



tennis Page 15



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday Saudi Minister of State, and member of the Saudi Council of Ministers Prince Turki bin Mohammad and his delegation on their official visit to the country.

Kuwait addresses fiscal challenges at Arab meet

ABU DHABI, Jan 23, (KUNA): Kuwaiti delegation in Abu Dhabi representing the Ministry of Finance took part in the 9th Arab Finance Undersecretaries meeting, during which they discussed ways to enhance shared financial cooperation among Arab states

by addressing various economic and financial issues. The head of the delegation, Kholoud Al-Mutawa, told KUNA after the meeting that the most notable discussions centered around Arab cooperation in economy and finance.

The focus was on the role of fiscal policy in integrating the informal and national economic sectors and the resulting repercussions on the economy.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait walks economic tightrope amid oil's grip

Private sector falls short in diversification efforts

By Mahmoud Shendi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The General Secretariat of Planning's report on the Kuwaiti economy has unveiled a perpetual and consistent connection between the Kuwaiti

economy and global oil prices.

Despite substantial government investments aimed at maximizing non-oil revenues and empowering the private sector to spearhead economic activities, these endeavors have fallen short of expectations. This prompts the crucial questions: Where are the non-oil revenues, and what role does the private sector play in diversifying the local economy?

Analysis of the private sector's performance over the past 12 years within the Kuwaiti economy's macroeconomic framework reveals a consistent but uninspiring contribution. Throughout the first, second, and third development plans, the private sector's share in the local economy fluctuated between 23% and 38%, underscoring its limited impact. Interestingly, during economic recoveries, the private sector's contribution to the GDP diminishes, while it increases during economic downturns. Notably, the private sector failed to play a significant role in rescuing the Kuwaiti economy from deficits, as evidenced by the highest recorded contribution of 38% in 2020 coinciding with the largest economic deficit in 12 years.

The report attributes the economic challenges to the quality of government investment spending over the past 12 years, contradicting the vision that positioned the private sector as the economic leader. Notably, the Kuwaiti economy experienced financial surpluses between 2010 and 2014 when

Continued on Page 5

Opinion

Waiting for Kuwait's fourth state

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

KUWAITIS have the right to feel bitter as a result of what they have endured in the past years. They also have the right to receive any change with caution, especially from the executive authority on which they rely to get them out of their current situation.

They hence see some signs of optimism in the new Cabinet, especially since the rate of change in it is about 80 percent, unlike what was usual in the previous Cabinets. There is no doubt that the personality of His Highness the Prime Minister is one of those signs.

He is known for his pursuit of reform. However, this cannot be achieved without bold laws and firm decisions that flow into the vision whose general outlines were set by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal

Al-Ahmad in his supreme speech during the swearing-in ceremony and his speeches since the year 2022.

In recent years, there has been a feeling that the parliamentarians are the rulers. Events have shown that the country is ruled by 51 rulers, 50 of whom are in the National Assembly and the remaining one - His Highness the Amir - is in Seif Palace. As for the ministers, they were either employees of the Prime Minister, or the parliamentarians.

Therefore, if the justifications were that democracy imposes this, and that the Constitution determined the path for both parties, then this is an injustice to Kuwait, its Constitution, and democracy.

For example, when 44 parliamentarians agree on a legislative plan that has clear personal goals and takes into account the interests of those controlling it, the real goal will not be the renaissance of the country, but rather the pursuit of governance.

If these parliamentarians agreed to enact legislation affirming the powers of the ruler or the Prime Minister, or even to amend the Constitution, nothing would hinder them.

The head of state has no right to reject the law. If they are determined to do so, the Constitution itself allows them to approve it without returning to the Amir.

In this regard, we have the precedent of the law granting women their political rights in 2003, when parliamentarians rejected the Amir's desire at that time, and the debate continued for about two years until the law was approved in 2005.

To this day, in light of the tampering that has been practiced over the past years and based on what His Highness the Amir said in the oath-taking session in this regard - "What is required is to reconsider all the texts that

Continued on Page 5

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'Program exploited'

Canada caps foreign student visas as cost of living spikes

TORONTO, Jan 23, (AP): Canada has announced a two-year cap on international student visas to ease the pressure on housing, health care and other services at a time of record immigration.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller said that there will be a 35% reduction in new study visas in 2024. He said that the international students program has been exploited by institutions offering "sham" degrees, putting pressure on housing and health care. "It's a bit of a mess, and it's time to rein it in," Miller said.

The number of new visas handed out will be capped at 364,000. Nearly 560,000 such visas were issued last year.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Cabinet retreat in Montreal this week will prioritize affordability and housing, according to a government statement.

The government said that there are about 1 million foreign students in the country now, and without any intervention this number would keep increasing. The total number of foreign students is more than three times what it was a decade ago.



KUNA photo
The Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute, affiliated with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosted a symposium titled 'State of Kuwait's Position on the Palestinian Issue' as part of the ministry's training cultural season. The event drew participation from various embassies and agencies. — See Page 2

MP intensifies probe on public fund thefts and embezzlement

Government faces initial parliamentary inquiries

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Raed Youssef
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The new government, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, has received the first parliamentary questions addressed to its members who, as per the regulation, will not be obligated to respond before the new ministers among them take the constitutional oath in the National Assembly on Feb 6.

A total of nine questions were officially referred to the government.

MP Badr Nashmi asked Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs and acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Firas Al-Malik about the crimes of embezzlement of officially documented public funds in cooperative societies since

the beginning of 2014, measures taken and the number of cases filed against expatriates accused of theft and embezzlement.

Nashmi cited the repeated theft in many cooperative societies by what he described as "weak-souled expatriates" and their escape with the stolen money outside the country, stressing the necessity of confronting these thefts, which demonstrate the weakness of the supervisory and financial roles of State agencies. He also underscored the need to stop the wastage of public money and to protect the shareholders' money.

He pointed out that "public money has a sanctity which requires preserving everything in the interest of the nation and the citizens. Allah Almighty has vowed to impose severe punishment for anyone who takes public money in an unlawful manner. Therefore, we must preserve and protect public money. We must pursue those who steal it

by taking sound and firm measures, tracking the movement of the looted money outside the country, and recovering it through legal and political means and other means followed internationally."

He asserted that the country recently witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of embezzlement, theft and misappropriation of public funds crimes in many institutions, government agencies and companies. He said the problem has exacerbated in the absence of deterrence and many of the accused have not been punished despite the multiplicity of regulatory bodies in the country.

He requested for detailed report on the crimes of embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds officially documented in cooperative societies since the beginning of 2014 for each cooperative society and each year separately, including the amounts of stolen money, nationality of the

Continued on Page 5

News watch

DOHA: Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Jassim Al-Budaiwi discussed along with Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani joint Gulf work and efforts meeting the aspirations of Gulf leaders and their people.

These sentiments were expressed during meeting between the two in the capital of Doha, reported, the General Secretariat. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: The U.S. and British militaries bombed multiple sites used by the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen on Monday, the second time the two allies have conducted coordinated retaliatory strikes on an array of the rebels' missile-launching capabilities, several U.S. officials said.

According to officials, the U.S. and U.K. used warship- and submarine-launched Tomahawk missiles and fighter jets to take out Houthi missile storage sites and launchers. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing mission. (AP)



PM Diwan photo
His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah meets UAE Ambassador Dr. Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi.

Kuwait PM receives UAE invitation

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah met with UAE Ambassador in Kuwait Dr. Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi at Bayan Palace on Tuesday.

During the reception, the ambassador handed His Highness the Prime Minister a letter from UAE Vice-President, Prime

Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed Al-Maktoum, inviting him to attend the World Government Summit 2024 due in UAE in February.

Chief of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Dekheel Al-Dekheel was also present at the meeting. (KUNA)

Day by Day

PEOPLE invest substantial sums of money in enhancing their physical appearance and features, yet often neglect the improvement of their character. Psychologists emphasize that cultivating good behavior is a cost-free way of beautifying one's morals.

A wise man was once asked why he doesn't seek revenge on his enemies. His response was insightful: "It is not wise to bite the dog that bit you." Indeed, responding to harm with harm is not a wise course of action. The analogy extends to the understanding that even dogs, when they bite, may face consequences or punishment for their actions.

Another proverb illustrates a cautionary tale: "Sheep live in fear of wolves, only to find in the end that they are consumed by their shepherds."

This serves as a reminder that sometimes the very individuals entrusted with protection may turn out to be the ones causing harm.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:19 Asr 14:58
 Sunrise .. 06:42 Maghrib .. 17:18
 Zohr 12:00 Isha 18:38

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate variable wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-32 km/h with a chance for scattered

light rain.

By Night: Rather cold to cold and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	30	19
Kuwait Airport	31	15
Abdaly	31	15
Jahra	32	15
Salmiyah	29	18
Nuwaisib	30	12



His Highness the Prime Minister Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah (center) chairs the Cabinet meeting.

PM Diwan photo

'Working to satisfy public demands'

We are almost heading towards a consensus govt, says Premier

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet held its weekly meeting at Seif Palace on Monday, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and has highlighted its recent coordination committee meeting between the executive, legislative branches.

After the Cabinet meeting, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Feras Saud Al-Sabah said the following:

During the meeting, the ministers reviewed a recently held coordination committee meeting between the government and parliament in the National Assembly.

The committee meeting was attended by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Sa'adoun, His Highness the Premier Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and a number of ministers and member of parliaments (MPs).

The Premier confirmed that there is almost a parliamentary government consensus on what should be done during the next pe-

riod, noting that the government is currently preparing its agenda which would be presented to the National Assembly, expressing the government's aspirations that such program will satisfy the Kuwaiti people and achieve their ambitions.

Sheikh Feras added that the Prime Minister affirmed during the cabinet meeting on the government's keenness to enhance cooperation, coordination and fruitful work between the executive and legislative branches.

In compliance with the provisions of Article 98 of the Constitution, the government shall submit its work program immediately after its formation.

The Cabinet also reviewed a visual presentation submitted by the ministerial committee charged with following up on the government's agenda and work.

The Council of Ministers decided to assign the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development to prepare a draft of the government's program in preparation for referring it to the National Assembly.

1,211 jobs available for Kuwaitis as contract workers in oil sector

Bonuses, allowances, benefits provided: KPC

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Kuwaitization program for contractors linked with the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries in the year 2024 includes 1,211 jobs in five oil companies, reports Al-Anba daily quoting official data.

The data showed that Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) has the largest number of jobs under contracts that are subject to Kuwaitization with about 629, followed by Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIIC) with 507, Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) with 46 jobs, Kuwait Petrochemicals Industry Company with 28 and Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) with only one.

It stated that the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) and Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) are currently studying the employment plan for Kuwaiti workers under the contracts with KPC.

Contract workers in the oil sector receive bonuses, allowances and benefits as follows:

Social and children allowances: These allowances are disbursed to Kuwaitis in accordance with the systems and rules specified through the workforce restructuring program and the State's executive system. These allowances are not considered part of the wage granted to workers.

Site allowance: It applies only to Zone Two (South and East Kuwait Fields, Ahmadi refineries, Shuaiba, Port Abdullah, Export and Marine Operations) and Zone Three (Wafra, Zour, North Kuwait Fields, West Kuwait Fields, and Al-Jazeera Industrial Drilling Operations).

Annual travel ticket: The employee and his wife are granted KD200 air ticket allowance each, after the employee completes one year of uninterrupted work without considering the annual performance evaluation.

This applies to both male and female employees.

Incentive bonus: The contractor provides an annual incentive bonus for those with good performance and discipline at work. This bonus is equivalent to a maximum of the net month's salary. The contractor grants this bonus after obtaining the company's written approval.

Immediate bonus: By decision of the company, the contractor will pay an immediate bonus to the Kuwaiti worker -- maximum of one month salary, after obtaining the company's written approval, provided that this bonus is not paid repeatedly to the same worker in the same fiscal (contractual) year.

As per the contracts of entities subject to the Kuwaitization decision, Kuwaiti workers are given, at the start of recruitment, the corresponding wages for each job based on the job grade and the location of the work. These wages are considered total lump sum wages, including, for example, (road and transportation allowance, nature of work and all other allowances), provided that the worker bears the percentage of his social insurance contribution.

The worker also enjoys medical insurance, as the contractor is obligated, within 30 days of signing the employment contract for the Kuwaiti worker, to provide health insurance to his Kuwaiti workers, and the annual cost of that insurance must not exceed KD250. It should cover the worker and all members of his family. The Kuwaiti worker is also granted an annual leave of 42 days.

At the end of the contract, every Kuwaiti worker is entitled to receive an allowance equivalent to half of the net monthly salary for each year of service without interruption, provided that he obtains a performance evaluation rating of not less than 'good'. This bonus is paid once at the end of the contract period. The contractor pays this entitlement based on the actual amounts paid to the Kuwaiti worker.

Court overturns 4-years jail for top police officer

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Court of Cassation annulled the verdict issued by a lower court, which sentenced a police officer of rank "Major" to four-year imprisonment as well as a group of his police assistants after they were convicted of assaulting two prosecutors. The court instead ruled to abstain from pronouncing any punishment against them.

According to the court files, the first defendant detained the freedom of both prosecutors for cases other than those approved by the law, and without taking into account the procedures. They did this by restricting their freedom, according to what was seen in the video clips, based on the statements of the first, second, third and fourth witnesses to the incident, and based on statements submitted by the two prosecutors, as well as based on the statements of the first, fourth and fifth defendants, and as indicated in the investigations.

The first defendant - as stated in the ruling - presented a false verbal report to a public employee authorized to initiate procedures, fully aware of its lack of truthfulness. This individual, vested with responsibilities for receiving reports related to criminal activities, went as far as ascribing facts warranting legal action against the plaintiff.

The information cannot be traced back to them, as corroborated by the technical evidence from surveillance cameras depicting the chronological order and the extent of acceleration exhibited by the vehicle's driver.



His Highness the Prime Minister receives the Minister of State and Member of the Saudi Council of Ministers, Prince Turki bin Mohammad Al Saud.

KUNA photo

HH PM receives Saudi Prince

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received on Tuesday at Bayan Palace Saudi Minister of State, and member of the Saudi council of ministers Prince Turki bin Mohammad and his delegation on their official visit to the country.

Prince Turki conveyed the greetings of the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman, congratulating his Highness on forming the new government.

Both sides also discussed various regional and international issues of common interest, adding that the meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, Head of the Diwan of the Prime Minister Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, and Saudi ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Sa'ad. (KUNA)

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Kuwaiti and UN teams during the meeting.

KUNA photo

Deputy FM, UN official meet

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met in New York late Monday with UN Undersecretary General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo.

This meeting came ahead of the UNSC open session, which would touch on a number of issues including the Palestinian cause.

The meeting also discussed regional and international developments. (KUNA)



Dr Mohammad Al-Rumaihi



Jamal Al-Nouri

'Kuwait support historical'

Seminar focus on Palestine issue

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Kuwaiti Diplomatic Institute, an affiliate of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized on Tuesday a symposium entitled: "State of Kuwait's Position on the Palestinian Issue".

The event is part of the ministry's training cultural season, with several representatives of embassies and different agencies attending.

Dr. Mohammad Al-Rumaihi, a professor of political science at Kuwait University, said Kuwait is an integral part of Arab culture and that's why it has always been active in healing up Arab or Gulf rifts.

Economically, he cited the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), which serves more than 100 countries and offers huge aid to needy countries.

Politically, he stressed Kuwait's enduring support for the Palestinian people and their cause since the beginning of their crisis, but he called for Palestinian unity as very necessary.

For his part, Chairman of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society Jamal Al-Nouri addressed the symposium by elaborating Kuwait's history of relief and humanitarian aid provided by official and unofficial agencies to the Palestinian people.

He added that the Palestinian people need urgent medical aid as 53 hospitals have been destroyed, regretting that more than 25,000 Palestinians have been killed since the Israeli occupation started the aggression on October 7.

Medical error

'Pay KD 50,000 comp'

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Civil Court ordered an expatriate doctor in a famous cosmetic clinic to pay compensation of KD 50,000 to a Kuwaiti woman because a mastectomy had to be performed on her as a result of a medical error.

According to the court's medical reports, the accused is a dermatologist and does not specialize in liposuction.

It is noteworthy that the Criminal Court had sentenced him to six-month imprisonment followed by deportation from the country after serving the sentence.

The Kuwaiti woman had filed her lawsuit demanding compensation for the medical error, referring the papers to the Medical Liability Authority, which proved the medical error committed by the doctor, and imposed a disciplinary penalty.

He estimated that a total of 8,900 trucks carrying relief aid to Palestinians have entered Gaza since January 20.

Other Voices

Real wealth is vision, ability

By Ahmad alsarraf

If we put together a table showing the countries with the highest wealth, Russia would come in first place, but the wealth of countries is not measured by the wealth they possess, but rather by the visions and ability their governments possess to create policies that encourage citizens to be creative, to create initiatives, and to reformulate the citizens' desire." Providing the best for their families..!

When I was working at the bank, we avoided providing bank facilities and loans to those with huge wealth, except in exchange for guarantees equivalent to twice the loan amount. We usually resort to this option if it turns out that the loan applicant does not have the ability to manage his money in a prudent manner, despite his possession of great wealth.

At the same time, we used to provide loans to others, often without guarantees, knowing that they were fully aware of what they were doing, and had experience and expertise, even though they did not possess great wealth. He who possesses good management, or a distinguished government, is more important and lasting than he who possesses wealth but lacks it.

Prudence, and we have many examples, in our countries and with others. Russia, for example, is the richest in the world with its natural resources of oil, gas, coal, diamonds, platinum, gold and silver, and yet it has never lived up to being in the ranks of Western countries.

While Japan, and like Singapore, which barely possesses natural wealth, achieved great economic miracles, and remained the second economy in the world for several decades, and its people enjoyed prosperity and a distinguished standard of living, and achieved all its gains because of the "government," which our dear late Margaret spoke about.

Sheikh Muhammad Al-Sabah has a

great opportunity that will immortalize his memory in the nation's history forever, if he uses it well. He has the knowledge, experience, and age appropriate to assume leadership of the government, and runs a country that is supposed to be the easiest to govern among all the Third World countries, and he can return it to its golden age, but this cannot be achieved without adhering to the requirements of progress and renaissance, other than cultural and scientific openness to the world, rejecting intellectual backwardness represented by religious extremism, rejecting any openness or modifying outdated school curricula, and rejecting others, and this is what the religious parties have succeeded in imposing on us for half a century or more.

Many have warned of the danger of the Brotherhood. Their goal goes beyond appointing a supporter here, establishing a charitable organization there, appointing a member to the council, and raising a few million for the global organization.

Among these people was Prince Turki Al-Faisal, who warned, along with other senior Saudi politicians, of the danger of the Brotherhood and their ambitions to...

The late Sheikh Saud Al-Nasser, one of the knights of the battle to liberate Kuwait, also played an important role in exposing their plans, when Kuwait was bleeding and its people were dying with Saddam's shrapnel weapons.

They would meet him and make deals with him, and had it not been for the disagreements that broke out between them at that time, the situation would have been different; but no one listened to his warnings, and Kuwait was almost lost during the events of the "corrupt" Arab Spring, had it not been for the wisdom of the late Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad. Will we continue to bury our heads in the sand?

The Prime Minister did well by holding ministry meetings in the evening, so that the ministers could devote themselves to the work of their ministries in the morning!

□ □ □

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All must work in coherence to make Kuwait Gulf's pride

"FIRST, the fundamental question arises: Is freedom an absolute concept? In the past, editorial oversight committees were tasked with scrutinizing daily newspaper articles to ensure they avoided offense, whether through obscene language or false accusations, before publication. Similarly, recorded meetings underwent review for suitable content prior to broadcasting. Committees responsible for evaluating cinematograph films ensured scenes violating public taste were omitted before being screened in cinemas," columnist **Musa Behbehani** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"Regrettably, with the advent of modern social media technologies, these processes have become less regulated, transcending oversight. Instances of individuals resorting to aggressive behaviors, spreading moral corruption, disseminating lies and rumors, and engaging in character assassination have proliferated.

"This unrestricted approach disregards the fact that individuals have respectable families and, through such actions, violate the principles of our true religion.

"The concept of freedom is not absolute; it comes with rules, principles, and controls. While humans are inherently free, they possess a cognitive capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and a conscience to discern good from evil. This is intended to prevent deviation and mistakes against others, emphasizing the responsible use of freedom to avoid infringing upon the rights and freedoms of others.

"Freedom, therefore, exists within the bounds of adhering to public order, societal morals, and the laws of the land.

"Transitioning to ministerial formations, after His Highness Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al-Sabah assumed leadership of the Council of Ministers, social media witnessed an explosion of exposure regarding the appointed members. Instances include threats from Legislative Council members directed at the government through tweets and the broadcasting of video and audio recordings revealing personal information about taxpayers.

"The question arises: Does parliamentary immunity grant the right to use hurtful words and engage in betrayal while providing protection from accountability?

"The distressing reality is that members of the Executive Council face vehement attacks even before fulfilling their duties, with past tweets being weaponized to question their competence.

"Healthy differences of opinion are commendable as long as they refrain from insults or betrayal. Constructive criticism is a cornerstone of democracy, and there must be controls and legislation for responsible social media use to prevent chaos.

"The separation of powers is crucial for a functioning democracy. Unfortunately, undue interference from some members of the Legislative Council has strained relations between legislative and executive authorities.

"This interference is exemplified by unwarranted interrogations and blatant involvement in executive appointments.

"In conclusion, it is crucial to remain optimistic and constructive, prioritizing goodness over abuse. Kuwait looks forward to a promising future despite regional challenges. A message is extended to ministers, urging them to focus on diligent work and the national interest.

"Similarly, a call is made to the Legislative Council to cooperate with the executive authority for the collective good of the nation.

"In building the nation, collective efforts are essential, and it is hoped that this formation marks the beginning of future ambitions, making Kuwait the pride of the Gulf. A prayer is offered for the safety and security of Kuwait, with gratitude to God, the Lord of the Worlds."

Also:

"I am prepared to compile a book chronicling my experiences in three distinct roles -- as an official, a witness, and a historical events blogger. These locations, which I was fortunate enough to reside in, allowed me to absorb their essence, though I also endured some of their challenges. The difficulties faced by Kuwait and its officials during that period deeply sadden me," columnist **Abdullah Bishara** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"In the initial instance, the late Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad appointed me as the director of his office in January 1964. This led me to represent Kuwait at the meeting of the Palestinian Refugee Committee of the Arab League in Cairo. Accompanied by the late diplomat Ibrahim Bahwa, we were surprised when the Egyptian delegation distributed a memorandum accusing Australia of encouraging the Palestinians in Kuwait to immigrate, contrary to Arab League decisions.

"This incident, handled coldly without prior notification, elicited objection from Kuwait. Despite the communication challenges at the time, we informed the ministry, resulting in a severe reprimand to the Egyptian ambassador.

"Returning to Kuwait, I detailed the events to the late Undersecretary Abdul Rahman Al-Ateqi, marking my first encounter with a senior figure in the government. Subsequently, I worked in the undersecretary's office briefly before transitioning to the minister's office.

