



Page 14 **basketball**



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MP seeks clarity on family visa rules and exclusions



KUNA photo
National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun received in his office on Sunday Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji. The meeting also included Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Feras Al-Sabah and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Communications, Da-wood Marafi.

Kuwait evaluates visit visa revival

Bid to revitalize economy

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Ministry of Interior is currently evaluating the possibility of reinstating the issuance of visit visas to all categories, including commercial, tourist, and family visas.

This initiative aligns with the new government's vision, led by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, with the

aim of revitalizing the economy, fostering commercial activities, and attracting global visitors, akin to neighboring Gulf countries, reports Al-Rai daily.

The recent developments have included the decision to reopen family visa under new conditions and controls, as outlined by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of the Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef.

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'Budget boost'

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Raed Youssef
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: MP Muhammad Al-Sayer has asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Yusuf Al-Sabah to provide him with a copy of Ministerial Resolution number 56/2024 on the rules and regulations for the issuance of family visas.

He wants to know if some categories were excluded from the salary and university qualification requirements stated in the decision, what are these categories and reasons for their exclusion, reasons for the suspension of the issuance of family visas in the previous period and resumption of the issuance of such visas, and copies of studies in this regard if any.

Meanwhile, HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah has referred to National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun a draft law on opening an additional appropriation amounting to KD 50 million in the budget of ministries and government departments for fiscal 2023/2024 (Chapter Eight: Public Accounts, Other Expenditures and Transfers.)

The parliamentary Budgets and Final Accounts Committee received the draft law for approval and inclusion in the agenda of the session slated for Tuesday in order to vote on it, along with the committee's report regarding the allocations of the Head of State, provided that the additional appropriation is taken from the State's general reserve.

The government explained in its draft law that in view of the death of HH the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the assumption of the emirate by HH Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the approved amount does not cover the allocations of the Head of State in fiscal 2023/2024.

In addition, Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri revealed that the Priorities Committee on Sunday discussed the agenda of the upcoming session with the representatives of the government. He stressed that he will not allow the removal of the bills on increasing the cost of living allowance and the zero interest loans for retirees from the agenda. He pointed out that he can accept this only on one condition - if the government issues decisions to increase the cost of living allowance and the zero interest loans for retirees.

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Opinion

Read what the press wants and what you want from it

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

TODAY His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah will receive the editors-in-chief of local newspapers. This is a meeting that the Kuwaiti press media has been optimistically looking forward to, just as it has become accustomed to in the past decades.

However, the last meeting was with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled when he was appointed as the Prime Minister in his first government. At that time, he had promised the opinion-makers that the meeting would be a monthly event

but he was preoccupied with altercations with the National Assembly, and the resulting dissolution of the Council of Ministers and the resignation of ministers undermined this promise.

Over the past six decades, the press has placed before the executive decision-maker the concerns and issues of citizens especially in recent years. This is either regarding stimulating the economic cycle, increasing the national product, improving the citizens' standard of living, resolving the Bedoun issue, and dealing with the evils that resulted from the collapse of the education sector, the flood of forged certificates, and other issues that must be resolved quickly.

However, there was no one to listen or discuss because the ministers were either working to protect themselves from the MPs' attacks on them by concluding deals with them "under the table," and also submitting to them on issues that are merely secondary, such as preventing co-education, which is something that contradicts the simplest rules of logic, or the so-called negative phenomena authority, or job appointments that violate the law.

All this was recorded by the press, and highlighted in order to draw attention to what is happening in the country, but "your ministerial organs were all mute."

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Kuwait and Manila work on labor shelter dispute

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Kuwait and Manila will soon engage in virtual meetings via the "Zoom" platform to address the crisis stemming from the insistence of the Philippine government to retain the labor shelters established by its embassy in Kuwait, a move which the Kuwaiti authorities consider illegal, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Sources privy to this matter suggest reviewing the terms and conditions of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two nations to find a viable solution to the ongoing crisis. This may involve incorporating clauses related to the rights of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs); thereby, eliminating the need for the embassy to establish shelters for its citizens in Kuwait.

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Traffic gridlock on 4th Ring Road as students resume classes after the mid-year break in Kuwait on Sunday, Feb 4. Photo by Leahab Qurtal

IMCTC condemns Israeli aggression

Kuwait advocates collective action against extremism

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah said Saturday the State of Kuwait believes in the importance of collective action towards forming a single approach to empowering the armed forces to counter all forms of extremism and terrorism.

He urged upgrading the operating system of and capabilities of the armed forces of the members of the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) to make them better able to face up any security challenges in the future.

Sheikh Fahad was addressing to the second meeting of IMCTC's Council of Defense Ministers being held in Riyadh under the chairmanship of Saudi Minister of Defense Prince Khaled bin Salman, according to a statement from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense.

He called on IMCTC's member countries to capitalize on the fraternity and joint destiny among them in promoting military coordination with a view to ensuring their territorial unity and safety.

"The exceptional conditions on regional and international scales require ensuring the maximum degree of preparedness for any emergency through modernization of the military cooperation system of the



KUNA photo
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah during the meeting.

Islamic Coalition," Sheikh Fahad stressed.

He expressed confidence that the armed forces of the IMCTC are able to discharge their duties and tasks, based on their huge resources and capabilities.

On behalf of Kuwait, Sheikh Fahad appreciated the great efforts being made by the coalition partners to promote cooperation and coordination among their forces.

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World Bank offers expertise to support Kuwait's 'Vision 2035'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4, (KUNA): The World Bank is ready to offer its expertise to support Kuwait's Vision 2035, Ziad Nakat - World Bank Resident Representative in Kuwait - said on Sunday.

In an interview with KUNA, Nakat affirmed that as World Bank representative, he would be focusing on bolstering ties with Kuwait via providing proposals to boost development in Kuwait in the public and private sectors.

He indicated that such development must go through investing in human capital, bolstering governance, developing public administration, improving services, and reinforcing sustainable development of infrastructures.

Nakat affirmed that the World Bank would seek strong partnership with Kuwait to transform the country into an international hub for commerce and financing in line with Vision 2035.

The World Bank's vast global experience throughout the decades enabled it to offer sound advice and consultancy tailor fitted to each country's needs, Nakat pointed out, adding that any entity in Kuwait could seek knowledge collaboration with the World Bank in line with agreements signed between the bank and Kuwait.

Due to Kuwait being a member of the bank since 1961, the World Bank is eager boost cooperation between the two sides on all possible levels, Nakat affirmed.

The Washington DC-based World Bank was founded in 1944 and it has some 189 members. The bank provides development consultancy service through its international experts as well as solutions and crises management and response to regional and international challenges. It also offers loans to countries to battle poverty and achieve development.



Nakat

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace on Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also hosted His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

RIYADH: Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassem Al-Budaiwi, on Sunday, affirmed the importance of including all sectors in the Gulf community to establish a futuristic plan for food security for the GCC countries.

In a press release, Al-Budaiwi said that this came during an exceptional meeting via video call with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Committee on Agricultural Cooperation and Food Security headed by the Qatari minister of municipality Abdullah Al-Attiyah and GCC ministers. (KUNA)

RAMALLAH: Up to 127 Gazans died and 178 others suffered various injuries in intensive Israeli attacks on Gaza Strip during the past 24 hours, the local health authorities reported.

The health department in Gaza said in a statement the toll on the ongoing Israeli aggression on the enclave, since October 7, has increased to 27,365 deaths and 66,630 injuries. (KUNA)

JERUSALEM: Iran issued a warning Sunday to the U.S. over potentially targeting two cargo ships in the Mideast long suspected of serving as forwarding operating base for Iranian commandos, just after America and the United Kingdom launched a massive airstrike campaign against Yemen's Houthi rebels. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:15 Asr 15:07
 Sunrise .. 06:36 Maghrib .. 17:28
 Zohr 12:02 Isha 18:47

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather cold to mild with light variable wind, with speeds of 06-20 km/h.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.	Kuwait Airport	21	06
	Abdaly	22	06
	Jahra	21	09
	Salmiyah	19	14
	Nuwaisib	21	07
	Wafra	21	06

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



KUNA photo
Ambassador Bader Al-Awadhi visiting a student's booth in Al-Mubarakiya Market event.



KUNA photo
Participating Kuwaiti students in Al-Mubarakiya Market event displayed traditional items and dishes to promote Arabic culture.

Other Voices

Postal service and our prayers

By Ahmad alsarraf

If we are unable to have, for more than thirty years, a postal administration whose primary mission is to receive a letter from a person or entity, inside or outside Kuwait, and deliver it to the addressee, inside or outside the country, then how can we succeed in managing the country's economy, developing education, and proceeding with development, reducing dependence on oil, and 1,242 other problems?

For almost ten years, I have been criticizing the existence of an "authority" for printing the Qur'an, in light of the presence of several reliable entities that can provide us with all our needs of the Qur'an, noting that the establishment of this authority, which has failed over the course of 13 years and ten governments, to print a single copy of the Qur'an came only to achieve partisan and personal benefit, and not for a necessary need!

For years, I have been criticizing the existence of 6 governorates, with six governors, with diverse experiences, but none of them knows with certainty, even close to half-certainty, the reality of their mission, nor the reason for the millions of dinars that are spent and wasted, for no real reason, and the calamity is the number of people working in the governorates.

There are approximately 300 civilian and military employees, and the number of people working in the Supreme Council for Provincial Affairs exceeds approximately two thousand civilians and military personnel, that is, five employees, who do almost no specific work, to supervise the work of 300 employees who do almost no work.

These are just a few examples that His Highness the Prime Minister can use to improve the work environment and raise morale in society, which has completely despaired of the coming of reform!

The deterioration of the postal service, and the entire entity of the Ministry of Communication, began before Saddam's

occupation, and the situation worsened even more after the liberation, and it became a ministry devoid of spirit, especially after the establishment of Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), ten years ago, which quickly became the incompetent entity from which it separated itself.

Several government agencies have tried to develop the postal service, by outsourcing the matter to private companies, but all their attempts have failed, and no one knows the reason, or wants to know, so how can we become a financial center, semi-international, if we are unable to outsource mail distribution to a local company?

I remember that one day, one of the Ministers of Communication decided to float a tender related to outsourcing the printing and distribution of 300,000 landline telephone bills.

So 10 companies submitted the tender, and their average prices were one million dinars. One company deviated from them and submitted an offer of 75 thousand dinars, so the minister decided to award the tender to this company, and within hours the error was revealed. The company apologized for not carrying out the task, so its guarantee was confiscated, and the minister decided, at the time, and this was almost forty years ago, to stop printing and distributing phone bills, to this day!

Like many other things that have deteriorated, the postal service, until the mid-seventies, was good and fast, and with the increase in workers, including scholars and unemployment, its situation declined, or something like it.

My friend Hamad says that he sent a large envelope with Abdul Samad to the post office, after he wrote the address of the addressee on a label. The postal employee, "the scholar," objected and asked to write the address on the same envelope, and advised him to deliver the envelope to the Farwaniya post office, so that it would be sent on the same day, to the airport, or else it will be delayed, because mail is collected from the rest of the offices twice a week only.

Some people pray to God not to change us!

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'Al-Mubarakiya Market' event held in Manchester

Students' bid in highlighting culture, tradition hailed

By Nusaiba bin Shaibah

MANCHESTER, Feb 4, (KUNA): Kuwaiti ambassador to the UK, Bader Al-Awadhi said that the embassy would support Kuwait's youth and students efforts in highlighting their country's culture and tradition abroad.

This came in the opening speech of the Al-Mubarakiya Market event on Saturday, which was held in Manchester under the auspices of the Kuwaiti embassy in the United Kingdom and with the participation of Kuwaiti students.

The event coincided with the celebration of Kuwait's national day and the 125th anniversary of the Kuwaiti-British partnership.

He praised the idea of establishing a model of

Al-Mubarakiya Market in Britain, in reflection of the market's 127 history.

The ambassador stressed that the Kuwait leadership, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, is keen to support Kuwaiti youth studying abroad and especially those majoring in technology and artificial intelligence, which would contribute to Kuwait's prosperity and progress.

He thanked the organizer of the (Youth Event) and its President, Abdulqader Al-Abduljader for their efforts in a short time period and also expressed gratitude to the sponsors and the volunteering students for their contributions.

The participating students displayed, during the event, traditional items and dishes in an ef-

fort to promote Kuwait and Arab cultures to the attendees.

The market included a model of the old Kuwaiti house, showing how traditional Kuwaiti families of old lived, which caught the attention of visitors.

There was also a corner dedicated for Palestine to emphasize the importance of continuing to support the Palestinian cause.

In a statement to KUNA, a number of Kuwaiti students expressed their delight in this event because it "transports them to Kuwait".

They expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Education in Kuwait for their support and to the officials for facilitating the procedures of housing for the students.

'AI can do wonders in health sector'

270,000 X-ray tests done in Amiri in 2023

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Head of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Jahra Hospital Dr. Hanan Al-Husseini highlighted the importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a main focus in many scientific fields and various medical specialties, especially gynecology and obstetrics.

In a press statement, she affirmed the need of AI applications capable of producing texts, images, sounds, animations, 3D models, and other technologies related to gynecology and obstetrics.

Dr. Al-Husseini highlighted the Jahra Hospital's keen interest to keep pace with international developments in the specialties of obstetrics and gynecology.

She explained that the maternal and child health clinics in the hospital are witnessing a qualitative shift and tremendous development in various specialties, as the number of clinics in the morning and evening periods, as well as specialized clinics, has increased.

The hospital includes a clinic for monitoring gestational diabetes, clinics for delayed childbearing, clinics for treating recurrent miscarriage, clinics for women's laser sessions, electromagnetic chairs to strengthen the pelvis, a clinic for following up on menopausal cases, a urodynamic planning clinic, a day clinic for administering intravenous iron treatment to anemia patients, and a diagnostic colposcopy clinic.

Dr. Al-Husseini invited all doctors from various specialties to participate in the 26th International Conference of Gynecology and Obstetrics, which will be held under her presidency during the period from February 8 to February 10 under the auspices of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

She revealed that the conference will be graced by 20 experts from several foreign, Gulf and Arab countries including the United Kingdom, Spain, Russia, Cyprus, India, Slovenia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, as well as local experts noted for their excellence and experience in the field of gynecology and obstetrics.

Dr. Al-Husseini said the conference will address the importance of AI in embryo "sonographies" and therapeutic interventions for embryos during pregnancy, and in improving the quality and results of in vitro fertilization and assisted fertilization. It will also address topics related to pregnancy and childbirth, maternal and fetal medicine, and treatment of fertility problems in women and men as well, including the use of AI techniques.

X-rays conducted

Head of the Radiology Department at Amiri Hospital and the Chairman of the Annual Diagnostic Radiology Conference Dr. Asma Al-Failakawi announced that 270,000 X-ray tests were conducted at the Amiri Hospital in its various specialties during the year 2023, which is an increase of 20,000 check-ups throughout the year 2022.

He announced the launch of the annual radiology conference during the period from February 8 to February 10 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel under the patronage of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi and under the supervision of the Chairman of the Radiology Departments Council Dr. Buthaina Al-Kandari.

Dr. Failakawi stressed the importance of using artificial intelligence in improving many different medical specialties, including diagnostic radiology, adding that doctors who use artificial intelligence in diagnosis achieve better results in terms of accuracy and speed of diagnosis.

She said that the conference will be held under the title "The Latest Developments in the Field of Diagnostic Radiology" and will discuss several topics on the diagnosis of breast, heart, and digestive system diseases through six workshops, adding that interactive lectures will be held the day before the opening of the conference and extend until February 10.

She explained that the lectures and workshops include a workshop on breast X-rays and two workshops on cerebral vascular ultrasound for children and adults, in addition to workshops for radiology technicians on the latest research and developments in the various fields of radiology, including CT scans.

The conference hosts an elite group of experts and consultants in the field of diagnostic radiology from the United States, Canada and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in addition to national expertise and competencies.

The conference follows the continuing medical education program and gives participating doctors 19 points from the Kuwait Center for Medical Specialties.

Back from Umrah trip

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Society for Combating Smoking and Cancer Dr. Khaled Ahmad Al-Saleh announced the return of the cancer patients from the 21st Umrah trip organized by the society's Cancer Patients Fund every year under the title "The Peaceful Soul."

In a press statement issued yesterday, Dr. Al-Saleh said the trip, which took place during the period from January 31, 2024 to February 3, 2024, included 28 cancer patients.

He affirmed the importance of Umrah rituals to support patients psychologically and morally, as studies have proven the importance of Umrah in improving the quality of life of patients and alleviating the symptoms of the disease, adding that this journey of faith is evidence of the fund's continued assistance to cancer patients in various ways and capabilities available to it financially and morally.

Dr. Al-Saleh highlighted that a medical and nursing team is provided to accompany pilgrims during the Umrah trip, in addition to providing an administrative team that works to overcome the difficulties that pilgrims may face so that everyone can have a comfortable trip that brings happiness to the souls of patients and their companions.



KUNA photo
The Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya in talks with the Ambassador of the United States of America to the State of Kuwait Karen Sasahara.

FM, US envoy discuss ties

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met Sunday with US Ambassador to Kuwait, Karen Sasahara, where they touched on bilateral ties between

the two friendly countries. The latest regional and global developments were also discussed during the talks. (KUNA)



Photo by Rizk Taufiq
Flowers sent by the Ministry of Information congratulating the Arab Times newspaper on the 47th anniversary.

Newspaper marks 47th anniversary

Minister & undersecretary convey congratulations to the Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Minister of Information and Culture Dr. Abdul Rahman Baddah Al-Mutairi congratulated the Arab Times newspaper on its 47th anniversary since its inception.

The minister lauded the Arab Times for its valuable contributions to the nation, particularly in promoting objectivity and professionalism in the field of journalism.

He wished the Arab Times and its entire staff more successful milestones in the press

world, especially in what serves Kuwait and its people under the wise leadership of this beloved nation.

A similar letter of congratulations was also sent by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Dr. Nasser Ahmad Al-Muhaisen, who praised the Arab Times for its continuous efforts and integrity in the field of press, both locally and globally, which positively serves the country and its people.

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Two firefighters injured at work

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Two firefighters suffered from suffocation and heat exhaustion while dousing a large fire that broke out in four warehouses inside an agricultural plot in Sulabiya Agricultural Area, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Public Relations and Media Department at Kuwait Firefighting Force (KFF) disclosed that the Operations Department received a report about the fire that broke out in a number of warehouses.

Firefighters from Al-Ishtiqal, Sulabikhat, Tahrir and Support Fire Stations were dispatched to the site under the supervision of Director of Kuwait Firefighting Force (KFF) Major General Khaled Abdullah Fahd.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Israeli actions in Gaza mirror atrocities by Hitler and Stalin

"THE United States has stopped its financial support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees citing Israeli claims that a dozen UNRWA employees took part in the Al-Aqsa Flood operation (source: Al Jazeera website)," columnist **Hassan Al-Issa** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.



Hassan Al-Issa

"The US response, involving the denial of UNRWA services to 6 million Palestinians, appears to mirror the Israeli strategy in the 'Al-Aqsa Flood,' which resulted in the death of over 27,000 Gazans and the displacement of over a million people.

"The withholding of humanitarian aid as an instrument of war, known as starvation wars, is not a new phenomenon, as highlighted in the London Review's June 2017 issue. This historical practice, involving sieges and punitive measures by powerful nations, has led to millions of deaths due to starvation.

"Drawing a parallel, the article notes that Nazi Germany, in its sinister regime, allocated specific percentages of carbohydrates to different groups it subjugated. Notably, the Germans received 100 percent, the Poles 77 percent, Greeks 38 percent, and Jews a mere 27 percent of their carbohydrate needs. The comparison suggests that even the Nazis were more equitable in distributing food rations to Jews than the contemporary Israeli approach in its Gaza starvation war.

"The article underscores the broader consequences of siege warfare, highlighting the potential for the spread of epidemic diseases when ethnic groups are confined to ghettos and denied access to medicines. It draws historical parallels to Stalin's tactics, such as deporting people in trucks like livestock to remote locations.

"The author contends that Israel's current actions in its war against the Palestinians, involving genocide and displacement, mirror the atrocities committed by historical tyrants like Hitler and Stalin against the oppressed.

"In conclusion, the article invokes the timeless phrase of leader Sa'ad Zaghoul, asserting that 'right is above force,' despite the ongoing cycles of injustice and oppression."

Also:

"One of the fundamental virtues emphasized by our esteemed Islamic law is the embodiment of humility, harmonization of thoughts, and benevolence towards all of creation," columnist **Dr. Abdul Mohsen Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"These are commendable qualities that have distinguished the honorable people of Kuwait across generations, particularly exemplified by our virtuous mothers. Before delving into the commendable attitudes they displayed, I would like to highlight the philanthropic endeavors of Mrs. Hessa Hamad Falah Al-Falah, may God Almighty have mercy on her, as recounted by her son, dear brother Ahmed Hassan Al-Nassar.

"Mrs. Hessa Al-Falah exhibited a dedicated commitment to ongoing charitable works both in Kuwait and abroad. An integral part of her philanthropy was the discreet preparation and distribution of large boxes filled with assorted food supplies every year during the month of Shaban.

"She personally delivered these to impoverished families, keeping her charitable deeds a secret even from those closest to her. Her visits aimed not only to provide immediate assistance but also to understand the needs of the families she visited, ensuring prompt support for any lacking necessities. This reflects her kindness and commitment to fostering positive relationships.

"Furthermore, Mrs. Hessa Al-Falah extended her benevolence to the sisterly state of Bahrain, particularly during the blessed month of Ramadan. She personally distributed a significant portion of zakat and alms funds to needy families she knew personally.

"Her acts of charity inspired neighbors to contribute, further amplifying the impact of her noble endeavors. Ad-

ditionally, Mrs. Hessa Al-Falah actively participated in sponsoring orphans, contributing to well-digging projects, mosque construction, and various other charitable initiatives through multiple organizations in Kuwait. All these altruistic acts were carried out in the name of a true "philanthropist."

"Now, let me illustrate two instances that exemplify Mrs. Hessa Hamad Al-Falah's remarkable humility and her commitment to rectifying thoughts.

"The first instance reveals her humility and resilience when dealing with a visually impaired neighbor. During one of her visits, Mrs. Hessa and her daughter observed ants on the sugar prepared for tea. Rather than pointing out the issue, she silently stirred the tea, ensuring a comfortable atmosphere for her hostess, reflecting her kindness and humility.

"In the second instance, Mrs. Hessa welcomed two women from a needy family into her home. Understanding their unfamiliarity with formal seating, she encouraged them to sit on the furniture and graciously shared a meal with them on the floor, showcasing unparalleled humility and fortitude.

"These instances highlight the exemplary character and benevolent nature of Mrs. Hessa Hamad Al-Falah, may God Almighty have mercy on her. Her actions serve as an inspiration for all in our beloved Kuwait, emphasizing the importance of fostering positive thoughts and actions."

□ □ □

"Crown! I do not know what makes the majority so preoccupied with the issue of who will be the crown prince! Each of them tries to bring the fire closer to his bread, so this one shines at the expense of the other, or someone suggests that his own interest requires the arrival of this or that name, until this issue has become the main concern of the jobless!" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"It has escaped everyone's mind that the Kuwaiti Constitution regulates the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. It also regulates the relationship between all authorities, headed by His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him. One of the explicit articles of the Constitution states that the legislator gave the Amir the absolute right to choose his crown prince. Thus, the matter is presented to the National Assembly. If the candidate nominated by HH the Amir does not gain the trust of the Assembly, the Amir will nominate three people from Mubarak Al-Kabeer's descendants, then present them to the Assembly to choose one of them.

"It is the absolute right of HH the Amir to relieve the Crown Prince from his position, even if the Assembly chose him by an overwhelming majority! This means that the selection of the next Crown Prince is in the hands of His Highness the Amir. It is considered his absolute right and one can dispute this right. So, what makes people preoccupied with this issue, considering it is a private Amiri matter?"

