



cricket
Pages 15 & 16



soccer
Pages 14-16

Communications minister urges swift digitalization of CSB records

Kuwait highlights AI's transformative potential in various sectors



KUNA photo
Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Jarrah Jaber Al-Sabah with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Kuwait, UN partnership lauded

Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Jarrah Jaber Al-Sabah hailed the strategic partnership, cooperation and coordination between Kuwait and the United Nations. The Ambassador expressed this in a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on sidelines of UN Security Council's open debate on the Middle East and Palestine. Al-Sabah affirmed Kuwait's support to UN efforts, asserting its commitment to the stipulations in its charter. The two sides also discussed latest developments on regional and international fronts. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): Applying Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) would enable several sectors in Kuwait to enhance efficiency and may also improve living standards, head of the Kuwaiti AIoT association, Sheikh Mohammad Ahmad Al-Sabah has said.

The AIoT is the combination of AI technologies with the Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure to achieve efficient IoT operations and improve human-machine interactions.

This, in turn, will foster competition, improve economic and social development, and elevate living standards by creating more job opportunities, Sheikh Mohammad told KUNA while participating in an AI conference held in Dubai.

The forum discussed AI related matters

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait braces for rain, chilly nights

— Details Page 3 —

Extend concert ban for Gaza sake: MPs

PM refers draft law on KD 50m State allocations

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah has referred Decree No. 3/2024 regarding a draft law on the allocations for the head of State to National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun.

The draft law, which was included in the agenda of the parliamentary Budgets and Final Accounts Committee, stipulates that the allocations for the current head of State for the duration of his rule shall be set at KD 50 million annually and this will be under the State's general expenditures item in the annual budget.

According to the draft law, the conditions for the ruling family members' entitlement to such allocations, and the method of determining and disbursing them shall be specified in an Amiri order. HH the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance must implement this law, which took effect on Dec 17, 2023.

Meanwhile, MPs Ahmed Lari and Hani Shams called on the government to continue the suspension of concerts in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

They explained: "The government must continue implementing the decision it issued last October -- when the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood started -- to suspend artistic celebrations, as the matter had reached a war of extermination and burning of the crops and offspring of our brothers in Gaza, the West Bank and Palestine."

On the other hand, the Secretariat General of the Assembly denied receiving a request from the Minister of Justice to lift the parliamentary immunity of Deputy Assembly Speaker Mohammad Al-Mutair on grounds of insulting HH the Amir.

In a press statement, the Secretariat General clarified: "We have not received any request in this regard. If any request is received from the Attorney General to lift the parliamentary immunity of any member of the Assembly, the Secretariat follows the internal regulations of the legislature, particularly Article 21; such that the request is submitted to the Assembly Speaker who, in turn, refers it to the Legislative and

Continued on Page 5

NewsWatch

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia signed Thursday an agreement to launch Dream of the Desert Train by the Italian company Arsenale Group.

Noting that this train is first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported that Saudi Minister of Transport and the Head of Saudi Arabia Railways Saleh Al-Jasser said that the Italian group is specialized in managing luxurious train trips. (KUNA)

DOHA: Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani on Thursday held talks with Britain's Foreign Secretary David Cameron on bilateral relations and prospects for promoting and developing them.

The talks also included the latest regional and international developments, primarily the situation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, Qatar Amiri Diwan said in a statement. (KUNA)

BAGHDAD: An earthquake measuring 4.4 degrees on the Richter scale hit Basra Governorate, south Iraq, on Thursday, Iraqi Ministry of Transport said.

The tremor, which took place at 9.39 am local time, caused neither casualties nor damage, but it was felt by people, the ministry said in a press release. (KUNA)



The iconic Kuwait Towers stand tall in this photo taken on Thursday. To mark the conclusion of the official mourning period, Kuwait Municipality declared the initiation of activities by the monitoring, decoration, and flag-raising teams early this morning, as they hoisted Kuwait flags.

Yemen's Houthi rebels attack 2 US-flagged ships

KOTC prioritizes fleet safety in regional waters

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (Agencies): Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) said on Thursday it is daily monitoring and assessing the current situation in Bab Al-Mabdeh Strait and Red Sea.

It underlined in a press statement to KUNA that it is following globally applied precautionary measures for the protection and safety of its fleet.

It voiced hope that ongoing regional tensions would come to an end as soon as possible, reiterating that it backs Kuwaiti oil shipments to global markets.

On Wednesday, two American-flagged ships carrying cargo for the U.S. Defense and State departments came under attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels, officials said, with the U.S. Navy intercepting some of the incoming fire.

Continued on Page 5

US and Iraq to discuss ending anti-IS mission

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (AP): The United States and Iraq expect to begin formal talks soon to wind down the mission of a U.S.-led military coalition formed to fight the Islamic State group in Iraq, both governments said Thursday.

The U.S. has had a continuous presence in Iraq since its 2003 invasion. Although all U.S. combat forces left in 2011, thousands of troops returned in 2014 to help the government of Iraq defeat IS.

In the years since, the presence of U.S. forces, who have remained there to conduct counter-IS missions and training, has been a lightning rod for an increasingly influential faction of Iran-aligned militias and politicians in the country.

In a statement, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the discussions will take place as part of a higher military commission that was agreed upon last summer - before the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7 rocked the region - and will discuss the "transition to an enduring bilateral security partnership between Iraq and the United States."

Iraq's foreign ministry in a statement said Baghdad aims to "formulate a specific and clear timetable that specifies the duration of the presence of international coalition advisors in Iraq" and to "initiate the gradual and deliberate reduction of its advisors on Iraqi soil," eventually leading to the end of the coalition mission and a "move to comprehensive bilateral political and economic relations with the coalition countries."

It added that Iraq is committed to ensuring the "safety of the international coalition's advisors during the negotiation period in all parts of the country" and to "maintaining stability and preventing escalation."

Day by Day

IN Arab countries, the thief sleeps without any worry, and the politicians earn money without breaking the sweat, because the law there is just ink on paper.

This is a beautiful and expressive statement for those with understanding and awareness. In Arab countries, they also say that the sound of broken glass fades away very quickly, but the pieces remain, capable of causing harm to anyone who comes into contact with them.

So yes, the thief sleeps without worry in Arab countries, because the law continues to be just ink on paper. ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

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REPUBLIC DAY

An ARAB TIMES Special Supplement

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:19 Asr 15:00
 Sunrise .. 06:41 Maghrib .. 17:20
 Zohr 12:00 Isha 18:40

Local

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

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild to rather cold and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for forming at night.

Weather

By Night: Rather cold to cold and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northerly wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	23	17
Kuwait Airport	24	16
Abdaly	25	12
Jahra	24	16
Salmiyah	22	17
Nuwaib	23	15
Wafra	23	14

Two nations on road to further strengthen ties in 2024

Kuwait and Britain celebrate 125 years of diplomatic relations

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): This week marks 125 years since establishment of the 1899 Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement, a protectorate agreement launching decades of diplomatic relations, cooperation and strategic partnership.

In honor of the momentous event, the two governments dubbed 2024 the year of Kuwaiti-British Partnership, as per an agreement signed on sidelines of an official visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, then Crown Prince, to the United Kingdom, in August of 2023.

A joint statement issued by both countries' foreign ministries on Thursday highlighted the exponential growth of the deeply-rooted relations over the course of 125 years; years marked with support and cooperation in face of regional and global challenges, and in defense of common values.

This year is an opportunity to reflect on achievements, including investment relationships, embodied in the establishment of the Investment Of-

fice 70 years ago, as well as the defense of territorial integrity of Kuwait in the First Gulf War.

The two nations are setting out to augment current and future cooperation through high-level visits, events, initiatives, and promotion of cultural and educational exchange.

"Key areas of focus for cooperation will include trade and investment, defense, cyber security, education, culture, and international development .. key foreign policy issues which underpin mutual security and prosperity, as well as shared challenges and opportunities that are emerging in our ever-changing world," read the statement.

Furthermore, the statement expressed eagerness of both countries for the soon to be launched Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) replacing its visa waiver predecessor and making travel to the UK more accessible than ever.

Cyber security and defense is another field the two are looking forward to amplifying cooperation on that with the UK's help in establishing Na-

tional Cyber Security Center in Kuwait.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah spoke of Kuwait's pride in the steadfast relations between the two nations, underlining their intent on bolstering these ties.

He also took note of the upcoming events to take place this year, indicating that this has been brought forth by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's last visit to the UK.

Similarly, British Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, Commonwealth and United Nations, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, voiced the UK's pride in these durable relations, saying that this year is a thrilling opportunity to reflect on the past 125 years and to look forward to stimulating future cooperation.

On a personal level, Lord Ahmad stated that he is looking forward to visiting Kuwait next month as part of the UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group meetings, alongside Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Al-Sabah.

The British Minister also expressed his complete confidence that the exceptional relations between the two nations will continue to expand over the next 125 years and beyond.



Sheikh Jarrah



Lord Tariq Ahmad

Mental status frees murderer

No release for fashionista involved in manslaughter

'Waste collected in specific bins'

'Need to raise awareness on plastic pollution, risk to fish'

By Zahra Al-Kathemi

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): Kuwait's Scientific Center stated Thursday that it is committed to recycling and sorting waste based on its type, providing containers for electronic waste, paper waste, and clothing waste, all with the goal of preserving the environment.

Speaking to KUNA, the Center's General Manager Engineer Msaed Al-Yaseen said that the recycling program at the center is a key initiative to address the problem of plastic pollution, aiming to educate the community, particularly highlighting the risks it poses to marine life.

The center collaborates with various entities in the country to preserve the environment and achieve sustainable development goals by promoting environmental awareness through recycling programs and utilizing waste to generate economic returns for the state, he underlined.

Al-Yaseen clarified that in 2020, the center created a sculpture titled "The Last Catch," resembling the iconic Kuwaiti zubaidi fish, serving as a collection point

for plastic bottles, promoting recycling to mitigate the environmental hazards of plastic pollution.

He mentioned that the sculpture was a collaboration with Kuwaiti artist Jassem Al-Nashmi under the center's sustainability program, an initiative that aims to enhance environmental preservation and awareness of pollution effects.

Plastic bottles are collected inside the fish-shaped sculpture and are regularly removed through a partnership between The Scientific Center and a local recycling company, he stated.

After collecting the plastic bottles, the company sorts, cuts, and washes them, transforming them into plastic pellets ready for use in various industries then exporting some of the processed material to other countries.

He emphasized that environmental cleanliness, particularly the oceans being free from plastic materials, is a global goal, pointing out that waste recycling and pollution control have become international demands due to the significant threat these materials pose to the seas and oceans.

He underscored the need to spread environmental awareness and community consciousness to preserve the environment from pollution risks, achieving environmental sustainability aligned with sustainable development goals.



Eng Al-Yaseen



Customs officers are cutting open the container.

Al-Rai photo

Second operation in 24 hours

More banned tobacco seized

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Deputy Director General for Customs Ports Affairs Osama Khalil Al-Shami has confirmed that customs officers recently foiled an attempt to smuggle 324,000 packets of prohibited tobacco into the country through Shuwaikh Port, reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Shami revealed the customs officers inspected two shipments of sanitary goods that came from another Gulf country and referred to the inspection yard. When the shipment went through the X-ray machine, the customs officers discovered that thousands of packets of banned tobacco were stuffed in the floor of the container. The officers then cut the iron floor to take the contraband.

According to Al-Shami, the smuggler welded the floor of the container to make it appear empty and normal. He thanked all the employees assigned in the land, sea and air customs ports for their efforts and commitment to arrest anyone

who dares to tamper with the country's security. This was the second operation within 24 hours.

Chewed tobacco found: Inspectors of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, raided a warehouse and an apartment where they found two and a half tons of chewed tobacco - a narcotic banned by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, reports Al-Anba daily.

A thorough monitoring and verification process led to the discovery of the contraband, which were stored and prepared for distribution to shops, groceries and cafés. The necessary legal measures have been taken.

Earlier, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a decision prohibiting the display, sale and marketing of chewed tobacco.

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Criminal Court ruled that it is not permissible to try a Kuwaiti citizen, accused of premeditated murder, due to his mental illness and his admission to psychiatric hospital.

The defense team representing the citizen appeared before the court and requested that he be referred to psychiatry to examine his mental abilities. The defense's request was accepted, and it was revealed during the tests that he suffers from severe schizophrenia.

During the incident, the citizen was irresponsible for his actions, unaware of the nature of the act he committed from a moral and legal standpoint, and of the consequences.

His defense team stressed that the accused was not responsible based on article 22 of the Penal Code, as evidenced by the statements he made and the reality of his actions and public life. Accordingly, the court ruled that the accused was not responsible based on the psychiatric report.

Fashionista stays in jail: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Saleh Al-Asousi, refused to release the "fashionista" Fatima Al-Moumen on bail in the Al-Soor Road accident case in Kuwait City, and adjourned the case to the session on February 15 to present the defense.

On October 25, the lower court ruled that Al-Moumen be imprisoned for three years in the case that preoccupied the public opinion for two months.

It also ruled that Al-Moumen's driver's license be withdrawn for a period of one year in the case of manslaughter, crossing red light, and driving above the average speed.

It is worth explaining that the accident occurred at dawn on Thursday, August 24, 2023 at the intersection of Al-Soor Street and King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Road in Kuwait City, resulting in the death of two individuals and injuries to two others.

4 years jail for doctor: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Al-Duwaihi Al-Duwaihi, sentenced a doctor, who is a political activist, to four-year imprisonment with hard labor, and imposed a fine of KD 10,000 in a State Security case regarding posts on the "X" platform.

The Public Prosecution charged him with "state security charges for writing posts and phrases that would weaken the prestige of the state, and with misusing a phone."

Verdict overruled: The Misdemeanor Court of Appeals ruled to cancel the verdict issued by a lower court which fined a Kuwaiti citizen a sum of KD 5,000 for insulting a citizen via Snapchat. The court instead refrained from pronouncing punishment due to lack of the material element of the crime.

The Public Prosecution charged the citizen with deliberately misusing a means of communications (the social networking app "Snapchat") to send messages that contained insulting words.

The Public Prosecution requested that the accused be punished in accordance with the law of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) and that the device used to commit the crime be confiscated.

The defendant was represented by Lawyer Israa Al-Haddad, who insisted that the material element of the crime of misuse of mobile communications was not present, and that the pictures and correspondence were devoid of any indication that they were sent from the defendant's private account.

The lawsuit documents were also devoid of proof that the account belonged to him, as the user, and they were also contradictory and devoid of stating the date and time they were sent.

Forgery hearing on Feb 15: The Court of Cassation adjourned to February 15 to issue a verdict on the case of forgery of the Amiri Diwan letter in the Army Fund case.

During the court session yesterday, lawyer Amer Al-Shahoumi, the representative of Sheikh Hamad Sabah Al-Ahmad and the heirs of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, submitted a waiver of the appeal submitted against Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal, and Counselor Salah Al-Musaad in the case of forging the Amiri Diwan letter in the Army Fund case.

The Court of Appeal had upheld the Criminal Court's ruling that acquitted Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal, Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah, and Counselor Salah Al-Musaad in the case of forging the Army Fund letter.



A Ramadan exhibition is underway at the Mishref Fairground. Various items and foodstuffs used during the holy month is on display. Above: Multiple qualities of (Bak-hour), incense, is put up for sale at the fair.

Photo by Rizk Taufiq

CPA, MoCI sign cooperation MoU

Free and fair markets pondered

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: In a significant move toward fostering development and market growth, the Competition Protection Authority (CPA) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The signing ceremony took place at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry headquarters, symbolizing the joint commitment of both entities.

Representing the Competition Protection Authority, Prof. Dr. Rashid Shabib Al-Ajmi, Chairman of the Board of Directors, joined forces with Ziad Abdullah Al-Najem, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, to formalize the collaboration.

The memorandum aligns with the core responsibilities of the Competition Protection Authority, designated by Law No. 72 of 2020.

The agency's objectives include safe-

guarding freedom of competition, preserving competitive market structures, and enhancing the investment environment in Kuwait, pivotal to supporting commercial and economic activities.

Al-Najem highlighted the Ministry's pivotal role in evolving the market system, prioritizing services for consumers and employers.

This initiative is geared toward realizing Kuwait's vision, fostering economic development, and advocating for free and fair markets.

The signing of such memoranda reinforces the collaborative ties in the economic domain between the CPA and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Positioned as a cornerstone, this agreement lays the groundwork for the exchange of experiences, enhancing efficiency, and promoting joint cooperation in the commercial sectors.

Monitoring for Ramadan rates

Price control measures taken

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Mansour Al-Nazhan revealed that the number of citations issued by the administration in 2023 totaled 2,239 -- 1,133 for violations related to raising prices without justification, 466 commercial fraud, 184 counterfeit goods and 456 establishments were closed, reports Al-Anba daily.

In an interview with the daily, Al-Nazhan revealed that the number of violations in the last quarter of 2023 increased by 60 percent, compared to the same period in 2022.

He also pointed out that in light of the political developments in the region, the department is closely monitoring warehouses, confirming the availability of food commodities.

He affirmed that as the holy month of Ramadan is fast approaching, the department is monitoring the prices of food commodities, which are in demand during the holy month.

He reiterated there is ample supply of food commodities, so there is no need to buy in bulk, warning that the department is monitoring the markets all the time and it will not be lax in enforcing the law on violators.

He stated that the ministry is monitoring the supply of onions in the markets, so it can quickly intervene in case of a fault in the supply and demand mechanism. He disclosed that the ministry encouraged vegetable traders to import onions from many countries to cover local demand, affirming the arrival of onions from Yemen and other countries.

He added the department is keen on implementing an action plan to ensure consumer protection, combat commercial fraud, prevent unjustified price hikes, guarantee after-sales service, and gaining the trust of consumers by seriously dealing with reports and complaints received by external centers.

He revealed the department contributed to the issuance of many ministerial regulatory decisions, including requiring restaurants to provide filtered water and not

Vote-buying case

2 years jail for duo

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Criminal Court sentenced former MP Salman Al-Hulaila and a Kuwaiti woman to two-year imprisonment with hard labor in the vote-buying case.

The Criminal Court had previously heard the testimony of the investigation officer in the case of the former MP who was accused of buying votes for the National Assembly elections, but the accused denied the charges leveled against him.

It is noteworthy that the security services, based on their investigations, raided a house after receiving information confirming the existence of a vote-buying operation for the accused.

The concerned authorities began monitoring and following up the home of the accused - a candidate of the Second Constituency. The raid was carried out after obtaining permission from the Public Prosecution. The accused were arrested and referred to the Public Prosecution.

forcing the consumer to buy water, preventing the export of eggs during a period of declining quantities, and prohibiting the division of vegetables and fruits from large containers into small ones to prevent fraud in their quantities.

He made clear that cooperative societies are obligated to provide the ministry with prices of electronic goods on a monthly basis. He also stated that the department monitors auctions of imported and local vegetables, fruits and fish and monitors their prices and quantities on a daily basis.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

We want to breathe fresh air; don't spoil the nature

"A PROPOSAL that will be discussed by the Public Utilities Committee, regarding transferring the dependency of public parks in residential areas to cooperative societies, I hope with all my heart that this will not contribute to gradually abandoning the primary goal of parks and their health and psychological message," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Iqbal Al-Ahmad

"I am concerned about the dominance of the commercial nature of these parks, and their deviation from their primary purpose, if some associations go too far in their commercial projects to extend the length of the parks in order to achieve profits.

"It is known that the park is a place that the people of the region resort to for relaxation, sports, entertainment, and meeting family members and loved ones, and a place where children find safety to practice their fun and play, and to obtain a healthy and safe environment.

"It has recently been noticed that some parks, and even some sports centers in some areas, have turned into a gathering of restaurants, and some shops have spread, until the primary purpose of these places has faded.

"It is no secret that making profits is one of the legitimate goals of every investor, but this must not overshadow the basic goals and mission of the place, such as parks and sports centers.

"I hope that the associations do not turn this place (parks) into commercial projects in a crude manner, instead of being health and entertainment places, and so that the garden spaces do not turn into a place where cars, kiosks selling food and drinks, and booths selling products in all their forms are lined up.

"The goal of this proposal should be for cooperative societies to take care of, beautify and maintain gardens, compete with each other to achieve their basic environmental goal, and not be greedy for other matters that might detract from the beauty of their mission.

"This proposal must include a basic condition, which is that the place should not be transformed from a green land and environment with its own goals and mission, into other activities that have no connection to the place.

"Green spaces in residential areas have today become a very important requirement, requiring more attention, monitoring and maintenance, due to its impact on psychology and health in general.

"If we want to strengthen the societal role of cooperative societies, it must be in supporting their role in decorating and maintaining the region's parks, in coordination and cooperation with the responsible authorities in the state, in a way that enhances the identity of these places and further develops them, without any infringement on the role of other parties, governmental or otherwise, in that.

"We are in urgent need of increasing green spaces and strengthening the role of centers that contribute to protecting human health, both physically and psychologically.

"There is no better place to achieve this goal than green open spaces."

Also:

"Governance of work in public benefit associations is an important and multifaceted topic, as sound governance in these associations constitutes the basic building block for their success and their continued provision of services to society in all its aspects. In this article, I will discuss some of the main foundations and principles of work governance in public benefit associations," columnist **Nasser Buresli**, wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Transparency and accountability have become among the most important principles in the governance of public benefit associations. These associations must be transparent in all their dealings and submit periodic reports on their activities and finances, so as to enhance trust between them and the members of the General Assembly and the beneficiaries of the regulatory authorities as well. It must also be There are effective accountability mechanisms that ensure that any failures or violations are addressed quickly and effectively and reflect the seriousness of work according to frameworks that develop accountability and are approved by

the highest authority.

"Promoting participation and empowerment is important for public benefit associations to work to enhance participation by their members and beneficiaries of their services.

"There must be channels for effective communication and mechanisms for participation in decision-making, which contributes to the empowerment of members and beneficiaries and enhances the effectiveness of the association, so that empowerment lies in delegation and a matrix of specific powers, which are approved by the highest authority in the association.

"Public benefit associations need effective management to ensure that their objectives are achieved efficiently and effectively. There must be clear policies and procedures that govern daily operations and help direct the association towards achieving its objectives. They must be written and formulated in a way that reflects reality and improves decision-making to ensure the advancement of work in civil society associations.