"During my seven years as the office director, Sheikh Sabah demonstrated leadership, actively engaging in parliamentary matters, prioritizing safety, and fostering partnerships between the government and the Parliament.

"His interactions with members of the Foreign Affairs Committee revealed his openness, sympathy, and attentiveness to

their concerns. I attended some committee sessions, observing the harmonious deliberations.

"Despite political differences, Sheikh Sabah valued convictions, believed in freedom, and appreciated Kuwait's diverse society.

"Of particular concern was the file related to Kuwait's relations with Iraq. Iraq exploited these ties to secure privileges within Kuwait, while attempting to attach privileges for Iraq. The relationship was uneasy, prompting Kuwait to keep the details confidential.

"The situation evolved with changes in Baghdad's leadership. The Baath Party era saw Iraq consolidating power and engaging in the Iran-Iraq War. Sheikh Sabah supported Iraq as the head of the Arab Committee for the Defense of Iraq. During this period, Iraq utilized Kuwaiti facilities and proposed a future map integrating Kuwait into Iraq.

"In February 1990, Iraq presented a border demarcation project to Sheikh Sabah, who firmly rejected it, emphasizing Kuwait's commitment to the Arab Joint Defense Agreement. As tensions escalated, Saddam Hussein initiated the invasion plot, shocking Sheikh Sabah and challenging his belief in Arab interconnectedness.

"Despite diplomatic maneuvering, Kuwait faced the tragic consequences of the invasion, leading to Arab divisions and a global coalition, led by the United States, liberating the state. This experience underscored the need for strategic partnerships and effective deterrence mechanisms for Kuwait's future security."

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"In this article, I want to clarify some of the accusations and statements that have been repeated over the past years. These are accusations of hatred, lying and fabrication that have been directed toward me by some of those whose conscience died without shame evidence or witnesses," Kuwaiti citizen **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Such accusations did not provoke me to respond at the time, because I did not care about who said them or who repeated them after him.

"Today, the time has come to clarify them and to warn fellow citizens about the danger of social media, which has occupied the world and taken people's minds away from facts, replacing them with lies, cheating and artificial intelligence.

"I warn and advise them not to receive and publish any messages they receive without verifying the sources, so that they are far from commenting on some groups of people who found what they want to have fun with. These people are keen on projecting their poisonous and ill thoughts to others, believing in the strength of their influence, which equals to zero in the Kuwaiti society.

"Here is the explanation...
The Ministry: They attributed my desire for the ministry that I never thought about. It was not one of my goals or ambitions. I am content with being proud of the one whose name I bear, which spares me the need for State ministries, their positions and their temptations, which I have had since birth.

"For the information of those who do not know, I rejected one of the ministries more than 20 years ago. Whoever among the evil people does not believe should ask one of the living witnesses, may Allah prolong his life and the lives of all of you. He is Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah. Whoever is repeating this tone should stop at this point.

"**Azayez Farm:** I have been honored to host the princes of Kuwait -- the crown princes and their sons from the honorable family of goodness. I ask Allah Almighty for mercy and forgiveness for those who left us and to prolong the life of the leader of our path, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect and take care of him and his sons from the Sabah Family. I have been hosting Kuwaiti men and guests for more than 25 years, thank Allah.

"As for those who, in bad faith, believe that Azayez Farm is for merit only, I would like to clarify to him that it has not deviated from the purpose stated in the government contract. It is committed to all the conditions of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs, just like the other productive farms. Whoever wants proof should go to the Sulabiya and Shuwaikh markets and ask for farm number 3565 to find enough bills to fill his eyes, instead of the bad thoughts that he will eat.

"**Visa trader:** The upbringing of my father and my mother, may Allah have mercy on them and make them dwell in His spacious Paradise, put me in their circle of advice and guidance, to the point that my blood type changed to 'N-Y-Q-L', which is a special type that many Kuwaitis enjoy. Thank Allah, we benefit from it whenever we meet. This means 'clean hands, heart and tongue', by the grace of Allah Almighty.

"This prevents me from engaging in any illegal activity, knowing that I took over the Financial Affairs General Department at the Ministry of Interior for many years. There, I rose from the Control Department to the General Director post. Its budget and secret expenses item were under my command. However, thank Allah, because I left as soon as I entered it. Thus, I was neither tempted nor blinded by greed. So, how can someone like me trade in visas? You claim that your religion is Islam, and that the repetitions are only from the bankrupt and those who are out of their minds.

"Finally, I ask everyone who repeats what he hears without knowing the truth to fear Allah and to say only something that is beneficial to the people and the country, otherwise, he should remain silent to protect himself from Divine Punishment.

"The best measure of your good manners is...how much you can tolerate the rudeness of others. May Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all evil and harm."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Tobacco hidden in wooden boxes.

Huge cache of tobacco seized

Customs officials at Shuwaikh Port successfully prevented the entry of around 260,000 bags of banned tobacco in two separate incidents, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The illicit goods were concealed within an empty diesel tank and wooden furniture panels originating from a Gulf country.

Osama Al-Shami, the Deputy Director General for Customs Ports Affairs, emphasized the vigilant role of customs of-

ficers in safeguarding the nation against those attempting to smuggle prohibited materials.

Expressing gratitude, Abdullah Al-Sharhan, the Director General of the General Administration of Customs, extended appreciation to all personnel across various customs ports -- land, sea, and air -- for their dedication in arresting those attempting to compromise the country's security.

Wrong diagnosis leaves youth impotent & blind

Brawling officers dismissed

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud/Munaf Nayef**
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: In one of the gravest instances of medical errors that resulted in a significant loss of eyesight and infertility for a Kuwaiti citizen, lawyer **Mustafa Mulla Yousef** has filed a lawsuit in demand for compensation for his client and for holding accountable the individual responsible for the inaccurate medical diagnosis, which led to infertility in the client who had been taking medication for 12 years only to later discover that he did not have the disease in question.



Mustafa Yousef

Lawyer Mustafa explained that his client is a young unmarried man who visited the hospital 12 years ago to check for a health condition. He was surprised when he was told that he has diabetes. Based on the doctor's instructions, he took medications throughout these 12 years. A few days ago when he visited the same hospital, another doctor informed him that he did not have diabetes. However, he was informed by that doctor that he was unable to marry or have children and had become infertile because of these medications he was taking. In addition, he lost his sight to a large degree and was no longer able to drive a vehicle, even though he is still in his twenties.

Lawyer Mustafa concluded by saying, "People's health is the most precious thing they have and it cannot be experimented or manipulated with. Wrong diagnosis is more dangerous than the disease itself, as evident from what happened to my client as it ended his dream of starting a family."

□ □ □

Lawyer disbarred: The Lawyers' Disciplinary Chamber of the High Court decided to disbar a lawyer who used his client's power of attorney despite knowing that it had been canceled, and disbar another lawyer who was convicted by the Court of Cassation for bribing an employee at the airport.

It also ruled to suspend a lawyer for six

Illegals, criminals held

22,533 violations in week

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Traffic and Operations Sector at the Ministry of Interior carried out a series of traffic and security campaigns last week, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

These campaigns resulted in the issuance of 22,533 citations for various violations; impounding of 70 vehicles and 12 motorcycles; arrest of 23 violators and individuals involved in reckless activities; referral of 22 juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution; arrest of 14 people wanted by law for their involvement in security and criminal cases and two people for the possession and consumption of narcotic substances.

Officer at the Public Relations and Traffic Awareness Department in the General Traffic Department Major **Abdullah Bu Hassan** told the daily that the Traffic Operations Sector laid down an integrated traffic security plan, which covered roundabouts, main roads, highways, external roads and others areas to control the traffic situation at the beginning of the spring break. This led to the discovery of an increase in reckless activities and teenagers driving without a license.

Bu Hassan disclosed that the plan was implemented by the traffic sections in the traffic departments in the six governorates through the concerted efforts of the Traffic Operations Department, Special Traffic Tasks Department and the Traffic Investigation Department. He said the Traffic Operations Department received reports about 1,366 traffic accidents, including 1,124 minor accidents and 242 major accidents.

He added the traffic police arrested 10 expatriates who hold expired residency, 12 who failed to present a valid proof of identification, 11 subjected to arrest warrants issued by the security authorities, two people wanted by the Criminal Enforcement General Department, one who was reported absconding by the employer, two who were referred to the Drug Control General Department after they were caught in an abnormal situation, and one who committed an environmental violation so he was referred to the Environmental Police Department.

Expat found dead

Elderly man, working as guard commits 'suicide'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: An unidentified elderly person working as a guard on a farm has allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself with a rope at his workplace at an unidentified location, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

As soon as his sponsor informed the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior, the corpse was referred to Forensics and an investigation has been opened into the incident daily.

□ □ □

Expat found dead: The corpse of a 20-year-old expatriate, who was reportedly found dead in his room, has been referred to Forensics Medicine Department to identify the cause of death, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The daily said, earlier the father had filed a missing persons report about his son at the area police station and the corpse was found two days later in his room in **Al-Naseem**.

Police are investigating the incident.

□ □ □

137 illegals arrested: The Residency Affairs Department in cooperation with the Jahra Security Investigations Department organized inspection campaigns in Farwaniya, Ahmadi, and Jahra and arrested 137 violators of residence and labor laws, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

During the campaign three persons were caught working for an illegal domestic workers recruiting agency. The violators have been sent to the deportation.

□ □ □

Fire in Salmiya building: Firefighting teams from the Salmiya and Al-Bidaa Center controlled an apartment fire in a building in Salmiya, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

As a precautionary measure, residents were evacuated from the building; the fire was controlled, and extinguished without any significant injuries.

An investigation has been opened to determine the cause of the fire.



Abandoned cars are taken to Municipality garage.

Raids in Shuwaikh

Cleanliness, order eyed

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Public Cleanliness and Road Works Department's supervisory team, operating under the municipality, recently conducted comprehensive field inspections in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area. The initiative resulted in the removal of 14 abandoned vehicles and the issuance of 13 violations encompassing issues related to space exploitation, public cleanliness, and street vending. Additionally, the team addressed and rectified 5 violation instances at **Al-Watiya Beach**, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Saad Al-Khreinej, the Director of the Public Cleanliness and Road Occupations Department in the Kuwait Municipality Branch, emphasized the purpose of these rigorous field tours -- to actively monitor and address violations by implementing appropriate legal measures. Al-Khreinej highlighted the team's dedication to enhancing cleanliness levels within their jurisdiction, as well as eliminating any elements that compromise the aesthetic appeal and impede road access across various areas.

The municipality remains committed to its goal of maintaining a clean and orderly environment, ensuring that all residents adhere to the prescribed regulations. Through continuous field inspections and prompt corrective actions, the supervisory team aims to create a visually pleasing and obstruction-free urban landscape.

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Kuwait and Yemen Foreign Ministers exchange congratulations

HH Amir receives congratulations from Peru and Mexico presidents

MEW's long-standing vacancies impede development progress

Minister urges swift appointment of leadership

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: According to informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, there are 226 vacant supervisory and leadership positions in the ministry's technical and administrative sectors as of the end of the year 2023.

They criticized the situation, which has been ongoing for more than five years, especially for some important and vital positions within the ministry and the failure to be filled by successive ministers.

The sources explained that the failure to fill these supervisory and leadership positions so far represents a stick in the wheel of development. It is the main reason for the disruption of many development projects included in the ministry's plan, especially the electricity and water production projects. The dilemma that the ministry is currently facing due to the lack of productivity versus increased consumption will put the ministry to the test during the upcoming summer of 2024.

They said the Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Salem Al-Hajraf stressed the need to expedite the filling of leadership and supervisory positions in the ministry in accordance with the standards set by the Civil Service Commission, the most important of which are competence and experience, in order to move the wheel of development in the ministry.

The sources said, "The fact that leadership positions remain vacant causes slow decision-making for fear of accountability and exclusion from the position because it is by delegation and not by appointment."

On the other hand, the sources affirmed the keenness of the minister Dr. Salem Al-Hajraf to work on getting to know the various sectors of the ministry in the current



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received Tuesday the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer, and KRCS Secretary-General, Maha Barjas Al-Barjas. During the meeting, KRCS efforts and humanitarian activities were touched on.

period, and becoming familiar with its projects, especially those related to the customer service sector, and the project to install smart meters in various governorates of Kuwait.

They stressed that the minister's meetings with various sectors are continuing to review the projects of those sectors, their working mechanism, and the ministry's plans towards developing the performance of the various sectors.

In a related context, the ministry announced yesterday the start of receiving requests to connect electricity to the Khaitan Residential Project in parts of Block 1 and Block 2, indicating that it will receive requests to connect electricity to 175 plots.

It called on the owners of those plots to submit the necessary documents for connecting the power, indicating that it will connect the power to 47 new plots in Block 1 and 128 plots in Block 2 during the current phase.

The ministry stated that those in charge of the project are rushing to deliver power to the various plots according to the plan drawn up for infrastructure work in the Khaitan residential area.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has received a cable of congratulations from Peruvian President Dina Boluarte on assuming the leadership's top post.

President Boluarte wished His Highness the Amir success "in the march of virtues and development for the State of Kuwait," also wishing him lasting health and wellbeing.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal sent her a reply message, expressing heartfelt gratitude for her sincere sentiments on his accession to power, and wished her good health.

Similarly, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday a cable from the President of the United Mexican States, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, congratulating him on assuming top office.

In the cable, the President wished His Highness the Amir good health as well as further progress and prosperity for Kuwait.

His Highness the Amir sent a reply back to the President, expressing his sincere gratitude and appreciation

Amir extends condolences to Thai King after tragic fireworks factory explosion

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of condolences to the King of Thailand, Maha Vajiralongkorn, expressing sympathy to the families' victims of the fireworks factory explosion.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah wished the injured a swift recovery.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah sent a condolences cable to the King

of Thailand, Maha Vajiralongkorn, expressing sympathy to the victims of the fireworks factory explosion and their families.

National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun sent on Tuesday a cable of condolences to President of the Thai Senate Pornpitch Wichichulchai and President of the Parliament and Speaker of the House of the Representatives of Thailand Wan Mohamed Noor Matha, expressing sympathy to the victims of the firework factory explosion and their families.

for the kind words and sentiments. Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Tuesday a phone call from his Yemeni counterpart Ahmad bin Mubarak, congratulating him on his new post.

Bin Mubarak expressed his best wishes and success for the minister and looked forward to joint work that contributes to strengthening relations and ways to enhance joint Arab action.

Nearly 3K complaints on HS exam results

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Over the course of three days, the Ministry of Education received nearly 3,000 complaints about the results of high school exams submitted by Grade 12 students in the scientific, literary and religious sections, reports Al-Anba quoting reliable sources.

Sources confirmed to the daily that the test papers were carefully reviewed and verified; stressing that after scrutiny, it became clear that all correction procedures were in order.

Sources said the ministry started receiving complaints last Saturday through its website, reiterating that the test papers were reviewed directly and without delay in an effort to serve the students first and foremost.

Sources added the ministry took all the necessary measures and worked hard to thoroughly review the students' answer sheets to ascertain that the correction or aggregation of grades was correct, affirming there were no errors or cheating reports.

PAM opens entertainment hall & sports facility for female inmates

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The committee tasked to liaise between the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), civil society institutions and public benefit associations, with the support of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), opened a sports and entertainment hall in the authority's expatriate workers shelter, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, PAM explained that the objective of opening the hall is to allow the female inmates to engage in sports and entertainment activities as part of the psychological services provided for them to contribute to their personal development. The authority pointed out this is in addition to renovating the playground for female inmates in the entire courtyard to be suitable for them, as providing assistance to female inmates is one of its concerns along with KRCS.

Kuwait Medical City project advances

Construction of hospital for retirees will cost approx 55.8 million dinars

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Public Institute for Social Security has made significant progress in overcoming obstacles related to the study, design, construction, and operation of the hospital for 'retirees', reports Al-Qabas daily.

The project is managed by the Kuwait Medical City Company, established specifically for this purpose. According to a document seen by Al-Qabas daily, the estimated cost for building the project is set at 55.8 million dinars.

Established in January 2012, the Kuwait Medical City Company operates under the Commercial Companies Law with a capital of 40 million dinars. The General Organization for Social Insurance owns 99.94% of the company through one of Wafra International Investment Company's portfolios.

The document indicates that the company is working diligently to secure necessary approvals from various government agencies to initiate the establishment of the retirement hospital.

Plans have been submitted to the ministries of Electricity, Water, Renewable Energy, and Public Works, as well as the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport, to facilitate the removal of obstacles and begin infrastructure development for the hospital.

The Kuwait Medical City Company was established by PIFSS to oversee the study, design, construction, and opera-

tion of the Kuwait Medical City project. The project aims to provide high-quality healthcare services for Kuwaiti retirees. Situated in the Amghara region on an 860,000-square-meter plot (formerly a car garage headquarters removed two years ago), the medical project encompasses a hospital with 400 beds, expandable to 800 beds.

The hospital features five specialized centers focusing on heart disease, respiratory system, digestive system, urinary tract, kidneys, and bones. Additional medical services include outpatient clinics, long-term care, and rehabilitation services.

The hospital will be complemented by various non-medical elements such as residential, commercial, entertainment, services, infrastructure, and green spaces. While the original completion date was set for March 31, 2026, a delay is expected, pushing the completion to the end of 2027.

A recent meeting with the Ministry of Public Works highlighted the delivery of special plans for the hospital, outlining project details, water requirements, implementation plans, and necessary connection points.

The Kuwait Medical City Company, in line with its establishment goals, also holds the authority to invest financial surpluses in various portfolios, as specified in its articles of incorporation and articles of association.

Eyes 48 airlines to operate by summer

DGCA reveals ongoing negotiations with 3 airlines to boost Kuwait airport services

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Official spokesman of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Director of the Air Transportation Department Abdullah Al-Rajhi has confirmed the ongoing negotiations with three new airline companies to operate at Kuwait International Airport, indicating that 46 companies are currently operating at the airport, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a statement to the daily, Al-Rajhi disclosed that the number of airlines which will operate at the airport this summer will reach 48, explaining an agreement with the new companies could be concluded soon.

Kuwait International Airport is witnessing a steady increase in passenger traffic, as the DGCA expected that total passenger traffic to and from the airport would reach 15.5 million in 2023, and that number is expected to increase in the current year.

The number of flights annually is about 45,000 per season; and the most preferred destinations are Dubai, Istanbul, Cairo, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Riyadh, Bahrain, Amman and Sohad.

DGCA also revealed that the movement of private aircraft in Kuwait witnessed a remarkable development in 2023, as the number of flights reached 1,110 and the number of passengers reached 5,958.

Kuwait Airways greenlights employee incentive bonus

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: According to informed sources, the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) has approved the implementation of an incentive bonus project for all employees through the allocation of specific percentages from excess weight payments on passengers' luggage for the employees' benefit. The actual commencement is scheduled for the beginning of March.

They revealed that this incentive will be paid to those whose work requires dealing with passengers directly, indicating that these employees could either be those working at the counters or in sales and communication sector.

The sources said, "From the time they assumed duties, the company's board of directors has been seeking to overcome all the difficulties facing its employees, paying attention and improving all aspects and facilities of Kuwait Airways Corporation."

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KUNA photo
The delegation of the Fifth Kuwaiti Parliamentary Friendship Group begins its official meetings with senior officials in Slovenia.

Kuwaiti Parliamentary delegation explores bilateral ties in Slovenia

LJUBLJANA, Jan 23, (KUNA): The Fifth Kuwaiti Parliamentary Friendship Group began its meetings on Tuesday with Slovenia's senior officials on expanding bilateral cooperation in various fields between the two countries.

The Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation is led by MP Osama Al-Zaid and it includes MP's Shuaib Ali Shaaban, Hamad Abdul-Rahman Al-Olayan, and Abdul-Wahab Arif Al-Issa.

The delegation is scheduled to hold series of meetings with the Speaker of the Slovenian Parliament, Urska Klakochar, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sanja Stiglic in addition with the Chair of the Economic Committee in the Slovenian Parliament, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Slovenian Parliament.

The Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation visit to Slovenia is the

fourth and within the framework of strengthening existing relations between Kuwaiti parliamentarians and their counterparts in Slovenia. The meetings will also deal with developments in the Middle East, especially the continued Israeli aggression against the Palestinians and cutting off humanitarian aid.

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation arrived at Ljubljana International Airport last Sunday and was received by the non-resident Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Slovenia, Talal Al-Fassam, in addition to a number of staff from the Kuwaiti embassy in Vienna and representatives of the Slovenian Parliament.

The delegation is scheduled to leave for the Austrian capital, Vienna on a two-day official visit during which it will meet with senior officials in the government and the Austrian parliament.

Minister of Public Works takes 'proactive' approach in addressing citizens' concerns

Al-Mashaan initiates measures to enhance services

By Enas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan announced that she received directives from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah to make field visits and follow the open-door policy to receive citizens and get to know their problems closely so that quick solutions can be found to remove all obstacles and solve various issues.

In a press statement issued on the sidelines of her first meeting on her second working day with the head and members of the Municipal Council yesterday, Dr. Al-Mashaan said the meeting was fruitful.

She revealed that she listened to the members' proposals and will seek to strengthen joint cooperation in the coming period, indicating that some priorities have been set.

Dr. Al-Mashaan affirmed the keenness to develop performance and exert every effort to achieve the New Kuwait 2035 vision, and achieve further development and improvement of services.

On a related level, Dr. Al-Mashaan issued her first circular after assuming the portfolio of the Ministry of State for Municipal Affairs regarding submitting

suggestions, observations and recommendations as of Monday.

She highlighted that this step is based on the keenness of the Ministry of State for Municipal Affairs to organize work and raise the level of performance and quality of services provided to the public, as well as to support the national cadres working in the municipality in an effort to hone their expertise in various fields and specializations and to consolidate joint cooperation among its workers.

The minister indicated that she will receive suggestions and recommendations from the administrative, financial and technical aspects for developing the work mechanism, raising the level of services provided, developing its own projects, and moving forward to keep pace with the rapid developments and changes in the field of municipal work.

She said, "The submission of suggestions and recommendations began on Monday, January 22 by putting them in the public register and submitting a copy of them to the administration of the Office of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs."

Dr. Al-Mashaan called on all employees of the municipality to cooperate and provide their comments, suggestions and recommendations, and to strive forward to provide everything that is best and distinguished to serve the nation, the citizens and residents of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Head of the Municipal Council Abdullah Al-Mahri expressed appreciation for the visit of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of Public Works Dr. Al-Mashaan to the Municipal Council and holding a meeting with the council members.

He thanked her for her good cooperation on her second working day to visit the Municipal Council.

Al-Mahri explained that more than one topic was discussed related to the regulations that have been completed and that the municipality is working on, the most important of which are the building regulations, the cleaning regulations and their new contracts that will be in 2024. They also discussed certain problems in the municipality that will be resolved through fruitful meetings between both parties.

The meeting with the minister touched on the objections and the need to find a mechanism with the Municipal Council to clarify them before they are issued so that they are not misunderstood, and to avoid issuing inappropriate objections that would disrupt the wheel of development and advancement of the country.

He stressed the readiness of the Municipal Council to cooperate with the minister to achieve the public interest.

