

# Amir's health 'stable', confirms Amiri Diwan

'Verify news'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): The health condition of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is stable and he is taking necessary medication, said the Amiri Diwan Minister Wednesday.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah urges the public to obtain information about His Highness the Amir's health from official sources and verify news through reliable channels.

The minister prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow His Highness the Amir with good health and rapid recovery.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was admitted to the hospital Wednesday morning due to an emergency health problem that befell His Highness to receive the necessary treatment and conduct medical examinations.

## Opinion

### The fish that bit its thief

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

IT is natural for societies to look for a competent and clean person to take over their affairs and prevent corruption and the corrupt. However, the situation in reality is different. This is due to the fact that the social factors and personal relationships in developing countries such as Kuwait play their role by deviating from logic. Sometimes the corrupt are portrayed to be cute.

It is true that accountability in these countries is weak, selective, or vengeful, and therefore fails. Reform becomes a slogan for achieving what is not necessary. However, when strict and impartial oversight is facilitated, countries go on the right course.

In this regard, there are many examples indicating what a state can become when corruption is rampant. There are also parables about what befalls the thief and the embezzler, which in essence represent the state. This is due to the fact that the basic rule is that Almighty Allah delays justice but never denies it. Likewise, the nature of things is that the thief, no matter how powerful he may be, does not escape punishment, even if accountability is delayed.

Among such stories is the one that the 13th Islamic historian Imam Al-Dhahabi wrote in the book "Cardinal Sins" about a man who was walking on the streets, his entire arm from above the shoulder amputated, and saying, "Whoever sees me, let no one aggrieve us."

A man approached him and asked him, "What is your story?" and he replied, "I used to be a bully. Then one day while I was on the seashore, I saw a fisherman who had caught a big fish. I requested the fisherman to give me his catch, but he declined and said it is for sale, as that is the way he earns his livelihood to feed his family.

Despite his explanation, I, being a bully, took the fish by force and even shoved the fisherman off my way. As I was walking away with the fish, it bit my thumb. It was very painful.

I complained about my condition to the doctors, and they said the thumb needs to be amputated before the infection spreads to the rest of the hand and body. I delayed until the pain reached my shoulder, after which I could not bear it anymore. I then asked the doctor to chop my arm off.

From that moment, if anyone saw me and asked me what happened and why my arm was amputated from the shoulder, I would say that I took a fish from a poor man by force, and it only bit my thumb but because of the pain, my entire arm was amputated."

The man said, "Look for the fisherman and ask him for forgiveness. By God, if you had released him before that, nothing would have been cut off from you."

I started wandering around looking for the fisherman until I saw him. I knelt down before him, cried and said, "I ask you by God my Lord, will you not pardon me and let me go?" He then asked me, "Who are you?" I said, "I am the one who took your fish by force, a long time ago."

The fisherman cried when he saw my condition, and said, "By God, I have forgiven you". So I asked him, "What did you say when I took the fish from you?" He said, "I said Oh God, O Lord, you have shown me the strength of this in my weakness, so show me your strength in him."

This parable indicates the extent of the consequences of injustice. It represents not only the tyranny and bullying of that man, but also the extent of people's retaliation if they are subjected to injustice.

This is especially when this injustice befalls their livelihood and the livelihood of their families, and also in consequences that corrupt regimes brings on to themselves, because they allow bullies and oppressors to have their way in people. For this reason when accountability comes, the punishment will be severe.

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## NewsWatch

**KUWAIT CITY:** The UAE is set to host the annual United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as the Conference of the Parties (COP28), in **Dubai** from November 30 to December 12.

COP is considered the primary decision-making body of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), established in 1992, with 197 countries representatives who signed or are parties to the UNFCCC, which will participate through debates and negotiations. (KUNA)

**MUSCAT:** Oman's Minister of Foreign Affairs **Bader Albusaidi**, called on Tuesday, for reducing escalation rhetoric and use instead the language of reason when addressing the effects and consequences of the humanitarian, security, and political situation outcome from the war in **Gaza Strip**.

This came during a phone call between Albusaidi and his British counterpart **David Cameron**, according to a statement by the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (KUNA)

**NEW DELHI:** India has set up a high-level inquiry after U.S. authorities raised concerns with New Delhi that its government may have had knowledge of a plot to kill a Sikh separatist leader on American soil, an Indian official said on Wednesday. (AP)



Crown Prince Diwan photo  
His Highness the Crown Prince receives the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

### Crown Prince hosts Pakistan's premier

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hosted the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, and his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace during their official visit.

The discussions encompassed bilateral relations, strategies for mutual support, and a shared commitment to bolster cooperation across various sectors for the benefit of both nations.

The meeting also delved into key areas of mutual interest and addressed the latest regional developments. In attendance were His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with other high-ranking state officials.

Pakistan Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, and his accompanying delegation arrived in Kuwait on Tuesday for a two-day official visit.

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### HH Amir congratulates Saudi Arabia on successful bid to host 2030 World Expo

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday two cables to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to congratulate them on winning the race for hosting the World Expo 2030 in Riyadh.

In his messages, His Highness the Amir said the hosting of this significant global event materializes the eminent status of the Kingdom and reflects the great and deserved trust in the Kingdom's ability to organize such an event, thanks to its huge potentials, modern infrastructure and good relations with all nations.

This victory is a source of pride for all member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and all sisterly Arab countries, he wrote.

His Highness the Amir wished King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman everlasting well-being, and the sisterly Kingdom more prosperity and progress.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia won 119 votes of the 182 member countries of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) in the voting held in Paris on Tuesday.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh

Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday similar cables to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to congratulate them on the Kingdom's successful bid to host the World Expo 2030.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent similar cables to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince and Prince Minister Mohammed bin Salman to congratulate them.

Kuwait's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on winning a vote to host the World Expo 2030.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's win reflects the promising vision and ambitious aspirations of the Kingdom under the wise leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

This win is part of a series of great successes achieved by the Kingdom and comes in line with the Kingdom's ambitious development plan, known as 2030 Vision, which will benefit both the Kingdom and other countries of the region.

# MPs target property monopoly

Bill okayed

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The National Assembly unanimously approved the bill on amending the Housing and Real Estate Affairs Law in its second reading on Wednesday.**

The bill is aimed at combating monopoly of land and undeveloped plots; and to regulate the process of the property owner's authorization for another individual or a company to carry out sale, rental and mortgage procedures on his behalf. The bill considers such authorization a final contract for selling a house or any real estate property to another party.

The amendment aims to prevent traders from engaging in feudal practices to control the real estate prices, especially in private residential areas. It stipulates a grace period of 12 months for individuals and entities to modify their conditions; starting from the enforcement of the law; otherwise, the plots are considered sold and registered under the name of the authorized party.

The bill allows owners of real estate properties to authorize others to manage their plots or real estate properties according to Law No. 67/1980. This authorization is not eternal, permanent or inflexible. Permanent authorization, which cannot be cancelled, was widely used for manipulation as the authorized individual or company is usually the owner, but the plot or house is still registered under the name of the original owner.

The annual fee is KD10 per square meter if the size of the plot is more than 1,500 square meters and it is doubled every year thereafter until it reaches KD100 per square meter.

The bill will limit, if not eliminate, the feudal practices of some major real estate traders. It does not allow banks and financial institutions to grant loans to individuals and companies for the construction of two or more houses, as the loan should be for the construction of one house only. It limits banking support

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Photo by Rezk Tawfik  
National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun pictured with MPs as they commence the supplementary session to address the Parliament's agenda on Wednesday.

### One more hostage swap planned

## Mediators look to extend truce in Gaza

RAFAH, Gaza Strip, Nov 29, (AP): International mediators appeared to make progress Wednesday on extending the truce in Gaza, encouraging the territory's Hamas rulers to keep freeing hostages in return for the release of Palestinian prisoners and further respite from Israel's air and ground offensive. It will otherwise expire within a day.

Israel has welcomed the release of dozens of hostages in recent days and says it will maintain the truce if Hamas keeps freeing captives. But its other major goal - the annihilation of the armed group that has ruled Gaza for 16 years and orchestrated the deadly attack on Israel that triggered the war - seems less and less likely.

Weeks of heavy aerial bombardment and a ground invasion

## Kuwait, Qatar take steps to curb tax evasion

DOHA, Nov 29, (KUNA): The Qatari Cabinet approved on Wednesday a draft agreement between governments of Qatar and Kuwait on avoiding double taxation and preventing financial evasion on income and capital taxes.

This came during the Cabinet session chaired by Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Attiyah, Qatar News Agency (QNA) said.

The Cabinet also approved Qatar's accession to the agreement (ARASIA 2017), in addition to an agreement between government of Qatar and gov-

ernment of Uzbekistan on the elimination of double taxation with regard to taxes on income and the prevention of tax evasion and avoidance, QNA added.

It also approved a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the field of cybersecurity between the National Cyber Security Agency in Qatar and the Cyber Security Agency in Singapore, the source said.

The meeting also agreed on MoU to establish a political consultation mechanism between Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia.

have demolished vast swaths of northern Gaza and killed thousands of Palestinians. But it seems to have had little effect on Hamas' rule, evidenced by its ability to

conduct complex negotiations, enforce the cease-fire among other armed groups, and orchestrate the smooth release of hostages.

Yehya Sinwar and other Hamas leaders have likely relocated to the south, along with hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians who have

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## Bahrain 1st in Mideast to adopt 'advanced genome sequencing'

MANAMA, Nov 29, (AP): The Ministry of Health in the Kingdom of Bahrain has become the first in the Middle East to acquire and inaugurate the use of the cutting-edge NovaSeq X Plus machine for human genome sequencing purposes. The move is part of the Kingdom's commitment to continue developing therapeutic and diagnostic services in line with latest global medical advancements, benefiting the health of all.

The Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, Lt. General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, highlighted the ongoing efforts within the National Genome Project, which aims to utilize gene sequencing in adopting effective national health policies and therapeutic and preventative management plans.

For her part, the Minister of Health, Dr. Jaleela bint Al-Sayed Jawad Hassan noted that acquiring this device is in line with continuing efforts to keep abreast of latest technological trends in the health field, while further developing the National Genome Centre, which will reflect positively on the various diagnostic and therapeutic services in place for the benefit of the community.



John Kerry, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, rides in a cart ahead of the COP28 UN Climate Summit, Nov 29, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

## Global economy enters 2024 with wars, inflation pressures

WASHINGTON, Nov 29, (AP): The global economy, which has proved surprisingly resilient this year, is expected to falter next year under the strain of wars, still-elevated inflation and continued high interest rates.

The Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimated Wednesday that international growth would slow to 2.7% in 2024 from an expected 2.9% pace this year. That would amount to the slowest calendar-year growth since the pandemic year of 2020.

A key factor is that the OECD expects the world's two biggest economies, the United States and China, to decelerate next year. The U.S. economy is forecast to expand just 1.5% in 2024, from 2.4% in 2023, as the Federal Reserve's interest rate increases - 11 of them since March 2022 - continue to restrain growth.

The Fed's higher rates have made borrowing far more expensive for consumers and businesses and, in the process, have helped slow inflation from its four-decade peak in 2022.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:59	Asr .....	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:23	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr .....	11:36	Isha .....	18:11

# Local

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

## Kuwait, Pakistan sign several agreements, MoUs in various fields

# Pakistan keen on bolstering ties with Kuwait: PM Kakar

By Yousef Al-Tattan

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): Pakistan is willing to pursue all venues of cooperation with the State of Kuwait in reflection of the strong and historic relations linking the two countries, Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said on Wednesday.

During a KUNA interview, Prime Minister Kakar said that the Kuwaiti leadership showed keen interest to develop and further strengthen the relationship.

Kakar added that both countries needed to be more engaged, stating, "We are taking up this opportunity to develop this relation with the Kuwaiti people and government. There are many areas we can expand (ties) in from agriculture, food security, IT Defense area, mining, and there are many areas where mutual interest can converge. From regional issues, global issues, climate change and others."

He commended His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his "personality", adding, "We enjoyed his openness, and his depth and honest understanding of the issues."

"We highly appreciate this kind of leadership that takes difficult questions and issues but come up with a very reasonable, honest and pragmatic approach."

On current signed agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU), Kakar said, "There were more than a dozen MoU's in different sectors from IT to agriculture to water interventions and we are expecting them not be the last it's just the beginning of a new era."

On economic relations, he said that Kuwait,

when it came to demography, is a small nation, but held an utmost important role in the region and global affairs.

"And there is a huge transformation to modernize Kuwaiti economy and diversifying their investment portfolios," he affirmed, adding, "Pakistan is the destination where they can take the diversification and exploit the region connectivity, our connectivity to the Chinese economy and central Asia and for us here in the GCC."

"The region is opening up, the region is awakening and I feel Kuwait got a pivotal central leadership role to play in that," he pointed out.

Prime Minister Kakar's visit to Kuwait coincided with the 60th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations.

### visit

He met during his visit with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and met other Kuwaiti officials.

The State of Kuwait and Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed on Wednesday several agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to bolster cooperation on various fields.

This came after the meeting between First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Prior to the signings, Sheikh Talal Khaled and Prime Minister Kakar held a meeting reviewing all possible venues to boost ties between Kuwait and Pakistan.

The two officials also touched on issues pertaining to region and the world, expressing desire to coordinate efforts to achieve global peace and

security.

Post-meeting, the two officials oversaw the signing of several agreements and MoUs focusing on the fields of environmental protection, sustainable development, as well as cultural and technical cooperation.

A MoU between the Foreign Ministries of both countries was signed to expand cooperation, coordination, and dialogue.

Kuwait First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Wednesday Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and his accompanied delegation at Bayan Palace.

The Pakistani prime minister also met with Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Minister of State of Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban, the Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the Acting Minister of Public Works and the Head of the honorary mission Dr. Jassim Al-Ustad, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Rogbah, Finance Minister Fahad Al-Jarallah, Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and ambassador of Kuwait to Pakistan Nasser Abdulrahman Almutairi.

Pakistan Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, and his accompanying delegation arrived in Kuwait on Tuesday for a two-day official visit.

Upon arrival, the premier was received at Kuwait International Airport by Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the Acting Minister of Public Works, and as the head of the honorary mission Dr. Jassim Mohammad Al-Ostad, senior state officials, and the ambassadors of the two countries.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in discussion session with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.



KUNA photos Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Pakistan's Ambassador to Kuwait signing a memorandum of understanding.

# 'Child exploitation unacceptable'

Info Ministry, Nazaha hold media persons workshop

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Ministry of Information, in cooperation with Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), recently organized a workshop for media professionals entitled, "Integrity of the Media and Professionalism in Journalism," reports Al-Anba daily.

The workshop included a number of panel discussions presented by an elite group of experts like Director of the Corruption Detection and Money Recovery Department at Nazaha Issa Al-Anazi, Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs at the Ministry of Information Manal Al-Baghdadi, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Rai newspaper Walid Al-Jassem and official spokesperson for the electronic government services platform (Sahl) Yousef Kazem.

During the workshop, Al-Baghdadi disclosed that the objective is to educate the participants about the laws on the media, children and others; taking into consideration the importance of selecting information and ensuring that it comes from official sources and reaches the largest segment of society.

She highlighted the significance of Children Law number 12 of 2015, which prohibits the exploitation of the child in a way that affects his instincts and harm him or publication of works that incite the child to commit crimes. She affirmed all of these are regulated in the Children Law; while the

media is governed by multiple laws, including the Press and Publications Law and the Child and Non-Exploitation Law.

She pointed out that the media environment in Kuwait is considered a legal environment, because it is a State of institutions. She revealed that the ministry's strategy for the years 2021 to 2026 includes sustainable media, through which every journalist is bound by the rules of the profession - proper delivery of information and respect for the laws, because every freedom has a restriction and the restriction should not harm members of society since the journalist is subject to fines and penalties like imprisonment.

On the other hand, Al-Jassem said most countries are keen on ensuring transparency and clarity of information which, in turn, make the citizens trust the State institutions. "If this trust is demonstrated; political stability, good relations between the two authorities and development are achieved, while providing jobs and eliminating economic problems. In this manner, development stabilizes and becomes a permanent cycle. This is the aesthetic external appearance, but the realistic aspect could be different," he explained.

"We must ask: Is there really transparency and a journalist's right to obtain information? Is there cooperation between State officials and the media? Are State officials and media professionals prepared to deal with an investigative journalist? Is there protection for journalists? The journalist today is surrounded by a group of laws, which could be at least eight laws that apply to him, so transparency should not be observed only in forums and workshops that we organize just to appear civilized. We need to practice it and this is very important," he added.

## FM & Blinken in talks, Gaza scene discussed

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, on Wednesday, a phone call from US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, where they discussed the dangerous developments in Gaza Strip and ways to stop the Israeli occupation's crimes against Palestinians.

Sheikh Salem stressed on Kuwait's firm stand by the Palestinian people, as well as supporting them to obtain their full rights, establishing an independent Palestinian State, and reaching a just lasting solution to the Palestinian issue.

He called for the need to stop the ongoing killing in Gaza immediately, to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, and to work to ensure that the conflict does not expand, including finding effective ways to end the dangerous deterioration that threatens the security of the region as a whole.

Also during the phone call, Blinken offered his sincere condolences to Sheikh Salem over the passing of his mother.

**Masjid opened in Sicily:** Kuwaiti charities play an integral role in providing assistance to those in need spreading through such actions the true message of Islam, said Kuwait Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qatani on Wednesday.

In a statement obtained by KUNA, Ambassador Al-Qatani commended the opening of a new Masjid and Islamic center in the Island of Sicily last Friday, affirming that Kuwait was always on the forefront on assisting Muslims worldwide.

He affirmed that such actions was part of the Kuwaiti national identity, which sought the betterment of the whole world. First Secretary at the Kuwaiti Embassy Hamad Al-Turkait attended the opening of the new Masjid and Islamic center in Sicily, which was sponsored by Kuwait's International Mercy Society.

Islamic societies and charities operating in Italy as well as several Italian officials attended the event.

## Court fines pharmacist

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Criminal Court imposed a fine of KD 4,000 on a pharmacist for selling medicines worth KD 600 to a citizen by claiming that they will treat gangrene, but ended up worsening his condition and eventually getting his foot amputated.

Investigations had revealed that the medicines were for cleaning wounds and not for treating gangrene and the defendant had visited the victim at his home to treat him, and deceived him into believing that the medicine being provided to him was a German treatment.

The suspect denied that he was impersonating a doctor. He explained that he was once at a car wash station when he heard a young man talking on the phone about the condition of his brother who was suffering from gangrene. As soon as he ended the call, the suspect asked him about his brother's condition and expressed interest in it. He assured the victim's brother that he had the appropriate treatment, and that he had to pay KD 600 to buy these medications, and so he agreed. The suspect brought medication and began the treatment for several days, but it worsened the victim's condition. His temperature rose significantly, and he was transferred to the hospital, where the medical staff decided that the foot has to be amputated.



The cake-cutting ceremony.

Armed Forces Day marked

## Kuwait-B'desh military ties lauded

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Director of Junior Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers Affairs Unit in the Kuwait Armed Forces Brigadier General Lafi Al-Motairi confirmed that the Kuwaiti-Bangladeshi relations in the field of military cooperation and between the armies of the two countries are strong, pointing out that Kuwait Armed Forces utilized some Bangladeshi forces, reports Al Seyassah daily.

In a speech he delivered on behalf of the Chief of General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army during the celebration of Bangladeshi Armed Forces Day at the Defense Section of the Bangladesh Embassy recently, Al-Motairi confirmed the cooperation between the armies of the two countries. He disclosed this cooperation includes organizing training courses, sending Kuwaiti Army officers to attend training courses for the senior staff in Bangladesh, receiving Bangladeshi officers in Kuwait for the same purpose and logistics.

He greeted the Bangladeshi people on the occasion of Armed Forces Day, saying: "We are pleased to share your joy on this occasion, which dates back to 1971, when the country fought a liberation war that resulted in the establishment of a sovereign State." He prayed for mercy for the souls of those who sacrificed their lives for the independence of the Republic of Bangladesh, while appreciating the embassy's expression of sympathy with the Palestinian people by holding a meeting in this regard.

He expressed pride over the fact that Kuwait enjoys a long-term friendship with Bangladesh, recalling the role of the Bangladeshi Armed Forces that participated in the war to liberate Kuwait. He also praised the cooperation and work carried out by the Bangladeshi military mission in Kuwait and its participation in the success of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces at the technical and security levels.

## 2,183 liquor bottles hidden in generator

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Shuwaikh Port Customs inspectors confiscated 2,183 bottles of alcoholic drinks hidden in a large electric generator that came from another Gulf country through Shuwaikh Port, reports Al-Qabas daily.

It has been reported that a shipment containing a big electric generator arrived at Shuwaikh Port from another Gulf country.

Inspectors at the Northern Ports Customs and Failaka Island Inspection and Warehousing Control got suspicious, so they referred the generator to the concerned entity for radiological detection device.

With the assistance of Kuwait Firefighting Force personnel, the inspectors checked the shipment and this led to the discovery of 2,183 bottles of liquor.

The suspect and the confiscated items were referred to the concerned authorities.



Cucumbers for sale in a cooperative society.

## Cucumbers box over KD 1

The price of a box of cucumbers weighing two and a half kilograms in cooperative societies increased to KD1.100, while the price was about a quarter of a Kuwaiti dinar only a few days ago, reports Al Seyassah daily.

Former member of the Board of Directors of Kuwaiti Farmers Union Mohammed Al-Motairi attributed this sudden price hike to the scarcity of locally produced cucumbers at this time in almost every agricultural season due to change in the time of planting and the onset of cold nights. He added the price of cucumbers usually does not exceed a quarter of a Kuwaiti dinar, but

the price sometimes increases due to certain market and climatic conditions and will drop once the reasons behind the increase end.

He added: "The Kuwaiti farmer deserves support, especially in light of the increase in production costs, delays and increase in workers' wages. Agricultural support must be disbursed in full to those who deserve it. The comparison between the selling price of vegetables and fruits in general in Kuwait with that of many European countries shows that the prices in Kuwait are within the reach of consumers."



Photo by Mahmoud Jadeed

Chilly December ahead: expert

## Going to get cold over weekend

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Meteorologist Issa Ramadan expects the temperature to drop within the next two days, considering the relatively cold pressure on Wednesday, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Ramadan told the daily: "Winter is gradually approaching and it will be a cold December for Kuwait. Light to moderate northwesterly winds will continue for several days, including the weekend. The maxi-

mum temperature will range from 19 to 23 degrees Celsius and the minimum will range from eight to 16 degrees Celsius in the wilderness and suburbs."

He added: "Scattered clouds will appear at times, but without significant rain, over the weekend until the end of next week. The weather will be semi-stable and relatively cold, moderate during the day and cold at night, especially in the desert areas."

# 'Saad Hum' initiative to support correctional institutions inmates

First evening school for detainees opened

## Other Voices

### Israel chances better sans Bibi

By Ahmad alsarraf

Thomas Friedman is considered one of the best journalists in the world. He has been writing for The New York Times for years. He has also visited the region many times, and has written dozens of articles, interviews, and documentaries about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

This is a summary of his penultimate article, which changed the minds of many: People warned me before I came to Tel Aviv a few days ago that the Israel of October 7 was the Israel I had never visited before. They were right. It is a place where Israelis have never lived before, a nation whose generals have never had to protect it, and an ally that America has never had to defend, at least not to the extent that would lead its president to be its first visitor, after the Hamas operation.

It became clear to me that Israel faces a real danger, greater than at any time since the 1948 war. For three reasons: First, Israel faces threats from a group of enemies who combine medieval theocratic views with 21st century weapons.

They are no longer militiamen, they are modern armies that include brigades, battalions, electronic capabilities, long-range missiles, drones, and military equipment. Hamas is supported by Iran, Hezbollah, Iraqi militias, and the Houthis, and even Putin has become close to them, and their group threatens the existence of Israel.

How can a modern democracy live with such a threat? The beginning of the panic was the Israelis moving away from the border areas, with more than 200,000 "Israeli refugees," perhaps in a move for some of them to leave the country next. I am amazed by the growing number of Israelis who now feel this danger.

Second: Israel is in dire need of external support, and American support in particular, but Biden cannot generate the support that Israel needs on a sustainable basis, unless Israel is prepared to engage in some kind of wartime diplomatic initiative directed toward the Palestinians in the West Bank -- and hopefully in Gaza and beyond. Hamas -- which indicates that Israel will discuss some kind of settlement, such as a two-state solution, if Palestinian officials are able to unify and organize their political house.

This leads directly to the third danger, which is the presence of Netanyahu, the worst leader in the history of Israel, and perhaps in all of Jewish history, who is

incapable of taking the initiative, in addition to his arrogance and extremism, and all of this does not help his allies abroad build the coalition required to defeat Hamas.

