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Assembly Speaker invites government and MPs to Tuesday, Wednesday sessions

Parliament to deliberate changes in Foreigners Residency Law

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun has invited the government and MPs to the ordinary parliamentary sessions scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday.

Items in the agenda of these sessions include the reports of the parliamentary Financial and Economic Affairs Committee on amending the law on establishing the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) in order to increase the maximum amount of zero interest loans for retirees to 15 times their pension; in addition to increasing the cost of living allowance for

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'Made in Kuwait' campaign celebrates local products

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Industry is due to launch on Sunday "Made in Kuwait" campaign aimed at promoting national products, with the participation of more than 180 Kuwaiti factories.

Speaking about the 18-day campaign, Mohammad Al-Adwani, the authority's acting director general, told KUNA that the campaign aims at promoting and marketing national food, electrical and industrial products.

Al-Adwani said the campaign is also designed to urge

the people of Kuwait to purchase locally made products, considering their high quality that conforms to international standards.

Seeking to attract the largest number of people, the authority is holding the activity at some of the most frequented facilities, namely the Avenues Mall and Al-Asima Mall.

The activity is part of the authority's strategy spanning until 2035.



KUNA photo
Part of the honoring ceremony during the 2nd Kuwait Emergency Medicine Conference on Saturday.

Kuwait advances 'care'

Effective response relies on emergency medicine

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): Emergency departments at hospitals are considered the backbone of effective response to urgent cases, a Kuwaiti official said Saturday.

Speaking at the 2nd Kuwait Emergency Medicine Conference, Dr. Hisham Kelendar, Undersecretary for External Health Services Affairs at the Ministry of Health (MoH), said the ministry's policy is based on improving and developing medical services in varied fields.

The ministry also works on enhancing and developing this vital system, and upgrades the skills of doctors in a method that contributes to providing excellent healthcare, he added.

The last ten years witnessed an increased number of health facilities to be aligned with government's action program and the state's development plan, he noted.

Kelendar stressed the importance of creating an educational environment for medical cadres to ensure that they follow up state-of-art medical techniques and practices, in accordance with the latest global protocols.

Meanwhile, Dr. Hanan Al-Razuqi, head of the conference, said the three-day event features 60 speakers and trainers from inside and outside Kuwait.

She added that the conference constitutes an opportunity to share knowledge and develop "our skills" in emergency medicine.

Al-Razuqi referred that the conference also contains some workshops, including "US Pocus and Rush", and about 30 varied research papers in emergency medicine.

Blinken to ME

KRCS brings winter relief to Gaza youth

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (Agencies): Kuwait Red Crescent Society has distributed winter clothes to children in Gaza as part of its projects to aid the Palestinian people.

KRCS Secretary General Maha Al-Barjas said in a statement to KUNA on Saturday that the society handed over a large amount of clothes to the children in the strip, amid the hard winter conditions.

She indicated that the "air bridge" that had transported ambulance vehicles, relief and medical supplies to the Gazans.

Al-Barjas urged the international community to pressure for an instant cease-fire in Gaza, ending the siege and ensuring delivery of humanitarian aid to the people in enclave.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Israel, and the West Bank February 4-8, 2024, his fifth trip to the region since the outbreak of the ongoing round of Gaza conflict on October 7.

"The Secretary will continue diplomatic efforts to reach an agreement that secures the release of all remaining hostages and includes a humanitarian pause that will allow for sustained, increased delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza," State Dept. Spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters on Friday.

"He will continue work to prevent the spread of the conflict, while reaffirming that the United States will take appropriate steps to defend its personnel and the right to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

"The Secretary will also continue discussions with partners on how to establish a more integrated, peaceful region that includes lasting security for Israelis and Palestinians alike," Miller added.

Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken tackled the latest developments in Gaza Strip and its surroundings.

During a phone conversation, initiated by Secretary Blinken on Friday, both sides discussed regional and international issues of mutual concern, paramount of which are the developments in the Gaza Strip and the efforts to deal with the security and humanitarian consequences, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported, citing a Foreign Ministry statement.

Egypt and Norway stressed the importance of mustering international resources and support to step up humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip as soon as possible.

This came during a phone contact between Egypt's Foreign Minister and his Norwegian counterpart Espen Barth Eide, Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

During the conversation, both ministers discussed the current humanitarian situation in Gaza and the necessary efforts to deliver aid to Gaza according to the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 2720.

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Expat drivers without valid licenses on ministry's radar

145 deported

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Ministry of Interior has cautioned motorists against violating traffic laws and committing serious violations, warning of severe consequences, including administrative deportation, particularly if motorists are caught driving without a valid license, reports Al-Anba daily.

Emphasizing the significance of verifying the validity of driving licenses, the Ministry urges expatriates to use the "My ID" or "Sahel" applications. The source highlights that some expatriates may be unaware that their driving licenses have been withdrawn for various reasons, and merely possessing a license does not exempt them from penalties, potentially leading to deportation.

The source revealed 145 expatriates were deported for driving without a valid license. It was emphasized that the Ministry of Interior, through the General Traffic Department, regularly runs a check on driving licenses.

If the specified conditions are not met, or if there are changes in the profession, especially for licenses issued after 2013, the license status will be marked as withdrawn in the "My ID" application.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya at the friendly annual gathering hosted by former governor of Al-Asima Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for members of Foreign and Arab diplomatic missions and their families in Abdali. — See Page 2

'MoU expected to be finalized in near future'

KUDLO, DMW discuss domestic labor recruitment issue

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: A delegation from Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO) recently visited the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) headquarters at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) in the Philippines, during which they discussed the domestic labor recruitment issue with Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of DMW Hans Leo Caddac, reports Al-Anba daily.

The KUDLO delegation consisted of advisor of the Union Abdulaziz Al-Ali, Secretary Ali Shamoh and Khaled Al-Qallaf. This is in response to the invitation of the Philippine Federation to accompany them to visit the DMW headquarters.

During the meeting, Caddac discussed the results of the latest discussions regarding the process of recruiting domestic workers. He praised the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) in Kuwait, affirming that the discussions and meetings between the two parties yielded positive results.

He stated that efforts are currently focused on finalizing the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Kuwait and the Philippines to reach the optimal solution for the domestic labor recruitment issue.

The meeting lasted for about three hours. Caddac praised the cooperation between the Kuwaiti and Philippine federations, the good relationship between the two parties, and their efforts to solve urgent problems and assist the two countries in easing the domestic labor recruitment process.

Meanwhile, KUDLO Advisor Abdulaziz Al-Ali explained that the aim of the visit is to facilitate the process of bringing domestic

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Photo during the art exhibition.

Kuwaiti artists bring 'heritage' to life in unique art exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): Visitors of Al-Salam Palace Museum have had a chance to see aspects of Kuwait in the past and in the present through the works of art by local artists at "Kuwait - history, culture and nature" exhibition.

The seven-day exhibition, which opened on Thursday, provides an exception platform for artists to showcase collections of their paintings which enrich in visual form the past and the present of their country.

The opening ceremony gathered a galaxy of artistic celebrities, intelligentsia and diplomats besides the 12 male and female exhibitors; namely, Husam Al-Rashid, Jasem Al-Nasrallah, Mai Al-Saad, Maysam Qasem, Ahmad Moqim, Sarah Al-Shair, Isa Jodah, Hiba Al-Sabah, Sohaila Al-Atiyah, Nawaf Al-Armaly, Walid Al-Nashi and Yasin Zaidan.

"The artists used various materials, such as colors, cloth, metal, paper and recycled material to produce the works of art on display," Ahmad Moqim pointed out.

He said his painting, named the anniversary of the coronation of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, was in memory of the late Amir.

The painting took two years to complete, Moqim told KUNA, noting that he delved into historical research to make it a uniquely documentary work of art.

In similar statements, Sarah Al-Shair said her four paintings on display portray several aspects of the life of a Kuwaiti woman in the past.

Sohaila Al-Atiyah, who has similar number of exhibits, said she used patches of cloth in the paintings to focus on marine life and shed light on famous traditional anglers in an original style.

On his part, Walid Al-Nashi said his works follow the collage technique where pieces of paper, photographs and fabric are arranged and stuck down onto a supporting surface.

"This technique, though inexpensive, needs a lot of talent and effort to produce a creative work of art," he added.

Islamic health meet seeks AI regulations

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): The 16th Conference of the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences, themed "the artificial intelligence ... boosting the health and attaining goals of the Islamic Shariaa," has recommended forming committees grouping medicine, shariaa professors, high tech producers and patients' representatives to set criteria for employing the artificial intelligence in medicine.

The organization's chairperson, Dr. Mohammad Al-Jarallah, said in a press release on Saturday that the conference recommended that basic treatment remains for humans and not equipment, conforming AI programs with the shariaa, medical and social norms and prohibiting it from altering genes.

It also advised that accords should be worked out with local and international institutions to back up digital transformation, establishing official authorities to exclusively represent the State locally and externally for devising and managing plans, policies and strategies concerning the IT, data, statistics and digital transformation.

Moreover, the conference called for conducting researches and studies, examining top practices

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KUNA photo
Chairperson of the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences Dr. Mohammad Al-Jarallah during the recommendations' declaration session.

News watch

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Saturday that it will summon the Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Baghdad David Burger in protest of what it described as the American aggression targeting military and civilian sites in Iraq last night.

The ministry said in a statement that it will issue an official protest note to Burger over the recent US airstrikes on military and civilian sites in Akashat and Al-Qaim regions yesterday evening. (KUNA)

CAIRO: The Egyptian Space Agency (ESA) announced on Saturday the successful launch of its remote sensing satellite, NExSat-1, off coasts of Yangjiang City in China's southern Guangdong Province.

Initial signals were successfully received from the experimental satellite, ESA's Executive Chairman Dr. Shereef Sedqi said in a press statement, stating that the launch is part of Egypt's national space program aiming to develop satellite technology. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:15 Asr 15:06
Sunrise... 06:36 Maghrib .. 17:28
Zohr 12:02 Isha 18:46

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.

By Night: Cold with light vari-

able wind to light to moderate northerly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	20	10

Kuwait Airport	19	04
Abdaly	18	06
Jahra	18	07
Salmiyah	18	13
Nuwaisib	20	06
Wafra	20	04

UAE SWAT Challenge 2024 opens; Kuwait 'Guards' take part in event

By Salem Al-Methen

ABU DHABI, Feb 3, (KUNA): The fifth edition of the UAE SWAT Challenge 2024 kick-started in Dubai on Saturday, attracting Kuwait, represented by its National Guard, along with 87 teams from 48 Arab and foreign countries.

Arab representation in the competition is significant, with 11 teams from the UAE, four from the Kingdom of Bahrain, and two each from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the State of Kuwait, and Iraq, along with a single team from Morocco.

Speaking to KUNA, the Kuwaiti team's chief Col. Fahad Ibrahim said that it is the third time for Kuwait National Guard to partake in this five-day championship, hailing the backing of His Highness Chairman of the National Guard Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah

and his deputy Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Kuwait's involvement in the event is part of a strategy to share expertise with brotherly and friendly countries, he said, adding that the championship is mainly based on physical fitness, tactics and shooting.

The Organizing Committee of the UAE SWAT Challenge said that 87 teams from 48 countries are participating in the event, up from 55 last year, including five female and two mixed teams.

All participating Arab teams have affirmed their preparedness for the challenge, showcasing early readiness and a high level of physical and tactical readiness, it said.

The challenge encompasses five competitions: tactical, obstacle course, officer rescue, tower challenge, and assault.



KUNA photo

A group photo of the National Guard team participating in the tournament in Dubai.

Other Voices

Walk the talk, back oppressed

By Ahmad alsarraf

A statement was issued by "political forces," urging the authorities to continue banning parties, and that their request stems from a "purely humanitarian position."

Logically, we cannot ask a person or group to be sad with a decision, and to be happy with a decision, without an acceptable official excuse, and without specifying a time-frame. The tragedies of the Palestinian people have been continuing for 75 years, and they have been subjected to genocide since that time.

Therefore, the demand of the signatories of the statement to continue solidarity with them, in a paper form, until the massacres end, is illogical. True solidarity is in actions.

The suffering of the Palestinians, and subsequently the Arabs, has been continuing for many decades, and signing a statement, bearing names such as "Women's Cultural Forum" and "Democratic Platform," with Muslim Brotherhood associations, will not alleviate the suffering and magnitude of the tragedy and pain of the tortured Gazans, who are deprived of safety, medicine, and food, and do not benefit them. Solidarity statements are not worth the paper they are written on!

I personally, who oppose stopping concerts, have taken real actions and initiatives in support of the people of Gaza. What have the supporters of continuing to stop concerts done? What did the victims of the Zionist aggression benefit from their statement?

They called, from a humanitarian point of view, to stand with the plight of the people in Gaza, to stop parties, but they forgot that this ordeal or catastrophe to which the people of Gaza are exposed to is not the biggest catastrophe nor the most oppressive and

cruel in the history of the nation, but rather it was preceded by, and will come after, great disasters, tragedies and calamities.

This appears to be our fate. The Arab countries have long suffered from the oppression of the Turks, the malice of the British, the cunning of the French, and the depravity of the Zionists. This is in addition to the series of bloody military coups, the number of whose victims and their material and social losses increased, all that the nation suffered from all its enemies over the course of a thousand years. Is it required? Are we supposed to continue slapping, grieving, and crying forever?

If this is the group's demand, and I do not think that the majority of them are convinced of it, then our nights will be long and miserable, and we will live in constant depression and anxiety. According to logic, the human soul cannot tolerate such pressures for long, and continuing to impose them by force will result in the creation of a hypocritical and lying nation that acts secretly. What you cannot do in public, and the goal will change from solidarity with the injured person to being against him!

The Palestinians face the ordeal that we have faced before, and we were refugees for seven long months, during which the "brother and cousin" insulted everyone dear to us, and we were actually in a real tragedy, and yet I do not remember a day, and this is what often happened to others, if I wondered about the reason why "political forces" did not issue statements in support of our right.

Rather, my only concern was for my country to be liberated, searching for someone to reduce my suffering, but its way of life and celebrations did not concern me. Therefore, I do not think that there is a "reasonable Palestinian" who wants us to stop our celebrations, live in sadness, and issue statements. Rather, he wants our active and positive standing with him, not on paper or vocally.

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82 races eyed over six days

Camel racing tourney kicks off

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (Agencies): The 22nd edition of the Kuwait International Camel Racing Championship kicks off Saturday, attracting widespread participation from camel owners across Kuwait and several Gulf and Arab nations.

The prestigious event, featuring 82 races, will be held over six days at the Martyr Fahd Al-Ahmad Track, the venue affiliated with the Kuwaiti Camel Racing Club.

The inaugural day will showcase 21 rounds, comprising 17 in the morning and four main rounds in the evening, coinciding with the official tournament opening. Racing enthusiasts can anticipate a week of sequential races, culminating next Thursday with the highly anticipated Golden Sword competition.

Rabih Al-Ajmi, Secretary of the Kuwaiti Camel Racing Club and tournament director, expressed in a press statement that the championship has evolved into a crucial gathering for enthusiasts of this traditional Arab sport from the Gulf and Arab countries. With its esteemed reputation established over the past 21 editions, the tournament has become a key platform for camel racing aficionados.

Al-Ajmi highlighted the organizing

committee's completion of preparations, emphasizing the demand from camel owners to register for the races, indicating the anticipation of intense and competitive races. Valuable cash prizes, along with cups, symbols, and gold and silver encrusted swords and daggers, have been allocated for the race winners, showcasing the committee's commitment to recognizing excellence in camel racing.

A distinctive feature of this year's championship is the allocation of 22 rounds specifically for camels belonging to Highnesses, sheikhs, and princes, while the remaining rounds are designated for citizens. Additionally, the committee has assigned certain rounds to camels from the country's local production, aiming to support and encourage Kuwaiti owners in camel breeding.

Al-Ajmi predicted that the championship races would be marked by intense competition and excitement, attributing this to the participation of the finest camels from the Gulf region, renowned as the best in the world. He expressed gratitude for the continued support from the Public Authority for Sports, acknowledging its role in preserving the heritage of camel racing in the Arab region.

The tournament director also commended the efforts of the committees and volunteers, underscoring their significant contributions to the distinguished preparation for the event.



alsarraf

'PR serves common interests'

FM stresses expansion of foreign policy

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya affirmed the continued expansion of the State of Kuwait's foreign policy.

In a statement issued during the annual gathering held by the former Capital governor Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber at Azayez Farm for members of Arab and foreign diplomatic missions and their families at Abdali Farms, the minister affirmed the keenness of Ministry of Foreign Affairs to maintain continuous and effective communication with the ambassadors of brotherly and friendly countries in Kuwait in a way that contributes to serving common interests, and to advance diplomatic relations to broader horizons.

Al-Yahya said the gathering served as an opportunity for him to meet with the majority of the heads of diplomatic missions in the country after he assumed the ministerial position.

He expressed his aspiration to meet with them in the ministry's head office and discuss every aspect that would strengthen Kuwait's relations with their countries.

Al-Yahya praised Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber for the generous invitation, affirming that this annual gathering, which has been ongoing for 28 years, constitutes a meeting point and an opportunity for enhancing communication between all diplomats accredited to the country.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber explained that the custom of holding the gathering on an annual basis has been continuing for 28 years in the month of February. It begins with inviting His Highness the Amir of the country, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, and is followed by inviting the diplomatic corps in Kuwait.

In addition, the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman Dr. Saleh Al-Kharusi said Kuwaiti-Omani relations are deeply-rooted and based on mutual trust and continuous communication.

He expressed his happiness at participating in the diplomatic family gathering.

Dr. Al-Kharusi stressed that such meetings outside the official framework gives them an opportunity to talk socially, adding that this is one of the characteristics of the vibrant Kuwaiti society that always celebrates others.



KUNA photo

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Jarrah Jaber Al-Sabah with former governor of Al-Asima Sheikh Ali Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Photo by Iehab Qurtal

Ambassadors from different countries visited the Abdali Farms.

Public worker acquitted in colleague 'molesting'

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdict issued by a lower court which acquitted a ministry employee who was accused of assaulting his female colleague at work.

According to the case file, the victim explained that, prior to leaving the office at the end of working hours, she went into a room that is designated for clocking herself out. When she put her card on the device for clocking out, she was shocked to feel someone hug her from behind with his arms around her waist. She screamed and ran out of the office, after which she called her husband and informed him about what happened. He told her to go to her children's school to collect their children.

During investigations, when the husband was questioned, he explained that his wife had called him at 1:30 pm and told him what had happened to her. After he sent her away to collect the children, he went to his wife's workplace and met with the man who hugged his wife. When he approached him and asked for him by his name, the accused insulted him and beat him.

When the witness was questioned, he said the victim called him at around 12:30 pm or 1:00 pm and informed him about what the accused had done to her, adding that she was screaming and crying.

When the accused was questioned, he denied the charges. He explained that the woman came at 1:25 pm on the day of the incident, and asked him to clock out one of her colleagues. He refused and expelled her from the office. He insisted that what she claimed did not happen.

The defense counsel representing the defendant, Lawyer Ali Al-Wawan, said the indictment papers lacked firm and certain evidence of guilt proving that his client committed the act on the plaintiff.

He stressed that the indictment evidence presented by the Public Prosecution to convict his client fell short of reaching the level of sufficiency.

Lawyer Al-Wawan highlighted the contradiction between the victim's statements and the statements of witnesses, insisting that the accusation against his client was fabricated.

Through his plea, he affirmed that it is established in the Court of Cassation that the weight or assessment of the witness's statements is up to the trial court, and that it is sufficient in criminal trials for that court to doubt the validity of attributing the charge to the accused in order to acquit him.

The matter in this regard depends on what the court is confident of in determining the evidence, as long as what appears from its ruling is that it examined the case, took into account its circumstances and the evidence of proof on which the accusation was based, with insight, and balanced it with the evidence of denial, so it gave preference to the accused's defense, or it was suspicious of the elements of proof.

Defense Minister heads to Riyadh

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA) : Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah left to Riyadh on Saturday to participate in the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition's

(IMCTC) second meeting.

The Ministry of Defense said in a press release that this comes as response to an invitation by Saudi Minister of Defense and Head of IMCTC, Prince Khaled Bin Salman Al-Saud.

Food campaigns to intensify

All set for 'back to school': Mol

By Munaif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has taken all necessary traffic preparations for the resumption of schools for all educational levels on Sunday, February 4 following the end of the mid-year break.

According to a security source, security and traffic patrols will be deployed in all areas and roads today, and officers will be present on the ground to deal with any congestion.

The traffic presence will contribute to reducing traffic congestion on the roads through direct follow-up in the operations room in order to direct patrol teams at crowded sites to facilitate motorists.

In a related context, the General Traffic Department last week dealt with 2,018 reports of traffic accidents, including 245 serious accidents. It also issued 22,901 traffic citations, impounded 75 vehicles and 62 motorcycles, referred 11 reckless drivers to traffic custody, referred 21 juveniles to the juvenile prosecution for driving vehicles without a driving license, arrested seven violators of the residency law, and seized 58

wanted vehicles.

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Eye on food violations: The tripartite committee, headed by the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), has announced the intensification of field campaigns to arrest workers who committed violations, especially in the food and delivery sectors, reports Al-Anba daily quoting an official source from the committee.

The source confirmed the formation of teams in cooperation with the Residency Affairs Investigation Department in the Interior Ministry, Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, and PAM; indicating these teams have been tasked to arrest violators throughout the country, particularly in the markets and restaurants. He revealed that 98 Labor Law violators working in the delivery sector were arrested in the last 24 hours.

