

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023 / JUMADA AL AWWAL 26, 1445 AH

# ARAB TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT

Established in 1977 / www.arabtimesonline.com

NO. 18466

16 PAGES



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

#### **HH Amir's health 'stable'**

The health condition of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah remains stable, said the Amiri Diwan on Sat-

In a statement, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah also prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow good health and swift recovery upon His Highness the Amir. (KUNA)

#### No reported casualties

#### Rocket assault damages US Embassy in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Dec 9, (AP): A rocket attack on the sprawling U.S. Embassy in Baghdad caused minor damage but no casualties on Friday morning, U.S. and Iraqi officials said.

The attack was the first on the embassy located in the heavily fortified Green Zone of Iraq's capital to be confirmed since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7, triggered by the deadly attack on southern Israel by Palestinian militants from Gaza.

The Green Zone houses Iraqi government buildings and foreign embassies on the west bank of the Tigris River.

Friday's assault was followed by drone and multi-rocket attacks, including on al-Asad air base in western Iraq and three troop locations in Syria, also with no casualties, U.S. officials said.



Al-Sudani

Iran-backed militias in Iraq have claimed responsibility for dozens of attacks that targeted bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria since the Israel-Hamas war erupted two months ago. The U.S. military says 78 attacks have been carried out against U.S. facilities over the past weeks, of which 43 were in Iraq and 41 in Svria.

An Iraqi security official said 14 Katyusha rockets were fired Friday, of which some struck near one of the U.S. Embassy's gates while others fell in the river.

A U.S. military official said a multi-rocket attack was launched at American and coalition forces in the vicinity of the embassy complex and the Union III base, which houses offices of the U.S.led coalition. The official added that no casualties and no damage to infrastructure were reported.

#### Salvos

An embassy spokesperson said the U.S. Embassy was attacked by two salvos of rockets at about 4:15 a.m. local time.

"Assessments are ongoing, but there are no reported casualties on the embassy compound,' the official said, adding that no specific group had claimed responsibility for firing the rockets as of Friday morning. But early indications pointed to Iran-aligned militias.

We again call on the government of Iraq, as we have done on many occasions, to do all in its power to protect diplomatic and Coalition partner personnel and facilities," the official said. "We reiterate that we reserve the right to selfdefense and to protect our personnel anywhere in the world.

The three officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The U.S. State Department strongly condemned the attacks and said that the "many Iran-aligned militias that operate freely in Iraq threaten the security and stability of Iraq, our personnel, and our partners in the region.

Washington urged Iraqi security forces to "immediately investigate and arrest the perpetrators of these attacks and bring them to justice,' spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

Earlier, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a statement that "targeting diplomatic missions is something that cannot be justified." He called the attack an "insult to Iraq, its stability and security," and promised to "pursue the perpetrators of the attack ... and bring them to justice.'

Al-Sudani came to power with the support of a coalition of Iran-backed parties. But he also wants continued good relations with the United States and has backed the ongoing presence of American troops in his country

The attacks later Friday included a drone assault at Patrol Base Shaddadi and multi-rocket attacks on Rumalyn Landing Zone and Mission Support Site Euphrates, all in Syria, and a drone and multi-rocket attack on al-Asad in Iraq, said U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss preliminary reports. They said there was no damage to the bases

While no group claimed responsibility for the embassy assault, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed militias, issued statements claiming separate attacks Friday on the al-Asad airbase, which is used by U.S. forces in Iraq, and on a base located at the Conoco gas field

There are roughly 2,500 U.S. troops in Iraq and around 900 others in eastern Syria, on missions against the militant Islamic State group. In both countries, Iran has militias loyal to Tehran.

#### emergency number 112

**150 FILS** 

GCC sets KD100 daily fine for visa overstays

# **Kuwait mulls family visas launch in 2024**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Ministry of Interior is currently studying the possibility of opening the door for Article 22 visa (family or dependent) applicants by the beginning of 2024, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source.

The source was quick to clarify though that this will be for certain categories of expatriates only like doctors, university and applied education professors, counselors and others that will be determined based on several factors. However, the source did not enumerate the factors.

The source told the daily that the ministry will soon form a committee in charge of setting conditions for the expatriate categories that will be allowed to bring their families to the country in line with the demographics strategy being implemented under the leadership and supervision of First Deputy

**Continued on Page 5** 

DUBAI, Dec 9, (AP): Veteran negotiators at the U. N. climate talks Saturday said that the push to wean the world from dirty fossil fuels had gained so much mo-

enemy: the oil industry Late Friday, multiple news sources reported that the leader of OPEC, the powerful oil cartel, wrote to member countries earlier this week urging them

mentum that they had poked a powerful

to block any language that would phase out or phase down fossil fuels. The news had the effect of a thunderclap, shinning a light on host and petrostate United Arab Emirates, which clearly has oil interests but also wants to show the world that it can lead the conference toward a substantive result.

**COP28** talks push for fossil fuel phase-out

Environmental activists, still smarting after decades of soft power from oil interests keeping such discussions from seeing the light of day, smirked at signs that the mighty cartel was circling the wagons.

"I think they're panicking," said Alden Meyer, an analyst with climate think tank E3G "Maybe the Saudis can't do on their own what they've been doing for 30 years and block the process.'

**Continued on Page 5** 

# Al-Kandari keeps 'grilling' motion against FM in play

MPs push for transparency in alleged abuse

**By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh** 

Al-Seyassh/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf has unveiled his plan to file a grilling motion against Minister of Finance Fahd Al-

Jarallah soon; clarifying that the unprecedented parliamentary-government coordination should not prevent the MPs from correcting errors if the need arises, if the public fund is in danger and in the interest of citizens.

In addition, MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari said his plan to submit a grilling motion

against Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah in case the credentials of newly appointed American Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Sasahara are accepted remains on the table. He explained that he postponed the submission of the grilling motion in view of the hospitalization of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He added the motion focuses on important issues, which should be discussed and followed up by the head of State; citing the previous assignment of Sasahara in Jerusalem and failure to deal with a number of sensitive foreign affairs issues.

On the other hand, National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun, Deputy Speaker MP Muhammad Al-Mutair, Secretary MP Osama Al-Shaheen, Chairman of the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee MP Muhannad Al-Sayer, Chairman of the Parliamentary Priorities Committee MP Abdullah Fehad, Assembly Secretary Geberal Khalid Busleeb and Head of the Assembly Office Hanan Al-Deghaishem attended the recent meeting of the Office.

They discussed the report of the fact finding committee tasked to uncover the constitutional, legal, financial and administrative violations related to the special expenditure item in the budgets of the Assembly from fiscal 2013/2014 to 2021/2022; report of the committee tasked to investigate the legal, financial and administrative violations of the Assembly TV since its launching until fiscal 2021/2022; and violations of the Inter-Parliamentary Group from fiscal 2013/2014 to 2021/2022. The Office then decided to assign the Assembly's Secretariat General to take the necessary legal and administrative measures as per Article 14 of Procedures and Criminal Trials Law number 17/1960 and Article 18 of Public Prevention Law number 1/1993.

In another development, several MPs have reacted to the alleged illegal arrest and torture of a Kuwaiti citizen at the Military Intelligence Unit in the Ministry of Defense. They stressed that the citizens' dignity must be protected as per the Constitution and the relevant laws.

**Continued on Page 5** 

Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed

Blue skies and pleasant temperatures grace Kuwait's Sharq area on a clear Saturday.

#### **Kuwait criticizes block on Gaza ceasefire call**

# US vetoes UN ceasefire resolution

#### Newswatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday evening received a call from Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, checking on His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's health condition and wishing him everlasting good health and wellness.

His Highness the Crown Prince voiced much thanks and appreciation to the Saudi Crown Prince for his sincere fraternal sentiments and appreciated his good gesture, wishing him good health and wellness and the Saudi people all progress and prosperunder the wise leadership of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Egyptians are gearing up for their country's fifth multicandidate presidential elections to pick a new president for a fiveyear term, with four mainly rivals competing, mainly incumbent President **Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi**.

A total of 11,631 polling stations will be open at youth centers, schools and health facilities nationwide from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm for three days, Dec 10-12. (KUNA)

RAFAH, Gaza Strip, Dec 9, (AP): Israeli warplanes struck parts of the Gaza Strip overnight into Saturday in relentless bombardments, including some of the dwindling slivers of land Palestinians had been told to evacuate to in the territory's south.

The latest strikes came a day after the United States vetoed a United Nations resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, despite it being backed by the vast majority of Security Council members and many other nations. The vote in the 15-member council was 13-1, with the United Kingdom abstaining.

'Attacks from air, land and sea are intense, continuous and widespread," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said before the vote. Gaza residents "are being told to move like human pinballs - ricocheting between ever-smaller slivers of the south, without any of the basics for survival.'

Guterres told the council that Gaza was at "a breaking point" with the humanitarian support system at risk of total collapse, and that he feared "the consequences could be devastating for the security of the entire region.'

Gaza's borders with Israel and Egypt are effectively



Palestinians wounded in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip are brought to the hospital in Deir al Balah on Dec. 8, 2023. (AP)

#### dent, militants shot at troops from an U.N.-run school in the northern town of Beit Hanoun **Continued on Page 5**

sealed, leaving Palestinians with no option other than to seek

refuge within the territory. The overall Palestinian death toll

in Gaza has surpassed 17,400, the majority of them women

and children, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-

controlled territory, whose counts do not differentiate be-

Israel holds Hamas responsible for civilian casualties, ac-

cusing the militants of using civilians as human shields, and

says it's made considerable efforts with its evacuation orders

to get civilians out of harm's way. It has said 93 Israeli sol-

On Saturday, the Israeli military said its forces fought and

killed Hamas militants and found weapons inside a school in

Shijaiyah in a densely populated neighborhood of Gaza City.

It said soldiers discovered a tunnel shaft in the same neigh-

borhood where they found an elevator, and in a separate inci-

diers have died since the ground offensive began.

tween civilians and combatants.

# **Facebook Messenger unveils** default 'encryption' by Meta

NEW YORK, Dec 9, (AP): Meta is rolling out end-to-end encryption for calls and messages across its Facebook and Messenger platforms, the company announced Thursday.

Such encryption means that no one other than the sender and the recipient - not even Meta - can decipher people's messages. Encrypted chats, first introduced as an optional feature in Messenger in 2016, will now be the standard for all users going forward, according to Messenger head Loredana Crisan.

cause we've taken our time to get this right," Crisan wrote in a blog post. "Our engineers, cryptographers, designers, policy experts and product managers have worked tirelessly to rebuild Messenger features from the ground up." Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg promised,

"This has taken years to deliver be-

back in 2019, to bring end-to-end encryption to its platforms after the social media company suffered a string of high profile scandals, notably when Cambridge Analytica accessed user data on Facebook.

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Warm and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate variable

wind, with speed of 08-28 km/h. By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08-30 km/h.

Max Exp Min Rec Station **Kuwait City** 

Kuwait Airport 12 Abdaly 10 Jahra 14 Salmiyah Nuwaisib Wafra

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

#### Israel committing genocide under nose of global community: Al-Mubaraki

# World marks 75th 'versary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

#### **Report by Dalal Sharar**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9, (KUNA): The world marks tomorrow (December 10) the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the most significant international legal document of human rights: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The UDHR is a milestone document in the history of human rights. The declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December, 1948 (General Assembly Resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for

all peoples and all nations. The declaration,

with all its 30 Articles, is the basis of all laws bearing on human rights, with its first article stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are



endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another within a spirit of brotherhood.

Kuwait, as part of the international order, adopted several texts and articles in its 1962 constitution that comply with the UDHR and related international charters. It has even adopted a set of pieces of legislation, laws, and arrangements that reflect the country's observation of international commitments in the human rights domain.

In this regard, Chairman of the National Diwan of Human Rights Jassem Al-Mubaraki stressed the importance of the UDHR to the protection of all people from human rights violations, and spotlighting and addressing relevant chal-

Speaking to KUNA, he said the international community needs an executive will to apply relevant conventions to what is going on in the Gaza Strip, lamenting that the UDHR, human rights conventions and the United Nations (UN) Charter are not observed due to double standards.

He condemned the Israeli occupation's aggression on the Palestinian territory as a genocide and war crime against humanity right under the nose of the international community.

He added that human rights are the basic rights and freedoms of all people regardless of any other considerations such as gender, race, religious, language, political opinion, national and social origin, or economic or social situation.

In this context, Kuwait has approved and endorsed a set of international agreements and conventions targeting the elimination of racial discrimination with all its forms and manifestations, he remarked.

Kuwait has consequently enacted a package of laws, legislation and policies pertinent to these international conventions, and has always cooperated with international human rights agencies in order to promote and protect human rights in the country.

Furthermore, Kuwait has always been keen on implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by the United Nations (UN) in September 2015, and are mainly based on the UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and human rights treaties and conventions.

Kuwait's new development vision is chiefly meant to create an encouraging infrastructure and legislative business environment with human development regulations aiming at establishing values and safeguarding the society's identity and ensuring justice, political participation and freedoms.

Kuwait also established a permanent national committee for compiling reports and following up on human rights recommendations, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprising all state

It, further, created a National Diwan of Human Rights, an independent body supervised by the cabinet and aiming at promoting and protecting human rights, and disseminating the respect of public and private freedoms as per the constitution and international agreements endorsed by the State of Kuwait.

At the international level, Kuwait has emerged as a peace-loving country that defends civilians' rights, and hosts summits and conferences with a view to supporting needy and affected countries.

This has thus earned Kuwait a distinguished status in its relations with the UN, which, consequently, picked Kuwait as a humanitarian hub and the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a humanitarian leader.

In the same context, during its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council between 2018 and 2019, Kuwait did its utmost in the field of human rights, mainly including Resolution 2401 adopted on February 24, 2018, regarding Syria's ceasefire and humanitarian aid access, along with Resolution 2440 that defined a mechanism for delivering relief aid to Syria.

The UNSC also adopted Resolution 2417, which was tabled by the State of Kuwait, the Netherlands, Sweden and Cote d'Ivoire, condemning the starving of civilians as a war tactic and illegal denial of humanitarian access to the civilian population.

As part of its unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and defending the legitimate rights of Palestinians, Kuwait submitted a draft resolution aiming at proving international protection for the Palestinian people, but it was vetoed.

In another achievement, the UN General Assembly re-elected Kuwait as a member of the Human Rights Council between 2024 and 2028, which comprises 47 member states. It was first elected during the period from 2011 to 2014.

The membership is mainly based on states' contribution to promoting and protecting human rights and voluntary undertakings and commitments.

# Slew of Kuwaiti aid for Yemen

Hospitals, roads, schools built in many areas



Diplomatic attache at Kuwait's permanent delegation to the UN Hamad Al-Saeedi.

#### **Kuwait raps Israeli extremists protest**

## 'Don't deprive Palestinians of sea'

NEW YORK, Dec 9, (KUNA): Kuwait affirmed the need to commit to the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, noting that Palestine is deprived of its right to benefit from the Gaza Sea, due to the Israeli occupation siege.

Kuwait considers the convention as a UN constitution that determines the rights of all countries in seas and oceans, said diplomatic attache at Kuwait's permanent delegation to the UN Hamad Al-Saeedi, during a UN General Assembly meeting on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, held in New York late Thursday.

Palestine joined the convention in January 2015, however, the country is deprived of all sea rights by the Israeli occupation force, he noted.

Al-Saeedi called on the UN to look into the issue in the near future, as the "Gaza humanitarian aid ship" will sail towards the strip, with the participation of 30 Kuwaiti charity societies, in cooperation with the Turkish Red Crescent. He hoped the ship would reach the Gaza Strip safely without harm by Israeli occupation aggression.

Meanwhile, the diplomat noted that the sea is part of Kuwait's history, as the country relied on the Arabian Gulf since its es-

Kuwait had supported the UN's convention on many levels throughout the years,

becoming a permanent headquarters for the Regional Organization For the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) since

He added that Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait University (KU) are continuously conducting research and studies to improve and protect marine life, including recently launching the "explorer" boat to manage fish resourc-

Meanwhile , the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday condemned and denounced the Israeli occupation authorities' permission for extremists to organize a provocative march in occupied Jerusalem in a fresh shameful act that aims at changing the historical and legal status of the city and its holy sites, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The ministry said in a press release that Kuwait is opposed to such acts that reflect the absurdity, provocation and disrespect of the Israeli occupation and those extremists for Muslims' sentiments, as well as their covert measures to carry out their mischievous schemes against these holy sites.

The ministry warned of the consequences of such violations that defv international legitimacy resolutions and international sponsibility of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the international community in halting such unacceptable acts.

#### By Sami Na'aman

ADEN, Dec 9, (KUNA): Kuwaiti charities have launched a slew of relief and development ventures in Yemen's health, educational and utility sectors as part of the nineyear-old humanitarian campaign, "Kuwait by your side."

Latest fruits were a maternity and child hospital, named after the late Kuwaiti philanthropist Adel Abdulkhaleq Al-Nouri, and a medical oxygen plant with a daily output capacity of 300 cylinders. These two projects were inaugurated during a visit to Yemen by leading Kuwaiti charitable figures between November 28 and December 8.

The delegation included the head of relief committee at the Kuwait Relief Society and Director General of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Society, Jamal Al-Nouri, and the head of the Kuwait Relief Society in Yemen, Mahmoud Al-Mesbah, accompanied by the undersecretary of Maarib governorate, Abedrabbo Meftah, along with other local officials.

Raed Ibrahim, chairperson of the Yemeni Al-Tawasol Development Institution, said in a statement to KUNA that the 20-bed hospital, with state-of-art equipment, includes an emergency ward, specialized clinics, a laboratory, a pharmacy, operation rooms, intensive care and premature babies sections.

The Kuwaiti delegation had also inaugurated the com-

plex, "the Amir of Humanity," including a four-storey clinic, a technology institute and various workshops construction of which was funded by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Society. For his part, Al-Meftah praised Kuwait's philanthropic

activities in various Yemeni regions since the 60s of the Kuwait was among the first states that backed Yemen

in general and, in particular, Maarib that hosts relocated Yemenis from several other regions, he said. Jamal Al-Nouri affirmed dire need for the Kuwaiti as-

sistance in Maarib, swamped with difficulties due to inflow of millions of relocated people. The Kuwaiti delegation had proceeded to Taiz, where

they laid the corner stone of a settlement named Kuwait Village to house the displaced. The project featured 40 residential units, a mosque, a school and a clinic. In Hadramout, the delegation opened two hospitals,

construction cost of which was estimated at some USD In Lahj province, the Kuwaiti Relief Society and the local administration inaugurated a water project for 10,000

people living in ten villages. The venture featured a huge storage tank, solar energy-powered pumps and a distribu-

Elsewhere in Abyan, the Kuwaiti delegation visited a school, renovated with Kuwaiti financial contributions, During their visit to Shabwa province, they inspected a project for drilling four water wells.

Local officials heaped praise upon Kuwait namely the charities and the Kuwaiti visitors pledged continuing aid

'Money laundering cases

biggest threat to Kuwait'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Kuwaiti judiciary has confirmed

that it continues to focus on money laundering cases, warning these crimes are considered the biggest threat to the State, The Court of Cassation had earlier sentenced seven expatri-

ates working in the money exchange field to 10 years in prison

and fined them a total of KD60 million, along with three com-

panies, for involvement in money laundering cases. Docu-

ments related to this case unveiled one of the most dangerous

the movement of funds in the accounts of a company whose

capital does not exceed KD1,000; yet it made deposits exceed-

ing KD60 million within two years without proof of any prac-

tical, commercial or investment activity, or even the payment

formed one of the largest criminal networks for money laun-

dering in the country, stating they justified some money trans-

fers as "for importing sheep, which is not proportionate to the

ferred funds suspected to have been obtained by harming na-

tional interests and illegally collected cash (Kuwaiti dinars)

from a money exchange entity, indicating the money was de-

posited into the bank accounts of two other companies and an

agent believed to have received commissions. It was proven

that the defendants used the funds to conceal the illegal source,

The charge sheet stated that those referred for trial trans-

The Public Prosecution confirmed that the defendants

The Financial Investigation Unit submitted a report about

criminal organizations involved in suspicious transfers.

of fees or checks for the purchase of goods.

nature of the transaction and the owner.

#### **Gulf tops Kuwait in 'greening'**

# 'Govt oblivious to dying trees'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: Trees along the streets continue to die without solutions, resulting in the wastage of public funds spent on planting these trees, reports Al-Qabas

The failure to take care of the trees reflects the negligence of the concerned entities in terms of maintaining the aesthetic view and landscapes along the streets despite the capability of the State to do so.



The daily continues to monitor the death of trees in several parts of the country, especially those along Gulf Street, where palm trees are either dead or dry due to weevils

gnawing on them.

This indicates that the concerned entities no longer take Al-Hayyan care of the trees. Environmental activists warned against the continuous negligence of vegetation,

stressing that the latest international agreements obligate Kuwait to focus on vegetation and lay down a feasible plan for greening in order to address the climate change issue and reduce harmful emissions. They pointed out that other Gulf countries have succeeded in implementing their greening plans, in contrast to what is happening in Kuwait, where there is clear negligence of crops and vegetation.

The activists emphasized the importance of paying attention to greening in a desert country like Kuwait; considering it is beneficial to the environment in general, and contributes to lowering temperatures and dust in particular. They affirmed that trees are good for the health and the general view of the State; hence, the need to plant trees compatible with the climate in the country, instead of planting trees that could not withstand the summer heat and die quickly.

Environmental activist Sa'ad Al-Hayyan warned that the absence of a greening plan in the country could exacerbate the environmental problems. He said the international agreements that Kuwait signed recently obligate it to pay attention to vegetation and taking care of trees.

He added: "The green cover is necessary to improve the quality of life and reduce harmful emissions, while maintaining the 'Torture' queried

#### **Court frees hacker**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Court of Appeal has upheld the lower court verdict and has set free the 28-yearold Kuwaiti hacker who was sent to prison for hacking 200 secret American government websites, including the Ministry of Defense, and sharing confidential information with others, reports Al-Rai daily.

The man was charged with embezzling the money of subscribers to websites 13 years ago, which endangered Kuwait's relationship with and putting at risk and endangering

Kuwaiti national security. The accused was arrested in London and extradited to Kuwait and referred to the Criminal Court and remained in prison during the trial, on the grounds that he was accused of hacking 200 American websites, seizing other people's money, and hacking the US Department of Defense website.

Citizen tortured?: Parliamentarian Hamad Al-Olayan said, "The news circulating about a citizen being subjected to torture by the intelligence service (if true) is a dangerous matter that cannot be tolerated. It is our duty to protect people's dignity and defend them," reports Al-Rai daily.

He stated on his account social media account "X" platform that "we are waiting for the results of the investigation, which is supposed to be urgent and impartial, and we will take a serious stance towards the Minister of Defense if the investigation committee fails and delays in holding the wrongdoer accountable."

aesthetic view along the street. The Environment Public Authority (EPA) and the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) must perform their role efficiently and a permanent greening plan must be laid down.



KUNA photo

Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Zhang Ming meets the Kuwaiti ambassador to China.

#### **Boost in trade ties eyed**

#### 'Kuwait's SCO role to boost ties'

TOKYO, Dec 9, (KUNA): Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Zhang Ming has affirmed State of Kuwait's admission into the organization as a dialogue partner contributes to boosting ties among member states.

The State of Kuwait can play a pivotal role in enhancing cooperation among the SCO member countries, uniting efforts in the face of challenges and threats, boosting regional commercial, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, said Zhang, as cited by a statement released by the State of Kuwait Embassy in China.

Other SCO objectives are ensuring member states' commitment to dialogue, cooperation and adherence to the United Nations charter and international laws, particularly those that aim at safeguarding global peace and security, establishing partnerships among the States, protecting their sovereignty, respecting nations' right to determine their destiny, in addition to making headways at the political, social, economic and cultural levels.

Zhang affirmed the State of Kuwait is keen on maintaining balanced and various partnerships with States and international organizations and cooperation in particular with the SCO countries to attain common

The SCO, established in Shanghai on June 15, 2001, currently groups eight member States (Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakh-

stan and India as well as four countries as observers (Afghanistan, Iran, Belarus and Mongolia). Kuwait, along with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Maldives, singed

memoranda of understanding to join the body as dialogue partners, last Mav. The SCO, the largest regional organization globally, aims at establishing a multi-

polar global order that conforms with norms of the international law, mutual respect principles that serve each State's interests. Meanwhile, the Minister of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Al-Aiban received ambassadors of China, Iran and South Korea to Kuwait separately on Thursday to discuss

ways of strengthening the trade cooperation with the three friendly countries. The meeting with China Ambassador Zhang Jianwei focused on ways to increase the bilateral trade volume and promote the economic and investment cooperation, according to a statement from the Ministry of

Commerce and Industry. Al-Aiban, also minister of state for youth affairs, highlighted the need to activate the agreements and MoUs signed with China on trade, economic and investment coop-

The meeting also dealt with the prospects of joint investment and the possibilities of Kuwait taking part in the gigantic projects being implemented by the Republic of China in the Arabian Gulf region, the statement

#### The Kuwaiti judiciary warned that some expatriates are engaged in activities deemed harmful to national interests, as they created a huge illegal financial system outside the scope of the State's regulatory authorities, similar to legitimate systems, and through it, they made financial transfers to external parties in a way that prevents identification of the involved parties.

# **Implement strictly** orders of CP: MoE

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Ministry of Education (MoE) has announced the withdrawal and cancellation of decisions and circulars contravening the directive of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to suspend the appointment, promotion, transfer and secondment of employees in the public sector for three months, reports Al-Anba daily.

Acting Undersecretary of the ministry Anwar Al-Hamdan confirmed the implementation of the decision of His Highness the Crown Prince issued on Dec 5, 2023 and published in the official newspaper 'Kuwait Al-Youm'. "We advise all units in the Ministry of Education to strictly implement the directive until further notice, while the circulars and decisions that contravene this directive are withdrawn and cancelled," she added.

# diwaniya 🕈 چیوانیة

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

# Gaza, Kuwait and us ... the choice of opinion is yours!

"I TRIED to link what is happening in Gaza and the accompanying reactions to Kuwait from a purely religious perspective, so that we may write our testimony in directing public opinion to what is good for the country and its people," columnist **Dr Turki Al-Azmi**, wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"When the 'Al-Aqsa Flood' began and the events that happened to our people in Gaza, I was surprised by some unknowingly promoting foolishness who blamed Hamas and our brothers in Palestine.

"This is absolutely not permissible from a legal and humanitarian point of view. Our brothers in Palestine were subjected to a barbaric Zion-

ist attack from which children, the elderly, and hospitals were not spared. Even in many countries, non-Muslim components have emerged that condemn the killing and criminality that is happening against our brothers there.



Dr. Turki Al-Azmi

"And in Kuwait, a misguided group emerges that does not support the legal right or the humanity of what is happening there, and makes negative comments that would not have come from a Muslim reciting Surah Al-Fatihah in the five daily prayers, in which the Almighty says, 'Guide us to the straight path, lost people.'

"While we are in the midst of the developments taking place on the local scene a group emerges that spreads rumors, offends the components of society, strikes at the social fabric, and is promoted by some without their knowledge.

