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# Produce dumped as state support lacks



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Vegetables are seen neatly stacked at a Kuwaiti cooperative society.

Arab ministers tackle AI

Farmers deplore low prices

## Digital development vital: CITRA

### Kuwait's roads teem with 2.42m vehicles

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Official data issued by the Central Statistics Bureau revealed that the number of vehicles plying through the streets of Kuwait reached 2.42 million; including 203,400 new cars that were licensed in 2022, reports Al-Anba daily.

The data stated that the number of cars in the country increased by 38.5 percent or 673,800 within 10 years, indicating the number of vehicles in 2013 was 1.748 million. Around 80 percent of the vehicles are licensed as private vehicles and their number reached 1.947 million.

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ABU DHABI, Jan 20, (KUNA): The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority of Kuwait (CITRA) Chairman and CEO Omar Al-Omar affirmed recently the importance of developing global digital systems, especially in the Arab world.

During his participation in the 27th session of Arab Telecommunications and Information Ministerial Council, Al-Omar said that there was a need to find a unified Arab network to develop communication systems and improve citizens' experience, ensuring quality and speed of information transfer, reach regional integration, and improved regional communication.

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KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: The problem related to disposing of Kuwaiti agricultural products in garbage containers has now emerged due to lack

AP session set, budget in focus

CAIRO, Jan 20, (KUNA): The economic and financial affairs committee at the Arab Parliament (AP) discussed Saturday some dossiers, in preparation for the plenary session due on Sunday, the Kuwaiti MP Khalid Al-Otaibi, a member of the committee, said.

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By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

of government support for the Kuwaiti farmers, as well as deprivation of support if they are unable to sell their products to the intermediary traders.

A number of citizens and farmers called on the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, and the Kuwait Farmers Union to promote the Kuwaiti product in the markets, and allow Kuwaiti farmers to sell their products directly to the cooperative societies.

They stressed that there are hidden hands working to undermine the Kuwaiti food commodities for the benefit of the intermediary traders.

In detail, Kuwaiti citizen Bou Saud revealed that Kuwaiti agricultural products are being dumped in garbage containers due to the lack of support from the state.

He expressed his dismay at a carton of tomatoes being sold for 200 fils in Shabra (vegetable market) in Kabd, while the same carton is sold for KD 1.250 in cooperative societies.

### Responsible

Bou Saud called on the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and all responsible parties to take necessary action to protect the Kuwaiti products.

He said he was shocked when he saw the price of a carton of "columbines" is 100 fils, a carton of sweet pepper 50 fils, and a carton of black eggplant about 120 fils.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti citizen Fahad Abdul Rahman said Kuwaiti producers do not find the required support from the state, and this increases the suffering of the Kuwaiti farmers.

He affirmed the importance of supporting Kuwaiti citizens to ensure expansion of the agricultural sector in Kuwait, especially since the Kuwaiti farmers' frequent suffering makes him neglect this field.

A Kuwaiti farmer Saleh Al-Otaibi called on all responsible authorities to permanently support Kuwaiti products so that citizens are not forced to throw their produce in garbage containers due to the abundant availability of tomatoes and their low value.

He indicated that the value of the crop may not be sufficient to cover the costs of transporting it in Shabra, due to which citizens are forced to throw quantities of their products into garbage containers despite the effort, fatigue, and labor wages they sustained.

Al-Otaibi said he wondered why the state forces Kuwaiti farmers to sell their products only to the merchant, instead of allowing them to sell their products directly to cooperative societies and parallel markets.

### Benefit

He stressed that there are those who work to benefit the intermediary traders, especially since the Kuwaiti farmers are deprived of support if they do not sell their products to the intermediary trader.

Al-Otaibi indicated that the price at which a carton of cucumbers is sold is 60 fils, but the citizens sell a carton of cucumbers for 30 fils, which leads to more losses because the Kuwaiti farmers must sell to the intermediary traders.

He said that he has turned to planting nurseries on his farm as long as growing vegetables causes losses, revealing that he owns a seed trading company and therefore he knows very well the extent of the Kuwaiti farmers' losses.

Al-Otaibi affirmed that the lack of demand for seeds confirms the extent to which many farmers have retreated from agriculture due to the absence of support for the Kuwaiti products.

He called on the Kuwaiti Farmers Union to convey the voice of the Kuwaiti farmers to the government so that there is an end to the suffering of the Kuwaiti farmers.

Al-Otaibi revealed that one of the difficulties is that farmers are not allowed to display their products in the branches of the Kuwait Farmers Union.

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## Analysis

### Middle East on edge as Gaza conflict escalates

CAIRO, Jan 20, (AP): Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip has raised the temperature on tensions across the Middle East, increasing the risk that other conflicts in the region could spin out of control.

Whether it is assaults on shipping vessels by Houthi rebels in Yemen or tit-for-tat attacks between Iran and Pakistan, a line can be drawn back to the war that was started when Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostage.

Since then, Israel has killed more than 24,000 Palestinians and displaced nearly 2 million others from their homes, arousing anger throughout the Muslim world.

With no end in sight to the war, tensions in the region are worsening by the day.

The Houthis, a rebel group that has held Yemen's capital since 2014, link their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden directly back to the war in Gaza. But their targets increasingly have had tenuous - if no links at all - to the war.

The U.S. has retaliated with multiple strikes against the Houthis, the latest coming Friday when Navy fighter jets targeted missile launchers in Yemen.

Armed and supported by Iran, the Houthis have a world view guided by their group's slogan: "God is the greatest, death to America, death to Israel, curse the Jews, victory to Islam."

Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, is locked in a stalemated war between the Houthis and parties under the banner of a Saudi-led coalition.

Any direct military confrontation with the U.S. bolsters the Houthis' position within Yemen's fractious political scene. It also raises their profile within the so-called "Axis of Resistance," which is made up of Iran and the militant groups it supports, including Hamas and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

The brewing conflict with the U.S. also allows the Houthis to ignore both Arab and international efforts to reach a permanent ceasefire and potential peace deal in Yemen.

The U.S. has a long, complicated history in Yemen. It includes America's relationship with the country's late 33-year strongman president, a years-long drone-strike campaign against suspected al-Qaida members and struggling to help broker an end to the war as famine threatens the country.

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## NewsWatch

**JERUSALEM:** Iran said Saturday it had conducted a successful satellite launch into its highest orbit yet, the latest for a program the West fears improves Tehran's ballistic missiles.

The announcement comes as heightened tensions grip the wider Middle East over Israel's continued war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and just days after Iran and Pakistan engaged in tit-for-tat airstrikes in each others' countries. (AP)

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan's political and military leaders on Friday moved to de-escalate tensions with Iran after this week's deadly airstrikes by Tehran and Islamabad that killed at least 11 people and marked a significant escalation in fraught relations between the neighbors.

The decision was apparently reached at a meeting of Pakistan's National Security Committee, chaired by caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on his return home after cutting short his trip to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Pakistan's powerful army chief Gen. Asim Munir attended the meeting. (AP)

**LONDON:** Two British warships collided in a harbor in Bahrain, causing damage to the vessels but no injuries, the Royal Navy said.

The HMS Chiddingfold appeared to reverse into the HMS Bangor as it was at a dock, according to video posted on social media.

"Why this happened is still to be established," said Rear Admiral Edward Ahlgren. "We train our people to the highest standards and rigorously enforce machinery safety standards, but unfortunately incidents of this nature can still happen." (AP)



Photo by Samer Shiker

Beach enthusiasts relish the weather along the coastline of Kuwait in Kuwait City.

Women, children main victims of Israel-Hamas war with 16,000 killed: UN

## Kuwait reiterates call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

CAIRO, Jan 20, (Agencies): Kuwait reaffirmed the consistency between its stance and that of other Arab and Muslim nations regarding the urgency of immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and reopening the border crossings to allow delivery of life-saving aid to residents there.

The State of Kuwait is firmly opposed to any attempt to evict the Palestinian people forcibly from their occupied territories, the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Tareq M. Al-Bannai said in a speech to the 19th Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Kampala, Uganda, on Thursday.

The Palestinian people have been suffering from brutalities and atrocities at the hands of the Israeli occupation entity over the past 56 years. It's high time to break the cycle of brutal violence against them, Ambassador Al-Bannai, also Kuwait's chief delegate to the ministerial, stressed.

"There is no way forward other than establishing full, durable and comprehensive peace based on the relevant UN resolutions and the 2002 Arab peace initiative to prepare the ground for the independent sovereign State of Palestine within the Jun 4, 1967, borders with East Jerusalem as its capital," he made clear.

On behalf of Kuwait, Ambassador Al-Bannai welcomed the genocide case brought by the Republic of South Africa to the International Court of Justice against the Israeli occupation entity for the ongoing atrocities in the Gaza Strip.

He quoted late South African leader Nelson Mandela as saying "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

He also praised the active role played by the NAM over the past six decades in lobbying for the Palestine question and standing against the flagrant violations being committed by the Israeli occupation authorities against the Palestinian people on a daily basis.

Since Bandung Conference in April 1955 (which eventually led to the creation of NAM), the movement has been able to overcome numerous challenges and continue the march towards realizing the common aspira-



KUNA photo

Permanent Representative to the United Nations Tareq M. Al-Bannai delivers a speech.

tions of its member countries, he noted. Kuwait has been, and will continue to be, supportive of all efforts to promote development and prosperity in NAM countries and the world at large, Ambassador Al-Bannai pledged.

Kuwait will maintain full support to the valiant struggle of the Palestinian people against the brutal aggression by the Israeli occupation forces, he said.

Reaffirming Kuwait's resolve to continue exposing the serious crimes of the Israeli occupation forces at all regional and international forums, he said, "We are duty-bound to stand by our brothers in Palestine who have been undergoing brutal Israeli war over 100+ years."

Under the eyes of the international community, the Israeli war on Gaza has claimed more than 23,000 innocent armless lives, with half of the figure being women and children, in addition to 57,000 injuries and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, he pointed out.

Ambassador Al-Bannai criticized the silence of the international community at the atrocities in the occupied Palestinian territories and the failure of the UN Security Council to shoulder its mandate to protect international peace and security.

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## Israel airstrike in Damascus claims five Iranian advisers

DAMASCUS, Syria, Jan 20, (AP): An Israeli strike on the Syrian capital on Saturday destroyed a building used by the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, killing at least five Iranians, Syrian and Iranian state media reported.

The Syrian army said the building in the tightly guarded western Damascus neighborhood of Mazzeh was entirely destroyed, adding that the Israeli air force fired the missiles while flying over Syria's Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The Israeli military did not comment on the strike.

A few hours later, an Israeli drone strike on a car near the Lebanese southern port city of Tyre killed two people, the state-run National News Agency reported. It was not immediately clear who the target was but such strikes in the past have killed officials from Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group as well as the Palestinian Hamas group.

Nour News, which is believed to be close to Iran's intelligence apparatus, identified two of the dead in Damascus as Gen. Sadeq Omidzadeh, the intelligence deputy of the guard's expeditionary Quds Force in Syria, and his deputy, who goes by the nom de guerre Hajj Gholam. The guard later issued a statement identifying the dead as Hojjatollah Omidvar, Ali Aghazadeh, Hossein Mohammadi and Saeed Karimi. It gave no ranks for them. The difference in information could not be immediately reconciled.

An opposition war monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said at least six people - five Iranians and a Syrian - were killed in the missile attack that struck while officials from Iran-backed groups were holding a meeting. The Observatory's chief, Rami Abdulrahman, said three of the Iranians were commanders, adding that four other people are still missing under the rubble.

Security forces deployed around the destroyed four-story building as ambulances and fire engines were seen in the area. A search for people trapped under the rubble was underway. Windows were also shattered in nearby buildings.

A grocer near the scene of the strike said he heard five consecutive explosions at about 10:15 a.m., adding that he later witnessed the bodies of a man and a woman being taken away as well as three wounded people.

"The shop shook. I stayed inside for few seconds then went out and saw the smoke billowing from behind the mosque," the man, who asked that his name not be used for security reasons, told The Associated Press.

"What happened was terrifying. I collapsed," said Khaled Mawed, who lives nearby.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 05:19 Asr ..... 14:56  
 Sunrise... 06:43 Maghrib .. 17:16  
 Zohr ..... 11:59 Isha ..... 18:36

# Local

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

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Warm and partly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08-28 km/h.

**By Night:** Rather cold to cold

## Weather

with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.	Kuwait Airport	22	10
	Abdaly	22	08
	Jahra	23	12
	Salmiyah	20	16
	Nuwaisib	23	12
	Wafra	24	12

## Northern region will be built to boost regional trade: HH PM

# Maintain national unity, work for progress of country: HH Amir

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet on Thursday held its first meeting at Saif Palace after taking the constitutional oath before His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday.

The meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, studied His Highness the Amir speech after he took constitutional oath on December 20 before the National Assembly, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Feras Saud Al-Sabah said after the meeting.

In the speech, His Highness the Amir expressed great sorrow and sadness over the death of the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, recalling proudly his remarkable achievements, Sheikh Feras added.

His Highness the Amir stressed keenness on maintaining the national unity and working for the progress, development and prosperity of the homeland as well as abiding by religious, national and constitutional constants.

His Highness the Amir also called for respecting and implementing law, and combating all forms of corruption as well as following up on Kuwait's leading approach and role with sisterly and friendly countries in all different issues and topics of common concern, the minister noted.

In addition, His Highness the Amir called for maintaining Kuwait's gulf, regional and international commitments, and protecting national gains.

Sheikh Mishal further stressed the necessity of sharing views, advice and consultation, and seeking to spread optimism among the public.

Out of responsibility, the political leadership should be closer to all, and follow up on ongoing events and matters, His Highness the Amir said in his speech.

His Highness the Amir finally affirmed the need for follow-up, and serious and objective accountability, in line with the constitution and law, against negligence and tampering with the interest of citizens and the homeland, the minister noted.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet listened to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr.

Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah's address in which he thanked the ministers for accepting national responsibility and the burden of government action to gain the confidence of His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people.

His Highness the Premier said that Kuwait has begun a new era and a very accurate exceptional phase in the path of national action which faces challenges and regional and international conditions which require a new thought and a modern approach, Sheikh Feras said.

The ministers listened to the content of the address of His Highness the Premier calling for the necessity of maintaining decisively the State's prestige and enhancing confidence in government performance through respecting and enforcing the law on all in a just and transparent way.

His Highness the Premier also demanded combating corruption and applying reward and punishment and accountability approach to all.

He asked the ministers to focus on developing public services and infrastructure, reviewing laws to enhance the legislative reforms as well as giving momentum to construction and development in the country.

He called for elevating Kuwait's status regionally and internationally, preparing a government action program based on Kuwait's Vision 2035 and protecting the Kuwaiti family.

His Highness the Premier underlined the necessity of restructuring the state's apparatus and launching national strategies for digital transformation and leadership excellence as well as strengthening national economy and food and water security.

His Highness the Prime Minister affirmed that one of the government's priorities, during the next stage, is to present a vision about the future of economy and investment in Kuwait, with a view to maximizing value added to the national economy and focusing on logistics, digital and knowledge services' sectors.

It also envisages developing the northern region to be an international crossing and a main station for proving solutions and transformative services for regional trade, he clarified.

Sheikh Mohammad Sabah said this requires that each minister assumes his responsibilities towards implementing strategic objectives during the next stage, and reviewing all legislations, policies, plans, decision-making mechanisms as well as restructuring government agencies concerned with economic matters to meet requirements of the next stage.

Commenting on the Premier's speech, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah emphasized that the ministers are all aware of their responsibility towards the country and the political leadership.



HH the Amir



HH the PM

# 'No plan to privatize co-ops'

First line of defense for food security: Al-Mullah

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Head of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies Musab Al-Mullah af-

firmed that cooperative societies are the first line of defense for food security.

In a press statement issued yesterday in response to reports circulating on social media about the dissolution of all cooperative societies and their management by the Kuwait Investment Authority

and the Public Institution for Social Security, Al-Mulla denied the issuance of any directive to privatize cooperative societies or for them to be managed by Kuwait Investment Authority and the Public Institution for Social Security.

Al-Mulla said, "We have not been informed of any approach in this regard from any party."

He explained that cooperative societies are considered private funds for shareholders, through which they choose who will represent them in managing the cooperative societies. There are laws for regulating this matter, and it is not possible to give up the role they play under any justification.

The role played by cooperative societies is primarily social in nature, as they do not seek profit in particular, but rather seek to provide many services that benefit shareholders and the people of the relevant area.

Al-Mulla said, "This social experiment is considered one of the most successful experiments at the country level, and at the Gulf, Arab and even regional levels. Many countries were interested in learning about this experience and sought to benefit from it."

He stressed the need to develop this experience instead of fighting it.

Meanwhile, inspectors from the Commercial Control Sector at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry closed a company specializing in kitchen works against the backdrop of complaints from 40 citizens who accused it of collecting payments from them in exchange for carrying out contracted work, but it did not deliver what they have agreed upon, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed to the daily that the inspectors discovered the company collected around KD250,000 as initial payment for contracts whose total value exceeded KD500,000. Sources affirmed the submission of a report on the complaints in preparation for referring company officials to the Public Prosecution.

Sources said "the results of initial investigations conducted by the inspectors with the complainants indicated that they concluded contracts with the company to begin detailing kitchens for them, and that they settled the advance payments -- an average of approximately KD8,000 each or 50 percent of the total amount required. After paying the deposit and as the agreed delivery date had passed, the complainants discovered that they have been victims of breaches of contract dates, procrastination in delivery, and failure to return the advance payment."

Sources added "the direct investigation with the company and the complainants showed that the company already approved the contract and received advance payments ranging from KD6,000 to KD12,000 as deposit for implementation. However, until the date of investigating the complaints, the company has not started the work scheduled for its contractors without a convincing reason that reflects its seriousness in implementation."



Al-Mullah

## Peace, security on agenda

# HH Amir's rep in NAM summit

CAIRO, Jan 20, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Ambassador Tariq M. Al-Bannai, led Kuwait's delegation to the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) which opened in Kampala, capital of Uganda, on Friday.

Besides Al-Bannai - Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the delegation includes the country's Ambassador to Ethiopia and Non-Resident Ambassador to Uganda Naif Al-Otaibi and Assistant Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah as well as other diplomats.

The summit, chaired by Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, gathered heads of State and government of NAM member countries.

Speakers at the opening session denounced the ongoing military attacks by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

On top of the agenda of the summit are the political and economic challenges facing the world, multilateral cooperation, and the international peace and security.

With 120 member states and 18 observers, NAM is the second largest international grouping in terms of membership after the UN.

The Movement was founded after 29 Asian and African nations agreed, at the Bandung Conference in April 1955, 10 core principles outlining role of the Third World in global economic development and decolonization during the Cold War.



Exams in progress at an unidentified center.

## Results of 12th Grade declared

The Ministry of Education has released the results of the first-semester exams for twelfth-grade students in the scientific, literary, and religious education sections for the academic year 2023-2024, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The results are now available on

the Ministry of Education's website, the Ministry's mobile application, and the "Sahl" application. Students can access their results through these platforms, providing a convenient and accessible way to view their academic performance.

## IAC appoints Al-Oraiman ambassador

# 'Kuwait must set up space agency'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Kuwaiti innovator Lama Al-Oraiman has been appointed as the first Kuwaiti and Arab woman to serve as ambassador at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) -- the largest international conference specialized in the space sector with the participation of all space agencies and companies specialized in space sciences and applications, reports Al-Qabas daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Oraiman confirmed the appointment and stressed the need to establish a Kuwaiti space agency, as well as competent authorities and centers for space research like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which recently announced that it will send its first astronaut to the moon. She hopes this mission will motivate Kuwait to create an agency specialized in the

world of space.

She called on Kuwaiti youths to strive to gain knowledge, no matter how far-fetched and difficult it may seem, and not to wait for opportunities to be presented to them on a silver platter, but to search for these opportunities themselves. She said she is currently focusing on spreading awareness about Space Science among various segments of the Kuwaiti society.

On the other hand, Al-Oraiman expressed her happiness and pride for being honored by Forbes Middle East Magazine as one of the most creative and innovative young people -- under the age of 30 -- in the Science and Technology category. She received the award during the Forbes Summit held a few days ago in the Egyptian city of El Gouna by Executive Director of Forbes Kholoud Al-Omyan and Chief Executive Officer of the Operations Sector at IFS Hoda Mansour. She hopes this award will include a larger number of Kuwaitis in the future, including Kuwaiti women.



Al-Oraiman

## Other Voices

# The women in our societies

By Ahmad alsarraf

The majority of people are ignorant of other cultures, and this is not a defect, as they are mainly concerned with knowing their symbols, scholars, and leaders and being proud of their history.

Therefore, there is no reason to be surprised that an American does not know, for example, the location of Kuwait, or the name of the capital of Egypt, as this is not the concern of other peoples.

What is surprising is the continued weakness of our curricula, their focus on religious matters only, and their almost complete neglect of human heritage and its pivotal role in our current civilization.

The curricula, for several reasons, are devoid of mentioning the biographies of well-known figures such as Einstein, Plato, Isaac Newton, Voltaire, and great women like Mary Curie, the physicist and the only one to win two Nobel Prizes in two different fields; Rosalinda Franklin, the biophysicist who played the greatest role in understanding the structure of DNA; Florence Nightingale, the pioneer of modern nursing and Amelia Earhart, the writer and aviation pioneer, and many others.

It is also noted that there is no street, or even an alley, named after any Kuwaiti or Arab woman. What is the reason, and there are streets named after "terrorists" and nobodies, the virtue of some of whom is that they are dead?

Our curricula are also almost devoid of the biographies of the distinguished scholars of "Dar al-Islam," to whom Western civilization owes a great deal, and yet we ignored them, after it was rumored, truly or falsely, that the majority of them were killed or tortured for their negative positions on religious extremism.

So why did we stop giving the names of Ibn Rushd, Ibn Arabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, Ibn al-Haytham, Ibn al-Muqaffa and others to scientific edifices, hospitals, and even a school or university laboratory?

Why are our countries content with refusing to give these people the importance and honor they deserve, while developed countries place their statues in front of university buildings and laboratories, give their names to medi-

cal and scientific squares and buildings, and have taught their sciences in their universities, for centuries!

We also stand almost alone in our "humiliating" treatment of women, and it is not surprising that this treatment is linked to our intellectual, industrial and commercial backwardness, and before that, our educational and moral backwardness.

Whoever believes that morality is linked to the reproductive organs is ignorant, as morality is deeper and more complex than that, and it is impossible to know the number of girls and women who died simply because of a slander related to bad morals.

This has happened throughout our history, and it is still happening, and the laws are unable to impose just punishment on the perpetrators. Be kind to them, and they often emerge from prisons free, with crowns of "honor" crowning their heads!

It is absolutely impossible, and without any exceptions, for a nation to exist that views women as if they are the devil, treats them in a humiliating manner, and views them as a tool of temptation that must be banned. In this regard, the Iraqi visual artist Afifa Laibi says, in an article dating back years ago:

"What was appropriate for a woman in ancient times is not appropriate for a woman in this era. I do not consider myself deficient in reason, nor am I shameful, nor impure like a black dog. I am your mother, your sister, and your daughter.

"So how can you accept describing me with these ugly qualities? I am not less important than a man, I am not impure, I am not insensitive. I do not accept to cover my face as if I am ashamed of it, I am not a crooked rib, I am not an animal or a sign of bad luck.

"I do not know why I fast, pray, perform Hajj, and perform all acts of worship, and when I die and my husband is dissatisfied with me, I enter Hell. I do not know why curses descend upon me if I pluck a hair from my eyebrow, or wear a wig?