The source affirmed the continuation of such campaigns to arrest those who violate the work regulations in this sector; the most important of which is the need to hold a work permit affiliated with a delivery company, health license, vehicle designated for transporting food and consumer goods, and other rules announced earlier.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Kuwait, Arab, Gulf states need joint defense force for security'

"WE pray to God to shower His blessings upon the people of Kuwait as the security and defense services successfully unveiled the nefarious activities of terrorist factions engaging in violence and terrorism against citizens, councils, and state headquarters. The vigilant efforts of the security and defense services, coupled with the support of friendly nations collaborating with Kuwait, have exposed these malicious intentions. Gratitude is extended to all who contributed to safeguarding Kuwait and its people."

Dr. Muhammad Hussein Al-Dallal wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Identifying terrorist factions aiming to disrupt the stability and security of Kuwait and the Arab Gulf states proves exceptionally challenging.



Dr. Al-Dallal

The volatile nature of the Middle East, characterized by ongoing conflicts in multiple countries, adds to the region's high-risk environment.

"Our Arab region, comprising countries and peoples, grapples with wars, political and military crises, and a prevailing absence of democracy and public freedoms, turning it into a hot spot for conflict and instability.

"The combination of instability, insecurity, lack of democracy, and public freedoms, along with weak responses to regional and international risks by Arab countries, has given rise to groups resorting to violence and terrorism to achieve their objectives.

"Some of these groups, driven by ideologies contrary to Sharia, the law, and humanitarian conventions, pose a severe threat. Notably, certain extremist groups receive direction and support from countries, as well as international and regional organizations pursuing their own negative goals, often at the expense of targeted countries like Kuwait or the Gulf Cooperation Council nations.

"Given these circumstances, there is an urgent need for Kuwait, and subsequently the Arab Gulf states, to establish a robust joint defense and security alliance surpassing the current capabilities. Kuwait is urged to formulate a strategic vision for internal and external security, drawing upon successful global experiences in maintaining security and stability.

"This vision should encompass early anticipation and preparation for potential regional and international risk scenarios. May God protect Kuwait and its people from all harm."

Also:

"The allure of Europe, celebrated for its architectural marvels and lush landscapes, often overshadows the strategic measures taken by European countries to achieve such impressive outcomes," columnist **Dana Al-Rashed** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"These strategies, accessible to all, particularly in the world's fifth-richest country, are lessons we can implement, even if belatedly by centuries.

"European nations have safeguarded their history and architectural heritage through stringent building laws, limiting construction heights and enforcing specific colors and designs for visual coherence.

"The rejection of unwarranted demolitions in favor of restoration has been a cornerstone, with many historical structures, neighborhoods, and houses over a century old being listed on prestigious platforms like UNESCO, preserving their cultural significance.

"Prioritizing minimal light pollution, European countries allow clear views of the night sky, emphasizing the importance of environmental conservation. They invest in tree planting, green urban spaces, climate-appropriate flora, recycling initiatives, and impose penalties for environmental violations.

"The aesthetic appeal of their cities is the outcome of a commitment to values that preserve cultural identity and respect the natural environment, resulting in a high quality of life for residents.

"Contrastingly, our city reflects a value system rooted in unhealthy principles like fraud and greed. High-rise structures dominate the landscape, with minimal green spaces, perceived as savvy exploitation of available land for construction. The misconception

that Kuwait is unsuitable for agriculture is debunked by historical images from the seventies and eighties, revealing a relatively green Kuwait before the widespread destruction of greenery for concrete structures.

"Drawing inspiration from neighboring countries with similar climates, we can transform our desert landscape into a paradise by selecting suitable plants and trees that thrive in our geographical latitude. Using building materials and designs that reduce heat and harmonizing with our environment can contribute to a more beautiful and sustainable urban identity. It's time to cease the destruction of our built history and the environment, deserving a better quality of life and a more aesthetically pleasing city."

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"It is now time for the national intellectual project to defeat terrorism. The discovery of a terrorist cell that tried to destabilize the security of Kuwait and commit crimes against a Kuwaiti component in an attempt to incite sectarian strife at this particular time — when the Arab region is witnessing the escalation of tension affecting almost everyone and could change the geography of the entire region, means the matter is neither transient nor just a cell," columnist **M. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Nine years after the 'Al-Sadiq Mosque' massacre, the subsequent quiescence of terrorist groups and the return of their activity, the matter is not normal. It cannot be dealt with solely on security grounds despite the readiness of all sectors in this area. It is rather late a warning bell about what these groups could lead to if they are left to ravage society.

"Without a doubt, Kuwait is targeted by several groups that have their own agendas, for which they are working hard to achieve. They are in a state of constant movement and their activity is not a secret to anyone in the Arab region. They benefited from a number of political and security facts over the past years, so they started preparing the ground for their subversive activities. In Kuwait, they saw the weakest point coming out from under the ashes.

"Therefore, intellectual treatments are as important as, if not greater than security treatments, because neutralizing an individual does not mean that he has abandoned his deviant thoughts, as his activity has rather subsided so he can return to take revenge. If the cultural arms are active and develop conscious action plans, everything is organized. It starts with a clear national project in order to develop the positive aspects of society and uncover the loopholes through which terrorists penetrate the minds of young groups. Only then, these groups can be besieged, and even eliminated.

"It is true that ideas do not die, but there are many conscious, cultural and psychological methods to dry them up. These groups instill fear among the deceived young people. Investigations have revealed attempts by the recently arrested terrorists to recruit high school students, that is, young people. This is a very dangerous issue.

"Since ancient times, these groups have activated deviant ideas to enhance the feeling of fear among people, and subsequently exploit them in order to market their projects. We have seen in the past decades how Al-Qaeda and ISIS exploited all areas in order to market their ideas, whether in glorifying the meaning of 'martyrdom' according to their deviant vision or atonement of society, similar to what the old 'Takfir wal-Hijra Group' had done. Many organizations emerged from this group. Under sensitive circumstances, these organizations led societies to clashes and strife.

"Without a doubt, the situation in the region is very sensitive, and there are many lurkers who are waiting for any loophole to penetrate. Thus, it is necessary to work quickly and carefully to fill the loopholes and fortify the internal arena.

"This requires a lot of effort. It should be a large and continuous project that should start with strengthening national confidence among young people through a huge cultural and intellectual project with clear goals, not just a reaction. Otherwise, it could lead to failure and fortify groups which take advantage of the loopholes that surface during the reaction period."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**

GTD ups raid count

3,309 traffic violations issued, many arrested

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The General Administration of Security Media at the Ministry of Interior has disclosed that the General Traffic Department's endeavors to confront violators, monitor offenses, execute traffic campaigns, and deploy patrols across Kuwait's governorates on Thursday, February 1, 2024, yielded the issuance of "3,309" diverse traffic violations. Additionally, (9) individuals were referred to the Public Prosecution, and juveniles were directed to traffic police. Two wanted persons were apprehended during the operations, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

The campaigns also led to the seizure of 6 vehicles and their subsequent referral to the garage. Furthermore, 42 nuisance noise violations were recorded, along with the seizure of 16 sought-after vehicles. A total of 107 radar violations were issued, and one person violating the residency law was arrested. Lastly, 4 individuals were detained for lacking proper documentation.

'Optimize joint training, exercises'

Live ammo drills at 'Adeira', Failaka Island planned

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior — **Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef** has called upon the Defense Forces, with special focus on the Land Forces, to exert maximum efforts in enhancing the operational capabilities of the Land Force Operations Center, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

During his visit to the Land Force Operations Center, accompanied by Land Force Commander Major General Muhammad Al-Dhufairi and senior officials from the Land Force and the Kuwaiti Army, Al-Yousef emphasized the significance of optimizing joint training and exercises.

Al-Yousef received a comprehensive briefing from ground force leaders, gaining insights into the center's operations, assigned tasks, and its crucial role in coordinating various ground forces during maneuvers and military missions.

Concurrently, the Kuwaiti Army Ground Force successfully concluded the three-day "Al-Raqa" coastal shooting exercise in the Subiya area and Bubiyan Island, utilizing live ammunition. Major General Muhammad Al-Dhufairi, the Land Force Commander, oversaw the tactical exercise involving the artillery brigade, deploying various artillery weapons to target simulated enemy forces attempting to breach Kuwaiti territorial waters.

Furthermore, the Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations of the Kuwaiti Army announced that the Kuwaiti Army Ground Forces are scheduled to conduct a live ammunition shooting exercise in Al-Adeira Range on February 6.

The Kuwaiti Naval Force will also engage in a live ammunition exercise in the Marine Field next Sunday, along with another exercise on Failaka Island next Tuesday.

All exercises, occurring from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., will involve live ammunition and take place across various military shooting and training ranges on land, sea, and air, including Failaka Island. Citizens and residents are urged not to approach these areas on the mentioned dates.

Firemen tackle fire in Sulaibiya warehouses

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Firefighters from the Istiqlal, Sulaibikhat, Tahrir, and Support Centers successfully tackled a fire that erupted in four warehouses situated in the Sulaibiya area this Saturday morning. The warehouses, located within an agricultural plot, stored sanitary tools, wood, sponges, and cork, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The firefighting teams swiftly took charge, working to bring the fire under control and prevent its spread to adjacent warehouses. Their coordinated efforts resulted in the successful extinguishment of the fire, with no significant injuries reported.

Overseeing the operation were Major General Khaled Abdullah Fahd, the acting Chief of the General Fire Force, Brigadier General Muhammad Haider Ali, the Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate, Brigadier General Muhammad Badr Ibrahim, the Director of the Public Relations and Media Department, and Brigadier General Othman Saad Saleh, the Director of the Northern Centers Administration. Their direct involvement ensured effective management and resolution of the situation.



The contraband seized.

Ex-con Kuwaiti man held with drugs, gun

By **Munaif Naif**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Jahra security patrol officers have arrested a Kuwaiti citizen with a criminal history on Al-Salmi Road, while driving under the influence of drugs and possessing sachets of the narcotic substance shabu, drug paraphernalia, and an air gun, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The suspect, who is in his thirties, caught the attention of authorities when he was seen speeding in his sports car. When asked to stop, he evaded the order, fleeing toward the city of Jahra. The security team ambushed and arrested the man and was subsequently handed over to the authorities for legal action.

In a separate incident, security personnel referred three individuals to the General Administration for Narcotics Control after discovering them in a state of drug use in the Hawalli area. The trio was found in possession of narcotic substances, a bottle of alcohol, and drug paraphernalia.

While patrolling the Hawalli area, security officers observed a parked car with three occupants and upon approaching them, it was evident that they were under the influence of drugs.

Following their arrest and subsequent search, prohibited substances were found with them. During the preliminary interrogation, they confessed to attending an evening party in an apartment and were on their way home.

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Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef during the Defense Forces meeting.



The three suspects and the contraband seized.

Drugs Control Dept arrest three with various kinds of drugs, pills

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Continuing its commitment to combating the menace of drugs and psychotropic substances, apprehending their distributors and smugglers, and safeguarding society from this detrimental threat, the Criminal Security Sector, through the General Department of Narcotics Control (Local Control Department), successfully apprehended three individuals in possession of 6 kilograms of various drugs (Shabu – Hashish), 5 kilograms of Lyrica powder, 133,000 psychotropic pills, and an unlicensed firearm across three separate cases, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Upon confronting the accused with the seized items, they confessed to the possession of the confiscated substances.

□ □ □

Two stores shut: Head of the Emergency and Rapid Intervention Team at the Kuwait Municipality branch in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Nasser Al-Hajri has confirmed the administrative closure of two stores for operating although their licenses have expired, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

Al-Hajri revealed that 18 citations and 15 warnings were issued for various violations

including trespassing on State properties and operating before obtaining approval, while three kiosks were raided along the coastal strip and their owners were apprehended and a street vendor's merchandise were confiscated.

On the other hand, the Public Relations Department organized a ceremony to honor Kuwaiti employees for their contributions to raising the name of the Municipality through sports activities, under the sponsorship and in the presence of Director General of the Municipality Eng Saud Al-Dabbous.

The awardees include Suleiman Ghuloum, who won first place in the Ministries League Championship in snooker organized by the Public Authority for Sports.

□ □ □

Family rescued in fire: A family in the Taima area was rescued by the Al-Jahra Al-Harbi Fire Station firemen after a fire broke out in the kitchen, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source said help was immediately dispatched after a report was received from the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior. No casualties have been reported.

Govt pays man \$5,530/month

Monthly stipend for son slashed

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Family Court, in a remarkable ruling, has allowed a man to stop paying for his son's expenses because the latter receives financial support from the Ministry of Higher Education for his education in the United States of America, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In the lawsuit presented by the father's defense counsel Lawyer Tariq Al-Kharas, he explained that, as per the final ruling, his client is mandated to provide his son with a maintenance sum of KD 250, while the latter receives a monthly amount of USD 5,530 from the Ministry of Higher Education for his studies in the United States of America.

During the court session, Lawyer

Al-Kharas said, "It is lawful for a child without financial means to be supported by his father. This financial support continues until the daughter gets married or becomes self-sufficient, and until the son reaches the age of fifteen and can generate a suitable income.

If the son completed his education but is unable to sustain himself due to physical or mental illness, or if he is pursuing education suitable for his age and capabilities, or if he lacks the means to earn, his father remains responsible for his maintenance.

In order for the son to be supported by his father, he must be financially lacking and his father is either rich or able to earn, and the son is unable to earn because either he is too young, or he has a disability."

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Fruitful discussion sheds light on several major issues

Russian Ambassador discusses int'l relations at Reconnaissance Research

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Reconnaissance Research hosted the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Mr. Vladimir Zheltov, in a high-level panel discussion. The discussion was fruitful and shed light on the Russian Federation's positions on several major regional and international issues.

His Excellency discussed the fundamental differences between the historical and contemporary roles of major powers in the region, with a particular focus on the differences between the American and British approach versus the Russian approach. He also expressed Russia's steadfast position in supporting the Palestinian cause and criticized Western attempts to change the basic principles of peace in the Middle East, especially through the Abraham Accords, which he believes undermine the principle of establishing an independent Palestinian state.

Regarding Ukraine, the Ambassador expressed Russia's broader and more comprehensive view on the concept of Western intervention in the internal affairs of states and the stirring of manageable chaos in an attempt to contain rising powers hostile to Western policies aimed at maintaining American dominance in the world and building a new multipolar world order.

The race for global supremacy and the rising role of China and BRICS as new competing powers were focal points in the discussion. His Excellency emphasized that Russia, with its rich natural resources, is not in need of competing for energy resources in the Middle East, directing attention towards enhancing relations and Russia's strong presence in areas of more importance to Russia's strategic and security interests, specifically in its immediate external surroundings like Eastern Europe.

Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, the Founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, expressed his appreciation for the Ambassador's participation, stating: "Cooperation with the Russian side represents a valuable contribution that enhances our understanding of international dynamics and their impact on regional issues."

He added: "We look forward to hosting more discussions that bring together Russian experts and officials to promote dialogue that serves peace and stability in the region."



Reconnaissance Research hosted the Russian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Mr. Vladimir Zheltov, in a high-level panel discussion.

Rules streamlined

Al-Hajraf to amend housing procedures

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr Salem Al-Hajraf issued a decision to amend some provisions of the housing welfare regulations to ease procedures for the beneficiaries of residential units who previously sold their houses and wish to relocate to East Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area, reports Al-Anba daily.

Decision

In a press statement, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) disclosed that Article One of the decision stipulates replacing the text of Article 87 of the housing welfare regulations with the following: "Houses granted by PAHW can neither be replaced nor transferred to others. As an exception and with the approval of the concerned committee, an external replacement is permissible between the beneficiaries of East Taima and East Sabah Al-Ahmad residential areas. This is applicable only to those who previously sold their houses." This shall take effect upon publication in the Official Gazette.

Ahmadi Governorate and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate panels to 'tackle' various issues

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Ahmadi Governorate Committee in Kuwait Municipality will meet on Sunday to discuss a number of issues, reports Al-Anba daily.

The committee will also deliberate on the request of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs to allocate a plot for the establishment of a mosque and parking lots in Plot One, Sabahiya; as well as the request of the Ministry of Health

for a plot to establish Khiran Health Center in Block One, Khiran.

In addition, the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Committee will meet on the same day to discuss the request of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) to reallocate the Qurain waste landfill in Plot Five, Adan in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate to the Municipality, along with the modification of the area.

MoE launches TeleHealth video-call-based skin consultations for bedridden patients

Second Mutlaa Center set to open

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The official spokesman of the Ministry of Health and the Director of the Health Communication Office Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad launched the medical consultation service for skin diseases within the health care services for bedridden people using "TeleHealth" technology based on video communication.

Dr. Al-Sanad explained through messages from the Health Communication Center that more than 4,461 home visits were made as part of the health care service for the bedridden, at a rate of 40-60 visits per week. About 180,000 cases were received through eight emergency departments at Jaber, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Al-Amiri, Sabah, Farwaniya, Jahra, Adan hospitals and the Sabah Al-Ahmad City Emergency Center during the month of January. About 15 percent of these cases suffer from respiratory symptoms.

Dr. Al-Sanad highlighted the continued geographical expansion of health facilities, revealing that the second Mutlaa Health Center in the N10 suburb will be opened soon.

He revealed that the Mutlaa Residential City Ambulance Center has dealt with

PIFSS nears pension transfer completion

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) has revealed its nearing completion of the processes related to transferring the increased amounts to the accounts of beneficiaries under Law No. 121 of 2023, which pertains to elevating the minimum thresholds for retirement pensions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The organization shared through its platform that it has "concluded the auditing procedures and verified the requisite data in preparation for the disbursement."

about 100 cases since its operation last November, most of which were road accidents, cases of falling from a height, and fainting cases, adding that Mutlaa Health Center No. 1 in the N11 suburb received more than 70 cases during the first eight working days.

Dr. Al-Sanad also announced the operation of the new Abdali Health Center within the next few days.

He confirmed that the parking capacity at Jaber Hospital had been increased by 1,230 new parking spaces after parking area No. 2 entered service, thereby bringing the total capacity of parking lots in the hospital to about 5,000.



The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

Efforts to enhance academic efficiency

PAAET initiates study plan reforms for 2nd semester

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Ahead of the second semester and concurrent with the commencement of academic class registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Dr. Muhammad Al-Hayyan, Deputy Director General of Applied Education and Research, held discussions with college deans, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The focus was on formulating a study plan that aligns with the absorptive capacity of each scientific department, emphasizing adherence to the minimum required quorum for academic sections without division.

This initiative stems from the need to

address observations outlined in the Audit Bureau report for the fiscal year 2022-2023, specifically concerning the allocation of training and education personnel exceeding stipulated quotas.

In a circular addressed to the deans, a copy of which has been obtained by the daily, Al-Hayyan stressed the importance of considering exceptions to academic courses during the initial weeks of the semester. This precautionary measure aims to prevent the accumulation of hours beyond the specified quorum, thereby avoiding additional financial burdens on public funds.



February

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Empowering women in judiciary

Kuwaiti judges showcase judicial expertise in Netherlands



KUNA photo
Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai during the signing ceremony.

Kuwait, Suriname establish diplomatic relations

NEW YORK, Feb 3, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait and the Republic of Suriname announced Thursday the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The announcement was made in a joint statement issued in New York

today and signed by Ambassador Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Tariq Al-Bannai and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Suriname to the United Nations Ambassador Sunil Sitaldin.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Netherlands has invited eight Kuwaiti female judges to talk about their experience and expertise in the judiciary, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In response to the invitation of the Dutch judiciary, Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council approved the travel of these Kuwaiti female judges to the Netherlands -- Lulwa Al-Ghanim, Shaden Al-Rumi, Bashayer Al-Rakdan, Farah Al-Ajeel, Ruaa Al-Tabtabai, Sanabel Al-Houti, Fatima Al-Farhan and Sharifa Al-Mubarak.

Through the Dutch judicial program, the Kuwaiti female judges presented a summary of their judicial experience, how they reached the judiciary after rising to prosecutorial positions and their achievements.

A reliable source told the daily that steps to empower women in the judiciary continue based on the Supreme Judicial Council's confidence in Kuwaiti female judges, considering their exemplary performance in investigating all types of cases. The source confirmed these women have proven their worth and competence through their promotion to the po-



The eight Kuwaiti female judges during their visit to the Netherlands.

dium of justice after serving as prosecutors. The source added that the

acceptance of female prosecutors qualified for the judiciary will con-

tinue; stressing the selection is based on competency, not gender.



KUNA photo
Kuwait ambassador to Brazil submits credentials to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Kuwait's envoy to Brazil submits credentials to Brazilian President

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): Kuwait Ambassador to Brazil Talal al-Mansour submitted on Thursday his credentials to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, as the country's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, in a ceremony held at the presidential palace.

Ambassador Al-Mansour conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Brazilian president,

Kuwait Embassy to Brazil said told KUNA in a statement.

His Highness the Amir wished Brazil further progress and prosperity.

The ambassador stressed deep-rooted ties between Kuwait and Brazil, saying that Kuwait looks forward to consolidating relations with Brazil and enhancing them in all domains, mainly economy and investment, according to the statement.

Kuwait University unveils new budget of nearly KD408 million

KD7.3mn allocated for teaching load disbursement

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: According to a memorandum submitted by the university's acting rector, Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the budget of Kuwait University for the 2024/2025 fiscal year has been estimated at KD 407 million and 976,000.

Meanwhile, records of the Financial Affairs Department for the first and second semester reveal that the actual disbursement of the additional teaching load for the 2022/2023 academic year amounted to KD 7,313,2187, which were distributed as follows:

The first semester - KD 3,665,484/300,
The second semester - KD 3,647,733/700.

It was stated in the memorandum that the total number of Kuwaiti academic support staff reached 551 academics, including 318 males and 433 females.

What would be saved in the budget if the university sought help from the support academic staff (the teacher assistant) is linked to variable factors as follows:

1. Number of students accepted each academic year.
2. Number of support academic staff (teaching assistants) necessary to cover the workload.
3. Teachers for the additional teaching load.
4. Their monthly cost and then the total cost required to determine the extent of the savings resulting from this procedure.