"These ignorant and foolish people need immediate deterrence, whether they are owners of "social media" accounts whose names are borrowed or not. They must be exposed.

"I fear that we will fall on our faces in the fire of hell because of a word for which we do not take account out of ignorance or following what is produced by some calculations that do not want good for Kuwait or the Islamic nation. That is why I provided the evidence so that we may wake up from our heedlessness, avoid backbiting and bad speech, seek forgiveness from God.

"What is happening in Gaza is a violation of international and humanitarian conventions, and our brothers in Gaza are our brothers, and brothers in Islam are stronger than brothers in lineage.

"Therefore, it is our duty to stand in support of them and support them with prayers and money as much as possible. It is necessary to ignore everyone who contradicts the statement of truth mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's (PBUH) hadiths.

"We are all accountable ... You have a choice: either a kind word will raise you in rank with the Almighty God, or it will cause you to fall into the fire of hell.

"As for the foolish people among us who speak maliciously about our local issues, turn truth into falsehood, and spread rumors, we, on the individual level, must ignore them and not pay any attention to them, and the government must hold them accountable and punish them."

#### Also:

"The features of a new phase in the political situation in Kuwait began to take shape, represented by unprecedented cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities. This cooperation moved to an advanced stage with agreement on a legislative agenda for a number of laws that the country needs and are necessary for sustainable development and at the same time for the citizen's wellbeing and decent living," columnist Mubarak Fahd Al-Duwailah wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"This situation disturbs some who do not want to see democratic practice succeed in Kuwait and overcome the obstacles that made it falter over the past decades. This success in cooperation between the two authorities also confuses those lurking and trembling; who wait for opportunities for unrest and clashes to carry out their transgressions, taking advantage of the paralysis of the regulatory bodies and their weak effectiveness.

"Today, the government has proven its seriousness in cooperating and resolving the problems that were hindering this harmony between the two authorities, so it issued amnesty decrees for political prisoners and persecuted tweeters, in a humanitarian gesture aimed at healing the rift, gathering the word, and closing ranks.

"Today, the Kuwaiti government and people have announced to the whole world that we live in a system of government that differs from other Third World countries.

"Cleaning the prisons of people of conscience, restoring citizenship to those whose citizenship was withdrawn arbitrarily and pardoning political tweeters, all of this confirms that Kuwait is the most beautiful country to practice democracy in the modern era and comes with the accountability and interrogation of the Prime Minister without any objection from any-

one.

"It is an opportunity of a lifetime for Kuwait and Kuwaitis, an opportunity to prove to the whole world that we are a people deserving the best, and that we are a country worthy of respect.

"This situation that the two authorities are experiencing today is the best response to those who mocked our democracy and the margin of freedom in which we live.

"This situation pleases the friend and angers the enemy. All instruments affected by this cooperation will take action. Every individual or institution that finds these laws restricting their interests and reducing their gains will seek to stop this, even if it leads to us returning to square one.

"There are those who were upset by the pardon of the tweeters because he feeds on sectarianism and racism, and there are those who were upset when he saw the son of the soil on the interrogation stand!

"Things here are starting to move in the right direction, so do not waste the opportunity. It is true that the gap is still a problem because it is wide, and it is true that some institutions are still rife with corruption, but we have all begun the process of serious reform, so let us continue, and let us tell the disgruntled that enough is enough!"

"The curses of history haunt criminals and traitors ... Islamic stories ... Cruelty, genocide, massive destruction, including the destruction of homes and mosques ... All of these heinous incidents are embodied in the dark, tyrannical and criminal oppressors," columnist Imam and preacher Muhammad Al-Fouzan wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Hulagu became a symbol of the tyrants, thugs and notorious criminals of his time, but I wish the oppressive criminals were considered facts of history. Hulagu destroyed cities and exterminated their inhabitants. He was extremely hateful of Islam, striving to destroy it and the Muslims and change their culture and values.

"For this reason, he launched brutal and terrifying wars on Iraq and the Levant. He committed the largest massacre known to humanity to date when he occupied Baghdad with the help of traitors led by the vizier -- Ibn Al-Alqami, and overthrew the Abbasid Caliphate in the year 656 AH, killing about two million Muslims.

"This is in addition to the number of Muslims he killed in other places whose numbers were almost the same as the abovementioned figures due to the incitement of his Christian wife -- Zafar Khatun. His wife urged him day and night to exterminate the Muslims, as well as the incitement of traitors among the hypocrites, such as Al-Alqami, Nasir Al-Din Al-Tusi and other deceived conspirators.

"When Hulagu arrived in Damascus in order to occupy it, he received news of his brother's death, so he quickly returned to the city of Qaraqorm, his capital, to choose the new greatest ruler of the Mongols. He left Katbugha as commander of the armies in order to occupy Egypt, but he was killed and defeated in the Pottle of A in July.

defeated in the Battle of Ain Jalut.

"Fate wanted Baraka Khan, who is Hulagu's cousin, to convert to Islam along with all the members of the Mongolian Golden Horde in northern Russia. Baraka Khan decided to take revenge on Hulagu for what he did to the Muslims, so he launched a war against him and defeated him in many battles, splitting the ranks of the Mongols, and the elders also fled. His army leaders went to the Levant and Egypt, and declared their conversion to Islam.

"Then, Hulagu wanted to destroy the Mamluks that had defeated him in Egypt and the Levant, but Al-Zahir Baibars confronted and defeated him. As a result of the successive defeats and relapses, Hulagu was afflicted with involuntary urination and severe epilepsy, to the point that he began howling like a dog and no doctor was able to treat him. After a short period of illness, he died on a Monday -- Feb 8, 1265 AD and was buried on Kabudi Island near Lake Urmia.

"All that remained of Hulagu, the Mongolian, was his brutal name and his bad deeds in Baghdad and the rest of the Islamic countries, after the Muslims suffered from his tyranny, power, madness and destruction. Where did his empire and his sprawling State go? It was destroyed by injustice, tyranny and criminality.

"The Zionists are currently doing the same in Palestine. The act is similar to what Hulagu did to the Muslims. Their fate will be the same as that of Hulagu, as well as the traitors, instigators and betrayers. History proves to us that every tyrannical and criminal oppressor has an end, and that days will pass, history will be recorded, and curses will haunt them through generations until the Hour of Judgment. Is there anyone who considers this? Is there anyone who remembers?"

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary



Outdated medicines thrown into garbage.



Municipality inspector at the bust.

#### Illegal store busted in Fahaheel

### 'Corona-era' medicines destroyed

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: A security men in collaboration with the Al-Ahmadi Municipality busted an unlicensed medical store in Fahaheel and seized large quantities of unlicensed medicines and medical equipment, reports Al-Anba daily.

Among the seized items were intravenous solutions as well as swabs used during the Corona virus pandemic and blood tubes, which have subsequently be destroyed.

Moreover, officials from the Ministry of Health were summoned to supervise the process of destroying and compressing the seized items and ensuring that they were completely destroyed. The warehouse has been administratively sealed.

A source said immediately after the discovery of the unlicensed store by the Fahaheel Municipality Supervisor, Muhammad Qunais Al-Hajri, the Director of the Road Works Department, Nawaf Al-Mutairi, was notified, who directed to contact the Ministry of Health following which Dr. Khaled Al-Anezi from the Ministry to take inventory of the seized items

# Panel formed to look into state land abuse

Check on MEW projects delay

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Fahd Al-Shoula has issued a ministerial decision requiring the formation of a fact-finding committee to review the ad-

ministrative and legal measures taken by the Kuwait Municipality regarding the exploitation of state lands not subject to petroleum operations by contractors contracting



Al-Shoula

with the Kuwait Oil Company, headed by Counselor Sarah Al-Eid, and with membership of both advisors, Hassan Al-Saffar and Abdul Latif Al-Duwailah, reports Al-Rai daily.

#### Decision

Al-Shoula stated in his decision that the committee will be responsible for reviewing the decisions and licenses issued by the municipality, regarding a site exploited by one of the companies contracting with the Kuwait Oil Company, to indicate whether that occupation is based on a basis of law, or was carried out in violation of the regulations and decisions in force in the municipality, and in the case finally, a statement of the administrative and legal measures taken regarding these violations in accordance with applicable regulations.

He added that the committee will work to verify the validity of the legal measures taken by the Kuwait Municipality, regarding a number of violation records, in light of the legal opinion issued by the Fatwa and Legislation Department, which includes the right of the municipality to take the necessary measures against the company, and to demand state benefits for the incident of oc-

cupancy that violates the law, A statement of whether that opinion was taken or not, and in the second case, a statement of the reasons for that.

Al-Shoula pointed out that one of the tasks entrusted to the committee is to review all administrative and legal measures taken by the Kuwait Municipality regarding a number of violations reports in light of the laws, regulations and decisions followed in this regard, and to indicate whether or not those procedures are marred by any short-comings or violation of the provisions of the law and the governing regulations. In the last case, a statement of the deficiencies, identifying the culprit, and specifying all legal and administrative measures that must be taken by the municipality in order to preserve public money.

The decision specified the duration of the committee's work as one month, starting from the date of its first meeting or until the completion of its work and completion of its mission, whichever comes first.

**Check on projects delay:** The Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, and the Acting Minister of Public Works, Jassim Al-Ostad, has issued a directive to establish an unbiased fact-finding committee tasked with investigating the causes of the delays in electrical power station projects, reports Al-Rai daily.

The daily says, the decision stipulates the committee's terms of reference, as follows:

Determining the reasons for the emergence of the expected electrical shortage and delay in electrical power station projects, water distillation, and maintenance of existing electrical power generation units, identifying the culprit, if any, after the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority canceled the Al-Zour station project -- the Northern Electric Power Generation and Water Desalination Plant (Phase Two) in

August 2017. ■ Evaluating the measures taken regarding all projects for constructing electric power stations and water distillation.

Evaluating the steps and procedures taken by the Ministry in all current projects related to electricity generation affiliated with the Public-Private Partnership Authority and the Central Agency for Public Ten-

■ Examining the reasons for delays, if any, from the various sectors of the Ministry and the extent of their impact on plans for production and transmission of electrical energy.

#### Other Voices

# Few generous people in vast sea of 'wealth'

By Ahmad alsarraf

For years, the BBC has been conducting a survey regarding the most generous people in the world. In its latest report, Indonesia, the largest Islamic country, for the sixth year in a row, topped the list, followed by Ukraine and an African country, which was the most generous in the following three areas:

Providing assistance of various kinds, to those who do not know. Volunteering their time to help others in various fields, and thirdly, donating money to a charitable cause, according to the Global Giving Index for 2023 of the Charitable Aid Foundation. Myanmar, which has been ravaged by civil wars, also ranked highly.

Another poll from the same party above showed that Iraqis are considered the most generous Arabs towards



alsarraf

strangers and the needy! This result reminded me of an embarrassing incident I encountered approximately 65 years ago, when I was spending the summer with my family in Lebanon, where I was sitting with my peers in a café located beneath a modest and small hotel, run by their Lebanese owner.

One day I dared to ask him, and I was sure of the answer, about the nationalities of his best customers, and he surprised me by

saying that it was the Iraqi tourist! I was shocked by his answer, and when he read my disapproval on my face, he went on to explain that the Iraqi buys materials and things from him that the Kuwaiti does not ask for (he did not mention it, but I guessed it).

He said that the Kuwaiti comes to the hotel carrying with him, from Kuwait, cans of tea, milk, bags of basmati rice, and even hookah charcoal and thus the hotel hardly benefits from it, other than the accommodation fee.

When I tried to explain to him the reason, according to my humble understanding at the time, which is still as humble as he is, he did not care, and interrupted me by saying that the Iraqi is also more generous in "gratuities"

His words about the Kuwaiti's stinginess with tips were confirmed to me after more than 65 years, and after my experiences with restaurant projects, where those who were and still manage them informed me that the Kuwaiti guest is the stingiest when it comes to giving tips, and hardly leaves anything for the restaurant workers, who depend on a portion of their money.

This impression was also consolidated in me with my experiences in collecting donations for the "Charitable" Human Friendship Society.

Despite all that the association is distinguished by its high transparency and advantages that are not available in any charitable organizations, and its uniqueness in that its workers do not deduct any percentage for themselves, even a small percentage, from the donations that they receive, the sustainable donors to the association are non-wealthy people who makes the majority and this confirms the experience of Indonesia with generosity, and that it has nothing to do with wealth or poverty.

The conviction became more and more solidified with the tragedy of the people of Gaza, and it proved to me that we are indeed a very stingy people, in general.

Despite all the nation's strong emotions towards the tragedy of the Palestinians, and all the support and solidarity they showed with the people of Gaza, and all the "boycott" they spoke about and did, and all the tears that I saw that were shed, even in the eyes of family and friends, and all the words of thanks and praise through phone calls and text messages, despite the initiatives and donations I made towards the people of Gaza, a very few good people expressed their willingness to contribute with me in sending medical supplies to the afflicted in the wounded Gaza Strip.

The truth is painful, and our denial of it will not change it, and I am speaking here in general. The generous people who donated millions to the Friendship Society cannot be forgotten for their generosity, and actions cannot be forgotten, but they remain a very small minority, in a vast sea of very wealthy people and few generous people!

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

#### 10 yrs for joining ISIS

#### 'Will burn you and kill you'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Deputy Public Prosecutor has ordered the registration of a case at a police station in Farwaniya Governorate against a citizen accused of threatening to burn his brother to death, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source from the security sector.

The source disclosed that a citizen, in his 30s, reported that

his brother burned the grille opposite his house. He quoted the citizen as saying: "After committing this act, my brother called and threatened to burn and kill me." However, the complainant did not give details on what had prompted the brother to make such threats.

**10 yrs for joining ISIS:** The Criminal Court has sentenced two Kuwaitis – one male and one female, and a Syrian woman to 10 years in prison and fined them KD1,000 each for joining and financing the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court also sentenced another citizen to seven years in

prison, refrained from imposing punishment on yet another citizen and decided to deport the Syrian upon completion of prison time.

Carrying 'Night Calm' is crime

# Man victim of ex-wife's wrath KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: Personnel from the Forensic Department have lifted fingerprints from the Maidan Hawally

Department have lifted fingerprints from the Maidan Hawally home of an unidentified Kuwaiti after he accused his ex-wife of breaking into his apartment during his absence and stealing valuables, 1,500 dinars and a Rolex watch, reports Al-Rai daily.

This is in addition to vandalizing his car and expensive paintings from his house.

In a separate incident, a citizen born in 1983 has filed a complaint with the Jahra police station accusing unidentified thieves of stealing material from his house under construction in Al-Mutla'a.

He said that the theft occurred around midnight when the guard was fast asleep.

**'Night Calm' is banned:** The Public Prosecution has warned travelers against carrying with them the drug "Night Calm", saying it is one of the trade names for the "Zopiclone", substance listed in Schedule 4 of the Anti-Psychotropic Substances Law No. 48 of 1987 based on the decision of the Minister of Health, reports Al-Anba daily.

The prosecution indicated bringing this drug into the coun-

try without a medical prescription certified by Kuwait is punishable by law.

The Prosecution stressed that it is not permissible to hand over prescriptions for the drug to others to dispense them or

bring them from abroad.



#### Al-Munaikh appointed as non-resident ambassador to Turkmenistan

## Kuwait envoy in Tehran submits credentials to Turkmenistan parliament speaker

# Trade exchange volume between Kuwait, Kazakhstan hits \$400 mn

Number of visitors from Kuwait exceeds 14,000: envoy

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9:** The Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to **Kuwait Azamat Berdibay** affirmed the strength and firmness of the diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Kazakhstan.

In a press conference under the title "Economic Path of a Fair Kazakhstan" organized by the embassy, Wednesday, to shed light

on the political, economic and social reform programs and the speech of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the Kazakh people, the ambassador



stressed that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries reached \$400 million during the current year.

He revealed that the number of visitors to Kazakhstan from Kuwait exceeded 14,000 visitors, including travelers from countries in the region and Kuwaiti tourists, from the time Jazeera Airways launched a direct flight from Kuwait to Kazakhstan.

The ambassador indicated that his country has made significant progress in

# PAHW opens 'citizen service offices' in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) on Thursday inaugu-rated citizen service offices in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City within the Government Mall complex in the presence of the Deputy Director General for Public Relations and Development Affairs Omar Al-Ruwaih.

Al-Ruwaih began his tour of the center along with the Director of the Citizen Service Department Munira Al-Abdul Jader and

the Head of the Communications confirmed that the PAHW is work-Department, Al-Anoud Al-Ghaith. Al-Abdul Jader gave a detailed presentation about the services provided in the offices of PAHW. She also reviewed the volume

of services and technologies used to ensure their availability to facilitate clients' procedures in compliance with the decision of the Council of Ministers to generalize the government mall experience in all governorates of the country to serve citizens.

Meanwhile, in a press statement issued on the sidelines of the opening event, Al-Abdul Jader

ing to increase the volume of electronic services for citizens and provide support and service centers for citizens in new housing cities in order to save them time and effort, as they are covered by specialized employees to complete transactions in a decent and easy manner.

She stated that PAHW is working on implementing its plan for further development, which includes operating several custom-er service centers in new housing cities to facilitate citizens' transactions, and on increasing the volume of electronic services.

achieving gender equality and empowering the rights of women and girls, as a 30 percent quota for women and girls has been introduced. This will allow them to participate more actively and as equals in the political life of the country. He said, "The presidential term

was limited to one term of seven years. The people of Kazakhstan supported this proposal, and so it will not change in the future."

Ambassador Berdibay said, "Despite the difficult international situation that negatively affected the global economy, Kazakhstan's economy showed growth in 2022. The gross domestic product reached USD 22 billion. A record volume of USD 28 billion in foreign direct investment was attracted in 2022. The volume of foreign trade reached USD 136 billion."

Regarding the future economic reforms, Ambassador Berdibay indicated that the Kazakh government has been assigned to expand the geological exploration area to two million and 200 thousand square kilometers by 2026. It will focus on the agricultural industrial complex due to its increasing importance in food security. It also aims to increase the share of products manufactured within its framework to 705 in the next three years. It will also establish the Defense Industrial Complex Development Fund to provide financial support to local companies.

In his speech, the ambassador revealed the discussions that Kazakhstan has been conducting to establish a nuclear power plant in the coming years with a total capacity of 14 gigawatts, in parallel with developing education and science in the country and training qualified personnel to advance scientific research to become a basis for innovation and long-term economic growth.

He highlighted the construction of 400 schools within the framework of the "Comfortable School Project" to raise the level of Kazakh national education.

TEHRAN, Dec 9, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador in Tehran Bader Al-Munaikh has presented his credentials as a nonresident ambassador in Turkmenistan to speaker of Turkmenistan's parliament Dunyagozel Gulmanova.

This came during a reception held in the capital of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Iran said in a press release received by KUNA on Friday.

During the reception, the Kuwaiti diplomat conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedow and his people.

He hailed the level of relations between both countries, hoping that these distinguished ties would be further developed to cover various fields and to share views on issues of mutual interest.

He underlined Kuwait's eagerness to push forward bilateral relations with Turkmenistan in a way that would fulfill the ambitions of both countries' governments and people.



Kuwait's envoy in Tehran submits credentials as non-resident ambassador to Turk-



The banner of 24th edition of the Carthage Theater Festival in Tunisia **Al-Bassam handles '20 Beirut Port explosion** 

## Kuwait's 'Silence' director joins 24th Carthage Theater Festival

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9, (KUNA): Kuwaiti theater director Sulayman Al-Bassam partook in the 24th edition of the Carthage Theater Festival in Tunisia with his play "Samt" or (Silence), which handles the 2020 Beirut Port explosion with a text that combined music styles and Arabic sounds and reflected the violent

Speaking to KUNA by phone, Al-Bassam said his play is taking part in the performances of the official competition of the theatrical event held between December 2 and 10, adding that he is nominated to win awards.

He elaborated that French-Syrian actress Hala Omran would perform in the play, written and directed by him, with live musical accompaniment of "the Dragon Duo" Ali Hout and Abd

He pointed out that "Silence" is part of search for Arabic-Arabic combinations to create a contemporary theatrical language, and reflects a metaphor for the personality of the thinker, the artist and the human being who uses utter silence as an absolute form of expression.

The Kuwaiti director chose the Beirut Port explosion, which hit the Lebanese capital on August 4, 2020, to be a background for his work to handle the catastrophic impacts of the incident, along with the outcomes of marginalizing humans, society and the environment.

He added that the text raises questions about the significance of the political theatrical project that commits to addressing all this considered destruction of tools and systematic dismantling of meanings and attack on the language as a tool to describe today's reality.

Al-Bassam went on to say that it also represents a new stage of research in intensification at the level of language and economics with theatrical tools that lead to the concentration of poetical dimension in theatrical performance components.

On the future stations of the play, he said since there were positive and honorable reactions, it would be performed during the forthcoming edition of the Arabic Theater Festival due in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad in January.

It could also be shown in the State of Kuwait in February, and then Beirut and Cairo, he pointed out.

The one-hour-long play, whose first workshop was organized in Switzerland in October 2022, is performed in Arabic with simultaneous translation into English.

Committee reserves Al-Mahri's proposal

## **Capital Municipal's panel approves** three out of 10 items on its agenda

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: During its

meeting recently, headed by Fahad Al-Abd Al-Jader, the Capital Governorate Committee of the Municipal Council approved three out of ten items on its

The first one is the proposal submitted by the Municipal Council member Abdul Latif Al-Daei regarding developing the main coastal road in Kuwait to make it attractive and suitable for pedestrians and

The second proposal was submitted by Municipal Council member Sharifa Al-Shalfan for developing a strategy to illuminate Kuwait City and Al-Khaleej Al-Arabi Street. The third was related to

cleaning part of Qibla Block 1.
The committee did not approve the letter submitted by some residents of Sharq for amending the status of their properties located in the eastern part of the Arabian Gulf Street.

It referred to the executive body of Kuwait Municipality the letter submitted by Mrs. Fawzia Al-Hasawi regarding establishing a group of halls for events on the investment land in Sharq, Block 8, Plot No. 190 of the cadastral Plan 28/080 on an area of 3,778 square

It also referred to the executive body of Kuwait Municipality the letter submitted by the Ministry of Interior regarding uprooting trees defacing Mansouriya which affect its security and safety, and exploiting the sidewalks to park vehicles intended for buying and selling.

The committee referred to the executive body of Kuwait Municipality the proposal submitted by the Chairman of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri to add a restaurant and café activity in Al-Rai, Shuwaikh (extension of the Fourth Ring Road). It reserved the proposal submitted by

the Chairman of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri regarding converting the site designated for a kindergarten in Abdullah Al-Salem, Block 2 into a public park to serve the people of the

The committee also reserved the letter of the Ministry of Education regarding the proposal that was submitted by the President of the Municipal Council for the establishment of a public park for sports and recreational activities to serve

the people of Daiya. The committee retained on its agenda the letter submitted by the Capital Governor Ali Al-Asfar regarding some recommendations and observations about the problems facing the governorate and its



#### Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday) Queen Cabana 2 Bedroom Chalet (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night. per night. NOW NOW BHD 57.173/-net BHD 128.000/-net Weekends (Thursday & Friday) Queen Cabana 2 Bedroom Chalet (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night. per night. NOW NOW BHD 61.000/-net BHD 136.198/-net

Promo period from 1st - 13th December 2023

Terms & conditions apply\*

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 Email: reservation@albander.com

www.albander.com | ¶ @ @albanderhotelandresort

#### Call to follow official accounts on social media platforms

## Kuwait University enrolls 2,780 high school students for second semester of 2023/2024

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training announced today, 2,780 students of both sexes holding a high school diploma have been enrolled for the second semester 2023/2024, reports Al-Rai daily.

The PAAET Director-General, Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam, said the results of admission to the authority's colleges, institutes and special training courses have been approved in line with the rules and regulations laid down by the authority.

For his part, the Dean of Admission and Registration at the authority, Dr. Fawzi Al-Dokhi, explained that all those who met the admission requirements for all categories were

accepted in accordance with the approved regulations.

He pointed out that those accepted were distributed according to the approved budget



Dr Al-Fajjam

institutes, and training courses. He stated that admission to some specializations in colleges and institutes is conditional on passing the tests and personal interviews that have been held, pointing out the importance of all those accepted entering the authority's website or through the government (Sahl) application platform to find out all the necessary dates related to their admission and registering their study

He called on those accepted to follow the official accounts on social media platforms to know all the important instructions and dates firsthand, extending his congratulations to all the accepted students and their parents, asking God Almighty that this year will be a successful and prosperous year for all.

#### **Kuwait mulls**

**Continued from Page 1** Prime Minister and Minister of Inte-

rior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled. In another development, the source revealed that the unified Gulf visa mechanism of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries stipulates a fine of KD100 per day for any visitor who does not leave the country upon the expiry of the visa; in addition to the provisions on health insurance and hotel reservation for the duration

#### **Al-Kandari keeps**

#### **Continued from Page 1**

MP Jenan Bu Shehri emphasized the need for the fact-finding committee tasked to investigate the issue to remain neutral in order to uncover the truth. She urged Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahd to suspend whoever is implicated in the issue until the end of investigations, while asking the Public Prosecution to handle the case with full transparency.

MP Abdullah Fehad asserted that the dignity of citizens is protected by the Constitution, laws and religion; stressing no one is allowed to humiliate or victimize citizens regardless of the circumstances. He added he visited the father of the citizen in his house where he heard the story of the son, affirming he is closely monitoring the developments of the case.

MP Dawoud Maarefi disclosed that he heard a horrible story from the father of the citizen, identified as Turki Al-Anzi; wondering how many other citizens have been subjected to the illegal acts of the Military Intelligence Unit. He confirmed his commitment to follow up the issue in order to find the truth, away from the fact-finding committees that usually distort facts.

MPs Abdulkareem Al-Kandari, Muhannad Al-Sayer, Abdulaziz Al-Saqaabi, Abdullah Al-Mudhaf and Hassan Jawhar submitted a proposal for the Human Rights Affairs Committee to investigate the issue and submit its report to the Assembly within a few weeks.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Defense affirmed the formation of a fact-finding committee whose members are from the Military Judiciary. It clarified that the citizen was not detained, as he was just summoned for interrogations on Dec 4-5, 2023.

#### COP28 talks

#### **Continued from Page 1**

Former Ireland President Mary Robinson said, "They're scared. I

think they're worried. Robinson, co-chair of the retired leaders group The Elders, is now a prominent climate campaigner. She said that OPEC is concerned "gives me hope." Last month she clashed publicly with the president of the COP28 negotiations, Sultan al-Jaber, who is also CEO of the Emirates' national oil company.

Germany's climate envoy, Jennifer Morgan, suggested any call for blocking a deal would be felt most by small countries vulnerable of sea level rise caused by global warming.

"Right now, countries here are fighting for their lives. The small islands, and most countries here, are engaging very actively on this dis-cussion in a real way," she said in an interview. "And I think it is obviously not responsible to have a position that could mean - would mean - the life and death of many million people."

COP28 Director General Majid al-Suwaidi downplayed the OPEC letter, saying the UAE team running the climate conference has been meeting with negotiators to get an ambitious deal. The oil cartel has no formal link to the climate negotiations.

