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shooting

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National workforce in private sector shrinks due to non-compliance

Private company faces KD 2,000 fine for salary delay

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Khaled Al-Anazi, the head of the Private Sector Workers Union said a private company engaged in oil services supporting Kuwait Oil Company will face a two-thousand-dinar fine for delaying the payment of salaries to national workers on specified dates.

Al-Anazi emphasized that the penalty will still be applied

even if the company settles its dues, expressing regret over the non-compliance of many private sector companies with national employment rates.

In a statement to Al-Seyassah, Al-Anazi revealed that the Union plans to launch an electronic platform in the upcoming period. This platform will facilitate applications for permanent and part-time job opportunities for citizens, students, and retirees.

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DGCA's pet travel restrictions spark outcry

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: President of the Animal Welfare Society (Souls) Sheikha Al-Saadoun expressed her complete rejection of the decision issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to allow each passenger to take only one animal when traveling on the plane, and to check-in the remaining animals (dogs and/or cats) in the area designated for cargo.

Al-Saadoun stressed that the society rejects this decision because of the high shipping cost, which is about KD 500 for a small cat or dog, and upto KD 1,000 for a large one.

She stressed that this new decision would force animal owners to dispose of them on the streets due to the high cost of transporting them if they travel, and there is no one to take care of their animals, adding that this would in turn lead to an increase in the number of stray animals on the streets.

Al-Saadoun urged DGCA to reconsider its decision in this regard.

On a related note, Al-Saadoun said the society recently launched a ten-day campaign to sterilize and castrate stray dogs on the streets, indicating that this campaign was launched after receiving the approval of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).

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Opinion

Like a camel in the desert dying of thirst

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WHEN the pre-Islamic poet Tarfa bin Al-Abd said, "Like a camel in the desert dying of thirst while carrying water on its back," it seemed as though he was describing Kuwait. It is very difficult to convince any observer about the justifications presented by successive governments and parliaments regarding the country's condition.

This land has enormous wealth, but has no idea how to invest it for improving its vital sectors, the most important of which are education, infrastructure, and health.

This country cannot get out of its impasse, which has persisted for more than four decades due to differences in views regarding priorities.

In developed countries, investment in education is the basis, but in our country, the curriculum is backward for which patchy remedies that fall short of eradicating the disease are provided.

Due to this, the phenomenon of corruption has become widespread in recent years. Several times it happens through parliamentary demands, which is the worst thing that can happen in any country in the world. This does not happen even in the banana republics.

That is why when we talk about corruption, we must admit that corruption is generated from educational institutions. The two authorities - legislative and executive - are the ones who nurture corruption in the education sector, which produces corrupt people.

Anyone who accepts to obtain his degree via fraud will not be trustworthy to the institution in which he works. Whoever betrays himself will betray his country.

One of the reasons for this is that the spending on this sector is based on appearances, and not substance.

From here, we must begin working on establishing a productive and sound educational sector, because if the foundation is sound, the building will be stronger and more capable of development.

It is also necessary to note another vital matter. When a parliamentary committee controls people's behavior and sets its own controls stemming from its ideological agenda that is not in harmony with the culture of society and exercises dictatorial guardianship, all of this indicates a disregard for the most important requirements of the people.

This also includes forgetting the other social components and the outputs of the parliament, and having successive governments submit to such dictatorial guardianship.

As a result, we witnessed this frightening decline in all fields throughout the 40 years, and failure became entrenched, especially after the liberation, starting from production projects, through health, to public services, infrastructure, entertainment facilities, and other aspects that countries seek to develop in order to have the ability to compete, or at least, provide what the citizens need in order to spend their money at home and not abroad.

The situation in Kuwait has reached such an extent that even laughing has become forbidden, as if we are in Afghanistan of the Taliban.

There is an adage - "Hide your white penny for your black day." The country has been living in darkness for nearly two decades and it is getting darker day after day.

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Day by Day

I APPRECIATE a wise saying which is: "If you surround yourself with good-hearted people, their absence will make them miss you, their neglect will serve as a warning, and even when they pray for themselves, they won't forget to include you."

"It's advisable to distance yourself from envious people and the miserly, as they bring disgrace and offer no benefits. Associating with them is not only dishonorable but also a waste of your time." ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Parliament debunks buffet cost speculations, calls for accuracy



Photo by Rezk Tawfik

National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun speaks after adjourning an ordinary parliament session until February 6-7 due to the government's absence.

Session postponed

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16, (Agencies): National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun postponed the ordinary session scheduled for Tuesday until Feb 6-7, 2024 due to the absence of the government.

Al-Saadoun confirmed that Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari informed the legislature about the government's absence due to its resignation.

Article 116 of the Constitution stipulates that the government must be represented by the prime minister or some of its members in the sessions of the Assembly.

Meanwhile, the Secretariat General of the Assembly vehemently denied the rumor about the alleged plan to submit parliamentary queries to HH the Prime Minister-designate Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah; affirming that all queries are for the interim government.

In a press statement, the Secretariat General clarified it is not permissible to submit parliamentary queries to a prime minister who has yet to be sworn in as per the Constitution and the bylaws of the Assembly. It stressed the need to verify information prior to publication; otherwise, the public will be misinformed.

It also denied the news circulating on social media regarding the cost of the parliamentary members' buffets; indicating that the amounts mentioned are unreal. It explained that the total amount of breakfast and lunch buffets for representatives and employees at the Secretariat during the sessions does not exceed KD1,768; stressing that if the session is not held, the lunch buffet is cancelled.

The Secretariat called for accuracy, especially since all contracts for buffets are carried out under the supervision of the State's regulatory agencies and in accordance with the financial regulations and the policy of the Secretariat. It added that the number and amount of such buffets have been reduced compared to the previous assemblies, as the current legislature is keen on protecting public money.

It also denied the rumor that the deputy speaker has prevented the public from entering the session hall, emphasizing this is utterly false.

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Move threatens gov't sector amid medication shortages

Pharmacists oppose 'unlawful' licensing freeze

Kuwait participates in trade talks on 'rules of origin' for Arab goods

CAIRO, Jan 16, (KUNA): The 13th meeting of the Technical Committee for Arab Rules of Origin began Tuesday, headed by Saudi Arabia and with the participation of Arab member states of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), including the State of Kuwait.

Chief of economic integration directorate at the League of Arab States, Dr. Bahjat Abu Al-Nasser said in his opening statement that this assembly, which will be held over three days, will review the general requirements of the Arab rules of origin for Arab goods that will be completed based on observations of the Arab member states of GAFTA.

This issue is a "permanent item" on the agenda of the Technical Committee meetings until the final review of the requirements is completed, indicating that "the review of about 90 percent of the general requirements has been completed, and the remaining items will be discussed in preparation for submitting them to the Economic and Social Council to consider their adoption," added Dr. Abu Al-Nasser.

He elaborated that during the assembly, Egypt and Saudi Arabia will present their practical experience with the "certified exporter" system, based on the exchange of information and the sharing of best practical

practices among Arab countries to maximize benefits from these experiences and closely identify the system and the advantages that will accrue to countries if it is implemented facilitating the movement of trade between Arab countries.

Dr. Abu Al-Nasser explained that the "certified exporter" is a system that grants exporters who have the requirements stipulated in executive procedures to replace the issuance of permits of origin within the framework of preferential trade agreements, or with a commercial invoice or other commercial document, with an agreed-upon statement proving the preferential origin of the goods and granting this exporter with special codes, so that each approved source has its own code, and the commercial document containing the code of the approved source, is treated as a document proving its origin.

Kuwait is participating in the meeting with a delegation headed by the Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Industry, Shamlan Al-Juhaidi, and includes the Director of the Industrial Development and Support Department at the Authority, Dr. Abdullah Al-Hajri, and the Director of the Air Cargo Customs Department at the General Administration of Customs, Mutlaq Al-Anazi.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Pharmacists are expressing dissatisfaction with the decision to halt the issuance of licenses for private pharmacies, considering it both unlawful and poorly thought out. The move, which came after the government's resignation, is viewed as arbitrary and harmful to the private pharmacy sector in Kuwait, reports Al-Rai daily.

Several pharmacists, including Mubarak Al-Ajmi, Farah Sadiq, Khaled Al-Mutairi, and Shaima Abdul-Hussein, have raised concerns about the decision's legality, emphasizing that it violates professional regulations.

They argue that nothing in the law prevents Kuwaiti pharmacists from obtaining licenses, provided all conditions are met, and it contradicts the state's efforts to encourage private sector initiatives.

Pharmacists believe the decision poses risks to pharmaceutical security, the welfare of Kuwaiti citizens, and the pharmacists themselves. They question the rush to implement such measures, particularly in light of ongoing legal battles where pharmacists affected by closure decisions have won lawsuits against the ministry.

Mubarak Al-Ajmi criticized the decision as unjust and part of a series of arbitrary measures against private pharmacies, pointing to the cancellation of licenses for around 63 pharmacies.

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NewsWatch

TUNIS: Kuwait has been nominated to fill the position of the deputy chief of the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), the information ministry's undersecretary Dr. Nasser Mhaisen said on Tuesday.

The move is a testament to Kuwait's lofty position in the media industry, the official told KUNA on the sidelines of talks involving ASBU's executive council, ahead of a larger pan-Arab media gathering in which artificial intelligence (AI) technology is expected to take precedence over the rest of the topics on the agenda. (KUNA)

IRBIL, Iraq: Iraq recalled its ambassador from Tehran for consultations and summoned Iran's chargé d'affaires in Baghdad on Tuesday in protest over Iranian strikes on northern Iraq that killed several civilians overnight, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said.

The Iranian attack was "a blatant violation" of Iraq's sovereignty and "strongly contradicts the principles of good neighborliness and international law, and threatens the security of the region," it said in a statement. (AP)

JERUSALEM: U.S. Navy SEALs seized Iranian-made missile parts and other weaponry from a ship bound for Yemen's Houthi rebels in a raid last week that saw two of its commandos go missing, the U.S. military said Tuesday. (AP)

'AI adoption boosts gov't performance'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16, (KUNA): Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Acting Director General, Dr. Amar Al-Hussieni highlighted Tuesday the positive impact of Artificial Intelligence technologies on government performance, work environment and overall improvement of public sector services.

Dr. Al-Hussieni spoke to KUNA on sidelines of the third workshop organized by the agency in cooperation with Huawei. The workshops are part of AI applications in government sector forum launched last December.

He mentioned that this workshop sets out to deepen understanding of AI technologies, keep up with the rapidly changing field, as well as examine mechanisms of adopting such technologies in various government bodies.

He noted that several government bodies have already adopted the use of Artificial Intelligence, including Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

The previous two workshops handled machine learning and AI development with a number of public sector employees present.

This cooperation between CAIT and Huawei aims to promote more effective use of technological systems, explore AI capabilities, and stimulate innovation and creative solutions to face current and future challenges.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:20	Asr	14:53
Sunrise ..	06:43	Maghrib ..	17:12
Zohr	11:58	Isha	18:33

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

and partly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	21	15	Kuwait Airport	22
			Abdaly	22
			Jahra	22
			Salmiyah	20
			Nuwaisib	22
			Wafra	22
				14
				10
				14
				15
				14
				13

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



Officials from Zain, SACGC, and KU's Computer Science Department.



Competition aims to empower the next generation of technology leaders in Kuwait.

Other Voices

'Pigeons' and a posse of staff

By Ahmad alsarraf

The carrier pigeon is considered the master of pigeons and the most valuable of its species. It has had a historical role. For centuries, it has been the fastest means of delivering messages due to its ability to travel vast distances and return to its homeland.

It has also performed great services in wars, transmitting battle news, codes, and instructions, the last of which was in World War II, when the British used its abilities to repel the attack of German forces.

"Homing pigeons," and this is their correct name, are still of interest to meteorologists to benefit from their ability to save expenses required by modern devices, such as satellites, radars, aircraft, and infrared detectors, as a single homing pigeon, with its unique navigational device, can guide with its senses which does not go wrong with much of what you are looking for, while saving a lot of expenses that are allocated to the operation of these devices.

A friend of mine, who lives abroad, asked me to send him one of my books, so I paid the parcel transport company. Requests increased, and with them the costs. The most recent was from a reader living in Sweden. It turned out that the fee costs approximately \$60, or the equivalent of ten times the price of the book itself.

I thought about using the government's courier service, so I consulted the Ministry of Communication website and found the following administrative structure, for the postal sector only:

Assistant Undersecretary, Director of the Department of International Postal Relations, Director of the Postal

Inspection Department, Director of the First Miscellaneous Postal Services Department, Director of the Second Miscellaneous Postal Services Department, Director of the Third Miscellaneous Postal Services Department, Director of the Postal Operations Department, in addition to assistant directors, their office directors, and department heads observers, and an army of employees, most of whom are completely unemployed.

I also found that each "ma'asoul" had three landline numbers, including a fax, so I wrote down 42 of them, and asked my assistant to call each number, and to transfer any call that was answered. After half an hour of repeated calls, no one answered, and that was after nine in the morning yesterday (Monday).

The representative went to the Khaitan Post Office and found it empty except for two employees. One of them informed him that there was no service for sending letters to Sweden. He handed him a "historical and global document," belonging to the era of artificial intelligence, in which the names of the countries with which Kuwait had a postal parcel service were mentioned, in poor print and poor handwriting. There are 22 countries and cities, subject to decrease.

This happens 275 years after the first known letters were sent from them, and 75 years after the opening of the General Post Office, so how have we declined to such a low level, or rather to near collapse?

I have the "historical document" that the Khaitan Post Office employee delivered to our representative, which includes a map of Kuwait Postal services, which employs no less than two thousand employees!

Oh our dear Sheikh Mohammad, the legacy is much heavier than I imagined, and we hope that you will strengthen it and destroy these ruined regimes.

e-mail: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



alsarraf

'Innovation Nation' initiative seeks to foster creativity

Zain, SACGC robotics competition strategic partners

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: In support of their joint vision to invest in the digital and tech capabilities of young people in Kuwait, Zain and Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) – a center of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) have announced that they are joining the Kuwait National Robotics Competition 2024 as Strategic Partners. The competition is organized by the Computer Science Department, College of Science, Kuwait University from 2-3 March.

The exciting competition, to be hosted by Kuwait University's Conferences Center in Shadadiya, comes in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Kuwait Technical College (KTC), and private sector supporters. The initiative is a successful result of direct and active collaboration between the public and private sectors to empower the next generation of innovators in Kuwait.

This partnership comes under the umbrella of Innovation Nation, the initiative under which all of Zain's innovation and entrepreneurship pro-

grams fall, with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. The initiative mainly targets young people and entrepreneurs and aims to foster a digitally capable generation.

The Kuwait National Robotics Competition targets middle school, high school, and university-level students, and features a rich and comprehensive program to develop various technical skills related to building, assembling, and programming robotics. The initiative uses a unique combination of theoretical lessons and practical exercises, and also focuses on invaluable personal skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

The competition features three levels, each designed for a specific age group. The middle school level centers around the basics of robotics and programming and encourages young minds to explore and innovate. The high school level brings a more advanced platform that pushes the boundaries of creativity, technical skills, and teamwork. The uni-

versity level is the most advanced, with theoretical and practical skills put to the test. Each level has its special rules and challenges for a unique and informative experience for everyone.

This competition represents an important step towards fostering creativity and empowering Kuwait's next generation of technology leaders and innovators. In addition, the winning teams in the Kuwait National Robotics Competition will represent the State of Kuwait in the upcoming global VEX Robotics Competition to be held in the United States in April.

This announcement adds to the long list of programs and initiatives presented and supported by Zain and Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity under their strategic partnership that kicked-off last year. The partnership focuses on a number of strategic pillars and sustainable goals like supporting tech innovation, empowering entrepreneurs and startups, encouraging creativity, investing in the digital skills of young people, and more.

Heirs obligated to pay dues

Verdict upheld in Raja'an embezzlement lawsuit

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by the lower court which obligated the family members (heirs) of former head of the Public Institution for Social Security Fahad Al-Raja'an to pay KD 807,400,000 to the Public Institution for Social Security.

The institution had previously filed criminal and civil lawsuits against Al-Raja'an and his wife. Various sentences were issued against them, including a life sentence, a 15-year prison sentence, and a ten-year sentence. They were also ordered to return the amounts they had embezzled as well as double the amounts seized from insurance funds in stock purchases and other operations that took place outside Kuwait.

It is worth noting that the Public Prosecution recently recovered assets and funds from the Kingdom of Bahrain amounting to one hundred million US dollars, which is in implementation of the ruling issued against the convicts Fahad Mazayad Al-Raja'an and his wife Mona Muhammad Al-Wazzan.

PADA chief acquitted: The Court of Appeals overturned the verdict issued by the Misdemeanor Court which sentenced the director-general of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) to four-month imprisonment, imposed a fine of KD 30,000 and dismissed him from office, as well as imposed a fine of KD 10,000 each on other employees and dismissed them from office. The court instead acquitted the defendants.

According to the Public Prosecution, the defendants were the director general of PADA, a controller, accountants, and a legal researcher. They were accused of causing serious harm to the authority's funds by neglecting to perform their duty in terms of approving tuition fees for a private school, and increasing support from the authority by KD 76 thousand, despite the increase in the school's capacity.

The first defendant - the director general - was also accused of causing harm to the authority's funds worth KD 375 thousand by approving the school's capacity increase without presenting it to the authority's specialized team.

Earlier, the Misdemeanor Court had ruled to imprison the first defendant for four months, fine him KD 30,000 and dismiss him from office, imposed a fine of KD 10,000 each on the rest of the employees and ordered their dismissal from their offices.

Representing the defense was Lawyer Fadeel Al-Basman who appealed against the ruling, highlighting the absence of intentional harm from the defendants, especially the first, adding that they followed the usual procedures at PADA in accordance with the legal frameworks and proper procedures.

He indicated that there was no negligence on the part of the defendants in their decisions, which the authority's internal regulations allow for correction if the theory of error and negligence was imposed, which is inconsistent with the reality of the case, the results of the investigations, and the decisions taken.

The court responded to the lawyer's defense and ruled to acquit the defendants and cancel the appealed ruling.

Steps taken to protect students from 'cheats'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Head of the Kuwaiti Cultural Office in Jordan Dr Hammoud Al-Qashaan has confirmed the implementation of a plan to reduce costs for Kuwaiti students in Jordanian universities, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Qashaan said the Office took measures to protect Kuwaiti students from the fraudulent practices of intermediaries between students and academic institutions in Jordan; especially after several such cases were uncovered recently.

He affirmed the Office has been working hard to monitor the transactions of Kuwaiti students in Jordan. He said the Office discovered there are 85 intermediaries between the students and the academic institutions, indicating these intermediaries charge 100 Jordanian dinars (about KD45) for every transaction without guarantee.

He disclosed the Office contacted universities and other educational institutions in Jordan as it approved only four intermediaries and set the fee at 20 Jordanian dinars or about KD8 with a guarantee. He added the Office managed to reduce university fees after getting 25 percent discount from Jordanian universities.

He revealed the Office established a mechanism for conducting transactions electronically, through which the students can carry out 25 different transactions for free. He pointed out the students used to pay about 300 Jordanian dinars for these transactions including certifications.

He affirmed some banks provided facilities for the students by exempting them from some documentary requirements, such as the lease contract and others, to open a savings account, and replaced that with a letter from the Office stating the person wishing to open the bank account is a student registered in the Office.

He also stressed the importance of avoiding the official social media accounts of the Office to fall into the trap of fake offices that may exploit the names of the universities and the Office.



Major General Khaled Fahd chairs the meeting.

KFF photo

Well-being of community sought

Focus on rest stops safety violations

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Major General Khaled Fahd, from Kuwait Fire Force, presided over a meeting focused on addressing violations that pose a threat to safety and fire prevention requirements.

The meeting took place at the General Fire Force headquarters building and included the Vice President for the Prevention Sector, Major General Khaled Fahd, along with representatives from the Kuwait Municipality and the Ministry of Finance, reports Al-Anba daily.

The committee, dedicated to removing violations conflicting with safety and fire prevention standards, gathered to discuss recommendations put forth by inspection teams. The primary focus of the meeting was on addressing violations occurring in areas designated for rest houses.

These violations typically involve the improper use of such lands for storage and craft activities, leading to

a breach of safety and fire prevention protocols.

The committee underscored the importance of swiftly addressing these violations to safeguard lives, protect property, and ensure overall community security.

By closely monitoring and reviewing the recommendations, the committee aims to take decisive action against violations that compromise the well-being of individuals and the community at large.

The meeting emphasized the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders, including the General Fire Force, Kuwait Municipality, and the Ministry of Finance, in working towards a safer and more secure environment.

The commitment to upholding safety standards and fire prevention measures remains a top priority, reflecting the dedication of the Violations Removal Committee to maintaining the well-being of the community.

Supplies, devices donated to center

Looking after needs of 'disabled'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The Al-Ahmad Governorate has donated a variety of devices and supplies to the day care center of the Kuwait Society for the Care of the Disabled in South Sabahiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative aligns with the governorate's commitment to sustainability, rehabilitation, and societal integration, aiming to address essential needs for center members with disabilities across all categories.

In an announcement made yesterday, the governorate stated that this undertaking is conducted under the auspices of Governor Sheikh Fawaz Al-Khaled and with the support of Burgan Bank.

The donated devices encompass various machinery, such as printing, packaging, cutting, wood burning, embroidery, and sewing machines, as well as a heat press for printing cups, an interactive whiteboard, and a loom operated by hands and feet.

The governorate commended the day care center's success in integrating its creative workforce and preparing them for employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors. This achievement merits ongoing support from all stakeholders.

Baraa Al-Janaie, the Director General of the Kuwait Society for the Care of the Disabled, expressed gratitude for the governor's consistent commitment to supporting the association's activities over the preceding years.

He also conveyed pride in the governorate's contributions, recognizing their

Social allowance services on 'Sahl'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Hashim Al-Qallaf issued Administrative Circular number 3/2024 on activating the social allowance services on the 'Sahl' platform, reports Al-Anba daily.