According to the memorandum, in light of the steady increase in the number of students qualified for admission to Kuwait University, which began to appear in 2011 after the graduation of the first batch from the unified system for the secondary stage, Kuwait University has implemented a number of solutions to address this increase and accept numbers beyond its capacity.

Applying the additional burden for faculty members was one of these solutions that contributed to absorbing the number of students and offering the required courses for approximately 45,000 male and female students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Calculating the additional burden in each university department and



KUNA photo
Spain's King Felipe VI receives Kuwaiti Ambassador to Spain, Khalifa Al-Kharafi.

Kuwait Ambassador to Spain praises bilateral ties

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Spain, Khalifa Al-Kharafi, praised the "special and deep-rooted" bilateral ties with the Kingdom, especially in investment and academia.

His statement to KUNA came Thursday after his attendance to the annual Diplomatic Corps Reception, hosted by King Felipe VI at the Royal Palace in Madrid. Mourning the loss of late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Ambassador Al-Kharafi said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is "the best successor to the best predecessor."

Additionally, Al-Kharafi expressed deep sorrow for the events taking place in the Gaza Strip, hoping for a solution to the crisis, which caused a great number of casualties.

Moreover, Al-Kharafi voiced gratitude to the King during a side conversation for attending funeral of the

late Amir.

Historical bilateral relations and Kuwait's desire to deepen and strengthen them in different fields were discussed during the exchange, noted the ambassador.

Furthermore, Spain's significant role in urging the European Union to reject the Israeli occupation of Gaza was highlighted.

The King of Spain delivered a speech at the Reception held yesterday, beginning with a reflection on the tragedies unfolding in Gaza, which have deeply touched the conscience of humanity. In addition to calling for facilitating humanitarian aid access to Gaza, as well as an immediate and permanent ceasefire, King Felipe said the world is going through a stressful time for the past two years, with the ongoing Ukrainian-Russian war since 2022 and spread of terrorism in all its forms. (KUNA)

preparing an annual plan for university appointments and scholarships ensures that the additional burden is gradually reduced over the years.

The immediate need for faculty members in each college is based on the classes offered in each department of the college by calculating the number of basic classes and the number of additional classes. Also, the need for faculty members is estimated based on the assumption that the additional burden will be reduced and excluded from

some academic departments. Then the required need for faculty members will be estimated and distributed among appointments.

The future need for faculty members in each college is estimated based on the expected increase in the number of students enrolled annually according to the proposed admission plan. The ideal teaching capacity for each college is calculated according to the available space capacity in each college of study halls and the number of

classes offered.

The memorandum highlighted that the number of teaching assistants expected to return to each college in the coming years should be included when calculating the development of the teaching capacity, the number of faculty members expected to end their services based on their age, and the expected number of admissions annually in each college in a manner consistent with the capacity for teaching.



KUNA photo
Acting Public Works Undersecretary Eid Al-Rashidi and Acting CEO of Kuwait Oil Company Issa Al-Maraghi during the signing of the agreement.

MoU aims to enhance cooperation

MPW partners with KOC to provide treated water to operational areas

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): The Ministry of Public Works signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait Oil Company on Wednesday to supply the company's operational areas with quaternary treated water from the Kabd-Wafra pumping station in the Kabd area.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works, Eid Al-Rashidi, stated in a press release that this memorandum aims to enhance cooperation with other parties, contributing to various aspects of the state and promoting sustainable development.

In a similar statement, the Acting CEO of the Kuwait Oil Company, Issa Al-Maraghi, expressed gratitude to the

Ministry of Public Works for its cooperation and organization of the meeting. He emphasized that this ongoing collaboration builds on previous meetings, aiming to strengthen the partnership for economic and human development.

Al-Maraghi highlighted the joint project undertaken by the Ministry of Public Works and Kuwait Oil Company, emphasizing its significance in supporting the company's operations and sustaining projects beneficial to the state. He reiterated that the collaboration serves the mutual aspirations of both entities and positively impacts the implementation of future development projects in the country.

Islamic health

Continued from Page 1

and methods in the digital transformation realm, following up on latest innovations, conventions and conducting sufficient studies about the AI benefits.

The AI employment must be aimed at attaining human race interests, observing religious beliefs, human dignity, Islamic and humanitarian values, attaining justice, avoiding hmr and ensuring human's control over machines.

Dr. Al-Jarallah added that the AI emergence is a new phase where "the digital health" predominates the realm, noting that His Almighty's creation cannot be compared with the human technologies.

The conference that started on Tuesday with an Amiri sponsorship focused on the pivotal role of public health, preventive medicine, upgrading health policies, national governance and the AI role in preserving the shariaa objectives.

KUDLO, DMW

Continued from Page 1

workers to Kuwait, primarily to serve the interest of the Kuwaiti citizen. He hinted on the possibility of accelerating the recruitment process, especially since the holy month of Ramadan is fast approaching.

The meeting ended with both sides affirming the strength of relations between the two countries. Based on the joint efforts of the two countries, the MoU is expected to be finalized in the near future to address all issues related to the recruitment of domestic workers.

Parliament to

Continued from Page 1

public sector workers and nationals working in the private sector from KD120 to KD250 per month.

Other items in the agenda are the

government's proposal to amend the Foreigners Residency Law; as well as the bills on amending Article 80 of the PIFSS Law particularly the stipulation about the exceptional salaries, amending constituencies and establishing a national company for advanced petrochemical industries.

The MPs will also elect members of some committees to fill up vacancies and discuss 19 incoming letters.

Meanwhile, the government will finalize its work program during its meeting on Monday in preparation for submission to the Assembly.

On the other hand, MP Muhammad Hayef has proposed using the yards of schools for the students to perform the Noon Prayer (Al-Dhuhr Prayer) in the second break time. He stressed the importance of encouraging the students to perform the Noon Prayer on time, considering the great benefits of such prayers.

MP Hamad Al-Matar submitted a bill on the establishment of the Students Fund with a capital of KD200 million that will be taken from the National

Reserve Fund. The proposed fund will be managed by the Board of Trustees chaired by the Higher Education minister, while the members include four academic staff from Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).

The fund will support Kuwaiti students who want to obtain bachelor, master's and doctorate degrees, but they do not meet the requirements for enrolling in Kuwait University or PAAET. This is in addition to those who want to study on overseas scholarship, but they do not meet the requirements. The financial support shall be in the form of zero interest loans for the beneficiaries. The term of the fund is 10 years that can be renewed as per a decision of the Council of Ministers.

MPs Fahd Al-Masoud, Mubarak Al-Tasha, Hamad Al-Obaid, Ahmed Lari and Muhammad Al-Mahan submitted a bill on obligating foreign companies operating in the country, as well as private companies that were awarded public tenders by Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), to hire nationals. The

Council of Ministers shall specify the jobs and professions covered by this bill, in addition to the fines which will be imposed on companies proven to have committed violations and the method of collecting these fines.

MP Badr Nashmi Al-Anzi submitted a bill on the establishment of a special court to deal with economic and commercial cases. The court shall consist of two sections -- one for criminal cases concerning the economy and commerce chaired by three judges including one counselor and the other shall handle misdemeanor cases chaired by at least one judge. The appeals will be referred to the Court of Appeal tasked to handle commercial and economic cases. This court will be divided into two sections as well -- one for cases in which the amount involved is lower than KD200,000 and the other will handle cases in which the amount involved is KD200,000 or higher. He also proposed the establishment of a special prosecution for these cases.

The laws covered by the bill include those on commercial companies, insur-

ance, commercial agencies, banknotes, Central Bank of Kuwait, competitiveness protection and commercial cheating.

KRCS brings

Continued from Page 1

The two ministers also discussed the challenges that the UN refugee agency (UNRWA) faces especially that some countries decided to pause their funding to the agency, which makes it difficult to deliver humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people, according to the statement.

The Norwegian minister praised the role of Egypt regarding humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in Gaza, as well as its efforts for Gaza ceasefire.

At the end of the call, the two ministers expressed the importance of keeping communicating during the coming period in order to contain the situation and reduce its reflections on the Palestinian people.

World News Roundup

Europe

'Suspect may have mental health issues': A man armed with a knife and a hammer wounded three people Saturday in an early morning attack at the bustling Gare de Lyon train station in Paris, another nerve-rattling security incident in the Olympic host city before the Summer Games open in six months.

The man, carrying residency papers from Italy and medicines suggesting he was undergoing treatment, was quickly taken into police custody following the attack at 7:35 a.m. in one of the station's cavernous halls, authorities said. Millions of passengers ride the transport hub's high-speed trains that link Paris to other cities and its commuter train services to the suburbs and towns in the Paris region.

"This individual appears to suffer from psychiatric troubles," said Laurent Nunez, the Paris police chief who is also in charge of the massive security operation for the July 26-Aug. 11 Olympic Games.

While stressing that the police investigation was still in its early stages, Nunez said: "There are no elements that lead us to think that this could be a terrorist act."

The suspect attacked passersby with a hammer and a knife, seriously wounding one person and two others more lightly, Nunez said. A fourth person who was "very shocked" could also be counted as lightly injured, he said.

The most seriously hurt person was undergoing surgery, he said.

Investigators are analyzing the knife and hammer, the Paris prosecutor's office said. It said the police investigation is looking at a potential preliminary charge of attempted murder.

Posting on social media, Interior Minister **Gerald Darmanin** described the attack as an "unbearable act" and thanked those who detained the assailant. (AP)



Darmanin

'Moscow's military action fight for survival': President Vladimir Putin on Friday described Moscow's military action in Ukraine as a battle for Russia's survival as he campaigned for re-election next month in balloting that he's all but certain to win.

Speaking at a meeting with arms industries workers in the city of Tula south of Moscow, Putin declared that the vast majority of Russians support his course.

"If the public hadn't felt that way, nothing would have happened," he said. "We are doing what people expect us to do."

He again argued that sending troops into Ukraine was necessary to protect Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine and stop what he described as attempts by Washington and its NATO allies to encroach on Moscow's vital security interests. Ukraine and its Western allies have denounced it as an unprovoked act of aggression. (AP)

'Russia refuses to turn over POWs bodies': Russia has refused Ukrainian requests to hand over the bodies of scores of prisoners of war whom the Kremlin claims were killed in the downing of a Russian military transport plane by Kyiv's forces, a Ukrainian intelligence official said.

Andrii Yusov, the spokesperson for Ukraine's military intelligence, in televised remarks late Thursday reaffirmed Kyiv's call for an international probe into the Jan. 24 crash inside Russia that would determine whether the Il-76 transport carried weapons or passengers along with the crew.

Russia accused Ukraine of killing its own men, while Kyiv dismisses Moscow's assertions as "rampant Russian propaganda." (AP)

UN court says it has jurisdiction: The United Nations' top court said Friday it has jurisdiction to rule on a request by Ukraine for a declaration that Kyiv is not responsible for genocide, but not on other aspects of a Ukrainian case against Russia.

The two countries have at various times accused each other of committing genocide. Ukraine filed its case at the International Court of Justice just days after Russia's February 2022 invasion, alleging that Moscow used trumped-up claims of genocide to justify its attack that unleashed Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

But the court said it could not rule on that issue. Instead, it will rule on whether Ukraine violated the convention - as Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed to justify the invasion. A final, legally binding decision is likely still years away. (AP)

'Approve Sweden's NATO membership': A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers are urging Hungary to immediately ratify Sweden's application to join NATO, saying patience with the Central European country is "wearing thin" as it continues to delay its approval for the Nordic nation.

Hungary is the only country in the 31-nation military alliance that hasn't yet backed Sweden's membership bid, and frustration has mounted within NATO as Budapest has repeatedly pushed back a vote on ratification for more than a year.

In a joint statement released Thursday, US Sens Jeanne Shaheen, a New Hampshire Democrat, and Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican, called on Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to "advance Sweden's accession protocols to NATO without further delay," and said continuing to hold up the process would harm Budapest's relations with its allies. (AP)

Detention of Russian-US journo extended: A Russian court on Thursday ordered a detained Russian-American journalist to be held in jail for two more months pending her trial on charges of failing to register as a foreign agent.

Alsu Kurmasheva, an editor for the US government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Tatar-Bashkir service, was taken into custody on Oct. 18 and faces charges of not registering as a foreign agent while collecting information about the Russian military.

Kurmasheva, who holds US and Russian citizenship and lives in Prague with her husband and two daughters, could face up to five years in prison if convicted.

The court in Tatarstan has rejected appeals from Kurmasheva's lawyer to place her under house arrest. (AP)

Navalny urges election day protests: Imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny urged Russians to show their protest of President Vladimir Putin during next month's presidential balloting by voting at a specific time on election day.

In a social media statement relayed from the Arctic penal colony where he is being held, Navalny argued that by forming long queues at noon on March 17 to vote against Putin, people would make "a powerful demonstration of the country's mood." He said it could be "a real, all-Russia protest action that will take place not just in every city, but in every district of every city."

Putin is almost certain to win his fifth term in office in the election because of his tight control over the political system, with most opposition politicians either in jail or in exile abroad and the vast majority of independent media in Russia blocked. (AP)

Acquittal of ex-security officers criticized: Media rights groups and opposition campaigners on Saturday condemned a Serbian appeals court ruling that acquitted four former intelligence officers who were jailed for the killing of a prominent journalist and newspaper publisher who was fiercely critical of the government in Belgrade.

Slavko Curuvija was shot dead at the entrance to his Belgrade apartment during the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia over its crackdown against Kosovo Albanian separatists.

His killing became a symbol of the long struggle for a free press in the Balkan nation that is formally seeking membership in the European Union. (AP)



US Republican presidential candidate former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley speaks at a campaign event in Mauldin, S.C. on Jan 27. (AP)

Politics

Energizing SCarolina voters crucial to Biden

Haley insists she's staying in GOP race

COLUMBIA, S.C., Feb 3, (AP): For months, the underdog in the presidential primary refused to concede defeat. He fought hard in state after state, even as the front-runner amassed a delegate advantage that would be virtually impossible to overcome.

The extended feud between Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton in 2016, which turned more bitter as time passed, left behind Democratic divisions that would ultimately contribute to their party's crushing general election loss.

Fear

Eight years later, some Republicans fear that history may soon repeat itself.

Nikki Haley's path to the GOP nomination is rapidly shrinking following recent losses in Iowa and New Hampshire. But she's vowing to stay in the race indefinitely, backed by thousands of committed donors, a key slice of the party's moderate wing and a new willingness to attack the mental fitness and legal baggage of 2024 Republican front-runner Donald Trump. And the harder Haley fights, the more Republican officials fear she may hurt his long-term prospects in the all-but certain general election ahead against Democratic President Joe Biden.

Former Trump adviser David Urban described Haley's continued presence as a distraction, a drain on resources and a source of frustration.

"Nobody on Trump's team thinks (a Biden matchup) is going to be easy. It's going to be a bumpy road. It's going to be a tough race. They want to hit the starter's pistol and get going," Urban said. "People need to start coming together and working together. But right now, none of that is happening because she's still out there stoking the anti-Trump fire."

Of course, Haley is in a much different position than Sanders was during the epic 2016 campaign. The Vermont senator actually won contests, including his 22-point victory in the New Hampshire primary. Unless she manages a dramatic turnaround, Haley's 11-point deficit in the same state last month may prove to be the high point of her presidential bid.

Haley decided to skip Nevada's presidential caucuses next Thursday in favor of a state primary election two

Sens reach deal on border policy bill, now it faces an uphill fight to passage

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP): Senate negotiators on Friday reached a deal on a proposal to overhaul the asylum system at the U.S. border with Mexico, clearing the way for Democratic and Republican Senate leaders to begin the difficult task of convincing Congress to pass a national security package that will include tens of billions of dollars for Ukraine and immigration enforcement, as well as funding for Israel and other American allies.

Sen. Chris Murphy, the lead Democratic negotiator, posted on social media Friday that a deal had been reached and that text of the bill would be released over the weekend. Senators are still working on finishing the rest of the package, which was initiated by a request from President Joe Biden for \$110 billion for wartime aid for allies, domestic defense manufacturing, humanitarian assistance for conflicts around the world and managing the influx of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Senators are preparing for a key test vote on the package next week, but it already faces a steep climb through Congress. Republicans in both chambers have balked at compromises on border security policy. Senate Republicans had initially demanded that the package

include border policy changes, but Donald Trump, the GOP's likely presidential nominee, has become a vocal opponent of the legislation. "Republicans said the border is a priority and we should craft a bipartisan bill to help control the border. We did that. We have a deal," Murphy said on the platform X, formerly Twitter. He added: "It's decision time."

The core group of negotiators has been laboring for months to craft a package that can win support from a bipartisan coalition of moderates in Congress. As they prepared to allow the details of the bill to be scrutinized, it remained to be seen whether they could cobble together the requisite votes from both sides of the aisle.

"The criticisms are based on rumors and misconceptions," Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona independent who was central to crafting the bill, said on Thursday.

Senate Democrats, increasingly wary of the political vulnerabilities facing Biden and their party on immigration, have become more comfortable with the contours of the package, though progressive and Hispanic members of the House are still expected to oppose the border policy changes in droves if it passes the Senate.

Also: CHARLESTON, S.C.: The Democrats'

first primary of the 2024 presidential contest contains little mystery. **South Carolina** propelled President **Joe Biden** to the Democratic nomination four years ago and he faces only token opposition when voting concludes Saturday.

What's at stake for Biden is the depth of support he receives from Black voters. They made up half the party's primary electorate in the state in 2020 and gave him a resounding victory, a win he rewarded by moving South Carolina to the front of the party's nominating process. In the general election, Biden was backed by 91% of Black voters nationwide, according to AP VoteCast.

said the defense was creating a false narrative about how the investigation began and was trying to "cast a cloud of suspicion over responsible actions by government officials diligently doing their jobs."

"The defendants' insinuations have scant factual or legal relevance to their discovery requests, but they should not stand uncorrected," the prosecution motion states. (AP)

Railroads making safety changes: The changes railroads announced after last year's fiery crash in East Palestine, Ohio, haven't yet made a major difference, statistics show, and reforms have stalled in Congress.

A few key measures in the latest Federal Railroad Administration statistics, including the total number of train accidents, worsened over the first 11 months of last year compared to the same period in previous years. Meanwhile there were some improvements with other numbers, like total derailments.

The overall picture is that rail safety hasn't significantly improved in recent years - and as the Norfolk Southern derailment in East Palestine last Feb. 3 and others demonstrate, just one derailment can be disastrous when hazardous chemicals are involved. The small town near the Ohio-Pennsylvania border is still struggling to recover a year later. (AP)



Police investigators work inside the Gare de Lyon station after an attack on Feb 3 in Paris. A man seemingly armed with a knife and a hammer injured three people Saturday in an early-morning attack at the major Gare de Lyon train station in Paris, another nerve-rattling security incident in the Olympic host city before the Summer Games open in six months. (AP)



Trump



Medina

America

Quake hits Oklahoma: A 5.1 magnitude earthquake shook an area near Oklahoma City late Friday night, the US Geological Survey reported.

The earthquake hit at 11:24 pm and was centered 8 kilometers (4.9 miles) northwest of Prague, Oklahoma, the agency said.

Prague is about 57 miles (92 kilometers) east of Oklahoma City, where residents reported feeling the shaking. Shawnee, Stillwater and Tecumseh residents also felt the earthquake, KFOR-TV reported.

The earthquake was shallow - just 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) deep, according to the USGS - and tremors that hit close to the surface can make the shaking more intense.

At least six earthquakes, including two greater than magnitude 4.0, were recorded near another Oklahoma City suburb in January. In April, a magnitude 4.0 earthquake was among a series of six that struck the central Oklahoma town of Carney, about 40 miles (64 kilometers) northeast of Oklahoma City. (AP)

'No stone unturned': The police chief in New Mexico's largest city vowed Friday that the Albuquerque Police Department will "leave no stone unturned" as it moves ahead with an internal investigation into allegations of possible corruption within the Driving While Intoxicated unit.

Chief **Harold Medina** declined to give many specifics during a news conference Friday, saying he didn't want to compromise the work being done by his agency or the FBI. Still, he tried to ease public concerns by saying the department has been working with the district attorney's office to streamline the process for flagging when officers fail to appear in court for those cases in which a motorist is suspected of driving drunk or impaired.

Medina shared a timeline of DWI cases dating back to 2015. He said changes in how the department and prosecutors handle such cases has led to fewer dismissals overall in the last two years. In 2019, the dismissal rate topped 43%. Last year, only 3% of the 1,027 cases filed were dismissed. (AP)

'Version of events inaccurate': Prosecutors in the classified documents case against former president **Donald Trump**

told a judge Friday that defense lawyers had painted an "inaccurate and distorted picture of events" and had unfairly sought to "cast a cloud of suspicion" over government officials who were simply trying to do their jobs. The comments came in a court filing

aimed at urging a judge to reject a Trump team request from last month that sought to force prosecutors to turn over a trove of information that defense lawyers believe is relevant to the case.

But special counsel Jack Smith's team



Denmark's King Frederik X meets Danish soldiers and their families at NATO's multinational corps headquarter in Szczecin, Poland on Feb 2. (AP)

Africa

2 peacekeepers hurt

Kenya gas explosion kills three, injures 280

NAIROBI, Kenya, Feb 3, (AP): Liquid petroleum gas cylinders exploded in an illegal depot in a residential area of the Kenyan capital, officials said Friday, setting off a late-night inferno that killed at least three people and injured 280 others. The death toll was expected to rise.

The depot in Nairobi had twice been demolished, and the owner had been found guilty of operating an illegal gas refilling business in May, but continued to do business, officials said. That raised suspicions - in a country where corruption is endemic - that bribes were paid to ignore the operation.



Mwaura

At least 24 people were critically injured, the Kenya Red Cross said, after a huge fireball erupted from the gas depot and rapidly spread, burning homes and warehouses. Some gas cylinders were thrown hundreds of meters (yards), sparking separate fires in the neighborhood.

