



ISRAEL BOOSTS GROUND OPERATION, CUTS OFF COMMUNICATIONS
UN approves Gaza truce resolution



Smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip, as seen from southern Israel, Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023. Inset: Results are displayed as the U.N. General Assembly voted for a non-binding resolution calling for a 'humanitarian truce' in Gaza and a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers, Friday, Oct. 27, 2023 at U.N. headquarters. (AP)

NewsWatch

Egypt multi-car pileup claims 32

CAIRO, Oct 28, (AP) - A passenger bus slammed into a parked vehicle on a foggy Saturday morning on a highway linking the Egyptian capital, Cairo, and the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, killing at least 32 people, authorities said.

The multi-car pileup, which set some vehicles ablaze, left at least 63 others injured, said the Health Ministry. Ambulances rushed to the scene of the crash on the Cairo-Alexandria desert road to transport the injured to nearby hospitals, it said.

Local media reported that the bus was on its way to Cairo when it hit the parked vehicle. Other cars slammed into the bus with some catching fire.

Footage circulating online showed many burned vehicles on the side of the road with firefighters extinguishing the fire. In one footage many vehicles were seen on fire with thick plumes of smoke billowing from them.

DUBAI: An Iranian teenage girl injured weeks ago in a mysterious incident on Tehran's Metro while not wearing a headscarf has died, state media reported Saturday.

The death of Armita Geravand comes after her being in a coma for weeks in Tehran and after the one-year anniversary of the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini which sparked nationwide protests at the time.

Geravand's Oct. 1 injury and now her death threaten to reignite that popular anger, particularly as women in Tehran and elsewhere still defy Iran's mandatory headscarf, or hijab, law as a sign of their discontent with Iran's theocracy. (AP)

BRUSSELS: An international conference hosted by the EU's police agency, Europol, at The Hague, concluded that tackling the criminal use of cryptocurrencies is a race against time.

The two-day event on Thursday and Friday organized in a hybrid format, was attended by representatives from law enforcement, the public and private sectors, policy institutions and academia from more than 100 countries.

The aim was to explore trends and strategies to tackle crimes involving cryptocurrencies, said Europol in a press release. (KUNA)

NEW DELHI: India and the European Union on Friday discussed ways of enhancing safe and regular migration between India and the EU and ways of countering irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement that in the framework of the 7th India-EU High Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility, both sides discussed ways of further deepening cooperation in the field.

The meeting was co-chaired by Additional Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India Anurag Bhushan and Deputy Director General of the European Commissions Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs Johannes Luchner. (KUNA)

'War enters new stage'

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 28, (Agencies): The U.N. General Assembly approved a non-binding resolution Friday calling for a "humanitarian truce" in Gaza leading to a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers, the first United Nations response to the war.

The 193-member world body adopted the resolution by a vote of 120-14 with 45 abstentions after rejecting a Canadian amendment backed by the United States. It would have unequivocally condemned the Oct. 7 "terrorist attacks" by Hamas and demanded the immediate release of hostages taken by Hamas, which is not mentioned in the Arab-drafted resolution.

Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, called the General Assembly "more courageous, more principled" than the divided U.N. Security Council, which failed in four attempts during the past two weeks to reach agreement on a resolution. Two were vetoed and two failed to get the minimum nine "yes" votes required for approval.

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan called it "a day that will go down in infamy," saying after the vote: "Israel will not stop the operation until Hamas terror capabilities are destroyed and our hostages are returned. ... And the only way to destroy Hamas is root them out of their tunnels and subterranean city of terror."

Frustrated Arab nations went to the General Assembly, where there are no vetoes - just as Ukraine did after Russia's February 2022 invasion because of Moscow's Security Council veto power - to press for a U.N. response. And the United Arab Emirates Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, the Arab representative on the Security Council, expressed delight at the result.

"120 votes in this kind of geopolitical environment is a very, very high signal of the support for international law, for proportionate use of force, and it is a rejection of the status quo that is currently happening on the ground," she said.

The State of Kuwait has underlined that the Israeli occupation's war crimes against Palestinians under the pretext of "self-defense" show disregard for the relevant UN resolutions and the international law.

War crimes

The international community must immediately intervene and hold the Israeli occupation accountable for its blatant war crimes and continued violations of international law, said Diplomatic Attaché Reem Al-Sharhan, of Kuwait's Permanent Delegation to the UN, at the UN General Assembly's First Committee meeting on Disarmament Machinery.

She slammed the occupying entity for its "lies and continuous denial of war crimes". Al-Sharhan expressed Kuwait's deep concern about the ongoing escalation in the Gaza Strip "which claimed the lives of more than 6,000 Palestinian civilians, including more than 2,000 children."

She reiterated her country's respect for international agreements, especially those related to disarmament, international security and peace.

"Despite Kuwait's commitment, we express our concern due to the lack of tangible progress in terms of disarmament and the implementation of the relevant obligations," Al-Sharhan regretted.

She criticized the international community double standards on disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is quick to condemn some countries but remains silent towards others, she said.

The 14 countries that voted against the resolution include Israel and its closest ally, the United States, five Pacific island nations and four European countries - Austria, Croatia, Czechia and Hungary, all European Union members. Eight EU members voted in favor.

France's U.N. Ambassador Nicolas De Riviere said his country supported the resolution "because nothing could justify the suffering of civilians," and he urged collective efforts to establish a humanitarian truce.

Mansour said the European votes indicate they can be "very helpful" in pursuing a Security Council resolution "or in maximizing pressure in Israel to stop this war."

The Arab Parliament affirmed that the UN General Assembly's approval of an Arab draft law on an immediate ceasefire, protecting civilians and opening humanitarian passages, must be followed by serious measures to pressure Israel to abide by the resolution.

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Palestinians arrive to collect drinking water during the ongoing Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in Rafah on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023. (AP)

MP seeks clarity on CAIT and 'stolen public funds'

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: MP Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf has forwarded queries to Minister of State for Municipal and Communication Affairs Fahd Al-Shaulah about the administrative and legal violations in the Central Agency for Information and Technology (CAIT).

He wants to know the reasons behind the resignation of the CAIT chairman in November 2022 with the vice-chairman being appointed as acting chairman as per ministerial decision number 304/2022 issued on Nov 22, 2022; why a new chairman has not been appointed till date considering the vital role of CAIT in maintaining national cybersecurity; if the list of officials nominated for the position was forwarded to the Council of Ministers and reasons if the answer is 'no'; assessment requirements for employees at CAIT since 2019 till date; number of employees who were terminated for failing the assessment; number of employees hired since 2019 till date; if it is true that the assessment requirements are subjective such that the senior administration officials can fire employees according to their whims; if the assessment procedures are in line with Civil Service Commission (CSC) decision number 36/ 2006; if the assessment scores of employees were reduced in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022; if there are reports on the assessment of employees in the last five years comparing their scores with the previous years; if action on employees' complaints regarding promotions has been suspended; if the CSC approved the new organizational structure despite the violation of the law on establishing CAIT; if the agency's system has been hacked but it was not revealed to the public; and losses incurred due to the incident if the answer is in the affirmative.

He also asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari about the total amount spent on recovering the public funds stolen by the former Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) chairman, including the cost of hiring attorneys and travel of the representatives of monitoring institutions to follow up the case.

MP Soud Al-Asfour asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barrak about the completion percentage of Abdullah Port, date of opening the port, its capacity, total cost of the project, factors leading to the delay if any, number of variation orders, cost, reasons and fine imposed on the contractor.

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Munitions storage hit

US strikes Iran-linked sites in Syria in retaliation for attacks

WASHINGTON, Oct 28, (AP) - U.S. fighter jets launched airstrikes early Friday on two locations in eastern Syria linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Pentagon said, in retaliation for a slew of drone and missile attacks against U.S. bases and personnel in the region that began early last week.

The strikes reflect the Biden administration's determination to maintain a delicate balance. The U.S. wants to hit Iranian-backed groups suspected of targeting the U.S. as strongly as possible to deter future aggression, possibly fueled by Israel's war against Hamas, while also working to avoid inflaming the region and provoking a wider conflict.

Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said Friday that the strikes near Boukamal by F-16 and F-15 fighter aircraft targeted a weapons storage facility and ammunition storage facility used by the IRGC and affiliated groups. "Both facilities were destroyed," he said. "We currently assess there were no casualties in the strikes."

A senior U.S. military official said there had been Iranian-aligned militia and IRGC personnel on the base and no civilians. The official would not say how many munitions were launched by the jets.

A senior defense official said the sites were chosen because the IRGC stores the types of munitions there that were used in the strikes against U.S. bases and troops. The two officials briefed reporters after the strikes on condition of anonymity to provide details on the mission that had not yet been made public.

Syrian opposition activists confirmed the U.S. strikes in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour. Omar Abu Layla, a Europe-based activist who heads the Deir Ezzor 24 media outlet, said the main target was an area known as "the farms" outside the town of Mayadeen. He said it is an important transit site where weapons from Iran are stored before being shipped to Lebanon.

He said the second strike hit an area known as the "green belt" in the Boukamal area that borders Iraq. According to Abu Layla, some people were evacuated before the strikes because the retaliation was expected. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said ambulances were seen rushing to the area but it wasn't clear if there were casualties.

Meanwhile Friday, an Iranian semi-official news agency, Tasnim, said gunmen in east Syria fired 10 rockets on a base housing American troops in retaliation for the U.S. airstrikes. A U.S. official confirmed the rocket attack and said there were no reported casualties.

And the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group for several Iran-backed groups, said fighters attacked al-Assad airbase in western Iraq with a suicide drone. U.S. officials said it was shot down a few kilometers away and did not hit the base.

According to the Pentagon, as of Friday there had been at least 20 attacks on U.S. bases and personnel in Iraq and Syria since Oct. 17. Ryder said 21 U.S.

personnel were injured in two of those assaults when drones targeted al-Assad airbase in Iraq and al-Tanf garrison in Syria.

In a statement, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the "precision self-defense strikes are a response to a series of ongoing and mostly unsuccessful attacks against U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-backed militia groups that began on October 17."

In a letter sent Friday to congressional leaders, President Joe Biden wrote: "The strikes were intended to establish deterrence and were conducted in a manner to limit the risk of escalation and avoid civilian casualties. I directed the strikes in order to protect and defend our personnel, to degrade and disrupt the ongoing series of attacks against the United States and our partners, and to deter Iran and Iran-backed militia groups from conducting or supporting further attacks on United States personnel and facilities."

The senior defense official told reporters that the airstrikes will have a significant impact on the ability of Iranian proxy groups to continue to attack U.S. forces. Asked what groups were targeted, the official said there are several that can have different names, but the U.S. holds Tehran responsible for funding, arming, equipping and directing the proxies. The official said the airstrikes were not designed to expand the conflict in the region, but to compel Iran to direct the militia groups to cease the attacks on American bases and personnel.

The Biden administration has not accused Iran of having a direct role in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel and has said it appears so far that Tehran was not aware of it beforehand. But the U.S. has noted that Iran has long supported Hamas and has raised concerns that Iran and its proxies could turn the conflict into a wider war.

Austin said the U.S. does not seek a broader conflict, but if Iranian proxy groups continue, the U.S. won't hesitate to take additional action to protect its forces.

According to the Pentagon, all the U.S. personnel hurt in the militant attacks received minor injuries and all returned to duty. In addition, a contractor suffered a cardiac arrest and died while seeking shelter from a possible drone attack.

The retaliatory strikes came as no surprise. Officials at the Pentagon and the White House have made it clear for the past week that the U.S. would respond, with Ryder saying again Thursday that it would be "at the time and place of our choosing."

The latest spate of strikes by the Iranian-linked groups came in the wake of a deadly explosion at a Gaza hospital, triggering protests in a number of Muslim nations. The Israeli military has relentlessly attacked Gaza in retaliation for the devastating Hamas rampage in southern Israel nearly three weeks ago, but Israel has denied responsibility for the al-Ahli hospital blast and the U.S. has said its intelligence assessment found that Tel Aviv was not to blame.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:38 Asr 14:42
Sunrise... 05:58 Maghrib .. 17:06
Zohr 11:32 Isha 18:23

Local

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

Iraq must remain committed to agreement: Senate VP Gasparri

Kuwait MP touts Italy support for Khor Abdullah accord

ROME, Italy, Oct 28, (KUNA): A Kuwaiti member of parliament on Friday commended and appreciated Italy's support for Kuwait regarding the Khor Abdullah Agreement that regulates maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah waterway.

Speaking to KUNA, MP Mohammad Al-Huwaila, who is a member of a Kuwaiti parliament delegation visiting Italy as part of a joint parliamentary friendship committee, spoke highly of the outcomes of the delegation's successful visit.

He added that the delegation's meetings with Italian members of parliament were so fruitful and positive that issues of special significance were addressed.

Al-Huwaila added that the visit had focused on several core issues, mainly Iraq's unilateral termination of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi maritime treaty which obtained parliamentary approval and was deposited with the United Nations in 2013.

He voiced gratitude to the Italian parliamentary leadership for supporting the Kuwaiti stance and international law, remarking that discussions had also covered the prime Kuwaiti and Arab cause of Palestine, including the serious occupation aggression on the Gaza Strip in a blatant breach of international humanitarian law and the international human rights law.

The Kuwaiti MP conveyed his country's unwavering support for the Palestinian issue, calling on the international community to move to protect Palestinian civilians and ensure humanitarian and relief aid corridors.

Kuwait's parliamentary delegation included MP Dr. Mohammad Al-Huwaila and MP Fares Al-Otaibi, MP Bader Al-Shammari and MP Bader Al-Anzi, accompanied by the Kuwaiti Ambassador Nasser Sunhat Al-Qahtani.

Vice President of the Italian Senate, Maurizio Gasparri, emphasized Friday the necessity of Iraq's commitment to the Khor Abdullah Agreement.

This came during a meeting between

Gasparri and the Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Kuwaiti National Assembly.

During the talks, the Deputy President of the Senate pledged to work in coordination with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani to urge Iraq to fully comply with the agreement signed between the governments of Kuwait and Iraq.

In remarks to KUNA, Deputy Head of the Kuwaiti delegation, MP Fares



M. Gasparri

Al-Otaibi, said that this important meeting reflects the distinguished and historical relations between Kuwait and Italy.

MP Al-Otaibi stated that the Kuwaiti delegation briefed the Italian official on the repercussions of the Iraqi court's decision

its impact on bilateral relations and the violation it represents of international norms and conventions.

He also affirmed that the two sides touched on the developments in Palestine, and the humanitarian situation in Gaza, stressing adherence to a lasting and just peace that is based on a two-state solution with the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Gasparri underlined on Friday the importance of the main role that Kuwait can play in building peace and regional and international dialogue.

This came in a statement made by Gasparri to KUNA on the occasion of his meeting with the Head of the Italian-Kuwaiti Parliamentary Friendship Group Mauro Datis, with the delegation of the Parliamentary Friendship Committee of the National Assembly, which is on an official visit to Italy.

Italy has great respect for Kuwait, which can be a champion in the peace process, economic cooperation and dialogue between parliaments, Gasparri said.

The Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation to Rome is welcomed, he added, as he accepted the invitation to visit Kuwait at the start of 2024 for Italian-Kuwaiti parliamentary cooperation and participate in the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between them.

Regarding his discussion with the Kuwaiti delegation of topics, most notably the issue of Iraq's cancellation of the Khor Abdullah agreement, Gasparri explained that he and Datis will submit to Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani the recommendations regarding respect for that international agreement with Iraq and the other security needs of Kuwait.

Regarding Kuwait's position on the Palestinian issue and what the Gaza Strip is being exposed to, he said that at this extremely difficult moment in the Middle East, hopefully, it will be possible to confirm the principle of a two-state solution between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

In a similar statement, Datis said that Italy and Kuwait are very close to each other, noting Kuwait's historical presence in Italy on the commercial and economic levels through the most widespread network of gas stations Q8.

He commended the bonds of friendship and solidarity for many years, even since the nineties when Kuwait went through one of the worst periods in its history during the Iraqi invasion, and Italy's strong support for the freedom and independence of Kuwait.

In this context, he stressed the mission of the Italian-Kuwaiti Parliamentary Friendship Group in consolidating the relationship between the legislators of the two countries, and then through these parliamentary relations, strengthen cultural and economic relations, as well as mutual solidarity in difficult times.

Datis underscored the commitment of the Parliamentary Friendship Group to support the activities of the Kuwaiti National Assembly and its movements in everything that could be useful to the Italian Parliament.

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:

By Day: Rather hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h.

By Night: Mild and cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**
Kuwait City 34 25

Kuwait Airport 34 17
Abdaly 34 16
Jahra 34 20
Salmiyah 32 25
Ahmadi 32 27
Nuwaisib 34 18
Wafra 33 17



KUNA photo
Vice President of the Italian Senate, Maurizio Gasparri, and head of the Parliamentary Friendship Group delegation, Dr. Muhammad Al-Huwaila, with the Kuwaiti Ambassador, Nasser Al-Qahtani, and members of the delegation.

PAHW responds to queries about housing applications

91,223 on waiting list: official

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), in response to the question submitted by Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Saqabi regarding the number of housing applications submitted to PAHW until September 26, 2023 that are still on the waiting list, stated that the number of applications in the waiting list is 91,223.

Regarding the second item of the question about non-submission of old housing applications, PAHW stressed that this is due to the citizen's desire to be allocated or not.

In response to the third item of the question regarding the solutions available to PAHW to reduce the number of applicants for old housing and its continuing approach to implementing integrated housing cities, PAHW explained that it sets five-year plans for its housing projects with focus on reducing the waiting period and addressing the increasing number of housing requests. These plans are developed according to the development plan and the state's structural plan. They can reduce the number of housing applications and reduce the waiting period for citizens to obtain housing.

Implementing

PAHW has begun implementing housing cities. It is moving forward with the completion, construction, maintenance and implementation of the South Sabah Al-Ahmad City project. The procedures for signing the infrastructure contract for the South Saad Al-Abdullah City are being completed to begin implementation.

PAHW said there are sites for housing projects allocated to it, which its Board of Directors will decide to include, in light of what was stated in the latest structural plan for the State of Kuwait, which are as follows:

1. Nawaf Al-Ahmad City, which contains approximately 52,000 plots.
2. The city of Sabriya, which contains approximately 52,000 plots.
3. Khairan City, which contains approximately 45,000 plots.
4. South Saad Al-Abdullah expansion, which includes approximately 3,000 plots.

PAHW affirmed that coordination is underway with the Kuwait Municipality to allocate a number of additional sites for housing projects, and in light of the issuance of law No. 118/2023 (the Housing Cities Law).

It stressed that this law contributes to the involvement of the global private sector and the entry of experienced people to contribute to accelerating the pace of completion of housing projects, reducing waiting periods, and creating job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth in those companies that are planned to be established in accordance with the law.

MPW plans to launch project 'Medical City'

By Mohammad

Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) reported that necessary measures were taken to launch the design phase of the Medical City project in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City. The ministry received the technical bids for the project from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), and a decision was issued to form a committee to study the bids.

At the same time, the technical bids are being studied. The awarding procedures will begin as soon as the budget is approved, and the project is being sponsored by the Ministry of Finance.

Memorandum

The ministry explained in a memorandum to Undersecretary Eid Al-Rashidi that was attached by the Minister of Public Works Dr. Amani Bouqmaz, in response to a parliamentary question submitted by MP Dr. Muhammad Al-Huwaila, that the total time scheduled for the implementation of the project is 68 months.

This will be divided into three stages - the first stage (design) for 18 months, the second stage (proposal and award) for 12 months, and the third stage (project implementation) for 38 months.

It is worth highlighting that the Council of Ministers assigned the project to the Ministry of Public Works through Resolution No. 838 issued during its meeting No. 234/2022 held on 29/08/2022.



KIB Aqari wins an award.

KIB gets recognition in the first-ever 'Qorus Reinvention Awards' in 'MEA'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: In recognition of its excellence in digital transformation, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) is thrilled to announce it has been recognized in the first-ever Qorus Reinvention Awards - MEA. The Bank's innovative KIB Aqari, which offers the first-of-its-kind real estate digital platform in Kuwait, has won an award under the "Distribution" category. The Bank received honorable recognition from Qorus, a global association for retail financial institutions, during a live ceremony in Dubai that was attended by innovation leaders from across the region.

Launched in 2023, the Qorus Reinvention Awards - MEA put the spotlight on the institutions that are innovating at scale to shape the future of financial services in the Middle East and Africa region. They are a spin-off of Qorus and Accenture's long-running Banking Innovation Awards and Innovation in Insurance Awards, which recognize and reward the best and brightest ideas. KIB Aqari was qualified following a stringent evaluation process and a specific set of criteria. The criteria included the uniqueness of the innovation, its potential as a game changer, and its capacity to generate a superior, long-term competitive edge and a significant return on investment.

Commenting on this remarkable achievement, Omar Khalifouh, Executive Manager of Digital Transformation and Innovation at KIB, said: "We are delighted to have been recognized in the first Qorus Reinvention Awards in the MEA region. The prize is a testament to KIB's unwavering dedication to staying at the forefront of technological advancements, and its continuous efforts to enhance the digital banking experience for its customers."

"Over the years, KIB has consistently invested in cutting-edge technology and strategic partnerships to streamline its digital services," he said, shedding light on the different digital platforms KIB offers customers for various needs. Its Corporate Online Banking platform provides all state-of-the-art services and products for corporate customers, while retail customers can always enjoy an on-the-go, easy-to-manage banking experience with the advanced 'KIB Mobile' application.

Khalifouh added: "KIB has successfully been facilitating digital channels to provide convenient and secure banking solutions to its customers, allowing them to manage their finances securely and effectively from anywhere, at any time."

Expressing his delight over this win, Fahad Al Saleh, Manager of the Real Estate Advisory Division and the Product Development and Support Division (PDSD) at KIB's Real Estate Department, said: "The Bank's digital initiatives have not only simplified daily banking tasks but also paved the way for personalized financial advice and tailored product offerings."

Al Saleh pointed out that KIB Aqari is a one-stop shop for real estate-related needs, and on top of the wide range of distinguished services and solutions it offers is the property appraisal service. This service, launched digitally for the first time in the country, allows platform users to track property appraisal requests and validate appraisals using a QR code. Among KIB Aqari's other advantages for real estate management are the automated rent collection service, the ability to track the status of late and overdue rent payments, and many other features that ensure the convenience of customers.

"Such efforts contribute to KIB's all-encompassing and forward-thinking digital transformation initiatives, blending the finest elements from both the banking and business realms, ensuring a modern and user-friendly experience for all customers," Al Saleh said.

It serves to note that Qorus is a global non-profit organization established in 1971 by banks and insurance companies. Headquartered in Paris, Qorus serves financial institutions on all continents, with offices in Andorra, Bangkok, Bratislava, Brussels, Dubai, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, London, Milan, Seoul, and Tokyo.



Eaman Al Roudhan and Dr. Ameenah Farhan sign the MoU.



Al Roudhan and Dr. Farhan with Zain and KFAS officials.

