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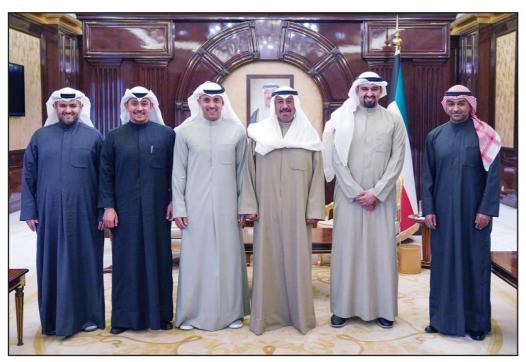
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16 PAGES

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## **Prime Minister hosts Economic Society and university faculty**





#### **Opinion**

## This is not how things get done

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

THE housing crisis continues to be one of the most complex issues in Kuwait that exacerbates the social situation of families who are waiting for their dream house.

However, it seems that the solutions are only slogans that continue to be fictitious, because the vision falls short of realizing the reality of the future in



terms of housing, especially regard to proper structure and the environment. though Even

the state is obligated to provide housing care for citizens, it is not concerned about rendering areas to bad scenery of concrete forest that

Al-Jarallah also lack structure. In other countries, there are civil regulations based on clear standards that citizens do not deviate from when

it comes to construction, including the colors on the exterior of the building, environmental preservation, and other specifications that give a beautiful view

From 1963 until today, several attempts have been made to organize population care, but they have failed because the primary goal was not a radical solution.

Other countries, especially the Gulf ones, solved the problem within years, as they relied on building integrated cities in terms of self-sufficiency either in roads, public services, or even parks. For all of this, the state did not pay a single penny of its public money.

It instead obligated the citizens to borrow from real estate banks, while the state paid the interest, similar to what the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, and even Britain and other countries did.

The reasons for the housing crisis also include the scarcity of land allocated for housing, and the lack of liquidity at the credit bank, which is why the number of housing applications has exceeded 100,000. This number increases annually with the increase in the number of housing care seekers.

There are about 95,000 families who do not have homes. The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) pays each applicant KD 150 per month as rent allowance, meaning that there are additional costs that can be saved if the government works to adopt solutions applied in other countries.

Here it must be noted that the Kuwait Credit Bank has debt worth about KD four billion owed by citizens. It is possible to borrow this amount from banks and work to rotate its loans.

#### **Continued on Page 5**

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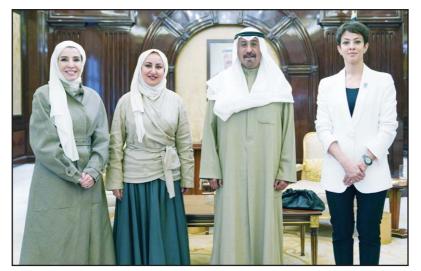
### **Health Ministry extends** medical services to ports

#### By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: The Ministry of Health announced the allocation of five marine health centers to provide medical services to travelers. sailors and workers in the seaports of Kuwait at all times around the clock.

**Continued on Page 5** 



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received teaching staff members from Kuwait University's College of Administrative Sciences and

College of Engineering and Petroleum at Bayan Palace on Wednesday. His Highness also received the chair and members of the Kuwait Eco-

nomic Society. (KUNA)

Gov't commends Interior Ministry

## **Cabinet lauds peaceful,** organized celebrations

### Newswatch

**GENEVA:** Gulf Cooperation Council General Secretary, Jassim Al-Budaiwi, urged Wednesday the international community to end the Palestinian suffering and to immediately and permanently

implement ceasefire in Gaza Strip. Al-Budaiwi stressed in his speech at the 55th meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, the importance of the Palestinian Case for the GCC and demanded the end of the occupation of Palestine.

He condemned the Israeli occupation violations against the Palestinians and their policies of hunger and killing, stressing that aid must be delivered promptly to Gaza Strip. (KUNA)

**GENEVA:** Britain has called for "further action" against extremist Israeli settlers involved in human rights violations, including "urgent sanctions" to stop them.

There needs to be a "sustainable and irreversible ceasefire in Gaza" that would allow for the protection of Palestinian civilians and hospitals, Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia Lord Tariq Ahmad said on Wednesday

Addressing the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Lord Tariq called for "life-saving aid" to be delivered immediately.

The British minister went on to press the Israeli "occupying entity" to respect international humanitarian law, underlining the UK's commitment to working with its partners in the region to achieve de-escalation of violence across the Palestinian enclave. (KUNA) 

**BERLIN:** The German army (Bundeswehr) said on Wednesday its naval frigate (Hessen) deployed to the Red Sea, successfully repelled a Houthi at-

The vessel, part of an EU mission to protect shipping in the vital seawater inlet, successfully engaged two "enemy" targets on Tuesday evening, the mission's command said, without mentioning the ship the Houthis were target-

The reports came from German sources following the US announcement of a US aircraft and an allied ship taking down five drones launched from Houthi-controlled territories. (KUNA)

(KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet reviewed, during its weekly meeting on Tuesday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the efforts to organize and secure the celebrations marking the 63rd National Day and 33rd

Liberation Day of the country. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah apprised the meeting of the preparations made by the security and traffic personnel to set

the stage for the celebrations. The Cabinet appreciated the efforts of the leaders and personnel of the Interior Ministry under Sheikh Fahad to ensure the safety and orderliness of the celebrations, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji

following the meeting. The Cabinet thanked the citizens and expatriates for their positive response to instructions of the Ministry of Interior, which reduced the negative behaviors and reflected the civilized aspect of the celebrations.

It extolled the diligent work made by the standing committee on national days, under its president Minister of Information and Culture Abdul-Rahman Al-Mutairi and general coordinator Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to ensure exemplary orga-

nization of the celebrations. The meeting thanked the member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the other sisterly Arab and friendly countries for sharing Kuwaiti festivities on the state and popular levels, which materialized the depth of Kuwait's relations with these countries.

**Continued on Page 5** 

Sheikh Fahad in talks with Saleh Al-Fadhalah.

## Kuwait aims for solutions

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, held a meeting with head of the Central System for the Remedy of Situations of Illegal Residents, Saleh Al-Fadhalah, to bolster coordination between the Central System and concerned state bodies.

**Continued on Page 5** 

# **Kuwait boosts** poll 'vigilance'

Election preparations begin

By Munif Naif and Saeed Mahmoud Saleh Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: According to security sources, the General Department of Criminal Investigations has issued strict instructions to follow

## Day by Day

IT'S often said that someone brought up in a dog pen won't become a lion, even if fed with the milk of countless lion-

One who's used to the company of dogs will always carry that identity, no matter how earnestly they attempt to con-

ceal their true nature. Their barking will betray them, unabashedly echoing their inner essence. Their destiny is predetermined, confined to the confines of their upbringing, and although they may weave intricate webs of deceit, fate remains impartial

to their plight.

**Zahed Matar** 



H.E. Belinda Lewis, the British Ambassador to Kuwait, attends the opening of the Kuwaiti-British Defense Cooperation Exhibition on the 1961 Crisis. — See Page 2

up and monitor any illegal actions related to the upcoming parliamentary elections that is scheduled to be held on April 4.

They said the instructions stressed on the need to take strict legal measures against any illegal actions related to the elections such as holding by-elections and vote-buying operations.

The sources confirmed the presence of specialized security teams to deter such actions and eliminate them completely during these elections as well as refer any violators to the Public Prosecution.

They explained that the Ministry of Interior, during the parliamentary elections last year, was able to thwart the process of holding by-elections in the Second Constituency.

Two years ago, the ministry thwarted the by-elections held in the fifth and fourth constituencies. Those accused of organizing these by-elections were sentenced to two years in prison. Candidates and their electoral keys in the fifth and second constituencies were also sentenced to two years in prison on issues related to vote-

**Continued on Page 5** 

## **Employment surges but gender** wage disparities persist: report

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: The Central Administration of Statistics report sheds light the number of workers in the State of Kuwait as at the end of the third quarter of 2023, classified according to number, gender, nationality, wages, ages, etc, putting its size to about 2.107 million workers, not counting the number of domestic workers, reports Al-Jarida

An increase of 6.6% (1.977 million workers at the end of the third quarter of 2022), which is an increase that, if true, contradicts all the goals of modifying the demographic composition.

When adding domestic workers and the like -- the family sector -- whose number is about 790 thousand, the total rises to about 2.897 million workers (2.688 million workers at the end of the third quarter 2022), and the percentage of domestic workers amounts to about 27.3% of the total employment in Kuwait as of the end of the third quarter 2023 (26.5% of the total employment at the end of the third quarter 2022).

The numbers of the Central Administration of Statistics sometimes differ from the numbers of the Public Authority for Civil Information and the two government agencies. Population and employment numbers are an essential input for formulating public policies and it is not permissible for them to differ, and they and other national statistics are supposed to be accurate in the program.

The latest data on wages and employment in Kuwait shed light on several key trends in the labor market, particularly in terms of gender disparities and sectoral dynamics.

In the government sector, the average monthly wage for male Kuwaiti workers stood at approximately 1,952 dinars, compared to 1,364 dinars for female Kuwaiti workers, indicating a significant gender wage gap of 43.1%. Similarly, non-Kuwaiti male workers earned an average of 795 dinars, while their female counterparts earned 709 dinars, reflecting a smaller gender wage gap of

When considering both sectors, Kuwaiti workers receive substantially higher wages than non-Kuwaitis, with Kuwaiti males earning about 1,886 dinars and females earning 1,322 dinars. Non-Kuwaiti males earned an average of 323 dinars, significantly lower than the average wage for non-Kuwaiti females, which was 482 dinars.

Despite efforts to promote employment in the private sector, the number of Kuwaiti workers in this sector decreased slightly, while government sector employment increased. However, the productivity of Kuwaiti government sector employees remains a concern, attributed to factors such as overcrowded work environments, educational shortcomings, and a mismatch between skills acquired and labor mar-

ket demands. The educational profile of Kuwaiti government sector employees is relatively high, with approximately 86.5% holding degrees ranging from high school diplomas to postgraduate qualifications. Despite this, challenges persist in translating this educational attainment into productivity and effective-

ness in the workplace. Efforts to address these challenges will require comprehensive strategies aimed at enhancing workforce skills, improving the efficiency of government operations, and promoting greater gender equality in wages and opportunities.

# oca

Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Mild with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-42 km/h.

By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-40 km/h.

**Station** Max Exp Min Rec **Kuwait City** 

11 Kuwait Airport Abdaly 19 09 19 12 Jahra Salmiyah 17 14 Nuwaisib 15

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

#### **'Smooth celebrations'**

### 'Thanks to all Kuwaitis, residents'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi voiced Tues-

day sincere thanks and gratitude to all citizens and residents and all state and private bodies for the civilized and deferential way of celebrating the country's national festivals.

Speaking KUÑA, Al-Mu-

tairi, who is also Chairman of the Permanent Committee for National Celebrations, said the committee was absolutely eager to ensure that the celebrations would be so smooth and beyond all expectations.

He underlined that the national festivals reflect citizens' and residents' sincere love and sentiments towards the dear nation, thanking everyone for celebrating with a highly patriotic and responsible

The minister prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow joy, security and safety on the homeland under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, while highly commending the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.



KUNA photo The Embassy of Kuwait in the Czech Republic celebrating the National Days.



Wafra

In Singapore, Ambassador Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Shuraim with senior State officials.

#### Kuwait embassies in Albania, Czech, Singapore mark Nat'l Day

Kuwaiti embassies in Albania, Czech Republic, and Singapore celebrated Kuwait's 63rd National Day and 33rd Liberation Day.

Ambassador to Albania Faisal Al-Musaileem held the celebrations in Tirana, welcoming the President of Albania Bajram Begaj and other high-ranking officials, diplomats,

In Prague, Ambassador to Czech Rashed Al-Haieri held the commemorations in the presence of members of the senate and the chamber of deputies, and the deputy speaker. In Singapore, Ambassador Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Shuraim held the celebrations in the Singapore Edition hotel, welcoming officials like Senior Minister of State, parliament members, and other high-ranking officials and diplomats.

The three Kuwaiti Ambassadors were pleased with the important and respected attendance, while the valued guests expressed their gratitude for invitations and warm welcoming during celebrations marking Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day. (KUNA)

### **Other Voices**

### 'Anti-seismic' dinner table

#### By Ahmad alsarraf

few days ago, I was invited to a A luncheon held by the Maronite Association in Kuwait at the beautiful St. Regis Hotel, on the occasion of St. Maron's Day.

Maron, or Saint Maron, as he is commonly known, was a hermit, monk, and priest who lived in northern Syria during the fourth century

AD. He is considered one of the most famous Syrian Syriac ecclesiastical figures, and is described as the founder, intercessor, and father.



alsarraf

B i s h o p alsarrat
Youssef Debs, the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, says in his book "The Complete History of the Original Maronites," which was published in the late 19th century, that the history of the Maronites begins with a discussion of Saint Maron, who is considered the founder and patron saint of this sect, and that today there is no detailed biography or an accurate record of Saint Maron's life and

The testimony of the bishop of the region where Saint Maron practiced asceticism, Theodoret, is considered the only basic reference about him, and how he was primarily responsible for spreading Christianity in northern Syria, where paganism was deeply rooted at the beginning of the fifth century.

Despite the lack of ancient references mentioning the biography of Saint Maron, the various studies and research conducted about him and the Maronite Church in general, especially following the founding of the Maronite School in Rome in the late sixteenth century, in addition to excavations and research operations north of Aleppo in the late twentieth century, led to drawing a detailed picture of the life of Saint Maron and his church activities.

Upon my arrival for the ceremony, the president of the association, Brother Joseph Estephan, took me

and sat me at the main table, the ten chairs of which were empty except for two clerics, the accredited Sheikh of the Mind of the Unitarian Druze sect in Kuwait, Sheikh Nassib Qansu, and Bishop Ghattas Hazim, the Metropolitan of Baghdad, Kuwait, and their dependencies.

I thanked him for my special seating place, and told him, jokingly, that our table had its share of clerics, many of whom I expected to arrive in succession!

I was not disappointed. Moments later, the pastor of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Archimandrite Boutros Gharib, came and took his place at our table. Since he is a dear friend, it was natural for him to sit with us. Then we were honored by the pastor of the Maronite Church in Kuwait, Al Khor, Bishop Raymond Eid, as he represents the head of the Maronite Church in the state, so it was a pleasure for him to sit at our table.

Because of the wonderful and attractive composition of the "respected priests" at the table, the pastor of the Armenian Orthodox Church, Father Ardak Kayabani, and the patriarchal representative for Kuwait and the neighboring Armenian Orthodox, Bishop Bedros Manolia, did not hesitate to sit with us, perhaps because I am the only Kuwaiti who wrote a novel about the suffering of the Armenians, which was embodied in the novel "Abdul Latif Al-Armani"!

Then Bishop George Abi Saada of Al Khor graced the ceremony, reprelic Reatitude Patria Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi, head of the Maronite Church in Lebanon, and Abi Saada attended specifically for this occasion.

Thus, I, known for my liberalism, was surrounded by the presence of Brother Ahmed Arafa, the Lebanese Chargé d'Affaires, and the host, Brother Estephan, with this wonderful mixture of seven clerics, whose presence was a source of reassurance that our table, in the event of a disaster, such as an earthquake, would be the safest, and no wonder it was the table that most attracted photographers.

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## **Kuwaiti-British Defense Cooperation Exhibition on 1961 crisis inaugurated**

British soldiers laid their lives to protect Kuwait: envoy

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: In a press statement issued after the opening of the Kuwaiti-**British Defense Cooperation Exhibition on** the 1961 Crisis, the British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis said, "There is no doubt that this is a wonderful collection of pictures that show British soldiers working side-by-side with Kuwaiti volunteers during an exceptional stage in the history of Kuwait, specifically in the year 1961, when unfortunately four British soldiers had died during Vantage operations.

Those operations were part of a military campaign conducted in the year 1961 with the aim of protecting Kuwait. On its anniversary, these soldiers are remembered and wreaths are placed on their graves, as they were buried in the soil of Kuwait, but their memory still remains.

The pictures also show the harsh nature of the surrounding environment and the high temperatures during the summer. They also show the British soldiers learning from the Kuwaitis how to preserve their lives in such heat. It is truly a wonderful collection of emotionally stimulating images.'

Meanwhile, the owner of the Kuwaiti-British Defense Cooperation Exhibition on the 1961 Crisis, and a researcher of the Kuwaiti-British relationship Essa Dashti affirmed that the exhibition was opened in the presence of British Ambassador Belinda Lewis and Sheikha Hala Bader Al-Mohammad, and it showcases more than 35 pictures.

In a press statement issued after the opening of the exhibition, he said, "Most of these pictures are being displayed for the first time and are original. We bought them from some archives, auctions and antique shops in Britain, where they display defense cooperation between the two countries.

The pictures show communication and joint training be-

cooperation, weapons inspection, and communication between the army and volunteers. Some pictures show the rapid response of the United King-

tween the Kuwaiti army and Kuwaiti volunteers, as well as the

dom to return to Kuwait with 5,000,000 soldiers, warships, and air force, who camped on the northern border. Britain's position was indicative of sincerity in the relationship, as the relationship is greater than any agreements because

Kuwait is a friendly country and a strong ally. We see pictures of members of the ruling family, such as the late His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad, and the late Sheikh Bader Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad, as well as some pictures that show the Ardha to increase enthusiasm among volunteers.

In addition, Sheikha Hala Bader Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah affirmed that the exhibition is aimed to strengthen the British-Kuwaiti relationship, and it simulates the relationship with the British army.

In a press statement, she explained that the relationship began after the signing of the Friendship Treaty in 1961 when there were demands from the Iraqi leadership of Abdul Karim Qasim to annex Kuwait. The British sought to help, and their response was very rapid.

The pictures talk about their presence, the volunteering of the people of Kuwait, how their lives were, and how they endured the high temperatures to remain steadfast.



exhibition.

### 'Only 24+7 violations recorded'

## Unprecedented fines, strict Mol keep festivity revelers in check

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: The Director of the Inspection Department at the Environment Public Authority commended the adherence to regulations demonstrated by citizens and residents during national celebrations. Nada Al-Dabbashi highlighted the success of collaborative efforts between the Authority and relevant bodies in upholding the Environmental Protection Law, particularly concerning the prohibition of water guns and

recent holiday festivities, only 24 violations related to chemical handling and 7 violations related to dumping rubbish were recorded under Articles 21 and 33 respectively. This relatively low number reflects a commendable level of awareness and compliance among the majority of participants.

Throughout the celebratory period, judicial officers from the Environment Public Authority and Environmental Police were deployed across various event locations to ensure adherence to environmental regulations. Al-Dabbashi emphasized the importance of enforcing these laws to preserve the environment, resulting in a more civilized and environmen-

Violations primarily included improper waste disposal, with penalties ranging from 50 to 500 dinars under Article 33 Additionally, violations related to Article 21, which prohibits the trade, purchase, or sale of chemicals such as foam containers, carried penalties ranging from 500 to 50,000 dinars.



Nada Al-Dabbashi



Inspectors during the tour.

#### Jail, heavy fine for violators

## Some companies found taking people for Umrah trip illegally

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: The Department of Hajj and Umrah Affairs at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs recorded five violations against Umrah expedition companies during the national

Tĥese holidays. companies had organized more than 50 trips under the supervision of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs via Kuwait's Salmi and Saudi's Raqi land ports.



tion Operations Law, it is not permissible to operate or advertise a Hajj and Umrah campaign without a license from the concerned authorities. Anyone who violates this law will be subject to imprisonment not exceeding one year and/or a fine not exceeding KD 50,000

The Department of Hajj and Umrah Affairs, headed by the Director of the department Sattam Al-Muzain, conducted a field tour of the Kuwaiti Salmi port and the Saudi Al-Reqqei port to monitor these companies and arrest those who practice Umrah activity without licenses, as well as to ensure the extent of Umrah companies' compliance with law No. 1/2015 regarding organizing Hajj and Umrah campaigns,

and the executive regulations issued by ministerial resolution No. 51/2021.

During the tour, some companies were monitored, and violations of law No. 1/2015 and executive regulations No. 51/2021 were proven. The Judicial Control Officer and Head of the Licensing Department Dr. Muhammad Fahad Al-Shteiwi requested that these violations be recorded, and the most severe penalties be imposed on violators of the abovementioned law and regulations.

According to article 7 of law No. 1/2015 regarding organizing Hajj and Umrah campaigns, if a violation is proven by the license holder, one of the following penalties will be imposed on him -

Warning. 2. Liquidating all or part of the value of the letter of guarantee provided by the

3. Refunding the amounts received from the Hajj or Umrah pilgrim in the event of failure in providing a specific service or negligence in it.

4. Suspension of the license for a period not exceeding three years 5. Permanent cancellation of the li-

These penalties will be imposed in accordance with the schedule of violations and penalties that the Supreme Committee must issue immediately upon implementing this law.

The person who is subjected to the penalty may file a grievance against it in accordance with the general rules established in this regard.

British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis opens the



Photos by Samer Shaqair Kuwaiti royalty took part in the operations.

balloons usage, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Dabbashi noted that during the

tally conscious celebration.

**Water saved in low-key celebrations** 

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy revealed statistics on water consumption during the national holidays and the rate of savings achieved this year, after prohibiting the excessive use of water during celebrations, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The Ministry, according to a post on its official account on the social networking site "X", Tuesday, said Kuwait saved about 16.8 million imperial gallons of water, compared to last year.

Meanwhile , the Commercial Control
Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has intensified its inspection tours; which resulted in the closure of a commercial facility and issuance of 12 citations for the violation of Resolution No.

178/2024 regarding the sale of prohibited items like water guns and balloons, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry advised the owners of shops and other establishments to adhere to the decision on prohibiting the sale of certain items during the national holidays until April 1, 2024

In another, unrelated development, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs at the Education Ministry Hessa Al-Mutawa has asked the educational districts, Religious Education Department and Coordination Department to submit a list of all decisions to fill up vacant positions for certain job levels in educational districts and departments under the Public Education Sector, reports Al-Anba daily.

