



Amir congratulates Denmark's King Frederik X on throne ascension

Opinion

This is not how things are done

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

IT seems that the persistence to fail has become a Kuwaiti demeanor par excellence, as the state, over the past six decades, neither benefited from the many experiences it underwent, nor worked to establish a clear methodology for selecting officials in executive positions.

People have tried many ministers, undersecretaries and directors, but the result was that the majority of them failed miserably. The great invention instead was to "rotate" them, that is, to transfer them from one place to another.

In all countries of the world that respect competencies, there is an integrated system for selecting officials, which is based on their "data", that is, not only their degrees and academic standing, but also their social attributes and personal relationships, so that the employee does not exploit his position for his own interests.

Also, the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers does not play any role in nominating any candidate. He does not open his desk drawer and take out a list of names of those nominated either through intermediaries or on the basis of "this is our son," or because the candidate is a member of any particular diwaniya.

When that person becomes a minister, and he is not covered by the Prime Minister and the other ministers, he ends up being subject to parliamentary accountability, because, as the public says, "The sun has not risen on him."

Unfortunately, this custom is followed in Kuwait because there are unseen forces working behind the scenes to ensure their own interests. A new "deep state" is emerging, which is what pushed the country to this slope of backwardness.

This is because whoever assumed executive responsibility did not work according to a national agenda, but rather issued his decisions according to what benefited "the intermediary" and "the clique". The same applies to laws that were approved without study.

All of this harmed Kuwait, starting with society, passing through the economy, all the way to the agricultural and industry sectors, and even entering and leaving the country.

This is because the work system in state institutions lacks the standards applicable in the world. For example, in the Gulf countries, officials are selected based on a specific system. If it is discovered that one of them is not qualified for the position, he is quickly relieved of it, and sometimes he is held accountable for the slightest mistake.

There are also many examples in the world in terms of respect for standards and laws. In New Zealand, the Minister of Housing and Fish Resources had resigned from his position because he used the government credit card for private purchases amounting to only about USD 880.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait has set Thursday, February 8 as a public holiday marking the Muslim occasion of Al-Israa wal Miraj (Prophet's Ascension) (PBUH), the Civil Service Commission (CSC) said on Monday.

Work will resume as normal on Sunday, February 11, while state bodies with a "special work nature" will have their holidays determined by their own internal management, taking into consideration "public interest," CSC said on its official X social media account. (KUNA)

JERUSALEM: Missile fire struck a ship Monday just off the coast of Yemen in the Gulf of Aden, less than a day after Yemen's Houthi rebels fired an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea, officials said.

Details remained scarce on the missile strike, though it marked the latest attack roiling global shipping amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Suspicion immediately fell on the Houthis. (AP)

BEIRUT: Turkish shelling and airstrikes have targeted dozens of infrastructure facilities in northeast Syria over the past days, wounding at least 10 people and cutting out electricity and water supplies in wide areas held by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces in the war-torn country, Kurdish-led authorities in northeast Syria said Monday.

The statement by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria said the 73 attacks by Turkey's military over the past two days have hit oil, electricity and water facilities as well as warehouses where grain is stored. The statement added that power supplies were cut in major towns and hundreds of villages and hamlets. (AP)

DUBAI: A court in Iran has slapped imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi with an additional sentence of 15 months for allegedly spreading propaganda against the Islamic Republic, her family said Monday.

According to a post on Instagram by Mohammadi's family, the new sentence was handed down on Dec. 19. It said Mohammadi had refused to attend the court sessions. (AP)

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Monday to King of Denmark, Frederik X, on occasion of ascending the throne.

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PAM announces launch of new e-service

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Yousef Kazem, the official spokesperson for the unified government application for electronic services 'Sahel', has announced the launch of

a new electronic service by the Public Authority for Manpower, reports Al-Seyassah daily. This service facilitates the direct availability of "a certificate to whom

it may concern for the Ministry of Higher Education - Chapter Five" through the 'Sahel' application.

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Part-time work rule faces threats from 'visa traders'

Engineering Union calls for robust regulation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Union of Engineering Offices and Consulting Houses has expressed its appreciation for the recent decision made by First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, allowing workers in the private sector to engage in part-time employment elsewhere, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The president of the union, Badr Al-Salman, has lauded the decision as a significant step in modifying the demographic composition, acknowledging the efforts to regulate

the labor market.

However, Al-Salman urged caution, emphasizing the importance of responsible utilization of this decision. He specifically addressed concerns about potential exploitation by certain individuals, cautioning against the misuse of the decision to legitimize what is commonly known as the residency trade.

He expressed concerns about engineering and technical workers being registered under companies and subsequently granted approval to work for other entities. Al-Salman pointed out that the regulations governing the engineering and consulting profession stipulate full-time commitment to the respective engineering office or consulting house, with a prohibition on simultaneous employment in other roles related to engineering and consulting work. This measure aims to

prevent conflicts of interest and maintain integrity in the profession.

While recognizing the commendable efforts and initiatives of the First Deputy in regulating the labor market and adjusting the demographic composition, Al-Salman urged a prompt response in drafting detailed regulations for the decision.

Furthermore, he advocated for the active involvement of the Union in the formulation of these regulations to contribute to establishing robust foundations and standards. This collaborative approach, he believes, will help address and cover any potential loopholes that could be exploited to the detriment of public funds and in violation of municipal laws, regulations, the laws of the Public Authority for Manpower, and residency laws under the Ministry of Interior.

Al-Salman highlighted specific provisions, such as Article Seven, which outlines necessary conditions for opening an engineering office. This includes a prohibition on being an employee, partner, shareholder, or owner of a contracting company or specialized institution involved in construction work. Al-Salman stressed the need for strict adherence to these regulations to maintain the core principles of the engineering profession.

Additionally, the Union president underscored the critical role of engineering offices and consulting houses as neutral parties between project owners and implementing parties. He emphasized that combining the roles of engineering consulting and contracting work is not permissible to ensure the safety of facilities, the quality of work, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Expressing confidence in the First Deputy's commitment to addressing these concerns, Al-Salman called for patience in preparing detailed regulations and encouraged electronic connectivity between the Union and

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Day by Day

HH the Prime Minister has a difficult mission. It comes after missions that wreaked havoc in public affairs, which prompted the premiership to vent his anger without mincing his words over what happened in the past.

Time has come for competence to prevail in order to end the absurdity that has become the talk of Kuwait.

...Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Photo by Rezk Tawfik

On Sunday evening, Kuwaitis unite at Erada Square in a show of solidarity with the Palestinian people as the Israel-Hamas conflict reaches its 100th day.

Disabled Affairs Law amendments await review

Lawmaker calls for ministerial scrutiny to avoid future crises

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Chairman of the Disabled Affairs Committee in the National Assembly MP Saud Al-Asfour has confirmed that the committee discussed the government's decree responding to the proposed amendments to Disabled Affairs Law number 8/2010, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Officials of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) attended the committee meeting, while representatives of the Legal Advice and Legislation Department were absent.

Al-Asfour revealed they found out that the government's comments were not presented to the committee to obtain its opinion before returning the bill, affirming the committee will complete the review of the comments after the formation of the new government to discuss them with the concerned minister.

He added the committee also talked about its task to study medical cases that are not approved as a disability; such as one eye, one ear, childhood diabetes and others; disclosing the committee asked the authority's medical team to provide it with the standards approved in such cases.

Meanwhile, MP Abdul Hadi Al-Ajmi has called on HH the Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah to carefully review the names of ministers in the government formation and remove those surrounded with suspicions of corruption in order to prevent political crises, so that "we do not resort to more difficult procedures after the oath guaranteed by the Constitution."

In a press statement, he asserted: "This is a clear message, because some of the names being circulated as ministers send negative signals to the Kuwaiti street, considering they have negative positions or were subjected to interrogations and did not provide anything to protect them before the Kuwaiti people." He hopes that Kuwait will have young ministers who can complete government work and perform well for the country.

He pointed out that Kuwait is living in an atmosphere of long wait and anticipation for the formation of the new government, indicating the nation's representative must bear his oversight responsibilities.

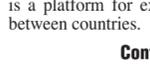
He stated that he asked HH the acting Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah about

KU urges GCC alliances in cybersecurity and AI

ABU DHABI, Jan 15, (KUNA): Kuwait University (KU) Acting Chancellor for Academic Support Services, Dr. Sulaiman Al-Rafie, stressed Monday the importance of building strategic partnerships with universities in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC) in the fields of cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to confront the increasing digital challenges.

Al-Rafie told KUNA on Kuwait's participation in the 26th meeting of presidents and directors of universities and higher education institutions in the GCC, hosted by the United Arab Emirates University in Dubai and concluded last Saturday, that the meeting is a platform for exchanging experiences and ideas between countries.

Al-Rafie



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his choices for ministers, the question related to a minister in the previous governments, and his observations and suspicions of a conflict of interests. "The issue resurfaced today, but there is room for HH the Prime Minister-designate to reconsider, since this question still exists after the circulation of some names nominated to the new government. Well-known corruption files, which have disturbed the Kuwaiti street, are still open; most notably the Army Fund. The Public Funds Protection Committee held a series of meetings on this file," he added.

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Famine, disease threaten Gazans

RAFAH, Gaza Strip, Jan 15, (AP): Gaza urgently needs more aid or its desperate population will suffer widespread famine and disease, the heads of three major U.N. agencies warned Monday, as authorities in the enclave reported that the death toll in the Israel-Hamas war had surpassed 24,000.

While the U.N. agency chiefs did not directly point a finger at Israel, they said aid delivery is hobbled by the opening of too few border crossings, a slow vetting process for trucks and goods going into Gaza, and continuing fighting throughout the territory - all of which Israel plays a deciding factor in.

Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza, sparked by the militant group's Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, has prompted unprecedented destruction in the tiny coastal enclave and triggered a humanitarian catastrophe that has displaced most of Gaza's 2.3 million population and pushed more than a quarter into starvation, according to the U.N.



KUNA photo

The 26th meeting of presidents and directors of universities and higher education institutions in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in Dubai.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:20	Asr	14:52
Sunrise ..	06:44	Maghrib ..	17:11
Zohr	11:57	Isha	18:33

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

Weather

By Night: Rather cold to cold and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h.

Station **Max Exp** **Min Rec**

Kuwait City	25	16
Kuwait Airport	26	16
Abdaly	24	12
Jahra	26	14
Salmiyah	20	17
Nuwaisib	26	16
Wafra	28	16

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

Kuwait Institute for Judicial, Legal Studies inks dynamic MoU with UAB

CAIRO, Jan 15, (KUNA): The Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies and the Union of Arab Banks (UAB) signed Sunday a memorandum of understanding (MoU) focused on the exchange of expertise, experiences and studies in the legal and judicial fields, under the auspices of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States Ahmad Aboul Gheit.

Director General of the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies Counselor Hani Al-Hamdan and UAB's Secretary General Dr. Wissam Fattouh inked the MoU, with dignitaries present at the ceremony such as Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi, and the Assistant Secretary General, Head of the Economic Affairs Sector Ambassador Ali Al-Maliki, representing the League's Secretary General, along with Dr. Raed Al-Juboori, director of the Arab organizations and federations department at the League.

During the ceremony in a speech, Al-Maliki emphasized the League's commitment to supporting collaborative endeavors, viewing them as vital initiatives to advance joint Arab efforts, expressing optimism for the positive impact of this cooperation on judicial, legal and banking sectors, fostering a unified Arab approach.

Speaking on the ceremony, Al-Hamdan underscored the strategic significance of the agreement, presenting it as an opportunity to exchange ideas, enhance visions, and develop specialized training programs in banking,

highlighting the memorandum's focus on addressing challenges posed by modern financial transactions, particularly within the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence.

The collaboration is expected to yield not only the exchange of curricula, programs, and scientific materials but also well-defined training and scientific plans that are envisaged as foundational elements in developing a knowledgeable and experienced generation, prerequisites for achieving excellence, success, and innovation in legal, judicial, and banking fields, he added.

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Fattouh highlighted the MoU's importance in harmonizing laws and banking, crucial for resolving disputes within the Arab banking sector, anticipating joint studies and research on laws and banking, with plans for an international conference in Kuwait later this year that focuses on mediation, arbitration, and the development of laws supporting banking.

Speaking to KUNA, Al-Mutairi underscored the significance of the memorandum in enhancing cooperation in judicial, legal, and banking sectors, pointing out the distinguished position of the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, anticipating benefits for UAB through the institute's expertise in specialized legal and judicial studies in banking.

The MoU is poised to contribute new experiences and build specialized legal expertise in financial aspects, marking a significant step toward strengthening collaboration between the two entities, contributing to the development of legal and banking practices in the Arab world.

Al-Mutairi clarified that the Arab League possesses mechanisms addressing financial matters, including institutions like the Arab Investment Court and the Administrative Court.



Al-Hamdan

'Current ME status dangerous'

China for peace, stability in region: Ambassador Jianwei



Group photo of those present at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial, Legal Studies, UAB MoU signing ceremony.



The meeting in progress.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Zhang Jianwei has confirmed that China fully supports countries in the Middle East as they work together in enhancing solidarity and cooperation in facing regional challenges, reports Al-Qabas daily.

He reiterated that his country did not and will not seek to achieve its interests at the expense of the people in the region. He said China's interests are consistent with the interests of the Middle Eastern countries, which are peace and stability.

He believes the current situation in the Middle East is complex and dangerous; hence, the need to resolve disputes and differences through dialogue, consultation and political means. He affirmed that China will remain a country that promotes security and stability in the Middle East, ensures cooperation on development and prosperity, supports solidarity and self-strengthening of countries in the region and contributes more to achieving reconciliation, peace and harmony in the region.



Zhang Jianwei

should abandon double standards and prove their responsibility to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and to maintain safety and stability in the region."

On the possibility of a Chinese military presence in the region, he pointed out the urgent needs of the region are not aircraft and warships, but factories, ports, schools and houses. He retorted: "If we want to extinguish the fire, do we pour oil on it or remove the burning wood?"

He emphasized the need for a safe and stable environment, indicating this is the basic condition. He asserted that military presence does not guarantee 100 percent peace and stability, especially when it comes from outside the region, pointing out that history and the reality in the region have clearly proven this.

"We always believe that the countries in the region are the owners of the region, and that dialogue is an effective solution to settle the conflict. Cooperation and development are the keys to maintaining stability and prosperity in the long term. Countries outside the region must play a constructive role in promoting dialogue and cooperation between countries in the region, and not the other way around. China has remained a reliable partner with sincere intentions."

It has never supported the use of force, pursued selfish geopolitical interests or imposed its will on others. It has continued to support the peoples of the Middle East to explore development paths on their own. It supports the countries in the Middle East in their bid to settle differences through dialogue and consultation."

Asked about the lack of a role for China and its efforts to form an international pressure to end the war on Gaza, and about the possibility of Chinese efforts to calm the situation between Hamas and Israel, as it did in the Saudi-Iranian reconciliation, he replied: "I do not agree with this description as it contradicts the facts. Since the outbreak of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, China has been exerting tremendous efforts to push for ceasefire, protect civilians and alleviate the humanitarian crisis."

In its capacity as the rotating president of the Security Council from last November and in solidarity with the Arab countries, China adopted the first Security Council resolution and presented a paper on its official position about resolving the conflict, which mobilized the international community's support for peace."

He continued: "Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the extraordinary virtual summit of leaders of the BRICS countries on the Palestinian issue, emphasizing the immediate ceasefire and the necessity of restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and establishing an independent Palestinian State. Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Foreign Affairs Minister Wang Yi also held extensive meetings with senior figures and leaders from more than 20 countries and international organizations, including the joint delegation of foreign affairs ministers of Arab and Islamic countries."

They visited Beijing as the first stop after the extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit. This shows their deep confidence in China. He also chaired a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on the Palestinian-Israeli issue."

Ceasefire

The Chinese ambassador also stated that his country's current concern is the comprehensive implementation of the relevant resolutions issued by the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly on the immediate ceasefire and stopping hostilities. "The Chinese side rejects any displacement or forced displacement of the residents of the Gaza Strip and open humanitarian corridors as soon as possible to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe on a larger scale."

He called on the UN Security Council to listen to the calls of Arab and Islamic countries and take responsible steps to calm the situation. "China believes that the root cause of the deterioration of the Palestinian-Israeli situation is that the rights of the Palestinian people to establish their State, to exist, and to return to their homeland have been ignored for a long time, as well as calls on the Chinese side to support the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty."

On the latest Chinese developments and efforts at Mubarak Port, he affirmed that during the successful visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China in September 2023, the Chinese and Kuwaiti sides agreed to enhance cooperation in many areas like construction, infrastructure and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port.

Coast Guard launches boats

Rescue, reconnaissance targeted

MoH launches restructuring

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Ministry of Health (MoH) has started restructuring the committees and work teams that have been suspended since the end of December last year, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry had earlier set the regulations for organizing work teams and committees; including the need to comply with the specified number of members for each team and committee.

In addition, requests to form committees and work teams should be based on the actual need and the powers assigned to them should be different from the powers of the requesting party. Teams should work for a period of three months and this period cannot be extended; while the committees' duration is six months, provided the justifications for extension are valid and approved by the competent technical committee.

'Could be bombs': The Ministry of Interior has warned citizens and expatriates against tampering with the strange objects that they might see in camping sites and other places, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry published pictures of some of the bombs, which could explode once touched or tampered.

It stressed the need to exercise caution and avoid getting near or tampering with any strange object, and to call Emergency No. 112 in case they see such objects.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Coast Guard General Department at the Interior Ministry has inaugurated a multi-mission, search and rescue boat and another boat for reconnaissance and search for the Maritime Security Department, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry manufactured the boats at the workshop of the Coast Guard under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaleel.

The inauguration of the two boats comes within the ministry's plan to highlight the importance of strengthening maritime capabilities with the aim of achieving comprehensive security control.

The Coast Guard confirmed the boats were launched in the territorial waters, proving their capabilities as per the international specifications that play a vital role in protecting Kuwaiti territorial waters.

The ministry stressed that the Coast Guard remains committed to strengthening its capabilities and depending on the capabilities of the local industry; such that the industry overcomes all challenges to achieve self-sufficiency and manufacture such boats.

Meanwhile, Director of the Coast Guard General Department Major General Talal Al-Mowanis revealed that the multi-mission boat for search and rescue operations is 31 feet long, while the reconnaissance and search boat is designated for the Maritime Security Department. He added these two boats, which were designed and manufactured locally, were tested in the workshops of the Coast Guard and in the hands of Kuwaiti engineers.

He went on to say that in February, the 40-foot interceptor boat with certain specifications and special armament will be tested. He disclosed this boat is equipped with various types of weapons - 60 mm and 50 mm.

He thanked Sheikh Talal Al-Khaleel for his unwavering support for the Coast Guard in particular, and the security services in general. He added the minister has been urging the Coast Guard officials to develop mechanisms for self-sufficiency.



Sheikh Talal

Audit Bureau findings discussed

Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, led a meeting with several assistant undersecretaries and security leaders yesterday, reports Al-Anba daily. The primary focus of the gathering was to deliberate on the findings

presented by the Audit Bureau. The meeting involved a comprehensive review of the agenda, in-depth discussions on the observations raised by the Audit Bureau, and the formulation of requisite measures to address and rectify the identified issues.

Hunt for 'headphone-sellers' launched

Cheating in exams continues despite arrests & crackdown

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: As Grade 12 students continue their final exams in the first semester of academic year 2023/2024, the cheating in exams issue remains a headache for the Education Ministry, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Cheating is a recurring problem that requires radical treatment and more effective measures through the coordinated efforts of the ministry and other concerned State agencies in order to deter those looking for "imaginary success". This is in addition to educating generations about the dangerous impact of cheating on the quality of education.

Despite the decrease in the number of cheating in exams cases towards the end of the first semester of academic year 2023/2024 compared to previous years, cheating continues although the previous 'cheating groups' have been eliminated.

Statistics

According to official statistics, the number of students who were deprived of the chance to take the tests in the literary and scientific sections due to cheating reached 552 in 10 tests as of Sunday - 259 in the Literary Section and 293 in the Scientific Section; while the number of those who were not allowed to take the same tests due to cheating at the end of the first semester in academic year 2022/2023 reached 1,355.

Observers noticed that over the past years, the ministry was able to strike successive blows to cheaters; the first of which was through the approval of exam regulations like depriving those proven to have cheated from taking the tests and implementation of the rotation mechanism for principals in 2018.

Observers stated that with the elimination of cheating facilitators and test leakers and the arrest of what is known as 'cheating groups'; the number of those deprived of a chance to take the tests is supposed to decrease as the cheating tools were no longer available, yet the issue is troubling the ministry. This necessitates a radical solution and strict monitoring during exams.

Headphones

Educational sector officials confirmed to the daily that comprehensive measures must be taken to address the issue. They pointed out that the sale of headphones used for cheating continues. They said the search for "imaginary success" is a problem begging for a solution, indicating that concerted efforts to educate generations about the dangers of cheating are urgently needed.

In addition, an official source disclosed that the ministries of Interior and Commerce are working together to arrest those behind the sale of headphones used for cheating. The source said the two ministries fully prepared for the Grade 12 exams, as they conducted intensive campaigns in markets and stores known for selling headphones used in cheating; in addition to monitoring those selling these headphones through social networking sites and taking legal measures against them.

The source stressed that these efforts and inspection campaigns have greatly contributed to reducing the sale of such headphones. He said dozens of people involved in selling these headphones through social networking sites were referred to the investigation authorities after they were caught red-handed.

25 abandoned vehicles removed

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Director of the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department at the Kuwait Municipality branch in the Capital Governorate Saad Al-Khreinji confirmed that the supervisory team in his department carried out field tours that resulted in the removal of 25 abandoned cars, issuance of 30 public sanitation and road occupancy violation citations, and putting 100 warning stickers on abandoned cars in various areas at the governorate, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, Al-Khreinji explained the intensive field inspection campaign aims to monitor negative

phenomena and take legal measures against those proven to have committed violations. He asserted that the supervisory team focuses on maintaining cleanliness in the areas under its responsibility, as well as removing everything that distorts the aesthetic view and road works in a bid to retain the cultural landscape of the governorate.

He affirmed the continuation of these campaigns and the distribution of awareness posters throughout January, warning there is no complacency in taking legal action against those who violate the public sanitation and road occupancy regulations.



Companies compete to present their latest services and products at the Horeca Kuwait exhibition.

HORECA exhibition kicks off

The 12th edition of the HORECA Exhibition kicked off today at the Kuwait International Fairground.

Running until January 17, the event features seminars with over 20 industry specialists, offering

insights into hospitality and hotel service trends. Attendees can expect a curated experience, meeting the needs of both local and international hospitality enthusiasts.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Cautious Kuwait, plays safe, despite change in policy ... post-invasion

"In a recent gathering at a Kuwaiti diwaniya, discussions veered towards Kuwait's foreign policy, exploring both recent shifts and historical context. Reflecting on the era before the invasion (1961-1990), it became evident that Kuwait's diplomacy during this period was shaped by specific circumstances, primarily its acceptance into the Arab League in 1961," columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Several factors defined this phase following which an Arab force was stationed on the borders, supporting Kuwait and rejecting Iraq's territorial claims: Assistance Commitment: Kuwait was assured assistance if it decided to align with any Arab country.