Zain and KFAS ink MoU to upskill 'national talent' in private sector

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: In a new step that reflects their unwavering efforts to support and grow the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in the community, Zain and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) have announced signing a memorandum of understanding. The two organizations are joining forces to accelerate capacity building, upskill national talents in the private sector, grow research & development in innovation, enable social enterprises, and empower local entrepreneurs.

The MoU was signed at KFAS headquarters in Kuwait City, attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al Roudhan, KFAS Director General Dr. Ameenah Farhan, and top executives and officials from both sides.

This partnership embodies Zain and KFAS's joint vision to foster innovation and promote entrepreneurship in Kuwait, continuing their long-term missions to upskill national talents in science and technology and empower local startups, who form a vibrant part of the nation's economy.

Under this partnership, Zain and KFAS will join their expertise and resources to present several development programs and community initiatives that upskill national talents, empowering them to enter the highly competitive market. The programs are designed to tackle the needs and requirements of the Kuwaiti private sector, with key topics like leadership skills, digital competencies, management and business skills, and sustainable strategies.

The two organizations will also host programs for capacity building in innovation and technology, targeting various age groups with a special focus on young people. Such programs will feature unique training sessions and interactive workshops that cover technical and digital skills to cultivate the youth's creativity, support their talents, and embrace their passions.

The agreement also explores means to enrich research & development for innovation, with the aim of promoting sustainable corporate practices and transforming traditional workflows. By having innovation as the main drive for corporate strategies, organizations can

contribute to achieving the nation's developmental goals.

One of the key topics covered by the MoU focuses on empowering entrepreneurs and supporting local startups. Certified trainers and experts from KFAS will join in facilitating highly specialized sessions and workshops for entrepreneurs under Zain's award-winning tech startup accelerator program, Zain Great Idea.

This agreement goes in line with Zain's Innovation Nation initiative, under which all of Zain's innovation and entrepreneurship programs fall, especially within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. The initiative mainly targets the youth, and centers around a number of pillars, including entrepreneurship, investment, startup acceleration, supporting inventors, fostering innovation, and more.

In a previous step to support the growth of innovation in Kuwait, Zain signed an MoU with Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC), a KFAS center. The agreement built a new strategic partnership that focused on elevating the digital literacy of the youth, empowering creativity and innovation, and enhancing the local startup ecosystem in the community.

The partnership resulted in many successful programs and initiatives, most notably a summer bootcamp that upskilled over 800 children and young people through 130 courses and workshops that covered the fundamentals of electronics, robotics, 3D printers, programming, artificial intelligence, and more.

The MoU fostered a joint collaboration between the two partners to elevate digital literacy, develop digital competencies, support the local startups ecosystem, empower Kuwaiti inventors and innovators to excel, and more to serve the nation's developmental, economic, and social goals.

KFAS continues to achieve its mission through many of its centers, including the Scientific Center, Dasman Diabetes Center, and Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC). Zain has had many successful and fruitful partnerships with these centers.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Foreign party stays unharmed in random emotional boycott'

"A FEW days ago, I wrote a sentence that some people liked: "Never give a child a gun, and do not give a fool a microphone," meaning that the danger of a gun in a child's hand is equivalent to a microphone given to a fool or an incompetent person who makes decisions and demands that people do such and such," columnist **Hamad Al-Hamad** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"The history of the call for a boycott is not new to us, and we know that it is official, issued by the state after studying the course of events, approved by the Parliament, and takes effect on the ground as a boycott of the Zionist entity.

"However, there are random emotional boycotts issued by persons or entities who have no capacity and do not have the right to issue them. Even though some of them have fundamental reasons, they are issued without qualification and without study.

"We mention here the boycott of Danish, Swedish or other products that were issued and accepted by parties such as the Union of Cooperative Societies and not by the state, but its effect is temporary and has no effect in the future.

"A cooperative society announces that it is removing the products of such-and-such country from its shelves, and people respond to it at the time, but because it is not studied, the one harmed by the boycott decision is the local merchant who owns the goods, because he has paid for them in advance, and the merchant of the country of origin is not harmed at the time, but if the decision was practical and thoughtful, it would have been from an official body, and its effect would take effect, for example, after a period of time and not at the moment of the event, but what happens is a boycott for a week and the local supplier is harmed. After two weeks, it is as if nothing had happened, and the products return to the shelves with full force.

"The harm of this random emotional boycott is double, as the foreign party is not harmed, but the greatest harm is to the local parties that were boycotted, and we are talking about what is happening these days in the painful events in Gaza.

"Someone grabs the microphone or the Snapchat and takes a decision to boycott such-and-such by name because he is a foreigner, and demands people are actually the same, here he has no description when he mentions the name of a specific café or restaurant, and he does not mention other cafés or restaurants, and people respond to him, especially young people.

"Rather, what is more dangerous than that is that a number of teenagers going on rounds to find out who is not implementing the decision, and even vandalize the facades and private facilities, and according to a source, if only one café closed its doors if the boycott lasted for a long time, 14,000 Arab people

would lose their means of livelihood when they were laid off.

"Our boycott is only in food, restaurants, cafes, and food products, even though the countries that we will boycott produce all the products in our lives, including cars, electrical appliances, medicines, telephones, channels, and others. But when we boycott, we boycott all what is eaten, this is really a strange matter and requires study.

"Why is the boycott random and selective, even though all Western and Asian countries strongly stood by Israel? What is more dangerous than that is that billboards spread in Kuwait on the streets from an unknown party and with the approval of the state, represented by the municipality, calling for a boycott, but it has not been specified which countries to boycott.

"A tweeter mentioned that India is more a country that supported Israel, why were there no calls to boycott biryani restaurants and lay off servants and drivers from our homes or workers in our companies?

"Whoever grabbed the microphone or his position on Snapchat or Instagram and other things, and demanded a boycott of a specific product by name, does he not realize that after the end of the war or crisis, the employer or the affected company can file a complaint against him and sue him legally?

"Of course, it has the right and is supposed to do that. Such calls from unqualified people for a boycott must not go unnoticed and cause losses and reputation.

"The most dangerous thing about the state's complete silence is that most of those calling for the boycott and those who are strongly drawn towards it are young people, teenagers, children, many adults, and elected representatives whom we used to fool with reason, as if they do not realize that the security of the nation depends on God and then on treaties with the countries that many call for a boycott while their camps on our lands...that's why where are the bright minds, as if we had never gone through a harsh experience before.

"Therefore, in conclusion, we must look at our interests before drifting towards our emotions, and God is the protector."

Also:

"We have often described the Arab world as being in a period of tumultuous and rapid change. This transformation, marked by events such as the Arab Spring a decade ago, has seen both progress and setbacks," Dr **Muhammad Hussein Al-Dallal** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"The Arab Spring ignited hope but eventually receded due to counter-revolutionary forces and a lack of effective reform initiatives. It is clear that this period of transformation in the Arab world is ongoing, and we can expect to witness further changes in terms of countries, regimes, and regional and international political dynamics.

"Previously, we believed that this turmoil and instability were limited to the Middle East region. However, it has spilled over into the international arena, with the entire world experiencing significant upheaval.

"The United States, once the global leader after the Cold War, is currently grappling with a decline in its influence and international support. It faces global criticism for its foreign policy decisions and human rights violations.

"Additionally, other major powers, including China, Russia, and India, are increasingly seeking to assert themselves on the global stage, challenging the dominance of the United States and its interests.

"Analyzing the "Al-Aqsa Flood" events in Palestine that began on October 7 requires considering the global context of transformation and instability. In the Arab world, these events are just one facet of the ongoing transformation, and it's likely that they will elevate the Palestinian issue to the forefront of global attention for an extended period.

"This upheaval will produce a range of outcomes, including changes in the internal Palestinian landscape and implications for Arab countries and international relations.

"The Zionist occupation state is expected to face internal and external crises, while Western powers may experience a decline in confidence in their secular and liberal principles and their global roles.

"These transformative and uncertain times demand vigilance and adaptability, as events and surprises continue to shape our world.

"Despite the distinctions between global, regional, and internal developments, Kuwait finds itself in a similar state of transition and political turmoil. The performance of most state institutions has suffered due to a chronic lack of reform and capable leadership within the executive branch. Disagreements and internal conflicts have further hindered effective governance.

"The absence of political experience in managing government affairs exacerbates these challenges. While occasional positive steps have been taken, they do not represent a sustained or institutionalized effort.

"Therefore, Kuwait appears likely to remain in a period of unstable and unproductive transition for an indeterminate duration.

"As we approach the commencement of the National Assembly's second session, it is important to acknowledge and appreciate the positive stance of the government, parliament, and the public on the issue of Palestine. This Arab-Islamic and humanitarian position should be lauded and supported.

"It is imperative that the National Assembly and the government work together in close coordination to uphold the Palestinian cause without creating unnecessary divisions. Kuwait must demonstrate its unity in supporting the just Palestinian cause to the world."

— Compiled by **Mai Elsoukay**



Al-Hamad

'No need to relocate 'haraj' site'

Kuwait 52nd out of 142 on rule of law index

By **Inass Awad**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: The Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous sent a letter to the Head of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri regarding the proposal of his deputy Khaled Al-Mutairi for the allocation of a "Haraj" site for the sale of used cars.

According to the letter, there is no need to allocate a new used car sale site based on the previous decisions of the Municipal Council. In addition to that, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to date has not submitted architectural plans for those sites to license and operate them in accordance with previous decisions issued by the Municipal Council.

The Municipal Council issued a decision on August 11, 2021 to approve the transfer of the temporary car sale yard located in East Amghara to another location in the same area but reducing its area to 121,600 square meters.

Also, a decision was issued by the Municipal Council on September 7, 2020 to approve the allocation of a car sale site of an area of 500,000 square meters in the northern part of Salmi Road. Accordingly, all needs were covered based on those decisions due to which there is no need to issue new allocation decisions.

Kuwait 52nd in 142: For the very first time, the Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has successfully included the State of Kuwait in the World Justice Project's WJP Rule of Law Index for 2023, securing the 52nd position out of 142 countries, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Kuwait scored 0.58 out of 1.00, with scores spanning from 0 to 1, where 1 signifies the highest commitment to the rule of law. Nazaha has announced that this inclusion serves the purpose of supporting endeavors to identify and prevent corruption while also assessing aspects included in the index that had not been previously assessed in Kuwait.

This index stands as the premier global source of original and independent data on the rule of law. It encompasses 142 countries and relies on more than 149,000 household surveys and 3,400 surveys conducted among legal practitioners and experts. Its aim is to gauge and compare the perception and experience of the rule of law at the national level.

The index further furnishes up-to-date and dependable information for policymakers, civil society organizations, academics, citizens, legal professionals, and various stakeholders. Its ultimate goal is to promote policy reforms, guide program development, and support research aimed at reinforcing the rule of law.

The index comprises eight primary factors, which are divided into 44 sub-factors. These primary factors encompass "limitations on government authority," "absence of corruption," "transparent governance," "fundamental rights," "public order and security," "regulatory enforcement," and "civil and criminal justice."



The cake-cutting ceremony.



Photos by **Iehab Qurtal**

More pictures from the event.

'5-year Schengen makes travel easier'

'40,000 Kuwaitis visited Austria'

By **Fares Al-Abdan**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: The Ambassador of Austria to Kuwait Marian Wrba says the relations between the two countries are built on a close and deep friendship, adding, "We are doing our utmost to preserve and strengthen it."

This came in a speech he delivered on the occasion of Austrian National Day in the presence of the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Nabil Al-Dakhil, representing the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Abdullah and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishaal.

Ambassador Wrba said, "The important evidence of these excellent relations manifested in the last visit made by Kuwaiti For-

eign Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah to Vienna in June where he met with his Austrian counterpart Alexander Schallenberg and the Speaker of the Austrian Parliament Wolfgang Sobotka. During this visit, the two sides agreed to intensify cooperation in all fields. A number of important bilateral agreements and communications were signed that will benefit our relations in many aspects.

The goal of Austrian diplomacy is to deepen relations between our two countries and exchange at all levels and in all fields.

Since our general meeting here last, we have been pleased to welcome more than 40,000 Kuwaiti citizens who visited Austria.

From September, we have begun issuing a five-year Schengen visa to all Kuwaiti citizens traveling to Austria. This will make travel much easier and more convenient, because the visa is valid for five years."

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

the Editor-in-Chief of

دار السياسة و **ARAB TIMES**  **SEYASSAH**

and all employees of the two newspapers mourn the passing away of their colleague

Amal Abbas Mohammed

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Ambassador Maarefi hails Ireland's efforts to welcome Kuwaiti students

Kuwaiti, Irish officials discuss bilateral ties, regional situation Study eyed on special increase for govt sector workers: official

'Concept discussed with CSC, to be submitted to Cabinet'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: In conjunction with the issuance of the Council of Ministers' decision regarding the regulation for Kuwaitization of government contracts, and in confirmation of what Al-Seyassah published in its issue on August 18 regarding developing an integrated program to review public sector salaries known as the "strategic alternative," the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munaifi revealed a study that the ministry is currently preparing with the cooperation of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to approve a "special increase" for workers in the government sector.



Aseel Al-Munaifi

the "special increase" came under the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nawaf to improve the standard of living of citizens. The concept was discussed with CSC and is in its final stages, and will be submitted to the Council of Ministers soon.

The expected step is also part of a series of decisions that were recently issued in which the Ministry of Finance participated and whose financial cost was ap-

proved, including disbursing labor support for micro-activities or activities of a special nature, and continuing to disburse labor support to the patient and the patient's companions working in the private sector during overseas medical treatment trip.

It will also be disbursed to scholarship students from the private sector to complete their studies or training, in addition to agreeing to postpone loan installments for small and medium enterprise owners financed by the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development for a period of six months.

On a related level, Al-Munaifi reported that there are efforts being made by the Subsidies Committee with the aim of rationalizing subsidies and directing them to those who are deserving.

She explained that the study is specifically related to subsidies for diesel and kerosene, and when it is completed, it will be submitted to the Council of Ministers to issue a decision. The matter comes in the context of studying the development of non-oil revenues and rationalizing the state's general budget.

Meanwhile, the Government Communication Center announced the approval of the

Council of Ministers of a draft decision for obligating public entities to include the provisions of the Kuwaitization of government contracts regulations among the contracting requirements.

Through its account on the X platform, the center said, "The step was based on a letter from the Chairman of the National Demographics Committee, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid.

The regulation aims to create more job opportunities for national cadres to work for government contractors and gain practical experience and develop technical skills while achieving continuity, development and transition between contracts.

The benefits of the government contracts list include a wage scale starting at KD 450 per month for a recent university graduate, health insurance for the worker and his family, a social allowance (employment support), and an annual increase ranging from KD 20 for the recipient of a "Very Good" rating and KD 30 for the recipient of a "Excellent" grade, in addition to a 40-day paid annual vacation, and an annual bonus."

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Europe's Affairs Ambassador Sadeq Maarefi and Director of the Gulf and Middle East Unit at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs Sean O Regan on Friday tackled ways of cementing bilateral relations in all fields.

During the meeting, they also addressed the regional developments, mainly Gaza, stressing that it is essential to reach a ceasefire, open humanitarian aid passages and condemn targeting civilians and breaking international and humanitarian laws, the Foreign Ministry said in a press release.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Ireland Mohammad Al-Mohammad attended the meeting, which took place at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, according to the release.

The Kuwaiti official spoke highly of Ireland's efforts to welcome Kuwaiti students and facilitate their affairs.



KUNA photo
Ambassador Sadeq Maarefi with Director of the Gulf and ME Unit at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Sean Regan.



Al-Anba photo

The newly-opened bridge.

5-lane bridge links Al-Khiran and Umm Safaq

A new bridge with a length of 2.4 kilometers was opened on King Fahd Highway between Al-Khiran area and Umm Safaq Road, reports Al-Anba daily.

This was announced by the General Traffic Department, noting that the new bridge has 5 lanes in addition to the safety lane, and it was opened on Thursday.

Move in solidarity with Palestinians

KTUF calls for expulsion of Zionists from all int'l unions

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Head of the Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) Ahmad Al-Enezi called for the expulsion of Zionists from membership in international organizations and unions, in support and solidarity with the people and workers of Palestine.

In a speech during a solidarity stand organized by the Kuwait Trade Union Federation in support of the Palestinian people, he said, "The union addressed international organizations and unions to assume their responsibilities by immediately intervening and applying pressure by all means to stop the brutal attacks on the Palestinians, especially in Gaza."

Al-Enezi called for issuing a statement condemning the criminal operations and demanding the opening of the crossings to bring in humanitarian aid of all kinds.

Support

He said, "We will continue to support the Palestinian people who are facing the war machine, including the working class. They are working fearlessly and tirelessly in all fields to alleviate the suffering of their people and provide the most basic necessities of life to continue the struggle and confront the Zionist war regime."

Al-Enezi stressed the rejection of all Zionist plans, and those who support them in attempts to displace the Pales-

tinian people and expel them from their lands, and the suspicious efforts to liquidate the Palestinian cause.

In this regard, the Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub said, "Since the beginning of this brutal aggression, we have seen Kuwait embrace the Palestinian cause, and every day there is an activity. Kuwait is almost the only country that takes this honorable position, which all the free people of the world must learn from. We Palestinians are incapable of doing anything apart from expressing our appreciation and gratitude towards this country dear to our hearts, small in size and great in its stances.

Genocide

The Palestinian people have been subjected to genocide not since October 7, but rather over the course of 75 years, and yet they stand like a palm tree, bowing only to Allah, and deriving their strength from their belief in the justice of their cause. In the end the power of logic will triumph over the logic of force."

He cited President Mahmoud Abbas's statement, "We will not leave the land of Palestine, and we will not allow anyone to displace us from our land, no matter the cost."

Tahboub thanked His Highness the Amir, government and people of Kuwait for everything they have provided and will provide for the Palestinian people so that they can achieve their freedom and their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

US targets Hamas' secret investment portfolio

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: According to the American CNN news network, the United States is intensifying its efforts in the region to target a "secret" investment portfolio for the Hamas movement amounting to one billion US dollars and generating money for the organization, which is classified as a "terrorist", according to the network's statement, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The network explained that the global portfolio includes companies operating under the guise of legitimate businesses in Sudan, Algeria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and other countries.

After the Hamas attacks on October 7, American officials held an emergency meeting recently in Riyadh at the terrorist financing targeting center, which includes the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, to discuss procedural steps in this regard. This meeting was supposed to be held in November, but the attacks expedited it.

The US Treasury Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian Nelson said, "After the attack, efforts have been redoubled using the

Terrorist Financing Targeting Center, which was established in 2017, to pursue Hamas, Hezbollah, and other armed groups allied with Iran, including exchange of information.

The US Treasury Department imposed sanctions last week on individuals who manage assets in a secret Hamas investment portfolio whose value is likely to range between USD 400 million and USD 1 billion. The portfolio generates large amounts of revenue for Hamas.

We cannot tolerate a world in which Hamas and other terrorist organizations' fundraisers live and operate with impunity, abusing the financial system, to sustain their terror."

Nelson urged the Gulf states to exchange more information about the parts of Hamas' financial system that are "vulnerable to disruption", and called on the member states to take the necessary measures.

On the other hand, the news network revealed that the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network of the US Treasury Department last week put in place new rules targeting Hamas' ability to use cryptocurrencies to raise money.



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LOCAL



Deputy PM and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad during his visit to Kuwait Embassy's HQ. KUNA photo

Kuwait's DM concludes Riyadh visit, returns home

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Fahad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah concluded his official visit to Riyadh Thursday that began Tuesday with visiting Kuwait Embassy's H.Q.

Sheikh Ahmad Fahad lauded the embassy's efforts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its role in boosting and backing the bonds of brotherhood and mutual cooperation between the two brotherly countries, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense said.

Upon arrival at the embassy, Sheikh Ahmad Fahad was received by Kuwait's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Nasser Al-Sabah, Military attaché Brigadier Mohammad Abdulnour, and the diplomatic mission and military attaché's members.

During the visit, Sheikh Ahmad Fahad met some

Kuwait's military personnel and conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the personnel. Sheikh Ahmad Fahad expressed his pride to the Kuwaiti military personnel in Saudi Arabia, expressing his thanks and great appreciation to Saudi Arabia, and its leadership and people for warm reception and hospitality.

Sheikh Ahmad Fahad was seen off at King Khalid International Airport by Saudi Arabia's Deputy Defense Minister Prince Abdulrahman bin Mohammad.

Sheikh Ahmad Fahad and his accompanying delegation returned home Thursday. (KUNA)

Undesirable consequences over resorting to govt bonds

Lack of a long-term strategy on tackling budget deficit poses significant high risks: Audit Bureau

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: According to a government report, the state's general budget deficit and its reliance on issuing government bonds for financing are concerning high-risk factors. The report highlights various observations and risks that directly impact both the state's general budget and the national economy. The practice of resorting to government bonds to address budget shortfalls has led to undesirable consequences, including the imposition of additional burdens on public finances when budget deficits occur as a result of budget execution, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a recently issued report, the daily has learned that the State Audit Bureau touched on the most important risks resulting from shortcomings in dealing with this issue, which can be summarized as follows – the presence of high risks resulting from not preparing a long-term strategy to deal with the expected deficits in the state's general budget; the lack of representation of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development in the Public Debt Committee to contribute to drawing up the borrowing strategy and directing it in implementing development plans and

the risks resulting from not completing the organizational structure of public debt management in a manner commensurate with the powers assigned to that department, despite the passage of nearly five years since its establishment.

The Audit Bureau provided a comprehensive analysis, highlighting critical outcomes that pose significant risks. Among these, the most prominent risk is the burden placed on the state's general reserve due to interest and expenses related to foreign bond issuances, resulting in higher costs of external borrowing compared to the returns on net general reserve assets.

Furthermore, in contracts executed with banks and companies, the Kuwait Investment Authority breached the regulations outlined in Article No. (2) of Law No. (25) of 1996, which pertains to the disclosure of commissions in state contracts.

Despite a considerable amount of time since its establishment, the organizational structure for managing public debt remains incomplete.

As part of its vision for treatment, the Audit Bureau presented a number of recommendations in this regard, which are:

1. The necessity of working to improve Kuwait's credit rating and reform the current situation by addressing all observations that have a negative impact on the national economy and the state's general budget.
2. Take all necessary measures to provide financial resources to pay the amounts owed by the state.
3. Full coordination between the competent authorities in completing borrowing operations to implement capital projects.
4. Completing the legal legislation related to public debt in implementation of the provisions of Article No. (136) of the Kuwaiti Constitution and ensuring resort to borrowing when needed and in accordance with specific technical controls and conditions.
5. Improving revenues, rationalizing spending, and diversifying sources of income, which contributes to eliminating the deficit and achieving investment surpluses.
6. Developing the state's general reserve funds and not charging them with any expenses outside the budget.
7. The need to take the necessary steps towards completing the organizational structure for public debt management.

reveals the ugly face of countries who defend the international humanitarian law in every event, and neglect it when it's urgently needed to protect the lives of innocent civilians.