As per Civil Service Commission (CSC) circular number 34060 issued on May 17, 2023 about the launching of services related to the social allowance for male employees through 'Sahl' effective May 21, 2023; these services are as follows:

- Request to disburse social allowance for children,
- Request to stop social allowance for children,
- Request to modify the social allowance amount for children (disabled/healthy),
- Request to pay social allowance to the wife,
- Request to stop social allowance for the wife.

The circular advised the ministry employees to submit all applications related to the social allowance only through 'Sahl'.

significant role in supporting and empowering individuals with disabilities. Al-Janaie extended appreciation to Burgan Bank for its noteworthy contribution to supporting and qualifying the center's employees.

'Revenues' collected from ministries

Absentees pay KD3m in penalties

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: In a notable paradox highlighting the escalating issue of attendance violations, particularly related to tardiness and absenteeism, a government report of which Al-Seyassah obtained a copy shows that ministries and government agencies have imposed penalties totaling 3.027 million dinars during the fiscal 2022/2023.

This marked a significant increase of 1.058 million dinars compared to the preceding fiscal year, where penalties amounted to 1.969 million dinars.

The report revealed that the overall percentage of applied penalties during this period reached 72.1%, exceeding the Ministry of Finance's estimated amount of 4.027 million dinars.

These penalties, categorized as "revenues collected," are enforced on employees in 34 ministries and government

agencies.

They include fines for late fingerprinting, the method used to verify attendance and departure, as well as penalties for absences, all in accordance with civil service regulations and laws.

Civil Service Council Resolution No. (41) of 2006, outlining rules, provisions, and controls for official work, mandates the use of the fingerprint system as the sole proof of attendance and departure in all government agencies (Article 7).

According to Article 18, delays are tallied at the end of each month, with employees facing salary deductions if delays exceed a quarter of a working day but are less than half a day.

The extent of the deprivation increases with longer delays, and employees are duly notified, emphasizing that this measure is not a disciplinary punishment and does not necessitate an investigation. Instead, it is implemented in adherence to the pay-for-work rule.

Move to check prices at co-ops diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Uniformity eyed in rates at all outlets

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The President of the Union of Co-operative Societies, Musab Al-Mullah, has announced a new initiative aimed at enhancing price control within cooperative societies for essential commodities, vegetables, and fruits.

In a press statement, Al-Mullah revealed that the Union has engaged with the Ministries of Trade and Industry, as well as Social Affairs, proposing a novel concept under the "Sahel" program. This initiative aims to facilitate the monitoring of prices for basic goods, vegetables, and fruits in each cooperative society, allowing for comparisons with other societies to ensure uniformity and minimal price differences.

According to Al-Mullah, this idea would empower shareholders to access and compare prices of the cooperative societies in which they are members, providing transparency even from the

comfort of their homes. If implemented, cooperative societies would be mandated to update their prices through the "Sahel" system, eliminating disparities.

Al-Mullah emphasized that this approach aligns with the social responsibility of the Union and its commitment to the well-being of citizens contributing to cooperative societies. He highlighted that under this system, various entities, including price monitors in the federation, associations, and inspectors, could scrutinize prices to ensure they are not unjustly raised.

The President stressed that the Union has numerous other ideas and suggestions aimed at benefiting citizens, which will be presented to the relevant authorities for implementation. These initiatives aim to provide the best prices and services to shareholders and citizens alike.

In response to the decision by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Muhammad Al-Aiban, to restrict the retailing of vegetables and fruits in cooperative societies, Al-Mullah explained that discussions involving officials from trade, affairs, and the union were held to study such proposals. He expressed support for these measures and called on everyone to adhere to the decisions issued.



Al-Rai photo

Concrete paving underway in an unknown place.

‘Long lasting’

Concrete paving eyed for ‘slow-speed’ lanes

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART) is presently examining the feasibility of using concrete paving for slow-speed lanes on highways, as opposed to traditional asphalt laying techniques. This shift is prompted by the extended lifespan of concrete paving, which can last up to 30 years with minimal maintenance, reports Al-Rai daily.

Sources within the authority revealed to Al-Rai that cement concrete is already successfully employed in slow lanes in the United States and several European countries. Its proven efficiency in these regions has prompted authorities in Kuwait to explore the potential application of concrete paving.

The decision to consider concrete paving is primarily driven by the unique properties of cement concrete. Notably, it possesses the strength to withstand the heavy loads carried by trucks, a longstanding issue afflicting the country's roads due to damage caused by the substantial weight of large trucks on traditional asphalt surfaces.

Authorities underscored that the protracted durability of cement concrete is a key factor motivating the exploration of this alternative. The potential 30-year period without the need for significant maintenance could result in substantial savings within the maintenance budget, allowing for redirected funds to other critical areas aimed at enhancing overall road quality and infrastructure.



Fire brigade vehicles at the blaze site.

Building evacuated

The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said acting on information fire engines from Ahmadi controlled a sixth-floor apartment fire in residential building, reports Al-Rai daily.

The fire force explained the residents were evacuated from the building as a precautionary measure. The apartment was destroyed but no casualties have been reported.

‘Fight over helping friend’

Minister orders custody of all parties in quarrel

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled recently issued a directive on the immediate formation of an investigation committee to investigate the fistfight between a number of security officers assigned at the ministry, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting a security source.

The source disclosed that Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled ordered the detention of all parties involved in the fight, which occurred at a police station in Northwest Sulaiyikhat, and to take all the necessary administrative measures against them. He said six security officers were involved in the altercation -- two with the rank of captain, one first lieutenant assigned at the Public Security Sector in the Capital Governorate Security Directorate- Northwestern Sulaiyikhat Police Station, two assigned at the Traffic Operations and Traffic Investigation units in the General Traffic Department (GTD) and one from the Criminal Investigation General Department.

The source added that the preliminary investigations conducted by Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Rajaib revealed that a police officer had a dispute with a motorcycle driver as the latter was driving recklessly who turned to be a police investigator and a vehicle driven by an official at the Traffic Investigation Unit was chasing him. Then, a captain assigned at the police station and another officer intervened. They tried to arrest the reckless officer whose colleagues intervened, hence, a fistfight ensued.



Sheikh Talal

7 held for brewing liquor at home

Delivery man shot in campsite area

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: A restaurant food delivery driver is currently in critical condition at Jahra Hospital's intensive care unit after being shot in Subbiya by unidentified attacker using a shotgun, reports Al-Rai daily.

Security sources said the relevant authorities received a report from Al-Jahra Hospital regarding the critical condition of an Asian expatriate with gunshot wounds.

The sources further explained, "It was discovered that the injured individual is employed as a delivery driver for a restaurant in Al-Jahra Governorate. While en route to one of the camps, he was unexpectedly subjected to gunfire."

Detectives are actively investigating the incident to ascertain the identity of the shooter, determine the motives behind the crime, and obtain statements from the victim once his health condition allows.

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Bootleggers nabbed: The Ministry of Interior has reported that personnel from the Criminal Security Sector have detained seven men for bootlegging, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to the Public Relations and Security Media Department, the Al-Ahmadi Governorate Investigation Department and the Capital Investigation Department carried out separate operations, and caught the suspects red-handed during a raid which was carried out after receiving a tip-off from a police agent.

Security authorities have confiscated a total of 181 barrels of raw material, 413 bottles ready for sale, and discovered four distillation devices along with various manufacturing tools.

The arrested persons have been handed over to the Directorate-General for Drugs and Alcohol Control for further legal proceedings.

Assault victim awarded comp

Court acquits ‘drug peddling’ trio

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The Criminal Court acquitted three individuals who were accused of possessing narcotic drugs for the purpose of trafficking and abuse, due to the invalidity of the arrest-and-search procedures and the invalidity of tracking and arresting them.

According to the case files, the first lieutenant of the Drug Control General Department testified that his secret investigations revealed that the first defendant acquired narcotic substances for the purpose of trafficking and abuse.

The lieutenant then obtained a warrant from the Public Prosecution for arrest and inspection. To implement it, he went to Hawally near the Qadisiya Club, where the accused was present on the day of the incident. When he was searched, no contraband was found in his possession.

When the suspect was confronted during the investigation, he denied that he was trafficking in drugs but admitted that he uses hashish sometimes. He said he did not have any with him at the time of his arrest, and that he obtained hashish from his brother.

The accused then gave the officer details about his brother who was arrested near the Shuwaikh Police Station. When searching him, the officer found hashish on him. He revealed that the hashish with him was meant for his use but he had some quantity in his residence in Khaitan, which he planned to sell.

He also revealed that he obtained the hashish from an individual who works in a restaurant in Jahra. When the officer went to him, he found a laptop bag near him with large pieces of hashish inside.

During the court session, Lawyer Inaam Haider, who represented the accused, argued that the arrest and search procedures were invalid, and the tracking and arrest of the accused were also invalid, because all of this occurred without obtaining permission from the Public Prosecution, due to which the subsequent procedures are also considered invalid.

Based on this, she asked the court to acquit them all of the accusations leveled against them.

Lawyer Haider said, based on the report of the incident officer, when he arrested the first suspect, he was informed that the suspect was using hashish, and therefore the accusation against the accused was based on suspicion and doubt.

This is especially since no narcotic substances were found on him when he was searched, and his analysis did not indicate that he had taken any narcotic substances, which is enough to acquit.

In the explanatory memo of its ruling, the

court stated that the accusation against the defendants was invalid because the incident officer did not obtain permission from the concerned authority to pursue his leads. Also, the second accused was not in one of the cases that would allow the arresting officer to take that action legally. Therefore, the seizures that resulted from that invalid search were invalid, because it was based on invalid procedures.

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Victim wins comp: The High Court obliged three Kuwaiti citizens, in their capacity as guardians of their minor children, to pay KD 21 thousand to a Kuwaiti man and his son for the physical injuries and the material and moral damages the latter sustained when he was assaulted.

According to the case files, the plaintiff counsel Lawyer Ali Matar Al-Wawan, who was representing the Kuwaiti man, said his client is the natural guardian of his minor son. They obliged them in their capacity to provide compensation to him on his behalf and in his capacity as a natural guardian of his minor son, for the physical injuries and material and moral damages the latter sustained.

Lawyer Al-Wawan said this on the basis of the statement that the Public Prosecution charged the defendants' sons of beating the victim intentionally in the juvenile police station department with premeditation, preparing knives for that purpose, and waiting in the place they considered suitable to carry out the crime.

As soon as he appeared, they beat him and kicked him, and then attacked him with a knife, causing the injuries described in the forensic report. He ended up sustaining a permanent disability through a partial cut of the left ulnar nerve, a complete cut of the posterior palpable nerve in the left forearm, and a slight weakness in the broad shin of the left hand, the percentage of which is estimated at 45 percent of the body's total capacity.

□ □ □

Female officers called: The Camps Committee at Kuwait Municipality has requested for the assistance of female officers from the Ministry of Interior in its campaign to demolish illegal camping sites on Monday, reports Al-Rai daily quoting an official source from the Municipality.

According to the source, the committee had to take this step in order to monitor the activities of women in the camping sites; indicating that violations were uncovered in 125 camps.

The source revealed "the Municipality will open a hotline to receive complaints about the illegal camping sites with strict confidentiality. Expatriates own a majority of the illegal camps, which cost the State a lot in terms of removing the waste that campers leave or destruction of soil due to digging and pouring of cement."

Meanwhile, Sheikh Hai Al-Hai confirmed to the daily that "the Sharia Law prohibits setting up camps without obtaining a license; especially since the government has enacted the law, specified fees and set the campaign period for the benefit of Muslims. It is not good to be lenient as it could lead to the destruction of the State. Whoever is proven to have violated the law will be punished. The penalties include fines and removal of the camps. Once an expatriate violates the laws of the State, a certain penalty must be imposed even if he is deported to prevent the spread of chaos."

‘Educational reforms needed to produce men of integrity’

"THE wife of former Danish Prime Minister Lars Rasmussen was working as a teacher in a school, and one day the school principal summoned her to an emergency meeting to discuss her mistakes at work, noting that the law in Denmark allows you to bring a companion with you in such a case, so that he can be a witness to the events of the session," columnist Ahmad Al-Dawas wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The teacher brought with her, her husband, who is the Prime Minister, to attend the meeting with her, and yet the meeting with the principal ended with the teacher being permanently dismissed from work, despite the presence of the Prime Minister husband in the principal's office!"

"The Danish press was not kind to the Prime Minister, and the opponents accused him that the purpose of his presence at the meeting was to influence and put pressure on the school administration's decision."

"There are many lessons in the story:"

"How dare the school principal summon the Prime Minister's wife to a meeting to discuss her mistakes? What's worse is how he dares to dismiss her when her husband is the prime minister?"

"What is even more astonishing is how the Prime Minister's wife was able to work as a teacher in the first place? The Prime Minister could have, by any means, removed the director from his position, but he did not do so?"

"The school principal implemented the law, and the Prime Minister did not violate it. The question is: Why do some foreigners have job integrity, or good moral values, and apply the law?"

"The answer: Because their educational system is good, it builds good citizens."

"We have repeatedly said that our country was interested in building hospitals, roads and bridges, that is, it was interested in bricks and cement, but it neglected building good citizens through education, and the evidence is that many of Kuwait's youth have changed their morals, so their daily concern has become quarrels and violence, and perhaps stabbing with knives, and taking psychotropic substances, such as hallucinogenic pills and not just drugs."

"He also has a harsh manner of speaking, does not respect his parents or others, lacks good manners and taste, and drives his car in the streets in a reckless manner, which poses a danger to people. What would the state of the country be like if these young people took over the administration of the state? I fear for my country of a dark future if its youth behave like this."

"In short, the education curriculum in Kuwait depends mostly on

memorization and repetition, and not on understanding, inculcating virtuous moral values, and high behavior, so the educational outcomes have become poor.

"What is required is to teach subjects that develop the student's personality and morals, such as self-development subjects, in order to create high-quality behavior for students and youth."

"The rate of corruption in our country is high, and moral values do not need legislation from the National Assembly, or a matter forcibly imposed by the government, but rather they are implanted in people."

Also:

"Respected brother, the traffic director who is nominated to be a traffic undersecretary, his problem is in his office. When the director puts an illusory barrier between the director and the people, there will be a major catastrophe! This is the case of the undersecretary. Is the manager like him or worse off in dealing with him," columnist Talal Al-Saeed wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"We contacted the authorities and complained about the bad traffic in Al-Jahra and the constant absence of traffic police. The answer was shocking, as the director said: 'We do not receive complaints. Whoever has a complaint should take another road!'"

"Is this response convincing? How the traffic problem can be solved? So where do we go, or do they really not receive complaints?"

"Knowing that the minister himself declares on every occasion 'You are in this place to serve the citizens, but it seems that you are outside the flock, as the citizen is your last priority, the opposite of what the minister says is true."

"Oh Traffic Director, the façade of your office needs to be transparent, and you urgently need to hear people's complaints and the citizen's voice, but how do the citizen's voice reach you when there is a barrier between you and the people?"

"All we know is that you are a candidate for the position of assistant undersecretary for traffic affairs. If this was how your office dealt with people before you got the promotion, then what if you became an undersecretary? Then we will need a "parachute" to reach you?"

"We do not accept insults from anyone, and if we accept it upon ourselves to beg someone, it is for the benefit of our region, the affairs of which we care very much, and you do not care about its affairs, leaving the region and its people as victims of reckless people, violators of the traffic law and the residence law, and unjustified crowding, and the consequences that result from that is security failure!"

"May God have mercy on you, Abdul Hamid Al-Hajji, because your chest was wider than your desk and could accommodate all people!"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

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Diplomatic ties strengthened

Kuwait's Amir extends congratulations to Guatemala's new president

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a congratulatory cable to Guatemala's new President Bernardo Arevalo.

development of relations between both friendly countries. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a congratulatory cable to the new President of Guatemala Bernardo Arevalo.



Aerial view of the Al-Shaqaya Solar Energy Complex.

Government exam center goes paperless

Ministry tackles audit recommendations

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Assistant Undersecretary for Inspection, Quality Control and Research at the Government Center in the Ministry of Public Works Iman Al-Omar has proposed the signing of a contract for periodic, preventive and preparatory maintenance works of all systems, devices and equipment in the buildings, facilities and services of the center that is located in Subhan,

reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources. Sources confirmed the ministry has started addressing the comments of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to improve the efficiency of the systems for suctioning gas fumes resulting from laboratory inspections, maintain the building, address deficiencies in the level of quality of the center's facilities, and maintain their sustainability to

preserve the public property. Sources said that the contract includes training the center's employees to operate the building and qualify a number of them to obtain the Project Management Professional (PMP) certificate. On the other hand, the Government Center for Examinations has adopted the automated system and stopped all paper transactions.

Kuwait faces looming '24 summer power shortage

Ministry urges action, int'l help sought

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The country might experience electricity shortage during summer in the coming years, unless the necessary decisions and measures are taken immediately to prevent the potential energy shortage, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources.

Sources cited studies projecting the electricity shortage; considering the current capacity of the power generating stations reached a maximum of 18,500 megawatts, while the highest consumption recorded in the summer of 2023 was 16,900 megawatts and the available energy at the time was only about 17,250 megawatts.

Sources explained that the capacity of the existing power generating stations is not guaranteed; because most of these stations are old and some of them have ended their operational life, yet no measure has been taken to replace them, hence, the possibility that some units will stop functioning during peak consumption.

Sources revealed the expected shortage at the peak of summer in 2024 will reach 1,000 megawatts, rising to 2,000 megawatts in 2025 and 2,500 megawatts in 2026. Sources pointed out this shortage cannot be covered by the Gulf power link for many reasons, as it depends on many variables. Considering the production capacity of Gulf countries, the peak loads coincide with

Public Authority for Minors Affairs organizes Umrah trip for 39 minors

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The Public Authority for Minors Affairs yesterday organized an enlightenment meeting for participants in the Umrah (minor pilgrimage) trip for the Islamic lunar year of 1445 AH, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Director of the authority Eng. Hamad Al-Barjas explained that the authority's support for religious and social activities comes within the framework of its keenness to enhance religious and educational awareness and create appropriate conditions for minor children and those under care to perform Umrah rituals to the fullest extent.

The Umrah trip organized by the authority during the period from January 29 to February 2 involves 39 male and female mi-

nors. Those escorting them will be under the authority's sponsorship, along with a number of supervisors and administrators.

The accompanying administrative team includes a number of cadres from the Control Department, the Social Welfare Department, and the Public Relations Department. The delegation will distribute Qur'an, prayer booklets, pamphlets, and supplications, and give lessons to explain the Umrah rituals, as well as distribute bags containing all the supplies.

Eng. Al-Barjas added that the Umrah trip is organized by the authority annually for minors under its care based on certain conditions, within the framework of its annual plans related to its religious activities.

the same peak load period in Kuwait and the Gulf power link has limited capacity that is not sufficient to cover the expected energy shortage.

Sources added the Ministry of Electricity and Water has proposed seeking the help of international developers and investors to build power generation and water production plants, but this step faced opposition from the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority, which prefers to continue

implementing the power generation plants project through the partnership system despite the significant delay.

Sources said the Council of Ministers had earlier instructed the ministry to take the necessary steps to prevent the power shortage, but no action has been taken so far. They also cited the delayed completion of Subiya Power Station, which has with a capacity of 900 megawatts and the cancellation of the tender could have exacerbated the crisis.

albander hotel & resort

January

Room Promotion



The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW). KUNA photo

Priority for pre-2006 applicants

PAHW distributes reserve cards for South Saad Al-Abdullah City project

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) had announced the distribution of reserve cards for the South Saad Al-Abdullah City project on Tuesday for the tenth batch from fourth district until the reserve cards run out, indicating that priority for distribution will be for those allocated to them on and before Dec 31, 2005.

In parallel, PAHW confirmed that the total number of units in the residential projects under distribution for the city of South Saad Al Abdullah is 24,508, including 23,551 in residential plots for applicants until December 2006.

According to the statistics, the total number of public buildings under construction is 55, including five buildings in Al-Mutlaa City, 31 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, 16 in East Sabah Al-Ah-

mad, and only three in the Wafra expansion project.

Regarding infrastructure projects for housing projects, there will be two contracts for the implementation of infrastructure in 1,184 houses in East Sabah Al-Ahmad. The first contract included 587 houses, and the contractual completion rate was 89.61 percent but the actual completion rate was 78.79 percent.

As for the second contract, it included 597 homes. The contractual completion rate was 81.57 percent but the actual completion rate was 62.78 percent.

The Wafra Expansion Project included 53 industrial plots with a contractual completion rate of 61.14 percent, while the actual completion rate was 48.18 percent.

In the South Sabah Al-Ahmad City project, the contract for the main roads and site equipment was completed with an actual completion rate of 3.44 percent.

754 licenses issued, 147 closures

Hawally Governorate's 2023 enforcement

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Director of the Hawally Governorate Inspection Department at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Abdullah Al-Kandari revealed that the number of reports on controlling violations issued in 2023 reached 1,804; while the decisions to close violating food establishments totaled 147 and the number of licenses issued reached 754, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Kandari revealed the number of new health licenses issued in the past year reached 1,008 and the number of renewed such licenses reached 3,442; in addition to 335 new permits for transporting foodstuff while the renewed permits totaled 562; 16 new permits for selling masks and 34 such permits were renewed; 55 licenses for new ice cream trucks and 59 such licenses were renewed; 1,604 licenses for new bicycles and delivery vehicles and 249 such licenses were renewed.

He stressed that the year 2024 will witness intensification of inspection campaigns to maintain food safety; affirming the strict implementation of laws and

KPC plans to fill 147 vacancies in 3 years

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is keen on filling up 147 vacancies in the next few years, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed the number of vacant posts for fresh graduates in the main administrative building of KPC totaled 47, indicating the corporation intends to fill these vacancies in the next three years.

