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Saudi Crown Prince congratulates Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah

Kuwait Amir receives appointed PM, premier, ministers

Opinion

Sheikh Mohammad, bring our dreams closer

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

THE Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran, "And continue to remind, for surely the reminder benefits the believers."

Your Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem, the reminder here is regarding the economy, and how it is still about 93 percent dependent on oil and the profits of the foreign investments.

No serious attempts have been made to diversify the sources of income, done by the other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which have made great strides in this regard. On the other hand, Kuwait is still on the "land of the deceased."

There is no doubt that the global financial crisis in 2008 had negative consequences on all economies, including Kuwait.

Likewise, the Lebanese crisis and what we lost in its banks in 2019 represent a warning bell of what could happen in foreign strategic investments.

Also, the fluctuations in oil prices, and the search for alternatives to oil, make relying on it highly risky.

Therefore, investing in local assets, working to diversify sources of income, attracting investments, encouraging non-local ones, and entering into local and foreign partnerships have become a necessity.

It goes without saying that the closure of the country for nearly 20 years due to the improvised decisions and laws based on fanaticism and backwardness made it more like an isolated state. For this reason, we must get rid of the complex that those who come to us are covetous in us.

Your Highness the Prime Minister, as one of the distinguished economic experts of Kuwait, the economy must be your top priority. The country, as everyone knows, lacks productive projects, both in the industrial sector and services. Just as the infrastructure has become backward and must be developed, so does food security.

The state is under great financial pressure and facing an annual deficit as a result of systematic wastage due to absurd subsidies for goods and services, and the poor use of overseas medical treatments, which in the past three decades have turned into a political trade, while the local health infrastructure remains underdeveloped.

If the government worked to properly redirect the billions that are wasted on subsidies, allocate ten percent of them to increase the salaries of low-income and needy people, and direct the remaining amounts to encourage manufacturing of all kinds, improve infrastructure, and lift subsidies on goods, the annual financial deficit would be transformed into savings.

Here it must be said that those who say "it should not touch the citizens' pocket" are the ones who actually benefit from subsidizing goods. Everyone knows where the large quantities of these subsidized goods go. It is either for smuggling abroad or for storage in order to increase their prices. This is an issue that must be addressed.

There is a proverb that says - "You reap what you sow." You might lose the money that you don't invest but instead you just keep it without benefiting from it. So why not use the wealth that suffers from great risks abroad to develop Kuwait? Open the country to everyone, and build service and entertainment facilities so that half a million Kuwaitis and residents are not forced to flee abroad every vacation. Last year alone, Kuwaitis' spending on travel and tourism amounted to about USD 15 billion. Isn't Kuwait more worthy of that?

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'Ripple effect'

Jordan's king warns of Gaza violence spillover

AMMAN, Jan 7, (Agencies): Jordan's King Abdullah II has warned of a ripple effect the ongoing violence in the Gaza Strip could trigger, his royal office said on Sunday, citing the dire need of preventing a "humanitarian catastrophe" from unfolding there.

During talks with visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the Jordanian monarch pressed Washington to ramp up pressure aiming to put in place a ceasefire in Gaza, subsequently allowing the delivery of humanitarian aid, according to a statement by his office.

Deploping Israel's "persistent atrocities" committed against the Palestinian people, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi told his US counterpart that such acts could possibly push the wider region to the precipice of destruction.

On his fourth visit to the region in three months, Blinken stressed the need for Israel to adjust its military operations to reduce civilian casualties and significantly boost the amount of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza while highlighting the importance of preparing detailed plans for the post-conflict future of the territory, which has been decimated by intensive Israeli airstrikes and ground offensives.

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Kuwait weighs decision on visit, family visas issuance

Call to amend recruitment pricing for domestic workers

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Representatives of the concerned government agencies confirmed in the previous meetings of parliamentary committees that, in principle, there is no objection to lifting the ban on the issuance of visit and family visas, provided the humanitarian and economic aspects are taken into consideration, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting parliamentary sources.

Sources pointed out that the previous experiences entail the necessity of imposing

certain restrictions and regulations in the interest of the public. Sources said all these are stipulated in the government's proposed amendment of the Foreigners Residency Law, which has been included in the agenda of the upcoming legislative session.

Sources added: "Political developments may have contributed to the delay in approving this important bill. The parliamentary Interior and Defense Affairs Committee has completed a balanced report that achieves common objectives and sets controls for the Ministry of Interior to move forward in opening family, tourist and commercial visit visas."

Sources went on to say that the bill states there will be no changes in the fees of the issuance and renewal of all types of visas; clarifying the bill does not specify these fees, but it

authorizes the Minister of Interior to issue decisions to amend them.

Sources pointed out that imposing compulsory health insurance on visitors would also contribute to expediting the lifting of visa restrictions, affirming this insurance would generate good revenues for the State, reduce the burden on government hospitals and develop their infrastructure so that they could focus on providing health services to citizens efficiently.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: In compliance with the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has formally approached the Ministry of Commerce seeking amendments to Ministerial Resolution number 103 of 2022, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This resolution, which was initially issued by the Minister of Commerce, outlines the pricing structure for recruiting domestic workers. The proposed amendment aims to reinstate the practice observed before the COVID-19 pandemic -- incorporating the cost of recruiting a domestic worker along with the travel ticket within the specified recruitment fees.

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NewsWatch

RIYADH: Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, received members of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence at the Winter Camp in the northern city of Al-Ula on Saturday.

The Senators present at the meeting were: Mark Warner, chairman of the committee, Angus King from Maine, John Cornyn from Texas, Kirsten Gillibrand from New York, Jon Ossoff from Delaware, and Mark Kelly from Arizona. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Security Media Cell (ISMC) on Sunday announced the death of four members of so-called the Islamic State (IS) during an air strike in Diyala governorate northeast Iraq.

The ISMC mentioned, in statement, based on confirmed information from the Iraqi Intelligence Service that an F16 aircraft targeted important IS hideouts in Baqubah village in Diyala. (KUNA)

AMMAN: Jordanian army said Saturday that it killed five drug and weapon smugglers and arrested 15 in a day of clashes with armed groups of smugglers attempting to cross into Jordan from Syria.

The army statement said the clashes broke out before dawn between Jordanian border guards and armed organizations "that practice smuggling and rely on systematic infiltration operations." It said the smuggling operations have recently increased in frequency.

The state-run Jordan News Agency reported that in recent days smugglers have "aimed to cross the Kingdom's border by force by targeting border guards." (AP)



The 2023-'24 semester's final midterm exams in Kuwait kicked off on Sunday for about 43,000 12th-grade high school students, encompassing both sciences and arts disciplines. — See Page 4

Assembly criticized for Conflict of Interests Law delay

Nazaha summons former MP over alleged bribery attempt

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has summoned former MP Nasser Al-Sane'e to provide details about his statement in a recent television interview that some parties offered to pay him KD20 million when he was a lawmaker if he agreed to sign some papers and approve a certain bill.

Nazaha explained this will help in the continuation of investigation into the issue to obtain more details and identify the involved parties.

Commenting on the issue, constitutional expert Professor Ibrahim Al-Homoud said the above-mentioned scenario is an act of bribery; so he urged Al-Sane'e to provide information to Nazaha for the latter to complete the investigation and submit its report to the Public Prosecution.

Also, in response to Nazaha, former MP Al-Sane'e issued a statement confirming that he will visit Nazaha soon -- once he arrives from his trip abroad. He disclosed the incident happened in the 1990s, during which he consulted some lawyers, but they advised him not to file a case as the bribe was offered to him verbally and he could not present any incriminating evidence.

He then asked Nazaha to summon his colleagues and some former ministers who mentioned similar offers in their television interviews.

In another development, Al-Homoud clarified that ministers in the interim government are not authorized to issue decisions which could bring about positive or negative consequences. He warned that taking such decisions before the formation of the new government disrupts the monitoring role of the National Assembly,

because the new ministers are not responsible for the decisions they did not issue and the interim ministers cannot be questioned as they no longer occupy the ministerial posts. He stressed that the role of the interim government is limited to dealing with urgent issues and it should take the aforementioned decisions.

Meanwhile, MP Saud Al-Asfour has submitted a bill on amending the Private Universities Law to pave way for the establishment of colleges, institutes and branches of foreign universities in the country to provide low-cost education.

According to the bill, a large percentage of the capital of the suggested educational establishments will be owned by Kuwaiti shareholders, not the benefit organizations. He pointed out that investment in education must not be aimed at obtaining financial gains; as the focus should be educational development, reducing pressure on public educational institutions and providing high quality education at reasonable fees.

On the other hand, Chairman of the parliamentary Education, Culture and Guidance Affairs Committee MP Fahd Al-Masoud confirmed that the committee is keen on addressing problems hindering the development of education in the country. He said the committee is conducting field tours to complete this task.

He also cited international indexes, indicating that Kuwait is among the top 10 countries in the world with a high budget for education -- roughly 10 percent of the State budget. He wondered why the same international indexes ranked Kuwait low in terms of education quality; hence, the need to determine how the budget is spent.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait implements digital process for part-time work

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Following the initiation of the decision to allow part-time work for employees in the private sector, an official source from the Public Authority for Manpower disclosed that the Authority is in the process of introducing guidelines for the implementation of this decision and the corresponding operational procedures, reports Al-Anba daily.

All processes will be automated and conducted through officially approved PAM programs, including "easier service," "easy application," and the Authority's website.

According to the source, a form will be made available on the websites which must be duly filled and submitted online, complete with approval from the original employer and subsequent endorsement from the second employer.

Further controls and conditions are currently being mulled, with plans to present them to the Minister of Interior for approval. It is important to note that the decision allowing part-time work has been ongoing since the beginning of this month.



Kuwait Municipality team conducts inspection. — See Page 3

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:19 Asr 14:46
 Sunrise .. 06:43 Maghrib .. 17:05
 Zohr 11:54 Isha 18:27

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

and partly cloudy with light variable wind, with speeds of 06-22 km/h.
Station Max Exp Min Rec
 Kuwait City 21 15
 Kuwait Airport 21 12
 Abdaly 22 08
 Jahra 22 13
 Salmiyah 20 16
 Nuwaisib 22 12
 Wafra 21 11

3,300 Pakistani medical staff in Kuwait; visas to be opened soon: Farouq

We can meet Kuwait's goal to maintain food security: Pakistan envoy

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Around 3,300 doctors and nurses are currently working in Kuwait, and a new batch arrives every two or three months, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Malik Muhammad Farouq.

In an exclusive interview with the daily, Farouq confirmed that the year 2023 ended with high-level interaction between the leaders of the two countries; that is, after a break of six years. He cited the visit of a delegation headed by Pakistani Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar to Kuwait last year. He said the delegation consisted of the Pakistani ministers of Finance,

ships go everywhere every year. We want Kuwait to be part of these visits, as well as the 'Aman' exercises in Pakistan.

Currently, Kuwait is just an observer in these exercises. We want Kuwait to have full membership. If we talk about training, the military personnel from Kuwait can come to Pakistan to participate in our training programs. Kuwait recently sent a large Armed Forces group -- more than 30 members. I am sure that they learned a lot. Our military personnel do not compromise on experience and skills. The training is rigorous and serious."

Feasibility

On Kuwaiti investments in Pakistan, Farouq confirmed: "We presented certain projects to Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA). We are fully aware that KIA always requests for feasibility studies, since they have their own standards. Given the fears that investors always express, their first concern is to recover their money through dividends. I assure the Kuwaiti investors that everything a company or person invests in Pakistan will be safe, secure and profitable.

Since Pakistan is a large country, it is a huge open market and the policies of the government are favorable to foreign investors. Pakistan is a very rich agricultural country as well, so we urged our Kuwaiti friends to invest in this sector; as well as in the energy and mining sectors. We have very rare minerals and many mines that need to be explored and invested in."

He also cited tourism as another field open for Kuwaiti investors, stressing that "Pakistan is a beautiful country and it has a number of tourist attractions. We have good infrastructure due to the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor, but the tourism industry still needs investments, such as the hotel sector and large resorts. We know that Kuwaitis love tourism and Pakistan is relatively close to Kuwait while its prices are very reasonable, especially for the shopping enthusiasts. Pakistani textiles are considered one of the best in the world. You find them everywhere, specifically in European countries, but we hardly see them in Kuwait."

About the visa for Pakistani workers, Farouq expressed his gratitude to the concerned Kuwaiti authorities as they listened to his view on the resumption of the issuance of visas for Pakistanis. "I am hoping that we will reach an agreement soon, then we will see more skilled Pakistani workers coming to Kuwait, which needs a lot of manpower, particularly those specialized in information technology, construction and engineering.

I had a meeting with the secretary general of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), which offers one of the best investor-friendly policies. One of the areas I am focusing on is Pakistan's advanced and good information technology expertise, as Kuwait needs that and it is focusing on cybersecurity," he added.

On health agreements, Farouq confirmed the existence of a health agreement between the two countries. He said Kuwait's Ministry of Health usually requests for medical staff from Pakistan, indicating that a new batch will arrive within two or three months -- after the Ministry of Human Resources Development in Pakistan completes the selection of qualified doctors, nurses and technicians.

So far, we have about 3,300 medical and nursing staff in Kuwait. I extend my special thanks to the Ministry of Health here and the minister for their continued support and cooperation. I also thank the leadership of Kuwait and its people for the trust they have shown towards our citizens. I am also grateful to my country's officials, because they are very careful in choosing the best people to send to Kuwait. I thank those who come to work in Kuwait, as they have brought the best and positive image of my country to Kuwait.

In fact, I have not heard a single negative comment about any of them. This is truly a source of great pride for me. I am honored that everyone is happy with their knowledge and skill. We have extended the health agreement, which ended in May last year, until 2026."

Asked about the vision of Kuwait and his country on international issues, Farouq pointed out: "We talk about international issues most of the time.

The two countries meet on all issues and they have similar views, especially on current situation in Gaza. The two countries have always condemned the Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilians. We asked the international community to push for ceasefire. Like Kuwait, we are also sending our military planes loaded with relief goods for our Palestinian brothers and sisters."

KD1m spent on subsidies/day

21% increase seen in monthly expenses



Top and above: Dignitaries and ambassadors visited the Iranian embassy to express condolences.

Photos by Samer Shaqair

Tragic and painful: Iran envoy

Diplomats offer condolences over terror attack in Kerman

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: The Assistant Undersecretary for Asian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Yasin affirmed Kuwait's condemnation of the terrorist bombings that took place in the city of Kerman, south of Iran, and resulted in many casualties, including several deaths and injuries.

In a press statement issued yesterday during his visit to the Iranian embassy to express condolences for the victims of the terrorist act and sign the condolences register in the presence of a number of ambassadors and diplomats, Al-Yasin said Kuwait expresses its denunciation and condemnation of the terrorist bombings.

He called on Almighty Allah to maintain stability and security in the Islamic Republic of Iran, have mercy on the victims, and grant the injured a speedy recovery.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Totonji issued a similar press statement in which he described the incident as "tragic" and "painful".

He said, "Terrorism has no nationality, and is rejected and condemned at any time and place. Humanity rejects such criminal acts, and all countries of the world must stand up to confront terrorism and denounce it."

Regarding the causes of instability in the Middle East and the continued spread of the phenomenon of terrorism, Totonji said, "Because of the sensitivity of the Middle East region as a strategic and important region, we believe that these actions do not originate from the region, but are planned from outside the region. Islamic countries and countries of the region must unite to confront such criminal acts.

The stability of the region can be achieved through unification of ranks. We hope that we will witness more cohesion, stability, security and peace in the region, because the security of the region must stem from itself. The countries of the region must reach a single solution, which is unity and cohesion."

He expressed gratitude to all the ambassadors and officials who offered condolences to the Iranian government and people fol-

lowing this painful tragedy, as well as to the Kuwaiti people and government who expressed their condolences and denounced this crime.

Totonji said he wishes for global steps to be taken to eradicate this malicious epidemic, which is terrorism.

Ambassadors: heinous attacks and a terrible tragedy

A number of ambassadors who visited the Iranian embassy yesterday to offer condolences had expressed their deep sorrow, denunciation, and solidarity with the Iranian government and people in this painful tragedy.

The German Ambassador to Kuwait Hans-Christian Freiherr said he went to offer his condolences to the Iranian government and people over these heinous terrorist attacks, adding that he wishes the people of Iran safety, security and peace.

The Apostolic Nuncio to Kuwait His Grace Cardinal Eugene Martin Nugent said, "We pray for the victims of this terrible tragedy, we console their families, and we wish the injured a speedy recovery.

There are many efforts in place to fight terrorism. There is international solidarity in this regard. Laws must be applied to fight terrorism and prosecute terrorists."

The Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sönmez expressed pain over what Iran has been exposed to.

She wished a speedy recovery for the injured and mercy for those who lost their lives.

The ambassador indicated that the region has been subjected to many terrorist attacks, and the Kerman attack is not the first and will not be the last, adding, "I hope all countries of the region, Islamic countries, and humanity would unite and coordinate to fight terrorism because it is our common enemy. If any country is unsafe, this affects all other countries. It is time to provide support among us."

In addition, Anne Koistinen, the EU Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, said that the European Union strongly condemns the Kerman bombings.

She expressed solidarity with the Iranian people, stressing that this terrorist act is horrific, and she went to the embassy to express condolences and solidarity."

Cancer awareness sought

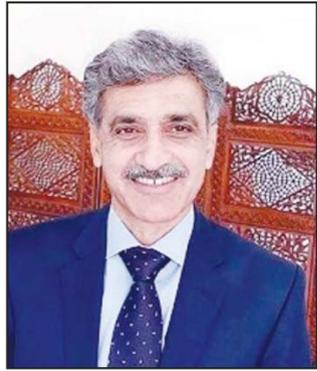
Al-Harban sponsors Kuwait's AFL

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Abdullah Al-Saleh, Director of Haidu Academy, announced that the sixth edition of the Kuwaiti Amateur Football League, hosted at Surra Stadium by the Public Sports Authority, will receive generous sponsorship from renowned sports commentator Khaled Al-Harban. Emphasizing its objective to raise awareness about cancerous diseases and reduce associated risks, Al-Saleh highlighted the critical role of early detection in achieving higher cure rates.

The league, inaugurated on December 7 and set to run until February 7, features the participation of 14 teams, including the Haidu "Kan" squad, comprising Inspire, Marker, English, Victo's, Wolffoot, and various other amateur teams, totaling 520 players. Al-Saleh expressed gratitude for the opportunity provided by the league to engage youth in meaningful sports activities, positively impacting their lifestyle choices and leisure time.

Al-Saleh underscored the CAN campaign's commitment to linking sports with the prevention of chronic diseases, particularly cancer, as physical activity plays a crucial role in steering young individuals away from factors that compromise immunity and increase disease susceptibility. He highlighted smoking as a prominent risk factor, noting that exercise can aid in smoking cessation. Al-Saleh emphasized the importance of quitting smoking, given its adverse effects on the immune system and its role in hindering disease resistance. Additionally, he pointed out that engaging in sports triggers the release of happiness hormones, promoting a positive approach to life.

Al-Saleh extended gratitude to the General Sports Authority for their dedicated efforts in ensuring the success of the tournament and for their outstanding support in caring for sports, youth, and the overall advancement of Kuwaiti sports.



Malik Muhammad Farouq

Trade, Law, Justice, Climate Change and Energy; in addition to Chief of Staff of the Pakistani Army Lieutenant General Syed Asim Munir.

"We had very fruitful discussions on both the civilian and military aspects. Pakistan enjoys outstanding and friendly relations with Kuwait; built on common interests, trust and mutual understanding. It was a very successful visit, especially since it took place for the first time after six years and it coincided with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Kuwait," the Ambassador asserted. He then revealed that the two sides agreed that this interaction should be regular, stressing the talks at the ministerial level were fruitful as emphasis was put on trade and investment.

He went on to say that when the delegation visited Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the authority was about the current initiative of the Pakistani government. "Our government launched the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. SIFC has five sectors -- agriculture, information technology, energy, mining and food security.

We know that food security is particularly important in the Gulf region. It is the primary concern of all governments around the world, including Kuwait. Pakistan wants to play a vital role in Kuwait's bid to address its food security issue. We can meet its needs for fresh fruits, vegetables and meat. It is known that Kuwait imports 99 percent of its food products from different countries.

Imports

Pakistan's share of the amount that Kuwait imports from Brazil, New Zealand and Australia does not exceed three percent. We know very well the extent of Kuwait's interest when it comes to the issue of 'halal' meat and Pakistan is a pioneer in the field of halal meat. We have developed the international quality of slaughterhouses. Our people do not compromise on the issue of quality standards for fresh meat. The Kuwaiti people also know that Pakistan does not compromise when it comes to slaughtering in a proper and professional manner.

As for rice, we produce one of the best types of basmati rice, but the share of Pakistani rice coming to Kuwait is less than one percent. We can add to that the vegetables and fruits. We have the best types of fruits, nuts including pine nuts, and pink salt. The Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and I had a good and fruitful meeting late last year. He was very optimistic that Pakistani products would soon spread in the Kuwaiti market. I am sure that in the coming days, you will see the results of this in both directions. We will see Pakistani products coming to Kuwait and we will see some Kuwaiti investments in Pakistan," he pointed out.

On military cooperation, Farouq affirmed that Pakistani Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Syed Asim Munir and his accompanying delegation had extensive discussions with their Kuwaiti counterparts; because Pakistan is keen on strengthening military ties with Kuwait. He said: "Our military ships used to come here and this is what we will do in the future. Our naval

KD4.5m fine, jail in money-wash

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: The Court of Cassation yesterday brought down the curtain on one of the money laundering cases, and ruled to imprison four individuals who worked in the Kuwait Ports Authority for a period of 4 years and imposed a fine of KD 4,500,000.

One of the defendants was charged with committing forgery and assisting an accused person to flee outside the country.

The court confirmed that the charge against them was proven, and it ruled to acquit another accused person.

Ruling withheld: The Criminal Court ruled to refrain from pronouncing punishment against the former PM Abdul Rahman Al-Anjari who was accused of broadcasting false news through his X account.

Al-Anjari had appeared before the court with his defense team, and denied the accusations against him.

Earlier, the Public Prosecution had leveled him with State Security charges, namely broadcasting false news and misusing his smartphone. It then released Al-Anjari with-

out financial bail after investigating him in the case that came against the backdrop of his Twitter posts.

Verdict overruled: The Court of Appeals overturned the verdict issued by a lower court and nullified the decision issued by the arbitration center at Kuwait Lawyers Society which obligated a consultative physician to pay KD 29,480 as attorney charge in addition to a fine worth KD 3,000.

The physician filed a case to nullify the above mentioned decision issued upon the request of the attorney office which resorted to the Taher Legal Group Company to file a lawsuit for the invalidation of the arbitration ruling that obliged him to pay the aforementioned amount in exchange for an annual subscription fee contract that was not renewed with his former lawyer. The doctor signed an annual contract worth 40 thousand dinars annually in exchange for consulting and litigation services with his former lawyer. At the end of the year, the lawyer asked him to increase the value of the contract.

The physician said he did not renew the contract, but the attorney office asked him to continue the payments.

Bid to unravel mystery behind couple's death

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Experts from the Criminal Evidence General Department in the Crime Scene Sector at the Interior Ministry, as well as officers from the Search and Investigation Unit in the Criminal Investigation Department in Hawally Governorate continue to work hard in order to unravel the mystery behind the death of two individuals whose bodies were found inside a hotel apartment in Salmiya last weekend, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting a security source.

The source confirmed that the authorities have identified the bodies as that of a Syrian man and a female Gulf national who was reported to have left her family home four days prior to the discovery of the bodies. A missing person report was filed at a police station in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate.

The source revealed that results of the initial forensic examination indicate no criminal suspicion behind the death, as the two bodies were intact and had no signs of violence that could have led to their death. The source said the Forensic Medicine Department hinted on the possibility of joint suicide.

In a separate case, the employees of the Accident Department at Jahra Hospital informed the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior about a person of unknown nationality arrived at the hospital with a gunshot wound in his stomach, and that his health condition is stable after undergoing surgery to extract the bullet.

A security source revealed that upon receiving the report, the securitymen rushed to the hospital and listened to the testimony of the injured person's brothers who took him to the hospital. They stated that they were exposed to gunfire while they were in their camping site in Subiya, and that one of the bullets hit their brother and the other bullets hit the tent where they were sitting.

The security and forensic officers inspected the camp and found traces of bullets believed to be from a powerful air rifle. The officers informed the deputy public prosecutor who ordered the registration of an attempted murder case and investigations are ongoing to identify the suspect/s.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Positive change is on the horizon

"THERE is unanimous agreement on the overwhelming joy, happiness, and optimism that swept through the Kuwaiti people upon the announcement of Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem as Prime Minister," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"This signifies that the people have reached a point of hopelessness, and as soon as they received the news of this appointment, they collectively expressed their relief. It is seen as the first rain, signaling positive change on the horizon.