"Why don't angels enter my house if I reveal my hair? Why, with all this contempt for women, the belittlement of their humanity, and the preference for men over them, and considering them more competent, wiser, and higher in rank than them, and he is their guardian and responsible for them, yet when they sin, they receive the same punishment as men or more?"

□ □ □

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KUNA photo

Two groups of outstanding students (boys and girls), embark on foreign trips.

### Top notch students on foreign trips

A delegation of excellent Kuwaiti students departed on Friday to Tunisia and Vietnam kicking off the 13th edition of the initiative "Be among the Excellent." The initiative, due until the 26th of this month, is organized by the fund for high school students, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

Mona Al-Ayyaf, the media direc-

tor at KFAED, said in a press release that the journey was planned by the fund to encourage students to excel in their studies.

Saleh Al-Taqi, supervisor of the expedition, said the students would visit venture sites that had been launched with KFAED's contributions.

For her part, Fatma Al-Tirkit, the

supervisor of the journey to Vietnam, said the students would go to sites of development projects, in addition to tourist attractions and villages.

KFAED launched the first such expedition in 2010. Up to 300 students had taken part in these travels, visiting more than 15 countries. (KUNA)

# Neglected road repairs big challenge for new minister

'Flying gravel, potholes motorists' nightmare'



Gravel damages lights, windshields, body of the car, say motorists.



Vehicles destroyed by the fire.

### Fire destroys vehicles

## Syrian perishes in mishap

By Munaif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: A tragic accident involving two cars at the Nuwaiseeb road border crossing, led to the death of a 57-year-old Syrian resident.

The security authorities and paramedics rushed to the accident site and referred the corpse of the victim to Forensics.

Investigations are underway to determine the cause of this unfortunate accident.

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**Vehicles on fire:** The Public Relations and Media Department of the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) said acting on information firemen from the Al-Samoud Center rushed to an open ground in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on Friday evening and controlled a fire which destroyed two trailer trucks, a bus, and a salon car, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The fire sources explained the teams brought the fire under control without causing any injuries.

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Deteriorating roads, flying gravel, and persistent potholes, motorists' nightmare, present a significant challenge for the Minister of Works, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, who inherits this enduring issue as a heavy legacy. The problem of asphalt flying on highways has persisted for 19 years, dating back to 2005, according to reports from the Ministry of Public Works, reports Al-Jarida daily.**

Over the years, the Ministry has established nine committees, spanning from 2011 to 2020, to investigate the flying gravel phenomenon. Despite signing a memorandum of understanding with the State of Qatar in 2020 to enhance cooperation in road implementation, construction, and maintenance, the issue remains unresolved.

The primary cause identified is the absence of a comprehensive maintenance strategy, leading to the general deterioration of both internal and highway roads across the country.

A key concern highlighted in the report is the lack of clear priorities in road maintenance efforts and a failure to adhere to established priorities. The absence of routine and preventative maintenance exacerbates the rapid degradation of roads.

Additionally, the maintenance contracts exhibit limitations, focusing on specific areas within governorates while neglecting others. Maintenance efforts often involve only the sweeping and furnishing of certain lanes on highways.

In the past year, the Ministry of Public Works streamlined road maintenance contracts, reducing them from eight to two fundamental types. These new contracts cover basic maintenance of road works in Kuwaiti governorates and comprehensive maintenance of highways and main road works. The previous contracts encompassed various aspects, including the maintenance of highways, main roads, bridges, intersections, rain drainage networks, and related services.

The report emphasizes the crucial role of the human factor within the Ministry of Works in resolving this longstanding issue. Transforming Kuwait's streets from dilapidated and pothole-ridden thoroughfares to roads befitting the country's development vision is a primary focus. As a new government takes shape, there is anticipation and hope for positive changes in the next stage that could address and rectify these persistent road maintenance challenges.

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**'Disputes resolution' course:** The Kuwait Center for Commercial Arbitration (KCCA) successfully concluded the "Alternative Methods of Dispute Resolution" course, held from January 16 to 18 at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The program, part of the "Training and Qualification of Newly Graduated Kuwaiti Legal Professionals" initiative by Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) attracted thirty-four participants. Dr. Ahmed Abdul Latif Al-Jarallah and Dr. Rasha Ali Al-Din, both seasoned professionals in law, conducted the lectures.

The course, aligned with the center's commitment to promoting alternative dispute resolution methods, particularly arbitration, highlighted the increasing recognition of these methods at local and international legal and judicial levels.

Emphasizing flexibility, confidentiality, and active participation in dispute resolution, these methods offer a decisive and swift solution, steering clear of conventional litigation paths. This approach helps preserve commercial and social relationships, allowing parties to invest resources in economic and social development, thereby contributing to national economic stability.

A collaborative effort between the Kuwait Center for Commercial Arbitration and the General Organization for Social Insurance, the course aims to enhance the legal knowledge and professional capabilities of law graduates. It provides specialized training to broaden their knowledge base, incorporating comparative jurisprudence and keeping them informed about the latest legislative and legal trends.

The program covers various aspects, such as an introduction to the Kuwait Center for Commercial Arbitration, alternative dispute resolution methods (mediation, conciliation, and commercial arbitration), advantages of these methods, an in-depth explanation of the arbitration clause, formation of arbitration panels, case procedures, symptoms, and drafting arbitration awards.

The course concluded with a moot court, providing practical training that simulates arbitration cases, incorporating local and international scenarios with a focus on the practical application of arbitration case requirements.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## Careful & strategic approach needed by new Premier in changing scenario

"UPON assuming the position of Prime Minister (previous), His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled brought with him a rich legacy of media, security, and political expertise at both domestic and international levels. However, a significant methodological misstep marked the beginning of his term as head of the Council of Ministers," Dr. **Abdullatif bin Nakhi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"This error involved extending goodwill and maintaining an honorable approach in dealing with opposition MPs. Despite committing his government to three clear stances, the opposition responded with pre-emptive interrogations and a disinformation campaign in cyberspace, ultimately leading to a detrimental impact on his short-lived presidency.

"As the political landscape indicates a potential shift from doves to hawks in the opposition during the tenure of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Sabah, it is imperative to avoid repeating the same systematic mistakes.

"To prevent a similar outcome, a precise diagnosis of the local political scene is essential. This involves analyzing parliamentary and media stances on critical issues, notably the political reform file, which encompasses crucial matters such as raising the quorum when the government is absent.

"Several points related to the adjournment of sessions due to the government's absence deserve attention, with a focus on four key observations:

■ A blatant reversal of positions among some MPs who changed their stance multiple times on the same issue without hesitation.

■ Fragile parliamentary movements aimed at avoiding embarrassment, exemplified by a proposal to change internal regulations explicitly stipulating the validity of holding sessions with a quorum in the government's absence.

■ Superficial and flawed comments on parliamentary actions, such as criticism of Marzuq Al-Ghanim's invitation to Dr. Hassan Johar to address the session after its adjournment.

■ Inconsistencies in the results of the current council elections, potentially influenced by media and non-media factors, leading to representatives becoming more loyal to influential figures without regard for public expectations.

"As the political landscape evolves, a careful and strategic approach is essential to navigate challenges and ensure positive change in Kuwait's political arena."

Also:

"In the current period, widespread anticipation is building for a positive transformation in the State of Kuwait. The country, grappling with the aftermath of global economic and health challenges, as well as regional conflicts, is in urgent need of political stability and economic reforms," columnist **Aseer Al-Ghadiri** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"A recent report from Standard & Poor's, a leading global investment rating agency based in the United States, underscores the necessity for change. The recommendations offered in the report, if heeded, have the potential to shift Kuwait's future outlook from negative to stable, aligning it with the swift progress seen in the Gulf and the broader region.

"As Kuwait stands on the cusp of benefiting from a return to high oil prices, increased production shares, and revived revenues, a significant opportunity emerges to transform the existing deficit into a surplus. Sustainability emerges as a pivotal goal for the upcoming phase. This entails a dual commitment to preservation and production, crucial for the country's economic resilience.

"International economic reports highlight disruptions caused by political tension and instability in Kuwait, emphasizing the need for bold, fundamental changes.

"Constructive reforms are called for to restore confidence in integrity, correct the course, and address primary issues overshadowed by secondary concerns. While topics like the "Durra" gas field and the Khor Abdullah agreement persist, their timing amid local

political tension risks destabilization and distracts from critical matters.

"The imperative for positive change looms large as Kuwait strives to align with regional progress. This change must be driven by efficiency, steering clear of quotas and patronage in appointments.

"Such an approach is vital to achieve tangible improvements, usher in transformative decisions and legislation, and propel the nation towards financial stability.

"Positive outcomes and advanced projects are pivotal in ensuring economic sustainability, global currency basket classification, internal security stability, and positioning Kuwait as a beacon of progress and development in the region."

□ □ □

"Stability and security are fundamental to development. We have been suffering in the country for decades due to political instability, which led to the spread of corruption and the disruption of development. Thus, we have fallen behind the scenes, although we were at the forefront earlier," columnist **Hamad Salem Al-Marri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Due to political conflicts between influential people who seek to achieve their partisan, personal or sectarian interests, the National Assembly has transformed from a tool for developing the country and achieving the well-being of the citizen into a tool for demolition.

"For some, the Assembly became either an end for the sake of prestige and position, or a means to achieve interests. It deviated from its correct path and became one of the causes of political instability. This is what we witnessed and experienced from the repeated dissolution of the Assembly, and the modification of electoral districts and the method of election, yet it did not return to the correct path. Rather, it increased its abnormality by lawmakers holding a sit-in in the Assembly and making it an arena for shouting, cursing and fist-fighting.

"The Assembly was not the only one concerned with this matter, as the government participated in it, since, unfortunately, it was formed according to political quotas, not according to efficiency, so the average age of a minister in the ministry became less than a year due to frequent resignations either to escape interrogations or due to inability to adapt and cooperate with the Assembly.

"The country will not stabilize, the rampant corruption will not be eliminated and we will not advance, except by changing the concept of the purpose of the Assembly – that is a tool for cooperation with the Council of Ministers to develop the country, not a tool to achieve interests. The Council of Ministers is formed according to efficiency, not according to quotas and political satisfaction.

"This will not happen permanently, because there are hidden political and sectarian parties that want the Assembly to continue as a tool to achieve their interests. Some people want the Assembly to achieve tribal interests, aiming for prestige and protection. There are also some influential people who want the Council of Ministers to continue to be formed according to political satisfaction to achieve their commercial interests, or because of their superior outlook, since they are, as they claim, 'children of its belly' and blue-blooded people.

"The Gulf countries preceded us in development and progress, because they live in political stability. There is no elected Assembly, rather there is a Shura councils whose members are appointed by the political leadership where they have jurisdiction, or councils in which half of the members are appointed by the political leadership, and the other half are elected by the people, so these councils could focus on developing and advancing their country.

"It is now time to amend the Constitution and transform the country into a monarchy, where rule is vertical from father to son, to stop the struggle of the family members, and to abolish the Assembly, and replace it with a Shura Council whose members are appointed from the political leadership and who must be competent, while the government is formed according to competence, and it is headed by the Crown Prince. The covenant works to implement the law firmly and to apply Sharia as the source of authorities, not the people."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

### KAC reschedules countless flights

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Kuwait Airways has announced adjustments to its flight schedule, including cancellations and diversions. Flight No. KU545 bound for Cairo experienced a change in aircraft type, with affected passengers redirected to Flight No. KU543 and passengers from Flight No. KU546 from Cairo to Kuwait were transferred to Flight No. KU544 scheduled for 2:40 a.m. local time in Cairo, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The airline reported the cancellation of Flight No. KU785 to Jeddah due to technical reasons. Affected passengers were accommodated on Flight No. KU783. Similarly, Flight No. KU786 from Jeddah to Kuwait was canceled for technical reasons, and passengers were transferred to Flight No. KU784 scheduled for 3:10 am local time in Jeddah.

Furthermore, Kuwait Airways informed passengers that Flight No. KU157 to Sabiha Airport has been rescheduled, along with the rescheduling of Flight No. KU158 departing from Sabiha Airport to Kuwait.

## SPIN & WIN

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# Municipality and KCB ink co-op protocol for electronic services

Move aims to expedite citizen transactions

By Enas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20:** The Director General of Kuwait Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous yesterday signed a cooperation protocol with the Director General of the Kuwait Credit Bank Khalifa Al-Fadhel for establishing an electronic interface between the two sides in order to provide electronic services using web service.

In a press statement, the municipality explained that this cooperation comes within the framework of their endeavor to implement electronic services and electronic interface in order to achieve speed in completing citizens' transactions.

The municipality is working to develop a mechanism for providing electronic services to citizens and facilitating its procedures to quickly complete the transactions for issuing description certificates and building permits within the engineering offices program in accordance with Law No. 33/2016.

In addition to the above, the bilat-

eral protocol fulfills the desire of both parties to develop means of cooperation and coordination between them through electronic connectivity, due to the current need to provide the Kuwait Credit Bank with a service for inquiring about data on description certificates issued by the municipality, building permit data, and engineering office data.

Meanwhile, Al-Dabbous, after the signing ceremony, which was preceded by a meeting with the participation of officials from both sides, said, "Work on the agreement began immediately after its signing, and will extend for a full year, which will be automatically renewed for a similar period."

## Commitment

It includes the commitment to establish and operate an automated inquiry service for the data on description certificates, and data for building permits and engineering offices, with the aim of providing the bank with this information.

The service includes the data of all employees of the two entities dealing with the services provided on a regular basis, according to monthly statistics, in addition to maintaining a historical record containing the information obtained from the bank via electronic link for reference when

needed.

The record includes information about the customers and the employees in charge of requesting the electronic service and the date of its request. Both parties will be committed to using the information in accordance with the purposes stipulated in the protocol.

The two sides are obligated to issue an official letter specifying the contact officer from each party, including the employee's name, work phone, mobile phone, and official email to follow up the implementation of the articles of the protocol."

Al-Dabbous stressed that the protocol preserves the confidentiality of the information and data exchanged between the municipality and the Kuwait Credit Bank by not disclosing it to any other party or official body that deals with it inside and outside the country, unless there is a judicial ruling or an official request from judicial authorities, or in accordance with the provisions of law No. 20/2014 regarding electronic transactions and its executive regulations.

He stated that the protocol takes into account the intellectual and literary property rights owned by each party and preserves the licenses granted to either party, adding that it is not permissible to assign them, grant them, or transfer them to others.

## Iraq charity touts Kuwait humanitarian backing

**BAGHDAD, Jan 20, (KUNA):** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) is the only Arab charity that throws much weight behind Iraq's humanitarian situation, said Chairman of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Yassin Ahmad Friday.

The IRCS has a phased-out cooperative agreement with the KRCS, but it does not have any such agreement with

other Arab charities, he told KUNA.

Ahmad highly commended the KRCS for having funded three makeshift clinics that offer primary health care to Iraqi people, and having provided humanitarian and relief aid to various segments of people in different Iraqi provinces.

The Iraqi charity chief's comments come as KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar

Al-Hasawi is currently visiting Baghdad in a bid to promote bilateral cooperation.

Ahmad told KUNA earlier on Thursday that the main goal of Al-Hasawi's ongoing tour of Baghdad is to agree with the Iraqi side to establish a new medical center in Iraq's southern Basra Governorate in the context of the Kuwaiti charity's humanitarian projects to support the Iraqi people.

## Brotherly ties strengthened

# Regional leaders extend best wishes to Foreign Minister Al-Yahya on new role

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Saturday congratulations from his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shukri on assuming his post.

During a phone call, Shoukri voiced best wishes to Al-Yahya, noting he is looking forward to strengthening already deep-rooted relations between the two sisterly countries in manner that enhances joint Arab action.

Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Thursday congratulations from Iraqi Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein on assuming his post.

Hussein expressed, over the phone, his best wishes to Al-Yahya, saying he looked forward to further strengthen relations between the two brotherly countries.

Similarly, Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received Friday a telephone call from Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Abdullah Bou Habib



KUNA photo  
Abdullah Al-Yahya, Foreign Minister

on the new position.

During the call, Bou Habib wished Al-Yahya every success in his mission, and stated that he was looking

forward to "working together" in a way that contributes to enhancing deep-rooted brotherly ties, and the interests of the two countries and their peoples that will be in favor of boosting joint Arab action.

Additionally, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Thursday congratulations from Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Al-Safadi on assuming his post.

Al-Safadi expressed, over the phone, his best wishes to Al-Yahya, saying he looked forward to further strengthen relations between the two brotherly countries.

Furthermore, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Friday congratulations from Turkish Foreign Minister Dr. Hakan Fidan on assuming his post.

Hakan expressed, over the phone, his best wishes to Al-Yahya, saying he's looking forward to strengthen relations even further between the two friendly countries.

## Education Minister Al-Adwani congratulates teacher and student for winning Hamdan bin Rashed award



KUNA photo  
Adel Al-Adwani, Minister of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research.

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20, (KUNA):** Minister of Education and Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani has congratulated the teacher Sanaa Al-Barrak and the student Jenan Al-Sherif for winning Hamdan bin Rashed Al-Maktoum Award for Excellent Teaching at the Gulf level.

The minister expressed in a statement on Friday his pride that the Ministry of Education won the award in the categories, the excellent teacher and student, at the Gulf level, dedicating it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

The Kuwaiti ministry won the award on Thursday.

Al-Barrak is a teacher at Safia bin Thabet school and Al-Sherif is a student at Tulaitalah high school for girls.

Funded by the Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Distinguished Academic Performance, the prize is awarded every two years and aims to reward innovative practices that contribute to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning around the world.

## New era for justice

# Justice Minister Al-Ghareeb committed to transparent and efficient legal procedures

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20:** With every new government era, people rejoice over the promises of reform that the official media reiterates. With every oath-taking session, they begin to feel real hopes looming in the prospects for achievement. They believe that there is no cure for frustration except hard work for achieving development that will facilitate public services for people.

In the Ministry of Justice, high hopes are placed on the new Minister Judge Faisal Al-Ghareeb to make the justice facility an accessible one that makes it easier for litigants and lawyers to obtain everything necessary to perform their legal transactions and obligations in litigation procedures without anything backfiring on them as a procedural penalty. This involves temporarily halting the criminal consideration of the case due to incomplete notification and treating the case as if it had not occurred, based on the unsettling reason of "incomplete judicial notification."

The minister must develop work, enhance performance, improve services, and ensure open doors for citizens, work to enhance cooperation at the current stage, prevent nepotism and favoritism, monitor any negligent person or violator, stress the need for hard work and tangible achievement, facilitate transactions, overcome obstacles in all sectors, and keep pace with technological development for advancement.

**Courts that previous ministers had not seen**

While the scene in the Farwaniya, Hawally and Ahmadi courts is bleak and uncomfortable, in reality it is difficult for us not to say that no one sees with his own eyes the tragedies of people in the courts, no one listens to the litigants from inside the courts, and no one sees the chaos of organization left behind by the decisions that were issued recently.

Appointments were delayed for more than three weeks due to the reduction in the number of transactions received by one department. The most important of these departments is the docketing department where a specific number of cases has been set for each litigant, not exceeding two cases.

Filing lawsuits should not be subject to deadlines, because all lawsuits are tied to legal deadlines that may be affected by not filing them within the specified legal deadline, and may be subject to rulings not to accept them.

Therefore, accelerating the development of filing lawsuits electronically is the most necessary solution at this stage, along with the order to accept the registration of cases and file them whenever the litigant wants that, without considering a prior date.

All that is required is sudden visits to the courts so that the official can see with his own eyes the defects, and then pinpoint the flaws.

Great solutions begin with careful observation, which can only happen by paying attention to people's affairs and concerns, and standing with them on the same ground.

**Family Court buildings**

Regarding the temporary Family Court buildings, which are rented by the Ministry of Justice, the value of renting the Family Court buildings in four governorates exceeds two million dinars annually. This is a huge amount in light of the presence of original courts in the governorates that can be used for the same purpose, especially considering the fact that these buildings are not qualified to hold court sessions.

The lack of halls led to most sessions



KUNA photo  
Faisal Al-Ghareeb, Minister of Justice

being held in secret. This violates the principle of publicity of sessions stipulated in the Code of Procedures. In light of this unhealthy legal situation, a bold decision is required to end the daily misfortunes of litigants, and to implement and annex Family Courts to the new court buildings, allocating a role to the Family Court.

**The Cassation Prosecution and the expected legislative solution**

It is no secret to those who follow the matter of Cassation appeals that they have accumulated and burdened the judiciary. This is due to the complexities of the litigation procedures in the Court of Cassation, which has contributed to the delay in adjudicating appeals for many years.

There are tens of thousands of pending appeals that have not completed their administrative procedures and legal cycle.

One of the most important aspects of these problems is that the law requires the Cassation Prosecutor to write its opinion - which is not binding on the court - regarding the procedures and subject of the appeal, before setting a session to consider the appeal. This obstructs the adjudication of a huge number of appeals.

It is imperative for the Ministry of Justice - in his capacity as the one managing the justice facility - to adopt a legislative amendment in which it abolishes the Cassation Prosecution so that more chambers can be formed in the Courts of Cassation to deal with the direct adjudication of all the accumulated appeals.

**Accumulation of appeals**  
One of the most prominent problems that have been exhausting the Kuwaiti judiciary is the accumulation of appeals before the Court of Cassation, which has so far reached 60,000 appeals accumulated in the court stores in the Justice Palace.

This is after successive administrations failed to find solutions to this issue, which began before 2014, when the President of the Court of Cassation and the President of the Supreme Judicial Council at the time Judge Yousef Al-Mutawa announced that the number of accumulated appeals had reached 24,000.

When Judge Al-Ajeel assumed the presidency of the Judicial Council in October 2020, he announced that it had reached 42,000. It later reached 60,000 without any interruption or significant impact by those in charge of the court's administration.

It is also necessary to increase the number of judicial chambers in the Court of Cassation and increase the number of its judges, with the possibility of holding evening sessions to deal with the increasing number of appeals.

Continued on Page 5



# January

## Room Promotion







Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	
Queen Cabana (2 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.	2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons inclusive of breakfast) per night.
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<b>BHD 61.000/-net</b>	<b>BHD 136.198/-net</b>

Promo period from 1<sup>st</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

Terms & conditions apply\*

## Financing solutions for company's customers

# KFH signs agreement with Daam Real Estate Development Company

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has signed an agreement with Daam Real Estate Development Company to offer financing services for customers wishing to buy Daam's ready-made housing units.

The agreement will benefit both parties by offering Shariah-compliant financing solutions for Daam's customers and contributing to providing financing services according to the applicable terms and provisions of granting personal finance.

Certainly, this cooperation is part of KFH's constant support to the efforts aiming at providing proper housing for citizens and finding solutions for the housing industry. Additionally, it is geared towards de-

veloping the capabilities of national companies in a manner that would develop and assist their sales and marketing endeavors.

Following the signing of the agreement, KFH Acting Executive Manager Personal Finance, Abdulaziz Alsaeed affirmed KFH's efforts towards supporting Kuwaiti companies, enhancing the Bank's personal financing services, and encouraging projects and initiatives that focus on providing proper housing for citizens.

Alsaeed pointed out that, pursuant to the agreement, KFH will offer the required financing for customers buying Daam properties. In turn, the Company will grant customers exclusive benefits as part of the faci-



Abdulaziz Alsaeed



Adnan Al Muhanna

ties offered to encourage those wishing to purchase real estate.

