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## **KUWAIT AMIR, AL-SABAH FAMILY RECEIVE RAMADAN WELL-WISHERS**





Amiri Diwan photos His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Al-Sabah family received Monday citizens and residents on the occasion on the holy month of Ramadan. The reception reflected unity of the Kuwaiti people during these occasions.

#### 'Obtain certification'

## **CPR training must for pediatric staff**

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi, has issued a ministerial decree mandating pediatricians and nurses working in intensive care

units for pre-

mature infants to obtain certification in the

advanced life support train-

(known as car-

as the American

course



diopulmonary resuscitation or PALS) from accredited training centers such

ing

Al-Awadhi

Heart Association (AHA) and the American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) prior to employment or promotion.

The decision is part of efforts aimed at enhancing the efficiency of medical personnel and improving the quality of services offered to pediatric patients.

# **Expat beggars in Kuwait face deportation, sponsor 'blocks'**



'Nab outlaws'

**By Munaif Naif** Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: According to security sources, officers from all sectors of the Ministry of Interior, including Public Security, Traffic, Operations, and Criminal Investigations have been deployed to deal with traffic jams and arrest outlaws and beggars during the month of Ramadan, especially those present in markets, stores, and mosques. They explained that any expatriate caught begging will be deported from the country and a block will be placed on the sponsor's file.

It aligns with the government's action plan to raise the level of healthcare standards and facilitate citizens' access to top-quality services.

It is worth highlighting that this decision comes in conjunction with the ministerial resolution No. 63/2024, which mandates all doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and allied health workers in hospitals, specialized centers, and primary care centers affiliated with the ministry, and workers in the private medical sector to undergo training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation from accredited training centers affiliated with the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) upon appointment and promotion.

## Kuwait strips citizenship for 6 men, three women

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Council of Ministers has approved the revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship for nine individuals, comprising six men, three women, including one American woman, reports Al-Qabas daily.

These decisions were issued by the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality, following a thorough review of relevant constitutional and legal provisions.

The Supreme Committee, in accordance with the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and its amendments, found that these individuals obtained citizenship through fraudulent means or were convicted by final court rulings, including some currently serving prison sentences.

The American woman allegedly acquired citizenship in 2006 and the Emirati woman obtained citizenship in 1967, along with seven others who acquired citizenship at various times.

In light of recent decisions, the total number of individuals who have had their Kuwaiti nationality revoked has surpassed 30 within a week, highlighting the government's commitment to upholding legal integrity and combating fraudulent practices related to citizenship acquisition.

À government source revealed ongoing efforts to identify and address cases of fraudulent citizenship acquisition, with further decisions pending submission by the committee. The source emphasized that the government remains steadfast in its resolve to pursue legal measures against perpetrators and maintain transparency throughout the process.

#### **Continued on Page 5**

#### Ramadan Timings Iftar ...... Wednesday ...... 17:56 Imsak ...... Thursday ...... 04:37

The cannon at Naif Palace, Kuwait City, is fired, signaling to worshippers that it's time to break their fast. - See Page 2

2 candidates withdraw from parliamentary race

## Election tally rises to 219 as 17 more register

#### By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: A total of 17 candidates registered for the upcoming parliamentary elections, including one woman, on Tuesday — the ninth day of the registration period for candidates.

This increases the total number of candidates to 219, including seven women. Two candidates have so far withdrawn from the race.

The candidates who registered on Tuesday are as follows:

Second Constituency: three men (Mohammad Al-Mutair, Abdulwahab Al- Qattan and Bandar Mubarak Al-Mutairi)

Third Constituency: two men (Madhi Ibrahim Al-Khamees and Abdullah Al-Hendal)

Fourth Constituency: 11 men and one woman (Husain Al-Serafi, Hamad Al-Jadie, Saud Al-Heraiji, Adel Al-Jemaili, Abdullah Falah Al-Hajri, Askar Owaed Al-Anzi, Mubarak Haif Al-Hajraf, Mohammad Mahdi Al-Sulaimani, Mohammad Shenaifi Al-Majedi, Yousef Al-Bazzali, Ahmed Al-Sulaimani and Nawal Saleh Aba Al-Khail)

Third Constituency candidate Madhi Al- Khamees stressed the need for the government to submit an integrated work program, which is feasible and has a timetable. He said political instability led to deterioration in all fields; wondering how the country witnessed the formation of four governments in seven years, while the upcoming parliamentary election is the third in four years.

Former Deputy National Assembly Speaker Mohammad Al-Mutair, who filed his candidacy in the Fourth Constituency, asserted that the corrupt should be bored, not the people. He hopes the people will not only vote for pro-reform candidates, but continue supporting them to succeed in their legislative work as well.

Former MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf and Fourth Constituency candidate called on all eligible voters to participate in the election in order to decide about their future. He pointed out the time has come for a popular prime minister (not from Al-Sabah Family). He added this will minimize disputes whose source everyone is aware of.

#### **Continued on Page 5**



Kuwait's 49th relief plane heads to Jordan with 45 tons of aid for Gaza.

According to the instructions of the ministry leadership, strict

#### **Continued on Page 5**

#### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Amir **Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** received a call on Tuesday from Egyptian President **Abdulfattah El-Sisi**, in which the two exchanged greetings on occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

President El-Sisi wished His Highness the Amir good health and the state of Kuwait further progress and prosperity under his wise guidance. (KUNA)

#### 

**UN chief renews** 

call for ceasefire

(KUNA): The UN secretary gen-

eral, Antonio Guterres called on

Monday for a truce in the Israel-

Gaza war and Sudan as the holy

Muslim fasting month of Rama-

In a statement, Guterres also

urged the release of hostages held

by Hamas and the removal of 'all

obstacles to ensure the delivery

of lifesaving aid at the speed and

massive scale required' to Gaza.

ian health ministry in Gaza is-

sued new casualty figures, noting

at least 31.112 Palestinians have

been killed and 72,760 wounded

since 7 October in Israel's mili-

tary offensive on the Gaza Strip.

from the repercussions of threats

to attack Rafah city, which would

push Palestinians in Gaza to new

depths of hell, stressing on the

importance of ending the cycle

Reiterating his call to the

warring parties to halt the war,

Guterres highlighted the same

compelling appeal from the fam-

ilies of victims who visited the

bers said, "we are not here for

condolences. We are not here for

apologies. We are here for imme-

**Continued on Page 5** 

diate action," Guterres added.

"As one of those family mem-

UN in New York recently.

The UN chief also warned

As Ramadan begins, Palestin-

YORK, March 12,

NEW

dan begins.

of violence.

**KUWAIT CITY:** An Amiri decree was issued on Tuesday appointing **Esam Salem Al-Roumi** Chief of the State Audit Bureau (SAB).

The first article of the decree 37 for the year 2024 stipulated that Esam Salem Al-Roumi be appointed President of the State Audit Bureau. (KUNA)

**KUWAIT CITY:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tuesday expressed Kuwait's welcome of the recent meeting hosted by the Arab League, which aimed to support political resolution efforts in **Libya**, paving the path towards eagerly anticipated presidential and parliamentary elections.

In a statement released Tuesday, the ministry reiterated Kuwait's support for all Arab and international efforts aimed at strengthening the unity, sovereignty, security, and stability of Libyan territories, echoing the aspirations of its people for peace, development and prosperity. (KUNA)

#### 

**TOKYO:** China, Iran, and Russia have kicked off a joint naval drills in the Gulf of Oman to strengthen maritime cooperation and safeguard regional peace and stability, the Chinese National Defense Ministry announced Tuesday. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings				
Fajr 04:43	Asr 15:22			
Sunrise 06:02	Maghrib 17:54			
Zohr 11:58	Isha 19:11			



Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Warm with light vari-able wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h and some scat-tered clouds will appear. Bv Night: Rather cold with light

Weather				
to moderate southeasterly win				
with speeds of 12-32 km/h ar				
some scattered clouds will a				

24

Max Exp

rly wind,	Kuwait Airport	25	14
m/h and	Abdaly	21	11
will ap-	Jahra	27	14
	Salmiyah	20	17
Min Rec	Nuwaisib	30	15
16	Wafra	30	13

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

#### 70% attendance noted in ministries; police maintain order

## Arab, Gulf, foreign envoys extend warm Ramadan wishes to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Ambassadors representing Arab, Gulf, and foreign nations have conveyed heartfelt congratulations to the leadership, government, and people of Kuwait on the occasion of the commencement of the holy month of Ramadan, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In their messages, they expressed hopes for continued stability and prosperity for Kuwait, emphasizing the significance of Ramadan as a time to foster human compassion and unity.

These ambassadors commended Kuwait for its exemplary role in promoting peace, reconciliation among nations, and

Le Flecher

rejecting hatred. The Omani Ambassador to Kuwait, Saleh Al Kharousi, and the Chinese Ambassador, Zhang Jianwei, extended their sincere well-wishes for the holy month.

French Ambassador Claire Le Flecher conveyed her heartfelt wishes of happiness, health, and brotherhood to the Kuwaiti people and Muslims worldwide. She emphasized the spiritual significance of Ramadan, highlighting its themes of contemplation, tolerance, and peace, as well as its role in fostering solidarity and compassion towards those in need. Ambassador Anne

Dr. Al-Kharousi

Koesten of the European Union underscored Ramadan as an occasion for reflection, forgiveness, and giving, expressing her anticipation for experiencing her first Ramadan in Kuwait. Koesten reiterated the EU's commitment to nurturing strong and enduring relationships with Islamic communities globally, emphasizing mutual understanding and respect between cultures and religions.

Moreover, embassies including those of the United States, Canada, India, Japan, and the Philippines conveyed their Ramadan greetings through their respective online platforms, reflecting the diverse international community's celebration of this auspicious month.

In conclusion, these messages of goodwill and solidarity underscore the universal significance of Ramadan, emphasizing its role in fostering harmony, understanding, and cooperation among nations and communities worldwide.

#### Ramadan first day

On the first day of Ramadan, Al-Qabas observed notable traffic congestion, particularly during the rush hours at the beginning and end of the workday, prompting a a significant role in reducing congestion and facilitating transactions, with many services now accessible online. Ministers reiterated the need to maintain discipline and deter laziness or negligence, especially during Ramadan.

In courtrooms, a high attendance rate of over 80% was observed among employees, ensuring the seamless operation of judicial proceedings. Similarly, lawyers and defendants demonstrated a high level of commitment to attending sessions, recognizing the consequences of absenteeism.

In schools, student attendance varied, with some schools experiencing full at-

tendance while others saw noticeable absences. Teachers maintained their commitment to attendance, often utilizing fingerprint systems for record-keeping. Additionally, some schools engaged in Ramadanrelated activities, fostering a sense of community among staff. At Kuwait University, both students and

absence



Zhang Jianwei

Anne Koesten congestion. Overall, the first

day of Ramadan showcased a strong commitment to work discipline and attendance across various sectors, underscoring the importance of maintaining efficiency during this holy month.

#### Ramadan 'iftar cannon'

One of the most iconic rituals associated with the holy month of Ramadan in Kuwait is the "Iftar Cannon," a tradition steeped in history and cultural significance, reports Al-Qabas daily.

For approximately 117 years, the launch of the Iftar cannon has marked the end of fasting hours and the Maghreb call to prayer, bringing joy and anticipation to both children and adults alike.

The origins of the Iftar cannon trace back to historical happenstance, with its inception dating back to the year 865 AH in Mamluk Cairo. Sultan Khashkadam's desire to test a new cannon coincided with the sunset call to prayer, resulting in the cannon shots firing at the precise moment of breaking the fast.

Mistaking it for a deliberate tradition, people embraced it as a way to alert fasting individuals, thus cementing its status as a beloved ritual during both Iftar and Suhoor.



pear.

Station

Kuwait City

Photo by Samer Shaqair Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributing food parcels on the first day of Ramadan, March 11, 2024.

# **Zakat House enforces innovative** aid distribution plan in Ramadan

Focus on modern features, energy saving in schools

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Zakat House intensifies its endeavors to provide donations and alms to deserving individuals both within and outside Kuwait, leveraging the blessings and virtues of the holy month, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In this regard, the Director of Projects and Local Bodies Department at Zakat House, Radaan Al-Hajri, announced the launch of various initiatives aimed at ensuring efficient distribution of aid during this auspicious period.



#### 2

robust security and traffic presence to man age the flow and ensure order, reports Al-Oabas daily.

Despite this, employees demonstrated commendable commitment and punctuality, with attendance rates exceeding 70% across various sectors.

During a tour of ministries, Al-Qabas noted a diligent work atmosphere, with employees efficiently completing transactions amidst a modest number of visitors during the initial hours.

However, inspection teams identified absenteeism, ensuring accountability for those not adhering to work obligations. Ministers emphasized the importance of addressing absenteeism promptly, especially during Ramadan.

Despite the fasting period, many transactions were smoothly processed, with minimal disruption and some offices remaining open during iftar time. As the workday drew to a close, requests for permission to leave increased, with approximately 60% of employees seeking early departure, citing various reasons.

The implementation of electronic transaction systems in service agencies played

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: As the auspi-

cious month of Ramadan graces us once

again, the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC)

redoubles its efforts to stand in solidarity

with all members of society. Recogniz-

organizing

back to you," under-

scoring the reciprocal

Another account attributes the introduction of the Iftar cannon to Fatima, the daughter of Khedive Ismail, who purportedly decreed its use to announce the breaking of the fast throughout Ramadan, leading to its designation as the "Hajja Fatima cannon" in Egypt.

This tradition eventually spread to various Arab and Islamic countries, including Kuwait. In 1907, during the reign of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, Kuwait witnessed the introduction of the Iftar cannon, with Ali bin Aqab bin Ali Al-Khazraji being credited as its first launcher. Gifted by the British government, the cannon served as a means for Kuwaitis to discern the timing of both Suhoor and Iftar.

Initially launched from the Seif Palace, the Ramadan cannon found its permanent home in the Naif Palace in the early 1950s, where it has continued to signal the end of fasting hours ever since. Built in 1920 under the reign of Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak, Naif Palace stands as a testament to Kuwait's enduring cultural traditions, with the Iftar cannon serving as a symbol of unity and anticipation during the holy month of Ramadan.

Standing firmly by all segments of soci-

ety, KOC will organize daily iftar gatherings

at Mubarakiya market, ensuring that no one

goes hungry during this blessed month. Fur-

thermore, in collaboration with the Grand

In a groundbreaking partnership, KOC

Not forgetting the children of its employ-

ees, KOC hosts the annual Ramadan com-

petition, featuring daily quizzes and Quran

memorization contests that showcase re-

markable talent and dedication. Moreover,

the company organizes a joyous Georgian

ceremony, growing in popularity each year,

to delight the hearts of its employees' chil-

To enrich the spiritual experience of Ra-

madan, KOC will broadcast daily record-

ings from prominent imams and sheikhs,

providing valuable insights and reflections

ing goodness and unity, Kuwait Oil Compa-

ny exemplifies the true essence of Ramadan,

spreading warmth and compassion to all.

In its unwavering commitment to foster-

This year, Zakat House has introduced a mobile iftar project within Kuwait, deploying twenty-five mobile units across strategic locations to distribute meals to the needy. With 6 sites in Al-Ahmadi Governorate, 5 in Farwaniya, 2 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, 5 in Al-Jahra, 3 in the capital, and 4 in Hawalli, these points cater to areas with high worker concentrations, adjacent to mosques, facilitating the distribution of 6,635 meals daily.

Al-Hajri highlighted the implementation of a new mechanism for issuing magnetic cards in lieu of distributing food supplies, ensuring greater convenience and flexibility for beneficiaries.

These cards, allocated to individuals registered with the Social Service Department at Zakat House, enable the purchase of essential food supplies from designated locations, including Lulu Hyper, Farwaniya Cooperative Society, Oncost, and others.

Furthermore, the Zakat House is prepared to execute the in-kind Zakat al-Fitr project, designating 14 revenue centers across all governorates to receive Zakat al-Fitr contributions, particularly in the form of rice.

Al-Hajri reaffirmed Zakat House's commitment to serving donors, charities, and the needy, emphasizing its readiness to deliver aid swiftly and efficiently. With a vision focused on modernizing aid distribution methods, Zakat House continues to uphold its leadership in zakat and humanitarian endeavors, both locally and globally.

#### 

Modern features: Muhammad Al-Khalidi, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Facilities and Planning at the Ministry of Education, underscored the Ministry's commitment to sustainability and energy-saving initiatives in newly constructed schools, reports Al-Jarida daily

Speaking at the official opening of a girls' middle school building in the Sabah Al-Nasser area, Al-Khalidi highlighted the modern features of the facility, including its advanced systems and focus on energy efficiency.

The newly inaugurated school is equipped with solar energy systems aimed at reducing electricity consumption, along with 50 smart boards, state-of-the-art laboratories adhering to international safety standards, sports facilities, spacious courtyards, and student restrooms. Additionally, the school is furnished with surveillance cameras and instructional screens to enhance security and learning environments.

Al-Khalidi noted that the project, initiated in 2022, was completed within a remarkably short timeframe, reflecting the Ministry's dedication to timely infrastructure development. Spanning an area of 16 thousand square meters across three floors, the school comprises 30 classrooms, laboratories, a library, and a mosque. He emphasized the sector's efforts in utilizing weather-resistant external facades for the school building.

On the same lines, Eng. Muhammad Fahad, Director of Project Management, confirmed the completion of another project related to the establishment of two schools in the Sabah Al-Nasser area. A boys' middle school in plot (7) has been successfully completed, with a girls' middle school in plot (1) currently undergoing final checks. Fahad highlighted the innovative architectural design of the new schools, which are set to commence operations soon, further enriching educational opportunities in the region.

KUNA photo Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi talks to the medical team after their return from Gaza.

#### 'First initiative in Gulf'

### Kuwaiti team's efforts in Gaza hailed

KUWAIT CITY, March 12, (KUNA): The Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi praised the efforts of the volunteer medical team of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, which performed delicate surgical operations on the critically injured in the Gaza Strip

Minister Al-Awadi told KUNA after the medical team's return that this initiative is the first in the Gulf and the culmination of coordination between public benefit associations in Kuwait and with humanitarian associations and organizations in Egypt and Palestine.

The minister affirmed that the medical team performed its work with full dedication and sincerity, expressing his pride in its efforts in treating the wounded and injured. He also praised Kuwait's firm position in supporting the Palestinian people by providing medical, food aid, and urgent shelter for

those affected in the Gaza Strip. For his part, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society. Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer, said that the Society is

keen to provide aid to the Gaza Strip, including providing medical personnel to provide the necessary treatment, adding that the team's presence is "a national pride worthy of praise."

The team performed about 23 surgical operations on sick and wounded Palestinians in (Kuwait Specialist) and (Gaza European) hospitals.

#### 'Modernization efforts'

## Call to set up applied university

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: A group of academics from higher education institutions in Kuwait have voiced unanimous support for the establishment of an applied university.

In an interview with Al-Jarida, they emphasized the necessity of such an institution to complement existing governmental universities and support the objectives of the General Authority for Applied Education and Training.

Dr. Khaled Al-Saifi, President of the Faculty Association of Applied Sciences, highlighted that the concept of an applied university is not new but rather the culmination of extensive studies and governmental decisions

He cited specific directives from the Ministry of Education, including decisions to separate five applied colleges to serve as the foundation for the university. Al-Saifi underscored that the establishment of an applied university aligns with educational and developmental needs and represents a natural progression in Kuwait's modernization efforts.

Dr. Saleh Al-Jalahma, a faculty member at the College of Basic Education, emphasized the urgency of transforming the five teaching colleges into an applied university to meet the growing demands of the labor market. He noted the colleges' track record of providing skilled Kuwaiti graduates across various sectors and emphasized the importance of enhancing academic standards through international accreditation.

Dr. Salah Al-Hammadi, a faculty member at the Arab Open University, echoed the sentiment that an applied university is a critical necessity to address the evolving needs of the labor market.

He stressed the role of such an institution in facilitating the completion of university studies for members of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

ing Ramadan as a time of giving in all its forms, KOC is deeply committed to its social responsibility, diverse events aimed at serving the community, reports Al-Rai daily. Embracing the spirit of generosity, KOC has adopted the slogan "Goodness will come



dren.

to the community.

nature of giving and encouraging altruism among all. Throughout Ramadan, the company is set to host a myriad of activities and events, many of which have become cherished traditions synonymous with the month of compassion and brotherhood.

In a bid to remain connected with its employees, KOC's senior management, led by CEO Ahmad Jaber Al-Eidan, will personally visit various facilities and assembly centers to share in the joy of breaking fast together.

Additionally, the management will extend their outreach to patients, particularly children, at Al Ahmadi Hospital, spreading cheer and a sense of belonging.

Mosque administration, the company will distribute suboor meals to those attending nightly prayers, fostering a sense of community and spiritual connection. joins forces with several specialized entities to launch the "360 Challenge: Wellness Initiative in Ramadan" at 360 Mall. This initiative aims to promote healthy habits and physical activity, offering a range of health lectures, exercise sessions, and entertainment competitions throughout the month.

**KOC** fosters goodness, unity

during Ramadan; 'Do good'

## diwaniya ዮ جيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Who or what instigated attack? Israel takes all from operation'

"IN depth... Deadly stubbornness... It is inconceivable that the Hamas movement did not anticipate the brutal Israeli enemy's response to its attack on July 10, 2023; or that it did not take into account the devastating consequences on Gaza and its people," columnist Talal Abdul Kareem **Al-Arab** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"So what was the goal of its operation? Why was this critical time chosen -- when the two-State solution discussion is acceptable to everyone except Israel and Iran? Was the goal to liberate its prisoners or to advance the Palestinian cause globally? Or, I wonder, was it in implementation of external instructions with false promises and a deadly deception? The at-

tack did not free prisoners, as it rather incited the world's ire against it, and later aroused the wrath of sympathizers against Israel for its brutality against the innocent Gazans. However, neither

the demonstra-

tions against it.

Talal Al-Arab

nor the resonant speeches and strong emotions, curbed its aggression.

"The ferocious attack, whether you knew it or not, served Israel to complete its old plan, which began with Hamas isolating Gaza from the legitimate authority under its nose. This is certainly what it wanted, because it was strange and illogical for Israel to remain silent about transforming Gaza into an emirate loyal to Iran and its Revolutionary Guard.