Furthermore, the Municipal Council member Dr. Hassan Kamal said, "The minister's first visit to the Municipal Council indicates a strong desire on her part to cooperate with the members of the Municipal Council and learn about the most important issues. Her presence is a positive indicator of the strengthening of cooperation and continuous coordination between Kuwait Municipality and the Municipal Council."

He revealed that the minister pos-

sesses competence and a resume that qualifies her to manage files in the two heavy and interconnected ministries in many specializations.

The Municipal Council member Munira Al-Amir said, "Our ambition as members is unlimited for achieving a qualitative shift in municipal work and having a real imprint that every citizen and resident in Kuwait will feel and be happy with."

Also, the Municipal Council member Alia Al-Farsi said, "The minister expressed her cooperation with the Municipal Council, and discussed it to follow up on the most prominent challenges and priorities, including the hygiene file, for which the Municipal Council finished preparing a newly developed regulation under the name of "the Municipal Waste Management and Public Cleanliness Regulations".

The role of the executive branch of intensifying the oversight system, amending and updating contracts and mechanisms used, and community awareness were highlighted. The recycling projects included in the government's action plan were discussed, and the importance of community participation to reach the desired goals was highlighted."

In addition, a member of the Municipal Council Eng. Sharifa Al-Shalfan expressed her happiness at meeting the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan at the Municipal Council, describing the meeting as "fruitful."

She revealed the discussion about the importance of taking into account the Municipal Council's report on the fourth master plan 2040 and the eleven challenges mentioned in order to avoid any obstacles that may face implementation.

Spring camp for rehab inmates launched

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Director of the Information Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs Khaled bin Shaflout said, "Based on social responsibility and in continuation of fruitful and constructive cooperation between government agencies, particularly between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, the spring camp for inmates of the Halfway Rehab House, which was launched in 2017 with a capacity of 85 recoveries, has been opened."

In a press statement issued during the opening of the Ministry of Social Affairs' spring camp yesterday morning, he

said, "This idea has a positive resonance to provide an appropriate and healthy environment for those recovering from drugs and to contribute to the implementation of special treatment programs for the continuity of recovery, as we in the ministry extend a helping hand and cooperate to support and make such ideas and programs successful to serve this category of those afflicted by this scourge."

Bin Shaflout directed his speech to the recovering people, saying, "We remind our recovering brothers of the words of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his speech, "Every human being is a sinner, and the best sinners are those who repent." We hope that Almighty Allah will protect our dear country from all evil and harm under the leadership of His Highness the Amir of the country Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad."

years (2022/2023 and 2023/2024).

MP Shuaib Shaaban asked Minister of Education Dr Adel Al-Adwani about the specialized committee in charge of the separation of the applied education sector from the training sector in the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).

MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf asked Finance Minister Anwar Al-Mudhaf on whether or not the Insurance Corporation granted large loans to some people or companies.

MP Fahd bin Jamea to Minister asked Health Minister Ahmed Al-Awadhi to submit copies of the curricula vitae of some officials in his ministry and the mechanism for filling up vacant supervisory positions.

MP Badr Nashmi also referred queries to Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef about the value of the deficit in the annual budget of the Ministry of Interior since fiscal 2020/2021, the deficit expected to be recorded in the current fiscal year, plan to rationalize expenditures, and delay in promoting graduates of the ninth batch of specialized officers from the rank of captain to the rank of major.

MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri asked Minister of Commerce Hamad Al-Joan if his ministry formed a transitional committee immediately after the publication of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Law number 122/2023 to undertake the work of the Board of Directors until a new board is elected.

Meanwhile, the Disabled Affairs Committee on Tuesday met with Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf; as well as the representatives of the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA), Legal Advice and Legislation Department, and Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS).

They discussed the points that prompted the government to return the ratified bill on amending Disabled Affairs Law number 8/2010 to the Assembly as per decree number 229/2023.

Chairman of the committee MP Saud Al-Asfour disclosed that the objective of the meeting is for the two sides to compromise; such that the bill is acceptable for the government while guaranteeing the privileges allocated for the disabled.

He said the committee asked the Ministry of Finance and PIFSS to submit a joint report stating their views and vision on the acceptable amendment within a few weeks. He added the committee will then discuss this report and submit its own report to the Assembly for voting.

Earlier, the previous government justified its decision to return the bill to the Assembly by highlighting the high cost that could exhaust the State budget; as the bill stipulates granting financial privileges to non-Kuwaitis and it is not in line with the PIFSS Law, particularly the stipulated procedures for the retirement of disabled employees and those taking care of relatives with disabilities.

Waiting for

Continued from Page 1

caused this chaos, starting with the Constitution, passing through the laws, and all the way to the ministerial executive decision mechanism. The interest of Kuwait is not a gateway to achieving the personal interests of a parliamentarian, group, or bloc."

Currently, attention is turning to His Highness the Prime Minister and the ministers to follow the line drawn by His Highness the Amir, who made fighting corruption his first goal and sought reform.

Therefore, if there are some obstacles that must be removed, then the best thing is to do it urgently, as neither the Constitution is a sacred text nor the laws are not subject to amendment.

There are indicators that His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem's primary concern is reform, as indicated by the dialogue between him and the National Assembly Speaker, and by the fact that His Highness the Prime Minister is not busy with governance, like the way it happened in previous councils of ministers, which were working to spread corruption under the title of reform.

There is no doubt that the indicators for this will be manifested in the government's work program. Will it be realistic and possible to implement, and meet the aspirations of the people who are tired of failed experiments, or will all the effort be equal to zero? Or will the birth of Kuwait's fourth state begin to dawn upon us during the time of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem?

Kuwait walks

Continued from Page 1

global oil prices peaked at \$100 per barrel. Conversely, in 2015, with a three-year consecutive decline in oil prices to \$40 per barrel, the economy entered a persistent deficit, exacerbated by the substantial impact of the "COVID-19" pandemic in 2020. The global economic recovery and increased oil demand played a pivotal role in mitigating the crisis, with oil prices reaching \$100 per barrel in 2022.

Since the initiation of the development plan in 2010, Kuwait has invested in projects with sustainable economic returns to achieve Kuwait Vision 2035. The first development plan focused on legislative preparation, the second on infrastructure, and the ongoing third on empowering the private sector. Future plans involve strengthening the knowledge economy and transitioning towards "Smart Kuwait 2035."

Examining the first development plan, government investments ranged from 13% to 18%, leading to a trade surplus of 36% to 48%. Private spending recorded levels between 24% and 29%, marking a prosperous period for the local economy. In the second development plan, government investments increased to 25-30%, resulting

in a trade deficit in 2016. The ongoing third development plan witnessed fluctuations in government investments, ranging from 22% to 15%, leading to a trade deficit in 2020.

To enhance the private sector's role in the local economy, the report proposes several recommendations:

1. Implementing development projects with sustainable economic returns.

2. Swiftly approving legislative requirements to prevent project delays.

3. Emphasizing urgency in achieving New Kuwait Vision 2035, focusing on creating economic zones, building a knowledge economy, reshaping government roles, promoting sustainable prosperity, and empowering citizens.

Kuwait addresses

Continued from Page 1

The meeting also touched on other matters, said Al-Mutawa, including the risk of fiscal policy amid an economic decline, and the significance of incorporating clean and sustainable energy.

Al-Mutawa's remarks were reported by the Finance Ministry via statement, she affirmed the importance of reinforcing the country's capability of facing obstacles and maintaining its financial resilience by addressing and labeling the sustaining debts as one of the highest priorities.

She also emphasized the critical role of organizing social security networks in Kuwait and improving living standards, while putting forth effective proposals through a visual presentation.

Government faces

Continued from Page 1

accused and those convicted in these crimes, and their job descriptions.

He inquired about the measures taken by cooperative societies that witnessed crimes of embezzlement and theft, whether a report on these crimes was submitted to the Public Prosecution, number of cases filed by the boards of directors of cooperative societies against expatriates accused of crimes of theft and embezzlement of shareholders' funds, and the mechanism followed by the Ministry of Social Affairs to recover the funds stolen from cooperatives.

He wondered: How a person, who has custody of public money, could leave the country without clearing his responsibility before leaving for any reason? How much is the total value of the stolen funds? Has any of this money been recovered since 2014 and have investigation committees been formed in cooperative societies?

MP Hamad Al-Matar asked the same minister about the Jaber Bridge North Island Project, while MP Marzuq Al-Ghanim asked HH the Prime Minister about the secret special expenses item that was allocated to His Highness's Office in the budget of the Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers for the two fiscal

Commitment to support education and youth

KFH inks collaboration agreement with K-Tech

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has signed a collaboration and partnership agreement with Kuwait Technical College (K-Tech). The agreement is part of KFH's commitment to support education, youth, and society.

Held at K-Tech campus, the signing event was attended by KFH Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Zeyad Abdullah AlOmar, K-Tech Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Meshari Ayman Boodai, and several representatives from both sides.

On this occasion, AlOmar emphasized KFH's keenness to support the private and public academic institutions in fulfilling their role of preparing young national talents and improving their capabilities. He said that this agreement is in line with KFH's strategy of learning and development.

"KFH has been an active participant in previous K-Tech events such as the participation in the job fair, which benefited students as well as private and public entities," He added.

AlOmar explained that such agreements contribute to enhancing society and introduce youth to the importance of self-development, raising efficiency, educational attainment and working in the private sector.



Ziad Al-Omar and Mishary Boudi.

He highlighted KFH's continuous role in training and kuwaitization efforts, pointing out that the Bank offers integrated modern learning methods in collaboration with world-class academic institutions.

"KFH supports the universities' efforts in pushing young talents into enhancing their creativity," added Al Omar, "This is achieved through specialized professional programs in technology, accounting, Islamic finance applications, as well as leadership courses and many other integrated learning op-

portunities tailored to the market needs in line with learning and development global standards."

K-Tech Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Meshari Ayman Boodai said that the main objective of this agreement is to join in the efforts of government, private organizations, and educational institutions to create a generation capable of leading the labor market.

"We believe this strategic cooperation with KFH strengthens K-Tech partnerships with state government and private sectors," said Boodai. "These partnerships enable future leaders to navigate the country's efforts towards unparalleled prosperity, leading the Kuwaiti economy to further growth."

Meanwhile, K-Tech Board of Trustees member, Othman Ayman Boodai said that the strategic collaboration brings new horizons of cooperation in the recruitment and academic fields. It also contributes to supporting students and achieving Kuwait's 2035 vision.

K-Tech Vice President for Finance and Administration, Abdulrahman Al-Ajeel pointed out that the agreement with KFH entails field training, workshops, and specialized courses, benefiting K-Tech students of all majors and qualifying them to take part in the banking labor market.



JOINT OPERATIONS WAFRA

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



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

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under-mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **24 JAN 2024** up to **11 FEB 2024** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

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

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

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (IN KD)
1	011260	VALVES (GATE - CHECK - BALL)	50
2	011864	PIPE SPOOL	25
3	012233	INTERFACE LEVEL INDICATING TRANSMITTER	35
4	012237	GUIDED WAVE RADAR (GWR) TRANSMITTER	25
5	012238	FLOWMETERS ROTAMETER (KHRONE - YOKOGAWA - BROOKS) OR EQUIVALENT	15
6	012260	CONTROL VALVES	5

Notes:

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

For additional information, you may contact:

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

World News Roundup

Europe

Russian missiles strike Ukrainian cities: Russian missiles struck three Ukrainian cities Tuesday, including its two biggest, killing at least six people and wrecking apartment buildings after Moscow shunned any deal backed by Kyiv and its Western allies to end the nearly 2-year-old war.

The barrage included more than 40 ballistic, cruise, anti-aircraft and guided missiles, officials said. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted 21 of them.

The attacks keep Ukrainians on edge while the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line has barely budged. Both sides' inability to deliver major gains on the battlefield has pushed the fighting toward trench and artillery warfare. Analysts say Russia stockpiled missiles at the end of last year to press a winter campaign of aerial bombardment.

In Kharkiv, in northeast Ukraine, the onslaught killed five and injured 48, including four minors, as the missiles damaged around 30 residential buildings and shattered hundreds of apartment windows in icy weather, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said.

Russia used S-300, Kh-32 and hypersonic Iskander missiles in the attack, he said.

An entire section of a multistory residential building was destroyed, trapping an unknown number of people there, Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said. Kharkiv, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the border with Russia, has often felt the brunt of Russia's winter campaign of long-range strikes that commonly hit civilian areas.

The attack injured at least 20 people in four districts of Kyiv, the capital, including a 13-year-old boy, according to Mayor Vitalii Klitschko. (AP)



Klitschko

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Sunak's 'bill' suffers blow in parliament: The upper house of Britain's Parliament has urged the Conservative government not to ratify a migration treaty with Rwanda. It's a largely symbolic move, but signals more opposition to come for the stalled and contentious plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to the African nation.

The House of Lords voted by 214 to 171 on Monday evening to delay the treaty that paves the way for the deportation plan. The treaty and an accompanying bill are the pillars of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's bid to overcome a block on the deportations by the UK Supreme Court.

Members of the Lords, who are appointed rather than elected, backed a motion saying Parliament should not ratify the pact until ministers can show Rwanda is safe.

John Kerr, a former diplomat who sits in the Lords, said the Rwanda plan was "incompatible with our responsibilities" under international human rights law.

The vote has little practical impact, because the House of Lords can't block an international treaty, and the government says it will not delay. However, ignoring the demand could later be used against the government in a legal challenge. (AP)

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Spain's SC says gov't broke the law: Spain's Supreme Court ruled Monday that authorities acted illegally when they sent unaccompanied child migrants back to Morocco after thousands of people forced their way from the North African country onto Spanish soil in 2021.

Hundreds of unaccompanied minors were among a surge of around 10,000 people who tried to enter Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in North Africa, by scaling a border fence or swimming around it.

Many were believed to be sub-Saharan migrants seeking a better life in Europe. Morocco later took back most of the migrants.

Spain's Interior Ministry defended sending the unaccompanied children back across the border, arguing that they wanted to go home. Spanish officials denied accusations by rights groups that the returns breached international law. (AP)

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Orbán says he invited Swedish leader: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán sent a letter to his Swedish counterpart, Ulf Kristersson, inviting him to Budapest to discuss Sweden's accession into the NATO military alliance. Orbán wrote Tuesday in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The invitation comes as Hungary and Turkey remain the only NATO members not to have ratified Sweden's bid to join the alliance. Admission into NATO requires unanimity among all member countries, but more than a year of delays in Budapest and Ankara have frustrated other allies who want to expand the alliance amid Russia's war in Ukraine.

Orbán, a right-wing populist who has been lukewarm in his support for neighboring Ukraine and maintained a friendly relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, has long promised that Hungary would not be the last NATO member to ratify Sweden's bid.

Last month, the Turkish parliament's foreign affairs committee approved Sweden's accession protocol, moving the Nordic country one step closer to joining the alliance. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lifted his opposition to Sweden's membership last year in response to efforts by Stockholm to tackle supporters of Kurdish militants and other groups in Sweden that Ankara views as security threats. (AP)

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Outgoing Dutch PM begins Bosnia visit: Outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Monday began a two-day visit to Bosnia with a stop in Srebrenica, where he paid his respects to victims of the 1995 genocide.

The Netherlands has long wrestled with the legacy of the massacre, Europe's only acknowledged genocide since the Holocaust. Dutch troops served as UN peacekeepers in the town during war in the Balkans but were overrun by Bosnian Serb forces who went on to kill more than 8,000 Bosniaks.

Victims' remains are still being unearthed from mass graves and identified.

Rutte on Tuesday will join European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic for discussions about Bosnia's bid to join the European Union.

Bosnia remains ethnically divided and politically unstable long after the end of the 1992-95 war that killed more than 100,000 people and displaced millions. (AP)

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Trial starts for 9 suspects in journo slaying: A long-delayed trial opened Tuesday of nine men accused of involvement in the fatal 2021 shooting on a downtown Amsterdam street of prominent Dutch investigative reporter Peter R. de Vries.

Among the suspects is Delano G., who is accused of gunning down De Vries in broad daylight on July 6, 2021. Under Dutch privacy law, suspects are identified only by their first name and the first initial of their family name.

De Vries, a popular reporter and television presenter, died nine days later of his injuries, at age 64.

The brazen slaying sent shock waves through the Netherlands and triggered an outpouring of grief. Dutch King Willem-Alexander called it "an attack on journalism, the cornerstone of our constitutional state and therefore also an attack on the rule of law."

De Vries had been an adviser and confidant for a protected witness in the trial of the alleged leader and other members of a crime gang that police described as an "oiled killing machine." Verdicts are expected next month in that case. (AP)

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One dead, 2 hurt at protest barricade: Spreading demonstrations by French farmers against low wages and other grievances were hit by tragedy Tuesday when a woman was killed and her husband and daughter injured in a crash at a protest barricade, authorities said.

A prosecutor, Franck Rastoul, told public radio France Bleu Occitanie that the three people were hit by a car and that investigators are working to determine whether the collision was deliberate.

It happened before dawn at the site of a farmers' protest in Pamiers, a town in the Ariège region of southwestern France, regional authorities posted on social media. Broadcaster BFM showed that the road had been blocked with straw bales and tractors.

The woman who was killed as well as her husband and daughter were members of the FNSEA union of agricultural workers, the union president, Arnaud Rousseau, said on RMC radio.

Farmers have for months been protesting for better pay and against what they consider to be excessive regulation, mounting costs and other problems. (AP)

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Candidates (from left), US Rep Barbara Lee, US Rep Adam Schiff, US Rep Katie Porter, and former baseball player Steve Garvey, stand on stage during a televised debate for candidates in the senate race to succeed the late California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, on Jan 22 in Los Angeles. (AP)

Politics

Harris targets Trump

GOP Senate contenders face off for debate

CLEVELAND, Jan 23, (AP) — The three Republicans vying to take on Democratic incumbent Sherrod Brown this fall in Ohio's competitive US Senate race clashed bitterly in their first statewide debate Monday, lobbing personal attacks and accusing each other of shifting political positions aimed at wooing GOP primary voters.

Facing off at WJW Fox 8 Studios in Cleveland, businessman Bernie Moreno, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose and state Sen. Matt Dolan generally agreed on a few issues. All three, for example, supported some form of federal limit on abortion access, citing pro-abortion amendments like the one Ohioans approved last fall as too extreme. They declined to say anything critical of former President Donald Trump, who has endorsed Moreno, and called for fully securing the southern US border.

They split quickly on the latter topic, though, with Dolan accusing Moreno of wanting "to militarize the federal government and deport children" for his stance calling for deporting anybody in the country illegally. LaRose called earlier Monday for Democratic President Joe Biden to deploy three military divisions to the border, which Dolan said was irresponsible.

"We need to work with the Mexican government, we need to be tough with the Mexican government," he said.

Strategy

LaRose, who noted he would be the first Green Beret elected to the Senate, defended his support for a strong military strategy and deporting anybody who has come to the country during the Biden presidency. "We don't want to secure the border because we hate the people on the other side," he said. "We want to secure the border because we love our country."

Moreno called LaRose "slick" for couching his support for deportation. Moreno emphasized that he is a "political outsider" — like Trump — running against two "career politicians." He told moderators Colleen Marshall and Joe Toohy that even a criminal conviction of Trump, who faces four separate indictments, wouldn't cause him to reject the former president's endorsement.

Both Moreno and LaRose described

the Trump lawsuits as politically motivated and said there's a two-tiered justice system in the U.S. that targets Biden's political enemies. The debate moderators noted that Moreno originally tweeted that Jan. 6 demonstrators were "morons" and "criminals," then later joined those who describe them as "political prisoners."

Moreno said there were two distinct groups of people in question, while Dolan called that an attempt by Moreno to "reinvent himself." He also took aim at Moreno for shredding documents as he faced wage theft lawsuits in Massachusetts.

"Public service is about trust, making sure that you're going to follow through with what you do," he said, also accusing LaRose of originally saying Ohio's elections were secure but later, while trying to woo Trump's endorsement, saying that they had problems.

Choice

Moreno, pointing to Dolan, replied: "If you want Liz Cheney to represent you in the United States Senate from Ohio, here's your choice, because that's where his position comes from. The reality is it's sad to see you repeating left-wing liberal talking points." Cheney, a Republican former House member from Wyoming, has been deeply critical of Trump.

Democrats said the debate showed none of the Republican candidates would "fight for anybody but themselves."

"In between every barb and insult lobbed at tonight's debate, Bernie Moreno, Frank LaRose, and Matt Dolan made it clear that they have no interest in fighting for Ohioans or the issues most important to their daily lives." Ohio Democratic Party spokesperson Katie Smith said in a statement.

LaRose sought to position himself as the middle-class candidate in a fight against two wealthy opponents. Moreno is a millionaire who made his money building a high-end Cleveland car dealership and Dolan's family owns the Cleveland Guardians baseball team; both have provided millions in loans to their own campaigns.

"I live in the real economy, just like everyday Ohioans do," LaRose said.

"I'm not sure that my opponents here sit at the kitchen table and figure out how they're going to pay their bills the way most Ohioans do. I understand that it's because of the bad policies of Biden and Brown that Ohio families are suffering."

On abortion, all three candidates said they see a role for the federal government in setting a limit — generally around 15 weeks. Dolan was the only one who mentioned supporting exceptions after that point. They said Ohio's Issue 1, which passed in November with 57% of the vote, was too extreme. Dolan repeated the misleading claim that it would allow the return of "late-term abortions," while advocating that Republicans work toward a federal compromise.

"We haven't listened. We haven't listened," he said.

Also:

WAUKESHA, Wisconsin: US Vice President Kamala Harris blasted Republicans as extremists for trying to ban abortions as she rallied women in the key battleground state of Wisconsin on Monday, marking the 51st anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* by leading Democrats' charge for restoring reproductive rights.

She singled out Donald Trump, who is tightening his grip on the Republican presidential nomination, for saying he was "proud" of helping to limit abortions. Trump nominated three conservative justices to the US Supreme Court during his term in office, paving the way for the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

"Proud that women across our nation are suffering?" Harris said. "Proud that women have been robbed of a fundamental freedom? Proud that doctors could be thrown in prison for caring for their patients? That young women today have fewer rights than their mothers and grandmothers?"

"How dare he?" she added. The barrage reflects the White House's intense focus on abortion rights during this year's presidential campaign. Back in Washington, Biden convened a meeting of his reproductive health care access task force to discuss threats to emergency care and new steps for implementing executive orders on the subject.



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak greets Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo outside 10 Downing Street, London, during his visit to the UK on Jan 23. (AP)



Keller



Nance

America

'Suspect in killing of 8 shot self': A man suspected of shooting and killing eight people in suburban Chicago fatally shot himself after a confrontation with law enforcement officials in Texas, police said late Monday.

Police in Joliet, Illinois, said on Facebook that at about 8:30 pm Central time 23-year-old **Romeo Nance** was located by US Marshals near Natalia, Texas, and that Nance shot himself after a confrontation.

The Medina County Sheriff's Office in Texas said on Facebook that the agency received a call about a person suspected in the Chicago killings heading into the county on Interstate 35. A standoff then occurred between Nance and police from multiple agencies at a gas station, where Nance shot himself, the sheriff's office said.