"It is important for public benefit organizations to maintain financial sustainability to ensure their ability to continue providing their services, manage risks, and rely on the business continuity model. Strategies must also be developed to diversify funding sources and manage financial resources effectively, especially in times of crises.

"Public benefit organizations must adhere to local and international laws and regulations that govern their work. This includes compliance with accounting standards, legal reports, and any other regulatory requirements as required by ministerial circulars and regulatory authorities.

"It is necessary for public benefit organizations to evaluate their performance periodically and work to improve it continuously so that there are mechanisms to measure impact, evaluate programs and activities, and use this information to improve performance according to various data.

"In conclusion, work governance in public benefit associations is not just a set of rules and procedures, but rather goes beyond that. It is a culture that must prevail in these associations through the effective and clear application of governance principles. It also enables the associations to enhance their credibility and increase their influence in society."

"The appointment of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah means that he gained the trust of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him, while he enjoys full support of the public," columnist **Major General Faizal Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Seyasah** daily.

"All this is considered a heavy responsibility and entitlements that must be implemented in order to move from a scene of delay to a scene of speedy implementation. Likewise, the responsibility falls on the ministers for taking an unconventional administrative approach in follow up and accountability. The task is daunting, so it requires courageous decisions in everything that must be changed in order to get rid of dullness and decline in State institutions.

"The accumulation of negative developments in the State's administrative system and the spread of corruption require an unconventional confrontation without failure or retreat. We also hope to benefit from the Kuwaitis' experience in supporting the government's progress. "All countries are working on this. The choice must be based on personalities that influence thought and opinion, not friendship. Kuwait is waiting to be moved from stagnation to development and institutional reform.

"I pin my hope on His Highness the Prime Minister, God willing, to set a new vision for the future of Kuwait linked to a serious road map, the motto of which is neither complacency nor inaction, provided that everyone bears responsibility before Allah, the political leadership and the Kuwaiti people. The National Assembly should not lose sight of this scene of national responsibility. It must support the government's work, because it represents the Kuwaiti people. For this reason, all Kuwaitis are aspiring for support, not the return to disputes.

"Kuwait will remain above everyone else. May God protect Kuwait and its people from all harm under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him. May Allah have mercy on our righteous martyrs."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Al-Rai photo
Airport police arrest a suspect in the plane during a drill to apprehend culprits.

Drill to protect aircraft held

A security exercise to "protect aircraft" at Sheikh Saad Airport took place in the presence of Major General Mansour Al-Awadhi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Ports and Border Security Affairs Sector, and Major General Abdullah Safah Al-Mulla, Assistant Undersecretary for the Private Security Sector. Also in attendance were Engineer Imaad Al-Jalawi, Director General of the General Administration of Civil Aviation, Abdul Mohsen Al-Faqaa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways, as well as representatives from the General Fire Force, the Ministry of Health, and various relevant authorities, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

The simulation involved security operations that replicated potential threats to the safety of both aircraft and airports.

Scenarios included acts of unlawful interference inside aircraft, prompting the application of standard operating procedures. This encompassed the establishment of a crisis management center and the securing of a designated safe area for rescuing hostages, ensuring passenger safety, and evacuating the injured.

Distinguished as the inaugural event of its kind, the exercise was designed with the objective of enhancing the capabilities of the Aircraft Security and Protection Department, along with other pertinent security agencies. The overarching goal was to equip these entities with an activated joint work mechanism, enabling them to effectively address any security threats that may compromise the well-being of travelers and airport personnel.

EMS cuts assaults on doctors, visits count

'Patient congestion mitigated'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: A recent report from an impartial committee within the Ministry of Health praises the success of the newly approved Electronic Medical System (EMS) spearheaded by Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, reports Al-Qabas daily.



Dr. Al-Awadhi

The EMS has delivered a myriad of benefits, showcasing a noteworthy reduction in assaults on doctors and a significant decrease in overall visitor numbers -- reportedly reaching up to 30% and even 50% in specific centers compared to corresponding periods in past years.

The committee's detailed report, (copy obtained by Al-Qabas), underscores the enhanced work quality attributed to the electronic medical system. It has effectively minimized waiting times at health centers, alleviated the burden on both medical service providers and recipients, ultimately resulting in heightened patient satisfaction.

Key achievements highlighted in the report include the system's pivotal role in mitigating patient congestion, particularly among non-patients, leading to reduced waiting times and the prevention of unnecessary medication dispensing.

Furthermore, the report notes the decision's positive impact on doctors' time management, lessening their workload and alleviating the strain on receptionists and

Intermarriages

'NOC mandatory'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Legal Authentication Department at the Ministry of Justice has confirmed that the approval of the Qatari Embassy is a condition for documenting the marriage contracts of Qataris in Kuwait, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the department's circular stating that "it is necessary to adhere to the memorandum of the Qatari Embassy on the need to obtain a no-objection certificate from the Qatari Embassy approving the marriage of a Qatari to another nationality."

The circular was distributed to observers, heads of marriage departments, heads of family court documentation offices, notaries and marriage officers.

patients, resulting in a more streamlined and efficient healthcare process.

In the realm of public health, the electronic medical system has proven instrumental in reducing the spread of diseases, notably respiratory illnesses. It has also lessened the likelihood of attacks on medical staff, simplified sick leave procedures without necessitating a visit to the center, and reduced crowding in doctor's offices.

The system's reach extends to providing patients the convenience of obtaining sick leave without physically visiting the center if treatment is available elsewhere, prioritizing genuine cases and curbing the misuse of medical care.

Notably, the system has contributed to averting attacks on doctors and addressing personnel shortages during evening shifts, encompassing doctors, nurses, and administrators.

'Rain late in the night'

Mixed weather expected

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The upcoming weekend is anticipated to bring moderate daytime temperatures and chilly nights, according to the latest forecasts from the Meteorological Department. Yasser Al-Balushi, Head of the Marine Forecasting Department, shared insights with the Kuwait News Agency, revealing that the country is poised to experience a blend of weather conditions, reports Al-Rai daily.

Meteorological projections suggest the influence of an extended air depression, leading to the proliferation of clouds and intermittent opportunities for scattered rain, potentially accompanied by thunderstorms in certain areas. Expect light to moderate northeasterly winds with varying intensity.

Today's weather is forecasted to be warm with a mix of partly cloudy to cloudy skies. Anticipate light to moderate northwesterly winds ranging from 6 to 32 kilometers per hour. Maximum temperatures are projected to hover between 23 and 25 degrees Celsius, with the sea exhibiting light to moderate conditions and waves measuring between 1 and 4 feet.

As night falls, temperatures are expected to drop significantly, reaching moderately cold levels. Cloudy conditions will prevail, accompanied by variable winds shifting to light to moderate northeasterly, at speeds between 6 and 30 kilometers per hour. There's a chance of scattered rain, potentially thunderous later in the night. The expected minimum temperature will range from 14 to 16 degrees Celsius, and the sea will maintain light to moderate waves, measuring between 1 and 4 feet.

Looking ahead to Friday, the weather is anticipated to be moderate to cold, featuring cloudy to partly cloudy skies. Northeasterly winds of light to moderate intensity, intermittently active at speeds between 10 and 45 kilometers per hour, are expected. The day may see scattered rain, at times accompanied by thunderstorms, with maximum temperatures ranging from 21 to 23 degrees Celsius. The sea is forecasted to have light to moderate conditions, and waves may reach heights of 2 to 6 feet.

Friday night will bring cold temperatures and cloudy skies. Northerly to northwesterly winds, light to moderate, occasionally active at speeds ranging from 12 to 40 kilometers per hour, are expected. Fog formation is possible in certain areas, and the expected minimum temperature is between 7 and 9 degrees Celsius. The sea will exhibit light to moderate waves, measuring between 2 and 6 feet.

Other Voices

Good governance is crucial for progress

By Ahmad alsarraf

First, whether we like it or not, we are a Third World country, but a rational government can actually move us, by its own strength, to the ranks of developing countries, and this is a worthy and achievable step.

We have all the factors required to make this great leap and realize the dream within twenty years, or even less. All that is required is setting up a plan, adopting it, and implementing it. This is, of course, easy to talk about, but implementing it is not that easy.

Second, democracy is not an obstacle to progress and advancement, but rather it is a contributing factor, as no country in the world has advanced in the modern era without it, and progress here does not mean buildings, roads, the manufacture of cars, fast trains, and great airports, but it also means creative human creativity, with the presence of advanced universities, useful and free research, the publication of distinguished novels and literary works, the existence of clear laws and provisions, high theatrical and artistic creations, human dignity protected by the rule of law, and the examples before us are too numerous to count.

The Soviet Union, for example, and the countries that revolved around it, achieved a lot during the period of communist rule, whether in sports, industry, etc., but its citizens were sometimes willing to die in their attempts to escape from that "beautiful" prison.

Education, food, and medicine were free there, but man did not live on bread alone.

Kuwait also reached the height of its "civilized" progress, in every sense of the word, when it enjoyed true democracy, before dark forces took over the country's capabilities and turned it into an unjust homeland for some of its segments, and a dark homeland that lacked all kinds of freshness and beautiful feelings, under the pretext of preserving traditions. We were once, in the Gulf at least, the best, athletically, artistically, culturally and literally, despite our small size.

The creativity of Kuwaitis reached the world. Freedom is priceless, and its meaning is only known to those who lack it.

The maximum punishment that can be imposed on a "guilty" person is putting him in prison. Therefore, I am surprised by those who are willing to give up their freedom, or so they claim, under the pretext that by losing it, our hotels will be filled with patrons and our economy will advance.

This is a sick argument, so what prevents freedom from being in full in hotels? All decisions to prevent family enrollment and close the country were not issued by democratic institutions, but rather by an executive authority.

Whoever believes that theft increases in a democratic climate and disappears in dictatorial regimes is also wrong, due to the presence of firmness and severity. This is an illusion and nonsense. There is no evidence that corruption in the first case is greater than in the second. Just because we do not hear about incidents of corruption in a country does not mean that it does not exist.

Likewise, the legions of 34 countries would not have gathered to liberate Kuwait in 1990 from the oppression and injustice of Saddam, if we had been an unjust and corrupt dictatorial state.

Rather, they came with confidence that we are a people worth sacrificing for, and that the period of cessation of democracy was temporary and will not be repeated, and this is what encouraged the US leaders and other Western countries to sacrifice their money, and before that the lives of their children, to liberate our homeland!

Finally, all those who call for the demise of democracy have a goal behind it, and we have the right to oppose their whims. At the very least, "punish your madman, lest someone madder than him answer you."

Kuwait will rise, through its adherence to its democratic system, whether its enemies like it or not, and all it needs is a distinctive, quality government. We have learned, from our history and the history of other nations, that what the leadership, represented by the government wants, will eventually be achieved.

□ □ □

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Traffic cams trap motorists

185,816 caught using cell phones

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Statistics from the Traffic Affairs and Operations Sector at the Ministry of Interior revealed that 185,816 violations of the rule prohibiting the use of a mobile phone while driving were recorded in 2023, reports Al-Qabas daily.

On Jan 3, 2023, the ministry announced that it started monitoring traffic violations, particularly using a mobile phone

while driving and not wearing a seat belt, through the sixth generation traffic control cameras.

At the time, the General Traffic Department explained that the installation of the new cameras (sixth generation) is in line with its commitment to develop its traffic monitoring system, increase the level of road safety and raise public awareness on the need to drive safely.

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CSC Undersecretary advocates robust governance for government efficiency

Municipal Council to hold 8th meeting for 2nd session

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Development Sector at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Mohammad Abdul Mohsen Al-Ahmad addressed the General Secretariat of the Municipal Council regarding the procedural work guide for the institutional governance teams in the government administrative apparatus.

In his correspondence, Al-Ahmad highlighted the significance of institutional governance, serving as a fundamental pillar for enhancing and modernizing the operational efficiency of the government's administrative framework to realize the objectives of the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

He further emphasized that, in alignment with the development plan's policies and the promotion of principles such as integrity, accountability, and the rule of law, there is collaborative effort and coordination among the Civil Service Commission, the General Secretariat for Planning and Development, and the Anti-Corruption Commission (Nazaha).

Al-Ahmad said, "With reference to the approval of the Council of Ministers in their letter issued on 4/3/2023, the procedural guide for the formation of institutional gov-

ernance teams was attached, which includes the most important technical aspects of the mechanism for forming and working the team and ways to assign tasks, to be circulated to your leaders and employees to be a comprehensive and integrated guiding reference for the entity for the corporate governance implementation mechanism."

Decision

He concluded by stressing the need to provide CSC with a copy of the decision to form the government team from the General Secretariat of the Municipal Council if it is issued.

In a related context, the Technical Committee of the Municipal Council will hold its eighth meeting for the second session, headed by member Dr. Hassan Kamal, on Tuesday, January 30 to discuss a number of items on its agenda. The

following are the main items slated for discussion:-

1. The request of the Public Facilities Management Company, and installation of smart bathrooms for a small fee in the ground parking lots managed by the company.

2. The request of the Public Authority for Industry for the allocation of a site to establish a station for treating liquid industrial waste in the Subhan Industrial Area, Block 1.

3. The letter submitted by National Cities Real Estate Company for approval to add supporting service activities within the permitted uses in the coastal strip areas included in the requirements for its buildings.

4. The Ministry of Justice's request for renewing the decision related to the allocation of the land of the Family Court Building Project

in the Capital Governorate in Granada Block 3.

5. The Ministry of Finance's request that part of the housing site 47 located in Mirqab Block 2 in front of Shaheed Park be transferred to the Ministry of Finance and the State Treasury to pay the actuarial deficit of the Public Institution of Social Security.

6. A request to deduct an area of 15,000 square meters from the former Ministry of Communication warehouse site in the Second Shuwaikh Industrial Area and allocate it to expand the Environment Public Authority's site in the same location.

7. A request to establish a sea bridge between the city of Mutlaa and Kuwait City.

8. A letter submitted by Abdul Wahab Ali Al-Naqi, the acting Mayor of Failaka Island, concerning the island.

Report submitted to National Assembly

Probe into land distribution completed

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: MP Abdullah Al-Mudhaf, heading the investigation committee probing the distribution of industrial, service, and craft plots of land, has announced the completion of the committee's report, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The report has been officially submitted to the National Assembly, marking a significant milestone in the investigative process.

Simultaneously, Al-Mudhaf revealed that the committee has forwarded a correspondence entrusting the Parliamentary Priorities Committee with scheduling a date for a public session to discuss the report's findings and recommendations

in the coming period.

Al-Mudhaf emphasized the committee's unwavering commitment to fulfilling its oversight role, stating that it meticulously conducted a series of meetings during which it heard testimonies from over 97 relevant individuals.

Expressing gratitude, Al-Mudhaf commended the Rapporteur and committee members for their dedicated efforts and consistent attendance in preparing a thorough technical report.

He also acknowledged the positive role played by the technical office of the investigation committee in ensuring the success of the committee's mission.



Kuwait University's academic advising for secondary school students.

Bridging aspirations with reality

KU takes proactive steps to guide HS students towards in-demand careers

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Officials at Kuwait University have emphasized their commitment to introducing high school students to specialized fields which are in demand in the local job market with the aim of guiding students to choose academic studies aligned with their interests and aspirations, fulfilling their practical ambitions for the future, reports Al-Qabas daily.

As part of this initiative, the Academic Guidance Department of the Deanship of Student Affairs at Kuwait University organized field trips for secondary school students in Sabah Al-Salem University City.

These tours aimed to familiarize students with various modern colleges at Kuwait University, including public health and life sciences.

The Director of the Academic Advising Department, Fahd Al-Mutairi, highlighted the importance of showcasing the quality of Kuwait University graduates in these specializations and their relevance to the job market.

During these tours, students were introduced to the services and ac-

tivities provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs throughout the university stage.

Al-Mutairi stressed the significance of students being aware of opportunities and overcoming challenges by engaging with the Deanship.

He emphasized the importance of providing information about cultural, artistic, social, and sports activities as part of the student's university life. Engaging in hobbies and developing skills during university can open up multiple job opportunities for students.

Mashaal Al-Failakawi, the Superintendent of the Academic Guidance Department, highlighted the importance of rare specializations in meeting the needs of the Kuwaiti labor market.

She encouraged students to inquire about rewards for excellence and rare specializations at the Deanship of Student Affairs, emphasizing the role of guidance and counseling offices in university colleges as valuable resources for information and assistance.

Mobile vehicle licenses halted

Micro-Enterprise transactions soar

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Statistical data issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry revealed that the number of transactions of micro-enterprises completed through the Single Window Department from the beginning of January 2023 until the end of October 2023 totaled 2,442; most of which were done in October when 735 transactions were completed, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily obtained a copy of the statistics, showing that the department approved 205 establishment applications while 505 applications were rejected and the number of licenses issued reached 511.

October was the busiest month for the department, as the number of transactions completed within this month reached 735 - 138 approved establishment applications, 381 rejected establishment applications and 216 licenses were issued.

On the other hand, data on mobile vehicle companies showed that no new application was completed at the department due to the continued implementation of the decision to stop issuing new mobile vehicle licenses that the ministry issued on March 8, 2021.

This decision was taken due to the high number of licenses issued, which exceeded 2,000; compared to the limited locations approved by Kuwait Municipality and other concerned authorities, which limited the number of locations to only 400 throughout the country.

'Where is the Kuwaiti inventor headed?'

Kuwaiti Society sets comprehensive 'strategy' for innovators, urges government intervention

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Kuwaiti Society for Supporting Inventors and Innovation has laid down a strategy for Kuwaiti inventors and innovators; including a comprehensive vision for improving their conditions and solving their problems, reports Al-Anba daily.

Chairman of the Society's Board of Directors Dr Fatima Al-Thallab confirmed that the Society reviewed the opinions of inventors and those concerned with issues related to innovation and invention in the recently concluded forum entitled, 'Where is the Kuwaiti Inventor Headed?'

Al-Thallab said the Society will continue holding forums to set a clear plan and demands that will be presented to the concerned officials and government agencies. She stressed that the current condition of Kuwaiti inventors and innovators needs government intervention and effective action, similar to what other countries have done.

She emphasized the need for Kuwaiti inventors to have an official reference -- a body, entity or institution -- that carries out its role in addressing the problems of inventors and provides them with all forms of support. She added the proposals and demands of the Society will be announced later.

PADA unveils automation plan in disability services

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Deputy Director General of the Educational Sector at the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) Mubarak Al-Badah revealed that the educational sector is currently coordinating with the Information Systems Department to complete the automation of the data of the beneficiaries of its services and then gradually include all procedures in the authority's electronic services, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Badah stated: "We are creating an electronic database to store the transactions and documents of people with disabilities in a digital archive."

Regarding the conditions for opening an educational file, he enumerated the following: the beneficiary must be a Kuwaiti, his mother must be a Kuwaiti or treated as a Kuwaiti, has a valid certificate of disability issued by PADA, and the age as of Aug 31 of the academic year must not be below three years old.

Regarding the preparation of schools, centers, and nurseries under the supervision of PADA; he said there are 28 nurseries, 11 institutions and rehabilitation centers, 12 foreign schools, and 12 Arab schools and centers.



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Kuwaiti leaders congratulate Liberian President

HH Amir receives congratulatory from Tanzania Pres on assuming post

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Thursday a cable from President of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan, congratulating him on assuming top office.

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

His Highness the Amir sent a reply cable to the President of Tanzania, expressing his sincere gratitude and appreciation for the kind words and sentiments. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations Thursday to Liberian president Joseph Boakai following his constitutional oath for presidency.

His Highness the Amir wished the President good health and success, and for progress in relations between the two countries.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah sent a cable to President Joseph Boakai of Liberia, congratulating him on assuming top office.

KISR presents feasibility study on nuclear energy

Kuwait's path to net zero carbon emission

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) held an open symposium titled "Will nuclear energy have a role in achieving the goal of net zero carbon emission in the State of Kuwait?" during which KISR presented the results of a study that was recently concluded with the cooperation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IEA) for studying the technical, economic, environmental, social and political feasibility of adopting nuclear energy technology for electricity generation, water desalination, and for oil and industrial use in the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a speech delivered on behalf of the Acting Director General of KISR Dr. Mishaan Al-Otaibi, the Acting Executive Director of the Energy and Building Research Center at KISR Dr. Ahmed Al-Mulla explained that the State of Kuwait does not officially have a nuclear program for energy generation. However, the study was aimed at looking into the technological developments related to sustainable development to meet the country's energy requirements.

The local demand for energy is increasing, and the environmental requirements for reducing carbon emissions have become part of the country's development plans and international pledges.

At the 27th United Nations Climate Conference of the Parties (COP27), the State of Kuwait had pledged to achieve the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in the oil sector and 2060 in all other sectors.

It is working steadily to meet the demand for energy and reduce carbon emissions by adopting energy efficiency measures, and working to develop the power stations and build renewable energy stations.

The Shaqaya Renewable Energy Complex is at the forefront, for which KISR has drawn up the structural plan and established the first phase of it.

Hospital's nuclear medicine dept showcases pioneering technique

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Dr. Zeina Al-Banna, Head of Farwaniya Hospital's Nuclear Medicine Department (NMD), has reported the success of injecting radioactive materials into 80 knee joints, showcasing the hospital's exclusive and pioneering technique, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This groundbreaking approach effectively addresses conditions like synovitis and rheumatic arthritis, offering an alternative for cases unresponsive to traditional drug or surgical treatments.

In an official statement, Dr. Al-Banna underscored the Nuclear Medicine Department's distinguished role as the primary and sole center in Kuwait's government sector hospitals for utilizing radioactive materials in arthritis treatment. Synovitis, characterized by a benign knee joint tumor, is one of the conditions effectively managed through this innovative method.

Patients referred to the Nuclear Medicine Department hail from both government and private sectors, directed by orthopedists and rheumatologists. The department conducts

thorough preliminary examinations, employing nuclear scanning, X-rays, ultrasound, or magnetic resonance imaging to evaluate knee joint activity and rule out any contraindications for injections and treatment.

Following the injection procedure, patients are advised complete rest for 48 hours. Dr. Al-Banna emphasized that the department's physicians have undergone specialized training in this technique in Germany, ensuring a high standard of expertise.