"Now that the axe has fallen on the head, and after Gaza was destroyed along with its hospitals, schools, homes and infrastructure, and after tens of thousands of its residents have been martyred and more than a million and a half Gazans have been displaced; the shouting and begging for a ceasefire has begun for nothing in return. This will not happen and Hamas knows this, yet it is stubborn and its stubbornness is fatal for the people of Gaza.

"Israel will not stop its brutal bombing. It may stop for a while in order to release its prisoners. Hamas realized that Israel will stop the fighting permanently if it leaves Gaza. Hamas knows that, but it is stubborn. Israel is an expansionist, colonial State. The fervent attack on it gave it the pretext and the western American cover to implement its plan to empty Gaza and start the 'Ben Gurion Canal' project. Hamas knows about it.

"Is the action of Hamas in that dark history justified? If Israel released cost are not available till date, I hope the administrative and technical procedures will be free of defects and impurities in both contracting and implementation. This is extremely important for the success of the project.

"Without a doubt, this step opens the door to industrial initiatives and projects that our national economy desperately needs. It is also a step in economic diversification, so we hope it will be followed by productive industrial projects that enhance the contribution of the industrial sector to the gross domestic product.

"Solid waste recycling' is a government industrial project. We await the results on the executive side. We must be convinced of the necessity of developing an effective industrial sector, because it is one of the requirements of economic diversification.

Here, we must point out that government investment should not be limited to the government. It must be led by the private sector, including the small projects.

"The government must also provide the necessary investment climate, including the land needed for industrial facilities. Its role should be through partnership with the private sector or be limited to regulation, su-

pervision and control. "There are promising sectors for investment in our national economy, such as renewable energy projects, information technology, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical industries, food industries, manufacturing and others. These can be successful investment projects that are compatible with our resources and needs.

"On this basis, the waste recycling project is the first step toward the path of a thousand miles. The government must continue it until the end.'

"Your tongue is your horse ... Homeland, homeland, and then homeland. From now until the fourth of April, there will be an opportunity to criticize and insult some figures -- both governmental and non-governmental -- by some old and new candidates who have no way to succeed except through the demonstration of their heroism and boldness in front of their voters to reach the National Assembly. They have always dreamed of entering the Assembly in order to benefit it, as this had been the custom of some lawmakers over the past years," Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-

Ahmad wrote for Al-Seyassah daily. "This is not the correct and ideal way to success. Whoever wants to reach Abdullah Al-Salem Hall must be honest with Allah first, and then with himself. He must have pure intentions in front of his voters to serve his country, so that Allah Almighty will grant him success in his efforts. This candidate and other citizens should know that every human being has his own tongue in the middle of his mouth. Your tongue is your horse. If you protect it, it will protect you, and if you insult it, it will ruin you. "Unfortunately, many people insult their tongues without achieving any goal other than proving their courage. They think so in front of their acquaintances, without knowing that their followers see it as lack of morals, while knowing well that someone else's tongue is in their mouth, but that someone else's upbringing requires him not to use it, except for what Allah has commanded in terms of good speech. Allah forgives those who are arrogant and utter bad words. The reward is permission for whoever receives it without responding. "There is no country devoid of problems, and each one searches for solutions that suit them. We are concerned about our internal problems, especially social problems, which require the government to exert utmost effort to find appropriate solutions, given the effects that the Kuwaiti society is suffering. This step must be taken before the problems get worse and expand, such that it becomes difficult to control and solve them. "In short, these problems are family disintegration, spread of drugs, betrayal of trust, corruption and debts. These are extremely dangerous issues if they continue. It is important to solve them as soon as possible in order to maintain cohesion of Kuwaiti society and to pass it on to the next generation. "Gratitude and appreciation for every citizen who works and strives with all his energy for the sake of the country, whether he is in the government or outside it. He must also preserve the trust. His duty is to continue with what his conscience dictates to him to preserve it. He is responsible for it in front of Allah Almighty, as long as he is in good health and that he is not stingy with his giving and service to her (conscience), just as he takes from her, for she is the caring mother and safe haven for our dignity and pride, and our survival after Allah Almighty. There is no gratitude or appreciation for anyone who belittles her. She takes care of him and looks out for his interests before hers, so she shows her love through action, not words.

#### 'Soldiers exclusion based on legal, security concerns'

## Mol commends citizens in pursuit of truth

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Ministry of Interior extends its gratitude to honorary citizens who sought to uncover the truth behind recent events involving the exclusion of certain soldiers from graduation courses and the withholding of financial dues to student officers, reports Al-Qabas daily.

It commends citizens for their commitment to seeking accurate information amidst the spread of rumors and misinformation.

Regarding the exclusion of military personnel from courses, the Ministry clarifies that such decisions were made based on legal, security, and procedural considerations to prevent potential harm to the country.

Some individuals enrolled in courses despite deficiencies in their data or security concerns in their files, necessitating corrective action to uphold legal and security standards.

Concerning the non-disbursement of financial rewards to students of the Sa'ad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences, this was due to parliamentary pressures leading to the acceptance of additional students beyond the allocated budget. The Ministry emphasizes its efforts to secure funding to fulfill these obligations promptly, either from the current or future budgets.

The Ministry reaffirms its commitment to upholding the constitution, laws, and security considerations for the nation's best interests. It urges the public to seek information from official sources to avoid legal consequences resulting from spreading inaccurate information.

## **MPW enhances quality control** measures for asphalt factories

Roads maintenance top on list: minister

**KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Ministry** of Public Works announced the withdrawal of 52 samples from various asphalt factories and sites across the country as part of its ongoing efforts to monitor the quality of asphalt production and road maintenance, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These samples underwent 79 tests at road laboratories to ensure compliance with quality standards. Additionally, the ministry conducted 607 visits to asphalt factories, issuing six certificates related to factory calibration in February.

Sources within the Ministry emphasized its commitment to addressing complaints from citizens and residents, particularly concerning road maintenance. These complaints are promptly addressed, with maintenance teams dispatched to carry out necessary repairs across the country's governorates.

#### Maintenance

Specialized teams analyze maintenance needs swiftly, followed by appropriate action and repairs guided by expert insight. Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works and

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, is expected to announce two new contracts for essential maintenance projects in the near future.

These projects signify a comprehensive approach to maintenance, encompassing not only interior areas but also major highways.

Recent initiatives include maintenance work on key highways, including Al-Salmi Road, the Sixth and Seventh Ring Road, Subiya Road, King Fahd Road, Al-Fahaheel Road, Al-Jahra, Abdali, and various ring

Al-Mashaan

roads and intersections. These endeavors aim to enhance the efficiency of

highway infrastructure, asphalt quality, pothole treatment, bridge expansion joint maintenance, and rainwater sewer network cleaning.

#### 

Tourist attractions: The government has tasked the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature with accelerating the implementation of its initiatives to restore heritage and historical buildings, aiming to transform them into significant tourist and cultural attractions for the country, reports Al-Rai daily. This directive follows a recommendation from the Ministerial Education, Health, and Youth Committee concerning the preservation of buildings and sites. Commending the Public Authority for Sports for its successful organization of the "Kuwait Sports Day" event held last Saturday, which featured a walking marathon, a bicycle race, and group games, the Council emphasized the importance of sports for all individuals and its positive impact on human health. The Council extended its gratitude to the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, the Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Daoud Marafi, members of the Public Authority for Sports, and all other parties involved in orchestrating this distinguished sporting occasion for their contributions and efforts towards its success.



Cartons of imported liquor found in container.

#### **Contraband from Asian nation**

## Bid to smuggle liquor haul foiled

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Customs Research and Investigation Department successfully foiled an attempt to smuggle 1,188 bottles of alcohol into the country via Shuwaikh Port, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to the General Administration of Customs, vigilant officers from the Customs Research and Investigation Department grew suspicious of a container arriving from an Asian nation.

Consequently, they meticulously monitored and inspected the container in close collaboration with the Customs Inspection and Warehouse Control team at Shuwaikh Port. Their joint efforts culminated in the detection of 1,188 bottles of wine concealed within the shipment. Swift action was taken in response to this discovery.

## Kuwaiti, Afghan, Nepalese victim

## 5 dead in mishaps on Ramadan 1

#### **By Munaif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, March 12: On the first day of Ramadan, the country witnessed

In addition, an Afghan expatriate died when his vehicle collided with another on Subiya Road. He was removed from the wreckage of his vehicle, and his body was referred to Forensic Medi-



all Palestinian prisoners even if it stopped bombing Gaza and even if it did not stipulate Hamas' exit from it, would what happened to Gaza and its residents be justified? Do the safety of Hamas' leaders and members, and the release of its prisoners match what happened to it? There is nothing more heinous than turning defeats and destruction into imaginary victories. There is nothing more criminal than the murderer except the one who brags about the blood of the dead person -- the blood of the martyrs of Gaza -- on the necks of those who brag about it. You are the ones who threw them to destruction. Everyone who applauds and cheers for you -- whether intentionally or not -- shares in your sin. What happened was suicide and mass slaughter, not a struggle. There is no consolation for the Palestinians, as they will not get Gaza as it was.

"As for Israel, it received financial, military and political support from its allies, and even sports. As for Hamas, it received more warm encouragement for more deadly stubbornness, with leaders rejoicing in health and wellness. As for the others, let them go to hell.

"The two-State solution was ready according to the Arab-American agreement, which Israel rejects and which conflicts with Iran's interests, because it will isolate it from its agents. What happened in Gaza benefited them and aborted a peace opportunity that would have been the nail in the coffin of the Zionist State in the long run.

"The Gaza tragedy is painful, but emotion must not blind us from the truth of what happened. Is there any wise and honorable person who dares hang the bell of sin around the neck of the one who committed it?"

#### Also:

"The solid waste recycling project is useful not only from the standpoint of getting rid of solid waste and the large number of landfills that have flooded the country, but the idea could be a productive industrial project by converting solid waste into alternative fuel and a number of other useful organic products," columnist M. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Karafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"If this project will not cost the State's general budget, and will be implemented and managed by a national company owned by Kuwait Investment Authority, then it is compatible with our high level of consumption and the resulting waste, and nothing is more evident than the abundance of rubbish.

"Although the project data and its

"May Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of evil and harm.'

- Compiled by PFX Fernandes

#### 'Fasting easier'

## Moderate, good weather during Ramadan: expert

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Meteorologist Issa Ramadan said temperatures will vary during the holy month of Ramadan, with moderate weather at night, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Ramadan pointed out this is common during spring and it is a good weather for the month of fasting.

He disclosed that the southeast wind speed will be moderate, and then become active, with partly cloudy weather and a chance of scattered light rain with low horizontal visibility and temperatures ranging from 28 to 30 degrees Celsius.

He added the weather forecasts state that the winds will shift to northwesterly winds with sunny weather on Tuesday and Wednesday, and temperatures will rise starting from Thursday and during the weekend — more than 30 degrees Celsius on Friday until Sunday; with light to moderate southeasterly winds that will be active at times, and then temperatures will drop with a chance of scattered rain until Tuesday.

Ramadan said that day and night will be equal in Saturday on March 16, while the vernal equinox in the northern hemisphere will be on March 21. The day will begin to lengthen and the night will shorten after March 21, and the angle of incidence of the sun's rays will rise.

#### 

Burial timings: Kuwait Municipality recently issued an administrative circular on the burial timings during the holy month of Ramadan – 11:00 am, after the afternoon prayers and after Tarawih prayers, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Municipality explained in its circular that it set these burial timings to alleviate the burdens of the families of the deceased, starting from the first day of Ramadan. It added this is out of concern for the health and safety of mourners in cemeteries.

a total of five deaths in traffic accidents.

Three individuals - 2 Nepalese and an unidentified man - were run over by a car driven by a Kuwaiti citizen on the Coastal Road opposite Mahboula, resulting in their death.

When the Operations Room of Ministry of Interior received information about the accident, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location and referred the bodies of the deceased to the Forensic Medicine Department. The Kuwaiti motorist has been arrested. An investigation was opened into the accident, and a case was registered.

Meanwhile, a Kuwaiti citizen was run over by a car on Subiya Road, and succumbed to serious injuries. His body was taken to the Forensic Medicine Department, and a case was registered.

cine. A case was registered.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef has issued a decision for amending allowances, bonuses, and additional personnel for the officers, requiring the addition of a second paragraph to article 68 of the ministerial resolution No. 500/2021.

The article stipulates that if the ministry transfers an officer to the department of the ministry's office, he retains the position's allowance and his special allowances for a period of only three months. They will be dropped after that, unless he sought assistance or is assigned to any other position or work that requires the payment of allowances to him.



## LOCAL



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the honorable Al-Sabah family receiving a large number of well-wishers on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

# **MPW prepares for tender of special education school complex in Egaila**

Municipality extends 3 billboard site contracts in 3 governorates

## By Mohammed Ghanem and Muhammad Al-Musleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Informed sources at the Ministry of Public Works revealed the readiness of the construction projects sector to float a tender on the special education school complex project in Egaila through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT).

They explained that the establishment of the project in Egaila comes within the framework of the construction of three similar buildings in Jahra and Hawally, which will be proposed and implemented successively.

The ministry is awaiting the formation of the board of directors of CAPT, and will then resume the agency's work progress in order for the project to be presented to the companies classified by CAPT.

The project is one of the major development projects implemented by the ministry for the benefit of the Ministry of Education.

The design of the project has been completed,

and it will be implemented in three areas, namely Hawally, Egaila, and Jahra.

According to the project implementation schedule, two complexes for schools for people with special needs will be established, the first in Egaila and the second in Jahra. After the completion of construction and operation of the two complexes in Egaila and Jahra, the private schools in Hawally will be demolished and a new complex will be built on their land.

#### Components

The components of the project are in the three buildings, which are specialized buildings for teaching cases of deafness, mutism, movement disabilities, cases of Down syndrome, autism, and speech difficulties.

The complex contains physical therapy buildings with swimming pools, as well as a gym, a multi-purpose hall, and another for education and treatment of speech difficulties. It also contains craft workshops, student housing, and the administration building, as well as libraries, workshops, and theaters equipped with the modern technological means required to meet the needs and requirements of people with special groups with the maximum capacity.

Meanwhile, according to an informed source, Kuwait Municipality has extended three additional contracts for the use of billboard sites in a number of companies in Farwaniya, Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Ahmadi governorates. The extension period will be six months, with a total revenue of up to KD 1.665 million.

They stressed that the extension of the auction contract in Farwaniya Governorate received the approval of the Ministry of Finance and the State Audit Bureau, with a total revenue of KD 739,000 for a period of six months from April until end of October.

Regarding the extension of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate auction contract, the sources affirmed that the municipality had obtained regulatory approvals, with a total revenue of KD 301 thousand for a period of six months from February 6 to August 5.

They explained that the regulatory agencies agreed to extend the same contract in Al-Ahmadi Governorate with a company for revenues amounting to KD 625,000 for a period of six months from April 25 to October 24.

The supervisory bodies stressed to the municipality the necessity of completing the tendering, awarding and contracting procedures for new bids before the end of the extension period.

The difference in advertising revenues varies from one governorate to another. Farwaniya Governorate is considered the largest in terms of value, and is therefore regarded as the most important advertising market in Kuwait due to its distinguished geographical location and its demographic and commercial diversity.



#### **PM sends greetings**

## HH the Amir congratulates Mauritius on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, March 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of Mauritius Prithvirajsing Roopun on his country's National Day. His Highness the Amir wished the president long-term health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country and people.

Also, Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem sent a cable of congratulations to President Prithvirajsing Roopun on his country's National Day.



KUNA photo Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas with UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammad.

#### 'Range of initiatives being implemented'

# Kuwait contributes to UN's effort to empower women: Sheikh Firas

NEW YORK, March 12, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Saud Al-Malik Al-Sabah reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to working with the United Nations to improve the status of women.

"The Kuwaiti government is implementing a range of initiatives to empower women and improve their status in the framework of Kuwait Vision 2035," he said on Monday.

Sheikh Firas, who leads Kuwait's delegation to the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, made the comments during his meeting with UN Deputy Secretary-General

Amina Mohammad on the fringes of the session.

Out of belief in the crucial role of women in development, Kuwait made headway in implementing the fifth gender equality goal of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN member states in 2015, he pointed out.

On her part, Amina Mohammad praised the relentless efforts of Kuwait to empower women, recalling her last visit to the country in early March.

She expressed hope for more cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the State of Kuwait in this regard.

'Platform designed to be family-friendly'

Info's '51' digital platform to enhance Kuwait's media, advertising landscape



Special Promotion

Solution One Night Stay in a Queen Cabana for 2 persons inclusive of Suhoor

BHD 46/- net

- One Night Stay in a 2 Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Suhoor
- BHD 102.148/- net
- Andalucia Café serves a selection of Ramadan Specials and its open from Iftar time until 02:00hrs

Group/Family Bookings for Iftar and Gabgha with Traditional Ramadan dishes for **BD8.000** Net per person with a minimum of 25 people

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Assistant Undersecretary for Media Services Sector and New Media at the Ministry of Information and Chairman of the Coordination Committee for Digital Platform Saad Al-Azmi has announced the technical details of the '51' integrated digital platform that will be launched on May 12, 2024 as per the digital transformation strategy of the ministry for the years 2021 to 2026, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press conference held recently at the ministry's headquarters with a number of its officials in attendance, Al-Azmi revealed the goals of launching the platform include keeping pace with modern technologies in the field of media; developing media, advertising and marketing methods and tools; developing and maximizing the State's financial resources; and supporting and encouraging creative competencies in partnership with the private sector and civil society.

He pointed out the platform is considered one of the most important aspects of maximizing the State's financial resources through a partnership with the private sector; as it will achieve a financial return of KD5.050 million within five years, in addition to 10 percent of net advertising profits and 10 percent of subscriptions. According to the contract concluded with the operating company, the ministry will maintain its own archive, and own the trademark and everything that is displayed through the platform, he added.

Al-Azmi explained: "We are witnessing the details of an integrated digital platform in cooperation with the Kuwaiti operating company,

'Fast Communications'. The launching of the platform coincides with the anniversary of the launching of Kuwaiti Radio on May 12, 1951. The specialized team will provide some materials, including some programs for the holy month of Ramadan, through the Kuwait TV digital platform until the complete switch to the new '51' platform."

He revealed the platform is a portal that opens new horizons for digital content that goes beyond traditional methods and allows the user to access television and radio content with ease. It also allows viewing of immortal archival works and live broadcast of all Kuwaiti television channels and radio stations, he added.

He stated that the platform was designed to be family-friendly, operating within the controls and policies of the ministry, and reflecting the values of authentic Kuwaiti culture and the creativity of its people in the fields of media, art, awareness, sports and drama, including the history of media and authentic Kuwaiti art.

On the other hand, Fast Communications Company representative Nouf Al-Mashaan confirmed that cooperation between the private and government sectors affirms the joint commitment to develop services by strengthening coordination through the unique technical expertise and distinguished infrastructure of the company.

Al-Mashaan said: "Our project opens new doors to the value and richness of the Kuwaiti archive of visual and audio content, making it available for viewing in all countries. It is not only a display of the ancient history and culture of Kuwait, but also a platform for promoting the Arabic language and creating a safe environment with family-friendly content."



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## LOCAL



#### Sheikh Jarrah Jaber chairing the meeting.

#### Deputy FM chairs diplomatic, consular body meet

Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired the meeting of the Diplomatic and Consular Council on Tuesday, with the participation of assistant minis-

ters who are members of the council. During the meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' headquarters, they discussed the issues of the meeting agenda. (KUNA)



Al-Otaibi and Al-Awadhi during the signing of the agreement.

#### 'Teams vital to activate deals effectively'

## KISR enhances collaboration with AIU

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Dr. Mishaan Al-Otaibi, Acting Director General of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, underscored the vital role of scientific research and studies in advancing services and elevating quality standards, reports Al-Jarida daily.

His remarks were made during the signing of a joint cooperation agreement with the American International University, attended by Dr. Nael Al-Awadhi, a member of the university's Board of Trustees.

Al-Otaibi expressed satisfaction with such agreements, emphasizing the shared commitment to scientific research evident in both public and private universities. The agreement facilitates bilateral cooperation in scientific research across various fields, allowing researchers from the American International University to leverage the insti-

#### tute's laboratories, research facilities, and expertise.

Highlighting the importance of active collaboration beyond mere agreement signings, Al-Otaibi stressed the need to form teams to activate these agreements effectively.

Dr. Al-Awadhi praised the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research as a cornerstone of scientific research in the region, noting the potential for students to benefit from the institute's expertise to enhance their capabilities.

Muhammad Al-Qattan, Vice President of the American International University for Research, emphasized the university's commitment to contributing to Kuwait's vision 2020-2035 through scientific research. He outlined plans to allocate specific budgets for research, aiming to address the country's challenges and support its development goals.

#### to be aware of the spreading rumors and verify them.

#### **By Inaas Awadh** Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Kuwait Municipality approved the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to allocate a main transformer station site with a total area of 3,000 square meters and with dimensions of 50 m x 60 m in Fahaheel Block 4.

According to the technical opinion approved by the Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous, the approval of the ministries of services must be obtained and their requirements must be adhered to before starting implementation. This is in addition to authorizing the concerned department to move and modify the dimensions and area of the transfer station to no more than the areas specified for the site, in the event that it conflicts with any existing infrastructure services or for regulatory reasons prior to installation.

On a related level, the municipality has started working on the ministerial amendments regarding the organization of construction works and the schedules attached to it after their publication in the official gazette, which was recently issued by a ministerial decision from the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

The decision stipulates adding the library activity to clause No. 18 (the requirements for commercial uses permitted in investment properties outside and inside Kuwait City) contained in table No. 2 regarding the requirements and specifications for investment residential buildings outside and inside Kuwait City, provided that the library area is not less than

sponsibility among employees."



**MEW's request for transformer** 

station site in Fahaheel gets nod

'Approval of ministries of services needs to be obtained'

A group photo from the beach cleaning drive.

## ABK joins forces with Action Group Holding for beach cleanup initiative

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) reaffirmed its commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) by participating in a beach cleanup organized by Ac-tion Group Holding. The event took place at the Free Zone where volunteers from the Bank and Action Group Holding rolled

up their sleeves to make a positive impact on the environment. Sager benali, Acting Chief Communications Officer at ABK,

A1-

expressed, "We are immensely Albenali

proud of the enthusiasm and dedication shown by our volunteers in this joint effort to promote the well-being of our environment. This initiative aligns with our values and emphasizes our ongoing support for sustainable causes.