Nance is suspected of fatally shooting eight people at three locations in the Chicago suburbs, sparking a search that left neighbors on edge earlier Monday as police warned he was still on the loose and should be considered "armed and dangerous."

Police in Will County in Illinois and Joliet previously said they did not know of a motive for the killings, but said Nance knew the victims. The FBI's fugitive task force had been assisting local police in the search for the suspect, Joliet Police Chief William Evans said. (AP)

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'Execution method painless': Alabama, unless stopped by the courts, intends to strap inmate Kenneth Eugene Smith to a gurney and use a gas mask to replace breathable air with nitrogen, depriving him of oxygen needed to stay alive, on Thursday in the nation's first execution attempt with the method.

The Alabama attorney general's office told federal appeals court judges last week that nitrogen hypoxia is "the most painless and humane method of execution known to man." But what exactly Smith, 58, will feel after the warden switches on the gas is unknown, some doctors and critics say.

"What effect the condemned person will feel from the nitrogen gas itself, no one knows," Dr. **Jeffrey Keller**, president of the American College of Correctional Physicians, wrote in an email. "This has never been done before. It is an experimental procedure." (AP)

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Flash floods inundate homes: Flash floods inundated homes and overturned cars in San Diego on Monday as torrential rain swept through a large swath of the US, toppling trees and overflowing streets across California.

Early morning flooding hit the town of Guerneville, north of San Francisco, where



Rescuers work at the scene of a building damaged by Russian rocket attack in Kharkiv, Ukraine on Jan 23. Russian missiles targeted Ukraine's two biggest cities on Tuesday morning, damaging apartment buildings and killing at least six people after Moscow shunned any deal to end the almost two-year war that is backed by Kyiv and its Western allies. (AP)

a creek overflowed after more than 4 inches (10 cm) of rain fell in 24 hours. The local school district canceled classes for the day.

Later, the weather system unleashed a severe punch on the south end of the state in the second major rain event of the winter. Floodwaters swept away vehicles and caused cars to pile on top of each other in parts of San Diego. Several feet of water inundated the Mountain View, Shelltown and Southeast neighborhoods, and multiple highways including Interstate 15. (AP)

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Families sue gun shop: The Kentucky gun shop that sold an assault weapon to a man who used it to kill five co-workers and wrote in his journal the gun was "so easy" to buy is facing a lawsuit filed Monday from survivors and families of the victims.

The civil suit filed in Louisville alleges River City Firearms should have been more suspicious of the sale and noticed red flags when Connor Sturgeon bought the gun six days before the April 10 shooting. Sturgeon walked into Old National Bank and opened fire on co-workers who were having a morning meeting, killing five and injuring several others. A responding police officer was also shot.

Sturgeon, 25, struggled with mental illness and wrote in a journal he was "very sick," according to an extensive Louisville police report on the shootings released in November. (AP)

Africa

Blinken visits Africa

Liberia's new prez Boakai takes office

MONROVIA, Liberia, Jan 23, (AP): Liberia's new president, **Joseph Boakai**, was sworn into office Monday after his narrow win in a November election. Boakai, who at age 79 has become the country's oldest president, promised to unite and rescue Africa's oldest republic from its economic woes.

"Partisanship must give way to nationalism," Boakai told citizens and foreign delegation members who attended his inauguration ceremony in Monrovia, Liberia's capital. He listed improving adherence to the rule of law, fighting corruption and renewing "the lost hope" of citizens as his priorities.

The ceremony, however, ended abruptly after Boakai, who wore traditional Liberian attire for the occasion, began to show signs of physical distress while speaking. Officials led him away from the podium after he unsuccessfully tried to continue his address.



Boakai

A spokesperson for Boakai's political party said the president's weakness was caused by heat and had nothing to do with his health.

Boakai has dismissed concerns about his age, arguing that it came with a wealth of experience and achievements that would benefit the country.

He won a tight run-off election to defeat Liberia's youngest-ever president, George Weah. Public goodwill toward soccer legend-turned-politician Weah waned as he neared the end of his first six-year term. Critics accused him of not fulfilling campaign promises to fix Liberia's ailing economy, stamp out corruption and to ensure justice for victims of the country's back-to-back civil wars between 1989 and 2003.

Boakai, who earned a university degree in business administration, has been active in Liberia's national politics since the 1980s, when he served as the agriculture minister. Starting in 2006, he spent 12 years as vice president under Africa's first democratically elected female leader, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

He lost his first run for the presidency in 2017 to Weah, who took over from Sirleaf in the West African nation's first democratic transfer of power since the end of its civil wars. Boakai touted his second presidential campaign as a rescue mission to free Liberians from what he described as Weah's failed leadership.

Blinken begins Africa tour: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken began a tour of four African countries on Monday, meeting with the leaders of Cape Verde and Ivory Coast and touting America as the continent's key economic and security ally at times of regional and international crises.

Blinken is visiting Nigeria and Angola next. The tour - which comes as deadly crises and rampant coups threaten the continent's stability - focuses on trade, security, and democracy promotion.

In Cape Verde's capital, Praia, he met with Prime Minister Ulisses Correia e Silva and said the U.S. is committed "to deepening, strengthening, broadening" its partnerships with Africa whose young population of 1.3 billion is set to double by 2050 and make up a quarter of the world's inhabitants.

Analysts say Africa seems to have been pushed to the back burner under President Joe Biden as his administration is increasingly consumed by other international issues such as the fighting in Ukraine, the Israel-Hamas war, as well as its rivalry with China. Biden also failed to visit Africa last year as he promised.

"As President Biden has said, we are all in when it comes to Africa," Blinken told the Cape Verdean leader. "We see Africa as an essential, critical, central part of our future. This trip ... really does focus on President Biden's commitment and conviction that the United States and Africa are joined in partnership for the future," he added.

Rwanda, Burundi trade accusations: Rwandan authorities accused Burundi's leader of making "incendiary allegations aimed at inciting division among Rwandans," raising tensions that persist after Burundi closed all border crossings with Rwanda earlier this month.

Relations between Rwanda and Burundi have deteriorated in recent weeks after Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye renewed accusations that Rwanda is funding and training the rebels of the RED-Tabara group.

Burundian authorities consider RED-Tabara a terrorist movement and accuse its members of being part of a failed coup attempt in 2015. The group first appeared in 2011 and has been accused of a string of attacks in Burundi since 2015.

Ndayishimiye spoke of Rwandan youth in "captivity" at an event in the Congolese capital Kinshasa on Sunday, saying the region needs to continue to fight until Rwandan people put pressure on their own government.

Truck accident kills 18 in Congo: A truck driving at high speed ran out of control and plunged into a ravine in southwestern Congo, killing 18 passengers on board and injuring more than a dozen others, police said.

The truck was "filled with goods and carrying many passengers" on a major highway in the remote Kasangulu territory in Kongo Central district on Sunday when it fell into the ravine, according to Kasangulu police commander Benjamin Banza.

"The bodies recovered from the ravine were transported to the morgue of the Kasangulu General Hospital, while the injured, including six serious and 15 minor ones, are being treated at the hospital," Banza said late Sunday.

The truck was severely damaged and was yet to be recovered from the raven, Banza said, adding that speeding is suspected as the cause of the accident.

2 excluded from list of candidates: Senegal's highest election authority has excluded two top opposition leaders from the final list of candidates for the West African nation's presidential election next month. The party of the main challenger called the move a "dangerous precedent" on Sunday.

The list published Saturday by Senegal's Constitutional Council named 20 candidates, including Prime Minister Amadou Ba, who has the backing of outgoing President Macky Sall and is seen as a major contender.

Opposition leader Ousmane Sonko, who finished third in the country's 2019 presidential election, was disqualified from the ballot because he faces a six-month suspended sentence following his conviction for defamation, the Constitutional Council said.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, rescuers search through a quake-affected area in Yamsu Township, Wushi County of Aksu prefecture, China's Xinjiang, on Jan 23. An earthquake struck a sparsely populated part of China's western Xinjiang region early Tuesday, injuring people and damaging or collapsing scores of homes in freezing cold weather, authorities said. (AP)

7.1 magnitude quake rattles part of western China

A magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck a sparsely populated part of China's western Xinjiang region early Tuesday, killing three people and causing extensive damage in freezing cold weather, officials said. It was the latest in a series of tremors and natural disasters to hit the country's west.

The quake rocked Uchturpan county in Aksu prefecture shortly after 2 am, the China Earthquake Networks Center said. Rescue crews were rushed to the area, with about 1,000 on hand by midday. By evening, authorities said three people have died and five were injured in the county, which is also called Wushi in the Mandarin language spoken by most Chinese.

Rescue crews combed through the rubble, overturning bricks and stone blocks in search of victims. Emergency survival gear - including coats, tents

and folding beds to help the thousands of people who fled their homes - had arrived or were on their way, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Of the five hurt, two had serious injuries. Among the more than 120 buildings damaged, 47 houses collapsed, 78 houses were damaged and some greenhouses were reduced to plastic sheets and rubble, the government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region posted on its official Weibo social media account.

Liu Jinhua, who runs an advertising company in Aksu, rushed out of his apartment in the middle of the night with his wife and kids in their pajamas as the quake shook their building.

The quake downed power lines but electricity was quickly restored, Aksu authorities reported.

Multiple aftershocks were recorded, the strongest of them measured at 5.3 magnitude.

Also:

BEIJING: Thirty-one people were confirmed dead while several remained missing Tuesday after a landslide in a remote, mountainous part of China's southwestern province of **Yunnan**, Chinese state media reported. The disaster struck just before 6 am on Monday in the village of **Liangshui** in the north-eastern part of Yunnan.

Authorities said earlier Tuesday that a total of 44 people were either missing or had been found dead.

Search and rescue operations resumed after being suspended earlier in the day due to another landslide alert. (AP)

Asia

'Churches, temples regularly hit by airstrikes'

Western nations press China on minority rights

GENEVA, Jan 23, (AP): Western countries used a regular UN-backed review of China's human rights record on Tuesday to press Beijing to do more to allow freedom of expression, protect the rights of ethnic minorities and repeal a security law in Hong Kong that is derided by independent activists, among other things.

China's ambassador in Geneva, Chen Xu, led a delegation from some 20 ministries in China for the "universal periodic review" under the UN Human Rights Council. He stressed China's progress in poverty eradication, said citizens engage in "democratic elections" and said freedom of religious belief is safeguarded.

"China upholds respect for and protection of human rights as a task of importance in state governance," Chen said through an interpreter. "We have embarked on a path of human rights development that is in keeping with the trend of the times and appropriate to China's national conditions and so-called historic achievements in this process."

"We uphold the people-centered philosophy and strive to deliver a better life for all the people," he said.

The process, which encourages constructive recommendations over sharp criticism, nevertheless gave way to firm, if not scathing, advice to China from some leading Western countries.

Also:

BANGKOK: A study issued Tuesday by researchers collecting evidence of war crimes in Myanmar supported

Filipino fisherman to China coast guard in shoal: 'This is not your territory, go away'

MANILA, Philippines, Jan 23, (AP): A Filipino fishing boat captain protested on Tuesday the Chinese coast guard's aggression in the disputed South China Sea where he said Chinese officers drove him and his men away from a disputed shoal and ordered them to dump their catch back to sea.

The face-to-face confrontation on Jan. 12, which Filipino fisherman Joely Saligan and his men reported belatedly to Manila's coast guard after returning from the sea voyage, is testing efforts by China and Philippines to deescalate tensions in a potential Asian flashpoint.

At a Jan. 17 meeting in Shanghai, Beijing and Manila agreed to take steps to ease tensions after a year of high-seas territorial faceoffs between

their ships in the sea passage, one of the world's busiest. The hostilities have sparked fears of a major armed conflict that could involve Washington, Manila's longtime treaty ally.

The fishermen, led by Saligan, reported to the Philippine coast guard that Chinese coast guard personnel drove them away from the disputed Scarborough Shoal off the northwestern Philippines on Jan. 12 and ordered them to dump their catch of fish and seashells back to the sea.

The confrontation happened on a coral outcrop, which juts out of the high seas like an islet at low tide. Saligan and his men took a dinghy from their mother boat and went to collect seashells and fish for food during their sea voyage.

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia: Former Malaysian leader **Mahathir Mohamad** attacked a graft probe into his associates as politically motivated, a week after his eldest son was ordered to hand over information to investigators.

Mahathir, a two-time prime minister who's been a fixture in Malaysian politics for decades, said Prime Minister **Anwar Ibrahim**'s government is using corruption charges to go after political rivals.

reports that air strikes by the military damaged churches in the Buddhist-dominated country's sole Christian-majority state.

The 10 reported attacks on churches in the western state of Chin examined by the researchers are part of a broader assault on religious communities across the war-torn nation, other religious and human rights workers said.

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Police patrol through the streets of downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Jan 22. The Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince is pleading for the release of six nuns kidnapped last week and demanding that Haiti's government crack down on gang violence. (AP)



Sandoval



Bárceña

Lat/Am

Colombia captures narco-sub: Colombia has intercepted its first narco-submarine of the year, the navy said Monday, as drug traffickers in the South American country produce record amounts of cocaine destined for Europe and the United States.

The submersible was intercepted on Saturday morning off Colombia's Pacific Coast, navy spokesman Capt Wilmer Roa said. The 15 meter-long, homemade craft was carrying almost 800 kilograms of cocaine in small packages the size of bricks. The packets were stamped with images of scorpions and Mexican flags.

"In reality, this was a small" seizure, Roa said. "We've caught submarines with almost 3,500 kilos" of the drug.

Roa said that last year Colombia's navy captured 10 narco-submarines. (AP)

Leaders denounce kidnappings: The Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince pleaded for the release of six nuns kidnapped last week and demanded that Haiti's government crack down on gang violence, in a strongly worded letter released Monday.

The Archdiocese, along with the Haitian Conference of the Religious, said in the letter that Haitians are tired of the "reign of terror" imposed by armed groups and called on government officials to protect people and their property.

Religious leaders said they were distressed to witness that there has not been a serious response to what it called a scourge of kidnappings for more than two



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (right), speaks to US Ambassador to Ivory Coast Jessica Davis Ba, center, and Vice President of Ivory Coast Tiemoko Meyliet Kone following the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) 2024 Group A soccer match between Equatorial Guinea and Ivory Coast at the Alassane Ouattara Stadium in Ebimpe, Abidjan, Ivory Coast on Jan 22. (AP)

years. They said the ongoing violence has "plunged the country into an increasingly confusing and chaotic situation" as they

called for the safe release of the kidnapped nuns without conditions. (AP)

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Mexico demands probe: Mexico wants an urgent investigation into how US military-grade weapons are increasingly being found in the hands of Mexican drug cartels, Mexico's top diplomat said Monday.

Mexico's army is finding belt-fed machine guns, rocket launchers and grenades that are not sold for civilian use in the United States. "The (Mexican) Defense Department has warned the United States about weapons entering Mexico that are for the exclusive use of the US army," Foreign Relations Secretary **Alicia Bárceña** said. "It is very urgent that an investigation into this be carried out."

The Mexican army said in June that it had seized 221 fully automatic machine guns, 56 grenade launchers and a dozen rocket launchers from drug cartels since late 2018.

The military-grade US weaponry - which cartels have bragged about and openly displayed on social media - poses a special challenge for Mexico's army, which along with police and the National Guard already faces cartels operating homemade armored vehicles and bomb-dropping drones.

In June, Defense Secretary **Luis Cresencio Sandoval** said five rocket launchers had been found in the possession of the Jalisco New Generation cartel, four were seized from the rival Sinaloa cartel and three more seized from other cartels. Sandoval did not specifically say the weapons were from US military stockpiles. (AP)

USD stable

The exchange rate of US Dollar on Tuesday stabilized against the Kuwaiti Dinar at 0.307, while the exchange rate of Euro dropped by 0.08 percent to KD 0.334 compared to yesterday's rates, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) on Tuesday.

The CBK added in its daily bulletin that the Pound Sterling rose by 0.07 percent to KD 0.391, as well as the Swiss Franc rose by 0.15 percent to KD 0.354, and the Japanese Yen dropped by 0.21 percent to KD 0.002. (KUNA)

oil down

The price of Kuwaiti crude oil fell by USD 1.11 to USD 79.83 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 80.94 pb last Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Monday.

In the International markets, the Brent crude oil future contracts went up by USD 1.50 to reach USD 80.06 pb, while West Texas Intermediate rose by USD 1.36 to stand at USD 74.61 pb. (KUNA)

\$45b allocated for global food security: World Bank

The World Bank Group has said that efforts were expanded to achieve food security by providing USD 45 billion to address the food price inflation crisis in low-, middle-, high-income countries.

The World Bank provided USD 45 billion, USD 22 billion in new loans and USD 23 billion from existing portfolio.

The statement added that the Bank's food and nutrition security portfolio now spans across 90 countries, it includes short-term interventional activities such as expanding social protection and

enhancing long-term resilience such as improving productivity and climate-sensitive agriculture.

The Bank's activities are expected to benefit 335 million people, about 44 percent of people who are facing nutritional deficiency.

The World Bank said in its latest update on global food security that domestic food price inflation remain high with an inflation rate exceeding five percent in 63.1 percent of low-income countries, 73.9 percent of lower-mid-

dle-income countries, 48 percent of upper-middle-income countries and 46.3 percent of high-income countries.

The World Bank stated that it was to provide USD 30 billion over 15 months to address the crisis but it was exceeded and the World Bank has provided greater amounts and efforts to achieve food and nutrition security.

The statement added that the most affected countries are in Africa, North America, Latin America, South Asia, Europe and Central Asia. (KUNA)

Market Movements

23-01-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
UAE - DFM	+0.64	4,107.52	JAPAN - Nikkei	-0.08	36,517.57
PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+0.53	64,423.94	SAUDI - Tadawul	-0.04	12,105.33
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+0.58	6,621.88	EGYPT - EGX 30	-1.65	27,587.00

Business

Hamis cryptocurrency financiers also on the radar

US targets Fly Baghdad and its CEO for sanctions

CMA committed to enlightening firms listed on KSE about regulatory aspects

Authority embarks on an educational initiative

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Capital Markets Authority orchestrated an educational initiative titled "Sustainability Reporting Requirements for Listed Companies," underscoring its commitment to enlighten companies listed on the stock exchange about regulatory aspects and advancements in sustainability, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The session commenced with an exploration of the role and concept of sustainability from the Authority's standpoint, presented by Hamad Al-Najdi, the principal analyst in the Markets Regulation Department. Al-Najdi delved into global investment trends towards sustainability goals, the Authority's regulatory role in sustainability aspects, and an overview of reporting requirements.

Following this, a workshop was conducted, moderated by Karim Abu Eid, Sustainability Services Partner at Al-Bazia Consulting Office RSM. The workshop delved into prominent sustainability practices and reporting methodologies aligned with international frameworks. It clarified the relationship between sustainability and environmental, social, and governance factors (ESG), discussed foundational principles, and touched on global reporting frameworks and related developments.

The final segment of the event featured a panel discussion involving perspectives from various stakeholders, including Abdul Rahman Al-Failakawi, Director of the Markets Regulation Department at the Markets Authority, Jennifer Suleiman, Chief Sustainability

FIC organizes training program on basics of credit risk analysis

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Federation of Investment Companies, through its training arm -- the Center for Investment Studies, held a training program on the basics of the credit risk analysis process on Jan 21-22, 2024 at the Federation's headquarters, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The program was presented by lecturer Alaa Ghanem, financial and economic expert and CEO of Advisory and Business.

Fadwa Darwish, Secretary General of the Union of Investment Companies, stated that the training program was a continuation of the Union's efforts and endeavors to support human resources working in the financial sector and investment companies, based on the Union's belief in the importance of investing in the human element to achieve sustainable economic development.

Officers at Zain Companies, and Dr. Dalal Al-Ghawas, Founding Advisor at SWAPAC. The panel, moderated by Karim Abu Eid, addressed the Authority's role in enhancing transparency in sustainability reports, the importance of adhering to global standards, and the potential application of sustainability standards issued by the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB).

Speakers emphasized the added value of sustainability reports to companies, their significance in corporate strategy integration, and the

Darwish explained that the training program aimed to give a comprehensive idea about credit risk analysis and credit classification, and to enhance the participants' ability to analyze the various factors that affect investment in capital markets such as stocks, bonds, funds, and even granting loans to others.

She also added that the training program focused on providing participants with modern skills and tools to keep pace with changes and developments, and how to use them to have a good understanding of the risks that an investor or borrower may face, including credit analysis, financial analysis, critical thinking, risk assessment, and research skills.

Alaa Ghanem stressed the importance of risk management during the credit process, as no loan or investment can achieve its desired goal without identifying risks, studying

them, and evaluating their impact on future financial performance.

The credit risk assessment process, Ghanem said, involves analyzing the borrower's creditworthiness, analyzing his financial background, and forecasting. With its ability to repay borrowed funds on time, this analysis plays an essential role in mitigating financial risks, maintaining the stability of the banking and financial system, and ensuring sustainable growth of the economy.

At the conclusion of her statement, Darwish indicated that the Investment Studies Center had prepared a comprehensive training plan for the year 2024, paying special attention to including a variety of topics related to companies' business, and she expressed her aspiration for this plan to play an effective role in supporting the financial and investment sector, and enhance the process.

implications thereof. They also discussed the role of companies in measuring carbon emissions and the challenges and opportunities inherent in these topics. The panel touched on global initiatives from the COP28 conference, including investment pledges for carbon neutrality, and explored their impact on Gulf and Kuwaiti markets heavily reliant on oil and gas.

The discussion also delved into Singapore's experience and the role of the Monetary Authority of Singapore in guiding investment institutions to support the transition

to clean energy, highlighting the need for transparent reporting. The event concluded with an interactive session where attendees' interventions and questions were addressed by the speakers.

This initiative underscores the Authority's commitment to its awareness role, particularly concerning sustainability, amidst global developments and their implications for entities under its supervision. The Authority expressed gratitude to the speakers for their valuable contributions in enriching the discussions during the event.

Warba 1st bank to obtain ISO 27001:2022 certificate in Info Security Management

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Warba Bank announced obtaining the ISO 27001:2022 certificate for its information security management system, as the first bank in Kuwait to obtain this advanced certificate. The Bank was able to achieve all the requirements of the new standard, which was issued in October 2022 as an updated version of the previous standard, ISO 27001:2013, with which Warba Bank had also obtained a certificate of compliance in March 2021 after a comprehensive evaluation of all applied controls, including securing information and data centers.

The Bank said in a press statement that implementing the new information technology security controls according to international standards came with the aim of achieving the highest levels of protection for customer data, proactively addressing cyber and technology risks, and securing all digital products that the Bank provides to its clients, which help them complete their financial transactions easily and safely.

He explained that obtaining the ISO certificate confirms the Bank's interest in being proactive in applying

international standards for cybersecurity, in addition to the cybersecurity framework issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait to secure information and customer data, and its commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of information security systems and its commitment to renewing and maintaining the certificate.