The Petroleum Institute of East Africa said a magistrates' court sentenced the owner of the illegal depot to a year in prison or a fine of \$3,076. That was despite a precedent set by Kenya's High Court in which those found guilty of operating an illegal gas facility should be sentenced to a minimum of five years in prison or a fine of at least \$61,500.

Despite the law providing for mandatory forfeiture, the magistrate also released all motor vehicles, including two liquid petroleum gas tankers, together with confiscated LPG that had a net weight of 4,660 kilograms (more than 10,000 pounds), the PIEA said.

The institute said one of the tankers that was "unprecedentedly released" was involved in the explosions and fire that broke out.

Illegal

"The proprietor continued operating the illegal storage and refilling facility without even the bare minimum safety standards and qualified LPG personnel as required by law leading to this unfortunate catastrophe which could have been avoided should the letter and spirit of the law have been followed," it said.

Local resident Charles Mainge said "the government knew this liquid petroleum gas plant was existing in a residential area but they did nothing."

"They should make sure this doesn't happen again," he said.

Witnesses said they heard a sound they suspected was gas leaking before at least two explosions and the fire, which broke out at around 11.30 p.m. local time Thursday. Cellphone videos taken by witnesses showed the fireball erupting right next to apartment buildings. People were heard screaming.

Many residents were likely inside their homes when the fire reached their houses in the Mradi area of the Nairobi neighborhood of Embakasi, government spokesman Isaac Mwaura said.

A gas cylinder sent flying through the air set off a fire that burned down a nearby garment and textile warehouse, he said. Several other vehicles and businesses were damaged by the blaze.

At the scene after daybreak, houses and shops were burned out. The roof of a four-story residential building about 200 meters (650 feet) from the scene of the explosion was broken by another flying gas cylinder. Electrical wiring lay on the ground.

Nothing remained in the burned-out gas depot except the shells of several trucks.

Local resident Alfred Juma said neighbors told him they suspected there was a gas leak, and he heard a loud noise from a cylinder in the depot next to his house when he came outside.

Also:

UNITED NATIONS: Members of an armed group fired on a UN helicopter in Eastern Congo early Friday, injuring two South African peacekeepers, one seriously, the United Nations said.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the UN peacekeeping department assumes the attack was carried out by members of the M23 rebel group in the Karuba region of North Kivu province, in Masisi territory.

Eastern Congo has struggled with armed violence for decades as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities. The armed groups have long waged campaigns of violence in the mineral-rich region and have been accused of mass killings.

The conflict spiked in late 2021 when M23, which had been largely dormant, resurfaced and initiated attacks to seize territory. The group allegedly has support from neighboring Rwanda, though that country's government denies ties.

Dujarric said the helicopter that was hit was able to land safely in Goma, and the peacekeepers were receiving medical attention.



KAMPALA, Uganda: Eritrean troops are abducting farmers and stealing hundreds of livestock in border regions of Ethiopia's Tigray region, 15 months after a cease-fire ended a civil war there and called for their withdrawal, according to an aid memo seen by The Associated Press.

The memo prepared on Jan. 31 by the Ethiopia Health Cluster is based on an assessment of two districts near the Eritrean border by UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations. It documents several instances of kidnapping and livestock raiding by Eritrean forces. The memo was provided to the AP by an official from a UN agency on condition that its name not be disclosed.

Yemane Gebremeskel, Eritrea's information minister, denied the allegations, telling the AP on Friday that the reports of livestock raiding and abductions are "false."



JUBA, South Sudan: Residents of a swampy area in central South Sudan battled with cattle herders who moved in looking for water and pasture during the dry season, and at least 38 people were killed and 52 suffered gunshot wounds, officials said.

The fighting started Wednesday and tensions remained high Thursday night, with officials reporting "minor clashes" and apprehension over revenge attacks in the remote area.

The information minister of Warrap state, William Wol Mayom, said fighting took place in the Alor area, which is in Lakes state and borders both Warrap and Unity states.

Mayom said security forces had been sent to calm the situation and to move the cattle herders away from the disputed wet lands.



Confetti and smoke in the colors of the Indian national flag mark the entry of INS Vindhyagiri, a new warship for the Indian navy, into the Hooghly river in Kolkata, India, Aug. 17, 2023. India has long focused its defense policy on its land borders with rivals Pakistan and China but is now beginning to flex its naval power in international waters, including anti-piracy patrols and a deployment close to the Red Sea to protect ships from attacks. (AP)

India begins to flex its naval power as competition with China grows

For decades, India has focused its defense policy on its land borders with rivals Pakistan and China. Now, as its global ambitions expand, it is beginning to flex its naval power in international waters, including anti-piracy patrols and a widely publicized deployment close to the Red Sea to help protect ships from attacks during Israel's war with Hamas.

India sent three guided missile destroyers and reconnaissance aircraft in November when Yemen-based Houthi rebels began targeting ships in solidarity with Hamas, causing disruptions in a key trading route that handles about 12% of global trade.

The deployment highlights the country as a "pro-active contributor" to international maritime stability,

said Vice Adm. Anil Kumar Chawla, who retired in 2021 as head of India's southern naval command.

"We are not doing it only out of altruism. Unless you are a maritime power you can never aspire to be a global power," Chawla said. India, already a regional power, is positioning itself "as a global player today, an upcoming global power," he said.

India is widely publicizing the deployments, signaling its desire to assume a wider responsibility in maritime security to the world and its growing maritime ambitions to regional rival China.

Also:

MALE, Maldives: The Maldives government says it

has asked for clarification of why Indian coast guard personnel boarded three Maldivian fishing vessels operating within its economic zone earlier this week without consultation.

The Maldives defense ministry said in a statement Friday night that its military was informed on Wednesday that personnel from a foreign military had boarded a Maldivian fishing vessel, and on reaching the location it was found that they were from the Indian coast guard.

The Maldives military also found that Indian coast guard personnel had boarded two more boats, the statement said without explaining what they did on the boats. (AP)

Asia

Japan residents near N-plants submit petition

North Korea tests more cruise missiles

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 3, (AP): North Korea said it tested cruise missiles outfitted with new "super-large" warheads as well as a new type of anti-aircraft missile, extending a streak in weapons demonstrations that has rival South Korea worried.

The report Saturday by North Korean state media came a day after South Korea's military said it detected the North launching multiple cruise missiles into waters off its western coast. It's the country's fourth round of launches of such weapons in 2024.

North Korean photos of the test showed a low-flying cruise missile striking a target built on a coastal shore, and another projectile soaring into the air after being launched from ground.

In announcing the development of larger warheads for cruise missiles, North Korea could be trying to emphasize that these missiles are intended to be armed with nuclear weapons.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency did not specify the number of missiles tested or the details of their performance. The agency said the tests were part of the country's "normal activities" for military development and did not affect the security of neighbors.

Cruise missiles are among a growing collection of North Korean weapons designed to overwhelm regional missile defenses. They supplement the country's vast lineup of ballistic missiles, including long-range weapons aimed at the continental United States.

Also:

TOKYO: A group of residents of towns near Japanese nuclear plants submitted a petition on Friday asking regulators to halt safety screening for the restart of

MANILA, Philippines, Feb 3, (AP): The government of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has taken steps to address human rights abuses in the country, including the killings of journalists and rights activists, a UN expert said. However, more needs to be done, she said, including ensuring accountability.

The remarks by United Nations Special Rapporteur Irene Khan came at the end of a nearly two-week visit - at the invitation of the government - to assess rights conditions in the Philippines, where she met with officials and activists, as well as a detained journalist.

Khan said she underscored the need for the Marcos administration to seek justice for rights victims under his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.

Watchdog groups had described Duterte's term as a "human rights calamity" due to widespread violations, including the killings of thousands of mostly poor suspects in a brutal anti-drugs crackdown. The International Criminal Court is investigating the killings as a poten-

tial crime against humanity.

Also:

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia: Malaysia's Pardons Board said Friday it has reduced ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak's 12-year jail sentence by half and sharply cut a fine, less than two years into his sentence from a corruption case linked to the theft of billions of dollars from state coffers.

With the sentence commuted, Najib will be freed by Aug. 23, 2028, the board said in a statement. The board also cut Najib's 210 million-ringgit (\$44.5 million) fine to 50 million ringgit.

It is unclear if Najib is still eligible for additional time off for good behavior. If so, he could be out as early as August 2026.

Despite his conviction, Najib is still influential in his party, the United Malays National Organization, which is now a member of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's unity government that took power after 2022 general elections.



Former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak, (center), leaves a court house in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on July 28, 2020. Malaysia's Pardons Board said on Feb 2, it has reduced Najib Razak's 12-year jail sentence by half and sharply cut the fine imposed after his corruption conviction. (AP)



Martinelli



Arévalo

Lat/Am

Prez appeals for society's help: Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo said that with his political party suspended, little support in congress and an attorney general in hot pursuit, he will appeal to the Guatemalan people to help him overcome the entrenched old guard and achieve the change he campaigned on.

"We are clear that in the current context, we depend on society and convincing them that together we begin to row," Arévalo told The Associated Press in an interview two weeks after his inauguration. "We can't depend on a political system where those criminal and patronage networks still lurk."

Arévalo won the presidency in August, beating the establishment candidate by a comfortable margin. He is the son of a former president credited with implementing some of Guatemala's key labor protections, but Arévalo's strong showing in a crowded field was still a shock. (AP)



Missing cardinal found: Authorities have found alive a Roman Catholic cardinal who disappeared this week in western Panama near the border with Costa Rica, church officials said Thursday, hours after confirming the cleric's disappearance.

Panama's Episcopal Conference said in a statement Thursday afternoon that Spanish Cardinal José Luis Lacunza had been found after last being seen Tuesday. They did not immediately provide details.

Prosecutors in the state of Chiriqui had said earlier in the day that they opened an investigation. Lacunza, 79, is the bishop for

the David archdiocese in Chiriqui.

The archdiocese confirmed in a statement that Lacunza had not been seen since Tuesday afternoon and said it had reported his

disappearance to authorities. (AP)



Boat accident kills 2: Authorities



Firefighters put out the fire caused by a vehicle loaded with gas which exploded, in Nairobi, Kenya on Feb 2. The truck explosion ignited a huge fireball, and a flying gas cylinder set off a fire that burned down the Oriental Godown, a warehouse that deals with garments and textiles, according to government spokesman Isaac Mwaura. The late-night inferno killed at least three people and injured 280 others. (AP)

tsunami.

Two idled reactors at Shika nuclear power plant on the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa suffered power outages because of damage to transformers. Radioactive water spilled from spent fuel cooling pools and cracks appeared on the ground, but no radiation leaked outside, operator Hokuriku Electric Power Co. said.

searched for migrants missing off Puerto Rico's northwest coast Thursday after a crowded boat capsized, killing at least two people.

Puerto Rico police said officers rescued 20 occupants of the boat that capsized Wednesday near the coastal town of Quebradillas. Two of them were hospitalized for unspecified reasons.

It wasn't immediately clear how many people the boat carried when it turned over or from where they departed, although the vast majority of migrants who try to reach Puerto Rico are from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. (AP)



Martinelli appeal rejected: Panama's Supreme Court on Friday denied an appeal from former President Ricardo Martinelli, convicted of money laundering in the case of a media company he purchased, likely keeping him out of this year's presidential race.

The court ruled that a 10-year prison sentence handed down last year for Martinelli will stand, making him ineligible to run in Panama's presidential elections May 5. Article 180 of the country's constitution says that no one sentenced to five or more years for a crime can be elected president or vice president.

The 71-year-old businessman and supermarket magnate who governed Panama from 2009 to 2014 was elected by his party last June as its presidential candidate. He was one of eight hopefuls vying for the presidency. (AP)

oil drops

Price of the Kuwaiti crude oil dropped by USD 1.27 to USD 79.22 per barrel in Friday's trades vis a vis USD 80.49 pb in Thursday's transactions, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation said in a statement on Saturday. In international markets, forwards of the Brent crude oil moved down by USD 1.37 to settle at USD 77.33 pb while those of the Intermediate West Texas crude fell by USD 1.54 to settle at USD 72.28 a barrel. (KUNA)

Kuwait oil min applauds OPEC+ unity

Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister, Dr. Emad Al-Ateeqi, commended the collective cooperation and harmony within the OPEC+ alliance during a statement on Thursday, underscoring a commitment to closely monitor market developments. These remarks were conveyed through an official ministry statement following Dr. Al-Ateeqi's chairmanship of Kuwait's delegation during the 52nd meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), conducted via videoconference. Emphasizing the significance of

OPEC+ resolutions, the minister highlighted their shared objective of ensuring stability and balance in global markets. He pointed out that the oil markets are currently witnessing a balanced approach, attributing this equilibrium to the voluntary production cuts implemented by OPEC+ since January, a practice set to continue until March. Dr. Al-Ateeqi expressed the collective interest of oil-producing nations in maintaining supply security for global oil markets.

S&P forecasts strong banks growth

Standard & Poor's credit ratings agency anticipates continued strong credit growth and profitability for Gulf banks in 2024, with a slight dip from 2023 levels. The agency suggests that the region's banks are poised to maintain robust creditworthiness, thanks to their strong capitalization levels, projecting an overall strengthening of capital ratios across Gulf banks, except in Saudi Arabia, where the fastest growth is expected in 2024, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a recent report, the agency emphasizes the need for Gulf banks to sustain key banking metrics in 2024, focusing on good capitalization, strong profits, prudent provisions, and overall robust liquidity. The report highlights potential risks that could impact Gulf banks, including a deteriorating geopolitical environment, exposure to high-risk markets like Turkey and Egypt, volatility in oil prices, and significant exposure to the real estate sector.

Market Movements

02-02-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+8.39	4,228.74	UK - FTSE 100	-6.62	7,615.54
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+84.24	6,707.25			
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+525.02	62,989.88			
EUROPE - EURO Stoxx 50	+15.95	4,654.55			

Business

Kuwait market off to good start in '24, reports Markaz

Kuwait All Share index rises by 6.6% in January

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for the month of January 2024. Kuwait equity index recorded a positive start to the year and was the top gainer among GCC markets in January 2024.

GCC equity indices were mixed during the month as the possibility of early rate cuts by the U.S. Fed reduced due to strong Q4 2023 real-GDP growth in the U.S.

Kuwait market has rebounded after a decline in 2023. The formation of a new Kuwaiti cabinet, pickup of non-oil activity and projections of rate cuts by U.S. Fed in 2024, mainly

in the second half of the year buoyed investor sentiment. Kuwait All Share index rose 6.6% in January, supported by broad based gains in all the sectors. Banking stocks recorded a 6.6% increase during the month. NBK and KFH, the two large banks in terms of market capitalization, registered monthly total returns of 9.6% and 6.3% respectively on anticipation of a positive earnings announcement. Among Premier Market stocks, Kuwait Investment Company and Boursa Kuwait Securities Company gained the most, recording total returns of 49.6% and 17.7% respectively. Kuwait Investment Company's stock price moved owing to some large block trades during the month without any material disclosures from the company. Kuwait's CPI accelerated to 3.37% y/y in December 2023, driven by 6.72% y/y increase in the cost of clothing and footwear. Kuwait's con-

sumer spending growth (measured by card transaction data) eased to 5.4% y/y (0.5% q/q) in Q4 2023 from 8.7% in Q3. Spending grew 8.6% y/y in 2023, normalizing from the post-pandemic surge of 21.7% in 2022. Kuwait's budget deficit in the fiscal year 2024/2025 is expected to hit KD 5.89 billion (USD 19.15 billion), down 13.5% on y/y basis based on the oil price assumption of USD 70/bbl. Kuwait real estate sales rose 13.6% q/q to KD 771 million in Q4 2023. Robust investment and commercial sector activity and a less marked decline in residential sector sales supported the real estate performance. However, on a y/y basis real estate sales dropped by 22% in 2023 to KD 2.8 billion in 2023 owing to higher interest rates and residential valuations.

GCC Markets posted a mixed performance during January despite a surge in oil prices. The S&P GCC composite index witnessed a marginal decline of 0.6% for the month. The S&P GCC composite index performance was weighed down by the negative performance of Saudi and Abu Dhabi equity indices, which fell 1.4% and 0.7% respectively. Qatar equity index fell 6.8% triggered by the sharp fall in natural gas prices. However, positive economic growth expectations for Saudi boosted the performance of few stocks. Alinma Bank recorded a monthly total return of 7.2% following its announcement of doubling its stake in Arabian Shield (insurance company in KSA) Dubai equity index gained 2.7% supported by the strong earnings of blue-chip stocks. Emirates NBD recorded a total return of 2.3% after registering a net profit of about USD 5.9 billion (AED 21.5 billion) in 2023, up 65% y/y from AED 13 billion in 2022. On the contrary, real estate stocks trended downwards during the month and dragged down the performance of the Dubai stock index. Emaar Properties and Emaar Developers fell 6.2% and 2.7% respectively during the month. UAE's real GDP is projected to grow by 5% in 2024, exceeding the 3% growth estimated for 2023, according to S&P Global estimates. The rating agency projects continued strong momentum in Dubai's hospitality, wholesale and retail, and financial services sectors to drive growth in 2024/25.

According to the World Bank, Saudi's GDP is expected to grow by 4.1% in 2024, as the non-oil economy continues to get a boost from the Saudi Vision 2030 programs. Saudi Arabia is expected to tap the debt market in 2024 with estimated financing needs of USD 22.93 billion under its borrowing plan for deficit financing and repay upcoming debt maturities. Global and U.S. markets were

mildly positive despite stronger than expected U.S. economic growth reducing the possibility of early rate cuts. The MSCI World index and S&P 500 indices rose 1.1% and 1.6% respectively in January. According to the data released by the U.S. Commerce Department on January 25, U.S. GDP grew by 3.3% y/y in Q4 2023, surpassing expectations of 2% y/y by Wall Street. Technology stocks rallied during the month driven by the continued momentum for generative AI. However, the market performance was stunted by geopolitical concerns due to the China-Taiwan conflict, weak U.S. unemployment data and higher-than-expected inflation in the U.S. The MSCI EM index fell by 4.7% for the month led by the 6.3% fall in the Chinese stock index. Chinese equities were weighed down by rising geopolitical risks and persisting deflationary pressures in the economy. US inflation hit 3.4% y/y in December 2023 compared to 3.1% y/y rise in November and dimming market expectations that rate cuts would be implemented as soon as March. The European Central Bank (ECB) left its policy rate unchanged at 4% in the January meeting, signaling a dovish stance. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note crossed the 4% threshold in mid-January and closed at 3.99% during the month. The investor concerns over geopolitical risks coupled with comments from Fed Governor that the rate cuts priced in by the markets for 2024 are unlikely, underpinned the rebound in yields.

Oil price settled at USD 81.7 per barrel, recording a monthly gain of 6.1% supported by the ongoing geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East and projections for strong oil demand in 2024. The disruption of oil supply from two major oil fields in Libya and attack in the Red Sea drove up oil prices. IEA expects oil demand to grow by 1.24 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2024, up 180,000 bpd from previous estimates. Production outages in the U.S. from cold weather also supported oil prices. Gold prices marked a fall of 1.2% closing USD 2,037.2/oz. The strong U.S. dollar following waning expectations of an early interest rate cut in the U.S. and rise in U.S. treasury yields were behind the fall in gold prices. Natural gas prices witnessed a steep decline of 16.5% during the month amidst warmer temperatures expected in late January leading to reduced demand for heating.

The global and GCC markets performance for February 2024 hinges on two major factors – i) indications from the U.S. Fed on the onset of the rate cuts and ii) earnings announcement from the blue-chip companies.

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'19.6 tons bought in 2023'

Kuwaiti gold purchases surge to \$1.23 bln in 2023

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwaiti citizens and residents bought about 19.6 tons of gold jewelry, bullion, and coins in 2023, with a value amounting to about 1.23 billion dollars (376.3 million dinars, at an exchange rate of 306 fils to the dollar), with an average price per kilo reaching 19.2 thousand dinars during the same year, reports Al-Anba daily.

Data from the World Gold Council showed that purchases of gold by citizens and residents increased by 3.7%, with a volume of 700 kilograms, to reach 19.6 tons during 2023 compared to 18.9 tons during 2022, in light of a noticeable increase in purchases of gold bullion, which is usually classified as the first savings and hedging tools before gold jewelry which is classified as "ornament and treasury", reports Al-Anba daily.

While the data shows that there is an increase in the volume of gold purchases during the whole of 2023, the most prominent purchase incentives are represented by a number of economic and geopolitical variables that can be listed as follows: ■ Geopolitical events: The escalation of geopolitical events in the region and their global repercussions prompts individuals to increase their holdings of the yellow metal to hedge against the future, and to preserve the value of their savings in anticipation of any developments.

■ The rise in gold prices: The price increases achieved by the yellow metal during 2023 were a great incentive for citizens and residents to acquire the yellow metal, as they aimed to maximize the value of their savings, which is clearly evident in the noticeable increase in bullion sales.

■ Inflation rates: The high inflation rates that many countries of the world are experiencing have made their citizens resort to acquiring gold as one of the hedging mechanisms through which they preserve the value of their savings.

■ Interest rates: The trend of the US Federal Reserve and central banks around the world to ease the severity of the monetary tightening policy would increase the attractiveness of gold to achieve higher rates of profitability. In detail, the total purchases of

KFH records 63% increase

Boursa set for strong finish on 'robust' financial results

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: The Boursa Kuwait is poised to conclude its upward trajectory, fueled by robust financial results and distributions — key drivers in the stock market, reports Al-Anba daily. The unveiling of fiscal year 2023 financial results has commenced, featuring positive numbers and record gains for Kuwait Finance House (KFH) at 584.5 million dinars, marking a 63% increase with recommended distributions of 10% and 9%.

The National Bank of Kuwait also reported historic gains of 560 million dinars, a 10% increase, with recommendations for 25% cash distributions and a 5% bonus. During Thursday's session, there was a trend of profit-taking among traders focusing on leading stocks that had seen recent price hikes. Consequently, the Boursa Kuwait concluded the week with a decline in both primary and main market indices. The general index, reflecting the combined performance of the two markets, saw a decrease due to profit-taking from stocks that had previously gained in value.

