



CALL FOR PROFESSIONALISM IN ELECTION MEDIA COVERAGE

Reject election hopefuls' appeals: Prosecution

AMIR VISITS DISABLED SPORTS CLUB, K.B.A.

KRCS mobilizes 400 volunteers

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Muhammad Al-Musleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: While the Ministry of Information announced the withdrawal of a number of licenses and preventing their owners from covering the election at candidates' headquarters or polling stations due to violating the regulations in this regard, a reliable source has confirmed the issuance of strict instructions to monitor and audit all electoral polls.

Day by Day

ANY leadership in the world, especially a monarchy or prince, surrounds itself with three entities. First is an open platform for people to submit their complaints. These complaints are followed up by people who fear Allah and are keen on solving them, while the ruler follows up from time to time; such that nothing is hidden from him.

Second is the Council of Grievances that people can turn to, since the judiciary is infallible and it could issue a verdict based on flawed laws.

Third, there must be pure advisors that no one knows about; focusing on finding solutions to problems that could harm the people.

...Yet tomorrow is another day.
Zahed Matar



Experts call on Assembly
Kuwait urged to embrace economic transformation

KUWAIT CITY, March 27, (KUNA): The upcoming National Assembly should adopt several prominent economic issues namely laws that would boost the diversification of the Kuwaiti economy and finding new income sources that would secure sustainability, economic experts stressed.

In interviews with KUNA, they said that the local economy depends on the global energy markets and their rapid fluctuations, pointing out to the necessity on working on the sustainability of the national economy to transform it from a rentier economy to a productive one.

They also stressed on creating an investment climate that would attract foreign capital, boost the business competition and remove the obstacles for foreign investors, as well as encourage national cadres to pave their way into a free economy and encourage innovation and creativity.

Imbalances

Financial markets expert Hassan bu Mejdad said that resolving the structural imbalances in the national economy would be through the privatization of some government sectors, such as energy and communications.

He called for boosting private-public partnership, citing Az-Zour North power plant, Sheqaya solar plant and privatization of the stock market, as well as restructuring the government apparatus, canceling the non-productive sectors and merging sectors of similar nature.

For his part, Business Management professor at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Abdulmir Al-Hendal called for optimal utilization of funds in The National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Development to progress youth projects, reduce the burden on the government and encourage skillful employees and those working in the private sector. He stressed the importance of

activating the partnership between the public and private sector and encourage the foreign investment environment in Kuwait, as well as facilitating all obstacles.

He called for focusing on a specific vision between the legislative and executive authorities, and prioritizing it through activating strategic plans and policies that were set in the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Expert in economic and investment affairs Nader Al-Obeid said that the government and National Assembly have to "agree on a clear economic vision with specific goals" that could be achieved through intensifying all efforts and harnessing all possibilities.

He called for taking advantage of Kuwait's special strategic location that would achieve a sustainable economic boom (renaissance), stressing in this regard the importance of creating specialized zones with diverse activities.

He warned against continuing to depend on a single source income, which is oil, and to expand investment in oil industries and producing environmentally friendly oil derivatives that would meet the needs of the global markets.

Dr. Issam Al-Tawari, the Managing Partner for Newbury Economic Consultancy, said that the next National Assembly would be facing an important entitlement which is preserve the state's sustainability through stopping over-spending, boosting the non-oil revenues and collect arrears on companies and individuals.

He affirmed that diversifying income sources has become an urgent necessity in light of the developments in the world oil markets, recalling the record drop in oil prices during the Covid-19 pandemic.

He stressed the importance of sustaining the national economy and transforming it from a rentier economy to a productive economy, saying that investing in people is the pillar to build a productive and sustainable economy.



Top: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, visited Kuwait Blind Association. Above: His Highness the Amir, accompanied by His Highness the PM, visited the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club on Tuesday evening.

China-Arab states meeting due May 30: Amb Al-Najem

TOKYO, March 27, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Jaseem Al-Najem confirmed on Wednesday that China was preparing to host the 10th session of the ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing on May 30.

Al-Najem indicated that Arab foreign ministers plus the Secretary-General of the Arab League would participate in the meeting, according to a statement by Kuwait Embassy in Beijing, received by KUNA.

On his part, Director of the Chinese Ministry's China-Arab States Cooperation Forum Affairs Ambassador Li Chen explained the importance of the upcoming ministerial meeting of the forum. He expressed his hope that Kuwait would participate with a high-level delegation headed by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, with widespread participation of Arab foreign ministers in the meeting, which will discuss many important issues for both the Chinese and Arab sides, both at the regional and international levels, most notably the Palestinian issue.

The forum will adopt three documents after discussion, which are namely "the Beijing Declaration," "the Joint Statement on the Palestinian Issue," and "the Executive Program of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum between 2024-2026."

'Generations foster love, loyalty'

KUWAIT CITY, March 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, visited the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club on Tuesday evening on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

His Highness the Amir was welcomed by Minister of State for National Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Minister of State for Communication Affairs Dawood Marafie, Director-General of the Public Sports Authority Yousef Abdullah Al-Baidan and the Club's Board Chairman Shafi Mohammad Al-Hajri.

His Highness the Amir addressed the gathering by saying that he was pleased to visit the club to congratulate its disabled members, their families, and officials on the holy month of Ramadan.

He said that the State of Kuwait, with all sectors concerned, has been paying much attention to the disabled as being a main component of the Kuwaiti social fabric, providing them with much care and support.

He thanked the club's administration and everyone concerned for their care to the members, citing championships in several international events, particularly the win of 24 medals in the Sharjah International Para Athletics Forum and the 15th Fazza International Athletics Championship in the UAE.

His Highness the Amir also thanked the families of the champions and disabled champions, who had proved strong resolve and will to address challenges, urging them to keep on attaining goals and maintaining their levels.

However, His Highness the Amir called on those in charge

of the affairs of the disabled to adopt all-out policies to support them, empower them, and incorporate them in society by means of providing them with health, housing, and educational care, and enacting appropriate legislation to protect them.

Board Chairman of Kuwait Disabled Sports Club Shafi Al-Hajri pledged Tuesday to maintain and continue serve the dear homeland.

Addressing His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah while visiting the club, Al-Hajri conveyed congratulations and greetings of all disabled to His Highness the Amir on the holy month of Ramadan.

Al-Hajri said "Kuwait, upon the wise leadership of Your Highness, implements all laws in all governmental agencies in the country", affirming obedience and loyalty to His Highness the Amir for the public interest of Kuwait's present and future.

He lauded the good of Al-Sabah Family, indicating that generations are taught to love and be loyal to this country to raise its flag in international arenas.

Continued on Page 5



Amiri Diwan photo Photo shows HH the Amir during his visit to the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club.



KUNA photo Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Jaseem Al-Najem with Chinese Director for China-Arab Cooperation Forum Li Chen and Arab envoys.

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: The security authorities in Kuwait have seized an Iranian commercial ship and its crew following an incident where the ship's captain was compelled to enter Kuwaiti territorial waters to report the death of an Iranian sailor, resulting in a case of accidental manslaughter being registered, reports Al-Rai daily.

BEIRUT: Seven people were killed and four others were wounded in an airstrike by Israeli aggression's warplanes launched on Wednesday, on the town of Al-Habbaniyah in southern Lebanon, said a media source.

The warplanes targeted the "Lebanese Emergency Services Association center affiliated with the Islamic Group" in the town of Al-Habbaniyah, destroying it and killing seven medical staff members who were inside, said The Lebanese National News Agency. (KUNA)

Commitment

He clarified that most of those who were granted licenses proved their commitment to the instructions and guidelines; which reflects the extent of their professionalism and responsibility. He added a small number of media license holders violated the licensing conditions during the candidate registration period despite their clarity and simplicity, which led to the withdrawal of their licenses and preventing them from covering the election - whether at candidates' headquarters or polling stations.

He called on all media outlets to adhere to professionalism in covering the election, so that this democratic entitlement is conveyed in the best possible way in a way that reflects the true image of the ancient Kuwaiti media.

Meanwhile, the Public Prosecution has requested for rejection of the appeals filed by former MPs and candidates for the upcoming parliamentary election at the Court of Cassation.

Former MPs and candidates for the 2024 parliamentary election Ahmed Mutei Al-Azmi, Marzouq Al-Hebeini, Marzouq Al-Khalifa and Jaber Al-Mehailbi appealed the ruling of the Court of Appeals; which upheld the decision of the Ministry of Interior to disqualify them.

The Court of Cassation will rule on these appeals on Sunday.

On the other hand, Fourth Constituency candidate Anwar Al-Fikr said in his electoral campaign that although the appointment of the Crown Prince is the absolute right of HH the Amir; the Parliament has the right to approve such an appointment.

Former MP and Second Constituency candidate Khalid Ayed Al-Anzi has vowed to submit a bill on amending the Nationality Law. He said the amendment shall stipulate that whoever is born to a Kuwaiti father is

Continued on Page 5

Ramadan Timings

Iftar ..... Thursday ..... 18:05
Imzak ..... Friday ..... 04:18

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:25    Asr ..... 15:23  
 Sunrise .. 05:44    Maghrib .. 18:03  
 Zohr ..... 11:54    Isha ..... 19:21

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Warm and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h.  
**By Night:** Rather cold and part-

## Weather

ly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	27	17

Kuwait Airport	28	14
Abdaly	29	14
Jahra	30	15
Salmiyah	25	19
Nuwaisib	29	14
Wafra	29	12

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

## Egyptian consulate announces new fees for MRPs

# 'Italy to deliver 13 more Eurofighter jets to Kuwait in 18 months'

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Military Attaché at the Italian Embassy Colonel Salvatore Ferrara has confirmed the depth of relations between the air forces of Kuwait and Italy; confirming that his country will deliver 13 additional Eurofighter aircraft to Kuwait within the next 18 months as per the announcement of Italian Minister of Defense Guido Crosetto during his recent visit to the country, reports Al-Qabas daily.



Ferrara

Ferrara told the daily that 15 out of 28 Eurofighters have already been delivered as part of the 'Eurofighter Kuwait' program.

He also praised the results of the visit of the Italian Defense Minister to Kuwait on March 5, which he described as successful and positive.

Crosetto met with his counterpart Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah at the headquarters of the Ministry of Defense, accompanied by Undersecretary of the ministry Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah and Chief of the General Staff of the Army Major General P.S.C. Pilot Bandar Al-Muzain.

According to Ferrara, the two sides praised bilateral cooperation in the field of defense as a fundamental pillar for ensuring peace and stability in the region; while providing opportunities for mutual investment and strengthening the economies of the two countries. He pointed out that a wide range of common topics were discussed during the visit, as well as the growing bilateral defense partnership between Kuwait and Italy, such as renewing many agreements and intensified cooperation between the armed forces of the two friendly countries.

**New fees for MRPs:** The Consulate of the Arab Republic of Egypt has announced that in light of the Egyptian Minister of Interior's decision No. 470/2024 on amending the fees for issuing a new machine-readable passport and replacement for a damaged or lost passport; it has been decided that the fees will be collected for the benefit of the Ministry of Interior-General Administration of Passports, Immigration and Nationality as of April 1, reports Al-Anba daily.

### Following are the new fees:

1. Obtaining a passport for the first time - KD97
2. Passport renewal - KD97
3. Obtaining replacement for damaged/lost passport - KD145

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**Water use decreases:** The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) has confirmed a decrease in the percentage of water consumption compared to production; indicating that consumption exceeded production in the past, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources attributed the increase in production to the completion of maintenance works in a number of stations. Sources affirmed that

the maintenance of stations is carried out as per schedule.

Sources said the ministry is working hard to complete maintenance works in various stations, units and electrical network before the peak season at the end of May in order to be prepared for the expected increase in water and power consumption during summer.

Sources stressed that the ministry takes into account any shortfall in production during the next stage; as it will be compensated water wise from the strategic reserve and electrically from the Gulf interconnection network, in addition to its endeavor to secure electricity by purchasing from others through several initiatives with the independent supplier system that are currently being studied.



HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah with the guests.

