



Kuwait, Philippines diplomatic channels always open: Ambassador Hayat

'Resolving Filipino domestic workers issue needs time'

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameh Hayat affirmed that resolving the "misunderstanding" in the issue of Filipino domestic workers requires time and solid steps.

not stopped, as he considers the Philippine ambassador like the rest of the ambassadors, adding that the diplomatic channels are always open. As part of the celebration of Kazakhstan's National Day, he revealed a visit by a high-level Kuwaiti delegation to discuss matters of concern to the two countries, adding that relations with Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia will be Kuwait's next destination.

visit of His Highness the Crown Prince to China. Important and strategic discussions were held with the Chinese President and senior officials, which resulted in the signing of agreements on development projects in many fields, but we need time to put it in a certain way and how to involve China and others in this issue.

NewsWatch

8 Indians face death in Qatar

NEW DELHI, Oct 26, (AP): The Indian government on Thursday vowed to explore "all legal options" after a Qatari court handed death sentences to eight Indian employees of a Qatari company on spying charges.

According to Indian media reports, the eight men are retired Indian navy officers who worked for the consulting company Al Dahra, advising the Qatari government on the acquisition of submarines.

India's External Affairs Ministry said in a statement it was awaiting the detailed judgment in the case.

"We are in touch with the family members and the legal team, and we are exploring all legal options," it said. "We attach high importance to this case and have been following it closely. We will continue to extend all consular and legal assistance. We will also take up the verdict with Qatari authorities."

The statement did not provide further details.

Qatar's government declined to immediately comment on the sentences.

Qatari authorities provided New Delhi consular access to the eight Indian nationals during their trial.

Millions of Indians live and work in the Gulf, a large number of them as semi-skilled or unskilled workers. They constitute an important source of income for India and contribute to the success of Gulf economies.

RIYADH: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan spoke with his Romanian counterpart Luminita Odobescu on Wednesday about the dangers of Israeli occupation intense military operations in Gaza.

Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that during the phone call, the ministers reaffirmed the need to prevent the violence from escalating to a wider regional conflict.

The two also reviewed ways to bolster communication amongst the international community in order to find a just and comprehensive peace plan that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people and alleviates the humanitarian crisis in Gaza by ensuring a steady flow of relief aid and medical equipment into the territory.

They also discussed bilateral relations between their countries and ways to strengthen them. (KUNA)

NEW DELHI: Indian police said on Thursday that two militants were gunned down by the security forces in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Press Trust of India quoting the police spokesman in Kashmir as saying that two militants were killed during a joint search operation conducted by the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and intelligence agencies.

The troops killed the militants while foiling an infiltration bid along the Line of Control at Macchil in the state.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of supporting and funding the armed groups in Kashmir, claims which Islamabad denies. (KUNA)

BRUSSELS: The first ever Space Dialogue that took place between the African Union and the European Union in Dakar, Senegal, ended Thursday.

During the three-day dialogue, participants discussed their respective political priorities in the space domain, covering the main aspects of the EU-AU collaboration in space including earth observation, satellite navigation and satellite connectivity, said an EU statement.

The EU presented to its African partners the EU satellite constellation IRIS, which stands for Infrastructure for Resilience, Interconnectivity and Security by Satellite, and that aims to offer global connectivity through satellites.

The Space Dialogue came after a long-standing and fruitful collaboration between the European and African Unions, that has been ongoing in the space sector for the past 20 years, with its main goal to establish a process of regular exchanges and concrete cooperation between the two parties on space affairs, it noted. (KUNA)

KABUL: The Taliban have freed an Afghan activist who campaigned for the education of girls, a local nonprofit organization said Thursday. Matiullah Wesa was arrested seven months ago and spent 215 days in prison, according to the group, Pen Path.

Wesa has been outspoken in his demands for girls to have the right to go to school and repeatedly called on the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan to reverse its bans on female education. Since their takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban have barred girls from school beyond the sixth grade. Last December, they banned women from going to universities. Afghanistan is the only country in the world with restrictions on female education. (AP)

Gaza ceasefire calls mount



A dead Palestinian boy found under the rubble of a destroyed building following Israeli airstrikes on the town of Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, Thursday, Oct. 26, 2023. (AP)

Crisis deepens

CAIRO, Oct 26, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and for relevant international agencies to assume their responsibilities towards protecting civilians, in addition to the importance of allowing humanitarian aid in the Strip to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

This came in Kuwait's speech delivered Thursday by Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher Al-Sabah, before an emergency meeting of the Arab Human Rights Committee to discuss the crimes of the Israeli occupation against humanity in the Gaza Strip.

Sheikha Jawaher said that Kuwait's request to hold a special session comes out of its belief in the importance of the Arab League's role in supporting the Palestinian cause.

"We meet today, 20 days after the horrific and brutal attacks launched with all barbarism by the occupying Israeli army on the Gaza Strip under the pretext of the right to self-defense," Sheikha Jawaher added.

Moreover, she described these violations as "war crimes", stressing that forced displacement, apartheid, and blocking access to humanitarian aid are a grave violation of international humanitarian law.

She also pointed out that all of this is happening in the face of a terrible silence from advocates of human rights.

Sheikha Jawaher reaffirmed the principled and firm position of Kuwait on the Palestinian issue, which has always been the fundamental and central cause.

The Gulf countries are united on the issue of halting the Israeli occupation aggression against the Gaza Strip in addition to allowing the entry of urgent relief aid, said Secretary General of the GCC Jassem Al-Budaiwi on Thursday.

Speaking to (CNN Business), Al-Budaiwi called for avoiding double standards in international reactions to the appalling violations carried out by the Israeli aggressors against the people of Gaza.

He reiterated calls for establishing an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and east Jerusalem as capital, adding that civilians should be avoided during the time of war according to international law.

Meanwhile, the fourth Kuwaiti aid plane, carrying 10 tons of necessities

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Day by Day

THE thief involved in a series of scandals, including plane theft, property theft (houses and apartments), and car theft from advertising companies, has now escalated his criminal activities.

His latest thefts involve cars, which he exports from Kuwait and registers them in the names of his children in the countries where they reside.

The person known for stealing planes, houses, and apartments is now facing charges related to the theft of several cars, including an armored vehicle. He claimed a Kuwaiti businessman had requested the vehicle to be given as a gift to the president of the country where the plane thief resides. To facilitate this, he falsified ownership documents and transferred the car, despite holding a different nationality himself.

Previously, this thief had committed fraud by embezzling advertising funds from a newspaper, and siphoning off commissions into his own accounts. As a result, he was incarcerated and only secured his release after repaying the stolen money.

... Yet tomorrow is another day. Zahed Matar

Hunt on for shooter as residents take shelter

Amir condoles as US shooting claims 18

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Thursday a cable of condolence to the US President Joe Biden over victims of the shooting incident in the city of Lewiston in the State of Maine.

His Highness the Amir expressed his deepest sorrow to the victims' families and hoped for a swift recovery of the injured.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also sent on Thursday a cable of condolences to the US President Joe Biden over victims of the shooting incident in the city of Lewiston in the State of Maine.

His Highness the Crown Prince hoped for a swift recovery of the injured in this horrendous shooting.

A similar cable of condolences was sent by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

A man shot and killed at least 18 people at a restaurant and a bowling alley in Lewiston, Maine, and then fled into the night, sparking a massive search by hundreds of officers while frightened residents in multiple communities stayed locked in their homes Thursday under a shelter-in-place advisory.

A police bulletin identified Robert Card, 40, as a person of interest in the attack that sent panicked bowlers scrambling behind pins when shots rang out around 7 p.m. Wednesday. Card was described as a firearms instructor believed to be in the Army Reserve and assigned to a training facility in Saco, Maine.

The document, circulated to law enforcement officials, said Card had been committed to a mental health facility for two weeks in the summer of 2023. It did not provide details about his treatment or condition but said Card had reported "hearing voices and threats to shoot up" the military base. A telephone number listed for Card in public records was not in service.

Lewiston Police said in an earlier Facebook post that they were dealing with an active shooter incident at Schemengees Bar and Grille and at Sparetime Recreation, a bowling alley about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) away. A number of parents and children were at Sparetime as part of a children's bowling league.

Ten-year-old Zoey Levesque, who was there with her mother, told WMTW-TV she was grazed by a bullet.

"It's scary," she said. "I had never thought I'd grow up and get a bullet in my leg. And it's just like, why? Why do people do this?"

One bowler, who identified himself only as Brandon, said he heard about 10 shots, thinking the first was a balloon popping.

"I had my back turned to the door. And as soon as I turned and saw it was not a balloon - he was holding a weapon - I just booked it," he told The Associated Press.

Brandon said he scrambled down the length of the alley, sliding into the pin area and climbing up to hide in the machinery. He was among a busload of survivors who were driven to a middle school in the neighboring city of Auburn to be reunited with family and friends.

"I was putting on my bowling shoes when when it started. I've been barefoot for five hours," he said.

The bowling alley is home to traditional tenpin bowling as well as candlepin, a variant of bowling found in New England. It's located about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) north of the Bates College campus, on the outskirts of downtown. The alley has a small bar and is popular for local bowling leagues and children's parties.

Melinda Small, the owner of Legends Sports Bar and Grill, said her staff immediately locked their doors and moved all 25 customers and

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In this image taken from video released by the Androscoggin County Sheriff's Office, an unidentified gunman points a gun while entering Sparetime Recreation in Lewiston, Maine, on Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023. (AP)

Nov 1 for Gaza

Assembly gears up for Oct 31 session with 'packed' agenda

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun has invited the MPs and the government to the inaugural ceremony and session for the second year of the 17th parliamentary term on Oct 31, 2023.

The agenda of the session includes the following:
- Oath-taking of MPs and ministers who have not done so in accordance with Article 91 of the Constitution,
- Electing the Assembly Secretary,
- Electing the Assembly Observer,
- Grilling motion of MP Mubarak Al-Tasha against Minister of Public Works Amani Bugamaz on four issues as follows:

- failure to carry out road maintenance works and delayed completion of projects;
- corruption suspicions, conflict of interests and squandering of public fund funds;
- violation of the Constitution and failure to respond to parliamentary queries.
- Grilling motion of MP Dawoud Maarefi against Bugamaz on the following:
- Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART),
- Ministry of Public Works,
- Kuwait International Airport and manipulation of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- Electing members of parliamentary committees.

Al-Saadoun also invited the MPs and the government to the special session scheduled for Nov 1, 2023 to discuss the Zionist attacks of Gaza; according to the proposal signed by 48 MPs.

In another development, Chairman of the parliamentary Financial and Economic Affairs Committee MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri disclosed that the committee has approved and completed reports on various bills; most of which aim to improve the citizens' standard of living. He said the completed reports are on

the following:

- Cancellation of the requirement for married citizens to have a local agent if they wish to participate in public tenders,
- Increase the minimum pension amount,
- Increase the amount of loans for retirees from seven times of their pension to 21 times and reduce the installment amount to range from five to 15 percent of the pension,
- Increase the children allowance to KD100 per month,
- Increase the social allowance for married citizens to KD100 per month,
- Increase the cost of living allowance to KD250 per month for all citizens working in the public and private sectors, as well as the disabled.

He added the committee also finalized its report on controlling prices. He revealed the committee met with the concerned institutions, during which they agreed that the procedures to monitor markets in order control prices are not enough.

He affirmed that the committee reached an agreement with the concerned public institution to conduct an integrated study on the issue, including the reasons behind the price hikes and recommend measures to enhance the monitoring of markets.

He went on to say that the committee approved the bill to exempt the heirs of those who obtained loans from Kuwait Credit Bank from paying the rest of the loan in case the borrower dies. He added the bank will lay down the procedures and regulations for obtaining insurance to cover the remaining installments upon the death of the borrower.

He also stated that the committee approved the report on cancelling the privatization of Kuwait Airways Corporation and the bill on amending the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Law for the chambers to be subject to State laws, to be under the monitoring of the Commerce and Industry Ministry, and to make the KCCI subscription optional.

He affirmed the top priority bills are those on improving the citizens' living conditions. He assured that these bills, once ratified, will not affect the public budget.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:36	Asr	14:43
Sunrise ..	05:56	Maghrib ..	17:07
Zohr	11:32	Isha	18:25

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot with light to moderate variable wind to north-westerly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.

By Night: Mild with light to

Weather

moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.

Station

Kuwait City
Kuwait Airport

Max Exp

32
34

Min Rec

23
21

Abdaly	34	18
Jahra	34	21
Salmiyah	30	25
Ahmadi	30	27
Nuwaisib	33	22
Wafra	33	20

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

'13,676 persons over 30 years in service still working'

'Sharq properties for investment housing; cannot alter status'

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah Staff/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: Regarding the letter submitted by some residents of Sharq area to amend the status of their properties located on Arabian Gulf Street in Sharq, Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous and Chairman of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri explained that the category mentioned for their properties is investment housing only. The recommendations of the structural plan indicate that there is a surplus of such commercial investment category, due to which it is not possible to allow a change in category as requested by some residents.

In a related context, the Legal and Financial Committee of the Municipal Council will hold a meeting on Sunday, headed by the Municipal Council member Fahad Al-Abd Al-Jader, to discuss a number of important items on its agenda.

Among them is the Kuwait Insurance Union's request to add new activities to the list of public stores that disturb comfort and are harmful to health. They will also discuss the letter submitted by the Kuwait Society for Small and Medium Enterprises regarding excluding small and medium enterprises from

municipal fees. In addition, they will discuss the request submitted by a citizen to change the name of the street located in Shamiya Block 1, Umayya Street.

In its meeting, the committee will also review the Kuwait Municipality's draft budget for the fiscal year of 2024/2025, and the proposal submitted by the Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi for amending some provisions of the temporary event tents regulations.

They will also discuss the proposal submitted by member Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding translating Kuwait Municipality regulations into English, as well as the proposal submitted by member Fahad Al-Eid Al-Jader regarding issuing temporary licenses for some activities during the rain season.

Over 30 years in service: The Public Institute for Social Security reported that the number of insured persons whose period of service exceeded 30 years, and who are still continuing in service and have not retired, is 13,676, 7,397 of whom are under 55 years of age, reports Al-Rai daily.

In response to a parliamentary question by MP Dawood Maarafi, regarding deducting subscription money from employees, Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah attached the letter of the institution's acting director, Ahmed Al-Thunayan, in which he stated that "Social Insurance Law is mandatory, and it is linked to the work relationship between both parties saying it is not bound to a specific period, and

the employer is obligated to pay the contributions due, in accordance with the provisions of the PIFSS law, whether that he is obligated to do as an employer, or what he is obligated to deduct from the insured person's salary."

Al-Thunayan added, "Taking into account that the period exceeding the maximum period stipulated for entitlement to a retirement pension (30 years), a retirement bonus is paid in accordance with the text of Article 25 of the Insurance Law, and this reward is also due for the actual contribution period that exceeds the period necessary to entitle the limit." The maximum pension, stipulated in Article 19 of the law, is paid along with the retirement pension.

He stated that "in the event of the end of service due to death, this reward is distributed in full to those entitled to the pension, in proportion to their shares in it. If there are none of them, it is disbursed to the legal heirs, in addition to the insured benefiting from that period in calculating the supplementary pension."

Regarding the procedures followed by the organization, in the event that an employee retires and the amount has been deducted from him for a period longer than the prescribed period, Al-Thunayan explained, "The collection of contributions ends as soon as Form 103 is received with notification of the end of the service of the insured person, taking into account that the employer's obligation to pay contribution is linked to the duration of the work period in accordance with the text of Article (2/A) of the Amiri Order of Law No. 61/1976 promulgating the Social Insurance Law, as well as Article 12 of the Social Insurance Law."



KUNA photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah shaking hands with King Charles III of Great Britain and North Ireland.

HH CP meets King Charles, leaves UK

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation returned home on Thursday after an official visit on an invitation from King Charles III of Great Britain and North Ireland.

His Highness was seen off by Kuwaiti Ambassador to the UK Bader Al-Awadhi, UK Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis and other diplomats.

Earlier, Kuwait's Crown Prince His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited Buckingham Palace on Wednesday for talks with

Britain's King Charles III, focusing on bilateral relations and efforts to propel cooperation to greater levels.

His Highness the Crown Prince's visit to Britain comes in response to an invitation extended to him by King Charles III, where he conveyed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's greetings to Britain's King Charles III.

On His Highness the Crown Prince's visit, King Charles III said it was a testament to the strength and solidity of bilateral ties. (KUNA)

'Power crisis in the offing'

Delay in new projects execution blamed

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The recent report by State Audit Bureau on "High-Risk Issues" affirmed the inability of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy to meet the country's future needs for electrical energy, pointing out that signs of the crisis began to appear since the summer of this year.

The report stated that SAB shed light on the issue from the time of emergence of indications in the ministry regarding an expected deficit in the production of electrical energy in the country during the summer seasons of the past years.

The signs of this crisis had already begun during the summer of this year, with electrical loads increasing to very high levels and power outages occurring in some areas of the country.

There is a high risk of the state entering into huge deficits in the coming years if electrical power station projects continue to be delayed, the completion rates of which do not exceed eight percent, and the current expenditure of the budget to purchase energy from abroad increases to fill the deficit instead of investing those amounts in establishing electrical stations.

In addition, 204 supervisory positions were not filled, which led to confusion in administrative and financial work.

The radical maintenance projects for electrical power stations and electricity network projects did not achieve the desired goals due to the non-implementation of long-term contracts whose value exceeded KD 321,630,601, or 53.7 percent of their total basic cost of KD 598,589,744. In addition, there was a delay in achieving the state's vision to diversify the production of electrical energy by using renewable sources, at a rate of 15 percent of the total electrical energy in the country.

The report revealed that the state faces a deficit in meeting energy needs for the summer seasons of 2022-2024, with demand constantly increasing, indicating that the state will opt for purchasing electricity from abroad.

Call for joint efforts to track missing in wars

JEDDAH, Oct 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Prisoners and Missing Persons Affairs, Ambassador Rabie Al-Adnsani, called on Thursday for united international community's efforts regarding missing persons in armed conflicts and disasters.

This came during Ambassador Al-Adnsani's participation in a high-level round table organized by the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in coordination with the delegation of the regional mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States.

The Kuwaiti official also called for establishing specialized national bodies whenever necessary to coordinate missing persons' search efforts and to manage collection of data related to their identification.

Further, he stressed the importance of encouraging countries to ratify and implement international agreements related to missing persons in conflict and updating national legislation on that matter.

During the talks, Al-Adnsani touched on the Kuwaiti experience regarding prisoners and missing persons in all its political, technical and social aspects, and its role in sponsoring and presenting Resolution (2474) of UN Security Council in mid-2019.

Resolution (2474) is the first to deal with the issue of missing persons and the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, which reflects the status of Kuwaiti diplomacy at the level of humanitarian efforts.

The round table discussed how to address missing persons during conflicts and disasters issue, in order to enhance the response of the Organization's member states.

Kuwait's side was represented by Ambassador Al-Adnsani and First Secretary of the Kuwaiti Delegation to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Turki Al-Daihani.



Burgan Bank's corporate and CSR communications representatives and the Expo 965 team.

Kuwaiti youths' contributions hailed

Burgan Bank announces strategic sponsorship of the Expo 965 team

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: Stemming from its unwavering support for Kuwait's youth and their contributions to cultural programs and entrepreneurial initiatives, Burgan Bank announced its sponsorship of the Expo 965 Team for Heritage Crafts Exhibitions and Talented Kuwaitis. The strategic sponsorship is set to span a year, covering the team's efforts throughout the 2023-2024 season. This sponsorship marks an expansion of Burgan's efforts to support local talents and promising artisans, as well as dedication to the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles in business and community development alike.

Traditions

The Expo 965 team, which was established with the sole purpose of preserving Kuwait's traditions and culture and introducing them to the younger generations in an exciting and attractive way, comprises 175 Kuwaiti volunteers who contribute to the domestic cultural scene in different capacities. While some of the team members are owners of private museums, others are researchers whose work revolves around Kuwaiti heritage, dialect, and rare antiques.

"Our sponsorship of the Expo 965 Team comes under the umbrella of Burgan's comprehensive social responsibility and sustainability program and our unwavering support of Kuwait's most ambitious talents," commented Ms. Hessa Hussain Al-Najadah, Senior Manager - Corporate and CSR Communications at Burgan Bank. "Under the umbrella of this program, the Bank continues to support all events and initiatives that shed a light on arts, contributing to the preservation of Kuwait's cultural heritage and the handicrafts that reflect the Kuwaiti identity and capture the history of our ancestors."

She went on to note, "We truly appreciate the yearlong efforts that the Expo 965 Team exert in organizing top-class exhibitions, domestically and abroad, which allow for showcasing high-quality crafts and artwork that embody the Kuwaiti heritage. With every successful exhibition,

a wider audience, especially the younger generations, get to learn more about the Kuwaiti culture and renew their pride in our rich heritage."

On his part, Mr. Ali Mohammad Kamal, Founder of the Expo 965 Team, said: "We extend our gratitude to Burgan Bank for its sponsorship and support of our team's effort throughout the upcoming year."

We are very proud to be partners with a proactive institution such as Burgan Bank which shares our belief in the importance of preserving our cultural heritage, artisanship, and rare antiques. We are also grateful for their support in helping us preserve the non-tangible aspects of our culture such as our dialect and customs that face the danger of dwindling and slowly vanishing from our memory and the world's."

Kamal clarified that the team was established in 2016 on the shoulders of a select group of creatives, artists, and craftspeople whose primary cause is to safeguard Kuwait's national heritage against erosion and collective forgetfulness. This goal, he clarified, can only be achieved through supporting and developing rising artists and continuously educating the younger generations about their country's rich culture and what it stands for.

Culture

"We are very proud of being able to represent Kuwait and its culture in international exhibitions and foreign embassies," he added. "In addition, we continue to organize local exhibitions that target school and university students who expressed genuine fondness of the displayed artwork and crafts, and even engaged with the different activities that we embed throughout the exhibitions."

It serves to note that Burgan Bank continues to support all initiatives and events that advocate for Kuwait's national arts and culture heritage, no matter the format. As part of this collaboration, Burgan Bank and Expo 965 will share timely updates of all upcoming events in 2023-2024, allowing a bigger audience to enjoy the beauty of Kuwait's cultural heritage.

HH Amir congratulates Austria

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations to President of Austria Alexander Van der Bellen on his country's national day on Thursday.

His Highness wished the president a long healthy life and more development and prosperity for Austria.

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The cake-cutting ceremony.

United by strong bonds: envoy

Kazakhstan marks National Day

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Kuwait Azamat Berdibay affirmed that Kuwait and Kazakhstan are united by strong bonds of friendship and cooperation that have proven solid over decades, adding, "Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1993, relations of trust based on mutual respect and equal partnership have been established between the two countries."

In his speech during the celebration of Kazakhstan's National Day, the ambassador said regional political relations between the two countries are a guarantee of the continuous development of cooperation in all fields, as mutually beneficial relations develop fruitfully in

various fields and trade and economic cooperation that develops dynamically is considered the core of bilateral relations.

He indicated that the recent meeting in Jeddah on the sidelines of the European summit that brought together the countries of Central Asia and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, between the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tayev, and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad highlighted the common desire to resolve the emerging issues, move forward actively and implement all identified joint plans.

The ambassador said, "It will give a strong impetus to further develop comprehensive cooperation between our countries and enhance friendship and understanding."

We're keen for joint efforts: Liu Xiang

Kuwait stance on Gaza praised

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Acting Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Kuwait, Counselor Liu Xiang, praised the firm and just position of the Kuwaiti government and people on the Palestinian issue, praising the effective humanitarian measures taken by Kuwait, including the launch of Kuwaiti relief operations via an air bridge to transport humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip and provide supplies. Emergency relief for the Palestinian people, explaining that this air bridge is an extension of Kuwait's humanitarian role.

Xiang added in a statement to Al-Qabas: We are keen to make joint efforts with the Kuwaiti side to support the Palestinian issue and work to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to it.

