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University graduates below 60 can transition from 'government' to 'private'

— Details Page 2 —

GCC MEET HELD IN SHADOW OF UNPRECEDENTED GAZA CATASTROPHE

Summit seeks joint Gulf action

Issues reviewed

DOHA, Dec 5, (KUNA): The 44th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) kicked off on Tuesday in the Qatari capital.

The Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah headed the Kuwaiti delegation at the 44th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which kicked off Tuesday in the Qatari capital.

During the session, ministers reviewed issues on the agenda and topics concerned with supporting and strengthening the process of joint Gulf action in various fields and at all levels.

The ministers also delved into the decisions and recommendations submitted to the GCC Supreme Council, in a way that would enhance the historical process of joint Gulf action, and discuss the most important regional and international issues, most notably the dangerous war taken place in Gaza Strip and the numerous violations on to the occupied Palestinian lands and their sanctities.

Meanwhile, Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani on Tuesday said the 44th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council takes place



The 44th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) kicked off on Tuesday in the Qatari capital Doha. The State of Kuwait delegation at the summit is headed by the Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

KUNA photo

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'AI could replace jobs, but opens new career avenues'

MP submits bill for constituency reformation

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: MP Abdulhadi Al-Ajmi has submitted a bill on reforming the constituencies to ensure equality among the constituencies based on the number of voters.

He affirmed that the bill, once approved, will narrow the gap between constituencies in terms of the number of voters, as the current distribution negatively affects the elections results.

The bill stipulates five constituencies as follows:

First Constituency: 159,684 voters consisting of Ahmadi, Maqwa, Warah, Juiadan, Jaber Al-Ali, Eqaila, Reqa, Hadiya, Dhahr, Fahd Al-Ahmad, Abu Halifa, Mangaf, Fahaeel, Fintas, Mahboulah, Sabahiya, Ali Sabah Al-Salem neighborhood, Abdullah Port, Zour, Sabah Al-Ahmad City, Wafra and Khairan residential area.

Second Constituency: 172,938 voters consisting of Funaitees, Messilah, Sabah Al-Salem neighborhood, Abu Al-Hasaniya, Abu Fatera, Masayel, Qurain, Adan, Qusour, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Bayan, Mishref, Bede'a, Rass, Salwa, Rumaitiyya, Mubarak Al-Abdullah neighborhood and Anjafah.

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NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: The White House said that the U.S. may establish a naval task force to escort commercial ships in the Red Sea, a day after three vessels were struck by missiles fired by Iranian-back Houthis in Yemen.

National security adviser Jake Sullivan said the U.S. has been in active conversations with allies about setting up the escorts though nothing is finalized, describing it as a "natural" response to that sort of incident. (AP)

HYDERABAD, India: Twelve people died in the downpour before Tropical Storm Michaung made landfall along India's southeast coast Tuesday, bringing further torrential rains and strong winds, officials said.

The storm entered Andhra Pradesh state with maximum sustained winds of 90-100 kph (56-62 mph) and gusts up to 110 kph (68 mph), the Indian Meteorological Department said, adding that the storm would weaken over the next few hours. Authorities were on high alert for heavy showers over the next 24 hours. (AP)



A woman mourns her child and her husband killed in an Israeli army bombardment of the Gaza Strip, at a hospital in Khan Younis, Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023. (AP)

Israel widens offensive into southern Gaza

War in Gaza enters bloody new phase

85 killed in Nigerian drone 'mistake' at religious event

ABUJA, Dec 5, (AP): At least 85 people have been confirmed dead after a "mistaken" army drone attack on a religious gathering in northwest Nigeria, authorities said. The president on Tuesday ordered a probe into the latest in a series of mistakes in Nigeria's conflict zones.

"Eighty-five dead bodies have so far been buried while (a) search is still ongoing," Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said in a statement that listed children, women and the elderly among the victims. At least 66 people were injured, the agency added.

Since 2017, some 400 civilians have been killed by airstrikes the military said were targeting armed groups in the deadly security crisis in the country's north, according to the Lagos-based SBM Intelligence security firm.

Manila delegation in bid to lift ban on recruitment

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: A delegation from the Philippines will visit the country from Dec 14-16 to discuss the resumption of the recruitment of Filipino workers for Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting a diplomatic source.

The source disclosed that the delegation will include Filipino officials who will discuss lifting the ban on the recruitment of Filipino workers with their counterparts in Kuwait.

Continued on Page 5

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): Artificial Intelligence (AI) could potentially replace many jobs, but create new lines of work such as prompt engineering, which is a totally new discipline that teaches how to command and control this new technology, said a Kuwait University (KU) academic on Tuesday.

Vice President for Academic Services Dr. Sulaiman Al-Rafee said in a statement to KUNA, "anyone who wishes to guarantee a future, has to major in the field of technology specifically Artificial Intelligence" although some jobs might be at risk.

The KU scholar pointed out to the potential new job market AI could create but also favored the regulations placed on AI in tools like ChatGPT, some of which he believed posed ethical challenges, but did not elaborate on the nature of the challenges.

Dr. Al-Rafee was among other scholars, namely his assistant professor Mohammad Al-Dhafiri, in a conference about AI, its innovations and advancements, which took place in Kuwait University. Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), private and

Continued on Page 5

Audit Bureau saves KD 25mn for Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): Between April 1 and November 30, the Audit Bureau's efforts resulted in saving KD 25 million (USD 80.9 million) for the state treasury.

Sara Al-Hajeri, an auditor specializing in the advanced examination of allocations for affiliated and independent departments, stated that the bureau addressed 2,455 topics related to state spending in various sectors, totaling KD 3.27 billion (USD 10.6 billion).

Of the cases reviewed, 84 percent pertained to ministries and government departments, with a cumulative value of KD three billion (approx. USD 9.7 billion).

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Kuwait committed to battle climate change

DUBAI, Dec 5, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD), Dr. Khaled Mahdi stressed Tuesday that Kuwait, as an oil producing country, is committed to obligations in facing the climate change challenges, including commitments to reach Carbon neutrality in 2060.

Speaking to KUNA during partaking in the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28 UAE), Mahdi stressed that Kuwait's commitment is an indication of its cohesive role in the international and global organization to combat climate change.

Having the UAE organizing COP28 is a clear evidence of the importance of the climate change issue to the Gulf Cooperation Countries and its effect of climate on various areas of the world, Mahdi added.

Continued on Page 5



Dr Mahdi

HH Amir's health 'stable': minister

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): The health condition of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah remains stable, said the Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Tuesday.

Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah expressed wishes of good health and rapid recovery for His Highness the Amir.

Opinion

End the plight of dud cheques

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

IT goes without saying that the Court of Cassation is a source for interpretation of legislative work, particularly the law, with the principles it establishes through its rulings.

This is due to the fact that the judge of the Court of Cassation uses his intellect and experience to interpret the legal rules, and seeks the wisdom of the legislation. Therefore, his rulings are considered judicial norms that can be referred to, and reliable precedents so that there is no flaw in the future rulings.

Based on this principle, the Court of Cassation built the rulings related to the issue of the dud cheque, and considered it a tool of fulfillment that does not carry bad faith, but rather a purely commercial transaction.



Al-Jarallah

It is a principle that many countries have established in their modern laws, after judges sensed premeditated bad faith through the creditor's insistence on the debtor to issue a cheque, knowing that he has no funds. This is a kind of blackmail because failure to pay the amount was considered a criminal case.

This strange legal principle is still in effect in Kuwait, although there are many rulings issued by the Court of Cassation that deny it.

However, stakeholders insist on circumventing the principles derived from the Court of Cassation by refusing to legislate what renders a dud cheque not a crime that requires physical coercion to be exercised on its issuer.

That is why I began demanding since 1999 the abolition of the so-called "penal protection", which is imprisonment, to relieve pressure on the investigative authority, the judiciary, and the relevant agencies.

In addition, when banks issue a cheque book to a customer, they are confident that he has solvency; otherwise they would not have done so. For greater credibility, there is the so-called "certified cheque".

For this reason, most countries in the world have abolished the laws that criminalize the issuance of dud cheques, and considered it a commercial transaction that does not amount to physical coercion.

In Kuwait, it is completely different because the legal principle was based on an error, and the legislator did not view the provisions of the Court of Cassation as reliable principles for updating legislation.

Therefore, the creditor must preserve his right by knowing whether the debtor has enough funds or not.

Those with bad intentions are working to establish the principle of coercion, which is why they refuse to abolish this crime. This is happening at a time when many observers and jurists are calling for amending the law, because they are relying on principles established by the Court of Cassation.

In banking transactions, there are collateral assets against the loans granted to customers. Therefore, when the bank lends, it works on the principle of long-term loyalty.

This is because it realizes that the borrower only resorted to it because he has outstanding assets and is able to pay back; otherwise the banks would throw people in prison.

Hence, the physical coercion practiced in this case contradicts the spirit of legislation and legal principles. It was appropriate for the time when transactions were based on the principle of enslavement and not equality among people.

There is no doubt that decriminalizing the issuance of dud cheque enhances the financial cycle, because it gives the beneficiary the freedom to work in order to repay the debt. But if he is thrown in prison, the creditor loses his money because he prevented the debtor from working.

Therefore, abolishing the law and resorting to the principles established by the Court of Cassation has become a strong necessity today.

Finally, it must be said that those who insist on criminalizing the issuance of dud cheques are the loan sharks and consumer companies who built their principle on bad faith and use the state to collect their debts.

This is why we say to the people's representatives: Rally behind the popular issues.

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:03	Asr	14:31
Sunrise ..	06:27	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr	11:38	Isha	18:11

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speed of 06-26 km/h.

Weather

By Night: Rather cold to cold with light variable wind with speed of 06-22 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	25	16	Kuwait Airport	25
			Abdaly	26
			Jahra	26
			Salmiyah	24
			Nuwaisib	26
			Wafra	26
				11

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

Qualification must match profession: PAM

Degree holders under 60 years can change 'iqama' from public to private

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has opened a window for expatriates, whose professions match their university qualifications and whose age does not exceed 60 years, to transfer their residency from the government sector to the private sector, reports Al-Rai daily.

The authority explained that this decision is in line with the steps aimed at addressing the lopsided demographic structure issue and to benefit from expatriates with vast experience who might be needed by employers in the private sector, and in accordance with the regulations and policies on the demographic structure of the country.

The Board of Directors of PAM issued resolution number 239 of 2023 during its third meeting for fiscal 2023/2024, stat-

ing "the expatriates employed in government agencies cannot transfer to the private sector, except those under the following three categories:

1. Husband and children of a Kuwaiti woman married to a non-Kuwaiti, and foreign women married to Kuwaitis,
2. Palestinian document holders,
3. Those who hold a university certificate and have not reached the age of 60, provided that the profession is compatible with the qualification and nature of the job occupied in the government sector."

The decision also grants PAM the power to "establish regulations on prohibiting such transfer for some professions and specializations in the interest of the public."

Move in citizens interest: MoCI

Decision to cut ration items clarified

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has clarified that the decision to cancel 42 types of ration food associated with the civil identification card is in the interest of the citizens, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Official Spokesman of the ministry Abdullah Al-Haraz told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the aforementioned decision is based on the results of a comprehensive study carried out by the joint committee whose members are from several bodies, including the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN).

Al-Haraz disclosed that one of the most important reasons for taking such a decision, which will take effect on Jan 1, is "the failure of some companies to reduce the market price as stipulated in the regulatory decisions requiring a 25 percent reduction, in addition to the fact that some items are not in demand in the ration supply branches."

It can be recalled that on July 10 this year, Minister of Commerce and Industry and

Minister of State for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban issued a decision on the formation of the permanent committee tasked to regulate categories of food supplies and discounted items, including basic and complementary goods and products.

Diesel subsidy cut: The Subsidy Study Committee reduced the quantity of subsidized diesel for fishermen by 50 percent effective Nov 1, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources explained that the 50 percent diesel subsidy reduction came after the concerned authorities set conditions that the beneficiaries of the subsidy must meet in order to continue enjoying the privilege, indicating the reduction is the result of their inability to fulfill these conditions.

Sources said the fishermen, who exceed the 50 percent subsidy, can buy diesel at the announced price of 115 fils per liter, which is also a subsidized price as the global price currently ranges from 230 fils to 240 fils.



KRCS officials and volunteers pictured near the relief-carrying plane.

KUNA photo

Two ambulances, mobile clinic on board

34th plane with 40 tons aid leaves for Egypt

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 5, (KUNA): The 34th Kuwait relief plane for the Gaza Strip left to the Egyptian city of Al-Arish Tuesday, carrying 40 tons of humanitarian aid.

The plane also carried two ambulances and a mobile clinic, with a donation from the Ministry of Health and the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK).

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Deputy Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi praised the political efforts, as well as the continued relief bridge to support the people in Gaza, led by prominent Kuwaiti figures and people.

The continuation of the relief air bridge came from Kuwait's solid stance towards the Palestinian case, to support them against the Israeli occupation's aggression that martyred and left many injured in addition to destroying hospitals, shelters, and other infrastructures, he indicated.

The two ambulances and mobile clinic will be transported through Al-Arish airport to be deployed in Gaza, to support the medical capabilities in the Strip, and maintain medical service to the people of Gaza, he added.

Al-Hasawi said that the situation in Gaza required immediate aid and relief from humanitarian organizations, which the KRCS had done and will continue to do more to support the affected.

He expressed his gratitude towards the Kuwaiti Defense Ministry for providing airplanes for the air bridge and the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on its contributions towards this humanitarian mission.

He reminded people, companies, and banks to donate through the Society's website in the (Relief Palestine) campaign to help the people in Gaza who are in desperate need of direct relief and aid.

Kuwait sent on Monday an urgent humanitarian relief aid convoy to help ease the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza Strip, including 77 trucks of medical supplies and food.

Deputy Director of Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR) Omar Al-Thuwaini said to KUNA that the aid from Kuwait contains 1,000 tons of food baskets, flour, mineral water bottles and medical supplies.

Al-Thuwaini added that the convoy came as part of an agreement by KSR with Egypt's Dar Al-Orman charity, amounting at USD 500,000 to provide urgent aid for the people of Gaza.

KSR's campaign to aid Palestinians was launched during the first days of the Israeli occupation aggression on Gaza on October seventh, adding that 27 Kuwaiti charities, governmental bodies and authorities all participated to help in any ways possible.

KPC plans to build 181 petrol stations by 2040

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), in coordination with Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), intends to build 181 gas stations by 2040, reports Al-Anba daily.

This move is aimed at providing retail gas stations to meet the local needs, such that a total of 181 fuel filling stations will be built by 2040 divided into nine groups. The plan is to construct 100 stations by 2028 divided into five groups. The new fuel filling stations will utilize advanced technology to produce electrical energy through alternative and renewable energy sources.

A total of 18 retail/fuel filling stations were operated within the first group, so the number of filling stations has so far reached 66 stations -- 61 are permanent and five are mobile.

According to data obtained by the daily, the number of gas stations currently stands at 66, which will reach 148 by 2028 and 229 by 2040.

In the private sector, Al-Soor Fuel Company currently owns 42 stations, while Al-Oula Local Fuel Marketing Company owns 43 stations.

Regarding the quantities of products sold in the local market, the data revealed that local market sales for fiscal year 2022/2023 increased to 4.89 billion liters of gasoline compared to 4.46 billion liters in fiscal 2021/2022. The kerosene sales in fiscal 2022/2023 reached about 172 million liters, compared to 177 million liters in fiscal 2021/2022; while gas oil sales reached 2.55 billion liters in fiscal 2022/2023, compared to two billion liters in 2021/2022.

The data also showed details of the sales of three types of automobile fuel in fiscal 2022/2023 when total sales increased by 10 percent or around 4.891 billion liters compared to the previous fiscal year. The breakdown of sales are as follows: 1.8 billion liters of special gasoline, three billion liters of premium gasoline and 40 million liters of ultra gasoline.