"These conditions restricted Kuwait's access to military support from Western nations and anchored its defense mechanisms within the Arab League.

"Arab League decisions during the Kuwait crisis, especially influenced by the United Arab Republic and President Jamal Abdel Nasser, placed Kuwait under Arab political and moral sway. This unique approach hampered Kuwait's freedom to engage in dialogue with its former protector, Britain, and positioned it under an Arab umbrella.

"The late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad recognized that Kuwait's security hinged on collective Arab cooperation. Hence, Kuwait maintained a proactive role within the Arab League, not only participating in committees but also assuming their chairmanship. Sheikh Sabah believed in preserving Arab consensus to bolster Kuwait's security.

"During his active years from 1964 to 1971, Sheikh Sabah played crucial roles. Notably, he orchestrated a meeting between President Abdel Nasser and King Faisal on Yemen and presided over the Arab Committee to Defend Iraq during its war with Iran. His optimism and determination were instrumental, and his diplomatic efforts extended globally.

"In the context of Kuwait's relations with the United States, while disciplined, they lacked warmth. Kuwait's membership in the Arab League placed constraints on its engagement with Western allies.

"US President George Bush 'the father' acknowledged this during a meeting, singling out Kuwait for its reserved stance towards the US.

"The invasion in 1990 altered Kuwait's diplomatic landscape. Confronted with regional threats, Kuwait formed a strategic partnership with the United States and Britain, strengthening relations in various domains. This shift marked a departure from the limitations imposed by the Arab League and allowed Kuwait more diplomatic flexibility.

"Despite this strategic shift, Kuwait remains cautious, actively participating in Arab League meetings, and contributing positively to regional problem-solving. The people of Kuwait support these diplomatic measures, appreciating the safeguarding of their independence and the resilience Kuwait has displayed in the face of regional challenges.

"As Kuwait continues to navigate these diplomatic waters, it is essential for the strategic partners to acknowledge and invest in the partnership's vitality through

multifaceted dialogues and engagements beyond political and security realms. "In essence, Kuwait's diplomatic journey reflects a pragmatic response to evolving circumstances, grounded in a commitment to regional stability and cooperation."

Also:

"In 2010, Adam Przeworski, a prominent Polish-American political science professor renowned for his insights into democratic societies, introduced a proposal outlining a binary classification of democracy and dictatorship," columnist **Suad Fahd Al-Mojil** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"He utilized annual data spanning 1946 to 2008 across 199 countries. The classification distinguished between democracies and dictatorships, further categorizing democracies into parliamentary, semi-presidential, and presidential, while dictatorships were classified as royal, military, or civil.

"Przeworski's theory asserted that the essence of democracy lies in competitive elections, representing a system where citizens can change governments without resorting to violence.

"Applying this classification, Kuwait demonstrated a minimal level of democracy, a noteworthy achievement considering the relatively brief duration of its democratic experiment. The presence of reasonably competitive elections without bloodshed marked a positive outcome.

"However, beyond parliamentary elections, democracy yields tangible benefits that deserve consideration in any evaluative process. This is particularly crucial amid political crises, where differing perspectives on the electoral system and mechanisms of operation come to the forefront. The constitutional amendment process is currently a low priority within the dual authorities.

"The critics of democracy in Kuwait often argue that it impedes sustainable development, yet they fail to articulate the nature of this obstacle or provide a precise definition of development.

"They also overlook the role of the constitution and the birth of popular participation in Kuwait, which has been integral to cultural, educational, health, artistic, and sporting advancements.

"The Przeworski scale, which classifies countries based on their government systems, highlights reasons for categorizing them as democracies or dictatorships.

"Many Arab countries are labeled as dictatorial due to factors like the lack of power exchange, absence of legislative parties, and unelected executive leadership, or reliance on a single-party system.

"While democratic culture remains distant in most Arab societies, this is attributed to hierarchical social structures and the relatively short democratic experience, initiated in many Arab countries after World War II.

"Rejecting the notion that democracy is a Western concept incompatible with Arab societies, a comparison with Iraq, which rebuilt its political structure after decades of dictatorship, illustrates the adaptability of democratic principles.

"The chicken-and-egg puzzle may not be applicable to the establishment of a sound political system.

"Prioritizing democratic actions involves setting the foundation with freedoms, a constitution, elections, and legislative councils.

"These foundations, once established, evolve through practice, subject to trial

and error, acceptance, and rejection.

"Calls to suspend parliamentary life for refining the democratic experience are deemed futile; revisions can only occur through increased practice. The unique nature of this case negates the conventional chicken-and-egg puzzle."



"The mourning custom in Kuwait is one of the good customs that we inherited from our fathers and grandfathers, and we will pass it on to our children, grandchildren and beyond -- God willing," **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"It is a bright picture that shows the extent of cohesion and communication between citizens, regardless of their affiliation, to console the family of the deceased and alleviate their pain and grief.

"It is also pleasing to witness acquaintances and others rushing to perform their duty in the cemetery or at home, not caring about the traffic or where to park their cars. The method of offering condolences and praising Allah is ideal in terms of timing and organization. It is done morning and evening, not to mention the standing arrangement of the elderly among the family of the deceased.

"Aside from funerals, we also see this custom in weddings, which are no less popular and shared. We ask Allah Almighty to perpetuate these blessings upon us through our good customs, have mercy and forgive those whom He has chosen to be near Him, and to grant long life to those who breathe the air of their Lord.

"When you express an opinion that is not in line with that of the nation's representatives, especially with regard to the issue of nationality, and you meet one of them in an occasion, you feel dissatisfied with his facial expression. If you greet him, you can hardly hear his voice and the reason is that your opinion contradicts his. Not only that, he and his colleagues cannot tolerate you, or those who support you. They describe you as misguided groups with suspicious and deviant opinions, as one of them mentioned in his meeting.

"Moreover, they accuse you of inciting others to overthrow the regime and the Constitution, God forbid. They are certain that you have accepted the democratic system with a sweet soul, that you are adhering to it, and that it is indispensable because you are more honest than them. Therefore, the name, 'nation's representatives,' does not match the actions and practices of some of them, which cannot be accepted by any Kuwaiti.

"Whenever we are optimistic about the new representatives, the same suspicions come to us and only a few perform their duties to the fullest. We thank these few.

"Just as the representatives have an opinion, you have another opinion without using bad words to describe them. You do not utter the most horrific expressions to them. You do not hurl accusations, like they do, because you think that disagreement over an issue does not destroy the friendship. You regard it as a disagreement between members of Kuwaiti families. They reconcile without hostility or estrangement, while they consider it a challenge between a victor and a loser, far from public interest, so this phrase applies to them: 'If you are not with me, you will not see my smile.'

"May God protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of evil and harm."

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**



Abdullah Bishara

Other Voices

My Christian friend & my book

By **Ahmad alsarraf**

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with a group of friends in Beirut during a symposium related to my book, 'The Secret of Lebanon through Kuwaiti eyes.'

The event featured speeches by politician and economist Nizar Younis, Father George Hobeika, the honorable President of the University of Kaslik, and literary novelist Omar Saed.

The symposium, skillfully moderated by Justice Professor Yousef Bishara, drew a relatively large crowd despite the challenging circumstances in Lebanon. Attendees navigated the difficulties of traveling on less crowded, more arduous, and slower roads -- a reality shaped by various well-known reasons.

The journey has transformed into an odyssey, and the pervasive fear is that the situation may erupt at any moment, making it crucial for everyone to be cautious about being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Among the audience, as usual, was Ms. Ilham Helou, a prominent figure known as "the writer of closed drawers." She earned this moniker because she meticulously stores everything she intends to write in the drawers of her desk, maintaining a refined style but refusing to publish her work.

In an email received after my return from Beirut, Ms. Helou expressed that our meeting was significant, both due to its rarity and the intellectual and mental enjoyment it provided. She identified herself as a Maronite, emphasizing her identity as a free human being first.

Ms. Helou shared her perspective on my book, which delves into the role of Christians in Lebanon, noting that Christians, often unintentionally, are raised with a more flexible upbringing, characterized by a higher level of freedom. In contrast to some

who tend to suppress opinions and conceal feelings to evade rebuke, she observed that Christians have room for expressing criticism of prevailing or traditional norms. According to her, this flexibility allows them to innovate, make mistakes, and learn valuable lessons in life.

Ms. Helou pointed out that the upbringing of individuals from different religious backgrounds influences their behavior, especially in expressing feelings or opinions.

She suggested that individuals from her community tend to be cautious, quick to agree with others' opinions, and hesitant to express dissent. In contrast, she highlighted the openness within her community to discuss and challenge religious practices or beliefs without fear of ridicule or blasphemy. She credited this to the more lenient nature of religious authority, which adapts to the changing lifestyles and values of the era.

According to Ms. Helou, the continuous review and discussion within the Christian community safeguard faith from stagnation and the imposition of rigid interpretations. While the committed may find these positions challenging, they have become integral to Christian religious thought, influenced by the West's history, the Age of Enlightenment, revolutions, and secularism.

Religious authorities have abandoned strictness and military-like discipline in favor of freedom of expression, discussion, and research.

Ms. Helou acknowledged that the ideals and values attributed to Christians are sometimes incorrect, emphasizing that individual behavior outside one's homeland differs from behavior within it. She concluded that, in the end, everyone, regardless of their religious background, is a sinful human being.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Helou emphasized the importance of choosing the right school for children, one that aligns with a balanced educational policy between oppression and freedom, fanaticism and acceptance of others.



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3 hurt in Jleeb fire

Interpol extradites wanted barber

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Kuwaiti Interpol Service apprehended an expatriate, subsequently extraditing him to his home country following a conviction in an ethical case. The individual, employed as a children's barber in Kuwait, had been placed on the international wanted list following a court decision in his home country sentencing him to 15 years of imprisonment, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Conversely, three expatriates received medical treatment at Farwaniya Hospital after sustaining injuries in a fire incident in the Jleeb area.

In an official statement, the fire department disclosed that personnel from the Jleeb and Al-Samoud centers successfully contained a fire at an Arab residence in the Al-Hasawi area yesterday morning. The response was prompted by a report of a fire breaking out in the aforementioned house.

Firefighters managed to extinguish the flames, and three expatriates, who suffered from smoke inhalation, were promptly transferred to the medical emergency room for necessary medical attention.

Cops hurt in police station fight

Hearing in 'terror' case adjourned to Feb 12

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Ministry of Interior has started an extensive investigation into a fistfight among security officers, which caused injuries to some of them, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a security source.

The source disclosed that the officers involved in the fight are from the General Traffic Department, Public Security Department and Criminal Investigation Department; including two policemen, a first sergeant, a corporal, a captain and a first lieutenant.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the circumstances that led to the fistfight.

On the other hand, Task Force officers approached a citizen in Hawally Governorate when they noticed his abnormal condition. However, he tried to attack them and ignored their directive for him to stop, indicating with his hand that he was busy. He was forced to obey the orders of the officers when a number of policemen arrived at the scene.

A case was registered against him for resisting police and behaving in an abnormal way. He was referred to the concerned authorities.



Ruling opposed: The Court of Cassation adjourned to the February 12 session the appeal submitted by the Public Prosecution against the ruling to acquit 13 Kuwaiti citizens who were accused of financing terrorism and joining a banned Lebanese party "Hezbollah" through donations from a charitable organization.

Earlier, the Court of First Instance had confirmed in the explanatory memo of its ruling that "there is no legislation in the country that criminalizes collecting money for public purposes without a license since the establishment of the Ministry of Social Affairs on December 14, 1954.

This is the matter that tied the court's hands and prevented it from using its authority stipulated in article 132 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Trials by amending the description of the accusation to a legal description, which is supposed to exist, that is more correct and accurate.

According to the court's view, this is considered a legislative defect that requires attention to be amended and corrected in order to place all individuals and groups in the field of fundraising with their various beliefs and orientations under the scrutiny of the auditor, and under the eye of the censor who prevents the recurrence of the incident under accusation, and protects the country from any harm that may befall it or its position internally or externally at the local, regional, or international levels."



70 pc drug cases: While the corridors on the fourth floor of the Justice Palace are crowded with the public who are waiting for the sessions to begin, a number of defendants sit on chairs adjacent to the halls next to their families, fearing the decisions that will be reached by the judicial bodies that will hear their cases.

Yesterday, the Criminal Court on the fourth floor tried 54 criminal cases, the largest share being drug cases, with 38 cases filed against citizens and expatriates who were accused of drug use and trafficking, i.e. 70 percent.

The session began by examining the usual cases, such as beating, robbery by force, kidnapping, and murder. The court then proceeded to consider the other cases, all of which are classified as drug cases of all kinds, such as abuse, trafficking, import, and cultivation of various types, such as hashish, heroin, morphine, cocaine, narcotic pills of all kinds, and shabu (crystal meth).

The surprise usually lies in the fact that in criminal cases, a state of astonishment prevails among those present in other cases that the defendants in drug cases are of both sexes and of different ages. One can find a 50-year-old defendant sitting in the dock, and a young man, aged 19, sitting next to him accused of using Shabu. You also find some girls of different ages accused of using drugs.



KUNA photo

Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous talking on new advertising regulations.

'Violations will not be tolerated'

Kuwait's Municipality affirmed on Monday that the state's capabilities and properties are a red line not to be violated in light of the existence of regulations and laws that facilitate individuals' and companies' ability to revise previous violations.

Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous made these remarks during a lecture on the new advertising regulations.

He stated that though they have been amended and new licensing programs are in development, they will not be the last step in their vision for developing and digitizing Kuwait's municipality. (KUNA)

SPIN & WIN

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E-commerce solidifies role as fundamental pillar in economic and consumer landscape

4sale CEO forecasts robust growth in Kuwait's online market

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: As electronic commerce solidifies its role as a fundamental pillar in the economic and consumer landscape of the country, keeping pace with the swift developments in this sector has become imperative, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This expansive domain not only fosters substantial employment opportunities but also serves as a catalyst for economic growth across global economies.

To delve into the notable advancements and prospects shaping e-commerce in Kuwait in the current year, the daily recently engaged in a conversation with Tariq Saqr, the CEO of 4sale -- a prominent online classified advertising platform in Kuwait. Saqr's insights, derived from an analysis of consumer and commodity data from the past years, anticipate a promising year ahead, particularly in the realm of car trade.

Saqr highlights the changing consumer behavior characterized by swift purchasing decisions, heightened engagement with targeted recommendations, and an insistence on top-tier platforms in their respective categories. Describing the forecasting of e-commerce prospects as akin to "fortune-telling with a crystal ball," Saqr emphasizes the rational approach employed by 4sale in understanding the Kuwaiti market. Drawing on years of experience, customer feedback, and data evaluation, the company adopts a thoughtful perspective on the coming year and its potential opportunities.

In Saqr's view, each year serves as a wealth of knowledge and experience, providing valuable insights into the preferences and behaviors of Kuwaiti consumers. Leveraging this

abundance of information, he outlines five key developments and potential prospects for online business in 2024.

Saqr predicts a sustained increase in demand for used cars throughout the year, with a peculiar dip in transactions during April. He notes that crucial customer inquiries revolve around the car's manufacturing year and mileage, with the top 10 car brands maintaining their dominance over the past five years.

Expecting a cultural shift toward instant gratification in 2024, Saqr observes that consumers will spend less time browsing and act more quickly on what they see, be it buying, selling, or interacting with content. This aligns with the modifications made to applications and classified sites for a more streamlined and attractive user experience.

Consistency

Saqr affirms the consistency of consumer preferences within specific departments. For instance, watches are the most popular in the men's gifts department, while leather bags top the list among women. The dynamism of tastes is evident in preferences for wedding dresses among women and shoes among men in the clothing department.

In 2024, hyper-personalization of messages to customers, respecting their data privacy, is deemed essential. Consumers increasingly desire recommendations tailored precisely to their tastes.

Saqr asserts that the trend in the classified advertising field is leaning towards exceptional performance in one main sector or strong competence across all sectors. The evidence suggests that either excelling significantly (e.g., 15 out of 10) in a particular sector or consistently performing well (9/10) across the board is becoming pivotal for success.



Loading up relief aid into the plane.

KUNA photo

Kuwait sends Gaza 40th relief planeload

The 40th relief planeload to Gaza left for Al-Arish Airport on Monday carrying 40 tons of humanitarian aid and three ambulances organized by Al-Salam Association for Humanitarian and Charitable Works in partnership with the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO).

Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Al-Salam Association and a member of the Board of Directors of the International Islamic Charity Organization, Dr. Nabil Al-Aoun, spoke of the coordination efforts to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) saying that it expedited

aid delivery to Gaza.

Al-Aoun said that the 40th relief plane contains three fully equipped ambulances, 285 tents and food, revealing that the weight of the total aid provided by the Association to Gaza amounted to some 380 tons.

He added that the Association's warehouses contain more than 200 tons of relief aid to meet the needs of the Palestinian people in light of the deteriorating situation.

He also called on official authorities to operate additional flights to provide more aid to the Palestinians.

He pointed out that Al-Salam's humanitarian campaign which started on December 15 last year, aiming to send 500 trucks to face winter in four different countries, allocated 58 truckloads for Gaza.

Dr. Walid Al-Awadi, the representative of the IICO, asserted to KUNA that the increasing demand for necessary materials requires cooperation and coordination with the Palestinian Red Crescent to deliver it as well as facilitation from the Kuwaiti Ministries of Defense, Social Affairs and Foreign Affairs. (KUNA)

Land degradation

PAAAFR, ACSAD forge strategic 'partnership'

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Public Authority for Agricultural and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) discussed ways to enhance and expand joint cooperation and implement a number of projects. These projects mainly focus on monitoring land degradation. There are also new projects related to non-traditional water uses, monitoring and stabilizing sand dunes, and developing livestock, pastures, and forest resources.

During his meeting with the Director General of ACSAD Nasr Al-Din Al-Obaid, the Director General of PAAAFR Eng. Nasser Al-Taqi expressed his desire to cooperate with the ACSAD to implement development plans that serve Kuwait, meet the priorities and objectives of PAAAFR, achieve Arab food security, ensure sustainable development and activate joint Arab action.

Executive steps

The two sides also discussed the executive steps for opening an ACSAD office in Kuwait to follow up the work and activities and implement the development projects.

Meanwhile, experts from both parties held technical meetings which focused on researching the implementation of livestock projects, agricultural resources and land uses.

The ACSAD delegation was briefed on the plans and programs of PAAAFR, and the results of joint research with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, especially the cultivation of ACSAD varieties of wheat and barley.

More than 300 livestock of promising breeds were also tested, some of which could be improved in their productivity (meat and milk), which reached more than 240 percent of the milk.



January

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Companies' guarantees reach KD 35.223 mln

FCB records 8 abstentions in 3 fiscal years

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: According to informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the Financial Controller Bureau recorded eight abstentions in the fiscal years of 2022, 2023 and 2024, in accordance with article 14 of the Financial Controllers Law.

They explained that six abstentions were passed due to referral of the abstention issue for investigation, or due to the availability of documents supporting the disbursement.

On the other hand, the sources reported

that the value of companies' guarantees reached KD 35.223 million at the Contracts and Tenders Department according to the latest census.

They said an inventory of all companies' guarantees and letters of guarantee has been carried out, and there is also an automated system through which all their data registered in contracts is stored. There is a special locked safe to store letters of guarantee and original articles once they are submitted by the contracted companies.

The sources also confirmed that work is currently underway to coordinate and allocate the appropriate place to transfer it to the Accounts Department.

Enhancing municipal efficiency

Municipality holds talk on new adverts list

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: "The newly approved list of advertisements has been worked on for years. It is based on the municipality's vision to develop its services and support digital transformation in parallel with updating its licensing program", says the Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous.

In a speech he delivered yesterday on the sidelines of a lecture organized under his auspices for the employees of the municipality about the new list of advertisements, Al-Dabbous explained that this step will not be the last, but work will be carried out tirelessly to develop all the regulations. These include the agriculture regulations, which are under issuance, the building law and many other regulations.

Work will also be done soon to develop the municipality's organizational structure, merge and create some sectors to activate the supervisory aspect of business, and place young employees in supervisory positions for them to be responsible for their workplace without centralization of work.

He stressed that the state's capabilities and properties are a red line, and no one will be allowed to commit violations in light of the existence of regulations and laws that make it easy for individuals and companies to amend any previous violating status.

Al-Dabbous affirmed that the door of his office is open for any proposal that aims at developing performance and advancing the level of the municipality.

Meanwhile, in a press statement, Al-Dabbous indicated that he personally participated in the discussions regarding the advertisement regulations during his years of work prior to assuming the position of Director General of the Municipality.

He explained that the new advertising regulations were formulated after lengthy and numerous studies and discussions about the articles it contains and the amendments proposed to them by the concerned authorities.

Some of them were skipped and others were accepted until the vision crystallized in the new list of adverts that was recently approved by the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahad Al-Shoula.

Al-Dabbous praised the efforts exerted by the advisor Eng. Faisal Sadiq in drafting and approving the list.

He went on to explain that the activation mechanism for implementing the new advertisement list includes providing lectures to familiarize municipality employees with the terms of the new advertisement list and the amendments contained therein.

PADA launches media awareness campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Director of the Public Relations and Media Department at the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) Doha Al-Khamis said the authority has launched an awareness campaign about the required documents and the relevant committees on its social media accounts, with the aim of educating all those concerned about the procedures followed in various sectors of the authority, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Khamis disclosed that the procedures for medical services and specialized committees, which include opening a medical file for the first time, necessitate the submission of a recent medical report from a government hospital with the original civil identification card to schedule a committee appointment and for the patient to appear a quarter of an hour before the appointment. She clarified that medical reports from any government hospital, the military hospital and the oil company hospital are accepted.

It also aims at educating the public about the regulations, the violations, and the financial fines imposed on for violations. Adherence to the controls contained in the regulation, its conditions and its law prevents those dealing with the municipality from committing a violation or a fine regarding it.

The list of advertisements will not be permanent, but will be subject to improvements and changes according to its practice and application. This approach will be circulated to all regulations in the municipality.

Al-Dabbous highlighted that the organization contained in the articles of the new advertisement list will reflect positively on strengthening the financial resources of the municipality as it is its primary resource.

It is worth highlighting that the lecture was presented by the advisor to the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Faisal Sadiq, who reviewed the articles of the new regulations, included discussions about some of them and ways of implementing them with the employees of the municipality. They listened to the opinions and inquiries of the participants about the articles and clauses of the regulations, especially the articles and clauses related to financial fines for violators.

LOCAL

This is

Continued from Page 1

The Qatari Minister of Finance was also dismissed based on corruption charges. His arrest was ordered by the Public Prosecution.

However, the opposite happened in Kuwait. Many ministers and officials caused the state to lose hundreds of millions, and even billions of dinars.

Instead of putting them in prison, they were appointed again to institutions and ministries, as if nothing had happened.

In any European country, when someone assumes the position of Prime Minister, he has a team prepared quickly and chosen based on strict criteria. The state is thus not disrupted for weeks or months.