"I feel confident that we're going to get a good result you're going to be surprised about," Suwaidi told The Associated Press

OPEC didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment. Protestors Saturday in a flash mob briefly blocked the OPEC exhibit at climate talks, calling for an immediate phase-out of fossil fuels.

The conference presidency has been crowing about deal after deal, many of them involving hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars of pledges, but they've more nibbled the edges of the key issue of cutting emissions. When it comes to reducing the gases that cause climate change, a key group of scientists who analyze pledges, actions and potential temperature increases said in a report on Saturday that all the

action hadn't amounted to much. "The COP28 Presidency has made a very big deal about a whole lot of voluntary initiatives, while adopting an ambiguous and weak position on the central issue of a fossil fuel phaseout," Climate Analytics CEO Bill Hare, co-author of the report, said.

Saturday's firestorm of controversy came as protests at the conference center in Dubai ramped up, with a "Global Day of Action" urging nations to move decisively to stop climate change and officials from various countries talked increasingly urgently at the official meetings. The OPEC letter has added fuel to their

fury.
"With current policies, the planet is on track to a 2.9 (degree Celsius, 5.2 degree Fahrenheit above preindustrial temperature) future. We cannot adapt to temperature rise that high; the loss and damage will be incalculable. It will be our death sentence," Marshall Islands natural

resources minister John Silk said. "We will not go silently to our graves," he said.

A speedy phase-out of fossil fuels has shaped up as the central issue at the talks as they head into their final days. Activists and experts have warned that the world must quickly reduce use of the oil, gas and coal

that is causing dangerous warming.

Mohamed Adow, director of Power Shift Africa, called the Dec. 6 letter from OPEC Secretary-General Haitham Al Ghais "shameful" and said "the writing is on the wall for dirty energy."

Negotiators are fleshing out language in a key document called the Global Stocktake. It will say how much progress the world had made since the 2015 Paris agreement where nations agreed to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since preindustrial times - and what it has to do next.

New proposed language on how to curb warming released Friday afternoon strengthened the options for a phase-out of fossil fuels that negotiators could choose from. Four of the five options call for some version of a rapid phase-out.

'The bare bones of a historic agreement is there," Adow said. "What we now need is for countries to rally behind the stronger of the options and strengthen them further.

#### **US** vetoes

#### **Continued from Page 1**

Hamas said Saturday it had continued its rocket fire into Israel

Residents reported airstrikes and shelling in Gaza's north and south, including the city of Rafah, which lies near the Egyptian border and where the Israeli army had ordered civilians to move to.

Two hospitals in central and southern Gaza received the bodies of a total of 133 people from Israeli bombings over the past 24 hours, the Health Ministry said.

Israel has been trying to secure the military's hold on northern Gaza, where furious fighting has underscored heavy resistance from Hamas. Tens of thousands of residents are believed to remain despite evacuation orders, six weeks after troops and tanks rolled in during the war sparked by Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 raid targeting civilians in Israel.

About 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed in the Hamas raid, and more than 240 taken hostage. A temporary truce saw hostages and Palestinian prisoners released, but more than 130 hostages are believed to remain in Gaza.

On Saturday, a kibbutz that had come under attack on Oct. 7 announced that 25-year-old hostage Sahar Baruch had died in captivity. His captors said Baruch was killed during a failed rescue mission by Israeli forces early Friday. The Israeli military has only confirmed that two soldiers were seriously wounded in an attempted hostage rescue and that no hostages were freed.

More than 2,200 Palestinians have been killed since the Dec. 1 collapse of the truce, about two-thirds of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

With only a trickle of humanitarian aid getting into just a few parts of the Gaza Strip, residents were report-

ing severe food shortages.
"I am very hungry," said Mustafa al-Najjar, sheltering in a U.N.-run school in the devastated Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza. "We are living on canned food and biscuits and this is not sufficient.

While the adults can cope with the hunger, "it's extremely difficult and painful when you see your young son or daughter crying because there are hungry and you are not able to do anything," he said. Despite growing international pressure, the Biden administration remains opposed to an open-ended cease-fire, arguing it would enable Hamas to continue posing a threat to Israel. Officials have expressed misgivings in recent days about the rising civilian death toll and dire humanitarian crisis, but have not pushed publicly for Israel to wind

down the war, now in its third month. "We have not given a firm deadline to Israel, not really our role,' deputy national security adviser Jon Finer told a security forum a day before the U.S. veto in the U.N. Security Council. "That said, we do have influence, even if we don't have ultimate control over what happens on the ground in Gaza."

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant argued that "a cease-fire is handing a prize to Hamas, dismissing the hostages held in Gaza, and signalling terror groups everywhere.'

A delegation of foreign ministers from mainly Arab nations and Turkey was in Washington to push the U.S. to drop its objections to an immediate cease-fire. Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Friday ahead of a meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken that Israel's bombardment and siege of Gaza is a war crime that is destabilizing the region.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the U.S. veto showed Washington's isolation.

"The American political system is now helpless on issues related to Israel. Therefore, Israel acts recklessly on this issue and continues its oppression.," Fidan told Turkey's state-run news agency Anadolu and broadcaster TRT.

Fidan and the Palestinian, Saudi, Indonesian, Egyptian, Jordanian, Qatari and Nigerian ministers met with Blinken to press for an end to the fighting, while the group is to meet Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Minister Melanie Joly on Saturday.

As fighting resumed after a brief truce more than a week ago, the U.S. urged Israel to do more to protect civilians and allow more aid to besieged Gaza. The appeals came as Israel expanded its blistering air and ground campaign into southern Gaza, especially Khan Younis, sending tens of thousands more fleeing.

"It was a night of heavy gunfire and shelling as every night," Taha Abdel-Rahman, a Khan Younis resident, said by phone early Saturday.

Airstrikes were reported overnight in the Nuseirat refugee camp, where resident Omar Abu Moghazi said a family home was hit, causing casu-

Israel has designated a narrow patch of barren coastline in the south, Muwasi, as a safe zone. But Palestinians who have headed there portrayed a grim picture of desperately overcrowded conditions with scant shelter and poor hygiene facilities.

"We didn't see anything good here at all. We are living here in a tough cold. There are no bathrooms. We are sleeping on the sand," said Soad Qarmoot, who was forced to leave her home in the northern town of Beit Lahiya.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Saturday expressed the State of Kuwait's robust condemnation of applying the veto right at the UN Security Council against a draft resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The veto was tabled in response to the draft resolution, proposed by the United Arab Emirates, that was widely acclaimed by envoys of the UNSC member States.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber expressed deep concern at the UNSG's failure to respond to the decision by the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, to refer to Provision 99 of the UN Charter to draw the international community's attention to the situation in Gaza that constituted a threat to the global humanitarian order and signaled prospected collapse of the international security and peace.

"The ceasefire and protecting the civilians in Gaza Strip are a pending humanitarian demand that must be heeded as soon as possible," Sheikh Salem stated, also expressing concern that the failure to pass the resolutions would lead to granting a "new permit to the occupation forces to continue the operations of killing, annihilation and displacing the brotherly Palestinian people."

He reiterated the State of Kuwait's unwavering stand that calls for pursuing all possible political and diplomatic efforts to meet the humanitarian needs for the unarmed Palestinian civilians who have been facing the flagrant Israeli aggression, according to the responsibilities accorded to the UNSC with respect of safeguarding the globe's security and peace.

# Palestinian cause among the top issues concerning Kuwait

#### 'Century of support'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9, (KUNA): The Palestinian cause has been among the top issues concerning the State of Kuwait for a century and its stances toward the question have often drawn nations and stakeholders' attention.

The State of Kuwait's concern for the cause has been manifested, anew, due to the current events in Gaza Strip, with statements of support made by the sagacious political leadership, Kuwaitis of various levels and occupation and

Kuwaiti-Palestinian relations have continuously evolved since the 1948 "Al-Nakba," as it has repeatedly expressed full support for rights of the Palestinian people and has condemned the Israeli occupation practices.

The following events portray Kuwait's particular concern for the Palestinian cause:

1921: The first Palestinian delegation visits Kuwait to raise donations for renovating Al-Aqsa Mosque. 1932: Kuwait hosts Palestine Mufti Hajj Amin Al-

Husseini who has come to the country as part of an Arab tour to raise funds for refurbishing Al-Aqsa Mosque. **1933:** A number of Kuwaiti youth address a message

to the British government political resident in Kuwait protesting maltreatment of Palestinians in the territories under British mandate. 1936: A group of young Kuwaiti citizens form the

first committee for solidarity with the Palestinian people, called "the October Commission." It collected 7,500 rupees, the currency used at that time, and held a rally that drew 150 Kuwaiti nationals. 1937: Junior Kuwaitis formed a committee named "the

youth of Kuwait" that appealed the Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to take a stand against the British scheme to partition Palestine.

1938: A Palestinian delegation visits Kuwait to raise donations and rally support for the Palestinian cause.

**1947:** Kuwaiti merchants collect 500,000 rupees to aid Palestinian refugees.

1948: Kuwait hosts thousands of Palestinian refugees following "Al-Nakba" amid official and public solidarity with them. —1948: A number of Kuwaiti citizens participate in the 1948 war, designed to liberate Palestine.

1948: Collecting donations at Al-Mubarkiyah School for aiding Palestinian refugees.

1954: Kuwait participates in the economic boycott of Israel in line with Arab League resolutions. 1957: An Amiri Decree is issued emphasizing neces-

sity of boycotting Israel. 1958: Kuwait hosts the conference for offices of boycotting "the Zionist entity in the Arab world."

1963: Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah affirms, during the first official Kuwaiti attendance of a United Nations session, the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, emphasizing that the "de facto policy cannot be a stable basis for peace."

**1964:** Kuwait becomes the first Arab state to allow the Palestinians hold elections for membership in the first Palestinian National Assembly.

**1964:** Kuwait contributes two million sterling pounds to forming the Palestine Liberation Army, in line with a resolution taken at the second Arab summit.

1964: Kuwait allows the establishing of an office of the Palestine Liberation Organization and supports the PLO with two million sterling pounds, heeding a resolution of the second Arab summit.

1967: Kuwait declares it will offer all forms of assistance for the Palestinian people amid the "tripartite aggression" that happened on June 5. 1967 (July 25): Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah calls in a statement in front of the UN General Assembly for Israel's immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal from Arab territories namely Jerusalem for sake of preserving the UN charter, global peace and security. **1970:** Kuwait declares donations to cover fees for 300

Palestinian students studying outside their home country. 1971: Kuwait asks the Arab League to work out a plan for facing "Zionist activities" in Africa.

1974: Kuwait donates KD 211,000 for the Palestinian Red Crescent. 1977: Kuwait donates KD 300,000 for the UNRWA.

1979: Kuwait donates KD 138,000 for Al-Najah University in Nablus.

1980: Kuwait donates KD 50,000 for the Arab Institute in Jerusalem.

1983: Kuwait donates KD KD 100,000 for the Arab Institute.

1984: Kuwait donates KD 152,000 for the UNRWA. 1986: The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah affirms in a message to the UN Secretary General solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle

to attain their legitimate rights. 1987: The Kuwaiti Government decides to offer all forms of support for the Palestinian "intifada" and allowing Palestinians living in the country to raise donations.

1987: Kuwait witnesses official and popular support for the first Palestinian uprising. Authorities have decided to deduct a proportion of payments for civil servants to support the Palestinians and form the "Arab committee for supporting families of the martyrs and the injured."

1988: Kuwait recognizes the independent State of Pal-

1993: Kuwait contributes with USD 25 million for reconstruction in the Palestinian territories.

1995: Kuwait donates USD one million to fund a Canadian plan to house Palestinian families at Tal Al-Sultan camp in Gaza. 1996 (March 13): Kuwait affirms support for devel-

oping self-rule Palestinian regions and allocates USD 25 million for this purpose. 1998: Kuwait pledges USD 80 million worth of aid for

the Palestinians during a donors' conference held in the 1999 (March 1): Kuwait grants USD 25 million to the

Palestinian Authority 1999 (September 30): Kuwait grants USD 1.5 million to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refu-

gees in the Near East (UNRWA). 2000 (October 3): The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah orders urgent dispatch of aid to the Palestinian people to back up their uprising for Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque.

2000 (October 4): Kuwait dispatches food, medicines and medical supplies to the occupied territories to help in easing off the Palestinian people's hardships during confrontations with the occupation over A-Aqsa.

2000 (October 8): Kuwait calls on the international community to stop massacres perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinians. 2000 (October 23): Kuwait receives a number of Pal-

estinians injured in violent confrontations with the Israeli occupation forces during the uprising, or Intifadha. 2000 (October 28): Kuwait donates USD 150 million for Al-Aqsa Fund and the Palestinian uprising in implementation of resolutions of the extraordinary Arab sum-

2000 (December 10): Kuwait calls upon the UN Security Council to take necessary measures to end the tragic situation experienced by the Palestinian people and halt massacres and inhumane acts by the Israeli forces against 2000 (December 14): A huge convoy of Kuwaiti aid

mit held in Cairo during the same month.

supplies arrives in Amman destined for the Palestinian people while they are engaged in the uprising against the Israeli occupation. 2001 (February 15): A Kuwait Air Force aircraft car-

rying medicines, relief and medical supplies for the Palestinians arrives in Amman. It is the first such airborne mission since flare-up of the Palestinian "intifadah" on September 28, 2000. 2002 (March 18): Kuwait Red Crescent Society donates 12,000 food parcels for inhabitants of the old town

in Al-Khalil, some besieged and poor families elsewhere in the occupied territories. **2001** (December 4): The Kuwaiti government sends

147 tons of food supplies to the Palestinian people. 2002 (March 18): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) donates 12 food parcels to residents of the old sector in Al-Khalil province, besieged Palestinian regions and impoverished families in the Palestinian territories.

2002 (April 9): Kuwait grants USD 7.5 million to the Palestinian National Authority as the first tranche of financial support declared at the Arab summit, held in Beirut in March 2002, totaling USD 55 million per month.

To be continued

## Scientists create blood test that predicts how quickly body's internal organs age

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: A group of scientists have created a blood test that can predict how quickly the body's internal organs are aging, and identify which

organs may fail soon, reports Al-Qabas daily. According to British BBC News, scientists at Stanford University in the United States have confirmed that this test looks for the levels of thousands of proteins in the body, and that it is capable of monitoring 11 major organs, including the heart, brain and lungs. Scientists have tested it on thousands of adults, most of whom are middle-aged.

The results indicated that one in five adults over the age of 50, who are in good health, may have at least one rapidly aging organ. Researchers also found that rapid aging of one or more organs may increase the risk of certain diseases and death over the next

Dr Tony Weiss-Coray, one of the scientists devel-

oping this test, said: "We found that 18.4 percent of people aged 50 or older are exposed to rapid aging of at least one of their organs. We found that these individuals are at increased risk of developing disease in this particular organ for the next 15 years. Scientists pointed out that this test may help doc-

tors intervene in a timely manner and take the neces-

sary measures to combat this rapid aging of organs. They also emphasized that monitoring organs witnessing rapid deterioration can help detect health problems, which may be looming on the horizon. For example, premature aging of the heart may increase the risk of heart failure, while a brain that ages rapidly may be more susceptible to infection along with

The scientists submitted the necessary papers to obtain a patent for the test, in case it can be used and sold in the future.

#### **News in Brief**

Medical tests for domestics: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has coordinated with the Ministry of Health regarding the medical examination of the holders of licenses for offices and companies recruiting domestic workers as a condition for renewal of their licenses, reports Al-Anba daily.

PAM has adopted a medical examination model for owners of domestic labor recruitment offices and companies, which was circulated to all health centers to approve the medical examination as per the regulations. The authority took this step to ensure that the owners of the aforementioned offices and companies are fit to work.

Cost of adding housewives: The cost of adding housewives to the beneficiaries of the health insurance for retirees (Afiya) totaled KD33.76 million, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources. Sources revealed that the Ministry of Health asked

the concerned authorities to make a change order in the

health insurance contract for retirees (Afiya), adding

KD33.76 million for a period of eight and a half months. Sources confirmed the regulatory authorities have approved the change order to add the aforementioned amount to the 'Afiya' contract covering the period from Jan 1 until September 15, 2024.

«Mujezat Al-Shifa»: ProScientists extracted 5 types of antibacterial compounds from bee production

The nutrition consultant at Mujezat Al-Shifa Company said: Scientists have discovered that the antimicrobial



compounds that bees secrete in honey are produced by the bees inside the lymphatic fluid that flows in their veins as a result of stimulating their immune system. Therefore, they are formed as an immediate immune reaction when the bee is exposed to microbes.

She cited the research carried out by Professor Castells at the Genetic Research Institute of the Bayer Scientific Company in Belgium in 1990, where the immune system of bees was stimulated by the live E. coli microbe. Scientists were then able to extract 5 types of antimicrobial compounds produced by each bee. Three of these compounds are derivatives of epidecin and Two types have a longer chain of amino acids (the most important of which is proline).

### **World News Roundup**

#### **Europe**

#### Victory all but assured

### Russian opposition 'defies' Putin's grip

TALLINN, Estonia, Dec 9, (AP): Behind bars in penal colonies or in self-exile abroad, Russian opposition figures vow they will still put up a fight against President Vladimir Putin as he seeks yet another term in office in an election in March.

Although they believe Putin will be declared the winner no matter how voters cast their ballots, they say they hope to undermine the widespread public support he enjoys, turn popular opinion against the devastating war he unleashed on Ukraine, and show those who oppose it already that they are not alone.

"No one but us will step into this battle for the hearts and the minds of our fellow citizens. So we need to do it and win," imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei



Putin

Navalny said in an online statement relayed from be-Putin, 71, announced

Friday that he will run for president again, to pile another six years onto his two dozen in power. He could even run again in

The vote is scheduled for March 15-17, with his victory all but assured. The

vast majority of opposition figures are either imprisoned or have fled the country, almost all independent news outlets have been blocked, and any criticism has been muted by a slew of repressive laws adopted over the last decade.

Scholz confident of resolving crisis: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Saturday he is confident that his troubled government will find a good solution to a budget crisis triggered by a court ruling last month, and promised his center-left party there will be no dismantling of the country's wel-

Leaders of Scholz's three-party coalition have been wrangling over money since Germany's highest court annulled a decision to repurpose 60 billion euros (\$65 billion) originally meant to cushion the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic for measures to help combat climate change and

modernize the country.

The immediate challenge is to plug a 17 billion-euro hole in next year's budget. Scholz, Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck and Finance Minister Christian Lindner have met repeatedly to seek to resolve the impasse, but have run out of time to get the budget through parliament before the new year starts.

2 journalists are detained: Two journalists were detained in Belarus on Friday, a Belarusian journalist association reported, the latest step in a

crackdown against dissent in recent years.

Chief editor of the Ranak television channel, Yulia Dauletava, and correspondent Lyudmila Andenka were detained in the city of Svetlahorsk in southeastern Belarus and accused of contributing to extremist activities, the Belarusian Association of Journalists reported. Both have covered protests in Belarus and local authorities. They each face up to seven years in prison if convicted

A wave of protests rocked Belarus in 2020, following a disputed presidential election in August that year, in which Alexander Lukashenko was declared the winner, securing a sixth consecutive term in office.

**Human rights envoy voices hope:** Ukraine's human rights ombudsman Friday that a coalition of countries formed to facilitate the return of Ukrainian children illegally deported by Russia will be able to come up with a faster mechanism to repatriate them. Over 19,000 children are still believed to be in Russia or in occupied regions

Dmytro Lubinets spoke to reporters following the first meeting of the National Coalition of Countries for the Return of Ukrainian Children, which was formed based on a recommendation by Canada, in Kyiv.

He said Russia continues to deport Ukrainian children to the territories it controls, citing information his office has received.

Bulgaria OK's additional military aid: Bulgaria's parliament on Friday approved the provision of additional military aid to Ukraine in its war with Russia.

A majority of 147 lawmakers in the 240-seat chamber voted in favor of supplying Ukraine with portable anti-aircraft missile systems and surfaceto-air missiles of various types intended to bolster Ukraine's air defense capabilities, the state-run BTA news agency reported.

Military experts said the missiles, which are either defective or redundant, cannot be repaired in Bulgaria, but Ukraine has the needed facilities to fix them or use them for spare parts.

**Hospital fire kills at least 3:** A fire broke out in a hospital on Rome's outskirts, killing at least three people and forcing the overnight evacuation of the smoke-filled facility and its patients, officials said Saturday.

Patients in intensive care at St. John the Evangelist hospital in Tivoli were transferred immediately to other hospitals via ambulance, the Tivoli mayor's office said in a statement. Less-critical patients were moved into a nearby municipal gymnasium and then transferred to other facilities.

The governor of the Lazio region, Francesco Rocca, said from the scene that three people were killed and an investigation would determine the cause of the blaze.

**Six French teens convicted:** A French juvenile court on Friday convicted six teenagers for their roles in the 2020 beheading of a teacher by an Islamic extremist, an attack that shocked the country and shone a light on the real-world dangers of online hate speech.

Samuel Paty, a history and geography teacher, was killed near his school after showing his class cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad during a debate on free expression. Attacker Abdoullakh Anzorov, a young Chechen who had become radicalized, was killed by police.



US President Joe Biden speaks at the Carpenters International Training Center with union workers Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Las Vegas. (AP)



Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley speaks during a town hall, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Sioux City, Iowa. (AP)



#### America

**Haley needs strong showing:** For Nikki Haley, a win in Iowa doesn't necessarily mean a win in the state's Republican presidential caucuses.

"The way I look at it, we just need to have a good showing in Iowa," the former South Carolina governor said Friday in response to a question during a town hall event in Sioux City. "I don't think that means we have to win necessarily, but I think that means we have to have a good showing.'

The comments stand in stark contrast to Florida Gov. Ron De-Santis, who declared decisively that "we're going to win Iowa" on NBC's "Meet the Press" last Sunday. DeSantis wouldn't say whether he would end his campaign if he didn't finish first or second.

DeSantis and Haley are likely battling for a second-place finish, since former President Donald Trump continues to sit comfortably atop the field in polls of Republicans in Iowa and nationwide.

The DeSantis campaign has largely focused on Iowa, hoping to deny Trump a big win in the caucuses. A super PAC supporting De-Santis has invested more than \$16 million in advertising and more on

building a campaign organization. But DeSantis has faced growing pressure from Haley, who is piquing the interest of donors and voters looking for an alternative to Trump. (AP)

**Houston to choose for mayor:** Two of Houston's most powerful and longest serving political titans are facing off in a mayoral runoff election Saturday to see who will lead the nation's fourth largest city, a young and diverse metro area facing challenges including crime, crumbling infrastructure and potential budget shortfalls.

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee and state Sen. John Whitmire, both Democrats, made it to Saturday's runoff after breezing past a crowded field of nearly 20 candidates in the Nov. 7 general election.

If elected, Jackson Lee, 73, would be Houston's first Black female mayor. Since 1995, she has represented Houston in Congress and before that served on Houston's City Council.

Whitmire, 74, is one of Texas' most powerful Democratic lawmakers in the state Legislature, where he has helped drive toughon-crime policies while also casting himself as a reformer during his 50 years in office.

His campaign focused on reduc-

#### **Politics**

#### 'High-speed rail on fast track'

# Biden dings Trump on infrastructure

LAS VEGAS, Dec 9, (AP): President Joe Biden went to Las Vegas on Friday to say he's "putting high-speed rail on the fast and he used the moment to blast Donald Trump - his predecessor and likely 2024 challenger - as a do-nothing politi-"Trump just talks the talk. We walk the

walk," Biden said at a hall for unionized carpenters. "He likes to say America is a failing nation. Frankly, he doesn't know what the hell he's talking about. I see shovels in the ground, cranes in the sky. People hard at work rebuilding America together.' The president showcased \$8.2 billion in new federal funding for 10 major pas-

senger rail projects across the country. He also emphasized the fundamental differences between Trump and himself, a sign that his policy speeches are taking an ever greater political bent with the election now roughly 11 months away. The Democrat said Trump "failed" to deliver on his promises to invest in U.S.

infrastructure. Biden countered that his rail funding could help to connect Las Vegas to Los Angeles via high-speed trains before L.A. hosts the summer Olympics in 2028, slashing travel times, helping the environment and creating jobs.

Biden hopes that investment through federal and state partnership programs will help to boost prospects for the long-discussed project, which supporters say could revitalize travel in the American West but critics argue is too costly.

The 218-mile (350.8-kilometer) train route linking Las Vegas and Rancho Cucamonga, California, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) east of downtown Los Angeles, may one day serve more than 11 million passengers annually.

Another electric rail line getting funding has been billed as the nation's first high-

ing crime, improving streets and

"It's going to be a tough job. It's

going to be challenging, but I'm

going to reach out and bring people

together and we're going to fix our infrastructure," Whitmire said earlier this week.

experience bringing federal fund-ing to Houston for flooding relief,

job training programs and educa-

tion while reaching out to voters.

AG drops reelection bid: Utah

Attorney General Sean Reyes, who

is facing scrutiny for his decade-

long friendship with the embattled

founder of an anti-child-trafficking

organization, announced Friday

that he will not seek reelection in

Jackson has touted her years of

reaching across the political aisle.

speed route and is eventually planned to traverse California's Central Valley and extend to San Francisco and on to Los Angeles, with trains reaching up to 220 mph

The funding highlighted by the president won't be nearly enough to cover the full costs of either project, but signals the Biden administration's commitment to spurring train travel in a nation that has long celebrated the spirit of fast cars and open highways.

#### **Upgrades**

Other train projects getting funding include upgrades to heavily traveled corridors in Virginia and North Carolina, with the eventual goal of linking Richmond and Raleigh by rail. Funding will also go to improvements to a rail bridge over the Potomac River to bolster passenger service in Washington and will cover train corridor upgrades in western Pennsylvania and Maine, while expanding capacity at Chicago's Union Station, one of the nation's

The announcement aside, Biden also used his visit to Las Vegas to address this week's shooting at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, that killed three people and wounded a fourth. Biden again called for Congress to act on an assault weapons

"I'm not going to rest until we do all we can to prevent more families and more communities from being torn apart by gun violence," Biden said.

The president is to end the day in Los Angeles at a fundraiser featuring entertainment industry luminaries.

Friday's trip was planned before the shooting and Biden's focus on train service is little surprise for a president who is a big passenger rail advocate. Biden has

The Republican had announced

in September that he would seek

a fourth term. Reyes is now back-

tracking on that decision and has

pledged to dedicate his final year

in office to investigating the sex

abuse claims against his longtime

Ballard, the now-ousted founder

of nonprofit Operation Under-

ground Railroad, has been accused

of sexual assault by multiple wom-

en and is the subject of a criminal

investigation. His organization

rose to prominence last summer

as a focal point of the film "Sound

of Freedom," which was widely

praised by conservative moviego-

ers and included a producer credit

In a video announcement, Reyes

said he sat down with each person

who had come forward with accu-

for the attorney general.

friend, Tim Ballard.

championed several major federal spending investments in passenger rail travel, including last month when he announced \$16 billion in federal investments for rail travel along the busy Northeast Corridor.