Before October 7, the Israelis believed that the threat was from missiles, so they built safe rooms, but Hamas militants came and burned them in their safe rooms, so the concept of security became incomprehensible?

The October 7 operation also hardened the hearts of Israelis towards the suffering of civilians in Gaza. It also caused a deep feeling of humiliation and guilt in the Israeli army, for failing in its basic mission of protecting the country's borders, and to overcome this failure, the army would be forced to commit brutal criminal acts.

According to Israel's official Central Bureau of Statistics, at the end of 2021, 9,449 million people lived in Israel (including Israelis in West Bank settlements). The Times of Israel reported last year. Of these, 6.982 million (74%) are Jews, 1.99 million (21%) are Arabs, and 472,000 (5%) are not.

The Palestinian Bureau of Statistics estimates the Palestinian population in the West Bank at just over three million people, and the population of Gaza at just over two million people.

So Netanyahu says that seven million Jews will indefinitely control the lives of five million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza -- while offering them no hope of a political horizon, or anything, in the form of a state one day on any demilitarized terms. Netanyahu and his far-right fanatics have taken Israel on multiple flights of fancy in the past year, dividing the country and the military over fraudulent judicial reform, and bankrupting its future with massive investments in religious schools that don't teach math, and in West Bank Jews and settlements that don't teach pluralism -- while working to build Hamas, which will never be a partner for peace and to tear apart the Palestinian Authority, the only potential partner for peace.

The sooner Israel replaces Netanyahu and his far-right allies with a true national unity government, the better chance it has of cohesion and survival.

**Note:** Please note that the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society consists of Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer, Anwar Al-Hasawi, Maha Al-Barjas, Abdullah Al-Humaidhi, Hamad Al-Bahr, Wafa Al-Qatami, Fawzia Al-Nassar, Walid Al-Nisf, and Dr. Khaled Al-Sabeeh.

Sorry for the unintentional mistake in mentioning names in yesterday's article.

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alsarraf

Blogger fined KD 2,000

## Pro-Gaza cleric released on bail

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Public Prosecution has decided to release the Islamic preacher identified only as "T.S." on a financial bail of one thousand dinars on a state security charge due to tweets he posted on social media sites about Gaza.

The Public Prosecution had charged the accused with broadcasting false news that would destabilize the security of Kuwait and endanger it by publishing tweets on social media about Gaza and insulting a segment of Kuwaiti society. He also charged with misusing his mobile phone.

**Blogger fined KD 2,000:** The Criminal Court fined a tweeter 2,000 dinars in the case of publishing the secrets of treating former MP Dr. Obaid Al-Wasmi and incorrect news

to influence him in the elections, and ordered the civil case to be referred to the competent civil court.

The tweeter had published on social media a medical report on Al-Wasmi's treatment at the expense of the United States Department of Health, intending to defame him. He is also charged with misusing his mobile phone.

**Vote-buying issue:** The Criminal Court has set Dec 25, to issue a verdict on the National Assembly elections vote-buying case (the elections were held in June 2023), in which a former candidate from the fifth constituency and others have been accused of buying votes.

The court charged two people with fraudulently and through intermediaries attempting to buy the votes in the fifth constituency for five hundred dinars each.

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By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The strategic partnership program between the Permanent Committee for Complaints and Grievances at the National Office for Human Rights, the Human Construction Society for Social Development, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Social Affairs launched ten projects at the headquarters of the General Department of Correctional Facilities to rehabilitate the lives of inmates in correctional institutions through the 'Saad Hum' (Help Them) initiative.**

The projects aim at rehabilitating inmates and helping them merge back into society through training combined with employment in the presence of society's officials.

Head of the Complaints and Grievances Committee at the National Office for Human Rights Dr. Abdul Redha Asiri said, "The pioneering Saad Hum initiative comes as the first phase of a program that includes 34 projects for the central prison and the women's prison.

He stressed that the initiative provides room for cooperation between the government and private sectors, in addition to civil society organizations as donors and sponsors of this type of project.

Dr. Abdul Redha Asiri expressed appreciation for the prominent role of both Namaa and Al-Najat charity societies in supporting the initiative, based on their belief in the importance of promoting human rights by providing health, educational, social, and recreational opportunities for inmates in correctional facilities.

Meanwhile, under the patronage of Assistant Undersecretary for Correctional Institutions and Judgment Implementation at the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdullah Al-Rujab, the first evening school for male inmates in correctional institutions (intermediate and secondary levels) opened recently in Farwaniya Educational District, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Maryam Al-Anazi attended the opening ceremony.

Speaking at the event, Al-Anazi expressed happiness over the opening of an evening school for the inmates of correctional institutions. She explained this is the fruit of the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Education, in coordination with the General Administration of Correctional Institutions, to carry out its noble mission to provide quality education for all citizens regardless of their status or circumstances.

"We believe that education is the basic right of every human being and it is the key to development, progress and peace in societies. We also realized that some of our children have deviated from the right path, committed mistakes and crimes, and entered correctional institutions. This does not mean that they have lost their right to education, rehabilitation and integration into society.

The Educational Development and Activities Sector at the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, established and equipped the evening school, which aims to provide quality educational services to inmates of correctional institutions, and enable them to continue their studies, obtain academic certificates, develop their skills and abilities, boost their self-confidence, improve their behavior and attitudes, strengthen their values and principles, and realize their ambitions and dreams," she concluded.



The car being pulled out.

## Weird accident

The Al-Bidaa Center Fire Brigade recently dealt with an accident when a vehicle fell into the basement of a house under construction in the Rumaihiya area, reports Al-Rai daily.

The accident resulted in a person being trapped, who was rescued and delivered to the medical emergency department. Firefighters towed away the vehicle and secured the site.

## Top officer involved in 'drug trafficking'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: As part of the efforts of the Public Security Sector and the Traffic and Operations Sector to arrest outlaws and violators of traffic laws and rules, the security deployment and traffic campaigns in the Wafra and Sulaibiya areas officers have impounded 3 vehicles and arrested the drivers for engaging in reckless driving, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the drivers have been detained and will be produced before the public prosecution.

The Capital Governorate Traffic Department also issued 70 direct traffic citations and impounded 7 vehicles for violating traffic laws during a campaign on the Second Ring Road and Damascus.

**Top officer accused:** The Criminal Court is looking into the case of officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel who is accused of exploiting his rank and place of work to smuggle large quantities of narcotic substances into the country through the port of Shuwaikh, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Personnel from General Department of Narcotics Control, in cooperation with the men of the Coast Guard, were able to arrest the officer from the State Security Service working in the Shuwaikh port office who tried to smuggle about 200 kilograms of hashish into the country.

**2 drug addicts nabbed:** The support security patrols from the Ahmadi Security Directorate has referred two former convicts to the General Administration for Narcotics Control after they were caught in the Mahboula in a state of drug use and in possession of narcotic substances and abuse tools, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the suspects were caught in the parking lot of a building under construction when they were seated in a four-wheel drive.

Police have seized from them 3 sachets of heroin and a sachet of shabu, 11 narcotic pills, a marijuana cigarette, a sensitive scale, and tools for abuse.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'The brave people of Gaza, who endure, they are best'

"In the face of the pride that we feel, we also mention with pride Kuwait's honorable position on the Palestinian issue, which is a position with a long and extended history, which has no specific limits, but rather it is open, whether through the official position supportive of it, or the popular position that we see as supporting the Palestinian right, in its entirety," columnist Aisha Mubarak Al-Sabah, wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"Defending the homeland, against an enemy that only understands the language of oppression and injustice, and taking rights from its people without deterrence, is an acquired right, and our Islamic religion commands us to do so, with all the strength and equipment we possess: 'Permission is given to those who fight because they have been wronged, and indeed, God is able to grant them victory.'"

"Salute to the brave and heroes of Gaza, who were able to put the Zionists in the heart of the experiment, and prove to the world that they are cowards, who take refuge in their weapons and those who support them in their oppression and tyranny, but they cannot fight the battle with honor in front of these heroes... Therefore, we have the right to say: The brave people of Gaza are the ones who remain.

"It is with immense pride that we declare Gaza's achievement in crafting an Arab-Islamic national epic through its courageous resistance, destined to be immortalized in history across generations. This narrative stands as a source of pride for all of us.

"With limited resources and humble military capabilities, devoid of external assistance, the unyielding determination of Gaza's inhabitants shattered the myth of an invincible army. The resistance, despite enduring the Zionist entity's imposed siege and the passage of time, inflicted astonishing losses on its adversary. The world now looks on with respect and admiration for the valiant souls who defied odds.

"Gaza's resistance exemplifies unparalleled patience in the face of an enemy fueled only by hatred and malice. Their goal: to penetrate deep into the adversary's territory, reclaim settlements on Palestinian land, apprehend soldiers, and instill fear and terror.

"Alongside our pride in Gaza, we must acknowledge Kuwait's honorable stance on the Palestinian issue. With a rich history and an open commitment, Kuwait stands both officially and popularly in support of the entire Palestinian cause.

"Defending the homeland against an oppressor that understands only the language of injustice is an inherent right. Our Islamic teachings guide us to stand firm, employing all available strength and resources: 'Permission is given to those who fight because they have been wronged, and indeed, God is able to grant them victory.'"

"We salute the brave heroes of Gaza who placed the Zionists in the crucible of challenge, revealing them as cowards reliant on weapons and external support for their oppression. Yet, in the face of these heroes, they cannot engage in an honorable battle. Hence, we assert with conviction: The resilient people of Gaza are the ones who endure."

**Also:**

"Novelist Haitham Boudi has summarized in his short novel 'The Kuwaiti Plague Year 1831', a crisis that passed through Kuwait during that period, and what the difficult conditions at that time reflected, and how the people of Kuwait dealt with it, especially since some of its chapters were harsh, but in the end, it saved families, relatives, and neighbors," columnist Iqbal Al-Ahmad wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"This short novel summarized chapters in history, as it quickly passed through some of the difficulties that the homelands were going through in an-

cient times, which Kuwait experienced in 1831, and we lived through one of them years ago, when the Corona epidemic (Covid 19) swept the world, when the homelands were isolated and life stopped. During this period, everyone remained in their homes, the roads and streets were empty of people, and movement ceased... except what was necessary.

"At that time, everyone adhered to strict instructions, which sometimes reached the point of cruelty, from the competent authorities around the world, until everyone passed the crisis with losses that could not be underestimated.

"What is beautiful about what the novelist Haitham Boodai concluded this short novel with is a summary, which we must not underestimate, forget, or even deny or overlook, and he means our country, Kuwait. "These good countries were not created by chance or by oil, but rather they struggled to survive, and they resisted to survive, despite poverty," hunger, epidemics and wars.

"Therefore, just as this country was built with the hands of its people, their pain and sweat, with their tragedies and sorrows, with the difficulties they overcame thanks to their cohesion and inter-connectedness, someone standing in the second row supporting it, rejoicing in its joy and helping it in its crises, we must cling to its being and defend it against everyone who harbors evil against it, no matter how strong. We fight those who doubt its capabilities, but at the same time we push for the intrinsic strength of this country, its youth and its children, to bring the country to safety, no matter how strong and strong the waves are.

"We say firmly that culture and art are the most beautiful things that can address reality, present and past, and point to the future."

"The grilling succeeded! Honorable Representative Mohalhal Al-Modhaf successfully interrogated His Highness the Prime Minister before this grilling took place or before His Highness ascended the podium," columnist Talal Al-Saeed wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The Council of Ministers approved the proposal to increase the cost of living allowance to KD200 without hesitation, as it is their custom. This is in addition to the pension increment for retirees. All of this is not meant to fulfill the demands of the Kuwaiti people, but to empty the grilling of its content!"

"It is clear that the results of the grilling were in the interest of the Kuwaiti citizens before the motion is discussed. It is also clear that the government of employees, may God replace us with something better, needs constant pressure in order to achieve the Kuwaiti people's aspirations. This means that it works without conviction and lacks initiatives, as it does not take the initiative unless an interrogation is presented. This is the source of the defect in the modest government performance so far.

"The evidence of this is that the government does not have a clear opinion on the increments issue. If the government has an opinion on this issue, it is supposed to announce and defend its view forcefully, without hesitation or fear, even if it led to questioning.

"But this did not, and will not, happen. All that matters is that the employee government's policy relies on reactions and attempts to contain the interrogations, or rather, to thwart the submission of a 'non-cooperation' motion. This is the key!"

"Currently, it is the turn of the 'loyal' members of the National Assembly to follow the example of their colleague Al-Modhaf, and perhaps, there will be an achievement. Let the beginning be on the issue of rebuilding Kuwait's dilapidated roads, before the issue of rebuilding Gaza comes to us and devours our budget!"

"They interrogated them for neglecting the repair of roads, so that they would take the initiative to repair, then the housing issue and others. Mohalhal Al-Mudhaf has opened the way for you to know how to deal with the government of employees ... Good."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukary

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Visitors being briefed on all sources and documents

46th Book Fair visitors explore Kuwait's history through digital ecosystem

By Wajad Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): The 46th edition of Kuwait International book fair visitors explored Kuwait Digital Memory, first launched on December 30th, 2020, which aimed to preserve Kuwait's history and heritage morally, intellectually, and materially through a digital ecosystem.

The visitors were briefed on all sources and documents that discussed many fields in Kuwait's history, in the National Library of Kuwait. The project's main aim is to preserve the country's history and documents as well as allow researchers and those who are interested to have access, saving it for the next generations in all different means of information, visual, readable and audible.



The Kuwait National Library team at the pavilion participating in the book fair.



The 30th airplane took off from the Kuwaiti air bridge, Tuesday, to provide relief to Gaza with 10 tons of aid to combat the winter.

Grant to housewives tops list with 46.4 pct of total amount last year

Amount of aid for 3,455 beneficiaries up, down for 6,724: report

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The report of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) on evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the Family Welfare Administration in disbursing social assistance showed that the amount of aid for 3,455 beneficiaries increased, while it decreased for 6,724 beneficiaries in 2022, reports Al-Anba daily.

The disbursement for 10,797 people was suspended and then aid was allocated to 6,518 individuals in 2022. The amount of aid disbursed in 2022 reached KD239 million -- KD181.4 million or 76 percent of which were paid to three categories of beneficiaries.

The data revealed that assistance to housewives topped the list with 46.4 percent of the total assistance amounting to KD110.9 million, followed by divorced women with 15.2 percent amounting to KD36.32 million and the elderly with 14.3 percent amounting to KD34.17 million.

In detail, the report showed that the number of cases for which public assistance was increased in 2022 totaled 2,125 cases or

Kuwait keen on protecting peace and security in Africa – diplomat

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Africa Affairs Bader Al-Tunaib said his country is taking part in the ninth Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa out of keenness on contributing to the international effort to resolve



Al-Tunaib

3,455 individuals and the amount reached KD1.1 million; most of which were granted to divorced women with KD379,000 or 33.4 percent -- 715 cases or 1,020 individuals; followed by the elderly with KD146,000 or 13 percent -- 306 cases or 316 people.

The total number of cases for which public assistance was linked in 2022 reached 4,868 cases or 6,518 individuals with a total of KD11.1 million; most of which went to housewives with KD3.3 million or 30 percent -- 1,191 cases with the same number for individ-

uals, followed by divorced women with KD1.8 million -- 792 cases of 949 individuals.

The year 2022 witnessed a reduction in social assistance for 5,549 cases or 6,724 people with KD2.1 million; most of which went to divorced women with KD739,000 or 34 percent -- 1,765 cases or 2,334 individuals; single women with KD496,000 or 23 percent -- 1,395 cases or 1,395 people; and then the elderly -- 233 cases or 1,277 individuals.

The report also showed that the total number of cases for which security problems in Africa and beyond.

The two-day Dakar forum which

kick-started Monday discussed several issues, notably cybersecurity and the digital challenges facing Africa.

The conferees also exchanged views on ways to tap into the potential of the Black Continent, and empower the private sector to contribute to peace, security, stability and rational management of the natural resources, the senior diplomat added.

Kuwait's delegation includes Ambassador to Senegal Adel Al-Amir and several other diplomats.

public assistance was suspended in 2022 reached 9,193 cases or 10,797 people amounting to KD31.5 million; most of which went to housewives, with KD6.1 million or 19.5 percent -- 1,599 cases, followed by divorced women with KD5.7 million or 18.3 percent -- 1,642 cases or 2,031 people.

The value of aid for cases whose disbursement has been suspended for the last three years are as follows: KD34.4 million for 8,998 cases in 2020; KD35.6 million for 9,790 cases in 2021 and KD31.6 million for 9,193 cases in 2022.

Bid to provide support for Palestine

Kuwait Society for Crisis inks MoU with Jordanian Ambulance Assoc

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Society for Crisis and Emergency Management Dr Fawzi Al-Khawari and Chairman of the Jordanian Ambulance Association Dr Yanal Al-Ajlouni recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on enhancing humanitarian coordination, providing urgent logistical and relief support for Palestine, and strengthening joint cooperation in the future, reports Al-Anba daily.

The two associations signed the MoU under exceptional circumstances with the aim of strengthening humanitarian cooperation and providing emergency aid to Gaza and Palestine in general. This is done through the initiative called for by the Kuwait Society for Crisis and Emergency Management, along with the participation of medical teams in the 'Fazaa for Palestine' campaign, which was launched by the Kuwait's Ministry of Social, Family and

Childhood Affairs.

This is in compliance with the directives of the political leadership to exhaust all means to deliver aid to the people in Gaza and benefit from the Jordanian capabilities, especially the Jordanian Hashemite Charitable Organization and King Hussein Cancer Centre, as well as their accumulated experience in supporting the people in Gaza and learning about the capabilities available in the Jordanian Ambulance Association in terms of handling Palestinian patients, especially performing surgical operations in Jordanian health facilities and mobilizing medical teams in response to the humanitarian situation in Palestine.

The MoU stipulates the commitment of both parties to strengthen cooperation in the field of providing humanitarian and relief aid to the affected areas, particularly the people in Gaza and Palestine who are currently facing difficulties.

KFAED, GEIA teams carry out field tour

Construction and civil works of Wafra station project completion rate up 50%

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Executive Vice President of Networks Sector at the Gulf Electricity Interconnection Authority Eng. Muhammad Al-Sheikh says the construction and civil works of the Wafra station project are proceeding according to the specified time schedule, and the completion rate has exceeded 50 percent, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He revealed that he is expecting the project to be ready for delivery in December 2024.

Eng. Muhammad Al-Sheikh said this in a press statement issued during a field visit carried out recently by a delegation from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and officials from the Gulf Electricity Interconnection Authority to inspect the project and see the progress of work, accompanied by engineers for qualifying and training newly graduated Kuwaiti engineers and architects, something that the KFAED has been organizing since 2004 to train national cadres and give them practical experience.

In a similar statement, trainee engineer Othman Al-Amhuj said, "We are currently working in Saudi Arabia with Omexom GCC Projects, which is responsible for implementing the authority's Wafra station project. Today we are visiting the site with a delegation from KFAED and the Gulf Electricity Interconnection Authority to follow up the achievements with the contractor and engineers from the implementing company."

It is worth highlighting that the Wafra station is considered one of the expansion projects, and will connect the authority's network to the Kuwait network via four circuits with 400 kilovolts at a total cost of USD 270 million in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of electrical energy at all times.

The project is considered one of the regional development projects in the field of joint Gulf and regional cooperation in order to meet the challenges and increasing demand in the Gulf interconnection sector, and to provide electrical energy to all Gulf countries.

News in Brief

**Shift allowance eyed:** Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi confirmed that the ministry is keen on implementing the decisions of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Mutairi revealed that the ministry has laid down regulations for the disbursement of shift allowance to eligible employees in the Social Care Sector. He explained these are the regulatory procedures for granting allowance, such that the disbursement is in line with the regulations; which take into consideration the nature of work, job title and number of wards in each welfare home, subject to the approval of the concerned administration and assistant undersecretary.

**Coffee fights liver disease:** Experts said coffee could become an important weapon in the fight against liver disease, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This is good news for coffee lovers, as researchers found that drinking two cups of coffee a day reduces the risk of developing cirrhosis of the liver by 44 percent and 65 percent if one drinks four cups daily. Those who are already suffering from a liver problem could benefit from coffee as research has shown that moderate amounts -- between one to three cups per day -- may slow down the following conditions: cirrhosis, hepatitis B and C, and non-alcohol-related fatty liver disease, according to the American health services company WebMD.

# November

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Focus on requirements, specifications for private and model housing buildings

Two new items added to private housing regulations: Dr Kamal



Participants at the annual event.

Event focuses on anemia and iron deficiency

Al-Jahra Hospital operates at 70pc capacity

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Director of the Jahra Health District, Dr. Jamal Al-Duaij, said the Jahra Hospital is a medical city operating at a 70 percent of its capacity.

In a statement to Al-Rai, on the sidelines of attending the annual event of the internal medicine department in the hospital on anemia and iron deficiency, the minister touched on the Ministry of Health's keenness to expand the opening of clinics and specialties, as it is one of the large health facilities in the country and covers the Jahra Governorate.

He indicated the ministry is providing it with medical personnel in various specialties to provide health care to the people of Jahra.

He explained that the hospital administration has opened new departments for nuclear medicine and ophthalmology, and there are departments that will be opened soon to serve patients.

In turn, internal medicine consultant, head of the department, Dr. Aziz Al-Dhafiri, said the event is held annually from November 26 to enhance health awareness about anemia and iron deficiency diseases and target the group

that is susceptible to them, such as children, pregnant women, and those with chronic diseases such as heart and kidney failure.

Al-Dhafiri considered that "the turnout was successful" and that he was keen to inquire about the symptoms and available treatment methods, such as injections or pills, with follow-up at the hematology clinic, calling on adults and children to undergo regular blood tests to prevent anemia.

For her part, Dr. Aisha Al-Ajmi said that the symptoms of anemia caused by iron deficiency include headaches and fatigue, in addition to academic delay, lack of concentration, poor memory, and pale facial color, as well as mouth ulcers, shortness of breath, cold extremities, hair loss, and broken nails.

Al-Ajmi pointed out that the most common groups affected by anemia caused by iron deficiency are pregnant women, teenage girls, and young people who follow harsh diets or diets, as well as children. The event was supervised by Aisha Al-Ajmi, Warej Al-Saidi and Amal Al-Otaibi from the Internal Medicine Department at Al-Jahra Hospital.

Fifth Kuwait Primary Healthcare Confab to be held from Dec 6-8

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Director of the Central Primary Healthcare Department in the Ministry of Health Dr Dina Al-Dubaib has announced that the Fifth Kuwait Primary Healthcare Conference will be held from Dec 6-8, 2023 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel under the patronage of Health Minister Dr Ahmed Al-Awadhi, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, Al-Dubaib disclosed the conference will focus on significant topics in the field of primary healthcare, latest medi-

cal developments, role of artificial intelligence and enhancing the role of the primary care physician. She said the conference will include 44 scientific lectures delivered by a group of lecturers in and outside Kuwait.

She added a poster competition, "Scientific Posters", will be held on the sidelines of the conference and the entries will be evaluated by a specialized jury in person and virtually; affirming that prizes will be awarded to the best scientific posters.

MPs target

Continued from Page 1

ordinary citizens and prevents the use of banks' funds for illegal businesses, which negatively affect the housing conditions.

Chairman of the committee MP Fayed Al-Jomhour said the objective is to shorten the waiting period for housing grant applicants, indicating the ratified bill is just one of several bills aimed at finding final and comprehensive solutions to the housing issue.

Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun praised the efforts exerted by the committee in the previous and current rounds of the 17th parliamentary term, as well as the cooperation of the government, which led to the ratification of such an important bill - one of the demands of citizens.

In addition, the Assembly unanimously approved the proposed amendment of Disabled Affairs Law number 8/2010 and referred it to the government.

Rapporteur of the Disabled Affairs Committee MP Hani Shams disclosed that the amendment includes the following:

- Add Kuwaiti men and women taking care of non-Kuwaiti third degree relatives to the beneficiaries of the law.
- Transfer the supervision of special needs schools from the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) to the Ministry of Education with PADA as the oversight authority.
- Reduce the working hours for employees taking care of relatives with minor disabilities.
- Grant the same privileges to the second individual taking care of a relative with severe and permanent disability.
- Grant full time vacation for the second individual taking care of a relative with severe and permanent disability once the first individual completes the specified number of years to avail the early retirement privilege.
- Expand the provision of free prosthetic devices to include individuals with minor disabilities and nurses to take care of the disabled in coordination with the Ministry of Health or grant cash for this purpose in coordination with the Ministry of Finance.
- Reduce the number of years required for employees taking care of disabled relatives to be referred for retirement.
- Cancel the real estate and housing loan amount limit for families with disabled members. The current law stipulates KD20,000 as the maximum amount, which means that in case the family has more than one disabled member, the share of each will be lower than KD20,000. The proposed amendment cancels this provision, such that there is no limit to the loan amount.
- Reduce the required number of years for a disabled employee to retire to 10 years.
- Reduce the required number of years for a male or female employee taking care of a disabled relative to re-

tire to 15 years.