Through its participation, ABK has presented itself as a responsible corporate organization that understands the importance of contributing to environmental sustainability. This beach cleanup reflects their dedication to preserving the natural beauty of Kuwait. Albenali added, "Engaging in such

initiatives not only strengthens our commitment to CSR but also fosters a sense of community and collective re-

The beach cleanup was part of a



#### Volunteers in action

fostering environmental sustainability. By actively participating in the cleanup, ABK has exemplified a proactive approach to CSR, setting a strong example in the market.

Ålbenali concluded, "This noteworthy cause serves as a reminder of the importance of environmental stewardship and the need for collective action in preserving natural habitats. It also highlights the potential for collaboration between corporate entities and community organizations to effect

positive change in society. Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital. Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian mar-

ket through ABK-Egypt's network of 48 branches.

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

#### **Expat beggars**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

measures must be taken regarding this phenomenon, which increases during the month of Ramadan.

In this context, the ministry's Security Media Department announced that the Criminal Security Sector has designated a hotline to receive reports related to beggars after which necessary steps will be taken immediately. Security efforts are being exerted to confront this phenomenon, which represents a crime against society and harms the civilized appearance.

The department called on everyone to cooperate with the General Department of Criminal Investigations by immediately reporting any observed case of begging, using the following two numbers - 25589655 and 25589644 - or the emergency hotline No. 112, which receives their reports round the clock.

The department said every person must be "a guardian of his country and keen about the public good".

#### **Kuwait strips**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers discussed the appointment of boards of directors in government bodies during its recent meeting, underscoring the importance of expediting work and project completion. Ministers were directed to disclose any discovered instances of corruption, even if investigations are ongoing, in order to uphold transparency and keep the public informed.

Upcoming announcements will include details regarding forged certificates issued since 2000, as these documents are currently under scrutiny, demonstrating the government's commitment to addressing fraudulent practices and ensuring accountability in administrative matters.

#### **Election tally**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

He affirmed his commitment to continue protecting public funds, as well as the citizens' rights and interests.

Asked about his opinion regarding the speaker's seat, Al-Hajraf stated: "First, we have to know who will win. The voters' mood is changing.

Former MP and Fourth Constituency candidate Askar Al-Anzi urged HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al- Salem Al-Sabah to approve the bills on increasing the cost of living allowance and zero interest loans for retirees.

He claimed the 2022 election results were inaccurate. He called on the citizens

Commenting on the 2023 Parliament, Al-Anzi said it did not do much for the

people. Fourth Constituency candidate Nawal Saleh Aba Al-Khail revealed that she decided to run for the election due to patriotism and her feelings toward the suffering of citizens. She intends to represent the hard labor class, asserting she is not part of the middle class.

She added some citizens suffer from depression due to their financial prob-

### **UN chief**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

Meanwhile, President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen warned that possibility of escalation in the Middle East is real, and called on member states to redouble efforts so that the people of Gaza "can get not only humanitarian relief, but also a ray of hope, towards a two-state solution."

These remarks were made when von der Leyen was addressing the European Council at inaugural session in Strasbourg.

The top European official held Iran responsible for tensions heightening in the region, and on possibility of Iran providing Russia with ballistic missiles; she asserted that they are prepared to implement further sanctions

While she called for guaranteeing the protection of civilians, and reinstating the flow of aid, von der Leyen pointed out that humanitarian assistance alone is not enough as the situation requires immediate and sustainable ceasefire.

In that regard, von der Leyen, hailed the unprecedented international cooperation between the Commission, Cyprus, UAE, the United States and the United Kingdom, that resulted in a maritime corridor to deliver aid to Gaza

"When fully operational, this maritime corridor could guarantee a sustained, regulated and robust flow of aid to Gaza. This is the first time that a ship is authorized to deliver aid to Gaza since 2005. Finally, it is an additional lifeline for the people of Gaza," she stated.

Elsewhere, Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman met on Tuesday with US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf to discuss the situation in Gaza.

This came in a press release by the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying that the meeting took place in the Prime Minister's office in Doha

During the meeting, both sides discussed bilateral ties, latest developments in Gaza and occupied Palestinian lands, ways to increase efforts to ensure ceasefire in Gaza and allow humanitarian aid to enter the strip.

750 square meters.

#### **'Integrated approach** to public events vital'

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Kuwait Environmental Protection Society commended Kuwait's efforts in organizing carnival events, noting their creativity and special significance within Kuwaiti society, reports Al-Jarida daily.

However, the recent Kuwait Sports Marathon, attended by Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Sabah and 13,000 participants, drew attention to the issue of plastic bottle waste.

Following the event, environmentally conscious citizens documented a significant amount of plastic bottle waste, which was later removed by Kuwait Municipality from the Sheikh Jaber Bridge Road. The society emphasized that such waste represents a depletion of natural resources and called for better management of public events to mitigate environmental impact.

The society suggested adopting an integrated approach to event management, including environmental considerations. This involves collaboration with governmental and comenvironmental munity agencies, as well as the environmental police, and mobilizing volunteer teams for environmental supervision, monitoring, and awareness.

Furthermore, the society recommended learning from successful initiatives, such as those implemented by the Ministry of Interior during national holiday celebrations, which prioritized water conservation and reduced plastic pollution. By incorporating environmental awareness into event planning, Kuwait can ensure sustainable and eco-friendly festivities in the future.

wider initiative to promote environmental awareness and preservation. The collaboration between ABK and Action Group Holding underscores the significance of corporate partnerships in driving positive change in society.

The strength of this initiative lies in its demonstration of the tangible impact that corporate entities can have in



Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the undermentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from 13 MAR 2024 up to 31 MAR 2024 for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender. Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057 and tender # 9 is without fees Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tenders will be on Monday, 8 APR 2024 @ 10:00 AM.

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (KD)
1	012238- R1	FLOWMETERS ROTAMETER (KHRONE - YOKOGAWA - BROOKS) OR EQUIVALENT	15
2	014845	BARE PIPES	5
3	014846	S/F PACIFIC PUMPS	5
4	014848	INSERT SLEEVE COATED	25
5	014868	S/F LEYDEN HARMONIC FILTER BANKS	25
6	014870	BALL AND GATE VALVES	15
7	015035	LUBRICANTS AND GREASE	5
8	015099	LIQUID CHROMATOGRAPH, AGILENT TECHNOLOGIES OR EQUIVALENT	5
9	BPT # 252/24	BLANKET PURCHASE TENDER FOR REFILLING OF GAS CYLINDERS (CONTRACT PERIOD 3 YEARS)	free

**Notes:** Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender documents and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact: Tel No.: 23983639 - Ext.: 2502 - 3477

## INTERNATIONAL

## **World News Roundup**

#### Europe

'Open accession negotiations with Bosnia': The European Union's executive arm will recommend that member countries open accession negotiations with Bosnia-Herzegovina, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Tuesday, despite lingering ethnic divisions in the Western Balkan country. Bosnia-Herzegovina country is among six nations from the re-



gion - alongside Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia - who are at different stages of the EU accession process, following a period of wars and crises in the 1990s.

Their memberships have been stalled for years. But after Russia's war on Ukraine, EU officials are more keen on trying to lure them away from the Kremlin's influence. "We have realized that it is not enough

Von der leyen

to just wait for the Western Balkans to move closer to us," von der Leyen told EU lawmakers on Tuesday. "It is not

enough to say that the door is open. We must also take responsibility, and support their path towards our Union in any possible way.

EU leaders are expected to discuss the European Commission's recommendation at a summit scheduled in Brussels next week. (AP)

Top Polish leaders to visit White House: US President Joe Biden is hosting Poland's president and prime minister for White House talks on Tuesday with the Polish leaders looking to press Washington to break its impasse over replenishing funds for Ukraine at a critical moment in the war in Europe.

Ahead of the visit, President Andrzej Duda called on other members of the NATO alliance to raise their spending on defense to 3% of their GDP as Russia puts its own economy on a war footing and pushes forward with its plans to conquer Úkraine. Poland already spends 4% of its own economic output on defense, double the current target of 2% in NATO.

"The war in Ukraine has clearly shown that the United States is and should remain the leader in security issues in Europe and the world," Duda said in an address to Poland on Monday. "However, other NATO countries must also take greater responsibility for the security of the entire alliance and intensively modernize and strengthen their troops.

In a Washington Post opinion piece to spotlight his call for greater NATO spending, Duda argued that Russia was switching its economy to "war mode," allocating close to 30% of its annual budget to arm itself. (AP)

Ukraine's 1st Oscar reminder of war horrors: Ukraine awoke Monday to another day of war - Russian drones blasted buildings in the Kharkiv and Odesa regions - but also the news it had won its first Oscar.

The best documentary victory for Mstyslav Chernov's "20 Days in Mariupol," a harrowing first-person account by The Associated Press journalist of the early days of Russia's invasion in 2022, was bittersweet.

"This is the first Oscar in Ukrainian history, and I'm honored," an emotional Chernov said Sunday at the Academy Awards. "Probably I will be the first director on this stage to say I wish I'd never made this film, I wish to be able to exchange this to Russia never attacking Ukraine.

Back home in his native Ukraine, the award was applauded for exposing the brutal devastation of the war and the message Chernov had sent to the world from one of the biggest stages.

"I really liked what the director said during the award acceptance, that it would have been better if he hadn't made this film and if all of this hadn't happened," said Oleksii Kurka, a Kyiv office worker. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the award as "important for our entire country" and said he was grateful to the team and thanked journalists across the world still covering the war. (AP)

#### 

South Korean accused of espionage in Russia: A South Korean citizen arrested in Russia earlier this year on suspicion of spying is to remain in custody until mid-June, Russia's state news agency Tass said Monday.

The news agency said it is the first time that a South Korean has been arrested for espionage in Russia.

Tass said the man, identified by the agency as Baek Won-soon



US President Joe Biden speaks to supporters during a visit to a campaign field office, Monday, March 11, 2024, in Manchester, NH. Biden and Donald Trump hope to clinch their parties' presidential nominations with dominant victories in a slate of state primaries on Tuesday as the 2024 fight for the White House moves into a new phase. (AP)

외교부



South Korean Foreign Ministrv spokesperson Lim Soo-suk speaks during a briefing on a South Korean citizen arrested in Russia at the Foreign Ministry in Seoul, South Korea on March 12. A South Korean citizen arrested in Russia earlier this year on suspicion of spying is to remain in custody until mid-June, Russia's state news agency Tass said Monday. (AP)

#### Trump's team slashes RNC staff

## House GOP moves ahead with TikTok vote

NEW YORK, March 12, (AP): House Republicans are moving ahead with a bill that would require Chinese compa-ny ByteDance to sell TikTok or face a ban in the United States even as former President Donald Trump is voicing opposition to the effort.

**Politics** 

House leadership has scheduled a vote on the measure for Wednesday. A Republican congressional aide not authorized to speak publicly said that's still the plan and there has not been significant pushback to the bill from lawmakers.

A vote for the bill would represent an unusual break with the former president by House Republicans, but Speaker Mike Johnson and others have already forcefully come out in favor of the bill, and dropping it now would represent a significant reversal. "It's an important bipartisan measure to take on China, our largest geopolitical foe, which is actively undermining our economy and security," Johnson declared last week.

and local governments to help them conduct the 2020 election at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The donations - which were fully permitted under campaign finance law - went to pay for things like equipment to process mail ballots and drive-thru voting locations.

TikTok, a video-sharing app, has emerged as a major issue in the 2024 presidential campaign. The platform has about 170 million users in the U.S., most of whom skew younger - a demographic that both parties are desperately trying to court ahead of November's general election. Younger voters have become especially hard for campaigns to reach as they gravitate away from traditional platforms like cable television

Biden's 2024 campaign officially joined TikTok last month, even though he has expressed his own national security concerns over the platform, banned it on federal devices and on Friday endorsed the legislation that could lead to its ban. The bill being considered by the House would require the Chinese firm ByteDance to divest TikTok and other applications it owns within six months of the bill's enactment in order to avoid a nationwide ban. The legislation also creates a process that lets the executive branch prohibit access to other apps that pose a threat to national security.

the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the moves publicly.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., celebrated news of the staffing cuts, suggesting they send a clear message about the direction of the GOP.

NEW YORK: Donald Trump is seeking to delay his March 25 hush money trial until the Supreme Court rules on the presidential immunity claims he raised in another of his criminal cases.

The Republican former president's lawyers on Monday asked Manhattan Judge Juan Manuel Merchan to adjourn the New York criminal trial indefinitely until Trump's immunity claim in his Washington, D.C., election interference case is resolved.

Merchan did not immediately rule. In an order late Monday, he chided Trump's lawyers for missing a filing deadline, waiting until 21/2 weeks be-

fore jury selection to raise the immu-

nity issue and failing to "explain the reason for the late filing." Going for-

ward, the judge said, Trump's lawyers

and prosecutors must get his permis-

sion before making any other pretrial



was detained "at the start of the year" in the far eastern city of Vladivostok and was taken to Moscow at the end of February. He is being held in Lefortovo Prison, where a court on Monday ordered his detention extended until June 15. Tass said.

Tass cited an unnamed law enforcement official as saying the suspect passed on information "constituting state secrets to foreign intelligence services." The case has been labelled "top secret" and no further details have been made public. (AP)

#### 

Sweden's flag raised at NATO's HQ: Sweden's flag was raised at NATO headquarters on Monday, cementing the Nordic country's place as the 32nd member two years after Russia's fullscale invasion of Ukraine persuaded its reluctant public to seek safety under the alliance's security umbrella.

Under a steady rain, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, Crown Princess Victoria and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stol-tenberg looked on as two soldiers raised the blue banner emblazoned with a yellow cross among the official circle of national flags at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels.

The Russian, brutal, full-scale invasion against Ukraine united Sweden behind the conclusion that a full-fledged NATO membership is the only reasonable choice," Kristersson said. Swedish government ministers and party leaders from across the political spectrum attended in a show of national unity. (AP)

#### 

French govt targeted by intense cyberattacks: The French government said Monday that several of its services have been targeted by cyberattacks of "unprecedented intensity," and a special crisis center was activated to restore online services.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal's office said in a statement that the attacks started Sunday night and hit multiple government ministries, without providing details. By Monday afternoon, it said, "the impact of the attacks has been reduced for most services and access to government sites restored."

A group of hackers called Anonymous Sudan, which is considered by cybersecurity experts as pro-Russia, claimed responsibility for the attacks in online posts. The French prime minister's office and digital safety agency wouldn't comment on the claim, or provide details of what was targeted or what damage might have been caused. (AP)

#### 

Denmark's Queen Margrethe designs costumes: Danish Queen Margrethe, who surprised her country by abdicating earlier this year, is back as a ballet costume designer for Denmark's famed Tivoli amusement park, which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, the gardens said Monday.

The 83-year-old-queen, who has designed costumes and stage sets more than a dozen of times at the Tivoli gardens' Pantomine theater, is creating the costumes and set for a ballet based on a fairy tale by the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen, "Klods Hans," or "Clumsy Hans.

In a statement, issued by the Tivoli Gardens, the queen said "it should be a fun show, and I'm looking forward to seeing the adventure unfold on stage." The show opens June 22.

The open-air Pantomime is one of the downtown amusement park's landmarks. (AP)

#### 

Norway's king gets permanent pacemaker: Europe's oldest monarch, King Harald V of Norway, is getting a permanent pacemaker on Tuesday, the palace said, adding that the monarch will followingly remain in hospital for a few days.

In a brief statement, the royal household said the 87-year-old would get it at Oslo's university hospital, Rikshospitalet.

Last month, Harald fell ill during a private holiday with his wife Queen Sonja on the Malaysian resort island of Langkawi. He underwent surgery and received a temporary pacemaker due to a low heart rate.

Harald returned to Norway aboard a medical airplane and was immediately transferred to an Oslo hospital.

The monarch has been in frail health in recent years with numerous hospital stays. He had an operation to replace a heart valve in October 2020 after being hospitalized with breathing difficulties. (AP)



#### America

Bus-truck collision kills 5: Five people, including three children, were killed in western Illinois when a school bus and semitruck collided on a highway Monday, authorities said.

The bus was traveling eastbound when it crossed the center line on US Route 24 into the westbound lanes "for an unknown reason" and into the path of a semitruck carrying sand, Illinois State Police Troop 6 Capt. Jody Huffman said at a news conference. Both vehicles caught on fire in the crash. The crash happened around 11:30 a.m. in Rushville, a Schuyler County community of about 3,000 roughly 60 miles (95 kilometers) west of Springfield.

All four people aboard the bus from Schuyler-Industry Schools - three children and the driver - as well as the driver of the semitruck were killed.

"There's not really words at this time that can be said," Schuyler County Sheriff **Bill Redshaw** told reporters. "When you have a loss of life like this, it's devastating."

He said the tragedy hit the small, closeknit community particularly hard. (AP) 

NTSB probes plane crash: A small plane crash in a remote area of central Oregon has killed everyone on board, local authorities said Monday.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office said a 911 call around 7:40 p.m. Sunday reported the crash outside the city of Madras, and deputies found the site with the help of power company officials. "Due to the extent of the crash there were

no survivors," the sheriff's Facebook post said.

Authorities did not specify the number of passengers in the single-engine plane. The sheriff's office says it won't release the names of the victims until identities are confirmed and families are notified.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it has opened an investigation into the crash, which involved a Piper PA-32. It will oversee the probe along with the Federal Aviation Administration, the sheriff's office said. (AP)

#### Man pleads guilty to murder: The man

accused of fatally shooting University of Utah football player Aaron Lowe pleaded guilty to murder charges on Monday, more

#### Popular

Trump said Monday that he still believes TikTok poses a national security risk but is opposed to banning the hugely popular app because doing so would help its rival, Facebook, which he continues to lambast over his 2020 election loss.

"Frankly, there are a lot of people on TikTok that love it. There are a lot of young kids on TikTok who will go crazy without it," Trump said in a callin interview with CNBC's "Squawk Box." "There's a lot of good and there's a lot of bad with TikTok. But the thing I don't like is that without TikTok you're going to make Facebook bigger, and I consider Facebook to be an enemy of the people, along with a lot of the media.

"When I look at it, I'm not looking to make Facebook double the size,' he added. "I think Facebook has been very bad for our country, especially when it comes to elections.

Trump has repeatedly complained about Facebook's role during the 2020 election, which he still refuses to concede he lost to President Joe Biden. That includes at least \$400 million that its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, and his wife donated to two nonprofit organizations that distributed grants to state

Salt Lake City

#### Also:

WASHINGTON: Just days after installing his new leadership team at the Republican National Committee, **Donald Trump**'s lieutenants are cutting dozens of staff across key departments in an aggressive move that further cements the former president's takeover of the GOP's political and fundraising machinery.

More than 60 people were fired in all, including senior staff in the political, data and communications departments inside the committee's Washington headquarters. The cuts also included staff that ran the committee's celebrated community centers, which were focused on building relationships with minority groups in some Democratic-leaning states.

The sweeping overhaul was confirmed by multiple people with direct knowledge of the cuts who spoke on

to Lowe's murder and the attempted murder of a woman injured in the shooting on Sept. 26, 2021, Salt Lake County District Attorney Sim Gill said. Police say he fired



Denmark's Queen Margrethe during the first working day at the HC Andersen ballet The Snow Queen at Tivoli in Copenhagen, on Nov 2 2021. Queen Margrethe, who surprised her country by abdicating earlier this year, is back as ballet costume designer with Denmark's famed Tivoli amusement park that celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, the gardens said on March 11. (AP)

CHARLESTON, W.Va: When West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice recently returned to the spotlight, it wasn't as the state's top executive. Or a wealthy businessman. Or even as a candidate for the U.S. Senate.

motions.

The term-limited Republican was instead back on the court, guiding a high school team in the quarterfinals of the state basketball tournament.

Compared to his everyday dealings as governor as well as owner of the posh Greenbrier Resort and more than 100 other businesses, it was a respite for the 72-year-old former billionaire who moonlights as the girls coach at Greenbrier East.

It was a chance for him to focus on a group of young players who'd won 21 of their 25 previous games. The school last won the state title in 2012, also under Justice, who's been the girls coach since 2000. He also has been president of youth baseball's Little League chapter in Beckley since 1992.

multiple shots at the two during a heated argument after the football player asked Buk's friends to move their car.

As Lowe, 21, and Fuamoli Pomale, 20, lay on the ground bleeding, witnesses watched in horror as Buk continued to shoot at them, according to court documents. (AP)

#### 

HUD secretary resigning: Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge announced Monday that she would resign her post, effective March 22, saying she was leaving "with mixed emotions.

A former mayor of Warrensville Heights, Ohio, and later an Ohio representative in Congress, Fudge, 71, served as HUD secretary since the start of President Joe Biden's administration.

"As a dedicated public servant for nearly five decades, I have been devoted to improving the quality of life for the people of this nation, focusing on those with the greatest need," Fudge said in a statement. "Having worked at every level of government ... I have worked tirelessly to ensure that America lives up to its promise of liberty and justice for all.

Fudge's statement did not indicate a reason she was resigning now, saying only that she planned to "transition to life as a private citizen."

The White House, in a statement, hailed Fudge's dedication to increasing the supply of affordable housing and protect the housing needs of some of the country's most vulnerable residents. (AP)

than two years after police say he killed the cornerback outside a rowdy house party in

Buk Mawut Buk, now 25, pleaded guilty

## INTERNATIONAL

#### Africa

## **Corruption burning issue** SAfrica's ANC fields election candidates

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, March 12, (AP): South Africa's ruling African National Congress said Monday that six officials facing accusations of corruption have been included on its list of candidates for this year's election, bringing more scrutiny on a party that already has had its reputation badly damaged by graft.

ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula told report-ers that four of the six were included provisionally and were still to be cleared by the party's internal integrity committee having been implicated in a national commission of inquiry into corruption that exposed mas-sive government graft during the administration of former president Jacob Zuma.

Another 14 officials implicated by the corruption inquiry were either disqualified from standing or were not nominated as candidates, Mbalula said, without disclosing their names.



7uma

The ANC has finalized a list of 284 candidates who are in the running to become lawmakers, and some of them cabinet ministers, following the May 29 national and pro-vincial elections. President Cyril Ramaphosa also is on the list as he seeks a second and final term.

How many of the ANC

candidates are installed as lawmakers will depend on

how many votes the party receives in an election that analysts predict will be its toughest since coming to power at the end of apartheid in 1994.