Detailing the process, she explained that initial examinations, including a bone examination, are conducted to confirm the knee tumor's activity. Ultrasound scans assess the synovial membrane's thickness and identify potential contraindications. After collecting the necessary information, patients undergo evaluation to determine the treatment's responsiveness.

Farwaniya Hospital's Nuclear Medicine Department continues to lead in innovative medical approaches, providing successful and advanced treatments for knee conditions through the application of radioactive materials.

greenhouse gas emissions.

The study examined the technical, economic and environmental feasibility of adopting nuclear energy, especially modern technology related to small modular nuclear reactors in the State of Kuwait.

Even if the technical, economic and environmental feasibility are positive, the social and political factor in the country is the first and last arbiter of whether or not the nuclear program is accepted and successful.

Dr. Al-Sayegh affirmed that KISR will continue to research and develop clean energy technologies related to the production of blue and green hydrogen, conversion of waste into energy, carbon capture and recycling, and energy storage, in addition to solar and wind energy systems.

He added that KISR will also continue to follow developments in nuclear energy technology, so that policymakers and decision-makers are informed of the latest developments to achieve the country's development goals.

The aforementioned study also examines the extent of the capabilities of renewable energy systems, which include solar and wind energy technology, in order to meet the energy demand and reduce carbon emissions close to zero in the country.

Meanwhile, Dr. Osama Al-Sayegh, a project leader at KISR's Energy and Building Research Center, said the study took into account the country's climatic, geographic, and area factors, and discovered that these factors restrict the expansion of the deployment of renewable energy systems with capabilities that exceed the capabilities of traditional oil and gas technology.

He indicated that this is one of the main motivations for researching other options for power generation that do not have carbon emissions, in addition to renewable energy systems.

Dr. Al-Sayegh explained that nuclear energy technology is advanced with safety systems. It is highly reliable and stable for power generation, and does not emit

multiple rounds of airstrikes seeking to stop the attacks.

Qatar, one of the world's top exporters of liquefied natural gas, warned that its deliveries were affected by ongoing Houthi attacks over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Danish shipper Maersk, in a statement to The Associated Press, identified two of its vessels affected by the attacks as the U.S.-flagged container ships Maersk Detroit and Maersk Chesapeake. It said the U.S. Navy was accompanying its ships at the time.

"While en route, both ships reported seeing explosions close by and the U.S. Navy accompaniment also intercepted multiple projectiles," Maersk said. "The crew, ship, and cargo are safe and unharmed. The U.S. Navy has turned both ships around and is escorting them back to the Gulf of Aden."

Maersk said both vessels carried cargo belonging to the U.S. Defense and State Departments, as well as other government agencies, meaning they were "afforded the protection of the U.S. Navy for passage through the Strait."

The ships were operated by Maersk Line, a U.S. subsidiary of Maersk that is "suspending transits in the region until further notice," the company said.

The U.S. military's Central Command in an online statement blamed the Houthis for the attack, saying they fired "three anti-ship ballistic missiles."

"One missile impacted in the sea," the statement said. "The two other missiles were successfully engaged and shot down by the USS Gravelly," an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer.

Central Command did not respond to further questions from the AP.

The Houthis, who have been launching attacks on ships since November over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, later claimed the attacks in a pre-recorded statement by their military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree. He vowed the Houthis would continue their attacks.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea, saying they were avenging Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas. But

they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade.

The U.S. and the U.K. have launched rounds of airstrikes targeting suspected missile storage and launch sites used by the Houthis in their attacks. The rebels now say they'll target American and British ships as well.

Meanwhile, Qatar announced its shipments of liquefied natural gas had been affected by the Houthi attacks. Previous shipments had been delayed previously before heading through the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

Qatar, which has served as a key mediator between Hamas and Israel, has yet to see any of its ships attacked, however. A statement from its state-owned QatarEnergy producer said that its "production continues uninterrupted, and our commitment to ensuring the reliable supply of LNG to our customers remains unwavering."

"While the ongoing developments in the Red Sea may impact the scheduling of some deliveries as they take alternative routes, LNG shipments from Qatar are being managed with our valued buyers," the statement said.

The statement suggests QatarEnergy's cargos now are traveling around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, likely adding time to their trips.

Extend concert

Continued from Page 1

Legal Affairs Committee to discuss it and then submit a report to the Assembly."

The Secretariat stressed that it handles all issues in accordance with the constitutional texts, internal regulations of the Assembly, and the principles of justice and transparency. It also emphasized the need to be accurate in transmitting news and taking it from official sources to avoid misleading the public.

Moreover, MP Badr Nashmi Al-Anzi submitted a proposal for the Civil



Photo during the symposium.

Patient recovers after innovative surgery

Use of laser treatment for kidney stone a success, Head of Urology Unit reveals

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Head of the Urology unit at Jaber Armed Forces Hospital Dr. Mohammed Al-Ghanim revealed the success of the operation through the use of laser technology to remove a bifurcated stone in the right kidney on a 45-year-old patient who suffers from high blood pressure and takes blood thinners to treat heart problems.

Dr. Al-Ghanim stressed that the patient discovered this stone when he suffered from pain and renal colic and went to the Urology clinic at Jaber Armed Forces Hospital. After conducting the necessary medical tests, the case was diagnosed as a large bifurcated stone in the right kidney, which measured approximately 3 by 4 cm. The diagnosis was made by CT scan.

He said, "The kidney function was healthy, and the patient had a history of stones, as he had a large, bifurcated left kidney stone, which was removed about four years ago in another hospital through a surgery."

However, we performed this operation through a small opening on the side of less than one cm, using a kidney endoscope. After we reached the stone, it was completely broken up using a modern laser, and then a stent was installed for the patient.

The patient remained in the hospital under observation for 48 hours, then left the hospital in good health, and was given an appointment to remove the stent after about five weeks."

Dr. Al-Ghanim advised patients that if renal colic occurs on the right or left side, they should consult a specialist doctor to perform the necessary tests.

He stated that kidney stones are divided into two parts, the largest percentage of which is calcium oxalate, and the second part is uric acid, indicating that this patient had a calcium oxalate type stone.

Dr. Al-Ghanim added, "As a result, we were given advice to reduce consumption of mangoes, tomatoes, and spinach, in addition to drinking appropriate amounts of water daily, approximately two to two and a half liters."

Reduction aims to avoid service-related obstacles

Kuwait's planning sector greenlights major urban, military developments

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Planning Sector, led by Deputy Director General for Urban Planning and Structural Planner Eng. Manal Al-Asfour, has given the nod for the expansion of plots 1 and 2 of the Southern Khaitan Project, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The project area will increase by approximately 70,000 square meters, reaching a total of 1,579,982,845 square meters. This decision aims to accommodate additional plots and housing units in alignment with the plan proposed by the General Authority for Housing Welfare.

The municipality's conditions for this expansion include adherence to approved commercial spaces, a pre-implementation traffic study endorsed by the structural plan administration, and coordination with relevant ministries – Social Affairs, Endowments and Education – overseeing the sites in the region. The administration is granted authority to adjust final boundaries.

In another development, the organization sector has given the nod to the request of the Ministry of Defense for a reduction in the central region's (Sabhan) allocated area from 1,974,544 square meters to 1,625,892 square meters.

This reduction aims to avoid service-related obstacles, empowering competent departments to modify dimensions

while ensuring adherence to specified areas and regulatory standards during installation.

The sector has also approved the Amiri Diwan's request to expand the Arabian Horse Center in the north of the central Sabhan region.

The expansion includes an additional 25,316 square meters on the eastern side and approximately 22,500 square meters on the southern side, bringing the total expanded area to approximately 327,000 square meters. This expansion comes in response to the flourishing interest in breeding Arabian horses in Kuwait, with records now boasting around 8,000 purebred Arabian horses.

The increased space caters to the needs of owners, breeders, and enthusiasts, forming an integral part of the region's history and heritage.

The center hosts annual local and international festivals supervised by the ECHO (European Arabian Horse Beauty Authority), attracting a large audience of Arabian horse enthusiasts from inside and outside Kuwait. The growing popularity of these festivals necessitates designated areas for housing horses, as well as facilities for owners, the public, and participating horses, highlighting the need for ongoing comprehensive support for this cherished hobby.

Kuwait highlights

Continued from Page 1

and explored ways of enabling institutions and government bodies to efficiently and strategically utilize AI to increase productivity.

Sheikh Mohammad also pointed to potentials of AI across different fields including manufacturing, medicine, education, and others if properly utilized and the association's role in developing the technology and its effects on the community.

He added that the association was working on providing educational courses and workshops for individuals and institutions in hopes of raising standards and awareness in this domain.

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs **Dawood Marafi** has underlined the importance of urgently digitalizing the records of the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) to help set assessment criteria.

In a statement during a visit to the CSB, Marafi, also Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, emphasized the need to have a complete digital version of all the state records to secure the state highly important data.

The minister expressed eagerness to upgrade the work mechanisms in the CSB and hone the skills of its national cadres out of a deep belief in the high sensitivity and importance of these data in serving the state interests and realizing its development vision.

KOTC prioritizes

Continued from Page 1

The attacks on the container ships Maersk Detroit and Maersk Chesapeake further raise the stakes of the group's ongoing attacks on shipping through the vital Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The U.S. and the United Kingdom have launched

the parliamentary Human Rights Committee prepared in a number of parliamentary terms will be discussed with the government in order to find the best solution, especially since this is a humanitarian concern.

MP Marzuq Al-Ghanim forwarded queries to HH Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah about the total amount allocated for the secret special expenditures of the Secretariat General of the Cabinet in fiscals 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 including the amount spent in each fiscal year. He asked if the expenditures exceeded the maximum budget allocated for this item, and if a portion of such budget was used to pay individual and news accounts on social media. If yes, he requested for the list of these accounts including the amount paid to each of them; and amount spent when MP Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf announced his plan to grill HH the former Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah on Nov 6, 2023 until the grilling motion was discussed on Nov 28, 2023.

MP Mubarak Al-Tasha asked Minister of Justice, Endowments and Islamic Affairs Faisal Al-Gharib if it is true that Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Anwar Al-Mudhaf was referred to the Public Prosecution for investigation on the alleged embezzling of the shareholders' money in a company, breach of trust and other issues. If yes, he wants to know when Al-Mudhaf was referred to the prosecution, charges filed against him, the party that initiated the lawsuit, and the prosecution's decision regarding the case.

MP Abdullah Al-Anbai asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef if the cash allowance for vacations has been disbursed to any entity affiliated with the Ministry of Interior after the issuance of CSC Resolution No. 32/2023. This resolution stipulates replacement of Article Two in the previous resolution (No. 22/2022) regarding vacation allowance, as the new article states that the allowance should be paid to Kuwaitis only once every 10 years while they are still in service.

Service Commission (CSC) and other concerned institutions to hire Political Science graduates and appoint them to posts that match their specialization.

He suggested appointing these as government relations coordinator, international relations coordinator and parliamentary relations coordinator.

He also recommended allocating jobs for these graduates in major development projects like the North Economic Zone, Silk City, National Council of Planning and Development, National Cybersecurity Center, and the international and regional organizations.

In addition, Al-Anzi asked Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and acting Interior Minister Fahd Yousef Al-Sabah about the budget deficit of the Interior Ministry in fiscals 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023; projected deficit in fiscal 2023/2024; and if there is a plan to rationalize expenditures to address the issue.

He asked Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs and acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Feras Saud Al-Sabah about the public fund embezzlement cases recorded in cooperative societies since 2014 till date, embezzled amount per year in each cooperative, penalties imposed by the court, and the list of convicted individuals including their jobs and nationalities.

He wants to know the number of cases that the boards of directors of cooperative societies referred to the Public Prosecution against expatriate workers accused of embezzling and stealing the shareholders' money.

MP Shuaib Shaaban forwarded queries to Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Adwani about the reasons for forming a committee to conduct a study on separating the applied education and training sectors at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). He wants to know the projected outcome of this move, list of committee members including their qualifications and experience, allowances they receive, number of meetings held so far, and copies of the minutes of these meetings.

MP Shuaib Al-Muwaziri forwarded

World News Roundup

Europe

UK says it has no plans for conscription: The UK government said Wednesday it has no plans to introduce conscription, after the head of the British Army said a "citizen army" would be needed to fight a future war with a country like Russia.

Chief of the General Staff GenPatrick Saunders said preparing for a potential land war would have to be a "whole-of-nation" undertaking. He praised European nations closer to Russia for "prudently laying the foundations for national mobilization."

Saunders, who has long argued for more military spending and is due to leave his job this year, said that "within the next three years, it must be credible to talk of a British Army of 120,000."

"But this is not enough," he added during a speech at the International Armored Vehicles conference in London. "Taking preparatory steps to enable placing our societies on a war footing when needed are now not merely desirable but essential."

He said "Ukraine brutally illustrates that regular armies start wars; citizen armies win them."

Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak's** spokesman, Max Blain, said the government "has no intention" of introducing conscription. (AP)



Sunak

Flight recorders from plane crash found: Investigators have found the flight recorders of a Russian military transport plane that crashed in a border region near Ukraine, Russian media reported Thursday, a day after Moscow accused Kyiv of shooting down the aircraft, which it said was carrying 65 Ukrainian prisoners of war.

The Il-76 crashed in a huge ball of flame in a rural area of Russia on Wednesday, and authorities said all 74 people on board were killed. Ukraine's president has demanded an international investigation.

Russian officials accused Kyiv of shooting down the plane with two missiles and said Ukrainian prisoners of war were on board and headed for an exchange. They offered no evidence for their claim.

The Associated Press could not independently confirm who was aboard or how the plane was downed.

Ukrainian authorities confirmed a prisoner exchange was due to happen Wednesday, and that it was called off, but said they had no information about who was on the plane.

Kyiv officials gave no direct response to the Russian accusation, though they noted that Russian aircraft were legitimate targets and that Moscow had requested no safe passage in the context of the prisoner swap. (AP)

Separatist rebel leader gets 4 yrs in jail: The Moscow City Court on Thursday convicted a former Ukraine rebel leader who called President Vladimir Putin cowardly of extremism and sentenced him to four years in prison.

Igor Girkin, who used the surname alias of Strelkov (shooter), was the most prominent leader of Russian-backed separatist fighters in Ukraine's Donetsk region in 2014, when rebellion arose after the ouster of Ukraine's Russia-allied president.

He returned to Russia and became a nationalist commentator and activist. He supported launching Russia's war in Ukraine, but sharply criticized authorities for being inept and indecisive in carrying out the fight. (AP)

'War in Ukraine is being forgotten': The UN High Commissioner for Refugees said Wednesday that he's worried that the war in Ukraine has been forgotten as the country prepares to mark two years since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion.

UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi also told The Associated Press in an interview that it was important to remind the international community that Ukrainians were living through a brutal war despite other global crises taking the spotlight.

Speaking at the end of a weeklong visit to Ukraine, Grandi said that the invasion, which was launched by Moscow on Feb. 24, 2022, continues to bring devastation to civilians with houses destroyed, health centers hit and many facilities not functioning.

UNHCR put the latest figure of people who have been displaced from the war at 10 million - 3.7 million are considered to be internally displaced, while another 6.3 million are categorized as refugees. (AP)

Lawmakers reject int'l women's rights treaty: Czech lawmakers have voted against ratifying an international treaty on women's rights.

Only 34 of the 71 Senators present in the upper house of the Czech Parliament late Wednesday voted in favor of the treaty known as the Istanbul Convention. The result was two votes short of the majority needed to pass.

After the vote, the lower house of Parliament will likely not deal with the treaty and the Czech Republic will be among those countries that have signed the document but not ratified it.

The Council of Europe adopted the document in 2011 in a bid to deter violence against women throughout Europe.

The Czech Republic, also known as Czechia, signed it in 2016. The vote reflected a split between conservative and liberal lawmakers. Conservatives have argued the document challenges traditional roles for men and women in society and that its ratification in other countries didn't help reduce violence against women there. (AP)

Italy lower chamber of parliament OKs deal: Italy's lower chamber of parliament on Wednesday approved a novel government deal with Albania to house migrants during the processing of their asylum requests, a cornerstone of Premier Giorgia Meloni's efforts to share the migration burden with the rest of Europe.

The proposal, which passed 155-115 with two abstentions in the Chamber of Deputies, now goes to the Senate, where Meloni's right-wing forces also have a comfortable majority.

Meloni and Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama announced the groundbreaking initiative last November, in which Albania would shelter up to 36,000 migrants for a year in two centers while Italy fast-tracks their asylum requests.

Italy has long sought concrete gestures of solidarity from fellow European Union nations to help it handle the tens of thousands of migrants who arrive each year. Albania is hoping to join the bloc, and Italy has been a strong supporter of its bid. (AP)

Orban once again in spotlight: With Turkey completing its ratification of Sweden's bid to join NATO, Hungary is the last member of the military alliance not to have given its approval.

After more than a year of delays, and consistent urging from its Western partners to move forward with Sweden's application, the Central European country and its conservative populist prime minister, Viktor Orbán, are once again in the spotlight.

Orbán has long promised that Hungary wouldn't be the last NATO member to ratify Sweden's request to join the alliance. Yet Monday's approval in Turkey's parliament has upended those guarantees, and others in the alliance are now asking: When will Budapest follow Ankara's lead?

Hungary's government, Orbán says, is in favor of bringing Sweden into NATO, but lawmakers in his governing Fidesz party remain unconvinced, offended by "blatant lies" from some Swedish politicians that have excoriated the quality of Hungary's democracy. (AP)

Child dies after being rescued: One of the five children who were hospitalized in Cyprus after being rescued from a rickety boat along with 55 other Syrian migrants has died, an official said Thursday.

The migrants, who were rescued early Wednesday by Cyprus police, apparently ran out of food and water after sailing on the boat from Lebanon for six days, officials said.

Health Services spokesperson Charalambos Charilaou told the Cypriot state broadcaster that the child suffered a heart attack and couldn't be revived.

Charilaou said two other children, aged 3 and 5, remain in intensive care at a hospital in the Cypriot capital. Two other minors are also being treated at a hospital, but their condition isn't as serious.

Two adults were also hospitalized with leg fractures. The remaining Syrians were transferred to a migrant reception center on the capital's outskirts.

Police found the migrants about 55 kilometers (35 miles) off the island nation's southeastern tip after a passing ship notified authorities of the boat's presence. (AP)



US Republican presidential candidate former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley speaks during a campaign event at The North Charleston Coliseum on Jan 24, in North Charleston, SC. (AP)

Politics

Despite 2 losses, Haley tries to claim victory

Trump racks up endorsements from GOP

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (AP) — Long before Donald Trump announced his campaign to retake the White House, he launched a quieter campaign to rack up Republican endorsements.

In early 2021, after Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden and inspired a mob of supporters to attack the Capitol trying to overturn the 2020 election, the defeated president started laying the groundwork for the support in Congress he would need for a return.

With lavish three-hour dinners hosted at his private clubs, telephone town-hall fundraisers, rides on his private jet and endorsements of his own up and down the ballot, Trump schmoozed and strategized and wined-and-dined his way to the GOP lawmakers' support.

By the time of the first 2024 caucus in Iowa this month, Trump had secured endorsements from 120 House Republicans and nearly half the Republicans in the Senate.

On Wednesday, after Trump won the New Hampshire primary, the number of endorsements climbed even higher, with a solid majority of Republicans in both chambers of Congress.

Unite

"It's past time for the Republican Party to unite around President Trump," said Speaker Mike Johnson, setting the tone after Trump's New Hampshire victory.

It's a remarkable turnaround for Trump, whose campaign is being powered not only by loyal voters but also by elected Republicans in Congress.

And those lawmakers appear unwilling or unable to stop his rise, almost ensuring Trump has no institutional roadblocks to the eventual party nomination and a potential return to power.

Trump himself marveled at those standing behind him on election night in New Hampshire, where he was trying to drive his remaining rival, Nikki Haley, out of the race with a show of endorsements from her home state of South Carolina. He singled out Sen. Tim Scott, suggesting he "must really hate" Haley, the state's former governor.

The senator, once a Republican presidential candidate himself, stepped up to correct Trump, gushing: "I just love you."

The race for endorsements, years in the making, has been painstakingly orchestrated as a way to bring a certain official Washington legitimacy to Trump, who was twice impeached by the House, including for the insurrection at the Capitol. Trump now faces federal charges of defrauding voters in the run-up to the Capitol attack, among dozens of other charges in several different court cases.

Once facing pockets of resistance in Congress, Trump has essentially won over all segments of the Republican Party on Capitol Hill - the House GOP leadership team, including Whip Tom Emmer who had voted to certify Biden's election, to the chairman of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, Rep. Bob Good of Virginia, who quickly switched sides last week when Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis suspended his presidential campaign.

US President Joe Biden is zeroing in on an expected rematch against Donald Trump after this week's New Hampshire primaries, eager to sharpen the contrast with his predecessor.

Ten months from Election Day, Biden's write-in victory in a New Hampshire race he didn't formally contest put a fork in any plausible path to deny him a second turn at the Democratic nomination. Now Biden and his team want to clarify the choice voters will face, believing that the stakes of the election, and Trump's solidifying grip on the GOP, will appeal to voters in the center and reinvigorate his base.

Rematch

While many in the country have hoped for different choices in November, Biden decidedly is not one of them. He sees a rematch with Trump as both his easiest path to reelection and a validation of his decision, at 81, to seek another four-year term.

Biden wasted no time trying to anoint Trump as his head-on rival after the Republican's decisive victory in the New Hampshire primary, which came on the heels of a romp

in the Iowa caucuses a week earlier.

Presidential historian Julian Zelizer of Princeton University said the Biden campaign believes it can paint Trump as a very real threat because of the Republican's past record in the Oval Office.

Biden faces no shortage of headwinds going into the general election season - low approval ratings, widespread concern about his age, multiplying tensions abroad and plenty of discontent at home, including from disenchanted young people and minorities who were key to his first victory.

Despite losing both Iowa and New Hampshire to Donald Trump, Nikki Haley is nevertheless trying to frame those losses as a victory and vowing to head off a "coronation" of Trump as the 2024 Republican nominee.

The path through the next states to vote, however, may not be any easier.

Support

"We were thrilled," Haley said during a rally before hundreds of sign-waving fans on Wednesday night in North Charleston, South Carolina, casting her second-place New Hampshire finish as a win given how little support her campaign had in its early days.