The market value of the stock market dropped by 1.4%, experiencing a loss of 618 million dinars due to selling operations, particularly on leading stocks anticipated for financial results disclosure. The week concluded with a market value of 42,744 billion dinars, down from the previous week's 43,362 billion dinars.

Liquidity levels continued to rise significantly, with the average daily trading reaching 68.3 million dinars, resulting in a total weekly trading

volume of 341 million dinars — indicating a 10% increase from the previous week. However, the volume of traded shares decreased by 14.5%, with 1.146 billion shares traded compared to 1.340 billion shares the previous week.

Despite the overall decline, performance indicators improved collectively at the end of the week. The Premier Market Index fell by 1.7%, the Main Market Index by 0.03%, and the general market index by 1.4%. Foreign ownership in the primary market decreased to 5.28 billion dinars, while official statistics indicated a net purchase of foreigners' stock exchange shares in January amounting to 43.3 million dinars. Notably, 10 Kuwait Stock Exchange-listed companies secured contracts and tenders worth 90.5 million dinars in January, reflecting the positive national economic performance.

Moreover, Kuwaitis' purchases of Emirati stocks on the Abu Dhabi Securities Market in January 2024 amounted to 101.87 UAE dirhams (8.53 million dinars), showing a 25.5% growth compared to January 2023. Gulf nationals, including Kuwaitis, recorded purchases of 835.71 million dirhams (70 million dinars) and sales of 896.41 million dirhams (75 million dinars) in January, resulting in net sales of 60.7 million dirhams (5 million dinars). In 2023, Kuwaitis' purchases of Emirati stocks totaled 1.05 billion UAE dirhams (88 million dinars), with net purchases amounting to 85.45 million UAE dirhams (7.15 million dinars).

CMA maintains MREC stock listing on Boursa

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: In a commitment to protect the interests of the investing public and uphold regulatory compliance, the Capital Markets Authority announced a decision during its meeting No. 03 of 2024 on January 31, 2024. Effective from February 4, 2024, according to Al-Jarida daily, the decision, in line with Article 1-16-4 of the Listing Rules of the Executive Regulations, states that the listing of Mena Real Estate Company's (MREC) stock on the Boursa Kuwait will not be canceled, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The decision underscores adherence to Resolution No. 148 of 2023, issued on October 26, 2023, which pertains to the delisting of Mena Real Estate Company (K.S.C.P.) shares. The Capital Markets Authority, in continuous efforts to protect the investing public, emphasizes its commitment to Law No. 7 of 2010 regarding the establishment of the Capital Markets Authority and the regulation of securities activity, along with its executive regulations

and subsequent amendments. The key points of the decision include:

■ Retention of Listing: Mena Real Estate Company's stock will not be delisted from the Boursa Kuwait, adhering to the provisions of Article 1-16-4 of the Listing Rules and fulfilling the requirements of Resolution No. 148 of 2023.

■ Implementation and Publication: The competent authorities are directed to implement this decision within their respective jurisdictions. The decision comes into effect on Sunday, February 4, 2024, and will be officially published in the Official Gazette.

The Capital Markets Authority reiterates its commitment to its supervisory role, aiming to create a fair, competitive, and transparent financial market. Additionally, it seeks to mitigate risks inherent in securities activity and ensure compliance with laws and regulations related to financial transactions.

Other Voices

'Trim expenses, create 24,000 jobs'

Kuwait's oil price must reach \$91 per barrel in next year's budget

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

THIS is the base figure in our budget of KD 25 billion for next year from April 1, which is lower than the current budget of KD 2 billion, in order to avoid a deficit, which is currently estimated to be KD 6 billion or \$18 billion.

It is worth highlighting that the government announced its equilibrium price for the first year to balance the budget, as our budget

is based on a crude oil price of \$70 per barrel, which is a conservative figure. However, it is unlikely that the oil price will reach such a level; it will remain at around \$75 to \$80 per barrel.

It will be an achievement if our government manages to reduce its expenses but it is worth trying. It should try to hire more or provide more than 24,000 job opportunities in the coming 12 months, which is a real challenge for our new Prime Minister and his government.

Now that few figures are announced and published, the most important number in the whole budget was not disclosed, which is Kuwait's crude oil production for the next year. For a drop in the deficit by KD 2.5 billion, oil production can be estimated at around 2.8 million barrels per day, equal to KD 22 billion. For a balanced budget without deficit, the estimated crude oil price

should be \$ 80 per barrel and crude oil production 2.8 million barrels, without any need for the oil price to reach \$91 a barrel. It will indeed be a blessing if it hits that magical number.

We are expected to incur about KD 6 billion deficit in our current year's budget, as there remain more than 55 days to close our books for the current fiscal year, which ends on March 31.

This will bring us another challenge, which is how to tackle and address the shortage of KD 6 billion. Will it be by borrowing from international banks, or by borrowing from our sovereign wealth funds? Or will they think out-of-the-box and privatize some of the oil companies, which will help with dealing with the shortage of funds? In fact, it is the best way, as it serves two purposes at the same time. It provides easy cash to the government, and it enhances the health of the private sector and our economy in recruiting and developing national graduates. It is indeed the best solution, but it needs some hard work and efforts from both the government and the private sectors.

Certainly, we see a positive budget with lower expenses and lower deficits from previous years. The question however is regarding maintaining such a level of expenditure.

We wish our new government and its head all the success in reducing our budget without any form of borrowing. It is time for a new era.

Email: nafikuwaiti@yahoo.com

Shares up 2%

Exxon Mobil sees decline in Q4 profits

WASHINGTON, Feb 3: Exxon Mobil's fourth-quarter revenue and profits declined along with the price of oil, and the energy giant was weighed down by a hefty impairment charge tied to regulatory issues in California. Still, it posted a healthy adjusted profit and the company raised its quarterly dividend.

Shares rose 2% before the market opened Friday.

Revenue for the three months ended Dec. 31 declined to \$84.34 billion from \$95.43 billion. That fell short of the \$91.81 billion that analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research expected.

Exxon earned \$7.63 billion, or \$1.91 per share, for the quarter. A year earlier, it earned \$12.75 billion, or \$2.25

per share.

The current quarter included a \$2.3 billion impairment charge of which \$2 billion related to regulatory obstacles in California that have prevented production and distribution assets from coming back online.

Excluding the charge and other items, earnings were \$2.48 per share.

Analysts were calling for earnings of \$2.21 per share. Exxon does not adjust its reported results based on one-time events such as asset sales.

The Spring, Texas-based company boosted its quarterly dividend 4% to 95 cents per share.

Exxon went on a bit of a shopping spree last year with oil prices surging.

103m barrels of oil exported

The Iraqi oil ministry said on Friday that the Oil Marketing Company (COMO) exported, in January, a US \$8 billion worth 103.5m barrels of oil.

In a statement, the ministry said that all exports were from oil fields located middle and southern of the countries, with the exception of one million barrels produced from the Qayyarah field in the north, and 464,000 barrels that were exported to Jordan.

The export rate according to these quantities amounted to 3.3 million barrels of oil per day, with a sales rate of USD 77.5 per barrel of oil, the company explained. (KUNA)

The nation's employers delivered a stunning burst of hiring to begin 2024, adding 353,000 jobs in January in the latest sign of the economy's continuing ability to shrug off the highest interest rates in two decades.

Friday's government report showed that last month's job gain - roughly twice what economists had predicted - topped the December gain of 333,000, a figure that was itself revised sharply higher. The unemployment rate stayed at 3.7%, just above

a half-century low.

Wages rose unexpectedly fast in January, too. Average hourly pay climbed a sharp 0.6% from December, the fastest monthly gain in nearly two years, and 4.5% from January 2023. The strong hiring and wage growth could complicate or delay the Federal Reserve's intention to start cutting interest rates later this year.

The latest gains showcased employers' willingness to keep hiring

US adding hundreds of thousands of new jobs

to meet steady consumer spending. It comes as the intensifying presidential campaign is pivoting in no small part on views of President Joe Biden's economic stewardship. Public polls show widespread dissatisfaction largely because even though inflation has sharply slowed, most prices remain well above pre-pandemic levels. Some recent surveys, though, show public approval gradually improving.

"America's economy is the strongest in the world," Biden said Friday.

"Today, we saw more proof, with another month of strong wage gains and employment gains of over 350,000 in January, continuing the strong growth from last year."

This week, the Fed took note of the economy's durability, with Chair Jerome Powell saying "the economy is performing well, the labor market remains strong." The central bank made clear that while it's nearing a long-awaited shift toward cutting interest rates, it's in no hurry to do so. (AP)

Company actively pursuing development opportunities in the region

Rokk appointed as MD of Egypt Kuwait Holding Company

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Egypt Kuwait Holding Company has announced the appointment of Jon Rokk as Managing Director, effective February 1, 2024. Rokk has extensive leadership experience spanning a 30-year career, his expertise in entrepreneurship and business development across various environments is exceptional. Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi, Chairman of the Board of Directors stated that Rokk was meticulously selected for this role due leading numerous multinational companies in diverse geographical regions including Europe, Middle East and North Africa. Furthermore, he has managed multiple sectors such as oil, gas, petrochemicals, infrastructure, and nuclear, aligning with the business areas of Egypt Kuwait Holding Company's subsidiaries.

Prior to joining Egypt Kuwait Holding Company, Rokk served as Chief Operating Officer at South Tees Development Company in the UK, overseeing Europe's largest regeneration project in the energy transition and renewable energy sectors, with investments exceeding £2 billion.

In 2013, Rokk moved to the Middle East to become the General Manager at Interserve, a British firm operating in oil, gas, petrochemicals, utilities, engineering, and construction in Qatar, UAE and Oman.

Then, in 2019, he assumed the role of President and CEO at Bilfinger Middle East and North Africa, overseeing the company's operations in utilities, oil and gas, petrochemicals, infrastructure, and nuclear sectors.

Jon's experience includes expertise in integration strategies, analyzing advanced growth methods, and implementing acquisitions in the United Kingdom, China and the Middle East.

Al-Kharafi remarked that this strategic change in management follows the current Managing Director, Sherif El Zayat, expressing his desire to step down for personal reasons. His tenure will conclude on March 31, 2024. Al-Kharafi added we express sincere gratitude for his significant contributions over the years, positively impacting the holding company's business and financial performance. The company's net profit in 2015 was \$36 million, and due to the expansion of the business base, profits continued to rise to a total of \$241 million of net profit in 2022. Despite global market challenges, the company managed to earn net profit of \$137 million in the first nine months of 2023.

Al-Kharafi also expressed his appreciation for the dedication and efforts of the employees of the Holding Company and its subsidiaries, who have played a key role in achieving



Jon Rokk



Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi

this remarkable performance.

Egypt Kuwait Holding Company is actively pursuing development opportunities in the region to enhance its foreign currencies earnings as part of a long-term strategy to sustainably increase shareholder returns. The company has invested over \$200 million in capital expenditures to support its expansion plan in 2023, demonstrating confidence in the growth potential of its subsidiaries and associates.

Founded in 1997, Egypt Kuwait Holding Company is listed on both the Kuwait and Egyptian stock markets. Over the past decades, it has emerged as one of the largest, leading, and fastest-growing investment companies in the Middle East. Its diverse portfolio spans five major sectors: fertilizers, petrochemicals, gas upstream and distribution, power production and distribution, insurance and non-bank financial services.

US seizing over 500,000 barrels of oil it says Iran illegally trafficked

Prosecutors announce criminal charges related to the sale

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP) - The Justice Department announced Friday that it was seizing more than 500,000 barrels of internationally sanctioned Iranian fuel that officials said was illegally trafficked to provide funding for the country's paramilitary force.

In addition, prosecutors announced criminal charges related to the sale of the crude oil to buyers in China, Russia and Syria.

Officials described the actions, which come at time of simmering tensions between the U.S. and Iran, as part of a broader effort to disrupt fund-

ing to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, an expeditionary unit believed to be working abroad in countries like Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen to back Iranian-allied militias.

"Iran presents a constant threat to the United States - trying to murder Americans right here within our borders, conducting a cyber-attack on a children's hospital, supporting terrorists around the world, and more," FBI Director Christopher Wray said in a statement.

"All of Iran's crimes cost money. And the FBI will remain committed to enforcing U.S. sanctions that keep money out of its coffers."

Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement that "the Justice Department will continue to use every authority we have to cut off the illegal financing and enabling

of Iran's malicious activities, which have become even more evident in recent months."

One criminal case, filed in New York, charges seven people - including multiple officers of a Turkish energy group and a leader within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - with using front companies, false documentation and manipulated location and shipping data to sell to government-affiliated buyers in China, Russia and Syria.

The charges include crimes related to terrorism, sanctions evasion, fraud and money laundering.

A separate criminal case filed in federal court in Washington, D.C., charges a Chinese woman and an Omani man for their alleged involvement in the sale of Iranian oil to refineries owned by the Chinese government.

The cases are the latest major ones related to Iran unsealed by the Justice Department this week.

On Monday, prosecutors announced charges against an Iranian national accused of conspiring with two Canadians in a murder-for-hire plot on U.S. soil that was ultimately disrupted.

The more than 500,000 barrels of fuel that the U.S. is moving to seize were valued at over \$25 million aboard the Abyss oil tanker.

The Associated Press in March 2023 analyzed satellite photos and maritime tracking data to place the Abyss in a key Asian maritime strait next to the crude oil tanker Oceania for a possible ship-to-ship transfer.

The U.S. also says it seized \$108 million that was used as part of the scheme.

Turkish Central Bank Governor resigns months into her tenure

ISTANBUL, Feb 3, (AP) - The governor of Turkey's central bank has resigned only months after taking office amid allegations of improper use of power and family interference in the workings of the financial institutions.

Hafize Gaye Erkan who took over as central bank governor in June was the bank's first female chief. She announced her resignation on social media platform X, formerly Twitter, late Friday, saying she was a victim of a "character assassination campaign" and would

resign to spare her family further anguish.

Last month, a leading Turkish newspaper claimed that her parents were exerting undue influence inside the financial institution and that her father had even fired a bank employee.

Allegations Erkan has vehemently refuted.

At the time, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan came out in support of the central bank governor, dismissing the media report as "irrational rumors designed to destroy the climate of trust and stability in the economy that we

have achieved through great difficulty."

The Turkish president had previous governors fired for resisting his insistence that lower interest rates would fight Turkey's staggering inflation. Economists have blamed his unconventional economic policy that led to a major spike in the cost of living, with people struggling to afford food, housing and other necessities.

However Erdogan reversed course after winning elections in May, appointing a new economic team headed by former Merrill

Lynch banker Mehmet Simsek, who returned as finance minister and who brought on Erkan as the new governor.

Under Erkan's tenure, loan rates increased from 8.5% to the current 45%, the latest spike enforced last week.

Simsek wrote on X Saturday that Erkan's resignation was entirely her decision and thanked her for her service.

Fatih Karahan, the previous deputy governor of the central bank, will replace Erkan, according to the country's official gazette.

Where the jobs are

Strong hiring in most industries has far outpaced the high-profile layoffs

WASHINGTON, Feb 3, (AP) - Blockbuster job growth in the past several months has coincided with high-profile layoff announcements by a number of large companies.

So, how are both occurring at the same time? It's not as contradictory as it might seem. Recent job cuts have been concentrated mainly in just a few sectors: technology, finance and media.

Relative to the U.S. labor force of 160 million people, layoffs so far have been dwarfed by consistently vigorous hiring - a monthly average of 248,000 jobs added over the past six months. The unemployment rate is still just 3.7%, barely above a 50-year low.

It turns out that many of the companies that are now shedding jobs had over-hired during the pandemic, when they thought the trends that emerged then - especially a surge in online shopping - would continue apace. As the economy has normalized, many of these companies have discovered that they no longer need so many employees and have responded with layoffs.

In January, American businesses and other employers added a blistering 353,000 jobs - the biggest monthly haul in a year. The government also revised up its estimate of job gains in November and December by a combined 126,000. The data provided compelling evidence that most companies, large and small, are confident enough in the economy to keep hiring.

Several of the companies that have announced layoffs are among the most well-known household names: Google, Amazon, eBay, UPS, Spotify and Facebook's parent Meta. Not that they've been the only ones. Challenger, Gray & Christmas, a leading outplacement firm, reported this week that businesses announced 82,000 layoffs in January, the second-most for any January since 2009.

Here are some reasons why these seemingly disparate trends are coinciding:

In most industries, businesses have kept adding workers over the past three months. Manufacturers, for example, added 56,000 in November, December and January combined. Restaurants, hotels and entertainment companies gained nearly 60,000 over that time. Health care providers - hospitals, doctors' offices, and dentists - added a whop-

ping 300,000.

They're not all low-paying jobs, either: A sector that the government calls professional and business services, a sprawling category that includes accountants, engineers, lawyers and their support staff - has 120,000 more jobs than it did in October. Federal, state and local governments, which regained their pre-pandemic levels of employment in September, also added nearly 120,000 jobs over that period.

The job cuts, by contrast, have been more concentrated. The Labor Department doesn't track technology jobs specifically, but Friday's jobs report pointed to signs of the industry's struggles: The unemployment rate for workers in what the government calls the "information" sector, which includes media and tech workers, jumped to 5.5% in January from 3.9% a year ago. That's nearly 2 percentage points above the national jobless rate.

More confusing is why companies would cut workers if the economy is growing and consumers keep spending. Last week, the government estimated that the economy expanded at a healthy 3.3% annual pace in the October-December quarter after robust growth of 4.9% the previous quarter.

Companies tend to shed jobs for all sorts of reasons, sometimes to reflect changes in their business strategy or to maintain or boost their profit margins. Many high-tech companies that went on hiring binges in 2022, as the economy accelerated out of the pandemic recession, miscalculated the longer-term demand for their products and services.

In its survey of job cuts, Challenger, Gray & Christmas said the leading reason companies cited last month for laying off workers was "restructuring." A year earlier, it was "economic conditions," economists at Renaissance Macro noted, meaning that companies had previously worried more about the state of the economy.

Todd McKinnon, CEO of the software company Okta, said in a message announcing that the company would cut about 400 jobs that it entered 2023 "with a growth plan based on the demand we experienced in the prior year."

"This led us to over-hire for the macro-economic reality we're in today," he wrote.

Egypt Kuwait Holding

Egypt Kuwait Holding

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The youngest winner of the biggest prize in the world

Alaa Yousef Al-Mutairi wins KD 2 million from Gulf Bank



A group photo of Gulf Bank employees in Al-Shaheed Park after announcing the winner.

AIDanah Millionaire account holders await the KD 1 million draw on July 18, 2024

In a significant achievement for the renowned AIDanah Millionaire account, Gulf Bank has proudly announced the 21st millionaire in the history of AIDanah Millionaire draws. The lucky winner, Alaa Yousef Adel Al-Mutairi, became the youngest winner of the world's largest prize, valued at an impressive KD 2 million.

Acknowledging that special events require exceptional locations, Gulf Bank selected Al-Shaheed Park for this momentous occasion. With its symbolic significance, and reputation as one of the largest public parks in Kuwait and the region, Al-Shaheed Park proved to be the perfect location for revealing the lucky winner of the world's largest bank account prize, aligning with Gulf Bank's dedication to promoting environmental sustainability.

In the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young, and amidst the palpable atmosphere of anticipation and excitement among eagerly awaiting AIDanah Millionaire account holders, Gulf Bank revealed the name of the winner. The event was live-streamed on the bank's social media platforms.

Digital Services

Addressing the audience at the ceremony, Mr. Mohammad Al-Qattan, the General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, extended his congratulations to Alaa Al-Mutairi, who secured the annual grand prize, becoming the first and youngest winner of the KD 2 million prize.

He emphasized that the AIDanah millionaire account consistently fulfills the dreams of customers and plays a role in creating millionaires, encouraging tens of thousands to embrace a savings-oriented mindset.

Furthermore, he noted that individuals who were not fortunate enough to win the KD 2 million prize will have another chance in the semi-annual draw for a KD 1 million prize on July 18, 2024.

Al-Qattan highlighted the remarkable advancements in the bank's services, and the unprecedented progress in its digital transformation journey. This transformative process involved introducing a new version of Gulf Bank's mobile application, and the launch of high-quality products designed to align with customer aspirations.

Emphasizing the continuous success of the bank's digital transformation journey, Al-Qattan highlighted enhancements in electronic services, branches, ATMs, as well as the Call Center – all aimed at making Gulf Bank's services more accessible, faster, and superior in the banking sector. This endeavor aligns with the bank's 2025 strategy, to position itself as a forward-looking financial institution, harnessing state-of-the-art technology.

He also mentioned that, in addition to service development and ongoing efforts to improve the customer experience, Gulf Bank has introduced a new identity for its branches; emphasizing the concept of self-service. This approach will be progressively rolled out across the current branch network, and the bank has launched its first environmentally friendly branch in the residential area of Sabah Al-Ahmad.

Al-Qattan concluded by affirming the bank's commitment to generous investments aimed at delivering an extraordinary customer experience. This entails concentrating on developing advanced digital capabilities and improving the skills of employees, to ensure banking services that are user-friendly.

Human Resources

Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj, the General Manager of Human Resources, highlighted Gulf Bank's exceptional workplace environment, positioning it as one of the most attractive talent destinations in the private sector, and underscoring its positive impact on the overall customer experience.

She acknowledged the bank's substantial efforts in empowering women and youth, as well as its continuous commitment to developing and training its employees. This is achieved through collaborations with prestigious international and local institutions, ensuring that staff members acquire the latest expertise and skills essential to keep pace with significant developments in the banking industry, both locally and internationally.

Ms. Al-Hajjaj stressed the economic imperative of empowering women and supporting their career development. She pointed out that companies offering equal opportunities for both genders, often witness increased levels of profitability, productivity, and innovation, leading to positive effects on their reputation and market value.