#### Depending

South Africans vote for parties and not candidates in national elections and parties receive seats in Parliament depending on their share of the vote. Lawmakers then elect the president.

Corruption is a burning issue in South Africa and is one of the factors responsible for the ANC's decline in support.

The ANC's list was closely watched for signs of whether the party would take a strict stance with regards to the allegations after Ramaphosa made fighting corruption one of his priorities when he was elected to succeed Zuma in 2019.

Ramaphosa has had his own reputation tarnished by a separate scandal involving more than \$500,000 in cash that was stashed in a couch at his ranch and stolen in 2020. The theft only came to light in 2022. The four ANC candidates provisionally includ-

ed on the list pending the finalization of integrity investigations include current Sports and Culture Minister Zizi Kodwa, former Finance Minister Malusi Gigaba and former State Security Minister David Mahlobo, the three who have come under the most scrutiny

#### Inquiry

Current Energy Mnister Gwede Mantashe, who is also the chairperson of the ANC, was cleared to stand after the judge-led national inquiry into corruption recommended he be investigated for allegedly receiving security upgrades at his home from a company at the center of multiple scandals.

Mbalula said there were "no adverse findings" against Mantashe from the ANC's integrity commit-



Muslims walk in Putra Mosque for prayer during sunset ahead of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Putrajaya, Malaysia on March 11. (AP)

#### Ramadan kicks off in much of Asia, a day after most of Middle East

The Muslim holy month of Ramadan, when the faithful fast from dawn to dusk, began at sunrise Tues-day in much of Asia, a day after many Muslims in the Middle East began their fasts.

In the Muslim lunar calendar, months begin only when the new moon is sighted, which can lead to variations of a day or two.

Middle Eastern nations including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates

declared the month would begin early Monday, but in the Asia-Pacific countries including Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore began Ramadan on Tuesday after failing to see the crescent moon the previous night. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh also began Ramadan on Tuesday, as did Iran and Jordan. During Ramadan, Muslims rerain from eating, drinking and smoking from sun-rise until sunset. Even a tiny sip of water or a puff

of smoke is enough to invalidate the fast. At night, family and friends gather and feast in a festive atmosphere.

The fasting is aimed at bringing the faithful closer to God and reminding them of the suffering of the poor. Muslims are expected to strictly observe daily prayers and engage in heightened religious contemplation. They are also urged to refrain from gossip, fighting or cursing during the holy month. (AP)

Lat/Am

## Blinken and Caribbean leaders meet in Jamaica Haiti's prime minister bows to pressure

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, March 12, (Agencies): Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry announced early Tuesday that he would resign once a transitional presidential council is created, bowing to international pressure to save the country overwhelmed by violent gangs that some experts say have unleashed a low-scale civil war.

Henry made the announcement hours after officials including Caribbean leaders and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met in Jamaica to urgently discuss a solution to halt Haiti's spiraling crisis and agreed to a joint proposal to establish a transitional council.

Installation

Scores of people have been killed, and more than 15,000 are homeless after fleeing neighborhoods raided by gangs. Food and water are dwindling as stands and stores selling to impoverished Haitians run out of goods. The main port in Portau-Prince remains closed, stranding dozens of containers with critical supplies.

The urgent meeting in Jamaica was organized by Caricom, a regional trade bloc that has pressed for months for a transitional government in Haiti while violent protests in the country demanded Henry's resignation.

Guyana President Irfaan Ali said that the transitional council would have seven voting members and two without a single elected official.

As Haiti prepares for new leadership, some experts question the role that heavily armed gangs who control 80% of Port-au-Prince will play.

"Even if you have a different kind of government, the reality is that you need to talk to the gangs," said Rob-ert Fatton, a Haitian politics expert at the University of Virginia. "You can't suppress them.

He said officials will still have to deal with them and try to convince them to give up their weapons, "but what would be their concessions?"

Fatton noted that gangs have supremacy in terms of controlling the capital. "If they have that supremacy, and there is no countervailing force, it's no longer a question if you want them at the table, they may just take the table.'



Although the national inquiry into corruption, which lasted from 2018-2022, implicated numerous senior ANC and government figures and recommended they be investigated, hardly any have faced criminal charges. Mantashe, Kodwa, Gigaba and Mahlobo have not been charged with any corruption.

Mbalula said every one of the approved candi-dates for the election, from Ramaphosa down, were the subjects of "rigorous" eligibility investigations, were interviewed by an ANC integrity commission and agreed to lifestyle audits as the ANC attempts to restore its credibility following the corruption-tainted era of Zuma.

Zuma led South Africa from 2009-2018 and is alleged to have overseen a period of widespread government graft that is estimated to have cost the country over \$20 billion.

He is currently on trial for corruption, although that case relates to him allegedly receiving bribes before he was president. The trial started in 2021 but Zuma has launched a series of legal actions that have delayed the case and no testimony has yet been heard.

#### Also:

DAKAR, Senegal: Gueva Ba tried to reach Europe by boat 11 times from Morocco, failing each attempt. Then, in 2023, the former welder heard about a new route to the United States by flying to Nicaragua and making the rest of the journey illegally by land to Mexico's northern border.

"In Senegal, it's all over the streets - everyone's talking about Nicaragua, Nicaragua, Nicaragua," said Ba, who paid about 6 million CFA francs (\$10,000) to get to Nicaragua in July with stops in Morocco, Spain and El Salvador. "It's not something hidden."

Ba, 40, was deported from the US with 131 compatriots in September after two months in detention, but thousands of other Senegalese have gained a foothold in America. Many turn to savvy travel agents who know the route - touted on social media by those who've successfully settled in the US.

They are part of a surge in migration to the United States that is extraordinary for its size and scope, with more people from far-flung countries accounting for crossings at the border. And as with this route used by the Senegalese, more are figuring out plans, making payments, and seeking help via social networks, and apps like WhatsApp and TikTok.

Arrests for illegal crossings on the US border with Mexico reached record highs in December. January saw a drop for the month, but arrests have topped 6.4 million since January 2021. And Mexicans account for only about 1 of 4 arrests, with the others coming from more than 100 countries.

US authorities arrested Senegalese migrants 20,231 times for crossing the border illegally from July to December. That's a 10-fold increase from 2,049 arrests during the same period of 2022, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Many cross in remote deserts of western Arizona, like Ba, and California.

Word of the Nicaragua route began spreading early last year in Dakar and took hold in May, said Abdoulave Doucouré, who owns a travel agency that sold about 1,200 tickets from Dakar to Nicaragua in the last three months of 2023, for the equivalent of several thousand dollars each.

"People didn't know about this route, but with social networks and the first migrants who took this route, the information quickly circulated among migrants," he said.

onesia Yamazaki, 43, was arrested off Bulan island in Kepulauan Riau province on Jan 31, while attempting to cross into Malaysia in a small wooden boat, said Nyoman Gede Surya Mataram, who heads the provincial office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. (AP)

Yusuke Yamazaki, (left), a Japanese

fugitive who is wanted for fraud in his

home country, prior to his deporta-



Albanese

## Asia

2 skiers killed in avalanche: Two backcountry skiers have died in a mountain avalanche on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido, according to news reports.

The dead in Monday's avalanche on the 1,898 meter (6,227 feet) Mount Yotei were from New Zealand, according to the New Zealand Herald.

The snow slammed into three people in a group of six, according to Japan's Kyodo News. The man who survived was injured in his shoulder. (AP)

#### 

'People bounced off the roof': As officials investigate what caused a "strong shake" before a sudden plunge on a plane traveling between Australia and New Zealand, a passenger on Tuesday described a wild ride, with people without seatbelts thrown from their seats and some crashing into the plane's ceiling.

At least 50 people were injured Monday by what LATAM Airlines described as a "strong movement" on the Chilean plane traveling from Sydney to Auckland, New Zealand

The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner later landed at Auckland Airport as scheduled and was due to continue on to Santiago, Chile.

"The plane, unannounced, just dropped. I mean it dropped unlike anything I've ever experienced on any kind of minor turbulence, and people were thrown out of their seats, hit the top of the roof of the plane, thrown down the aisles," passenger **Brian** Jokat told ABC news in Australia on Tuesday. Prime Minister of Australia is Anthony Albanese.

"Some of the roof panels were broken from people being thrown up and knocking through the plastic roof panels in the aisle ways. And there was blood coming from several people's heads."

LATAM Airlines said in a statement that there was "a technical event during the flight which caused a strong movement.

"The government that I'm running cannot remain insensitive in front of this situation. There is no sacrifice that is too big for our country," Henry said in a videotaped statement. "The government I'm running will remove itself immediately after the installation of the council.'

Earlier on Monday, Blinken an-nounced an additional \$100 million to finance the deployment of a multinational force to Haiti. Blinken also announced another \$33 million in humanitarian aid and the creation of a joint proposal agreed on by Caribbean leaders and "all of the Haitian stakeholders to expedite a political transition" and create a "presidential college."

Henry has been unable to enter Haiti because the violence closed its main international airports. He had arrived in Puerto Rico a week ago, after being barred from landing in the Dominican Republic, where officials said that he lacked a required flight plan. Dominican officials also closed the airspace to flights to and from Haiti.

It wasn't immediately clear who would be chosen to lead Haiti out of the crisis in which heavily armed gangs have burned police stations, attacked the main airport and raided two of the country's biggest prisons. The raids resulted in the release of more than 4,000 inmates.

In a later statement, the airline said that the plane "experienced a strong shake during flight, the cause of which is currently under investigation.'

The airline said it was working with officials to support an investigation into what happened.

nonvoting ones. Those with votes include the Pitit Desalin party, run by former senator and presidential candidate Moïse Jean-Charles, who is now an ally of Guy Philippe, a former rebel leader who led a successful 2004 coup and was recently released from a United States prison after pleading guilty to money laundering. Also with a vote is the EDE party of former prime minister Charles Joseph: the Fanmi Lavalas party; the December 21 coalition led by Henry; the Montana Accord group; and members of the private sector.

#### Transitional

Before sharing details of the pro-posed transitional council, Ali said, "I want to pause and thank Prime Minister Henry for his service to Haiti," as Caribbean leaders and others clapped.

Henry served the longest single term as prime minister since Haiti's 1987 constitution was approved, a surprising feat for a politically unstable country with a constant turnover of premiers. He was sworn in as prime minister nearly two weeks after the July 7, 2021, assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

Critics of Henry note he was never elected by the people, much less Parliament, since it remains nonexistent after the terms of the last remaining senators expired in January 2023, leaving Haiti

#### Also:

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's presidential candidates on Monday signed a commitment for peace with Catholic Church leaders that proposes strategies to reduce the violence in the country.

During the meeting led by the Episcopal Conference of Mexico, presidential front-runner and ruling party candidate Claudia Sheinbaum said she would be open to dialogue but didn't to accept several criticisms of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's security strategy made by the religious leaders.

"I do not share the pessimistic evaluation of the current moment," said Sheinbaum, who contended that not all Mexicans feel fear, distrust or uncertainty, as the church said in a document previously shared with all three candidates.

Sheinbaum said homicides dropped during the presidency of López Obrador. But organized crime has long controlled swaths of Mexico through violence and corruption. It has diversified beyond drug trafficking in recent years, extorting businesses big and small for protection payments.

Passengers were met by paramedics and more than 10 emergency vehicles when the flight touched down in Auckland.

About 50 people were treated at the scene for mostly mild injuries, while 13 were hospitalized, an ambulance spokesperson said. LATAM said that of the 13, the major-



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, (centre left), is greeted by African National Congress supporters as he arrives at the Mose Mabhida stadium in Durban, South Africa on Feb 24 for the ANC national manifesto launch in anticipation of the 2024 general elections. (AP)

ity were discharged soon after, and only one passenger and one cabin crew member needed additional attention, "but without any life-threatening risks."

Passengers said a number of people weren't wearing seatbelts when flight LA800 suddenly dropped.

He said that he woke up suddenly during the drop and found the passenger who'd been next to him "on the roof of the plane." (AP)

#### 

Indonesia to deport Japanese man: A Japanese man accused of helping to run a \$90 million investment scam will be sent home after four years on the run, Indonesian authorities said Tuesday. Yusuke Yamazaki, 43, was arrested off

Bulan island in Kepulauan Riau province on Jan. 31, while attempting to cross into Malaysia in a small wooden boat, said Nyoman Gede Surya Mataram, who heads the provincial office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. He's expected to be deported by the end of the day. The boat also carried four undocumented

Indonesian migrant workers and two crew, Mataram said. The others were detained by police for further investigation while Yamazaki was handed over to the Immigration Office in Batam on Feb. 2.

Yamazaki initially gave a false name and detained on suspicion of visa violations, Mataram said, but police later identified him as an international fugitive. (AP)

#### **Market** Movements 12-03-2024 Change Closing pts Change Closing pts SAUDI JAPAN Nikkei 225 +58.22 12,613.94 -22.98 38,797.51 Tadawul UAE - DFM +4.67 4,252.77 PAKISTAN - KSE 100 -863.73 64,881.47 PHILIPPINES - PSEi +7.35 6,879.59

# Business



National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted a series of knowledge sharing sessions with managers from Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Kuwait Aviation Fuelling Company (KAFCO).

#### Bank seeks to share valuable experience regarding leadership techniques and strategies

## NBK hosts series of knowledge sharing sessions with managers from KNPC and KAFCO

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted a series of knowledge sharing sessions with managers from Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Kuwait Aviation Fuelling Company (KAFCO). The aim of these sessions is to share insights and experiences regarding leadership techniques and strategies, in coordination with the Training and Development Department at KNPC.

The sessions held during January and February brought together NBK's executive leadership and their counterparts from KNPC and KAFCO. The participants engaged in open discussions on a range of topics, including effective communication and motivation strategies, building high-performance teams, empowering employees, stimulating innovation, adaptability to change, and overcoming challenges.

The sessions were joined by 22 managerial participants from KNPC and KAFCO, and included lectures by NBK's executive leaders: Mr. Moham-

med Al-Othman, CEO-Consumer and Digital Banking, Mr. Mohammed Al Kharafi, COO – Head of Group Operations and Information Technology, and Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Group Human Resources.

Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Group Human Resources. Speaking on this, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, GM –head of Group Human Resources, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait said, "NBK maintains solid ties with the oil sector, being the 'bank of choice' for Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries, in addition to its effective role in developing the human capital in state-owned entities as the strategic banking partner for the government sector."

"NBK's strategic partnership with oil sector companies in training and development extends over long decades, and is continuously increasing, in line with our unwavering commitment towards the oil sector and ambition to provide ongoing support to this strategic industry" he added.

"In this context, NBK has launched the NBK-KPC Visa Infinite Credit

Card exclusively for the employees of KPC and its subsidiaries, in an effort to enhance their banking experience and promote the cooperation and partnership between the two organizations over several decades," he mentioned.

"NBK is keen on developing the human capital, especially in state-owned entities, in line with its social and development responsibilities, complementing its year-round initiatives that underline its profound belief in the powerful impact of these programs in serving society and individuals, and echoing its leading role in this field for long decades," he emphasized. NBK always seeks to strengthen its leading position as the most socially

NBK always seeks to strengthen its leading position as the most socially responsible private sector institution through a wide range of initiatives including training national talent in different government entities, especially the oil sector, which contributes to developing human capital and supporting the Kuwaiti economy.

# Kuwait elevates closed joint stock company by 45% in '23

Public joint stock company establishment stagnates

#### **By Mahmoud Shendi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Ministry of

#### Fourth consecutive month of positive result

12: The Ministry of Boursa Kuwait leads Gulf markets

#### Geopolitical risks drive oil prices up in Feb

# Oil futures 'surge' to November highs amid positive economic developments

#### **By National Bank of Kuwait**

rent futures rallied for a second consecutive month in DFebruary, rising by more than 2% to \$83.6/bbl (+8.5% ytd) on the back of positive macroeconomic signals and continuing geopolitical tensions surrounding events in Gaza and the Red Sea. (Chart 1.) Stimulus measures undertaken by the Chinese government and expectations of an extension of OPEC+' supply cuts into Q2, which were announced on 3 March, also factored in oil's move to its highest level since November. Brent's backwardated price structure, where prices for prompt delivery are higher than prices for delivery in the future, widened to more than \$2.4/ bbl (M1-M3) by February's close, a four-month high, signaling increasing supply tightness. Local marker Kuwait Export Crude (KEC), meanwhile, closed the month at \$81.8/bbl (-2.7% m/m; +2.9% ytd). In the futures markets, bullish speculator positioning increased substantially in February, with net length (the difference between the number of bullish "long" and bearish "short" contracts) reaching the highest in nearly a year at 276k contracts, before pulling back towards the end of the month. (Chart 2.) The ratio of longs to shorts was back up over 5 in mid-February, the most since last October. Furthermore, as a sign of renewed appetite for oil trades, Brent open interest (the total number of outstanding derivative contracts) rose in February to its highest level since last July. Oil demand growth forecasts for 2024 remained relatively unchanged in February, though all the reporting agencies noted the likelihood of a softer pace of expansion this year compared to last. The International Energy Agency (IEA) reduced its projection by 20 kb/d to 1.2 mb/d, still a huge 1 mb/d below OPEC's estimate of 2.2 mb/d, which is by far the most bullish among forecasters. Non-OECD economies including China, India and Brazil are expected to drive the increase this year, accounting for 78% of total oil demand gains in 2024. OECD members, on the other hand, will likely post much slower growth amid a lackluster economic environment. For 2025, OPEC sees oil demand rising by a still strong 1.85 mb/d to 106.2 mb/d. On the supply side, combined data from OPEC secondary sources and S&P Global show aggregate OPEC+ production (quota-bound members) falling 234 kb/d m/m to 34.4 mb/d in January. Among OPEC members, the steepest declines came from Kuwait (-109 kb/d) and Iraq (-98 kb/d) as both countries began implementing their voluntary cuts. Increased production in the UAE (+31 kb/d), in accordance with its new higher baseline, and in Saudi Arabia (+25 kb/d), slightly offset the losses. Of the 8 OPEC+ members taking part in the latest round of supply cuts, which on paper total 2.1 mb/d but which in practice will see only about 500 kb/d of fresh production cuts (the remainder is a combination of Saudi's 1 mb/d output cut rollover from mid-2023, Russia's 300 kb/d export cut rollover from 2023 and an additional Russian 200 kb/d refined product exports cut, while the UAE's 163 kb/d cut is offset by a 200 kb/d increase to its baseline) only Saudi Arabia was in perfect compliance in January, with Kazakhstan yet to move at all with its 82 kb/d cut. Meanwhile, quota-exempt Libya saw its output fall 135 kb/d to 1.0 mb/d in February following protests at Al-Sharara field earlier in the month and Iran recorded its first monthly production decline in a year (-5 kb/d to 3.16 mb/d). As was widely expected, OPEC+ announced on 3 March that these producers will extend their cuts through Q2, with Russia also signing up, but with a mix of production and export cuts totaling 471 kb/d rather than an outright 500 kb/d export cut as was the case in Q1. Russia intends to gradually deepen its production cut from 350 kb/d in April to 471 kb/d in June while simultaneously reducing its export cuts from the initial 121 kb/d in April.



Trade and Industry's efforts to streamline joint stock company transactions have yielded positive results, with closed joint stock companies experiencing a significant increase of 45% in 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. The establishment of closed joint stock companies rose from 20 in 2022 to 29 in 2023. In contrast, no public joint stock company was established during this period.

In May, the Ministry approved development measures, simplifying the transaction clearance cycle for joint-stock companies. The 17-step establishment cycle, previously taking 60 days, was streamlined, with 4 steps now completed within 24 hours through the Ministry's automated system, eliminating the need for physical visits.

Commercial Licensing Department data revealed 119 new licenses issued to natural persons and addressed changes for 162 licenses of natural persons and 2 for legal persons in December 2023. Additionally, modifications were made to 27 activities for natural persons and 2 for legal persons, while 73 licenses for natural persons and 2 for legal persons were canceled. Furthermore, 12 licenses were issued to replace lost ones for legal persons.

## with strong February performance

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Despite a decline in liquidity rates, the Kuwait Stock Exchange demonstrated positive performance in February for the fourth consecutive month, resulting in favorable returns for investment funds, reports Al-Qabas daily. The Premier Market index

The Premier Market index surged by approximately 2.5%, while the main market index saw a rise of about 1.9%; the general market index also experienced growth of around 2.4%, with the Main Market 50 index increasing by approximately 0.6%. However, stock market liquidity decreased by 20.9% compared to January, reaching 1.16 billion dinars.

 Investment funds, particularly
traditional Kuwaiti funds focusing on local stocks, continued to
register significant returns ranging
between 5.6% and 9.8% since the
beginning of the year. Similarly, Kuwaiti Islamic funds achieved returns ranging from 5.2% to 8.4% during
the same period.

The monthly gains in February further bolstered the overall positive performance of the Kuwait Stock Exchange since the start of 2024. This positioned the exchange as the top-performing Gulf stock market for the month, with the first market index showing notable growth of over 9.1% from the beginning of the year until the end of trading on Monday.

In December 2023, 1,481 licenses were issued for main companies, showing a 20% decrease from November 2023. Branch companies also saw a 25% decrease with 286 licenses issued. License renewal transactions for main companies decreased by 31%, and renewals for branch companies decreased by 18%.

Trade name change transactions saw a 20% decrease for main companies (183 transactions) and a 20% decrease for branches of private companies (53 transactions) compared to the previous month. Dissolution and liquidation of companies, along with license cancellations, amounted to 71 transactions for main companies (13% increase) and 103 transactions for branch companies (27% decrease). The number of licensed companies per person in December 2023 was 1,046, reflecting a 21% decrease from November 2023. Additionally, 701 companies were licensed (22% decrease), and 14 licenses were issued to joint-venture companies, indicating a 56% increase. Limited partnership companies received 11 licenses, marking a 267% increase.

The new incorporation model focuses on immediate approval of founders' criminal status after application submission, direct printing of the supervisory authority's book on activity, providing electronic copies of draft articles of association for closed companies, and preparing to link with the Ministry of Justice for electronic contract authentication.

#### **KIPIC** extends bidding deadline for AI-Zour Refinery project

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) has extended the bidding deadline for a contract to deliver alternative feeding systems for the hydrogen production unit at Al-Zour Refinery, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The new deadline, set by KIPIC has been postponed to April 14 from the initial date of March 12. The project, with a budget of \$150 million and an estimated completion time of 36 months, has seen multiple deadline extensions since its inception last year, with the most recent extension moving the deadline from March 12 to April 14.