Meanwhile, Israel on Saturday expanded its ground operation in Gaza, sending in tanks and infantry backed by massive strikes from the air and sea. Israel's defense minister said that "the ground shook in Gaza" and that the war against the territory's Hamas rulers entered a new stage.

The bombardment, described by Gaza residents as the most intense of the war, also knocked out most communications in Gaza. This largely cut off the besieged enclave's 2.3 million people from the world, while enabling the Israeli military to control the narrative in a new stage of fighting.

The military released grainy images Saturday showing tank columns moving slowly in open areas of Gaza, many apparently near the border, and said warplanes bombed dozens of Hamas tunnels and underground bunkers. The underground sites are a key target in Israel's campaign to crush the territory's ruling group after its bloody incursion in Israel three weeks ago.

"We moved to the next stage in the war," Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said in remarks broadcast Saturday. "Last evening, the ground shook in Gaza. We attacked above ground and underground. ... The instructions to the forces are clear. The campaign will continue until further notice."

His comments signaled the gradual ramping up toward what is expected to evolve into an all-out ground offensive in northern Gaza.

Early in the war, Israel had already amassed hundreds of thousands of troops along the border. Until now, troops had conducted brief nightly ground incursions before returning to Israel.

The Palestinian death toll in Gaza on Saturday rose to just over 7,700 people since Oct. 7, with 377 deaths reported since late Friday, according to the territory's Health Ministry. A majority of those killed have been women and minors, the ministry said.

Ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra told reporters that the disruption of communications has "totally paralyzed" the health network.

Residents had no way of calling ambulances, and emergency teams were chasing the sounds of artillery barrages and airstrikes to search for people in need.

Some civilians were using their bare hands to pull injured people from the rubble and loading them into personal cars or donkey carts to rush them to the hospital. In a video posted by local media, Palestinians were sprinting down a ravaged street with a wounded man covered in the

MP seeks

Continued from Page 1

He asked Minister of Public Works Amani Bugamaz about the maintenance of roads in Mangaf, date of maintenance works and the contractor.

He also asked Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban about the measures taken to stop the smuggling of subsidized food products, which are either sold in the black market or sent abroad; and if the Ministry of Commerce and Industry coordinates with Kuwait General Administration of Customs to prevent the smuggling of such products.

He asked Minister of Health Ahmed Al-Awadhi why Mangaf Clinic does not operate 24/7, number of ambulances that the ministry owns including the manufacturing and acquisition dates, if it is true that the new ambulances do not meet the specifications indicated in the purchase contracts, copy of the technical report, strategy of the ministry to deal with emergencies, number of individuals that the ambulances can transport every hour, if the ministry signed insurance contracts for the ambulances, cost of the insurance compared to the value of the ambulances, number of Kuwaiti and expatriate employees assigned in the medical emergency field, number of Kuwaiti and expatriate employees hired in the last 10 years, if the ministry conducted a study on the low number of Kuwaiti employees in the medical emergency field, if the ministry asked the CSC to put Kuwaitis employed in the medical emergency field under the rare specialization category, if they are given additional bonus or allowances, and if the ministry asked PIFSS to include the medical emergency technicians to the hazardous job category.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun sent a cable to Speaker of the Senate in the Czech Republic Milo Vystcil and Speaker of the House of Representatives Markéta Bakarová Adamová to greet them on their National Day.

UN approves

Continued from Page 1

In a statement on Saturday, parliament's President Adel Al-Asoomi said that the UN must make haste in enforcing the resolution, making sure it doesn't stay only on papers.

Israeli occupation's war criminals will not stop their acts of terror against Palestinians if the international community does not step in and take responsibility to end the attacks. The world's silence on the genocide of Palestinians is a completely unethical support of Israeli occupation force's crimes, he said.

Al-Asoomi noted that this silence

HH Amir congratulates Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Czech Republic on national days

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Friday to Governor General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Susan Dougan on her country's National Day.

His Highness wished the Governor General a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Saturday to Governor General Dougan on her country's National Day.

her country's National Day.

His Highness wished the Governor General a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to Governor General Dougan on her country's National Day.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad sent a cable of congratulations Saturday to President of Czech Republic Petr Pavel on his country's National Day.

His Highness wished the president a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for Czech Republic. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad sent a cable of congratulations to President Pavel on his country's National Day.

His Highness wished the president a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for Czech Republic.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf sent a cable of congratulations to President Pavel on his country's National Day.

Owner of company acquitted of charges of trafficking in persons

'Court has no jurisdiction to hear dispute'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: The Misdemeanor Court acquitted the Kuwaiti owner of a commercial company from charges of bringing workers into the country without needing them.

Representing the defendant was Lawyer Zayed Al-Suwait, who said during the court session that his client's indictment was invalid due to ignorance of the company's data.

He stressed that the elements of the crime attributed to his client were invalid, given that his company exists and carries out its work in a known location, in addition to its obligation to pay the salaries of its employees.

As a result of this defense, the court acquitted the accused after previously ruling in absentia to impose a fine of KD 8,000 (KD 2,000 for each worker) on him.

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court ruled that the Kuwaiti criminal judiciary does not have the jurisdiction to hear a lawsuit filed by a girl of Gulf nationality against a Kuwaiti woman on charges of misusing the phone, insulting her, and defaming her.

The plaintiff had accused the defendant of filming her without a hijab while she was dancing in an indecent manner inside a restaurant in a Gulf country and a chalet in Kuwait, and sending two clips of her to a person of another Gulf nationality who had a relationship with her, without her knowledge or consent and with the

intention of offending and harming her.

The plaintiff stated that the accused deliberately insulted and defamed her through communication devices and means using which she took two video clips of her in which she appeared in an indecent manner, and sent them through the instant messaging application WhatsApp with the intention of offending her modesty and harming her honor.

During the court session, the defense attorney Lawyer Shahad Khaled Al-Khalidi argued that the elements of the crime were absent and that the accusation leveled against her client was malicious, adding that the court had no jurisdiction to hear the dispute because the incident in question occurred outside the territorial scope of the State of Kuwait, based on article 11 of the Kuwaiti Penal Code.

She said the investigations by the incident officer confirmed that the incident was committed outside the country, and not inside it.

Mechanism to streamline disbursement of aid

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: In response to the recent annual report issued by the Audit Bureau, which highlighted concerns and shortcomings in the audit, examination, and review processes of the Ministry of Social Affairs for fiscal 2022/2023, Sarah Al-Dosari, the Assistant Undersecretary for Social Development Sector Affairs at the ministry, has affirmed that the au-

tomatic linkage between the ministry and various government agencies involved in aid provision has substantially reduced the improper disbursement of aid, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This mechanism has also aided in identifying cases of duplicate aid recipients, who receive assistance from multiple government agencies, allowing for immediate intervention. Al-Dosari noted

that 13 government agencies have completed the automatic linkage with the ministry, with four more agencies yet to be linked. Al-Dosari explained that the ministry has seen a consistent increase in the collection of aid debts, particularly due to the routine review by the committee established to monitor the ministry's debt balances and take necessary actions for debt recovery.

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World News Roundup

Europe

PM warns of AI risks

EU leaders reaffirm support to Ukraine

BRUSSELS, Oct 28, (Agencies): European Union (EU) leaders Friday ended their two-day summit after discussing Ukraine, migration and economy issues and also held a Euro Summit.

"The European Union will continue to provide strong financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes," said the European Council (EU summit) in its conclusions this afternoon.

"In particular, the European Union and its Member States will continue to provide sustainable military support to Ukraine," it stressed.

On economy, the EU leaders said "in the face of increasingly complex challenges, including a changing demographic landscape and growing global competition, the European Union needs a strong economic base that ensures its long-term competitiveness and a level playing field both internally and globally."

In a separate statement, the Euro Summit said they discussed the economic and financial situation.

"Our economies have shown remarkable resilience in the face of numerous economic shocks and continue to grow, albeit with reduced momentum. Inflation remains a key concern," it noted.

The Euro Summit brings together the heads of state or government of the 20 EU countries which use euro as a common currency.

On external issues, the European Council said it "is deeply concerned about the security situation in the north of Kosovo" and strongly condemned the violent attack against Kosovo Police in September.

Advancing

The European Council underlined its continued support for advancing a sustainable and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan based on the principles of recognition of sovereignty, the inviolability of borders and territorial integrity.

The European Council held a strategic discussion on the situation in the Sahel and expressed its concern about the continuing deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel, aggravated by political instability.

It was a good thing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had his video conference address to the European Union summit pre-slotted for the opening session.

Immediately afterward, EU leaders switched off and went to the order of the day - the Israel-Hamas war. They didn't come back to the issue of Russia's war in Ukraine again before Friday's closing day of the summit.

Sunak warns of AI risks: As authorities around the world scramble to draw up guardrails for artificial intelligence, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak warned against moving too fast on regulating the rapidly developing technology before it's fully understood.

Sunak warned about acting too quickly even as he outlined a host of risks that AI could bring, from making it easier to build chemical or biological weapons to its use by terrorist groups to spread fear, or by criminals to carry out cyberattacks or fraud. He said AI has the potential to transform life but it should be a global priority to mitigate the risks of human extinction it could bring, similar to pandemics and nuclear war.

Governments are the only ones able to keep people safe from AI's risks, and it shouldn't be left up to the tech companies developing it, he said in a speech ahead of a summit he's hosting next week on AI safety.

AI developers, who "don't always fully understand what their models could become capable of," should not be "marking their own homework," Sunak said.

"Only governments can properly assess the risks to national security. And only nation states have the power and legitimacy to keep their people safe," he said.

Russia names new air force head: Russia has named a replacement for the former head of the country's Aerospace Forces, who was dismissed in the wake of this summer's brief rebellion against the military establishment, according to information on the Defense Ministry website.

The website on Friday showed Col. Gen. Viktor Afzalov, who reportedly had been acting head of the air force since mid-August, was given the full post. He replaces Gen. Sergei Surovikin.

The ministry's intent to make the appointment was reported last week by state news agencies.

Surovikin was believed to have had close ties with Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner mercenary group, who mounted a rebellion in June seeking the dismissal of Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and military chief of staff Valery Gerasimov. Prigozhin accused both of undermining Wagner forces who were key fighters in eastern Ukraine.

After the uprising disintegrated, Surovikin was not seen in public for months. Reports of his dismissal came one day before Prigozhin and several top lieutenants died in a private plane crash widely regarded as suspicious.

Surovikin had commanded Russia's forces in Ukraine from October 2022 until January, when he was replaced in that role by Gerasimov.

Belarus leader asks Orban to visit: The authoritarian president of Belarus invited Hungary's prime minister to visit his country, which has faced increasing isolation over the government's relentless crackdown on dissent and support of ally Russia's war with Ukraine.

President Alexander Lukashenko extended the invitation to Prime Minister Viktor Orban at a meeting with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto, who arrived in Belarus earlier this week. Lukashenko expressed readiness "for a dialogue with European countries" and invited Orban over "to discuss serious matters."

Orban's press chief, Bertalan Havasi, said the prime minister would consider the invitation once he returns from a European Union summit in Brussels.

Belarus has come under a barrage of Western sanctions since 2020, when Lukashenko won his sixth term in an election the West and the opposition denounced as rigged.

The vote sparked an unprecedented wave of mass protests, to which Lukashenko's government and law enforcement agencies responded by arresting more than 35,000 people and violently beating thousands.



Zelenskyy



Law enforcement personnel are staged in a school parking lot in Lewiston, Maine on Oct 27. The suspect, Robert Card, a firearms instructor who grew up in the area, was found dead in nearby Lisbon Falls, Gov Janet Mills said at a Friday night news conference. (AP)



French President Emmanuel Macron speaks during a media conference at an EU summit in Brussels on Oct 27. European Union leaders concluded a second day of meetings on Friday in which they discussed, among other issues, migration. (AP)



Trump

James

America

Trump set to testify Nov 6: Donald Trump is set to testify Nov 6 at his New York civil fraud trial, following his three eldest children to the witness stand in a case that threatens to disrupt their family's real estate empire, state lawyers said Friday.

It was already expected that the former president and sons Donald Jr and Eric would testify. The timing became clear Friday, after Judge Arthur Engoron ruled that daughter Ivanka Trump also must appear, rejecting her bid to avoid testifying.

The schedule sets up a blockbuster stretch in the trial of New York Attorney General Leticia James' lawsuit. She alleges that the former president, now the Republican front-runner for 2024, overstated his wealth for years on financial statements that were given to banks, insurers and others to help secure loans and deals.

Trump denies any wrongdoing and has called the trial a politically motivated sham. The case could strip Trump of some of his corporate holdings and marquee properties such as Trump Tower. James and Engoron are Democrats. (AP)

Lectern remains out of sight: From targeting Chinese-owned farmland to banning gender-neutral terms like "pregnant people" from state documents, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders has rolled out announcements in recent weeks in quick succession, cheered on by her Republican base.

The former White House press secretary - known for scaling back regular press briefings in Washington - has also fielded questions from behind a lectern at the state Capitol. But it's the lectern she's not using - a \$19,000 purchase that's led to an audit and claims her office illegally altered public records - that remains a problem for the first-term governor.

That lectern hasn't been seen at Sanders' public events, and the governor's office won't say where it is. But questions about its cost and how its purchase was handled haven't gone away so easily.

Sanders has dismissed such questions as a "manufactured controversy" and even chided reporters for chasing what she called "tabloid gossip." But whether it's that or a legitimate matter of public accountability, the lectern purchase has drawn the attention of everyone from late-night comic Jimmy Kimmel to The New York Times and could

Shooting

Biden calls for GOP help on gun violence

Maine mass killing suspect found dead

LEWISTON, Maine, Oct 28, (AP): The Army reservist who opened fire in a bowling alley and then at a bar in Lewiston, Maine, killing 18 people, was found dead Friday from a self-inflicted gunshot, ending an intensive two-day search that had the state on edge.

Robert Card, a firearms instructor who grew up in the area, was found dead in nearby Lisbon Falls, Gov. Janet Mills said at a Friday night news conference.

"Like many people I'm breathing a sigh of relief tonight knowing that Robert Card is no longer a threat to anyone," Mills said.

April Stevens, a Lewiston resident who knew one of the victims, said she was relieved to learn that the "monster and coward" who inflicted so much pain was no longer a danger.

"I'm relieved but not happy," she said. "There was too much death. Too many people were hurt. Relieved, yes, happy, no."

Maine Department of Public Safety Commissioner Mike Sauschuck said Card was found at 7:45 p.m. near the Androscoggin River, about 8 miles (13 kilometers) southeast of where the second shooting occurred Wednesday evening. He declined to divulge the location but an official told The Associated Press the body was at a recycling center from which Card had been fired.

The official was not authorized to discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Mills said she had called President Joe Biden to alert him that Card was dead.

"Tonight we're grateful that Lewiston and surrounding communities are safe after spending excruciating days hiding in their homes," Biden said in a statement. He added that "Americans should not have to live like this" and called on Congress to take action on gun violence.

The deadliest shootings in Maine history stunned a state of 1.3 million people that has relatively little violent crime and had only 29 killings in all of

2022. In Lewiston, the 37,000 residents and those in surrounding communities were told to stay in their homes as hundreds of police officers, sheriff's deputies, FBI agents and other law enforcement officials swarmed the area.

Card, 40, of Bowdoin, was a US Army reservist. Leo Madden, who said he ran Maine Recycling Corp for decades, told the AP that Card worked there for a couple of years and nothing about him stood out. Madden said he didn't remember when Card was employed or whether he was fired or quit.

Attack

Last summer, Card underwent a mental health evaluation after he began acting erratically during training, a US official told the AP. A bulletin sent to police across the country shortly after the attack said Card had been committed to a mental health facility for two weeks after "hearing voices and threats to shoot up" a military base.

A US official said Card was training with the Army Reserve's 3rd Battalion, 304th Infantry Regiment in West Point, New York, when commanders became concerned about him. State police took Card to the Keller Army Community Hospital at West Point for evaluation, according to the official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the information and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

On Wednesday, Card attacked the bowling alley first, then went to the bar. Police were quickly sent to both locations but Card was able to escape. For the next two days authorities scoured the woods and hundreds of acres of Card's family-owned property, and sent dive teams with sonar to the bottom of the Androscoggin River.

Law enforcement officials had said they hadn't seen Card since his vehicle was left at a boat ramp Wednesday shortly after the shootings.

Hours before Card's body was found, the names and pictures of the 15 men, two women and 14-year-old boy who died in the shootings were released at a news conference.

The victims of the shootings include Bob Violette, 76, a retiree who was

coaching a youth bowling league and was described as devoted, approachable and kind. Auburn City Councilor Leroy Walker told news outlets that his son, Joe, a manager at the bar and grill, died going after the shooter with a butcher knife. Peyton Brewer-Ross was a dedicated pipefitter at Bath Iron Works whose death leaves a gaping void in the lives of his partner, young daughter and friends, members of his union said.

The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf said the shootings killed at least four members of their community.

Meanwhile, Biden called on Republicans in Congress to help keep Americans safe from gun violence and praised police for their efforts to track down the Maine gunman who killed 18 people.

Biden said the shooting and anxious search for the gunman has been tragic "not just for Lewiston, Maine, but for our entire country."

The shooting spree has been devastating for the families of those killed and injured, leaving "scores of family and friends praying and experiencing trauma no one ever wants to imagine," he said in a statement late Friday.

He praised the police for their intense search over two days.

"Numerous brave law enforcement officers have worked around the clock to find this suspect and prevent the loss of more innocent life - all while risking their own. They are the best of us," he said.

He thanked Maine Gov Mills for "her steady leadership during this time of crisis." And he said his administration "would provide everything that is needed to support the people of Maine."

And he asked for congressional help.

"Americans should not have to live like this," he said. "I once again call on Republicans in Congress to fulfill their obligation to keep the American people safe. Until that day comes, I will continue to do everything in my power to end this gun violence epidemic. The Lewiston community - and all Americans - deserve nothing less."

hamper the governor's efforts to emerge in the vanguard of next-generation Republican leaders nationally. (AP)

2 boaters plead guilty: Two white boaters charged in an Alabama riverfront brawl that drew nationwide attention pleaded

guilty Friday to misdemeanor charges of harassment and assault.

The August riverfront melee in Montgomery drew national attention after white boaters were filmed hitting a Black riverboat co-captain and crew members rushing to his defense. Video of the fight was shared widely online, sparking countless memes and parodies.



Britain's King Charles III meets residents whilst opening the Priscilla Bacon Lodge hospice in Norwich, England on Oct 26. (AP)

Montgomery police said the brawl began when the white boaters refused to move their pontoon boat so the city-owned Harriott II riverboat could dock in its designated space. The boat's co-captain said he was attacked after moving the pontoon boat a few feet to make way for the riverboat.

Four white boaters and one Black man, who was filmed hitting people with a folding chair, were charged with misdemeanor offenses. (AP)

Fishing boat rescues fisherman: A Canadian fishing boat rescued an American man one day after the US Coast Guard ended its search for a missing commercial fishing boat from Washington state with two people aboard, authorities said.

US Coast Guard Petty Officer Steve Strohmaier said the Canada-based Ocean Sunset spotted a covered life raft drifting in open ocean about 75 kilometers (46 miles) off the west coast of Vancouver Island on Thursday.

Strohmaier said the Ocean Sunset's crew found the man conscious on the raft, which was from the Evening fishing boat based in Gray's Harbor, Washington. The man was taken to shore by the Canadian Coast Guard and was reported in stable condition. His identity was not released.

The fate of the Evening and the other person aboard were unknown. Strohmaier said Coast Guard officials hoped to speak with the survivor soon to determine whether to renew the search. (AP)

Asia

SKoreans hold subdued celebrations: Halloween celebrations in South Korea were subdued on the eve of the anniversary of the harrowing party crush that killed about 160 people.

Many restaurants, bars, department stores and amusement parks are avoiding Halloween-themed events as a sign of respect for the victims. Few people clad in Halloween costumes were seen in Seoul's popular nightlife Itaewon neighborhood, the site of last year's deadly surge when a large number of revelers and others packed an alley, causing people to fall on each other like dominos.

The walls of the narrow, sloped alley in Itaewon were plastered with numerous post-it notes with condolence messages, while white flowers were placed on the ground.

Authorities have deployed thousands of police, emergency and other officials since Friday for crowd control and safety of pedestrians in Itaewon and 15 other major nightlife districts in Seoul. About 200 police officers were separately mobilized to monitor narcotics use and violent crime as well, according to Seoul police.



Oh

"I offer a deep apology again by bearing the sorrow and heavy responsibility for the disaster in my heart," Seoul Mayor **Oh Se-hoon** said in a statement Friday. "The way to overcome the pains and sorrow of the disaster is preventing this kind of incident from happening again."

Bereaved families are to hold a formal memorial service on Sunday.

In January, a police special investigation team concluded that police and municipal officials failed to work out effective crowd control steps despite correctly anticipating a huge number of people in Itaewon. (AP)

Shibuya district raises alarm: Tokyo's busy shopping, business and entertainment district of Shibuya is trying hard to shoo away visitors ahead of this year's Halloween weekend.

Banners across town say no drinking and no Halloween events on the street, and town officials are cordoning off the famed statue of Hachi - an unceasingly loyal dog - behind protective walls.

"Shibuya streets are not party venues for Halloween," Shibuya Mayor Ken Hasebe said in an interview Friday with the Associated Press. "Anyone who is thinking about visiting Shibuya for Halloween, please be aware that the situation has changed this year ... security will be tighter and it won't be enjoyable."

Hasebe, a native of Shibuya, says his 91-year-old town - founded by people from around Japan - prides itself as an inclusive, innovative and diverse place open to visitors, but there should be a fine balance between freedom to enjoy the public space and the residents' right to live peacefully.

"We just want to stress, as a rule of our town and morale of this country, that street drinking can cause trouble and should be avoided," Hasebe said. "It's time to reconsider partying on public streets for Halloween."

Fear that a large number of partygoers and tourists across Japan and the world following the COVID-19 pandemic could cause a disaster similar to last year's fatal crowd crush in South Korea's capital, Seoul, has been running high. (AP)

Sudden death of Li shocked many: The sudden death of China's former second-ranking leader, Li Keqiang, has shocked many people in the country, with tributes offered up to the ex-official who promised market-oriented reforms but was politically sidelined.

Li, who died early Friday of a heart attack, was China's top economic official for a decade, helping navigate the world's second-largest economy through challenges such as rising political, economic and military tensions with the United States and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Li was extolled as an excellent (Communist Party of China) member, a time-tested and loyal communist soldier and an outstanding proletarian revolutionist, statesman and leader of the Party and the state," the official Xinhua News Agency said in its brief obituary.

Li was known for his advocacy of private business but lost much of his influence as President Xi Jinping accumulated ever-greater powers and elevated the military and security services in aid of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." (AP)

Thaksin's daughter named Pheu Thai head: Thailand's ruling party on Friday selected as its leader the daughter of Thaksin Shinawatra, the country's divisive former prime minister, highlighting the family's continuing influence more than two decades after Thaksin entered politics.