During his 36 years as a senator, Biden traveled back and forth from his home in Delaware to Washington daily and says he has logged more than 1 million miles on

Making high-speed rail a reality in California won't be easy, though, since its firstin-the-U.S. project has long been plagued by extended deadlines and cost overruns.

The plan has been funded by some prior federal grants, as well as a bond fund approved by voters in 2008, and revenue from the state's cap-and-trade climate program. But that adds up to a total far below the project's estimated costs, now at more than \$100 billion.

California Republicans have long been critical of the project, but even some state Democrats have become more vocal in their skepticism.

Construction and land acquisition is underway in the Central Valley. But Brian Kelly, the project's CEO, has long said a fresh infusion of federal cash is an important part of advancing the project. The Biden administration had previously signaled support for the project when it restored nearly \$1 billion in federal money that the Trump administration tried to re-

Asked about rising costs and growing delays on the high-speed line, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg acknowledged in a call with reporters, "They are facing a lot of the challenges that come with being the very first at anything.'

"For all of these projects, we would not be funding them if we did not believe they

can deliver," he said.

candidate's past two primary elections must be cast with the party the candidate is affiliated with or a county party chair must approve the candidacy. In court documents, Rust argued that this statute "should be struck down as being unconstitutionally vague and overly broad."

A phone message seeking comment from Rust was left Friday evening by The Associated Press. Rust voted as a Republican in

the 2016 primary but as a Democrat in 2012. He did not vote in the 2020 Re-

publican primary because of the pandemic and the lack of competitive Republican races in Jackson County, the lawsuit said. Rust said his Democratic votes were for people he personally knew. (AP) 

Michigan teen gets life: A judge sentenced a Michigan teenager to life in prison Friday for killing four students and terrorizing others at Oxford High School, after listening to hours of gripping anguish from parents and wounded survivors.

Judge Kwame Rowe rejected pleas from defense lawyers for a shorter sentence and ensured that Ethan Crumbley, 17, will not get an opportunity for parole. Moments before learning his fate, the teen apologized and appeared to agree with his victims that the stiffest punishment was appropriate.

"Any sentence that they ask for, I ask that you do impose it on me.' the shooter said. "I want them to be happy, and I want them to feel secure and safe. I do not want them to worry another day. I really am sorry for what I've done. ... But I can try my best in the future to help other people, and that is what I will

sations to tell them that he believed

Ethan Crumbley stands with his attorneys Paulette Loftin, left, and Amy Hopp, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Pontiac, Mich. Parents of students killed at Michigan's Oxford High School described the anguish of losing their children Friday as a judge considered whether Crumbley will serve a life sentence for a mass shooting in 2021. (AP)

Morales appeals ruling: The Indiana secretary of state is appealing a ruling that a law stipulating voting requirements for a candidate's party affiliation is unconstitutional in a decision that lifted the hopes of a U.S. Senate hopeful who

them and was heartbroken for the

that my past friendship with Tim

Ballard and past association with

OUR contributed to an environ-

ment that made them feel power-

less and without a voice for so

many years," he said. "I cannot

give them back those voiceless

years, but I intend on spending my

last year in office working together

ers who come forward so that their

Suzette Rasmussen, an attorney

representing the accusers, said her

clients have accepted Reyes' apol-

ogy and respect that he was "the

first and only person" to accept re-

sponsibility for his role in support-

with these survivors and any oth-

voices are heard."

ing Ballard. (AP)

"I apologized to each of them

trauma they had endured.

wants to run as a Republican. The Indiana attorney general's office filed the notice of appeal Friday with the Indiana Supreme Court on behalf of Secretary of State Diego Morales.

The filing came a day after a Marion County judge granted an injunction sought by John Rust, the former chair of the egg supplier Rose Acre Farms who is running to replace Sen. Mike Braun. Rust filed a lawsuit in September against Morales, the Indiana Election Commission and Jackson County Republican Party Chair Amanda Lowery to challenge the law and ensure the possibility of his place on the ballot.

The law in question says a

#### Lat/Am

#### 'Suspects cartel link'

#### Violent clash claims 11 lives in central Mexico showdown

MEXICO CITY, Mexico, Dec 9, (AP): Eleven people were killed in a clash Friday between gunmen from a criminal gang and residents of a small farming community in central Mexico, authorities said.

Dramatic video of the fight posted on social media showed villagers in cowboy hats with sickles and hunting rifles chasing down suspected gang members amid bursts of automatic gunfire.



Mayor Caballero

Police in the State of Mexico, which abuts Mexico City, said the clash occurred in the hamlet of Texcaltitlan, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) southwest of the capital.

State police said eight of the dead were members of the criminal gang, while three were village residents. Police did not identify the gang, but the violent Familia Michoacana drug cartel has been domi-

nant in that area for a decade. The video appeared to show the attackers wore military-style uniforms, some with helmets. Villagers apparently set their bodies and vehicles on grmen. Local media said Familia Michoacana gunmen had shown up in the village scaling dense.

shown up in the village earlier demanding local farmers pay a per-acre (hectare) extorsion fee. Authorities did not immediately comment on that.

The Familia Michoacana is known for its brazen ambushes of police as well as the the 2022 massacre of 20 townspeople in the town of Totolapan in neighboring Guerrero state. The attack killed the town's mayor **Cesar Arturo Caballero**, his father and 18 other men. 

Authorities act on FBI intel, detain 2 Iranians: Mexico's immigration agency said Friday its agents have detained two Iranians who they say were under observation by the FBI.

The National Immigration Institute did not say what the supposed FBI investigation was about.

The agency said a total of five Iranians were detained along with their Haitian driver, who was apparently acting as their guide on a highway between the Baja California border cities of Tijuana and Tecate on

It said their car was stopped at a toll booth because agents suspected they were going to try to cross into the United States.

The agency said two of the Iranians were "under observation by the Federal Bureau of Investigations.' The FBI did not immediately confirm the informa-

31 pharmacies shut in Ensenada: Mexican authorities said Friday they have raided and closed 31 pharmacies in Baja California's coastal city of Ensenada, after they were detected selling fake or fentanyl-laced pills.

Marines and health inspection authorities seized 4,681 boxes of medications that may have been offered for sale without proper safeguards, may have been faked and may contain fentanyl.

This measure was taken due to the irregular sales of medications contaminated with fentanyl, which represents a serious public health risk," the Navy said in a press statement.

Mexico's health authorities are conducting tests on the seized merchandise. Ensenada is located about 60 miles (100 kms) south of the border city of Tijuana.

The announcement represents one of the first times Mexican authorities have acknowledged what U.S. researchers pointed out almost a year ago: that Mexican pharmacies were offering controlled medications like Oxycodone, Xanax or Adderall, but the pills were often fentanyl-laced fakes.

OAS cites 'coup attempt': Prosecutors in Guatemala on Friday asked a court to strip President-elect Bernardo Arévalo of his immunity, saying there could be enough irregularities to annul the election results, a move that the OAS called part of "a coup attempt."

It was the third time they have done so since he won election in August, and the Organization of American States said the moves were part of "a coup attempt." Arévalo is scheduled to take office on Jan. 14, and

it was unclear whether the prosecutors' continued targeting of him and his party could interfere with the inauguration.

The most recent request from prosecutors cites alleged irregularities in the way Arévalo's Seed Movement party gathered signatures to register years earlier.

Authorities arrested a number of Seed Movement members in recent weeks. They also previously requested stripping Arévalo of immunity over alleged mishandling of party funds, and requested that he and his vice president-elect also lose their immunity for allegedly making supportive comments on social media about the takeover of a public university last year. 

5 officers killed in Guyana helicopter crash: Guyana's government said Thursday that five military officers aboard a helicopter that crashed near the border with Venezuela have died and two others survived.

The military helicopter had vanished Wednesday about 30 miles (48 kilometers) east of the Venezuelan border during bad weather while transporting officers carrying out a routine inspection of troops in the forested area. Searchers found the wreckage Thursday.

"My heart pains and drowns in sorrow at the tragic (loss) of some of our finest men in uniform," President Irfaan Ali said in a statement posted on social media, calling the loss "immeasurable.

Ali identified those who died as a retired brigadier general, a colonel and two lieutenant colonels. The two survivors include the co-pilot, and their conditions weren't immediately known.

Guyana requests UN meeting: The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency closed meeting Friday at the request of Guyana following Venezuela's weekend referendum claiming the vast oil- and mineral-rich Essequibo region that makes up a large part of its neighbor.

In a letter to the council president, Guyana's foreign minister, Hugh Hilton Todd, accused Venezuela of violating the U.N. Charter by attempting to take its territory.

The letter recounted the arbitration between then-British Guiana and Venezuela in 1899 and the formal demarcation of their border in a 1905 agreement. For over 60 years, he said, Venezuela accepted the boundary, but in 1962 it challenged the 1899 arbitration that

set the border. The diplomatic fight over the Essequibo region has flared since then, but it intensified in 2015 after ExxonMobil announced it had found vast amounts of oil off its coast.



In this image taken from video provided by the Philippine Coast Guard, a Chinese Coast Guard ship (right), uses a water cannon on a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) vessel as it approaches Scarborough Shoal in the disputed South China Sea on Dec 9, 2023. The Philippines and its treaty ally, the United States, separately condemned a high-seas assault Saturday by the Chinese coast guard and suspected militia ships that repeatedly blasted water cannons to block three Philippine fisheries vessels from a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. (AP)

#### **US & Philippines condemn China's water cannon attacks on Manila's ships**

The Philippines and its treaty ally, the United States, separately condemned a high-seas assault Saturday by the Chinese coast guard together with suspected militia ships that repeatedly blasted water cannons to block three Philippine fisheries vessels from a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

The noontime assault by China's ships off the Scarborough Shoal, one of the most aggressive this year, caused "significant damage" to the communication and navigation equipment of one of the three Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ships of

the Philippines, Filipino officials said.

They said without elaborating that suspected militia vessels accompanying Chinese coast guard ships used a long-range acoustic device that could impair hearing causing "severe tempo-rary discomfort and incapacitation to some Fili-

It's the latest flare out of the long-seething territorial disputes in the South China Sea, a flashpoint in Asia that has put the U.S. and China on a collision course. China claims virtually the entire strategic

waterway, but the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have also pressed their separate

Territorial standoffs between China and the Philippines over a number of disputed offshore areas, including the Scarborough and the Second Thomas shoals, have been particularly heated this year. The U.S. has warned that it's obligated to defend the Philippines, its longtime treaty ally, if Filipino forces, aircraft and ships come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea. (AP)



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, left, watches as Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno prepares to answer questions during a meeting of the Lower House Budget Committee in Tokyo Dec. 8, 2023. Kishida and several key Cabinet ministers were grilled by opposition lawmakers in parliament on Friday over a widening fundraising scandal and his alleged link to the Unification Church which threatens to further damage his government's sagging popularity. (AP)



Ramkalawan

#### Africa

Disaster strikes Seychelles: The Indian Ocean island nation of Seychelles declared a state of emergency Thursday after flooding killed three people and a huge blast at an explosives depot near the capital injured scores of others.

The explosion caused mostly minor injuries to 178 people, the health ministry said. It took place around 2 a.m. Thursday and came after hours of heavy rain and flooding starting Wednesday evening, mostly in the north of the main island of Mahe, though authorities did not link the blast to the weather.

Waters from the rains flooded houses washed away parts of roads and caused landslides in some areas. Two of the people who died in the flooding were trapped in their home, authorities said.

trial area of Providence, around 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) southeast of the capital, Victoria, the country's president said.

The blast destroyed buildings, flattened

The explosion took place in the indus-

trees and left a large crater. National TV showed people at hospitals and clinics bloodied with injuries after the blast. No deaths were reported from the explosion.

President Wavel Ramkalawan cited both the flooding and the explosion when announcing the state of emergency. His statement ordered schools to close and people to stay at home in the nation of just over 100,000 people to give emergency services and other essential workers the space to do their jobs. (AP) 

Congo rebels seize key outpost: Armed rebels seized a town in eastern

Congo on Thursday after violently clashing with the army, which has taken on an expanded role as peacekeeping forces withdraw from the mineral-rich, conflictstricken region.

Military officials and residents of Mushaki told The Associated Press that M23 militants had penetrated the town and occupied key military outposts, leading many to flee. 'The fighting is still going on," Sabi-

mana Alexis, a resident, told AP. "The inhabitants are moving en masse.'

M23 is a large and powerful rebel group that operates near Congo's border with Rwanda, a mineral-rich region where armed groups have long waged

#### Asia

## **Taiwan detects Chinese surveillance balloon**

# Tri-Nation urges global action on N.Korea's N-program

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 9, (AP): The national security advisers of the United States, South Korea and Japan on Saturday called for a stronger international push to suppress North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and missiles, its cybertheft activities and alleged arms transfers to Russia.

The meeting in Seoul came as tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest in years, with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un accelerating the expansion of his nuclear and missile program and flaunting an escalatory nuclear doctrine that authorizes the preemptive use of nuclear weapons.

lies have responded by increasing the visibility of their trilateral partnership in the region and strengthening their combined military exercises, which Kim condemns as invasion rehearsals.

Washington, Seoul and Tokyo have also expressed concerns about a potential arms alignment between North Korea and Russia. They worry Kim is providing badly needed munitions to help Russian President Vladimir Putin wage war in Ukraine in exchange for Russian technology assistance to upgrade his nuclear-armed military.

#### Security

Speaking after the meeting, U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Washington is working with Seoul and Tokyo to strengthen defense cooperation and improve its response to North Korean missile testing and space-launch activities, including a real-time information sharing arrangement on North Korean missile launches that the countries plan to start at an unspecified date in December.

He also said the countries have agreed to new initiatives to more effectively respond to North Korean efforts to bypass U.S.-led international sanctions that aim to choke off funds for its nuclear weapons and missile program.

"This will be a new effort with respect to cryptocurrency and money laundering and how we disrupt North Korea's capacity to gain revenue from the hacking and stealing of cryptocurrency and then laundering it through exchanges," he said.

Sullivan declined to share detailed U.S. assessments on the types and volume of North Korean arms being shipped to Russia and didn't comment on the specifics of his discussions with South Korean and Japanese officials over the issue, but insisted that "there's no daylight among us in terms of the types of And those continue and they represent a grave concern for us.

South Korean intelligence and military officials have said North Korea may have shipped more than a million artillery shells to Russia beginning in August, weeks before Kim traveled to Russia's Far East for a rare summit with Putin that sparked international concerns about a potential arms deal. Both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied U.S. and South Korean claims.

In a joint news conference after Saturday's trilateral meeting, Cho Taeyong, South Korea's national security office director, said the three security advisers reaffirmed North Korea's obligations under multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions that call for its denuclearization and ban any weapons trade with other countries, and agreed to strengthen coordination to ensure that is implemented.

Takeo Akiba, Japan's national security secretariat secretary general, said the "unprecedented frequency and patterns" of North Korean ballistic missile launches necessitate a deeper and more effective partnership between Washington, Seoul and Tokyo.

South Korea, the U.S., Japan and Australia have also announced their own

sanctions on North Korea over its spy satellite launch last month. North Korea argues it the right to launch spy satellites to monitor U.S. and South Korean military activities and enhance the threat of its nuclear-capable missiles.

During his conversation with reporters. Sullivan said the allies are preparing for the possibility that North Korea will up the ante of its weapons demonstrations and threats in 2024, possibly including the country's seventh nuclear test.

Direct military action is also a concern after the North recently announced it was abandoning a 2018 nter-Korean military agreement on re ducing border tensions after the South partially suspended the agreement, which had established border buffers and no-fly zones.

#### Also:

TAIPEI, Taiwan: Taiwan's Defense Ministry says it spotted a Chinese surveillance balloon in the Taiwan Strait along with a large-scale movement of military aircraft and ships.

The ministry said the balloon passed southwest of the northern port city of Keelung on Thursday night, then continued east before disappearing, possibly into the Pacific Ocean.

There seemed to be some uncertainty about whether the balloon was operated by the People's Liberation Army, the military branch of China's ruling Communist Party. The ministry referred to it both as a "PLA surveillance balloon" and as "PRC's balloon," using the acronym for the People's Republic of China, China's official name.

A Defense Ministry spokesperson said they had no additional information. The incident came just over a month

before Taiwan is to hold elections for president and the legislature and raises questions about possible Chinese efforts to influence the vote.

campaigns of violence and been accused of mass killings. The group allegedly has support from neighboring Rwanda, though the country denies ties

Mushaki is a pivotal transport hub that paves the way to larger cities in east Congo's Kivu region. It has traded hands between rebels and the army throughout the



In this image made from video, buildings damaged after a massive explosion at an industrial area on the main island in Mahe, Seychelles, Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023. The president of Seychelles declared a state of emergency on Thursday after a huge blast at an explosives depot and flooding in other parts of the country's main island. (AP)

conflict and as recently as February. (AP) 

S.Leone ex-president faces inquiry: A former president of Sierra Leone has been called in for questioning by police over recent attacks that officials say was a failed coup, an official said Thursday.

The police summoned ex-President Ernest Bai Koroma to its headquarters "for questioning on the failed attempted coup" toward the end of last month, Information Minister Cherno Bah said in a statement. Koroma's summons follows the earlier arrest of his former security aide. Dozens of gunmen launched a brazen

attack on Nov. 26 in the West African nation's capital of Freetown during which they broke into Sierra Leone's key armory and into a prison where the majority of the more than 2,000 inmates were freed.

At least 18 members of the security forces were killed during the clashes, while more than 50 suspects - including military officers - have been arrested so far.

Among those arrested was Amadu Koita, who worked as a security guard for Koroma until 2018 when the former president left office. Police on Wednesday released an image that they say shows Koita with a gun in a surveillance photo captured when the prison was attacked. A bodyguard of the former president was

also killed during the attack. Koroma said that he would honor the police summons, and asked his supporters to be calm, according to a statement issued by his office. (AP)

#### Amazon's California strategy exposed in internal memo leak

An internal Amazon memo has provided a stark look at the company's carefully laid out plans to grow its influence in Southern California through a plethora of efforts that include burnishing its reputation through charity work and pushing back against "labor agitation" from the Teamsters and other groups.

The eight-page document - titled "community engagement plan" for 2024 - provides

a rare glimpse into how one of America's biggest companies executes on its public relations objectives and attempts to curtail reputational harm stemming from criticisms of its business. It also illustrates how Amazon aims to methodically court lo-cal politicians and community groups in order to push its interests in a region where it could be hampered by local moratoriums on warehouse develop-

ment, and it is facing resistance from environmental and labor activists.

The memo was leaked to the nonprofit labor organization Warehouse Worker Resource Center and posted online this week. The Associated Press independently verified its authen-

When reached for comment, Amazon did not dispute the authenticity of the document. (AP)

#### **Spotify CFO joins mass departure, sells \$9 mln in shares**

Spotify's chief financial officer will step down next year, according to the music streaming service, just days after it announced its third round of layoffs for 2023.

In a statement announcing CFO Paul Vogel's departure, CEO Daniel Ek said that the two had "come to the conclusion that Spotify is entering a new phase and needs a CFO with a different mix of experi-

Spotify said this week that it would be axing 17% of its global

workforce, citing the need to slash costs and become profitable. About 1,500 people will lose their

jobs, a spokesperson confirmed. Shortly after the layoffs were announced Monday, Spotify's stock jumped about 8%. On Tuesday, Vogel moved to sell more than \$9.3 million worth of shares, according to securities filings.
Two other senior executives

also cashed in over \$1.6 million in shares, The Guardian reported.
The Associated Press reached

out to Spotify for further comment on Friday. Vogel will leave Spotify on March 31. Ben Kung, who currently serves as vice president of final cial planning and analysis, "will take on expanded responsibilities" in the interim as Spotify searches for a successor externally, the

company said in a blog post.
Stockholm-based Spotify posted a net loss of 462 million euros (about \$500 million) for the nine months to September. (AP)

#### **Market** Movements

**EUROPE** FTSE 100 KSE 100

4,523.31 7,554.47 +40.75 +1,480.84 66,238.07

Change Closing pts 3,951.52

# Business

# **Kuwait faces economic setback**

GDP distorted by resource rents, affecting economic quality

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: A report issued by the National Center for Development Research of the General Secretariat of Planning shows Kuwait suffered a setback in the area of economic quality during the past decade by 21 places, while its best performance was in 2014, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The "National Center" report on the issue of prosperity in Kuwait pointed out that the gross domestic product is the accepted standard for measuring the economic prosperity of any country (prosperity is measured and determined in a way that can also be compared to national income), however, when seeking to understand the real added value of participants in the economy, it can be the GDP that provides a distorted picture especially for countries with large resource rents.

The report explained that it is possible that the contributions of resource rents to the GDP figures cause some arithmetic imbalance, which can give a false impression of the quality of any economy.

For example, Kuwait has resource rents that con-

tribute more than 25% of the GDP, and it may appear Kuwait is wealthy, but its workforce is relatively unproductive economically, underperforming as GDP numbers would suggest, according to the 2019 Glob-

al Prosperity Index report. The report indicated that Kuwait witnessed a strong decline in the quality of the economy from after 2019 until now, as the oil-producing countries in general and Kuwait in particular faced a double crisis at the beginning of 2020, when the Corona pandemic coincided with a decline in oil prices on the international market, which was clearly reflected in the economies of Gulf oil states.

The Gulf countries were negatively affected by the crisis, and this was evident in the public budget deficit, the layoff of large numbers of expatriate workers, the reduction of public expenditures, the adoption of austerity measures, and the tendency to external debt through international bonds.

The report explained that the economic crisis seemed more severe and clear in Kuwait compared to some other Gulf countries, such as the UAE and Qatar. The most prominent crisis that Kuwait faced was the problem of providing liquidity for the salaries of workers in the public sector and other state facilities in the last months of 2020.

The report stated that there are several indicators that indicate the existence of a real crisis at the financial and economic levels in Kuwait, including what was published by Fitch in early February 2021, about reducing the credit rating of Kuwaiti debts from stable to negative, and the agency said that the reduction of Kuwait's sovereign credit rating reflects the

restrictions in the ongoing political decision-making, which impedes addressing the structural challenges related to oil dependence, the generous prosperity state and its large public sector.

In addition, the statements of the Minister of Finance increased the ambiguity of matters, as he stated that the liquidity in the country's treasury was almost running out, and as for the budget, the deficit in Kuwait's budget for the fiscal year 2020/2021 reached about 46 billion dollars, while in Qatar it reached the limits of 9.5 billion. Dollars, and in the UAE the deficit reached 1.3 billion dollars

The report showed Kuwait's progress in the business environment pillar by 39 places over the past decade, and its best performance was in 2021, where it achieved a score of 57.4 out of 100. Kuwait's progress came due to the state's efforts to improve the business environment through radical changes in laws and legislation to enhance the business environment and the business environment within the framework of National Vision 2035 and its goals, which has made the investment climate in Kuwait more attractive, which increases the effectiveness of the economic cycle and real job opportunities for the national workforce.

The report explained that when markets have adequate infrastructure and few barriers to doing business, trade can flourish and thus lead to more competitive and efficient markets, allowing new products and ideas to be tested, financed and marketed, which ultimately benefits consumers through a greater range of goods at more competitive prices.

## Initiative funds \$500 mln plant in Nigeria

# US & UAE back \$9 billion for agricultural innovation

DUBAI, Dec 9, (AP): An additional \$9 billion of funding to tackle agriculture's role in the climate crisis was announced on the sidelines of the United

Nations climate talks on Friday.

The Agriculture Innovation Mission (AIM) for Climate, a joint initiative led by the United States and the United Arab Emirates that debuted at the climate talks in Glasgow two years ago, now has \$17 billion to invest in agriculture and food systems innovation. Food systems - all the processes involved in making, shipping and disposing of food - account for about a third of planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

Countries have been convening at the annual Conference of the Parties to discuss and negotiate what to do about climate change that has Earth bumping up against the Paris agreement target of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since industrial times. With difficult negotiations still underway on how aggressively countries might agree to cut fossil fuel use, it's been easier for nations and companies to announce funding for programs not directly related to

This year's summit, COP28, is unique in its emphasis on farming.

"We would not be able to reach 1.5 degrees if we don't fix our food and ag sector," UAE Minister for Climate and the Environment Mariam Almheiri said in a press conference in Dubai on Friday

The funding announced Friday is enough money and will support enough different approaches to be a good start, said Mario Herrero, a professor of food systems and global change at Cornell University. But he added that the real test will be to see whether more money comes in, and whether the projects are held accountable for doing what they

say they will.
"That's something we will need to monitor very carefully, whether this is largely greenwashing," Herrero said.

Projects the initiative has funded in the past include building a \$500 million agri-processing plant in Nigeria, restoring degraded pastureland in Brazil and backing research to reduce synthetic nitrogen.

The new projects being funded address a wide range of areas

Some, like a \$500 million action agenda on "regenerative agriculture," have no single definition but involve a range of techniques that encourage farmers to switch to practices that low-

#### **Other Voices**

'No volume cuts extension

# **OPEC+** considers strategies to 'boost' lagging oil prices

By Kamel Al-Harami Independent Oil Analyst

Oil prices are almost on the verge of hitting a level of mid-70s from their high peak of \$90 about three months ago. It is now time for the oil organization to do something, as its last action of further reduction of crude oil production by 2.2 million barrels did not do any magic

Perhaps OPEC+

did not ex-

pect such



a surge in US oil production more than 13.2 million barrels, the highest in its history Al-Harami world record.

The surge in production is not going to stop and could hit 15 million. Such an increase in oil production will be followed by a gradual increase by Iran, Venezuela, Iraq, Brazil, and Canada, while OPEC+ members will have to live with their volunteer cuts.

Meanwhile, the demand for oil is not forthcoming, as the economy of China is not moving the oil markets towards sufficient growth to fasten oil demands. This has led OPEC+ to be content with their reduced volumes, without any volume cuts, to be extended beyond June of next year.

However, the oil organization must decide to have another review meeting and agree for further cuts. It is unlikely that it will have a consensus, and will therefore end up in disagreement.

The question is - Did OPEC+ miss or miscalculate the new barrels coming into the market at such a fast rate, which led the USA to become the top oil and gas producer with the ability to satisfy the European Union's demand, which

can live for now with Russian oil and gas?

As a result, the oil prices have been pushed to the level of \$72, before jumping to \$75, and may stay at such a level for some time, until cold weather hits the Western hemisphere and may create some increase in demand. Nevertheless, it will be short lived.

The future doesn't look bright for oil prices, with more on-stream volume coming from the Emirates and hitting five million barrels per day, and with Brazil at the same level, along with aggressive production from Iraq, Iraq, and Ven-

A new oil producer Guyana is emerging with one million barrels per day, and OPEC+ has sent an invitation for the newcomer to join the oil organization and be an active member. Two new members will join and they may be asked to pitch in and reduce their production. This is the new trend in OPEC+ in order to face the decline in oil prices.

Despite the call for phasing out the use and production of fossil oil, top US oil companies seem to be heading for a boost in oil production and acquisition of billions of dollars inside the USA. They are not as yet committed to lower global temperature, unlike European companies.