## PM receives chairman, members of education panel

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received Wednesday the Chairman and members of the Board of Trustees of the National Committee for Supporting Education and the Endowment for Supporting Education. (KUNA)



Ministry of Defense photo

Kuwaiti Army Chief Gen. Bandar Al-Muzain

## Amir orders 'roadmap': Army chief

KUWAIT CITY, March 27, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Army Chief Gen. Bandar Al-Muzain has called on army commanders to act according to the instructions of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as being a "roadmap and approach".

The top general made the remark while addressing a meeting of the Military Defense Council, the Ministry of Defense said in a press release.

He pointed out Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah's keenness to see all army commanders act in line with the political leadership's directives.

"These directives act as a roadmap and approach aiming at encouraging army personnel and upgrading their preparedness, efficiency, and capabilities to cope with advancement in qualification, training, and armament, and to enable them to serve and protect their nation," he added.

# Kuwaitis can enter Antigua, Barbuda without visa for month's stay: envoy

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to Kuwait Mohammad Al-Zoubi announced that his country's government has issued a decision to exempt Kuwaiti citizens from obtaining a visa to enter its territories.**

In a press statement issued yesterday, he said Kuwait is the first Gulf country whose citizens can enter this Caribbean country without a visa and can stay for a month.

Ambassador Al-Zoubi revealed that his country's government sent an official memorandum regarding the decision to the Kuwaiti government, stressing that this decision was taken in appreciation of the State of Kuwait and with the aim of strengthening relations between the two friendly countries.

He welcomed Kuwaitis who wish to visit his country to enjoy its moderate weather throughout the year, explaining that what distinguishes it and makes it unique is that it has 365 beaches, and the waters of the Caribbean Sea are warm and calm. There are luxurious and modern hotels and resorts on the islands, which means that a tourist can visit a new beach every day for an entire year without visiting a beach twice.

Ambassador Al-Zoubi stated that about one and a half million tourists visit Antigua and Barbuda annually, most of them from the United States, Canada, Britain, and many European countries.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Muhammad Farouk and other dignitaries at the cake-cutting ceremony.

## Embassy marks National Day

# 'Kuwait & Pakistan have stood with each other in time of need'

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait Malik Farouk says his country had last year celebrated with Kuwait the 60th anniversary of their distinguished diplomatic relations and excellent fraternal relations, during which a common slogan was launched, and various activities, including the exchange of cultural groups, trade delegations, and joint sports competitions, were held.**

He highlighted this in a speech he delivered during the celebration of the National Day of Pakistan, which corresponds to March 23, held the day before yesterday in the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil Dr. Imad Al-Ateeqi, and the Commander of the Land Force in the Ministry of Defense Khalid Zayed.

Ambassador Farouk said, "That year culminated in the visit of our Prime Minister to Kuwait, and the signing of several memorandums of understanding related to investments."

He said, "The two countries enjoy deep and fraternal relations that extend for centuries, as our contacts between our people and our trade ties are ancient. We have stood by each other in moments of victory, and in the hours of need."

"The two countries have a convergence of views on regional and international issues, and cooperate with each other in various international forums, including the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation."

"The Defense Cooperation Agreement and the Health Cooperation Agreement Protocol between the two countries are excellent landmarks. Our bilateral trade is on the

rise, and we look forward to further expanding trade ties. We are also keen to contribute to the food security requirements in Kuwait.

"We have strong Kuwaiti investments in Pakistan, through the Kuwait Investment Authority and the Kuwait Oil Company. Our investment potential is huge, and Kuwait is welcome to benefit from this tremendous growth boom."

"The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was established to facilitate foreign investors, especially from the Gulf countries. The council is chaired by our Prime Minister and is dedicated to resolving investor issues and complaints in a prompt and transparent manner."

"Pakistan attracts thousands of tourists from Kuwait who not only enjoy the country's natural beauty, but also its unique culture, cuisine, hospitality and archaeological sites."

Ambassador Farouk expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah, as well as the government and people of Kuwait, for being excellent hosts to the Pakistani diplomatic mission and the Pakistani community alike.

He added, "We join Kuwait, the Gulf states and the broader international community in calling for an urgent end to the continued suffering of defenseless civilians in Palestine."

Meanwhile, the Commander of the Land Forces at the Ministry of Defense Khaled Zayed, in a speech during his participation in the Pakistani Embassy's celebration of its National Day, revealed the conclusion of a number of agreements between the two countries in the future, and highlighted the existing agreements.

## Other Voices

### PM bicycle, morals of nation

By Ahmad alsarraf

The sight of the Prime Minister of Kuwait, pedaling alongside his fellow citizens, including those of his grandchildren's age, during the "Kuwait Sports Day" event on Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge, was truly heartwarming.

With over 13,000 participants, both men and women, ministers, officials, and prominent figures taking part in the sports which was held under his patronage, was a resounding success.

Here are some reflections on this remarkable occasion:

His Highness the Prime Minister's active participation and his extended presence among the people are rare occurrences indeed. We hope that similar events will continue to take place periodically, fostering a closer bond between the leadership and the community.

While some view this event as a testament to the nation's sports and health awareness, it's important to recognize that many Kuwaitis struggle with health issues such as obesity and diabetes. Dr. Abeer Al-Bahwa's recent statement regarding the alarming rates of physical inactivity and chronic diseases underscores the urgent need for health and moral awareness among the populace.

The presence of senior officials at the event undoubtedly encouraged participation and served to silence critics,

highlighting the importance of such gatherings in promoting a healthier lifestyle.

However, despite our enthusiasm for such initiatives, it's disheartening to witness the aftermath of the event marred by litter and waste. While most participants were provided with refreshments, some displayed a lack of responsibility by discarding waste improperly.

The absence of adequate waste management infrastructure, such as garbage bins along the route, reflects a broader issue of environmental neglect. It is imperative that we instill a sense of environmental stewardship and respect for cleanliness alongside our participation in such events.

Indeed, while events like the "Kuwait Sports Day" are crucial for promoting physical activity and community engagement, they must be accompanied by efforts to foster moral responsibility and respect for others. This extends beyond our participation in sports to encompass our everyday actions, including our conduct during religious observances like fasting and prayer.

It is unacceptable for worshippers to disturb others by obstructing traffic or parking inappropriately, and law enforcement must uphold regulations to ensure public order and safety.

In conclusion, while celebrating the success of events like the "Kuwait Sports Day," we must also acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead in promoting health, environmental awareness, and moral responsibility among our society. Only through collective efforts can we build a healthier, more harmonious community for future generations.

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## MoH orders 'probe' into admin absent at facility

**KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The Ministry of Health (MoH) has opened investigation and taken the necessary legal measures against the administrators in a health facility, following their absence and leaving the workplace without asking permission or providing an alternative, reports Al-Anba daily.**

The ministry confirmed that the Minister of Health Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi immediately issued a directive to open an investigation into the incident; stressing that anyone proven to be negligent in performing his job duties will be held accountable, and that administrative and legal procedures regulating the workflow will be applied.

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**Online classes planned:** The idea of implementing the remote education system has expanded; as the Education Ministry is now gearing towards holding online classes in the last 10 days of the holy month of Ramadan, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources pointed out that the initial agreement was to conduct online classes in the last two days of the holy month, indicating the Public Education Sector and Co-ordination Department have prepared a memorandum that will be presented soon to Minister Of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani.

Sources said the teachers will hold classes in the school building according to the academic schedule.

Sources explained that due to the success of the online education experience in the past, and the familiarity of teachers and students with the application mechanism; the ministry decided to use it whenever necessary.





Ambassador Md Ashikuzzaman hoisting the National Flag.



The ambassador placing floral wreath before the portrait of the Father of the Nation.

# PADA recovers around KD 275K from disability plaintiffs: official

9,000 disabled students benefit from educational support

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The Acting Deputy Director General for Educational and Rehabilitation Services at the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) Mubarak Al-Badah affirmed that approximately KD 275 thousand have been fully recovered from the disability plaintiffs.**

Al-Badah explained that 62 cases of disability claimants were discovered. They were granted disability certificates after they forged their medical reports. All of them were referred to the Public Prosecution, which in

turn referred them to the Criminal Court.

One of them, which included 7 cases, was decided by a final ruling from the Court of Cassation. The other case is still pending before the Criminal Court and is reserved for judgment at the session of March 31, 2024. The cases were discovered in 2019.

Regarding the educational file, Al-Badah explained that the number of students benefiting from the PADA's educational support is about 9,000 disabled students.

PADA is progressing, according to article 11 of Law No. 8/2010, to accept scholarship applications for students with disabilities by providing seats for them in coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education.

PADA provides a wide range of services to people with disabilities and their families, and aims to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and provide them with the necessary support

in various aspects of life.

It classifies disabilities into motor, physical, visual, hearing, mental, psychological, developmental, and educational disabilities. Their degrees vary from simple, moderate, and severe.

PADA issues disability certificates of all kinds according to the condition of the person with disability. They could be motor, physical, visual, auditory, mental, psychological, developmental, or educational disability. The duration of the certificates is between three years to five years depending on the case. In some cases, PADA issues life-time certificates.

Regarding prosthetic devices, Al-Badah said the authority has issued a tender for the supply of prosthetic devices and to provide them to people with disabilities according to their condition.

He indicated that they are awaiting the completion of the tender procedures with the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

## Ambassador hoists National Flag

### Bangladesh Embassy celebrates 'Independence and National Day'

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait observed the "Independence and National Day" at the Chancery on Tuesday, March 26, with due fervor and festivity. Presided over by H.E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, ndc, afwc, psc, G(Retd.), Ambassador of Bangladesh to Kuwait, embassy officials, members of the Bangladeshi community and representatives of the print and electronic media were present at the program.

The program started at the embassy premises with the hoisting of the National Flag ceremoniously by H.E. Ambassador Major General (Retd.) Md Ashikuzzaman in the presence of embassy officials, members of Bangladesh diaspora and representatives of the print and electronic media. Later the ambassador along with other officers and officials of the embassy placed floral wreath before the portrait of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The discussion session of the program started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. The messages conveyed by the Hon'ble President and the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Bangladesh were read out by the senior officials of the embassy. During the program, a short video documentary on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day was displayed.

The ambassador in his closing remarks paid deep homage to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members. He also paid tribute to the three million martyrs, two hundred thousand women, and all the valiant freedom fighters for their extraordinary contributions and great sacrifices during the Liberation War in 1971. He highlighted the development of Bangladesh under the



The ambassador during his speech.

charismatic leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina. Ambassador urged upon the expatriate community to follow the ideals of Bangabandhu and devote themselves to build 'Sonal Bangla' (Golden Bengal) dreamt by Bangabandhu and work together with utmost sincerity and integrity to improve the image of the country. He also thanked all the people who were present at the discussion session.

At the end, special prayers were offered for the salvation of the departed souls of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the members of his family, the valiant freedom fighters who laid down their valuable lives for the independence of the country, the wounded freedom fighters, and for continued peace and progress of the country.

## Other Voices

### Constitutional awareness

By Abdulaziz Abdullah Alhusainan  
Lawyer

In the intricate tapestry of governance, the constitution stands as the foundational document, weaving together the principles, rights, and duties that define a nation. Yet, despite its paramount importance, constitutional awareness often remains elusive to many. In a world where political discourse dominates headlines and societal norms evolve rapidly, fostering constitutional awareness becomes imperative for the sustenance of democracy and the protection of individual liberties.



Alhusainan

Constitutional awareness entails more than a mere acquaintance with the document; it encompasses a deep understanding of its principles, the rights it enshrines, and the mechanisms it establishes for governance. It involves recognizing the delicate balance of power between different branches of government, understanding the significance of checks and balances, and appreciating the role of the judiciary in upholding constitutional values.

At its core, constitutional awareness empowers citizens. It equips them with the knowledge to hold their leaders accountable, to engage meaningfully in political discourse, and to safeguard their rights in the face of encroaching authoritarianism or populist rhetoric. Informed citizens are the bedrock of a robust democracy, capable of participating actively in the decision-making process and shaping the trajectory of their nation.

However, nurturing constitutional awareness is no simple task. It requires concerted efforts from multiple fronts, including educational institutions, civil society organizations, and the media. Incorporating civics education into school curricula is crucial for cultivating constitutional awareness from a young age. Students should be introduced to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and the

fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution. Interactive and engaging teaching methods can make constitutional learning more accessible and relatable.