"We got out there, and we did our thing and we said what we had to say, and then Donald Trump got out there and just threw a temper tantrum," Haley added, referencing Trump's primary night remarks in which the former president repeatedly insulted her in a speech far angrier than his remarks after his Iowa victory.

Haley did perform better in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary than she had in the Iowa caucuses a week earlier, where she finished third, well behind Trump and only slightly down from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has since shuttered his campaign.

But Haley had been banking on a stalwart showing in New Hampshire, a state where her attempt to appeal to independents and more moderate-leaning Republicans appeared to take root. Trump still won by double-digits on Tuesday night, leaving some to wonder whether she would keep going.



This photo, provided by regional Governor Oleh Kiper, shows the site of Russian drone attack in Odesa, Ukraine, on Jan 25. (AP)



Moriarty



Whitmer

America

Gov focuses on education: Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer called for increased investments in education through initiatives such as free community college for all high school graduates and free preschool for 4-year-olds in a State of the State speech Wednesday night focused on cutting costs for residents.

The second-term Democratic governor's speech preceded a legislative session that may require lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to work together for the first time since Democrats took full control of the state government last January. The state House will be tied 54-54 until at least April, when special elections for two open seats are set to be held.

Whitmer's speech highlighted an investment of over a billion dollars to build or rehabilitate housing in the state, saying they planned to "build, baby, build." She also called on lawmakers to pass a tax credit of up to \$5,000 for caregiving expenses including counseling, transportation, and nursing or respite services. (AP)

WH launches gun safety initiative:

The White House is trying to enlist school leaders to help spread the word about the importance of safely storing firearms to protect children.

The new initiative was to be unveiled Thursday in an event for school principals with first lady Jill Biden and Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. Also participating will be Stefanie Feldman, who runs the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

"We know safe storage of firearms can save lives, especially by reducing suicide by firearms and school shootings," Feldman told reporters.

Guns are the leading cause of death for American children, and most guns used in school shootings are taken from the shooter's home.

"I know that there are some parents who wake up every day, drop their kids off for school and while they're watching their kids walk through that door, there's just a little part of them that worries about gun violence during the school day," Feldman said. (AP)

Minnesota trooper charged: A Minnesota state trooper was charged with murder Wednesday in the shooting of motorist Ricky Cobb II, who failed to get out of his car during a July traffic stop and took his foot off the brake when officers tried to arrest him.

In announcing charges of second-degree

unintentional murder, first-degree assault and second-degree manslaughter, Hennepin County Attorney **Mary Moriarty** said Trooper Ryan Londregan's use of deadly

force against Cobb, a 33-year-old Black man, was not justified.

"As with all Minnesota law enforcement officers, state troopers may only use deadly

force when it is necessary to protect a person from a specific identified threat of great bodily harm or death that was reasonably likely to occur. That did not exist in this case," Moriarty said. (AP)



Britain's Sophie, the Duchess of Edinburgh (centre), poses with students, during a visit to a menstrual health workshop at Harris Girls Academy in East Dulwich, south east London on Jan 24. (AP)

Deputies find six bodies: Deputies found the bodies of six people at a remote dirt road in the Mojave Desert, a scene described as so grisly that Southern California TV stations blurred some of the images captured by their helicopters overhead.

San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputies responding to a request for a wellness check reached the area off Highway 395 outside the community of El Mirage around 8:15 p.m. Tuesday and found five of the bodies. The sixth was found Wednesday morning, sheriff's spokesperson Mara Rodriguez said.

Authorities were still gathering evidence to determine what happened, and Rodriguez said they could not say even how the people died or whether they had been shot. The area, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) north-east of Los Angeles and about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest of Victorville, is so remote that the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department called in help from the California Highway Patrol's Aviation Division to find the scene, Rodriguez said. (AP)

Africa

'End Sudan conflict'

Mali mine collapse kills more than 70

BAMAKO, Mali, Jan 25, (Agencies): An unregulated gold mine collapsed late last week in Mali, killing more than 70 people, an official said Wednesday, and a search continued amid fears that the toll could rise.

Karim Berthé, a senior official at the government's National Geology and Mining Directorate, confirmed the details to The Associated Press and called it an accident.

There were around 100 people in the mine at the time of the collapse, according to **Abdoulaye Pona**, president of the Mali Chamber of Mines, who was at the scene.

The cause of the collapse, which happened in Kangaba district in the southwestern Koulikoro region on Friday, was under investigation.



Pona

It was first reported on Tuesday in a Ministry of Mines statement that estimated "several" miners dead.

Such tragedies are common in Mali, Africa's No. 3 gold producer. Artisanal miners - small-scale, informal ones - are often accused of ignoring safety measures, especially in remote areas.

"The state must bring order to this artisanal mining sector to avoid these kinds of accidents in the future," Berthé said.

The Ministry of Mines statement "deeply regretted" the collapse, and urged miners and communities living near mining sites to "comply with safety requirements."

In recent years, there have been concerns that profits from unregulated mining in northern Mali could benefit extremists active in that part of the country.

The region of this latest collapse, however, is far to the south of that and closer to the capital, Bamako. "Gold is by far Mali's most important export, comprising more than 80% of total exports in 2021," according to the International Trade Administration with the US Department of Commerce. It says more than 2 million people, or more than 10% of Mali's population, depend on the mining sector for income.

Artisanal gold mining is estimated to produce around 30 tons of gold a year, and represents 6% of Mali's annual gold production.

The Ministry of Mines has estimated that the country has 800 tons in gold deposits. The country also has an estimated 2 million gold miners operating in around 300 artisanal mining sites, Pona said.

Algeria gears up for election year: Algeria is gearing up for an election year with an aging president and an opposition that is yet to present a candidate.

The oil-rich north African country faces mounting political and economic challenges as public dissatisfaction rises. Yet it remains unclear whether Algeria's presidential election, likely to be held in December, will inspire serious campaigning.

The Rally for Culture and Democracy, among the rare opposition parties maintaining a notable public presence in President Abdelmajid Tebboune's Algeria, this week called on the government to "put in place political conditions for a debate to find a way out of crisis."

Still, no candidate has stepped forward to challenge Tebboune, Algeria's 78-year-old leader who came to power in 2019 and has not announced plans to run for a second term. He's maintained an air of mystery, contending last month that "the people will decide the right moment" for such an announcement.

Tanzania main oppn party holds protest: Hundreds of supporters of Tanzania's main opposition party marched in the commercial capital Wednesday in the first such demonstration since political gatherings were banned several years ago. They seek changes to the constitution and election laws ahead of elections next year.

It was the first time in seven years that leaders of any opposition group were allowed to hold a major demonstration since late President John Magufuli took power in 2015 and barred political rallies and protests. President Samia Suluhu Hassan lifted the ban last year as part of her reconciliation strategy after taking office in 2021 following Magufuli's death.

The Chadema party wants the constitution to be changed to allow presidential election results to be challenged in court. It also wants electoral laws amended to prevent the president from selecting members of the electoral commission.

'Bid to end Sudan conflict': German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock embarked on a two-day visit to Djibouti, Kenya and South Sudan, with the aim to intensify diplomatic efforts to put an end to the conflict in Sudan.

According to a foreign affairs ministry statement on Wednesday, the minister is seeking to explore possibilities to bring Generals Abdelfattah Al-Burhan and Mohammad Hamdan Dagalo (also known as Hemedti) finally to the negotiating table, to keep the region safe and stable.

She called on applying more pressure on the ones who are responsible for the crimes in the region against civilians, through holding them accountable, as well as imposing sanctions.

The African Union and IGAD must cooperate to achieve a peaceful outcome between both sides of the conflict that left more than 12,000 people dead and 5.7 million displaced, the minister added.

Zimbabwe opposition figure convicted: A Zimbabwean opposition figure who has spent close to 600 days in pretrial detention was convicted on Wednesday of inciting public violence, while some supporters sobbed at the treatment of a man seen by many as the face of resistance to the government's alleged repression.

Job Sikhala, an outspoken official with the main opposition Citizens Coalition for Change party and a former member of parliament, was detained in June 2022 following the killing and dismembering of an activist from his party. He was accused of using social media to encourage opposition supporters to violently respond to the death of Moreblessing Ali.

Sikhala denied the charges, arguing that he was simply acting as the family's lawyer in their quest to find Ali, whose body parts were later discovered in a well.

However, magistrate Tafadzwa Miti said evidence showed that Sikhala and opposition lawmaker Godfrey Sithole were responsible for the violence that followed Ali's death near the capital, Harare.



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114) conducts routine underway operations in the Taiwan Strait, on Sept 9, 2023. China accused the US of abusing international law with its military maneuvers in the western Pacific, one day after an American naval destroyer sailed through the politically sensitive Taiwan Strait. (AP)

China accuses US of abusing int'l law by sailing in Taiwan Strait, SChina Sea

China accused the US of abusing international law with its military maneuvers in the western Pacific, one day after an American naval destroyer sailed through the politically sensitive Taiwan Strait.

While China welcomes military-to-military communication with the United States, Defense Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said Thursday that U.S. warplane and warship activity "on China's doorstep" is the root cause of the problems between the two

military powers. "The United States side should stop abusing international law, cease all dangerous and provocative behavior, and strictly restrain the activities of front-line troops, which is the fundamental way to avoid accidents at sea and in the air," he said at a monthly briefing.

The USS John Finn sailed Wednesday though the 160-kilometer (100-mile)-wide waterway that separates China from Taiwan, a self-governing is-

land that China claims as its own territory.

China agreed to resume military contacts with the US at a meeting last November between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping in California. In part, the argument for doing so was to be able to manage an unintentional collision or other incident that could happen as both sides hold drills and patrol the waters in regional hotspots including the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. (AP)

Asia

Washington affirms bipartisan support for Taipei

'US, SKorea preparing for war with NKorea'

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 25, (AP): Russia's top diplomat accused the United States, South Korea and Japan on Wednesday of preparing for war with North Korea.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told a U.N. news conference that this new military bloc brought together by the United States is building up military activity and conducting large-scale exercises. The United States, South Korea and Japan have described their combined military drills as defensive in nature and necessary to cope with growing North Korean nuclear threats.

All of a sudden South Korea's rhetoric "became even more hostile towards Pyongyang," Lavrov said. "In Japan as well, we hear aggressive rhetoric" and it is seriously talking about setting up NATO infrastructure with US assistance.

Lavrov said the objective of the military bloc is clearly stated: "They're preparing for war with the DPRK," the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Russian minister said the United States and its Asian allies have also been talking about developing their cooperation. "It's quite wishy-washy the way they phrased it, but they said something like nuclear-related cooperation," he said.

Last week, the three countries conducted combined naval exercises involving an American aircraft carrier in their latest show of strength against nuclear-armed North Korea.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been on a provocative run of weapons testing and threats that raised regional tensions to their highest point in years. Senior diplomats from the three allies were to meet in Seoul to discuss the worsening standoff with Pyongyang.

On the other hand, Lavrov said Russia's relationship with the DPRK is "proceeding nicely, its developing quite actively."

"We see that the DPRK is trying to be independent, not to dance anybody's tune," he said.

law, as well and national and international legislation protecting against discrimination against women.

The code was based on "customary prac-

tices based on patriarchal and archaic concepts of family, which discriminates against women and today is incompatible with the Law of the Constitution," the Chamber said



Police officers gather outside the Kyoto District Court in Kyoto, western Japan on Jan 25 ahead of the sentencing hearing for Shinji Aoba. Japanese court sentenced Aoba to death after finding him guilty of murder and other crimes Thursday for carrying out a shocking arson attack on an anime studio in Kyoto, Japan, that killed 36 people. (AP)

Also:

TAIPEI, Taiwan: A bipartisan delegation from the United States Congress reaffirmed support for Taiwan during a visit Thursday, following the election of its new president. The delegation's visit is the first from US lawmakers to the island since the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party won a third-straight term in the Jan. 13 presidential election.

China, America's chief competitor for global influence, claims Taiwan as its own territory and threatens to use force to bring the self-ruling island under its control. Beijing strongly condemned **Lai Ching-te's** election and appears set to continue its policy of refusing to engage with the island's gov-

ernment - a practice that's been in place since Tsai Ing-wen's election in 2016.

Japanese man gets death: A Japanese court sentenced a man to death after finding him guilty of murder and other crimes Thursday for carrying out a shocking arson attack on an anime studio in Kyoto, Japan, that killed 36 people.

The Kyoto District Court said it found the defendant, **Shinji Aoba**, mentally capable to face punishment for the crimes and announced his capital punishment after a recess in a two-part session on Thursday.

Heavy snow in Japan: Weather officials in Japan predicted more heavy snow Thursday, a day after nearly 800 vehicles were trapped for hours on an expressway in central Japan.

The 6-kilometer (4-mile) traffic jam happened after two trailers got stuck in the snow Wednesday, forcing soldiers to come in and help free the vehicles.

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's top court on Thursday restored a prominent detained activist's conviction over a banned vigil commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown on pro-democracy protesters, marking the latest setback for the city's democracy supporters.

Chow Hang-tung, a former leader of the now-disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, had been sentenced to 15 months in prison in January 2022 for inciting others to take part in the vigil banned by the police on public health grounds during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.

Judge Paul Rueda said the changes were made based on a case where a person sought to reverse the current order of her surnames so that her mother's name is placed first. The court added that keeping the law as is also limited citizens' right to freely develop their own personalities and identities. (AP)

Taxco shuttered by gang killings: The bullet-ridden bodies of two detectives were found on the outskirts of Taxco, a colonial town in central Mexico that draws throngs of tourists to its silver workshops, authorities said Wednesday.

Prosecutors in the violence-plagued state of Guerrero said the two detectives worked for the state prosecutors office and had been reported missing the day before. Local media said their bodies showed signs of torture.

The grisly discovery came as Taxco endured a days-long strike by private taxi and van drivers who suffered threats from one of several drug gangs fighting for control of the area.

The lack of transportation got so bad that on Tuesday the city government had to offer people rides in the back of police pickup trucks, about the only vehicles that dared to travel.

Taxi and van drivers refused to work since the weekend, when one driver was shot to death in Taxco. (AP)



Workers remove the remnants of a Captain Cook statue in Melbourne, Australia on Jan 25 after vandals cut the statue off at the ankles. Two monuments symbolizing Australia's colonial past were damaged by protesters on Thursday ahead of an increasingly polarizing national holiday that marks the anniversary of British settlement. (AP)



Arévalo



Porras

Lat/Am

'I'm not going to resign' - AG: The Guatemala attorney general leading efforts to prosecute President **Bernardo Arévalo** and his party refused to step down Wednesday ahead of a meeting with the president.

"I am not going to resign," said **Consuelo Porras** in a recorded video message released by her office on the same day that Arévalo said he would ask her to step down in a face-to-face meeting.

Porras also threatened to take legal action against anyone who tried to push her out and cited court rulings in arguing that she is also not under any obligation to meet with Arévalo, because her office "is an autonomous and independent institution."

"You (President Arévalo) as the maximum authority of the nation must respect what the (constitution) and the country's laws establish," Porras said in the video.

Porras has faced months of protests demanding her resignation for her office's interference in last year's elections. Her office has pursued investigations of Arévalo, his vice president and their party, as well as of electoral officials. Her agents have ordered waves of arrest warrants, raids of the party offices and seizures of electoral records and ballots.

For weeks, Indigenous groups blocked the country's highways and for even longer have maintained a constant protest outside Porras' office. (AP)

Citizens allowed to choose names: Costa Rica's Supreme Court of Justice reported Wednesday that it was no longer obligatory to place the paternal surname before the maternal surname on a person's identification.

In Spanish-speaking nations, people often go by two first and last names given by their parents. The court's decision would effectively allow citizens to choose the order of their own last names.

The court modified a piece of civil code originally mandating that names had to be written in that order. It made the decision on the grounds that the original code contradicts the right of equality before the

oil down

The price of Kuwaiti crude oil went down by 31 cents to USD 81.68 per barrel on Wednesday, compared to USD 81.99 pb the day before, said the Kuwaiti Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Thursday.

The price of Brent crude oil went up by 49 cents to USD 80.04 pb, and the West Texas intermediate rose by 72 cents to reach USD 75.09 (KUNA)

Al-Oula proposal gets GA nod

Al-Oula Investment Company has officially endorsed the protective settlement proposal, marking a crucial step before its submission to the competent court, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The announcement, conveyed to the Boursa Kuwait, also disclosed the approval of the extraordinary general assembly agenda, specifically focusing on the adoption of the preventive settlement proposal.

This development comes in the wake of a recent decision by the Supreme Court to extend the suspension period for all judicial claims and implementation measures against "First Invest-

ment" by one month.

The extension, effective from January 7, 2024, allows for ongoing deliberations and settlements.

The financial performance of "First Investment" in the first nine months of the past year indicates a downturn, with reported losses amounting to 404.01 thousand dinars.

This contrasts with the corresponding period in 2022, which recorded a profit of 1.77 million dinars. As Al-Oula Investment Company navigates the protective settlement process, stakeholders await the unfolding developments in the coming stages.

GCC, UK discuss possible FTAs

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi has discussed with Anne-Marie Trevelyan -- UK's Minister for International Trade -- the issue of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) between the two sides.

Over a videoconference, Al-Budaiwi told Trevelyan that the GCC was looking forward to work on FTAs with several countries and regions to boost its economy and open international and re-

gional markets for Gulf products, according to a GCC statement.

According to UK Government's official website, on November 5-16, 2023, the UK and the GCC held their fifth round of FTA negotiations. Most of the chapters advanced the draft text of the treaty. Over 40 sessions, technical talks were held covering 21 policy issues. Latest figures show a trade volume of GBP 61.5 billion (USD 78.6 billion). (KUNA)

Market Movements

25-01-2024

		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	- Nikkei	+0.03	36,236.47	UAE	- DFM	-0.19	4,173.55
EGYPT	- EGX 30	+0.29	27,666.18	PAKISTAN	- KSE 100	-0.82	64,219.49
				PHILIPPINES	- PSEi	-0.10	6,673.50
				SAUDI	- Tadawul	-0.10	12,161.56

Business

Global IPO proceeds plunged 33% y-o-y

GCC listing momentum continued in 2023

By Kamco Invest

GCC listing momentum continues in 2023, albeit at smaller ticket-sizes

After witnessing strong activity throughout 2022, major GCC stock exchanges remained active with listing momentum in terms of IPO numbers, however issuance proceeds dropped even as the MSCI GCC gained by 3.7% y-o-y on mixed performances from individual countries. Total number of IPOs in the GCC declined marginally to 46 issuances in 2023 from 48 issuances in 2022, as per our analysis. Proceeds for 2023 from GCC issuers dropped by 54% to USD 10.79 Bn from USD 23.38 Bn in 2022, based on data from Bloomberg and stock exchanges. Although issuance numbers were driven by smaller-ticket IPOs, post-listing performance from larger names was largely positive. Solid performances from larger stocks were backed by clear signaling and IPO pitches from companies and investment bankers about either growth prospects which drove solid price appreciation or strong dividend yields (5%-6%). Dividend yields from recurring revenue generating and utility companies were sought after by investors, as many of these names also included state-owned enterprises previously, as governments in the region divested their stakes to push ahead with their diversification plans.

UAE repeats with higher issuance proceeds; Saudi Exchange dominates deals yet again Saudi Arabia continued its leadership position for IPO issuances from the region in 2023, as 35 out of the 46 GCC IPOs debuted on either the Nomu or Tadawul. Within Saudi Arabia, the Nomu - Parallel market dominated the number of issuances with 27 deals, as compared to 8 deals for the Main Market. UAE continued its domination in terms of IPO proceeds raking in almost 56.3% of the issuance proceeds at around USD 6.07 Bn from its 8 listing on UAE exchanges in 2023. The average listing size of IPOs on UAE exchanges was ~USD 759 Mn and was significantly higher than the rest of the GCC average listing size of ~USD 124 Mn. The largest IPO from the region was that of ADNOC Gas that supplies around 60% of the UAE's natural gas requirements. The company garnered USD 2.48 Bn from the sale of 5% of its business via its primary market issuance as per Bloomberg.

Global IPO proceeds plunge a further 33% y-o-y in 2023 after a dismal 2022

IPO markets globally declined in 2023 despite most equity markets witnessing healthy double-digit gains during the year, as seen from the 21.8% y-o-y gain in the MSCI World index in 2023. Though secondary market performance typically drives IPO activity, aggressive monetary tightening leading to higher financing costs kept companies away from the public markets on valuation concerns. This drove global IPO numbers lower by 8% y-o-y to 1,298 IPOs and caused proceeds to decline by 33% y-o-y to USD 123.2 Bn, as per data from EY.

Pipeline from GCC IPO candidates in 2024 suggests a repeat is not out of reach

GCC IPO volumes - 2013 to 2023

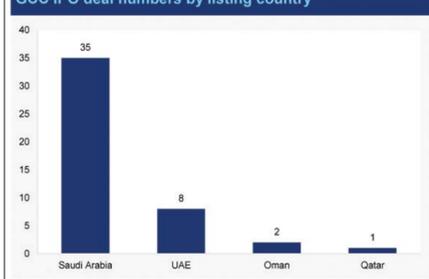


Source: Kamco Invest Research, Bloomberg, GCC stock exchanges

GCC IPO proceeds (USD Bn) - 2013 to 2023

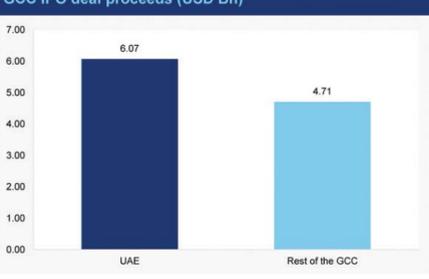


GCC IPO deal numbers by listing country



Source: Kamco Invest Research, Bloomberg, GCC stock exchanges

GCC IPO deal proceeds (USD Bn)



The backdrop for IPOs from 2023 such as interest rates, geopolitics, secondary stock market volatility and oil price volatility will continue to remain crucial in 2024. The pipeline for 2024 based on our estimates at the start of 2024 range around 28-30 companies between announced, mandated, and rumored GCC IPO issuances, which suggests that a repeat of 2023 is possible as similar estimates were available the previous year. However, if trends from 2023 were to repeat, we also believe that it is likely that issuance proceeds will be dominated by a fewer number of larger issues, while several smaller IPOs should debut on the markets such as the Nomu. Further, we expect sectoral participation to be diverse similar to trends witnessed in 2023.