It is a tough time for OPEC+. The reduction scenario is not working with mass production coming from everywhere from within and outside. It simply cannot manage or be able to start any sort of dialogue for the time being.

The new challenge is how to tackle the decline in oil prices when the US with its new record volume, Brazil with one million barrels, and the newest potential member Guyana with its one million are hitting the oil market. Oil prices and OPEC+ are in need of some miracles to bring up the oil prices!

Email: naftikuwaiti@yahoo.

#### **US jobless claims rise slightly**

# Nov rally boosts market on Fed's potential policy shift

ened its grip on Wall Street and the economy in 2023, raising hopes for a gentler Federal Reserve and solid gains for the market next year.

Stocks rallied to their best month of the year in November as investors raised their bets that the Fed is done hiking interest rates to fight inflation. The economy has cooled under the weight of rising interest rates, as the central bank intended, but remains surprisingly resilient.

Easing inflation and a solid economy heading into 2024 have increased the chance that the central bank could achieve a "soft landing" for the economy. That means inflation easing back to the central bank's target rate of 2% under high interest rates without the

"Importantly, the soft-landing scenario is very much at play here, with market participants anticipating the 'good' rate cuts to take place: those that the Fed is able to, but not forced to make," said Katie Nixon, Chief Investment Officer for Northern Trust Wealth Management.

A steep drop in gasoline prices helped slow in-

throughout the year. U.S. crude oil prices are down about 10% in 2023.

Consumer electronic prices have also eased, along with some groceries. Consumers have seemingly shifted their spending, which is still strong but has slowed overall.

Inflation fell to 3% in November, according to a government report on personal spending that is the Fed's preferred measure. It peaked at 7.1% in 2022. Rates of inflation have fallen even more steeply elsewhere, slipping to 2.4% in Europe last month, the lowest in over two years. Much of that easing has been because of lower energy costs. Inflation peaked in Europe in 2022 at 10.6%.

"Slowing growth, slowing inflation is our base case scenario for 2024, creating a favorable backdrop for stocks and bonds," said Jack Ablin, chief invest-

ment officer and founding partner at Cresset. The S&P 500 hit its highest point of the year on Dec. 1, reaching 4,594.63 points. Analysts expect that the index will finally breach 4,600, a level that the market has struggled to surpass as it advanced in

Inflation is expected to continue easing through

2024 and Wall Street is betting that the Fed will start cutting interest rates by mid-year. That could add more fuel to corporate earnings, which helps drive stock prices. Stock values are typically determined by how much profit a company generates and how much investors are willing to pay for each \$1 of that.

**NEW YORK:** U.S. applications for jobless benefits ticked up last week, but the overall number of people in the U.S. collecting unemployment benefits fell af-

ter hitting its highest level in two years last week.
Unemployment benefits claims rose by 1,000 to 220,000 for the week ending Dec. 2, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That was in line with analyst expectations.

About 1.86 million were collecting unemployment benefits the week that ended Nov. 25, 64,000 fewer than the previous week. It's just the second time in 11

weeks that continuing claims have fallen. Analysts say the continuing claims have been rising because many of those who are already unem-

ployed may now be having a harder time finding new

#### The Conversation

#### Natural calamities cost US \$150 bln annually

#### Climate change's economic impact demands Fed attention & action

#### By Jennie C. Stephens Northeastern University

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

Climate disasters are now costing the United States US\$150 billion per year, and the economic harm

The real estate market has been disrupted as home insurance rates skyrocket along with rising wildfire and flood risks in the warming climate. Food prices have gone up with disruptions in agriculture. Health care costs have increased as heat takes a toll. Marginalized and already vulnerable communities that are least financially equipped to recover are being hit the

Despite this growing source of economic volatility, the Federal Reserve - the U.S. central bank that is charged with maintaining economic stability - is not considering the instability of climate change in its monetary policy.

Earlier this year, Fed Chair Jerome Powell declared unequivocally: "We are not, and we will not become, a climate policymaker."

Powell's rationale is that to maintain the Fed's independence from politics and political cycles, it should use its tools narrowly to focus on its core mission of economic stability. That includes price stability, meaning keeping inflation low and maximizing employment. In Powell's view, the Fed should stay away from social and environmental concerns that are not tightly linked to its statutory goals.

However, it is getting increasingly difficult for central banks to ensure stability if they do not integrate climate instability into their monetary policies.

As researchers with expertise in climate justice and central banks, we recently published a paper reviewing the monetary policy tools available to central banks around the world that could help slow climate change and reduce climate vulnerabilities.

With the new U.S. National Climate Assessment and other research making clear that U.S. policies and actions are insufficient to minimize climate instability and manage the growing economic costs, we believe it's time to reconsider the role of central banks in responding to the climate crisis.

One thing central banks could do is set lower interest rates for renewable energy development. The Bank of Japan has used this strategy.

The Fed's aggressive increases in interest rates in response to rising inflation have slowed the transformation toward a more sustainable society by supporting fossil fuels and making investments in renewable energy infrastructure more expensive. Offshore wind power has been particularly hard hit, with multiple multibillion-dollar projects canceled as higher interest rates raised the projects' costs. One way to introduce differentiated rates would be

to create a special lending facility under which commercial banks could borrow money from the central bank at preferential interest rates if used for renewable energy deployment or other climate-friendly investments. Whether the Fed already has authorization to do that depends on interpretation of its current

While the U.S. Federal Reserve has not done it before, China's central bank has used similar tools to incentivize renewable energy, and the Bank of Japan's lending facility offers zero-interest loans for green investments.

Despite the Fed's proclaimed efforts not to pick winners and losers, its monetary policies have taken steps that favor established industries and companies, including the fossil fuel industry.

#### **Efforts**

For example, the Fed supported the financial sector unconditionally during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep credit available to limit economic harm. Its massive purchases of corporate bonds resulted in subsidies to the fossil fuel sector.

Our analysis suggests two ways to help manage climate change now: The Fed can reinterpret its current statutory duties and start viewing climate action as a critical part of its role in maintaining economic stability within its existing mandate, as the European Central Bank has done, or the mandate of the Fed can be changed by Congress to explicitly include "green"

transformation objectives, similar to the U.K.'s mandate for the Bank of England.

Either of these options could empower the Fed to address climate change and support the government, businesses, banks, households and communities in financing climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

The Fed could also discourage banks and investors from investing in assets that ultimately harm the economy - for instance, by setting collateral requirements for banks that would reduce the attractiveness of holding carbon-intensive assets. The European Central Bank recently announced that it would tilt purchases of corporate bonds toward "green" assets.

The Fed has recently taken steps to push large financial institutions to monitor climate-related risks in their portfolios, drawing the ire of Republicans, who claimed the bank had no authority to consider climate change. Whether this risk management approach will pressure banks to change their lending patterns is not

yet clear. The Fed and other central banks could go further and mandate energy transition planning with an eye toward economic stability. The European Union developed a whole new sustainable finance framework designed to discourage investment in economic activities that do not support an energy transition along the lines of the European Green Deal, which aims to turn Europe into a climate-neutral continent with no one left behind. The European Central Bank is obligated to support EU economic policies, including the

green transition. Many times in its 110-year history, the Fed has provided financial support to the U.S. government during major crises, such as wars and recessions, by offering direct lines of credit or by directly purchasing Treasury bonds. During the pandemic, it took extraordinary steps to keep U.S. businesses running.

Now that the U.S. is facing rising costs from the climate crisis, we believe the Fed should treat climate change with the same urgency and importance.

In our analysis of the tools available to central banks, we took a climate justice perspective, looking beyond greenhouse gas emission reductions to incorporate social justice and economic equity. (AP)

#### **Chevron-Hess merger inquiry opens** WASHINGTON, Dec 9, (AP): The The statements Friday follow an

Federal Trade Commission is investigating Chevron's acquisition of Hess oil company, the second inquiry the independent agency has opened this week of a major oil industry merger.

Chevron and Hess said in separate filings that the FTC is seeking additional information and documentary materials related to Chevron's proposed \$53 billion purchase of Hess, announced in October.

announcement earlier this week that the FTC is reviewing ExxonMobil's proposed \$60 billion acquisition of Pioneer Natural Resources. Such requests for information are steps the agency takes when reviewing whether a merger could be anticompetitive un-If completed, the Exxon and Chev-

ron deals would be among the largest mergers in the energy industry in two

# NEW YORK, Dec 9, (AP): Inflation gradually loos-

economy slipping into a recession.

flation and broader energy prices have been falling

#### Chaos at a govt jobs fair in Zimbabwe

A stampede at a government-organized job fair involving hun-dreds of young people in Zimba-bwe desperate for work left some limping and others screaming in pain after being stomped on or beaten by security guards Wednesday.

The chaos came as job seekers rushed to register for potential vacancies, but no serious injuries were reported.

The crush of people illus-

trated the growing distress over the lack of formal jobs in the southern African nation of 15 million people, which has been hit by long-running economic problems. Hundreds turned up for the fair in the capital, Harare, holding envelopes with their resumes and college certificates. They were hoping to be registered on a database of

job seekers. People stomped on each other in the rush to access a large hall where the registration was taking place. Security guards used batons to restore order, but people still surged forward.

Last month, 31 people died in a crush at a military recruitment event at a stadium in the Republic of Congo as large crowds of young people gathered to register to join the army, one of the few institutions in that country still offering employment. (AP)

#### India sets ambitious agenda for circular economy

Leaders and influencers convened at the 8th International Conference on Waste to Worth to address the imperative shift towards a circular economy. The event, virtually graced by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Min-ister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, and Shri Ashwini Kumar Chaubey, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and

Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, emphasized collaboration and 'bhagidaari' (partnership) to propel India nto a sustainable and circular

The National Circular Economy Framework (NCEF) was unvéiled by Prof Ajày K Sóod, offering a comprehensive roadmap for India's transition to a circular economy. The framework places emphasis on collaboration,

awareness, and targeted actions for a sustainable future.

Prof Ajay K Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, encouraged India to embrace a circular economy, turning waste management challenges into opportunities. Recycling plastic waste, electronic waste, and faecal sludge were identified as potential areas for innovation. (PR Newswire)

#### **The Conversation**

#### Walmart is venturing online more

# More businesses trying mobile apps to lure, keep consumers

By Venkatesh Shankar, Texas A&M University and Unnati Narang, Texas A&M University

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

Intense retail competition has led old standbys, such as Sears, to close doz-Lens of stores. Walmart is venturing online more. And Amazon is expanding offline, opening stores and buying Whole Foods. The fight for retail dollars is fierce, and the battleground will soon migrate into the palms of customers' hands - via apps on their smartphones.

This isn't just happening with mega-retailers.

Movie chains and pet supply stores are increasingly connecting with their customers through their own branded apps. Zumiez, a specialty clothing chain with 600 stores in the U.S., has an app. Scooter's Coffee, an Omaha-based coffee chain with 200 stores, has one too. So does New York Pizza Oven, a single

pizza parlor in Vermont. Mobile apps are becoming key ways for customers and retailers to interact. Our recent analysis of data from a large U.S. retailer of video games and electronics (whose name we agreed to keep confidential) found that apps can even affect consumers' offline buying habits.

The number of people who have the option to use mobile apps is skyrocketing. More than 70 percent of the world population will own a smartphone by 2020. And they'll spend more than 80 percent of their on-phone time using

Letting buyers learn about products, discover deals, locate nearby stores and even place orders in advance is a huge business opportunity. At Starbucks, for example, an app allowing people to order and pay on the go - just swinging into the store for pickup - helped customers avoid standing in line and waiting: Over five years, 20 percent of its sales shifted to online transactions

Research has also begun to show that people who use mobile shopping apps buy more than they might otherwise. After individual shoppers started purchasing using eBay's mobile app, their purchases from eBay's website increased. Similarly, a tablet app from major Chinese e-tailer Alibaba led customers to spend about US\$923.5 million more each year with the company than they would have without the app. Some of that increased spending is from shoppers using the app to buy impulsively - making one-off purchases of items they are interested in, or adding items to larger orders.

Our research recently found a new dimension to this app-related spending boost. Over 18 months, customers who downloaded the branded app of the retailer we studied spent 30 percent more in stores than they would have without the app. We can infer this by looking at data on customers' spending before and after the app was installed, and by comparing that to the spending of a random sample of customers who had similar demographics and shopping behavior before the app launched.

#### Increase

We learned that most of the increase was because customers used the app to find out about products before buying them. For example, by closely analyzing the data on app use and purchases, we could see these customers started increasing purchases of lesser known video games when they started using the app.

While shoppers who use a retailer's mobile app tend to buy more online and in stores, we find that they are also more prone to subsequently returning the products they purchased. In particular, customers who use a retailer's app tend to return products most often when they purchased those products on discount, and within seven days of making the original purchase. Apps often make it easier to purchase items on impulse. When customers receive some of the items and are dissatisfied, they regret the decisions and return the items

Even taking into account the high rate of returns, app users spend more both online and in physical stores. But that's when the apps work as customers ex-

Apps that load information slowly or crash frequently can deter not only online purchasing, but in-person spending, too. Surveys show that more than 60 percent of users expect an app to load within four seconds. And our ongoing research suggests that more than half of users will abandon an app that freezes

App slowdowns can be costly. One estimate suggests that if each Amazon webpage took just one second longer to load, the company's sales could drop as much as \$1.6 billion a year. For smaller retailers, a similar drop of 2 to 3 percent would be a smaller dollar amount but still a significant blow.

Our ongoing research with Stanford's Sridhar Narayanan suggests that poor app performance reduces users' in-store spending too. Specifically, we studied how shoppers react when an app is not accessible for five or six hours, due (users were told) to a server error. Our preliminary results suggest that in the following two weeks, those shoppers spent 3 to 4 percent less in stores than they would have otherwise. Less-frequent customers reduced their spending even

more than the company's more regular shoppers. Interestingly, customers who experience app failures spend less in stores, but their online spending remains unchanged. A deeper analysis indicates that when a retailer's app fails, shoppers often go to the retailer's website to complete their intended transactions. But the negative experience from app failure discourages them from buying more in the retailer's store.

Our research illustrates some ways mobile apps can be a double-edged sword for customers and retailers alike. Shoppers can use apps to learn more about prospective purchases, be inspired on the fly and save time at the cash register. But if the software fails, they may be frustrated, discouraged and even spend less at physical stores. Retailers can see increased sales and faster transactions, but may have to handle more returns - though they'll still make more money. The longer-term effects of mobile apps on the retail business have yet to be seen, of course, but in an everchanging landscape, companies and customers alike will be exploring the options.

This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article here: https://theconversation.com/morebusinesses-are-trying-mobile-apps-to-lure-and-keep-consumers-88684. (AP)

#### Summit held in Beijing

### Xi urges China, EU to step up coop and handle differences

BEIJING, Dec 9, (PRNewswire): The first in-person meeting of its kind between the world's two major forces and markets after the COVID-19 pandemic - the 24th China-European Union (EU) Summit - was held in the Chinese capital of Beijing on Thursday.

During his talks with President of

the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leven, Chinese President Xi Jinping, who underscored the significance of China-EU relations to global stability and peace amid a turbulent international situation, called for both sides to step up cooperation and handle their differences through dialogue

Upholding apt description of Chi-

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership and has witnessed frequent high-level exchanges between China and the EU.

In June, Chinese Premier Li Qiang made his first overseas trip after taking office to Germany and France. In October, the 12th round of the China-EU High-level Strategic Dialogue was held in Beijing, the latest interaction between the two sides.

"China and the EU should uphold the apt description of their relationship as a comprehensive strategic partnership," Xi said at Thursday's meeting. He urged both sides to fully leverage the guiding role of the China-EU Summit and the five high-level dialogues, strengthen strategic communication. increase understanding and properly handle differences through constructive dialogue.

"We should not view each other as rivals just because our systems are different, reduce cooperation because competition exists, or engage in confrontation because there are disagreements," the Chinese president stressed. Echoing Xi, Michel and von der Leven noted that the EU does not want to decouple from China. It seeks a long-term, stable, predictable and sustainable relationship with China and hopes that the China-EU Summit will help reenergize relations between the two sides.

Established in 1998 as an annual meeting mechanism, the China-EU Summit is devoted to enhancing dialogue and cooperation between the two sides in areas including politics, economy, culture and society. The previous summit took place in April last vear via video conference.

At this year's summit, the two sides also vowed to strengthen communication and coordination in multilateral fora, including the United Nations and the G20, uphold multilateralism and promote the political settlement of international and regional hotspots.

Chinese modernization an opportunity for EU

"As China pursues high-quality development and high-standard opening up, it sees the EU as a key partner for economic and trade cooperation, a preferred partner for scientific and technological cooperation, and a trustworthy partner for industrial and supply chain cooperation," Xi told the two EU leaders.

China and the EU have remained each other's second-largest trading partners. Official data shows that twoway trade amounted to \$847.3 billion in 2022, or an average of over \$1.6 million every minute.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). During the meeting, Xi expressed China's willingness to strengthen Belt and Road cooperation, including by creating synergy between the BRI and the EU's Global Gateway.

# Hopes for a Mercosur-EU trade deal fade yet again

Leaders of trade blocs meet in Brazil

#### SAO PAULO, Dec 9, (AP): **Heads of state from South** America's Mercosur trade bloc gathered Thursday in Rio de Janeiro for a meeting all but certain to once again disappoint members hoping to finalize a longdelayed trade deal with the **European Union.**

Negotiations with the EU were set to be the gathering's main topic, and host Brazil had aimed for a swift conclusion to finalize a deal. However, the outgoing government of Argentina, the bloc's second-biggest economy, has already said it opposes the agreement, although right-wing President-elect Javier Milei, who will be sworn in on Sunday, has expressed support.

Brazil's leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is an advocate of the agreement that has been in the works for two decades. His main partners so far have been Spain, which holds the presidency of the EU, and Germany.

#### Joining

Paraguay and Uruguay are also a part of the bloc and the membership of Bolivia, which has been in the process of joining, is scheduled to be formalized Thursday afternoon.

"I have as my motto 'never, ever give up,' because nothing exists that is impossible to realize, even this attempt for an agreement with the EU that has lasted 23 years, but we have to keep trying," Lula said in his opening statement to the other heads of state.

would mean the integration of a market of over 700 million people, about a fourth of the world's gross domestic product and about \$100 billion in bilateral trade of goods and services a year. It would also cut customs duties and ease access for agricultural export-

'aimed' at interconnecting South America SAO PAULO, Dec 9, (AP): Four investment banks announced Thursday during a meeting of leaders of the Mercosur trade bloc that they will put \$10 billion up for infrastructure works aimed at better connecting South America, including funds for port, airport, road, rail and power transmission

The "Routes for South American Integration" initiative was launched in Rio de Janeiro with host Brazil introducing a plan involving more than 120 projects, many of them in Brazil's north bordering Venezuela, Guyana, French Guvana and Suriname.

The funds will come from the Inter-American Development Bank with \$3.4 billion, the Development Bank of Latin American and the Caribbean with \$3 billion, the Brazilian Development Bank with another \$3 billion, and FONPLATA, a bank owned by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, with \$600 million more. Aloizio Mercadante, the president of

Brazil's Development Bank, said his

ers to the EU market, and for European

thought this would be finished in two

years," Welber Barral, who represented

"When I was a negotiator in 2010, we

manufacturers to Mercosur countries.

institution will finance works "from the border within Brazil" and the other banks will pay for projects "from the border to the outside.

Investment banks to put \$10b into projects

"It is the biggest fund ever built for South American integration and for Mercosur in Mercosur's history," Mercadante said. Brazil's Planning and Budget Min-

istry said in a statement the new infrastructure is aimed at "significantly reducing the time of transportation of merchandise between Brazil and Asia." Similar plans for South American integration failed in the last three decades, but Brazil's Planning Minister Simone Tebet says it will be different this time.

"The regional integration project is finally mature enough to come true. That has happened after a lot of dialogue and many conversations between leaders," Tebet said.

The integration plan includes five main projects.

The Guyana Islands route project will boost infrastructure in Brazil's northern states of Amapa and Roraima to better connect them to Guyana, French Guyana, Suriname and Ven-

The Manta-Manaus route includes the Brazilian state of Amazonas and parts of the states of Roraima, Para and Amapa in a river link to Colombia, Peru and Ecuador.

The Rondon Quadrant route involves the Brazilian states of Acre and Rondonia and the soybean rich portion of the Mato Grosso state to connect it with Bolivia and Peru.

The Capricorn rout links the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Parana and Santa Catarina through multiple pathways to Paraguay, Argentina and Chile.

And the Porto Alegre-Coquimbo route boosts connections between the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul to Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.

Mercosur has Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay as full members. Venezuela is currently suspended from the trade bloc. Bolivia is in a process to join it.

#### Mistakes found in data

#### **Retail group pulls back on claim**

NEW YORK, Dec 9, (AP): The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, has revised a report released in April that pulls back the claim that organized retail crime accounts for nearly half of overall industry shrink, which measures overall loss in inventory, includ-

The revision of the group's organized retail crime report on Dec. 1 follows an analysis from Retail Dive that found mistakes in the data. Retail Dive is an online news site that covers retail trends.

The trade association released the original report in partnership with K2, a financial crimes risk management firm. The report erroneously stated that of the \$94.51 billion in so-called industry shrink, nearly half was to organized retail crime.

David Johnston, the national retail group's vice president of asset protection and retail operations, told The Associated Press in an interview on Thursday that the discrepancy was based on K2 referencing U.S. Senate testimony delivered in 2021 by Ben Dugan, who at the time

was the president of a nonpartisan group called the Coalition of Law Enforcement and Retail, or CLEAR. In testimony, Dugan said that organized retail crime accounted for \$45 billion in annual losses for retailers and cited the coalition.

The K2 analyst then made an incorrect inference linking the 2022 NRF security survey's results with the CLEAR figure. Johnston said he hasn't been able to confirm where CLEAR derived the \$45 billion amount, but he said that a 2016 security survey by the retail trade group reported \$45 billion in overall shrink loss. The revised report also deleted any estimate of organized retail crime's overall impact in dollars and any reference to CLEAR.

"It was an inaccurate inference," Johnston said. "We missed it."

It's unclear how much money retailers broadly are losing due to organized retail crime - or if the problem has substantially increased. But the issue has received more notice in the past few years as high-profile smash-andgrab retail thefts and flash mob robberies have garnered national media "This delay is very bad for everyone. If

A Mercosur-EU trade agreement

the Brazilian side at the time, told The Associated Press. The Rio meeting is yet another missed opportunity, he said.

this deal fails, there could be a blame game that doesn't help anyone." The two blocs reached a basic agreement in 2019 that was supposed to be the first step toward sealing full consensus. But it was never implemented amid fierce resistance on both sides of the Atlantic,

including demands for environmental

protection in South America and concern in some European countries, particularly France, over an influx of cheap goods.

Lula said he had spoken with most European presidents as well as many of their negotiators, and that he made a personal appeal to France's Emmanuel Macron to "stop being so protectionist." Hesitance from Argentina's current

government, which has warned that its manufacturing and agricultural exports would be negatively affected, also stalled the deal's advance.

Milei has harshly criticized Mercosur in the past, repeatedly calling for its elimination in the run-up to the Nov. 19 election, but he has refrained from any such harsh statements since. In fact, his incoming administration has signaled it wants the deal completed.

"We have no objections; it is frankly desirable that it goes through," incoming Foreign Minister Diana Mondino said Nov. 30 at a conference for the Industrial Organization of Argentina, a manufacturing trade group. "Much better to have it than not to have it."

Mondino said she realized there are objections from certain sectors. A spokesperson for Milei's transition team declined an AP request for comment about what modifications might be required to ensure his administration's endorsement.

# Danish EU commissioner pulls out of race for top job

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, Dec 9, (AP): The European Union's powerful antitrust chief has withdrawn as a candidate for the presidency of the European Investment Bank, the Danish government said Friday after EU finance ministers gave their support to someone else.

Margrethe Vestager, who took unpaid leave in September to pursue the bank job, plans to return to her role at the EU's executive commission for a few months, the government in Copenhagen said. The new president of the EIB, the 27-nation bloc's development bank, is set to begin a six-year term on

"Out of respect for the further process, the government, together with Margrethe Vestager, has decided to withdraw the Danish candidature,' Denmark's government said.

EU finance ministers agreed Friday to back Spain's economy minister, Nadia Calviño, becoming the bank's next president. Calviño, 55, said that under her leadership, the bank "will have an even more important role going forward to fund the green transition, to provide financial support to the rebuilding of Ukraine, and also support the role of Europe in the world."

She would succeed Werner Hoyer, a German whose second mandate as EIB chief ends Dec. 31. Her candidacy still requires approval from the bank's board of directors and board of gover-

Calviño worked for the European Commission for two years until 2018, when Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez chose her as his economy minister. She eventually because Spain's deputy prime minister. She is credited with helping Spain weather the coronavirus pandemic and the global surge in inflation made worse by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Although we would have liked to see a different outcome, we are satisfied that there is now a clarification of

the process," Danish Business Minister Morten Bødskov said.

Vestager is arguably one of the world's most important tech regulators. She slapped Google with multibillion-dollar antitrust penalties, ordered Apple and Amazon to pay back taxes and fined Facebook over its WhatsApp acquisition.

Such flagship enforcement cases struck fear in Silicon Valley and drew attention in Washington. Vestager also took on Starbucks and McDonald's, and looked into Nike's tax arrangements. Other targets have included Italian automaker Fiat and Russian gas

# What's On

#### Wide participation from commercial and service program partners

## KIB concludes PayTally Show with exclusive financing deals under one roof

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: After three exciting days, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) concluded its PayTally Show, which took place at The Arena Kuwait – 360 Mall. Bringing together all its PayTally program commercial and service partners under one roof, the special exhibition offered tailored financing offers to both customers and non-customers, assisting them in accessing products and services that meet their needs in a more modern and convenient manner. This initiative aligns with KIB's comprehensive corporate social responsi-

bility strategy, embodying its goals of elevating customers banking experience, especially in the realm of financing, to be more compre-

hensive and integrated. Commenting Al-Shaalan on the occasion. Musaab Al-Shaalan, Deputy General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, said: "We take pride in the success of this important and vibrant event. The exhibition witnessed significant interest from both customers and non-customers who were able to obtain convenient financing offers

from KIB to purchase various products

provided by the Bank's partners under



Cutting of ribbon during the opening of the exhibition.

the PayTally program."

Al-Shaalan also highlighted that the exhibition attendees benefited from the exclusive and exceptional offers provided by the participants over three consecutive days. He praised the diverse and extensive range of choices, especially with the participation of a long list of the best service providers and consumer goods suppliers in Kuwait.

Furthermore, Al-Shaalan pointed out that KIB provides convenient financing for a duration of up to 60 months, ranging from KD 300 to KD 25,000, adding that through the Pay-Tally program, the Bank offers consumer financing services, medical and treatment financing, educational financing, as well as financing for furniture, electronics, computer equipment, and all types of devices. He noted that



Top & below: Photos from the event

this innovative platform also provides financing for the purchase of marine equipment, heavy machinery, spare parts, and financing for the acquisition of the newest cars and vehicles from renowned brands.