He believed that the main reason for the developments in the Palestinian situation so far is the long-term suspension of the Palestinian people's right to establish their state, the long-term violation of the Palestinian people's right to live, and the long-term neglect of the Palestinian people's right to return, pointing out that the historical injustices that the Palestinian people suffer from

cannot be To continue indefinitely. Regarding his country's position on the Gaza events, Xiang said: "China always stands on the side of fairness and justice, on the side of peace and international law, and on the side of the legitimate demands of the Arab and Islamic countries, and we support the Arab and Islamic countries in forming a common position and sending a unified voice."

He continued by saying: "China opposes all actions that harm innocent civilians or any practice that violates international law," referring to the urgent humanitarian aid that his country has provided to the Palestinians and will continue to provide through the United Nations and bilateral channels with the aim of alleviating the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and calls for a ceasefire, fire and end the war as soon as possible to prevent a more serious humanitarian catastrophe."



Liu Xiang

'Zionist insistence on escalation may push region into an abyss'

"For consecutive weeks since the glorious Al-Aqsa Flood operation, the brutal Zionist entity raids on the Gaza Strip have not stopped which turned the sector into a heartbreaking human tragedy. The Zionist entity insists on this escalation, which seems to have not stopped, and may push the entire region to the brink of abyss, for various reasons combined," columnist Dr Noura Saleh Al-Majim wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"According to prominent Zionist officials and writers, the Al-Aqsa Flood operation represented the greatest insult to the Zionist entity since it was forcibly planted in the region. This is due to several considerations, including the size of the dead and prisoners, and the nature of the perpetrator of the Al-Aqsa flood, which is Hamas, the resistance movement whose capabilities do not match those of the smallest regular armies in the world.

"Hence, the continuing brutal Zionist escalation was expected as a way to restore the dignity of the wounded lion, even at the expense of innocent civilians in Gaza. The leaders of the Zionist entity have no choice but to brutally escalate to absorb the extremely angry Zionist public opinion, especially against the backdrop of the large number of prisoners, which may have reached nearly 220.

"As for the leaders of the Zionist entity, led by Netanyahu, they also have no escape from escalation, to save themselves from the difficult internal reckoning over their miserable failure, which has not yet come. The Al-Aqsa flood, which the ruling elite in the Zionist entity knows well, will likely destroy their professional and political future forever, especially Netanyahu. This is in addition to the possibility of them being criminally prosecuted for negligence and abject military and intelligence failure.

"The escalation as well, and this is very important for the Zionist entity, is a clear Zionist message to other resistance movements in the region, especially Hezbollah. It is clear that you will meet the same fate as Gaza if you intend to carry out operations against the Zionist entity on the scale of the Al-Aqsa flood in the future.

"In this context, the Zionist entity may want to weaken the spirit of resistance in general, and perhaps even shift internal and external pressure and blame on 'the Palestinian people' and external blame onto Hamas itself, considering that had it not been for the Al-Aqsa flood, the Zionist entity would not have committed all these brutal crimes in Gaza amid regional and international silence. We come to the most important strategic goal of the Zionist entity behind the terrible escalation, which exceeds the level of the ruling elite in Tel Aviv. It is preparing for a ground invasion, supported by air strikes to strike the tunnels in which Hamas is sheltering in the hope of liquidating Hamas.

"The Zionist entity is escalating its strikes against civilians in Gaza in the hope of pushing them south to the border with Egypt. This matter is not hidden from anyone, and the Zionist entity and some other parties have alluded to it indirectly.

"This indicates that the Zionist entity is seeking a ground invasion in a sector devoid of population, in order to facilitate its mission in tracking down members of the Hamas resistance and its leaders, or to avoid the so-called street wars, as Gaza is a terrible quagmire for any ground force, and an annoying Zionist nightmare, according to what the former leaders of the Zionist entity say.

"It also reduces civilian casualties in Gaza in order to avoid international pressure, as well as restoring military concentration in Gaza, that is, before its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2000. This requires evacuating the Gaza Strip of civilians so that Gaza does not turn into a new nightmare that forces the Zionist entity to withdraw once again.

"A ground invasion in the Gaza Strip is a 99% confirmed scenario. There is multiple evidence to support it, other than the brutal escalation. It is sufficient to mention the most important of them, which is the American orders to move its largest aircraft carrier to the eastern Mediterranean in the areas near Gaza.

"The aim of this is to support the Zionist entity in a ground invasion scenario against possible retaliatory strikes, especially by Iran or its agents. Another powerful piece of evidence that was leaked from American sources is that the Zionist entity was provided with smart bombs that were tested in Afghanistan, and that can penetrate deep into the ground, in order to strike the tunnels and underground hideouts of Hamas."

Also:

"During the closing ceremony of the Kuwait Hackathon competition, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled emphasized that Kuwait faces threats in both cybersecurity and drug-related issues," columnist Ali Al-Fayrouz wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"He made it clear that these challenges cannot be taken lightly anymore, and it's time for all citizens who care about their country to recognize the evolving landscape. Technology has become an integral part of our lives, and the danger of cyberattacks on critical government infrastructure is real.

"There's a genuine concern that such attacks could disrupt the operations of government institutions. Furthermore, we must consider the potential risks to the banking sector, including the Central Bank, and the possibility of financial turmoil if customer data and accounts are compromised. It's a matter that should concern us all, and we must be proactive in safeguarding against global cyber threats and government system breaches.

"Kuwait has often been criticized for its slow decision-making processes, but this should not be an excuse for neglecting the risks of cyberattacks on the state. It's imperative that the government takes swift action to enhance the role of its cybersecurity apparatus, especially given the increased frequency and sophistication of cyber threats. Kuwait should keep pace with global technological advancements by implementing new applications and improving cybersecurity across various government websites. To achieve this, collaboration among Kuwaiti professionals and fostering innovation in modern technology is essential.

"Governments worldwide are susceptible to cyberattacks, and Kuwait is not exempt from these threats, particularly from skilled black hat hackers. Therefore, rapid decision-making is vital to evaluate and bolster our national cyber defense capabilities within the Cyber Security Agency in Kuwait.

"Many citizens and residents have encountered cyber theft attempts on their bank accounts, often without proper reporting and remediation. Public awareness about the dangers of cyber-attacks is lacking, and it is the responsibility of the government, parliament, and civil society institutions to work together and raise awareness as a united front against cyber intrusions. The security of citizens' and residents' data is at stake, and it is in the hands of both professionals and hackers.

"In conclusion, Kuwait must unite in an awareness campaign to educate people about cybersecurity, in schools, universities, workplaces, and government institutions. This collective effort is crucial to combat electronic hacking and phishing effectively. Cyber threats are numerous, and by understanding and preparing for them, we can deter the ambitions of black hat hackers who prioritize personal gain over all else. Are we ready to face the challenges of the coming days in the battle against hackers?"

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"Israel did not absorb the shock that came from the Palestinian resistance until two days later, and then its revenge was supported by the West without any thought about international law or the humanitarian and moral side of the war. But, what happened is not surprising, as it rather reflects Israel's ability to win supporters through various means – diplomatic and economic harvest and the Zionist lobbies in the West," columnist Dr Adel Al-Misha'al wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"Despite the global condemnation from the Federal Republic of Russia, China and many other countries throughout the world, in addition to some organizations and personalities in some western countries that supported Israel, some politicians, jurists, celebrities and ordinary people supported the Palestinian right.

"Between the waves of support and condemnation, Israel insists on imposing pain through hunger, thirst and bombings on the people of Gaza, especially with regard to the shortage of fuel and flour, as they suffer in operating hospitals and bakeries. The Turkish President stressed that any war that depends on cutting off water, electricity and roads, and destroying infrastructure, places of worship and schools is called a 'massacre'.

"Israel bombed civilian buildings, houses, mosques and the Greek Orthodox Church, without the Christian West taking care of the bombing of churches and killing and wounding many of those who sought refuge in these structures.

"The disaster is that the Zionist entity has begun to have a despicable tendency to expel the people of Gaza to Sinai, but the reality has rejected the project. Despite the Arab Republic of Egypt being exposed to economic pressures and temptations, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi refused without discussing the details.

"Mahmoud Abbas added that the Israeli aggression on Gaza will only strengthen the resilience of the Palestinian people. I declare disavowal of agreements with the American and Israeli sides.

"The backwardness of the Arab media in reaching others, especially the western world, has become clear. It has never succeeded in conveying the message and the Arab narrative of events. This backwardness is linked to democratic backwardness. In the education and health sectors, it is a chain. There is a difference between a journalist and someone who works in the media.

"The duality and hypocrisy of the western world regarding its values is that it supports Ukraine defending itself, but it does not support Palestine. The material support will be great for Israel, which does not please the Ukrainian President who constantly supports Israel's attacks because Israel will share with him the military and material aid provided by the West."

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"The State of Kuwait along with its successive governments, rulers and people have stood steadfastly with Palestine and against the occupying entity throughout the decades. This distinguishes Kuwait from others and makes it a remarkable case in terms of its constant governmental and public stance to support the Palestinian rights," columnist Kamaal Al-Khars wrote for Al-Rai daily.

"In 2020, the Palestinian News and Information Agency (Wafa) mentioned this phenomenon in a report stating that 'Kuwait is one of the countries whose people and government reject any contact, even if it is individual, with what it has considered as the 'enemy' for decades.'

"The Palestinian Agency pointed out the depth of the historical relationship between Kuwait and Palestine even before the Israeli occupation. After that, Kuwait opened its doors to displaced Palestinians.

"Definitely, Kuwait's aid to Palestine and its people is considered a fraternal duty necessitated by fraternal relations and the ties of religion, blood and history that bind the two peoples. What is more important than Kuwait's material support for Palestine and the Palestinians is its rejection of any form of normalization with the occupying State – normalization that is considered a Trojan horse. To penetrate the enemy in the body of the nation is like blood flowing through the veins of the body, but it is certainly blood contaminated with deadly viruses.

"Yes, Kuwait, its government and people reject any form of association with the occupying State regardless of the circumstances. One of the striking government positions, which came as a surprise to some in their severity against the Zionist occupation, was the recent statement of Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled Al-Sabah: 'I say it while I am proud of the Amiri decree issued in 1967, that Kuwait is in a state of war with the Zionist gangs in occupied Palestine, which is still in effect until today.'

"In Kuwait, students since the Al-Aqsa flood on Oct 7, 2023, and the subsequent Israeli barbarism, have been greeting Palestine in the morning during the raising of flags in schools. Commercial advertisements in the streets have the Palestinian 'keffiyeh' – a special head gear. In some elementary schools, video clips of children hitting the flag of the occupying entity with their shoes have spread and others stepping on it when they entered the school gate. Even in the weather forecast, the broadcaster links weather vocabulary and weather conditions to expressive words about Palestine.

"Despite the tears that flow due to the shedding of innocent blood in Gaza, part of the solace for this pain is that one is a citizen of a State that supports Palestinian rights, and that one is in a State that categorically rejects the occupation and everything resulting from it."

— Compiled by Mai Elsoukry



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah during his visit to the headquarters of the Islamic Military Coalition to Combat Terrorism in Riyadh.

DM tours Saudi-led Islamic alliance base

Kuwait's Defense Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah on Wednesday paid a visit to the headquarters of a Saudi-led Islamic military alliance to fight terrorism, where he was kept abreast of its

latest plans and endeavors.

Amid his visit to the headquarters in the Saudi capital, the Kuwaiti defense minister praised the alliance's determination to clamp down on the scourge of terrorism, while the

military coalition's secretary general Air Vice Marshal Mohammad Al-Mughaidi expressed his appreciation for the visit, acknowledging Kuwait's contributions towards counter-terrorism efforts. (KUNA)

Fashionista gets three-year jail, license pulled in traffic mishap

Court files multiple charges

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Misdemeanor Court yesterday sentenced a fashionista to three-year imprisonment with hard labor and suspended her driver's license for a period of one year in the case of a traffic accident that resulted in the death of two people, and referred the civil lawsuit to the concerned department.

The accused was charged with:

1. Crossing the red traffic signal, in accordance with article 33 (bis) of law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976.
2. Exceeding the permitted speed limit set in Article 1/33 (bis) of Law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976.
3. Driving a vehicle under the influence of intoxicants, in accordance with Article 38 of Law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976.
4. Causing an accident that damaged private and public properties, in accordance with Article 1/3.4 of Law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976 and in line with Article 122 of the executive regulations.
5. Committing manslaughter, based on Article 154 of the Penal Code.
6. Causing unintentional injury, based on Article 164 of the Penal Code.
7. Driving a vehicle with expired insurance policy, in accordance with Article 14/35 of Law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976.
8. Driving a vehicle without carrying a driving license, in accordance with Article 4/36 of Law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976.
9. Driving a vehicle that has no road license, in accordance with Article 4/36 of Law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976.
10. Driving a vehicle recklessly and negligently, in accordance with Article 2/33 of Law No. 52/2001 amending some provisions of Decree Law No. 67/1976.

According to the case file, the tragic traffic accident occurred at dawn on Thursday, August 24, 2023, at exactly 3:17 am at the intersection of Soor Street and King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Road, which resulted in the death of two people and injuries to two others. They were transported to the nearest hospital and are still receiving treatment.

The accident was filed under Case No. 2023/86 misdemeanor traffic at the Abdullah Al-Salem Police Station.

Other Voices

Zero point ... that everyone left

By Ahmad alsarraf

Those who genuinely care for our country and possess a clear conscience have often wondered how we've descended to such a dismal state.

Kuwait, once a symbol of freedom, innovation, and progress, has transformed into a bleak example of a nation weary of democracy. We must ask ourselves: how did the lights in our cultural and artistic institutions dim? When did the theaters fall silent, and the voices of recitals fade away?

How did the opera become neglected, and our cultural and literary magazines vanish? What led to the marginalization of our universities in favor of regressive and obscurantist forces? These forces, supported by the government, are determined to impose their vision and siphon off our national wealth.

This is the bitter fruit of the ominous alliance between influential political parties and extremist, exclusionary religious groups. They seem fixated on subjugating women and stifling any enlightened movement. I've said it repeatedly: democracy should not be synonymous with such dire conditions.

The government has always possessed the means to continue the path of freedom and progress that once yielded positive results, albeit for a relatively brief period.

Suddenly, everything changed when

the government aligned itself with the forces of darkness, causing the demise of all that was beautiful and wonderful.

This transformation was accompanied by a marked decline in moral values, a surge in crime, widespread cheating in schools and corruption in hiring, as well as a growing number of drug addicts and other negative phenomena.

The government had all the necessary tools at its disposal, including finances, job opportunities, authority, land allocations, subsidies, public contracts, and appointments to high-ranking positions. Unfortunately, it failed to utilize these advantages effectively.

Regrettably, the forces of regression have become like scarecrows, frightening off any official who dares to initiate reform.

This poignant situation resonates with the words of Egyptian writer Ayman Al Semari, who observed how his own society underwent a transformation towards religious conservatism. He recounted a time when music, art, and intellectual discourse were more prevalent, and he lamented the loss of this vibrant cultural scene to an increasingly conservative environment. We must reflect on how our own society has undergone a similar shift, giving rise to disillusionment and a longing for the days when our national identity was stronger, and the embrace of life was more vibrant.

We find ourselves in the grip of disappointing circumstances, and we must question how we allowed ourselves to regress to a point of no return without experiencing any sense of remorse.

□ □ □

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'Food must be enough for 3 mths'

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Sabah affirmed that the tour of cooperative societies was based on directives of the Council of Ministers and in confirmation of the

ministry's keenness to secure food and consumer stocks for a period of at least six months.

He said this during an inspection tour that included the warehouses of a number of cooperative societies to follow up on the availability of the strategic stock of various commodities.

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Kuwait's permanent mission to UN organizes event

Kuwait eager for Mideast free of nuclear weapons: Al-Bannai

MEW opens center for training Kuwaitis on electrical networks

Training center considered a beginning for the better

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr Jassem Al-Ostad inaugurated the center for training national cadres affiliated with the Electrical Transmission Networks Sector in Adan area in the presence of the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity and Water Eng. Maha Al-Asousi, and the Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Electrical Transmission Networks Sector Eng. Nahar Al-Dhafiri.

Al-Ostad praised the efforts exerted by those responsible for opening the training center,

which is considered a beginning for the better as it will provide specialized training services to the ministry's employees in the technical sectors with the aim of developing work.



Dr Al-Ostad

He highlighted that training is the basis of success in everything, and that most nations' progress and excellence was driven by continuous training for their children, which made them developed nations.

Al-Ostad said he hoped the ministry's sectors would follow the example of the communication networks in training their workers, stressing that what is gratifying is that the center has been transformed into a training center after it was almost a

"ruin" with high quality and specific training equipment.

He affirmed that the ministry supports such an approach due to which training centers must be created in the various stages of energy production so that electricity reaches all consumers, adding that he hopes the center would serve as the nucleus of something big at the level of Kuwait.

Al-Ostad thanked everyone who contributed to the implementation of the center.

He stressed the importance of the center having a training program through which employees in the sector can be trained, and issuing statistics on the number of trainees and the type of training they receive.

Al-Ostad called for cooperation with other entities such as Kuwait University, so that invited students can come to the center and learn about the type of training provided at the center.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Undersecretary for Electrical Transmission Networks Sector Eng. Nahar Al-Dhafiri said, "We are meeting today to open the center for

building and training national cadres. It will train the ministry's sons and qualify them to lead the work of the electrical network in the future.

We are honored by the presence of Minister Dr Jassem Al-Ostad to honor the sons and daughters participating in the completion of this training edifice. We thank him for his interest and presence, which confirms the state's interest in training national cadres.

"The spark for the idea of establishing the center began years ago, with the aim of creating greater opportunities for effective training for male and female employees of the electrical transmission networks sector and other sectors, and to create national cadres with high capabilities and competencies commensurate with the size of the actual work need."

Al-Dhafiri stressed the importance of the center to enhance research capabilities and find solutions to the problems facing the network by raising the efficiency of workers in the sector and facilitating access to information.

NEW YORK, Oct 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's permanent envoy to the UN Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai affirmed Kuwait's continuous efforts to make the Middle East a nuclear and weapons of mass destruction-free zone.

The remarks were made during an event organized by Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN late Tuesday, and attended by Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN Alexander Marschik and Political Affairs Officer at UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Blanca Montejo.

Kuwait's efforts include taking part in international events on the matter, said Al-Bannai, adding that the country will take part in the Conference on the Establish-

ment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction next month, which Kuwait had chaired in 2021.

Creating this zone is the responsibility of the 191 member-countries in the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, said the ambassador.

Al-Bannai noted that the main fear comes from the impact of nuclear weapons on civilians and the environment.

Countries have failed to implement a full weapons-embargo, despite decades on continuous efforts, especially as tension between nuclear countries is rising, which in return, threatens the lives of millions of people, said Al-Bannai.



A photo from the event organized by Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN.



A photo from the exhibition.

Al-Rai photo

Kuwait participates in GCC Endowments Ministerial meeting

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26, (KUNA): The Ministry of Awqaf (Endowments) and Islamic Affairs participated in the 9th meeting of Islamic affairs and endowments ministers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, held in Muscat.

In a statement, the Head of the Kuwaiti delegation, Ministry Un-

dersecretary Dr. Bader Al-Mutairi said they presented an initiative to develop a unified regulatory mechanism to organize endowments process.

He stresses the ministry's keenness to contribute to unifying visions, coordinating efforts, deepening communication, and investing

in capabilities, effective initiatives, and constructive cooperation to achieve the prosperity of the Islamic nation and gulf societies, stressing the need to transform ideas into reality and practical programs.

He noted the ministry's constant endeavor to support leadership and advance Islamic and humanitar-

ian work, and adopt distinguished Kuwaiti initiatives to enhance joint Gulf cooperation.

Al-Mutairi appreciated the efforts spent by the Gulf delegations that contributed to enriching the meeting with ideas and recommendations that have positive repercussions on Gulf societies in many areas.

October

Room Promotion

'Aims at preserving Kuwaiti heritage'

Diplomatic corps members hail Expo 965 team over exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: A number of members of the diplomatic corps working in Kuwait praised the efforts made in the fifth annual official exhibition of the Expo 965 team and the accompanying forums aimed at preserving Kuwaiti heritage, reports Al-Rai daily.

On the second day of the forum, the UAE Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr. Matar Al Neyadi, visited the pavilions and stalls of the participants, praising the Gulf participation in the exhibition, and the participation of members of the Emirati delegation.

For his part, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said on the sidelines of his tour of the exhibition, "I congratulate this artistic and heritage demonstration for Kuwait, and it is an exhibition that reflects the civilization and history of Kuwait."

The Iranian envoy expressed his pleasure in attending the exhibition, which gives an image of the Kuwaiti people's culture, authenticity, and interest in arts and crafts.

He pointed out that "his country has commonalities with Kuwait, there is a common heritage and civilization, and our two

peoples have many arts in which they intersect."

In turn, the founder of the team, Muhammad Ali Kamal, said that the second day of the exhibition, sponsored by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahd, witnessed the presence of representatives of various government agencies and civil society, led by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Maha Al-Asousi, on behalf of the Minister of Electricity and Water and Sheikh Anisa Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Kamal stated that the second day witnessed, in the morning, lectures entitled "Craft industries at the heart of industrial creativity," "Caps from the history of Kuwait," "Photos from the history of Kuwait," "The role of training in completing youth projects," and "Utilizing Kuwaiti heritage and handicrafts in development projects" and a group of workshops on making old Kuwaiti heritage toys, and the foundations and skills of turning beads, with a large public presence in both periods.

'Creative 5' Academy for children of martyrs launched to enhance skills

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

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The office for honoring martyrs and their families launched the "Creative 5" Academy for the children of martyrs with the aim of enhancing their skills and experiences and developing their life capabilities, which qualifies them to have a role in providing the courses associated with the academy in the future.

In this regard, the Director General of the office Salah Al-Awfan explained about the launch of the "Creative 5" Academy after the great success of the academy's previous experiences and the benefit that the children of the martyrs received through their participation in the training programs that resulted in them obtaining new practical experiences.

He explained that this is the fifth academy, which serves as a link in a series of previous academies that have achieved success after success, as evidenced by their continuation for the fifth year. The training programs for the fifth academy come as a continuation of the previous four academies.

The focus will be on new topics that will develop the experiences and skills of children, in line with the needs of the labor market in a creative and professional manner that is consistent with the idea of the Creative 5 Academy. The target age group is from 25 to 55 years, and the academy's activities will continue until December 12, 2023.

Meanwhile, the Director of the Moral Guidance and Family Welfare Department in the office Muhammad Al-Mutairi said that the Creative 5 Academy will focus on 42 children of the martyrs, and will be divided into four main axes - the psychosocial axis, the health axis, the family axis, and finally the economic axis.

In this regard, Al-Awfan stressed the importance of these topics and their effective role in achieving the aspirations and needs of children in all aspects of life. It will be a stage for enhancing skills and

experiences through practical and theoretical training and direct dialogue to achieve the desired goals of this academy.

Furthermore, Dr. Ahmed Bouarki, a lecturer and an educational and family consultant at the Creative 5 Academy, said, "With regard to the educational field, we talked about child development, adolescence, and parents' interactions within the home, especially with these two groups, in order to increase educational awareness within the home for the parents because they are the foundation of development."

We hope to provide assistance to the children of the martyrs in gratitude for the sacrifices their families made as martyrs for this country, and we return a small part of this favor."

In turn, a number of the children of the martyrs participating in Creative 5 Academy affirmed that their participation contributes to developing their skills in many psychological, social and family aspects, in addition to the religious, educational, and health aspects, as well as the professional and financial aspects, and enhancing the spirit of patriotism.

Dr. Muhammad Al-Shammari said, "In this academy, we learn psychosocial skills. There is also a course on dealing with oneself and a course on the impact of social media on values and how to deal with the technical and financial revolution."

Shaima Al-Enezi revealed that she participated for five years in the Creative Two and Three academies. In the fifth year, she welcomed the efforts of the office to benefit those affiliated with the academy in their private lives. She said, "I benefited from the academy a lot, as it changed many things in my life for the better in society and in the profession."

Maryam Bou Hamdi said she participated in the Creative 5 Academy, "where the martyr's office provides us with multiple courses that give skills in all areas of life in the family, social, health and psychological aspects."

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'All cases against me are fabricated'

Court delays case of preacher accused of molesting six kids

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Criminal Court, headed by Counselor Muhammad Al-Sanea, has decided to postpone the case of the Islamic education teacher who is accused of molesting 6 children in the Khaitan and Farwaniya, reports Al-Rai daily.