Sources said the corporation also needs 38 employees with various engineering and administrative qualifications like internal audit, financial system analysts, tax, local content, strategic planning, product development and quality control.

toughening penalties for violators -- food establishments or workers trading in food without a license.

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LOCAL

Kuwait trains 6,514 paramedics in advanced emergency medical skills

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Director of the Medical Emergency Department Dr. Ahmad Al-Shatti revealed the success of the administration's training center in training about 6,514 paramedics in advanced emergency medical skills for providing care to patients before they arrive at the hospital or in the emergency department, in the ambulances, or in the intensive care units (ICU).

In a press statement issued to Al-Seyassah on the sidelines of the event held to celebrate the graduation of two new batches of advanced emergency medical skills training recently in the presence of the Assistant Undersecretary for Allied Medical Services at the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah

Al Fares, Dr. Shatti affirmed that the Emergency Medical Training Center was able to double its efforts this year to provide First Aid training lectures to about 4,072 paramedics through the Advanced Emergency Medical Skills program, in addition to training 1,442 paramedics through the American Heart Association's training courses.

He praised the efforts exerted by the Medical Emergency Department's training department and its keenness about the quality of the training outcomes by raising the level of training with the participation of all ambulance centers and various ambulance points in Kuwait to graduate two new batches of the advanced medical emergency skill at a high technical level, which contributes to raising the health services provided to the community.

Like a

Continued from Page 1

Whether in terms of the economy, infrastructure, projects, or even social relations, we must monitor the indicators of social violence that are on a rise daily.

When will that day come for the state to open its fund and work to solve its crises, all of which begin with money?

There is no doubt that one of the important reasons is the reliance on visions based on the interests of people. In the National Assembly, the representatives have been seeking for 20 years to change the Kuwaiti culture through strict laws and the generalization of trends based on fraud.

Such trends are like vote-buying and electoral bribery through services, such that many of them are known as "services representatives". Sometimes, the Cabinet's focus is on making deals with MPs so that a certain minister does not fall, or the Prime Minister is not grilled even though his programs are not implemented.

Therefore, the solution begins with education, followed by the rule of law over everyone, and then the quality of projects.

Is this too much to ask for Kuwait, or will it continue to die of thirst while carrying plenty of water on its back?

Parliament debunks

Continued from Page 1

On the other hand, Chairman of the Human Rights Protection Committee MP Muhammad Hayef said the investigation into the death of a citizen, Turki Al-Anzi, has been suspended due to the expiration of the period granted to the committee and it has been unable to request for an extension due to the adjournment of Assembly sessions since Jan 9.

In a press statement, Hayef confirmed that the committee held a number of meetings with the family of Al-Anzi and listened to all their statements. He said they also met with the head of the investigation committee assigned by the defense minister; and heard the views of the director of the Military Judiciary, members of the investigation committee, and the assistant chief of the General Staff of the Intelligence and Security Authority.

He added the committee continued its meetings with a number of military officials who are directly related to the incident, in the presence of the director of Military Security at the Technical Training Institute and members of the investigation committee.

In another development, Hayef revealed that on Jan 14, the committee discussed a number of petitions submitted by citizens in the presence of the director general of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and several other officials in the authority. He said the committee is keen on resolving these complaints in accordance with the law and regulations, in coordination with the PAHW officials.

Moreover, MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri affirmed that the law on increasing the minimum pension of retirees; which was published in the Official Gazette on Dec 3, 2023 was applied to 80 percent of the beneficiaries this month. He clarified that the law will be applied on the remaining 20 percent after rectifying all errors related to those who have seven children as the increment was applied only to those with one child up to five children. He said all the complaints and problems related to the application of the law will be addressed soon. He pointed out that whenever a new law is implemented, some problems arise; and in this case, there are problems regarding early retirement and shares; reiterating all the issues will be resolved soon.

Asked about those entitled under Chapter Five of the law, Al-Muwaizri stated that this would have been resolved in the session slated for Dec 19, as the Council of Ministers already issued a decision in this regard; but no session was held due to the death of HH the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah -- may Allah have mercy on him.

In addition, Al-Muwaizri called for the proper selection of ministers in the new government and the exclusion of those suspected of involvement in corruption. He asserted: "We do not interfere in matters related to the powers of the executive authority, especially with regard to government formation, but it is necessary to provide advice." He stated that the selection should be based on competencies, such as people who are not suspected of embezzlement or abuses in the Army Fund and those who played a major role in the

merging of two banks."

He hopes that HH the Prime Minister-designate is keen on removing anyone suspected of corruption, and that the selection will be in the interest of the country and the people; not based on emotion or pressure.

On another topic, Al-Muwaizri said: "Some parties are planning to attack the Assembly's entity as they were harmed by laws issued recently. This attack will allow the corrupt to demand for the transformation of the Assembly into a Shura Council, which is the first door to corrupting everything. Certain parties are affected by the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Law, which subjected the chamber to State laws after 70 years of independence from State laws and the Constitution. Others are affected by the law on the abolition of the local agent, which allows any foreign company to participate directly in tenders or direct sales to citizens. This law enhances competition between companies in terms of prices and services for the benefit of the country and the citizen. Criticism should be directed to the representatives of the nation, not the entity of the Assembly."

Private company

Continued from Page 1

It will include a section for submitting complaints regarding workers in the private sector. Al-Anazi highlighted that these complaints will be thoroughly verified and monitored with the relevant authorities until resolution.

Al-Anazi mentioned that the number of national workers in the private sector recently decreased to about 64,000 from the previous 70,000. He attributed this decline to private companies' failure to comply with laws safeguarding national workers in the private sector.

He emphasized the Union's significant role in disbursing national labor support to workers in joint operations contractor contracts in the divided region. This was achieved in collaboration with the Minister of Interior, Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled.

Furthermore, Al-Anazi noted that the Union is currently coordinating a conference on job opportunities scheduled for March in collaboration with the Public Authority for Manpower.

Pharmacists oppose

Continued from Page 1

He highlighted the potential financial repercussions for the ministry due to compensations demanded by affected pharmacists.

Farah Sadiq questioned the necessity of such a decision, especially when efforts are underway to draft new legislation regulating the pharmacy profession.

She called for a reconsideration of the decision, stressing its adverse impact will be not only on Kuwaiti pharmacists but also on the overall health sector.

Khaled Al-Mutairi labeled the decision as random and poorly considered, expressing disappointment with the lack of support for the private pharmaceutical sector.

He emphasized the detrimental effects on pharmacists' ambitions and the potential strain on government sector pharmacies amid existing medication supply challenges.

Shaima Abdul-Hussein criticized the decision as confusing and questioned its timing, considering ongoing efforts to evaluate private pharmacies.

She highlighted the need for medical services in new residential areas, emphasizing the negative impact on Kuwaiti citizens and pharmacists.

Pharmacists are urging the Minister of Health to reconsider the decision, emphasizing the importance of supporting and encouraging the private pharmacy sector without compromising the livelihoods of pharmacists.

They hope for a comprehensive study to develop the pharmacy profession while preserving the rights of those in the field.

DGCA's pet

Continued from Page 1

She revealed that the campaign began in Sabahiya, and will be held in several other areas in the coming days where stray dogs abound.

Al-Saadoun explained that the phenomenon of stray dogs has increased in Kuwait in recent years as a result of non-implementation of animal ownership laws and the animal welfare law, adding that the recent decision of DGCA will contribute to further increasing the problem.

'Offering encompasses all-inclusive package catered to suit customer needs'

ABK announces GMC Yukon quarterly draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced Nabel Muhsin AlMasri as the winner of the GMC Yukon vehicle in the Bank's quarterly 'Transfer Your Salary!' campaign draw, held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

On this occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "I would like to begin by congratulating our winner. I am very pleased to witness the great success of our campaign, reaffirmed by the noteworthy customer turnout seeking to benefit from the numerous features offered."

Upon salary transfer, ABK awards new customers an array of benefits including a cash gift of up to KD 1,000, a free-of-charge Visa Signature credit card for life, as well as a chance to enter the next quarterly draw to win yet another GMC Yukon.

Marafi continued, "Our salary transfer offering represents one of the Bank's most significant campaigns designed to reward customers with worthwhile benefits. It encompasses an all-inclusive package catered to suit customer needs and desires."

In addition to attracting new customers to open accounts, she also expressed ABK's commitment and eagerness to ensure the satisfaction of its existing customers. She said, "All our initiatives are in line with the Bank's goal to sustain our position as one of the most prominent players in the market."

Marafi affirmed, "We constantly study the best possible ways to enhance our product and service offering to thank and reward our customers



Handing over the car keys to the winner.

for their loyalty and trust. As such, the Bank will continue to develop more sought-after promotional campaigns in the near future."

Marafi concluded with an invitation to follow the Bank's social media accounts to remain up to date with the latest marketing initiatives and to benefit from the promotions offered throughout the year.

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

vestment solutions and services through its subsidiary, ABK Capital.

Across the region, the Bank offers individuals and corporates the convenience of comprehensive banking and financial services in the Egyptian market through ABK-Egypt's network of 45 branches.

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

ABK is a strong supporter of Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's 'Let's Be Aware' aware-

ness campaign. Through its various initiatives, the Bank aims to promote financial inclusion by educating Kuwaiti society about customer rights, responsibilities, and the different types of banking and special needs services. Additionally, ABK consistently provides strategic information on how to avoid banking and financial fraud, loan application requirements, digital services, and more.

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

Kuwait adopts modern cancer treatment protocols with abundant medicine supply

State reports 75% five-year recovery rate

Humanitarian aid crucial

Kosovo seeks stronger relations with Kuwait

KUNA photo
Ambassador Beqir Ismail, Director General of the Diplomatic Academy of the Republic of Kosovo.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16, (KUNA): Kosovo is eager to propel its relations with Kuwait to greater levels, the landlocked Balkan state's diplomatic academy chief Dr. Beqir Ismail said on Tuesday.

Acknowledging the flow of Kuwaiti humanitarian aid that has poured into Kosovo over the years, the diplomat told a seminar on Kosovo's international relations that such aid helped bring relief to Kosovans who lived through war over the past two decades.

Some 117 countries, including 22 European Union member states, recognize Serbia's former province of Kosovo as independent.

JOINT OPERATIONS
WAFRA

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC) - KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY



Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from 17 JAN 2024 up to 11 FEB 2024 for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tenders will be on **Monday, 19 FEB 2024 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	011300	PIPE FITTINGS	25
2	011307	SLEEVES COATED	15
3	011308	PIPES & SLEEVES COATED	25
4	011309	SPOOLS COATED	5
5	011311	PIPE FITTINGS COATED	35
6	011313	GATE VALVES	25

Notes:

Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGO or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Telephone No.: 23983639 - Ext. : 2502 - 3477

World News Roundup

Europe

'Halt foreign adoptions'

PM faces Conservative rebellion in Parliament

LONDON, Jan 16, (AP): UK Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** faces rebellion from senior lawmakers in his Conservative Party over his stalled plan to send asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda, a controversial and expensive policy that the British leader has made central to his attempt to win an election this year.

To do that he needs to unite his fractious party, which trails far behind the Labour opposition in opinion polls. But the liberal and authoritarian wings of the Conservatives - always uneasy allies - are at loggerheads over the Rwanda plan. Moderates worry the policy is too extreme, while many on the party's powerful right wing think it doesn't go far enough.

In a blow to Sunak, two deputy chairmen of the Conservative Party say they will vote to toughen up the government's flagship Safety of Rwanda Bill in the House of Commons on Tuesday. Lee Anderson and Brendan Clarke-Smith announced they will back amendments seeking to close down asylum-seekers' avenues of appeal against deportation to Rwanda.

"I want this legislation to be as strong as possible," Clarke-Smith wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.



Sunak

More than 60 Tory lawmakers, including former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, support amendments to toughen the legislation, and some say they will vote against the bill as a whole if it is not strengthened. Along with opposition party votes, that might be enough to kill the legislation. That would be a major blow to Sunak's authority and potentially fatal to the Rwanda plan.

Sunak insists the bill goes as far as the government can because Rwanda will pull out of its agreement to rehouse asylum-seekers if the U.K. breaks international law.

'Halt all foreign adoptions': Norway's top body for international adoptions on Tuesday recommended a halt to all adoptions from abroad for a two-year period pending an investigation into several allegedly illegal cases, while Denmark's sole overseas adoption agency announced it was stopping for the same concerns.

Norway's government has the final say, and Kjersti Toppe, minister for children and families, said she believes there is a need for further investigation and has asked the Norwegian directorate for children, youth and family affairs for that.

In Denmark, the privately-run DIA said it was stopping all adoptions from abroad after the Danish social affairs ministry, the top authority in the matter, announced a halt. The DIA handles adoptions from the Philippines, India, South Africa, Thailand, Taiwan and the Czech Republic.

"Adoptions must be safe, sound and in the best interest of the child," said Hege Nilssen, head of Norwegian directorate for education and training, said in a statement.

Iceland faces daunting period, says prez: Iceland's president said the country is battling "tremendous forces of nature" after molten lava from a volcano in the island's southwest consumed several houses in the evacuated town of Grindavik.

Scientists said Monday that the eruption appeared to be dying down, but it was too soon to declare the danger over. Iceland's Meteorological Office said "it is difficult to estimate how long this eruption will last."

President Gudni Th. Johannesson said in a televised address late Sunday that "a daunting period of upheaval has begun on the Reykjanes Peninsula" where a long-dormant volcanic system has awakened.

A volcano on the peninsula erupted for the second time in less than a month on Sunday, with orange lava bursting through two fissures near the fishing town of Grindavik. Authorities had ordered residents to leave hours earlier as a swarm of small earthquakes indicated an imminent eruption.

Ukraine shoots down 2 Russian aircraft: The Ukrainian air force shot down a Russian early warning and control plane that can spot targets up to 650 kilometers (400 miles) away and a key command center aircraft that relays information to troops on the ground in a significant blow for the Kremlin's forces, Ukraine's military chief said Monday.

The planes are fundamental tools in helping orchestrate Russian battlefield movements in Ukraine. Shooting them down, if confirmed, would be a landmark feat for Ukraine in the almost two-year war, as fighting along the front line is largely bogged down in trench and artillery warfare.

Russia has largely ensured its air dominance during the war, as Ukraine fights with its fleet of Soviet-era warplanes against Moscow's more modern aircraft.

Poland local elections in April: Poland's new Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Monday crucial elections to choose city mayors and provincial and county administration leaders would be held April 7, with a runoff April 21.

The elections will test the new pro-European Union coalition government's popular support, just six months after it won parliamentary elections.

Tusk and his Cabinet took office last month, vowing to restore the importance and powers of city mayors and local governments which the previous right-wing government sought to limit. Local administrations suffered slashed funding and stalled projects and investments.

"I hope that April will prove to be a good month for Poland's local government activists," the premier said.

Belarus political prisoner dies: A political prisoner has died in prison in Belarus after authorities failed to provide him with proper medical care, a human rights group said Monday, a death that spotlighted cruel conditions in Belarusian prisons.

Vadzim Khrasko died of pneumonia in a penal colony near the northeastern city of Vitebsk after prison authorities had been slow to take him to a hospital, ignoring his pleas for help, the respected Viasna human rights center said. He died on Jan 9, but the penal colony only reported his death now.

Khrasko, an information technology specialist who died at the age of 50, was serving a three-year sentence on charges of offering donations to opposition groups that the authorities branded "extremist."



US Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump takes the stage at a caucus night party in Des Moines, Iowa on Jan 15. (AP)



This photo provided by the Buckingham Palace on Jan 15 is the new official portrait of Britain's King Charles III taken in 2023 at Windsor Castle, England. Copies of the portrait will hang in public buildings throughout the United Kingdom as part of a Government-funded scheme. King Charles III is wearing a Royal Navy uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet and official medals and decorations. A copy of the portrait is being offered to public authorities free-of-charge as part of a scheme to celebrate the new reign. (AP)



Cheney



Menendez

Sen, wife seek separate trials: US Sen **Bob Menendez** and his wife are seeking separate trials on bribery charges they each face in a New York court.

The New Jersey Democrat and his wife, Nadine, were each charged in the fall with aiding three New Jersey businessmen in return for cash, gold bars and a luxury car.

The couple and the businessmen, who also face charges, have all pleaded not guilty.

Nadine Menendez's lawyers asked in papers filed late Monday for the severance on the grounds that the senator may want to testify at a trial scheduled to start in May and may divulge marital communications that she plans to keep secret.

Lawyers for Bob Menendez wrote that each spouse should face separate trials so that the senator does not provide information about marital communications during cross-examination that might be damaging to his wife's defense. (AP)

Communities mark MLK day: Communities across the nation celebrated the Martin Luther King Jr holiday on Monday with acts of service, prayer services and parades. But with the November presidential election as a backdrop, some events took on an overtly political turn.

In King's hometown of Atlanta, several speakers at the 56th annual commemorative service at the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King served as pastor, touched on the divisive partisan climate in the United States.

Former US Rep **Liz Cheney**, who served on the House committee that investigated the Jan 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol, had harsh words for Trump, whom she did not mention by name. On that day, Trump's supporters tried to block Congress from counting the Electoral College votes that would affirm Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential race. (AP)

'Improve school security': Several parents in an Iowa town where a deadly school shooting took place earlier this

Politics

DeSantis edges Haley for second place

Trump wins Iowa Republican caucuses

DES MOINES, Iowa, Jan 16, (AP): Former US president Donald Trump scored a record-setting win in the Iowa caucuses on Monday with his rivals languishing far behind, a victory that affirmed his grip on the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

In what was the lowest-turnout caucus in a quarter-century, participants endured life-threatening cold and dangerous driving conditions to meet in hundreds of schools, churches and community centers across the state. But those who ventured out delivered a roughly 30-point win for Trump that smashed the record for a contested Iowa Republican caucus with a margin of victory exceeding Bob Dole's nearly 13-percentage-point victory in 1988.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis finished a distant second, just ahead of former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley.

The results left Trump with a tighter grip on the GOP nomination, though it could take several more months for anyone to formally become the party's standard bearer. The magnitude of Trump's victory, however, posed significant questions for both DeSantis and Haley. Neither candidate appeared poised to exit the race, though they leave Iowa struggling to claim making much progress in trying to become Trump's strongest challenger.

Unity

Having repeatedly vowed vengeance against his political opponents in recent months, Trump offered a message of unity in his victory speech.

"We want to come together, whether it's Republican or Democrat or liberal or conservative," he said. "We're going to come together. It's going to happen soon."

The GOP contest moves swiftly to New Hampshire, which will hold the first-in-the-nation primary on Jan. 23. A shrinking field will compete there after conservative entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy suspended his campaign after a disappointing fourth place finish and endorsed Trump.

DeSantis first heads to South Carolina on Tuesday, a conservative stronghold where the Feb. 24 contest could prove pivotal. He will head later in the day New Hampshire.

"Because of your support, in spite of

all of what they threw at us, we got our ticket punched out of Iowa," DeSantis told supporters.

Haley plans to compete vigorously in New Hampshire, where she hopes to be more successful with the state's independent voters.

"When you look at how well we're doing in New Hampshire and in South Carolina and beyond, I can safely say tonight Iowa made this Republican primary a two-person race," she said.

In a preview of a remarkable balancing act Trump may have to manage in the months ahead, he was expected to be in court in New York on Tuesday. A jury is poised to consider whether he should pay additional damages to a columnist who last year won a \$5 million jury award against Trump for sex abuse and defamation. It's just one of multiple legal challenges facing the former president.

After visiting the court, Trump will fly to New Hampshire to hold a rally Tuesday evening.

Portray

Trump has made courtroom visits a part of his campaign - heading to court voluntarily twice last week while his opponents campaigned in Iowa - in a strategy designed to portray him as a victim of a politicized legal system. Among Republican voters, at least, the approach is working.

The Associated Press declared Trump the winner at 7:31 pm CST based on an analysis of early returns as well as results of AP VoteCast, of more than 1,500 voters who said they planned to take part in the caucuses. Both showed Trump with an insurmountable lead.

Initial results from eight counties showed Trump with far more than half of the total votes counted as of 7:31 pm, with the rest of the field trailing far behind. These counties included rural areas that are demographically and politically similar to a large number of counties that had yet to report.

The Associated Press determined at 11:17 pm CST that DeSantis finished a distant second to Trump. With an estimated 10% of ballots remaining to be counted, DeSantis led Haley by approximately 2,300 votes, or about 2 percentage points. With votes reported in all but one of Iowa's 99 counties, Haley wasn't

doing well enough anywhere to catch DeSantis, based on the number of outstanding votes.

Trump showed significant strength among Iowa's urban, small-town and rural communities, according to AP VoteCast. He also performed well with evangelical Christians and those without a college degree. And a majority of caucusgoers said they identify with Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement. One relative weakness for Trump comes in the suburbs, where only about 4 in 10 supported him.

Uneven

Iowa has been an uneven predictor of who will ultimately lead Republicans into the general election. George W. Bush's 2000 victory was the last time a Republican candidate won in Iowa and went on to become the party's nominee.

But Trump's success tells a remarkable story of a Republican Party unwilling or unable to move on from a flawed front-runner. He lost to Biden in 2020 after fueling near-constant chaos while in the White House, culminating with his supporters carrying out a deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol. In total, he faces 91 felony charges across four criminal cases.

The US Supreme Court is weighing whether states have the ability to block Trump from the ballot for his role in sparking the Jan 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol. And he's facing criminal trials in Washington and Atlanta for his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

Trump has increasingly echoed authoritarian leaders and framed his campaign as one of retribution. He has spoken openly about using the power of government to pursue his political enemies. He has repeatedly harnessed rhetoric once used by Adolf Hitler to argue that immigrants entering the US illegally are "poisoning the blood of our country."

Trump's legal challenges appear to have done little damage to his reputation. Many of his supporters view the charges through a political lens.