The project's scope encompasses engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) work, as well as precommissioning, start-up, and quality testing phases.

MEED reported that several contractors have expressed interest in the project, including Hyundai Engineering & Construction, Larsen & Toubro Hydrocarbon Energy, Petrofac, Samsung Engineering, and SK Engineering and Contracting.

The EPC scope involves constructing Unit 38, Compression Facilities, steam generating units, and associated facilities, among other tasks.

In a separate development, Kuwait Oil Company has reopened applications for the design consultant contract for the heavy oil development program in the Lower Pars region. Interested companies are encouraged to apply online, with the deadline set for June 2, 2024.

The heavy oil project's first phase, awarded to a consortium led by Petrofac and Consolidated Contractors Company, was completed in 2019, with subsequent phases yet to commence. The project includes construction of central processing facilities, infrastructure, and pipeline packages, with phases two and three estimated at \$2 billion each.

Outside of the OPEC+ group, the IEA reckons that output gains from the US, Canada, Brazil and Guyana will drive aggregate non-OPEC supply growth of 1.5



mb/d in 2024, which, while down on 2023's breakneck pace of 2.5 mb/d, will, nonetheless, outpace expected demand growth this year, leading to a surplus of supply over demand and potentially around 0.2 mb/d of oil inventory gains on average. The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) and OPEC do not share that view, with the former pegging non-OPEC supply growth in 2024 at around half the IEA's rate and OPEC at around 1.3 mb/d. We think non-OPEC supply growth could come in lower at about 1.1 mb/d, which, with OPEC+'s supply cut extension into Q2, could almost certainly leave the market short of barrels and facing an inventory drawdown in Q1-Q3 and for the year as a whole (-0.4 mb/d). Were OPEC+ to extend their voluntary cuts beyond Q2 then the oil market balance/stock change would tip further into a supply deficit/drawdown.

In the US, crude oil production returned in February to the record 13.3 mb/d level following January's winter storms when 1 mb/d of output was shut in. It is partly as a result of this and partly on expectations of lower drilling during the rest of the year that the EIA has reduced its crude oil output growth projections this year from 290 kb/d to just 170 kb/d, a sizeable drop from 2023's growth of 1.0 mb/d. The EIA expects output to generally flatline around 13.1 mb/d on average for 2024. For 2025, however, the agency expects production to rise to 13.5 mb/d (+400 kb/d) despite no significant change in the expectations of oil prices over the period. Meanwhile, active oil rigs increased to 506 (+1.2% ytd) by February's close, the highest level since September.

OPEC's policy path will likely be the focal point for markets this year. Having announced an extension to their Q1 supply cuts, the producer bloc will be watching carefully how oil demand fares through the months ahead and the trajectory of non-OPEC supply. Of comfort to OPEC+ will be that prices appear to have firmed with a price floor established at around the \$80/bbl level. We think that level will be a reasonable base case for 2024, though with a stronger upside risk developing than before.

## **BUSINESS**

# Warba inks deal with Taskeen Real Estate to provide real estate management services at exclusive prices

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Warba Bank has entered into an agreement with Taskeen Real Estate Company, which is a digital service provider for the rental property owners' sector. According to this agreement, property management services are provided at exclusive prices.

Through this agreement, Warba seeks to attract individual customers who own rental properties, especially since Taskeen Company's services integrate property management, online rent collection, asset management, leasing, 24-hour maintenance, detailed reports, and legal services.

On this occasion, Mejren Hamad Al-Mejren - Director of Digital Department at Warba Bank, said that we are pleased to sign this agreement with a specialized company that provides distinguished and diverse services, as it will enable Warba Bank's client to benefit from real estate services as well as view all data and reports related to his registered real estate investments.

Al-Mejren stated that the agreement comes within the policy aimed at supporting small projects and expanding the banking experience to include new, non-traditional sectors, stressing that it will work in a fast, safe and compatible manner with the provisions of Islamic Sharia.Pointing out that it aims to reduce administrative work and risks, provide immediate reports for rents, increase the speed of collection, and avoid cash transactions to reduce the risk of theft.

Al-Mejren continued that the agreement with Taskeen Company comes as confirmation of Warba's strategy in supporting Kuwaiti youth and supporting owners of viable youth projects, stressing that the Bank will continue its commitment to supporting owners of small and medium enterprises that provide added value and great economic feasibility in the market, and allow young people to develop their ideas and expand their activities, and contribute to accelerating the national economy.

For his part, the CEO and founder of Taskeen Company, Mr. Abdulwahab Suhail Al-Eissa, expressed his gratitude to those in charge of Warba Bank's services and their keenness to provide services that would facilitate the collection and management of their clients' properties through digitizing the services and making them accessible among many services through the Warba Bank application.

Taskeen Real Estate Company is one of the first companies that sought to digitally transform the real estate market and provide several services through an application that facilitates real estate owners' monitoringt of their properties and collecting rents without any effort, and on the other hand ensuring fast access to services by tenants.

This partnership comes as an important step in the Company's journey to expand in the local and global markets.

Lawyer Ahmed Al-Kulaib, Director of the Legal Department at Teskeen Company, also explained that the digital transformation, especially with regard to signing contracts and issuing notary reciepts documented with the electronic encryption system, which we were the first to introduce in the local market, has become a distinguishing mark from all our competitors, because the tenant can prove his payment receipt without the need to receive the original paper copy, as is the case in most of the local market,In addition, the Taskeen client can take any legal action against tenants who violate the requirements of lease contracts or any legal action with just the click of a button through the program, as the electronic connection ensures that the entire transaction is completed within one business day, whether a request to file a lawsuit or a legal inquiry related to the property.

Al-Kulaib concluded that digital transformation, especially with regard to contracts and their documentation, has become a necessary matter in the present time, in line with the future vision and with the laws related to digital transformation that will be applied soon.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the Bank close to all members of society.



The two sides shake hands after signing the agreement.

#### Mejren Hamad Al-Mejren: The agreement comes within the policy of expanding the banking experience to include new, non-traditional sectors We are committed to supporting and financing owners of small and medium enterprises that provide added value and great economic feasibility in the market

Abdulwahab Suhail AI-Eissa: ■ Taskeen Real Estate is one of the first companies that sought digital transformation in the real estate market ■ The partnership is an important step in the Company's journey to ex-

pand in the local and international markets



Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures while speaking at a news conference following a meeting of the State Council at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia on Dec. 22, 2022. The economy's resilience in the face of bruising Western sanctions is a major factor behind President Vladimir Putin's grip on power in Russia. (AP)

#### Putin plots his reelection

## Resilient economy a key selling point

MOSCOW, March 12, (AP): Russians are finding a few imported staples, like fruit, coffee and olive oil, have shot way up in price. Most global brands "Prices have gone up - if I used to buy three items for a certain price, now I buy one," she said, but added, "Go look for Russian products, the shops

# US inflation 'likely stayed' above Fed target last mth

Fed cautious on eventual rate cuts

WASHINGTON, March 12, (AP): Consumer prices likely rose last month at a pace that would exceed the Federal Reserve's inflation target, underscoring why the Fed is being cautious as it considers when to cut interest rates and suggesting that inflation will remain a potent issue in this year's presidential election.

Yet Tuesday's report from the Labor Department may also show that underlying price pressures continue to ease, which would be an encouraging sign that inflation is gradually coming under control.

Economists have estimated that prices rose at a brisk 0.4% annual pace from January to February, up from a Fed Chair Jerome Powell signaled in congressional testimony last week that the central bank is getting closer to cutting rates. After meeting in January, Fed officials said in a statement that they needed "greater confidence" that inflation was steadily falling to their 2% target level. Since then, several of the Fed's policymakers have said they believe prices will keep declining. One reason, they suggested, is that consumers are increasingly pushing back against higher prices by seeking out

cheaper alternatives. "When we do get that confidence, and we're not far from it, it'll be appropriate

to begin" reducing the Fed's benchmark rate, Powell told Congress last week.

Most economists expect the Fed's first rate cut to occur in June, though May is also possible. When the Fed cuts its benchmark rate, over time it reduces borrowing costs for mortgages, car loans, credit cards and business loans.

One factor that could keep inflation elevated is the still-healthy economy. Though most economists had expected a recession to occur last year, hiring and growth were strong and remain healthy. The economy expanded 2.5% last year and could grow at about the same pace in the first three months of this year, according to the Federal Reserve's Atlanta branch.

Last week, the Labor Department said employers added a robust 275,000 jobs in February, the latest in a streak of solid hiring gains, and the unemployment rate stayed below 4% for the 25th straight month. That is the longest such streak since the 1960s.

Still, the unemployment rate rose from 3.7% to 3.9%, and wage growth slowed. Both trends could make the Fed feel more confident that the economy is cooling, which could help keep inflation falling and lead the central bank to begin cutting rates.

## Invitation to Attend the Ordinary General Assembly Meeting Kuwait Telecommunications Company (stc)

Kuwaiti Shareholding Company (Public)

have disappeared - or been reincarnated as Russian equivalents under new, Kremlin-friendly ownership. A lot more Chinese cars are zipping around the streets. Those who want a particular luxury cosmetic may be out of luck.

Other than that, not much has changed economically for most people in President Vladimir Putin's Russia, more than two years after he sent troops into Ukraine.

That's despite the sweeping sanctions that have cut off much of Russia's trade with Europe, the U.S. and their allies.

That sense of stability is a key asset for Putin as he orchestrates his foreordained victory in the March 15-17 presidential election for a fifth, sixyear term.

Inflation is higher than most people would like, at over 7% - above the central bank's goal of 4%. But unemployment is low, and the economy is expected to grow 2.6% this year, according to the International Monetary Fund, double the previous forecast. That's far above the 0.9% expansion predicted for Europe.

"There are difficulties, of course - they're connected with the general situation in the world," said Andrei Fedotov, 55, who was walking down the Tverskaya Street central shopping avenue a few blocks from the Kremlin. "We know this very well, but I believe we'll overcome them."

Higher prices "bother me, of course - like any consumer, I see them going up," said Fedotov, who works in education. "It's connected to the times that we're in, and which will pass."

Brand manager Irina Novikova, 39, was upbeat despite higher prices in stores: "More domestic products have appeared, more agricultural products. Yes, we all see that some goods have disappeared."

KUALA LUMPUR, March 12,

(KUNA): The United States Com-

merce Secretary Gina Raimondo

said during an official visit to Ma-

nila on Monday that American com-

panies are set to announce invest-

ments of more than a USD billion in

In a joint statement with her Fili-

pino counterpart Alfredo Pascual, she

mentioned that the investments will span areas like solar energy, electric

the Philippines.

**US** companies invest more

than bln USD in Philippines

with Russian goods."

"Industry may have suffered, we know there have been some setbacks in that regard, but again, we're adjusting and we're reorienting our thinking, and we're starting to look to our Chinese friends," Novikova said.

Massive Russian spending for military equipment and hefty payments to volunteer soldiers are giving a strong boost to the economy. Governmentsubsidized mortgages are supporting apartment buyers in a powerful kick to the booming construction sector, as evidenced by several mammoth high-rise developments going up on the banks of the Moscow River.

Inflation rankles, but it's also nothing new. Russia became more selfsufficient in producing its own food after 2014, when it took over Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula and the resulting Western sanctions led the government to ban a broad range of food imports from Europe.

Planned government spending this year is roughly twice what it was in 2018. Yet the deficit remains manageable as taxes and oil revenue keep flowing in.

So-called parallel imports via third countries such as Georgia, Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan have allowed Russians with money to keep buying Western products - from sneakers to mobile phones and cars - from companies that no longer do business in Russia, usually for a significant markup.

A BMW SUV is still easily available, though at twice the price in Germany. IKEA shut its 17 Russian stores, but its furniture and home goods can be bought online - for a price.

Apple left, but an iPhone 15 Pro Max with 512 gigabytes sells for the ruble equivalent of \$1,950 on Russia's Wildberries retail site, about what the phone sells for in Germany.

#### 0.3% rise the previous month, according to estimates compiled by FactSet. Compared with a year earlier, inflation is expected to have remained 3.1% in February, unchanged from January.

Higher gas costs likely drove much of last month's overall inflation. The average national pump price climbed from \$2.94 a gallon in mid-January to \$3.08 in mid-February, according to the Energy Department. Grocery prices are thought to have ticked up, too. And because of higher food and labor costs, restaurant prices are expected to have risen more than they did before the pandemic.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, economists think "core" prices increased 0.3% from January to February, down from a hot 0.4% in the previous month. Compared with 12 months earlier, core prices are projected to have risen 3.7% in February, according to FactSet, down from 3.9% in January, and the smallest rise in nearly three years. Core inflation is watched especially closely because it typically provides a better read of where inflation is likely headed.

Overall inflation has plummeted from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022, though it's now easing more slowly than it did last spring and summer. The prices of many goods, from appliances to furniture to used cars, are actually falling after clogged supply chains during the pandemic had sent prices soaring higher. There are more new cars on dealer lots and electronics on store shelves.

By contrast, prices for restaurant meals, car repairs, hospital care and other services are still rising faster than they did before the pandemic. Car insurance has shot up nearly 21%, reflecting rising costs for auto repair and replacement. And after having sharply raised pay for nurses and other in-demand staff, hospitals are passing their higher wage costs on to patients in the form of higher prices.

Voter perceptions of inflation are sure to occupy a central place in this year's presidential election. Despite a healthy job market and a record-high stock market, polls show that many Americans blame President Joe Biden for the surge in consumer prices that began in 2021. Though inflationary pressures have significantly eased, average prices remain about 17% above where they stood three years ago.

In his State of the Union speech last week, Biden highlighted steps he has taken to reduce costs, like capping the price of insulin for Medicare patients. The president also criticized many large companies for engaging in "price gouging" and so-called "shrinkflation," in which a company shrinks the amount of product inside a package rather than raising the price.

"Too many corporations raise prices to pad their profits, charging more and more for less and less," Biden said. The Board of Directors of Kuwait Telecommunications Company **(stc)** is pleased to invite you to attend the Ordinary General Assembly Meeting for the financial year ended 31 December 2023, which will be held on Wednesday 27 March 2024 at 11:30 a.m., at the Company's Headquarters - Olympia Mall / West Office Towers, where Shareholders shall be able to attend by their physical presence or electronically through Kuwait Clearing Company's platforms specified for holding Annual General Assembly Meetings to discuss the agenda of the Ordinary General Assembly Meeting.

#### Ordinary General Meeting Agenda

First	Discussing and approving the Board of Directors' Report of the company's activity, financial position and business outcomes for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2023.
Second	Discussing and approving the External Auditor's Report on the results of the company's financial statements and approving the dividable net profit for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023.
Third	Presenting and approving the Sharia Supervisory Board's report for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023.
Fourth	Presenting and approving the Corporate Governance Report and the Audit Committee Report for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023.
Fifth	Presenting any breaches monitored by the regulatory body/bodies and any penalties issued due to such breaches and led to [financial and non-financial] penalties against the company [if any], for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023.
Sixth	Review and approve the financial statements and profit and loss accounts for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023.
Seventh	Discussing the Board of Directors' recommendation to stop deducting any percentage for the voluntary reserve account from the net profits for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023 and following years.
Eighth	Discussing the Board of Directors' proposal to distribute cash dividends 35% of the company's total capital for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023, (i.e. 35 fils per share), to shareholders registered in the company's Shareholder Register as at the Maturity Date on Monday, April 15, 2024. The cash dividends shall be distributed to shareholders who are entitled to them, starting from Sunday, April 21, 2024, while authorizing the Board of Directors to change the dates mentioned in the previously specified entitlement schedule in the event that they are required to be changed [if necessary].
Ninth	Discussing the Board of Directors Members Remunerations, amounting to KWD 192,500 [one hundred and ninety-two thousand five hundred Kuwaiti dinars] for the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023.
Tenth	Authorizing the Board of Directors to deal in the company's shares not exceeding 10% of the number of its shares, in accordance with the articles of Law No. 7 of 2010 and it's Executive Regulations and their amendments.
Eleventh	Discussing the executed related parties transaction during the fiscal year ended on December 31, 2023, and authorizing the company to deal with related parties during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024.
Twelfth	Discussing the release and discharge of the Board of Directors Members and absolving them from all liabilities related to their legal, financial, and administrative actions for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2023.
Thirteenth	Appointing or reappointing the company's External Auditor from the approved list of auditors at the Capital Markets Authority, taking into account their mandatory execution period for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, While authorizing the Board of Directors to determine their fees.
Fourteenth	Appointing or reappointing the Sharia Board Members for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, while authorizing the Board of Directors to determine their fees.
Fifteenth	Elect the Board of Directors Members for a three-year tenure.

**Electronic Attendance:** Shareholders wishing to attend the meeting electronically are required to register their names using the electronic voting service eAGM by filling up the intended form available on the website of the Kuwait Clearing Company (www. maqasa.com) in addition to providing the required documents in order to obtain the username and password which shall authorize them to attend and vote electronically on the agenda items of the Ordinary General Assembly. Participation and voting currently available until 08:00 a.m. of the day of the Ordinary General Assembly Meeting scheduled on Wednesday 27 March 2023, as per the Policies and Procedures Guidelines published on Kuwait Clearing Company's website with regards to convening the general assemblies through the electronic systems.

**Physical Attendance:** Shareholders wishing to attend the meeting physically should visit the Investor Relations Department at the Company's Headquarters - Olympia Mall / West Office Towers. Shareholders shall bring with them their share certificates or the original transfer receipt in order to obtain the attendance invitations and the AGM agenda.

In the absence of a quorum for the Ordinary General Assembly Meeting another meeting with the same agenda items and same place will be held on Tuesday, 16 April 2024, at 10:30 a.m. whereby, the attendance and voting shall be either physically or electronically.

#### **Board of Directors**



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vehicles and digitization. She added that the American companies are keen to do business in the Philippines, saying that the US-Philippine alliance has been preserved for 72 years and will remain loyal friends and partners in prosperity. She pointed that the Philippines has

a 73-year-old mutual defense treaty with the U.S., making it Washington's oldest treaty ally in the Asia-Pacific region.

Raimondo is heading a two-day trade and investment mission in the Philippines on behalf of the United States president Joe Biden, the delegation includes executives from 22 companies including United Airlines, Alphabet's Google, Visa, KKR Asia Pacific and Microsoft.

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What's On

#### Presented to underprivileged families through 'Social Affairs', KRCS, and 'Food Bank'

## Zain kicks off Ramadan campaign with food supplies initiative

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Zain kicked off its annual Ramadan social campaign, Zain Alshuhoor, with the food supplies (Machla) initiative. The supplies were presented to underprivileged communities through three of Zain's strategic partners: the Social Care Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), and the Kuwait Food Bank - all official, recognized organizations.

The food supplies were prepared and distributed to those in need before the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan. In attendance were Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulaziz Sari Al Mutairi, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Managing Director Abdulrahman Al Oun, Zain Kuwait Corporate Relations Department Manager Hamad Al Musaibeeh, officials from the Kuwait Food Bank, and members of the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team.

In a step that showed the Zain family's commitment to bring about positive social impact in the community, members of the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team - that consists of Zain employees from across

Abdulaziz Al Mutairi and Hamad Al Musaibeeh with Zain and

'Social Affairs' officials



Abdulrahman Al Oun with Zain and KRCS volunteers.

the company's divisions and departments - gathered at Zain's headquarters in Shuwaikh to prepare the food supplies. Foodstuffs were categorized and dis-

tributed into boxes ahead of their delivery to the three organizations.

The food supplies were delivered to the Social Care



Zain volunteers and Kuwait Food Bank officials at the Bank's stores.

Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs, where they were presented to residents of the centers, including foster care children, elderly individuals, and people with special needs. The supply boxes were also delivered to the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and the Kuwait Food Bank to be presented to underprivileged families and individuals across the nation.

This year, six of Zain's strategic community partners from both the public and private sectors join its annual Ramadan social campaign, Zain Alshuhoor. The campaign features a wide range of humanitarian, charitable, social, religious, health, and sports programs that continue throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Zain Alshuhoor is one of Kuwait's biggest and most successful community programs during the Holy Month. Every year, the company introduces a bigger, renewed version of the campaign that expands upon the previous year in its initiatives and programs. The campaign strives to share the blessings of this much-cherished month with the entire Kuwaiti people.



Members of the Zain Alshuhoor volunteer team pack the food supplies.

Step towards strategic excellence in banking sector

## **Gulf Bank celebrates 'graduation' of its senior leaders** from The Harvard Business School executive program

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: As part of its continuous efforts to develop human capital, Gulf Bank announced the graduation of its senior leaders from the Harvard Business School executive program - a custom executive development program for banking and finance executives that are part of the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies. The program is designed to support and develop leaders in the banking and financial sector, under the theme "Strategic Leadership in a Changing World"

This program is part of the "Kafaa" initiative launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks to help develop and qualify national talents; and is managed by the Institute of Banking Studies, in cooperation with Harvard Business School.

The Bank celebrated the leaders for completing the program and receiving the Harvard Business School certifications, namely: Dep-uty General Manager – Mr. Basel Asad from Branch Banking, Assistant General Manager of Card Products – Mr. Mohammad Taqi, Assistant General Manager of Enterprise Core Services – Mr. Rami Al Zaid

The program focuses on two primary themes:



Graduates of the Harvard Program are executive leaders at Gulf Bank after receiving their graduation certificates.

it comes to digital transformation, makes the Bank's employees' participation in such specialized programs a top priority. Noting that digital transformation requires strategic leaders capable of facing market fluctuations, and to and skills necessary to keep pace with the major banking developments that the banking industry is undergoing locally and internationally.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantESF Oracle to organize groundbreaking journalism conference for HS students

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The English School Fahaheel Newspaper Club, The ESF Oracle is organizing the journalism conference for high school students in Kuwait and the Middle East on April 27. The aim is to provide students with an opportunity to learn about the field of journalism, develop essential skills, and network with professionals in the industry.

The conference will consist of various workshops, panel discussions, and interactive activities that cater to the interests and needs of high school students in the region.

The conference is scheduled to commence with an opening ceremony featuring a keynote address by a prominent journalist or media professional in the Middle East.

This address will set the tone for the day and provide students with an overview of the importance of journalism and the role

Other Fields in Kuwait – focusing on the remarkable achievements of women who have broken barriers and reshaped narratives in journalism and various other fields.

This workshop aims to inspire and empower young journalists by showcasing the stories of successful women who have made significant contributions to their respective industries in Kuwait.