The Year of Change

Ms. Najla Al-Eisa, Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank's Marketing Department, highlighted that the significant advancement observed in Gulf Bank has further enhanced the customer experience. This improvement is realized through the provision of services characterized by simplicity and innovation; meeting customer aspirations, simplifying their lives, and contributing to sustainable growth.

She further stated, "We have declared 2024 as "Year of Change", building upon our success from the previous year, in raising awareness about the significance of saving through informative programs and campaigns that encourage customers to save. This resulted in the increase of the grand prize value of the AIDanah Millionaire Draw to KD 2 million."

Ms. Al-Eisa emphasized that Gulf Bank's campaigns this year will concentrate on instigating change within the bank and in the lives of their customers. She highlighted that the 2024 calendar, themed "Always with You in the Year of Change," has been structured to assign each month with a specific value related to change, including "Determination," "Self-challenge," "Ambition," "Acquiring New Skills," "Self-confidence," and more.

Wealth Management

Mr. Sattam Al-Marzouq, Assistant General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank - Wealth Management, expressed, "Gulf Bank is committed to delivering top-notch services to its Wealth Management clients, tailored to their needs and lifestyle. This commitment aims to attract more high-net-worth individuals seeking distinguished banking services."

He emphasized that as part of the 2025 strategy, the bank is committed to improving and extending services tailored to the needs of its Wealth Management customers. The goal is



Mr. Mohammad Al-Qattan delivers his speech before the draw.

Mohammad Al-Qattan: AIDanah millionaire account consistently fulfills the dreams of customers and plays a role in creating millionaires, motivating customers to save.

Salma Al-Hajjaj: The bank's success is based on a wealth of exceptional talents and distinguished human resources

■ We are making significant efforts in empowering women and youth and are focused on developing and enhancing the skills of our employees.

Najla Al-Eisa: Our marketing campaigns in 2024, will focus on bringing about change in our services and in the lives of our customers.

Sattam Al-Marzouq: The Wealth Management division offers quality services tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of our clients.



From the right, Mr. Mohammed Al-Qattan, Ms. Najla Al-Eisa, and Mr. Ahmad Al-Amir.



A section of the audience led by Acting Deputy CEO, Sami Mahfouz.



Mr. Mohammed Al-Qattan signs a cheque with the name of the winner.



A KD 2 million cheque, representing the Grand Prize for the AIDanah Millionaire draw.



'Neo,' the newly introduced children's account.



Recycling the AIDanah street advertisements and transforming them into reusable bags.

to streamline their banking operations for greater ease and convenience. Additionally, the bank consistently strives to bolster its relationship with esteemed customers, by continuously exploring and understanding their evolving banking needs and requirements.

Mohammed Taqi: The fastest rewarding program in Kuwait, with a new look and feel

Gulf Bank consistently seeks to reward its customers with the best and fastest rewarding program in Kuwait. In line with the dedication, the bank has introduced the Gulf Bank Rewards Program with a new look and feel, enabling customers to instantly redeem their points through its mobile application.

Neo Account for Kids

As part of the newly introduced offerings in the Year of Change, Mr. Taqi announced the introduction of the "Neo" kids bank account, designed to encourage savings among children. He explained that Gulf Bank is preparing for significant changes in 2024, with some initiatives already underway, and others in the preparation phase, set to be revealed soon.

Mahdi Sulaiman: Promoting Awareness on the Significance of Saving

Mr. Mahdi Sulaiman, Senior Manager of the Marketing Department at Gulf Bank, highlighted the bank's ongoing initiatives to promote financial literacy by educating diverse segments of society about the importance of savings. He emphasized encouraging individuals to boost their savings through savings accounts, highlighting Gulf Bank's notable involvement in supporting the Let's Be Aware "Diraya" campaign. This campaign is overseen by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with the Kuwait Banking Association.

Nabil Shuaib Spotlights Gulf Bank's Digital Advancements

In a distinctive appearance, the renowned Kuwaiti singer Nabil Shuaib was featured in a promotional advertisement showcased during the AIDanah Millionaire ceremony, emphasizing the noteworthy advancements observed in Gulf Bank's digital services.

Eman Al-Najm and Ahmed Al-Matari Host AIDanah Millionaire Event

The AIDanah Millionaire event was hosted by the well-

known presenter and actress, Eman Al-Najm, alongside Ahmed Al-Matari, Assistant Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank.

Collaborating with Calligrapher Shaima Al-Azmi

As part of its commitment to supporting Kuwaiti youth talents and empowering women, Gulf Bank collaborated with calligrapher Shaima Al-Azmi. She inscribed the name of the grand prize winner on the oversized check and wrote the names of attendees who desired a commemorative copy.

Promoting Sustainability Principles

As a part of its dedication to promoting sustainability principles in society, Gulf Bank is committed to using recyclable bags made from materials utilized in outdoor advertising campaigns, for the AIDanah Millionaire account.

Archival Exhibition of AIDanah Millionaires

During the AIDanah ceremony, Gulf Bank organized an archival exhibition showcasing previous AIDanah millionaires, spanning from when the grand prize was KD 1 million to its current value of KD 2 million.

For the second time, holding the title of the world's largest cash prize linked to a bank account

AIDanah Millionaire earns a spot in the Guinness Book of Records

Mohammad Al-Qattan: We are proud to announce that the AIDanah Millionaire account has entered the Guinness World Records for the second time, transforming the dreams of our customers into reality.

Guinness: We are delighted to announce that Gulf Bank has broken the previous record by meeting all the necessary requirements.



Mr. Mohammad Al-Qattan receives the certificate for entry into the Guinness World Records, accompanied by Ms. Najla Al-Eisa and Mr. Ahmad Al-Amir



A small exhibition featuring photographs of previous millionaires from the AIDanah account.

For the second time in its history, the grand prize of the AIDanah millionaire account has earned a place in the Guinness Book of Records. This recognition marks it as the largest cash prize linked to a bank account worldwide. During the ceremony, Mr. Mohammad Al-Qattan, Consumer Banking General Manager at Gulf Bank, received the award from the Guinness representative.

Expressing pride in this achievement, Al-Qattan stated, "We are honored to be featured in the Guinness Book of Records for the second time. The AIDanah Millionaire draw's top prize was previously recognized in 2016 as the largest reward linked to a bank account globally. This year, it has once again achieved the same prestigious status, transforming the dreams of our customers into reality."

Annual Draws

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the AIDanah millionaire account, Gulf Bank has raised the annual grand prize from KD 1 million to KD 2 million. This account is one of the oldest and most prestigious savings accounts in Kuwait and was designed to encourage a culture of savings in society, and reward customers for their commitment to saving on a regular basis.

Gulf Bank's AIDanah account offers monthly opportunities to win KD 1,000 to ten lucky winners, in addition to two quarterly draws with KD 100,000 prizes each, a semi-annual draw prize of KD 1 million and a grand draw prize of KD 2 million.



The Grand Prize for the AIDanah Millionaire draw.

The AIDanah account is open to both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents in Kuwait. A minimum of KD 200 is required to open an account, and the same amount must be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming AIDanah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 monthly fee will be charged to the account, until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days. Gulf Bank encourages AIDanah

customers to raise their chances of winning by increasing their depositing amount, using the electronic payment service available through the bank's website and mobile application.

Criteria for Guinness World Records Registration

Guinness World Records serves as the ultimate authority in recognizing record-breaking achievements. Established in the early 1950s, Guinness achieved record sales in the United Kingdom with its inaugural version. With a team of professional ex-

perts specially trained to manage records, Guinness World Records conducts thorough research and investigations to validate the authenticity of each record. The organization maintains the highest standards of accuracy and enforces strict policies governing the decision to grant the World Record Award.

All records must adhere to criteria such as measurement, achievement, standardization, verification, uniqueness, and universality. Candidates are required to submit an application

with the necessary evidence to demonstrate the accomplishment.

In October 2016, Gulf Bank submitted its application to Guinness World Records for the AIDanah Millionaire Draw Prize. The Guinness Records Management team meticulously examined the application for acceptance. Following this, the Guinness team assessed the application against the specified criteria and confirmed that Gulf Bank's AIDanah Millionaire account holds the record for the largest prize associated with a bank account globally.

This outstanding achievement was confirmed once again in 2024, for the second time.

AIDanah Millionaire Documentary

To mark the 25th anniversary of the introduction of the AIDanah Millionaire Account, Gulf Bank has created a documentary chronicling the account's evolution from its inception. The documentary explores how the AIDanah Millionaire Account has positively transformed the lives of numerous individuals and families, propelling them to join the esteemed list of millionaires.



A group picture featuring several executives of Gulf Bank, with the Deputy CEO in the center.

AIDanah

Power Your Dreams

OFFICIAL ATTEMPT

AIDanah Millionaire Draws

KD One Winner

2,000,000

KD One Winner

1,000,000

Bi-annual Draws

KD 100,000

10 Monthly Winners

KD 1,000

Terms & conditions apply. 2312116460

Open an AIDanah Millionaire Account today

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People & Places

People

Thunberg acquitted

Swift's private jet travel scrutinized

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 3, (AP) — For weeks, scrutiny over singer Taylor Swift's travel in private jets has been bubbling up on social media, with people pointing out the planet-warming emissions of carbon dioxide released with every flight.

The megastar is dating Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, one of the NFL's most celebrated players. The growing romance between the couple has been closely watched, with Swift showing up at several games - which has meant much travel on private jets. The chatter got even louder the last few days after the Chiefs beat the Baltimore Ravens on Sunday, sending them to the Super Bowl, which is in Las Vegas on Feb. 11.



Swift

Swift, the hitmaker whose dominance of pop culture now includes the first tour to gross more than \$1 billion, is the latest in a long list of celebrities, government officials and elite businesspeople to come under scrutiny about private jet travel. A look at Swift's recent travel, carbon dioxide emissions from private jets versus commercial planes and one of the most common, albeit controversial, solutions floated to address such pollution.

If Swift attends the Super Bowl, she will be traveling from Tokyo, where she is on tour. That will mean more than 19,400 miles (30,500 kilometers) by private jet in just under two weeks. Just how much carbon dioxide will that be?

While exact carbon emissions depend on many factors, such as flight paths and number of passengers, a rough estimate is possible, said Gregory Keoleian, co-director of the Center for Sustainable Systems at the University of Michigan. Traveling 19,400 miles on a Dassault Falcon 900LX, one of Swift's jets, could release more than 200,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, he said.

That would be about 14 times as much as the average American household emits in a year, according to data from the US Energy Information Administration.

Debate

How realistic commercial travel would be for Swift is open for debate. After all, she's so famous that even if she wanted to, flying on commercial flights might be chaotic for an airline crew and any public airport she frequents. Keoleian said there are other important ways that public figures flying private can address climate change, such as through their influence on public attitudes and perceptions, investments and who they vote for.

The controversy over Swift's use of private jets illustrates the "great disparity" between the wealthy and lower-income people when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions each person generates, said Julia Stein, a professor at University of California, Los Angeles School of Law.

"You're seeing this play out on kind of a microcosmic scale (with Swift), but that's true too of industrialized countries their carbon emissions historically," she said.

Swift is the latest of many famous people to be scrutinized over pollution from their globe-trotting. Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Leonardo DiCaprio and many others have periodically gotten attention for their travel on private jets.

"It's striking that Ms. Swift gets so much of the outrage when private jet customers are overwhelmingly men over 50," said Jeff Colgan, a professor of political science at Brown University. "The focus really should be on a broader class of people."

Big events, from Olympic Games to the annual UN climate summit have also been criticized because of the thousands of people flying in to attend, travel that all contributes to climate change.

All air travel creates emissions, though private jets produce much more per person. A 2023 study by the Institute for Policy Studies found that private jets emit at least 10 times more pollutants per passenger compared to commercial planes.

One often discussed way to address air travel pollution is paying for carbon offsets, which aim to balance out emissions released. For example, trees pull carbon out of the air, so offset programs include planting trees that, at least in theory, balance out pollution from air travel.

Gates has defended his travel by private plane by saying he purchases offsets and supports clean technology and other sustainability initiatives. Swift's publicist told The Associated Press that "Taylor purchased more than double the carbon credits needed to offset all tour travel" before her tour began, but did not provide any details.

Still, there are many questions about the effectiveness of offsets. They are loosely regulated and investigations by news organizations in recent years have shown some programs overestimate how much carbon is being captured or have questionable practices.

"Offsets are still the Wild West of climate change and have been riddled with fraud, failed projects, and dubious effectiveness," said Jonathan Foley, executive director of Project Drawdown, a group that publicizes climate solutions. "Planting trees, for example, might work - or not - depending on how the forests are managed in the long run."

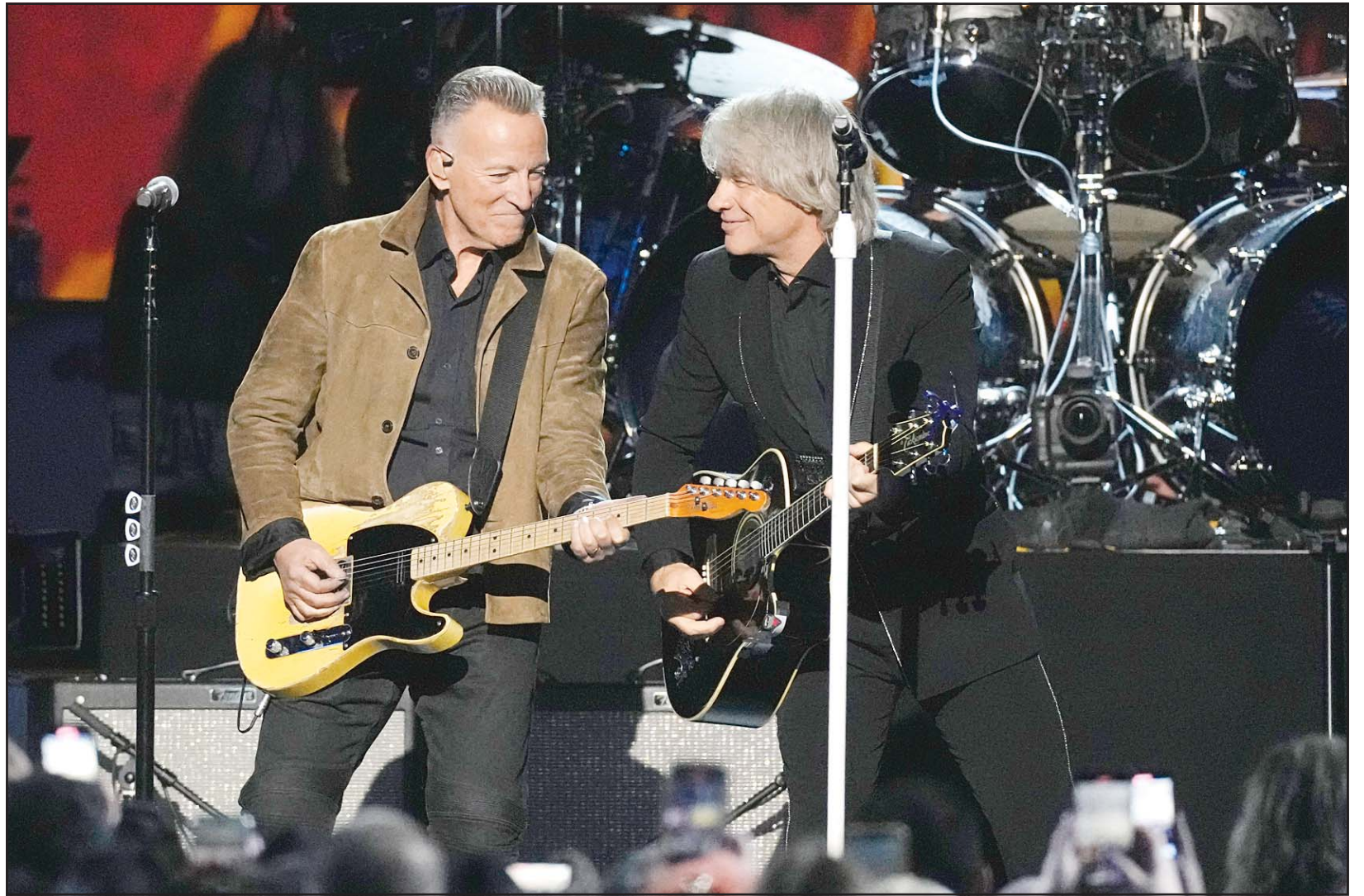
Also:

LONDON: Climate activist Greta Thunberg was acquitted Friday of a charge of refusing to follow a police order to leave a protest blocking the entrance to a major oil and gas industry conference in London last year.

The courtroom gallery erupted with applause as Judge John Law told Thunberg and her four co-defendants to stand and told them they were cleared of the criminal charge of breaching the Public Order Act. The judge cited "significant deficiencies in the evidence" presented by the prosecutor.

Law said the police could have applied less restrictive measures and didn't properly define where protesters should move, while their order to disperse was "so unclear that it was unlawful." Individuals who did not comply therefore committed no offense, according to the judge.

Law also granted defense lawyer Raj Chada's request for the government to pay legal fees and Thunberg's travel costs once the bills are submitted. She had faced a fine of up to 2,500 pounds (\$3,190) if convicted in Westminster Magistrates' Court of violating the act that allows police to impose limits on public assemblies.



Bruce Springsteen, (left), and Jon Bon Jovi perform during MusiCares Person of the Year honoring Jon Bon Jovi on Friday, Feb. 2, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Obituaries

MC5 band co-founder Wayne Kramer dead

Weathers, 'Rocky' films actor, dies

NEW YORK, Feb. 3, (AP) — Carl Weathers, a former NFL linebacker who became a Hollywood action movie and comedy star, playing nemesis-turned-ally Apollo Creed in the "Rocky" movies, facing off against Arnold Schwarzenegger in "Predator" and teaching golf in "Happy Gilmore," has died. He was 76.

Matt Lubber, his manager, said Weathers died Thursday. His family issued a statement saying he died "peacefully in his sleep."

"Carl Weathers will always be a legend," Schwarzenegger wrote on Instagram. "An extraordinary athlete, a fantastic actor and a great person. We couldn't have made 'Predator' without him. And we certainly wouldn't have had such a wonderful time making it."

Comfortable flexing his muscles on the big screen in "Action Jackson" as he was joking around on the small screen in such shows as "Arrested Development," Weathers was perhaps most closely associated with Creed, who made his first appearance as the cocky, undisputed heavyweight world champion in 1976's "Rocky," starring Sylvester Stallone.

"It puts you on the map and makes your career, so to speak. But that's a one-off, so you've got to follow it up with something. Fortunately those movies kept coming, and Apollo Creed became more and more in people's consciousness and welcome in their lives, and it was just the right guy at the right time," he told The Daily Beast in 2017.

Most recently, Weathers has starred in the Disney+ hit "The Mandalorian," appearing in all three seasons.

Tribute

"We lost a legend yesterday," Stallone wrote in an Instagram message that included a video tribute. The actor stood before a painting of him and Weathers boxing and said, "Carl Weathers was such an integral part of my life, my success ... I give him incredible credit and kudos."

"When he walked into that room and I saw him for the first time, I saw greatness. ... I never could have accomplished what we did with 'Rocky' without him."

Stallone ended his video tribute by saying: "Apollo, keep punching."

Creed, who appeared in the first four "Rocky" movies, memorably died in the ring of 1984's "Rocky IV," going toe-to-toe with the hulking, steroid-using Soviet Ivan Drago, played by Dolph Lundgren. Before he entered the ring, James Brown sang "Living in America" with showgirls and Creed popped up on a balcony in a Star-Spangled Banner shorts and waistcoat combo and an Uncle Sam hat, dancing and taunting Drago.

A bloodied Creed collapses in the ring after taking a vicious beating, twitches and is cradled by Rocky as he dies, inevitably setting up a fight between Drago and Rocky. But while Creed is gone, his character's son, Michael B. Jordan's Adonis Creed, would lead his own boxing trilogy starting in 2015.

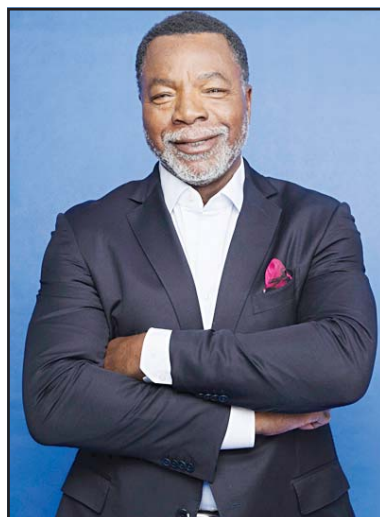
Weathers went on to 1987's "Predator," where he flexed his pecs alongside Ventura, Schwarzenegger and a host of others, and 1988's nouveau blaxploitation flick "Action Jackson," where he trains his flamethrower on a bad guy and asks, "How do you like your ribs?" before broiling him.

"We lost an icon," former "Predator" co-star Jesse Ventura wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "Carl Weathers was a phenomenal talent, a true professional and a dear friend."

He later added a false wooden hand to play a golf pro for the 1996 comedy classic "Happy Gilmore" opposite Adam Sandler and starred in Dick Wolf's short-lived spin-off series "Chicago Justice" in 2017 and in Disney's "The Mandalorian," earning an Emmy Award nomination in 2021. He also voiced Combat Carl in the "Toy Story" franchise.

Sandler hailed his friend on social media, calling him a "great man" and "a true legend" - "So much fun to be around always. Smart as hell. Loyal as hell. Funny as hell."

Weathers grew up admiring actors such as Woody Strode, whose combination of physique and acting prowess in "Spartacus" made an early im-



Carl Weathers poses at the Disney+ launch event promoting 'The Mandalorian' at the London West Hollywood hotel in West Hollywood, Calif., on Oct. 19, 2019. Weathers died Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024. He was 76. (AP)

Variety

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.: Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals roasted Barry Keoghan, best known for his roles in "Dunkirk," "The Killing of a Sacred Deer," "Eternals," and "The Banshees of Inisherin," on Friday with its 2024 Man of the Year Award.