During the hearing the suspect told the court, "I have been an Islamic education teacher for 15 years, and no one has ever complained against me. They said I took the boy behind the grocery store and violated his honor. Behind the grocery store there is a factory full of CCTV cameras, and it is adjacent to the grocery store. So, how one can take the boy behind the grocery store?"



Al-Sanea

There is no such thing as behind the grocery store, behind it is a factory, and every corner of the factory is covered by the CCTV camera. I will defend myself on the Day of Resurrection, the investigation officer forced me to confess under duress."

He added, "All the cases against me are fabricated, and the witness says he shouted at me. I was taking the boy next to the grocery store and he said, "Where are you taking this boy?" By coincidence, I was next to the boy, and there was a distance between me and him, and my presence there was just a coincidence.

"Your Honor, all the prisoners praise you and say that you are a fair judge and there is no injustice in your judicial rulings, and I "I have my wife and children at home alone, and I hope that you will release me."

The Criminal Court had previously confronted the accused in his second case,

and asked him the following questions:

- The court: You were accused on June 6, 2022, of kidnapping the child (.....) and indecent assault.

- The accused: It is not true that they say that I kidnapped him from the grocery store. There are cameras in the vicinity of the grocery store. I hope you can see the footage of the cameras in the grocery store.

- Court: You are detained pending other cases.

- The accused: No.

- Court: You say you have no other cases.

- The accused: There are none.

- Court: The prosecution's statement confirms that there are other cases against you.

- The accused: Another case in which I was sentenced to 4 months.

- Court: What is the case?

- The accused: Kidnapping and indecent assault.

- Court: How can you be charged with a case of kidnapping and indecent assault and receive a 4-month sentence?

- The accused: A death sentence has been issued against me!

- Court: How come from 4 months to the death penalty? You are accused in other cases as well.

- The accused: I don't remember.

- Court: From which court was the death sentence issued against you?

- The accused: Court of First Instance.

It is noteworthy that the Criminal Court had earlier sentenced the man to death by hanging in the first of 50 cases in which he was accused of kidnapping and molesting children.

The abused children had previously identified the accused in a queue before the police and the Public Prosecution, where they recognized him from a number of people.

Govt agencies to include provisions for Kuwaitization of govt contracts

'Special increase' mulled for govt sector employees

By Abdul Rahman Al-Shamari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: In conjunction with the issuance of the decision by the Council of Ministers concerning the "Regulation for Kuwaitization of Government Contracts" and in line with what was previously published in Al-Seyassah issue on August 18, 2023, regarding the development of a comprehensive program known as the "Strategic Alternative" to review public sector salaries, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance, Aseel Al-Munaifi, has announced an ongoing study in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission to approve a "special increase" for government sector employees.

Statement

Al-Munaifi, in a statement to Al-Seyassah, explained that this study is in response to the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nawaf, aimed at enhancing citizens' standard of living.

She noted that the concept has been discussed with the Civil Service Commission and is now in its final stages, set to be presented to the Council of Ministers in the near future.

The Undersecretary of Finance also clarified that this anticipated step is part of a series of recent decisions, with financial costs already approved. These decisions include providing support to labor engaged in micro-activities or specific fields, continuing support for patients and their companions employed in the private sector during overseas medical treatment, extending support to scholarship students from the private

Medical campus project eyed at varsity city

MC's tech panel okays KU request for approval of amended structural plan

By Inass Awad

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Technical Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting recently headed by Dr. Hassan Kamal, approved the request of Kuwait University for the approval of the amended structural plan for the medical campus project in Sabah Al-Salem University City in Shadadiya.

The committee returned to the executive branch of the Kuwait Municipality the request of the Ministry of Finance to transfer the lands located in Al-Rai, and part of the housing site in Mirqab opposite Shaheed Park, for the benefit of the Ministry of Finance to the state's general treasury to pay the actuarial deficit to the Public Institution of Social Security to prepare a detailed study. It also returned the proposal for advisory services for the pedestrian crossing project to the municipality, to communicate and coordinate with the authorities concerned with the project, the most important of which are the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), the Public

Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW).

Commenting on the return of the two transactions related to the Ministry of Finance to the executive branch, the head of the technical committee, Dr. Hassan Kamal said the sites that the Ministry of Finance is demanding that they be allocated to it to fill the actuarial deficit of the Public Institution of Social Security contain parts and sites owned by other government agencies, including the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD), PAAAFR, and PART.

The committee decided to return the two transactions of PAHW to the executive branch to obtain explicit approvals to relinquish their positions from the relevant government agencies.

There is a legal problem with PAHW in this regard, which has a law supported by the Fatwa and Legislation Authority that prevents it from relinquishing the lands to which it is affiliated.

The committee asked the municipality for waiver approvals from government agencies in order to complete the process of changing

the allocation smoothly and to ensure that no obstacles occur in the future.

Also, the committee referred to the executive branch the letter of the Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters regarding adding the activity of a training institute in preserved historical buildings, and including existing commercial activities in the classified service areas, to prepare a study on them.

The committee kept on its agenda the proposal submitted by the member of the Municipal Council Architect Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding preparing a regulation for demolition of buildings based on a field study on the types of construction extracted and the local market, with the invitation of the Safety Committee and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Engineering Systems, in addition to providing it with a copy of the results report of the work team formed regarding the proposal pursuant to an administrative decision last year. It also retained the question of member Ismail Behbehani regarding the evaluation criteria for highway projects.

Forums held for disabled people, orphans, educational directors and superintendents

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: On Tuesday, the third forum for people with special needs, people with disabilities, and orphans, and the forum for educational zone directors and superintendents, were held on the sidelines of the 5th annual exhibition of the Expo 965 Group.

The event was held under the patronage of His Highness the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, and in the presence of a member of the National Assembly Dawood Marafie, the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi, and directors of the educational zones in the Ministry of Education.

On the sidelines of the forum, MP Marafie affirmed that the efforts made by Kuwaiti craftsmen are great, and these experiences must be transferred to the new generation of children so that they can learn the professions of their fathers and grandfathers.

He stressed the necessity of continuing exhibitions and forums that display Kuwaiti heritage with the aim of preserving national identity, indicating that issues related to people with disabilities are prioritized in the National Assembly through 18 parliamentary priorities, including special amendments to their law that are in their interest.

Meanwhile, the Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi said in a similar statement that full attention is paid to people with disabilities, their support and their in-

tegration into society.

He affirmed the authority's endeavor to enhance their presence in jobs that support them in the government and private sectors and achieve the required percentage, which amounts to four percent.

Al-Mutairi highlighted that the authority continues to provide the appropriate environment for people with disabilities who are craftsmen by supporting them either in the school environment or the specialized centers that it cooperates with to train and develop hobbies and craftsmanship.

He indicated that there are more measures that the authority is working on to provide a sound legal and legislative environment that enables more steps to support people with disabilities.

Furthermore, the Honorary President of the Kuwait Sports Club for the Disabled Sheikh Shaikhah Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah said the strength of countries lies in preserving their identity and heritage, and that such forums are important steps to build a generation that is aware and has experience and culture in its history.

Also, the former undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali stressed the importance of working to train and develop the skills of young generations to preserve the country's heritage and identity by holding relevant courses for those with experience.

In addition, Head of the Friends of the Disabled Team Sheikhah Suhaila Al-Sabah highlighted the importance of working to integrate people with disabilities into such activities and crafts, as it will benefit them and develop their skills.

Man falls to his death in Mutlaa

By Munaif Nayef
Al-Seyassah Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: An Egyptian expatriate died after falling from the top of a house under construction in Mutlaa.

According to security sources, when the Ministry of Interior's Control Room received information about the incident, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location. Upon their arrival, they discovered that the worker had succumbed to the serious injuries he had sustained. His body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department. A case was registered.

Meanwhile, a security source said the Public Prosecution has not ruled out that the person, whose corpse was found in Mutreba desert, the north of the country, was murdered, reports Al-Rai daily.

Amir condoles

Continued from Page 1

employees away from the doors after a customer reported hearing about the shooting at the bowling alley less than a quarter-mile away. Soon, the police flooded the roadway and a police officer eventually escorted everyone out of the building.

"I am honestly in a state of shock. I am blessed that my team responded quickly and everyone is safe," Small said. "But at the same time, my heart is broken for this area and for what everyone is dealing with. I just feel numb."

After the shooting, police, many armed with rifles, took up positions while the city descended into eerie quiet - punctuated by occasional sirens - as people hunkered down at home. Schools as far away as Kennebunk, an hour from Lewiston, reported closing out of caution on Thursday.

The Androscoggin County Sheriff's Office released two photos of the suspect on its Facebook page that showed the shooter walking into an establishment with a weapon raised to his shoulder.

Two law enforcement officials told The AP that at least 16 people were killed and the toll was expected to rise. However, Michael Sauschuck, commissioner of the Maine Department of Public Safety, declined to provide a specific estimate at a news conference, calling it a "fluid situation." State police planned to hold a mid-morning news conference Thursday.

It's the 36th mass killing in the United States this year, according to a

database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University.

The two law enforcement officials said dozens of people also had been wounded. The officials were not authorized to publicly discuss details of the ongoing investigation and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity.

Gaza ceasefire

Continued from Page 1

and supplies, departed Kuwait on Thursday, heading to Egypt to provide assistance to the people of the Gaza Strip.

This initiative came in line with the Kuwaiti leadership's directives and reflected the people's heartfelt support to the Palestinian people.

Government and non-government entities as well as charities had coordinated their efforts to gather supplies and send them to Gaza.

On Monday, the first aid plane took off from Kuwait carrying around 40 tons of relief materials, including medical supplies and ambulances for the people of Gaza who suffer from continuous attacks from the unjust Israeli occupation forces.

In latest developments, Israeli troops and tanks briefly raided northern Gaza overnight into Thursday, the military said, striking several militant targets in order to "prepare the battlefield" before a widely expected ground invasion after more than two weeks of devastating airstrikes.

The raid came after the U.N. warned that it's on the verge of running out


of fuel in the Gaza Strip, forcing it to sharply curtail relief efforts. Gaza has been under a brutal siege - running out of food, water and medicine - since Hamas' bloody rampage across southern Israel earlier this month ignited the war.

The rising death toll in Gaza is unprecedented in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza said Thursday more than 7,000 Palestinians have died in the conflict, a figure that could not be independently verified. Even greater loss of life could come if Israel launches an ground offensive aimed at crushing Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007 and survived four previous wars with Israel.


Israeli airstrikes in the southern city of Khan Younis leveled more than eight homes belonging to an extended family, killing at least 15 people. Ambulances raced to the scene as dust from the collapsing buildings hung in the air.

The blast zone was a chaotic wasteland of crumbled concrete and twisted metal. Rescuers carried wounded people covered in gray dust. The body of a boy was dug out from beneath a concrete slab, where his head had come to rest next to the foot of another person entombed in the wreckage.

The Israeli military says it only strikes militant targets and accuses Hamas of operating among civilians in densely-populated Gaza. Palestinian militants have fired rocket barrages into Israel since the war began. One struck a residential building in the central city of Petah Tikva, without wounding anyone.




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World News Roundup

Europe

Police officers dismissed
Putin oversees drill
simulating N-strike

MOSCOW, Oct 26, (AP): Russia's military conducted a simulated nuclear strike in a drill Wednesday overseen by President **Vladimir Putin**, hours after the upper house of parliament voted to rescind the country's ratification of a global nuclear test ban.

The bill to end ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, approved in the lower house last week, will now be sent to Putin for final approval. Putin has said that revoking Russia's 2000 ratification would "mirror" the stance of the US, which signed but did not ratify the nuclear test ban.

State television showed Putin directing the exercise via video call with top military officials.

Russia's Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu said the purpose of the drills is to practice "dealing a massive nuclear strike with strategic offensive forces in response to a nuclear strike by the enemy."

While similar drills are held every autumn, Shoigu's pointed comments came amid soaring tensions between Russia and the West over the fighting in Ukraine.

The test ban treaty, adopted in 1996, bans all nuclear explosions anywhere in the world, but the treaty was never fully implemented. In addition to the US, it is yet to be ratified by China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel, Iran and Egypt.

There are widespread concerns that Russia could move to resume nuclear tests to try to discourage the West from continuing to offer military support to Ukraine. Many Russian hawks have spoken in favor of a resumption of the tests.

Putin has noted that while some experts have argued that it's necessary to conduct nuclear tests, he hasn't yet formed an opinion on the issue.



Putin

N-reactors construction launched: Bulgaria on Wednesday decided to expand the country's nuclear power generation as an alternative to fossil fuels by launching the construction of two additional reactors at its only nuclear power plant.

The two new reactors, which will provide a total of 2,300 megawatts, will use Westinghouse's technology, the government said in a statement.

Earlier this year, US-based nuclear equipment manufacturer Westinghouse Electric Co. signed an agreement with the Kozloduy plant for a proposed deployment of one or two AP1000 pressurized water reactor units.

Prime Minister Nikolay Denkov said Wednesday that the government has allocated an initial amount of 250 million euros (\$270 million) for the project, adding that the first reactor is expected to be ready in 2033, and the second one - two to three years later.

Polish parliament to convene Nov 13: Poland's president said Thursday that he is calling the first session of the country's newly elected parliament for Nov. 13.

President Andrzej Duda's announcement launches a timetable that will lead to the formation of a new government after Poland's national election on Oct. 15. He must also announce a candidate for prime minister but said that decision would come later.

Duda said there were two serious candidates for the post, the current prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, and Donald Tusk, a former prime minister who is the head of an opposition bloc that collectively won a majority of seats in the new parliament.

Morawiecki belongs to the ruling conservative Law and Justice party. It won more votes than any other single party in the election but lost its majority in parliament and will not hold enough seats to govern the country. The party has said it considers itself the winner of the election and should be given the first chance to try to form a government.

Slovakia swears in new Cabinet: Slovakia's president swore in a new government Wednesday, led by a former populist prime minister poised to end the country's military aid for Ukraine as it fights Russia's invasion.

Robert Fico returned to power and took over as prime minister for the fourth time after his leftist Smer, or Direction, party won Slovakia's Sept 30 parliamentary election.

The party won 42 seats in the 150-seat Parliament after campaigning on a pro-Russian and anti-American platform.

Fico formed a parliamentary majority by signing a coalition government deal with the leftist Hlas, or Voice, party and the ultranationalist Slovak National Party.

Hlas, led by Fico's former deputy in Smer, Peter Pellegrini, gained 27 seats. Pellegrini parted ways with Fico after the scandal-tainted Smer led the previous election in 2020.

Pellegrini replaced Fico as prime minister after he was forced to resign following major anti-government street protests resulting from the 2018 killing of journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée.

2 UK police officers dismissed: Two of London's Metropolitan Police officers were dismissed from the force on Wednesday after a disciplinary panel concluded that they committed gross misconduct over the stop and search of two Black athletes.

Bianca Williams and Ricardo Dos Santos, both professional sprinters, told the police watchdog that they were racially profiled by a group of police officers on July 4, 2020.

The couple were driving home in London with their 3-month-old infant son in the back seat when police followed their car and pulled them over outside their home. The athletes were handcuffed and searched on suspicion of having drugs and weapons, but nothing was found.

Man charged with murder: An American man has been charged with murder and other offenses for attacking two women from the US near Neuschwanstein castle in Germany in June and pushing them into a ravine, fatally injuring one of them, prosecutors said Thursday.

The indictment against the 31-year-old suspect, whose name hasn't been released in line with German privacy rules, was filed at the state court in Kempten, which will have to decide whether and when to send the case to trial.

He faces charges of murder, rape with fatal consequences, attempted murder and possession of child pornography. Murder charges carry a maximum sentence of life in prison in Germany.



US Speaker-elect Rep Mike Johnson, R-La., addresses members of Congress at the Capitol in Washington on Oct 25. Inset: Johnson puts the gavel down before speaking at the Capitol in Washington. (AP)

Politics

WH wants \$56b from Congress for disaster relief, child care

Johnson elected US House speaker

WASHINGTON, Oct 26, (AP): US Republican Mike Johnson is the new speaker of the House, but the ally of Donald Trump inherits many of the same political problems that have tormented past GOP leaders, tested their grasp of the gavel and eventually chased them out of office.

When the House convenes Thursday it will be a bustle of activity, making up for lost time during the weeks of chaos since the ouster of Kevin McCarthy. But the goodwill toward Johnson blurs the political fault lines challenging the Louisiana's ability to lead the GOP majority as it faces daunting issues ahead.

By Nov. 17, the Congress must fund the government again or risk a federal shutdown. President Joe Biden wants an additional \$105 billion in military and humanitarian aid for Israel and Ukraine. And Republicans are eager to resume their impeachment inquiry into Biden over his son's business dealings.

Process

"This has been a grueling process," Johnson said Wednesday after he took the gavel. "The challenge before us is great but the time for action is now, and I will not let you down."

Johnson, 51, swept through on the first ballot with support from all Republicans anxious to put the past weeks of tumult behind and get on with the business of governing. He was quickly sworn into office, second in line to the presidency.

A lower-ranked member of the House GOP leadership team, Johnson emerged as the fourth Republican nominee in what had become an almost absurd cycle of political infighting since McCarthy's ouster as GOP factions jockeyed for power.

While not the party's top choice for the gavel, the deeply religious and even-keeled Johnson has few foes and an important GOP backer: Trump.

"He's a tremendous leader," Trump said Wednesday at the New York courthouse where the former president, who is now the Republican front-runner for president in 2024, is on trial over a lawsuit alleging business fraud.

about his former chief of staff, Mark Meadows, who was reported by ABC News on Tuesday to have testified before a grand jury after receiving immunity from prosecution. (AP)

Rep Bowman of NY charged: Democratic

"He's going to make us all proud." Biden called to congratulate the new speaker and said it's "time for all of us to act responsibly" to fund the government and provide aid for Ukraine and Israel.

"We need to move swiftly," the president said in a statement.

In the House, far-right members had refused to accept a more traditional speaker, and moderate conservatives didn't want a hard-liner. But the affable Johnson, who has been in office less than a decade, drew lawmakers together through his evangelical faith, his conservative roots and Trump's nod after more seasoned leaders had failed.

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., who led the small band of eight hardliners who ousted McCarthy, said, "You watch and see how much this House of Representatives can actually get done under Mike Johnson."

Democrats quickly criticized Johnson as an extreme conservative, a strict opponent of abortion access and an architect of Trump's legal effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election he lost to Democrat Biden.

"Republicans have chosen a MAGA acolyte to push an extreme agenda in the House at the expense of middle-class families," said Rep. Suzan DelBene, the chair of the Democrats' campaign committee, referring to Trump's Make America Great Again campaign slogan.

Anxious and exhausted, Republican lawmakers are desperately trying to move on.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The White House is asking lawmakers for nearly \$56 billion in emergency spending to help the government respond to natural disasters, shore up funding for child care centers and keep high-speed internet running for low-income families - outlining President **Joe Biden's** domestic priorities as Congress simultaneously weighs sending billions for conflicts abroad.

The largest portion of the supplemental funding request, sent to Capitol Hill on Wednesday, includes more

than \$23 billion for disaster relief, as the Biden administration continues to aid communities across the US devastated by wildfires, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes. The package also includes \$16 billion to help scores of child care centers operate for another year, as well as \$6 billion to extend free and discounted internet through December 2024, according to the White House.

Other asks included in the \$56 billion request are international food aid, energy assistance for low-income households and pay for federal wildland firefighters. Wednesday's package is on top of the separate, nearly \$106 billion request the Biden administration made last week for aid to **Ukraine** and Israel, as well as other national security priorities.

The White House says the request for additional disaster relief - parsed out among the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies that cover housing, transportation and agriculture needs - is based on estimates from communities that have been hit by disasters this year, such as the August wildfires in **Hawaii**, hurricanes in **Florida** and flooding in **California** and **Vermont**, among other extreme weather events.

President Joe Biden has repeatedly traveled to disaster-ravaged zones this year to comfort victims and to pledge that the federal government would not only help with recovery efforts but in rebuilding communities.

"As I told your governor: If there is anything your state needs, I'm ready to mobilize that support - anything they need related to these storms," Biden said as he visited **Live Oak, Fla.**, in September, where Hurricane Idalia tore through the community. "Your nation has your back, and we'll be with you until the job is done."

The biggest portion of the \$23.5 billion in Biden's disaster request is \$9 billion to beef up FEMA's disaster relief fund, which the agency taps for immediate response and recovery efforts once a natural disaster hits. That fund currently has \$33.7 billion available, according to FEMA.

The alarm forced the evacuation of a House office building for over an hour. The New York lawmaker has acknowledged pulling the alarm and said it was a mistake. He was in a rush to go to vote, tried to go through a door that was unexpectedly closed and wrongly thought pulling the fire alarm lever would help him open it, he said.

At the time of the evacuation, House Democrats were working to delay a vote on a funding bill to keep federal agencies open. They had said they needed time to review a bill that Republicans abruptly released to avoid a shutdown. The funding package was ultimately approved with most Republicans and almost all Democrats, including Bowman, supporting the bill. (AP)

Driver pleads not guilty: The 22-year-old driver of a BMW that struck and killed four Pepperdine University students in Malibu, California, last week pleaded not guilty Wednesday to four counts of murder, and prosecutors said he was speeding at more than 100 mph moments before the crash.

Fraser Michael Bohm was also charged with four counts of gross vehicular manslaughter, Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón announced at a news conference. Bohm entered not-guilty pleas to the eight felony charges at a court hearing Wednesday, a day after his arrest.

Investigators believe Bohm's car reached 104 mph (167 kph) on a winding stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway where the posted speed limit is 45 mph (72 kph), Gascón said. (AP)



Franklin Mayor Ken Moore, with his wife, Linda, (at his side), speaks to supporters after securing re-election at the Election Night watch party at the Harpeth Hotel in Franklin, Tenn., Oct. 24. Voters in a Tennessee city have rejected a far-right candidate for mayor who drew national scrutiny over the support she received from white supremacists. Gabrielle Hanson lost the race against Moore on Tuesday. (AP)



Trump



Harris

America

Harris to attend AI summit: US Vice President **Kamala Harris** will attend a summit on artificial intelligence in the United Kingdom next week, shortly after President Joe Biden issues a highly anticipated executive order on an emerging technology that has generated excitement and fear.

She's scheduled to leave on Tuesday and return on Nov 2, and she'll be accompanied by her husband, Douglas Emhoff, according to her office.

Harris will deliver a speech outlining the Democratic administration's approach to artificial intelligence on Nov 1 before attending a summit on the topic the next day. Emhoff is expected to participate in events with civil society groups and young leaders focused on science learning, gender equity and countering hate.

Kirsten Allen, a spokeswoman for Harris, said the goal is a future "where every person is safe from the harms of AI and where every person can share equally in its benefits."

Governments around the globe are racing to set guidelines for artificial intelligence. Besides Biden's executive order, the European Union is putting the final touches on a comprehensive set of regulations that targets the riskiest applications for the technology. (AP)

'Reinstate Trump gag order': Federal prosecutors are urging a judge to reinstate a gag order on **Donald Trump**, citing recent social media posts about the former president's chief of staff that they said represented an attempt to influence and intimidate a foreseeable witness in the case.

US District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who is presiding over the federal case charging Trump with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election, last week temporarily paused her order barring Trump from making inflammatory comments about prosecutors, court staff and potential witnesses. The ruling came as Trump's lawyers challenge the limited gag order in higher courts.

In a motion filed Wednesday night, special counsel Jack Smith's team encouraged Chutkan to put the restrictions back in place. Prosecutors cited in part statements in social media and at a news conference over the last day by Trump



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, (center right), is shown a Retinal Scan procedure being performed by Dr. Siegfried Wagner, senior research fellow, and Dr. Xiao Liu, (center left), with staff research team member Polly Rawlinson, (left), as a volunteer patient, during a visit to Moorfields Eye Hospital in London on Oct 26. (AP)

Lat/Am

Probe launched

Milei endorsed by 'rival' in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Oct 26, (AP): Former Argentine presidential candidate Patricia Bullrich, who placed third in Sunday's election, endorsed right-wing populist **Javier Milei** on Wednesday for next month's runoff, a move that could rupture the country's main center-right opposition coalition.