Thanks to KFH's diverse personal financing products, Alsaeed reiter-

ated that the Bank is able to meet the demands of customers buying Daam's properties through Shariah-compliant financings that meet the

different needs and financial capacities of customers. In addition to being a distinguished real estate investment, Alsaeed noted that Daam's projects are adopting new housing perspective, making the Company an exemplary in the field. He added that KFH is a main supporter for initiatives that provide modern solutions for the housing sector across different areas of Kuwait.

"KFH operates from the basis of collaboration and cooperation, serving the national economy, pushing the production industry forward and supporting individual's needs," added Alsaeed. "I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to organizing and preparing this

agreement".

Meanwhile, Daam Real Estate Development Chief Executive Officer, Adnan Al Muhanna said "We are pleased to be working with KFH, one of the leading financial institutions, to provide an array of financing options for our customers who are participating in the company's projects."

Al Muhanna explained that under the agreement, the Company will cooperate with KFH to offer opportunities of Islamic personal financing solutions for customers wishing to purchase the Company's real estate, noting that Daam's properties are of excellent specifications, good quality and with distinct locations, "Daam's will offer exclusive benefits for KFH customers," added Al Muhanna.

## AP session

Continued from Page 1

Speaking to KUNA in a statement at the end of the committee's meeting, Al-Otaibi said they reviewed the AP's budget for 2024 and discussed the secretary's note on that matter.

He noted that they also covered a draft law regulating combating the losses of food supply chain to eradicate poverty.

Al-Otaibi went on to say that they met with Arab League's Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs Dr. Ali Al-Malki to activate the Arab economic deals.

In addition, the committee dealt with an initiative to set up an Arab strategy to support entrepreneurship in the Arab countries, as well as laws, legislations and visions that enhance digital economy, Al-Otaibi pointed out.

The committee further followed up the latest preparations for the Arab economic forum to boot economic integration amongst the Arab countries, he state.

Meanwhile, the four committees of the AP concluded their meetings earlier in the day, in preparation for the plenary session due on Sunday.

Kuwaiti National Assembly's lawmakers, MPs of the AP also, Mohammad Al-Huwaila, Hamdan Al-Azmi and Al-Otaibi attended the committee's meetings.

## Kuwait's roads

Continued from Page 1

while the private transport vehicles account for 12.6 percent or 304,600.

Also, a total of 119,159 citizens and expatriates applied for theoretical tests to obtain a driver's license; including 117,237 who applied for the first time; 1,407 for the second time and 515 for the third time or more. Among them; 102,872 citizens and expatriates succeeded, including 101,037 who succeeded for the first time; 1,087 for the second time and 415 for the third time or more. The number of people who failed the theoretical tests reached 16,280; including 15,860 who failed for the first time, 320 for the second time and 100 the third time or more.

In the practical tests, the total number of applicants reached 135,130, including 132,500 who applied for the first time; 1,834 for the second time and 799 for the third time or more. The total number of successful applicants reached 97,442 including 96,190 who succeeded for the first time, 886 for the second time and 359 for the third time or more. The number of people who failed the practical tests reached 37,686, including 36,300 who failed for the first time, 946 for the second time and 440 for the third time or more.

The total number of market licenses issued in 2022 reached 105,700; including 92,660 private licenses; 6,009 public licenses; 6,318 motorcycle licenses and 767 construction vehicle licenses.

In terms of the governorates, the Capital recorded the highest with 22,900; Hawally with 13,090; Jahra with 15,280; Ahmadi with 20,100; Farwaniya with 22,960 and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 11,280.

Meanwhile, the oil tanker movement data showed that Port Ahmadi and Port Abdullah witnessed the departure of 1,250 oil tankers in 2022. A total of 873 oil tankers departed through Port Ahmadi -- 58 Hong Kong ships, 14 Chinese, 54 Indian and 15 South Korea; while 377 tankers left through Abdullah Port -- 12 Hong Kong ships, five Chinese and 10 Indian.

## Middle East

Continued from Page 1

On the surface, airstrikes launched this week between Iran and Pakistan may not seem to be connected to the Israel-Hamas war; but they are.

They spring in part from suicide bombings by the Islamic State earlier this month that killed more than 90 people in Iran. It was the deadliest militant attack in Iran since its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

In taking credit for the attack, the Islamic State called on its supporters around the world to avenge the bloodshed in the Gaza Strip by attacking Christians and Jews. But it also criticized Palestinian-aligned militants such as Hamas and Hezbollah for receiving support from Iran.

The Islamic State group follows an extremists' version of Sunni Islam and views Shiites like those in Iran as heretics.

"Iran and its parties were spared from a fierce battle that Gaza is enduring alone from the blood of its children and women," the Islamic State group message said.

The Islamic State attack increased the pressure faced by Iran's theocracy. It has struggled to regain control follow-

ing women-led mass demonstrations and individual protests sparked by the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini.

Iran hasn't directly intervened in the Israel-Hamas war, despite long describing Israel as its archenemy. But it has faced years of attacks likely carried out by Israel as part of a wider shadow war across the Mideast since the collapse of its nuclear deal with world powers.

Iran first launched strikes this week against targets in Iraq and Syria in response to the Islamic State suicide bombings. The assault drew anger, but no direct response from either nation.

But then Iran launched an attack on what it described as militant hideouts in Pakistan after alleging the suicide bombers passed through the country from Afghanistan. The attack killed two children and immediately raised tensions with nuclear-armed Pakistan, which also maintains a strong conventional military to counter its neighboring rival, India.

Pakistan responded Thursday with its own strikes inside Iran, killing at least nine people.

The U.S., China and the U.N. have urged restraint, and on Friday both countries appeared to signal efforts to tamp down tensions. But the potential for escalation, while low, remains. Iran wants to present itself as a regional Mideast power, while Pakistan's military needs to show it can deter India -- in part, so it can maintain domestic support key to its political power.

There are risks that crises across the region could spin out of control.

Some headline members of the Israeli government have called for Palestinians to be expelled from the Gaza Strip into the Sinai Peninsula. That could destabilize Egypt and the longstanding peace between it and Israel.

## Kuwait reiterates

Continued from Page 1

He renewed Kuwait's call for overhauling the Security Council and other UN bodies, including the financial institutions, in a way that could make them better able to respond to regional and international challenges.

Ambassador Al-Bannai thanked Azerbaijan for its successful presidency of NAM over the past four years, expressing best wishes for Uganda, the new presidency of the Movement (2024-2027).

Women and children are the main victims in the Israel-Hamas war, with some 16,000 killed and an estimated two mothers losing their lives every hour since Hamas' surprise attack on Israel, the United Nations agency promoting gender equality said Friday.

As a result of the more than 100-day conflict, UN Women added, at least 3,000 women may have become widows and heads of households and at least 10,000 children may have lost their fathers.

In a report released Friday, the agency pointed to gender inequality and the burden on women fleeing the fighting with children and being displaced again and again. Of the territory's 2.3 million population, it said, 1.9 million are displaced and "close to one million are women and girls" seeking shelter and safety.

UN Women's executive director, Sima Bahous, said this is "a cruel inversion" of fighting during the 15 years before the Hamas attack on Oct. 7. Previously, she said, 67% of all civilians killed in Gaza and the West Bank were men and less than 14% were women.

She echoed U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' calls for a humanitarian cease-fire and the immediate release of all hostages taken captive in Israel on Oct. 7.

"However much we mourn the situation of the women and girls of Gaza today, we will mourn further tomorrow without unrestricted humanitarian assistance and an end to the destruction and killing," Bahous said in a statement accompanying the report.

"These women and girls are deprived of safety, medicine, health care, and shelter. They face imminent starvation and famine. Most of all they are deprived of hope and justice," she said.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says nearly 25,000 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict, 70% of them women and children. The United Nations says more than a half million people in Gaza - a quarter of the population - are starving.

In Israel, around 1,200 people were killed during the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that sparked the war, and some 250 people were taken hostage by militants. More than 100 hostages are believed to still be held captive in Gaza.

Bahous said UN Women had heard "shocking accounts of unconscionable sexual violence during the attacks" by Hamas, and she echoed U.N. calls for accountability, justice and support for all those affected. Despite escalating hostilities in Gaza, the agency said women-led and women's rights organizations continue to operate.

## Produce dumped

Continued from Page 1

He said the government does not provide any support to the Kuwaiti farmers from seed to production, adding that it provides them with some support if they sell their products to the intermediary traders.

Furthermore, another farmer Bou Rashid said he sold a small amount of tomatoes at very low prices.

He said he wondered why a Shabra merchant buys a carton of tomatoes from a farmer for less than 100 fils, and the same carton is sold in the cooperative societies for more than one dinar. In addition, a carton of cucumbers may be sold for less than 50 fils.

Bou Rashid asked if such prices exist in any country in the world, demanding that the Kuwaiti farmers be allowed to sell their products directly to cooperative societies without a middleman.

He stressed that the fraud has led to a number of suppliers putting Kuwaiti products in cartons for imported products and selling them for more than the value of the Kuwaiti products.

Bou Rashid said he wondered whether the Kuwaiti products have reached such an extent, despite the fact that some Arab countries, whose borders are close to Israel, import seeds from Israel and supply vegetables to Kuwait.

Furthermore, a seller in the vegetable market Mahmoud Siddiq revealed that the cost of a carton of tomato inside the market is 200 fils, and of six cartons of cucumbers is KD 1.

He revealed that a citizen may dump tomatoes in the garbage for reasons unknown to the stall seller.

In addition, a trader Abu Al-Kalam Azzam said that he buys Kuwaiti agricultural products through auction and sells vegetables to Shabra, adding that he bought a carton of tomatoes for 475 fils and sold them for 500 fils, and he bought a carton of cucumbers for less than 150 fils and sold them for a little more than that value.

## Digital development

Continued from Page 1

He explained that the existence of a unified network would contribute to great developments in the fields of innovation and increase business in the technology sector, which would promote economic development and digital economy in the member countries.

Al-Omar drew attention to Arab countries' intent in finding an organizational method to transmit information between member states, especially with the global developments of digital systems.

This step would require cooperation and coordination between the member states to achieve a promising future for Arab citizens.

He stated that the agenda of the 27th session, which concluded on Thursday, included a set of common issues and topics.

Topics such as cybersecurity, the importance of creating a working mechanism for joint Arab cooperation, how to coordinate work between organizations working in the field of telecommunications, as well as following up the results of the working group meetings of the Arab Permanent Committee for Communications and Information.

He added that the session's objective was to discuss ways to support innovation and entrepreneurship in the technology sector and enhance the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in the Arab world.

He stated that the session discussed various topics, including the Arab ICT strategy and reviewing the results of the working groups of the Arab Permanent Committee for Communications and Information on Internet Affairs and ICT Indicators.

Al-Omar said that the meeting of the Arab Communications and Information Committee was an opportunity for collective cooperation to face the challenges facing the ICT sector in the Arab region, benefit from modern digital developments and devote them to developing Arab sectors and institutions and supporting the ICT sector in Palestine.

He pointed to Kuwait's keenness to share its vision and experiences among its peers to reach results that will positively affect the communications and information scene in the Arab region through cooperation with the Arab Federation for Digital Economy and cooperation with RIPE NCC.

Al-Omar pointed to cooperation between authorities and institutions in Kuwait concerned with the information and communication sector, unifying efforts to employ artificial intelligence to benefit from it and its wide applications. It is noteworthy that the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi, witnessed the 52nd meeting of the Arab Permanent Committee for Communications and Information last Monday for two days, under the chairmanship of the UAE.

# Ministry unveils 'guidelines' for operating wedding halls

Final approval and publication pending

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: The Ministry of Social Affairs has finalized the rules and regulations for operating the wedding halls that were returned to donors and cooperative societies, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources disclosed the ministry has so far received five requests from donors to restore their halls.

Sources also confirmed that the ministry has obtained approval from its Finance counterpart to terminate rental contracts, collect rental fees and entrust the management, maintenance and operation of the halls to donors and cooperative societies.

Following are the proposed rules and regulations, pending final approval and publication in the Official Gazette:

1. For the hall that is in the hands of the donor, cooperative societies or any party with the right to operate and manage it, the person in charge must obtain a maintenance contract covering all maintenance-related works, as well as a firefighting license to renew his contract with the State Properties Department at the Ministry of Finance.

2. The renewal shall be for a period of one year, provided the regulations stated in the first clause are adhered to.

3. Approval of reservations shall be through the Community Development Department after ensuring compliance with the regulations.

4. The recipient of the hall is committed to the provision of regular maintenance, camera system, and everything related to the continuity of work in the hall and its continuous operation.

5. Do not use the hall for unauthorized purposes or events.

6. The donor collects the fees and insurance specified by the ministry for using the hall.

7. The hall is not for buffet companies, restaurants or party organizers.

8. For any violation, the donor shall bear the penalties like a fine or temporary withdrawal of the hall until the violation is addressed. In the event of a repeat violation, the hall will be withdrawn permanently and assigned to another beneficiary in accordance with the regulations.

9. The Community Development Department shall inspect the halls periodically without restrictions, review records, reservation books, reservation contracts, approval of reservations, maintenance contracts, guarantees, firefighting licenses, and the extent of compliance with the rules and regulations.

10. Commitment to holding events authorized by the ministry -- marriage, graduation, new baby, new house, promotion, return from treatment, election seminar during election period, Ramadan Ghabqa, Eid, funeral, activities of volunteer teams authorized by the ministry, non-profit, voluntary, cultural, health, educational, distributing in-kind donations with the ministry's permission, and any occasion approved by the Community Develop-

ment Department provided it does not violate public morals.

11. Reservation is for Kuwaitis, Gulf nationals, children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis, Bedouins, and relatives of a Kuwaiti up to the second degree. Foreigners can use the hall as per the regulations set by the ministry.

12. The beneficiary and donor of the hall must adhere to all circulars and regulations issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

13. Adherence to the rules and regulations of Kuwait Municipality and Kuwait Firefighting Force (KFF).

14. Do not set up tents in front or next to the hall, and do not allow use of the basement.

15. The organizer is allowed to enter the hall at 12:00 noon, and the event ends at 11:00 pm for men's halls and 2:00 am for women's halls.

16. Adherence to the Labor Law regarding working hours.

17. Presence of a reservations official in the hall periodically, as well as a security guard and an appropriate number of cleaning workers. This is monitored by the Private Wedding Halls Control Section at the Community Development Department.

18. Commitment to maintenance work once a year in normal cases and when needed in exceptional circumstances, in the event of sudden malfunctions, with the necessity of validating maintenance and cleaning contracts and any contract requested by the ministry.

19. Commitment to ensure that only men use the men's hall and only women use the women's, except under circumstances approved by the concerned authorities.

20. The Private Wedding Halls Con-

## Supreme Council, Arab Center unite for educational advancements in Gulf states

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development has signed an agreement with the Arab Center for Educational Research for the Gulf States to bolster collaborative efforts in the realms of educational planning, scientific research, and the development of educational policies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Khaled Mahdi, the Secretary-General of the Council, commented on the signing, emphasizing that the agreement will facilitate training, capacity-building, and professional development services for specialists engaged in scientific research, educational planning, and policymaking. These initiatives fall under the umbrella of the state's comprehensive development plan.

Mahdi elaborated that the

agreement focuses on offering advisory services in the development of educational policies and practices. It also involves the exchange of publications, information, and statistical data related to education in Kuwait.

Additionally, the agreement seeks to enhance performance management and reform across all government sectors involved in education.

Dr. Muhammad Al-Sharika, the Director of the Arab Center for Educational Research for the Gulf States, expressed that the agreement fosters the exchange of experiences and the organization of joint events. Both parties are keen on strengthening cooperation and partnership between them, aligning with their mutual commitment to collaborative development in the educational sector.

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Department must confirm the reservations and their conformity with the authorized events, and monitor the extent of the hall's compliance with the rules and regulations.

21. Obligating the organizer of an event to submit all the required documents like valid civil identification card, document proving the occasion, approval from the Ministry of Interior, and any document requested by the concerned entity.

22. The donor must submit evidence of annual payment of electricity and water fees when requesting to renew the contract, as well as telephone bills valid maintenance contract and a valid firefighting license, as well as contracts for cleaning, guarding and surveillance cameras.

23. Whoever has the management, exploitation and maintenance rights over the hall -- whether a donor or a cooperative -- must provide an office for the concerned ministry employees in the hall.

24. The ministry's employees do not have the authority or right to receive amounts from those booking the halls. Their role is only verifying the amount of the reservation and fees and the extent of compliance with the rules and regulations.

25. The person who made the reservation has the right to recover the reservation fee one week before the event. In the event of death up to the second degree, the payment will be refunded without a time limit, in which the deposit will be refunded if the hall is free of damage after the event.

26. It is prohibited to use wedding halls for religious or political forums or for advertising or electoral purposes, without prejudice to National Assembly Election Law number 35/1962.

# Egyptian consulate urges public to follow official channels for accurate information

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Consulate of the Arab Republic of Egypt has stressed the need to know the rules on granting visas to enter Egypt through its official website [www.egyconskwt.com](http://www.egyconskwt.com), Facebook page [www.facebook.com/Consulate.of.Egypt.in.Kuwait](https://www.facebook.com/Consulate.of.Egypt.in.Kuwait) or telephone number 25234491, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the announcement of

the Consulate, which called on everyone to refrain from publishing or sharing information from unknown sources.

It then explained that anyone who wishes to obtain an entry visa to Egypt must book an appointment through its mobile application, and then go to the Consulate to obtain the visa in accordance with the rules.

## Minister Al-Ghareeb's

Continued from Page 4

Without these direct realistic solutions, it is difficult to talk about solutions to the issue of the accumulation of appeals before the Court of Cassation.

Misdemeanor cases postponed to 2025

The topic of increasing the number of misdemeanor and appealed misdemeanor cases also casts a shadow on the suffering of litigants and lawyers after setting distant dates reaching up to 2025 for adjudicating cases of opposition to misdemeanors and appealed misdemeanors.

Due to the large number of misdemeanor cases, the lack of mechanisms for preserving them in the courts and

the reliance on preserving mechanisms in place at the General Department of Investigations, which contributed to de-layering cases and postponing the consideration of misdemeanor objections and appeals presented before the misdemeanor appellate circuits for many years.

On the other hand, this causes the statute of limitations to lapse due to the passage of five years since the last criminal action against it was taken.

This will deprive the state of collecting the financial fines imposed on violators in these cases due to the negligence in dealing with this file, which has exhausted the litigants and deprived the state of collecting the violations that should go to the public treasury.

Electronic declaration

The important file that the council must confront is the issue of electronic

transformation in the courts, and working to amend the Code of Procedure to ensure the enforcement of digital transformation procedures in the courts, the Public Prosecution, and their supporting departments in light of the digitization of the services provided by the state.

The minister, while he is in the process of discussing digital transformation, must also explain the procedures reached in the issue of electronic declaration, which is still stalled due to the unwillingness of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) to adopt an electronic civil registry for companies and institutions, and introduce them into the My ID app, which will lead to the completion of the announcement if it is completed by 80 percent or more.

## World News Roundup

## Europe

**Ukrainian drone attack on oil depot:** A Ukrainian drone struck an oil storage depot in western Russia on Friday, causing a massive blaze, officials said, as Kyiv's forces apparently extended their attacks on Russian soil ahead of the war's two-year anniversary.

Four oil reservoirs with a total capacity of 6,000 cubic meters (1.6 million gallons) were set on fire when the drone reached Klintsy, a city of some 70,000 people located about 60 kilometers (40 miles) from the Ukrainian border, according to the local governor and state news agency Tass.

The strike apparently was the latest in a recently intensified effort by Ukraine to unnerve Russians and undermine President Vladimir Putin's claim that life in Russia is going on as normal before its March 17 presidential election.

Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** has vowed to hit more targets inside Russian border regions this year. Russia's air defenses are concentrated in occupied regions of Ukraine, Kyiv officials say, leaving more distant targets inside Russia more vulnerable as Ukrainian forces develop longer-range drones.

The Russian city of Belgorod, also near the Ukrainian border, canceled its traditional Orthodox Epiphany festivities on Friday due to the threat of Ukrainian drone strikes. (AP)



Zelenskyy

The Russian city of Belgorod, also near the Ukrainian border, canceled its traditional Orthodox Epiphany festivities on Friday due to the threat of Ukrainian drone strikes. (AP)

**Prosecutors seek lengthy prison terms:** A Russian court in Siberia on Friday sentenced a man to 19 years in prison for shooting a military enlistment officer, while prosecutors in St Petersburg asked for a 28-year sentence for a woman charged in the bombing of a cafe last April that killed a prominent military blogger, reports said.

Both cases underscore the tensions in the Russian society heightened by President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, with some of those opposing it turning to violent acts.

In the Siberian city of Irkutsk, 26-year-old timber truck driver Ruslan Zinin was sentenced Friday to 19 years after opening fire in September 2022 at the military enlistment office in Ust-Ilimsk, a town 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) north of Irkutsk, the state-run Tass news agency reported.

The shooting came a few days after Putin ordered a partial military mobilization to boost his forces fighting in Ukraine, sparking rare protests across Russia that were shut down, sometimes brutally. (AP)

**'Swiftly pass Rwanda migration plan':** British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak laid out a challenge Thursday to members of Parliament's unelected upper chamber to swiftly pass his controversial plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda.

Sunak said any attempt by the House of Lords to soften or delay the policy, which elected lawmakers in the House of Commons backed Wednesday, would "frustrate the will of the people."

"There is now only one question," Sunak said at a news conference in his Downing Street headquarters. "Will the opposition in the appointed House of Lords try and frustrate the will of the people as expressed by the elected House? Or will they get on board and do the right thing?"

Sunak's governing Conservatives do not have a majority in the House of Lords, which is made up of representatives from political parties as well as non-aligned appointees. The Lords can delay and amend legislation but ultimately can't overrule the elected House of Commons. (AP)

**William visits Kate in hospital:** Prince William visited his wife Kate Thursday in a London hospital, where she is recovering after abdominal surgery.

British media reported that the 42-year-old Princess of Wales was "doing well" after the operation, details of which have not been disclosed.

Royal officials announced Wednesday that Kate had had surgery and was expected to remain in the private London Clinic for 10 to 14 days. She is not expected to resume public duties until April.

The princess' office at Kensington Palace didn't offer further details, but said her condition wasn't cancerous. Though she has generally experienced good health, Kate was hospitalized while pregnant because of severe morning sickness. (AP)

**Former Sinn Fein leader faces lawsuit:** Former Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams faces a lawsuit by three people who were wounded in bombings attributed to the Irish Republican Army that date back more than 50 years, a judge said Friday.

Adams can be sued as an individual but not as a representative of the IRA, Justice Michael Soole ruled. The judge also threw out a claim against the IRA, saying the group could not be sued because it was not a legal entity.

Adams is one of the most influential figures of Northern Ireland's decades of conflict and led the IRA-linked party Sinn Fein between 1983 and 2018. He has always denied being an IRA member, though former colleagues have said he was one of its leaders.

The three claimants are seeking to prove Adams was responsible for bombings in England during "the Troubles," referring to three decades of violence involving Irish republican and British loyalist militants and UK soldiers. (AP)

**Fico's ally preparing a run for prez:** The speaker of Slovakia's Parliament, Peter Pellegrini, a close ally of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico, announced on Friday he will run for president.

Pellegrini, 48, is considered a favorite in the race for the largely ceremonial post, according to public polls. Zuzana Čaputová, the country's first female president, decided not to seek reelection.

The first round of the election is scheduled for March 23.

Pellegrini, who favors a strong role for the state in society, heads the left-wing Hlas (Voice) party that finished third in the Sept 30 parliamentary election. His party formed a ruling coalition with Fico's leftist Smer (Direction) party and the ultranationalist Slovak National Party.