On this occasion, Anwar Bader Al-Ghaith, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Support Services and Treasury at Warba Bank, expressed his great happiness for achieving this success, which is considered a major achievement that reflects Warba Bank's commitment to providing a safe and stable environment for its clients, stressing the interest of the executive management and its continuous endeavor to raise business efficiency and the continuous development of protection and safety rules. Pointing out that the Bank's team has made great efforts to reach this achievement, which is a matter of pride and appreciation.

Al-Ghaith pointed out that this unprecedented achievement in the banking sector, locally and internationally, strengthens the Bank's leadership in



Anwar Al-Ghaith DCEO

conforming with best international practices and standards.

He added that this supports the confidence and appreciation of international institutions in the Bank's information security management systems and standards, as one of the pillars of the Kuwaiti economy, and also reflects the proficiency of the Bank's team in managing information security.

Al-Ghaith stressed the Bank's ability and keenness to apply the highest

quality standards in modern information security management and controls that keep pace with global development in this field, where all teams cooperated to achieve the highest rates of quality and efficiency in banking services provided to clients.

He concluded his statement saying that the Bank's obtaining this certificate reflects the efforts exerted by all the staff and qualified talents of the Bank, which strengthened its role in adopting and applying the best international practices and standards, emphasizing the Bank's continuous endeavor to develop and apply the best practices and applications in the field of information security, which contributes to achieving the Bank's goals and strategies with the highest efficiency rates.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leadership position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders, and these are among the most prominent components that make the bank close to all members of society.

Oil minister: Committed to Amiri vision on justice, efficiency

KUWAIT, Jan 23, (KUNA): Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister Dr. Emad Al-Ateeqi affirmed on Tuesday the full commitment to the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with regard to achieving justice, efficiency and taking care of the human element.

In his statement delivered at a conference organized by Kuwait Pe-

troleum Corporation (KPC) titled "Excellence in Leadership" and held at Al-Abdalya natural reserve which belongs to KOC, Al-Ateeqi stressed on the importance of following His Highness the Amir's instructions aimed at disciplining all departments and administrative and financial works, rejecting any form of favoritism.

He added that the human element

in the oil sector in general and in engineering work in particular is considered crucial to achieve all performance incentives in administrative and engineering works and to ensure the quality and the improvement of KPC's work to the best international standards in human performance.

The conference was attended by Vice Chairman and CEO of KPC Sheikh Nawaf Saud Nasser Al-Sabah,

former Minister of Oil and Housing Affairs Dr. Adel Al-Sabeeh, CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Isam Al-Sager.

The speakers shared their experience in leading the most important economic sectors in Kuwait including oil and gas industry, bank and construction sectors, focusing on leadership qualities and skills to be used in the oil sector in future.

WASHINGTON, Jan 23, (AP): The U.S. has hit Iraqi airline Fly Baghdad and its CEO with sanctions, alleging assistance to Iran's military wing, and imposed a fifth round of sanctions on the militant group Hamas for abuse of cryptocurrency since the Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

The sanctions come as Israel's bombing campaign on the Gaza Strip continues - killing 25,000 Palestinians so far, according to the Gaza Strip Health Ministry - and Iranian-backed militias in Iraq launch regular strikes against bases housing U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria.

In the new sanctions, the Treasury Department said Fly Baghdad and CEO Basheer Abdulkadhim Alwan al-Shabani have provided assistance to Iran's military wing and its proxy groups in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

"Iran and its proxies have sought to abuse regional economies and use seemingly legitimate businesses as cover for funding and facilitating their attacks," Treasury Undersecretary Brian E. Nelson said in a statement. "The United States will continue to disrupt Iran's illicit activities aimed at undermining the stability of the region."

The sanctions block access to U.S. property and bank accounts and prevent the targeted people and companies from doing business with Americans.

Fly Baghdad denied the U.S. allegations and said it would take legal action to demand compensation for losses resulting from the sanctions "as it is clear that the decision was based on misleading and false information and cannot stand before the law."

The Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control also designated three

leaders and supporters of an Iran-aligned militia in Iraq, Kataib Hezbollah, as well as a business that it says moves and launders funds for the organization.

Since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, an umbrella group of Iranian-backed militias in Iraq calling itself the Islamic Resistance in Iraq has launched strikes against bases housing U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria. The group has said that the strikes are in retaliation for Washington's backing of Israel in the war in Gaza and that it aims to push U.S. troops out of Iraq.

Most of the strikes have fallen short or been shot down and have not caused casualties, but on Saturday a missile salvo launched at al-Asad airbase in western Iraq injured a number of U.S. personnel and one Iraqi military service member stationed there.

Some of the Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, including Kataib Hezbollah, officially operate under the control of the Iraqi military as part of a coalition known as the Popular Mobilization Forces, which was a key player in the fight against the Islamic State extremist group when it rampaged across Iraq and Syria, seizing wide swaths of territory. In practice, however, the groups largely operate outside of state control.

In addition on Monday, the U.S. sanctioned a network of Hamas-affiliated financial exchanges in Gaza, including financial facilitators that transferred funds through cryptocurrency from Iran to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza.

The U.K. and Australia coordinated with the U.S. on these sanctions.

Hamas has said it planned for a potentially long fight and was "ready to do whatever is necessary for the dignity and freedom of our people."

Microsoft, others to the rescue

New tools made to aid small businesses 'capitalize' on AI

NEW YORK, Jan 23, (AP): The influx of generative artificial intelligence software is transforming small businesses.

Small business owners are using A.I. tools like OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard and others to check grammar in emails, punch up marketing copy and research business plans.

What's more, bigger companies are developing tools specifically to help small businesses integrate A.I. into their operations in more advanced ways.

Microsoft's Copilot lets users ask software to perform tasks like summarize an email or a Teams meeting, come up with key themes in a document, or draft emails in a conversational tone in Outlook.

The service, which costs \$30-a-month per employee, was recently expanded from companies with at least

300 employees to all companies, so smaller businesses - even "solopreneurs" with no employees - can use Copilot for Microsoft 365.

Meanwhile, MasterCard is piloting a product called MasterCard Small Business A.I., aimed at helping small business owners analyze data and offer their resources to help grow their business.

It uses information from MasterCard's content library as well as information licensed from media companies focused on inclusivity, including digital media company Blavity Media Group and Spanish-language media company TelevisaUnivision, to answer small business owners' queries.

Mastercard plans to pilot the tool in the U.S. later this year, with international markets to follow.

Federal judge urged to halt \$10 bln transmission line

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Jan 23, (AP): A federal judge is being asked to issue a stop-work order on a \$10 billion transmission line being built through a remote southeastern Arizona valley to carry wind-powered electricity to customers as far away as California.

A 32-page lawsuit filed on Jan. 17 in U.S. District Court in Tucson, Arizona, accuses the U.S. Interior Department and Bureau of Land Management of refusing for nearly 15 years to recognize "overwhelming evidence of the cultural significance" of the remote San Pedro Valley to Native American tribes including the Tohono O'odham, Hopi, Zuni and Western Apache.

The suit was filed shortly after Patern Energy received approval to transmit electricity generated by its SunZia Transmission wind farm in central New Mexico through the San Pedro Valley east of Tucson and north of Interstate 10.

The lawsuit calls the valley "one of the most intact, prehistoric and historical ... landscapes in southern Arizona," and asks the court to issue restraining orders or permanent injunctions to halt construction.

"The San Pedro Valley will be irreparably harmed if construction proceeds," it says.

SunZia Wind and Transmission and government representatives did not respond Monday to emailed messages. They are expected to respond in court. The project has been touted as the biggest U.S. electricity infrastructure undertaking since the Hoover Dam.

Plaintiffs in the lawsuit are the Tohono O'odham Nation, the San Carlos

Apache Reservation and the nonprofit organizations Center for Biological Diversity and Archaeology Southwest.

"The case for protecting this landscape is clear," Archaeology Southwest said in a statement that calls the San Pedro "Arizona's last free-flowing river," and the valley the embodiment of a "unique and timely story of social and ecological sustainability across more than 12,000 years of cultural and environmental change."

The valley represents a 50-mile (80-kilometer) stretch of the planned 550-mile (885-kilometer) conduit expected to carry electricity linking massive new wind farms in central New Mexico with existing transmission lines in Arizona to serve populated areas as far away as California. The project has been called an important part of President Joe Biden's goal for a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035.

Work started in September in New Mexico after negotiations that spanned years and resulted in the approval from the Bureau of Land Management, the federal agency with authority over vast parts of the U.S. West.

The route in New Mexico was modified after the U.S. Defense Department raised concerns about the effects of high-voltage lines on radar systems and military training operations.

Work halted briefly in November amid pleas by tribes to review environmental approvals for the San Pedro Valley, and resumed weeks later in what Tohono O'odham Chairman Verlon M. Jose characterized as "a punch to the gut."

Bank aims to strengthen national sustainability agenda

Gulf Bank funds numerous large-scale sustainable projects in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: In its ongoing commitment to promoting environmental sustainability principles, Gulf Bank actively participated in the International Horticultural Exhibition, Expo 2023, hosted in the Qatari capital, Doha. The exhibition, themed "Green Desert, Better Environment," is scheduled to conclude on March 28, 2024.

During the conference organized by the Kuwait Pavilion, under the theme "The Role of the Private Sector Towards Sustainability," Mr. Ahmed Al-Amir, the Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, delivered a presentation yesterday, titled "Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and Sustainability Progress." The lecture centered around a comprehensive framework of standards and components aimed at enhancing organizational capacity and fostering an understanding of governance management strategies.

Al-Amir emphasized Gulf Bank's close collaboration in supporting and advancing the national sustainability agenda aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035. The bank strategically implements initiatives that effectively contribute to a sustainable approach within the community. This is achieved by adopting responsible practices with a proactive stance, delivering distinguished financial and banking services, and offering innovative digital solutions to its customers.

Funding Projects

Al-Amir highlighted Gulf Bank's significant contribution to funding sustainable development projects, highlighting its position as a leading financial institution in Kuwait and the region. The bank has actively participated in financing a diverse array of sustainable development initiatives, such as the "Al-Shagaya" renewable energy project and the Clean Fuels project.

2024/2030 Strategy

On the flip side, Al-Amir highlighted the bank's endeavors to solidify sustainability principles both internally and externally. This effort materialized in the release of the third annual Sustainability Report, showcasing noteworthy accomplishments in environmental,

- Ahmed Al-Amir: Our close collaboration aims to strengthen and hasten the national sustainability agenda, in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035.
- We actively contribute to fostering a sustainable approach within the community through carefully selected initiatives.
- The 2024/2030 strategy serves as the fundamental framework guiding our sustainability efforts in the upcoming phase.

- An ambitious initiative has been launched to foster a societal shift towards the use of reusable bags.
- The launch of our first fully environmentally friendly branch marks a significant step, and we are currently improving sustainability across our branch network and main building through continuous development initiatives.

social, and governance domains. The bank also introduced its ESG 2024/2030 strategy, serving as the foundational framework for sustainability efforts in the upcoming phase. Additionally, a high-level sustainability committee, chaired by a Board of Directors member, was established to oversee program implementation, and facilitate advanced training for leaders. Sustainability stands as a central emphasis across all facets of the bank's operations and services.

Reusable Bags

He further highlighted that, in collaboration with five major Cooperative Societies and the Environment Public Authority in Kuwait, the bank initiated a significant environmental sustainability effort. This initiative aims to foster a societal shift towards the use of reusable bags, reducing reliance on plastic bags. The initiative aligns with Goal No. 17 of the



Mr. Ahmed Al-Amir, the Deputy General Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, delivered a presentation.

sustainable development goals, highlighting the importance of enhancing implementation methods through extensive state-level partnerships across different sectors.

Internal Initiatives

Furthermore, Al-Amir mentioned Gulf Bank's continuous dedication to the annual Environment Month initiative, organized by the Scientific Cen-

ter. This involvement encompasses activities commemorating World Recycling Day, World Water Day, World Aquatic Animals Day, and World Health Day.

Additionally, Al-Amir highlighted various initiatives implemented within the bank to cut-down on greenhouse gas emissions, decrease paper usage, advocate for environmental cleanliness, reduce waste, and shift towards energy-efficient lighting.

Developing Environmentally Friendly Branches

He pointed out that, as part of an ambitious plan to make its branch network environmentally friendly and increase reliance on renewable energy, the bank has renovated several branches, including its headquarters in the capital. This includes the opening of the first fully environmentally friendly branches in the Sabah Al-Ahmad area.

Recycling E-waste

Moreover, Al-Amir mentioned that the bank has maintained its dedication to recycling e-waste (electronic waste), by partnering with a specialized recycling company, ensuring the safe disposal of around 22.3 tons of electronic waste.

He concluded by emphasizing, "At Gulf Bank, we prioritize implementing the highest standards of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) sustainability to ensure that our operations, initiatives, and investments align with the optimal sustainability model both now and in the future."

Gulf Bank's Vision

Gulf Bank aspires to be the leading financial institution in Kuwait, fostering an inclusive and diverse environment for its employees to deliver exceptional customer service, while ensuring a commitment to sustainable community initiatives. With an extensive network of branches and cutting-edge digital services, customers have the flexibility to choose how, and where, they conduct their banking transactions, ensuring a seamless and efficient banking experience.

In alignment with its support for Kuwait Vision 2035, known as "New Kuwait," and its dedication to collaborate with various stakeholders to achieve these goals, Gulf Bank is steadfast in driving significant advancements in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) realms. This commitment is realized through a range of strategically selected sustainability initiatives, both within and beyond the bank.

It is noteworthy that the International Horticultural Exhibition, Expo 2023 Doha, is currently featuring participation from 80 countries, alongside numerous organizations, non-governmental entities, international experts, private sector companies, universities, and laboratories. The event anticipates a total of 3 million visitors, hosting significant conferences, workshops, and discussions to innovate global solutions. The focus is on addressing issues such as desertification, climate change, and sustainability challenges, with a particular emphasis on utilizing modern technologies for resource sustainability.



Participants in the International Horticultural Exhibition, Expo 2023.

Plan relies on unproven technologies

NM governor proposes \$500m for treatment of fracking wastewater

SANTA FE, N.M., Jan 23, (AP): Environmental activists pushed back Monday against an initiative from the governor of New Mexico that would finance the treatment and recycling of oil-industry wastewater, warning that the plan relies on unproven technologies and might propel more water-intensive fracking for oil and natural gas.

Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham is seeking legislation and regulatory changes that would allow the state to finance development of a strategic new source of water by buying and selling treated water that originates from the used, salty byproducts of oil and natural gas drilling or from underground saltwater aquifers.

The aim is to help preserve freshwater sources by providing a new source of recycled water for industrial uses, at the same time helping an arid state attract businesses ranging from microchip manufacturers to hydrogen fuel producers.

Environmental

An array of environmental and social-justice groups gathered outside the Statehouse to denounce the governor's plan as a handout to the oil and natural gas industry that won't necessarily decrease pressure on the state's ancient underground aquifers.

"It's intended to help oil and gas producers, particularly in the Permian Basin, to resolve their enormous problem with wastewater disposal and allow for continued extraction" of petroleum, said Mariel Nanasi, executive director of the environmental and consumer protection group New Energy Economy.

Julia Bernal, executive director of the environmental justice group Pueblo Action Alliance, sees the initiative as an attempt to secure

more water supplies for the production of hydrogen.

Hydrogen can be made by splitting water with solar, wind, nuclear or geothermal electricity yielding little if any planet-warming greenhouse gases. But most hydrogen today is not made this way and does contribute to climate change because it is made from natural gas.

"We would like to see more investment in wind and solar, more community based projects," said Bernal, a tribal member of Sandia Pueblo.

Inside the Capitol, state Environment Department Secretary James Kenney briefed a state Senate budget-writing on the administration's plan to underwrite the project with up to \$500 million in bonds over a two-year period, to spur private investment in water-treatment and desalination infrastructure.

Approval from the Legislature is necessary under a construction-spending bill that has not yet been introduced. The state's annual legislative session ends on Feb. 15.

The Environment Department is proposing a new regulatory framework for reusing oil-industry wastewater and desalination of naturally occurring brine. On Monday, it also announced a related request for technical and economic briefings by people in business, academia, government agencies - or other interested individuals.

New Mexico has extensive underground reservoirs of salty water that have been of limited use. That brackish water is a crucial component in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and advanced drilling techniques that have helped turn New Mexico into the No. 2 oil production state in the U.S.

United Airlines anticipates Q1 loss amid Boeing 737 Max 9 grounding

Airline forecasts strong full-year profit recovery

CHICAGO, Jan 23, (AP): United Airlines has said it will lose money in the first three months of this year as it deals with the grounding of its Boeing 737 Max 9 planes after a panel blew out of a Max jetliner this month.

United said it expects to lose between 35 cents and 85 cents per share in the first quarter.

The airline said, however, that it will recover to earn a full-year profit between \$9 and \$11 per share. Analysts were expecting \$9.48 per share, according to FactSet.

The Chicago-based airline based its forecasts on an assumption that the Max 9s will be grounded through the month of January, but not longer. Federal regulators have refused to put a timeline on letting the planes fly again, saying it will happen only when they believe the planes are safe.

Higher revenue

United reported that despite higher revenue fourth-quarter profit fell 29%, to \$600 million. The results were dragged down by a 28% increase in labor costs, partly reflecting a new union contract with pilots.

United and Alaska Airlines have canceled hundreds of flights since the Federal Aviation Administration grounded their Max 9 jets after a panel called a door plug blew off the side of an Alaska plane 16,000 feet (4,900 meters) above Oregon on Jan. 5. Investigators with the National Transportation Safety Board said they were examining whether bolts on the panel were missing or broke off.

United has 79 Max 9s in its fleet, which numbers around 1,000 planes, not counting those used by regional affiliates.

Concern about door plugs on Boeing planes widened Monday, when the FAA recommended that airlines inspect the same panel on Boeing 737-900ERs, a predecessor to the Max 9. The FAA said some airlines have inspected their 900ERs during maintenance "and have noted findings with bolts."

United has about 130 of the older planes. The airline said Monday inspections on the 900ERs should not interfere with its operations.

The airline's fourth-quarter profit compared with \$843 million a year earlier. The company said it earned \$2 a share after adjusting for one-time items, which beat the \$1.69 per share mean forecast of 16 analysts surveyed by FactSet.

Revenue rose 10% to \$13.63 billion, slightly better than analysts expected. Sales of premium seats and services



Two United Airlines Boeing 737s are parked at the gate at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on July 7, 2022. United Airlines said Monday, Jan. 22, 2024, it will lose money in the first three months of this year because of the grounding of its Boeing 737 Max 9 planes after a panel blew out of a Max jetliner this month. (AP)

Independent examiner required

Appeals court reverses FTX bankruptcy ruling

DOVER, Delaware, Jan 23, (AP): A federal appeals court has ordered the appointment of an independent examiner in the bankruptcy case of FTX amid concerns about widespread fraud preceding the collapse of the multibillion-dollar cryptocurrency exchange.

A three-judge panel in Philadelphia issued the ruling Friday in an appeal filed by the U.S. bankruptcy trustee, who serves as a government watchdog in Chapter 11 reorganizations. Lawyers for the trustee had argued that FTX's financial affairs and business operations, including allegations of unprecedented fraud leading to its collapse, should be reviewed by a disinterested person, not left to an internal investigation.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge John Dorsey denied the trustee's request last February. He agreed with FTX and its official committee of unsecured creditors that an examiner's work would be too costly and would duplicate investiga-

tions already under way by FTX's new leadership, the creditors committee and several federal agencies. Dorsey also expressed confidence in John Ray III, who was appointed by FTX co-founder Sam Bankman-Fried as the company's new CEO on the same day the company sought bankruptcy protection.

Wire-fraud

Bankman-Fried is awaiting sentencing in March after being convicted in November on wire-fraud and conspiracy charges. Several other former FTX executives have pleaded guilty to similar charges. Prosecutors said Bankman-Fried siphoned billions of dollars from customer accounts at FTX into his cryptocurrency hedge fund, Alameda Research.

The appeals court reversed Dorsey's ruling, agreeing with the trustee that the bankruptcy code mandates the appointment of an examiner.

"Sometimes highly complex cases give rise to straightforward investiga-

tion." Judge Luis Felipe Restrepo wrote for the panel. "Such is the case here."

Restrepo also noted that an examiner is required to make his or her findings public, whereas a debtor or creditors committee conducting an internal investigation has no such obligation.

"The collapse of FTX caused catastrophic losses for its worldwide investors but also raised implications for the evolving and volatile cryptocurrency industry," the judge wrote, noting that further scrutiny of FTX could alert potential investors to undisclosed credit risks in other cryptocurrency companies.

"In addition to providing much-needed elucidation, the investigation and examiner's report ensure that the bankruptcy court will have the opportunity to consider the greater public interest when approving the FTX Group's reorganization plan," he added.

did even better, jumping 16%.

For all of 2023, United earned \$2.62 billion, more than tripling its 2022 profit of \$737 million.

Airline officials were scheduled to discuss the results with analysts and reporters on Tuesday.

Shares of United Airlines Holdings

Inc. fell 1% in regular trading, but rose 6% after more than two hours of extended trading following release of the financial results and forecasts.



Julia Bernal, with Pueblo Action Alliance, speaks at a protest against an initiative by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham to develop a strategic new source of water, buying treated water that is the byproduct of oil and natural gas drilling, then treating it and selling it back to industry. Around 35 people attended the rally included speakers by Wild Earth Guardians and No False Solutions outside the State Capitol, in Santa Fe, N.M., Jan. 22, 2024. (AP)

INNOVATION

Business Plus



One-quarter of world's adults don't have access to a bank or mobile-phone account

'No cash' policies add to financial barriers



A customer makes a transaction at an automatic teller machine in Los Angeles on March 27, 2023. (AP)

By Jay L. Zagorsky
Boston University

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

How many people don't have a bank account? And just how difficult has it become to live without one?

These questions are becoming increasingly important as more businesses refuse to take cash in cities across the U.S., the latest data shows, which is about the population of Wisconsin. And outside of the U.S., more than a billion people don't have a bank account.

As it happens, a lot of people are still "unbanked": roughly 6 million in the U.S., the latest data shows, which is about the population of Wisconsin. And outside of the U.S., more than a billion people don't have a bank account.

I am a business school professor who researches society's

transition from cash to electronic payments. I recently visited Seattle and was amazed by the mixed signals I saw in many storefronts. Numerous shops had one sign proudly proclaiming how welcoming and inclusive they were - next to another sign saying "No cash accepted." This tells people without bank accounts that they aren't welcome.

Why would someone want to avoid using banks? Every two years, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation surveys households about their connections to the banking system and asks people without bank accounts why they don't have one. People can respond with multiple answers. In 2021, the top reason - with over 40% of respondents choosing it - was that they didn't have enough money to meet the minimum balance.

This is consistent with data showing that poorer households are less likely to have bank accounts. About

one-quarter of those earning less than \$15,000 a year are unbanked, the FDIC found. Among those earning more than \$75,000 a year, almost every person surveyed had some type of bank account.

The second- and third-most common answers show that some people are skeptical of banks. Roughly one-third of survey respondents agreed that "Avoiding a bank gives more privacy," while another one-third said they simply "don't trust banks."

Rounding out the top five reasons were costs of dealing with a bank. More than one-quarter of respondents felt bank account fees were too high, and about the same proportion felt fees were too unpredictable.