Kuwaiti, Egyptian to hang for Rashidi kill

Death for maid in colleague murder

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Criminal Court yesterday sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen and an Egyptian expatriate, who were accused of the first degree murder of Mubarak Al-Rashidi, to death by hanging.

The Public Prosecution had demanded the Criminal Court to issue the death penalty for the suspects after it was proven that they had committed premeditated murder.

It confirmed that the first defendant committed his crime with premeditation by preparing his equipment, looking for the victim and committing the murder after catching him.

Weeks after the citizen Mubarak Al-Rashidi disappeared in Subbiya desert, the Ministry of Interior announced the discovery of his body inside a container in Salmi.

On May 26, the forensic evidence report revealed that the body belonged to the missing citizen Mubarak Al-Rashidi, and that he had been killed.

The investigations by the Ministry of Interior and its continuous efforts since the disappearance of the citizen Mubarak Al-Rashidi revealed the details and circumstances of this heinous crime.

The investigations extended from Kuwait to Egypt, in coordination with the Egyptian security authorities, to find the Egyptian suspect who had witnessed the crime inside a camp in Kabd and had helped in transporting Al-Rashidi's body to Salmi.

Death sentence upheld: The Court of Cassation upheld the verdict issued by the lower court which sentenced an Ethiopian maid to death by hanging because she stabbed an Indian housemaid to death in Abdullah Al-Mubarak on the first day of Ramadan.

Just minutes before breaking the fast, the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior had received a report from a Kuwaiti citizen about a quarrel that broke out between his two housemaids which resulted in the death of one of them.

Farwaniya Governorate detectives arrested the perpetrator after they went to the site of the report and recovered the knife that she used to commit the crime.

When questioned, she confessed to committing her crime, revealing that she had killed the victim due to some disagreements between them.

'Spying' in the loo: The Misdemeanor Court, presided over by Judge Issa Al-Hazer, sentenced two expatriates - an Asian and an Arab, who were accused of placing a camera inside a women's bathroom, to two-year imprisonment with hard labor followed by deportation after serving the sentence, and ordered the confiscation of the mobile phone.

The court also ordered the referral of the civil case to the concerned civil court after the legal team of the Kuwaiti plaintiff filed a civil complaint, claiming an amount of KD 5,001.

According to the case files, a Kuwaiti woman found a spy camera hidden inside the women's bathroom of a local bank in Farwaniya Governorate. She immediately filed a complaint with the police.

Soon after, the Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of the accused.

The ministry issued a statement, in which it declared that, "The Criminal Security

Sector's General Department for Criminal Investigations, arrested an Arab and an Asian on charges of misusing a phone, by placing it inside a bathroom designated for women in a bank in Farwaniya."

Murder ruling Dec 26: The Criminal Court has set the session of December 26 to rule on the murder case of Abdulaziz Al-Za'atari at the hands of a member of the ruling family.

During yesterday's session, Lawyer Jasser Al-Jada'i said the court should read the news regarding the arrest of the real killer, as his client did not commit the crime.

He stressed that there were no fingerprints of the accused on the weapon, bullets, or helmet.

Lawyer Al-Jada'i highlighted the presence of a witness around whom there are question marks in terms of the actual culprit behind the crime after his insistence on fabricating a case with his partner to detain him at the time of the crime.

Jail in adultery abortion: The Criminal Court sentenced two expatriates - a man and a woman - to three-year imprisonment with hard labor on charges of adultery and abortion. It sentenced another individual to two-year imprisonment for selling abortion pills. The court sentenced a building guard to one-year imprisonment for digging a grave and burying the fetuses of the first and second defendants in the backyard of a building in Farwaniya.

The first defendant was charged with selling abortion pills to his friend (the second defendant) who had asked his help for aborting the fetus of his wife. The second defendant then presented the pills to his wife (the third defendant) to abort the fetus she had carried in her womb for seven months.

After aborting the fetus, the second and third defendants buried it in the backyard of the building where they live in Farwaniya. When their friend (the informant) learned that her friend had purchased abortion pills from her husband, aborted her fetus, and buried it in the backyard of her building, she informed the police.

Detectives

Immediately, the detectives conducted secret investigations and found out that the second and third defendants are married in a common law contract, and she was pregnant and had miscarried.

The Public Prosecution was notified, the grave behind the building was dug up, and the fetus was retrieved, after which the couple was arrested.

After conducting a DNA test on the fetus, it was discovered that the first defendant is the father, and the third defendant had cheated on her husband and became pregnant.

Confronting the third suspect, she admitted to aborting her fetus with the help of her husband, and that he had decided to do so because of his intense love for her after she insisted but without knowing that the fetus belonged to his friend. She said she had been married to her husband for six years and was in love with him, but his friend managed to play with her mind and seduce her into committing adultery with him. She said, "I became pregnant, and my husband bought abortion pills from that man, without knowing that the fetus was his friend's and not his."

When the husband (second defendant) was confronted with this information, he admitted what was attributed to him, but was shocked to know that the fetus was not his, but of his special friend who had betrayed him with his wife.



KUNA pavilion at the exhibition.

KUNA, embassies participate

'Media Role 2' exhibition kicks off

By Ahmad Shabib

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): The Mass Communication unit at Kuwait University inaugurated on Tuesday the "Our Media Role 2" exhibition, with participation from more than 240 public and private institutions, including KUNA, and several embassies in Kuwait.

In the Opening Statement, the Acting Director of Kuwait University Dr. Meshari Al-Harbi emphasized on KU consistent contributions to society at different sectors.

Al-Harbi said, "public relations is a vital part in our academic journey, and it reflects effective communication with our society and world."

He added the exhibition sheds the light on "improving students and professors skills and abilities, and it unveils their dedication and persistency."

Moreover, the Dean of College of Arts Dr.

Abdulmohsen Al-Madaj stressed in his statement on the great impact of Media in society.

"We all experienced the impact of media in Kuwait, where freedom of speech scrutinizes economic, political, and social issues," Al-Madaj said.

From his end, Al-Madaj appreciated KU and College of Art for receiving a vast number of participants from several public and private institutions, and linking students with the labor market.

For his part, the event supervisor, Dr. Hussain Ibrahim said, "the exhibition focuses on the crucial role of PR in the governmental and private sector, non-profit organizations, and embassies."

Ibrahim added, "the exhibition highlights the significance of Media studies at KU, where plenty of innovators and leaders in different fields have graduated."

Chronic diseases kill 4K per year

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Director of the Health Promotion Department in the Ministry of Interior Dr Abeer Al-Bahwa said 4,000 citizens die annually due to chronic diseases, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Bahwa also highlighted the prevalence of physical inactivity among Kuwaiti women at a rate of 90 percent.

She said Kuwait is one of the least active countries in the world, revealing that chronic diseases cause the death of about 4,000 Kuwaitis annually, accounting for 72 percent of the total deaths of citizens and about 79 percent of the total deaths in Kuwait.

In a statement to the daily on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, she revealed that cardiovascular diseases rank first with 41 percent of deaths, followed by cancer with 15 percent, respiratory diseases and diabetes with three percent each.

She indicated that patterns of physical inactivity differ according to gender and social and geographical considerations around the world. She cited the World Health Organization's report on physical activity in Kuwait for the year 2022 stating "the prevalence of physical inactivity rate among females by 90 percent compared to 79 percent for males for the age group 11 to 17

years, and among adults aged 18 and above, the inactivity rate for females is 75 percent compared to 61 percent for males.

She stated that physical inactivity among elderly women in the age group 70 and above reached 85 percent compared to 76 percent for men.

She confirmed that the World Health Organization estimated the annual cost of healthcare for patients with chronic noncommunicable diseases in Kuwait at \$75,753,263 dollars, equivalent to KD 23,350,000, expecting the cumulative cost of healthcare in the country to rise to \$833,285,893, equivalent to KD 256,870,000.

She attributed the differences in physical activity between females and males to the conservative social and cultural norms that restrict women's physical activities in the open air, as well as the lack of sports facilities designated for women.

Speaking about the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which falls on Dec 3 each year; Al-Bahwah highlighted the importance of practicing physical activity for people with disabilities, explaining that it contributes to improving respiratory, cardiovascular and muscular fitness; improving cardio-metabolic health such as blood pressure, dyslipidemia, sugar and insulin resistance; and improving physical functions in children and adolescents in the age group from five to 17 years.

Other Voices

The modern history of the Jewish state

By Ahmad alSarraf

American Thomas Tonon wrote an article in the Princeton University Journal, last May 9, relating to the humanitarian and positive positions of the distinguished American scientist Albert Einstein regarding Israel, the establishment of a Jewish state, and his rejection of the offer to become its first president.



alsarraf

Tonon begins his article entitled "A Jew's Journey" with a comment that David Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, met the scientist Einstein at Princeton University, where Einstein had previously studied, and subsequently became one of its professors, to convince him to become president of Israel, but

Einstein rejected the offer.

In a speech Einstein gave in 1938, he said: I would rather see a reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the establishment of a Jewish state.

In a quote dating back to the late 1920s, Einstein said: If we cannot find a way to cooperate and make honest treaties with the Arabs, we have learned absolutely nothing in two thousand years of suffering.

Einstein also previously co-signed a letter on December 4, 1948, addressed to the New York Times, with 28 other prominent members of the American Jewish community, stating that the "Freedom Party," led by Menachem Begin, is a political party very similar in its organization, methods, political philosophy, and social appeal for the Nazi and fascist parties.

Referring to the massacre committed by the Jews against the Arabs in the village of Deir Yassin, the letter stated that the (Jewish) terrorists, far from being ashamed of their action, were proud of this massacre, and spread it widely. The Deir Yassin incident embodies the character and actions of the Freedom Party, headed by Begin.

In an additional description of the Freedom Party, he described the party as containing a mixture of extremist nationalism, religious mysticism, and racial supremacy, and that it bears the unmistakable character of a fascist party that targets terrorism against Jews, Arabs, and Britons alike, and that it used deception as a means.

The letter from Einstein and his companions ended by saying that America should turn its back on Begin and not support "this latest manifestation of fascism."

Ten years before that letter, Einstein had announced at the Commodore Hotel in New York that the existence of a Jewish state with borders and an army to protect those borders contradicts "the basic nature of Judaism."

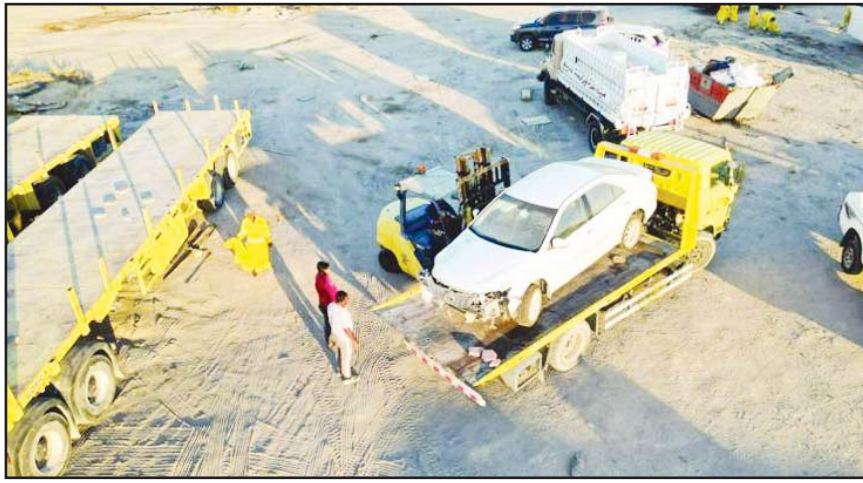
As he told the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry into the Palestinian Question in 1946: I cannot understand why there is a need for a Jewish state. I think it is a bad thing.

There are many quotes about Einstein in Fred Jerome's book, which show the truth about his provocative ideas about the Middle East and his positive position on the conflict.

It appears, from current events in Israel, that the nature of its government has not changed much since Einstein's time. The reason for this is that Zionism, as a political entity, is a form of fascism, and no political party in Israel can be truly democratic if it promotes Zionist ideals.

□ □ □

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Municipality team carries away the abandoned cars.

Abandoned cars lifted

Cleanliness campaign launched

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The hygiene department's field teams have intensified their inspection campaigns to monitor and rectify hygiene violations and road occupancy across various governorates. This initiative stems from the directives of Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous, the Director General of the Municipality, emphasizing the need to activate regulatory bodies to enforce municipal laws, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Relations Department of the Municipality clarified that the Public Cleanliness and Road Occupations Department of the Al-Ahmadi Governorate Municipality Branch conducted a comprehensive campaign in the Al-Ahmadi Industrial Estate. The primary objectives were to enhance cleanliness standards, clear obstacles from roads, maintain the general aesthetic, and discourage the improper disposal of waste outside designated containers.

Nawaf Al-Mutairi, the Director of the Public Cleanliness and Road Works Department at the Al-Ahmadi Branch, emphasized that the intensified field campaigns aim to monitor violators and take necessary legal actions. He highlighted the team's dedication to elevating cleanliness standards in their designated areas and eliminating elements that mar the visual appeal and obstruct roads. The department conducts regular field tours to preserve the cultural integrity of the governorate.

Al-Mutairi reported that the recent campaign resulted in identifying 10 municipal violations and the removal of 17 abandoned, scrap cars. He underscored the ongoing commitment of the supervisory team to conduct field tours, emphasizing their unwavering dedication to enforcing legal measures against those who violate public cleanliness and road occupancy regulations.

Remove Xmas decorations from shops – Municipality

Shopkeepers, expats perplexed

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: In a surprising move, the Municipality has issued a directive for all shops to pack away Christmas decorations, bringing an unexpected halt to festive preparations.

The announcement has left the expatriate community and shopkeepers perplexed, as the directive means a sudden end to the Christmas celebrations and festive atmosphere that typically sets the city alive at this time of year, say sources.

The surprise move comes at a time when the businesses and individuals alike were gearing up for the holiday season, with store façades adorned with festive lights, ornaments, and Christmas trees.

The municipality's decision has sparked a mix of reactions, disappointment and confusion among residents, who were looking forward to the festive spirit after a challenging year.

Local shop owners, who had invested time and resources into creating attractive Christmas displays, now have no choice but to comply with the municipality directive.

Kuwait has been experiencing a ban on selling Christmas decorations in shops due to opposition from some citizens who claim that such decorations are incompatible with Kuwait's customs, and traditions.

Last year the management committee of the Avenues Mall, one of the biggest shopping centers in the country, removed a huge Christmas tree that had been put up inside the mall after citizens complained to the Kuwait Municipality about it.

The ban on Christmas decorations in Kuwait is not unique, as many other countries, including some Muslim-majority countries, do not officially recognize Christmas as a public holiday.

Stick to rules, campers warned

Fine for hunting lizards, birds

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Environmental Police Department at the Ministry of Interior has advised campers to adhere to the regulations to avoid legal problems, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the department, the fine for hunting lizards or birds of prey is KD250, while the fine for smoking in schools, universities and institutes ranges from KD50 to KD100.

This was announced in a panel discussion organized by Kuwait Scouts Association entitled, "Environmental Violations and the Camping Season". The association hosted Major Badriya Sa'ad and First Lieutenant Zaid Abdullah from the Environmental Police Department. They stressed the necessity of obtaining a camping license from the official website of Kuwait Municipality and pay the corresponding fee of KD50 while the security deposit is KD100.

One of the most important conditions for camping is the prohibition of damaging or deteriorating the natural environment, such as uprooting plants and harming wild animals in the form of hunting lizards or birds of prey, as this leads to a fine of KD250 or imprisonment.

The two officers urged the people to stay away from the border strip, natural reserves, and oil installations, as the license will be canceled in the event of a modification to the site chosen for camping through the Municipality's website. They also stressed the need to adhere to the prevention and safety regulations of Kuwait Firefighting Force and the Ministry of Interior. They said people should not dig the soil, not place cement pours, and not burn waste and dump it anywhere.