■ Public institutions should not cut any of the allowances and privileges granted to employees taking care of a disabled relative. The existing law allows some public institutions to cut some allowances granted to housewives due to the privileges they obtain for having disabled children.

■ Increase the allowance for hiring a driver for the disabled from KD 100 to KD 120.

■ Design roads and sidewalks to be suitable for the disabled.

Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun adjourned the session until Dec 12, 2023.

Mediators look

Continued from Page 1

packed into overflowing shelters.

An Israeli ground invasion of the south could eventually ferret out Hamas' leaders and demolish the rest of its militant infrastructure, including kilometers (miles) of tunnels, but at a cost in Palestinian lives and destruction that the United States, Israel's main ally, seems unwilling to bear.

The Biden administration has told Israel that if it resumes the offensive it must operate with far greater precision, especially in the south. That approach is unlikely to bring Hamas to its knees any time soon, and international pressure for a lasting cease-fire is already mounting.

"How far both sides will be prepared to go in trading hostages and prisoners for the pause is about to be tested, but the pressures and incentives for both to stick with it are at the moment stronger than the incentives to go back to war," Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, wrote on X.

Diaa Rashwan, head of Egypt's state information services, said negotiations to extend the cease-fire and release more hostages have made progress and that it is "highly likely" another extension will be announced Wednesday. Egypt, along with Qatar and the U.S., played a key role in mediating the original cease-fire and a two-day extension announced Monday.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who plans to visit the region this week, said the U.S. would like to see an extension of the truce, the release of more hostages, and the delivery of more humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Speaking to reporters in Brussels, he said he also wanted to discuss postwar arrangements for Gaza, a subject on which the U.S., Israel and Arab countries are deeply divided.

The war began with Hamas' Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel, in which it killed over 1,200 people, mostly civilians. The militants dragged some 240 people back into Gaza, including babies, children, women, soldiers, older adults and Thai farm laborers.

Israel responded with a devastating air campaign across Gaza and a ground invasion in the north. More than 13,300 Palestinians have been killed, roughly two-thirds of them women and minors, according to the Health Minis-

try in Hamas-ruled Gaza, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

The toll is likely much higher, as officials have only sporadically updated the count since Nov. 11 due to the breakdown of services in the north. The ministry says thousands more people are missing and feared dead under the rubble.

Israel says 77 of its soldiers have been killed in the ground offensive, and it claims to have killed thousands of militants, without providing evidence.

The plight of the captives, and the lingering shock from the Oct. 7 attack, has galvanized Israeli support for the war. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is also under intense pressure to bring the hostages home, and could find it difficult to resume the offensive if there's a prospect for more releases.

Israel said Wednesday that around 160 hostages are still being held in Gaza, including four who are under 18 and 10 who are over 75. With information hard to come by, authorities have only given approximate counts of the number of hostages held in Gaza.

There appear to remain enough to potentially extend the current cease-fire for another two weeks. Israel did not say how many of the captives are soldiers, for whom Hamas is expected to drive a much harder bargain.

The cease-fire is currently due to end at some point after an exchange planned for later on Wednesday.

A total of 60 Israelis have been freed as part of the truce, most of whom appear physically well but shaken. Another 21 hostages - 19 Thai, one Filipino and one Russian-Israeli - have been released in separate negotiations since the truce began. Before the cease-fire, Hamas released four hostages, and the Israeli army rescued one. Two others were found dead in Gaza.

The latest swap brought to 180 the number of Palestinians freed from Israeli prisons. Most have been teenagers accused of throwing stones and firebombs during confrontations with Israeli forces. Several were women convicted by Israeli military courts of attempting deadly attacks.

Palestinians have celebrated the release of people they see as having resisted Israel's decadeslong military occupation of lands they want for a future state.

Ordinary Palestinians fear the resumption of the war, which has brought unprecedented levels of death, destruction and displacement across Gaza.

"We are fed up," said Omar al-Darawi, who works at the overwhelmed Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in central Gaza. "We want this war to stop."

Israel's bombardment and ground offensive have displaced more than 1.8 million people inside Gaza, nearly 80% of the territory's population, and most have sought refuge in the south, according to the U.N.

The cease-fire has allowed more aid to be delivered to Gaza, up to 200 trucks a day, but that is less than half what the enclave was importing before the fighting, even as needs have soared.

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Head of the joint committee consisting of the technical, legal and financial committees of the Municipal Council Dr. Hassan Kamal announced the addition of two new items to the private housing regulations.

In a press statement issued after the committee meeting, Dr. Kamal explained that the first items aims at achieving justice for the owners of plots with an area

of above 400 square meters, and equating them with the owners of plots with lesser area, as they were previously required to have a construction percentage not exceeding 21 percent or 960 square meters, depending on whichever is greater. After this amendment, they became equal to the owners of plots with an area of less than 400 square meters, who were allowed by the old regulations to add 120 square meters to their building percentage.

The second items relates to allowing plot owners to build one or two basements

in the entire plot, as well as including comprehensive explanations for the spaces that were granted as exceptions to some vouchers to be used in the work of elevators and dispensers.

He revealed that the discussion during the meeting focused on the table of requirements and specifications for private and model housing buildings, known as the private housing regulations, adding that the latest amendments from the technical staff was included after several meetings with the work teams.

'CAN campaign role vital to raise awareness over prostate cancer'

Disease ranks 2nd among Kuwaiti men over 50 years: expert

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cancer Awareness Nation (CAN) campaign Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh affirmed the importance of the awareness-raising role played by the campaign to increase the awareness of men over the age of 50 about cancer especially prostate cancer.

In a press statement issued recently, Dr. Al-Saleh explained that a number of lectures are being organized to raise awareness and provide the necessary medical consultations in coordination with the "Diwaniya of the First Pioneers" in Rumaithiya.

The CAN team visited several places, the most recent of which was to the "Diwaniya of the First Pioneers" in Rumaithiya

Eng Al-Khaza issues decision

'Terminate services of seconded employees'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Director of the Central Administration for Managing the Secondment System at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Eng Ibrahim Al-Khaza issued a decision to terminate the services of seconded employees; such that their last working day is at the end of this month, re-

ports Al-Anba daily.

The circular issued to various departments in the ministry explained that the decision is based on the agreement finalized in the recently concluded meeting of the Central Committee, taking into consideration the fact that the seconded employees' work is in conflict with the Labor Law.

Al-Khaza pointed out that Public Authority for Manpower Letter No. 19120 dated Nov 22, 2023 regarding the permissibility of seeking assistance from external employees who hold Article 18 visa (private sector employees) stated that such practice contravenes the Labor Law.

where the kidney and urology specialist Dr. Khaled Al-Otaibi provided a lot of medical advice and guidance on the importance of early detection of prostate cancer and the need to conduct necessary tests for that purpose.

Dr. Al-Saleh stressed the importance of early detection to achieve higher rates of cure.

He revealed that prostate cancer ranks second among Kuwaiti men over the age of 50 due to which prostate cancer is considered a "lifelong cancer", as more than 50 percent of prostate cancer patients are over the age of 50.

Dr. Al-Saleh affirmed the im-

portance of awareness for identifying the initial signs of tumor infection, and performing simple laboratory tests such as the PSA test, which leads to faster diagnosis and treatment and a higher rate of recovery.

He highlighted the launch of the Kuwait Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign by CAN in November in partnership with the Kuwait Urology Association and the Kuwait Oncology Association under the slogan "Get Screened", with the aim of spreading awareness about prostate cancer among men over the age of 50 years in the State of Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Saleh announced the organization of more than ten lectures as part of the activities and events of the "Get Screened" campaign in coordination with public bodies and institutions and public benefit associations, in addition to holding various exhibitions and a walkathon as part of the campaign for the target group, with the cooperation of the Patient Helping Fund Society.

He also announced the launch of a new campaign in December under the title "Our Children, Our Youth" to educate children and youth about the importance of eating healthy food.

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World News Roundup

Europe

Putin slams West

Finland to close entire 'border' with Moscow

HELSINKI, Nov 29, (Agencies): Finland said Tuesday it will close its last remaining border crossing with Russia amid concerns that Moscow is using migrants as part of "hybrid warfare" to destabilize the Nordic country following its entry into NATO.

Finland already had shut seven of the eight checkpoints on its 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) border with Russia this month following a surge in arrivals of migrants from the Middle East and Africa. Helsinki has accused Moscow of ushering them toward the frontier - through thick forests in the south to the rugged Arctic landscape in the north.

"The government has decided to close all the crossing points on the entire eastern border," Prime Minister **Petteri Orpo** told reporters, saying Finland faced an "exceptional" situation that the government blames on Moscow for orchestrating.

"Finland has a profound reason to suspect that the entry (of migrants) is organized by a foreign state. This deals with Russia's influencing operations and we won't accept it," Orpo said bluntly. "We don't accept any attempt to undermine our national security. Russia has caused this situation and it can also stop it."

The complete closure announced Tuesday is due to last for at least two weeks, after which one crossing point may be reopened, the Finnish government said.



Orpo

**EU to provide additional funding for Ukraine:** The European Union Tuesday announced its decision to provide additional funding for training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces under the European Union Military Assistance Mission (EUMAM Ukraine).

Such support will take the form of necessary lethal and non-lethal equipment and supplies, as well as services to back the training activities.

The financial amount is increased by 194 million euro (USD 212 million) totalling 255 million euro (USD 279 million), said an EU statement.

This support will continue facilitating large-scale training of Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel and enable EU member states to provide required training equipment and supplies.

**Spy chief wife being treated for poisoning:** The wife of Ukraine's intelligence chief has been diagnosed with heavy metals poisoning and is undergoing treatment in a hospital, a spokesperson for the agency said Tuesday as the country's war with Russia stretched into its 22nd month.

Marianna Budanova is the wife of Lt. Gen. Kyrilo Budanov, the head of the military intelligence agency that is known in Ukrainian as GUR for short. Her condition was confirmed to The Associated Press by Andrii Yusov, the agency's spokesman.

Yusov did not provide more details about the alleged poisoning, nor did he say if it was believed to have been intended for Budanov or whether Russia was thought to be behind it. Earlier this year, he told Ukrainian media that military intelligence chief had survived 10 assassination attempts carried out by the Russian state security service, or FSB.

**Putin accuses West of trying to plunder Russia:** Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, in a ranting speech before a presidential election campaign, cast Moscow's military action in Ukraine as an existential battle against purported attempts by the West to destroy Russia.

Putin, who has been in power for more than two decades and is the longest-serving Russian leader since Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, is expected to soon declare his intention to seek another six-year term in a presidential election next March.

"We are defending the security and well-being of our people, the highest, historical right to be Russia - a strong, independent power, a country-civilization," Putin said, accusing the U.S. and its allies of trying to "dismember and plunder" Russia.

**Latvia chief diplomat pursues NATO top job:** Latvia's foreign minister on Tuesday staked his claim to the top job at NATO, saying that the military organization needs a consensus builder who is committed to higher defense spending and has a clear vision of how to deal with Russia.

NATO is likely to name a new secretary general at its next summit in Washington in July. Former Norwegian prime minister Jens Stoltenberg has been the alliance's top civilian official since 2014. His term has been extended four times during the war in Ukraine.

"We're going to have 32 countries. Keeping 32 countries together on any topic, it's a big challenge, and we need a consensus builder that can work with any and all allies, to move everyone forward in the same direction," Latvian Foreign Minister Krisjanis Karins told reporters at NATO headquarters.

**Baltics, Ukraine top diplomats to boycott talks:** The foreign ministers of the three Baltic states and of Ukraine said Tuesday they will boycott a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe being held this week in North Macedonia, in objection to the participation of Russia's foreign minister.

The top diplomats of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania issued a joint statement, saying they "deeply regret the decision enabling the personal participation" of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"It will only provide Russia with yet another propaganda opportunity," they said.

Lavrov said Monday that he planned to travel to North Macedonia's capital, Skopje, for the OSCE foreign ministers' meeting, which would mark a rare visit to a NATO member country since Russia started its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. He also has visited NATO member Turkey, which has no ban on Russian flights. In September, he was in New York to attend the UN General Assembly.

**Four miners die in Poland:** Four miners died after a pipeline filled with water burst in a coal mine deep below ground in southern Poland, Polish media reported on Tuesday.

The all-news station TVN24 reported that the fatal accident occurred in the Sobieski mine in Jaworzno, a town in the coal-mining region of Silesia, not far from Poland's borders with Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

TVN24 quoted a spokesman for the mining authority, Piotr Strzoda, as saying the uncontrolled pipeline rupture happened at a depth of 600 meters (1,970 feet) underground. A brigade of six miners were working on flushing the pipeline at the time.



The casket of former US first lady Rosalynn Carter, arrives inside Glenn Memorial Church on Nov 28 in Atlanta. (AP)

Rosalynn Carter honored by family, friends, first ladies and presidents

Rosalynn Carter was remembered Tuesday as a former US first lady who leveraged her fierce intellect and political power to put her deep Christian faith into action by always helping others, especially those who needed it most.

A gathering of first ladies and presidents - including her 99-year-old husband Jimmy Carter - joined other political figures in tribute. But a parade of speakers said her global stature wasn't what defined her.

"She had met kings and queens, presidents, oth-

ers in authority, powerful corporate leaders and celebrities," her son James Earl "Chip" Carter III said. "She said the people that she felt the most comfortable with and the people she enjoyed being with the most were those that lived in absolute abject poverty, the ones without adequate housing, without a proper diet and without access to health care."

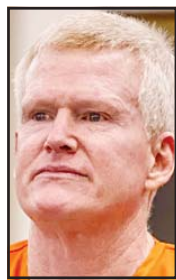
The service was held during three days of events celebrating the humanitarian who died Nov 19 at home in Plains, Georgia, at the age of 96. Tributes

began Monday in the Carters' native Sumter County and continued at Glenn Memorial Church in Atlanta. Her funeral and burial are planned for Wednesday in her small hometown.

Jimmy Carter, who is 10 months into home hospice care, watched from his wheelchair, reclining and covered by a blanket featuring his wife's face. Chip and his sister, Amy, held their father's hands and were flanked by their brothers, Jeff and Jack. (AP)



A woman makes her way through a snowy street near the government headquarters Rosenbad during a heavy snowfall in central Stockholm, Sweden on Nov 28. Winter's early onset has brought heavy snowfall and icy roads to Northern Europe, creating disruptions and dangerous driving conditions, with German media reporting Tuesday at least two deaths and children stuck overnight in a school. (AP)



Murdaugh



Biden

America

**Hunter Biden to testify publicly:** Hunter Biden offered Tuesday to testify publicly before Congress, striking a defiant note in response to a subpoena from Republicans and setting up a potential high-stakes faceoff even as a separate special counsel probe unfolds and his father, President Joe Biden, campaigns for reelection.

The Democratic president's son slammed the subpoena's request for closed-door testimony, saying it can be manipulated. But Rep. James Comer of Kentucky, the chairman of the House Oversight Committee, stood firm, saying Republicans expect "full cooperation" with their original demand for a deposition.

Hunter Biden's lawyer called the inquiry a "fishing expedition," a response in line with the more forceful legal approach he's taken in recent months as congressional Republicans pursue an impeachment inquiry seeking to tie his father to his business dealings. (AP)

**Murdaugh gets 27 yrs:** For years, South Carolina attorney Alex Murdaugh looked his anguished clients in the eyes and promised to help them with their medical bills, their suffering or simply to survive. Then he stole some, if not all, of what he won for many of them.

Those clients got to look Murdaugh in the eye Tuesday and tell him how he had destroyed their trust, as the disgraced lawyer was sentenced to 27 years in prison for stealing about \$12 million.

"I'm not crying for what he stole from me. I'm crying for what he did to every-

Politics

Haley wins backing from powerful Koch network

Biden targets Boebert in fresh attack on GOP

DENVER, Nov 29, (AP): US President Joe Biden will try to turn Rep Lauren Boebert of Colorado into the embodiment of Republican opposition to his agenda as he visits her congressional district on Wednesday.

The trip comes as Biden struggles with low approval ratings while he prepares for a likely 2024 rematch against former President Donald Trump, leaving Democrats eager for opportunities to score political points against Republicans.

Biden plans to tour CS Wind, the world's largest facility for wind tower manufacturing, in the town of Pueblo. The trip was originally scheduled for last month, but it was delayed as the Democratic president focused on the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas.

CS Wind is undergoing a \$200 million expansion that is expected to create 850 jobs by 2026 with help from the tax benefits in the Inflation Reduction Act, which included hundreds of billions of dollars of financial incentives.

Analysis

In addition, a new analysis from the Treasury Department said clean energy investments have mostly flowed to communities with below-average wages and above-average child poverty. The White House said the data indicates that Biden's policies are expanding economic opportunity.

Boebert, who has cultivated a national reputation as a far-right insurgent, has called the Inflation Reduction Act "a massive failure" that "needs to be repealed."

She also described the bipartisan infrastructure law enacted in 2021 as "garbage" and "wasteful." According to the White House, the law has contributed roughly \$190 million toward street and water infrastructure improvements in her area of Colorado.

The White House said Biden would speak about his administration's progress on clean energy and "how self-described MAGA Republicans like Representative Lauren Boebert are threatening those investments, jobs, and opportunities."

Pueblo is one of the anchors of Colorado's sprawling 3rd Congressional District, which covers more ground than Pennsylvania. Boebert won her seat in 2020 and barely held on to it during the 2022 midterms.

Rematch

She recently suffered an embarrassing episode when she was kicked out of a musical production of "Beetlejuice," where she was spotted vaping and groping with a date. Now she faces a difficult reelection campaign and a likely rematch against Democratic candidate Adam Frisch.

Biden in recent weeks has been taking an increasingly confrontational stance toward Republicans.

For example, during a White House event focused on supply chains on Monday, Biden unleashed a broader critique of Republicans for trying "to undo this progress we're making."

"They want to go back to the bad old days, when corporations looked around the world to find the cheapest labor they could find, to send the jobs overseas, and then import the products back to the United States," he said.

Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of the powerful Koch network, formally endorsed **Nikki Haley's** presidential campaign on Tuesday, promising to commit its nationwide coalition of activists - and virtually unlimited funds - to helping Haley defeat former President Donald Trump in the GOP

primary contest. "AFP Action is proud to throw our full support behind Nikki Haley, who offers America the opportunity to turn the page on the current political era, to win the Republican primary and defeat Joe Biden next November," AFP president and CEO **Emily Seidel** wrote in a memo announcing the group's decision.

Lead

"She has what it takes to lead a policy agenda to take on our nation's biggest challenges and help ensure our country's best days are ahead. With the grassroots and data capability we bring to bear in this race, no other organization is better equipped to help her do it."

The endorsement may help Haley address one of her biggest strategic liabilities.

Despite seizing some polling momentum in recent months, especially in early primary states, the former United Nations ambassador's campaign has been lacking significant resources on the ground to ensure her supporters turn out to vote. But now, she inherits the organizational heft of what may be the most powerful conservative grassroots organization in the nation. The Koch network, previously referred to as the Koch Brothers, has been building a network of paid conservative activists and volunteers in key states for several years.

Through last summer and the fall alone, Americans for Prosperity activists communicated with 6 million primary voters, either in person at their doors or on the phone, Seidel said.

The endorsement marks a particularly painful blow to Florida Gov. **Ron DeSantis**, who had championed conservative priorities in Florida, but struggled to emerge as the clear Trump alternative in the 2024 GOP primary contest.

body," said Jordan Jinks, a friend of Murdaugh's since childhood.

The courtroom drama marked yet another step in the fall of a powerful and respected

attorney whose family name dominated the legal scene in a small Hampton County for generations, and whose alleged crimes have been a perennial topic of true crime pod-



Georgia state Reps. Matt Dubnik, R-Gainesville (left), and Timothy Barr, R-Lawrenceville, confer over a redistricting map at the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta on Nov 10, 2021. Lawmakers were to return on Nov 29, 2023, for a special session to redraw congressional and legislative maps after a federal judge ruled Georgia's maps illegally diluted the power of Black voters. (AP)

casts and online chat groups. (AP)

Mom charged with drowning child:

A Southern California woman was charged Tuesday with drowning her 9-year-old daughter in a bathtub where her decomposing body was found days later, prosecutors said.

Khadijah Pendergraph, 32, of Westminster, was arrested last Friday in a grocery store parking lot in Aliso Viejo - about 20 miles (32 kilometers) away - on the same day that the girl's body was found in their shared apartment, according to a statement from the Orange County District Attorney's Office.

The girl, identified by the office only as Victoria, had cerebral palsy and couldn't speak, prosecutors said. (AP)

Deputy's family to sue county:

The parents of a Los Angeles County deputy who was shot and killed while sitting in his patrol car plan to file a lawsuit accusing the sheriff's department and county leaders of putting law enforcement officers at risk by making them work excessive overtime because of severe understaffing, an attorney announced Tuesday.

Investigators said Deputy Ryan Clinkumbroer, 30, was ambushed Sept. 16 while waiting for a traffic light to change in Palmdale, a city of more than 167,000 residents in the high desert of northern LA County. (AP)

## India

## 'Inclusive, action-oriented'

## India's G20 Presidency and dawn of new multilateralism

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (Agencies): Today marks 365 days since India assumed the G20 Presidency. It is a moment to reflect, recommit, and rejuvenate the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, 'One Earth, One Family, One Future.'

As India undertook this responsibility last year, the global landscape grappled with multifaceted challenges: recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, looming climate threats, financial instability, and debt distress in developing nations, all amid declining multilateralism. In the midst of conflicts and competition, development cooperation suffered, impeding progress.



Modi

Assuming the G20 Chair, India sought to offer the world an alternative to status quo, a shift from a GDP-centric to human-centric progress. India aimed to remind the world of what unites us, rather than what divides us. Finally, the global conversation had to evolve -- the interests of the few had to give way to the aspirations of the many. This required a fundamental reform of multilateralism as we knew it.

Inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive -- these four words defined our approach as G20 president, and the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (NDLD), unanimously adopted by all G20 members, is testimony to our commitment to deliver on these principles.

Inclusivity has been at the heart of our presidency. The inclusion of the African Union (AU) as a permanent member of the G20 integrated 55 African nations into the forum, expanding it to encompass 80% of the global population. This proactive stance has fostered a more comprehensive dialogue on global challenges and opportunities.

## Convened

The first-of-its-kind 'Voice of the Global South Summit,' convened by India in two editions, heralded a new dawn of multilateralism. India mainstreamed the Global South's concerns in international discourse and has ushered in an era where developing countries take their rightful place in shaping the global narrative.

Inclusivity also infused India's domestic approach to G20, making it a People's Presidency that befits that world's largest democracy. Through 'Jan Bhagidari' (people's participation) events, G20 reached 1.4 billion citizens, involving all states and Union Territories (UTs) as partners. And on substantive elements, India ensured that international attention was directed to broader developmental aims, aligning with G20's mandate.

At the critical midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, India delivered the G20 2023 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking a cross-cutting, action-oriented approach to interconnected issues, including health, education, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

A key area driving this progress is robust Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). Here, India was decisive in its recommendations, having witnessed the revolutionary impact of digital innovations like Aadhaar, UPI, and Digilocker firsthand. Through G20, we successfully completed the Digital Public Infrastructure Repository, a significant stride in global technological collaboration. This repository, featuring over 50 DPIs from 16 countries, will help the Global South build, adopt, and scale DPI to unlock the power of inclusive growth.

For One Earth, India introduced ambitious and inclusive aims to create urgent, lasting, and equitable change. The Declaration's 'Green Development Pact' addresses the challenges of choosing between combating hunger and protecting the planet, by outlining a comprehensive roadmap where employment and ecosystems are complimentary, consumption is climate conscious, and production is planet-friendly.

In tandem, the G20 Declaration calls for an ambitious tripling of global renewable energy capacity by 2030. Coupled with the establishment of the Global Biofuels Alliance and a concerted push for Green Hydrogen, the G20's ambitions to build a cleaner, greener world is undeniable. This has always been India's ethos, and through Lifestyles for Sustainable Development (LiFE), the world can benefit from our age-old sustainable traditions.

