



tennis

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16 PAGES

150 FILS

DEPUTY P.M. CALLS FOR UNIFIED EFFORTS AMID RISING CONCERNS
'Act decisively on security threats'

Mol urges child supervision, traffic caution during Ramadan

Commerce moves to verify authenticity of certificates

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Minister of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Al-Joan, has instructed all departments under his authority to conduct a comprehensive inventory of the educational certificates of employees...

KUWAIT CITY, March 21, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, emphasized today the importance of unified efforts and coordination across sectors...

dersecretaries of the Ministry of Interior. He congratulated the newly appointed undersecretaries for earning the trust of the political leadership, recognizing their dedicated efforts in safeguarding national security.

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Day by Day

THE saying "whoever lives by deception dies of poverty" rings true for swindlers whose lives often lead to imprisonment, persecution, and legal proceedings.

Those who resort to deception not only harm themselves but also corrupt their children and families. By feeding them ill-gotten gains, they subject their loved ones to a life built on lies, deceit, and falsehoods.

Eventually, the truth comes to light, and they face the consequences of their actions. Such individuals are met with disdain and condemnation from society.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

'Amend Constitution'

Court to rule Sunday on 'disqualifications'

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The Court of Appeals has set a session on Sunday to rule on the disqualification cases of 2024 parliamentary election candidates...

Earlier, the Administrative Court canceled the decision to disqualify Marzouq Al-Khalifa and Ahmed Mutee; thereby, putting their names back to the list of candidates for the upcoming parliamentary election.

The court rejected the appeal of Fifth Constituency candidates Jaber Al-Muhailbi and Marzouq Al-Habini against the decision to remove them from the list of candidates.

The court received electoral appeals from some candidates disqualified by the Ministry of Interior, demanding in their appeals to cancel the decision to disqualify them and re-register their candidacy in the electoral district in which they were registered.

This came after the ministry decided to disqualify some candidates for failing to fulfill one of the electoral conditions due to their conviction for the crime of participating in by-elections.

The ministry informed Ahmed Mutee, Jaber Al-Muhailbi, Marzouq Al-Habini, Marzouq Al-Khalifa, Sheikh Mishal Al-Malik, Mohammad Al-Juwailih, Walid Al-Nasser, Mohammad Al-Azmi, Hani Hussein, Adel Al-Saeedi and Mubarak Trad about their disqualification; in addition to three other candidates who failed to complete the registration procedures.

Meanwhile, Fourth Constituency candidate Mused Al-Qeraifa said the Constitution must be amended; because the State should not be managed according to the mentalities of the people in the 1960s, "considering we are in 2024."

In a podcast interview, Al-Qeraifa stressed that Kuwait is no longer a testing field for members of the Sabah Family to be appointed as prime ministers.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of congratulations to the Republic of Namibia's President Dr. Nangolo Mbumba on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished him long-lasting health and further progress and prosperity for his country. (KUNA)

CAIRO: The Permanent Kuwaiti Representative to the League of Arab States Ambassador Talal Khalid Al-Mutairi, reaffirmed Thursday that despite the challenges, the League remains a sanctuary for all Arabs.

In honour of the 79th anniversary of the establishment of the League, the Ambassador gave a statement to KUNA saying that the League proved itself in being a home to all Arabs and an important platform for the aspirations of the Arab nation. (KUNA)

Ramadan Timings

Table with 3 columns: Time, Day, and Duration. Rows include Iftar, Imsak, and their respective times for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.



Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah chairs a security meeting with assistant undersecretaries of the Ministry of Interior on Thursday.

Other Voices

10 records set in China-Kuwait relations

By Zhang Jianwei
Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait

March 22 this year marks the 53rd anniversary of the Establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kuwait. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, China-Kuwait relations have withstood the vicissitudes of the international landscape and enjoyed sound and steady growth...

I. Kuwait was the first among Gulf countries to send a senior delegation to visit the People's Republic of China (PRC). In February 1965, the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who was then Minister of Finance, Commerce and Industry led a delegation to the PRC.



Ambassador Zhang Jianwei

II. Kuwait was the first Gulf Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC. In March 1971, China and Kuwait announced the establishment of diplomatic relations, opening the door to friendly exchanges between Gulf Arab countries and China.

III. Kuwait has in China the largest diplomatic presence across the world. Kuwait is now represented by four diplomatic missions that include the embassy in Beijing and three general consulates in the cities of Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

IV. Kuwait was the first Arab state to offer and has made itself the Arab state offering the largest amount of government concessional loans to China. In 1982, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) started to offer China concessional loans.

V. Kuwait is the only GCC country where a Chinese medical team is stationed. As early as 1976, China began to dispatch a medical team to Kuwait. In the ensuing four decades and more, China has sent to Kuwait a total of 245 medical workers in 24 groups that have diagnosed and treated over 800,000 patients.

VI. China has become the largest trading partner of Kuwait. China has remained the biggest trading partner of Kuwait for nine years in a row, meaning that economic and trade cooperation between the two sides has become and will continue to serve as an important anchor.

Continued on Page 5

Healing amidst crisis

Kuwaiti doctor honored for Gaza humanitarian efforts

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: According to Dr. Hussein Al-Quwaian, a consultant orthopedic surgeon and a member of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society's volunteer medical team in the Gaza Strip, the team performed 23 complex surgical operations during its short visit to the Gaza Strip.

In a press statement issued to Al-Seyassah on the sidelines of the annual ghabqa of the Kuwait Association of Surgeons the day before yesterday during which he was honored, Dr. Al-Quwaian said, "I am ashamed of this honor, as I am an orthopedic surgeon, just like all the other orthopedic surgeons in Kuwait whose desire and willingness I trust to travel to help and support the Palestinian medical team in Gaza, if they are given the opportunity to do so."

Continued on Page 5

Finance reports 'reduced' deficit

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The Ministry of Finance disclosed that the total general budget deficit for the first ten months of the fiscal year 2023-2024 stood at 1.09 billion dinars, marking a notable decrease from the anticipated deficit projected to reach approximately 6.8 billion dinars by the fiscal year's end, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to a report issued by the Ministry, budget revenues from April 1, 2023, to the end of January 2024, reached around 17.8 billion dinars, predominantly sourced from oil revenues amounting to 16.3 billion dinars. Non-oil revenues totaled approximately 1.4 billion dinars, with taxes and fees contributing 347 million dinars.



Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, receives visiting US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken in Jeddah late Wednesday night to discuss bilateral and regional issues. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr 04:32 Asr 15:23
 Sunrise... 05:51 Maghrib .. 18:00
 Zohr 11:55 Isha 19:17

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and cloudy to partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance

for rising dust over open areas.

By Night: Rather cold and partly cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-32 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	26	17
Kuwait Airport	27	13
Abdaly	26	13
Jahra	27	14
Salmiyah	25	19
Nuwaisib	26	15
Wafra	26	13

Minister issues transfer orders of 7 Mol officials

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah recently issued decisions on the transfer and appointment of seven officials in the Ministry of Interior, reports Al-Qabas daily.

These decisions include the transfer of Assistant Undersecretary Major General Badr Al-Baloul from the Education Sector to the Correctional Institutions and Prisons Sector and Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Sector Major General Abdullah Al-Rajaib to the Office of the Minister.

The minister also appointed Major General Hamad Al-Munaifi as Assistant Undersecretary for the Public Security Sector, Major General Yousef Al-Khadda as Assistant Undersecretary for the Operations and Traffic Sector, Major General Fawaz Al-Khaled as Assistant Undersecretary for the Education Sector, Major General Mujbil bin Shawq as Assistant Undersecretary for the Borders Sector and Major General Ali Al-Adwani as Assistant Undersecretary for the Residence Sector.



Sheikh Fahad



KUNA photo

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya is pictured with heads of diplomatic missions and international organizations in Kuwait.

FM Al-Yahya receives foreign envoys to Kuwait

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya received on Wednesday heads of diplomatic missions of several countries and international organizations in Kuwait on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

The minister conveyed to his guests the greetings

of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

He expressed appreciation of the deep-rooted relations between the State of Kuwait and the friendly countries and international organizations.

Al-Yahya also expressed best wishes for his guests and their countries, as well as the Arab and Muslim nations.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and senior officials of the Foreign Ministry. (KUNA)

'Bonus to be deposited around Eid'

MoSA allocates KD1.5 million for disbursing 'rewards' to workers

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulaziz Sari announced that the Ministry of Finance has approved approximately 1.5 million dinars for disbursing rewards to eligible employees, matching the previous year's allocation, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Despite an increase in the ministry's overall workforce and those entitled to bonuses, efforts are underway to deposit the bonuses into the accounts of eligible individuals before or immediately after Eid al-Fitr.

In a press statement, Sari explained that annual evaluations for all ministry employees have been completed in accordance with the Civil Service Commission's guidelines.

These evaluations are based on job performance, with 70% attributed to ministry performance and 30% to bureau performance, verified through fingerprint attendance records. Efforts are being made to expedite the evaluation process for simple cases.

Sari emphasized that rewards will

only be granted to eligible employees who meet all disbursement criteria, including having worked a minimum of 180 days throughout the year.

The value of excellent work rewards varies according to job grade, with assistant agents receiving up to 2,000 dinars and department heads receiving up to 1,000 dinars. Employees must contact the Civil Service Commission for approval before receiving rewards for service-related positions.

Regarding automatic linking with the Service Bureau for attendance monitoring, Sari stated that the Ministry completed the process last year and is awaiting approval from Bureau officials.

This linkage facilitates monitoring attendance and implementing penalties for non-compliance, such as delay and sickness deductions. Additionally, the Ministry is awaiting approval from five government agencies to complete the automatic connection for disbursing social assistance.

KPC CEO confirms development of Durra field jointly with Saudi Arabia

211 nationalities withdrawn from March 4 till date

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah has confirmed the development of Durrah field jointly with Saudi Arabia, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Sheikh Nawaf disclosed that "the design phase of the project will be completed in the next few months. We will soon take the investment decision to start work in the field and develop it."

The Standard & Poor's Commodity Trading Agency quoted Sheikh Nawaf as saying during the 'CERAweek' conference organized by the agency, "Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is planning to start work in an offshore oil area for the first time. It will seek assistance from major international oil companies as it aims to enhance its declining production capacity. We are looking forward to a new business model in the new maritime work area to attract global expertise. Kuwait currently produces less than three million barrels per day due to OPEC+ cuts, but it intends to increase its production to more than four million barrels per day compared to 2.4 million barrels per day in February."

He pointed out that Kuwait is working hard to increase the refining of crude oil in its three refineries to maximize its exports of the most profitable light oil, explaining that these refineries currently refine 1.4 million barrels per day, with expectations to raise it to 1.6 million barrels soon.

He said Al-Zour Refinery works with as much oil refining as possible. "We are trying to maximize the capacity of the refinery, while obtaining lower returns in the refining market. This means that we can increase Kuwaiti oil exports to achieve higher returns."

As for the Red Sea tensions, he indicated that KPC was forced to divert its shipments around the Cape of Good Hope due to the Red Sea attacks; while giving the naval crews of its tankers autonomy regarding sailing to the Red Sea.



Sheikh Nawaf

Other Voices

Juha and mission impossible!

By Ahmad alsarraf

One of the Abbasid governors announced that whoever taught his favorite mule, which was then a 13-cylinder Volvo, to read and write, he would give him a thousand dinars, and if he failed, his head would be cut off.

Many idiots applied for the task, failed, and had their necks chopped off! But after a while, "Juha" advanced to the task, and returned from the governor's palace, dragging the mule behind him, amidst the ridicule of the people of the city, and when they asked him about the secret of his madness, when he was known for his intelligence, he responded by saying that he asked the governor to first give him the thousand dinars, and give him ten years so that he could complete his mission!

Everyone laughed at his stupidity. How could a mule learn to read even after ten years? So Juha justified his behavior by saying that he would enjoy the money in the coming years, and then one of the following calamities would most likely occur: the mule would die, or the governor would die, or he would die!

I remembered that anecdote as I read about the Ministry of Public Works beginning to solve the problem of damaged roads and awarding contracts to maintain some residential areas to local companies.

I have no doubt in the good faith of the honorable Minister Noura Al-Mashaan, and in her sincerity. From my meeting with her, based on her generous request, I found in her the determination, the intention to work, and the courage to confront the problems.

She is qualified for the task, and it would not have been advisable to burden her with the "ministry" of the municipality. With all the corruption and concerns of the Ministry of Works, I hope with all my heart that she will return as a Minister of Works (only) in the new ministry.

I told her in the meeting that it was necessary to speed up the awarding of contracts to local companies, as the idea of using foreign companies was completely ridiculous and impractical! I also told her, and she was aware of

this, that it was very difficult to seek help from the Ministry's employees and its army of brave engineers, the majority of whom were not "always creative," men or women, to carry out the task of supervising, even the least difficult and complex work.

It was therefore necessary for someone from "outside the Ministry" to hire for this work, even if temporarily, due to the need to move quickly, especially with the presence of a Sharia graduate at the head of a completely technical ministry (!).