It is worth noting that PayTally is a multi-service digital platform dedicated to the application and tracking of Islamic financing transactions (Musawama) for individuals interested in obtaining any of the services or products offered by KIB's commercial and service partners. Through its financing offers, KIB ensures that customers enjoy easy monthly installment payments

and grace periods.



Company sponsors expo's biggest season yet

# **Zain Smart Home welcomes visitors at Mirzam Expo**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: Continuing to support national initiatives that foster creativity and innovation in the community, Zain has announced its platinum sponsorship of the new season of Mirzam Expo, Kuwait's top interior design and home decoration event. The company's support to this project comes for the fourth year running, and this year's event is anticipated to be the biggest in the expo's history. Over 300 booths are set to be featured, covering over 30 categories for interior design, home furnishing, decoration,

The announcement was made at the press conference held at Andalus Complex, attended by Zain Kuwait's

Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti, Mirzam Expo Founder and Organizer Farah Al Humaidhi, along with representatives of sponsors and participants. The conference took the attendees in a tour through Mirzam's journey, covering its success story from the past, present, and beyond.

At the conference, Zain shared its plans for joining the event's all-new season through its special booth, the Zain Smart Home. Located at Hall 6 in the Kuwait International Fair in Mishref, the Zain Smart Home was designed to resemble a miniature house. giving visitors a close-up view to experience the company's latest smart home solutions and products, along with accessories from the world's big-

Mirzam's huge success in the past editions drove Zain to continue supporting it, as the company prides itself for being a top supporter of homegrown projects that foster creativity and innovation in the community. In addition, being Kuwait's top digital service provider that serves the biggest family of subscribers, Zain was keen on adding value to the expo by offering the best world-class smart home

The Zain Smart Home was designed as a miniature house with several rooms and halls that mimic those of real houses, giving visitors a unique experience to try out the company's latest smart home solutions with real-world use cases, allowing them to choose the best products that serve their home-planning needs. The booth is set to feature security solutions, surveillance cameras, sensors, smart lighting, home appliances, gaming consoles, accessories, and much more.

This year, Zain has also collaborated with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy to promote the ministry's latest campaign, Waffer, for raising awareness of energy conservation. The company has dedicated a section of its booth for the ministry's team, who will provide informative advice and valuable consultation to visitors on how to implement sustainability tools and practices in their existing or future homes.

The fourth season of Mirzam Expo is anticipated to be the biggest in its history, with over 25,000 sqm of space across three halls in the Kuwait International Fair, Mishref. Over 300 booths covering over 30 categories will serve all visitor needs for interior design, home furnishing, decoration, and more. The expo will also offer exciting draws, valuable prizes, and other ntertainment programs to the crowds throughout its period.

Mirzaam is the biggest event of its kind in Kuwait, gathering decoration experts, designers, suppliers, professional contractors, and specialists that offer all services and needs related to designing and decorating homes, offices, commercial projects, and more. The event also features many panel discussions, seminars, and other programs that reveal the secrets of the art of interior design and discuss the latest decoration trends.

### UCMAS Kuwait Students win several awards at 24th Int'l Competition '23

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The 24th International Competition 2023 was hosted by UCMAS - Malaysia at the Headquarter of UCMAS on Saturday, 3rd December 2023

The tournament featured an impressive participation of 2,550 students from Malaysia, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Cote Di' Ivoire, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Somaliland, Sri Lanka, UAE, USA, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. Young students as early as 6 to 13 years old are competing to win events in the various categories they competed for. Each UCMAS student participating in the competition received a paper ranging between 100-200 arithmetic math problem depending on their UCMAS level and age. They were given a time of 8 minutes to finish as many problems as they can.

From Kuwait, 5 participants travelled to Malaysia and below are the

winners in different categories: Adelyn Prasanth Mathews: place (Basic level), Ananya Manoj: -2nd place (Intermediate level), Nikunj Harikrishnan Pillai: - 3rd place (Elementary level), Jouri Mohamed Kamal: 3rd place (Elementary level) and Aarya Rajeev – 3rd place (Higher Level)

Mrs. Annu Thomas, Operations Head at UCMAS Kuwait, who accompanied the students to Malaysia, stated, On behalf of our Managing Director, Mr. Nandan Menon, we extend our heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to all the participants for their outstanding efforts and achievements.' The competition became a manifestation of young talents' dedication and excellence, highlighting the positive impact of the UCMAS program on students in Kuwait. We would also like to thank ITL WORLD Travels for their assistance with all air, hotel, and logistics arrangements.

UCMAS Kuwait is located in Salmiya, Block 12, and has been representing Universal Concept of Mental Arithmetic System (UCMAS), an international education organization that is widely recognized as a leader in whole brain



UCMAS-Kuwait students with their awards.



Al Khashti and Al Humaidhi with Zain officials at the press conference.

# Take learning furth

Sign language expert Khalifa Al Bin Ali mediates with employees of the company's branches.

#### **Engaging more effectively with diverse community segments**

#### stc holds sign language workshops for employees

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, organized sign language workshops for its employees held under the umbrella of its ongoing 'Because We Care' campaign. The initiative which comes as part of stc's extensive CSR framework reflects the Company's continuous efforts to have a positive impact on the society by engaging more effectively with diverse community segments.

The workshops organized by stc aimed to empower employees with the necessary skillsets to communicate with customers through sign language when needed, witnessing the participation of 20 employees from various branches. The sessions were led by sign language expert Khlifah Al Bin Ali, a renowned trainer from the Arab Union for Bodies Working with the Deaf. Al Bin Ali is a certified expert and interpreter in sign language, bringing a wealth of invaluable knowledge and expertise. The comprehensive training covered various attributes of learning sign language and included various assessments, in which employees received certified certificates upon completing the course.

stc indicated in a statement that it continuously strives to elevate the customer experience at its various branches and throughout its operations. Such initiatives focus on various segments within the community to ensure that the Company's different products and solutions are accessible and complimented by the exceptional service offered by stc. This commitment to excellence is evident in the tailored approaches to customer service, aiming to meet the unique needs of every individual the Company serves. By investing in the training and development of its employees, stc ensures that its team is not only

knowledgeable about the Company's

products and services but also skilled in communicating and interacting with a diverse customer base.

The "Because We Care" campaign was previously launched by stc as part of its extensive CSR program, showcasing a range of activities and events designed to positively impact society. Through initiatives like equipping its employees with sign language skills, stc aims to enhance its customer experience and foster an inclusive, accessible environment for everyone, further demonstrating its commitment to social responsibility and community engage-

stc reaffirmed its dedication to being a pioneer in the telecom market, especially within its dynamic CSR program, contributing to a more inclusive society. Catering to a diverse range of customer needs, the Company will continue to enhance its operations and explore new outlets to provide its customers with a well-rounded and seam-

# **Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait 'creates' a Wonderland of fun for KACCH & BACCH**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: While international World Kindness Day falls on November 13 every year, Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya wanted to extend the love a little longer... After the success of their initial collaboration with Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital & Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (KACCH & BACCH) in October, the heartfelt Hotel decided to host 'Wonderland Tea Time' in Elements restaurant on Saturday, November 25 as a special treat for the hospice's children and their families. From 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, the resil-

ient youngsters and their loved ones gathered in the buzzing, market-style surrounds of Elements-its breezy, light interiors bright with colourful balloon decoration sponsored by Alissar - to feast on a range of savoury and

sweet treats. From mini quiches, bao bun sliders and toasted sandwiches to mouth-watering brownies and cakes, the menu centred on bite-size delights perfect for little hands and mouths.

An ice cream cart spread smiles with wonderland-inspired flavours while a chocolate fountain and cupcake-decorating activity ensured a playful, interactive element for the brave guests. Other happiness-inducing experiences included games and entertainment such as balloon sculpture, air hockey, Playdoh modelling, fuse ball, and colouring while "real life" characters like Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Princess Elsa and Barnie lifted spirits.

The 'Wonderland Tea Time' was a natural next-step from the success of the Hotel's heart-warming 'Hats On' event - a fun celebration where everyone turned up in their choice of headwear

in support of children with life limiting and life threatening conditions who are in need of palliative care - that took place on October 13. The Four Seasons For Good team visited Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH) to set up a food stand filled with treats, drinks and desserts, and provide fun activities like face painting and games.

"It was a privilege to be able to support these incredible children and their families through our collaboration with KACCH & BACCH at both events,' comments Martin Kipping, General Manager at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya. "Witnessing the kids' faces lit up with smiles and playing happily together is something that will stay with our team forever. We hope to be able to continue to spread a little joy during hard times and create cherished memories through future events.



Photo during the Four Seasons Hotel children event.

Not only was Swift's landmark Eras Tour the No. 1 tour both worldwide and in North America, but she also brought in a whopping \$1.04 billion with 4.35 million tickets sold across 60 tour dates, the concert trade publication found.

Pollstar data is pulled from box office reports, venue capacity estimates, historical Pollstar venue ticket sales data, and other undefined research, collected from Nov. 17, 2022 to Nov. 15, 2023.

Representatives for the publication did not immediately clarify if they adjusted past tour data to match 2023 inflation in naming Swift the first to break the billion-dollar threshold. Pollstar also found that Swift brought in approximately \$200 million

in merch sales and her blockbuster film adaptation of the tour, "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour," has reportedly earned approximately \$250 million in sales, making it the highest-grossing concert film of all time.

According to their estimates, Pollstar predicts a big 2024 for Swift as well. The magazine projects the Eras Tour will once again reach \$1

billion within their eligibility window, meaning Swift is likely to bring in over \$2 billion over the span of the tour.

Worldwide, Swift's tour was followed by Beyoncé in second, Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band in third, Coldplay in fourth, Harry Styles

in fifth, and Morgan Wallen, Ed Sheeran, Pink, The Weeknd and Drake. In North America, there was a similar top 10: Swift, followed by Beyoncé, Morgan Wallen, Drake, P!nk, Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band, Ed Sheeran, George Strait, Karol G, and RBD.

Beyond the Swift of it all, 2023 was a landmark year for concert sales: worldwide, the top 100 tours of the year saw a 46% jump from last year, bringing in \$9.17 billion compared to 2022's \$6.28 billion.

In North America, that number jumped from \$4.77 billion last year Earlier this week, Swift was named Time Magazine's Person of the

Year. Last month, Apple Music named her its artist of the year; Spotify revealed she was 2023's most-streamed artist globally, raking in more than 26.1 billion streams since Jan. 1 and beating Bad Bunny's threeyear record. (AP)

Nicki Minaj's highly anticipated fifth studio album, "Pink Friday 2," is finally here.

Out Friday, the 10-time Grammy nominee's 41st birthday, "Pink Friday 2" is Minaj's first full-length release since 2018's "Queen."

The 22-track release is stacked with features, including contributions from Drake, Lil Wayne, J. Cole, Lil Uzi Vert, Future, Tate Kobang, Lourdiz, Skillibeng, Skeng, and Tasha Cobbs Leonard.

Little was known about the album prior to its release, which makes its surprises even more effective. Opener "Are You Gone Already" includes a sample of **Billie Eilish**'s 2019 breathy cut "when the party's over"; Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" makes an appearance on "Pink Friday Girls."

The hyper-energetic "Everybody" with Lil Uzi Vert plays with a chopped-up sample of Danish pop duo Junior Senior's 2002 retro-hit

And there must be something to pulling from addictive Y2K production, because "Red Ruby Da Sleeve" samples Lumidee's 2003 hit 'Never Leave You (Uh Oooh, Uh Oooh)."

The reality is, of course, that Minaj is a master of borrowing from immediately recognizable sounds and making it her own with her idiosyncratic flow - standing on the shoulders of giants and offering something completely her own (and F-R-E-A-K-y) in the same breath.

"Fallin 4 U" is airy alt-R&B stacked with strings that would make Enya envious, Minaj and Drake reunite on the Afrobeats-heavy "Needle." "This entire album will be the biggest gift I have ever given humanity thus far," Minaj said in a recent livestream. "I have never in my life

been so in love with something that I'm working on."

The original "Pink Friday" was released in 2010, with her sophomore album, "Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded," following two years

The road to "Pink Friday 2" has been long. Fans suspected it was on the horizon when the rapper tweeted a simple three-character message, "PF2," in the summer of 2020. But it wasn't until this past June that Minaj announced the album title. The release date, originally slated for Oct. 20, was pushed back twice, too.

In the days leading up to the December release of "Pink Friday 2," Minaj's loyal fans, called Barbz, inspired headlines when they created

"Gag City," a pink AI metropolis inspired by the album's cover. In September, Minaj hosted the 2023 MTV Video Music Awards and performed her latest single, the dreamy "Last Time I Saw You" before teasing a fiery new trap cut from "Pink Friday 2," now revealed to be "Big Difference."

#### **Variety**



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Timothee Chalamet, (center), in a scene from 'Wonka.' (AP)

Film

#### Chalamet and Grant bring heart and whimsy to musical

# A world of pure imagination in 'Wonka'

false claims about the riot at the US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. **Donner** had not shown he faced illegal discrimination. The nation's capital bans discrimination based

nor that his bosses knew and fired him for it, Fox lawyers said. "That law does not protect employees of news media organizations based on their differences

of opinion over reporting and commentary on matters of public concern," Fox attorneys wrote.

a longtime Republican who affiliated with Democrats more recently. The network also questioned

whether he had properly informed managers when taking sick time after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and whether he filed the lawsuit within the time allowed by the law.

Donner's lawsuit said he was fired in 2022 as part of a "purge' of employees who refused to only report information that would "appease" former President Donald **Trump** and his supporters. He had been inside the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and called to scream at the control room when he learned Fox News was referred to the rioters as peaceful, he wrote in his suit. (AP)

**LONDON:** Thousands of people lined the streets of **Dublin** on Friday to say goodbye to The Pogues frontman Shane MacGowan as his coffin wound through the Irish capital before a small-town funeral attended by family, neighbors and friends including Johnny Depp

MacGowan died Nov. 30 at the age of 65 after a lifetime of drinking, carousing and writing songs that fused Irish traditional music

and Ireland's President Michael D. Higgins was among hundreds of people who packed St. Mary of the Rosary Church in the town of

**Nenagh** for the funeral Mass. Mourners at the service, in MacGowan's ancestral home county of **Tipperary** some 100

**WASHINGTON:** Fox News pushed back Friday against a former reporter's lawsuit saying he was targeted and fired for challenging The network argued that Jason

on political party membership or endorsement, but Donner hasn't shown he joined a political party,

Donner said in his lawsuit he was

and Nick Cave.

with the spirit of punk. He became an Irish cultural icon,

miles (160 kilometers) southwest

LOS ANGELES, Dec 9, (AP): Hugh Grant learned some years ago that if a filmmaker doesn't make something from the heart, it shows. The films that work best, and are most loved, he's found, are the ones that the directors really meant.

It applied to his romantic comedies with Richard Curtis as well as "Paddington 2." And he's pretty sure it's true of "Wonka." The lavish big screen musical about a young Willy Wonka - before Charlie, before the chocolate factory - is dancing into theaters this month with its heart on its velvet sleeve.

Like the "Paddington" movies, "Wonka" was dreamt up by Paul King, a lifetime Roald Dahl fan and a writer and director whom his collaborators somewhat universally agree may actually be Paddington in a human costume. With a beloved troupe of actors, including Grant, Timothée Chalamet, Ôlivia Colman, Sally Hawkins as well as newcomer Calah Lane, its vibrant costumes and sets and a contagious "let's put on a show" energy, "Wonka" feels like a modern homage to classic MGM productions of the

But King wasn't so sure about "Wonka" at first. He worried that like so many other "brands," a young Willy Wonka movie was something devised in a boardroom with visions of "12,000 movies and a TV

Then he went back to the book, which he'd read so many times as a child that the pages fell out of the spine. This time he found not just a great character in Willy Wonka, an unapologetically flamboyant dreamer whom Dahl also seemed a bit obsessed with, but also a breakthrough about his work.

"I realized how informative Dahl had been to everything that I love about family movies. They've got these great heightened characters, but there's a real beating heart to them," King said. "It was like, oh this is the mothership.

And, with his "Paddington 2" co-writer Simon Farnaby (of "stop that stunning sister" fame), he would spend years toiling over what they're calling a companion piece to the Gene Wilder "Charlie and the

Chocolate Factory." Chalamet, the wildly popular Oscar-nominated actor of "Call Me By Your Name" and "Dune," wasn't technically a song and dance man (though his digital footprint from his teen years contains some evidence to the contrary) when he signed on to play Wonka. But King was convinced that he was the perfect person to balance "sincere" and "ridiculous" thanks in part to his memorable (and "hella-tight") performance in Greta Gerwig's "Lady Bird."

This was a little baffling to Chalamet, who only learned this at the premiere in London. But for him, "Wonka" was a chance to do something a bit different, on a grand scale. He also understands audiences being a little skeptical of any spin-off of a beloved character, but he takes comfort in something Gerwig said while they were making "Little Women."

#### Original

He recalled her telling him "something like, 'For anybody that's saying that a lot of versions of this have been made, you know, when it's done well, no one complains," he said. "I think Paul really did that

here.' In addition to "Pure Imagination" and the Oompa Loompa song from the 1971 film, Neil Hannon, frontman of The Divine Comedy, wrote six original songs, while Christopher Gatelli ("Hail, Caesar!") oversaw the choreography.

Though Chalamet grew up surrounded by dancers (his sister, mother and grandmother included), and had done musicals at his performing arts high school, he didn't fully appreciate the exhaustive rigor of it. He'd trained for "Wonka" for months, but he was still not fully prepared for how taxing "take 13" of a largescale dance number would be.

"He's very modest and I think that's one of the nice things about him," said King, who has compared Chalamet's singing voice to Bing Crosby.

The sets, overseen by production designer Nathan Crowley ("Interstellar") were also something grand to behold. King wanted the city to look like "the best of Europe." In total, they built more than 50 set across three soundstages, a backlot and an aircraft hanger around Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, in addition to several on-site locations in the U.K. to give the film its whimsical, but grounded feel. Lindy Hemming ("Paddington") designed the vibrant costumes.

Perhaps the most inspired twist of "Wonka" is Grant, an actor made world famous for his good looks and charm and romantic leads, who is playing an Oompa-Loompa.

King had already introduced Grant to a new generation of youngsters having him as the washed-up actor Phoenix Buchanan in "Paddington 2." When he was re-rereading "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" he found "Hugh's voice" coming into his head for the

devious little workers. "They're so biting and satirical and funny, but they've got a real kind of edge to them ... and they take an enormous delight in these children's demise,' King said. "I had this vision of Hugh Grant, you know, this high with orange skin and green hair. And once you have that picture come into your mind, you

have to try and get it out there." Grant is also a self-proclaimed miserable curmudgeon, which he'll say with a straight face right before saying something completely contradictory. In his interviews, which often go viral, he's witty and wry and

reliably unreliable. Yet when he talks about King, and "Wonka," and it all being from the heart, something melts away.

"One of the things that made those romantic comedies that I made with Richard Curtis work, apart from the fact that he's very good at writing comedy was that he meant it. He really cared about love and he was always falling in love, falling out of love and being traumatized by it. But he meant it," Grant said. "Paul King means all this. The message of Paddington and the message of this one, you know, family matters, the people you share your chocolate with. It's not a trite, tacked on motto. It comes from his heart.'

And it's easy to believe that Grant, miserable though he may be, actually means it too.

of Dublin, included former Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams and Irish actor Aidan Gillen, who both gave readings. There was also a recorded reading from Bono of U2. Depp, a friend of the musician, was among those who helped lead the prayers.

Father Pat Gilbert welcomed "the world of people this great man influenced, encouraged,



MacGowan

on television and online. The priest called MacGowan "a poet, lyricist, singer, trailblazer" whose "raw, vibrant, energetic, earthy soul-filled expression gave us hope and heart and hankering.

entertained and touched" to the

service, which was broadcast live

At the front of the Catholic church, the singer's casket was heaped with red roses, alongside a black-and-white photo of a youthful MacGowan. Friends and bandmates carried up symbols of MacGowan's life, including a Led Zeppelin record, a copy of James Joyce's "Finnegan's Wake," a DVD of "The Godfather," a statue of the Virgin Mary and a Buddha.

"Shane was a lover of all reli-

gions," his widow Victoria Mary Clarke said. Musicians including Cave and

Imelda May performed several of MacGowan's songs during the service, including a rousing rendition of "Fairytale of New York" led by Glen Hansard and Lisa O'Neill that had the congregation dancing in the aisles.(AP)

### People & Places

#### **Books**

#### **Memoir soars**

### Streisand reflects on her extraordinary life

NEW YORK, Dec 9, (AP): Before she's ready to talk about her memoir, Barbra Streisand needs to pull herself away from current events.

"I'm watching (expelled Rep.) George Santos, and worrying about the world and democracy," she says at the start of a telephone interview, when asked how's

"I have to say," she adds a moment later, "I guess I'm OK.

There are reasons "My Name is Barbra" took as long to wrap up as even her most challenging film projects. For decades, she rarely had the kind of solitary time needed to settle down and write. And even with her film and concert career essentially over - "I don't enjoy performing anymore,'

she says - the longtime liberal and political activist remains absorbed in the news no matter how distressing, from next year's US presidential election to the war in the Middle East. For Streisand, long one of the most private of superstars, opening up about herself is an ongoing challenge. But, as she explains in her memoir, she felt an "obligation to the people truly interested" in her work, in



Streisand

the process behind her work "and perhaps the person behind the process. "I thought writing a book would be easier than mak-

"I thought writing a book would be easier than making a movie, but boy, was I wrong," she writes.

Published in early November, "My Name is Barbra" is a nearly 1,000 page memoir that covers one of the epic narratives in modern show business - her uncompromising rise from working class Brooklyn in the 1940s and '50s to global fame. Streisand's records have sold more than 100 million copies worldwide and her honors range from multiple Emmys and Grammys. her honors range from multiple Emmys and Grammys to a lifetime achievement award from The American Film Institute to a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

#### Memories

Publishers had sought her life story since at least the 1980s, when then-Doubleday editor Jacqueline Kennedy lobbied in vain to sign up Streisand, who felt she wasn't ready. But starting in the late 1990s, Streisand began writing down memories - in longhand, because she couldn't type. She agreed to a book deal with Viking in 2015, and notes that a manuscript she expected to finish in two years ended up taking a decade, a delay she was relieved to learn is not uncommon in

"I always wonder about that," Streisand, 81, says during the interview. "Like, great authors, if it takes them a long time, how do they make a living? It helps to have outside income.

In her memoir, Streisand shares vivid, detailed memories of her breakthrough Broadway and film roles in "Funny Girl," of recording such chart-topping albums as "People" and "Guilty" and making such signature Streisand films as "The Way We Were," "A Star Is Born" and "Yentl," which marked the beginning of her unique achievements as a woman who produced, directed and starred in her own movies. She also looks back on her 8-year marriage to Elliott Gould, her affairs with Ryan O'Neal and Don Johnson among others and her enduring relationship with James Brolin, whom she married in 1998.

"Nothing's impossible," is how she begins the book's epilogue.

"My Name is Barbra" reached the top five on the New York Times bestseller list and has received the kinds of reviews her films and albums inspired: "At heart this is a story so bursting with life, fury, unbelievable ambition and food (Streisand loves to eat) that you come away from it exhausted but smiling," wrote the Guardian's Emma Brockes.

During her recent interview, Streisand reflected on her tastes in music, the films she made and those she enjoys and her sense of destiny, dating back to child-

She recalled seeing "The Diary of Anne Frank" on stage in the 1950s. Even then, she just knew she could

"I said to myself, 'I'm 14. I'm Jewish, and I can play that part.' Well, how did I know that? I don't know. So there's a part of me that's very self-sufficient or believes in myself."

But there's another part, too, a negativity, a doubt - "don't know if it's just people who are artistic," she says, but it's a dichotomy.

"And then there's the part that knows from your

soul, from my DNA, from my father, maybe even my mother, that tells you 'You can do it.' I don't know how to describe it. It doesn't come in a bottle.'

#### Inspired

Her father passed away when she was in infancy. She was known for that, as "the girl with no father," she recalls, and for having "a good voice." More inspired as a teenager by the soundtrack to "Guys and Dolls" than by the latest hit from Elvis Presley or Chuck Berry, she preferred Broadway musicals to rock 'n' roll.

"I looked for the lyrics first. If I relate to the lyric, I can sing the song. I took for granted my voice.

"They (show songs) came from Broadway musicals. There is a character playing those parts and singing those songs. So there's something to act. There's a beginning, a middle and an end. (With rock songs), you just repeat the phrase. There's a phrase and then there's a bridge and then there's the phrase. And I don't know. They just never appealed to me.'

She shared a note she sent to director Martin Scorsese after seeing "Killers of the Flower Moon."

"These movies you made are so amazing. And the actors' performances and the script and just, I'm so impressed. And I feel very bad that I turned you down, if it was you, that asked me to be in 'Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore.' (Ellen Burstyn starred as an aspiring singer in the 1974 release). And because I was told it was the part of a bad singer in a nightclub. So I thought, 'I'm not that good an actress at that time to play a bad singer."

She says she ended playing the role in "that flop I made," referring to the 1981 comedy "All Night

Looking back at her career, Streisand recalls a framed photo she had in her old home, before she moved to Malibu, California. It was of an interview she did at age 19.

"They asked me, 'What do you want to be?' It was like, 'Well, I want to do lots of things. I want to act, sing.' Oh, I even said I would like to direct an opera someday. Which I always thought I'd like to do. I never got around to that. Although it's possible that's something I could do.'



Los Angeles Angels TV play-by-play announcer Patrick O'Neal, (right), poses with his father, actor Ryan O'Neal before a baseball game against the Oakland Athletics in Anaheim, Calif., Saturday, May 21, 2022. O'Neal, who was nominated for an Oscar for the tear-jerker 'Love Story' and played opposite his precocious daughter Tatum in 'Paper Moon,' has died. O'Neal's son Patrick said on Instagram that his father died Friday, Dec. 8. (AP)



Adele appears at the Brit Awards in London on Feb. 8, 2022. Adele paid homage to the many women - including her mother, grandmother and aunts - who helped shape her world and processely the seeks proceed the and personality as she accepted the Sherry Lansing leadership award at The Hollywood Reporter's Women in Entertainment breakfast gala Thursday, Dec. 7. (AP)

#### **Variety**

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif.: Adele paid homage to the many women -- including her mother, grandmother and aunts - who helped shape her world and personality since she was a child.

The superstar singer then praised actor Kerry Washington and found herself in awe while in the presence of singer Dua **Lipa** after she received the prestigious Sherry Lansing Leadership Award at The Hollywood Reporter's Women in Entertainment breakfast gala Thursday. She was handed the award by Helen Mirren for excelling as a trailblazer and her philanthropy work in Hollywood.

"You are the absolute epitome of what it is to open doors and more importantly leave them open," said Adele of Lansing. the first female to head a Hollywood studio. The singer has been a supporter of the LGBTQ and women rights, and associated with an organization that helps provide clean water to countries in need.

Mirren, an Oscar winner, applauded Adele for her musical prowess. The actor said she felt a "shiver" down her back when she listened to the singer's debut single "Hometown Glory."