"One of them cannot manage the affairs of his own home, his wife and his children, yet he interferes in the Amiri affairs, claiming that this is out of his concern for the future of the country and the people. He also expressed fear for Kuwait on the basis that the citizen is allowed to express his point of view. Yes, this is true, but the citizen can express his point of view only on matters concerning him, not those beyond this framework. You care for him so that he does not fall under the penalty of the law, then he ends up in a place that does not suit him!"

"The other very important aspect is that whoever is chosen as the Crown Prince from this honorable family and from the descendants of Mubarak the Great will be good, God willing, for Kuwait and its people. All sheikhs are congratulated, but the problem is always with the surrounding circle, not with the sheikhs.

"Therefore, we always pray, O Allah, grant them a good lining that guides them to goodness, and let us leave the matter to the person in charge. Just as those who preceded him chose him knowing the interests of Kuwait and its people, he will choose, with the grace of Allah Almighty, the one who puts trust in his hands ... Good."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

4 Egyptians get 7 years, fined KD 4,200 in fraud

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Four Egyptians have been sentenced to seven years in prison and fined 4,200 dinars for violating "consumer protection" laws. The Criminal Court, led by Counselor Ahmed Al-Sadi, made the decision to imprison the individuals with penal servitude and imposed the fine, along with deportation, in the case known as the "Consumer Protection Hacker", reports Al-Rai daily.

The defendants were found guilty of infiltrating the consumer protection database and using it to illicitly obtain funds from both male and female citizens, as well as expatriates. They accomplished this by sending deceptive messages via WhatsApp, posing as representatives of "consumer protection" and misleading victims into financial transactions.

The Ministry of Interior recently issued Ministerial Resolution No. 38/ 2024 on the electronic issuance of the identification cards of the military personnel through its official platform, reports Al-Anba daily.

Article One of the decision states: The electronic identification card is considered an official work identification document for military personnel at the ministry. It is issued through the ministry's application by all parties in the country, citizens and residents. It must be used in all governmental and non-governmental transactions, and its existence and validity must be validated.



Municipality employees at work.

Bid to clean, beautify health facilities

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has initiated a program to revitalize the outdoor spaces surrounding health facilities. This campaign, orchestrated by the Public Services sector of the Ministry, aims to clean, beautify, and introduce greenery to the courtyards of health establishments, reports Al-Rai daily.

Engineer Abdul Aziz Al-Tasha, the Under-secretary of the Ministry of Health for Public

Services Affairs, shared details about the inaugural phase of the initiative.

This involves the cleaning and paving of the outdoor areas of health facilities, including the courtyards at the Ministry's General Office.

Al-Tarawa, Al-Makrad, and Al-Khuda have been designated as assistant agents responsible for residence, correctional institutions,

and traffic as part of this undertaking. Al-Tasha emphasized that this campaign aligns with the directives of the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

The overarching goal is to create a safe, healthy, and supportive environment conducive to overall well-being, guided by scientific research indicating the positive effects of green.

Teachers irked by 'biometrics'

Disburse overdue financial dues: KTA chief

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Kuwait Teachers Association (KTA) has urged Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, to comprehend the reasons behind its objection to the implementation of fingerprinting in educational institutions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The association contends that this measure conflicts with professional privacy and the duties of educational bodies, emphasizing that its enforcement could adversely impact teacher performance, implementation of plans, and job responsibilities, saying these objections are based on logical and objective justifications that were agreed upon by former ministers, urg-

ing the need to address any gaps and concerns before implementation.

In a recent statement, Hamad Al-Houli, KTA Chairman of the Board of Directors, reiterated the association's call for the swift disbursement of overdue financial dues to members of the educational institutions which have been approved by the ministry or included in integrated systems. The association emphasizes its consistent plea for the

resolution of this matter to ensure beneficiaries receive their full legal financial rights.

The Board of Directors expressed its commitment to intensify efforts to address outstanding issues and challenges in the new phase of the Ministry under Dr. Al-Adwani's leadership while at the same time commending his determination to implement a roadmap for educational development, enhance its quality, and improve educational

indicators in the country.

The association supports his efforts to translate the directives of the political leadership, prepare competent national human resources, overcome obstacles, and improve educational outcomes. The association also appreciates the Minister's call for the Ministry to provide three strategies and plans that can be implemented in three stages, free from complexities and regulatory requirements.

him to pay him an amount of KD 170,000.

The accused had fabricated an acknowledgment of receipt of the debt, on the basis of which the aforementioned payment order was issued, by adding the phrase "and the cash amounts until the value of the cheque is cashed". As a result, the incident was reported.

During the court session, the counsel representing the defendant Lawyer Inaam Haider highlighted the grave error, the contradiction in the descriptive registration, the lax reporting, the maliciousness of the accusation, and its fabrication.

Resident acquitted of forging docus after appeal

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by a lower court which acquitted a resident of forging a customary document - "an acknowledgment of receipt of a debt" - in the amount of KD 170,000, and falsely attributing it to the plaintiff, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The legal counsel representing the plaintiff said the defendant, at a previous date, had issued a total performance order against the plaintiff, obligating

him to pay him an amount of KD 170,000.

The accused had fabricated an acknowledgment of receipt of the debt, on the basis of which the aforementioned payment order was issued, by adding the phrase "and the cash amounts until the value of the cheque is cashed". As a result, the incident was reported.

During the court session, the counsel representing the defendant Lawyer Inaam Haider highlighted the grave error, the contradiction in the descriptive registration, the lax reporting, the maliciousness of the accusation, and its fabrication.

Resident acquitted of forging docus after appeal

Waste dumpers warned

Citizen pays heavy fine for barbecuing in park

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Environmental Police registered a number of violations committed by a citizen who barbecued in Salmiya Garden recently, reports Al-Rai daily.

This is in implementation of the decision of Kuwait Municipality Director Eng Saud Al-Dabbous on allocating four hours a day for barbecuing in locations managed by the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) as follows: behind Megana Restaurant, behind Burger King and Pizza Hut restaurants, behind Villa Fayrouz Restaurant, Egaila Beach and Khiran Park (for members only); that is, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm from Nov 1 to March 31 each year.

Security sources told the daily that "the Environmental Police inspected a number of public places, including Salmiya Garden, to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations. They issued a citation to a citizen who was barbecuing in an unauthorized location. Unfortunately, some people do not know the rules and regulations on barbecuing and the resulting penalties."

Sources added two other citations were issued against the citizen -- one for barbecuing on the ground, and the second for cutting cosmetic plants inside the garden.

The fines for these violations is KD500 and KD700 respectively after reconciliation.

Sources warned that strict and deterrent instructions have been issued to be applied on anyone who does not abide by the Environmental Law; as many pictures have been taken of some citizens and expatriates throwing waste including those emitting unpleasant odors, cause diseases and affect the aesthetic view of public places, especially the parks and gardens. Sources said these people will be summoned and citations will be issued against them based on the recordings of surveillance cameras installed in public places.

Repairs to be done at night: minister

'Pinpoint potholes for swift action'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of Works, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan,

said there is a plan to address the road issues soon, particularly to get rid of potholes which have been the main irritant for motorists, reports Al-Jarida daily.

During her visit to Abdullah Al-Salem, she emphasized on the urgency of implementing immediate solutions saying the Ministry of Works encourages citizens to send pictures of what she called 'obstructive potholes' for swift action.

In her statement, Dr. Al-Mashaan acknowledged the challenges posed

by 'rough' streets and emphasized the focus on urgent measures rather than radical ones.

She added, teams have been formed in all governorates to follow a scheduled plan for inspecting and promptly addressing road conditions and highlighted the activation of the guarantee clause for companies contracted by the ministry to repair both primary and secondary roads assuring that this work will be done on a daily basis during the nighttime.

Dr. Al-Mashaan drew attention to upcoming improvements in road repairs, particularly those leading to rural and agricultural areas such as Abdali, Wafra, and Kabad roads.

She expressed the ministry's commitment to avoiding past errors in contracting methods, company selection, asphalt mixture choices, supervision, and quality control.



Dr. Al-Mashaan

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To continue enjoying uninterrupted services, in compliance with CITRA regulations

Zain invites customers to update their Civil ID on its database

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Zain invites customers to update their Civil ID and personal information on its database as soon as possible to continue enjoying uninterrupted services, following directives and regulations from the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA).

This step helps protect customer privacy, limit fraud attempts, and ensure the validity of customer data in Zain's database, enabling the company to offer them the best services. To avoid service interruption, customers should complete this process by 03 March 2024.

Customers can easily update their information via Zain's digital channels, including the official website (kw.zain.com) and the Zain KW app

available from official app stores. In addition, customers can complete this process by visiting any of Zain's nationwide branches or by calling the contact center at 107.

Zain asks customers to be vigilant and not click any unidentified links or visit any unknown URLs that claim to be official sites. Customers should also be careful not to engage in suspicious phone calls, nor engage with any unsecure external links. Zain will never ask customers to submit any information or documents through any channels other than the official ones mentioned above.

To update via the Zain KW app or website (kw.zain.com), customers can simply tap on their profile page, choose "update Civil ID", then enter the Civil ID number in the designated area. After-

wards, the customer will be prompted to continue the authentication process via the Kuwait Mobile ID app. After authenticating, the update process will be successfully completed. Customers can also visit any of Zain's nationwide branches or call 107 to complete the update process with the help of the customer care team.

Zain ensures the compliance of its systems with all regulatory requirements and standards to protect customer data. The company continues to introduce strict security procedures and implement core-level changes to its systems to assure the highest levels of security when customers complete transactions or payments on its channels, including the official website, smartphone app, and the biggest network of branches in Kuwait.



Zain Civil ID updated flyer.

CITRA calls on telecom subscribers to 'update' their data to ensure services

Public awareness urged to avoid fraud

By Fajer Alhajeri

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4, (KUNA): Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) called on Sunday mobile and fixed subscribers to update their data to ensure the continuity of their access to services from companies.

The manager of the Competition and Operators Affairs Department at the authority, Khaled Al-Qarawi told KUNA that the registration list of subscribers to communication services were obliged all licensed companies to urge their customers to update their expired personal data and information registered with the companies.

Al-Qarawi emphasized the importance of maintaining the continuity of service to subscribers during the update phase, adhering to protocols set by mobile and virtual telecommunications providers.

He emphasized the significance of public awareness of the registration list for mobile and fixed telecommunications services on the TRA website and urged them to avoid fraud.



One of the meetings in progress.

'Training and knowledge transfer priority'

Minister Al-Hajraf conducts strategic meetings to 'boost' sector efficiency

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Dr. Salem Al-Hajraf, has conducted a series of meetings with various sectors within the Ministry, in the presence of Acting Undersecretary Engineer Maha Al-Asousi, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Throughout the past week, discussions were held with sectors including water projects, water operation and maintenance, planning, training, information systems, technical services, main concerns, electric power stations, water distillation, as well as monitoring, control, and command centers.

Dr. Al-Hajraf familiarized himself with the operational processes and future plans of each sector and project, while also addressing the challenges they encounter. He emphasized his full support for the sectors and expressed a commitment to overcoming any obstacles that could potentially cause delays in project implementation.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Hajraf highlighted the importance of enhancing the skills of the ministry's national workforce through training and knowledge transfer, aiming to cultivate future leaders from within the organization.

Proactive measures

Government urges state agencies to prep 2nd row of senior officials

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The government has issued directives to state agencies to qualify a second row of senior officials and supervisors in all the governorates of Kuwait, in what is seen as preemptive efforts to quickly fill vacant positions to ensure there is no shortage of manpower whenever the positions fall vacant and prevent disruption of work, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The sources indicated that the Civil Service Commission is in the process of organizing a training program in this regard. The program aims to familiarize the participants in the program with modern methods of management and planning.

The sources indicated that the program expected to be rolled out next May comprises of 6 training objectives:

- Learning about the concept of future leaders and their role in the success of the organization
- Learning how to develop leaders and qualify them to implement the job succession plan
- Building the intellectual framework for modern methods of delegation and

empowerment

■ Explaining the importance of the leadership development process and its connection to other functions in human resources management

■ Enabling participants to develop individual development plans and how to follow them

■ Practical applications of the program for qualifying new leaders and training them to develop government departments

The sources explained the program will enable participants to develop individual development plans and how to follow them, in addition to practical applications of the program.

The sources concluded by saying that the program is directed at senior leaders in government agencies, namely the Undersecretary, the Assistant Undersecretary, and the like.

It is worth noting that the number of vacant leadership positions exceeded 120 positions in various government agencies, and there are agencies without completely original leaders.



Participants from various segments of government entities.

'Certified Trainer Preparation'

CMA holds training initiative program

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Capital Markets Authority actively engaged in an esteemed training initiative under the 'Certified Trainer Preparation', with participants from various segments of government entities in the State of Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Conducted from January 21 to 25, 2024, the program was aimed at enriching participants' understanding of the attributes and competencies essential for a successful trainer while equipping them with the requisite skills to deliver both theoretical and practical lectures effectively.

Furthermore, the program focused on empowering participants to design impactful training programs, create educational materials and training packages, and execute and evaluate training processes with the highest standards of quality.

The certified trainer preparation certificate was conferred upon Tariq Mohammed Al-Jutaili, Director of the Anti-Mon-

ey Laundering and Terrorist Financing Department (Field Control Department), Anwar Ali Al-Mutairi, Director of the Training and Career Development Department (Human Resources Department), and Ayyad Faisal Al-Mana, Senior Specialist (Human Resources Department).

This local membership, along with the international membership, holds validity for a five-year period, subject to renewal. The acquisition of this certificate by the participants signifies their excellence, successfully meeting the established certified trainer standards, and delivering exceptional training sessions.

The participants underwent evaluation based on a model encompassing ten international standards, assessing their achievement of program objectives, proficiency in presentation skills, and utilization of diverse training methodologies. The Authority received acclaim for delivering outstanding training offerings.



February

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Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 57.173/-net	BHD 127.685/-net

Promo period from 1st – 29th February 2024

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Building safer societies

Amana Society President 'vows' support for vulnerable children

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4, (KUNA): President of the Amana Society for Social Welfare, Zeina Al-Sultan, stated on Sunday that the society aims to support foster children, abused children, and those of unknown parentage, providing them with therapeutic, psychological, and social care for their ideal integration into society. Al-Sultan added, in an interview with the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), that since its announcement last November, the association has been diligently monitoring and studying everything that children are exposed to in society, developing solutions, and addressing their needs.

She pointed out that one of the general goals of the association is to spread community awareness, introduce the rights and laws related to children and the family, raise the level of awareness in society about the abused child, and prevent abuse by providing specialized awareness, guidance, rehabilitation, training, and treatment programs according to the child's condition.

She explained that an abused child needs all kinds of support to integrate with their family, and this must be under the supervision of a multidisciplinary professional team. Meanwhile, a child of unknown parentage needs to be provided with social care and rehabilitated with a foster family. She pointed out that the association provides specialized training and qualification programs for all professionals working in the field of child and family care. The association also offers specialized training programs in aspects related to children and family for those responsible for caring for the child and



KUNA photo
Zeina Al-Sultan, President of the Amana Association for Social Welfare.

their family.

Al-Sultan stated that the association has a specialized rehabilitation team whose mission is to diagnose the condition of the abused child or children in the shelter center and develop a plan for their psychological and social rehabilitation, led by psychological and social specialists. She added that the association also has a legal team whose mission is to provide advice on laws related to children to the association's members, in addition to examining issues related to children and defending them.

She further pointed out that the association, through a specialized educational team, seeks to expand awareness campaigns for children in schools to prevent abuse and educate them about their rights.

Education Minister stresses dedication to student well-being and academic success

Al-Adwani highlights significance of school programs

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4, (KUNA): The Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Adel Al-Adwani, stressed on Sunday the keenness to ensure the provision of an appropriate and suitable environment for students, which will positively reflect on their performance and academic achievement.

Al-Adwani expressed, in a press statement following an inspection visit he made to a number of schools to check on their readiness for the start of the second semester 2023-2024, that he was optimistic that the beginning of the second semester would be full of giving and achievement to serve the nation and raise its name. He urged his students to exert more effort, perseverance, and attention in their academic path to achieve their ambitions and dreams.

Competent

He stressed that the Ministry, in all its sectors, will spare no effort in providing educational, and psychological support to its students through its competent departments to enable them to achieve success and excellence in their educational career as future leaders and the true wealth of their country, Kuwait.

He expressed gratitude for the efforts of school administrations and the educational body, responsible for guiding and motivating students through improved teaching methods, understanding, and innovation. He emphasized the importance of nurturing students' love for science and knowledge, encouraging the development of their skills and deepening their understanding of the curriculum.

Al-Adwani also highlighted the significance of activating cultural, scientific, and sporting activities provided by the Ministry within the school environment. These activities aim to build students' personalities, showcase their talents, and enhance their abilities, ultimately leading to the effective investment of their time.



KUNA photo
The Minister of Education Dr. Adel Al-Adwani inspects a number of schools.

Partnership aims to enhance food security

Kuwait Camel Association and KISR sign Memorandum of Understanding

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4, (KUNA): Acting Director General of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Dr. Mishaan Al-Otaibi, stressed the importance of cooperation with entities, companies, and associations working in the agricultural, animal production, and fisheries sectors to address the problems they face. He emphasized the need to provide the best solutions through studies, research, and the development of systems and practices.

This statement was conveyed by Al-Otaibi in a press release issued by the institute on the occasion of signing a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait Camel Association to organize cooperation in various areas. This collaboration includes conducting joint studies and research on the breeding and production of camels and their environment.

Al-Otaibi explained that the institute had previously completed a research project to evaluate the safety and quality of camel milk using second-generation DNA sequencing. One of the project's outcomes was demonstrating the possibility of utilizing beneficial bacteria discovered in camel milk in food technology. This contribution aims to enhance consumer health and develop the dairy products industry while prioritizing quality and safety considerations.

He stated that researchers from the institute published a scientific paper in an international journal on separating the microbial structure of camel milk and the effect of geographical location and seasons on it. He stressed the importance of developing studies and research on camels to protect these livestock, develop industries related to them, and benefit from them economically, while also emphasizing the significance of enhancing food security. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of protecting camels as a natural resource and preserving their biodiversity and ecosystem.



KUNA photo
Mazen Abu Al-Hassan, Head of the International Organization for Migration's mission in the State of Kuwait.

IOM Mission Chief praises Kuwait's humanitarian aid

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4, (KUNA): Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mazen Aboualhasan praised Kuwait's role in providing humanitarian aid to needed countries.

Aboualhasan stated the amount of aid that Kuwait provided has reached approximately USD 70 million during the last 15 years including USD 14 million for last year's Turkey-Syria earthquakes.

Aboualhasan said that starting 11 February the IOM is collaborating with Kuwait's Ministry of Interior to fight human trafficking and also, discussing a project with the Public Authority of Manpower Aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035.

He added the IOM launched its first annual appeal in 2024 that aims to raise USD 7 billion to support its operations and help to deal with the migration crisis.

He pointed out that the Director General of IOM Amy Pope stated during the launching of the global appeal the funding helps 140 million people to prevent further displacement along with proactive action to promote economic growth and human development.

Read what

Continued from Page 1

In fact, the ministers' submission to the parliamentarians reached the extent where they handed them the needle and the thread for them to tailor matters as they wish.

His Highness the Amir, in his first supreme speech before the current National Assembly, was clear in this regard when he explained in detail how the agreement between the two authorities led to pushing the country into abysses that no one could wish for, because the sword of parliamentary accountability was drawn against the ministers who feared for their positions and privileges.

Therefore, in recent years, we have seen prime ministers, ministers, and senior officials being taken to court for tampering with public funds, appointments, and other clearly visible violations. When the press was publishing these corruptions, it was prosecuted for allegedly publishing false, or rather fake news.

For this reason, it placed before it an arsenal of suppression of free voices with four laws, all of which serve to prevent the disclosure of what is going on in terms of the parliamentary corruption.

Social media also had its largest share of silence. Dozens of citizens were taken to prison, while others fled abroad.

By the way, this is the first time that Kuwait has experienced so many barriers preventing the truth from being revealed.

All of this led to adapting the Kuwaiti reality according to retarded visions, as if we were in a "Taliban" state. It also led to the closure of the country, making it repulsive to investment, fighting individual initiative, and stealing public money through projects that experience has proven were more for the people than for infrastructure development.

It is well established that freedom of press ensures that decision-makers make sound decisions. It is also a basic necessity for enhancing transparency and accountability in all areas of society.

However, when it is governed by imbalanced considerations based on an iron curtain to prevent seeing the illegal practices of ministers and parliamentarians, then corruption becomes widespread, and institutions become farms for corrupt officials, which means increasing the injustice of the common people.

Today, people believe that they are facing a different Prime Minister. Perhaps he realizes that the press is his primary helper, and is his weapon with which he fights corruption, and just as he can, with transparency, putting things right, so that no authority transgresses the other.

Therefore, he must work to liberate the press from the poisonous daggers that attack it through the four aforementioned laws in order to restore its strength, because it is the voice of the people.

It is good for His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem to reactivate the habit of meeting with the editors-in-chief, and for the meeting to happen on a monthly basis, or at close intervals, and for it to be open without caveats in order for what is said in secret to be said in openly.

In this regard, Kuwait needs to rejuvenate itself, which can only be achieved through freedom of press and media as a whole.

Kuwait evaluates

Continued from Page 1

The government's overarching goal is to revive Kuwait's dormant tourist traffic, which has been on hold for several years.

In this regard, informed sources stressed that the move to reopen visit visas will be executed with stringent controls and conditions, carefully considering social, security, and other dimensions.

The intention is to prevent an upsurge in violators, leveraging the Ministry of Interior's significant progress in electronic connectivity and digital transformation.

These technological advancements facilitate a more streamlined and precise monitoring process to ensure visitors comply with the country's laws.

Kuwait's cold

Continued from Page 1

transitional period between winter and spring, characterized by being cold starting February 10 in open areas.

At the end of the season, the temperature would range between cold and relatively warm, added the center.

Al-Ojairi Scientific Center pointed out that the upcoming season would be synchronized with a rare phenomenon that occurs when a full moon was at perigee, its closest distance in its orbit to Earth, making it appear larger than usual.

Kuwait and

Continued from Page 1

In the meantime, Abdulaziz Al-Ali, advisor to the Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices said a delegation from the union met with Filipino officials to iron out what he called, "some differences in views", and that the Officer-in-Charge at the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) said efforts were underway to finalize the MoU to reach an optimal solution to the domestic labor recruitment issue.

However, Al-Ali has emphasized the urgency of resolving the issue before the holy month of Ramadan to alleviate the escalating labor crisis. Al-Ali added the Union members visited the DMW headquarters along the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) in response to the invitation of the union's counterpart in Manila.

During the visit, the union's delegation met with the Officer-in-Charge of DMW who gave an update on the progress of talks and bilateral discussions aimed at resuming the process of bringing in new domestic workers.

The Officer-in-Charge confirmed that meetings between the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and their Filipino counterparts were positive and fruitful, while underscoring the need to intensify efforts to finalize the MoU for an optimal recruitment process.

Al-Ali praised the collaboration between the Kuwaiti and Filipino federations, emphasizing the strength of their relations and joint efforts. He highlighted the significance of Filipino workers; citing various reasons, such as good communication skills, high level of education, and familiarity with community customs and traditions, making them the preferred workers for both Kuwaiti and expatriate families.

Kuwait advocates

Continued from Page 1

He thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, for their efforts to protect international peace and security and support the main causes of the Arab and Muslim nations.

Sheikh Fahad also thanked Prince Khaled bin Salman for hosting the IMCTC second meeting, and for the warm reception and hospitality given to the Kuwaiti delegation to the meeting.