It seems that she was not convinced by my proposal, or did not obtain approvals. I learned from my sources that it is not possible to seek the help of professional and external parties to carry out the supervision process, for logistical and financial reasons, and this is understandable!

Consequently, the ministry's supervision of the contractors' work will be of a quality other than what it requested, which is consistent with logic, and this may result in the situation remaining as it is, and perhaps we will discover after a few years that the condition of the roads has returned to what it was, then the theory of the three possibilities that he developed will apply."

Juha had this in mind when he pledged to teach the mule how to read! After five years, when the devastation begins to appear in public, who will remember who was responsible? We hope we are wrong, but we have learned from our experiences with the Ministry of Works to be careful when assessing the level of the Ministry's supervision!

I hope that Madam Minister will ask all contractors to place clear signs in various project sites, clearly showing the name of the implementing company, so that people will remember that it is the one that implemented the project, and the company will subsequently either be praised or cursed and this is a kind of indirect deterrence.

We also do not forget to extend our sincere thanks to Minister Noura Al-Mashaan for her success in overcoming all obstacles to ending the situation of the "Abdul Razzaq" road tunnel, which for years represented evidence of the devastation and destruction of the government administration!

We wish her success, and she deserves all the support and continuation of her "almost impossible" mission.

The discussion on the same topic will continue in tomorrow's article ...

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



KUNA photo

The 49th relief plane from the Kuwaiti Air Bridge to provide relief aid to Gaza is ready for take-off at Kuwait Airport.

National Guard lauds Amir's HQ visit

Call to implement royal directives

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf recently presided over the meeting of the Supreme Council of the National Guard, with Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai and senior officials in attendance, reports Al-Jarida daily.



Sheikh Faisal

Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf affirmed that he is proud of the honorable visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, to the National Guard General Presidency where he met with his sons - the leaders and officers - during the holy month. This is an annual tradition that embodies the political leadership's interest in the military sector, he asserted.

He stressed that the lofty directives of His Highness the Amir during the visit are a beacon that lights the way and establishes firm rules and a road map for the continuation of the work and achievement in the National Guard. He confirmed that the National Guard draws lessons from such lofty directives to continue to play its role in maintaining national security and stability; while supporting the ministries of Defense and Interior, Kuwait Firefighting Force and State institutions, especially those of a strategic nature, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir.

He said he instructed the commanders and officers to implement the royal directives; follow up the implementation of action, modernization and development plans in all areas; go out to the field and follow the open-door policy in order to achieve the vision of the political leadership, and preserve the process of institutional excellence that always receives praise from His Highness the Amir.

211 nationalities pulled: The number of individuals whose nationality was withdrawn from March 4 till date (within two weeks) totaled 211, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a reliable source.

The source revealed that the forged and dual nationalities files are currently on the table of the Supreme Committee for Citizenship and are subject to scrutiny in preparation for withdrawal after verifying suspicions.

The source explained that the withdrawal files are divided into these categories: counterfeited, fraud, deception in obtaining citizenship, dual nationalities, and non-Kuwaiti women who married Kuwaitis for the purpose of obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship and divorced immediately after their naturalization; that is, through the husband agreeing with the wife to divorce even before their marriage. He said those with dual nationalities can either give up or retain the Kuwaiti citizenship.

The source added the Ministry of Interior received 407 reports about cases of fraud and dual nationalities after opening the hotline for receiving such reports, and they are currently being carefully studied and investigated to confirm suspicions before submitting them to the Supreme Committee for Citizenship for the necessary action.

The source pointed out that the citizenship withdrawal decisions are based on relevant decrees and the decision of the Supreme Committee for Citizenship, indicating that such decisions will be issued successively.

Appeal rejected: The Constitutional Court ruled not to accept the demand to halt the 2024 National Assembly elections, in which the plaintiff based the claim on the invalidity of the decree of necessity amending the electoral law, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Lawyer Saad Al-Lamie had filed an appeal and demanded that the elections be halted and that the invitation decree be invalidated due to the absence of a state of necessity and the unconstitutionality of restricting the exercise of the right to vote by adhering to Islamic law.

Ex-MP acquitted in various charges

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The Court of Appeal has acquitted a former Member of Parliament (MP) of charges related to smuggling and money laundering amounting to 257 million dinars. The ruling also included a verdict for two Jordanians, sentencing them to 3 and 8 years in prison respectively, along with a fine of one million dinars.

The Public Prosecution had accused the defendants of engaging in money laundering, involving a substantial sum of a quar-

ter-billion dinars. The accusation revolved around the deliberate possession and acquisition of funds known to be obtained from fraudulent activities. It was alleged that they collected these funds through various means, including depositing them into personal accounts and a company owned by the former MP.

The investigation revealed a complex network of financial transactions involving banking institutions, real estate companies, an engineering consulting office, and other entities owned by the primary defendant in Kuwaiti banks.

College of Admin Sciences partners with Coded Academy for tech initiatives

KU College of Dentistry hosts World Oral Health Day awareness event

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The College of Dentistry at Kuwait University recently organized an awareness event in celebration of World Oral Health Day, under the patronage and presence of Dr. Rashid Al-Azmi, the Acting Dean of the College, in collaboration with the International Hospital and Ultramed Company, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Dr. Iman Behbehani, Outreach Awareness Program Officer and Assistant Professor in the Department of Preventive Sciences and Growth and Development Sciences at the college, highlighted the significance of the event in line with World Oral Health Day. She emphasized the importance of raising awareness about oral health among society members, stressing the college's commitment to social responsibility through education, awareness, and dispelling misconceptions regarding oral hygiene practices and dietary habits detrimental to oral health. Dr. Rashid Al-Azmi, the Acting Dean of the College, underscored the college's dedication to equipping students with effective communication

skills with diverse societal segments. He emphasized the importance of student participation in awareness campaigns and volunteer activities, both domestically and internationally, to promote the adage "Prevention is better than cure." Al-Azmi encouraged community members to undergo regular oral examinations and adhere to preventive measures for maintaining healthy teeth and gums. Meanwhile, the College of Administrative Sciences at Kuwait University and the Coded Academy for Human Resources Development recently

forged a memorandum of understanding, solidifying their joint strategic cooperation on initiatives like "Kuwait Programming" and "Technology Pioneers." The signing took place during a press conference held at the Cultural Center in Al-Shaddadiya, reports Al-Jarida daily. Ahmed Marafi, CEO of Coded Academy, emphasized the initiative's nonprofit nature, aiming to educate secondary school students in programming and cultivate a tech-savvy generation capable of addressing challenges through technology.

Marafi highlighted the initiative's past achievements, having served over 2,500 students, many of whom pursued technical academic careers in fields such as data science and computer science, while others embarked on entrepreneurial ventures. Dr. Adel Al-Waqyan, Acting Dean of the College of Administrative Sciences, underscored the college's alignment with the academy's objectives in fostering youth engagement in technology, information technology, and programming across different age groups.

Walid Al-Khashti, CEO of Zain, expressed a commitment to enhancing students' skills in technology, information technology, and programming, aligning with the demands of contemporary labor markets. Yousef Al-Ruwaih, Deputy Director General for Public Relations and Media at Kuwait Finance House, emphasized the importance of initiatives like these in meeting the labor market's needs. He stressed the significance of nurturing a conscious generation interested in such initiatives to meet evolving demands in the job market.

'KIMS trainers bonuses hiked as MoH okays quarterly payment'

'Procedures on for unified e-technical file for drug registration'

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Informed health sources disclosed that increased bonuses for trainers at the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialties (KIMS) have been transferred to beneficiaries' bank accounts in recent days. The Al-Jarida report quoting informed sources said, while some beneficiaries have already received their rewards, others can expect to receive them in the coming period. The Ministry of Health approved the disbursement of raised remuneration for trainers at the institute on a quarterly basis, departing from the previous annual practice. The new remuneration structure includes 500 dinars for consultants, 400 dinars for first specialists, and 300 dinars for first registrars. Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, Director of the Health Communication Center and official spokesman for the Ministry of Health, affirmed the ministry's commitment to implementing the objectives and projects outlined in the government's 100-day work plan. He announced the

opening of a new branch of the Medical Council in Jahra Governorate next week, following the directives of Health Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, aiming to enhance healthcare accessibility for all patients. Furthermore, Dr. Al-Sanad reported the recent inauguration of five dental departments in primary health care centers across various governorates in Kuwait, along with the Al-Jahra Specialized Dental Center for children. In a move toward digital transformation, procedures have commenced for implementing a unified electronic technical file for drug registration. This system, adopted globally by pharmaceutical regulatory bodies, ensures the quality, effectiveness, and safety of medicines circulating in Kuwait. Additionally, Dr. Al-Sanad announced the initiation of an electronic system for managing laboratory information in pharmaceutical laboratories within the ministry's Department of

Registration and Control of Medicinal and Plant Drugs, further advancing digitalization efforts across various ministry sectors. **Bid to address members' concerns:** Dr. Khaled Al-Saifi, President of the Faculty Association for Applied Education and Training, has called for several measures to address faculty members' concerns, including the separation of five applied faculties from the "applied" body to come under the Council of Public Universities, reports Al-Jarida daily. Speaking at a ceremony organized by the association at its headquarters, attended by Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, the director of the authority, and faculty members from various educational institutions, Dr. Al-Saifi emphasized the importance of addressing faculty issues and strengthening ties between academics and authority leaders. The event also honored faculty members who have made significant contributions to their fields, including Dr. Qais Majeed, Head of the Science Department in Basic Education.



Dr Al-Awadhi



A photo from the College of Dentistry's 'World Oral Health Day' event.



Al-Jarida photos. Signing of MoU between College of Administrative Sciences and Coded Academy.

KPS to host 1st pharmacy confab in May

Conference set to boost health care & career prospects for pharmacists

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The Kuwait Pharmaceutical Society (KPS) announced the launch of the 1st Kuwait Pharmacy Conference to be held on May 4 and 5 with the aim of developing the pharmacy sector and highlighting all the career opportunities available to pharmacists, in addition to improving health care in all pharmaceutical sectors. In this regard, President of the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Society Abdullah Al-Enezi, in his speech recently during the society's annual Ramadan ghabqa, affirmed the continuation of serious and sincere work to raise the level of pharmaceutical performance within the country's advanced health system. He praised the society's unlimited ambitions to achieve more of the hopes that every pharmacist aspires to, while preserving the gains achieved by those who preceded them in holding the secretariat of this national edifice since its inception.



Al-Enezi

Approve Also, the Secretary-General of the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Society pharmacist Ali Hadi expressed his hope that the National Assembly will soon approve the new pharmacy profession law, which will be the first of the society's achievements in the next stage. He stressed the importance of the law in addressing the problems and challenges facing the pharmaceutical sector, and developing appropriate solutions to them with sound legal formulation. In a press statement, Hadi explained that the law reflects in its articles the development of the pharmacy profession in the public and private sectors, supports the presence of Kuwaiti youth energies and the infusion of new blood into the various governmental and private pharmaceutical sectors, and develops a set of solutions to address the issue of drug shortages and maintain drug security in the country. The new law keeps pace with scientific development in the pharmacy sector, and also keeps pace with the increase in the number of pharmacists in the State of Kuwait, and preserves their rights to moral and material incentives, thus preserving the profession and enabling pharmacists to practice the profession according to the latest international standards. Regarding the expected health career structure, and the position of the pharmaceutical sector towards it, Hadi said one of the matters that is of interest to the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Society is the structure of the pharmaceutical sector within the

'Residential plots' go under hammer

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Al-Enmaa Real Estate Company conducted a real estate auction at the Four Seasons Hotel on Tuesday, featuring 11 residential plots of land situated in the Yarmouk, Al-Zahraa, and Hittin areas. However, only 4 plots, all located in the Yarmouk area, were successfully sold at their starting price of 3.96 million dinars, with no significant increase, reports Al-Rai daily. Among the sold plots was one measuring 1,013 square meters, with dual street frontage (Batin, Dhar, and Sikka), fetching a price of 1.09 million dinars. Additionally, three plots, each measuring 920 square meters, were sold for 957 thousand dinars each. The remaining residential plots, with various areas, remained unsold, totaling an initial value of 5.18 million dinars. The auction was conducted in compliance with Penal Ruling No. 1499 of 2008, which governs the management of public funds, and was overseen by the Public Prosecution.

body of the Ministry of Health. He indicated that there are many studies and observations that were prepared by the board of directors to be submitted as proposals to the Ministry of Health to take into consideration. Hadi stressed the society's keenness to approve any functional structure for the pharmacy sector that keeps pace with the needs of modern practices of the pharmacy profession in the government and private sectors, thus providing job and investment opportunities for Kuwaiti pharmaceutical energies. **Challenges** Regarding the challenges facing the pharmacy sector currently, Hadi explained that there are two types of challenges - global and local. The first revolves around the availability of some types of medicines and the supply of medicines and medical equipment in all countries of the world, including the State of Kuwait. There is the need to develop, pay attention to, and address local challenges to achieve the maximum degree of functional efficiency, by placing them at the center of attention of specialists to develop the pharmaceutical services provided in the country. These include regulating the work of pharmacies in the private sector, providing medicines in the two sectors, ensuring the supply of medicines and drug security, and achieving self-sufficiency of essential medicines in the country.