Organizing workshops, seminars, and public forums on constitutional topics can bridge the gap between legal jargon and everyday understanding. These events provide platforms for dialogue, where citizens can discuss pertinent constitutional issues and learn from experts in the field. In an era of misinformation and sensationalism, media literacy is essential for deciphering constitutional matters portrayed in the media accurately. Promoting critical thinking skills enables citizens to discern between credible sources and misinformation, fostering a more informed citizenry.

Encouraging community participation in local governance fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility towards constitutional principles. Platforms such as town hall meetings, citizen assemblies, and neighborhood associations provide avenues for citizens to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes. Providing access to legal resources and services empowers individuals to assert their rights and seek redressal for grievances. Legal aid clinics, helplines, and pro bono services ensure that constitutional protections are accessible to all, irrespective of socio-economic status.

Constitutional awareness is not static; it requires ongoing engagement and learning. Encouraging lifelong learning through online courses, reading groups, and discussion circles ensures that citizens stay abreast of constitutional developments and debates. In conclusion, constitutional awareness is indispensable for the preservation of democracy and the protection of individual liberties. By fostering an informed citizenry, we fortify the foundations of governance and ensure that the principles enshrined in the constitution endure for generations to come. It is through active engagement, education, and dialogue that we uphold the ideals of democracy and realize the promise of a more just and equitable society.

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## Girgian

### Colorful Ramadan tradition

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Girgian (Eid of the Children) is an annual celebration during Ramadan when groups of children wearing costumes and singing songs visit homes to request for Girgian goodies, reports Al-Rai daily.

Girgian is considered one of the ancient customs and traditions that everyone is keen to celebrate, but it has developed in recent years and taken a different form in terms of advance preparation of clothes and costumes and the variety of sweets offered to children. It now lacks simplicity and spontaneity, up to the point that it became the subject of criticism like the recent gathering in Yarmouk when crowds entered the area to celebrate the occasion, prompting the Ministry of Interior to regulate entry to the area and limit it to the residents.

This Ramadan celebration began in the rest of the regions, after breaking the fast, with groups of young people moving between homes, singing songs and requesting various Girgian goodies from the neighbors, while wearing traditional costumes, amid festive appearances that adhere to the authentic heritage in order to preserve it from extinction despite the passage of years and modern development factors.

It is worth mentioning that developments have occurred in the traditional Ramadan character of Girgian as it is now held in commercial complexes and markets, instead of children moving between homes and praying for the families: "Save their son, O Allah, spare him for his mother." Some even composed new songs and melodies that keep pace with the age, while cooperative societies and public benefit societies organize such event for the residents where they are located.



Al-Jarida photo

A group photo during the Girgian ceremony organized by KRCS.

### KRCS celebrates Girgian ceremony at social care homes

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs' Social Welfare Department, organized the Girgian ceremony at the social care homes, aiming to spread joy and happiness among orphans, the elderly, and individuals with special needs, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Dr. Musaed Al-Enezi, Director of the association's operations sector, highlighted that this annual humanitarian

initiative seeks to create a festive atmosphere for residents, fostering a sense of community and inclusivity.

The ceremony featured cultural and entertainment competitions, engaging children, individuals with special needs, and their families. Girgian distributions and prizes were awarded to competition winners, enhancing the celebratory spirit. Al-Enezi emphasized the association's commitment to maintaining regular communica-

tion with residents and organizing humanitarian visits throughout the year, particularly during Ramadan.

The Red Crescent's participation in the Girgian ceremony underscores its dedication to serving society and supporting individuals across all demographics. This collaborative effort aims to uplift spirits and create memorable experiences for those in social care homes.

### MoCI launches 7 new e-services

## Hawalli Governorate on way to becoming a Model Healthy City

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Ali Al-Asfar, Governor of Hawalli, and Acting Governor of the Capital, reiterated the commitment to transforming Hawalli Governorate into a fully integrated, healthy city during the first coordination meeting with members of the Healthy Cities Office. The initiative aims to enhance the quality of life and combat chronic diseases within the community, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Governor Al-Asfar urged swift completion of the necessary tasks after registering Hawalli Governorate as a health governorate, emphasizing that the proliferation of healthy city concepts across Kuwait would promote health awareness and encourage lifestyles conducive to well-being, thereby positively impacting public health.

Acknowledging the voluntary efforts of Kuwait-loving groups, Al-Asfar credited their contributions to the registration of 12 health zones in Hawalli and the capital governorates. He expressed gratitude to the members of the Healthy Cities Committee for their distinguished role in facilitating the integration of these cities into the Healthy Cities Network.

Dr. Amal Al-Yahya, head of the Healthy Cities Office at the Ministry of Health, highlighted the significance of expanding the number of healthy cities, affirming Kuwait's dedication to individual well-being and community development.

She underscored Kuwait's commitment to global health standards and the importance of participating in international forums to promote the Healthy Cities Initiative, advocated by the World Health Organization to improve quality of life and achieve health for all.

The meeting addressed various topics concerning the establishment of Hawalli Health Governorate, emphasizing collaboration with the Healthy Cities Office. Attendees included Adel Al-Aslawi, Director of the Hawalli Governor's Office, and Secretary Tariq Abdul Rahim.

**7 new services:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry unveiled seven new electronic services for real estate management accessible through the "Sahel Business" application, catering to business owners, reports Al-Jarida daily.

These services were announced in a blog post shared by the ministry via its "Commerce" account on the "X" platform.

The newly introduced services encompass various aspects of real estate management, including requests for adding a real estate sale advertisement to an existing license within Kuwait, obtaining a license to publish real estate sale advertisements inside or outside Kuwait for different durations, replacing lost real estate resident certificates, renewing real estate resident licenses, and following up on real estate management requests.

stances, and encourages their distinguished determination.

Chairman of Kuwait Blind Association (KBA) Fayiz Al-Azmi expressed Tuesday great appreciations and thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his support to the association.

Addressing His Highness the Amir who was accompanied by His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah while visiting the KBA, Al-Azmi congratulated His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Prime Minister and Sheikhs on the holy month of Ramadan and prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect Kuwait from any evil.

Since the KBA's establishment, Kuwait's rulers have been supporting institution in a manner that helped it partake in all international arenas, Al-Azmi said.

Mansour Al-Enzi has been named as secretary general of the Asian Blind Union (ABU), which was the KBA most achievement since "Your Highness" came to office, Al-Azmi stated.

Kuwait won this post, which means that the country has a great humanitarian position across the world, he said, thanking His Highness the Amir for his efforts and backing to the association.

Al-Azmi also thanked Minister of Social Affairs and Childhood for backing to the blind and all undersecretaries as well as societies and officials. At the end, a documentary was displayed.

### Reject election

Continued from Page 1

considered a Kuwaiti citizen. He added the citizens should not be classified according to different articles of the law.

Moreover, Second Constituency candidate Bader Ghareed Al-Bazzali has withdrawn his candidacy in favor of his colleague and former MP Hamed Mehri Al-Bazzali.

Badr Ghareed disclosed that his aim is to enhance the chances for Bani Ghanim Tribe to be represented in the National Assembly.

In related news, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced on Wednesday that 400 of its volunteers would partake in organizing the 2024 National Assembly elections scheduled on April 4.

KRCS's Deputy Chairman of the Board Anwar Al-Hasawi told KUNA that volunteers would be present in 26 schools throughout the country's five constituencies as part of their contribution to this tremendous national duty.

He revealed that volunteers would be tasked with aiding the elderly and individuals with special needs to reach ballot boxes to cast their vote.

Volunteers were trained to carry out their duties prior to elections and would hopefully attend to their task adequately during the day of elections, said Al-Hasawi.

He affirmed that the KRCS would be coordinating with other state entities to make sure that the election process runs smoothly.

# Fatwa Department finalizes judicial arbitration draft law

Proposed legislation slated to annul Law No. 102 of 2013

**KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The Fatwa and Legislation Department, under the auspices of the Council of Ministers, has finalized the preparation of the ultimate draft concerning a proposed law on judicial arbitration.**

Informed sources told Al-Qabas daily that the objective of this new draft law is to enhance the arbitration sector in Kuwait, recognized as a crucial support mechanism for judicial operations. They elucidated that following the conclusion of the electoral process, the government will present the draft law to the upcoming National Assembly for consideration and approval.

These sources highlighted that the completed draft law on judicial arbitration, encompassing 35 articles, has been crafted to align with significant advancements in regional judicial arbitration, particularly in the adjudication of commercial and financial contracts between parties, be they individuals or diverse corporations, prior to resorting to judicial courts.

The draft law delves into the establishment of definitions and outlines the jurisdiction of arbitration bodies in civil and commercial matters stemming from contractual agreements, thereby forming distinct legal relationships, whether contractual or non-contractual, subject to arbitration.

### Legislation

Furthermore, the proposed legislation is slated to annul Law No. 102 of 2013, which previously constrained the jurisdiction of arbitration bodies to disputes involving amounts exceeding 500,000 dinars.

The following are the most important provisions of the text of the draft law on judicial arbitration:

■ Arbitration is permissible in matters in which reconciliation is permissible, but it is not permissible in matters that violate public order.

■ An arbitration agreement may only be concluded by a person who has the right to dispose of the right subject to arbitration.

■ Arbitration is not valid unless it is in writing, ratified and signed by its parties, and includes an arbitration clause.

■ The court, before which a case is presented, in which the subject of the dispute is contracts that include an arbitration clause, must rule that it lacks jurisdiction before discussing the matter.

■ The resort of one of the parties to the arbitration, before the start of its proceedings, to the courts to take temporary or urgent measures regarding it, does not constitute a waiver of the arbitration procedures. The Arbitration Department may not receive the arbitration request until it has been decided by the courts.

■ One or more arbitration panels shall be formed at the headquarters of the Court of Appeal, consisting of a judge with the rank of advisor, and two arbitrators chosen by the parties to the dispute. They shall be chosen from among the arbitrators registered in the arbitrators' registration register at the Judicial Arbitration Department at the Court of Appeal,



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Deputy FM Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Sabah receives Ambassador Aguilar.

### Kuwait's Deputy FM receives Spanish ambassador

Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah re-

ceived Wednesday the Spanish Ambassador to the country, Miguel Jose Moro Aguilar.

The bilateral ties between the two countries were touched on during the talks. (KUNA)



Al-Rai photo

The university director honoring the inventors.

### University's acting rector extends his appreciation to inventors

## KU registers new patent on rock analysis

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The Kuwait University, through its Office of Patents and Intellectual Property Rights in the Research Sector, proudly announced the registration of a new patent focusing on rock analysis and laboratory experiments, reports Al-Rai daily.

Dr. Mishari Al-Harbi, the university's acting rector, extended his appreciation to the inventors from the College of Engineering and Petroleum, namely Professor Dr. Osama Ali Al-Omair, along with engineers Nezo Christian Azubuike and Ahmed Essam Omar.

He commended their distinguished scientific and research efforts and acknowledged the pivotal role played by the Patent and Intellectual Property Rights Office in

facilitating the patent registration process.

Al-Harbi emphasized the university's unwavering support for creative individuals, emphasizing the importance of translating innovative ideas into tangible benefits for society.

He highlighted how the achievements of researchers and inventors significantly enhance Kuwait University's academic standing both locally and internationally.

Dr. Osama Al-Omair provided insights into the invention, explaining that it offers an advanced solution for heating rock samples using microwaves.

By integrating microwave radiation as an energy source, the invention enhances the effectiveness of geological analyses. The process

involves passing electric current through a magnetron containing thorium, a radioactive element, to generate microwave radiation.

This radiation is then directed to a secure chamber containing hot liquid or a water bag, transferring heat to the sample. The invention's advanced design enables precise temperature and pressure control, ensuring accuracy and efficiency in laboratory experiments and opening new horizons for geological and geochemical research.

The patent represents a significant contribution to the field of rock analysis and laboratory experimentation, showcasing Kuwait University's commitment to fostering innovation and scientific advancement.

or from others chosen by the opponents.

■ In the event that neither party to the arbitration does so within the ten days following the Arbitration Administration assigning him to choose an arbitrator, the aforementioned Administration shall appoint the arbitrator who has the

role in the registers of arbitrators specialized in the subject matter of the dispute for membership in the Authority.