They also touched on maritime violations and warned against fishing in Kuwait Bay, unless there is a license from the concerned authority and an entry fee of KD5, as entry without a license costs the entrant a fine of KD1,250, along with the seizure of the cruiser.

They stressed that the fine for smoking in enclosed and semi-enclosed spaces, such as

Nod to request

Family Court shift

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Ahmadi Governorate Committee approved the request of the Ministry of Justice to renew the Municipal Council's decision regarding the reallocation of a site for the Family Court in the Al-Egaila area, reports Al-Rai daily.

It also approved the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs' request to expand the Mubarak Abdullah Al-Dabbous Mosque and parking lots in the Fahaeel area, Sector 12.

The committee referred during its meeting on Monday, to the executive branch, the requests of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport for the allocation of only 9 basins, 5 water channels, and 4 connecting links to collect and drain rainwater between Wafra and Qaradan, Al-Hafrah, and Al-Fawwar to protect the Al-Khairan area.

On the other hand, the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate Committee in the Municipal Council approved the PART request to modify the shape and dimensions of the location of the rainwater collection tank, while allocating a path to connect the tank, in the Sabah Al-Salem area, Block 3.

schools, complexes, universities and institutes, ranges between KD50 to KD100, wishing everyone to adhere to the instructions in the interest of the public.

At the end of the discussion session, Vice President of the Scouts Association Hussein Al-Maqseed honored the lecturers.

Team in Shuwaikh, to check prices

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The price monitoring team, headed by Director of the Technical Body tasked to Supervise Commodities and Determine Prices in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari, conducted an inspection tour of the wholesale and central markets in Shuwaikh to survey the prices of meat, frozen chicken, and other basic commodities such as edible oil, sugar, cheese, canned beans, lentils chickpeas and table eggs, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Ansari confirmed that the prices of basic commodities are fixed according to the list of prices announced to consumers in the markets and

stores. He added the administration will submit a plan to Undersecretary Ziad Al-Najem that includes its work during the coming period to monitor the markets.

He said Al-Najem instructed the management of the technical body to supervise goods and to intensify inspection tours in all regions to survey prices and uncover whether there are violations like raising prices in an unjustified manner and to implement the law against violators.

He pointed out that the price monitoring team took pledges from the central markets and stores not to raise prices and to adhere to the announced prices.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Creating trust, transparency can shut the door on rumors

"POLITICAL rumors pose a significant challenge for many countries, often exerting a considerable impact on political stability and potentially tipping the balance in certain situations. Universally, no country is immune to the prevalence of political rumors," columnist Dr. Ghadeer Muhammad Asiri wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"A recent study conducted at the University of Basel in Switzerland revealed that 30% of people believe in rumors. This underscores the global need for qualified researchers to analyze the dissemination of political rumors and their effects on individuals.

"Numerous countries actively seek to analyze and categorize rumors with precision, utilizing them strategically to manage conflicts and their repercussions on public sentiment.

"Major powers employ electronic communication as a weapon to achieve political, economic, and military objectives, manipulating people's emotions to influence both domestic and international affairs. This influence can be wielded positively or negatively, shaping the narrative through organized means.

"Political rumors are employed as a weapon by countries or foreign policies, often involving financial incentives or official documents to sway individuals.

"This strategy may extend to the acquisition of media outlets, electronic platforms, and programming, influencing public opinion in specific directions. The objectives behind such tactics may range from undermining national unity to promoting ideological conflicts, bias, and fanaticism, disrupting peaceful coexistence and societal stability.

"The destructive nature of political rumors becomes evident in their efforts to dismantle the state of peace and societal coexistence. They aim to induce psychological instability among citizens by generating doubt and distrust through the dissemination of hypothetical scenarios. Kuwait, undergoing political changes akin to its neighbors, faces an influx of political rumors, exacerbated by a unique space of freedom.

"While official statements caution against the spread of misinformation, the absence of a proactive official body in communicating changes swiftly contributes to citizens relying on potentially inaccurate sources, such as WhatsApp or other electronic communication programs.

"To address this challenge, solutions are imperative to provide citizens with real-time and accurate information, acknowledging their right to access pertinent and trustworthy data affecting their lives. The state must prioritize creating trust, awareness, and transparency by disseminating authentic information that aligns with citizens' concerns.

"Leveraging official media institutions becomes crucial in this context, as they serve as authoritative sources for correct, prompt, and transparent information.

"The constitution emphasizes the vital connection between citizens and the state, underscoring the need for transparency in conveying facts to ensure stability and prosperity for the nation's future, thereby diminishing reliance on false rumors in the pursuit of information."

Also:

"The Israeli state's policy towards Syria is unequivocal and well-known, considering Syria as a primary target due to its perceived role as the tip of the spear against the occupying state. Since the establishment of the Israeli entity, Syria's stability and its resistance to occupation have marked it as a key focus. Over the years, the Israeli state has targeted the airport and its vicinity, often claiming the presence of Iranian weapons or forces as a pretext for its attacks," columnist Fakhri Hashem Al-Sayyid Rajab wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"These strikes, particularly on the airport, have intensified, with periods of it being rendered non-operational. After the Gaza War, the Israeli state not only targeted the airport but also struck military barracks in the southern part of the country. The final blow to the airport occurred thirty-five days after its initial disablement, leading to a halt in flights, including those at Aleppo International Airport.

"The Israeli state remains steadfast in its obstructionist approach. The official

spokesperson, Avichai Adraee, issued a warning, declaring that any act of sabotage against Israel would be met with an iron fist, exempting no warnings.

"In response, Syria issued a statement through its Foreign Ministry, cautioning the Israeli state about the consequences of these attacks on Syria, Palestine, and southern Lebanon. Syria vowed that the occupying state would pay the price for its recklessness.

"The Israeli state's interest in disrupting the airport is rooted in its belief that Iranian weapons enter Syria through this route. Even if this hypothesis were valid, the question arises: does this legitimize the actions of the occupying state?

"Amidst the complexities of the Syrian reality, where the nation battles occupiers in the north and east, there is a strange regional silence and occasional support for the occupier. The perplexing situations prompt questions without clear answers.

"Why doesn't Syria reciprocate? The truth contradicts the Israeli state's claims, as the notion of weapons passing through Damascus International Airport is deemed false. The real objective is to eliminate the axis of resistance, with Damascus at its core.

"Since the last third of 2022, attempts to disrupt Damascus Airport have increased, coinciding with a rise in movement and visitors to the city. The Israeli state even targets United Nations planes delivering aid, showing a willingness to exacerbate Syrian suffering amid the economic blockade.

"The future remains uncertain, with many in the nation left in a state of anticipation, unsure of the direction events will take and who will emerge victorious or defeated in a reality filled with contradictions and variables. The destiny of many in this nation seems to be one of waiting."

□ □ □

"Nawaf ... our great love. For those who know us, or who do not know us, we are the people of the beloved State of Kuwait. We Kuwaitis differ among ourselves on many matters, but we all agree on two constant things: the love of Kuwait and the love of Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, may God protect and preserve him," columnist Talal Al-Saeed wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"We in Kuwait do not have declared parties, but every citizen or every group of citizens who represent a party themselves, has their own point of view that they defend strongly, and some of us try to impose our point of view on others!

"Yes, there are undeclared parties, some of which are managed from abroad, and there are disputes and disagreements that have a beginning and no end, but what is certain is that we all come together in love for Kuwait, and love for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, may God protect and preserve this great leader who enjoys an unparalleled popular support. It is unprecedented and no country in the world has witnessed it. The young before the old, the woman and the man, without exception, all unite in their love for the Amir, the leader, the humanitarian father, who imposed his love and respect on everyone, believing in God Almighty, fearing God Almighty for himself and for his people.

"He has a great character and a thankful, witty tongue. He puts his interlocutors to shame with his extreme humility and fragrant conduct. It is not only the Kuwaitis who love him, but even the expatriate brothers residing on the land of Kuwait who have the same feelings for the Amir, may God protect him. As for the people of Kuwait, there is no Kuwaiti family that does not know this great personality closely, and even feels that he is a caring father for the one who loves him and he loves in return.

"This is an unprecedented consensus on the love and respect of Nawaf Al-Khair, who has white hands, a big heart and clear patriotic stances. Therefore, you find everyone on the land of Kuwait sincerely praying for his speedy recovery.

"Oh God, you know that our human prince is fair to us and loved by us. Oh God, hasten his recovery and grant him good health and well-being.

"We call on you by your greatest name, by which if we call on you, you respond, to remove all harm from Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, return him to his people unharmed, and reward him on our behalf with the best reward in this world and the hereafter. From us is sincere supplication, and from you, Glory be to You, is the answer, and our last supplication is praise be to God, Lord of the worlds."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



Traces of fire.

5 suffer from smoke

The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said acting on information firemen from the Salmiya and Al-Bida' centers responded to the call and controlled the fire, which had originated on the ground floor of a residential building, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily added, five people suffering from asphyxiation were given first aid at the site and then taken to a hospital for treatment.

The cause of the fire and the extent of property damage are not known. In the meantime, the authorities are investigating the cause of the fire.



Contraband seized from drug addict.

Drug addict arrested

Personnel from General Traffic Department (roving patrol) have taken into custody an unidentified person for consuming drugs, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the man was found in possession of an air weapon, narcotic pills, and pieces of hashish in the Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area.

He has been handed over to the Directorate-General for Drugs Control.

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LOCAL

Minister issues regulation to set up cos to build cities, residential areas

MPW inks deal for maintenance of service sectors, roads

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Minister of Justice and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Raqba issued resolution No. 138/2023 regarding the issuance of the executive regulations of law No. 118/2023 for the establishment of companies to build cities and residential areas and develop them economically.



Al-Raqba

In a press statement issued Sunday, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) said the decision included a set of steps that contribute to implementing the various articles of the law, in response to Article 39 of the law, which stipulates the necessity of issuing the executive regulations of the aforementioned law from the concerned minister.

PAHW explained that the new regulations focus on identifying aspects of cooperation and partnership with the private sector, and benefiting from the law and turning it into reality, by launching a series of projects that provide housing care, in support of the development visions and plans of the Council of Ministers.

The regulations include 16 chapters with 84 legal articles that

Council's panel okays PART request

Bid to modify shape, dimensions of 'rainwater' collection tank site

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Mubarak Al-Kabeer Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting headed by Nassar Al-Azmi, Sunday, approved the request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to modify the shape and dimensions of the site of a rainwater collection tank on an area of 7,898.5 square meters, and

cover the mechanism for implementing housing projects, either in the form of a city or an area. They will enter into force immediately upon their publication in the official gazette.

The articles of the regulations also cover projects from the time they are an idea until the completion of their presentation, then select the winning investor, and establish a public joint-stock company, as the case may be.

Accurately

The regulations touched on how to implement projects, their quality, and work items accurately, while guaranteeing the rights of those entitled to housing care and beneficiaries, as well as the duties and obligations of the company in operating, managing, and maintaining the project until the end of the contract period.

The regulations contain a number of procedures related to re-introduc-

ing projects after the end of the contract period of the companies benefiting from them, in addition to regulating the building regulations and issuing their licenses.

PAHW is continuing to cooperate and partner with various agencies in the country to achieve more steps that contribute to providing housing care for citizens and increasing its size in line with the country's development plan.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Public Works has signed a contract for the maintenance of service sectors, roads and squares of State institutions in the Farwaniya, Capital and Jahra governorates (contract number QS/T/453) with an undisclosed company valued at KD1.7 million, reports Al-Anba daily quoting reliable sources.

Sources said the contract period is 1,095 days and this tender was awarded to the winning company on Jan 18 in order to comply with

the technical conditions and specifications as per the approval of the concerned authorities.

According to the terms of the contract, the contractor is obligated to complete the work in accordance with the conditions stipulated therein. The contractor is also obligated to guarantee and maintain the works that are the subject of this contract for a period of 1,825 days from the date specified in the initial handover certificate.

Before concluding the contract, the contractor submitted to the ministry the final insurance equal to 15 percent of the total value of the contract and this insurance is valid for 3,010 days from the date of its issuance and throughout the period of completion of the work, including the warranty for maintenance period, plus three months, as insurance and guarantee for the implementation of the contract.

Meanwhile, the Ahmadi Governorate Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting headed by Nassar bin Muhaini, approved the request of the Ministry of Justice regarding the re-allocation of a site for the Family Court in Egaila in the Ahmadi Governorate, and the request of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to expand the Mubarak Abdullah Al-Dabbous Mosque's parking area in Fahaheel Block 12.

HH Crown Prince, PM send greetings

HH the Amir congratulates Thailand on 'National Day'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent, Tuesday, a cable of congratulations to King Vajiralongkorn of Thailand on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness wished King Vajiralongkorn good health and wellbeing, his country and the people of Thailand progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable

of congratulation to King Vajiralongkorn on his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness Sheikh Mishal wished King Vajiralongkorn good health and wellbeing, his country and the people of Thailand progress and prosperity.

Also, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulation to King Vajiralongkorn on his country's National Day.



KUNA photo

Part of the participation of the KRCS delegation in the forum.

Al-Zaid participates in Doha forum

Volunteering work vital, stresses KRCS

DOHA, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has stressed the importance of developing and strengthening work in the volunteer and relief fields in communities, refining them through participation in specialized forums.

This came in a statement made by the Director of Public Relations and Media Department at KRCS Khaled Al-Zaid to KUNA on the sidelines of participation in the Fourth Gulf Voluntary Work Forum for Red Crescent societies from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which Doha is hosting for two days.

In the forum, volunteers will participate in exchanging experiences between them, he said, indicating its importance in highlighting capabilities and talents in the fields of volunteer and relief work.

The volunteers presented KRCS' vision regarding plans for volunteers in dealing with disasters and emergency crises and their efforts in relief work, Al-Zaid pointed out.

He stated that International Volunteer Day falls on December 5 yearly, which comes in honor of volunteers and in recognition of the great humanitarian services they provide to local communities everywhere.



Al-Bazzaz standing in front of a model of a 'dhow'.

'Building dhows one of oldest crafts'

Kuwaiti retirees master handicrafts making amid govt encouragement

By Fawaz Karami

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): Hussein Al-Bazzaz carefully examined an unfinished statuette of a wooden dhow, the "Kuwaiti Al-boom," relishing the moments of gazing at the product of meticulous work that had lasted for a month and a half and now decorated center of his diwaniah.

The 74-year-old Kuwaiti craftsman, Bu Waleed, said in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that building dhows is one of the oldest Kuwaiti crafts and has remained a symbol of prosperous trade in the old times and ancestors' skills both in commerce and handwork.

Nowadays, building the wooden boats, "Al-Gallafa," is a craft on the verge of extinction and has become a hobby for some retirees, such as Bu Waleed who spends much of his time in constructing small figures of the dhows.

On a recent government resolution to back up Kuwaiti craftsmen and workers, namely the young ones, Bu Waleed said that maintaining traditional professions needs more than financial support because only a countable number of Kuwaitis are practicing the crafts.

He called for establishing special workshops, securing sufficient support for the young citizens willing to turn into artisans and engaging government institutions, citing as a successful example the training of inmates at the central prison on some crafts.

Bu Waleed said that he had met many young Kuwaiti artisans who practice the traditional handworks, in

addition to their jobs, however they would need government incubation and care to render these works a reliable source of income.

Salman Boland, President of the Kuwaiti Craftsmen Association, echoed Bu Waleed's hope that the government support would eventually develop to render the crafts a sustainable source of income for the skilled juniors.

Up to 200 handworks disappeared after the oil discovery and many others would follow, Boland said, noting that the crafts' products are only promoted and sold at exhibitions, popular markets and even through personal acquaintances.

The handcraft requires a lot of time, effort and high costs in addition to difficulties in selling the products, thus government intervention is very much needed to save them, Boland said, suggesting that the relevant authorities organize training courses for the young craftsmen, specialize pavilions for their works at exhibitions and organize workshops.

In some Gulf countries, authorities have allocated plots of lands and booths for craftsmen and craftsmen in exchange for token fees. Moreover, the craftsmen are allowed to sell their items at airports, where majority of the clients are tourists interested in carrying souvenirs with them back home.