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World News Roundup

Europe

Kyiv hit by Russia missiles

Gething elected as Wales' 1st minister

LONDON, March 21, (AP): **Vaughan Gething** was elected first minister of Wales on Wednesday, becoming the first Black leader of a government in the UK.

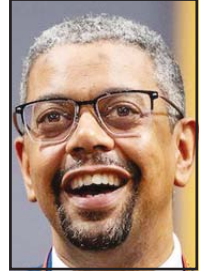
Gething was elected government leader by members of the Welsh parliament in Cardiff, four days after winning the contest to be leader of Wales' governing Labour Party. He secured 27 of 51 votes in the legislature, the Senedd, where Labour is the biggest party.

Gething, the son of a Welsh father and a Zambian mother, said Wales is now "the first nation anywhere in Europe to be led by a Black person."

"It is a matter of pride for a modern Wales but also a daunting responsibility for me - and one that I do not take lightly," he told lawmakers.

He said he wanted to lead a country that "can celebrate our differences and take pride in all of those things that draw us together."

Gething will be sworn in once his appointment is approved by King Charles III - a formality.



Gething

Three of the UK's four governments now have nonwhite leaders. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has Indian heritage, while Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf was born to a Pakistani family in Britain.

Northern Ireland is led jointly by Michelle O'Neill and Emma Little-Pengelly, meaning that for the first time there are no white male heads of government in the UK.

Wales, which has a population of about 3 million, is one of four parts of the United Kingdom, along with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The British government in London is responsible for defense, foreign affairs and other UK-wide issues, while administrations in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast control areas such as education and health.

Gething was Wales' health minister during the COVID-19 pandemic. As economy minister since 2021, he has had to deal with fallout from Tata Steel's plan to close both blast furnaces at its plant in Port Talbot, eliminating 2,800 jobs at one of Wales' biggest employers.

Portugal's center-right wins: A center-right alliance led by the Social Democratic Party has won Portugal's general election by a slender margin and is set to form a minority government that could have a difficult term in office as a radical-right populist party that came third in the voting tries to get a hand on the levers of power.

Results published late Wednesday after votes from abroad were counted to decide the last four lawmakers from the March 10 balloting gave the Democratic Alliance a final tally of 80 seats in the 230-seat National Assembly, Portugal's parliament.

The center-left Socialist Party placed second with 78 seats and has said it won't stand in the way of the Democratic Alliance forming a minority government in an upcoming parliamentary vote.

Wilders taps 2 officials to lead talks: The Dutch parliament named two new go-betweens Wednesday to lead negotiations to form the next ruling coalition, four months after the anti-immigration party led by Geert Wilders won a national election.

The appointment of economist and former lawmaker Elbert Dijkgraaf, and Richard van Zwoel, a former senior civil servant who now sits on a key government advisory panel, sets the stage for a new phase in government talks.

Four parties - Wilders' Party for Freedom, the center-right People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, the reformist New Social Contract and pro-agriculture populist Farmer People Movement - are seeking to build what they are calling a "program Cabinet" made up of politicians and experts from outside politics.

Irish PM quits for personal reasons: Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar announced Wednesday that he is stepping down for reasons that he said were both personal and political.

Varadkar announced Wednesday he is quitting immediately as head of the center-right Fine Gael party, part of Ireland's coalition government. He'll be replaced as prime minister in April after a party leadership contest.

"My reasons for stepping down now are personal and political, but mainly political," Varadkar said, without elaborating. He said he plans to remain in parliament as a backbench lawmaker and has "definite" future plans.

Russia fires 31 missiles at Kyiv: Russia fired 31 ballistic and cruise missiles at Kyiv before dawn Thursday in the first attack on the Ukrainian capital in 44 days, officials said. Air defenses shot down all the incoming missiles, though 13 people including a child were injured by falling wreckage, they said.

Residents of Kyiv were woken up by loud explosions around 5 a.m. as the missiles arrived at roughly the same time from different directions, said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv City Administration.

Ukraine's air force said Russia launched two ballistic missiles and 29 cruise missiles against the capital. Kyiv has better air defenses than most regions of the large country. The missile interception rate is frequently high, rendering Russian attacks on the capital significantly less successful than during the early days of the war.

US national security adviser visits Kyiv: President Joe Biden's top foreign policy adviser Jake Sullivan sought to reassure Ukrainians during an unannounced visit to Kyiv Wednesday that the U.S. will continue to support their efforts to fend off Russia's two-year-old invasion.

The national security adviser expressed optimism that lawmakers in Washington will break a month-long logjam and approve tens of billions of dollars in military and economic aid to Ukraine. Russian forces have exploited the shortfall to make some gains in the conflict.

"We will get a strong bipartisan vote in Congress," Sullivan said during a press conference. "We will get that money to you as we should, so I don't think we need to speak about Plan B today." He also acknowledged that the process had "taken too long."



US President Joe Biden speaks about an agreement to provide Intel with up to \$8.5 billion in direct funding and \$11 billion in loans for computer chip plants in Arizona, Ohio, New Mexico and Oregon, on March 20, in Chandler, Ariz., at the Intel Ocotillo Campus. (AP)

Politics

United Steelworkers Union endorses US prez

Biden touts Arizona as America's 'future'

CHANDLER, Ariz., March 21, (AP): US President Joe Biden on Wednesday celebrated an agreement to provide Intel with up to \$8.5 billion in direct funding and \$11 billion in loans for computer chip plants around the country, talking up the investment in the political battleground state of Arizona and calling it a way of "bringing the future back to America."

The Biden administration has predicted that the cash infusion should help the US boost its global share of advanced chip production from zero to 20%. The Democratic president highlighted the investment while visiting Intel's Ocotillo campus in Chandler, Arizona, where he inspected silicon wafers and expressed amazement at how thin the chips are.

In remarks after a tour, Biden pivoted to the impact his policies could have on the US economy as he tries to translate his policy wins into a political boost ahead of November's election. Intel plans to invest in facilities in Arizona, Ohio, Oregon and New Mexico, with some of the government money helping to support workforce development.

"This isn't just about investing in America," Biden said, "It's about investing in the American people as well."

Produce

Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said the deal reached through her department would put the United States in a position to produce 20% of the world's most advanced chips by 2030, up from zero. The U.S. designs advanced chips, but its inability to make them domestically has emerged as a national security and economic risk.

"Failure is not an option - leading-edge chips are the core of our innovation system, especially when it comes to advances in artificial intelligence and our military systems," Raimondo said on a call with reporters. "We can't just design chips. We have to make them in America."

The funding announcement came amid the heat of the 2024 presidential campaign. Biden has been telling voters that his policies have led to a

resurgence in US manufacturing and job growth. His message is a direct challenge to former President Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, who raised tariffs while in the White House and wants to do so again on the promise of protecting US factory jobs from China.

Biden told Intel employees during his tour, "You're bringing the future back to America."

Biden narrowly beat Trump in Arizona in 2020 by a margin of 49.4% to 49.1%.

After the announcement, Biden flew to Texas to headline a pair of Dallas-area campaign fundraisers, with the first event a sellout that raised \$2.5 million, said trial lawyer Russell Budd, one of the hosts.

"Mr. President, you're the hottest ticket in Texas tonight," Budd told Biden.

The United Steelworkers Union has endorsed US President **Joe Biden**, giving him support from another large labor union.

Operated

The announcement Wednesday by the Pittsburgh-based union came less than a week after Biden voiced opposition to the planned sale of U.S. Steel to Nippon Steel of Japan, saying it's vital that the company remain American owned and operated.

The USW, which represents 850,000 workers in metals, mining, rubber and other industries, said Biden has a track record of supporting retirement security, affordable health care and laws that help workers, all important issues to its members.

The AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers, and several other unions previously endorsed Democrat Biden in his race against **Donald Trump**, the presumptive Republican nominee. The Teamsters union has talked with both candidates and has yet to announce its pick.

By opposing Nippon's planned acquisition of US Steel, Biden chose to support unionized workers at the risk of upsetting the business community and an essential ally in Japan. Also, U.S. Steel is headquartered in Pennsylv-

ania, a key swing state in this year's election.

US President Joe Biden opened a new line of attack against former president Donald Trump on Wednesday, asking and answering the classic "are you better off today than you were four years ago" question to remind voters of what it was like when Trump was in office.

Criticized

The Democratic president also criticized Trump for saying over the weekend that a "bloodbath" would follow if he loses to Biden again in November. Trump and his allies defended the rhetoric, saying the Republican's comments were about the US auto industry. Trump's critics had a different take.

"Folks, we can't stand for this," Biden said in his first public comments on Trump's "bloodbath" claim. "We have to say it as Americans, as Democrats, as independents, as Republicans, that there's no place for political violence ... ever. Period."

Biden sought to turn the tables on Trump with the "better off" riff. "Speaking of Donald Trump, just a few days ago, he asked the famous question at one of his rallies: Are you better off today than you were four years ago?" Biden said at a pair of Dallas-area campaign fundraisers, one of which brought in \$2.5 million, one of the hosts said.

"Well Donald, I'm glad you asked that question man because I hope everyone in the country takes a moment to think back when it was like in March of 2020," Biden said.

The Democratic president reminded the audience that the coronavirus had reached America, hospital emergency rooms were overcrowded, first responders were risking their lives to care for the sick and some nurses wore trash bags due to the scarcity of personal protective equipment.

Morgues were being set up outside of hospitals because so many people were dying, unemployment shot up, the stock market crashed and grocery store shelves were bare, Biden said.



Britain's Queen Camilla is welcomed by Lieutenant Governor of Isle of Man Sir John Lorimer, outside the Government House in Onchan, Isle of Man on March 20. (AP)



Ivey

Trump

America

Inmate, accomplice still at large: Authorities are still searching for a white supremacist Idaho prison inmate and an accomplice who fled after the accomplice shot and wounded corrections officers as they were transporting the inmate from a Boise hospital, according to police.

Police said Nicholas Umphenour is suspected of shooting two corrections officers during Wednesday's ambush in the ambulance bay at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center. A warrant with a \$2 million bond has been issued for his arrest on two charges of aggravated battery against law enforcement and one charge of aiding and abetting an escape, police said.

He and inmate Skylar Meade drove off early Wednesday after the shooting in a gray 2020 Honda Civic with Idaho plates. It's not known where they are or where they are headed, police said Wednesday evening.

Three corrections officers were shot and wounded during the attack - two allegedly by Umphenour and one by responding police.

Officials described Meade, 31, as a white supremacist gang member. Meade was sentenced to 20 years in 2017 for shooting at a sheriff's sergeant during a high-speed chase. (AP)

Former deputy gets 40 years: Two former Mississippi deputies wept in court Wednesday as a federal judge sentenced them to years in prison and condemned their cruelty for breaking into a home with four other white officers and torturing two Black men.

US District Judge Tom Lee sentenced Christian Dedmon, 29, to 40 years in prison and Daniel Opydyke, 28, to 17.5 years. Lee said Dedmon carried out the most "shocking, brutal and cruel attacks imaginable" against the two Black men, Michael Corey Jenkins and Eddie Terrell Parker, and against a white man during a traffic stop weeks earlier.

Dedmon did not look at Jenkins and Parker as he apologized Wednesday, saying he'd never forgive himself for the pain he caused.

Jenkins, who has trouble speaking after being shot in the mouth during the January 2023 attack, said in a statement read by his lawyer that Dedmon's actions were the most depraved of any of those who attacked him. (AP)

Alabama governor signs bill: Alabama



A firefighter walks amongst the debris after a Russian attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on March 21. Around 31 cruise and ballistic missiles were shot down over Kyiv on Thursday morning, said Serhii Popko, the head of Kyiv City Administration. The missiles were entering Kyiv simultaneously from various directions in a first missile attack on the capital in 44 days. (AP)

diversity, equity and inclusion programs, also known as DEI, on college campuses. Republicans say the programs deepen divisions and promote a particular political viewpoint. But opponents say it is a rollback of hard-won advances and programs that welcome underrepresented student populations.

"My administration has and will continue to value Alabama's rich diversity, however, I refuse to allow a few bad actors on college campuses - or wherever else for that matter - to go under the acronym of DEI, using taxpayer funds, to push their liberal political movement counter to what the majority of Alabamians believe," Ivey said in a statement. (AP)

'Don't let Trump forgo bond: New York state lawyers urged an appeals court Wednesday not to buy former President **Donald Trump**'s claims that it's impossible to post a bond fully covering a \$454 million civil fraud judgment while he appeals.

The presumptive Republican nominee's lawyers said earlier this week that he couldn't find an underwriter willing to take on the entire amount. But the state is arguing that Trump and his co-defendants didn't explore every option.