Meanwhile, Defense Ministers of the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) stressed Saturday on the importance of adopting a unified position in condemning the aggression by the Israeli occupation entity against the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The final communique of the second IMCTC defense ministers' meeting expressed determination of the partners to enhance cooperation and unify their efforts to ward off the threat of terrorism.

It emphasizes the importance of joint action to eliminate terrorism through comprehensive planning in accordance with plans and initiatives that support the main areas of the alliance represented in the intellectual field, the media field, and combating terrorist financing and the military field.

The meeting agreed to launch a fund to finance the coalition's initiatives, which will be designated to receive financial contributions from member states, supporting states, and international bodies and organizations to combat terrorism in its various fields, according to the statement.

It praised the consensus of visions reached at this meeting and the importance of concerted efforts to achieve the goals sought by the coalition to fight terrorism and the existing partnership with friendly, supportive countries and international organizations concerned with fighting terrorism based on respect for the principles of international legitimacy, and welcomed countries wishing to join to the alliance in the future.

Kuwait's delegation to the meeting was led by Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yosif Al-Sabah.

MP seeks

Continued from Page 1

He urged the government to pay attention to the citizens' demands, asserting that the claims about the budget deficit are not true. He affirmed that the financial condition of the State is very strong, such that it will not be affected by the approval of the aforementioned bills. He pointed out that the deficit is not in the State budget, but in the minds of some people.

On the other hand, the Assembly Speaker has included 12 incoming letters in the agenda of Tuesday's session as follows:

• A letter from MP Shuaib Shaaban requesting that the Health Affairs Committee be assigned to review the justifications for not establishing a hospital or increasing the capacity of the health center

in Jaber Al-Ahmad City and the delay in providing health services in Al-Mutlaa City; indicating the committee must submit its report within three months.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Public Utilities Committee be assigned to investigate the causes of the dilapidation of the buildings designated for the Ministry of Social Affairs in Sulaibikhat. The committee must submit its report within three months.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Public Funds Protection Committee be assigned to investigate the amounts that Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) spent on media advertisements.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Environmental Affairs, Food and Water Security Committee be assigned to investigate the environmental damage resulting from the lack of sanitation in Al-Mutlaa.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Environmental Affairs, Food and Water Security Committee be assigned to investigate the environmental situation of the landfills in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Environmental Affairs, Food and Water Security Committee be assigned to investigate the lack of green spaces in various regions.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Environmental Affairs, Food and Water Security Committee be assigned to investigate the existing environmental violations in Asherj.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Environmental Affairs, Food and Water Security Committee be assigned to investigate the environmental damage to telecommunications towers.

• A letter from the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee requesting for an extension of its mandate to submit its report on the draft law on establishing the Northern Economic Zone for a period of four months.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the Priorities Committee be assigned to set a two-hour period in one of the upcoming legislative sessions to discuss the State Audit Bureau's report on assessing all the work of the Health Insurance Hospitals Company.

• A letter from MP Dr Hamad Al-Matar requesting the invitation of the Ministry of Health, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to implement recommendation number eight issued in the special session of the Assembly on Nov 1, 2023, to quickly complete the procedures for transferring the injured from the Al-Aqsa Flood to undergo treatment in the State of Kuwait.

• A letter from a group of MPs requesting that the joint committee between the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee and the Human Resources Committee urgently study and discuss proposals to issue laws regulating the appointment of officials; indicating the joint committee must submit its report within one month.

Moreover, MP Hamad Al-Matar asked Sheikh Fahd Yusuf Al-Sabah to provide him with copies of the contracts that the Ministry of Interior signed in 2022 for the maintenance of Banhard AML armored vehicles for three years, copy of the advertisement for this tender, names of the two contracting companies, reasons for awarding the tender to Smartech General Trading and Contracting Company, if this company is owned by the previous company or owned by any of the previous company's partners.

He also inquired about contract number 715 for fiscal 2014/2015 to build, supply and maintain interceptor cruisers and contract number 68 for fiscal year 2018/2019 to build and supply special cruisers in view of the report of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) about the financial violations uncovered in the contracts. He pointed out that SAB recommended the formation of a fact-finding committee to investigate these violations. He requested for a copy of the decision to form the fact-finding committee, tasks of the committee, and the conclusion and recommendations presented by the committee.

He asked about the ministerial decision on authorizing private companies to conduct technical inspection of vehicles and issue the registration books. He wants to know the number of authorized companies, oversight procedures adopted by the ministry in dealing with these companies, fees paid by each company to obtain the authorization, number of transactions completed by the companies compared to that of the concerned department at the Ministry of Interior, total revenues collected from the companies for obtaining authorization, and amount of revenues transferred to the public treasury.

Al-Matar also forwarded queries to Minister of Health Dr Ahmed Al-Adwani about Retirees Health Insurance Law number 114/2014 and its amendment -- law number 71/2023, which stipulates the additional categories of beneficiaries. He said Article 11 of the law allows the retirees specified in a decision of the health minister to visit the facilities allocated for providing health insurance services, inspect them, view the files and record violations that will be referred to the concerned authorities. He requested for a detailed report; including the list of inspected facilities, recorded violations, and measures taken regarding these violations.

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World News Roundup

Europe

'Ukrainian shelling kills at least 28': Moscow-installed officials say Ukrainian shelling killed at least 28 people at a bakery in the Russian-occupied city of Lysychansk.

At least one child was among the dead Saturday, local leader Leonid Pasechnik wrote in a statement on Telegram. A further 10 people were rescued from under the rubble by emergency services, he said.

Ukrainian officials in Kyiv did not comment on the incident. Both Moscow and Kyiv have increasingly relied on longer-range attacks this winter amid largely unchanged positions on the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line in the nearly 2-year-old war.

However, Ukrainian forces have come under intense Russian attack over the past 24 hours, with continuous assaults along the front line, Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement Sunday.

Fighting has been particularly fierce in the eastern city of Avdiivka, where Moscow is attempting to encircle Kyiv's troops, while Ukrainian forces have also been on the defensive in Kupiansk, Lyman, Bakhmut and Zaporizhzhia, officials said.

The military administration for Ukraine's northern Sumy region said Sunday that Russian forces had shelled the region in 16 separate attacks the previous day, firing on the border communities of Yunakivka, Bilopillia, Krasnopillia, Velyka Pysarivka, and Esman. Gen **Serhii Naiev**, commander of the Ukrainian Joint Forces, also said that Kyiv's troops had pushed back Russian sabotage and reconnaissance units attempting to cross the border in the Sumy region.

With Ukraine's soldiers concentrated in the eastern regions of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv, the reported incursion suggests that Moscow could be probing vulnerabilities on a new front to further stretch Ukrainian resources. (AP)

More than 2 dozen detained: More than two dozen people, mostly journalists, were detained Saturday at a protest in central Moscow, as wives and other relatives of Russian servicemen mobilized to fight in Ukraine called for their return, according to independent Russian news reports.

The relatives gathered to lay flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, just outside the Kremlin walls. They marked 500 days since Russian President Vladimir Putin in September 2022 ordered a "partial mobilization" of up to 300,000 reservists following battlefield setbacks in Moscow's full-scale war against Ukraine.

The call-up was widely unpopular and prompted hundreds of thousands to flee abroad to avoid being drafted.

Wives and relatives of some of the reservists called up in 2022 have campaigned for them to be discharged and replaced with contract soldiers. Saturday's demonstration was organized by one such campaign group, The Way Home, that on Friday posted on Telegram calling on "wives, mothers, sisters and children" of reservists from across Russia to come to Moscow to "demonstrate (their) unity." (AP)

Irish nationalist to lead Northern Ireland's gov't: An Irish nationalist made history Saturday by becoming Northern Ireland's first minister as the government returned to work after a two-year boycott by unionists.

Sinn Fein Vice President Michelle O'Neill was named first minister in the government that under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday peace accord shares power equally between Northern Ireland's two main communities - British unionists who want to stay in the UK, and Irish nationalists who seek to unite with Ireland.

Northern Ireland was established as a unionist, Protestant-majority part of the UK in 1921, following independence for the Republic of Ireland, so O'Neill's nomination was seen as a highly symbolic moment for nationalists.

"This is a historic day which represents a new dawn," O'Neill said. "That such a day would ever come would have been unimaginable to my parents and grandparents' generation. Because of the Good Friday Agreement that old state that they were born into is gone. A more democratic, more equal society has been created making this a better place for everyone."

O'Neill will share power with deputy first minister Emma Little-Pengelly from the Democratic Unionist Party. (AP)

UK aircraft carrier sidelined from exercises: A British aircraft carrier that had been set to lead the largest NATO exercises since the Cold War will not set sail Sunday after a problem with its propeller was discovered during final checks, the Royal Navy said.

The HMS Queen Elizabeth will not join the exercises off Norway's Arctic coast and will be replaced by the HMS Prince of Wales.

The change of plans is almost a reverse scenario of what happened in August 2022 when the Prince of Wales broke down with a propeller problem on its way to carry out training exercises with the United States and Canada off North America. The carrier had to be towed back to port from the Isle of Wight and the HMS Queen Elizabeth took its place in the exercises.

With the HMS Queen Elizabeth sidelined, the navy may not be able to deploy an aircraft to the Red Sea - as armed forces minister James Heappey has suggested - where hostilities have been heating up with Iran-backed Houthi rebels targeting cargo ships in the waters connecting Asia with Europe and the US. (AP)

Guesthouse blaze kills one, 2 hospitalized: A fire at a guesthouse in central Romania on Sunday morning left one person dead and two hospitalized, authorities said.

Emergency teams were deployed to the blaze in the town of Calimanesti in Valcea county where 10 people - including the owner and an employee - were staying at the guesthouse, according to the Department for Emergency Situations, DSU.

Nine people managed to escape the blaze, of whom two were hospitalized, authorities said. One person was trapped inside the building.

"Unfortunately, despite all the efforts of the rescuers, the person caught inside the building was declared dead," the DSU said in a post on Facebook.

Authorities did not say what caused the blaze but said it affected an area of about 250 square meters (820 square feet) and that it was contained and there was no danger of it spreading. (AP)

150K gather in Berlin to protest far right: At least 150,000 people gathered in front of the German national parliament Saturday afternoon to protest against the far right, the latest in a string of large weekend demonstrations across Germany.

The pro-democracy demonstrations started three weeks ago after the investigative journalists' group Correctiv published an article saying that right-wing extremists had recently met to discuss deporting millions of immigrants, including some with German citizenship. Some members of the far-right Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, were present at the meeting.

Saturday's protest drew more participants than organizers expected, despite intermittent rain showers in the German capital. Police said that as of mid-afternoon on Saturday, approximately 150,000 people were in attendance. Similar protests against the far right in other German cities, including the southern city of Freiburg and the western city of Hannover, also drew thousands of attendees on Saturday. (AP)

Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy dies: Prince Vittorio Emanuele of Savoy, the son of Italy's last king, Umberto II, has died at the age of 86.

The prince died on Saturday in Geneva, the Savoy Royal House said in a statement. He had lived in Switzerland since the family were exiled from Italy when he was 9 years old.

Vittorio Emanuele was born on February 12, 1937, in Naples to Umberto, Prince of Piedmont, who would later briefly become Umberto II, and Princess Marie-José of Belgium.

Umberto ruled Italy for only 34 days after his father, King Vittorio Emanuele III, abdicated in an attempt to save the monarchy that had been discredited by his support of Benito Mussolini's fascist regime during World War II.

When Italians voted to abolish the monarchy in 1946, Vittorio Emanuele and his family were obliged to go into exile. An article of the Constitution of the new Italian Republic prevented previous kings of the House of Savoy, their wives and male descendants of the family from entering Italian soil.

The ban was lifted in 2002 and moves to bring royal remains back to Italy began in 2011. (AP)



US President Joe Biden speaks about investment in rail projects, Dec 8, 2023, in Las Vegas. Biden easily wins South Carolina's Democratic primary on Feb 3 clinching a state he pushed to lead off his party's nominating process after it revived his then-struggling White House bid four years ago. (AP)

Politics

US president gears up for reelection bid

Biden wins SC's Democratic primary

COLUMBIA, S.C., Feb 4, (AP): US President Joe Biden easily won South Carolina's Democratic primary on Saturday, clinching a state he pushed to lead off his party's nominating process after it revived his then-struggling White House bid four years ago.

Biden defeated the other long-shot Democrats on South Carolina's ballot, including Minnesota Rep. Dean Phillips and author Marianne Williamson. His reelection campaign invested heavily in driving up turnout in what it saw as a test drive of its efforts to mobilize Black voters, a key Democratic bloc central to Biden's chances in a likely November rematch against former President Donald Trump.

"In 2020, it was the voters of South Carolina who proved the pundits wrong, breathed new life into our campaign, and set us on the path to winning the presidency," Biden said in a statement. "Now in 2024, the people of South Carolina have spoken again and I have no doubt that you have set us on the path to winning the Presidency again - and making Donald Trump a loser - again."

The Associated Press declared Biden the winner at 7:23 pm based on an analysis of initial vote results showing him with a decisive lead in key locations throughout the state. He won all 55 of the state's Democratic delegates.

Leading

The victory comes following the president leading a Democratic National Committee effort to have South Carolina go first in the party's primary, citing the state's more racially diverse population compared to the traditional first-in-the-nation states of Iowa and New Hampshire, which are overwhelmingly white.

South Carolina is reliably Republican, but 26% of its residents are Black. In the 2020 general election, Black voters made up 11% of the national electorate, and 9 in 10 of them supported Biden, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of that election's voters.

ing theft, assault and prostitution got into a truck with a man who had picked her up for a "date" near downtown Anchorage. When he left her alone in the vehicle, she stole a digital

memory card from the center console.

Now, more than four years later, what she found on that card is key to a double murder trial set to begin this week: grie-



In this photo taken from video released by Russian Emergency Ministry Press Service on Feb 3, Russian Emergency Ministry employees work at the side of a collapsed bakery after an attack of Ukrainian troops, that Russian officials in Luhansk said was conducted by Ukrainian forces, in Lysychansk, Russian-controlled Luhansk region, eastern Ukraine. (AP)

likely general election matchup with the GOP's current front-runner.

Earlier in the day, Democratic National Committee Chairman Jaime Harrison said, "We all know that we, because of the color of this, we, our great grandparents, our grandparents, could not always vote here." Harrison is a South Carolina native who is Black.

Process

"For this president to say, 'Jaime, for the entirety of your life, we have started this process in Iowa and New Hampshire, and now, we're going to start it in South Carolina' - no other president before ever decided to touch that issue," he added. "But Joe Biden did, and I will always be grateful to the president for giving us a chance, for seeing us, and understanding how much we matter."

Black voters interviewed during the recent early voting period listed a range of reasons for supporting Biden, from his administration's defense of abortion rights to appointing Black jurists and other minorities to the federal courts. Some echoed Biden's warnings that Trump would threaten democracy as he continues to push lies that the 2020 vote was stolen.

"We can't live with a leader that will make this into a dictatorship. We can't live in a place that is not a democracy. That will be a fall for America," said LaJoia Broughton, a 42-year-old small business owner in Columbia. "So my vote is with Biden. It has been with Biden and will continue to be with Biden."

Some voters said they were concerned about the 81-year-old Biden's age, as many Americans have said they are in public polling. Trump is 77. Both men have had a series of public flubs that have fueled skepticism about their readiness.

"They're as old as I am and to have these two guys be the only choices, that's kind of difficult," said Charles Trower, a 77-year-old from Blythewood, South Carolina. "But I would much rather have President Biden than even consider the other guy."

some photos and videos of a woman being beaten and strangled at a Marriott hotel, her attacker speaking in a strong accent as he urged her to die, her blanket-covered body being snuck outside on a luggage cart. (AP)

Man gets 12 yrs in prison: A medical biller has been sentenced to 12 years in federal prison after being convicted in a massive insurance fraud scheme that involved posing as an NBA player and other patients to harangue the companies for payments that weren't actually due, prosecutors said.

US District Judge **Joanna Seybert** called Matthew James' actions "inexcusable" as she sentenced him Friday in Central Islip, Newsday reported.

"To ruin people's reputations, to do all that, for wealth is really something," Seybert said.

James, 54, was convicted in July 2022 of fraud and identity theft charges. Prosecutors say he bilked insurance companies out of hundreds of millions of dollars.

James ran medical billing companies. Prosecutors said he got some doctors to schedule elective surgeries via emergency rooms - a tactic that boosted insurance reimbursement rates - and billed for procedures that were different from the ones actually performed. When insurance companies rejected the claims, he called, pretending to be an outraged patient or policyholder who was facing a huge bill and demanding that the insurer pay up. (AP)



Sinn Fein Vice President Michelle O'Neill walks, in the Great Hall at Parliament Buildings at Stormont, before a sitting of the Northern Ireland Assembly, in Belfast, on Feb. 3. O'Neill was named first minister in the government that under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday peace accord shares power equally between Northern Ireland's two main communities - British unionists who want to stay in the UK, and Irish nationalists who seek to unite with Ireland. (AP)



Seybert



Noem

America

South Dakota tribe bans gov't: A South Dakota tribe has banned Republican Gov **Kristi Noem** from the Pine Ridge Reservation after she spoke this week about wanting to send razor wire and security personnel to Texas to help deter immigration at the US-Mexico border and also said cartels are infiltrating the state's reservations.

"Due to the safety of the Oyate, effective immediately, you are hereby Banished from the homelands of the Oglala Sioux Tribe!" Tribe President Frank Star Comes Out said in a Friday statement addressed to Noem. "Oyate" is a word for people or nation.

Star Comes Out accused Noem of trying to use the border issue to help get former US president Donald Trump re-elected and boost her chances of becoming his running mate. (AP)

Officer fatally shoots motorist: Wisconsin police officer fatally shot an armed motorist who approached officers, authorities said Saturday.

The motorist had fled a traffic stop Friday night in the village of North Fond du Lac in Winnebago County, the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation said in a news release.

A pursuit ensued, and police set up a tire deflation device on an interstate, forcing the vehicle to stop, the release said.

The driver called 911 and reported that they had a gun. The driver then got of the car and was approaching officers when one of them shot the motorist, authorities said. The driver died at the scene. No police officers were injured. The officer who shot the driver has been placed on administrative duty, per department policy. (AP)

Card leads to double murder trial: A woman with a lengthy criminal history includ-

Africa

Election postponed

Namibia President Geingob dies at 82

HARARE, Zimbabwe, Feb 4, (AP): **Hage Geingob**, President of Namibia, one of Africa's most stable democracies, died Sunday while receiving medical treatment at a local hospital, his office announced.

The Namibian presidency said Geingob's medical team at Lady Pohamba Hospital did its best to help him, but he died with his wife, Monica Geingos, and children by his side, in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Angelo Mbumba, Namibia's acting president, called for calm, saying in the same post that the "Cabinet will convene with immediate effect in order to make the necessary state arrangements in this regard."

Local media reported Mbumba has called for an urgent cabinet meeting.

According to Namibia's constitution, there should be an election to choose a new president within 90 days of Geingob's death.



Geingob

Geingob was undergoing treatment for cancer. The 82-year-old had a colonoscopy and a gastroscopy on Jan. 8, followed by a biopsy, his office said last month. He returned home on Jan. 31 from the United States where he had undergone a trial two-day "novel treatment for cancerous cells," according to his office. In 2014, he said he had survived prostate cancer.

Geingob, president of the southern African nation since 2015, was set to finish his second and final term in office this year. He was the country's third president since it gained independence in 1990, following more than a century of German and then apartheid South African rule.

After spending nearly three decades in exile in neighboring Botswana and the US as an anti-apartheid activist, Geingob returned to Namibia as its first prime minister from 1990 to 2002. He also served in the same capacity from 2008 to 2012.

Firm

Soft-spoken but firm on advancing Africa's agenda as an important stakeholder in world affairs, Geingob maintained close relations with the US and other Western countries.

But, like many African leaders, he also forged a warm relationship with China, refuting claims that Beijing is aggressively asserting economic influence over countries in Africa as a form of colonialism.

Namibia, which is on the southwestern coast of Africa, enjoys political and economic stability in a region ravaged by disputes, violent elections and coups. However, the country's opposition slammed Geingob last year for endorsing disputed elections in Zimbabwe.

Condolences from various African leaders poured in on Sunday.

Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa posted on X, saying Geingob's "leadership and resilience will be remembered."

Cyril Ramaphosa, president of neighboring South Africa and one of Namibia's largest trading partners, described him as a "close partner in our democratic dispensation" and "a towering veteran of Namibia's liberation from colonialism and apartheid."

Kenya's Prime Minister William Ruto said Geingob was a "distinguished leader who served the people of Namibia with focus and dedication" and "strongly promoted the continent's voice and visibility at the global arena."

Namibia, a country of just over 2.5 million people, is rich in minerals such as diamonds, gold and uranium. Despite being classified as an upper-middle-income country, socioeconomic inequalities are still widespread, according to the World Bank.

Namibians were expected to head to the ballots in November to choose a new leader.

Also:

DAKAR, Senegal: West Africa's regional bloc on Sunday called for dialogue to resolve the political crisis in Senegal as opposition leaders rejected the decision by the country's leader to postpone the Feb. 25 presidential election over an electoral dispute between parliament and the judiciary.

Senegalese politicians must "prioritize dialogue and collaboration for transparent, inclusive and credible elections," the regional bloc known as ECOWAS said in a statement that called on authorities to "expedite the various processes to set a new date for the elections" after Saturday's postponement.

Analysts say the crisis is putting one of Africa's most stable democracies to the test at a time when the region is struggling with a recent surge in coups. Senegal has been embroiled in political tensions as a result of deadly clashes involving opposition supporters and the disqualification of two opposition leaders ahead of the crucial vote.

Several opposition figures rejected President Macky Sall's decision to postpone the election, with at least two of the 20 presidential candidates saying they would proceed with their campaign scheduled to kick off on Sunday.

Sall's tenure is scheduled to end on April 2. Senegal's electoral code requires 80 days' notice of an election, meaning the earliest a new vote could take place is the last week of April.

"I am launching my electoral campaign tomorrow, in Dakar, with the candidates who have chosen to defend the Constitution," former minister and opposition candidate **Thierno Alassane Sall** said Saturday in a post on social media platform X.

Former mayor of the capital of Dakar **Khalifa Sall** also asked the citizens to "come together to save our democracy" while another opposition candidate, Déthié Fall, said, "We will start our campaign and we call on all candidates to do the same."

There were no signs of unrest in Dakar on Sunday.

NAIROBI, Kenya: Kenya's president says corruption and officials' incompetence allowed a liquid petroleum plant to operate in one of Nairobi's most crowded residential neighborhoods, where its explosion and fire killed three people and injured more than 280 others.

President **William Ruto** said the officials who gave licenses to the plant must be dismissed and prosecuted. Police are also looking for the site's owners.

At least 24 people were critically injured when the huge fireball erupted from the gas depot late Thursday and spread rapidly in Kenya's capital, burning homes and warehouses. Some gas cylinders were thrown hundreds of meters (yards), sparking separate fires.

Although at the time of the fire the site was operating illegally, Ruto said some licenses had been issued for the gas plant to operate in a residential area.



A person looks at a burned-out house after a forest fire reached Villa Independencia neighborhood in Vina del Mar, Chile on Feb 3. (AP)

Lat/Am

Panama's ex-prez vows to run for presidency

At least 46 dead in Chile's forest fires

VIÑA DEL MAR, Chile, Feb 4, (AP): Intense forest fires burning around a densely populated area of central Chile have caused at least 46 deaths, Chile's president said Saturday evening, and officials said at least 1,100 homes had been destroyed.

In a nationally televised address, President Gabriel Boric warned that the death toll could worsen as four large fires burn in the region of Valparaíso, where firefighters have struggled to reach the most threatened neighborhoods.

Boric urged Chileans to cooperate with rescue workers.

"If you are told to evacuate don't hesitate to do it," he said. "The fires are advancing fast and climatic conditions have made them difficult to control. There are high temperatures, strong winds and low humidity."