Pellegrini, who was Fico's former deputy in Smer, became prime minister in 2018 after Fico was forced to resign following major anti-government street protests resulting from the 2018 killing of journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée. (AP)

**Stuntman loses control, injuring 9:** A stuntman steering a car with his feet while sitting on its roof lost control and struck a barrier during an exhibition in the northern Italian city of Verona on Friday, injuring nine spectators.

Video shows the driver exiting the cab, taking his place on the roof and starting to steer with his feet before the car quickly spins out of control, striking the barrier where dozens of people were standing to watch the show. Many tumbled to the ground; nine were taken to hospitals for light injuries including bruises.

The announcer can be heard in the video saying, "he's driving like that," before his tone grew more urgent, yelling, "Attention!" to the spectators.

The stuntman exited the car and appeared not to be injured. (AP)

**Moldovan man arrested in Croatia:** The Moldovan driver of a van packed with migrants was arrested in Croatia following a chase in the capital, Zagreb, early on Friday, police said.

A police patrol tried to stop the van on the highway outside the city but the 31-year-old driver instead rushed through the pay toll ramp, said a statement.

Police called in reinforcements while following the van safely through Zagreb, they said. They set up a roadblock where the van eventually slammed into a police car and stopped.

It was not clear how long the chase lasted. The van was carrying 32 foreign nationals, two of whom were slightly injured in the accident, police said. (AP)



The US Capitol is seen on Jan 8, 2024, in Washington. The chairmen of the top tax policy committees in Congress announced a bipartisan agreement on Jan 16, 2024, to enhance the child tax credit and revive a variety of tax breaks for businesses, a combination designed to attract support from lawmakers of both political parties. (AP)

## Politics

## Election-yr politics threaten Senate border deal

## Biden signs bill to avoid govt shutdown

WASHINGTON, Jan 20 (AP) — US President Joe Biden on Friday signed a short-term spending bill that keeps the federal government operating until early March.

The bill averts what would've been a partial government shutdown starting Saturday. It does not address additional aid for Ukraine, which remains in limbo as key legislators continue to negotiate a border security measure that would go in tandem with more support for Kyiv.

Congress, ahead of the winter snowstorm that struck Washington, DC, on Friday, passed the short-term bill with large bipartisan majorities on Thursday. The vote was 77-18 in the Senate and 314-108 in the House.

## Draft

Under the bill, funding for agencies overseeing agriculture, veterans affairs, energy, transportation and housing runs through March 1. Funding for the rest of the federal government now runs through March 8. It's meant to buy lawmakers extra time to draft full-year spending bills through the end of the fiscal year on Sept 30.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., will continue to face pressure from House conservatives who want him to abandon a bipartisan agreement that sets overall spending levels for those full-year bills at \$1.66 trillion. Those conservatives say that is too much money, but Democrats and moderate Republicans say Congress must abide by that deal and avoid legislative dysfunction during an election year.

House Republicans have fought bitterly over budget levels and policy since taking the majority at the start of 2023. Former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., was ousted by his caucus in October after striking an agreement with Democrats to extend current spending the first time. Johnson has also come under criticism as he has wrestled with how to appease his members and avoid a government shutdown in an election year.

"We just needed a little more time on the calendar to do it and now that's where we are," Johnson said Tuesday about the decision to extend federal funding yet again. "We're not going to get everything we want."

## Trump 'mocks' GOP rival Haley's birth name ahead of NH primary

ATLANTA, Jan 20: (AP) — Donald Trump used his social media platform Friday to mock Nikki Haley's birth name, the latest example of the former president keying on race and ethnicity to attack people of color, especially his political rivals.

In a post on his Truth Social account, Trump repeatedly referred to Haley, the daughter of immigrants from India, as "Nimbra." Haley, the former South Carolina governor, was born in Bamberg, South Carolina, as Nimarata Nikki Randhawa. She has always gone by her middle name, "Nikki." She took the surname "Haley" upon her marriage in 1996.

Trump, himself the son, grandson and twice the husband of immigrants, called Haley "Nimbra" three times in the post and said she "doesn't have what it takes."

The attack comes four days before the New Hampshire primary, in which Haley is trying to establish herself as the only viable Trump alternative in the Republicans' 2024 nominating contest.

Trump's post was an escalation of recent attacks in which he referenced Haley's given first name - though he misspelled it "Nimrada" - and falsely asserted she is ineligible for the presidency because her parents were not US citizens when she was born in 1972.

The attacks echo Trump's "birther" rhetoric against President Barack Obama. Trump spent years pushing the conspiracy theory that the nation's first Black president was born in Kenya and not a "natural born" U.S. citizen as required by the Constitution. That effort was part of Trump's rise among Republicans' most culturally conservative base ahead of his 2016 election that surprised much of the U.S. political establishment.

Meanwhile, months before Trump's defiant turn as a witness at his New York civil fraud trial, the former president came face-to-face with the state attorney general who is suing him when he sat for a deposition last year at her Manhattan office.

Video made public Friday of the seven-hour, closed-door session last April shows the Republican presidential frontrunner's demeanor going from calm and cool to indignant - at one point ripping Attorney General Letitia James lawsuit against him as a "disgrace" and "a terrible thing."

Most House Republicans have so far refrained from saying that Johnson's job is in danger. But a revolt of even a handful of Republicans could endanger his position in the narrowly divided House.

Virginia Rep Bob Good, one of eight Republicans who voted to oust McCarthy, has been pushing Johnson to reconsider the deal with Schumer.

A politically treacherous dynamic is taking hold as negotiators in Congress work to strike a bipartisan deal on the border and immigration, with vocal opposition from the hard right and former President Donald Trump

threatening to topple the carefully negotiated compromise.

Senators are closing in on the details of an agreement on border measures that could unlock Republican support for Ukraine aid and hope to unveil it as soon as next week. But the deal is already wobbling, as House Speaker Mike Johnson faces intense pressure from Trump and his House allies to demand more sweeping concessions from Democrats and the White House.

"I do not think we should do a Border Deal, at all, unless we get EVERYTHING needed to shut down the INVASION of Millions & Millions of people," Trump posted on social media this week.



Britain's Queen Camilla arrives to open the new 'Safe Space' during a visit to Aberdeen Art Gallery, as part of an initiative to provide help and guidance to people if they suspect someone is living with domestic abuse, in Aberdeen, Scotland on Jan 18. (AP)



Cuomo



Comer

## America

**Cuomo sues attorney general:** Former New York gov **Andrew Cuomo** is suing state Attorney General Letitia James in an effort to force her to release interviews from the damaging sexual misconduct investigation that led to his resignation.

Cuomo filed the case against James in New York state court on Thursday, arguing he needs the witness statements in full to defend himself against two sexual harassment lawsuits linked to the investigation.

A federal judge declined to release similar records in a separate case filed by Cuomo last year.

The former governor, once a rising star in the Democratic Party, resigned in 2021 after a report by the attorney general's office concluded he sexually harassed at least 11 women.

Cuomo has denied the allegations. He and his backers have repeatedly criticized James and the sexual misconduct investigation as unfair. Cuomo is rumored to be contemplating a political comeback. (AP)

**Biden agrees to deposition:** Hunter Biden has agreed to appear before House Republicans for a private deposition next month, ending months of defiance from the president's son, who had insisted on testifying publicly.

The House Oversight Committee announced Thursday that the two parties have agreed for Hunter Biden to sit for a deposition on Feb 28.

"The president's son is a key witness in this investigation and he's gonna be able to come in now and sit down and answer questions in a substantive, orderly manner," Rep **James Comer**, chair of the Oversight Committee, told reporters. He added that Hunter Biden will be able to testify publicly sometime after his deposition.

News of the agreement was confirmed by Hunter Biden's legal team Thursday night. (AP)

**No charges for 4 officers:** Four Baltimore police officers who fired three dozen shots at an armed man during a foot pursuit in November won't face criminal charges, state prosecutors said Friday.

Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown said in a news release that the officers returned fire after Hunter Jessup, 27, fired seven shots in their direction while fleeing. Jessup was later pronounced dead at a hospital.

The decision not to charge the officers comes after an investigation by the attorney general's office, which is authorized under state law to investigate police shootings and in-custody deaths. A law change that went into effect last year also gave the agency the authority to make charging decisions; previously those decisions had fallen to local prosecutors.

Jessup's death occurred on Nov 7 after officers on a District Action Team - a squad focused on seizing illegal guns - approached him while patrolling in southwest Baltimore.

In the aftermath of the shooting, some community members questioned whether his death was necessary. They said officers on the department's specialized gun squads have a reputation for displaying overly aggressive behavior and escalating otherwise peaceful encounters, especially in that neighborhood. (AP)

**Plane makes emergency landing:** A small passenger plane made an emergency landing on a northern Virginia highway after taking off from nearby Washington Dulles International Airport on Friday afternoon, but no injuries were reported, authorities said.

Police responded to a call just before 1 pm about a small aircraft making an emergency landing on Loudoun County Parkway, Virginia State Police said in a news release.

Police said the plane landed on the parkway's westbound lanes, only a couple miles away from the airport.

No vehicles were struck, and the only damage occurred to a guardrail on the edge of the road, police said. (AP)

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## Lat/Am

## 'Don't support cartels'

## Guatemala's new govt takes aim at extortion

GUATEMALA CITY, Jan 20, (AP) — Guatemala President **Bernardo Arévalo**'s new administration says it will make addressing widespread extortion its top security priority.

Interior Minister Francisco Jiménez, a security expert who has previously held the position, explained that Guatemala's extortion problem is different from that in some neighboring countries.

Only about 20% of the extortion cases are attributable to gangs, while the rest are gang "imitators," Jiménez said, meaning that opportunistic criminals trade on the violent reputation of the gangs to extract money from people.

Authorities also trace most of the extortion back to Guatemala's prisons, where inmates use contraband phones to threaten and terrorize small business owners.

"As President Arévalo said, the issue of extortion is what we are going to make a particular priority this year," Jiménez told The Associated Press in a telephone interview this week.

To address it, Jiménez said the government would launch a public awareness campaign against extortion, reinforce the police and their intelligence capacity, especially within the prison system.

"We believe the majority of the extortion comes from the prison system, as well as other important crimes like kidnappings and hired killings that are organized inside the prisons," Jiménez said.

## Exchange

The woman said she had been extorted before and recalled when gang members gathered her and other business owners on her block to threaten them. "They asked for money in exchange for not cutting us to pieces," she said.

Arévalo, who was sworn in during the early hours of Monday, also has focused his attention on the prison system, saying Wednesday that he believed that its deficiencies and corruption were a large part of Guatemala's security challenges.

The problem is not isolated to Guatemala. Ecuador's government has blamed much of its recent spiraling violence on the organized criminal groups that control the prisons. Mexico too has repeatedly found organized extortion groups operating inside its prisons.

Jiménez said another security priority would be going after drug trafficking operations, noting that their criminal enterprises often expand into other areas.

Arévalo campaigned on going after Guatemala's deep-rooted corruption, some of which is fueled by drug proceeds. But his ability to tackle that and many other issues could be hindered by the multiple investigations of him and his party by the Attorney General's Office.

The U.S. government, the Organization of American States and others have said the investigations are politically motivated. Attorney General Consuelo Porras has been sanctioned by the U.S. government and accused of significant corruption.

## Also:

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexico's president called on citizens Friday not to support drug cartels, or oppose the installation of National Guard barracks, after a number of videos surfaced showing residents cheering convoys of cartel gunmen.

Several videos have been posted on social media in recent weeks of villages in southern Chiapas, showing farmers lining roadways near the border with Guatemala and cheering convoys of Sinaloa Cartel gunmen.

The Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels are fighting turf battles in the region to control the smuggling of drugs and migrants, and income from extortion.

"I want to call on people not to support the gangs," President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** said Friday, noting that he understood that the gangs may be pressuring civilians to appear in such videos "out of fear" of reprisals.

López Obrador acknowledged the cartels have mounted a public relations effort.

"They are going to shoot videos and post them on social media, they also have propaganda operations," the president said. "They tell people 'line up on the highway,' and if people don't line up, they could be subject to reprisals."

But López Obrador also accused anybody who opposes the building of National Guard barracks in their communities of aiding the cartels.

"If they don't want the Guard to be there, they are protecting criminals," he said.

In fact, residents of several municipalities across Mexico have opposed barracks construction for various reasons, including that they would be on environmentally sensitive or culturally significant land, or because they don't feel the Guards' presence helps.

López Obrador has dispatched more troops and guard officers to Chiapas in the last few months as the violence has grown worse.

Despite that, hundreds of local residents who live around the Angostura dam reservoir in Chiapas took the desperate step this week of fleeing in boats across the lake, after cartel gunmen engaged in shootouts near their homes.



**GEORGETOWN, Guyana:** A government commission in Guyana tasked with investigating a fire that killed 20 children at an Indigenous boarding school found multiple errors and systematic failures.

Calling for reforms to avoid a repeat of the deadly 2023 fire, the report presented to President Irfan Ali late Friday found there was a delay in seeking help and contacting the fire station, and that when help arrived, there were issues with crowd control and access to the dormitory located in the town of Mahdia near the border with Brazil.

The report also noted there was a lack of water supply and found "inadequacies" in the fire service and firefighting equipment.

"These factors assisted with the speed of the conflagration," said Brig. Gen. Joseph Singh, commission chair and retired army chief of staff.

The report confirmed that the May 2023 fire was intentionally set by a 15-year-old student, who was later arrested and charged with multiple counts of murder. Nineteen students and the infant son of the dormitory manager died. At least 14 other students younger than 18 were rescued from the blazing, one-story building.

Investigators found that many of the dormitory's windows had iron grills to keep out unwanted adult visitors, and panicked dorm officials were unable to find the keys to five doors that had no grills in time to save people.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, an aerial drone shows the dormitory with charred windows after a fire at the Yingcai School in Dushu Town, Fangcheng County, Nanyang city in central China's Henan province on Jan 20. A fire broke out in dorms at the boarding school for elementary students in central Henan province, and more than a dozen students died in the blaze, Chinese state media reported Saturday. (AP)



Residents of the Solino neighborhood, who were displaced from their homes due to clashes between armed gangs, seek shelter as they walk along a street in the Carrefour community of Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Jan 18. Gang members have raided a key community in Haiti's capital that is home to numerous police officers and has been under siege for four days in an ongoing attack, with residents fearful of the violence spreading throughout Port-au-Prince. (AP)



Mandela



Geingob

## Africa

**Geingob to start treatment:** Namibian President **Hage Geingob** will start treatment for cancer after routine medical checkups and a follow-up biopsy led to the detection of cancerous cells, his office said Friday.

The Namibian Presidency said the 82-year-old had a colonoscopy and a gastroscopy on Jan. 8, followed by a biopsy. Geingob's office gave no more details on his diagnosis but said he would continue to carry out his duties.

Geingob, who has been president of the southern African nation since 2015, is due to finish his second and final term in office this year. In 2014, he said he had survived prostate cancer.

"On the advice of the medical team, President Geingob will undertake appropriate medical treatment to deal with the cancerous cells," his office said in a statement. (AP)



**Sfrica to challenge auction:** South Africa's government announced Friday it will challenge the auctioning of dozens of artifacts belonging to the nation's anti-apartheid stalwart **Nelson Mandela**, saying the items are of historical significance and should remain in the country.

The 75 artifacts belonging to Mandela, the country's first democratically elected president who spent 27 years in jail for his anti-apartheid struggle against the white minority government, are to go under the hammer on Feb. 22 in a deal between New York-based auctioneers Guernsey's and Mandela's family, mainly his daughter Dr. Makaziwe Mandela.

The items include Nelson Mandela's iconic Ray-Ban sunglasses and "Madiba" shirts, personal letters he wrote from prison, as well as a blanket gifted to him by former President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle.

A cooler that was a present from former President Bill Clinton is also on the list, with bidding for it starting at \$24,000. Also among the items is Mandela's ID "book," his identification document following his 1993 release from prison.

Last month, the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria gave the go-ahead for the auction after dismissing an interdict by the

## Asia

## 10 dead after landslide buries house in Philippines

## China school dorm fire kills 13 students

BANGKOK, Jan 20, (AP) — A fire broke out in dorms at a boarding school for elementary students in central Henan province, and 13 students died in the blaze, Chinese state media reported Saturday.

All of the dead were third grade students, a teacher told Zonglan news, a state-backed media outlet from Hebei province. One person rescued from the scene was being treated in the hospital, CCTV, China's state broadcaster said.

Police set up a cordon around the school, a Xinhua news report showed, and the dorm where the fire had happened was charred black even on the outside of the building. The school had metal grilles covering the windows, as is common in buildings in China.

The fire started Friday night and was put out just before midnight at Yingcai School in rural Fangcheng district in central Henan. The school's owner was detained, CCTV reported.

State media reported that public records showed the owner of the school is a man called Li Jizhong. The AP could not reach Li. Local authorities said they were investigating the cause of the fire.

The boarding school caters primarily to students in the elementary grades, though it has an attached kindergarten, according to the school's WeChat page. Many of the boarding students come from rural areas, the Beijing Youth Daily reported.

## Also:

**DAVAO, Philippines:** A landslide set off by days of heavy rain buried a house where people were holding prayers in the southern Philippines, killing at least 10 people, including five children, officials said Friday.

Two people were injured, and at least one more villager remained unaccounted for following the landslide in a remote mountain village in the gold-mining town of **Monkayo** in Davao de Oro province, **Ednar Dayanghirang**, the regional chief of the government's Office of Civil Defense, said.

Three more bodies were found Friday, after the search was paused mid-afternoon Thursday due to the risk of another landslide. "They were praying in the house when the landslide hit," Dayanghirang told The Associated Press by telephone Thursday night. "It's sad but it's the reality on the ground."

People living near the village were ordered to evacuate due to fears of more land- and mud-slides due to intermittent downpours, Monkayo Mayor **Manuel Zamora** said.

South African Heritage Resources Agency, which is responsible for the protection of the country's cultural heritage.

The government said Friday it will back

an appeal by the agency.

South African minister of arts and culture, Zizi Kodwa, said the government wants to "preserve the legacy of former



Japan's Emperor Naruhito, (from left), Empress Masako, Crown Prince Akishino, Crown Princess Kiko and their daughter Princess Kako arrive at an annual celebration of poetry at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Jan 19. Masako expressed her yearning for peace as a mother's love in her poem Friday at an annual celebration of poetry at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. (AP)

## North Korea says it has tested another underwater nuke drone

SEOUL, South Korea, Jan 20, (AP) — North Korea said Friday it has tested a nuclear-capable underwater attack drone in response to a combined naval exercise by South Korea, the United States and Japan this week, as it continues to blame its rivals for raising tensions in the region.

The test of the drone, purportedly designed to destroy naval vessels and ports, came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared he is scrapping his country's long-standing goal of a peaceful reunification with South Korea and that his country will rewrite its constitution to define South Korea as its most hostile foreign adversary.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have risen to their highest point in years, with Kim accelerating his weapons testing and threatening nuclear conflict. The United States and its Asian allies have responded by strengthening their combined military exercises, which Kim calls rehearsals for an invasion.

The underwater drone, which North Korea said it first tested last year, is among a broad range of weapon systems demonstrated in recent years as Kim expands his arsenal of nuclear-capable weapons. South Korea's military says

North Korea has exaggerated the capabilities of the drone.

North Korea's military said it conducted the test in the country's eastern waters in response to a naval drill by the US, South Korea and Japan which ended Wednesday in waters south of Jeju island. It did not say when the test occurred.

"Our army's underwater nuclear-based countering posture is being further rounded off and its various maritime and underwater responsive actions will continue to deter the hostile military maneuvers of the navies of the US and its allies," North Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement.

"We strongly denounce the US and its followers for their reckless acts of seriously threatening the security of (North Korea) from the outset of the year and sternly warn them of the catastrophic consequences to be entailed by them," it said.

South Korea's Defense Ministry denounced North Korea's recent tests as a violation of UN Security Council resolutions and a threat to "peace in the Korean Peninsula and the world." It said in a statement that the US and South Korean militaries were maintaining a firm defense posture against possible North Korean provocations.

which he was charged. Mongkhon was found guilty by the Northern Region court of appeals in Chiang Rai on Thursday not just in the 14 cases, but also in 11 of the 13 cases for which the lower court had acquitted him, the group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights announced.

The court of appeals sentenced him to an additional 22 years in prison, bringing his total to 50 years. Technically, he had been given a prison term of 75 years, but the sentence was cut by one-third in acknowledgment of his cooperation in the legal proceedings.

The law on insulting the monarchy, an offense known as lèse-majesté, carries a prison term of three to 15 years for each count. It's often referred to as Article 112 after its designation in Thailand's Criminal Code.



**'Immediate cease-fire':** The African Union, European Union, and United States called Thursday for an immediate cease-fire and constructive dialogue between warring factions in Sudan.

The groups also called for an end to tension between Somalia and Ethiopia over an agreement signed between Ethiopia and Somalia's breakaway region Somaliland.

Representatives of the groups, who spoke in Kampala, Uganda, after the meeting of an East African regional bloc, said that the two crises are threatening regional stability in the Horn of Africa.

Sudan's armed forces and the rival Rapid Support Forces have been fighting for control of Sudan since April. Long-standing tensions erupted into street battles in the capital and other areas including the western Darfur region.

The AU, EU and US and US noted that the fighting has displaced 7 million people and kept 19 million children out of school.

Michael Hammer, US special envoy for the Horn of Africa, called on Sudan's factions to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and to fulfill recent commitments to stop fighting.

"It's time for them to take action consistent with their stated claims that they want to stop the fighting and meet the needs of the people," Hammer said. (AP)

## GCC chief praises Gulf participation in Davos Forum

Gulf Cooperation Council's Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi praised the participation of the GCC countries in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, which concluded on Friday.

"This participation is a clear example of how effective international cooperation is, at a time where collective efforts are increasingly needed to find solutions for dire global circumstances," a statement from the GCC Secretariat quoted Al-Budaiwi as saying.

On the theme of WEF meeting "Building Trust," he said it signals the worrying regional and global escalations noting that significant discussions reflected the participants' commitment to building a resilient global community.

He also expressed pride in his inaugural participation in the

forum and emphasized that the Gulf countries' involvement extended beyond the public sector to include exceptional participation from the private sector, represented by the largest companies.

The WEF was founded in 1971 as a non-government body that aims to gather important personalities and political, economic decision-makers to face and find solutions for global challenges. (KUNA)

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the World Economic Forum's (WEF) innovation platform UpLink today signed two agreements to catalyze innovative global solutions to today's most pressing environmental and sustainability challenges.

Signed on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2024 in Davos, Switzerland, by His Excellency Faisal F. Alibrahim, Saudi Arabia's Min-

## Saudi Expands partnership with WEF's UpLink platform

ister of Economy and Planning and Børge Brende, President of the World Economic Forum, the agreements focus on 'Catalyzing Innovation for an Ocean Positive Economy' and 'Catalyzing Innovation for a Positive Circular Carbon Economy (CCE).'

The two agreements aim to foster innovation ecosystems around early-stage impact entrepreneurs to stimulate investments and support for break-

through solutions that address critical sustainable development challenges including ocean degradation, biodiversity loss, and the circular carbon economy.