### Deal reached to tackle 'lymphedema'

#### By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: A joint agreement has been signed between the Physical Therapy Department at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center and the Physical Therapy Department at Ibn Sina Hospital for Specialized Surgery to activate the outcomes of the training program for treating lymphedema titled "Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT)".

In this regard, Head of the Physical Therapy Department at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center Hana Al-Khamis said that the agreement comes within the framework of joint cooperation between the physical therapy departments in government hospitals.

She indicated that the physical therapy department at Ibn Sina Specialized Surgery Hospital is ready to receive first-degree and second-degree lymphedema cas-

es soon, after the medical staff completed the training program for treating this disease, which extended for two weeks during which they received lengthy practical training on lymphedema patients. Al-Khamis highlighted the coordina-

tion with the head of the Physical Therapy Department at Ibn Sina Hospital to receive some cases at the Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery affiliated with Ibn Sina Hospital.

She praised the initiative of the Department Ĥead Abeer Al-Tajli in presenting the idea to enhance the manual skills that were trained on by a distinguished group of specialists at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center.

Al-Khamis affirmed that the agreement would also reduce waiting lists for lymphoma patients at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center, given that it receives lymphoma patients from all governorates

## diwaniya 🕈 چیوانیة

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Some are trying to do what Saddam was not able to ...

"ON AUGUST 3, 1990, it was a Friday, and I called on the residents of the Omariya area to gather after the evening prayer, where more than five hundred people gathered. I preached to them about steadfastness and confronting the brutal enemy and the unjust neighbor, and the importance of organizing ourselves and managing our region, after God honored us with the survival of our Amir and Crown Prince and the government moved out of Kuwait, so it was necessary to manage ourselves," col-umnist Mubarak Fahd Al-Duwailah wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"I asked everyone over the age of fifty or under eighteen years of age to leave the mosque because there was no need for them that day, and we split the

rest into groups some of whom were to manage the cooperative society, others to clean the area and the streets, and others to undertake civil defense tasks and this is how we organized ourselves with tasks to self-man-



Al-Duwailah

age our region.
"One of the important observations is that an old sheikh named Abu Amer Al-Baijan came to me at that time asking permission to participate, so I told him, "You are an old man and we do not need to bother you." He answered me verbatim: "I know how to decipher the script. You may need me." Meaning, he is good at reading and writing. May God have mercy on you. God, Abu Amer, and thank God he lived and witnessed the liberation.

"After the dawn prayer on September 8, 1990, I decided with my companion Abdulaziz Al-Sharida, an officer in the Air Force, to rest a little before each of us went to breakfast at his home.

"We were sleeping at night in the house of our neighbor (Falah Al-Shabak) for fear of the oppression of Saddam's army, which he was looking of every soldier, and everyone who had a hand in the popular resistance to the occupation, and within minutes, we heard a loud knock on the door.

"It became clear to us that they were members of the Iraqi red berets! Before I opened the door, I saw more than thirty soldiers digging up the soil of the garden and extracting military clothing, ammunition boxes, a photo album, and a number of light weapons, which we had buried in the garden for use in times of need. We had to open the door, but before that I felt the pocket of my dress and found in it fake ID cards and a sum of money, so I went to the bathroom, destroyed the ID cards, and opened the door.

"They took me and my colleague to a quick investigation council in the shadow of the wall of the house, and one of the Saddam officers took out a photo album, and he saw a person who looked like me photographed with Thatcher, the British Prime Minister at the time, and with King Fahd, may God have mercy on him, and with the Egyptian President and others and he put the gun under my ear to kill me, but another officer advised him to hand me over to Baghdad, because this one who was photographed with all these people was definitely a "big hobbyist," according to what he said!

"Of course, it turns out that the album belongs to my brother Nasser, and the pictures are in the Wax Museum (Madame Tussauds in London) with the presidents of the world, but where do you understand these shapes!

"As for the weapons and ammunition, I received them one day ago from Sheikh Fahd Sabah Al-Nasser from his home in Andalusia and buried them in the garden at night. The story of our departure is long, and I mentioned it in more than one interview, and in the first part of my book 'Harvest of Years'.

"The intention of mentioning these events is to point out that the Kuwaiti people, with all their groups, had one position on the occupation. Today, no one who is accustomed to spreading poison and fanning the fire of strife comes to claim patriotism for himself alone, and tailor loyalty to the homeland according to his needs, and he has no history with the events that passed. The country is on its way.

"Today, praise be to God, we are not suffering from an external invasion, but rather we are suffering from attempts by some to internally tear apart this small entity (Kuwaiti society).

"Dividing society and fragmenting its national unity is unacceptable. The fallen Saddam tried to achieve it through invasion, but he failed because

of the unity of Kuwaitis and their lovalty to their homeland. Had it not been for God, and then for the wisdom of His Highness the Amir, this society would have burned from the fire of racism and factionalism, but God was kind. Let us preserve our society and may all Kuwaitis live as brothers in love and united in one homeland and under one

#### Also:

"Last week, I sat among students at a private university to participate in a dialogue about international relations. I felt that we all needed a short return to school among students to renew knowledge and expertise from time to time. We are from a generation that entered politics through the Cold War curriculum and economics through a market crisis," columnist Dr Nada Suleiman Al-Mutawa wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"Climate, before bipolarity, unilateralism and multipolarity sweep this world, and before the economy fades and afflicts the Asian tigers, then the industrialized world. We were not part of the Internet generation that searches for meanings and terms in search engines, and we did not have artificial intelligence programs that read what is on the mind and come up with information without getting fired, until the "blessed" digital revolution came, sweeping us with it into the world of artificial intelligence and digital solutions programs.

"Returning to the classroom, and before diving into international relations, we must stop at the stations that distinguished Kuwait, including using oil wealth to build an economic base characterized by sustainability and building international networks under the umbrella of humanity and other competitive advantages.

"Our international environment today is made up of different autonomy and interests, so it stands out. The importance of studying this world of ours in a renewed manner so that we do not fall into the trap of stagnation in thought.'



"Joy ... homeland and then citizen. I did not expect this overwhelming joy after the dissolution of the National Assembly, knowing that many citizens, through my meetings with them in offices, events and social media, conveyed to me their lack of desire for the Assembly, not even for a constitutional solution, as their wish is to suspend it for two years or more to get rid of the current situation -- practices of some representatives and the illegal claims of others, and for the government to take the chance to prove to us its work alone," Kuwaiti citizen Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad wrote for Al-Seyassah

"I use the phrase 'many citizens' to be more realistic and honest with myself and the readers, instead of using the Kuwaiti people, which the former representatives rely on every occasion due to their belief in what they say to

Note that one person's knowledge of the Kuwaiti people will not exceed the number of those invited to his joy and his brother's joy. As for whoever will come as a representative in the future, he must understand the message well, and remember that the reason for the solution is the naughtiness of some representatives who deviated from what is permitted and reached what is forbidden like someone who jumps a red light to catch up, causing harm to

himself and his companions. "They celebrate what is called Valentine's Day, which is a lover's lie to his beloved. How many false lovers do we have, enough to increase in number with the scarcity of loyal people whom the country and people need? If we replace Valentine's Day with the Day of Loyalty, we would gain our religion and our souls, while our sorrows would be eased, our pains would be sweet, our nights would be beautiful, and our wishes would come true.

"The following paragraph was published in the newspapers... from my article dated June 11, 2023: 'After the results appear, we congratulate those whom Allah Almighty has granted success, and we say to those who were not lucky, be prepared less than a year from now.' It is evidence that reading the political scene, particularly some issues, is not difficult, because we know what our brothers and sons want, and what the government wants for them.

"May Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of evil and

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

'Sober national days celebration'

Minister praises law abidance KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah thanked the citizens and expatriates for their positive response to the instructions issued by the Ministry of Interior, which had a significant impact on reducing negative phenomena and making the celebration of the national holidays reflect the honorable and civilized appearance of the State of Kuwait, reports A-Anba daily.

In a press statement, the Public Relations and Security Media General Department in the Interior Ministry revealed that Sheikh Fahad Yusuf praised the role of the ministry's employees, led by acting Undersecretary Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf; as they exerted tremendous efforts to ensure the celebrations are organized and safe.

On the other hand, Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf sent a cable of thanks to the Ministry of Interior personnel; including officers, non-commissioned officers, civilians and volunteers in view of the successful implementation of security and safety plans during the national holidays.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Municipality continued its intensified inspection campaigns during the national holidays in various governorates; covering the densely populated areas, camping sites, farms, chalets, beaches and public parks, reports Al-Anba daily.

Municipal inspectors closely monitored violations; resulting in the confiscation of 748 cartons of foam, 315 cartons of water-spraying tools and 1,339 pieces of fireworks.



The scene of the accident.

#### Two perish in accidents

Two fatalities and four injuries occurred in two separate traffic incidents on Wednesday. One incident unfolded on the Sixth Ring Road, while the other took place on the Massad Airport Road the day prior, reports Al-Anba daily . The accident on the Sixth Ring

Road involved a collision between two vehicles, claiming one life and causing injuries to multiple individuals. On the Massad Airport Road, a collision followed by overturning between two vehicles resulted in one fatality and

## No connection between 'ship of death' & Kuwait

'Vessel leased to Iraqi investor'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Informed sources have vehemently denied any connection between Kuwait and the vessel carrying livestock, commonly referred to as the "ship of death," which recently docked in Cape Town, South Africa, stirring controversy.

The vessel, transporting livestock from Brazil to Basra, Iraq, made a routine stop in Cape Town, clarified the sources, asserting that the stopover was not prompted by any emergency. Such layovers are customary for livestock carriers traveling from the Americas to the Middle East or neighboring regions, often stopping at ports in countries like Spain or Portugal.

These matters are overseen by the governments of these developed countries themselves, preempting interference from animal welfare groups due to their perceived bias and lack of factual accuracy in presenting information. Given its route from the southern hemisphere, the ship chose Cape Town as its stopover

#### Highlighted

Furthermore, the sources highlighted that despite flying the Kuwaiti flag, the vessel is leased to an Iraqi investor for transporting cargo to Iraq, absolving the State of Kuwait of any involvement . Additionally, they affirmed that the Kuwait-owned ship is among the world's top-tier and most modern livestock carriers.

Contrary to sensationalized reports, meticulous examination of the shipment revealed that claims of bad odor and high mortality rates were greatly exaggerated. Mortality rates aboard the vessel were lower than standard rates on livestock farms, and the livestock were found to be in excellent health. Allegations of heightened ammonia levels were debunked, with a South African Ministry of Agriculture medical team confirming the animals' well-being.

In response to efforts by animal welfare groups seeking to halt livestock trade, the sources condemned such actions as baseless, noting that published images depicted only a small fraction of the total livestock, strategically magnifying isolated incidents to mislead the public.

Regarding the ship captain's statement about disposing of deceased livestock, it was clarified that any deceased animals would be appropriately handled in accordance with international regulations, refuting claims of deliberate disposal during the voyage.

#### Receiving

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, a British maritime authority disclosed receiving a report concerning three boats tailing a ship off the coast of Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

According to the authority, the boats continued for approximately an hour, each reportedly had two individuals on board, although no weapons or uniformed personnel were seen.

The ship's captain informed the authority that the small boats followed his vessel for an hour, maintaining a distance of less than a nautical mile. The captain assured that both the ship and its crew were safe.

In response to the incident, the British Navy advised ships navigating through the area to exercise caution and promptly report any suspicious activities they encounter.

Regarding a purported success by the Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in South Africa in halting a livestock shipment in 2022, the sources downplayed it as exaggerated, emphasizing the organization's failure to prevent livestock exports altogether, merely delaying the shipment's loading.

#### **Ruling adds to woes**

### PAI loses KD 1.14mn in lawsuit filed by investor

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: An investor has secured a significant victory with a new final ruling against the Public Authority for Industry, amounting to 1.14 million dinars. This ruling adds to a series of recent judgments issued against the Authority, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Legal sources were astonished at the substantial size of these rulings and compensations, which are shouldered by the public.

They emphasize the necessity for a thorough review of the Authority's financial procedures and its core role in fostering and strengthening the industrial sector. Enhancing the sector's exports and addressing the needs of serious stakeholders are deemed vital for generating revenues.

The ruling highlighted that damages were meticulously estimated by a committee of experts, with the assistance of knowledgeable professionals. Both the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal were satisfied with the assessments, deeming further expert consultations unnecessary.

The court stressed its discretion in following up on opponents' arguments, emphasizing its commitment to the truth supported by presented evidence, which serves as an implicit response that overrides other claims.

On a broader note, the Industry Authority is recognized as a pivotal entity within the economic framework, yet it has faced operational challenges for years. Urgent appointment of a competent director-general is deemed essential to address pending issues and manage matters entailing fines, thereby alleviating the burden on public funds.

#### Tons of fish eaten

### Jobs for 457 Kuwaitis

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has disclosed that 457 male and female citizens have been shortlisted as part of a new wave of candidates poised to join various government agencies, reports Al-Qabas

These individuals, who are registered with the Commission and aspire to work in ministries, agencies, and state institutions, have been selected to fill roles that match the needs of their respective workplaces.

Emphasizing its ongoing commitment to aligning candidates with the specific requirements of government agencies, the Bureau highlighted its continuous receipt of plans from these entities

These plans outline the demand for specialized skills relevant to their operations. Through this collaborative effort, the Bureau aims to facilitate the timely release of new batches of candidates tailored to meet the diverse needs of government organizations.

In urging the selected candidates to promptly engage with their designated employers, the Commission stressed the preference for direct contact with the respective agencies. This approach eliminates the need for candidates to revisit the Civil Service Bureau, ensuring efficient communication and expediting the placement process for aspiring civil servants.

**Tons of fish eaten:** According to recently compiled statistics from the Central Administration of Statistics, Kuwait consumed 2.8 thousand tons of local fish in 2023, with a total estimated value of around 6.7 million dinars, reports Al-Oabas daily.

These statistics covered approximately 25 varieties of fish, with shrimp being a notable contributor, accounting for approximately one million kilograms sold during the year 2023. Additionally, the consumption of Zubaidi fish totaled around 79 thousand kilograms over the same period.

#### 'Take urgent action against negative behavior'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, who was accompanied by a number of security officials, inspected the security checkpoints on Sheikh Jaber Bridge, Khairan and several other areas in the northern and southern parts of the country during the national holidays, reports Al-Jari-Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf was briefed on the se-

curity procedures, establishment of security patrols and scope of security deployment during the inspection tour. He also conveyed the greetings of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah to the

security personnel; while lauding their tremendous efforts and tireless work in maintaining national se-

He stressed the need for the security personnel to be fully prepared and vigilant all the time in order to firmly deal with any violation of the law. He said strict instructions have been issued for the security personnel to immediately take serious action against any negative behavior.

He expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Ministry of Interior staff, including the securitymen and women police; praising their competence and ability to carry out the tasks and duties assigned to them within the security system established by the ministry.

#### 'National heroes'

## KFF remembers 17 of its martyr 'firefighters'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Acting Chief of Kuwait Firefighting Force (KFF) Major General Khaled Fahad has affirmed that the honorable martyrs of Kuwait deserve commemoration in reverence and appreciation of their sacrifices and heroism for the country to remain free and an oasis of security and safety, reports Al-Jarida daily



Fahad disclosed that KFF memorialized 17 martyr firefighters on the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of the Liberation Day. He recalled the sacrifices of the Kuwaiti martyrs, stating "the least that can be offered to everyone who sacrificed his life for the sake of the nation is to revive their memory. These martyrs are a beacon for every citizen and expatriate in the country, considering their heroic acts and sacrifices. It is important to learn from the sacrifices they made during the Iraqi invasion. The righteous martyrs of duty remain in the nation's memory and

Khaled Fahad

conscience, and are immortalized in its records with pride and honor. We implore Allah Almighty to protect Kuwait, its Amir and its people from all forms of harm."

### Citizen robs kin of KD700

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: In a recent ruling by the Criminal Court, a citizen has been sentenced to two years of imprisonment with hard labor on charges of forgery and misappropriation of funds, reports Al-Anba daily.

The case unfolded when the complainant realized that her debit card had been left behind in the accused's vehicle. Subsequently, she received notifications indicating that approximately 700 dinars had been deducted from her account without her authorization.

According to the complainant's legal representative, Abdul Rahman Al-Muqaddam, police investigations substantiated the occurrence of the crime. Evidence included bank-recorded photographs capturing the accused during the unauthorized



## 'Kuwait Legal Forum' emphasizes need for legal innovation and dev

Minister Al-Gharib patronizes conclusion of forum

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: The "Third Kuwait Legal Forum," organized by the Kuwait International College of Law, completed its sessions and accompanying workshops, under the patronage of the Minister of Justice and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Faisal Al-Gharib, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The third session of the forum was entitled "Reviews of the Administrative Division of the State," which was chaired by Dr. Suha Al-Tarkait from the General Secretariat of the College's Office of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation.

The Dean of Graduate Studies at the College, Dr. Ahmed Al-Farsi shed light on the importance of administrative division, especially after the state transformed into a welfare state that provided services to citizens, which led to the creation of a new administrative system based on the principle of division of labor.

Lawyer Abdul Rahman Al-Humaidan, stated that the municipality previously controlled all state activities, and it eased somewhat in the 1970s, and the ministries began to exercise their role, and the municipality departed from this system, and became specialized only in municipal work.

He stressed the need to develop municipal work in Kuwait by expanding the administrative division, pointing out that moving away from centralization contributes to providing greater services.

The college president, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Al-Muqata'a talked about the problem in the plan and the government's work program, and stated that both of them miss Article 123 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, which talks about the issue of centralization, as the Council of Ministers dominates the state's interests, formulates the state's general policy, and follows up on its implementation.

> Al-Muqata'a pointed to the, "The absence of general policies for the state, despite the existence of long-term plans and a vision, but we do not have general policies, nor do we have references that govern the policies that the state follows, and therefore it is not permissible to deviate from them, and overnight the ministry changes, and the policies change with it," he explained.

> In turn, strategic expert Dr. Ahmed Bouzbar, spoke about a coordination strategy between the laws of the development plan and the government's work program, pointing out that the citizen wants from development matters that directly affect his needs and requirements, asking: Do you think that there is coordination between the development plan in Kuwait and the government's work program?

He explained that the citizen wants a financial increase, the absence of taxation, the fight against corruption, public services and transactions without interference, stability of the two authorities, and quality education, health and housing.

The fifth session of the forum discussed "Innovation in the Justice and Law Sectors," which was chaired by lawyer Badr Al-Muqata'at, during which the former minister of health, electricity, water, housing, and oil, Dr Adel Al-Subaih said that information technology can do a lot, and courts can shorten many procedures that enable them to make the right decision, pointing out that information technology can govern dealings and prevent disputes from their

For his part, a full-time board member of the Communications and Information Technology Regula-tory Authority, Dr. Walid Al-Hassawi, said that innovation in the justice and law sectors may be very limited, and it must be benefited from, pointing to the impact of technology on various fields, including the entry of technology into existing industries and creating a major change in them, media, marketing, journalism, taxis, aviation, hotels, e-commerce, delivery services, and telephone communications.



Kuwaiti participants in the Web Summit Qatar 2024.

KUNA photo

#### Kuwaiti participants explore new opportunities

A global business summit bringing together international entrepreneurs and investors in the Qatari capital on Tuesday should provide new opportunities to explore, Kuwaiti participants in the event agreed, underlining the significance of the gathering.

Besides allowing participants to explore these opportunities, Web Summit Qatar 2024 also provides a platform for the exchange of know-how and expertise, members of the Kuwait-based Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity said.

Among the primary objectives of taking part in such an event is to keep abreast of the latest breakthroughs seen in the world of technology, according to Abdulaziz Al-Farhan, one of the Kuwaiti participants, citing the chance in bringing back home such tech know-how.

The event also allows international entrepreneurs and investors the chance to interact with one another, which is an important step towards gaining more knowledge in the field, said Abdulrahman Al-Menefi, another participant from Kuwait. (KUNA)



#### Dept received only 14 cases in Feb: expert

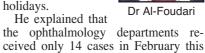
## Number of eye-injury cases down during nat'l days compared to '23

#### By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Chairman of the Council of Ophthalmology Departments at the Ministry of Health Dr.

Ahmad Al-Foudari revealed that there was a decrease in the number of eye-related cases at the ophthalmology departments of the hospitals of the Ministry of Health during the national holidays.



year in all governorates of the country

when compared to the 331 cases they

cases in Adan Hospital, seven cases in Jahra Hospital, and only one case in Farwaniya Hospital. The ophthalmology department at Jaber Hospital and the Shamiya Health Center did not receive any cases.

days last year.

Dr. Al-Foudari appreciated the efforts exerted by the relevant state authorities in ensuring that the celebrations were held in an honorable, civilized manner, free of many negative aspects that may harm health.

had received during the national holi-

This year, only one case was re-

ceived at Al-Bahar Eye Center, five

He praised the level of awareness of the Kuwaiti society and people, and their commitment to the decisions and legal frameworks, the positive results of which were reflected in the significant decrease in the rate of eye injuries.

Decision on classifying cleaning cos vital

## **Council member submits questions to** executive body regarding hygiene-file

#### By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: A Municipal Council member Munira Al-Amir submitted questions to the executive body regarding the follow-up of the procedures that were taken regarding activating the new hygiene-related decisions.

It comes as a continuation of what was stated in cooperation with the municipal administration to communicate and discuss everything related to the hygiene file, as well as to follow up immediately on what is happening to ensure the activation of the new decisions that Al-Amir believes will have a positive impact on developing the performance of this important file.

In the preamble to the letter on her questions, Al-Amir explained that she had previously submitted questions on the same subject, but had not received much information about any timetable or details related to implementing the new decisions approved by the Municipal Council regarding the hygiene file.

The most important of the decisions is the one to classify cleaning companies (cleaning companies operating in cities) according to capacity, capabilities and experience, in addition to the decision to contract with an international office to lay the technical foundations for cleaning contracts and determine the control standards and levels. These decisions are approved and

must be implemented, especially since the municipal administration will now begin work on renewing contracts for city cleaning. Al-Amir asked several questions,

1. "What measures has the executive body taken so far in order to ensure the inclusion of the Municipal Council's decisions issued in this regard?