While many middle-class and wealthy people don't pay directly for their bank accounts, fees can be costly for those who can't maintain a minimum balance. A recent Bank-rate survey shows basic monthly service fees range between \$5 and

\$15. Beyond these steady fees, banks earn \$4 to \$5 each time people withdraw cash from an ATM or need services like getting cashier's checks. Unexpected bills can result in overdraft fees of about \$25 each time an account is overdrawn.

The FDIC calls people without a bank account "the unbanked." People with a bank account but who primarily rely on alternative services such as check cashing outlets are called "the underbanked."

The latest FDIC data shows almost 6 million unbanked and 19 million underbanked U.S. households. Given that 2.5 people live in the average household, this means there are over 15 million people living in a home with no connection to banks, and 48 million more in homes with only a tenuous connection to banks.

Combining the two figures means roughly one out of every five people in the U.S. has little or no connection to banks or other financial

institutions. That can leave them shut out from stores, restaurants, transportation and medical providers that don't take cash.

The true number of unbanked people is likely higher than the FDIC estimates. The questions on being banked or unbanked are supplemental questions added to a survey given to people at their homes. This means it misses homeless people, transients without a permanent address and undocumented immigrants.

These people are likely unbanked because you need a verified address and a government-issued tax-identification number to get a bank account. Given roughly 2.5 million migrants crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in 2023 alone, there are millions more people in the cash-only economy than the FDIC estimates.

While the U.S. has relatively high rates of people with bank accounts, the picture is different in other parts of the world. The World Bank has created a database that shows the percentage of each country's population that has access to financial services. The World Bank's definition of being banked is broader than the FDIC's, since it includes anyone who uses a cellphone to send and receive money as having a bank account.

Overall, the World Bank estimates about one-quarter of the world's adults don't have access to a bank or mobile-phone account. But that varies dramatically by region. In countries that use the Euro, almost everyone has a bank account, while in the Middle East and North Africa, only about half the population does.

Many of us swipe our credit cards, tap our phones or insert a debit card to pay without thinking. However, there are at least 6 million people in the U.S. and almost 1.5 billion worldwide who are unbanked.

When businesses stop accepting cash, the unbanked are forced to use payment methods like prepaid debit cards. However, these prepaid debit cards are costly. For example, Walmart, one of the largest U.S. retailers, offers a reloadable basic debit card.

The card costs \$1 to buy and charges \$6 per month in fees, in addition to \$3 each time someone wants to load the card with cash at Walmart's registers. Paying a minimum of \$10 just to set up a debit card for a few purchases is a steep price.

The next time you see a sign in a shop or restaurant window stating "No cash accepted," you're really looking at a business excluding many unbanked and underbanked people. Insisting that all businesses accept cash is a simple way to ensure everyone is financially included in the modern economy. (AP)

Iranian-born innovator defining future of technology

NIST's role pivotal in shaping AI standards

BOSTON, Jan 23, (AP): No technology since nuclear fission will shape our collective future quite like artificial intelligence, so it's paramount AI systems are safe, secure, trustworthy and socially responsible.

But unlike the atom bomb, this paradigm shift has been almost completely driven by the private tech sector, which has been resistant to regulation, to say the least. Billions are at stake, making the Biden administration's task of setting standards for AI safety a major challenge.

To define the parameters, it has tapped a small federal agency, The National Institute of Standards and Technology. NIST's tools and measures define products and services from atomic clocks to election security tech and nanomaterials.

At the helm of the agency's AI efforts is Elham Tabassi, NIST's chief AI advisor. She shepherded the AI Risk Management Framework published 12 months ago that laid groundwork for Biden's Oct. 30 AI executive order. It catalogued such risks as bias against non-whites and threats to privacy.

Iranian-born, Tabassi came to the U.S. in 1994 for her master's in electrical engineering and joined NIST not long after. She is principal architect of a standard the FBI uses to measure fingerprint image quality.

This interview with Tabassi has been edited for length and clarity.

Question: Emergent AI technologies have capabilities their creators don't even understand. There isn't even an agreed upon vocabulary, the technology is so new. You've stressed the importance of creating a lexicon on AI. Why?

Answer: Most of my work has been in computer vision and machine learning. There, too, we needed a shared lexicon to avoid quickly devolving into disagreement. A single term can mean different things to different people. Talking past each other is particularly common in interdisciplinary fields such as AI.

Q: You've said that for your work to succeed you need input not just from computer scientists and engineers but also from attorneys, psychologists, philosophers.

A: AI systems are inherently socio-technical, influenced by environments

and conditions of use. They must be tested in real-world conditions to understand risks and impacts. So we need cognitive scientists, social scientists and, yes, philosophers.

Q: This task is a tall order for a small agency, under the Commerce Department, that the Washington Post called "notoriously underfunded and understaffed." How many people at NIST are working on this?

A: First, I'd like to say that we at NIST have a spectacular history of engaging with broad communities. In putting together the AI risk framework we heard from more than 240 distinct organizations and got something like 660 sets of public comments. In quality of output and impact, we don't seem small. We have more than a dozen people on the team and are expanding.

Q: Will NIST's budget grow from the current \$1.6 billion in view of the AI mission?

A: Congress writes the checks for us and we have been grateful for its support.

Q: The executive order gives you until July to create a toolset for

guaranteeing AI safety and trustworthiness. I understand you called that "an almost impossible deadline" at a conference last month.

A: Yes, but I quickly added that this is not the first time we have faced this type of challenge, that we have a brilliant team, are committed and excited. As for the deadline, it's not like we are starting from scratch. In June we put together a public working group focused on four different sets of guidelines including for authenticating synthetic content.

Q: Members of the House Committee on Science and Technology said in a letter last month that they learned NIST intends to make grants or awards through a new AI safety institute - suggesting a lack of transparency.

A: Indeed, we are exploring options for a competitive process to support cooperative research opportunities. Our scientific independence is really important to us. While we are running a massive engagement process, we are the ultimate authors of whatever we produce. We never delegate to somebody else.

Q: A consortium created to assist

the AI safety institute is apt to spark controversy due to industry involvement. What do consortium members have to agree to?

A: We posted a template for that agreement on our website at the end of December. Openness and transparency are a hallmark for us. The template is out there.

Q: The AI risk framework was voluntary but the executive order mandates some obligations for developers. That includes submitting large-language models for government red-teaming (testing for risks and vulnerabilities) once they reach a certain threshold in size and computing power. Will NIST be in charge of determining which models get red-teamed?

A: Our job is to advance the measurement science and standards needed for this work. That will include some evaluations. This is something we have done for face recognition algorithms. As for tasking (the red-teaming), NIST is not going to do any of those things. Our job is to help industry develop technically sound, scientifically valid standards. We are a non-regulatory agency, neutral and objective.

editor's choice



In countries that use the Euro, almost everyone has a bank account, while in the Middle East and North Africa, only about half the population does

AI systems are inherently socio-technical, influenced by environments and conditions of use

Norman Jewison, Oscar-nominated director, dies at 97

NEW YORK, Jan 23, (AP): **Norman Jewison**, the acclaimed and versatile Canadian-born director whose Hollywood films ranged from Doris Day comedies and "Moonstruck" to such social dramas as the Oscar-winning "In the Heat of the Night," has died at age 97.

Jewison, a three-time Oscar nominee who in 1999 received an Academy Award for lifetime achievement, died "peacefully" Saturday, according to publicist Jeff Sanderson. Additional details were not immediately available.

Throughout his long career, Jewison combined light entertainment with topical films that appealed to him on a deeply personal level. As Jewison was ending his military service in the Canadian navy during World War II, he hitchhiked through the American South and had a close-up view of Jim Crow segregation. In his autobiography "This Terrible Business Has Been Good to Me," he noted that racism and injustice became his most common themes.

"Every time a film deals with racism, many Americans feel uncomfortable," he wrote. "Yet it has to be confronted. We have to deal with prejudice and injustice or we will never understand what is good and evil, right and wrong; we need to feel how 'the other' feels."

He drew upon his experiences for 1967's "In the Heat of the Night," starring Rod Steiger as a white racist small-town sheriff and Sidney Poitier as a Black detective from Philadelphia trying to help solve a murder and eventually forming a working relationship with the hostile local lawman.

James Baldwin condemned the film's "appalling distance from reality," and thought the director trapped in a fantasy of racial harmony that would only heighten "Black rage and despair." But The New York Times' Bosley Crowther was among the critics who found the movie

powerful and inspiring and in a year featuring such landmarks as "The Graduate" and "Bonnie and Clyde." Jewison's production won the Academy Award for best picture while Steiger took home the best actor Oscar.

Among those who encouraged Jewison while making "In the Heat of the Night": Robert F. Kennedy, whom the director met during a ski trip in Sun Valley, Idaho.

"I told him I made films and he asked what kind I make," he recalled in a 2011 interview with The Hollywood Reporter. "So I told him that I was working on 'In the Heat of the Night' and that it's about two cops: one a white sheriff from Mississippi and the other a black detective from Philadelphia. I told him it was a film about tolerance. So he listened and nodded and said 'You know, Norman, timing is everything. In politics, in art, in life itself.' I never forgot that."



Jewison

Racial

He received two other Oscar nominations: For "Moonstruck," the beloved romantic comedy for which Cher won an Academy Award, and "Fiddler on the Roof," the classic musical about a village in Russia.

His other notable films included the Cold War spoof "The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming," the Steve McQueen thriller "The Thomas Crown Affair" and a pair of movies featuring Denzel Washington: the racial drama "A Soldier's Story" and "The Hurricane," starring Washington as wrongly imprisoned boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter.

A third project with Washington never made it to production. In the early 1990s, Jewison was set to direct a biography of Malcolm X, but backed out amid protests from Spike Lee and others that a white director shouldn't make the film. Lee ended up directing.

Five Jewison films received best Oscar nominations: "In the Heat of the Night," "The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming," "Fiddler on the Roof," "Moonstruck" and "A Soldier's Story."

Jewison and his wife Margaret Ann Dixon (nicknamed Dixie) had three children, sons Kevin and Michael and daughter Jennifer Ann, who became an actress and appeared in the Jewison films "Agnes of God" and "Best Friends." The Jewisons were married 51 years, until her death in 2004. He married Lynne St. David in 2010.

Jewison, honored by Canada in 2003 with a Governor General's Performing Arts Award, remained close to his home country. When he wasn't working, he lived on a 200-acre farm near Toronto, where he raised horses and cattle and produced maple syrup. He founded the Canadian Film Centre in 1988 and for years hosted barbecues during the Toronto Film Festival.

The Toronto-born Jewison began acting at age 6, appearing before Masonic lodge gatherings. After graduating from Victoria College, he went to work for the BBC in London, then returned to Canada and directed programs for the CBC. His work there brought offers from Hollywood and he quickly earned a reputation as a director of TV musicals, with stars including Judy Garland, Danny Kaye and Harry Belafonte. Jewison shifted to feature films in 1963 with the comedy "40 Pounds of Trouble," starring Tony Curtis and Suzanne Pleshette.

Obituary

Variety

Features

ARABO TIMES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024



This image released by the Sundance Institute shows Richard Roundtree, (left), and June Squibb in a scene from 'Thelma' a film by Josh Margolin, an official selection of the Premieres program at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival. (AP)

Film

Hollywood veteran steals hearts, laughter at Sundance

At 94, Squibb takes the lead in 'Thelma'

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan 23, (AP): June Squibb is perhaps the busiest 94-year-old in Hollywood. This year alone she'll voice a role in "Inside Out 2," head to New York to star in Scarlett Johansson's directorial debut and film a television series that she can't quite talk about just yet.

And for the first time in her rich and varied career which has brought her from the stage to an Oscar nomination at 84, she is the lead of a film, "Thelma." It's a grounded but also "Mission: Impossible"-inspired comedy about a grandmother trying to get her money back from a phone scammer. Thelma goes on a scooter ride across Los Angeles, with the late Richard Roundtree in tow, to right the wrong.

"My friends all laugh at me, like 'What are you doing next?'" Squibb said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Sometimes I say to my agent, who is here, why are people still asking me to work? But I love it and I do it and it's been great."

The charming film from first-time director Josh Margolin premiered Thursday at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, where it quickly became one of the must-sees. The filmmakers are looking for distribution partners at the festival.

"I just knew that the minute I read it that I wanted to do it. That's how I decide, because I truly read everything," Squibb said. "I thought it was beautifully written. And I got excited about that scooter right away. I thought that would be a hoot to drive around on that."

Thelma is the name of Margolin's grandmother, who was an inspiration for the story. Squibb was on his mind while writing, too, and it was a mutual friend, Beanie Feldstein, who connected them.

"Beanie knows my sister and he knows my real grandma and she was like, 'Oh, you writing about your grandma? It's got to be June,'" Margolin said. "I said, 'Yes that's exactly what I want.'"

Feldstein had recently acted in "The Humans"

with Squibb and texted her: "I'm going to send you a script." One read and a 30-minute conversation later and she was in.

In "Thelma," she's a widow living alone in her beautiful apartment. Her family is busy living their own lives but also concerned about her and wondering when they're going to be able to convince her to go into assisted living. Thelma is especially close with her grandson, played by "The White Lotus" Fred Hechinger, who feels personally responsible that his beloved grandmother has gone missing. Of course, the audience knows she hasn't simply wandered off - she's on a mission, which she knows well she has to do on her own as her family would never let her do anything that potentially dangerous. It's something that resonated for Squibb.

Impression

"I think we're all stronger than anyone thinks we are, in many different ways," Squibb said. "I mean, I have friends that don't get out of the apartment, but they have strength in other areas."

Her accomplice in this is Roundtree, who is delightful in one of his last film roles as the owner of the scooter she so desperately needs. He had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and died in October at age 81. Squibb hadn't known the "Shaft" star before "Thelma." The first thing she said was, "It's about time." She's not entirely sure why she said it, but was glad that "he thought it was funny."

"He was so good and lovely. He was just a joy," Squibb said. "And he would have gone on working. He was only in his early 80s."

Squibb loved shooting "Thelma" all over the Valley and Brentwood in Los Angeles, with costars like Parker Posey, Clark Gregg and Malcolm McDowell, who made a big impression in his two days on set. "He's a hell of an actor," she remembered telling her assistant.

"We all knew, I think, that we were doing some-

thing special," she said. "We had no idea that people would relate to it and react to it the way they are."

The real Thelma and Squibb have yet to meet, but they'd like to. She gave the actor a "beautiful needlepoint pillow" and they've spoken over the phone about their favorite cop shows.

"My favorites are the 'FBI' on Tuesday night - all three of them," Squibb said. "Oh, boy. You can't drag me away, I love them."

She doesn't seem too impressed with the leading lady designation. For her, it doesn't change the work and some of her favorite roles have been "supporting," especially those in Alexander Payne's "About Schmidt" and "Nebraska," for which she received her first Oscar nomination 10 years ago. Both were turning points in her career, she said.

"I'm aware of what Alexander Payne did for me," she said. "It made a tremendous difference."

One thing that hasn't changed is her refusal to watch "dailies," the raw, unedited footage made during the making of a film.

"Some editors go crazy with me because they try so desperately to get me to come in and watch what's been shot. And I will not do it. I just don't want to," she said. "When I worked with Jack Nicholson, he wanted me to come in. I said, 'No, I'm not.' My early training was on the stage and you really learn not to look at yourself. Don't think about yourself. You just do it. And I think I'm sure that's probably what it is."

She has no trouble watching the finished product though - she can even dissociate and just watch it as a film. And she'll keep working as long as she keeps finding interesting parts.

"When I came out of the womb, I said, 'I'm an actress.' I did it at a very young age and I decided 'This is it.' And I never varied from it or wavered," Squibb said. "It's just something that I have always loved doing."

LOS ANGELES: A woman charged with killing a high-profile marketing consultant and social justice advocate in film pleaded not guilty Monday.

Jameelah Elena Michl, 36, entered the plea in Los Angeles Superior Court to charges of murder and burglary, with additional allegations that she used a firearm



King



Latt

to commit the felonies.

Prosecutors say she knocked on the door of the Los Angeles home of Michael Latt - then forced her way in and fatally shot him with a semi-automatic handgun on Nov. 27. He was later declared dead at a hospital.

Latt, 33, was a well-known consultant in Hollywood whose

firm focused on social impact in film and entertainment. He had worked on projects with directors including Ryan Coogler and Ava DuVernay.

Prosecutors and court records say Michl had been stalking and threatening director A.V. Rockwell, and targeted Latt because he was friends with Rockwell. Michl

was the subject of several restraining orders from Rockwell.

Rockwell's latest film "A Thousand and One," starring Teyana Taylor, won the Grand Jury Prize at last year's Sundance Film Festival, and earned her a Gotham Award for breakthrough director on the same night Latt was killed. (AP)

People & Places

Fashion

Timeless elegance

Dior and Schiaparelli pay historical tribute

PARIS, Jan 23, (AP): Dior's couture show at Paris' Musee Rodin wove an intricate Ottoman tapestry for spring and attracted a tapestry of stars to rival it Monday. Rihanna, Natalie Portman, Elizabeth Debicki, Ali Wong, Felicity Jones, Glenn Close, Kristin Scott Thomas, Juliette Binoche, and Carla Bruni were among the VIP guests on hand to admire Maria Grazia Chiuri's latest fusion of art and fashion.

An installation by artist Isabella Ducrot adorned the runway walls. The set called "Big Aura" featured myriad oversized dresses, each towering up to 5 meters (16.4 feet) high, that were reminiscent of Ottoman sultans' attire and hinted at the masterful show theme - the deft uniqueness of couture.

Here are some highlights of spring 2024 couture displays in Paris:



Lopez

Dior

It began with an understated yet powerful beige trench, worn with the large collar draping over a bare torso and complemented by a raw pearl double choker reminiscent of teeth that added a subtle bite.

Chiuri's interplays of architectural silhouettes and innovative materials were out in force for a diverse collection that had

a lot to say, seamlessly intertwining the historical richness of Ottoman styles with the contemporary.

Yet, the show's scope extended beyond historic influences: It was very much a Dior show. A draped skirt embroidered with metallic Ottoman-style threads exemplified Dior's own haute couture legacy.

Above all, it served as a homage to the unsung heroes of haute couture: Dior's legendary seamstresses. Their artistry was vividly showcased in pieces like a crocheted field flower twine top, a teeming tapestry of intricate blooms that had guests reaching for their cameras. It was the piece de resistance.

Further delving into Dior's rich history, the La Cigale dress, an iconic piece from Christian Dior's autumn-winter 1952 collection, was revisited. It was reimagined for the modern era, standing out with its sculptural construction and luxurious moiré fabric.

The ambition of the collection was its only weakness, sometimes leading it to skirt the edges of thematic coherence. One example was an elegant, long black crepe wrap dress, which, while stylish, seemed incongruous in the display as a whole.

Schiaparelli

Schiaparelli, piloted by the inventive Daniel Roseberry, inaugurated Haute Couture Week with a celebration of glamour, surrealism, and historical reverence. The collection was a vivid tableau of the house's 1930s glory days under the late, great Elsa Schiaparelli, fused with a provocative twist that electrified the VIP audience.

Opening with a dominatrix-inspired black PVC-style gown, complete with an Elizabethan choker, the show was a study in historic contrasts. This modern reinterpretation of the choker, blending the grandeur of yesteryear with a nod to BDSM aesthetics, showcased Roseberry's ingenious ability to weave art and high fashion with tongue-in-cheek.

A standout piece, a 17th-century black cape with rope adornments, mirrored the kinky spikes of a BDSM submissive while being set against a bejeweled neck clasp. Beyond its tantalizing exterior, the ensemble underscored Schiaparelli's commitment to craftsmanship.

Roseberry's tribute to the house's founder was masterfully displayed in a pearl suit jacket ensemble with tubular, sculptural arms that redefined the human form. This piece, and others, exemplified his surreal take on classics, a hallmark of Elsa Schiaparelli's original vision.

Jennifer Lopez embraced a daring new look at Schiaparelli. The megastar captivated onlookers at the Petit Palais venue with a striking white coat, a masterpiece adorned with real white rose petals that cascaded over a textured white turtleneck sweater. This floral fantasy was a Roseberry creation, the house said.

The star's new chin-length bob, slicked back in a slightly wet style, added an edge.

In the fast-paced world of modern fashion, some runway shows, including those by Dior and others, may benefit from rethinking audience seating arrangements.

Giambattista Valli

The air was perfumed, the carpet a lush pink, and the music orchestral and suspenseful as VIPs gathered at Giambattista Valli's show in Place Vendôme. True to Valli's signature flair for drama, the collection dazzled in shades of peony and powder pink, punctuated by bold reds, tangerine, and obsidian.

The show contrasted tiny, glittering bodysuits with immense tulle trains and asymmetrical bows of gargantuan proportions. Opening with a silk velvet bodysuit adorned with silk organza roses, the collection transitioned into draped tulle skirts and trains, a testament to Valli's mastery of extravagant volume.

Crystals and bows were abundant throughout. Balloon sleeves and velvet trains were reminiscent of Elizabethan opulence, while dropped shoulders unfurled like blossoms, blending historical elements with contemporary couture. Each piece segmenting the female form into architectural tiers, another Valli signature, showcased his expertise in creating striking silhouettes.

Rahul Mishra

Rahul Mishra's couture was a celebration of eastern opulence and vibrant artistry. The show - clearly unafraid of excess - unfurled in bursts of color. The opening was marked by a striking dragonfly motif, embroidered on a sheer disc that resembled gossamer, adorning a model in a luminous gold turban. This imagery, echoing Mishra's fascination with nature's enchanting creatures, set the tone for a divergent collection.

Two bare-chested men in turbans and shimmering silver sequined sultan pants continued the eastern theme.

Any unity of the collection lay in its unapologetic vibrancy. Silver tiered ponchos, sparkling disco flares, and sheeny metallic blue suits paraded down the runway as did a dragonfly motif reimagined as a colossal bow at the midriff, crafted in silver and pearl.

Giant tulle hooded gowns, almost engulfing the models, showcased Mishra's flair for dramatic volumes.

Rahul Mishra is an Indian fashion designer, known for his unique approach to design, which often integrates traditional Indian craftsmanship with contemporary fashion.



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Cillian Murphy in a scene from 'Oppenheimer.' 'Oppenheimer' leads all Oscar nominees with 13. (AP)

Awards

Docu nomination for '20 Days in Mariupol'

'Oppenheimer' leads Oscar nods with 13

Partial list of Oscars nominees

NEW YORK, Jan 23, (AP): After a tumultuous movie year marred by strikes and work stoppages, the Academy Awards showered nominations Tuesday on Christopher Nolan's blockbuster biopic, "Oppenheimer," which came away with a leading 13 nominations.

Nolan's three-hour opus, viewed as the best picture frontrunner, received nods for best picture; Cillian Murphy, Robert Downey Jr. and Emily Blunt; and multiple honors for the craft of the J. Robert Oppenheimer drama.

Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" wasn't far behind with eight nominations, including nods for best picture; Ryan Gosling for best supporting actor; and two best-song candidates in "What Was I Made For" and "I'm Just Ken." But Gerwig was surprisingly left out of the best director field.