The "defendants fail to propose a serious alternative to fully secure the judgment," Dennis Fan, a lawyer in the state attorney general's office, wrote in papers sent to the appeals court. (AP)

Lat/Am

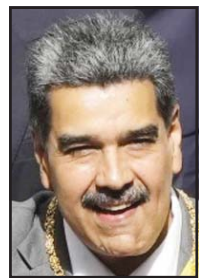
Communities targeted

Venezuela govt keeps 'arresting' opponents

MEXICO CITY, March 21. (AP): As Venezuela's government would have it, President Nicolás Maduro and members of his inner circle have been the target of several conspiracies since last year that could have left them injured or worse.

Few details have been released about the alleged plots. But the government has cited them in the arrests of more than 30 people since January including a prominent human rights attorney and staffers of the leading opposition presidential candidate.

Local and international nongovernment groups, the United Nations and foreign governments have described the crackdown as a pretext to stifle political opposition ahead of the July 28 president election in which Maduro, in power since 2013, will seek a new six-year term.



Maduro

The latest arrests took place Wednesday shortly before the country's top prosecutor announced arrest warrants for nine people working with Machado's campaign whom he accused of participating in one plot.

Oscar Murillo, general coordinator for the Venezuelan human rights group Provea, said officials are coordinating actions of the police, military and civic groups to tamp down on any anti-government activity.

"This has translated into greater political repression and a deepening of the policy of persecution that seeks to break civil society at a time when perhaps the ideal thing would be to be talking about the public policies needed to reverse poverty or inequality in Venezuela," Murillo said.

Plots

Attorney General Tarek William Saab has described the plots variously as aimed at attacking military installations, killing Maduro and other officials and de-stabilizing the country. He has publicly presented alleged confessions, planning documents, laptops and other items he has characterized as evidence.

Saab on Wednesday accused the nine members of the opposition, including Machado's campaign manager, of being part of a "destabilizing" plot that included demonstrations, a media campaign and plans to attack military barracks. He said two of the nine people, Dignora Hernández and Henry Alviarez - Machado's political coordinator and national coordinator respectively - had already been arrested.

The arrests of Hernández and Alviarez brings to at least six the number of Machado staffers who are in custody over their alleged participation in the plots the government claims to have foiled.

Allowing free-market proponent Machado to run in the July election would offer Venezuela its best chance of a competitive race because no other candidate has anywhere near the level of support, money or political machinery to challenge Maduro. But the self-described socialist government has barred her from office for 15 years - an administrative order upheld by the country's top court in January.

Other members of Venezuela's opposition have urged Machado to stand aside for another contender, but she has insisted on continuing her candidacy - perhaps hoping that international pressure could force Venezuela's establishment to relent on the ban.

"If the regime believes that with these actions they are going to isolate me, let me be clear: My team is Venezuela," she told reporters Wednesday. She added that her campaign continues organizing across the country and expects "much more than just well wishes" from the international community.

Machado defended her staff, stressing that all allegations against them are false.

The government has not made public any charging documents detailing allegations against the dozens of defendants in the conspiracy cases. Under Venezuelan law, court hearings are open, but in practice people, journalists and sometimes even the defendants' counsels of choice are barred from the courtroom.

Maduro has alleged the US government is behind the plans to assassinate him.

Also:

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti: Armed gangs launched new attacks in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince early Wednesday, with heavy gunfire echoing across once-peaceful communities near the Haitian capital.

Associated Press journalists reported seeing at least five bodies in and around the suburbs, and gangs blocked the entrances to some areas.

People in the communities under fire called radio stations pleading for help from Haiti's national police force, which remains understaffed and outmatched by the gangs. Among the communities targeted in the pre-dawn hours were Pétion-Ville, Meyotte, Diègue and Métivier.

"When I woke up to go to work, I found I could not leave because the neighborhood was in the hand of the bandits," said Samuel Orelus. "They were about 30 men with heavy weapons. If the neighborhood had mobilized, we could have destroyed them, but they were heavily armed, and there was nothing we could do."

By Wednesday afternoon, another victim had been reported: a police officer killed in broad daylight in a Port-au-Prince neighborhood known as Delmas 72, according to the SYNAPHOHA police union.

As the attacks continued, the US State Department announced Wednesday that it had completed its first evacuation of American citizens from Port-au-Prince. More than 15 Americans were airlifted to neighboring Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic.

RIO DE JANEIRO: As Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's term wound down in the final days of December 2022, he had decided to skip the ritual of handing over the presidential sash to his successor, and instead made plans to travel abroad.

But there was a problem, according to a Federal Police indictment unveiled Tuesday: Bolsonaro didn't have the necessary vaccination certificate required by U.S. authorities.

So Bolsonaro turned to his aide-de-camp, Mauro Cid, and asked him to insert false data into the public health system to make it appear as though he and his 12-year-old daughter had received the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the indictment.

Cid told police he tasked someone with the carrying out the deed, then printed out the certificates inside the presidential palace on Dec. 22 and hand-delivered them to Bolsonaro, according to detective Fábio Alvarez Shor, who signed the indictment.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, right, meets with New South Wales state Premier Chris Minns, left, during a visit to New South Wales Parliament House in Sydney, on March 21. Australia received its most senior Chinese leadership visit in nearly seven years with Wang's arrival Wednesday. (AP)

Asia

UN urges stronger int'l action against Myanmar junta

Australia, UK sign defense & security treaty

SYDNEY, March 21. (Agencies): Australia and the United Kingdom signed a new defense and security cooperation agreement with the defense ministers of both countries saying it was required to meet "contemporary challenges" to maintain a global rules-based order.

The treaty was signed by Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles and his UK counterpart Grant Shapps following annual bilateral ministerial defense talks at Parliament House in Canberra on Thursday, as part of the Australia-UK Ministerial (AUKMIN) meeting, which was first held in 2006.

"Australia's relationship with the UK is dynamic and enduring," Marles said in a written statement Thursday. "From the UK's leadership of support for Ukraine and efforts to address the Houthi threat, to increasing contributions in the Pacific and the Indo-Pacific, we continue to work closely together to support a global rules-based order."

"As the world becomes more complex and uncertain, we must modernize our most important partnerships," the statement said.

The treaty also includes provisions to make it easier for the respective forces to operate together in each other's countries, such as the joint training of Ukrainian troops in the UK.

Shapps said the treaty formalizes how the two country's will consult on issues that affect each other's sovereignty and regional security.

"I think one of the most important elements is it describes a mechanism by which we consult when either of our countries are under threat and we have those discussions more formalized than it is at the moment," Shapps said at a joint press conference with Marles at Parliament House in Canberra on Thursday.

Other areas within the agreement included continued cooperation on capability development, including through the AUKUS alliance, as well as closer collaboration on undersea warfare, intelligence and military exercises.

Refreshing the bilateral defense treaty was a commitment made at the AUKMIN conference held last year in the UK, and is unlikely to have come as a surprise to others powers in the region, namely China.

Also:

GENEVA: Thomas Andrews, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar called on Wednesday for stronger international action against Myanmar's military

Subianto confirmed as president-elect as rivals allege fraud in Indonesia polls

JAKARTA, Indonesia, March 21. (AP): Indonesian Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto was announced the winner of the presidential election in the world's third-largest democracy Wednesday over two former governors who vow to contest the result in court over alleged irregularities.

Subianto, who was accused of abuses under the past dictatorship and chose the son of the popular outgoing president as his running mate, won 58.6% of the votes. Former Jakarta Gov. Anies Baswedan received 24.9% and former Central Java Gov. Ganjar Pranowo got 16.5%, the General Election Commission said. It posted polling stations' tabulation forms on its website, allowing for independent verification.

Subianto said he will respect those who made different choices in the vote.

"We call on all Indonesian people to look to the future together," he told a news conference. "We must unite and join hands because our challenges as a nation are very big."

Subianto has received congratulatory messages from other Southeast Asian nations as well as the Chinese, Russian, French, Dutch and British governments, who all expressed their wishes to work with his new government.

"We look forward to partnering

closely with President-elect Subianto and his Administration when they take office in October," U.S. State Secretary Antony J. Blinken said after his victory was confirmed.

On Thursday morning, Baswedan's lawyers filed a challenge to the results in the Constitutional Court. Pranowo also plans a court challenge. "We do not want to let these various deviations from democracy pass without historical records and set a bad precedent for future election organizers," Baswedan said after final results were announced.

Also:

HANOI, Vietnam: Vietnam's Vice President Vo Thi Anh Xuan will serve as acting president after the previous president's resignation a year into the position, a Communist Party newspaper reported Thursday.

Analysts said a permanent candidate was unlikely to be selected soon, underscoring the growing concerns among foreign investors about political instability in the Southeast Asian nation that is a growing manufacturing hub and sits at the middle of the U.S.-China competition for global influence.

Xuan, 54, became vice president in 2021 and she will be serving as acting president for the second time, the Tuoi Tre daily reported.



Residents of the township of Soweto, South Africa, queue for water on March 16. Thousands of South Africans are lining up for water as the country's largest city, Johannesburg, confronts an unprecedented collapse of its water system affecting millions of people. Residents rich and poor have never seen a shortage of this severity. (AP)



Sonko



Sall

Africa

Senegal votes Sunday: Senegal votes Sunday in a tightly contested presidential election that has fired up political tensions and tested one of West Africa's most stable democracies.

The election will take place after much uncertainty following President Macky Sall's unsuccessful effort to delay the vote until the end of the year, sparking violent protests.

In the latest turn of events leading up to Sunday's vote, opposition leader Ousmane Sonko was released from prison last week, triggering jubilant celebrations on the streets of Dakar and renewed excitement about the contest.

Sunday's election is set to be Senegal's fourth democratic transfer of power since it gained independence from France in 1960. The country is viewed as a pillar of stability in a region that has seen dozens of coups and attempted coups in recent years.

Alioune Tine, founder of Afrikajom, a Senegalese think tank, told the Associated Press that Sunday's election had set a grim record in the country's democratic history, with rights groups accusing Sall's government of repressing the media, civil society and the opposition.

"It was the longest and most violent presidential election process, with the most deaths, injuries and political detainees," said Tine.

Human Rights Watch said nearly 1,000 opposition members and activists have been arrested across the country in the last three years. But in a recent interview with the AP, Sall denied that he's trying to hold on to power.

There are 19 candidates in the race, the highest number in Senegal's history. These include a former prime minister, a close ally of Sonko - who was barred from running - and a former mayor of Dakar. A runoff between leading candidates is widely expected.

Despite the violent upheavals in recent months, analysts say unemployment is the chief concern for a majority of young Senegalese. Around half of Senegal's population of 17 million are under 18, according to Afrobarometer, an independent survey research group.

"The big question right now for the Senegalese election is how are we going to break out of poverty," said Marième Wone Ly, a former Senegalese political party leader. "We can't see the end of the tunnel. People don't see it."

About a third of Senegalese live in poverty, World Bank data shows. Thousands have fled towards the West in search of economic opportunity, undertaking risky and often

deadly journeys. (AP)

Taps run dry in Johannesburg: For two weeks, Tsholofelo Moloi has been among thousands of South Africans lining up for

water as the country's largest city, Johannesburg, confronts an unprecedented collapse of its water system affecting millions of people.

Residents rich and poor have never seen a shortage of this severity. While hot



Rohingya refugees stand on their capsized boat as rescuers throw a rope to rescue them in the waters off West Aceh, Indonesia, on March 21. The wooden boat carrying dozens of Rohingya Muslims capsized off Indonesia's northernmost coast on Wednesday, according to local fishermen. (AP)

weather has shrunk reservoirs, crumbling infrastructure under decades of neglect is also largely to blame. The public's frustration is a danger sign for the ruling African National Congress, whose comfortable hold on power since the end of apartheid in the 1990s faces its most serious challenge in an election this year.

A country already famous for its hours-long electricity shortages is now adopting a term called "watershedding" - the practice of going without water, from the term load-shedding, or the practice of going without power. Moloi, a resident of Soweto on the outskirts of Johannesburg, isn't sure she or her neighbors can take much more.

They and others across South Africa's economic hub of about 6 million people line up day after day for the arrival of municipal tanker trucks delivering water. Before the trucks finally arrived the day before, a desperate Moloi had to request water from a nearby restaurant.

There was no other alternative. A five-liter (1.3-gallon) bottle of water sells for 25 rand (\$1.30), an expensive exercise for most people in a country where over 32% of the population is unemployed.

"We are really struggling," Moloi said. "We need to cook, and children must also attend school. We need water to wash their clothes. It's very stressful."

Residents of Johannesburg and surrounding areas are long used to seeing water shortages - just not across the whole region at once. (AP)

Bank hopes to encourage a greater sense of responsibility during the holy month

NBK distributes thousands of Iftar meals at different areas in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: As part of fulfilling its ongoing corporate social responsibilities and on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK)'s Public Relations Team distributed thousands of meals and special convoys to fasters daily at many Areas in Kuwait. This initiative comes within the framework of the ongoing "Do Good Deeds in Ramadan" philanthropic campaign launched by the bank.