"Optimism is undeniably beautiful, especially for us in Kuwait, considering the prolonged period of challenges and dilemmas. These challenges included strained relations between the executive and legislative authorities, a halt in progress and development, deteriorating conditions, and the country being positioned in a state of 'stagnation' in terms of development.

"However, the concern lies in the extent of this optimism and happiness. There is a fear that the expectations of rapid changes, modifications, and a swift turnaround in the wheel of development may not align with the principles of careful deliberation, study, and adherence to the concept of 'stages.'

"The concern stems from the possibility of encountering problems due to hastily made decisions without proper studies and consideration of potential amendments and reactions to unforeseen circumstances.

"While we are all optimistic and happy, viewing this appointment as the beginning of a collective journey towards a brighter future, we must be cautious not to burden our new Prime Minister with unrealistic expectations.

"It is crucial to demand the appointment of a strong ministerial staff capable of efficiently shouldering responsibilities, making informed decisions, and demonstrating boldness and strength in implementation, regardless of the consequences, if it serves the best interests of the country and its people.

"The current state of affairs in Kuwait may lead certain groups, segments, individuals, or officials to suffer when certain decisions are implemented, as they have become accustomed to a period of authority marked by corruption and narrow interests.

"There is hope that the trajectory of development and reform will continue addressing the challenging issues that have arisen in the country due to a lack of accountability and follow-up.

"Corruption has proliferated in various scales, from large to small cases, without heed to the discordant voices that may attempt to obstruct reform and development measures.

"Move forward, Your Highness the Prime Minister, with your resolute decisions that breathe life into long-dormant hopes. Press forward in fulfilling your national mission, aligned with the expectations placed on your honorable person, to revive a nation that has weakened under the weight of corruption affecting both the country and its people.

"Behind you are a people eager for development and openness, deserving a place among developed nations.

"There is hope that this marks the beginning of the reform to rebuild the Kuwaiti citizen, profoundly affected by the pervasive corruption that has infiltrated various aspects of life. It is crucial to adapt to the developments and variables of today's life, even if some are painful and harsh, as they are essential to save the nation.

"May God grant you success. Walk forward, and know that we stand behind you, supportive and strong."

Also:

"In 2009, I wrote an article on the then His Highness the Prime Minister, and after that I did not find any positive movement, and most of those who write have become like those who write their letters on the sand of the beach, which soon are washed away by the waves," columnist **Turki Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Now, after the appointment of Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Sabah Al-Salem, I was rejoiced, as were many people living in this country, asking God Almighty to grant him a good cadre of ministers and leaders who understand the importance of the position in terms of the vision and the necessity of having executive experience, good conduct, and the ability to make decisions.

"Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Sabah Al-Salem, is a specialist in the field of economics, and this is the introduction to our article, which we hope will be read carefully.

"In 2015, Kuwait signed the 17 goals of the United Nations, and one of its most important goals is human capital, and human development (the main driver of human capital) is considered the cornerstone of the labor market and upon which the economy is built in any country in the world.

"Let us take this presentation and discuss the following:

"We need a new vision formulated by leaders familiar with the science of leadership and strategic management; the state needs a complete restructuring, starting with the Civil Service Commission and its Law No. 15 of 1979.

"There is a need to separate higher education from the Ministry of Education to obtain better educational outcomes according to the requirements of the labor market.

"We need distinguished health care through strategic partnership contracts with the best international medical centers to manage and operate our hospitals, especially specialized (diagnostic) hospitals.

"We need a Ministry of Economy and Investment to create strategic partnerships to implement housing projects, roads, economic cities, railways, metro, and others from an economic, investment, and security perspective, and that would provide a source of income greater than the oil source they rely on.

"We need to pay attention to the level of leaders and the method of appointing them, so that if they are reformed, the human development system will be reformed, in addition to providing a bank of experiences from the best people with distinguished actual experience from retirees, as is the practice in Japan.

"The human element (citizen) deserves attention in terms of the standard of living and the level of services provided to it, whether from the public or private sector.

"Let us begin by moving away from the approach of quotas, nepotism, and rushing to digital government as it is the gateway to the reform that we hope to achieve. The need indicates that we lack bold decision makers that begin by holding the corrupt and thieves of public money accountable, and this is based on the good selection of leaders.

"It is customary that whoever prepares to leave must leave behind a good impact or a good memory for people to remember him by. However, our rational government insists on bidding us farewell with a crisis that gives birth to another. It leaves a painful memory as the onion crisis continues, followed by the egg crisis. What should we say as we bid farewell to a ministry that is about to leave, considering it cannot protect its people from the egg and onion merchants who know they are safe, so they control the prices without fear or shame?!" columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"If the scarcity of onions is due to the source, that is, if the onion fields around the world are infected and did not produce anything, then it is another issue. But, how would we know if the government remains silent, as if there is no onion crisis?"

"As for the eggs crisis, they think the solution is to ban the export of eggs for three months, which can be extended until eggs are available in the local market. The question is: Since when have we been an egg exporting country? Unless this happens, the general impression among the people is that eggs are not part of the State's exports. Are eggs available in Kuwaiti markets for the competent authorities to prevent the export of such products? Will the authorities stop a car that is transporting a tray of eggs?"

"Experience shows that the authorities have not succeeded in preventing the smuggling of subsidized supplies. Even if they have succeeded in reducing the phenomenon, subsidized products are still sold in the black market. Under such circumstances, how will they prevent the exit of eggs from Kuwait? Cancel decisions that are not implemented, are difficult to implement or issued just for the sake of saying that the ministry took a decision.

"All these do not protect the Kuwaiti consumer suffering from unjustified price hikes. We need practical measures that ensure the consumer finds what he needs at a reasonable price, even if he takes onions and eggs from his country by plane."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Photo by Samer Shaqir

Municipality inspectors started their intensive campaign in Hawally governorate.

Municipality starts cleaning campaign

Focus on street vendors, stray dogs

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Today marks the commencement of Kuwait Municipality's inaugural inspection campaign aimed at evaluating the performance of public cleaning services across various regions. The campaign encompasses rigorous monitoring, supervisory measures, and executive procedures to scrutinize the activities of cleaning contractors and companies. Additionally, the initiative aims to enhance control over street vendors and address the issue of stray animals.

An official source within the municipality confirmed to Al-Rai that Engineer Saud Al-Dabbous, the Director General, emphasized the imperative of activating and enforcing laws, regulations, and decisions pertaining to public cleanliness and road occupancy within the governorates. The initial focus of

the campaign will be on Hawalli Governorate, with plans to progressively extend coverage to the remaining governorates in the upcoming period.

The source highlighted six key focal points established by the municipality for the campaign, specifically addressing issues related to cleanliness and street vendors. It was noted that there has been a notable improvement in cleanliness levels in private and model housing areas in recent times. This positive trend underscores the presence of a comprehensive development plan, with the services sector spearheaded by Meshal Al-Azmi. The campaign signals a commitment to upholding standards and ensuring the effective implementation of regulations for the overall betterment of public spaces and services.

Fake education degrees for sale at KD4,000 each

5 women's parlors shut

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Personnel from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have administratively shut down an unidentified educational institute for selling fake 'education' certificates, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The daily added, whose responsible for this fraud have been referred to the Public Prosecution.

The daily added, a thorough inspection of the premises showed the facility did not have the necessary license for organizing exhibitions, conferences, and events, and it did not also have permission from the local regulatory authorities to organize such activities.

It has been reported the institute issued certificates from foreign educational and training institutes that were unaccredited and to add insult to injury some of these certificates were found to be entirely counterfeit.

Investigations have revealed that the institute 'sold' the certificates for up to 4,000 dinars, to be paid in three install-

ments or more.

The MCI inspectors added such certificates were sold to about 15 victims and this information will be relayed to the relevant authorities.

These victims will not be approved for appointments or other procedural matters requiring valid professional certificates.

In a separate incident, the ministry inspectors have administratively shut down five women's parlors for carrying out unauthorized surgeries not covered by the licenses.

Investigations revealed the use of materials were unfit for human use, leading to their closure and referral to the prosecution.

Recent recorded violations also include the closure of restaurant branches, referral to the Commercial Prosecution for judicial action, and fines for non-compliance with delivery fees set by the ministry.

The fines amount to 250 fils for delivery within the same region and 500 fils for delivery to another region, with instructions specifying that imposing a minimum limit on customer requests is not permissible.

'No place for illegals in country'

1,000 arrested to be deported

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Within the framework of campaigns aimed at arresting violators of laws and menial workers, a security source revealed that more than a thousand expatriates were arrested from January 1 to 5, reports **Al-Qabas** daily.

The daily said a majority of those arrested have been referred to the deportation center in accordance with the law.

The source confirmed that the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, directed the continuation of campaigns in all to rid the country of illegal workers.

On the other hand, the General Traffic Department announced the referral of a number of reckless people and those who endanger the lives of others in the Fahaheel area to the Traffic Court, after the spread of a video clip containing a gathering, reckless and reckless operations, stressing that any violation of the law will not be tolerated.

Meanwhile, the residency investigations have arrested 289 expatriates of various nationalities for violating the residency and labor laws during security campaigns in Fahaheel, Mangaf, Farwaniya, Shuwaikh, Hawalli, Khaitan, Al-Hasawi, and Kabd, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The inspection campaigns were jointly organized by the General Administration of Residence Affairs Investigations, the Research and Investigation Department, the Control and Coordination Department, the Violators Follow-up Department, and the Financial and Administrative Services Department.

Drug pills seized: Customs officers assigned at Kuwait International Airport have foiled the attempt of a citizen to smuggle about 600 narcotic pills into the country, reports **Al-Anba** daily quoting a security source.

According to the source, the suspect hid the narcotic pills in the secret parts of his luggage, indicating the suspect came from an Asian country.

The source revealed that the customs

Major events in Kuwait during 2023

Environment

Jan 21: Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) organized, in cooperation with Kuwait Diving Team, a beach cleaning activity.

Jan 25: Gulf conference and exhibition for green cities and buildings launched under the slogan, an opportunity for green economy.

Jan 30: Environment Public Authority commenced media campaign in cooperation with the UN office aiming to curb use of one-use plastic products.

March 6: Environment week activities began under the slogan, "your home is your responsibility."

March 9: Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment signed a Memorandum of Understanding with British Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS).

March 10: Kuwait's Municipality launched in coordination with Kuwait Trade Union Federation the largest voluntary beach-cleaning campaign.

May 24: Environment Public Authority launched three projects in collaboration with the UN environment office as part of Kuwait's compliance with UN climate change framework agreement.

June 26: Kuwait joined the UAE's climate initiative, launched at the COP conference in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2022.

July 16: Environment Public Authority was awarded ESRI excellence award.

Nov 20: Public Authority for Environment launched Kuwait low-carbon 2050 strategy.

Health services:
Jan 11: Kuwait's Ministry of Health announced that genetic tests have detected the XBB.1.5 variant, which belongs to a subset of the Omicron of the Coronavirus.

Jan 12: The second scientific forum organized by the scientific research and development committee at Al-Adan hospital launched with the participation of more than 300 doctors and technicians.

Jan 15: The national campaign for cancer awareness launched sub-campaign aimed at youth.

Jan 18: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi inaugurated 11th Kuwait Medica conference and exhibition.

Jan 21: For the first time in the Middle East, three plastic surgeries are held in one due to modern technological advancements, announced Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital.

Jan 21: The 18th surgeons conference and seventh surgery association forum was inaugurated.

Jan 22: Health Minister, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, issued decision decreasing profit margin by five percent for pharmaceuticals at private pharmacies.

Jan 24: Kuwait, since establishing children stem cells transplant program in 2020, came in second Arabian Gulf wide, announced Health Ministry official.

Jan 26: The very first orthopedic surgery conference was inaugurated by Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi.

Jan 31: Health Ministry commenced month-long awareness campaign for cervical cancer for the second year in a row.

Jan 31: Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital announced the success of the first surgery of its kind, hip and knee replacement for an 82-year old patient at the same time.

Feb 1: Health Ministry began bivalent covid-19 vaccine campaign for 18-year olds and older.

Feb 2: Kuwait first in Arab region, second in Mideast for organ donors per capita announced health official.

Feb 5: The Ministry of Health inaugurated third operational stage of the new Farwaniya hospital.

Feb 15: Dhaman Health Assurance Hospitals Company announced facilities completion and readiness of Al-Jahraa and Ahmadi hospitals as well as five healthcare centers.

Feb 19: Jaber Al-Ahmad hospital inaugurated a research and innovation center the first of its kind locally and on a wider gulf level.

Feb 20: The 20th of February declared Kuwait's first aid day.

March 19: Health Ministry and Environment Public Authority inked cooperation and strategic partnership agreement.

March 19: Maternity Hospitals began providing services for prematurely born infants to allow for the performance of daily activities and skills.

March 21: Health Ministry opened tuberculosis-fighting unit at Mnahi Al-Osaimi center.

March 22: Jaber Al-Ahmad hospital conducts first surgery of its kind in Kuwait for

nerves in the back of a child to alleviate muscle cramp symptoms and aid movement.

May 13: Ministry of Health launched an electronic platform for appointments for 48 mental health clinics nationwide.

April 18: Ministry of Health launched on-line service for treatment abroad.

April 29: The MoH said 33 practitioners violated the law and that it temporarily closed 33 plastic surgery clinics.

May 6: Kuwait opened a ward for Kuwaiti patients in Montefiore Hospital in New York.

May 10: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi opened a center to monitor poisonous cases and provide advice and treatment plans.

May 18: Jaber Center for treatment of diabetes of the foot and treatment by using compressed oxygen.

June 21: The MoH announced success of the first operation to implant a pump of an artificial heart for a citizen in his 60s.

June 21: Minister Al-Awadhi closed Kuwait Health Office in Amman, Jordan.

July 12: Qortuba joined World Health Organization's regional healthy city network.

Aug 7: The cardiac hospital in Kuwait successfully completed two aortic valve replacement surgeries using state of the art tech used for the first time in the middle east.

Aug 15: Health Ministry announced finding coronavirus variant EG.5

Aug 23: Al-Shaab joined World Health Organization's regional healthy city network.

Aug 24: Jaber Al-Ahmad hospital used free tissue grafts in a new mechanism for the first time in Kuwait.

Sept 16: Kuwait Cancer Control Center hosted a regional training course on treating prostate cancer and neuroendocrine tumors via radioactive materials in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Sept 17: Kuwait ranked first in treating prostate and neuroendocrine tumors via isotopes, announced cancer control center.

Sept 27: Jaber Al-Ahmad hospital announced successful highly complex Cardiac catheterization operation for a 65-year-old patient.

Oct 7: Ministry of Health announced option of acquiring sick leave online through Sahel app.

Oct 8: Kuwaiti Medical Association announced presiding over World Medical Association for the 74th session.



Dr Ahmad Al-Awadhi

Oct 10: Three doctors extended awards for the State of Kuwait for combating cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes in the Middle East.

Oct 11: Health Ministry established a communication center to connect the ministry to beneficiaries.

Oct 12: Health Ministry launched online booking service for mammogram tests.

Oct 16: Mubarak Al-Kabeer hospital opened seven new dermatology clinics.

Oct 19: Health sector stood in solidarity with Palestinian people following Israeli occupation tragic bombing of Al-Ahli hospital.

Oct 21: New surgical robot was used in prostate removal operation.

Oct 30: Farwaniya hospital opened emergency department with a capacity of 1,800 patients.

Nov 6: Kuwait came first on Arab level in combating AIDS indices.

Nov 7: Al-Jahra hospital began use of modern X-ray machines for tumors and infections.

Dec 11: Health Ministry declared success of program harvesting organs and tissues from the bodies of brain-dead people saving 1,338 patients.

To be continued

SPIN & WIN

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024

JANUARY REWARDS

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officers got suspicious of the citizen upon his arrival at the airport. The officers searched the suspect's luggage thoroughly until the narcotic pills were found. He was referred to the Drug Control General Department at the Ministry of Interior, along with the confiscated narcotics.

Belgium, Tunisia, Senegal, Ukraine, Singapore, Albania, Soloman Islands send greetings

Congratulations continue to pour in for HH Kuwait's Amir

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sunday a cable of congratulations from Belgium's King Philippe, expressing his congratulations to His Highness on assuming the top office.

In the cable, he wished His Highness good health and further success in leading Kuwait into a much prosperous and promising future.

In return, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to King Philippe, expressing his utmost appreciation for his kind words and heartfelt sentiments.

Tunisia

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal received a cable from President of Tunisia Kais Saied, congratulating him on assuming the top office.

In the cable, the president wished His Highness the Amir good health and further success in leading Kuwait into further prosperous and promising future.

In return, His Highness the Amir sent the Tunisian president a cable, expressing his utmost appreciation to him for his heartfelt sentiments.

Senegal

His Highness the Amir received a cable from the President of Senegal

Macky Sall, congratulating him on assuming the top office.

In the cable, he wished His Highness the Amir good health and further success in leading Kuwait into a more promising future.

In return, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to the President of Senegal, expressing his sincere appreciation for his kind words and heartfelt sentiments.

Ukraine

His Highness the Amir received a cable of congratulations from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on assuming top office.

The president wished His Highness the Amir success and good health, and Kuwait more progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir sent a reply cable expressing his utmost appreciation for the heartfelt sentiments, wishing the president long-lasting health and wellness.

Singapore

His Highness the Amir received a cable of congratulations from President of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam on assumption of power.

In the cable, the Singaporean president wished His Highness the Amir success and good health, and for Kuwait progress and prosperity.

wait progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir sent a reply cable to the president, expressing his utmost appreciation for the heartfelt sentiment, and wishing him long-lasting health and wellbeing.

Albania

His Highness the Amir received a cable of congratulations from the President of the Republic of Albania, Bajram Begaj for assuming top office.

The president wished His Highness the Amir success and good health, and Kuwait progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir sent a cable expressing his utmost appreciation for the

heartfelt sentiments, wishing the president long-lasting health and prosperity.

Soloman Islands

His Highness the Amir received a letter from the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands Manasseh Sogavare, congratulating him on assuming power.

In the letter, the prime minister wished His Highness good health, and more development and prosperity for Kuwait.

In return, His Highness the Amir expressed appreciation, in a letter to the Solomon Islands' prime minister, for his kind sentiments, wishing him good health and wellness.

New Premier ... a true academician with vision for Kuwait development

Educational officials congratulate Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: A number of educational sector officials welcomed the appointment of Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as Prime Minister, praising his history of giving and service to Kuwait; noting that he enjoys popular acceptance because of his high morals, political and social maturity, unique mentality, and for being a diplomatic and political man, reports Al-Anba daily.

They told the daily that Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah is

worthy of the precious trust that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah bestowed upon him when the latter appointed him as Prime Minister.

Assistant Undersecretary of the Financial Sector at the Ministry of Education Matrook Al-Mutairi congratulated Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah for gaining the trust of HH the Amir through his appointment to the premier post. He affirmed that Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah enjoys popular acceptance due to his high morals, political and social maturity, exceptional mentality, and for being a diplomatic and political man. He added the premier is an academician with vast experience in international relations as well; hence, he will play an important role in the next stage.

Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Development and Activities Maryam Al-Anzi said that Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah held many positions in which he excelled and left a good impact. She added: "We wish him success in carrying this responsibility and he is worthy of it. We hope that he will choose a good ally that puts the country's interest above all else."

Director of the Capital Educational District Mansour Al-Dehany congratulated HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah for gaining the trust of HH the Amir, stressing that this Amir order is a continuation of the process of giving and building in Kuwait.

Director of the Educational Technologies Department at the Ministry of Education Dr Ghanem Al-Sulaimani said HH the

Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah is considered one of the leading intellectual and scientific elites who studied at the most prestigious universities and participated in intellectual and scientific forums. "He has a long history in Science and the knowledge sector, in addition to political acumen and experience. He is qualified for the post," he asserted.

"He is also the son of Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem, may Allah have mercy on him, who is considered one of the pioneering rulers of Kuwait. Sheikh Dr Mohammad Al-Sabah was a contemporary of many princes and has great love and trust in political and intellectual circles and a thinker. Kuwait will witness a qualitative leap and a journey full of development under this premiership, Al-Sulaimani concluded.



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Students absorbed in last-minute wisdom, peeping into their books on first day of commencement of their exams.

43,000 12th graders start final midterm exams

By Faisal Al-Khumaili

The final midterm exams for the 2023-24 semester started on Sunday for some 43,000 high school students in the 12th grade for both sciences and arts disciplines.

Some 27,540 sciences, 15,005 arts, and 824 religious studies students were eager to start and perform their best to succeed in their studies and cultivate a bright future for Kuwait. (KUNA)

Top body responds to Al-Shalfan query

Al-Sawaber Complex site considered as investment housing: Municipality

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: The executive body of Kuwait Municipality, represented by the Structural Plan Department, responded to questions submitted by the Municipal Council member Sharifa Al-Shalfan regarding the development of the Al-Sawaber Complex site.

According to the response, which was approved by the Deputy Director General for Urban and Structural Planning Affairs Manal Al-Asfour, the Al-Sawaber Complex site is considered as investment housing, due to which the regulations for building investment housing within the city limits applies to it. It also complies with the planning and zoning system as recommended by the country's fourth structural master plan. In addition, the location of Al-Sawaber Complex is in the T6 sector classification.

Regarding Al-Shalfan's question about the mechanisms and options available to develop the site, the municipality indicated that the site is currently considered as state property and belongs to the Ministry of Finance, and it has not submitted any proposals regarding it until the date of the municipality's answers to member Sharifa Al-Shalfan's questions.

In a related context, Kuwait Municipality informed the Municipal Council that it had sent a letter to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) to nominate a representative to attend the meetings of the Municipal Council's committees to discuss the request submitted by NCCAL to adding a training institute activity in preserved historical buildings. These meetings are intended to be held after the end of the spring break period on January 21 for the members of the Municipal Council.



Leaders of the Federation of Associations and the Sports Federation.

Kuwait Sports for All and Cooperative Societies team up for health initiative

KUWAIT CITY Jan 7: Mahmoud Abel, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Sports for All Federation, recently engaged in discussions with Musab Al-Mulla, Chairman of the Federation of Cooperative Societies. The meeting aimed to establish collaborative frameworks and mutual coordination to encourage society's engagement in sports, aligning with the Federation's upcoming initiatives, notably the launch of "Sports Villages" on January 11.

Convened at the Union of Cooperative Societies headquarters, the meeting emphasized the collective responsibility to advance society and promote physical health as a fundamental pillar for cultivating a healthy community, free from obesity-related diseases and other health issues.

Abel highlighted the Federation's commitment to fostering cooperation with both governmental and private institutions, underscoring the importance of supporting the sports movement across all segments of society. He expressed the Federation's aspirations for success in raising health awareness and called for unified efforts from various sectors, be it the private or government sector, to address contemporary

diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity-related ailments through exercise and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

Anticipating several upcoming events organized by the Federation's committees, Abel emphasized the significance of the "Sports Villages" initiative set to launch on January 11, inviting participation from all societal groups, regardless of age or gender. He welcomed volunteers, enthusiasts, and individuals with initiatives to join the Federation, contributing to the realization of the Union's goals.

In response, Al-Mulla expressed his satisfaction with the collaboration, emphasizing the Federation of Cooperative Societies' commitment to encouraging widespread participation in sporting events. He conveyed the Federation's dedication to cooperation and its intent to guide associations in urging shareholders to actively engage in activities like the "Sports Villages."

The meeting also encompassed discussions on enhancing future cooperation beyond the "Sports Villages," with a broader goal of creating a physically and psychologically healthy community through various recreational activities.



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Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 53.361/-net	BHD 119.173/-net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
NOW	NOW
BHD 61.000/-net	BHD 136.198/-net

Promo period from 1st - 31st January 2024 Terms & conditions apply*

'Tuesday's Assembly session called for by Al-Saadoun may not be held'

New government formation awaited with tinge of optimism

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: A state of anticipation prevails in political and popular circles awaiting the announcement of the formation of the new government after HH the Amir appointed Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah as the next Prime Minister, reports Al-Anba daily.

The government formation will take its due course in preparation for the maturation of a homogeneous government team capable of keeping up with the next stage with a performance that gives it possible sustainability in terms of implementing its agenda in accordance with the established vision and according to national and popular requirements and entitlements.

Speaking of the session of the National Assembly called for by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmed Al-Saadoun, scheduled for Tuesday, the sources suggested that it may not be held and that the government may send an apology for not attending since formation of the government is in its infancy, so that the session will most probably be adjourned to Jan 16, according to the internal regulations of the Council and the schedule of sessions.

The sources explained the invitation of Al-Saadoun to hold the session is a purely regulatory measure that must be taken after announcing the appointment of the Prime Minister.

Online platform was launched on Sept 15, 2021

'Kuwait's Sahel platform achieves 30mln transactions and 356 electronic services'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Official spokesman for the unified government electronic platform (Sahel) Yousef Kazem has confirmed the success of the platform in processing more than 30 million transactions and services since its launching until the end of 2023, reports Al-Anba daily.

Kazem disclosed that since the launching of the platform on Sept 15, 2021 until the end of 2023; the number of electronic services avail-

able through Sahel reached 356 and these services are provided by 35 government agencies.