However, in our case, ministerial formation is sometimes delayed for weeks. This is due to the fact that a certain minister was not the choice of a particular parliamentarian or bloc, or because the heads of the tribe or sect did not accept him. When personal accounts overpower the performance of state institutions, they fail.

If an official does not perform his work to the fullest extent, and does not put the interests of the country ahead of his own interests, then failure is imminent. This is not how things are done.

Amir congratulates

Continued from Page 1

In the cable, His Highness the Amir hailed the relationship between Kuwait and Denmark as strong and bound by history, expressing his desire to further enhance this relationship in the future and wishing the new King and his people health and prosperity.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations on Monday to King of Denmark, Frederik X on assuming the throne.

In his cable, His Highness the Prime Minister wished the King and the people of Denmark further progress and prosperity.

PAM announces

Continued from Page 1

Kazem explained that the purpose of this new service is to empower individuals registered in "Chapter Five" to generate a "To Whom It May Concern" certificate addressed to the Ministry of Higher Education directly through the application.

This can be done when there is a need to complete studies or for any other purpose. The user of the "Sahel" application must have previously submitted a request for the processing of study applications in the labor support transactions system on the Public Authority for Manpower website.

Kazem commended the Public Authority for Manpower for its ongoing efforts in introducing new electronic services through the unified government application for electronic services 'Sahel'.

Part-time work

Continued from Page 1

The Public Authority for Manpower. This connectivity would facilitate the issuance of "no objection to working part-time" certificates for engineers and employees affiliated with engineering offices and consulting houses. These certificates aim to ensure that engineers and technicians do not engage in part-time work for contracting companies, preserving the integrity of the profession by avoiding conflicts of interest, protecting intellectual property, and maintaining confidentiality in the workplace.

In conclusion, Al-Salman issued a warning against residency traders and individuals seeking to exploit the decision for personal gain. He stressed the importance of strict adherence to regulations and the upcoming implementation of the partial labor law, emphasizing the need for vigilance to prevent violations and uphold the standards set by the regulations governing the engineering and consulting profession.

KU urges

Continued from Page 1

The meeting also tackled many important topics to meet the challenges and requirements of modern technologies in teaching and learning, including the importance of coordination between universities in the field of research, E-learning, academic programs, professional and academic development, volunteer work and student exchange, he said.

During the meeting, several topics were approved including the governance of Gulf database (Jisr), the establishment of a website for the secretaries of the joint work committees, an amendment to the regulations organizing the awards, and preparation for the upcoming meetings of the committee, in addition to building alliances related to cybersecurity and AI among Gulf universities, he added.

Al-Rafie said that it was also approved to adopt the unified guideline for blended education prepared by KU and the Saudi Electronic University, stressing the importance of the meeting in supporting the process of cooperation between universities and higher education institutions to build an advanced Gulf society.

KU had participated in sixth meeting of presidents and directors of universities and higher education institutions in the GCC hosted by the UAE University, Dr. Al-Rafi participated on behalf of KU Director in the preparatory meeting of the Vice Deans as well as the main meeting that was held in Dubai last Friday.

Lawmaker calls

Continued from Page 1

He disclosed the committee discovered that this case, which was announced by Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad -- may Allah have mercy on him -- in a historic position by exposing this group and its repercussions are still continuing. He stressed it is unimaginable that an official, a bank manager or a person closely or remotely linked to any of the suspicions related to the Army Fund would be a candidate as a minister in the new government. "If this happens, the committee will summon the minister to investigate the case, as well as other well-known corruption cases," he warned.

He also denied accusing the Ethics Committee of violating the laws and praised the citizens' cooperation with the panel.

On the other hand, Chairman of the Committee for Promoting Values and Combating Negative Phenomena MP Muhammad Hayef accused "intrusive institutions" -- which he did not name -- of seeking to change the face of Kuwaiti society and preoccupying young people with matters outside their religion, customs and traditions in a world filled with many negative and alien phenomena that invade societies.

In a press statement following the committee's meeting, Haif praised the ministries' employees in assisting the relevant agencies to reduce negative phenomena. He also lauded the citizens who report to the competent authorities about any wrong practices in the country.

He vehemently denied the allegation that he accused the Ethics Committee of taking decisions contradicting the laws, stressing that the committee is playing its role in urging the activation of laws and regulations.

He said "the committee discussed the legal and ethical violations in health clubs based on the complaints we received from citizens, and in the presence of representatives of the ministries of Commerce and Municipality who were informed about the necessity of activating the laws and regulations to organize the work of health clubs and various activities in the country. These regulations prohibit them from violating the provisions of Islamic Sharia, including the employment of men in women's salons; in the same manner that women are prohibited from working in health and physical institutes and salons for men.

Chairman of the Education Affairs Committee MP Hamad Al-Olayan announced that the committee will organize a discussion panel and an open dialogue entitled, "The Challenges of Education in Kuwait and Ways to Advance It, at the National Assembly Theater on Thursday in order to determine the reasons for the deterioration of education in the country and ways to develop it.

In a press statement, Al-Olayan confirmed the conference is within the framework of the committee's preparations for the session on education laws and development on April 30. He said the committee is keen on fully preparing for the session in terms of reports and laws to ensure the session is fruitful and to achieve its goal. He hinted on the possibility of holding marathon meetings to complete the reports needed for the session.

He pointed out that the invitation to the conference will be general to all specialists, interested parties, educational activists, those in the educational field, and officials in the Ministry of Education and other concerned authorities.

He added the members of the committee will be present at this conference in order to listen to the concerns of specialists in this field and to know their views on the reasons for the deterioration of education in Kuwait, ways to advance it, and their ideas for educational development in the country.

He stated that the committee recently held a number of meetings with government agencies; such as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Academic Accreditation Authority, Private Universities Council, government universities and many entities related to education. He said the meetings coincided with the visit of the members of the committee to the State of Qatar to learn from the Qatari experience.

In another development, MP Abdullah Al-Anbai asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr Saad Al-Barrak about the number of drilling towers and well repair at the joint operations in Wafra, number of contracting companies, and number of Saudi and Kuwaiti employees supervising them.

He wants to know the number new rigs operating at the joint operations since the resumption of production at the joint operations, number for each contracting company, if the increase in the number of rigs is accompanied by a similar increase in the number of Kuwaiti employees representing KGOC, future national manpower needs of KGOC in all specializations, if the dues and benefits of Kuwaiti employees are different after switching from the joint account to the single account, including the annual merit increase, annual bonus, optional external training, allowances

Kuwait charity organization helps less fortunate villagers of Yemen

120 families find new hope as initiative brings dignified living

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Kuwaiti International Islamic Charitable Organization inaugurated the "Kuwait Al Khair" residential village, on the coastal district of Al Mokha on the Red Sea in the Taiz Governorate, Yemen. This initiative, part of the "Kuwait Is Next to You" campaign, received funding from the "Tarahum Volunteer Team," reports Al-Rai daily.

Nasser Al-Bassam, the head of the Kuwaiti Tarahum Volunteer Team delegation in Yemen, said the residential village comprises 120 housing units, each featuring two rooms, a kitchen, and a courtyard.

Additionally, every housing unit is equipped with a solar system, water tank, and water drainage network. Shelter bags, bedding, and cooking tools were provided to support the well-being of all beneficiary families.

The "Kuwait Al-Khair" residential village significantly improved the living conditions of 120 families previously residing in makeshift straw houses and tents. They have now been relocated to secure homes, shielding them from the harsh conditions and offering a more dignified life.

Vital roles

Al-Bassam expressed gratitude to those who contributed to this humanitarian project, acknowledging the vital roles played by the International Islamic Charitable Organization, benefactors, supporters, and the Yemeni Communication Foundation for Human Development, which implemented the project.

Al-Bassam highlighted the ongoing projects, including the construction of a mosque, school, health center, bakery, and water tank tower, as well as endowment shops, all funded by the Tarahum Team and supervised by the Charitable Organization.

He also mentioned the initiation of a water network extension project for villages inhabited by displaced people, funded by Kuwaiti philanthropists and overseen by the Kuwaiti Tanmia Charitable Society.

Abdul-Jabbar Al-Zahzouh, the Second Deputy Head of the Political Bureau of the National Resistance, expressed gratitude to Kuwait's Amir, government, and people, as well as the Tarahum Volunteer Team, the International Islamic Charitable Organization, and the Tanmia Charitable Society.

He praised Kuwait for its consistent support through humanitarian and development projects, emphasizing the profound impact on the lives of Yemenis and their gratitude for Kuwait's steadfast solidarity in various circumstances.

specific to the nature of their work, overtime and travel time allowance to and from the workplace.

He also inquired about the company's plan to resolve the job deadlock at the joint Wafra and Khafji operations, if all the positions vacated by those who retired from 2015 till date have been filled, employment rate for Kuwaitis during the same period, ratio of Kuwaiti employees to Saudi employees in Wafra joint operations, if the representatives of the two entities equal in number and job grades for each job title, jobs of foreign consultants, engineers or drilling supervisors (non-Kuwaitis and Saudis) in the joint Wafra operations, the academic requirements, number of non-Kuwaiti employees under subcontract, if it is possible to replace them with the nationals of both countries, if KGOC announced its need for Kuwaiti graduates for all the mentioned jobs before appointing foreigners, financial compensation and privileges granted to foreign employees including financial and in-kind benefits and monthly travel tickets, cost incurred by KGOC for these benefits, if the Saudi side contributes to such cost, if the cost is higher than the amount paid to a newly appointed Kuwaiti employee (Grade 11) according to the company's regulations, added value of these non-Kuwaiti employees, and if there have been deductions from the entitlements of Kuwaitis working in the joint Wafra and Khafji operations over the past two years.

Al-Anbai also inquired about the mission of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) in the international horticultural exhibition 'Expo Qatar 2023', cost of travel, number of members of the delegation, amount allocated for each member, number of rooms rented at the hotel, rationale behind the decision of EPA to choose Mandarin Hotel even though there are other hotels with the same quality at a lower price, cost of the Kuwaiti pavilion at the exhibition, items displayed and the cost, officials responsible, lessons from this mission, reason for closing the Kuwaiti Pavilion for a long period, date of the last environmental conference organized by EPA and reasons for not activating its powers to arrest violators.



The International Islamic Charitable Organization opens a residential village for displaced people in the Yemeni Governorate of Taiz.



KUNA photos Kuwait Development Funds a project to extend a water network to displaced villages in the Yemeni Governorate of Taiz.

Kuwait exports 15,229 megawatts to GCC grid

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: According to informed sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, a total of 15,229 megawatts were exported to the GCC electrical grid last December, and the network received 11,003 megawatts, which is a difference of 4,226 megawatts for the Kuwaiti network, according to the latest statistics issued by the ministry.

In a related context, the sources confirmed that the total electrical installations for the plots last December amounted to 444 plots with an electrical load of 67,757 kilowatts.

They indicated that the private housing sector received the largest share of the total extensions with 390 plots, while the commercial and government sectors came in second place with 19 plots each, then the industrial sector with eight plots, then the investment sector with six plots,

and finally the agricultural sector with two plots.

In a different context, the ministry is proposing a practice for disposing of chemicals containing asbestos found in the ministry's warehouses in Subhan, in order to preserve the health of employees working in these warehouses.

This is a practice that was supposed to be introduced eight years ago. The procedures are being completed. The value of these materials amounts to KD 54,000.



THE NEW INDIA ASSURANCE COMPANY LTD
(Kuwait)

TENDER NOTICE
APPOINTMENT OF ACTUARIAL EXPERT FOR ACTUARIAL VALUATION

New India Assurance Company Limited, Kuwait (NIA Kuwait) is a licensed insurer engaged in general Insurance activities regulated by Insurance Regulatory Unit (IRU) in Kuwait. Our Parent company M/s New India Assurance is a public sector undertaking under the ownership of Government of India. New India is a Multinational General Insurance Company, today operates in 25 countries and headquartered at Mumbai, India. The company is a public listed entity in Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE: 540769) and National Stock Exchange (NSE: NIACL) in India.

The New India Assurance Co Ltd, Kuwait (NIA Kuwait) intends to appoint an actuarial firm for actuarial valuation as mandated by IRU as per Executive Regulation of the Law 125 of 2019 (including but not restricted to) as outlined in Article 145, 146, 147, 155, 160, 163, 164, 165 of Law No. (125) of 2019 regarding the regulation of insurance for a period of three years from 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2024 (Three years). Interested Actuarial Firms are invited to submit their proposals for the assignment. Please refer the tender document for the complete scope, terms & conditions.

Terms & Conditions:

- The applicant entity / actuarial firm may be a Partnership Firm/ Limited liability partnership/body corporate, licensed by concerned authorities & registered with Insurance Regulatory Unit (IRU) in Kuwait.
- The Actuarial Firm should have carried out the actuarial valuation of at least 3 general insurance companies in the immediately preceding 5 financial years.
- The contract will be for an initial period of three (3) years from 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2024.
- Right of Acceptance -NIA Kuwait reserves all rights to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.
- Successful bidder shall enter into a contract and the authorized signatory shall execute and sign the contract agreement in accordance with the tender document scope, terms & conditions before commencement of service.
- Successful bidder shall give acceptance within 10 days from the date of receipt of the work order, failing which the work order issued stands cancelled.
- All submissions to be sent via email including any supporting documentation to Mail Id- coo@newindiakuwait.com

Tenders must be received before 4.00 p.m. (local time in Kuwait) on Thursday 25th January 2024.

Tender document can be downloaded from our website <https://newindiakuwait.com/>

or
Scan the QR code



For any clarifications, write to coo@newindiakuwait.com

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World News Roundup

Europe

Ex-mayor cuts jail time

UN seeks \$4.2b for Ukraine aid in 2024

BERLIN, Jan 15, (AP): The United Nations appealed on Monday for \$4.2 billion to help people in Ukraine and displaced outside the country this year, saying that people on the front lines have "exhausted their meager resources" and many refugees also are vulnerable.

About three-quarters of the total, \$3.1 billion, is meant to support some 8.5 million people inside Ukraine. The remaining \$1.1 billion is sought for refugees and host communities outside Ukraine.

A recent wave of attacks "underscores the devastating civilian cost of the war" and a bitter winter is increasing the need for humanitarian aid, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UN refugee agency said in a statement from Geneva.

"In front-line towns and villages, people have exhausted their meager resources and rely on aid to survive," it said.

Ukraine has been subjected to massive Russian barrages recently. More than 500 drones and missiles were fired between Dec 29 and Jan 2, according to officials in Kyiv.

Nearly two years after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the UN says 14.6 million people in the country need humanitarian

help, while around 6.3 million have fled Ukraine and remain refugees.

"Hundreds of thousands of children live in communities on the front lines of the war, terrified, traumatized and deprived of their basic needs. That fact alone should compel us to do everything we can to bring more humanitarian assistance to Ukraine," said **Martin Griffiths**, the UN's humanitarian chief.



Griffiths

Ex-Russian mayor cuts jail time: A disgraced former Russian mayor convicted over bribery had his prison sentence cut short after signing a contract to fight with Russia's military in Ukraine, local media reported Sunday.

Oleg Gumenyuk, who served as mayor of the far eastern city and cultural hub of Vladivostok between 2018 and 2021, was convicted last year of accepting bribes worth 38 million roubles (about \$432,000) and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.

However, he was released after agreeing to bear arms and fight as part of his country's military operation in Ukraine that started nearly two years ago, his lawyer Andrei Kitaev told Russian news outlet Kommersant.

He said that the politician's whereabouts were unknown, but that Gumenyuk was instructed to report to his military unit on Dec 22.

Quiet Dutch village holds clues: "Everyone is welcome," reads the sign at the church door in this quiet Dutch village, where neighbors greet each other from tidy porches overlooking manicured lawns.

But that declaration of tolerance seems oddly out of place.

Triggered by economic and cultural anxieties that have whipped up fears about immigrants, people here and throughout the Netherlands have veered far to the right politically. It's an extreme example of a trend being felt across the continent that could tilt the outcome of this year's European Union parliamentary election.

In Sint Willebrord, which has few immigrants among its 9,300 residents, almost three out of four voters chose a virulently anti-migrant, anti-Muslim party in an election last year that shattered the Netherlands' image as a welcoming, moderate country.

Pope hopes to keep promise to visit Argentina:

Pope Francis said Sunday that if he can, he'll visit his native Argentina in the latter part of 2024, a trip that would see him there for the first time in his nearly 11-year-old papacy and while his fellow Argentinians are suffering economically.

Francis hasn't been back to his homeland since he was elected pope in 2013.

In an interview with the host of a talk show on a private Italian TV channel, Francis said he is worrying about Argentina's people because "they are suffering much," an apparent reference to the ravaged economy in that country.

From his residence at the Vatican, Francis, 87, told the interviewer on the show "Che Tempo Che Fa" that he plans to visit Polynesia in August and that an Argentine trip would come sometime after that year.

Reunion braces for storm: Authorities urged residents on the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion to shelter indoors Sunday as a powerful storm bore down packing hurricane-force winds.

Forecaster Météo France issued a code red cyclone alert for the storm, named Belal, and said it was expected to be "very dangerous."

"Be careful, stay at home," French President Emmanuel Macron posted on social media.

Météo France forecast "a strong probability" the heart of the storm could pass directly over or close to the island on Monday. It warned of winds that could top 250 kph (155 mph).

Five migrants killed: Five people were found dead Sunday in another maritime drama involving migrants trying to cross the dangerous English Channel from northern France, authorities said.

The deaths and the rescue of dozens of other people after a migrant boat ran into difficulties in the dark and winter cold again highlighted the perils of migrant crossings from France to Britain. Drownings, sinkings and other sometimes deadly incidents, often aboard crowded and flimsy boats, are frequent in the busy sea lane. Winter air temperatures have dropped below freezing and the sea is bitterly cold, too.

The boat carrying migrants was spotted early Sunday in difficulty off a beach in the French coastal village of Wimereux, according to the French maritime authorities for the English Channel and North Sea.

Demos against far right held in Germany: Thousands of people gathered in Germany on Sunday for demonstrations against the far right, among them Chancellor Olaf Scholz and his foreign minister, following a report that extremists recently met to discuss the deportation of millions of immigrants, including German citizens, if they took power.

There were protests in Potsdam, just outside Berlin, and at the Brandenburg Gate in the German capital. They followed a demonstration on Saturday in the western city of Duisburg.



Snow falls at the Iowa State Capitol Building in Des Moines, Iowa, Jan 9, as a winter snow storm hits the state. As frigid temperatures scour the Midwest on Jan 15, marks the official start to the Republican presidential nominating contest with the Iowa caucuses. (AP)

Politics

Trump says votes can help him punish enemies

Dems target GOP strongholds Texas, Florida

WASHINGTON, Jan 15, (AP): Democrats hoping to hold their slim Senate majority after November are looking for upsets in two unlikely places, Texas and Florida, to help neutralize potential setbacks elsewhere.

But that means US President Joe Biden's party's top opportunities to play political offense in Senate races are coming in America's largest reliably red state and a onetime quintessential battleground that has moved decidedly to the right in recent years.

Still, with West Virginia Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin not seeking reelection, his seat is likely to flip Republican. Retaining their 51-49 Senate advantage likely means Democrats must defend their other 22 seats on the 2024 ballot - including party incumbents and independents who caucus with them - while also gaining seats, and they say Texas and Florida are their best shot.

Democrats nationwide have championed abortion rights and are looking to build on gains among suburban women and other key swing voters since the Supreme Court's overturning of the Roe v. Wade decision in 2022. The party thinks many Texas and Florida voters are with them in believing Republicans have gone too far in restricting reproductive freedom.

Dallas mother Kate Cox made national headlines when she was recently forced to leave Texas to terminate a non-viable pregnancy after Republican officials argued she didn't qualify for an exception to its near total abortion ban.

Access

In Florida, activists secured enough signatures to put on November's ballot a referendum cementing access to abortion in the state constitution - following statewide votes defending abortion access in Republican-leaning Ohio and even more solidly red Kansas and Kentucky.

Democrats are also encouraged by Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz eking out reelection in 2018 by less than 3 percentage points over Democrat Beto O'Rourke. In Florida, meanwhile, Republican Sen. Rick Scott won his seat that year by around 10,000 votes out of 8.1-plus million cast.

Migrant deaths intensify tensions:

After Texas fenced off a park along the US-Mexico border and began turning away Border Patrol agents, Republican Gov **Greg Abbott** explained why at a

campaign stop near Houston.

"We are not allowing Border Patrol on that property anymore," Abbott said Friday, drawing applause from supporters while endorsing a state legislator running



Denmark's King Frederik X (foreground left), Queen Mary (background left) and Crown Prince Christian, arrive with Speaker of the Folketing Soeren Gade (right), at the Folketingsalen at Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen on Jan 15, their first time visiting in their new official roles. (AP)

incumbents.

National Republicans are eyeing Ohio, where Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown was first elected in 2006, and Montana's Jon Tester, also a three-term Democratic incumbent. Both states are expected to vote Republican for president.

"This team is not over-confident," Daines said. "We know we also have a great map, but you can't fall in love with the map."

He said strong candidates and messaging will make the difference, as well as a renewed push to encourage early voting and mail-balloting after Trump discouraged them in 2020.

Biden's approval ratings remain soft, which could hurt Democrats in Senate races, though Trump also appears to be his party's likely presidential nominee and would bring his own top-of-the-GOP-ticket negatives.

Only three of the six Senate candidates Trump endorsed won in 2022. Still, Daines said his party was "learning from '22," and that he speaks with Trump and his team "frequently" while "working closely with the president to make sure that we are gonna be behind candidates that can win both the general election as well as the primary."

Also:

INDIANOLA, Iowa: Donald Trump implored his supporters Sunday to brave frigid temperatures and deliver him a decisive victory in Monday's Iowa caucuses, saying their vote would help bring to Washington the retribution he has repeatedly promised if he returns to the White House.

The former president has set sky-high expectations for his own performance in the first contest of the race for the Republican presidential nomination. He spent the day before the caucuses trying to ensure he meets them. His main GOP rivals all spent Sunday in Iowa as well, making last-minute appeals to Iowans open to hearing them.

At a rally in Indianola, Trump said his supporters could fight back against his political enemies, claiming that the four indictments he faces were driven by politics and renewing his false claims about the 2020 election he lost to Democrat **Joe Biden**.

for reelection. He relayed frustration over migrants illegally entering the US through the border city of Eagle Pass and federal agents loading them onto buses.

"We said, 'We've had it. We're not going to let this happen anymore,'" Abbott said.

Later that night, the US Department of Homeland Security said three migrants, including two children, drowned near the park after Texas officials "physically barred" Border Patrol agents from entering. Mexican authorities pulled the bodies, each of them wearing jackets, from the water on the other side of the Rio Grande. (AP)

Iowa principal dies: An Iowa principal who put himself in harm's way to protect students during a school shooting earlier this month died Sunday, a funeral home confirmed.

Caldwell Parrish Funeral Home & Crematory confirmed the death of Perry High School Principal Dan Marburger after the family announced it on a GoFundMe page.