ADES Holding Company - owner and operator of offshore and onshore rigs from Saudi Arabia recorded the second largest IPO from the region with issuance proceeds of USD 1.2 Bn before listing on the Tadawul Main Market. Pure Health from UAE rounded off the top three IPOs from the GCC raising USD 0.99 Bn

from its IPO and subsequently listing on the ADX. Oman (MSX) contributed with the fourth largest IPO in the region with OQ Gas Network that raised USD 771 Mn for 49% of its stake based on Bloomberg estimates. Fellow energy name - Abraj Energy Services also raised USD 244.1 Mn via its IPO and listed on the MSX, as both issues from Oman were significantly oversubscribed. Separately, Qatar witnessed the IPO of Managed IT services & solutions provider - MEEZA and the company raised USD 232.67 from its public offering and was listed in Aug-2023.

In terms of sectoral split, Materials (6) and Consumer (6) and Transportation (6) split top honors in terms of deal numbers, across the region. Healthcare & Pharma (5), Financials (5), Technology (4) and Energy (4) were the other broad sectors which saw a higher number of IPO forays. Sectoral participation from the region remained diverse with corporates with unique niche operating models coming to the primary market.

Industrials tops global IPO deals, Tech reclaims

top spot in proceeds but witnesses sequentially lower trends

Asia Pacific was the key market that drove the decline in global IPO numbers and proceeds as the number of IPOs were down by 18% y-o-y, while issuance proceeds sunk by 44% y-o-y to USD 69.4 Bn, as per EY. EMEIA also saw a 39% decline in issuance proceeds (USD 31.1 Bn) but was able to witness a 7% increase in IPO numbers. Sectoral trends turned towards Consumer and Industrials sectors based on data from EY Global IPO Trends 2023. The report ascribed the growth in these sectors to buoyant trading activity as global supply chains shift from traditional markets and move towards new geographies such as India, Indonesia and Japan, which spurred listing from these countries.

In terms of number of issuances, Industrials reportedly topped with 265 listings registering a growth of 19% y-o-y, while listings in the Consumer sector grew by 20% y-o-y to 224 IPOs. As per EY, the Technology sector reclaimed its top spot after being beaten by Energy in 2022 in terms of IPO proceeds, nevertheless, the Technology sector continued to experience a sequential decline in IPO numbers, valuations, and after-market performance like 2022. Within the Technology sector, Semiconductor companies reportedly dominated other industries in 2023 with 58% of proceeds and was up 30% y-o-y. EY mentioned that the energy sector experienced a sharp decrease in both deal numbers and value, while mentioning that the number of IPOs where the offer prices fell below the initial filing range increased. The report highlighted that IPO volumes (-24%) and proceeds (-38%) within the Health and Life Sciences sector significantly declined on valuation repricing, as interest rates rose, and cost of capital increased.

Clear thesis messaging from GCC corporates & investment bankers could lead to another strong IPO showing in 2024

While IPO valuations have not been a concern for frontline issuances from the region, Investment bankers in 2024 would be cognizant in advising corporates about the interest for their issues from institutional investors who look to accommodate deployable capacity for new IPO issuances. Past trends of strong interest and post-listing market performance for idiosyncratic businesses with clear positioning of growth prospects, competitive position and/or dividend yield expectations should encourage IPO candidates to enter the primary market with confidence, albeit within the backdrop of stable secondary market performances. Further the pipeline of announced, mandated, and rumored GCC IPO issuances suggests that Tadawul could continue as the main listing destination for the region followed by UAE exchanges - ADX & DFM. Governments continue to support IPO markets in the region both in terms of bringing suitable state-owned candidates to the market and initiatives such as the Abu Dhabi IPO Fund (ADIPOF) through which prospective companies within the Technology and Hospitality industries are reportedly expected to reach markets by the end of 2024.

Kuwait's local liquidity experienced fluctuations in 1st 11 mths of 2023

0.67% decrease recorded

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Kuwait's local liquidity experienced fluctuations in the first 11 months of 2023, with a decrease of 0.67%, equivalent to approximately 13.4 million dinars.

This decline came after the liquidity figure stood at 1.999 billion dinars in December 2022. However, a noteworthy increase of 1.25% was observed in November, amounting to 24.4 million dinars.

The total liquidity for the month reached 1.986 billion dinars, compared to 1.962 billion dinars in October. On an annual basis, there was a 0.87% increase, representing 17.3 million dinars, compared to the end of November 2022, which stood at 1.969 billion dinars.

Breaking down the data for November, the Central Bank of Kuwait reported that the currency in circulation is divided into banknotes and coins. Banknotes increased by 1.26% on a monthly basis, amounting to 24.3 million dinars. This increase brought the total to 1.95 billion dinars in November, compared to 1.93 billion dinars in October. On an annual basis, there was an 0.87% increase, totaling 17 million dinars.

The supply of coins witnessed a growth of 1.15% during the first 11 months of 2023, reaching a value of 360 thousand dinars. This increase was observed from 31.134 million dinars at the end of December to

83.072 million dinar allocated for ICT implementation at Kuwait airport T2

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: According to sources within the Ministry of Public Works, an allocation of 83.072 million dinars has been designated for the implementation of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system in the Kuwait Airport Terminal (T2) project. This funding is part of the reserve item for works, and the ministry, particularly the major projects sector, collaborated with the Public Administration of Civil Aviation, the project's beneficiary. The project's data communications network equipment system will be implemented through an American company specified in the contractual documents.

In a related development, the

31.494 million dinars in November. On an annual basis, the increase remained consistent at 1.15% in value.

The report further details the distribution of banknotes across various categories, such as a quarter dinar, half a dinar, a dinar, five dinars, ten dinars, and twenty dinars. Notably, the twenty dinar category witnessed an increase in supply by 0.8%, reaching about 9.2 million

Ministry has formed an investigation committee to examine the Information Technology system and a separate local network for the Ministry of Interior in the Package (1) project. The committee determined the necessity of a distinct network for the Ministry of Interior, leading to ongoing coordination with the ministry's representatives. This is in preparation for obtaining regulatory approvals for the change order associated with these works.

On a separate note, sources revealed four active contracts for road maintenance totaling 14.9 million dinars. These contracts aim to address urgent maintenance needs in critical areas with issues such as potholes and flying asphalt. Some of these contracts are nearing expiration, with one already expired at the end of this month for road main-

tenance in Farwaniya Governorate (main roads - Khaitan - Farwaniya) at a total value of 5.280 million dinars. Another contract is set to expire in May for road maintenance in agricultural areas in the southern region, costing 1.797 million dinars.

The last two contracts for road maintenance in Hawalli, totaling 5.992 million dinars, will conclude in June, while the contract for road maintenance in agricultural areas in the northern region, valued at 1.811 million dinars, will conclude in August. With these contracts on the verge of expiration, there is a pressing need to expedite the offering of road maintenance projects recently announced by the ministry. Delays could exacerbate the crisis, leading to deteriorating road conditions and posing risks to the safety of citizens, residents, and their property.

The balance of coins includes denominations of 100 fils, 50 fils, 20 fils, 10 fils, and 5 fils, each with its nominal value. The balance of a penny amounted to about 12 thousand dinars.

These figures reflect the dynamic nature of Kuwait's local liquidity, showcasing both short-term fluctuations and long-term trends in the country's monetary environment.

Unique, free & without fees

Warba launches 'Zakat Calculator' for its clients

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Warba Bank announced the launch of the "Zakat Calculator", which is a new and unique service that includes calculating the zakat on gold and Warba Bank shares at the side menu of the Warba Bank application, noting that this service is free of charge.

The Executive Manager - Sharia Department at Warba Bank, Dr. Essa Al-Qassar, reviewed the most prominent advantages of the new service, the most important of which is that all customers can benefit from the Zakat Calculator by choosing the type of classified gold karat and the number of grams hoarded so that the Zakat Calculator can calculate it immediately, and the gold prices are updated directly according to the price of Dar Al-Sabaiq for each type of gold karat available to the clients.

Al-Qassar further said that the client can know the price of gold when choosing any type of gold karat available 18/21/22/24, and the gold zakat will be calculated immediately and clearly in Kuwaiti Dinars. Adding that the customer can calculate the Zakat on Warba Bank shares in the "Zakat on Shares" box, which is specific to Warba Bank shares, so the client can choose the year in which he wants to inquire about Warba Bank shares, enter the number of shares owned, and the calculation for zakat on the shares will appear, if the zakat is paid by Warba Bank, and an immediate message will appear informing the client of that.

Al-Qassar pointed out that the "Zakat Calculator" works in the Warba Bank application at the side menu of the application that runs on the iOS, Apple Store & Android Google Play systems, where the Warba Bank application is downloaded from the store and the zakat on gold calculator service is used.

Al-Qassar stressed Warba Bank's keenness to facilitate its clients' access to the information they need at any time and from anywhere, which makes the Bank seek to find digital solutions that keep it in constant communication



Dr. Essa Al-Qassar

with its clients, therefore, it took the lead in offering unique and new services and products to the Kuwaiti market.

He added: "Warba Bank was the first during the last three years in many of the services and products that it offered in the Kuwaiti market, and sometimes even the first in the Gulf or the Middle East, and some of them were a surprise to competitors and customers alike."

Al-Qassar continued, saying: "Warba Bank recently launched a distinctive set of Sharia products, services and solutions that keep pace with the Bank's continuous endeavor to keep pace with the aspirations and needs of its clients in various aspects of their daily lives, which brings them more ease, comfort, and save their time."

He explained that the success of these products and services was not a coincidence; Rather, it is the result of numerous studies carried out by the relevant departments based on continuous follow-up of our clients, and learning about their various points of view, whether through continuous direct meetings or through various means of communication, to learn about clients' opinions.

Warba Bank is one of the banks that has achieved great successes in a short period, as it occupied a leading position in the field of Islamic digital banking services for individuals, and it is one of the largest local banks in the number of shareholders.

Ahli United Bank congratulates the winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw

Ahli United Bank (AUB) Congratulates the Winners of Al-Hassad Weekly Draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account, which was held on 24 January, 2024 at the bank's head office in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as a representative from Deloitte as the external auditor to oversee the draws as per the instructions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in this regard.

The Bank Announced 10 Winners Of KD 1,000 As Follows: Ahmed Ahmed Abdelmagid Ali, Basemah Abduljaleel Abbas Alsaif-

far, Abdullah Fahid Khaled Al-Zoabi, Shahad Bader Fahad Thunayan Al-Ghanim, Ibrahim Mohamed Ibrahim Hakam, Fahhad A M Al-Mutairi, Fawzi E. Abdullah, Abdulwahab Mohammad Abdullah Al-Jalahmah, Nourah Barjas Faleh Al-Ajmi and Salwa Falah Humoud Al-Mutairi.

In its new package, Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account presents a broader variety of rewards. Customers could now participate in the draw to win a monthly KD 100,000 prize, in addition to 10 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 each. The grand quarterly prize of KD 250,000 in

cash for the winner remains the most important aspiration of customers. It is a real chance for them to realize their life dreams. In addition to this attractive package, there will be the annual expected profits on the basis of a Wakala contract that increases the attractiveness of the Al-Hassad Islamic Saving Account to customers.

Al-Hassad Account provides a suite of unique features, including the simplest and easiest savings program and a unique account-opening feature online with all ease with an instant deposit option.

AUB flyer

'Bank needs to see more proof that painful inflation has been beaten down'

Financial markets are jonesing for interest rate cuts, not so fast, says ECB

FRANKFURT, Germany, Jan 25, (AP) - European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde will likely push back Thursday against expectations for quick interest rate cuts even as Europe's economy sputters and financial markets froth in hopes of cheaper credit that would boost business activity and stock prices.



President of European Central Bank Christine Lagarde speaks in the panel 'The Global Economic Outlook' on the last day of the forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, Friday, Jan. 19, 2024. (AP)

She will likely underline that the bank needs to see more proof that painful inflation - which has made everything from groceries to energy more expensive - has been beaten down, analysts say.

Lagarde has indicated that the ECB's next move would likely be a cut to borrowing costs this summer but said its benchmark rate will need to stay at a record high for "as long as necessary" to unequivocally squelch inflation.

The ECB leader is faced with financial markets that are anticipating cuts as early as April, and stock prices that have risen and fallen depending on hopes for the boost from lower rates.

Lagarde has cautioned that the bank will make decisions based on the latest figures about the economy's health rather than making longer-term promises. The ECB is expected to leave rates unchanged during Thursday's meeting at its Frankfurt headquarters.

Stock investors saw their holdings, such as those in U.S. retirement accounts, soar in the last weeks of 2023 as the U.S. Federal Reserve and ECB indicated that a rapid series of rate hikes was ending. Fed Chair Jerome Powell said officials discussed prospects for rate cuts at the bank's December meeting, and the U.S. central bank has indicated it would cut its key interest rate three times this year.

The S&P 500, a broad measure of U.S. large company shares, has hit record highs this week, and European indexes

also have risen. The global stock rally faces questions about whether gains can continue.

Rate cuts make riskier investments like stocks more attractive than safer bets like money market accounts and certificates of deposit. They also stimulate business activity and thus prospects for share prices to go higher.

Expectations for rate cuts have been fueled by the rapid drop of inflation in Europe to 2.9% in December from the peak of 10.6% in October 2022. In a little over a year, the ECB raised its key rate from negative levels - which made it

British billionaire Lewis pleads guilty in insider trading case

NEW YORK, Jan 25, (AP) - British billionaire Joe Lewis, whose family trust owns the Tottenham Hotspur soccer club, pleaded guilty Wednesday to insider trading and conspiracy charges in New York, saying he knew that sharing non-public information about publicly traded companies was wrong and that his crimes have left him "so embarrassed."

The 86-year-old businessman

entered the plea in Manhattan federal court six months after he was charged in the case. He had been free on \$300 million bail, with a yacht and private plane serving as collateral.

He told Judge Jessica G.L. Clarke that he agreed in 2019 to share secrets he knew about publicly traded companies with two other people who bought stock in those companies. He said that he

shared confidential tips with another person in July and September of the same year and that individual bought stocks in the companies.

"I knew that I was violating a legal duty not to make those recommendations because the nonpublic information had been entrusted to me in confidence," he said. "I knew at the time what I was doing was wrong, and I am so embarrassed and I apologize to the court for my conduct."

cheap to borrow money to buy a house or invest in a business - to a record-high 4%.

While rate hikes are a central bank's chief weapon to snuff out inflation, they also can slow the economy - which has been seen in Europe and countries around the world, feeding expectations for cuts now that inflation has dropped closer to preferred levels.

The economy of the 20 European Union member countries that share the euro currency, where the ECB sets interest rates, shrank slightly in the July-to-September quarter of last year. Expectations are no better for the following months.

The economic squeeze follows a surge of inflation fueled by a supply chain crunch during the COVID-19 pandemic

and then higher food and energy prices tied to Russia's war in Ukraine. The worst of the energy costs and supply problems have eased, but inflation has spread through the economy as workers push for higher wages to keep up with the boost in prices they're paying.

Analysts say there are good reasons for the ECB to move cautiously. For one, having to reverse course and raise rates if inflation doesn't keep falling - or spikes again - would only prolong the pain from tighter credit.

Another is the speed of pay raises for Europe's workers. ECB officials have indicated that they want to see figures for wage increases for the first months of this year before deciding where they think inflation is headed.



Employees look up at the construction site of Hinkley Point C nuclear power station in Somerset, England, Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2022. A major nuclear plant that Britain's government hopes will generate affordable, low-carbon energy could cost up to 46 billion pounds, or \$59 billion, and the completion date could be delayed to after 2029. (AP)

UK's flagship nuclear plant could cost up to \$59 bn, developer says

LONDON, Jan 25, (AP) - A major nuclear plant that Britain's government hopes will generate affordable, low-carbon energy could cost up to 46 billion pounds (\$59 billion), and the completion date could be delayed to after 2029, the firm developing it said Wednesday.

The U.K. government says nuclear projects like the Hinkley Point C plant are a key part of its plans to ensure greater energy independence and achieve its "net zero" by 2050 strategy.

But a re-evaluation showed that the final bill for the plant, being built in Somerset in southwest England, could soar to up to 34 billion pounds in 2015 prices - or 43 billion pounds in current value, French energy giant EDF said.

Officials had previously said that the Hinkley plant would start producing electricity in 2027, but the completion date has now been pushed back to 2029 at the earliest.

"Like other infrastructure projects, we have found civil construction slower than we hoped and faced inflation, labor and material shortages - on top of Covid and Brexit disruption," said Stuart Crooks, managing director of Hinkley Point C.

EDF and the U.K. government have said the plant will become a major

source of decarbonized electricity supply for the U.K., generating enough to power 6 million homes and providing some 7% of the country's electricity.

The Conservative government is investing heavily in nuclear power, with ambitions to generate up to a quarter of the country's projected electricity demand by 2050.

The move has divided opinion and drawn criticism from green groups.

Some experts say nuclear energy will be needed to help nations wean off fossil fuels, but there are concerns about the substantial cost and time-scale of building large nuclear reactors as well as worries over safety and nuclear waste. Other clean energy, such as wind farms, can be built and come online much faster.

Critics, including the U.K. government's own climate advisers, say the U.K.'s support for new domestic oil and gas production and its slow pace in transitioning to green energy were undermining its "net zero" pledges.

Authorities have promised to reduce emissions by 68% by 2050, eventually reaching net-zero - or releasing only as much greenhouse gas as can be absorbed again through natural or technological means - by 2050.

US growth slowed last quarter but suggests resilient economy

GDP expanded at solid annual pace of 2%

WASHINGTON, Jan 25, (AP) - The nation's economy was supposed to have sunk into recession by now, dragged down by the highest interest rates in two decades and a resulting slump in borrowing and spending.

Instead, the U.S. economy has kept chugging along. Even more encouraging, inflation, which touched a four-decade high in 2022, has edged steadily lower without the painful layoffs that most economists had thought would be necessary to slow the acceleration of prices.

On Thursday, the Commerce Department is expected to report that the nation's gross domestic product - the economy's total output of goods and services - rose at an annual rate of around 2% from October through December.

Growth rate

That would mark a deceleration from a vigorous 4.9% growth rate in the July-September quarter. But it would still showcase the surprising durability of the world's largest economy, marking the sixth straight quarter in which GDP has expanded at a solid annual pace of 2% or more. Helping fuel that growth has been steady spending by consumers, whose purchases drive more than two-thirds of the economy.

The economy's outlook had looked far bleaker a year ago. As recently as April 2023, an economic model published by the Conference Board, a business group, had pegged the likelihood of a U.S. recession over the



Jose Vasquez, left, Gayle Goschie, center, and Eloy Luevanos set up a harrow behind a grain hopper in preparation for planting winter barley at Goschie Farms in Mount Angel, Ore., Oct. 31, 2023. On Thursday, the government issues the first of three estimates of GDP growth in the United States during the October-December quarter. (AP)

next 12 months at close to 99%. The widespread fear was that the Federal Reserve's numerous interest hikes, in seeking to tame inflation, would slow borrowing and spending so much as to trigger a deep downturn. That is what typically has occurred when the nation's central bank has aggressively jacked up rates to fight inflation.

Now, there's growing optimism that the Fed is on track to deliver a rare "soft landing" - raising borrowing rates enough to cool growth and hiring and ease price increases yet not so much as to send the economy into a tailspin. A moderation in GDP growth last quarter would be consistent with that outlook.

Even as inflation has slowed significantly, overall prices remain nearly 17% above where they were before the pandemic erupted three years ago, which has frustrated many Americans. That fact will likely raise a pivotal question for the nation's voters, many of whom are still feeling the lingering financial and psychological effects of the worst bout of inflation in four decades. Which will carry more weight in the presidential election: The sharp drop in inflation or the fact that most prices are much higher than they were three years ago?

The Fed began raising its benchmark rate in March 2022 in response to the resurgence in inflation that accompanied the economy's recovery from the pandemic recession. By the time its hikes ended in July last year, the central bank had raised its influential rate from near zero to roughly 5.4%, the highest level since 2001.

As the Fed's rate hikes worked their way through the economy, year-over-year inflation slowed from 9.1% in

UBS-Credit Suisse merger sparks calls for reform

Swiss financial regulator gets new leader

GENEVA, Jan 25, (AP) - Switzerland's financial markets authority is getting a new chief executive as the rich Alpine country looks at ways to strengthen regulations after UBS strenuously took over ailing rival Credit Suisse last year partly to prevent a global banking meltdown.

The Swiss government on Wednesday selected Stefan Walter, a 59-year-old German national who was director-general of the European Central Bank for the last decade, to head the Swiss financial authority known as FINMA.

The agency played a key role, along with government officials and bank executives, in striking the megamerger worth 3 billion Swiss francs (\$3.48 billion) after Credit Suisse customers rapidly pulled out their money following years of scandals. Swiss authorities feared the collapse of such a major lending institution could further roil global financial markets following the failure of two U.S. banks last year.

The troubles at Credit Suisse threatened to unhinge Switzerland's position as a leading financial market, and the takeover left the country with only one internationally important bank: UBS.

A FINMA report issued last month laid out lessons from the brush with banking catastrophe, calling for a stronger regulatory toolbox that would pinpoint responsibilities with banks, grant the financial agency the power to impose fines, and impose tougher rules on corporate governance, among other things.

A parliamentary panel created after the government-orchestrated merger has been looking into the origins of the deal. Plus, Switzerland's executive branch, known as the Federal Council, is expected this spring to issue a report on "too big to fail" rules that will inform parliament's debate on whether and how to beef up banking regulations.

Walter takes over from an interim chief in place since the September departure of former FINMA CEO Urban Angehrn, who left citing the health consequences of a "high and permanent stress level" from being in the position.

Before Angehrn, British-Swiss national Mark Branson led the financial authority from 2014 to 2021.



Walter

June 2022, the fastest rate in four decades, to 3.4% as of last month. That marked a striking improvement but still leaves inflation above the Fed's 2% target.

The progress so far has come at surprisingly little economic cost. Employers have added a healthy 225,000 jobs a month over the past year. And unem-

ployment has remained below 4% for 23 straight months, the longest such streak since the 1960s.