■ The arbitration panel decides on the preliminary issues that are presented to it in the dispute, which fall within the jurisdiction of the civil or commercial judi-

ciary, and on the defenses related to its lack of jurisdiction, including deciding on any objection related to the existence of the arbitration agreement, its validity, its lapse, or its failure to cover the subject of the dispute. Or requests made by opponents during the hearing of the dispute.

World News Roundup

Europe

Insider releases audio

Greek Pasok seeks to bring down govt

ATHENS, Greece, March 27, (AP): A Greek opposition party Tuesday submitted a motion of no-confidence against the government, saying that it tried to cover up its responsibility over a deadly rail disaster last year that shocked Greece.

The Socialist Pasok party challenged the government following a newspaper report suggesting that audio leaked to the news media of rail officials had been chosen selectively to misleadingly indicate human error in the crash.

The three-day debate in parliament is due to end with a vote late Thursday.

Prime Minister **Kyriakos Mitsotakis'** center-right New Democracy party holds a comfortable majority of 158 seats in the 300-member parliament, meaning that the motion is unlikely to pass. But it could increase pressure on the government, whose critics accuse it of trying to sidestep responsibility for the circumstances of the crash.

The crash in the Tempa area of central Greece occurred on the night of Feb. 28, 2023, when a passenger train smashed into an oncoming cargo train put onto the same track and heading in opposite directions. It was Greece's deadliest railway disaster. Many of the 57 people killed were university students heading back to class after a public holiday.

Renewed public attention on the disaster has dented Mitsotakis' majority in recent opinion polls, a little over 10 weeks before the European Parliament election in June. The crash highlighted long-standing problems with Greece's rail safety monitoring systems, and relatives of the crash victims have been vocal in alleging a cover-up by the government of failures to implement safeguards that could have prevented the tragedy.

**Charles to attend Easter Sunday service:** King Charles III and Queen Camilla will attend an Easter service at the chapel at Windsor Castle on Sunday, Buckingham Palace officials said Tuesday, in the first major appearance for the 75-year-old king since he was diagnosed with cancer in February.

Officials said Charles and Camilla will be accompanied by members of the royal family at St. George's Chapel. The event is expected to be smaller than usual. Prince William and Kate, the Princess of Wales, who announced last week that she is also undergoing cancer treatment, are not expected to attend.

The king is undergoing treatment and has suspended almost all his public engagements since his diagnosis. Officials didn't disclose what form of cancer Charles has but said it's not related to his recent treatment for a benign prostate condition.

Officials have said the monarch is continuing with state business, including regular weekly meetings with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, and won't be handing over his constitutional role as head of state.

**Russia persists in blaming Ukraine:** Russian officials persisted Tuesday in saying Ukraine and the West had a role in last week's deadly Moscow concert hall attack despite vehement denials of involvement by Kyiv and a claim of responsibility by an affiliate of the Islamic State group.

Without offering any evidence, Alexander Bortnikov, head of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, followed similar allegations by President Vladimir Putin, who linked the attack to Ukraine even as he acknowledged that the suspects who were arrested were "radical Islamists."

The IS affiliate claimed it carried out the attack, and US intelligence said it had information confirming the group was responsible. French President Emmanuel Macron said France also has intelligence pointing to "an IS entity" as responsible for the attack.

But despite the signs pointing to IS, Putin insisted on alleged Ukrainian involvement - something that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy rejected, accusing the Kremlin leader of trying to drum up fervor as his forces fight in Ukraine.

**'Russian warships destroyed':** Ukraine has sunk or disabled a third of all Russian warships in the Black Sea in just over two years of war, the navy spokesman said Tuesday, a heavy blow to Moscow's military capability.

Ukraine's Navy spokesman Dmytro Pletenchuk told The Associated Press that the latest strike on Saturday night hit the Russian amphibious landing ship Kostiantyn Olshansky that was resting in dock in Sevastopol in Russia-occupied Crimea. The ship was part of the Ukrainian navy before Russia captured it while annexing the Black Sea peninsula in 2014.

Pletenchuk has previously announced that two other landing ships of the same type, Azov and Yamal, also were damaged in Saturday's strike along with the Ivan Khurs intelligence ship.

He told the AP that the weekend attack, which was launched with Ukraine-built Neptune missiles, also hit Sevastopol port facilities and an oil depot.

Russian authorities reported a massive Ukrainian attack on Sevastopol over the weekend but didn't acknowledge any damage to the fleet.

**Ex-Hungarian insider releases audio:** A former Hungarian government insider turned critic released an audio recording on Tuesday that he says proves that top officials conspired to cover up corruption, the latest development in a scandal that has shaken Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's domination of the country's politics.

The country's largest protests in years erupted in early February when it was revealed that the president had issued a pardon to a man imprisoned for covering up child sexual abuses by the director of a state-run orphanage. Close Orbán allies, including the president and Justice Minister Judit Varga, were forced to resign in the face of public outrage.

The latest allegations come from Varga's ex-husband, Peter Magyar, a former political insider who says he has turned whistleblower to reveal the extent of the scandal.

He posted a recording on Facebook and YouTube on Tuesday featuring what appeared to Varga's voice describing how other government officials caused evidence to be removed from court records to cover up their roles in corrupt business dealings.

"They suggested to the prosecutors what should be removed," Varga says in the recording, which Magyar says he made during a conversation in the former couple's apartment.



Mitsotakis



Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg arrives for a news conference near the scene where a container ship collided with a support on the Francis Scott Key Bridge, in Dundalk, Md on March 26. (AP)

'Heroes' scrambled to stop traffic before Baltimore bridge collapsed

It was the middle of the night when a dispatcher's 12-second warning crackled over the radio: A massive cargo ship had lost its steering capabilities and was heading toward the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

Within about 90 seconds, police officers responded that they had managed to stop vehicle traffic over the Baltimore bridge in both directions. One said he was about to drive onto the bridge to alert a construction crew.

But it was too late. Powerless and laden with huge containers, the vessel smashed into a support pillar. "The whole bridge just fell down," a frantic officer said. "Start, start whoever, everybody ... the whole bridge just collapsed."

When the shipping vessel Dali slammed into the pillar around 1:30 a.m. Tuesday, it caused a long

span of the bridge, a major link in the region's transport networks, to crumple into the Patapsco River. The loss of the bridge is expected to snarl commuter traffic and disrupt a vital shipping port.

At least eight people went into the water. Two survived but the other six, part of a construction crew that had been filling potholes on the bridge, were missing and presumed dead. (AP)



In this handout photo taken from video released by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on March 25, a Russian soldier carries a captured Ukrainian drone restored and modernized by the military at an undisclosed location in Ukraine. (AP)



Paxton



Murdaugh

America

**'Overturn convictions':** Attorneys are asking a US appeals court to throw out the hate crime convictions of three white men who used pickup trucks to chase Ahmaud Arbery through the streets of a Georgia subdivision before one of them killed the running Black man with a shotgun.

A panel of judges from the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta was scheduled to hear oral arguments Wednesday in a case that followed a national outcry over Arbery's death. The white men's lawyers argue that evidence of past racist comments they made didn't prove a racist intent to harm.

On Feb 23, 2020, father and son Greg and Travis McMichael armed themselves with guns and drove in pursuit of Arbery after spotting the 25-year-old man running in their neighborhood outside the port city of Brunswick. A neighbor, William "Roddie" Bryan, joined the chase in his own truck and recorded cellphone video of Travis McMichael shooting Arbery in the street. (AP)

**FBI says Murdaugh lied:** Convicted killer Alex Murdaugh didn't tell the truth when FBI agents repeatedly asked him where more than \$6 million he stole ended up and whether another attorney not yet identified helped him steal from clients and his law firm, federal prosecutors said in court documents Tuesday.

The prosecutors want a judge to revoke their end of a plea deal with Murdaugh on theft and other charges and order him to the maximum of well over 100 years in prison when he is sentenced in Charleston, South Carolina, on Monday.

Murdaugh, 55, is already serving a life without parole in state prison after a jury found him guilty of murder in the shootings of his wife and younger son. He pleaded guilty to stealing money from clients and his law firm in state court and was sentenced to 27 years, which South Carolina prosecutors said is an insurance policy to keep him be-

Politics

Some in GOP fear 'skeleton' campaign

Trump evokes more anger from Dems

ATLANTA, March 27, (AP): Many Americans are unenthusiastic about a November rematch of the 2020 presidential election. But presumptive GOP nominee Donald Trump appears to stoke more anger and fear among Americans from his opposing party than President Joe Biden does from his.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that Democrats are more likely to report feeling "fearful" or "angry" about the prospects of another Trump term than Republicans are about the idea of Biden remaining in the White House.

The emotional reaction Trump inspires may work in his favor too, though, since the poll also found that Republicans are more excited about the prospect of a Trump win than Democrats are about a Biden victory.

Seven in 10 Democrats say the words "angry" or "fearful" would describe their emotions "extremely well" or "very well" upon a Trump victory. A smaller majority of Republicans - 56% - say the same about a Biden triumph. About 6 in 10 Democrats cite both emotions when contemplating a Trump victory. Again, that exceeds the roughly 4 out of 10 Republicans who said they would feel both angry and scared about Biden prevailing.

Also:

**NEW YORK:** In his bid to retake the White House, few states hold as much promise for **Donald Trump** as Michigan.

The former president has already won the state once and President Joe Biden, who reclaimed it for Democrats in 2020, is confronting vulnerabilities there as he seeks reelection. Trump's campaign promises an aggressive play for Michigan as part of a robust swing-state strategy.

Dems will preserve health care, GOP would take it away, say Biden, Harris

RALEIGH, NC, March 27, (AP): US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday promoted their health care agenda in the battleground state of North Carolina, arguing that Democrats like themselves would preserve access to care while Republicans would reverse gains made over the past decade and a half.

Fourteen years after President Barack Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law, the White House still sees health care as a winning issue during a campaign in which Biden has sometimes found himself on the defensive when it comes to immigration or the economy. Republicans have opposed Biden's signature initiatives to lower medical costs, and they've seized

opportunities to restrict abortion rights after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

"It's sick. Now they want to quote, his words, terminate the ACA, as my predecessor says," Biden said, referring to Republican former President Donald Trump. "If that were ever to happen, we'd also terminate a lot of lives as well. But we're not going to let that happen, are we? We're not going to let that happen."

North Carolina was Biden's final stop on a tour of battleground states after his State of the Union address this month, which jump-started a frenzied travel schedule as the Democratic president makes his case for a second term in a likely rematch with Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee.

But, at least for now, those promises appear to be mostly talk. The Trump campaign and its partners at the Republican National Committee haven't yet made significant general election investments in the state, according to Michigan Republican Party Chairman Pete Hoekstra. The national committee, he said, hasn't transferred any money to the state party to help bolster its operations heading into the general election. There are no specific programs in place to court voters of color. And there's no general election field staff in place.

**WASHINGTON:** The case against **Donald Trump** seemed relatively straightforward in August 2022 when FBI

agents searched his Mar-a-Lago estate, with authorities citing evidence that the former president hoarded enough classified documents to fill dozens of boxes and obstructed the government's efforts to retrieve them.

But nine months after he was indicted, there are mounting doubts that the case can reach trial this year.

The Trump-appointed judge in the case has yet to set a firm trial date despite holding two hours-long hearings with lawyers this month. Multiple motions to dismiss the case are still pending, disputes over classified evidence have spanned months and a bitterly contested defense request to disclose the names of government witnesses remains unresolved.

hind bars in case his murder conviction was ever overturned. (AP)

**Texas AG reaches deal:** Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** on Tuesday agreed to

pay nearly \$300,000 in restitution under a deal to end criminal securities fraud charges that have shadowed the Republican for nearly a decade.

The announcement by special prosecu-



Britain's King Charles III, (centre), speaks during an audience in the Billiard Room at Buckingham Palace, London, on March 26 with community faith leaders from across the UK who have taken part in a Windsor Leadership Trust programme, encouraging and supporting dialogue, harmony and understanding at a time of heightened international tension. (AP)

tors in a Houston courtroom came less than three weeks before Paxton was set to stand trial on felony charges that could have led to a prison sentence. It was the closest Paxton - who was indicted in 2015 - has ever come to trial over accusations that he duped investors in a tech startup near Dallas.

