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By Ahmed Al-Jarallah Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times WHEN a person has the opportunity to lead, he must have ambition and perseverance. That is why there are leaders who worked to push their countries to the top, while others failed because they lacked the ability to

In the last century, history witnessed figures who

promoted their country to the highest ranks after it suffered for decades from crises economically, politically For example, before Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore was a peninsula described as the poorest in East Asia, but when this man assumed the prime ministership, his only concern was to get out of the legacy left by British co-He worked quickly to promote education, enact laws

to encourage investment, and open up the country. Between 1959 and 1990, his country became the fourth largest economy in the world, and its population had emergency number 112

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16 PAGES

Kuwait University launches e-health form for students

Opinion

strive for achievement.

Sheikh Mohammad, we want Kuwait to be the 'Pearl of the Gulf'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8, (KUNA): Kuwait University (KU) launched an online health status form for students on Monday, marking a significant step towards enhancing medical follow-up and fortifying primary health services.

Dr. Fayez Al-Dhafiri, KU Acting Secretary General, expressed confidence that the introduction of this new service would elevate health services on campus and expedite responses to emergency situations.

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Kuwait sets price cap for hiring domestic workers

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban has issued a decision setting the fees for recruiting domestic workers.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry confirmed that in coordination with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) and in line with the recommendations of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Al-Aiban issued a decision amending Article One of Ministerial Resolution No. 103/2022; specifying the maximum cost of recruiting domestic workers, including the travel ticket.

The statement added: "This decision will enable citizens to collect their full entitlements,

op by sharing historical strategies

stated the Crown Prince met with

a delegation from the United States

Congress, including Senator Joni

ABU DHABI: UAE President

Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed

Al-Nahyan affirmed on Sunday

that the UAE participation in the

international project of establish-

ing a lunar station, Gateway, and

its planned dispatch of a UAE

astronaut to the station depicted

the UAE keenness on serving sci-

The president was speaking dur-

ing a ceremony marking the UAE

proclamation of joining the space

project, alongside the US, Japan,

Canada, the European Union, and

its plan to dispatch an astronaut to it,

to be the first Emirati and Arab to go

on such a space trek. (KUNA)

ence and humanity.

Ernst, at Riffa Palace. (KUNA)

Bahrain News Agency (BNA)

and many joint conventions.

including the ticket price, in the event of a dispute arising with recruitment offices if the domestic worker refuses to complete the contract period with the employer.

The decision sets the maximum fee for hiring domestic workers from Asian countries at KD750 (including the ticket), KD575 for domestic workers from African countries and KD350 for individuals holding a special passport provided by the sponsor.

Meanwhile, official statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) revealed that the total number of registered domestic workers in mid-2023 reached 811,307.

India has the highest number of registered domestic workers with 361,222 (44.5 percent of the total); followed by the Philippines in second place with 201,110 (24.8 percent); Sri Lanka is third with 102,685 (12.6 percent); Bangladesh is fourth with 85,989 (10.6 percent); Nepal is fifth with 25,554 (3.1 percent); Ethiopia is sixth with 11,684 (1.4 percent); Benin is seventh with 5,105 (0.6 percent); Indonesia is eighth with 2,103 (0.3 percent; Mali is ninth with 1,901 (0.2 percent) and Madagascar is 10th with 1,838 (0.2 percent).

It added that 11,616 individuals of other nationalities constitute 1.4 percent of the total domestic worker population.

Road plans in focus

MP presses Kuwait **ICC** action on Israel

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari has submitted a proposal for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Legal Advice and Legislation Department, and Ministry of Justice to form a joint committee that will coordinate efforts for Kuwait to join South Africa in filing a case against Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for violating

the Genocide Convention in Gaza. He disclosed this is one of the recommendations presented in the special parliamentary session on supporting Palestine, in addition to declaring the leaders and military commanders of Israel as war criminals in international

courts and parliaments. In addition, the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee issued a statement calling on the government, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to join South Africa in suing the Zionist entity and to implement the recommendations presented in the special parliamentary session on supporting Palestine that was held on Nov 1, 2023

The committee said it will soon meet with Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah to coordinate efforts in dealing with the Israeli crimes targeting the people of Gaza. It also stressed the need to unify parliamentary and government efforts to protect human rights as part of the humanitarian, Arab and Muslim

responsibilities towards the Palestinian issue. Meanwhile, the Disabled Affairs Committee on Monday discussed its assignment to follow up the execution of Disabled Affairs Law No. 8/2010 by the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA).