The once red-hot job market has cooled somewhat, easing pressure on companies to raise pay to keep or attract employees and then pass on their higher labor costs to their customers through price hikes.

Govt seeks to clean up its financial image

Cyprus sees Russian bank deposits plunge

NICOSIA, Cyprus, Jan 25, (AP) - Cyprus has made headway in weaning itself off Russian cash and business as it tries to clean up its image, according to official figures, while a visiting team of U.S. officials is helping the government look at cases of alleged violations of sanctions against Russia.

According to figures obtained by The Associated Press on Wednesday, Russian deposits held in Cypriot banks fell 76% from 2014 to 2022, while Ukrainian deposits shrank by 67%. The number of Russian clients using Cypriot banks dropped 82% in the same period, while Ukrainian clients fell by 54%.

For years, Cyprus was known as an ask-few-questions jurisdiction whose banks welcomed money from wealthy depositors, despite their shady connections. It was especially popular with Russia's wealthy oligarchs.

But that began to change following a 2013 financial crisis that brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy. Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, who took office in March last year, is vowing to enforce sanctions related to Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. He says the country is committed to "being on the right side of



A woman walks outside of a branch of 'Bank of Cyprus' in central capital Nicosia, Cyprus, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024. (AP)

history," condemning Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine.

According to the same figures, Cypriot banks severed business ties with nearly 60,000 customers - mostly Russian and Ukrainian nationals - between 2014 and 2022, while some 126,000 accounts have been suspended, amounting to approximately 40 billion euros (\$43.5 billion).

Local media recently reported that several large Russian-owned companies registered in Cyprus have transferred their headquarters abroad owing to the scrutiny. It's unclear which and how many of these companies have moved out of the country. Numerous AP requests for information from Cypriot authorities went unanswered.

What's On

KGL honored for contributions to Children's Hospital partnership

ABCK AmCham Kuwait wraps up 2023 with Winter Social event

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: ABCK AmCham Kuwait hosts its end of the year Winter Social event, bringing together members and friends for an evening of networking, meaningful connections, and reminiscing on 2023's achievements as a Chamber through its partnerships.

The Winter Social event was introduced by Omar Ben Naji, Board Member of AmCham Kuwait, who provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere for AmCham Kuwait's diverse community. Ben Naji also spoke to guests about AmCham Kuwait's newly formed Disabilities Focus Group whose goal is to create more inclusion and awareness about people with disabilities, as well as finding ways to include them in the economic fabric of the country through the support of the private sector.

Ben Naji also gave special recognition to Kuwait & Gulf Link (KGL) for their support in regard to AmCham Kuwait's partnership with the Children's Hospital - Bayt Abdallah, in which KGL donated several toys and stationary items for the children's wards. The Winter Social included a special acknowledgment of AmCham Kuwait's members, whose continued support plays a vital role in the Chamber's mission to promote economic growth and collaboration between the United States and Kuwait. The event also showcased the Chamber's commitment to fostering a strong and supportive business network, promoting



Group photo during ABCK AmCham Kuwait's Winter Social event.

ing collaboration and engagement among its members. The AmCham Kuwait team organized a raffle to conclude the evening, featuring exciting prizes. These include two vouchers for Thursday's BBQ Night at Teatro and access to

the spa at Hilton Hotel, a pass for the Aquatic pool, a Friday brunch for two, a one-night stay for two with breakfast at Crowne Plaza Al-Thuraya City, three lunch or dinner buffet invitations from Al-Hamra Hotel for Friday or Saturday,

two complimentary stays in their deluxe suite, two chocolate baskets from Bustan Khaleeji, two full-fledged Safety Kits from Fire & Safety Experts Co., and from The Sultan, six cards for use at Sultan Stores and two fruit baskets..



Faculty members during the ribbon cutting ceremony.



Inaugural ceremony



General photos of the capstone exhibition.



Exhibition highlights student creativity

AUK Art & Graphic Design Department unveils 17th Biannual Capstone Exhibit

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Art & Graphic Design Department at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) launched its Fall 2023 Capstone Design Exhibition which took place at the AUK Exhibition Center. The exhibition offered senior students an opportunity to display their creative work, which covered a range of themes, including social and cultural awareness, corporate identity, and entrepreneurship.

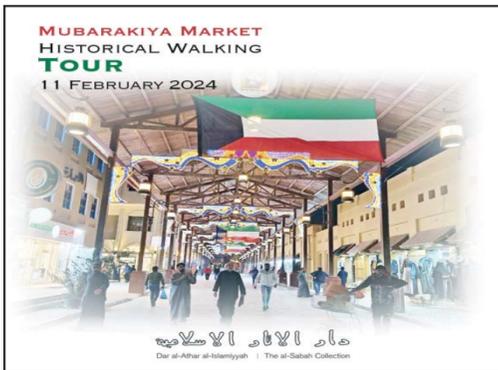
The exhibition ran for one week and participating students were evaluated by industry experts based on their creativity and presentation, their ability to conduct and use graphic design research strategy effectively, and their ability to plan and implement a compelling graphic design display.

The Chair of the Art & Graphic Design Department, Professor William Andersen, talked about the exhibition and what it represents, "We are proud to showcase the final projects of our graduating graphic design majors. Their capstone projects bring together all the knowledge and skills they have acquired at AUK and highlights their talent and creativity."

Held on a biannual basis, the Capstone Design Exhibition brings together visitors from the field of graphic design, including experts from graphic design studios, publishing houses, film and video production companies, advertising, and multimedia firms.

Associate professor of graphic design and professor of the capstone course, Maryam Hosseini, stated, "The diversity of projects influenced from personal stories and life circumstances is what makes this exhibition unique and special. Each student's journey, their values, passion, and motivation are expressed in their work, a unique combination of what it takes to be a graphic designer."

AUK's Graphic Design Capstone Exhibition presents an opportunity for senior students to fully incorporate their design strengths and learning into a focused and extended process of research and visual expression.



Al Mubarakia Market historical tour

Kuwait's Souk Al Mubarakia may be small in size compared with other Middle Eastern markets but its importance lies in the fact that it represents the soul of Kuwait.

Visitors invariably find it embodies some of the country's best attributes: friendly people, traditional Arabian hospitality, and a personal way of doing business in an unhurried atmosphere.

Join local author and photojournalist Claudia Farkas Al Rashoud for a fascinating walking tour through the small streets and alleys of the old souk. Learn about life in the days before oil, when the souk was central to the social, political, economic and cultural life of Kuwait, serving as the crossroads for merchants, craftsmen, and customers as well as two distinct cultures, that of the nomadic bedouins and the settled townspeople.

And find out what's in all those big burlap sacks and bins, and where to shop for great souvenirs and treasures.

Conducted by: Claudia Farkas Al Rashoud; Length of tour: 2 hours (Please wear comfortable walking shoes.) Date: Sunday, Feb 11; Time: 6:00-8:00 pm; Registration: at Yarmouk Cultural Center - Museum Shop; Email: trips@darmuseumkw.org; WhatsApp: 65145981

Healthcare collaboration successful

AAM Kuwait hosts 12th Free Medical Camp

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: In a significant healthcare initiative, the 12th Free Medical Camp was recently organized under the auspices of the Anti Alcoholism Movement (AAM), a spiritual organization affiliated with St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church. The event, held at Jleeb Integrated Indian School, witnessed collaboration with prominent medical associations, including the Kuwait Medical Association, Indian Doctors Forum, Kuwait Heart Foundation and Indian Dental Alliance.

The comprehensive medical camp offered free consultations from expert doctors across various specialties such as General Medicine, Oncology, Gynecology, Dermatology, Orthopedics, ENT, Pediatrics, Cardiology, Urology, Ophthalmology and Dental care. Attendees also had access to complimentary diagnostic tests including ECG, ultrasound scanning, blood sugar, blood pressure, eye examinations and visual acuity tests.

The commencement of the meeting associated with the camp was officiated by Dr. Sameer Humad, Vice President of the IDF. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Rev. Dr. Biju Goerge Parackal, President of the Anti Alcoholism Movement and Vicar of St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church. IDF Vice President Dr. Sameer Humad marked the commencement of the medical camp and led the proceedings. Camp Coordinator Ebey Samuel extended a warm welcome, while Secretary Roy N. Koshi expressed gratitude for the successful collaboration.

The event saw the participation of esteemed individuals, including IDF Community Secretary Dr. Syed Mahmood Rahman, Dr. Raghunandan, IDAC Community Welfare Committee Chairman Dr. Prashanthi, Rev. Fr. Liju K. Ponnachan (Associate Vicar, St. Gregorios Indian Orthodox Church), Trustee Joji P. John, Secretary Jiju P. Simon, and Samuel Kattoorkalikal, Vice-President of the Anti Alcoholism Movement.

With a diverse turnout of over 500 people from various nationalities residing in Kuwait, the medical camp provided crucial healthcare services to the community, reinforcing its commitment to public welfare and well-being.



Commencement of the meeting



Community welfare in action.

TMA to conduct Cultural Pongal Festival for Tamil community in Kuwait on Feb 9



KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Tamilnadu Muslim Association (TMA), a subsidiary of Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait conducting a Cultural Pongal festival for the Tamil community in Kuwait on Feb 9, 2024 at ICSK School, Khaitan from 11.30 am onwards.

We request our Tamil community to come and participate in this Unique Cultural Program witnessing first time in Kuwait, where we have arranged some attracting events for the audience. The events are for all ages, whether ladies or gents, childrens and professionals.

Program has some fascinating discussion and cultural games to inculcate social harmony and peaceful coexistence through dialogue sharing and pattimarram.

For More information, Please contact below.

Email: kuwaittma@gmail.com
Whatsapp number: 99155105

Travel

How to book a unique all-inclusive vacation that's not terrible

By Sally French
NerdWallet

All-inclusive vacations can conjure images of food under heat lamps, too many poolside drinks, and being trapped on resort grounds. But sun-soaked packages are not the only type of all-inclusives.

Sure, sprawling mega-resorts exist - and their numbers are growing. All-Inclusive by Marriott Bonvoy has spent the last couple of years building a portfolio of nearly three dozen all-inclusive hotels worldwide, mostly in Mexico and the Caribbean. One of the most highly anticipated is the Marriott Cancun, reopening in early 2024 to include some of the typical all-inclusive amenities: a sprawling property of 450 rooms, a lazy river, waterslides and more.

But guests looking for a more localized and unique experience can still find that type of vacation - with the price of food and activities included.

Consider a different type of all-inclusive in 2024

Some all-inclusives are entirely antithetical to stereotypical resort experiences. Wellness and activity take precedence over all-you-can-eat meals. They aren't necessarily in sunny locales. Guest counts are limited, with just a handful of beds.

Vista Verde Guest Ranch in Clark, Colorado, is among the properties that check all those boxes. At the all-inclusive dude ranch, summer outdoor activities include fly fishing and paddle boarding. Winter options include snowshoeing, ice fishing, skiing and sleigh rides. There are only 12 cabins and three lodge rooms.

Many all-inclusives in this genre,

such as the Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge, may hardly be considered relaxing at all. With 16 cabins located just under 500 miles north of the Arctic Circle, vacationers are encouraged to partake in activities like riding fat tire bikes over the ice. If the ice has already melted, you can sea kayak instead. With no electricity at night and no in-cabin showers (they're only in the main complex), it's not glamorous. But it's still expensive.

Beware the price tag

The cheapest Arctic Watch offering costs \$17,500 Canadian (about \$13,000) for nine nights, amounting to about \$1,400 per night. At Vista Verde Guest Ranch, three-night stays start at \$2,695 during the off-season or about \$900 per night (though per-night costs decrease the longer you stay).

But not every all-inclusive worth visiting is for travelers with big bud-

gets. At Minnesota's family-oriented Fair Hills Resort, cabins are modest and the food resembles what you ate at summer camp. Meals and activities - such as golf lessons, pickleball, and s'mores - are included in most packages. Rates can run just over \$200 per adult, per night, and \$121 per kid, per night, depending on your stay length.

How to book a better all-inclusive

According to a survey published in April 2022 that was commissioned by Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, which has a robust portfolio of all-inclusives, 77% of travelers believe that an all-inclusive vacation is the least stressful way to travel.

If you're considering an all-inclusive for your next vacation, here are some tips to consider:

■ Think boutique, not blockbuster: Skipping the sprawling resorts in fa-

vor of intimate properties can bring more personalized service. It might also better connect you with the destination and its people rather than the hundreds of other vacationers.

■ Consider more than just beach locales: Whether it's the Arctic tundra, a Minnesota summer camp or Colorado dude ranch, some of the most authentic experiences occur at all-inclusives that are far from the beach.

"We are stewards of the western ranch lifestyle, and we enjoy bringing folks into our world," says Ben Martin, general manager of Colorado's Vista Verde Guest Ranch.

You might even consider a trip that doesn't stay in one place. Companies like SpiceRoads Cycling and Backroads offer all-inclusive, multi-day cycling tours where you get a guide and bike support on top of meals and nightly lodging. (AP)

With SO MANY choices,

Which Book Next?

The only way to find out is to attend
DAI Storytime at Amricani
Saturday, 27 January, 3-30
Amricani Cultural Centre

No registration is needed, just come and enjoy.
And while you're here, check out the
DAI Children's Library
open Saturday, 3 - 5 PM

Award-winning documentary sheds light on untold stories

'The Ones Left Behind' shows plight of single moms in Japan

TOKYO, Jan 25, (AP) — The women work hard, sleeping only a few hours a night, as they juggle the demands of caring for their children and doing housework — all while suffering from poverty.

The award-winning independent documentary film "The Ones Left Behind," released last year, tells the story of such single mothers in Japan, weaving together interviews with the women and experts, and showing the other side of a culture whose ideal is for women to get married and become stay-at-home housewives and mothers.

"This is a topic that no one wants to really touch. In Japan, it's very taboo," Australian filmmaker Rionne McAvoy said Tuesday. "I think it's a very apt title because I feel that single mothers and their children have really been left behind in society."

One woman in the film says she works from 8:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m., while earning less than 200,000 yen (\$1,350) a month. That's sparse for a nation where the cost of living is relatively high, with monthly rent in cities easily taking up a third or half of that, for a tiny room.

Tomiko Nakayama, another woman in the film, says: "I have to do everything on my own."

Despite being one of the world's richest nations, Japan has one of the highest rates of child poverty among the world's wealthy coun-

tries, with one in every seven children living in poverty. About half of single-parent households live below the poverty line.

Japanese society also tends to favor full-time male workers, and women often receive lower wages and fewer benefits, even when they are working full-time and overtime.

Another woman in the film is near tears as she describes how her child stopped asking her about take-your-parent-to-school days. She knew her mom was too busy and couldn't attend.

Culture

McAvoy's wife, Ayuri, who produced the film, was formerly a single mother. But both deny that's why Rionne McAvoy made the film. Initially, she wasn't interested in getting involved in his filmmaking.

What makes the story so "Japanese," according to Rionne McAvoy, is how the country's conformist culture makes many women accept their hardships, too ashamed to ask for help, "keeping their public face and private face separate," he told The Associated Press.

"The Ones Left Behind" was the Best Documentary Winner at the Miyakojima Charity International Film Festival last year and an official selection at the Yokohama International Film Festival.

Despite repeated promises by the Japanese government to pro-

vide monetary assistance to people with children, action has been slow, said Akihiko Kato, a professor at Meiji University who appears in the film.

That's partly why the birth rate is crashing in Japan from 1.2 million births in the year 2000 to below 700,000 today. Japan also lacks a system that can force fathers to pay child support, according to Kato.

In the past, grandparents, neighbors and other members of the extended family helped look after children. In the modern age of the nuclear family, the single-parent household is often on its own.

What this means for the children is sobering, said Yanfei Zhou, a social science professor at Japan Women's University who appears in the film. The gap between the haves and have-nots is growing, and the children are destined to inherit the cycle of poverty, she said.

The story of the underclass, including those who are forgotten and don't have a voice, has long fascinated McAvoy. His next film will be about young people driven to suicide in Japan. He said that being an outsider allows him to tell stories with a fresh perspective and without bias.

"It's one thing we can do more of in society: to try recognize people's cries for help," McAvoy said.

Film

Variety



This image released by the Sundance Institute shows Maisy Stella, (left), and Aubrey Plaza in a scene from "My Old ..." by Megan Park, an official selection of the Premieres program at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival. (AP)

Film

'Nashville' star's film stirs emotions

Stella shines in debut film at Sundance

NEW YORK: A man charged with stalking and harassment after his arrest near singer Taylor Swift's Manhattan townhouse had been spotted there dozens of times in the past two months and was repeatedly asked to leave, according to court documents released Wednesday.

David Crowe, 33, of Seattle was taken into custody Monday evening and again Wednesday afternoon by officers responding to complaints of an emotionally disturbed man acting erratically near Swift's home in the exclusive Tribeca neighborhood, spokespeople for the New York Police Department said.

Crowe was arraigned Wednesday on stalking and harassment charges related to Monday's arrest and given supervised release. The prosecutor's request for an order of protection was granted, according to a spokesperson from Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office.

A short time after leaving court, police say they arrested Crowe again near Swift's townhouse and charged him with four counts of criminal contempt related to the protection order.

The Associated Press left a phone message seeking comment with Crowe's attorney in the public defender's office.

Court documents say an unidentified security worker had spotted Crowe near the singer's home about 30 times since Nov. 25. Crowe was asked about 10 times not to approach the building or to leave, according to the complaint.

In seeking supervised release Wednesday, Assistant District Attorney Harriet Jiraneck said Crowe's "continued conduct in showing up to this location despite numerous directives to leave shows a clear risk that the defendant will not abide by court orders to return to court."

It was unclear if Swift was home on Monday or Wednesday when Crowe was taken into custody. A representative for the singer did not return emails from the AP seeking comment. Police would not confirm reports that Crowe also was detained Saturday outside the townhouse and released. (AP)

NEW YORK: Comedian Jon Stewart is rewinding the clock, returning to "The Daily Show" as a weekly host and executive producing through the 2024 U.S.

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan 25, (AP) — "Who's that girl?" has been a common refrain from Sundance Film Festival goers walking out of "My Old ..." this week in Park City, Utah.

Its star Maisy Stella, 20, will be a familiar name to some, for her years on "Nashville" playing Daphne Conrad, for her viral video singing Robyn's "Call Your Girlfriend" with her sister Lennon Stella (31 million views and counting), and for being someone Billie Eilish has said inspired her to start singing. But to a certain subset of cinephiles, Stella is a complete discovery and an exciting one at that.

Both designations work, in a way. Stella is reintroducing herself in her first film role after taking a few years off to just be a normal teen. She started on "Nashville" when she was 8 years old. At 15, she took a break from acting.

"I went back to school and made sure my head was like nice and screwed on and just went to prom and did all that stuff," Stella said in an interview with director Megan Park this week at the festival. "The second I turned 18, I was just like, I missed it so much and found such a new appreciation for it."

Her turn in "My Old ..." the sophomore feature from Park, is about a girl heading off to college who finds herself in contact with her 39-year-old self (played by Aubrey Plaza). The film is a funny and emotional charmer that has left more than a few moviegoers wiping tears away for the last 30 minutes. Much of that has to do with Stella's authenticity as Elliott, who is figuring out how she wants to be in the world.

"I think the best thing she ever did was take a break for a second after Nashville and just, like, be a normal human," Park said. "A lot of kids that have been acting from such a young age, that's the only thing they know, and they don't have as much life experience. And Elliott is just like a normal girl. Maisy has that perfect mix ... she is one in a million."

Park met Stella through their mutual friend Mad-

die Ziegler, who plays one of Elliott's friends in "My Old ..." Ziegler and Stella have been close since they were children.

"I think about her and Maddie and I'm like so it was like two 8-year-old prodigies just hanging out," Park laughed. "You singing and her just chaîné-ing across the floor."

Stella downplays this, as she does many things (we'll get to Eilish later). She and Ziegler, the Dance Moms alum and Sia music video star, are just best friends. Their extracurricular talents don't come up very often. But they do get to perform together in this movie, alongside Kerrice Brooks. Without spoiling too much, there is a bit of a dream sequence in which Elliott performs Justin Bieber's "One Less Lonely Girl," a song she suggested and that Bieber and his camp had to approve.

Generation

"It was a big deal for our generation," said Stella. "It like changed who I am today as a person."

The film as a whole was a dream re-entry for Stella to work on material that she loved with a supportive group, including "Wednesday" actor Percy Hynes White and Plaza, who was only there for a few days but made a big impression.

"She's the most legit and the most genuinely profound actor," Stella said. "She genuinely taught me so much about how to be a good scene partner."

Plaza would ask what she needed from the day and then afterward make sure to text and give her a boost, saying how well she had done.

"In future projects like I will take that with me and like always try to give other people what she gave to me," Stella said. "It literally made the biggest difference."

Both Park and Stella have been overwhelmed by the response to the film at Sundance.

"It has been like the most surreal couple days of my life," Stella said. "My eyes well every 10 seconds when I talk about it. I've definitely felt the

genuine excitement."

Park is already thinking about releasing the full "One Less Lonely Girl" performance at some point, but when is still up in the air. As of the writing of this article, "My Old ..." produced by Margot Robbie's Lucky Chap Entertainment, has not yet been acquired for distribution. But that's likely to change soon. As is Stella's open schedule.

"A star is born," Park said.

She also said to "check in in seven days" and Stella will be booked for the next four years. For Stella that wouldn't be a bad thing - she's genuinely missed working.

"Maisie's such the real deal," Park said. "She's been very patient and specific ... I think everyone's really excited to see, at least I'm excited to see your long career and what you choose to do, because you've been silently influencing so much of culture."

Stella: Oh my god. Park: Billie Eilish became a singer because of Maisy. I know this for a fact. Finneas confirmed it.

Stella: She would have done it with or without me. I'm not the reason for Billie Eilish ... She is a genius. Park: I'm your hype woman.

Stella: You really are, to the point where I just sweat.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Nicole Holofcener has long been a master of mining nagging neuroses for comedy, and "You Hurt My Feelings" (streaming Friday, Jan. 26 on Paramount+) finds the writer-director in top form. Julia Louis-Dreyfus stars as a writer who overhears her otherwise loving husband (Tobias Menzies) criticizing her latest book. That's just one of the threads Holofcener pulls at in her very funny, very melancholy examination of how white lies prop up our marriages, relationships and self-images. In my review last year, I praised Holofcener as "brilliant in finding the major heartache in minor slights."

elections cycle.