Bullrich, a former security minister, received 24% of the vote, compared to 37% for Economy Minister Sergio Massa and 30% for Milei.

"In the case of Javier Milei, we have differences, and that's why we competed. We don't overlook them. However, we are faced with the dilemma of change or the continuation of a mafia-style governance for Argentina and putting an end to the shame of the present.

We have the obligation not to remain neutral," Bullrich told a news conference.

"The country needs a fundamental change," Bullrich added, warning against a "continuation of the worst government in history."

Bullrich emphasized that she was speaking on behalf of her presidential team, including running mate Luis Petri, rather than their coalition, making clear that neither the center-right PRO party she leads, nor the broader United for Change coalition, officially backed the decision.

Milei, a self-described anarcho-capitalist, competed with Bullrich for right-leaning votes in Sunday's election. Ahead of the vote, Milei harshly criticized Bullrich but has recently moderated his speech and even raised the possibility that she could join his Cabinet if he wins the presidency.

Showed

Shortly after the news conference, Milei posted a cartoon drawing on social media that showed a lion hugging a duck. Milei's supporters have dubbed him "the lion" while Bullrich's backers often referred to her as "Pato" (Spanish word for duck), a common nickname for Patricia.

"We forgave each other," Bullrich said, revealing that she had met with Milei on Tuesday night. "Today, our nation needs us to be able to forgive each other because something very important for the future is at stake."

Since Sunday's vote there have been tensions within the center-right United for Change, the country's main opposition coalition, about who its members would support ahead of the Nov 19 runoff. The election will decide who will lead South America's second-largest economy, which suffers from rising poverty and an annual inflation rate of almost 140%.

Former President Mauricio Macri, who founded the PRO party, has spoken positively of Milei in the past, characterizing the support he received as a demonstration of how Argentines want change.

However, other elements in the coalition, mainly members of the more left-leaning Radical Civic Union (UCR), made clear in recent days they would not support Milei, a chainsaw-wielding candidate who has vowed to slash state spending and ditch the local currency in favor of the dollar to deal with inflation.

Former Sen. Ernesto Sanz, a UCR leader and one of the founding members of the coalition, raised the possibility that the coalition would disband if leaders of the party publicly expressed their support for Milei.

"Coalitions, like political parties, are not designed to live forever," Sanz said in a radio interview Wednesday.

Support

The UCR later issued a news release where it confirmed that it would not support either candidate in the runoff and party leaders did not hide their displeasure at Bullrich's endorsement of Milei, openly raising the possibility that it could fracture the coalition.

"Patricia's attitude is intolerable," Gerardo Morales, the governor of northern Jujuy province and head of the UCR, said in a news conference. "I don't know what agreements she's made with Milei."

Sen. Martín Lousteau, who is also a UCR leader, said that with their endorsement of Milei, Bullrich and Macri had decided to "abandon" the coalition.

The UCR wasn't alone in its criticism. Buenos Aires Mayor Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, a long-time PRO member who faced off against Bullrich in a primary for the presidential candidacy, also said he would not support either candidate in the second round. "The two options we have for the runoff election are very bad for all Argentines," Larreta said Wednesday evening.

Milei is a libertarian economist who parlayed a successful television career into a seat in the lower house of Congress in 2021. He managed to insert his Liberty Advances party into a political system that had been dominated by one center-left and one center-right coalition trading power for around two decades.

Liberty Advances will have 37 seats in the lower house of Congress, known as the Chamber of Deputies, and eight senators, according to preliminary calculations. That compares to 105 lawmakers and 32 senators for the ruling Union for the Homeland and 94 lawmakers and 24 senators for United for Change.

Also:

CARACAS, Venezuela: Venezuela's chief prosecutor on Wednesday announced a criminal investigation into organizers of this past weekend's primary election that was meant to let voters choose an opposition candidate to run against President Nicolás Maduro next year.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab told reporters the probe would look at allegations including that the independent National Primary Commission that organized Sunday's balloting was illegally usurping the duties of a government entity.

The announcement came hours after the opposition-organized commission released updated results showing participation of more than 2.4 million voters, the overwhelming majority of whom supported longtime government foe **María Corina Machado**.

Saab said his investigation also would look into allegations of identity theft, money laundering and conspiracy. "As we know, an act of buffoonery took place Sunday, a kind of theater to deceive both national and international public opinion," Saab said, joining other government allies who portrayed the primary election as a farce.

Saab, a close Maduro ally and former lawmaker, said that the commission does not have the authority to preside over an election because that power belongs only to the country's National Electoral Council. The commission initially sought help from the council, widely considered partial to the ruling party, but forged ahead without it after repeated delays.



Milei



People are helped as they cross a highway blocked by a landslide triggered by Hurricane Otis near Acapulco, Mexico on Oct 25. (AP)

Acapulco residents left in flooded, windblown chaos with hurricane toll unknown

A day after Hurricane Otis roared ashore in Acapulco, unleashing massive floods and setting off looting, the resort city of nearly 1 million descended into chaos, leaving residents without electricity or internet service as the toll remained uncertain.

The early images and accounts were of extensive devastation, toppled trees and power lines lying in brown floodwaters that in some areas extended for miles. The resulting destruction delayed a compre-

hensive response by the government, which was still assessing the damage along Mexico's Pacific coast, and made residents desperate.

Many of the once sleek beachfront hotels in Acapulco looked like toothless, shattered hulks a day after the Category 5 storm blew out hundreds - and possibly thousands - of windows.

There seemed to be a widespread frustration with authorities. While some 10,000 military troops were deployed to the area, they lacked the tools to

clean tons of mud and fallen trees from the streets. Hundreds of trucks from the government electricity company arrived in Acapulco early Wednesday, but seemed at a loss as to how to restore power, with downed electricity lines lying in feet of mud and water.

Jakob Sauczuk was staying with a group of friends at a beachfront hotel when Otis hit. "We laid down on the floor, and some between beds," Sauczuk said. "We prayed a lot." (AP)

Asia

Beijing wants to bolster climate cooperation with Washington

US, China seek to ease strained ties

WASHINGTON, Oct 26, (AP): In the midst of two active and potentially world-changing conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, the US is hoping to find at least a small measure of common ground with China as China's top diplomat visits Washington this week.

Over three days of meetings that begin Thursday, top Biden administration officials, including possibly the president himself, will press Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the importance of China stepping up its role on the world stage if it wants to be considered a responsible major international player.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, are both expected to urge China to play a constructive role in both the Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine wars. Those meetings could set the stage for a summit between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping next month on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum leaders gathering in San Francisco.

Issues

The U.S. has been disappointed with China over its support for Russia in the war against Ukraine and its relative silence on the Middle East. In addition, the world's two largest economies are at odds on issues such as human rights, climate change, Taiwan, the South China Sea and North Korea.

Still, both sides have expressed a willingness to talk with each other since Blinken canceled a planned visit to China in February after the shoot-down of a Chinese spy balloon over the US, which marked a low point in recent relations.

In the months that followed that crisis, however, Blinken rescheduled his trip and went to China in June. He was followed in quick succession by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, climate envoy John Kerry and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

In addition, Sullivan met with Wang in Malta in mid-September ahead of Blinken's discussions with Chinese Vice President Han Zheng later that

SKorea, US & Japan condemn NKorea alleged supply of munitions to Russia

SEOUL, South Korea, Oct 26, (AP): South Korea, the US and Japan strongly condemned what they call North Korea's supply of munitions and military equipment to Russia, saying Thursday that such weapons shipments sharply increase the human toll of Russia's war in Ukraine.

A joint statement by the top diplomats of South Korea, the US and Japan came days after Russia's foreign minister scoffed at a recent US claim that his country received munitions from North Korea, saying that Washington has failed to prove the allegation.

"We will continue to work together with the international community to expose Russia's attempts to acquire military equipment from (North Korea)," said the joint statement by South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.

"Such weapons deliveries, sev-

eral of which we now confirm have been completed, will significantly increase the human toll of Russia's war of aggression," it said.

The joint statement was meant to show the three countries' resolve to actively respond to a weapons transfer deal that Russia and North Korea have been pursuing in defiance of repeated warnings by the international community, South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lim Soosuk told reporters.

North Korea and Russia - both locked in separate confrontations with the U.S. and its allies - have recently taken steps to strengthen their military ties. Speculation about North Korea's provision of conventional arms to refill Russia's exhausted weapons stores flared last month, when North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia's Far East to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military facilities.

month on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. And Blinken spoke just last week with Wang about the Israel-Hamas crisis.

The goal, according to US officials, is to set the stage for another Biden-Xi summit at which the two leaders could explore cooperation or at least easing outright hostility on the most pressing matters of the day.

"Wang Yi's visit will serve as one of the final touchpoints in laying the groundwork" for the Biden-Xi meeting, said Ryan Hass, director of the John L. Thornton China Center at the Brookings Institute, a Washington-based think tank.

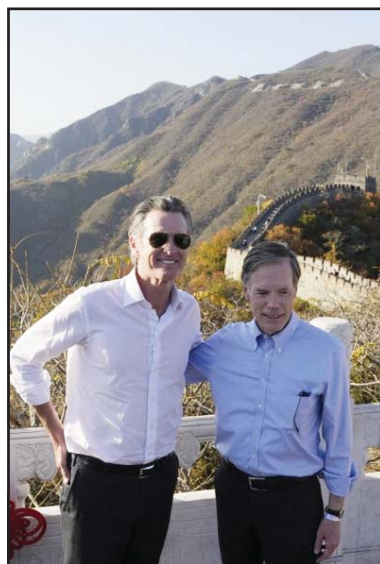
Also:

BANGKOK: China's Environment Min-

ister **Huang Runqiu** said Thursday his country wants to strengthen cooperation with the **United States** to combat climate change, as he met in **Beijing** with **California Gov. Gavin Newsom**.

Newsom is on a weeklong tour of China where he is pushing for climate cooperation. His trip as governor, once considered routine, is drawing attention as it comes after years of heightening tensions between the US and China.

The climate is one of the few issues where the US and China have agreed to work together. Relations between the two countries have deteriorated in recent years over trade practices, tariff barriers, human rights abuses and the fate of **Taiwan**, a self-ruled island that China claims as its own territory.



US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns, (right) and California Gov Gavin Newsom pose for photos as they visit the Mutianyu Great Wall on the outskirts of Beijing, on Oct 26. Newsom is on a weeklong tour of China where he is pushing for climate cooperation. His trip as governor, once considered routine, is drawing attention as it comes after years of heightening tensions between the US and China. (AP)



Tinubu



Weah

Africa

SC refuses to void prez election: Nigeria's Supreme Court refused Thursday to void the recent election of President **Bola Tinubu** and dismissed the political opposition's challenges, which argued that the vote was flawed and that Tinubu was not qualified to seek or hold the presidency.

The court held in a majority ruling that the grounds of the challenges were "devoid of merits," ending a dispute that had put Africa's most populous country on the edge after the February election. An appeals court in Nigeria also rejected the petitions last month.

Two other candidates in the election separately challenged Tinubu's win, alleging that he failed to meet the minimum educational qualification to run, did not secure the required number of votes and that the country's election commission did not follow its own provisions in collating and announcing the election results.

During a televised hearing in Abuja, the Nigerian capital, the Supreme Court dismissed the challenges from the Peoples Democratic Party's Atiku Abubakar and the Labour Party's Peter Obi in their entirety, affirming the position of the election tribunal that Tinubu's victory followed the due process. (AP)

Many suffer under sanctions: Hamsa Diakite can't remember the last time her family of eight had a good meal.

She once sustained them by selling fried bread until a coup in Niger three months ago resulted in sanctions against the West African nation, squeezing incomes in one of the world's poorest countries and leaving millions like Hamsa struggling in the absence of aid.

"Not only is food very expensive, but school supplies have also doubled in price. I also have to clothe my children and, above all, deal with their illnesses," the 65-year-old said.

After elite soldiers toppled Niger's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum on July 26, the country faced eco-

nom sanctions from West Africa's regional bloc, ECOWAS, as well as Western and European countries including the United States that had provided aid for health, se-

curity and infrastructure needs.

Neighbors shut their borders with Niger and more than 70% of its electricity, supplied by Nigeria, was cut off after financial

transactions with West African countries were suspended. Niger's assets in external banks were frozen and hundreds of millions of dollars in aid were withheld. (AP)



Women gather at a clinic to have their children vaccinated in Niamey, Niger, Aug 21. Families in Niger say they are struggling in the wake of economic sanctions imposed after a military coup three months ago. Neighbouring countries in West Africa have closed their borders with Niger, stymieing livestock trade. And residents in the capital, Niamey, say food prices have skyrocketed. (AP)

Weah to face Boakai in runoff: Liberian President **George Weah** will face off against challenger **Joseph Boakai** for the second time in a Nov. 14 runoff vote, election officials in the West African nation said Tuesday.

The results of the first round announced by Liberia's National Elections Commission are the closest runoff since the end of the country's back-to-back civil wars.

Weah, a former international soccer star, failed to win an absolute majority and took 43.83% of the first round vote, the commission announced. Boakai led a crowded field of challengers with 43.44%.

The two politicians last faced off in the 2017 vote, when Weah ultimately won 60% of the vote in the second round. It was the first democratic transfer of power in the West African nation since the end of the country's back-to-back civil wars between 1989 and 2003 that killed some 250,000 people.

Weah won that election amid high hopes brought about by his promise to fight poverty and generate infrastructure development. His goal, he had said in 2017, was to push Liberia from a low-income country to a middle-income one. (AP)

oil down

The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel dropped USD 1.39 to reach USD 92.09 per barrel (pb) on Wednesday, compared with USD 93.48 pb on Tuesday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Thursday.

In international markets, Brent crude oil went up USD 2.06 to reach USD 90.13 pb, while West Texas Intermediate rose USD 1.65 to stand at USD 85.39 pb. (KUNA)

Turkey's central bank opts for another interest rate hike in efforts to curb inflation

Turkey's central bank hiked interest rates again on Thursday, pressing ahead with more conventional economic policies recently embraced by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to fight inflation. The bank raised its policy rate by 5 percentage points to 35% after inflation hit 61.53% last month. It was the bank's fifth rate hike in as many months.

The bank said its Monetary Policy Committee "decided to continue the monetary tightening process in order to establish the disinflation course as soon as possible."

It also announced more such moves "in a timely and gradual manner until a significant improvement in inflation outlook is achieved." Erdogan had long pressured the central bank into cutting interest rates, arguing that

low borrowing costs help fight inflation. That thinking however, runs contrary to traditional economic theory and many central banks around the world hiked interest rates to bring consumer prices under control.

Many blamed Erdogan's unorthodox policies of lowering interest rates for an economic turmoil, including a currency crisis and skyrocketing inflation that has left Turkish households struggling to afford rent and basic goods.

Erdogan, however, reversed course after winning reelection as president in May, appointing a new economic team that is implementing more conventional policies.

The team includes former Merrill Lynch banker Mehmet Simsek, who returned as finance minister, a post he held un-

til 2018, and Hafize Gayer Erkan who took over as central bank governor, becoming the first woman to hold that post in Turkey. Since Erkan took office, the bank has raised interest rates from 8.5% to 35%. Simsek told a group of journalists last month that the team's economic policies have Erdogan's full backing. "There isn't the slightest hesitation," Simsek said.

Meanwhile, Turkey's benchmark stock index saw a 7% drop on Wednesday, after Erdogan voiced support for the Hamas militant group, calling it a group fighting for the liberation of its people and lands. The comment raised concerns about possible tensions with the West that could upend the country's efforts to secure foreign investments. (KUNA)

Market Movements

26-10-2023

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
PAKISTAN	-	+33.08	51,158.40	JAPAN	-	-668.14	30,601.78
EGYPT	-	+130.31	23,262.27	EUROPE	-	-43.03	4,030.32
				UK	-	-57.79	7,356.55
				DUBAI	-	-59.08	3,782.04
				SAUDI	-	-95.82	10,408.94
				PHILIPPINES	-	-36.01	6,018.49

Business

Achieving goals through landmark partnership with Kuwait University for educational collaboration

KPC emphasizes risk management as key to 2040 strategy success

Kuwaiti import financing soars by 49.3% in first nine months of 2023

KD2.738b growth

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The financing provided to support Kuwaiti imports from local banks has experienced substantial growth during the initial nine months of this year in comparison to the same period last year. It has surged by an impressive 49.3%, representing an increase of 2.738 billion dinars. This boost has propelled the financing from 5.55 billion dinars during the first three quarters of 2022 to 8.296 billion dinars in the same period this year.

Import financing has also increased on a monthly basis by 48.7%, totaling 298.9 million dinars, rising from 613.2 million dinars at the end of September to 912.1 million dinars at the close of September last year. However, on an annual basis, this financing witnessed a decrease of 11.6%, amounting to 120.1 million dinars, compared to 1.03 billion dinars in September 2022.

In terms of the type of financing, funding provided through other payment orders predominated over other financing methods, comprising 73.6% of the total financing. This financing category has seen a notable 60.6% increase, growing from 3.8 billion dinars during the first three quarters of 2022 to 6.1 billion dinars in the same period this year. It also increased on a monthly basis by 87.5%, adding 345.8 million dinars, rising from 395.3 million dinars at the end of August to 741.1 million dinars by the end of last September.

Documentary credits

Financing through documentary credits took second place, accounting for 23.3% of total import financing. This category experienced a growth of 40.7%, reaching a value of 560.9 million dinars. This is a substantial increase from 1.375 billion dinars in the first three quarters of 2022 to 1.936 billion dinars in the first three quarters of this year. Nonetheless, it decreased by 20.5% on a monthly basis, falling to a value of 39.2 million dinars, down from 190.4 million dinars in August to 151.2 million dinars in September.

Lastly, financing through collection policies represented 3% of the total import financing, but it saw a decrease of 33.9%. This drop resulted in a value of 129.1 million dinars, down from 380.5 million dinars in the first three quarters of 2022 to 251.4 million dinars in the same period this year. It also decreased by 28.6% on a monthly basis, with a value of 7.9 million dinars, down from 27.6 million dinars in August to 19.7 million dinars by the end of September.

In terms of financing by currency, the majority of import financing was provided in US dollars, accounting for 85.8% of total import financing. This is due to a substantial 72.6% increase, with a growth of about 2.529 billion dinars. The financing in US dollars surged from 4.596 billion dinars during the first three quarters of 2022 to 7.12 billion dinars in the same period this year. Despite an increase during September by 63.4% to a value of 308.3 million dinars, it decreased on an annual basis by 14.3% to about 133.3 million dinars, down from 927.5 million dinars in September 2022.

Financing in other currencies came in second place, accounting for 6.1% of total import financing. It increased by 2% during the month of September, reaching a value of 1 million dinars, up from 47.9 million dinars in August to 48.9 million dinars. However, it decreased by 40.6% during the first three quarters, with a value of 146.4 million dinars, down from 360.2 million dinars to 506.6 million dinars.

Financing provided in euros ac-



Photo during the signing ceremony of the joint cooperation agreement between the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and Kuwait University. KUNA photo

Global market sees shifting dynamics ahead

Geopolitical tensions boosts natural gas prices

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: Kamco Invest's recent report reveals that geopolitical tensions, particularly the Palestine conflict, temporarily drove up natural gas prices. The closure of the Tamar gas field in the Mediterranean Sea due to the turmoil in the Middle East added uncertainty to the markets. Additionally, fears of interference and sabotage following a leak in the Baltic Sea gas pipeline raised concerns, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Dutch TTF Natural Gas Futures saw a significant increase from 36.650 Euro/MWh on October 6, 2023, to 49.9 Euro/MWh by October 23, 2023, reflecting the impact of these geopolitical events.

However, it's essential to note that natural gas prices had been on a downward trend before these developments, especially in European markets. European prices were under pressure compared to those in Asia and the United States, which had strengthened during the second quarter of the year.

Throughout 2023, natural gas prices had remained under pressure, despite significant gains in the previous year caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The World Bank Natural Gas Index had dropped by 62.1% during the first nine months of the year, reflecting the commodity's weaker global sentiment and stabilization after a turbulent period.

Fears of sluggish global eco-

counted for 4.1% of the total import financing, and it increased by 14.9% on a monthly basis, amounting to 5.8 million dinars, up from 38.9 million dinars in August to 33.1 million dinars in September. Nevertheless, it decreased by 0.3% during the first three quarters, with a value of about 1.3 million dinars, down from 344.3 million dinars to 343 million dinars. Financing in UAE dirhams accounted for 1.7% and experienced a 16% increase, amounting to 19.1 million dinars, up from 119.9 million dinars in the first three quarters of 2022 to 139 million dinars in September. Financing in Saudi riyals increased by 68.8%, reaching 43.2 million dinars, up from 62.8 million dinars in the first three quarters of 2022 to 106 million dinars in the same period this year, accounting for about 1.27% of the total financing. The value of financing in Japanese yen reached 37.3 million dinars, a growth of 28.6%, compared to 29 million dinars in the first three quarters of 2022. Financing in the British pound also increased by 5.7%, with a value of 1.9 million dinars, up from 33 million dinars to 34.9 million dinars.

nomical growth had also affected natural gas demand, putting downward pressure on prices. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had downgraded its global real GDP forecast for 2024, and the International Energy Agency (IEA) expected a slowdown in global natural gas demand growth.

In the United States, natural gas prices had decreased by 66.0% year-on-year in September 2023, while European prices dropped by 80.5% year-on-year for the same month. Japanese LNG prices also witnessed a significant decline.

Trending

However, it's worth noting that natural gas and LNG spot prices in Europe had already been trending upward before the Palestine conflict, driven by labor strikes in Australia.

Looking ahead, the ongoing instability in the Middle East, coupled with increased LNG demand in Asia, was expected to keep natural gas prices on an upward trajectory. US gas consumption had increased year-on-year in September 2023, with growth in the residential, commercial, and power generation sectors.

On the supply side, global natural gas production was forecasted to see marginal growth in 2023, primarily driven by North America, the Middle East, Asia Pacific, and Africa. European

gas production had been declining.

While natural gas demand in Europe was decreasing, there was a surge in gas demand in Asia, particularly in China and India. China's natural gas consumption had increased, driven by economic activity and policy shifts.

The global natural gas market was influenced by the unavailability of additional gas supplies to compensate for the reduced Russian pipeline gas to Europe. Concerns were raised about filling the gap left by the decrease in Russian gas supplies.

In the United States, natural gas consumption was expected to stabilize in 2023, with an increase in LNG exports. The country had become a significant LNG exporter, surpassing other nations.

Qatar had signed multiple LNG contracts with European companies to provide much-needed LNG to Europe as it struggled to fill gas storage facilities for the winter due to the shortage of Russian pipeline gas.

In summary, while geopolitical tensions initially drove up natural gas prices, supply and demand dynamics continued to shape the global natural gas market. The market faced challenges, but also opportunities, as it responded to a complex web of factors, from geopolitics to economic shifts and environmental concerns.

Strengthening ESG policy leadership

Kuwait-based Dhaman Corporation issues USD 500 million loan to Egypt

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26, (KUNA): The Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) issued on Thursday a Non-Honoring of Sovereign Financial Obligation (NHSO) insurance policy to cover a USD 500 million international commercial loan to its member country, Egypt. The loan is provided within the framework of the decisions of the 27th climate summit held in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022.

Egypt had successfully closed a USD 500 million dual-tranche 7-year international commercial loan equally provided by Deutsche Bank AG and the Arab Banking Corporation (B.S.C.), Bahrain, benefiting from a credit insurance policy provided by Dhaman (rated A+ by S&P), said Dhaman Corporation.

This landmark deal is the first international loan market transaction benefiting from a multilateral credit-enhancement mechanism for Egypt, involving a multilateral insurer Dhaman and mobilizing the private insurance market, it added.

Director General of Dhaman Abdullah Al-Sabeeh said that this transaction "demonstrates Dhaman's commitment to its message of contributing to achieving the SDGs, as well as Egypt's commitment to the diversification of its external financing sources through blended finance solutions with strong support from both Dhaman and global private insurers. "Innovative credit-enhanced solutions in favor of Member Countries are one of the pillars of Dhaman's 2022-2026 strategic plan," he said.