Marburger was critically injured during the Jan. 4 attack, which began in the school's cafeteria as students were gathering for breakfast before class. An 11-year-old middle school student was killed in the shooting, and six other people were injured. The 17-year-old student who opened fire also died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot. (AP)



US Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump delivers pizzas to fire fighters at Waukege Fire Department in Waukee, Iowa on Jan 14. (AP)



Hochul



Abbott

America

Arctic blast sweeps across US: A dangerous Arctic blast will continue sweeping across the US on Monday and linger through at least midweek, prolonging a bitter cold that set record-low temperatures in parts of the country and threatens to further disrupt daily life, including an NFL playoff game and the first-in-the-nation presidential nominating contest in Iowa.

The National Weather Service said wind chills are expected to push temperatures 30 degrees below zero from the Northern Rockies to northern Kansas and into Iowa, testing the hardiness of caucusgoers willing to brave the deep chill on Monday.

"You can't sit home," former president Donald Trump told supporters Sunday. "If you're sick as a dog, you say, 'Darling, I gotta make it.' Even if you vote and then pass away, it's worth it."

Arctic storms left at least four dead and knocked out electricity to tens of thousands in the Northwest, brought snow to the South and walloped the Northeast with blizzard conditions forcing the postponement of the Pittsburgh Steelers vs. Buffalo Bills NFL playoff game hosted in bone-chilling Buffalo, New York.

New York Gov **Kathy Hochul**, a Buffalo native, posted a video on X, formerly known as Twitter, showing near-whiteout conditions. (AP)

Crews search for plane: An airplane crashed into the Pacific Ocean near an airport south of San Francisco Sunday evening, authorities said.

Sgt. Philip Hallworth of San Mateo County Sheriff's Office said crews were searching for the plane that went down in Half Moon Bay around 7:15 pm, KRON-TV reported.

The crash occurred a few miles from the Half Moon Bay Airport on the Cabrillo Highway, Hallworth said. The airport is located in Moss Beach, about 22 miles (35.4 kilometers) south of San Francisco.

The US Coast Guard, California Highway Patrol and fire crews also responded to the crash site, KRON reported.

There was no immediate information about the number of people on board the plane, possible survivors or the type of aircraft involved in the crash. (AP)

Lat/Am

Bishop, priests freed

Arévalo sworn in as Guatemala's leader

GUATEMALA CITY, Jan 15, (AP): Bernardo Arévalo was sworn in as Guatemala's president on Monday minutes after midnight despite months of efforts to derail his inauguration, including foot-dragging and rising tensions right up until the transfer of power.

Arévalo arrives in the presidency after winning August's elections by a comfortable margin. But nothing has been straightforward since, with Attorney General Consuelo Porras and the establishment forces observers say she represents throwing one legal challenge after another at Arévalo and his party.

"It fills me with deep honor to assume this lofty responsibility, showing that our democracy has the necessary strength to resist and that through unity and trust we can change the political panorama in Guatemala," Arévalo said in his first address as president.



Porras

Arévalo thanked Guatemala's youth for not losing hope and the country's Indigenous peoples for their support, acknowledging "historic debts that we must resolve." He summarized his administration's guiding principle as: "There cannot be democracy without social justice and social justice cannot prevail without democracy."

Despite hundreds of Arévalo's supporters pressuring lawmakers to follow the constitution, even clashing with riot police outside the congress building Sunday, the inauguration process dragged for hours before he took the oath of office just past midnight.

Reforms

A progressive academic-turned-politician and son of a Guatemalan president credited with implementing key social reforms in the mid-20th century, Arévalo takes office with expectations of confronting Guatemala's entrenched corruption. But it will not be easy.

He has little support in congress and Porras' term as the top law enforcement official extends to 2026, though Arévalo has said one of his first orders of business will be to request her resignation.

Supporters had been waiting hours for a festive inauguration celebration in Guatemala City's emblematic Plaza de la Constitución and were fed up with yet another delay, sweeping police roughly out of their way before gathering outside congress demanding legislators stop delaying and name the delegation that must attend the ceremony.

Congress, which was supposed to attend the inauguration as a special session of the legislature, engaged in bitter infighting over who to recognize as part of the congressional delegation, as members yelled at each other.

The leadership commission tasked with doing that was packed with old-guard opponents of Arévalo, and the delay was seen as a tactic to draw out the inauguration and weaken Arévalo.

Arévalo wrote in his social media accounts that "they are trying to damage democracy with illegalities, inconsequential details and abuses of power."

Representatives from the U.S. government and Organization of American States called on the congress to respect Guatemala's constitution.

Minutes before midnight, the special session of congress was convened.

Porras had tried every legal trick in the book to put Arévalo on trial or in jail before he could take office. And Arévalo's party won't have a majority in Congress and may not even have formal recognition there.

Arévalo is an academic, diplomat and the son of a progressive president from the middle of the 20th century, and his election marked a political awakening in a population weary of corruption and impunity.

Process

"I feel enthusiastic, because we are finally reaching the end of this long and torturous process," Arévalo said before his inauguration. "Guatemalan society has developed the determination to say 'no' to these political-criminal elites."

In his address immediately after his swearing-in, Arévalo said "we will not allow our institutions to submit again to corruption and impunity." Outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei, widely criticized for eroding the country's democratic institutions, did not attend the inauguration.

But as much as Arévalo wants to change things, he faces enormous obstacles. His anti-corruption stance and outsider status are threats to deep-rooted interests in the Central American country, observers say.

Still, the fact he got this far is a testament to international support and condemnation of the myriad attempts to disqualify him.

For many Guatemalans, the inauguration represented not only the culmination of Arévalo's victory at the polls, but also their successful defense of the country's democracy.

In his first act as president, Arévalo visited the site outside the Attorney General's Office where Indigenous protesters have kept vigil for more than three months, demanding authorities respect the vote and that Porras step down. He applauded them for defending the country's democracy.

It was an important gesture by Arévalo, who was criticized last week for including only one Indigenous person in his Cabinet. In October, hundreds had blocked highways across the country for three weeks to pressure authorities.

Also:

MEXICO CITY: Nicaragua's government released a prominent Catholic bishop and 18 other clergy members imprisoned in a crackdown by President Daniel Ortega and handed them over to Vatican authorities who welcomed them in Rome.

Bishop Rolando Álvarez and the other clergy were jailed more than a year ago, in most cases, as part of a crackdown on the opposition and Catholic church by Ortega. He had accused them of supporting massive 2018 civic protests that he claimed were a plot to overthrow him.

The government said in a press statement the releases on Sunday were part of negotiations with the Vatican aimed at "making possible their trip to the Vatican." In the past, imprisoned priests have been quickly flown to Rome.

Vatican News, the Vatican's in-house media operation, said the group arrived in Rome on Sunday afternoon and were welcomed as "guests of the Holy See."

Ortega's government said those released also included Bishop Isidoro Mora.

Ortega sent 222 prisoners to the United States in February in a deal brokered by the US government and later stripped those prisoners of their citizenship.



In this photo released by Brunei's Information Department, Brunei's Prince Abdul Mateen and bride Anisha Rosnah, in their car, attend the wedding procession in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei on Jan 14. The royal couple were to be feted at a royal banquet Monday to mark the end of a lavish nuptial festival in the oil-rich sultanate. During Sunday's procession, the newlyweds stood at the back of an open-top Rolls-Royce as they waved to the crowds lining the streets to catch a glimpse of the popular prince and his bride. The pomp and splendor of their wedding festival has brought much excitement to the tiny sultanate of 450,000 people. (AP)

Asia

NKorean foreign minister visits Moscow for talks

North Korea says it tested solid-fuel missile

SEOUL, South Korea, Jan 15, (AP): North Korea on Monday said it flight-tested a new solid-fuel intermediate-range missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead as it pursues more powerful, harder-to-detect weapons designed to strike remote US targets in the region.

The report by North Korea's state media came a day after the South Korean and Japanese militaries detected the launch from a site near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, in what was the North's first ballistic test of 2024.

The launch came two months after North Korea said it successfully tested engines for a new solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile, which reflected a push to advance its lineup of weapons targeting U.S. military bases in Guam and Japan.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Sunday's launch was aimed at verifying the reliability of the missile's solid-fuel engines and the maneuverable flight capabilities of the hypersonic warhead, which the report implied was an upgraded version of previous vehicles designed to perform intermediate-range strikes.

The report described the test as a success but didn't provide details. It didn't mention whether North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attended the test, which it said was part of the country's regular weapons development activities and did not affect the security of neighbors.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile flew about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The North's existing intermediate-range ballistic missiles or IRBMs, including the Hwasong-12 that may be able to reach the US military hub of Guam in the Pacific, are powered by liquid-fuel engines, which are fueled up before launch and cannot stay fueled for long.

Missiles with built-in solid propellants can be made ready to launch faster and are easier to move and conceal, theoretically making it harder for adversaries to detect and preempt the launch.

Meanwhile, top nuclear envoys from Japan, the US and South Korea strongly condemned Sunday's ballistic missile launch by North Korea, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said Monday.

Director General of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanic Affairs Bureau Hiroyuki Namazu, US Deputy Special Representative for North Korea Jun Park, and South Korean Foreign Ministry's Special Representative for Korean Peninsula peace and Security Affairs Kim Gunn, spoke over the phone as per the Ministry's press release.

Pacific Island nation of Nauru cuts ties with Taiwan, switches to China

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Jan 15, (AP): The Pacific Island nation of Nauru said Monday that it is switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, a move that reduces the dwindling number of Taiwan's diplomatic allies to 12 around the world.

A statement from the government of Nauru said it was severing ties with Taiwan and seeking a resumption of relations with China.

China claims self-governing Taiwan as its territory and has been peeling off the island's diplomatic allies, often with promises of development aid. It's a long-running competition between the two that has swung in China's favor in recent years.

"This policy change is a significant first step in moving forward with Nauru's development," the statement said.

China said it welcomes Nauru's move to break its "so-called diplomatic ties" with Taiwan.

The decision to re-establish ties with China "once again shows that the one-China principle is where global opinion trends and where the arc of history bends," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

Nauru said in its statement that it would move to the one-China principle, which holds that Taiwan is part of China and recognizes Beijing as the government of China. It differs from America's one-China policy, which recognizes Beijing as China's government but doesn't take a position on who rules Taiwan.

Also:

TAIPEI, Taiwan: Retired US officials met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Monday and praised the island's democratic processes under which it elected a new president and legislature over

Also:

MOSCOW: North Korea's foreign minister is visiting Russia on Monday for three days of talks, as international concern grows over an alleged arms cooperation deal between the two countries.

A delegation led by Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui arrived in Moscow on Sunday, according to North Korea's official Korean Central News

the weekend in defiance of China's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan and threat to annex it by military force.

"Taiwan's democracy has set a shining example for the world, a democratic success story based on transparency, the rule of law and respect for human rights and freedoms," former national security adviser Stephen Hadley said.

America's commitment to Taiwan is "rock solid," he said.

The visit came as the Pacific Island nation of Nauru announced it was switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, reducing Taiwan's number of diplomatic allies to just 12.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said it was withdrawing its diplomats from the tiny nation "in the name of national dignity."

SYDNEY: A day after an Australian became queen of Denmark, her native land on Monday celebrated the unlikely fairy tale with picnics and a "Danish Fiesta."

Mary Donaldson's journey from Tasmania to the world's first Australian-born queen has captivated both Danes and Australians. People gathered to mark the occasion across Australia, including Queen Mary's hometown of Hobart, the capital of the southern island state of Tasmania.

In Melbourne, scores gathered at Denmark House, one of Melbourne's oldest social clubs, to celebrate the coronation with a special cultural event.

"It's not something that happens every day that you have an Australian becoming queen. I don't know if it will ever happen again," Danish Club Vice President Lykka Borup told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Agency. She is to meet her Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, on Tuesday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said.

Choe is visiting at Lavrov's invitation, the ministry said.

The United States and South Korea say North Korea has provided Russia with arms, including artillery and missiles, to help its fight in Ukraine.



Incoming Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo acknowledges the crowd after receiving the presidential sash during his swearing-in ceremony in Guatemala City, on Jan 15. (AP)



Assoumani



Lutundula

Africa

Comoros votes for president: The Indian Ocean island nation of Comoros voted Sunday for president in Africa's first national election of 2024. Incumbent President Azali Assoumani, a former military officer, is expected to win a fourth term despite criticism he has become increasingly authoritarian and cracked down on his opponents.

Five opposition candidates stood against Assoumani while other opposition parties have called for a boycott, accusing the national electoral commission of bias. The commission denied the accusations. Provisional results are expected on Friday.

The country of around 800,000 people off East Africa has experienced a series of coups since it gained independence from France in 1975. The first coup came just a month after independence.

Assoumani, 65, took charge himself in a coup in 1999, and was first elected president in 2002. He stepped down after one term but returned to reclaim the presidency in an election in 2016, and was reelected in 2019. Presidential terms are for five years.

Assoumani succeeded in side-stepping term limits by changing the constitution in 2018. Previously, the presidency was rotated after a single term between Comoros' three main islands of Grand Comore, Anjouan, and Mohéli. (AP)

UN sets Dec deadline: The UN peacekeeping mission in Congo, which helped in the fight against rebels for more than two decades before being asked by the Congolese government to leave, will complete its withdrawal from the Central African nation by the end of 2024, the mission said Saturday.

A three-phased withdrawal of the 15,000-force will begin in the South Kivu province where at least 2,000 security personnel will leave by the end of April in the first phase, according to Bintou Keita, head of the mission known as MONUSCO, after which forces in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces will also leave.

"After 25 years of presence, MONUSCO will definitively leave the DRC no later than the end of 2024," Keita said at a media briefing in the Congolese capital of Kinshasa. The end of the mission will not be "the end of the United Nations" in the country, she added.

The UN and Congolese officials worked together to produce a disengagement plan for "a progressive, responsible, honorable and exemplary withdrawal of MONUSCO." Congolese Foreign Minister Christophe Lutundula said. Modalities have also been set for "the gradual transfer of tasks from MONUSCO to Congolese government." Lutundula added. (AP)

'4 Ukrainians on copter': Ukraine's foreign affairs ministry says that four of its citizens were among those captured by al-Qaida-linked extremists in Somalia after

their helicopter that was contracted by the United Nations made an emergency landing in territory controlled by the militants earlier this week.

Officials say the helicopter went down on Wednesday because of engine failure and was then attacked by al-Shabab militants who killed one person and abducted the

other passengers.

"Our citizens were members of the helicopter crew of the United Nations Mission in Somalia that crashed," said Oleh Nikolenko, spokesman for the Ukrainian foreign affairs ministry said Friday in a Facebook post. The helicopter belongs to a Ukrainian private company, which executed a contract for transport on the order of the United Nations, he said.

Along with the Ukrainians, there were also five foreigners on board, Nikolenko said, without giving their nationalities.

An aviation official said earlier this week that medical professionals and soldiers were on board the helicopter that had been headed to Wisil town for a medical evacuation when it was forced to land in a village in Galmadug on Wednesday.

The minister of internal security of Galmadug state in central Somalia, Mohamed Abdi Aden Gaboobe, told The Associated Press by phone on Thursday that the helicopter made the landing because of engine failure in Xindheere village.

He said that six foreigners and one Somali national were on board and one was shot dead while trying to escape. One was missing. Different sources give varying figures for the number of occupants in the helicopter, ranging between seven and nine. The AP hasn't been able to verify the exact number of people on board the helicopter. (AP)



Firefighters wearing protection gears take part in a civil protection exercise in Tokyo on Jan 15. The exercise was held on the assumption that a ballistic missile was launched. (AP)

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts		
▲	JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.91	35,901.79	▼	UAE	- DFM	-0.07	4,101.29
	PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	+0.56	6,680.45		PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-0.74	64,160.63
	SAUDI	- Tadawul	+0.51	12,122.11					
	EGYPT	- EGX 30	+1.06	25,250.73					

Business

UK GDP rose 0.3% in November

Mixed global inflation data as US labor mkt remains resilient

By National Bank of Kuwait

United States

Unemployment Claims Data Shows Robust Labor Market

US jobless claims fell to the lowest level since October, coming in at 202,000 claims versus the prior reading of 203,000 claims. Expectations were for the print come around 210,000 claims. Moreover, continuous claims also fell to the lowest level since October, coming in at 1.83 million claims. Consumer spending remains the backbone of the US economy, accounting for roughly 70% of the GDP. A healthy labor market supports consumer spending and supports growth, even though forecasts call for a slower pace of growth compared to last year.

CPI Comes In Higher Than Anticipated

In the latest December US consumer price index report, monthly CPI increased by 0.3%. The higher than expected figure marked a notable shift from last year's figure, as well as November's 0.2% increase. The year-over-year print showed a 3.4% increase, higher than the anticipated 3.2% figure. Core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, also rose 0.3% on the month and marked a 3.9% annual increase, with most of the gains coming from a 6.2% rise in shelter costs. Wages on the other hand increased 0.2% on the month, ending the year with a light 0.8% annual increase. The news release was followed by a mixed reaction in the stock market, while treasury yields ticked higher as the 10-year note reached around 4% at one point. Meanwhile, traders remain anticipated that rates cuts will begin early this year, with markets expecting a 69% probability of rate reductions to start in March.

PPI Sends Mixed Signals

US producer prices fell in December for the third consecutive month, falling 0.1% monthly as opposed to a 0.1% expected increase. The figure shows PPI rising 1% in the annual figure, slightly higher than November's 0.8% reading but below expectations of 1.3%. Core PPI, which strips out food and energy prices was flat for the

- US CPI came in at 3.4% versus expectations 3.2%.
- US PPI Rises 1% versus 0.8% previously, below expectations of 1.3%.
- Unemployment claims in the US at 202,000 versus forecasts of 210,000.
- UK GDP rose 0.3% in November versus 0.3% decline previously.
- Tokyo CPI falls to 2.1% in December from 2.3% in November.
- China CPI and PPI remain in contraction territory at -0.3% and -2.7% respectively.
- Australia CPI falls to 4.3% from 4.9% previously.

month compared to the 0.2% expected figure. The news sent mixed signals to markets as the drop in PPI came following an uptick in the consumer price index released the day before.

The greenback slightly decreased on the week, closing at 102.439.

United Kingdom

UK GDP Increases in November

The latest news release from the UK office for national statistics presents a mixed picture. Over the three months leading to November 2023, the GDP saw a marginal decline of 0.2%, indicating a slight contraction in the economy. However, November 2023 brought a positive turn with a 0.3% growth in GDP, recovering from a 0.3% decrease in October.

This growth was primarily driven by the services sector, including retail and professional services, which expanded by 0.4%. The construction sector, on the other hand, continued to face challenges, with a 0.2% decline in November. These figures from the latest release reflect the UK's ongoing journey towards economic stabilization and growth amidst global economic challenges.

The Sterling is up over the past week, last seen at 1.2751.

Rates - January 14th, 2024

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0972	1.0962	1.0985	1.0965	1.0890	1.1000	1.0991
GBP	1.2756	1.2752	1.2784	1.2755	1.2610	1.3050	1.2759
JPY	145.28	144.85	145.85	145.15	143.60	145.85	142.87
CHF	0.8518	0.8510	0.8535	0.8529	0.8460	0.8640	0.8442

Asia-Pacific

Tokyo Inflation Slows

CPI data out of Japan's capital Tokyo shows core inflation slowing to 2.1% y/y in December, the lowest reading since June 2022, and lower than the 2.3% rise in November. Additionally, the Bank of Japan indicated that it would reduce its monthly buying of 10-25-year government bonds. Pressures to pivot from the ultra-loose monetary policy eased for the BoJ as global debt yields face a downward pressure, and inflation rates in Japan are more in line with the BoJ's target.

The Yen traded sideways on the week, closing at 144.90.

China's Inflation Data Raises Worries

Amid weak consumer demand, the latest data coming out of China adds to fears about growing deflationary pressures. Annual CPI came in at -0.3%, while monthly CPI rose to 0.1% versus market expectations of a 0.2% increase. PPI also declined 2.7% annually, missing market expectations of a 2.6% fall. The latest release serves as a stark reminder to policymakers that the country's economic woes and weak demand remain an issue. The Chinese economy is still facing problems in its property sector, while the central bank and the government introduced a series of easing measures hoping to boost

the economy and consumer demand. While the results of easing measures remain mixed, policymakers vowed to step up supportive measures to help drive up demand and achieve a rebound in prices, including adjusting policy rates, issuing sovereign bonds, and introducing other measures to improve fiscal spending.

The USD/CNY currency pair is up on the week, last trading at 7.1665.

Australia Inflation Declines

Consumer price inflation in Australia is down sharply, coming in better than expected at 4.3% annually versus the previous print of 4.9%. The reading marks a near two-year low, reinforcing market expectations that the Reserve Bank of Australia will not need to raise interest rates. Furthermore, core inflation, the trimmed mean, came in at 4.6% down from the previous print of 5.3%. It's a welcomed reading for policy makers amid signs that 425 basis points worth of tightening is on track to bring inflation down to their 2-3% target range.

The AUD/USD pair traded sideways, finishing the week at 0.6685.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30715.

Formation of closed joint stock cos up 80%

Bridging the Mediterranean and Arabian Seas

ZOI and Telecom Egypt forge new digital corridor

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Telecom Egypt, Egypt's first integrated telecom operator and one of the largest subsea cable operators in the region, and Zain Omantel International (ZOI), the Middle East's premier international wholesale powerhouse with access to more than 20 international subsea cables in the region, are joining forces to establish a unique digital corridor. This corridor will seamlessly connect the Mediterranean Sea to the Arabian Sea and Arabian Gulf, creating an unprecedented Eurasian data highway.

The innovative infrastructure will extend from Oman's Arabian Sea and Gulf shores to Egypt's Mediterranean coastline, employing a high fiber count, cutting-edge blend of terrestrial and subsea segments. The terrestrial segments, spanning Oman, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, promise unparalleled reliability and protection. On the other hand, the subsea section, directly linking Saudi Arabia and Egypt through the Red Sea, will feature a high-capacity, repeaterless cable system.

This route design will provide Telecom Egypt and ZOI's partners and customers with the best resiliency and reliability for their end-to-end solution. Furthermore, the infrastructure will be extended to Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq and Jordan through ZOI's network and collaboration with the licensed cable landing parties in each country.

This collaboration also offers a revolutionary opportunity for subsea cable owners. By connecting to this open access system, they can significantly reduce their construction costs and greatly enhance latency, resiliency, and market response times. Telecom Egypt will develop new infrastructure across Egypt from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and onwards to Europe, complemented by ZOI's robust infrastructure across the Middle East. This new network route will have the shortest, enhanced latency profile, giving hyperscalers, subsea cable providers, carriers and telecom operators improved connectivity options from the Indian Ocean to Europe.

Mohamed Nasr, Managing Director and CEO at Telecom Egypt, commented: "We are excited to collaborate with ZOI on this strategic project; it's a game-changer in the Eurasia route connectivity landscape. As we look for innovative ways to better serve our customers, we will consistently strive to provide a seamless international connectivity network and increase our diversity layers, without compromising quality, cost or speed. We will do this by leveraging on both Telecom Egypt's established history in the subsea cables arena and its experienced and competent team."