About three-quarters of Iowans responding to AP VoteCast said the charges against Trump are political attempts to undermine him, rather than legitimate attempts to investigate important issues.

month told school officials on Monday they want more preventative measures and transparency as the school board plans for students' return.

Their comments came during a Perry school board meeting, the day after the death of Principal Dan Marburger, who was critically injured in the shooting.



Pedestrians brave sub-zero temperatures while walking on Jan 15, in downtown Kansas City, Mo. Dangerously cold wind chills continued to affect much of the Rockies, Great Plains and Midwest Jan 16, with wind chills below minus 30 degrees (minus 34.4 C) in many parts of the central US. About 110,000 US homes and businesses were without power late Monday, the bulk of them in Oregon after widespread outages that started Saturday. (AP)

Grace Castro criticized the school district's policies, saying that "lives were lost due to our lack of preventative measures." She suggested the installation of metal detectors at schools' entrances and a temporary remote learning option at the same time, and enforcement of a clear-bag policy as "the absolute least you can do." (AP)

Woman's body found in water: A woman's body was found in the water near where a single-engine plane crashed into the ocean off the California coast after witnesses reported it flying erratically, authorities said Monday.

The crash was reported shortly after 7 pm Sunday by a 911 caller who said the plane was in obvious distress and appeared to go down toward the water near Half Moon Bay, said Sgt. Philip Hallworth with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

The Federal Aviation Administration said two people were aboard the Cozy Mark IV, a four-seat light aircraft that can be built from a kit. No information was immediately available about the plane's occupants.

The US Coast Guard sent out a diver and the sheriff's office deployed a drone to search for the downed plane. At around 8:30 pm the drone's video feed showed a small plane upside down near Ross Cove, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of San Francisco, Hallworth said. (AP)

Lat/Am

Prez faces challenges

Brazil confronts flood 'damage', rain kills 12

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 16, (AP): Neighborhoods in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state remained flooded Monday more than a day after torrential rains that killed at least 12 people.

The heavy downpour wreaked havoc over the weekend, flooding peoples' homes, a hospital, the metro line in the city of Rio and a main freeway section, Avenida Brasil.

Some people drowned and were killed in landslides, while at least three died after being electrocuted. Eighteen towns across the state remained at "high" risk of landslides, according to civil defense officials.

The floods were particularly devastating in Rio's northern peripheries, some of the metropolitan's poorest areas.

"We feel like animals. It's not normal to live like this," Heloisa Regina, 55, said as she surveyed her flooded bar and home in Duque de Caxias, a city to the north of Rio where more than 100 millimeters (3.9 inches) of rain fell in 24 hours. Regina spent the night trying to sleep on a pool table, wondering how she was going to pay to repair the damage to the bar she has owned for 30 years. "We've lost everything," she said.

Residents waded through waist-high water Monday to navigate streets in Duque de Caxias. Others climbed on roofs and called for help as helicopters flew overhead, according to video footage from Brazil's Globo television network.

Firefighters were searching for a woman who disappeared after her car fell into the Botas River in Rio's Belford Roxo neighborhood.

Around 2,400 military personnel from Rio's firefighters corps were mobilized over the weekend and used ambulances, boats, drones and aircraft to rescue residents and to monitor affected areas.

Authorities intervened in over 200 incidents due to the flooding across the state, according to a statement from Rio's civil defense. But some people accused authorities of negligence.

"We are completely abandoned," Duque de Caxias resident Eliana Vieira Krauss, 54, charged. "Nothing has improved" since similar floods more than a decade ago, the nursing assistant said.

Krauss carried her 80-year-old disabled father-in-law to her sister-in-law's home herself. "The water was almost reaching his bed. If he had turned around and fallen, he would have drowned," Krauss said.

Rio de Janeiro Mayor **Eduardo Paes** on Sunday declared an emergency and urged people to not force their way through flooded areas and to avoid disrupting rescue and recovery efforts.

Moderate to heavy rain, lightning and gusts of wind were forecast Monday afternoon. Rio's civil defense advised people not to swim in lakes or the sea, and when at home to stay away from sockets, windows and metal doors.

Floods in the basement of the Ronaldo Gazolla Municipal Hospital led to power cuts that were resolved by Sunday, but all appointments at the hospital have been delayed by 15 days, Rio Health Secretary Daniel Soranz said on X, formerly Twitter.

Brazil's National Institute of Meteorology had warned Thursday of the potential for heavy rain in Rio, Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais due to a combination of heat, humidity and areas of low pressure in the atmosphere.

In February 2023, heavy rain caused flooding and landslides that killed at least 48 people in Sao Paulo state. In September, flooding from a cyclone in southern Brazil killed at least 31 people and left 2,300 homeless.

At the same time, the Amazon rainforest in Brazil has faced severe drought. Scientists say extreme weather is happening more frequently due to human-caused climate change, and 2023 was the hottest year on record.

Nizia Maria Geralda Francisco, 70, spent Saturday night on the roof where she was taken by neighbors to escape the flooding of her home in Belford Roxo.

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In this image taken from video footage run by China's CCTV, excavators clear a road blocked by snow in Altay Prefecture in northwestern China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Jan 16, 2024. (AP)

Evacuation underway for stranded tourists after avalanches trap 1K people in China

Rescuers evacuated tourists on Tuesday from a remote skiing area in northwestern China where dozens of avalanches triggered by heavy snow have trapped more than 1,000 people for a week, state media said.

The avalanches have blocked roads, stranding both tourists and residents in a village in Altay prefecture in the Xinjiang region, close to China's border with Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan.

Those injured were being airlifted out on a military helicopter while supplies such as food and fuel were being flown in.

State broadcaster CCTV said a snow-blocked road linking Hemu village to major roads was cleared on Tuesday, enabling vehicles to enter and tourists to drive themselves out.

Footage showed dozens of tourists dragging luggage over snow-covered areas toward a military helicopter, while a long line of outgoing cars was seen on the cleared road.

State media cited the local highway administration as saying the avalanches affected 350 kilometers (220 miles) of roads. Road clearing efforts were

hampered due to the area's geography as roads leading to Hemu are situated in a valley with tree-covered slopes.

Known as an emerging ski destination, Altay prefecture had been hit by heavy snowfall since early January. China Daily, citing the Xinjiang meteorological bureau, said at least 31 avalanches were reported as of Saturday.

Authorities at the Kanas scenic area, where Hemu village is located, said the area will be closed until at least Jan 20 due to continued extreme weather. (AP)

Asia

SKorean president vows stronger punishment

NKorea won't pursue reconciliation with South

SEOUL, South Korea, Jan 16, (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country would no longer pursue reconciliation with South Korea and called for rewriting the North's constitution to eliminate the idea of shared statehood between the war-divided countries, state media said Tuesday.

The historic step to discard a decades-long pursuit of a peaceful unification, which was based on a sense of national homogeneity shared by both Koreas, comes amid heightened tensions where the pace of both Kim's weapons development and the South's military exercises with the United States have intensified in a tit-for-tat.

Some experts say Kim could be aiming to diminishing South Korea's voice in regional security matters and communicate more clearly that he would seek to deal directly with the United States over the nuclear standoff, which has deepened amid disagreements over the stringent US-led sanctions over his growing nuclear weapons program.

Declaring the South as a permanent adversary, not as a potential partner for reconciliation, could also be part of efforts to improve the credibility of Kim's escalatory nuclear doctrine, which authorizes the military to launch preemptive nuclear attacks against adversaries if it perceives the leadership in Pyongyang as under threat.

Also:

TOKYO: South Korean President **Yoon Suk Yeol** vowed Tuesday to punish North Korea multiple times as hard in the event it carries out a provocation against his country, after North Korean leader **Kim Jong-un** called for defining Seoul as a "primary foe and invariable principal enemy," Yonhap News Agency reported.

"The current Republic of Korea government is different from any previous government," Yoon said during a Cabinet meeting, referring to South Korea by its formal name.

"Our military has an overwhelming response capability. Should North Korea provoke us, we will punish them multiple times as hard," the president said.

MOSCOW:

Russia's top diplomat on Tuesday hosted his North Korean counterpart for talks on expanding ties between the two countries amid inter-

China 'blasts' Philippine president for congratulating Taiwan election winner

BEIJING, Jan 16, (AP): China's Foreign Ministry summoned the Philippine ambassador Tuesday and denounced President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s congratulatory message to the winner of Taiwan's presidential election, Lai Ching-te.

Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters that Marcos's remarks "seriously violated the political commitments made by the Philippines to China and rudely interfered in China's internal affairs."

China claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be recovered by force if necessary, and angrily condemns statements that appear to confer legitimacy on the island's government.

"We would like to sternly tell the Philippines not to play with fire on the Taiwan issue ... (and) immediately stop making wrong words and deeds on Taiwan-related issues, and stop sending any wrong signals to Taiwan independence and separatist forces," Mao said.

She said Assistant Foreign Affairs Minister Nong Rong summoned the Philippine Ambassador to China Tuesday morning and "made solemn representations, and urged the Philippines to give China a responsible explanation."

Marcos Jr. congratulated Taiwan's president-elect on Monday, saying in a statement shared on social media that he was looking "forward to close collaboration" and "strengthening mutual interests."

Lai, who is detested by Beijing, has national concerns over an alleged arms cooperation deal between Pyongyang and Moscow.

At the start of the meeting, **Sergei Lavrov** said he and North Korean Foreign Minister **Choe Son Hui** would discuss "active work" on implementing the agreements reached by the countries' leaders.

North Korean leader **Kim Jong Un** traveled to Russia in September to meet President **Vladimir Putin** and visit several military sites, sparking international

pledged to safeguard the island's de-facto independence from China and further align it with other democracies.

Also:

BANDAR LAMPUNG, Indonesia: A former Jakarta governor seeking Indonesia's presidency said democracy is declining in the country and pledged to make changes to get it back on track.

Anies Baswedan said in an interview with The Associated Press on Sunday that concerns about neutrality in the current government and the institution arose when the frontrunner in the presidential race, **Prabowo Subianto**, picked the son of the current president as his running mate.

BANGKOK:

A powerful ethnic armed group fighting Myanmar's military that is based in the country's western state of Rakhine has seized a township bordering India and Bangladesh, the group declared Monday, confirming accounts by local residents and media.

Paletwa is the first township reported to fall to the Arakan Army, which launched surprise attacks beginning in mid-November on military targets in Paletwa, which is in Chin state, and townships in Rakhine. Paletwa is just north of Rakhine and borders both Bangladesh and India.

concerns about an arms alliance that would help Moscow replenish its arsenals amid the fighting in Ukraine.

Putin is set to host Choe later in the day. Kremlin spokesman **Dmitry Peskov** said the Russian president will visit North Korea on Kim's invitation "at a convenient time" and based "on mutual agreement."

Lavrov on Tuesday also mentioned "close and fruitful cooperation" between the two countries at the United Nations and other international organizations.



Princess Igbinoso, 10, who lost her leg following a traffic accident, tests her prosthetics limb at the IREDE foundation in Lagos, Nigeria on Nov. 30, 2023. (AP)



Chigbu



Roopun

Africa

Belal causes flooding in Mauritius: A tropical cyclone caused heavy flooding and at least one death in Mauritius on Monday as cars were washed away by surges of water in the Indian Ocean island's capital city and elsewhere. A motorcyclist died in an accident caused by the flooding, the government said and imposed a curfew.

The government issued an order that everyone except emergency and health workers, members of the security services and those requiring medical treatment must return home and remain there. Mauritius president is **Prithviraj Singh Roopun**.

Some people were also being evacuated as the floodwaters caused by Tropical Cyclone Belal threatened houses and other buildings. Schools were closed and hospitals were told to only keep their emergency departments open.

The main airport was closed and flights into and out of the island nation of 1.2 million people were canceled until further notice, the government said.

The Mauritius newspaper L'Express published videos of cars floating down streets that looked more like raging rivers in the capital, Port Louis, and other parts of the island. Some people climbed onto the roof of their car and clung on, according to the images published by L'Express. Motorists who had escaped from cars were seen being pulled from the floodwaters and to safety by others.

Vehicles were left piled up, some of them overturned, after some of the floodwaters receded. The water also entered buildings and flooded homes and the lobbies of offices. The Central Bank of Mauritius building was reportedly flooded. (AP)

Group provides prosthetic limbs: The accident that broke 10-year-old Princess Igbinoso's right leg could have crushed her dreams of becoming a model in a country where not many can afford prosthetics to cope with life and fight social stigma.

"It was heartbreaking when they told us they had to amputate it (the leg)," her mother, Esther Igbinoso, said of Princess's experience in 2020. "During the first few months of her amputation ... I just wake up and start crying. I was like, how is she going to cope with life with an amputated leg?"

But Princess can now walk and her dreams are alive again, thanks to an artificial leg that matches the tone of her skin. The prosthesis came from the IREDE Foundation, a Nigerian group that provides chil-

dren like her with free artificial limbs that normally cost \$2,000 to \$3,000.

"My dream is to become a model," Princess said. "When the accident happened, I thought I couldn't become a model. But

now that I have two legs, I can become whatever I want - model, doctor, whatever."

Founded in 2012 in Nigeria's economic hub of Lagos, IREDE has provided more than 500 artificial limbs at no cost in addition to psychosocial support to children like Princess, said its executive director, **Crystal Chigbu**. She said the group gets up to 70% of its funding from crowdfunding.

Chigbu said her inspiration to start the foundation came from her daughter's experience with being born with limb deformity.

The child amputees the foundation has helped can "do things that they would never have imagined that they would do," said Chigbu.

While there is no verifiable data on how many Nigerians are living with amputated limbs, IREDE is one of several groups providing such services amid a great need.

It is a huge source of relief in Nigeria where people with disabilities struggle with stigma and limb replacements make them more accepted in their communities, said Dr. Olanode Isreal-Akinmokin, an orthopedic surgeon. "We have limbs that function almost as perfectly as the limbs that have been lost," he said.

In addition to providing artificial limbs to children, Chigbu said, IREDE is also educating people about limb loss to deter stigma and it encourages support groups among parents of affected children. (AP)



Firefighters evacuate residents through a flooded street after deadly rainfall in Belford Roxo, Brazil on Jan 15. Neighborhoods in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state remained flooded Monday more than a day after torrential rains that killed at least 12 people. (AP)

USD rises

The exchange rate of the US Dollar against the Kuwaiti Dinar rose on Tuesday by 0.07 percent to reach KD 0.307, while the exchange rate of the Euro fell by 0.31 percent to reach KD 0.335 compared to yesterday's numbers, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) on Tuesday.

The CBK said in its daily bulletin that the exchange rate of the British Pound Sterling fell by 0.48 percent to reach KD 0.389, the Swiss Franc by 0.52 percent to reach KD 0.358 and the Japanese Yen by 0.59 percent to KD 0.002. (KUNA)

oil down

The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by USD 1.08 to USD 80.14 per barrel on Monday as opposed to USD 81.22 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

The prices of the Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate both fell by 14 cents and 18 cents respectively, settling each at USD 78.15 pb and USD 72.50 pb. (KUNA)

tech firm Baidu denies report

Technology company Baidu on Monday refuted a newspaper report that said its artificial intelligence chatbot Ernie was linked to Chinese military research.

Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post on Friday cited an academic paper from a university affiliated with the People's Liberation Army cyberwarfare division. The paper stated that the division had tested its artificial intelligence system on Baidu's Ernie and on artificial intelligence firm iFlyTek's Spark, both of which are

language-based AI chatbots similar to ChatGPT.

After its Hong Kong-listed stock plunged more than 11.5% Monday, Baidu denied the allegations, saying in a statement that it had not engaged in a business collaboration with the paper's authors or their affiliated institutions.

"Ernie Bot is available to and used by the general public," the Chinese company said in its statement.

The academic paper from the PLA Information Engineering University de-

tailed how researchers had given Ernie Bot prompts to generate simulated military response plans for Libyan troops in response to a U.S. military attack.

Baidu said that if the authors employed large language models such as Ernie Bot, they would have used the functions available to any user interacting with such AI tools.

Like ChatGPT, users can pose questions or requests to Ernie Bot, which would then generate content based on the initial prompt. (AP)

Market Movements

16-01-2024

EGYPT	-	EGX 30	Change	Closing pts
			+2.62	26,938.14

UAE	-	DFM	Change	Closing pts
			-0.46	4,082.34
JAPAN	-	Nikkei	-0.79	35,619.18
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	-0.64	63,747.33
PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi	-0.65	6,637.00
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	-0.37	12,077.58

Business

Equities made strong gains in 2023

Sustained rally hinges on resilient economy, Fed pivot

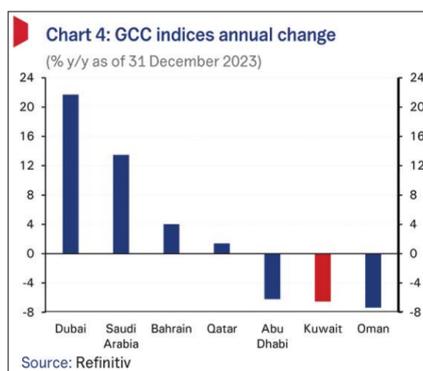
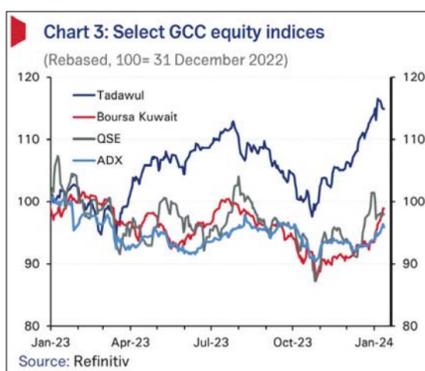
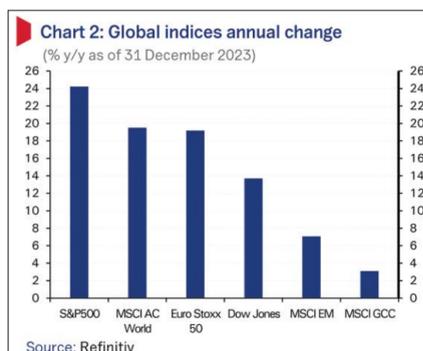
By National Bank of Kuwait

Most international equity markets ended 2023 with substantial gains as investors looked past various headwinds ranging from high inflation, hawkish central banks, and the possibility of a recession. Adverse geopolitics and oil market volatility were additional risk factors. Emerging markets underperformed along with GCC markets amid ongoing economic weakness in China and lower oil prices and growth prospects in the latter. Though a reversal of tight monetary policy will be supportive of equities in 2024, a sluggish global growth outlook and ongoing geopolitical risks could weigh on performance.

The positive annual performance was thanks in part to a strong first half where an AI-driven tech rally lifted major indices. Despite a selloff in Q3 amid profit taking and renewed inflation and recession concerns, losses were reversed in Q4 on signs of economic resilience, decelerating inflation, and optimism that restrictive monetary policy was nearing its end. In addition, the rally came despite adverse geopolitics which could potentially disrupt global supply chains and lead to renewed inflationary pressure. After major indices ended the year near all-time highs, markets have since been volatile ahead of key economic data releases. Moreover, some investors have reassessed their previous aggressive rate-cut calls which may have been optimistic given the Fed's own dot-plot projections and comments suggesting the possibility of a relatively long period of restrictive policy. The rally will likely resume should inflation prove to be supportive of a dovish Fed pivot along with no material weakness in economic indicators that would boost the soft-landing scenario. However, should the data justify a 'higher for longer' policy approach, investor sentiment and market performance could be hit in coming months.

Markets mostly positive with US equities outperforming global peers

Global equity gains were led by US indices, driven largely by optimism that the economy will be able to weather monetary tightening and recession odds. The tech rally in the first half of 2023 drove tech-heavy indi-



ces like the Nasdaq Composite (+43% in full-year 2023) and S&P500 (24%) higher compared to less inclusive indices such as the Russell 2000 (15%) and Dow Jones (14%). However, the broader market subsequently gained momentum in Q4 as lower inflation and better

corporate earnings contrary to expectations earlier in the year fueled upbeat market sentiment. Further support came from the better-than-expected holiday season sales reflecting a still solid consumer sector. The Euro Stoxx 50 rose 19% y/y as European markets benefited

from similar optimism, but the MSCI Emerging Market index underperformed, up a relatively modest 7%, weighed down by ongoing economic weakness in its largest constituent - China.

GCC equities lag behind global peers amid slower growth

GCC market performance was mixed but mostly positive (MSCI GCC +3.1% y/y) with strong gains in Dubai (22%) and Saudi Arabia (13.5%) partly offset by losses in Oman (-7.4%), Kuwait (-6.5%), and Abu Dhabi (-6.2%). Dubai and Saudi Arabia continued to benefit from strong non-oil economic activity thanks to business-friendly reforms aimed at growing the private sector, which involved a large privatization drive and an unprecedented number of IPOs for two consecutive years. The strong corporate sector activity should continue in 2024, as the region's two key markets compete for foreign capital and undergo an economic transformation. Meanwhile, lower oil prices (and production) and weakened fiscal positions, slower growth, higher interest rates, and the general absence of a catalyst contributed to muted activity in other regional markets.

Outlook hinges on economic data and Fed policy

Though equities are poised to perform well this year given receding headwinds, an unclear growth outlook and geopolitical uncertainty remain key downside risks. On the other hand, lower bond yields and interest rates, and a still resilient economy with durable earning performance are bullish factors for equities in 2024. Another rally is possible this year with investors mostly betting on a sooner-rather-than-later dovish Fed pivot, which in turn will depend on inflation softening sustainably towards the Fed's 2% target. Lastly, a pivot accompanied by continued economic resilience, rather than in response to a downturn, will in our view be decisive for longer-term market confidence and momentum. In other words, monetary easing in tandem with a soft economic landing will present the ideal conditions for a bull market. Meanwhile, the strong upside potential of underperforming EM stocks, especially if paired with signs of recovery in the Chinese economy could support EM equities, though investor confidence remains weak in the risk laden economy.