Interior Minister Carolina Tohá said earlier Saturday that 92 forest fires were burning in the center and south of the country, where temperatures have been unusually high this week.

The deadliest of the fires were in the Valparaíso region, where authorities urged thousands of people to evacuate their homes.

Meanwhile, residents in areas farther away from the fires were told to stay at home so that fire engines, ambulances and other emergency vehicles can get about on the roads with greater ease.

Threatening

Tohá said two fires near the towns of Quilpué and Villa Alemana had burned through at least 8,000 hectares (19,770 acres) since Friday. One of the fires was threatening the coastal resort town of Viña del Mar, where some neighborhoods had already been hit hard.

In Villa Independencia, a hillside neighborhood on the eastern edge of the town, several blocks of homes and businesses were destroyed. Burned cars with broken windows lined the streets, which were covered in ash.

"I've been here 32 years, and never imagined this would happen," said Rolando Fernández, one of the residents who lost his home.

He said he first saw the fire burning on a nearby hill Friday afternoon and within 15 minutes the area was engulfed in flames and smoke, forcing everyone to run for their lives.

"I've worked my whole life, and now I'm left with nothing," Fernández said.

Three shelters were set up in the Valparaíso region, and 19 helicopters

and more than 450 firefighters were brought into the area to help battle the blazes, Tohá said.

The fires were burning on mountains that are hard to reach, such as neighborhoods built precariously on the edge of Viña del Mar.

Officials reported power blackouts as a result of the fire, and Tohá said that in the Valparaíso region, four hospitals and three nursing homes for the elderly had to be evacuated. The fire also destroyed two bus terminals, the interior minister said.

The El Niño weather pattern has caused droughts and hotter-than-usual temperatures along the west of South America this year, increasing the risk of forest fires. In January, more than 17,000 hectares (42,000 acres) of forests were destroyed in Colombia by fires that followed several weeks of dry weather.

Also:

PANAMA CITY, Panama: A former president convicted of money laundering defiantly proclaimed his intention Saturday to run in Panama's upcoming presidential election despite facing a possible ban on seeking office.

Ricardo Martinelli was officially presented as the candidate of the Realizing Goals Party at a rally in Panama City where his supporters waved blue and white flags and chanted that they will stand with him in his struggle with Panamanian officials.

In a speech, the former president and businessman said he was not guilty of any crimes and accused authorities of persecuting him as the country gets ready to hold elections May 5.

"The only crime I have committed is to defend the people of Panama, to defend our country from those who want to steal hope," Martinelli said.

Martinelli, a conservative known for investing heavily in infrastructure projects, was Panama's president in 2009-2014.

In July, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison for money laundering. Prosecutors accused him of using undeclared funds from companies that had contracts with Panama's government to buy a media company that owns several newspapers in the country.

Martinelli, who owns a large supermarket chain, says he bought the media company with his own funds. He has been free while appealing the conviction, though it was upheld by Panama's Supreme Court on Friday.

Panama's constitution bans anyone

with a conviction carrying a prison sentence of five or more years from running for office. The nation's electoral tribunal will now have to rule whether Martinelli is eligible to participate in the election, where he is one of the most popular candidates.

In a recent poll by EcoAnalitic, about a third of those surveyed said they would vote for Martinelli, giving him a nine-point lead over his closest rival, Martin Torrijos.

Martinelli has been involved in several corruption cases since he left office in 2014. Last year, the U.S. government barred him and his immediate family from entering the country, alleging he had been involved in "significant" corruption.

MEXICO CITY: Tourists have barely started trickling back into the Mexican resort of Acapulco after deadly storm damage last year, but the gangland killings on the beaches have already returned.

Late Friday, the government of the Pacific coast state of Guerrero said it was deploying 60 gun-toting detectives to patrol the beaches "in light of the violent events that have occurred recently."

At least three people were shot dead on beaches in Acapulco last week, one by gunmen who arrived - and escaped - aboard a boat.

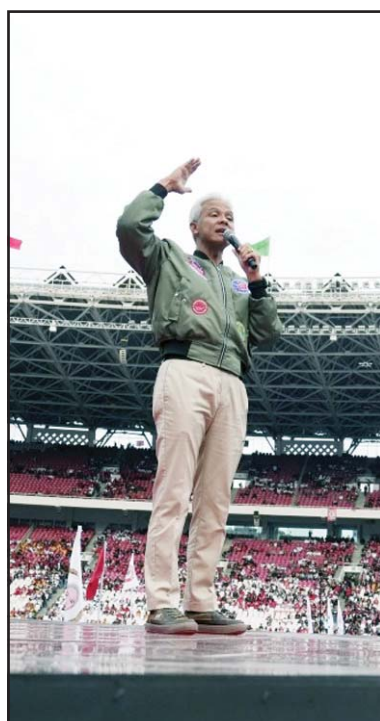
The violence continues despite the presence of thousands of soldiers and National Guard officers deployed to the city after Category 5 Hurricane Otis in late October.

The storm killed 52 people and left 32 missing. It also caused severe damage to almost all Acapulco's hotels. Only a fraction of the city's hotel rooms - about 5,000 - have been repaired.

The government has pledged to build about three dozen barracks for the quasi-military National Guard in Acapulco. But even with throngs of troops now on the streets, the gang violence that has beset the resort for almost two decades appears to have continued.

In January, the main Acapulco chamber of commerce reported that gang threats and attacks caused about 90% of the city's passenger vans to stop running, affecting the resort's main form of transport.

Acapulco has been bloodied by turf battles between gangs since at least 2006. The gangs are fighting over drug sales and income from extorting protection payments from businesses, bars, bus and taxi drivers.



Presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo speaks during his campaign rally at Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium in Jakarta, Indonesia on Feb. 3. The world's third-largest democracy is scheduled to hold its parliamentary and presidential elections on Feb. 14. (AP)



Subianto



Widodo

Asia

Indonesians flock to rallies: Tens of thousands of Indonesians flocked to presidential campaign rallies on Saturday to air their concerns over the state of democracy in the country.

President **Joko Widodo** is facing mounting criticism over his lack of neutrality after he threw his support behind frontrunner **Prabowo Subianto**, who has picked Widodo's son as his running mate.

Widodo has distanced himself from the governing Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, under whose banner he ran in 2014 and 2019.

The party's presidential candidate, Ganjar Pranowo, the former governor of Central Java province, addressed a crowd of more than 130,000 supporters and stressed the need for government neutrality in managing military and police forces and civil servants. He said he received reports of intimidation against regional leaders and civil society during the 75-day campaign period in the world's largest archipelago nation, home to more than 270 million people.

"Let the people decide their vote freely," Pranowo said. "Let the military, police and civil servants work to serve people, let them be neutral and provide the best service to this nation."

The nomination for vice president of Gibran Rakabuming Raka, Widodo's 36-year-old son, is widely seen as representing Widodo's implicit support of Subianto, the current defense minister who launched his third bid for the presidency. (AP)

Rebels appeal to pilot's captor: Separatist rebels asked for the immediate release Saturday of the New Zealand pilot who's been held hostage for almost a year in Indonesia's restive Papua region.

Egianus Kogoya, a regional commander in the Free Papua Movement, took Philip Mark Mehrrens, a pilot from Christchurch who was working for Indonesian aviation company Susi Air, on Feb. 7, 2023.

In a statement, Sebby Sambom, spokesperson of the West Papua Liberation Army - the armed wing of the Free Papua Movement - said they have asked Kogoya to release Mehrrens on a humanitarian basis.

"Using the pilot as a guarantee for an independent Papua at a fixed price is absolutely impossible to happen," Sambom said. (AP)

Highly wanted fugitive dies: A man

who died at a Japanese hospital this week told police before he passed away that he was one of the country's most wanted fugitives and had been on the run for nearly 50

years for being part of a radical group that carried out bombings in the 1970s, police said Friday.

Police had received a tip and went to



People shout slogans during a protest against the possibility of President Macky Sall to run for a third term in the presidential elections next year in Dakar, Senegal, Friday, May 12, 2023. West Africa's regional bloc on Feb 4 called for dialogue to resolve the political crisis in Senegal as opposition leaders rejected the decision by the country's leader to postpone the Feb 25 presidential election over an electoral dispute between parliament and the judiciary. (AP)

the hospital near Tokyo last week to question the 70-year-old man. He told them he had terminal cancer and wanted to die using his real name, Satoshi Kirishima, instead of his alias and disclosed previously unknown details about the bombings, police said.

On Monday, four days after the questioning, the man died without police having confirmed his identity. DNA tests conducted on him and on relatives of the suspect in the case showed they were compatible, Kyodo News reported Friday. Police would not confirm that report. (AP)

Ship returns to Australia: A ship carrying thousands of livestock that has been stranded at sea for almost a month has finally docked in Australia, where welfare concerns mean some of the animals are expected to be offloaded.

About 16,500 sheep and cattle have been stowed on the MV Bahijah since Jan. 5, when it sailed for the Middle East from the western Australian port of Fremantle before it was ordered by the government, two weeks into its journey, to turnaround due to the ongoing Yemen Houthi rebels attacks in the Red Sea.

Since Monday the vessel had been sitting off the west Australian coast as concerns grew for the welfare of the animals on board. It finally docked at Fremantle on Thursday, 25 days after it had set off from the same port. (AP)

dollar soars

The exchange rate of the US Dollar on Sunday rose to KD 0.307, while the Euro dropped to KD 0.331, compared to Thursday's prices, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK).

The CBK added in its daily bulletin that the Pound Sterling dropped to KD 0.388, Swiss Franc to KD 0.355 and the Japanese Yen to KD 0.002. (KUNA)

gold prices hold steady at \$2039/oz

Gold prices stabilized at USD 2039 per ounce in last week's trading, following the rise of US dollar and Treasury bond yield, Dar Al-Sabaek said on Sunday.

The Kuwaiti company said the gold prices were low in the last weeks, amid the increase of US employment markets, as 353,000 jobs were added in January, which was more than 333,000 jobs in December 2023.

The US employment markets

reached 180,000 jobs, bringing the unemployment rate to stabilize at 3.7 percent comparing it with past percentage 3.8, confirming that an increase in employment rate means an increase in US economy rate, therefore there will be a decrease in safe-haven assets, the report added.

World Gold Council data showed that gold was demanded in 2023, which reached 4,899 tons by Central Banks and world's markets. (KUNA)

Kuwaiti oil surpasses budget projection

The AISH report following the conclusion of January 2024, which marks the end of the tenth month of the current fiscal year 2023-2024 said the average price of a barrel of oil during this period was approximately \$84.7, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In January 2024, the average price of a barrel of Kuwaiti oil stood at around \$80.9, surpassing the new hypothetical price estimated in the current budget of \$70 per barrel by \$10.9 or 15.6%.

Comparatively, the last fiscal year 2022-2023 achieved an average price of a barrel of

Kuwaiti oil at about \$97.1. The average price for January 2024 was approximately 16.7% lower than the average for the previous fiscal year and 12.9% lower than the break-even price of \$92.9, as estimated by the Ministry of Finance after discontinuing the 10% deduction for the Future Generations Reserve.

Assuming Kuwait's oil revenues for January were approximately 1.575 billion dinars and projecting production levels according to recent OPEC+ decisions, the expected total oil revenues, after deducting costs for the entire fiscal year, may amount to around 20.793 billion dinars.

Market Movements 04-02-2024

SAUDI - DFM Change +48.43 Closing pts 11,962.72 EGYPT - PSEI Change -860.87 Closing pts 27,573.50

Business

Boursa records losses despite dividend news

Five indices drop, two gain in past week

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: During past week's transactions, the financial markets in Gulf Cooperation Council countries resulted in losses for five indices and gains for two. The fluctuations ranged from substantial to moderate, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Kuwait Stock Exchange indices also recorded losses, with the general market index losing 1.43%, reducing its gains for the year to 6.6%. Announcements of annual dividends by major including NBK, Boubyan, and KFH, had varying impacts on stock positions, with KFH and NBK experiencing losses.

The gains of the Bahrain Financial Market reached 4.9% for the year, securing the second position after the Kuwaiti market. Additionally, the Dubai Financial Market Index saw a

noteworthy growth of 1.57%, closing at 4,228.74 points, its highest level in almost two years. The gains for the year amounted to 4.1%, supported by positive annual results from companies, with 45% reporting significant growth, particularly in the banking sector.

However, Qatar and Saudi Arabia faced losses exceeding 2%, with the Qatar Financial Market index dropping by 2.88% to close at 10,049.36 points. Global market indices' performance and oil price fluctuations, coupled with limited profit growth among listed companies, contributed to the decline.

Surprisingly, the Bahrain Financial Market index, with the smallest value weight among the region's indices, emerged as the top performer. It exhibited significant growth of 2.65%, adding 53.37 points to reach 2067.11 points. Notably, this index, which has yet to begin its annual listed companies' announcements, outshone others, including the Kuwait Finance House, listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange,

which reported a remarkable 63% increase in profits compared to the previous year.

Abu Dhabi and Oman financial market indices experienced moderate declines, with Abu Dhabi losing 1.16% and Oman losing approximately 0.97%. Despite positive banking sector results in the Emirates, Abu Dhabi's index increased its year-to-date loss to 1.4%. The Amman Financial Market Index in Oman maintained a 1.1% gain achieved during January but lost approximately 0.97% during the week's trading.

In summary, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries' financial markets showcased a mixed performance, with notable gains in Bahrain and Dubai, while Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait faced losses. Abu Dhabi and Oman experienced moderate declines, reflecting the broader economic and geopolitical influences on regional markets.

Conflict causes supply chain disruptions in EU

Tensions rise after Iran-backed attack, credit effects examined

By Moody's Investor Service

On 29 January, an Iran-backed group hit a US (Aaa negative) military base, killing three US service personnel and injuring more. The attacks increase the risk of an escalation, but provided Israel (A1 review for downgrade) and the US are not drawn into a wider conflict in the Middle East and shipping routes are not disrupted for an extended period of time, events and their effects remain consistent with our baseline scenario.

To date, the conflict has had credit implications for Israel, Lebanon (C stable) and Egypt (Caal negative) through varying channels, including weaker economic activity, higher spending, some infrastructure damage, and lower foreign exchange inflows. Some European retail, general manufacturing, auto manufacturers and suppliers have been affected by an increase in the cost of shipping goods and oil products through a number of Red Sea routes, as well as significantly longer transport times leading to sup-

ply disruption (see Exhibit 1). We expect companies will generally absorb any cost increases without material effects on their profitability.

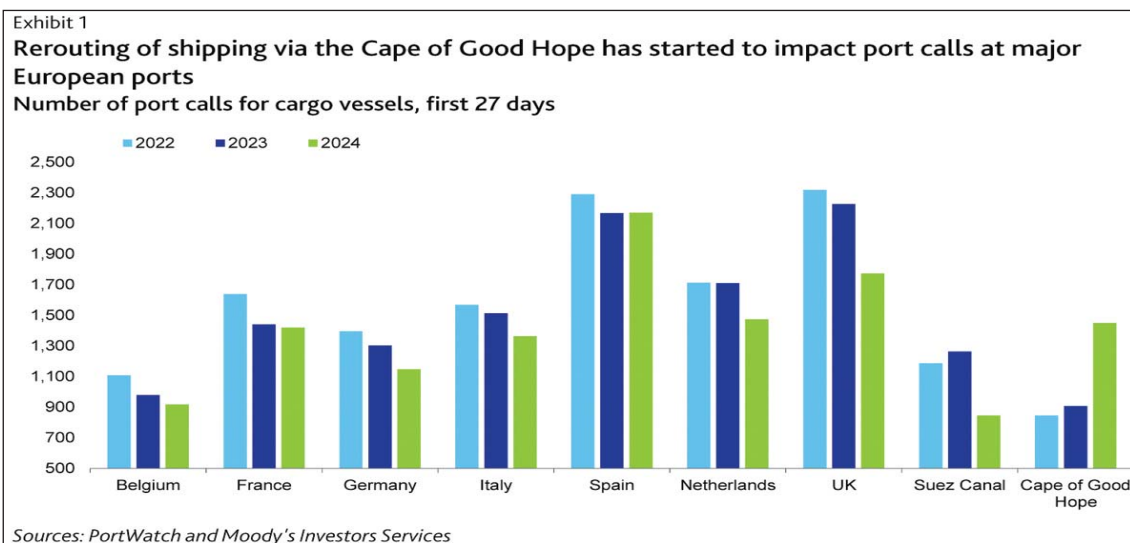
We expect to see further volatility in the price of oil, and spikes in shipping rates and marine insurance but do not anticipate these price increases to materially affect inflation and thus monetary policy outcomes. In a downside scenario, with much more severe shipping disruption in the Middle East, we would see credit risk materially increase for issuers in European retail, general manufacturing, auto manufacturers and suppliers, as well as a more sustained impact on market conditions and inflation.

A full-scale military conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and/or a halt to shipping activity via the Red Sea, would mark a shift to our downside scenario. Factors that would indicate a significant increase in the likelihood of a downside scenario occurring include largescale military mobilisations around the border between Israel and Lebanon, any planned permanent

displacement of the population from Gaza, and/or exchanges of fire between Israel and its allies against other Iran-backed groups beyond Hamas that carry high political and military significance.

Nevertheless, we believe that a number of deterrents, such as ongoing diplomatic efforts, the military capabilities on both sides and the economic impact of a multifront regional conflict will motivate restraint.

Across sectors and globally, our analysis of the credit implications of recent developments in the Middle East is consistent with our baseline assumptions. Further skirmishes between those actors already engaged in conflict are unlikely to change that assessment. At the issuer level, we consider the credit impact of likely developments and risks, which would flow through three main transmission channels: (1) heightened security concerns; (2) energy and supply chain disruption; and (3) weak macro-financial conditions.



Federal Reserve maintains stable rates amid robust US jobs report

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

CB Consumer Confidence Index Rises to Two-Year High

Consumer sentiment in the US continues to improve, with the latest Conference Board reading coming in at a two-year high of 114.8, considerably above the previous print of 108. The present situation index rose to 161.3 from 147.2, while the expectations index was also up to 83.8 from 81.9. This comes amid a time of declining inflation and robust employment, fueling consumer spending and growth across the economy. Finally, the one-year consumer inflation expectations fell to 5.2%, the lowest since March 2020.

JOLTS Reading at 3-Month High

In yet another sign of a strong and robust US labor market, the JOLTS reading showed an increase of job openings in December, coming in at 9.03 million from 8.93 million previously and surpassing expectations of 8.71 million openings. This represents a 3-month high as it was the first time openings rose above the 9 million mark since September. The Federal Reserve have signaled that they are hoping to see easing in the labor market to bring down inflationary pressures. Since consumer spending makes up 70% of US GDP, an imbalance between the supply and demand side of the labor market could see wages rise, continuing the trend of robust spending and remarkable growth. However, this will prompt companies to raise their prices as well, complicating the path to the Fed's desired 2% inflation goal.

Fed Maintains Interest Rates

The US Federal Reserve decided to keep interest rates unchanged between 5.25%-5.5% aligning with market expectations. Fed Chair Jerome Powell gave a speech following the decision, stating that despite inflation moving down the right direction towards the Fed's desired target, more data is needed to determine whether it's the right time to start cutting rates, insinuating to markets that a cut in March may be too early. Prior to the FOMC meeting, markets shifted their expectations of a first rate cut from March to May following better than expected JOLTS job openings data.

Unemployment Claims Rises

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits rose to the highest level in 11 weeks, coming in at 224,000, up from last week's 215,000 figure. Additionally, continuing claims were up by 70,000 to 1.9 million, the highest since mid-November. Despite the increase in initial and continuous claims, the US labor market remains historically tight on the back of a historical tightening cycle by the Fed.

Non-Farm Employment Soars Beyond Expectations

Non-farm employment in the US saw a significant increase, soaring to 353,000 new jobs from the previous revised figure of 333,000. Forecasts were for 187,000 jobs to be added. The reading reinforced the narrative of a strong US labor market, especially with the unemployment rate at 3.7%. Moreover, average hourly earnings beat expectations, rising 4.5% annually and 0.6% on the month. Following the data release, treasury yields surged with the 10-year breaking past the 4% mark at one point. Meanwhile, the dollar strengthened and bets on a March pause surged to 80.5% from 64.5% a day ago. The Fed have mentioned that they are keeping an eye on labor markets when factoring the decision to cut rates, with a robust job market likely to add to inflationary pressures.

The greenback strengthened in the week, closing at 103.96.

Europe

Eurozone Barely Avoids a Technical Recession

GDP numbers out of the Eurozone show that the bloc narrowly avoided a technical recession, with the print coming in flat versus the previous reading of a 0.1%

contraction. This comes at a time when Europe's largest economy, Germany, continues to struggle as its economy shrank by 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2023. The better than anticipated growth from Italy and Spain at 0.2% and 0.6% respectively helped offset Germany's troubles and ensure the print was not in contraction. Furthermore, France's economy also recorded 0% growth, indicating that despite barely avoiding a recession, higher interest rates and weak consumer demand are plaguing the Eurozone. ECB President Lagarde signaled that the central bank is not thinking about rate cuts until the summer, however continuous weak data coming out of Europe has the market pricing in cuts as early as April.

Stubbled Inflation in the Eurozone

Headline CPI in the Eurozone eased in January to 2.8% from 2.9% previously, in line with expectations. December's 2.9% figure represented an increase from November's 2.4% print, on the back of winding down on energy support policies. The volatility in the headline figure indicates the sensitivity of the Eurozone to energy prices and measures. Despite this, it's the core numbers that represent a sticky predicament for policymakers, with January's reading coming in at 3.3%, above the forecasted figure of 3.2%. The stubborn nature of the core figure, and more specifically the services sector, represents a hurdle to the ECB's goal of bringing inflation down to their 2% target. While markets are pricing in rate cuts in April, some ECB speakers have pushed back on this expectation calling for rate cut considerations in summer at the earliest. Despite this, economic growth in the block stagnated, just narrowly averting a technical recession. Consumers are also facing pressure from elevated inflation and a historic tightening cycle, making the ECB's job more complicated. The central bank, however, vowed to remain data dependent, making fighting inflation their priority.

The Euro is down to end the week, last trading at 1.0784.

United Kingdom

Bank of England Hold Rates

In a widely expected move, the Bank of England held interest rates steady at 5.25%. BoE Governor Andrew Bailey stated, "We have had good news on inflation over the past few months. It has fallen a long way, from 10% a year ago to 4%. But we need to see more evidence that inflation is set to fall all the way to the 2% target, and stay there, before we can lower interest rates." Markets are narrowly pricing in the central bank to hold rates all the way to May, with the first rate cut happening in June.

The Sterling slightly declined over the past week, last seen at 1.2630.

Asia-Pacific

China's PMI Numbers Show Rebound in Manufacturing Activity

PMI figures coming out of China suggest a rebound in manufacturing despite a soft and struggling economy. China's official PMI reading came in at 49.2 compared to 49 in December. This marks the fourth straight month of contraction despite a slight rebound. Meanwhile, the Caixin manufacturing PMI print came in at 50.8 matching the previous month's number, and extending divergence with the official data as it marks the third straight month of expansion. The Caixin survey encompasses 650 private and state-owned companies located in China's coastal regions, while the official PMI survey includes 3,200 companies across the country. The slight rebound with regards to the official number and a third straight month of expansion in the Caixin reading did little to convince investors that there is a sustainable recovery path ahead without further support and easing measures from Chinese officials.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30755.

Rates - February 4th, 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0847	1.0778	1.0897	1.0784	1.0600	1.1000	1.0829
GBP	1.2693	1.2611	1.2772	1.2630	1.2400	1.2800	1.2642
JPY	148.11	145.88	148.58	148.37	146.00	150.00	146.33
CHF	0.8646	0.8549	0.8680	0.8664	0.8500	0.8800	0.8585

Nation pledges more help for its ailing property market

Chinese markets sink as IMF predicts slower economic growth

BANGKOK, Feb 4, (AP): Markets in China sank Friday despite a fresh flurry of measures to prop up the ailing property sector, as the International Monetary Fund forecast that the Chinese economy will continue to slow in coming years.