The transaction allowed Egypt to secure favorable financing terms, materially more advantageous than those available on the international bond market, he noted.

Dhaman provided a credit insurance policy on a sovereign blended finance loan transaction, covering up to 95 percent of the scheduled principal and related interest, he continued.

Al-Sabeeh mentioned that the mobilization of Dhaman's credit insurance policy allowed Egypt to secure a reduced loan margin, resulting in savings compared to current Eurobond yields. This transaction, therefore, supports efforts to stabilize and reduce Egypt's

cost of funding, extend maturities and access new funding sources.

This transaction also demonstrates Egypt's strong ESG policy leadership and contributes to the Government's human capital development agenda. The proceeds will be used to cover social projects eligible under Egypt's Sustainable Financing Framework, announced at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022, including health and education budget expenditures aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being) and 4 (quality education), he added.



Al-Sabeeh

End of pandemic-era aid

Food insecurity shot up last year with inflation

WASHINGTON, Oct 26, (AP): An estimated 17 million households reported problems finding enough food in 2022 - a sharp jump from 2021 when boosted government aid helped ease the pandemic-induced economic shutdown.

A new Department of Agriculture report, released Wednesday, paints a sobering picture of post-pandemic hardship with "statistically significant" increases in food insecurity across multiple categories. Using a representative survey sample of roughly 32,000 American households the report said 12.8% (17 million households) reported occasional problems affording enough food - up from 10.2% (13.5 million households) in 2021 and 10.5% (13.8 million households) in 2020. This is up from 10.2% (13.5 million households) in 2021 and 10.5% (13.8 million households) in 2020.

Analysts and food security profes-

sionals point to the dual impact last year of high inflation and the gradual expiration of multiple pandemic-era government assistance measures.

"This underscores how the unwinding of the pandemic interventions and the rising costs of food has taken hold," said Geri Henchy, director of

nutrition policy for the Food Research and Action Center. "It's like a horrible storm for families."

The number of households reporting more serious forms of economic hardship also increased. Wednesday's report by the USDA's Economic Research Service also tracks families with "very low food security" - a condition it defines as families having to ration food consumption and where "normal eating patterns were disrupted at times during the year because of limited resources."

Households experiencing this level of hardship in 2022 rose to 5.1% (6.8 million households), up from 3.8% (5.1 million households) in 2021 and 3.9% (5.1 million households) in 2020.

Increased benefits and more relaxed enrollment rules for SNAP - the foundational government assistance program commonly known as food stamps - didn't end until early this year.



Second-grade students select their meals during lunch break in the cafeteria, Dec 12, 2022, at an elementary school in Scottsdale, Arizona. (AP)

BUSINESS

\$1bn World Bank loan to help S. Africa energy sector

The World Bank approved a \$1 billion loan for South Africa on Wednesday to help it address an energy crisis that has peaked this year with the country's worst electricity blackouts. The energy problem has forced the country to lean on its highly polluting coal-fired power stations. South Africa has experienced scheduled, rolling blackouts for months because of problems generating enough electricity for its 62 million people. The state-run power utility, Eskom, generates approxi-

mately 80% of the country's electricity through its coal stations, but they have failed to meet demand due to mismanagement, corruption and regular breakdowns. South Africa's commitment to its climate change targets are in danger of being affected in the short term, with President Cyril Ramaphosa announcing in April that it may delay shutting down some of its coal stations because of the electricity supply problems. "The loan endorses a significant

and strategic response to South Africa's ongoing energy crisis, and the country's goal of transitioning to a just and low carbon economy," the World Bank said. While Africa contributes the least to climate change and is the continent affected the most, South Africa is Africa's most advanced economy and the world's 16th-largest emitter of greenhouse gases overall. It is 45th per capita based on 2019 data, according to Climate Watch. (AP)

EU, Bangladesh sign two investment agreements

The European Union and Bangladesh Wednesday signed two investment packages, a Renewable Energy Package worth 400 million euro (USD 422 million) and the second, EU's Annual Action Plan for 2023 valued at 70 million euro (USD 73 million) for public administration, employment and education. Speaking to the press at the signing ceremony of the two agreements, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said the EU has built "a solid

partnership" with Bangladesh. "And now we will take it to the next level. Because in a time of global turbulence, the European Union is glad to be able to count on its longstanding partners, as they can count on us," she said. On her part, prime minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina said this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of EU-Bangladesh partnership and noted that the EU is now Bangladesh largest trading partner. Sheikh Hasina announced that the

EU and Bangladesh will soon launch negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Referring to the Rohingya refugees who have sought shelter in Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina said the solution to Rohingya crisis lies in their safe and sustainable return to their homeland in Myanmar and urged the EU to remain engaged for an early durable solution to this problem. The Bangladeshi prime Minister is in Brussels to attend the First Global Gateway Forum. (KUNA)

Strong US economic growth for last quarter likely reflected consumers' resistance to Fed rate hikes

Economy faces other challenges

WASHINGTON, Oct 26, (AP): The government is expected Thursday to report stellar growth for the U.S. economy during the July-September quarter, highlighting the durability of consumer and business spending despite the Federal Reserve's efforts to cool the expansion with high interest rates.

Last quarter's robust growth, though, will probably prove to be a high-water mark for the economy before a steady slowdown beginning in the current October-December quarter and extending into 2024.

Thursday's report is sure to be seized upon by the Biden administration as evidence that its policies have helped spur solid growth, though surveys show that most Americans hold a sour view of the president's handling of the economy.

The Commerce Department's figures are expected to show that the nation's gross domestic product - the economy's total output of goods and services - expanded at a 3.8% annual pace in the third quarter, according to a survey of economists by FactSet. If accurate, that would amount to the fastest quarterly pace in nearly two years and up sharply from a 2.1% growth rate in the April-June quarter. Some economists have estimated that last quarter's annual growth could turn out to be as high as 4.5%.

Americans likely drove the economy by stepping up their spending, splurging on everything from cars to concert tickets to restaurant meals. Businesses have also been spending on new factories and other buildings, and companies likely increased their stockpiles of goods, which boosts output.

Still, the breakneck pace is expected to slow because consumers are likely reining in their spending in the final three months of the year, and the sluggish housing market is dragging on the economy. This month, nearly 30 mil-

lion people began repaying several hundred dollars a month in student loans, which could slow their ability to spend. Those loan repayments had been suspended since the pandemic first struck three years ago.

The economy faces other challenges as well, including a spike in longer-term interest rates since July. The average 30-year mortgage rate is approaching 8%, a 23-year high, putting home buying out of reach for many more Americans.

Fed officials have acknowledged the pickup in growth, which could potentially undercut their efforts to fight inflation. Brisk consumer spending typically leads companies - those that sell physical goods as well as those, like restaurants and entertainment venues, in the economy's vast service sector - to raise prices, thereby fueling inflation.

But Fed Chair Jerome Powell, in a discussion last week, said he was generally pleased with how the economy was evolving: Inflation has slowed to an annual rate of 3.7% from a four-decade high of 9.1% in June 2022. At the same time, steady growth and hiring have forestalled the recession that was widely predicted at the end of last year.

If those trends continue, it could allow the Fed to achieve a highly sought-after "soft landing," in which the central bank would manage to slow inflation to its 2% target without causing a deep recession.

At the same time, Powell has acknowledged that if the economy were to keep growing robustly, the Fed might have to raise rates further. Its benchmark short-term rate, which affects the rates on many consumer and business loans, is now about 5.4%, a 22-year high.

"Additional evidence of persistently above-trend growth," Powell said last week, "could put further progress on inflation at risk and could warrant further tightening of monetary policy."

Fed officials were surprised by a blowout government report last week on retail sales, which showed that spending at stores and restaurants jumped last month by much more than expected. Americans spent more both for necessities like gas and groceries as well as for discretionary items, such as cars and restaurant meals, on which consumers typically cut back if they are worried about a weakening economy.

There are signs that consumers might continue to resist the Fed's efforts to cool spending and the economy. Many student loan borrowers started repaying their loans before the official end of the moratorium Oct. 1, suggesting that they were able to make those payments, at least for now, without having to sharply cut back spending in other areas.

"We view this initial jump as a sign that households were willing and able to resume these payments without requiring a large reduction in spending," economists at JPMorgan write in a research note.

And while high mortgage rates have depressed the sales of existing homes, the vast majority of homeowners are still paying low rates that are fixed for 30 years, meaning that their housing costs remain low even as the Fed hikes rates. That's a contrast to homeowners in the United Kingdom and Europe, for example, who are more likely to have floating-rate mortgages. About eight in 10 U.S. homeowners have a mortgage rate below 5%, according to online brokerage Redfin.

With inflation generally easing, the Fed is expected to keep its short-term rate unchanged when it meets next week. Many economists increasingly expect the central bank's policymakers to keep rates on hold when they meet in December as well.

Powell will hold a news conference Wednesday that will be scrutinized for any hints about the Fed's next moves.

Mideast war casts a shadow over the economy

Europe's central bank is set to halt rate hikes

FRANKFURT, Germany, Oct 26, (AP): The European Central Bank is ready to leave interest rates unchanged Thursday for the first time in over a year as the Israel-Hamas war spreads even more gloom over already downbeat prospects for Europe's economy.

It would be the bank's first meeting with no change after a torrid pace of 10 straight increases dating to July 2022 that pushed its key rate to a record-high 4%. The ECB would join the U.S. Federal Reserve, Bank of England and others in holding borrowing costs steady - albeit at the highest levels in years - as inflation has eased.

In Europe, inflation peaked at a painful 10.6% in October for the 20 countries that use the euro currency as Russia's war in Ukraine took a toll. Those high prices have been poison for consumer spending, draining household finances with added costs for necessities such as food, heat and electricity.

But with inflation now down to 4.3%, analysts expect the ECB to hold off on more hikes during its meeting in Athens. It is one of the bank's regular meetings away from its Frankfurt headquarters, meant to underline its status as a European Union institution.

Now, worries are sharpening about weakening economic growth and even the risk of a recession. Rate hikes are a central bank's chief weapon against inflation, but they can weigh on economic growth by raising the cost of credit for consumer purchases, particularly homes, and for companies to buy new equipment and facilities.

Surveys of purchasing managers by S&P Global indicate that economic activity fell in October. Analysts at ABN Amro bank foresee a 0.1% drop in economic output in the eurozone for the July-September quarter and minus 0.2% for the last three months of the year. The EU will publish third-quarter figures on Tuesday.

Inflation's impact on consumers was a big reason why Europe has seen almost no growth this year, recording zero in the first quarter and 0.2% in the second. Its biggest economy, Germany, is forecast by the International Monetary Fund to shrink by 0.5% this year, making it the world's worst performing major economy. The IMF says that even Russia is expected to grow this year.

And there's little prospect of improvement for Europe this year. The war in the Middle East has threatened to raise oil prices, though there hasn't been a major spike or an interruption



The European Central Bank (2nd right), is pictured during sunrise in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, Oct 26, 2023. The ECB's governing council met in Athens on Thursday. (AP)

Southwest Airlines quarterly profit slides 30% and says growth will slow next year

DALLAS, Oct 26, (AP): Southwest Airlines' third-quarter profit fell 30% to \$193 million despite record revenue as leisure travel boomed over the summer.

The airline's labor costs rose sharply, however, more than offsetting the increase in revenue.

Southwest predicted Thursday that a key measure of pricing power will fall sharply in the fourth quarter and it will scale back its aggressive growth plans early next year.

The results, and particularly Southwest's plans to throttle back on growth, are likely to add to concerns that de-

mand for domestic travel, the heart of Southwest's business, could weaken.

Shares of Southwest Airlines Co. slid 3% before the opening bell.

The airline's profit is down from \$277 million a year ago and, excluding special items, worked out to 38 cents per share. That matched Wall Street expectations, according to a FactSet survey of analysts.

Revenue rose \$305 million, or 5%, to \$6.52 billion, just short of projections for \$6.56 billion.

Labor costs rose by \$406 million, an increase of more than 17%. The airline saved \$186 million because fuel was

cheaper than a year earlier, but fuel prices have been rising recently.

The airline expects fourth-quarter passenger-carrying capacity to increase 21% compared with the same period last year. Southwest said it will cut that growth in half in the first quarter of next year - to between 10% and 12%, four points less than previously planned.

CEO Robert Jordan said that Southwest is slowing its growth rate in 2024 "to absorb current capacity, mature development markets, and optimize schedules to current travel patterns."

in supplies so far. But the conflict adds uncertainty because Europe is heavily dependent on imported energy, which could be affected if the Israel-Hamas war widens to include Iran or its proxy fighters in Arab countries.

"The ECB won't be in any rush to take further action," said Carolyn Brzeski, global head of macro at ING

bank. "Instead, it will use a welcome pause to wait for more data points on the delayed impact of the rate hikes so far and developments in the oil price."

The emphasis has shifted to how long rates will stay at record highs. ECB President Christine Lagarde has repeated the bank's message that rates have now "reached levels that, maintained for a sufficiently long

duration, will make a substantial contribution to the timely return of inflation" to its goal of 2% considered best for the economy.

That was taken as a signal the ECB was finished raising rates, though some analysts aren't ruling out a last rate hike in December if the expected decline in inflation doesn't materialize.

Australian hydrogen company outlines US expansion

SANTA FE, N.M., Oct 26, (AP): An Australia-based company plans to build a campus in New Mexico to expand its research into hydrogen fuel as a heat source for industry, touting a proprietary chemical process without greenhouse gas emissions.

Hydrogen-technology research and developer Star Scientific Limited, which has around 20 employees, signed a letter of intent with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham while she was in Sydney attending a summit Thursday on hydrogen and the energy sector.

Andrew Horvath, global group chairman at Star Scientific, said the new facilities in Albuquerque would scale up research and development of its hydrogen technology for generating heat.

"Our system doesn't burn gas, it reacts the gas," said Horvath, describing the proprietary technology in general terms only. "It creates an instantaneous reaction whereby you end up with the heat from the excitation energy from those atoms."

Horvath said the company is developing a chemical catalyst system for use in combining hydrogen and oxygen

to produce heat directly, with water as a byproduct. The system is different from hydrogen fuel cells that provide electricity, he said.

Star Scientific is currently sponsoring two hydrogen-energy pilot projects in Australia with a food-production company and a plastics-packaging business. They aim to replace heat systems derived from natural gas, reducing emissions of climate-warming pollution in the process.

The New Mexico governor's office said in a statement that the company is

looking to acquire enough land to place up to 10 buildings for laboratory research, testing and eventual manufacturing, and possibly qualify for public incentives that underwrite infrastructure investments and job training.

Lujan Grisham, a Democrat, has enthusiastically embraced support for hydrogen-energy ventures to create local jobs. But there's been concern and criticism from environmentalists who say hydrogen presents its own pollution and climate risks depending on production methods and precautions against leaks.

NerdWallet

Entrepreneurs with 'disabilities' activate allies, rewrite narrative

Inna and Vladimir Giterman tinkered with several business ideas before finding their niche - and their version of the American dream - with crepes.

Both immigrants, and both deaf, the Gitermans started Crepe Crazy in 2007. What began as a mom-and-pop shop at festivals has grown into a full-blown family business with multiple food trucks, two brick-and-mortar restaurants in Texas and a franchise location in Baltimore.

Everyone who works for the company, including the Giterman's two adult children, are either deaf or "deeply involved with the deaf community," Inna Giterman said in an email. Staff communicate using American Sign Language. Customers who can't sign still order with their hands: by pointing.

Crepe Crazy is one of roughly 1.8 million businesses in the United States that is owned by someone with a disability, according to the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (though experts believe that number to be conservative).

And while the path to entrepreneurship is rarely easy, business owners with disabilities often need to overcome additional challenges, like societal misconceptions, barriers to financing, extra living costs and lack of accommodations, among other things.

Layers of funding barriers
Entrepreneurs often have to leverage personal savings, credit cards or even a personal loan to fund their business at the outset.

But that's complicated for founders with disabilities, especially if they rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid, which have income and asset limits, says Nikki Powis, director of small-business programs at the National Disability Institute (NDI).

"A person receiving SSI is only allowed to have \$2,000 in assets," Powis says. "That makes it very difficult to save money to start a business - and do it yourself - because you can't have more than \$2,000 in your bank account."

There are workarounds, including leveraging ABLE accounts, tax-free savings and investment accounts that don't count toward one's asset total. Business owners should also tap the expertise of a professional to help with benefits planning, Powis says, adding that the NDI can help connect people with those experts.

"Yes, there are barriers and challenges, but you need to find people who are experts that can help you navigate that," Powis says. "And it should never stop somebody from moving forward with their dreams."

Overcoming stigma

Securing funding with business loans or venture backing often requires a higher bar for entrepreneurs with disabilities, too. In part because banks, loan officers and investors frequently underestimate what people with a disability are capable of accomplishing.

That stigma can color nearly every business interaction, from winning contracts and customers to leasing commercial real estate.

"I would say probably 99.5% of the people that I've talked to said they've experienced that at some level or other," Powis says, citing several examples.

These include one business owner who has lost contracts after the other party realized he had a disability. And a female founder who was told by an investor, "Come back to me when you have a male counterpart without a disability."

Community development financial institutions like DreamSpring and the Disability Opportunity Fund are working to get business loans to more entrepreneurs with disabilities. Organizations like 2Gether-International, a startup incubator for disabled founders, and Communication Service for the Deaf's Social Venture Fund also offer opportunities for funding, coaching and community with peers.

Changing the narrative
Diego Mariscal sees disability as a strength rather than a weakness for entrepreneurs, and he started 2Gether-International to help rewrite the script surrounding people with disabilities.

" Oftentimes, you talk about disability as something that needs to be accommodated or fixed or cured," says Mariscal, who has cerebral palsy. But in reality, people who live with a disability are resilient as a default - and that's a "competitive advantage," he says.

"As disabled people, we have to figure out how do you get dressed, how do you drive, how do you communicate. We have to figure out how to live in a world that is not built to fit our needs," Mariscal says. "Those skills, those survival skills, can be translated into entrepreneurship skills."

The Gitermans are changing the narrative, too, one customer at a time. While customers come to their food trucks and restaurants for tasty crepes, they also get a glimpse at a thriving business run almost entirely by deaf people. This leaves an impression.

"We appreciate that they come in for food because they know it's uniquely good," Inna Giterman said. "(But) it is more satisfying knowing that they leave with more than just a happy stomach." (AP)

SECURITY

Business Plus



Economic crises are rippling through countries bordering Israel

War could threaten already fragile economies



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, second from left, participates in global infrastructure and investment forum with Amos Hochstein, left, senior advisor to the president on energy and investment, Janet Yellen, second from right, United States Secretary of Treasury, and Ajay Banga, right, World Bank president, in New York, Sept. 21, 2023. Economic crises are rippling through the countries bordering Israel. That raises the possibility of a chain reaction from the war against Hamas that further worsens the financial health and political stability of Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon and creates problems well beyond. (AP)

WASHINGTON, Oct 26, (AP): Economic crises are rippling through the countries bordering Israel, raising the possibility of a chain reaction from the war with Hamas that further worsens the financial health and political stability of Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon and creates problems well beyond.

Each of the three countries is up against differing economic pressures that led the International Monetary Fund to warn in a September report that they could lose their "sociopolitical stability." That warning came shortly before Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, triggering a war that could easily cause economic chaos that President Joe Biden and the European Union would likely need to address.

The possible fallout is now starting to be recognized by world leaders and policy analysts. For a Biden administration committed to stopping the Israel-Hamas war from widening, the conflict could amplify the economic strains and possibly cause governments to collapse. If the chaos went unchecked, it could spread across a region that is vital

for global oil supplies - with reverberations around the globe.

"The more unstable things are economically, the easier it is for bad actors in the region to stir the pot," said Christopher Swift, an international lawyer and former Treasury Department official. "The notion that you can divorce politics from economics is a little bit myopic, and naive. Politics, economics and security go together very closely."

World Bank head Ajay Banga warned at a conference in Saudi Arabia this week that the war puts economic development at a "dangerous juncture."

The financial situation is serious enough that Charles Michel, president of the European Council, met with the IMF last Thursday and told officials there that they needed to do more to support the Egyptian government, which he said is under pressure due to the possibility of migrants arriving from Hamas-controlled Gaza as well as people fleeing a civil war in Sudan.

"Let's support Egypt," Michel told reporters afterward. "Egypt needs our support and we need to

support Egypt."

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi refuses to take in Palestinian refugees, fearing that Israel wants to force a permanent expulsion of Palestinians and nullify Palestinian demands for statehood. The Egyptian leader also said a mass exodus would risk bringing militants into the Sinai Peninsula.

Already, over a million people have been displaced within Gaza, and the threat of the war's escalation looms with clashes along the Lebanon-Israel border between the Israeli military and Hezbollah militants.

"To presume that there won't be a movement of people is naive and premature," said Swift. "Any sudden blow to the el-Sissi regime from the outside, whether it's an economic blow, or whether it's the sudden migration of a lot of people out of Gaza into the Sinai could have destabilizing effects."

Swift said that while el-Sissi's regime is heavily dependent on U.S. economic and military assistance, it's increasingly going to be popular opinion within Egypt that deter-

mines his actions, a lesson learned from the Arab Spring protests that brought down the Mubarak regime in 2011.

In April, the IMF concluded that Egypt's financing needs for the year were equal in size to 35% of its gross domestic product. On Oct. 5, Moody's downgraded Egyptian debt that was already at junk status. The downgrade came as past efforts have failed to help Egypt's economy, which was saddled with about \$160 billion in debt as of the end of last year.

Mirette F. Mabrouk, director of the Middle East Institute's Egypt Studies program, said, "Egypt is in the worst economic crisis I can remember in at least five decades" and that only complicates the current turmoil from the war.

"If you have this conflagration in Gaza, you need the rest of the region to be stable for everyone to take appropriate and correct action," Mabrouk said. "You don't need more instability in a region that is already quite unstable."

Mabrouk said one of the most immediate signs of increasing distress

is that Egypt's central bank has in the past week imposed foreign currency restrictions on cards linked to local bank accounts.

One major potential setback for Egypt stemming from the latest Israel-Hamas War would be the loss of tourists seeking to explore the country's ancient pyramids and history. Tourism is one of Egypt's leading economic sectors, and along with foreign investment provides needed access to the rest of the global economy.

A representative from the Egyptian government did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

Nearby Jordan is struggling due to slower economic growth and less foreign investment, according to the IMF. Its debt outlook is healthier than Egypt's, but its unemployment rate is in the double digits, according to financial data provider FactSet.

The size of the Lebanese economy shrank by more than half from 2019 to 2021, according to the World Bank. Lebanon's currency, which since 1997 had been pegged to the U.S. dollar at 1,500 Lebanese pounds to the dollar, now trades around 90,000 pounds to the dollar.

While many businesses have taken to charging in dollars, public employees who still get their wages in lira have seen their purchasing power crash, with many now relying on remittances from relatives abroad to stay afloat. International donors including the United States and Qatar have been subsidizing the salaries of Lebanese army soldiers.

The country's leaders reached a tentative agreement with the IMF in April 2022 for a bailout package but they have not implemented most of the reforms required to finalize the deal. The IMF warned in a report earlier this year that without reforms, public debt in the small, crisis-ridden country could reach nearly 550% of GDP.

Before the latest Israel-Hamas war, some officials had pointed to Lebanon's rebounding tourism industry as an economic lifeline. But since the conflict has threatened to envelop Lebanon - with regular small-scale clashes already taking place between militants from Hamas-allied Hezbollah and Israeli forces on the country's southern border - foreign embassies have warned their citizens to leave and airlines have canceled flights to the country.

Paul Salem, president of the Middle East Institute in Washington, said that "if tensions spread to the Gulf, this conflict will have the potential to severely impact international markets and struggling economies and populations around the globe."

Damaged buildings underscore massive risks for businesses

Business owners in Ukrainian front-line city adapt

KRAMATORSK, Ukraine, Oct 26, (AP): In a city where damaged buildings are everywhere, a destroyed pizzeria stands out as a painful reminder of lives and livelihoods dashed in an instant.

A Russian ballistic missile struck the popular eatery in eastern Ukraine in June, killing 13 people including an award-winning Ukrainian writer and several teenagers. Seven of the victims were staff.