The initiative is spearheaded by the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), in partnership with the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA), the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) and the WAVE Initiative under FII. (Business Wire)

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## Market Movements

19-01-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
UAE	- DFM	+0.71	4,081.71	PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	-0.11	6,503.54
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+1.40	35,963.27	SAUDI	- Tadawul	-0.86	11,959.07
PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	+0.03	63,281.07				
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+0.32	26,842.67				

# Business

## Company emerges as a pioneer of digital transformation and innovation in Kuwait for 2023

# stc Kuwait & solutions by stc Kuwait receive International Finance awards

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, has been awarded the "Best Business Enterprise Digital Transformation" and "Most Innovative Telecom Operator" in Kuwait for the year 2023 from International Finance ("IF"), a renowned financial publication that recognizes industry talents, leadership skills, industry net worth and capability on an international platform. The awards were presented to stc Kuwait during the International Finance Awards ceremony held in Dubai, UAE on January 18th, 2024.

stc Kuwait was honored with two prestigious awards following a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation by the International Finance's (IF) expert research team, where it won the "Most Innovative Telecom Operator" award and its specialized business arm solutions by stc Kuwait won the "Best Business Enterprise Digital Transformation" award. The prestigious award ceremony was held in Dubai, UAE and witnessed Danah AlJasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc Kuwait, accept the accolades on behalf of the Company.

As a telecom pioneer, stc Kuwait progressively evolves its business model and operations to cater to the latest technology and trends in the telecom market. For the past several years, stc's focus has been driven towards enabling digital transformation in Kuwait, providing world-class services and platforms that empower its customers, and contributing to the technological advancement in the country. The accomplishments achieved by the

Company in 2023 highlight its dedication to creating a sustainable, connected future for its valued customers. These achievements also emphasize the Company's role in aligning with Kuwait's developmental and strategic vision and affirming its position as a driver of change in the region. stc's initiatives in fostering innovation, supporting local SMEs, and leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as 5G, AI, and IoT have been key in developing a vibrant, digital ecosystem.

In a statement, stc Kuwait indicated that it remains committed to delivering exceptional telecom services while exploring new applications of digital and tech-based concepts to enhance efficiency and productivity. The Company also extended its gratitude and appreciation to International Finance's research team for their comprehensive evaluation and to International Finance for this esteemed recognition.

On the telecom side, stc Kuwait made significant strides in 2023, leading to its recognition as the "Most Innovative Telecom Operator". stc Kuwait continued its trajectory of growth and innovation in 2023, marking significant milestones in its journey towards digital transformation and operational expansion. This year, the Company made substantial strides in enhancing its array of digital solutions and infrastructure. stc's achievements in 2023 highlight its relentless pursuit of excellence and innovation in the telecom and ICT sectors. The Company's focus on digital transformation, operational optimization, investment in future technologies positions it as a forward-thinking pioneer, ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly digital world.



Dana AlJasem receiving awards at the ceremony held in Dubai.

Aligned with its pioneering role, stc has successfully navigated numerous milestones in its commitment to digital transformation. This focus has been pivotal in enhancing customer experiences and streamlining operational efficiency. Leveraging its advanced network infrastructure, stc Kuwait offers a broad range of services, catering to the specific needs of both individual and enterprise customers. This adaptability



The awards won by stc.

and responsiveness to customer needs further strengthens the Company's position as a leader in delivering innovative telecom solutions. Stc Kuwait has made significant strides in enhancing its internal capabilities and integrated systems, aligning with the Company's overarching corporate strategy.

E-Portal Holding Company, a specialized ICT arm of stc, has been instrumental in providing comprehensive

and state-of-the-art ICT solutions to the enterprise sector. This year, stc's focus on expanding its ICT solutions has been more pronounced, with the introduction of new concepts and a broader array of solutions offered through E-Portal. The Company's investment in emerging technologies like 5G services, IoT, Cloud services, and artificial intelligence as well as Cyber Security projects reflects its

commitment to staying ahead of the technological curve, shaping the future of ICT services in Kuwait.

Furthermore, stc's dedicated CSR initiatives and sustainable approach, focused on supporting SMEs and the education sector, and highlight its role in fostering community development and social responsibility. These achievements collectively strengthen stc's position as a leader in the telecom and ICT market, embodying innovation and digital transformation.

solutions by stc has distinguished itself through a series of remarkable achievements in digital transformation, which also led to another notable recognition. The Company's expertise in leveraging advanced technologies such as 5G, AI and Machine Learning has revolutionized ICT services, particularly with their Digital BSS (Business Support System) which plays a pivotal role in digital transformation, cloud services and IoT ecosystems. The Cloud Managed Network solution, a highlight of solutions by stc's offerings, has transformed business operations by providing scalable, secure and efficient network management. Furthermore, the advancements in AI, especially AI Video Analytics, have significantly enhanced safety and efficiency for businesses. Solutions by stc has also been instrumental in supporting SMEs and local start-ups, notably through integrated solutions such as Tاجر, which offers comprehensive digital tools for business growth. Their commitment to continuous innovation and strategic partnerships positions them as a leader in driving digital transformation and operational excellence in the dynamic digital era.

# Stock market sees continued upward trend in 3rd wk of '24

Market's total value reaches 95 mln dinars

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: The stock market experienced a continued upward trend in the third week of 2024, witnessing a collective rise in indices, except for a slight dip in the First Market Index.

Throughout the week, indices displayed positive momentum, registering growth in three sessions and a decline in one session.

The market's total value reached 95 million dinars, reflecting a 0.2 percent increase from the previous week's 42,602 million dinars to 42,697 million dinars in the Thursday session.

Since the beginning of 2024, the stock market has achieved significant gains, totaling 2,438 billion dinars in 13 sessions, representing a growth rate of 6.06 percent. This growth led to a market value of 42,697 million dinars, compared to 40,259 billion dinars at the end of December.

The Premier Market witnessed a marginal decrease of 0.2 percent during the week, with a value of 54 million dinars.

However, it displayed an overall increase of 5.95 percent, equivalent to 1.896 billion dinars since the beginning of 2024; the market value of the Main Market, on the other hand, increased by 1.69 percent, reaching 8.98 billion dinars. This marked a 6.4 percent increase, or 542 million dinars, from the start of the year.

Market Indices Summary -- General Index: Increased by 0.22 percent to 7230.06 points; Premier Market Index: Decreased by 0.2 percent to 7921.96 points; Main Index: Increased by 1.69 percent to 5928.9 points; Main 50: Increased by 0.95 percent to

## Refined petroleum products shipments to Europe from Kuwait experience a dip

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Standard & Poor's Global Commodities at Sea has confirmed a surge in pressure on ship owners to avoid the Red Sea, significantly impacting Europe's imports of refined petroleum products in the first half of January, reports Al-Rai daily.

This is evident in a notable decline in destined petroleum product shipments to Europe from Saudi Arabia by 15%, from India by 31%, and from Kuwait by 43%, surpassing December's levels.

Analysts cited by the agency noted that although imports of US oil products helped compensate for shipments from East Suez, an upcoming maintenance phase is expected to further deplete the already low stock of the European market.

Initially, tanker shipments seemed resilient against the escalating security threat in the Suez region, but major oil companies such as BP, Shell, and Reliance have taken the initiative to reduce their shipments in the area.

5849.4 points.

Year-to-date Growth -- General Index: 11.88 percent; Premier Market Index: 12.4 percent; Main Index: 9.9 percent and Main 50: 10.8 percent.

Market Liquidity and Trading -- Liquidity increased by 7.8 percent to 387.3 million dinars; trading volumes rose by 11.5 percent to 1.764 billion shares; deals increased from 80.5 thousand to 114.9 thousand.

The main market shares attracted significant attention dur-

The agency disclosed that Europe imported an average of 2.3 million barrels of petroleum products from outside the Suez region in the first half of January, representing a decrease from December's imports, which totaled 2.9 million barrels.

The decline in European imports poses a significant threat to diesel supplies, as about a third of Europe's diesel imports come from the Middle East. With European stocks decreasing by 257 thousand barrels below their average in the past five years, the threat is heightened.

While higher imports from the United States provided some buffer, reaching 237 thousand barrels per day in January (down from 246 thousand in December), expectations of shipments of 416 thousand in January of diesel and fuel oil from the United States to Europe -- the highest level in 6 years -- are anticipated to offer relief in the coming weeks.

On the other hand, early January loadings suggest that deliveries from the East Suez

region will further decline. India has not loaded any refined products for export to Europe, disrupting the usual flow of diesel and gasoil that Europe has grown accustomed to. Indian flows redirected to the Gulf region and other areas in Asia, while companies such as Reliance appear to be avoiding rising shipping costs, having exported all their gas oil to Europe in 2023.

The data indicates that about 24% of India's gas oil exports headed to the Gulf region in the first half of January, marking a 19% increase from December.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's shipments to Europe averaged 147,000 barrels per day in the first half of January, down from 293,000 in December, and Kuwait's shipments to the region fell to 28,000 after reaching 147,000. These developments could expose European insurance fees to pressure, urging them to secure larger quantities of petroleum products.

dividends, particularly in the banking sector, which constitutes around 90 percent of the leading stocks on the stock exchange.

While the stock market experienced fluctuations during the week, with six sectors rising and six declining, overall optimism and positive momentum prevailed. The primary market index and the "year" index witnessed slight declines, while the main index and the main 50 displayed positive growth.

During 2023, Kuwait recorded a deficit in its trade balance with the United States worth approximately \$74 million, as the value of American exports to Kuwait was \$173.4 million, compared to Kuwaiti exports to the United States worth \$99.5 million during the same period, reports Al-Anba daily.

During 2023, Kuwait recorded a deficit in its trade balance with the United States worth approximately \$74 million, as the value of American exports to Kuwait was \$173.4 million, compared to Kuwaiti exports to the United States worth \$99.5 million during the same period, reports Al-Anba daily.

The deficit in the trade balance between the two countries comes despite Kuwait's return to exporting oil to the US during November after stopping in October, as Kuwait exported 651,000 barrels worth approximately \$55 million, bringing the total of what Kuwait exported to the United States during the first 11 months of last year to about 6.66 million. A barrel worth approximately \$567 million.

Kuwaiti oil prices dipped last November on a monthly basis compared to their prices during October, as Kuwaiti crude ended the month of October at levels ranging between \$91 and \$92 per barrel, then decreased during the month of November and closed at \$84-\$85 at the end of the month's trading.

## Other Voices

### Oil between two rivalries

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

ONE represents oil-producing and exporting nations, while the other represents oil-consuming countries. Disagreements frequently arise, particularly regarding fundamental aspects such as oil supply and demand figures, growth projections, and future trends.

The organization is now known as OPEC+ following the inclusion of Russia as a significant participant due to its status as the second-largest producer with considerable influence in the market, comparable to that of Saudi Arabia. Undoubtedly, with the collaboration of these two key members, the oil markets are experiencing greater harmony and coherence.

Established in 1974, the International Energy Agency (IEA) was primarily formed by the European nations, including Norway and Turkey, later joined by Japan and the United States of America.

The IEA's core objective is to provide reliable data and offer policy recommendations. Functioning as a monitoring entity, it tracks global supply and demand figures, occasionally leading to open clashes, particularly in recent months. It is often referred to as the energy watchdog of the West.

The prediction indicates that the current year will witness an influx of oil from the USA, Brazil, Guyana, and Canada, contributing to a



Al-Harami

record oil supply of 103.5 million barrels. The supply from the USA is anticipated to offset any reductions implemented by OPEC+.

This contradicts OPEC's estimates for stable growth and increased demand for oil this year compared to the previous year. Despite this, oil prices have not reached the desired \$80 per barrel since last year, putting OPEC+ in an awkward position and facing a second consecutive year of deficits.

Although OPEC+ has the capability to release four million barrels into the market at any time, the demand is currently lacking. China's awakening to boost demand and absorb any market surplus appears to be a distant prospect, making it a challenging journey for OPEC+ to navigate.

OPEC+ remains steadfast in asserting that oil will experience a growth of 2.3 million barrels per day, but decreasing to 1.8 million barrels by 2025. The IEA, however, does not anticipate such significant demand growth, which is in turn intensifying the rivalry and competition between the two sides.

It is evident that more oil will enter the market from OPEC+ members. It will mainly come from Iran and Venezuela. The option of cutting or reducing oil is no longer considered feasible.

Perhaps, it might be a suitable moment for OPEC+ to reconsider going back to the blackboard and formulate an alternative plan (plan B).

Given the abundance of oil in the market, OPEC+ is reluctant to pursue further reductions and cuts. Therefore, they may need to accept the current price range of \$77 - \$79 and wait for a potential miracle to happen or revisit their plan B if available.

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## Kuwait exports to US 'dip'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: US Department of Commerce data revealed that the value of Kuwaiti exports to the United States of America during the first 11 months of 2023 were to about 1.44 billion dollars, compared to US imports from Kuwait during the same period worth 2.69 billion dollars as the trade balance between the two countries dipped 1.24 billion dollars in favor of the American side, reports Al-Rai daily.

During 2023, Kuwait recorded a deficit in its trade balance with the United States worth approximately \$74 million, as the value of American exports to Kuwait was \$173.4 million, compared to Kuwaiti exports to the United States worth \$99.5 million during the same period, reports Al-Anba daily.

The deficit in the trade balance between the two countries comes despite Kuwait's return to exporting oil to the US during November after stopping in October, as Kuwait exported 651,000 barrels worth approximately \$55 million, bringing the total of what Kuwait exported to the United States during the first 11 months of last year to about 6.66 million. A barrel worth approximately \$567 million.

Kuwaiti oil prices dipped last November on a monthly basis compared to their prices during October, as Kuwaiti crude ended the month of October at levels ranging between \$91 and \$92 per barrel, then decreased during the month of November and closed at \$84-\$85 at the end of the month's trading.

**Gulf Bank showcases leading environmental sustainability expertise at Expo Doha**

Gulf Bank has declared its involvement in the International Horticulture Exhibition "Expo Doha 2023," held in Qatar's capital under the theme "Green Desert, Better Environment." The exhibition will conclude on March 28, 2024, featuring participants from 80 countries, including various non-governmental organizations, international experts, private sector entities, universities, and laboratories. Projections indicate that the total number of visitors to the exhibition will reach 3 million.

The conference includes important events and workshops focused on developing worldwide solutions for issues such as desertification, climate change, sustainability challenges, and the progress of modern technologies to ensure resource sustainability.

In a specialized session scheduled for January 23, 2024, Gulf Bank will present its significant expertise in environmental sustainability, emphasizing the contributions of Kuwait's private sector to environmental conservation. It is worth mentioning that Kuwait will showcase a significant pavilion during the event.

Ahmed Al-Amir, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications, affirmed, "Gulf Bank actively participates in global and regional conferences and exhibitions focused on environmental sustainability, showcasing its leading practices in incorporating sustainability principles within and beyond the bank."

He stressed that these participations offer an excellent opportunity for the exchange of ideas and collaborative efforts, leading to significant positive changes in the global environment. Al-

Amir further emphasized that the topics addressed at the Doha Horticulture Exhibition align with Gulf Bank's strategic sustainability objectives.

Al-Amir emphasized the significant efforts of Gulf Bank in promoting and accelerating the national sustainability agenda through carefully selected initiatives. These initiatives effectively play a role in fostering sustainable practices within the community, encompassing proactive and responsible measures in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) domains.



Ahmed Al-Amir, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications.

**Public unrest mounts over economic measures**

**Sri Lanka's economic reforms yielding results, but challenges remain: IMF**

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Jan 20, (AP): Debt-stricken Sri Lanka's economic reform program is yielding the first signs of recovery, but the improvements still need to translate into improved living conditions for its people, the International Monetary Fund said Friday.

Sri Lanka has been struggling with an economic crisis since declaring bankruptcy in April 2022 with more than \$83 billion in debt, more than half of it to foreign creditors.

The crisis caused severe shortages of food, fuel and other necessities. Strident public protests led to the ouster of then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The IMF agreed last March to a \$2.9 billion bailout package, and released the first payment shortly thereafter and the second tranche last month.

The IMF said Sri Lanka's real GDP grew by 1.6% in the third quarter of 2023, the first expansion in six consecutive quarters. Shortages of essentials have eased, inflation remains contained and the country's external reserves increased by \$2.5 billion in 2023, it said.

"The economic reform program implemented by the Sri Lankan authorities is yielding the first signs of recovery," said Pete Breuer, the IMF's senior mission chief for Sri Lanka.

Breuer led a team of IMF officials who visited Sri Lanka and met with officials to discuss progress in implementing the economic and financial policies under the bailout package.

"However, challenges remain as these improvements need to translate into improved living conditions for Sri Lanka's people," Breuer told reporters at the end of his visit. "Sustaining the reform momentum and ensuring timely implementation of all program commitments are critical to rebuilding confidence and putting the recovery on a firm footing that will benefit all people."

**US and China wrap up financial issues meet**

BANGKOK, Jan 20, (AP): US and Chinese officials have completed the third meeting of a working group established to cooperate on financial issues, in a step that continues the trend set by the two powers last November to ease tensions.

Officials from the U.S. Department of the Treasury met with counterparts in the People's Bank of China to discuss issues ranging from financial stability to countering money laundering. The delegation also met with Vice Premier He Lifeng while they were in China, according to a statement from the Treasury Department Friday.

The group also indicated that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen would return to China for a visit at some point in the future. She was previously there in July.

He stressed that tax policy measures need to be accompanied by strengthened tax administration, the removal of exemptions and reduction of tax evasion to make the reforms more sustainable and build confidence among creditors to support Sri Lanka's efforts to regain debt sustainability.

Sri Lanka is hoping to restructure \$17 billion of its outstanding debt and has already reached agreements with some of its external creditors.

Severe shortages of food, fuel and medicine have largely abated over the past year and authorities have restored power supply. But public dissatisfaction has grown over the government's effort to increase revenue by raising electricity bills and imposing heavy new income taxes on professionals and businesses.



A view of Tata Steel's Port Talbot steelworks in south Wales, Sept. 15, 2023. Indian firm Tata Steel says it will close both blast furnaces at its plant in Port Talbot, Wales, with the loss of about 3,000 jobs. (AP)

**Tata Steel plans to cut 2,800 jobs, dealing blow to Welsh steel town**

Company's shift to make unprofitable UK operations leaner and greener



People walk past Akasa Air's 737-8 on display beside other aircraft at 'Wings India 2024,' a biennial aviation event at Begumpet airport in Hyderabad, India, Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024. (AP)

Good news for plane maker

**India's newest airline Akasa Air orders 150 Boeing Max aircraft**

HYDERABAD, India, Jan 20, (AP): India's newest airline will buy 150 Boeing 737 Max aircraft, in the first major announced sale for the manufacturer since a panel blew out of another Max model in midflight earlier this month, the airline announced Thursday.

Akasa Air CEO Vinay Dube announced the order of the Boeing 737 Max 10 and 737 Max 8-200 planes at an airshow in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad.

The airplanes will increase the airline's total Boeing orders to 226, Dube said. It currently operates a fleet of 22 Boeing 737 Max 8 and Max 8-200 planes.

None of the planes is the same model as the Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 on which a door plug blew out shortly after taking off on Jan. 5 from Portland, Oregon, leaving a hole in the fuselage. The cabin lost pressure and the plane was forced to descend rapidly and make an emergency landing. No serious injuries were reported.

Since launching operations in 2022, Akasa Air has captured about 4% of India's domestic market, serving 18 destinations. It is looking to expand its network in India and South Asia.

"This milestone demonstrates the strength of our partnership with Akasa Air," Boeing Chief Operating Officer Stephanie Pope said in a statement.

Boeing's 2023 Commercial Market outlook forecasts the delivery of 2,705 new commercial airplanes over the next 20 years for the South Asian region, of which nearly 90% will be single-aisle jets.

**Apple offers rivals tap-and-go access**

LONDON, Jan 20, (AP): Apple has promised to open up its tap-and-go mobile payment system to rivals, the European Union said Friday, as the U.S. tech company seeks to resolve an antitrust case and avoid a fine that potentially could be worth billions.

Apple proposed letting third-party mobile wallet and payment service providers access the contactless payment function on its iOS operating system, the EU said. The 27-nation bloc now is seeking feedback from "all interested parties" on the changes before making a decision on the case.

The European Commission, the bloc's executive arm and top antitrust enforcer, accused Apple in 2022 of abusing its dominant position by limiting access to its mobile payment technology.

Brussels has been using antitrust cases and new digital laws to rein in the power of Apple and other tech giants and protect consumers.

The commission alleged that Apple was restricting competition by blocking developers of rival mobile wallet apps from accessing the near-field communication, or NFC, technology used by its Apple Pay system. That prevents those developers from offering competing services on Apple devices, the EU said.

Breaches of EU competition law can draw fines worth up to 10% of a company's annual global revenue, which in Apple's case, could amount to tens of billions of euros (dollars).

Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, Vistara, Air India Express and Akasa Air are among India's main airlines.

**Al Habtoor Group unveils the epitome of luxury living with launch of Habtoor Grand Residences**

DUBAI, UAE, Jan 20: Al Habtoor Group (AHG), a leading figure in the realm of luxury real estate, is thrilled to introduce its latest masterpiece, the Habtoor Grand Residences (HGR), gracefully positioned in the sought-after Jumeirah Beach, Dubai Marina area. The luxury ceremony took place at the Garden Lawn at Habtoor Grand Resort with the attendance of Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor, Founding Chairman of Al Habtoor Group, Mohammed Al Habtoor, Vice Chairman & CEO of Al Habtoor Group, AHG management, VIP guests, real estate agents, brokers, and media representatives.

This iconic waterfront development is meticulously crafted to epitomize the pinnacle of elegance and luxury, encapsulating the very essence of resort-style living. Drawing inspiration from Miami-style architecture, the tower's dynamic facade harmoniously merges with the surrounding sea views, solidifying its status as a true symbol of sophistication.

AHG's Chairman Khalaf Al Habtoor said: "I am proud of this new addition to our portfolio of Luxury Lifestyle Destinations across the United Arab Emirates. Our reputation as developers and contractors since 1970 is built on delivering the best quality and finishes in prime locations and in the fastest time. I am recommitting to this promise with the Habtoor Grand Residences."

"The United Arab Emirates is the world's safe haven for investors, witnessing steady growth in all sectors, including real estate. Our mission is to add landmark developments to Dubai's skyline.

The decision to develop this luxury waterfront residential tower reflects our commitment to creating benchmarks for sustainability and luxury, using the best engineering techniques known to man. Our vision for HGR is to enable residents to immerse themselves in the ultimate waterfront lifestyle. The meticulous design, panoramic views, and world-class amenities make the tower a gem in Dubai's real estate landscape.

Encompassing 283 units, ranging from exquisite 2-bedroom apartments to opulent 4-bedroom duplex



Photos during the Al Habtoor Group's unveiling of its latest masterpiece, the Habtoor Grand Residences.

penthouses, each residence offers panoramic sea views, capturing the allure of Dubai's iconic skyline and the azure waters of the Arabian Gulf. The tower enjoys a premier location, situated close to renowned landmarks such as Palm Jumeirah, Jumeirah Beach Residences, and Bluewater.

A distinctive feature of the HGR is its vast rooftop infinity pool, which offers residents a stunning view of Jumeirah Beach, Palm Jumeirah, and the renowned Burj Al Arab. The restaurant and wellness centre, which overlook the Marina and Habtoor Grand Resort, enhance the resort-style living experience for residents. All residents will enjoy exclusive access to the private beach at Habtoor Grand Resort and the diverse F&B offerings, as well as other amenities across the affili-

ated hotels. The meticulously designed apartments, townhouses, and penthouses boast outdoor areas, allowing residents to relish the stunning views from their terraces, with some even featuring private pools.

The tower measures 253 meters and covers a footprint of 2,593 square meters. It consists of G+49 stories and has been carefully designed to ensure its striking appearance.

Habtoor Grand Residences is poised to redefine Dubai's skyline, presenting a limited number of exclusive residences starting at AED10.5M. The groundbreaking for this exceptional project is slated to take place in the coming months, with the tower anticipated to be completed by March 2027.