The report by the IMF forecast that the economy would expand at a 4.6% annual pace this year, down from 5.2% in 2023. It put growth in 2028 at 3.4%. It noted that housing starts had fallen more than 60% from pre-pandemic levels after a crackdown on excessive borrowing that began in 2020.

That's a pace "only seen in the largest housing busts in cross-country experience in the last three decades," it said.

Shanghai's benchmark composite index lost 1.5%, dipping sharply at one point before regaining some losses but still logging its worst week in five years. The smaller market in Shenzhen lost 3%.

The moves to increase the supply of affordable housing and spur demand come just weeks before top officials will gather in Beijing for the annual meeting of the national congress, a time when the ruling Communist Party will want to showcase its leadership.

The real estate industry's woes were highlighted earlier this week by an order by a Hong Kong court for the liquidation of China Evergrande, the world's most heavily indebted developer with more than \$300 billion in liabilities.

China's property sector accounts for nearly a third of the country's economic activity and the industry-wide meltdown has weighed on growth and sapped the confidence of both investors and consumers.

The economy expanded at a 5.2% annual pace last year but is forecast to slow this year. The sluggish property market also has dented local government revenue from vital land use sales, adding to public debt. The Finance Ministry reported Thursday that land sales revenues fell 13.2% in 2023 from the year before.

The IMF report noted that serious problems remain. Many developers are insolvent but are avoiding bankruptcy because accounting rules allow them to delay booking losses on their loans. The need for new housing is bound to slow, it said, as the population shrinks and the pace of urbanization slows.

In the medium term, real estate investment is likely to fall to between 30% to 60% below its level in 2022, it said.

The government recently has expanded access to loans to help developers recover from the downturn. On Thursday, Wang Dongwei, a vice minister of finance, pledged to keep spending at a "necessary intensity."

Various regions in China have issued "white lists" of projects that qualify for lending, a key part of the government's effort to revive the industry.

The central bank and State Administration of Financial Supervision issued a list of 17 measures to support the rental housing market, due to take effect on Monday. Most have to do with financial services for leasing, promoting investment in rental housing and improving the financial management of rental properties.

"Financial support for the development of the housing rental market should highlight key points and target shortcomings, mainly in large cities, focusing on solving the housing problems of new citizens, young people and other groups," said a document posted on the government website.

The aim is to "support various entities to build, renovate and operate long-term rental housing, and to revitalize existing housing stock, effectively increasing the supply of affordable and commercial rental housing," it said.

Home ownership in China has vastly expanded over the past few decades, after a sweeping housing reform that gave workers ownership of homes that were previously assigned to them by the state-owned companies and agencies that once employed most city dwellers in the formerly centrally planned economy.

The home ownership rate in China is about 90%, much higher than in many Western countries, and many urban families buy multiple properties as investments. Beefing up the rental market would help free up more housing for young people and others who lack the means to purchase apartments.

Winner of the world's largest cash prize from the AIDanah Millionaire Account

Gulf Bank deposits KD 2 million into Alaa Youssef Al-Mutairi's account

Mohammad Al-Qattan: We extend our congratulations to the winner and her family, and in two months, AIDanah customers will be able to participate in the upcoming KD 1 million draw.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Gulf Bank extended a warm welcome to Alaa Youssef Adel Al-Mutairi and her father, after she secured the grand prize in the yearly draw for the AIDanah Millionaire account. The prize, valued at KD 2 million, was awarded on Thursday, February 1, 2024, with oversight and attendance from representatives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

Upon concluding the prize handover formalities and transferring KD 2 million to the winner's personal account through her father, he conveyed his delight and happiness for this extraordinary moment in his family's life. He extended gratitude to Gulf Bank for its ongoing commitment to rewarding its customers.

The father of the winner, noting that his 4-year-old daughter secured the grand prize, expressed that, while searching for a savings account with exceptional rewards, he discovered no better option than the AIDanah Millionaire account. He created AIDanah accounts for all his children, with his daughter Alaa, emerging as the lucky winner of the grand prize.

Mohammad Al-Qattan, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Consumer Banking, extended congratulations to the winner for becoming the youngest recipient of the world's largest prize linked to a bank account. He reaffirmed Gulf Bank's dedication to delivering an outstanding banking experience for customers, emphasizing its commitment to rewarding savers and fostering a culture of savings within society.

Al-Qattan highlighted that Gulf



Mohammad Al-Qattan received the youngest millionaire for the biggest prize.



Najla Al-Eisa and Ahmad Al-Amir in a group photo with the winner and her father.

Bank's prize giveaways continue, with numerous opportunities for monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual draws. He further noted that

in two months, AIDanah customers will be able to participate in the upcoming KD 1 million draw scheduled for July 18, 2024.

He stated, "We are excited to keep rewarding our customers for their savings in the AIDanah Millionaire account. We urge everyone to continue saving in their accounts, enhancing their opportunities to win in the upcoming draws. These encompass the annual grand draw of KD 2 million and a semi-annual draw of KD 1 million. Furthermore, there are two draws offering a prize of KD 100,000 each, in addition to 10 winners in the monthly draws receiving KD 1,000 each."

The AIDanah account welcomes both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents in Kuwait. They have the option to open an account either by visiting the branch or using the mobile application. 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

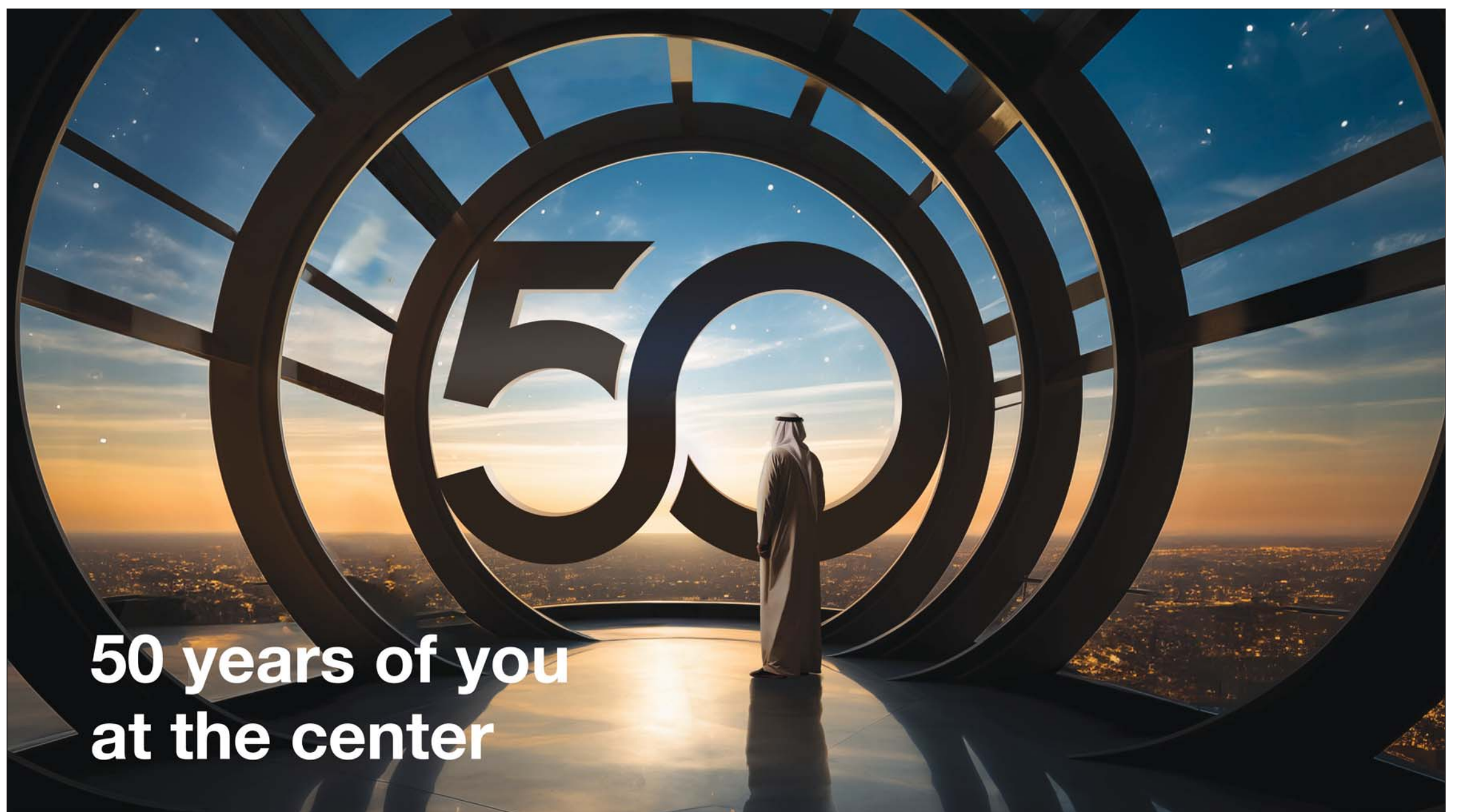
customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 monthly fee will be charged to the account, until the minimum balance is met.

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.

The grand prize in the annual draw of the AIDanah Millionaire account has once again, secured a place in the Guinness World Records as the largest cash prize linked to a bank account globally. This notable achievement was recognized during the winner's announcement ceremony last Thursday, February 1, 2024. Mohammad Al-Qattan, the General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, was presented with a certificate of registration for Gulf Bank in the Guinness World Records.

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

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



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KONTINUE aims to spark the entrepreneurial spirit in young people

Agility sponsors LOYAC's KONTINUE Entrepreneur Program

20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each

KFH announces winners of AIRabeh draw

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AIRabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 3rd and 4th weeks of 2024.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Abdulrahman Dekheelallah, Hayat Al-Mujaibel, Mohammad Al-Doukhi, Shujaa Al-Dosari, Eisa Al-Jadi, Moudhi Al-Ajmi, Maha Al-Mutairi, Ahmad Al-Enezi, Jaber Al-Ajmi, Fayeza Al-Enezi, Hamad Al-Tayyar, Almeqdad AL-Zanki, Nawal Al-Ghanim, Fatemah Al-Sawwan, Fuad Gurcan, Khaled Al-Duaij, Ruqayah Al-Houz, Fahad Al-Khadher, Makeyah Al-Failakawi, Mohammad Al-Dhuwaih.

The AIRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional prod-



The campaign visual.

ucts and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The AIRabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open AIRabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers

wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to AIRabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for amount of K.D 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.

KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, announced today its sponsorship of LOYAC's KONTINUE youth entrepreneurship program, which aims to guide aspiring entrepreneurs by helping them conceptualize, refine, fund and monetize their ideas.

LOYAC is a non-profit organization established in Kuwait in 2002 with the goal of helping young people develop into creative leaders who are able to make a positive impact in society. This is the second year Agility has sponsored KONTINUE.

KONTINUE is an expert-led, six-week program developed in collaboration with Babson College, a U.S. institution of higher learning that specializes in entrepreneurial leadership. The KONTINUE program provides ambitious entrepreneurs and small business owners with the opportunity to learn, implement foundational entrepreneurial skills, and build the professional networks they need to start or grow a business.

"Agility has a long-standing commitment to education, capacity-building, and knowledge transfer programs that equip young people with skills they need to succeed and lead. LOYAC's focus on



LOYAC's Kontinue program.

entrepreneurship echoes our own emphasis on it within Agility. We believe in KONTINUE's power to inspire young people and transform economies, and we are committed to cultivating the same spirit and promoting it in our business and communities. KONTINUE's success, inspirational nature, inclusivity, and alignment with our organizational values make it ideal for our support," Agility Chairperson Henadi Al Saleh said.

Agility backs community-enabling initiatives and has partnerships in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Côte D'Ivoire, Ghana, India and Egypt, among other countries. In the last decade, Agility has reached more than 1 million people in need, providing funding for youth education, entrepreneurship, employment and digital training, and responding with resources in the aftermath of natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies.



Prize distribution ceremony photos.



Official draw conducted in a fair and transparent manner

LuLu Hypermarket awards prizes to winners of grand promotion

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: LuLu Hypermarket, the undisputed retail heavyweight in the region, held its much-awaited prize distribution ceremony for the "LuLu One-Year Free Shopping Promotion" at its Alrai outlet on 3 February.

The exciting promotion, which ran from 25 October to 31 December 2023 at all outlets of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait, offered shoppers the chance to win amazing prizes with every KD5 worth of purchase made through any LuLu outlet in the country.

The 'one-year free shopping' promotion included the opportunity for 10 winners to shop for products worth a total of KD1,500, totally free over a one-year period. In addition, 100 lucky winners earned the right to shop for KD100 worth of goods for free.



One of the winners.

The awards ceremony saw 110 lucky winners walk away with prizes worth a total of KD25,000.

The official draw to pick the winners of the

promotion was conducted in a fair and transparent manner on 30 January 2024, at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the presence of ministry officials and representatives of LuLu Hypermarket.

The prize distribution ceremony witnessed top officials from LuLu Hypermarket presenting the prizes to the winners in front of a large crowd of shoppers and well-wishers. All the winners conveyed their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to LuLu Hypermarket for the incredible opportunity to enjoy a year of free shopping.

The event was a resounding success, showcasing LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to providing its valued customers with exciting promotions and an exceptional shopping experience throughout the year.

Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Malayil Sabu Koshy Cheriyan 'visits' Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Bishop of C.S.I Madiya Kerala Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dr. Malayil Sabu Koshy Cheriyan, arrived in Kuwait on February 1, 2024. The Bishop was welcomed with great honor at Kuwait International Airport by Rev. Binoy P. Joseph (Vicar) and church members of St. Paul's C.S.I Malayalam Congregation, Ahmadi. His Excellency's presence in the church to lead the confirmation service on February 2, 2024 has been a prodigious blessing for the all church



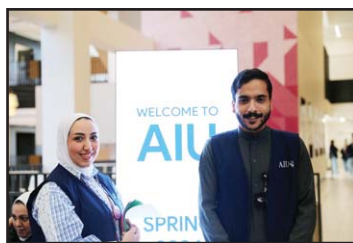
members especially for the children who received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

NSO multifaceted event

AIU launches Spring 2024 semester

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: American International University Kuwait (AIU) is thrilled to announce the commencement of the Spring 2024 semester with an innovative New Student Orientation (NSO) designed for the incoming cohort of students. This program marks the beginning of a new academic journey, aligning with AIU's commitment to fostering future leaders in harmony with Kuwait Vision 2035.

The NSO, a multifaceted event, is meticulously planned to integrate new students into the AIU community. It began with a series of comprehensive presentations from various university departments. These presentations are more than just introductions; they are a gateway for students to understand and maximize the use of AIU's extensive



AIU welcoming atmosphere.

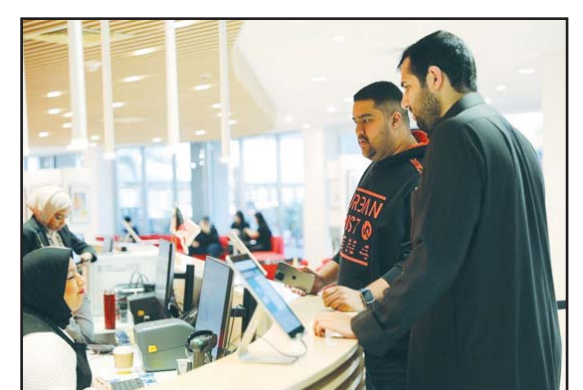
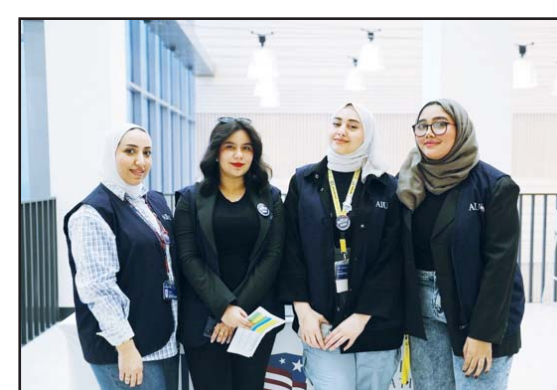
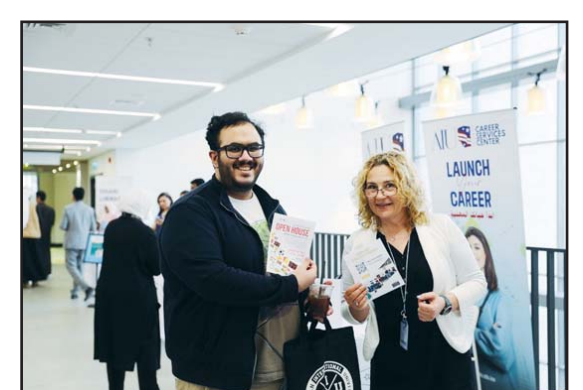
campus services and facilities.

Following the presentations, the second segment of the NSO was the Informational Resource Fair. This interactive fair provided a unique opportunity for students to engage directly with each university department, including all the schools, and to connect

personally with staff and faculty members. This segment is crucial for building a sense of community and belonging among the new students.

AIU believes in creating a welcoming and enjoyable atmosphere for its students. To this end, the university also organized fun activities and events, ensuring that the NSO was not only informative but also enjoyable.

AIU prides itself on its commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to excel both academically and professionally. In line with Kuwait Vision 2035, AIU is set to host various initiatives aimed at personal, academic, and professional growth, reaffirming its dedication to developing the future leaders of Kuwait and the region.



Photos during the American International University Kuwait commencement of the Spring 2024 semester.

Branford Marsalis named artistic director in hometown

NEW ORLEANS, Feb 4, (AP): Branford Marsalis, the jazz saxophonist and composer acclaimed for his movie scores, Grammy-winning recordings and his stint as the leader of The Tonight Show band, is taking on the role of educator in a return to his hometown of New Orleans.

Marsalis was named Tuesday as the new artistic director for the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, a donor-supported education and community center and the cornerstone of the Musicians' Village, a Habitat for Humanity housing development that benefited displaced musicians after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005.

The center is named for Branford's late father, a pianist, teacher and patriarch of an accomplished family of New Orleans musicians that also includes Branford's brother, trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis. The elder Marsalis served as the artistic director when the center opened in 2012 until his death in April 2020.

"I didn't move back to do this. I moved back to move back," Marsalis, who has lived for years in Durham, North Carolina, said in an interview with The Associated Press ahead of the formal announcement. "This is the icing on the cake."

Marsalis will be carrying on a legacy of music education in the tradition of his father at the center, where on Tuesday afternoon he played "Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans" before turning the stage over to a group of students.

"Most of them are probably not even going to be musicians," he said of the young people who attend programs at the center. "But I think that much like most high school kids playing football are not going to become professionals, we're going to use the discipline of music and the philosophy of hearing and all these things to help them ascend in whatever, they decide they want to do, to do in the future. And, I mean, both of my parents were kind of like that."

The center provides music and cultural education programs - and not just for young people.

Lessons

"One of the funny things that started with the center - these kids were coming home, and then the parents came up and said, 'Well, what about us? Can we get some lessons too?'" said Marsalis.

He was sitting in the control room of the center's recording studio, where musicians who live in the Musicians' Village can record for small fees. "So, we have a lot of musicians who are making records here, recording here, doing concerts here," Marsalis said.

Branford Marsalis and fellow New Orleans musician Harry Connick Jr. spearheaded the development of the village to provide housing for New Orleans musicians who lost their homes after levee failures during Katrina led to catastrophic flooding.

Connick, Marsalis said, wanted to do more than just help musicians

attain home ownership.

"Harry said, 'You know, I've always wanted to start this school.' And I said, 'A school's impractical.' And then it just very quickly became - Harry brought up the idea to our manager, Ann Marie Wilkins - and it became a community center where music was kind of used as the driving force, but not the main force. We were going to use music the way that a lot of these community centers use basketball in sports."

As the project developed, so did the idea of naming the center for Ellis Marsalis, who took an immediate interest in the center. "He had all these ideas," Branford Marsalis said. "And he communicated a lot of those ideas to Ann Marie - for hours."

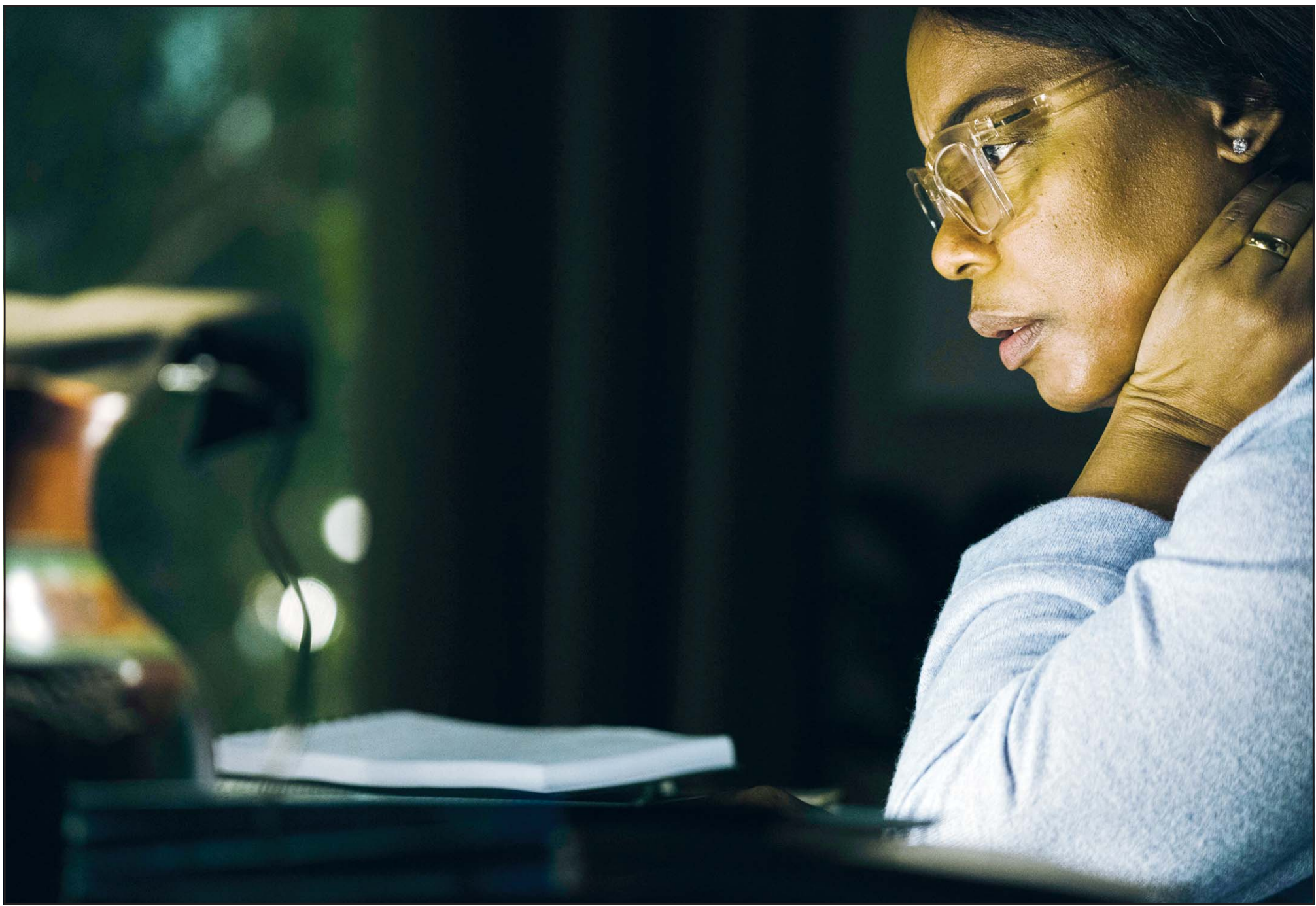
Marsalis said he is proud to step into his father's shoes at the center. He described his role as part of a tradition of New Orleans musicians continuing the city's musical legacy. "We're doing what we're supposed to be doing," he said.