Also, NBK distributed dates and water at different intersections and bus stops in Kuwait before iftar time as part of "Do Good Deeds in Ramadan". The campaign aimed to raise awareness at reducing accidents, speeding and committing traffic violations during the holy month of Ramadan, especially during the run up to iftar at different areas.

The initiative involved a large number of NBK volunteers who distributed small snacks for drivers to break their fasting around Iftar time, at strategic intersections and traffic lights, as well as bus stops.

"NBK Iftar banquets, an annual NBK philanthropic tradition and a landmark activity within the bank's corporate social responsibility, acquired much more momentum this year distributing daily thousands of Iftar banquets at many Areas in Kuwait, including Farwaniya, Salmiya, Bneid Al Qar and Jleeb, in addition to hospitals: Amiri, Mubarak and Sabah as well as Kuwait Airport terminals 1 and 2", said Talal Al Turki, NBK Public Relations Senior Manager.

"The distribution scale and range of NBK Iftar banquets this year also included distributing fast-breaking meals via special convoys to various crowded locations in Kuwait. A large number of NBK staff volunteers was ready to serve the fasters", Al Turki added.

Commenting on dates and water distribution, "NBK is proud to launch this initiative, which combines giving and sharing spirit in offering snacks to drivers to break their fasting and raising safety awareness to reduce traffic accidents, especially around Iftar



NBK's Public Relations Team distributed thousands of meals and special convoys to fasters daily at many areas in Kuwait.

time". He stated.

"NBK is committed to adopting value-added social initiatives, especially those related to the holy month of Ramadan," he added.

For almost three decades, the Ra-

madan program comprised a series of activities and initiatives aimed at encouraging community engagement and solidarity in Kuwait. "NBK hopes to encourage a greater sense of responsibility during the holy month", Al Turki noted.

It is worth mentioning that NBK's, NBK Iftar banquet campaign launched with the commencement of the Holy Month of Ramadan as part of an extensive social program comprising a multitude of philanthropic activities.

Bank offers highest monthly returns

KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's 2nd and 3rd weekly draws

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the names of the winners in the Al Dirwaza account's second and third weekly draws, based on customers' February deposits. The two weekly draws were recently held in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. In the second weekly draw, the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Marzouq Qaaid Faisal AlOtaibi, Hadeel Alaa Aldeen Mirza AlSeleemi, Mohammad Abdulredha Mohammed AlBazzaz, Laila Abbas Ahmad AlSairafi, and Abdulkarim Ajdar Khalil Balanji, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Ahmad Mohammad Abdullah AlYaqout, Maha Abdulmohsen Ibrahim Alshatti, Hatem Alsayed Abu Alezz Ahmad Alsayed, Faisal Mohad Muhsen Alenzi, Hanan Khaled Salman AlOtaibi, Ashraf Mohamed Hussein Ahmed Kasbar, and Abdulrahman Saleh Marzouq Abu Quthailh.

As for the third weekly draw, the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Ali Khaleel Abdulhussain Alkhabbaz, Engy Alyeldan Yehia Ibrahim, Mubarak Shadiid Salman Alhindal, Saif Khaled Saif Alazmi, and Fakhreyah Mohammad Abdullah Almulla, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Ali Ahmad Abdulmajeed Albohasan, Fetouh Ahmad Almursi Mohamed, Adnan Ahmed Hussein Alshaheen, Mohammad Abdulraheem Abdulredha Almutawa, Hamad Ahmad Mudhi Almuadhi, Shaikhah Muhareb Awwad Alazmi, and Osama Abdulaziz Mohammad Abdulaziz.

On this occasion, Ali Alsane, Manager - Product Development, Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence at KIB, said: "On behalf of KIB, I would like to congratulate all those who were the lucky winners of the weekly draw and wish the rest of AlDirwaza account holders the best of luck in the upcoming period. Our distinctive draws campaign for the Al Dirwaza account has many features and allows customers to enjoy benefits and rewards in exchange for their savings. It motivates cus-

tomers to deposit funds and enter the draws, which boast the highest number of winners throughout the year." He added: "At KIB, we always seek to introduce products and solutions that enable us to reward our customers, earn their loyalty, and achieve the highest levels of satisfaction among them. In line with KIB's slogan 'Bank for Life', we continue offering the best banking experience that caters to the modern lifestyles of all customer segments and meets their expectations."

Alsane asserted that KIB also continues to develop the benefits and advantages of its campaign designed to encourage customers to open an Al Dirwaza account digitally through the KIB Online platform or KIB Mobile application.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their account. For the weekly and monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw.



Alsane



Al Turki

Drive reaches needy families

KCICAI distributes vital food supplies during Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The Kuwait Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (KCICAI) proudly announces its recent initiative aimed at providing essential food supplies to those in need during the holy month of Ramadan. In a spirit of generosity and compassion, the chapter successfully concluded its food distribution program, providing crucial support to individuals requiring financial assistance.

Ramadan stands as a month of fasting, prayer, and reflection, emphasizing acts of charity and kindness towards those facing adversity. Recognizing the importance of this sacred month, KCICAI organized the food distribution drive to ensure that individuals have access to nutritious meals throughout Ramadan. This initiative reflects the chapter's commitment to its core values of social responsibility and compassion towards the less fortunate.

Mr. Rabin Gonsalves, Chairperson of KCICAI, expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "As members of the global accounting community, it is our duty to contribute positively to society and make a difference in the lives of others. We believe that Ramadan is not only a time for personal reflection and spiritual growth but also an opportunity to extend a helping hand to those facing difficulties. It is a time of solidarity and compassion, and through our food distribution



Group photo during the charity work.

efforts, we hope to alleviate the burden on families struggling to make ends meet and spread joy and solidarity within our community."

The food distribution encompassed a range of essential items, including rice, lentils, cooking oil, flour, and other pantry staples. KCICAI committee members and its members, devoted

their time and efforts to meticulously coordinate logistics, ensuring a seamless and efficient distribution process. Mr. Rabin extended heartfelt gratitude to all volunteers and supporters whose contributions were instrumental in the success of this initiative.

The Ramadan food distribution program reflects KCICAI's ongoing com-

mitment to making a positive difference in the lives of others. By uniting as a community and exemplifying compassionate solidarity, the chapter endeavours to foster a sense of unity and empathy during this auspicious month.

For more information about the food distribution program, please visit the KCICAI website at icaikw.org



ABK's Alfouz flyer

ABK announces Alaa Ali Alias winner of the Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw prize

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced Alaa Ali Alias the KD10,000 Alfouz weekly draw winner on Monday, 18th March 2024, where the draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Since its launch, the Alfouz account continues to offer an impressive weekly draw of KD10,000.

The Bank has recently expanded its offering by adding a new alluring monthly draw of KD20,000, and an exceptional quarterly draw of

KD100,000.

The account also retains its hallmark mega annual draw of a KD5,000 monthly salary for ten years. Furthermore, the Bank now offers customers an increased opportunity to win for every KD10 as opposed to KD100 previously.

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

Middle Eastern educational leaders convene in Sri Lanka

36th CBSE Principals' Conference in Sri Lanka marks historic milestone

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The Kuwait Chapter hosted the 36th CBSE Principals' Conference at the Hilton Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 7th February to 10th February, 2024. The conference themed 'Visionary Leaders in Times of Change' was the first ever CBSE Gulf Sahodaya Principals' conference to be held outside India and the Middle East.

The CBSE Gulf Sahodaya, established in 1986, comprises 200 principals from six Middle Eastern countries—Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates—making it one of the largest academic leadership bodies in the region, dedicated to maintaining high standards in academics, sports and co-curricular activities. The Annual Conference serves as a platform for stakeholders to convene, participate in various events, and benefit from the expertise of seasoned educators within the Sahodaya.

The Kuwait Chapter of CBSE Gulf Sahodaya warmly welcomed distinguished guests, esteemed speakers and Principals from prestigious CBSE Schools in the Middle East to the inaugural ceremony on 7th February, 2024. The ceremony witnessed a SEA of great minds and the excitement was palpable. The occasion was graced by the dignified presence of the Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, esteemed Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. Dr. Satyanjal Pandey, Deputy High Commissioner of India to Kuwait was the Special Guest.

Amidst ceremonial drumbeats, trumpets, and cymbals, accompanied by traditional dance, the attendees were escorted to the auditorium. Adorned with vibrant lights, the auditorium exuded an atmosphere of joy and serenity. The conference was formally inaugurated by lighting the lamp of knowledge by Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena and Dr. Satyanjal Pandey, symbolizing intellectual and spiritual energy. The gathering paid tribute to the nations of Sri Lanka and India by honoring the National Anthems.

The young pillars from the reputed schools of Sri Lanka presented a soulful rendition of prayer invoking the blessings of Almighty. They mesmerized the audience with an enthralling classical dance, a replication of Sri Lanka's rich culture. Highlighting the pivotal role played by the visionary leaders in shaping educational landscapes, Dr. V. Binumon, Secretary of Gulf Sahodaya presented an august welcome to the gathering. Mr. Palaniswamy, Chairman of CBSE Gulf Sahodaya, in his Presidential address appreciated the educators for inspiring generations and encouraged them to



Group photo during the 36th CBSE Principals' Conference in Sri Lanka.

continue serving the society by spreading the light of knowledge.

Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, Chapter Convenor, Kuwait gave a formal introduction of the esteemed Chief Guest, Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena. In his address, the Chief Guest acknowledged the significant role educators play in shaping society. He also highlighted the strong bond between Sri Lanka and India, sharing a personal connection by mentioning his parents' involvement in India's independence movement and their imprisonment in Mumbai. Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena commended the collaborative efforts of CBSE Gulf Sahodaya in education and officially launched the CBSE Gulf Sahodaya Mobile App. The Sri Lankan cultural extravaganza presented by the young talented buds of Sri Lanka was a treat to the eyes of the spectators. Vote of thanks proposed

by Dr. Prashant Vasudev, Treasurer CBSE Gulf Sahodaya drew curtains to the inaugural ceremony of the Principals Conference.

With the motto 'Learn Together and Grow Together', the 36th CBSE Principals' Conference aimed to update visionary leaders on modern trends in the field of education. The conference provided a forum for Principals to network, exchange ideas, and refine their skills. Discussions encompassed recent innovations, achievements, trends, practical issues, and challenges, fostering growth and solidarity.

Multiple speakers, trainers and mentors shared a common platform to connect, educate and inspire the visionary leader adding glory to the 36th Principals' Conference of CBSE Gulf Sahodaya. The engaging four-day event comprised sessions on strategic vision and system improvement.



Stage play 'Right vs Wrong' flyer

Pilar Rubio, Spain's most charismatic television phenomenon

Celebrity



Pilar Rubio

SHE is a reporter and TV presenter who entertains the audiences through her television broadcasts and also plays a crucial role in keeping the public informed about current events, conducting interviews, hosting programs, and presenting stories on a wide range of topics.

With strong communication skills, a keen eye for detail and the ability to work under pressure to meet tight deadlines, she reports from the field, conduct live interviews in studio settings and hosts talk shows and other television programs.

She is none other than Pilar Rubio Fernández a prominent Spanish reporter and television presenter known for her captivating on-screen presence, versatile talent, and engaging personality.

Born on March 17, 1978, in Torrejón de Ardoz, Spain, Rubio has established herself as one of the most recognizable faces in the Spanish entertainment industry, with her passion for sports engaging with viewers, provide analysis, and offer insights into various issues of public interest and plays a vital role in imparting valuable information to audiences across the globe.

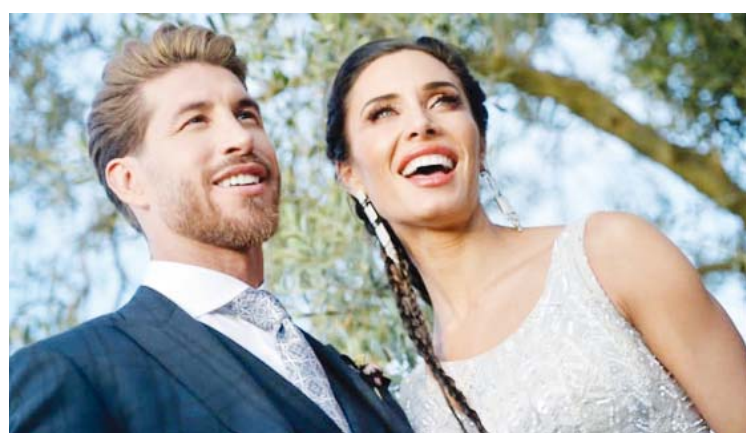
Rubio began her career in the spotlight as a model before transitioning to television, where she quickly gained recognition for her charisma and professionalism.

Her breakthrough came when she joined the cast of the popular Spanish comedy show "Sé lo que hicisteis..." (I Know What You Did...) in 2007.

As a co-host of the program, Rubio showcased her wit, humor, and interviewing skills, earning praise from audiences and critics alike.

Building on her success in comedy, Rubio expanded her repertoire to include various television genres, including entertainment, reality television, and sports.