Keoghan, who also starred in the comedy psychological thriller "Saltburn" and the World War II drama series "Masters of the Air," was presented with a pudding pot before being invited to attend a performance of Hasty Pudding's 175th production "Heist Heist Baby!"

During the roast, Keoghan, who is Irish, was pressed into a boxing match with "Mr. Irish Potato Famine," played by an actor in a comically oversized suit and hat. He also participated in an awkward romantic comedy scene at the end of which he planted his face in a dish of spaghetti.

Keoghan, who acted in "The Eternals" about a race of immortal beings, confessed during the roast that his favorite Avenger was the Hulk and then changed it to Iron Man when he briefly thought Robert Downey Jr., the actor who plays Iron Man, was in the audience.

And at the end of the roast, the BAFTA award winning Keoghan was presented with a "BAFTUB" award - a bathtub-sized award that Keoghan climbed into - before being forced to don a bra adorned with cartoons of Morton Salt and cardboard flames.

Speaking to reporters after the roast, Keoghan said he was honored to be in the same category of the other actors who have received the award.

"I've seen Paul Newman's name and some of the others," he said. "It's just an honor isn't it?" (AP)

LONDON: A major work by surrealist painter René Magritte that hasn't been shown in public for a quarter century could fetch 50 million pounds (\$64 million) at auction next month.

Christie's auction house announced Saturday that it will offer "L'ami intime" (The Intimate Friend) at a March 7 sale in London marking a century of the surrealist movement in art.

The painting includes several of the Belgian artist's signature motifs, including a bowler-hatted man and fluffy white clouds on a blue sky. In this painting, completed in 1958, the man is shown from behind, facing out over a hilly landscape. A baguette and a wine glass hover in the foreground.

Olivier Camu, Christie's deputy chairman for Impressionist and modern art, said the "highly poetic, highly dreamy" painting is among the handful of most important Magritte works in private hands. Last exhibited publicly in Brussels in 1998, it's being auctioned for the first time since 1980, and has a pre-sale estimate of between 30 million and 50 million pounds (\$38 million and \$64 million).

This year marks the centenary of Andre Breton's "Surrealist Manifesto," which defined a revolutionary artistic movement characterized by unsettling juxtapositions and paradoxical statements - as in Magritte's most famous work, a painting of a pipe titled. (AP)

spring who'd turn New Jersey into lyrical legend.

Adele Springsteen's joyful, spirited charm made her a fan magnet in her own right. "Video evidence of Adele rocking out onstage with Bruce dates back to 1992," according to Rolling Stone magazine.

She was "real smart, real strong, real creative," with a "refusal to be disheartened," Bruce told biographer Dave Marsh.

And her influence ran deep. She "held our family together" through years of hardship, the musician said in a 2010 Ellis Island speech, sharing the stage with his beaming mother and aunts.

"I took after my mom in a certain sense. Her life had an incredible consistency, work, work, work every day, and I admired that greatly," he told "Uncut" magazine in 2002, praising her "noble" juggling of work and home.

"I'd visit her at her job sometimes, and it was filled with men and women who seemed to have a purpose," he said. "I found a lot of inspiration in those simple acts."

When Bruce was a kid, his mom scraped together some money - a story sweetly portrayed in another section of "The Wish," which he recorded in 1987 and quoted from on Instagram on Thursday.

"Little boy and his ma shivering outside a rundown music store window.

Others he idolized included actors Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte and athletes Jim Brown and Muhammad Ali, stars who broke the mold and the color barrier.

Also:

NEW YORK: Wayne Kramer, the co-founder of the protopunk Detroit band the MC5 that thrashed out such hardcore anthems as "Kick Out the Jams" and influenced everyone from the Clash to Rage Against the Machine, has died at age 75.

Kramer died Friday at Cedars-Sinai hospital in Los Angeles, according to Jason Heath, a close friend and executive director of Kramer's nonprofit Jail Guitar Doors. Heath said the cause of death was pancreatic cancer.

From the late 1960s to early 1970s, no band was closer to the revolutionary spirit of the time than the MC5, which featured Kramer and Fred "Sonic" Smith on guitars, Rob Tyner on vocals, Michael Davis on bass and Dennis "Machine Gun" Thompson on drums. Managed for a time by White Panther co-founder John Sinclair, they were known for their raw, uncompromising music, which they envisioned as the soundtrack for the uprising to come.

murder in the daytime ambush of Young Dolph, who was buying cookies at a Memphis bakery when he was gunned down in November 2021.

Johnson's lawyer, Luke Evans, told Judge Jennifer J. Mitchell that the killing has received relentless attention from news outlets and on social media, where some commenters have called for Johnson to be lynched or killed in prison in an attempt to seek vengeance, not justice. (AP)



Keoghan



Dolph

MEMPHIS, Tenn.: A man charged with killing Young Dolph cannot get a fair trial in Memphis due to the intense media attention and "public visceral outrage" over the slaying of the beloved rapper in his hometown, a defense lawyer said Friday.

Justin Johnson's attorney asked a judge to bring in a jury from outside of Shelby County for the trial of Johnson and Cornelius Smith Jr. Both men have been charged with first-degree

Al-Sidra provides crucial support to over 16,000 cancer patients

Medical authorities, societies unite to aid cancer patients in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): On February 4, activists, medical experts, and doctors observe World Cancer Day amid national initiatives to combat the disease and raise awareness of its severe health risks. Kuwaiti authorities, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, represented by the Kuwait Cancer Control Center (CCC) and hospitals, provide comprehensive support both materially and morally. Specialized societies also play a crucial role in offering financial and moral assistance to cancer patients.

Al-Sidra Association, established on January 23, 2012, has served over 16,000 Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti patients, delivering psychological support through specialized professionals and volunteers. Sheikha Azza Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, the association's founder and chairwoman, highlighted that the society conducts individual and group support sessions, allowing patients to benefit from the experiences of survivors and address psychological challenges associated with the disease.

The treatment approach focuses on promoting patients' well-being and self-confidence, incorporating activities such as massage, yoga, deep breathing sessions, educational lectures, and workshops to educate the public on coping mechanisms for cancer. Financial assistance is also provided



Entertainment activities for children with cancer. KUNA photo

to low-income patients, including free transportation for examinations at the center and affiliated facilities.

Psychological therapist Altaf Al-Isa emphasized the need for an adequate number of healthcare professionals in the fight against cancer, expressing readiness to collaborate with volunteers and specialists.

Jamal Al-Fozan, Director General of the Patients Helping Fund, stated that the society financially supports 350-550 patients annually, with a cost of KD 5,412,000 in the previous year.

The Patients Helping Fund Society, established in 1979, continues to launch annual campaigns to support cancer patients, extending financial aid to low-income residents of Kuwait.

Dr. Iman Al-Shemmari, Secretary of the Cancer Awareness National Campaign (CAN), affirmed the contribution of Ministry of Health personnel in combating cancer through centers and awareness campaigns. While thyroid cancer is prevalent in the country, Dr. Al-Shemmari noted its high treatability due to the availability of necessary

Urgent action needed: WHO

Global cancer cases to hit 35m by 2050

GENEVA, Feb 3, (KUNA): The World Health Organization (WHO)'s cancer agency and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have expected a surge in the global cancer burden with the potential for over 35 million new cases in 2050 marking a 77 percent increase compared to 2022.

This came in a joint report issued Thursday on the occasion of World Cancer Day corresponding to the fourth of February in which it warned that cancer cases have reached 20 million new cases resulting in 9.7 million deaths worldwide during the year 2022.

The report disclosed that approximately one in five individuals would develop cancer in their lifetime. Additionally it anticipated that one in every nine men and one in every 12 women would succumb to the dis-

ease underscoring the urgent need to enhance efforts in cancer prevention early detection and treatment.

Furthermore the report confirmed that the World Health Organization had conducted a survey in 115 countries. Upon publishing its findings it warned of a significant gap in financing cancer services and prioritizing therapeutic care a crucial element of universal health coverage.

Only 39 percent of the participating countries had allocated funds for cancer treatment in their basic health services and a mere 28 percent covered curative care indicating a substantial deficiency in comprehensive cancer care.

"This underscores the urgent need for increased investments to reduce global inequality in access to treatment," the two agencies stated. The report highlighted also that

lung breast and colorectal cancers as the most prevalent types in 2022 constituting two-thirds of new cases and deaths globally.

Lung cancer ranked highest with 2.5 million new cases and 1.9 million deaths followed by breast cancer in women with 2.3 million new cases and colorectal cancer with 1.9 million cases.

The findings revealed variations based on the development index among countries.

"Women in countries with a low human development index were 50 percent less likely to develop breast cancer compared to those in high human development index countries. Despite lower infection rates the risk of death in these countries was significantly higher due to late diagnosis and inadequate access to quality treatment," reads the report.

equipment, medications, and qualified healthcare professionals. The CAN campaign, initiated in 2006, aims to

expand public awareness of various cancer types, particularly breast and thyroid cancer, leading to increased

awareness of early detection and optimal treatment among Kuwaiti residents.

Advancements in IVF and AI to take center stage

Kuwait to host 3-day Obstetrics and Gynecology Conference from Feb 8

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Dr. Hanan Al-Husseini, Head of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Jahra Hospital and Conference President, has officially announced the commencement of the 26th International Conference on Obstetrics and Gynecology in Kuwait. The prestigious event, held under the auspices of the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, is scheduled to take place from February 8 to February 10, spanning three days.

In a press statement, Dr. Al-Husseini highlighted that the conference stands as the largest scientific and training gathering in the field. The event will feature the participation of renowned experts, including 20 specialists from various foreign, Gulf, and Arab countries, such as the United Kingdom, Spain, Russia, Cyprus, India, Slovenia, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Additionally, local experts renowned for their excellence and experience in obstetrics and gynecology will contribute to the conference.

The diverse agenda of the conference encompasses discussions on pregnancy, childbirth, maternal and



Dr Hanan Al-Husseini with the participants of the workshop and the team at the pregnancy and birth ward at Al-Jahra Hospital. KUNA photo

fetal medicine, addressing fertility issues in both women and men, and utilizing artificial intelligence tech-

niques to enhance in vitro fertilization and assisted fertilization. Furthermore, the event aims to showcase the latest scientific advancements to enhance the quality of medical services for patients. Topics such as the future of embryology and genetics, robotic surgeries, the application of artificial intelligence in fetal sonars, and therapeutic interventions for fetuses during pregnancy will be explored.

Dr. Al-Husseini emphasized that the conference will delve into the latest findings in genetic and hereditary testing before pregnancy. Moreover, it will address the legal and religious perspectives on the applications of artificial intelligence in medicine, specifically in the realm of women's health and childbirth.

Legal experts and specialists in leg-

islation will contribute to these crucial discussions.

The conference will precede its main sessions with three workshops. These include a workshop on advanced detailed ultrasound in gynecology and obstetrics from February 6 to 7, a workshop on male surgeries for fertility operations spanning February 5 to 7, 2024, and a workshop on performing hysteroscopy during February 6 to 7. The workshops are designed to provide valuable insights and hands-on experiences for participants.

The 26th International Conference on Obstetrics and Gynecology is poised to be a groundbreaking event, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among experts to advance the field's understanding and practices.



Dr Abdulrazzaq Al-Obaid KUNA photo

Dr. Al-Obaid makes history

Kuwaiti surgeon takes helm at 'Pan-Arab Spine Society'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3, (KUNA): The General Assembly of the Pan-Arab Spine Society (PASS) has unanimously elected Dr. Abdulrazzaq Al-Obaid chairman of the PASS - the first time for a Kuwaiti surgeon to hold the post.

The uncontested election took place during a general assembly meeting, held in Kuwait on Thursday on the fringes of the 13th international spine conference.

The PASS, which works under the umbrella of the Arab League and the Arab Health Ministers' Council, has agreed on an action plan for advancing the medical education in the Arab region, including in the field of spine sur-

gery, Dr. Al-Obaid said in statements to KUNA following his election.

"The PASS plan includes organizing a number of training programs, the publication of scientific researches and upgrading the surgical techniques particularly in countries that suffer from political instability," he noted.

The PASS agreed to organized scientific conferences and work out scholarship program on spine surgery for Arab surgeons, Dr. Al-Obaid added.

Hailing his election as recognition of Kuwait's role in medical advancement, he dedicated this achievement to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

22% of US adults receive vaccine

Newest COVID shots 54% effective in preventing symptoms

NEW YORK, Feb 3, (AP): The latest versions of COVID-19 vaccines were 54% effective at preventing symptomatic infection in adults, according to the first US study to assess how well the shots work.

The shots became available last year and were designed to better protect against more recent coronavirus variants.

In Thursday's study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention looked at 9,000 people who got tested for COVID-19 at CVS and Walgreens pharmacies, checking who tested positive and whether they had gotten a new shot or not.

The 54% finding is similar to what's been reported in other countries, and it's also about what was

reported for an earlier vaccine version, said the Ruth Link-Gelles of the CDC, the study's lead author.

Studies coming out later this year will assess how effective the shot was at preventing symptoms severe enough to send patients to a doctor's office or hospital, she said.

The CDC recommends the new shots for everyone 6 months and

older, but most Americans haven't gotten them. The latest CDC data suggests only about 22% of US adults have gotten the shots, and only 11% of children. The slow uptake meant that it took longer for researchers to gather enough data to assess how well the shots work, Link-Gelles said.

Legal experts and specialists in leg-

islation will contribute to these crucial discussions.

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Westbrook helps Clippers to a 136-125 win over Pistons



Atlanta Hawks guard Dejounte Murray (5) goes to the basket as Phoenix Suns forward Drew Eubanks (14) defends in the second half of an NBA basketball game Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, in Atlanta. (AP)

Sensational freshman continues to dazzle

Watkins scores record 51 pts, helps Trojans upset Stanford

STANFORD, Calif., Feb 3, (AP): JuJu Watkins pulled up from long range and hit contested 3-pointers. She powered to the rim against Stanford's two star posts to draw fouls and get to the line.

She outscored Stanford all by herself in the third quarter. The sensational freshman scored a Southern California-record 51 points - the most in major NCAA women's basketball this season - and the 15th-ranked Trojans upset No. 4 Stanford 67-58 on Friday night.

Watkins hit a key 3 with 3:10 remaining and four free throws over the final 18 seconds to break the previous USC scoring mark of 50 set by Cherie Nelson against California on March 11, 1989. Cheryl Miller held the freshman record of 39 points.

Not that Watkins is ready to consider herself among the program's greats just yet.

"It's crazy. I don't really think about it too much," she said. "I have a long way to go 'til I will consider myself in that category with Cheryl and Lisa (Leslie) and

the greats. I'm just honored, honestly, blessed to be in this environment, space and time in women's basketball. I'm just soaking it all in."

Watkins hit six 3-pointers and converted 17 of 19 free throws to help the Trojans (15-4, 5-4) send the Cardinal (19-3, 8-2) to their first home loss of the season.

The basketball-crazed home crowd even appreciated the performance, by an opponent no less.

"Every time I scored all I heard was 'oooh,'" Watkins said. "It wasn't even like a boo. I was like, 'All right.' It was crazy."

Recruited by Stanford, Watkins had 25 by halftime and finished 14 for 26 from the floor. Her 3 with 5:52 left in the third put her at 37 and USC ahead 43-35 - giving her more points than Stanford. Watkins came in averaging 25.8 points, and Hall of Fame Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer turned to freshman Courtney Ogden to try stopping her.

In the handshake line after the final buzzer, VanDerveer told USC coach Lindsay Gottlieb, "She was really good."

"I said, 'She sure was,'" Gottlieb said.

Watkins hardly slept this week after a loss to Washington, spending hours in the gym getting up shots. A security guard even called Gottlieb to make sure it was OK.

Stanford star Cameron Brink had 19 points, 15 rebounds and eight blocked shots - swatting six shots in the first half. Her layup with 5:36 left pulled Stanford within six and she converted two free throws at 4:02 that made it 54-50 before Watkins took over once more.

And what a thrilling way for these two teams to begin the final weekend of the L.A. schools coming to the Bay Area for Pac-12 play before their move to the Big Ten. Gottlieb returns to Berkeley on Sunday to face her former Cal program.

"I'll never forget this," Gottlieb said. "And again it's meaningful because it's our last time playing Stanford in the Pac-12."

Kiki Iriafen contributed 16 points and nine rebounds for the Cardinal, who lost for the first time in five games since a 71-59 defeat at Colorado on Jan. 14.

McKenzie Forbes added 12 points for USC, which had lost three of four since beating UCLA on Jan. 14.

BASKETBALL

USC missed six straight shots and had a scoring drought of 4:31 before Watkins' late 3 that was reviewed and stood. The Trojans went on a 6-0 run late in the third as Stanford looked rushed during a 1-for-8 shooting stretch.

"I think they were out of sorts a little bit because of what JuJu was doing," Gottlieb said. Both teams endured long scoring droughts.

USC went 5:44 between baskets in the first quarter - missing nine straight shots during a 1-for-11 stretch before Watkins connected on a jumper with 2:14 left in the opening period.

Watkins got on a roll from there, scoring 25 of her team's first 31 points and shooting 9 for 13 after starting 1 for 5.

"She's an incredibly talented player. If she's not shooting well then it might be a different story. But she got going," VanDerveer said. "We tried a lot of different people guarding her, we tried some different things against her. We fouled her too much, too, she had 19 free throws. We didn't do the job we needed to do."

Magic cast spell on Timberwolves

DETROIT, Feb 3, (AP): Kawhi Leonard scored 21 of his 33 points in the first half, Russell Westbrook became the 25th player in NBA history to score 25,000 points and the Los Angeles Clippers put on an offensive show in a 136-125 win over the Detroit Pistons on Friday night.

Los Angeles got off to a slow start while trailing by as many as 14 points in the first quarter, but scored 109 points in the final three periods. They shot 59.6% from the floor and 48.3% on 3-pointers.

Westbrook added 23 points and nine assists, and Paul George scored 18 points for the Clippers, who have won seven of eight.

Jalen Ivey had 28 points and Bojan Bogdanovic added 26 for Detroit, which is 4-41 after a 2-1 start. Marcus Sasser added 21 points.

Magic 108, Timberwolves 106

In Minneapolis, Paolo Banchero had 23 points and six assists to help Orlando overcome a 17-point second-quarter deficit and beat Minnesota.

Wendell Carter Jr. added 18 points and 12 rebounds, Franz Wagner scored 19 points and Jalen Suggs pitched in 15 points in his hometown for the Magic in their rally.

Rudy Gobert had 22 points and 16 rebounds and Anthony Edwards scored 22 points for the Wolves, whose NBA-leading scoring defense has been hindered at times by an underperforming offense. This was another example of ill-timed turnovers and ill-advised shots down the stretch, as the Wolves had just 18 points in the fourth quarter.

Heat 110, Wizards 102

In Washington, Jimmy Butler scored 24 points, Bam Adebayo added 20 points and 14 rebounds and Miami used a 31-point third quarter to beat Washington for its second straight win after a seven-game skid.

Butler went 7 of 10 from the floor and hit his only 3-point attempt. Adebayo posted his 25th double-double of the season. Kevin Love added 13 points and 10 rebounds in 15 minutes.

BASKETBALL

Corey Kispert scored a season-high 26 points as Washington sank to 2-3 under interim coach Brian Keefe since he replaced Wes Unseld Jr.

Jordan Poole had 16 points and 10 assists, and Daniel Gafford added 11 points and 14 rebounds for the Wizards.

Pelicans 114, Spurs 113

In San Antonio, Zion Williamson had 33 points, including the winning layup over three defenders with 3.8 seconds left, in New Orleans' win over San Antonio.

Williamson shot 12 for 21 from the field and had four points in the final 29 seconds as New Orleans won its second straight to finish its trip 2-2. C.J. McCollum added 21 points and Brandon Ingram had 19.

Devin Vassell had 28 points, but missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer for San Antonio. Jeremy Sochan finished with 15 points and 16 rebounds, Victor Wembanyama added 16 points and 12 rebounds and Tre Jones had 20 points for the Spurs.

Hawks 129, Suns 120

In Atlanta, Trae Young had 32 points and 15 assists, leading Atlanta over Phoenix.

Young shot 7 for 11 from 3-point distance and added two steals. Bogdan Bogdanovic came off the bench to hit 4 of 7 shots from long distance and finish with 23 points for Atlanta,



Charlotte Hornets guard Bryce McGowens (right) prepares to shoot next to Oklahoma City Thunder forward Lindy Waters III (12) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, in Oklahoma City. (AP)

which has won three straight games. Dejounte Murray scored 22 points and Jalen Johnson 16.

Kevin Durant led the Suns with 35 points, eight rebounds and eight assists. Devin Booker added 24 points.

Kings 133, Pacers 122

In Indianapolis, Domantas Sabonis had 26 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists to break Oscar Robertson's single-season franchise record with his 30th consecutive double-double and De'Aaron Fox added 25 points and six steals as Sacramento topped Indiana.

Malik Monk finished with 23 points, six assists and five rebounds for the Kings, who won for the fifth time in six games.

Benedict Mathurin had 31 points and five rebounds for the Pacers, who shot 54% from the field and committed 21 turnovers. Pascal Siakam added 22 points and six rebounds as Indiana fell to 4-8 in its last 12 games.

Rockets 135, Raptors 106

In Houston, rookie Cam Whitmore scored a season-high 25 points and Alperen Sengun had 24 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists in three quarters to lead Houston's rout of Toronto.

Houston led by double figures for most of the game and was up by 30 after three periods, allowing coach Ime Udoka to rest his starters for the entire fourth quarter.

Rockets rookie Amen Thompson, the fourth overall pick in the 2023 draft, also had a season high with 19 points.

Scottie Barnes had 28 points and Immanuel Quickley added 25 for the Raptors, who lost for the sixth time in seven games.