Paetongtarn Shinawatra, 37, who is Thaksin's youngest daughter, was executed into the position at a meeting of executives and other members at the Pheu Thai Party's Bangkok headquarters. Pheu Thai is the latest in a string of parties believed to be supported by Thaksin and serving his political interests.

The party's previous leader, Chonlanan Srikaew, resigned for breaking a pledge that Pheu Thai would not form a government with any military-aligned parties. Pheu Thai finished second in May's election, but the winning Move Forward Party failed to win enough support from conservative lawmakers to form a government, opening a path for Pheu Thai to take power by joining with former political foes.

"We will not give up the original DNA of Pheu Thai, which is bringing policies that we promise to the people to reality. We will make dreams come true. We will make the impossible become possible. We will erase all insults with our irrefutable performance," Paetongtarn told party members after the vote. (AP)

27 suspected militants arrested: Indonesian police said Saturday they arrested at least 27 suspected militants believed to have links to banned extremist groups, in a nationwide crackdown as the world's most populous Muslim-majority country gears up for elections in 2024.

The police's elite counterterrorism squad, known as Densus 88, made the arrests on Friday in the capital, Jakarta, and in West Java and Central Sulawesi provinces, said National Police spokesperson Ahmad Ramadhan.

"We are still investigating and interrogating all those arrested in search for other possible suspects," said Aswin Siregar, the spokesperson of Densus 88 told The Associated Press.

Most of the arrested are suspected of being members of a homegrown militant outfit affiliated with the Islamic State group known as Jemmah Anshorut Daulah, or JAD, he said.

The arrests were made after the interrogation of 18 suspected militants arrested since Oct. 2, Ramadhan said.

Some local media reports said those arrested were linked to an alleged plot of militant attacks meant to disrupt the elections in February 2024, but Ramadhan quickly downplayed them. (AP)

Rebel groups launch attacks: An alliance of ethnic rebel groups on Friday launched a coordinated offensive in north-eastern Myanmar to seize military targets in areas near the Chinese border, the groups and residents of the area said.

The Arakan Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, calling themselves the Three Brotherhood Alliance, said in a joint statement that they have begun "Operation 1027" in Myanmar's Shan state. The offensive could become a new major front in the strife-torn Southeast Asian nation.

Major coordinated attacks initiated by opponents of Myanmar's military government are relatively rare, partly because the army has a great advantage in weaponry and trained manpower. (AP)



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, (third from left), and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, (fourth from right), with their delegations hold a bilateral meeting at the US State Department in Washington on Oct 27. (AP)

Diplomacy

Details still being worked out

Agreement reached for Biden-Xi talks

WASHINGTON, Oct 28, (AP) - US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping have agreed to meet on the sidelines of next month's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco, according to a US official familiar with the planning.

The two sides worked out an agreement in principle to hold a meeting during the summit as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Friday with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan, according to the official, who was not authorized to comment and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The official added that the two sides have still not worked out details on the exact day of the meeting, venue and other logistics.

The White House said in a statement following Friday's meetings that the two sides were "working toward" a Biden-Xi face-to-face on the sidelines of APEC, a forum of 21 Pacific countries.

Stabilizing

Earlier Friday, Biden met with Wang, holding an hourlong talk with the senior Chinese official in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The meeting, with Blinken and Sullivan present, was the latest in a series of high-level contacts between the two countries as they explore the possibility of stabilizing an increasingly tense relationship at a time of conflict in Ukraine and Israel.

The White House said Biden "emphasized that both the United States and China need to manage competition in the relationship responsibly and maintain open lines of communication," and he "underscored that the United States and China must work together to address global challenges."

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Biden viewed his meeting with Wang as "a positive development, and a good opportunity to keep the conversation going."

Biden had been widely expected to talk with Wang, a reciprocal action after Xi met with Blinken in June.

Beijing has yet to confirm if Xi will travel to San Francisco for the annual APEC summit, which runs from Nov 11 to Nov 17.

Wang is in the midst of a three-day visit to Washington, where he's been meeting with top US officials. He sat down with Blinken on Friday morning

Calif governor's trip shows US-China engagement 'possible' on state level

BANGKOK, Oct 28, (AP) - California Gov Gavin Newsom's trip to China, with the stated goal of working together to fight climate change, resulted in a surprise meeting with leader Xi Jinping and was filled with warm words and friendliness not seen in years in the China-US relationship.

The trip was seen as one of the steps in paving the way for US President Joe Biden and Xi to meet in San Francisco in November during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, but it also highlighted the existing relationship that China has with California, showing that even when tensions are high between the two countries, collaboration is still possible on some levels.

The reception from China "sends a very clear signal that working with California is desired and, at minimum, politically safe and encouraged," said Alex Wang, a professor of law at UCLA who focuses on the environment.

US-China relations have deteriorated significantly since 2018 over issues as wide-ranging as trade, the origin of COVID-19 and the national security crackdown in Hong Kong. That is true both for the two

countries at the national level, and for state-level engagement.

States' involvement with China has fallen off rapidly in the past five years, as the bilateral relationship deteriorated under the Trump administration and further soured with the pandemic, according to research from Kyle Jaros, a professor of global affairs at University of Notre Dame.

Yet, that engagement is what China wants, he said, as it views U.S. states as pragmatic partners in business without having to wade into politics.

California has a steady and long working relationship with China.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican governor, started the formal relationship with China over climate cooperation a decade ago, Jaros said. His successor, the Democrat Jerry Brown, continued the relationship even as the U.S. started turning away from China during the Trump administration. At one point, the California government even had a staffer based in China.

The state is also home to the biggest population of Chinese-Americans nationally, sharing historical and cultural ties.

for the second time during his trip.

On Thursday, after their initial meeting, the Chinese side said "the two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on China-US relations and issues of common concern in a constructive atmosphere."

In its readout, the US State Department said the two men addressed "areas of difference" and "areas of cooperation," while Blinken "reiterated that the United States will continue to stand up for our interests and values and those of our allies and partners."

Wang said before Thursday's meeting that China's goal was to "push the relationship as soon as possible back to the track of healthy, stable and sustainable development."

US officials had said they would press Wang on the importance of China stepping up its role on the world stage if it wants to be considered a responsible

major international player. The US has been disappointed with China over its support for Russia in the war against Ukraine and its relative silence on the war between Israel and Hamas.

"China should use whatever ability it has as an influential power to urge calm" in the Middle East, said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller. "We know China has relationships with a number of countries in the region, and we would urge them to use those relationships, the lines of communication they have, to urge calm and stability."

US officials believe the Chinese have considerable leverage with Iran, which is a major backer of Hamas.

Wang came to Washington at a time when tensions between the two countries remain high, including over US export controls on advanced technology and China's more assertive actions in the East and South China seas.

Judge's son pleads guilty: The son of a federal judge who was convicted of first-degree murder in the death of his wife more

than a decade ago pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in a deal reached with Puerto Rican prosecutors during a retrial.

Pablo Casellas had won a new trial after

the US Supreme Court ruled in 2020 that criminal cases require unanimous verdicts. At the time, suspects in Puerto Rico could be convicted by a minimum of nine jurors, and Casellas had been found guilty in an 11-1 verdict.

Casellas was convicted in 2014 on first-degree murder and other charges and was sentenced to 109 years in prison for the fatal shooting of his wife in one of Puerto Rico's most high-profile cases. Carmen Paredes, 46, was shot several times, including in the forehead and chest, in July 2012 at the couple's upscale home where they lived with their two children. (AP)

Retired army officer gets life: A federal judge in Miami on Friday sentenced a retired Colombian army officer to life in prison for his role in plotting to kill Haiti's President Jovenel Moise in 2021, which caused unprecedented turmoil in the Caribbean nation.

Germán Alejandro Rivera García, 45, is the second of 11 suspects detained and charged in Miami to be sentenced in what U.S. prosecutors have described as a conspiracy hatched in both Haiti and Florida to hire mercenaries to kidnap or kill Moise, who was slain at his private home near the Haitian capital of Port-Au-Prince on July 7, 2021.

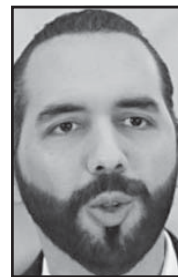
Rivera, also known as "Colonel Mike," had pleaded guilty in September to conspiring and supporting a plot to kill the Haitian president. (AP)



Maria Corina Machado attends a ceremony with the Opposition Primary Commission that recognizes her electoral win in the opposition-organized primary election to choose a presidential candidate in Caracas, Venezuela on Oct 26. (AP)



Salgado



Bukele

Lat/Am

Families hunt for loved ones: Desperate families made missing posters Friday and joined online groups to look for loved ones out of touch since Hurricane Otis devastated the Mexican Pacific coast city of Acapulco.

Officials said they were moving in supplies and evacuating people from the devastated metropolis of 1 million people.

As cellphone service returned to some parts of the city, many residents had help from friends and relatives living in other parts of Mexico and in the United States.

On Thursday there were some 1,000 people in 40 chats, which grew in number through the day. Late Thursday, Guerrero state Gov **Evelyn Salgado** followed their lead, urging people to send messages to government WhatsApp accounts about the missing. (AP)

Bukele registers for re-election: El Salvador's President **Nayib Bukele** registered as his party's candidate to seek re-election in the country's presidential vote next year, a decision already raising eyebrows Friday because the constitution prohibits it.

Bukele and his running mate, current vice president Félix Ulloa, were the last to register before the deadline at midnight Thursday. In typical Bukele fashion, the last-minute registration became a spectacle, coming amid rumors the president had been hospitalized. Instead, he exited electoral offices to a crowd of cheering supporters. (AP)

Machado winner of oppn primary: Venezuelan government critic Maria Corina Machado was declared the winner Thursday of an opposition-organized primary to choose a presidential candidate, in polling last weekend that was denounced by the self-proclaimed socialist government as illegitimate.

The voting Sunday organized by the National Primary Commission drew more than 2.4 million voters in Venezuela and abroad and was aimed at choosing a candidate to run against President Nicolás Maduro next year.

But despite some assurances by Maduro's government that the opposition would be allowed to choose a candidate, it has cast heavy doubt on any outcome of the weekend primary. Prosecutors have opened a criminal investigation into primary organizers on charges including identity fraud and usurping authority, and on top of that the government has maintained a ban on Machado running for office. (AP)



South Korean Interior and Safety Minister Lee Sang-min places flowers to pay his condolence to the victims of the Oct 29, 2022 crush, in front of the messages for condolences in Seoul, South Korea on Oct 28. South Koreans are holding highly subdued Halloween celebrations this weekend amid tight police security, as the country marks the first anniversary of the harrowing party crush that killed about 160 people. (AP)

oil down

The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel dropped 20 cents to reach USD 93.09 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared with USD 93.29 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

In international markets, Brent crude oil went up USD 2.55 to reach USD 90.48 pb, while West Texas Intermediate rose USD 2.33 to stand at USD 85.54 pb. (KUNA)

Exxon profit falls compared with record-setting numbers last year

Exxon Mobil's third-quarter profit declined compared with last year when the oil giant put up record numbers as oil prices soared, but net income jumped 15% compared with the previous quarter. It also raised its quarterly dividend.

Those lofty crude prices have fueled an Exxon shopping spree. In July, the company agreed to pay \$4.9 billion for Denbury Resources, an oil and gas producer that has entered the business of capturing and storing carbon and stands to benefit from changes in U.S. climate policy. Then a few weeks ago, Exxon topped that deal by announcing that it would buy shale operator Pioneer Natural Resources for \$60 billion.

Exxon isn't alone. Earlier this week, Chevron said it would spend more than \$50 billion to acquire Hess.

Exxon Mobil Corp. earned \$9.07 billion, or \$2.25 per share in the period. That compares with \$19.66 billion, or \$4.68 per share, a year earlier. Removing certain items, earnings were \$2.27 per share.

Analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research predicted higher earnings of \$2.36 per share, but Exxon does not adjust its reported results based on one-time events such as asset sales as most companies do.

Revenue slipped to \$90.76 billion from \$112.07 billion, but still topped Wall Street's estimate of \$89.29 billion. Production dipped 0.8% to 3,688 thousand oil-equiva-

lent barrels per day.

Exxon said Friday that it delivered its best ever third-quarter global refinery throughput at 4.2 million barrels per day.

"We delivered another quarter of strong operational performance, earnings and cash flows, adding nearly 80,000 net oil-equivalent barrels per day to support global supply," Chairman and CEO Darren Woods said in a prepared statement.

Exxon's results come just a few weeks after announcing that it would acquire Pioneer Natural Resources for nearly \$60 billion. It's the company's largest buyout since acquiring Mobil two decades ago. (AP)

Market Movements

27-10-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
UAE	- DFM	+4.51	3,786.55	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-95.82	10,408.94
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+389.91	30,991.69	PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-56.50	5,961.99
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+130.31	23,262.27	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-199.95	50,958.45
				EUROPE	- Euro Stoxx 50	-35.04	4,014.36
				UK	- FTSE 100	-63.29	7,291.28

Business

Partnership expanded to include bonds & real estate club deals in USA & GCC

Markaz & Gulf Bank extend their partnership to fulfill customers' investment needs

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: More than a decade since they established a strategic partnership, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" and Gulf Bank continue to leverage their collective strengths and expertise, in pursuit of catering to their clients' changing needs. The partnership, formalized through a distribution agreement in 2010 of Markaz's real estate funds, designated Gulf Bank as a Selling Agent of Markaz's investment funds through its Priority Banking network located in selected branches throughout the country.

Subsequently, the partnership expanded to include bonds and real estate club deals in the USA and GCC. Through this partnership, both Markaz and Gulf Bank continue to provide investment opportunities for potential investors with interest in the real estate sector, regionally and internationally.

Distribution of Markaz's Real Estate Funds

The Markaz and Gulf Bank partnership facilitates the distribution of Markaz's flagship investment products - the Markaz Real Estate Fund (MREF), distributed since 2010, and the Markaz Gulf Real Estate Fund (MGREF), launched in 2014 and first distributed in 2015 through the bank. Whereas MREF aims to generate stable and recurring Shari'ah-compliant returns by investing in Kuwaiti real estate properties, MGREF is a privately placed open-ended fund investing in income-generating properties in the GCC's most promising real estate segments to generate stable income and returns through sound property acquisition, management, and disposal. Both funds present clients with the opportunity to invest in the real estate sector and benefit from the investment advantages provided by real estate assets for a lower monetary value than acquiring real estate directly, under the supervision of efficient and expert fund managers, accompanied with monthly returns.

Capital Market Services
In light of this partnership, Markaz and Gulf Bank collaborated in the capital markets field, given the extensive expertise attributed to each of the organizations and the broad investor base each enjoys. Accordingly, Markaz was assigned as the issuance manager for Gulf Banks bonds, which stood at KWD 100 million in value. Both organizations also came together as joint issuance managers for Markaz's KWD 25 million bonds, which were issued that same year. Issuances for other companies then followed, which were managed by both Markaz and Gulf Bank, reaffirming the mutual trust in the execution and distribution network capabilities of both entities. This partnership also witnessed the fruition (in cooperation with other issuance managers at times) of seven bond issuances with a total value of KWD 455 million, which contributed to building a solid base for the Kuwaiti bond market.

Joint Real Estate Deal
Furthermore, Markaz offered Gulf Bank clients the opportunity to invest in



Gulf Bank Headquarters.

Subscription period until Nov 12

Gulf Bank commences capital increase subscription process

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Gulf Bank is commencing the subscription process today, October 29, 2023, for the increased issued and paid-up capital of KD 26.1 million. Subscriptions will be open for a two-week period, concluding on Sunday, November 12, 2023.

Gulf Bank has received approval from the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority, to enhance its issued and paid-up capital. This will be achieved by issuing 260,869,565 new ordinary shares priced at 230 fils per share. This amount includes the nominal value of 100 fils per share, along with an issue premium of 130 fils per share. Consequently, the bank's capital base will rise by KD 60 million.

Shareholders listed in the Bank's Register of Shareholders as of the maturity date on Thursday, October 26, 2023, will have access to the subscription. Non-shareholders desiring to participate in the capital increase, along with shareholders looking to augment their allocated shares, can engage in the process by acquiring rights issues. This rights trading period commences on Sunday, October 29, 2023, and concludes on November 5, 2023.

the GCC; specifically in Saudi Arabia through its Riyadh and Khobar based offices, and in the UAE through its Dubai and Abu Dhabi offices. In terms of international markets, Markaz offered investment opportunities in the USA through its international real estate arm Mar-Gulf, through Markaz's value-added US program, and through residential projects in both Texas and Missouri, which are private placements.

Commenting on the long-standing partnership with Gulf Bank, Abdullahif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, said: "We take immense pride in our long-standing partnership with Gulf Bank, which has spanned over a decade, as we continue to offer our investment products to the bank's clients. We have achieved

The primary objective of the capital increase at the Bank is to bolster its capital base and ensure compliance with regulatory capital adequacy ratios. This initiative aligns with the Bank's strategic vision of expanding its capabilities to seize future growth prospects. By doing so, the Bank aspires to achieve sustainable growth and create additional value for its diverse stakeholders and customers in the long run. This strategy aims to deliver exceptional banking services that cater to the evolving needs and aspirations of its clientele.

The prospectus and extra information about the offering process are available on Gulf Bank's official website and through authorized underwriting agents at www.e-gulfbank.com and www.kamcoinvest.com. It is important to note that subscription applications should be submitted through KCC's online IPO platform at www.ipo.com.kw during the subscription period.

Gulf Bank has appointed KAMCO Invest as a Joint Issue Manager and Underwriting Agent, while Gulf Bank also serves as a Joint Issue Manager and Underwriting Agent.

remarkable milestones together that have allowed us to enable the investment community through tailored funds, providing them with opportunities to invest in the real estate sector. We look forward to continued success and growth in the future."

In his statement, Tariq Al-Saleh, Deputy General Manager of Investments at Gulf Bank, expressed, "We take immense pride in our enduring partnership with Markaz. It highlights our dedication to offering clients an array of innovative investment products tailored to their requirements, empowering them to enhance their wealth."

He further stated, "At Gulf Bank, our goal is to enhance our strategic collaboration with Kuwaiti companies operating in the capital markets, notably the Kuwait Financial Center.

Kuwait aims to attract quality investments in crucial sectors

'FDI as a critical driver of economic growth'

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Sheikh Dr. Mishal Al-Jaber, Chairman of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, has emphasized the pivotal role of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Kuwait's strategy to attain the United Nations sustainable development goals and the objectives outlined in the New Kuwait Vision 2035, reports by Al-Anba daily.

Sheikh Mishal views FDI as a critical driver of economic growth, diversification, and sustainability, highlighting that all 17 United Nations sustainable development goals are incorporated within the seven pillars of "New Kuwait 2035." These goals are comprehensively addressed to tackle both social and economic challenges.

In an interview with the Oxford Business Group, Sheikh Mishal articulated that the substantial impact of foreign direct investment contributes to the creation of a sustainable, prosperous, and well-rounded economy. It does so by facilitating the transfer and advancement of advanced technology, fostering innovation in green industries, promoting renewable energy, and smart city initiatives. Furthermore, FDI strengthens relationships with local suppliers and producers, develops the national workforce, and generates job opportunities across various sectors.

Internationally, it supports Foreign Direct Investment Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development Initiatives. Sheikh Mishal noted that aligning with the authority's mission of positioning Kuwait as a prime destination for value-added direct investment, the development of local skills is a fundamental objective. This aligns with New Kuwait Vision 2035's emphasis on nurturing creative human capital, enhancing the quality of life, and cultivating an advanced and sustainable economy. In recent years, the Authority has worked closely with its licensed investment partners to foster local talent.

These entities have announced hundreds of high-quality job opportunities across various administrative, professional, and technical levels, benefiting thousands of employees. The programs offer specialized, accredited certificates to enhance professional and managerial skills, including financial analysis, project management, operational technology, and cloud computing.

'Dramatic drop in life satisfaction across the world'

New principles for strengthening global economy defined by heads of state, IMF, politicians & CEOs

RIYADH, Oct 28, (Business-wire): At the Future Investment Initiative (FII), a global summit, in Riyadh today, leading international figures including ministers from Europe, the Middle East, and an African head of state looked at new principles that can help strengthen the international economy amidst the growing volatility and disruption seen over this decade.

The second day of the FII, entitled A New Vision Manifest, gave a focus to the challenges and opportunities available to emerging economies. Giving the stage to new "middle powers" such as, Brazil, Turkey, and South Africa, and the summit looked at ways to improve domestic economies and international trade amidst more challenging economic headwinds, and the ongoing need for critical climate solutions.

In the day's major morning discussion, the Minister of Finance for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Jadaan, and H.E. Mehmet Şimşek, Minister of Finance, Republic of Türkiye along with ministers from the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Kingdom explored how to improve global trade, which declined to 1.7% in 2023 from 2.7% in

Other Voices

Fossil fuels here to stay!

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

Indeed, fossil fuels will stay now and even after the year 2060. Why else would the two American oil giants venture into acquiring two independent US companies for a total of \$120 billion within ten days?! Is it not because of confidence in oil and gas for years to come?!

Interestingly, the investment is in their own backyard with all kinds of detailed information on the two companies, namely Pioneer Natural Resources and Hess Corporation, the New York based company that enjoyed a crude oil relationship with KPC in Kuwait.

Undoubtedly, the future of oil is secure for years to come. This is enticing further future speculations for the remaining companies like Shell and BP. This is the same with the UK companies, with talks about mergers in the markets for some years now. Standing alone is no longer an option. The same could apply to the two European companies - Total, and Agip Oil Company, along with the remaining independent US companies like ConocoPhillips, Marathon oil, Valero, Range resources and ERO.

The amounts for such acquisitions are huge but it has become a matter of existence. Remaining independent is no longer viable. If on the other hand the oil companies don't believe that oil will remain after 2050, it is perhaps time to exit and sell their ventures. Consultations is the name of the game but in a big way.

The takeover of Hess Corpora-

tion last week by Chevron for close to \$56 billion, and the acquisition of Pioneer Natural Resources by ExxonMobil are evidence of the fact that fossil fuels are to stay. This time is different due to the huge investments on their lands and within their own homelands, and not outside their own homelands, secure and within their own established laws and regulations.

The world was waiting for some assurances from the top oil companies, and who could do it better than the two giants putting their "cash" in the right place to serve as evidence. This is needed for oil explorations and monies to start rolling again, and sharing with the oil producing countries in investing in fossil fuel again.

The next step to monitor is the future mergers and buyouts of the second tier of oil companies in consulting oil industries in combined resources, and to benefit more and ensure efficient throughputs of oil and gas.

Certainly, this is reassuring news, even though we wish the current US administration should have not discouraged oil companies in its early days in the first place by warning against fossil fuels. Now the same administration has reversed its position, after accomplishing its ignorant advice.

For sure we cannot set a certain timetable for the duration or peaking of global oil demand. For sure it will extend beyond 2026, but again, it is just a guessing game. For oil consuming countries, however, business is as usual. They are not minding watching and observing any developments, perhaps to follow suit.