The ancestors-created handworks are honorable professions that maintain the national identity and heritage, he said, alluding in part to the making of "bishts" and "sadu" weaving in addition to pottery and gold works.



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LOCAL

Ministry plans to implement e-messaging system in all sectors

MoC launches nomination of applicants for supervisory posts

Vietnam-Kuwait ties strong and sturdy: envoy

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Vietnamese Ambassador to Kuwait Ngo Thuan Thang has affirmed that the Vietnamese-Kuwaiti relations are strong and sturdy, as they were built on solid foundations of friendship, mutual respect and joint cooperation, reports Al-Anba daily.

In an exclusive interview with the daily, he highlighted the development of bilateral relations at all levels and various areas of cooperation. He said Kuwait, with its pioneering and balanced diplomacy, plays a vital role regionally and internationally in resolving crises and bringing peace.

He revealed that Kuwait and Vietnam signed more than 10 agreements and memorandums of understanding

(MoUs) governing bilateral relations between the two countries and form the legal framework for them.



Ngo Thuan

He added that Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has financed 18 infrastructure projects in Vietnam at a total cost of \$200 million.

He said the total volume of trade exchange between the two countries reached \$5.5 billion last year, while the total volume of Kuwaiti government investments in the Nghe Son refinery

and petrochemical complex project amounted to \$3.5 billion.

He confirmed that his country has enormous potential in the agricultural production sector and can form a distinguished partnership with Kuwait in the field of food security. He added the next round of political consultations between the two countries at the ministerial level will be held in Kuwait next year.

He pointed out that the political scene in the region is very complex, with many hot spots affecting security and safety and cause people to suffer. "I hope that security and peace will return to the region and that it will enjoy calm and more stability," he concluded.

Abdullah Mubarak, South Abdullah Mubarak, Abraq Khaitan, Khaitan, Salaam, Seddiq, Haitteen, Shuhadah and Zahraa.

Fifth Constituency: 138,156 voters consisting of Sulaibikhat, Doha, Northwest Sulaibikhat, Gharnata, Jaber Al-Ahmad City, Shuwaikh Health District, Shuwaikh Industrial Area, Nahdha, Qairawan, Sulaibiya, Saad Al-Abdullah City, Jahra, Oyoum, Naseem, Qasr, Taima'a and Wahla.

MPs Jenan Bu Shehri, Abdullah Al-Anbai, Osama Al-Shaheen and Mubarak Al-Tasha submitted a bill on amending Article Six of law number 24/1962 regarding clubs and public profit organizations. The bill states that the aforementioned article will be replaced as follows: "Clubs and public profit organizations are banned from interfering in religious disputes. They should not instigate sectarian or racist disputes." The current article bans public profit organizations and clubs from interfering in political disputes.

Bushehri pointed out that the bill is aimed at providing more freedom to civil society organizations.

On the other hand, the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee on Tuesday discussed the bills on reforming the constituencies and amending Penal Code number 16/1960. Representatives of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and the Public Prosecution attended the committee meeting.

The Budgets and Final Accounts Committee deliberated on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for fiscal 2022/2023 and the comments of State Audit Bureau (SAB) on its final account. It also discussed the comments of the Bureau of Financial Controllers (BFC) on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for fiscal 2022/2023. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, SAB, BFC, Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) attended the meeting.

The Public Funds Protection Committee continued its discussion on the Kuwait Army Fund case and issues concerning the overseas military offices under the Ministry of Defense. Senior officials at the Ministry of Defense and representatives of SAB attended the meeting.

On the other hand, MP Abdulkareem Al Kandari forwarded queries to all ministers about the procedures they have adopted to respond to the comments of the State Audit Bureau (SAB). He wants to know the number of comments included in SAB's reports from fiscal 2018/2019 to 2022/2023 that were not addressed immediately or within the same fiscal year, comments that were not addressed because of overlapping functions with other institutions, if those responsible for the comments were referred to the Public Prosecution, number of financial violations that SAB recorded against the ministries and their subsidiaries in the last five years, if committees were formed to investigate these violations, recommendations and conclusions of the committees if the response is in the affirmative, copies of decisions issued by the concerned minister, undersecretary or assistant undersecretary to implement the recommendations of investigation committees, number of comments recorded by SAB against the ministries and their subsidiaries from fiscal 2018/2019 to fiscal 2022/2023 which were addressed, number of those not addressed till date, number of repeated comments, if senior officials in the ministries discussed the comments with SAB officials, and copies of the minutes of such meetings if the answer is 'yes'.

In another development, MP Dawoud Maarefi has launched an attack on Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Manea; describing him as "a formal minister who lacks the capability to manage the ministry and whose decisions are not considered by some departments."

He wonders how HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah chooses his ministers and how an official who lacks the required leadership qualities is appointed to a leadership position. He said he received several complaints from citizens about the problems they have encountered at the ministry; indicating that his tasks as a lawmaker do not include the functions of the minister and his senior officials.

He revealed the Coordination Department at the Ministry of Education did not consider the family conditions or traffic jams when it assigned teachers to schools; as a teacher who resides in Bayan or Mishref was assigned to a school in Jahra. He added this department simply ignoring the directives of Al-Manea.

He added the Accreditation

Department at the Ministry of Higher Education uses double standards in dealing with academic certificates; citing as an example two individuals who hold the same certificates, but one was accredited while the other was rejected. He claimed this department treats individuals like criminals. He then urged the minister to "address the shortcomings or resign."

Al-Manea has been subjected to a series of parliamentary queries, which seem to support the allegation that a grilling motion will be filed against him soon.

National Assembly Deputy Speaker Muhammad Al-Mutair forwarded the same queries to Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al-Ostad. Before starting his queries, the lawmaker highlighted the importance of the establishment of Terminal Two (T2) and its essential role in realizing the Kuwait 2035 vision and transforming the country into an international financial center. He pointed out that despite its utmost importance, the project has been delayed and the total cost increased by almost KD2 million. He disclosed that some parties like Jazeera Airways are manipulating State properties by allocating land for the establishment of its own Terminal Six (T6), as mentioned in the meeting held on Nov 7, 2023 by the investment analysts at Jazeera Airways; while the chairman of Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) said the national carrier will provide services at T2 without additional advantages.

Thus, Al-Mutair asked the two ministers to provide him with copies of all relevant correspondences, including the approvals of concerned institutions on the allocation of land for Jazeera Airways; economic and operative effects of not allowing Jazeera Airways flights at T2 which constitute roughly 30 percent of the Kuwaiti air transportation market. He quoted the KAC chairman as saying that half of the revenues of Jazeera Airways come from its investment in Terminal Five (T5); so he wants to know the legal basis for Jazeera Airways to obtain such revenues, if any. He added the KAC chairman also revealed that Jazeera Airways is getting more privileges than KAC, because of certain official decisions. Therefore, he inquired about all the privileges granted to Jazeera Airways compared to that of KAC; as well as all the fees collected from the passengers of Jazeera Airways, either directly or indirectly.

Summit seeks

Continued from Page 1

in the shadow of the unprecedented and dangerous tragedy and humanitarian catastrophe resulting from the Israeli aggression on the Palestinian people.

Addressing the summit inaugural session, the Amir said the Israeli occupiers breached in the occupied Palestine all humanitarian, moralistic and religious norms and values.

Regrettably and in spite of the scope of the "crime and the wide-spread protests throughout the world, some official quarters continue to neglect the Palestinian people's calls for a cease-fire," he said.

He was alluding to the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip that began more than 55 days ago, claiming nearly 16,000 lives among the Gazans.

"It is shameful that the international community has allowed this brazen crime to proceed for nearly two months, with systematic killing of the innocent and the unarmed namely children and women," the Qatari Amir said.

The aggressors have targeted the infrastructure in Gaza, cut off power and water supplies, stopped entry of medicines, demolished hospitals, mosques and key installations in the enclave. "All this has been done at the pretext of self defense although the occupation cannot be justified as such according the international laws."

The Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim said peoples throughout the world "have been wondering what is the meaning of the term international community. Why it has turned its back to the killing of the children in Palestine ..."

"The international legitimacy may become a victim of this barbaric war."

Qatar that had mediated a truce in the past was ready to renew it "but truces are not alternative to a comprehensive cease-fire," the Qatari Amir said.

He expressed hope that the GCC leaders at the summit would succeed in bolstering the joint Gulf action and meet aspirations of the GCC peoples.

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Ministry of Communications recently announced the start of the nomination process for supervisory positions in all sectors from those who had not previously applied, in accordance with the regulations accompanying resolution No. 184/2023.

The ministry invited those wishing to submit an application to visit the Administrative Affairs Department in

Shuwaikh - Building No. 2, floor 3, Employment Affairs Department during the period scheduled to receive applications, which is from December 4 to December 14.

Meanwhile, informed sources in the ministry revealed a tendency towards implementing the electronic messaging system in all its sectors for sending internal letters between sectors and departments, as this will contribute to avoiding delays and slowness in the documentary cycle that disrupts the work mechanism

within the ministry.

The sources explained that electronic correspondence will enable the ministry to respond to all letters and correspondence received to and from other government agencies, especially with the regulatory authorities, including the Financial Controllers Bureau and the State Audit Bureau.

They affirmed that the ministry provides full support to the bureau's team to enable it to complete all the documents and send the information it requests.

Decree issued to amend retirement pension law

PADA chief hails nod to amending law

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: A decree has been issued amending the Retirement Pension and Benefits for Military Personnel Law, which stipulates the minimum retirement pension for those supporting seven children or more shall be KD1,615 based on the total pension, contributions and due increments; regardless of the year of their determination, name and the party bearing them, reports Al-Anba daily.

The amendment stipulates that through the decision of the concerned minister and after the approval of the board of directors of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS); the minimum pension of other retirees is KD1,010 for a single woman; KD1,126 for a married person with no dependents; KD1,196 for a person supporting one child; KD1,265 for a person who supports two children; KD1,335 for someone who has three children; KD1,405 for someone who has four children; KD1,475 for someone who has five children and KD1,545 for someone who supports six children.

The decision also specifies the rules and conditions for the subsidy and the consequences of changing the social status of the pensioner in terms of continuing to disburse the amount of the increase of the minimum or modifying it. The decision may be issued by the minister in case of the absence of the board of directors, provided that it is presented at the first meeting.

The decree allows the minimum limit for retirement pensions to be amended upward by a decision of the minister after the approval of the board of directors. The decree stipulates that in all cases, what is due in accordance with the amended provisions of Article Seven may not be less than what is due before the date it takes effect and PIFSS shall bear the financial burdens resulting from the application of the provisions of this law.

Meanwhile, the Director General of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi expressed his happiness over the approval of some amendments to Disabled Affairs Law No. 8/2010, reports Al-Anba daily.

As per the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Saud; the country focuses on comprehensive care for people with disabilities. The amendments are aimed at supporting those taking care of people with disabilities and the handicapped themselves to provide them with a decent life, Al-Mutairi disclosed.

On the other hand, Al-Mutairi confirmed that the concerned entities like the Activities and Media Department in welfare homes affiliated with the Medical, Psychological and Social Services Sector; and welfare homes and the Vocational Rehabilitation Department affiliated with the Educational and Rehabilitation Services Sector at PADA will organize the celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities with the theme, "I Am Talented", at the Avenues Mall on Dec 7.

He said this event will highlight the importance of the role of the disabled, their skills and abilities, ways to integrate them into society, identify the outcomes of integration, activate and employ them in developing society and raise their status economically, socially and psychologically.

In addition, Deputy Director General of Educational and Rehabilitation Services and the authority's official spokesman Mubarak Al-Badah revealed that Kuwait is one of the first countries that paid attention to persons with disabilities. He said this has been demonstrated since the 1950s through the establishment of facilities for people with disabilities, including schools and public benefit associations specializing in people with disabilities, in addition to issuing laws guaranteeing a decent life for them.

Ties developed 'drastically'

Kuwait ambassador to Russia presents 'credentials' to Putin

MOSCOW, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's

new Ambassador to Russia Rashid Al-Adwani on Monday presented his credentials to the Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin Palace. During the ceremonial occasion of presenting diplomatic credentials, the website of the Russian Presidential Admin-



Al-Adwani

istration evoked Putin saying, "relations between Russia and Kuwait have developed drastically" while also pointing to the importance of developing bilateral cooperation in the economic sector.

He also mentioned how prominent the strengthening of political relations is, especially in terms of foreign policy, explaining that cooperation is based on the convergence of views encompassing a range of regional and international issues.

As both countries are working towards coordinating stances on the energy sector bearing in mind Kuwait's an OPEC member, he added.

'AI could

Continued from Page 1

public institutions participated in the event showcasing their different applications of AI.

Professor Al-Dhafiri expressed the important role AI plays across many fields in everyday life, the medical field being one of them.

He said he believes that the positive impact of AI can be found in the potential it holds and the capacity it has to be developed to serve the medical professionals in treating patients surgically or help in diagnosing sick people.

KUNA participated in the KU event showcasing its new Smart Oasis, an innovative new unit seamlessly merges the realms of Artificial Intelligence and Journalism, where a team of adept professionals harness the power of AI to elevate journalistic practices, ensuring the delivery of timely, accurate, and contextually rich content.

Audit Bureau

Continued from Page 1

Health-related cases were the most numerous, reaching 1,062, with an estimated value of KD one billion (USD three billion). Al-Hajeri noted that the bureau either approved, conditionally blessed, or renewed approval for 1,415 cases, totaling around KD 2.2 billion (USD 7.1 billion).

Furthermore, Al-Hajeri mentioned that the Diwan rejected 768 cases worth KD 458 million (USD 1.4 billion) due to non-compliance with specified terms. Additionally, 73 cases were outright turned down, with an estimated value of KD 520 million (USD 1.6 billion).

Kuwait committed

Continued from Page 1

He pointed out to the vision of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in reaching Carbon neutrality by 2060, especially with major projects in this field within Kuwait's development plan and the Sustainable environment program.

Such projects includes, producing electricity from renewable energy, protecting environmental areas, building smart and green residential cities, as well as oil sector projects represented in producing electricity using solar energy such as (Sidrah 500) project.

Kuwait is keen in improving its environmental performance to become one of the leading countries in this field despite environmental and climate challenges, the Kuwaiti official concluded.

Manila delegation

Continued from Page 1

According to the source, Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Jose Cabrera will soon meet with Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Gohar Hayat to tackle the labor file, in addition to discussions with other concerned parties.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr announced on Oct 21 that the ban on sending Filipino workers to Kuwait would be lifted soon.

The Philippine media, including Philippine Star Newspaper and CNN Philippines, quoted the Philippine president as saying upon his return from the ASEAN and Gulf Cooperation Council Summit held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia that "they discussed relations between Kuwait and the Philippines on the sidelines of the summit."

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Top and above: Some photos from the event.

AIU and Amideast to promote private sector career opportunities in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: American International University (AIU) is pleased to announce its collaboration with Amideast to host a dynamic event entitled: "Future Pathways - Careers & Opportunities in the Private Sector." Joined by senior leadership members of the HSBC Kuwait team, the event aligns with AIU's mission to foster the development of future leaders and provide an authentic American educational experience in Kuwait.

AIU believes in offering its students exposure to diverse industries, and this event underscores the university's commitment to enriching the educational journey for its students. By collaborating with Amideast to bring the HSBC team to campus, AIU aims to provide students with invaluable and exclusive insights into the dynamic world of banking and finance, along with prime networking opportunities.

Dr. Michael Pishko, President of AIU, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, "AIU is excited to welcome HSBC Bank Middle East Limited - Kuwait CEO and other executives to campus. Their engagement with our students shows a real commitment by HSBC to develop the next generation of Kuwaiti banking and finance leaders."