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India leads as primary source of domestic workforce

the highest per capita income in

BEIRUT, Jan 8, (KUNA): The

Arab Planning Institute (API)

General Director Dr. Bader

Al-Shami affirmed on Monday

interest in refining Lebanese

workforce's abilities and prepar-

ing them to take initiatives for a

This came in a statement to

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA)

after a delegation from the Ku-

wait-headquartered institute met

with Prime Minister of the Leba-

nese caretaker government, Na-

jib Mikati, where they discussed

economic growth and future of

in Lebanon's latest budget high-

light a number of "achievements"

compared to previous years,

which were positive and could

further be built upon to make

He pointed out that start of

the economic wheel contributes

to moving the situation in Leba-

non in a positive way, stressing

the importance of political sta-

Furthermore, Al-Shami elabo-

rated on the role of the API in

supporting political and econom-

ic institutions in Arab countries

through a number of programs

and initiatives, especially small

The API's role for which it

was established and the contribu-

tions of Arab countries to it is "to

develop the human and technical

capabilities of individuals" and

enable them to contribute to cre-

ating a promising future for their

Al-Shami mentioned that the

institute's delegation will visit

the Basil Fuleihan Financial

and Economic Institute in Leba-

non and hold a meeting with the

president of the institute, Lamia

the Minister of Finance on the

Board of Trustees of the AP.

Bissat is the representative of

Al-Moubayed Bissat.

countries, Al-Shami stated.

and medium enterprises.

positive results in the future.

Al-Shami said facts revealed

the Lebanese economy.

successful future.

Ambition was this man's motivation, just like Deng Xiaoping, who inherited a bankrupt China that was suffering from a closed

totalitarian economy. He began his era by not relying on partisan teachings or the power centers of the ruling party. He instead relied on technocrats, and took a bold step when he sought the help of the British economist of Iraqi origin Elias Korkis, and

Al-Jarallah gave him full powers.

Therefore, within a few years, Korkis launched the Chinese Development Renaissance Project strategy, and today the country is considered the most dynamic, vibrant, and growing economy.

When talking about the Asian Tigers, the first thing one remembers is Malaysia, which for decades had been suffering from corruption, chaos, and crime. When Mahathir Mohamad assumed the prime ministership, he served as a role model for achieving renaissance. He was even called in Asia as the leader who combined knowledge, wisdom, and political acumen. He was a skilled captain who steered his country's ship amidst the waves of a choppy sea.

Not far from it is Indonesia, which is witnessing economic development and the expansion of infrastructure and foreign investments. This paved the way for it to become an economic power in Asia, facilitated by some ambitious leaders, including Joko Widodo, who began his presidency in 2014 by working to change the economic strategy and develop the country in an amazing way.

The desire for renaissance does not require genius, but rather insistence on achieving ambitions. An example of this is some of the countries of the region.

During the era of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan and Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed, the United Arab Emirates took rapid steps until it became one among the economically active countries. Both Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed and Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid came to complete the renaissance process. Also, Saudi Arabia, before the era of King Salman

bin Abdulaziz and his Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, suffered from isolation and backwardness in laws and regulations. Corruption was rampant there. But when it found the determination to achieve renaissance, within seven years, it achieved what other countries had been unable to achieve in decades.

Unfortunately, these cases are referenced at a time when Kuwait, once a Gulf and Arab pioneer, appears to be lingering on the sidelines of history, reminiscing about the past and echoing rhetoric. Instead of showcasing progress, it unfortunately reflects a prevailing state of backwardness across various domains.

This is due to the fact that there are those who seek to shackle it with the restrictions of the deep state that controls every corner of the country.