He said the number of services and transactions completed through the platform has so far reached 30,226,374; while the number of notifications sent to users reached 100,413,592 and the number of users reached 1,648,211.

He praised the continuous effort of the Council of Ministers to pro-

mote the use of the platform. He also lauded Minister of State for Municipal and Communication Affairs Fahd Al-Shoula and the Executive Committee of Sahel platform for the digital boom that the application is witnessing at the level of enhancing user confidence, owing to the diversity of services in terms of quantity and quality. He concluded all these efforts are aimed at providing better and faster services to the public.



Female Municipality inspectors at one of the stores checking for validity of expiry dates of commodities and manipulation of prices if any. Photos by Sameer Shiger

Kuwait Amir

Continued from Page 1

In a phone conversation on Saturday, the Saudi Crown Prince expressed best wishes for Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah who, in return, thanked him for his brotherly feelings, according to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

Kuwait weighs

Continued from Page 1

This initiative is designed to protect citizens from exploitation and potential fraud related to travel tickets, particularly in cases where a worker refuses employment or departs for an undisclosed destination.

Furthermore, the revision seeks to enhance control mechanisms and facilitate the resolution of disputes between the employers and domestic labor recruitment agencies.

The decision is prompted by citizen complaints against domestic worker recruitment offices and companies, specifically concerning the recovery of amounts charged by these entities, in accordance with Article 17 of Domestic Workers Law number 68/2015 and its executive regulations.

Nazaha summons

Continued from Page 1

Moreover, Rapporteur of Health, Social and Labor Affairs Committee MP Soud Al-Asfour said the committee continued discussing the bill on developing medical services with representatives of the Ministry of Health on Sunday. He praised the ministry for cooperating with the committee, affirming that the meeting was fruitful and the report on the bill will be submitted soon to the Assembly for inclusion in the parliamentary agenda for March 2024.

In addition, MP Osama Al-Shaheen forwarded queries to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah about the plan to protect all sites allocated for practicing sports against traffic accidents and negative phenomena. He inquired if the ministry specified places for walking and cycling and what steps have been taken to prevent the gathering of young men who perform car stunts.

Al-Shaheen also asked Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Manea about the reasons behind the delay in the transfer of medical studies colleges and institutes to Sabah Al-Salim University, which was inaugurated in 2019. He wants to know the colleges and institutes that have not moved to the new location till date, budget allocated for scientific

research at the College of Medicine in Kuwait University, if this budget matches the estimate submitted by the college, number of beneficiaries including students and staff, budget allocated for scientific research at the university in general, and if such budget is enough for the university to finance its scientific research.

He asked Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah about the number of inactive bank accounts, total amount of deposits in such accounts, and if the Central Bank of Kuwait intends to contact the owners of these accounts or their heirs.

Lastly, MP Jenan Bu Shehri held National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun and the Assembly Office responsible for the delayed issuance of the executive regulations and disclosure forms that the MPs and Assembly employees need in order to implement the Conflict of Interests Law. She pointed out that the Assembly unanimously approved her request to assign the Assembly Office to issue the executive regulations and disclosure forms within a few weeks, but no such steps have been taken, although more than one month has passed since the approval of her request. She stressed the importance of enforcing the law on the MPs as part of public monitoring over the legislative authority. She wondered how the Assembly could be the last to enforce the law that it issued.

Jordan's king

Continued from Page 1

After a day of talks with Turkish and Greek leaders in Istanbul and Crete, Blinken met Sunday with Jordan's King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi seeking buy-in for U.S. efforts to tamp down resurgent fears that the three-month-old war could engulf the region, ramp up aid deliveries to Gaza and prepare for the eventual end of hostilities.

King Abdullah II "warned of the catastrophic repercussions" of the war in Gaza while calling on the U.S. to press for an immediate cease-fire, a statement by the Royal Court said.

Jordan and other Arab states have been highly critical of Israel's actions and have eschewed public support for long-term planning, arguing that the fighting must end before such discussions can begin. They have been demanding a cease-fire since mid-October as civilian casualties began to skyrocket. Israel has refused and the U.S. has instead called for specified temporary "humanitarian pauses" to allow aid to get in and people to get to safety.

Blinken also toured the World Food Program's Regional Coordination warehouse in the Jordanian capital where trucks are being packed with aid to be delivered to Gaza through both Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings.

He commended the work of the

WFP and other UN agencies as well as the government of Jordan to get assistance into Gaza.

"The efforts right here to collect and distribute food to people in need are absolutely essential," Blinken said. "The United States has worked from day one to open access routes into Gaza."

"We continue to work on that every single day, not only to open them but to multiply them, to maximize them and to try to get more assistance, more effectively," he said. "We're determined to do everything we possibly can to ameliorate the situation for the men, women and children in Gaza."

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement that Blinken and Jordan's king agreed to continue their close coordination on getting sustained humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

The U.S. has been pressing Israel for weeks to let greater amounts of food, water, fuel, medicine and other supplies into Gaza, and the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution on Dec. 22 calling for an immediate increase in deliveries. Three weeks ago, Israel opened Kerem Shalom, adding a second entry point for aid into Gaza after Rafah.

Still, the rate of trucks entering has not risen significantly. This week, an average of around 120 trucks a day entered through Rafah and Kerem Shalom, according to U.N. figures, far below the 500 trucks of goods going in daily before the war and far below what aid groups say is needed.

Almost the entire population of 2.3 million depends on the trucks coming across the border for their survival. One in four Palestinians in Gaza is starving, and the rest face crisis levels of hunger, according to the U.N.

More than 85% of people in Gaza have been driven from their homes by Israeli bombardment and ground offensives. Most live in U.N. shelters crowded beyond their capacity, in tent camps that have been sprung up, or on the streets. The few functioning hospitals are overwhelmed with the wounded as well as patients amid outbreaks of disease, as sanitation systems have collapsed.

In Greece on Saturday, Blinken said his trip would be dominated by "not necessarily easy conversations" with allies and partners about what they are willing to do "to build durable peace and security."

Blinken's visit comes as developments in Lebanon, northern Israel, the Red Sea and Iraq have put intense strains on what had been a modestly successful U.S. push to prevent a regional conflagration since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, and as international criticism of Israel's military operation mounts.

From Jordan, Blinken traveled to Qatar and will continue on to the United Arab Emirates on Sunday evening and Saudi Arabia on Monday. He will then visit Israel and the West Bank on Tuesday and Wednesday before wrapping up the trip in Egypt.

Sober Christmas Mass held at St Mark Coptic Orthodox Cathedral

Father Bijol Bishop delivers speech

By Bassam Al-Qassab
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: In an atmosphere that reflects the depth of Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations and the strong bonds between the peoples of the two brotherly countries, the St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in Kuwait limited its celebration of the Christmas Mass to prayers in a spiritual atmosphere followed by a speech delivered by the Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral of St. Mark, Father Bijol Anba Bishop.

In his speech, Father Bishop apologized for not receiving well-wishers out of respect for the feelings of citizens and residents over the loss of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (May God have mercy on him), and in line with the mourning period currently in the country.

He began by wishing more prosperity, peace and security for Kuwait in the new year and for the well-being of its leaders, government and people.

Father Bishop affirmed that the church is content with just offering prayers in solidarity with the Kuwaiti people in mourning the loss of Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad (May God have mercy on him).

He said the feeling of pain of parting with His Highness the late Amir will go beyond the path of renaissance and progress under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad.

Support

Father Bishop said, "In this Christmas Mass, we pray for God to support the leadership of Kuwait and guide its steps".

He expressed his congratulations to His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem on assuming the position of prime minister, describing him as a person of sophistication, humility, and wise diplomacy.

Father Bishop also thanked the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi for his good feelings and congratulatory

speech to Christians abroad. He expressed his congratulations to His Excellency the Egyptian President el-Sisi on the occasion of assuming a new presidential term in Egypt in order to complete the process of construction and renaissance with the people's strong confidence in his leadership.

He thanked all of Kuwaiti society, and all its components and groups, diplomatic missions, and communities here, for the abundant feelings of tolerance and brotherhood that they always feel, adding, "These are feelings that we realize on this Christmas, like in every Christmas, despite not receiving well-wishers this time".

Bishop Bishop did not miss the opportunity to send his greetings to the leaders and officers of the Ministry of Interior, led by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled.

He also expressed his gratitude for everyone's efforts in securing the celebrations. He highlighted the visit of the Acting Director General of the Hawalli Security Directorate Brigadier General Ziad Al-Khatib to the church a few days ago with a number of security and traffic leaders of Hawalli Governorate who monitor the security checkpoint opposite the church and the security situation during the holiday periods. He also thanked the media outlets that covered these activities.

In his sermon titled "God is with us", Father Bishop said, "The blessing of Christmas is to feel that God is with us in our midst, residing in us and with us here on earth and also in eternity. The secret to eternal happiness is to be in God's presence.

As we bid farewell to the year that has passed and welcome a new Gregorian year in our common journey full of hope and optimism, I would like to express, in the name of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, the Pope and Patriarch of the See of Mark in Egypt and all countries of the diaspora, and His Eminence Anba Anthony, the Bishop of the Jerusalem See and the Near East, and the Fathers of St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in Kuwait, good wishes that it will be a happy year, that peace will prevail in the region, especially in the State of Palestine, and that the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Gaza, as well as the human suffering in all areas of war and conflict, will soon end."

Major events in Kuwait during 2023

Economy:

Jan 5: Arab Planning Institute inked a memorandum of understanding with the Egyptian National Planning Institute on cooperating to establish joint economic modeling unit.

Jan 10: Kuwait took part in second roundtable meeting of ministers concerned with mining affairs, represented by Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology, Mazen Al-Nahedh, and Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Industry Mahammad Al-Adwani.

Jan 12: Kuwait's Department of Expropriation for Public Welfare announced that total transactions value last year, reached KD 3.5 million (approx. USD 11.4 million).

Jan 16: Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance, Aseel Al-Menifi, and Greek Minister of Development and Investment Adonis Georgiadis and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Economic Diplomacy and Openness Kostas Fragoianniis talked boosting economic relations.

Jan 18: The Finance and Insurance Company, Fitch Ratings, has affirmed Kuwait's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at (AA-) with a Stable Outlook.

Jan 19: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan jumped 27.7 percent from a year earlier to JPY 84.8 billion (USD 663 million) in December.

Jan 19: Kuwait-based Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Export Credit Greece (ECG) to promote Kuwait-Greece trade and investment.

Jan 22: Gold price in Kuwait exceeded the USD 1,926 per ounce barrier with a five percent increase since the beginning of the year.

Jan 25: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) decided to raise the discount rate by 0.50 percent from 3.5 percent to 4.0 percent effective as of January 26.

Jan 30: The Central Bank of Kuwait announced broad money supply increase by 0.05 percent last December on monthly basis to settle at KD 38.4 billion (approx. USD 126.7 billion). Jan 31:

The Central Statistical Bureau declared that the Kuwaiti family average monthly income in the year 2021 is KD 3,994.9 (approx. USD 13,000), not accounting for rent value.

Feb 12: Kuwait's Ministry of Finance signed a Memorandum of Understanding with South Korea to boost cooperation in knowledge exchange program.

Feb 13: Arab Planning Institute signed MoU with organization of women empowerment within the Islamic cooperation agreement to bolster developmental efforts.

Feb 15: Arab Planning Institute inked a MoU with Omani development bank to boost strategic partnership between two sides.

Feb 20: Central Statistical Bureau data showed increase of the inflation by 3.31 percent last month on annual basis.

Feb 28: Third Arab and Kuwaiti youth forum was launched by Youth Public Authority at the Arab Institute.

March 1: Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Communication and Information Technology Affairs Mazen Al-Nahedh inaugurated consumer protection Gulf week activities at the Avenues Mall.

March 21: Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company announced profits of KD 52 million (approx. USD 170 million) for the year 2022, marking 19 percent increase.

March 24: Kuwait and San Marino inked an initial investments' protection agreement.

March 26: The Central Bank of Kuwait announced broad money supply increase by 0.2 percent last February on monthly basis to settle at KD 39.1 billion (approx. USD 129 billion).

March 26: Gold recorded positive gains for the fourth week in a row, closing at USD 1,978 an ounce. April 1: Agility Company announced KD 68 million (USD 221.6 million) net profits in 2022.

KD200 fee for building tower

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Minister of State for Municipal and Communication Affairs Fahd Al-Shoula issued a decision on imposing a fee of KD200 for the issuance of a license to build a communication tower, reports Al-Anba daily.

Article One: Item number 26 shall be added to the mayor's decision regarding the fees for engineering services related to construction management, stating a fee of KD200 shall be collected for issuing a license to build a station, communications tower or antenna.

Article Two: The competent authorities must implement this decision, which will take effect upon publication in the Official Gazette.

April 12: State Audit Bureau said it examined 3,222 files with a value of KD 3.66 billion (USD 11.94 billion) for fiscal year 2022-23.

April 20: Central Statistics department said inflation rose 3.7 percent in March year-on-year.

May 2: Boursa Kuwait registered KD 4.3 million (USD 13 million) net profits in first quarter of 2023, dropping 17.8 percent from same period last year.

May 4: Minister of Commerce and Industry announced a ban on export and re-export of junk in order to preserve iron's basic materials.

May 4: Gold registered its highest price ever, USD 2,072 per ounce.

May 11: Central Bank of Kuwait said balance of payments registered a USD 1.1 billion (USD 3.6 billion) surplus in 2022 compared with KD 970 million (USD 3.1 billion) deficit the year before.

May 18: Inflation rose by 3.69 percent in April year-on-year.

June 24: Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) allocated three location for Google cloud-Kuwait as part of the government's digital transformation strategy.

June 12: Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) said Kuwait benefitted KD two billion (USD 6.8 billion) in credit services since its establishment up until 2022.

July 4: Kuwait Central Bank issued new guidelines for postponed payment services.

July 10: Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Aiban formed committee for organizing supported food supply.

July 18: Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs, Mohammad Al-Aiban, issued decision banning the use of cryptocurrency.

July 19: A delegation from Kuwait Audit Bureau, higher council for planning and development and the state's permanent envoy to the UN take part in high level sustained development forum.

July 26: Ministry of Finance announced a KD 6.4 billion surplus and final account for the finance for the fiscal year 2022 to 2023 for the first time in nine years.

July 27: The central department for statistics launched official website for sustained development indices 2030.

July 30: Boursa Kuwait (the bourse) announced net profit of KD 8.42 million for the period ending June 30, 2023.

Aug 14: Agility Public Warehousing Company achieved net profit of KD 29.4 million (approx. USD 89.6 million) in the first half of 2023 compared to KD 28.8 million (approx. USD 87.2 million) in the same period of last year marking a 2.3 percent increase.

Aug 16: Kuwait Audit Bureau issued a legal and judicial encyclopedia for in line with plans of digitization and transforming from service providers to data producers.

Aug 17: Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued new requirements for auditors and listed companies stipulating the collection of one percent of net profits to be contributed to Kuwait Fund for the Advancement of Science (KFAS).

Aug 22: The Central Statistics Bureau launched an electronic system for sustainable development objectives 2030 as an instrument of boosting cooperation and coordination with concerned bodies.

Aug 23: Kuwait took second place at Gulf level in exports to Dubai chamber of commerce for international markets in the first half of 2023 with total value of AED 12.8 billion (approx. USD 3.4 billion).

Aug 23: The International Monetary Fund announced expedited GDP for non-oil sectors in Kuwait from 3.4 percent in 2021 to four percent in 2022.

To be continued

REQUIRED for Manufacturing & Trading Co. - Kuwait
Asst. General Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min 15 years of experience in Industrial Manufacturing and Trading business • Knowledge of Building materials, General engineering, Oil & Gas • Knowledge in Banking, Finance studies, Marketing, Administration etc • Ability to prepare feasibility studies/new investment proposal, etc. • Flexibility to deal with changing activities and roles • Reporting to the Board • GCC experience preferred • Engineering degree will be preferred. • Good command in english and experience in dealing with complex company affairs
Please send CVs at Email: hrkuwait1979@gmail.com

World News Roundup

America

Struggle for power

Trump downplays Jan 6 anniversary

NEWTON, Iowa, Jan 7, (AP): Former President Donald Trump, campaigning in Iowa Saturday, marked the third anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021 assault on the U.S. Capitol by casting the migrant surge on the southern border as the "real" insurrection.

Just over a week before the Republican nomination process begins with Iowa's kickoff caucuses, Trump did not explicitly acknowledge the date. But he continued to claim that countries have been emptying jails and mental institutions to fuel a record number of migrant crossings, even though there is no evidence that is the case.



Trump

"When you talk about insurrection, what they're doing, that's the real deal. That's the real deal. Not patriotically and peacefully - peacefully and patriotically," Trump said, quoting from his speech on Jan. 6, before a violent mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol as part of a desperate bid to keep him in power after his 2020 election loss.

Trump's remarks in Newton in central Iowa came a day after Biden delivered a speech near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where he cast Trump as a grave threat to democracy and called Jan. 6 a day when "we nearly lost America - lost it all."

With a likely rematch of the 2020 election looming, both Biden and Trump have frequently invoked Jan. 6 on the campaign trail. Trump, who is under federal indictment for his efforts to overturn his 2020 loss to Biden, has consistently downplayed or spread conspiracy theories about a riot in which his supporters - spurred by his lies about election fraud - tried to disrupt the certification of Biden's win.

Trump also continued to bemoan the treatment of those who have been jailed for participating in the riot, again labeling them "hostages." More than 1,230 people have been charged with federal crimes connected to the violence, including assaulting police officers and seditious conspiracy.

"They ought to release the J6 hostages. They've suffered enough," he said in Clinton, in the state's far east. "Release the J6 hostages, Joe. Release 'em, Joe. You can do it real easy, Joe," he said.

Trump was holding the commit-to-caucus events just over a week before voting will begin on Jan. 15. He arrived at his last event nearly three-and-a-half hours late due to what he said was a mechanical issue with a rented plane.

After Trump spoke in Newton, he signed hats and other items people in the crowd passed to him, including a copy of a Playboy magazine that featured him on the cover.

One man in the crowd, Dick Green, was standing about 15 feet away, weeping after the former president autographed his white "Trump Country" hat and shook his hand.

"It'll never get sold. It will be in my family," Green said of the hat.

A caucus captain and a pastor in Brighton, Iowa, Green said he had prayed for four years to meet Trump.

"I'll never forget it," he said. "It's just the beginning of his next presidency."

Incompetent

Trump spent much of the day assailing Biden, casting him as incompetent and the real threat to democracy. But he also attacked fellow Republicans, including the late Sen. John McCain of Arizona, whose "no" vote derailed GOP efforts to repeal former President Barack Obama's signature healthcare law.

"John McCain, for some reason, couldn't get his arm up that day," said Trump of McCain, who was shot down over Vietnam in 1967 and spent 5½ years as a prisoner of war. The injuries he suffered left him unable to lift his arms over his head for the rest of his life. His daughter, Meghan McCain, responded on X, the site formerly known as Twitter, calling Trump an expletive and her father an "American hero."

Earlier Saturday, Trump courted young conservative activists in Des Moines, speaking to members of Run GenZ, an organization that encourages young conservatives to run for office.

Trump's campaign is hoping to turn out thousands of supporters who have never caucused before as part of a show of force aimed at denying his rivals momentum and demonstrating his organizing prowess heading into the general election.

His chief rivals, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, were also campaigning in the state as they battle for second place in hopes of emerging as the most viable alternative to Trump, who is leading by wide margins in early state and national polls.

Trump has used the trip to step up his attacks against Haley, who has been gaining ground. He again cast her Saturday as insufficiently conservative and a "globalist" beholden to Wall Street donors, and accused her of being disloyal for running against him.

"Nikki will sell you out just like she sold me out," he charged.

On Friday, Trump had highlighted several recent Haley statements that drew criticism, including her comment that voters in New Hampshire correct Iowa's mistakes ("You don't have to be corrected," he said) and her failure to mention slavery when asked what had caused the Civil War.

"I don't know if it's going to have an impact, but you know like ... slavery's sort of the obvious answer as opposed to her three paragraphs of bulls---," he told a crowd Friday.

In Newton, he said that he was fascinated by the "horrible" war, which he suggested he could have prevented.

"It's so fascinating," he said. "It's just different. I just find it... I'm so attracted to seeing it... So many mistakes were made. See that was something I think could have been negotiated, to be honest with you."

Haley's campaign has pointed to his escalating attention, including a new attack ad, as evidence Trump is worried about her momentum.

"God bless President Trump, he's been on a temper tantrum every day about me ... and everything he's saying is not true," Haley told a crowd Saturday in North Liberty, Iowa.



Rioters loyal to President Donald Trump rally at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021. The FBI arrested three Florida residents on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, the third anniversary of their alleged attack on Capitol police officers during the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection. (AP)



Supporters of Brazil's former President Jair Bolsonaro hold a banner with a message that reads in Portuguese: 'Military Intervention,' as they storm the National Congress building in Brasilia, Brazil, Jan. 8, 2023. Mimicking the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection by defenders of outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump at the Capitol in Washington, thousands of Bolsonaro's supporters stormed the presidential palace, Congress and the Supreme Court buildings, last year, in one of the biggest challenges to Latin America's most populous democracy. (AP)

Politics

Rivalry intensifies

DeSantis, Haley clash in Iowa

DUBUQUE, Iowa, Jan 7, (AP): Second place in the Iowa caucuses is seldom so important.

The rivalry between GOP presidential candidates Ron DeSantis and Nikki Haley has become a leading storyline before the first Republicans vote on Jan. 15. The two are in an increasingly tense contest to emerge in Iowa as the preferred alternative to former President Donald Trump for the party's 2024 nomination.

Florida Gov. DeSantis has said he expects to win Iowa despite trailing far behind Trump in polls. He portrays Haley, a former South Carolina governor who was Trump's U.N. ambassador, as a puppet of wealthy donors and someone who has flip-flopped on key issues.

Haley, who hopes to edge the better-organized DeSantis in Iowa, has accused him of misrepresenting her record, especially on taxes, and of falsely portraying himself as tough on China.

Enormous

The stakes are enormous for both. DeSantis would upend the race if he were to beat Trump in the caucuses. Haley's allies believe they could hobble DeSantis if she finishes ahead of him. The thinking is that a second-place finish would give her a boost before New Hampshire's Jan. 23 primary and a chance to take on Trump directly in South Carolina a month later.

"I don't know if we'll get to second. I certainly hope so. That's our mission," said Mark Harris, lead strategist for Stand for America, a pro-Haley super political action committee. "We do that, we turn the page and head into a state where I think we're in a great position to win."

Trump has been operating at a different level, attracting tens of thou-

sands to rallies in larger cities since the fall and packing events into the final stretch of the campaign in every corner of the state. His campaign has spent months organizing caucusgoers and recruiting "captains" responsible for turning out voters on Jan. 15.

He has ramped up his attacks of Haley in speeches and campaign ads, which Haley has said is a sign he is taking her more seriously. Before a Trump speech Friday, her campaign issued a statement about the former president going after her on immigration.

"Nikki Haley is rising," her campaign said. "Donald Trump is scared. This is a two-person race."

But Haley must also fend off DeSantis. His camp has hit her for several recent comments about the cause of the Civil War and the role of Iowa in the GOP nomination process. In an interview with NBC News and the Des Moines Register, DeSantis referred to Haley as a "phony."

DeSantis has repeatedly mentioned comments Haley made in New Hampshire this past week when she suggested that New Hampshire voters would "correct" Iowa's results. Haley tried to play down the remark by explaining it as a nod to the good-natured rivalry between the two early-voting states.

"We're getting down to crunch time in the Iowa caucuses," DeSantis told more than 300 people jammed into a bar Saturday in downtown Dubuque. "And no, your votes don't need to be corrected by any other state. I don't care what Nikki Haley says."

Haley answered a recent question in New Hampshire about the cause of the Civil War without mentioning slavery. She walked back her answer a day later and said "of course" slavery was a cause of the war.

and black and white pictures of the Eiffel Tower on the wall. He also has a fitness room with weights, treadmill and a rowing machine, while three parakeets fly around the complex.

Even so, his lawyer, Øystein Storrvik, says it is impossible for Breivik, who now goes by the name Fjotolf Hansen, to have any meaningful relationships with anyone from the outside world, and says preventing his client from sending letters is another breach of his human rights. (AP)

Brazil

Tumultuous times

Brazil reflects on Jan 8 riots

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 7, (AP): Brazil's Congress has everything ready to open an exhibit Monday featuring pieces including a tapestry crafted by renowned artist Burtel Marx and a replica of the country's Constitution dated 1988.

The display is notable not because of the rarity of the objects, but because they are the living memory of one of the grimmest episodes in Brazil's recent history: As unprecedented riots in support of former President Jair Bolsonaro took place on Jan. 8, 2023 in government buildings in the capital Brasilia, the tapestry was damaged and the replica Constitution was taken.