2. "What is the timetable expected by the executive body of the Kuwait Municipality to see a real process of activating these decisions individually

3. "What steps has the executive body of the Kuwait Municipality taken so far to address the various state agencies, most notably the Central Agency for Public Tenders, to include the data of these decisions in their next presentation to ensure their activation?

4. "Can the executive body of the Kuwait Municipality pledge before the Municipal Council to ensure the implementation of the decisions referred to in the upcoming contracts in accordance with the procedures it has taken, since the current one is about to expire?"

5. "What is the municipality's plan and alternative steps if it does not have enough time to ensure these decisions are implemented while concluding new contracts for city cleanliness?"

#### **News in Brief**

Mol to review cash grants: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, announced that the Interior and Defense Ministries will establish their sectors by the end of March, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Speaking to reporters during his inspection of a security checkpoint set up on Al Khaleej Al Arabi Street for the country's national holiday celebrations, Al-Yousef stated that a review of cash allowances and other financial matters will follow once the organizational structure is finalized, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Highlighting his understanding of the disparities in workload among sectors, Al-Yousef emphasized the need for fair compensation, stating that equal allowances for unequal workloads would be unjust and could lead to migration of personnel.

Several decrees issued: Several decrees have been issued, including Text No. 23 of 2024, which establishes a connection between the Public Authority for Civil Information and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Decree No. 20 involves the transfer of

oversight over the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), while No. 21 transfers supervision over the General Secretariat of the Supreme Planning Council (SPC) and Development to the Minister of Commerce and Industry (MCI).

Furthermore, Decree No. 22 of 2024 shifts supervision of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources to the Minister of State for National As-

Aid provided to 76K people: As part of its endeavor to localize charitable work,

Al-Najat Charitable Society provided aid to more than 76,000 people inside the country in 2023, reports Al-Anba daily.

Director of the Aid Department at the Society Muhammad Al-Khalidi revealed that the types of support granted included rent, financial aid, food supplies, electrical appliances and others.

Elaborating on the rent payment project, Al-Khalidi disclosed that the Society paid rent for 449 families; indicating that the total number of months paid reached 1,165 months as part of the 'Give Good News' campaign.

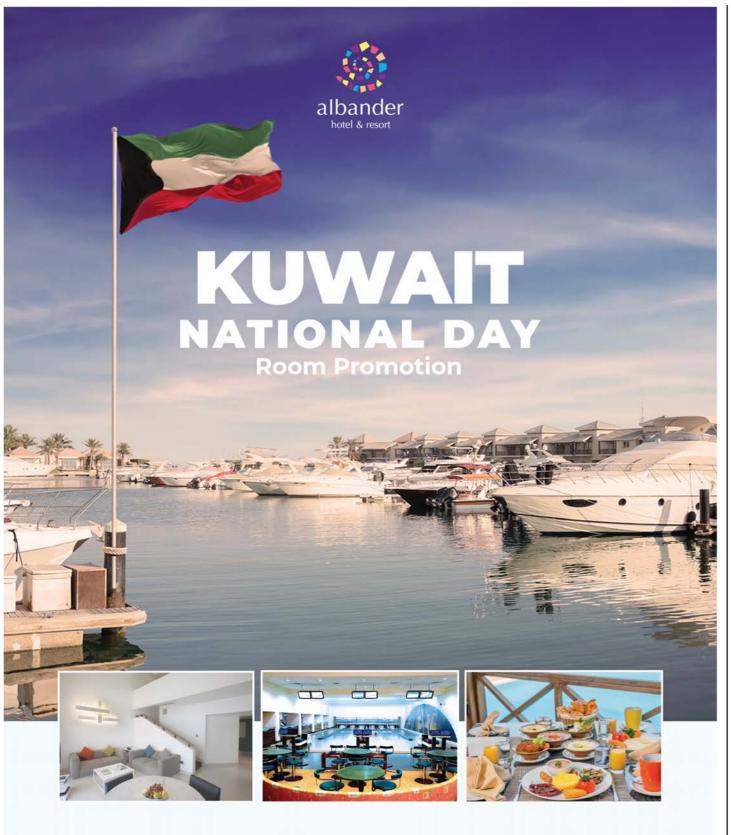
He added the Society provided financial assistance to 2,000 families and food cards to 8,034 families that used these cards to purchase the commodities they needed in the markets.

Al-Ajmi refutes rumors: Amer Al-Ajmi, the Head of the Local Affairs Sector and the official spokesperson for the government, debunked rumors circulating on social media regarding the government's alleged plan to revise electoral districts and voting procedures, reports Al-Jarida

Al-Ajmi made it clear to KUNA that the government has not entertained any proposals regarding district revisions and has no intentions to do so.

He reassured that the upcoming elections will proceed using the existing electoral districts and the one-vote system.

Additionally, the latest electoral registration data reveals that there are 837,000 eligible voters for the forthcoming National Assembly elections. The electoral lists, scheduled for publication in the Official Gazette next Sunday, show that there are 792,000 previously registered voters, along with an additional 45,000 individuals who have reached the voting age of 21.



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British Ambassador Belinda Lewis with other officials during the exhibition.



Photo shows British soldiers working side by side with Kuwaiti volunteers during the 1961 crisis.

## Iran keen to boost relations with Kuwait, affirms envoy

Totonji hails FMs' friendly meeting

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Iranian Ambassador** the paths for drawing a road map for the course of bilatto Kuwait Mohammad Totonji has affirmed eral relations. He added such meetings on the sidelines his country's keenness to strengthen relations with Kuwait and coordinate positions regarding common issues, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Totonji praised the friendly meeting that brought together Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and his Iranian counterpart, Dr Hussein Amir Abdullahian, in Geneva; where the two sides exchanged views on some issues of mutual concern. He said both parties confirmed their readiness to continue joint meetings and consultations, indicating that the meetings between senior officials of the two countries paved the way for enhancing cooperation and determined

of international conferences and office coordinate positions on common issues.

He continued: "We all hope that these meetings will contribute to strengthening political relations and economic interdependence between the two countries, while enhancing cooperation in all fields. The current circumstances in the region and the worsening developments in the occupied Palestinian territories call for further consultations and discussions among Islamic countries more than ever.'

Asked if Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Hussein Amir Abdullahian will visit Kuwait soon, Totonji stated that coordination on the exchange of visits between officials of the two countries is ongoing.

#### This is

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

This is in order to build beautiful housing cities that provide all the requirements for citizens, and use foreign companies that have a long history in building cities, and not granting plots and loans that reach KD 70,000.

This is due to the fact that the citizens consider this amount as small and incapable of meeting their needs because they want to build a large house. They are also not satisfied with the 400 meters allocated to them. They hence resort to borrowing in order to increase the area ver-

This is why they fall under the burden of debt and destitution, because the state gave them the freedom to choose the form and design of the building, which does not exist in any country in the world.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, resolving this crisis requires a vision that takes into account the future of the housing, social, economic, and environmental situations. What is most important of all is getting rid of the financial burdens incurred by the state, which will undoubtedly reach a stage where it will not be able to fulfill not only residential care, but everything it provides to citizens.

This is why we beg to say: This is not how things get done.

#### **Health Ministry**

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

According to a press release issued by the Ports and Borders Health Department of the Ministry of Health's Public Health Sector, the five centers are the Zour Port Health Center, the Doha Port Health Center, the Shuwaikh Port Health Center, the Ahmadi Port Health Center and the Shuaiba Port Health Center.

These centers will provide First Aid services, urgent care for emergency cases, and preventive services such

as necessary vaccinations, to protect society from diseases that may come from abroad. They will also provide health monitoring services at sea, issue or renew health forms and permits, and meet the requirements of international health regulations, such as issuance of an exemption certificate for a ship from sanitary surveillance, a marine health declaration form, an international certificate of vaccinations form, and a form granting a ship clearance of

#### **Cabinet lauds**

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

It paid homage to the honorable martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the dear homeland, expressing hope more prosperity and progress for Kuwait under its wise leadership.

The meeting approved a draft decree inviting the voters to elect new members of the National Assembly (parliament) on April 4, 2024, and referred it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for final endorsement.

During the meeting, President of the Government Performance Follow-Up Agency (GPF) Sheikh Ahmad Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah updated the Cabinet on the following projects:

First, the refurbishment of the 'Derwaza' (gate) of Alabd-Alrazzaq, Second, the New Terminal of Ku-

wait Airport (T-2), And, third, the heritage village on

Abdullah Al-Ahmad St. The Cabinet spoke highly of the diligent efforts being made by GPF president Sheikh Ahmad Mishal and staffers to review the progress of the government projects.

It tasked the competent state agencies with cooperation with GPF and implementing the recommendations of

the Agency's report. The Cabinet agreed a recommendation from the Ministry of Interior to accept a donation from Kuwait Finance House for the designing, building and equipping one of the facilities of the

The Cabinet appreciated the donation as a kind gesture that reflects the genuine values of the sons of Kuwait and loyalty to the homeland.

#### **Kuwait boosts**

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

The Election Affairs General Department at the Ministry of Interior has started preparations for the registration of candidates for the 2024 parliamentary election, which will commence on Monday as per the relevant decreee.

Meanwhile, former MP Osama Al-Shaheen disclosed that he will not stand for the upcoming election due to personal commitments.

Al-Shaheen won in five consecutive parliamentary elections.

Former Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh has announced that he will run for the upcoming election in the Second Constituency.

Former MP Badr Al-Dahoum con-

firmed he will run for the election in the Fifth Constituency Constitutional expert Professor

Fawaz Al- Jade'e also unveiled his plan to stand for the election. On the other hand, sources said former MP and National Assembly

Speaker Marzouq Al- Ghanim intends

to vie for speaker's seat in case he wins in the upcoming election. On the participation of women, sources disclosed that former Fourth Constituency candidate Modhi Al-Mutairi will contest the election. Al-Mutairi contested the election for the first time in 2022, during which she

#### **Kuwait aims**

ranked 17th with 3,041 votes.

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

This came in a statement to KUNA issued by the Central System follow-

ing the meeting held at Naif Palace. During the meeting, Al-Fadhalah gave a detailed presentation with statistics regarding the Central System's efforts in resolving the issue.

## to case No. 380 / 2019, commercial and civil, governmen

First: Debts that the bankruptcy Trustees Committee deems acceptable

S	The Industrial Bank Of Kunsait	(KWD) Amount	Remarks
1	The Industrial Bank Of Kuwait	KD 12,873,904	As per claim letter on 27/11/2023
2	The Public Authority for Minors Affairs	KD 9,693,517	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
3	Zakat House	KD 1,623,780	As per claim letter on 30/11/2023
4	The Public Institution for Social Security	KD 767,732	As per claim letter on 7/12/2023
	ner Creditors		
5	Al Rajhi Banking & Investment Corporation S.S.C	KD 96,361,263	As per claim letter on 19/11/2023
6	TID GLOBAL SUKUK 1 LIMITED/ Maples Fiduciary Services	KD 51,827,671	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
7	HSBC Bank Plc, As Investment Agent-London	KD 47,487,970	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
8	Wataniya Money Market Fund (Under Liquidation)	KD 37,542,303	As per claim letter on 10/12/2023
9	Al Dar Money Market Fund (Under (Liquidation	KD 26,937,839	As per claim letter on 13/12/2023
10	Kuwait and Middle East Financial Investment Co.	KD 25,959,576	As per claim letter on 29/11/2023
11	Cham Islamic Bank-S.S.C.C	KD 22,978,597	As per claim letter on 7/12/2023
12	Al Daal Holding Co.	KD 19,833,258	As per claim letter on 27/11/2023
13	Kuwait International Bank	KD 19,294,306	As per claim letter on 5/12/2023
14	Kuwait Investment Company	KD 18,889,587	As per report provided by the company
15	SC Lowy Primary Investments, Ltd.	KD 17,729,394	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
16	AREF Investment Group	KD 15,781,932	As per claim letter on 23/11/2023
17	Al Awsat KD Money Market Fund (Under Liquidation)	KD 14,451,936	As per claim letter on 29/11/2023
18	THE INVESTMENT DAR SUKUK CO- B.S.C.C/ABC ISLAMIC BANK B.S.C.C.V	KD 14,291,816	As per claim letter on 13/12/2023
19	KIPCO Asset Management Company (KAMCO)	KD 14,017,996	As per claim letter on 30/11/2023
20	Burgan Bank	KD 12,803,613	As per claim letter on 3/12/2023
21	Al Fajr Takaful Reinsurance Co. (Under Liquidation)	KD 11,865,140	As per claim letter on 13/12/2023
22	Al Masar Leasing & Investment Company	KD 11,153,651	As per claim letter on 26/11/2023
23	Gulf Investment House	KD 10,222,157	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
24	Kuwait and Middle East Financial Investment Co.	KD 10,019,246	As per claim letter on 29/11/2023
25	Al-Hilal Islamic Fund	KD 9.991.648	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
26	Bank AlBilad-S.S.C	KD 9.067,255	As per claim letter on 11/12/2023
27	Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank	KD 7,040,847	Via email on 13/12/2023
28	Al Baraka Islamic Bank	KD 6,517,989	As per claim letter on 16/11/2023
29	KIC Bond Fund	KD 6,421,936	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
30	AMWAL Money Market Fund (Under Liquidation)	KD 5,169,440	As per claim letter on 13/12/2023
31	The International Investor Company	KD 3.955.518	Via email on 23/1/2024
32	Al Buraq Holding Company	KD 3,904,482	As per claim letter on 10/12/2023
33	Global Omani Development & Investment Co.	KD 3,792,115	As per claim letter on 12/12/2023
34	Bank Muscat International	KD 3,732,110	Via email.
35	Al-Jazi Money Market Fund (Under	KD 3,115,374	As per claim letter on 27/11/2023
36	Líquidation)  Al Own El Mubasher	KD 2,365,121	As per claim letter on 14/12/2023
37	Al Awsat USD Money Market Fund (Under Liquidation)	KD 2,355,664	As per claim letter on 19/11/2023
38	Lebanese Islamic Bank	KD 1,815,710	As per claim letter on 20/11/2023
39	Global Investment House-(Merger with KAMCO)	KD 1,741,710	As per claim letter on 23/11/2023
40	WARA CONSTRUCTION CO.	KD 1,101,356	As per claim letter on 23/11/2023
41	Best RE (L) Limited	KD 1,080,442	As per claim letter on 12/12/2023
42	SC Lowy Primary Investments, Ltd.	KD 965,789	As per claim letter on 16/12/2023
43	Global Investment House Jordan-Limited	KD 650,634	As per claim letter on 23/11/2023
44	Wethaq Takaful Insurance Company	KD 91,949	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
45	International Leasing & Investment Company	KD 24,370	Net due amount according to Stipulated Judgment
	Total	KD 599,297,440	Five Hundred Ninety Nine Million Two Hundred Ninety Seven Thousand Fou Hundred Forty Kuwaiti Dinars
		tees Committee deer	ms exclusion -After the bankruptcy s, it decided on a temporary exclusion of these debts and claims.
S	Creditor Name	(KWD) Amount	
1	Lawyer/ Yousef Al-Harbish	KD 15,000	As per claim letter on 20/11/2023
2	Lawyer /Yousef Al-Harbish	KD 1,000,000	As per claim letter on 19/11/2023

As per claim letter on 19/11/2023-non-final judgment Murex Gulf Real Estate Company KD 6,368,292 As per claim letter on 20/11/2023-non-final judgment Emirates NBD Bank 5 KD 10.242.324 As per claim letter on 10/12/2023-non-final judgment (Within Debt of HSBC as Agent) Solus Alternative Asset Management (Sola Ltd Agent) KD 10,383,391 Solus Opportunities Fund 1 LF KD 4,111,304 As per claim letter on 10/12/2023-Case-Assignment of Right from SC Lowy Solus Opportunities Fund 1 LP KD 3,279,745 As per claim letter on 10/12/2023-non-final judgment- (Within Debt of HSBC as Agent) Investment House-Q.S.C KD 5,611,582 As per claim letter on 19/11/2023-non-final judgment- Investment offer agreement Secretary General of the Arab Towns
Organization 10 KD 519.534 As per claim letter on 11/12/2023-non-final judgment Secretary General of the Arab Towns Organization KD 1,020,164 As per claim letter on 11/12/2023-non-final judgment Mashreq Bank - Dubai KD 7,116,746 As per claim letter on 13/12/2023-non-final judgment (Within Debt of HSBC as Agent) 13 .SC Lowy Primary Investments, Ltd KD 3.982.123 As per claim letter on 10/12/2023-non-final judgment (Within Debt of HSBC as Agent) KD 8,364,445 As per claim letter on 30/11/2023-non-final judgment USD 29,024,219 - equivalent KD 8,924,947 15 (Saudi Awwal Bank (Saudi British Bank Previously As per claim letter on 13HSBC as Agen - (Within Debt of HSBC as Agent) Commercial Bank of Kuwait 16 KD 123,871,878 As per claim letter on 14/12/2023 17 MELLI BANK PLC KD 2,669,992 Via email - Investment Wakala (Within Debt of TID Global sukuk) USD 10,000,000 - equivalent KD 3,075,000 18 Qatar Islamic Bank Via email - Investment Wakala (Within Debt of TID Global sukuk) Kamco Islamic Fund KD 435,552 20 .Persia International Bank PLC KD 1.381.475 Via email - Investment Wakala (Within Debt of TID Global sukuk) Spinnaker Global Emerging Markets Fund Ltd USD 1,150,000 - equivalent KD 353,625 Via email - Investment Wakala (Within Debt of TID Global sukuk) SC Lowy Primary Investments, Ltd 22 (Within Debt of TID Global sukuk) USD 14,688,541 - equivalent KD 4,516,726 As per claim letter on 16/12/2023 - Investment Wakala (Within Debt of HSBC as Agent) 23 The Arab Investment Co As per claim letter on 16/12/2023 - Investment Wakala (Within Debt of TID Global sukuk) USD 5,000,000 - equivalent KD 1,537,500 24 The Arab Investment Co Solus Alternative Asset Management ((Sola Ltd Agent USD 8,172,914 - equivalent KD 2,513,171.06 25 Investment Wakala (Within Debt of HSBC as Agent) Solus Alternative Asset Management - Investment Dar Sukuk USD 250,000 - equivalent KD 76,875 (Within Debt of TID Global sukuk) 27 Markaz Lav KD 2,197,183 As per claim letter attached to it copies of account statements One Hundred Seventy Seven Million Two Hundred Fourteen Thousand **Total** KD 177,214,386 Three Hundred Eighty Six Kuwaiti Dinars

Note: According to article No. (111) of law No. 71 of 2020, issuing the Bankruptcy law.

### **World News Roundup**

#### **Europe**

#### **Harald hospitalized**

## Ukraine prez co-hosts a 'summit' in Albania

TIRANA, Albania, Feb 28, (AP): Ukraine's president co-hosted a summit with Albania's government on Wednesday that is meant to encourage further support for Kyiv by southeastern European countries, as signs of fatigue grow two years after Russia's full-scale invesion.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived before midnight Tuesday on the latest stop in an international tour that saw him in Saudi Arabia earlier Tuesday to push for a peace plan and the return of prisoners of war from Russia.

Zelenskyy on Wednesday called Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama "Ukraine's unwavering friend" in a message on X, formerly Twitter, adding the two would "discuss defense and political cooperation, support for the Peace Formula, and

security agreements."

"I will propose supporting Ukraine's efforts to achieve just and lasting peace, as well as organizing the Global Peace Summit in Switzerland," he

said, referring to the summit.

Zelenskyy and Rama also signed a friendship and cooperation agreement "to strengthen our cooperation with Albania and Ukraine's position in

the Balkans." Zelenskyy also awarded Rama with the "Yaroslav the Wise" medal for his contribution to Ukraine. Zelenskyy is accompanied by Foreign Minister

Zelenskyy

Dmytro Kuleba.

Germany, Poland not sending troops: European

military heavyweights Germany and Poland affirmed Tuesday that they would not be sending troops to Ukraine, after reports that some Western countries may be considering doing so as the war with Russia enters its third year.

The head of NATO also said the US-led military alliance has no plans to send troops to Ukraine, after

other central European leaders confirmed that they too would not be providing soldiers.

The Kremlin, meanwhile, warned that a direct conflict between NATO and Russia would be inevitable if the alliance sends combat troops. "In this case, we need to talk not about probability, but about the in-

if the alliance sends combat troops. "In this case, we need to talk not about probability, but about the inevitability (of conflict)," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Navalny funeral to be held on Friday: The funeral

of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died earlier this month in a remote Arctic penal colony, will take place on Friday in Moscow after several locations declined to host the service, his spokesperson said.

His funeral will be held at a church in Moscow's

His funeral will be held at a church in Moscow's southeast Maryino district on Friday afternoon, Kira Yarmysh said Wednesday. The burial is to be at a nearby cemetery.

Navalny died in mid-February in one of Russia's

Navalny died in mid-February in one of Russia's harshest penal facilities. Russian authorities said the cause of his death at age 47 is still unknown, and the results of any investigation are likely to be questioned abroad. Many Western leaders have already said they hold Russian President Vladimir Putin responsible for his death.

Entry ban on Russian tourists extended: Latvia's government has extended restrictions on the entry of Russian citizens into the Baltic country until next year, citing Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine which officials say is "still posing a threat to the inter-

nal security of Latvia."

The Cabinet of Prime Minister Evika Silia decided Tuesday to lengthen the entry conditions on Russian citizens until March 4, 2025.

Russian citizens will continue to be banned from entering Latvia, a European Union country, for the purposes of tourism and leisure, the government said in a statement.

However, some Russians will be permitted to enter, including those with residence permits valid in Latvia or another EU member state, or Russians whose entry is related to humanitarian considerations like political dissidents.

King Harald V of Norway hospitalized: King Harald V of Norway has been hospitalized with an infection while on vacation in Malaysia, the Norwegian royal house said in a statement Tuesday.

The 87-year-old monarch has had several illnesses in recent months, raising concern about the head of state's health. But royal officials have told Norwegian media that Crown Prince Haakon will be carrying out his planned engagements at home.

Harald, who is on a private trip abroad, is the oldest monarch in Europe. Two days before his birthday last week, the palace announced that the king would be undertaking a private trip abroad, without specifying the destination or dates, according to the Norwegian news agency NTB.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said that he was "sad" to hear of the king's hospitalization and wished him a "speedy recovery," NTB said.