And that is a legacy, he said, that even the Katrina disaster could not have ended.

"No, we're talking about 120 years of musicians who have done this for each other. Katrina was just a bump in the road," Marsalis said. "Really, I mean, there was never any question in my mind that the city would rebuild and that the musicians would come back because, quite frankly, they can't be anywhere else."

Music

Variety



This image released by Neon shows Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor in a scene from 'Origin.' (AP)

Film

Gladstone travels to Osage country to honor Oscar nod

'Origin' an artful 'Caste' interpretation

By Lindsey Bahr

Words like "important" and "vital" are thrown around possibly a little too much in film criticism. It's not that we don't mean it - it's just that sometimes we (ok, I) can get a bit excited. And when watching and reviewing good films in real time, it's impossible to know what is yet to come. Will there be something else that makes that superlative seem silly in retrospect? Often times, yes.

Ava DuVernay's new film "Origin" is that something else. It is a powerful and artistic interpretation of an academic book that was anything but an obvious candidate for a narrative feature.

The book in question is "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents," in which Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson offers an overriding theory about power and hierarchy and systemic dehumanization in social structures, connecting the Black experience in America to the Dalits of India and Jewish people in Nazi Germany. The New York Times reviewer called it one of the most powerful non-fiction books he'd ever encountered and "the keynote nonfiction book of the American century thus far."

That "Caste" was appealing to DuVernay, who has made documentaries like "13th," connecting slavery to mass incarceration of Black men, is not surprising. What's she's done with it is. Instead of reshaping the facts of the book, DuVernay has turned "Caste" into an investigative, fictionalized drama in which we follow the character Isabel Wilkerson as she puts the pieces together while her life crumbles.

With an unconventional structure, in which we are often transported to different stories in different times, in the American South, Nazi Germany and early 20th century India, "Origin" is nonetheless alarmingly effective, a riveting and haunting journey to a kind of enlightenment.

Wilkerson is played beautifully by Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, an actor deep enough to engage with the academic and intellectual inquiries of the film, and charismatic enough to make what sounds like homework absorbing. Hers is the kind of 360-degree Black woman that we don't see leading films very often: She is at once confident and full of doubt and vulnerability, accomplished but searching, determined and still wary. And she's un-

afraid to pursue her hunch that everyone, civilians and book editors alike, seems to be telling her isn't worth it.

This is a character who is surrounded by love when we meet her, with a fairly perfect and supportive husband (Jon Bernthal), her aging mother Ruby (Emily Yancy) and a cousin/confidant in Marion (Niecy Nash-Betts). She is not immediately interested in an assignment about Trayvon Martin, and is a bit stuck knowing that whatever she does, she'll have to give herself over fully to it. In "Origin," a push comes in the form of loss and her research takes on a vital urgency, not to be too hyperbolic, figure out why everything is rotten before she too leaves the earth.

Segregated

DuVernay takes us into her findings as Wilkerson learns about a group of Harvard students, two Black, two white, who integrate themselves into a segregated Southern community to study it, a Nazi party member who fell in love with a woman, and an Indian intellectual who rose out of his lowly caste and advocated for Dalit rights. They feel a bit like different movies. But while it might not be the most elegantly stitched together anthology, it works on a gut level. DuVernay and Ellis-Taylor commit to the big swing, and audiences who give it a chance may find themselves changed - or at least a little more curious, a little more alert - because of it.

Is it premature to say that "Origin" might just be DuVernay's magnum opus? Well, perhaps. But hopefully it's the start of a vibrant and bold new era of storytelling for her, with those pesky wrinkles in time firmly in the rearview mirror.

Lily Gladstone knew she wanted to be somewhere special when the Oscar news came. And that somewhere was not home, watching on TV, but in Oklahoma with the Osage community, where the real-life version of her character lived and where **Martin Scorsese's** "Killers of the Flower Moon" is centered.

"I decided that I wanted to be on the Osage reservation, should this news come in today," Gladstone said in an interview shortly after receiving her historic nomination for best actress, the first Native American so honored. "I wanted to be as close to **Mollie Kyle** and her family as I could be. So I'm here in **Pawhuska, Oklahoma**. Once things wrap up, I think I'm gonna load up

and drive out to Fairfax and Gray Horse and pay my respects there."

Meanwhile Gladstone's parents were FaceTiming her as the nominations were announced. She asked them not to show her the TV screen, but instead to focus on their own faces.

"Flip the camera around," she says she told her mother. "I want to see your and dad's reactions!" And sure enough, I could kind of hear them starting to say my name, but then it just got drowned out by my parents cheering, and my dog started barking."

Gladstone's nomination was hardly a surprise. The accolades for the 37-year-old actor's performance have been flowing since the film came out in October, and she won a Golden Globe earlier this month. She's had both time and opportunity to articulate what feels historic about this moment, and remains just as passionate.

"It's what I've been saying this whole time and I still absolutely feel it," she said. "It happens to be that I'm carrying this honor right now ... (but) it's all so long overdue. It's a real moment of restoration, placing Indigenous talent in these roles, spotlighting their humanity. ... I think it is shattering a lot of stereotypes people have about Indigenous women, particularly Native American women."

"We're taking our place where we belong," she said of Indigenous actors and storytellers. "And it's taken a long time to get here. But it's so necessary."

Gladstone, who grew up between Seattle and the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, and learned the Osage language for the film, added that the recognition comes "in a time where across the country, stories like this are getting buried, are being considered too woke." So she is gratified, she said, "to be in a film that cements this history in the public eye, that makes it accessible for people to see, to get inside of in a way that only film can bring you inside of, as brutal as it can be, as heart-breaking and challenging as it can be."

"Killers of the Flower Moon," adapted from **David Grann's** real-life whodunit of the same name, focuses more than the book did on the relationship between Mollie and her husband, **Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo DiCaprio)**, who loves her but somehow also participates in a sinister plot with his uncle (**Robert De Niro**, also nominated) to eliminate her family and acquire their oil-rich land. (AP)

NEW YORK: The songwriters who gave us "Your Song," "Tiny Dancer" and "Rocket Man" will add to their stuffed awards shelf later this year when **Elton John** and **Bernie Taupin** are awarded the Gershwin Prize.

The Library of Congress said recently that songwriter-performer John and lyricist Taupin will receive the library's Gershwin Prize for Popular Song, called by the institution "one of the great songwriting duos of all time."

They will be bestowed the prize at an all-star tribute concert in **Washington, D.C.**, on March 20. PBS will air portions of it on April 8.

"Elton John and Bernie Taupin have written some of the most memorable songs of our lives. Their careers stand out for the quality and broad appeal of their music and their influence on their fellow artists," Librarian of Congress **Carla Hayden** said in a statement.

Their hits include "Your Song," "Tiny Dancer," "Rocket Man" "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me," "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" "Bennie and The Jets" and "Crocodile Rock." John has retired from touring.

The prize, named after Jazz Age songwriters **George and Ira Gershwin**, is described as the "nation's highest award for influence, impact and achievement in popular music." (AP)

TOKYO: **Taylor Swift**, who is holding concerts in **Japan** through Feb. 10, will make it in time for the Super Bowl to see her partner and football superstar **Travis Kelce** play.

To make sure all her fans know, the Japanese Embassy in **Washington, D.C.** has sent a message on X, formerly Twitter, alluding to her hit songs in bold letters.

"Despite the 12-hour flight and 17-hour time difference, the Embassy can confidently speak now to say that if she departs Tokyo in the evening after her concert, she should comfortably arrive in **Las Vegas** before the Super Bowl begins," it said.

Swift is in a highly public relationship with Kansas City Chiefs tight end Kelce. The AFC champions face off the San Francisco 49ers, the NFC champs, Feb. 11. Noise regulations in Tokyo stipulate that events must stop using the public sound system at 9:30

p.m. That should give Swift plenty of time, given that Japan is a day ahead in the global day. (AP)

JACKSON, Miss.: **Ellen Gilchrist**, a National Book Award winner whose short stories and novels drew on the complexities of people and places in the American



John



Swift

South, has died. She was 88. An obituary from her family said Gilchrist died Tuesday in **Ocean Springs, Mississippi**, where she had lived in her final years.

Gilchrist published more than two dozen books, including novels and volumes of poetry, short stories and essays. "Victory Over Japan," a collection of short stories

set in Mississippi and **Arkansas**, was awarded the National Book Award for fiction in 1984.

Gilchrist said during an interview at the Mississippi Book Festival in 2022 that when she started writing in the mid-1970s, reviewers would ridicule authors for drawing on their own life experiences.

"Why?" she said. "That's what

you have. That's where the real heart and soul of it is."

Gilchrist was born in 1935 in **Vicksburg, Mississippi**, and spent part of her childhood on a remote plantation in the flatlands of the Mississippi Delta. She said she grew up loving reading and writing because that's what she saw adults doing in their household. (AP)

People & Places

Film

Office drama

Ridley explores dark comedy in new film

NEW YORK, Feb. 4, (AP): **Daisy Ridley** doesn't want audiences to be misled by the title of her new film, "Sometimes I Think About Dying."

Her character, Fran, is, actually, quite funny. Fran is a woman content in her mostly solitary life, apart from her co-workers in her chatty office. But when an attraction to a new colleague challenges her to take risks and push through social awkwardness to make a connection.

The film, in theaters now, is directed by Rachel Lambert and co-stars comedian Dave Merheje and several other comedic actors, who improvise watercooler talk to big laughs. (Ridley says she often had to stifle her laughter to stay in character.)

The Associated Press recently spoke to Ridley about finding Fran, reprising her role as Rey in a new "Star Wars" film, and perfecting her death stare. Answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: The film's title makes it sound gloomy, but it's actually a comedy, right?

Ridley: There was a lot more humor than anyone is expecting because the title gives a feeling that it's going to be more of a melancholic sort of feeling. But there is a lot of humor and Fran is pretty funny. But also the world that she lives in is full of vibrancy and the office space is very gregarious and loud and fun, so it's a nice world for her to live in, even though she is struggling to make connections occasionally.

AP: Fran's outsider view puts the office setting and people under a microscope — did that amuse you?

Ridley: I loved the world and I loved the office but, actually, a lot of that was improvised. Rachel talks about how much she loves working with comedians because there's such an ease with improvisation. The first scene we filmed was around the table in the conference room, and Rachel just let people fly and it was such a great way to bring everyone together. Fran loves to be at work. She loves her routine. But also she is sometimes a little judgmental of the people around her. So it's not just that she's struggling. Sometimes she's like, "I don't want to be part of it." I think it's very human, like two things can be true at the same time.

AP: You perfected your death stare for the fantasy scenes — was that challenging?

Ridley: The beach was cold! And the main thing really was trying not to shiver. So that was "please don't shiver, please don't move." And then lying in the forest was tricky because I had a handful of bugs and it was like icky icky icky.

Thank you for the compliment about my death stare, I don't know how I managed that well (laughs). It sounds so messed up. An absence of thought, which is obviously a contrast, because I had so much thinking when I was playing her. So in those moments, it was about the absence of any of that and the sort of calm, quiet time.

AP: This was your first time producing — how was that experience?

Ridley: It was a generous give of the producer credit (laughs). I did come on early so there was a sense that we all had to hold hands and say, "OK, this is what we're going to do, and this is how we're going to do it." I was asked about various creative things, but Rachel made it so easy. And then from landing in Portland, (Oregon,) I was just an actor. There was no feeling of responsibility - bar from my own performance and being part of a company of people, which was wonderful. But there were a lot of lessons I learned on set because there were a group of people who made the film together and they were very generous with me, talking about budget and scheduling - so that actually facilitated me making my own movie, because I knew what could be done.

AP: Knowing you can't say much about the new "Star Wars" movie, what excites you most about it?

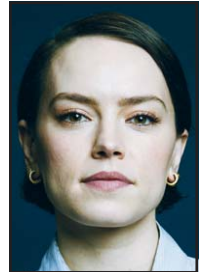
Ridley: I'm excited about the story. I didn't think it would happen that I would go back now. I thought maybe it would at some point, like in the faraway future. But I think the story is great and will appeal to the people that love it, and people who are maybe not as familiar with it. I think it will be a worthwhile adventure (smiles).

AP: You were so young on the last one; how will this be different?

Ridley: I was the baby! Now I feel more like a grown-up. It's going to be so strange because I'm not going to be the baby anymore. But also, that's sort of an exciting adventure of like, OK, how is this going to be - a different filmmaker, different writer, different crew, different cast? It will be such its own thing with its own thumbprint on it. It will be interesting.

AP: Who on that set gave you advice or helped you learn about the business?

Ridley: I'm the person that is always too embarrassed to ask questions. So I pretend I'm not fussed at all that I'm, like, next to Harrison Ford (laughs)! I think J.J. (Abrams) particularly, I will always think of in such a wonderful way because it's such an intimate relationship, the one between actor and director, and the one between actor and cameraman. We had this amazing camera operator called Colin and there's always such protection with the hair and makeup team and the costume team because, again, it's so intimate. You go in at 5 in the morning and people are in your space, helping guide you and helping you feel ready to be seen eventually on an IMAX screen. And actors. There was a lot of kindness from all places.



Ridley



Jon Bon Jovi accepts his MusiCares Person of the Year award during a ceremony in his honor on Friday, Feb. 2, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Brandy Clark, (from left), The War and Treaty, Shania Twain, Jon Bon Jovi, Jelly Roll, Sammy Hagar, Rebecca Lovell, and Megan Lovell of Larkin Poe perform. (AP)



Rebecca Lovell of Larkin Poe, (from left), Melissa Etheridge, and Megan Lovell of Larkin Poe perform during MusiCares Person of the Year honoring Jon Bon Jovi. (AP)



Gayle King speaks during MusiCares Person of the Year honoring Jon Bon Jovi on Friday, Feb. 2, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Jordan



Manson

Variety

NEW YORK: A collection of sneakers that superstar **Michael Jordan** wore as he and the Chicago Bulls won six NBA championships has fetched \$8 million at auction, setting a new record for game-worn sneakers, Sotheby's said.

The six Air Jordan shoes - one apiece from the last games of the 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997 and 1998 championship series - sold Friday. Sotheby's dubbed it the "Dynasty Collection."

"Serving as both a reminder of Michael Jordan's lasting impact on the world and a tangible expression of his recognized legendary status, its significance is further validated by this monumental result," **Brahm Wachter** of Sotheby's said in a statement. Wachter oversees modern collectibles for the auction house.

Sotheby's didn't identify the buyer and described the seller only as "a private American collector" who obtained them from a longtime Bulls executive.

Jordan first gave a sneaker to the executive after the championship-winning game in 1991 and continued the tradition afterward, according to Sotheby's. The auction lot included photos of Jordan wearing a single shoe as he celebrated the 1992, 1993, 1996 and 1998 wins.

A five-time league MVP and two-time Olympic gold medalist, Jordan was so singular a player that then-NBA Commissioner **David Stern** in 1992 called him "the standard by which basketball excellence is measured." The NBA renamed its MVP trophy for Jordan in 2022. (AP)

CONCORD, N.H.: **Marilyn Manson**, who was sentenced to community service for blowing his nose on a videographer at a 2019 concert in **New Hampshire**, recently completed his time at an organization that

Music

New Jersey comes West to kick off Grammy weekend

Music icons unite to honor Bon Jovi

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 4, (AP): New Jersey came to the West Coast to kick off Grammy Awards weekend, with native sons Jon Bon Jovi and Bruce Springsteen teaming up.

The occasion was to honor Bon Jovi for his musical achievements and philanthropic efforts as MusiCares Person of the Year on Friday night.

Bon Jovi hailed Springsteen as "my hero, my friend, my mentor" to a crowd of 2,000 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Instead of performing at the end of the evening as is traditional for the honoree, Bon Jovi got the nearly three-hour show going. He and Springsteen traded guitar licks on "Who Says You Can't Go Home" as scenes of New Jersey were projected behind them.

With the crowd on its feet for a standing ovation, they segued into Springsteen's "The Promised Land," with Bon Jovi on harmonica before Springsteen joined him.

Bon Jovi then retreated to his star-studded table in the crowd. He was joined by his wife, Dorothea, Paul McCartney and his wife, Nancy, Springsteen, New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft and actor-singer Rita Wilson.

Springsteen appeared two days after his 98-year-old mother Adele died.

"When I first got the news he was already on the airplane on his way here," Bon Jovi told the crowd. "I certainly

would have understood if he'd said that he couldn't make it, but he wanted to be here tonight for MusiCares and he wanted to be here tonight for me, and I am forever grateful to you."

Melissa Etheridge was joined by Larkin Poe for a rip-roaring version of "Blaze of Glory" two days before the Grammy Awards.

Best new artist nominee Jelly Roll performed "Bad Medicine" and Lainey Wilson sang "We Weren't Born to Follow."

Ballad

Pat Monahan of Train tackled "It's My Life" as Bon Jovi bobbed his head in time to the music.

Clad in black-fringed leather, Shania Twain sang "Bed of Roses" as the hall was bathed in red lighting. Bon Jovi touched his hand to his heart as she closed out the ballad.

Jason Isbell did "Wanted Dead or Alive" and Damiano David of Måneskin sang "Keep the Faith."

The War and Treaty took the crowd to church with their soulful in-the-round performance of "I'll Be There for You" that earned a standing ovation.

Van Halen fans got a treat when the band's former lead singer, Sammy Hagar, did "You Give Love a Bad Name" with Orianthi on guitar. Wolfgang Van Halen and his Mammoth WVH came out later to do "Have a Nice Day."

Brandy Clark, a six-time nominee on Sunday, played guitar and sang "(You Want to) Make a Memory" in the round backed by piano and cello.

Comedian Jim Gaffigan hosted and relentlessly mocked Bon Jovi for his big hair and penchant for wearing short-shorts in the 1980s. Proof of the rocker's questionable sartorial choices were flashed on video screens around the hall.

"Does it feel like you're looking in a mirror?" Gaffigan said when he later walked out dressed in a Jack Daniels sleeveless T-shirt, denim shorts, spiked hair and cowboy boots.

Bon Jovi broke out laughing.

"Livin' On a Prayer" became an all-star finale, with Bon Jovi joined onstage by the other performers for a singalong.

Kraft presented Bon Jovi with his award as MusiCares Person of the Year. The two first met on the sidelines at the 1997 Super Bowl.

Bon Jovi founded the JBJ Soul Kitchen Food Bank and his Soul Foundation, a nonprofit that operates community restaurants in three New Jersey cities. His foundation also has helped fund more than 700 units of affordable housing in 11 states and the District of Columbia.

"Tonight and every night I know how blessed I've been," Bon Jovi said.

Now in its 34th year, the dinner and auction raised money for programs and services supporting musicians in need.

provides meeting space for Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon, according to court paperwork.

The shock rocker, 55, spent 20 hours last month at the Windsor Club of Glendale, a

California nonprofit that provides meeting locations for Alcoholics Anonymous and families of alcoholics to "achieve a more meaningful life through recovery," according to the group's website.

A certificate of completion was filed by the Assistance League of Los Angeles with a New Hampshire court on Jan. 30. Manson had to file proof of his service by Feb. 4.

Manson, whose legal name is **Brian Warner**, pleaded no contest in September to the misdemeanor charge in **Laconia, Concord**, the state capital.

A no contest plea means Manson did not contest the charge and did not admit guilt. (AP)



Five-time Grammy winner Mariah Carey receives the Recording Academy Global Impact Award at the third annual Recording Academy Honors presented by The Black Music Collective in Los Angeles, Thursday, Feb. 1. (AP)

NEW YORK: Spotify has penned a new multi-year partnership deal with controversial podcast host **Joe Rogan**, whose enormously popular show will soon also be available on competing platforms, including YouTube and Apple Podcasts.

Spotify announced the renewed partnership in a post on the company's corporate blog Friday. Under a prior multimillion-dollar deal, "The Joe Rogan Experience" had been a Spotify exclusive since 2020.

Wall Street Journal, which first reported the new deal on Friday, estimated that the new contract was worth as much as \$250 million over its multiyear term. It cited unnamed people familiar with the matter. The pact involves an upfront minimum guarantee, in addition to a revenue sharing agreement based on ad sales, the newspaper reported. (AP)

The dark side of miracle cures

Online conspiracies fuel the rise of unproven medical remedies

BUTLER, Pa., Feb 4, (AP): The hotel on the outskirts of town looks a lot like lodging one can find on any American highway. Over the years it has been a Holiday Inn and a Days Inn. The sign outside now bears the brand of a new, growing chain. One that promises a lot more than a good night's sleep.

At the Tesla Wellness Hotel and MedBed Center, about 45 minutes north of Pittsburgh, the enticements are nothing short of miraculous.

Part motel, part new-age clinic, the facility offers nightly rentals in rooms that come equipped with "BioHealers" -- canisters that the company claims exude "life force energy," or biophotons. Testimonials from the company's patients speak to the devices' power to treat cancer, dementia, chronic pain and a long list of other ailments.

The center also sells the canisters for home use. Prices start at \$599 and range all the way to \$11,000 for the largest model, with slightly cheaper versions available for pets and children.

Patients

Just don't call the thousands of people who have shelled out big bucks to Tesla "patients." Dr. James Liu, the physician who founded Tesla, doesn't like the term -- perhaps the first clue that what he's selling goes far beyond the abilities of traditional medicine.

"We are not a clinic, not a doctor's office," said Liu, who earned a medical degree in China and a Ph.D. in human nutrition at Penn State University. "For me, for the company, I always call them customers."

Tesla Biohealing, which has no connection to the car company, is part of a growth industry marketing unproven cures and treatments to conspiracy theorists and others who have grown distrustful of science and medicine. Experts who study such claims say they're on the increase, thanks to the internet, social media and skepticism about traditional health care.

"There have always been hucksters selling medical cures, but I do feel like it's accelerating," said Timothy Caulfield, a health policy and law professor at the University of Alberta who studies medical ethics and fraud. "There are some forces driving that: obviously the internet and social media, and distrust of traditional medicine, traditional science. Conspiracy theories are creating and feeding this distrust."

Blending the high-tech jargon of Western science with the spiritual terminology of traditional and Eastern medicine, these modern salesmen claim their treatments can reverse aging, restore mental acuity or fight COVID-19 better than a vaccine. They promise better health, but what they're really selling is the idea of insider information, the promise of a secret known only to the wealthy and the powerful.

So-called medbeds are one of the flashiest, most expensive, and least credible. "Medbeds are coming," exclaims a woman in one TikTok video.

Similar videos have been seen millions of times on the platform.

According to believers of the QAnon conspiracy theory, medbeds were developed by the military (in some versions, using alien technology) and are already in use by the world's richest and most powerful families. Many accounts claim former President Donald Trump, if he wins another term in the White House, will unveil the devices and make them free for all Americans.

Whole message boards on Telegram are devoted to discussions about medbeds, and the latest rumors about when and where they will arrive.

"I'm desperately seeking any help from all to answer my prayers to a cure for my son's cancer," wrote one woman on another Telegram channel created by medbed conspiracy theorists in New Jersey.

For those waiting for medbeds to arrive, Tesla BioHealers may be tempting alternative, though one that comes with a cost.

A one-night stay in a "highly-energized" room at the Tesla complex in Butler runs for \$300. The rooms look like any other motel room, although a look beneath the bed reveals several of the biophoton devices placed underneath. The company runs seven other medbed centers in other states and its devices are used at several other "partner" facilities operated by other businesses.

Inside the canisters? A mix of "fine naturally active stones and activated fine metal, grout, sands and proprietary polymers that are manufactured with a special technology," according to the company.