Under the 18-month agreement, the special prosecutors would drop three felony counts against Paxton as long as he pays full restitution to his victims, and completes 100 hours of community service and 15 hours of legal ethics education. A former special prosecutor said the chance of a conviction was going to be "50-50." (AP)

**Ex-state senator drops bid:** One of several Republican candidates jostling for North Dakota's only US House seat has ended his campaign.

Former state Sen. Tom Campbell, a potato farmer from Grafton, announced on Tuesday he is withdrawing from the race.

"I feel it would be a better use of my time to avoid a negative campaign, ignoring any threats and focus on the positive, where I can contribute to the well-being of others," Campbell posted to Facebook. "At a time where there seems to be too much division and anger, I believe I can make more of a difference taking a different path rather than as 1 in 435 in Congress." (AP)

## Asia

## 13 elite soldier held

## Indonesia top court hears poll 'appeals'

JAKARTA, Indonesia, March 27, (AP): Indonesia's top court heard appeals lodged by two losing presidential candidates who are demanding a revote, alleging widespread irregularities and fraud at the polls in appearances before the judges Wednesday.

Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto won the election with an overwhelming margin: 58.6%, or more than 96 million votes, according to the General Election Commission - more than twice the runner-up's share in the three-way race.

But the losing candidates - Former Jakarta Gov. Anies Baswedan and former Central Java Gov. Ganjar Pranowo - argue that the election was marred by irregularities throughout the campaign. They're asking the Constitutional Court to annul the election results and order a revote, in separate lawsuits.

Both candidates presented parts of their cases in person, focusing on allegations that the court itself, as well as outgoing President **Joko Widodo**, bent laws and norms to support Subianto.

"We witness with deep concern a series of irregularities that have tarnished the integrity of our democracy," Baswedan told the court.

Dozens of protesters held a peaceful but noisy rally near the court building, declaring that they would oversee the trial. Authorities blocked streets leading to the court where about 400 police were deployed in and around the building.



Widodo

## Succeed

Indonesian presidents are expected to stay neutral in races to succeed them, but Subianto, a longtime former rival of Widodo who twice lost elections to him before joining his government, ran as his successor. He even chose Widodo's son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, as running mate, even though Raka did not meet a constitutional requirement that candidates be at least 40 years old.

Baswedan and Pranowo argue that Raka should have been disqualified, and are asking the court to bar him from a revote. Before the election, the Constitutional Court made a controversial exception to the minimum age that allowed him to run, under the leadership of then-chief justice Anwar Usman, who is Widodo's brother in law. Usman was later forced to resign as chief justice for failing to recuse himself.

Baswedan also said that regional officials were pressured or given rewards to influence political choices, and that state social assistance was used as "a transactional tool to help one of the candidates."

Hefty social aid from the government was disbursed in the middle of the campaign - far more than the amounts spent during the COVID-19 pandemic - and Widodo distributed funds in person in a number of provinces.

"If we do not make corrections, the practices that occurred recently will be considered normal and become habits, then become culture, and ultimately become national character," Baswedan said before the eight-judge panel.

On Tuesday, Subianto himself twice went to the top court to challenge the results of elections he lost to Widodo, but the court rejected his claims as groundless both times.

Baswedan had the first turn before the court in the morning, while Pranowo spoke in the afternoon.

## Habits

"If we do not make corrections, the practices that occurred yesterday will be considered normal and become habits, then become culture and ultimately become national character," Baswedan said before the eight-judge panel. "The Indonesian people are waiting with full attention, and we entrust all this to the Constitutional Court who is brave and independent to uphold justice."

The verdict, expected on April 22, cannot be appealed. It will be decided by eight justices instead of the full nine-member court because Usman is required to recuse himself.

In the past two elections, the Constitutional Court has rejected Subianto's bids to overturn Widodo's victories and dismissed his claims of widespread fraud as groundless. Subianto refused to accept the results of the 2019 presidential election, which pitted him against Widodo, leading to violence that left seven dead in Jakarta.

Widodo has reached his term limit and could not run again this year. He has faced criticism for throwing his support behind Subianto, who has links to alleged human rights abuses. Indonesian presidents are expected to remain neutral in elections to replace them.

## Also:

**JAKARTA, Indonesia:** Indonesia's military said Monday it has arrested 13 elite troops accused of involvement in a video showing the torture of an indigenous Papua man believed to be a member of a separatist group.

The video that emerged in recent days on social media shows men who appear to be soldiers kicking, beating and dunking the man in a barrel of water.

"This is a violation of the law and we will act according to the applicable laws and regulations," army spokesperson Brig. Gen. **Kristomei Sianturi** told a news conference, adding: "This is what we regret, that the Indonesian military or Indonesian army never taught, never approved any violence in asking for information." Sianturi said the incident occurred at a post for the border security task force in Puncak, a mountainous district of **Central Papua** province, on Feb. 3.

At least five men are seen in the video beating a man, taunting him with racist slurs and slicing into his back with a machete.

**BANDA ACEH, Indonesia:** Six more bodies of Rohingya refugees have been found at sea off Indonesia after a boat with more than 150 people aboard capsized last week, local authorities said Monday.

The bodies of the six women were found off the coast of Aceh province, search and rescue officials said in a statement. Five bodies were found over the weekend.

The United Nations refugee agency confirmed with survivors that the women had been on their boat, staff member **Faisal Rahman** said.

The agency has said the boat carrying Rohingya Muslims left a refugee camp in Bangladesh but capsized on Wednesday. Fishermen and search and rescue workers rescued 75 people on Thursday after they huddled overnight on the boat's overturned hull.



In this photo released by the Taiwan Presidential Office, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen inspects the commissioning of two new navy ships in the northern Taiwan port of Suao on March 26. (AP)

## Taiwan commissions 2 navy ships as safeguards against threat from China

Taiwan has commissioned two new navy ships as a safeguard against the rising threat from China, which has been ratcheting up its naval and air force missions around the island that it claims as its own territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

The pair of Tuo Chiang class corvettes completes the first order of six of the domestically produced catamarans with stealth capabilities. The ships are relatively small, capable of carrying just 41 sailors

and officers, but are fast and highly maneuverable and carry a range of missiles and deck guns aimed at countering larger Chinese vessels and rocketry.

Outgoing President Tsai Ing-wen oversaw the commissioning on Tuesday at the northern port of Suao, emphasizing her push to revitalize Taiwan's defense industries, alongside extensive arms purchases and support from key ally the United States.

Tsai has also fast-tracked the production of train-

er jets and the island's first homebuilt submarines, sometimes pushing budgets for such purchases through the legislature against resistance from representatives of the opposition Nationalist Party, which favors eventual unification with China.

Ma Ying-jeou, the last president from the Nationalists, also known as the KMT, is reportedly planning a visit to China next month that could include a meeting with Communist Party leader Xi Jinping. (AP)



Morgue workers move a body of a victim of a cult for burial in Malindi Funeral home in Kilifi, Kenya on March 26. Kenya government on Tuesday released seven bodies of victims, who died due to starvation to their families for burial. (AP)



Deng



Mackenzie

## Africa

**Schools to reopen in S.Sudan:** South Sudan's government on Tuesday said schools will reopen next week following a two-week closure due to extreme heat across the country.

The health and education ministries said temperatures were expected to steadily drop with the rainy season set to begin in the coming days.

South Sudan in recent years has experienced adverse effects of climate change, with extreme heat, flooding and drought reported during different seasons.

During the heat wave last week, the country registered temperatures up to 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit).

Teachers have been urged to minimize playground activities to early morning or indoors, ventilate classrooms, provide water during school time and monitor children for signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Health Minister **Yolanda Awel Deng** singled out Northern Bahr El-Ghazel, Warap, Unity and Upper Nile states as the most affected areas. (AP)

## Kenya handing over bodies:

Kenya's government on Tuesday began handing over to relatives the bodies of 429 members of a doomsday cult at the center of a legal case that has shocked the country.

Exhumed bodies from a vast rural area in coastal Kenya have shown signs of starvation and strangulation. Cult leader **Paul Mackenzie** is accused of asking his followers to starve themselves to death and now faces charges that include murder.

Authorities are using DNA testing to help identify bodies and their families. On Tuesday, the first bodies were handed over to relatives. Emotions ran high at the Malindi mortuary as families collected loved ones for reburial. Some wailed, overwhelmed. (AP)

## Nigeria sentenced man to death:

A Nigerian court on Tuesday sentenced a Chinese national to death after finding him guilty of killing his girlfriend, a government

## Lat/Am

## Book of kids' drawings reflect Brazil's violence

## Gangs intensify rampage in Haiti capital

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, March 27, (AP): Gangs have intensified their rampage in the downtown area of Haiti's capital, setting fire to a school and looting pharmacies across the road from the country's largest public hospital.

The attacks that began Monday and continued into early Tuesday mark nearly a month since gunmen began targeting key infrastructure across Port-au-Prince including police stations, the main international airport that remains closed and Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

"The violence and instability in Haiti have consequences far beyond the risk of the violence itself," Catherine Russell, UNICEF's executive director, said in a statement Tuesday. "The situation is creating a child health and nutrition crisis that could cost the lives of countless children."

The number of children in Haiti estimated to suffer from severe acute malnutrition has increased by 19% this year, according to UNICEF. In addition, some 1.64 million people are on the precipice of famine.

"This malnutrition crisis is entirely human made," Russell said.

## Closure

Violence has forced the closure of roads and certain hospitals and prevented aid groups from delivering critical supplies at a time they are needed the most.

Only two of five hospitals in Haiti are operational across the country, according to UNICEF. In addition, the violence in Port-au-Prince has prevented the distribution of health and nutrition supplies for at least 58,000 children who are severely wasted, the agency said.

Meanwhile, members of a regional trade bloc known as Caricom have pushed to accelerate the formation of a transitional presidential council in

hopes it could soon help quell the ongoing violence.

The council would be responsible for choosing a new prime minister and a council of ministers. Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who was locked out of Haiti when the attacks began, has said he would resign once the council is created.

However, multiple setbacks continue to delay formation of the council, which will be composed of nine members, seven of them with voting powers.

## Also:

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Dozens of kids and teenagers from Rio de Janeiro's **Mare** neighborhood gathered for the launch of a book in which they show, with their own words and pictures, how violence in their poor, bayside community weighs on their young lives.

The book, titled "I Was Supposed to be at School," features drawings and testimonies collected from youngsters aged between 5 and 17.

All too often, when Rio state's military police conduct operations and face off with local drug traffickers, class is canceled and they take shelter behind washing machines, under their beds or far from windows that a stray bullet might shatter. **Mare** is one of Rio's most populous favelas, with about 130,000 residents.

"Some policemen invade our houses. They turn things upside down, they attack, they even steal our food," according to one child's account in the book, which launched Monday.

"Sometimes police fire at children, too," another account says, going on to reference 14-year-old **Marcus Vinicius da Silva**, whose death in 2018 sparked outrage and protests. Residents say police shot him in the back as he left home for class, but the case remains unsolved and sealed by Rio police.

□ □ □

official told The Associated Press, vowing to recommend execution if he unsuccessfully appeals the ruling.

Frank Geng-Quangrong was convicted by a local court in northern Nigeria's economic hub of Kano state, Kano Justice

Commissioner Haruna Dederi said. Geng-Quangrong had pleaded guilty.

"This is a signal that whoever is coming to a society should be prepared to comply with the extant laws of that society," Dederi said.

Death sentences for capital offenses are common in Nigeria and sometimes involve foreigners. A Danish man in 2022 was sentenced to die by hanging for killing his wife and daughter. (AP)

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**4 get death in Tunisia:** A Tunisian court sentenced four people to death and two to life in prison on charges stemming from the murder of a left-wing politician, a public prosecutor said Wednesday.

Chokri Belaid, the 48-year-old leader of the Popular Front coalition, was shot in his car outside his home in Tunis in February 2013. His assassination, the country's first in decades, prompted mass protests and helped lead to the resignation of the then-prime minister.

Those criticisms and subsequent assassinations later that year set off a political crisis for Tunisia as it struggled to transition from dictatorship to democracy. (AP)

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**Journalist to face trial:** A prominent Tunisian journalist was put under pre-trial detention on a judge's order after a Tuesday hearing in which he dangled the prospect of publishing reporting on corruption and the misuse of public funds by several ministers and public institutions.