'That chill comes just a few times in your life when you realize you are listening to a brilliant and game-changing new artist," Mirren said of Adele, a 16-time Grammy winner who also has collected an Oscar and Emmy during her lauded career. "I thought, 'Wow, a goddess walks amongst us.'

Adele's shoot-from-the-hip speech, which involved several F-bombs, drew laughter and applause from the audience She said the women in her family molded her into the person she is today through their boisterous and strong personas.

"They are a force to be reckoned with and quite frankly terrifying. But that was because they had to be," the singer said. "They had to learn the hard way what it is to be a woman. In turn, they hardened. Their character was their armor. But thanks to them, my character is my skin.

In her speech, Adele expressed her gratitude toward Kerry Washington, who was earlier honored with the Equity in Entertainment Award, which recognized her for amplifying the voices of underrepresented communities in the entertainment industry.

Actor Ariana DeBose, who presented

Washington with the award, admired how the "Scandal" actor "squashed the traditional stereotype" of being a Black woman in Hollywood. "Every component of the career that

(Washington) built, the empire that she has created speaks to equity," said DeBose, who starred in the "West Side Story." "How has she done that? By being herself and taking up space." (AP)

**NEW YORK:** The actor **Jonathan Majors** 

#### **Obituary**

#### Hollywood heartthrob of the '70s

# Legendary actor O'Neal dies at 82

LOS ANGELES, Dec 9, (AP): Ryan O'Neal, the heartthrob actor who went from a TV soap opera to an Oscar-nominated role in "Love Story" and delivered a wry performance opposite his charismatic 9-year-old daughter Tatum in "Paper Moon," died Friday, his son said.

"My dad passed away peacefully today, with his loving team by his side supporting him and loving him as he would us," Patrick O'Neal, a Los An-

geles sportscaster, posted on Instagram. No cause of death was given. Ryan O'Neal was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2012, a decade after he was first diagnosed with chronic leukemia.

"My father, Ryan O'Neal, has always been my hero," Patrick O'Neal wrote, adding, "He is a Hollywood legend. Full stop."

"He meant the world to me. I loved him very much and know he loved me too," Tatum O'Neal told People magazine in a statement. "I'll miss him forever. and I feel very lucky that we ended on such good terms."

Ryan O'Neal was among the biggest movie stars in the world in the 1970s, working across genres with many of the era's most celebrated directors including Peter Bogdanovich on "Paper Moon" and "What's Up, Doc?" and Stanley Kubrick on "Barry Lyndon." He often used his boyish, blond good looks to play men who hid shadowy or sinister backgrounds behind their clean-cut images.

O'Neal maintained a steady television acting career into his 70s in the 2010s, appearing for stints on "Bones' and "Desperate Housewives," but his longtime relationship with Farrah Fawcett and his tumultuous family life kept him in news.

Twice divorced, O'Neal was romantically involved with Fawcett for nearly 30 years, and they had a son, Redmond, born in 1985. The couple split in 1997, but reunited a few years later. He remained by Fawcett's side as she battled cancer, which killed her in 2009 at age 62.

With his first wife, Joanna Moore, O'Neal fathered actors Griffin O'Neal and Tatum O'Neal, his co-star in the 1973 movie "Paper Moon," for which she won an Oscar for best supporting actress. He had son Patrick with his second wife, Leigh Taylor-Young.

Ryan O'Neal had his own best actor Oscar nomination for the 1970 tearjerker drama "Love Story," co-starring Ali MacGraw, about a young couple who fall in love, marry and discover she is dying of cancer. The movie includes the memorable, but often satirized line: "Love means never having to say you're sorry."

The actor had at times strained relationships with three of his children, including estrangement from his daughter, squabbles with son Griffin and a drug-related arrest sparked by a probation check of his son Redmond. The personal drama often over-shadowed his later career, although his attempts to reconcile with Tatum O'Neal were turned into a short-lived reality series.

O'Neal played bit parts and performed some stunt work before claiming a lead role on the prime-time soap opera "Peyton Place" (1964-69),

which also made a star of Mia Farrow.
From there O'Neal jumped to the big screen with 1969's "The Big Bounce," which co-stared his then-wife, Taylor-Young. But it was "Love Story" that made him a movie star.

The romantic melodrama was the highest-grossing film of 1970, became one of Paramount Pictures' biggest hits and collected seven Oscar nominations, including one for best picture.

#### Remembered

After "Love Story" made him a major movie star, O'Neal was considered for seemingly every major leading role in Hollywood. Paramount even pushed for him to to star as Michael Corleone in "The Godfather" before Al Pacino got the part at the insistence of director

Francis Ford Coppola. O'Neal then starred for Bogdanovich as a bumbling professor opposite Barbra Streisand in the 1972 screwball

comedy "What's Up, Doc?" "So sad to hear the news of Ryan O'Neal's passing," Streisand, who also starred with O'Neal in the 1979 boxing rom-com "The Main Event," posted on Instagram. "He was funny and charming, and he will be remembered."

The year after "What's Up, Doc?" Bogdanovich cast him in the Depression-

era con artist comedy "Paper Moon." In it, O'Neal played an unscrupulous Bible salesman preying on widows he located through obituary notices. His real-life daughter, Tatum, played a trash-talking, cigarette-smoking orphan who needs his help - and eventually helps redeem him.

Although critics praised both actors, the little girl's brash performance overshadowed her father's and made her the youngest person in history to win a competitive Academy Award. She was 10 when the award was presented in 1974. (Younger performers such as Shirley Temple have won special Oscars.)

The elder O'Neal's next major film was Kubrick's 18th century epic "Barry Lyndon," in which he played a poor Irish rogue who traveled Europe trying to pass himself off as an aristocrat.

Filming the three-hour movie was tedious work, however, and Kubrick's notorious perfectionism created a rift between him and the actor that never healed.

O'Neal then reteamed with Tatum in Bogdanovich's early Hollywood comedy "Nickelodeon" (1976). But the film was a flop and they never worked together again. An attempt to capitalize on his "Love Story" character, Oliver Barrett, with the sequel "Oliver's Story" (1978) resulted in another flop.

Father and daughter drifted apart as Tatum grew older, with the elder actor learning about his daughter's marriage to tennis great John McEnroe by a belated telegram, Ryan O'Neal wrote in a 2012 book about his relationship with

"A door inside me locked the morning the telegram came, and I am still blindly searching for the key to open

it," O'Neal wrote in "Both of Us."
O'Neal's career cooled further in the 1980s with the emerald heist drama "Green Ice" (1981) and the 1984 comedy "Irreconcilable Differences," in which he played a busy father in an unhappy marriage whose daughter, played by 9-year-old Drew Barrymore, tries to divorce her parents.

The decade was also a low-point in O'Neal's personal life. His son Griffin faced numerous brushes with the law, including a 1986 boating accident that killed Gian-Carlo Coppola, 23, son of movie director Francis Ford Coppola in Maryland. Griffin O'Neal was convicted of negligently and recklessly operating a boat, received a community service sentence and later served a brief stint in jail as a result.

#### Relationship

With his Hollywood status diminishing, Ryan O'Neal began appearing in TV movies and eventually returned to series television opposite then-lover Fawcett with the 1991 sitcom "Good Sports," but the show ran only one season.

Both acknowledged the work put a strain on their relationship.

"We get into fights," O'Neal said in 1991. "She's tough. She expects to be treated well. On a set that can get lost when you're trying to create a moment and you're fighting the clock."

O'Neal began accepting more supporting roles with the 1989 film "Chances Are." He began a second career as a character actor, playing a husband who hires a hitman to kill his wife in "Faithful" (1996) and a mysterious tycoon in the blackmail comedy "Zero Effect" (1998).

By then his relationship with Fawcett had ended, although they remained close and eventually rekindled their romance in the 2000s. The volatile O'Neal family dynamics that had taxed their relationship before, however, remained.

In 2007 the elder O'Neal was arrested in 2007 for alleged assault and firing a weapon in an altercation with Griffin, but charges were never pursued. Their son Redmond was repeatedly arrested, jailed and spent several years in court-mandated rehab.

A probation check on Redmond O'Neal in September 2008 at his father's Malibu home led to the actor's arrest for methamphetamine possession. Ryan O'Neal pleaded guilty to the charge and entered a drug diversion program, but he publicly denied the drugs were his. He said he confiscated them from his son and was trying

begged his former girlfriend not to seek medical attention after an incident that left her with a head injury last year, warning she had "no perspective of what could happen" if the truth got out, according to previously undisclosed text messages read at the actor's criminal trial on Friday.

"They will ask you questions, and as I don't think you actually protect us, it could lead to an investigation even if you do lie and they suspect something," Majors wrote to his girlfriend, Grace Jabbari, on Sept. 22, 2022.





Majors: "Why would I tell them what really happened when it's clear I want to be The messages were read on the fifth day

Jabbari replied that she would tell

doctors she bumped her head, assuring

of the Manhattan trial against Jonathan Majors, a rising Hollywood star who is fighting to salvage his reputation after his arrest for allegedly assaulting Jabbari in a separate incident, months later, in New York City. (AP)

#### **Experts warn of possible side effects**

# Hope for sickle cell patients: US approves 2 gene therapies

NEW YORK, Dec 9, (AP): Regulators on Friday approved two gene therapies for sickle cell disease that doctors hope can cure the painful, inherited blood disorder that afflicts mostly Black people in

The Food and Drug Administration said the one-time treatments can be used for patients 12 and older with severe forms of the disease. One, made by Vertex Pharmaceuticals and CRISPR Therapeutics, is the first approved therapy based on CRISPR, the gene editing tool that won its inventors the Nobel Prize in 2020. The other is made by Bluebird Bio and works differently.

'Sickle cell disease is a rare, debilitating and life-threatening blood disorder with significant unmet need," the FDA's Dr. Nicole Verdun said in a statement announcing the approvals. "We are excited to advance the field especially for individuals whose lives have been severely disrupted by the disease.'

The two gene therapies are the first approved in the US for sickle cell. The FDA has previously OK'd 15 gene therapies for other conditions. Some have list prices in the millions of dollars, and the sickle cell therapies will too.

In the US, an estimated 100,000 people have sickle cell and about a fifth of them have the severe form. Sickle cell is most common among Black people and 1 in 365 Black babies are born with the disease nationally. Scientists believe being a carrier of the sickle cell trait helps protect against severe malaria, so the disease occurs more often in mosquitoprone regions such as Africa or in people whose ancestors lived in those places.

#### Mutation

The disease affects hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen. A genetic mutation causes the cells to become sickle or crescentshaped, which can block blood flow, causing excruciating pain, organ damage, stroke and other problems.

Current treatments include medications and blood transfusions. The only permanent solution is a bone marrow transplant, which must come from a closely matched donor and brings a risk of rejection.

No donor is required for the gene therapies, which permanently change DNA in the patient's blood cells. The goal of the Vertex therapy, called Casgevy, is to help the body go back to producing a fetal form of hemoglobin that's present at birth - it's the adult form that's defective in people with sickle cell disease. CRISPR is used to knock out a gene in stem cells collected from the patient.

Bluebird's treatment, called Lyfgenia, aims to add copies of a modified gene, which helps red blood cells produce "anti-sickling" hemoglobin that prevents or reverses misshapen cells.

When patients get the treatments, stem cells are removed from their blood and sent to a lab. Before getting the altered cells back, they must undergo chemotherapy. The process requires at least two hospitalizations, one lasting four to six weeks

Still, many patients say they'd consider gene therapy given the seriousness of the disease.

Jalen Matthews of Louisville, Ken-

at birth and had her first pain episode at age 9. Three years later, the disease led to a spinal cord stroke that left her with some paralysis in her left arm and leg.

"I had to learn how to walk again, feed myself, clothe myself, basically learn how to do everything all over again," said Matthews, now 26.

Today, she keeps her sickle cell at bay with transfusions every two months or so, with five units of her blood replaced with healthy cells. She said gene therapy could be a better option and she plans to ask her doctor about it.

"This one-time kind of cure is very much needed," said Matthews.

The FDA's approval is the first for Bluebird's treatment; Vertex has been previously authorized in Britain and Bahrain.

Studies testing the therapies suggest they work well. Of 31 people treated in the pivotal Vertex study with sufficient follow-up, 29 were free of pain crises for at least a year. In the Bluebird study, 28 of 32 patients had no severe pain or organ damage between six and 18 months after the therapy.

But doctors point out there are pos-

sible side effects and the long-term outcomes are unknown. For both, the necessary chemotherapy comes with risks such as infertility, hair loss and vulnerability to serious infection.

With the Bluebird therapy, blood cancer has occurred, so the FDA said the label will include a "black box warning" about that risk. With the Vertex therapy. some scientists worry that CRISPR brings the possibility of "off-target effects," which are unexpected changes to a person's genome.

"It's important to be cautious and to be optimistic about this therapy, but also know that there's still not a ton of experience with it," said Dr. Benjamin Watkins, director of the pediatric stem cell and cell therapy program at Children's Hospital New Orleans.

#### Equipment

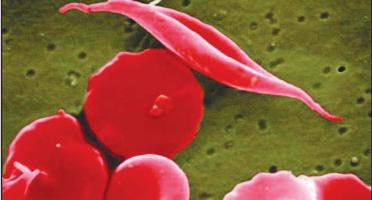
Doctors said they don't expect every medical center to offer the gene therapies because they require so much equipment and coordination between medical specialists. They also don't expect lots of people to seek them right away. Watkins said some may want to wait until more people get the treatments.

Experts also warned that cost could be a hurdle. The list price for Bluebird Bio is \$3.1 million and for Vertex, \$2.2 million. What patients might pay will depend on insurance coverage and other factors. To help cover the cost, the US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced a plan that aims to establish partnerships with state Medicaid agencies and drug companies.

But eventually, gene therapy "could be transformative and really change the landscape of sickle cell disease," said Dr. Monica Bhatia, who treats children with the disease at NewYork-Presbyte-

Matthews, who volunteers with The Sickle Cell Association of Kentuckiana, said she's hopeful the treatments will

have a big impact. "It's a blessing," she said. "It will really benefit all of us in the sickle cell



Testing causes anxiety and costs money

# **Breast cancer survivors may not** need yearly mammograms: study

NEW YORK, Dec 9, (AP): Annual mammograms are recommended indefinitely for breast cancer survivors in many countries, including the US, but a large British study finds that less frequent screening is just as good.

Yearly screening is meant to monitor whether cancer has come back. All that testing causes anxiety for patients and costs money.

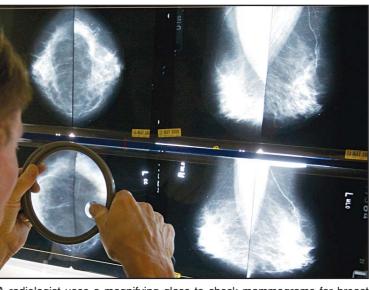
Until now, there wasn't solid evidence for when women could ease back on yearly mammograms, said Janet Dunn of the University of Warwick, who led the study funded by the research arm of the UK's National Health Service.

The study showed less frequent mammograms are just as good as a yearly schedule for breast cancer survivors 50 and older.

"It's really all about giving the ladies the all-clear a bit earlier if you can," Dunn said. The findings were being discussed Friday at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium. The unpublished study has not yet gone through a full peer review.

Researchers followed more than 5,200 women. The participants were 50 and older, and had undergone successful breast cancer surgery, mostly lumpectomies. After three years of annual screening, half were randomly assigned to get mammograms every year and the other half to get less frequent

Both groups did well, with remark-



A radiologist uses a magnifying glass to check mammograms for breast cancer in Los Angeles, May 6, 2010. (AP)

ably similar results. Six years later, 95% of both groups were still cancer free. Breast cancer survival was 98% in both groups.

"This is an eye-opening study," said breast cancer specialist Dr. Laura Esserman of the University of California, San Francisco who was not involved in the new study but is leading research on a personalized approach to screening. "I think people will be very surThe new study is "very strong," but more research will be needed to change U.S. guidelines, said Corinne Leach of Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. She led the development of a 2015 U.S. guideline that calls for indefinite annual screening for these kinds of pa-

"One study alone typically does not move the needle on guidelines,' Leach said. "This study inspires other researchers to do more work in this area. And that is what could lead to a

In the new study, most women in both groups followed their assigned screening schedule. Some in the annual group missed screenings and some in the less frequent group were screened ahead of schedule. When the researchers analyzed the findings based on what the women actually did, the conclusions remained the

Survivors "can breathe easily" three years after surgery as they resume a less frequent mammogram schedule, Dunn said. The findings are likely to change practice in the U.K. and "will be influential globally," she said.

How often is less frequent? In the study, it depended on the type of sur-

In the less-frequent screening group, women who'd had mastectomies had a mammogram once every three years. Those who'd had lumpectomies, also called breast conservation surgery, had mammograms every two years.

The findings do not apply to younger breast cancer survivors, who were excluded from the study and tend to have more aggressive cancers. And women who have both breasts removed don't need mammograms.

"It's high time that we have a more personalized approach to screening, not just for women who've never had breast cancer, but for those who've had breast cancer," Esserman said.

#### Black women at greater risk

# Disparity reported in US maternal mortality rate

JACKSON, Miss., Dec 9, (AP): Black people make up about 38% of Mississippi's population, but a new study shows that Black women were four times more likely to die of causes directly related to pregnancy than white women in the state in 2020.

"It is imperative that this racial inequity is not only recognized, but that concerted efforts are made at the institutional, community, and state levels to reduce these disparate outcomes," wrote Dr. Michelle Owens and Dr. Courtney Mitchell, leaders of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee that conducted the study.

The Mississippi State Department of Health published the findings Wednes-

The committee said 80% of pregnancy-related deaths in Mississippi between 2016 and 2020 were considered preventable, and cardiovascular disease and hypertension remain top contributors to maternal mortality.

#### Resources

Women need comprehensive primary care before, during and after pregnancy, but many people live in areas where health care services are scarce, Owens and Mitchell wrote.

"A substantial portion of this care is being shouldered by smaller hospitals with limited resources, many of whom are facing possible closure and limiting or discontinuing the provision of obstetrical services, further increasing Advocates raise concerns

# **US** startup illegally selling endangered fish health drink

MEXICO CITY, Dec 9: (AP): Environmental watchdogs accused a Mexico-based startup Thursday of violating international trade law by selling a health supplement made from endangered totoaba fish to several countries including the US and China.

Advocates told The Associated Press they also have concerns that the company, The Blue Formula, could be selling fish that is illegally caught in the wild.

The product, which the company describes as "nature's best kept secret," is a small sachet of powder containing collagen taken from the fish that is designed to be mixed into a drink. Under the Convention on Interna-

tional Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, to which Mexico and the US are both signatories, any export for sale of totoaba fish is illegal, unless bred in captivity with a particular permit. As a listed protected species, commercial import is also illegal under US trade law

The environmental watchdog group Cetacean Action Treasury first cited the company in November. Then on Thursday, a coalition of environmental charities - The Center for Biological Diversity, National Resources Defense Council and Animal Welfare Institute filed a written complaint to CITES.

The Blue Formula did not immediately respond to an AP request for comment.

The company claims on its website to operate "100%" sustainably by sourcing fish from Cygnus Ocean, a farm which has a permit to breed totoaba, and using a portion of their profits to release some farmed fish back into



This electron microscope image provided by the National Institutes of Health in 2016 shows a blood cell altered by sickle cell disease, top. (AP)

the burdens borne by the individuals and their communities," they wrote.

The Maternal Mortality Review Committee was formed in 2017, and its members include physicians, nurses, public health experts and others who work in health care.

The committee found that from 2016 to 2020, Mississippi's pregnancy-related mortality rate was 35.2 deaths per 100,000 live births. The study did not provide a comparable five-year number for the U.S. but said the national rate was 20.1 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 and 32.9

deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020. Mississippi has long been one of the poorest states in the U.S., with some of the highest rates of obesity and heart

A state health department program called Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies offers care management and home visits for pregnant women and for infants who are at risk of having health prob-

"Losing one mother is too many," Dr. Daniel Edney, the state health officer, said in a news release about the maternal mortality study.

The committee recommended that Mississippi leaders expand Medicaid to people who work in lower-wage jobs that don't provide private health insurance - a policy proposal that Republican Gov. Tate Reeves has long opposed.

Earlier this year, Reeves signed a law allowing postpartum Medicaid coverage for a full year, up from two months.

Medicaid expansion is optional under the health care overhaul that then-President Barack Obama signed into law in 2010, and Mississippi is one of 10 states that have not taken the option.







Ph: 24 734 000

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp.Police station - Farwaniya www.shifaaljazeera.com.k

#### Chock, Bates top ice dance

### Malinin overcomes quad axel tumble to clinch GP Final title

BEIJING, Dec 9, (AP): Ilia Malinin could have been thrown off by a fall on his opening jump - the quad axel at the Grand Prix Final

Then again, nobody else in the world even tries it.

So instead, the 19-year-old American brushed off the mistake, put together a near-flawless free skate the rest of the way, and easily topped Japanese rival Shoma Uno to win the gold medal Saturday at National Indoor Stadium in Beijing. Malinin finished with a career-best 314.66 points, the sixth-highest men's total in history under the current scoring sys-

Uno made a mistake on a triple axel and finished with 297.34 points. Yuma Kagiyama

Japan was third. "I'm feeling just amazing. I just don't have words for what just happened," said Malinin, who captured the title 24 years after his mother, Tatiana Malinina, won the Grand Prix Final representing Uzbekistan in Saint Petersburg, Russia.



"I'm still trying to express and think of what just went on," Malinin said. "It's incredible to me. I've never felt like this before." Malinin capped a banner day for the U.S. after Madison

Chock and Evan Bates won the ice

dance for the first time. In the women's event, two-time world champion Kaori Sakamoto won her first Grand Prix Final with a free skate set to music from Lauryn Hill. She was indeed "Feeling Good" after scoring 225.70 points, easily outdistancing second-place Loena Hendrickx

of Belgium and Japanese country-

woman Hana Yoshida, who overtook

Nina Pinzarrone for bronze. Sakamoto opened with her nowsignature double axel before landing seven triple jumps, including a triple flip-triple toe loop in combination and a triple loop-triple toe loop to wrap up her program and the title.

"This year, I had a good start with the Grand Prix," Sakamoto said, "so I really wanted to keep it going like that. Being able to get first place everywhere until the Final became a strength for me, I think. So I think it will make me feel confident going forward."

Sakamoto had finished off the podium in two previous disappointing Grand Prix Finals.

Chock and Bates knew something about disappointment. The American ice dancers finished second in 2015

and then settled for three more silver medals over the years, always putting together programs that left the crowd breathless but were not quite good enough for gold. That included last year, when Chock and Bates were second to their Canadian rivals, Piper Gilles and Paul Poirier.

The reigning world champions finished with 221.61 points on Saturday, while Charlene Guignard and Marco Fabbri of Italy were second with 215.51. Gilles and Poirier, the world bronze medalists, finished third at 213.58.

"We have been to seven Finals but this feels really special," Chock said. "Being here with our teammates makes it, of course, even more fun. We really enjoy each other's company. We still have a lot of goals for ourselves on and off the ice.

That presumably includes the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy. "We are so

#### **FIGURE SKATING**

honored to compete here," Bates said. 'We are so happy with where we are at this point in the season.'

While Chock and Bates have been coy about their Olympic plans, the 19-year-old Malinin has made it clear he is targeting the Milano-Cortina Games. And given that he is already on top of the skating world, his chances of following Nathan Chen and giving the U.S. back-to-back champions looks good just over two years out.

Skating to music from the HBO hit "Succession," Malinin looked smooth and confident after his fall on the opening quad axel, a jump that he landed in the short program for the first time in skating history.



United State's Madison Chock and Evan Bates practice ahead of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating in Beijing, Wednesday, Dec 6, 2023.

# Embiid shakes off injury scare, leads 76ers to win over Hawks

Magic send Pistons to 19th straight loss



Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid (right), blocks the shot by Atlanta Hawks' De'Andre Hunter during the second half of an NBA basketball game Friday, Dec 8, 2023, in Philadelphia. (AP)

Embiid appeared to injure his left leg on a drive down the lane with just over 4 1/2 minutes left as he tried to make a move in the lane with Atlanta ahead 109-108. Even while hunched over and walking with a limp, Embiid remained in the game and scored six points in

PHILADELPHIA, Dec 9,

(AP): Joel Embiid had 38

points and 14 rebounds and

shook off an injury scare in

the late minutes to help the

Philadelphia 76ers hold off

the Atlanta Hawks 125-114

on Friday night.

rebounds along the way.

Tyrese Maxey added 30 points for Philadelphia, hitting a 3-pointer with 1:20 to play in a 13-0 run. The 76ers improved to 14-7 with their second straight victory.

the final moments, grabbing two

De'Andre Hunter led the Hawks with 24 points, and Bogdan Bogdanovic and Dejounte Murray each added 20. Star guard Trae Young sat out because

#### Magic 123, Pistons 91

In Orlando, Fla., Franz Wagner scored 27 points, Paolo Banchero added 24 and Orlando handed Detroit Pistons its 19th straight loss. Detroit is 2-20, with the losing streak the longest in one season in franchise history and second-longest overall behind a 21game slide at the end of the 1979-80 season and start of 1980-81.

The streak is the longest in the NBA since Houston lost 20 straight in 2020-21. The Philadelphia 76ers hold both NBA records, setting the single-season mark at 26 in a row in 2013-14 and the overall mark at 28 at the end of 2014-15 and start of 2015-16.

Cole Anthony added 16 points and six assists for the Magic. They shot 55.1% in winning for the 10th time in 12 games. Cade Cunningham led Detroit with 21 points.

#### Timberwolves 127, Grizzlies 103

In Memphis, Tenn., Karl-Anthony Towns scored 24 points, Rudy Gobert had 16 points, 20 rebounds and six blocks and NBA-leading Minnesota pulled away in the third quarter to beat Memphis for its sixth straight victory.

Mike Conley added 19 points and seven assists to help Minnesota im-

ARAB TIMES

the second quarter, Irving was fouled prove to 17-4. Gobert had 20 rebounds under the basket by Trail Blazers for the second straight game. Jaren Jackson Jr. led Memphis with center Duop Reath. The star guard fell 21 points. to the floor, where teammate Dwight Powell inadvertently stepped on his **Bulls 121, Spurs 112** foot, causing Irving to stay down for In San Antonio, Colby White had 24 several minutes. Irving remained in the game to shoot two free throws before

points and the Chicago Bulls overcame Victor Wembanyama's big night to hand San Antonio its franchise recordtying 16th straight loss.

Wembanyama had 21 points and 20 rebounds as the Spurs matched the team record they set last season. At 19, Wembanyama is the youngest player in league history with 20 points and 20 rebounds in a game.

Nikola Vucevic added 21 points and 16 rebounds for Chicago. De-Mar DeRozan had 20 points and 10 rebounds, Patrick Williams also had 20 points and Torey Craig finished with 16 points to help Chicago win its fourth straight and snap a seven-game

#### Thunder 138, Warriors 136, OT

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 38 points and Oklahoma City beat Golden State in overtime. Jalen Williams scored 28 points and Chet Holmgren added 21. The Thunder beat the Warriors for the third straight time in the final matchup between the teams this season.