She has hosted several high-profile programs, including "Operación Triunfo," "Mira quién baila!" (Look Who's Dancing!), and "Ninja Warrior España," where she demonstrated her versatility as a presenter and her ability to connect with diverse audiences.



Sergio Ramos and Pilar Rubio wedding in Seville.

In addition to her work on television, Rubio has also ventured into acting, appearing in Spanish films and television series. Her talent and charm have made her a sought-after personality for endorsements and brand partnerships, further solidifying her status as a household name in Spain.

Off-screen, Rubio is known for her philanthropic efforts and commitment to charitable causes, using her platform to raise awareness and support for various social issues.

With her magnetic presence and multifaceted talent, Pilar Rubio Fernández continues to captivate the audiences and make a significant impact in the Spanish entertainment industry.

She began a relationship with Spanish and then Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos in September 2012, which was confirmed during the FIFA Ballon d'Or gala. They have four children.

On July 16, 2018, the couple got engaged. The wedding took place in Ramos' hometown of Seville on June 15, 2019.

Since 2014, she has appeared as a collaborator on El Hormiguero. In 2012, she began a relationship with footballer Sergio Ramos, with whom she has four children; they married in 2019.

She started studying Economics, although she did not finish the degree.

She modeled in several men's magazines and appeared in the films Isi & Disi: Alto Voltaje and Carlitos y el campo de los sueños, as well as in two short films: Merry Christmas by Fran Casanova and Cuestión de química by Juan Moya, acting alongside Cristina Peña and Arturo Valls, among others.

On television, she has appeared in commercials for Amstel, Canal+, Hyundai, and in programs such as Lo que necesitas es amor, The Price Is Right, La azotea de Wyoming, and in Six pack, broadcast by the Cuatro network.

Her definitive public success was her appearance on the comedy program Sé lo que hicisteis... on La Sexta, where she reported on various news articles. In the summer of 2007, she appeared in a humorous home video program called La ventana indiscreta.

She won the award for best television reporter at the Premio Joven 2007. In 2008 and 2009, she was selected as the sexiest woman in the world by the Spanish edition of FHM magazine.

From July 14 to August 29, 2008, and in July 2009, she presented the program Sé lo que hicisteis... replacing Patricia Conde, who was on vacation.

Since 2014, she has appeared as a collaborator on the comedy show El Hormiguero. In 2013, she appeared as a zombie on the cover of Annihilator's album Feast.

Variety



This image released by Columbia Pictures shows, from left, Celeste O'Connor, Kumail Nanjiani, Finn Wolfhard and James Acaster in a scene from "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire." (AP)

Film

Nostalgic romp or just another reboot?

Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire clears low bar

LOS ANGELES: M. Emmet Walsh, the character actor who brought his unmistakable face and unsettling presence to films including "Blood Simple" and "Blade Runner," has died at age 88, his manager said Wednesday.

Walsh died from cardiac arrest on Tuesday at a hospital in St. Albans, Vermont, his longtime manager Sandy Joseph said.

The ham-faced, heavyset Walsh often played good old boys with bad intentions, as he did in one of his rare leading roles as a crooked Texas private detective in the Coen brothers' first film, the 1984 neo-noir "Blood Simple."

Joel and Ethan Coen said they wrote the part for Walsh, who would win the first Film Independent Spirit Award for best male lead for the role.

Critics and film geeks relished the moments when he showed up on screen.

Roger Ebert once observed that "no movie featuring either Harry Dean Stanton or M. Emmet Walsh in a supporting role can be altogether bad."

Walsh played a crazed sniper in the 1979 Steve Martin comedy "The Jerk" and a prostate-examining doctor in the 1985 Chevy Chase vehicle "Fletch."

In 1982's gritty, "Blade Runner," a film he said was grueling and difficult to make with perfectionist director Ridley Scott, Walsh plays a hard-nosed police captain who pulls Harrison Ford from retirement to hunt down cyborgs.

Born Michael Emmet Walsh, his characters led people to believe

NEW YORK, March 21, (AP) - Forty years after "Ghostbusters" and following a string of sequels that never measured up to the 1984 original - beginning all the way back with 1989's "Ghostbusters II" - it's fair to wonder, well, who else ought we to call? It may be time to, if not give up the ghost entirely, at least give a flip through the ol' rolodex.

But as the lackluster 2021 installment, "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" showed, the half life of most film franchises today is an ever-lengthening long tail of diminishing returns. Though the options are many, sucking "Ghostbusters" dry would make a prime exhibit in Hollywood's nostalgia fix.

Still, it's not quite as simple as that. I'm glad for the female-led 2016 "Ghostbusters." Aside from prompting a minor culture war, it assembled the best comic ensemble since the original with Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon, Leslie Jones and, yes, Chris Hemsworth.

And as easy as it might be to label the new one, "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire," another half-hashed retread - which it is, a little bit - it's also a significant upgrade from "Afterlife," which relocated the action to Oklahoma and forgot to pack any comedy. "Frozen Empire," back, thankfully, in New York, is a breezier, more serviceable sequel that has a modest charm as an '80s-tinged family adventure.

The innate appeal of "Ghostbusters" had to do with its brash mixing of genres - adult-edged comedy with sci-fi toys - that summoned the spirit of "Abbott of Costello Meet Frankenstein." When the sequels have gone astray, it's usually because they get bogged down with solemnity or special effects when all they really need is the it's-the-end-of-the-world-and-I-feel-fine smirk of Bill Murray. I'd forgive bad visual effects a lot

sooner than I would bland comic interplay.

"Frozen Empire," though, is organized less around a group of funny people wearing proton packs than it is around a family. The movie more or less opens with the Ectomobile racing down Fifth Avenue with Gary (Paul Rudd) at the wheel, Callie (Carrie Coon) riding shotgun and her kids - Trevor (Finn Wolfhard) and Phoebe (Mckenna Grace) - in the back, all in bickering pursuit of a "sewer dragon" apparition.

The cast is much the same as "Afterlife," but the behind-the-scenes talent has been rejiggered. After Jason Reitman took over directing from his father, Ivan Reitman, he here is credited as a producer and writer. Gil Kenan, who co-wrote "Afterlife," directs "Frozen Empire," which is dedicated to the elder Reitman, who died in 2022.

More than before, you can feel the growing distance from the original "Ghostbusters." Harold Ramis died in 2014 and while Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Ernie Hudson all return, they no longer feel like the axis to this cinematic universe. (Aykroyd, though, gives the movie some soulful quirk as Dr. Raymond Stantz, and Ernie Hudson may be more a potent presence than ever.)

Familiar-faced ghosts return, too, in "Frozen Empire," which, like its predecessor, doesn't skimp on the fan service. That instinct to cater to "Ghostbusters" diehards (a kind of ridiculous kind of diehard, if we're being honest) continues to diminish a franchise that recoiled defensively after the 2016 "Ghostbusters."

But if you accept the low-bar aspirations of "Frozen Empire," you may get a pleasant-enough experience out of it. It's a movie that feels almost more like a high production-value TV pilot for an appealing sitcom, with Rudd as the stepfather, than it does a big-screen event on par with the original.

he was from the American South, but he could hardly have been from any further north.(AP)

LONDON: Prince Harry's lawyer leveled explosive new allegations Wednesday that Rupert Murdoch was aware of cover-ups at his British tabloids that used unlawful techniques to



Walsh



Murdoch

spy on the Duke of Sussex and others.

Attorney David Sherborne said Murdoch was among the executives who were aware that public statements made about phone hacking and other unlawful information gathering at News Group Newspapers were untrue.

Harry and other claimants, in-

cluding actor Hugh Grant, sought during the first of a three-day hearing in the High Court to amend their lawsuit against the publisher to include allegations that executives were part of an effort to conceal and destroy evidence of wrongdoing.

"It is inferred that they would not have been carrying out this extensive concealment and

destruction strategy without the knowledge and approval of Rupert Murdoch," Sherborne said in a court filing.

Defense lawyer Anthony Hudson said the proposed changes to the case were unnecessary and seemed aimed at "campaigning against the tabloid press" and as a "substitute for a public inquiry." (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES
FRIDAY-SATURDAY, MARCH 22-23, 2024



People & Places

ENTERTAINMENT

Natural wonders, Napoleon's exile

Journey through history's forgotten isle

St. Helena, a small, craggy island in the South Atlantic Ocean, hasn't seen many tourists in the past for good reason: It's one of the most remote inhabited places in the world.

Until 2017, it took five nights by boat to reach the British overseas territory, which is nearly halfway between southern Africa and Brazil. Today, with weekly commercial flights and the recent arrival of high-speed internet, the government is hoping to breathe new life into a fledgling tourism industry that welcomed about 2,100 leisure travelers in 2023.

The island has just a little more than 4,000 residents, or Saints as they call themselves, and is likely to attract a certain kind of visitor.

"It's people with a real desire to travel and learn rather than, 'let's go somewhere to have a bit of sunshine and some nice food,'" says Emma Phillips, whose husband, Nigel, is St. Helena's governor.

After all, weather can be unpredictable and supplies occasionally run low when you're 1,200 miles from the nearest continent.

"You've got to be prepared to embrace all of that," Phillips says, while extolling the island's welcoming locals, rich history and natural wonders. "Come with an open mind."

Perhaps best known as the site of Napoleon Bonaparte's exile from 1815 until his death in 1821, St. Helena features multiple heritage sites honoring the deposed French emperor. Visitors can tour his homes and his original burial grounds. His remains were returned to France in 1840.

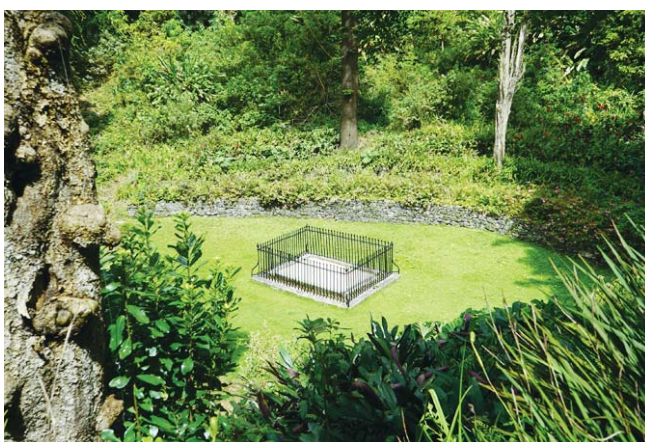
The capital city, Jamestown, is an eclectic mix of new and old. British Georgian-era colonial buildings house small retail and grocery stores. There are a couple DVD rental shops - remnants of the island's pre-high-speed internet days.

For a workout with a view, climb the 699 steps of Jacob's Ladder on the edge of town. The 600-foot-high outdoor staircase was originally a donkey-powered cart track used to transport goods between the city and fortifications on the cliffs above.

Plantation House, 2 miles south of the capital, is a grand Georgian mansion built in 1792 by the Brit-



Sweeping views of Sandy Bay can be seen from Blue Point Trail on the island of St. Helena, on Feb. 24, 2024. The 40-minute trek is one of the remote territory's 21 scenic hiking trails of varying difficulty. (AP)



The site of Napoleon Bonaparte's tomb, known as the Valley of the Tomb, is seen on the British overseas territory of St. Helena in the South Atlantic, on Feb. 24, 2024. (AP)



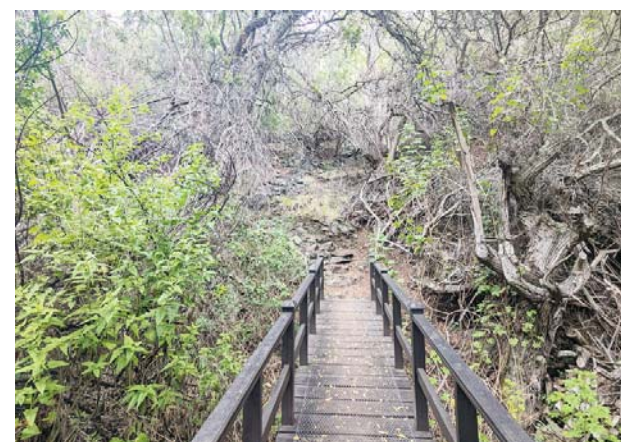
British Georgian-era colonial buildings line Main Street in Jamestown, St. Helena, on Feb. 23, 2024. The British overseas territory, located nearly halfway between southern Africa and Brazil, is one of the world's most remote inhabited islands. (AP)



The foyer of Plantation House, the official residence of the governor of the British overseas territory of St. Helena, is pictured Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024. Visitors to the remote island can tour the ornately decorated rooms of the grand Georgian mansion built in 1792. (AP)



The library inside Plantation House, the official residence of the governor of the British overseas territory of St. Helena, is pictured on Feb. 22, 2024. (AP)



A wooden bridge leading to the Heart Shaped Waterfall on the island of St. Helena on Feb. 21, 2024. The trek is one of the remote territory's 21 scenic hiking trails of varying difficulty. (AP)



Tourists take photos of Jonathan, a 192-year-old tortoise, on the lawn of Plantation House on the South Atlantic island of St. Helena on Feb. 22, 2024. (AP)



A hiker walks the Cox's Battery trail on the island of St. Helena on Feb. 24, 2024. The nearly three-mile trek is one of the remote territory's 21 scenic hiking trails of varying difficulty. (AP)



The city of Jamestown is pictured from the top of Jacob's Ladder, a massive staircase carved into the side of a mountain on the remote island of St. Helena, on Feb. 23, 2024. The 600-foot-high stairway was originally a donkey-powered cart track used to transport goods in and out of the city. (AP)

ish East India Company, which administered St. Helena until 1834. Now the official governor's residence, the house features a collection of royal portraits and original furnishings, including antique china and a chandelier from Bonaparte's final home.