Mohamed Boughalleb's court hearing came four days after he was arrested in Tunis on suspicion of insulting a public official on social media. (AP)



Women scuffle for plates of food for their children at a shelter for families displaced by gang violence, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on March 22. Gangs have intensified their rampage in the downtown area of Haiti's capital, setting fire to a school and looting pharmacies across the road from the country's largest public hospital. (AP)







## Al-Ablani highlights bank's vision for employees' growth and leadership

# IBS honors 25 NBK employees for earning professional certifications

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: As part of their strategic partnership, the Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) honored 25 employees from National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) who participated in a number of IBS training programs, as part of the Professional Certification Programs for year 2023, with total 40 certificates obtained by the bank's employees. These programs are accredited by The London Institute of Banking and Finance, which is one of the leading international institutions in professional banking and finance studies.

The honoring was presented in the awarding ceremony held at NBK HQ 38th Floor – Ballroom on 25 March 2024, and attended by Ms. Rana AlNabari – General Director of IBS.

NBK employees received various professional certificates including: Advanced Certificate in Credit Management (ACCM), Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM), Certified Bank Relationship Manager for High-Net-Worth Customers (CBRM), and Certified Bank Wealth Manager (CBWM).

Commenting on this, Mr. Emad Al-Ablani, GM –Head of Group Human Resources at National



Group photo during the awarding ceremony held at the bank's headquarters.

Bank of Kuwait said, "NBK adopts a strategy that promotes employees' continuous development and improvement of their skills and expertise. To this end, the bank links promotions and financial incentives to academic certificates and training courses obtained by employees, to ensure continuous development for them."

"In line with our leadership in the banking sector, we regard professional certification as para-

mount in employees' career, and always motivate them to pursue continuous development of their capabilities and skills. In addition to being globally accepted tools for continuous learning and training, these certificates help boost the professional competence of banking sector employees to keep pace with global changes in this regard," he added.

"NBK holds an unwavering commitment to furnishing future

leaders with the necessary training programs and capabilities. These initiatives aim to cultivate adaptability, motivation of others, and delivering advanced and innovative services, thus solidifying the bank's leadership position among local banks," he emphasized.

Al-Ablani expressed NBK's appreciation of the significant contributions of IBS in providing these professional certificates

that enrich the banking business, as they help upskill national talent working in local banks and enhance their capabilities to ensure that they are up to date with the latest advancements in the global banking industry and qualify them to become active contributors to the economic development in Kuwait.

It is worth mentioning that IBS' initiatives align with NBK's strategy of investing in human

capital, as seen in its consistent endeavors to support, empower, train national talent and provide them with promising employment opportunities.

This reflects NBK's role as one of the top private sector employers of Kuwaitis, and keenness to deliver training programs designed according to advanced scientific methodologies, to help improve employees' performance.

## Bringing convenient banking options to customers

# Gulf Bank expands 'Ayadi' service to branches and ITMs for Eid Al-Fitr



The event gathered children and families to celebrate Girgeaan.

## Company sponsors annual Girgeaan event to bring joy to children and families

# Zain continues support to Al Kharafi Special Needs Center

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Zain continues to support the annual Girgeaan celebration (traditional candy distribution) organized by Al Kharafi Center for Special Needs Activities. The event featured fun and interactive programs that brought joy to children with special needs and their families and was attended by the center's Director Aisha Al Salem.

This step came under the Zain Alshuhoor campaign, through which the company reaches out to the entire community with a plethora of initiatives and contributions that last throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan. Zain's support to the event also comes as part of its extended strategic partnership with Al Kharafi Center for Special Needs Activities, where the company supports its events during special seasons and occasions.

The joyful event featured many entertaining segments, like on-stage traditional acts performed by the center's children, engaging competitions and interactive programs designed to nurture their creative talents, and more. At the end of the event, Zain's team joined in giving out Girgeaan candy to the children and their families, bringing joy to everyone.

Zain Alshuhoor is one of Kuwait's biggest and most successful community programs during the Holy Month. The campaign features a wide range of humanitarian, charitable, social, religious, health, and sports programs that continue throughout Ramadan. Every year, the company introduces a bigger, renewed version of the campaign that expands upon the previous year's initiatives and programs.

Al Kharafi Center for Special Needs Activities aims to offer a specialized, safe, engaging, and entertaining environment for all children with special needs. The center offers children and their families a wide range of services, including rehabilitation, entertainment, training, awareness, and more.



Aisha Al Salem honors Zain's team.

## In line with its commitment to Diraya campaign

# KFH warns against donations to unknown entities

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) advises customers to exercise caution when donating or making financial contributions through websites on certain occasions.

In a press release, KFH highlighted how fraudsters exploit specific events. They do this by sending phishing emails that request donations through bank transfers or payments on fake websites. Their goal is to steal money from unsuspecting victims.

KFH warned about the dangers of new phishing scams that have recently emerged. The bank advised customers to verify the website's safety, legitimacy, and authenticity before making any donations.

As part of its ongoing support for Diraya campaign to promote banking awareness, in collaboration with



Diraya logo

the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association, KFH explained that scammers are employing new methods of fraud.

The rise of digital payments and the growing reliance on smartphones and the internet have created new

avenues for fraudsters. They exploit this by targeting the millions of customers who conduct their transactions and daily business online. These fraudsters attempt to trick users into revealing sensitive account information, ultimately aiming to steal their money.

Fraudsters can leverage advanced AI and vast datasets to analyze online purchases and identify patterns that suggest potential victims with vulnerable accounts.

KFH added that fraudsters can target anyone, regardless of age or social status. They employ various tactics, including enticing but fake offers, seemingly urgent bank warnings about account problems, suspicious friend requests online, or pleas for help over the phone.

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Gulf Bank is spreading the joy of Eid Al-Fitr with its customers and the public, by extending its "Ayadi" service to most of its branches and ITMs across Kuwait.

The "Ayadi" service is now available at most of Gulf Bank branches, totaling over 50 in number. Additionally, interactive Teller Machines (ITMs), are available at various locations including Crystal Tower, Al-Adan, Al-Salam (South Surra), Fahheel (Xcite Mall), Hawally, Kuwait International Airport (TI), Mishref, Al-Fanar Mall, Al-Kh-iran Mall, and Sabah Al-Ahmad branch.

The bank offers its Private and Priority banking clients the chance to schedule cash deliveries through the concierge service. They can do so by dialing 22969955, specifying their preferred denominations, and arranging the delivery time.

The "Ayadi" service provides customers with fresh banknotes in denominations of KD20, KD10, KD5, and KD1, addressing the increased demand for new banknotes during the Eid Al Fitr celebrations.

Additionally, Gulf Bank offers its customers the Pay Link service via its mobile application featuring easy and simple steps.

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



Gulf Bank Eid Fitr flyer

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.

# ABK announces Duaa Mohammad Ibrahim as Alfouz KD 100,000 quarterly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Duaa Mohammad Ibrahim as the winner of Alfouz KD 100,000 quarterly draw on Monday 25 March 2024. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the Alfouz account has already attracted the attention of the Kuwaiti market. Based on the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

By introducing a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000 monthly draw, the Alfouz offering has continued to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.

To top it off, ABK has simplified the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10 deposited as opposed to KD 100 previously. The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming weekly draw, which is scheduled to take place on 1 April 2024.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for!

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow the ABK's Instagram account @ abk\_kuwait, visit eahl.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.



Alfouz Quarterly Winner flyer.

# NBC News cuts ties with Ronna McDaniel amid internal uproar

NEW YORK, March 27, (AP) — NBC News cut ties Tuesday with former Republican National Committee chief Ronna McDaniel less than a week after hiring her as an on-air political contributor, a decision that followed a furious protest by some of its journalists and commentators.

In announcing the decision in a memo, NBC Universal News Group Chairman Cesar Conde apologized to staff members who felt let down by the hire, acknowledging he had signed off on it.

"No organization, particularly a newsroom, can succeed unless it is cohesive and aligned. Over the last few days, it has become clear that this appointment undermines that goal," Conde said. But he said the network remained committed to centering "voices that represent different parts of the political spectrum."

There was no immediate comment from McDaniel, who stepped down as RNC leader just over two weeks ago. She found out she lost her job through media reports, not from NBC directly, said a person close to her who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about it publicly.

NBC announced Friday that McDaniel would contribute commentary across network platforms. It said it wanted the perspective of someone with inside knowledge about the Republican Party and former President Donald Trump heading into the 2024 election, in which Trump is seeking a second term.

The response from journalists and others within the network was swift - and public. Former "Meet the Press" moderator Chuck Todd criticized his bosses on the air Sunday for the hire, saying he didn't

know what to believe from her after she supported former President Donald Trump in "gaslighting" and "character assassination" following the 2020 election.

An extraordinary succession of MSNBC hosts - Joe Scarborough, Rachel Maddow, Joy Reid, Nicolle Wallace, Jen Psaki and Lawrence O'Donnell - all publicly protested the decision to hire McDaniel on their shows Monday.

Republicans countered that the protest indicates that people at NBC News, particularly at MSNBC, were unwilling to countenance opposing viewpoints. The hiring, and quick firing, represents one of those rare instances likely to unite the left and right - in anger.

### Censors

"NBC caving in to the censors," Elon Musk, owner of X, formerly Twitter, posted on his platform.

On his Truth Social site, Trump said, "These Radical Left Lunatics are CRAZY, and the top people at NBC ARE WEAK."

Those who protested her hiring claimed that it wasn't because McDaniel is a Republican, but it was because she helped promote Trump's lies about the 2020 presidential election and assisted in efforts to overturn the results.

Efforts by news organizations to hire former politicians is hardly new. NBC News hired Psaki directly from her job as press secretary to President Joe Biden, and another former Republican National Committee chairman, Michael Steele, hosts a weekend show on MSNBC.

But there are concerns that the McDaniel episode may make it difficult for networks to find voices this year that can provide insight into Trump and his campaign. Former Trump chief of staff Reince Priebus is an ABC News contributor and Alyssa Farah Griffin, a former White House communications director during the Trump administration, is a CNN commentator.

Conde said that NBC News remains committed to the principle that there must be diverse voices on the network. "And to that end, we will redouble our efforts to seek voices that represent different parts of the political spectrum."

McDaniel's tenure at NBC may have lasted less than a week, but a mess surrounding it could last much longer. She was dropped Tuesday by Creative Artists Agency, who she hired to negotiate her TV deal, and has been consulting with lawyers since learning that deal had ended.

The succession of MSNBC stars who denounced McDaniel and the hiring reached its apogee during the weekly show by Maddow, the network's most popular personality. She spent nearly half an hour on the issue, drawing a comparison between crackpot efforts by authoritarians to gain power in the US, and the GOP backing of Trump under McDaniel's leadership. She called her hiring by NBC News "inexplicable," comparing it to a mobster being given a position in a district attorney's office.

Maddow appeared Tuesday on Reid's show. Reid said she was grateful for the decision to oust McDaniel, and Maddow echoed that.

Media

### Variety



This image released by Apple TV+ shows Steve Martin in a scene from the documentary 'Steve! (Martin) a Documentary in 2 Pieces.' (AP)

### Film

Martin reflects on past and present in new documentary

## Discover the multi-faceted 'Steve'

By Lindsey Bahr

Steve Martin has never been one to follow any sort of playbook. It is fitting the first official documentary about his life is similarly unconventional: A free-wheeling story told in two parts, one part focused on "Then" and one part focused on "Now" (kind of) with both parts debuting on Apple TV+ on Friday. Both documentarian and subject are trying, the best they can, to make sense of whatever "Steve Martin" is.

Directed by self-proclaimed superfan Morgan Neville (the Oscar-winner who has told the story of Fred Rogers and Anthony Bourdain), "STEVE! (martin)" never commits to one form. Like its subject, it allows itself to be a little looser, utilizing every technique available to help paint a truer picture of Martin, a man so enigmatic that his close friends don't even seem to have a handle on him. He'd hardly be the first performer to save it all for the stage: Martin says that it was somewhat comforting to be able to put on a persona during shows. He was also able to continually reinvent himself. Who else could have walked away from stand-up just as they'd reached rock star status?