For sure, the acquisitions worth \$120 billion made the headlines, affirming that fossil fuels will remain put.

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puting. They also support the broader goal of promoting the adoption and utilization of new technologies and solutions in the Kuwaiti market.

Sheikh Mishal highlighted that the Authority employs a multifaceted investment policy consistent with national and international frameworks, including the principles outlined in the United Nations

Conference on Trade and Development's investment policy framework for sustainable development. The latest interim strategy for the period 2023-2025 delineates three strategic directions: embracing digital transformation, reinforcing resilience in the face of global challenges, and enhancing the capacity to attract and retain direct investment.

Prices up 0.4% from August to September

US consumer spends briskly, as inflation holds steady

WASHINGTON, Oct 28, (AP): An inflation gauge that is closely monitored by the Federal Reserve showed price increases remained elevated in September amid brisk consumer spending and strong economic growth.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department showed that prices rose 0.4% from August to September, the same as the previous month. And compared with 12 months earlier, inflation was unchanged at 3.4%.

Taken as a whole, the figures the government issued Friday show a still-surprisingly resilient consumer, willing to spend briskly enough to power the economy even in the face of persistent inflation and high interest rates. Spread across the economy, the strength of that spending is itself helping to fuel inflation.

In a cautionary note, consumers relied increasingly on savings to fuel their shopping last month. Income growth slowed. Adjusted for inflation, income actually fell slightly. Yet spending jumped 0.4%, after adjusting for inflation. The saving rate fell to 3.4%, down from the 6%-plus average before the pandemic.

"That is clearly unsustainable, and we expect spending growth will slow sharply in the quarters ahead," said Michael Pearce, lead U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, a consulting firm.

September's month-to-month price increase exceeds a pace consistent with the Fed's 2% annual inflation target, and it compounds already higher costs for such necessities as rent, food and gas. The Fed is widely expected to keep its key short-term interest rate unchanged when it meets next week. But its policymakers have flagged the risk that stronger growth could keep inflation persistently high and require further rate hikes to quell it.

Since March 2022, the central bank has raised its key rate from



A shopper peruses cheese offerings at a Target store on Oct. 4, 2023, in Sheridan, Colo. On Thursday, the Labor Department issues its report on inflation at the consumer level. (AP)

near zero to roughly 5.4% in a concerted drive to tame inflation. Annual inflation, as measured by the separate and more widely followed consumer price index, has tumbled from the 9.1% peak it reached in June of last year. On Thursday, the government reported that strong consumer spending drove the economy to a robust 4.9% annual growth rate in the July-September quarter, the best such showing in nearly two years. Heavy spending by consumers typically leads businesses to charge higher prices.



Shadi Zahran



Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem



Jamal Al-Humairi

Bank surpasses expectations with historic KD 461.5 million profit in 9 months

KFH holds webcast for financial results up to end of Q3-2023

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held its webcast for the financial results up to the end of Q3-2023.

Shadi Ahmed Zahran, Acting Group Chief Executive Officer said "by the grace of Allah, KFH has reported a record net profit for its shareholders of KD 461.5 million (equivalent to USD 1.5 billion) for the period ended 30th of September 2023, with an increase of 124.3% compared to the same period last year. Earnings per share reached 30.81 fils; an increase of 61.1% compared to the same period last year. KFH achieved highest ever profit for the nine months period in history of Kuwaiti banking sector."

Zahran added that the record earnings achieved by KFH strengthen its regional position and contribute towards development of the Kuwait and Bahrain banking sector.

He added that the outstanding results confirm the benefits and significance of the acquisition of Ahli United Bank as being realized. It also confirms effectiveness of KFH strategy which focuses on growth in sustainable earnings along with geographical diversification and its efficient execution by the management despite many challenges including high inflation, geopolitical tensions, and fears of imminent recession.

On 30th July 2023, Zahran pointed out that KFH - Kuwait reached an initial agreement with AUB - Kuwait to enter a merger transaction by combination through share swap. During October 2023, KFH received the CMA approval on the initial merger agreement. According to the fairness opinion of the independent investment advisor and the results of the valuation study by an independent assets valuator, the Swap ratio was calculated and disclosed recently at Boursa Kuwait.

Extraordinary

He added that the merger is subject to the approvals of the extraordinary general assemblies of both banks and completing the remaining relevant regulatory procedures and approvals. Merger of business and operations in Kuwait will further improve the target synergies.

Conversion of AUB conventional business to Sharia compliant is progressing well and ahead of the plan. As of 30th September 2023, only 7.9% of KFH group financing receivable are conventional loans and advances. Further integration of business and operations is on track for all workstreams, and we are confident of meeting all key milestones and targets.

KFH ranked first among all the listed companies on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization exceeding KD 10.5 billion. Further KFH consistently ranks number 1 in terms of number and volume of trades of all listed shares on Boursa Kuwait.

KFH enjoys strong credit ratings, high liquidity ratios and healthy capital buffer to support business growth and expansion both locally and globally.

According to Fitch latest update, KFH Long-Term issuer default rating (IDR) stands at 'A' with Stable Outlook. In addition, Moody's rating for the long-term deposit stands at A2 with a Stable Outlook.

KFH continues to invest in digital transformation with the aim of enhancing customer experience and exceeding the expectations of our customers. KFH has made great progress in this area as evident by substantial increase in digital banking transaction conducted via KFH online on mobile and website. The total number of online transactions exceeded 152 million during the nine months period ended 30th September 2023, representing a growth of 40% compared to the same period last year.

KFH has played a vital role in green finance and linking investments to Sustainable development goals. KFH efforts were recognized in the form of various awards it has received including "Best Islamic Bank for ESG- global category 2023" from Euromoney magazine and "Kuwait's Best Bank for Sustainable Finance" award from Global Finance magazine.

Zahran: Record earnings achieved by KFH strengthen its regional position and contribute towards development of banking sector

Al-Mukhaizeem: KFH ranked first among the largest listed companies on Boursa Kuwait in terms of market capitalization

Al-Humairi: Profits mainly from increase in total operating income



KFH headquarters

Zahran concluded: "at KFH, we acknowledge the importance of investing and development of SME's and supporting entrepreneurship by offering financing solutions for development and growth of this sector. Further KFH continues to play unprecedented role in social commitment and executing strategic community initiatives inside and outside Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem, Group Chief Strategy Officer (GCSO), covered highlights of the Kuwait operating environment with an overview on KFH. He also shared KFH's strategy, as well as the results for the 3rd Quarter of 2023.

Al-Mukhaizeem said: Accord-

ing to the most recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast for September 2023, Kuwait's GDP growth reached 8.8% in 2022 and slower growth in 2023. Kuwait's annual inflation rate in 2023 is forecasted to be 3.4%. Kuwaiti Crude Oil Price stood at USD 97.9 by the end of September 2023, up by 1.9% from the same period the previous year. Kuwait's credit rating is A+ with a stable outlook, according to Standard & Poor's. Kuwait's credit rating was last established at A1, with a stable outlook, by Moody's. Kuwait's credit rating was recently published by Fitch at AA- with a stable outlook. Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) decided to raise the discount rate by

0.25% from 4.0% to 4.25% effective July 27, 2023.

He added that Kuwait's economic recovery is continuing, and inflation is under control, due to strong oil prices. Financial soundness indicators and stress tests conducted by the regulators indicate that the

banking system is robust and resilient to severe shocks. Banks are adequately financed and liquid. Non-performing loans are still sufficiently provisioned. Profitability is also improving. The economic recovery continues, but there are significant elements that need to be taken into consideration. Non-oil growth stays strong in 2023, with headline inflation falling and an

expected current account surplus. Nonetheless, other factors surround the baseline economic forecast, particularly those connected with oil prices and production volatility caused by global forces.

Al-Mukhaizeem pointed out that KFH's long term credit rating stands at A by Fitch with Stable Outlook, and at A2 by Moody's with Stable outlook. In addition, KFH Group was recently named as the Best Islamic Financial Institution in the World and in the Middle East by Global Finance Magazine and received the Sustainability award in Middle east by EMEA Finance, and Best Islamic Bank for ESG by Euromoney.

He explained that KFH ranked

first among the largest listed companies on Boursa Kuwait in terms of a market capitalization exceeding KD 10.5 billion.

Jamal Al-Humairi, General Manager Financial Control and Acting Group Chief Financial Officer said the Group has achieved Net Profit After Tax attributable to Shareholders for the first nine months ended 30th September 2023 of KD461.5mn higher by KD 255.7mn or 124% compared to 9M-22 of KD 205.8mn.

Al-Humairi added that the higher profits is mainly from increase in total operating income, lower provisions and lower net monetary loss that resulted from the application of IAS-29 "Financial reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies" on the financial statements of Kuwait Turkish Participation Bank (KTPB). Partly offset by increase in operating expenses and taxation.

He said that financing income has increased by KD 780mn or 98.4% compared to same period last year due to consolidation of AUB during the current period and increase in yield and average profit earning assets.

Net financing income at KD 713.9mn increased by KD 205.4mn or 40.4% compared to same period last year mainly due to increase in financing income by KD 780mn offset by increase in finance cost and distribution to depositors by KD 574.6mn.

Net Operating income at KD 739.8mn increased by KD 276.4mn or 59.7% compared to same period last year; mainly from increase in net financing income by KD 205.4mn, increase in Investment income by KD 124.7mn, increase in Net gain from foreign currencies by KD 58.4mn and increase in fees and commissions by KD 33.1mn offset by increase in operating expenses by KD 141.3mn.

Total Operating Expenses at KD 376mn is KD 141.3mn or 60.2% higher than same period last year primarily due to consolidation of AUB Group and increase due to high inflation mainly in Turkey.

Average Yielding Assets is up by 24.1% compared to FY2022 and 58.8% compared to 9M-22, mainly from the growth in Financing receivables and debt securities.

Looking at provisions and impairments, group total impairment charge for 9M-23 at KD 23.5mn decreased by KD 36.1mn or 60.5% compared to same period last year.

Gross credit provisions charge for 9M-23 amounted to KD 64.6 mn higher by KD 36.8mn compared to KD 27.8mn in 9M-22. This was mainly due to higher precautionary provision recorded during the current period in line with group's conservative approach towards provisioning in view of high recoveries from written off financing receivables in 9M 2023.

KFH cautious approach towards provisioning have contributed to credit provision balance exceeding ECL required as per CBK IFRS 9 by KD 561mn as of 30 September 2023.

■ Al-Humairi highlighted that total Assets at KD 37.1bn marginally increased by KD 99mn or 0.3% in 9M-23.

■ Net financing receivables at KD 19bn increased by KD 155mn or 0.8%.

■ Investments in debt securities at KD 6.3bn has increased by KD 251mn or 4.1%

■ Additionally, deposits for 9M-23 at KD 21.1bn are higher by KD 46mn or 0.2% compared to FY 2022.

■ The contribution from CASA deposits total group customer deposits as at the end of 9M-23 is 40% and on overall basis group continues to benefits from a large pool of low cost deposits.

■ Looking at the key financial ratios which reflects improvement in profitability

■ ROATE increased from 14.54% to 21.78%

■ ROAA increased from 1.49% to 1.88%

■ EPS increased from 19.13fils to 30.81 fils

■ Group NPL ratio reached 1.71% (as per CBK calculation) in 9M-23.

■ Group CAR ratio as of 30 September 2023 was 16.44%

JPMorgan CEO selling shares of the bank

Jamie Dimon will do something he has never done before in nearly 20 decades as the head of JPMorgan Chase & Co. - sell shares in the company. The top executive of the nation's largest bank will sell 1 million shares starting next year, according to a regulatory filing this week. JPMorgan sought to reassure investors that the stock sale is not a matter of concern. "Mr. Dimon continues to be-

lieve the company's prospects are very strong and his stake in the company will remain very significant," the filing said. Dimon and his family currently hold about 8.6 million shares of the bank. And JPMorgan has become a titan under Dimon's leadership. Dimon became CEO of JPMorgan in January 2006 and added on the chairman role a year later. The value of the bank,

with \$3.2 trillion in assets, has tripled during Dimon's tenure, and it now as a market capitalization of more than \$409.1 billion, according to FactSet. The value of JPMorgan's shares have also tripled in that time and they are up another 10% in the past year. The New York bank reported a 35% surge in profits during its most recent quarter, fueled by a rapid rise in interest rates. (AP)

Russia hikes interest rate for 4th time this year

Russia's Central Bank on Friday raised its key lending rate for the fourth time in half a year in an effort to bring down surging inflation. The bank raised the rate to 15%, up 200 basis points. The interest rate in the first half of the year was 7.5%. "Current inflationary pressures have significantly increased to a level above the Bank of Russia's expectations," the bank said in a statement. It said seasonally

adjusted price growth in the third quarter exceeded an annualized 12% and inflation for the year is expected to be about 7%. The bank said it expected inflation to fall to about 4% in 2024. Raising interest rates is intended to impede inflation by increasing the cost of borrowing and encouraging savings. "Steadily rising domestic demand is increasingly exceeding the capabilities to expand

the production of goods and the provision of services. Inflation expectations remain elevated. Lending growth paces are invariably high," the bank said. Sanctions imposed over Russia's military operation in Ukraine and increased defense spending have taken a toll on the Russian economy, notably on the ruble's exchange value, which has dropped about 25% against the US dollar this year. (AP)

Interest rates left unchanged for first time in over a year

ECB halts rate hikes as Mideast conflict spreads gloom

FRANKFURT, Germany, Oct 28, (AP) - The European Central Bank left interest rates unchanged Thursday for the first time in over a year as the Israel-Hamas war spreads even more gloom over already downbeat prospects for Europe's economy.

It is the bank's first meeting with no change after a torrid pace of 10 straight increases dating to July 2022 that pushed its key rate to a record-high 4%. The ECB joins the U.S. Federal Reserve, Bank of England and others in holding borrowing costs steady - albeit at the highest levels in years - as inflation has fallen.

ECB President Christine Lagarde pointed to a "broad based" decline in inflation to 4.3% in September, with fuel costs dropping and spikes in food prices easing. She reiterated that high rates would help drive back inflation to the bank's goal of 2% if "maintained for a sufficiently long duration."

She would not say how long that might take but told reporters in Athens, where the bank held one of its regular meetings away from its Frankfurt headquarters, that "even having a discussion on cuts is totally, totally premature."

Lagarde also did not rule out further rate increases, depending on how the fight against inflation progresses, saying, "I am not going to pass a judgment to say we are at peak."

The ECB's "message seems clear," Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg bank, said in an analyst note. "In the absence of any major surprise, rates will stay at their current levels for the foreseeable future."

Inflation peaked at a painful 10.6% in October for the 20 countries that use the euro currency as Russia's war in Ukraine took a toll. Those high prices have been poison for consumer spending, draining household finances with added costs for necessities such as food, heat and electricity.

Growth

With inflation down considerably, worries now are sharpening about weakening economic growth and even the risk of a recession. Rate hikes are a central bank's chief weapon against inflation, but they can weigh on economic growth by raising the cost of credit for consumer purchases, particularly homes, and for companies to buy new equipment and facilities.

Lagarde noted that the economy was expected to stay weak through the end of the year, while the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East could create uncertainty about the future and further hurt economic growth in Europe.

Surveys of purchasing managers by S&P Global indicate that economic activity fell in October. Analysts at ABN Amro bank foresee a 0.1% drop in

economic output in the eurozone for the July-to-September quarter and minus 0.2% for the last three months of the year. The EU will publish third-quarter figures on Tuesday.

Inflation's impact on consumers was a big reason why Europe has seen almost no growth this year, recording zero in the first quarter and 0.2% in the second. Its biggest economy, Germany, is forecast by the International Monetary Fund to shrink by 0.5% this year, making it the world's worst performing major economy. Even Russia is expected to grow this year, the IMF says.

And there's little prospect of improvement for Europe this year. The war in the Middle East has threatened to raise oil prices, though there hasn't been a major spike or an interruption in supplies so far. But the conflict adds uncertainty because Europe is heavily dependent on imported energy, which could be affected if the Israel-Hamas war widens to include Iran or its proxy fighters in Arab countries.

"The ECB has never been more worried about the growth outlook," said Carsten Brzeski, global head of macro at ING bank. The bank also seems "relatively relaxed about potential new inflation waves stemming from oil prices."

As a result, he said he expects Thursday's rate pause "to eventually be seen as the end of the hiking cycle."

X struggles with misinformation, advertising and decline in usage

Twitter takeover: One year on

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct 28, (AP) - One year ago, billionaire and new owner Elon Musk walked into Twitter's San Francisco headquarters with a white bathroom sink and a grin, fired its CEO and other top executives and began transforming the social media platform into what is now known as X.

X looks and feels something like Twitter, but the more time you spend on it the clearer it becomes that it's merely an approximation. Musk has dismantled core features of what made Twitter, Twitter - its name and blue bird logo, its verification system, its Trust and Safety advisory group. Not to mention content moderation and hate speech enforcement.

He also fired, laid off or lost the majority of its workforce - engineers who keep the site running, moderators who keep it from being overrun with hate, executives in charge of making rules and enforcing them.

The result, long-term Twitter watchers say, has been the end of the platform's role as an imperfect but useful place to find out what's going on in the world. What X will become, and whether Musk can achieve his ambition of turning it into an "everything app" that everyone uses, remains as unclear as it was a year ago.

"Musk hasn't managed to make a single meaningful improvement to the platform and is no closer to his vision of an 'everything app' than he was a year ago," said Insider Intelligence analyst Jasmine Enberg. "Instead, X has driven away users, advertisers, and now it has lost its primary value proposition in the social media world: Being a central hub for news."

Experience

As one of the platform's most popular and prolific users even before he bought the company, Musk had a unique experience on Twitter that is markedly different from how regular users experience it. But many of the changes he's introduced to X has been based on his own impressions of the site - in fact, he even polled his millions of followers for advice on how to run it (they said he should step down).

"Musk's treatment of the platform as a technology company that he could remake in his vision rather than a social network fueled by people and ad dollars has been the single largest cause of the demise of Twitter," Enberg said.

The blue checkmarks that once signified that the person or institution behind an account was who they said they are - a celebrity, athlete, journalist from global or local publication, a nonprofit agency - now merely shows that someone pays \$8 a month for a subscription service that boosts their posts above un-checked users. It's these paying accounts that have been found to spread misinformation on the platform that is often amplified by its algorithms.

On Thursday, for instance, a new report from the left-leaning nonprofit Media Matters found that numerous blue-checked X accounts with tens of thousands of followers



Workers install lighting on an 'X' sign atop the company headquarters, formerly known as Twitter, in San Francisco, on July 28, 2023. One year ago, Elon Musk began transforming the social media platform into what is now known as X. (AP)

Higher fuel costs could spell pricier fares

Airlines expect heavier drag on profit growth

NEW YORK, Oct 28, (AP) - Major airlines expect fuel costs to keep rising through the end of the year, putting a dent in profits for an industry that has seen earnings growth in 2023.

United Airlines, Delta and American have all seen fuel costs rise since the beginning of the year along with commodity prices for oil. Strong demand has so far helped profits grow each quarter. But all three airlines are forecasting yet another increase in costs during the current quarter and warning that it could hurt their bottom lines.

The higher fuel costs could potentially lead to pricier fares for travelers at a time when high inflation is still squeezing consumers. Airlines are also worried about travel demand slumping because of global conflicts, particularly the war in Gaza. The U.S. has issued a global advisory for citizens overseas because of rising tensions and the potential for violence.

Fuel prices and the war's impact

claimed that the mass shooting in Maine was a "false flag," planned by the government. Researchers also found such accounts spreading misinformation and propaganda about the Israel-Hamas war - so much so that the European Commission made a formal, legally binding request for information to X over its handling of hate speech, misinformation and violent terrorist content related to the war.

Ian Bremmer, a prominent foreign policy expert, posted on X this month that the level of disinformation on the Israel-Hamas war "being algorithmically promoted" on the platform "is unlike anything I've ever been exposed to in my career as a political scientist."

It's not just the platform's identity that's on shaky grounds. Twitter was already struggling financially when Musk purchased it for \$44 billion in a deal that closed Oct. 27, 2022, and the situation appears more precarious today. Musk took the company private, so its books are no longer public - but in July, the Tesla CEO said

on travel to Israel both factored into United Airlines disappointing financial update. The company expects profit of \$1.50-\$1.80 a share, depending on when travel resumes to Tel Aviv. That would mark a sharp drop in profit from a year ago after two quarters of solid gains.

American Airlines and Delta Air Lines also trimmed profit forecasts for the year and Wall Street expects smaller profits from a year ago in the fourth quarter.

Higher fuel prices have been pressuring margins, said Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian, in a conference call with investors.

"However, I fully expect the market will adjust to higher costs as it has historically and re-establish equilibrium," he said.

Overall, the sector has been reporting earnings growth throughout 2023 while the broader S&P 500 contracted. Now, Wall Street expects the airline

the company had lost about half of its advertising revenue and continues to face a large debt load.

"We're still negative cash flow," he posted on the site on July 14, due to about a "50% drop in advertising revenue plus heavy debt load."

"Need to reach positive cash flow before we have the luxury of anything else," he said.

Advertising

In May, Musk hired Linda Yaccarino, a former NBC executive with deep ties to the advertising industry in an attempt to lure back top brands, but the effort has been slow to pay off. While some advertisers have returned to X, they are not spending as much as they did in the past - despite a rebound in the online advertising market that boosted the most recent quarterly profits for Facebook parent company, Meta, and Google parent company, Alphabet.

Insider Intelligence estimates that X will bring in \$1.89 billion in advertising revenue this year, down 54% from 2022. The last time its ad revenue

was near this level was in 2015, when it came in at \$1.99 billion. In 2022, it was \$4.12 billion according to the research firm's estimates.

Outside research also shows that people are using X less.

According to research firm Similarweb, global web traffic to Twitter.com was down 14%, year-over-year, and traffic to the ads.twitter.com portal for advertisers was down 16.5%. Performance on mobile was no better, down 17.8% year-over-year based on combined monthly active users for Apple's iOS and Android.

"Even though the cultural relevance of Twitter was already starting to decline," before Musk took it over, "it's as if the platform no longer exists. And it's been a death by a thousand cuts," Enberg said.

"What's really fascinating is that almost all of the wounds have been self-inflicted. Usually when a social platform, starts to lose its relevance there are at least some external factors at play, but that's not the case here."

FTX founder denies fraud

Bankman-Fried acknowledges in court that customers were 'hurt'

NEW YORK, Oct 28, (AP) - Sam Bankman-Fried, testifying at his fraud trial Friday, cast himself as a bumbling cryptocurrency visionary who knew nothing about the industry when he started FTX or about marketing when he became the face of his company and not enough about his businesses to see they were \$10 billion in the hole until shortly before they collapsed.

In Manhattan federal court, the one-time cryptocurrency golden boy denied defrauding anyone.

Bankman-Fried, 31, acknowledged some failures, saying he made mistakes, large and small, but he also contested testimony by four former top executives who blamed him for the collapse of his businesses last year when a rush of customers withdrew their money, exposing that billions of dollars were missing.