Investigative Journalism and Ethics workshop will focus on the importance of investigative journalism, its impact on society, and the ethical considerations that journalists must take into account when reporting on sensitive issues.

The conference will conclude with a closing ceremony, during which awards will be presented to students who have demonstrated excellence in journalism at their schools. The ceremony will also include a reflection on the day's events and the importance of journalism in the Mid-

**Empowering next generation of journalists** 

Financial markets strategy and leadership, equipping participants with concepts and tools for successful leadership in a rapidly changing financial landscape, and ways to impact the performance, innovation, and culture of their organization.

On this occasion, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Mrs. Salma Al-Hajjaj, said: "At Gulf Bank, we believe that our employees are the foundation of our success and the drivers of our excellence. Therefore, we are continuously working on training and developing them, which contributes towards consolidating Gulf Bank's leading position in the banking sector.'

Al-Hajjaj mentioned that the major transformations recently witnessed by Gulf Bank as part of its 2025 strategy, especially when

make the most of the opportunities they gener ate; ensuring the best results are achieved with the fast-changing financial technologies.

She pointed that the program provides an opportunity for participants to anticipate and respond quickly, and effectively, to strategic opportunities and threats in financial markets, such as: Understanding risks and appropriate responses to cyber threats, managing, and leading digital innovation, and ways to understand and manage investor concerns around ESG and sustainability.

Al-Hajjaj also expressed her pride in Gulf Bank for being one of Kuwait's leading banks that generously invests in human capital in order to enhance the competencies of its employees - as they are the key for achieving its strategic objectives. This is accomplished through providing employees with the latest expertise ly 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.

it plays in society.

Students will attend a workshop led by an experienced journalist, where they will learn the basics of news reporting and writing, including the inverted pyramid style, headline writing, and ethical considerations in journalism.

During the Social Media and Digital Journalism workshop, students will learn about the role of social media in modern journalism, best practices for using social media platforms, and how to create engaging content for digital audiences.

This will be followed by the Panel Discussion -- Women Breaking Barriers and Changing Narratives in Journalism and dle East.

According to the school sources, the idea for organizing this conference arose when students of the ESF newspaper club realized that they could not participate in the high school journalism conference held in the USA due to some agenda items conflicting with Islamic standards.

Consequently, they opted to establish their own conference that aligns with the principles of the Islamic faith.

The primary objective of this year's conference launch is to extend invitations to delegates from schools across Kuwait as the ESF plans to include schools from other countries in the GCC region.

#### Week-long journey into Kuwait's history

#### Data decodes travel preferences

## AUK hosts 'Voices from the Occupation' exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: In conjunction with Kuwait National and Liberation days, the American University of Kuwait (AUK) Library celebrated the opening of "Voices from the Occupation," an exhibition by the Oral History and Documentation Project (OHDP), supported by Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO) and in collaboration with the Contemporary Art platform (CAP). After its successful showcase at CAP, the exhibition was extended to AUK.

This provided students with an invaluable opportunity to delve deeper into the project and engage with firsthand accounts of individuals who witnessed the Iraqi occupation and subsequent liberation of Kuwait in 1991.

The exhibition consisted of several stations with posters and audio segments

selected from the original interviews. The audio parts focused on narrators' experiences during the occupation from different standpoints depending on their field. This format allowed visitors to gain a multifaceted understanding of the occupation through the diverse narratives presented.

AUK president, Dr. Rawda Awwad, attended the opening ceremony alongside Mr. Samer Khanachet, AUK board of trustees member and Deputy KIPCO Group Chief Executive Officer; and Ms. Eman Al Awadhi, KIPCO Group Senior Vice President - Corporate Communications & Investor Relations.

The exhibition was scheduled to be on display for an entire week.

To listen to the oral history interviews, visit the website https://oralhistory.auk.edu.kw











AUK faculty and students.

General photo of the exhibition.

## Wego reveals top destinations for Kuwaiti travelers in Q1 '24

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Wego, the largest online travel marketplace in MENA (Middle East and North Africa), has unveiled the latest insights into the travel trends of Kuwaiti travelers for the first quarter of 2024. The data reveals intriguing patterns in destination searches and preferences among Kuwaiti jetsetters, shedding light on their wanderlust and travel intent.

Wego data showed that the top 10 countries that Kuwaiti globetrotters are searching for the most during this period include Egypt, India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey, Jordan, Pakistan, Qatar, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines.

Travel interest to Egypt itself makes up about half of all trip searches originating from Kuwait. In a further breakdown of the data, Wego also found that Cairo, Sohag, Assiut, Alexandria, and Luxor rank highly as cities Kuwait travelers are searching for in Q1 this year.

According to the travel experts at Wego, the popularity of Egyptian destinations among travelers flying from Kuwait can be attributed to several factors.

The significant Egyptian expat community in Kuwait may plan to return to Egypt for Ramadan or part of it. The searches may also include plans to celebrate Eid al Fitr at home

Moreover, the favorable exchange rate between the Kuwaiti Dinar and the Egyptian Pound encourages Egyptians living abroad to return home for significant occasions like Ramadan. This economic advantage also presents Egypt as an affordable travel destination for Kuwaiti tourists.

While Egyptian cities steal the spotlight, other cities elsewhere also feature on most-searched destinations from





Wego flyers

Kuwait this quarter. Istanbul, for one, is a perennial favorite for its charm, affordability, and visa-free entry perk afforded to Kuwaiti passport holders.

The same no-visa-required arrangement similarly draws them to London, one of the most sought-after European destinations from Kuwait. Wego also spotted accessible emerging destinations like Baku and Tbilisi down the listboth cities can be reached by flights within a 3-hour duration-hinting at a growing interest in unique cultural experiences among Kuwaiti travelers.

## James Patterson looks back through history in new 'Time Travel Twins' series

NEW YORK, March 12, (AP): James Patterson never seems to run out of ideas.

The ultraprolific author is launching a new middle grade series, "The Time Travel Twins," about a boy and girl who witness key moments in U.S. history, starting with the era of the Revolutionary War.

Released by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, and co-written with Tad Safran, the series begins Sept. 9.

"I've always said that the hardest job with kids is to get them in the habit of reading. Like all of my children's books, the goal of 'The Time Travel Twins' is for a kid to finish it and say, 'Please, give me another book," Patterson said in a statement Monday.

Patterson's hundreds of books include children's stories, his "Maximum Ride" and "Alex Cross" thrillers, political thrillers co-written with former President Bill Clinton and a novel written with Dolly Parton about the Nashville music scene.

#### Also:

**NEW YORK:** Olympic gold medalist **Katie Ledecky** has written a memoir, reflecting on a life she can hardly believe is her own.

Simon & Schuster announced Thursday that the celebrated swimmer's "Just Add Water" will be published June 11. Ledecky, a two-time winner of The Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year award, is a seven-time gold medal winner who has won more individual Olympic races than any female swimmer in history.

Her memoir will cover everything from childhood games of sharks and minnows while growing up in **Bethes**-

Variety



This cover image released by Simon & Schuster shows "Just Add Water" by Katie Ledecky. (AP) **da, Maryland,** to her reign as one of the world's greatest athletes.

"I never imagined I would make it to the Olympics, or be at this level, or write a book about this unlikely career that I've had," Ledecky, who turns 27 next week, said in a statement.

"I first started keeping a journal when I was 14 years old, to document my training in the lead-up to the 2012 London Olympics. Paging through them last year, I realized these journals included elements of my wider story in swimming. I also wanted to be able to show that I wouldn't be where I am without the love, support, and encouragement of people who have influenced me."

**James Patterson** never seems to run out of ideas. The ultraprolific author is launching a new middle grade series, "The Time Travel Twins," about two boys who witness key moments in U.S. history, starting with the era of the Revolutionary War.

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Sally Field, from left, Jennifer Lawrence, Michelle Yeoh, Charlize Theron, and Jessica Lange present the award for best performance by an actress in a leading role during the Oscars on Sunday, March 10, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Film

**LOS ANGELES:** Al Pacino says he was following the instructions of the Oscars producers when he omitted the names of the best picture nominees while announcing the winner of the show's biggest category. The Oscar-winning actor was

Sunday night's final presenter and announced "Oppenheimer" as the best picture winner without naming the full slate of nominees.

"I just want to be clear it was not my intention to omit them, rather a choice by the producers not to have them said again since they were highlighted individually throughout the ceremony. I was honored to be a part of the evening and chose to follow the way they wished for this award to be presented," Pacino said in a statement Monday afternoon. "I realize being nominated is

"I realize being nominated is a huge milestone in one's life and to not be fully recognized is offensive and hurtful. I say this as someone who profoundly relates with filmmakers, actors and producers so I deeply empathize with those who have been slighted by this oversight and it's why I felt it necessary to make this statement."

Pacino, 83, is a nine-time acting nominee, who won best actor for 1992's "Scent of a Woman."

The Oscars started late and ended in a respectable time - under last year's runtime - in part because Pacino skipped reading all the nominees for best picture.

The nominated films -"American Fiction," "Anatomy of a Fall," "Barbie," "The Holdovers," "Killers of the Flower Moon," "Maestro," "Oppenheimer," "Past Lives," "Poor Things" and "The Zone of Interest" - all were featured with montages during the show.

But Pacino's abrupt presentation - saying "And the Oscar goes to ... " before eventually announcing "my eyes see 'Oppenheimer," left many viewers confused.

It wasn't the only category to omit a reading of the nominees. The nominated original songs were all performed on Other winners revel at Vanity Fair's Oscar after-party

## 'Oppenheimer' crew keeps it low key

BEVERLY HILLS, California, March 12, (AP): Christopher Nolan stood as staid and nonchalant as ever as crowds surrounded him and music pulsed.

His celebration was limited to casually holding a best directing Oscar, his first, and one of seven on the night for his film.

The "Oppenheimer" crowd were hardly the hardest partiers at the Vanity Fair post- Oscars party on Sunday night, but they hardly needed to be, their hardware did all the preening for them.

Nolan's wife, "Oppenheimer" producer Emma Thomas, held her own statuette, for best picture, and did most of the talking as waves of well-wishers descended on the couple.

They found a couch near the dance floor with their two children and were immediately met by a woman bearing a tray of In-N-Out burgers, the signature food at the signature Oscars after-party where end-of-awardseason decadence is the norm.

Nolan did have the relax-it's-all-over vibe down pat. Billie Eilish soon strode by with two friends, her best original song Oscar slung in one arm. It was the lone Oscar won by the film that has stood opposite Oppenheimer since their simultaneous release in July, but it's already the second for Eilish at age 22.

The Nolan clan left early, as the party was just getting started.

The annual affair is hosted by Vanity Fair editor Radhika Jones and held at a space built between Beverly Hills City Hall and the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

It's one of several Oscar parties held across the city after the show. The first stop of the night for most winners, including Nolan and Thomas on Sunday night, is the Governor's Ball, the official after-party just a few escalators away from the Dolby where they get their statuette engraved on the spot.

Greta Gerwig was headed there after the show but first had to find her parents. She stood in the lobby of the Dolby trying to look up to the different balconies. Finally she just decided to call "dad, dad, are you up or are you down?"

A few minutes later she ran into one of her Kens (Kingsley Ben-Adir) and had to recap the "Im Just Ken" performance once more, while inside the party Noah Baumbach and his son searched for some food.

Over by the engraving station, best actress winner Emma Stone got to share a moment with some of the "Poor Things" crafts winners, like costume designer Holly Waddington. They posed joyously with their statuettes and Stone laughed again about her dress.

"Anatomy of a Fall" director Justine Triet went straight from getting her original screenplay Oscar engraved to the nearby caviar and filet station. Soon most stars and winners were on the way out to check out the Vanity Fair party.

Across town, Universal Chairman Donna Langley also celebrated their company's triumphant night for "Oppenheimer" and "The Holdovers" (a Focus release) at the Soho House, a private, members-only club with panoramic views of the clear Los Angeles night. Even Steven Spielberg made a lengthy appearance to give congratulations (he'd earlier on the broadcast handed the best director Oscar to Nolan).

#### Memorable

Emily Blunt, John Krasinski and best actor winner Cillian Murphy huddled together in a corner to enjoy the evening, while the Oppenhomies like Jack Quaid, Josh Hartnett and David Krumholtz mingled. Also around was supporting actress winner Da'Vine Joy Randolph, still in her stunning Louis Vuitton gown, and who everyone wanted to talk to about her memorable speech, and her co-star Dominic Sessa who had changed into a sequin black jacket.

Such sequins abounded at the Vanity Fair party, where the dress code might be called "loosened black tie." Many still wear their tuxes and gowns from the ceremony. Some come in more casual, but no less ornate, outfits.

Usher wore a white, sequined jacket over a bare chest. Barry Keoghan sported a similarly spangled jacket over a mesh tank top, looking not too different than his "Saltburn" character did when he ingratiated himself with the nobility.

The party's guest list always extends well beyond Hollywood into music, fashion, literature and sports. Serena Williams and LeBron James, who both have

had a hand in producing in recent years, each hung out on the party's patio.

The 6-foot-9 James was a star among stars as he towered over the crowd in a white tuxedo jacket and sunglasses while holding a glass of champagne. He became an instant magnet for photos.

At the entrance, where many walk their final awards season red carpet, Anya Taylor-Joy greeted Matteo Bocelli, who sang during the in memoriam segment with his father, the Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli.

"Were you nervous to sing? You did such a beautiful job," she said.

"Grazie," he answered.

Along with the ubiquitous In-N-Out burgers, servers circulated with fried, cheese-stuffed squash blossoms and quattro formaggio pizza. Ke Huy Quan, last year's best supporting actor winner for "Everything Everywhere All at Once" and one of the men who presented it to Robert Downey Jr. for "Oppenheimer" this year, grabbed a slice of the pie after walking the carpet and scarfed it down like he hadn't eaten all day.

As Earth, Wind and Fire's "September" blasted, Jon Hamm stood sipping a cocktail at the nearest bar, halfdancing along as he hugged Brett Goldstein of "Ted Lasso" and chatted with "Schitt's Creek" star Catherine O'Hara. Hamm later talked and laughed at length with John Mulaney, a presenter during the show. The two exchanged cheek kisses as they parted ways.

Nearby, Jeffrey Wright, best actor nominee for "American Fiction," talked intently to director John Waters.

Near them, "Anyone but You" and "Euphoria" star Sydney Sweeney stood in a white gown with fiancé Jonathan Davino at her side.

At least one "Oppenheimer" winner got a little rowdy. As midnight approached, Ludwig Göransson, who won his own second musical Oscar for writing the film's score, tore up the dance floor, shimmying and moonwalking with his statuette in one hand.

His wasn't the only Oscar on the floor. Other lesser-known faces danced alongside him, celebrating the instant invitation a win gets you, regardless of the category or your fame, to the absurdly star-studded party where the tiny statues are the real celebrities.

the show, and the announcement that "What Was I Made For?" from "Barbie" had won was made without listing them again.

Oscars producer **Molly McNearney** told the trade outlet Variety that skipping the reading of the nominees was intentional.



Pacino McNearney

"It was a creative decision we made because we were very worried that the show was going to be long," she said. "By the time you get to the end of the show, you've seen all ten best picture clip packages. People just want to hear who wins, and they're pretty ready for the show to be over. At least that's what we anticipated." She added: "I apologize if our decision to not have to read through all those nominations put him in a tough spot." The day after the Oscars, Penguin Press announced that

Pacino has a memoir coming out this fall. The publisher is called the book "an astonishingly revelatory account of a creative life in full," including his account of such classics as "The Godfather," "Serpico" and "Dog Day Afternoon."

Pacino said in a statement that he wanted "to express what I've seen and been through in my life." (AP)

## **NEWS/FEATURES**

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Ryan Gosling performs the song "I'm Just Ken" from the movie "Barbie" during the Oscars on Sunday, March 10, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

#### Animation

#### Legacy continues

## Oscar-winning Miyazaki defies retirement plans

TOKYO, March 12, (AP): Ghibli, the Japanese studio that just won its second Oscar for feature animation for "The Boy and The Heron," hasn't said yet what it plans next.

But founder Hayao Miyazaki, who at 83 was the oldest director ever nominated in that category, won't rule out making another film, even if his next project is a short instead of a full-length



Finneas O'Connell, left, and Billie

#### Oscars

### 'Barbie' and 'Oppenheimer' bring audience bump

## Oscars ratings aren't quite blockbuster

LOS ANGELES, March 12, (AP): "Barbenheimer" brought a bump not a boom to Oscars ratings.

An estimated 19.5 million people watched Sunday night's 96th Academy Awards ceremony on ABC. That's the biggest number drawn by the telecast in four years.

ly 22 million people saw her do it. The show actually started a little less than an hour early. With Gaza protests happening outside slowing down entrances at the Dolby Theatre, host Jimmy Kimmel kicked things off about six minutes late, but it's not clear if that affected viewership.

Last year's big Oscar winner,

"Everything, Everywhere All at

Once," was hardly a slouch at the

box office, bringing in \$143 mil-

lion globally. But that's nothing

like the "Barbenheimer" jugger-

naut, with "Oppenheimer" ap-

proaching a billion global dollars

Ballooning

and "Barbie" surpassing it.

Awards were often the second most-watched television program of the year behind the Super Bowl. Until 2018, the Oscar telecast had never slipped below 30 million viewers, according to Nielsen records. The high-water mark was the 55 million people who watched

feature.



Miyazaki, according to a longtime confidante, is a bit embarrassed about having pronounced a decade ago that he would no longer make movies, citing his age.

"He regrets having announced to the world he won't make another film," producer Toshio Suzuki, the co-founder of Studio Ghibli, said after the latest win.

Miyazaki

When the Oscar was announced early Monday in Japan, a cheer went up in the tiny, humble building that houses the studio on the fringes of sprawling Tokyo where dozens of invited media had crammed in to watch the ceremony on a big screen.

It was a big day for Japanese filmmaking, with "Godzilla Minus One" winning the award for best visual effects, marking Japan's first win in that category.

Japanese media heaped praise on both the Ghibli and Godzilla films, noting that a double win at the Oscars hadn't happened for the country since 2009. An editorial Tuesday in the mass-circulation Yomiuri newspaper heralded "a new page in the history of Japanese filmmaking."

#### Backdrop

Japan is also very much in the backdrop of "Oppenheimer," which won seven Oscars, including best picture. The biopic centers on an American scientist working on the atomic bomb. The film has yet to be released in Japan.

"Perfect Days," Wim Wenders' touching film about a sanitation worker, was nominated in the international feature film category but did not win. Japanese actor Koji Yakusho, who portrays a gentle and lonely man who takes photos and cares for plants, won best actor for his performance at Cannes in May last year.

"War is Over," which won for short animation, was inspired by Yoko Ono and John Lennon's music. Their son Sean, who co-wrote the film, gave a shout-out to his mother, who is Japanese, at the Academy Awards.

Miyazaki celebrated his Oscar win in private at his atelier and did not attend the studio event, Suzuki said. When asked why Miyazaki had shaved off his trademark beard, Suzuki said: "He doesn't want to look important."

Suzuki said he spent time analyzing why Ghibli's latest film was chosen, wondering if it was because of the Old Testament references in the storyline, which centers on a young boy dealing with his mother's illness and death, and the relationship he develops with a talking bird. Suzuki said Ghibli's hand-drawn illustrations were more effective than computer graphics in portraying the bird's metamorphosis.

Ghibli didn't do much publicity for the film, choosing instead a low-key approach for a work that was 10 years in the making and released after Miyazaki was supposedly retired.

We thought it was OK to make something we really wanted to make," said Suzuki.

Eilish pose in the press room with the award for best original song for "What Was I Made For?" from "Barbie" at the Oscars on Sunday, March 10, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)



Gladstone

#### Variety

LOS ANGELES: The Academy Awards were full of sure-things, long-awaited anointments and easy predictions. The "Oppenheimer" romp. **Ryan Gosling**'s Ken stealing the show. That put even more focus on the category that was hardest to call: best actress.

When Emma Stone was announced as the winner, a ceremony light on surprise got a genuine shock, perfectly illustrated by Stone's stunned expression. Stone's win, for her sensational performance in "Poor Things," was hard not to cast as a defeat for Lily Gladstone. The "Killers of the Flower Moon" actress had been picked by most prognosticators and - as everyone knew - history hung in the balance. Her win would have been the first for a Native American in the nearly century-long history of the Oscars.

It was a difficult to define result. It wasn't quite an upset - Stone's performance, equally favored, was too good to call it that. But it still stung, particularly for Native Americans watching across the country - a community that has watched Hollywood for most of its existence overlook its stories and performers. One thing you couldn't call it, though,

was a loss for Gladstone. "Lily Gladstone has undeniably left

an indelible mark, breaking barriers and inspiring countless individuals with her remarkable presence and commitment to storytelling," cheered Blackfoot Confederacy, a Tribal Council for the Blackfoot Confederacy Nations of Kainai-Blood Tribe, Siksika, Peigan-Piikani and Aamskapi Pikuni. "Her representation is a source of

pride for the Blackfoot Confederacy, The Osage Nation, and all indigenous communities, resonating far beyond the confines of a single ceremony.

Throughout awards season, Gladstone has been a figure of rare grace, speak-ing eloquently on behalf of her tribe, the Osage, Native American representation and Hollywood history. More than any

But that upward trend comes from an all-time low during the pandemic, and is up just 4% from last year's estimated audience of 18.7 million, according to numbers released Monday by ABC.

The Academy experimented with scheduling this year's show an hour earlier, and for the first time in years had many nominations for huge hit movies that viewers had actually seen - "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer."

The viewership peaked in the final half hour, when the audience saw Ryan Gosling perform "I'm Just Ken" from "Barbie," saw Cillian Murphy win best actor, Christopher Nolan win best director for "Oppenheimer" and Al Pacino give the film the best picture Oscar in an odd presentation.

won best actress in the final stretch in the the night's most competitive

A major star, Emma Stone, also

other nominated performer on Sunday night, she carried the hopes and dreams of a people.

stone said accepting her Golden Globe award in January. "Every little urban kid, every little Native kid out there who has a dream, who is seeing themselves represented and our stories told by ourselves in our own words, with tremendous allies and tremendous trust with and from each other.