Many saw the rioting as part of a failed attempt by Bolsonaro to remain in power following his election loss. A year and hundreds of arrests later, Brazil is still recovering.

"Brazil's society still doesn't know how to handle what happened, there's no consensus," said Creomar de Souza, founder of political risk consultancy Dharma Politics. "Brazil's society is now in extreme opposites. And parts of those opposites are in a place that they cannot reconcile with the other."

Mimicking the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection by defenders of outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump at the Capitol in Washington, thousands of Bolsonaro's supporters stormed the presidential palace, Congress and the Supreme Court buildings, in one of the biggest challenges to Latin America's most populous democracy.

A year later, about 400 people out of about 1,500 remain jailed facing charges for the riots and Bolsonaro has been under investigation by the Supreme Court over his role in the mayhem. But the country is still reeling from an episode that some say they are proud of.

Members of the three branches of power in Brazil say democracy and its guardrails have been restored after the trashing of the government buildings. But arrests have led supporters of the former president to say their freedom of speech is being violated and claim they are politically persecuted.

Some of them have also voiced unfounded claims that the riots were actually led by the current administration and its supporters. Bolsonaro made the same claim in an interview on Saturday.

Democracy

Rio de Janeiro-based businessman Pablo Diniz, 44, rejects calling all protesters in Brasilia that day rioters. He even believes the discussion of Jan. 8 is not about democracy.

"There was a bit of everything there. There were people claiming for their rights. There were infiltrated people," he said. "There were some good old ladies there, people who are patriots. I am a patriot. ... I went to the streets (on Jan. 8) too, peacefully. I was there to fight for democracy for all."

Bolsonaro was barred by a court last year from running for office again until 2030, in a case not related to the riots but to his unfounded claims that the electronic voting system in the past presidential election was rigged. Despite that, his far-right base remains numerous on the streets and feels capable of challenging President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

But on Monday, Lula and other officials will gather in Congress for the peculiar exhibit called "Unshakeable Democracy" in a symbolic ceremony aimed at reassuring Brazilians of the strength of their democratic system of government.

Lula told Brazilian media outlets Friday that Monday's event could help to show how Brazilians should work to be able to live "the entire 21st century without any coup d'état."

Following the events on Jan. 8, Brazil's Senate paid about \$40,000 to recover the tapestry made in 1973, which was stained by urine and torn in pieces. Supreme Court justices initially feared the replica of the Constitution had been stolen after a Bolsonaro supporter was filmed allegedly carrying it outside of the building. But days after the insurrection they found the real piece hidden in one of the building's museums.

Many politicians associated with Bolsonaro are choosing not to show up at the "Unshakeable Democracy" event.

One of Bolsonaro's staunchest supporters, lawmaker Carla Zambelli, said she and many in her base will ignore the gathering, which she called "a ridiculous waste of energy and public funds." Sao Paulo Gov. Tarcisio de Freitas, deemed by many supporters of the former president as a potential political heir, traveled to Europe on vacation and will not attend either.

De Souza, the political risk consultant, says the establishment's reaction to the riots was swift because the friction between Bolsonaro and other authorities, especially Supreme Court justices, was already in place before the 2022 presidential elections. But he said that doesn't mean the country's democracy has now returned to normalcy and can just move forward.

"There are trials for a first layer (of rioters)," he said. "That is an attempt to sell the idea of normalization from then onward."

But the riots by Bolsonaro supporters in Brasilia made many moderates steer away from the far-right leader.



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, left, gestures as he talks to members of the Environment Agency as he looks at flood defences during a visit to Oxford, England, Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024. Britain was hit by heavy rainfall last week following storm Henk, which led to flooding in parts of the UK. (AP)

Europe

Russian shelling kills 11: Eleven people were killed Saturday in Russian shelling in Ukraine's partially occupied Donetsk province, according to regional Gov. Vadym Filashkin. Five children were among the dead and eight further people were wounded in the attack on the Pokrovsk district, he said.

Ukraine's military claimed Saturday it successfully attacked the Saki military airbase in the west of the Russian-occupied Crimean peninsula.

"Saki airfield! All targets were hit!" Air Force commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on Telegram. He also published a photo appearing to show the airfield, though it was not immediately possible to verify the image.

Russian officials did not comment on the alleged attack, but Russia's Defense Ministry said in the early hours of Saturday that it had successfully downed four Ukrainian missiles over the peninsula overnight. Later on Saturday, the ministry reported that its air defense forces had shot down six anti-air missiles over the Black Sea.

Traffic was temporarily suspended for a third straight day on a bridge connecting the peninsula, which Moscow seized illegally in 2014, with Russia's southern Krasnodar region. The span is a crucial supply link for Russia's war effort. (AP)

Norwegian killer to sue state: Anders Behring Breivik, the Norwegian right-wing extremist who killed 77 people in a bomb and gun rampage in 2011, will try for the second time Monday to sue the Norwegian state for allegedly breaching his human rights.

Norway's worst peacetime killer claims his solitary confinement since being imprisoned in 2012 amounts to inhumane treatment under the European Convention of Human Rights.

Norway favors rehabilitation over retribution, and Breivik is held in a two-story complex with a kitchen, dining room and TV room with an Xbox, several armchairs



Oleshchuk



Breivik



Geisha apprentices pray for the victims of a powerful earthquake on Jan. 1, on their first working day of the new year in Kyoto, western Japan Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024. Inset: Snow falls as rescuers conduct a search operation around a burnt market in Wajima, Ishikawa prefecture, Japan on Sunday. (AP)



A TV screen shows a file image of North Korea's military exercise during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024. (AP)

Koreas

Pyongyang denies firing

North Korea fired artillery near sea boundary: Seoul

SEOUL, Jan 7, (AP): South Korea says North Korea has fired artillery shells near the rivals' tense sea boundary for a third straight day.

South Korea's military says the North fired more than 90 rounds on Sunday afternoon.

It says South Korea strongly urges North Korea to halt provocative acts.

Earlier, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un mocked South Korea's ability to detect weapons launches by the North on Sunday, as she denied Seoul's claim that North Korea fired artillery shells into the sea the previous day.

South Korea's military quickly dismissed her statement as "a low-level psychological warfare" and warned that it will make a stern response to any provocations by North Korea.

South Korea's military earlier said North Korea fired shells near the rivals' disputed western sea boundary for a second consecutive day on Saturday. The military said North Korea fired more than 60 rounds on Saturday, a day after launching more than 200 shells.

North Korea acknowledged it performed artillery firings on Friday but said it didn't fire a single round on Saturday.

Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, said Sunday that North Korea only detonated blasting powder simulating the sound of its coastal artillery at the seashore to test the South Korean military's detection capabilities.

"The result was clear as we expected. They misjudged the blasting sound as the sound of gunfire and conjectured it as a provocation. And they even made a false and impudent statement that the shells dropped north" of the sea boundary, Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by state media.

"I cannot but say that (South Korean) people are very pitiful as they entrust security to such blind persons and offer huge taxes to them," she said. "It is better 10 times to entrust security to a dog with a developed sense of hearing and smell."

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff responded in a statement that it closely monitors North Korean military activities. It said North Korea must stop acts that escalate tensions, saying it will "overwhelmingly" react if North Korea launches provocations.

Animosities between the two Koreas are running high because North Korea has conducted a barrage of missile tests since 2022 while South Korea has expanded its military training with the United States in a tit-for-tat cycle.

North Korea's artillery firings Friday prompted South Korea to carry out its own firing exercises. The shells launched by the two Koreas fell at a maritime buffer zone they had established under a 2018 military agreement meant to ease front-line military tensions.

Japan

Snow hinders rescues, aid deliveries as toll hits 128

Nonagenarian rescued alive 5 days after quake

WAJIMA, Japan, Jan 7, (AP): Rescue teams worked through snow to deliver supplies to isolated hamlets, six days after a powerful earthquake hit western Japan, killing at least 128 people. Heavy snowfall expected in Ishikawa Prefecture later Sunday and through the night added to the urgency.

After Monday's 7.6 magnitude tremor, 195 people were still unaccounted for, a slight decrease from the more than 200 reported earlier, and 560 people were injured. Hundreds of aftershocks have followed, rattling Noto Peninsula, where the quakes are centered.

Taiyo Matsushita walked three hours through mud to reach a supermarket in Wajima city to buy food and other supplies for his family. The home where he lives with his wife and four children, and about 20 nearby homes, are among the more than a dozen communities cut off by landslides.

Power was out, and in a matter of hours, they couldn't even use their cell phones, he told Jiji Press.

Attachment

"We want everyone to know help isn't coming to some places," Matsushita was quoted as saying by Jiji Press. "We feel such an attachment to this community. But when I think about my children, it's hard to imagine we can keep living here."

Late Saturday, a woman in her 90s was rescued from a crumbled home in Suzu, Ishikawa Prefecture, after 124 hours trapped in the rubble. She was welcomed by shouts of encouragement, although the darkness and a long blue sheet of plastic blocked her from view.

Chances for survival greatly diminished after the first 72 hours.

Of the deaths, 69 were in Wajima, 38 in Suzu, 11 in Anamizu, and the rest in smaller numbers spread among four towns. Firefighters and other disaster officials were trying to get to nine people believed to be buried under collapsed houses in Anamizu, Japanese media reports said.

Ishikawa officials say 1,370 homes were completely or partially destroyed. Many of the houses in that western

TOKYO, Jan 7, (AP): Japanese prosecutors made their first arrest Sunday in connection with a major political slush funds scandal that has rocked Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's already unpopular government.

Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office apprehended former vice-education minister Yoshitaka Ikeda on suspicion of failing to report fundraising proceeds he received from his faction within the governing Liberal Democratic Party, according to officials and local media reports.

Ikeda's faction, which used to be led by the late former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who was assassinated in 2022, has remained the largest and most influential within Kishida's ruling party. The faction is suspected of failing to report more than 600 million yen (\$4.15 million).

The former vice-minister was accused of not reporting more than 40 million yen (about \$276,500) he received from the faction as kickback from political event ticket sales, a violation of political funds control law, media reports say.

NHK television, citing prosecutors, reported that Ikeda allegedly falsified the compulsory report of his political funds' management organi-

zation by not including 48 million yen (about \$331,870) as income. The sum was quite large compared to the 10 million yen (nearly \$69,140) allegedly received by each of several others implicated in the scandal.

Ikeda's aid was also arrested Sunday.

Kishida said Sunday the arrest was "extremely regrettable" and that the party has decided to expel Ikeda. He reiterated that he took the matter seriously and his plans to set up an expert panel later this week to start discussing ways to strengthen fundraising regulations.

"We must have a strong sense of crisis and make an effort to regain public trust," Kishida told reporters.

Last year, dozens of LDP lawmakers, mostly members of the Abe faction, were accused of systematically failing to report about 600 million (\$4.15 million) yen in funds in possible violation of campaign and election laws, according to media reports. The money is alleged to have gone into unmonitored slush funds.

Kishida replaced four of his Cabinet ministers linked to the scandal in December in an attempt to mitigate the scandal that has rocked his

party and grip on power. Former top government spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno and Economy and Trade Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura were among those removed. Prosecutors reportedly interviewed the two top officials on a voluntary basis, along with several other LDP lawmakers.

Support ratings for Kishida have continued to drop, falling below 20% despite purging members of the Abe wing involved in the scandal. This move could trigger an internal power struggle within the ruling party.

The LDP has almost continually ruled postwar Japan. It has faced repeated infamy with the 1970s Lockheed bribery, an insider trading and corruption scandal in the 1980s, among other money scandals.

The current fundraising scandal is considered one of the biggest blunders in decades by the powerful party.

However, LDP's grip on power is seen unchanged as long as the opposition remains fractured, though Kishida's leadership is shaking.

The prime minister doesn't have to call a parliamentary election until 2025, but the Liberal Democratic Party has a leadership vote in September.

coastal region of the main island are aging and wooden. Cars lay tossed on cracked, bumpy roads. Snow blanketed the debris and highways. Wires dangled from lopsided poles.

More than 30,000 people who evacuated to schools, auditoriums and community facilities slept on cold floors. They trembled in fear through the aftershocks. They prayed their missing loved ones were safe. Others cried softly for those who had died.

Mikihito Kokon, one of those who had evacuated, was worried about what the snowfall might do to his home, which was still standing but a wreck.

"You don't even know where to start or where the entrance is," he sighed.

Some people were living out of their cars, and long lines formed at gas stations. Food and water supplies were short. Worries grew about snow and rainfall, which raise the risk of mudslides and further damage, as snow

collecting on roofs can flatten barely standing homes.

A fire that raged for hours gutted a major part of Wajima, and a tsunami swept through homes, sucking cars down into muddy waters.

"We're all doing our best to cope, helping each other, bringing things from home and sharing them with everyone," Kokon said. "That is how we are living right now."

Subcontinent

B'desh poll marred by violence:

Voters in Bangladesh cast ballots Sunday in a parliamentary election fraught with violence and a boycott from the main opposition party, paving the way for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League to seize a fourth consecutive term.

Days of violence including at least 18 arson attacks preceded the vote but the election day passed relatively calm. One hour before the voting closed, turnout was only 27.15%, said the Election Commission.

Security incidents, including four deaths in an arson attack on a passenger train on Friday, have intensified tensions ahead of the election that was shunned by the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its allied groups.

Authorities blamed much of the violence on the BNP, accusing it of seeking to sabotage the election. On Saturday,

detectives arrested seven men belonging to the BNP and its youth wing for their alleged involvement in the train attack. The opposition party denied any role in the incident.

On Sunday, a supporter of a candidate from the ruling Awami League was stabbed to death in Munshiganj district near Dhaka, officials said. Police did not



Sheikh Hasina



Zia

comment immediately.

A victory for the 76-year-old Hasina, the country's longest-serving leader and one of its most consequential, would come with a deeply contentious political landscape. The vote, like previous elections, has been defined by the bitter rivalry between Hasina's Awami League and BNP, led by former premier Khaleda Zia, who is ailing and under house arrest on corruption charges, which her supporters claim are politically motivated.

The two women ran the country alternatively for many years, cementing a feud that has since polarized Bangladesh's politics and fueled violence around elections. This year's vote raised questions over its credibility when there are no major challengers to take on the incumbent.

Badshah Mia, a rickshaw puller in Dhaka, said he wouldn't vote given the limited choices, adding that the atmosphere

didn't exude that of "a fair election."

Sakibul Hasan Chowdhury, a businessman, felt the same. "There is no opposition and no candidate of my choice. So how would I benefit from voting?"

A small business owner, Habibur Rahman, said he was voting for the ruling party candidate in his constituency but added that there didn't seem to be much of a turnout.

Critics and rights groups say the vote follows a troubling pattern, where the past two elections held under Hasina were sullied by allegations of vote-rigging - which authorities have denied - and another boycott by opposition parties.

The government has rejected a months-long demand by the BNP to have a neutral caretaker government administer Sunday's vote.

The government has defended the election, saying 27 parties and 404 independent candidates are participating. (AP)

Gold price stabilized at \$2,045 per ounce last week

Gold price stabilized at the end of last week's trading to USD 2,045 per ounce, after achieving high of USD 2,060 per ounce amid the geopolitical and technical factors on the yellow metal, said Dar Al-Sabaek.

In the report released on Sunday by the company, the prices of gold futures contracts for delivery next February stabilized at USD 2,049 per ounce, ending a series of gains that lasted three weeks,

as traders reset their bets on the first cut in the US interest rate.

The metals markets are anticipating a decrease or stabilization of the US interest rate in the first quarter of this year, mainly in conjunction with the emergence of economic data indicating an increase in employment in the US market, as 216 thousand jobs were added recently, bringing the unemployment rate to stabilize at 3.7 percent, the report added.

The euro zone had also recorded an inflation rate of 2.9 percent in December meanwhile the dollar index, stabilized at 103.1 points.

It also explained that there are possibilities of decreasing the US interest rate by 25 points during March, noting that the current week will witness the emergence of new inflation data, followed by US foreign trade data and producer prices. (KUNA)

Oil sector to award contracts worth KD35m

The Al-Anba daily has learned that the oil sector will witness the awarding of two tenders in both the Kuwait Oil Company and the Kuwait National Petroleum Company with a total value of 35 million dinars.

The daily added, the Central Agency for Public Tenders has agreed to award a tender for the maintenance services for wireless communications systems affiliated with the Kuwait

Oil Company at a value of 15.25 million dinars. The agency also agreed to award a tender to replace the old electrical stations at Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery for 19.83 million dinars for a period of 36 months.

The oil sector is awaiting the conclusion of many tenders during the first quarter of 2024, especially with the ambitious plans of the Kuwait Oil Company to issue about 10 tenders

worth \$6.4 billion to develop production.

The Kuwait National Petroleum Company also plans to spend about one billion dinars (\$3.26 billion) to establish a number of projects, including establishing a fuel depot for local marketing, completing the construction of 100 new fuel stations, establishing an oil berth at the Al-Ahmadi refinery, and a new facility for the Shuaiba oil berth.

Market Movements

07-01-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE	-	DFM	+0.02	4,087.99	
JAPAN	-	Nikkei	+0.27	33,377.28	
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	+0.41	6,629.64	
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	+1.82	12,145.45	
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-0.18	64,537.19	
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	-0.23	25,350.28	

Business

216,00 added to the labor force in Dec

US labor market continues to defy expectations

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

Institute of Director's confidence index
The Institute of Director's (IoD) confidence index showed that the gap between economy-optimists and economy-pessimists has fallen to -28 in December from -21 in November. The figure indicates that company directors are getting back to their pessimistic stance on the economy, as they start to hesitate to take investment decisions. "Although aspects of the business environment have improved in the last couple of months, particularly with regard to inflation, this is not yet exerting a meaningful impact on business decision-making," IoD policy director Roger Barker emphasized that for significant economic growth to happen in 2024, "business is in dire need of a boost."

Jolts job openings

Adding more signs that the resilient US jobs market is steadily cooling, openings fell in November to their lowest level since March 2021. There were 8.79 million job openings in November, down from October's upwardly revised 8.85 million and roughly in line with expectations of 8.77 million openings. Openings fell by 62,000, though the rate of vacancies as a measure of employment was unchanged at 5.3%. Economic activity is beginning to show signs of cooling as interest rates remain at a 22-year high. The ratio of job openings to available workers fell to 1.4 to 1, still elevated but down sharply from the 2 to 1 level seen throughout 2022.

ISM manufacturing PMI

The latest reports showed that the US manufacturing sector is still in contraction. The ISM manufacturing report for December registered a reading of 47.4 (anything below 50 indicates a contraction), up 0.7 points from November and slightly stronger than the 47.2 estimate. Meanwhile, employment rose to 48.1, a strong 2.3-point

Highlights

- US company directors are pessimistic on the economy.
- The US manufacturing sector remains in contraction.
- In December, 216K jobs were added to the US labor market.
- The latest CPI reading to come out of the Eurozone was in line with the European Central Bank's expectations, at 2.9%.
- In China, the Caixin General Manufacturing PMI unexpectedly climbed to 50.8.

monthly increase.

FOMC meeting minutes

The latest to come out of the Federal Reserve is that we might have certainly seen the end of the interest rate hike cycle and have entered the phase of anticipating rate cuts. Fed officials have affirmed that progress has been made in the battle to bring down inflation. "In discussing the policy outlook, participants viewed the policy rate as likely at or near its peak for this tightening cycle, though they noted that the actual policy path will depend on how the economy evolves," the minutes said. The ever so cautious federal reserve reiterated "the importance of maintaining a careful and data-dependent approach to making monetary policy decisions."

Non-farm employment change

In December, more workers were hired than expected, with the latest Non-Farm Employment change showing that a hefty 216K workers were hired versus the expected 168K figure. The bulk of jobs added in recent months have largely been in a small number of sectors, mainly leisure and hospitality. The latest report indicates that markets expectations for the Federal Reserve to start cutting rates in March are somewhat

Rates - 7th January, 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1042	1.0875	1.1046	1.0941	1.0890	1.1040	1.0990
GBP	1.2729	1.2607	1.2770	1.2716	1.2610	1.2805	1.2722
JPY	140.82	140.80	145.98	144.65	143.40	147.30	142.60
CHF	0.8415	0.8399	0.8576	0.8498	0.8350	0.8600	1.1880

premature. On an annual basis, 2.7 million jobs were added in 2023, as opposed to the 4.8 million jobs added in 2022, proving

that the tightness of the labor market is in fact cooling down following the Fed's vigorous rate hike cycle. Additionally, the unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.7%. Similar to the previous month, average hourly earnings rose 0.4% in December.

The US Dollar index closed the week at 102.412.

Europe

Eurozone inflation

The latest CPI reading to come out of the Eurozone was in line with the European Central Bank's expectations, at 2.9%. This backs the ECB's case to keep interest rates higher for longer, despite markets' expectations of swift rate cuts. The ECB believes that inflation had reached a low point of 2.4% in November and will now roam around the 2.5%-3% range before falling to its 2% target in 2025. Global political tensions are playing a major role in impacting prices and that could have longer-

term consequences for the European economy. Nevertheless, markets are still expecting the ECB to cut interest rates six times this year, while policymakers argue that this will not be the case.

The EUR/USD currency pair ended the week at 1.0941.

Asia Pacific

China Caixin General Manufacturing PMI

In China, the Caixin General Manufacturing PMI unexpectedly climbed to 50.8 in the latest publication released in December, exceeding expectations of a drop to 50.4. The data shows an increase in output at the fastest pace in 7 months, as well as an increase in new orders which rose to its highest level since February. Meanwhile, new export orders fell at the softest pace in seven months, and purchasing activity stagnated.

The USD/CNY currency pair ended the week at 7.1395.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30735.

Kuwait import bill up 5.3% in Q3 of '23

Sector acquired 51.2% of shares

Institutional, corporate sector emerges as biggest participant at Boursa Kuwait in '23

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: According to the Kuwait Clearing Company's report covering the trading volume in the official market from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, the institutional and corporate sector has emerged as the predominant participant in the Boursa Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily.

This sector acquired 51.2% of the shares, marking a significant increase from 30.5% in 2022.

Additionally, it accounted for 51.1% of the total value of shares purchased, compared to 34% in the previous year.

The institutional and corporate sector sold shares worth 5.46 billion dinars and bought shares worth 5.45 billion dinars, resulting in a net trading turnover of approximately 9.97 million dinars.

The individual sector ranked as the second-largest contributor, with a reduced share. It acquired 32.9% of the total value of shares purchased (down from 38.2% in 2022) and 32.2% of the total value of shares sold (down from 39.6% in 2022).

Individual investors bought shares worth 3.51 billion dinars and sold shares worth 3.439 billion dinars, resulting in a net trading volume of approximately 71.242 million dinars.

The customer accounts sector (portfolios) was the third-largest contributor, with a decreased share of 13.0% of the total value of shares sold (down from 25.8% in 2022) and 12.7% of the total value of shares purchased (down from 24.4% in 2022).

This sector sold shares worth 1.386 billion dinars and bought shares worth 1.352 billion dinars, resulting in a net trading volume of approximately 33.740 million dinars.

The investment funds sector, the last contributor to market liquidity, saw a decrease in its share, accounting for 3.6% of the total value of shares sold (down from 4.1% in 2022) and 3.3% of the total value of shares purchased (down from 3.5% in 2022). This sector sold shares worth 385.133 million dinars and bought shares worth 357.590 dinars, resulting in a net trading volume of approximately 27.534 million dinars.

Kuwaiti investors retained their

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7, (KUNA): This is the continuation of important events that took place in 2023 and had a bearing on the world economy.

July 28: The European Commission approved a 246 million euro (USD 271 million) Dutch scheme to support the production of renewable hydrogen.

July 28: The Austrian gas conglomerate OMV announced discovering the largest gas field in the country for 40 years ago.

Aug 1: UK's first drone delivery service for mail launched initially for three months.

Aug 1: Central Bank of Russia launched the Digital Russian Ruble, to help Moscow conduct foreign trade in the face of Western sanctions.

Aug 1: Fitch Ratings downgraded its US debt rating from the highest AAA rating to AA+.

Aug 3: Russia announced cutting oil exports by 300,000 barrels per day to ensure the oil market remains balanced.

Aug 3: The Bank of England increased interest rate for the 14th time in a row, to 5.25% as UK inflation stays high.

Aug 4: Italy's industrial production decreased by 0.8% during June, on an annual basis.

Aug 4: Thailand hosted more than 15 million tourists in the first seven months of 2023, increasing by 384 percent as compared to the same period last year.

Aug 8: Moody's cut credit ratings of several small to mid-sized US banks, following Fitch downgrading US debt rating.

Aug 9: US treasury secretary prohibited certain US investments in Chinese artificial intelligence for national security risks.

Aug 11: British economy saw a 0.2% growth in the second quarter of 2023.

Aug 15: Japan's economic growth jumped at an annual pace of 6% in the April-June period, marking the third straight quarter of growth as exports and inbound tourism recovered.

Aug 16: UK official data showed consumer price index (CPI) inflation rate fell to 6.8 percent.

Aug 17: US mortgage rates surged, rising to their highest level in 21 years.