**3 men charged in London court:** Three men arrested in an investigation into right-wing extremism were charged Tuesday in a London court with preparing to commit a terrorist act, authorities said.

They were arrested on Feb. 21, Counter Terrorism Policing North East said.

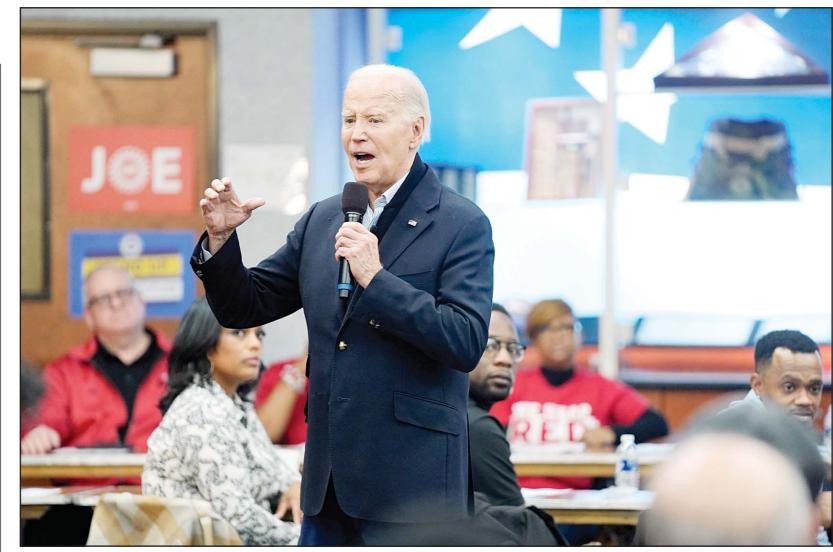
Prosecutors said the men had joined extreme rightwing online chat forums, had right-wing text messages and distributed information on guns and ammunition.

The men had manufactured an FGC-9 semi-automatic gun, had instructions on assembling a 3D-printed firearm and identified an Islamic education center in Leeds as a possible target.

**Italian family back in Rome:** Italy's foreign minister was on hand Tuesday for the arrival in Rome of an Italian family of three just hours after their release from two years of captivity in the African nation of Mali.

The family, identified as Rocco Langone, his wife Maria Caivano and an adult son, Giovanni Langone, were kidnapped from their home in the city of Koutiala, southeast of the Mali capital, by a militant group affiliated with al-Qaida. Italian authorities said the family had lived in Mali for years as part of a "well-integrated community of Jehovah's Witnesses."

Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said that the family members were all in good condition. Besides Tajani, they were met by another adult son, Daniele



US President Joe Biden meets with UAW members during a campaign stop at a phone bank in the UAW Region 1 Union Hall, Feb 1 in Warren, Mich. Biden and former president Donald Trump won the Michigan primaries on Feb 27. (AP)



Officials work at a command post near the home of Holly bobo to coordinate the search for bobo on April 14, 2011, in Darden, Tenn. Court documents show that Jason Autry, the star trial witness in the killing of Holly bobo, a 20-year-old nursing student who disappeared from her rural Tennessee home in 2011, is recanting his testimony. (AP)





Cantu

**America** 

Card

**Evidence points to innocence:** A Texas inmate who has long said he's innocent and claims that his conviction more than 20 years ago was based on false testimony and questionable evidence faces execution Wednesday for fatally shooting two people, including his causing

including his cousin.

Ivan Cantu was condemned for the killing of his cousin, James Mosqueda, 27, and his cousin's girlfriend, Amy Kitchen, 22, during a November 2000 robbery at their north Dallas home. His execution by lethal injection is set to take place at the state penitentiary in Huntsville.

Prosecutors have said Cantu, 50, killed Mosqueda, who dealt illegal drugs, and Kitchen as he tried to steal cocaine, marijuana and cash from his cousin's home. Convicted in 2001, Cantu has claimed a rival drug dealer killed his cousin over a dispute about money. (AP)

u u u nter crashes, injures 1:

**Copter crashes, injures 1:** One person was injured when a tour helicopter crashed on a remote beach on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, the county fire department said Tuesday.

An aircraft operated by Jack Harter Helicopters crashed at Honopu Beach on the Napali Coast, a rugged stretch of Kauai that is only accessible by hiking, kayaking or aerial tour.

The helicopter was carrying one pilot and four passengers, the Kauai Fire Department said in a news release. One passenger suffered a back injury. The pilot and other three passengers were not hurt. A photograph released by the fire department showed a crumpled helicopter resting on the sand.

A fire department helicopter airlifted the injured passenger to paramedics waiting at Princeville Airport. The others were picked up by another Jack Harter helicopter. (AP)

Reservist gets glowing reviews: An Army reservist responsible for the deadliest shooting in Maine history received a glowing review from his superiors even as some of his family members were growing increasingly worried about his mental health.

The annual evaluation from April 2023 indicated **Robert Card**, 40, of Bowdoin, was "a consummate professional" who "ex-

#### **Politics**

#### 'Uncommitted' votes demand attention

## Trump and Biden win Michigan primaries

DEARBORN, Michigan, Feb 28, (AP): US President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump won the Michigan primaries on Tuesday, further solidifying the all-but-certain rematch between the two men - yet early results from the state were highlighting some of their biggest political vulnerabilities ahead of the November general election.

A vigorous "uncommitted" campaign organized by activists disillusioned with Biden's handling of the war in Gaza was making headway. It had already far surpassed the 10,000-vote margin by which Trump won Michigan in 2016, a goal set by organizers of this year's protest effort.

As for Trump, he has now swept the first five states on the Republican primary calendar. But there were early signs that Trump was continuing to struggle with some influential voter blocs who have favored former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley in previous contests. Haley's strongest performance Tuesday night came in areas with college towns like Ann Arbor, home to the University of Michigan, and suburbs around Detroit and Grand Rapids.

For Biden, the notable percentage of "uncommitted" voters could signal weakness with parts of the Democratic base in a state he can hardly afford to lose in November. Trump, meanwhile, has underperformed with suburban voters and people with college degrees, and faces a faction within his own party that believes he broke the law in one or more of the criminal cases against him.

#### Largest

Michigan has the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the nation. More than 310,000 residents are of Middle Eastern or North African ancestry. Nearly half of the Detroit suburb of Dearborn's roughly 110,000 residents claim Arab ancestry.

Both the White House and Biden campaign officials have made trips to Michigan in recent weeks to talk with community leaders about the Israel-Hamas war and how Biden has approached the conflict, but those leaders have been unpersuaded.

A robust grassroots effort began just a few weeks ago to encourage voters to select "uncommitted" as a way to register objections to the death toll caused

celled as a squad leader" and whose men-

toring of troops was "among the best," ac-

cording to the documents released under an

open records request. Six months later, Card

by Israel's offensive. Nearly 30,000 people have died in Gaza, two-thirds of them women and children, according to Palestinian health officials.

That push has been backed by offi-

cials such as Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the first Palestinian American woman in Congress, and former Rep. Andy Levin. "Uncommitted" votes were hovering around the 15% mark needed to

ing around the 15% mark needed to qualify for delegates statewide. It was too soon to say whether the campaign would collect delegates locally.

In a statement, Biden did not direct-

In a statement, Biden did not directly acknowledge the "uncommitted" effort. Instead he touted the progress his administration has achieved for Michigan voters, while warning that Trump is "threatening to drag us even further into the past as he pursues revenge and retribution."

#### Fight

"This fight for our freedoms, for working families, and for Democracy is going to take all of us coming together," Biden said. "I know that we will."

Trump won the state by just 11,000 votes in 2016 over Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, and then lost the state four years later by nearly 154,000 votes to Biden. Organizers of the "uncommitted" effort wanted to show that they have at least the number of votes that were Trump's margin of victory in 2016, to demonstrate how influential the bloc can be.

"It is not lost on me that this president has softened his language and begun to recognize Palestinian suffering. But what is not enough is lip service. What we need is a withdrawal of support" for Israel, Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud said as votes rolled in Tuesday night.

"Tonight, we will watch the votes tally. But what's most important is to understand that the White House is listening," Hammoud said. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Mich., a

prominent Biden supporter in the state, said the president's campaign was well aware of its challenges in Michigan ahead of Tuesday night. She stressed that outreach needed to continue to not just the Arab American and Muslim communities, but other coalitions that

will be critical for Democrats in November.

"We have to talk to young people," Dingell said, pointing to Washtenaw County, where Ann Arbor is located. "Women who turned out in record numbers last year, and get in the union halls." Dingell also noted that Trump was underperforming among Republican primary voters, underscoring his general election weaknesses in the critical swing state.

#### Secur

Trump's victory in Michigan over Haley, his last major primary challenger, after the former president defeated her by 20 percentage points in her home state of South Carolina on Saturday. The Trump campaign is looking to lock up the 1,215 delegates needed to secure the Republican nomination sometime in mid-March.

Trump's dominance of the early states is unparalleled since 1976, when Iowa and New Hampshire began their tradition of holding the first nominating contests. He has won resounding support from most pockets of the Republican voting base, including evangelical voters, conservatives and those who live in rural areas. But Trump has struggled with college-educated voters, losing that bloc in South Carolina to Haley on Saturday night.

Trump did not travel to the state

Tuesday night. He instead called into a Michigan GOP election night watch party in Grand Rapids, where he stressed the importance of the state in the general election and said the results Tuesday evening were "far greater than anticipated."

"We have a very simple task: We

"We have a very simple task: We have to win on Nov. 5 and we're going to win big," Trump said, according to a campaign transcript. "We win Michigan, we win the whole thing."

But Haley campaign spokeswoman Olivia Perez-Cubas said the Michigan results were a "flashing warning sign for Trump in November."

"Let this serve as another warning sign that what has happened in Michigan will continue to play out across the country. So long as Donald Trump is at the top of the ticket, Republicans will keep losing to the socialist left. Our children deserve better."

ing years earlier when he volunteered to

become one of his unit's suicide prevention

officers and attended associated schooling

killing himself.

The personnel files also show Card had received some mental health-related train-

killed 18 people in a mass shooting before

in 2015-2016. (AP)

Suspect remains in custody: A suspect in the killing of a woman at a New York

in the killing of a woman at a New York City hotel was indicted Tuesday by a grand jury in Arizona's most populous county in the subsequent stabbing attacks of two women in the Phoenix area.

The Maricopa County Attorney's office announced Raad Almansoori, 26, was indicted on two counts each of attempted first degree murder, aggravated assault, and attempted sexual assault, as well as one count each of attempted armed robbery and theft of means of transportation. The grand jury indictments replace the direct charges filed against Almansoori last week.

Almansoori is suspected of stabbing an 18-year-old woman at least three times in the neck in a McDonald's restaurant bathroom in Surprise. Phoenix police have also named Almansoori a suspect in the attack a day earlier on a woman who was stabbed in her car in that city.

The women in both Arizona attacks survived, but New York police say Almansoori is a suspect in the killing of a woman in that city earlier in the month. The body of Denisse Oleas-Arancibia was found by staff on the floor of a hotel room. Officers said her death was determined to have been caused by blunt force trauma to the head and a broken clothes iron was found nearby. (AP)



Prince Andrew, Mike Tindall, Sarah, Duchess of York, Princess Anne, and Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, (from left), arrive to attend the Thanksgiving Service for King Constantine of the Hellenes at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, England, on Feb 27. Constantine II, Head of the Royal House of Greece, reigned as the last King of the Hellenes from 6 March 1964 to 1 June 1973, and died in Athens at the age of 82. (AP)

#### Lat/Am

#### **Warlord repatriated**

### Former leader under investigation in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, Feb 28, (AP): Former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro is under investigation for having allegedly "harassed" a humpback whale while riding a personal watercraft off Sao Paulo's coast last

Bolsonaro appeared at the federal police in Sao Paulo on Tuesday to meet with officers, along with his lawyer and former adviser who was also present at the time of the alleged incident.

The investigation is just one of the many legal headaches the former far-right leader is facing. Since leaving office a year ago, Bolsonaro has been banned from running for office until 2030, investigated for plotting a coup to remove his successor from power and stripped of his passport.



In a June 2023 video that circulated on social media, a man is seen riding a personal watercraft close to a whale, seemingly recording the encounter with a cellphone. Federal prosecutors, who are also investigating the case, said the man appeared to be Bolsonaro.

Under Brazilian legislation, motored vessels must keep a minimum distance of 100 meters from whales and other cetaceans. Any intentional attempt to get closer can lead to a sentence of up to two

to five years in prison and a fine. The man on the personal watercraft seemed to be about 15 meters from the animal, prosecutors said last

For Bolsonaro's large base, the case is yet another example that their former leader is being politically persecuted - an argument he has often made since leaving office.

Last week, officers in the capital, Brasilia, questioned Bolsonaro for allegedly plotting a coup, in an attempt to remove his successor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, from power. Bolsonaro, whose passport was seized in a previous police operation, chose to remain silent.

Warlord repatriated to Colombia: Colombian warlord Salvatore Mancuso was repatriated Tuesday after serving a drug trafficking sentence in the United States and being denied several requests to be sent to Italy, where he also has citizenship.

Mancuso arrived in Bogota's El Dorado Airport on

a charter flight that also carried dozens of Colombians who were deported from the U.S. after illegally crossing the southern border. Mancuso was quickly taken into police custody, wearing a green helmet and a bulletproof vest.

Human rights organizations and government officials in Colombia hope that Mancuso will cooperate with the justice system and provide information about hundreds of crimes that took place when paramilitary groups fought leftist rebels in rural Colombia in the 1990s and early 2000s.

"This event marks an important step towards reconciliation and the construction of a lasting peace in Colombia," said Fernando García, the director of Colombia's national immigration service.

Mancuso, 59, was one of the leaders of the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia, a paramilitary group founded by cattle ranchers who fought against leftist rebels during one of the most violent stretches of Colombia's decades-long armed conflict.

9 dead, 6 injured in police raids: A police raid Tuesday morning in several Rio de Janeiro's sprawling, low-income neighborhoods left at least nine dead and six injured, police said in a statement.

The raids targeted areas controlled by the Red Command drug trafficking group and took place in several communities in the city's north, including Cidade de Deus, and the Alemao and Penha complexes of favelas. Local residents took to social media to share videos

and photos of intense gunfire. Thousands of children were forced to stay home, with public transport and schools shut while the operation was ongoing. TV broadcaster Globo News showed images of bar-

ricades - made of rubber tires, furniture, cars - sometimes set on fire by criminals in an effort to slow down police.

According to Fogo Cruzado, a nonprofit organization that provides real-time reporting of gun violence in Brazil, shots in the Alemao complex were still being reported mid-afternoon.

Barbuda residents win appeal: A top court in London ruled Tuesday that two residents of the tiny Caribbean island of Barbuda have the right to challenge construction of an airstrip that critics say endangers fragile

ecosystems and was begun without any permits. The ruling by the Privy Council is considered a big win for John Mussington, a marine biologist, and Jacklyn Frank, a retired teacher, who launched a legal fight against the government of the twin-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda in July 2018.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda had argued that Mussington and Frank had no standing to mount a legal fight.

Leslie Thomas, one of the UK attorneys representing the Barbudans, said the plaintiffs now plan to ask the government to tear down what has been built. "This is a real David and Goliath battle," Thomas said. "We're up for another big fight."

Mussington said the ruling would have "significant implications for citizens of Antigua and Barbuda who have long been suffering from the lack of transparency and accountability from key institutions and officials charged with implementing the planning laws.'

2 mayoral hopefuls in Maravatio killed: Two mayoral hopefuls in the Mexican city of Maravatio have been gunned down within hours of each other, as experts warn the June 2 national elections could be the country's most violent on record.

The widening control of drug cartels in Mexico has been described as a threat. During the last nationwide election in 2021, about three dozen candidates were

The campaigns haven't even started yet. They formally begin on Friday.

On Tuesday, this farming town, where most of the men wear boots and big belt buckles, was in a state of wary shock following the previous day's killings. Dozens of state police were visible around city hall.

Talking about gynecologist Miguel Ángel Zavala, one of the murdered aspiring candidates, Maravatio resident and homemaker Carmen Luna said the crime was shocking and incomprehensible. "The way I see it, there's no explanation for killing a person ... it might have been a power struggle between them.'



Indonesian Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, (center right), receives four-star general epaulettes from President Joko Widodo during a ceremony at the Armed Forces Headquarters in Jakarta, Indonesia on Feb. 28. (AP)

Holding a sign of anti-Article 23 bill, pro-democracy activists shout slo-gans during a candlelight vigil at a downtown Hong Kong park on Feb 25, 2003. Hong Kong's plan to enact a new national security law, on top of a sweeping legislation that was imposed by Beijing and used to crack down on dissent, is deepening concerns over the erosion of freedoms in the former British colony. (AP)



Touray

Bazoum

#### **Africa**

Panel proposes June elections: A national dialogue panel in Senegal proposed holding elections in early June, the first proposed new date offered since the president attempted to push elections back to the end of the year.

President Macky Sall who faces term limits at the end of his second terms, said in early February he was postponing an election for 10 months, just weeks before it was set to take place on Feb. 25.

But Senegal's highest election authority, the Constitutional Council, rejected that move and ordered the government to set a new election date as soon as possible.

Sall called for a two-day national dialogue earlier this week, aiming at fostering trust among the candidates and the population. Civil, political and religious leaders attended, but almost all of the candidates on the ballot refused to participate. On Tuesday, the panel proposed holding the vote on June 2.

Sall has said that he will step down by April 2, which is the end of his current term, but it's unclear who will take over if elections are not held before that. Senegal has been seen as a rare stable de-

mocracy in a region rife with coups. The delay of the vote has sparked deadly protests across the country. The panel called for the Constitutional Council to review decisions that blocked

candidates including Karim Wade, an op-

position leader and son of former Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, from the ballot. The election authority disqualified Wade because he previously held dual citizenship. He renounced his French nationality in or-

der to run. Sall has defended his decision to delay elections, but has accepted the Council's ruling and attempted to calm the situation. At the launch of the dialogue he said he would propose a general amnesty law addressing the protests, in which hundreds of people were jailed. (AP)



31 killed in bus accident: At least 31 people were killed and 10 others injured when a driver lost control of a passenger bus in southern Mali on Tuesday, the country's government announced.

The bus carrying Malians and nationals from the West African subregion was en route to Burkina Faso when it "overturned," said a statement posted on Mali's Ministry of Trans-

port and Infrastructure's Facebook page.
"The provisional toll is 31 killed on the spot and 10 injured, some of them seriously," the statement said. The accident around 5 p.m. lo**Asia** 

#### Indonesia's likely next prez made 4-star gen

## South Korea, US military drills next week

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 28, (Agencies): South Korean and US troops will begin their expanded annual military drills next week in response to North Korea's evolving nuclear threats, the two countries said Wednesday, a move that will likely enrage North Korea because it views its rivals' joint training as an invasion rehearsal.

In recent months, North Korea has inflamed animosities on the Korean Peninsula with fiery rhetoric and continued missile tests. While it's unlikely for North Korea to launch full-blown attacks against South Korea and the US, observers say the North could still stage limited provocations along the tense border with South Korea.

On Wednesday, the South Korea and US militaries jointly announced that the allies will conduct Freedom Shield exercise, a computer-simulated command post training, and a variety of separate field training, from March

Col Lee Sung-Jun, a spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that the allies' drills are designed to bolster their joint capabilities to prevent North Korea from using its nuclear weapons. He said the allies are to carry out 48 field exercises this spring, twice the number conducted last year, and that this year's drills would involve air assault, live-firing and bombing training.

"Our military is ready to punish North Korea immediately, strongly and to the end in the event of its provocation, and we'll further strengthen our firm readiness through the upcoming drills," Lee said.

Col Isaac L. Taylor, a spokesperson for the US military, said the allies' exercises have been defensive in nature and that there is solid evidence that "a high readiness rate" helps ensure deterrence.

North Korea didn't immediately respond to the drills' announcement. North Korea has reacted to previous major South Korea-US military drills with its own missile tests.

**TOKYO:** South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik and US Secretary of Defense Llovd Austin on Wednesday vowed to deal with North Korea's arms transfers to Russia in coordination with the international community, Seoul's defense ministry said,

According to Yonhap News Agen-

cal time in Koumantou south of Bamako.

Accidents involving public transport bus-

es are a frequent occurrence in Mali. On Feb

19, at least 15 people died and more than 46

HK's plan for new national security law deepens fears over eroding civil liberties

HONG KONG, Feb 28, (AP): As Hong Kong moves toward enacting a new national security law, four years after Beijing imposed a similar law that all but wiped out dissent and vocal pro-democracy media in the semi-autonomous Chinese city, concerns are spreading among the city's international business and média communities.

Critics say the legislation will make Hong Kong's legal system increasingly similar to that of mainland China, but the government argues it will affect only a "small minority" of disloyal residents.

Businesses and journalists fear that broad provisions on state secrets could criminalize their day to

The Basic Law, the city's miniconstitution, requires it to pass a home-grown national security law. But previous efforts to pass such a law were defeated by a massive protest that saw them as efforts to erode the civil liberties Beijing promised to keep intact in the former British colony for 50 years after it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

However, following a year of massive pro-democracy protest that rocked the city in 2019, China's rulers took harsh measures to impose control.

Under Beijing's 2020 National Security Law, many of the city's leading activists were arrested and others fled abroad. Several vocal media outlets were shuttered. Large protests have been absent in the city in the post-pandemic era.

That law targeted politically active Hongkongers, but businesses and journalists are worried that the local law could bring more mainland-style surveillance and censor-

ship to Hong Kong.

The city's many companies are concerned about how the new law could affect handling economic data or exclusive research, said George Chen, Hong Kong-based managing director for American policy consulting firm The Asia

A public consultation document proposed criminal prosecution for unlawfully disclosing state secrets, echoing the broad definition of secrets used in mainland China. which covers economic, social and technological developments among

JAKARTA, Indonesia: Indonesian

President Joko Widodo on Wednes-

cy, the officials expressed concerns that these illegal arms transfers pose a significant threat to global peace and stability, and pledged to respond firmly in this manner.

During the conversation, Shin and Austin condemned North Korea's missile tests and pledged to maintain a strong defense to deter its provocations. The talks were held amid concerns over North Korea's supply of munitions and missiles to Russia for Ukraine use.