Today, fresh flowers and notes have been placed where the entrance once was. A T-shirt, part of the waitstaff's uniform, hangs near the makeshift memorial with the inscription "We will never forget."

"As an entrepreneur, of course, I regret the loss of property, but there's something that cannot be returned: human lives," said Dmytro Ihnatenko, the owner of RIA Pizza.

The bombed-out building in Kramatorsk underscores the massive risks for businesses in this front-line city in the Donetsk region. But that has not deterred many other

business owners who have reopened their doors to customers in the past year.

The city council estimates there are 50 restaurants and 228 shops now open in Kramatorsk, three times the number open at the same period last year. Most are believed to be existing businesses that closed in the early days of the war and have reopened.

"We understand that this is a risk, and we are taking it because this is our life," said Olena Ziabina, chief administrator of the White Burger restaurant in Kramatorsk. "Wherever we are, we need to work. We work here. This is our conscious choice."

The White Burger chain operated mainly in Donetsk and Luhansk regions before the war. But after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, it could reopen only in Kramatorsk. It launched two new restaurants in the capital, Kyiv, and in Dnipro to keep the chain alive.

Kramatorsk's restaurant is the

chain's top performer in profitability, even though prices are 20% lower than in the capital's restaurant.

After the attack on RIA Pizza, White Burger's operators didn't consider closing the Kramatorsk restaurant, Ziabina said. "I cried a lot," she said, recalling the day she heard about the attack.

Kramatorsk's economy has adapted to war. The city houses the Ukrainian army's regional headquarters, and many cafes and restaurants are frequented mainly by soldiers as well as journalists and aid workers.

Ukrainian women often travel there to reunite for few days with husbands and boyfriends.

Soldiers joke that Kramatorsk is their Las Vegas, providing all the "luxuries" they need like good food or coffee. But restaurants offer only non-alcoholic beer due to the city's proximity to the battlefield.

The city streets are mostly empty except for military cars. The residents who stayed avoid big gather-

ings and crowded places.

Still, it is a far cry from the war's early days, when Kramatorsk's shops, restaurants and cafes were shuttered. Tens of thousands of people were left without jobs, and factories were closed.

"Probably, thanks to the military, we can still come back to this city," said Oleksandr, who asked to be identified only by his first name because of security concerns.

He is a co-founder of one of the numerous military shops in Kramatorsk serving soldiers. Oleksandr said he marks up prices by only 1 hryvnia (2 cents) above the manufacturer's price. He said the aim isn't to earn money but to provide the military with the necessary equipment.

Many residents cherish new work opportunities brought by the reopening of shops and restaurants.

But there are fewer options for older people, said Tetiana Podosionova, 54. She worked at the Kramatorsk Machinebuilding Plant

for 32 years, but the plant closed due to security risks when the war started.

"I had hoped to work at the factory until retirement," Podosionova said. Most jobs are now in restaurants and shops, where she had no experience.

Finally, she found a job at Amazing Fish Aquarium, which resumed operations months after the war began. The aquarium has hundreds of exotic fish and dozens of parrots and remains open to entertain residents, who are often stressed from missile strikes.

But every reopened business carries risk. Ihnatenko, the pizzeria owner, still comes to his destroyed restaurant every day when he's in Kramatorsk. He doesn't know why. He looks tired. His voice is hardly above a whisper.

He, like many business owners, saw Ukraine's successful counteroffensive in the neighboring Kharkiv region last year as a sign that life could return to Kramatorsk.

editor's choice





Entertainment

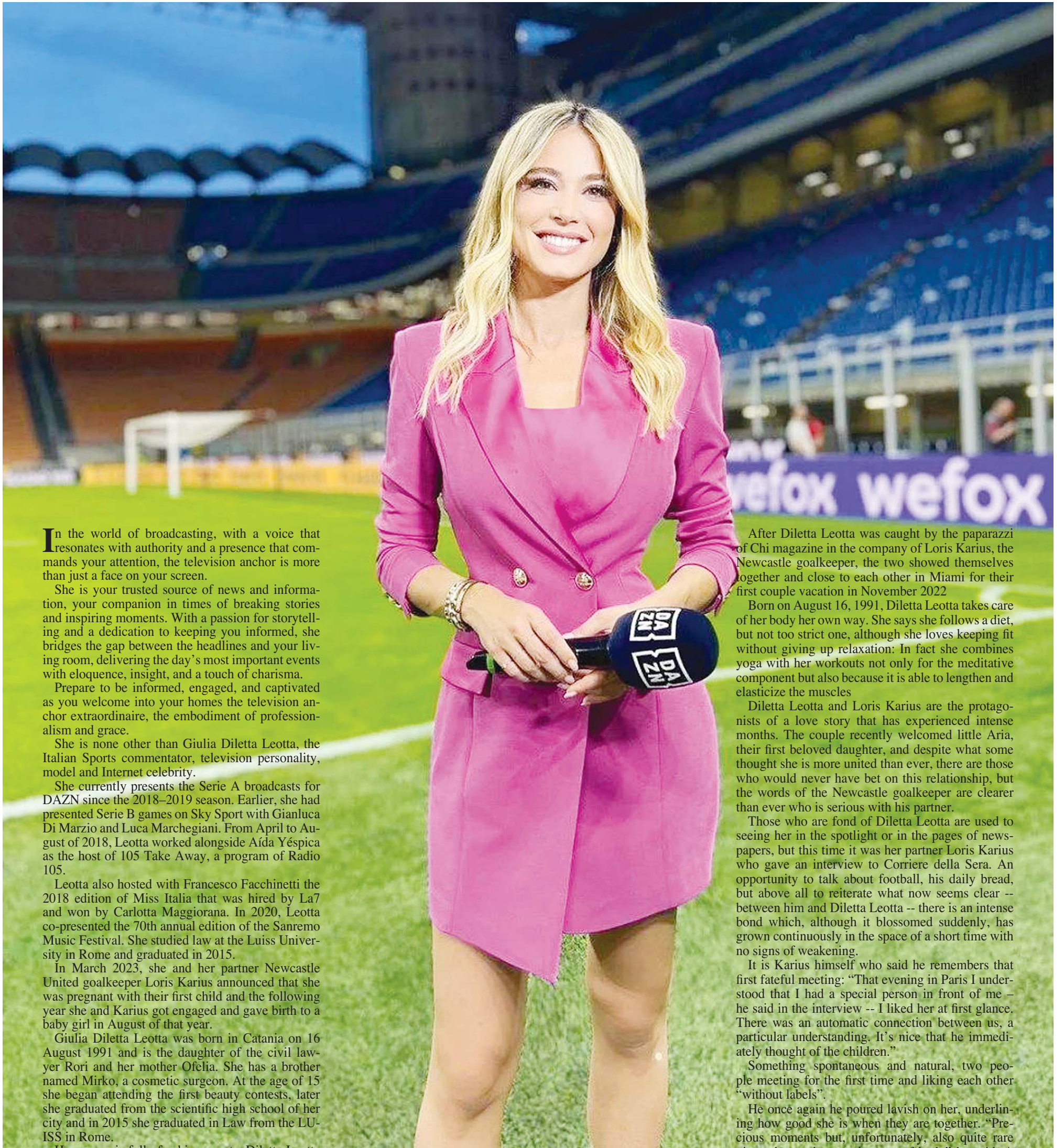
Giulia Diletta Leotta ...

more than just a face on your screen

celebrity

Features

ARABIC TIMES
FRIDAY-SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27-28, 2023



Giulia Diletta Leotta

In the world of broadcasting, with a voice that resonates with authority and a presence that commands your attention, the television anchor is more than just a face on your screen.

She is your trusted source of news and information, your companion in times of breaking stories and inspiring moments. With a passion for storytelling and a dedication to keeping you informed, she bridges the gap between the headlines and your living room, delivering the day's most important events with eloquence, insight, and a touch of charisma.

Prepare to be informed, engaged, and captivated as you welcome into your homes the television anchor extraordinaire, the embodiment of professionalism and grace.

She is none other than Giulia Diletta Leotta, the Italian Sports commentator, television personality, model and Internet celebrity.

She currently presents the Serie A broadcasts for DAZN since the 2018-2019 season. Earlier, she had presented Serie B games on Sky Sport with Gianluca Di Marzio and Luca Marchegiani. From April to August of 2018, Leotta worked alongside Aída Yéspica as the host of 105 Take Away, a program of Radio 105.

Leotta also hosted with Francesco Facchinetti the 2018 edition of Miss Italia that was hired by La7 and won by Carlotta Maggiorana. In 2020, Leotta co-presented the 70th annual edition of the Sanremo Music Festival. She studied law at the Luiss University in Rome and graduated in 2015.

In March 2023, she and her partner Newcastle United goalkeeper Loris Karius announced that she was pregnant with their first child and the following year she and Karius got engaged and gave birth to a baby girl in August of that year.

Giulia Diletta Leotta was born in Catania on 16 August 1991 and is the daughter of the civil lawyer Rori and her mother Ofelia. She has a brother named Mirko, a cosmetic surgeon. At the age of 15 she began attending the first beauty contests, later she graduated from the scientific high school of her city and in 2015 she graduated in Law from the LU-ISS in Rome.

Her career is full of achievements. Diletta Leotta began working on a football program broadcast on Antenna Sicilia in 2008 and the following year she took part in Miss Italia but was eliminated in the pre-selections.

In 2010 she joined Salvo La Rosa in hosting the Festival of the new Sicilian song, broadcast on Antenna Sicilia, and in the entertainment program Insieme, on the same network, as a valet and the following year she made her debut at Mediaset hosting Birthday di La5; and in 2012 went on to become the "meteorina" of Sky Meteo.

In 2014 she was the host at RDS Academy, the first talent show dedicated to radio on Sky Uno. For the 2015-2016 sports season she was hosts Sky Serie B on Sky Sport 1 and a special on the 2016 European Championships alongside Ilaria D'Amico

After hosting the first evening of the 2017 Sanremo Festival, Diletta Leotta began her radio adventure at the helm of the 105 Take Away program with Daniele Battaglia; in 2018 she left Sky Sport to host The Farmer Looks for a Wife again on Sky, before leaving the broadcaster and becoming the face of DAZN.

For the DAZN platform she was the host of 'Diletta gol', 'Diletta gol stories', 'Diletta gol in campo' and Linea Diletta; also in 2018 she hosted the Miss Italia final on La7 with Francesco Facchinetti and subsequently the Gazzetta Sport Awards.

In 2020 she joined Amadeus to host the 1st and 5th evenings of the Sanremo Festival. In the same year she appeared, as herself, in the film '7 hours to

make you fall in love'. In 2021 she presents an episode of Striscia la Notizia with Alessandro Siani and with the Neapolitan actor she is also the protagonist of the Christmas film 'Who Framed Santa Claus?' and the same year she also participated in Celebrity Hunted 2 on Amazon Prime Video

Diletta Leotta's attractiveness exposed her to criticism from haters and some of her colleagues from a very young age. She received a Golden Tapiro from Striscia la Notizia when she declared that she had not resorted to any retouching despite Paola Ferrari's insinuations.

After Diletta Leotta was caught by the paparazzi of Chi magazine in the company of Loris Karius, the Newcastle goalkeeper, the two showed themselves together and close to each other in Miami for their first couple vacation in November 2022

Born on August 16, 1991, Diletta Leotta takes care of her body her own way. She says she follows a diet, but not too strict one, although she loves keeping fit without giving up relaxation. In fact she combines yoga with her workouts not only for the meditative component but also because it is able to lengthen and elasticize the muscles

Diletta Leotta and Loris Karius are the protagonists of a love story that has experienced intense months. The couple recently welcomed little Aria, their first beloved daughter, and despite what some thought she is more united than ever, there are those who would never have bet on this relationship, but the words of the Newcastle goalkeeper are clearer than ever who is serious with his partner.

Those who are fond of Diletta Leotta are used to seeing her in the spotlight or in the pages of newspapers, but this time it was her partner Loris Karius who gave an interview to Corriere della Sera. An opportunity to talk about football, his daily bread, but above all to reiterate what now seems clear -- between him and Diletta Leotta -- there is an intense bond which, although it blossomed suddenly, has grown continuously in the space of a short time with no signs of weakening.

It is Karius himself who said he remembers that first fateful meeting: "That evening in Paris I understood that I had a special person in front of me -- he said in the interview -- I liked her at first glance. There was an automatic connection between us, a particular understanding. It's nice that he immediately thought of the children."

Something spontaneous and natural, two people meeting for the first time and liking each other "without labels".

He once again he poured lavish on her, underlining how good she is when they are together. "Precious moments but, unfortunately, also quite rare given the work commitments of both," he said. A "long distance relationship", as he himself defines it, but totally divorced from disagreements and jealousies which would only increase unnecessary tensions.

The Newcastle goalkeeper is increasingly in love with her partner, with whom he does not hide the fact that he has long-term plans: "I chose to start a family with her. Our plan is to be together for the rest of our lives," he stated bluntly. An unequivocal declaration of love, made even more beautiful in light of the new experience as parents that they are both experiencing with great enthusiasm.

Karius is a happy father who deeply loves little Aria, born on August 16: "I like to think that there is this little baby who needs me," he explained to the Corriere.

"If I have a stressful day and she's at home, I just pick her up and everything becomes beautiful. It's a gift, with her I can give the right weight to things that previously seemed important to me. I enjoy all the time together."

Diletta Leotta's life has been enriched by the joy of becoming a mother but, as an energetic woman as she is, it took her very little to get back into shape (to say the least, dazzling) and a few weeks after giving birth she is already preparing to return in the field. A place that means a lot to her, perhaps everything: what has consecrated her among the most loved sports presenters of all time, admired by women and secretly (but not too much) loved by fans.



Giulia Diletta Leotta

A VOICE THAT RESONATES WITH AUTHORITY

editor's choice



People & Places

Books

'Ideas, info a threat'

US prison prohibits 'Art of War' & more

NEW YORK, Oct. 26, (AP) — Tens of thousands of books are being banned or restricted by US prisons, according to a new report from PEN America. The list includes everything from self-help books to an Elmore Leonard novel.

"The common concept underpinning the censorship we're seeing is that certain ideas and information are a threat," says the report's lead author, Moira Marquis, senior manager in the prison and justice writing department at PEN, the literary and free expression organization.

Timed to the start Wednesday of Prison Banned Books Week, "Reading Between the Bars" draws upon public record requests, calls from PEN to prison mailrooms, dozens of accounts from inmates and PEN's struggles to distribute its guide for prison writing, "The Sentences That Create Us: Crafting A Writer's Life in Prison," which came out last year.

Marquis said that the most common official reasons for bans are security and sexual content, terms that can apply to a very wide range of titles. Michigan's "restricted" list includes Leonard's thriller "Cuba Libre," set right before the 1898 Spanish-American War, and Frederick Forsyth's "The Day of the Jackal," about a professional assassin's attempt to murder French President Charles de Gaulle in the 1960s. Both novels were cited as a "threat to the order/security of institution."

"One of the books ('Day of the Jackal') deals with the planned assassination of a political leader/methods for engaging in such activities and the second ('Cuba Libre') deals with an individual engaged in various criminal enterprises," a spokesman for the Michigan Department of Corrections told The Associated in an email. "As part of the updated restricted publication process, a new Literary Review Committee has been formed to review items that were previously placed on the restricted publication list, to determine if they should remain or be removed."

Rehabilitative

Amy Schumer's memoir "The Girl with the Lower Back Tattoo" was flagged by Florida officials for graphic sexual content and for being "a threat to the security, order, or rehabilitative objectives of the correctional system or the safety of any person."

Other books to appear on banned lists: Sun Tzu's "The Art of War," the compilation "Prison Ramen: Recipes and Stories from Behind Bars," Barrington Barber's "Anyone Can Draw: Create Sensational Artwork in Easy Steps" and Robert Greene's self-help best-seller "48 Laws of Power."

"It's a form of control. It's the ultimate form of power of manipulation," Greene said in a statement issued through PEN.

In its report, PEN found parallels between the frequency of prison bans and book bannings in schools and libraries. In Florida, PEN has estimated that more than 40% of all library bans took place in Florida in 2022. Meanwhile, the organization found that more than 22,000 books are banned from Florida prisons - the highest of any state - as of early this year, with some entries dating back to the 1990s. Texas, another frequent site of library bannings, had more than 10,000 prison book bans, second only to Florida.

Incidents of banning are likely much higher than what PEN has compiled, according to "Reading Between the Bars," because record keeping by many prisons is erratic or non-existent. Kentucky and New Mexico are among more than 20 states that do not keep centralized records.

"Prison book programs have mostly tried to raise awareness locally when prisons implement new censorship restrictions for communities they serve," the report reads. "But these programs are largely run by volunteers and struggle to keep up with the demand for books even absent censorship. The upshot is that there have been few nationwide efforts to analyze trends in carceral censorship."

Marquis says that PEN places bans into two categories: content-specific, in which books are banned because of what they say or allegedly say, and content-neutral, in which books are restricted because they are not sent through accepted channels. In Maine, Michigan and other states, prisoners may only receive books through a select number of vendors, whether Amazon.com, a local bookstore or an approved publisher.

Restrictions

In Idaho, Amazon and Barnes & Noble are not among the nine approved sellers, which include Books a Million and the Women's Prison Book Project.

Content-neutral restrictions may also apply to the packaging (some federal facilities only permit white wrapping, Marquis says), and against free or used literature "because the intended recipient did not receive permission from a warden - or similar administrator - for each specific title mailed to them before the literature arrived," according to Marquis.

A spokesman for the Idaho Department of Correction told the AP in an email that restrictions on packaging had become necessary because of "an increase in the amount of drug-soaked mail being sent to our residents." He added that inmates can receive books and periodicals free of charge from authorized vendors and publishers.

"We believe our guidelines area a reasonable response to a growing problem that puts the health and safety of the people who live and work in Idaho's correctional facilities at risk," he said.

"Reading Between the Bars" follows a study released late in 2022 by the non-profit Marshall Project, which found some 50,000 banned prison titles, based on lists made available by 25 states. In 2019, a PEN report explored different levels of prison bans - from individuals not permitted to receive a given book to state-wide restrictions - and determined that restrictions were both widespread and arbitrary.

"With over two million Americans incarcerated, the book-restriction regulations within the United States carceral system represent the largest book ban policy in the United States," the 2019 study reads in part. "The reality of book banning in American prisons is systematic and comprehensive. State and federal prison authorities censor content with little oversight or public scrutiny. Often the ultimate decision-maker about a person's right to read is housed in the prison mailroom."



Schumer



This image released by A24 shows Jacob Elordi as Elvis, right, and Cailee Spaeny as Priscilla, in a scene from 'Priscilla.' (AP)



Actor Karole Rocher poses on the red carpet of the movie Comme un Fils (Like a Son) during the 18th Rome Film Festival in Rome, Wednesday, Oct. 25. (AP)



Imperioli



Callas

Variety

ATHENS, Greece: Finishing her class at The Julliard School of the arts in New York, Greek opera great Maria Callas gave her students a final word of advice.

"Keep on going the proper way: Not with fireworks, not with easy applause, but with the expression of the words, the diction, and to really feel what you feel. That's what I want. I'm not good at words, so that's that."

The March 1972 speech was a detail little known to her admiring public, along with letters, jewellery and countless honors that include a postage stamp series from Kyrgyzstan and Congo.

Now they are on display. The City of Athens inaugurated the Maria Callas Museum in the center of the Greek capital Wednesday, marking a century since the birth to Greek parents of the legendary soprano in New York.

The museum, next to the city's cathedral and with a view of the Acropolis, opens to the public Thursday, with sections of the museum connected by a red carpet.

The top floors offer a recreated room of her Paris apartment, an imaginary forest and a sound studio, along with recordings of her famed live performances and clips of her lessons at The Julliard School.

Other display areas have exhibits of her costumes, hand-written letters and a sketch of a Callas-inspired Manolo Blahnik design.

"I think we are primarily addressing a person who is the ordinary visitor who might not know much about opera. They might know much about Maria Callas," museum supervisor Erato Koutsoudaki told The Associated Press.

"So we invite them to start with the spaces where you can listen and watch her perform iconic arias from the great operas. So you can just live it. Then you can learn more about who this woman was and why she was important, on the lower floors that are more like a conventional museum."

Born Maria Kalogeropoulos, the singer made her professional debut in Athens as an 18-year-old student and died in Paris aged 53 after a career that some still consider to be unrivaled in opera.

Callas would have turned 100 on Dec. 2, and her life has been honored with a year of artistic events in Greece as well as the upcoming movie "Maria" starring Angelina Jolie.

Athens Mayor Kostas Bakoyannis at

Film

Coppola's film is muted and textured

Teen dreams & nightmares in 'Priscilla'

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 26, (AP) — Dreamily gazing at the album covers of Elvis Presley was not, statistically speaking, a rare habit among American teen girls in the late 1950s and early '60s.

But for Priscilla Beaulieu, teenage fantasy became a strange and surreal reality. Sofia Coppola's "Priscilla," starring Cailee Spaeny, captures all the dreaminess, the absurdity and, finally, the nightmare of falling in love with Elvis.

Priscilla was just 14 years-old - a 9th grader - when she first met him. It was 1959. She was living in West Germany, where her Air Force officer stepfather was stationed. The swoony early scenes of Coppola's film find a solitary Priscilla sipping soda in a Navy base diner while Frankie Avalon's "Venus" ("Venus, make her fair / A lovely girl with sunlight in her hair") plays around her, as covered by the band Phoenix.

A man approaches and asks if she likes Elvis. Of course she does. Would she like to meet him? Um, what? After some negotiations with her parents, Priscilla is sitting there on the sofa at a small party when the King of Rock 'n' Roll, himself (Jacob Elordi), strolls down the stairs. Big, big sigh.

Coppola, the writer-director of "The Virgin Suicides," "Lost in Translation" and "Somewhere," has always been innately attuned to the forming identities, swelling desires and intimate revelations of young women. In the story of Priscilla Presley (the film is based on her 1985 memoir, "Elvis and Me"), Coppola has found a tale tailor-made for her delicately perceptive style of filmmaking.

As a movie, "Priscilla" is the diametric opposite of Baz Luhrmann's "Elvis." Where Luhrmann's film was lurid and careening, Coppola's is muted and textured. Her film is a kind of fairy tale that turns claustrophobic and cautionary.

"Priscilla" is, at least at first, quite funny. After Priscilla initially catches Elvis' eye at that party, she's back at school learning about the food groups. How could anyone possibly stomach that? Or when, after Elvis hasn't called following his stint in the military, Priscilla's mother asks her if there aren't any boys in school she might be interested in, instead, Priscilla doesn't need to say anything; just the image of lining up your average 9th grade boy against Elvis Presley is enough.

Problematic

Yet their courtship continues in somewhat traditional fashion. Elvis, played with relaxed magnetism by Elordi ("The Kissing Booth," "Saltburn"), is drawn to Priscilla because she reminds him of home; it's clear her purity is part of her appeal to him. It's a long time before they have sex, though her youth remains tacitly problematic. "Wow, she's young," says one woman watching Elvis lead Priscilla upstairs. "Like a little girl."

Their life together is initially sweet if deranged. Priscilla drifts through a dream world even if Elvis' extremes are glaring to us. His bedroom in Graceland is comically gaudy. "I got this for you," we hear Elvis say kindly, before a handgun is handed over.

No Presley songs play in "Priscilla." (While Priscilla Presley is an executive producer, the Elvis estate didn't participate in the film.) But it does share a telling track (Carl Orff's "Gas-senhauer") with Terence Malick's "Badlands," another movie about an underage teen girl (Sissy Spacek) who throws her life in with a charismatic drifter with matinee-idol looks (Martin Sheen).

And like they do for Holly in "Badlands," things turn increasingly dark for Priscilla. Elvis treats her like a doll he keeps at home while he goes in and out. "It's either me or a career, baby,"

he tells her. Coppola, who dedicates the movie to her mother, Eleanor Coppola, has long specialized in gilded cages ("Marie Antoinette," "The Bling Ring"). Graceland turns out to be a prison to Priscilla.

There aren't many false notes in Coppola's richly layered film, handsomely shot by Philippe Le Sourd, with sumptuous production design from Tamara Deverell and fine, toned-down costumes by Stacey Battat.