Aug 18: A container ship, which set sail from Ukraine's Odesa port, reached the Istanbul Strait, after Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain deal.

position as the largest investors in the Boursa Kuwait, acquiring 83.7% of the total value of shares purchased (up from 79.1% in 2022) and accounting for 82.0% of the total value of shares sold (down from 84.2% in 2022). The net most purchased trades for Kuwaiti investors amounted to approximately 177,568 million dinars.

Other investors had a 13.8% share of the total value of shares purchased, buying shares worth 1.474 billion dinars. They accounted for

13.2% of the total value of shares sold, with shares worth approximately 1.414 billion dinars. Their net purchase trading amounted to about 59.788 million dinars.

Investors from Gulf Cooperation Council countries held a 4.7% share of the total value of shares sold (up from 2.9% in 2022), with shares worth 502.991 million dinars. Their share of shares purchased was 2.5% (down from 2.7% in 2022), with shares worth 265.635 million dinars. The net trading for this group

amounted to approximately 237.356 million dinars.

The distribution among nationalities changed, with Kuwaitis making up about 82.9%, traders from other nationalities accounting for 13.5%, and traders from Gulf Cooperation Council countries making up 3.6%. This marked a shift from the distribution in 2022, which was approximately 81.7% for Kuwaitis, 15.5% for traders from other nationalities, and 2.8% for GCC countries traders.

KD2.8 bln spent on imports

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Data from the Central Administration of Statistics indicates a 5.3% increase in Kuwait's import bill during the third quarter of 2023, rising to 2.8 billion dinars compared to 2.6 billion dinars in the same period in 2022. However, the trade balance surplus declined by 28.3% to 3.8 billion dinars from 5.3 billion dinars in Q3 2022.

In specific categories, Kuwait's imports of telephone devices rose by 24.3% to 92.8 million dinars, while the gold import bill decreased by 36.4% to 78 million dinars in Q3 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Cosmetic imports also saw a notable increase of 22.8%, reaching 26.7 million dinars.

In the realm of transportation and

personal items, Kuwait imported motor vehicles worth 349 million dinars and jewelry and its parts totaling 70.3 million dinars, marking a 20.6% decline from Q3 2022. Meanwhile, imports of rice increased by 15.2% to 23.2 million dinars, and perfume imports surged by 44.1% to 18.6 million dinars.

The data also reveals a 17.1% decrease in the total value of Kuwait's exports in Q3 2023, amounting to 6.64 billion dinars compared to 8.01 billion dinars in the same period of 2022. Notably, oil exports totaled about 6.2 billion dinars, down from approximately 7.5 billion dinars in Q3 2022.

China secured the top spot in countries exporting goods to Kuwait in Q3 2023, contributing around 589 million dinars to Kuwait's imports. The United Arab Emirates followed with exports worth 254 million dinars, and the United States of America ranked third with exports valued at 235 million dinars. Regarding Kuwaiti exports, the UAE took the lead with 83 million dinars, followed by India with 81 million dinars, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with 53 million dinars.

Oman demonitizes certain banknote denominations

MUSCAT, Jan 7, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) Sunday declared a discontinuation of specific banknote denominations, as these banknotes will cease to be recognized as legal currency after a 360-day duration from the announcement.

The affected notes are those launched prior to the sixth issue of 2020, with issuances ranging from November 1995 to 2019, the CBO said in a statement.

The denominations facing discontinuation encompass a wide range, including 1,500 baisas, 200 baisas, 100 baisas from November 1995.

They also include OMR 50, OMR

20, OMR 10, and OMR 5 from November 2000. A commemorative OMR 1 note from 2005, a commemorative OMR 20 note from 2010, OMR 50, OMR 10, and OMR 5 notes from 2011 and 2012.

A commemorative OMR 1 note from 2015 and an OMR 50 note from 2019. These banknotes will cease to be recognized as legal currencies after a 360-day duration from the announcement.

The CBO has strongly advised all individuals in possession of these notes to exchange them within the designated timeframe. Post this period, these denominations will be considered illegal and non-negotiable currencies.



Launching of the new currency notes

KFH warns against investment fraud

As part of its continuous support to Diraya campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) advises customers to keep caution when receiving investment offers messages from unknown parties. While themessages may entail investment opportunities with high returns in a short period of time, they are considered one of the latest fraud approaches that mainly aim to steal customers' bank information.

In a pressrelease, KFH explained that fraudsterscontinue developing new means to lure customers and steal their account data and their money. The latest of which is fake investment opportunities, which entails marketing a deceptive investment offer targeting people who want to profit quickly and

pushes them to rush into handing over information that reconsidered confidential which ultimately results in the theft of their data and funds.

KFH pointed out that some scammers take advantage of people's desirefor quick profit by impersonating an investment fund, government agency or a famous business influencer. They reach out to customers via phone, e-mail or social media accounts to speculate in currencies, precious metals, foreign stocks, cryptocurrencies, bonds or fake investment and real estate funds, while the main goal of fraudsters is to obtain bank data when customers log in before they start trading.

KFH invites those wishing to invest to contactlicensed banks and companies and deal with trusted

parties to provide investment advice. The bank also urges customers to avoid suspicious communications, invitations, fake websites, and online platforms. It stressed the necessity to verify the authenticity of the investment entity before disclosing any information or taking any step.

Diraya awareness campaign, launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collaboration with local banks, aims to spread banking literacy among the society and raise awareness on financial issues and how to protect assets from any fraud attempts. It also aims to highlight the role of the banking sector and the products the bank provides by presenting and posting instructions and guidance through media and social media platforms.



Diraya logo

Relations strain further as Taiwanese election looms

China hits back with sanctions over US arms sales to Taiwan

BEIJING, Jan 7, (AP): China announced sanctions Sunday on five American defense-related companies in response to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and U.S. sanctions on Chinese companies and individuals.

The sanctions will freeze any property the companies have in China and prohibit organizations and individuals in China from doing business with them, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement posted online.

It was unclear what impact, if any, the sanctions would have on the companies, BAE Systems Land and Armaments, Alliant Techsystems Operations, AeroVironment, Viasat and Data Link Solutions. Such sanctions are often mostly symbolic as American defense contractors generally don't sell to China.

The Foreign Ministry said the

U.S. moves harmed China's sovereignty and security interests, undermined peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and violated the rights and interests of Chinese companies and individuals.

"The Chinese government remains unwavering in our resolve to safeguard national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity and protect the lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies and citizens," the ministry statement said.

Contested

The announcement was made less than a week ahead of a presidential election in Taiwan that is being contested in large part over how the government should manage its relationship with China, which claims the self-governing island as its territory



A man walks past a screen in the BAE Systems chalet at the Farnborough Airshow in Farnborough, England, on July 16, 2018. (AP)

and says it must come under its rule. The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not specify which arms deal or which

U.S. sanctions China was responding to, though spokesperson Wang Wenbin had warned three weeks ago

that China would take countermeasures following the U.S. government's approval of a \$300 million military package for Taiwan in December.

The deal includes equipment, training and equipment repair to maintain Taiwan's command, control and military communications capabilities.

The U.S. said the sale would support the modernization of Taiwan's armed forces and the maintenance of a credible defense. "The proposed sale will improve the recipient's capability to meet current and future threats by enhancing operational readiness," a news release from the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said.

Taiwan is a major flashpoint in U.S.-China relations that analysts worry could explode into military

conflict between the two powers. China says that U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are interference in its domestic affairs.

The Chinese military regularly sends fighter planes and ships into and over the waters around Taiwan, in part to deter the island's government from declaring formal independence. An invasion doesn't appear imminent, but the constant military activity serves as a reminder that the threat is ever-present.

The U.S. switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, but it is bound by its own laws to ensure that Taiwan has the ability to defend itself. America and its allies sail warships through the Taiwan Strait, a 160-kilometer (100-mile)-wide waterway that separates the island from China.

Alaska Airlines fuselage blowout raises alarms

Boeing faces worldwide scrutiny as FAA grounds some 737 Max planes

PORTLAND, Oregon, Jan 7, (AP): Boeing faces new scrutiny about the safety of its best-selling plane after federal officials announced the temporary grounding of some Boeing 737 Max planes on Saturday, following a harrowing flight in which an Alaska Airlines jetliner was left with a gaping hole in its side.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it was requiring immediate inspections of some Max 9 planes operated by U.S. airlines or flown in the United States by foreign carriers.

The FAA's emergency order, which it said will affect about 171 planes worldwide, is the latest blow to Boeing over the Max lineup of jets, which were involved in two deadly crashes shortly after their debut.

On Friday, a fuselage panel blew out on an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 seven minutes after takeoff from Portland, Oregon. The rapid loss of cabin pressure pulled the clothes off a child and caused oxygen masks to drop from the ceiling, but miraculously none of the 171 passengers and six members were injured. Pilots made a safe emergency landing.

Hours after the terrifying incident, Alaska Airlines announced that it would ground its entire fleet of 65 Max 9s for inspections and maintenance. CEO Ben Minicucci said Alaska expects the inspections to be completed "in the next few days."

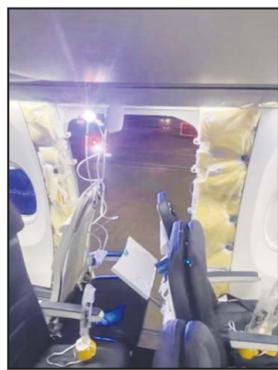
Inspected

Alaska said on Saturday that the affected areas on 18 of its Max 9s were inspected during recent, intense maintenance work and were cleared to return to carrying passengers.

Even the short grounding disrupted the airline - the Max 9 accounts for more than one-fourth of Alaska's fleet - and its passengers. On Saturday, Alaska canceled more than 100 flights, or 15% of its schedule, by late morning on the West Coast, according to FlightAware.

United Airlines said it had inspected 33 of its 79 Max 9s, and pulling the planes from service had caused about 60 canceled flights.

Photos showed a hole in the Alaska jet where an emergency exit is installed when planes are configured to carry a maximum number of passengers. Alaska plugs those doors because its 737 Max 9 jets don't have enough seats to trigger the requirement for another emergency exit.



This photo provided by an unnamed source shows the damaged part of an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9, Flight 1282, which was forced to return to Portland International Airport on Friday, Jan. 5, 2024. (AP)

The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board said they would investigate Friday's incident.

Boeing declined a request to make an executive available for comment. The company, based in Arlington, Virginia, issued a statement saying it supported the FAA's decision to require immediate inspections. Boeing said it was providing technical help to the investigators.

Analysts said the extent of the damage to Boeing's brand will depend on what investigators determine caused the blowout.

Richard Aboulafia, a longtime aerospace analyst and consultant, said if the blowout is traced to a manufacturing issue it would put more pressure on Boeing to change its processes, and cash-generating deliveries of new planes could be slowed.

Aboulafia said, however, he doesn't expect any change in Boeing's sales of the planes "unless the situation is worse than it seems." Airlines are snapping up new, more fuel-efficient planes from Boeing and Airbus to meet strong demand for travel coming out of the pandemic.

The plane involved in Friday's incident is brand-new - it began carrying passengers in November and has made only 145 flights, according to FlightRadar24, a flight-tracking service.

The Max - the Max 8 and Max 9 differ mainly in size - is the newest version of Boeing's venerable 737, a twin-engine, single-aisle plane frequently used on U.S. domestic flights.

More than a decade ago, Boeing considered designing and building an entirely new plane to replace the 737. But afraid of losing sales to European rival Airbus, which was marketing a more fuel-efficient version of its similarly sized A320, Boeing decided to take the shorter path of tweaking the 737 - and the Max was born.

A Max 8 jet operated by Lion Air crashed in Indonesia in 2018, and an Ethiopian Airlines Max 8 crashed in 2019. Regulators around the world grounded the planes for nearly two years while Boeing changed an automated flight control system implicated in the crashes.

Federal prosecutors and Congress questioned whether Boeing had cut corners in its rush to get the Max approved quickly, and with a minimum of training required for pilots. In 2021, Boeing settled a criminal investigation by agreeing to pay \$2.5 billion, including a \$244 million fine. The company blamed two relatively low-level employees for deceiving the Federal Aviation Administration about flaws in the flight-control system.

Robert Clifford, a Chicago lawyer who is representing families of passengers killed in the Ethiopian crash, said Friday's incident raised questions of whether regulators were too quick to let Max planes return to flying. He accused Boeing of putting profits over safety.

"This is a company that went from being the gold standard in engineering expertise and precision to now a company that seems like it's at the bottom of the barrel," he said.

Boeing has estimated in financial reports that fallout from the two fatal crashes has cost it more than \$20 billion. It has reached confidential settlements with most of the families of passengers who died in the crashes.

After a pause following the crashes, the airlines resumed buying the Max. But the plane has been plagued by problems unrelated to Friday's blowout.

Questions about components from suppliers have held up deliveries at times. Last year, the FAA told pilots to limit use of an anti-ice system on the Max in dry conditions because of concern that inlets around the engines could overheat and break away, possibly striking the plane.

US biotech company halts sales of 'DNA kits' in Tibet

Lawmakers mull more export controls on China

WASHINGTON, Jan 7, (AP): A U.S. biotech company has halted sales of its DNA testing products in the Chinese ethnic region of Tibet, as lawmakers mull export controls to keep Beijing from using American products to conduct massive surveillance of its own citizens.

Thermo Fisher, based in Waltham, Mass., said in a statement that it made the decision in mid-2023 to cease sales of human identification products in Tibet "based on a number of factors." It did not specify the "factors." The news site Axios first revealed Thermo Fisher's decision this week.

Measures

The move by the biotech company, which in 2019 took similar measures in the ethnic region of Xinjiang, came at a time of concerns on the Capitol Hill over Beijing's human rights record. About a year ago, a bipartisan group of lawmakers demanded to know if the company was certain its equipment was not used to aid or abet rights abuses in China, following reports that the Chinese government had been collecting DNA data from hundreds of thousands of Tibetans. Beijing faces criticism for its rule in Tibet, after the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader for most Tibetans, was forced to flee in 1959 when a revolt failed.

China has denied the allegation. "It is groundless accusation saying that the Chinese government is collecting DNA data from ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and Xizang to strengthen surveillance," said Liu Pengyu, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, referring to Tibet by its Chinese name of Xizang. "China is a country under the rule of law, and the privacy of Chinese citizens is fully protected by law, regardless of their ethnicity."

The company's action reflects the intensifying scrutiny U.S. firms face when doing business with China. The Biden administration says it looks to



Exile Tibetans hold placards during a street protest against U.S. based company Thermo Fisher Scientific, in Dharamshala, India, Feb. 3, 2023. (AP)

protect national security and press China on human rights while maintaining cooperation and keeping tensions from spiraling out of control. It says it seeks to "responsibly manage" the U.S.-China economic relationship.

The administration last August restricted U.S. investments in sensitive technologies that could boost China's military powers, following a ban on most advanced computer chips. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said the U.S. will use its tools to protect human rights, and the U.S. already bans import of goods made with forced labor in the ethnic region of Xinjiang in China's northwest.

Beijing argues that Washington is using the human rights issue to suppress China's growth.

"China opposes the relevant parties politicizing normal economic cooperation and stopping cooperation with China based on groundless lies," Liu said.

In a January 2023 response to U.S. lawmakers, Thermo Fisher said it was confident that its products were "being used for their intended use in Tibet, namely police casework and forensics." In its statement emailed to the AP on Thursday, Thermo Fisher said the sales of its human identification products in Tibet had been "consistent with routine forensic investigation in an area of this size." It declined further

comment. Lawmakers and rights advocates applauded Thermo Fisher's decision to pull out of Tibet but urged the company to do more.

"I remain concerned that the continued sale of these products throughout the rest of China will continue to enable the CCP's techno totalitarian surveillance state," said Rep. Mike Gallagher, chair of the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. "Thermo Fisher needs to immediately stop the sale of all DNA collection kits to all of China."

Rep. Chris Smith, chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, said the decision by Thermo-Fisher was "a long-overdue step to remove the company from further complicity in egregious human rights abuses."

The U.S. Commerce Department should continue to make "more systematic efforts" to prevent American companies from working with China's police and security apparatus in Tibet, Smith said.

"There is much more work to be done to starve the globe's dictators and authoritarians of the PRC's technological tools of repression - particularly when abetted by U.S. corporations," the congressman said, referring to China by its official name, the People's Republic of China, or the PRC.

The Conversation

AI reveals 75% more fishing vessels than AIS data suggests

Humans race to harness ocean's potential to power economic growth

By Jennifer Raynor
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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

Humans are racing to harness the ocean's vast potential to power global economic growth. Worldwide, ocean-based industries such as fishing, shipping and energy production generate at least US\$1.5 trillion in economic activity each year and support 31 million jobs. This value has been increasing exponentially over the past 50 years and is expected to double by 2030.

Transparency in monitoring this "blue acceleration" is crucial to prevent environmental degradation, overexploitation of fisheries and marine resources, and lawless behavior such as illegal fishing and human trafficking. Open information also will make countries better able to manage vital ocean resources effectively. But the sheer size of the ocean has made tracking industrial activities at a broad scale impractical - until now.

A newly published study in the journal Nature combines satellite images, vessel GPS data and artificial intelligence to reveal human industrial activities across the ocean over a five-year period. Researchers at Global Fishing Watch, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing ocean governance through increased transparency of human activity at sea, led this study, in collaboration

with me and our colleagues at Duke University, University of California, Santa Barbara and SkyTruth.

We found that a remarkable amount of activity occurs outside of public monitoring systems. Our new map and data provide the most comprehensive public picture available of industrial uses of the ocean.

Our research builds on existing technology to provide a much more complete picture than has been available until now.

For example, many vessels carry a device called an automatic identification system, or AIS, that automatically broadcasts the vessel's identity, position, course and speed. These devices communicate with other AIS devices nearby to improve situational awareness and reduce the chances of vessel collisions at sea. They also transmit to shore-based transponders and satellites, which can be used to monitor vessel traffic and fishing activity.

However, AIS systems have blind spots. Not all vessels are required to use them, certain regions have poor AIS reception, and vessels engaged in illegal activities may disable AIS devices or tamper with location broadcasts. To avoid these problems, some governments require fishing vessels to use proprietary vessel monitoring systems, but the associated vessel location data is usually confidential.

Some offshore structures, such as oil platforms and wind turbines, also use AIS to guide service vessels, monitor nearby vessel traffic and improve navigational safety. However, location data for offshore structures are often incom-

plete, outdated or kept confidential for bureaucratic or commercial reasons.

We filled these gaps by using artificial intelligence models to identify fishing vessels, nonfishing vessels and fixed infrastructure in 2 million gigabytes of satellite-based radar images and optical images taken across the ocean between 2017 and 2021. We also matched these results to 53 billion AIS vessel position reports to determine which vessels were publicly trackable at the time of the image.

Remarkably, we found that about 75% of the fishing vessels we detected were missing from public AIS monitoring systems, with much of that activity taking place around Africa and South Asia. These previously invisible vessels radically changed our knowledge about the scale, scope and location of fishing activity.

For example, public AIS data wrongly suggests that Asia and Europe have comparable amounts of fishing within their borders. Our mapping reveals that Asia dominates: For every 10 fishing vessels we found on the water, seven were in Asia while only one was in Europe. Similarly, AIS data shows about 10 times more fishing on the European side of the Mediterranean compared with the African side - but our map shows that fishing activity is roughly equal across the two areas.

For other vessels, which are mostly transport- and energy-related, about 25% were missing from public AIS monitoring systems. Many missing vessels were in locations with poor AIS reception, so it is possible that they broadcast their locations but satellites did not pick up the transmission. (AP)

Sponsorship falls within ABK's comprehensive framework of social responsibility: Behbehani

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait sponsors Arab Elite Tennis Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait has recently announced sponsoring the third Arab Elite Tennis Championship that was held in the Qatari Capital, Doha, in the period from 24 to 28 December, at Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex, with 16 players participating from nine Arab countries and that was concluded with the Tunisian player, Mohammad Aziz Douqas, winning first place over the Syrian, Mohammad Hazem, in the final match.

This sponsorship is a reflection of ABK's keenness to consolidate its presence in the region, contribute to the success of diverse events, and establish valuable business partnerships that highlight the pivotal role the Bank plays in the field of societal responsibility whether locally or regionally, hence, resulting in enhanced activities as part of its social responsibility program.

The event was attended by Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait's Head of Private Banking, Mr. Mohammed Talib Behbehani, and Corporate Communications' Senior Manager, Ms. Yasmeen Al Salem, who participated in the coronation ceremony that was held after the final match which witnessed fierce competition among players. On this occasion, Mr. Behbehani commented that sponsoring this event reflects the strong business relationship that is established between Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait and the Arab Tennis Federation and falls within the Bank's comprehensive and diverse social responsibility program. He, further, pointed out that it was not the Bank's first sponsorship of the Arab Elite Tennis Championship nor will it be the last as the coming period will witness sponsoring more sports tournaments.

Moreover, Mr. Behbehani shed the light on the significant role this tournament plays as a preparatory station for Arab tennis players to participate in future international championships and the fact that it includes an elite group of the



Mohammed Talib Behbehani participating in crowning the winners.

players in the Arab world attributed to sponsoring such a sophisticated event.

Commenting on the Bank's sponsorship of the championship, he emphasized the great attention placed by Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait on sports and encouraging young people to

engage in physical activity to maintain their overall well-being.

ABK has also contributed to the success of many sports tournaments which lead to strengthening its position in the Kuwaiti society among all segments and that align with its

social responsibility strategy which undergoes continuous improvement, he added.

Concluding his statement, Mr. Behbehani praised the great efforts that have been exerted by the Arab Tennis Federation, led by Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah that he attributed the success of this tournament to, expressing his pride and pleasure for the Bank's participation in the event which strengthens its societal presence and help meet the needs of all customer segments in the Kuwaiti society.

Since its establishment in 1967, ABK has progressed to become one of the leading Kuwaiti banks in the region that offers a wide array of personal, corporate, and private banking products and services. ABK also provides a broad range of local, regional, and global investment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 44 branches.

This is in addition to ABK's three branches located in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) in the United Arab Emirates, servicing both Kuwaiti and Emirati individual and corporate clients.

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' awareness campaign.

Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services.

Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

For more information about ABK, please follow the Bank's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.



Behbehani

Branch open 24 hours a day

BEC opens new branch at Airport T1

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Bahrain Exchange Company W.L.L. (BEC), one of Kuwait's leading worldwide money transfer and foreign exchange company, is proud to announce the opening of its new branch at Airport Terminal 1 (T1).

In line with BEC's strategy to improve customer service & efficiency, the new branch is conveniently located and is easily accessible from the departure and arrival gates of Terminal 1.

The branch is open 24 hours a day, offering customers a range of fast and reliable international money transfer products, including Cash Pick-up and Credit to Account through EzRemit, Transfast and MoneyGram, as well as a choice of over 40 global currencies to buy or sell at competitive market rates.

Commenting on the new branch Mr. Mathews Varughese, General Manager of BEC said, 'We are constantly working on getting closer to our customers.'

'Capitalizing on high foot airport traffic and providing good service to our diverse customer base is what we aim for.'

BEC currently has 64 branches conveniently located across Kuwait and specialises in sending money around the globe safely and quickly to over 46,000 locations in 30 countries.

Its global reach is extended to over 200 countries and territories through its partnership with MoneyGram an international remittance company. BEC also has its own online money transfer service allowing customer to send money fast, safe and securely from the comfort of their own home or office.



BEC's new branch at Airport Terminal 1.

وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا (القرآن)

Dedicated to
Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
May Allah Almighty bestow mercy on his soul

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Blood Donation Drive poster

New flights to Antalya, Trabzon in SunExpress winter 2023 and summer 2024 flight schedules



SunExpress Airlines PR photo.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: SunExpress, a joint venture of Lufthansa and Turkish Airlines, will operate its inaugural flights from Kuwait International Airport (KWI) to Trabzon International Airport (TZX) on February 8, 2024 and to Antalya International Airport (AYT) on April 4, 2024. The airline, which has been awarded "Best Leisure Airline in Europe" by Skytrax, will offer 2 weekly flights to Trabzon from Winter 2023 onwards and to Antalya during 2024 summer season.

"With the best leisure airline in Europe, who wouldn't want to get on those flights to Antalya and Trabzon? Our vibrant and diverse home city offers everything that makes for a successful holiday: great hospitality, fascinating culture, crystal-clear water, beautiful beaches, excellent cuisine, and unbeatable value for money. In Trabzon, our guests can explore cities rich cultural

heritage from the oldest ages of history with its semi-tropical climate at the Black Sea Coast Region" says Peter Glade, SunExpress Commercial Director.

Trabzon will be served with 2 weekly flights on each Monday and Thursday starting from February 2024 until the end of October 2024 and Antalya with 2 weekly flights on each Thursday and Sunday starting from April 2024 until the end of October 2024. SunExpress will also offer several connections from Kuwait via Antalya to destinations across Europe.