And so the medium becomes a kitchen sink: There is stock footage, animation, reenactment, home videos, movie clips, stand-up segments, talk show appearances, new interviews with famous friends (Martin and Jerry Seinfeld in conversation, for example), scripted voiceover and some fly-on-the-wall footage of him just spending time with Martin (Marty) Short bike riding, walking through town, playing cards and workshoping jokes for their show. It's probably the only way to capture an artist who has taken the hypenate to absurd levels: Magician/balloon artist/novelist/banjo player/screenwriter/essayist/art collector/joke teller/cartoonist/movie star/father/husband/friend. What am I missing?

For anyone who's read Martin's memoir "Born Standing Up," "Then" might not be especially revelatory, but it's all context and it remains interesting to hear Martin reflect candidly on a moment that now feels "like a blip." While he might not have had a plan, he did possess a keen sense of when he'd hit a dead end, whether that be in magic, stand-up or even movies.

His life in movies is saved for "Now," and you see someone still struggling with the agony of never really knowing if a thing would work. Everyone misses once in a while, but Martin had a brutal back-to-back of a wild success in "The Jerk" followed by an epic flop in "Pennies From Heaven" and that was just the start of his rollercoaster in Hollywood. He's kind of moved on from that (and "Mixed Nuts") but also kind of not. He said he had to do 40 movies to get five good ones. He's being a little sarcastic, but hopefully he knows that a lot of people out there love far more than a measly five Steve Martin movies.

It is especially fascinating to get a glimpse into his complex relationship with critics and how he found an outlet in writing both fiction and non-fiction. Personally, I wish even more time had been spent on the movies and his writings, like "Shoggirl." Everyone is bound to have a favorite that this doesn't cover enough.

### Biography

If you want to keep Steve Martin in your mind as that wild and crazy guy, or George Banks or Navin or Lucky Day (the list could go on), and don't care about his relationship with his father, his decision to become a father late in life, reflections on his art collection, the memorabilia he kept over the years and the things he didn't do that he wishes he did, these films might not be for you. There are no rules to being a fan. For some, biography can mean everything. For others, it matters little when there's so much joy to be had without it.

Martin, who has been both an open book in some ways and also guarded in others, is really quite vulnerable here - especially in "Now." Neville captures him looking at the script for "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" and reflecting on his late friend and co-star John Candy. There was a great monologue, he said, in which Candy's Del Griffith tells the story of his life. Martin recalled bawling off camera as Candy delivered it. And yet for whatever reason, it was chopped down to a line or two. He reads a bit of it and starts to cry.

There's more, but if that sounds intriguing, you should really just watch it. Neville has said it doesn't matter which order. And what does it add up to? On

a certain level he's still an enigma. It's hard for mere mortals to comprehend a half century of otherworldly fame, but it's also just nice to watch a familiar face reflect on how he has, at 78, finally found happiness. Besides, Steve Martin's story is not even remotely finished. These are just two parts.

"STEVE! (martin) a documentary in 2 parts," an Apple TV+ release streaming on Friday, is rated TV-MA. "Then" is 98 minutes. "Now" is 95 minutes. Together, they add up to three stars out of four.

### Also:

**NEW YORK:** The Golden Globes and CBS have reached a five-year deal to broadcast the annual award show and stream it live on Paramount+, it was announced Monday.

The new agreement, which begins with January's telecast, gives the Globes a new broadcast home following years of turmoil. The Globes had long resided at NBC before scandal enveloped the organization behind the awards, leading NBC to give them up.

CBS stepped in to air the 81st Golden Globes in January, and was rewarded with a ratings boost. The telecast pulled in an average of 9.4 million viewers, up about 50% from 2023, when NBC moved the Globes to a Tuesday.

"CBS' collaboration with the Globes for this year's broadcast was a big win for both of us and established strong momentum for awards shows in 2024," said **George Cheeks**, president and chief executive of CBS, in a statement. "The Globes is a one-of-a-kind live event that adds another marquee special and valuable promotional platform to CBS' annual calendar."

Though host Jo Koy drew bad reviews, a ceremony that featured Hollywood stars as well as Taylor Swift helped stabilize a Golden Globes that for a time was teetering on the brink. After The Los Angeles Times reported that the Hollywood Foreign Press Association had no Black members, Hollywood boycotted the organization and the 2022 Globes were booted off the air.

The HFPA has since been dissolved. The Globes were acquired by Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions, which Penske Media owns, and turned into a for-profit venture. (AP)

**LONDON:** Bruce Springsteen is the first international songwriter to be named a fellow of The Ivors Academy, the UK's professional association of music creators.

The American icon was announced as the next recipient of the 80-year old Academy's highest honor Tuesday, in recognition of the impact his career has had on the cultural landscape of the UK.

Over the last half century, the "Born to Run" musician has sold more than 140 million records worldwide - from his 1973 debut "Greetings from Asbury Park, NJ" to his most recent studio album "Only the Strong Survive" in 2022 - with a liberal dusting of top honors along the way, including 20 Grammys, an Oscar and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Springsteen, 74, said he was proud of the honor in a statement released by the academy. "In addition to recognising my songwriting, the award stands as a tribute to the fans and friends who have supported me and my work for the last fifty years. This entire country has made me feel welcome every step of the way, and for this, I will always remain deeply appreciative."

The news comes a week after Springsteen's triumphant return to the stage with the E Street Band in Phoenix for a nearly three-hour set.

Springsteen announced in September he was pausing his tour, citing doctor's advice as he recovered from peptic ulcer disease. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Following the success of "Wonka" and the "Dune" movies, Warner Bros. is staying in the **Timothée Chalamet** business. The star signed a first look deal with the studio to collaborate on future projects as an actor and producer, Warner Bros. said Tuesday.

This doesn't mean that Chalamet can only make movies with Warner Bros., just that the studio is entitled to right of first refusal. The terms of the deal were not released, but it is a "multi-year" agreement.

Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group co-chairs and CEO's **Mike De Luca** and **Pam Abdy** said in a statement that they've admired his "commitment to his craft" and his "unwavering dedication to give

100% of his time and attention to every project he has made."

Chalamet, in a statement, said of De Luca and Abdy: "These are studio heads who believe in real movie making, and I'm so grateful for their support as an actor, producer and collaborator. This partnership feels like a natural next step. Let's go!"



Chalamet



Springsteen

The 28-year-old recently became the first star in over four decades to be in two top-grossing films released within eight months of each other with "Dune: Part Two," which has a running box office total of \$575.5 million, and "Wonka," which made over \$632 million globally. The previous record-holder was **John Travolta**

with "Grease" and "Saturday Night Fever." (AP)

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The art of Shadow Puppetry, or Wayang Kulit as it is locally known in Malaysia, is a form of storytelling that was once quite popular with the local community as they used to gather

around and watch epic narratives unfold right before their eyes.

The UNESCO listed Wayang Kulit as a puppet show relying on the play of light and shadow, presenting to its audience ancient Indian legends interlaid with relevant messages and accompanied by traditional orchestra music known as Gamelan. (AP)

# Features

ARABIC TIMES

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 2024



The Conversation

Mathematics meets artificial intelligence to unravel chaos

AI can help engineers predict critical failure via pattern absence

By John Edward McCarthy

Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis

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

Humans are very good at spotting patterns, or repeating features people can recognize. For instance, ancient Polynesians navigated across the Pacific by recognizing many patterns, from the stars' constellations to more subtle ones such as the directions and sizes of ocean swells.



McCarthy

Very recently, mathematicians like me have started to study large collections of objects that have no patterns of a particular sort. How large can collections be before a specified pattern has to appear somewhere in the collection? Understanding such scenarios can have significant real-world implications: For example, what's the smallest number of server failures that would lead to the severing of the internet?

Research from mathematician Jordan Ellenberg at the University of Wisconsin and researchers at Google's Deep Mind have proposed a novel approach to this problem. Their work uses artificial intelligence to find large collections that don't contain a specified pattern, which can help us understand some worst-case scenarios.

Collections

The idea of patternless collections can be illustrated by a popular card game called Set. In this game, players lay out 12 cards, face up. Each card has a different simple picture on it. They vary in terms of number, color, shape and shading. Each of these four features can have one of three values.

Players race to look for "sets," which are groups of three cards in which every feature is either the same or different in each card. For instance, cards with one solid red diamond, two solid green diamonds and three solid purple diamonds form a set: All three have different numbers (one, two, three), the same shading (solid), different colors (red, green, purple) and the same shape (diamond).

Finding a set is usually possible - but not always. If none of the players can find a set from the 12 cards on the table, then they flip over three more cards. But they still might not be able to find a set in these 15 cards. The players continue to flip over cards, three at a time, until someone spots a set.

So what is the maximum number of cards you can lay out without forming a set?

In 1971, mathematician Giuseppe Pellegrino showed that the largest collection of cards without a set is 20. But if you chose 20 cards at random, "no set" would happen only about one in a trillion

times. And finding these "no set" collections is an extremely hard problem to solve.

If you wanted to find the smallest collection of cards with no set, you could in principle do an exhaustive search of every possible collection of cards chosen from the deck of 81 cards. But there are an enormous number of possibilities - on the order of 1024 (that's a "1" followed by 24 zeros). And if you increase the number of features of the cards from four to, say, eight, the complexity of the problem would overwhelm any computer doing an exhaustive search for "no set" collections.

Programs

Mathematicians love to think about computationally difficult problems like this. These complex problems, if approached in the right way, can become tractable.

It's easier to find best-case scenarios - here, that would mean the fewest number of cards that could contain a set. But there were few known strategies that could explore bad scenarios - here, that would mean a large collection of cards that do not contain a set.

Ellenberg and his collaborators approached the bad scenario with a type of AI called large language models, or LLMs. The researchers first wrote computer programs that generate some examples of collections of many that contain no set. These collections typically have "cards" with more than four features.

Then they fed these programs to the LLM, which soon learned how to write many similar programs and choose the ones that give rise to the largest set-free collections to undergo the process again. Iterating that process by repeatedly tweaking the most successful programs enables them to find larger and larger set-free collections.

This method allows people to explore disordered collections - in this instance, collections of cards that contain no set - in an entirely new way. It does not guarantee that researchers will find the absolute worst-case scenario, but they will find scenarios that are much worse than a random generation would yield.

Their work can help researchers understand how events might align in a way that leads to catastrophic failure.

For example, how vulnerable is the electrical grid to a malicious attacker who destroys select substations? Suppose that a bad collection of substations is one where they don't form a connected grid. The worst-case scenario is now a very large number of substations that, when taken all together, still don't yield a connected grid. The amount of substations excluded from this collection make up the smallest number a malicious actor needs to destroy to deliberately disconnect the grid.

The work of Ellenberg and his collaborators demonstrates yet another way that AI is a very powerful tool. But to solve very complex problems, at least for now, it still needs human ingenuity to guide it. (AP)



A group photo from the event.



Some photos from the event.



KCICAI hosts exclusive Iftar and CPE event

KCICAI event delves into AI's role in professions and digital transformation's effect on humanity

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The Kuwait Chapter of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (KCICAI) hosted a thought-provoking Continuing Professional Education (CPE) and Iftar event centred around two paramount topics: "Impact of AI on our Profession" and "Digital Transformation and its Effect on Humanity." The event, graced by distinguished speakers, Heshana Kruppu, President of South Asia Federation of Accountants (SAFA) and President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, and Mr. Dheeraj Bhardwaj, CEO of City Group, garnered insightful discussions and reflections.

CA Rabin Gonsalves, the esteemed Chairperson of KCICAI, officially welcomed the audience, providing insights into the chapter's recent activities and upcoming initiatives. Emphasizing the crucial role of professionals in embracing technology and driving innovation, Gonsalves set the tone for an enlightening evening. CA Sweta Chipra and CA Venkata Ramana, executive committee members of KCICAI, co-hosted the event, ensuring its smooth flow and engaging atmosphere.

The event commenced with Mr. Heshana Kruppu's compelling discourse on "The Impact of AI on Our Profession," captivating attendees with profound insights into the evolving landscape of the accounting profession in the era of AI. Kruppu emphasized the importance of embracing AI as a tool for transformation, stating, "People do not lose jobs to AI, but they lose jobs to people who know AI." His presentation illuminated how AI is revolutionizing traditional practices and driving efficiencies, urging professionals to evolve into value enablers in decision-making processes.