Boursa Kuwait indicators regain stability

Branch aims to offer seamless customer experience

stc opens its newest branch at Assima Mall

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, opened its latest flagship branch at Assima Mall in Kuwait City. The branch aims to showcase the various products and services offered by stc, while presenting an exceptional experience for visiting customers. In line with its strategic approach, stc aims to blend technology with customer-centric services, presenting a unique customer experience at all its branches.

The Assima Mall branch has been designed to offer a seamless, fast, and efficient customer experience that integrates both innovative features and convenient solutions. By visiting the branch, primarily located in the heart of Kuwait City, customers will gain access to a wide range of services through stc's expert staff, and interactive screens. Designed meticulously for optimal customer convenience, the new branch features spacious stations elegantly displaying the latest in smartphones and entertainment devices. This layout is tailored to provide customers with a tangible, firsthand shopping experience. Visitors will have the opportunity to personally test and interact with products, allowing them to assess the grip, size, and functionality of devices to make an informed purchase decision. Moreover, the branch is equipped with a dedicated 24/7 self-service area, thoughtfully created to cater to customers' needs at any time, ensuring their requests are fulfilled efficiently and conveniently.

The opening of the Assima Mall branch marks an additional strategic location where stc can serve customers in Kuwait City and provide assistance in any telecom and digital solutions needs. Location wise, the new branch is the first to open in Kuwait City, aside from the Souq Sharq branch, catering to residents and employees in the area of Kuwait City and Assima Mall. Through such flagship branches, stc aims to offer a streamlined and personalized shopping experience. This allows customers to effectively manage their accounts and explore the latest offerings and promotions with the guidance of professional and highly informed employees.

stc indicated in a statement that it is dedicated to consistently delivering exceptional customer experiences

The world could get its first trillionaire within 10 yrs, anti-poverty group says

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan 16. (AP) - The world could have its first trillionaire within a decade, anti-poverty organization Oxfam International said Monday in its annual assessment of global inequalities timed to the gathering of political and business elites at the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

Oxfam, which for years has been trying to highlight the growing disparities between the super-rich and the bulk of the global population during the World Economic Forum's annual meeting, reckons the gap has been "supercharged" since the coronavirus pandemic.

The group said the fortunes of the five richest men - Tesla CEO Elon Musk, Bernard Arnault and his family of luxury company LVMH, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Oracle founder Larry Ellison and investment guru Warren Buffett - have spiked by 114% in real terms since 2020, when the world was reeling from the pandemic.

Oxfam's interim executive director said the report showed that the world is entering a "decade of division."

"We have the top five billionaires, they have doubled their wealth. On the other hand, almost 5 billion people have become poorer," Amitabh Behar

said in an interview in Davos, Switzerland, where the forum's annual meeting takes place this week.

"Very soon, Oxfam predicts that we will have a trillionaire within a decade," Behar said, referring to a person who has a thousand billion dollars. "Whereas to fight poverty, we need more than 200 years."

If someone does reach that trillion-dollar milestone - and it could be someone not even on any list of richest people right now - he or she would have the same value as oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

John D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil fame is widely considered to have become the world's first billionaire in 1916.

Currently, Musk is the richest man on the planet, with a personal fortune of just under \$250 billion, according to Oxfam, which used figures from Forbes.

By contrast, the organization said nearly 5 billion people have been made poorer since the pandemic, with many of the world's developing nations unable to provide the financial support that richer nations could during lockdowns.

In addition, Oxfam said Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which sent energy and food costs soar-

ing, disproportionately hit the poorest nations.

With Brazil hosting this year's Group of 20 summit of leading industrial and developing nations, it was a "good time for Oxfam to raise awareness" about inequalities, said Max Lawson, Oxfam's head of inequality policy.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has put issues that concern the developing world at the heart of the G20 agenda.

Oxfam said measures that should be considered in an "inequality-busting" agenda include the permanent taxation of the wealthiest in every country, more effective taxation of big corporations and a renewed drive against tax avoidance.

To calculate the top five richest billionaires, Oxfam used figures from Forbes as of November 2023. Their total wealth then was \$869 billion, up from \$340 billion in March 2020, a nominal increase of 155%.

For the bottom 60% of the global population, Oxfam used figures from the UBS Global Wealth Report 2023 and from the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2019. Both used the same methodology.

10 sectors led by tech propel surge

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: Stock market indicators regained stability in the positive territory following fluctuations in the previous session.

During yesterday's trading in 2023, the indicators collectively experienced an uptick, propelled by a surge in 10 sectors, notably led by the technology sector. Consequently, the market value increased by 0.7 percent, reaching 308 million dinars, up from 42.585 billion dinars in the last Sunday session to 42.89 billion dinars in yesterday's session.

The Premier Market's market value also recorded an uptick of 0.8 percent, totaling 276 million dinars, compared

to the previous value of 33.716 billion dinars, which rose to 33.992 billion dinars. Similarly, the main market's value increased by 0.36 percent, reaching 32 million dinars, up from 8.869 billion dinars to 8.901 billion dinars.

The general index exhibited a rise of 0.72 percent, gaining 52.2 points to reach 7,263.5 points. The premier market index increased by 0.8 percent, adding 64.8 points to settle at 7,986.9 points. The main index also saw a 0.36 percent increase, rising by 21.4 points to 5,876.6 points. Furthermore, the main 50 index experienced a 0.15 percent increase, reaching 5794.3 points with a gain of 9 points.

In terms of liquidity, the session observed a 2.8 percent increase, climbing from 71.24 million dinars in the last Sunday session to 58.8 million dinars.

However, trading volumes decreased by 10.8 percent from 342.3 million shares to 305.2 million shares, while the number of deals increased from 16.6 thousand to 17.1 thousand deals.

181 brokers join group

Notable surge seen in number of real estate brokers in 2023

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The number of licensed real estate brokers in Kuwait experienced a notable increase since the beginning of 2023, surging by 13.4 percent to reach approximately 181 brokers. The cumulative total of licensed brokers in Kuwait rose from 1,351 at the end of December 2022 to 1,532 by the end of October the following year.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce reveals that the cumulative total of licensed brokers saw a 2.7 percent increase, amounting to 41 brokers during October alone, compared to the previous month's count of 1,491 brokers in September.

The Ministry of Commerce further disclosed that the cumulative total of licensed real estate residents in Kuwait grew from 62 at the end of December 2022 to 151 by the end of July, marking an 89-resident increase over ten months. In October, the number of licensed real estate residents showed a monthly uptick, accompanied by a rise in brokerages compared to the previous September.

Real estate evaluators play a crucial

role in determining the fair values of real estate for various purposes, such as selling, buying, or valuation. Their expertise enhances the feasibility of real estate investment decisions and contributes to the fair value representation in company budgets, safeguarding the rights of owners and shareholders.

However, real estate evaluators encounter challenges, including lack of accreditation from banks and insufficient data on the properties they evaluate. The profession requires more regulatory decisions to address these issues.

In response to this, the Ministry of Commerce has taken steps to regulate the professions of real estate brokers and evaluators. In November 2020, regulatory regulations for practicing the real estate brokerage profession were issued, covering licensing and registration processes.

Additionally, in March 2023, Ministerial Resolution No. 28 of 2023 established a committee to study and regulate the real estate valuation profession, aiming to identify obstacles and propose solutions for effective implementation. The committee was given the authority to coordinate with relevant authorities and gather necessary data for its tasks.



International collaborations, prestigious awards, and a prominent position in recruitment, training, and development

Human Resources at Gulf Bank: Performance Summary for 2023



A number of Gulf Bank leaders graduated from the Harvard Business School program.



Mr. Jassim Boodai in a group photo with bank officials and guests of the Lead the Way conference.



Walid Mandani and Salma Al-Hajjaj in a memorial photo with Ajjal graduates.



Mai Al-Awaish in a group photo with the winners of the second edition of the Datathon competition.

Being a highly appealing hub for talent, Gulf Bank consistently invests in the training and development of its workforce through collaborations with esteemed international and local institutions. This approach ensures that employees are equipped with the latest expertise and skills essential to navigate the significant transformations occurring in the banking industry both locally and globally.

In its commitment to attracting exceptional young talents, Gulf Bank has actively sponsored various career fairs organized by Kuwaiti universities. The goal is to position itself as the preferred employment destination for emerging professionals entering the workforce.



Salma Al-Hajjaj

Aligned with the bank's 2023 strategy and in harmony with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Gulf Bank remains dedicated to fostering inclusivity and empowerment for women, youth, and people of determination.

Furthermore, as part of its dedication to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the yearly "Employee Engagement Survey" has demonstrated consistent positive progression in recent years.

Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj, the General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, highlighted key achievements, programs, and courses organized by the bank in 2023 within this overarching framework. These initiatives include:

Gulf Bank's Double Win at 2023 MENA HR Summit

Gulf Bank won two awards at the 2023 Middle East and North Africa HR Management Summit in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The summit included the participation of esteemed officials and specialists in the human resources field, representing prominent companies and banks in the region. Ms. Salma Al-Hajjaj was honored with the awards for "Best Training and Development" and "Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion" at the ceremony that recognized outstanding achievements in human resources within various companies.

Data Innovation Excellence Award at Finnovex Qatar 2023

At the 18th Finnovex Qatar 2023 summit, Gulf Bank received the Data Innovation Excellence Award for its exceptional contributions to advancing data-driven innovations within the Kuwaiti financial sector. This recognition is attributed to various impactful initiatives such as the Data Ambassadors Program, data literacy training courses, and the Fekrety Innovation Competition.

Global Partnerships

Collaboration with Coursera

In its ongoing commitment to employee development, Gulf Bank has partnered with Coursera, a leading global online learning platform. This collaboration aims to offer employees advanced training opportunities and access to courses and certificates from renowned educational institutions and universities.

Partnership with Coach Hub

Gulf Bank has joined forces with Coach Hub, a worldwide platform specializing in talent and leadership development. This collaboration empowers employees of major organizations globally, to establish distinctive, measurable, and scalable training programs.

Employment Opportunities for Youth

As part of its support for the youth and its continuous efforts to attract the best talents from the national workforce, Gulf Bank concluded its sponsorship and participation in the second edition of the "Watheefi" Career Fair. Representatives from Gulf Bank highlighted the nature of banking work during their participation in the exhibition, offering comprehensive explanations to job seekers about the banking industry and the career development opportunities offered by the bank to its employees.

Career Fair at Kuwait University

Gulf Bank, the favored choice for employment in the Kuwaiti financial sector, successfully wrapped up its sponsorship of the three-day career fair hosted by Kuwait University.

GUST Career Fair's Diamond Sponsor

In its ongoing commitment to empower youth and as the preferred choice for employment in the Kuwaiti financial sector, Gulf Bank served as the diamond sponsor for the twenty-fourth career fair at Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST).

Career Fair at Kuwait Technical College

As part of its continuous commitment to empower youth and its position as a favored choice for employment in the Kuwaiti financial sector, Gulf Bank took part in the Kuwait Technical College (KTECH) Career Fair last March.

The Australian University Alumni Exhibition

Gulf Bank wrapped-up its Platinum sponsorship of the Alumni Exhibition for the College of Engineering students at the Australian University. This reflects the bank's unwavering support for young individuals, its ongoing efforts to empower them, and its encouragement for innovation while reinforcing the principles of sustainability in society.

Hiring People of Determination

Gulf Bank participated in the Employment Forum for People of Determination, showcasing graduates from the fourth batch of the "Partners to Employ Them" campaign. The campaign was organized by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs in collaboration with the Human Construction Society for Social Development. At the forum, Gulf Bank announced the recruitment of a group of these graduates.

Training and Development

Ajjal Program

In its ongoing commitment to foster the development and skills of its employees, Gulf Bank initiated the ninth edition of the "Ajjal" program. This edition welcomes a new group of

Salma Al-Hajjaj:

- Gulf Bank received the prestigious "Best Training and Development" and "Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion" awards at the 2023 MENA HR Management Summit
- Gulf Bank was acknowledged with the Excellence in Data Innovation Award at the eighteenth Finnovex Conference summit in Qatar.
- We established strategic partnerships with global platforms Coursera and Coach Hub, focusing on the development of employees and leaders.
- We participated in the Kuwait University, GUST, "KTech," and "Watheefi Career Fairs.

- We successfully graduated the eighth batch of the Ajjal program, inaugurating the ninth batch, and engaged in various international training programs
- We launched the second edition of the Datathon competition
- We introduced a digital library and actively participated in the Innovation Challenge Program
- We organized the "Lead the Way" conference and conducted a "WOW Diwaniya, showcasing our unwavering commitment to women's empowerment.
- The annual "Employee Engagement Survey" showcased consistent positive progression in recent years.



Launching the ninth edition of Ajjal.



Salma Al-Hajjaj receives two awards at the Human Resources Management Summit in the Middle East and North Africa.



Annual employee celebration.



Center symposium Salma Al-Hajjaj and representatives of the bank at the American Trade Advisory Center symposium in Kuwait.



My job gallery.

recently appointed trainees with less than 5 years of experience at Gulf Bank. The program aims to refine their skills and contribute to their professional and personal development.

Qualifying Fresh Kuwaiti Graduates

In its continuous dedication to human resource development, Gulf Bank announced the successful conclusion of the "Qualifying Fresh Kuwaiti Graduates for Employment in the Banking Sector" program for a group of its employees. This initiative was carried out in partnership with the Institute of Banking Studies and the Central Bank of Kuwait from March 2022 to May 2023. (KGDP - Kuwait Graduates Development Program)

Part of their training includes a trip to Oman to visit the National Bank of Oman Apprenticeship (6 weeks)

Corporate Directors Training Program

Gulf Bank has declared its involvement in the Corporate Directors training program for the second consecutive year. This program is organized by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, in collaboration with the Tammayaz Foundation and Soroptimist International. The bank's participation reflects its commitment to promoting sustainability principles in society and supporting programs and initiatives for women's empowerment.

Harvard Business School Program

Several leaders from Gulf Bank successfully completed the Harvard Business School program, specifically crafted to foster the growth of leaders in the banking and financial sector. The program, titled "Strategic Leadership in a Changing World," is a part of the "Kafaa" initiative, a collaborative effort between the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwaiti banks aimed at supporting and cultivating leadership in the industry.

FranklinCovey Leadership Program

Built upon enduring principles of human effectiveness,

this program is crafted to facilitate transformative change for individuals. The Institute of Banking Studies has established a strong partnership with FranklinCovey, collaborating to cultivate essential skills for personal and interpersonal effectiveness among leaders and their teams. Sustainable shifts in behavior originate from within - shaping one's identity and perspective. This internal transformation reflects in how individuals engage with and lead others.

The primary goal of the program is to empower leaders to recognize their capacity to engage with others, amplify their influence, foster collective action, and achieve groundbreaking results for their banks.

"Sustainability in Finance" Masterclass and Workshop by IE Business School for GB50 and Board Members

An interactive session held for executive leaders and board members as part of the ESG 2024/2030 sustainability initiative.

Data and Innovation

Introducing a Digital Library

In its ongoing commitment to digital leadership within the banking sector and delivering top-notch services to its customers, Gulf Bank revealed the introduction of a digital library. This library is positioned to serve as the primary resource for the bank's products and services, representing a key component of the extensive digital transformation the bank aims to accomplish across various sectors and business operations.

The Second Edition of the Datathon Competition

With the involvement of over 400 young Kuwaiti participants, Gulf Bank revealed the winning teams at the end of the second edition of the Datathon competition. As the first platform of its kind in Kuwait, the Datathon aims to empower data professionals, as well as school and university students, and new employees keen on entering the realms of data and ana-

lytics. Notably, the second edition marked the inaugural participation of the 14-18 age group in the competition, alongside contestants aged 18 and above.

The Innovation Challenge Program

Gulf Bank participated, alongside five selected Kuwaiti banks and companies, in the seventh edition of the Innovation Challenge Program for the year 2022-2023. This program is annually organized by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences in collaboration with the London Business School. The program aims to stimulate innovation and enhance creative skills within private sector companies, supporting economic growth and contributing to the transformation of Kuwait's economy into a knowledge-based economy.

Data Ambassadors Program

Gulf Bank successfully completed the second edition of the Data Ambassadors Program. This data and analytics program is the first of its kind in Kuwait, with the total number graduates reaching 210.

A Training Program for Youth

Gulf Bank completed a training program in Data Science and Innovation for high school graduates and university students who reached the final stage of the second edition of the annual Datathon competition. The competition featured the participation of over 400 young and talented Kuwaiti contestants, including, for the first time, individuals aged 14 to 18 years.

Women Empowerment

Lead the Way Conference

In celebration of International Women's Day 2023, Gulf Bank orchestrated the "Lead the Way" conference. The event attracted a diverse audience, including notable figures and officials from banks, the private sector, diplomats, government representatives, and public welfare associations.

The conference delved into key challenges hindering endeavors to bolster and empower women. Through engaging workshops, motivational speeches, and stimulating panel discussions, participants explored the impactful ripple effects of supporting and empowering women on the economy. The event served as a platform for interactive dialogue on these crucial issues.

"WOW" Monthly Discussion Circles

Gulf Bank organized the monthly "WOW" Diwaniya for women, providing a platform for networking, sharing experiences and ideas, and engaging in discussions about suggestions and solutions to the challenges that women encounter.

American Business Council AmCham Seminar

Gulf Bank participated in a seminar organized by the American Business Council AmCham Kuwait at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. The seminar, titled "Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainable Practices", saw active participation from numerous representatives from both the public and private sectors. During the event, Gulf Bank's notable journey in solidifying sustainability principles, particularly in the realm of women's empowerment, was extensively reviewed.

Kuwaiti Women's Economic Empowerment Platform (KWEPP)

A collaborative digital platform, in alignment with the UN Call-to-Action WEPs, emphasizing Gulf Bank's commitment to shaping a better future for working women and fostering sustainability.

Health Awareness

Annual Women's Health Awareness Campaign

On the occasion of Breast Cancer and Mental Health Awareness Month, Gulf Bank initiated its yearly campaign dedicated to promoting women's health and safety throughout October. The campaign includes offering complimentary screenings for female employees and conducting a workshop focused on women's empowerment.

Three-day Women's Empowerment Workshops in Collaboration with Safira CSR

These workshops included engaging sessions featuring various guest speakers addressing topics such as well-being, achieving work-life balance, goals setting, seizing opportunities, as well as fostering critical thinking.

Mental Health Awareness Podcast Session with Dr. Mohammad T. Alsuwaidan

The interactive podcast session featured Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan, Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Director at Mindwell Center Kuwait, as well as Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto, Canada. The session delved into the connection between mental and physical health and was accessible to all Gulf Bank employees.

The First Mover Campaign

Continuing its steadfast dedication to fostering the well-being of its employees, Gulf Bank introduced its inaugural Mover campaign, emphasizing men's health and safety, following the successful Breast Cancer Awareness Month initiative last October.

Blood Donation Campaign

In collaboration with the Kuwait Blood Bank, Gulf Bank organized a blood donation campaign for its employees. The objective was to bolster the strategic reserves of the blood bank and its humanitarian endeavors in saving the lives of patients during critical emergencies.

Numeric Overview of 2023

- 55 internships
- 275 training courses
- employees enrolled in training courses
- 72% of national employment
- 365 new employees recruited
- 57% of youth in the overall workforce (aged 19-35)
- 31% of youth in overall workforce (aged 19-30)
- 42% of women in the overall workforce
- 27% of women in leadership positions



Selena Gomez



Claire Danes



Jessica Chastain



Kristen Dunst



Jenna Ortega



Calista Flockhart

Glamour & diversity

Edebiri & Seehorn light up Emmys silver carpet

NEW YORK, Jan 16, (AP): Television's finest brought the silver carpet alive in color, vying with a sea of black, on Monday at the strike-delayed 75th Emmy Awards, including a 3D-molded black look for Ayo Edebiri and sparkly chartreuse for Rhea Seehorn.

Edebiri of "The Bear" walked in a strapless custom gown from Louis Vuitton. It was molded to her body and fell above the ankle in a bell shape. "We're snatched and loving it," she told E!

Riley Keough also went for black as the classic color made the brights pop at the 2023 Emmys.

"Black is often seen as a 'safe' color, but one trend that emerged tonight? Pieces which complicated that idea with a focus on shape, texture, or transparency like Riley Keough in semi-sheer Chanel, Ayo Edebiri in custom Louis Vuitton with an intriguing bulblike shape and Jenna Lyons doing the see-through trend as only she can," said Veronique Hyland, Elle's fashion features director and author of the book "Dress Code."

Necy Nash-Betts was all-in on Old Hollywood black in a velvet Greta Constantine mermaid body hugger with a flounce hem. She paired it at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles with matching velvet opera gloves with satin ruffle detail as she picked up an Emm y for best supporting actress in a limited series for "Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story."

Sequins

Elizabeth Debicki also chose velvet, a deep red sleeveless look by Gucci.

Seehorn of "Better Call Saul" was in the color camp, her sequins shining on her long-sleeve, high-neck gown by Naeem Khan. When it comes to her looks, she told The Associated Press, she's not about things "falling out." Being able to use the restroom is another fashion requirement.

"I do love dress up," she said.

She had a chartreuse (or possibly citron) sister in Jessica Chastain, who wore custom Gucci by Sabato De Sarno. It was adorned with sequins and beaded fringe.

"I loved how she paired it with an earring in another shade of green. She looked like a disco queen," said Cassie Anderson, fashion director for Cosmopolitan.

Hollywood's duel strikes last year delayed TV's big night, unleashing high-volume fashion energy this awards season. There were metallics, floral patterns and, yes, trains.

Dominique Fishback felt it in a pale blue Miu Miu halter gown with a plunging neckline and wide train. Joy Sunday felt it in an optimistic optic white off-shoulder trouser look with two long pieces trailing behind her. So did Tom Colicchio in a red velvet jacket.

Cristo Fernández split the color difference in two tones: a brown jacket with black accents and trousers.