Both Martin Scorsese's Osage epic "Killers of the Flower Moon" and Yorgos Lanthimos' Frankenstein riff "Poor Things" were also widely celebrated. "Poor Things" landed 11 nods, while "Killers of the Moon" was nominated for 10 Oscars.

Nominated

Lily Gladstone, star of "Killers of the Flower Moon," became the first Native American nominated for best actress. For the 10th time, Scorsese was nominated for best director. Leonardo DiCaprio, though, was left out of best actor.

Those four contenders made for a maximalist quartet of Oscar heavyweights. Nolan's sprawling biopic, Gerwig's near-musical, Scorsese's pitch-black Western, Lanthimos' sumptuously designed fantasy. Each utilized a wide spectrum of cinematic tools to tell big, often disturbing big-screen stories. And each - even Apple's biggest-budgeted movie yet, "Killers of the Flower Moon" - had robust theatrical releases that saved streaming for months later.

The 10 films nominated for best picture were: "Oppenheimer," "Barbie," "Poor Things," "Killers of the Flower Moon," "The Holdovers," "Maestro," "American Fiction," "Past Lives," "Anatomy of a Fall" and "The Zone of Interest."

The nominees for best actress are: Annette Bening, "Nyad"; Lily Gladstone, "Killers of the Flower Moon"; Sandra Hüller, "Anatomy of a Fall"; Carey Mulligan, "Maestro"; Emma Stone, "Poor Things."

The nominees for best actor are: Bradley Cooper, "Maestro"; Colman Domingo, "Rustin"; Paul Giamatti, "The Holdovers"; Cillian Murphy, "Oppenheimer"; Jeffrey Wright, "American Fiction."

The nominees for best supporting actor: Sterling K. Brown, "American Fiction"; Robert De Niro, "Killers of the Flower Moon"; Robert Downey Jr., "Oppenheimer"; Ryan Gosling, "Barbie"; Mark Ruffalo, "Poor Things."

"We look forward to Mr. Davis being found not guilty at the conclusion of his trial," the statement said, adding that Davis anticipates posting bail so he can help prepare his defense.

Robert Arroyo, one of Davis' former lawyers from the Clark County special public defender's office, said Monday that he and co-counsel Charles Cano wished Davis well and referred questions to Arnold.

Arnold has served during



Shakur



Eggers

public fatality reviews as representative of relatives of people killed by police. He has also been sanctioned twice by the Nevada State Bar during 20 years of practice.

One, in 2018, was for failing to properly file documents in a defendant's appeal to the state Supreme Court. The other, in 2021, was for failing to represent a defendant in Las Vegas Justice Court. Each time, Arnold received a written reprimand and was fined \$1,500. (AP)



Harper Steele, (left), and Will Ferrell attend the premiere of 'Will & Harper' at the Eccles Theatre during the Sundance Film Festival on Monday, Jan. 22, in Park City, Utah. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: Dave Eggers is now an award-winning children's author.

Eggers' "The Eyes & the Impossible," the great adventure of a very fast dog, has received the John Newbery Medal for the year's best children's book, an honor previously given to Beverly Cleary, Neil Gaiman and Lois Lowry among others. Eggers is otherwise known for such acclaimed adult books as "A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius," "What Is the What" and "A Hologram for the King."

"I've read just about every Newbery winner from the last 50 years or so, and my kids grew up reading them, too," Eggers told The Associated Press in an email Monday. "Last night my kids were telling me how much that golden sticker meant to them as readers, and to have 'Eyes' among those books we love so much - it's just surreal."

Eggers has another book for young people, "Soren's Seventh Song," coming out next month.

The Randolph Caldecott Medal for outstanding illustration was given to Vashti Harrison's "Big," the first time the award was given to a Black woman since it was established in 1938. Last fall, "Big" was a National Book Award finalist.

The Newbery and Caldecott medals were among the awards announced by the American Library Association.

Pedro Martin's "Mexikid: A Graphic Memoir" won the Pura Belpré Award, given to Latinx writers, for best book and for illustration. Rebecca Yarros' "Fourth Wing" was among 10 winners of the Alex Award for adult book that appeal to teen readers. Other Alex recipients included Darrin Bell's "The Talk" and Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah's "Chain Gang All Stars."

Ibi Zoboi's "Nigeria Jones" won the Coretta Scott King Award for outstanding work by a Black author, and Dare Colter won the King illustration award for "An American Story," written by Kwame Alexander.

"The Collectors," a book of short stories featuring contributions from Jason Reynolds and David Levithan among others, received the Michael L. Printz Award for young adult literature. Neal Shusterman, author of "The Arc of the Scythe," "Bruiser" and "Challenger Deep" among others, has received the Margaret Edwards Award for lifetime achievement. (AP)

LAS VEGAS: A former Los Angeles-area gang leader jailed in Las Vegas in the 1996 killing of hip-hop music icon Tupac Shakur has hired a private attorney who pointed Monday to what he expects will be a historic murder trial.

Duane "Keffe D" Davis dismissed court-appointed lawyers and hired veteran criminal defense lawyer Carl Arnold, who said in a statement that his office was "honored by the opportunity to represent Mr. Duane Davis in what will be one of the most historic trials of the century."

The Conversation

Researchers identify key enzyme that works as anti-aging

Breaking down fat byproducts could lead to healthier aging

By Eyleen Jorgelina O'Rourke
University of Virginia

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

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The journey of aging brings with it an unavoidable reality for many: an increased accumulation of body fat. Though much of society seems mostly focused on the aesthetics of being overweight, doctors look past any cosmetic concerns to focus on the health implications of fat byproducts in the body.

Fatty acids are one of the molecular building blocks that make up fats. Though essential for various bodily functions, excessive amounts of fatty acids in the body can be harmful, shortening a person's health span and life span by increasing their risk of chronic disease, disrupting metabolic processes and promoting inflammation.

Fatty acids are routinely checked during medical examinations, such as blood tests measuring your lipid profile. But clinicians and researchers often overlook the other key component of fat despite its potentially harmful effects: glycerol, a compound that links fatty acids to make a fat molecule.

Both of these fat byproducts disrupt cellular and organ function, mirroring the effects of aging. In fact, researchers are increasingly seeing obesity as a catalyst for accelerated aging.

Glycerol

The role that fats play in aging is one of the focuses of my work as a genomicist and biochemist. My research team and I wondered whether reducing harmful fat byproducts might help slow the aging process and consequently stave off common diseases.

In studying ways to extend the life span and improving the health at late age of lab animals, my colleagues and I saw a consistent pattern: All the anti-aging interventions we tested led to reduced glycerol levels.

For instance, when placed on a calorie-restricted diet, the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* lives about 40% longer. We found that the glycerol levels in the body of these long-lived worms were lower than in shorter-lived worms that were not food restricted. Calorie restriction also heightened the activity of an enzyme responsible for breaking down glycerol, ADH-1, in their intestine and muscles.

We saw similar high ADH-1 activity levels in people undergoing dietary restriction or treated with an anti-aging drug called rapamycin. This finding suggests there may be a common mechanism underlying healthy aging across species, with ADH-1 at its core.

We hypothesized that elevated ADH-1 activity promotes health in old age by decreasing harmful levels of glycerol. Supporting this hypothesis were two critical observations. First, we found that adding glycerol to the diet of worms shortened their life span by 30%. By contrast, animals genetically modified to boost levels of the glycerol-busting enzyme ADH-1 had low glycerol levels and remained lean and healthy with longer lives, even on unrestricted diets.

Activity

The simple molecular structure and wealth of research on ADH-1 make it an attractive target for developing drugs that boost its activity. My lab's long-term goal is to explore how compounds that activate ADH-1 affect the health and longevity of both mice and people.

Anti-aging research generates both excitement and debate. On the one hand, the benefits of healthy aging are clear. On the other hand, extending life span through healthier aging will likely introduce new societal challenges.

If life spans extending to 120 years become the norm, social structures, including retirement ages and economic models, will need to evolve to accommodate an aging population. Legal and social frameworks regarding the elderly and family care may need revision. The sandwich generation, those with children and living parents and grandparents, might find themselves caring for even more generations simultaneously. Longer lives will require society to rethink and reshape how we integrate and support an increasingly older population in our communities.

Whether through ADH-1 or dietary adjustments, the quest for the solution to healthy aging is not just a medical journey but a societal one. (AP)

Combo therapy addresses muscle loss from 'medication' in diabetes patients

GLP-1 treatment's side effects tackled



A dose of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is displayed at the Neighborcare Health clinics at Vashon Island High School in Vashon Island, Wash., on May 15, 2019. UK health officials are urging millions of parents to book their children in for missed measles, mumps and rubella shots amid a sharp increase in the number of measles cases and the lowest vaccination rates in a decade. The National Health Service is launching a publicity campaign after figures showed there have been 216 confirmed measles cases and 103 probable cases in parts of England since October. (AP)

Millions missed MMR shots

Britain launches vaccination drive as measles cases rise

LONDON, Jan 23, (AP) — UK health officials on Monday urged millions of parents to book their children for missed measles, mumps and rubella shots during a sharp increase in the number of measles cases and the lowest vaccination rates in a decade.

The National Health Service is launching a publicity campaign after figures showed there were about 250 confirmed measles cases in parts of England last year. Most cases were in children under 10 years old.

The combined measles, mumps and rubella, or MMR, vaccine is offered in the UK in two doses to all children, first at 12 months and then again at 3 years. Vaccination rates have dropped to about 85% nationally, and far lower in parts of London, according to UK Health Security Agency chief executive Jenny Harries.

That is "too low to maintain safe population coverage - we want that at about 95%" as advised by the World Health Organization, she said.

Public health officials say more than 3.4 million children under 16 years old are unprotected and at risk of catching the preventable diseases.

Measles was declared eliminated in the UK in 2017, meaning the disease was no longer native to the country.

Transmissions

But transmissions began again when epidemics broke out in the rest of Europe. Officials said outbreaks can take place anywhere where vaccine coverage is below the 95% needed to achieve herd immunity.

WHO and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in November that measles deaths globally spiked by more than 40% last year, and cases rose after vaccination levels dramatically dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Measles is among the most infectious diseases known and spreads in the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It's most common in children under 5. Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose and a distinctive rash.

Infection can lead to permanent physical damage such as deafness. Most deaths are due to complications like encephalitis, severe dehydration, serious breathing problems and pneumonia.

Harries said there was "clearly misinformation" about vaccines and urged people to consult trusted sources.

Officials said intense media coverage in the late 1990s about the now discredited claim linking the MMR vaccine to autism led to a drop in vaccinations and took many years to recover from.

More recently, declines in vaccination uptake were exacerbated partly by the pandemic and anti-vaccine sentiment, said Helen Bedford, a professor of children's health at University College London.

"The pandemic, with new vaccines introduced and vaccination constantly discussed, may have resulted in the public having more questions about vaccination: its safety, effectiveness and, for a disease like measles which had become rare in the U.K., its necessity," she said. "Asking questions about vaccination is to be encouraged, but we need trained staff to do this."

NEW YORK, Jan 23, (AP) — Noom, the leading digital healthcare company empowering people to live better, healthier lives, has partnered with FitOn to add a "Muscle Defense" enhancement to its newly launched Nook GLP-1 (Glucagon-like peptide-1) Companion. Nook GLP-1 Companion with Muscle Defense is aimed at helping GLP-1 users navigate one of the most problematic concerns surrounding GLP-1 use today — muscle mass loss. This move makes Nook the first weight loss company to announce on-demand fitness programming into its platform specifically to support GLP-1 patients.

While GLP-1 medications have much promise, they can leave people in worse health than before, especially when medications are not used according to the drug label — as an adjunct to a diet and exercise program. If patients are not supported by a strong behavior change program that emphasizes muscle-building exercises and a high-protein diet, they risk losing a significant amount of muscle mass, strength, and bone density, which can result in lowered resting metabolic rate and worsening insulin resistance. All together this may lead to a complication called sarcopenic obesity, which is associated with worse prognoses from chronic disease and higher all-cause mortality.

Discontinue

Recent studies have shown that 68% of individuals discontinue the use of GLP-1 medications within 12 months of first use. Those that do frequently regain the lost weight as fat, leaving them worse off with a potentially higher percentage of body fat than before they began use of the GLP-1. To address this major concern of lost muscle mass while taking GLP-1s, Nook today announced its partnership with FitOn to launch Muscle Defense within its most recent offering: Nook GLP-1 Companion.

"We designed Nook GLP-1 Companion with Muscle Defense to be the adjunct diet and exercise program that addresses key dangers associated with taking GLP-1s such as loss of muscle mass," said Nook CEO Geoff Cook. "We believe prescribing the drug without such a program carries dangers, given the amount of muscle mass people often lose while taking a GLP-1 and the fact that most people will stop taking the GLP-1 and regain the weight absent of behavior change, which can potentially lead to future conditions like sarcopenic obesity. Nook GLP-1 Companion with Muscle Defense provides the protein-tracking, resistance training, behavior change, and expert guidance needed to have the best outcomes while taking a GLP-1. It's critical we not leave people worse off than before they started the medication. Healthy habits have never mattered more."

"We are so excited to partner with Nook to power an important aspect of Nook GLP-1 Companion with Muscle Defense," said Lindsay Cook, Founder

and CEO of FitOn. "FitOn is on a mission to bridge the gap in today's health and wellness solutions and make fitness accessible to anyone. We know fitness is a critical part to long-term lifestyle changes. This partnership with Nook combines FitOn's best-in-class fitness content with Nook's expert nutrition tracking and guidance to help people taking GLP-1s build muscle mass and set them up for a more successful long-term weight loss journey."

The Muscle Defense program includes a series of FitOn resistance training exercises curated by Nook's Chief of Medicine Linda Anegawa, MD, FACP, Dipl. ABOM, to combat sarcopenic obesity and the reduction of lean muscle mass. Key features of Nook GLP-1 Companion with Muscle Defense include:

- A Program Designed by Nook's Chief of Medicine & Fitness Leader FitOn: Nook has collaborated with the renowned global fitness experts at FitOn to provide a range of workout videos designed to help GLP-1 users build and maintain lean muscle mass, which in turn supports a healthy metabolism and bone density. These videos will be curated by Nook's Chief of Medicine Dr. Linda Anegawa to be practiced by those being clinically treated for obesity

- Comprehensive Changes to Nook's Well-Known Food Color System: For Nook members taking a GLP-1, Nook's "green-yellow-orange" food color system underwent the biggest change in its history with the addition of over 200,000 protein-rich foods now marked "green" for these members

- A Protein-Tracking Tool, helping members to hit their daily protein requirements, which also helps to prevent the loss of lean muscle

- Expert-Led Guidance and Content on Common Side Effects and Complications

- Customized, Interactive Mini-Courses focused on "Aha Moments" to drive long-term behavior change around nutrition, fitness, and goal-setting to support successful tapering and off-ramping from GLP-1s

Complicate

"Patients taking control of their health through a GLP-1 treatment plan deserve to have their complex needs met after years of being misunderstood, and as risks of treatment such as sarcopenic obesity continue to complicate patient journeys," said Dr. Anegawa. "In order to serve this community with the utmost care and promote better long-term living, we must meet them where they are with on-demand solutions that promote overall metabolic health, not just weight loss alone."

Muscle Defense is expected to be included within Nook GLP-1 Companion for Nook Weight members who indicate they are taking a weight-loss drug and for all members of Nook Med. Nook GLP-1 Companion with Muscle Defense will begin rolling out in the spring.

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China must wait

Cup host Qatar finish group stage in style

AL-RAYYAN, Qatar, Jan 23, (AP) — Asian Cup host Qatar finished its group stage in style on Monday with a spectacular volley from Hassan Al-Haydos for a 1-0 win over China, which is on the brink of elimination from the tournament.

The deadlock at the Khalifa International Stadium was broken midway through the second half with an unforgetta-

ble strike. Akram Afif's corner was immediately met outside the area by Al-Haydos, who confidently volleyed into the top corner. Both players had just been introduced as substitutes.

Qatar, which had already secured its spot in the knockout stage, topped Group A with nine points and advanced with Tajikistan, which beat last-place Lebanon 2-1 to take second

with four points.

China finished with just two points and failed to score in any of its three games. It has never won the Asian Cup and must now wait for other results and hope to squeeze into the next round as one of the four best performing of the third-place teams in the six groups.

"In the three games we played, we missed a lot of chances every game," China coach Aleksandar Jankovic said. "If you don't score, you cannot expect a big result. We are disappointed of course because our destiny doesn't depend on us any more."

The Serbian said he understands that his position as head coach, which he started in February 2023, may be under threat.

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"There are two types of coaches in general -- those who have been fired and those who will be fired," he said. "When you accept to do this job, you accept both."

Qatar may have lost all three games on home soil at the 2022 World Cup but has been perfect in the Asian Cup, advancing to the round of 16 by winning all three games without conceding a goal.

Already certain of top spot heading into the match, defending champion Qatar made nine changes from its previous game, handing the initiative to China which created better chances in the first half.

Wei Shihao had three opportunities to score his team's first goal. After just seven minutes, he side-footed wide from just inside the area and then later his low shot from close range was saved by Saad Al Sheeb.

Wei went close again just before the break with a header that just cleared the bar.

After Al-Haydos' superb goal in the 66th, China had the ball in the net within three minutes remaining but Jiang Shenglong's shot was ruled out as the ball had gone out of play in the buildup.

In the group's other fixture, Tajikistan rallied to beat Lebanon and advance to the knockout stage for the first time.

"We made history today and this is the biggest thing for the Tajikistan people," Tajikistan coach Petar Segrt said. "It was difficult but we kept fighting and we did it."

Lebanon took the lead early in the second half with a curling shot from Bassel Jradi but was reduced to 10 men after 54 minutes because of a foul by Kassem El-Zein.



Syria's Jalil Elias, right, goes for a header against India's Lalengmawia Apuia during the Asian Cup Group B soccer match between Syria and India at Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor, Qatar, Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024. (AP)

Equatorial Guinea pummel host nation Ivory Coast 4-0

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Jan 23, (AP) — Emilio Nsue scored twice as Equatorial Guinea routed Ivory Coast 4-0 to leave the host nation in danger of an Africa Cup of Nations exit on Monday, when Egypt advanced and Ghana was likely eliminated.

Ivory Coast was left to rue a host of missed chances as Nsue opened the scoring before the break, and Pablo Ganet fired in a brilliant free kick after it, two minutes before the 34-year-old

while Ivory Coast was left hoping that its three points will be enough to be among the four best third-place finishers who also go through to the last 16.

"When we saw the group stage, we saw we were playing two of the top teams in Africa, but we were in prayer," said Equatorial Guinea goalkeeper Jesús Owono after his man-of-the-match performance. "I don't know how far we can go. I know this team will work and do the same thing that we did today to reach as far as possible."

Equatorial Guinea, the "National Thunder," is only taking part for the fourth time.

Owono kept his team in the game by denying Nicolas Pépé in a one-on-one. The "Elephants" also had two goals ruled out through VAR for offside - Ibrahim Sangaré before the break and Jean-Philippe Krasso after it.

Owono's counterpart, Yahia Fofana, had nothing to do until he picked the ball out of his net after Nsue fired the visitors ahead with their first attack in the 42nd.

SOCCER

Nsue capped his performance with his fifth goal of the tournament. No other player has scored more.

Jannick Buyla completed the rout on a counterattack in the 88th.

It sent Equatorial Guinea into the knockout stage as group winner with seven points.

Nigeria defeated Guinea-Bissau 1-0 in the other Group A match to take second place on goal difference,

Embiid scores 70 points to lead 76ers past Spurs



Atlanta Hawks forward Saddiq Bey, left, shoots over Sacramento Kings forward Keegan Murray during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Sacramento, Calif., Monday, Jan. 22, 2024. The Kings won 122-107. (AP)

Town's 62 points come in a Wolves loss

PHILADELPHIA, Jan 23, (AP) — Joel Embiid scored a franchise-record 70 points, the most in the NBA this season, to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to a 133-123 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Monday night.

Embiid also set a career high with 18 rebounds. He was 24 of 41 from the field, including 1 of 2 from 3-point range, and made 21 of 23 free throws. He broke Hall of Famer Wilt Chamberlain's 76ers record of 68 points, set on Dec. 16, 1967, with a layup with 1:41 to play.

Chamberlain was playing for the Philadelphia Warriors when he set the NBA record with 100 points.

A six-time All-Star and the league's reigning MVP, Embiid has scored at least 30 points in 21 consecutive games. The 76ers have won six in a row.

Hornets 128, Timberwolves 125

In Minneapolis, Karl-Anthony Towns scored a franchise-record 62 points, including 44 in the first half, but Charlotte erased an 18-point deficit and stunned Minnesota.

Towns managed just four points on 2-for-10 shooting in the fourth quarter, when the Timberwolves were outscored 36-18. He thought he was fouled on a drive to the basket in the closing seconds and Minnesota trailing by one, then was short on a 3-point attempt on the final possession.

Miles Bridges scored 28 points and Brandon Miller had 27 for the Hornets. Leaky Black ripped the ball away from Towns on his way to the basket to preserve the Hornets' 10th victory of the season.

Charlotte went ahead for good at 122-121 on P.J. Washington's floater with 3:21 remaining. LaMelo Ball added 18 points for the Hornets, who had lost seven of their past eight games and had the Eastern Conference's third-worst mark entering Monday.

Suns 115, Bulls 113

In Phoenix, Kevin Durant hit a contested 17-foot jumper with 1.6 seconds left to help Phoenix erase a 23-point deficit and stun Chicago.

The Suns have won six straight.

BASKETBALL

Durant finished with 43 points, eight assists and six rebounds, one night after scoring 40 in a win over the Indiana Pacers. Bradley Beal scored 18 and Devin Booker added 16. Coby White led the Bulls with 26 points. DeMar DeRozan added 21 and Nikola Vucevic added 19 points and 17 rebounds.

Cavaliers 126, Magic 99

In Orlando, Sam Merrill scored 20 of his 26 points in the first half, and Cleveland beat Orlando for its eighth straight victory.

Donovan Mitchell added 25 points and 13 assists for the Cavaliers, who shot 20 for 38 (53%) from 3-point range. Cleveland never trailed and led by 36 points midway through the fourth quarter.

The Cavs' win streak is one short of the NBA's longest this season (set by the Magic and the Los Angeles Clippers),

Morata goal gives Atletico 1-0 win over Granada

Milner closes in on record but Brighton lack scoring spark

BRIGHTON, England, Jan 23, (AP) — On a night when James Milner went second in the Premier League's all-time appearances table, his Brighton team was held to a 0-0 draw in a lackluster match at home to Wolverhampton.

The 38-year-old Milner made his 633rd Premier League appearance at the Amex stadium on Monday, taking him one clear of Ryan Giggs to sit just 20 matches behind leader Gareth Barry.

However, neither Milner nor anyone else was able to break the deadlock on a frustrating night.

Facundo Buonanotte saw one early attempt cleared off the line for Brighton but it was a rare moment of excitement in a dull first half.

Brighton goalkeeper Jason Steele saved well against Matheus Cunha early in the second period and Wolves captain Max Kilman was relieved to see his last-gasp intervention hit the post rather than give Brighton the lead a few moments later.