"We thought that we might be able to build the best product on the market" and move the crypto ecosystem forward, he said.

"It turned out basically the opposite of that. A lot of people got hurt - customers, employees - and the company ended up in bankruptcy," Bankman-Fried said.

Asked by his lawyer, Mark Cohen, if he defrauded anyone or took customers' funds, Bankman-Fried answered, "No I did not."

Mostly unemotional on the witness stand, Bankman-Fried, who could face decades in prison if he is convicted of all charges, said: "I don't tend to show a lot of freakoutness."

As the day wore on, testimony focused on what happened as Bankman-Fried's businesses sank deeper in debt, even as he spent hundreds of millions of dollars on marketing that included a 2022 Super Bowl commercial featuring comedian Larry David, a partnership with quarterback Tom Brady and a firm that linked him to celebrities.

Bankman-Fried said he was "very surprised" when he learned in October 2022 that Alameda had an \$8 billion debt that he didn't know about, which meant the company's total debt was roughly \$10 billion.

Cohen said he expected to finish questioning his client on Monday. A prosecutor said cross-examination would last into Tuesday. The jury was unlikely to get the case until late next week at the earliest.

The California entrepreneur has pleaded not guilty to conspiracy charges accusing him of diverting billions of dollars from clients and investors to make risky investments, buy luxury housing, engage in a star-studded publicity campaign, and make large political and charitable donations.

His testimony became the centerpiece of a defense that has tried to convey that Bankman-Fried had no criminal intent in actions prosecutors say were directly to blame for the collapse last November of businesses Bankman-Fried began creating in 2017 and eventually ran from the Bahamas. Bankman-Fried told the jury that when he started his first company, Alameda Research, he knew "basically nothing."

"I knew that a bitcoin was digital," he said.

He described himself as "somewhat

inverted naturally," but explained that he accidentally became the face of FTX when several interviews "ended up going better than I thought they would."

He said he testified three times before Congress to persuade legislators to create cryptocurrency regulations that would allow products to be marketed directly to Americans.

As requests for interviews became overwhelming, "It was too late to find a new public face for the company. I was the public face," he said.

"I had absolutely no background in marketing. Absolutely no idea," he said.

His lawyer showed jurors a picture of Bankman-Fried with singer Katy Perry, actress Kate Hudson and others at the 2022 Super Bowl in Los Angeles while his client explained that he went to the game because he "thought maybe it would be interesting" and then ended up in the box with celebrities when they saw him and "invited" him in.

Most of Bankman-Fried's testimony focused on the explosive growth and collapse of FTX, a cryptocurrency exchange, and Alameda, but Cohen occasionally strayed into asking about his client's personal life and quirks, including his penchant for wearing casual clothing and letting his hair grow.

Bankman-Fried blamed himself for the breakdown of his on-off romantic relationship with Caroline Ellison, Alameda's chief executive, saying "I didn't have the time or the energy to put in what I think she wanted from a relationship." "It's not something I've been great at, being able to sustain a romantic relationship for a long period," he said.

Still, he cast Ellison as a villain in his company's collapse, saying she failed to follow his instructions for over a year to create a hedge to protect Alameda.

He said he considered shutting down the company at one point because "there might not be the right management in place for Alameda to justify its risk going forward."

When the jury was shown a photograph of Bankman-Fried with a deck of cards, he explained that he used them to satisfy his urge to "compulsively fidget with things" - a habit from his college years that grew so severe that he said he'd wear out a deck in a week. He has since switched to fidget spinners.

Bankman-Fried, wearing a suit and tie in court and short hair, said he frequently wore shorts and T-shirts because he found them comfortable. As for the scattered long hair he had until weeks ago, he said: "I was busy and lazy and didn't bother getting haircuts for long periods of time."

Before Bankman-Fried testified Friday, Judge Lewis A. Kaplan mostly shut down his lawyers' plans to show Bankman-Fried made many decisions about his businesses in consultation with lawyers, saying evidence of that would falsely imply that lawyers with full knowledge of all facts "blessed what the defendant is alleged to have done."

The defendant was extradited from the Bahamas to New York in December to face fraud charges.



In this courtroom sketch, Sam Bankman-Fried testifies on the witness stand in Manhattan federal court, Friday, Oct. 27, 2023, in New York. (AP)

'Feel comfortable and beautiful in your own skin'

Albinism pageant winner says event instilled beauty and purpose

HARARE, Zimbabwe, Oct 28, (AP) — A glittering crown on her head and a bouquet of flowers in her hands, Andreia Solange Sicato Muhitu beamed at being named the co-winner of the inaugural Mr. and Miss Albinism Southern Africa pageant.

The 28-year-old Angolan model has competed in beauty pageants in her home country since her teens and won some of them. But none made her feel more beautiful or purposeful as the pageant for people with albinism that was held this month in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare.

"I can be that inspiration for young girls, especially those with albinism, to feel comfortable and beautiful in their own skin," Muhitu said. "That is the strong message we are hoping to send out there."

Albinism, an inherited genetic condition that reduces melanin pigment production, is "still profoundly misunderstood," according to the UN human rights agency. People with the condition have pale-colored skin, hair and eyes, are vulnerable to sun exposure and bright light, and often have eyesight problems and are prone to developing skin cancer.

Although traditional beauty pageants have come under criticism for objectifying women's bodies, Muhitu thinks the Oct. 14 event where she was crowned could bring about positive change in parts of Africa where people with albinism are treated with disdain, ridicule and even violence driven by dangerously misguided superstitions.

"This crown gives me the opportunity to change the lives of people living with albinism in ways I never imagined, not just in my country, but in the entire region. I don't feel shamed, I feel empowered," she said, shaking hands with people eager to congratulate her.

The superstitions include the belief that having sex with a person with albinism can cure HIV or that their skin, hair, feet, hands, eyes,

genitals or breasts have supernatural powers to bring good luck or boost the effectiveness of witchcraft potions, according to the UN and rights activists. In Malawi and Tanzania, people with the condition are sometimes killed for their body parts.

They typically face daily prejudice despite anti-discrimination laws. She and other pageant participants talked about rejection by families and fathers who denied paternity once they realized a child had albinism.

The contestants also highlighted how they need affordable skincare services and cancer treatment but more often receive hate, mocking or insults.

Dreams

Muhitu, who works as head of the tourism department in southeastern Angola's Cuando Cubango province, said ridicule at school almost derailed her dreams, but celebrating her skin color is helping her and others push back against stereotypes and stigma.

"The progressive laws on paper and the ugly reality on the ground are miles apart," Muhitu said, adding: "It is time for soft power. We can change mindsets through modeling contests, storytelling, music and any outlets that are interesting. Art forms can be a powerful tool to change mindsets."

Albinism is more common in sub-Saharan Africa, where it affects about 1 in 5,000 people. The prevalence can reach 1 in 1,000 in some populations in Zimbabwe and in other ethnic groups in southern Africa, compared to 1 in every 17,000 to 20,000 in North America and Europe, according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Hu-

man Rights.

The 18 contestants who participated in the regional pageant in Zimbabwe came from countries that also included South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Angola and Tanzania. They included fashion designers, health workers and professional models.

Waving their national flags, they entertained a small audience with poetry, song and dance performances. They elegantly cat-walked in professional wear, evening gowns and African animal skin outfits before answering questions from a panel of judges on a variety of social and economic topics.

Held under the theme, "Into the light," the pageant was aimed at shining a spotlight on the "boundless talents" of people with albinism in a region where they often face harsh treatment and stigma, event organizer Brenda Mudzimu, who also has albinism, said.

"We are mentally and physically tortured, yet we are no different from any other person except skin color," said Mudzimu, whose Miss Albinism Trust founded the event as a local Zimbabwean contest in 2018.

The contestants were judged for their charisma, confidence, poise, quality of walk and intellect. The Mr. Albinism Southern Africa title was claimed by Zimbabwean Ntandoyenkosi Mnkandla, 26, a trainee paralegal.

Winners also received cash prizes, trophies, medals and flowers for categories such as Miss Personality and the People's Choice awards.

Muhitu, who received \$250 for winning the Miss Albinism prize, commended the growing number of events that celebrate people with albinism in Africa.

Pageant

Variety

Features



This image released by Netflix shows Emily Blunt in a scene from 'Pain Hustlers.' (AP)

Film

Emily Blunt shines in a sad familiar story

A gripping opioid drama in 'Pain Hustlers'

LOS ANGELES, Oct 28, (AP) — The wife of a man who nearly died of an opioid overdose comes bursting into the office of the sleazy doctor who prescribed it, wrongly, in exchange for personal gain. She slugs the doctor, in her agony.

The scene comes deep into the new Netflix film "Pain Hustlers," and it feels bracingly real and tragic.

If only the rest of the movie, the latest in a string of opioid-themed films, felt the same. Instead, despite a high-powered cast featuring a reliably solid Emily Blunt, an expertly low-life Chris Evans and the gifted Catherine O'Hara, the film tries too hard to be something it isn't, or shouldn't be: slick and breezy and too clever for its own good, filled with mockumentary interviews, wild montages, and other tricks used to more disciplined effect in more accomplished films.

Not that Blunt isn't an effective presence here as Liza Drake, a struggling, single Florida mom who works at a strip club but wants to move up in life - to be treated with respect, and to support her ailing teen daughter and her flighty mother. Indeed, Blunt carries the film with her intelligent and likable presence.

But that speaks precisely to the other big problem with the film, which is directed by "Harry Potter" vet David Yates and inspired by the article and book by Evan Hughes, telling the real-life tale of an opioid startup that intentionally mis-marketed a fentanyl spray meant for severe cancer pain. Here, the bare bones are the same, but Yates and screenwriter Wells Tower invent their own corrupt company and their own characters.

And the filmmakers seem determined to make their protagonist likable. In giving Liza a fairly ironclad excuse for her actions - her sweet, plucky daughter needs costly brain surgery - they take an easy way out. Not to mention that through most of

the film, Liza believes (unbelievably, really, given her smarts) that she's merely helping patients get the right drug. Wouldn't it have been more interesting to see Blunt play a character who knew exactly what she was doing?

Instead, Liza claims at the start, looking back: "I did it for the right reasons." And here's sales rep Pete, her unscrupulous colleague: "This was 2011. Strictly speaking, we were not part of the opioid crisis." Evans, leaning into the sleaze, is fun to watch throughout, though the filmmakers care oddly little about his backstory.

Then there's Jackie, Liza's mom, wacky but also steely, and, in the hands of a wonderful comic actor like O'Hara, vivid in everything she does. Lest you think Mom doesn't approve of Liza's slippery new career, heck, she joins her at the company, and even makes moves on the boss - but we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Environment

When we first meet Liza, she's living in her sister's garage. At the strip club, she meets Pete, who, mid-flirtation, suggests she come work for him, promising \$100k in commissions in one year.

Liza's daughter, Phoebe (Chloe Coleman, in a lovely performance) gets in trouble at high school, engaging in what one might call, um, arson. We also learn she suffers from epilepsy. She requires a stable environment, the doctor says. And then Liza and daughter get kicked out of the garage and move into a cheap motel, eating instant noodles. Liza reconsiders that job offer.

Outfitted with a fake resume - Pete, with a quick edit, gives her a biochem degree - Liza gets hired by Zanna, the company run by eccentric billionaire doctor Jack Neel (Andy Garcia, efficiently creepy) and proves a quick study. Against all odds, she finds a doctor (Brian D'Arcy James,

playing against type as a sleazeball pain doc in need of a hair transplant) to write a prescription for Lonafen, a sublingual fentanyl spray. Soon she's corralled him into a "speakers program" designed to bribe more doctors.

Moving quickly from sundresses to color-blocked power ensembles, Liza starts raking in commissions, and she and Pete hire a team of hungry salespeople. Pete likens what they're doing to driving a few miles over the speed limit - technically illegal, but everybody does it. Meanwhile, Liza's suddenly able to afford a condo fit for a king, buy Mom a car, and enroll Phoebe in private school.

Zanna, named for Neel's own late wife, goes public, and is the industry's new kid on the block. The company's celebratory slogan, shouted at decadent parties: "We Own Cancer!"

But things start getting uncomfortable. Neel, increasingly paranoid, rejects Liza's proposed compliance plan. Then, he decides the best way to improve flat sales is to market Lonafen off-label - for any kind of pain, even headaches.

Liza is aghast - Pete, not so much - but her daughter's condition worsens, and Medicaid won't cover the operation. She needs cash. Then, patients start overdosing. The look one man's widow gives a weeping Liza, wordless, is chilling.

The pace picks up as the law starts bearing down. But ultimately, "Pain Hustlers" feels like a retreading of the same ground covered in other recent works, bringing nothing especially new to the table and, in splitting the stylistic difference between slick/breezy and poignant/authentic, succeeding fully at neither.

"Pain Hustlers," a Netflix release that begins streaming Friday, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for language throughout, some sexual content, nudity and drug use." Running time: 122 minutes. Two stars out of four.

NEW YORK: Richard Moll, a character actor who found lasting fame as an eccentric but gentle giant bailiff on the original "Night Court" sitcom, has died. He was 80.

Moll died Thursday at his home in Big Bear Lake, California, according to Jeff Sanderson, a publicist at Chasen & Company.

Moll played "Bull" Shannon on NBC's "Night Court" from 1984-1992 alongside stars Harry Anderson and John Larroquette. His character formed a close friendship with the court's other bailiff, Roz Russell, played by Marsha Warfield. Bull was known for his catchphrase, "Ohh-kay," and a dim but sweet world view.

After "Night Court" ended, Moll contributed his trademark gravelly voice to various video games and comic book projects like "Batman: The Animated Series" as Harvey Dent and appeared in horror films like "Ghost Shark" (2013) and "Slay Belles" (2018).

He voiced Scorpion on the 1990s "Spider-Man: The Animated Series" and had small parts in 1994's "The Flintstones," the Arnold Schwarzenegger comedy "Jingle All the Way" and "Scary Movie 2."

The towering actor - he was 6-feet 8-inches tall - did not join the reboot of "Night Court" starring Larroquette. The original "Night Court" finale ended with his character being abducted by aliens who needed someone tall to reach the things on their highest shelves.

Moll is survived by his children, Chloe and Mason Moll; ex-wife, Susan Moll; and stepchildren Cassandra Card and Morgan Ostling. (AP)

NEW YORK: Football fans in Germany who couldn't get tickets for the two NFL games in Frankfurt have a new viewing option: their local movie theater.

The theater chain CinemaxX in partnership with DAZN said Friday it will screen the games at 18 of its locations around Germany.

The Kansas City Chiefs face the Miami Dolphins on Nov. 5 at Deutsche Bank Park and the New England Patriots play the Indianapolis Colts there a week later. Tickets to the games sold out in minutes.

"The interest in experiencing the games live with other fans is

accordingly high," DAZN said in a statement. "Fans can watch the two Frankfurt games on big screens with popcorn, nachos and cool drinks."

DAZN Group signed a 10-year agreement with the NFL to deliver the Game Pass International service to fans outside the United States beginning this



Brady



Moll

season. DAZN has aired games in Germany since 2016.

Germany has become the NFL's largest market in Europe and the league staged its first-ever regular-season game in the country last year when Tom Brady led the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to a 21-16 win over the Seattle Seahawks at Allianz Arena in Munich.

The league estimates that it has 18 million fans in Germany, 3.6 million of which are "avid" fans, Alexander Steinforth, the NFL's general manager for Germany, told The Associated Press.

"The excitement for the NFL coming over has been so massive that I think no matter which of the 32 teams that you would have put

out on the field would have resulted in massive interest and a very quick sell out," Steinforth said.

Interest in last year's game also prompted alternative viewing options. Fans packed the Audi Dome basketball arena in Munich to watch, and Deutsche Bank Park showed the game on a big screen. (AP)

ARABIC TIMES

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2023

People & Places

Music

Debut act

Miami duo return to their country roots

MIAMI, Oct 28, (AP): Growing up in Miami in the '80s and '90s, **Leo Brooks** had a secret love that he always was afraid to share with his friends: He was a country music fan.

While hanging out with his friends in high school, Brooks listened to rap, hip hop, alternative rock and other popular music, but at home with his family, he listened to country. The Miami native's love of country was inherited from his father and grandfather, who didn't come from Nashville, but from Roatan, a small island off the coast of Honduras.

"The biggest thing there is Reggae music and classic country music," Brooks said. "So I started learning how to play music to George Jones and Hank Williams and Willie Nelson, all the country classics. It wasn't so popular back then in Miami, so that's something I kept to myself."

Now Brooks is returning to Miami as half of the country duo Neon Union. They are slated to perform at the Country Bay Music Festival scheduled for Nov. 11-12 at the historic Miami Marine Stadium, just southeast of downtown on Virginia Key in Biscayne Bay.

The headliners scheduled for the event are Thomas Rhett, Sam Hunt, Chris Young, Lee Brice and Lainey Wilson. Other performers include Randy Houser, Chris Lane, LOCASH, Elle King, Restless Road, Blanco Brown, Josh Ross, Hailey Whitters, David J. and Kat & Alex.

"This is a big thing for me," Brooks said. "I never would have thought that I would be performing at a country festival as an artist in Miami, being from Miami. I'm going to feel like I'm floating when I perform that day for sure."

Brooks said he never really thought about being anything other than a musician, but it took a while to start his country career. The 40-year-old got a gig as Lauryn Hill's bass player shortly after graduating from high school and stayed with the rapper and singer for about a decade. He then joined hip-hop-artist Pitbull, also a Miami native, for another decade.

Collaborated

During Brooks' time with Pitbull, they collaborated with Tim McGraw and other country artists. Brooks started sharing some of his country songs with Pitbull, hoping to pass them along to established country acts, but Pitbull encouraged Brooks to perform the songs himself.

"I'm the guy in the background," Brooks said. "But he kept telling me every day nonstop, 'You gotta do it.'"

Brooks said Pitbull hooked him up with some promoters, landing Brooks a spot at a country music festival. Brooks eventually met his Neon Union partner, North Carolina native Andrew Millsaps, through mutual friends and recorded a five-song demo the next day.

"While we were recording, our hairs were standing up," Brooks said. "We're like, 'This is a... thing. This is meant to be.' And that's just the feeling I still have."

The duo released their first single, "Bout Damn Time," in November 2022.

Growing up with country music allowed Brooks to lock into the feel of it, but he can't ignore the Latin influence of his Miami upbringing, he said.

"That gives it a little flavor in our sound for sure," Brooks said.

Miami already is considered a hub for Latin, hip hop and electronic music, but Country Bay organizer Nelson Albareda, the CEO of Loud and Live, said South Florida has no shortage of country fans.

More than a third of all country music fans in the U.S. identified as people of Latin descent and Miami's reputation as a cultural melting pot, as well as an entertainment capital, encouraged promoters to bring a massive country music event to South Florida, Albareda said.

"We believe that this could become a destination festival, where people come for Miami and country music," Albareda said. "And we're seeing that in our tickets sales. We are selling an equal amount of tickets in South Florida as we are outside of South Florida."

Albareda said his company began testing the Country Bay concept in 2017, though plans were delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Back on track, Loud and Live is already working on the lineup of performers for next year and Albareda hopes the festival can become a permanent, annual event.

Country Bay is scheduled to be held at the Miami Marine Stadium, taking advantage of the view across Biscayne Bay toward Miami's skyline. City officials and historic preservationists have worked to restore and renovate the structure, and Albareda said his company wants to support those efforts.

"We have a long-term commitment to Country Bay as a festival, and we have a long-term commitment to Miami," Albareda said.

Besides hosting one of the largest country events in Miami's music history, the Country Bay Music Festival will include a country-themed bar, games, food, line dancing, a mechanical bull and a giant Ferris wheel. The festival also has been selling anchorage access passes enabling fans to attend the event by boat or yacht. Organizers expect as many as 20,000 people.

Virginia Key, the site of Miami Marine Stadium, is a small barrier island in Biscayne Bay linked to the mainland by a single causeway.

The limited access created transportation problems for the Ultra Music Festival when the electronic music event temporarily moved from Bayfront Park in downtown Miami to the Miami Marine Stadium in 2019.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: "Highway Desperado" is the 11th studio album from mainstream country juggernaut **Jason Aldean**, released on the heels of his first Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 single, the controversy-creating "Try That in a Small Town." Produced by **Michael Knox**, Aldean says "Highway Desperado" takes inspiration from his live show.

"I think when I look back on it, I built my career early on my live show, and have been on the road touring since I was 18 years old," Aldean said in a press release. "For us, touring is our favorite part. Getting on the bus and going town to town and playing our shows and doing our thing and seeing the fans... the title for the tour and album was really inspired from that."



Brooks



The Beatles, (foreground from left), Paul McCartney, George Harrison, John Lennon and Ringo Starr on drums perform on the CBS 'Ed Sullivan Show' in New York on Feb. 9, 1964. Sixty years after the onset of Beatlemania and with two of the quartet now dead, artificial intelligence has enabled the release of a 'new' Beatles song. 'Now And Then,' will be available Thursday, Nov. 2. (AP)

Music

'Now And Then' brought to life through AI

Last new Beatles song out next week

NEW YORK, Oct 28, (AP): Sixty years after the onset of Beatlemania and with two of the quartet now dead, artificial intelligence has enabled the release next week of what is promised to be the last "new" Beatles song.

The track, called "Now And Then," will be available Thursday, Nov. 2, as part of a single paired with "Love Me Do," the very first Beatles single that came out in 1962 in England, it was announced Thursday.

"Now And Then" comes from the same batch of unreleased demos written by the late John Lennon, which were taken by his former bandmates to construct the songs "Free As A Bird" and "Real Love," released in the mid-1990s.

Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and George Harrison worked on "Now And Then" in the same sessions, but technological limitations stood in the way.

With the help of artificial intelligence, director Peter Jackson cleared those problems up by "separating" Lennon's original vocals from a piano used in the late 1970s. The much clearer vocals allowed McCartney and Starr to complete the track last year.

Tribute

The survivors packed plenty into it. The new single contains guitar that Harrison had recorded nearly three decades ago, a new drum part by Starr, with McCartney's bass, piano and a slide guitar solo he added as a tribute to Harrison, who died in 2001. McCartney and Starr sang backup.

McCartney also added a string arrangement written with the help of Giles Martin, son of the late Beatles producer George Martin.

As if that wasn't enough, they weaved in backing vocals from the original Beatles recordings of "Here, There and Everywhere," "Eleanor Rigby" and "Because."

"There it was, John's voice, crystal clear," McCartney said in the announcement. "It's quite emotional. And we all play on it, it's a genuine Beatles record-

ing. In 2023 to still be working on Beatles music, and about to release a new song the public haven't heard, I think it's quite an exciting thing."

Harrison's widow, Olivia, said he felt in the 1990s that the technical problems made it impossible to release a song that met the band's standards. With the improvements, "he would have wholeheartedly" joined Paul and Ringo in completing the song now if

how individuals across the globe interact with celebrities and brands," he said in a statement.

Tuan's hope with Digital Mark is that as the technology advances, so too will fans' relationships with his AI character - and that they'll get to communicate with him in languages beyond English.