Comedy Central on Wednesday said Stewart will host the topical TV show, the perch he ruled for 16 years starting in 1999, every Monday starting Feb. 12. A rotating lineup of show regulars are on tap for the rest of the week.

"Jon Stewart is the voice of our generation, and we are honored



Swift



Stewart

to have him return to Comedy Central's The Daily Show to help us all make sense of the insanity and division roiling the country as we enter the election season." Chris McCarthy, president and CEO of Showtime/MTV Entertainment Studios, said in a statement. "In our age of staggering hypocrisy and performative politics, Jon is the

perfect person to puncture the empty rhetoric and provide much-needed clarity with his brilliant wit."

Over the years, "The Daily Show" - first hosted by Craig Kilborn, then Stewart and Trevor Noah - has skewered the left and right by making the media a character and playing it absolutely straight, no matter how ridiculous.

The show, which won an Emmy Award this month for best talk series, has not had a permanent host since Noah left last year. Current correspondents include Desi Lydic, Michael Kosta, Ronny Chieng and Jordan Klepper.

Stewart didn't leave the show in anger in 2015 and has spoken fondly of it over the years. (AP)

People & Places



Elie Saab



Valentino

PARIS: As the Paris spring couture shows entered their third day, Jennifer Lopez ensured that the power of runway designs was matched by the power of a VIP audience. The singer and actress energized the Palais de Tokyo, arriving at the last minute for Elie Saab's show amid pandemonium. She and other fashion insiders witnessed a silken display of the Lebanese designer's work evoking the complexity of North African medinas.

Haute couture - the Paris fashion industry's ideas factory - is the age-old tradition of producing exorbitantly priced, made-to-measure garments for the world's richest women.

Here are highlights of Wednesday's displays - including Valentino, whose designer Pierpaolo Piccioli found his voice:

Elie Saab

With an embellished floral cape and daring décolleté, Lopez marveled - and occasionally shimmied - from the Saab front row as vibrant beats accompanied the shimmering ode to Marrakech.

This season, Saab did not reinvent the wheel, nor did he intend to. This was classic couture - in sandstone tulle, sky-like lilac, blush cloud pink and dappled pastels - with arabesque motifs on golden foliage. Floor-sweeping chiffon and crepe gowns had a timeless feel, without a nod to seasonal trends.

Guests snapped photos as a giant blush full skirt in the shape of an upside-down tulip swept by, covered with hundreds of delicately embroidered three-dimensional flowers.

Elsewhere, the collection wove in playful elements like a fusion of traditional kimono techniques with the draped elegance found in classic Arab clothing.

As the grand finale gown made its entrance, the line between show-stopper and spectacle blurred. The breathtaking bridal gown, with an embroidered train stretching meters long, captivated all. But in a telling sign of today's couture landscape, it was uncertain whether the camera-wielding guests were more enthralled by the exquisite craftsmanship - or just Lopez's reaction to it.

Valentino

The masterful blend of subtle color blocking, whimsical elements, and - very slight - minimalism in Valentino's Spring Couture marked a crowning moment for designer Pierpaolo Piccioli's evolving vision of the storied house.

The dusk event, buzzing with excitement and attended by luminaries like Jennifer Lopez and Kylie Jenner, set to the haunting soprano of Madame Butterfly in the Place Vendôme, marked a milestone in Piccioli's journey of redefining Valentino's classic couture.

Piccioli infused the collection in the gilded halls with a more disco-oriented vibe. He used silver embellished paillettes on capes and disco tops, which gleamed like river fish - and

Above and below: Models wear creations for Valentino, Viktor&Rolf, Elie Saab and Franck Sorbier as part of the SS 2024 collections presented in Paris, Jan 24. (AP)

Style



Elie Saab



Elie Saab



Valentino

Fashion

PARIS



Elie Saab

Franck Sorbier



Viktor&Rolf



Franck Sorbier



Viktor&Rolf



Valentino

sparkled alongside the venue's crystal chandeliers. Eye-popping color such as dazzling mustard and acid green amidst more conventional hues was a light color blocking underlining his penchant for ludic contrast.

Sublime touches, like diaphanous feathers, could easily have drifted into the realm of the old-school. Yet, Pic-

cioli transformed them into spiky, textural fans, lending them a modern edge and subtle kink. That kink repeated as visible breasts, sheer lingerie, and a

gold-baubled brown leather trench coat, reminiscent of luxury bondage gear. It's a difficult balancing act for Piccioli - or any designer, for that matter,

ing elements of the 1600s and 1900s. Its prominent Elizabethan-like collar brought an almost theatrical quality.

The collection ventured further into the realm of abstract deconstruction. The same black coat reappeared but this time transformed - sections snipped away, edges clawed off as if by a wild animal with a distaste for luxury. The aggressive alteration was symbolic, representing a rebellion against tradition and perhaps a commentary on the fleeting nature of fashion itself.

There were moments where the collection evoked the fearsome elegance of Maleficent with its dark, powerful aesthetic.

Other pieces hinted at the tragedy of Miss Havisham from Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations,"

particularly the gowns with panels burnt away to reveal gleaming black jeweled underlays. The garments, reminiscent of Havisham's burnt wedding dress, seemed

to speak of beauty marred by time and neglect, yet still enduring.

By slashing and deconstructing traditional designs, Viktor & Rolf infused them with a new vibrancy, challenging viewers to see clothes from a different perspective.

In a display that could be described as a theatrical "blood wedding," Yuima Nakazato's latest couture show intentionally left an eerie feeling. A model, a swan-like apparition, waded through a lake of blood-colored liquid, her diaphanous gown absorbing the vibrant hue and trailing a crimson path down the runway. This was high couture drama.

Nakazato, known for his boundary-pushing creativity, delved into the darker realms of fashion for spring. A model adorned with armor-like neck clasps, tears streaming from his eyes, sported a rucked devore gown that fused the high-priestly with a warrioresque Middle Earth aesthetic. (AP)

leading a heritage house with such history as Valentino - to free himself of the creative shackles of the house codes, without throwing the maison's spirit under the bus. This spring, Piccioli found his sweet spot.

Viktor&Rolf

Dutch designers Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren again defied convention, presenting a concoction that blended the historic with a deconstructed edge. They literally cut up couture garments.

A standout piece was a large black coat, anachronistically merg-

The Conversation

Research investigating how to counteract addiction's effects

Drugs rewire brain by changing how your genes work

By Karla Kaun
Brown University

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

Many people are wired to seek and respond to rewards. Your brain interprets food as rewarding when you are hungry and water as rewarding when you are thirsty. But addictive substances like alcohol and drugs of abuse can overwhelm the natural reward pathways in your brain, resulting in intolerable cravings and reduced impulse control.

A popular misconception is that addiction is a result of low willpower. But an explosion of knowledge and technology in the field of molecular genetics has changed our basic understanding of addiction drastically over the past decade. The general consensus among scientists and health care professionals is that there is a strong neurobiological and genetic basis for addiction.

As a behavioral neurogeneticist leading a team investigating the molecular mechanisms of addiction, I combine neuroscience with genetics to understand how alcohol and drugs influence the brain. In the past decade, I have seen changes in our understanding of the molecular mechanisms of addiction, largely due to a better understanding of how genes are dynamically regulated in the brain. New ways of thinking about how addictions form have the potential to change how we approach treatment.

Each of your brain cells has your genetic code stored in long strands of DNA. For all that DNA to fit into a cell, it needs to be packed tightly. This is achieved by winding the DNA around "spools" of protein called histones. Areas where DNA is unwound contain active genes coding for proteins that serve important functions within the cell.

Activity

When gene activity changes, the proteins your cells produce also change. Such changes can range from a single neuronal connection in your brain to how you behave. This genetic choreography suggests that while your genes affect how your brain develops, which genes are turned on or off when you are learning new things is dynamic and adapts to suit your daily needs.

Recent data from animal models suggests that alcohol and drugs of abuse directly influence changes in gene expression in areas of the brain that help drive memory and reward responses.

There are many ways addictive substances can change gene expression. They can alter which proteins bind to DNA to turn genes on and off and which segments of DNA are unwound. They can change the process of how DNA is read and translated into proteins, as well as alter the proteins that determine how cells use energy to function.

For example, alcohol can cause an alternative form of a gene to be expressed in the memory circuits in flies and people, resulting in changes in dopamine receptors and transcription factors involved in reward signaling and neuronal function. Similarly, cocaine can cause an alternative form of a gene to be expressed in the reward centers of mice, leading them to seek out more cocaine.

Exactly how these drugs cause changes in gene regulation is un-

known. However, a direct link between alcohol consumption and changes in gene expression in mice provides a clue. A byproduct of alcohol being broken down in the liver called acetate can cross the blood-brain barrier and unwind DNA from histones in mouse memory circuits.

Alcohol, nicotine, cocaine and opioids also all activate important signaling pathways that are central regulators of metabolism. This suggests they can also affect many aspects of neuronal function and consequently affect which genes are expressed.

How addictive substances change cell function is complex. The version of a gene you're born with can be modified in many ways before it becomes a functional protein, including exposure to alcohol and drugs. Rather than discouraging researchers, this complexity is empowering because it provides evidence that changes to gene expression in your brain aren't permanent. They can also be altered by medications and lifestyle choices.

Medications

Many commonly prescribed medications for mental health disorders also affect gene expression. Antidepressants and mood stabilizers can change how DNA is modified and which genes are expressed. For example, a commonly prescribed drug for depression called escitalopram affects how tightly wound DNA is and can change the expression of genes important to brain plasticity.

Additionally, mRNA-based therapies can specifically change which genes are expressed to treat diseases like cancer. In the future, we may discover similar therapies for alcohol and substance use disorder. These treatments could potentially target important signaling pathways linked to addiction, altering how brain circuits function and how alcohol and drugs affect them.

Lifestyle choices can also affect gene expression in your brain, though researchers don't yet know whether they can alter the changes induced by addictive substances.

Like alcohol and drugs, dietary changes can affect gene expression in many ways. In flies, a high sugar diet can reprogram the ability to taste sweetness by tapping into a gene expression network involved in development.

Intensive meditation, even after only one day, can also affect gene regulation in your brain through similar mechanisms. Attending a month-long meditation retreat reduces the expression of genes that affect inflammation, and experienced meditators can reduce inflammatory genes after just one day of intensive meditation.

Work in animal models has also shown that exercise changes gene expression by altering both histones and the molecular tags directly attached to DNA. This increases the activity of genes important to the activity and plasticity of neurons, supporting the idea that exercise improves learning and memory and can decrease the risk of dementia.

From Dry January and beyond, many factors can have profound effects on your brain biology. Taking steps to reduce consumption of alcohol and drugs and picking up healthy lifestyle practices can help stabilize and bring long-lasting benefits for your physical and mental health. (AP)

Genes responsible for 60% of all hearing loss cases

Experimental 'gene therapy' allows kids with inherited deafness to hear

NEW YORK, Jan 25. (AP) Gene therapy has allowed several children born with inherited deafness to hear.

A small study published Wednesday documents significantly restored hearing in five of six kids treated in China. On Tuesday, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia announced similar improvements in an 11-year-old boy treated there. And earlier this month, Chinese researchers published a study showing

much the same in two other children.

So far, the experimental therapies target only one rare condition. But scientists say similar treatments could someday help many more kids with other types of deafness caused by genes. Globally, 34 million children have deafness or hearing loss, and genes are responsible for up to 60% of cases. Hereditary deafness is the latest condition scientists are targeting with gene therapy,

which is already approved to treat illnesses such as sickle cell disease and severe hemophilia.

Children with hereditary deafness often get a device called a cochlear implant that helps them hear sound.

"No treatment could reverse hearing loss ... That's why we were always trying to develop a therapy," said Zheng-Yi Chen of Boston's Mass Eye and Ear, a senior author of the study published Wednesday in the journal *Lancet*. "We couldn't be more happy or excited about the results."

The team captured patients' progress in videos. One shows a baby, who previously couldn't hear at all, looking back in response to a doctor's words six weeks after treatment. Another shows a little girl 13 weeks after treatment repeating father, mother, grandmother, sister and "I love you."

All the children in the experiments have a condition that accounts for 2% to 8% of inherited deafness. It's caused by mutations in a gene responsible for an inner ear protein called otoferlin, which helps hair cells transmit sound to the brain. The one-time therapy delivers a functional copy of that gene to the inner ear during a surgical procedure. Most of the kids were treated in one ear, although one child in the two-person study was treated in both ears.

The study with six children took place at Fudan University in Shanghai, co-led by Dr. Yilai Shu, who trained in Chen's lab, which collaborated on the research. Funders include Chinese science organizations and biotech company Shanghai RefreshGene Therapeutics.

Treatment

Researchers observed the children for about six months. They don't know why the treatment didn't work in one of them. But the five others, who previously had complete deafness, can now hear a regular conversation and talk with others. Chen estimates they now hear at a level around 60% to 70% of normal. The therapy caused no major side effects.

Preliminary results from other research have been just as positive. New York's Regeneron Pharmaceuticals announced in October that a child under 2 in a study they sponsored with Decibel Therapeutics showed improvements six weeks after gene therapy. The Philadelphia hospital - one of several sites in a test sponsored by a subsidiary of Eli Lilly called Akouos - reported that their patient, Aissam Dam of Spain, heard sounds for the first time after being treated in October. Though they are muffled like he's wearing foam earplugs, he's now able to hear his father's voice and cars on the road, said Dr. John Germiller, who led the research in Philadelphia. "It was a dramatic improvement," Germiller said. "His hearing is improved from a state of complete and profound deafness with no sound at all to the level of mild to moderate hearing loss, which you can say is a mild disability. And that's very exciting for us and for everyone."

Columbia University's Dr. Lawrence Lustig, who is involved in the Regeneron trial, said although the children in these studies don't wind up with perfect hearing, "even a moderate hearing loss recovery in these kids is pretty astounding."

Still, he added, many questions remain, such as how long the therapies will last and whether hearing will continue to improve in the kids.

Also, some people consider gene therapy for deafness ethically problematic. Teresa Blankmeyer Burke, a deaf philosophy professor and bioethicist at Gallaudet University, said in an email that there's no consensus about the need for gene therapy targeting deafness. She also pointed out that deafness doesn't cause severe or deadly illness like, for example, sickle cell disease. She said it's important to engage with deaf community members about prioritization of gene therapy, "particularly as this is perceived by many as potentially an existential threat to the flourishing of signing Deaf communities."

Meanwhile, researchers said their work is moving forward. "This is real proof showing gene therapy is working," Chen said. "It opens up the whole field."



In this photo provided by researchers in January 2024, Dr. Yilai Shu examines a young patient at the Eye & ENT Hospital of Fudan University in Shanghai, China, after a gene therapy procedure for hereditary deafness. A small study published Wednesday, Jan. 25, in the journal *Lancet*, documents significantly restored hearing in five of six kids treated in China. (AP)

Hearing loss afflicts 37.9m in US

Men & rural residents more likely to suffer from hearing loss: study

MILWAUKEE, Jan 25. (AP) A new estimate shows hearing loss affects approximately 37.9 million Americans and is more common in rural areas than urban ones and in men than women.

The study, published Wednesday in *The Lancet Regional Health-Americas Journal*, is the first to estimate hearing loss rates at the state and county level, and was led by NORC at the University of Chicago. The estimates are for 2019 and only include people who have hearing loss in both ears.

While the study could not explain the reason for the geographic divide, experts who treat hearing loss say there are two factors to consider: how loud noises are and how often people hear them.

A person who rides the subway in a bustling city could, in theory, go six to eight hours before being at risk of hearing loss, said audiologist Nicholas Reed, an assistant professor of epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University who co-authored the study. On the other hand, hunters who don't wear protection can damage their hearing with just a few pulls of the trigger.

Experts say rural Americans need better access to hearing screenings and specialists. Many jobs in rural areas may use loud machinery. Popular leisure activities in these

areas, like hunting, woodworking and riding all-terrain vehicles, also put hearing at risk.

The study also found men were more likely than women to have hearing loss, starting at 35, which is in line with previous estimates. The highest rates were among non-Hispanic white people and those 65 and older.

"The number one risk factor for hearing loss is age," said David Rein, director of NORC's public health analytics program and the paper's lead author.

Audiologist Melanie Buhr-Lawler, a clinical professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said she saw the threats to hearing health growing up on a farm in rural Wisconsin and later researching hearing loss in rural residents.

"People who live in rural areas have a hearing health double-whammy," said Buhr-Lawler, who was not involved with the study. "So they're more exposed to high noise levels through their work, be it mining or farming or other rural occupations, but also through leisure activities."

For years, her research team handed out thousands of ear plugs at a tractor pull in Tomah, Wisconsin, to raise awareness.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded the study.

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Bucks beat Cavs in Central showdown



Atlanta Hawks' Dejounte Murray passes around Golden State Warriors' Draymond Green as Andrew Wiggins watches during Dubs' 134-112 win during NBA game at Chase Center in San Francisco on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. (AP)

Morocco's win boosts host nation

Ivory Coast edge into Africa Cup last 16

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Jan 25, (AP): Host nation Ivory Coast squeezed into the last 16 of the Africa Cup of Nations on the day it fired its coach.

Morocco's 1-0 win over Zambia in Group F on Wednesday ensured Ivory Coast finished as the fourth-best third-place team, thus just qualifying for the knockout stage.

Zambia's defeat left the Copper Bullets with two points after three games, one fewer than Ivory Coast, which failed to secure its own progress when it was beaten 4-0 by Equatorial Guinea in its final group game on Monday.

Morocco's win set off unbridled celebrations in Abidjan, the largest city in Ivory Coast, where there were fireworks, supporters cheering in the streets and fans driving around honking their car horns. The Alassane Ouattara

bridge linking the districts of Plateau and Cocody was illuminated in red and green, the colors of the Moroccan flag.

Morocco captain Hakim Ziyech became a local hero when he scored the only goal across four games Wednesday, firing in the rebound after Lawrence Mulenga saved Ayoub El Kaabi's effort in the 37th.

SOCCER

The goal was immediately celebrated by the Ivorian fans in attendance in San Pedro, and those who heard about it at the other match between Tanzania and Congo in Korhogo. That game ended 0-0.

Ziyech and his teammates ran to celebrate on the sideline, where he made

a heart sign for coach Walid Regragui, watching from the stands as he was serving a suspension imposed by the Confederation of African Football earlier Wednesday.

But Ivory Coast fans had to endure a nervy finale. Lameck Banda went just wide as Zambia started its best period of pressure around the hour-mark. Lubambo Musonda fired over for the Copper Bullets, who pushed hard for an equalizer that would have meant the hosts' elimination.

Morocco then missed late chances to seal it with Mulenga pulling off two saves in stoppage time to keep the suspense to the end.

Ivory Coast fired coach Jean-Louis Gasset earlier Wednesday.

Morocco finished top of Group F with seven points, four more than

Congo, which also reached the last 16. Zambia and Tanzania, with two points each, were eliminated.

Mali, South Africa and Namibia all advanced to the last 16 on Wednesday when they took part in the tournament's first goalless games.

Mali's 0-0 draw with Namibia was enough to top Group E, while South Africa clinched second place on goal difference from Namibia by drawing 0-0 with Tunisia.

Mali finished with five points, one more than South Africa and Namibia, while Tunisia was eliminated after finishing bottom of the group.

Namibia progressed as one of the four best third-place finishers, which was bad news for Ivory Coast at the time. The Elephants then needed a Morocco victory.

Warriors shoot down Hawks

MILWAUKEE, Jan 25, (AP): Giannis Antetokounmpo had his third triple-double in his last four games and the Milwaukee Bucks responded to the firing of coach Adrian Griffin with a 126-116 victory Wednesday night that snapped the Cleveland Cavaliers' eight-game winning streak.

Antetokounmpo had 35 points, matched a season high with 18 rebounds and had 10 assists for his seventh triple-double of the season. Damian Lillard scored 28 points and Khris Middleton added 24 for the Bucks.

Griffin was fired Tuesday despite being 30-13 in his lone season as coach. Joe Prunty, an assistant on Griffin's staff, served as interim head coach Wednesday while the Bucks were finalizing negotiations with Doc Rivers to eventually take over.

Central Division-leading Milwaukee has the Eastern Conference's second-best record.

Donovan Mitchell had 23 points and Jarrett Allen added 21 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavs, second in the Central Division at 26-16. Georges Niang and Max Strus scored 14 points each, Sam Merrill 12 and Isaac Okoro 10.

Warriors 134, Hawks 112

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry had 25 points and eight assists, Klay Thompson scored 24, and the Warriors won in their first game back after the death of assistant coach Dejan Milojevic last week, beating the Hawks.

BASKETBALL

The Splash Brothers shined playing for their beloved "brate" - the word for brother in Serbian that Milojevic so lovingly used for all of the Warriors. Jonathan Kuminga made all 11 of his shots on the way to 25 points as seven Warriors scored in double figures.

In an emotional pregame ceremony, the two teams stood united on one sideline near their team benches and listened as the Serbian national anthem played in his honor. Each Warrior player then placed an extra jersey with Milojevic's name on the back worn during warmups on one of the coaching chairs, which also featured a special black T-shirt with the word "BRATE" draped over the seat.

Suns 132, Mavericks 109

In Dallas, Devin Booker scored 22 of his 46 points in a decisive third quarter and Phoenix matched its longest winning streak of the season at seven games with a win over Dallas.