The event will feature a panel discussion moderated by Mr. Samer Alabed, Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Bank Middle East Limited - Kuwait, along with senior speakers from HSBC, including Mr. Leith Ashkanani - Head of Regulatory Conduct, Mr. Bader Alsalem - Head of Global Markets, and Ms. Ruqaya Al Naqi - Head of Operations, Security Services. The panelists will share their career paths and achievements, shed-



One more photo from the event.

light on the benefits and diverse employment possibilities in HSBC and the private sector.

"We value the collaboration with Amideast for creating learning opportunities for the next generation of Kuwaiti business leaders," remarked Mr. Samer Alabed, Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Bank Middle East Limited - Kuwait.

Ms. Samar Kheif, Country Director for Amideast, Kuwait, expressed pride in the partnership, stating, "Thanks to the support provided by HSBC Bank Middle East Limited - Kuwait, we hope that the students will continue to benefit from the information and guidance to enhance and develop their career opportunities and future growth prospects."

The event is a testament to the collaborative efforts of American International University and industry leaders working together to shape the future of Kuwait's workforce. The collaborative effort between AIU, HSBC Bank Middle East Limited - Kuwait Branch, and Amideast supports Kuwait's Vision 2035 by encouraging more Kuwaitis to explore and pursue careers in the private sector.

World News Roundup

Europe

Freezing rain kills 3

UK unveils rules to 'cut' net migration

LONDON, Dec 5, (AP) — The British government announced tough new immigration rules Monday that it says will reduce the number of people able to move to the U.K. each year by hundreds of thousands.

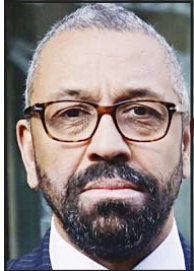
Home Secretary **James Cleverly** said he was taking "robust action" to lower authorized immigration, which hit a record level of almost 750,000 people in 2022. Critics said the moves would leave overstretched sectors like health and social care at a breaking point.

Under the new rules, immigrants will have to earn more to get a work visa and will find it harder to bring family members to the U.K.

Cleverly said that from the spring of 2024, prospective immigrants will have to earn 38,700 pounds (\$48,900) to get a skilled worker visa, up from 26,200 pounds (\$33,000) now. British citizens who want to bring their foreign spouse to Britain will have to earn the same amount - almost double the current threshold.

Health and social care, sectors that are highly reliant on immigrant staff, are exempt from the salary rule. But care workers from overseas will no longer be able to bring dependent relatives with them to Britain, leading to concerns in the industry that fewer will want to come.

The government also said it would scrap a rule that lets employers in sectors on a "shortage occupation list" pay immigrant workers 20% less than U.K. citizens.



Cleverly

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Freezing rain kills 3: Freezing rain and cold weather buffeting Germany were blamed for traffic accidents that left three dead on Tuesday while Munich Airport temporarily suspended flights.

One student was killed in a crash involving a school bus in the Erzgebirge mountains in the eastern German state of Saxony, police said. At least 10 other schoolchildren were taken to a hospital. Two adults, including the bus driver, were seriously injured.

The bus skidded into the side of a winter road maintenance vehicle in Sehmatat county near the Czech border, German news agency dpa reported. It then crashed head-on into a tree and the impact was so strong that it completely destroyed the front of the vehicle.

In Munich, all flights were either canceled or postponed between 6 a.m. and noon (0500-1100 GMT), with the airport warning that many flights scheduled for later in the day might also be affected by the severe weather conditions.

Russian shelling hits city, killing 2: Russian artillery struck the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson on Tuesday morning, local officials said, killing at least two people in the street as the 21-month war drags into another winter.

Regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin posted a video of the attack's aftermath, showing two bodies in a city center street and blood near holes in the road caused by the shelling.

"The medics who arrived promptly at the scene could only declare their deaths," Prokudin said of the victims on Telegram.

The head of the Kherson city administration, Roman Mrochko, added that a medical facility also was struck, wounding two medics.

Heavy snowfall hits Moscow: Heavy snowfall hit the Russian capital, disrupting traffic on roads and flights in and out of three Moscow airports, officials and media reported on Monday.

The snowfall that began Sunday and continued overnight has brought an additional 23 centimeters (nine inches) to already high levels of snow in Moscow, according to deputy mayor Pyotr Biryukov. About 135,000 people and 18,000 pieces of equipment were involved in the snow-clearing effort.

Nearly 200 trucks got stuck in the snow over the past 24 hours, and required assistance from road traffic workers, the Moscow transport department reported.

A total of 53 flights were delayed and five more were canceled on Monday morning in three out of four Moscow airports. Russian business daily Vedomosti reported. Most of the delays occurred at the Sheremetyevo airport north of the capital.

'Strategic discussion needed first': Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban demanded on Monday that Ukraine's membership in the European Union and billions of euros in funding meant for the war-torn country be taken off the agenda at a summit of the bloc's leaders next week.

In a letter to European Council President Charles Michel, who will chair the Dec 14-15 summit in Brussels, Orban insisted that a "strategic discussion" is needed first about Ukraine's European future and warned that forcing a decision could destroy EU unity.

Decisions on EU's enlargement and a review of its long-term budget, which includes 50 billion euros (\$54.1 billion) in aid for Kyiv, can only be taken unanimously by all 27 member countries.

Plane makes emergency landing in Paris: A small twin-engine plane was forced to make an emergency landing Monday in the southern Paris suburbs, France's civil aviation safety agency said.

French media said the aircraft landed near a populated area in the town of Villejuif.

Sebastien Barthe, the communications director for the safety agency known as BEA for short, said the cause of the unplanned landing was a "technical problem" and that four people were on board the plane, including the pilot.

Judges reject demand by prosecutors: International judges on Monday rejected a demand by prosecutors for a nearly complete ban on prison visits for three former Kosovo Liberation Army leaders on trial at The Hague for war crimes.

Kosovo ex-President Hashim Thaci, former parliamentary Speaker Kadri Veseli and ex-lawmaker Rexhep Selimi face charges including murder, torture and persecution during and after the 1998-1999 war with Serbia.

The three defendants have been in custody since November 2020. Prosecutors called on the judges to limit their prison visits to only their lawyers or close relatives, saying that the three were attempting to tamper with witnesses and leak confidential testimony.



Roads in front of Schwerin Castle are covered in snow, in Schwerin, Germany on Dec 5. Heavy snowfall in places and temperatures below freezing are hampering traffic in northern Germany. (AP)

Politics

Santos offers personalized videos for \$200

Burgum ends '24 GOP presidential bid

BISMARCK, North Dakota, Dec 5, (AP) — North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum ended his long-shot presidential campaign on Monday, blaming his inability to resonate in the race on the Republican National Committee's strict requirements to qualify for the debate stage.

The second-term governor and wealthy software entrepreneur dropped his bid just hours before the RNC was to release the list of candidates who had met the polling and donor qualifications for the fourth debate, being held Wednesday in Alabama. He also failed to qualify for the third debate last month.

He blamed the RNC, which sets qualifications for the debates, for "nationalizing the primary process and taking the power of democracy away from the engaged, thoughtful citizens of Iowa and New Hampshire."

Mission

"It is not their mission to reduce competition and restrict fresh ideas by 'narrowing the field' months before the Iowa caucuses or the first in the nation New Hampshire primary," Burgum wrote in his statement announcing his departure. "These arbitrary criteria ensure advantages for candidates from major media markets on the coasts versus America's Heartland. None of their debate criteria relate to the qualifications related to actually doing the job of the president."

An RNC spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Burgum's remarks.

Burgum was little known nationally when he launched his 2024 presidential campaign in June, touting his priorities of energy, the economy and national security, as well as his small-town roots and leadership of the sparsely populated state.

He participated in the first two Republican debates, meeting donor requirements of the Republican National Committee by offering \$20 Biden Relief Cards - a job at rising inflation rates during President Joe Biden's term - in exchange for \$1 donations. The tactic drew skepticism over its

legality, though Burgum's campaign said its legal advisers had reviewed and approved the method.

Ultimately, he was unable to gain much traction against his rivals in a contest dominated by former President Donald Trump. He joins former Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, radio show host Larry Elder, businessman Perry Johnson, former Texas congressman Will Hurd and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez in suspending his bid.

Burgum had been one of two lower-tier candidates scheduled to appear this coming weekend at an event billed as an "action conference" in South Carolina, hosted by the state GOP.

Filings

Burgum injected millions of his own money into the race, accounting for \$12.2 million of the \$15.1 million raised by his campaign from March through September, according to Federal Election Commission filings. A super PAC supporting his bid spent over \$19 million from July to November, according to filings.

Burgum nearly missed his first opportunity for national public exposure when he ruptured his Achilles tendon the day before the inaugural debate in August in Milwaukee. But he persevered through, later telling reporters that he stood on one leg behind the podium.

Former North Dakota Republican Gov. Ed Schafer called Burgum's campaign "pretty gutsy." But hailing from such a little-populated state, with just three electoral votes and little national profile, brings no leverage or power, Schafer said.

"In the structure of a presidential race, it's virtually impossible for a state like North Dakota to play in the game," said Schafer, a former US agriculture secretary. Raising campaign money from North Dakota also presents an increasing challenge, he added.

Burgum is in his second term as governor and is eligible for a third in 2024, though he hasn't indicated whether he plans to run again. He and his family will gather over the holidays "to consider future possibilities," said senior

political adviser Dawson Schefter. Burgum's "most likely scenario" is to seek a third term, Schafte said, citing accomplishments and pressures to run again, as well as Burgum's popularity and likely "unfinished business." An April filing deadline looms for candidates.

Also:

ALBANY, N.Y.: George Santos already has a new gig.

The former congressman, fresh off his historic expulsion last week, has created a Cameo account where the public can pay for a personalized video message.

Screenshots of his account - with the bio "Former congressional 'Icon!'" - started to spread online Monday morning. By the afternoon, users, including several lawmakers, were posting clips of Santos offering advice, blowing kisses and making jokes about Botox. The price for a personalized video from Santos started at \$75 and by Monday evening went as high as \$200. He is also selling text messages for \$10.

Santos did not immediately return a voicemail seeking comment on Monday, but added a link to the Cameo account on his personal account on X, formerly known as Twitter.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.: Arkansas election officials on Monday said online news personality Cenk Uygur, who was born in Turkey, can't appear on the state's Democratic presidential primary ballot next year.

The determination comes weeks after Uygur proclaimed that he had become the first naturalized citizen on a presidential ballot after filing paperwork with the state and the Arkansas Democratic Party. Uygur's parents immigrated to the US from Turkey when he was 8.

"My office has received your candidate filing paperwork," Arkansas Secretary of State **John Thurston** said in a letter to Uygur. "However, based on your own proclamation, you are not qualified to hold the elected office for which you filed. Therefore, I cannot, in good faith, certify your name to the ballot."



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban delivers his speech after he was re-elected as party president at the election of officials congress of the ruling Hungarian Fidesz party in Budapest, Hungary, on Nov 18. Orban demanded on Dec 4 that Ukraine's membership in the European Union and billions of euros in funding meant for the war-torn country be taken off the agenda at a summit of the bloc's leaders next week. (AP)



Garland



Savage

America

Explosion leveled home in Va: A massive explosion at a duplex where police were investigating reports of shots fired shook a Washington, DC, suburb Monday and destroyed the home.

All officers escaped serious injury but it was unclear what happened to the suspect who was inside the home when it was leveled by the explosion, Arlington County, Virginia, police spokesperson **Ashley Savage** said.

Officers went to the home at about 4:45 pm after receiving reports of shots fired. They later determined the shots came from a flare gun, Savage said. While police investigated, they obtained a search warrant for the home.

When police later attempted to execute the warrant the suspect fired several rounds inside the home and the explosion occurred just before 8:30 p.m., shooting flames and debris into the air police said. (AP)

5.1 quake hits Hawaii: A magnitude 5.1 earthquake on the Big Island of Hawaii was felt widely Monday, but there were no reports of damage or injury, officials said.

The earthquake hit at 5:54 pm near the Kilauea volcano at a depth of 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) below sea level, according to a statement from the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory. The initial quake and a magnitude 3.0 aftershock were not related to volcanic activity, the statement said.

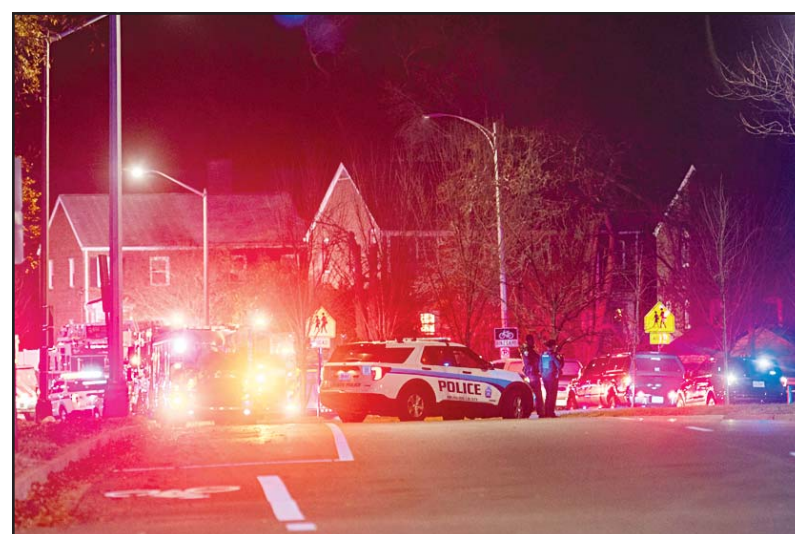
"Aftershocks will likely continue, some large enough to be felt locally. We see no detectable changes in activity at Kilauea as a result of these earthquakes," the observatory said. There was no risk of a tsunami, officials said. (AP)

Man charged in killings: Prosecutors charged a man Monday with four counts of murder in the fatal shootings of three

homeless men in Los Angeles and a suburban resident last month.

Jerrid Joseph Powell was also charged with one count of residential robbery and

one count of being a felon with a firearm, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office said in a statement. He also faces special circumstances of committing multiple



Arlington County Fire Department fire and police vehicles fill the street near the scene of a house explosion on Dec 4 in Arlington, Va. All officers escaped serious injury but it was unclear what happened to the suspect who was inside the home when it was leveled by the explosion, Arlington County, Virginia, police spokesperson Ashley Savage said. (AP)

murders, murder in the course of a robbery, as well as personal use of a firearm allegations, the statement said.

Powell, 33, appeared in court Monday afternoon with his attorney, Deputy Public Defender Carlos Bido, but did not enter a plea. His arraignment was continued to Jan 8. (AP)

Ex-career US diplomat charged: A former career American diplomat was charged with serving as a secret agent for communist Cuba going back decades in what prosecutors portrayed as one of the most brazen and long-running betrayals in the history of the US foreign service.

Manuel Rocha wept as he sat handcuffed in Miami federal court on charges that he engaged in "clandestine activity" on Cuba's behalf since at least 1981 - the year he joined the US foreign service - including by meeting with Cuban intelligence operatives and providing false information to US government officials about his contacts.

"This action exposes one of the highest-reaching and longest-lasting infiltrations of the United States government by a foreign agent," Attorney General **Merrick Garland** said in a statement. "To betray that trust by falsely pledging loyalty to the United States while serving a foreign power is a crime that will be met with the full force of the Justice Department." (AP)

Africa

US sanctions 3 Sudanese

Niger's junta revokes security agreements

ABUJA, Nigeria, Dec 5, (AP) Niger's junta on Monday scrapped two key military agreements that the West African nation signed with the European Union to help fight the violence in Africa's Sahel region as the country's army leaders and a senior Russian defense official discussed military cooperation.

Before the coup that deposed the country's president, **Mohamed Bazoum**, Niger had been the West and Europe's last major security partner in the Sahel, the vast region south of the Sahara Desert that Islamic extremist groups have turned into the global terror hot spot.

In a memo, Niger's foreign affairs ministry said the government has decided to "withdraw the privileges and immunities granted" under the EU Military Partnership Mission in Niger that was launched in February and consequently "has no legal obligation" related to that partnership.