Shin told local media on Monday that North Korea has been shipping millions of munitions to Russia since July 2023, in exchange for food and necessities.

The US and its partners have denounced the arms deal as violating UN Security Council resolutions banning countries from trading weapons or military equipment with North Korea. 

were injured in a traffic accident between a

day awarded an honorary four-star general rank to Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, a former highranking army officer who is linked to human rights abuses and who emerged as the apparent winner of the Feb. 14 presidential election. Widodo gave the honorary promotion to Subianto, 72, in front of highranking military and police officials

usually held by the officer who leads the country's military. "This award is a form of appreciation as well as confirmation of one's complete devotion to the people, nation and state," Widodo said on

in Jakarta. A four-star general is Indo-

nesia's second-highest military rank,

Wednesday. Subianto's vice presidential running mate, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, is

Widodo's son.

Bloc lifts coup sanctions on Niger: public transport bus and a lorry in central West Africa's regional bloc known as ECOWAS said that it is lifting travel and economic sanctions imposed on Niger that were aimed at reversing last year's coup in the country in a new push for dialogue as it also renewed calls on three junta-led nations to rescind their decision to quit the regional

> The sanctions will be lifted with immediate effect, the president of the ECOWAS Commission, Omar Alieu Touray, said after the bloc's meeting in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, that aimed to address existential threats facing the region as well as implore three junta-led nations that have quit the bloc to rescind their decision.

After elite soldiers toppled Niger's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum on July 26, neighbors shut their borders with Niger and more than 70% of its electricity, supplied by Nigeria, was cut off after financial and commercial 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.

The sanctions, however, emboldened the junta in Niger and two other coup-hit countries of Mali and Burkina Faso, resulting in the three countries forming an alliance and announcing the unprecedented decision last month that they have quit the 15-member bloc. Analysts have called their withdrawal the bloc's biggest crisis since its formation in 1975. (AP)



In this photo released by the Colombian Immigration agency, migration officials meet former Colombian paramilitary leader, Salvatore Mancuso, at the gate of the plane as he arrives from the US which deported him after he served his time for drug trafficking, in Bogota on Feb 27. (AP)

SAUDI UAE PHILIPPINES - PSEi

KSE 100

Change Closing pts +9.87 12,611.42 +17.83 4,290.38 +15.85 6,876.52 +633.98 63,803.57

**JAPAN EGYPT**  EGX 30

28-02-2024

Change Closing pts -31.49 39,208.03 -328.70 28,876.46

# Business

Groundbreaking merger propels KFH to pinnacle of Islamic banking with unprecedented assets and profitability

## KFH completes largest-ever merger in Kuwait's banking sector

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Following its landmark cross-border acquisition of Ahli United Bank - Bahrain, one of the largest deals in the region, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq announced the successful completion of its merger with Ahli United Bank - Kuwait (AUB-Kuwait), including the stock swap of KFH capital's increase with the shareholders of AUBK. This historic merger officially establishes KFH as the continuing entity and AUB-Kuwait as the merged entity, marking the firstever such project in Kuwait's banking sector.

On this occasion, Al Marzoug expressed his deepest gratitude to everyone involved in the merger project. He acknowledged the length and complexity of the process, emphasizing that it was made possible by the unwavering support of the employees. He also lauded the role of the regulators and extended his thanks for their continuous support.

He added:"KFH and AUB are now united as a single team, with a unified banking identity and a shared Sharia vision. We warmly welcome the AUB teams to their new home at KFH. We look forward to their valuable contributions as they become key members of the KFH team, solidifying our position as the largest bank in Kuwait and the world's secondlargest Islamic bank by total assets, which stood at KD 38.01 billion in 2023."

"Furthermore,KFH holds the top spot for market capitalization in Kuwait, exceeding KD 12



Hamad Abdulmohsen Al Marzouq – KFH Chairman

billion. It also boasts the highest traded liquidity on Boursa Kuwait, surpassing all other listed companies, groups, and banks. In 2023, KFH achieved a record net profit of KD 584.5 million attributable to the shareholders, marking the highest profit ever recorded in Kuwait's banking sector and reflecting a strong

#### Al Marzouq:

- Boosting national employment and creating high-quality jobs in the local market
- A formidable banking group with enhanced cross-border competitiveness

63.4% increase from the previous year,"Al Marzouq said.

He continued, "As we step into this era, the world's attention turns to us, spotlighting our united Sharia and vision. This merger is not just a landmark for us, but it sets the stage for a new global Islamic banking era led by KFH."

Al Marzouq explained that the merger will enable KFH to enhance its services, significantly contribute to economic diversification, and support Kuwait's development plans. It will also allow KFH to create quality jobs in the local market as the new merged unitis in Kuwait.In addition, the organization's expansion requires more employees and may require sending some employees abroad to support the Group's operations in other markets.

He indicated that the acquisition contributed to boosting KFH's capability to employ the best competencies and support national manpower.400 employees were hired during 2023, with a nationalization rate of 100% of the total number of hires. Thus, the Kuwaitisation ratio exceeded 81%, in addition to appointing national employees to leadership positions during the year.

Al Marzouq concluded: "Our focus now shifts to the integration phase. As we blend our operations, systems, and client base, we are set to pave the way for new success defined by innovation, digital advancement, and ethical professionalism, catering to the growing needs of our diverse multinational clientele. Enhancing the presence of a giant banking group, we gain greater cross-border competitive capabilities that expand its presence across many markets. KFH Group spans 12 geographical locations, chief among them is Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Germany, Egypt, United Kingdom, Malaysia, among other strategic markets."

## **Kuwaiti banks' 2023 financing to** oil & gas sector hits 1.81b dinars

December sees sharp 68.6% decline

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Throughout the year 2023, Kuwaiti banks provided a total financing of approximately 1.81 billion dinars to the oil and gas sector. However, there was a notable decline in funding for the sector in December, plummeting by 68.6% to 84.5 million dinars compared to the 269.7 million dinars recorded in November. On an annual basis, this represented a significant decrease of 44.6%, amounting to 68.1 million dinars in December 2023.

The financing landscape for the sector displayed a fluctuating pattern over the course of 2023. Starting at 78.8 million dinars in January, it increased to 243.3 million dinars in February, sharply declined to 61.2 million dinars, followed by an upswing to 159.2 million dinars in April. The trend continued with a substantial rise to 274.3 million dinars in May, a dip to 169.1 million dinars in June, a further drop to 84.9 million dinars in July, and a significant surge to 298.7 million dinars in August. Subsequently, there was a decline to 6.2 million dinars in September, a subsequent increase to 125.1 million dinars in October, and a peak at 269.7 million dinars in Novem-

In the broader context of credit facilities, the total cash credit facilities provided by banks, encompassing all sectors, witnessed a 2.1% increase during 2023, reaching 53.581 billion dinars by the end of December.

#### **Chinese firm secures contract for JPF-5**

### **KOC & Spetco nears completion** of Jurassic Production Facility 4

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: MEED Magazine has reported that Kuwait Oil Company and Spetco are nearing the completion of operations for the oil and gas facility known as the Jurassic Production Facility 4 (JPF-4), with expectations to finalize op-erations by next week, according to sources within the oil industry. The project, which has incurred a cost of \$398 million, is in its final stages, and operational activities are scheduled to conclude within the next seven days, reports Al-Anba daily.
The magazine noted that Spetco

currently owns and operates the third Jurassic production facility, JPF-3, which is already opera-

being operated. It's worth mentioning that Ku-

tional, along with the fourth facility, JPF-4, which is in the process of

wait Oil Company had awarded the main contract, valued at \$398 million, for the aforementioned facility to the Kuwaiti company Spetco in December 2021. Additionally, the Chinese company Jirah secured a contract worth \$426 million for the construction of the fifth production facility, JPF-5, during the same pe-

riod.

The source further indicated that the operation of the fifth fa-cility, JPF-5, is expected to be completed at some point in the

Personal cash facilities provided by banks experienced a growth of 1.5%, amounting to 284.2 million dinars, while housing facilities increased by 1.7%, reaching 276.4 million dinars. However, private and typical housing loans decreased by 7%, totaling 22.9 million dinars.

The new credit facilities provided, consolidated for 12 months, saw a decline of about 618 million dinars or 2.75% during 2023, dropping from 23.049 billion dinars in 2022 to 22.431 billion in 2023. Personal facilities provided by banks decreased significantly by 43.1%, totaling 1,562 billion dinars, falling from 5.184 billion dinars in 2022 to 3.621 billion dinars in 2023. Consumer loans declined by 7.3%, amounting to 67.2 million dinars, and housing loans decreased by 59.2%, totaling 1.12 billion dinars.

Meanwhile, on the global front, oil prices experienced an upswing, nearing their highest levels in three weeks. Brent crude futures rose to \$83.59 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate crude futures for April delivery increased to \$78.48 per barrel. Contracts for March delivery also saw a rise, reaching \$79.43 per bar-

Analysts attributed the positive sentiment in oil markets to signs of rising demand in China, driven by a 47.3% year-on-year increase in tourism revenues during the Lunar New Year holiday. The International Energy Agency revised its forecast for global oil demand growth to 1.22 million barrels per day for the current year, a slight decrease from the previous month's estimates. In contrast, OPEC maintained its projection of oil demand growth at 2.25 million barrels per day.

The International Energy Agency had previously anticipated that oil demand would peak in 2030 as the world shifts towards clean energy. In contrast, OPEC expected oil consumption to continue rising for the next two decades.



Fahad Al Ali, Chief Technology Officer at stc Kuwait, and Yang Chaobin, President of ICT Products & Solutions at Huawei, attended the signing ceremony

Collaboration aims to boost network efficiency and intelligence

## stc Kuwait and Huawei sign strategic cooperation MoU to accelerate 5.5G

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and Huawei signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further enhance their strategic cooperation and business monetization on 5.5G. The two parties will jointly build a 5.5G intelligent wireless network based on their previous joint innovation on 5G, along with incubating new services related to 5.5G ToC/ ToH and ToB, while promoting the maturity of the 5.5G industry and ecosystem.

The signing ceremony of the MOU took place at MWC Barcelona 2024 in the presence of Fahad Al Ali, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at stc Kuwait, Yang Cherkier Breithert of ICT Bredwett & Seletion Chaobin, President of ICT Products & Solutions at Huawei, and other members of the management teams

of both parties. Under the MoU, stc Kuwait and Huawei will carry out strategic cooperation on 5.5G technology innovation to build intelligent wireless networks and converge crossdomain data. Intelligent wireless networks include solutions such as WTTx Suite 2.0, Smart Care, and RAN digital twin systems. Cross-domain data convergence uses NOC and SOC convergence to proactively manage user experience, continuously improve network performance, achieve digital intelligence transformation and build a network security architecture to protect stc digital assets from threats. In terms of business monetization, further explore and incubate new ToC and ToH applications based on 5.5G technologies, and release new services based on network capabilities to promote the growth of 5G users. In the ToB field, focus on the SME and oil and gas industry, launch smart office solutions customized for SME, and incubate vertical applications. The two parties will verify the concept and then iterate into commercial products to lead the market development.

Fahad Al Ali, CTOat stc, said, "as a pioneer of the 5G technology in the regional market, stc adopts the most advanced intelligent solutions to support and enable the country's digital transformation and is committed to enrich customers' experience through unique and innovative solutions. Huawei has been our strategic partner since the inception of the Company and jointly we have introduced and launched cutting edge technologies and solutions to the market. With the changing customers' demands and requirements along with the evolving technological advancements in the world, the two parties will jointly promote 5.5G innovation, improve network performance, efficiency, and intelligence, meet diversified requirements of users and industries, and bring more business opportunities and competitive advan-

Yang Chaobin, President of ICT Products & Solutions at Huawei, said, "Huawei is committed to providing customers with the best products and solutions to help them for digital intelligence transformation and business growth. stc is Huawei's strategic partner in Kuwait. The two parties will jointly explore new technologies and applications for intelligent wireless networks and provide strong support for stc's digital strategy and Kuwait's digi-

With the 2024 commercial launch of 5.5G, Huawei is collaborating with operators and partners around the world to pursue exciting new innovation in networks, cloud, and intelligence. Together, we will drive 5G business and foster a thriving industry ecosystem, creating a new era for intelligent digital transformation.

#### **Ceremony part of Kafa'a initiative initiated by CBK**

## NBK celebrates achievements of HBS Exec Dev Program graduates

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) proudly celebrated the graduation of its trainees from the fifteenth edition of the Harvard Business School (HBS) Executive Development Program. This milestone marks a significant achievement as part of the Kafa'a initiative initiated by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in collaboration with Kuwaiti banks. Managed by the Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS), this initiative aims to develop and improve the skills of national talent.

The bank observed significant participation in this edition, with nine trainees from various departments' directors-a record number among participating banks.

The ceremony took place under the patronage of Mr. Basel A. Al-Haroun, the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Banking Studies. Representatives from Kuwaiti banks, participating companies from both domestic and international spheres, CBK, KIBS, and the honorees were all in attendance.

This year's Executive Development Program, held in the UAE, was themed "Navigating the Future: Leading Financial Institutions in an Era of Innovation and Transformation. The program aimed to cultivate executive leadership within the banking and financial sectors.

The program centered around two primary pillars: "Financial Markets Strategy" and "Leadership." It emphasized the pivotal role of leadership and



NBK Harvard Executive Development Program graduates pose for a group photo.

management in devising and executing financial, technical, and leadership strategies to address challenges. More-

over, it underscored the importance of acquiring the diverse strategic and leadership skills necessary for navigating digital transformation within the financial sector, enabling participants to stay abreast of rapid developments

The six-day program featured practical case studies relevant to the program's theme and the banking and financial sectors, as well as other in-dustries for which HBS is renowned. These case studies aimed to offer participants a comprehensive array of practical experiences, enhancing their analytical skills and equipping them with tools and methodologies to enhance performance, foster innovation, and shape institutional culture.

The program alternates its location annually among the GCC countries. This approach is designed to cultivate executive leadership within banks and financial institutions across the region, tailored to meet the evolving needs of the banking and financial sectors amidst the dynamic changes in the business landscape.

Moreover, the program sought to familiarize participants with the implications of the global surge in investments aligning with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards, emphasizing their significance for the organization. Additionally, it aimed to educate them on optimizing the utilization of emerging tools like AI, managing risk in a data-driven manner, and promoting successful digital transformation. Additionally, it highlighted emerging opportunities in FinTech.

The program featured interactive plenary sessions, simulations, and real-world case studies led by Harvard Business School faculty. These sessions aim to empower leaders to delve into actionable insights and acquire

essential tools for effective leadership. The curriculum also emphasized global attention to environmental sustainability, emerging technologies, and strategies for leading successful digital transformations. Furthermore, it addressed the influence of AI on team dynamics and leadership approaches, emphasizing improved communication, leadership in high-pressure, highprofile situations, and supporting diverse talent collaboration.

Commenting on this event, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, GM - Head of Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait (NBK)said: "Our engagement in the "Kafa'a" initiative underscores NBK's commitment to investing in human capital, ensuring the development of skilled national banking leaders in alignment with the latest and highest international standards."

"Creating a flexible, dynamic, and high-performing workforce entails empowering and nurturing future leaders, equipping them with the most effective and up-to-date programs. Hence, we prioritize participation in initiatives and programs that align with the bank's long-term goals and bolster sustainability efforts in human resources," Al-Ablaniadded.

He emphasized NBK's unwavering commitment to furnishing future leaders with the necessary training programs and capabilities. These initiatives aim to cultivate adaptability, inspire others, and deliver advanced and innovative services, thus solidifying the bank's leadership position at

#### FTX founder's lawyer asks judge

## 'Reject the hundred-year recommended sentence'

NEW YORK, Feb 28, (AP): Sam Bankman-Fried's lawyer said Tuesday that a suggested 100-year prison sentence for the FTX founder by an arm of the court is "grotesque" and "barbaric" and at most a term of a few years behind bars is appropriate for cryptocurrency crimes that the California man still dis-

In presentence arguments filed just minutes before a late Tuesday deadline in Manhattan federal court, attorney Marc Mukasey said a report by Probation officers improperly calculated federal sentencing guidelines to recommend a sentence just 10 years short of the maximum potential 110-year sen-

A spokesperson for prosecutors, who will respond in court papers in mid-March, declined comment. Mukasey noted, however, that prosecutors have agreed with the 100-year recommendation and say it was supported by trial

On March 28, Judge Lewis A. Kaplan will sentence the man prosecutors say cheated investors and customers of at least \$10 billion in businesses he controlled from 2017 through 2022.

His FTX trading platform was perceived by some in the cryptocurrency industry as a pioneer before it collapsed into bankruptcy in November 2022, weeks before he was brought to the United States from the Bahamas for trial.

At a November trial, the man known for his casual clothing and wild hair was convicted of fraud and conspiracy charges by a jury that wasn't swayed by Bankman-Fried's testimony

Mukasey wrote Tuesday that the Probation office miscalculated federal sentencing guidelines to justify its recommendation. A proper sentence, Mukasey said, would be based on guidelines that would call for between five years and 6 1/2 years in prison, at most.

When Bankman-Fried's charitable works and his commitment to others are considered, an appropriate sentence would return him "promptly to a productive role in society," the lawyer said. Mukasey signed the 90-page document that was also worked on by four other

Mukasey said that the Probation office "recommends that the Court sentence Sam to 100 years in prison. That recommendation is grotesque." He called on the judge to reject the "barand humane person" who doesn't use drugs, rarely drinks and is a first-time

"Sam is not the 'evil genius' depicted in the media or the greedy villain described at trial," Mukasey wrote. "Sam is a 31-year-old, first-time, non-violent offender, who was joined in the conduct at issue by at least four other culpable individuals, in a matter where victims are poised to recover - were always poised to recover - a hundred cents on the dollar. FTX was once the world's second-

largest crypto exchange and Bankman-Fried seemed to be flying high with the purchase of Super Bowl advertising and endorsement from celebrities including comedian Larry David and NFL superstar quarterback Tom Brady

After his arrest, though, Bankman-Fried's communications were found by the judge to be attempts to influence trial witnesses and he was jailed before

For more than a half year, Bankman-Fried was permitted to live at home with his parents - both Stanford Law School professors - in Palo Alto, California, where he grew up.

Mukasey said the media portrayal of Bankman-Fried as a luxury-laden billionaire who craved wealth was wrong and he included a quote from his client's father, who said: "For anyone who knows Sam, the popular portrayal of him as a high-rolling, celebrity-seeking, CEO driven by greed is simply bizarre.'

Mukasey also quoted Bankman-Fried's mother, who said her son "has been wracked with remorse for not having prevented the implosion of FTX and the damage that followed. It is, he has told me, the first thing he thinks about when he wakes up and the last thing he thinks about when he goes to sleep.

Mukasey wrote that Bankman-Fried "does not feel pleasure, or happiness, or joy, even when something very good happens to him," and that he was diagnosed in college with anhedonic depression and has been on antidepressant medication ever since.

Mukasey wrote that Bankman-Fried, regardless of his sentence, will never be

"He will be scorned by many people wherever he goes for the rest of his life," he said.

## Ookla® Speedtest® 'celebrates' Zain's success at MWC Barcelona



Stephen Bye and Daaij Al Oud during the ceremony at MWC Barcelona.

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28:** Ookla® Speedtest®, the global leader in network intelligence and connectivity insights, has celebrated Zain Kuwait's success at the Mobile World Congress (MWC 2024) in Barcelona, Spain. The recognition came after Zain's 5G network won three Speedtest Awards in Q2-Q3 of last year.

The special ceremony was attended by Zain Kuwait Acting Chief Technology Officer Daaij Al Oud, President and CEO of Ookla, a division of Ziff Davis, Stephen Bye, Zain Kuwait Customer Care Director Ali Akbar, Ookla Chief Strategy Officer Chip Strange, and executives from both companies.

Toward the end of last year, Zain announced that it has become the first and only operator in Kuwait to win three major awards in the same year from Ookla Speedtest, raising the bar yet againto reaffirm its leadership position in the local telecom & ICT industry and continue its ongoing efforts to serve Kuwait's largest family of subscribers.

The three prestigious accolades, 'Fastest 5G Network', 'Best 5G Video Experience', and 'Fastest Internet', came after Zain's network successfully topped the extensive analysis carried out by Ookla on hundreds of thousands of user-initiated tests made by consumers in Kuwait. The tests were carried on all of Kuwait's major networks, and Zain deservedly scored the highest results in the above three categories during the award period.

Zain continues to heavily invest in its 5G infrastructure with world-class technologies, achieving the highest speeds and best operational efficiency levels. The company seeks to meet the increasing demand on data, while exploring new ecosystems only possible by this revolutionary technology, with the ultimate goal of serving all needs of consumers, businesses, and government agencies.

In yet another impressive achieve-



A group picture of Zain and Ookla executives.

## Kuwait Airways ... new era of aviation development

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28, (KUNA): Kuwait Airways celebrated its 70th anniversary on Tuesday by launching its new logo and expanding its services, which reflects on their visions in achieving their goals.

Chairman of the Board of Directors Abdulmohsen Al-Faqan, said in a press conference that Kuwait Airways seeks to develop its systems by using the latest technology in the fields of

He added that Kuwait Airways is collaborating with national food companies to improve the food quality on their aircraft, and launching a luggage home delivery service to the passengers arriving in Kuwait.

Al-Faqan also stated that they launched the 'Blue Bird Channel' on all airplanes screens that contains programs and documentaries which meet the passengers' entertainment needs.

He also added that the company is operating 50 flights to 46 destination daily during the current winter season, noting that the number will increase to 54 destinations during the upcoming summer season.

Flights to London will increase to two daily, four weekly flights to Munich and Vienna, three weekly flights to Barcelona, Malaga, Bodrum, Sara-

ment that reaffirmed its leadership po-

sition in the local ICT industry, Zain

ture to prepare for the shift towards the

5.5G era, which brings limitless op-



Kuwait Airways Board of Directors led by Abdulmohsen Al-Faqan holding a press conference.

jevo and Salalah, two flights weekly to Antalya and Nice, and a flight to Taif in Saudi Arabia, he said.