## Support

Further, the Declaration underscores our commitment to climate justice and equity, urging substantial financial and technological support from the Global North. For the first time, there was recognition of the quantum jump needed in the magnitude of development financing, moving from billions to trillions of dollars. G20 acknowledged that developing countries require \$5.9 trillion to fulfill their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2030.

Given the monumental resources required, G20 emphasized the importance of better, larger, and more effective Multilateral Development Banks. Concurrently, India is taking a leading role in UN reforms, especially in the restructuring of principal organs like the UN Security Council, that will ensure a more equitable global order.

Gender equality took centre stage in the Declaration, culminating in the formation of a dedicated Working Group on the Empowerment of Women next year. India's Women's Reservation Bill 2023, reserving one-third of India's Parliament and state legislative assembly seats for women epitomizes our commitment to women-led development.

The New Delhi Declaration embodies a renewed spirit of collaboration across these key priorities, focusing on policy coherence, reliable trade, and ambitious climate action. It is a matter of pride that during our Presidency, G20 achieved 87 outcomes and 118 adopted documents, a marked rise from the past.

During our G20 Presidency, India led deliberations on geopolitical issues and their impact on economic growth and development. Terrorism and the senseless killing of civilians is unacceptable, and we must address it with a policy of zero-tolerance. We must embody humanitarianism over hostility and reiterate that this is not an era of war.

"I am delighted that during our Presidency India achieved the extraordinary: it revitalized multilateralism, amplified the voice of the Global South, championed development, and fought for the empowerment of women, everywhere.

"As we hand over the G20 Presidency to Brazil, we do so with the conviction that our collective steps for people, planet, peace, and prosperity, will resonate for years to come," said the Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**.



In this photo released from Myanmar Military True News Information Team, Chinese destroyer Zibo (156) is seen upon arrival at Thilawa port in Yangon, Myanmar on Nov 27. Myanmar's military-controlled government has been conducting joint naval exercises with neighboring China. Inset: In this photo released from Myanmar Military True News Information Team, senior officers from Myanmar Navy, (right side), welcome officers from the Chinese Navy Escort Task Group, (left side), upon arrival at Thilawa port in Yangon, Myanmar Monday. (AP)



Presidential candidate Anies Baswedan gestures as he delivers a speech during his campaign rally in Jakarta, Indonesia on Nov 28. Candidates officially began their campaign for next year's election which will determine who will succeed President Joko Widodo who is now serving his second and final term. (AP)



Fernández



Milei

## Lat/Am

## Milei committed to freedom:

Argentina's President-elect **Javier Milei** met Tuesday with senior Biden administration officials at the White House in his first international trip since winning a presidential runoff earlier this month.

The right-wing Milei had a "positive meeting" with White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan, the president-elect's office said in a statement. The visit by Argentina's incoming leader occurred while President Joe Biden was away from Washington at a memorial for former first lady Rosalynn Carter in Georgia and then traveling to Colorado.

The statement from Milei's office said he had expressed "his views on the international geopolitical agenda aligned with the West and his commitment to the values of freedom." It added that Sullivan, speaking on behalf of the administration, "conveyed the willingness of the United States to cooperate in the transition of the incoming Argentine government, given the challenging political, economic and social circumstances that the country is facing."

The White House issued a statement saying that Sullivan and Milei discussed economic issues and "shared priorities such as investing in technology and clean energy, advocating for human rights, and standing up for democracies around the world." (AP)

## Case reopened against ex-VP:

A federal appeals court in Argentina reopened a money laundering investigation into Vice President **Cristina Fernández de Kirchner** on Tuesday, increasing her legal woes just weeks before she leaves office and loses her immunity from arrest.

Fernández, 70, who served as president from 2007 to 2015, leaves office when President-elect Javier Milei is sworn in on Dec 10. She already has been sentenced to six years in prison in a separate corruption case involving her ties to family friend and businessman Lázaro Báez.

That sentence, issued in December 2022, isn't firm until appeals are decided, which could take years, and

## Asia

## Osprey crashes off southern Japan, at least 1 dead

## Myanmar, China conduct naval drills

BANGKOK, Nov 29, (AP): Myanmar and China are conducting naval drills together as the military government in the Southeast Asian nation loses ground in its northeast border region to a coalition of militias that also has strong ties to Beijing.

State-run Myanmar Alinn newspaper said Wednesday that three Chinese vessels were anchored in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, and that officials from both nations met Tuesday to discuss the maritime security exercises.

The Chinese vessels - the destroyer Zibo, frigate Jing Zhou and supply ship Qian Dao Hu - carry about 700 sailors and arrived at the Myanmar port Monday. The report didn't give more details on the drills.

Myanmar's military seized power from an elected government in 2021 and since has been in armed conflict with pro-democracy forces and ethnic militias.

## Uprising

The visit of the Chinese vessels comes during an uprising in violence on Myanmar's border with China by the Three Brotherhood Alliance, a group of militias that launched a coordinated offensive against the ruling military on Oct 27.

China is Myanmar's biggest trading partner and maintains good relations with the ruling generals. The groups in the alliance also have good relations with China and have vowed to protect foreign investments such as Chinese-backed projects in territory they control.

The alliance has claimed widespread victories including four border crossings in the northern part of Shan state, and the military government acknowledged soon after fighting began that it had lost three towns.

The alliance's offensive has energized the nationwide armed struggle to overthrow the military regime that was installed after the army seized power, and fighting has spread to many parts of the country.

On Wednesday, the resistance forces in the northwestern Chin state seized a small town in Matupi township bordering India, according to Salai Danny, a spokesperson

of the Chinland Defense Force-Zotung militia group.

Beijing has called for a ceasefire and has said the warring parties should try and resolve their differences through dialogue. It has not, however, used its influence with the militia groups to pressure them to put an end to the fighting.

Before the offensive, China had been growingly discontented with the military government's inattention to large-scale criminality in Myanmar near the border, including drug trafficking and cyberscam centers.

As the Three Brotherhood Alliance has gained ground, thousands of Chinese nationals involved in such operations have been repatriated into police custody in China.

Supporters of Myanmar's ruling generals have held several demonstrations in major cities accusing China of aiding the militia alliance.

Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, spokesperson of the ruling military council, was quoted in state media Wednesday as saying that Myanmar and China remain strategic partners and have close and friendly communications.

## Also:

**TOKYO:** A crew member who was recovered from the ocean after a US military Osprey aircraft carrying six people crashed Wednesday off southern Japan has been pronounced dead, coast guard officials said.

The cause of the crash and the status of the five others on the aircraft were not immediately known, coast guard spokesperson **Kazuo Ogawa** said. Initial reports said the aircraft was carrying eight people, but the US military later revised the number to six, he said.

The coast guard received an emergency call from a fishing boat near the crash site off Yakushima, an island south of Kagoshima on the southern main island of Kyushu, he said.

Coast guard aircraft and patrol boats found one person, who was later pronounced dead at a nearby hospital, and gray-colored debris believed to be from the aircraft, Ogawa said. They were found about 1 kilometer (0.6 mile) off

the eastern coast of Yakushima. An empty inflatable life raft was also found in the area.

"The government will confirm information about the damage and place the highest priority on saving lives," Chief Cabinet Secretary **Hirokazu Matsumoto** told reporters.

The Osprey is a hybrid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter, but during flight can rotate its propellers forward and cruise much faster like an airplane. Versions of the aircraft are flown by the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force.

Ogawa said the aircraft had departed from the US Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni in Yamaguchi prefecture and crashed on its way to Kadena Air Base on Okinawa.

Japanese Vice Defense Minister **Hirokazu Miyazawa** said the Osprey had attempted an emergency sea landing.

Kyodo News agency, quoting Kagoshima prefectural officials, said witnesses reported seeing fire coming from the Osprey's left engine.

It said a Japanese military base in Saga in southern Japan decided to postpone planned Osprey flight exercises on Thursday.

U.S. and Japanese officials said the aircraft belonged to Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo. US Air Force officials at Yokota said they were still confirming information and had no immediate comment.

**CANBERRA, Australia:** The Australian government on Wednesday proposed new laws that would place behind bars some of the 141 migrants who have been set free in the three weeks since the High Court ruled their indefinite detention was unconstitutional.

Home Affairs Minister **Clare O'Neil** said Parliament would not end sittings for the year as scheduled next week unless new laws were enacted to allow potentially dangerous migrants to be detained.

"We are moving quickly to implement a preventive detention regime," O'Neil told Parliament.

In 2021, the High Court upheld a law that can keep extremists in prison for three years after they have served their sentences if they continue to pose a danger.

anyway she has been immune from arrest while still in office. Now, her advancing age could spare her time behind bars, because detainees who are 70 or older generally are granted

house arrest in Argentina.

On Tuesday, the federal appeals court judges decided in a 2-1 ruling to revoke her earlier dismissal from a case involving money laundering by

Báez on behalf of Fernández's family. (AP)

## Oppn party leader flees arrest:

The president of Honduras' main opposition party fled an international airport Tuesday breaking through a parking gate with his pickup truck after immigration agents stopped him for carrying two passports before he boarded a flight to the United States, authorities said.

David Chávez Madison, president of the National Party, fled the Palmira International Airport around 3 am Tuesday, leaving behind his passports when immigration agents called him for a second inspection, Allan Alvarenga, director of Honduras' immigration agency told local press.

Chávez fled the terminal dressed in a black baseball cap, black jacket and black pants, according to images released by authorities.

Hours later, a judge ordered Chávez's capture based on the investigation of a 2016 complaint by the nongovernmental National Anticorruption Council related to irregularities during Chávez's time as director of the National Institute of Professional Training, a government agency managing workforce training programs. (AP)



Australian Minister for Home Affairs Clare O'Neil gestures during question time in the House of Representatives at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia, Wednesday, Nov 29. The Australian government on Wednesday proposed new laws that would place behind bars some of the 141 migrants who have been set free in the three weeks since the High Court ruled their indefinite detention was unconstitutional. (AP)

## oil price up

The Kuwaiti oil price rose 33 cents to USD 84.80 per barrel on Tuesday, as opposed to USD 84.47 pb on Monday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Wednesday.

In international markets, Brent crude went up by USD 1.70 to USD 81.68 pb, while West Texas Intermediate rose USD 1.55 to stand at USD 76.41. (KUNA)

## Kuwait emphasizes IT sector's role in economic growth

The information and communications technology sector has great potential to raise the rate of economic growth through improvements in efficiency and increased productivity, said the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority, Omar Al-Omar.

This came in a speech delivered by Al-Omar on behalf of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Fahad Al-Shoula, during the (Gulf Informa-

tion and Communications Technology) conference, which was launched today, Wednesday, with the participation of many government agencies and will last for two days.

Al-Omar said that investment in this sector contributes greatly to the development of other related sectors, as it works to improve public services and the emergence of new and innovative information institutions that benefit from the enormous wealth of information and communications technology.

He also noted that information and

communications technology is linked to the development of societies in the present era and is the most important means of transferring developing societies to more developed ones.

Further, Al-Omar explained that the aim of holding this conference is to review the technology tools that are being updated and developed daily, as well as the programs that work to ward off the risks of cybercrime, in addition to reviewing the mechanisms for keeping information safe when it is circulated and transmitted. (KUNA)



Omar Al-Omar  
- Chairman of  
CITRA

## Market Movements

29-11-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
Saudi - Tadawul	+2.13	11,103.05	UAE - DFM	-9.03	3,999.58
Japan - Nikkei	-87.17	33,321.22	Japan - Nikkei	-87.17	33,321.22
Egypt - EGX 30	-362.57	24,759.16	Egypt - EGX 30	-362.57	24,759.16
Philippines - PSEi	-44.43	6,265.14	Philippines - PSEi	-44.43	6,265.14
Pakistan - KSE 100	-346.58	60,498.96	Pakistan - KSE 100	-346.58	60,498.96

# Business

## Foreign investment in Kuwait reaches 5bn dinars by mid '23

Economic uncertainty ahead as oil prices decline

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29:** The report of the National Center for Development Research of the General Secretariat of Planning revealed that Kuwait declined in the investment environment pillar during the past decade by 5 places, and its best performance was in the years 2013 and 2023, when it scored 57.3 out of 100, while the volume of foreign investment in Kuwait reached 5 billion dinars by the end of the first half of 2023.

The report explained that Kuwait has historically been a financial center and a regional trade hub, and over the past decade it has witnessed stable levels of economic growth, but the recent decline in oil prices and the decline in investment levels portend more economic uncertainty for the country in the coming years while recognizing the obvious importance of direct investment, international data and classifications of foreign investment flows do not give Kuwait advanced positions on the list of countries attractive to investment.

The report on prosperity in Kuwait pointed out that the decline in the pillar of the investment environment in Kuwait was linked to a number of realistic, administrative, legal and human obstacles represented by the fluctuation of some aspects of economic, financial and tax policies, in addition to the overlap and intertwining in the legislative base related to the economy, trade and investment and the inadequacy of some of them and delaying their keeping pace with changes.

The rapid growth in the global economy, where any trade-off in favor of the national investor at the expense of the foreigner is considered a violation of the legal principles governing foreign direct investment flows in light of the provisions of the relevant bilateral and international agreements, and where the effective protection of invested capital is considered a continuing necessity.

The report confirmed the existence of confusion in some features of economic legislative

policy and the delay in approving some laws or canceling some legislative texts for reasons related only to conflicts and contradictory opinions between political forces, in addition to ignorance of the importance of foreign investment to the national economy, with a wrong view of foreign investments flowing into the country as competition to the Kuwaiti private sector and harmful to its interests, as well as the lack of commitment of state ministries to the components of the vision and development plan in implementing government and economic projects.

The report pointed to the scarcity plots of lands that can be used for economic and investment projects and the slow launch of privatization projects and partnership projects between the public and private sectors, in addition to the delay in the actual application of governance concepts in the government sector despite their launch in private sector companies.

The report pointed out the slowness of the documentary cycle associated with development projects, the lack of ease of starting work in investment and economic projects, the procedural complexities, and the long period required to obtain licenses and approvals and to recruit qualified workers.

The report explained the lack of a detailed and updated procedures guide for company owners that shows the detailed steps required to complete all their transactions in the competent government agencies, in addition to the lack of interest in updating the instructions, forms and applications on the website to facilitate the interested investor, and the weakness of linking to the automated system used by all ministries and agencies concerned with the investment, and the presence of some problems in the legal aspects and judicial disputes related to foreign direct capital investment, as well as the presence of complications that have become common in most government agencies related to the request for the person to complete the transaction in person and follow the procedures, and the refusal to seek the assistance of the local agent or legal representative in Kuwait.

To overcome these challenges, Kuwait needs to diversify its economy, improve its links to international markets, and focus not only on attracting foreign investments focused on natural resources, but also on investments that seek market and efficiency.

A country like Kuwait needs basic reforms because it has the necessary leverage and financing in order to benefit from the financial abundance during the previous years to build a strong and diversified economy that is not dependent solely on oil resources, by opening areas of investment to local and foreign investors, creating more job opportunities, and creating a climate Investment in a fair competitive environment that can transform Kuwait into an important financial and economic center in the region.

The following are the obstacles to developing the investment environment in Kuwait

- Fluctuations in some aspects of economic, financial and tax policies
- Overlapping and intertwining in the legislative base related to the economy, trade and investment
- Confusion regarding some features of economic legislative policy and delay in approving some laws
- Ignorance of the importance of foreign investment to the economy and a mistaken view of its competition with the private sector are harmful to its interests
- Lack of commitment by state ministries to the components of the vision and development plan in implementing government projects
- Scarcity of land for economic projects and slow launch of privatization and partnership projects
- Delay in the actual application of governance concepts in the government sector despite its launch in the private sector
- The slowness in the documentary cycle associated with development projects and the lack of ease in starting work on projects
- The lack of a procedures guide for company owners that shows the steps for completing their transactions with government agencies
- Lack of interest in updating instructions, forms and requests on the website
- Poor connection to the automated system used by all ministries and entities concerned with investment affairs
- There are problems in the legal aspects related to foreign direct capital investment
- There are complications related to requesting the person receiving the transaction to appear in person to carry out the procedures

## 'Rates high enough to tackle inflation'

Fed's Waller raises possibility of rate cut by spring amid slowing inflation

WASHINGTON, Nov 29, (AP): A key Federal Reserve official raised the possibility Tuesday that the Fed could decide to cut its benchmark interest rate as early as spring if inflation keeps declining steadily.

The official, Christopher Waller, a member of the Fed's Board of Governors, cautioned that inflation is still too high and that it's not yet certain if a recent slowdown in price increases can be sustained. But he sounded the most optimistic notes of any Fed official since the central bank launched its aggressive streak of rate hikes in March 2022, and he signaled that the central bank is likely done raising rates.

Waller is regarded as a relatively "hawkish" official, meaning that he typically favors higher rates to combat inflation rather than low rates to boost job growth. But he has also become somewhat of a bellwether for the Fed's overall rate-setting committee.

If inflation continues to cool "for several more months - I don't know how long that might be - three months, four months, five months - that we feel confident that inflation is really down and on its way, you could then start lowering the policy rate just because inflation is lower," Waller said in remarks at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank. "It has nothing to do with trying to save the economy or recession."

Fed officials have previously suggested that eventually, cooling inflation would lead the Fed to cut rates. That's because, adjusted for inflation, the central bank's benchmark rate effectively rises as inflation falls.

And because the Fed's key rate affects rates on consumer and business loans, like mortgages and credit cards, it becomes more of a drag on the economy. That's why as inflation slows, the Fed could reduce its benchmark rate just to keep its inflation-adjusted level stationary.

Still, Waller's remarks were a more explicit suggestion that such a scenario could occur as early as spring. Waller also said he thought the Fed's short-term rate, which is at 5.4%, the highest in 22 years, is likely high enough to keep inflation headed down to the central bank's 2% target.

"I am increasingly confident," he said, that the Fed's interest rate policies are "currently well-positioned to slow the economy and get inflation back to 2%," Waller said.

Waller's remarks Tuesday suggested that the Fed's outlook for interest rates may have decisively shifted in the past few months. In September, the Fed's policymakers had signaled that they expected to raise their key short-term rate once more this year. At their most recent meeting, which ended Nov. 1, they kept the rate unchanged. Now, with signs that infla-



Federal Reserve Board of Governors member Christopher Waller poses for a photo on May 23, 2022, in Washington. Waller said Tuesday, Nov. 28 (AP)

tion is cooling, the officials are considered virtually certain to keep rates steady again at their final meeting of the year, Dec. 12-13.

Waller's remarks follow Chair Jerome Powell's more cautious comments earlier this month, when Powell said "we are not confident" that the Fed's key short-term interest rate was high enough to fully defeat inflation. The Fed has raised its rate 11 times in the past year and a half.

Inflation, measured year over year, has plunged from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022 to 3.2% in October. Waller said October's inflation report, which showed prices were flat from September to October, "was what I want to see."

In a speech in October, Waller noted that inflation had cooled rapidly even as the economy continued to grow at a healthy pace. "Something's got to give," he said, meaning that either the economy would have to slow or inflation might re-accelerate.

"I am encouraged by what we have learned in the past few weeks - something appears to be giving, and it's the pace of the economy," he said Tuesday.

Still, Waller cautioned that, given the uncertainties surrounding the outlook for the economy, "I cannot say for sure whether" the Fed has done enough to conquer inflation.

Skanda Amarnath, executive director at Employ America, an advocacy group, and a former Fed economist, said the Fed will be particularly attentive to inflation data at the beginning of 2024, because prices spiked in the first couple of months of the year in 2022 and 2023.

"If we get through the (first quarter) of this upcoming calendar year and inflation has not reared its head in quite the same ugly way we saw the previous few ones, I think the Fed will have a lot more confidence," Amarnath said, which could "also mean the Fed is interested in possibly lowering interest rates."

Waller noted that recent data on hiring, consumer spending, and business activity suggested that economic growth was cooling from its torrid 4.9% annual pace in the July-September quarter. Slower spending and hiring, he said, should help further cool inflation.

## 'Decline in oil prices saves motorists millions'

US gas prices have fallen or remained stable for 10 weeks, says report

NEW YORK, Nov 29, (AP): It's not just you. Across the U.S., prices at the pump have felt milder in recent months.

Gas prices have fallen or remained steady since Sep. 19 - marking about a 70-day trajectory of decline, Andrew Gross, spokesperson for motor club AAA, said Tuesday.

As of Tuesday, the national average for gas prices stood just below \$3.25, according to AAA. That's down 25 cents from a month ago and 30 cents less than this time last year. Experts point to a recent decline in oil prices and a seasonal dip in demand, as well as easing inflation.

Each penny decline in the national average saves motorists close to \$3.8 million, according to Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "If you amplify that times 30 cents, we're talking about Americans that are spending hundreds of millions less on gasoline today than they were a year ago."

### Volatile

Despite the drop, the global energy market can be volatile and lower gas prices down the road aren't promised. Here's what you need to know.

A few factors contribute to today's gas prices, but a big explanation behind the decline is seasonality. In other words, prices at the pump almost always ease at this time of year.

For starters, there's a switch to winter blend gasoline - which is cheaper to produce than the summer blend, Gross notes. And, despite some upticks around the holidays, shorter days make hitting the road less enticing in the colder months.

"It's dark and the weather is kind of crummy, and people just want to stay home," Gross said. "Demand



Drivers refuel at a Chevron gas station, Monday, Oct. 23, 2023, in South Miami, Fla. A big explanation for the recent decline in gas prices is seasonality - with prices at the pump almost always easing at this time of year. (AP)



The per-gallon prices of the various grades of gasoline are displayed on a pump at a Shell station Friday, Nov. 17, 2023, in Englewood, Colo. A big explanation for the recent decline in gas prices is seasonality - with prices at the pump almost always easing at this time of year. (AP)

is a lot less (in the fall and winter.)"

On top of the seasonal cycle, inflation, while down from last year, is still high and continues to undercut Americans' spending habits - which could also be contributing to today's lower demand, De Haan added.

Beyond demand, experts also point to declining oil costs. Prices at the pump are highly dependent on crude oil, which is the main ingredient in gasoline. West Texas Intermediate crude, the U.S. benchmark, has stayed in the high-to-mid \$70s for the past three weeks - standing at about \$76 a barrel as of Tuesday afternoon, down from over \$82 a month ago.

Oil is a global commodity, so events impacting production and supply such as the Russia-Ukraine war can be felt domestically. There's also been a notable uptick in U.S. production that is "helping to keep a lid on prices" today, De Haan said.

At the start of October, American oil production hit an all-time high of 13.2 million barrels per day, passing the previous record set in early 2020 by 100,000 barrels.

Average production has since remained at that level, according to the government's latest data through the week of Nov. 17.

While the downward trend in gas prices is expected to continue at least into the New Year, anything's possible. Some experts point to the potential of more cuts from major producing OPEC+ countries - which boosted energy prices in the past.

Earlier this year, Saudi Arabia and Russia notably extended their voluntary oil production cuts through the end of this year, trimming 1.3 million barrels of crude out of the global market. Some speculate that OPEC+ could announce further cuts in an upcoming meeting, which was reportedly postponed until Thursday.

Still, the meeting delay signals that there may be disagreements within OPEC+, so it's "going to be a wildcard to watch," De Haan said. If a surprise announcement does arrive, it's hard to predict the impact - but consequences could also be brief or minimal, Gross added, especially if the market is already anticipating more cuts.

Among today's global backdrop is also the Israel-Hamas war. The breakout of violence initially slowed the fall in oil prices, but that progressively changed, Gross said - noting the war has not expanded to large oil producing countries in the Middle East. Still, the future remains uncertain.

"Given how volatile the oil market is ... I would keep an eye on what's going on overseas, not just in terms of this war, but in other economies," Gross said, adding that shifts in oil prices can be very headline-driven, with news impacting major markets around the world.

While gas prices nationwide are collectively falling, some states, of course, always have cheaper averages than others - due to factors ranging from nearby refinery supply to local fuel requirements.

As of Tuesday, according to AAA, 15 states in the U.S. had gas prices below \$3 - with Texas (\$2.71), Mississippi (\$2.76) and Georgia (\$2.79) at the lowest.

Meanwhile, the states with the highest prices at the pump were led by California (\$4.88), Hawaii (\$4.72) and Washington (\$4.34).

CCI rises to 102 from 99.1

## US consumer confidence surges in Nov amid holiday shopping 'buzz'

WASHINGTON, Nov 29, (AP): After declining for three straight months, American consumer confidence ticked up in November as the all-important holiday shopping season kicks into high gear.

The Conference Board, a business research group, said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose to 102 this month from 99.1 in October. Analysts were expecting a reading of 101. The October reading was revised down from an original reading of 102.6.

The index measures both Americans' assessment of current economic conditions and their outlook for the next six months.

The main index was boosted by respondents whose outlook for the next six months improved.