It also dismissed the EU Civilian Capacity-Building Mission established in 2012 to strengthen Niger's internal security sector, effectively revoking its approval for the missions.

The developments are the latest in growing political tensions between Niger and the EU since the July coup.

In a rare visit on Sunday, a Russian delegation led by Russia's Deputy Minister of Defense Lounou-Bek Evkourov met with Niger's junta leader, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, and Minister of State for National Defense Salifou Mody. The two sides held more meetings on Monday to discuss military and defense issues.



Bazoum

□ □ □

Cleverly visits Rwanda to try to unblock plan: British Home Secretary James Cleverly flew to Rwanda on Tuesday in a bid to revive a plan to send asylum-seekers to the East African country that has been blocked by UK courts.

The UK government said Cleverly will meet his Rwandan counterpart, Vincent Biruta, to sign a new treaty and discuss next steps for the troubled "migration and economic development partnership."

"Rwanda cares deeply about the rights of refugees, and I look forward to meeting with counterparts to sign this agreement and further discuss how we work together to tackle the global challenge of illegal migration," Cleverly said.

The Rwanda plan is central to the Conservative government's self-imposed goal of stopping unauthorized asylum-seekers arriving on small boats across the English Channel.

Critics say it is both unethical and unworkable to send migrants to a country 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers) away, with no chance of ever settling in the UK.

□ □ □

US imposes sanctions on 3 Sudanese figures: The United States imposed sanctions Monday on three Sudanese individuals accused of undermining "peace, security and stability" in the conflict-stricken African nation.

The sanctions imposed by the Department of the Treasury block all property and entities owned by Taha Osman Ahmed al-Hussein, Salah Abdallah Mohamed Salah and Mohamed Etta al-Moula Abbas that are in the US.

All three held senior government positions under former autocratic President Omar al-Bashir, who ruled Sudan for 30 years. They were forced out of public office after al-Bashir was toppled in a popular uprising in 2019.

The sanctions are the latest the US has imposed on Sudanese leaders and companies in recent months.

□ □ □

Emballo issues decree dissolving parliament: Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Emballo issued a decree Monday dissolving the nation's opposition-controlled parliament, less than six months after it was reconstituted following a similar move by the president in 2022.

Emballo cited last week's shootout between troops loyal to him and forces controlled by the parliament, which he described as a failed coup.

"The date for holding the next legislative elections will be set in due time in accordance with the provisions of ... the Constitution," the decree stated. "This Presidential Decree comes into force immediately."

On Monday night, Emballo deployed soldiers at the headquarters of the state television and radio as he sought to change the heads of the broadcast stations said to be loyal to the parliament. "Everything is going well in Bissau," the nation's leader said as he attempted to allay fears of yet another political crisis in the capital city. "Democratic achievements are respected and maintained."

□ □ □

Rescuer raises hope of survivors at mine: A member of a rescue team raised hope Monday that there may be survivors at a Zambian mine where more than 30 informal miners have been trapped under debris for days and presumed dead after heavy rain caused landslides.

Rescuers have been searching for the miners since early Friday after they were buried Thursday night while digging tunnels at an open-pit mine near the city of Chingola on the country's copper belt.

"We are getting close and expect to find survivors as there is some voices we are hearing from one of the tunnels," Viva Chanda, an informal miner from the area helping with the rescue effort, told The Associated Press by telephone. "There is hope but I think it will be a mix of survivors and dead bodies."

□ □ □

Heavy rains, landslides kill at least 47: At least 47 people are dead and 85 others injured following heavy flooding and landslides in northern Tanzania, authorities said Monday.

The government has deployed the military to help rescue hundreds of people trapped by the flooding which has been described as the worst in years in the East African nation.

The flooding occurred near Mount Hanang in the north. Houses, roads and bridges have been destroyed, complicating ongoing rescue efforts.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who is attending the U.N. climate summit in Dubai, said she was cutting short her trip to return to Tanzania due to the tragedy.

"I send my sincere condolences to the affected families and have directed all our security forces to deploy to the area and help those affected," she said in a video message.



In this photo provided by Sawang Rungrueang Rescue22 Foundation, rescue workers and volunteers work at the site of a bus accident on Dec 5 at the Prachuap Khiri Khan province, Thailand. More than a dozen people were killed after the vehicle fell off the road and hit a big tree. (AP)

Bus crashes in western Thailand, killing 14 and injuring more than 30

A bus crashed in western Thailand early Tuesday, killing 14 people and injuring more than 30 others, officials said. The accident occurred in Prachuap Khiri Khan province as the bus was traveling from the capital, Bangkok, to Songkhla province in the deep south. It was carrying 49 people when it ran off the road and hit a tree near Hat Wanakorn Na-

tional Park, a local police official said. Prachuap Khiri Khan province is located on a coastal stretch between the Gulf of Thailand and Myanmar.

"We presume the driver might have fallen asleep," said Pol Col Weerapat Ketesa, the superintendent of the Huay Yang Police Station, adding that officials were waiting for the result of a blood test on the

driver, who survived the accident.

Police were still investigating what caused the crash, he added.

Most victims were Thai and a few were Burmese, Weerapat said. Some 35 people were being treated for injuries at local hospitals, according to the Sawang Rungrueang Rescue Foundation. (AP)

Asia

Thousands protest Indigenous policies of NZ

PNG to sign security pact with Australia

CANBERRA, Australia, Dec 5, (AP) Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape said Tuesday he will sign a bilateral security pact with Australia during a visit this week.

Marape said the agreement to be signed with his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese on Thursday will involve Australian police officers working under the command of Papua New Guinea Police Commissioner David Manning.

"The security arrangement is in the best interest of Papua New Guinea and also for Australia and its regional security interests," Marape said in a statement.

"Cabinet will fully endorse the finer details before Prime Minister Albanese and I sign off," Marape added.

Albanese's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

A security treaty between Australia and its nearest neighbor, which is strategically crucial in the U.S. partners' battle against China for regional influence, had been expected to be signed in June.

But after a security agreement that Papua New Guinea signed with the United States sparked student protests in May in the South Pacific island nation's second-largest city, Lae, Marape announced the Australian pact would be delayed.

Papua New Guinea's deputy prime minister, John Rosso, told Australian Broadcasting Corp. that the latest agreement would aim to build the capabilities of both the developing nation's military and police.

Also:

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: Thousands of protesters rallied against the New Zealand government's Indigenous policies on Tuesday as the Parliament convened for the first time since October elections.

Demonstrations in the capital, Wel-

lington, and in about a dozen other New Zealand cities and towns were organized by the minor Maori Party, which advocates for the rights of Indigenous New Zealanders who are known as **Maori**.

Protesters demonstrated peacefully outside Parliament against what they described as the "anti-Maori" policies of the newly elected conservative-led coalition government.

Maori Party co-leader **Rawiri Waititi** said the new policies of Prime Minister **Christopher Luxon's** administration would take New Zealand "back to the 1800s."

"Our protest this morning was an activation of our people," Waititi said.

The National Party-led government promises to review the Treaty of Waitangi and implement potential changes to how that foundation document signed by **British** colonists and Maori chiefs in 1840 affects modern laws.

The government has also foreshadowed changes to the Maori Health Authority, a statutory agency responsible for ensuring that the New Zealand health system meets Maori needs.

Luxon said his government was "deeply committed to improving outcomes for Maori and non-Maori."

"Maori have done very well in National-led governments in the past, and they're going to continue to do well," Luxon said.

Lawmakers were sworn in on Tuesday after elections on Oct. 14 ousted the center-left Labour Party government that had ruled since 2017.

The Maori Party won six of the 123 seats in the 54th Parliament.

Party lawmaker **Takuta Ferris** wore a Maori headdress and performed a haka, a traditional dance or challenge accompanied by a chant, as he crossed the chamber to make an affirmation that confirmed his place in the Parliament.

□ □ □



In this undated photo released Dec 5, by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), rescuers prepare to evacuate the body of a climber killed in Mount Marapi's eruption in Agam, West Sumatra, Indonesia. Rescuers found 11 more bodies who were caught by a surprise weekend eruption, raising the number of confirmed dead to 22, officials said Tuesday. One person remained missing.



Garduño



Alvarado

Lat/Am

5 bodies found in car: The bodies of five young men were found stuffed in a vehicle on a dirt road in north-central Mexico, authorities said.

Diego Sinhue Rodríguez, the governor of the state of Guanajuato, pledged an "exhaustive" investigation into the killings.

The car and the bodies were found Sunday in a rural area on the outskirts of the city of Celaya, which has seen a spate of drug cartel violence in recent years. The area is located outside a local university.

Local media reported the men had been shot to death, but prosecutors did not immediately confirm that.

In June, a drug cartel set off a car bomb in Celaya aimed at law enforcement, killing a National Guard officer.

National Guard officers were reportedly responding to information about a car parked with what appeared to be bodies inside. As they approached, the vehicle exploded, sending officers flying.

Authorities blamed the Santa Rosa de Lima cartel, which for years has fought a bloody turf war with the Jalisco cartel for control of Guanajuato. (AP)

□ □ □

Mexico halts deportations: The head of Mexico's immigration agency has ordered the suspension of migrant deportations and transfers due to a lack of funds amid a record-setting year for migration through the country's territory.

The suspensions were outlined in an agency memo dated Dec 1 from director **Francisco Garduño**, whose authenticity was confirmed to the Associated Press by an agency official who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it.

Mexico's finance ministry suspended payments to the National Immigration Institute in November due to end-of-year budget adjustments, according to the memo.

Citing budget constraints "and the lack of liquidity to cover commitments," Garduño ordered a halt to various agency activities, most notably the "assisted returns," a gov-

ernment euphemism to describe deportations, and "ground transportation for transfer of irregular migrants."

Mexico's government had been frequently moving migrants from points north near the US border to locations in the south in part to relieve pressure on border cities, but also to exhaust migrants, according to ad-

vocates.

Mexico has recorded nearly 590,000 undocumented migrants in its territory this year, a significant increase compared to 440,000 in all of last year and fewer than 310,000 in 2021, according to government data.

Mexico has already deported far fewer

migrants this year than in recent years. From January to October, the government deported 51,000 migrants, compared to nearly 122,000 in all of last year and more than 130,000 in 2021. (AP)

□ □ □

Rainforest defender killed: A Kichwa tribal leader has been shot to death in an area of the Peruvian rainforest that's seen high tensions between Indigenous people and illegal loggers.

Quinto Inuma Alvarado was attacked as he was returning from presenting at a workshop for women environmental leaders in the San Martín region of the Amazon, his son, Kevin Arnol Inuma Mandruma, told The Associated Press in a phone interview. Peruvian police confirmed his death.

"He was travelling in a boat," when assailants blocked the river with a tree trunk, Kevin Inuma said. "There were many shots fired."

The boat carried six people, said Kevin Inuma, including his mother, brother, sister and uncles. Quinto Inuma was shot three times in the back and once in the head, and Kevin Inuma's aunt was wounded too, he said.

Kevin Inuma was not on the trip. He said his brother and mother recounted the attack to him.

Quinto Inuma had received numerous death threats over illegal logging, said Kevin Inuma.

The loggers "told him they were going to kill him because he had made a report," he said. "They've tried to kill him several times, with beatings and now gunfire." (AP)



Home Secretary James Cleverly shakes hands with the British High Commissioner to Rwanda, Omar Daair, as he arrives at Kigali International Airport in Rwanda, where he will sign a new treaty with Rwanda on Dec 5. The treaty will address concerns by the Supreme Court, including assurances that Rwanda will not remove anybody transferred under the partnership to another country. (AP)

KIB adds multi-currency ATM to its expansive network

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that it has installed a new multi-currency ATM at the Kuwait International Airport, as part of efforts to continue providing a seamless, comprehensive and distinctive banking experience for its customers. This step falls in line with the Bank's integrated strategy aimed at strengthening the ATM network using the latest technology. It also stems from KIB's commitment to continue developing its services and products to meet all customer

needs as a "Bank for Life." Commenting on the initiative, Ahmad Abdullah Alanazi, Assistant Manager – ATMs, Retail Banking at KIB, said: "We are currently witnessing fast-moving transitions and successive developments in the banking market with every passing second. This pushes us to continuously renew the definition of a convenient and easy banking experience. Committing to our motto and main vision 'Bank for Life,' we continue to monitor and keep abreast of all new tech-

nologies that we believe can contribute, directly or indirectly, to enhancing our customers' banking experience and ensuring the quality of services suited to their modern lifestyle." Alanazi pointed out that the banking sector in Kuwait continues to affirm its keenness to offer practical solutions that meet customer requirements and exceed their expectations, in step with the development of modern financial technology. He also highlighted that KIB's multi-currency ATM is located at Jazeera Airways

Terminal 5 (T5). The new ATM will allow cash withdrawal in four different major currencies: the UAE dirham, the Kuwaiti dinar, the US dollar, and the British pound, without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches. KIB customers can still benefit from its network of ATMs available all around the country to complete all basic banking operations, such as cash withdrawals and deposits, transfer of funds between accounts, PIN management, and cardless withdrawals using their civil ID and mobile phone number.



Ahmad Abdullah Alanazi, Assistant Manager – ATMs, Retail Banking at KIB.

Market Movements

05-12-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+24.58	6,308.95	EGYPT - EGX 30	-137.50	25,127.91
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+452.78	63,028.13	JAPAN - Nikkei	-455.45	32,775.82
			SAUDI - Tawadul	-47.56	11,143.83
			UAE - DFM	-9.55	3,978.20

Business



Bader Nasser Al Kharafi and Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo sign the deal.



Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Bader Al Kharafi, and Iyad Mazhar with Ooredoo Group, Zain Group, and TASC Towers Holding executives.

Ooredoo, Zain & TASC Towers create largest tower company in MENA region valued at USD 2.2 billion

Operating model will provide passive infrastructure as service, supporting reduction of MENA's carbon footprint

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Ooredoo Q.P.S.C. ("Ooredoo") – Ticker: ORDS and Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.P.C ("Zain Group") - Ticker: Zain announce the signing of definitive agreements between Ooredoo Group, Zain Group and TASC Towers Holding ("TASC") to create the largest tower company in the MENA region, in a cash and share deal.

The enlarged tower company, comprising approximately 30,000 towers, has a combined estimated current enterprise value of USD2.2 billion. Ooredoo and Zain will equally retain a substantial stake of 49.3% each in the newly restructured entity, through an asset and cash equalization process. The founders of TASC will retain the remaining shareholding, through Digital Infrastructure Assets LLP, and will continue to manage the operations of the business.

The tower entity is expected to achieve run-rate revenues close to USD 500 million annually, with an EBITDA (after leases) of more than USD 200 million annually upon the completion of closings in all individual countries – including Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, Algeria, and Tunisia. This financial position underpins the promising prospects and profitability of the newly restructured tower company.

The chairmanship of the Tower company rotates every two years between Zain and Ooredoo, beginning with Bader Al-Kharafi as Chairman and Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo as Vice-Chairman.

The signing of this landmark transaction constitutes a major milestone towards realizing key aspects of both Ooredoo and Zain's strategies, focused on evolving into smart telcos and creating value-focused portfolio. It also reaffirms the commitment of Ooredoo, Zain and TASC to drive growth and value for shareholders.

In a joint commentary, Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, MD and Group CEO, Ooredoo; Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO; and Iyad Mazhar, Founder & CEO of TASC said: "This pioneering deal embarks us on an exciting journey together as it results in the establishment of the region's largest independent Tower company, placing the MENA region on the world telecom tower map. It also positions the region as an advanced player in the global telecoms landscape, and we anticipate wide-ranging positive implications for the region – from economic growth and upgraded connectivity to technological improvements and increased global relevance."

"This strategic transaction will unlock significant shareholder value through higher earnings multiples, as well as ensure capital efficiency, optimising balance sheets for our respective companies and creating new possibilities for investors. The deal also demonstrates our joint dedication to supporting the reduction of the region's carbon footprint, contributing to our vision of reshaping the telecommunications sector by building a more sustainable ecosystem and ensuring a better-connected future for our communities across the region," the CEOs concluded.