Caesars Int'l Travel to fly SunExpress

SunExpress has chosen Caesars Int'l Travel Co.W.L.L as its General Sales Agent (GSA) in Kuwait. Caesars Int'l Travel will be responsible for sales and marketing at the Kuwait International Airport.

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The Conversation

War and violence stories can distress and negatively impact children

By Robin Gurwitch
Duke University

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

Violent photos and videos - whether from conflicts abroad or shootings near home - are commonplace, even ubiquitous, on television and social media today. The impact on children can be debilitating.

SciLine interviewed Dr. Robin Gurwitch, a psychologist and professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University Medical Center, who discussed how these images and stories affect a child's mental and emotional health; how the conversation about war and violence differs with young children, tweens and teens; and how to recognize signs that children are struggling with recent events.

Below are some highlights from the discussion. Answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

How do images and stories about war and violence affect children's mental and emotional health?

Robin Gurwitch: The very short answer is, it's not good. These events take a toll on our youth. We know from much academic work in this area that we see an increase in anxiety, in worries, in fears, in depression and, sometimes, an increase in anger. We see an increased sense of hopelessness, and then, at the extreme, an increase in risk for suicide.

How should parents prepare for a conversation with their children about hate and hate crimes, war and violence?

Robin Gurwitch: Before we even begin to talk to our children, as adults we have to put in place our thoughts and feelings. What are the values and beliefs that we hold in the face of these types of events? Talk to friends and other trusted relatives to make sure that you have a handle on your emotions.

What specific advice do you have for talking to very young children - and to older children?

Robin Gurwitch: With really young children, under preschool age and younger, they probably don't know and won't understand what's going on. Yet they can sense your distress. So making sure you keep their routines as consistent as possible will be helpful.

When we start talking about school-age children - assume they know.

They've heard about it on the school bus. They've heard about it from friends. They've seen it on TV when they've walked through the living room.

With them, I think you start the conversation saying, "There's been ..." And then fill in the event you're going to talk about. "There's been a shooting in Maine." "There's been a hurricane in Mexico." "There's been a terrorist attack in Israel and now there's a war, and that's really hard, but I want to talk to you about it. Tell me what you've heard about it."

Allow them to have that ability to tell you what they've heard. Listen for and gently correct misinformation, rumors and misinterpretations. And then follow that up with, "How is that making you feel?" As they share their feelings with you, accept those rather than try to talk them out of them. It doesn't work for adults, and it won't work for children.

What specific advice do you have for talking to tweens and teens?

Robin Gurwitch: Sometimes when we talk or try to talk to our tweens and teens, they give us the shoulder shrug, or they say, "I'm fine," or nothing, or "Why do I need to tell you what I think?" So sometimes we may take a different approach with them.

Instead of saying, "Tell me what you know about the war happening between Israel and Hamas," you may phrase it a little differently and say, "You know, the war between Israel and Hamas has been going on for several weeks. Tell me what your friends are saying about that," or "What are you seeing on social media about the war?"

This approach gives them a little bit of distance from you. That is, they may be more willing to share about their friends and social media. And it gives you some insight on what they understand, what they believe, and gives you an opportunity to check in about any misperceptions or misinformation that they may have.

What specific advice do you have for talking to college students?
Robin Gurwitch: There's still a tether that binds the two of you as they're continuing to grow into their own person. So, it is important to reach out. "Tell me what's happening on campus related to the war in Israel and Gaza. What are professors saying? What are your classmates saying?" Check in to make sure that they feel safe and supported. And to let them know that you are there if they have any concerns, or any worries about anything, to give you a call and you'll

talk it through with them.

How can parents monitor their children's media diet and social media use while respecting their privacy?

Robin Gurwitch: When we're talking about school-age children, parents and caregivers truly need to know what their social media is all about. They need to look at it. They need to make sure that it's appropriate.

As children get older, they do expect a little bit more privacy. But I think it's important for parents to say, "You know, I've heard from other parents" - you can throw other parents under the bus - "I've heard from other parents that there's a lot of things on social media about the war in Israel," or whatever the topic is. And let them know that oftentimes there are things on social media that just aren't true. And to come to you if they have any questions about what they're seeing or hearing, and you'll tell them what you know to be true.

Also tell them that sometimes there are images that no one should see. If they see them, tell them to come to you so you can talk it through with them. Acknowledge that while their friends are seeing it, and they may be drawn to it, this can interfere with their sleep and their focus,

because those images are hard to get out of our minds.

What are some signs and symptoms that children or teens may be struggling with recent events?

Robin Gurwitch: We may see sleep problems. Either problems falling asleep or staying asleep, so they may be more tired. Because of that and because of other reactions to stress, children may be more irritable.

Younger children may have more meltdowns and temper tantrums, and even our tweens and teens - where we expect some of it - it'll be above and beyond. We may see more conflict between you and your children, but also between your children and their peers.

We may see a lack of enjoyment with the things that they used to really look forward to or want to do. Sometimes we see problems with attention and focus and concentration. That can lead to difficulties with schoolwork. It's not that they're not studying hard. It's not that they're not trying their best. But being able to process and retain new information becomes really hard.

So a little bit of extra patience, maybe a little bit more help, attention and love really will go a long way these days. (AP)

Reneé Rapp has always known what she wants

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 7, (AP) — For a 23-year-old, Reneé Rapp has had a lot of practice telling powerful people no. Her first time came at 19, when Tina Fey and Lorne Michaels offered her one of the lead roles in the national touring production of the “Mean Girls” musical.

Practically speaking, Rapp was hardly in a position to turn it down. She needed money to make the move from her hometown in North Carolina to New York permanent as she sought to realize her dreams of becoming a pop star.

Though she admitted the decision was, “in a way, difficult,” she was sure she could land something better, citing her upbringing, work ethic and financial security all as factors in that confidence.

“I was also really fortunate to have that delusion of like, ‘Yeah, I’m doing that,’” she said. “I really do have a certain level of trust in myself when it comes to work that I’m going to figure it out.”

And it wasn’t long before she did. A few months later, Fey and Michaels came back to Rapp with an offer to play Regina George in the show’s Broadway production, the first of many opportunities to which she would say yes.

And although her initial big breaks were acting gigs, Rapp wasted no time in capitalizing on that fame to fulfill her dreams of being a recording artist. Her critically praised debut album, “Snow Angel,” has made her one of The Associated Press’ breakthrough Entertainers of 2023.

She eventually starred in the upcoming movie adaptation of the “Mean Girls” musical, set to hit theaters in January, and played Leighton, one of the leads in Mindy Kaling’s “The Sex Lives of College Girls,” a coming-of-age HBO comedy-drama series that helped turn Rapp into a recognizable name.

But she had another round of practice saying no this year when she decided not to return as a series regular for the third season, in a move she hoped would solidify her identity as a pop star — something she maintains has always been her plan.

Rapp demonstrates a savvy restraint of her Broadway pipes in “Snow Angel,” embracing a pleasing pop sound that balances easy listening with poignant, sometimes dark lyrics.

Attention

Now, she’s giving her undivided attention to making music — often to the point where it becomes all-consuming.

“I think about music like every second of every” she trails off. “I could be going through the worst thing on planet Earth and all I’m thinking in the back of my head is like, ‘Oh, this is what my next album is about.’ I don’t care if that’s sick. That’s what I do.”

But it’s not just Rapp’s music that is vulnerable. In true Gen Z fashion, she has been frank online about intimate aspects of her life, includ-

ing being bisexual and her struggle with eating disorders.

She is proud of that vulnerability, but Rapp said honesty in the lime-light can be a double-edged sword.

“I get asked about my sexuality and eating disorders like it’s my right and left arm. And in a lot of ways, I love that because I’ve been so incredibly open about it and it’s something that I really, not enjoy talking about, but I feel like I want to,” she said. “Sometimes I think with that comes being asked a lot of really dumb questions and being asked things that make me uncomfortable and then having to reroute in my head and be like, ‘s---, did I ask for this?’ And then I’m like, ‘Actually, no, I didn’t.’”

Navigating her rapid rise to fame and these momentous life changes amid a pandemic would be a lot for any young adult to handle. But Rapp never lost sight of her initial goal of being a pop star, always calculating how each addition to her resume would help get her there.

“It was just like a welcomed blessing that was a means to get to what I wanted to do,” Rapp recalled of her experiences as an actor and Broadway star.

Citing what she sees as a double standard with men, Rapp said she’s gotten used to people calling her spoiled or worse for this mentality.

“If I’m not bending over backwards and am like, ‘Oh my God, I’m so grateful. I’m so lucky to have this opportunity,’ and like, kissing the hand that feeds me, then I’m a problem.”

People

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Sam Song Li as Bruce Sun, Michelle Yeoh as Mama Sun in an episode of ‘The Brothers Sun.’ (AP)

Television

Yeoh leads an immigrant family with new faces

‘Brothers Sun’ redefines Asian family tale

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 7, (AP) — In 2021, Sam Song Li was cast in an independent film as the ancestor of a character played by a pre-“Shang-Chi” Simu Liu. To the general public, the non-speaking cameo might seem insignificant. But for Li, it was a seminal moment.

A producer told him she picked him after looking at more than 200 people for the role, for which he was “on screen for like a whole 30 seconds,” Li recalled to The Associated Press.

“I remember hearing that and just feeling like, ‘You know what? I think I’m good enough for this,’” he said.

Almost three years later, Li is one of the leads in an all-Asian cast and, like Liu, acting opposite Oscar winner Michelle Yeoh. He and Justin Chien play the scions of a Taiwanese triad leader in the new Netflix series “The Brothers Sun,” dropping Thursday.

An elixir of crime drama and comedy, “The Brothers Sun” shakes up the formulaic way Hollywood has often portrayed Asian immigrant families. The genre-bending show aims to be a vehicle for fresh faces like Li and comedian Jenny Yang, a practice that doesn’t always feel like the norm when it comes to actors of Asian descent.

Mostly known for stand-up and sketch comedy, Yang is making her television acting debut as the assassin Xing.

“I had heard about the project before any casting notice was seen and I was jealous. ... Why am I not involved in this?” Yang recalls.

She credits casting director Jenny Jue with making “the extra effort to scour the internet and scour her networks to look for talent that might not have been previously seen.”

Jue, whose previous projects include “Inglorious Basterds,” also grew up in Southern California with a high school boyfriend who “dabbled” in a Taiwanese gang. She pointed to that history when she lobbied writer-executive producer Brad Falchuk (“American Horror Story,” “Pose,” “Glee”) and executive producer Byron Wu to board the project. But she also made a heartfelt pitch about how she saw it as a huge

responsibility to the Asian American community.

“I really want to see new faces here. You’ve written roles that are too distinctive and layered and nuanced. I don’t just want to shoehorn the same faces that we always see into these roles,” says Jue, describing her pitch. “Even the final cast, I wasn’t sure if any of them had their SAG cards other than Michelle Yeoh.”

Yeoh was the only big name Jue felt they had to have. Producers agreed after she got them into an early screening of “Everything Everywhere All at Once.”

“I knew of some really talented actors who were considered for Mama Sun. But Michelle just has a really innate, motherly quality. And she can also be really tough,” Jue says. “That’s what we really needed for this role.”

Li likens working with Yeoh to “playing basketball with Steph Curry.” And when the cameras weren’t rolling, “she is somebody who walks into a room with so much grace, so much love for everybody and she really listens to to people in a very intimate way.”

Opportunities

There have been a few naysayers on social media, including Asian Americans, who bemoaned Yeoh’s continued casting in parts that could have been stepping stones for other actors. It’s reminiscent of criticism Liu — who played a Ken in “Barbie” — has faced for appearing to get the lion’s share of “Asian male” roles.

The double-edged sword of being cheered for breaking barriers and then dinged for seemingly taking too many opportunities more often plagues actors of color. Yang understands some of these complaints come from a good place of wanting to elevate more people. But, one person’s success doesn’t have to be divisive, she says.

“Of course everyone wants to work with Michelle Yeoh. Of course everyone wants to see what she can do next. So, I think we can have both,” Yang says. “I think we can have the ability to uplift as many talented voices as possible. Let’s keep pushing on that. But, let’s celebrate when someone gets a spotlight on their talents.”

Li, whose only previous TV credits were one-episode guest spots on “Never Have I Ever,” “Better Call

Saul” and “Home Economics,” has had his share of rejections. But, he chooses not to take it personally.

“I think a win in our community of any kind is a huge win for all of us,” Li says. “There’s never been an instance for me where I went, ‘Wow, I could have done it better.’”

A 20-year veteran in casting, Jue agrees it can feel like one sees a lot of the same faces from a marginalized group. It’s “a product of a lot of decision-makers and higher-level executives not knowing that there’s anything else out there.”

She recalls trying to have dialogues with producers and directors about diversifying ensembles numerous times in the late 2000s. She would often hear “no” without explanation. It was as if having no conversation at all was easier, Jue says. But there was a seismic shift in 2020, with the racial reckoning after the murder of George Floyd.

“The conversations I’m having now with producers are much more open,” Jue says. “It’s a real safe space where I tell them ‘I’m never gonna use anything we talk about against anybody in these rooms. We just really need to talk openly about what you guys like, what you don’t like, what you want to see and how we can add more diversity in a way that feels really natural.’”

For so long, too, Asian immigrant family narratives on screen tended to be depressing, overdone tales of struggles with racism, money or some other outside force.

“The Brothers Sun” is the latest among recent productions, all featuring Yeoh, that paint parent-child conflict in an Asian American household with humor and action. “Everything Everywhere All at Once” and the Disney+ show, “American Born Chinese” have been applauded for fun and inventive narratives. This isn’t a trend but an indicator that audiences are moving on from “well-trodden tropes” about Asian immigrant stories, Yang says.

“I feel like it’s a part of a greater desire to see just fun entertaining family shows or about family dynamics but with heightened situations,” Yang says. “This is what television is for, baby.”

Features

ARABIC TIMES

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024

LOS ANGELES: Britney Spears is shooting down rumors of a new album, vowing to “never return to the music industry.”

At the same time, Spears noted in Wednesday’s Instagram post, she’s still writing music — just for other people.

“When I write, I write for fun or I write for other people!!!” she wrote. “I’ve written over 20 songs for other people the past two years!!! I’m a ghostwriter and I honestly enjoy it that way!!!”

The Instagram caption, in which she blasted those who “keep saying I’m turning to random people to do a new album,” was paired with a photo of a Guido Reni painting of Salome holding the head of John the Baptist.

This isn’t the first time Spears has indicated she’s retiring from releasing her own music. In July 2021, while still under the infamous conservatorship that controlled her life, money and voice for nearly 14 years, her longtime manager Larry Rudolph resigned, saying she had no intention of resuming her career. Just after being released from the conservatorship later that year, she took to Instagram to say she was scared of the music business and that not doing her own music was an act of defiance against her family.

But the next year, she released the single “Hold Me Closer,” a collaboration with Elton John that spent 20 weeks on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, peaking at No. 6. Last year’s “Mind Your Business,” a single with will.i.am, was poorly reviewed and failed to make the Hot 100, though. Spears’ last full album was 2016’s “Glory.”

In Wednesday’s post, Spears also wrote that it was “far from the truth” that her 2023 bestselling memoir, “The Woman In Me,” was released without her approval. (AP)

CAPITOLA, Calif.: Theobald Lengyel, a founding member of the experimental rock band Mr. Bungle, has been arrested on suspicion of killing his girlfriend after human remains were found at a park near San Francisco, police said.

Alice “Alyx” Kamakaakalani Herrmann was last seen Dec. 3 in Santa Cruz County, where

she lives, and became the subject of a missing person inquiry the following week, according to a statement from the Capitola Police Department.

“As the investigation progressed, it became clear that foul play was involved, leading to the identification of Theobald Lengyel as a suspect,” Capitola



Spears



Lengyel

police wrote in a statement.

Lengyel, 54, was arrested Tuesday after investigators discovered human remains in a wooded area of Tilden Regional Park in Berkeley, the statement said. DNA confirmation is still pending but police believe it is Herrmann.

Jail records show Lengyel, of El Cerrito, California, was held

without bail on one count of first-degree murder. He’s scheduled to appear in court Jan. 16.

A phone listing for Lengyel could not be found Thursday and it wasn’t known if he has a lawyer. The Santa Cruz County Public Defender’s Office didn’t immediately respond to an email asking if one of its attorneys was

representing him.

Lengyel left Mr. Bungle in 1996 after playing saxophone, clarinet and keyboards on several recordings including the band’s self-titled 1991 debut album and “Disco Volante” in 1995. He did not participate in any of the band’s recent reunion tours, which began in 2020. (AP)

People & Places

In Memoriam

Year in review

Influential people who died in 2023

LOS ANGELES, Jan 7, (AP): **Grace Bumbry**, 86. A pioneering mezzo-soprano who became the first Black singer to perform at Germany's Bayreuth Festival during a more than three-decade career on the world's top stages. May 7.

Rita Lee Jones, 75. Brazil's million-selling "Queen of Rock" who gained an international following through her colorful and candid style and such hits as "Ovelha Negra," "Mania de Você" and "Now Only Missing You." May 8.

Denny Crum, 86. He won two NCAA men's basketball championships and built Louisville into one of the 1980s' dominant programs during a Hall of Fame coaching career. May 9.



Turner

Heather Armstrong, 47. Known as Dooce to fans, the pioneering mommy blogger laid bare her struggles as a mother and her battles with depression and alcoholism on her website and on social media. May 9.

Jacklyn Zeman, 70. She played Bobbie Spencer for 45 years on ABC's "General Hospital." May 9.

Rolf Harris, 93. The veteran entertainer whose decades-long career as a family favorite on British and Australian television was shattered when he was convicted of sexual assaults on young girls. May 10.

Jim Brown, 87. The pro football Hall of Famer was an unstoppable running back who retired at the peak of his career to become an actor as well as a prominent civil rights advocate during the 1960s. May 18.

Andy Rourke, 59. Bass guitarist of The Smiths, one of the most influential British bands of the 1980s. May 19.

Ray Stevenson, 58. The Irish actor who played the villainous British governor in "RRR," an Asgardian warrior in the "Thor" films, and a member of the 13th Legion in HBO's "Rome." May 21.

Ed Ames, 95. The youngest member of the popular 1950s singing group the Ames Brothers, who later became a successful actor in television and musical theater. May 21.

Tina Turner, 83. The unstoppable singer and stage performer who teamed with husband Ike Turner for a dynamic run of hit records and live shows in the 1960s and '70s and survived her horrifying marriage to triumph in middle age with the chart-topping "What's Love Got to Do With It." May 24.

George Maharis, 94. A stage-trained actor with rough-hewn good looks who became an icon to American youth in the 1960s as he cruised the country in a Corvette convertible in the hit television series "Route 66." May 24.

John Beasley, 79. The veteran character actor who played a kindly school bus driver on the TV drama "Everwood" and appeared in dozens of films dating back to the 1980s. May 30.

Theodoros Pangalos, 84. A former Greek foreign minister known for his undiplomatic outbursts and on whose watch Greece suffered one of its most embarrassing foreign policy debacles in 1999. May 31.

June

Kaija Saariaho, 70. She wrote acclaimed works that made her the among the most prominent composers of the 21st century. June 2.

George Winston, 73. The Grammy-winning pianist who blended jazz, classical, folk and other stylings on such million-selling albums as "Autumn," "Winter Into Spring" and "December." June 4.

Astrud Gilberto, 83. The Brazilian singer, songwriter and entertainer whose off-hand, English-language cameo on "The Girl from Ipanema" made her a worldwide voice of bossa nova. June 5.

Robert Hanssen, 79. A former FBI agent who took more than \$1.4 million in cash and diamonds to trade secrets with Moscow in one of the most notorious spying cases in American history. June 5.

Richard Snyder, 90. A visionary and imperious executive at Simon & Schuster who in bold-faced style presided over the publisher's exponential rise during the second half of the 20th century and helped define an era of consolidation and growing corporate power. June 6.

Françoise Gilot, 101. A prolific and acclaimed painter who created art for more than a half-century but was nonetheless more famous for her turbulent relationship with Pablo Picasso - and for leaving him. June 6.

The Iron Sheik, 81. A former pro wrestler who relished playing a burly, bombastic villain in 1980s battles with some of the sport's biggest stars and later became a popular Twitter personality. June 7.

Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski, 81. Branded the "Unabomber" by the FBI, he was the Harvard-educated mathematician who retreated to a shack in the Montana wilderness and ran a 17-year bombing campaign that killed three people and injured 23 others. June 10.

Roger Payne, 88. The scientist who spurred a worldwide environmental conservation movement with his discovery that whales could sing. June 10.

Silvio Berlusconi, 86. The boastful billionaire media mogul who was Italy's longest-serving premier despite scandals over his sex-fueled parties and allegations of corruption. June 12.

Treat Williams, 71. An actor whose nearly 50-year career included starring roles in the TV series "Everwood" and the movie "Hair." June 12. Motorcycle crash.

Cormac McCarthy, 89. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist who in prose both dense and brittle took readers from the southern Appalachians to the desert Southwest in novels including "The Road," "Blood Meridian" and "All the Pretty Horses." June 13.

Glenda Jackson, 87. A two-time Academy Award-winning performer who had a second career as a British lawmaker before an acclaimed late-life return to stage and screen. June 15.

Daniel Ellsberg, 92. The history-making whistleblower who by leaking the Pentagon Papers revealed longtime government doubts and deceit about the Vietnam War and inspired acts of retaliation by President Richard Nixon that helped lead to his resignation. June 16.

Big Pokey, 48. A popular Texas rapper and original member of Houston's pioneering Screwed Up Click. June 18.

George Frazier, 68. The former pitcher was a World Series champion who had a nearly three-decade run as a television broadcaster. June 19.

H. Lee Sarokin, 94. The federal judge who freed boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and in a landmark case famously said tobacco companies engaged in a "vast" conspiracy to conceal the dangers of smoking. June 20.

To be continued



The team from 'The Last of Us - Infected' pose in the press room with the award for outstanding prosthetic makeups during night one of the Creative Arts Emmy Awards on Saturday, Jan. 6, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)



Judith Light poses with the award for outstanding guest actress in a comedy series for 'Poker Face.' (AP)



Tara McDonald, (from left), Freda Ellis, Nirvana Jalavand, Tamara Meade, and Bianca Boeriu pose with the award for outstanding contemporary makeup (non-prosthetic) for 'Wednesday - Woe What A Night.' (AP)



Sam Richardson with his Emmy for outstanding guest actor for 'International Break' episode for Ted Lasso. (AP)



Storm Reid poses with the award for outstanding guest actress in a drama series for 'The Last of Us.' (AP)



Sharon Long, (from left), Claire Tremlett, Basia Kuznar, and Anna Lau, pose with the award for outstanding period costumes for a series for 'The Great.' (AP)



Joanna Naugle poses with the award for outstanding picture editing for 'The Bear.' (AP)

Emmys

Obamas among nominees at creative arts awards

Emmy glory for Light and Richardson

LOS ANGELES, Jan 7, (AP): Judith Light from "Poker Face" and Nick Offerman and Storm Reid from "The Last of Us" were winners at Saturday night's Creative Arts Emmy Awards on a night when the theme was first-time Emmys for actors of all ages.

Light, 74, took her first Emmy in a nearly 50-year television career for playing a 1960s radical hiding out in a retirement home on an episode of "Poker Face," the Peacock comedy-mystery series starring Natasha Lyonne. The star of the 1980s and 1990s sitcom "Who's the Boss?," Light had been nominated four times previously, including twice for her acting on "Transparent."

"I've been in the business a long time, and this is quite a gift," Light said backstage.

Offerman, 53, won his first Emmy in four nominations, taking best guest actor in a drama series for his role as an angry survivalist who ends up in a tender gay relationship on "The Last of Us," the HBO video game adaptation about a fungal apocalypse that won a leading eight Emmys on Saturday.

Offerman's 20-year-old castmate Reid, currently a college student at nearby USC, won best guest actress in a drama in her first nomination for a similar episode, a flashback in the form of a tragic teen love story between her and

best lead actress nominee Bella Ramsey.

Offerman praised "The Last of Us" for its "decency and inclusivity" and Reid said she was grateful for its "representation of young, queer Black women."

Sam Richardson, 39, won his own first Emmy for playing a billionaire soccer enthusiast from Ghana on "Ted Lasso," the Apple TV+ series that is the year's most nominated comedy with 21 nods. He had been nominated once previously for the same role.

The two-part ceremony, where nearly 100 awards are handed out, mostly to less famous crew members and crafts people, began Saturday night and continues Sunday night. It's a precursor to the main Emmy ceremony that will air at 8 p.m. EST Jan. 15 on Fox, with "black-ish" star Anthony Anderson as host. Just like the main telecast, the Creative Arts Emmys arrive after a four-month delay because of Hollywood's writers and actors strikes.

Drama

Another 1980s and '90s sitcom star, Jasmine Guy of "A Different World," won her first Emmy on Saturday, for best actress in a short-form comedy or drama series for "Chronicles Of Jessica Wu." Tim Robinson won the same award on the actors' side for "I Think You Should Leave With Tim

Robinson." It's his second Emmy for performing on the Netflix show.