The index measuring Americans short-term expectations for income, business and job market rose to 77.8 in November from 72.7 in October. However, it was the third straight reading below 80 for future expectations, which historically signals a recession within a year.

The survey also showed that Americans' expectations of a recession in the next 12 months

declined to the lowest level so far this year. Still, about two-thirds of those surveyed still expect a downturn before the end of 2024.

Consumer spending accounts for around 70% of U.S. economic activity, so economists pay close attention to consumer behavior as they take measure of the broader economy.

In September, spending by consumers rose by a brisk 0.4%, even as Americans face ever-higher borrowing costs. After a strong summer, economists forecast that consumer spending will slow in the final three months of the year, as credit card debt and delinquencies rise and average savings fall.

Americans did cut back on retail spending in October, ending six straight months of gains, though the decline was partly driven by falling prices for both gasoline and cars.

Though they continue to spend, inflation, geopolitical conflicts and higher interest rates remain at the forefront of American consumers' minds.

Consumers' view of current conditions this inched down modestly this month, to 138.2 from 138.6 in October.



### Sweden's economy shrinks in the third quarter

Sweden's economy shrank in the third quarter of 2023 to mark the second time of contraction and signal that a recession may have hit the country.

Data released Wednesday by Statistics Sweden showed that the country's gross domestic product declined by 0.3% in the period ending in October.

"The GDP decreased for the second quarter in a row. The downturn in the economy was

broad, but was held back somewhat by strong service exports," said Jessica Engdahl, section manager at the National Accounts with the statistical agency.

The decline is mainly explained by inventory liquidation and lower household consumption. Engdahl added that household consumption expenditure had decreased for the fifth consecutive quarter.

Compared to the third quarter of 2022, GDP decreased by 1.4%.

Two consecutive quarters of contraction is a common definition of recession, though economists on the eurozone business cycle dating committee use a broader set of data, including employment figures.

Sweden is a member of the European Union, but doesn't use the euro currency. (AP)

### Kenya court strikes out key clauses of a finance law

The Kenyan High Court on Tuesday struck out key clauses of a contentious finance law that has been blamed for significantly raising taxes and the cost of living in East Africa's largest economy.

High court judges David Mwanjia, Christine Meoli and Lawrence Mugambi said parts of the Finance Act 2023, including a mandatory housing levy, were unconstitutional and couldn't be enforced.

"The levy against persons in formal employment to the exclusion of other nonformal income earners without justification is discriminatory, irrational, arbitrary and against the constitution," according to the 160-page judgment.

The housing levy is a significant agenda of President William Ruto, who has pledged to construct 1 million homes by 2027 under his affordable housing program already underway in

parts of the country.

Political analyst Herman Mwangi said that the court ruling was a big blow to the government, "which has lost public support by pushing an unpopular legislation."

The law, which was enacted earlier this year, also doubled value added tax on petroleum products to 16% up and raised taxes on personal income up to 40%. (AP)

### Announcement company's response to rivals

# Amazon launches Q, a business chatbot powered by generative AI

NEW YORK, Nov 29, (AP) — Amazon finally has its answer to ChatGPT. The tech giant said Tuesday it will launch Q — a business chatbot powered by generative artificial intelligence.

The announcement, made in Las Vegas at an annual conference the company hosts for its AWS cloud computing service, represents Amazon's response to rivals who've rolled out chatbots that have captured the public's attention.

San Francisco startup OpenAI's release of ChatGPT a year ago sparked a surge of public and business interest in generative AI tools that can spit out emails, marketing pitches, essays, and other passages of text that resemble the work of humans.

That attention initially gave an advantage to OpenAI's chief partner and financial backer, Microsoft, which has rights to the underlying technology behind ChatGPT and has used it to build its own generative AI tools known as Copilot. But it also spurred competitors like Google to launch their own versions.

These chatbots are a new generation of AI systems that can converse, generate readable text on demand and even produce novel images and video based on what they've learned from a vast database of digital books, online writings and other media.

Amazon said Tuesday that Q can do things like synthesize content, streamline day-to-day communications and help employees with tasks like generating blog posts. It said companies can also connect Q to their own data and systems to get a tailored experience that's more relevant to their business.

The technology is currently available for preview.

While Amazon is ahead of rivals Microsoft and Google as the dominant cloud computing provider, it's not perceived as the leader in the AI research

Fake AI-generated woman on agenda cited as reason for withdrawal

## Microsoft and Amazon executives drop out of conference

NEW YORK, Nov 29, (AP) — Tech executives at Microsoft and Amazon have dropped out of an upcoming software conference after at least one of the women on the agenda turned out to be fake.

DevTernity organizer Eduards Sizovs admitted on social media that one of the featured speakers was an "auto-generated" woman with a fake title. He was responding to allegations about a number of suspicious profiles on his conference websites that appeared to be generated by artificial intelligence.

But he denied that the fake profile was intended to mask the "worse-than-expected level of diversity of speakers" in this year's lineup and refused to apologize in a series of posts on X, formerly Twitter. He didn't respond to emailed requests for comment Tuesday.

The revelation led other speakers to quickly drop out of the virtual conference that was supposed to start on Dec. 7.

"I found out that I was the only woman on the agenda, and some of the others advertised may not be real," said Amazon Web Services executive Kristine Howard in a post on LinkedIn.

Microsoft executive Scott Hanselman said on X that he only speaks at conferences with an inclusive lineup but in this case was "duped by the fake speakers."

He added, "I remind all tech conference organizers that there are thousands of speakers of all walks of life, genders, ages, and backgrounds."

DevTernity was previously held each year in Riga, Latvia but has been online-only since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

that's led to advancements in generative AI.

A recent Stanford University index that measured the transparency of the top 10 foundational AI models, including Amazon's Titan, ranked Amazon at the bottom. Stanford researchers said less transparency can make it harder for customers that want to use the technology to know if they can safely rely on it, among other problems.

The company, meanwhile, has been forging forward. In September, Amazon said it would invest up to \$4 billion in the AI startup Anthropic, a San Francisco-based company that was founded by former staffers from OpenAI.

The tech giant also has been rolling out new services, including an update for its popular assistant Alexa so users can have more human-like conversations and AI-generated summaries of product reviews for consumers.

### NerdWallet

## Five steps to creating 'financial' boundaries during the holidays

By Elizabeth Ayoola

Marketing ads, family functions and holiday gift-giving culture can make it feel impossible not to spend, or for some, overspend. According to a 2023 survey from NerdWallet, around half of Americans (52%) incurred credit card debt when shopping for gifts during the holidays last year, and almost a third (31%) of them still haven't paid it off.

While giving can be noble, consider setting boundaries when it comes to lending and spending money during the holidays.

#### Step 1: Set 2024 money goals

It can be difficult to rein in your spending during the holidays if you don't have a reason. Begin the process of mapping out your financial goals for 2024 to help avoid shortsightedness while spending. For instance, if you want to make larger payments on your student loan or save for a down payment on a new car next year, overspending during the holidays could set you back.

"Really be brutally honest about what your financial commitments for January and February (are)," says Yvette Murry, a clinical social worker in Princeton, New Jersey, who helps clients with financial wellness.

Starting your 2024 budget now can help prevent both unwanted debt and regret come the new year.

#### Step 2: Practice saying no to requests

Prices are high, and requests to borrow money this time of the year might be, too. As much as you may feel obligated to play Santa and give cash to everyone who asks, it could put you in a financial bind come the new year.

When you do get requests beyond your capacity, prepare to say no. For those who aren't well-versed in "no," Traci Williams, a certified financial therapist and psychologist in Atlanta, Georgia, provides an example of how to say it.

Consider including a "lending bucket" in your budget, which comprises an amount that doesn't throw your finances off. You may also want to stick to only lending what you can afford not to get

back.

#### Step 3: Understand it's ok to feel guilty

Guilt can come when you say no, whether that's to requests for money, traveling to see family or buying your partner an expensive gift. When we say no, we may feel guilt because of expectations from ourselves, family and society, Williams says.

To deal with those difficult feelings, Williams suggests first identifying them.

"A lot of people feel things and don't realize what the actual feeling is," she says. Once you name the feeling, you can counter it by reinforcing why you made that decision, she adds. For instance, if you have to say no to buying gifts this year, remember the importance of creating financial stability for yourself.

#### Step 4: Explore your motivations around holiday spending

Many of our money habits may be driven by subconscious beliefs or motivations, even during the holidays. To understand why you're making certain financial decisions, Murry suggests asking yourself the motivation behind loaning someone money or spending.

Understanding your motivations for spending can help you reinforce boundaries and potentially establish new money beliefs rooted in values you want to emulate. For example, if you realize you overspend on gifts because you were taught by your parents that gifts are the best way to show love, you may decide giving intangible gifts of time or love are more important to you.

#### Step 5: Remember holiday pressure is normal

Holiday pressure is real and it can cause us to exceed our budgets. Acknowledging that holiday pressure is normal can help you stay focused and within your budget. Williams says to remember you don't have to do everything, and expecting that of yourself is unrealistic.

"Recognizing that that pressure exists and that marketing is doing its job can help you to remember that you have to stick to your own goals," she says. (AP)

# High-fat jetliner is the first to make a fossil fuel-free trans-Atlantic crossing

Flight from London to NY

LONDON, Nov 29, (AP) — The first commercial airliner to cross the Atlantic on a purely high-fat, low-emissions fuel flew Tuesday from London to New York in a step toward achieving what supporters called "jet zero."

The Virgin Atlantic Boeing 787 flight was powered without using fossil fuels, relying on so-called sustainable aviation fuel made up largely of tallow and other waste fats.

"The world will always assume something can't be done, until you do it," said Virgin founder Richard Branson, who was aboard the flight with others including corporate and government officials, engineers and journalists.

The U.K. Transport Department, which provided 1 million pounds (\$1.27 million) to plan and operate the flight, called the test a "huge step towards jet zero" to make air travel more environmentally friendly, though large hurdles remain in making the fuel widely available.

While governments have long talked about decarbonizing air travel, the transition has been moving at the pace of a dirigible.

Sustainable aviation fuel, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions by about 70%, is the best near-term way for the international aviation industry to achieve its net zero target by 2050, the U.S. Energy Department said, though it called the goal aspirational.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office said that while domestic production of the fuel had jumped from about 2 million gallons in 2016 to 15.8 million gallons in 2022, it accounted for less than 0.1% of the jet fuel used by major U.S. airlines. It was also a drop in the bucket compared to the goal of producing 1 billion gallons a year set in 2018 by the Federal Aviation Administration.

The White House, meanwhile, set a goal two years ago to produce 3 billion gallons of sustainable aviation fuel per year by 2030 and 100% of domestic commercial jet fuel by 2050.

The U.K. has set a goal that 10% of jet fuel will come from sustainable sources by 2030.

Holly Boyd-Boland, vice president of corporate development at Virgin Atlantic, said the flight shows



A Virgin Atlantic Boeing 787-9 passenger airplane arrives following a flight from London to Seattle, March 27, 2017, at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in Seattle. (AP)

## Strike over privatizing Sao Paulo's public transport causes crowds and delays in city of eleven million

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 29, (AP) — Long lines appeared in Sao Paulo's bus and subway stations Tuesday as a strike opposing privatization efforts of public transport in South America's largest city caused delays. Traffic on some routes stalled completely.

Sao Paulo state Gov. Tarcisio de Freitas, who took office in January, called the strike "unreasonable." He told reporters he had campaigned for looking into privatizations, concessions and "the participation of private capital in public services as a way of bringing investment."

It was not clear how long the strike would last, and there appeared to be little room for negotiations. The governor insisted that privatization had been the "winning position" in the election

and that "to not accept that position is to not accept the results of the polls."

Camila Lisboa, president of the Sao Paulo Subway Workers Union, which opposes privatization, lamented "authoritarian statements that do not consider the right to strike." Lisboa claimed that privatization would lead to more expensive fares and poor service — a position also embraced by part of the opposition.

A court decision had said minimum service should be maintained for the city's 11 million people during the strike, but that requirement was not respected, Sao Paulo state's press department said.

Passengers faced long delays Tuesday. Two subway and train lines stopped working.

Federal lawmaker Sãmia Bom-

fim, of the leftwing PSOL party, warned of privatization, citing the recent blackout in Sao Paulo that plunged the city into the dark for several days. She blamed power distribution company Enel, one of three companies providing electricity in Sao Paulo.

"The population goes without electricity for days because ENEL (privatized) thought only of profit, fired thousands of employees, and ended up not serving (Sao Paulo) when we needed it most," Bonfim said on X, formerly Twitter.

The lawmaker also criticized the governor for trying to privatize Sao Paulo's water and waste management company, SABESP, "in a hurry, at a price far below what it is worth, without any social participation, transparency or price adjustment index."

that the fuel can power existing aircraft but said the challenge is ramping up production to "get to enough volume so that we're flying more sustainable aviation fuel every day."

But the group Aviation Environment Federation said the aviation industry was making misleading claims about the impact of sustainable fuel on carbon emissions.

"The idea that this flight somehow gets us closer to guilt-free flying is a joke," said policy director Cait Hewitt. Sustainable aviation fuel represents "around 0.1% of aviation fuel globally and will be very hard to scale up sustainably."

While this is the first jetliner to make the trans-Atlantic journey using only the sustainable fuel, it was

not a commercial flight and not the first jet to do so.

Gulfstream Aerospace was the first to make the crossing earlier this month with a business jet powered only by the eco-fuel. Air France-KLM flew from Paris to Montreal two years ago using a mix of petroleum-based jet fuel and a synthetic derived from waste cooking oils.

## Toyota selling part of Denso 'stake' to raise cash to develop electric vehicles

TOKYO, Nov 29, (AP) — Toyota is selling a part of its stake in components maker Denso to raise cash for its drive toward electric vehicles and other innovations, Japan's top automaker said Wednesday.

The move is estimated to raise about 290 billion yen (\$2 billion), given recent share prices. The number of shares Toyota Motor Corp. plans to sell total more than 124 million shares, lowering its stake in Denso Corp. from 24.2% to 20%, while remaining the top stakeholder.

"We don't want to just hold on to our assets. We want to make them living assets that feed into the growth of our company," said Masahiro Yamamoto, an executive in the accounting group at Toyota.

Denso shares closed at 2,298 yen (\$16) Wednesday.

Toyota said the money will also go into developing smart-driving technology and a wide range of other initiatives ongoing in the industry.

Yamamoto did not give a specific date for the sale, but it's expected to happen soon.

All the world's major automakers are working on strengthening their lineup of electric vehicle and other green cars, as concerns grow about climate change. That requires a great deal of investment.

Toyota affiliates, Toyota Industries and Aisin, are also selling a portion of their Denso shares, officials said.

Japanese companies hold stakes in other group companies in a practice traditionally known here as cross-shareholdings.

Yamamoto denied the move was aimed at reducing such cross-holdings. Some have criticized the practice as reducing transparency while proponents say it helps maintain stability.

Toyota officials have acknowledged they have fallen behind in the industry shift toward electric vehicles, and they have been aggressively playing catch-up.

## Panama's Supreme Court declares 20-year contract for Canadian copper mine unconstitutional

PANAMA CITY, Nov 29, (AP) — Panama's Supreme Court ruled unanimously Tuesday that a 20-year concession for a Canadian copper mine that has been the focus of widespread environmental protests was unconstitutional and the president said later a process to close the mine would begin.

Opponents of the Cobre Panama mine argued it would damage a forested coastal area and threaten water supplies. The announcement of the nine-member court's decision after four days of deliberations set off cheers among a crowd of people waiting outside and waving Panamanian flags.

"This is what we had been wait-

ing for," demonstrator Raisa Banfield said after what she called an agonizing wait. "The president has to suspend (mine) operations today."

Minera Panama, the local subsidiary of Canada's First Quantum Minerals, which operates the mine in central Panama, said in a statement that "Cobre Panama acknowledges the court's decision."

"We want to affirm our unwavering commitment to regulatory compliance in all aspects of our operations within the country," the company wrote. "We will comment further as additional details on the ruling are made public."

Panama President Laurentino Cortizo told the nation Tuesday that as

soon as his administration formally receives the court's decision it would be published in the official gazette and a process will begin "for an orderly and safe closure of the mine."

The mine employs thousands and accounts for 3% of Panama's gross domestic product.

In March, Panama's legislature reached an agreement with First Quantum allowing Minera Panama to continue operating the huge copper mine for at least 20 more years. The open-pit mine was temporarily closed last year when talks between the government and First Quantum broke down over payments the government wanted.

The contract, given final approval Oct. 20, allowed the subsidiary to continue operating the mine in a biodiverse jungle on the Atlantic coast west of the capital for the next 20 years, with the possibility of extending for a further 20 years if the site remained productive.

The dispute over the mine led to some of Panama's most widespread protests in recent years, including a blockade of the mine's power plant. Protesters also blocked parts of the Pan American highway, including a stretch near the border with Costa Rica.

Just before the ruling was announced, they opened the roadway so freight trucks could get through.

## Google Cloud's Dr. Tawbi unveils evolution of data and business automation

## Zain and SACGC host insightful session on AI innovations



Dr. Chawki Tawbi with Zain officials and employees.

'Your health, Your happiness'

## stc concludes awareness campaign on men's health under the 'because we care' umbrella

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, concluded its

prostate cancer awareness campaign under the slogan 'Your health, Your happiness' in line with the international men's health awareness month, November. The campaign launched under the "because we care" umbrella comes

as an annual initiative organized by stc, aligning with the fundamental goals of the health pillar within its comprehensive CSR framework.

The initiative aimed to spread awareness on prostate cancer while stressing on the importance of performing regular checkups that can detect the disease at an early stage. This initiative comes as part of stc's robust CSR strategy, wherein health is a central theme, demonstrating the Company's unwavering commitment to elevating health standards and fostering a culture of wellness both internally and across the wider community.

stc organized a challenge in collaboration with Flare Fitness to participate in at its booth in Winter Wonderland Kuwait in the presence of Mr. Ahmad Al Nowaibet, PR & Social Media Manager at stc and several Flare Fitness coaches. Winners of the competition got a chance to win one of stc's various gifts, while participating in an initiative that helped educate the public on prostate cancer.

stc extended its heartfelt gratitude to Flare Fitness for their invaluable collaboration in making the prostate cancer awareness campaign a resounding success. This partnership exemplifies the power of collective efforts in addressing critical health issues in the community and around the world. By engaging the community through interactive challenges and educational initiatives, stc reinforced its dedication to nurturing a culture of wellness and proactive healthcare in Kuwait. These efforts reflect stc's enduring commitment to social responsibility and its ongoing endeavor to positively impact society, further cementing its role as a pioneer in community-oriented initiatives.



Ahmad Al Nowaibet, PR &amp; Social Media Manager at stc with Flare Fitness coaches.



Visitors participate in a challenge.



Children also have a share in the challenge.



Photo during Muraleedharan Nanoo's recognition.

## Muraleedharan Nanoo 'honored' for corporate leadership and innovation

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: In a significant acknowledgment of corporate leadership and innovation, Muraleedharan Nanoo, Managing Director of United Business Group WLL, Kuwait and the UAE received the prestigious "Best Innovative Excellence in IT" award at the UAE International Conference on November 19, 2023. This accolade is annually presented to distinguished leaders who demonstrate outstanding business excellence, innovation, and profound industry impact.

Under Muraleedharan's guidance, United Business Group has achieved remarkable milestones in the Information Technology

Industry. The award, presented at a ceremony in Sharjah, was bestowed by the Associate Dean, Global Business Studies, Dubai, Dr. Elango Rangaswamy, in recognition of Muraleedharan's visionary leadership and the sustainable growth he has driven within the company.

This prestigious award not only highlights Muraleedharan's individual excellence but also underscores United Business Group's commitment to innovation, customer satisfaction, sustainable growth, and more. It serves as a testament to the hard work and dedication of the entire team at United Business Group.

## Fostering holistic development and sports values

## BSK takes center stage as co-hosts of BSME U-19 Games

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The excitement was palpable as The British School of Kuwait (BSK) co-hosted the British Schools in the Middle East (BSME) Under 19 Games with The English Academy (TEA) on Friday 17 November and Saturday 18 November 2023. A total of 14 schools from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE took part in the games, with the volleyball and netball tournaments being held at The British School of Kuwait (BSK) and the football tournaments at the Celtic pitches in Bayan and the Hasan Abul football field in Dasma.

BSK, renowned for its commitment to holistic education and fostering a culture of well-rounded development, was thrilled to play a pivotal role in promoting the values of teamwork, discipline, and healthy competition with student athletes from across the region throughout this event. In the boys' volleyball, competitors spiked, blocked, and dug their way to victory in an intense competition that left spectators on the edge of their seats. After impressive displays of athleticism and agility it was St Christopher's School (Bahrain) who came in first, with The British School Al Khubairat (Abu Dhabi) the runners up. After a thrilling play-off for third place between the two host schools, it was The British School of Kuwait (BSK) who emerged victorious after a hard fought third set win over The English Academy (TEA).

On the netball courts, there were incredible displays of agility and precision as talented young netball players vied for supremacy. Fast-paced action, strategic plays, and nail-biting moments kept supporters cheering for their favorite teams right into the final rounds. In the end it was Cranleigh Abu Dhabi who emerged victorious, with Kings' School Al Barsha (Dubai) the runners-up and The British School Al Khubairat (Abu Dhabi) coming in third place.

When it came to football, spectators at the pitches witnessed impressive displays of skill, strategy, and teamwork as the aspiring footballers showcased their talents in an electrifying tournament. From precision passes to breathtaking goals, the football tournaments captivated fans and enthusiasts alike. In the boys' event it was The British International School Abu Dhabi who placed first, with Cranleigh Abu Dhabi the runners-up and Park House English School (Qatar) coming in third place. In the girls' tournament, victory went to The British Inter-



Thrilling Boys football match



Netball match



Strong competition in boys volleyball.



A girls soccer match

national School of Jeddah, with St Christopher's School (Bahrain) in second place and The British International School Abu Dhabi in third position.

A special thanks to our sponsors, Al Mulla Exchange, Want IT Buy IT, KDD, National Printing Press, and Kun Kopy, whose generous support ensured the success of the BSME Under 19 Games. We appreciate their commitment to promoting youth sports in the Middle East.

As a founding member of the British Schools in the

Middle East, BSK has a decades-long commitment to the BSME network of British international schools within the region and is a strong advocate of competition, sportsmanship and unity for which these games are renowned. BSK were delighted to be able to share their excellent campus facilities with visiting schools and for the hard work and commitment of their PE Team to help ensure that the Under 19 BSME Games were a memorable and seamless event for everyone involved.

## Commitment to responsible management education

## Academic integrity at forefront of discussion between AUK and Nazaha



Dr. Israa Al-Issa and Mr. Ahmed Al-Othman lead seminar on education and integrity.



KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The College of Business and Economics (CBE) and Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) organized a seminar in collaboration with Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) on academic integrity. The seminar featured Dr. Israa Al-Issa, associate professor of industrial engineering at Kuwait University; and Mr. Ahmed Al-Othman, an expert in integrity awareness and education.

The discussion focused on tackling corruption issues in education, aligning with

Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). This effort underscores the University's commitment to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).

Dr. Al-Issa emphasized the importance of ethical conduct and accountability. She highlighted how a dedicated focus on extracurricular activities within the educational system contributes to promoting integrity, enhancing student academic performance. Dr. Al-Issa also detailed the importance of

educational institutes prioritizing the quality of graduates over quantity.

The seminar further explored the influence of legislation and the role of education in shaping values. Mr. Al-Othman elaborated on the importance of public awareness campaigns and financial literacy programs as additional avenues for spreading awareness and upholding academic integrity.

The event concluded with a dynamic Q&A session, highlighting the institution's dedication to promoting transparency in education.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Under their strategic partnership to empower tech innovation and support entrepreneurs, Zain and Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) – a center of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) have jointly hosted an insightful session that discussed the innovations and capabilities of artificial intelligence technologies. The session, which also focused on how entrepreneurs can use AI to drive growth and success for their startups, was presented by Google Cloud expert Dr. Chawki Tawbi.

This step came under the umbrella of Zain and SACGC's recently signed MoU, which focuses on a number of strategic pillars and sustainable goals like supporting tech innovation, empowering entrepreneurs and startups, encouraging creativity, investing in the digital skills of young people, and more.

During the session, Dr Tawbi covered an overview of Google Cloud and its leading role in empowering digitization around the world. He also discussed some of the most notable cloud computing solutions offered by Google Cloud, especially those that are based on AI technologies. Dr. Tawbi then went on to explain what Generative AI is, how it dominated the tech scene recently, and how to utilize the capabilities



The session covered AI and data innovations.

of such revolutionary technologies to open up entire new opportunities for startups.