Janelle James of "Abbott Elementary" was among the stars who chose red.

Classic

"It's Rodarte. I just learned how to say that," James laughed. Her jewels, including a pear-drop pendant, were Fred Leighton.

Sarah Snook was also in red by Vivienne Westwood. Her skinny straps were slightly off the shoulder and the skirt of her gown was full and pleated. Meghann Fahy's red look by Giorgio Armani Prive came with rosettes skimming her strapless neckline. A very pregnant Suki Waterhouse killed the fashion game in a red Valentino open at the sides.

"Red was big on the Golden Globes carpet and again at the Emmys, like very classic, vampy, inspired reds," said Maggie Coughlin, a senior editor at Vanity Fair. "Summer felt like Barbie pink, and I don't know if red is in response to that. It's kind of the next big trend we're seeing because it's close to pink, but it's still very elegant. It's like Baby pink had its moment and we're ready for another bold color," she said.



Lizzy Caplan



Sarah Snook



Quinta Brunson



Ayo Edebiri



Sheryl Lee Ralph



Taraji P. Henson



Dominique Fishback



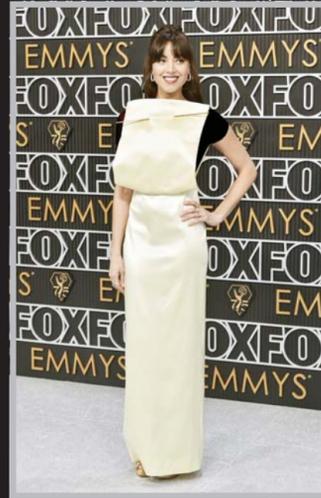
Katherine Heigl



Hannah Waddingham



Simona Tabasco



Aubrey Plaza



Amy Poehler



Annaleigh Ashford

Emmy win caps iconic career of music maestro

Elton John joins EGOT club with Emmy win for farewell concert

LOS ANGELES, Jan 16, (AP): Elton John has achieved EGOT status.

The famed British singer-pianist won an Emmy Award on Monday night for best variety special (live) for "Elton John Live: Farewell from Dodger Stadium," a three-hour concert documentary that streamed on Disney+.

John said he was "incredibly humbled" for joining the elite group of EGOT winners who have won Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards.

"The journey to this moment has been filled with passion, dedication, and the unwavering support of my fans all around the world," John, 76, said in a statement after winning his trophy.

The superstar performer has five Grammys, most recently for "Elton John & Tim Rice's Aida" in 2001; two Oscars for "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" from "The Lion King" in 1994 and "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" from "Rocketman"; along with a Tony for his original score on "Aida."

He is one of the top-selling solo artists of all time, and he holds the record for biggest-selling physical single of all time thanks to the 33 million copies sold for "Candle in the Wind" in 1997.

John became the 19th person to reach EGOT status after Viola Davis achieved the feat when she won a Grammy last year. Others

performers who have EGOTs include Whoopi Goldberg, Jennifer Hudson and John Legend.

David Furnish, John's husband and a producer on the concert special, said John was overjoyed Monday night about winning his first-ever Emmy, and he "screamed out loud." Furnish said a "incredibly honored" John was unable to attend the awards ceremony since he's recovering from recent surgery.

"We Facetimed him. We woke him up in the middle of the night," Furnish said while holding John's award backstage. "He's back in the UK. He's had his left knee replaced - which isn't surprising when you think of the number of pianos he's jumped off."

Concert

John's concert was the last of a three-night stand at the stadium in Los Angeles as part of the North American leg of his Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour, which began in September 2018 with the first of the 300-plus scheduled dates. It was suspended in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed in 2021.

His final show, which drew more than 50,000 people, had guest appearances from a new generation of stars, including Dua Lipa and Brandi Carlile.

The singer's aired special beat out the Apple Music Super Bowl

halftime show starring Rihanna, as well as ABC's Oscars telecast, CBS's Tony Award telecast and Netflix's "Chris Rock: Selective Outrage."

"Tonight is a testament to the power of the arts and the joy that it brings to all our lives," John said. "Thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout my career. I am incredibly grateful."

The temporary shift does have some rather confusing side effects. The Emmys already have what some consider a counterintuitive eligibility window, as AP's Alicia Rancilio broke down last April. Had the 75th Emmys not been delayed, they still would have aired more than a year after the finale of Season 1 of "The Bear," which is up for several awards. Now, the show is even further behind: Two seasons of the show have come and gone, and Jeremy Allen White has Golden Globes for both - but is still waiting to see if he collects a statuette from the Television Academy for his work in 2022.

If you missed the pep of E! during last week's Golden Globes, fret not: The channel is back with its "Live from E!" coverage at 5 p.m. Eastern, three hours before the telecast kicks off. The first hour is hosted by Zuri Hall, Amber Ruffin and Zanna Roberts Rassi, before Laverne Cox and comedian Heather McMahana take over. And if that's not enough, E! is throwing an after-party that begins at 11 p.m., featuring Real Housewives Garcelle Beauvais and Jenna Lyons.

Awards

Variety



The team from 'Succession,' winners of the award for outstanding drama series, pose in the press room during the 75th Primetime Emmy Awards on Monday, Jan. 15, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. (AP)

Awards

'The Bear' claims comedy and Brunson makes history

'Succession' dominates drama Emmys

LOS ANGELES, Jan 16, (AP): "Succession" secured its legacy with its third best drama series award, "The Bear" feasted as the night's top comedy, and the two shows about squabbling families dominated the acting awards at Monday night's Emmys.

Quinta Brunson of "Abbott Elementary" and Steven Yeun and Ali Wong of "Beef" also had historic wins at the 75th Primetime Emmy Awards, in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day ceremony that was finally held four months late after a turbulent year of strikes in Hollywood.

"Succession," the HBO saga of the dysfunctional generations of a maladjusted media empire, won the top prize for its fourth and final season. It also won best actress in a drama for Sarah Snook and best actor in a drama for Kieran Culkin.

"We all put our all into it, and the bar was set so high," Snook said.

"The Bear," the FX dramedy about a contentious family and a struggling restaurant at the center of the life of a talented chef, won best comedy series for its first season. It also made a meal of the comedy acting categories, with Jeremy Allen White winning best actor, Ayo Edebiri winning best supporting actress, and Ebon Moss-Bachrach taking best supporting actor. All three were first-time nominees.

"This is a show about family, and found family and real family," Edebiri said from the stage as she accepted the first trophy of the night at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.

Instead of the usual producer speeches, Matty Matheson, a real-life elite chef who plays a kitchen newbie and repairman on "The Bear," spoke for the show while surrounded by the cast near the end of the Fox telecast.

"I just love restaurants so much, the good and the bad, we're broken inside," Matheson said before getting a long kiss on the mouth from Moss-Bachrach.

Brunson won best actress in a comedy for the show she created, ABC's "Abbott Elementary," becoming the first Black woman to win the award in more than 40 years and the first from a network show to win it in more than a decade.

"I am so happy to be able to live my dream and act out comedy," Brunson said during her acceptance, fighting back tears. The writer-actor was among the stars with standout looks on the Emmys' silver carpet.

"Succession" won six Emmys overall including best supporting actor in a drama for Matthew Macfadyen and best writing in a drama for show creator Jesse Armstrong. The only drama acting category it didn't win was supporting actress, taken for the second time by Jennifer Coolidge of "The White Lotus."

"The Bear" won in every category it was nominated for Monday night, and along with the four it had won previously at the Creative Arts Emmys, took 10 overall, the most of any show.

"Beef" from Netflix won best limited series, while Yeun and Wong became the first Asian Americans to win in their categories - Yeun for best actor in a limited series and Wong for best actress. Creator Lee Sung won Emmys for writing and directing. It had eight Emmys overall after three wins at the Creative Arts Emmys.

Category

Brunson had won a writing Emmy for "Abbott Elementary," her mockumentary about a predominantly Black and chronically underfunded grade school in Philadelphia, but this was her first for acting. Isabel Sanford of "The Jeffersons" was the only previous Black woman to win the category in 1981.

The show held on the King holiday saw three Black women win major awards: Brunson, Edebiri and Niecy Nash-Betts, who won best supporting actress in a limited series for "Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story."

On the Netflix show, Nash-Betts played a neighbor of the serial killer whose complaints to authorities about his behavior go unheeded.

"I accept this award on behalf of every Black and brown woman who has gone unheard and over-policed," she said.

"Everybody having fun at the chocolate Emmys tonight?" host Anthony Anderson said during the show. "We are killing it tonight! ... This is like MLK Day and Juneteenth all rolled up in one!"

The tweaked awards calendar made for some oddities. Edebiri and White won their Emmys for the show's first season eight days after winning Golden Globes for the second season.

Culkin as little brother Roman Roy outshined the older brother and the father to win the last lead actor Emmy for "Succession."

He had twice been nominated for best supporting

actor for "Succession" without a win. But in the final season, in which his character goes from sideline wisecracker to emotional disaster at the center of the show's drama, he was put in the lead category and won over his fictional father Brian Cox and brother Jeremy Strong.

After praising his on-screen family, he shifted to his own family, getting big laughs during his speech when he told his wife Jazz Charton that their two young kids weren't enough. "I want more," he said. "You said if I won, we could talk about it."

Snook took her first Emmy in three nominations for "Succession" for playing the family's lone daughter Shiv Roy, and her show-husband Macfadyen won the second Emmy of his career for playing Tom Wambsgans, the son-in-law that began the HBO series as a hanger-on and ended it as the closest thing it had to a victor.

Emotions ran high from the start of the ceremony. Edebiri and Brunson were both quick to cry as they took the stage, and the first presenter, Christina Applegate, who said in 2021 that she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, got a standing ovation as she came out using a cane, helped by Anderson. As the tears welled in her eyes, she struggled to get through the nominees and winner.

Anderson told the nominees at the beginning of the night that instead of having their speeches cut off by music, his mother, actor Doris Bowman, sitting in the audience, would tell them when it was time to move on. But she more often shouted down her son in the running gag.

Honoring television history was the theme at the 75th Emmys. Anderson opened the show on a "Mr. Rogers" set and performed TV theme songs including "Good Times," and several cast reunions were spread throughout the show.

Cast members including Martin Lawrence and Tisha Campbell from "Martin," Ted Danson and Rhea Perlman from "Cheers," and Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers from "All in The Family" performed short bits from recreations of their sitcom sets before presenting awards.

Tina Fey and Amy Poehler reunited to present in the form of their 2001-2005 "Weekend Update" team-up from "Saturday Night Live."

"We've reached the stage in life where we'll only present awards sitting down," Fey said.

See Also Pages 10 & 12

Features

ARABO TIMES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024

MILAN: Milan Fashion Week of menswear previews for the next cold weather season closed on Monday with Armani and Zegna, the A-to-Z of Italian men's fashion.

The relatively light calendar reflected the choice of some brands to favor coed shows during the womenswear week, scheduled for next month.

Some scenes from Monday's menswear preview shows for fall-winter 2024-25:

An arresting photograph of one of Giorgio Armani's penetrating blue nearly 90-year-old eyes served as a backdrop to Monday's runway show. Its intensity underlined Armani's singular role as the guiding force behind his fashion empire for nearly a half-century.

The Giorgio Armani collection featured the designer's signature relaxed tailoring, accented by geometric patterns and rich textures in a dreamy mélange of soft neutrals. Herringbone and checks dominated, not just as patterns, but also as textures in knitwear that suggested an off-hours demeanor.

Armani leaned heavily into ski and snowboard wear, with baggy sheep pants with parkas for the slopes, and bulky knitwear for apres-ski. As with his Emporio Armani line, helmets, goggles and gloves completed the gear.

For evening, velvet suits were set off by bright pink or blue vests or turtle-necks. Velvet ties added a richness to business suits invariably paired white shirts, the ties slightly arching out of the suit jacket, smartly unsettling the silhouette. Quilted bags maintained the collection's softness. A stunning dark leather midi coat with furry leopard print liner would turn heads even in tony Cortina or Aspen.

"These are all things you know of Armani," said Armani, who turns 90 in July.

"I don't think that men need to be stunned every time by some strained element," he told Italian journalists backstage. (AP)

TOKYO: Members of a group of men who say they were sexually abused as boys by a Japanese entertainment mogul are accusing the company behind the scandal, previously known as Johnny's, of not being sincere in dealing with the victims.

Shimon Ishimaru, who represents the victims' group, said many have not yet received compensation. The group has asked to

meet with company officials, but that has not happened, he said at a news conference with three other men who said they were victims.

Ishimaru is among hundreds of men who have come forward since last year, alleging they were sexually abused as teens by boy band producer Johnny Kitagawa. Kitagawa, who died in 2019, was



Ishimaru



Kitagawa

never charged and remained powerful in the entertainment industry.

The company finally acknowledged Kitagawa's long-rumored abuse last year. The company's chief made a public apology in May. The Japanese government has also pushed for compensation.

The company, which has changed its name from Johnny & Associates

to Smile-Up, said Monday it has received requests for compensation from 939 people. Of those, 125 have received compensation, it said in a statement. The company has set up a panel of three former judges to look into the claims.

"We are proceeding with those with whom we have reached an agreement on payments," it said,

while promising to continue with its efforts.

It did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday's news conference.

The victims' group said it has been approached by dozens of people who had been told by the company that there was not enough evidence to honor their claims. (AP)

People & Places

Moments

LOS ANGELES: So it be, so it is, as Cousin Greg would say: "Succession" had a fittingly successful sendoff at the Emmys, the addictive saga of the roiling Roy family dynasty winning best drama for a third time and five more awards, including three top acting prizes.

But "Succession" was not the only show to make a ludicrously capacious haul. "The Bear" had a bearish night indeed, fully dominating the comedy category in its first season, winning the top prize and three acting awards.

And the chaotic, darkly humorous "Beef" was the other big victor, winning best limited series, with leads Steven Yeun and Ali Wong becoming the first Asian Americans to win in their categories. Also making history: star Quinta Brunson of "Abbott Elementary," the first Black winner in her category since 1981.

It was not a night of upsets, with most predictions holding. But it was not without pleasant surprises, including a series of cast reunions of beloved shows - some more effective than others - like "The Sopranos," "Cheers,"



Wong

"Grey's Anatomy," "Ally McBeal" and more. Natasha Lyonne and Tracee Ellis Ross filled their mouths with bonbons in a throwback to the classic "I Love Lucy" candy assembly line scene.

There was a lot of kid talk on the podium, with John Oliver beseeching the crowd to tell him where to buy Pokemon cards for his kids, Sarah Snook of "Succession" paying tribute to her own newborn daughter, and her costar Kieran Culkin actually telling his wife he wanted more kids.

Hopefully those kids will be as nice to their mama as host Anthony Anderson, who knew just how to delegate, giving Mom Doris a key job.

For details, and other notable moments of the night, read on:

Anderson had said before the show that the pressure was off. He meant because he wasn't nominated this year, but he could also have meant that his hosting gig had to go more smoothly than that of Jo Koy at the Golden Globes. Indeed it did, perhaps partly because Anderson wasn't trying to roast any celebrities. Plugging into the nostalgia theme of the show's 75th anniversary, Anderson began with his own version of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," hanging up his coat, sitting at a piano and singing themes for TV classics, like "Good Times" and "The Facts of Life." Anderson then asked winners to keep their speeches tight, and introduced his secret weapon.

"When you see my Mama coming, just thank Jesus and your family and wrap it up," the host said. And indeed, Doris Bowman, in the front seats, made appearances throughout the night, the human equivalent of play-off music. Bowman illustrated her power early, interrupting her own son's opening monologue by telling him, "Time's up, baby." Then she certainly seemed to keep winner Jennifer Coolidge in check. Oliver tried to test the new system after winning best scripted variety show: "I'm not leaving without being played off by Anthony Anderson's mom. So I'm going to start reading off the names of the Liverpool football team." When she popped up, he quickly said: "I'd like to thank Jesus and my family. Thank you."

Lorraine Bracco and Michael Imperioli from "The Sopranos" celebrated the 25th anniversary of the show's premiere with a moment in a therapist's office. The cast of "Ally McBeal" had a dancing reunion amid bathroom stalls. Some "Grey's Anatomy" cast members - including Ellen Pompeo, Katherine Heigl and Chandra Wilson, but no Sandra Oh and no McDreamy! - gathered in a hospital room for a victory lap as the longest medical drama in TV history. Anderson honored "Game of Thrones" wearing a massive fur-lined cloak. And "Cheers" drew cheers with a reunion of stars Ted Danson, Kelsey Grammer, Rhea Perlman, John Ratzenberger and George Wendt, who was greeted by his signature "Norm!" scream. Also appearing: Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers, the surviving cast members of "All in the Family," and the casts of "Martin" and "It's Only Sunny in Philadelphia."

It was a seemingly endless succession of "Succession" winners trooping to the stage on a final triumphant night for the HBO drama. Matthew Macfadyen, who played "human grease stain" Tom Wamsbagn, as he described his character at the Globes, won best supporting actor for a second time and kept his speech to thanking Snook and "my other onscreen wife," Nicholas Braun, who played hapless Cousin Greg: "Acting with you has been one of the most wonderful things in my career." Snook, winning best actress as the very, very complicated Shiv Roy, spoke about how being pregnant helped her acting because it sent the hormones flowing, and told her recently arrived baby daughter: "It's all for you, from here on out." Kieran Culkin, in an emotional speech, thanked his wife, Jazz, for two amazing kids, and threw in a tiny request: "And Jazz, I want more. You said maybe, if I win!"

Could "The Bear" replicate its success from the Golden Globes? Yes, chef, with Jeremy Allen White and Ayo Edebiri winning for best actor and best supporting actress in a comedy, and Ebon Moss-Bachrach winning



Matty Matheson, (center), and the team from 'The Bear' accept the award for outstanding comedy series during the 75th Primetime Emmy Awards on Monday, Jan. 15, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. Natasha Lyonne and Tracee Ellis Ross look on from right. (AP)



The team from 'Beef', winners of the award for outstanding limited or anthology series, pose with award. (AP)



The 'Last Week Tonight with John Oliver' team poses with the award for outstanding writing for a variety series. (AP)



Kieran Culkin accepts the award for outstanding lead actor for 'Succession.' (AP)



The team from 'Elton John Live: Farewell From Dodger Stadium' poses with the Emmy for outstanding variety special (live). (AP)



Sarah Snook poses with award for outstanding lead actress for 'Succession.' (AP)



The team from 'The Daily Show With Trevor Noah' poses with award for outstanding variety talk series. (AP)



Jeremy Allen White winner of best actor in comedy series. (AP)



Ebon Moss-Bachrach with outstanding supporting actor award. (AP)

List of top Emmy Award winners

LOS ANGELES, Jan 16, (AP): List of the top winners of the prime-time Emmy Awards:

- Best Drama Series: "Succession"
- Best Comedy Series: "The Bear"
- Best Limited Or Anthology Series: "Beef"
- Actor In A Drama Series: Kieran Culkin, "Succession"
- Actor In A Comedy Series: Jeremy Allen White, "The Bear"
- Actress In A Drama Series: Sarah Snook, "Succession"
- Supporting Actress In A Comedy Series: Ayo Edebiri, "The Bear"
- Actress In A Comedy Series: Quinta Brunson, "Abbott Elementary"
- Supporting Actress In A Drama Series: Jennifer Coolidge, "The White Lotus"
- Supporting Actor In A Drama Series: Matthew Macfadyen, "Succession"
- Supporting Actor In A Comedy Series: Ebon Moss-Bachrach, "The Bear"
- Scripted Variety Series: "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver"
- Supporting Actress In A Limited Or Anthology Series Or Movie: Niecy Nash-Betts, "Dahmer, Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story"
- Reality Competition Series: "RuPaul's Drag Race"
- Talk Series: "The Daily Show With Trevor Noah"
- Supporting Actor In A Limited Or Anthology Series Or Movie: Paul Walter Hauser, "Black Bird"
- Live Variety Special: "Elton John Live: Farewell From Dodger Stadium"
- Actor In A Limited Series Or TV Movie: Steven Yeun, "Beef"
- Actress In A Limited Series Or TV Movie: Ali Wong, "Beef"



Jennifer Coolidge with outstanding supporting actress award. (AP)



Steven Yeun with award for outstanding lead actor for comedy. (AP)



Ayo Edebiri, winner of the award for outstanding supporting actress in a comedy series. (AP)



Quinta Brunson, winner of the award for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series. (AP)



Niecy Nash-Betts with award for outstanding supporting actress in a limited series. (AP)



Paul Walter Hauser, winner of outstanding supporting actor award in a limited series. (AP)

a supporting actor award. Onstage, Moss-Bachrach gave costar Matty Matheson a comically long kiss before Matheson saluted the show, which dramatizes the sacrifices people in the restaurant business make: "I just love restaurants so much. The good, the bad. It's rough. We're all broken inside and every single day we gotta show up

and cook and make people feel good by eating something and sitting at a table. It's really beautiful."

Big-name actors became fanboys and fangirls in the presence of Carol Burnett, 90, the first woman to host a restaurant show. A standing ovation greeted the veteran comedienne, who had an immediate zinger: "A lot has



Anderson



Bracco

changed in the last 46 years. For the better. Progress has been made and it truly warms my heart to see how men are doing in comedy," the seven-time Emmy-winner said. Christina Applegate introduced Burnett by saying she has only one picture of herself framed - with Burnett. "She is more important to me than any of you," Applegate

said. Another star awed by Burnett was the woman who received her prize from her: Brunson, the "Abbott Elementary" star and writer who won best actress in a comedy series, the first Black winner in the category since Isabel Sanford won in Norman Lear's classic "The Jeffersons" in 1981. (AP)

The Conversation

Immunologist explains immune system's multi-threat defense

What if every germ hits you at the exact same time?

By Joseph Larkin III
University of Florida

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

Curious Kids is a series for children of all ages. If you have a question you'd like an expert to answer, send it to curiouskids@the-conversation.com.