Getting Digital Mark to mirror the real Mark Tuan was an extensive process, involving several days of filming in a motion capture body-suit. Tuan spent a full day demonstrating emotive facial expressions for Digital Mark to learn from, and then considerable time in his studio so "they can get my voice recognition," he says.

Right now, Digital Mark "just stands there ... but maybe in the future, they're going to incorporate me walking around," he says.

The technology is in its early days - Tuan says Digital Mark has been spreading "false rumors" about a nonexistent tour - but he's excited about how the avatar will evolve. Fans have already been using Digital Mark to "troll" Tuan, playfully bugging the AI Mark about things like tour dates and new music - "which is the relationship the fans have with me," he says with a laugh.

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he were still alive, she said.

Next Wednesday, the day before the song's release, a 12-minute film that tells the story of the new recording will be made public.

Later in the month, expanded versions of the Beatles' compilations "1962-1966" and "1967-1970" will be released. "Now And Then," despite coming much later than 1970, will be added to the latter collection.

celebrity giant pandas will be heading home a little earlier than expected. Zoo officials told The Associated Press on Thursday that adult bears **Mei Xiang** and **Tian Tian** and their cub **Xiao Qi Ji** will be returning to China sometime in mid-November.

The zoo's exchange agreement with the Chinese government, originally brokered by President **Richard Nixon** 50 years ago, expires Dec. 7. Ongoing negotiations to extend the agreement haven't produced results, amid speculation from China-watchers that **Beijing** is gradually pulling its pandas from Western nations due to deteriorating diplomatic relations with the US and other countries.

Panda-philies around the country had circled the December date as the last chance to view the iconic bears. But the zoo, for undisclosed reasons, said the departure would happen about three weeks earlier.

"Discussions with our Chinese partner, the China Wildlife Conservation Association, to develop a future giant panda program will likely start after the current pandas have returned to China," zoo spokesperson Annalisa Meyer said in an email. "After 51 years of success, we remain committed to giant panda conservation. ... It's our intention to have giant pandas at the Zoo again and continue our research here and conservation work in China." (AP)



Mexican-Salvadoran director **Tatiana Huezos** poses for photos with her award for best documentary by a female director and public documentary choice for 'El eco,' at the Morelia Film Festival, Friday, Oct. 27, in Morelia, Mexico. (AP)



Rushdie



Young Dolph

Variety

MEMPHIS, Tenn.: A judge removed himself from the **Young Dolph** murder case Friday after he was ordered to do so by a Tennessee appeals court, which questioned whether he could be impartial to a man charged with killing the rapper two years ago.

Shelby County Criminal Court Judge **Lee Coffee** asked the court clerk to assign a new judge in the high-profile case. The Tennessee Court of Appeals issued its order Sept. 28 after Coffee refused to step down at the request of the lawyer for **Justin Johnson**, who is charged with two other men in the fatal shooting of Young Dolph in November 2021.

The lawyer, **Luke Evans**, had argued that Coffee could not be impartial after the judge failed to inform him about an order limiting Johnson's ability to communicate with people outside the jail other than Evans.

Johnson and **Cornelius Smith** have pleaded not guilty in the killing of Young Dolph, whose real name was **Adolph Thornton Jr.** The rapper, producer and independent music label owner was gunned down in a daylight ambush at a Memphis bakery, where he was buying cookies while back in his hometown to visit a sick relative and hand out Thanksgiving turkeys. (AP)

MAYVILLE, N.Y.: Author **Salman Rushdie** could take the stand against the man charged with repeatedly stabbing him before a lecture when the defendant goes on trial early next year, a prosecutor said Friday.

"He is on the people's witness list right now heading into trial," Chautauque County District Attorney **Jason Schmidt** said, following a court hearing in which the judge scheduled the trial for Jan. 8.

Hadi Matar, 25, has pleaded not guilty to charges of assault and attempted murder. Authorities said the **New Jersey** resident left the audience and rushed the stage where the "The Satanic Verses" author was about to speak in August 2022, stabbing him more than a dozen times before onlookers intervened.

Rushdie, 76, who was left blinded in his right eye and with a damaged left hand, wrote about the attack in a memoir: "Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder," due out April 16.

Matar has been in custody since immediately after the attack at the Chautauque Institution, an arts and intellectual retreat in the rural southwest corner of **New York** state. (AP)

WASHINGTON: The National Zoo's three



In this photo supplied by pageant organizer **John Karimazonde** of the Mr and Miss Albinism Southern Africa Pageant, the winners **Andreia Solange Sicato Muhitu**, (left), and **Ntandoyenkosi Mnkandla** are seated, at the Harare International Conference Centre, Saturday Oct. 14. (AP) - **Details Page 11**

Kuwait ranks first in Arab world for overweight, obese population

Stomach botox is new cutting-edge obesity therapy: Dr Al-Hashash

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: According to a consultant in internal medicine and gastroenterologist Dr. Wafaa Al-Hashash, Kuwait is considered the first in the Arab world for the highest number of overweight and obese people with a rate of 77 percent overweight and 40 percent obese.

In an exclusive interview with Al-Seyassah daily, she affirmed that obesity is the fifth risk factor causing death in Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Hashash praised the techniques for treating obesity and weight gain in Kuwait and around the world, stressing that "Stomach Botox" is considered one of the latest obesity treatments, and is suitable for overweight patients with a body mass between 27 and 40.

At the beginning of the interview, Dr. Al-Hashash highlighted the dangers of obesity by saying, "There is no doubt that obesity rates around the world have increased significantly. In Kuwait, obesity is considered the fifth major risk factor for deaths. Reducing its rate is necessary for treatment and prevention of its diseases. It is no secret that the rate of obesity is more widespread among adolescents and children, and constitutes a warning bell for the next generation.

The prevalence of overweight and obesity is widespread among the Kuwaiti population in the age group between 18 and 29 years. Kuwait ranks first in the Arab world in terms of obesity and overweight, with a rate of 77 percent overweight and 40 percent of the population.

The risk of obesity in general lies in the diseases and symptoms that accompany it, the most important of which are general fatigue, shortness of breath, difficulty in sleeping, snoring, joint and spine pain, and esophageal reflux, as well as early puberty in girls, irregular menstruation in girls, and delayed puberty in boys."

Diseases

When asked "You recently mentioned that Stomach Botox is the latest technology in treating obesity. What do you mean by Stomach Botox?", she replied, "It is a non-surgical procedure, performed through gastroscopy. It helps accelerate weight loss by using Botox injections into the stomach to relax its muscles. This temporarily reduces muscle contractions in the stomach, in addition to helping the patient feel full for a longer period than usual to reduce food intake.

The effect of Botox lasts from five to six months, and the injections can be repeated after six months.

Botox injections are considered a new revolution in the world of weight loss and obesity treatment. It is a non-surgical procedure that helps people who are overweight or obese and have exhausted all attempts without any success."

When asked if Stomach Botox is suitable for all patients, or if there are exceptions, Dr. Al-Hashash replied, "Stomach Botox is not suitable for all patients. People who suffer from significant weight gain are not eligible for this procedure. This technique is suitable for patients who are overweight and obese, with a body mass index

(BMI) between 27 and 40, who suffer from poor appetite control, and who have had previous attempts to follow a healthy lifestyle without benefit.

Botox is also not suitable for pregnant or breastfeeding women, children younger than 18 years, or people who suffer from an allergy to Botox.

It is suitable for people who have undergone gastric sleeve surgery and gained weight after the operation, people who suffer from binge eating and addiction, and people who suffer from health problems as a result of obesity, such as high blood pressure or pain in the joints, bones, and spine."

When asked if Botox treatment is safe, and if there are any side effects associated with it, Dr. Al-Hashash said, "Stomach Botox is a global treatment, and was recognized in Kuwait recently. It is approved in many countries of the world, such as America and Europe, and some Arab countries as well such as Egypt and Jordan.

Injection

It is a safe treatment and does not cause any health problems for patients in general and there are no cracks or external wounds as a result of the injection.

As for the side effects of Botox injections, they are actually what we need for stomach injections, meaning that they cause indigestion for the patient when he starts eating, and this is what we need to lose weight.

The patient begins to gradually reduce the amount of food and then lose weight, and the symptoms continue for two weeks.

It must be noted that Botox injections do not increase fat burning, but rather help the person feel full. The effect of Botox is temporary and can be restored after six months. It is necessary to follow up with a nutritionist, exercise, and follow a diet after the injection."

When asked "What is the injection mechanism?", Dr. Al-Hashash said, "Botox is injected through a gastroscopy. The patient undergoes the injection after fasting for at least 12 hours to ensure that the stomach is empty of food.

The doctor then injects certain amounts of Botox into the muscles in the stomach wall, which are the places that send signals of satiety and fullness, after which the person begins to feel full for a long time.

The duration of the injection takes between 10 to 15 minutes, and does not require complete anesthesia, but only local anesthesia. The patient does not need to stay in the hospital, and the results of the injection do not appear immediately after the operation, but rather it takes between two to three weeks for the results to appear."



Dr. Wafaa Al-Hashash



Photos by Mohamed Morsi

Photos from the event

Experts highlight latest diagnostic, therapeutic methods

Colorectal cancer tops among Kuwaiti men

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Chairman of the Council of Radiology and Radiotherapy departments at the Ministry of Health Dr. Buthaina Al-Kandari says colorectal cancer ranks first among the most common cancers among Kuwaiti men, and third among the most common cancers among Kuwaiti women following breast cancer and thyroid cancer.

In a special press statement issued to Al-Seyassah on the sidelines of the inauguration of a colorectal cancer imaging workshop yesterday under the patronage of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi in the presence of an elite group of doctors and specialists inside and outside Kuwait, Dr. Al-Kandari said the high rates of colorectal cancer in the country was a major incentive and reason for shedding light on the latest diagnostic and therapeutic methods for the disease, including providing continuous training techniques through cooperation with the best international centers.

She highlighted the importance of workshops and scientific forums to develop the skills of doctors and specialists in various scientific fields through access to global expertise and experiences.

Dr. Al-Kandari affirmed the role of the Kuwait Cancer Control Center as one of the best oncology treatment centers in the region, as it is equipped with the best and latest international technologies in order to achieve the highest levels of diagnostic and therapeutic services.

In addition, Head of the Radiology Department at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center and Head of the

Firm distributes flowers, souvenirs at Assima Mall

Lexus holds breast cancer awareness drive

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: The Lexus L-finesse boutique in the Assima Mall recently hosted a medical team from Dar Al Shifa Hospital, as part of a health awareness program about the importance of early detection for breast cancer.

It is worth noting that Lexus is keen to organize such programs to promote the concepts of preventive health among people in general and among women in particular.

As part of this awareness program, Dr. Reem Al-Saif - Diagnostic Radiology Consultant at Dar Al Shifa Hospital provided explanation and health awareness about the importance of early screening for breast cancer to avoid the risks of its development. She stated that one in every 8 women is at risk of contracting breast cancer. The team also conducted preliminary examinations for the visitors who were interested.

A representative at Lexus said "We at Lexus AlSayer have taken all necessary preventive measures, including tests and diagnosis, with the aim of caring for women in general, so that will reflect positively on their elegance, health, home and community".

As a gesture of appreciation to the ladies who visited the boutique and



A photo from the event.

listened to the explanation about breast cancer, members of "Lexus L-finesse" boutique team in Assima Mall distributed bouquets of flowers and souvenirs to the attendees.

Lexus, as a luxury Japanese brand, adopts such awareness activities, to re-

fect the extent of interest in women's health and their role in society, and the need to commit to providing the support they deserve in accordance with the highest levels of exceptional hospitality within a special and distinguished atmosphere.

Colorectal Tumor Imaging Workshop Dr. Mashaal Bandar said the workshop will be held for three days from October 26 to October 28 under the umbrella of the Council of Radiology and Radiotherapy departments and under the patronage of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

In a special press statement to Al-Seyassah, Dr. Bandar explained that the workshop hosts three lecturers from Europe with the aim of learning about the latest developments in imaging tumors of the rectum and colon through lectures and workshops. About 180 doctors participated, including

120 doctors in the workshops and 60 doctors in the lectures. The workshop is part of the ongoing medical education program at the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialties. Participants in the workshop are given 16 continuing medical education points and 10 points in the lecture.

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Celtics edge Heat in rematch

Wembanyama posts 21 points, 12 rebounds as Spurs knock off Rockets

SAN ANTONIO, Oct 28, (AP): Victor Wembanyama made the tying basket with 20 seconds left in regulation, the opening basket in overtime and finished with 21 points and 12 rebounds in his first NBA victory, helping the San Antonio Spurs beat the Houston Rockets 126-122 on Friday night.

Wembanyama had 16 points, eight rebounds and three blocks in the second half and overtime.

Devin Vassell scored 25 points and Keldon Johnson added 20 for the Spurs, who lost to Dallas on Wednesday in Wembanyama's highly anticipated debut and trailed late in this one before the No. 1 pick helped them pull it out.

Wembanyama's layup while defended by Jabari Smith Jr. made it 111-111 all and his jumper sent San Antonio to a 6-0 run to begin OT.

Houston center Alperen Sengun scored 25 points, Fred VanVleet added 24 and Jalen Green had 22. The Rockets have dropped their first two games of the season.

Celtics 119, Heat 111

In Boston, Derrick White had 28 points, including five 3-pointers, and Boston rallied to beat Miami in a rematch of last season's Eastern Conference finals.

Jaylen Brown added 27 points and six rebounds. Jayson Tatum finished with 22 points in the latest matchup of the East rivals, who've met in the conference finals three out of the past four seasons.

They split their four meetings last season. Miami then emerged in the playoffs after a seven-game slugfest in which it had a 3-0 series lead erased

before beating the Celtics in Game 7 in Boston to advance to its seventh NBA Finals.

Tyler Herro, who sat out the conference finals with a hand injury, had 28 points and five of Miami's 16 3-pointers. Bam Adebayo added 27 points and seven rebounds. Jimmy Butler finished with 14 points on 3-of-11 shooting.

Mavericks 125, Nets 120

In Dallas, Luka Doncic scored 49 points and had a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 26.3 seconds remaining on a right-handed heave that banked in as Dallas beat Brooklyn in its home opener.

BASKETBALL

Doncic was standing near the right sideline, about 25 feet from the basket while being tightly guarded, when he sent a hook shot with the shot clock about to expire. He scored the last four field goals for Dallas - all on 3-pointers.

Cam Thomas led the Nets with 30 points in his seventh career NBA start, a game after setting a league record by scoring 36 points off the bench in a season opener.

Spencer Dinwiddie scored 23 points, hitting six 3-pointers in the first three quarters. Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 19 points off the bench for the Mavericks, and Kyrie Irving finished with 17.

Knicks 126, Hawks 120

In Atlanta, Jalen Brunson made a career-high eight 3-pointers and scored 31 points to power New York past winless Atlanta.

Brunson made 11 of 21 shots from the field, including 8 of 12 from be-



Houston Rockets center Alperen Sengun (28) has his shot blocked by San Antonio Spurs center Victor Wembanyama (1) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Antonio. (AP)

yond the 3-point line. The Knicks made 20 3s.

RJ Barrett added 26 points, including two baskets in the final four minutes after Atlanta closed within two points. Julius Randle had 17 points and iced the win with three free throws in the final 16 seconds. Randle added 12 rebounds and nine assists.

Dejounte Murray and Trae Young each had 18 points for Atlanta, while Bogdan Bogdanovic added 16. Young had 12 assists but continued his poor shooting to start the season by making only 4 of 16 shots from the field.

Young was 4 of 19 in Atlanta's 116-110 season-opening loss at Charlotte on Wednesday night.

Thunder 108, Cavaliers 105

In Cleveland, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points, rookie Chet Holmgren added 16 and 13 rebounds in his second NBA game and Oklahoma City made a furious rally in the final two minutes to stun Cleveland.

The young Thunder trailed 102-93 with 1:56 left before getting three straight 3-pointers - one by Holmgren - in an 11-0 run and closed with a 15-3 flurry to wreck Cleveland's home opener.

Gilgeous-Alexander made his first two free throws with 4.6 seconds left, and Oklahoma City's smooth guard then stole the ball from Donovan Mitchell to end it as the Thunder opened the season with their second

straight road win.

Pistons 111, Hornets 99

In Charlotte, Alec Burks scored 24 points, Jalen Duren added 14 points and 17 rebounds and Detroit defeated Charlotte for its first win of the season.

Jaden Ivey had 18 points and Isaiah Stewart had 11 of his 15 points in the fourth quarter for the Pistons, whose bench outscored the Hornets 58-19.

Cade Cunningham, who had 30 points in the season opener against Miami, was held to 12 points on 4-of-13 shooting before fouling out.

There were 52 fouls called in what was a physical game. Detroit was 21 for 25 from the free throw line, while Charlotte went 26 for 34.

Nuggets 108, Grizzlies 104

In Memphis, Nikola Jokic had 22 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, Jamal Murray also had 22 points and Denver thwarted a fourth-quarter rally by Memphis.

Reggie Jackson added 16 points as the defending NBA champion Nuggets won their second straight to open the season.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis with 21 points, nine rebounds and three blocks, and Marcus Smart finished with 20 points and five assists. Desmond Bane had 15 points despite going 4 of 17 from the floor and 1 of 10 from 3-point range.

Bulls 104, Raptors 103, OT

In Chicago, Alex Caruso hit a 3-pointer with 2.3 seconds remaining in overtime and Chicago beat Toronto.

Caruso hit the winner off a feed from Zach LaVine after blocking Pascal Siakam. He finished with 13 points, 13 rebounds and two steals.

DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points. Coby White added 17, and the Bulls came out on top in a game filled with wild swings.

Jazz 120, Clippers 118

In Salt Lake City, Jordan Clarkson made a go-ahead 3-pointer with 28 seconds left and then forced Kawhi Leonard into a tough missed shot at the other end in Utah's win over Los Angeles.

Lauri Markkanen had 35 points and 12 rebounds and Kelly Olynyk added 15 points.

Paul George scored 36 points and went 15 for 15 from the line, while Leonard finished with 25 points in his first appearance on the court here against the Jazz since Game 2 of the 2021 Western Conference semifinals.

Warriors 122, Kings 114

In Sacramento, Stephen Curry picked up where he left off in last season's playoffs against Sacramento, scoring 41 points in Golden State's win.

This game was the first at Golden 1 Center since Curry eliminated the Kings with a 50-point effort in Game 7 of their first-round series last season.

Klay Thompson added 18 points and Chris Paul had 10 points, 12 assists and two turnovers in his second game with the Warriors.

Magic 102 Trail Blazers 97

In Portland, Franz Wagner scored 23 points and Orlando won its second straight game to open the season, beating Portland.

Cole Anthony had 18 points off the bench for the Magic, playing the first of a four-game Western road trip. Paulo Banchoero added 14 points and seven rebounds.

England finish 3rd at World Cup after holding out hard-charging Argentina

'It is hard to accept losing this game'

PARIS, Oct 28, (AP): England finished third at the Rugby World Cup for the first time by stopping waves of late Argentina attacks and prevailing 26-23 in their tense playoff.

The Pumas brought the game alive by rallying from 13-0 down to lead by one point straight after halftime. England hit straight back and just stayed in front enough thanks to the boot of captain Owen Farrell, who was mercilessly booed all night.

In the last five minutes, the Pumas missed a penalty to tie the score and England replacement George Ford pulled off a try-saving tackle on wing Mateo Carreras.

"We started the game really well, got on the front foot, were really physical and made some inroads, but it didn't end up being a game like that," Farrell said. "Argentina were always going to play a big part in that and it was pretty scrappy thereafter. We did what we needed to do to grind out a win."

Third place gives England comfort after it was written off before the tournament. England and Argentina combined for only three wins in nine matches in the Six Nations and Rugby Championship but scratched their way out of the same pool to reach the semi-finals in the easiest half of the World Cup draw.

RUGBY

Seven weeks after their drab pool game in which 14-man England beat Argentina on goalkicks, the same teams were disciplined and wholehearted and showed they dearly wanted the bronze medal.

"It is hard to accept losing this game," Argentina coach Michael Cheika said. "It is hard to draw any positives but I believe that the trajectory over this World Cup will make Argentines proud. What is missing from us is excellence. We need it but we have the capacity to overcome obstacles."

Playing Sam Underhill and Tom Curry together in a World Cup game for the first time since the 2019 final paid dividends for England in an attritional first half. They were England's top two tacklers and got the only two turnovers in a half that was fairly even except on the scoreboard.

Curry was superb in a week when he and his family were abused online for complaining he was the subject of a racial slur from South Africa during the semifinals last weekend. Underhill, an emergency replacement playing his first test in more than a year, finished with a game-best 24 tackles. "Surreal," was how he summed up his last three weeks.

Marcus Smith sent No. 8 Ben Earl through a gap and soft defense for the opening try. Farrell's conversion and two penalties sent England ahead 13-0.

Argentina thought they were playing a Barbarians game and gave up two kickable penalties to try a lineout and scrum, both of which were wasted. The next penalty, though, was kicked over by Emiliano Boffelli, which pleased a crowd of 77,647 giving the Pumas partisan support.

Farrell kicked England 16-3 ahead, and just when the game was plodding along, it was given a welcome lift by the Pumas after scrumhalf Tomas Cubelli dived through English legs to score.

The game really came alive straight



England players pose after winning the Rugby World Cup third place match between England and Argentina at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. (AP)



Argentina's Emiliano Boffelli catches the ball against England's Marcus Smith during the Rugby World Cup third place match between England and Argentina at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. (AP)

after halftime when, out of nothing, Pumas flyhalf Santiago Carreras slipped front-rowers Theo Dan and Ellis Genge and glided around Smith to score between the posts.

But Carreras immediately undid his brilliant work when he was charged down by Dan, who picked up and scored.

Farrell and Boffelli had the posts zeroed in all night, combining for a perfect 10 out of 10 goalkicks. Their penalties plus a penalty by replacement Sanchez pushed the score to 26-23 with 12 minutes to go.

Defending champions still mathematically alive

England seek face-saving turnaround against India

LUCKNOW, India, Oct 28, (AP): When the Cricket World Cup schedule was announced in July, India vs. England on Sunday was expected to be a marquee match.

It will be anything but. England's poor showing at the World Cup so far has befuddled even their most ardent fans. One win from five games is the worst showing for a defending champions since 1999, when 1996 winners Sri Lanka won two out of five league games and failed to qualify for the next stage of that tournament.

England's only win so far came at Dharamsala - beating Bangladesh by 137 runs. They are ninth in the points' table with a minus 1.634 run-rate.

CRICKET

"I am not a mathematician but it is over now - with our net run-rate and too many teams who are going to take games off each other, we have to come to terms with that from now. We are (only) playing for a lot of pride," England coach Matthew Mott said after an eight-wicket loss to Sri Lanka.

Despite what Mott said, England are still mathematically alive. If they win four games in a row and reaches 10 points, then depending on other results, they could still be in with a

chance of making the semifinals.