As an independent tower company, leveraging the combined assets of Ooredoo and Zain, TASC will offer Passive Infrastructure as a Service (PIaaS) in a partnership model. This creates unprecedented opportunities for all mobile network operators, offering a capital-efficient alternative to building, owning and managing their own passive infrastructure in a cost-efficient and environmentally friendly manner. This partnership model is well-equipped to meet the needs of other mobile network operators seeking to reduce costs, lower carbon emissions, and address the increasing demand for sites driven by double digit growth in mobile data consumption across the region.

Both Ooredoo and Zain will retain their respective active infrastructure, including wireless communication antennas, intelligent software, and intellectual property with respect to managing their telecom networks.

The expected timeline for the completion of this transaction contemplates initial market closings in 2024. The phased implementation, tailored for each market and adhering to the regulatory environment, is subject to regulatory approvals, ensuring a seamless transition of operations. Ooredoo's tower network in Oman is following a stand-alone process.

Morgan Stanley acted as the exclusive financial advisor to the Ooredoo Group, and Citigroup Global Markets Ltd acted as the exclusive financial advisor to Zain Group and TASC Towers Holding on this transaction. DLA Piper acted as the legal advisors for Ooredoo, and both Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) and Norton Rose Fulbright (NRF) jointly acted as the legal advisors of Zain Group and TASC Towers Holding. Shearman & Sterling (S&S) acted as the legal advisors of Digital Infrastructure Assets.

Yearly raises under microscope: Employee feedback

67% Kuwaiti employees satisfied with salaries & benefits

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: A new survey conducted by Bayt.com, the Middle East's #1 job site, titled "Bayt.com Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2023" sheds light on employee satisfaction levels with their current salaries and the factors influencing those levels. More than half of respondents (67%) expressed high or medium levels of satisfaction with their current salary. Additionally, the research found that 54% of respondents are satisfied with the benefits they receive from their current company.

The survey aimed to comprehend the level of satisfaction employees experienced with the raises they received in the past year and their expectations for future salary increases. Notably, 45% of the respondents received a salary raise up to 10% in the past year, with 35% expressing satisfaction with the increase. Looking ahead to 2024, 23% of the respondents anticipate a salary raise of up to 10%. These findings underscore the significance of fair compensation practices in attracting and retaining talented employees.

Ola Haddad - Director of Human Resources at Bayt.com at Bayt.com said: "The findings from our latest survey offer Kuwait organizations an opportunity to reflect on their compensation strategies and address the factors that influence employee satisfaction. By prioritizing fair and competitive salaries, coupled with a comprehensive range of benefits and growth opportunities, organizations can truly empower their workforce, foster loyalty, and create a thriving environment that attracts and retains top talent."

In terms of gender pay parity, 32% of respondents believed that salaries offered to both men and women in their companies were equal.

Insights into Salary and Benefits in Kuwait

The survey unveiled that 57% of respondents receive just a basic salary, while personal medical insurance (25%), transportation allowance (18%), bonus (25%), and family medical insurance (9%) were cited as the top benefits received by employees. A majority of respondents (77%) have a monthly income of US\$3000 or less, with 34% earning less than US\$1000.

According to the research findings, one-quarter of respondents currently hold middle management and mid-level executive positions without managerial responsibilities. Moreover, 41% of the respondents have been working in their respective industries for up to six years. Impressively, 75% of the respondents have been with their current employer for six years or less, with 40% having been employed for less than three years.

The survey also revealed that 49% of respondents have up to 10 employees reporting to them, illustrating their influence and level of responsibility within their organizations. When asked about their position in their career path, 60% of respondents described themselves as being between fairly senior and mid-point seniority. The research also indicated that 59% of respondents held one or two jobs over the past five years, while 36% held three jobs or more.

Cost of Living, Savings, and Financial Outlook in Kuwait

In Kuwait, 55% of respondents reported saving up to 35% of their personal income, highlighting that despite the increasing cost of living, substantial savings are still possible. Furthermore, 73% of respondents in

the UAE expected further increases in the cost of living in 2024. This makes the ability to save even more important for individuals in order to maintain their financial stability.

Understanding the drivers of employee loyalty is crucial for organizations seeking to create a positive work environment. The survey revealed that while 23% of respondents stated that their loyalty to their company was not influenced by their salary, for 57% of respondents, salary played a significantly influential role in their loyalty to their organization. In addition to compensation, other factors such as the nature of daily responsibilities (33%), career advancement opportunities (26%), colleagues (21%), and training and development opportunities (24%) were found to drive employee loyalty.

Zafer Shah – Research Director at YouGov said: "We are pleased to present the findings from the Bayt.com Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2023, which provides valuable insights into employee satisfaction levels in the region and the key factors influencing them. Fair compensation practices are critical to attracting and retaining talented employees, complemented by a comprehensive range of benefits and growth opportunities, organizations can empower their workforce and foster loyalty, creating a thriving environment that attracts and retains top talent."

Data for the Bayt.com Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2023 was collected online from October 2 to 18, 2023. Results are based on a sample of 6,734 respondents from the following countries: UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, and others.

'Strengthening links for air travel'

Kuwait's DGCA inks MoUs of cooperation with 5 countries

RIYADH, Dec 5, (KUNA): The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) signed on Monday memorandum of understanding for cooperation with five countries during the ICAO Air Service Negotiations Event, ICAN 2023, currently held in Riyadh.

In a press briefing Acting Director-General of the DGCA, Eng. Emad Al-Jalawi mentioned meetings with representatives of Ethiopia, Italy, Iceland, Seychelles, and Turkiye were held on the sidelines of the event.

During the meetings, memorandum of understanding and special agreements were signed with those states especially for organizing air transport to better meet the needs of affiliated air carriers.

Furthermore meetings in the upcoming days will commence with other countries until the last day of the conference, December 7, which will focus on updating air transport mechanisms with positive impacts linking the Kuwait International Airport with the largest number of airports worldwide to better serve passengers and airlines.

He also eagerly talked about the importance of the conference to upgrade operational mechanisms with countries with which "our national carriers work" to better operate inbound and outbound flights from the Kuwait International Airport, in order to achieve the goals set by the national air carriers and serve the desired economic goals.

'Curbs only phased out after consideration of market conditions'

OPEC+ oil production cuts can continue past March if needed: Saudi

DUBAI, Dec 5: The OPEC+ oil production cuts can "absolutely" continue past the first quarter if needed, Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said, as he pledged the curbs would be delivered in full.

The supply reductions announced last week of more than 2 million barrels a day – about half of which are coming from Saudi Arabia – will only be withdrawn after consideration of market conditions and using a "phased-in approach," he said.

As the prince was speaking to Bloomberg, crude prices remained below the level seen before the OPEC+ meeting, trading near \$78 a barrel in London. Oil has failed to find renewed momentum after market-watchers noted that only about half of the cuts are entirely new, and also questioned whether all of the promised supply re-

ductions will actually materialize.

Prince Abdulaziz said these skeptics will be proved wrong.

"I honestly believe that the delivery of the 2.2 million will happen," he said in an interview in Riyadh on Monday. "I honestly believe that 2.2 million will overcome even the usual inventory build that usually happens in the first quarter." There are already signs that demand is improving, he said.

As traders try to gauge the real impact of the agreement between the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, one of the biggest questions is about Russia. Its contribution comes from export curbs, not outright production cuts as is the case for other OPEC members.

Prince Abdulaziz said he would have preferred to see a reduction in output, but couldn't convince his Rus-

sian counterpart. Moscow has long argued that freezing weather and other geological conditions make it more difficult to curb production in the first few months of the year.

"We did try," Prince Abdulaziz said. "We also know it's extremely tough for Russia to cut production in the winter." Even as Riyadh makes the greatest effort to rebalance the oil market, with deeper cuts than any of its allies, Prince Abdulaziz emphasized the level of trust between Riyadh and Moscow, which is the key relationship in OPEC+.

While Russia may not be cutting output, it is carrying out its exports curbs, he said. If Moscow ever falls short of its pledges, as it did earlier this year, it has been transparent and promised to make amends.

"We believe them," Prince Ab-

dulaziz said. "I honestly believe they are doing everything by the book."

It's just as important that Russia has the trust of the market, which requires outside verification, the prince added.

"This is what we've been saying to them: What counts is not us believing you, what counts is the market, the secondary sources, the tanker trackers," the prince said. "You have to approach them, you have to work with them."

Prince Abdulaziz said he has the same faith in key Gulf ally the United Arab Emirates, which has for several years been arguing that it should be allowed to produce more to monetize its massive investments in capacity.

"We would not have done this deal if we had believed that they are not doing what they are supposed to do," he said when asked about the UAE's commitment to the OPEC+ deal.

Annual recognition ceremony for employees and graduates of Ajyal training program

Mandani commends Gulf Bank's success and employee dedication

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Gulf Bank recently hosted its annual employee ceremony, celebrating the eighth batch graduation of the Ajyal program in the presence of Acting CEO, Mr. Waleed Khaled Mandani, and bank executives.

Mr. Mandani expressed gratitude to employees for their year-long efforts, leading to positive impacts on the bank's overall performance. He highlighted the successful launch of Gulf Capital Investment, Invest GB, and commended collaborative efforts across various departments.

Proud of Gulf Bank's enhanced customer experience, Mr. Mandani emphasized ongoing service development and the introduction of more competitive products.

He highlighted the bank's commitment to prioritizing customers and its significant strides in digital transformation. Additionally, he emphasized the crucial role of youth development in the bank's strategy, particularly through the Ajyal program.

Work Environment
Ms. Salma Al-Hajaj expressed satisfaction in the numerous accomplishments of Gulf Bank's employees over the past year. Furthermore, she emphasized the bank's strong sense of unity and communication among its staff, highlighting how this cohesion reflects the financial institution's values and distinctive work environment.

She went on to affirm the team's commitment to supporting one another by providing tools and opportunities for the enhancement and growth of the workforce. This commitment is realized through ongoing training initiatives, including participation in the Ajyal Program for Fresh Graduates. Additionally, Gulf Bank collaborates with renowned universities and training institutes worldwide to ensure continuous learning and development for its employees.

Panel Discussion
Conversely, the ceremony featured a panel discussion moderated by Ms.



Waleed Khaled Mandani delivers his speech.



Waleed Khaled Mandani and Salma Al-Hajaj stand in the middle of the Ajyal graduates.



Department directors during the dialogue session.



Part of the audience.

Salma Al-Hajaj, the General Manager of Human Resources. The panel included Mr. Mohammed Al-Qattan, the General Manager of Consumer

Banking, Mr. Faisal Al-Adsani, the Director of Corporate Banking, Ms. Mona Mansour, the General Manager of Customer Support Services, and Mr.

Shahzad Anjoom, the General Manager of Information Technology. During the session, the participants delved into the significant develop-

ments witnessed by the bank throughout the year in its digital transformation journey, aiming to solidify its position as a bank geared for the future. Each

department provided insights into completed stages and ongoing efforts within this transformative process.

The discussion also highlighted the bank's achievements in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance realms. Emphasis was placed on the bank's dedication to implementing top-tier environmental sustainability practices in the ongoing development processes of its branches.

Ajyal Training Program
The Ajyal training initiative attracts individuals with under five years of experience, offering them the chance to enhance their skills and nurture both their professional and personal development.

In its continuous commitment to developing and enriching the capabilities of its workforce, the bank initiated the ninth edition of the Ajyal program in September 2023. This edition welcomed a fresh cohort of newly recruited trainees in collaboration with the American University of Kuwait.

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

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

Parties aim to enhance trade relations

South African Ambassador explores business opportunities at Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The South African Ambassador to Kuwait, His Excellency Manelisi Genge made a significant visit to the regional office of Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait on December 4, 2023. During his visit, His Excellency engaged in productive discussions with Mr. Mohamed Haris, Director of Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait, and other esteemed members of Lulu's top management to explore potential business collaborations, particularly focusing on the import of more south African product ranges into the vibrant Kuwaiti market for the upcoming year 2024.

The meeting commenced on a cordial note, with warm greetings exchanged between the Ambassador and the Lulu Hypermarket team. Expressing gratitude for the opportunity to visit the renowned retail giant, His Excellency acknowledged Lulu's prominence in the Kuwaiti retail landscape and its contribution to the region's economic growth.

In addition to these discussions, the Ambassador highlighted that as part of the strategic initiatives for 2024, South African delegate teams are poised to visit Lulu stores across Kuwait. This upcoming visit aims to further strengthen the partnership between South Africa and Kuwait by providing an on-the-ground understanding of the market dynamics and consumer preferences. It underscores the commitment of both nations to fostering lasting economic ties and promoting cultural exchange through mutually beneficial business endeavors.

The discussions between the parties centered on identifying potential sectors and more products for import from South Africa to Kuwait. Both parties expressed a keen interest in further exploring these opportunities, aiming to



South African Ambassador to Kuwait, His Excellency Manelisi Genge with Mohamed Haris, Director of Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait, and other esteemed members of Lulu's top management.

enhance trade relations and strengthen economic ties between south Africa and Kuwait. LuLu Hypermarket currently imports and stocks more than 70 well-known South African brands, including food and non-food items. The hypermarket also has a dedicated sourcing office for various products from the region, conveniently located in South Africa's port city of Cape Town.

'Uniting for a Cleaner Tomorrow'

Beach clean-up by IMA, KCWA, UPNRI & Maharashtra Mandal

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Indian Muslim Association (IMA) in collaboration with Kuwait Canara Welfare Association (KCWA), UPNRI & Maharashtra Mandal Kuwait invites all to participate in Beach Cleaning Event aimed at promoting cleaner Beach & stronger sense of community & environmental responsibility.

Event Details:
Date: 8-Dec-2023; Time: 8:30 am
Location: Shuwaikh Beach, Opposite



Beach Clean-Up poster

to KPC Head Office
Event is a collective effort to bring together individuals from all walks of life to contribute to the well-being of our coastal ecosystem. Whether you're a nature enthusiast, a community supporter, or simply someone who cares about the environment, your participation will make a difference.
Event Highlights:
 Engaging Beach Cleanup Activities
 Informative Talks on Environmental Conservation
 Opportunities to Learn about Sustainable Practices
 Networking with Like-minded Individuals

Join us as we unite for a day dedicated to fostering community, promoting environmental awareness & taking positive action. Your participation & efforts can contribute to a cleaner & healthier coastline, ensuring a better environment for generations to follow.

Feel free to share this with your friends and family. For more information, please contact below POC's
60044851 (IMA)
97895654 (KCWA)
97856660 (UPNRI)
56555728 (Maharashtra Mandal)
For further details and queries, please refer attached flyer
Visit: www.imakuwait.org

Digital disparities exposed

AUK professor's research on Kuwait's digital landscape pioneers in Mideast

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Dr. Fahed Al-Sumait, associate professor of communication at the American University of Kuwait (AUK), collaborated with researchers at the London School of Economics and the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) to publish a report that stands as the first of its kind in the Middle East. The 'Kuwait's Digital Inequalities Report 2022,' featured in the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) 'Al-Taqadum Al-Ilmi' magazine, offers essential insights into Kuwait's current digital landscape.

Dr. Al-Sumait and his core-researchers Ellen J. Helsper, Cristina Navarro, Nouf Al-Saif, and Nilesh Rau, carried out a national survey that shed light on the factors affecting digital skills and access. This survey was part of a global project known as 'From Digital Skills to Tangible Outcomes' (DISTO).

The survey, conducted between October 2020 and January 2021 with over 700 adults in Kuwait, unveiled that respondents aged 18-25 demonstrated more than twice the digital skills compared to those over 40; however, these skills are not fully harnessed in professional or educational settings. The survey also indicated a deficiency in navigation skills as the lowest among those recorded, while online social skills dominated, emphasizing the necessity for more accessible ICT skills and media literacy training. Importantly, the report highlighted that the country does not have a significant gender gap, which is present in many countries across the Middle East and worldwide.