Al-Faqan added that Kuwait Airways will operate a flight to Madrid weekly, which may increase to two weekly flights based on its demand.

For his part, Director of the company's operation department Abdulhameed Al-Ali stated that the company

portunities and opens up new horizons

for businesses and consumers alike. In

is offering two scholarship plans for students wishing to study aviation for qualification and training under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Kuwait Airways was established in 1953 and operated its first flight on March 16, 1954, noting that it is wholly owned by the government of

tions, Ookla's mission is to make the

recently announced that it has achieved addition, the achievement serves as a speeds of 10 Gigabits per second after testament to Zain's leadership position completing a 5.5G technology trial on and goes in line with its digitization efits network, becoming the first operaforts for the 'New Kuwait' vision. tor to reach this significant milestone Ookla® is the global leader in netin Kuwait's telecom market. The comwork intelligence and connectivity insights. For almost two decades, Ookla pany also succeeded in testing Ultra-Reliable Low Latency Communication has set the industry standard for both (URLLC), a key 5.5G feature. fixed and mobile network testing and Zain has invested early in upgrading analysis.From its world-renowned and enhancing its network's infrastruc-Speedtest® and Downdetector® platinternet better, faster, and more accessible for everyone. Ookla's enterprise solutions com-

bine first-party crowdsourced data and scientifically controlled testing with tools that provide actionable insights across a network's lifecycle and customer experience. Ookla's insights empower operators, businesses, government agencies, nonprofits, and more to analyze, optimize, and publicize networks around the world.

To learn more about Ookla's methodology, visit speedtest.net/awards.

## **Hong Kong lifts curbs on property** market, to spend more on tourism

HONG KONG, Feb 28, (AP): Hong Kong's government has lifted curbs on property deals after home prices fell to a seven-year low, adding to the Chinese territory's woes.

Finance minister Paul Chan announced the move in a speech presenting the territory's budget, which also raised spending on tourism promotion. He said all curbs, such as extra taxes, imposed earlier to cool the property market would be lifted with immedi-

Home prices have fallen for nine consecutive months and share prices have languished as a tightening of freedoms in the former British colony has rattled investors. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's tourism has not fully rebounded after it reopened to foreign travelers following the COVID-19 pandemic. China's slowing economy has also im-

pacted Hong Kong's recovery. Chan said the limits on property transactions were "no longer necessary amid the current economic and market

conditions. The government lifted a 15% stamp duty imposed on non-permanent residents who buy property in Hong Kong and a 15% stamp duty charged on pur-

chases of a second property. Homeowners also no longer must pay a separate duty on sales of homes purchased less than two years before. Chan said more measures might be taken to ease property lending. "We consider that there is now room

to make further adjustments to the rel-

evant measures and other supervisory policies pertinent to property lending where appropriate, under the premise of maintaining the stability of the banking system," Chan said. Last year, the city reduced by half

taxes charged on home purchases by non-permanent resident homebuyers and those buying additional properties.

Shares of property developers in Hong Kong jumped after the scrapping of cooling measures was announced Henderson Land's shares rose 4.1%, while New World Development's soared 5.9%. Sun Hung Kai Properties jumped 4.1%

As an additional tourist attraction, Chan said the city will revamp its light show on scenic Victoria Harbor and stage monthly pyrotechnic and drone shows over the waterfront.

Another \$100 million Hong Kong dollars (\$12.8 million) will go to promoting big events in the city, highlighting activities like hiking and cycling and creating a new tourism brand to "soft-sell" Hong Kong, he said.

support Ukraine's continued resistance and long-term reconstruction," Yellen said in remarks in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where Group of 20 finance ministers and central bank governors are meet-

'I believe there is a strong international law, economic, and moral case for moving forward. This would be a

edented threat to global stability," she

forms to an accompanying and grow-

ing suite of end-to-end enterprise solu-

The United States and its allies froze hundreds of billions of dollars in Russian foreign holdings in retaliation for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Those billions have been sitting untapped as the war grinds on, now in its third year, while officials from multiple countries

have debated the legality of sending the money to Ukraine. More than twothirds of Russia's immobilized central bank funds are located in the EU.

Using the assets to help Ukraine "would make clear that Russia cannot win by prolonging the war and would incentivize it to come to the table to negotiate a just peace with Ukraine,'

#### 'Unlock frozen Russian cbank assets and send them to Kyiv' WASHINGTON, Feb 28, (AP): value of these immobilized assets to decisive response to Russia's unprec-Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on

roughly \$300 billion in frozen Russian Central Bank assets and using them for Ukraine's long-term recon-"It is necessary and urgent for our

coalition to find a way to unlock the

Tuesday offered her strongest public

support yet for the idea of liquidating

ing this week.

Yellen said.





Group photo during the 16th ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Award-2023.

#### **Private sector companies lauded for their dedication to improving HSE standards**

## ASSP Kuwait Chapter organizes GCC HSE Excellence Awards 2023

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP), Kuwait Chapter ISO 9001:2015 is a premier voluntary, non-profit Health, Safety and Environmental organization, which strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region.

One of our flagships annual event "16th ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Award-2023" under the patronage of Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC), which was endorsed by BCSP, IADC, IPAF and GDA, announced in the month of August 2023 and received nominations from private sector companies of GCC countries. The award ceremony organized on 21st February 2024 at Hilton Resorts Kuwait, and recognized the winning companies.

The annual award program's primary aim is to recognize and commend the exemplary Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) Management Systems and performance of private sector contractors and business partners of K-Companies, Manufacturing industries, Hospitals, and other private sectors of Kuwait. This award is also extended to all the above sectors of GCC countries, those who are committed to improving HSE standards and performance during the last three years to prevent accidents and injuries. As we say "You Perform... We Recognize".

The opening session was attended by:

- a) Shamlan Bader Al-Roomi, Manager HSE KOC b) Omar Al Molhem, Manager HSE–KNPC c) Mr Abdul Raheem Al Rashidi, Team leader HSSE KPC, Representative of Manager HSSE- KPC d) Abdulla Al Awadi, TL, HSE West Kuwait - KOC
- e) Eng. Hassan Alibrahim, Responsible Care & EHS Di-
- rector Equate, f) Mohammad Al-Qahtani, TL, Soil Remediation Projects

and several other dignitaries from oil sector companies from all over the GCC and other distinguished guests attended the function. Engr. Fadhel Al Ali, Chairman ASSP Kuwait, Engr. Faris Al Mansouri, Director ASSP GCC HSE Excel-lence Awards along with Mr. Safdar Ali Khan, President ASSP Kuwait Chapter 2023-2024 also preceded the inaugural ceremony.

Engr. Fadhel Al Ali, Chairman of the ASSE Kuwait Chapter in his opening address welcomed everyone to this prestigious event. The Chairman extended appreciation to KPC management for their patronage and acknowledged the support of KPC, KOC, KNPC and KIPIC management. Expressed gratitude for tremendous participation from Kuwait and GCC Private companies. The event, now in its 16th year, has played a pivotal role in transforming organizational attitudes towards HSE commitment, fostering a culture of excellence in the region. In his concluding remarks, the Chairman acknowledged the dedication of the ASSP Kuwait Chapter's volunteer team and praised the leadership of Eng.

Engr. Faris Al Mansouri, Director ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Awards 2023 in his welcome address thanked and congratulated all the participating companies, emphasized on HSE culture by having focus on safety always been a









Top & above: photos during the opening address from the distinguished guests and during the annual award

core value of the industry and will always remain at the forefront, strongly support employees to promote HSE culture. Moreover, he shared that since the commencement of this award in 2009, participation is steadily grown in the Middle East region. While concluding he thanked KPC and its subsidiaries for patronaging, the Evaluation Committee for maintaining standards and appreciated all the members of the award organization.

Mr. Mustaq Mirza, Deputy Director, ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Awards 2023, briefed about the scheme of the GCC Awards Program, and a video capsule was unveiled, he congratulated and extended best wishes to all the winners. Appreciated organizations for providing safe, healthy work environment, high industrial standards, and performance. Thanked the organizing team, committee members, EC members, and Chapter Admins for their dedication. Invited companies to participate in the 2024 ASSP GCC award

Mr. Safdar Ali Khan, President ASSP Kuwait Chapter 2023-2024,urged the commitment of HSE excellence serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration. ASSP Kuwait chapter is recognized for quality HSE training provider.In conclusion, let us cherish the moment and recognized how to carry forward the spirit of innovation, collaboration and dedbic newspapers and social media journalists.

ication for our people, our planet, and for future generations Mr. Safdar, along the Chairman and other dignitaries launched "ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Awards 2024, 5th Dec" with a video capsule and further"12thASSP PDC Conference & Expo May 2025" was also launched by unveiling a beautiful video capsule. He requested all the executives

get recognized in the HSSE fraternity. ASSP KUWAIT CHAPTER Safety professional of the year (spy) award 2023 was conferred to Mazharuddin R.

from various companies and organizations to participate and

Shaikhby the chairman and other dignitaries There was a special address from the board of Certified Safety Professional (BCSP) representative Mrs Kavita Prabhu. BCSP President Mr Ashok Garlapati also witness the award function.

After the opening ceremony Engr. Fadhel, Engr. Faris along with Shamlan Bader Al-Roomi, Mr. Omar Al Molhem, Mr. Abdulla Al Awadi, Eng. Hassan Alibrahim and Mr. Mohammad Al-Qahtani, Mr Abdul Raheem started the Awards program and distributed the awards to the successful companies who had won Platinum, Gold, Gold Medal (for companies who achieved Gold Award for consecutive 5 years), Silver & Merit awards.

A total of 49 companies from the GCC countries participated and won a total of 79 awards in the following catego-

- a. HSE Excellence Award
- b. Best Corporate Social Responsibility Program Award
- c. Environment Excellence Award
- d. Best HSE Initiative Award
  e. Best Management of Driving Safety Award
  f. Best Risk Management Awards

All the above submissions were meticulously evaluated by a professional team of adjudication panel.

After the award ceremony, Eng. Fadhel Al Ali, Chairman, ASSP Kuwait Chapter, Eng. Faris Al Mansouri, Director, recognized EC Core committee, ASSP GCC HSE Excellence Award organizing committee members with ASSP. lence Award organizing committee members with ASSPbranded mementos.

A lucky draw was conducted among participant with three lucky winners.

The closing ceremony of the event was held by Mr. Mohammad Yusuff, Actg. Vice President ASSP Kuwait Chapter 2023-2024 in his vote of thanks he appreciated the overwhelmed response from the Kuwaiti Companies and the GCC countries

He thanked all ASSP volunteers and supporting & endorsing organizations for making this program grand success. Engr Omar Al Sadi and Mr. Salim Al-Alawi facilitated the award ceremony. He thanks the exhibitors Falcon Plus, Raja Traders, Safety & Fire and Al Mouwasat hospital.

Last but not the least he thanked all the volunteers who had put their personal time in making this event a great success, also appreciated the event organizing team from VCONEX headed by Mr. Mohammad Riaz for a flawless production.

The event concluded with press coverage by various Ara-

Second collaboration with singer Nabil Shuail in 2024, paying tribute to song 'Free Kuwait'

## **Gulf Bank's National Day commercial hits 13 million views**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: For the second time this year, the reowned singer, Nabil Shuail, has redirected his support to Gulf Bank, encouraging his fans and followers to transfer their accounts to Gulf Bank and take advantage of its cards without any limitations and enjoy all their benefits. His latest commercial for Kuwait National Day has garnered 13 million views since its release just a few days ago.

In a notable gesture, Gulf Bank has paid tribute to the importance of the song "Free Kuwait," by singer Nabil Shuail after the liberation of Kuwait. by by incorporating it into a special commercial for Kuwait National Day. Presented in an engaging and uplifting manner, the commercial promotes the prepaid card, featuring with Kuwait's flag, symbolizing deep sentiments in the hearts of all citizens.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Eisa, Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank's Marketing Department, emphasized Gulf Bank's commitment to actively engaging with the community on every occasion.

This reflects the bank's longstanding role as one of Kuwait's leading financial institutions supporting the national economy, and aligns with its motto "Always With You," signifies Gulf Bank's commitment to maintain-



and Abrar Al-Yaqout from Gulf Bank.

ing strong ties with the community. Al-Eisa expressed joy in teaming up with singer Nabil Shuail and the commercial team, following the remarkable success of their previous campaign "Ya Shams," which garnered millions of views. She confirmed their ongoing collaboration with Nabil Shuail on future projects.

Regarding the Gulf Bank prepaid

card, Al-Eisa highlighted its convenience in managing expenses and its instant benefits and discounts for customers. She emphasized its userfriendly and secure features, suitable for both children and family members. Particularly noteworthy are the immediate discounts of up to 25% at over 550 restaurants and cafes in Kuwait, and up to 30% at over 300 commercial

outlets across various sectors including travel, entertainment, health, beauty, and luxury lifestyle.

The prepaid card stands out for its convenient and rapid payment options via point-of-sale devices, available at over 2 million ATMs and more than 33 million stores. Customers have the flexibility to add credit of up to KD 3,000 through various channels, or by visiting one of the branches.

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

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



Students immersed themselves in learning about Kuwait, its rich heritage, and cultural nuances.

#### 'Nurturing a strong sense of identity'

#### Kindergarten for Special Needs marks Kuwait's National and Liberation Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Royal Britannia Kindergarten for Special Needs celebrates Kuwait National and Liberation Day with Joyous Carnival.

On Thursday, 22nd of February, Royal Britannia Kindergarten for Special Needs transformed into a festive carnival to mark Kuwait National and Liberation Day. The event, held at the enchanting Hyde Park Garden, became a vibrant celebration of Kuwaiti culture, traditions, and national pride.

As part of their curriculum, students immersed themselves in learning about Kuwait, its rich heritage, and cultural nuances. The carnival served as the culmination of their exploration, fostering a sense of identity and instilling pride in the blessings their country offers.

The Hyde Park Garden was adorned with the vibrant colours of the Kuwaiti flag, showcasing various elements of the country's landscape, landmarks, and traditions. Several engaging stations offered students and parents the opportunity to celebrate together, fostering familial bonds in the spirit of the occasion

The RB Team, led by the Arabic Teacher, orchestrated a beautifully



Carnival served as the culmination of their exploration.

organized event. Multiple stations provided students with diverse activities aimed at promoting communication, social and emotional development, cognitive skills, and motor coordination.

Dr. HananAlmutawa, Chair and Co-founder of Royal Britannia, expressed her vision for the event, stating, "Celebrating Kuwait National and Liberation Day is not just a tradition; it's an integral part of our commitment to nurturing a strong sense of identity in our students. Our carnival is a testament to the importance of community, cultural understanding, and the joy of learning.

## ICSK Khaitan's little graduates shine in a heartwarming ceremony

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: Honouring the hard work and dedication of the tiny tots, The Indian Community School Kuwait, Khaitan, organized its Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony on 22 February 2024. The day at ICSK Khaitan began with the radiant morning sun greeting parents as they eagerly entered the school auditorium, awaiting the momentous occasion of their children's graduation. Warm and traditional welcomes were extended to the parents and the esteemed Chief Guest, Ms. Khadija Rangwala, Operation Manager at en.v, a non-profit organization based in Kuwait, who graced the event with her vibrant presence. K.G. Shirsath, the Principal, the Vice Principal, the Academic Coordinator, teachers, parents and students of the UKG wing were a part of the splendid event.

The formal function started on a pious note with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, followed by the national anthems of Kuwait and India. The ceremonial lamp was conjointly lit by the Chief Guest, Principal and Vice-principal of ICSK, Khaitan. The young prodigies gave a wonderful tribute to their mentors in the form of a well-choreographed wel-



Photo during the Indian Community School Kuwait, Khaitan's kindergarten graduation ceremony.

come dance. The principal honoured and felicitated the Chief Guest and also extended a warm welcome to the August gathering. Ms Khadija, a vibrant personality, delivered a warm speech to the parents in the auditorium and shared parenting tips. Ms Khadija Rangwala and Mr K.G. Shirsath congratulated the graduates of UKG and also gave honours to the rising stars of LKG and UKG classes.

The event was filled with vibrant performances by the UKG students, touching the audience's hearts with their renditions dedicated to parents and teachers. A highlight of the day was the captivating dances and melodious song rendition performed by the students, evoking nostalgic moments for teachers and parents alike. The stately procession of the little scholars in blue gowns and caps created an air of reverence and celebration. The Supervisor and the teachers of the kindergarten department had meticulously planned and put in their best efforts, along with the tiny tots, to make the event a memorable one. The graduation ceremony culminated with the vote of thanks proposed by Ms. Sushmeeta Prakash, the Vice Principal

As the young graduates bid farewell to their kindergarten days, they joyously marched on to new horizons with excitement and lovely memories of the kindergarten and their teachers. The joyous faces of parents and their young champions were a testament to the grand success of the KG graduation ceremony 2024.

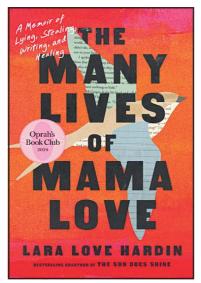
## Winfrey unveils gripping memoir: 'The Many Lives of Mama Love'

NEW YORK, Feb 28, (AP): Oprah Winfrey's latest book club selection is an author and ghost writer's life story, chronicling her journey from prison and drug addiction to collaborating with the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and others.

Lara Love Hardin's "The Many Lives of Mama Love: A Memoir of Lying, Stealing, Writing, and Healing' was published last summer.

"Once you start reading, be prepared, because you won't want to stop as Lara chronicles how she went from surviving behind bars to becoming a best-selling ghostwriter and author, sharing her harrowing, sometimes hilarious, and often heartbreaking journey from her arrest and conviction to her release and ultimate reinvention," Winfrey said in a statement Tuesday.

As she has done with previous club picks, Winfrey popped up during a video conference call between Hardin and her publisher, Simon & Schuster,



This cover image released by Simon & Schuster shows 'The Many Lives of Mama Love' by Lara Love Hardin. (AP)

and broke the news.

"I had to ask myself if this was real life or my overactive imagination,' Hardin said in a statement. "Her spotlight is humbling and validating and I know it will also shine a light on the shared story of all incarcerated wom-

Words are inadequate to convey what an incredible, fantastical, dreamfulfilling honor this is as an author, nor how much it means to me that this new plot twist to my story will become a part of the story my children someday tell to their children."

Hardin has been cited by Winfrey before. She co-wrote, and was fully credited for the prison memoir "The Sun Does Shine," by Anthony Ray Hinton, who spent nearly 30 years on death row in Alabama on a wrongful murder conviction. "The Sun Does Shine" was a Winfrey selection in 2018. "The Many Lives of Mama Love" is Winfrey's 104th book choice since she started the club in 1996, her previous selections ranging from Michelle Obama's "Becoming" to Cormac McCarthy's "The Road."

Tuesday's announcement comes at a time of growing prominence for ghost writers, among them J.R. Moehringer, widely praised for his work on Prince Harry's "Spare." In January, the Gotham Ghostwriters and the American Society of Journalists and Authors co-presented the first-ever national conference of ghost writers, "Gathering of the Ghosts," in New York City.

LONDON: A proof copy of the first Harry Potter novel that was bought for pennies in a second-hand bookshop almost 30 years ago has sold at auction for 11,000 pounds (\$13,900.)

British auctioneers Hanson's said Monday that the first-edition copy of "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," which states "uncorrected proof copy" on the cover, was bought in 1997 from a shop in south London with two other books for a total of 40 pence (\$0.50.)

The seller, who was not named, picked up the book about the famous boy wizard as a "throw-in" with other titles and didn't read it or pay much attention to it for years - until she read online about the high prices some Potter copies achieved, Hanson's said.

The book was sold to a private **U.K.** buyer on Wednesday for a hammer price of 11,000 pounds, and a total of 14,432 pounds including a sales pre-

Jim Spencer, head of books at the auction house, said the copy's inside title page mistakenly stated the author's name as "J A Rowling" instead of J.K. Rowling.

"This book so deserved to do well. This proof copy is where the Harry Potter phenomenon began. This is the very first appearance in print of the first Potter novel," Spencer said.

#### **Variety**



This image released by A24 Films shows Julio Torres, left, and Tilda Swinton in a scene from 'Problemista.' (AP)

Film

premiered over the weekend and featured numerous scenes of the former talk show host unsteady, belligerent, confused and also drunk. Her manager would throughout her apartment, behavior that producers say unnerved them while filming. But they say they didn't know at the time that

for her safety. To be honest, I was so concerned she would fall down the stairs and for numerous different reasons," said Erica Hanson. an executive producer who can be seen and heard speaking to Williams at certain moments in

Hanson said soon after she and had dementia by her son, they turned the cameras off.

as a team. We kept hoping that she was going to get better but it became apparent to us that she

help," Hanson said.
"Where is Wendy Williams?" debuted Saturday, two days after her care team released a statement saying she has been diagnosed with primary progressive aphasia and frontotemporal dementia, the same disease Bruce Willis has. Its two episodes aired after attorneys for Lifetime successfully fended off an effort by Williams' guardian to stop the broadcasts.

In a review, Variety called the series "an exploitive display of her cognitive decline and emotional well-being." Danie Buchanan, a radio DJ in Atlanta posted a video reaction on Instagram saying, "I couldn't finish it ... It was so hard to watch, it was so hard to see her like that," she said

Throughout the documentary, Williams appears unsteady on her feet and she has trouble walking without assistance. Her emotions fluctuate between sweet to suddenly irritable to belligerent to weepy or frustrated. Many times the former talk show host admits to drinking. "I love vodka," Wil-

LOS ANGELES: If you watched Lifetime's Wendy Williams docuseries that premiered over the weekend and felt uncomfortable,

Williams had dementia, which the public learned late last week.

the filmmakers were told Williams

"We decided to stop filming was not and that she really needed

regularly find liquor bottles hidden

you weren't alone.
"Where is Wendy Williams?

"Problemista" is not like a Wes Anderson-type hyper-whimsy, but more like the surreal bursting "We all became very concerned joy of "Everything Everywhere All at Once." It even breaks space and time like the latter. It is absolutely It tells the story of Alejandro (Torres), an El Salvadoran immigrant desperate to work for Has-

bro but needing to extend his New York stay by getting his work visa approved. His artistic mother back home has tried to shield him from life's harshness, but he's alone in a hulking, unfriendly city filled with trash. Isabella Rossellini narrates, adding a starry gravitas.

idiosyncratic mind.