Plantation House's well-manicured yard is home to one of the island's most famous residents, a venerable tortoise named Jonathan. At the approximate age of 192, Jonathan holds the Guinness World Record for the oldest living land animal. He has met several royals, including Queen Elizabeth II, who visited St. Helena in 1947, and Prince Edward, who made the trip in January.

"Jonathan is an enigmatic tortoise," says Teeny Lucy, one of his caretakers for over a decade. "If you come to St. Helena, people usually know two things: Jonathan the tortoise and Napoleon Bonaparte." She's not sure who is the bigger celebrity.

Jonathan has lost his sight and sense of smell, but remains a major draw for tourists like Gilly Hill, who traveled from the U.K. to snap selfies with him.

"I just think he's the most amazing creature," she said.

Other bucket-list activities include swimming with Chilean devil rays or whale sharks, which are often spotted December through March. There's also humpback whale watching from June to December. Come in January to catch peak nesting season for the wirebird, also known as the St. Helena plover, which can only be found on St. Helena.

Roughly one-third of all endemic biodiversity in U.K. territories can be found within the 47-square-mile island. More than 500 species are not seen anywhere else on earth, including 45 flowering plants and ferns.

Microclimates that range from cool tropical forests to sunny rolling grasslands and windswept volcanic cliffs can all be experienced within an hour's drive.

With two dozen scenic trails, St. Helena can satisfy even the most avid hiker's wanderlust. Serious trekkers might opt for the highest point, Diana's Peak. The 2.3-mile hike takes you 2,690 feet above sea level and into Britain's last remaining natural cloud forest.

Shelter of dreams, little dancers rewrite the script of survival

Echoes of elegance: Ballet's timeless tale

KHARKIV, Ukraine, March 21, (AP): In a dance studio that doubles as a bomb shelter in northeast Ukraine, the little girls in pink tutus prance in like gusts of air.

Timed to classical music, the 9-year olds jump and glide. Occasionally, they misbehave, prompting a curt rebuke from Marina Altukhova, their instructor.

The Princess Ballet Studio is a spartan, windowless space under an apartment complex, but for an hour, the ballet class offers levity and escape from the daily horrors playing out above ground in the northeastern city of Kharkiv.

Reminders of Russia's war against Ukraine are inescapable: buildings lie in piles of rubble, and sirens are constant. Practicing in a bomb shelter means the girls can keep dancing through the almost hourly air raid alerts.

Owner Yulia Voitina has done what she can to lighten the place up: Pink ballet slippers hang from a door knob, a bean bag offers comfortable seating for waiting parents.

Altukhova tells her students to plié, and the little girls bend their knees, staring at their reflection in a large mirror to perfect the stance. As the music swells, she tells them to rise up on the balls of their feet and raise their arms. Some lose their balance.

"Very good," she says. The Kharkiv region cuts across the snaking 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where Ukrainian and Russian forces have been locked in vicious battles for over two years since Moscow's invasion.

Voitina ran a chain of ballet studios before the war, but she closed them when she left to seek shelter in western Ukraine. When she came home in March 2023, she realized she



Girls practice in a ballet school in a bomb shelter in Kharkiv, Ukraine, Monday, March 18, 2024. Kharkiv, Ukraine's closest big city to the Russian border, is regularly under Russian missile attacks. (AP)

didn't have the money, or the students to reopen them. But she decided keep one open for nearly no profit. From 300 students before the war, today her studios serve 20.

She felt she had to. "There is nothing for kids in Kharkiv, no school or kindergartens, kids are online all the time," she said. "They need to apply their energy somewhere to feel nice emotions. So ballet, in particular, is like salvation for them."

Across the Kharkiv region, civilians are putting lives back together as best they can.

In nearby Izium, all but levelled after months of Russian occupation, Hanna Tertysna is gardening. The front lines are not far, but she has had enough of being displaced after fleeing the Russians once. "It's all unpredictable," she said. "But it's good to be home, the birds are chirping and children are playing."

A short distance away, Evgeny Nepochatov looked at the rubble that used to be his family

home. "It's so sad," was all he could say.

Yuri Sevastianov, an 80-year-old former Soviet agricultural director, bicycled by to gather firewood from the remains of Nepochatov's house. "It's the only way we can survive," said Sevastianov, grimly, and sped off.

Back in ballet class, Altukhova has a complicated exercise for the girls that will require them to do a complete turn of the body on one foot - a pirouette. Nine-year old Myroslava Ponomarenko goes in for the move, her expression fixed in a mask of concentration as though the whole world were at stake.

From the door to the small waiting room, her mother Hanna watches with pride.

"That is her favorite thing to do, she has been attending classes since she was 3," the 32-year old says.

Her husband works for the State Emergency Service, and is rarely at home. Often, he is called to rescue civilians after Russian missile strikes, move rubble and assess the damage.

Like Voitina, Ponomarenko fled the city with her family early in the war, only to return last year. She was among the first to sign up her daughter for ballet classes once the studio reopened.

At first, little Myroslava was not impressed. "When my daughter came here at first, she said, 'Oh my God, mom, this is a basement, there are no windows'" she said.

She was used to Kharkiv's finest ballet conservatory, where concert pianists played live during lessons, and she could watch professional dancers practice.

But she has come to terms with the new reality. She told her mother, "Well, it is what it is, let it be," Ponomarenko said. "I will agree to anything."

Casual hikers can stroll along Blue Point Trail for spectacular views of Sandy Bay, Sperry Island and Castle Rock. For a moderate challenge, try the shaded hike to St. Helena's famed Heart Shaped Waterfall, which only flows in winter and early spring. Be sure to catch the best views of the falls from the main road out of Jamestown.

Perched at 1,700 feet on one of the lushest and most remote parts of the island lies a historic estate with sweeping cloud-forest views



Coconut fingers, a traditional celebration dessert of iced sponge cake dusted with coconut, are displayed at a restaurant on the island of St. Helena on Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024. (AP)



St. Helena's famed coffee is pictured during a farm tour and tasting at Wranghams, a small coffee plantation and homestay in Sandy Bay, St. Helena, on Feb. 22, 2024. (AP)

and a really good cup of joe.

Wranghams is a small coffee farm with tours and home stays, run by Neil and Debbie Fantom.

Coffee connoisseurs seek out St. Helena's beans, often touted as one of the rarest and most expensive varieties in the world due to their export costs and single-origin status. It sells online for \$150 per half pound. Extreme isolation has ensured that the coffee plants, which were imported from Yemen in the 18th century, have never been cross-fertilized. (AP)

editor's choice



Excess niacin fuels inflammation, cardiovascular disease through newly discovered pathway

Cleveland Clinic-led study discovers link between 'high levels' of Niacin

CLEVELAND, March 21: Researchers from global health system Cleveland Clinic have identified a new pathway that contributes to cardiovascular disease associated with high levels of niacin, a common B vitamin previously recommended to lower cholesterol.

The team, led by Stanley Hazen, M.D., Ph.D., discovered a link between 4PY, a breakdown product from excess niacin, and heart disease. Higher circulating levels of 4PY were strongly associated with development of heart attack, stroke and other adverse cardiac events in large-scale clinical studies. The researchers also showed in preclinical studies that 4PY directly triggers vascular inflammation, which damages blood vessels and can lead to atherosclerosis over time.

The study, published in *Nature Medicine*, also details genetic links between 4PY and vascular inflammation. The findings provide a foundation for potential new interventions and therapeutics to reduce or prevent that inflammation.

"What's exciting about these results is that this pathway appears to be a previously unrecognized yet significant contributor to the development of cardiovascular disease," said Dr. Hazen, Chair of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Sciences at Cleveland Clinic's Lerner Research Institute and Co-Section Head of Preventive Cardiology in the Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute. "What's more, we can measure it, meaning there is potential for diagnostic testing. These insights set the stage for developing new approaches to counteract the effects of this pathway."

Dr. Hazen adds, "For decades, more than 50 nations have mandated niacin (vitamin B-3) fortification in staple foods such as flour, cereals and oats to prevent disease related to nutritional deficiency." Yet one in four subjects in the researchers' patient cohorts appear to be getting too much, and had high levels of 4PY, which appears to contribute to cardiovascular disease development.

Dr. Hazen compares our intake of niacin as multiple taps pouring water into a bucket. Once that bucket is filled, it begins to spill over. The human body then needs to process that spill-over and produce other metabolites, including 4PY.

"The main takeaway is not that we should cut out our entire intake of niacin - that's not a realistic approach," said Dr. Hazen. "Given these findings, a discussion over whether continued mandates of flour and cereal fortification with niacin could be warranted."

Dr. Hazen notes broader use of over-the-counter supplements made with different forms of niacin have also become popular because of presumed anti-aging purposes. He adds that patients should consult with their doctors before taking over-the-counter supplements and focus on a diet rich in fruit and vegetables while avoiding excess carbohydrates.

The new findings also might help explain why niacin is no longer a go-to treatment for lowering cholesterol. Niacin was one of the first treatments prescribed to lower LDL or "bad" cholesterol. However, eventually niacin showed to be less effective than other cholesterol-lowering drugs and was associated with other negative effects and higher mortality rates in previous research.

Sharp increase seen in Community Eligibility Provision

Free school meals for all may reduce childhood obesity while easing financial and logistical burdens for families and schools

By Anna Localio, University of Washington and Jessica Jones-Smith, University of Washington

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

School meals are critical to child health. Research has shown that school meals can be more nutritious than meals from other sources, such as meals brought from home.

A recent study that one of us conducted found the quality of school meals has steadily improved, especially since the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act strengthened nutrition standards for school meals. In fact, by 2017, another study found that school meals provided the best diet quality of any major U.S. food source.

Many American families became familiar with universal free school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic. To ease the financial and logistical burdens of the pandemic on families and schools, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued waivers that allowed schools nationwide to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. However, these waivers expired by the 2022-23 school year.

Since that time, there has been a substantial increase in schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision, a federal policy that allows schools in high poverty areas to provide free breakfast and lunch to all attending students. The policy became available as an option for low-income schools nationwide in 2014 and was part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. By the 2022-23 school year, over 40,000 schools had adopted the Community Eligibility Provision, an increase of more than 20% over the prior year.

We are public health researchers who study the health effects of nutrition-related policies, particularly those that alleviate poverty. Our newly published research found that the Community Eligibility Provision was associated with a net reduction in the prevalence of childhood obesity.

Well-being

President Harry Truman established the National School Lunch Program in 1946, with the stated goal of protecting the health and well-being of American children. The program established permanent federal funding for school lunches, and participating schools were required to provide free or reduced-price lunches to children from qualifying households. Eligibility is determined by income based on federal poverty levels, both of which are revised annually.

In 1966, the Child Nutrition Act piloted the School Breakfast Program, which provides free, reduced-price and full-price breakfasts to students. This program was later made permanent through an amendment in 1975.

The Community Eligibility Provision was piloted in several states beginning in 2011 and became an option for eligible schools nationwide beginning in 2014. It operates through the national school lunch and school breakfast programs and expands on these programs.

The policy allows all students in a school to receive free breakfast and lunch, rather than determine eligibility by individual households. Entire schools or school districts are eligible for free lunches if at least 40% of their

students are directly certified to receive free meals, meaning their household participated in a means-based safety net program, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or the child is identified as runaway, homeless, in foster care or enrolled in Head Start. Some states also use Medicaid for direct certification.

The Community Eligibility Provision increases school meal participation by reducing the stigma associated with receiving free meals, eliminating the need to complete and process applications and extending access to students in households with incomes above the eligibility threshold for free meals. As of 2023, the eligibility threshold for free meals is 130% of the federal poverty level, which amounts to US\$39,000 for a family of four.

We analyzed whether providing universal free meals at school through the Community Eligibility Provision was associated with lower childhood obesity before the COVID-19 pandemic. To do this, we measured changes in obesity prevalence from 2013 to 2019 among 3,531 low-income California schools. We used over 3.5 million body mass index measurements of students in fifth, seventh and ninth grade that were taken annually and aggregated at the school level. To ensure rigorous results, we accounted for differences between schools that adopted the policy and eligible schools that did not. We also followed the same schools over time, comparing obesity prevalence before and after the policy.