**LONDON, Jan 20, (AP): Indian firm Tata Steel announced Friday it will close both blast furnaces at its plant in Port Talbot, Wales, eliminating 2,800 jobs, as part of plans to make its unprofitable U.K. operation leaner and greener.**

Tata plans to switch from coal-fired blast furnaces to an electric arc furnace, which emits less carbon - and needs fewer workers - using a half-billion pound (\$634 million) investment from the British government.

The company said the switch would "reverse more than a decade of losses and transition from the legacy blast furnaces to a more sustainable, green steel business."

"The course we are putting forward is difficult, but we believe it is the right one," Tata Steel Chief Executive T.V. Narendran said.

The company said it expects about 2,800 jobs will be eliminated - 2,500 of them in the next 18 months, with a further 300 at longer-term risk. Both blast furnaces are due to be shut this year, with the new electric furnace installed by 2027.

The news is a major blow to Port Talbot, a town of about 35,000 people whose economy has been built on the steel industry since the early 1900s.

Unions have called for one blast furnace to remain open while the electric one is built, which would have meant fewer job cuts. They say Tata rejected their proposal.

The Unite union said it would "use everything in its armory" to fight job losses, including potential strikes.

At its height in the 1960s, the Port Talbot steelworks employed around 20,000 people, before cheaper offerings from China and other countries hit production. More than 300,000 people worked in Britain's steel industry in 1971; by 2021 it was about 26,000.

The steel industry now accounts for 0.1% of the British economy and 2.4% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, according to research by the House of Commons Library.

Tata warned in 2022 that its U.K. operations were under threat unless it secured government funding to help it move to less carbon-intensive electric arc furnaces.

Last year the U.K. government gave Tata up to 500 million pounds (\$634 million) to make the Port Talbot steelworks greener. Tata says it is investing a further 750 million pounds (\$950 million) in the project.

The company said switching to the electric furnace, which produces steel from scrap metal, would "secure most of the (plant's) capability in terms of end products" while cutting its carbon emissions by about 85%.

The British government said the investment would "transform the site and protect thousands of jobs - both in Port Talbot and throughout the supply chain." It said the move to electric furnaces would "secure a sustainable and competitive future for the U.K. steel sector."

**Pakistan, UAE sign over USD 3 billion investment pact**

ISLAMABAD, Jan 20, (KUNA): Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates on Thursday signed more than three billion dollars investment pact for cooperation in railways, economic zones and infrastructure development, said the Ministry of Railways.

An official press release by the Pakistan Ministry of Railways said that the agreement was signed between the governments of Pakistan and a UAE-based company on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Communication, Railways and Maritime Affairs, Shahid Ashraf Tarar and Chairman of Ports, Customs and Free Zone Corporation of Dubai, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem signed the document on behalf of their respective governments.

Speaking on the occasion, the Pakistani Minister said building on the unwavering trust and partnership, the two brotherly countries have decided to further consolidate the economic cooperation through landmark projects.

## INNOVATION

## Business Plus



How user experience sparked tech revolution

## Mac at 40: Legacy of user-centric innovation



The original Macintosh computer may seem quaint today, but the way users interacted with it triggered a revolution 40 years ago. (Mark Mathosian/Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA)

By Jacob O. Wobbrock  
University of Washington

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



Technology innovation requires solving hard technical problems, right? Well, yes. And no. As the Apple Macintosh turns 40, what began as Apple prioritizing the squishy concept of "user experience" in its 1984 flagship product is, today, clearly vindicated by its blockbuster products since.

It turns out that designing for usability, efficiency, accessibility, elegance and delight pays off. Apple's market capitalization is now over US\$2.8 trillion, and its brand is every bit associated with the term "design"

as the best New York or Milan fashion houses are. Apple turned technology into fashion, and it did it through user experience.

It began with the Macintosh.

When Apple announced the Macintosh personal computer with a Super Bowl XVIII television ad on Jan. 22, 1984, it more resembled a movie premiere than a technology release. The commercial was, in fact, directed by filmmaker Ridley Scott. That's because founder Steve Jobs knew he was not selling just computing power, storage or a desktop publishing solution. Rather, Jobs was selling a product for human beings to use, one to be taken into their homes and integrated into their lives.

This was not about computing anymore. IBM, Commodore and Tandy did computers. As a human-computer interaction scholar, I believe that the

first Macintosh was about humans feeling comfortable with a new extension of themselves, not as computer hobbyists but as everyday people. All that "computer stuff" - circuits and wires and separate motherboards and monitors - were neatly packaged and hidden away within one sleek integrated box.

You weren't supposed to dig into that box, and you didn't need to dig into that box - not with the Macintosh. The everyday user wouldn't think about the contents of that box any more than they thought about the stitching in their clothes. Instead, they would focus on how that box made them feel.

As computers go, was the Macintosh innovative? Sure. But not for any particular computing breakthrough. The Macintosh was not the first computer to have a graphical user

interface or employ the desktop metaphor: icons, files, folders, windows and so on. The Macintosh was not the first personal computer meant for home, office or educational use. It was not the first computer to use a mouse. It was not even the first computer from Apple to be or have any of these things. The Apple Lisa, released a year before, had them all.

It was not any one technical thing that the Macintosh did first. But the Macintosh brought together numerous advances that were about giving people an accessory - not for geeks or techno-hobbyists, but for home office moms and soccer dads and eighth grade students who used it to write documents, edit spreadsheets, make drawings and play games. The Macintosh revolutionized the personal computing industry and everything that was to follow because of its

emphasis on providing a satisfying, simplified user experience.

Where computers typically had complex input sequences in the form of typed commands (Unix, MS-DOS) or multibutton mice (Xerox STAR, Commodore 64), the Macintosh used a desktop metaphor in which the computer screen presented a representation of a physical desk surface. Users could click directly on files and folders on the desktop to open them. It also had a one-button mouse that allowed users to click, double-click and drag-and-drop icons without typing commands.

The Xerox Alto had first exhibited the concept of icons, invented in David Canfield Smith's 1975 Ph.D. dissertation. The 1981 Xerox Star and 1983 Apple Lisa had used desktop metaphors. But these systems had been slow to operate and still cumbersome in many aspects of their interaction design.

The Macintosh simplified the interaction techniques required to operate a computer and improved functioning to reasonable speeds. Complex keyboard commands and dedicated keys were replaced with point-and-click operations, pull-down menus, draggable windows and icons, and systemwide undo, cut, copy and paste. Unlike with the Lisa, the Macintosh could run only one program at a time, but this simplified the user experience.

The Macintosh also provided a user interface toolbox for application developers, enabling applications to have a standard look and feel by using common interface widgets such as buttons, menus, fonts, dialog boxes and windows. With the Macintosh, the learning curve for users was flattened, allowing people to feel proficient in short order. Computing, like clothing, was now for everyone.

Although I hesitate to use the clichés "natural" or "intuitive" when it comes to fabricated worlds on a screen - nobody is born knowing what a desktop window, pull-down menu or double-click is - the Macintosh was the first personal computer to make user experience the driver of technical achievement. It indeed was simple to operate, especially compared with command-line computers at the time.

Whereas prior systems prioritized technical capability, the Macintosh was intended for nonspecialist users - at work, school or in the home - to experience a kind of out-of-the-box usability that today is the hallmark of not only most Apple products but an entire industry's worth of consumer electronics, smart devices and computers of every kind.

According to Market Growth Reports, companies devoted to providing user experience tools and services were worth \$548.91 million in 2023 and are expected to reach \$1.36 billion by 2029. User experience companies provide software and services to support usability testing, user research, voice-of-the-customer initiatives and user interface design, among many other user experience activities. (AP)

From analog features to digital prowess

## Face recognition tech fulfilling surveillance blueprint

By Sharrona Pearl  
Drexel University

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



American Amara Majeed was accused of terrorism by the Sri Lankan police in 2019. Robert Williams was arrested outside his house in Detroit and detained in jail for 18 hours for allegedly stealing watches in 2020. Randal Reid spent six days in jail in 2022 for supposedly using stolen credit cards in a state he'd never even visited.

In all three cases, the authorities had the wrong people. In all three, it was face recognition technology that told them they were right. Law enforcement officers in many U.S. states are not required to reveal that they used face recognition technology to identify suspects.

Face recognition technology is the latest and most sophisticated version of biometric surveillance: using unique physical characteristics to identify individual people. It stands in a long line of technologies - from the fingerprint to the passport photo to iris scans - designed to monitor people and determine who has the right to move freely within and across borders and boundaries.

In my book, "Do I Know You? From Face Blindness to Super Recognition," I explore how the story of face surveillance lies not just in the history of computing but in the history of medicine, of race, of psychology and neuroscience, and in the health humanities and politics.

Viewed as a part of the long history of people-tracking, face recognition technology's incursions into privacy and limitations on free movement are carrying out exactly what biometric surveillance was always meant to do. The system works by converting

captured faces - either static from photographs or moving from video - into a series of unique data points, which it then compares against the data points drawn from images of faces already in the system. As face recognition technology improves in accuracy and speed, its effectiveness as a means of surveillance becomes ever more pronounced.

Surveillance is predicated on the idea that people need to be tracked and their movements limited and controlled in a trade-off between privacy and security. The assumption that less privacy leads to more security is built in.

That may be the case for some, but not for the people disproportionately targeted by face recognition technology. Surveillance has always been designed to identify the people whom those in power wish to most closely track.

On a global scale, there are caste cameras in India, face surveillance of Uyghurs in China and even attendance surveillance

in U.S. schools, often with low-income and majority-Black populations. Some people are tracked more closely than others.

In addition, the cases of Amara Majeed, Robert Williams and Randal Reid aren't anomalies. As of 2019, face recognition technology misidentified Black and Asian people at up to 100 times the rate of white people, including, in 2018, a disproportionate number of the 28 members of the U.S. Congress who were falsely matched with mug shots on file using Amazon's Rekognition tool.

When the database against which captured images were compared had only a limited number of mostly white faces upon which to draw, face recognition technology would offer matches based on the closest alignment available, leading to a pattern of highly racialized - and racist - false positives.

With the expansion of images in the database and increased sophistication of the software, the number of false

positives - incorrect matches between specific individuals and images of wanted people on file - has declined dramatically. Improvements in pixelation and mapping static images into moving ones, along with increased social media tagging and ever more sophisticated scraping tools like those developed by Clearview AI, have helped decrease the error rates.

The biases, however, remain deeply embedded into the systems and their purpose, explicitly or implicitly targeting already targeted communities. The technology is not neutral, nor is the surveillance it is used to carry out.

Face recognition software is only the most recent manifestation of global systems of tracking and sorting. Precursors are rooted in the now-debunked belief that bodily features offer a unique index to character and identity. This pseudoscience was formalized in the late 18th century under the rubric of the ancient practice of physiognomy. (AP)

editor's choice



Actor's indictment opens two paths for prosecutors

# Grand jury indicts Baldwin in 'Rust' movie shooting

SANTA FE, N.M., Jan. 20, (AP) — Alec Baldwin once again is staring down a felony involuntary manslaughter charge after a grand jury indicted the actor in connection with the fatal 2021 shooting of a cinematographer on the set of a Western movie in New Mexico.

The lead actor and a co-producer on "Rust," Baldwin pointed a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe when the gun went off, killing her and wounding director Joel Souza.

A new analysis of the gun opened the way for prosecutors to reboot the case, after dismissing an involuntary manslaughter charge last year. A new one-page indictment delivered by the grand jury Friday alleges Baldwin caused Hutchins' death - either by negligence or "total disregard or indifference" for safety.

Defense attorneys for Baldwin indicate they'll fight the charge, which carries a potential prison sentence of up to 18 months.

Here are some things to know about the case. Baldwin can enter a formal plea with or without a court arraignment, setting in motion preparations for trial.

The indictment provides prosecutors with two alternative standards for the felony involuntary manslaughter charge against Baldwin. One would be based on the negligent use of a firearm.

Baldwin has said he pulled back the gun's hammer, but not the trigger, and the weapon fired. But a recent analysis of the gun used by Baldwin from Lucien and Michael Haag of Forensic Science Services in Arizona concluded that "the trigger had to be pulled or depressed sufficiently to release the fully cocked or retracted hammer of the evi-

dence revolver." Michael Haag testified to the grand jury this week as a witness, according to the new indictment.

An earlier FBI report on the agency's analysis of the gun found that, as is common with firearms of that design, it could go off without pulling the trigger if force was applied to an uncocked hammer - such as by dropping the weapon. The gun eventually broke during testing.



Baldwin

Santa Fe-based defense attorney and former prosecutor John Day, who is not connected to the case, believes the indictment gives prosecutors a possible opportunity to address Baldwin's safety obligations as a co-producer.

"We don't know exactly what their theory is," Day said. "It could be that they're including his role as basically CEO of the production ... not having a safe workplace and somebody dies and you're at the top of the pyramid."

**Safety**

A second alternative for prosecutors is to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Baldwin caused the death of Hutchins without due caution or "circumspection," also defined as "an act committed with total disregard or indifference for the safety of others."

Prosecutors declined to answer questions Friday after spending about a day and a half presenting their case to the grand jury.

The company Rust Movie Productions has paid a \$100,000 fine to state workplace safety regulators following a scathing narrative of safety failures in violation of standard industry protocols, including testimony that production managers took limited or no action to address two misfires on set before the fatal shooting.

Separately, special prosecutors Kari Morrissey and Jason Lewis are preparing for a February trial against "Rust" armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, who has pleaded not guilty to involuntary manslaughter and evidence tampering in the case.

That trial is likely to proceed independently - and could give Baldwin's attorneys insights into prosecution strategies and testimony from key witnesses who are likely to also testify in proceedings against Baldwin.

"His attorneys will certainly be watching the armorer's trial closely," said Los Angeles-based entertainment litigator and defense attorney Kate Mangels, who is not involved in the case. "It could offer a preview of the prosecution's approach and potential witness testimony."

Baldwin's case was assigned to Santa Fe-based state District Court Judge T. Glenn Ellington, a specialist in criminal cases. The Gutierrez-Reed case is overseen by a different judge.

"We look forward to our day in court," said Luke Nikas and Alex Spiro, defense attorneys for Baldwin.

Two of the witnesses seen at the courthouse included crew members - one who was present when the fatal shot was fired and another who had walked off the set the day before due to safety concerns.

People

Variety



Kristen Stewart, a cast member in 'Love Me,' is interviewed at the premiere of the film at Eccles Theatre during the Sundance Film Festival, Friday, Jan. 19, in Park City, Utah. (AP)

Film

Festival kicks off with star-studded gala

## Stewart, Nolan honored at Sundance

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan. 20, (AP) — Thousands of cinema lovers, Hollywood celebrities, industry executives and filmmakers from around the world have arrived in a very snowy Park City, Utah, for 10 days of movie watching.

The 40th edition of the Sundance Film Festival, the world's premier showcase for independent film, kicked off Thursday with a starry gala honoring festival veterans such as Kristen Stewart and Christopher Nolan and numerous world premieres.

Nineteen films played on day one, including documentaries about Brian Eno, Lollapalooza and Frida Kahlo, Yance Ford's inquiry into policing in America, "Power," as well as the mock government experiment "Girls State." In fiction premieres, some lucky ticketholders were among the first to see Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck's 80s-set "Freaky Tales" or "Thelma," featuring June Squibb as a Los Angeles grandmother who gets scammed and goes on a mission to get her money back with the late Richard Roundtree.

The festival has always been a major sales market for studios and distributors looking for films to fill their slates, including both theatrical and streaming releases. But in the aftermath of the dual Hollywood strikes, sales this year could be even more robust. The theatrical release calendar for the first half of the year was "decimated," producer Jason Blum noted at the opening day press conference. Around 80% of the 91 features playing do not yet have distributors.

"The one positive thing about the strike is that movies that might have struggled shouldn't be because there's so many holes in the release schedule," Blum said. "I hope that a bunch of Sundance movies end up in theaters quickly."

Festival director Eugene Hernandez added that "these films are ready for their audience."

Blum, a Sundance board member, has had a longstanding relationship with the festival going

back to the premiere of "Reality Bites" in 1992, which he said he almost missed because he was trapped "in a snowbank with Ethan Hawke."

Over the years, Blum has experienced both sides of the acquisition coin at Sundance, as the one buying films (including, he laughed, one of the least successful acquisitions ever, "Happy, Texas") and the one selling them (like Damien Chazelle's "Whiplash.") He also brought Jordan Peele's "Get Out" to the festival and said the response to that first screening "started the whole thing."

**Feature**

The main hub of activity remains in Park City, where many of the shops and restaurants on Main Street have been transformed into a hub of branded lounges from various sponsors and media partners. In addition to the venues playing movies around the clock, there are various talks and panels on everything from the legacy of Sundance to making your first feature. There will also be screenings in Salt Lake City, and, beginning on Jan. 25, online showings of select films for virtual festival pass-holders.

Slightly outside of town Thursday, some of the festival's most well-heeled attendees gathered at the DeJoria Center in Kamas, Utah, for an opening night fundraising gala in which Nolan, Stewart, "Past Lives" director Celine Song and "The Eternal Memory" director Maite Alberdi received tribute awards.

Eisenberg gave the award to Stewart, who he has worked with on three films: "two gentle talkies and one aggressive shoot 'em up," he said.

"Kristen is one of these rare performers where she is so committed, so authentic, so feeling, that you almost want to make sure she's okay at the end of the day," he said.

Stewart has been coming to Sundance for 20 years and this year has two films debuting: Rose

Glass's crime thriller "Love Lives Bleeding," which is heading to theaters in March, and "Love Me," with Steven Yeun, in which a buoy and a satellite fall in love.

"My whole life I have loved this festival," Stewart said. "I knew that in my bones this was just like a place full of 'yes' in a world full of 'no.' I couldn't even understand why, but I knew it."

Robert Downey Jr. also was on hand to toast his "Oppenheimer" director, who, he said, "is a bit blue because a terrible tragedy has befallen him and I don't mean to bring this up and I know it's very personal: He has become recognizable on the street."

Nolan won a screenwriting award for "Memento" after it screened at Sundance in 2001. Both that film and "Following," which played "up the hill" at Slamdance, were independently financed before he and his wife and producer Emma Thomas went on to have great successes with studio films.

But Nolan said he doesn't think he has ever been an independent filmmaker, insofar as filmmaking is dependent on other people, from the crew to those who help get a movie out to the world.

"A lot of people know that it was a hit and enabled so much more that came after it for us," Nolan said.

But, he said, not a lot of people know that earlier, when the film was finished, all the independent distributors passed on buying it and the filmmakers found themselves in "terrible limbo" for a year not knowing whether it would ever be seen by an audience.

"It was an appalling position to be in, but so many people became so important in that moment," Nolan said. "These people who saw the film, believed in it and stood by it, those are the people you depend on as a filmmaker. You can't get anywhere without them."

The film festival runs through Jan. 28.

# Features

ARABIC TIMES

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2024

**LONDON:** Prince Harry dropped his libel lawsuit Friday against the publisher of the Daily Mail tabloid following a punishing ruling in which a judge suggested he might lose at trial.

Lawyers for the Duke of Sussex notified the High Court in London that he would not continue the suit against Associated Newspapers Ltd., one of several cases he had pending in his high-profile battle with the British press.

No reason was given, but it came the day he was due to hand over documents in the case and after a punishing ruling last month in which a judge ordered Harry to pay the publisher nearly 50,000 pounds (more than \$60,000) in legal fees after he failed to achieve victory without going to trial.

The action will leave him on the hook to pay the publisher's legal fees, which the Daily Mail reported to be 250,000 pounds (\$316,000). A spokesperson for the duke said it was premature to speculate about costs.

Harry, 39, the estranged younger son of King Charles III, has broken ranks with the royal family in his willingness to go to court and it has become the main forum in his efforts to hold the news media accountable for hounding him throughout his life.

Associated Newspapers is one of three tabloid publishers he has sued over claims they used unlawful means, such as deception, phone hacking or hiring private investigators, to try to dig up dirt on him. That case against Associated and another against the publisher of The Sun are headed for trial.

In the sole case that has gone to trial, Harry scored a big victory last month against the publishers of the Daily Mirror when a judge ruled that phone hacking was "widespread and habitual" at Mirror Group Newspapers, and executives at the papers covered it up. He was awarded 140,000 pounds (\$177,000).

The libel case involved a Mail on Sunday article that said Harry tried to hide his efforts to retain publicly funded protection in the United Kingdom after walking away from his role as a working member of the royal family. (AP)

**BERLIN:** Arnold Schwarzenegger was stopped for hours by customs at Munich Airport after entering Germany with a luxury watch that was potentially to be auctioned at a charity event.

The former movie star and California governor was stopped for a routine check after arriving Wednesday, customs spokesperson Thomas Meister said.



Arnold



Harry

Schwarzenegger was able to leave after about 2½ hours, he said Thursday.

Goods over the value of 430 euros (\$467) that will stay in the European Union have to be declared and, where appropriate, duty paid on them. German daily Bild, which first reported on the incident, reported that the

allegedly undeclared watch made by Swiss manufacturer Audemars Piguet was valued at about 20,000 euros (\$21,739) by Schwarzenegger, for whom it was specially produced.

The Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative said that Schwarzenegger was detained "for traveling with a watch he owns, that he

might be auctioning at his charity auction (Thursday) in Kitzbuehel," in neighboring Austria.

It added in an emailed statement that Schwarzenegger "cooperated at every step even though it was an incompetent shakedown" and that he agreed to "prepay potential taxes on the watch (remember, it is his personal watch)." (AP)

People & Places

PARIS  
a guy thing



Dior

Kenzo

Yohji Yamamoto

Dior

Kenzo

Yohji Yamamoto

Streetwise fusion  
Dior's fashion ballet transcends barriers

PARIS, Jan 20, (AP) — Dior's menswear maestro Kim Jones transformed a sunny afternoon in Paris into a starlit evening of balletic grandeur at Paris Fashion Week, in a display of fashion theatrics.

Inspired by the legendary ballet icons Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev, Jones delivered an exuberant spectacle at the Ecole Militaire annex on Friday.

Amid the haunting melodies of Sergei Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet," the collection intertwined Dior's fine tailoring with a joyful explosion of theatrical glamour. It drew screams and cheers from a VIP audience - as it explored the duality of an artist's persona onstage and backstage.

Here are some highlights of the fall-winter 2024 men's shows:

Jones' mastery in blending traditional codes with modernity was evident. Muted beiges and grays, signature to Dior's palette, were enlivened with exuberant bursts of color - saffron yellow socks, lilac blue sandals, and handbags, and vividly striped sweaters.

The pieces de resistance included a gleaming Renaissance cape-shawl with silver scallop fringe and woolen coats reinvented with double sleeves, cascading down poetically.

Echoing Jones' own words, "The collection, or rather collections, are about contrast: the contrasts in the House of Dior in terms of ready-to-wear and haute couture. It's the difference between onstage and backstage; the life of Nureyev theatrically and in reality."

This sentiment was captured in contrasts between the subdued tones and tailoring of the first half of the show and the shimmer, gleam and sparkle that dominated the latter part in a dazzling crescendo.

The collection verged on the encyclopedic. A silver Uchikake kimono paid homage to Nureyev's lavish style. Alongside this were modern silhouettes - sleek trousers and ribbed knits, each a testament to Jones' contemporary flair.

Futuristic

As the show culminated, the audience was left half in awe and half grappling for their cameras as the neon stage rose up like a sci-fi movie carrying the models into the air. Thus it melded styles from the past with a futuristic, space-age edge.

In a fashion-forward fusion of traditional themes and streetwise flair, designer Nigo's Friday night show for Kenzo whispered of soft warriors and echoed the brand's past.