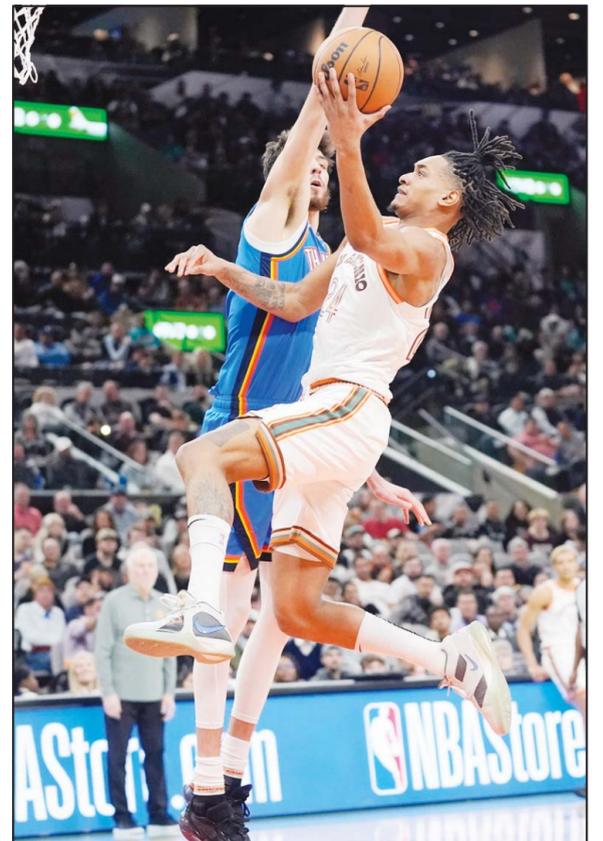
Kevin Durant had 12 points and 10 rebounds as the Suns opened a seven-game trip, their longest this season, by turning a 16-point deficit in the second quarter into a 22-point lead after outscoring Dallas 43-20 in the third.

Kyrie Irving was out for the Mavericks, who have lost four of five, after spraining his right thumb early in a loss to Boston two nights earlier.

Luka Doncic had 34 points, eight rebounds and nine assists, but didn't have much help from his Dallas teammates. The Suns got 20 points from Bradley Beal and 15 from Grayson Allen.

Thunder 140, Spurs 114

In San Antonio, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 32 points and 10 assists, and the Thunder overcame 24 points and 12 rebounds from Victor Wembanyama to beat the Spurs.



San Antonio Spurs guard Devin Vassell (24) drives to the basket against Oklahoma City Thunder forward Chet Holmgren during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Antonio, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024. (AP)

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Sabalenka, Zheng advance to Australian Open final

Bopanna, Ebden make history

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 25, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka avenged a U.S. Open final loss to Coco Gauff and will take a 13-match Australian Open winning streak into Saturday's championship decider against first-time finalist Zheng Qinwen.

Defending champion Sabalenka attacked Gauff's serve with her powerful returns and unloaded 33 winners in the 7-6 (2), 6-4 semifinal victory on Thursday night.

No. 12-seeded Zheng had a 6-4, 6-4 win over No. 93-ranked Dayana Yastremska, ending the Ukrainian player's bid to become the second qualifier to reach a Grand Slam final in the Open era after 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu.

Zheng lost in the U.S. Open quarterfinals to Sabalenka last year in her best previous run at a major. She's into the final a decade after Chinese star Li Na won the Australian title.

Li reached two finals in Australia before clinching the 2014 final.

"It feels unbelievable. I'm super excited to have such a great performance today and arrive in the final," said Zheng, who hasn't faced a player ranked in the top 50 in six rounds.

Taking on No. 2 Sabalenka will be a big step up for the 21-year-old Zheng, who is playing in a major for the ninth time.

Sabalenka said she was "ready for anything" against Gauff, and happy to have some support after facing the 19-year-old American in New York last September.

Sabalenka was back in the semis for the fifth straight major, a run that started here in Australia last year in her Grand Slam breakthrough. She's the first to reach consecutive finals here

since Williams in 2015, '16 and '17.

"The key was that I was able to stay focused no matter what, no matter what the score was ... keep fighting for it," Sabalenka said on the difference between her last two matches against Gauff. "I'm super happy to be in another final of the Grand Slam. Hopefully I can do a little bit better than the last time."

Gauff went into the semifinals unbeaten in 2024 after winning a title in Auckland, New Zealand.

The 19-year-old American was on a 12-match winning streak in majors and attempting to be the first player since Naomi Osaka in 2020-21 to win the U.S. Open and Australian Open back to back.

She'd worked out how to beat Sabalenka at the U.S. Open to win her first major title, but didn't have the answers this time against the only player in the final four with semifinal experience in Australia.

TENNIS

The first set contained six service breaks, with both players missing opportunities to serve it out.

Sabalenka led 5-2 and missed a set point as Gauff held firm and went on a four-game roll to take a 6-5 lead. Gauff also couldn't serve it out, with Sabalenka's booming returns continuing to cause her trouble.

In the tiebreaker, Sabalenka raced to 5-1. Chants of "Coco, Coco" went up around Rod Laver Arena but they didn't help Gauff.

Almost a half-hour after her first set point, Sabalenka got five more. She clinched on the second of those with a big serve out wide.

Gauff won points on just three of her 17 second serves in the first set, and that made her push harder and led to six double-faults.

The second set was tight, until Sabalenka got a service break in the ninth game.

She missed her first match point when Gauff saved with a forehand winner to end a 12-shot rally.

"I am really proud of myself. I did want to win a Slam as a teenager, and I did that. I was hoping to get number two, or at least give myself a chance to get number two. I feel it can only go upwards from here."

In doubles, 43-year-old Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden advanced to their second consecutive Grand Slam men's final by beating Zhang Zhizhen and Tomas Machac 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7).

Tournament officials said Bopanna and Ebden, at a combined age of 79, will become the oldest No. 1 pairing in tennis history after the tournament.

Bopanna and Ebden, ranked second in men's doubles, will play Italian pair Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori on Saturday in the final.



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus plays a backhand return to Coco Gauff of the U.S. during their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Rare frustrating day for the Australians

Da Silva and Hodge lead West Indies to 266-8

BRISBANE, Australia, Jan 25, (AP): Joshua Da Silva and Kavem Hodge rallied West Indies to 266-8 against Australia with resolute half-centuries on day one of the day-night test at the Gabba on Thursday.

Da Silva (79) and Hodge (71) shared a 149-run stand in almost two sessions in a rare frustrating day for the Australians in a home season that's seen them whitewash Pakistan 3-0 and win the first test against the West Indies at Adelaide by 10 wickets.

Off-spinning allrounder Kevin Sinclair, who made his test debut in place of Gudakesh Motie, was unbeaten on 16 while Alzarri Joseph counterpunched with seven boundaries among 32 runs before he edged Josh Hazlewood in the slips in the last over.

Nathan Lyon broke up Da Silva and Hodge two overs before the second new ball became available. Lyon trapped Da Silva lbw on the back foot while bowling round the wicket. The batter went for an unsuccessful referral.

The second pink ball netted Hodge and Joseph.

CRICKET

Hodge was caught at second slip off Mitchell Starc, who took 4-68.

Da Silva's patient 157-ball knock included seven boundaries. He braved a brief spell of short balls from the Australian quicks in the second session during which captain Pat Cummins used seven bowlers without any success.

Hodge, in his second test, pulled Starc for six over fine leg after dinner and hit eight boundaries in his 194-ball innings, playing some impressive drives to overpitched deliveries on the off side.

Australia could have broken the West Indies' first century stand in the series early in the last session, but Hodge's nick flew through vacant second slip, then Cameron Green couldn't hold on to a tough left-handed catch at gully off Starc.

Hodge and Da Silva showed plenty of patience against the Australia pace trio and Lyon's spin threat as they grinded out a brilliant partnership against a softened pink ball. The pitch also got better for batting in the twilight.

Starc earlier became the fifth Australian bowler to take 350 test wickets when he claimed three in the first session.

Starc got opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul caught at slip by Steve Smith on 21 and Alick Athanaze was caught behind by Alex Carey on 8 as the West Indies top order struggled with the bounce of the pitch. Starc removed Justin Greaves on 6 with the last ball before tea.

Kuwait Volleyball League 'heats' up as Al-Arabi, Kazma face off in key matchup

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Today's General Volleyball League will feature two highly anticipated matches at Al-Ittihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. The

action begins with Al-Sahel taking on Sulaibikhat at 5:15 pm., followed by a clash between Kazma and Al-Arabi at 7:15 pm.

The current standings of the Volleyball League are led by Kuwait, Al-Qadisiya, and Burgan, each boasting 31 points. Matches involving the "White" and "Yellow" teams are postponed as they undergo training camps in Turkey and Dubai, respectively, preparing for the upcoming Second West Asian Club Championship in the Sultanate of Oman next month.

In a bid to secure a stronger position in the league, Al-Arabi and Kazma, both with 28 points, are set to engage in a crucial match. Al-Shabab follows with 18 points, Yarmouk with 16, Al-Tadamon with 12, Sulaibikhat with three points, and Al-Sahel without a score.

The meeting between Al-Arabi and Kazma is deemed the most important and strongest, with both teams vying to take the lead or share the top spot if the result favors either team by 3-0 or 3-1.

VOLLEYBALL

Under the coaching of Iranian Jawad Shamami, Kazma, which includes German professional Igor and Bulgarian Fino, faces Al-Arabi led by Tunisian Niaz Salam. Al-Arabi's roster features Dominican Santos Alves, a former Kazma player, and Tunisian Mohamed Al-Arabi.

Looking ahead, the "Sons of Adailiya" are gearing up for their foreign camp in Turkey starting on February 2 for two weeks. This preparation precedes their participation in the 42nd Arab Club Championship for Men in Jordan from the 17th to the 29th of the same month, where Kazma will compete in the third group alongside Al-Hussein Youth Clubs of Jordan and northern Iraqi refineries.

Turmoil deepens as Boban resigns

GENEVA, Jan 25, (AP): Turmoil inside European soccer body UEFA fueled by its president Aleksander Čeferin's push to change statutes that would let him stay in office longer led to a first exit of a senior manager on Thursday.

Zvonimir Boban, the Croatia and AC Milan great, cited his "total disapproval" for Čeferin's political power move in his decision to leave his job as UEFA chief of football after three years.

"It is with sorrow, and a heavy heart, I have no option but to leave UEFA," Boban said in a statement. "I am not trying to be some sort of hero, especially as I am not alone in my thinking here."

Boban's departure is the most public show of growing discontent with Čeferin's leadership since the Slovenian lawyer was re-elected unopposed last April to extend a presidency that started in 2016.

UEFA supported its disgraced former vice president Luis Rubiales of Spain in the furor after incidents at the Women's World Cup final in August. When Rubiales eventually resigned, UEFA publicly thanked him in a statement that gave no support to the Spanish players.

UEFA then tried to bring Russia youth teams back into European competitions despite its own ban imposed within days of the military invasion of Ukraine. That plan was dropped within two weeks after a swath of member federations continued to insist they would not play games against Russia.



Zheng Qinwen of China celebrates after defeating Dayana Yastremska of Ukraine in the semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Marina Beach hosts show jumping championship with 500 participants

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The KIB STADIUM Show Jumping Championship kicks off today at nine in the morning on Marina Beach, featuring the participation of over 500 male and female riders.

The day's competitions will cover heights ranging from 110 to 145 cm, with activities concluding at eleven in the morning on Monday.

Tomorrow, rounds will take place at heights of 115, 125, 130-135, and 140-145 cm, offering a generous prize pool of 10 thousand dinars for the top winners.

EQUESTRIAN

Ahmed Al-Majed, the Executive Director of SAFEX, expressed, "The company organizes numerous sporting events, and today, we are gearing up for an international equestrian championship catering to both male and female riders."

Al-Majed further detailed the upcoming international tournaments, with the first one commencing today and standing out for its significant participation and substantial prizes for the winners.

Following this, a 3-star international tournament qualifying for the World Cup will be held two weeks later, followed by a third international two-star category tournament.

Heading the Kuwaiti international court is Nader Al-Mustafa, leading the refereeing committee alongside Ibtisam Al-Arouri and Lama Mustafa. The German-designed track by Andreas Stoeber will be supervised by referees Abdulaziz Al-Ajeel, Dr. Yahya Al-Hadban, and Badr Al-Haifi. Additional referees include Jawaher Bushehri, Shahad Awad, Alia Al-Hunaidi, Aisha bin Eidan, and Jassim Al-Khalifan.



A participant training for the championship.



Ahmed Al-Majed

Kuwait Club secure a resounding win over Al-Nasr

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Kuwait Club dominated Al-Nasr in a convincing victory with a substantial margin of 137-72 in their recent basketball clash during the third round of the second division. Simultaneously, Al-Sulaibikhat secured a resounding win over Al-Tadamon with a scoreline of 99-74 in another match of the league.

The league is structured into two sections, with the top four teams

qualifying for the semi-finals and vying for the championship title. Following this commanding win, Kuwait elevated its score to 20 points, while Al-Nasr accumulated 15 points. Similarly, Sulaibikhat increased its tally to 19 points, leaving Al-Tadamon with 12 points.

BASKETBALL

In the initial matchup, defending champions Al-Abyad asserted control over the game from the outset,

displaying prowess in both defensive and offensive facets. The first quarter concluded with a dominant 29-15 lead for Al-Abyad. The team continued its supremacy in the second quarter, propelled by standout performances from players like Hamad Adnan and American Marcus Hunt, both contributing 25 points each. The halftime score stood at a commanding 72-28. Al-Abyad's star, Mohamed Adnan, showcased remarkable brilliance in the third quarter, scoring 28 points and propelling the team to a 119-48 lead.

Despite the efforts of Al-Nasr's American professional Hedgeman, who notched 38 points, the last quarter offered no reprieve, resulting in a substantial 65-point victory for Al-Abyad, concluding at 137-72.

In the second encounter, Sulaibikhat continued its pursuit of the fourth qualifying spot for the semi-finals. The team effortlessly outplayed Al-Tadamon, establishing leads of 33-13, 46-29, and 66-54 in the first three quarters before ultimately securing a decisive triumph with a final score of 99-74.



A shot attempt by Al-Kuwait player.



Players vie for the ball in this file photo.



The West Indies' Kavem Hodge bats against Australia on the first day of their cricket Test match in Brisbane. (AP)



Kuwaiti defended by three Bahrain players.

Sports

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Blues return

Kuwait fall short as Bahrain secure Asian Handball Champ'ship bronze

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Jan 25: The delegation of Kuwait handball team is set to arrive at 1:40 this afternoon, marking the conclusion of their participation in the 21st Asian Championship for national teams, known as the "2025 World Cup Qualifiers." The championship unfolded at the Khalifa Sports Hall in Manama, Bahrain, where Qatar and Japan contested for the title. Unfortunately, the team suffered a defeat in bronze match against Bahrain, with a final score of 17-26.

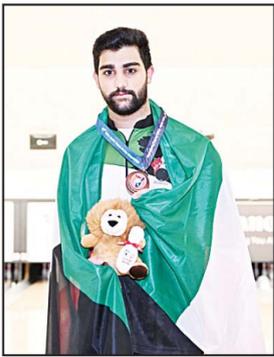
Despite the setback, Kuwait secured qualification for the World Cup finals scheduled from January 14 to February 2 next year in Croatia, Denmark, and Norway. This achievement comes after reaching the semi-finals alongside the teams of Qatar, Japan, and Bahrain—a milestone for the blue team after 15 years. Notably, the Blue Hand has qualified for the World Cup finals on eight previous occasions in 1982, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009.

HANDBALL

In recognition of this accomplishment, as per the financial rewards regulations outlined in Resolution No. 42 of 2023, each player from Kuwait team will receive 5,000 dinars for qualifying for the World Cup, in addition to an extra two thousand dinars for each player for securing the Masters bronze.

A ceremony is planned to honor the handball team stars, along with players who clinched colorful medals in the recent Asian Games, as announced by the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Daoud Suleiman Marafi.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Burgan Sports Club, Anwar Al-Otaibi, extended congratulations to the Handball Federation, the national team's players, and the technical and administrative staff for their well-deserved qualification to the 2025 World Cup. Al-Otaibi emphasized the club's steadfast support for Kuwait in all external competitions, expressing pride in contributing to Kuwait's national sports initiatives.



Hassan Qasim

Kuwait's rising star Qasim, 'impresses' at World Youth Bowling Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: Hassan Qasim, the shining star of the national bowling team, successfully advanced to the round of 16 in the World Bowling Championship for the youth category.

This prestigious event, conducted under the auspices of the International Bowling Federation, is currently reaching its conclusion in the United States, with the notable presence of Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, the President of the International and Asian Federations.

BOWLING

The competition has been intense, featuring strong rivalries among all participating countries.

Expressing his joy over this significant accomplishment, Qasim emphasized that it serves as a testament to the positive trajectory of bowling development within Kuwait.

He credited the continuous support extended by the Bowling Club's Board of Directors to the players, coupled with their dedicated efforts to overcome obstacles, as key factors contributing to the improvement and advancement of the game.

Qasim highlighted the de-

manding nature of participating in the World Youth Championship, emphasizing the need for unwavering effort and focus at the highest level.

He stressed the importance of achieving notable successes that bear Kuwait's name, a collective aspiration shared by the entire team. Furthermore, Qasim commended the thorough preparation of the Kuwaiti team for the tournament,



India's Ravichandran Ashwin bowls during the first day of their first test cricket match against England in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

Bahrain win group, Jordan advance

South Korea draw with Malaysia and avoid knockout clash with Japan at Asian Cup

Jürgen Klinsmann's team advanced as the runner-up in Group E after conceding in the 15th-minute of added time at Al Janoub Stadium.

Romel Morales struck late to even the group game and ensure Bahrain advanced as the group winner to face Japan. Bahrain won 1-0 against third-placed Jordan, which is also through to the knockout stage.

South Korea was another of the pre-tournament favorites, but, like Japan, has had its setbacks in the group stage and progressed with one win and two draws.

A Son Heung-min penalty four minutes into injury time gave his team a 3-2 lead that would have sealed first place. But Morales secured Malaysia's only point of the tournament by firing into the bottom corner from outside of the area.

SOCCER

South Korea led through Jeong Woo-yeong's header in the 21st. Faisal Halim leveled six minutes after half-time and Malaysia had the chance to go ahead after Seol Young-woo fouled Arif Aiman in the box. Aiman stepped up and converted from the penalty spot.

South Korea equalized in the 83rd thanks to an own goal by Syihan Hazmi before the dramatic conclusion.

Klinsmann may be grateful to avoid Japan for now, even as the four-time champion has had its own problems and finished runner-up in Group D behind Iraq.

South Korea will play the winner of Group F, which is currently Saudi Arabia.

Bahrain lost its opening game to South Korea but it advanced to the knockout stage at the top of Group E after back-to-back 1-0 wins.

Abdulla Yusuf Helal struck in the 34th at Khalifa International Stadium to beat Jordan.

Despite losing, Jordan advanced as one of the best third-placed teams.



South Korea's Hong Hyun-seok, (right), fights against Malaysia's Stuart Wilkin during the Asian Cup Group E soccer match between South Korea and Malaysia at Al Janoub Stadium in Al Wakrah, Qatar. (AP)

Jaiswal hits quickfire half-century

India dominate England on day one of first Test

HYDERABAD, India, Jan 25, (AP): Opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal's unbeaten 76 helped India to dominate England on day one Thursday of the first test.

India reached 119-1 at stumps after England was bowled out for 246.

Ravichandran Ashwin finished with 3-68 in 21 overs, and Axar Patel took 2-33 in 13 overs.

England captain Ben Stokes scored 70 off 88 balls to save the innings after opting to bat.

By lunch, England's top three batters were back in the pavilion and 108 runs were on the board. England then slumped to 155-7.

CRICKET

Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow added 13 more runs to their fourth-wicket stand - a total of 61 - when Patel broke through by bowling Bairstow on 37 off a sharply turning delivery. Root followed suit four overs later on 29, top-edges a sweep to short fine leg.

Stokes came to the rescue again by manoeuvring the innings well with the lower order.

He added 38 runs for the eighth wicket with Tom Hartley, the debutant who made 23 including two fours and a six before Ravindra Jadeja bowled him.

The late-order runs allowed England to cross 200 and reach tea at 215-8. In the final session, Stokes teed off and was particularly harsh on Jadeja, who finished with 3-88 in 18 overs.

The skipper reached 50 off 69 balls. Overall, he hit three sixes and six fours. Jasprit Bumrah bowled him to end the innings in the 65th over.

Jaiswal then showcased his version of Bazball by smacking Hartley for two sixes in his first over, including one off the spinner's first ball in test cricket.

Playing his first test on home soil, Jaiswal smacked his way to a 47-ball half-century as he put on 80 off 75 balls with captain Rohit Sharma.

Sharma was happy to watch from the other end, scoring 24 off 27 balls. Hartley was taken for 0-63 in nine overs.

England seemed to be in a hurry to get some wickets before stumps, and ended up burning all three of its reviews within 13.2 overs. Its only success came in the 13th over, when Sharma holed out off Jack Leach.

Shubman Gill was with Jaiswal at stumps on 14 not out.

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The 62nd edition of the Amir Cup kicks off today, featuring two preliminary round matches. The first match at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium sees Al-Arabi facing Al-Sulaibikhat at 4:30 pm, followed by the clash between Al-Nasr and Al-Sahel at Sabah Al-Salem Stadium at 7:45 pm.

Tomorrow's action completes the preliminary round with two more matches. Al-Fahaheel meets Al-Shabab at 4:30 pm at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium, while Al-Qadisiya takes on Yarmouk at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium at 7:45 pm.

SOCCER

The day after tomorrow, two more matches are scheduled. Al-Salmiya faces Khaitan at 4:30 pm at the Friendship and Peace Stadium, and Kazma plays against Burgan at Thamer Stadium at 7:45 pm. The round concludes next Monday with a single match between Al-Jahra and Solidarity rally at Nasser Al-Osaimi Stadium at 5:50 pm.

Defending champion Kuwait is exempt from the preliminary round, awaiting the winner between Al-Jahra and Al-Tadamon in the quarter-finals starting next Thursday.

Al-Kuwait, Al-Qadisiya, and Al-Arabi top the list of most title wins, each securing it 16 times. Kazma holds 8 titles, Al-Salmiya and Yarmouk each won twice, while Al-Fahaheel claimed the title once.

In the first match, Al-Arabi is favored over Al-Sulaibikhat due to their higher ranking and capabilities. Al-Arabi strengthened its squad with Tunisian Ayman and Algerian Imad Eddine Boubacar. In the second clash, Al-Nasr aims to continue its positive season against Al-Sahel.

Al-Qadisiya take on Yarmouk

'Excitement' builds as Al-Arabi face Al-Sulaibikhat in Amir Cup



Ayman and Boubacar participate in Al Arabi training



Amir Cup trophy.