"We didn't really create enough in the final third," Milner said. "At home, we have dropped too many points, which is disappointing. A clean sheet is important and that will help us going forward. The firepower we have up front means we usually get on the scoresheet. The clean

SOCCER

sheets are really important, we'd have more points if we had kept more earlier in the season."

A win for Wolves would have been its fourth league victory in a row, equaling a run it last achieved in 1972, but it had to settle for a point that left it 11th.

Brighton moved into seventh, one place above Manchester United.

Liverpool tops the table, five points ahead of Manchester City, which has a game in hand.

and all of it has been accomplished without Darius Garland and Evan Mobley, the team's second- and third-leading scorers.

Jarrett Allen, who didn't score until the Cavs had a 21-point lead, set a franchise record with his 12th straight double-double, finishing with 14 points and 11 rebounds.

Celtics 119, Mavericks 110

In Dallas, Jayson Tatum had 38 points and 11 rebounds, Jaylen Brown scored 35 and Boston beat Dallas.

The NBA-leading Celtics were never in much trouble because their All-Star pair was more efficient on the second night of a back-to-back than the Dallas duo of Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving after four days off.

Tatum and Brown combined to go 24 of 43 from the field while Doncic and Irving were 21 of 50, with Doncic not hitting his first 3-pointer until the fourth quarter and finishing 2 of 8 from beyond the arc.

Doncic had a triple-double with 33 points, 18 rebounds and 13 assists. Irving scored 23 coming off an unexpected break when a game at Golden State was postponed following the death of Warriors assistant Dejan Milojevic from a heart attack.

Bucks 122, Pistons 113

In Detroit, Giannis Antetokounmpo had a triple-double and Khris Middleton added 26 points as Milwaukee pulled away late and beat Detroit.

Antetokounmpo finished with 31 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists as the Bucks won for the fifth time in six games. Brook Lopez finished with 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Marcus Sasser led the Pistons with 23 points, and fellow reserve Isaiah Stewart had 19 points and eight rebounds. Jaden Ivey led the starters with 17 points as Detroit lost to Milwaukee for the second time in three nights.

Grizzlies 108, Raptors 100

In Toronto, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 16 of his 27 points in the first quarter, Luke Kennard added a season-high 19 points, and Memphis won its fourth straight north of the border, beating slumping Toronto.

Vince Williams Jr. had 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Santi Aldama scored 10 points before leaving because of a sore right knee as the short-handed Grizzlies won for the second time in their past six games.

Jackson finished with a career-high six steals, all in the first quarter, as the veteran big man wasted no time breaking his previous mark of five.

RJ Barrett scored 29 points for Toronto, and Scottie Barnes had 22 points and 12 rebounds. Immanuel Quickley had 10 assists but shot 3 for 13 and scored eight points as the Raptors lost for the eighth time in 10 games.

Kings 122, Hawks 107

In Sacramento, Harrison Barnes scored 32 points and Sacramento beat short-handed Atlanta to snap a four-game losing streak.

The Hawks were without All-Star guard Trae Young, who suffered a concussion in Saturday's loss to the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Domantas Sabonis had 14 points and 21 rebounds for his 25th straight double-double, tying Oscar Robertson for the second-longest streak in franchise history. Robertson owns the record at 29 in a row.

Dejounte Murray had 35 points and 10 rebounds for Atlanta.

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Al Marshoud, Hayat, and Al Khashti award the top winners.



The competition was joined by notable local riders.

Company sponsored 10th Al Marshoud Int'l Showjumping Championship

Zain continues to support local equestrian talents

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Zain sponsored the tenth season of Atyab Al Marshoud International Showjumping Championship, held at the Kuwait Riding Center in Sabhan. The competition was supervised by the Kuwait Equestrian Federation and witnessed a huge turnout of equestrian fans, along with notable participation from local and international riders.

Zain joined in awarding the tournament's top winners, with attendance from H.E. Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth

EQUESTRIAN

Affairs, and Minister of State for Communication Daood Marafie; championship host Waleed Sulaiman Al Marshoud; Kuwait Equestrian Federation Chairman Masoud Hayat; and Zain Kuwait Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al Khashti.

Zain is proud of its ongoing yearly support to this competition, which springs from its belief in the role played by the private sector in shouldering the local youth and sports scenes. The company is also very keen on empowering local talents and athletes who excel in all sports, including equestrian sports that are deep-rooted in the

Kuwaiti, Arab, and Islamic identities.

The thrilling competition saw Kuwait Equestrian Club's rider Ali Al Kharafi win the tenth season's title, with a huge turnout of equestrian enthusiasts, including families, young people, and athletes. Zain also set up a special spectators area for fans to enjoy viewing the exciting competition.

The tenth season of Atyab Al Marshoud International showjumping Championship was held at the Kuwait Riding Center in Sabhan, with notable participation from local and international riders who represented the biggest clubs. The competition was refereed by a professional international team, with supervision from the Kuwait Equestrian Federation.

Zain is always keen on supporting the biggest sports programs and competitions in Kuwait with the aim of elevating the Kuwaiti sports scene. The company strongly believes that the private sector has a vital role in progressing sports and youth initiatives, and it makes this belief a reality by shouldering similar events.

Zain is also proud of sponsoring and supporting many Kuwaiti athletes who represent the nation in the biggest local, regional, and international sporting arenas. These athletes continue to raise Kuwait's flag high in every sport, including equestrian sports.

Al-Tomoooh Sports Club counters the 'unjust' advertisement cancellation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Eng. Jassim Al-Nouri, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Tomoooh Sports Club for the Disabled, has formally requested the reversal of the decision to terminate the club's advertisement. Al-Nouri expressed his dissatisfaction with the sudden and unjust decision, emphasizing that it was made without prior warning. The decision poses a threat to a well-established entity that has been actively supporting 150 male and female players for six years, producing numerous champions and boasting an extensive record of global and regional participations and achievements.

During a press conference organized by the club to address the aftermath of the advertisement cancellation, Al-Nouri clarified that Al-Tomoooh Club has consistently adhered to all financial and administrative laws and regulations throughout its career. Additionally, all tournaments in which the club participated received prior approvals from the Sports Authority, with no recorded vio-

lations since its establishment.

Al-Nouri highlighted the club's cooperation with the committee formed by the former Minister of Youth, providing all necessary data. Despite this cooperation, the club was neither invited to any meetings nor informed of any violations. The ministerial decision to cancel the advertisement came as a surprise to the club.

Expressing astonishment, Al-Nouri noted that at a time when the aim is to encourage the establishment of more clubs for sports involving individuals with mental disabilities to enhance competition, discover talent, and build a broader base of athletes, the decision undermines the only entity dedicated to this accomplished sport in Kuwait. The club has notably represented Kuwaiti sports with disabilities on a global stage, with its most recent success being the winning of 21 medals in the World Games in Berlin—an achievement recognized and honored by His Highness the Amir.



Eng. Jassim Al-Nouri, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Tomoooh Sports Club.

Unanimous approval: Al-Shraida leads Al-Nasr Club's newly confirmed board

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Electoral Committee of Al-Nasr Club has officially endorsed the



Khaled Al Sharida

new Board of Directors, led by Khaled Al-Shraida. The approval comes following the closure of the nomination period, during which Al-Shraida's list was the sole contender for the elections.

The confirmed list comprises individuals such as Ali Al-Dasam, Mutlaq Al-Adwani, Abdulaziz Al-Mutairi, Subeh Al-Adwani, Sultan Al-Mutairi, Dhari Al-Mutairi, Mishari Al-Mutairi, Youssef Falah, Khaled Al-Mutairi, and Mutlaq Bandar Al-Mutairi.

This development follows the National Authority for Sports Arbitration's decision to nullify the Al-Nasr Sports Club elections held on January 12, 2023, along with their subsequent effects and decisions.



Al-Arabi player goes for the basket as opponent looks on.

Al-Qadisiya 'maintain' basketball league lead

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Al-Qadisiya has maintained its lead in the preliminary round of the basketball league, securing a decisive victory against Al-Qurain with a score of 92-59. Simultaneously, Al-Arabi triumphed over Yarmouk with a score of 106-89.

Al-Qadisiya's impressive win elevates its score to 21 points, securing the top position, while Al-Akhdar advances to fifth place with 15 points. Al-Qurain climbs to sixth place with 14 points, and Yarmouk now holds eighth place with 12 points.

BASKETBALL

In a dominating performance against Al-Qurain, Al-Qadisiya secured a substantial lead in the first quarter (22-9), extending it to 47-22 by halftime and 75-39 by the end of the third quarter. The final score stands at an easy 92-59.

Similarly, Al-Akhdar showcased control from the outset, leading the first quarter against Yarmouk 23-17, expanding the lead to 56-36 by halftime, 83-54 by the end of the third quarter, and ultimately concluding the match with a score of 106-89.

In today's matchups, Kuwait aims to extend its winning streak against Al-Nasr at 5:00 pm in the Al-Itihad Hall at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex. Additionally, Al-Sulaibikhat faces Al-Tadamon at 07:15 in the same hall.

The league features two sections, with the top four teams advancing to the semi-finals after the second section concludes. In the first match, third-placed Al-Kuwait, with 18 points, seeks to maintain its unbeaten record against sixth-placed Al-Nasr, holding 14 points. The second match sees fourth-placed Sulaibikhat, with 17 points, taking on ninth-placed Al-Tadamon, with 11 points. Sulaibikhat is poised to secure two crucial points given the technical advantage it holds over its opponent, continuing its journey towards qualifying for the semi-finals.

Nole holds off Fritz to reach Australian Open semis again

Gauff to play titleholder Sabalenka

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 23, (AP): Nobody has ever been better at this end of the Australian Open than Novak Djokovic, the 10-time champion.

Every time he's won a quarterfinal at Melbourne Park - as he did against Taylor Fritz on Tuesday - he's gone on to win the title.

The odds are usually stacked against his semifinal rival. Perhaps even more so against fourth-seeded Jannik Sinner, who won a quarterfinal over No. 5 Andrey Rublev that didn't start until 10:42 p.m. and didn't finish until 1:21 a.m. Wednesday.

TENNIS

Djokovic reached his record-extending 48th Grand Slam semifinal by beating Fritz 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 in 3 3/4 hours. Their match started late in the heat of the afternoon because U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff's win over Marta Kostuk took more than three hours in the preceding women's quarterfinal on Rod Laver Arena.

In an on-court interview with Australian player Nick Kyrgios, who has been sidelined by a long-term injury, Djokovic made a light-hearted joke about getting popcorn and watching Sinner vs. Rublev on late-night TV.

In his later news conference, Djokovic said Sinner's late finish wouldn't make a difference come the semifinals.

The start of the night session was pushed back past 9 p.m. and, after defending women's champion Aryna Sabalenka's straight-set win over of Barbora Krejickova, Sinner and Rublev started a best-of-five-set match.

Sinner was down 5-1 in the second-set tiebreaker before winning six straight points, starting with a stunning crosscourt forehand, to turn momentum and take the match 6-4, 7-6 (5), 6-3.

Since he lost to Djokovic in the Wimbledon semifinals last year, Sinner has won two of his three matches against the 24-time major winner.

"I'm really lucky to face him again (in) one of the biggest tournaments in the world," he said. "Happy I can play the No. 1 in the world. He won here some times!"

Sinner hasn't dropped a set yet.

Djokovic, meanwhile, has spent more time on court so far through five rounds than ever at Melbourne Park - more than 15 hours - but thinks he's still building into it. He's on a 33-match winning streak at the Australian Open - a tournament record he shared with his



Jannik Sinner of Italy plays a backhand return to Andrey Rublev of Russia during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

childhood inspiration, Monica Seles.

The first game took 16 minutes and the first set lasted 1 hour, 24 minutes. Fritz got the first break of serve, and Djokovic said he was on the back foot at times until the third set.

"Credit to him for playing really well. You could see that he had a clear game plan. He was really sharp," Djokovic said. "So it was definitely a struggle for me to play the first couple sets."

Fritz saved the first 15 breakpoints he faced, an unheard of stat against one of the best returners ever.

The first game set the tone for a long, tough match. It contained 24 points, going to deuce nine times.

Then followed the longest first set of the tournament.

After Fritz held in the 11th game, Djokovic was agitated in the changeover and gesturing to get the attention of his support team, calling for salts.

But after holding and taking the set to a tiebreaker, Djokovic finished a 21-shot rally with a stunning backhand crosscourt winner to get five set points. He put his finger to his ear, nodded his head and blew a kiss toward a commentary box at the rear of the court.

It was Fritz who got the first service break to open the second set, having fended off eight in the first set against him.

He saved another seven break point chances in the second, mostly with clean winners, and maintained the break to level at one set apiece, closing with an ace.

After all that resistance, though, Fritz was broken in the second game of the third set when Djokovic converted his 16th chance. Djokovic broke again, at love, in the ninth game to wrap up the third set in 38 minutes.

In the fourth, there was an exchange

of breaks until Djokovic served it out from 5-3 to improve to 9-0 against Fritz in career head-to-heads.

Fritz said the late start for Sinner and Rublev would be tough for whoever advanced, and scheduling had come up in the locker rooms after Daniil Medvedev's second-round match didn't start until after 11 p.m. and didn't finish until almost 4 in the morning. He said with physio, treatment and wrapping up, it takes hours after the match to get to sleep.

Coco Gauff hopes she's got her "bad" match out of the way at the Australian Open before meeting defending champion Aryna Sabalenka in the semifinals.

It'll be a rematch of the U.S. Open final, which the 19-year-old Gauff won in three sets for her first major title.

Gauff is on a 12-match winning roll at the majors after rallying from 5-1 down in the first set to beat Marta Kostuk 7-6 (6), 6-7 (3), 6-2 in a quarterfinal that lasted more than three hours.

Sabalenka is on a 12-match streak at Melbourne Park after her 6-2, 6-3 win over No. 9-seeded Barbora Krejickova in the first match of the night session that didn't start until after 9 p.m.

Gauff's long three-setter had a knock-on effect that made for a long night at Melbourne Park. It took Novak Djokovic 3 3/4 hours to hold off Taylor Fritz 7-6 (3), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 and reach the Australian Open semifinals for the 11th time.

Sabalenka's match started at 9:09 p.m. and the last men's match, No. 4 Jannik Sinner against No. 5 Andrey Rublev, didn't start until 10:42 p.m.

After winning her first major here last year, Sabalenka reached the semifinals at the French Open and Wimbledon before her run to the final in New York, finishing the year ranked No. 2.

Fiercely contested third round

Ahmed Al-Shehab solidifies Championship lead

DUBAI, Jan 23: In the fiercely contested third round of the Porsche Carrera Cup Gulf Championship at the Dubai Autodrome, car racer Ahmed Al-Shehab emerged triumphant, securing the coveted first place. This victory propelled Al-Shehab to earn 25 valuable points, solidifying his lead in the overall standings and enhancing his prospects for clinching the championship title in the upcoming final tournament.

CAR RACING

With three rounds remaining until the conclusion of the championship, Al-Shehab now holds a strong position, setting the stage for the next rounds in Abu Dhabi and the Kingdom of Bahrain. The ultimate showdown will take place at the Jeddah

Corniche Circuit.

Expressing his elation, Al-Shehab shared his joy at the recent win and

expressed his aspirations to maintain this winning momentum in the upcoming rounds.



Ahmed Al-Shehab with other winners on the podium.



Palestine's Oday Dabbagh (left), fight for the ball against Hong Kong's Oliver Benjamin Gerbig during the Asian Cup Group C soccer match between Hong Kong and Palestine at Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium in Doha, Qatar. (AP)

Sports

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Winners celebrate on the podium at the end of the championship.

Dressage mastery: Kuwaiti riders impress in 3rd annual Champ'ship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: In the midst of intense competition and widespread participation, the third edition of the Kuwaiti Dressage League Championship concluded at the Hunting and Equestrian Club track in the Subhan area. The event, held under the auspices of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation and organized by the Dressage Horse Dressage Committee led by Sheikha Fajr Al-Sabah, saw the curtain fall on a series of thrilling competitions.

EQUESTRIAN

In the beginner level, rider Abdullah Al-Amer secured the top spot, showcasing remarkable success, with Abdulrahman Al-Hawalq and Talal Al-Hazeem following closely. Moving on to the basic level, jockey Hussein

Al-Kharafi claimed first place, outshining competitors Fadwa Al-Ajeel and Maryam Khaled. Meanwhile, at the training level, jockey Fatima Al-Qadiri emerged victorious, with Talal Al-Hazeem and Afnan Al-Sulaiman securing the second and third positions, respectively.

The champions were honored in a ceremony presided over by Sheikha Fajr Al-Sabah and the Assistant Secretary at the Khalil Assad Hunting and Equestrian Club.

The Dressage Committee, led by Sheikha Fajr Al-Sabah, boasts a lineup of distinguished members, including international dressage coach and technical officer Amber Den Heer, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Abdullah Al-Amer, Alaa Al-Sultan, Nasiba Al-Maousherji, and Dana Pursley. The British International Championship was officiated by judge Ruth Galasco.

Each Kuwaiti player granted KD5000 for Handball World Cup qualification

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Daoud Suleiman Marafi, the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs, has officially announced a forthcoming ceremony to honor the achievements of our first national handball team. The team has successfully secured a spot in the World Cup finals, scheduled to take place in January 2025 across Croatia, Denmark, and Norway, following the attainment of a qualification card for Asia at the earliest opportunity.

HANDBALL

Marafi, in a press release from the General Sports Authority, revealed ongoing coordination with the authority to determine financial rewards in line with Resolution No. 42 of 2023, which amends the provisions of Resolution No. 9 of 2018 pertaining to the list of athletes deserving recognition.

As per the resolution, each player will be granted an award of 5,000 dinars for their remarkable qualification for the World Cup. Additional rewards will be allocated if a player secures a medal in the Asian Cup, particularly after progressing to the semi-finals,



Daoud Maarafi, Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs.

Egypt goalkeeper 'ruled out' of Cup

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Jan 23, (AP): Egypt's hopes of a record-extending eighth Africa Cup of Nations title have suffered another blow after goalkeeper Mohamed El Shenawy was ruled out by a dislocated shoulder.

El Shenawy was to travel to Germany for "medical examinations with a doctor specializing in shoulder injuries," the Egyptian Football Association said on Tuesday on X, formerly Twitter.

It said El Shenawy's trip to Germany was coordinated with his club, Al Ahly.

El Shenawy was injured on Monday at the end of Egypt's 2-2 draw with Cape Verde, a result that allowed the Pharaohs to squeeze into the last 16 because Ghana conceded two late goals to draw with Mozambique 2-2 in the other Group B game.

Egypt star Mohamed Salah is also likely out for the rest of the tournament with a hamstring injury from the 2-2 draw with Ghana.

adhering to the stipulated regulations.

Marafi expressed unwavering support for the handball players during the upcoming semi-final competitions, expressing confidence in their capability to stand on the podium and secure an Asian medal—an accomplishment that would further enrich Kuwaiti sports records on the international stage.

Highlighting the broader celebration, the Minister of Youth mentioned that aside from honoring the Kuwaiti handball team, champions from the Asian Games will also be acknowledged. Gold medalists in individual games will receive 10,000 dinars, silver medalists 7,000 dinars, and bronze medalists 5,000 dinars. The handball players who clinched the bronze medal in the Asian Games will also be honored with an amount of 2,000 dinars for each player.

Syria make history, advance in the Asian Cup for 1st time

Australia win group

AL WAKRAH, Qatar, Jan 23, (AP): Syria advanced to the knockout stage of the Asian Cup for the first time after beating India 1-0 on Tuesday.

Substitute Omar Khrbin's score in the 77th minute ensured Syria finished third in Group B and advanced as one of the four best third-placed teams.

Khrbin's decisive strike at Al Bayt Stadium was Syria's only goal in three group games.

Syria failed to advance from the first round in its six previous attempts, most recently in 2019.

Progress was a triumph for Argentine coach Hector Cuper, who was a back-to-back Champions League runner-up when in charge of Valencia, and led Egypt to the final of the Africa Cup of Nations in 2017.



Syria's Mahmoud Alaswad (left), fights for the ball against India's Subhish Bose during the Asian Cup Group B soccer match between Syria and India at Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor, Qatar, Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024. (AP)

Syria players hoisted Khrbin into the air in celebrations on the field after the final whistle. Australia advanced as the Group

B winner after drawing with Uzbekistan 1-1.

The 2015 champion had already secured a place in the round of 16 after two straight wins and confirmed the group win after picking up a point at Al Janoub Stadium.

Australia conceded for the first time but remained unbeaten.

SOCCER

Martin Boyle fired the Socceroos ahead in first-half stoppage time from the penalty spot after a handball from Odiljon Xamroboev.

He sent Uzbekistan goalkeeper Utkir Yusupov the wrong way.

But Uzbekistan held onto second spot in Group B when substitute Azizbek Turgunboev rose to meet Jaloliddin Masharipov's cross in the 78th minute and headed in.

Lautaro scores late

Inter pip 10-man Napoli to lift Italian Super Cup

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 23, (AP): Lautaro Martínez scored in second-half stoppage time and Inter Milan beat Napoli 1-0 in the Italian Super Cup final on Monday to lift the first trophy of the season, although both the player and the team have loftier ambitions for the rest of the campaign.

Lautaro struck in the first minute of stoppages, just as it appeared as if Napoli would take the match to penalties despite having played for half an hour with 10 men after Giovanni Simeone was sent off for two yellow cards in the space of five minutes.

Lautaro tore off his jersey and raced the entire length of the field to celebrate in front of the Inter fans in Riyadh, followed by his joyous teammates.

SOCCER

It was Inter's third straight Italian Super Cup victory although the first in its revamped format. It used to be a one-off match between the Serie A champion and the Italian Cup winner but now includes the runners-up from both competitions.

The final ended up being between the two winners as Serie A champion Napoli beat Fiorentina in their semi-final, while Italian Cup winner Inter defeated Lazio.

Inter's attention will now turn to more substantial matters, having fallen a point behind new Serie A leader

Juventus, which has played a match more because of the Nerazzurri's time in Saudi Arabia.

Inter is also through to the Champions League last 16, where it will face Atlético Madrid. It finished runner-up in that competition last year.

Lautaro, who won the World Cup with Argentina in 2022, is also chasing the top goalscorer award in Serie A and leads with 18 goals in as many

appearances.

For Napoli it was the most realistic chance of winning a trophy. Out of the Italian Cup and trailing Juventus by 21 points in the league, Napoli plays Barcelona in the Champions League.

It could also have been one of the last matches for coach Walter Mazzarri, with reports Napoli is set to meet with José Mourinho this week after the Portuguese coach was fired

by Roma.

Inter had the better of the chances in the first half and Lautaro had a goal ruled out for offside.

Napoli improved after the break but the match changed on the hour mark when Simeone was sent off after he received a second yellow card for a foul on Francesco Acerbi - incensing Mazzarri, who yelled "shame" from the sidelines.



Inter Milan's players celebrate after they won the Italian Super Cup final soccer match between Inter Milan and Napoli at Al Awwal Park Stadium in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)