Dr. Fahed Al-Sumait

Instead, women on average demonstrated higher levels of personal uses, access to more internet devices, and achievement of more work-related outcomes than men.

The 'Kuwait's Digital Inequalities Report 2022' serves as a compass for navigating Kuwait's path into a highly digitized and globally interconnected future. Dr. Al-Sumait emphasized the importance of the gathered data in informing policymakers and businesses. In particular, more can be done to reduce barriers and add incentives that address current limitations in access, skills, and uses, especially for older populations, those with limited formal education, and the high number of expatriates living in the country. Doing so will foster greater equity, promote higher participation, and contribute to society-wide benefits in both productivity and well-being.

By consistently publishing their findings, AUK professors play a vital role in advancing their fields, shaping the academic community, and actively engaging in groundbreaking research that changes and influences scientific discourse.

No fees via KFHOnline for a limited period

KFH offers int'l money transfer in collaboration with Western Union

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has collaborated with Western Union to offer co-branded international money transfer services through its mobile app, KFHOnline.

KFH Manager E-Channels and Cash Management Services, Meshal Mandani, said that KFH and Western Union are offering the new service without any transfer fees for a limited period.

He pointed out that the services are beneficial to customers in terms of saving time and effort, as it permits them to send money (cash or bank account) to their designated beneficiaries at desired locations across Western Union's global network.

Mandani added that customers who want to transfer money from their account to an overseas location via Western Union can conveniently and securely access the KFHOnline app on their mobile devices. Then, they can carry out the transfer procedure by following specific and swift steps.

He pointed out that the service is designed to offer the best benefits to KFH customers and is part of the Bank's cooperative efforts with global money transfer companies. The aim is to facilitate secure, transparent, and prompt money transfer that aligns with customer expectations.

Western Union is one of the largest and accredited international money transfer operators. Customers can send money through Western Union's vast retail network, which spans more than 200 countries and territories. Payouts can also be made into billions of bank accounts and millions of digital wallets and cards in over 110 countries. Real-time international money transfers are available for accounts in 100 countries.

Western Union's Regional Vice President for the Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Hatem Sleiman, emphasized the importance of the collaboration, which gives customers access to the full scale of Western Union's network.

Sleiman added that according to World Bank's 2022 remittance data, Kuwait ranked in the top 10 send markets globally. Consumers expect a choice in how and when they send money. They want services that are easy to access, re-



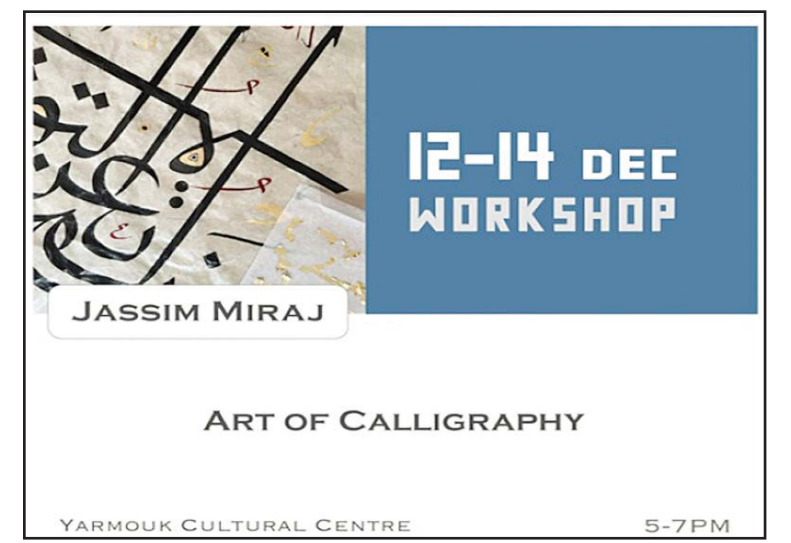
Meshal Mandani



Hatem Sleiman, Regional Vice President, MEPA, Western Union.

liable, convenient and can be completed at speed. Joining forces with Kuwait Finance House to expand its digital app capability, Western Union aims to serve these needs. The collaboration brings Western Union another step closer towards ensuring accessible financial services for all, which is a central component of its strategy.

It is worth noting that KFH provides a range of digital banking solutions via the KFHOnline app. These include a set of new services such as submitting a personal finance application online through KFHOnline, opening a gold account with options for selling and buying, gold delivery service, cheque book request, instant cheque printing, instant debit card issuance via QR code, and cheque deposit. Customers can also view investment plans, make local and international transfers, and create investment deposits.



DAI Workshop: Art of Calligraphy flyer.

Duke of Sussex said he wants protection when he visits home

Prince Harry challenges UK govt over security removal

LONDON, Dec 5, (AP) — Prince Harry is challenging on Tuesday the British government's decision to strip him of his security detail after he gave up his status as a working member of the royal family and moved to the United States.

The Duke of Sussex said he wants protection when he visits home and claimed it's partly because an aggressive press jeopardizes his safety and that of his family.

The three-day hearing scheduled to begin in London's High Court is the latest in a string of Harry's legal cases that have kept London judges busy as he takes on the UK government and the British tabloid media. It was not clear if he would attend Tuesday's hearing.

Harry failed to persuade a different judge earlier this year that he should be able to privately pay for London's police force to guard him when he comes to town. A judge denied that offer after a government lawyer argued that officers shouldn't be used as "private bodyguards for the wealthy."

Harry, the youngest son of King Charles III, said he did not feel

safe bringing his wife, former actor Meghan Markle, and their two young children back to Britain and was concerned about his own safety after being chased by paparazzi following a London charity event.

Harry's animosity toward the press dates back to the death of his mother Princess Diana, who died in a car wreck as her driver tried to outrun aggressive photographers in Paris.

Decision

Harry, whose wife is mixed-raced, cited what he said were racist attitudes and unbearable intrusions of the British media in his decision to leave the United Kingdom.

The 39-year-old prince is challenging the decision by the Executive Committee for the Protection of Royalty and Public Figures to provide his security on a "case by case" basis after moving in 2020 to Canada and then California, where he and his family now reside.

He said the committee unfairly nixed his security request without hearing from him personally and did not disclose the makeup of the

panel, which he later learned included royal family staff. He said Edward Young, the assistant private secretary to the late Queen Elizabeth II, should not have been on the committee because of "significant tensions" between the two men.

The Home Office has argued that any tensions between Harry and the royal household staff was irrelevant and that the committee was entitled to its decision because he had relinquished his role as a working member of the family.

The case is one of five that Harry has pending in the High Court.

The four other lawsuits involve Britain's best-known tabloids, including a case that alleges the publisher of the Daily Mail libeled him when it ran a story suggesting he had tried to hide his efforts to continue receiving government-funded security. A ruling is expected in that case Friday.

Three other lawsuits allege that journalists at the Mail, the Daily Mirror, and The Sun used unlawful means, such as deception, phone hacking or hiring private investigators to dig up dirt about him.

People

Variety



This image released by Focus Features shows Paul Giamatti in a scene from 'The Holdovers.' (AP)

Film

A 20-year journey from 'Sideways' to recognition

Will Giamatti finally secure an Oscar?

NEW YORK, Dec 5, (AP) — When Paul Giamatti made "Sideways" with Alexander Payne, he stayed in a little house in the middle of a large vineyard. At the end of a day of shooting, he would drive home in darkness, with the California hills around him.

Giamatti was then a respected character actor, but this was one of his first times as the lead. And he couldn't believe it.

"I remember Alexander saying, 'You two guys are going to do it,'" recalls Giamatti of himself and Thomas Hayden Church. "And we were like, 'Seriously?'"

In the years since, Giamatti, 56, has remained a leading man, albeit an unlikely one. His ability to carry a movie is now, well, kind of obvious. That goes for indie gems like "Private Life" and "Win Win" or acclaimed series like "John Adams" and "Billions."

But two decades later, "Sideways" remains lodged in Giamatti's memory. "I remember every second of making it," he said on a recent afternoon in Manhattan. Wide as his travels have been since — "Hamlet" at Yale, Jerry Heller in "Straight Outta Compton," seven years on "Billions" — he's not experienced anything quite like the natural, ensemble feel of "Sideways." Until, that is, he reteamed with Payne for "The Holdovers."

"I've never done anything like it again," says Giamatti, "except this is the closest thing to it."

"The Holdovers," playing in theaters and available digitally, marks the long-incoming reunion of Giamatti and Payne. Just as in "Sideways," their alchemy produces something wry and moving. The setting — a 1970s boarding school — has moved from California sunshine to snowy New England.

But a faint connection between the two movies is there. Giamatti plays Paul Hunham, an irascible classics professor, widely disliked by his students, who's forced to spend Christmas break with a handful of students. The movie, a broad comedy at first, peels away a tender humanistic drama around the trio of Hunham, a bright, less well-off student (Dominic Sessa) and the school's grieving head cook (Da'Vine Joy Randolph).

For Giamatti, the bookends of "Sideways" and "The Holdovers" inevitably prompt reflection on the distance he's traveled in the intervening decades.

"All the stuff in between, I mean the life changes, the professional stuff — it's just insane. My whole life changed. I got divorced. Massive change," Giamatti says. "I never talked to Alexander about this, but I thought there were similarities between the two characters. But it's a guy 20 years on from the other guy. And

probably there's a lot of me 20 years on going into it."

Hunham, like Giamatti's struggling writer Miles Raymond of "Sideways," is a prickly misanthrope stuck in a midlife stasis. In Giamatti's hands, the dialogue of an erudite grouch sings. One example: "Christ on a crutch, what sort of fascist hash foundry are you running?"

"I kind of like this character better, for some reason," Giamatti says. "He's not as self-pitying. He's got a little more zest. He, like, enjoys being the a--hole that he is."

Payne and Giamatti have talked for years about making another movie, including a private-eye film ("It'd be so great," says Giamatti) and a Western ("I'm like, I would do anything in a Western"). But it wasn't until Payne got together with screenwriter David Hemingson with the idea of loosely adapting the 1935 French comedy "Merlusse" that they hit on the right project.

Connections

"I wanted to work with that guy again for 20 years," says Payne. "I've been lucky to work with a lot of terrific actors, but we had a really terrific professional relationship making 'Sideways.' I was waiting for the right thing — and created it. I told David Hemingson: We're writing for Paul Giamatti."

"He's just the best actor," Payne adds. "He's the finest actor. Not casting aspersions on others, I just think there's nothing he cannot do."

The part of Paul also had connections to Giamatti's own upbringing. His father, A. Bartlett Giamatti, was an academic. Aside from being president of Yale and commissioner of Major League Baseball, he was a professor of English Renaissance literature. His mother, Toni, taught at the Hopkins School, the New Haven, Connecticut, prep school. The younger Giamatti, himself, attended the boarding school Choate as a day student.

"I think it's why he was like, 'You'll get this character. This is sort of written for you.' Because he knows I went to a school like that and I had a background like that," says Giamatti. "He even knows I'm interested in Roman history. A lot it was kind of a big gift of like: You kind of know all of this."

Asked for an example of how he and Payne work together, Giamatti describes a scene from "Sideways" when his character runs into his ex-wife and learns she's newly married and pregnant. Miles, crushed, struggles to keep up a cheery facade.

"We had done three takes or something, and he came

up to me and said, 'Don't stop smiling. Whatever you do, whatever she says, you can't stop smiling,'" says Giamatti. "That was one of the best examples to me of how an actor and a director can work together. He saw something I was doing and he just kept pulling it out of me."

On "The Holdovers," Giamatti and Payne had their first argument. In a scene toward the end of the film, Paul is in a tense meeting with the parents of Sessa's character. In the middle of it, Giamatti decided to sit down — an instinctual choice that, he felt, showed Paul was breaking protocol.

"He came up to me and he said, 'Talk to me about sitting down,'" recalls Giamatti.

They discussed Giamatti's reasoning and as they began to shoot it, Payne announced: "Sitting down, I buy it." But by then, Giamatti had rethought it. He asked to try it standing up. Each had come around to the other's idea. Giamatti decided he liked standing better.

"And that was the biggest disagreement we had," says Giamatti, laughing.

During the actors strike, Giamatti and his castmates (Randolph and Sessa have also been widely celebrated for their performances), weren't able to promote the film. Normally, missing out on interviews wouldn't be something Giamatti would lose sleep over.

"But it was funny, I kept saying to my girlfriend, 'I actually want to be talking about it. I think I'm frustrated that I can't,'" Giamatti says.

Twenty years ago, Giamatti was surprisingly passed over for an Oscar nomination for "Sideways." This time, many are predicting he'll receive his first Academy Award nomination for best actor. (He was nominated for best-supporting actor in 2006 for "Cinderella Man.")

"That would be lovely if it happened. I'm not counting on anything," Giamatti says. "But for the first time, I do feel like putting myself behind it because I'd like it to get acknowledged in some way. Whether it's me or not, that's fine. If the movie does, if (Randolph) does, if Hemingson does or Alexander does — it'd be great if somebody does."

If Giamatti is nominated for best actor, it would be an overdue acknowledgement of one this era's finest actors, one who's long imbued everyman characters with wit and warmth. Calling them "schlubs" wouldn't do justice for the justice he does them. So good at it is Giamatti that you might mistake the very down-to-earth actor for a regular guy, too.

Features

ARABO TIMES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden is making a big push to raise money for his reelection effort before the end of the year, appearing at seven events through next Monday — with more to come.

Biden was traveling to Massachusetts on Tuesday to schmooze with donors at a trio of Boston fundraisers to benefit his campaign and the broader Democratic Party, including an event in the city's theater district featuring a concert by singer-songwriter and guitarist James Taylor.

Later this week, the Democrat will touch down on the West Coast on Friday for his first Los Angeles fundraisers since the end of the strikes by actors and screenwriters, featuring film director Steven Spielberg and "Scandal" show-runner Shonda Rhimes, among other celebrities.

Biden will also attend a fundraiser Wednesday near the White House and another one on Monday in Philadelphia.

"This next election is going to be different," the president said last week at a money event in Denver, where he sought to draw contrasts with former President Donald Trump, expected to be Biden's Republican opponent. "Not because I'm running, because of the nature of what's at stake."

The burst of fundraising comes as the holiday season sets in and as candidates make their final pushes to raise needed cash before the quarter ends on Dec. 31.

Biden is also headlining fundraisers in Washington, D.C., and in Maryland later in December.

November was the campaign's strongest grassroots fundraising month since Biden formally announced last April that he was seeking a second term, according to a campaign official who requested anonymity to discuss campaign finances before details are made public. The numbers will be released in January. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: An investigator who staged a California plane crash to make a YouTube video of himself parachuting to safety was sentenced Monday to six months in federal prison for obstructing the investigation by destroying the wreckage, the US Justice Department.

Trevor Daniel Jacob, 30, an experienced pilot and skydiver, pleaded guilty in June to one count of destruction and concealment with the intent to obstruct a federal

investigation.

The video titled "I Crashed My Airplane" appeared in December 2021 and purported to show Jacob's small plane have engine failure over the mountainous Los Padres National Forest in Santa Barbara County.

Already wearing a parachute, he jumped out with a selfie stick



Biden



Jacob

camera in hand.

His jump and the aircraft's plunge were recorded by cameras mounted on the plane's wing and tail and by the camera he carried. After landing, he hiked to the crash site and recovered video from the onboard cameras, the government said.

According to the plea agree-

ment, Jacob had a sponsorship deal to promote a company's product in a video he would post, and he never intended to complete the Nov. 24, 2021, flight.

The Justice Department said Jacob later informed federal investigators about the crash, was told he was responsible for preserving the wreckage, agreed to determine

its location — and then lied that he did not know the location.

On Dec. 10, 2021, Jacob and a friend flew to the site in a helicopter that was used to lift the wreckage and fly it to a trailer attached to his pickup truck, according to the agreement. The plane was later cut up, and the parts were disposed of in trash bins. (AP)