Gladstone, born in Montana and raised

But they didn't yield the same ballooning numbers for the show that the Academy and ABC might have hoped for. The Oscars did top the viewership of the most recent versions of other top awards shows, which have gone through similar slumps. Its 19.5 million outdrew the 16.9 million people who watched the Grammys in February, and the Golden Globes and Emmy Awards in January each had far fewer

viewers. For many years, the Academy

in the Blackfeet Nation, was the first Indigenous performer to win that award, for best actress in a drama - just one of the many "firsts" that she achieved leading up to the Oscars. She likewise made history at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, where she won best female actor in a leading role. Those wins - along with the devastating empathy and poise of her performance in "Killers of the Flower Moon" - were more than enough to leave many cheering Gladstone's milestone accomplishments.



Dave Mullins, center, and Brad Booker, winners of the award for best animated short for 'War Is Over! Inspired by the Music of John & Yoko,' pose in the press room at the Oscars on Sunday, March 10, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Anya Taylor-Joy, left, looks on. (AP)

Titanic" clean up in 1998.

From the 43.7 million who watched in 2014, viewership declined steadily to 26.5 million in 2018, then went back up to 29.6 million in 2019, and 23.6 million in 2020. The bottom fell out with the pandemic-diminished show in 2021, seen by 9.85 million. It began rebounding in 2022 - the year of the Slap - with 16.6 million.

The movies and their makers aren't entirely to blame. The generational shift to streaming and other video forms has gutted broadcast television viewership, and few live events other than the Super Bowl draw the sort of audiences they once did.

The Oscars led into the sitcom "Abbott Elementary," which had a series high in viewers with a 6.9 million. The episode had an Oscar tie-in, with Bradley Cooper, playing himself, getting roasted in a classroom after a long season of heavy Oscar campaigning.

"Lily Gladstone, you already won," Peggy Flanagan, Minnesota's Lieutenant Governor and a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, wrote on X. "You bring all of us into every room you enter. We see ourselves in you every day - thank you for taking us along on this journey with you. We can dream bigger than we ever thought because of you.

Gladstone's SAG award was a big reason some expected her to win at the Oscars. It's the most predictive awards for acting prizes. All of the other SAG winners - Cillian Murphy, Da'Vine Joy Randolph, Robert Downey Jr. - won Sunday. In the two previous years, the SAG winners have exactly matched those at the Academy Awards. (AP)

But Stone also won at the BAFTAs and at the Globes, where "Poor Things" was slotted into the comedy or musical categories. At the Oscars, it was clear academy voters were more passionate about "Poor Things" than "Killers of the Flower Moon." "Poor Things" took home four awards, second most to "Op-penheimer," while "Killers of the Flower Moon" was shut out.

Martin Scorsese could be seen consoling Gladstone after the ceremony ended. The 81-year-old director knows something about Oscar disappointment. Scorsese, remarkably, has won only one Academy Awards (for directing "The Departed"), and he's sat through numerous ceremonies only to see his much-nominated films - including "Taxi Driver," "Gangs of New York," "The Wolf of Wall Street" and "The Irishman" - leave with nothing. His last two fea-tures have gone 0-for-20 at the Academy Awards, easily a record. (AP)

race over Lily Gladstone, and near-"This is for every little rez kid," Glad-

## **HEALTH/SCIENCE**

## **Fasting guidelines during Ramadan** Navigating cardiovascular risks

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: In a recent interview with Dr. Rajesh Rajan, a senior cardiologist and esteemed figure in the field of cardiovascular health, we discussed the recommendations for patients with cardiovascular disease during Ramadan fasting.

During the interview, Dr. Rajan highlighted several important factors and therapies to consider for patients with cardiovascular conditions during Ramadan fasting. Patients are categorized into three risk levels: high risk, moderate risk, and low risk. High and moderate risk patients are advised against fasting, while low risk patients are permitted to fast.

1. Fasting-associated dehydra-

tion may lead to electrolyte abnormalities, which could be life-threatening in patients with unstable arrhythmias, inherited arrhythmia syndromes long QT or Brugada syndrome), or those on certain medications.

ance syndromes.

lation.



2. Dehydration is a risk factor for

3. Cardiac medications can induce

hypotension, potentially causing syn-

cope, especially in elderly patients

with impaired baroreflexes. This risk may be exacerbated by dehydration

or changes in medication dosing to

accommodate fasting. 4. Ramadan fasting has been

shown to decrease blood pressure in

individuals using diuretics for hyper-

5. Sleep cycle and eating distur-

6. Medication adjustments should

be made cautiously, considering

once-daily or long-acting formula-

tions, and avoiding changes in estab-

onary artery disease, or recent acute coronary syndrome should have their blood pressure, kidney function, and

medications reviewed by healthcare

blood pressure and who are compli-

ant with medications are considered

riod of an acute coronary syndrome

or cardiac surgery are advised not to

ure (LVEF  $\leq 35\%$ ) or advanced heart

failure are considered high and very

high risk for fasting, respectively.

10. Patients with severe heart fail-

11. Patients with pacemakers are

considered low-moderate risk if their

device parameters are stable and they

12. Patients with cardiac resyn-

chronization therapy or implantable

cardioverter defibrillators are consid-

have no electrolyte abnormalities.

9. Patients within a 6-week pe-

low-moderate risk for fasting.

8. Patients with well-controlled

providers before Ramadan fasting.

7. Patients with hypertension, cor-

lished therapies if possible.

bances during Ramadan fasting may increase the incidence of atrial fibril-

tension, without complications.

the recurrence of orthostatic intoler-

drome should carefully avoid dehy-

dration 17. Patients with hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy (HOCM) should remain well hydrated to reduce the occurrence of potentially life-threatening symptoms.

To ensure a safe fasting experience, the study recommends: A. Medical evaluation before

Ramadan. B. Medication management and adjustment.

C. Nutritional guidance and maintaining a balanced diet.

D. Engaging in light to moderate physical activity.

E. Regular monitoring of blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and overall well-being.

Open communication between patients and healthcare providers is crucial for personalized advice and decision-making.

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



In this photo provided by NASA, Roscosmos cosmonaut Konstantin Borisov, from left, ESA (European Space Agency) astronaut Andreas Mogensen, NASA astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) astronaut Satoshi Furukawa are seen inside the SpaceX Dragon Endeavour spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship MEGAN shortly after having landed in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Pensacola, Florida, Tuesday, March 12, 2024. The four astronauts caught a lift back to Earth with SpaceX on Tuesday to end a half-year mission at the International Space Station. (AP)

#### Four astronauts return to Earth after 6 months in orbit

Four astronauts from four countries caught a lift back to Earth with SpaceX on Tuesday to end a half-year mission at the International Space Station. Their capsule streaked across the U.S. in the predawn darkness and splashed into the Gulf of Mexico near the Florida Panhandle.

NASA's Jasmin Moghbeli, a Marine helicopter pilot, led the returning crew of Denmark's Andreas Mogensen, Japan's Satoshi Furukawa and Russia's Konstantin Borisov.

They moved into the space station last August. Their replacements arrived last week in their own SpaceX capsule. "We left you some peanut butter and tortillas," Moghbeli radioed after

departing the orbiting complex on Monday. Replied NASA's Loral O'Hara: "I miss you guys already and thanks for that very generous gift." O'Hara has another few weeks at the space station before leaving

aboard a Russian Soyuz capsule.

Before leaving the space station, Mogensen said via X, formerly known as Twitter, that he couldn't wait to hear "birds singing in the trees" and also craved crunchy food

NASA prefers multiple travel options in case of rocket trouble. Boeing should start providing astronaut taxi service with a two-pilot test flight in early May. (AP)

## Founder of Kuwaiti Obesity Association highlights health benefits of eating less

## Ruling paves way for smoke-free tomorrow

## Court upholds town bylaw to ban anyone born in 21st century from buying tobacco

BROOKLINE, Mass., March 12, (AP): A Massachusetts town that adopted an unusual ordinance banning the sale of tobacco to anyone born in the 21st century is being looked at as a possible model for other cities and towns hoping to further clamp down on cigarettes and tobacco products.

The bylaw - the first of its kind in the country - was adopted by Brookline in 2020 and last week was upheld by the state's highest court, opening the door for other communities to adopt similar bans that will, decades from now, eventually bar all future generations The rule, which bans the sale of tobacco to anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 2000, went into effect in 2021 in the town of about 60,000 next to Boston. Under a Massachusetts law signed by former Republican Gov. Charlie Baker in 2018, anyone under the age of 21 is already barred from purchasing any tobacco product - including cigarettes, cigars and e-cigarettes - in the state.

state law which allows those over the age of 21 to purchase tobacco products - and would establish two sets of adults, one that could buy cigarettes and one that couldn't

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court sided with Brookline, noting that cities and towns "have a lengthy history of regulating tobacco products to curb the well-known, adverse health effects of tobacco use.'

"Importantly, state laws and local ordinances and bylaws can and often do exist side by side," the court added. "This is particularly true of local ordibylaws regulating health, the importance of which we have long acknowledged.'

gov should focus on schools, pub-lic safety, trash services, etc.," Hurst wrote on wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Brookline's approach only targets the next generation of would-be tobacco users, not current purchasers, according to Mark Gottlieb, executive director of the Public Health Advocacy Institute at Northeastern University's School of Law, which represented Brookline.

### Study reveals key gene activation

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Dr. Youssef Bouabbas, Endocrine and Hormone Consultant and founder of the Kuwaiti Obesity Association, highlighted findings from a recent study published in the renowned medical journal Nature, emphasizing that reducing food intake leads to better health outcomes, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to Bouabbas, the study revealed that moderate eating activates a gene, which in turn protects brain cells from oxidation, thereby preventing mental decline and conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's,



Dr Bouabbas

Bouabbas has underscored that the fast food consumption is a major contributor to obesity and type 2 diabetes, particularly among children and ado-

lescents due to its high calorie, sugar, salt and saturated fat content.

He warned that excessive consumption of fast food leads to the accumulation of body fat, manifested by increased waist circumference, a key

ered at least high risk for fasting. 13. Pregnant patients with cardiovascular conditions should consult their specialist team regarding Rama-

dan fasting. 14. Patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF) who closely monitored their condition during Ramadan fasting did not experience worsening symptoms. Non-compliance with fluid restrictions and medications increased the risk of worsening symptoms.

15. Patients with Type 2 Diabetes or heart failure on Sodium-glucose cotransporter 2 inhibitors (SGLT2i) should be initiated at a low dose, in the evening, and at least one month before Ramadan for patients observing fasting.

16. Patients with long QT syn-

Supporters of the Brookline measure point out that state law acknowledges the authority of local communities to enact their own measures to limit the sale of harmful products.

Critics of the Brookline law, including convenience store owners who rely on the sales of tobacco products for a significant portion of their income, disagreed however, arguing that the Brookline law conflicts with the 2018

Peter Brennan, executive director of the New England Convenience Store and Energy Marketers Association, said the group is looking into possibly appealing the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

He noted that while the law targets tobacco, the rules for marijuana remain the same.

"It's a question of how else can we demonize this product," Brennan said. "It's about trying to be a trendsetter, tying to be first in the nation.'

Jon Hurst, president of the Retailers of Massachusetts Association, also criticized the ruling, saying it could lead to a hodgepodge of rules,

"351 different rules doesn't make sense for interstate commerce. Local



A man holds a lit cigarette while smoking, Dec. 2, 2020, in San Francisco. Brookline, Mass., has adopted an unusual smoking ban that bars tobacco sales to anyone born in the 21st century. (AP)

indicator of obesity. Citing a significant medical study, Bouabbas noted that short-term consumption of fast food can alter brain nerve connections, potentially leading individuals to develop cravings for unhealthy foods.

In light of these findings, Bouabbas emphasized the imperative of avoiding fast food entirely due to its detrimental health effects, particularly on young individuals. He advocated for regular physical activity and sports, such as walking, as essential measures for disease prevention and promoting overall health, regardless of one's health sta-

Bouabbas pointed out that Kuwait ranks highest in the Gulf region for obesity and diabetes prevalence and is among the top 10 countries globally for both conditions.







Coach Alonso won't dare say it

## Bayer Leverkusen closing in on the Bundesliga title

BERLIN, March 12, (AP): Xabi Alonso doesn't yet dare speak of winning the Bundesliga but his team is playing like a champion inexorably closing in on the German title.

Bayer Leverkusen passed its latest test Sunday with a mature performance in a 2-0 win over Wolfsburg, three days after returning from Baku, Azerbaijan, where it came from two goals down to draw 2-2 at Qarabağ in the Europa League.

Leverkusen is unbeaten in 36 games across all competitions this season - a German record.

While capable of big wins like the 3-0 victory over Bayern Munich last month, Leverkusen overcame Wolfsburg with patience for its 21st win in the league.

It kept the team 10 points ahead of 11-time defending champion Bayern with nine rounds remaining

But Alonso is refusing to speak about the title just yet. "April," he replied Sunday when asked when it will be OK to

> mention it. The 42-year-

> old coach is in

his first senior

management

job after a stel-

lar playing career for Spain,

Liverpool, Real

Madrid,

and



Alonso

Bayern. Alonso started his coaching career in Madrid's youth setup before spending three years as a reserve team coach at Sociedad.

Real

Sociedad

Always unhurried, Alonso's ethos has clearly made its way through to the players. He said: "We have a clear idea

that when we have control, when we show patience, we play better. And that's when we have better results, better performances. That was the tendency this season, particularly here at home.

"Normally we want to force the initiative. The players know when we want to play fast, when we have to play it short. I don't have a joystick on the bench to decide that. They have to decide, and when I see that the players make good decisions, normally we play better."

Alonso's success - Leverkusen was in the relegation zone when he took over in October 2022 - has boosted his appeal at Bayern and Liverpool, who are both in need of a new coach next season, and Madrid, which is no hurry to replace Carlo Ancelotti but knows the day will come.

Leverkusen CEO Fernando Car-

#### CHICAGO, March 12, (AP): Luka Doncic had 27 points, recording another triple-double but doing so without scoring 30 for the first time in seven games, and the Dallas Mavericks rolled over the Chicago Bulls 127-92 on Monday night.

Doncic finished with 14 assists and 12 rebounds, but exited the blowout midway through the fourth quarter to end his NBA-record streak of 30-point triple-doubles at

six. Daniel Gafford made history by going 9 for 9, extending his run of consecutive made shots to 28. That's the longest since the NBA began tracking play-by-play data in 1996-97, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. He finished with 20 points.

Doncic set the tone as Dallas outscored Chicago by 28 in the first quarter. The Mavericks gave up a

#### BASKETBALL

season low in points while handing the Bulls their most lopsided loss.

#### Suns 117, Cavaliers 111

In Cleveland, Kevin Durant scored 37 points and Devin Booker had 27 in his return from a right ankle sprain, rallying Phoenix over injurydepleted Cleveland.

Durant also had eight rebounds and six assists for the Suns, who are one game ahead of Sacramento for sixth place in the Western Conference. Booker had missed four games with his injury, but played 38 strong minutes and had seven assists and six boards.

Phoenix trailed 63-44 midway through the second quarter, but answered with a 43-15 run that ended deep in the third. Booker later put the Suns ahead for good at 106-104 by scoring in transition with seven minutes remaining.

Darius Garland scored 30 points and Caris LeVert had 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers. Cleveland trailed 113-111 with 51 seconds on the clock before Jarrett Allen and Isaac Okoro committed back-to-back

### Suns rally past injury-depleted Cavaliers

of 30-point triple-doubles as Mavs 'rout' Bulls

**Doncic scores 27 to fall short of extending run** 



Golden State Warriors forward Jonathan Kuminga (00) is blocked by San Antonio Spurs as he tries to score during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Antonio, Monday, March 11, 2024. (AP)

Keldon Johnson had 16 points for the Spurs

Toronto

Celtics 121, Trail Blazers 99

In Portland, Jaylen Brown scored

27 points, Jayson Tatum added 26

Warriors rookie Trayce Jackson-Davis added 13 points and 10 rebounds, including a one-handed dunk over Wembanyama in the final minute that dropped San Antonio's 7-foot-4 rookie to the court.

#### Nuggets 125, Raptors 119

In Toronto, Jamal Murray scored 12 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, and Denver rallied from 21 points down in the third quarter to beat depleted Toronto.

Murray added 12 assists to go

had 13 points and 10 rebounds for and Boston beat Portland despite the absence of two key starters.

Jrue Holiday and Kristaps Porzingis were sidelined with injuries for the Eastern Conference-leading Celtics, who have already clinched a



playoff spot with 18 games remaining in the season.

Deandre Ayton had 22 points and 15 rebounds for the Blazers, who are second-to-last in the West.

Sam Hauser's 3-pointer with 8:40 to go in the game put Boston up 101-83, and his step-back 3 made it 115-95 and sent Portland fans streaming for the exits. Hauser finished with a season-high six 3-pointers and 22 points

#### Pistons 114, Hornets 97

In Detroit, Cade Cunningham scored 12 of his 22 points in the first

ro is already prepared for Alonso's departure.

"We're happy that he's here, but Xabi Alonso is a puzzle piece. It's not like everything will fall apart when he's not here," Carro said in an interview with online broadcaster DAZN. "We have a top squad, we have a coaching staff, (sporting director) Simon Rolfes... Therefore, most of the people who are responsible for the success are here, independently of Xabi Alonso.

Alonso has said he won't let the speculation over his future distract him. It would also be no surprise if he stayed at Leverkusen - he turned Borussia Mönchengladbach down when he was still at Sociedad because he felt he wasn't ready for the move.

Leverkusen has the best defense in the Bundesliga with just 16 goals conceded in 25 games, while only Bayern has scored more - thanks in part to the remarkable Harry Kane who is closing in on Robert Lewandowski's scoring record.

But Alonso's reluctance to talk about potentially winning the Bundesliga title is merited as Leverkusen has endured a number of painful near misses, finishing runner-up in 2011, 2002, 2000, 1999 and 1997.

Leverkusen also lost German Cup and Champions League finals in 2002.

Only the club's older fans remember the German Cup win in 1993, or the UEFA Cup victory in 1998

Granit Xhaka has played a big part in the team's success since arriving from Arsenal last summer, but the Swiss midfielder also knows what it's like to let victory slip after Manchester City overhauled the Gunners to win the Premier League title last year.

"I really hope it doesn't happen again," Xhaka said after the win over Wolfsburg. "We still have nine games, nothing is won yet. We have to keep working as we're doing now, working hard, and we know that the coming weeks are so important."

Leverkusen, which is also through to the German Cup semifinals, hosts Qarabağ on Thursday for the second leg of their Europa League last-16 tie before visiting Freiburg in the Bundesliga on Sunday

turnovers to end its comeback hopes.

#### Warriors 112, Spurs 102

In San Antonio, Jonathan Kuminga scored 21 points, Klay Thompson added 20 and Golden State overcame a sluggish start to beat San Antonio.

San Antonio rookie Victor Wembanyama had 27 points and 14 rebounds in his return from a one-game absence after spraining his right ankle in the first half of Tuesday's loss in Houston. Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said he is unsure if Wembanyama will play against Houston on Tuesday.

Devin Vassell added 17 points and

along with Nikola Jokic's 21st triple double of the season. Jokic finished with 35 points, 17 rebounds and 12 assists to help Denver improve to 9-1 since the All-Star break.

Jokic has 126 career triple-doubles.

The Raptors played without Scottie Barnes (left hand fracture ), Chris Boucher (knee), Gary Trent Jr. (groin strain) and Immanuel Quickley (hip flexor) in addition to Jakob Poeltl being sidelined after having surgery on is left pinkie.

Kelly Olynyk scored 24 points and Bruce Brown, who helped the Nuggets win the NBA title last season,

eight losses.

Toronto Raptors forward Kelly Olynyk, left, blocks a pass by Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray (27) in the second half of an NBA basketball game Monday, March 11, 2024, in Denver. (AP)

quarter to help Detroit build a double-digit lead and he finished with eight assists in a win over Charlotte.

Cunningham reached 1,200 points and 400 assists in his 54th game, getting those totals in a season quicker than any player in franchise history, one game faster than Hall of Famer Isiah Thomas did during the 1984-85 season.

The Pistons have won just 11 games, but they swept the threegame season series against Charlotte. Hornets rookie Brandon Miller scored 19 points and Miles Bridges had 24, but the Flint native and former Michigan State star missed 15 of 24 shots.

### Pant cleared to play cricket in IPL more than one year after serious car accident

## Peshawar edge Karachi in nailbiter, leads PSL

from the playoffs race, finished fifth overall

with four wins in 10 matches, and defend-

ing champion the Lahore Qalandars had a

dismal campaign with only one win and

Peshawar rode captain Babar Azam's fifth

half-century, 51, and Rovman Powell's brisk

KARACHI, Pakistan, March 12, (AP): Peshawar Zalmi successfully defended a 147 total to beat Karachi Kings by two runs in a Pakistan Super League nailbiter on Monday.

On the last ball, Irfan Khan needed a boundary and fast bowler Aamer Jamal conceded only one bye

Peshawar moved to the top of the standings and will play the first qualifier in the playoffs on Thursday. Peshawar's opponent will be determined on Tuesday after the last roundrobin game between other qualifiers Multan Sultans and Quetta Gladiators.

Two-time champion Islamabad United is the other playoffs team and will take on the loser of Tuesday's game in the eliminator on Friday.

Karachi, which was already eliminated

30 off 18 balls to reach 147-6 on a tricky pitch CRICKET

which offered plenty of turn. Even so, both batters were run out.

Karachi came agonizingly close in reaching 145-5. Tim Siefert (41) and James Vince (21) gave Karachi a resolute start of 61 by

Peshawar Zalmi' Babar Azam, (center), plays a shot during the Pakistan Super League T20 cricket match between Peshawar Zalmi and Karachi Kings, in Karachi, Pakistan (AP)

smashing 12 boundaries between them. Then the batters were strangled by Afghani-stan fast bowler Naveen-ul-Haq, 2-22, and Saim Ayub, 1-18, in the middle overs. Khan hit 39 not out and almost won it.

Left-arm spinner Arafat Minhas, with 1-11, bowled the most economical four-over spell of the league against Peshawar.

#### Also:

MUMBAI: India wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant has recovered from the serious injuries sustained in a car crash and can return to the Indian Premier League this month, India's cricket board said Tuesday.

Pant was involved in a road accident in northern India in December 2022, when the car he was driving overturned and caught fire. "After undergoing an extensive 14-month

rehab and recovery process, following a lifethreatening road mishap on December 30th, 2022, (Pant) has now been declared fit as a wicket-keeper batter for the upcoming (IPL)," the BCCI said on X, formerly known as Twitter. The lucrative IPL season starts on March 22 and Pant could make an eagerly-awaited return for Delhi Capitals, the side he captains, the following day in Mohali against Punjab Kings.