Sohail Qadir, CEO at ZOI, commented: "We are delighted to partner with Telecom Egypt on such a groundbreaking project. ZOI was



The modernized gas turbines at Sabiya power plant.

GE Vernova completes modernization of 4 gas turbines at Sabiya power plant

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: In a significant milestone for Kuwait's power generation sector, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy have announced the successful completion of the upgrades of four 9F.03 class gas turbines at the 2 gigawatts (GW) Sabiya Combined Cycle Power Plant in Kuwait.

The new upgrades are part of a broader effort by the Ministry to modernize the power generation infrastructure in Kuwait. This project is expected to increase the power plant's block output by up to 6.3% and reduce heat rate by as much as 1.8%, leading to a combined increase in power production of up to 70 megawatts (MW). This increase in efficiency and output will allow more power to be produced without increasing fuel consumption and the resulting carbon dioxide emissions, which would amount to the equivalent of approximately another 16,000 cars being put on Kuwait's roads.

created to revolutionize the wholesale telecom scene and this is an example of what the future holds. We are facilitating the landing of subsea connections through our shareholders such as Omantel and Zain KSA being the licensees in those jurisdictions. This one-of-a-kind infrastructure will be expanded to most of ZOI's network footprint to maximize the benefit to our group operations across the region. The value that this digital corridor will create is enormous and it will be widely realized in the region and beyond not only from a connectivity point of view, but also on technological, commercial and social levels."

The upgrades were completed as part of a multiyear service agreement between Alghanim International (the leading engineering, procurement, construction contracting company in Kuwait) and GE Vernova (NYSE: GE) which followed the signing of an Operations & Maintenance (O&M) agreement between Alghanim and the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy for all three combined-cycle power blocks at Sabiya. The goal was to boost power production, increase the duration between planned maintenance cycles, drive fuel efficiency, and reduce costs as well as carbon dioxide emissions per megawatt of power generated.

Under this service agreement with Alghanim International, GE Vernova provided Advanced Gas Path (AGP) upgrades for the four 9F.03 turbines in Blocks 2 and 3 at the Sabiya plant, along with the supply and maintenance

services of the units for 7 years. The AGP upgrade will help deliver more fuel efficient and reliable power output to Kuwait's power grid to meet the increase in electricity demand, especially during peak seasons.

Jihad Saade of Alghanim International, said: "In line with our commitment to supporting the country's efforts to boost power generation capacity, Alghanim International continues to reach out to the latest innovative technologies in cooperation with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). GE Vernova helped us ensure that the Ministry of Electricity & Water & Renewable Energy power plants are performing at their best. The successful implementation of these upgrades demonstrates the commitment of Alghanim International towards Kuwait's energy sector and our aim to support the Ministry in its efforts of maintaining Kuwait leadership position in the region."



ZOI-Telecom Egypt route map.

Minister's initiative yields dividends

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Ministry of Trade and Industry's initiative to streamline procedures for joint-stock company transactions has yielded significant results, particularly in the establishment of closed joint stock companies. The first ten months of 2023 saw an impressive 80% increase, with 27 closed joint stock companies established compared to 15 in the same period in 2022. Notably, no public joint stock companies were established during this time-frame.

In May, the Ministry approved a series of developmental measures aimed at enhancing the efficiency of transaction clearance cycles for joint-stock companies. This breakthrough, designed to foster growth and competitiveness in the local business environment, included a streamlined 17-step establishment cycle. Previously taking 60 days to complete, now, four steps can be processed within 24 hours using the Ministry's automated system, eliminating the need for physical visits.

KSE completes review of listed cos

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Kuwait Stock Exchange has completed its annual review of listed companies for the year 2023 in accordance with the stock exchange's rules, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

As a result of this review, decisions were made to transfer certain companies from the main market to the Premier market or vice versa.

Companies moving from the main market to the premier market include Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Sahlia Real Estate Company, and Kuwait Telecommunications Company. This transfer is based on the application of premier market standards to these entities.

Conversely, Shamal Al-Zour Al-Oula Power and Water Company is set to move from the premier market to the main market due to its failure to meet the conditions and standards required for the first market.

Additionally, companies that have violated ongoing obligations in the first market, such as Kuwait Investment Company, Al-Imtiaz Investment Group, and Alafco Company for financing the purchase and leasing of aircraft, have been granted a one-year period to rectify their situations, during

The year 2023 witnessed consistent growth in closed company establishments, with 27 companies formed in various months. Other joint stock company management transactions also experienced substantial growth, encompassing main license issuances, license renewals, branch license issuances, renewals, and cancellations, as well as replacements for lost or damaged licenses.

The new incorporation model, approved in May, focused on reducing the procedural and time requirements for joint-stock companies. Noteworthy enhancements include the immediate approval of founders' criminal status upon application submission through direct integration with the Ministry of Interior's criminal database. Regulatory approval processes were also expedited, allowing for direct printing of the supervisory authority's activity book from the system without the need for paper documents, along with simplified amendments and a streamlined approval recording process.

Additionally, the Ministry introduced electronic copies of draft articles of association for closed companies and is in the process of linking with the Ministry of Justice for the electronic authentication of contracts, further advancing the efficiency of joint-stock company procedures.

which they will remain in the first market.

The Kuwait Stock Exchange specified that the practical results of the review will be implemented starting Sunday, February 11.

The Stock Exchange also revealed the names of companies to be added to the "Main 50" market index due to the application of index criteria. These are Iktitab Holding, Sokouk Holding, Gulf Insurance Group, Warba Insurance and Reinsurance, Sanam Real Estate, Munsha'at Real Estate Projects, Kuwaiti Al-Sakab Company, and the first local fuel marketing company, among others.

On the other hand, companies not included in the main market index 50 comprise Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Insurance Company, Sahlia Real Estate Company, Al Enmaa Real Estate Company, Real Estate Trade and Investment Company, Mena Real Estate Company, ACICO Industries Company, Sultan Center Foodstuff Company, Gulf Petroleum Investment Company, Mubarrad Holding Company, Kuwait Parks Company, Inoest Company, and Kuwait Telecommunications Company.

BUSINESS

German GDP shrinks by 0.3%

Germany's gross domestic product fell by 0.3 percent in 2023, compared to 2022, according to data released by the Federal Statistical Office on Monday.

In the annual report, the office stated that despite recent price declines, the rates remained high at all stages in the economic process and put a damper on economic growth, adding that there were unfavorable financing conditions due to rising interest rates and lower demand from home and abroad.

According to the report, the inflation rate last year reached 5.9 percent, unprecedented since three decades ago, which was the main reason of the economy decline. (KUNA)

Romanian truckers, farmers protest

Romanian truck drivers and farmers protested across the country again on Monday as negotiations with the coalition government over lower taxes, higher subsidies and other demands failed to reach any agreements. Long convoys of trucks and tractors disrupted traffic on the outskirts of Bucharest and other cities throughout the European Union nation. It was the sixth straight day of demonstrations.

Farmers are demanding faster

subsidy payments, compensation for losses caused by imports from neighboring Ukraine, and more state aid for fuel costs. Truck drivers are calling for lower tax and insurance rates and have complained about lengthy waiting times at the borders.

Meetings between the protesters and the agriculture and transport ministries were held over the weekend but no agreements were reached. (AP)

London Stock Exchange on high alert

British police said Sunday that six people were arrested on suspicion of a plot to disrupt the London Stock Exchange.

British Met Police said information suggested activists from the Palestine Action group were intending to target the exchange on Monday.

Police added it was believed those involved were planning to cause damage and "lock on" in an effort to stop the building opening for trading.

Arrests were made in London, Liverpool and Brighton on Sunday.

All six people are currently in custody.

Met said it was "mindful of the suggestion that this was one part of a planned week of action".

The British police said it was in contact with other forces, including City of London Police, to ensure any further disruption could be dealt with.

The Met said the arrests were prompted by information shared by the Daily Express. (KUNA)

Plant expected to meet 100% at full production capacity

Africa's biggest oil refinery begins production in Nigeria



A view of oil installations at the Dangote refinery during the opening ceremony in Lagos, Nigeria, Monday, May 22, 2023. Nigeria's Dangote Petroleum Refinery, which is Africa's biggest, says it has begun production, starting with diesel and aviation fuel. This brings to an end a yearlong wait for a plant that analysts said Monday, Jan. 15, 2024 could boost local and regional refining capacity in a region heavily reliant on imported refined products. (AP)

ABUJA, Nigeria, Jan 15, (AP): Africa's biggest oil refinery has begun production in Nigeria, the company has said, ending a yearlong wait for a plant that analysts said Monday could boost refining capacity in a region heavily reliant on imported petroleum products.

The \$19 billion facility, which has a capacity to produce 650,000 barrels per day, has started to produce diesel and aviation fuel, the Dangote Petroleum Refinery company reported Saturday.

As Nigeria's first privately owned oil refinery, the project "is a game-changer for our country," it added.

Nigeria is one of Africa's top oil

producers but imports refined petroleum products for its own use.

The nation's oil and natural gas sector has struggled for many years, and most of its state-run refineries operate far below capacity because of the poor maintenance.

Policy

The Dangote refinery is "not a silver bullet" for Nigeria's energy crisis, according to Olufola Wusu, an oil and gas expert who was part of a team that helped review Nigeria's national gas policy.

"But it is a great way to revive the sector ... and will help move Nigeria from being a major importer of refined petroleum products to being self-reliant in domes-

tic refining capacity."

Described by the company as the world's largest single-train refinery, the private refinery is owned by Africa's richest man, Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote. It is located on the outskirts of Lagos, Nigeria's economic hub, where it operates alongside a fertilizer plant.

The plant is expected to meet 100% of Nigeria's needs for gasoline, diesel, kerosene, and aviation jet fuel at full production capacity, Dangote said last year when the facility was opened. At least 40% of the oil products made there also would be available for export, the company said.

The plant received about 6

million barrels of crude so far from Nigeria's state oil firm, NNPC Limited, to kickstart its operation, although it could take months before the refinery reaches full capacity, according to analysts.

Some citizens have expressed hope that the new plant would soon help reduce consumer gas prices, which have tripled from a year ago after the government stopped decadeslong subsidies.

Analysts have said any impact on prices would still depend on industry trends such as the cost of crude, government interventions such as subsidies, and the local currency's exchange rate to the dollar.

Suspicion of corruption

Ex-chairman of state-owned bank China Everbright Group arrested

HONG KONG, Jan 15, (AP): The former chairman of state-owned Chinese bank China Everbright Group has been arrested on suspicion of embezzlement and bribery, prosecutors said in a statement Monday, amid an intensified campaign against corruption.

The investigation into Tang Shuangning, the former party secretary and chairman of China Everbright Group has ended and the case would be "transferred to the procuratorate for review and prosecution," China's Supreme People's Procuratorate said in a statement.

Tang, 69, was expelled from the Chinese Communist Party earlier this month over violations of disciplines and laws, amid a crackdown on corruption in China's financial sector. He retired in 2017.

Other allegations against him

include weakening the party's leadership over the bank, failing to prevent and defuse financial risks, "privately reading publications with serious political problems and resisting organizational scrutiny," the party-run newspaper Global Times cited the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and the National Supervisory Commission as saying.

Another alleged transgression: promoting his calligraphy. Tang has published several volumes of calligraphy and poems.

Chinese president Xi Jinping earlier this month pledged to intensify a crackdown on graft in the finance, energy and infrastructure sectors, part of a longstanding campaign against corruption since he came to power since 2012.



Tang Shuangning, then chairman of China Everbright Group and Everbright Securities Co., talks to the press after the IPO for Everbright Securities at Shanghai Stock Exchange in Shanghai, China on Aug. 18, 2009. The former chairman of state-owned Chinese bank China Everbright Group has been arrested on suspicion of embezzlement and bribery, prosecutors said in a statement Monday, Jan. 15, 2024, amid an intensified campaign against corruption. (AP)

Advocates brace for impact

Firms adopt diversity and inclusion programs amidst 'legal challenges'

NEW YORK, Jan 15, (AP): Advocates of diversity efforts are steeling themselves for a fight this year as a growing number of lawsuits take aim at programs intended to advance racial equity in the corporate world.

Lawsuits making their way through the courts have targeted prominent companies and a wide array of diversity initiatives, including fellowships, hiring goals, anti-bias training and contract programs for minority or women-owned businesses. Most have been filed by conservative activists who have been encouraged by the Supreme Court's June ruling ending affirmative action in college admissions and are seeking to set a similar precedent in the workplace.

The battle has been a roller coaster of setbacks and victories for both sides, but some companies are already retooling their diversity programs in the face of legal challenges, and the expectation that the conservative-dominated Supreme Court will eventually take up the issue.

"There's a dragnet that I think we should all be concerned about," said Alfonso David, President & CEO of the Global Black Economic Forum and a legal counsel for the Fearless Fund, an Atlanta-based non-profit that is facing a lawsuit over a grant program for businesses owned by Black women.

"It's all coordinated to reverse existing law and advance a chilling effect throughout many industries," David said.

One conservative activist, Christopher Rufo, claimed a victory this month with the resignation of Harvard's first Black woman president, Claudine Gay, after allegations of pla-

giarism and a furor over her congressional testimony about antisemitism.

Rufo, who has cast Gay's appointment to the job as the culmination of misguided diversity and inclusion efforts, vowed on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, not to "stop until we have abolished DEI ideology from every institution in America."

Civil Rights advocates are fighting back. On Monday, the National Action Network, led by the Rev. Al Sharpton, plans to announce a national drive to defend diversity programs at an annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day breakfast in Washington.

Sharpton and other prominent civil rights activists have rallied around the Fearless Fund as it fights a lawsuit brought by the American Alliance for Equal Rights, a group founded by anti-affirmative action activist Edward Blum, the man behind the college admissions cases the Supreme Court ruled on in June. The lawsuit alleges that one of the Fearless Fund's grant contests discriminates against non-Black women and asks the courts to imagine a similar program designed only for white applicants.

In late September, a federal judge in Atlanta refused to block the contest, saying the grants are donations protected by the First Amendment and the lawsuit was likely to fail. But days later, a three-judge federal appeals panel suspended the contest, calling it "racially exclusionary" and saying the suit was likely to succeed.

Oral arguments in the case are scheduled for Jan. 31. The outcome of the case could be a bellwether for similar diversity programs.

Conflict, climate change and AI to get top billing in Davos

Leaders converge for elite meeting

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan 15, (AP): The Earth is heating up, as is conflict in the Middle East. The world economy and Ukraine's defense against Russia are sputtering along. Artificial intelligence could upend all our lives.

The to-do list of global priorities has grown for this year's edition of the World Economic Forum's gabfest of business, political and other elites in the Alpine snows of Davos, Switzerland, which runs Tuesday through Friday.

Over 60 heads of state and government, including Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will be heading to town to hold both public appearances and closed-door talks. They'll be among more than 2,800 attendees, which also include academics, artists and international organization leaders.

The gathering is mostly high-minded ambition - think business innovation, aims for peace-making and security cooperation, or life-changing improvements in health care - and a venue for decision-makers in an array of fields and industries to connect.

It is also regularly panned by critics as an emblem of the yawning gap between rich and poor: Young Swiss Socialists staged a rally Sunday to blast the forum and brand attendees as "the richest and most powerful, who are responsible for today's wars and crises."

"Davos is easily mocked. But in current times it is hard to get people together to talk in a room on shared global issues and the value of face-to-face conversations is very real, as the COVID-19 pandemic showed," Bronwen Maddox, director of the Chatham House think tank, said in an e-mail.

Here's what to watch for:

Conflict

While Davos is generally big-picture, regional conflict can cast a long shadow - like Ukraine's war did a year ago, prompting organizers to exclude any Russian delegation.

This year, Israel's three-month war with Hamas in Gaza, and recently U.S. and British airstrikes on Houthi militants in Yemen who have fired missiles into Red Sea shipping lanes, are looming large.

Herzog, the Israeli president, whose job is more ceremonial than is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's, will be on hand for a Davos session Thursday, and the prime ministers of Qatar, Jordan and Lebanon will also be attending.

A "humanitarian briefing on Gaza" session gets a half-hour slot Tuesday.

A testament to how technology has taken a large and growing slice of attention in Davos, this year the theme of Artificial Intelligence "as a driving force for the economy and society" will get about 30 separate sessions.

The dizzying emergence of OpenAI's ChatGPT over a year ago and rivals since then have elevated the power, promise and portent of artificial intelligence into greater public view.

OpenAI chief Sam Altman will be in Davos along with top executives from Microsoft, which helped bankroll his company's rise.

AI in education, transparency about AI, its ethics and impact on creativity are all part of the menu - and the Davos Promenade is swimming in advertisements and displays pointing to the new technology.



International flags wave on top of the Davos Congress Center where the World Economic Forum takes place in Davos, Switzerland, Monday, Jan. 15, 2024. The annual meeting of the World Economic Forum is taking place in Davos from Jan. 15 until Jan. 19, 2024. (AP)



Farmers with tractors arrive for a protest at the government district in Berlin, Germany, Monday, Jan 15, 2024. Farmers have driven thousands of tractors into Berlin in the climax of a week of demonstrations against a plan to scrap tax breaks on the diesel they use, a protest that has tapped into wider discontent with Germany's govern-

Columns of tractors gather in Berlin for climax of a week of protests by farmers

BERLIN, Jan 15, (AP): Columns of tractors rolled into Berlin on Monday as farmers gathered for the climax of a week of demonstrations against a plan to scrap tax breaks on the diesel they use, a protest that has tapped into wider discontent with Germany's government.

Police said late Sunday evening that the space set aside for vehicles in front of the Brandenburg Gate, where Monday's demonstration was being held, was already full. Over the past week, farmers have blocked highway entrances and slowed down traffic across Germany with their protests, intent on pushing Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government to abandon the planned cuts entirely.

They're not satisfied with concessions the government has already made. On Jan. 4, it watered down its original plan, saying that a car tax exemption for farming vehicles would be retained and the cuts in the diesel tax breaks would be staggered over three years.

Scholz said in a video message on Saturday that "we took the farmers' arguments to heart" and insisted the government came up with "a good compromise." He also said officials will discuss "what else we can do so that agriculture has a good future."

Leaders of the three governing parties' parliamentary groups plan to meet with farmers' representatives, though officials have dampened hopes of scrapping the subsidy cuts.

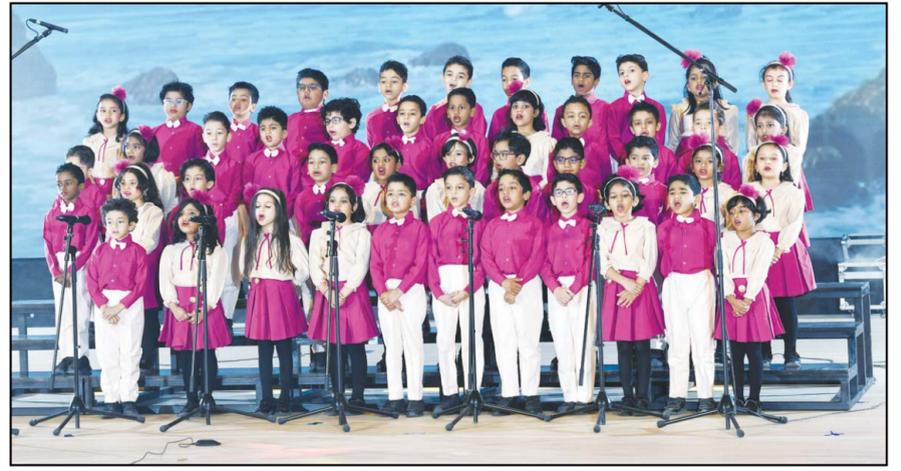
The plan to cut the tax breaks resulted from the need to fill a large hole in the 2024 budget. The farmers' protests come at a time of deep general discontent with the center-left Scholz's government, which has become notorious for frequent public squabbles and lengthy wrangling over sometimes poorly communicated decisions.

Scholz acknowledged concerns that go well beyond farming subsidies, saying that crises, conflicts and worries about the future are unsettling people.

What's On



FAIPS-DPS first graders mesmerize in a grand showcase.



First graders cast spellbinding performance

FAIPS-DPS annual day transforms school auditorium into a magical realm

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: On Thursday, December 7, 2023, the first-grade students of FAIPS-DPS joyously marked their Annual Day in the recently unveiled school auditorium. Under the theme 'The Magic Begins Here,' these young performers captivated the audience, skillfully transforming the stage into an enchanting realm with their infectious energy and boundless enthusiasm.

The morning commenced with the rendition of the Kuwait National Anthem, followed by the recital of the Holy Quran and the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, the Principal, extended a warm welcome to esteemed guests: Her Excellency Haja Ishata Thomas, the Ambassador of Sierra Leone to the State of Kuwait; Ms. Navniit Gandhi, a distinguished author, teacher, and trainer; and Dr. Shamma Al Ansary, Representative of the Ministry of Education, who graced the occasion with their esteemed presence. He also extended a heartfelt welcome to the parents, underscoring the significance of spending quality time with children and imparting essential values of discipline.

The debut presentation mesmerized the spectators with charming costumes and lively dance routines that beautifully portrayed the richness of Indian culture. Subsequently, the event showcased a sequence of musical performances delivered in both English and Spanish.

Extending beyond musical prowess, the students graced the stage with enchanting dance sequences. Meticulously choreographed Arabic, French, and Indian dances carried the audience into a realm of fantasy. The vibrant costumes and synchronized movements infused an additional layer of allure into the overall performance.

The children wrapped up the



event with a dazzling grand finale, evoking a tangible sense of unity and achievement that left the audience with a lasting impression of the enchanting magic crafted by these young talents.

In his concluding remarks, Principal Mr. Ayanoli praised the students for their exceptional performances. Ad-

ressing the audience, Her Excellency Ms. Thomas underscored the crucial role of parental support for teachers in nurturing responsible future citizens. Ms. Gandhi reminded everyone of Robert Fulghum's renowned quote: "Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you." She urged parents to

serve as exemplary role models for their children. The program concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Headmistress Ms. Seema Bhatnagar, who invited teachers and support staff on stage to acknowledge their tremendous efforts. She expressed gratitude to the guests and parents for their unwavering support.

Sadu House organizes Kashmir Textiles Exhibition

Cultural treasures: Journey through elegance

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The Sadu House Kuwait in collaboration with Kashmir Loom Company India is organizing the Kashmir Textiles Exhibition at Sadu House, Arabian Gulf Street, Kuwait City from Jan 14 to Jan 18 between 10 am and 1:00 pm and 4:00 to 8:00 pm.

The exhibition features exquisite textiles and heirloom Kani weave and sozni embroidered pashmina shawls from Kashmir, India. The Kashmir shawls represent a timeless blend of artistry, tradition, and luxury. The intricate craftsmanship and cultural significance make them highly prized and sought after globally.

For the first time in Kuwait, the exhibition also presents Kashmir Loom's vintage-style coats with hand embroidery and Ikat-dyed Pashmina, along with curated collection of hand-embroidered cushions and home objects in the traditional craft of Papier Mache.

Additionally, the event displays a collection of contemporary shawls, stoles and scarves from Kashmir Loom.