In addition to the biophoton emitting canisters, the company also sells bottled water -- 24-packs of 16.9 ounce bottles of Tennessee spring water -- for \$150. The company says the water has been imbued with "life force energy" that can increase energy and libido, improve breathing, digestion and sleep, reduce pain and lead to "vivid dreams to indicate enhanced brain activity."

Medbeds

At Walmart, a 24-pack of 16.9 ounce of generic brand water bottles retails for less than \$4.

Online testimonials from Tesla's customers speak to the life-changing power of the company's products, with gushing superlatives such as "It worked miracles!" But experts and scientists who have studied the company's claims say there's no scientific evidence to support them.

Tesla acknowledges the facts in its terms of service: "Tesla BioHealing does not provide any medical advice," the fine print says. "Our products... are not intended to replace your physicians' care, diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease or medical condition."

Liu told The Associated Press that he was unfamiliar with the medbed conspiracy theory when he named his company and that he isn't trying to exploit gullible people who want to be-

lieve medbeds are real. He said 40,000 people have used his devices so far, and that he believes the cannisters can treat about 80% of all disease.

Given the primary importance of health, it's hardly surprising that unproven medical claims and products that seem too-good-to-be-true have a long history in America. More than a century ago, hucksters peddled magic elixirs from wagons. Decades later, electricity sparked a brief craze in electric belts and magnet suits as a supposed cure for anxiety, paralysis or sexual problems. In the 1920s, a quack named John Brinkley became a household name by implanting goat testicles into the bodies of patients complaining of infertility and impotence. He later lost his medical license after he was exposed as a fraud.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the back pages of magazines were filled with ads for mail-order diet pills and supplements that made promises not backed up by the facts.

Today the same claims are made online, where they've found a niche audience among conspiracy theorists and others distrustful of science and traditional medicine. "Shop Now!" reads the website of conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who sells supplements and vitamins alongside survival gear and emergency food rations.

Chemicals

These online communities were thriving long before the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw an explosion of false claims about vaccines, communicable diseases and even basic medical science.

And as the adherents' suspicion of traditional medicine, the media and the government has grown, more people are willing to put their faith in untested treatments and unproven claims.

In some cases, that faith can have deadly results. Last year, a Florida preacher and members of his family were convicted for selling a COVID-19 cure that was actually toxic industrial bleach. Others have died after ingesting other unproven COVID-19 cures such as chloroquine phosphate and hydroxychloroquine, which was promoted by Trump as president. Conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and immunization have also spurred opposition to the lifesaving vaccine.

The Food and Drug Administration maintains an online database of unproven or harmful treatments that it has identified, including unapproved treatments for COVID-19 that contain harmful chemicals, autism "cures" that include raw camel milk and the ingestion of dangerous heavy metals, and medications that supposedly cure all cancer.

"Distrust of government and distrust of major institutions makes people vulnerable," said Stephen Barrett, a psychiatrist and expert in unproven medical claims who launched the organization Quackwatch in the 1970s to highlight medical scams. "But there are other factors too: Some people are desperate for help and they don't know what to believe."

Health care fraud is big business, and the largest source of civil fines and penalties for fraud paid to the federal government last year -- more than \$5 billion. Most investigations and prosecutions focused on schemes to defraud public health programs such as Medicaid and Medicare or the billions of dollars set aside for COVID-19. As a result, low-level hucksters or those peddling unproven treatments often don't get as much attention.

Liu and other Tesla employees are quick to defend their work, arguing they are only giving people alternatives to a medical system many no longer trust.

Like the automotive company owned by Elon Musk, Tesla BioHealing is named for Nikola Tesla, the 19th-century inventor and early electrical pioneer who, who like Musk, has become a favorite of many conspiracy theorists.

Study explains gender disparity

Why 'autoimmune diseases' strike more women than men

WASHINGTON, Feb 4, (AP): Women are far more likely than men to get autoimmune diseases, when an out-of-whack immune system attacks their own bodies -- and new research may finally explain why.

It's all about how the body handles females' extra X chromosome, Stanford University researchers reported Thursday -- a finding that could lead to better ways to detect a long list of diseases that are hard to diagnose and treat.

"This transforms the way we think about this whole process of autoimmunity, especially the male-female bias," said University of Pennsylvania immunologist E. John Wherry, who wasn't involved in the study.

More than 24 million Americans, by some estimates up to 50 million, have an autoimmune disorder -- diseases such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and dozens more. About 4 of every 5 patients are women, a mystery that has baffled scientists for decades.

One theory is that the X chromosome might be a culprit. After all, females have two X chromosomes while males have one X and one Y.

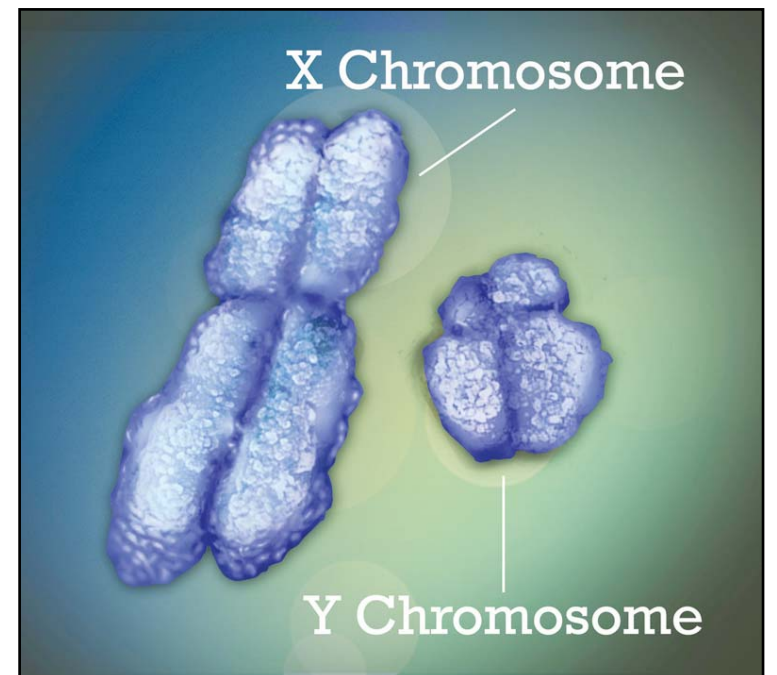
The new research, published in the journal Cell, shows that extra X is involved -- but in an unexpected way.

Chromosome

Our DNA is carried inside each cell in 23 pairs of chromosomes, including that final pair that determines biological sex. The X chromosome is packed with hundreds of genes, far more than males' much smaller Y chromosome. Every female cell must switch off one of its X chromosome copies, to avoid getting a toxic double dose of all those genes.

Performing that so-called X-chromosome inactivation is a special type of RNA called Xist, pronounced like "exist." This long stretch of RNA parks itself in spots along a cell's extra X chromosome, attracts proteins that bind to it in weird clumps, and silences the chromosome.

Stanford dermatologist Dr. Howard Chang was exploring how Xist does its job when his lab identified nearly 100 of those stuck-on proteins. Chang recognized many as related to skin-related autoimmune disorders -- patients can have "autoantibodies" that mistakenly



This image provided by National Institutes of Health (NIH) shows the X and Y chromosomes. Women are far more likely than men to get autoimmune diseases, illnesses like lupus or rheumatoid arthritis that occur when the immune system mistakenly attacks their own tissues. That gender disparity has baffled scientists for decades but new research may finally explain why. (AP)

attack those normal proteins.

"That got us thinking: These are the known ones. What about the other proteins in Xist?" Chang said. Maybe this molecule, found only in women, "could somehow organize proteins in such a way as to activate the immune system."

If true, Xist by itself couldn't cause autoimmune disease or all women would be affected. Scientists have long thought it takes a combination of genetic susceptibility and an environmental trigger, such as an infection or injury, for the immune system to run amok. For example, the Epstein-Barr virus is linked to multiple sclerosis.

Chang's team decided to engineer male lab mice to artificially make Xist -- without silencing their only X chromosome -- and see what happened.

Researchers also specially bred mice susceptible to a lupus-like condition that can be triggered by a chemical irritant.

The mice that produced Xist formed its hallmark protein clumps and, when

triggered, developed lupus-like autoimmunity at levels similar to females, the team concluded.

"We think that's really important, for Xist RNA to leak out of the cell to where the immune system gets to see it. You still needed this environmental trigger to cause the whole thing to kick off," explained Chang, who is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press' Health and Science Department.

Beyond mice, researchers also examined blood samples from 100 patients -- and uncovered autoantibodies targeting Xist-associated proteins that scientists hadn't previously linked to autoimmune disorders. A potential reason, Chang suggests: standard tests for autoimmunity were made using male cells.

Lots of more research is necessary but the findings "might give us a shorter path to diagnosing patients that look clinically and immunologically quite different," said Penn's Wherry.

American Dental Association alters guidance

You don't need a lead apron for dental X-ray

NEW YORK, Feb 4, (AP): Those heavy lead aprons may be on their way out at the dentist office, depending on where you live.

The nation's largest dental association said Thursday it will no longer recommend the use of lead aprons and thyroid collars on patients who are getting dental X-rays.

There are two main reasons for the change. X-ray beams are now more focused, so there is less concern about radiation hitting other parts of the body. Also, the aprons and collars can sometimes block dentists from getting the images they need.

The best thing to lower radiation exposure is to make sure the patient needs the X-ray and to do it right the first time, said Dr. Purnima Kumar, who chairs the American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs,

which released the recommendation.

Dental X-rays use a relatively small amount of radiation to begin with, she said.

"It's like taking a flight from, let's say, from Michigan to San Francisco, it gives you the equivalent of one dental X-ray," Kumar said.

The association's recommendation is just that. True change depends on state dental boards, dentists and patients, Kumar said. For example, California state rules require dentists to use the aprons.

Sanjay Mallya, a radiologist and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, said there is "no hard science," that the aprons are needed.

"Yet at the same time, we do have the letter of the law that requires that," said Mallya, who helped write the American Academy of Oral and Maxil-

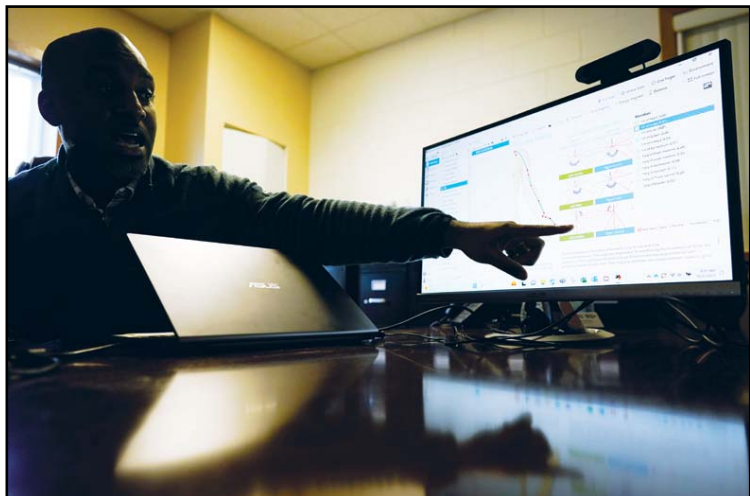
facial Radiology's recommendation in the fall against the use of lead aprons and thyroid collars. Kumar noted it was that group's recommendation that spurred the American Dental Association to look at the topic.

The most recent guidance is also backed by medical physicists with the US Food and Drug Administration.

Mallya also said X-rays may cause patients and dentists to be complacent about the things that should be done to prevent unnecessary radiation exposure -- such as making sure an X-ray is necessary and using digital X-ray instead of film ones because they use less radiation.

It will take advocacy and education to change more minds around the use of the aprons among patients, dentists and policymakers, he said.

"That is going to be the next step for us," he said.



Seth Robinson, a chiropractor who serves as Tesla BioHealing's medical director, explains energy readouts at the Tesla BioHealing & MedBed Center, in Milford, Del., Oct. 3, 2023. (AP)

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UConn dismisses St John's

Kansas dispose of Houston 78-65

LAWRENCE, Kan., Feb. 4, (AP): Hunter Dickinson scored 20 points to lead four Kansas players in double figures as the No. 8 Jayhawks beat No. 4 Houston 78-65 on Saturday.

Kansas (18-4, 6-3 Big 12) got 17 points each from Kevin McCullar and Johnny Furphy, and KJ Adams added 10 points as the Jayhawks became the first team this season to score more than 70 points against the Cougars.

Houston (19-3, 6-3) was led by L.J. Cryer with 24 points. J'wan Roberts and Emanuel Sharp each scored 11 points.

Houston came into the game with the nation's best scoring defense at 52.9 points per game allowed. The Jayhawks hit 53 points with 14:17 left in the second half on a layup by Dickinson.

UConn 77, St. John's 64

In New York, Cam Spencer scored 23 points, freshman Stephen Castle had a season-best 21 and UConn pulled away from St. John's at Madison Square Garden.

Tristen Newton added 18 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists as the defending national champion Huskies (20-2, 10-1 Big East), playing without injured forward Alex Karaban, won their 10th straight game.

North Carolina 93, Duke 84

In Chapel Hill, N.C., Armando Bacot had 25 points and 10 rebounds and Harrison Ingram added 21 points, 13 rebounds and four steals as North Carolina beat rival Duke.

BASKETBALL

ACC scoring leader RJ Davis faced constant defensive attention before coming on late to score 17 points despite 5-of-14 shooting as UNC (18-4, 10-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) moved to the top of the conference standings.

Tennessee 103, Kentucky 92

In Lexington, Ky., Josiah-Jordan James scored 17 of his 26 points in the second half, and Zakai Zeigler also added 26 points in Tennessee's win over Kentucky.

Zeigler made all five of his field goal attempts for 13 points before halftime, including three from long range, helping the Volunteers (16-5, 6-2 Southeastern Conference) lead throughout.

Marquette 91, Georgetown 57

In Washington, Kam Jones scored a career-high 31 points, Tyler Kolek had 17 points and eight assists and Marquette won its sixth straight game.

David Joplin scored 15 points and Oso Ighodaro added 10 points and 10 rebounds. Marquette (17-5, 8-3 Big East) forced 19 turnovers and outscored the Hoyas 35-5 in points off turnovers.

Baylor 70, Iowa State 68

In Waco, Texas, Jayden Nunn made the go-ahead layup with 2 seconds remaining and Baylor overcame coach Scott Drew's first career ejection to



Arizona State forward Bryant Seibangue scores against California during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024, in Tempe, Ariz. (AP)



Southern California guard JuJu Watkins, right, shoots against Stanford forward Kiki Iriafen, left, in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game, Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, in Stanford, Calif. (AP)

beat Iowa State.

The Bears hung on for the victory when Milan Momcilovic's banked 3-pointer by the Cyclones was ruled to be shot after the final buzzer.

Cincinnati 75, Texas Tech 72

In Lubbock, Texas, Simas Lukosius scored 16 points, including the go-ahead jumper with 21 seconds left, and Cincinnati dealt Texas Tech its first home loss this season.

The 14-footer by Lukosius was the 14th and final lead change of the game, which also had eight ties. That gave the Bearcats (15-7, 4-5 Big 12) a 73-72 lead right after Pop Isaacs made a long defended step-back 3-pointer to put the

Red Raiders ahead for the final time.

Auburn 91, Mississippi 77

In Oxford, Miss., Jaylin Williams scored 16 points and Auburn erased a 13-point deficit in the first half with a dominating second half to defeat Mississippi.

Johni Broome and Chad Baker-Mazara each scored 15 points, with 27 of those 30 combined points coming in the second half. Denver Jones and K.D. Johnson scored 11 points apiece as Tre Donaldson added 10 points for the Tigers (18-4, 7-2 SEC).

San Diego State 81, Utah State 67

In San Diego, Jaedon LeDee had 16 points and nine rebounds to lead San Diego State past Great Osobor and Utah State, pulling the defending Mountain West champion Aztecs within one game of the Aggies.

LeDee scored nine points in the second half of the showdown between the top two scorers and rebounders in the league. Osobor had 17 points and seven rebounds.

No. 20 Atlantic 102, Tulsa 70

In Boca Raton, Fla., Johnell Davis scored 24 points, Alijah Martin and Vladislav Goldin each scored 18 and Florida Atlantic won its seventh consecutive game.

Nick Boyd finished with 13 and Bryan Greenlee added 11 for Florida Atlantic (18-4, 8-1 American Athletic Conference), which remained tied with Charlotte and South Florida atop the league standings.

BYU 86, West Virginia 73

In Morgantown, W.Va., Fousseyni Traore had a season-high 24 points and nine rebounds to lead BYU past West Virginia.

Richie Saunders added 17 points and Jaxson Robinson scored 15 for the Cougars (16-5, 4-4 Big 12), who earned their second road win in five trips this season.

UCF 74, Oklahoma 63

In Orlando, Fla., Jaylin Sellers shot 13 for 14 from the line and scored 20 points, Antwann Jones hit three early 3-pointers and finished with 15 points and UCF coach Johnny Dawkins earned his 300th coaching victory.

Darius Johnson added 14 points and eight assists for UCF (13-8, 4-5 Big 12), which never trailed and built a 17-point lead in the game. The Knights shot 28 for 32 from the line in the game and blocked 12 shots in the win.

Alabama 99, Mississippi State 67

In Tuscaloosa, Ala., Mark Sears scored 21 points and Alabama maintained its spot atop the Southeastern Conference standings.

Aaron Estrada scored 15 points and Mouhamed Dioubate and Jarin Stevenson each scored 14 for Alabama (16-6, 8-1).

Texas 77, TCU 66

In Fort Worth, Texas, Max Abmas scored 19 of his 21 points after halftime, including the last 13 for Texas in a win over TCU.

Warriors fall 134-141 to Hawks in overtime



Sacramento Kings guard De'Aaron Fox, (left), follows Chicago Bulls guard Coby White down the court during the second half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024, in Chicago. The Kings won 123-115. (AP)

Lakers top Knicks

ATLANTA, Feb. 4, (AP): Stephen Curry scored a season-high 60 points in Golden State's 141-134 overtime loss to Atlanta on Saturday night, with Trae Young scoring 35 points to help the Hawks outlast the Warriors.

Curry had eight points in overtime to finish only two points shy of his career high of 62 at home against Portland on Jan. 3, 2021. He was 22 of 38 shots from the field, hitting 10 of 23 3-pointers, and made all six of his free throws.

Dejounte Murray scored the last seven points in an 11-0 run to open the overtime for Atlanta and finished with 19 points. Onyeka Okongwu had a career-high 22 points and a season-high 16 rebounds, and Jalen Johnson scored 21 points.

Curry scored 22 points in the fourth quarter, including a go-ahead jumper with 14 seconds remaining. Murray answered with a jumper from the free-throw line to tie it. Curry missed a last-second jumper to send it to overtime.

The Hawks have taken advantage of a six-game homestand to win four straight games, matching their best stretch of the season. They are 4-1 on the homestand.

Lakers 113, Knicks 105

In New York, LeBron James scored 24 points and Los Angeles ended New York's winning streak at nine games.

Austin Reaves had 22 points, D'Angelo Russell and Taurean Prince each scored 16 points, and Anthony

Davis finished with 12 points and 18 rebounds as the Lakers won their second straight to move above .500 (26-25).

Jalen Brunson scored 36 points to lead New York. Donte DiVincenzo had 26 before fouling out.

Bucks 129, Mavericks 117

In Dallas, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 48 points and Milwaukee overcame a 25-point deficit against Dallas for its first victory under coach Doc Rivers.

The Bucks lost their first two with Rivers on the bench after the midseason firing of first-year coach Adrian Griffin.

Rivers' first victory with the Bucks also means he and his staff will coach the Eastern Conference in the All-Star Game on Feb. 18. The Milwaukee staff gets the All-Star nod because Joe Mazzulla of East-leading Boston is ineligible after coaching in the game last year.

BASKETBALL

Damian Lillard scored 30 points in the second-biggest comeback victory this season for Milwaukee. Luka Doncic had 40 points and 11 assists for Dallas.

Nets 136, 76ers 121

In Philadelphia, Cam Thomas scored 40 points, Mikal Bridges had 23 and Brooklyn routed short-handed Philadelphia.

Philadelphia was without Joel Embiid, the reigning NBA MVP who missed his second game after sustaining a left meniscus injury Tuesday night at Golden State. Philadelphia is 4-10 in the 14 games without Embiid this season.

Lonnie Walker IV added 20 points

to help Brooklyn win for the third time in four games after losing 10 of 12. Former 76ers All-Star guard Ben Simmons failed to score and had nine rebounds and five assists in 14 minutes for the Nets.

Two nights after scoring a career-high 51 points at Utah, Tyrese Maxey had 23 points for Philadelphia on 8-for-23 shooting. The 76ers lost for the fifth time in six games.

Cavaliers 117, Spurs 101

In San Antonio, Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points, Evan Mobley had 28 points and 10 rebounds and Cleveland routed San Antonio.

Jarrett Allen had 26 points and 16 rebounds, and Mitchell added eight rebounds and seven assists to help Cleveland win its fifth straight and 13th in 14 games.

Mitchell and San Antonio's Zach Collins were ejected with 54.7 seconds remaining after the Cleveland All-Star leapt up to push Collins in the face and chest after taking an elbow to the head on a moving screen from the center.

Victor Wembanyama had 19 points and 14 rebounds for San Antonio. Devin Vassell scored 22 points.

Kings 123, Bulls 115

In Chicago, Domantas Sabonis had a triple-double and De'Aaron Fox scored 41 points, helping Sacramento hold off Chicago.

Malik Monk added 22 points as Sacramento improved to 5-1 on a seven-game trip. It has won six of seven overall, including a 133-122 victory at Indiana on Friday night.

Sabonis had 13 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists in his 14th triple-double of the season and No. 46 for his career.

Coby White scored 26 points for depleted Chicago.

Netherlands edge Switzerland 3-2

Brazil down Sweden to advance to Davis Cup Finals group stage

HELSINGBORG, Sweden, Feb. 4, (AP): Thiago Monteiro led Brazil its first spot in the Davis Cup Finals group stage in September, beating Sweden's Elias Ymer 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 on Saturday for a 3-1 team victory.

"I'm just happy to help the team," Monteiro said. "Everyone had put a lot of effort in to make this work. It is the job of the whole team."

TENNIS

Earlier in doubles on the hardcourt at Helsingborg Arena, Brazil's Felipe Meligeni Alves and Rafael Matos topped Filip Bergevi and Andre Goransson 6-2, 7-5. In the opening singles matches Friday, Monteiro beat Karl Friberg, and Ymer edged Gustavo Heide for Sweden's lone point.

Brazil won its third straight match after topping China and Denmark last year in World Group I.

On Friday, the United States wrapped up a group-stage spot with a sweep over Ukraine in matches played in Lithuania because of the war in Ukraine.

The 12 winners this week will join reigning champion Italy, 2023 runner-up Australia, and wild-card entries Britain and Spain in the Fi-



Christopher Eubanks of the USA returns the ball to Viacheslav Bieliskiy of Ukraine during a Davis Cup qualifier tennis match between Ukraine and USA in Vilnius, Lithuania, Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024. (AP)

nals group stage in September. Then eight teams will make it to the quarterfinals in Malaga, Spain, in November, when a champion will be determined.

In other matches that ended Saturday, the Netherlands beat visiting Switzerland 3-2; Germany won 3-2 at Hungary; Slovakia topped host Serbia 3-0 to reach the finals for the first time; Canada beat visiting South

Korea 3-1; and host Finland swept Portugal 3-0.

On a hardcourt in Groningen, Botic van de Zandschulp beat Marc-Andrea Huesler 5-7, 7-6 (5), 6-3 to lift the Netherlands past Switzerland. Earlier, Tallon Griekspoor tied it for the Netherlands, beating Leandro Riedi 7-6 (6), 7-6 (3), after Riedi and Huesler beat Wesley Koolhof and Jean-Julien Rojer 7-6 (4), 7-6 (2) in doubles.