In addition, Dr. Tawbi presented a live demo of some AI use cases, giving the attendees a close-up view of advanced AI applications. Another special session was also held for Zain employees, where the Google Cloud expert shared the best tips for using AI tools to increase efficiency, enhance workflows, and be more productive at the workplace.

Dr. Tawbi is a Senior Partner Sales Engineer at Google Cloud. He is a Data and AI Lead and is a Google Gen-AI Ambassador for Qatar, Kuwait and Oman. Dr. Tawbi has more than 25 years of experience in Data, AI and Business Automation across various

industries and geographies.

He founded and led a Data Science Center of Excellence in the MEA region, responsible for helping CDOs and Business Leaders in setting-up and executing Data and AI strategies. He is a board member of several universities and a lecturer in the Data and AI space.

This session came under Zain's Innovation Nation initiative, under which all of Zain's innovation and entrepreneurship programs fall, especially within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. The initiative mainly targets the youth, and centers around a number of pillars, including entrepreneurship, investment, startup acceleration, supporting inventors, fostering innovation, and more.

## Writing instructors are less afraid of students cheating with ChatGPT than you might think

When ChatGPT launched a year ago, headlines flooded the internet about fears of student cheating. A pair of essays in The Atlantic decried "the end of high-school English" and the death of the college essay." NPR informed readers that "everybody is cheating."

Meanwhile, Teen Vogue ventured that the moral panic "may be overblown."

The more measured tone in Teen Vogue tracks better with preliminary findings from our 2023 survey that examined attitudes and feelings about artificial intelligence among college faculty who teach writing. Survey responses revealed that AI-related anxieties among educators around the country are more complex and nuanced than claims insisting that AI is outright and always bad.

While some educators do worry about students cheating, they also have another fear in common: AI's potential to take over human jobs. And as far as teaching, many educators also see the bright side. They say they actually enjoy using the revolutionary technology to enhance what they do.

Our 64-item survey included a scale of AI anxiety and was conducted March 2-31, 2023. The 99 survey respondents included faculty, writing program administrators and others interested in the teaching of writing. More than 71% worked in the disciplines of English, writing or rhetoric, and the sample represented all types of institutions, from small liberal arts colleges to large research universities and everything in between.

AI anxiety among writing instructors is complicated. While 89% of survey participants feared "misuse" by students, misuse means different things to different people. Specifically, less than half of respondents - 44% - were "concerned" or "very concerned" about students turning to AI to compose entire essays. Only 22% were "very concerned" about students relying on such technologies to "co-write" their essays without providing appropriate attribu-

tion.

Additionally, less than half - 42% - reported they were "concerned" or "very concerned" about the need to revise university honor codes and plagiarism policies in light of AI. And only 25% said their institutions should enforce increased plagiarism detection through apps and websites such as Turnitin.

Regardless of whether respondents had deep worries or mild concerns, only 13% favored any ban on AI entirely in college courses and classrooms. Instead, instructors reported varying levels of anxieties about a range of issues, including learning how to use AI tools and job security.

As one participant wrote, "While I want students to compose original works in my writing courses, I see no reason to ban them from using AI tools at their disposal during the writing process."

Survey participants had wide-ranging reactions to the prospects of AI replacing their jobs as writing instructors. At times, their feelings seemed conflicted, depending on the circumstances and conditions described in our survey questions.

As some critics have already suggested, there is genuine fear about colleges using AI not as a means to enhance the work of instructors, but instead to replace them.

For instance, more than 54% of respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the prospect of AI technology replacing human jobs scared them. And 43% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they were anxious over the possibility of becoming unable to keep up with advances in AI techniques and products.

The anxiety among tenured and tenure-track faculty was significantly lower than that of adjunct instructors, graduate teaching assistants, instructors and administrative faculty and staff. This implies that college writing instructors who are most likely to fear losing their jobs because of AI are those who are most vulnerable anyway. (AP)

# Michael Douglas honored at International Film Festival in Goa

PANAJI, India, Nov 29, (Agencies): Veteran Hollywood actor and producer Michael Douglas was honored with the Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award at the 54th International Film Festival of India as it came to a close on Tuesday.

The two-time Academy Award winner, 79, said he was "humbled" and with everything going on in the world, the festival was "a reminder of the magic of moviemaking."

"Cinema is one of the few mediums that has the power to unite and transform us. It transcends divisions, whether that be geography, race language and even time," he said in his acceptance speech.

"Today our global language of cinema is more meaningful than ever," Douglas added.

"Endless Borders," an Iranian film directed by Abbas Amini, won the Golden Peacock for best film at the festival held annually in coastal Goa, India's scenic tourist hotspot.

"The film is about how complicated physical borders might be yet nothing can be more complicated than the emotional and moral borders that you impose upon yourself," the jury said in its citation.

The film is about an exiled Iranian teacher in a poor village on the border of Afghanistan and Iran who becomes acquainted with a family fleeing Afghanistan under threat from the Taliban.

"In the context of what's happening in the world right now, with the amazing conflicts that are going on, with the wars at our borders, it is very important to tell our stories," said Indian filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, the chair of the international jury who's directed movies including

"Elizabeth" and the recent "What's Love Got to Do With It?" "If we tell our stories to people and people listen to each other's stories across borders, across everywhere, we understand each other."

The other members of the international jury were Spanish cinematographer José Luis Alcaide, French producers Jérôme Paillard and Catherine Dussart and Australian producer Helen Leake.

As one of the oldest and most prolific film industries in the world, releasing about 1,500 movies annually, Indian films enjoy a large domestic market.

Films in regional Indian languages, most of them rooted in local culture, have also begun to find a foothold on the global stage. Earlier this year, India celebrated two Academy Awards - the high-energy best original song "Naatu Naatu" from the blockbuster Telugu-language action epic "RRR" and best short documentary "The Elephant Whisperers," which streamed on Netflix.

## Productions

The Indian government, which organizes the festival, has announced a new incentive plan for foreign film productions to boost global collaborations.

Douglas said Indian films were reaching a global audience thanks to the digital revolution and streaming services.

"Whatever country you are in, good moviemaking is usually about something personal to your country, and then realizing that it has an international message. Everything is in the material and you have to

make it for yourself," he said during a session earlier Tuesday.

The 54th International Film Festival of India opened on Nov 20, with "Catching Dust" by Stuart Gatt in Goa. Shekhar Kapur an Indian filmmaker served as chairperson of the international jury. This year a new award category 'Best Web Series (OTT)' award was introduced in the festival. 32 entries in 10 languages from 15 Over-the-top media service platforms were selected to compete for this award. The festival closed on Nov 28 with American biographical sports drama film "The Featherweight" by Robert Kolodny. In the ceremony Hollywood actor-producer Michael Douglas was honoured with the Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Persian film "Endless Borders" by Abbas Amini, received the Golden Peacock award for the best film; whereas Stephan Komandarev won the Silver Peacock award for best director for the Bulgarian film "Blaga's Lessons".

The opening ceremony on 20 November 2023, hosted by Karishma Tanna and Aparshakti Khurana was aired live on Colors TV and JioCinema. In this edition over 270 films from 105 countries are screened. Madhuri Dixit was felicitated with the 'Special Recognition for Contribution to Bharatiya Cinema' award at the festival. It was also streamed live on YouTube.

The festival closed on Nov 28 with "The Featherweight" an American biographical sports drama film on professional boxer Willie Pep by Robert Kolodny. Mandira Bedi hosted the closing ceremony, which was also streamed live on YouTube, in addition to broadcast on Colors TV channel.

Film

## Variety

# Features



This image released by Netflix shows Julianne Moore, right, and Natalie Portman in a scene from 'May December,' which debuts Friday, Dec. 1, on Netflix. (AP)

## Film

Italian film hopes for broad viewer connection

# 'Io Capitano' depicts migrant odyssey

MARRAKECH, Morocco, Nov 29, (AP): Italian director Matteo Garrone hopes that the way his film "Io Capitano" frames the journey taken by Senegalese teenagers to Europe as an adventure, albeit a harrowing one, will make it more compelling to audiences regardless of politics.

The film, which played over the weekend at the Marrakech International Film Festival, accompanies aspiring musicians Seydou and Moussa as they venture from Dakar through Niger and Libya and voyage across the Mediterranean Sea to reach Italy. The naive pair - unknowns whom Garrone found and cast in Senegal - witness mass death in the Sahara, scams and torture beyond their expectations.

The film has had box office success and rave reviews in Italy since its release in September, and it was screened for Pope Francis. "Io Capitano," which is being promoted in the English-speaking world as "Me Captain," comes as Europe, particularly Italy, reckons with an increasing number of migrants arriving on its southern shores - 151,000 so far in 2023. An estimated 1,453 are dead or missing, according to figures from the United Nations refugee agency.

Italian Premier Georgia Meloni has called migration the biggest challenge of her first year in office. Her government has worked to strike agreements with neighboring Albania to house asylum-seekers with applications under review and a broad "migration assistance" accord with Tunisia intended to prevent smuggling and Mediterranean crossings.

Though Garrone acknowledges that those who choose to see the film in theaters may already be sympathetic to migrants who take great risks to reach the Europe they perceive as a promised land, he said in an interview with The Associated Press that showing the film in schools to teenagers who may not choose to see it otherwise had been particularly powerful.

"It's very accessible for young people because

it's the journey of the hero and an odyssey," he said. "The structure is not complicated. They come thinking they might go to sleep, but then they see it's an adventure."

"Adventure" - a term used for years by West African migrants themselves that portrays them as more than victims of circumstance - doesn't do the film's narrative justice, however. The plot is largely based on the life of script consultant Mamadou Kouassi, an Ivorian immigrant organizer living in the Italian city of Caserta.

The film shows the two cousins Seydou and Moussa leaving their home without alerting their parents or knowing what to expect. They pay smugglers who falsely promise safe passage, bribe police officers threatening to jail them and call home as members of Libyan mafias running non-governmental detention centers extort them under the threat of torture.

## Missing

In Libya, the cousins watch as migrants are burned and hung in uncomfortable positions. Seydou at one point is sold into slavery to a Libyan man who agrees to free him after he builds a wall and fountain at a desert compound.

"There are more people who have died in desert than no one mentions," Kouassi said, contrasting the Sahara with the Mediterranean, where international agencies more regularly report figures for the dead and missing.

"This makes a point to show a truth that hasn't been told about the desert and the people who've lost their lives there, in Libyan prisons or in slavery," he added.

The film's subject is familiar to those who follow migration news in Europe and North Africa. The film's structure mirrors many journalistic and cinematic depictions of migrant narratives. But "Io Capitano" shows no interest in documentary or cinema vérité-style storytelling. Garrone's shots

of the Mediterranean and the Sahara depict them in beautifully panoramic splendor rather than as landscapes of death and emptiness.

Many scenes set in the Sahara were shot in Casablanca and the desert surrounding Erfoud, Morocco. Garrone said he relied heavily on migrants in Rabat and Casablanca who worked on the film as extras. They helped consult on scenes about crossing the Sahara and about Libya's detention centers.

"What was really important was to show a part of the journey that we usually don't see," he said. "We know about people dying in the desert, but we usually only know about numbers. Behind these numbers, there are human beings very much like us."

## Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Todd Haynes' "May December" is a deliciously disquieting drama loosely based on a stranger-than-fiction true story. Haynes' film, which debuts Friday, Dec. 1, on Netflix, is inspired by **Mary Kay Letourneau**, the teacher who went to jail in 1997 for a sexual relationship with a student, only to later marry him. In "May December," **Julianne Moore** and **Charles Melton** play a couple years past a similar scandal, while **Natalie Portman** portrays an actress who's come to research them for an upcoming film. In her review, AP Film Writer **Lindsey Bahr** called it "an audaciously self-aware, mischievously funny and emotionally complex drama that defies simple categorization."

Meanwhile, the biggest box-office hit of the year not named "Barbie" is coming to Netflix. "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" hits the streaming service Sunday, Dec. 3, after its previous run on Peacock. The film, which grossed nearly \$1.4 billion in theaters, has fared slightly better than the infamous 1993 "Super Mario Bros." In my review, I praised the primary-color visuals but wrote that "as nice as it is to look at 'The Super Mario Bros. Movie,' it's not anywhere near as fun as it would be to play it."

## FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.:

**Bruce Springsteen's** drummer, **Max Weinberg**, is suing the owners of a Florida car restoration company, saying they stole \$125,000 by falsely promising him a like-new 1957 Mercedes-Benz and then using his money for personal expenses.

Weinberg is seeking \$375,000 from **Arthur Siegle**, members of his family and their Investment Automotive Group Inc. in a lawsuit filed Sunday in **Palm Beach County**. The Mercedes-Benz 190SL roadster they claimed they could deliver had significant damage and rust, and they knew it could not be restored to like-new condition when they took Weinberg's \$125,000 deposit almost three years ago, according to the lawsuit.

A subsequent law enforcement investigation concluded that the Siegles used little or no money from Weinberg's deposit on restoring the car, but instead paid off credit cards and made deposits to personal accounts. No criminal charges have been filed.

"I guess they figured he's Max Weinberg, million-dollar drummer for Bruce Springsteen, Mighty Max. He can afford to lose \$125,000," Weinberg's attorney, **Valentin Rodriguez**, said Tuesday.

Siegle "thought he could pull the wool over the eyes of someone who is pretty well-known and wealthy, but Max wasn't just going to sit down and take it," Rodriguez said. He said Weinberg is not an expert on vintage cars but has just always wanted to own one.

**Peter Weintraub**, the Siegles' attorney, did not respond to an email seeking comment.

Weinberg, 72, is the longtime drummer in Springsteen's E Street Band and led **Conan O'Brien's** band when he hosted "Late Night" and "The Tonight Show." The musician currently tours with his own show, **Max Weinberg's Jukebox**. He is suing under a Florida law that allows triple damages for intentional theft.

According to the lawsuit, Weinberg says that in April 2021, he contacted Siegle and his son, **Stuart Siegle**, about a 1957 Mercedes-Benz 190SL he understood they were restoring. The 190SL is a convertible manufactured from 1955 to 1963. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Pop singer **Sabrina Carpenter's** use of a Roman Catho-

lic church in **Brooklyn** as a backdrop for parts of a music video, with her dancing next to pastel-colored coffins, led to its pastor being stripped of his administrative duties after its release and officials holding a Mass to restore the church's "sanctity."

Carpenter, who as a youth appeared on the Disney Channel, released the video for "Feather"



Weinberg



Springsteen

on Oct. 31; in it, she's in several scenarios with men who behave badly, like taking a nonconsensual photo of her body, and then die in grisly ways. At the end, Carpenter, 24, is filmed dancing in the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, wearing a short tulle dress and a black veil.

The day after its release, the

Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, which oversees the Catholic churches in Brooklyn and Queens, issued a statement saying that proper procedures around allowing filming had not been followed and it was "appalled."

A few days later, the diocese stripped administrative duties away from the church pastor,

Monsignor **Jamie Gigantiello**, and ended his stint as vicar of development for the diocese.

The diocese said Bishop **Robert Brennan** also celebrated a Mass of Reparation at the church and "through the offering of this Mass, Bishop Brennan has restored the sanctity of this church and repaired the harm." (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## People

## Gang charges

## Young Thug trial kicks off with diverse tales

ATLANTA, Nov. 29, (AP) — **Young Thug** is the ruthless leader of a violent street gang that terrorized Atlanta neighborhoods or he's an inspiring success who pulled himself out of poverty to rap stardom through hard work and determination. Those are the competing narratives presented to the jury as the rapper's trial got underway this week.

The Grammy winner, whose given name is Jeffrey Williams, was charged last year in a sprawling indictment that accused him and more than two dozen others of conspiring to violate Georgia's anti-racketeering law. He also is charged with gang, drug and gun crimes and is standing trial with five of the others indicted with him.

Fulton County prosecutor Adriane Love didn't dispute that Young Thug is a talented artist, but she said he exploited his gift for a darker purpose, using his songs, clout and social media posts to promote and establish the dominance of his gang, Young Slime Life, or YSL.

"Through that music, through that blessing, the evidence will show, Jeffrey Williams led that group of people who wreaked utter havoc on Fulton County," Love told jurors during her opening statement Monday.

Defense attorney Brian Steel acknowledged that his client's songs mention killing police, people being shot, drugs and drive-by shootings, but he said those are just the words he rhymed and a reflection of his rough upbringing and not a chronicle of his own activities.

"They want you to fear music that talks about killing, drugs," Steel told the jury in his opening statement Tuesday. "It is art. You don't like it, you don't have to listen to it. This is America. It is art."

Steel mentioned Young Thug's collaborations with high-profile artists, appearances on television and numerous awards and riches that came with it. The rapper is so busy and successful that he wouldn't have the time or motivation to lead a gang, Steel said.

"He is not sitting there telling people to kill people," he said. "He doesn't need their money. Jeffrey's worth tens of millions of dollars."

## Record

Steel noted that YSL is the name of Young Thug's successful record label, but Love said the actions outlined in the indictment "have nothing to do with a recording label."

The gang began about a decade ago in Atlanta's Cleveland Avenue neighborhood, born of an internal rift in a preceding gang, and Young Thug emerged as its leader, Love said. The gang's members were "associated in fact" - using common identifiers, language, symbols and colors - and they "knew who their leader was and they knew the repercussions of not obeying their leader," she said.

The people who have been affected directly and indirectly by the gang's violence represent the lives "swallowed up by that crater created by YSL in the Cleveland Avenue community," Love said.

Young Thug was born into poverty in a crime-ridden housing project where he developed a strong distrust of the criminal justice system, Steel said. His family moved to the Cleveland Avenue area when he was 16, and he got out through hard work and talent, Steel said. But he didn't forget his roots and has been extremely generous with his good fortune, Steel said.

"He's not the crater. He's trying to pull people out of poverty," Steel said.

The indictment charges all the defendants with conspiring to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or RICO. Love acknowledged that may sound complicated but told the jurors it's actually quite simple.

The members of the gang committed crimes, including murder, armed robbery, aggravated assault and theft to further the gang's mission, she said. Those actions and others that aren't crimes - rap lyrics, social media posts, flashing gang signs - combined to form a pattern of illegal activity, she said.

"They endeavored to do some illegal stuff to get a bunch of stuff that didn't belong to them," Love said.

Prosecutors have made clear that they intend to use rap lyrics from songs by the defendants to help make their case. This is a controversial tactic, but Fulton County Superior Court Chief Judge Ural Glanville earlier this month said he'd conditionally allow certain lyrics as long as prosecutors can show they're linked to the crimes alleged in the indictment.

Prosecutors have said they're not pursuing Young Thug and others because of violent lyrics.

## Evidence

"We didn't chase the lyrics to solve the murders," Love said. "We chased the murders and, as the evidence will show, in the process, we found the lyrics."

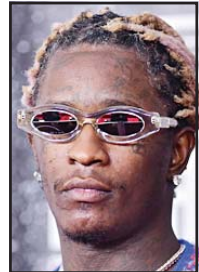
One of those murders that is expected to feature heavily during the trial is the January 2015 killing of Donovan Thomas, who prosecutors say was a major figure in a rival gang and whose death is said to have sparked an escalation in violence. Two of the six people currently on trial are charged with murder in his killing, and Young Thug is accused of renting the car used in the drive-by shooting.

Many of the lyrics, social media posts, text conversations and online messages cited in the indictment have been taken out of context and misrepresented to seem sinister when they are not, Steel said.

He and other defense attorneys tried during opening statements to poke holes in the state's case, saying that police relied on jailhouse informants who had every reason to tell them what they wanted to hear. They also hammered the state's use of song lyrics, saying the art that helped their clients better their circumstances is now being improperly used against them.

Opening statements began Monday and continued Tuesday before a jury that took nearly 10 months to select. The trial is expected to last months. Only six of the original 28 defendants are on trial after others either took plea deals or were separated to be tried later.

Among those who took a plea deal was rapper Gunna, whose given name is Sergio Kitchens. He was charged with a single count of racketeering conspiracy and entered an Alford plea last December, meaning he maintains his innocence but recognizes that it's in his best interest to plead guilty.



Young Thug



Beyoncé performs at a Get Out the Vote concert for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton at the Wolstein Center in Cleveland, Ohio, Nov. 4, 2016. Beyoncé releases a concert film this week titled 'Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé.' (AP)



Hollywood actor and producer Michael Douglas and Indian film producer Shailendra Singh at a session on the last day of the 54th International Film Festival of India, in Goa, India, Tuesday, Nov. 28. Douglas was honored with the Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award at the festival. (AP) — Details Page 11



Sytch



Dorsey

## Variety

**NEW YORK:** Larry Fink, an acclaimed and adventurous photographer whose subjects ranged from family portraits and political satire to working class lives and the elite of show business and Manhattan society, has died at 82.

Robert Mann, owner of the Robert Mann Gallery, told The Associated Press that Fink died Saturday at his home in Martins Creek, Pennsylvania. Mann did not cite a specific cause of death, but said that Fink had been in failing health.

"He was a dear friend and a real free spirit," Mann said. "I've known people like Robert Frank and Ansel Adams and Larry stood out. He was an exceptional and unique individual, a very unconventional man, not only in his personality, but in his photography."

A "self-described Marxist from Long Island," Fink was best known for "Social Graces," a 1979 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in which black and white photos of wealthy New Yorkers were juxtaposed against shots of everyday life of families in Martins Creek, Fink's longtime home. The series was published in book form in 1984.

He would go on to work for The New York Times, Vanity Fair and other publications, photographing such celebrities as Meryl Streep, Natalie Portman and Kate Winslet. He would also spoof President George W. Bush and other political leaders, while remaining close to a Martins Creek family, the Sabatines, who appeared often in his work. Fink had solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum and the Philadelphia Museum of Art among other galleries, and he received numerous honors, including two John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Tim Dorsey, a former police and courts newspaper reporter who found lasting fame as the creator of the crime-comedy novel series starring Serge A. Storms, an energetic fan of Florida history and an ingenious serial killer, has died. He was 62.

Dorsey, who published 26 novels, died Sunday, according to Danielle Bartlett, a publicity director at William Morrow, an imprint of HarperCollins. No details were revealed.

Fans of Dorsey appreciated his clever observations and satirical pokes at the weirdness of Florida. He was part of a trio of former newspapermen from Florida - including Dave Barry and Carl Hiaasen - who found a rich vein of absurd humor in the state.

"It was a privilege and honor to work with Tim Dorsey. His easy wit and deep

## Music

## Taylor Swift, SZA lead streaming lists

## Wallen tops Apple Music's 2023 Chart

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 29, (AP) — Country singer Morgan Wallen's "Last Night" topped Apple Music's global song chart in 2023 as the giant music streamer released year-end lists Tuesday and provided listeners with data on their own most listened-to tunes.

Wallen's hit emerged as the country song with the most days - 52 - at No. 1 on the Global Daily Top 100 chart.

Nigerian rapper Rema's "Calm Down" remix with Selena Gomez was No. 12 on the global songs chart, the highest entry, ever, for an African song. ("Calm Down" was No. 1 on the streamer's Shazam chart.)

Joining "Last Night" at the very top of the global songs list were "Flowers" by Miley Cyrus in second, "Kill Bill" by SZA in third, "Rich Flex" by Drake and 21 Savage in fourth, and another SZA track in fifth slot: "Snooze," which was followed by Taylor Swift's "Anti-Hero."

SZA, who leads the 2024 Grammy nominations, topped Apple's most-read lyrics in 2023 for her smash single, "Kill Bill."

Wallen's "Last Night" stayed atop the Billboard Hot 100 for 16 weeks this year, beating Harry Styles' "As I Was" for the record of longest No. 1 run for a non-collaboration. It also tied Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee feat. Justin Bieber's "Despacito" for the title of second-longest reign in Hot 100's 65-year history.

New to 2023's suite of year-end charts is the inclusion of an Apple Music Sing chart, which allows users to view which songs fan sang along the most to this year. On the inaugural chart, J-pop duo YOASOBI hit No. 1 with their song "(Idol)."

Apple's data also shows the growing presence of Música Mexicana globally. Peso Pluma and Eslabon Armado's history-making "Ella Baila Sola" made it to No. 18 on the Global Daily Top 100, which also featured Grupo Frontera and Bad Bunny's "un x100to," Peso Pluma and Natanuel Cano's "PRC," and Fuerza Regida and

Grupo Frontera's "Bebe Dame."

Also available Tuesday is Replay - Apple's alternative to Spotify's Wrapped playlist - which allows Apple Music subscribers to engage with what music was most popular on the streaming service this year.