Stephen Curry scored 10 of his 34 points in overtime for Golden State. Klay Thompson had 22 points and Draymond Green added 12 points and 13 assists before fouling out.

#### Rockets 114, Nuggets 106

In Denver, Jalen Green scored 26 points, Fred VanVleet had 25 and Houston withstood a furious Denver rally for its first road victory of the season.

Houston dropped its first eight games on the road before handing Denver its first loss at home in 10 games. The defending champion Nuggets have dropped three in a row while NBA Finals MVP Nikola Jokic continues to struggle with his shot. He finished with 23 points and 16 rebounds but was 9 for 26 from the field and is 18 of 58 over the last two games.

#### Mavericks 125, Trail Blazers 112

In Portland, Ore., Luka Doncic had 32 points and 10 assists and Dallas beat Portland after Mavericks guard Kyrie Irving injured his right foot. With just under four minutes left in

Kings 114, Suns 106 In Phoenix, De'Aaron Fox scored

28 of his 34 points in the second half, Domantas Sabonis added 15 points and 17 rebounds and Sacramento pulled away late to beat Phoenix.

The Kings won their third straight game in the series. Devin Booker led the Suns with 28 points on 10-of-14 shooting and added seven rebounds and seven assists. The short-handed

#### **BASKETBALL**

Suns played without stars Kevin Durant (ankle) and Bradley Beal (back). Celtics 133, Knicks 123

In Boston, Derrick White scored 30 points and Kristaps Porzingis had 21 after missing four games because of a strained left calf to help Boston beat New York.

Jayson Tatum added 25 points, six rebounds and five assists to help Boston improve to 10-0 at home. Jaylen Brown scored 17 points before he



Orlando Magic forward Franz Wagner (22) drives past Detroit Pistons guard Killian Hayes (7) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, Dec 8, 2023, in Orlando,

was ejected after getting two technical fouls midway into the final quarter.

#### Clippers 117, Jazz 103

In Salt Lake City, Kawhi Leonard scored a season-high 41 points and Los Angeles beat Utah to snap an 11-game road losing streak against the Jazz.

Leonard made a season-high 14 field goals in 23 attempts, was 6 of 8 from 3-point range and made all seven of his free throws. He also had five rebounds and five assists. Paul George added 20 points, and

Ivica Zubac had 18 points and 12 rebounds. James Harden had 12 points on 2-of-8 shooting. John Collins led Utah with 19 points and 13 rebounds.

#### Nets 124, Wizards 97

In New York, Mikal Bridges scored 21 points and Brooklyn routed Washington for its third straight victory and fifth in six games.

Cam Thomas added 17 points, Day'Ron Sharpe had 15 points and 11 rebounds and Nic Claxton finished with 13 points and 14 rebounds. At 12-9, the Nets are a season-best three games over .500.

#### Cavaliers 111, Heat 99

In Miami, Donovan Mitchell had 27 points and 13 rebounds, Darius Garland shook off early foul trouble to score 18 points and Čleveland beat

Georges Niang scored 13 points and Max Strus added 11 in his first road game against his former team. The Cavaliers are 7-3 on the road this season - tied with Oklahoma City and Minnesota for the best such mark in

#### Hornets 119, Raptors 116

In Charlotte, N.C., Gordon Hayward scored 24 points, Miles Bridges added 22 and the hot-shooting Charlotte survived Scottie Barnes' triple-double to beat Toronto.

Terry Rozier had 21 points and 13 assists and rookie Brandon Miller added 20 points for the Hornets, who shot 55.7% from the field, 52% from beyond the 3-point arc and made 18 of 20 free throws

Barnes had 31 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds for Toronto for the third

triple-double of his career and second this season. Josh Richardson and Kyle Lowry

each scored 17 points for Miami, They Heat have lost five of seven.

#### Shiffrin edges out Goggia at St. Moritz

## Odermatt wins World Cup giant slalom

VAL D'ISERE, France, Dec 9, (AP): Marco Odermatt raced through steady falling snow, making errors in his run, yet still won a World Cup giant slalom by almost one full second on Saturday.

The Olympic, world and World Cup champion in giant slalom is almost unbeatable in his favored discipline and finished 0.98 seconds ahead of Marco Schwarz. Joan Verdu, getting a best-ever World Cup result for the

tiny principality of Andorra, was third trailing Odermatt by

#### **SKIING**

1.32 seconds.

Odermatt extended his first-run lead on his decisive second run despite being at the limit of his balance at times. Storied resort Val d'Isere hosted its traditional early

season meet days after learning it is unlikely to be in the venue plan for the 2030 Olympics that France is set to host. Courchevel and Meribel are instead favored to stage Alpine

At the 1992 Winter Games hosted by nearby Albertville, Val d'Isere staged men's Alpine races and the giant slalom





Switzerland's Marco Odermatt speeds down the course during the first run of an alpine ski, men's World Cup giant slalom in Val d'sere, France, Saturday, Dec. 9,

was won by Italian great Alberto Tomba.

The 26-year-old Odermatt's win tied Tomba on 15 career victories in World Cup giant slalom.

It was a 25th career World Cup win for the two-time defending overall World Cup champion.

Saturday's event was just the second official race of the weather-affected men's World Cup after a series of cancellations and the abandonment of the season-opening giant slalom at Soelden, Austria. Schwarz had been leading that race in October.

In St. Moritz, Switzerland, When Mikaela Shiffrin is even winning downhill races, her rivals have less hope of denying her a record-tying sixth overall World Cup title.

Shiffrin mastered the sharper turns on a sun-bathed course Saturday at St. Moritz to be 0.15 seconds faster than standout downhill racer Sofia Goggia, who won the super-G on Friday. Attentively watching Goggia's run from the finish area, Shiffrin raised both arms and put her hands to her head on seeing that her lead had held up.

Federica Brignone was 0.17 back in third to complete a high-quality podium for the first race this season in the marquee speed event. Racers were clocked touching speeds of



# Al-Arabi surge to Zain Premier League summit



The Kuwaiti military team celebrates on the podium.

# Kuwaiti military shooters impress at Doha Championship with silver and bronze wins

DOHA, Dec 9: The Kuwaiti military shooting squad secured a silver medal in the (skeet) category and a bronze medal in the (skeet) category, concluding the inaugural Arab Military Championship for shotgun disciplines (skeet - trap) in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

Brigadier General Khalil Al-Kandari, the Director of the Military Sports Federation and head of the mission, reported the participation of seven countries in the tournament. The Kuwaiti military team excelled by clinching two silver medals, the first in the team category for the (trap) game and the second in the individual category for (skeet). Additionally, they secured a bronze in the (trap) game. Al-Kandari highlighted shooter Jaber Al-Baghili's impressive fourth-place finish in the dirt competition.

Al-Kandari praised the team's preparation, emphasizing that a week-long training camp prior to the championship significantly contributed to their success. The shooters proudly earned three medals, raising the Kuwaiti flag on the podium.

#### **SHOOTING**

He expressed gratitude for the excellent organization of the inaugural Arab cartridge championship and extended thanks to the organizers in Qatar for their remarkable efforts in ensuring the event's success.

Victory for Kuwait

#### Al-Kharafi takes 1st place in Riyadh equestrian event

RIYADH, Dec 9: Kuwaiti jockey Ali Al-Kharafi secured the top spot in the third round of the second day of the (Saudi Jumping) Championship held in Riyadh.

The tournament featured Al-Kharafi claiming victory in the 1.40-meter high hurdles category, outpacing Ukrainian equestrian Elissa Donlio, who secured the second

#### **EQUESTRIAN**

Saudi jockey Mishari Al-Harbi clinched the third spot, followed by Swedish jockey Antonia Hagrossum in fourth place, and Kuwaiti jockey Enad Al-Ānaz in fifth place.

The championship concludes today, bringing together male and female knights from 17 countries across various continents.



Al-Kharafi celebrates after winning the title.

#### **Phillips and Santner hold nerve**

# New Zealand earn series-leveling win over Bangladesh

MIRPUR, Bangladesh, Dec 9, (AP): Glenn Phillips and Mitchell Santner held their nerve to help New Zealand chase down 137 runs on a difficult wicket for a series-leveling fourwicket win over Bangladesh in the rain-hit second test on Saturday.

Phillips and Santner shared a 70run partnership for the seventh wicket as New Zealand recovered from 69-6 to reach 139-6 on Day 4 to give the team its first victory on Bangladesh soil since 2008.

The series ended 1-1. The home side, which won the first test by 150 runs, was chasing a first-ever test series victory against the Black Caps. Phillips, who struck a 72-ball 87 in

the first innings, hit offspinner Mehidy Hasan for a boundary through cover to confirm the victory as he was not out on 40 off 48 after smashing four fours and one six. Santner hit three fours and a six for his 39-ball 35

Phillips was key in helping the side take an eight-run lead when New Zealand was bowled out for 180 in the first innings, in reply to Bangladesh's

Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel then claimed 6-57 as Bangladesh was dismissed for 172 in its second innings, chasing a 137-run target for New Zealand to win the match.

"We obviously didn't get the big scores that we would like, but on a wicket like that, 20-30 run partnerships here and there go a long way," New Zealand skipper Tim Southee said. "And Ajaz on a spin-friendly condition, showed his class in picking up the six wickets.'

Mehidy Hasan had figures 3-52 and left-arm spinner Taijul Islam grabbed 2-58 as Bangladesh kept the hopes alive on an increasingly deteriorating

Pacer Shofirul Islam (1-9) broke through as he had Devon Conway (2) leg-before with a length delivery that kept pretty low.

#### **CRICKET**

Taijul got into the act with a flighted delivery that spun sharply to baffle Kane Williamson (11) before Mehidy joined the party, extending Henry Nicholls' (3) lean patch.

With 33-3, Tom Latham made 26

But Shanto put down the most crucial chance when he missed Phillips' catch at slip off Mehidy when he was

but his vigil came to an end when

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto held onto an excellent catch

Taijul dismissed Tom Blundell for 2 and Mediy got the better of Daryl Mitchell, who scored 19 as Bangla-

desh edged closer to victory. Phillips grew with confidence with the able support of Santner to ensure a victory in Mirpur, which has long been considered as Bangladesh's for-

Earlier, the entire second day and the first session of the third day was



New Zealand's captain Tim Southee bowls on the fourth day of the second test cricket match between Bangladesh and New Zealand in Dhaka, Bang-

washed out due to rain and wet out-

**US & Mexico submit** 

joint bid to host WC

CHICAGO, Dec 9, (AP): The

U.S. Soccer Federation and Mex-

ico Football Federation submitted

a joint bid Friday to host the 2027

Women's World Cup projecting

\$3 billion in revenue, competing

against a proposal from Brazil and a joint Germany-Nether-

The anticipated revenue in

North America would be a huge

increase from this year's tourna-

ment in Australia and New Zea-

land, which FIFA said totaled

SOCCER

Brazil's bid estimated compe-

tition revenue at \$99 million, a

figure that did not include broad-

cast money. The European bid

said it had "a target revenue well above what the FIFA Women's

World Cup has reached before."

The US-Mexico bid book pro-

posed U.S. sites from among the

same 11 to be used in the 2026

men's World Cup, according to the document released by FIFA:

Arlington, Texas; Atlanta; East

Rutherford, New Jersey; Foxbor-

ough, Massachusetts; Houston; In-

glewood, California; Kansas City,

Missouri; Miami Gardens, Florida;

Philadelphia; Santa Clara, Califor-

nia; and Seattle. The bid said other

Mexico listed Guadalajara.

Mexico City and Monterrey - its

three sites for the men's World

Cup - and in addition for 2027

listed as possibilities Leon and

The US-Mexico bid envisioned

taking advantage of efficiencies

from the 2026 men's tournament,

which will be co-hosted by the

U.S., Mexico and Canada.

cities could be considered.

lands-Belgium plan.

more than \$570 million.

Bangladesh earlier was undone by Patel, who denied them posting a winning target. His decisive bowling was complemented by left-arm spinner Santner's 3-51.

"The way the bowlers fought back to defend just 137 runs is obviously pleasing to see but batting let us down," Shanto said. "In the first innings, it was 230-240 wicket but we got out less than 200, which made the difference. There is nothing to blame the wicket, it was good. Just we can't bat well. We have to improve in this

Zakir Hasan battled alone for Bangladesh in the second innings with 59 off 86, hitting six fours and one six.

Resuming at 38-2, Bangladesh started strongly with Zakir Hasan hitting Southee for a pair of boundaries in the second over of the day.

But Patel trapped Mominul Haque leg-before for 15, ending a 33-run partnership between him and Zakir, which was Bangladesh's best partnership in the second innings.

Bangladesh then collapsed and lost the rest of the seven wickets for 73 runs, bolstering New Zealand's chance to level the series.

Santner dealt a double blow, dismissing Mushfiqur Rahim (9) and Shahadat Hossain (4) in his consecutive overs, leaving Bangladesh at 88-5.

Mushfiqur's hesitation to play or

leave the quicker delivery of Santner caused his dismissal. Then Mehidy played a rash shot against Patel to throw his wicket away to further the home side's slide.

Kuwait bolster title defense

**By Hassan Musa** Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9:** The conclusion of the Zain Premier League's ninth and final round brought favorable news for Al-Arabi, propelling them to the top of the standings with 20 points. Al-Arabi's dominant 4-0 victory over Kazma showcased their prowess, positioning them above Al-Kuwait with a goal dif-

#### **SOCCER**

ference. Darko Nestorovic, the Bosnian coach, played a pivotal role in the team's outstanding performance, evident as the first section concluded.

Al-Arabi's upcoming AFC Cup group stage match against a Najimah provides Darko with an opportunity to test other players. Although they missed securing a spot in the next round, this match serves as crucial preparation for their upcoming league clash with Al-Salmiva.

Under the leadership of coach Nabil Maaloul, Kuwait secured a vital 2-1 victory against Al-Nassr, bolstering their title defense efforts. Facing Al-Wahdat of Jordan in the AFC Cup's final group stage match, Kuwait aims for a win to enhance their chances of progressing.

defeating Al-Qadsia, after Al-Shabab 4-0, temporarily claimed the lead. The team's exceptional



KUNA photo Al-Kuwait and Al-Nasr players battle for the aerial supremacy.

performance suggested that they could be a formidable competitor, ending a long drought without significant achievements.

Al-Salmiya, holding the fourth spot, drew 0-0 with Al-Fahaheel, reaching 14 points. This result, coupled with losses by Al-Nasr and Kazma, solidified their position. Meanwhile, Al-Shabab remained in seventh place, facing challenges despite a commendable performance in previous rounds.

Khaitan and Al-Fahaheel clubs, each with 6 points, and Al-Jahra with 2 points, added to their totals but failed to alter their positions in the standings. The situation for these three clubs is now deemed "difficult," requiring significant efforts to move away from the "danger zone" as they approach the second and decisive section of the

#### **Basketball League drama unfolds**

#### Al-Arabi, Sulaibikhat eye top 4

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: Al-Arabi is gearing up for a challenging face-off against Sulaibikhat today at 05:00 pm in the Al-Ittihad Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex, marking the eighth and final round of the Basketball League's first division. Simultaneously, Kazma will take on Al-Qurain at 07:00 in the same hall.

The league's format comprises two sections, culminating in the top four teams qualifying for the highly anticipated semi-finals.

#### **BASKETBALL**

In the initial clash, Sulaibikhat currently fourth with 11 points, aims to outshine their fifth-ranked Arab counterpart with 10 points. This effort is crucial to secure a position in the top four before the league hiatus for the "Blue Basketball" team's participation in the upcoming Arab Championship in Cairo. Al-Akhdar, well-prepared with key signings like Hussein Al-Khabaz and Abdullah Salmeen, is under the guidance of their new Tunisian coach, Nidal Bin Abdulkarim. The latter replaced the dismissed Serbian Degan and has steered Al-Akhdar to rise to fourth

Anticipated to be an exciting matchup, Sulaibikhat's recent successes against mid and lower-ranked teams, coupled with their setbacks against formidable opponents like



Al-Arabi player wins the rebound battle.

Kazma, Al-Kuwait, and Al-Qadisiyah, make this confrontation a pivotal challenge for both teams vying for the coveted fourth place in the golden square.

In the second match, Kazma, currently holding third place with 11 points, seeks to maintain its standing by overcoming Al-Qurain, positioned seventh with 8 points. Kazma, not reaching its peak performance from the previous season, faces a determined Al-Qurain, whose dynamics shifted notably after the replacement of their American professional, Walker, with Serbian Dragovic.

### 'Tough times' for Kuwait Club as **Amri joins AFC Cup absence list**

#### By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: Following medical examinations, Kuwaiti-Tunisian professional Yassin Amri has been diagnosed with a leg muscle tear, leading to an expected absence of up to 30 days.

Amri sustained the injury during his team's recent match against Al Arabi in the eighth round of the Zain Premier League, rendering him unable to complete the game.

#### SOCCER

Unfortunately, Amri is now part of the list of players unavailable for the upcoming match against Al-Wahdat of Jordan in the sixth and final round of the second group competitions in the AFC Cup. This list also includes Youssef Nasser, Ibrahim Kamil, and goalkeeper Dhari Al-Otaibi, who are

all suspended. "Al-Abyad" will wrap up its training in Amman tonight in preparation for the showdown with Jordanian side Al-Wahdat. The Kuwaiti delegation, led by Deputy Head of the Football Staff Adel Oqla, arrived in Jordan two days ago with a 22-player squad. Yesterday, the team had their first training session in Amman under the guidance of returning Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul. Maaloul is focused on refining strategies based on his analysis of Al-Wahdat's performance in the first-round match



trols the ball.

and recent matches in the Jordanian League

Adel Uqla expressed the team's determination to secure a victory and advance to the second round. He noted that the withdrawal of the Palestinian team Jabal al-Mukaber from the first group would nullify the results of the fourth team in the three groups, presenting an opportunity for 'Al-Abyad" if they emerge victorious against the Jordanian team.

Rejecting any excuses, Oqla emphasized that the team is fully focused on overcoming recent setbacks, especially against the Syrian team of Aleppo and the Iraqi team Kahraba in the last round.



KUNA photo Juri Al-Mulla (right) with an opponent after the awarding

**Kuwait's female skating 'stars'** 

shine in Championship opener

# Sports

### **Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com**

We are studying both options: Prince Abdulaziz



Saudi sports minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal.

FIGURE TEAM

# 'Summer or winter 2034 WC doesn't matter for Saudi Arabia'

GENEVA, Dec 9, (AP): Saudi Arabia is looking into the possibility of hosting the 2034 men's World Cup during the traditional months of June-July despite daily temperatures above 100 degrees F (38 C), according to the desert kingdom's sports minister.

In a rare interview since FIFA fast-tracked the 2034 tournament toward Saudi Arabia in October, Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal told British broadcaster BBC that either a summer or winter tournament was

"Definitely we are studying both op-

tions to see what is the best option to host the World Cup," the sports minister said in an interview in Jeddah published

The assumption since the Saudi bid became the only 2034 candidate several weeks ago has been that the 48team tournament will be played in November and December just as the 2022 tournament was in Qatar.

In June, the average high temperatures are more than 104 F (40 C) in Riyadh and 100 F (38 C) in Jeddah by the Red Sea. In November, the averages

"Why not see what the possibilities are to do it in the summer?" Prince Abdulaziz said.

FIFA declined comment on details of the 2034 tournament, with hosting rights not due to be officially awarded until late next year.

#### SOCCER

The Qatar World Cup was the first to be played in November-December, forcing the top European leagues to stop play for at least six weeks.

Qatar's original bid for the tournament had pledged to host it in June-July with promises of developing air-cooling technology in stadiums to protect the health of players. Still there were doubts about health implications for fans and tournament work-

"Whether it is summer or winter it doesn't matter for us," Prince Abdulaziz said in the interview, "as long as we make sure that we (deliver) the right atmosphere to host such an



The launching of amateur football league to raise awareness of cancerous

# CAN launches 6th Kuwait Amateur Football League

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: The Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) campaign launched the 6th Kuwait Amateur Football League, with the cooperation of the Haido Academy, the sports arm of the campaign, and the Public Authority for Sports.

According to a member of the Board of Directors of the campaign and the Executive Committee member Dr. Hessa Al-Shaheen, CAN seeks to diversify its activities to suit all segments of society in order to achieve its mission. The increase in the various sporting activities is an important indicator of a societal trend to adopt a lifestyle in which physical activity is an integral part of daily or weekly practices.

In her opening speech, Dr. Al-Shaheen stressed that the league is being held for the sixth year under the generous patronage of the chief of commentators Khaled Al-Harban, with the aim of raising awareness about cancer.

She affirmed that sports represent a strong shield against wrong practices that lead to reducing the body's immunity and become a gateway to diseases including cancer.

Dr. Al-Shaheen said CAN's initia-

tives - health, scientific, cultural or so-

He highlighted the keenness of CAN to link sports and chronic diseases, adding that sports constitute the corner-

lifestyle.

from risk factors that lead to reduced immunity and infection with diseases. In addition, Khaled Al-Harban expressed his happiness in being a sponsor of the sporting event, indicating that he, despite his illness, chose to

stone of keeping young people away

She highlighted the keenness of those in charge of the campaign to

include sports activity due to the im-

portance of this aspect in encouraging

the adoption of healthy lifestyles that

Meanwhile, President of Haido

Academy Abdullah Al-Saleh affirmed

that CAN is honored to launch this im-

portant sporting event through which

young people can learn how to fill their

free time with sports and benefit from

the positive impact it reflects on their

SOCCER

include physical activity.

come to the event. He thanked the CAN campaign and all its officials for requesting the sponsorship of the ceremony.

Al-Harban also thanked Kuwait and all its men and women for their support.

Elliott scores in stoppage time

KUNA photo

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9, (KUNA): The Kuwait **National Figure Skating** Championships for girls kicked off at the Kuwait Winter Games Club hall. the tournament's organizer. Approximately 40 female athletes showcased remarkable levels of per-

formance during the first

Artistry on ice

day of competitions. The initial tournament day, featuring various competitions for different levels and age groups, saw the crowning of Nawar Al-Ateq, Haneen Al-Awadhi, Bodour Khaled, Narges Ashour, Dana Al-Maatouq, Juri Al-Mulla, Lynn Al-Shuraym, Al-Zein Al-Tawari, Fatima Al-Qallaf, Zeina Al-Khalidi, and Fatima Al-Mutawa as firstplace winners in their respective categories.

#### **FIGURE SKATING**

Salem Al-Ajmi, the director of the Figure game at the club, informed Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that this year's two-day tournament stands out for the extensive participation of female players, particularly young girls. He praised the impressive levels displayed by the female athletes on the first day.

Al-Ajmi highlighted the tournament's significance, serving as an opportunity for the Kuwaiti national team coach to identify the best players for upcoming foreign tournaments. He also expressed gratitude for the club's continuous support in developing this exhibition

Juri Al-Mulla emphasized that

#### Al-Subaie triumphs on day one of show jumping tournament

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 9: Knight Fawaz Al-Subaie secured the championship title on the inaugural day of the show jumping tournament dedicated to his late uncle, Abdul Aziz Al-Masaieed. The event takes place at the Kuwait Equestrian Center in the Subhan area and has drawn significant participation from both male and female riders

The outstanding skaters on the podium after receiving their trophies.

representing various local clubs. In the seventh round, navigating obstacles at a height of 135 cm, Al-Subaie claimed the top position. Jockey Nick Channing excelled at a height of 125 cm, securing the first and second places.

Nasser Abdulaziz Al-Masaieed, the head of the tour-

nament's organizing committee, revealed that over 350 male and female riders are actively participating. The challenging course was meticulously designed by German expert Frank Rothenberger, ranked fifth in the

#### **EQUESTRIAN**

Al-Masaieed emphasized that the tournament operates on a points system, ensuring transparency and providing equal opportunities for all riders to compete.



Winners of the inaugural Abdul Aziz Al-Masaieed show jumping tournament celebrate on the podium.

participating in the tournament provides a crucial opportunity for her and her teammates to assess their artistic levels. She commended the good public attendance and the excellent organization by the club, contributing to the success of the tournament's first day.

At the conclusion of today's competitions, Fuhaid Al-Ajmi, the President of the Kuwaiti Winter Games Club, awarded first-place winners in all categories. The tournament will continue tomorrow, focusing on competitions for the highest-level categories.

Alongside the main event, the club hosted the Speed Championship on Ice for the Buds category within the Short Track Competition. Fahd Al-Abdullah secured first place, with Yassin Al-Sayegh and Omar Eyada claiming second and third places, respectively.

**Resilient Liverpool edge Palace** 

LONDON, Dec 9, (AP): Mohamed Salah scored his 200th Liverpool goal on Saturday as Jurgen Klopp's team came from behind to beat 10man Crystal Palace 2-1 in the Premier League.

But it was substitute Harvey Elliott who struck Liverpool's winner with a long-range shot in the 91st minute at Selhurst Park to provisionally move the club to the top of the standings.

Liverpool now leads Arsenal by a point. The Gunners can regain the league lead when they play at thirdplace Aston Villa on Saturday evening. Salah had evened the score with a deflected shot in the 76th. Palace had been reduced to 10 men just a minute earlier when Jordan Ayew was sent off.

#### **SOCCER**

The home team had taken the lead through Jean-Philippe Mateta's penalty in the 57th after he had been fouled by Jarell Quansah.

But the game turned around when Ayew was shown a second yellow card. Liverpool quickly capitalized as Salah struck his landmark goal. He became the fifth Liverpool player to reach 200 for the club.

Even then, Klopp's team looked set to drop points until Elliott's clincher. Salah also moved up to 10th in the league's all-time scorers list with 150. 

The Club World Cup may come too soon for **Kevin De Bruyne** to make his return from a hamstring injury, Man-chester City manager Pep Guardiola said Friday.

De Bruyne has been included in City's squad for the tournament, which is being held in Saudi Arabia later this month, with City's first game scheduled for Dec. 19.

But Guardiola said the Belgium international had yet to return to full training as he continues his rehabilita-



Liverpool's Luis Diaz (right), heads the ball ahead of Crystal Palace's Joel Ward (left), during the Premier League soccer match between Crystal Palace and Liverpool at Selhurst Park, in London, England. (AP)

tion after surgery in August.

"I think he has started to run on the pitch, but hasn't trained with us once,' Guardiola said. "The FIFA Club World Cup is in two or three weeks. I don't know. Maybe it's a bit early, but I don't

De Bruyne hasn't played since City's first Premier League game of the season against Burnley on Aug. 11, when he was substituted after just 23 minutes.

Injury had also forced him off after 36 minutes of the Champions League final against Inter Milan in June, which City won to complete a treble of trophies last season. He later said his hamstring had "snapped."

City has missed the playmaker in recent weeks as the defending league champions have gone on a four-game winless run and dropped to fourth in the table.

ARAB TIME

**Editorial Office:** Airport Road, Shuwaikh

Advertising: Tel: 24813815 Fax: 24845708

Annual Subscriptions: Individuals KD 45/- Companies and Official Departments KD 75 Airmail charges extra for Fax: 24839487

Tel: 24849144

**Editor-in-Chief AHMED AL JARALLAH** 

P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

Telephone: 24813566 & 24849144 Fax: 24818267