Left: Asif Ali – Kashmir Loom founder. Right: Small eyeless bobbins used to insert the discontinuous wefts which at the same time form the structure of the material and make up the design in Kani weaving.



The opening night began with an illustrative talk by Kashmir Loom founder Asif Ali who spoke at length about the origin and art of making Kashmir shawls, often referred to as 'Pashmina' or 'Cashmere' shawls, which have a rich history and are renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship, luxurious feel, and timeless beauty.

The art of making Kashmir shawls, he said, dates back several centuries and has its roots in the Kashmir Valley, a region situated in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. The craft of weaving fine textiles in Kashmir can be traced as far back as the 3rd century BCE.

The authentic Kashmir shawls are made from the fine wool of the Pashmina goat, which is indigenous to the Himalayan region. Pashmina wool is known for its softness, warmth, and lightweight texture. In addition to Pashmina wool, Kashmir shawls may also be crafted using other types of wool, silk, or a blend of these materials.

He went on to say, traditional Kashmiri shawls are often handwoven on looms. Artisans use various weaving techniques to create intricate patterns and designs. Nonetheless, many Kashmir shawls feature exquisite embroidery, known as "Aari" or "Sozni" embroidery, which involves intricate hand-stitching with fine needles.

The Jamawar Shawls are a special type of Kashmir shawl known for their paisley patterns and vibrant colors and extensive use of brocade weaving while the Pashmina Shawls made from the fine wool of Pashmina goats, are highly prized for their softness and warmth.

The Kani shawls arerafted using the Kani weaving technique, featuring intricate designs and patterns; while the sozni shawls are adorned with detailed needlework, often depicting floral motifs and intricate patterns.

Historically, he said, Kashmir shawls were highly sought after, receiving patronage from Mughal emperors and European royalty. The Kashmir shawls have gained international acclaim and are cherished as high-end fashion accessories.

While traditional craftsmanship is still valued, contemporary designers have introduced modern designs to cater to changing tastes and are now sold worldwide, and their popularity extends



Left: Pashmina fiber hand carding – a process that separates coarse fiber from finer Pashmina before spinning. Right: Shawl weaving.



Shawl



Kashmiri shawls at a glance

Warba announces winners of Al Sunbula weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Warba Bank - the best bank in corporate and investment banking services in Kuwait - announced the winners of the weekly Al Sunbula draws. Warba Bank will continue to hold weekly draws for ten winners of Al Sunbula account, in the presence of a representative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Warba Bank employees.

Each of the 10 lucky winners of the Sunbula weekly draw of Warba Bank received KD 1,000, and the winners are: Salem Homoud Thamer Al-Ajmi, Homoud Mohammad Mashaa Al-Mutairi, Mohammad Abdul Mohsen Al-Omran, Aisha Waleed Ibrahim Al-Jeeran, Mohammad Muqbil Slubi Al-Mutairi, Badriya Mohammad Matar Al-Fadhli, Mansour Dhaidan Mnawekh Al-Otaibi, Khaled Musa Shadhan Al-Anezi, Essam Adnan Abu Shalhoub, and Nayef Turki Jazaa Al-Harbi.

As for the Sunbula account, it is the ideal choice for all those wishing to save money and achieve appropriate financial returns on their accounts at the same time, in addition to the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year.

Regarding the conditions, Ahmed M. Al-Mutawa, Area Manager Retail Banking Group said: "KD 100 is now required to enter the weekly Sunbula draws and major draws, and the client still gets one chance for every KD 10 in the account, and the chances are counted according to the lowest balance in the account during the month. Therefore, a full month must have passed in the account to qualify for the weekly draw, and two full months for the major draws to count the chances. There are no restrictions or limits for withdrawal and deposit, the higher the deposited amount, the greater the client's chances to win".



Ahmed Al Mutawa

Notably Warba Bank launched its latest banking solutions service, "Customer Onboarding", in accordance with the terms of its ambitious five-year strategy, which enables non-Warba Bank clients to apply for opening a Sunbula account in an easy digital way via the Bank's website without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches, and within only five minutes - through the new and unique automated system used to enable this service - new clients will be able to complete the request to open an account at any time and any place.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the bank close to all members of society, in addition Warba Bank is considered among the 50 largest banks in the Middle East in terms of market value for the year 2023 - Forbes Middle East ranking.

Pak Donors hosts 23rd Blood Donation Drive 'dedicated' to HH Sheikh Nawaf

By M. Irfan Shafiq

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: In a heartwarming display of unity and humanitarianism, Pak Donors, a prominent community organization in Kuwait, successfully conducted their 23rd Blood Donation Drive dedicated to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, with the hope that Allah the Almighty blesses him with mercy. The event witnessed an overwhelming response, with over 220 donors coming forward to contribute to this noble cause.

The Blood Donation Drive took place at Central Blood Bank Jabriya on Friday, 12th Jan 2024, and it was graced by esteemed guests, including Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait; Malik Muhammad Farouq, and Community Welfare Attache; Farukh Amir Sial. Also in attendance was Al-Andalus Health City Mayor, Mataba Al Fiji, who added prestige to the event with his presence.

Members of the Green Hand team

and other dignitaries from the Pakistani community also came together to support the cause and encourage blood donation to save lives.

Expressing gratitude to the entire community, volunteers, and media, the Pak Donors Team extended their heartfelt thanks. Their efforts in organizing this event and rallying the community were instrumental in its success.

This event highlights the generosity of the Pakistani community in Kuwait and underscores the importance of voluntary blood donation in saving lives and promoting a culture of care and compassion.

Pak Donors is a dedicated community organization in Kuwait committed to organizing blood donation drives and various charitable activities. They have consistently played a significant role in fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among the Pakistani expatriate community while contributing to humanitarian causes.



Pak Donors Team group photo.

'Succession' and 'Last of Us' vie for top awards

Emmy Awards finally arrive for a changed Hollywood

LOS ANGELES, Jan 15, (AP) - The time has finally come for a most unusual Emmys.

The 75th Primetime Emmy Awards are arriving four months past their due date on Monday night at the Peacock Theater, coming after a year of historic Hollywood turbulence in an industry whose upheavals are evident everywhere.

Strikes by both actors and writers, seismic shifts toward streaming, and the dismantling of the traditional TV calendar mean the envelopes opened during the Fox telecast hosted by Anthony Anderson on Martin Luther King Jr. Day will display winners that were decided months ago for shows that in some cases were completed years ago - and have a fraction of the audience they had a few decades ago.

But for actors and others taking part in the ceremony, norms just aren't a thing anymore in this business.

"Since the pandemic it's been really strange, you shoot something, then sometimes it's another couple years until you see it, and a while longer until something like this," actor Nick Offerman told The Associated Press last week after winning an early Emmy for "The Last of Us," a show that is among Monday night's top nominees along with "Succession," "Ted Lasso" and "The Bear."

The Emmys will provide some respite and celebration after the strike and the troubles that spurred it, and with its 75th edition, will attempt to provide links to its past and to TV history. It will include a series of cast reunions and scene recreations from beloved shows including "Cheers," "Game of Thrones," "Grey's Anatomy" and "Martin."

The nominations themselves provide one big link to Emmys past - the continuation of the decades-long dominance of HBO, which this

year has the three most nominated shows with "Succession," "The White Lotus" and "The Last of Us."

Anderson has been tasked with hosting at a time when emceeing awards shows is hardly a coveted job, especially after comic Jo Koy was widely roasted for his Golden Globes performance last weekend.

But Anderson said he's actually coming in relaxed and relieved, because for the first time in nearly a decade, he's not a nominee. He never won an Emmy despite 11 nominations as a producer and actor for his former show, "black-ish."

Category

"All the pressure is off of me now," Anderson, now the host of Fox's "We Are Family," said during ceremony preparations. "I don't have to sit there and wonder, am I going to win? Am I going to get it? What time are they going to get to this category? I just get to come up here and be myself."

The Emmys will air live on Fox starting at 8 p.m. Eastern, and available to stream starting Tuesday on Hulu.

The ceremony is watchable in dozens of countries. The Television Academy website has a handy list of broadcasters and in some instances, air times.

There are also many ways to watch the Emmys red carpet, which begins at 5 p.m., when E! kicks off its coverage. People and Entertainment Weekly are also hosting a red carpet show that will stream on their websites and YouTube pages.

"Succession" got a leading 27 nominations. It's the probable favorite to win its third best drama series Emmy and it has three men - Brian

Cox, Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin - up for best actor with four more nominated for best supporting actor.

But it won't come away with the most wins. That's because "The Last of Us," second with 24 nominations, is coming in with eight via last weekend's Creative Arts Emmys, where "Succession" won none. Those include best guest acting awards for Offerman and Storm Reid, suggesting that voters may also favor its lead actors Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey. Both could make history, with Pascal becoming the first Latino to win best actor in a drama and Ramsey the youngest to win best actress.

The elite ensemble from "The White Lotus" is all over the supporting categories. It has five women up for best supporting actress in a drama, including Jennifer Coolidge and Aubrey Plaza.

On the comedy side, the night could become a victory lap for the third and final season of "Ted Lasso," the soccer-themed series that won best comedy for its first two seasons.

Its main challenger comes from the kitchen. "The Bear," about a chef struggling with his family's legacy, will vie for best comedy, and its lead Jeremy Allen White could challenge Jason Sudeikis of "Ted Lasso" for best actor in a comedy.

Last year's two strikes meant the Emmys, normally held in September, made an unprecedented move to January, putting it in the heart of Hollywood's awards season.

Academy voting took place on the normal timetable, however, meaning the winners have been determined since late August.

The wait and other quirks of the calendar make for some strange award circumstances. "The Bear" is up for Emmys for its first season, after having already won key Golden Globes for its second.

Television

Variety



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Angourie Rice in a scene from 'Mean Girls.' 'Mean Girls' takes first place at the US box office with \$28 million earnings in its first three days in theaters according to studio estimates Sunday. (AP)

Television

Safdie, Stone, and Fielder reflect on the journey

'Curse' embraces cringe, absurdism

LOS ANGELES, Jan 15, (AP) - "We're certified Fresh!!!!!! Don't miss out!" filmmaker and actor Benny Safdie posted online in December, referencing his latest project with Emma Stone and comedian Nathan Fielder.

Attached to the ostensibly straightforward celebratory post was a photo of the Rotten Tomatoes score for "The Curse" - an impressive 94% endorsement from critics who watched, next to a comparatively atrocious audience score of 35%.

That's a feat the trio seems to relish. "I want to know what it is that we actually did," Safdie laughed, trying to pinpoint why exactly their series was so polarizing ahead of the Los Angeles premiere for its finale, which aired Friday on Showtime.

Safdie recently made headlines for confirming his professional split from his brother and collaborator, Josh Safdie (who is credited as an executive producer on the A24 series). Although the pair had made acclaimed independent films like "Good Time" and "Uncut Gems" - which had a similar chasm between audience and critical response - the co-creator and star of "The Curse" has had a successful year on his own, including acting roles in "Oppenheimer" and "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret."

And while the series has not exactly been a hit with the masses - it was by far the least-watched Showtime series this season - "The Curse" has garnered a cult following of devoted fans, even inspiring its own subreddit filled with analysis, theories and deep dives into suggested obfuscated symbolism and religious references within the show.

It follows Whitney and Asher Siegel (Stone and Fielder), a newly married couple making an HGTV series called "Fliplanthropy," where they purchase rundown houses in Española, New Mexico, and convert them into mirrored, pressurized "passive homes" - often likened to thermoses for their ability to self-regulate temperature - with no windows, heating or air conditioning.

Gentrification is widely seen as harmful to the resi-

dents it displaces, but Whitney and Asher bill their undertaking as one that will benefit the community, arguing they have practices in place to ensure Española's residents will not be forced out of their community - just their homes.

While filming the show with Asher's freemasonry and producer, Dougie Schechter (Safdie), Asher has a strange encounter with a young girl who curses him - a turn of events that arouses paranoia for the couple, despite their best attempts to convince themselves of its irrationality.

Though the genre-bending series might come across as merely nonsensical and avant-garde, a closer look invites viewers into a poignant meditation on questions concerning gentrification, racial and class guilt, religion and marriage.

Bizarre

The finale takes a turn so bizarre and terrifying that one wonders if Fielder had input from his friend, horror director Ari Aster - and whether Asher is in fact cursed. Those who crave closure or coherence will be disappointed with the final episode. But that's not to say it isn't there, only hard to find.

While Safdie credits Stone, who also worked as an executive producer, with getting the show greenlit thanks to her clout, many who tuned in solely for the Oscar winner have surely been caught off-guard by its esotericism.

And while some might be surprised at Stone's participation in a project so catered to a specific, almost fringe, taste - especially as she simultaneously racks up awards for her performance in "Poor Things" - she sees a continuity between "The Curse" and her films.

"A surrealistic experience I think has been interesting to me for a long time. 'Birdman' was sort of that way. 'La La Land' was sort of that way. There's an element of fantastical in the midst of a sort of groundedness that I find really intriguing," she said while promoting "Poor Things." "'The Curse' definitely does live in that world."

Stone had become friends with Fielder after seeing "every episode" of his reality series on Comedy Cen-

tral, "Nathan For You," in which Fielder provides bizarre and often destructive marketing advice to small businesses, including some viral stunts so over the top and confounding that they attracted national attention.

Stone said she was so eager to work with Fielder, who co-created and wrote the series with Safdie, that she agreed to join the cast before she even knew what it was about.

For faithful fans, like Stone, of Fielder, who reaped critical acclaim for his HBO series, "The Rehearsal," the tone and themes of "The Curse" are not surprising. His deadpan humor relies on exploiting awkward situations, real or contrived, and he is known for his almost superhuman ability to withstand cringe.

"I don't know about that word or what it means exactly," Fielder said sheepishly.

"Or that it's intentional," Stone interjected. But the comedian maintains his emphasis on painfully awkward circumstances in his work is meant to reflect the discomfort and absurdity of real life.

"Life is uncomfortable, I think. Interacting with people ..." he trailed off, nervously - though it is difficult to discern in a conversation with him what is a bit and what is real. "I feel like if you filmed anyone's life, it would look a lot like the show."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Ruth Wilson stars in a new mystery series called "The Woman in the Wall" for Paramount+ with Showtime. Wilson stars as Lorna, a woman who wakes up one morning to discover a dead body in her home and she doesn't know what happened. Lorna is immediately under suspicion by a local investigator played by Daryl McCormack ("Good Luck to You, Leo Grande") because she's got a reputation in town for her strange behavior. Lorna suffers from trauma after becoming pregnant as a teen and being sent to a religious home, where her newborn baby was taken from her. "The Woman in the Wall" premieres on Paramount+ on Jan. 19 before its broadcast debut on Paramount+ with Showtime (the cable channel formerly known as Showtime), on Sunday, Jan. 21.

LOS ANGELES: "Color Purple" scored in the A-range. The studio is optimistic after this weekend though. It also made \$6.5 million from 16 international markets.

"It's no secret that the release calendar is a little light for the first couple months of the year and because of the reception to this film we stand a chance of broadening

this audience," Aronson said. "It really is a crowd-pleaser."

Amazon and MGM's "The Beekeeper" debuted in second place with an estimated \$16.8 million from 3,303 theaters. Men made up approximately 62% of ticket buyers and audiences overall gave it a B+ CinemaScore. By the end of the four-day weekend, the studio

expects it to have made \$19.1 million. Miramax handled the international distribution for "The Beekeeper," which also grossed \$20.4 million from 49 territories.

Third place went to "Wonka," which added \$8.4 million in its fifth weekend. The Timothée Chalamet-led musical has now made over \$178 million domesti-

cally and \$500 million globally.

"Musicals are on a roll," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "It seems like a lot of studios run away from putting musical on their films for fear of limiting their audience pool, but I think this is a genre Hollywood should embrace and highlight." (AP)

Color Purple" scored in the A-range. The studio is optimistic after this weekend though. It also made \$6.5 million from 16 international markets.

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Cravalho



Rice

Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024

People & Places

Obituaries

Journalist Taylor dead

'Honeymooners' star Randolph dies at 99

NEW YORK, Jan. 15, (AP) — Joyce Randolph, a veteran stage and television actor whose role as the savvy Trixie Norton on "The Honeymooners" provided the perfect foil to her dimwitted TV husband, has died. She was 99.

Randolph died of natural causes Saturday night at her home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, her son Randolph Charles told The Associated Press Sunday.

She was the last surviving main character of the beloved comedy from television's golden age of the 1950s.

"The Honeymooners" was an affectionate look at Brooklyn tenement life, based in part on star Jackie Gleason's childhood. Gleason played the blustering bus driver Ralph Kramden. Audrey Meadows was his wisecracking, strong-willed wife Alice, and Art Carney the cheerful sewer worker Ed Norton. Alice and Trixie often found themselves commiserating over their husbands' various follies and mishaps, whether unknowingly marketing dog food as a popular snack or trying in vain to resist a rent hike, or freezing in the winter as their heat is shut off.

Randolph would later cite a handful of favorite episodes, including one in which Ed is sleepwalking.

"And Carney calls out, 'Thelma?!' He never knew his wife's real name," she later told the Television Academy Foundation.

Originating in 1950 as a recurring skit on Gleason's variety show, "Cavalcade of Stars," "The Honeymooners" still ranks among the all-time favorites of television comedy. The show grew in popularity after Gleason switched networks with "The Jackie Gleason Show." Later, for one season in 1955-56, it became a full-fledged series.

Those 39 episodes became a staple of syndicated programming aired all over the country and beyond.

In an interview with The New York Times in January 2007, Randolph said she received no compensation in residuals for those 39 episodes. She said she finally began getting royalties with the discovery of "lost" episodes from the variety hours.

Characters

After five years as a member of Gleason's on-the-air repertory company, Randolph virtually retired, opting to focus full-time on marriage and motherhood.

"I didn't miss a thing by not working all the time," she said. "I didn't want a nanny raising (my) wonderful son."

But decades after leaving the show, Randolph still had many admirers and received dozens of letters a week. She was a regular into her 80s at the downstairs bar at Sardi's, where she liked to sip her favorite White Cadillac concoction - Dewar's and milk - and chat with patrons who recognized her from a portrait of the sitcom's four characters over the bar.

Randolph said the show's impact on television viewers didn't dawn on her until the early 1980s.

"One year while (my son) was in college at Yale, he came home and said, 'Did you know that guys and girls come up to me and ask, 'Is your mom really Trixie?'" she told The San Antonio Express in 2000. "I guess he hadn't paid much attention before then."

Earlier, she had lamented that playing Trixie limited her career.

"For years after that role, directors would say: 'No, we can't use her. She's too well-known as Trixie,'" Randolph told the Orlando Sentinel in 1993.

Gleason died in 1987 at age 71, followed by Meadows in 1996 and Carney in 2003. Gleason had revived "The Honeymooners" in the 1960s, with Jane Kean as Trixie.

Randolph was born Joyce Sirola in Detroit in 1924, and was around 19 when she joined a road company of "Stage Door." From there she went to New York and performed in a number of Broadway shows.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, she was seen often on TV, appearing with such stars as Eddie Cantor, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Danny Thomas and Fred Allen.

Randolph met Gleason for the first time when she did a Clorets commercial on "Cavalcade of Stars," and The Great One took a liking to her; she didn't even have an agent at the time.

Randolph spent her retirement going to Broadway openings and fundraisers, being active with the U.S.O. and visiting other favorite Manhattan haunts, among them Angus, Chez Josephine and the Lambs Club.

Her husband, Richard Lincoln, a wealthy marketing executive who died in 1997, served as president at the Lambs, a theatrical club, and she reigned as "first lady." They had one son, Charles.

Ruth Ashton Taylor, a trailblazing journalist who was the first female newscaster to work in television on the West Coast, has died. She was 101.

Taylor died Thursday at an assisted living facility in San Rafael, California, according to her family. No cause of death was released. "She died very suddenly," her daughter, Laurel Conklin, said Sunday.

Conklin said her mother was born in Long Beach in 1922 and had a career in radio and television news that spanned more than 50 years.

Taylor graduated from Scripps College in Claremont, California, and earned a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University before taking a job as a news writer and producer at CBS radio in New York.

She was one of the original members - and only woman - in a documentary unit led by Edward R. Murrow.

By 1949, Taylor was on the air doing notable interviews and conducted many over the ensuing decades, including with performer Jimmy Durante, physicist Albert Einstein and President Jimmy Carter.

Taylor became an anchor for the CBS affiliate in Los Angeles in 1951. She left journalism for a short time in 1958 before returning to TV station KNXT in 1962, where she spent the rest of her career before retiring in 1989.

Taylor earned a Lifetime Achievement Emmy Award in 1982 and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1990.

In addition to Laurel Conklin, Taylor is survived by two other daughters plus a stepson, a grandson and granddaughter-in-law and a great-grandson.



Randolph



Emma Thomas, (left), and Christopher Nolan accept the award for best picture for 'Oppenheimer' during the 29th Critics Choice Awards on Sunday, Jan. 14. Alden Ehrenreich, (from left), Emily Blunt, and Cillian Murphy look on. (AP)



David Krumholtz, (from left), Robert Downey Jr., Emily Blunt, (center), Alden Ehrenreich, and Cillian Murphy accept the award for best ensemble for 'Oppenheimer.' (AP)



Emma Stone poses with the award for best actress for 'Poor Things.' (AP)



Greta Gerwig, (left), and Margot Robbie accept the award for best comedy for 'Barbie,' during the Critics Choice Awards on Sunday, Jan. 14. (AP)



Paul Giamatti poses with the award for best actor for 'The Holdovers.' (AP)



Dominic Sessa poses with best young actor award for 'The Holdovers.' (AP)



Kevin Messick, (from left), Nicholas Braun, Matthew Macfayden, Jesse Armstrong, Sarah Snook, and Kieran Culkin pose best drama series award for 'Succession.' (AP)



Da'Vine Joy Randolph accepts best supporting actress award for 'The Holdovers.' (AP)



Lionel Boyce, (from left), Ayo Edebiri, Cooper Wehde, Joanna Calo, Ebon Moss-Bachrach, Tyson Bidner, Liza Colon-Zayas, Abby Elliott, Matty Matheson, Jeremy Allen White, and Josh Senior pose with best comedy series award. (AP)



Maria Bello, (from left), Jake Schreier, Lee Sung Jin, center, Steven Yeun, and Ali Wong accept the award for best limited series for 'Beef.' (AP)



Christopher Nolan accepts the award for best director for 'Oppenheimer' during the 29th Critics Choice Awards on Sunday, Jan. 14, at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, Calif. (AP)

Awards

'The Bear,' 'Succession,' and 'Beef' win big in TV

'Oppenheimer' tops Critics Choice Awards

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 15, (Agencies) — In a dazzling display of achievements, "Oppenheimer" emerged as the standout champion at the 2024 Critics Choice Awards, securing an impressive total of eight victories. Among its notable wins were the coveted titles of Best Picture, Best Director for Christopher Nolan, and Best Supporting Actor for Robert Downey Jr.