In November, Apple Music named Taylor Swift its artist of the year, after the pop superstar broke incredible records: In the first 10 months of 2023, 65 of Swift's songs reached Apple Music's Global Daily Top 100. The Eras Tour was a catalyst: Streams grew 61% globally when she kicked off her landmark concert tour in March, and continued to build.

"Taylor Swift's impact on music is absolutely undeniable - not just this record-breaking year, but throughout her entire career," Oliver Schusser, Apple's vice president of Apple Music and Beats, said in a statement. "She is a generation-defining artist and a true change agent in the music industry, and there is no doubt that her impact and influence will be felt for years to come."

## Also:

**LOS ANGELES:** Sean "Diddy" Combs has temporarily stepped down as chairman of his cable television network Revolt amid multiple sexual abuse allegations against the music mogul.

Revolt announced Combs' decision on social media Tuesday. It's not clear when he will return to his media company - which said Combs previously had "no operational or day-to-day role" at the network.

"This decision helps to ensure that Revolt remains steadfastly focused on our mission to create meaningful content for the culture and amplify the voices of all Black people throughout this country and African diaspora," the network said in the statement.

Combs, a founder of Revolt, declined to comment further on the matter. The network has been preparing to celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Earlier this month, R&B singer

Cassie accused Combs of raping and beating her over the duration of their decadeslong, on-and-off relationship - which began in 2005, when she was 19 and he was 37. The singer, whose real name is Cassie Ventura, alleged that Combs raped her when she tried to end the relationship in 2018.

One day after she filed the lawsuit, she and Combs reached a settlement to their "mutual satisfaction."

"We have decided to resolve this matter amicably. I wish Cassie and her family all the best. Love," Combs said.

After Combs and Ventura's settlement, two more women came forward to accuse him of sexual abuse. Both suits were filed last week on the eve of the expiration of the Adult Survivors Act, a New York law permitting victims of sexual abuse a one-year window to file civil action regardless of the statute of limitations.

The filings detail acts of sexual assault, beatings and forced drugging allegedly committed in the early 1990s by Combs, then a talent director, party promoter and rising figure in New York City's hip-hop community.

Combs has vehemently denied the allegations. He accused the two women of seeking to exploit the New York law that temporarily extended the statute of limitations.

Combs is among the most influential hip-hop producers and executives of the past three decades. He is the founder of Bad Boy Records and a three-time Grammy winner who has worked with a slew of top-tier artists including Notorious B.I.G., Mary J. Blige, Usher, Lil Kim, Faith Evans and 112.

The mogul created the fashion clothing line Sean John and produced the reality show "Making the Band" for MTV.

This year, he released his fifth studio album "The Love Album: Off the Grid," which earned two Grammy nominations this month.

knowledge of Florida-lore made his satirical crime capers as entertaining as they were timely. But his greatest gift was the boundless joy and escape that Serge A. Storms brought to readers on every page," said Emily Krump, Dorsey's editor at William Morrow, in a statement.

Dorsey's Storms was an obsessive-compulsive serial killer who together with

his drugged-out sidekick, Coleman, devised fiendishly inventive ways to murder Florida grifters and thugs, who all, naturally, had it coming.

Some of Dorsey's titles include "The Big Bamboo," "Hurricane Punch," "Nuclear Jellyfish," "When Elves Attack," "Pineapple Grenade," "No Sunscreen for the Dead," "Naked Came the Florida Man,"

"The Tropic of Stupid," "Mermaid Confidential" and "The Maltese Iguana."

Storms would drive around the state in a 1978 Firebird Trans Am or a 1976 orange Gran Torino, expounding upon the local history at every stop to Coleman, who was often only partially conscious. The author used the pair to explore everything from internet fraud and the sleazy world of scam artists to pill mills that hand out OxyContin. (AP)



Eddie Murphy (right), a cast member in 'Candy Cane Lane,' poses with Paige Butcher at the premiere of the film at the Regency Village Theatre, Tuesday, Nov. 28, in Los Angeles. (AP)

**DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.:** Former pro wrestler Tammy "Sunny" Sytch has been sentenced to more than 17 years in prison for drunkenly colliding with another car, killing a 75-year-old man, while her blood alcohol level was four times the legal limit, authorities in Florida said.

Sytch, who was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2011, pleaded no contest in August to driving under the influence manslaughter and other charges. She also had an unsealed bottle of vodka in her vehicle and cannabis in her system at the time of her arrest in Volusia County in March 2022, authorities said.

She had faced up to more than 25 years in prison during her sentencing hearing on Monday. During the hearing, Sytch said she felt remorse and regret "deep in my soul" for killing Julian LaFrancis Lasse-ter of Daytona Beach.

Sytch, 50, previously had been arrested multiple times from driving under the influence in Pennsylvania, where her driver's license had been suspended. She didn't have a Florida driver's license. (AP)

## First 'global stocktake' on warming key to the UN talks

## Climate paradox: Less future warming, more current pain

NEW YORK, Nov 29, (AP): The world is heading for considerably less warming than projected a decade ago, but that good news is overwhelmed by much more pain from current climate change than scientists anticipated, experts said.

That's just one of a set of seemingly contradictory conditions facing climate negotiators who this week gather in Dubai for marathon United Nations talks that include a first-ever assessment of how well the world is doing in its battle against global warming. It's also a conference where one of the central topics will be whether fossil fuels should be phased out, but it will be run by the CEO of an oil company.

Key to the session is the first "global stocktake" on climate, when countries look at what's happened since the 2015 Paris climate agreement, how off-track it is and probably say what's needed to get back on track.

Even though emissions of heat-trapping gases are still rising every year, they're rising more slowly than projected from 2000 to 2015. Before the Paris deal, scientists at Climate Action Tracker and the United Nations Environment Programme were projecting about 3.5 degrees Celsius (6.3 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming over pre-industrial levels based on how much carbon dioxide countries were spewing and what they planned to do about it.

## Pledges

That 3.5 "is totally out of the picture. It will not happen," said NewClimate Institute scientist Niklas Hohne, who works on Climate Action Tracker. "Our number is 2.7 (4.9 degrees Fahrenheit). It could be even lower with pledges and with net zero targets."

UNEP's Emissions Gap projected 2.5 to 2.9 degrees (4.5 to 5.2 degrees Fahrenheit). The global goal is 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

Countries are promising and even starting on actions that should eventually reduce emissions, but those cuts haven't materialized yet, said Climate Analytics CEO Bill Hare, also of Climate Action Tracker.

"So things aren't as bad as they could have been or as we worried they might be 20 years ago, but they're still far from where we need to be," said Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson, who heads scientists who annual track world emissions in the Global Carbon Project.

When he looks at the impacts of just 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming - about what the world has gotten so far - World Resources Institute CEO Ani Dasgupta said he wants to scream from the rooftops about how "unfair and unequal the devastation is."

"No one who has half a brain can be happy where we are," Dasgupta said.

Scientists underestimated for decades how much destruction just a little warming would cause, several scientists said. And that damage we are feeling far outweighs the gains made in reducing future warming projections, they said.

Hare points to more than 60,000 heat deaths in Europe in 2022. Others point to thousands dead from flooding in Pakistan and Libya.

"The more we know, the more severe impacts we see at lower temperature changes," said Anne Olhoff, chief author of the UNEP Emissions Gap report. "The impacts happen much faster than we thought previously and much harder than we thought previously."

The damage the world is seeing "is scarier to me than almost anything else," Jackson said. "We are seeing the world's weather start to unravel and there's no evidence that that will stop."

When it comes to emissions, the key is what's causing them, experts say, citing fossil fuels.

"I think rightly the fundamental role of fossil fuels will take center stage" at the Dubai negotiations, called "COP"

for conference of parties, said Melanie Robinson, climate director for World Resources Institute.

Heading into negotiations, world leaders have crowded about tentative agreements to triple the amount of renewable energy use and double energy efficiency. But that's not enough, said Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research.

"It requires the tearing out the poisoned root of the climate crisis: fossil fuels," said United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Guterres, numerous climate scientists and environmental activists all say what's needed is a phase-out - or at the very least a phase-down - of coal, oil and gas.

But the host country runs the negotiations and appoints a president. The host country is the oil state United Arab Emirates and it has named ADNOC oil company CEO Sultan al-Jaber, who also runs a renewable energy company, as the conference president. Al-Jaber and his colleagues say by bringing fossil fuel companies to the table they can get more done and that it may take someone in the industry to get the concessions needed.

Environmental activists don't believe it.

"We cannot trust these politicians and we cannot trust the processes of the COPs because the fossil fuel industries are tightening their grip around their processes and dictating their outcomes," youth environmental activist Greta Thunberg said.

The process is in the hands of parties or nations and because of the COP rules it has to be by consensus or practically unanimous so that makes a phase-out of fossil fuels agreement unlikely, but a "phase-down of fossil fuels is inevitable," said Adnan Amir, the UAE's No.2 official for the climate talks.

"There are many different views on the fossil fuels language from many different parties and how exactly we will land it will be about how we get the right formulation," said COP28 Director-General Majid Al Suwaidi. "I think the sentiment is all the same. The language here that we're seeing between parties is really much closer than we've seen in the past."

## Eliminated

New Climate Institute's Hohne said a phase-out is needed but doesn't think Al Jaber will allow it: "He would basically have to agree that the basis of his business model of his company would be eliminated."

Hohne, Hare, Dasgupta and others look at al-Jaber and others' heavy promotion of carbon capture and storage - technology that the scientists say hasn't proven itself - and they worry that the climate talks will look like something significant has been accomplished when it actually hasn't.

"I think there's a high risk that it (negotiations) ends up in greenwashing, in just looking nice but not leading to much," Hohne said.

Activists and even United Nations officials also said they are disturbed by countries pointing to their efforts to reduce coal and increase renewable energy, as they also approve new oil and gas drilling projects, especially after Russia invaded Ukraine.

A report by the activist Center for Biological Diversity said that while new efforts by the Biden Administration in its Inflation Reduction Act would reduce nearly 1 billion metric tons of carbon emissions by 2030, 17 different oil and gas projects it has approved would add 1.6 billion metric tons of emissions.

"Governments can't keep pledging to cut commitments to cut emissions under the Paris Agreement and then greenlighting huge fossil fuel projects," UNEP Director Inger Andersen said. "This is throwing the global energy transition and humanity's future into question."

New Zealand leader plans to end tobacco controls

## France to ban smoking on beaches as it seeks to prevent 75,000 deaths per year

Gains still below pre-pandemic level

## US life expectancy rose last year

PARIS, Nov 29, (AP): France will ban smoking on all beaches, in public parks, forests and some other public areas as part of a national anti-tobacco plan presented by the health minister on Tuesday.

Tobacco products cause 75,000 avoidable deaths a year in France, Minister of Health and Prevention Aurélien Rousseau said on BFM television. The government will introduce legislation at the start of next year to enlarge the scope of places where fines can be levied for smoking, he said.

"Beaches, parks, around schools -- lots of places had started these experiments and now, it's true, we're heading to a general rule to show our determination," he said.

Legislators also intend to outlaw single-use disposable e-cigarettes, with an initial vote on a draft law to ban them expected in the National Assembly next month.

□ □ □

New Zealand's new prime minister plans to ban cellphone use in schools and repeal tobacco controls in the ambitious agenda he released Wednesday for his first 100 days in office.

Christopher Luxon outlined 49 actions he said his conservative government intended to take over the next three months.

The first new law he planned to pass would narrow the central bank's mandate to focus purely on keeping inflation in check, he said. That would change the Reserve Bank's current dual focus on low inflation and high employment.

Many of the actions in the 100-day plan involve repealing initiatives from the previous liberal government, which had been in office for six years. The new efforts include a plan to double renewable energy production.

Luxon said many of the measures were aimed at improving the economy.

Many of the plans are proving contentious, including the one to repeal tobacco restrictions ap-



An ashtray with cigarette butts at the edge of the beach, in Saint Jean de Luz, southwestern France, Tuesday, Nov. 28. France's government plans to ban smoking on all beaches, in public parks, forests and some other public areas. (AP)

NEW YORK, Nov 29, (AP): US life expectancy rose last year - by more than a year - but still isn't close to what it was before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2022 rise was mainly due to the waning pandemic, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention researchers said Wednesday. But even with the large increase, US life expectancy is only back to 77 years, 6 months - about what it was two decades ago.

Life expectancy is an estimate of the average number of years a baby born in a given year might expect to live, assuming the death rates at that time hold constant. The snapshot statistic is considered one of the most important measures of the health of the US population. The 2022 calculations released Wednesday are provisional, and could change a little as the math is finalized.

For decades, US life expectancy rose a little nearly every year. But about a decade ago, the trend flattened and even declined some years - a stall blamed largely on overdose deaths and suicides.

Then came the coronavirus, which has killed more than 1.1 million people in the US since early 2020. The measure of American longevity plunged, dropping from 78 years, 10 months in 2019 to 77 years in 2020, and then to 76 years, 5 months in 2021.

"We basically have lost 20 years of gains," said the CDC's Elizabeth Arias.

A decline in COVID-19 deaths drove 2022's improvement.

In 2021, COVID was the nation's third leading cause of death (after heart disease and cancer). Last year, it fell to the fourth leading cause. With more than a month left in the current year, preliminary data suggests COVID-19 could end up being the ninth or 10th leading cause of death in 2023.

But the US is battling other issues, including drug overdose deaths and suicides.

The number of US suicides reached an all-time high last year, and the national suicide rate was the highest seen since 1941, ac-

proved last year by the previous government. Those included requirements for low nicotine levels in cigarettes, fewer retailers and a lifetime ban for youth.

Luxon's government has said that ending the tobacco restrictions - which were not due to take effect until next year - would bring in more tax dollars, although Luxon said Wednesday it wasn't a case of trading health for money.



A couple walks through a park at sunset, March 10, 2021, in Kansas City, Mo. US life expectancy rose in 2022 - by more than a year - after plunging two straight years at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new government report released Wednesday, Nov. 29. (AP)

ording to a second CDC report released Wednesday.

Drug overdose deaths in the US went up slightly last year after two big leaps at the beginning of the pandemic. And through the first six months of this year, the estimated overdose death toll continued to inch up.

## Mortality

US life expectancy also continues to be lower than that of dozens of other countries. It also didn't rebound as quickly as it did in other places, including France, Italy, Spain and Sweden.

Steven Woolf, a mortality researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University, said he expects the U.S. to eventually get back to the pre-pandemic life expectancy.

But "what I'm trying to say is: That is not a great place to be," he added.

Some other highlights from the new report:

■ Life expectancy increased for both men and women, and for every racial and ethnic group.

■ The decline in COVID-19 deaths drove 84% of the increase in life expectancy. The next largest contributor was a decline in

heart disease deaths, credited with about 4% of the increase. But experts note that heart disease deaths increased during COVID-19, and both factored into many pandemic-era deaths.

■ Changes in life expectancy varied by race and ethnicity. Hispanic Americans and American Indians and Alaska Natives saw life expectancy rise more than two years in 2022. Black life expectancy rose more than 1 1/2 years. Asian American life expectancy rose one year and white life expectancy rose about 10 months.

But the changes are relative, because Hispanic Americans and Native Americans were hit harder at the beginning of COVID-19. Hispanic life expectancy dropped more than four years between 2019 and 2021, and Native American life expectancy fell more than six years.

"A lot of the large increases in life expectancy are coming from the groups that suffered the most from COVID," said Mark Hayward, a University of Texas sociology professor who researches how different factors affect adult deaths. "They had more to rebound from."

phone use - reflect a sentiment among some voters that schools have strayed from their primary mission.

Others plans around ethnicity, such as disbanding the Mori Health Authority, have been portrayed by Luxon's government as measures to treat all citizens equally but have been attacked by critics as being racist against Indigenous people.

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# Kentucky overwhelms Miami in ACC/SEC Challenge

Purdue routs Tigers

**LEXINGTON, Kentucky, Nov. 29, (AP):** Reed Sheppard scored 21 points, including 13 during a second half in which Kentucky shot 67%, and Antonio Reeves added 18 to propel 12th-ranked Wildcats to a 95-73 blow-out of No. 8 Miami on Tuesday night in the ACC/SEC Challenge.

Sheppard came off the bench, drained a 3 for his first basket and finished 5 of 9 from long range and 8 of 13 overall.



Sheppard

Reeves was 7 of 12 from the field.

Tre Mitchell had 14 points and seven assists, Rob Dillingham scored 14 points and Justin Edwards had 11 points for Kentucky (6-1).

Norchad Omier scored 20 points and Wooga Poplar had 19 for the Hurricanes (5-1), who shot 44.1% from the field but were no match for Kentucky's nearly flawless offensive performance.

**Purdue 99, Texas Southern 67**

In West Lafayette, Ind., Braden Smith had 19 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds while leading Purdue past Texas Southern.

Zach Edey added 15 points and six rebounds as the Boilermakers (7-0) extended the nation's longest regular-season winning streak against nonconference opponents to 31 games.

Purdue was playing its first game since ascending to No. 1 in the nation Monday after taking home the Maui Invitational title by winning

## BASKETBALL

three games in three days against teams ranked among the top 11 last week.

The Tigers (0-7) were led by Zytarious Murtle with 25 points and six rebounds.

**Marquette 93, Southern 56**

In Milwaukee, Tyler Kolek scored all 16 of his points in the first half and Marquette backed up its highest ranking in nearly half a century by trouncing Southern.

In its first game since a runner-up finish in the Maui Invitational, Marquette (6-1) used swarming defense to convert 22 turnovers by Southern into 38 points. The Golden Eagles turned it over just six times, leading to two points for the Jaguars (1-6), who lost their fifth straight.

Kam Jones scored 15 points, Stevie Mitchell added 11 and David Joplin and Ben Gold had 10 each for Marquette.

Jordan Johnson scored 21 points for Southern, matching his season total entering the game.

**Kansas 71, Eastern Illinois 63**

In Lawrence, Kansas, Hunter Dickinson had 25 points and 13 rebounds, Kevin McCullar Jr. overcame a tough shooting night to score 18, and Kansas had to fight all the way to the end to beat Eastern Illinois.

The Jayhawks (6-1) led by a point with about five minutes left, and the Panthers (3-5) were still within 65-61 a couple of minutes later. But Dickinson's bucket in the paint, a run-out dunk by McCullar and some clutch defense finally put the game away.

Tiger Booker led Eastern Illinois with 20 points. Naykel Shelton and Kooper Jacobi scored 14 apiece.

**Baylor 108, Nicholls 70**

In Waco, Texas, Langston Love made five 3-pointers and scored a career-high 23 points as Baylor never trailed against Nicholls.



Texas Southern guard Kehlin Farooq (32) drives on Purdue center Zach Edey (15) during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in West Lafayette, Ind., Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2023. (AP)

## Georgia and Michigan stay perfect

# Loaded field of CFP contenders for last 4-team playoff fuels 'championship' weekend drama



Georgia running back Kendall Milton (2) runs as Georgia Tech linebacker Kyle Efford (44) defends during the first half of an NCAA college football game, Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023, in Atlanta. (AP)

## Fils & Van Assche start their push for Next Gen Finals title with wins

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Nov. 29, (AP): Arthur Fils and Luca van Assche both started their pushes for the Next Gen Finals title with wins in the round-robin stage as the tournament opened Tuesday at its new home in Saudi Arabia.

The top-seeded, 19-year-old

## TENNIS

French player Fils won 2-4, 4-3 (6), 4-2, 1-4, 4-2 over Luca Nardi. The Next Gen Finals are played using special rules, with a best-of-five-sets format in which each set goes to the player who is first to four games, with a tiebreak at 3-3.

Also in the round-robin green group, Flavio Cobolli won 4-2, 3-4 (7), 4-1, 4-2 against Dominic Stricker.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29, (AP): The four-team College Football Playoff is going out with the most crowded field of contenders and the most consequential championship weekend in the 10-year history of the system.

Eight teams have at least a glimmer of hope to make the field. Yes, that means you, too, Ohio State.

The penultimate CFP rankings were released Tuesday. Georgia remained No. 1. Michigan moved up a spot to second after beating Ohio State. Unbeaten Washington was third, followed by unbeaten Florida State.

Oregon remained fifth, Ohio State slipped to No. 6, Texas was seventh and Alabama eighth.

The field for the playoff will be announced Sunday.

Determining which teams are CFP contenders heading into championship weekend is a bit subjective. More often than not a Power Five team with only

one loss going into the conference title games - regardless of whether that team is playing - has to be considered alive.

No team with two losses has ever made the CFP, but at least a couple of times a team with two losses had to be considered in contention when it played for a conference title. Auburn in 2017 is the most obvious example.

That season was one of the few where championship weekend had multiple games matching CFP contenders. More commonly, championship weekend hasn't been about teams playing their way into the field as much as watching for whether teams might play their way out.

Last season, when Southern California lost the Pac-12 championship game on Friday night, the field was practically set before Saturday's games kicked off. Georgia and Michigan won their conferences to stay perfect and lock down the top two seeds, but would have gotten

in regardless. TCU lost the Big 12 title game and got in. Ohio State slipped in the back door without playing.

Alabama coach Nick Saban politicked for the Tide to get in with two losses, but there was no real drama heading into selection Sunday.

This year, every conference championship has at least one CFP contender. The Pac-12 and the SEC each have two. Two-time defending champion Georgia might be able to lose to Alabama and make the field, as it did on the way to the national title in 2021, but that is far from a guarantee.

There are multiple scenarios that could play out this weekend and leave the 13-member CFP selection committee facing almost impossible choices Saturday night.

With such strong teams on top of college football this season, it would seem to be a perfect time to have a 12-team playoff to accommodate them all. That's coming next year.

Though an argument could be made if there were more seasons like this that produced dramatic championship weekends and intrigue heading into the selection Sunday, maybe the CFP would not have needed to expand. Here are the paths to the final four for the contenders. With perfect records, it is simple: win and you're in. Being unbeaten provides some hope of backing in after a loss. Especially for the Bulldogs, winners of 29 straight games.

The Seminoles are perfect and in playoff position heading into their Atlantic Coast Conference title game against Louisville, but an injury to star quarterback Jordan Travis creates some uncertainty. "You want to be pushing and playing your best ball in November so you can go into December and have these opportunities," Florida State coach Mike Norvell said.



Saban

## FOOTBALL

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## Pili and Kneepkens shine

# Utah women pummel Carroll College

SALT LAKE CITY, Nov. 29, (AP): Alissa Pili scored 20 points, Gianna Kneepkens added 19 points and No. 12 Utah beat NAIA-member Carroll College 100-44 on Tuesday for its 20th straight home win.

## BASKETBALL

Utah (6-1) reached the 100-point mark for the fifth time this season. The Utes also scored 98 points in a 64-point victory against Merrimack College on Friday.

Utah led 75-36 after three quarters. The Utes were shooting 70% from the field enter-

ing the fourth, including 12 of 17 from 3-point range. Carroll was 12 of 39 from the field with 13 turnovers. Utah also made its first 3-pointer of the fourth.

The Utes finished at 67% shooting with a 40-18 rebounding advantage.

Kneepkens, in her second season, became the 31st player in program history to reach the 1,000-point club after making 8 of 8 field goals, including three 3-pointers. Pili made 8 of 10 shots and

freshman Reese Ross hit 6 of 6 to reach 16 points.

Jenna Johnson added 15 points for Utah (6-1). Kennedy McQueen, who made six 3-pointers against Merrimack, had two of Utah's 14 3-pointers.

Jamie Pickens, who averages 18.8 and 10.5 rebounds, was one of three players to score eight points for Carroll. The Fighting Saints played the game as an exhibition.

Utah will host in-state rival BYU on Saturday before hitting the road to take on St. Joseph's. The Utes will take on No. 1 South Carolina in the Basketball Hall of Fame Showcase on Dec. 10.



Pili



Marquette's Sean Jones is fouled shooting between Southern's Jordan Johnson and Tidjiane Dioumassi during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2023, in Milwaukee. (AP)

## SPORTS

# Bucks win group as Celtics, Knicks 'advance' in In-Season Tournament

Kings stay unbeaten

MIAMI, Nov 29, (AP): Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points, Damian Lillard added 32 and the Milwaukee Bucks rallied in the fourth quarter to beat the Miami Heat 131-124 on Tuesday night and clinch a home quarterfinal game in the NBA In-Season Tournament.

Khris Middleton scored 17, Malik Beasley had 16 and Brook Lopez added 12 for the Bucks, who won East Group B with a 4-0 record.

They'll host wild-card New York on Dec. 5, with East Group C winner Boston going to Group A winner Indiana for the other quarterfinal before the Final Four in Las Vegas.

## BASKETBALL

Bam Adebayo scored 31 points for the Heat, who got 21 from Kyle Lowry and 20 from Josh Richardson. Jaime Jaquez Jr. and Caleb Martin each scored 14 and Duncan Robinson added 13 for the Heat.