Torres plays the aspiring toymaker as a delicate soul, always trying to be accommodating and a dreamer. He is childlike, with terrible bangs and a tuft of hair jumping out like an exclamation mark. always with a backpack, and walking in little unsure steps, almost hopping like a small bird, as if he doesn't want to leave an impression.

NEW YORK, Feb 28, (AP): The hero of "Problemis-

ta" sees the world differently. He's an aspiring toy

designer named Alejandro who thinks today's toys

are too fun. He proposes a toy truck with a deflating

Alejandro is the creation of Julio Torres, who

stars, directs and has written "Problemista," an off-

kilter and very winning movie from a rising artist

who thrillingly reflects his own toy maker's singular,

tire to teach kids they're running out of time.

#### Twist of fate

A twist of fate gets him into the orbit of Elizabeth, the widow of an artist who has been cryogenically frozen by FreezeCorp. To afford to keep her husband on ice, she must locate and sell his unloved paintings - a 13-painting series of eggs in different places - and she needs the computer and gofer assistance of Alejandro. He sees this as a potential lifeline.

Tilda Swindon - a Wes Anderson favorite - plays the widow as an unhinged, self-involved, rude and frightening force of nature. She thinks people are



Toying with reality, a surreal masterpiece

Torres a brilliant storyteller in 'Problemista'

This image released by A24 Films shows RZA, left, and Greta Lee in a scene from 'Problemista.' (AP)

screaming at her when she's the one screaming, she can't turn her iPhone light off, she confronts waiters over tiny things and is banned from Uber. Swindon is in her element here.

These two very opposite souls need each other and not just in a transactional sense. She needs his calmness and vision, and he needs her forthrightness. "When they tell you you can only turn left or right, you let them know you're going up. Always send

the food back. Stand up for yourself," she tells him. Torres displays a Kafkaesque bent as he illustrates the byzantine hurdles of red tape that immigrants face, with Alejandro negotiating a fantasy office maze, like a human rat opening vents to climb into sterile offices. In one scene, an immigrant who is told she must leave the country suddenly disappears - poof!

#### Filmmaker

The filmmaker also skewers the Catch-22 of another overly bureaucratic institution - banks. "I know that there's a still person in there and I know that she can hear me," he pleads to a bank representative about a nonsense overdraft fee. Both institutions feast on people who have no margin of error.

Torres is a comedian and TV writer, who worked at "Saturday Night Live" - his skit for Ryan Gosling about how "Avatar" weirdly used the Papyrus font is a new classic. He also was the creator of the oddball HBO sitcom "Los Espookys." He revels in the surreal and this movie proves he's one of the best out

If the hysterical weirdness about fonts is any indication, viewers won't be surprised that there are bizarre sequences about FileMaker Pro, misbehaving iPads, dropdown menus and Ikea's Billy bookcases. Craigslist is portrayed by a sinister man (Larry Owens) crowded by junk, people prove odd and kinky and a tense phone call is depicted as a knight in armor battling a dragon. Customer service calls descend into horror movie

chanting and madness. There is so much rich material in the absurdity: how immigrants and artists crave to be seen, how modern systems eat up people, how we try to cheat death and how technology doesn't live up to its promise. The movie even speeds more than 300

years into the future. In that cool future, we're pretty certain they'll be talking about the big directorial debut of a talented filmmaker. Torres is just starting to toy with us.

liams, 59, says in the first episode. She has been public about her cocaine addiction and lived in a "sober house" in 2019. Each time someone brings up her drinking on camera, Williams ends the conversation.

In April 2023, the film crew followed Williams to Miami to visit her son Kevin, Jr. and other family. During the trip, Williams' son





told the filmmakers that his mother suffers from a form of dementia caused by alcohol. 'We didn't find out the diagno-

sis until Kevin Jr. shared that with us," said Brie Bryant, Lifetime's senior vice president of non-scripted programming.

After returning from Miami, the crew arrived at Williams' apartment to find her sobbing in her bed,

seemingly inebriated. This was the tipping point - Hanson was filmed speaking with Williams' manager, Will Selby, about her condition, before they stopped filming Williams altogether. Shortly after she was placed in a treatment facility by her guardianship.

"We questioned all the time, 'Should we be here? Should we not? How can we tell this story

sensitively?' It touched all of us deeply. It really did," Hanson said.

The project was intended to be a follow-up to Lifetime's 2021 "Wendy Williams: What a Mess!" documentary and biopic "Wendy Williams: The Movie." Bryant said both the network and Williams enjoyed their partnership and agreed to film Williams' next chapter. (AP)



in sensuality and intrigue. An opera

Wilde, Zoe Saldana and Kate Moss. Navigating the near pitch-black venue,

a spectacle of shadow and light, draw-

#### The Conversation

#### New research suggests challenging goals can head it off

### Mental fatigue has psychological triggers

**By Matthew Robison** 

University of Texas at Arlington

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

Do you ever feel spacey, distracted and worn down toward the end of a long work-related task - especially if that task is entirely a mental one?

For over a century, psychologists have been trying to determine whether mental fatigue is fundamentally similar to physical fatigue or whether it is governed by different processes.

Some researchers have argued that exerting mental effort depletes a limited supply of energy - the same way physical exertion fatigues muscles. The brain consumes energy in the form of glucose, which can run low.

Other researchers see mental fatigue as more of a psychologi-

cal phenomenon. Mind-wandering means the current mental effort is not being sufficiently rewarded - or opportunities to do other, more enjoyable activities are being lost.

My colleagues and I have been trying to resolve this question. Our research suggests mental fatigue is in large part a psychological phenomenon - but one that can be modified by setting goals.

We began by reviewing the science related to mental fatigue.

Psychologists in the World War II era studied why soldiers monitoring radar were losing focus during their shifts. Psychologist Norman Mackworth designed the "clock test," in which military participants were asked to watch a large "clock" on a wall for up to two hours. The second hand ticked at regular intervals. But rarely and unpredictably, it would jump twice the usual distance. The task was to detect those tiny variations.

Within the first 30 minutes, the subjects' performance dropped dramatically - and then continued to decline more gradually. Psychologists named the necessary mental focus "vigilance" - and concluded it was fundamentally limited in humans.

#### Vigilance

Decades of research since has confirmed that vigilance is difficult to maintain, even over brief intervals. In studies, people report feeling stressed and fatigued following even a brief vigilance task. In 2021, one study even showed a reduction of blood

flow through the brain during vigilance.
My colleagues and I wondered: Are all forms of mental work like vigilance? Surely, there are instances where people can engage with mental work without feeling fatigued. We decided to study whether goal-setting could improve mental focus and ran three experiments to test this idea.

In the first experiment, we showed 108 under-

graduate students at the University of Oregon a screen with four empty white boxes against a gray background. Every one to three seconds, an X appeared in one of the four boxes. Their task was to indicate where that symbol appeared as quickly as possible. After each response, the participant was given feedback about both their accuracy and their speed, such as "Correct! Reaction time = 400 milliseconds.

Periodically during the 26-minute test, we also asked participants to rank their mental state as taskfocused, distracted or mind-wandering. This gave us data about how they felt, in addition to how they did.

We randomly gave half of them a specific goal: Keep their reaction times under 400 milliseconds while staying as accurate as possible. We gave no goal to the other half.

Our results were mixed. People who were given a goal did not experience as many slow reaction times, but having goals didn't increase their top speed. It also didn't change how often people reported feeling distracted.

#### **Experiment**

We decided to tweak the test for our second experiment. Again, we randomly assigned a goal to half of the 112 fresh participants and no goal to the other half. But this time, as the experiment progressed, we increased the difficulty of the goal from a 450-millisecond reaction time to 400 milliseconds and then to 350 by the final block. Setting these harder-over-time goals had a huge effect on performance.

Compared with the participants assigned a set goal in the first experiment, the participants assigned increasingly more difficult goals in the second experiment had faster reaction times by an average of 45 milliseconds - about a 10% improvement. Participants in the second experiment also reported fewer instances of mind-wandering and showed no slowing of reaction times throughout the experiment. In other words, they showed no signs of mental fatigue. And we didn't have to make the task easier. In fact, we made it harder.

Our first two experiments were conducted online because of shutdowns related to COVID-19. Our third study - a repeat of our second study - was conducted in person. We got the same results.

These findings, combined with other recent work we've conducted, have changed the way my colleagues and I consider mental fatigue. It's clear that when people strive for specific and hard-toreach goals, they report feeling more motivated and they do not report feeling as drained by mental work. If you're wondering how to implement these findings in your life, make simple, direct and specific goals for yourself. Mark when you complete the goals - the feedback can help you keep going. If you're feeling particularly drained, take short breaks. Even brief rests of less than two minutes can restore capacity for mental work. (AP)



Held by college sumo wrestlers, a couple of babies compete during Naki Sumo or Crying Baby Contest at Sensoji Buddhist temple in Tokyo, on April 26, 2014. The number of babies born in Japan last year fell for an eighth straight year to a new low, government data showed Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024, and a top official said it was critical for the country to reverse the trend in the coming half-dozen years. (AP)

## **Newborns in Japan are at a new** low, while fewer couples marry

Officials urge urgent measures to reverse trend

TOKYO, Feb 28, (AP): The number of babies born in Japan last year fell for an eighth straight year to a new low, government data showed Tuesday, and a top official said it was critical for the country to reverse the trend in the coming half-dozen years.

The 758,631 babies born in Japan in 2023 were a 5.1% decline from the previous year, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry. It was the lowest number of births since Japan started compiling the statistics in 1899.

The number of marriages fell by 5.9% to 489,281 couples, falling below a half-million for the first time in 90 years - one of the key reasons for the declining births. Out-of-wedlock births are rare in Japan because of family values based on a paternalistic tradition.

Surveys show that many younger Japanese balk at marrying or having families, discouraged by bleak job prospects, the high cost of living that rises at a faster pace than salaries and corporate cultures that are not compatible with having both parents work. Crying babies and children playing outside are increasingly considered a nuisance, and many young parents say they often feel isolated.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters Tuesday that the ongoing declining birth rate is at "critical state."

"The period over the next six years or so until 2030s, when the younger population will start declining rapidly, will be the last chance we may be able to reverse the trend," he said.

There is no time to waste. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has called the low births "the biggest crisis Japan faces," and put forward a package of measures that have included more support and subsidies mostly for childbirth, children and

But experts say they doubt whether the government's efforts will be effective because so far they have largely focused on people who already are married or already are planning to have children, while not adequately addressing a growing population of young people who are reluctant to go that far.

The number of births has been falling since 50 years ago, when it peaked at about 2.1 million. The decline to an annual number below 760,000 has happened faster than earlier projections predicting that would happen by 2035.

Japan's population of more than 125 million is projected to fall by about 30% to 87 million by 2070, with four out of every 10 people at age 65 or older. A shrinking and aging population has big implications for the economy and for national security as the country seeks to fortify its military to counter China's increasingly assertive territorial am-

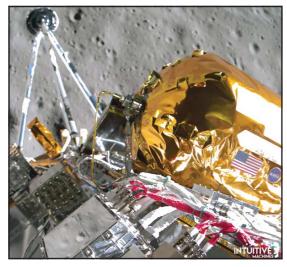
### **EU legislature backs major** plan to meet climate goals

STRASBOURG, France, Feb 28, (AP): The European Unprotect nature and fight climate change in the 27-nation bloc, despite opposition from the biggest party in parliament and fierce protests from the farming community.

The plan is a key part of the EU's vaunted European Green Deal that seeks to establish the world's most ambitious climate and biodiversity targets and make the bloc the global point of reference on all climate issues. Yet the Nature Restoration plan has had an extremely rough ride through the EU's complicated approval process and only a watered down version will now proceed to a final vote among the EU member states, where it is expected to pass easily.

The bill was adopted by a 329-275 vote with 24 abstentions, bigger margin than expected after the center-right Christian Democratic European People's Party of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen decided to vote against.

"Today is an important day for Europe, as we move from protecting and conserving nature to restoring it," said Socialist S&D legislator César Luena, who led the bill through parliament. "The new law will also help us to fulfil many of our international environmental commitments.



Feb. 27, 2024 shows its Odysseus lunar lander over the south pole region of the Moon. The toppled lunar lander is still beaming back pictures of the moon, as its nears the final hours of its life. The photos were taken

shortly before last Thursday's touchdown. (AP)

#### **Lunar lander expected to cease operations**

## Sideways moon landing cuts mission short

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Feb 28, main sponsor. But it came in too fast NASA, which plans to land astro (AP): A private lunar lander is expected to cease operations Tuesday, its mission cut short after landing sideways near the south pole of the

Intuitive Machines, the Houston company that built and flew the spacecraft, said Monday it will continue to collect data until sunlight no longer shines on the solar panels. Based on the position of Earth and the moon, officials expect that to happen Tuesday morning. That's two to three days short of what NASA and other customers had been counting on.

The lander, named Odysseus, is the first U.S. spacecraft to land on the moon in more than 50 years, carrying experiments for NASA, the

last Thursday and the foot of one of its six legs caught on the surface, causing it to tumble over, according to company officials.

Based on photos from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter flying overhead, Odysseus landed within a mile or so (1.5 kilometers) of its intended target near the Malapert A crater, just 185 miles or so (300 kilometers) from the moon's south pole.

According to NASA, the lander ended up in a small, degraded crater with a 12-degree slope. That's the closest a spacecraft has ever come to the south pole, an area of interest because of suspected frozen water in the permanently shadowed craters nauts in this region in the next few years, paid Intuitive Machines \$118 million to deliver six experiments to the surface. Other customers also had items on board.

Instead of landing upright, the 14foot (4.3-meter) Odysseus ended up on its side, hampering communication with Earth. Japan's lander ended up on the wrong side, too, just last month.

Only five countries have landed successfully on the moon. Intuitive Machines became the first private business to join the elite group. Another U.S. company gave it a try last month, but didn't make it to the moon because of a fuel leak. Both U.S. business hold NASA contracts for more moon landings







## Strus hits at the buzzer as Cavs beat Mavs



Houston Rockets guard Fred VanVleet (5) drives past Oklahoma City Thunder forward Kenrich Williams (34) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024, in Oklahoma City. (AP)

#### Club return to Copa del Rey final two decades later

## Mallorca beat Real Sociedad on penalties

MADRID, Feb 28, (AP): More than two decades later, Mallorca is back in the Copa del Rey final.

The Spanish club partly owned by Golden State Warriors coach Steve

#### **SOCCER**

Kerr and former NBA great Steve Nash defeated Real Sociedad 5-4 in a penalty shootout on Tuesday to make it to the final 21 years after it won the competition for the only time.

Mallorca goalkeeper Dominik Greif saved the opening penalty by Mikel Oyarzabal, then Sergi Darder converted the decisive kick to put

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## **Murray loses to Humbert at Dubai Championship**

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Feb 28, (AP): Fifth-seeded Ugo Humbert eased past Andy Murray 6-2, 6-4 on Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals of the Dubai Championships.

Humbert didn't face a break point before converting his first match point to secure a first career win over Murray, who lifted the trophy in Dubai in 2017.

After rallying past Denis Shapovalov 4-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3 in the previous round for his 500th hard-court win, the 36-year-old Murray hinted he was heading into the "last

Mallorca in the final. The teams drew 1-1 in regulation and were scoreless in extra time at Sociedad's Reale Arena.

ARAB (\*) TIMES

The teams had drawn 0-0 in the first leg in Mallorca on Feb. 6.

Mallorca will play the April 6 final in Seville against either Atletico Madrid or Athletic Bilbao, which will play the second leg of the other semifinal on Thursday in Bilbao. Athletic won the first leg 1-0 in Madrid.

In other early second-round matches, second-seeded

Andrey Rublev, the 2022 champion, advanced to the

quarterfinals of the hard-court tournament for the fifth

Seventh-seeded Alexander Bublik also progressed with a

Later Wednesday, defending champion Daniil Medve-

straight time after eliminating Arthur Cazaux 6-4, 6-4.

7-6 (8), 7-6 (2) win over Tallon Griekspoor.

dev will be in action against Lorenzo Sonego.

It will be the fourth Copa final for Mallorca, which hadn't made it the title game since it won the tournament in 2003 against Recreativo Huelva. Its other final appearances were in 1991 and 1998. It hadn't made it to the semifinals since 2009.

Mallorca's Mexican coach Javier Aguirre had taken Osasuna to the 2005 final, when it lost to Real Betis.

Sociedad was trying to return to the Copa final for the first time since it beat rival Athletic to lift the trophy in the 2019-20 season.

Vedat Muriqi, Manu Morlanes, Omar Mascarell and Nemanja Radonjic also scored for Mallorca in the penalty shootout. Beñat Turrientes, Jon Ander Olasagasti, Martín Zubimendi and Sheraldo Becker scored for Sociedad.

Mallorca took the lead in the 50th with a header by Gio González into the far corner in what was the visitors' only attempt on target during regulation. There was a long delay before the goal was confirmed as video review looked for a possible offside in the buildup.

The hosts, which had nearly 30 at-

tempts throughout the match, equalized in a breakaway in the 71st with Oyarzabal finding the net with a low shot after a nice through ball by Brais Méndez.

Mallorca, which sits just outside the relegation zone in the Spanish league, had won only one of its last six games.

Sociedad, seventh after 26 league rounds, had one win in its last seven matches across all competitions. The Basque Country club is in the round of 16 of the Champions League, having lost the first leg against Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 in France.

#### Celtics ease past 76ers 117-99

CLEVELAND, Feb 28, (AP): Max Strus drilled a 59-footer as time expired, his fifth made 3-pointer in the final four minutes, to give the Cleveland Cavaliers a wild 121-119 win over the Dallas Mavericks on Tuesday night.

After the Mavericks took the lead on P.J. Washington's dunk with 2.9 seconds left, the Cavs quickly inbounded the ball to Evan Mobley, who passed back to Strus — who made four 3s in a span of 67 seconds down the stretch to keep Cleveland close.

Strus then took a dribble before launching his shot from well beyond mid-court. As it swished through the net, Strus was tackled to the floor by teammates as the Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse crowd erupted. Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points,

Strus added 21 and Jarrett Allen 19 for the Cavs, who improved to 12-3 since Jan 26. Luka Doncic had 45 points and 14 assists a day before turning 25 for the

Mavericks. Kyrie Irving added 30 for Dallas, which lost for just the second time in 10 games.

#### Celtics 117, 76ers 99

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored 31 points and Boston earned its ninth straight win, powering past Philadelphia. Jayson Tatum added 29 points, including 15 in the fourth quarter, to help

#### **BASKETBALL**

the NBA-leading Celtics post their 25th consecutive home win over an Eastern Conference opponent.

Boston won despite connecting on just 5-of-22 3-pointers and committing 14 turnovers. But the Celtics outscored Philadelphia 64-48 in the second half and dominated with a 56-28 rebounding edge.

Tyrese Maxey led the 76ers with 32 points and five assists. Philadelphia has lost four of its last five and is just 4-8 since Joel Embiid was sidelined with a knee injury.

#### Warriors 123, Wizards 112

In Washington, Klay Thompson scored 25 points on a forgettable evening for Stephen Curry, Chris Paul demonstrated his value to the Warriors in his first game in seven weeks, and Golden State beat Washington.

Curry was held scoreless in the first half for the first time in the regular season since Nov. 23, 2012, against Denver. He missed his first seven shots, six from 3-point range - and three of them airballs, including a 32-foot heave at the halftime buzzer. Curry got on the board with a

3-pointer 53 seconds into the third quarter and the Warriors went on to outscore the overmatched Wizards 38-17 in the period. He finished with 18 points and shot 4 of 16 on 3-pointers while the rest of the Warriors went 17 for 30 from beyond the arc.

Jonathan Kuminga added 21 points for Golden State, which has won 11 of 14 and moved into ninth place in the Western Conference, percentage points ahead of the Los Angeles Lakers.

#### **Bucks 123, Hornets 85**

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 24 points, Damian Lillard had 23 points and Bobby Portis scored 21 as Milwaukee pounded Charlotte for its most lopsided victory of the

the break by holding Charlotte to the lowest point total any team had produced in a half all season. This represented the second-lowest point total the Bucks had ever allowed in the first half of a game, behind only the 25 they yielded in a 94-81 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on March 3, 1972.

Milwaukee has won three straight since the All-Star break to improve to 6-7 under coach Doc Rivers. The Bucks have allowed fewer than 100 points in four of their last seven contests after reaching that goal just once in their first 52 games of the season.

Miles Bridges scored 17, Tre Mann 16, Brandon Miller 14 and Davis Bertans 12 for the Hornets, who lost for just the second time in their last seven games.

#### Pelicans 115, Knicks 92

In New York, Trey Murphy III scored 26 points, Brandon Ingram had 24 and New Orleans beat New York. Zion Williamson added 21 points

for the Pelicans. Donte DiVincenzo led the Knicks with 23 points and Bojan Bogdanovic added 20 off the bench.

Jalen Brunson (neck spasms) and Isaiah Hartenstein (Achilles tendinopathy) did not play for the Knicks, who are still without starters Julius Randle, OG Anunoby and Mitchell Robinson.

#### **Timberwolves 114, Spurs 105**

In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards scored 34 points, returning from an injury scare right before halftime, and Minnesota beat San Antonio without All-Star Karl-Anthony Towns. Towns missed the game due to

personal reasons. Earlier in the day, Towns memorialized a high school teammate on Instagram. Minnesota coach Chris Finch said before the game that he hoped Towns would only miss one game. Rudy Gobert, back after missing a

game with a left ankle sprain, added 13 points and 17 rebounds for the Timberwolves in his latest matchup with fellow French countryman Victor Wembanyama.

Wembanyama had 17 points and 13 rebounds as San Antonio lost its fifth in a row and 12 of its past 13 games. Wembanyama scored eight points in iust over five minutes to open the game but didn't score again until a 3 with 2:55 left in the third quarter.

#### Thunder 112, Rockets 95

In Oklhoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points and Oklahoma City beat Houston for its sixth straight win.