What would happen if all the diseases in the world hit us at the exact same time? - Gabriella, age 12, Irving, Texas

When I was younger, I would watch "Batman" on my black-and-white television after school. Usually, Batman would face either the Joker, the Penguin, the Puzzler, Catwoman or any one of his usual opponents. However, on some occasions, Batman would have to face them all at the same time.

What would happen if, like Batman, the immune system had to face all of its rivals at once?

I am an immunologist who teaches the fundamentals of immunology to college undergraduates. My research generally focuses on factors that regulate immune responses and prevent autoimmune diseases - conditions where the immune system attacks your own body. As a scientist studying how we build immunity against pathogens such as the virus that causes COVID-19, understanding how the immune system combats multiple threats at the same time is immensely important to me.

There's no reason why you can't come down with strep throat at the same time as when you have a cold. In fact, sometimes fighting off one enemy can leave a hole in your defenses that another opportunistic pathogen can take advantage of.

The first point to consider is what your immune system protects you from. The potential bad guys include cancer cells and dangerous microorganisms - including bacteria, viruses, fungi and more - that cause infections. The immune system must also be careful not to damage healthy cells and beneficial microorganisms that live on and inside you.

You interact with thousands of microorganisms with every breath of air you take. Is the immune system facing off against all of them? Sort of.

Energy

It takes a tremendous amount of energy to fight a battle once a rival gains a foothold within your blood or tissues, so your immune system works to prevent it from getting in the body in the first place. Your skin, snot, saliva and tears form a critical first line of defense. This is why burn victims who lose too much skin often die from overwhelming infection - their defensive barriers are too compromised and pathogens pour in.

The immune system greatly prefers catching a microbe in snot and blowing it out of your nose, or giving you time to wash it off the skin of your hands, over having to wage a cellular war. Gathering an army of immune cells to fight pathogens takes a lot of energy and makes you feel awful.

For example, the immune system increases your body temperature to make it an uncomfortable place for microorganisms to live and grow, but that fever can also make you want to lie down for days.

When Batman faced multiple opponents, he would find a weakness shared by all of the opponents and tar-

get it to foil their plans. The immune system uses the exact same strategy.

Certain microbes are considered pathogens largely because they are in the wrong place - such as inside your body instead of on your skin - and causing damage. Pathogens have specific parts on their surfaces called pathogen associated molecular patterns, or PAMPs.

Very importantly, your body doesn't make PAMPs. This means if your immune system comes across a PAMP, it knows it isn't supposed to be there and will mount an attack. Because the same PAMP is present on many different pathogens, a strategy to combat one PAMP can defeat many pathogens.

There are molecules in cells all over your body that can recognize PAMPs and destroy anything those PAMPs are on. It's as though your immune system set up booby traps that can only attack your enemies.

Many of those booby traps are toll-like receptors. This family of molecules is located on the surface and inside of many of your cells. Once microbes contact these booby traps, they trigger an alarm that warn other cells of potential danger. In technical terms, this alarm is called inflammation.

Strategy

Whereas Batman would need to think of a new strategy to combat the Joker, the Penguin and Catwoman, your immune system devised a plan long ago.

When the virus that causes COVID-19 emerged in 2019, it was something people's immune systems likely had never seen before. However, some people already had immune cells that could target components of the virus. How is that possible?

The immune system makes many immune cells that are specific to antigens, or unique and recognizable parts of cancers and microorganisms, it hasn't encountered before. This occurs through a process where pieces of your DNA randomly recombine to form unique immune cell receptors. The DNA in each of these immune cells is different from the DNA in any other cell in your body. Researchers believe that each person can generate at least a trillion different combinations of immune receptors, which is more than the number of pathogens an average person would ever face in their lifetime overall.

Although the immune system makes a lot of immune cells, most of them aren't used because you're not exposed to the antigen they're made to recognize. However, when an immune cell recognizes an antigen, it rapidly makes many copies of itself. Since pathogens can also multiply rapidly, clonal selection allows you to rapidly raise an army to fight them.

Usually this strategy works well with one or two coinfections, such as if you have the common cold and an eye infection at the same time. But what if you were infected with a trillion pathogens at the same time? It would take a tremendous amount of energy and time to build an appropriate army against each microorganism all at once. Unfortunately, the immune system likely would be overwhelmed by this challenge, and you would probably die.

Fortunately, your immune system - like Batman - usually figures out the best way to shift a battle against rivals to its favor, pulling out a victory in the final minutes of the episode. (AP)

Surgeon general's report could provide insight

60 years after smoking report, public health experts call for vaping clarity

NEW YORK, Jan 16, (AP) - Sixty years ago, the US surgeon general released a report that settled a longstanding public debate about the dangers of cigarettes and led to huge changes in smoking in America.

Today, some public health experts say a similar report could help clear the air about vaping.

Many US adults believe nicotine vaping is as harmful as - or more dangerous than - cigarette smoking. That's wrong. The US Food and Drug Administration and most scientists agree that, based on available evidence, electronic cigarettes are far less dangerous than traditional cigarettes.

But that doesn't mean e-cigarettes are harmless either. And public health experts disagree about exactly how harmful, or helpful, the devices are. Clarifying information is urgently needed, said Lawrence Gostin, a public health law expert at Georgetown University.

"There have been so many confusing messages about vaping," Gostin said. "A surgeon general's report could clear that all up."

Disease

One major obstacle: E-cigarettes haven't been around long enough for scientists to see if vapers develop problems like lung cancer and heart disease.

"There's a remarkable lack of evidence," said Dr. Kelly Henning, who leads the public health program at Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Cigarette smoking has long been described as the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention puts the annual toll at 480,000 lives. That count should start to fall around 2030, according to a study published last year by the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, thanks in part to a decline in smoking rates that began in the 1960s.

Back then, ashtrays were everywhere and more than 42% of US adults smoked.

On Jan. 11, 1964, US Surgeon General Luther Terry released an authoritative report that said smoking causes



A health warning is seen on the packaging of a disposable vaping pod device in Washington on Monday, June 26, 2023. Sixty years ago, the US surgeon general released a report that settled a longstanding public debate about the dangers of cigarettes and led to huge changes in smoking in America. (AP)

illness and death - and the government should do something about it. The report is considered a watershed moment: In the decades that followed, warning labels were put on cigarette packs, cigarette commercials were banned, governments raised tobacco taxes and new restrictions were placed on where people could light up.

By 2022, the adult smoking rate was 11%.

Some experts believe e-cigarettes deserve some of the credit. The devices were billed as a way to help smokers quit, and the FDA has authorized a handful of e-cigarettes as less-harmful alternatives for adult smokers.

Vaping's popularity exploded in the 2010s, among both adults but and teens. In 2014, e-cigarettes surpassed combustible cigarettes as the tobacco product that youth used the most. By 2019, 28% of high schoolers were vaping.

U.S. health officials sounded alarms, fearing that kids hooked on nicotine would rediscover cigarettes. That hasn't happened. Last year, the high school smoking rate was less than 2% - far lower than the 35% rate seen about 25 years ago.

"That's a great public health triumph. It's an almost unbelievable one," said Kenneth Warner, who studies tobacco-control policies at the University of Michigan.

"If it weren't for e-cigarettes, I think we would be hearing the public health community shouting at the top of their lungs about the success of getting kids not to smoke," he said.

Chemicals

Cigarettes have been called the deadliest consumer product ever invented. Their smoke contains thousands of chemicals, at least 69 of which can cause cancer.

The vapor from e-cigarettes has been estimated to contain far fewer chemicals, and fewer carcinogens. Some toxic substances are present in both, but show up in much lower concentrations in e-cigarette vapor than in cigarette smoke.

Studies have shown that smokers who completely switch to vaping have better lung function and see other health improvements.

"I would much rather see someone vaping than smoking a Marlboro.

There is no question in my mind that vaping is safer," said Donald Shopland, who was a clerk for the committee that generated the 1964 report and is co-author of a forthcoming book on it.

But what about the dangers to people who have never smoked?

There have been 100 to 200 studies looking at vaping, and they are a mixed bag, said Dr. Neal Benowitz, of the University of California, San Francisco, a leading academic voice on nicotine and tobacco addiction. The studies used varying techniques, and many were limited in their ability to separate the effects of vaping from former cigarettes smoking, he said.

Asthma

"If you look at the research, it's all over the map," Warner said.

Studies have detected bronchitis symptoms and aggravation of asthma in young people who vape. Research also indicates vaping also can affect the cells that line the blood vessels and heart, leading to looks for a link to heart disease. Perhaps the most cited concern is nicotine, the stimulant that makes cigarettes and vapes addictive.

Animal studies suggest nicotine exposure in adolescents can affect development of the area of the brain responsible for attention, learning and impulse control. Some research in people suggests a link between vaping and ADHD symptoms, depression and feelings of stress. But experts say that the research is very limited and more work needs to be done.

Meanwhile, there's not even a clear scientific consensus that vaping is an effective way to quit smoking, with different studies coming up with different conclusions.

Last month, the World Health Organization raised alarms about the rapidly growing global markets for electronic cigarettes, noting they come in thousands of flavors that attract young people.

In 2016, US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy said efforts were needed to prevent and reduce e-cigarette use by children and young adults, saying nicotine in any form is unsafe for kids.

Why multiple sclerosis affects Europeans?

Ancient human DNA sheds light on MS mystery

WASHINGTON, Jan 16, (AP) - Ancient DNA helps explain why northern Europeans have a higher risk of multiple sclerosis than other ancestries: It's a genetic legacy of horseback-riding cattle herders who swept into the region about 5,000 years ago.

The findings come from a huge project to compare modern DNA with that culled from ancient humans' teeth and bones - allowing scientists to trace both prehistoric migration and disease-linked genes that tagged along.

When a Bronze Age people called the Yamnaya moved from the steppes of what are now Ukraine and Russia into northwestern Europe, they carried gene variants that today are known to

increase people's risk of multiple sclerosis, researchers reported Wednesday.

Yet the Yamnaya flourished, widely spreading those variants. Those genes probably also protected the nomadic herders from infections carried by their cattle and sheep, concluded the research published in the journal Nature.

"What we found surprised everyone," said study co-author William Barrie, a genetics researcher at the University of Cambridge. "These variants were giving these people an advantage of some kind."

It's one of several findings from a first-of-its-kind gene bank with thousands of samples from early humans in Europe and western Asia, a project

headed by Eske Willerslev of Cambridge and the University of Copenhagen who helped pioneer the study of ancient DNA. Similar research has traced even earlier cousins of humans such as Neanderthals.

Using the new gene bank to explore MS was a logical first step. That's because while MS can strike any population, it is most common among white descendants of northern Europeans and scientists have been unable to explain why.

The potentially disabling disease occurs when immune system cells mistakenly attack the protective coating on nerve fibers, gradually eroding them. It causes varying symptoms - numbness

and tingling in one person, impaired walking and vision loss in another - that often wax and wane.

It's not clear what causes MS although a leading theory is that certain infections could trigger it in people who are genetically susceptible. More than 230 genetic variants have been found that can increase someone's risk.

The researchers first examined DNA from about 1,600 ancient Eurasians, mapping some major shifts in northern Europe's population. First, farmers from the Middle East began supplanting hunter-gatherers and then, nearly 5,000 years ago, the Yamnaya began moving in - traveling with horses and wagons as they herded cattle and sheep.

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Norfolk State thrash Virginia-Lynchburg

N. Carolina A&T squeezes past Hampton

HAMPTON, Va. Jan 16, (AP): Landon Glasper scored 24 points and Camian Shell hit the game-winning jump shot with two seconds remaining as the Aggies knocked off Hampton 81-80 on Monday night.

Glasper also contributed eight rebounds for the Aggies (4-13, 2-2 Coastal Athletic Association). Shell scored 19 points and added eight assists. Nikolaos Chitkoukis had 15 points and shot 7 of 9 from the field.

Jordan Nesbitt led the Pirates (4-13, 0-5) in scoring, finishing with 17 points and five assists. Jerry Deng added 17 points for Hampton. Tristan Maxwell also had 12 points. The Pirates extended their losing streak to eight in a row.



Maryland's Jahmir Young, drives to the basket as Illinois' Ty Rodgers defends during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game Sunday, Jan. 14, 2024, in Champaign, Ill. Maryland upset Illinois streak to seven in a row.

McNeese 88, Lamar 69

In Lake Charles, La. Christian Shumate scored 21 points as McNeese beat Lamar 88-69 on Monday night.

Shumate had 15 rebounds for the Cowboys (15-2, 4-0 Southland Conference). Shahada Wells added 19 points while shooting 5 for 13 (3 for 7 from 3-point range) and 6 of 6 from the free throw line, and he also had nine assists and six steals. Javohn Garcia had 17 points and shot 6 for 8, including 3 for 4 from beyond the arc. The Cowboys extended their winning streak to 10 games.

Chris Pryor finished with 19 points and four assists for the Cardinals (9-8, 3-1). BB Knight added 13 points and four assists for Lamar. Cody Pennebaker also had 10 points.

Beth-Cookman 83, Southern 81 OT

In Daytona Beach, Fla. Jakobi Heady and Dhashon Dyson scored 19 points apiece and Heady scored the final five points in overtime to rally Bethune-Cookman to an 83-81 victory over Southern on Monday night.

Heady hit a game-tying 3-pointer with 36 seconds remaining and added two free throws with seven seconds left, adding five rebounds for the Wildcats (7-9, 2-1 Southwestern Athletic Conference). Reggie Ward Jr. had 15 points and shot 4 of 7 from the field and 7 for 8 from the line. Dyson hit a jumper with three seconds left in regulation, forcing overtime tied at 71.

The Jaguars (9-8, 3-1) were led in scoring by Tai'Reon Joseph, who finished with 31 points and two steals. Brandon Davis added 20 points and two steals. Tidjiane Droumassi also had 12 points, six assists and two steals. The loss ended a five-game winning streak for the Jaguars.

Sacred Heart 80, Le Moyne 73
In Syracuse, N.Y. Joey Reilly had 23 points in Sacred Heart's 80-73 win

against Le Moyne on Monday night.

Reilly shot 7 for 9 (5 for 6 from 3-point range) and 4 of 4 from the free throw line for the Pioneers (9-10, 3-1 Northeast Conference). Aidan Carpenter scored 20 points while going 7 of 13 from the floor, including 1 for 6 from 3-point range, and 5 for 6 from the line. Alex Sobel had nine points and was 3 of 6 shooting and 3 of 4 from the free throw line.

Kaiyem Cleary led the way for the Dolphins (6-11, 1-2) with 19 points and 11 rebounds. Darrick Jones Jr. added 10 points for Le Moyne. In addition, Nathan McClure finished with nine points.

Alabama Ste 72, Alabm A&M 55

In Mobile, Ala., Isaiah Range had 20 points in Alabama State's 72-55 win over Alabama A&M on Monday night.

Range shot 7 for 13, including 6 for 9 from beyond the arc for the Hornets (9-9, 4-1 Southwestern Athletic Conference). Amarr Knox scored nine points while finishing 4 of 12 from the floor. Antonio Madlock was 2 of 7 shooting and 4 of 4 from the free throw line to finish with eight points.

The Bulldogs (3-15, 2-3) were led by Dailin Smith, who recorded 19 points and two steals. Cameron Tucker added eight points and seven rebounds for Alabama A&M. In addition, Caleb Blackwell finished with seven points.

Nicholls 78, New Orleans 75

In Thibodaux, La., Jamal West scored 23 points and Jalen White hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 1:20 left to play to send Nicholls to a 78-75 victory over New Orleans on Monday night.

West added seven rebounds and four blocks for the Colonels (8-9, 3-1 Southland Conference). Robert Brown III shot 8 for 13, including 2 for 5 from beyond the arc to add 18 points. Jalen White was 4 of 9 shooting (2 for 6 from 3-point range) to finish with 12 points.

Texas A&M 73, S/Eastnn Louis 68

In Hammond, La., Jordan Roberts scored 17 points to guide Texas A&M-Corpus Christi to a 73-68 victory over Southeastern Louisiana on Monday night.

Roberts was 6 of 15 shooting (5 for 11 from 3-point range) for the Islanders (10-7, 3-1 Southland Conference). Garry Clark scored 12 points and added seven rebounds. Owen Dease had 10 points and shot 3 for 11 (2 for 8 from 3-point range) and 2 of 4 from the free throw line.

Roger McFarlane led the way for the Lions (6-11, 1-3) with 18 points and eight rebounds. Nick Caldwell added 16 points and Roscoe Eastmond scored 14 with six assists.

Green returns from NBA suspension but Warriors 'succumb' to Grizzlies



Indiana Pacers guard Benedict Mathurin (00) goes up to shoot over Utah Jazz center Walker Kessler (24) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Monday, Jan. 15, 2024, in Salt Lake City. (AP)

Sixers shoot down Rockets

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Jan 16, (AP): Vince Williams Jr. scored 24 points, GG Jackson added a career-high 23 and the Memphis Grizzlies defeated the Golden State Warriors 116-107 on Monday night in Draymond Green's return from his NBA suspension.

Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with 18 points despite shooting 4 of 20 from the field.

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 26 points, and Jonathan Kuminga had 20 points and 11 rebounds. Andrew Wiggins scored 16.

Green, suspended by the league indefinitely after he hit Phoenix Suns center Jusuf Nurkic in the face Dec. 12, played 23 minutes for the Warriors and scored seven points.

76ers 124, Rockets 115

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid returned from his latest injury to score 41 points and grab 10 rebounds in Philadelphia's win over Houston.

Embiid had his 16th straight 30-10 game. Tyrese Maxey added 27 points for the Sixers.

Alperen Sengun led the Rockets with 19 points. Dillon Brooks scored 18.

The 29-year-old Embiid missed the previous three games with left knee inflammation (the 76ers went 1-2). He had played just two games this month after missing all four on the 76ers' holiday road trip. The Sixers are 3-7 this season without Embiid, the reigning NBA MVP and two-time defending league scoring champion. He entered Monday leading the NBA in scoring at 34.6 points per game.

Mavericks 125, Pelicans 120

In Dallas, Kyrie Irving scored 42 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. had 41 and Dallas split a two-game home set with New Orleans.

The second game in franchise history with two 40-point scorers came with superstar Luka Doncic missing his third consecutive game due to a sprained ankle. Irving and Doncic combined for the other such game in March.

Zion Williamson scored 30 points but was 6 of 11 on free throws, including a miss with 17 seconds left when he had a chance to get the Pelicans even after Dallas fouled him on purpose.

The Mavericks were down seven midway through the fourth quarter before Hardaway hit consecutive 3-pointers to give them a 112-111 lead. Hardaway finished one point off his career high.

CJ McCollum scored 23 points for the Pelicans.

Celtics 105, Raptors 96

In Toronto, Jayson Tatum had 19 points and 14 rebounds, Jrue Holiday and Derrick White each scored 22 and Boston won its eighth straight meeting with Toronto.

Kristaps Porzingis added 15 points and Al Horford had 10 points and 11 rebounds as the Celtics completed a four-game season sweep of their Atlantic Division rivals.

BASKETBALL

RJ Barrett scored 24 points and Immanuel Quickley had 21 in the Raptors' fourth consecutive loss.

Boston forward Jaylen Brown sat out because of a hyperextended right knee. Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said Brown is dealing with soreness but the injury is not considered serious.

The Raptors were without guard Gary Trent Jr. (flu-like symptoms) and center Jakob Poeltl (sprained left ankle). Toronto shot a season-worst 4 for 32 from 3-point range.

Lakers 112, Thunder 105

In Los Angeles, Anthony Davis had 27 points and 15 rebounds, LeBron James scored 25 and Los Angeles snapped Oklahoma City's four-game winning streak.

D'Angelo Russell had 14 points and seven assists as the Lakers held off the powerhouse Thunder in the fourth quarter for only LA's sixth victory in 18 games, with two of those wins coming against Oklahoma City.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 16 of his 24 points in the first half while playing through a right knee sprain for Oklahoma City. The Lakers are responsible for two of the Thunder's four losses in their last 16 games.

Jalen Williams scored 25 points, but Chet Holmgren and Josh Giddey both struggled offensively to a combined 17 points for the Thunder, who opened a key four-game swing against some of the West's other top teams. Oklahoma City also faces the Clippers and the conference-leading Timberwolves on its trip.

Jazz 132, Pacers 105

In Salt Lake City, Lauri Markkanen had 32 points and 10 rebounds, Collin Sexton scored a season-high 30 and Utah routed Indiana for its sixth straight victory.

Markkanen made all 10 of his free throws and has scored 30 points or more three times in January.

Keyonte George had 19 points and Jordan Clarkson added 17 for the Jazz, who shot 55.6% and led wire-to-wire for the second time this season. Utah (22-20) has won nine straight at home by an average of 16.8 points.

Buddy Hield and Andrew Nembhard each scored 14 for the Pacers, who played their fourth game without injured Tyrese Haliburton (left hamstring).

Magic 98, Knicks 94

In New York, Paolo Banchero had 20 points, Cole Anthony scored 10 of his 15 in the fourth quarter and Orlando beat New York to stop a three-game skid.

Wendell Carter Jr. added 17 points for the Magic,

going 7 for 11 off the bench after missing five games with right knee tendinitis.

The Magic trailed by 11 in the third quarter but took charge midway through the final period. They grabbed the lead for good at 90-89 when Anthony tipped in a missed shot with 3:45 to play.

Deuce McBride scored a career-high 20 points in a second straight start in place of Knicks guard Jalen Brunson, who has a bruised left calf. OG Anunoby added 17, but Julius Randle shot just 5 for 18 and was held to 15 points.

Cavaliers 109, Bulls 91

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 34 points, Jarrett Allen had 10 points and 14 rebounds for his ninth straight double-double, and Cleveland pulled away from Chicago late.

Caris LeVert added 16 points, seven rebounds and seven assists off the bench as the Cavaliers extended their longest winning streak of the season to five, despite blowing a 21-point lead in the second half. Cleveland closed out the game on a 29-10 run.