### Celtics 124, Bulls 97

In Boston Jaylen Brown scored 30 points, Jayson Tatum had 21 and Boston routed Chicago to advance to the quarterfinals of the NBA In-Season Tournament.

The Celtics won a three-team tiebreaker with Orlando and Brooklyn via point differential to take Group C and earn the No. 3 seed in the Eastern Conference. They will visit the No. 2 Indiana Pacers next week.

The Celtics made a season-high 21 3-pointers, getting four each from Al Horford and Jrue Holiday. All five Boston starters scored in double figures.

### Knicks 115, Hornets 91

In New York, Julius Randle had 25 points and 20 rebounds, RJ Barrett scored 16 points and New York advanced to the quarterfinals of the NBA In-Season Tournament with a victory over Charlotte.

The Knicks missed their chance to win Group B when the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Miami Heat to finish unbeaten in pool play. But the Knicks



Dallas Mavericks guard Kyrie Irving (11) works to the basket against Houston Rockets' Jalen Green (4) in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Dallas. (AP)

took the wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference by tiebreaker because of their point differential in the preliminary round.

The Knicks will visit the Bucks, the East's No. 1 seed, on Dec. 5.

### Kings 124, Warriors 123

In Sacramento, Malik Monk hit a fadeaway with 7 seconds left and Sacramento rallied late to beat Golden State and advance to the quarterfinals of the In-Season Tournament.

The Kings won their group with a 4-0 record and will host New Orleans next week in the quarterfinals. Sacramento needed a win or a loss by 11 points or fewer but ended up with the victory thanks to a furious come-

back fueled by two late turnovers by the Warriors.

### Mavericks 121, Rockets 115

In Dallas, Luka Doncic had 41 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, and Dallas prevented Houston from advancing to the quarterfinals of the NBA In-Season Tournament.

Kyrie Irving added 22 of his 27 points in the second half for the Mavericks, who had already been eliminated. Their victory allowed the New Orleans Pelicans to win Group B in the Western Conference with a 3-1 record.

### Cavaliers 128, Hawks 105

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 40 points, Evan Mobley added 17 points and a career-high 19

rebounds, and Cleveland completed pool play in the NBA In-Season Tournament with a win over Atlanta.

The Cavs finished 3-1 and in second place in East Group A. They had to win to have any chance of capturing a wild-card entry, but needed four other teams to lose and ultimately fell short of advancing by point differential.

### Timberwolves 106, Thunder 103

In Minneapolis, Rudy Gobert had 17 points, 16 rebounds and four blocks, reserve Troy Brown Jr. scored 17 points and Minnesota withstood an injury to Anthony Edwards to beat Oklahoma City in the NBA In-Season Tournament.

Edwards had 12 of his 21 points in

the third quarter to lead the Timberwolves back from a deficit they faced for most of the first half, before landing hard on his right side during a dunk attempt and leaving the game in pain.

### Nets 115, Raptors 103

In New York, Spencer Dinwiddie scored 23 points to lead Brooklyn over Toronto Raptors to win its third straight, but was knocked out of the NBA In-Season Tournament.

Bridges was one of five players to finish in double-figure scoring for Brooklyn (9-8).

Mikal Bridges scored 22 points, Cam Johnson and Royce O'Neale had 18 apiece, and Nic Claxton chipped in with 15.

## Bid to set new standards

Women's soccer in England to be run by independent organization

LONDON, Nov 29, (AP): Women's soccer in England will be run by an independent organization rather than the Football Association from next

year in a move aimed at setting new standards in the game.

Clubs in the Women's Super League and the second-tier Women's Championship will operate under NewCo, whose first chief executive will be Nikki Doucet - a former investment banker and Nike executive.

"I've been incredibly encouraged by the collective desire and shared ambition to make our leagues the most distinctive, competitive and entertaining women's club competitions in the world," Doucet said.

The FA has run the WSL since its formation in 2010 and the Championship since 2014, but announced plans last year for an independent entity to take over the commercial activities of the women's game and give clubs greater control of their future.

The Premier League has run men's top-division soccer since 1992 and grown to become the world's most popular and richest league.

## SOCCER

"The women's professional game is in the strongest place that it has ever been thanks to the hard work of everybody involved in its development so far," said Sue Campbell, director of women's soccer at the Football Association, "but we firmly believe that the NewCo will take it to another level entirely."

"Each of our 24 clubs and the league itself wants the Women's Super League and Women's Championship to be setting the standards for women's football around the world, and this venture into a new governing body is the next step in us achieving that ambition."

Campbell said it is a "historical moment for the women's professional game in this country."

"It is a move," she said, "that will see our clubs and players make even bigger strides both on and off the pitch."

The changes look to capitalize on the huge growth of the women's game in England, which has seen its clubs become more competitive in European competitions and the national team be one of the best in the world. England won the European Championship last year and reached the World Cup final in Australia this year, losing to Spain.

## Al-Arabi sweep Al-Shabab

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The volleyball team of Al-Arabi Club secured a decisive victory against Al-Shabab, triumphing in three consecutive games with scores of "25-23, 25-19, 25-22." This match concluded the third round of the general league for the general category, which took place the day before yesterday. Simultaneously, Yarmouk achieved success over Al-Sahel in a thrilling encounter with

scores of 18-25, 25-15, 27-25, 25-14.

After the completion of the third round, the league standings are as follows: Burgan and Al-Kuwait each hold 8 points, while Kazma and Yarmouk follow closely with 7 points. Al-Arabi and Al-Qadsia have earned 6 points each, whereas Al-Shabab secured three points. Finally, Al-Tadamon, Al-Sahel, and Sulaibikhat are yet to register a score.



Al-Arabi players block a shot during the volleyball league match.

## Belgian clubs quietly having a lot of success

### Liverpool, Leverkusen look to clinch top spot

LONDON, Nov 29: The Europa League and Europa Conference League competitions have reached the next-to-last round of group games.

In the Champions League, winning the group is regarded as important to secure a home match in the second leg of the round of 16. In the Europa League, finishing in first place ensures a team skips a round of games. The eight group winners earn a direct place in the last 16 of the competition whereas finishing in second place only gets a team a playoff match against the clubs who drop into the Europa League as third-place finishers in Champions League groups. This season, that could easily be the likes of Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester United or Newcastle. Liverpool - the top team in the competition at this stage - could qualify as group winner by beating LASK at home, while Bayer Leverkusen and Atalanta will seal first place in their group with wins over Hacken and Sporting, respectively.

Maccabi Haifa (Europa League) and Maccabi Tel-Aviv (Europa Conference League) have only been able to

play in their European competitions since the Israeli league was suspended in early October due to the country's conflict with Hamas in Gaza. Maccabi Haifa returned to domestic action on Saturday for the first time since Oct. 1, beating Hapoel Petah Tikva 2-1 in a match played behind closed doors because of security concerns. The league will resume in full at the weekend. Maccabi Haifa, in last place in its

## SOCCER

group, will "host" Rennes at the Puskas Arena in Budapest on Thursday because Israel is not allowed to stage any UEFA-sanctioned matches. Maccabi Tel-Aviv is second in its Europa Conference League group ahead of a match against Breidablik in Iceland.

Belgian clubs are quietly having a lot of success in European competitions this season. Three clubs in the Europa Conference League are all unbeaten through four rounds. Club Brugge and Gent top their groups and Genk is third, two points behind Fiorentina before

facing the group leader in Italy. There is a longer-term collective reward in sight. Belgium and Turkey started the week in line to earn bonus entries in the revamped 36-team Champions League next season. UEFA will give two of the four extra entries to the countries whose teams combine for the highest average of UEFA ranking points this season. Each win or draw this season for a Belgian club can help ensure the domestic league runner-up this season enters the next Champions League directly, and that a third team will join the qualifying rounds. Brugge is at Besiktas on Thursday and Gent hosts Zorya Luhansk.

Viktoria Plzen is the only team so far to be guaranteed first place in its group in the third-tier Conference League. Club Brugge, PAOK, Fenerbahçe, Fiorentina, Gent, Legia Warsaw and Lille lead their respective groups and could also clinch top spot with one game to spare. A first-place finish earns a direct spot in the last 16, while finishing in second takes clubs into a playoff with third-place finishers in the Europa League.

## The tournament launches with the round of 16 matches

### HH Crown Prince 31st Soccer Cup kicks off

Yakin stays as Switzerland coach for Euro 2024

## Crew ask minimum of \$421 for individual tickets against Messi & Miami next season

COLUMBUS, Ohio, Nov 29, (AP): The Columbus Crew are asking a minimum \$421 list price for individual tickets for next season's Major League Soccer home game against Inter Miami and Lionel Messi.

The \$421 seats are located behind the end line in the bottom deck at Lower.com Field, according to a Ticketmaster webpage linked to the team's website. The price does not include fees.

Individual ticket prices increase to \$746 plus fees for seats closer to midfield.

The match vs. Miami is the only 2024 Crew home game with individual seats listed for sale. The date of the

match has not been announced; last year, MLS announced its schedule on Dec. 20.

"While our 2024 MLS schedule is to be determined, we recognized there was significant fan interest in securing tickets to our home match against Inter Miami CF, regardless of the date and time," the Crew said in a statement.

"In preparation for the holiday season, we opened a limited number of single-match tickets exclusively for our season ticket members Monday morning as we always prioritize our supporters through early access for events at our venues. The select inventory was offered to the public on Tuesday."

The New York Red Bulls last week offered a holiday two-game ticket promotion involving next season's home opener and their home match against rival New York City but included in small print that a match against Miami would not be included if it is the home opener.

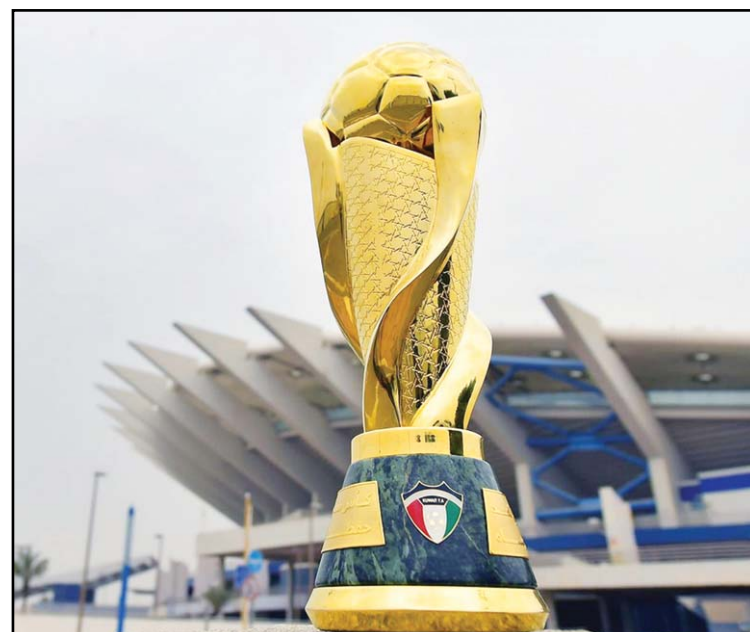
Switzerland coach Murat Yakin has kept his job for next year's European Championship after the national soccer federation resisted calls to fire him.

The Swiss qualified for Euro 2024 despite a run of eight qualifying games since June when the team beat only Andorra. Leads were wasted by conceding late goals amid reports of tension between the coach and senior players Granit Xhaka and Manuel Akanji.

The vote of confidence came four days before Yakin is due at the Euro 2024 draw in Hamburg, Germany.

"Even though we have drawn four matches and lost once in the last qualifying matches, Murat Yakin has our full confidence," Swiss soccer federation president Dominique Blanc said in a statement.

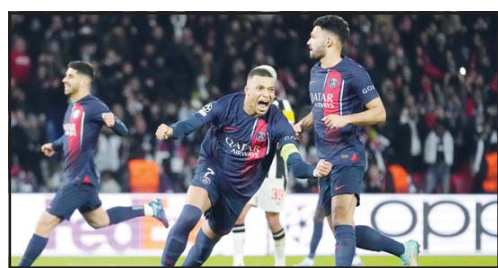
Yakin's hold on the job seemed shakier after Swiss coach Urs Fischer became available after being fired by Union Berlin, which he led from Germany's second division to the Champions League.



His Highness the Crown Prince Soccer Cup.



Los Angeles FC forward Carlos Vela (left), reaches out against Seattle Sounders defender Jackson Ragen (right), as he tips away the ball during the second half of an MLS conference semifinal playoff soccer match in Seattle. Los Angeles FC won 1-0 to advance. (AP)



PSG's Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the Champions League group F soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Newcastle United FC at the Parc des Princes in Paris. (AP)

# Sports

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## Pep walks off smiling as City stay perfect while PSG, Milan struggle

Barcelona return to Champions League knockout phase

ROME, Nov 29, (AP): On a night of unconvincing performances from Paris Saint-Germain and AC Milan, Pep Guardiola walked off smiling following a comeback victory for Manchester City in the Champions League.

Phil Foden inspired a second-half comeback as City beat Leipzig 3-2 on Tuesday to take first place in Group G and extend its perfect record to five wins in five matches.

It's the seventh straight season that City has won its group.

The defending champions trailed 2-0 at halftime but Foden scored one goal and helped to create two more to turn the match around and Guardiola had a smirk on his face

### SOCCER

when he shook hands with Leipzig counterpart Marco Rose after the final whistle.

"We had to be relaxed as possible and we reacted really well," Guardiola said. "We are first in the group and I am very satisfied for the reaction at the end. The team runs and fights and has spirit."

Kylian Mbappé's penalty deep into stoppage time salvaged a point for PSG in a 1-1 draw with an injury-depleted but tenacious Newcastle team.

In the tight Group F, Borussia Dortmund advanced with a 3-1 victory at Milan, a semifinalist last season.

Barcelona, Atletico Madrid and Lazio also advanced.

Portuguese duo João Félix and João Cancelo each scored as Barcelona defeated Porto 2-1 to return to the knockout phase after consecutive group-stage eliminations.

It will be the first time since Lionel Messi left the club that Barcelona will be playing in the round of 16.

Ciro Immobile scored twice in the final 10 minutes and Lazio beat Celtic 2-0.

Atletico then defeated Feyenoord 3-1 with the help of two own-goals to seal its spot in the next round and also send Lazio through.

Atletico leads with 11 points, followed by Lazio (10), Feyenoord (6) and Celtic (1).

In the final group matches on Dec. 13, Lazio visits Atletico in a match that will determine which club wins the group.

In Paris, Alexander Isak scored on a rebound for Newcastle early on after PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma pushed away a shot to Isak's feet for an easy finish.

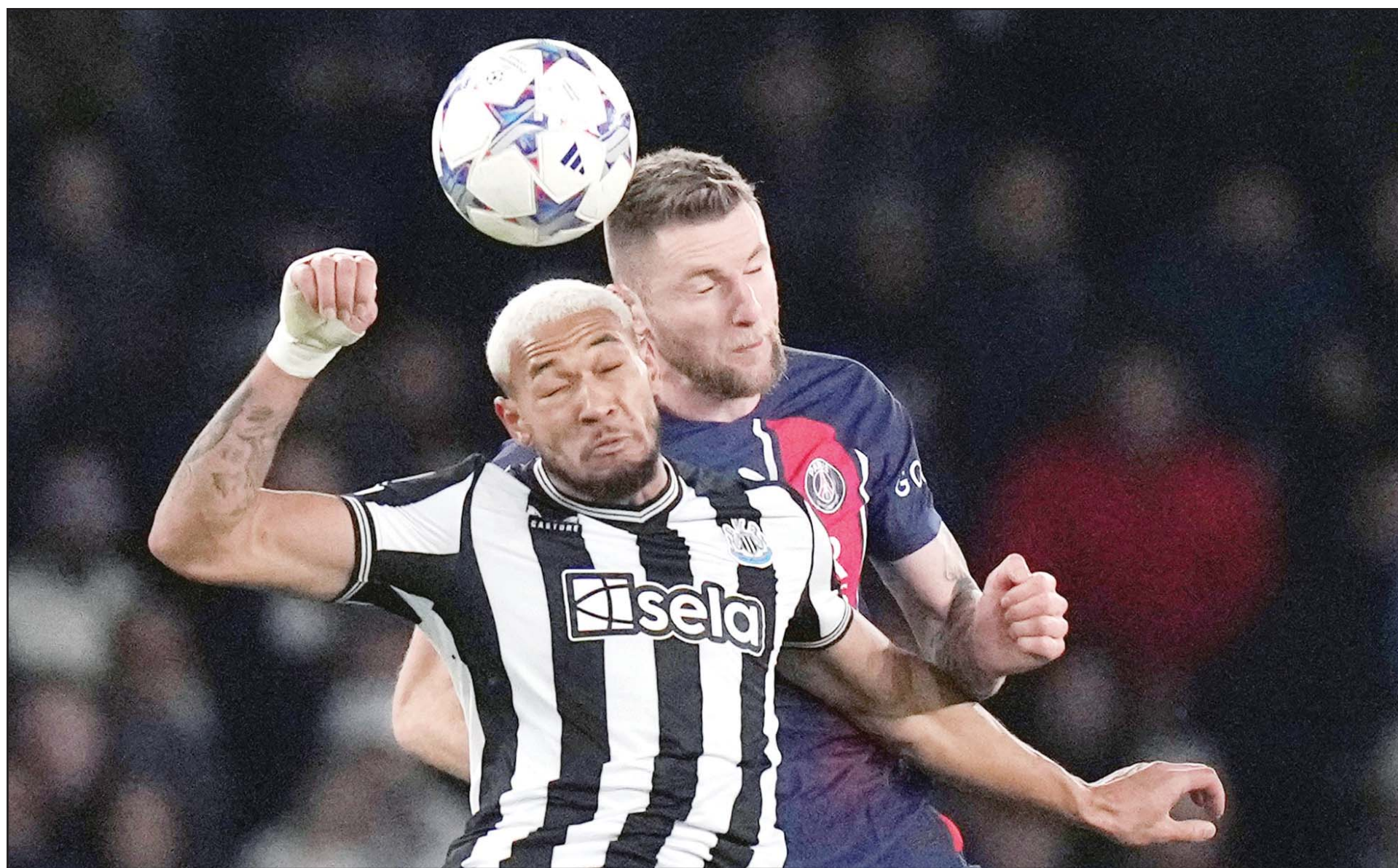
PSG wasted chance after chance and Newcastle seemed on course to pull off another unlikely win to follow the 4-1 victory over the same opposition last month.

That was until Ousmane Dembélé flicked the ball up in the fifth minute of stoppage time and it bounced off Tino Livramento's chest and onto his arm. Referee Szymon Marciniak gave a penalty after watching the incident on video review and Mbappé blasted the spot-kick past goalkeeper Nick Pope.

At the San Siro, Marco Reus gave Dortmund an early lead from the spot after Olivier Giroud had a penalty of his own saved for Milan. Although Samuel Chukwueze leveled at the end of the first half, goals from Jamie Bynoe-Gittens and substitute Karim Adeyemi gave the visitors the win they needed to book their spot in the last 16.

Dortmund leads with 10 points, followed by PSG (7), Newcastle (5) and Milan (5).

PSG, Newcastle and Milan are all still in contention and Dortmund is still fighting to win the group ahead of the last round with Dortmund hosting PSG and Newcastle hosting Milan.



Newcastle's Joelinton (left), challenges for the ball with PSG's Milan Skriniar during the Champions League group F soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Newcastle United FC at the Parc des Princes in Paris. (AP)



Barcelona's Joao Felix (right), and Porto's Jorge Sanchez challenge for the ball during the Champions League Group H soccer match between Barcelona and Porto at the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

In Manchester — where both teams had already advanced — Foden set up Erling Haaland for a goal in the 54th and equalized in the 70th. He then played a part in the buildup for substitute Julian Alvarez's winner in the 87th as City preserved an unbeaten home record in the Champions League that dates back to 2018.

Lois Openda scored for Leipzig in the 13th and 33rd, but City responded like champions after the break, with Foden at the heart of the comeback.

Swiss club Young Boys secured third place in the group with a 2-0 win over Red Star Belgrade.

City leads with a full 15 points, followed by Leipzig (9), Young Boys (4) and Red Star (1).

In Barcelona, Porto opened the scoring with Pepê in the 30th but Barcelona rallied with Cancelo equalizing two minutes later and Félix deciding it in the 57th.

Mykola Matviyenko's diving header kept Ukrainian champion Shakhtar Donetsk in the hunt for a place in the knockout stage with a 1-0 win over Antwerp.

Barcelona leads — but still hasn't won the group — with 12 points, followed by Porto (9), Shakhtar (9) and Antwerp (0).

Third-place finishers drop down to the Europa League knockout playoffs.

Williamson hits 104 for 29th century amid relentless spin attack

## Tajjul takes 4 wickets to keep Bangladesh ahead against NZ

SYLHET, Bangladesh, Nov 29, (AP): Left-arm spinner Tajjul Islam claimed 4-89 as Bangladesh dominated the second day of the first Test against New Zealand on Wednesday despite a century from Kane Williamson on a spin-friendly pitch.

Williamson hit a 104 for his 29th century amid a relentless spin attack as New Zealand reached 266-8 at stumps, trailing by 44 runs.

Bangladesh folded on its overnight score of 310 when skipper Tim Southee had Shoriful Islam out leg before wicket with the first ball of the morning.

The home side's spinners got into act immediately, turning the balls admirably to trouble the New Zealand batters but Williamson defied them with solid defense to keep the visitors in the game.

He got support from Glenn Phillips (42) and Daryl Mitchell (41) before the Bangladeshi bowlers made inroads in the last hour with the second new ball.

"It is one of those surfaces where it is hard to get a rhythm. You will get

some good balls as well. I thought the application was good," Williamson said. "It would have been naturally nice to get a few more. Everybody

would like to be out there fighting for the side. It has certainly posed a number of challenges out there. The wicket is deteriorating quite quickly, so we

have to keep moving with it."

Opener Tom Latham and Devon Conway played Bangladesh's lone pacer Shoriful Islam with ease but found it much tougher against offspinner Mehidy Hasan and left-arm spinner Tajjul Islam.

Tajjul bowled a tight line and the pressure eventually paid off when Latham, who had hit three fours in his 21 runs, tried to sweep but could only top-edge a catch to Nayeem Hasan at backward square leg.

Conway followed him two overs later when Mehidy Hasan Miraz had

### CRICKET

him caught by Shahadat Hossain at silly point as he tried to defend a quicker delivery when on 12.

On an increasingly deteriorating pitch, Williamson added 54 runs with Henry Nicholls (19) before the latter edged pacer Shoriful Islam (1-44).

Mitchell counterattacked and hit Tajjul for a six, but the left-arm spinner eventually had him stumped to end a 66-run partnership.

Offspinner Nayeem Hasan joined the party by dismissing Tom Blundell for 6 as New Zealand was left on 175-5.

With Bangladesh looking to expose the tail of New Zealand, Williamson found support from Glenn Phillips.

Together they kept the spinners at bay, using their feet well, prompting skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto to go to occasional bowler Mominul Haque for the breakthrough.

And Mominul broke the 78-run partnership in his first over as Phillips edged a delivery behind.

Williamson then raised his fourth century in as many games off 189 balls, clipping Nayeem behind the square for a single.

But when the second new ball was taken, Tajjul brought an end to his masterclass with an arm delivery which went straight to rattle his stump.

"If you drop some chances, it will be a costly one," Bangladesh spin bowling coach Rangana Herath said. "You saw the Kane Williamson ones. He gave opportunities on 63 and 70. He got a hundred. He got the innings going. We need to get those chances as much as we can."

Tajjul also dismissed Ish Sodhi to edge Bangladesh closer to a valuable lead before bad light forced stumps.



Bangladeshi cricketers celebrate the dismissal of New Zealand's Devon Conway during the second day of the first test cricket match at Sylhet, Bangladesh. (AP)

## Kuwaiti referees take center stage at Saudi Games

RIYADH, Nov 29: The Kuwait Gymnastics Federation has revealed that a team of its international referees is presently engaged in overseeing the artistic gymnastics events at the Saudi Games, hosted in Riyadh from November 28 to December 1.

The federation identified the referees overseeing the tournament's youth and men's competitions as Badr Hassan, Salah Askar, Haider Al-Jaafar, and Ali Al-Kandari. The participation of these referees is a response to an invitation extended by the Saudi Federation, showcasing collaborative efforts with their counterparts in the Kingdom.

It's noteworthy that the Kuwaiti Federation boasts the second-largest contingent of gymnastics referees in the Arab world, following the Egyptian Federation.



The Kuwaiti gymnastics referees.