This season's collection signified a slight departure from the previous spring's focus on preppy and collegiate themes.

Nigo began fall with a reinterpretation of checkers - a microscopic view transforming into blown up patterns, with silhouettes comprising broad shoulders and cascading lapels. A highlight was a pastel furry vest, resembling armor, yet with a streetwear edge. This piece, adorned with a diagonal black strap reminiscent of an Asian sword tie, encapsulated the theme of "soft warriors." Likewise, so did the martial arts-style belts adorning several women's outfits.

Nigo, Kenzo's first Japanese designer since founder Kenzo Takada, stepped into the spotlight in his January 2022 debut, marking a pivotal moment in fashion history. His journey, from the vibrant streets of A Bathing Ape to the luxurious corridors of Kenzo, reflects a shift in the industry's approach to diversity and creativity.

The parallels between Nigo and Takada are striking. Both share Japanese roots, attended the same Tokyo fashion college, and possess an East-meets-West artistic vision.

Style



Ami Paris

Junya Watanabe

Dior

Kenzo

Fashion

over gang territories on the city's South Side.

Jurors deliberated for about 16 hours over three days before announcing Wednesday that they had reached a verdict, convicting the six defendants of murder in the aid of racketeering and conspiracy to commit murder.

FBG Duck, whose real name was Carlton Weekly, was shot 16 times outside the luxury clothing store Dolce & Gabbana in Chicago's upscale Gold Coast neighborhood on Aug. 4, 2020. The 26-year-old's girlfriend and another man were wounded in the attack.

The jury convicted Charles Liggins, 32; Kenneth Roberson, 30; Christopher Thomas, 24; Marcus Smart, 25; Tacarlos Offerd, 32; and Ralph Turpin, 34, of murder in the aid of racketeering and conspiracy



Nathan



Hernández

to commit murder. Liggins, Roberson, Thomas, Smart and Offerd were also convicted of using a firearm in Weekly's murder.

A life sentence is mandatory for a conviction of murder in aid of racketeering. Sentencing hearings for all six are scheduled for August and September. (AP)

**SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic:** Authorities in the Dominican Republic have arrested US rapper Tekashi 6ix9ine, who is scheduled to appear in court on Thursday on charges of domestic violence.

The rapper, whose real name is Daniel Hernández, is being held at a jail in the capital of Santo Domingo, where he was arrested Wednesday, officials said.

No further details were immediately available, and it wasn't immediately clear if Hernández has an attorney.

A judge on Thursday is expected to decide whether the rapper will remain behind bars or be freed on bond as the investigation continues.

The arrest is Hernández's latest brush with the law.

He was arrested at a seaside hotel in the Dominican Republic in October after being accused of assaulting a local music producer. Hernández and his partner, a Dominican rapper known as Yailin la Más Viral, had been recording at the producer's studio. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** New York prosecutors on Friday returned two pieces of art they say were stolen by Nazis from a performer and collector murdered in the Holocaust.

The artworks were surrendered by museums in Pittsburgh and Ohio, but prosecutors are still fighting in court to recover third artwork by the same artist, Austrian expressionist Egon Schiele, that was seized from a Chicago museum at the same time.

On Friday in Manhattan, the estate of Holocaust victim Fritz Grünbaum accepted "Portrait of a Man," which was surrendered by the Carnegie Museum of Art and "Girl with Black Hair," surrendered by the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College. Prosecutors have collectively valued the two pieces at around \$2.5 million.

Ten of Schiele's works have now been returned to the family, but "Russian War Prisoner" remains at the Art Institute of Chicago, which maintains that it was legally acquired. (AP)

Variety

**LAS VEGAS:** A panel of Nevada Supreme Court justices won't reconsider former "Dances With Wolves" actor Nathan Chasing Horse's request to dismiss a sprawling indictment that accuses him of leading a cult, taking underage wives and sexually abusing

Indigenous women and girls. "Rehearing denied," two of three justices who heard oral arguments last November said in a terse order dated Tuesday. Justice Douglas Herndon dissented. Chasing Horse still can seek a hearing before the full seven-member court.

The state high court decision means prosecutors in Las Vegas can proceed with their 18-count criminal case after months of Chasing Horse legal chal-

lenges. The 47-year-old has been in custody since his arrest in January 2023 near the North Las Vegas home he is said to have shared with five wives.

Chasing Horse has pleaded not guilty to charges including sexual assault of a minor, kidnapping and child abuse. A hearing is scheduled next Wednesday in Clark County District Court.

His lawyers argued the case should be dismissed because, the former

actor said, the sexual encounters were consensual. One of his accusers was younger than 16, the age of consent in Nevada, when the alleged abuse began, authorities said. (AP)

**CHICAGO:** A federal jury has convicted six alleged gang members in the 2020 fatal shooting of Chicago rapper FBG Duck, a killing that prosecutors said was part of long-running violence

A brief walk every 30 minutes could transform your health

## Sitting all day bad for health ... here's easy way to offset it

By Keith Diaz, Columbia University

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



The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work.

To reduce the harmful health effects of sitting, take a five-minute light walk every half-hour. That's the key finding of a 2023 study that my colleagues and I published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*.

We asked 11 healthy middle-aged and older adults to sit in our lab for eight hours - representing a standard workday - over the course of five separate days. On one of those days, participants sat for the entire eight hours with only short breaks to use the bathroom. On the other days, we tested a number of different strategies to break up a person's sitting with light walking. For example, on one day, participants walked for one minute every half-hour.

On another day, they walked for five minutes every hour.

Our goal was to find the least amount of walking one could do to offset the harmful health effects of sitting. In particular, we measured changes in blood sugar levels and blood pressure, two important risk factors for heart disease.

We found that a five-minute light walk every half-hour was the only strategy that reduced blood sugar levels substantially compared with sitting all day. In particular, five-minute walks every half-hour reduced the blood sugar spike after eating by almost 60%.

That strategy also reduced blood pressure by four to five points compared with sitting all day.

But shorter and less frequent walks improved blood pressure too.

Even just a one-minute light walk every hour reduced blood pressure by five points.

## Benefits

In addition to physical health benefits, there were also mental health benefits to the walking breaks. During the study, we asked participants to rate their mental state by using a questionnaire.

We found that compared with sitting all day, a five-minute light walk every half-hour reduced feelings of fatigue, put participants in a better mood and helped them feel more energized. We also found that even walks just once every hour were enough to boost mood and reduce feelings of fatigue.

People who sit for hours on end develop chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, dementia and several types of cancer at much higher rates than people who move throughout their day. A sedentary lifestyle also puts people at a much greater risk of early death. But just exercising daily may not reverse the harmful health effects of sitting.

Because of technological advances, the amount of time adults in industrialized countries like the U.S. spend sitting has been steadily increasing for decades. Many adults now spend the majority of their day sitting. This problem has only gotten worse since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the migration to more remote work, people are less inclined to venture out of the house these days. So it's clear that strategies are needed to combat a growing 21st century public health problem.

## Guidelines

Current guidelines recommend that adults should "sit less, move more." But these recommendations don't provide any specific advice or strategies for how often and how long to move.

Our work provides a simple and affordable strategy: Take a five-minute light walk every half-hour. If you have a job or lifestyle where you have to sit for prolonged periods, this one behavior change could reduce your health risks from sitting.

Our study also offers clear guidance to employers on how to promote a healthier workplace. While it may seem counterintuitive, taking regular walking breaks can actually help workers be more productive than working without stopping.

Our study primarily focused on taking regular walking breaks at a light intensity. Some of the walking strategies - for example, one-minute light walks every hour - did not lower blood sugar levels. We don't know if more rigorous walking would have provided health benefits at these doses.

We are currently testing over 25 different strategies for offsetting the health harms of prolonged sitting. Many adults have jobs, such as driving trucks or taxis, where they simply cannot walk every half-hour. Finding alternative strategies that yield comparable results can provide the public with several different options and ultimately allow people to pick the strategy that works best for them and their lifestyle. (AP)

## Space

SLIM makes historic soft landing on lunar surface

## Japan joins elite club by landing on moon

TOKYO, Jan 20, (AP) - Japan became the fifth country in history to reach the moon when one of its spacecrafts without astronauts successfully made a soft landing on the lunar surface early Saturday.

However, space officials said they needed more time to analyze whether the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon, or SLIM, achieved its mission priority of making a pinpoint landing. They also said the craft's solar panel had failed to generate power, which could shorten its activity on the moon.

Space officials believe that the SLIM's small rovers were launched as planned and that data was being transmitted back to Earth, said Hitoshi Kuninaka, head of the Institute of Space and Astronautical Science, a unit of Japan's space agency.

## Power

But he said that SLIM's solar battery wasn't generating power and that it had only a few more hours of battery life. He said the priority was for the craft to gather as much data about its landing and the moon as possible on the remaining battery.

Japan follows the United States, the Soviet Union, China and India in reaching the moon.

Kuninaka said he believes that Japan's space program at least achieved "minimum" success.

SLIM landed on the moon at about 12:20 a.m. Tokyo time Saturday (15:20 GMT Friday).

There was a tense wait for news after the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's mission control initially said that SLIM was on the lunar surface, but that it was still "checking its status." No further details were given until a news conference nearly two hours later.

For the mission to be considered fully successful, space officials needed to confirm whether SLIM made a pinpoint landing. Kuninaka said that while more time was needed, he personally thought it was most likely achieved, based on his observation of data showing the spacecraft's movement until the landing and its ability to transmit signals after landing. He said the solar panel is possibly not in the planned angle, but there is still hope.

Despite the solar panel issue, "it's delightful news," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said in a message posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, pledging the government's continuing backing for the endeavors toward new challenges.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson also lauded SLIM's landing with an X message, congratulating Japan "on being the historic 5th country to land successfully on the Moon! We value our partnership in the cosmos and continued collaboration" in the U.S.-led multinational Artemis Moon exploration.

SLIM, which was aiming to hit a very small target, is a lightweight spacecraft about the size of a passenger vehicle. It was using



A real size model of the palm-sized Lunar Excursion Vehicle 2 (LEV-2) at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Sagamihiro Campus, in Sagamihiro, near Tokyo, Friday, Jan. 19, prior to the pinpoint moon landing operation by the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) spacecraft. (AP)



Representatives of Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Masaki Fujimoto, (left), Hitoshi Kuninaka, (center), and Hiroshi Yamakawa, (right), attend a press conference on the pinpoint moon landing operation by the SLIM spacecraft at JAXA's Sagamihiro Campus, Saturday, Jan. 20, in Sagamihiro, near Tokyo. (AP)

"pinpoint landing" technology that promises far greater control than any previous moon landing.

While most previous probes have used landing zones about 10 kilometers (six miles) wide, SLIM was aiming at a target of just 100 meters (330 feet).

A landing of such precision would be a world's first, and would be crucial technology for a sustainable, long-term and accurate space probe system, said Hiroshi Yamaka-

wa, president of Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA.

Japan needs the technology to secure its place and contribute in international space projects, Yamakawa said.

The project was the fruit of two decades of work on precision technology by JAXA.

SLIM, nicknamed "the Moon Sniper," started its descent at midnight Saturday, and within 15 minutes it was down to about 10 kilometers (six miles) above the lunar sur-

face, according to the space agency, which is known as JAXA.

At an altitude of five kilometers (three miles), the lander was in a vertical descent mode, then at 50 meters (165 feet) above the surface, SLIM was supposed to make a parallel movement to find a safe landing spot, JAXA said.

The spacecraft was testing technology to allow moon missions to land "where we want to, rather than where it is easy to land," JAXA has said. The spacecraft also was supposed to seek clues about the origin of the moon, including analyzing minerals with a special camera.

The SLIM, equipped with a pad each on its five legs to cushion impact, was aiming to land near the Shioli crater, near a region covered in volcanic rock.

## Mission

The closely watched mission came only 10 days after a moon mission by a US private company failed when the spacecraft developed a fuel leak hours after the launch.

SLIM was launched on a Mitsubishi Heavy H2A rocket in September. It initially orbited Earth and entered lunar orbit on Dec. 25.

Japan hopes to regain confidence for its space technology after a number of failures. A spacecraft designed by a Japanese company crashed during a lunar landing attempt in April, and a new flagship rocket failed its debut launch in March.

JAXA has a track record with difficult landings. Its Hayabusa2 spacecraft, launched in 2014, touched down twice on the 900-meter-long (3,000-foot-long) asteroid Ryugu, collecting samples that were returned to Earth.

A successful pinpoint landing by SLIM, especially on the moon, would raise Japan's profile in the global space technology race.

Takeshi Tsuchiya, aeronautics professor at the Graduate School of Engineering at the University of Tokyo, said it was important to confirm the accuracy of landing on a targeted area.

"It is necessary to show the world that Japan has the appropriate technology in order to be able to properly assert Japan's position in lunar development," he said. The moon is important from the perspective of explorations of resources, and it can also be used as a base to go to other planets, like Mars, he said.

Experts say Japan needs to demonstrate its consistency in the precision landing technology to be competitive.

SLIM was carrying two small autonomous probes - lunar excursion vehicles LEV-1 and LEV-2, which officials say were believed to have been released just before landing.

LEV-1, equipped with an antenna and a camera, is tasked with recording SLIM's landing. LEV-2, is a ball-shaped rover equipped with two cameras, developed by JAXA together with Sony, toy maker Tomy and Doshisha University.

## Japan's 'pinpoint landing' aims for global prestige

TOKYO, Jan 20, (AP) - Japan hopes that it made the world's first "pinpoint landing" on the moon when its spacecraft touched down on the lunar surface on Saturday.

Japan hopes that by landing on the moon and entering a club previously occupied by only the United States, the Soviet Union, India and China, it will mean international scientific and diplomatic accolades and potential domestic political gains.

Failure would have meant a very expensive and public embarrassment.

Here's a look at high-profile recent and upcoming attempts, and what they might mean.

**The United States:** NASA plans to send astronauts to fly around the moon next year, and to land there in 2026.

Just this week, however, a US company,

Astrobot Technology, said its lunar lander will soon burn up in Earth's atmosphere after a failed moonshot.

The lander, named Peregrine, developed a fuel leak that forced Astrobot to abandon its attempt to make the first US lunar landing in more than 50 years. The company suspects a stuck valve caused a tank to rupture.

NASA is working to commercialize lunar deliveries by private businesses while the U.S. government tries to get astronauts back to the moon.

For now, the United States' ability to spend large sums and marshal supply chains give it an advantage over China and other moon rivals. Private sector players such as SpaceX and Blue Origin have made crewed space missions a priority.

Another US company, Intuitive Machines, plans to launch its own lunar lander next month.

**India:** Last year, India became the first country to land a spacecraft near the moon's south pole, where scientists believe that perpetually darkened craters may hold frozen water that could aid future missions.

In 2019, a software glitch caused an Indian lander to crash on its lunar descent. So the \$75 million success in August brought widespread jubilation, with people cheering in the streets and declaring India's rise as a scientific superpower.

Indian scientists said that the next step is a manned lunar mission.

**China:** China landed on the moon in 2013, and last year launched a three-person crew for its orbiting space station. It hopes to put astro-

nauts on the moon before the end of the decade.

In 2020, a Chinese capsule returned to Earth from the moon with the first fresh lunar rock samples in more than 40 years. China's first manned space mission in 2003 made it the third country after the USSR and the United States to put a person into space.

**Russia:** Also last year, Russia's Luna-25 failed in its attempt to land in the same area of the moon that India reached.

It came 47 years after the Soviets landed on the moon, and Russian scientists blamed that long break, and the accompanying loss of space expertise, for the recent failure.

The Soviets launched the first satellite in space in 1957 and put the first human in space in 1961, but Russia's program has struggled since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

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# Nuggets hand Celtics 1st home loss of season



Portland Trail Blazers forward Jerami Grant (center), shoots from between Indiana Pacers guard Benedict Mathurin (left), and forward Jalen Smith during the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, Jan. 19, 2024, in Portland, Ore. (AP)

## Sarrazin beats Odermatt for his second Kitzbuehel downhill triumph in two days

KITZBUEHEL, Austria, Jan 20, (AP) — A former giant slalom specialist, Cyprien Sarrazin never raced a World Cup downhill until just over 13 months ago.

Now the French skier is among the main candidates to win the season-long title in Alpine skiing's fastest discipline. Sarrazin mastered the demanding Streif course for a second time in 24 hours on Saturday, beating world champion Marco Odermatt to repeat his downhill triumph from the previous day. "It's incredible," Sarrazin said on Austrian TV. "That's why we live, to bring the joy and the energy. I love this sport, I love this feeling, this is why I am here."

It was Sarrazin's third win in a downhill career that only started with his debut in Beaver Creek in December 2022. His current successful series began last month in Italy, when he finished fourth in Val Gardena. He added a win in Bormio two weeks later and two second places in Wengen last week before his double triumph in Kitzbuehel. "It's special, I'm really proud of myself," said Sarrazin, who also won a

super-G in Switzerland last week.

Racing in perfect sunny conditions under a blue sky and in front of 45,000 spectators, Odermatt had just taken a big lead in the race despite a mistake early in his run.

But Sarrazin stunned him with an all-attacking run down the frightening

### SKIING

3.3-kilometer course to beat the Swiss skier's time by 0.91 seconds - the biggest winning margin in the race since 2011, when Swiss skier Didier Cuche beat American great Bode Miller by 0.98.

"The best day in my sport life," said Sarrazin, who screamed and clicked out of his skis after finishing and jumped onto the finish-area safety barrier in celebration.

"I thought about it in my bed last night, it was crazy to jump on it," the Frenchman said.

Sarrazin had won Friday's race by 0.05 seconds from Italian speed specialist Florian Schieder, with Odermatt 0.35 back in third.

With two-time World Cup downhill champion Alexander Aamodt Kilde out for the season following the Norwegian's crash in Switzerland, Odermatt and Sarrazin are set to battle it out for this season's discipline title.

After Saturday's seventh of this season's 11 downhills, Odermatt leads Sarrazin by a mere six points. Next are two downhills in Chamonix, France, on Feb. 2-3.

Odermatt and Sarrazin are also 1-2 in the overall standings, but the two-time defending champion from Switzerland has a buffer of nearly 500 points here.

Last week, Odermatt beat Sarrazin twice to win both downhills at another iconic venue on the men's circuit in Wengen for the Swiss skier's first victories in the sport's fastest discipline.

For three minutes, Odermatt believed he might have won in Kitzbuehel as well.

"But I knew the big favorite was starting right after me. He is in a superb form," Odermatt said. "Today I could have won the last big race that is missing in my career, but now I have a big goal for next season."

## Suns outshine Pelicans 123-109

BOSTON, Jan 20, (AP) — Jamal Murray scored 35 points, Nikola Jokic had with 34 and the Denver Nuggets held on to hand the Boston Celtics their first home loss of the season, 102-100 on Friday night.

Jokic added 12 rebounds and nine assists to help the defending NBA champions end the Celtics' streak at 20 home victories. It was the first of two regular-season meetings between teams with sights on representing their respective conferences in the NBA Finals. They play again in Denver on March 7.

Jayson Tatum had a chance to tie it in the closing seconds, but he missed a one-legged fadeaway off the rim. He finished with 22 points and eight rebounds. Derrick White had 24 points and Kristaps Porzingis added 21.

Jokic, the two-time NBA MVP, feasted on a Celtics defense that opted not to double-team him for most of the game. He was efficient, connecting on 14 of 22 field attempts. It also didn't stop him from finding his teammates, as he had nine of his assists in the first three quarters.

### Suns 123, Pelicans 109

In New Orleans, Devin Booker scored a season-high 52 points in 37 minutes on the court - his second straight 50-point game against New Orleans - and Phoenix beat the Pelicans for its fourth straight victory.

The last time Booker - who had 25 points in the first quarter - was in the Suns' lineup against New Orleans he scored 58 points in a victory in Phoenix on Dec. 17, 2022. On Friday, he was 18 of 30 from the field, 6 of 11 on 3s and made 10 free throws without a miss.

### BASKETBALL

Booker reached 50 points for the sixth time in his career. He had a career-high 70 at Boston on March 24, 2017.

Kevin Durant added 26 points and Jusuf Nurkic grabbed 15 rebounds for Phoenix. Zion Williamson scored 24 points for the Pelicans.

### Nets 130, Lakers 112

In Los Angeles Cam Thomas scored 33 points and Brooklyn beat Los Angeles, pulling away in a dominant second half to snap a four-game losing streak and win for the fourth time in 18 games.

Thomas had 20 points in the first half on 9-of-12 shooting. Nic Claxton had 22 points and 14 rebounds, and Spencer Dinwiddie scored 13 of his 19 points in the third quarter as the Nets took control, outscoring the Lakers 38-22.

Anthony Davis had 26 points and 12 rebounds, and LeBron James added 24 points and 10 rebounds for the Lakers. They dropped back below .500 at 21-22, and are 7-13 since winning the inaugural NBA In-Season Tournament.

### 7ers 124, Magic 109

In Orlando, Fla. Joel Embiid scored 36 points, Tyrese Maxey had 32 and Philadelphia beat Orlando for its fourth straight victory.

Embiid and Maxey both scored over 30 points for the eighth time this season to break a 58-year-old franchise record. Embiid and Maxey surpassed the mark for a 76ers duo set by Wilt Chamberlain and Hal Greer, who went over 30 together seven times during the 1965-66 season.

It was the franchise-record 19th straight game of 30 points or more for Embiid, the NBA's leading scorer, who didn't play in the fourth quarter.

Wendell Carter Jr. had 25 points and 11 rebounds for Orlando.



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) shoots against Brooklyn Nets forward Dorian Finney-Smith (28) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Friday, Jan. 19, 2024. (AP)

### Trail Blazers 118, Pacers 115

In Portland, Ore. Jerami Grant scored 37 points and Portland spoiled Pascal Siakam's debut with Indiana.

Malcolm Brogdon added a season-high 30 points for Portland.

Siakam scored 21 points while starting for the Pacers after being traded from Toronto. Myles Turner had 29 points and 12 rebounds for Indiana, which held off Sacramento 126-121 on Thursday night.

Tyrese Haliburton returned to the Pacers after missing five games because of a hamstring injury. He had 21 points and 17 assists.

### Hawks 109, Heat 108

In Miami, Dejounte Murray hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with two seconds left and Atlanta spoiled Udonis Haslem's jersey retirement night by beating Miami.

Murray scored 22 points, finishing with his second straight late winner. On Wednesday night at home, he hit a 17-foot jumper as time expired to give Atlanta a 106-104 victory over Orlando.

Bogdan Bogdanovic added 17, Jalen Johnson had 15 and Saddiq Bey 14 for Atlanta, which trailed by four with 35 seconds left. Bogdanovic made a pair of free throws, the Hawks got a stop and then Murray connected.

Tyler Herro and Jimmy Butler each scored 25 points for Miami.

### Hornets 124, Spurs 120

In Charlotte, N.C. LaMelo Ball scored 16 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter and Charlotte beat San Antonio to end a six-game losing streak.

San Antonio rookie star Victor Wembanyama sat out for the sixth time this season. The No. 1 overall pick sprained an ankle Dec. 23 at Dallas, and the Spurs have been cautious with him. Keldon Johnson led San Antonio with 25 points.

No. 2 overall pick Brandon Miller added 24 points for Charlotte.

## Colorado State defeats UNLV 78-75

FORT COLLINS, Colo., Jan 20, (AP) — Nique Clifford had 21 points in Colorado State's 78-75 win over UNLV on Friday.