Jalen Williams had 24 points and Chet Holmgren added 18 points and 13 rebounds for the Thunder, who held Houston to 38.9% shooting. Oklahoma City is tied with Minnesota for the best record in the Western Conference. Alperen Sengun had 23 points and

11 rebounds and Jabari Smith Jr. added 18 points and 13 rebounds for the Rockets, who also lost to the Thunder on Sunday.

#### Heat 106, Trail Blazers 96

In Portland, Ore. Jimmy Butler had noints and nine assists zier scored 19 points and Miami beat Portland for its fifth straight win.

Rozier was one of three players returning to the Miami lineup, playing in his first game since sustaining a knee injury on Feb. 11 against Boston. Butler and Nikola Jovic both made their returns after serving a one-game suspension for their roles in an on-court altercation in New Orleans on Feb. 23.

The Heat also used their 31st different starting lineup of the season, ty-ing a franchise record. The Heat also had 31 combinations in the 2014-15 season; they needed only 58 games to match that mark this season.



ami Heat guard Terry Rozier (left), and guard Jaime Jaquez Jr. during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024. (AP)

### Mir's 6-wkt haul hands Lahore 6th straight defeat in PSL

LAHORE, Pakistan, Feb 28, (AP): Usama Mir became the first spinner in Pakistan Super League history to grab a sixwicket haul as Multan Sultans beat Lahore Qalandars by 60 runs Tuesday, handing the two-time champions their sixth

Leg-spinner Mir picked up 6-40 and bowled out Lahore for 154 in 17 overs

Table-topper Multan posted this season's highest score of 214-4 despite resting overseas players Dawid Malan, Chris Jordan and David Willey.

Usman Khan of the United Arab Emirates filled Malan's shoes with a blistering knock of 96 off 55 balls and Iftikhar Ahmed provided a perfect finish by smashing unbeaten 40

Multan captain Mohammad Rizwan fell without scoring for the second time in the last three games when Shaheen Shah Afridi clean bowled him with a delivery that perfectly shaped into the batter in the first over.

#### **CRICKET**

But Usman kept counterattacking and hit 11 fours and two sixes as he capped his half-century stands with Reeza

point, holed out to deep square leg in the last over to give Afridi (2-39) his second wicket.

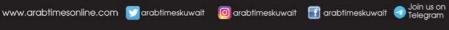
he had Rassie van der Dussen (30) caught in the deep, found the outside edge of George Linde's bat and then bowled Jahandad Khan off a full pitched delivery in one over.

tan moved to the top of the table with five wins in six games.

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Hendricks (40), Tayyab Tahir (21) with a 60-run partnership with Ahmed off just 28 balls in the death overs. Usman, who was dropped by Carlos Brathwaite on 89 at

Mir ran through Lahore's middle-order in quick time when

Mir claimed the last two wickets in his final over as Mul-



Semedo is challenged for the ball during Burgan and Al Arabi match.

## Burgan Club striving for third against Oman as Al-Arabi & Al-Deir battle for group supremacy

#### **Bv Khaled El Anzi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Feb 28:The inaugural handball team of Burgan Club has completed its preliminary round matches in the Gulf Cup Winners Club Championship's 40th edition, currently hosted by Al Arabi Club in Doha.

The tournament will run until March 5, with Burgan set to face Oman at 4 pm today in the Lusail Hall as part of the final round.

The third and concluding match within the same group will follow at six in the evening, featuring Al-Arabi of Qatar and Al-Deir of

Having faced defeats in its previous two matches against Al-Deir and Al-Arabi, Burgan has been

eliminated from contention for the Gulf title.

Today's match against Oman will determine the third-place team, which will then compete against the fourth-placed team in the consolation rounds on the upcoming Sunday.

#### **HANDBALL**

In the meantime, Al-Arabi and Al-Deir are slated to clash, deciding the first and second positions within the group after both teams secured their spots in the semi-finals during the previous round.

As it stands, Al-Arabi leads the group standings with 4 points, edging out Al-Deir in second place based on goal difference.

Burgan is in third place, while Oman sits in fourth place without any points.

Sameh Al-Hajri, the manager of Kuwait Club, emphasized that "Al-Abyad's" participation in the tournament is geared towards defending the title won last year against the Bahraini team on their home turf. Al-Hajri expressed ambitious goals, citing the unwavering sup-port from the club's board of directors, led by Khaled Al-Ghanem.

He further stated that Kuwait Club faces numerous upcoming obligations this season, including the Super Cup, the League Championship, and the Al-Ittihad Diamonds locally, in addition to external commitments. Adequate preparation for each tournament is deemed crucial by Al-Hajri.

# **Haaland scores 5 in City** 'rout' of Luton in FA Cup

Newcastle avoid a potential upset at Blackburn

LONDON, Feb 28, (AP): Erling Haaland looks determined to make up for lost time.

The Norway striker scored five goals to power Manchester City into the quarterfinals of the FA Cup in a 6-2 win against Luton.

It was his eighth hat trick in a season-and-a-half with City and the second time he has scored five in a single game for the club. Perhaps more significantly, it was

evidence that Haaland is fully back up to speed after recently returning from a foot injury that ruled him out for more than a month between December and January

"My fitness is getting back to its best finally," he said. "I feel good. It's an amazing feeling.

Haaland had scored only three goals in seven appearances since making his comeback on Jan. 31.

By his remarkable standards, that represented a relative drought, but he looked back to his devastating best at Kenilworth Road with a first-half hat trick and two more after the break. Four of those goals came from assists by Kevin De Bruyne, who has also missed large parts of the season through injury.

#### SOCCER

"It's a pleasure playing with him," Haaland said. "I think we know what we both want from each other, we look at each other and it clicks well.

Mateo Kovacic added a sixth for City, while Jordan Clark struck twice for Luton.

Haaland was denied a possible double hat trick when he was replaced by Julian Alvarez in the 77th minute. It was the second time City manager Pep Guardiola substituted the striker after scoring five goals, having taken him off during the 7-0 rout of RB Leipzig in the Champions League last year.

Haaland now has 27 goals in all competitions for the season after scoring 52 in his first year at the

His performance and linkup play with De Bruyne will also fuel the belief City can emulate last season's treble of trophies when it won the Premier League title, FA Cup and Champions League.

"We're coming. Exciting times (are) ahead," Haaland said.

The forward completed his hat trick after 40 minutes, having opened the scoring in the third and adding a second in the 18th.

Clark pulled one back for Luton in the 45th and made it 3-2 with another seven minutes after halftime. But Haaland quickly extended

City's lead with further goals in the 55th and 58th.

Kovacic completed the scoring with a long range effort in the 72nd. Newcastle avoided a potential upset

at Blackburn but needed penalties to overcome the second-division team. Goalkeeper Martin Dubravka pushed away Dominic Hyam's spot kick at the end of the shootout to secure a 4-3 win on penalties after the

game had finished 1-1 through extra Anthony Gordon fired Newcastle ahead in the 71st at Ewood Park, but the lead only lasted eight minutes when Sammie Szmodics leveled for

Blackburn. Saudi-backed Newcastle has endured a troubled season in the league and currently sits 10th in the standings after a fourth-place finish last

But victory over Blackburn means it is still in contention to win its first piece of major domestic silverware since the FA Cup in 1955.

Abdul Fatawu fired Leicester to a 1-0 win over Premier League team Bournemouth with a stunning extra time goal.

Substitute Fatawu struck in the 105th - curling a shot into the top corner from the edge of the area. Leicester won the Cup in 2021

celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during the FA Cup 5th round soccer match between Luton Town and Manchester City at the Kenilworth Road Stadium in Luton, England. (AP)

Manchester City's Erling Haaland

back up and showed its credentials with the win at Bournemouth. Japan winger Kaoru Mitoma is expected to miss the rest of the season for English club Brighton because of

but has slumped since then and was

relegated to the second division last

season. It is aiming to bounce straight

a back injury. Brighton manager Roberto De Zerbi said that Mitoma was set to be out for two or three months.

"Finished (for) the season," said De Zerbi, who was speaking ahead of Brighton's FA Cup match at Wolver-

hampton on Wednesday. Brighton has been drawn to play Roma in the Europa League's round of 16 and is in seventh place in the Premier League as the team bids to qualify for European competition for a second straight season.

Mitoma has recently returned from playing in the Asian Cup and has also missed a chunk of the season because of an ankle injury

"It's a bad, bad situation," De Zerbi



WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Feb 28. (AP): Devon Conway has been ruled out but Rachin Ravindra has been cleared to play for New Zealand in the first cricket test against Australia starting at the Basin Reserve on Thursday.

Conway suffered a thumb injury while

keeping wicket in the second Twenty20 international between the teams on Friday last week. While initial scans suggested there was no fracture, additional tests in

Wellington in recent days have found there is damage to Conway's left thumb. Conway will have further tests later in the week. Meantime, Will Young

open the batting with Tom Latham in

Conway's place.

Henry Nicholls, who was dropped from the New Zealand team ahead of its two recent tests against South Africa - both victories - has been recalled to provide reinforcement for the batting lineup.

#### **CRICKET**

"It's disappointing for Devon to be ruled out on the eve of an important match," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said. "He's a class player batting at the top of the order for us and I know he was really looking forward to this series."



## 'We want to move forward with the goal of winning a gold medal' **Japan defeat North Korea to qualify for Paris Olympics**

TOKYO, Feb 28, (AP): Japan defeated North Korea 2-1 on Wednesday to reach the women's soccer tournament at the upcoming Paris Olympics. But not without a tiny bit of VAR controversy.

The first match in the two-game series to determine one of Asia's two qualifiers ended in a 0-0 draw on Saturday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Japan had three clear standout players who helped book its tickets for Paris.

Japan won the silver medal in the 2012 Olympics but has never won gold in the women's tournament. North Korea last competed in women's soccer at the 2012 Olympics but has never won a medal.

"We want to move forward with the goal of winning a gold medal," Japan coach Futoshi Ikeda said.

#### SOCCER

Ikeda coached the Japanese women in the 2023 World Cup and saw them lose in the quarterfinals to Swe-

Hana Takahashi scored in the 26th, but it was Japanese goalkeeper Ayaka Yamashita who scrambled late in the first half to stop a shot that was millimeters from crossing over

Aoba Fujino put the match away with a header in the 76th to give Japan its second. North Korea's Kim Hye Yong

scored in the 80th, chipping the ball over keeper Yamashita as she came North Korea coach Ri Yu Il wiped

away tears, apologizing for the loss to thousands of fans - most reported to be of North Korean descent - who live in Japan but were cheering for the away team.

"To all the supporters who sent us

Japan's Kiko Seike (left), kicks the ball in an attempt to score as North Korea's goalkeeper Pak Ju Mi dives in to save the ball during the final qualifier for the Paris Olympic women's football tournament at the National Stadium

their voices and gave us instructions, we are very sorry we were not able to bring you a good result," he said speaking in Korean, stopping frequently to

gather himself. Japan had much of the possession in the first half with North Korea playing the long ball and counterattack. And then Japan withstood North Korean pressure in the first 20 minutes of the second half as the visitors looked for the equalizer.

Takahashi gave Japan a 1-0 lead after her team had much of the early possession. She tapped in a closerange shot after teammate Mina Tanaka's header was deflected off the crossbar by North Korean goalkeeper Pak Ju Mi, the ball falling for Takahashi to score.

North Korea came close to scoring in 44th when Choe Kum Ok's shot was stopped on the line by Japanese keeper Yamashita. VAR - video assistant referee - was not being used in the match but television replays seemed to show the entire ball had not crossed the line.

North Korea coach Ri did not say if he thought the ball had crossed the line - although he hinted at it, knowing that incident probably changed the tone of the game.

"I think it would be better if VAR were introduced in order to make fair decisions," Ri said. "I think it would have been helpful.'

North Korea skipped the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and blamed the pandemic. This angered the Internatinoal Olympic Committee, which also banned the country from the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing but has allowed them to return to Paris.



Williams driver Logan Sargeant of the US steers his car for a Formula One pre season test at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, Bahrain. (AP)

# Sports

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Sargeant heads into 2nd F1 season stronger, hopes to deliver for Williams

## **Bahrain International Circuit celebrates two decades of racing legacy**

### MANAMA, Feb 28, (Agencies): Bahrain International Circuit Marks 20 Years of Formula 1 Excellence with the Slogan '20 Years of a Modern

Classic The Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) gears up for the 2024 Formula 1 season, celebrating two decades of racing prowess from February 29 to March 2. The Formula 1 Grand Prix, a premier event in single-seat racing, takes center stage as BIC hosts a series of events and promotions, featuring enticing prizes that captivate a global audience

Streets in Bahrain are adorned with banners and the rallying cry of racing in anticipation of the Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix (Formula 1). BIC continues its impressive track record with the Bahrain Grand Prix, unfolding on a 5.4 km-long circuit where drivers navigate 57 laps of intense competition.

Renowned for its quality meeting the highest international standards, BIC has garnered accolades such as the International Automobile Federation (FIA) recognition and the worldwide award for best advertising. Serving as the opening round in the new season calendar with 24 races, the F1 event kicks off with a test lap before the main race, prohibiting overtaking to maximize engine and brake

#### **MOTOR RACING**

The audience can expect exhilarating moments from the starting line to the first turn, witnessing racers vying for the lead, with the risk of collisions in the tightly contested race. Each racer follows a meticulously planned strategy devised by their team after studying the circuit.

Racers undergo rigorous physical, mental, and psychological preparation, including specialized exercises for chest and neck muscles to endure the weight of the head and helmet. The demanding conditions inside the car, reaching temperatures of up to 50 degrees Celsius, lead to racers losing approximately three kilograms of weight per race due to heat generated from

various sources Since 2004, Bahrain has proudly hosted the F1 Grand Prix, becoming the first country in the region to do so. From the introduction of the night race in 2014 to the thrilling opening season in 2021, the circuit has consistently delivered standout races.

In July 2023, F1 announced the 2024 calendar, with BIC, hailed as the 'home of motorsport in the Middle East,' commemorating its 20th anniversary with the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix as the season opener. The allows for logistical preparations for the subsequent race in Saudi Arabia, also set for a Saturday. The 2024 calendar comprises 24 races, concluding in Abu Dhabi on December 8.

Even before Logan Sargeant finished his rookie Formula 1 season, a set of expectations were given to the American on what he needed to do to keep his ride at Williams.

It still took until December for Williams to confirm Sargeant would get a second season. He was the last driver

finalized for this year's 20-car grid. But he enters the new season - it starts this weekend in Bahrain - already ahead of schedule.

"First and foremost, I've asked him to surprise the world in terms of his physical fitness, his approach and his performance," Williams team principal James Vowles said. "We've changed quite a bit with him across the winter period, his trainer is different, his training programs are completely different. You should see he's a much more confident person and

he carries that well." Sargeant delivered on Vowles' ask by adding a little more than 11 pounds to his frame during the offseason - muscle that should help the Floridian with car handling a year after he was consistently

outperformed by teammate Alex Albon. Sargeant scored just one point all of last year and it didn't come until the U.S. Grand Prix, five races before the end of the season. Albon, meanwhile, scored 27 points across the season and was ranked

13th in the final driver standings. "I wasn't physically in the place I need to be and I've done everything I can to get on top of that. For example, I'm five kilos heavier than I was at the end of last year, and I feel much more healthy and much more ready to go,' Sargeant said. "I feel like a different man, I feel like physically I am in the best shape I've ever been. And I believe in the condition I'm in now, and will continue to get to, will be simply just helping me feel more comfortable

in the car and extract performance." Sargeant is the first American to race in F1 since Alexander Rossi in 2015 and his underwhelming rookie season did little to build a fanbase in the lucrative United States market that hosted a series-high three races last year.

But Williams last year had a car that was difficult to drive and both he and Albon were forced to adapt. Albon believes this year's FW46 will be easier for Sargeant to handle.

"Logan will have that experience

**Editor-in-Chief** 

## Kazma clinch 4th Futsal Super Cup



Kazma players celebrate on the podium after winning the Futsal Super Cup.

#### Kuwait Club beaten

#### **By Hassan Musa**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 28: In a gripping showdown at the Kuwait Club Hall, Kazma Club clinched the Futsal Super Cup Championship for the 2023-2024 sports season, marking its fourth title in history. The intense match saw Kazma emerge victorious with a 4-3 win over Kuwait Club.

#### **FUTSAL**

Hayef Al-Mutairi, Vice President of the Football Association, and Salah Al-Qenaei, Secretary-General of the Federation, bestowed the championship cup upon Kazma and honored

Kuwait Club as the worthy runner-up. This historic 13th edition of the championship featured an exhilarating match that captivated the audience, showcasing the high level of play expected in a final. Kazma took an early lead in the first half with goals from Chris and Saleh Al-Fadhel, while Abdul-Rahman Al-Taweel scored Kuwait Club's first goal.

The second half saw Kazma extend its lead with a third goal by Manshel, but Kuwait Club fought back, narrowing the gap with two goals from Abdul Rahman Al-Taweel and Abdulaziz Burashid. In the end, Chris secured the



KUNA photo Bronze medalist Badr Al-Subaie.

title for Kazma with the fourth goal. Kuwait Club, Al-Qadisiya, and Yarmouk clubs, each having won the title three times.

David Marin, the futsal coach of Kazma Club, expressed his joy at the victory, acknowledging the tough competition from a formidable opponent. Marin highlighted the team's focus and determination in securing the title, especially when the score was tied at 3-3 minutes before the end of normal time.

Looking ahead to the league championship, Marin emphasized the team's commitment and efficient preparations. He noted that the journey is long, with knockout rounds scheduled for May, leaving all options open to vie for more titles in the ongoing season.

now into this year, I don't think it'll be so much of a learning curve for him," Albon said. "I personally believe that the car's going to be a bit easier to drive. Our car was very unique. I spent two years refining a very strange driving style, which for someone coming into the car for the first time, without

any prior F1 experience, is difficult. "It was very easy to overdrive the car. I think naturally the car's going to go towards him as in a bit less on a knife edge and more usable," Albon continued. "So I think what you're going to see is a guy with a lot more experience and a car that should be more usable and that will in itself bring performance.'

Vowles agreed that this year's car should help both Albon and Sargeant as Williams tries to become competi-

tive again.
"We should have a car that is more suiting to both drivers," Vowles said. "I'm hoping that we've got rid of some of these really nasty effects from last year, but that will also make a platform for him where he should be able to grow much quicker than he did in 2023.

Vowles has also tried to relieve some of the pressure on Sargeant by

Airport Road, Shuwaikh

telling him to follow the same guidelines that helped him earn a second season with Williams.

"What I've asked him to do is to approach the first few days of driving the car with caution again, the same way he did at the end of last year, build up into it and don't try and rush into success," Vowles said. "That's the confidence I placed in him. That's why he's back in the car. I need him now to not go back to his old ways of trying to extract too much from himself and from the car too quickly, but rather approach things progressively.'

Sargeant goes into this year much more confident after a season that he admitted took a physical toll on him. He needed the extra work as F1 prepares for a record 24 races this year.

"The offseason has been such a good opportunity for me to take a step back and look at myself from mental, emotional and physical standpoint where I need to do improve, where I need to get better," Sargeant said. "I learned that I need to manage myself much better. I let myself get very drained throughout the season and I let that affect me off the track, which ultimately brings it onto the track."

## **Kuwait's Al-Subaie grabs diving bronze in Philippines**

MANILA, Feb 28, (KUNA): Kuwaiti diver Bader Al-Subaie, representing the Kuwait National team, secured the first bronze medal at the 11th Asian Age Group Aquatics Championships on

Wednesday in New Clark City, Philippines.

In a phone call with KUNA, Faisal Abu-Alhassan, Board Member of Kuwait Aquatics, highlighted the significance of this accomplishment in the premier continental competition. Al-Subaie clinched the third-place spot in the one-meter dive category for the 16-18 age group.

Abu-Alhassan emphasized that this achievement is noteworthy for Kuwait, considering the presence of elite athletes from around the world. He expressed the determination of Kuwaiti athletes to achieve further success in the remaining days of the championship.

#### DIVING

The Board Member mentioned that while the tournament encompasses all Aquatics disciplines, Kuwait is currently participating solely in diving and swimming competitions. He noted Kuwait's recent success in the second Arab Aquatics Championship held in Doha, where the national team secured an impressive 11 medals across various events.

## Saudi Arabia's PIF and the ATP tennis tour have 5-year sponsorship deal that includes rankings

RIYADH, Feb 28, (AP): Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and the men's professional tennis tour have agreed to a five-year partnership that includes naming rights for the ATP rankings, the latest move by the king-

dom into that sport and others. The ATP already had a deal that placed its Next Gen ATP Finals - a tournament for players 21 and under in Jeddah from 2023 through 2027. The arrangement announced Wednesday includes courtside branding for the PIF at the season-ending ATP Finals and tournaments in Indian Wells, California; Miami, Madrid and Beijing.

Pepperstone had sponsored the ATP

rankings since 2022. ATP chief executive Massimo Calvelli called the new agreement "a major moment for tennis," and the tour's announcement touted ways in which it hopes the sport will continue to grow in Saudi Arabia.

The WTA women's tennis tour has been in negotiations to partner with Saudi Arabia, including possibly placing its season-ending WTA Finals there.

"As part of our plans to grow the value of women's tennis, we regularly speak to both existing and potential commercial partners about possible new forms of collaboration. While we don't rule anything out for the future, there is no new update at this time," a WTA spokesperson wrote in an email Wednesday.

#### **TENNIS**

Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova are among those who have urged the WTA to stay out of Saudi Arabia, while another former star player and Hall of Famer, equal rights pioneer

Billie Jean King, has advocated for engagement.

In January, 22-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal was introduced as an ambassador for the Saudi Tennis Federation. This month, plans were announced for Nadal, Novak Djokovic and four other stars of men's tennis to participate in an exhibition event in Riyadh in October. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman clearly wants to diversify Saudi Arabia's economy

and reduce its reliance on oil. In recent years, Saudi Arabia has enacted wide-ranging social reforms, including granting women the right to drive and largely dismantling male guardianship laws that had allowed husbands and male relatives to control many aspects of women's lives. Men and women are still required to dress modestly, but the rules have been loosened and the once-feared religious police have been sidelined.



Andrey Rublev returns the ball to Arthur Cazaux of France during a match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Rublev won 6-4,6-4. (AP) — See Page 14

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