The 26-year-old Pant required reconstruction surgery on his right knee following the crash. He had a fractured wrist and ankle, as well as injuries to his head and back.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah said Pant could even be in contention for India's squad for the T20 World Cup in June.

"He is a big asset for us," Shah said. "If he can keep (wicket), he can play the World Cup. Let's see how he does in the IPL.

A hard-hitting left hand batter, Pant has scored five test centuries with a batting average of 43.67, including a century when batting at No. 7 against England in 2018, and a swashbuckling 159 early the following year in Australia.

In the T20 format he has struck three fifties and has a fast-scoring strike rate of 126.37.

#### Ratcliffe's investment in Man U cost club nearly \$44 mln in fees

MANCHESTER, England, March 12, (AP): Jim Ratcliffe's minority investment in Manchester United cost the club \$43.78 million in fees, according to financial figures released Tuesday. United's latest quarterly results also showed current gross debts of nearly \$1 billion.

Ratcliffe, the British billionaire, last month bought a 27.7% stake in the Premier League club - more than a year after American owners the Glazer family invited offers from potential buyers.

United's results stated an "exceptional" item of 9.6 million pounds (\$12.28 million) for "costs incurred in relation to the Group's strategic review and agreed sale" to Ratcliffe.

United said that was on top of a \$31.5 million fee to U.S. investment bank Raine Group, which oversaw the deal.

Ratcliffe paid \$1.3 billion for his minority stake and made an added investment of \$200 million. United has said Ratcliffe intends to invest a further \$100 million by the end of the year.



3) IT skills (Microsoft Office and other latest operating software systems)

4) Must have valid transferable residential visa of Kuwait 5) Well versed with Kuwaiti rules & regulations.

#### Dr. Eldho George heads sports committee

IDAK inaugurates IDAK-KDD Sports Championship 2024-'25 with throwball and volleyball



Participants pose for a group photo before the inauguration of the sports championship.

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The Indian Dentists Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK) kickstarted the highly anticipated IDAK - KDD Sports Championship 2024 - 25 by conducting the first sports event of 2024, the Women's Throwball & Men's Volleyball tournament on Friday, 8th March. The event commenced with the introduction of the Sports Committee, headed by Dr. Eldho George and fellow committee members Dr. Renjith, Dr. Abraham, Dr. Anjana, Dr. Varsha and Dr. Sharon. Adding a fun twist to the inauguration was an energetic and colorful flashmob performed by the members of the Executive committee and members of the participating Sports teams, which was coordinated by Dr. Parvathy. It got the crowd pumped up and looking forward to a great game.

All the teams lined up with their captains at the helm, namely Dr. Joe Daniel and Dr. Jyothy V Kuriakose of the Blue Phoenixes, Dr. Rupesh and Dr. Ranjitha R S of the Red Raptors and Dr. Ashwin Sudhesh and Dr. Remya Mathew of the Green Dragons. Mr. Shyam, who was the referee for the event, explained the rules and regulations to the players and wished them luck.

At the referee's whistle, the qualifying games commenced for the Women's Throwball category. The matches followed a Round Robin pattern and the results were as follows: Red Raptors vs Blue Phoenixes (6 - 21), Blue Phoenixes vs Green Dragons (20 - 9), Green Dragons vs Red Raptors (20 -17). The Blue Phoenixes faced the Green Dragons in a final match in a Best of 3 fashion, where the Blue Phoenixes came out on top with a score of (15 - 7, 15 - 8), with the Green Dragons being the First Runner up.

The Men's Volleyball matches took place in a similar fashion as all teams geared up and competed with great enthusiasm. The results of the quali(25-14). Victory was conquered by the Green Dragons against Blue Phoenixes in a close finals finish (21 - 18, 21 - 15) with Blue Phoenixes being the First runner up.

Best player for Throwball was awarded to Dr. Jane of Blue Phoenixes and the best player for Volleyball was awarded to Dr. Christy of Green Dragons. The scoreboard was efficiently managed throughout by Dr. Aju, Dr. Vinod, Dr. Sudhin and Mr. Prajul. The children were also kept occupied with a Dartgame competition, ably managed and conducted with great enthusiasm by Dr. Anjana, Dr. Varsha and Dr. Sharon. The winners of the game were Shivam, Evelyn and Gonna.

The sports commentators for the day were Dr. Thomas, Dr. Pramod and Dr. Reeby who kept the audience and players thrilled and entertained from the start to the end of the event. Dr. Santhosh, Dr. Jijan, Dr. Shaheer and Dr. Gireesh were seen capturing all of the fun and exciting moments of the games.

A new and fun addition to the event was the introduction of The IDAK Cookie Company's food stalls which brought members together to showcase their culinary skills, serving a variety of lip-smacking food items and cuisines, which was a great hit and thoroughly relished by those present. The Food stalls were put up by Dr. Anju Samuel & team, Dr. Nikhila, Dr. Asheel, Dr. Anju Nair, Dr. Aseela, Dr. Aysha, Dr. Shaikhan, Dr. Sharon, Dr. Ashwin and Dr. Revathi.

The event concluded with the felicitation of the winners and runners- up of the games. KDD Assistant Manager Mr. Bilu Cherian was the Chief Guest and handed over the winners trophy. This was followed by an IDAK group photograph by Dr.Jijan.

IDAK extends its sincerest gratitude to KDD for sponsoring this event and their remittance partner, Al Mulla Exchange.

## Massa says he's suing F1 and FIA

SAO PAULO, March 12, (AP): Former driver Felipe Massa said he's filed a lawsuit in London against auto racing governing body the FIA, series owner Formula One Management and Bernie Ecclestone to try and claim the 2008 title.

Massa added on Monday he was also seeking a minimum of \$82 million in damages, a document obtained by The Associated Press showed. That amount included prize money he lost and other potential deals he would have obtained as a F1 champion.

Massa has claimed since last year he was the "rightful" 2008 champion due to the incident known as "Crashgate." The 42-year-old Brazilian, who never won the drivers' championship, was runner-up to Lewis Hamilton by one point.

Former Ferrari and Williams driver Massa said in a statement his case would be heard at the King's Bench Division of the High Court.

#### MOTOR RACING

His decision came after months of preparatory steps that included his lawyers asking auto racing bodies to reply to his public allegations of a breach of contract.

"I always said I was going to fight until the end," Massa said in the statement. "Since the FIA and FOM decided not to do anything, we will seek to right this historical injustice in court. The matter is now for our lawyers and they are fully authorized to do whatever is necessary so justice in sport is served." His allegations relate to the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix, where Nelson Piquet Jr. crashed deliberately to help then-Renault teammate Fernando Alonso win the race. The Renault team was eventually punished but the results stood in the 15th race of 18 that year. Massa never got closer to the title. Last year, former F1 boss Ecclestone said in an interview with website F1 Insider that he learned through the course of 2008 that Piquet Jr. crashed deliberately. He added he chose not to investigate the incident until the season ended, when it was too late to change the standings. Piquet Jr.'s crash came when Massa was in front in Singapore. A safety car was brought in, which squandered his lead and gave Alonso a clear advantage as he was the only driver who had already made a pit stop to refuel. Massa went on to finish out of the points in 13th place after a calamitous pit stop, while Hamilton finished third in that race. Massa's filing said he wants "a declaration that the FIA acted in breach of its own regulations in failing to investigate the circumstances of the crash promptly in 2008" and "a declaration that if the FIA had not acted in breach of its own regulations, it would have canceled or adjusted the results of the Singapore Grand Prix with the consequence that Mr Massa would have won the drivers' championship in 2008.

# Kuwait Club seek win to maintain top spot as Al-Arabi battle Al-Nasr



Kuwait Club player battles an opponent for the ball.

Al-Fahaheel have little to lose

By Hassan Musa Al-Sevassah/Arab Times Staff

Udinese stun Lazio for rare win

fying matches were as follows : Blue Phoenixes vs Red Raptors (25-18), Blue Phoenixes vs Green Dragons (25-14), Green Dragons vs Red Raptors The Overall point tally at the end of this exciting day stood at Blue Phoenixes - 8 points, Green Dragons - 8 points and Red Raptors - 2 points.



A player goes for a spike as his teammates look on.



Captain of a winning team presented with a trophy

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: The first round of the championship group "League of Six" in the Premier League is set to conclude this evening, Wednesday. The clash between Kuwait Club and Al-Fahaheel is scheduled at 10:00 pm at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, while simultaneously, Al-Arabi will face off against Al-Nasr at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium.

#### SOCCER

Following this round, the competition will take a break as our national team prepares to meet Qatar on March 21 and 26 for the third and fourth rounds of the first group competitions in the joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup. The league competition is expected to wrap up by the end of March.

In the initial face-off, Kuwait Club, leading the standings with 43 points, aims to maintain its positive momentum and secure another victory to stay atop the pyramid. Despite a convincing 4-1 win against Al-Fahaheel in the first part of the tournament, Kuwait Club is mindful of the challenge posed by the same team, which forced a 1-1 draw in the second encounter.

On the other hand, Al-Fahaheel, currently in sixth place with 23 points, has little to lose, having already secured a spot in the Championship ROME, March 12, (AP): Udinese took a big step away from the Serie A relegation zone when it beat Lazio 2-1 on the road.

Udinese's only previous win this year was at Juventus, surprisingly. That dismal run brought it just seven points from a possible 27 and left it in 17th place, one spot above the relegation zone.

This win lifted Udinese four places to 13th. Lazio remained ninth.

All three goals came in a fiveminute burst early in the second half.

Udinese took the lead after 47 minutes when Lorenzo Lucca diverted a shot from Hassane Kamara past despairing goalkeeper Ivan Provedel.

Lazio equalized two minutes later when Lautaro Giannetti turned Mattia Zaccagni's cut back into his own net.

Oier Zarraga put Udinese ahead again in the 51st by placing a low shot into the corner of the net.

Nehuén Pérez was sent off for Udinese four minutes into stoppage time.

The misery continues for Almeria.

Group League. However, the team aspires to climb the ranks and make a lasting impression in the tournament.

In the second match, Al-Arabi, in second place with 42 points, is eager for a victory to potentially seize the lead if Kuwait Club faces a setback against Al-Fahaheel. This match holds special significance for both teams, as Al-Arabi dominated AlNasr in the second leg with a 6-3 victory, while Al-Nasr secured a 3-1 win in the initial encounter, marking the only defeat for Al-Akhdar in the tournament.

No team in Europe's top five

leagues has got this far into the

season without a victory and

Almeria's 2-2 draw with Sevilla

extended its winless streak to 28

might finally be the night after

captain Adrian Embarba gave the

home side the lead seven minutes

Instead, the crowd of 13,000

watched Almeria's lead vanish as

Sevilla score twice in the last 10

minutes through Dodi Lukébakio

the head of Marco Milovanović

was some consolation for the home

fans but it still left Almeria four

points adrift of Granada at the bot-

tom of La Liga with only 10 games

Granada also has a game in hand.

'It's a bittersweet experience.'

Embarba said. "We did everything

in that match, especially in the first half. We did well with and without

the ball and we had chances to kill

the game. They twice caught us on

the counterattack, which is what

"We were lucky to get a point

A stoppage time equalizer from

before halftime.

and Lucas Ocampos.

remaining.

we didn't want.

but victory eludes us.

And, yet, it looked like this

games, a Spanish league record.

Al-Nasr, currently fifth with 24 points, is hopeful of overcoming recent declines in results and making a positive impact in tonight's confrontation.



Players in action during a volleyball game.



A woman makes an attempt during the throwball match.



A winning team receives a trophy from an official.



Lazio's Taty Castellanos goes for the header with Udinese's Joao Ferreira during a Serie A soccer match between Lazio and Udinese, at Rome's Olympic Stadium. Udinese won 2-1. (AP) - See Page 15



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Australia to play Palestinian men's soccer team in Perth in June

## Youssef Nasser returns, Kuwait gear up for World Cup qualifiers against Qatar

KUWAIT CITY, March 12: Kuwait's head coach, Rui Pinto, has called up a squad of 24 players in preparation for the upcoming matches against the Qatar national team on March 21 and 26, marking the initial group fixtures in the joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup.

Among the selected players is Youssef Nasser from Kuwait club, a striker who has recently showcased outstanding performance, earning him a return to the squad. The roster comprises Ibrahim Kamil, Sami Al-Sanea, Muhammad Dahham, Ahmed Al-Dhafiri, Reda Hani, Mishari Ghannam, Mohsen Falah, Faisal Zayed, Saud Al-Hawshan, Youssef Nasser, Mubarak Al-Fanini, Hassan Hamdan, Suleiman Abdul Ghafour, Muhammad Al-Huwaidi, Mahdi Dashti, Athbi Shehab, Hamad Harbi, Abdullah Al-Fahd, Salman Burmah, Abdul Rahman Al-Majdali, Khaled Ibrahim, Eid Al-Rashidi, Youssef Al-Haqqan, and Bandar.

Team director Abdul Rahman Al-Mousa revealed that the delegation will embark on a training camp in Abu Dhabi, the Emirates, starting tomorrow, Thursday, and lasting until March 19. Following the camp, the team will head to Doha, Qatar, in preparation for their encounter with the Qatari team on March 21 as part of the initial group qualifiers. The team is



Youssef Nasser

set to return from Doha on March 22, organizing an internal camp for further preparation ahead of the March 26 clash against Qatar.

In Group A standings, the Qatar national team leads with six points, followed by Kuwait in second place with three points. The Indian national team holds third place, also with three points, while the Afghanistan national team remains at the bottom without any points.

Additionally, the Kuwait Olympic team, led by Portuguese coach Emilio Peixe, unveiled a list of 23 players participating in a training camp in Abu Dhabi from the 15th to the 26th of this month. The Olympic team is scheduled to face their Bahraini counterparts during the camp. The squad includes Talal Al-Qaisi, Fahd Al-Fadhli, Saleh

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Al-Mahtab, Montaser Suleiman, Salem Al-Khatlan, Jarrah Al-Hilaili, Muhammad Al-Rashed, Sultan Al-Faraj, Abdullah Al-Anazi, Khaled Al-Fadhli, Abdul-Rahman Al-Daihani, Yousef Al-Majed, Hussein Ashkanani, Abdul-Rahman Al-Sharhan, Hussein Shehab Kankuni, and Abdul Al-Rahman Al-Fadhli, Moaz Al-Anzi, Abdul Aziz Asaad, Talal Al-Hajraf, Abdul Rahman Al-Rashidi, Muhammad Al-Azmi, Abdul Rahman Al-Anzi, and Hamad Al-Taweel.

Meanwhile, soccer Australia said Tuesday that the Socceroos will play the Palestinian men's soccer team in Perth, Western Australia on June 11 in a 2026 World Cup qualifying match.

Australia has a 2-0 record in Group I in the second round of Asian qualifying while the Palestinian team has a draw and a loss.

The loss was 1-0 to Australia when the Palestinian side was forced to play a "home" game in Kuwait in November due to the ongoing conflict in Gaza. It was originally scheduled for the West Bank. Players on the Australian team,

before the start of the Kuwait match, donated a portion of their fees towards humanitarian causes in Gaza.

## Nardi stuns Djokovic at Indian Wells as Coco Gauff 'reaches' round of 16



Luca Nardi, of Italy, returns a shot Novak Djokovic, of Serbia, at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament Monday, March 11, 2024, in Indian Wells, Calif.

**INDIAN WELLS, March** 12, (AP): Luca Nardi used a combination of poise and power to stun his boyhood hero and top-seeded Novak Djokovic with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 win on in the third round of the BNP Paribas Open.

Nardi, who's ranked No. 123, closed out his huge upset over the No. 1 player in the rankings with an ace. The 20-year-old from Italy dropped his racket and brought his hands to his face almost in disbelief

#### Medvedev holds off Korda

vic complaining to the official about a potential hindrance. To think. Nardi was nearly on his

way home. He got into the field as a "lucky loser," which is a player who stumbled on the final hurdle in qualifying but made it into the main draw as a replacement for an injured player who pulled out before the first round. In Nardi's case, he stepped in for No. 30 Tomas Martin Etcheverry and received a bye through the opening round.

He went on to become the lowestranked player to beat Djokovic in a Grand Slam or ATP Masters 1000 level event, surpassing No. 122 Kevin Anderson in 2008 in Miami.

Using a combination of aggressiveness and finesse, Nardi had Djokovic, the 24-time Grand Slam singles champion from Serbia he grew up watching, smiling and shaking his head at times in a mixture of surprise and shock.

Nardi was far from intimidated, ei-

ther, answering Djokovic's well-placed shots with well-placed returns of his own.

"Before this night, no one knew me," said Nardi, who will face American Tommy Paul in the round of 16. "I hope now the crowd enjoyed the game. I'm super happy with this one.'

Djokovic certainly didn't know that much about Nardi, only what he gleaned watching him play. He knew Nardi had a strong baseline game, especially with the forehand, and moved well.

"He got in as a 'lucky



A trainer works on Ronaldo as the coach gives out instructions during Al Nassr and Al Ain game.

## Al Ain eliminate Ronaldo and Al Nasrr to 'qualify' for semis

RIYADH, March 12: Al Ain from the United Arab Emirates secured a spot in the AFC Champions League semi-finals by triumphing over their hosts, Al Nassr of Saudi Arabia, in a penalty shootout. The teams had

previously tied 4-4 on aggregate.

Having carried an advantage into the game with Sufyan Rahimi's goal in the first leg, Al Ain saw

Brozović Rahimi shine

once again, scoring in the 28th and 45th minutes. Although the hosts narrowed the gap with Abdul Rahman Gharib's goal, Al Nassr fought back in the second half. Khaled Issa's own goal error and a goal from Alex Telles leveled the aggregate score, forcing the match into extra time.

In the first half of extra time, Al Nassr's Ayman Yahya received a red card, giving Al Ain an edge. Sultan Al-Shamsi capitalized on a critical mistake by Al Nassr's goalkeeper, Raghed Najjar, scoring the third goal for Al Ain.

#### SOCCER

However, Ronaldo secured a penalty kick in the 118th minute, bringing the score to 4-3 and leading to a penalty shootout.

During the penalty kicks, Al Nassr's Marcelo Brozovic, Alex Telles, and Otavio missed three penalties, while Ronaldo successfully scored the fourth. Al Ain, on the other hand, secured their place in the semi-finals by converting kicks from Rahimi, Kaku, and Al-Shamsi.

#### **TENNIS**

before greeting Djokovic at the net. "This is a miracle," Nardi said in an interview after the match on the Tennis Channel. "I'm a 20-years-old guy, 100 in the world, and beating Novak. So, crazy. Crazy.

Setting the tone early with his hardhitting shots, Nardi frustrated Djokovic all evening. There was a moment when Nardi was surprised by an "in" call and casually hit the ball back over the net. It resulted in a winner and led to Djoko-



Taylor Fritz, of the United States, returns a shot against Sebastian Baez, of Argentina, at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament in Indian Wells, Calif. (AP)

main draw, so he really didn't have anything to lose. So he played great," Djokovic said. "Deserved to win. I was more surprised with my level. My level was really, really bad.'

No. 4 Daniil Medvedev's was just good enough, as he edged No. 29 Se-bastian Korda 6-4, 5-7, 6-3 and will face No. 13 Grigor Dimitrov.

Earlier in the day, Coco Gauff gave herself an early birthday present by beating Lucia Bronzetti 6-2, 7-6 (5) in the third round. Gauff, who turns 20 on Wednesday, struggled early but found a way to hold her serve by saving 10 of 11 break points. She closed out the match with a serve into the body that Bronzetti couldn't return. It extended Gauff's winning streak in the United States to 18 matches, a run that includes winning the title at last year's U.S. Open.

Injured Ederson out of Brazil's friendlies against England and Spain

## Palmer stars as, Chelsea edge Newcastle in 5-goal thriller

LONDON, March 12, (AP): Cole Palmer capped an impressive display with a goal and an assist as Chelsea beat Newcastle 3-2 in a pulsating English Premier League match on Monday.

In front of watching England manager Gareth Southgate, the 21-year-old Palmer pulled the strings in midfield for the London club.

His 11th goal this season made him the sixth Chelsea player to score in five consecutive league matches. Chelsea has not lost a league game at home in the month of March since 2001.

The result cut the four-point gap between Newcastle in 10th and Chelsea in 11th to one point.

Palmer's goal came 12 minutes into the second half. He found space just outside the Newcastle penalty area and fired home a low shot.

Nicolas Jackson gave the home side the lead after six minutes when he diverted a shot from Palmer past Newcastle goalkeeper Martin Dubravka.

Although it lost in-form winger Anthony Gordon to injury 10 minutes before halftime, Newcastle fought back and eight minutes later got an equalizer when Alexander Isak found the net with a perfectly placed shot from 18 yards out.

Substitute Mykhailo Mudryk made it 3-1 to Chelsea in the 76th just five minutes after replacing Raheem Ster-

ling. Jacob Murphy got a goal back for the visitor in the 90th but his rasping strike was not enough to stop Chelsea taking all three points and prevent Newcastle from recording its first

home-and-away double over the Blues since the 1986-87 season.

#### SOCCER

Howe told the BBC Gordon's injury "looks like a knee problem and it



Newcastle's Dan Burn, (left), duels for the ball with Chelsea's Cole Palmer during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Newcastle at Stamford Bridge stadium in London. (AP)

doesn't look too good at the moment - it is unclear.

The injury to defender Dan Burn looked less serious, he added.

#### Also:

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Goalkeeper Ederson was withdrawn from Brazil's squad on Monday after he injured his right thigh while playing for Manchester City in its draw with Liverpool.

Ederson will miss Brazil's friendlies against England and Spain this month. He left the pitch on Sunday in the 56th minute of the English Premier League showdown at Anfield. Brazil coach Dorival Júnior replaced him with Vasco da Gama's Léo Jardim.

Brazil will play England on March 23 at Wembley Stadium and Spain three days later at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Júnior also announced two more players out injured: Paris Saint-Germain's Marquinhos and Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli. They were replaced by Flamengo left back Fabrício Bruno and Porto striker Galeno, respectively.

Dorival Júnior took over in January amid a run of dismal results. The situation worsened last month when Brazil failed to qualify for the Paris Olympics, sidelining the two-time reigning champion.

## ARAB C TIME

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