Clifford also added seven rebounds for the Rams (15-3, 3-2 Mountain West Conference). Isaiah Stevens scored 18 points and added six rebounds and seven assists. Joel Scott had 14 points and went 7 of 9 from the field.

The Rebels (9-8, 2-3) were led in scoring by Keylan Boone, who finished with 21 points, eight rebounds and two blocks. Kalib Boone added 14 points for UNLV. In addition, Dedan Thomas Jr. finished with 11 points and eight assists.

Clifford scored 11 points in the first half and Colorado State went into halftime trailing 39-32. Colorado State pulled off the victory after an 8-0 second-half run erased a five-point deficit and gave them the lead at 71-68 with 2:42 remaining in the half. Clifford scored 10 second-half points.

Colorado State's next game is Wednesday against Nevada on the road, and UNLV hosts Air Force on Tuesday.

In Madison, Wis., Wisconsin's Max Klesmit acknowledges his style of play can frustrate opponents.

That's particularly true when Klesmit performs the way he did Friday night.

Klesmit scored 20 consecutive Wisconsin points during a second-half span of just over 4 1/2 minutes, and the 11th-ranked Badgers beat Indiana 91-79 to continue their home mastery of the Hoosiers.

### BASKETBALL

Klesmit capped his dominant stretch by hitting a pair of free throws after Indiana reserve guard CJ Gunn was ejected for elbowing him in the side of the face with 12:42 remaining.

"With the chip I play on my shoulder, I guess some guys can kind of look at that as super aggression, maybe a little out of control," Klesmit said. "But in my mind, it's nothing ever that's out of my control. It's always kind of just the way I play."

## Onley leads Tour Down Under

ADELAIDE, Australia, Jan 20, (AP) — Oscar Onley of Scotland will take the overall lead in the Tour Down Under into the final day after winning the fifth stage Saturday, finishing atop Old Willunga Hill.

Onley made a perfectly timed break on the second

of two ascents up the iconic South Australian climb to win the stage from Stephen Williams of Wales, Jonatan Narváez of Ecuador and the two-time world road race champion Julian Alaphilippe of France.

While Onley was calculated to be in first place on general classification after Saturday's stage, he and

### CYCLING

Williams were on the same time, not even a second between them.

Narváez is third, five seconds behind, on the same time as Isaac del Toro Romero of Mexico who was the overall leader heading into the fifth stage. Alaphilippe is next, 13 seconds down on the leader.

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## SPORTS

## Third round of Kuwait Dressage League commences



An equestrian trains ahead of the commencement of the Dressage League third round.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: The third edition of the Kuwait Dressage League kicks off today at 2:30 pm at the Hunting and Equestrian Club in the Subhan area. This event, sponsored by the Kuwait Equestrian Federation, witnesses a significant turnout of riders, coinciding with the introduction of new horses and a growing interest in the art of "horse dressage." The competition spans five levels, ranging from beginner to advance.

## EQUESTRIAN

Heading the dressage committee of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation is Sheikhha Fajr Badr Al-Sabah. The committee comprises Alaa Salem Al-Sultan, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Nusayba Al-Maousherji, Dana Bouresli, and Abdullah Al-Amer, with technical management led by the internationally

experienced Amber Dean Heer.

Sheikha Fajr Badr Al-Sabah expressed, We have already organized two tournaments, and future plans include hosting international referees for training courses. Our technical director has been providing training to both trainers and riders since the season's onset, emphasizing the correct execution of dressage tests, aiming for international accreditation and maximum points for each required movement.

Highlighting the significance of dressage, she emphasized its role in equestrianism, focusing on horse taming. The sport aims to teach riders and horses balance, flexibility, and seamless transitions between speeds with minimal effort. Complete obedience from the horse, precision in command execution, and maintaining specific timing and speeds are paramount objectives for every participant. The sport enjoys robust support from various club owners and managements, contributing to its continual growth and development.

## Al-Arabi 'bolster' squad with addition of Algeria's Abu Bakr

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Al-Arabi Club has bolstered its squad with the addition of Algerian player Abu Bakr. The club finalized the contract for foreign players by securing the signing of Algerian defender Imad El-Din Abu Bakr, who arrives from the Egyptian Arab Contractors Club. Abu Bakr is set to become the fifth international player for Al-Arabi, joining Nigerian Anayo Iweala, Moroccan Hamza Khaba and Walid Sabbar, and Tunisian Ayman Sfaxien.

## SOCCER

Abu Bakr steps in to replace Algerian Sofiane Bouchard, who has been loaned to an Algerian club. The termination of the contract of Senegalese Mamadou Thiam was a decision made by the Al-Arabi technical staff, led by Bosnian coach Darko Nestorovic, citing concerns about Thiam's performance.

With a wealth of experience, 28-year-old Abu Bakr has played for various clubs in Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco, including Olympique Medea and Chabab Al-Saoura in Algeria, as well as the Moroccan Wydad Club. He has also represented the Egyptian clubs of Port Said and the Arab Contractors Club.

Abu Bakr is expected to join Al-Arabi's training sessions today, gearing up for his involvement in the team's upcoming competitions



Algerian professional Abu Bakr.

for the remainder of the current season.

In a related update, Al-Arabi's international players are set to resume training today after completing their commitments with the national team.

Meanwhile, the return of players who joined the Olympic team camp in Bangkok is eagerly awaited by Al-Arabi.

The team is preparing for a clash against Sulaibikhat on January 26 in the preliminary round of the Amir Cup competition.

## Sulaibikhat lock horns with Kazma

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Sulaibikhat is set to embark on a quest for "rehabilitation" as they confront Kazma at 5:00 pm today in the Al-Ittihad Hall, part of the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex. This matchup takes place in the preliminary round of the basketball league, following Kazma's narrow victory in the first encounter with an 80-82 score.

## BASKETBALL

In another exciting faceoff at 7:30 pm in the same hall, Al-Nasr will go head-to-head with Al-Tadamon. Currently holding the second position with 17 points, Kazma faces Sulaibikhat, positioned fourth with 15 points. The "Orange" team is determined to secure victory and advance towards the semifinals, while Sulaibikhat, showcasing impressive performances throughout the tournament, aims to affirm its claim to the fourth qualifying spot in the golden square.

The upcoming match promises intense competition, given the commendable performances displayed by both teams this season. Under the guidance of Slovenian coach Bojan Lazic, Kazma relies on the skills of Ahmed Al-Balushi, Abdulaziz Al-Hamidi, Youssef Bourahma, and the American players Leslie and Chapman. On the other side, Sulaibikhat's coach, Fahd Burgess, looks to players such as Daoud Al-Sadi, Fahd Al-Nashi, and Adel Nafi, along with American Klibert and Malian Alex-



A file photo of Kazma player going for a basket.

ander.

In the second matchup featuring Al-Nasr, currently seventh with 11 points, against Al-Tadamon, positioned ninth with 10 points, the former holds an advantage in technical prowess and the absence of professionals in the latter team. This circumstance makes victory more likely for Al-Nasr, emphasizing the potential for them to secure the two crucial points.

## Kuwait conclude training camp on losing note



A Kuwaiti (left) battles Ugandan for the ball during their friendly match in Cairo.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah /Arab Times Staff

CAIRO, Jan 20: The Kuwait concluded its training camp in Cairo, Egypt, with a 2-0 defeat against the Uganda at Cairo Stadium.

The Kuwait camp, which commenced on January 9, included a friendly match against the Libyan national team, resulting in a 3-1 loss.

These preparations are crucial for the upcoming matches against Qatar in March, part of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup in the United

States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as the 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia.

International players are set to rejoin their respective clubs today, gearing up for the upcoming Emir Cup competitions starting next Friday.

## SOCCER

Portuguese coach Rui Pinto, leading the team, made strategic changes to the squad that faced Libya.

The lineup featured Abdul Rahman Al Majdali in goal, and in defense,

Suleiman Bormia, Mishari Ghannam, Sami Al Sanea, and Fahd Al Hajri. The midfield included Ahmed Al Dhafri, Abdul Mohsen Al Ajmi, and Athbi Shehab, while Faisal Zayed and the attacking duo were Shabib Al-Khalidi and Bandar Al-Salama.

Despite Pinto's efforts to alter the course of the match by introducing Othman Al-Shammari, Nasser Falih, and Ali Khalaf, the Uganda secured an early lead in the third minute and solidified its advantage in the second half. Despite changes made by Pinto, the final score remained unchanged.

## Swiatek exits Australian Open in third-round loss to Noskova

Men's top players advance

MELBOURNE, Jan 20, (AP): Already down a set and facing a break point against Iga Swiatek, No. 50-ranked Linda Noskova decided she had nothing to lose.

She won 11 of the next 12 points to take the second set and swing momentum in their third-round match Saturday, ultimately becoming the first teenager to beat a No. 1-ranked woman at the Australian Open since 1999.

## TENNIS

With a big serve and equally big groundstrokes, she unsettled Swiatek and held her cool, even under pressure in the last game to serve it out, for a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory that means there's no top 10 players in the top half of the draw.

"I'm just really kind of exhausted mentally and physically," Noskova said in her post-match news conference following the upset. "I just believed my game tonight. I just really wanted this."

Swiatek is a four-time major winner but has never been past the semifinals at Melbourne Park. Even so, she was on an 18-match winning streak and expected to account for the 19-year-old Noskova, who is making her main draw debut at the tournament.

Swiatek beat 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin in the first round and had to rally from 4-1 down in the third to overcome 2022 finalist Danielle Collins in the second.

But after taking the first set against her Czech opponent, she struggled for rhythm. The decisive break was in the seventh game of the third set, with two forehand errors costing Swiatek the game.

Two games later, she held at love and forced her rival serve it out, then jumped to 0-30 lead in the 10th game.

But Noskova won the the next four points to finish it off quickly, including an ace to set up match point. She'll next play Wimbledon semifinalist Elina Svitolina.

Swiatek said the tough opening matches didn't hurt her.

"Physically I felt - honestly, I didn't feel anything. So pretty good," she said. "Mentally, as well, I felt like actually I came back in my match against Danielle, and I could kind of start over and not expect a lot, just try to play my game."

"I felt like I had everything under control until she broke me in the second set," the 22-year-old Pole added. "Sometimes, yeah, I was rushing it. I just wasn't playing kind of with my intuition and naturally."

Swiatek's loss leaves No. 12 Zheng Qinwen as the highest-ranked player and two-time Australian



Inter Miami's Lionel Messi (right), and El Salvador's Rudy Clavel, fight for the ball during a friendly soccer match at the Cuscatlan stadium in San Salvador, El Salvador. (AP)

Open winner Victoria Azarenka as the only past major winner in the top half of the draw.

Defending champion Aryna Sabalenka, seeded second, U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff, seeded fourth, and No. 9 Barbra Krejckikova are all on the opposite half.

The men's draw remains stacked, with No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz, No. 3 Daniil Medvedev and No. 6 Alexander Zverev having straight-set wins Saturday to reach the fourth round. Top-ranked Novak Djokovic, No. 4 Jannik Sinner and No. 5 Andrey Rublev already reached the last 16 on the top half of the draw.

Medvedev beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 and finished 2 1/2 hours before midnight local time. His second-round match finished close to 4 a.m. Friday.

He will next play Nuno Borges, who upset No. 13 Grigor Dimitrov 6-7 (3), 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 (6).

Wimbledon champion Alcaraz was leading 6-1, 6-1, 1-0 when the 18-year-old Shang Juncheng retired

in the third set.

"It's not the way you want to move on," said the 20-year-old Alcaraz, who missed the 2023 Australian Open because of injury. "Last year I was watching the matches from my couch, wishing to be in the second week."

Alcaraz will play Miomir Kecmanovic, who saved two match points before upsetting 2023 semifinalist Tommy Paul 6-4, 3-6, 2-6, 7-6 (7), 6-0.

No. 9 Hubert Hurkacz beat No. 21 Ugo Humbert 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (4), 6-3 and will play another Frenchman next, wildcard entry Arthur Cazaux.

French Open finalist and No. 11 seed Casper Ruud lost 6-4, 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-3 to No. 19 Cam Norrie.

Azarenka won back-to-back women's titles here in 2012 and '13. On Saturday, she took out 2017 French Open winner Jelena Ostapenko 6-1, 7-5.

She trailed 5-2 in the second before winning five straight games.

"I'm just ready to give whatever it takes," she said. "I'm going to stay



Nuno Borges of Portugal plays a forehand return to Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria during their third round match at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

## Lionel Messi and Inter Miami held

SAN SALVADOR, Jan 20, (AP): Four days after being named FIFA's best men's player, Lionel Messi began the preseason with Inter Miami of Major League Soccer, which played to a scoreless draw with the El Salvador national team in an exhibition on Friday night.

The Argentina star played in the first half alongside Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez, his new teammate for the upcoming MLS season. Suarez reunited with Messi in Miami after the pair played six seasons together with Barcelona.

Fans packed the Cuscatlan stadium several hours before the start. El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele, took the opportunity to meet Messi and hosted the team at the Presidential House ahead of the game.

Messi had a couple of scoring chances and set up Jordi Alba for a scoring opportunity in the 39th minute, but goalkeeper Mario González deflected the shot.

Inter Miami coach Gerardo Martino rested Messi, Suárez, Jordi Alba and Sergio Busquets in the second half. The club still controlled possession, but El Salvador had the best scoring chance when Steven Vázquez's shot rattled the crossbar in the 83rd minute.

The 36-year-old Messi arrived in Miami last July and scored 10 goals in seven games. He led the club to its first-ever trophy by winning the Leagues Cup final on Aug. 19.

Inter Miami will play FC Dallas next Monday at the Cotton Bowl and then will travel to Saudi Arabia to face Al Hilal on Jan. 29 and Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr on Feb. 2.

out here as long as it needs to be."

Azarenka's next opponent will be Ukrainian qualifier Dayana Yastremska, a 6-2, 2-6, 6-1 winner over No. 27 Emma Navarro.

Anna Kalinskaya beat 2017 U.S. Open winner Sloane Stephens 6-7 (8), 6-1, 6-4 to set up a meeting with Jasmine Paolini. The 26th seeded Paolini advanced 7-6 (1), 6-4 over Anna Blinkova, who was coming off a big upset win over 2023 finalist Elena Rybakina in the longest tiebreaker in women's Grand Slam history.

In the Rod Laver Arena opener, Zheng, a U.S. Open quarterfinalist last year, edged fellow Chinese player Wang Yafan 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (8) to reach the fourth round in Australia for the first time and a match against Oceane Dodin of France.

Zheng told the crowd she was motivated by watching Li Na win the Australian Open title in 2014 and was surprised to see later that her tennis inspiration was on site to watch the match.



Jordan's Abdallah Nasib (bottom), stops South Korea's Son Heung-min during the Asian Cup Group E soccer match between Jordan and South Korea at Al Thumama in Doha, Qatar. (AP)

# Sports

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Kuwait fencing delegation.

## Al-Shamlan maintains 29th world ranking amidst tough competition

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20: Hamad Al-Awadi, the Secretary and Chairman of the National Teams Committee of the Kuwait Fencing Federation, reported that Youssef Al-Shamlan, the champion, maintained his world

### FENCING

ranking at 29th place after concluding the Grand Prix tournament in Tunisia. Al-Shamlan exited in the 64th round, succumbing to his Egyptian counterpart.

Simultaneously, the Kuwaiti fencing

team's delegation for juniors and juniors has embarked on a 17-day training camp in Budapest, Hungary, in preparation for the upcoming Asian Junior and Junior Fencing Championship (men and women). The championship is scheduled to take place in Manama, Bahrain, from February 16 to 25. Heading the delegation is Hamad Al-Awadi, who serves as both the secretary and head of the committee. The technical staff includes national coach Saud Al-Zamil, Senegalese coach Baba Touria, technical director Tariq Mahdi, and a contingent of 22 players.

## Proud moment: Al-Daihani clinches bronze and Olympic 'qualification'

Kuwait bids adieu to the Asian Shooting Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 20, (Agencies): Kuwaiti marksman Mohammad Al-Daihani has secured his spot in the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, clinching the bronze in the Men's single 'Skeet' competition at the ongoing 2024 Asian Shotgun Championships in Kuwait. Al-Daihani attributed his success to rigorous training and dedicated efforts, acknowledging the crucial support provided by the Kuwait Shooting Federation.

### SHOOTING

In a statement to the press, Al-Daihani highlighted the significance of the hard work put in to achieve this milestone. Additionally, Duajj Al-Otaibi, the chief of the Federation, expressed immense pride in Kuwait's accomplishment, securing the second qualification for the Paris Olympic Games. Al-Otaibi shared that shooter Khalid Al-Mudhaf earned his spot through the 'Trap' competitions held last August.

Meanwhile, today marks the conclusion of the Kuwait Asian Shooting Championship, which commenced on January 12 at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah "Olympic" ranges complex. The event witnessed the participation of 26 countries, culminating in the qualifiers and final for the mixed doubles competition in the "skeet" shooting category. The focus of the day is on finalizing the contracts for the eight qualifying tickets to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Also, Chinese shooter Gao Linmei clinched the gold medal in the women's skeet competition final, securing a score of 56 after a fierce competition with Indian shooter Dillon Raiza (52), who secured second place and the silver medal. Both shooters earned qualification for the 2024 Paris Olympics. The bronze medal was awarded to Indian shooter Chauhan Maheshwari.

Prince Khalid bin Bandar Al Saud, Vice President of the Saudi and Asian Shooting Federations, emphasized Saudi Arabia's commitment to strong participation in major Asian and international shooting championships.

He highlighted the significance of the Kuwait Asian Shooting Championship as a major global tournament, praising its excellent organization and the state-of-the-art Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Arena Complex. Prince Khalid noted the participation of strong Asian teams with international male and female shooters, all aiming for qualification for the Paris Olympics in 2024.

Prince Khalid expressed satisfaction with the performance of Saudi shooters in the tournament and shared the federation's aspirations for continuous improvement and better results in the future. He acknowledged the unwavering support of Saudi leadership, with direct oversight from the Minister of Sports and President of the Saudi Game Federation, Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal.



Kuwait's bronze medalist Mohammad Al-Daihani.

KUNA photo



Sheikh Salman Al-Hamoud welcomes Prince Khalid bin Bandar Al Saud.

### Iraq advance

## South Korea benefit from late own goal to 'salvage' draw with Jordan

DOHA, Qatar, Jan 20, (AP): Despite going ahead on an early strike by Son Heung-min, South Korea needed a last-minute own goal to secure a 2-2 draw with Jordan at the Asian Cup on Saturday.

Yazan Al-Arab's late intervention at the Al Thumama Stadium prevented a second surprise result in the space of 24 hours after Iraq defeated Japan 2-1. The draw leaves both South Korea, led by former United States coach Jurgen Klinsmann, and Jordan with four points from the first two games in Group E.

South Korea, a two-time champion but searching for a first title since 1960, started well. After just five minutes, Son was fouled in the area by Ehsan Haddad. After a four-minute long VAR check, the Tottenham captain scored from the spot.

Jordan leveled after 37 minutes as Park Yong-woo headed a corner into his own net. Six minutes into first-half stoppage time, Jordan took the lead on Yazan Al-Naimat's goal.

South Korea's pressure paid off in the 91st minute. Son pulled the ball back in the area for Hwang In-beom and the low shot from the Red Star Belgrade midfielder was turned into his own goal by Al Arab.

The top two from each of the six groups advance to the round of 16, where they are joined by the four best-performing third-placed teams.

Ayemen Hussein scored both goals as Iraq shocked Asian Cup favorite Japan 2-1 to claim a place in the knockout stage.

Hussein struck twice in the first half at Education City Stadium to inflict Japan's first group-stage loss at the Asian Cup since 1988. An injury-time header from Wataru Endo was a late consolation for Japan.

The win lifted Iraq, the 2007 champion, to the top of Group D and a

guaranteed spot in the round of 16. Four-time winner Japan, Asia's highest-ranked team at 17, was second.

"It's impossible to have a perfect match but we were close to perfect," Iraq's Spanish coach, Jesus Casas, said. "It is a great day for the people of Iraq."

Iraq took the lead after just six minutes when Japan goalkeeper Zion Suzuki palmed Ali Jasim's cross from the left straight to Hussein, who headed it home.

Japan streamed forward in search of an equalizer but Iraq defended in numbers and doubled its lead in first-half added time. Hussein headed in Aymed Yahya's cross.

"Conceding at the end of the first half hit us hard and made it a very difficult game," Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu said.

### SOCCER

Japan was awarded a penalty 10 minutes into the second half after Takuma Asano was judged to have fouled by Rebin Sulaka. However, referee Khalid Al-Turais overturned his original decision after viewing the pitchside monitor.

Endo eventually got Japan within a goal in added time when goalkeeper Jalal Hachim failed to collect the ball.

Indonesia moved level with Japan in the standings after beating Vietnam 1-0.

The deadlock was broken after 42 minutes when Nguyen Thanh Binh pulled Rafael Struick's shirt in the area. Captain Asnawi Mangkualam fired home the penalty to give Indonesia the victory and a chance of a place in the second stage for the first time.

Vietnam, which has lost both of its games, was reduced to 10 men late in the game after Le Pham Thanh Long's second yellow card.

Blues face decisive battle against Iraq at Asian Handball Championship

## Kuwait on the brink of World Cup qualification

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Jan 20: Kuwait stands at a pivotal juncture as it faces its Iraq at 3:00 pm. This match is part of the final round of the second group in the "main" round of the 21st Asian Handball Championship, also serving as the "2025 World Cup Qualifiers." The event is currently taking place in the Bahraini capital, Manama.

### HANDBALL

Kuwait currently holds the second position in the group with two points earned from a recent draw with Bahrain and South Korea. This places it behind the Bahrain leading the group with 3 points and ahead of the Korean team, sharing the balance with "two points" and a goal difference advantage for Kuwait. Meanwhile, the Iraqi team is in fourth place with one point.

The significance of today's match against Iraq lies in its potential to secure Al-Azraq's qualification for the World Cup after a 15-year absence. The last participation of Kuwait in the World Cup dates back to 2009 in Croatia. A victory today would officially qualify Kuwait for the next World Cup and ensure advancement to the semi-finals of the Asian championship.

In conclusion, Prince Khalid commended the efforts of the Asian Federations, led by Sheikh Salman Al-Hamoud, and the Kuwaiti Federation, led by Engineer Duajj Al-Otaibi, for their exceptional organization and meticulous attention to detail. He acknowledged Kuwait's longstanding history in successfully organizing major competitions of this nature.

## Arsenal end 3-game losing streak

LONDON, Jan 20, (AP): Central defender Gabriel Magalhaes helped Arsenal solve its scoring problems as the Gunners ended a three-game losing streak in all competitions with a 5-0 win over Crystal Palace in the Premier

League on Saturday. Having seen the team's forwards waste a slew of chances during its recent skid, Gabriel took matters into his own hands in the first half at Emirates Stadium.

In the event of a draw, qualification hinges on Bahrain winning against Korea in the match scheduled for 7:00 pm.

Today's matches also feature the UAE playing against Oman in a crucial encounter, and Qatar facing Japan at the top of the group. The top four qualifying teams will progress to the semi-finals of the 2025 World Cup, scheduled to be held in Croatia, Denmark, and Norway.

Expressing confidence in the team, Khaled Talib, Treasurer of the Handball Federation, highlighted the collective efforts to showcase the caliber of Kuwaiti handball on the international stage. Despite facing challenges since the inception of preparations for this stage, Talib emphasized pride in the players' determination and unity.

Talib urged Kuwaiti fans to rally behind Kuwait in this crucial match, expressing hope for victory, World Cup qualification, and a triumphant return to the Asian podiums.



A Kuwaiti player celebrates after scoring against South Korea.