Following closely behind, "Barbie" claimed six victories, securing accolades such as Best Comedy and Best Song for the catchy "I'm Just Ken." The awards ceremony brought unexpected turns to the competitive landscape, awarding the title of Best Actress to Emma Stone for her performance in "Poor Things," and Best Actor to Paul Giamatti for his role in "The Holdovers."

On the television front, "The Bear," "Succession," and "Beef" emerged as major victors, clinching multiple acting awards and dominating their respective categories. "The Bear" and "Beef" each garnered four awards, while "Succession" secured three, reinforcing their influence in the world of television.

Guiding the audience through the event's festivities, Chelsea Handler assumed the role of host for the Sunday night ceremony. The live broadcast on the CW, originating from Santa Monica's Barker Hangar, featured notable moments, including Harrison Ford graciously accepting the Career Achievement Award. Additionally, America Ferrera received the esteemed SeeHer Award, adding a touch of recognition and celebration to the star-studded evening.

Here's the full winners list:

Film

- Best Picture: 'Oppenheimer'
- Best Actress: Emma Stone, 'Poor Things'
- Best Actor: Paul Giamatti, 'The Holdovers'
- Best Director: Christopher Nolan, 'Oppenheimer'
- Best Supporting Actor: Robert Downey Jr., 'Oppenheimer'
- Best Supporting Actress: Da'Vine Joy Randolph, 'The Holdovers'
- Best Young Actor/Actress: Dominic Sessa, 'The Holdovers'
- Best Acting Ensemble: 'Oppenheimer'
- Best Adapted Screenplay: Cord Jefferson, 'American Fiction'
- Best Original Screenplay: Greta Gerwig & Noah Baumbach, 'Barbie'

Variety

MILAN: Milan designers are reflecting on a troubled world with collections that mark a return to serious business attire, even from active wear brands, and away from frivolity.

Actors Jake Gyllenhaal and James McAvoy had front-row seats. But the crowds of adoring fans waiting outside were for K-pop VIPs.

Some scenes from the third day of previews Sunday of mostly menswear collections for fall-winter 2024-25.

Italian brand Simon Cracker explores the moment before drifting off to sleep, as the best respite from a troubling world.

The nearly 14-year-old brand by designers Simone Botte and Filippo Biraghi works entirely with upcycled garments and reclaimed remnants. For this collection, the designers achieved harmony by dyeing the garments together, creating a dreamy pinkish blue of a sunset.

Colors bled together, and become a bit blurry, as if seeing through closed eyes. The silhouette is slouchy, as if giving up after a long day. Men's tailoring defines the collection, but jackets are deconstructed with one shoulder off, a new half-collar taking its place.

Garments are dusted with a glimmering sheen, as if visited by the sandman. Big bold pearls accent the looks, representing the moon. Denim garments were hand



Botte



Gyllenhaal

painted by British designer Sue Cloes, known for the 1981 Culture Club designs.

The treatments gave the collection a cohesion that the designers said that many interpreted as elegance - which isn't necessarily their goal. They prefer to shake things up.

"Rebellion does not necessarily come from making noise, rather maybe it comes more from quiet, from reflection," Biraghi said backstage. "There is still kindness. Kindness is the most revolutionary thing there is." (AP)

The Conversation

A beginner's guide to sound baths

Sound therapy helps cut anxiety, improve blood pressure

By Elisa J. Sobo

San Diego State University

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

In recent years, sound bathing, a therapy in which sound is used for healing, has been marketed as one of many "self-care" practices, such as journal-keeping or candle-burning, in support of personal well-being. Sold also as sound "immersions," or sound "healing" or "therapy," sound baths are pitched as a safe and effective way to reduce stress and increase inner peace.

Do they, though? If so, how? As a medical anthropologist who has conducted research on the sound bath boom, I have some evidence-based insights to offer.

Dedicated yogic sound baths are typically intimate, hour-long, small group events hosted in yoga studios or other private settings. Lights dimmed, perhaps with essential oils diffusing, providers surround their typically recumbent clients with sound generated from simple instruments such as tuning forks, gongs and bowls. In my research, sound bath receivers and providers say this leads to a deep sense of peace or harmony.

Some people claim erroneously that what we call sound baths are an ancient practice. There is a long-standing tradition in yoga of using sound to focus one's meditative efforts, perhaps most famously in chanting "Aum."

But sound baths emerged in their present form largely as an outgrowth of the rise of modern yoga - the kind that focuses on postures, or "asanas." These classes generally include, at the end, a short, meditative, "rest and receive" phase, or "savasana." A yogic sound bath is, essentially, a sound-enhanced, extended, savasana-only sound immersion session.

Practices

The commodification of yogic practices in the West, along with celebrity endorsements, have resulted in the modern-day sound bath industry. Many yoga studios now offer sound baths regularly: "It draws people in," explained one owner.

There is evidence that shows that yogic sound therapy can bring benefits. Data confirms associations between yoga practice and better physical and mental health.

Regarding sound baths specifically, in a study involving the controlled exposure of 62 people to singing bowls, gongs, cymbals called ting-shas, and other simple instruments, subjects reported decreased tension, anger and fatigue.

A review including several other somewhat smaller studies found that sound immersion can also improve blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate and other clinical indicators.

Scientific understanding of the mechanics of sound therapy is in

its infancy. But preliminary studies have shown that a well-executed sound bath may help reduce anxiety and even improve blood pressure and heart rate, among other clinical outcomes.

In my research, many participants pointed to science in explaining why sound baths worked so well for them, referencing for instance the nervous system's capacity to move us into a "rest and digest," or relaxation, state. Many also referenced spiritualized concepts, such as the "chakras," seven wheel-like energy or spiritual power centers running up the spine, which they believe the vibrations can "unblock."

The sound bath experience varies. For instance, some are held outside. Some providers play lots of different instruments, not just simple percussive ones or singing bowls. Some bring in lots of yogic philosophy; others leave that unspoken. Some infuse sessions with what I call "trauma talk," inviting clients to focus on inner pain; others remain silent regarding client motivations for participating.

With sound baths so widely available, no regulations, and a wellness market hungry for profit, how do you choose what kind to attend? Here are some guidelines, based on my study.

Sanctuary

To begin, participants said that the ideal sound bath site enables clients to let down their guard. This may mean locking studio doors or providing warm blankets and cushioning so that receivers can comfortably relax into the soundscape offered.

Outdoor sound baths can be nice, but concern about onlookers, noise intrusions and imperfect weather could undermine a sense of sanctuary. The same was true for baths conducted in noisy fitness centers or other locations not built to promote inner peace.

Practitioner style also mattered. Interviewees recommended backing out if a provider makes you uncomfortable, because relaxation will be difficult.

They also noted that providers with less experience often play too loudly, make jarring versus gentle transitions and forget to pause. Relatedly, baths with lots of diverse or complex instruments, or songs that tell a story, make maintaining meditation difficult.

Yet another distraction came from providers focused on suffering, stress or trauma. Observations confirmed that too much "trauma talk" might prime clients to focus on and even amplify any sense of distress, diverting them from the simple pleasure of an immersion and from their own resilience.

Even the best sound bath cannot relieve stress long term if the causes of that stress remain in place. Nevertheless, in a world where inner peace is hard to find, let alone maintain, an hour spent in meditative repose can be a godsend. (AP)

Other Voices

'Forever chemicals' tied to developmental issues

Your pots and pans are making you sick

Did you know that cookware, which include pots and pans like Teflon and tefal which are popular in the Middle East, are coated with something called forever chemicals? These chemicals essentially stay in your body and system forever, and they get into your food when you cook. These chemicals are hormone disrupters, which means they change or alter your hormones and can affect your children's development, as well as male and female hormones.

It can increase the males level of estrogen, which lowers testosterone levels and can lead to things like moodiness, weight gain, and abnormal testicular function. For women, it can also increase their estrogen levels which can lead to things like PMS and infertility. Can you imagine what this may do do children who are still developing and are more sensitive to hormone changes during their growth period?

So what can you do about it? Please be aware that cookware like Teflon and tefal are actually not safe, and some countries have banned their use due to the coating that is full of the forever chemicals. This means- these chemicals enter your body and will never ever leave. They will stay with you forever.

The good news is, there are great cookware options that are safe and healthy to use. For example, cast iron pans are wonderful because not only are they safe, but they also provide iron content in your food when cooked with them- and this may help those who suffer from anemia. Stainless steel pans (not to be confused with aluminum pans) are another great option- they are safe to use

and if coated and heated properly, your food will rarely stick.

Also- toxic free ceramic coated pans are another good option, but please do make sure that if they scratch, you replace them immediately.

The iron cast and stainless steel pots and pans do not scratch easily- so they will last you a lifetime. The more we know, the better choices we can make to improve our health.

□ □ □

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About 1 in 100 students in US has autism

Gifted autistic students thrive in college

By Joseph Madaus, Nicholas Gelbar and Sally Reis

University of Connecticut

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

About 1 out of every 100 students in American public schools has autism. A subset of these students also have academic gifts and talents in a broad range of areas, including math, science, technology, the humanities and the arts. These students are often referred to as "twice exceptional."

To learn more about this population, we conducted research with three groups: twice-exceptional autistic college students, their parents and college staff who work with them. The students were all enrolled in or recent graduates of competitive and very competitive colleges, including Ivy League institutions. We identified several strategies that can help these students transition to and succeed in college.

Identifying twice-exceptional students can be difficult because their gifts may mask their disabilities. Conversely, their disabilities may mask their gifts.

One student stated, "My mother was told that I was too smart to have a disability, so I did not really believe that I had a disability."

When these students are identified only as autistic, they may be placed in special education programs that focus on remediation of deficits, rather than encouraging students to develop and build upon their strengths. They might not be enrolled in challenging courses. On the other hand, when gifted autistic students are identified only as gifted, they might not receive the support needed to accommodate their disabilities.

Discussed

The students in our research project discussed how important it was for both their academic success and self-confidence to be appropriately identified. One student stated: "I had an amazing teacher who gave me opportunities to participate in projects. One of my mentors was a science teacher, and she also gave me advanced opportunities. She gave me so many chances for advanced work. She let me apply science to the real world and to me; that was beautiful. She gave me the confidence to know that I could go beyond and do extra work."

Nearly every student and parent stated that college attendance was an expectation from an early age. To prepare for this goal, students took challenging courses focused on their strengths.

For example, of the students we interviewed, nearly three-quarters were enrolled in Advanced Placement, honors or college credit-bearing courses while in high school.

Almost every student participated in at least one extracurricular activity, and some in multiple activities.

Many of the students assumed leadership roles. One parent discussed how her son tutored his peers in high school and was seen as a leader. "He was a role model there," the parent told us. "He had a lot of friends, and people really looked up to him and respected him. ... He built his self-esteem, which really made a big difference."

Both the students and parents discussed the importance of these activities as ways to pursue areas of interest, gain leadership experiences and find peers with similar interests.

Program

About half of the students participated in residential camp or program experiences while in high school. They described how these programs helped them prepare to live away from home during college. One student said such programs "really helped, as it helped my ability to communicate with others and helped me to understand how to explain what I need to explain to others."

The students reported that they were active participants in selecting their college. Finding a school with a program or major of interest was their biggest consideration.

Slightly less than half of the students interviewed started at a smaller school, or a smaller regional campus, before transferring to their final college or university. These smaller schools were often closer to home, enabling students to adjust to college life before they moved to their final competitive college or university. One parent told us that the family looked at schools that they could reach in two hours or so. "And that is because in case he had a meltdown, I wanted him to be in an area where I could drive and calm him down," the parent said.

Different laws exist at the high school and college level regarding disability supports. For example, special education services will not be provided in college. Students will not receive modified instruction or assessments and instead may be eligible for reasonable accommodations, such as extended test time.

Each of the groups we studied spoke about the importance of understanding these differences and what they mean for the student seeking supports in college. One college staff member stressed that high school students should receive accommodations, if needed, and not modifications. He also suggested students un-

derstand "what a college professor is going to expect from them and how ... parents aren't going to contact professors."

Colleges may offer different amounts of support for disabled students. These can range from basic accommodations to specific programs that provide an individual professional to support students. Colleges cannot charge extra fees for accommodations, but they can charge students to participate in more extensive and individualized support programs. Therefore, the level of disability support that the college offered was also a common consideration.

Opportunities

Having a go-to contact person - an adviser, counselor, teacher or faculty member - was essential, the parents and students told us. Such professionals may recognize the student's talents, support their interests and nurture opportunities for their growth.

One student said: "There were so many people that believed in me and gave me advanced courses and advanced independent projects. They gave me time to write short stories. They let me explore my strengths and interests."

It is important to teach students how to advocate for themselves while in high school. The students we spoke with learned how to take care of their emotional and physical health through diet, exercise, meditation, music or finding time alone to recharge and deal with stress. They were involved in a variety of clubs and extracurricular activities. They used these experiences to make friends with similar interests.

These students also learned how to request and use available campus supports and academic accommodations when needed. Many of the students stated that they wished they had more opportunities to develop these skills while in high school.

One college staff member summarized: "one of the key successful skill sets is self-advocacy and being able to recognize when things are not going well and being able to speak up and say, 'I need help.' And then taking that even a step further to say, 'Not only do I need help, but here's how I need help.' So it's that level of self-awareness and then being able to articulate those needs to the right people."

Gifted autistic students have tremendous potential but too often do not have the opportunity to develop their talents. Nationwide, only 39% of autistic students who start college finish, compared with 64% of all students.

With high expectations, support for talent development from teachers and careful transition planning that takes a strength-based approach, gifted students with autism can succeed in competitive colleges. (AP)

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Lillard's 3-pointer at OT buzzer lifts Bucks past Kings



Phoenix Suns center Jusuf Nurkic, right, and Portland Trail Blazers forward Jabari Walker (34) reach for a rebound during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Sunday, Jan. 14, 2024. (AP)

Timberwolves down Clippers

MILWAUKEE, Jan 15, (AP): Damian Lillard made a 3-pointer at the buzzer in overtime to give the Milwaukee Bucks a 143-142 victory over the Sacramento Kings on Sunday night.

The Kings led by four late in overtime, but Brook Lopez made a 3-pointer from the corner to pull the Bucks to 141-140 with 11.5 seconds remaining.

De'Aaron Fox made one of two free throws before Lillard received a pass, dribbled across half court and sank the shot that gave the Bucks their 15th consecutive victory over the Kings.

Lillard led Milwaukee with 29 points. Giannis Antetokounmpo had a triple-double with 27 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists, Malik Beasley scored 23 points and Bobby Portis added 22. The Bucks improved to 19-3 at home.

Fox finished with 32 points to lead the Kings, and Domantas Sabonis had his 10th triple-double of the season with 21 points, 15 assists and 13 rebounds.

Kings coach Mike Brown stormed onto the court with 9:27 left in the fourth and began screaming at referee Intae Hwang and was immediately ejected while having to be restrained by Sacramento players. Malik Monk wrapped his arms around Brown and directed him off the court.

Timberwolves 109, Clippers 105

In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards scored 20 of his 33 points in the third quarter and Rudy Gobert had 15 points and 18 rebounds to help Minnesota beat Los Angeles.

Norman Powell's corner 3-pointer - his sixth of the game - capped a 20-6 surge by the Clippers over a four-plus-minute stretch that sliced their deficit to 103-100. Gobert, who missed seven free throws including earlier back-to-back airballs, made four foul shots in the final minute to nudge the Wolves to the finish line on a night when they had 19 turnovers and allowed 37 points in the fourth quarter.

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 17 points for the West-leading Wolves (28-11), who held Clippers stars Paul George (16 points) and James Harden (14 points) to a combined 9-for-33 shooting from the floor. The Wolves, who lead the NBA in scoring defense, are 16-2 at home and 20-6 against their conference.

Kawhi Leonard had 26 points and nine rebounds for the Clippers (25-14). They have won 17 of their last 21 games.

Nuggets 117, Pacers 109

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 25 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists, finishing an assist shy of his 13th triple-double of the season in Denver's victory over Indiana.

Michael Porter Jr. and Jamal Murray matched Jokic with 25 points apiece for the Nuggets, who shot a season-high 64.8% from the field. Aaron Gordon added 20



Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert, (top right), blocks a shot attempt by Los Angeles Clippers guard Russell Westbrook (0) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Jan. 14, 2024, in Minneapolis. (AP)

points and 10 rebounds to help defending champion Denver improve to 17-4 at home.

Jokic made 12 of his 13 field-goal attempts. The two-time NBA MVP is shooting 81% from the field over his past nine games.

Former Nuggets player Bruce Brown had 18 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for Indiana. The Pacers are 2-2 since losing star Tyrese Haliburton to a strained left hamstring.

Suns 127, Trail Blazers 116

In Portland, Ore., Devin Booker had 34 points and Phoenix held off Portland for its second straight victory.

BASKETBALL

Bradley Beal added 23 points, Kevin Durant had 21 and Grayson Allen 20. The Suns, whose biggest lead was 17 points, let Portland narrow the gap to four points midway through the final quarter.

Rookie Scoot Henderson had a career-high 33 points and nine assists for the short-handed Trail Blazers. They have lost four straight and eight of 10.

Heat 104, Hornets 87

In Miami, Bam Adebayo had 24 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, helping Miami beat Charlotte.

Tyler Herro made four 3-pointers and scored 21 points for Miami. The Heat went 11 for 25 from 3-point range while completing a four-game sweep of the regular-season series against Charlotte. They also won their 22nd straight game at home against Southeast Division opponents.

Goal for Lille birthday boy David

Mbappé and Barcola score in PSG's 2-0 win at Lens

PARIS, Jan 15, (AP): Just one league match into 2024, Paris Saint-Germain is already putting more daylight between the defending champions and its rivals for the French league title.

Despite playing against 10 men in the second half, PSG was far from impressive as it resumed its league campaign Sunday with a 2-0 win at last season's runner-up Lens to extend its lead at the top to eight points. Second-place Nice lost ground

SOCCER

when it was beaten 2-0 by Rennes on Saturday.

Lens had the opportunity to take the lead in the fifth minute but PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma decided otherwise and stopped Przemyslaw Frankowski's penalty.

Forward Bradley Barcola was just as decisive for PSG, first by breaking the deadlock near the half-hour

mark, then by earning the foul that led to Lens defender Jonathan Gradić's sending off just before halftime.

"I thought that Barcola was tremendous tonight," PSG coach Luis Enrique said.

Kylian Mbappé wrapped up PSG's win in the closing stages with his 19th league goal this season.

Daniilo found the unmarked Mbappé on the break, and the league's top scorer set up the 21-year-old Barcola perfectly with a through ball. The former Lyon player won his duel with goalkeeper Brice Samba and scored with his right foot to give PSG the lead in the 29th minute.

Things went from bad to worse for the home team when Gradić was shown a red card after a VAR review following a big foul on Barcola, who had dribbled past several opponents and was approaching the box.

Luis Enrique had to make up for the absence of Achraf Hakimi, who traveled to the African Cup with

Morocco, and his tactical approach worked fine in the northern town. He gave a starting spot to Carlos Soler at right-back in a 4-3-3 system, with Barcola starting in attack alongside Mbappé and Ousmane Dembélé.

Ten-man Lens continued to attack after the interval and the match remained tense until the very end with both teams having chances to score but lacking an edge in the final third. Mbappé kept insisting and finally found the net from a tight angle from Dembélé's assist at the end of a counterattack.

Lens remained in eighth place, 17 points behind PSG.

Canada's Jonathan David scored his sixth goal of the season on his 24th birthday as Lille ended a three-match winless run with a 3-0 win against Lorient.

David broke the deadlock in the 37th minute from a set piece as he headed the ball home at the far post from Angel Gomes's cross.

The result moved Lille to fifth in

the standings, just two points behind fourth-place Monaco. Lorient dropped to last place, with only two wins from 18 matches.

Lille was in control and created several other chances before Remy Cabella made it 2-0 with three minutes left to play with a left-footed shot from close range. Forward Edon Zhegrovica was dangerous throughout the afternoon and was rewarded with a goal in added time.

Brest posted a fourth-consecutive win - 2-0 at Montpellier - to move into the top three.

Goals from Hugo Magnetti and Jeremy Le Douaron ensured a 10th win in 18 matches for the small Brittany side, which is unbeaten since November and leapfrogged Monaco in the standings.

Brest's surge up the table was largely unexpected when the struggling club appointed Eric Roy as its coach in January 2023, with hopes that the 55-year-old would help the club remain in the top division.

Fans jeer suspended coach Mourinho

French flair works for Milan in 3-1 win over Roma

MILAN, Jan 15, (AP): Without the suspended José Mourinho and injured Paulo Dybala, Roma fell 3-1 at AC Milan in Serie A on Sunday and lost ground in the race for the top four and a Champions League place.

It was a victory made in France for Milan as Yacine Adli netted an early opener before compatriot Olivier Giroud doubled the Rossoneri's lead in the second half.

Giroud also delightfully set up another Frenchman in Théo Hernandez to seal the match six minutes from time after Leandro Paredes had reduced the deficit with a penalty.

Milan remained third, while Roma was ninth, five points below fourth-place Fiorentina, after a fourth loss in seven matches for Mourinho's team.

Both Milan and Roma were looking to bounce back from being knocked out of the Italian Cup midweek.

Mourinho was suspended for the match after being sent off against Atalanta last weekend but he was still jeered by Milan fans when he was shown on the big screen at San Siro. Roma was also without key forward Dybala, who was sidelined with yet another muscular problem.

Milan took the lead in the 11th minute when Adli managed to carve out space for himself to drill the ball into the bottom right corner for his first goal for the club.

Hernandez clipped the woodwork and Christian Pulisic -

who had been given the player of the month award for December before the match - twice went close, while Roma also had chances to level.

But it was Milan which doubled its lead in the 56th as Adli's cross to the back post was nodded back to the center of the area by Simon Kjær for Giroud to head in from point-blank range.

SOCCER

Roma got back into the match 13 minutes later with Paredes' penalty after Lorenzo Pellegrini was tripped by Milan captain Davide Calabria.

However, Milan sealed the result with a sumptuous piece of play as Hernandez played a one-two with Giroud, who found him again with a brilliant backheel for the defender to blast in off the underside of the crossbar.

The move had Milan owner Gerry Cardinale and adviser and former player Zlatan Ibrahimović nodding at each other in approval in the stands.

The duo had spent several minutes before the match talking to the team in the locker room.

Yunus Musah also hit the post for Milan late on, shortly after coming on for United States teammate Pulisic.

Murray rallies late to capture Sony Open in a 3-way playoff

HONOLULU, Jan 15, (AP): Grayson Murray is a PGA Tour winner again and feels better than ever about his future. The gold trophy he won Sunday at the Sony Open with a 40-foot birdie putt in a playoff is only a small reason for that.

Murray has been sober for eight months, tired of alcohol fueling his arrogance in public and making him feel like a failure for wasting talent in his private moments.

He feels renewed through Christianity and is getting married in April to a woman that became a big part of a small support group.

No, winning didn't change his life. But it sure provided a big boost to his career.

"My story is not finished. I think it's just beginning," Murray said. "I hope I can inspire a lot of people going forward that have their own issues."