Best television movie went to the Roku Channel's biopic "Weird: The Al Yankovic Story," in which Daniel Radcliffe plays the title comic-music star.

The real Yankovic, a 64-year-old five-time Grammy winner, gave some advice backstage to young people starting out in entertainment.

"Take accordion lessons," he said. "It'll pay off eventually."

The Creative Arts Emmys continue Sunday, when nominees will include Barack Obama, Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey.

Pascal, nominated for best actor in a drama for "The Last of Us," is up for best guest actor in a comedy series for hosting "Saturday Night Live" and for his narration of a CNN documentary on Patagonia.

Lynskey, nominated for best actress in a drama for "Yellowjackets," is up for best guest actress in a drama for her one-episode appearance on Pascal's "The Last of Us." That series and "Succession" are the two top overall Emmy nominees.

judge on "So You Think You Can Dance," which she left after two seasons. (AP)

NEW YORK: Joseph Lelyveld, a career journalist who rose from copy boy to foreign correspondent to executive editor at The New York Times and won a Pulitzer Prize for a nonfiction book, died Friday. He was 86.

Lelyveld passed away at his Manhattan home due to complications from Parkinson's disease. **Janny Scott**, his longtime



Lythgoe



Lelyveld

partner and a former Times reporter, told the newspaper.

"Cerebral and introspective, Mr. Lelyveld was for nearly four decades one of the most respected journalists in America, a globe-trotting adventurer who reported from Washington, Congo, India, Hong Kong, Johannesburg and London, winning acclaim for his prolific and perceptive articles," the Times reported in a story about his death. (AP)

The Conversation

Resilience is more complex than being mentally tough

Expert explains main ingredients for stress management

By Rachel Goldsmith Turrow
Seattle University

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

The word resilience can be perplexing. Does it mean remaining calm when faced with stress? Bouncing back quickly? Growing from adversity? Is resilience an attitude, a character trait or a skill set? And can misperceptions about resilience hurt people, rather than help?

To sum it up in a sentence: Resilience is the ability to manage stress in effective ways. It's not a static quality or attribute you're born with, or a choice of attitude. Instead, it's a set of skills that can be developed by repeating specific behaviors. As a clinical psychologist, researcher and educator specializing in training people to cope with stress more effectively, I know that resilience can be developed.

But as with physical fitness, you can't get stronger abs by just wanting them. Instead, you have to repeat specific exercises that make your abs stronger; intention alone just won't do it.

Cultivating resilience is much the same. Like physical fitness, resilience is not a single quality but rather many factors that contribute differently to a range of strengths and situations. For instance, one may handle relationship issues rather well but be unable to cope with the stress of a traffic jam.

Pandemic

Many different ingredients combine to influence how effectively people handle stress. Some building blocks of resilience are factors that are largely beyond one's control, such as greater income and education and having supportive environments. Some are things you can do in your daily life, such as exercise, hobbies and activities, and getting adequate sleep. Other facets might take more time to develop, such as nourishing supportive relationships, building skills for tolerating distress and regulating emotions, meditation, incorporating spirituality or religion and practicing less self-criticism and more self-compassion.

Confusing connotations about resilience pervade not only the scientific literature and mental health approaches but also popular culture. The idea that difficult experiences make someone resilient is incorrect, or at least incomplete.

During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, I heard people claim that "children are resilient." However, one of the largest research investigations about difficult childhood experiences, the Adverse Childhood Experiences study, conducted in the 1990s at Kaiser Permanente with over 17,000 adults, established that cumulative stressors experienced in childhood impair both mental and physical health. It also found that more stress predicts worse outcomes.

What actually helped people be more resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Studies show that the same building blocks mentioned above helped people navigate the pandemic with greater well-being. Many of these same building blocks also improve people's outcomes following other stressful experiences, such as unemployment, cancer, divorce and exposure to violence.

All of this says that resilience can flourish by incorporating specific behaviors and creating healthy environments. People often assume it's optimal to remain relatively unaffected by stress - that is, to "get over it" quickly.

In many cases, that might be the case. If you forget an important meeting, for example, a response of "Oh no! I need to apologize right away and reschedule" is probably healthier than punching a wall or concluding that you're a terrible person.

But what if a relationship ends? Is it always best to get over it quickly, or could a longer reflection and healing process lead to deeper learning and growth? What looks like resilience could instead be suppressing, numbing or hiding feelings. Those tendencies are linked with worse mental health.

This is why the concept of resilience is somewhat nuanced; some people who seem resilient are just covering up, or coping in an unhealthy way - such as using alcohol to cope with difficult feelings.

Sometimes painful feelings or experiences contribute to personal development. Post-traumatic growth refers to the positive changes that some people report after trauma, especially when they incorporate some of the resilience "building blocks" listed above. This includes better relationships, a greater appreciation of life and enhanced spiritual or philosophical understanding. Rather than expecting yourself to always feel good or to bounce back quickly, in some situations it may be wise to allow yourself to experience deeply challenging feelings and the personal growth that can ensue.

Resilience is more complex than being mentally tough or not letting things get to you. Pressuring yourself to appear OK when you're not - also known as emotional perfection - could make things worse and prevent you from seeking support. Sometimes, changing stressful environments, such as a job or living situation, rather than just adapting to them is a healthier choice.

Challenge

This is why resilience can be a loaded term. Although coping with challenges has its place, for trauma survivors, people who have experienced racism or homophobia, or those living in regions especially affected by climate change, and many others, resilience falls flat. The word comes across as tacitly accepting the status quo rather than demanding accountability from those who caused harm or working to reduce the sources of stress.

Overemphasizing resilience can reinforce racial injustice by suggesting that people who are subjected to it are resilient enough to handle it. Having to wear a mask of resilience or put on a smile can add to the burden of racism, making resilience exhausting. Having to continually adapt to microaggressions and other forms of racism takes a mental and physical toll, such that resilience to racism comes at a cost.

A one-sized-fits-all approach to resilience doesn't work for every person and problem. But most of us can benefit from nourishing some of the building blocks of resilience, such as cultivating supportive relationships, physical exercise and self-compassion.

Becoming more resilient is a process. We can benefit from working on the building blocks of our own individual resilience, and from initiatives in schools, workplaces and other environments that promote resilience more broadly.

The number of factors affecting resilience may seem daunting. The upside is that you can choose from many effective ways of building resilience to determine the most suitable approach for you. (AP)

Focus on now for long-term health goals

By Kaitlin Woolley, Cornell University and Paul Stillman, San Diego State University

'Stay motivated and on track'

It's a familiar start-of-the-year scene. You've committed to a healthier lifestyle and are determined that this time is going to be different. Your refrigerator is stocked with fruits and veggies, you've tossed out processed foods, and your workout routine is written in pen in your daily planner.

Yet, as you head out one morning, the tantalizing aroma of fresh doughnuts wafts through the air. How can you resist the call of this sugary treat and stick with your healthy choices?

Conventional wisdom, grounded in years of research, suggests that the best way to resist unhealthy choices is to think about the long-term consequences. For example, you could consider how the added sugar from eating too many doughnuts can lead to diabetes and obesity. Thinking about these long-term consequences, the argument goes, should help you avoid indulging right now and better stick to your goals.

However, in our combined 25 years of experience investigating people's self-control behavior and motivation, we have learned that, in the heat of the moment, people often overlook distant outcomes, diminishing the effectiveness of strategies focused on the long term.

In response, we propose three approaches, backed by recent research, to help you stick to healthier habits.

One strategy to avoid indulging is to consider the short-term consequences of unhealthy behavior. We tested this approach in seven studies with over 4,000 participants.

In one study, we invited university students to view one of two public service announcements detailing reasons to avoid energy drinks. One message emphasized long-term costs of drinking high-sugar energy drinks, such as diabetes and obesity. The other stressed short-term costs, such as anxiety and a sugar and caffeine crash.

Students then had a choice between receiving an energy drink or another attractive prize. Those who read about the short-term costs were 25% less likely to choose the energy drink than those who read about the long-term costs.

In another study with a similar setup, participants read about either the short-term costs of eating sugar, the long-term costs of eating sugar, or they did not read about any downsides. Everyone then had to choose a delivery of cookies or a tote bag. Those who read about the short-term costs were 30% less likely to choose the cookies than those who read about the long-term costs and 45% less likely than those who didn't read about any detriments to sugar.

Temptations

We found that emphasizing short-term costs can also help you avoid other temptations. For alcohol, think about how excessive drinking can lead to poor sleep and hangovers. For fast food, think about how it can make you feel bloated or give you indigestion.

In our studies, immediate effects were a stronger motivator than long-term consequences that could take decades to occur. The takeaway is simple: To avoid indulging, think short term.

Avoiding unhealthy foods is one thing. On the flip side, can you nudge yourself toward consuming more healthy foods?

Research that one of us (Kaitlin) conducted with behavioral scientist Ayelet Fishbach found that prompting people to focus on the good taste - rather than the health benefits - of foods such as apples and carrots increased consumption in the lab and the real world. These findings were independently replicated in an intervention at five university dining halls that used food labels focused on either

tastiness or healthfulness.

This strategy can also promote other healthy behaviors, such as exercise. In one study, Kaitlin asked gymgoers to choose a weightlifting workout from a list of similarly difficult routines. The participants who were instructed to select a fun exercise completed more reps than those told to pick an exercise most useful for their long-term fitness goals.

Immediate rewards that result from pursuing long-term goals improve your experience right now, although they often go unnoticed. For this reason, focusing on the immediate versus delayed benefits of behaviors such as healthy eating and exercise can increase intrinsic motivation, making a behavior feel like its own reward and resulting in the immersed-in-an-activity feeling called "flow."

Starting healthy behaviors is one important piece of the puzzle; another is sticking with these behaviors over time. One strategy for persistence is to use rewards to stay committed.

Experiments

Research led by marketing professor Marissa Sharif, along with Kaitlin, involving over 5,000 people across eight experiments found that small, regular rewards were more effective for cultivating long-term commitment to healthy behavior such as exercising and flossing than were large, occasional rewards. Think watching 20 minutes of a guilty pleasure TV show each day you work out, rather than waiting to the end of the week to watch 80 minutes of TV to reward yourself for those four workouts.

But there's a twist: Rewarding yourself too early may backfire. It seems rewards are most effective when people have to work to unlock them, after which they become regular. In other words, putting in initial effort while not being rewarded, followed by small, continual perks, is

the most effective way to structure rewards.

In a study on exercise, Marissa and Kaitlin followed exercisers as they engaged in four initial workouts that came with no rewards. Then a work-to-unlock-rewards group began to receive small, continual rewards for each subsequent workout. They ended up persisting longer and completing more workouts than people in a lump-sum group who received a larger, occasional reward for every four workouts they finished.

A similar effect was evident in a 12-day study on tooth flossing. People in the work-to-unlock-rewards group - three days of flossing without rewards followed by daily rewards - flossed for more days than those who received continual rewards right way. Those who had to commit extra effort to unlock the rewards flossed 15% more days.

These studies suggest people can strategically incorporate rewards - with a short initial period without any rewards - into their routine to help them stick with healthy behaviors over time.

Our research highlights three effective strategies to help you achieve your goals: prioritizing short-term consequences to resist temptation, finding enjoyment in long-term choices, and continually rewarding yourself for sustained persistence.

What's great about these strategies is that you can adapt them to any personal goal you hold. For instance, if you're finding it hard to swap social media for a book, consider reflecting on negative short-term consequences of endless scrolling. Or if carving out time for relaxation feels like a challenge, focus on the immediate benefits of engaging in meditative exercises.

By incorporating these evidence-based approaches, you can empower yourself to follow through on your long-term goals. (AP)

High level of chromium detected

FDA uncovers additional hazard in lead-tainted applesauce

NEW YORK, Jan 7, (AP) - Recalled cinnamon applesauce pouches that were tied to lead poisoning in hundreds of US children contained an additional contaminant, federal health officials said Friday.

Besides lead, the US Food and Drug Administration said investigators detected "a high level" of the chemical element chromium, which can be toxic, in WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree and in cinnamon collected from the Ecuador factory where the pouches were manufactured.

The additional details come as the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 287 confirmed, probable or suspected lead poisoning cases from 37 states in the outbreak first detected in October. At least one adult has reported high blood lead levels after eating the lead-tainted pouches, but the median age of those sickened is 1, the FDA said.



This image provided by the US Food and Drug Administration on Nov. 17, 2023, shows three recalled applesauce products - WanaBana apple cinnamon fruit puree pouches, Schnucks-brand cinnamon-flavored applesauce pouches and variety pack, and Weis-brand cinnamon applesauce pouches. US health officials said Friday, Jan. 5, that recalled cinnamon applesauce pouches tied to lead poisoning in US kids contained chromium, a chemical element that can be toxic. (AP)

It's not clear what type of chromium was detected in the products, FDA investigators said.

Chromium is a naturally occurring element with traces typically found in the human diet. One form, called

chromium III, is considered an essential nutrient. Another, chromium VI, is known to cause cancer.

The lead-to-chromium ratio found in the factory is consistent with lead chromate, a compound that has been previously reported as a contaminant in certain spices, officials said. But that finding is not definitive evidence that the substance was the contaminant in the pouches, they said.

Anyone who consumed the recalled pouches should consult with a health care provider, the CDC said. There is no safe level of lead consumption, the agency emphasized.

The recalled pouches include those sold under the WanaBana brand at Dollar Tree stores and online and under the Schnucks and Weis brands in stores. Because they have a long shelf life, they may still be in consumers' homes. Consumers should not eat or serve the pouches and should discard them.

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Dickinson lifts Kansas over TCU 83-81



Houston guard Emanuel Sharp (21) and West Virginia guard RaeQuan Battle chase the ball during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game Saturday Jan. 6, 2024, in Houston. (AP)

Feller wins World Cup slalom by .02 seconds to 'deny' Norway another win at Adelboden

ADELBODEN, Switzerland, Jan 7, (AP): Manuel Feller denied the young Norwegian team another win at Adelboden in a World Cup slalom on Sunday and extended Austria's unbeaten run in the discipline this season. Feller rose from fifth after the first run to be 0.02 seconds faster than Atle Lie McGrath. Then first-run leader Alexander Steen Olsen fell

within seconds of starting a potentially decisive run in fast-fading light and falling snow.

"I saw 'OK, these young guns from Norway, they're going really hard,'" said Feller, one of the most charismatic ski racers sporting his trademark mustache and pointed beard. "So I need to go a little bit more on the limit."

His teammate Dominik Raschner, wearing low-

ranked bib No. 35, was 0.23 back in third having been just 16th-fastest in the morning run.

Feller yelled with excitement while sitting in the course-side leader's seat and seeing the United States-born McGrath cross the line having lost a lead of 0.25 at the final time check.

McGrath smiled and pointed across the finish area to his opponent, and later told Austrian broad-

caster ORF that if he had to lose a race by such a small margin he was glad it was to his good friend Feller.

McGrath finished second at Adelboden for the second straight time after being edged by his teammate and close friend Lucas Braathen one year ago.

Braathen, 23, is sitting out the season in a dispute with the Norwegian ski federation over his

individual commercial rights. A fan in the finish area Sunday held up a "We Stand With Lucas" banner.

McGrath said he had been in contact with Braathen, who will not return to race this season, though his smile suggested Braathen has not retired and will resume his career.

Austria has won all three men's slaloms this season with Feller's season-opening win at Gurgl, Austria, followed by Marco Schwarz's victory at Madonna di Campiglio, Italy.

Feller is now fourth in the overall World Cup standings, led by two-time defending champion Marco Odermatt who does not ski slalom. Swiss star Odermatt won the giant slalom Saturday in similarly challenging conditions with fog over the course and snow falling on racers' goggles.

SKIING

Feller's fifth career World Cup win, all in slalom, lifted him atop the season-long discipline standings above Schwarz, whose season was ended last month by a crash in downhill. Schwarz was leading the overall World Cup standings.

At the post-race trophy ceremony, Feller and Raschner held up a t-shirt with a handwritten message to "Blacky", their teammate Schwarz's nickname, to "Come Back Stronger."

Raschner previously only had top-10 World Cup results in parallel racing and the 29-year-old's career-best race mirrored that one hour earlier Sunday of American AJ Hurt at the women's slalom in Slovenia.

Hurt wore an even lower-ranked start bib, No. 38, and like Raschner rose from 16th place after the first run, skiing out within 10 seconds.

Adelboden opened a peak mid-season stretch for men's slalom racers, who also visit storied venues Wengen, Switzerland, then Kitzbühel and Schladming in Austria over the next 17

Kentucky floors Florida

LAWRENCE, Kansas, Jan 7, (AP): Hunter Dickinson scored with 3.4 seconds left to lift No. 2 Kansas past TCU 83-81 on Saturday.

Dickinson, who led Kansas with 30 points, hit a pair of free throws after a flagrant foul on TCU's Ernest Udeh Jr. with less than a minute remaining to tie the game. Dickinson then followed Dajuan Harris Jr.'s miss in the final seconds.

Kansas (13-1, 1-0 Big 12) also got 18 points from KJ Adams Jr. Kevin McCullar Jr. had 16 points and Harris scored 10.

Houston 89, West Virginia 55
In Houston, L.J. Cryer scored 20 points, Damian Dunn added 14 points and Houston improved to 14-0 with a win over West Virginia in the Cougars' inaugural Big 12 contest.

Cryer scored 16 points in the first half on 6-of-7 shooting, including four 3-pointers. Cryer has scored at least 20 points in five games this season.

Ja'Vier Francis had 13 points and five rebounds, and Jamal Shead had eight points and 11 assists for Houston, which shot 53% overall, including 9 of 18 on 3-pointers.

Tennessee 90, No. 22 Mississippi 64
In Knoxville, Jonas Aidoo scored 24 points and had 10 rebounds to lead Tennessee to victory over Mississippi in the Southeastern Conference opener for both teams.

Zakai Zeigler contributed 17 points and 10 assists for the Volunteers (11-3, 1-0 Southeastern Conference). Santiago Vescevi added 11 points and Jahmai Mashack scored 10 as Tennessee won for the seventh straight time.

Jaemyn Brakefield scored 22 points as Mississippi (13-1, 0-1) had its season-long winning streak snapped. Jaylen Murray added 11 points for the Rebels.

Kentucky 87, Florida 85

In Gainesville, Aaron Bradshaw hit a 3-pointer with 1:27 to play - just the first of the season for the 7-foot-1 freshman - and Kentucky rallied to beat Florida in the first Southeastern Conference opener between the rivals in 26 years.

Bradshaw finished with 10 points and seven rebounds for the Wildcats (11-2), who won their fifth in a row and ninth in 10 games.

Antonio Reeves led Kentucky with 19 points, and D.J. Wagner added 14. Reed Sheppard also scored 14, including six consecutive free throws to close it out.

Seton Hall 78, No. 7 Marquette 75
In Newark, N.J., Al-Amir Dawes had 23 points and Kadary Richmond scored 21 to lead Seton Hall over Marquette for the Pirates' third win this season over ranked teams.

Seton Hall (10-5, 3-1 Big East) held off a late scare from a well-rested Marquette, which hadn't played since Dec. 30.

Oso Ighodaro led Marquette (11-4, 2-2) with 22 points. David Joplin scored 15 points.

Dre Davis had 11 points and seven rebounds for the Pirates, who never trailed in the second half.

NO. 8 North Carolina 65, no. 16 Clemson 55

In Clemson, RJ Davis had 14 points while Armando Bacot had 14 points and 16 rebounds to lead North Carolina over Clemson.

Davis came in as the Atlantic Coast Conference's leading scorer at 21.2 points a game. And while he struggled to find his shot against the Tigers (11-3, 1-2), the senior stepped up in time for the Tar Heels (11-3, 3-0).

Bacot posted his 54th career double-double and helped hold Tigers top scorer PJ Hall to 10 points on 4-of-13 shooting.

Arizona 92, Utah 73
In Tucson, Ariz., Caleb Love scored 15 of his 23 points during a decisive second-half stretch, Keshad Johnson added 20 points and Arizona ran away from Utah for a win.

The Wildcats (12-3, 3-1 Pac-12) shot well in the first half, but were careless with the ball. Arizona took control early in the second half with a massive run.

Love triggered the Wildcats' second-half dominance, scoring 15 points in the opening 11 minutes as the Wildcats stretched the lead to 17.

Oklahoma 71, Iowa State 63
In Norman, Javian McCollum had 15 points and five assists, and Oklahoma defeated Iowa State in the Big 12 opener for both teams.

Milos Uzan scored 12 points, Le'Tre Darthard scored 11 and Sam Godwin added 10 points and six rebounds for the Sooners (13-1).

Hason Ward, Milan Momcilovic and Robert Jones each scored 12 points for Iowa State (11-3). The Sooners held Tamin Lipsey, Iowa State's scoring leader for the season, to four points on 1-for-10 shooting.

Cincinnati 71, No. 12 BYU 60
In Provo, Utah, Viktor Lakhin scored 17 points and Aziz Bandaogo had 12 points and 10 rebounds to lead Cincinnati over BYU in the Big 12 opener for both teams.

Jizzle James also added 12 for the Bearcats (12-2, 1-0 Big 12), who won their fourth consecutive game after rallying from a halftime deficit for the second straight game.

Utah State 77, No. 13 Colorado State 72

In Logan, Great Osobor scored 20 points and had 14 rebounds and Mason Falslev added 18 points to lift Utah State over Colorado State for its 13th straight win.

Utah State (14-1, 2-0 Mountain West Conference) last won against a ranked team on March 7, 2020, defeating fifth-ranked San Diego State 59-56.

Isaiah Stevens led the Rams (13-2, 1-1) with 21 points and eight assists, Nique Clifford had 18 points and Patrick Cartier scored 15 points.

Duke 67, Notre Dame 59

In South Bend, Ind. (AP) - Mark Mitchell scored 19 of his career-high 23 points in the second half, and Duke pulled away from Notre Dame for a victory.

The 6-foot-9 Mitchell also grabbed 14 rebounds, continuing his midseason surge.

Duke (11-3, 2-1 ACC) earned its sixth consecutive victory. Jeremy Roach went 9 for 9 at the free-throw line and scored 18 points for the Blue Devils. Jared McCain finished with 11 points.

Charlotte 70, Florida Atlantic 68

In Charlotte, Lu'Cye Patterson made two free throws with 1.7 seconds left as Charlotte defeated Florida Atlantic for its first home win against an AP Top 25 opponent in 14 years.

Patterson scored 16 points and Igor Milicic Jr. added 13 for the 49ers (7-7, 1-1 American Athletic Conference), who squandered a 17-point second half lead before surging ahead late.

Patterson was fouled on a step-back jumper and made both shots to put Charlotte ahead for good. After a full-court pass, Nick Boyd's 3-point attempt from the corner barely rimmed out as time expired.

Baylor 75, Oklahoma State 70, Ot

In Stillwater, Okla., Ray J Dennis scored 18 points and Langston Love added 17 as Baylor ended Oklahoma State's five-game winning streak with an overtime win in the Big 12 conference opener for both teams.

BASKETBALL

Yves Missi had 13 points and 10 rebounds for the Bears (12-2), who shot 42.5% for the game and outscored the Cowboys 15-10 in the extra period.

Baylor has won 15 of its last 18 games against Oklahoma State (8-6), including nine straight in Gallagher-Iba Arena.

Southern Miss 81, No. 19 James Madison 71

In Hattiesburg, Victor Hart scored 16 points and Andre Curbelo had 15 points and nine assists, helping Southern Miss beat James Madison.

Austin Crowley had 15 points and eight rebounds for the Golden Eagles (8-7, 2-1 Sun Belt), who earned their second straight win. Cobie Montgomery scored 12 points on 4-for-4 shooting.

T.J. Bickerstaff had 14 points and 16 rebounds for James Madison (14-1, 2-1). Terrence Edwards Jr. scored 15 points, and Noah Freidel had 13.

Texas Tech 78, No. 20 Texas 67

In Austin, Texas, Texas Tech's Pop Isaacs scored 21 points to lead the Red Raiders to a Big 12-opening win over Texas, a day after he was named in a lawsuit alleging sexual assault of a minor.

Isaacs was booed by Texas fans whenever he touched the ball, and at one point put his fingers to his lips after a 3-pointer to tell them to be quiet.

Wisconsin 88, Nebraska 72

In Madison, Tyler Wahl scored 17 points to lead five Wisconsin players in double figures and the Badgers beat Nebraska to snap the Cornhuskers' five-game winning streak.

Wisconsin (11-3, 3-0 Big Ten) has won four straight and 10 of 11.

Chucky Hepburn had 13 points, Connor Essegian scored 12 and AJ Storr and John Blackwell scored 10 each as the Badgers never trailed.

Creighton 69, No. 23 Providence 60
In Omaha, Ryan Kalkbrenner had 22 points and 12 rebounds to help Creighton beat Providence after nearly blowing an 18-point lead in the second half.