Meanwhile, India have been flying high - the only unbeaten side with five wins in a row. They have beaten Australia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and New Zealand, accruing 10 points and a positive run-rate of 1.353. It is currently second on the table, after 5-1 South Africa - also on 10 points after they beat Pakistan in Chennai on Friday - took over first place with a

better run-rate.

At this stage, there couldn't be a greater disparity between the teams. India have two big names in the top run-scorers' list - Virat Kohli with 354 runs, and Rohit Sharma with 311 runs, in five games. They also have two bowlers in the top wicket-takers' list - Jasprit Bumrah with 11 wickets and Kuldeep Yadav with eight wickets.

England's top scorer is Dawid Ma-

lan with 220 runs in five innings - 140 of them came against Bangladesh alone. Sam Curran - player of the tournament in the 2022 Twenty20 World Cup - has failed to make a mark and was dropped after three games.

"A lot of experienced guys who are fantastic cricketers - look at our dressing room. It is not a lack of talent. But this tournament hasn't gone the way we wanted to. It has been a huge disappointment," said England's Jos Buttler.

Meanwhile, India's changes have worked out well. Star allrounder Hardik Pandya is out because of a left ankle injury, and his replacement Mohammed Shami took 5-54 against New Zealand.

Pandya is still missing for India and the hosts will play a similar combination as in Dharamsala. The only question pertains to conditions in Lucknow - the slower turning pitch could see Ravichandran Ashwin play his second game of the tournament.

Ashwin last played against Australia on Oct. 5 in India's tournament opener at Chennai. In that scenario, pacer Mohammed Siraj is expected to make way, with Shami teaming up with Bumrah for the new ball.

The off-spinner's return will mean a three-spinner attack and it will only make the task tougher for beleaguered England.



India's Ravichandran Ashwin bowls during a practice session ahead of their match against England at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, in Lucknow, India. (AP)

SPORTS

Exciting clash in Zain Premier League as Kuwait 'lock horns' with Al-Qadsia

Al-Abyad look to regain winning form

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Soccer enthusiasts eagerly anticipate a fiery showdown between Kuwait and Al-Qadsia at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium, scheduled for an electrifying evening kick-off at 8:28 pm.

SOCCER

Preceding this thrilling encounter, fans can catch another match between Khaitan and Kazma at 5:30 pm at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium. This doubleheader marks the conclusion of the sixth round in the Zain Premier League.

This round carries the potential for a change in leadership. A defeat for "Al-Abyad" could cost them their top position, paving the way for a new contender to ascend to the throne.



Al-Salmiya and Al-Shabab players challenge for the ball during the Zain Premier League game.

"Al-Kuwait" have maintained their lead since the tournament's inception in August.

"Al-Abyad" are currently grappling with a period of instability, both domestically and in Asian competitions. They recently drew with Khaitan 1-1

in the league and faced a setback in the AFC Cup, drawing 1-1 against the Syrian Al-Ahly Aleppo Union. This result knocked them from the top spot in their group.

Serbian coach Boris Bunjak, at the helm of "Al-Abyad," recognizes the

need to recalibrate the team's performance and regain their winning form. Losing points, whether in domestic or international matches, is not an option, particularly as they are set to host the Syrian team in the fourth round of the Asian Championship next week.

On the flip side, Al-Qadsia, under the guidance of national coach Muhammad Ibrahim, aim to maintain their winning streak by securing their fourth victory in the tournament. They are keen to capitalize on their opponent's current vulnerabilities and hand them their first defeat in the competition. Notably, "Yellow" struggled against their opponents last season, managing only one win against Kuwait with three draws in the league. "White" also triumphed in the Prince's Cup semi-finals.

In the parallel fixture, Khaitan, currently holding 5 points, aim to capitalize on their opponents situation and secure their second victory in the tournament, a win that could keep them at a safe distance from the relegation zone.

Meanwhile, Kazma, with 7 points, are determined to bounce back to the winning track after their recent setback, a 2-1 loss against Al-Shabab in the previous round.

Three thrilling encounters

Men's volleyball league kicks off in grand style

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Today marks the commencement of the men's volleyball league competitions, featuring the enthusiastic participation of 8 teams representing colleges, institutions, and military establishments.

This sporting extravaganza is part of the third sports tournament for higher education, skillfully organized by the Kuwait School Sports and Higher Education Federation and proudly sponsored by their strategic partner, Warba Bank.

The stage is set for an exciting lineup of matches, with three thrilling encounters unfolding at the Gulf University Hall. In the first group, the Kuwait Technical College squares off against the Australian Federation.

Simultaneously, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training faces off against the American University in the second group, with the match set for six-thirty in the evening.

The day's fixtures culminate with a clash between Kuwait University and the Kuwait College of Science and Technology in the first group.

As the competition unfolds, the victor of each group secures a coveted spot in the semi-finals. Meanwhile, the second-place teams from Groups A and B will compete against the third-place finishers for a chance to enter the semi-finals. This exciting process



Higher Education Sports Games logo.

is determined through a lottery system.

Dr. Salman Haji, the director of the tournament's third edition, underlines that this year's iteration boasts the participation of 16 educational institutions, encompassing both private and public universities, as well as military establishments. The tournament encompasses a diverse array of games, including 6 for men and 4 for women.

Burgan Club secure top spot in Championship

Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY Oct 28: In the latest volleyball championship hosted by the Federation, the Burgan Club's volleyball team has emerged as the frontrunner, boasting 21 points following their well-deserved victory against Al-Shabab. The match unfolded in three decisive games with scores of 25-18, 25-20, 26-24, and it took place at the Abu Halifa hall during the eighth round of the tournament.

VOLLEYBALL

In a parallel match outcome, Kazma secured their win against Al-Sahel with scores of 25-17, 25-12, 25-19, and Kuwait bested Al-Qadsia with scores of 25-23, 25-17, 25-17. Additionally, Yarmouk clinched their victory against Al-Tadamon after a gripping three-round contest with scores of "25-15, 25-23, 22-25, 25-10.

With these notable results, Burgan now lead the Al-Itihad Championship standings with 21 points, having played eight matches. Kuwait follow closely with 18 points from seven matches, holding the third position. Meanwhile, Kazma maintained their fourth-place position with 12 points.

Riders will deliver: Al-Mailem

'Messila club set for a leaping season'



Badr Al-Mailem

Al-Arabi, Al-Shabab, and Yarmouk are tied with 6 points each, and Al-Sahel trail with two points. Al-Tadamon lags at the bottom of the standings with just one point to their name.

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Badr Tariq Al-Mailem, the President of Messila Equestrian Club, has given his assurance that the club's riders are fully prepared for the 2023-2024 sports season. Their recent rigorous training and participation in both local club-hosted tournaments and those held in collaboration with fellow clubs have primed them for a season marked by fierce competition and a quest for excellence.

Al-Mailem expressed optimism that the club's riders will deliver a distinguished performance befitting the club's esteemed position in Kuwaiti equestrianism. This sport has been gaining popularity, particularly in the younger age categories, reflecting a growing base of show jumping enthusiasts.

EQUESTRIAN

Kuwaiti clubs have made strides in organizing local championships that cultivate a spirit of fair competition among riders. This is pivotal in elevating the technical proficiency of show jumping within the country and equipping riders to excel in foreign competitions and international championships held in Kuwait, all under the watchful supervision of the International Equestrian Federation.

Conclusively, the President of Al-Masila Club affirmed Kuwait's abundant reserve of skilled referees, coaches, and administrators, all poised to develop and promote a cherished sport rooted in Islamic heritage.



Fabinho makes a tackle as an opponent attempts to shoot.

Al-Hilal edge Al-Ahly in Clasico

RIYADH, Oct 28: In the Saudi Roshan League, Al-Hilal managed to secure a remarkable victory 3-1 over their rivals, Al-Ahly, in the highly anticipated Clasico.

The experienced Serbian international, representing Al-Hilal, set the tone by opening the scoring in the 56th minute, followed by his compatriot Aleksandar Mitrovic, who added the second goal in the 37th minute. Al-Ahly managed to narrow the gap with a goal from their French star, Maximin, in the 58th minute. Al-Zaeem, representing Al-Hilal, completed his hat-trick, adding an 84th-minute goal, albeit with the unintended help of Al-Ahly.

The much-anticipated El Clasico clash between the Blue of

the Capital (Al-Hilal) and the Green of the Western (Al-Ahly) in the Professional League made its long-awaited return after 588 days. This resurgence comes after Al-Ahly's absence from the previous edition of the Roshan League due to their relegation to the lower division, which they spent a season in.

SOCCER

With this victory, Al-Hilal now stand atop the league standings with 29 points, while Al-Ahly find themselves in fifth place with 22 points.

Kuwait takes part in Special Olympics coaches training course

QASSIM, Saudi Arabia, Oct 28: Special Olympics Kuwait is actively engaged in an advanced training program focused on preparing chief athletics coaches. This significant course, hosted by Special Olympics Saudi Arabia, unfolds in the vibrant city of Qassim and spans four days. Kuwait is proudly represented in this endeavor.

Trainer Salma Al-Obaid stood out as one of the distinguished representatives, alongside 20 male and female coaches hailing from 14 different countries. This collective effort is part of the Regional

Presidency of the Special Olympics, driven by the imperative to revitalize Special Olympics activities across all domains following a hiatus brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy involves the meticulous implementation of a comprehensive training plan and the orchestration of a series of courses targeting senior coaches. This is a foundational step aimed at nurturing the next generation of coaches for their respective programs. It is noteworthy that powerlifting has emerged as the most prominent sport within the Special Olympics.

Coach Salma Al-Obaid expressed her profound satisfaction at being a part of this course, recognizing its pivotal significance in her professional journey. She also commended Special Olympics Kuwait for its unwavering commitment to bolstering the capabilities of the technical and administrative personnel, equipping them to carry out their roles with utmost proficiency. This approach not only fosters local talent but also positions Kuwait to shine on the regional and international stage, celebrating achievements in various forums.

Gut-Behrami takes season-opening GS

SOELDEN, Austria, Oct 28, (AP): Lara Gut-Behrami sat in the snow and leaned back against an inflatable banner in the finish area after completing her final run.

The Swiss skier only stood up and pumped her right fist after seeing that first-run leader Federica Brignone narrowly failed to beat her time.

Coming from fourth place, Gut-Behrami edged the Italian by two-hundredths of a second Saturday to win the season-opening women's World Cup giant slalom, with Mikaela Shiffrin finishing in sixth.

Gut-Behrami trailed Brignone by 0.73 after the opening leg but made up three-quarters of a second with a gutsy second run.

"I needed time to recover, I was just tired," Gut-Behrami said. "I was happy with my race."

The 2016 overall champion previously won the traditional season opener on an Austrian glacier in 2013 and 2016.

SKIING

"I'm happy as it's my third win after 10 years," Gut-Behrami said. "It's nice, it's an amazing slope. I really like to ski in Soelden. It was a tough one today."

Gut-Behrami became the third skier to claim at least one women's World Cup win in 13 different seasons, after Austria's Renate Goetschl (14) and American standout Lindsey Vonn (13) accomplished that feat.

Petra Vlhova of Slovakia trailed by 0.14 in third, while the rest of the field finished more than a second off the pace.

Brignone admitted that the two-hundredths "obviously hurt."

"What makes me most angry is my performance. I didn't ski as well as I could. But this is sport and you have to accept it. I'm very happy with how I started the season, whereas last year I was struggling a lot," said the Italian, who had her first of 21 career wins in Soelden eight years ago.

Match to be hosted in Kuwait

Australia, Palestine to face off at Jaber Stadium

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Following the guidance of the political leadership, the Football Association has officially declared that it will host the crucial match between Palestinian national team and their Australian counterparts at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium on November 21. This match is a pivotal fixture in the second round of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup.

SOCCER

Two days ago, the Asian Confederation granted its approval for this significant gesture, allowing the match to be hosted in Kuwait. This move reflects unwavering support and solidarity with the Palestinian national team, which, due to current circumstances, faces difficulties playing on its home turf and in front of its passionate fans.

The Football Association extends its heartfelt gratitude to the political leadership, the Council of Ministers, and the General Sports Authority for generously covering all hosting expenses and streamlining the necessary procedures to make this match possible.

Campillo leads by 1 shot at Qatar Masters



Palestinian FA logo.

DOHA, Qatar, Oct 28, (AP): Jorge Campillo led by one shot before the third round of the Qatar Masters was suspended because of fading light on Saturday, with the Spanish golfer having just the 18th hole left to play.

Campillo will return Sunday bidding to win on the European tour for a fourth time and a second time this year after the Kenya Open in March.

GOLF

Sami Valimaki of Finland held the clubhouse lead after shooting a third straight round of 67, leaving him on 15-under par for the tournament. Campillo was the only player above him on the leaderboard and was 6 under for his third round with the par-5 last remaining.

Robert MacIntyre was in third place, a shot further back, and was 2 under for his round with two holes to play.

In the clubhouse on 13 under was Sean Crocker (67), Scott Jamieson (66) and Nacho Elvira (66).



Salma Al-Obaid



Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during the La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Real Madrid at the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Sports

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Resilient Real edge Barcelona in 'clasico'

Bellingham hits stoppage-time winner

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 28, (AP): Jude Bellingham won't forget his first "clasico" match as the England midfielder scored two goals including a stoppage-time winner to lead Real Madrid to a 2-1 comeback victory at Barcelona in the Spanish league on Saturday.

SOCCER

They were Bellingham's 12th and 13th goals in 13 games in all competitions since he joined Madrid this summer, including a Spanish league-leading 10 goals in 11 rounds.

Barcelona went ahead in the sixth minute through former Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan's first goal for his new club. The hosts also hit the woodwork twice before Bellingham equalized.

Bellingham was kept in check by Barcelona's Gavi Paéz until he



Barcelona's Gavi (left) challenges for the ball with Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior during the La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Real Madrid at the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

found space well outside the box to unleash a strike in the 68th that swerved past Marc-Andre ter

Stegen and hit the corner of the net.

Bellingham then tapped in the stoppage-time winner when a deflected ball fell to him in front of the net.

Madrid remained top, level on points with second-place Girona. Barcelona are in third place at four points back.

Girona beat Celta Vigo 1-0 to extend their superb start to the season.

Girona had most of the chances at home and could have scored more in a dominant second half. Yan Cuoto in particular was guilty of a bad miss when he blazed high over the bar with just the keeper to beat.

Celta had a goal ruled out for a foul on the goalkeeper with eight minutes remaining, a decision that Celta coach Rafa Benitez called "inexplicable."

They remain in the relegation zone with six points from 11 games. Their next match is at home to Sevilla on Nov. 4. Girona play away at Osasuna the same day.

Head, Warner smash NZ pace bowlers

Australia hold nerve to beat New Zealand

DHARAMSALA, Oct 28, (AP): Mitchell Starc held his nerve and defended 19 off the last over as Australia beat New Zealand in a high-scoring affair at the Cricket World Cup.

James Neesham scored 58 off 39 balls but was run-out on the penultimate ball of the game as the Black Caps slipped at the last hurdle. Australia won the trans-Tasman battle by five runs.

CRICKET

This was after Travis Head made an explosive entry into the tournament with a blazing 109 off 67 balls as Australia went on a run rampage and had reached 360-6 in 47 overs.

Head, who recovered from fractured thumb, and David Warner smashed New Zealand pace bowlers with an aggressive 175-run opening wicket stand off 117 balls.

In reply, Rachin Ravindra scored his second World Cup century and almost helped his team chase down the tall target in an epic last game of the tour-



Australia's Glenn Maxwell (right) plays a shot during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between Australia and New Zealand in Dharamshala, India. (AP)

name at Dharamshala.

New Zealand finished with 383-9 in 50 overs, with Ravindra scoring 116 off 89 balls. It stays third with eight points but ahead of Australia (8 points) on net run-rate.

Opting to bat, Australia made a flying start to its innings. The Head-Warner partnership amassed 50 runs in only 4.1 overs. At the end of 10 overs, the duo had crossed 118-0 - just one run short of the record for first power-play in World Cups.

Head reached 50 off only 25 balls, the fastest in this tournament, after Warner scored 50 off 28 balls. For the latter, it was a continuation of his previous two knocks - centuries against Pakistan and the Netherlands.

Warner missed out on his third hundred, though, out caught and bowled by Glenn Phillips for 81 off 65 balls. He hit five fours and six sixes, including one smashed off Lockie Ferguson's 154 km/h delivery.

Australia went from 175-0 to 200-

2 in the space of 26 balls. Head was out bowled in the 24th over, again off Phillips, after completing his hundred. Mitchell Santner had earlier dropped Head on 70 not out off his own bowling.

It was an important marker as New Zealand found the breathing space to fight back. Australia lost its 10 wickets for 213 runs, after the Warner-Head stand came to an end.

Phillips was New Zealand's most successful bowler - picking 3-37 in 10 overs. Santner proved to be expensive, taking 2-80. Trent Boult recovered from the initial onslaught to finish with 3-77.

Steve Smith was Phillips' third wicket when he holed out for 18. Santner bowled Mitchell Marsh for 36, and then sent back Marnus Labuschagne for 18 as well.

Glenn Maxwell does what he does best - smashing 41 off 25 balls with five fours and two sixes - before he was out caught. He put on 51 runs with Josh Inglis after the Australian middle order was choked for runs.

Brentford beat Chelsea

Nketiah scores hat trick, Arsenal 'rout' last-place Sheffield United

LONDON, Oct 28, (AP): Eddie Nketiah scored his first Premier League hat trick as Arsenal brushed aside last-place Sheffield United 5-0 on Saturday to keep pace in the title race.

The England striker made sure Arsenal didn't miss the injured Gabriel Jesus as he opened the scoring in the 28th minute from close range and completed his hat trick in the 58th with a fierce shot from outside the area to put Arsenal 3-0 up.

Substitute Fabio Vieira netted the fourth from the penalty spot in the 88th and Takehiro Tomiyasu completed the rout deep into stoppage time from a corner.

Jesus had been the architect of Arsenal's win at Sevilla in the Champions League in midweek with a goal and an assist, but also sustained a hamstring injury that is expected to sideline the Brazilian for a few weeks.

That gave Nketiah another chance to impress and he made full use of it against a team that has now conceded a league-high 29 goals in 10 games.

In a tepid first half that saw Arsenal continually pass the ball around but struggling to break down a compact defense, Nketiah broke the deadlock when Declan Rice picked him out in the area and the striker used one touch to go past a defender and the second to slot the ball past goalkeeper Wes Foderingham.

The second came five minutes after the halftime break, when Foderingham flailed at a corner and the ball landed at the feet of Nketiah, who hammered it into the far corner.

The 24-year-old Arsenal academy product saved the best for last, collecting a pass from Emile Smith Rowe and setting himself up for a shot from 25 yards that he smashed into the top corner.

The striker, who received his first England call-up earlier this season, celebrated by kissing the yellow game ball and lifting it to the sky with one hand as the Emirates crowd chanted his name.

Arsenal were awarded a penalty after a lengthy VAR review for a foul on Vieira as he broke into the area, and the Portuguese midfielder stepped up to the spot himself to slot in the fourth. Tomiyasu was then on hand to slot home the fifth after a corner in the sixth minute of added time.

The win keeps Arsenal two points behind leaders Tottenham.

Son Heung-min scored again as Tottenham beat Crystal Palace 2-1 away.

Stars clinch well-deserved silver

Impressive showing by Kuwait fencing team



Silver medalists celebrate with an official.

RIYADH, Oct 28: The Kuwaiti fencing squad delivered an outstanding performance at the 2023 World Combat Games held in Riyadh, securing a total of four medals. In the fiercely contested fluorescent weapon competition, champions Ali Al-Nassar, Ali Fadel, Faisal Al-Zamil, and Yaqoub Al-Shatti clinched a well-deserved silver medal. Additionally, in the team saber competition, Ali Rustom, Hamad Al-Shamlan, and Hussein Al-Amari exhibited their prowess and were awarded a bronze medal.

Ali Rustom, a standout champion in his own right, also earned a silver medal in the individual saber competition. Meanwhile, Ali Al-Nassar, another exceptional talent, secured the bronze medal in the individual fluorescent weapon competition.

FENCING

Hamad Al-Awadhi, the Secretary of the Kuwaiti Fencing Federation, expressed his joy at the remarkable accomplishments of the fencing team members during the World Combat Games in Riyadh, 2023. He highlighted the dedication and honorable representation of Kuwait displayed by all participating athletes. Al-Awadhi underscored the fierce competition among players from various nations.

Furthermore, Al-Awadhi revealed that the federation deliberately chose to enlist their second-tier players for this tournament, affording them valuable opportunities to showcase their abilities and amass experience. He emphasized the federation's commit-

24 Olympic spots up for grabs

Sheikh Salman inaugurates Asian Shooting Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 28: Sheikh Salman Al-Hamoud, the President of the Asian Shooting Federation, officially opened the 15th Asian Comprehensive Shooting Championship, currently taking place in Chungwan, South Korea. The championship features the participation of 30 Asian countries, all vying

for qualification spots at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The event was graced with the presence of South Korean government representatives, Asian Federation officials, and Kuwait's Ambassador to Korea, Dhiab Al-Rashidi.

Sheikh Salman Al-Hamoud ex-



Sheikh Salman Al-Hamoud with other officials during the opening of the tournament.

ment to a comprehensive plan aimed at nurturing new generations of fencing talents, uncovering potential, and hon-

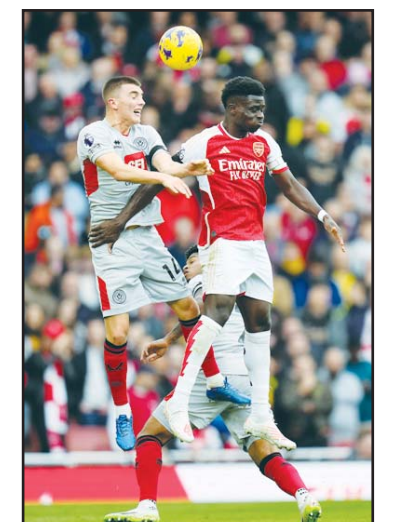
ing skills across different age groups, thereby laying a strong foundation for the national team's future success.

pressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to the Korean government for their gracious hosting of this significant tournament. Over the course of the championship, 24 slots for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games will be allocated. He also extended his gratitude to the Supreme Organizing Committee for their dedication to making the event a success and wished all the participating Asian athletes the very best.

Highlighting the supportive role played by Kuwait's Ambassador to Korea, Al-Rashidi, Sheikh Al-Hamoud praised his efforts in uniting with the Kuwaiti shooting delegation and providing unwavering moral support to the athletes.

SHOOTING

The Kuwaiti shooting team's delegation, led by Dr. Nidal Ahmed, a member of the Board of Directors, comprises 20 male and female shooters along with administrative and technical staff. They will be competing in a variety of shooting disciplines, including shotgun shooting (skeeet and clay) and bullet shooting (pistol and rifle). The talented Kuwaiti shooters aspire to enhance their illustrious shooting careers and secure qualification spots for the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



Sheffield United's Luke Thomas (left) and Arsenal's Bukayo Saka challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Sheffield United at Emirates Stadium in London. (AP)