But "Priscilla" fades where "Elvis" found its footing. When Presley's downturn accelerates in Las Vegas, Luhrmann's movie swelled with tragedy. In the same time period here, Priscilla awakens. Yet it feels underdeveloped, coming too quickly, in a sudden rush - albeit a terrific rush, with Dolly Parton playing.

A constant throughout, though, is Spaeny. This is a deft breakthrough performance perfectly poised between youthful fantasy and adult reality.

"Priscilla," an A24 release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for drug use and some language. Running time: 113 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Filmmaker Paul Schrader rounds out his unofficial Man in a Room trilogy ("First Reformed," "The Card Counter") with "Master Gardener," arriving on Hulu on Thursday. Joel Edgerton plays a horticulturist named Narvel who works on the large estate of a wealthy dowager (Sigourney Weaver's Norma). Narvel harbors some secrets under his gardening jumpsuits, though, including tattoos and a past with a body count. I wrote in my review that its ideas are many and perhaps not terribly coherent, but there are pleasures in the enjoyable performances from Edgerton, Weaver and Quintessa Swindell.

the museum's inauguration thanked the staff and private donors. Many started work on the project when it was conceived 24 years ago, bringing the collection together through auction purchases, donations from private collections and negotiations for display rights with recording companies.

"This is the first museum dedicated to Maria Callas that ... combines technology with lived experience," the mayor said. "We welcome this museum with great joy and deep respect for the great diva." (AP)

LAS VEGAS: The NBA enlisted an actor from "The Sopranos" and borrowed the central theme of the film "Ocean's Eleven" - a Las Vegas heist - to hype the inaugural In-Season Tournament that begins Nov. 3.

The latest marketing move, released Wednesday, is a nearly 2-minute spot featuring actor Michael Imperioli narrating how seven players - Anthony Davis, Trae Young, DeMar DeRozan, Julius Randle, Kawhi Leonard, Darius Garland and Draymond Green - are in a casino plotting to steal the NBA Cup.

That's the trophy the winner of the tournament finale in Las Vegas gets on Dec. 9. The NBA says the tournament will differ from the norm of early season basketball, with different playing floors and uniforms.

"We've launched what we believe is a comprehensive and engaging program to promote this new tournament," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said Wednesday. "We hope these efforts get fans as excited as we are about this new competition."

Silver spent years proposing a tournament like this, likening it to ones found in soccer. Spoiler alert: The trophy somehow ends up with Imperioli, the mastermind of the planned heist.

"Looks like you're all going to have to play for it," Imperioli says as the spot ends. (AP)

NEW YORK: Lester Holt, Kristen Welker and Hugh Hewitt will moderate the third Republican presidential debate, scheduled for Nov. 8 in Miami, NBC said Wednesday.

The first one held outside the confines of Fox News, the two-hour debate will be seen at 8 p.m. Eastern on NBC and the NBC News Now streaming service.

Holt is the anchor of "NBC Nightly News" and Welker is the moderator of "Meet the Press." Hewitt hosts a morning talk show for the Salem Radio Network, a co-sponsor of the debate.

Qualified participants will be announced later. Former President Donald Trump, leading in polls for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, skipped the first two debates and has given no indication he will be at any others. (AP)



From left: actors Sandra Ceccarelli, Antonio Albanese, and Liliana Bottone arrive on the red carpet of the film Cento domeniche at the 18th edition of the Rome Film Fest in Rome, Wednesday, Oct. 25. (AP)

HEALTH



Photos from the event

IDF gives insights into screening, symptoms and treatment

Educators empowered through breast cancer awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: Every October widely known as 'Pink October' marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM), a national campaign to raise awareness for this cause. The Indian Community School, Senior in collaboration with Indian Doctors Form organized Breast Cancer Awareness program on Friday, Oct 20 which aimed to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of breast cancer through education about screening, symptoms and treatment.

The occasion was graced by the esteemed presence of the Chief Guest Mrs. Vandana Swaika – wife of H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, Ambassador of India to Kuwait and Guest of Honor, Nour M. Haider, Public Relation Manager, International Hospital. Among the dignitaries were Dr. Diwakara Chaluvaiah, President of the Indian Doctors Forum, Dr. Sajna Mohammed and Dr. Sameer Humad Vice Presidents of Indian Doctors Forum, Vinu Kumar Nair, Hon. Vice Chairman to the Board of Trustees, Mrs. Surayya Salim, Indian Women's Association, Dr. Amir Ahmed, Former President of Indian Doctors Forum and Mrs. Sheeja Ravi, Principal of ICSK Junior.

Detection

One hundred and fifty educators from 22 different CBSE schools in Kuwait assembled in the school auditorium for the enlightening session. Stressing on the importance of early detection of the disease and appreciating the efforts of Indian Doctors Forum, Mrs. Sheeja Ravi, Principal of ICSK Junior presented an august welcome to the gathering. The session commenced with the lighting of lamp by the esteemed Chief Guest Mrs. Vandana Swaika accompanied by Dr. Diwakara Chaluvaiah, President of the Indian Doctors Forum and Hon. Vice Chairman to the Board of Trustees Mr. Vinu Kumar Nair. Chief Guest of the day, Mrs. Vandana Swaika appreciated the doctors for serving the community and also highlighted the importance of raising awareness to safeguard the society from the life-threatening disease. Dr. Sajna Mohammed, Vice President of Indian Doctors Forum in her inaugural speech briefed about the vision and motive of the campaign and stressed on the need of spreading awareness and early detection.

Eminent speakers Dr. Diwakara Chaluvaiah, President of the Indian Doctors Forum, Dr. Susovana Nair, Medical Oncologist at Ku-

wait Cancer Control Center and Dr. Rifat Jehan, Medical Oncologist at Kuwait Cancer Control Center delivered an insightful presentation on breast cancer, covering topics such as risk factors, symptoms and the latest advancements in treatment.

Dr. Diwakara Chaluvaiah, President of the Indian Doctors Forum spoke about the role played by the educators in spreading awareness to a mass community. Sharing his expertise on 'Breast biopsy' and 'Various techniques of breast imaging', he laid emphasis on the importance of screening and gave information regarding the various types of tests and treatments available.

Dr. Susovana gave a detailed lecture on the subject giving insights on the causes, treatment and preventive measures of the disease. She also mentioned how the management of the disease can be done with respect to the general condition of the patient, type of disease, stage of disease and hormonal status of the patient.

Self-examination

Dr. Rifat Jehan in her informative talk disseminated information on topics like uncontrollable and controllable risk factors of cancer and differentiated between normal and abnormal cell division. In her explicit talk on screening, she urged all women above the age of 30 to come forward for medical screening.

The educators were encouraged to perform breast self-examination regularly to rule out the chances of developing breast cancer.

Vote of thanks proposed by Mrs. Susan Rajesh, Vice Principal of ICSK Senior drew curtains to the informative session empowering women and society at large. A medical camp with a team of 25 – 30 doctors was exclusively arranged for the teachers to provide free cancer screening and consultation.

The Breast Cancer Awareness Programme conducted under the able leadership of Dr. V. Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK in collaboration with Indian Doctors Forum was a resounding success. It not only educated the school community but also promoted a culture of empathy and support for those affected by breast cancer. This program exemplified our school's commitment to making a positive difference in the world and underscored the importance of such initiatives in fostering a caring and informed community.

Chemical used in automotive care and household goods

EPA proposes TCE ban over cancer risks

WOBURN, Mass., Oct 26, (AP) — The US Environmental Protection Agency on Monday proposed banning the cancer-causing chemical trichloroethylene, which can be found in consumer products including automobile brake cleaners, furniture care and arts and crafts spray coating.

The move would end a nearly four decade battle to ban the chemical known as TCE, which can cause sudden death or kidney cancer if a person is exposed to high levels of it, and other neurological harm even at lower exposure over a long period.

EPA's recent risk-evaluation studies found that as much as 250 million pounds of TCE are still produced in the United States annually. One of the first places the chemical raised concern was in Massachusetts, where it was linked to contaminated drinking water in the city of Woburn. Two locations there were ultimately designated as massive Superfund sites. Monday's news conference was held at one of them, a location which now serves as a transportation center.

"For far too long, TCE has left a toxic legacy in communities across America," said Michal Freedhoff, the EPA's assistant administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. "Today, EPA is taking a major step to protect people from exposure to this cancer-causing chemical."

Leukemia

Massachusetts Sen. Edward Markey, who has led the effort to ban TCE, welcomed the move.

"With this rule, we can see a future where we will no longer be manufacturing, processing and distributing a chemical known to be deadly," Markey said. "We will no longer be exposing American families, communities and workers to a toxic chemical legacy that leaves questions, cancer and catastrophe in its wake."

Markey called the effort personal, citing his long-time work with Anne Anderson, a resident-turned-activist whose son Jimmy died in 1981 of leukemia.

"Since Anne and I met in 1980, we have been partners in the effort to clean up Woburn, to get justice for her son, and to save other fami-



The White House is illuminated in pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Thursday, Oct. 19, in Washington. (AP)

lies from seeing their children fall sick as a result of contamination," Markey said. "Thanks to the advocacy of Anne Anderson and the action of the EPA, the era of corporations using communities like Woburn as dumping grounds for toxic TCE is over." A 1982 lawsuit over the contaminated water supply involved eight Woburn families, including the Andersons. The case garnered national attention and led to the book and movie titled "A Civil Action."

The American Chemistry Council said in a statement that TCE has several important uses in packaging and in formulating products. The proposed rule "is inconsistent with the underlying science," the council said, calling on the EPA to avoid unnecessarily restricting valuable industrial uses for the chemical.

"EPA must base its risk management proposals on best available science, including accurate assessments of exposure," the industry group said. "Where uses of chemistries have decreased over time, this must be reflected in EPA's underlying risk assessment, because decreased use reduces potential exposure."

Meanwhile, environmental groups praised the proposed rule, which would take effect in a year.

"EPA followed the science, listened to impacted communities, and proposed one of the strongest

chemical regulations in recent history," Earthjustice Senior Attorney Jonathan Kalmuss-Katz said in a statement. "Some chemicals are simply too harmful to remain on the market."

Consumer

TCE is used to make refrigerants and in solvents that remove grease from metal parts. It is also used in carpet cleaners, laundry spot removers and hoof polish for horses. The chemical presents an "unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment" in 52 of 54 uses in industrial and consumer products, the EPA has found.

"I am overwhelmed that all of you are here to acknowledge everything that has happened and everything that was bad has turned good," Anderson said. "I owe so much to you people to keep the fight going, making sure that everybody is safe and that toxic chemicals like TCE will no longer exist."

The proposed ban stems from a major expansion of EPA's regulatory powers under a landmark 2016 law that overhauled rules governing tens of thousands of toxic chemicals in everyday products, from household cleaners to clothing and furniture.

The statute authorized new rules for tens of thousands of toxic chemicals found in everyday products, including substances such as asbestos and TCE, that for decades have been known to cause cancer

but were largely unregulated under federal law. Known as the Frank Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act, the law was intended to clear up a hodgepodge of state rules governing chemicals and to update the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976.

The 2016 law required the EPA to evaluate chemicals and put in place protections against unreasonable risks. The agency moved to ban asbestos last year and has also proposed banning methylene chloride, perchloroethylene and carbon tetrachloride.

Also:

NEW YORK: An outbreak of salmonella poisoning linked to bagged, pre-cut onions has sickened at least 73 people in 22 states, including 15 who were hospitalized, U.S. health officials said Tuesday.

Gills Onions of Oxnard, California, has recalled packages of diced yellow onions, red onions, onions and celery and a mix of onions, celery and carrots, known as mirepoix. The products recalled had use-by dates in August 2023. They are no longer for sale in stores, but consumers may have them — or foods made with them — in freezers. Consumers should not eat, sell or serve the onions for foods made with them, health officials said.

The diced onion products were sold at food service and other institutions in the U.S. and Canada and at retailers in Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. Retail sites included Stater Bros., Bashas' markets and Smart & Final stores in Arizona and California and Smart & Final and Chef's Store in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana.

Salmonella poisoning can cause serious illness, especially in children younger than 5, elderly people and those with weakened immune systems. Symptoms of infection usually occur within 12 hours to three days after eating contaminated food and include diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps.

Officials with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are investigating the outbreak to determine the source and whether additional products are tied to illnesses.

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Sacramento Kings guard De'Aaron Fox (5) drives around Utah Jazz guard Keyonte George (3) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Salt Lake City. (AP)

Mbonambi cleared for NZ showdown

South Africa select Pollard to start in WC final

PARIS, Oct. 26, (AP) — South Africa selected Handre Pollard on Thursday to start at flyhalf in the Rugby World Cup final against New Zealand and packed their bench with forwards in a high-risk 7-1 split.

Pollard was promoted from the reserves along with scrumhalf Faf de Klerk — the same halves combination that started in the Springboks' victory in the final four years ago.

The big surprise from Springboks management Rassie Erasmus and Jacques Nienaber was the bench split, with lock Jean Kleyn and No. 8 Jasper Wiese added for an extended 'Bomb Squad' of seven reserve forwards to face the resurgent All Blacks on Saturday in the first World Cup final between the two fierce rivals since 1995.

RUGBY

South Africa kept four of the five forwards that were on the bench for the semifinal, with prop Trevor Nyakane in for the injured Vincent Koch in a forced change. The Boks added Kleyn and Wiese in an indication they will lean heavily on their forwards. Willie le Roux is the only back in the reserves. That could leave South Africa exposed if they have backline injuries at Stade de France as they seek back-to-back titles to match the feat of the All Blacks in 2011 and 2015.

Whoever wins between the No. 1-ranked Springboks and No. 2 All Blacks will clinch a record fourth World Cup title.

South Africa experimented with a then-unprecedented 7-1 split in a warmup game against New Zealand



New Zealand's Anton Lienert-Brown kicks the ball (unseen) during a training session at the Stade du Parc, in Rueil-Malmaison, outside Paris. (AP)

ahead of the Rugby World Cup and won by a record 35-7 against a 14-man All Blacks.

South Africa also used the tactic against Ireland in the pool stage at the World Cup, when Ireland won 13-6.

Hooker Bongi Mbonambi was named in the starting lineup and cleared to play after World Rugby said there was insufficient evidence to support an allegation by England's Tom Curry that Mbonambi directed a discriminatory remark at him during South Africa's tense 16-15 win in the

semifinals.

England's rugby union stood by Curry's allegation and claimed Mbonambi also directed discriminatory remarks at Curry in a match last year.

An investigation was opened by rugby's governing body after Curry, who is white, complained of being the subject of a discriminatory remark from Mbonambi, who is Black, during South Africa's close 16-15 win last weekend at Stade de France. "Any allegation of discrimination is taken extremely seriously by World Rugby, warranting a thorough

investigation," World Rugby said in a statement on Thursday.

"Having considered all the available evidence, including match footage, audio and evidence from both teams, the governing body has determined that there is insufficient evidence at this time to proceed with charges. Therefore, the matter is deemed closed unless additional evidence comes to light."

World Rugby added it believes Curry made his allegations "in good faith, and that there is no suggestion that the allegation was deliberately false or malicious."

After the decision was announced, England's Rugby Football Union said Curry also alleged to World Rugby investigators that he had been "the victim of the same abuse, from the same player" in an England-South Africa game at Twickenham last November.

"The RFU fully support Tom Curry in raising the racially abusive behaviour he experienced," the RFU said.

Curry, who was selected to play against Argentina in the third-place game on Friday, has also received the support of the England team and his Sale Sharks club this week after a deluge of abuse on social media.

"World Rugby is also concerned by the social media abuse that both players have been subjected to this week," the governing body added. "There is no place in rugby or society for discrimination, abuse or hate speech, and World Rugby urges fans to embrace the sport's values of respect, integrity and solidarity."

Pollard replaced Manie Libbok at No. 10 for the final having recovered from injury and joined the squad midway through the World Cup. He was brought off the bench for Libbok and played a match-winning role in the quarterfinal against France and semifinal against England. De Klerk starts ahead of Cobus Reinach.

South Africa: Damian Willemse, Kurt-Lee Arendse, Jesse Kriel, Damian de Allende, Cheslin Kolbe, Handre Pollard, Faf de Klerk; Duane Vermeulen, Pieter-Steph du Toit, Siya Kolisi (captain), Franco Mostert, Eben Etzebeth, Frans Malherbe, Bongi Mbonambi, Steven Kitshoff. Reserves: Deon Fourie, Ox Nche, Trevor Nyakane, Jean Kleyn, RG Snyman, Kwagga Smith, Jasper Wiese, Willie le Roux.

Mavericks spoil Wemba's debut

Record-breaking victory for Pacers

SAN ANTONIO, Oct. 26, (AP) — Luka Doncic had 33 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists and the Dallas Mavericks spoiled the NBA debut of No. 1 draft pick Victor Wembanyama, beating the San Antonio Spurs 126-119 on Wednesday night.

Dallas forced two turnovers in the final minute to preserve the victory. Mavericks guard Kyrie Irving added 22 points and Grant Williams added 17 points in the season opener for both teams.

Devin Vassell had 23 points to lead San Antonio. Keldon Johnson added 17 and Wembanyama had 15 points.

Wembanyama scored nine points in the final seven minutes after struggling with foul trouble in the fourth quarter. The rookie was 6 for 9 from the field and had five rebounds and two assists and a block in 23 minutes.

Pacers 143, Wizards 120

In Indianapolis, Bruce Brown scored 24 points and made a career-high six 3-pointers in his Pacers

debut, leading Indiana to a record-breaking victory over Washington.

It was the highest scoring total for a season opener in team history, surpassing the 140 they had against Brooklyn in 2017. Indiana fell two points short of setting the franchise scoring mark for points in a home game.

All-Star guard Tyrese Haliburton had 20 points and 11 assists as eight Pacers had double-digit scoring totals.

Magic 116, Rockets 86

In Orlando, Cole Anthony had 20 points and eight rebounds, and Orlando beat Houston in the season opener for both teams.

Anthony went 8 for 12 from the field and played 24 minutes in a reserve role. Franz Wagner scored 17 points for Orlando, and Paolo Banchero finished with 12 points, five rebounds and five assists.

Cavaliers 114, Nets 113

In New York, Donovan Mitchell scored 10 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter, and Cleveland beat Brooklyn for its first road win in a season opener since 2000.

Cleveland had six players score in double figures. Max Strus, who started in place of injured center Jarrett Allen, had 27 points and 12 rebounds. Isaac Okoro scored 18 points, and Darius Garland finished with 15.

Thunder 124, Bulls 104

In Chicago, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points and Oklahoma City beat Chicago in the season opener.

Fourth in the NBA in scoring last season, Gilgeous-Alexander keyed a 12-0 run late in the third quarter that broke open a one-point game. Josh Giddey and Rookie of the Year runner-up Jalen Williams each scored 16 for Oklahoma City.

Pelicans 111, Grizzlies 104

In Memphis, CJ McCollum scored 24 points, Zion Williamson added 23 points and seven rebounds as New Orleans defeated Memphis.

McCollum was 8 of 16 from the field including 6 of 11 from outside the arc. Williamson scored 12 of his points in the fourth quarter to avoid any comeback by Memphis. Brandon Ingram finished with 19 points and Jonas Valanciunas added 12 points and 12 rebounds.

Kings 130, Jazz 114

In Salt Lake City, Harrison Barnes scored 33 points and Domantas Sabonis added 22 points and 12 rebounds to lead Sacramento over Utah.

De'Aaron Fox chipped in 18 points for the Kings, and Malik Monk dished out a team-high seven assists off the bench.

Clippers 123, Trail Blazers 111

In Los Angeles, Paul George scored 27 points and Kawhi Leonard added 23 to lead five players in double figures as Los Angeles beat Portland in their season opener.

The Clippers had Leonard and George together for just 38 games last season, when both were derailed by injuries and the team lost in the first round of the playoffs. But they're healthy and in the lineup at the same time now, raising expectations for the Clippers as they pursue the franchise's first NBA championship.



Sporting Kansas City midfielder Nemanja Radoja (right), and San Jose Earthquakes defender Keegan Tlney battle for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer wild-card playoff match in Kansas City, Kansas. (AP)

Disagreements with federation cited

Jamaica World Cup players boycott tournament

KINGSTON, Oct. 26, (AP) — Players for the Jamaican women's national team say they are boycotting a pair of tournament matches because of "constant mistreatment" by their soccer federation.

Khadija "Bunny" Shaw was among those who posted a statement to Instagram this past weekend that said players from the country's Women's World Cup team would not take part in this week's CONCACAF Women's Gold Cup qualifiers.

Interim coach Xavier Gilbert took a hastily assembled squad to play in Jamaica's qualifier against Panama on Wednesday. Jamaica fell 2-1 in Panama. A second match against Guatemala in Kingston, Jamaica, was set for Sunday.

"While this has been one of the hardest decisions we have had to make, we feel it is necessary to take such a drastic stance to put an end to the constant mistreatment we receive from the Jamaica Football Federation," the players' statement said.

The players said they had not received "full and correct" payments for their play at the World Cup this past summer in Australia and New Zealand. Jamaica advanced to the Round of 16 for the first time before falling to Colombia. The players also maintain the federation did not pay numerous bonuses for World Cup qualifying in 2022.

The Jamaican Football Federation issued a statement that claimed all of its debts to players for 2022 were settled. The statement said that the only outstanding payment was 20% in

FIFA prize money for the World Cup because the players did not specify how the funds should be distributed, but those payments were being processed. The JFF further said it had not yet received the full prize money payment from FIFA.

SOCCER

FIFA announced before the World Cup that each player participating in the tournament would earn \$30,000. The amount rose to \$60,000 apiece for teams that advanced out of the group stage. It was unclear whether



In this this file photo, Jamaica's Khadija Shaw runs during the Women's World Cup Group F soccer match between Jamaica and Brazil in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

the Jamaican players had received those payments. Federations also receive FIFA funds for participation in the tournament.

The women also noted they were not informed of coaching and other staff changes. Jamaica parted ways with World Cup coach Lorne Donaldson and appointed Gilbert in the interim. Players said they learned that Gilbert was coach on social media three days before they were expected to report for the CONCACAF qualification matches.

"As always, it is an honor and a privilege to represent Jamaica. It is our job to perform to the best of our ability and put all of our efforts into representing our country, making our fans, loved ones at home and diaspora proud," the players said. "Due to the current circumstances the Jamaica Football Federation has put us in, we would not be able to do our job."

The tension between the players and the Jamaican federation are long simmering. The players also went to social media to decry what they called subpar support in advance of the World Cup.

Their pleas concerning pay and financial support spurred a pair of crowdfunding campaigns to help the team train and pay staff, including one set up by a player's parent.

Jamaica's match against Panama on Wednesday was moved from Estadio Universitario in Penonome to Estadio Rommel Fernandez in Panama City because of protests in the country.

Sporting KC advance in playoffs

KANSAS CITY, Kan., Oct. 26, (AP) — Dániel Sallói converted the winning penalty kick and Sporting Kansas City advanced in the MLS playoffs after a scoreless draw with the San Jose Earthquakes on Wednesday night.

Sporting KC (13-14-8) won 4-2 on penalty kicks. Next up is a best-of-three series with rival St. Louis beginning on Sunday.

San Jose (10-11-14) did not advance for the sixth time in seven playoff appearances since winning the MLS Cup in 2003, including eliminations by Kansas City in 2004 and '20.

Sporting KC captain Johnny Russell converted the first penalty kick and goalkeeper Tim Melia denied San Jose midfielder Cristian Espinoza. Erik Thommy and Gadi Kinda also scored for Sporting.

Melia has won all seven penalty shootouts in his professional career, including a 5-0 mark with Sporting KC. Kansas City has lost only one of its last 21 home matches against San Jose dating to August 2004, including advancing in four single-leg knockout ties in that time.

San Jose reached the playoffs with six draws in its last eight games. Sporting reached the postseason despite collecting fewer than five points from its first 10 matches of a season.

Elias Manoel secured the first playoff hat trick in club

history and the New York Red Bulls advanced past Charlotte 5-2 in the opening game of the MLS playoffs.