Murray always looked like the odd-man out in a three-way battle at the end of the Sony Open until he delivered the goods. His wedge into a breeze to a back pin to 3 feet gave him a

GOLF

birdie on the par-5 18th for a 3-under 67 and allowed him to join a three-way playoff with Keegan Bradley and Byeong Hun An. And then he buried a birdie putt from just inside 40 feet with An facing a 4-foot birdie.

Bradley missed from 18 feet. An's short putt grazed the lip. Murray had another PGA Tour title, the other coming more than six years ago at an opposite-field event when he was a rookie. The timing couldn't be better.

Murray, who earned his way back to the PGA Tour with two wins on the Korn Ferry Tour last year, now can bank on his first trip to the Masters in April and a spot in the seven remaining signature events with their \$20 million purses.

"I knew today was not going to change my life," he said. "But it did change my career."

As big as the win was for Murray, it was a tough loss for Byeong Hun An and Keegan Bradley.

An hit a 3-iron to just inside 15 feet on the 18th in regulation, the best shot of the day on Waialae's closing hole, and two-putted for birdie on a 64 to be the first to post 17-under 263. In the playoff, he hit a superb pitch from the thick collar below the green to 4 feet, only to miss.

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Officials commend Kuwait's organizational excellence

Mixed doubles trap takes center stage at Asian Shooting Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The mixed doubles "trap" competition is set to take place today as a highlight of the Kuwait Asian Shooting Championship at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "Olympic" ranges complex. The championship, featuring participants from 26 countries, will culminate on the 22nd of this month. Concurrently, "skeet" shooting training is scheduled at the same complex.

Hussein Pasha Al-Majali, President of the Jordanian Shooting Federation, lauded the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Ranges Complex as the best on the Asian continent. He emphasized that Kuwaiti shooting has evolved into a source of pride for the

entire Arab region. Al-Majali commended the hosting of the Kuwait Asian Championship, praising the Supreme Organizing Committee for providing all necessary resources and expressing his pride in the capabilities demonstrated.

SHOOTING

During an inspection tour on Monday, Al-Majali, along with dignitaries such as Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, President of the Asian Shooting Federation, Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee, and other key figures,

witnessed the excellent facilities at the Al-Mayadeen Complex.

Al-Majali acknowledged the significance of Kuwait's human resources in organizing successful shooting tournaments and anticipated continued success in the future. He highlighted the commitment to nurturing young talents, ensuring a robust future for the sport.

President of the Syrian Shooting Federation, Ali Al-Salem, expressed happiness in participating in the Kuwait Asian Shooting Championship. He emphasized the tournament's importance in qualifying eight male and female shooters for the 2024 Paris Olympics. Al-Salem pledged intense competition with the aim of securing



A tour of the heads of delegations at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Square Complex.

colored medals and Olympic qualifications. He extended appreciation for the Kuwait Shooting Federation's efforts, led by Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi, in organizing outstanding tournaments.

Head of the Iraqi Shooting Federation, Sabih Murad, commended the Kuwait Asian Shooting Championship, noting the excellent organizational aspects that characterize Kuwaiti shooting. Murad praised the Supreme Organizing Committee for its efforts in overcoming obstacles, fostering an environment where participants can give their best. He wished success to all male and female shooters, hoping they achieve the desired results for podium climbs.



Kuwait Junior basketball team delegation.

Kuwait embarks on Turkey training camp for qualifiers

The Kuwaiti junior basketball team embarked on a journey to Turkey, commencing an external training camp scheduled until January 29 to gear up for upcoming events.

Leading the delegation is Mohsen Al-Sahmi, Vice President of the Federation. The team also comprises Mishal Mohammed as an administrator, Talal Al-Qallaf as coach, Musab Al-Khamis as assistant coach, Talib Al-Kandari as su-

pervisor, and 16 players: Mubarak Al-Mawli, Hassan Al-Hashimi, Abdul-Rahman Al-Marzouq, Saleh Al-Zaatari, Freej Al-Freij, Ali Al-Rabah, Ahmed Al-Mutairi, Abdul-Rahman Al-Rabah, Mahdi Al-Nasser, Suwail Al-Dhafiri, Hussein Bouffin, Abdullah Al-Jarid, Abdulaziz Al-Tahous, Abdul-Rahman Al-Qutaifi, Hassan Al-Anazi, and Yaqoub Al-Anazi.

During the camp, Al-Azraq is set to participate in five friendly match-

es. Mohsen Al-Sahmi, the head of the delegation and vice-president of the federation, shared that the national teams committee has devised a comprehensive preparation program for all national teams, including the junior national team.

This preparation is in anticipation of the Asian qualifiers for the Gulf region, scheduled to take place in Qatar next summer. Al-Sahmi highlighted that the program incorporates breaks

in the league schedule to assemble the team, distribute equipment, provide technical training for players, and set the stage for the external training camp featuring five trial matches.

Al-Sahmi expressed gratitude to the Sports Authority for their collaboration with the Federation, endorsing and financially supporting the implementation of this program to ensure the national teams excel in the upcoming period.

Gauff advances at Australian Open

Osaka's GS comeback ends in loss to Garcia

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 15, (AP): Moments after her Grand Slam comeback ended in a first-round loss, Naomi Osaka walked back through the players' tunnel where her name has a prominent place among recent Australian Open champions.

Three matches into her return from 15 months off the tour, and six months after the birth of her daughter, Shai, Osaka lost 6-4, 7-6 (2) to 16th-seeded Caroline Garcia in a tight encounter at Rod Laver Arena on Monday night.

Osaka won the U.S. Open in 2018 and 2020, and the Australian title in 2019 and '21. This was the first time she lost in the first round in Melbourne, where she made her debut in 2016.

She took time out from tennis for her own wellbeing after first-round exits at the French Open and U.S. Open in 2022. She's not planning any more breaks for now.

TENNIS

The Australian Open started Sunday and will be played over 15 days for the first time, with the first round spread over three days in a bid to cut down on the late-finishing matches.

Still, it was 1:39 a.m. local time by the time Felix Auger-Aliassime closed out a 4-hour, 59-minute win over 2020 U.S. Open winner Dominic Thiem that finished 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (5), 5-7, 6-3. That match was briefly held up in the fourth set by a bird landing on the court at Margaret Court Arena and having to be

General Sports Authority to upgrade 8 soccer fields

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: The General Sports Authority has initiated strategic administrative measures to upgrade eight football fields in youth centers. The transformation involves replacing the existing artificial turf system with a natural turf system, adhering to internationally approved specifications for training fields. The comprehensive upgrade includes the renewal and replacement of soil layers, the establishment of a drainage network, installation of an automatic irrigation system, incorporation of pumps, and the addition of an irrigation tank.

All refurbished stadiums are meticulously designed to meet the technical standards and specifications set by FIFA, ensuring a high-quality playing surface.

This initiative aligns with the authority's overarching plan to enhance

chased off by a ball kid to laughter from the crowd. It then flew around the stadium briefly before play could continue.

For Auger-Aliassime, the win ended a run of first-round exits at three consecutive majors.

In the opening match on Rod Laver, U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff needed just 60 minutes to advance 6-3, 6-0 over Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

The 19-year-old Gauff, who won



Public Authority for Sport logo.

the infrastructure of stadiums, addressing the shortage and significant deficit in football stadiums across clubs. The upgraded fields will serve

as venues for training sessions, competitions across different age levels, and friendly matches. The objective is to alleviate the strain on main stadiums within clubs, offering an excellent opportunity for their maintenance and preparation to host official and external matches.

The developmental blueprint also extends to football fields within sports arenas, totaling 12 sports arenas. These fields will be utilized for training sessions for local club age groups, first-team training, and hosting competitions. Additionally, the plan encompasses the establishment of multi-purpose halls catering to various individual sports federations, further emphasizing the authority's commitment to providing top-notch infrastructure for sports practice across all disciplines.

tremska and struggling with a hip injury.

A third 16-year-old reached the second round, with Mirra Andreeva beating 29-year-old Bernarda Pera 7-5, 6-2 to set up a second-round match with sixth-seeded Ons Jabeur, a three-time runner-up at Grand Slams.

Alina Korneeva and Brenda Fruhvirtova, both also 16, advanced after their first Grand Slam main draw wins on Sunday.

Al-Arabi welcome Ayman to first team

Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15: Al-Arabi Sports Club has officially announced the addition of Tunisian professional Ayman from CS Sfaxien to its first team, as posted on the club's official website.

Ayman, who predominantly plays on the right wing, brings a wealth of experience, having represented prominent clubs such as Etoile du Sahel, Stade Tunisien, and Egypt's Modern Future.

At 27 years old, Ayman achieved

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the title of top scorer in the Tunisian League for the 2020-2021 season. He recently played for the Egyptian club Modern Future after departing from Tunisia.

The Tunisian talent is set to replace Senegalese player Mamadou Thiam in the "Green" lineup. Additionally, the club is expected to announce another professional signing to fill the void left by Algerian player Sofiane Bouchard, who departed for personal reasons.

Currently, Al-Arabi boasts players like Nigerian Anayo Iweala, Moroc-

cans Hamza Khaba, and Walid Sebbar. The team is actively searching for a defender to replace Bouchard. The technical and administrative staff is thoroughly reviewing CVs to strengthen the squad before the resumption of local competitions.

Following a brief rest granted by Bosnian coach Darko Nestorovic after the conclusion of the Zain Premier League's fourteenth round, Al-

Arabi resumed training. The team is gearing up to face Sulaibikhat on January 26 in the preliminary round of the Emir Cup competition. Additionally, a friendly match against a local team is on the horizon, providing a valuable opportunity for the "Green" players to showcase their skills, even as some key players are absent due to their involvement with the first and Olympic teams



Ayman with teammates.

Kuwait eye top 'spot' vs Qatar

Iran hold off China

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Jan 15: The preliminary round of the 21st Asian Cup for handball teams, also serving as the "2025 World Cup Qualifiers," is concluding at the Khalifa Sports Hall in the Bahraini capital, Manama.

Today's lineup includes four matches, with the highlight being the face-off between Kuwait and Qatar scheduled at 5:00 pm in the first group.

Kuwait, currently second in the group with the same score of 4 points as the first-placed Qatar, aims to secure two points in the match to lead the group. Both teams are well aware of the challenging nature of the match Qatar, with equal determination, enters the game aspiring to claim the

full score, retain the top spot in the group, and secure a place in the main round of the tournament.

It's worth noting that the Qatar secured a victory over Oman with a score of 28-18 in the second round of the preliminary stage.

In the final round of the preliminary stage today, three matches are scheduled. At 1:00 pm in, China will face New Zealand in "Group Two," followed by

HANDBALL

Oman playing against Chinese Taipei in "Group One" at 3:00 pm. The South Korean national team will then compete with Iran in "Group Two" at 7:00 pm.

In the initial rounds, Kuwait triumphed over Chinese Taipei 31-27, Korea dominated New Zealand with a score of 42-13, Qatar defeated Oman 28-18, and Iran secured a victory over China with a score of 24-22. Japan emerging victorious over India with an impressive score of 59-11.



Kuwaiti players battle for the ball.

Saudi Arabia 'reveals' high-tech stadium design atop cliff for WC

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 15 (AP): Saudi Arabia revealed designs Monday for a high-tech stadium atop a 200-meter high cliff near Riyadh where the kingdom plans to stage games at the 2034 World Cup.

The 45,000-seat venue design has a retractable roof and field, plus an LED wall with hundreds of meters (yards) of screens to create an immersive experience for fans, the Qiddiya Investment Company said in a statement.

It will be named Prince Mohammed bin Salman Stadium for the crown prince of the oil-rich kingdom that wants to become the major player in world sports over the next decade.

The stadium is a centerpiece of the Qiddiya City project that aims to create an entertainment, gaming and sports hub 45 kilometers (30 miles) from

downtown Riyadh, the Saudi capital.

The QIC is wholly owned by the Public Investment Fund, which is chaired by the crown prince. It manages about \$700 billion in Saudi sovereign wealth and includes investments in the LIV Golf project and English Premier League club Newcastle.

The QIC said the new stadium is intended to become the home venue of Al-Nassr and Al-Hilal, the Riyadh clubs who last year signed Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar, respectively.

Saudi Arabia is the only bidder to host the men's World Cup in 2034, with FIFA set to confirm its pick late this year in a confirmation vote by more than 200 national soccer federations.

FIFA has said 14 stadiums will be needed for the 48-team tournament.

League leaders Girona held to draw at last-place Almeria

MADRID, Jan 15, (AP): Girona was held by last-place Almeria to a 0-0 draw in the Spanish league missing a chance to open a bigger gap over Real Madrid while its rival played in the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Girona had the chance to move three points clear with a victory at Almeria - the only team yet to win in the league so far this season - but the draw left the Catalan club only one point ahead.

Girona played a man down from the 80th minute after midfielder Aleix Garcia was sent off with a straight red card for a foul to stop a breakaway.

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Almeria had most of the significant scoring chances throughout the match while Girona finished with only one attempt on target.

"We knew it wasn't going to be an easy match," said goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga, the best Girona player on Sunday. "Considering how the match went, it's not a bad point. We are still on the right track."

It was only the second time this season Girona was held scoreless. The other was a 3-0 home loss against Madrid in September, which marked its only loss in all competitions this campaign. The team coached by Michel Sanchez has the league's best attack with 46 goals, six more than Madrid. It was trying to win for the seventh time in eight matches in all competitions to keep alive its surprise run for the league title.

"The good news is that we won a point and it gives us the lead," Michel said. "Almeria played better than we did."

Girona, part owned by Manchester City's Abu Dhabi ownership, recently won at defending champion Barcelona and against Atletico Madrid. Barcelona and Atletico also didn't play in the league this weekend because of the Super Cup.

In the other match of the day, Cadiz's winless streak reached 18 matches across all competitions after a 4-1 loss to Valencia at home.

The last league win for Cadiz, sitting inside the relegation zone, was against Villarreal in September.

Some local fans called for the resignation of Cadiz coach Sergio Gonzalez.

Hugo Duro, Diego Lopez, Javier Guerra and Jesus Vazquez scored for Valencia, which moved to eighth place. It has won three straight league matches for the first time since 2021.

Valencia led 1-0 and 2-1 before scoring its last two goals in stoppage time.

Spanish media reported that four intruders entered the home of Atletico Madrid forward Angel Correa while he and his family were at the residence on Saturday.

Europa Press cited police officials saying that no one was hurt and no arrests were immediately made. It said authorities were investigating the robbery.

Correa was back after Atletico's match against Real Madrid in the semifinals of the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia. Atletico, which lost to Madrid 5-3 midweek, was not in action this weekend.



Bahrain's Sayed Mahdi Baqer (second right), and South Korea's Park Yong-woo (third right), fight for the ball during the Asian Cup Group E soccer match between South Korea and Bahrain at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha, Qatar. (AP)

Sports

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The National Guard players celebrate at the end of the Super Cup.

National Guard clinches Ministries Basketball Super Cup

The 2023-2024 Ministries Basketball Super Cup was claimed by the National Guard team, emerging victorious with a 77-74 win over the Ministry of Electricity and Water at the Yousef Al-Shaheen Al-Ghanem Hall in the Kazma Club.

In a thrilling showdown, the Guard players showcased their experience, securing the win in the final moments and thwarting the spirited efforts of the Kahraba players, who had performed admirably and came close to clinching victory.

Walid Al-Sultan, Chairman of the Basketball Technical Committee and member of the Supreme Committee for the League of Ministries, Governmental Bodies, and Institutions, presented the championship cup to the Guards team and awarded second-place med-

als to the Electricity and Water players.

Al-Sultan extended his congratulations to the Guard players for their Super Cup triumph in the latest edition of the League of Ministries, Bodies, and Government Institutions. He com-

mended the Kahraba players for their commendable performance despite the loss, acknowledging their strong challenge against the Guard. He remarked, "The Kahraba team played a stellar match, providing formidable opposition for the Guard. The match was

decided in the closing moments, with the Guard maintaining their lead—an impressive testament to their ascendancy. The upcoming league competitions, featuring the participation of five teams in a two-round system, are set to commence next week."



Real Madrid players celebrate with the trophy of the Spanish Super Cup after the final soccer match between Real Madrid and Barcelona at Al Awwal Park Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Real rout Barcelona to win Super Cup in Saudi Arabia

Vinicius nets hat trick

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 15, (AP): Vinicius Júnior did his best Cristiano Ronaldo impression in Saudi Arabia, scoring a hat trick and leading Real Madrid to a 4-1 rout of Barcelona and the Spanish Super Cup trophy.

Vinicius scored his three goals in the first half as Madrid beat Barcelona to lift its first trophy of the season on Sunday. After his first goal, the Brazil forward imitated the trademark celebration of the former Madrid great, with Ronaldo reportedly at the Riyadh stadium. "It was for Cris, because he is my idol and now he is playing here," said Vinicius, who was named the best player of the final. "I'm very happy with myself and with my team. It's not easy to play against Barcelona and to win 4-1 is tough. We played an almost perfect match."

Rodrygo also scored for Madrid, which now has 13 Super Cup trophies, one less than the Catalan club. It was



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior (left), passes through Barcelona's goalkeeper Inaki Pena during the Spanish Super Cup final soccer match between Real Madrid and Barcelona at Al-Awwal Park Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Madrid's second Super Cup triumph since the tournament was moved to Saudi Arabia four years ago. Robert Lewandowski scored Barcelona's goal to make it 2-1 in the first half.

The "clasico" between the Spanish powerhouses was a rematch of last year's Super Cup final that Barcelona won 3-1 for its first trophy with coach Xavi Hernández and without Lionel Messi.

Madrid had also won at Barcelona in the first "clasico" of the season in October in the Spanish league.

Barcelona played a man down from the 71st after defender Ronald Araujo was shown a second yellow card for a foul on Vinicius. Madrid was already winning 4-1 at the time.

The victory added to Madrid's momentum as Carlo Ancelotti's team remains unbeaten in 21 consecutive games in all competitions. Its last setback was a 3-1 loss at Atletico Madrid in the Spanish league in September.

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In contrast, the defeat adds to Barcelona's troubles and increases the pressure on Xavi, whose team hasn't played well recently. It trails second-place Madrid by seven points in the Spanish league, with Catalan opponent Girona another point ahead at the top having played an extra game.

"We are disappointed and sad," Xavi said. "We were hopeful of another victory, but in the end it was our worst match. We didn't get off to a good start and were never comfortable. We have to congratulate Madrid because it deserved to win."

It didn't take long for Madrid to take control of the match in Riyadh, with Vinicius scoring his first goals since a long injury absence in the seventh, 10th and 39th minutes. It was Vinicius' third match since being out from November because of an injury picked up with Brazil's national team in a World Cup qualifier.

"Vinicius is back," Ancelotti said. "He needed these two or three games to get back to his best form."

Vinicius opened the scoring after an assist by Jude Bellingham, dribbling past Barcelona goalkeeper Inaki Peña before finding the open net.

PSG's Kang-in scores twice in South Korea's 3-1 win

Bahrain begin Asian Cup campaign on losing note

AL-RAYYAN, Qatar, Jan 15, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain winger Lee Kang-in is used to being overshadowed by Kylian Mbappe at club level. Son Heung-min remains the icon for his national team South Korea.

But with two moments of individual brilliance against Bahrain on Monday, Lee took center stage at the Asian Cup. Not that he seemed comfortable under the spotlight after scoring twice in the second half to inspire South Korea to a 3-1 win in the Group E match.

"It's not just about my two goals. All the goals we score are very important for the team. I would just like to say and highlight that it is not about in-

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dividual performance," a modest Lee said afterward.

His coach Jurgen Klinsmann was also restrained in his praise of the forward.

"If you score two in the opening game of the Asian Cup for us you deserve to be man of match and (it was) a very good performance. But I have to keep him on the ground every day," he said with a smile.

It feels like there is no danger of success going to Lee's head. And as members of the media crowded around after the post-match news conference, he was likely happy to see it was Klinsmann, the World Cup-winning former Germany striker, who was being mobbed with requests for selfies.

Lee was just trying to get back to the locker room at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium.

Earlier he had scored two picture perfect goals to get South Korea off to a winning start in the competition the country hasn't won since back-to-back titles in 1956 and 60.

The game was tied at 1-1 when he took control, giving South Korea a 2-1 lead in the 56th-minute with a left-footed shot from around 30 yards (meters).

He was equally clinical as he scored his second goal 12 minutes later when

Preparation intensifies in Bahrain camp

Al-Qadisiya 'announce' friendly matches vs Al-Ahly, Al-Khalidiya

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Jan 15: Al-Qadisiya has confirmed the dates for its upcoming two friendly matches as part of its ongoing training camp in Bahrain. The team is scheduled to face Al-Ahly of Bahrain tomorrow, followed by a match against Al-Khalidiya next Saturday.

The "Yellow" squad initiated their training sessions in the Bahraini capital, Manama, last week as they gear up for a significant encounter against Yarmouk on January 27 in the preliminary round of the Amir Cup competition.

Despite not joining the Al-Qadisiya delegation in Bahrain due to work commitments, star player and team captain Badr Al-Mutawa has taken the initiative to engage in regular daily training with the Al-Qadisiya youth team. This effort aims to maintain his readiness and enhance his physical fitness levels in preparation for the remaining competitions of the current season.

At 39 years old, Al-Mutawa, one of the iconic figures in Kuwaiti football history, plans to rejoin "Al-Asfar"

showing sharp footwork and curling the ball into the bottom corner.

Hwang In-beom had given South Korea a first half lead with a goal in the 38th, but Bahrain equalized six minutes after the break through Abdullah Al Hashash.

"We knew it was not going to be easy to play Bahrain today and it turned out to be scrappy," Klinsmann said. "We are very pleased to start with three points in the tournament, that is what really matters."

upon his return to Kuwait. His presence during the youth team's training has infused a sense of joy, with many players and members of the coaching staff taking memorable photos with the seasoned player.

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Al-Mutawa demonstrated a commitment to training intensively, setting a positive example for the emerging players on the field. This not only contributes to the team's overall performance but also ensures his personal preparation is at its best, anticipating the return of the "Yellow" squad from their training camp in Bahrain.



Badr Al-Mutawa training with his teammates.

'Kuwait ready to host Gulf Cup in Dec'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 15, (Agencies): The football body of Kuwait has affirmed, that the nation is ready to host the 26th edition of the Gulf Cup in December this year, considering it a significant gathering of Gulf Arab nations. Dismissing rumors circulating on social media about Kuwait's potential withdrawal as the tournament host, the local football federation emphasized the country's capability and readiness to organize such a major event. The federation underscored the importance of trusting news sources in delivering accurate information to readers.

Meanwhile, The Kuwaiti Olympic team is set to engage in friendly match-

es against their Thailand in Bangkok at 11 am. This series of matches is integral to the team's training camp in preparation for the upcoming AFC U-23 Cup, slated to take place in Qatar from April to May.

Part of Group D in the Asian Cup, the Olympic team faced formidable opponents such as Uzbekistan, Viet-

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nam, and Malaysia.

Commencing their camp last Tuesday, Kuwait underwent rigorous training sessions led by Portuguese coach Emilio Peixe and his assistant staff.



Kuwaiti players preparing for their friendly match against Thailand.