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New signings boost Al-Salmiya's hopes against Al-Tadamon

Al-Qadisiya-Al-Arabi derby takes center stage in Amir Cup semifinals

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Al-Qadisiya, Al-Arabi, Al-Salmiya, and Al-Tadamon clubs have initiated their preparations for the upcoming semifinals of the Amir Cup competition, set to take place next Thursday. The anticipated clash between the "Yellow" and the "Green" will unfold in the Kuwaiti football "derby," while Al-Salmiya will face the "Sons of Al-Farwaniya."



Players challenge for the ball in this file photo.

SOCCER

The four clubs are poised to organize internal training camps starting tomorrow, aiming to elevate their readiness levels for optimal performance in one of the most prestigious tournaments. They are all vying for the title, with Al-Salmiya seeking to break a 23-year absence, Al-Qadisiya aiming to end a 9-year drought, and Al-Arabi pursu-

ing victory after 4 years. Meanwhile, Al-Tadamon has yet to clinch the title since the tournament's inception in the early 1960s.

In Al-Arabi, Salman Al-Awadi, Sultan Al-Anzi, and Hassan Hamdan remain sidelined, while Nigerian Anayo Iwala has joined training, though his full readiness for participation is still uncertain. Players Badr Al-Mutairi, Saif Al-Hashan, and Abdullah Ammar

are grappling with various injuries, causing them to miss matches in the Amir's Cup.

Al-Qadisiya's coach, Ali, has expressed confidence in the readiness of all his players, with Abdulaziz Wadi rejoining training after missing the quarter-final against Al-Fahheel due to health reasons.

However, Youssef Al-Haqan, who needed stitches in the head, has an unclear status for the upcoming "Derby."

Bahraini newcomer Mahdi Humaidan has joined Al-Salmiya after completing his participation in the Asian Cup with his national team, making him ready for the match against Al-Tadamon.

During the winter transfer period, Al-Salmiya made strategic signings, including Bahraini Humaidan, Austrian (of Serbian origin) Srdan Spirdunović, Hajer Saudi player, Libyan Al-Senussi Al-Hadi, to complement Brazilian Alex Lima and Gambian

Abbott leads Australia to series deciding win

Sang-Pierre. This was coupled with the decision to part ways with Senegalese Cesar Ousinho, Brazilian Sebastião Junior "Seba," and Ghanaian Isaka Abudu. However, reconsideration is underway, especially after Srdan's impressive performance against Kazma in the quarter-finals, leading to a potential retention of Isaka Abudu and a reconsideration of releasing the Australian professional.

West Indies held to 175 all out in 43.3 overs

SYDNEY, Feb 4, (AP): Sean Abbott exhibited his allrounder skills and powered Australia to a series deciding 83-run win over the West Indies in the second one-day international on Sunday.

Abbott made a better than a run-a-ball 69 and lifted Australia to a competitive 258-9 at his home ground after West Indies won the toss and opted to field.

The tall fast bowler then struck inside the batting powerplay before he picked up key wicket of Keacy Carty, who top-scored with 40, in his return spell to finish with 3-40 as West Indies was held to 175 all out in 43.3 overs.

"We thought 220 would be competitive but were very competitive with partnerships, taking it over 250," Abbott said. "It's a really good (Australian) attack. It's such a good environment. I've been enjoying it. Love getting out there and playing in front of a home crowd."

Just like at the MCG two days ago where Australia romped to an eight-wicket win in the first game, the West Indies top order stuttered against pace in their run-chase.

CRICKET

Abbott grabbed a superb catch at mid-off when Alick Athanaze tried to go hard at Aaron Hardie and Jason Greaves was well caught by debutante Will Sutherland over his head before Abbott had the West Indies reeling at 34-3 inside the first 10 overs.

Carty and captain Shai Hope (29) rebuilt the chase with a 53-run stand before both fell in Josh Hazlewood's (3-43) and Abbott's return spells with the West Indies skipper losing his off stump to a brilliant Hazlewood ball that nipped back at the right-hander.

Sutherland picked up 2-28 and Adam Zampa finished off the West Indies timid batting when he had No. 10 Gudakesh Motie trapped leg before wicket in his final over.

Earlier, Australian top-order batters couldn't convert good starts before the home side was rescued by Abbott's career-best ODI knock.

Spinners Moti (3-28) and Roston Chase (0-40) conceded just two boundaries in 20 overs between them before Abbott's countercharge against the fast bowlers.

Jake Fraser-McGurk had an eventful five deliveries on his ODI debut as he smacked a four and a six before edging Alzarri Joseph (2-74) in the first over and Josh Inglis (nine) was smartly caught by Roston Chase at point.

Fraser-McGurk made his debut in place of Travis Head, who has been released from the squad for the remaining limited-overs games to rest ahead of the test series in New Zealand starting in late February.

Sutherland made his debut and replaced fast bowler Xavier Bartlett, while Hazlewood returned in place of Lance Morris.



Australia's Adam Zampa plays a shot against the West Indies during their one day international cricket match in Sydney. (AP)



Members of the Asian Cricket Council pose for a group photo after the AGM.

Shah re-elected as president

The Asian Cricket Council's AGM concluded in a spectacular style

BALI, Indonesia, Feb 4: Jay Shah, General Secretary of the BCCI, was re-elected as the President of the Asian Cricket Council for another year up until January 2025, after which the presidency tenure will be passed on to Pakistan Cricket Board as per the rotation policy of the ACC amongst test playing nations.

KCC Board President Haider Farman congratulated Jay Shah on his re-election. All the members now look forward to another successful year where a number of pathway events are lined up, paving the way for more development opportunities. These include qualification spots for both the Asia Cup and the Emerging Teams Asia Cup for men's and women's categories. Mr. Farman has played a pivotal role in the induction of cricket in the Asian Games as the former director of the Asian Games, and he is a very popular and highly respected figure in the world of cricket.

KCC's Director General, Sajid Ashraf represented the KCC Board at the ACC AGM in Bali. He addressed key areas of improvements, including but not limited to, the need for more development support from the ACC for all the associate members, especially for those countries participating and performing well in the pathway events.

CRICKET

Sajid stated that "although the number of pathway events and spots up for grabs for the Emerging Teams Asia Cup have increased, the development support for each tournament seems to have remained stagnant since my playing days of Kuwait U-19 and the men's team....digital broadcasting and surrogate branding has brought in new ways and mechanisms in modern day cricket to increase that support for the associates by monetizing all their events..." This was well acknowledged by the Development Committee Chairman Mahinda Vallapuram and ACC President Jay Shah, where Mahinda declared that plans are very much in place to increase that support for associate countries and tournaments in the near future.

ICC - International Cricket Council CEO: Geoff Allardice made a special appearance and gave a comprehensive presentation to the ACC AGM of ICC's global strategy, where USA was highlighted as a key growth market for the future, to which Kuwait's Sajid expressed that "within Asia, the Middle East remains as the most lucrative market amongst associates in terms of T20I rankings, competitiveness, fans, followers, commercial & broadcasting rights potential and should therefore be looked into by the ICC with the same enthusiasm....the results of this region have been there for long and far greater

over the past two decades including the successes of UAE & Oman, who have both already played multiple World Cups and Kuwait has only missed its opportunity by a game or two in the recent past." Allardice in agreement seconded that point of view stating that "this was very well observed and recognized during the inaugural GCC Cup in Qatar last year and the successful World Cup trophy tours that took place in Kuwait & Bahrain, respectively, and the focus is there very much on the Middle East, too as one of the key growth markets."

The induction of Japan Cricket Association and Indonesia Cricket Association as members of the ACC was another key highlight of the AGM, which was facilitated by the President Mr. Jay Shah. The two new members were wholeheartedly welcomed into the ACC family.

The ACC AGM was attended by all the heads and directors of full member and associate member countries, including test playing nations, comprising of Mirwaiz Omaidri (Chairman, Afghanistan Cricket Board), Nazmul Hassan (President, Bangladesh Cricket Board), Jay Shah (General Secretary, BCCI), Shah Khawar (Acting Chairman, Pakistan Cricket Board), and Shammi Silva (President, Sri Lanka Cricket Board).

Kuwait, as a member of the ICC & ACC, has been making its presence felt both on and off the field and will continue to do so as it remains focused on improving its T20I rankings in both the men's and women's categories, along with hosting more international events in the State of Kuwait in the future.



Kuwait Club player vies for the ball with two opposing players.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MUSCAT, Feb 4: The first volleyball team of Kuwait Club secured a well-deserved victory against Shabab Al-Hussein from Jordan yesterday, winning three consecutive rounds with scores of "25-21, 25-23, 25-22" in the second round of the second group during the preliminary round of the Second West Asian Club Volleyball Championship. This championship is currently taking place at the Omani Sohar Club.

VOLLEYBALL

In a parallel match, the second Kuwaiti volleyball representative faced defeat against Al-Qadisiyah from Al-Seeb, Oman, with an identical score in the first group. The "Yellow" team had previously achieved victory in the first round against Al-Ibtisam from Saudi Arabia, where Al-Seeb triumphed over Banyias from the Emirates with a 3-0 score. Additionally, Al-Arabi from Qatar secured a 3-0 victory against Al-Ahly from Bahrain, while Sohar from Oman defeated Shabab Al-Hussein with a 3-1 result.

Notably, the Qatari Al Rayyan team emerged victorious in the first edition of the tournament, with the Kuwait Club team securing the runner-up position and the Qatari Al-Shorta team claiming third place.

Prepared through an external camp in Turkey, Al-Kuwait faced Al-Qadisiyah, who had prepared through a camp in Dubai.

Today, four matches are scheduled for the third round. Al-Seeb

Best of the Rest

Inter Miami win: Hong Kong soccer fans and government expressed their disappointment on Sunday as Lionel Messi stayed on the bench for the full 90 minutes while Inter Miami defeated a Hong Kong XI 4-1 in the latest stop on the MLS team's preseason Asian tour.

The Argentine has a hamstring strain and did not play as fans, who snapped up more than 38,000 tickets within an hour of them going on sale in December, could be heard booing in the late stages of the game and at the final whistle.

"Regarding Messi not playing the match today, the government, as well as all football fans, are extremely disappointed about the organisers' arrangement. The organisers owe all football fans an explanation," the government said in a statement on Sunday. (AP)

Kurt Hamrin dies at 89: Kurt Hamrin, a former Fiorentina and Sweden great who was the last living player to have participated in the 1958 World Cup final, has died. He was 89.

The Swedish soccer federation announced Hamrin's death on Sunday. No more details were disclosed.

"One of Swedish football's biggest icons has left us. Rest in peace Kurt 'Kurru' Hamrin," it said in a statement on social media. "Kurru" Hamrin was a big factor in Sweden's World Cup silver in 1958. He is a legend at both AIK and Fiorentina for his efforts at the clubs.

"Our thoughts go out to Kurt's family and friends. Thank you 'Kurru' for all the blue and yellow memories you have helped create for so many," it added. (AP)

will face Al-Rayyan from Qatar in the first group, and Al-Qadisiyah will compete against Banyias from the Emirates. In the second group, Al-Kuwait will play against Al-Arabi from Qatar, while Al-Ahly from Bahrain will confront Shabab Al-Hussein from Jordan.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Volleyball Federation, through the Referees Committee, is organizing a study course for new referees in collaboration with the Abdullah Al-Salem Center for Leadership Preparation.

The 10-day course will be open for registration from today until the day after tomorrow during the evening period at the Volleyball Federation headquarters in the Sheikh Complex. The session will be led by international referees Dr. Ahmed Anizan and Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Houli.

Kuwait Volleyball Federation hosts training course

Kuwait Club prevail over Shabab Al-Hussein

Red Bull Car Park Drift returns with a bang as Ali Makhseed dominates



Ali Makhseed celebrating with his crew.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Ali Makhseed clinched the title at the Red Bull Car Park Drift competition, hosted at Kuwait Motor Sports City last Friday, securing a spot to represent the nation in the forthcoming international finals set to take place in Oman this December.

The competition showcased intense battles among a select group of skilled drifters, igniting the venue with engine roars, tire flames, and remarkable expertise that captivated the enthusiastic audience.

Marking its return after a three-year hiatus, the Red Bull Car Park Drift featured participants navigating through challenging obstacles and trials in two rounds that tested their complete repertoire of drifting skills and techniques.

Drivers were assessed based on nine criteria, enabling them to accumulate points with a maximum potential score of 300. The evaluation encompassed their aptitude for maneuvering through

a circuit with various stages, overcoming difficult obstacles while avoiding errors.

Following electrifying performances, Ali Makhseed emerged triumphant, amassing an impressive 285 points.

Alongside the competition, spectators were treated to a stellar display by Lebanese car racing sensation Abdo Feghali and a performance by internationally acclaimed Red Bull athlete Brian Capper, renowned for his awe-inspiring motorcycle skills.

DRIFTING

The Red Bull Car Park Drift Championship in Kuwait was organized in collaboration with Red Bull Mobile, Abdul Mohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Company (the exclusive agent for Nissan cars in Kuwait), Aqua Eva, Kuwait Motor Sports City, Dunlop Tires, and Al Babbain Auto.

Ivory Coast stage late comeback

BOUAKÉ, Ivory Coast, Feb 4, (AP): Oumar Diakité scored in stoppage time of extra time to send 10-man Ivory Coast into the semifinals of the Africa Cup of Nations with a dramatic 2-1 win over northern neighbor Mali.

Goalkeeper Ronwen Williams saved four penalties in the shootout for South Africa to also advance by beating Cape Verde 2-1 on penalties after their quarterfinal match ended 0-0 after extra time.

After playing with 10 men for the entire second half and extra time, tournament host Ivory Coast actually finished the match with nine players

as Diakité was booked for excessive celebrations amid scenes of unbridled joy among nearly 40,000 fans in the Stadium of the Peace in Bouaké.

It was Diakité's second yellow card, meaning he will miss the semifinal match against Congo on Wednesday.

Simon Adingra had equalized with Ivory Coast's first shot on target in the 90th minute to send the match to extra time, and Diakité completed a thrilling comeback by scoring in what was the 122nd minute of the game.

"If it continues like this, I think we can do nice things," Diakité said, referring to another remarkable recovery.



Qatar's Akram Afif (left), and Uzbekistan's Eshmuradov Umarbek fight for the ball during the quarterfinal soccer match between Qatar and Uzbekistan at Al Bayt stadium in Al Khor, Qatar. Qatar, beat Uzbekistan 3-2 in a penalty shootout following a 1-1 stalemate after extra time in their quarterfinal encounter to set up a clash with Iran. (AP)

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Kuwaiti shooters win gold at Arab Club Games

Emerging shooter Ghazlan Hassan secures silver

By Suzan Nasser

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

SHARJAH, Feb 4: The Shooting Club's female team, comprising Israa Bahman, Ghazlan Hassan, and Adhari Al Balushi, clinched the top spot and the gold medal in the team competition at the Arab Club Games for Women, held in Sharjah.

In addition to the team victory, emerging shooter Ghizlan Hassan secured the silver medal in the individual competition, showcasing her exceptional talent.

Fatima Hayat, Head of the Women's Sports Committee at the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, commended the achievement of Kuwaiti female shooters, particularly highlighting the promising future of rising star Ghizlan Hassan. She extended congratulations to the Salwa Volleyball Club team for their significant victory. Speaking to Al-Seyassah, Hayat, who closely followed the tournament from Sharjah, urged those responsible for Kuwaiti sports to prioritize and emphasize women's sports in future development plans.

In a related context, the Salwa women's volleyball team demonstrated exceptional prowess by defeating their Jordanian counterparts, De La Salle, with a clean



Suzan Nasser and Fatima Hayat with the shooting champions.

sweep of three goals. The match, hosted in the Khor Fakkan Club hall, marked the commencement of the second group competitions, with Salwa players dominating each half of the match with scores of 25-16, 25-12, and 25-13.

Kuwait Taekwondo team shines with 3 medals at Arab Cup Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: The Arab Cup Championship in Fujairah recently concluded with Kuwait taekwondo team clinching three notable medals. In the internationally classified event, Musaab Al-Masoudi, secured the gold medal in the under 160 height category. His teammate, Walid Al-Mutairi, earned a silver medal in the same category, while Hussein Shamouh claimed a bronze medal in the under 172 height category.

Hani Al-Marshad, the President of the Taekwondo Federa-

TAEKWONDO

tion, expressed satisfaction with the team's performance, emphasizing that their participation in the Arab Cup Championship was a significant achievement aligned with the goals set by the Federation's Board of Directors. Winning these medals not only brings glory to Kuwait but also contributes to the development of a generation capable of achieving future sporting titles.

Highlighting the importance of such external participations, Al-Marshad emphasized their role in providing players with valuable experience and building confidence, factors crucial for the team's growth and success on the international stage.



Kuwait taekwondo team celebrates with the national flag.

Wolves hand Chelsea another big EPL loss

LONDON, Feb 4: (AP) Chelsea's expensively assembled team slumped to a second straight heavy loss in the Premier League, with Wolverhampton following Liverpool in taking apart Mauricio Pochettino's team in a 4-2 victory on Sunday.

Chelsea was overrun in a 4-1 hammering at Anfield on Wednesday and was also picked off by Wolves, for whom Brazil striker Matheus Cunha scored a hat trick at Stamford Bridge where jeers rang out at fulltime.

Chelsea, which was quiet in the January transfer market after spending more than \$1 billion in three previous windows, dropped to 11th place and below Wolves in another below-par league campaign under the club's American ownership.

Cole Palmer gave Chelsea the lead in the 19th minute but the hosts were behind at halftime thanks to Cunha's deflected equalizer - after center-midfielder Moises Caicedo was dispossessed - in the 22nd and an own-goal in the 43rd by Axel Disasi, who stretched to block Rayan Ait-Nouri's shot and saw the ball spin into the net.

Cunha converted Pedro Neto's cut-back in the 63rd for 3-1 and calmly stroked home a penalty in the 82nd after he was tripped by Malo Gusto.

India set Poms 399-run target

VISAKHAPATNAM, India, Feb 4: (AP) Shubman Gill scored his third hundred on day three to help India set a target of 399 runs for England to win the second test.

Gill's 104 runs anchored India's second innings as it finished with 255 runs in 78.3 overs on Sunday. Axar Patel also scored 45 runs, while left-arm spinner Tom Hartley finished with figures of 4-77.

At stumps, England was 67-1 in 14 overs, needing another 332 runs for victory and a tantalizing day four in prospect.

England has a 1-0 lead in the five-test series, winning the first test in Hyderabad by 28 runs.

The home side reached 130-4 at lunch, with Gill's knock holding the innings together.

Needing 40 more runs to get his first hundred batting at No. 3, Gill accelerated and opened up to play shots against the spinners after lunch.

He put on 89 runs for the fifth wicket with Patel, as India rebuilt its innings. Gill reached his hundred off 132 balls. In all, he faced 147 deliveries, hitting 11 fours and two sixes.

CRICKET

In the morning session, Gill had survived two close calls within seven deliveries. First, he seemed to have struck the ball just as it hit his pad and escaped an lbw call off Tom Hartley. Then, the umpire's call went in his favour after James Anderson reviewed for another lbw appeal.

Gill then went on to score his second test hundred on home soil, adding to his ton in Chattogram, Bangladesh in 2022.

At the other end, Hartley trapped Patel lbw to provide the breakthrough as the India lower order was exposed.

Gill fell against the run of play, caught behind off Shoaib Bashir who finished with 1-58.

England made quick work of the lower Indian line-up with the combination of Hartley and wrist spinner Rehan Ahmed mopping up.

Srikanth Bharat was out caught for six off Ahmed, who also accounted for Ravichandran Ashwin later on.

Hartley dismissed Kuldeep Yadav for a five-ball duck, and then followed up with Jasprit Bumrah before he managed to get on the scoring sheet.

Ashwin was the last man out - he scored 29 runs, pushing India past 250 but the overall lead fell just short of 400.

Chasing a tall target, England came out attacking the new ball. Mukesh Kumar went for 19 runs in the two overs he bowled, with Ben Duckett scoring 28 off 27 balls.

Duckett hit six fours, before he was out caught off Ashwin. The ball looped up after taking an inside edge and keeper Srikanth Bharat completed a superb catch, diving forward.

Rehan Ahmed came out as the night watchman, and finished at nine not out, while Zack Crawley was unbeaten on 29 runs.

Earlier in the day, Anderson picked up two quick wickets to dismiss Rohit Sharma (13) and first innings' double centurion Yashasvi Jaiswal (17).



Kuwait cricket team pose for a group photo before its departure to Malaysia.

Kuwait women's cricket team 'gears' up for the ACC Women's Premier Cup T20I

Al-Amer claims victory in Dressage Champ'ship

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Jockey Abdullah Al-Amer secured the top spot in the intermediate level with an impressive 63 percent score during the inaugural Abdullah Walid Al-Osaimi Horse Dressage Championship. The event, held at Al-Osaimi's stable, witnessed intense competition among male and female riders vying for the coveted title, with Youssef Al-Nuaimi following closely in second place.

EQUESTRIAN

In the third category, jockey Mandy Grotgood claimed the first position, while in the basic level, jockey Alia Al-Hunaidi emerged victorious. Jockey Afnan Al-Sulaiman showcased exceptional skills, clinching the top spot in the training round. The awards were presented by tournament sponsor Jockey Abdullah Al-Osaimi, along with Jockey Sheikh Fajr Al-Sabah and Jockey Alaa Al-Sultan.

The "dressage" committee, led by

horsewoman Fajr Al-Sabah, comprised international dressage coach and technical officer Amber Den Heer, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Abdullah Al-Amer, Alaa Al-Sultan, Nasiba Al-Maousherji, and Dana Bourseli.

Equestrian Sheikh Fajr Al-Sabah expressed gratitude for the growing support and sponsorship from the private sector in nurturing this emerging sport. She emphasized the intention to organize a local dressage championship monthly, showcasing the commitment to the sport's development.

Horsewoman Alaa Al-Sultan praised the active role played by the private sector in supporting Kuwaiti equestrian sports and commended Abdullah Al-Osaimi for his dedication to fellow horsemen.

Equestrian Alia Al-Hunaidi conveyed her joy about the enjoyable competitive atmosphere in the tournament, organized and sponsored by Abdullah Al-Osaimi. She expressed a desire to see more events of this nature to further bolster support for equestrians.



Al-Sabah, Al-Osaimi and Al-Sultan with the winners on the podium.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 4: Kuwait Cricket Club is the official governing body for the game of cricket in association with Public Authority of Sports, Olympic Committee of Kuwait and the International Cricket Council (ICC - the world's governing body for cricket) and Asian Cricket Council (ACC - Operating under ICC).

Kuwait National Women's team sponsored by Al Muzaini Exchange and led by Captain Amna Sharif departed for Kuala Lumpur to participating in the 2024 ACC Women's Premier Cup T20I scheduled for 9th - 18th February 2024. Malaysian Cricket Association (MCA) will be

CRICKET

hosting this tournament across four (4) venues in the country. The tournament comprises teams from Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Nepal, Hong Kong, China, Myanmar, Bhutan, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Singapore, Japan, Qatar and Maldives with four (4) groups of four (4) teams each will be competing against each other in a single round-robin group stage format, following which the top two (2) teams in each of the groups will advance to the quarterfinals.

The winner and the runners-up in the Premier Cup will qualify for the ACC Women's Asia Cup 2024 tournament, set to take place in July. The four (4) semifinalists from the Premier Cup will qualify for the ACC Women's Emerging Asia Cup 2025 tournament. All matches in the tournament will carry ICC team ranking points. Women's teams of Japan and Indonesia will be taking part as special invitees, as announced by ACC in 2022 towards their pathway tournaments for 2023 and 2024.

The Kuwait National Women's team, arrived early in Malaysia on February 2nd, will engage in a 3 T20I bilateral series on February 4th, 5th, and 6th as part of their preparations for the ACC Women's T20 Premier Cup.