Cleveland made 20 3-pointers in a franchise-record 57 attempts - an NBA season high in regulation.

Nikola Vucevic had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Bulls. Coby White scored 18.

Heat 96, Nets 95, OT

In New York, Jimmy Butler returned after missing seven games with a sprained toe and scored 31 points, including two free throws with 11.8 seconds left in overtime to help Miami beat Brooklyn.

Tyler Herro had 29 points and 11 rebounds, and Bam Adebayo added 11 points and 20 boards in the Heat's third consecutive win.

Mikal Bridges scored 26 points and Cam Thomas added 23 for Brooklyn. The Nets have lost three straight and eight of nine.

Pistons 129, Wizards 117

In Washington, Alec Burks came off the bench to score 34 points and Detroit beat Washington for only its fourth win of the season.

Jalen Duren had 20 points and 19 rebounds, and Jaden Ivey added 24 points, seven rebounds and six assists to help the NBA-worst Pistons (4-36) snap a seven-game losing streak. Burks went 8 of 12 from 3-point range as Detroit shot almost 56% from the field.

Tyus Jones had 22 points, seven assists and six rebounds to lead the Wizards (7-32).

Hawks 109, Spurs 99

In Atlanta, Trae Young sank his first six 3-point attempts in Atlanta's victory over San Antonio.

Young had 36 points, passing 10,000 for his career, and 13 assists. Dejounte Murray, the former Spurs guard who has been discussed in trade speculation, added 13 points and a season-high 13 rebounds.

Atlanta opened the second quarter with 11 straight points to lead 46-16 and extended it to 69-34 at halftime. But the Spurs closed to 99-93 behind Victor Wembanyama, who had nine dunks. The 7-foot-3 rookie scored 26 points with 13 rebounds after sitting out the second game of a back-to-back Saturday, a 122-116 loss to Chicago.

The Hawks had lost two straight and four of five.

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A trophy followed by tirades and ugly defeats

José Mourinho's turbulent stay at Roma is finished

ROME, Jan 16, (AP): It started with a big success. It descended into ugly outbursts and devastating defeats.

And now José Mourinho's turbulent tenure at Roma is finished.

Roma announced on Tuesday that the outspoken coach was leaving the club "with immediate effect" - two days after a 3-1 loss at AC Milan left the Giallorossi in ninth place in Serie A and at risk of missing the Champions League for a sixth straight season.

The club was also eliminated by Lazio in an Italian Cup derby last week.

Former Roma captain Daniele De Rossi, 40, was named as Mourinho's replacement, with a contract through to the end of the season.

Mourinho was in his third season at

the club and his contract was due to expire in June. He led the Giallorossi to the UEFA Conference League title in his first season and Roma was a Europa League finalist last season.

But Mourinho was also given a series of bans for his protests and tirades against referees - which was clearly not appreciated by Roma's American owners.

Mourinho was suspended by UEFA from four European games for verbally abusing the Europa League final referee in a stadium garage after Roma lost to Sevilla. He was also suspended for the game at Milan on Sunday due to protests.

"AS Roma can confirm that José Mourinho and his coaching staff will leave the club with immediate effect,"

the club said in a statement.

"We would like to thank José on behalf of all of us at AS Roma for his passion and efforts since his arrival at the club," said owners Dan and Ryan Friedkin. "We will always have great memories of his tenure at Roma, but we believe that an immediate change is in the best interests of the club."

SOCCER

The 60-year-old Mourinho, who said last month that he wanted to extend his contract at Roma, could be headed to a club in Saudi Arabia or a national team position.

The Conference League title in 2022 marked Roma's first European trophy

in more than six decades. It was also Mourinho's fifth European title.

Mourinho also won the 2003 UEFA Cup and 2004 Champions League with Porto; the 2010 Champions League with Inter Milan; and the 2017 Europa League with Manchester United - making him the first manager to lead four different clubs to European titles. He also coached Chelsea and Real Madrid to numerous domestic trophies.

But Mourinho's defensive style is a struggle to watch and his expensive contract was a burden for Roma's finances. The Portuguese coach, though, played a key role in luring standout players like Paulo Dybala and Romelu Lukaku to join the Giallorossi - and a constantly soldout Stadio Olimpico for matches was attributed to his outsized personality.

De Rossi's appointment in a caretaker role won't slow speculation the club wants to hire Antonio Conte to take over next season.

The 40-year-old De Rossi played 18 seasons with Roma as a midfielder and won the World Cup with Italy in 2006. He coached SPAL in Serie B for four months last season and was an assistant to Roberto Mancini as Italy won the European Championship in 2021.

De Rossi's father, Alberto, coached Roma's under-19 team for nearly two decades.

"The excitement of being able to sit on our bench is indescribable. Everyone knows what Roma means to me," De Rossi said. "However, the work that awaits us all has already taken precedence."



In this file photo, Roma's Jose Mourinho, celebrates their victory during the Europa Conference League final between AS Roma and Feyenoord at National Arena in Tirana, Albania. (AP)

Nadal takes on ambassador role

Rafa envisions tennis growth in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Jan 16: Rafael Nadal expressed his belief in the genuine potential for tennis development in Saudi Arabia following his appointment as an ambassador for the Saudi Tennis Federation, holding an impressive 22 major titles.

TENNIS

The Saudi Federation outlined that Nadal's role involves spending dedicated time each year in the country to contrib-

ute to children's training and foster greater interest in tennis. Plans are underway to establish a tennis training academy.

Despite his withdrawal from the Australian Open due to a muscle injury, Nadal conveyed his enthusiasm in a statement, stating, "Everywhere you see in Saudi Arabia, you can witness growth and progress, and I am excited to be a part of that."

Highlighting the country's commitment to tennis, Saudi Arabia hosted significant matches last year, featuring world number one Novak Djokovic playing against Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka facing Ons Jabeur.



Rafael Nadal exchanges pleasantries with Saudi tennis players.

A star-studded lineup for int'l show jumping



Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee, Walid Al-Marshoud.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16: The final preparations for the "Atyab Al-Marshoud" International Show Jumping Championship have been completed by the Supreme Organizing Committee, led by Walid Al-Marshoud. The annual championship, set to kick off tomorrow at the Kuwait Equestrian Center in the Sabhan area, will feature riders representing various local clubs. The competitions will span until Saturday evening, concluding with the crowning of the Grand Prix champion.

Walid Al-Marshoud, Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee and Director of the Championship, expressed his enthusiasm for the current edition, highlighting the significant participation from male and female riders representing both Arab and European countries. He emphasized that the championship has now become a staple in Kuwait's annual championship calendar. Al-Marshoud commended the support from the private sector for local championships, attributing it to the motivation of riders to excel and secure top positions.

The Al-Marshoud Championship holds international standing in the two-star category, offering a total prize pool exceeding 23 thousand dinars, along with an additional car prize for the ultimate champion.

Al-Marshoud extended his gratitude to the management of the Kuwait Equestrian Center for their unwavering support of the sport. He noted the allocation of valuable prizes for first-place winners, in addition to the coveted car prize presented to the Grand Prix champion.

Qatar eye round of 16, Lebanon look to bounce back

DOHA, Jan 16: The Qatar team is eager to secure a spot in the Asian Cup's round of 16 as it faces the Tajikistan national team at 5:30 pm today. Simultaneously, the Lebanon seeks redemption against China at 2:30 pm in the second round of the first group competitions.

Currently leading the group with three points, Qatar achieved a clean 3-0 victory against Lebanon in its first match. Tajikistan, on the other hand, secured one point with a draw against China in the initial round.

This encounter marks the first official clash between the two teams, having previously faced each other in three friendly matches, with Qatar winning two and losing one.

The defending champion, the Qatari team, will enjoy home advantage at Al Bayt Stadium, accommodating around 60,000 spectators, as it aims to continue its journey towards the round of 16.

SOCCER

Despite missing defender Hammam Al-Amin due to a sprained ankle, Qatar relies on experienced players like Hassan Al-Haydos (33 years old), boasting 176 international matches. Coach Bartolomé Márquez Lopez, in preparation for the match, studied the Tajikistan-China game to formulate an effective strategy.

In Group Four, the Iraq showcased its strength by defeating Indonesia 3-1, with goals from Muhammad Ali, Rashid, and Ayman Hussein.

This places Iraq in second position, tied with Japan, while Indonesia and Vietnam share the bottom spot with no points.

Meanwhile, the Jordan dominated the Malaysian side with a 4-0 victory at Al Janoub Stadium in Group Five. Goals from Mahmoud Mardi (12', 31') and Musa Al-Taamari (17', 85') propelled Jordan to the top of the group, edging out South Korea on goal difference after their 3-1 win against Bahrain.

Jordan dominate Malaysia

Joshua battles Ngannou in epic showdown in Saudi Arabia



Anthony Joshua and Francis Ngannou face off to promote their upcoming bout.



Jordan's Mahmoud Al-Mardi celebrates after scoring the opening goal.

Welsford wins 1st stage of Tour

ADELAIDE, Australia, Jan 16, (AP): Australian Sam Welsford won the first stage of the Tour Down Under on Tuesday, edging Phil Bauhaus by half a length in a bunch sprint.

Biniyam Gernay of Eritrea was third and Caleb Ewen of Australia fourth.

Welsford was riding his first race for his new German cycling team Bora-Hansgrohe and was set up for the stage win by a brilliant team performance at the end of the 144-kilometer (89-mile) stage which started and finished in the town of Tanunda in the Barossa Valley

wine district.

The 140-strong peloton completed three circuits of a 48-kilometer (30-mile) loop through Tanunda which included three climbs up Mengler's Hill. Conditions were hot and testing for the first World Tour event of the season.

The last climb and fast descent came provided a particular test to teams trying to establish themselves at the front of the peloton and to bring their sprinters forward for the finish. Several riders fell and there was considerable jostling on the final descent.

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 16, (AP): The extra-day experiment for the first round finished on time on the Australian Open's two main courts, with Jessica Pegula converting her second match point just before midnight to conclude the program on Tuesday.

In a bid to reduce the number of late finishes, organizers extended the Australian Open to 15 days - one more than usual. It started on a Sunday for the first time, and spread the first round over three days.

It didn't prevent Days 1 or 2 going well past midnight.

But Elena Rybakina and Carlos Alcaraz advanced in straight sets in night matches on Rod Laver Arena on Day 3, and Pegula finished off the Margaret Court Arena program to make show-court deadline by 10 minutes.

Wimbledon champion Alcaraz's 7-6 (5), 6-1, 6-2 win over 37-year-old Richard Gasquet and Olympic champion Alexander Zverev's 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (3), 6-3 victory over Dominik Koepfer meant a record 30 seeds advanced to the men's second round.

Sumit Nagal prevented it from being 31. He became the first Indian male to



Alexander Zverev of Germany plays a forehand return to compatriot Dominik Koepfer during their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

beat a seeded player at a Grand Slam event since 1989 with a 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 (5) triumph over No. 31 Alexander Bublik.

"The tour has great players, a lot of them that can beat anyone," Alcaraz

said. "So I think it's really, really open. But, 30 from 32, I think they deserve it."

His opinion on the three-day first-round format? "It's better for the players ... better for everyone," the 20-year-old Alcaraz said. "For the crowd to have more days to have matches, for the tournament as well."

The fifth-seeded Pegula started her day watching TV coverage of the Buffalo Bills beating the Pittsburgh Steelers 31-17 in an AFC wild-card playoff.

She finished it by beating Canadian qualifier Rebecca Marino 6-2, 6-4, and acknowledged some Buffalo fans in the crowd holding up "Billie" signs.

"I see some Bills fans over there. It was on at 8:30 this morning," she said in a post-match TV interview. "I'm happy I could finish the day with a win. It was a good day for Buffalo!"

The only match still in progress after hers finished just after midnight, with local hope Ajla Tomljanovic recovering a break in the third set to beat Petra Martić 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-4 in almost three hours.

TENNIS

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek survived an early test in her bid for a fifth major title when she held off 2020 champion Sofia Kenin 7-6 (2), 6-2 in the opener on Rod Laver Arena.

Kenin served for the first set at 5-4 but could not close it out. Swiatek rallied to take it in a tiebreaker and then broke serve five games later.

"It wasn't easy to find my rhythm. I felt a little bit off and Sofia did everything to keep it that way, huge respect to her," Swiatek said. "I managed to get my level up in the second set."

Swiatek faces another ex-Australian Open finalist next.

Danielle Collins, runner-up here two years ago, beat 2016 champion Angelique Kerber 6-2, 3-6, 6-1.

"A tough little bracket that we have!" Collins said. "I was like, 'wow, I get really great draws now. But if you're trying to win a Grand Slam, you have to beat everyone.'"

Kerber was one of three past champions making their returns to Melbourne Park for the first time as mothers. She joined four-time major winner Naomi Osaka as a first-round exit. Caroline Wozniacki, the 2018 winner, has reached the second round.

Last year's runner-up Rybakina advanced 7-6 (6), 6-4 over former No. 1-ranked Karolina Pliskova.

Victoria Azarenka, who won back-to-back titles here in 2012 and 2013, won a hard-hitting contest with Camila Giorgi of Italy 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.

Sloane Stephens picked up her first victory at the Australian Open since 2019, beating wild-card entry Olivia Gadecki 6-3, 6-1.

Among the other men advancing, 11th-seeded Casper Ruud beat Albert Ramos-Vinolas 6-1, 6-3, 6-1, No. 13 Grigor Dimitrov overcame Marton Fucsovics 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (1), 6-2 and Cameron Norrie defeated Juan Pablo Varillas 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

BOXING

Anthony Joshua, a former world champion in the World Boxing Association, the International Boxing Federation, and the World Boxing Organization, experienced a triumphant year. In the "Decisive Day" fight on December 23, he secured victory over Otto Wallin in five rounds during the Riyadh season events, reclaiming his status in the Elite heavyweight rankings.

Ngannou, a former UFC heavyweight champion, transitioned into boxing after his clash with WBC world champion Tyson Fury in "The Fiercest Man in the World" on October 28, which marked the beginning of the Riyadh season.

The intensity of the fight peaked in the third round when Ngannou delivered a powerful punch, causing Fury to collapse to the ring floor.



Thailand's Elias Dolah, (left), and Kyrgyzstan's Merk Kai reach for a header during the Asian Cup Group F soccer match between Kyrgyzstan and Thailand at Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium in Doha, Qatar. (AP)

Sports

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Kuwaiti shooters shine with silver, bronze

Baaklini clinches gold at Asian Shotgun Shooting Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 16, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti shooting team secured a silver and a bronze medal at the ongoing Kuwait Asian Shotgun Shooting Championship, featuring the participation of 26 teams. In the team competitions, Kuwait's Talal Al-Rashidi, Nasser Al-Muqlad, and Abdulrahman Al-Faihan clinched the bronze medal, with the Chinese team claiming gold and the Qataris securing silver.

SHOOTING

In the junior singles competition, promising shooter Salah Al-Rashidi achieved second place after engaging in a fierce competition with his Lebanese counterpart, Ghassan Baaklini, who secured the first gold medal for the Arabs in the tournament. Chinese athlete Yan Zhen Liu earned the bronze medal.

Expressing pride in representing Kuwait, Salah Al-Rashidi highlighted the significance of winning the silver medal at this prominent continental event. He also acknowledged the support provided by the Kuwaiti Federation.



Kuwait trap bronze medalists (right) on the podium with other shooters on the podium after the awarding ceremony.

KUNA photos

Kuwait fully prepared to 'host' the Gulf Cup

DOHA, Jan 16, (KUNA): A high-ranking sports official confirmed on Tuesday that Kuwait is set to host the Gulf Cup tournament (Khaleeji 26) as originally scheduled in December of this year. Hayef Al-Mutairi, Deputy Chairperson of the Kuwait Football Association and member of the Executive Office of the Arabian Gulf Cup Football Federation, reassured that Kuwait is fully prepared to host this significant sports event aimed at fostering brotherhood.

SOCCER

Following a meeting in Doha, Qatar, of the Executive Office, Al-Mutairi addressed any speculation, dismissing rumors that Kuwait had withdrawn from hosting the tournament. He clarified that the meeting, chaired by Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, the Gulf federation chairperson, focused on discussing the agenda, committee formation, confirming Kuwait's hosting, and outlining Iraq as an alternative, adhering to the federation's constituent rules.

In response to the rumors, the Kuwaiti Football Association, on Monday, officially declared its readiness to host the Gulf Cup games as planned in December.



Silver medalist Salah Al-Rashidi (left) displays his medal as officials look on.



A section of the VIP box.

Premier League says date has been set for 'hearing' into Manchester City's legal case

LONDON, Jan 16, (AP): A resolution to Manchester City's legal case with the Premier League might not be far away.

Richard Masters, the league's chief executive, said on Tuesday that a date had been set for proceedings to be heard in a sports tribunal. He didn't disclose that date, however.

The league has accused City of about 80 alleged breaches of its financial rules and 30 more relating to its alleged failure to cooperate with an investigation. The charges were announced in February last year.

If found guilty, penalties could include a deduction of points or even expulsion from the top division.

Speaking before a parliamentary select committee, Masters was questioned over why some financial

investigations, like those involving Everton and Nottingham Forest, could be dealt with quickly and others, like City's, took longer.

"The volume and character of the charges laid before Man City, which I obviously cannot talk about at all, are being heard in a completely different environment," Masters said.

SOCCER

"There is a date set for that proceeding. I cannot unfortunately tell you when that is, but that is progressing."

British newspaper The Daily Mail reported in November the hearing would take place in the late autumn of this year.

Since being hit with the slew of charges, City has retained its Premier League title, won the Champions League for the first time, and become club world champion.

Everton was handed the biggest sporting sanction in the Premier League's history - a 10-point deduction - after being found by an independent commission to have made a loss of 124.5 million pounds (\$155 million) over three years up to the end of the 2021-22 season.

The league's profit and financial sustainability rules allow clubs to lose a maximum of 105 million pounds (\$130 million) over a three-year period or face sanctions.

The number and scale of the charges laid before City means any punishment would likely be much more severe.

Bonmati takes women's prize

Messi edges Haaland in tiebreaker for FIFA's best men's player award

LONDON, Jan 16, (AP): Lionel Messi landed another prestigious award in soccer - barely.

The Argentina star needed a tiebreaker with Erling Haaland to win FIFA's best men's player prize.

He has national team captains to thank.

The voting breakdown showed Messi and Haaland with 48 points each after voting by a global panel of national team coaches and captains, selected journalists, plus fans online. The tiebreaker was whoever had more first-place or "5-point" scores from the votes of national team captains. That category was 107 to 64 for the Inter Miami forward.

Neither player showed up at the awards ceremony at Hammersmith Apollo theater in west London. Kylian Mbappé, the third finalist, skipped it too.

SOCCER

Messi had moved from Paris Saint-Germain to Inter Miami and led the David Beckham-owned team to a little-known Leagues Cup title - all while single-handedly elevating soccer's relevance in the United States.

The 36-year-old Argentina star also topped Haaland and Mbappé for his eighth Ballon d'Or award last October.

World Cup champion Aitana Bonmati showed up - and cleaned up. The 25-year-old Spain playmaker was named FIFA's best women's soccer player, building on her Ballon d'Or award last October, which followed a UEFA award in August.

And that was after she led Spain to World Cup glory and Barcelona to the Champions League title. She was named player of the tournament for both competitions.

Bonmati won Monday over Spain teammate Jenni Hermoso and Colombia star Linda Caicedo.

"It's been an exceptional and unique year that I'll remember all my life," Bonmati said in translated comments. "I owe this to the teams that I've played with. Without all of you, I wouldn't be here."

"The Best" awards represent FIFA's version of the older and more prestigious Ballon d'Or prize.

The women's eligibility period covered performances from Aug. 1, 2022 through the World Cup final last August.



In this file photo, Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi holds his Ballon d'Or trophy before the team's club friendly soccer match against New York City FC in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

Spain's women won their first World Cup by beating England 1-0 in the final in Sydney, Australia.

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola was named best men's coach, and England coach Sarina Wiegman took the women's prize. Guardiola led City to a treble of titles: Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup.



Manchester City's coach Pep Guardiola accepts the Best Men's Coach award during the FIFA Football Awards 2023 at the Eventim Apollo in Hammersmith, London. (AP)

Messi secured the FIFA award for the eighth time in 15 years. He had won it last year, too, after leading Argentina to the 2022 World Cup title.

Fans voted overwhelmingly for Messi, and journalists favored Haaland. The Man City striker had a slight edge in the votes from national team coaches. The national team captains leaned Messi.

The men's award did not consider the World Cup, which ended 13 months ago. It recognized achievements from after the tournament through Aug. 20.

Messi and Mbappé helped PSG win the French league title, but the team underperformed in the Champions League and French Cup - exiting both competitions in the round of 16.

That means Messi's exploits in the United States surely swayed some voters.

In rejecting Saudi Arabia for the MLS, Messi brought star power to a league that fights for relevance in an American sports landscape dominated by the NFL and NBA.

LeBron James, Serena Williams and Kim Kardashian were all on hand in Fort Lauderdale for Messi's debut on July 21, when the forward scored from a free kick goal in stoppage time to beat Cruz Azul 2-1.

The goals kept coming - 10 in seven games to lead the MLS club to its first-ever trophy by winning the Leagues Cup final on Aug. 19, one day before FIFA award eligibility period ended.

Haaland and Mbappé could make good arguments that they deserved to win.

Haaland scored 28 goals in 36 games in all club competitions from after the World Cup through the end of the 2022-23 season as a driving force in Manchester City winning the treble. The 6-foot-4 striker then scored three goals in two appearances for Norway in June.

Mbappé scored at nearly a goal-per-game clip in the period of eligibility for PSG and then for France in European Championship qualifying in March and June.

Messi's figures in France after the World Cup were good but unspectacular: nine goals and six assists in 22 games across all competitions.

The best goalkeeper awards went to Ederson of Brazil and Manchester City, and Mary Earps of England and Manchester United.