Creighton (11-4, 2-2 Big East) led 48-30 before the Friars used a 25-8 run to get within 56-55 on Devin Carter's 3-pointer.

Carter led all players with 25 points and added 10 rebounds.

Gonzaga 101, San Diego 74

In Spokane, Ben Gregg had a career-high 22 points, Graham Ike scored 15 of his 19 points during a big first half, and Gonzaga beat San Diego.

Ike and Nolan Hickman sparked a 55-point first half from the Zags (11-4, 2-0 WCC) and the contributions from Gregg allowed most of Gonzaga's starters to call it an early night against the short-handed Toreros.

Ike was 8 of 12 shooting, grabbed eight rebounds and played just 21 minutes. Hickman also scored 15 points in the first half and finished with 17, including three 3-pointers. Ryan Nemphard added 18 points and the Zags shot 43.5% on 3-pointers.

Auburn 81, Arkansas 51

In Fayetteville, Chad Baker-Mazara scored 16 points to lead four Auburn players in double figures and the Tigers rolled over Arkansas in the SEC opener for both teams.

Johni Broome, a preseason All-SEC forward, scored all of his 14 points in the second half. Jaylin Williams and Tre Donaldson added another 11 apiece for the Tigers (12-2, 1-0 Southeastern Conference).

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Battling Gauff retains Auckland title

Rybakina blitzes Sabalenka to win Brisbane Int'l, Dimitrov grabs first title in 6 yrs

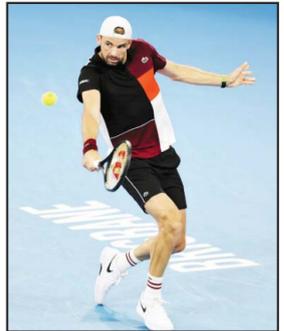
BRISBANE, Australia, Jan 7, (AP): Elena Rybakina claimed her sixth career title with a 6-0, 6-3 rout of top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka to win the Brisbane International in a perfect tune-up for the first major of 2024.

Sabalenka, who had won five of her seven previous meetings against the fourth-seeded Rybakina, had no answer Sunday to the world No. 4's laser-like groundstrokes and deft touches at the net as Rybakina dominated the final and stamped her credentials as one of the favorites for the upcoming Australian Open.

Almost a year after contesting the Australian Open final, where Sabalenka beat Rybakina in a tight three-setter, the tables were turned dramatically as the 2022 Wimbledon winner broke Sabalenka three times in a one-sided first set of just 24 minutes on Pat Rafter Arena in Brisbane.

The top-seeded Sabalenka finally got on the scoreboard when she broke serve in the ninth game, but Rybakina broke back immediately for a 3-1 lead in the second.

Sabalenka held serve for the first time in the match in the 11th game but it was too little too late as Rybakina nervously closed out the win on her first match point opportunity when the reigning Australian Open champion pushed her attacking forehand wide.



Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria plays a shot in his final match against Holger Rune of Denmark during the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

It capped a dominant week for Rybakina, who conceded just 15 games across five straight-set wins and was the 24-year-old sixth career title and first since Indian Wells last year.

The loss ended Sabalenka's streak of 15 wins on Australian soil, including a title run in Adelaide last year before her Grand Slam breakthrough at Melbourne Park, but the world No. 2 made light of a rare heavy defeat.

The final was the first to feature the top two seeds in Brisbane since 2015, when No. 1 Maria Sharapova held off No. 2 Ana Ivanovic in three sets.

Second-seeded Grigor Dimitrov beat top-seeded Holger Rune 7-6 (5), 6-4 in a tightly-fought men's final for his first tour title in six years.

TENNIS

It was Dimitrov's, ranked 14th, ninth career title and his first since the ATP finals in 2017, the same year he won his first Brisbane title.

Dimitrov hit 33 winners and only 14 unforced errors, with Rune saving break points eight times before Dimitrov finally cracked his serve on the ninth opportunity to deny him a fifth title in the 2 hours and 13 minutes encounter.

The third game of the first set was indicative of the close struggle. Rune held serve in a game of nine deuces and seven game points, finally fending off a break point at 2-1, 30-40 in a rally of 33 shots.

The 32-year-old Dimitrov finally broke Rune in the eighth game of the second set to lead 4-3. Rune saved two match points in the next game, in which he had a time violation and served an ace at 30-40.

Dimitrov then took the next game to love, serving his eighth ace of the match and finishing on his third match point. Rune had nine aces but also three double faults. The eighth-ranked 20-year-old was bidding for his fifth career title.

Top-seeded Coco Gauff has retained her title at the WTA Auckland Classic, beating second-seeded Elna Svitolina 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-3 in Sunday's final.

For the first time all week, Gauff



Slovakia's Viktoria Hrucakova and Anna Danilina, of Kazakhstan celebrate with their trophy after defeating Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic and Bethanie Mattek-Sands of the United States in the women's double final at the ASB Tennis Classic in Auckland, New Zealand. (AP)

had a fight on her hands. She swept into the final without dropping a set; in fact, dropping only 15 games on her way through the semifinals.

That followed her flawless tournament last year when she didn't drop a set at all and capped off a perfect week with a 6-1, 6-1 win over Rebeka Masarova in the final.

Third-ranked Gauff had needed only four hours of court time to reach the final whereas Ukraine's Svitolina took her title at the WTA Auckland Classic, beating second-seeded Elna Svitolina 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-3 in a match which lasted four-and-a-half hours with rain breaks.

Sunday's match against Svitolina was by far the toughest Gauff has faced in this, the first week of her 2024 season. She had to come from a set down for the first time and it took 2 hours, 23 minutes to complete her victory. Previously, Gauff's longest match at the tournament had been 1 hour, 22 minutes.

It was a struggle throughout. Gauff's serve has been the cornerstone of her game all week. She served 10 aces alone in her 6-3, 6-1 win over fellow American Emma Navarro in the semifinals and she won 80 percent of points all week when her first serve

was in play.

Against Svitolina, Gauff managed only three aces and had seven double faults. She put only 65 percent of first serves in play and had 43 unforced errors.

Gauff looked uncomfortable against the hard-hitting Svitolina who was tenacious and ran down shots that Gauff previously would have counted as winners.

But she persevered and had a winning edge in the third set in which she broke Svitolina only once, in the eighth game.

She served for the match and cham-

ionship in the next game and had to save a break point before winning on her first match point. She became the first player since Julia Goerges in 2018 and 2019 to win back to back Auckland titles and the first American to do so since Patty Fendick in 1988 and 1989.

Gauff broke Svitolina in the fourth game of the first set but Svitolina broke back immediately. Svitolina was broken again in the eighth game and, again, broke back straight in a service game in which Gauff had two double faults. The set went to a tiebreak, won comfortably by Svitolina at 7-4.

Celtics hold Pacers to season-low pt total and 'snap' their winning streak

Rockets overcome Antetokounmpo's 48 points, beat slumping Bucks

INDIANAPOLIS, Jan 7, (AP): Jayson Tatum scored 38 points, making a season-high eight 3-pointers, and Jaylen Brown added 31 points as the Boston Celtics beat the Indiana Pacers 118-101 on Saturday night, snapping the Pacers' six-game winning streak.

Tatum, who also had 13 rebounds and six assists, combined with Brown for 27 of the Celtics' 46 baskets on a night they shot 51% from the field and never trailed.

BASKETBALL

Boston, which came into the game third in the NBA in field-goal percentage defense (.449) and third in rebound rate, limited the Pacers to a season-low point total and out-rebounded them 70-42.

Benedict Mathurin led Indiana with 20 points while All-Star Tyrese Haliburton finished with 17 points, seven assists, six rebounds and five steals.

Boston held a 29-17 advantage at the end of the opening period, the Pacers' lowest-scoring first quarter of the season. The Celtics opened up a 16-point lead in the second quarter and led 58-49 at halftime despite not attempting a free throw in the half. Tatum and Brown shot a combined



Philadelphia 76ers' Kelly Oubre Jr. (left), shoots against Utah Jazz's John Collins (center), and Collin Sexton (right), during the first half of an NBA basketball game, in Philadelphia. (AP)

16 of 27 for 37 points before intermission.

Indiana cut its deficit to 84-81 entering the fourth quarter, but the Celtics led by as many as 19 in the final quarter and cruised down the stretch. Boston received only six minutes from starting center Kristaps Porzingis, who left the game due to an eye laceration.

It was the latest chapter in an eventful season series thus far.

In the first meeting, on Nov. 1 in Boston, the Celtics beat the Pacers

155-104 as Haliburton sat out due to injury. Boston's point total was the franchise's highest since 1959. In a hotly contested rematch on Dec. 4, Indiana prevailed 122-112 to knock the visiting Celtics out of the NBA's inaugural in-season tournament behind Haliburton's first career triple-double.

Indiana played without starting shooting guard Bruce Brown (bone bruise in right knee) and reserve guard Andrew Nembhard (back sprain).

Rockets 112, Bucks 108

In Houston, Alperen Sengun scored 21 points and Houston overcame 48 points from Giannis Antetokounmpo to beat Milwaukee.

Antetokounmpo shot 16 of 25 from the field and added 17 rebounds in his seventh straight double-double. But the Bucks lost for the third time in four games to start 2024 after going 11-2 in December.

Jalen Green scored 16 points for Houston. Fred VanVleet had 14 points and seven assists, and Jabari Smith Jr. added 14 points and 12 rebounds.

Damian Lillard had 18 points and nine assists in a poor-shooting night. He missed a season-high three free throws, on 10 attempts, and went 5 for 16 from the field, including 1 for 8 from 3.

Veteran Rockets reserve Jeff Green had a season-high 16 points. Cam Whitmore added 12 off the bench and Aaron Holiday had 11. The Rockets' bench outscored Milwaukee's 43-22.

Jazz 120, 76ers 109

In Philadelphia, Lauri Markkanen had 33 points and 13 rebounds, and Collin Sexton added 22 points and 10 assists to lead Utah past Philadelphia.

Reigning MVP and two-time defending scoring champion Joel Embiid missed the game for Philadelphia because of swelling in his left knee.

The 76ers not only suffered a 36-point defeat to the Knicks on Friday, they lost Embiid and also Tobias Harris to an ankle injury. The Sixers also played without key rotation players De'Anthony Melton (lumbar spine soreness) and Robert Covington (illness).

Tyrese Maxey led the 76ers with 25 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 24. Philadelphia fell to 2-6 without Embiid.

Knicks 121, Wizards 105

Washington, Julius Randle scored 39 points, Jalen Brunson had 33 and New York won its fourth straight game, beating Washington.

Coming off an impressive 128-92 win at Philadelphia on Friday night, the Knicks (21-15) led throughout and had a 60-34 lead late in the first half, causing the thousands of New York fans in Washington to loudly chant: "Let's go Knicks! Let's go Knicks!"

Randle's 39 points were two off his season high. Isaiah Hartenstein had 19 rebounds for the Knicks.

Kyle Kuzma scored 27 points but the Wizards lost their fourth straight. Deni Avdija had 23.

Al-Shabab determined to halt skid

Al-Arabi, Kazma eye vital wins

Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: This evening marks the completion of the fourteenth round of the Zain Premier League with two matches. At 08:00 pm, Al-Arabi will take on Al-Fahaheel at the Friendship and Peace Stadium, followed by a match between Al-Shabab and Kazma at 05:35 pm at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium.

Al-Arabi, currently at 30 points, aims to maintain its top position in the competition and extend its impressive performance. The team, led by Bosnian coach Darko Nestorovic, is undergoing a period of recovery, showcasing convincing levels of play despite the absence of some key players. Al-Arabi previously defeated Al-Fahaheel 2-1 in the first division and seeks to reaffirm its superiority.

On the other hand, Al-Fahaheel, with 15 points, has multiple objectives in this encounter. The team aims to restore its reputation against Al-Arabi, continue its positive results,

and distance itself from the relegation zone.

In the second match, Kazma, with 17 points, is eager to regain confidence after a humble performance against Al-Salmiya in the last round, resulting in a draw. Coach Mohamed Dehelis emphasizes the importance of securing three points to move away from the danger zone and catch up with the leading teams, although winning the title seems challenging.

SOCCER

Kazma recognizes the significance of tonight's victory as a recovery from their previous defeat to Al-Shabab (2-1) in the first division. Al-Shabab, currently with 11 points, is determined to halt the point losses, having failed to secure any points in the past four rounds. Montenegrin coach Slavio Bubinga seeks to boost the confidence of his players following a heavy defeat of 6-0 against "Al-Abyad" in the last round.



Dalibor Starkevic

'The General' visits the team's camp to boost morale

Talajic and Starkevic favourites to take over Al-Qadisiya

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Serbian and Croatian coaches Dragan Talajic and Dalibor Starkevic are favorites to take over Al-Qadisiya.

Talajic, with prior coaching experience at Kuwait Club in the 2011-2012 season, emerges as the frontrunner for the coaching role. Born on August 25, 1965, in Sarajevo, Talajic transitioned from a playing career as a goalkeeper to a successful coaching career. In the 2010-2011 season, he garnered accolades such as the best coach in Asia, the best coach in the Arab countries by Al Jazeera Sports Channel, and the best coach in the Arab countries for the 2010-2011 season by the Middle East Television Center. He was also recognized as the best coach in Jordan in the 2010-2011 season through votes from the public and the press.

Talajic has previously led various clubs, including Riffa, East Riffa, Al-Nahda, Youth of Jordan, Al-Itihad,

Kalba Union, Dhofar, Muangtong United, Al-Faisaly, Henan Jianye, Al-Tai, Khalidiya, and the Bahrain Football Association.

Al-Qadisiya is currently in search of a coach to guide the team for the remainder of the ongoing season, following the decision of coach Mohamed Ibrahim to step down due to recent health issues. Ibrahim, also known as "The General," visited the team's camp to boost morale before the last

SOCCER

two matches in the Zain League, where he emphasized the need for maximum effort from the players.

Due to health concerns, Ibrahim will be heading to London for further eye examinations after suffering a stroke last December. Expressing his desire not to continue as the head of the technical staff, Ibrahim has urged the club to begin the search for a new



Dragan Talajic.

coach. The announcement of the successor to "The General" is expected within the next two days, with negotiations involving Croatian Ante Mica, compatriot Dalibor, and Spanish Franco.



Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown, (top left), is fouled by Indiana Pacers guard Buddy Hield, (top center), during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis. (AP)



Huddersfield's Brodie Spencer, (left), duels for the ball with Manchester City's Sergio Gomez during the English FA Cup third round soccer match between Manchester City and Huddersfield Town, at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Sports

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De Bruyne returns in big win for Man City

Real, Atletico ease into Copa last 16

LONDON, Jan 7, (AP): Kevin De Bruyne set up a goal on his return from injury after nearly five months out as Manchester City opened its FA Cup title defense with a 5-0 win over second-tier Huddersfield on Sunday.

There was also a victory in the third round for Wrexham, the fourth-tier club owned by Hollywood star Ryan Reynolds and with a strong tradition in the famous cup competition, while Premier League teams West Ham, Nottingham Forest and Luton were all held to draws at home by lower-division opponents.

De Bruyne hasn't played since sustaining a hamstring injury at Burnley on the opening day of the Premier League season on Aug. 11. The Belgium playmaker came on as a 57th-minute substitute - when City was 2-0 ahead - and provided the cross that fellow replacement Jeremy Doku converted for the final goal in a one-sided match at Etihad Stadium.

Phil Foden scored twice, Julian Alvarez added another and there was an own-goal for City, which saw defender Manuel Akanji go off injured in the first half.

Erling Haaland was still deemed not



Luton Town goalkeeper Tim Krul, (top), attempts to clear the ball during their English FA Cup Third Round match against Bolton Wanderers at Kenilworth Road, Luton, England. (AP)

fit enough to feature for City, but should be back soon to complement the returning De Bruyne and Doku as Pep Guardiola's team go for an unlikely repeat of its treble of major trophies won last season.

Wrexham won 1-0 at Shrewsbury, a local rival from a division higher in English soccer's pyramid, thanks to Tom O'Connor's second-half goal.

The buzz around Wrexham and its celebrity owners - Reynolds and fellow Hollywood actor Rob McElhenney - reached new levels during a cup run around this time last year when the team beat one second-tier Championship team in Coventry and then took another, Premier League-bound Sheffield United, to a replay. But promotion is the big goal this season for Wrexham, which is in third place in League Two.

SOCCER

In more surprising results, West Ham failed to hold onto a lead and drew 1-1 with second-tier Bristol City. Forest had to come from 2-0 down to draw with third-tier Blackpool 2-2 and another third-tier team, Bolton, held Luton 0-0.

Real Madrid easily handled fourth-division club Arandina 3-1 and moved into the round of 16 of the Copa del Rey.

Joselu, Brahim Díaz and Rodrygo scored for the defending Copa champions, who also finally debuted young Turkey international Arda Güler after a series of injuries.

Also, Atletico Madrid defeated third-division club Lugo 3-1.

Real Madrid dominated, controlled possession, didn't allow Arandina to threaten much. It was given a late own-goal by Madrid defender Nacho Fernández.

Güler had some good scoring chances, including a free kick that struck the post in the first half. The 18-year-old midfielder arrived this season from Fenerbahce on a six-year contract. His debut was delayed by a knee injury in the offseason followed by a muscle problem.

Midfielder Eduardo Camavinga was back in the squad after injuring his knee while on international duty with France in November.

Memphis Depay scored twice in the second half as Atletico got past Lugo.

Ángel Correa also scored for Atletico, which was coming off a loss at Girona in La Liga. Atletico is 10 points off the lead at the league's halfway point.



Hayat, Al-Musaybih and Buqmaz honor the winners.

Al-Mutawa secures top position at a height of 125 cm

Al-Kharafi dominates Kuwaiti Show Jumping League

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: Kuwait Equestrian Club's rider, Ali Al-Kharafi, secured a significant triumph, seizing the top spot in the Kuwaiti Show Jumping League. Al-Kharafi clinched the title in the third round held at the Hunting and Equestrian Club track. As the reigning champion from the past two league editions, he dominated the main event, "the Grand Prix," with a flawless performance at

a challenging height of 140 cm. Al-Kharafi completed the differentiation round in an impressive time of 33.72 seconds, without incurring any penalty points. Following him were Yara Al-Hunaidi, Abdullah Al-Awadi, and Abdullah Al-Roudhan.

The crowning ceremony, officiated by Masoud Hayat, President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation, Hamad Al-Musaybih from Zain Telecommu-

nications Company, and Safyan Buqmaz, Administrative Director of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation, honored the triumphant riders.

EQUESTRIAN

Ali Al-Kharafi's success extended across multiple heights, claiming first place at 135 cm and 130 cm. Meanwhile,

female jockey Nadia Al-Mutawa secured the top position at a height of 125 cm.

The refereeing committee, led by Nadhar Al-Mustafa and including Raghad Al-Dabbous, Lama Abdel-Aal, and Abdulaziz Al-Ajeel, ensured fair play. The track design was entrusted to Samir Al-Jaweed, with assistance from Ghadeer Nemati. Court referees Yaqoub Al-Nasrallah and Sami Al-Barak played pivotal roles in overseeing the competition

Coach Hegazy optimistic as Kuwait head to Bahrain for 'Asian Handball Championship'

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 7: The final training session for Kuwait handball team is scheduled for 11 am today at the Federation's headquarters in the Martyr Fahd Al-Ahmad Complex in Daiya. Tomorrow, the team departs for the Kingdom of Bahrain to participate in the 21st Asian Handball Championship, also serving as the "2025 World Cup Qualifiers," taking place in Manama from January 11 to January 25. Kuwait is placed in the first group alongside Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman, and China Taipei.

HANDBALL

With recent successes, including winning the bronze medal in the Asian Games in China and an impressive performance in the qualifiers for the 2024 Paris Olympics, the national team aims to secure one of the four qualifying tickets to the 2025 World Cup.

Coach Saeed Hegazy, from Algeria, expressed satisfaction with the results of the European training camp, highlighting the team's physical readiness. Regarding the upcoming tournament, Hegazy stated, "We have the opportunity to qualify, considering the team's performance and results in previous international tournaments, especially in the Asian Games."

Acknowledging the challenging task ahead, Hegazy emphasized the team's commitment to avoiding complacency in any match and emphasized the im-



Kuwaiti players preparing for the Asian Handball Championship.

portance of securing results leading to the semi-finals. The coach mentioned that the technical staff has formulated plans for the tournament, adaptable based on the opponent, with the overarching goal to showcase a performance everyone can be proud of and compete earnestly for a qualification

card. In other news, today at 7 pm, the draw for the General Handball League Championship will take place at the Union's headquarters in Daiya. The draw will provide insights into the tournament system and the number of participating teams.

Germany win United Cup after thrilling final tie against Poland

SYDNEY, Jan 7, (AP): Reigning Olympic champion Alexander Zverev saved two match points in a remarkable comeback to win his singles tie in an epic three-setter and then helped clinch the United Cup final for Germany in the deciding mixed doubles match on Sunday.

The sixth-ranked Zverev showed plen-

ty of stamina in returning from the previous night's early morning finish to rally from a set down and two match points and defeat the No. 9-ranked Hurkacz 6-7 (3-7), 7-6 (8-6), 6-4 in a three-hour epic at Ken Rosewall Arena in Sydney.

Then playing his sixth match in three days, including a 2.20 a.m. local time

finish on Sunday in Germany's marathon semifinal victory over Australia, Zverev partnered with Laura Siegemund to win the mixed doubles 6-4, 5-7, 10-4 in a super tiebreaker against Iga Swiatek and Hurkacz.

Fittingly, the winning shot was off Zverev's racket as his backhand vol-

ley winner clinched for Germany what had appeared an unlikely United Cup title after nail-biting victories in the semifinal and in Sunday's final. Earlier, top-ranked woman Swiatek had given Poland an early lead with a straight-sets win against Angelique Kerber.

Three 22-year-old Swiatek beat Ker-

ber 6-3, 6-0 in 70 minutes to stretch her win-streak to 16 matches, after the

TENNIS

four-time major winner finished 2023 with title wins at the China Open and the WTA Finals in Mexico.

'I am not ready to compete at the maximum level' Nadal withdraws from Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 7, (AP): Rafael Nadal withdrew from the Australian Open with an injury a week before the season's first major was due to start after playing just one tournament in his comeback from 12 months on the sidelines.

Nadal said he had concerns over his surgically repaired hip after needing a medical timeout in the third set of his Brisbane International quarterfinal loss to Jordan Thompson on Friday.

TENNIS

The 22-time major winner initially said it seemed like more of a muscular problem than the tendon issue that caused him so much pain this time last year.

But he posted on social media Sunday that scans after he arrived in Melbourne revealed a small tear in the muscle and he was flying back to Spain for treatment.

"Hi all, during my last match in Brisbane I had a small problem on a muscle that as you know made me worried," Nadal said on X, formerly Twitter. "Once I got to Melbourne I have had the chance to make an MRI and I have micro tear on a muscle, not in the same part where I had the injury and that's good news."

"Right now I am not ready to compete at the maximum level. I'm flying back to Spain to see my doctor, get some treatment and rest."

Nadal's latest injury setback comes after being away from the court for almost a year and having surgery on his troublesome hip in June. The former top-ranked player also had a history of



Rafael Nadal of Spain blows a kiss to the crowd after he lost his quarterfinal match against Jordan Thompson of Australia during the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

knee and foot issues that many thought would threaten his ability to remain on the tour for as long as he has.

But Nadal's latest comeback looked promising as he won his first two competitive matches in a year before losing to Thompson. He wasted three match points in the second set with uncharacteristic errors in his quarterfinal before losing in three.

"A lot of things can be happening in a body like my body after a year without playing tennis," he said after the loss to Thompson. "So hopefully it is just that, just a muscle that is supercharged. If that's the thing, perfect."

Milan rout Empoli as Napoli lose at Torino

MILAN, Jan 7, (AP): Olivier Giroud took his goal tally into double figures for the 14th season in a row as he helped AC Milan to a 3-0 win at relegation-threatened Empoli in Serie A on Sunday for the Rossoneri's first away win in three months.

Giroud doubled Milan's lead from the penalty spot in the first half following Ruben Loftus-Cheek's opener. Teenager Chaka Traoré sealed the win late on after a powerful run from United States international Christian Pulisic.

Empoli remained second-to-last in Serie A, two points from safety.

Both Milan and Napoli had length injury lists and their problems grew worse as each lost a player in the first half with home defender Tyrone Ebuehi and Rossoneri counterpart Alessandro Florenzi both going off with apparent muscular issues.

SOCCER

Pasquale Mazzocchi's debut for Napoli lasted just four minutes before he was sent off amid a horror show for the defending champion that saw it lose 3-0 at Torino.

Mazzocchi, who joined from Salernitana two days ago, was brought on at halftime and moments later went sliding into a tackle on Valentino Lazaro with a high boot. The referee initially awarded a yellow card but after reviewing the incident on the pitchside monitor changed it to a straight red.

Torino was already leading following Antonio Sanabria's strike at the end of the first half and Nikola Vlašić doubled his team's advantage almost immediately.