Thunder 126, Hornets 106

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points, and Oklahoma City rolled past Charlotte.

Gilgeous-Alexander scored at least 30 points for the ninth straight game. He made 11 of 15 field goals and had nine assists, five steals and three blocks in three quarters as the Thunder moved into a tie for first place in the Western Conference with Minnesota at 34-15.

Chet Holmgren added 16 points for the Thunder, who have won two straight and seven of nine.

Rookie Brandon Miller scored 28 points and Bryce McGowens added 15 for the Hornets, who lost their sixth straight. LaMelo Ball missed his fourth straight game for the Hornets with a right ankle overuse injury.

Warriors 121, Grizzlies 101

In Memphis, Tenn. Jonathan Kuminga scored 29 points and Golden State defeated Memphis.

Stephen Curry had 20 points, six assists and six rebounds, and Klay Thompson added 14 points for the Warriors, who won their second straight. Kuminga was 11 for 15 from the field, with a 3-pointer, and surpassed 20 points for the eighth straight game.

Dutch star Sharon reclaims open water gold at worlds

DOHA, Qatar, Feb 3, (AP): Sharon van Rouwendaal of the Netherlands reclaimed the women's open water world title Saturday, beating Maria de Valdes of Spain with a furious sprint to the finish in the women's 10-kilometer race.

Van Rouwendaal touched first at the World Aquatics Championships in 1 hour, 57 minutes, 26.80 seconds - a mere 10th of a second ahead of de Valdes. The bronze went to Angelica Andre of Portugal, who was 1.4 seconds behind the winner.

On the last of six laps around the Old Doha Port, Moesha Johnson of Australia faded from the lead to fourth as van Rouwendaal showed off her finishing kick in the final 500 meters of the rough-and-tumble race.

The 30-year-old van Rouwendaal regained the title she held at the 2022 world championships in Budapest, Hungary. She finished fourth last sum-

mer in Fukuoka, Japan, where Leonie Beck of Germany swept the 5k and 10k titles.

Beck finished 20th at Doha, 45 seconds behind the winner.

Van Rouwendaal is a longtime star on the open water circuit. She won gold at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics and grabbed a silver at the Tokyo Games three years ago.

In other finals on Day 2 of the first world championships held in the Middle East, 13-year-old Huang Jianjie and Zhang Jiaqi gave China a diving gold in the mixed 10-meter synchronized platform event.

Evangelia Platanoti of Greece won the first gold in artistic swimming, taking the top spot in women's solo technical.

China, which claimed 12 of 13 diving golds at the Fukuoka worlds, did not enter the first two events on Friday, giving other nations a chance to shine.

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Over 280 players from Kuwait, Spain, Italy, and other GCC countries participated

stc sponsors the international Brisk World Padel tournament in Kuwait



A group photo of the tournament participants and winners.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, announced the conclusion of its sponsorship of the Brisk World Padel tournament held at El Padel Academy in Kuwait from January 28th till the 30th. stc's sponsorship of the tournament comes as a continuation of the support the Company has shown towards the sports community in Kuwait, especially amongst the local Padel community that aims to spread a positive and sustainable impact in society

PADEL

The tournament witnessed an impressive turnout with large crowds gathering daily to watch the numerous participating teams compete for the championship title. Approximately over 300 spectators attended the 3-day event daily, which was organized at the El Padel Academy courts located on the Arabian Gulf Street. Amongst the 144 teams participating in 5 different categories, the attending spectators cheered on their favorite teams as they battled for the first-place positions.

During the tournament, stc's dedicated booth served as a hub of engagement and interaction, offering a rich blend of activities. Spectators and athletes got a chance to participate in interactive competitions with attractive prizes, enhancing the event's excitement.

In addition to its sponsorship, stc has encouraged its employees to join the tournament to promote a healthy lifestyle at work and enhance their teamwork skills to excel in their personal and professional lives, an approach stc always follows.

Additionally, stc has been a strong supporter of the sports com-



Children participating in the stc pavilion.

munity in Kuwait, partnering with various entities to achieve shared goals that serve the interests of athletes and institutions alike. Through its CSR framework, stc strives to offer the community meaningful and long-lasting experiences that can result in positive outcomes. stc intends to remain an active participant in the community, aligning with its CSR framework, and contribute to initiatives that will benefit the younger generation, who are the future leaders of the community.

To find out more about stc's events, promotions, and sponsorships, follow stc's official social media platforms, visit one of stc's branches, download mystc mobile application, visit www.stc.com.kw or contact the customer service center by dialing 102 for around the clock assistance.

Al-Tadamon dethrone Kuwait Club

Resilient Salmiya advances to Amir Cup semifinals

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: Kuwait Club surrendered its Amir Cup champion title, succumbing to Al-Tadamon in a penalty shootout of 4-5 following a 1-1 draw in the quarter-final match. Al-Tadamon, a first-division team, showcased its

SOCCER

competitive prowess by eliminating Al-Jahra in the preliminary round, before dethroning the reigning champions.

The upcoming challenge for the "Sons of Farwaniya" against Salmiya in the semi-finals promises to be demanding, yet coach Jamal Al-Qabandi's players believe in the mantra that "nothing is impossible in football" and see an opportune moment to make history by qualifying for the final.

Salmiya, in a remarkable display of resilience, faced Kazma with only ten players from the fifth minute of



Salmiya goalkeeper punches the ball away from Kazma players.

the match, following a red card for defender Badr Gamal. Despite the numerical disadvantage, they twice took the lead, and Croatian coach Ante Misha's team eventually equalized (4-4) in extra time. Goalkeeper Abdul Rahman Al-Fadhli's stellar performance secured their spot in the

semi-finals with a 4-3 victory on penalties.

Coach Misha expressed confidence in his team's trajectory towards regaining strength to compete with the leading teams in the Kuwait Premier League, such as Al-Arabi and Al-Qadisiya. He emphasized the

challenging nature of overcoming a formidable opponent with a numerical disadvantage but highlighted the team's resilience and determination.

Misha acknowledged the significance of special preparation for the upcoming semi-final against Al-Salmiya, recognizing the formidable challenge posed by the defending champions.

Meanwhile, Kazma Club displayed satisfaction with their team's strong performance, even though they fell short in the penalty shootout. Player Ahmed Al-Arsan noted that the team gave their all in a match that ultimately concluded with a penalty shootout.

In the Al-Tadamon camp, there was jubilation in the dressing room after their victory over Kuwait Club on penalties. Coach Jamal Al-Qabandi emphasized that Al-Tadamon's ambition extends beyond the semi-finals, and preparations for the clash against Al-Salmiya are set to commence promptly. Al-Qabandi underscored that surpassing Kuwait, despite the disparity in technical levels, wasn't a surprise, attributing it to the focus and determination of the Al-Tadamon players in their pursuit of success in prestigious tournaments.

Al-Qadisiya 'dominate' Al-Ibtisam in West Asian Club Championship

Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MUSCAT, Feb 3: Al-Qadisiya volleyball team secured a convincing victory over Al-Ibtisam of Saudi Arabia in the opening matches of the Second West Asian Club Championship in the Sultanate of Oman. The scoreline reflected a dominant performance, with Al-Qadisiya winning three games to nil, with set scores of 25-22, 25-20, 25-19. Simultaneously in the same group, Al-Seeb of Oman achieved a similar result by defeating Bani Yas Al Emirate.

In the upcoming second round at the Sohar Sports Complex hall, Al-Qadisiya will face off against Al-Seeb at three in the afternoon. Additionally, within the same group, Al-Rayyan of Qatar will compete against Al-Ibtisam of Saudi Arabia. In the second group, "Al-Kuwait" is scheduled to clash with Shabab Al-Hussein of Jordan at 1:00 pm, followed by the match between Sohar Omani and Al-Ahly of Bahrain.

Shifting focus to domestic competitions, the Volleyball Association released the schedule for the Federation

Cup Championship, slated to commence in early March and conclude on the 21st of the same month. The tournament opener will witness Yarmouk and Sulaibikhat facing off.

Moreover, the association provided a schedule for postponed matches from the General League involving the currently participating teams in West Asia, namely "Kuwait," Al-Qadisiyah, and Kazma, set to compete in Al-Arabiya. These postponed matches are

VOLLEYBALL

scheduled for the 16th of this month until the 10th of next March.

Looking ahead, the Golden Quadrant for the Volleyball League, featuring teams ranked first to fourth, is scheduled from March 24 to April 5. The Silver Quadrant, hosting teams from fifth to eighth, will take place from April 4 to 8.

In other league action, Al-Arabi secured a hard-fought victory over Al-Yarmouk with a score of 3-2 in the General Volleyball League.

Mathews, Chandimal hit centuries

Sri Lanka take 212-run lead against Afghanistan

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Feb 3, (AP): Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal scored centuries and shared 232 runs for the fourth wicket to take Sri Lanka to a strong position in the one-off test against Afghanistan on Saturday.

Sri Lanka reached 410-6 at stumps on the second day, giving the hosts a 212-run first innings lead at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

Mathews made 141 before before being hit wicket against leg spin bowler Qais Ahmed just before close. He spent nearly six hours at the crease, faced 259 deliveries and hit three sixes and 14 boundaries.

It was Mathews' 16th test hundred.

Chandimal was out earlier as the fourth wicket after scoring 107 runs off 181 deliveries for his 15th test century. He hit one six and 10 boundaries.

Their 232-run partnership took 380 deliveries and saved a potential slide after Afghanistan held Sri Lanka to 148-3 after conceding 93 runs to the opening pair.

Sri Lanka resumed on Saturday at

CRICKET

80 without loss in reply to Afghanistan's first innings of 198 all out, with Dimuth Karunaratne batting on 42 with Nishan Madushka on 36.

Seamer Naveed Zadran had Madushka (37) caught at leg slip by Noor Ali Zadran adding just one run to his overnight score, to have Sri Lanka at 93-1.

Kusal Mendis (10) then gifted a catch to deep square leg from a bouncer by seamer Nijat Masood (1-59).

Karunaratne made 77 off 72 deliveries including 12 boundaries before being caught by Ibrahim Zadran off a full toss from leg spin bowler Ahmed.

Sri Lanka captain Dhanjaya

Mbappé misses penalty then scores as PSG top Strasbourg

PARIS, Feb 3, (AP): Kylian Mbappé missed a first-half penalty and scored one of the simplest goals of his career a few minutes later as Paris Saint-Germain convincingly beat Strasbourg 2-1 to remain on top of the French league on Friday.

Mbappé saw his seventh-minute spot kick parried for a corner by

de Silva was run out first ball after Chandimal departed caught behind by wicketkeeper Ikram Alikhil off Zadran.

Mathews swept a short ball down leg side for a boundary only to see his bat hitting the stumps on follow-through.

Sadeera Samarawickrama was batting on 21.



Australia's Josh Inglis (center), plays a shot that will have him caught out by West Indies' Alick Athanaze (left), during their one day international cricket match in Melbourne, Australia. Fast bowler Xavier Bartlett took 4-17 in his ODI debut as Australia thrashed West Indies by eight wickets with 69 balls remaining in their series opener. Josh Inglis showed little signs of testing positive for COVID-19 the day before when he smacked a quick-fire 65 off 43 balls for Australia. (AP)

Strasbourg goalkeeper Alaa Bellarouch.

But he was on hand 25 minutes later when Bellaarouch fluffed a

SOCCER

clearance straight at Marco Asensio and Asensio's pass left his

Zadran and Ahmed took two wickets each for Afghanistan.

Afghanistan was bowled out for 198 in its first innings on the opening day Friday with Rahmat Shah top scoring with 91 runs.

This is the first test match between the two countries since Afghanistan was admitted as a test playing nation in 2018.

teammate with an open goal from 20 meters.

The same pair was involved in PSG's second three minutes into the second half. This time Mbappé broke on the left and crossed to Asensio, whose perfectly placed shot wrong-footed the keeper.

Strasbourg got a goal back through Dilane Bakwa midway through the second half and it dominated the late exchanges but it was not enough to end a winless run against PSG that stands at 12 games.

The result also ended Strasbourg's six-game unbeaten run in Ligue 1. It remained in 10th spot.

PSG was nine points ahead of second-placed Nice, which plays at Brest on Sunday.



Al-Qadisiya players combine to block a shot from an opponent.

Kuwait Handball Association commemorates the handball team World Cup 'qualification'

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 3: At 6:30 pm today, Kuwait Handball Association is set to host a ceremony at its headquarters in the Martyr Fahd Al-Ahmad Center in Daiya to honor the players of our first national team. This celebration marks the remarkable achieve-

HANDBALL

ment of the team qualifying for the World Cup finals, scheduled to take place from January 14 to February 2, 2025, in Croatia, Denmark, and Norway.

Kuwait showcased their pro-



Ali Al-Moussawi

ess in the 21st Asian Cup recently held in Manama, Bahrain, securing a fourth-place finish and earning a spot in the World Cup after a 15-year absence. Notably, the last participation of the "team in the World Cup was in Croatia in 2009. To recognize their achievement, the Kuwait Handball Association announced a financial reward of one thousand dinars for each player.

In other sports news, Al-Arabi Club has officially signed a contract with goalkeeper Ali Al-Moussawi for the upcoming season. Al-Moussawi, with a diverse playing history that includes stints with Al-Tadamon, Al-Kuwait, Al-Sahel, Kazma, Al-Fahaheel, and Burgan clubs last season, brings valuable experience to the team.



Fatma Hayat, the head of the delegation and a member of the Kuwait Olympic Committee.

Sports

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Kuwaiti players pose for a group photo before their departure.

Kuwait participates in 7th Arab Women Sports Tournament

Kuwait has joined the 7th Arab Women Sports Tournament, commencing in Sharjah on Wednesday. The event boasts a diverse participation of over 550 players, representing 63 teams hailing from 15 countries. Kuwait's presence is marked by three national clubs: Salwa Club, Al-Fatat Club, and

Kuwait Shooting Club, according to Fatma Hayat, the head of the delegation and a member of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, as reported to KUNA. The Kuwaiti clubs are set to engage in seven competitions throughout the tournament, extending until February 12. These competitions encompass vol-

leyball, basketball, table tennis, athletics, karate, and shooting, as outlined by Hayat. She emphasized the tournament's significance as an excellent platform for women's clubs to challenge formidable opponents and elevate the preparedness of the national team for upcoming tournaments.

Iran advance to Asian Cup semifinals

Son extra-time winner sends South Korea into semis against Jordan

AL RAYYAN, Qatar, Feb 3, (AP): Alireza Jahanbakhsh's last-minute penalty gave Iran a 2-1 win over Japan on Saturday and a place in the Asian Cup semifinals for just the second time since 2004.

Jahanbakhsh kept his cool in the 96th minute to keep Iran on course for a first title since 1976 and fourth overall. Ko Itakura had been whistled for the foul and Jahanbakhsh gave goalkeeper Zion Suzuki no chance.

Iran came from behind after Hide-masa Morita put pre-tournament favorite Japan ahead in the first half of an entertaining quarterfinal match at Education City Stadium.

Mohammad Mohebi leveled the score in the 55th minute.

Iran will face either host Qatar or Uzbekistan in the semifinals.

Iran started aggressively with Jahanbakhsh firing just over from the left after 13 minutes. Shortly after Saied



Japan's Daizen Maeda fights for the ball with Iran's Ramin Rezaeian during the Asian Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Japan and Iran at Education City Stadium in Al Rayyan, Qatar. (AP)

SOCCER

Ezatolahi shot straight at goalkeeper Zion Suzuki.

Out of nothing however, Japan, looking for a record fifth win, took the lead in the 28th minute. Morita collected a pass, skipped past Hossein Kanani to enter the area and while his shot was soft, it seemed to confuse Alireza Beiranvand and the ball bounced off the goalkeeper's leg and into the net.

Iran, without suspended star striker Mehdi Taremi, almost leveled six minutes before the break when Brentford midfielder Saman Ghoddsos shot just wide.

Ten minutes after the break, Sardar Azmoun slipped the ball through to Mohebi whose first-time shot from near the penalty spot went in the net to spark the comeback.

Son Heung-min gave South Korea a dramatic 2-1 win over Australia after extra time in the quarterfinals.

Victory kept alive South Korea's hopes of a third Asian Cup title and a first since 1960. It set up a semifinal against Jordan, which reached the last four for the first time by beating Tajikistan 1-0.

Craig Goodwin volleyed Australia ahead in the first half at Al Janoub Stadium. Hwang Hee-chan's stoppage-time penalty forced extra time. Son's spectacular free kick in the 104th minute secured the win.

"This isn't really the way we want to win matches but we were ready to battle hard," Son said. "Winning this way will help with the morale of the whole team. I was really touched by the sacrifices that everyone on the team made. Each and every one of the team deserves to be complimented."

Australia almost took the lead after 20 minutes when Jo Hyun-woo could only parry Goodwin's powerful shot

Richarlison nets twice against former club

Everton fight back late to draw with Tottenham

LIVERPOOL, England, Feb 3, (AP): Defender Jarrad Branthwaite headed home a stoppage-time equalizer as Everton salvaged a 2-2 draw with Tottenham in the Premier League on Saturday after Richarlison had scored twice against his former team.

Richarlison looked to have boosted Tottenham's push for a top-four finish by taking his tally to nine goals in his last eight league games. But Bran-

thwaite was on hand at the far post to nod home a deflected free kick in the fourth minute of added time for his first goal of the season.

It ruined a perfect return to Goodison Park for Richarlison, who spent five seasons at Everton before joining Tottenham in 2022. The Brazil striker didn't celebrate either of his goals - instead pulling his shirt up to hide his face.

After a tough start to the season, Richarlison has found his scoring form recently and put the visitors ahead

twice in the first half. He first turned in a cross from Destiny Udogie after just four minutes, and then bent a first-time strike into the far corner from outside the area in the 41st after he was teed up by James Maddison.

But Everton came back both times, with Jack Harrison being credited for the first equalizer after Dominic Calvert-Lewin's close-range header came off his leg on the way into the net in the 30th.

The stoppage-time equalizer came when a free kick into the box was headed on by Tottenham defender Cristian Romero, but only into the path of Branthwaite who had a simple header from a yard out.

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Everton's Ben Godfrey, (left), challenges for the ball with Tottenham's Timo Werner during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Tottenham Hotspur, at the Goodison Park Stadium, in Liverpool, England. (AP)

SOCCER

England bowled out for 253 runs

Bumrah's six-wicket haul, Jaiswal's 209 put India in charge of 2nd Test

VISAKHAPATNAM, India, Feb 3, (AP): Jasprit Bumrah picked up his fourth six-wicket haul as India finished day two of the second test against England in a commanding position on Saturday.

Bumrah took 6-45 as England was bowled out for 253 runs in its first innings.

India had finished with 396 runs in its first innings thanks to Yashasvi Jaiswal's maiden test double hundred. Jaiswal scored 209 runs and finished 15 not out at stumps on day two in the second Indian innings.

CRICKET

Skipper Rohit Sharma was with him, unbeaten on 13 runs, as India finished with 28-0 on day two - for an overall lead of 171 runs.

Earlier, England had reached 32-0 at lunch and continued scoring quickly after the break.

Zack Crawley led the charge as he smacked 76 off 78 balls, including 11 fours and two sixes. He put on 59 off 62 balls for the first wicket, as also 55 runs off 73 balls with Ollie Pope (23) for the second wicket.

Duckett was out caught at silly point off Kuldeep Yadav, who was playing his first test since December 2022.

The scoring rate stayed high with Indian bowlers - including Bumrah - getting stick from Crawley. Axar Patel (1-24) got the much-needed breakthrough - Crawley went for the cut but was caught well at backward point by Shreyas Iyer.

England was 114-2 at that time and it opened the door for Bumrah.

He began with Joe Root, who was caught at slip for five in the 26th over. Two overs later, Pope was bowled off a searing Bumrah yorker.



India's Jasprit Bumrah celebrates the wicket of England's James Anderson and his sixth wicket, on the second day of the second test match between India and England, in Visakhapatnam, India. (AP)

At tea, England was 155-4 and lost Jonny Bairstow almost immediately on resumption of play. He was caught at slip, again off Bumrah.

England was down to 172-6 as Yadav bowled Ben Foakes for six runs. Four overs later, he also dismissed Rehan Ahmed (6), finishing with 3-71 in 17 overs.

The visitors had lost six wickets for 68 runs, before Ben Stokes played a rescuing hand. He scored 47 off 54 balls, including five fours and a six.

More importantly, he put on 47 off 42 balls for the eighth wicket with Tom Hartley, who made 21 runs.

Bumrah returned to bowl Stokes - not quite a yorker, but the ball stayed low. He mopped up the tail then, accounting for Hartley and James Anderson.

Lookman fires Nigeria into last 4

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Feb 3, (AP): Ademola Lookman scored again to fire Nigeria into the semifinals of the Africa Cup of Nations with a 1-0 win over Angola.

Victor Osimhen failed to score after having a goal ruled out for offside but produced another tireless performance to help the Super Eagles emerge victorious from the tournament's first quarterfinal. They did not concede for the fourth straight game.

Nigeria needed goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali - back after being stretched off in the win over Cameroon - to deny Angola forward Mabululu an early lead.

But Nigeria went on to dominate the game in terms of possession and chances, and Lookman finally scored in the 41st minute after Moses Simon skipped a challenge and raced clear to set him up. It was Lookman's third

goal of the tournament after scoring both against Cameroon.

Congo defeated Guinea 3-1 for the Leopards' first win within normal time of the tournament in the other quarterfinal.

SOCCER

Congo captain Chancel Mbemba conceded a penalty in the 17th minute, from which Mohamed Bayo scored with Guinea's first real chance in the 20th, but Mbemba atoned by equalizing from a difficult angle in the 27th.

A penalty from Yoane Wissa in the 65th and free kick from Arthur Masuaku that deceived the Guinea defense in the 82th ensured the Leopards reached the semifinals for the first time since 2015.