Following Kruppu's engaging presentation, Mr. Dheeraj Bhardwaj took the stage to address "Digital Transformation and Its Effect on Humanity." Drawing from his extensive experience in leading technological advancements within City Group, Bhardwaj provided invaluable insights into the broader societal implications of digital transformation. He explored the ethical considerations, challenges, and opportunities arising from the rapid pace of technological change, urging attendees to prioritize a human-centric approach to digi-

tal innovation.

The event provided attendees with a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection between AI, digital transformation, and professional domains. Through thought-provoking discussions and expert perspectives, participants were encouraged to reflect on the evolving landscape and strategize for the future.

"We are delighted to have hosted such an enlightening event that brought together professionals from diverse backgrounds to explore the transformative power of AI and digital technologies," remarked CA Surin Gandhi while presenting the vote of thanks.

As industries evolve and technology reshapes the landscape of professions worldwide, it is imperative for professionals to stay abreast of these changes. KCICAI recognizes this need and remains committed to fostering knowledge-sharing and collaboration within the community. The chapter looks forward to organizing more impactful events in the future.

For more information about KCICAI and upcoming events, please visit [icaikw.org](http://icaikw.org).

KFSH&RC scientists uncover novel bacterial strain

New bacteria species to help combat 'super bugs'

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, March 27: In a ground-breaking development, scientists at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSH&RC) have identified a new species of bacteria, referred to as "Stenotrophomonas Riyadhensis" through the application of whole-genome sequencing (WGS) technology. This discovery signifies a major advancement in understanding how bacteria interact with existing drugs, paving the way for innovative therapeutic strategies. Such efforts are essential in the global fight against antibiotic-resistant bacteria, highlighting KFSH&RC's advanced research capabilities and its leading role in fostering

scientific discoveries and enhancing patient care.

The discovery of "Riyadhensis" reinforces the potential of genomic tests in innovating promising diagnostic and therapeutic methods, as well as deepening the understanding of bacterial resistance mechanisms, particularly in sensitive environments like intensive care units (ICU) and among patients with compromised immune systems. This represents substantial progress in combating antibiotic resistance, developing pharmaceuticals, and preventing the spread of diseases.

This newly identified bacteria was discovered amid an in-depth investigation into a suspected outbreak in

the ICU of KFSH&RC in 2019, highlighting challenges previously unrecognized by the global scientific and medical communities in pinpointing and countering new bacterial strains. Initially thought to be a variant of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, a disease-causing bacterium known for its resistance to antibiotics, subsequent WGS analysis revealed it did not share the common characteristics of the *Pseudomonas* genus. Instead, Riyadhensis was found to belong to the *Stenotrophomonas* family, with a unique genetic composition and morphological traits, unlike any other scientifically recognized members.

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## Dr. Al Mahawish commends success of event

## 171 team wins Kuwait Airways Workers Union Futsal Tournament



Team 171 champion of the futsal tournament.

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: The sixteenth Ramadan session of the Kuwait Airways Workers Union and its affiliated subsidiaries concluded yesterday evening with an exhilarating final match in the futsal five-a-side tournament for the year 2024. In a showdown between the 171 team and the Shuaib Ali Shaaban team at the Martyr Fahd Al-Ahmad Hall in Daiya, the 171 team emerged victorious with a commanding 5-1 win. The event was graced by the presence of leaders from Kuwait Airways, Kuwait Aviation Services Company (KASCO), and the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Airways Workers Union and its subsidiaries, led by Dr. Ahmed Falah Al Mahawish.

## FUTSAL

Mahdi Yahya was honored with the prestigious title of the best player of the tournament, while goalkeeper Muhammad Rayhan secured the accolade for the best goalkeeper. The closing ceremony featured the distribution of various awards to the enthusiastic fans who attended the final match. Dr. Ahmed Falah Al-Mahawish expressed his delight and pride in the remarkable success achieved during the sixteenth Ramadan session of the Kuwaiti Syndicate.

He stated, "Thanks to the grace of God, the tournament has surpassed all expectations and has significantly enriched the sporting landscape of our beloved Kuwait."

## Kuwait Club 'defeat' Kazma in the West Asian Championship

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: In the first encounter of the semi-finals in the West Asian Basketball League Championship for the Gulf region, Kuwait Club emerged victorious over Kazma with a score of 101-87. Meanwhile, Manama from Bahrain secured a win over its compatriot Muharraq with a score of 86-78 in the other semi-final match.

This stage follows a playoff format of three matches, with the team winning two matches advancing to the final. Kuwait's basketball team has secured a spot for its representative in the Asian finals, which will feature teams from the Levant region, Iran, and Central Asia. This is guaranteed regardless of the outcome of the Kazma-Kuwait Club matches in the Gulf region final, as both teams in the final will qualify for the continental finals.

## BASKETBALL

The match was marked by intense rivalry from the onset, with both teams exchanging scores as they sought to establish early dominance. Kazma gradually gained the upper hand through the exceptional performances of players like Abdulaziz Al-Hamidi, Ahmed Al-Balushi, and the American players Williams and Chapman, ending the first quarter with a 31-27 lead.



Kuwait Club players control the ball as Kazma player defends.

Kuwait Club swiftly regained momentum in the second quarter, albeit with difficulty, ending it with a narrow 51-50 advantage.

The third quarter mirrored its predecessors, with both teams displaying a high level of play amidst a slight decline in performance due to the intense efforts exerted. Leads were exchanged before Kuwait Club managed to pull ahead by the end of the quarter, leading 76-71.

In the final quarter, Kuwait Club, known as Al-Abyad, asserted its dominance as its opponent's performance waned, especially after the injury of Kazma's player Abdulaziz Al-Hamidi. The match concluded with Kuwait Club securing a 14-point victory.

## France beatable, hosts Germany resurgent, Italy seek redemption

The state of play ahead of Euro 2024

LONDON, March 27, (AP): The 24-team lineup for the European Championship is complete after Poland, Ukraine and Georgia became the final teams to qualify for the tournament in Germany.

France will likely go into the tournament as the favorite, given its status as the leading European team in the FIFA ranking - at No. 2 - and having been the champion or runner-up at three of its last four major international tournaments. Fronted by Kylian Mbappé, the French squad remains deep and will be motivated by its loss in the World Cup final in Qatar. Similarly, No. 3-ranked England has regrets after losing the title match against Italy at the last Euros in 2021 and has its strongest pool of players for 20 years, with Jude Bellingham now a star at Real Madrid. Over the recent international break, France lost soundly to Germany and England was defeated by Brazil, underlining their vulnerability and showing that perhaps there's no overwhelming favorite at the Euros. Belgium has lost some of its luster and will be concerned by the absence of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and the persistent injury issues of Kevin De Bruyne. Portugal, meanwhile, has so much talent in his squad and was the only team to qualify with a flawless record, albeit from a weak group. At 39, can Cristiano Ronaldo win the Euros for a second time?

## SOCCER

Never write off Germany. After a miserable 2023 ended with friendly losses to Turkey and Austria, the Euro 2024 host kicked off this year by beating France and the Netherlands over the last week. Former Bayern Munich coach Julian Nagelsmann seems to have Germany ticking again with help from Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos, who was back in the German lineup for the first time since the last Euros in 2021. Bayer Leverkusen's 20-year-old attacking midfielder Florian Wirtz set a record with his goal just seven seconds into the win over France. Germany will have something to prove as host. Group-stage exits at the last two World Cups and a round-of-16 loss to England at the last Euros mean Germany has won just three of its last 10 games at major tournaments. Facing Scotland, Hungary and Switzerland in the group stage at Euro 2024 seems a relatively kind draw.

There is a familiar feel to Italy seeking redemption after failing to qualify for the previous World Cup. However, the defending European champion has faced more upheaval over the past year with coach Roberto Mancini quitting and key player Sandro Tonali banned for gambling. While there is no doubting new coach Luciano Spalletti's credentials after he led Napoli to its first league title in more than three decades last season, there are some question marks about the talent he has at his disposal. There have been positive signs as Spalletti appears to have Italy playing the type of entertaining soccer he delivered at Napoli, but the Azzurri still have problems in attack. Lazio forward Ciro Immobile was dropped by Spalletti after struggling with form, as was Atalanta's Gianluca Scamacca.

## Al-Qadisiya hand Kuwait Club first loss in the league

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 27: Al-Qadisiya's made a decisive statement in the summit clash of the sixth round of the handball league at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex hall, by defeating the defending champion, Kuwait Club 32-30. This victory marked the first loss for "Al-Abyad" in the league so far.

## HANDBALL

The "Yellow" team displayed a robust performance with the majority of players shining, while their Macedonian coach, Zoran Katsratovic, played a pivotal role in thwarting the opponent's strategies and securing two crucial points in the match.

Following the conclusion of the

sixth round, the league standings are as follows: Al-Salmiya leads alone with 12 points, followed by



Al-Qadisiya player makes a goal attempt as Kuwait Club players tries to block the shot.

Kazma with 10 points, and Al-Kuwait and Al-Arabi each with eight points. Al-Fahaheel follows closely with six points, while Al-Sulaibkhat, Al-Qurain, Burgan, Al-Nasr, and Al-Qadisiya all have five points. Al-Yarmouk stands at three points, with Khaitan trailing behind with two points. Al-Sahel and Al-Tadamon are currently at the bottom of the standings without any points.

The seventh round of the handball league kicks off today, Thursday, and will continue until next Sunday. Yarmouk will face Al-Qurain at 8:30 pm, followed by Al-Salmiya's match against Al-Nasr at 10 pm.

It's worth noting that at the conclusion of the General League, the top six teams will qualify to compete in the Premier League, while the remaining teams will participate in the First Division League.

Napoli call ruling 'astonishing'

## Acerbi won't be penalized for alleged racial abuse of Jesus

MILAN, March 27. (AP): Inter Milan defender Francesco Acerbi will not face sanctions for allegedly racially abusing Napoli's Juan Jesus in a Serie A match because there wasn't enough proof.

The alleged incident on March 17 was revealed when Juan Jesus told the referee Acerbi directed a racial slur at him.

Acerbi has repeatedly denied he used the offensive word.

The Italian soccer federation prosecutor questioned the players and witnesses last week. He reported to the Italian league sporting judge, who also studied images from the match, as well as audio from the referee and VAR, before announcing the decision.

Gerardo Mauro said in a lengthy statement that while it was clear Acerbi insulted Juan Jesus, the "minimum level of reasonable certainty" had not been reached that it was of a racial nature.

## SOCCER

Napoli called Tuesday's decision "astonishing."

"Napoli will no longer take part in anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives run by football institutions that are merely symbolic, but we will continue to organize them ourselves, as we have always done, with renewed conviction and determination," the club said in a statement.

The club wrote "I'm with JJ" on its statement and on X posted a photo of a raised fist - which Juan Jesus also added to his Instagram account.

If Acerbi was found guilty, he would have faced a minimum 10-match ban that would have ruled the Italy international out of the rest of the season and most likely the European Championship.

Acerbi was part of the Italy squad that won Euro 2020 although he didn't play in the quarterfinal, semifinal or final.



In this file photo, Inter Milan's Nicolo Barella jumps for the ball with Napoli's Juan Jesus, right, during the Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Napoli at the San Siro Stadium, in Milan, Italy. (AP)

Juan Jesus, a 32-year-old Black Brazilian, was visibly upset when he walked up to the referee during the second half at San Siro and was also pointing at his shirt sleeve which had a "Keep Racism Out" badge - as part of the league's anti-racism campaign.

Juan Jesus said after the match that Acerbi apologized and seemed to wish to put the matter behind him, adding, "What happens on the field, stays on the field ... he is a good guy."

Acerbi was sent home from the Italy training camp the next day - ahead of friendlies against Venezuela and Ecuador - although coach Luciano Spalletti and the players apparently agreed "there was no defamatory, denigrating or racist intent on his part."

Acerbi then told reporters he had been misunderstood, prompting Juan Jesus to issue a statement on Instagram about the "despicable matter" and revealing what he alleged the Inter defender said to him.



Germany's Pascal Gross (2nd right), leaps up for a header during the international friendly soccer match between Germany and Netherlands at the Deutsche Bank Park in Frankfurt, Germany. (AP)