We found that schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision had a 2.4% relative reduction in obesity prevalence compared with eligible schools that did not participate in the provision. Although our findings are modest, even small improvements in obesity levels are notable because effective strategies to reduce obesity at a population level remain elusive. Additionally, because obesity disproportionately affects racially and ethnically marginalized and low-income children, this policy could contribute to reducing health disparities.

The Community Eligibility Provision likely reduces obesity prevalence by substituting up to half of a child's weekly diet with healthier options and simultaneously freeing up more disposable income for low-to-middle-income families. Families receiving free breakfast and lunch save approximately \$4.70 per day per child, or \$850 per year. For low-income families, particularly those with multiple school-age children, this could result in meaningful savings that families can use for other health-promoting goods or services.

Childhood obesity has been increasing over the past several decades. Obesity often continues into adulthood and is linked to a range of chronic health conditions and premature death.

Growing research is showing the benefits of universal free school meals for the health and well-being of children. Along with our study of California schools, other researchers have found an association between universal free school meals and reduced obesity in Chile, South Korea and England, as well as among New York City schools and school districts in New York state.

Studies have also linked the Community Eligibility Provision to improvements in academic performance and reductions in suspensions. (AP)



Seventh graders sit together in the cafeteria during their lunch break at a public school on Feb. 10, 2023, in the Brooklyn borough of New York. (AP)

When earth, moon and sun line up perfectly

'Solar eclipses' result from a fantastic celestial coincidence of scale, distance

By Christopher Palma Penn State

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

On April 8, 2024, millions across the U.S. will have the once-in-a-lifetime chance to view a total solar eclipse. Cities including Austin, Texas; Buffalo, New York; and Cleveland, Ohio, will have a direct view of this rare cosmic event that lasts for just a few hours.

While you can see many astronomical events, such as comets and meteor showers, from anywhere on Earth, eclipses are different. You need to travel to what's called the path of totality to experience the full eclipse. Only certain places get an eclipse's full show, and that's because of scale.

The relatively small size of the Moon and its shadow make eclipses truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. On average, total solar eclipses are visible somewhere on Earth once every few years. But from any one location on Earth, it is roughly 375 years between solar eclipses.

I'm an astronomer, but I have never seen a total solar eclipse, so I plan to drive to Erie, Pennsylvania, in the path of totality, for this one. This is one of the few chances I have to see a total eclipse without making a much more expensive trip to someplace more remote. Many people have asked me why nearby eclipses are so rare, and the answer is related to the size of the Moon and its distance from the Sun.

You can observe a solar eclipse when the Moon passes in front of the Sun,



Solar eclipses happen because of a few factors, including the Moon's size and distance from the Sun. (AP)

blocking some or all of the Sun from view. For people on Earth to be able to see an eclipse, the Moon, while orbiting around the Earth, must lie exactly along the observer's line of sight with the Sun. Only some observers will see an eclipse, though, because not everyone's view of the Sun will be blocked by the Moon on the day of an eclipse.

The fact that solar eclipses happen at all is a bit of a numerical coincidence. It just so happens that the Sun is approximately 400 times larger than the Moon and also 400 times more distant from the Earth.

So, even though the Moon is much smaller than the Sun, it is just close enough to Earth to appear the same size as the Sun when seen from Earth.

For example, your pinky finger is much, much smaller than the Sun, but if you hold it up at arm's length, it appears to your eye to be large enough to block out the Sun. The Moon can do the same thing - it can block out the Sun if it's lined up perfectly with the Sun from your point of view.

When the Earth, Moon and Sun line up perfectly, the Moon casts a shadow onto the Earth. Since the Moon is round,

its shadow is round as it lands on Earth. The only people who see the eclipse are those in the area on Earth where the shadow lands at a given moment.

The Moon is continuously orbiting around the Earth, so as time goes on during the eclipse, the Moon's shadow moves over the face of the Earth. Its shadow ends up looking like a thick line that can cover hundreds of miles in length. Astronomers call that line the path of totality.

From any given location along the path of totality, an observer can see the Sun completely eclipsed for a few minutes. Then, the shadow moves away from that location and the Sun slowly becomes more and more visible.

Solar eclipses don't happen every single time the Moon passes in between Earth and the Sun. If that were the case, there would be a solar eclipse every month.

If you could float above the Earth's North Pole and see the Moon's orbit from above, you would see the Moon line up with the Sun once every time it orbits around the Earth, which is approximately once per month. From this high point of view, it looks like the Moon's shadow should land on Earth every orbit.

However, if you could shift your perspective to look at the Moon's orbit from the orbital plane, you would see that the Moon's orbit is tilted by about 5 degrees compared with Earth's orbit around the Sun. This tilt means that sometimes the Moon is too high and its shadow passes above the Earth, and sometimes the Moon is too low and its shadow passes below the Earth. An eclipse happens only when the Moon is positioned just right and its shadow lands on the Earth. (AP)

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In partnership with Suffix to promote active lifestyle during Holy Month

Zain Alshaheed Park Ramadan Challenge kicks-off for third year running

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: For the third year running, the Zain Alshaheed Park Ramadan Challenge kicks-off in strategic partnership with Suffix Events. The health & sports program was highly successful in its first two seasons and aims to encourage people of all ages to stay active and engage in sports during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The challenge kicked-off at Alshaheed Park - Phase 1, joined by Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti, Suffix Chief Operations Officer Ahmad Al Majed, Zain and Suffix teams, and many participants from all ages.

Zain's support to this unique sports initiative for the third year running springs from the company's strategy to support health and sports programs in the community, especially during the Holy Month. In its past two seasons, the Zain Alshaheed Park Ramadan Challenge was highly successful with thousands of adults and children joining in to promote a healthier, more active lifestyle during fasting.

The challenge runs from 20-29 March at Phase 1 and offers people

of all ages a great opportunity to join by speed-walking or running at their own time and pace inside Alshaheed Park. Participants can collect distance points and compete to top the leader boards. Those who want to earn extra points can join the special workouts held at the park.

After signing up, participants collect their armbands from a vending machine at the park. The armbands feature a chip that tracks and registers each participant's kilometers as they pass through the solar-powered smart arch. The leader board screen shows everyone's progress in real time so every participant can check their standing and compete for a higher place.

The challenge also features many other interactive programs, including group workout sessions with several local gyms, an activation to celebrate the International Day of Happiness, a special race for people with down syndrome, the Zain Ramadan Kids Race, and more.

The Zain Alshaheed Park Ramadan Challenge targets both males and females from all ages to encourage them to keep fit and adopt a healthy and active lifestyle, not only during the Holy Month, but throughout the year.

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

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



Initiative promotes active lifestyle during Holy Month.



Waleed Al Khashti and Ahmad Al Majed with Zain and Suffix teams.

Murray beats weary Berrettini to advance at the Miami Open

Vekic outlasts Pliskova

MIAMI GARDENS, March 21, (AP): Andy Murray won another lengthy match with Matteo Berrettini, who appeared weary and leaned on his racket to keep his balance during Murray's 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory at the Miami Open.

Playing his first match on the ATP Tour this season, Berrettini was serving with Murray leading 5-2 in the second set when he seemed to become dizzy, resting his racket on the court to hold himself up. He was visited by a medical attendant, who checked

TENNIS

his blood pressure before play continued.

Berrettini left the court after dropping that set but was able to finish the match, which last 2 hours, 49 minutes.

It was a rematch of Murray's 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-7 (7), 7-6 (10-6) victory that lasted more than 4 1/2 hours in the first round of the 2023 Australian Open.

"It was obviously a great win for me," Murray said. "Started off a little bit slow but then I did think I played pretty well across then end of the first set through to the end of the match. Created a lot of opportunities and he was struggling for a little bit end of the second and beginning of the third, and I capitalized on that and got off to

a quick start in the third and served it out well at the end."

Plagued by injuries, Berrettini hadn't played a match on tour since being forced to retire during his match in the second round of last year's U.S. Open. The 2021 Wimbledon runner-up returned last week and reached the final of a Challenger tour tournament in Phoenix.

The 36-year-old Murray has won the title twice in Miami and joined Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal as the only active players with 30 wins at the event. The three-time Grand Slam champion advanced to face No. 29 seed Tomas Etcheverry in the second round.

Naomi Osaka, a two-time U.S. Open champion, beat Elisabetta Cocciaretto 6-3, 6-4 in her return to Miami. The runner-up to Iga Swiatek in her last appearance in 2022 advanced to face No. 15 seed Elina Svitolina in the second round.

Elsewhere on the first full day of the tournament, Sloane Stephens celebrated her 31st birthday by beating Angelique Kerber 6-2, 6-3 in a matchup of past U.S. Open women's champions. Also, Donna Vekic outlasted Karolina Pliskova 6-4, 2-6, 6-2; and Americans Danielle Collins and Shelby Rogers advanced with three-set victories.

Men's winners included Denis Shapovalov, who beat Luciano Darderi 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-4; and Martin Damm Jr., who outlasted China's Zhang Zhizhen 7-6 (2), 7-6 (3).

The 32 seeded players were given first-round byes. Aryna Sabalenka, the No. 2 seed, is expected to play her opening match against Paula Badosa on Friday.

On this, the leaders of tennis can agree: There is more money out there to be made. And they see eye-to-eye on this, too: The sport's current structure could stand to change.

The how's and why's and when's of it all? Well, that's open to discussion - and there is plenty of that happening now behind closed doors, conversations and negotiations about the future of tennis among the folks who run the Grand Slam tournaments and other events, the women's WTA and men's ATP professional tours, the players, their agents and others with a hand in the sport, including Saudi Arabia's Private Investment Fund (known as the PIF, it is the entity behind LIV Golf).

Diwaniya Al-Jabriya claims victory in Soccer Championship



Diwaniya Al-Jabriya celebrates with officials at the end of the tournament

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: The team "Diwaniya Al-Jabriya" clinched victory in the Rawdah and Hawalli Ramadan Football Association Championship, triumphing over the Al-Thabat team with a resounding score of three unanswered goals in the recent showdown at Ajyal Stadium in the Al-Islah Association located in Rawdah. Additionally, Al-Maali's got the fair play award.

The championship's final match was graced by the presence of Muhammad Al-Kandari, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Rawdah and Hawalli Cooperative Society, along with other esteemed members of the Board of Directors.

The conclusion of the Ramadan session saw Kuwaiti football luminaries Hamad Al-Saleh, goalkeepers Nawaf Al-Khalidi and Musab Al-Kandari, and Saudi journalist Fahd Al-Jaloudi being honored as guests. The event, attended by

a large audience passionately cheering on the finalists, featured drawings for numerous prizes for the fans.

Muhammad Al-Kandari, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Rawdah and Hawalli Cooperative Society, commended the exceptional level of skill demonstrated throughout the matches of the Ramadan football tournament,

SOCCER

particularly highlighting the electrifying final match, which drew a significant crowd.

He emphasized the Rawdah and Hawalli Association's dedication to organizing sports events that benefit young individuals, especially during this sacred month, with the aim of fostering a healthy society.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser pledges support for Kuwaiti athletes and all sports clubs

KUWAIT CITY, March 21: Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Ahmad Al Sabah, President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, reiterated the committee's unwavering support for all sports federations and clubs, emphasizing their commitment to enhancing sports development and securing remarkable achievements in international competitions. This commitment is underpinned by the robust backing provided by the country's political leadership to sports and athletes.

Addressing reporters following the reception by the Family Sports Committee at the committee's headquarters in the Jaber Al-Ahmad City Youth Center, Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Ahmad Al Sabah described the event as an invaluable opportunity to engage with athletes and glean insights aimed at propelling the Kuwaiti sports movement forward.

He revealed that preparations are underway for Kuwaiti teams' participation in the upcoming Gulf Youth Games scheduled to take place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in April. The Kuwaiti contingent is set to compete in over 18 team and individual events. Additionally, plans are in motion for the forthcoming Olympic Games in Paris 2024, where several Kuwaiti athletes are poised to showcase their talents across various disciplines.

In a similar sentiment, Abdullah Al-Shaheen, President of the Kuwait Football Association, commended the gathering as a testament to the camaraderie among members of all sports bodies. He hailed the initiative as a platform for fostering dialogue aimed at bolstering collaboration among sports institutions nationwide.

Al-Shaheen highlighted the Kuwaiti football team's rigorous preparations for their encounters against their Qatari counterparts in the joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup. Expressing optimism, he voiced hopes for a favorable outcome for the "Blues" against the reigning Asian champions.

Echoing these sentiments, Fuhaid Al-Ajmi, President of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, underscored the significance of such gatherings in nurturing a spirit of unity and solidarity among Kuwaiti athletes and sports enthusiasts alike.

Al-Ajmi disclosed that the club is gearing up to host the Ice Hockey World Cup slated for April, underscoring that Kuwait's role as host for these prestigious international sporting events, supported by the committee and the General Sports Authority, serves to elevate its stature on the global sports stage.



Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah with other officials.



Sloane Stephens serves against Angelique Kerber, of Germany, in their first round match at the Miami Open tennis tournament in Miami Gardens, Fla. (AP)