New York (12-13-10) snapped a string of four straight postseason losses in opening matches, losing all four by one-goal margins. The Red Bulls advance to a best-of-three series with Cincinnati.

Charlotte (10-12-13), which was eliminated, had won three of its final four matches in the regular season to reach the playoffs after winning just one of its previous 15 league matches.

Manoel has scored six of his eight career MLS goals against Charlotte.

SOCCER

Manoel opened the scoring in the 10th minute. Manoel settled a lofted pass with his chest and sent a shot inside the far post. Manoel's second goal came in the 37th for a 3-0 lead — marking the second time in club history New York has scored three goals in the first half of a playoff game.

Manoel capped the scoring in the 78th.

Charlotte's first postseason goal came in the 49th on a bicycle kick from Kerwin Vargas to get within 3-1. Charlotte also scored in the 64th to make it 4-2.

Next generation clasico

Real's Bellingham faces 1st game vs Barca brimming with young talents

BARCELONA, Spain, Oct 26, (AP): Jude Bellingham has blossomed into a clinical scorer since joining Real Madrid. Now his team hopes Bellingham will be fully fit when he faces his first "clasico" match at Barcelona on Saturday. Girona can move provisionally into the league lead if they get at least a point against Rafa Benítez's struggling Celta Vigo on Friday. The England midfielder is on scoring streak with 11 goals in 12 matches so far this campaign, compared to 14 goals in all of last season for German side Borussia Dortmund.

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Bellingham appeared to be bothered by a leg problem when he was substituted after scoring his latest goal in a 2-1 win at Braga in the Champions League on Tuesday. Coach Carlo Ancelotti, however, said immediately after the victory that it was nothing serious.

Madrid top the Spanish league level on points with Girona, with Barcelona one point behind in third place going into the game between the fierce rivals. Atletico Madrid are also fourth at three points back. Atletico host Alaves on Sunday with Antoine Griezmann hav-

Ali to head Arab Club PR Committee

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Board of Directors of the Arab Club has introduced a new organizational structure for the club's public relations department.

In this revamped setup, the Public Relations Committee at the Green Castle is under the leadership of Board



Ali Atash

Member Ali Atash.

The committee also includes Hamid Al Ali as the Vice Chairman, Hamza Al Shatti as the General Coordinator, Abdulaziz Sudan as the Committee Rapporteur, and Hassan Bouwalbanat as the Head of the Volunteers Committee.

Furthermore, Ali Yateem presides over the Marketing and Follow-up Committee, Tawfiq Al-Faraj leads the Airport Reception Committee, and Mahdi Fathallah oversees the Mobile Committee. Additionally, Fahd Al-Shammari serves as the Deputy Chairman of the Mobile Committee.

ing scored seven goals in the league, only one fewer Bellingham.

If he is in top form, Bellingham should once again be the focus of an attack that has been prolific despite losing Karim Benzema this summer.

Barcelona also have several injury doubts. Top scorer Robert Lewandowski, who has six goals overall, has missed the last three games with an ankle injury, while midfielders Pedri Rodríguez and Frenkie de Jong, winger

Raphinha and Jule Koundé have also been sidelined.

Coach Xavi Hernández would not say if he expects to have these players back on Saturday.

The absences of those regular starters has had an upside: it has allowed Barcelona to give opportunities to the latest young talents to emerge from its La Masia youth academy.

Midfielder Fermín López, 20, was the team's best player against Shakhtar,

scoring a goal and hitting the woodwork twice. That came four days after 17-year-old Marc Guiu became the second-youngest player this century to score on his league debut when he netted in a 1-0 win over Athletic Bilbao.

Not to forget 16-year-old Lamine Yamal, who is adding up records after becoming the youngest player to score for both Barcelona and Spain in recent weeks.

Ferran Torres and newcomer João Félix, both 23 years old, have also made the most of their chances to start in attack with Lewandowski and Raphinha out, combining for eight goals.

All in all, this "clasico" promises to be a game featuring a new generation of players for both sides with Madrid relying on Bellingham (20), Vinicius Júnior (23), and Eduardo Camavinga (20), and Barcelona able to counter with its own crop of youngsters.

It will be the first "clasico" Barcelona plays after the exit of Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba, the last pillars of its golden era when it won everything with Lionel Messi and Xavi as a player. For Madrid, Ancelotti will have to decide how to use Luka Modric, the 38-year-old former Ballon d'Or winner, who has lost his set place in the starting 11 since the arrival of Belling-



Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham gestures to the crowd at the end of the Champions League Group C soccer match between SC Braga and Real Madrid at the Municipal stadium in Braga, Portugal. (AP)

ham.

Real Madrid president Florentino Pérez reportedly won't accompany the team, as he normally does to games against Barcelona, after relations between the powerhouses - who remain aligned behind the frustrated Super League plan - have been strained by off-the-field controversies.

Madrid and Barcelona have been

estranged by the scandal of Barcelona's payment of millions of euros over several years to a former referee working in the Spanish soccer federation. The case is being investigated by a judge.

Barcelona president Joan Laporta has denied any wrongdoing by the club and said it is all witch hunt that favors Madrid.



Al-Qadsia and Al-Arabi players challenge for the rebound.

Al-Qadsia and Sulaibikhat win

In the opening matches of the 61st Kuwaiti General Basketball League Championship for the 2023-2024 season, Al-Qadsia and Sulaibikhat emerged victorious in the basketball showdowns.

Al-Qadsia triumphed over their counterparts from Al-Arabi in a thrilling encounter held at the Basketball Association Hall within the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Sports Complex. The final score of the game was 81-73, and it was a well-fought match, particularly notable for its defensive prowess.

In a second exciting match also conducted in the

same hall, Al-Sulaibikhat secured a well-earned win against Al-Arabi, sealing a scoreline of 95-85. This game showcased the outstanding performance of Sulaibikhat's professional player, Colbert, who managed an impressive 42 points and 22 rebounds.

The 61st Kuwaiti General Basketball League Championship for the 2023-2024 season features the participation of nine clubs and is organized in a two-section merger system during its initial phase. Among the participating Kuwaiti clubs are the defending champions, Al-Nasr, Al-Tadamon, Kazma, and Al-Qurain.

Top spot on the line as Kuwait face Al-Qadsia

Salmiya square off against Al-Shabab

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: The Zain Premier League entered its sixth round, with a clash between Salmiya and Al-Shabab set to kick off at 7:00 pm at Al-Shabab Stadium.

The action continues on Saturday with two matches. First up, Al-Jahra face off against Al-Arabi at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium at 5:30. Meanwhile, at the Friendship and Peace Stadium, Al-Fahaheel take on Al-Nasr at 8:28.

The round will conclude on Sunday, when Khaitan square off against Kazma, while leaders Kuwait, with 13 points, anticipate a challenging encounter against third-placed Al-Qadsia, who have 11 points.

This round could potentially witness a shift in the standings, especially

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if Al-Qadsia managed to hand leaders Kuwait their first defeat of the season.

Turning our attention to today's match, it brings together two resurgent teams, both arriving on the back of victories in the last round. Al-Shabab, who "surprised" Kazma with a 2-1 win, secured their first victory in the competition and now sit on five points, elevating them to eighth place and a bit further from the relegation zone.

As for Al-Salmiya, currently in sixth place with 6 points, they managed to stage a comeback in the previous round, defeating Al-Jahra 2-1. They aspire to build on this resurgence, with their players regaining confidence after securing their second win in the competition.

Al-Arabi II, with 11 points, aim to compensate for their recent setback in the AFC Cup, where they suffered a 0-3 loss to Bahrain's Riffa and dropped to third place in the group standings. Their German coach, Thomas Berdarch, is



Salmiya players in training session.

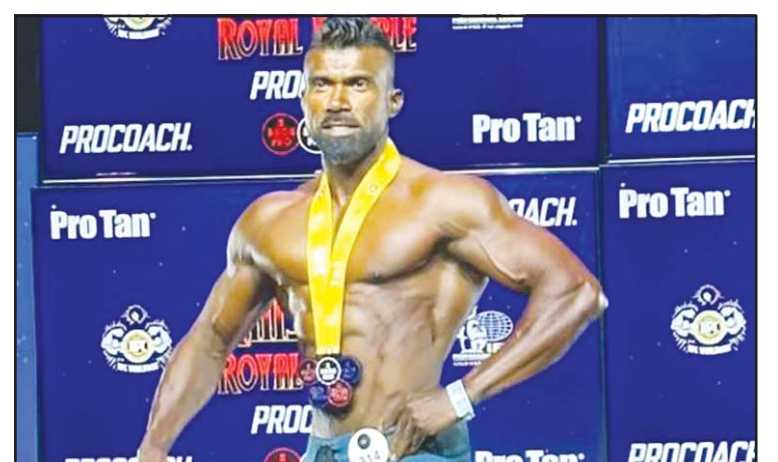
well aware of the challenges ahead, particularly given the absence of several key players due to injury.

On the other side, Al-Jahra, at the bottom of the standings with one point, hope to capitalize on Al-Arabi's situation and secure their first victory in the competition. The outcome of tonight's match may significantly impact Brazilian coach Gasiner Silva's position at the coaching helm in Jahra, as his dismissal remains a possibility if the team face another defeat.

In the other match, two teams looking to recover from recent losses, Al-Nasr in fourth place with 7 points and Al-Fahaheel in ninth place with 2

points, are eager to make amends. Al-Nasr narrowly lost to Al-Qadsia with a single goal.

While the "Sons of the Tenth District" team suffered a 2-1 defeat at the hands of Al-Arabi, Al-Nasr's coach, Zaher Al-Adwani, hopes to restore a winning streak and take advantage of the opponent's situation to remain among the leading teams. Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel's Syrian coach, Firas Al-Khatib, recognizes that facing "Al-Annabi" represents a critical juncture for his team if they want to distance themselves from the relegation zone and secure their first victory, necessitating a collective effort from all his players.



Jagath Gunasekara displays his medals.

Jagath gearing up for promising future

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: Jagath Gunasekara, a Sri Lankan citizen who has been residing in Kuwait since 2002, boasts an athletic physique and dedicates his time to training at Victory International Gym in Jabriya, Kuwait. His remarkable fitness journey includes numerous victories in competitions held in the United Kingdom.

Under the guidance of IFBB PRO Jack Davis from the UK, Jagath has worked tirelessly to attain his fitness goals. His unwavering dedication and years of hard work have played a pivotal role in his success. Notably, he covers all his expenses, including travel, training, supplements, and medical needs.

On September 30, 2023, at Braywick Leisure Centre in the UK, Jagath participated in the IFBB NPC Worldwide

Raistrick Royal Rumble and secured 3rd place in the NOVICE competition, as well as the Masters division for individuals above 35 years of age. Additionally, he claimed 2nd place in the Master 40 Plus category and an impressive 1st place in the Open C category.

Moving on to October 8, 2023, at the UK's Safford Gate House Theatre, Jagath achieved a remarkable 2nd place in the PCA Central (Physical Cultural Association - Europe) Bodybuilding and Fitness competition.

Continuing his winning streak, on October 14, 2023, Jagath secured another 2nd place at the Manchester Central Convention Complex in the IFBB NPC Worldwide Gym Shark Ryan Terry British Championship.

Kasatkina highlights social media 'abuse' after reaching semifinals

ZHUHAI, China, Oct 26, (AP): Daria Kasatkina highlighted the social media abuse she has received after becoming the first player to reach the semifinals of WTA Elite Trophy on Thursday.

The sixth-seeded Kasatkina beat 11th-seeded Magda Linette 6-3, 6-4. She then posted on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, saying she won her match but the abuse she gets "is completely out of control."

She included an image showing some of the abusive messages she had received.

Kasatkina beat top-seeded Barbora Krejickova in her first round-robin match in the Azalea group of the second-tier postseason event. Krejickova and Linette have been eliminated.

TENNIS

Third-seeded Jelena Ostapenko rallied to beat Donna Vekic 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 to win her opening match in the Orchid group, a result which eliminated the 10th-seeded Croatian.

Pakistan aim for a big turnaround against in-form SA

CHENNAI, Oct 26: South Africa's batters have ruled at three venues in the Cricket World Cup and going by their six-hitting template, they surely aren't going to change their approach against a struggling Pakistan bowling attack in Chennai on Friday.

South Africa have eight points from their four lopsided wins in five games and are second in the standings behind unbeaten India. Netherlands sprung one of the biggest upsets in tournament history when they beat the South Africans by 38 runs at Dharamsala in a rain-curtailed game.

Pakistan, the 1992 World Cup

CRICKET

champions, are in the must-win zone with four points from five matches. Babar Azam's squad Pakistan seem completely out of sorts after their back-to-back opening wins over Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

Losses to archrivals India, five-time champions Australia and Afghanistan followed. Afghanistan's historic eight-wicket win was against a visibly fatigued Pakistan bowling attack.

An upset loss like that doesn't necessarily have to be tournament-defining, as South Africa showed by rebounding quickly from their loss to the Dutch.

Quinton de Kock went close to fulfilling his wish of scoring a dou-

ble century in his final international tournament before retirement but fell short by 26 runs against Bangladesh in South Africa's most recent win. It was his third century in five games.

South Africa virtually batted out former champions Sri Lanka, Australia and England after setting big targets. There was no pause in the relentless power-hitting against Bangladesh, either, resulting in another triple-figure win.

The brilliance of de Kock, Markram and Rassie van der Dussen upfront

provides license to Heinrich Klassen and David Miller to explode in the last batting powerplay that has flattened all sorts of bowlers at Lucknow, New Delhi and Mumbai.

With a tally of 407 runs in five games, de Kock sits at the top of the tournament scoring charts. Klassen (288) and Markram (265) are also ranked in top 10 batters. The left-handed de Kock, who will be playing his 151st ODI on Friday, takes time before gradually accelerating both against pace and spin.



Pakistan's captain Babar Azam attends a practice session ahead of their ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match against South Africa in Chennai, India. (AP)



Celtic fans in the stands wave Palestinian flags ahead of the Champions League Group E match between Celtic Glasgow and Atletico Madrid, at Celtic Park, in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

Sports

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England hopes hanging by a slim thread



Ali Hussein Rustom with other medalists on the podium.

Rustom claims silver at World Combat Games

Ali Hussein Rustom, a prominent member of Kuwait national saber fencing team, has claimed the silver medal at the World Combat Games. These games are currently taking place in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi

Arabia, from October 20 to 30, and feature the participation of over 1,500 male and female athletes.

Riyadh's Sports Arena at King Saud University is hosting this monumental sporting event for the

very first time in the Middle East. This particular edition is notable for being the largest in the history of the tournament, which has continued without interruption for a decade. The previous two editions took

place in Beijing, China, and St. Petersburg, Russia, respectively. The 16 combat games in this edition have attracted over 1,500 elite athletes representing more than 120 countries from around the globe.

Al-Qadsia suffer setback with Vasily injury

Kuwait edge Qatar, secure 7th spot in Oly qualifiers

Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Oct 26: At the conclusion of their participation in the Asian qualifiers for the 2024 Paris Olympics, Kuwait handball team secured the seventh position. The tournament, currently taking place in Doha, Qatar, came to a close with our team defeating the UAE national team 31-26 in a match determining the seventh and eighth places, with the Chinese team occupying the ninth spot. Meanwhile, the Indian team secured the eleventh and final place with a victory over Kazakhstan, ending the qualifiers. In other matches, Saudi Arabia and Iran vied for fifth and sixth positions, while Qatar and Bahrain, as well as Japan and Korea, battled it out in the semi-finals.

The participation of Kuwait in the Olympic qualifiers was a crucial step in preparation for their participation in the Asian Cup qualifying tournament for the 2025 World Cup finals. This event will be hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain from January 11 to 22, 2024. This date modification was made by the Asian Confederation to accommodate the game's schedule, which was originally set from January 14 to 25, 2024. The draw for the tournament will be held on November 10 of the same month.

HANDBALL

Earlier this month, the national team achieved a remarkable third place and secured a bronze medal at the 19th Asian Games held in China.

In other news, Al-Qadsia Club's handball team, currently in an external training camp in Doha to prepare for the Asian Club Championship "Super Globe 2024 Qualifiers," which will be held in Kuwait from November 17-27, faced a setback as their Montenegrin professional player, Vasily Kalogorovich, suffered an injury during a friendly match against Al-Ahly of Qatar. The "Yellow" team emerged victorious with a score of 35-26. Initial diagnosis revealed that Vasily sustained an ankle injury, confirmed through an x-ray examination. The player is expected to be sidelined for a period of two to three weeks.

In the upcoming Asian Club Championship, Al-Qadisiyah will compete in the second group, facing teams such as the Indian Sai, Qatari Al-Arabi, the Iraqi Army, Lebanese Sidon Youth, and the UAE's Sharjah. Meanwhile, the first group includes the second Kuwaiti handball representative, the Kuwaiti team, Bahraini star, Qatari Al-Gharafa, Saudi Gulf, Palestinian Salah, and the Indian Golden Angel.

Yarmouk Club have recently wel-

Approximately 5000 students set to take part

Higher Education Sports Games scheduled for Sunday



Yousef Al-Baidan and Faisal Al-Maqseed pose for the camera during the press conference.



Kuwait's Dashti scores against UAE.

Kuwait drop in FIFA rankings

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 26: Kuwait slipped one spot in the FIFA rankings, now standing at 136th place in the classification released by the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA). Meanwhile, the Argentine national team maintain their top position in the rankings.

Kuwait played two friendly matches this month, suffering a 1-0 defeat to the United Arab Emirates and securing a 2-1 victory over the Syria.

In the top five positions, Argentina remain the front runners, followed by France, Brazil, England, and Belgium. Portugal have made a noteworthy jump, advancing two spots to claim the sixth position,

coming two international professionals, French player Leo Renaud and Icelandic player Ole Stefansson, to strengthen their first-hand handball team for the upcoming season. The

signing ceremony was attended by the club's president, Ahmed Al-Jarki, his deputy Hussein Al-Gharib, secretary Fouad Al-Failakawi, and treasurer Ahmed Al-Ansari.

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At the Arab level, the Morocco maintain their lead in 13th place, ahead of Tunisia (32), Algeria (33), Egypt (35), Saudi Arabia (57) and Qatar (61).

The Lithuanian are the biggest climbers in the current rankings, surging by nine places to secure the 134th position.

signing ceremony was attended by the club's president, Ahmed Al-Jarki, his deputy Hussein Al-Gharib, secretary Fouad Al-Failakawi, and treasurer Ahmed Al-Ansari.

Sri Lanka climb to sixth

BENGALURU, India, Oct 26, (AP): Defending champions England endured yet another abject loss at the Cricket World Cup as an eight-wicket defeat to Sri Lanka on Thursday left their hopes of advancing hanging by a slim thread.

England crashed to 156 all out after opting to bat - their lowest World Cup total since 2003, and the lowest ODI score ever recorded at the batting-friendly M. Chinnaswamy Stadium.

CRICKET

Sri Lanka pacer Lahiru Kumara led the rout and took 3-35 in seven overs. Ben Stokes was the top scorer for England with 43 runs.

Sri Lanka then coasted to victory with 24.2 overs to spare, finishing with 160-2. Pathum Nissanka (77 not out) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (65 not out) scored attacking half-centuries.

It was Sri Lanka's fifth consecutive victory over England in World Cups.

England have just one win - against Bangladesh - from its opening five games at the tournament following heavy losses to New Zealand and South Africa and an upset defeat to Afghanistan.

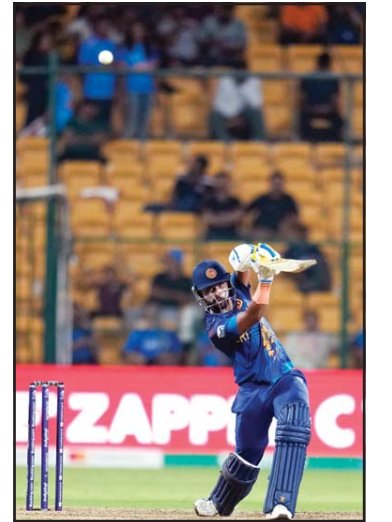
Their third successive loss means England have made the worst start of any defending champions since the 1999 World Cup. Back then, Sri Lanka lost three out of five games and failed to qualify for the super six stage and the eventual knockouts.

England's chances of making the semifinals also took a big blow as they are ninth with two points, only above the Netherlands on account of net run-rate.

Sri Lanka climbed to sixth with four points.

England got off to a decent start as Jonny Bairstow (30) and Dawid Malan (28) added 45 runs off 39 balls for the first wicket. But Angelo Mathews, playing his first game of the tournament, had Malan caught behind in the seventh over. And two overs later, Joe Root was run out for three.

The collapse began in the 14th over when Bairstow was caught at mid-on off Kasun Rajitha (2-36). Skipper Jos Buttler's torrid run with



Sri Lanka's Sadeera Samarawickrama hits a boundary during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between England and Sri Lanka in Bengaluru, India. (AP)

the bat continued as he was caught behind off Kumara in the next over.

Liam Livingstone wanted to hit his way out of trouble, but was out lbw for one as England sunk to 85-5 in 17 overs.

Stokes put on 37 runs off 46 balls with Moeen Ali (15) before Mathews got a second wicket as Ali was caught behind after England managed to cross the 100-mark. The veteran all-rounder finished with 2-14 in five overs.

It ushered in a fresh collapse as the defending champions lost the last five wickets for 34 runs across 70 deliveries.

Stokes was the eighth man out, holing to the deep off Kumara, as none of the English tail-enders contributed a decent score.

In reply, Sri Lanka faltered at the start as David Willey struck twice to remove Kusal Perera (4) and Kusal Mendis (11) early on. But Nissanka and Samarawickrama then bedded in for their unbeaten partnership.

Nissanka hit seven fours and two sixes, as he brought up 50 off 54 balls. His partner was more aggressive - reaching 50 off 44 balls with four fours and a six.

Overall they added 137 runs off 122 balls for the third wicket, as England suffered a third consecutive loss in a World Cup for the first time since 1996.

Sri Lanka's five-wicket win over the Netherlands last weekend was their first victory at the tournament.

Celtic hold Athletic

Man City & PSG boost chances of reaching CL knockout stage

PARIS, Oct 26, (AP): Superstar forwards Erling Haaland and Kylian Mbappé were both on target Wednesday to help boost their teams' chances of reaching the Champions League knockout stage.

Haaland scored twice in defending champion Manchester City's 3-1 win at Young Boys in Group G, while Mbappé set Paris Saint-Germain on the way to a crucial 3-0 home victory over AC Milan in Group F.

That broke a scoring drought in the competition for Haaland, who has nine in as many Premier League matches this season. Mbappé has eight in eight Ligue 1 games and also netted in PSG's Champions League opener.

City now just need to beat the same opponent in two weeks' time to book their place in the last 16. Barcelona are in a similar situation after a 2-1 win over Shakhtar Donetsk maintained a perfect start to their Champions League campaign too.

PSG lead a group that is getting ever tighter and leaves Milan, last season's semifinalists, with the prospect of not even qualifying for the Europa League as a consolation.

Feyenoord are in position to advance in their first time back in the group stage in six seasons.

Santiago Gimenez scored twice and Ramiz Zerrouki also found the target as the Dutch champions beat visiting Lazio 3-1.

Feyenoord moved a point ahead of Atlético Madrid, which were surprisingly held to a 2-2 draw at Celtic. Lazio were a point behind Atlético and three above Celtic.

Antoine Griezmann and Álvaro Morata scored a goal in each half as Atlético had to twice come from behind to salvage the away draw. Celtic scored before halftime through Kyogo Furuhashi and Luis Palma.

Atlético played the last seven minutes with 10 men after midfielder Rodrigo de Paul was sent off following a second yellow card.

PSG bounced back from their 4-1 humiliation at Newcastle to move top of their group.

France forwards Mbappé and Randall Kolo Muani scored either side

SOCCER

of halftime. Teen midfielder Warren Zaïre-Emery set up two goals, including PSG's third for South Korea winger Lee Kang-in near the end.

PSG moved two points clear of Borussia Dortmund and Newcastle after the German team won 1-0 at St. James' Park.



AC Milan's Pierre Kalulu (right), challenges for the ball with PSG's Kylian Mbappe (centre), during the Champions League group F soccer match between Paris Saint Germain and AC Milan at Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. (AP)