Therefore, as we mentioned previously, there are many challenges facing the new Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem, so all we hope is that his capabilities will be close to the aspirations of the people, and that Kuwait will return to being the "Pearl of the

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Ties strategic, historical links strong

Bahrain, UK eye co-op boost

MANAMA, Jan 8, (KUNA): The Kingdom of Bahrain discussed with the United Kingdom on Monday ways to enhance bilateral cooperation and the latest developments on the regional and international arenas.

The Bahrain News Agency (BNA) said that this came during reception of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad, Minister of State for Trade Policy at the Ministry of International Trade in the United Kingdom, Greg Hands, and his accompanying delegation at the Gudaibiya Palace.

The Bahraini Crown Prince emphasized during the meeting that the strategic relations and strong historical links between Bahrain and the United Kingdom are continually developing.

He noted that the two friendly countries were becoming more cooperative in their economic and investment sectors and that it was essential to support them in broadening their horizons in order to achieve common goals.

Bahraini Minister of Industry and Commerce Abdullah Fakhro emphasized the rich history of trade and investment between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Bahrain. He highlighted the necessity of strengthening cooperative efforts by increasing trade exchange in order to foster competitiveness across a range of domains.

In a discussion with Hands and his group, Fakhro talked about a number of topics of mutual interest for advancing bilateral investments.

He stressed Bahrain's enthusiasm to enhance bilateral cooperation with the United Kingdom in all fields, especially trade, highlighting the important role of the private sector in both countries, which contributes significantly to achieving com-

globally, third in Arab Gulf

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Kuwaiti passport is ranked 45th in the world, according to the Global Passport Index for the current year 2024, as it allows entry to 112 countries (62 without a visa, and 50 granted a visa upon arrival), reports Al-Rai daily.

At the Arab and Gulf levels, the Kuwaiti passport ranked third after the UAE passport ranked first as the most powerful passport in the world, as it allows entry to 180 countries (132 without a visa, and 48 visa upon arrival); the Qatari passport, ranked 44th in the world and second in Arab world since it allows entry to 117 countries (73 without a visa and 44 upon arrival).

The Kuwaiti passport has advanced one place compared to last year 2023, when it was ranked 46th globally, while maintaining its third rank in the Arab world.

The passport of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ranked fourth in the Arab world and 47th in the world, allowing entry to 101 countries (56 without a visa, and 45 upon arrival).

Globally, the German passport came in second place, along with the Spanish, French, Italian, and Dutch passports (each of which allows entry to 178 countries), while the Swedish passport came in third place globally, along with Finland, Luxembourg, Austria, and Switzerland passports (each of which

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This undated picture released by Hezbollah Military Media shows senior Hezbollah commander Wissam Tawil, who was killed in Kherbet Selem village, south Lebanon, on Jan 8, 2024. (AP)

US seeks to prevent escalation

Israeli airstrike kills elite Hezbollah commander

BEIRUT, Jan 8, (AP): An Israeli airstrike killed an elite Hezbollah commander in southern Lebanon on Monday, the latest in an escalating exchange of strikes along the border that have raised fears of another Mideast

war even as the fighting in Gaza exacts a mounting toll on civilians.

The strike on an SUV killed a commander in a secretive Hezbollah force that operates along the border, according to a Lebanese security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity according to regulations. Hezbollah identified the slain fighter as Wissam al-Tawil without providing details.

He is the most senior militant in the armed group to have been killed since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel triggered all-out war in Gaza and lower-intensity fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, which has

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Expected weather for next 24 hrs: By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeast-erly wind, with speeds of 06-26

By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather and cloudy to partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-28.

Station Min Rec Max Exp **Kuwait City**

Kuwait Airport Abdaly 23 Jahra 22 80 Salmiyah 14 Nuwaisib 10 Wafra

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

Massive change expected in new gov't lineup

New concept adopted in ministers selection: report



Photo by Mohammad Morsi A young woman rides a bicycle in pleasant weather by the seaside.

Chances of rain normal: Al-Qarawi

Winter late, bit warmer this year, outdoors time: experts

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: A number of astronomers, meteorologists and weather experts have confirmed that the winter season this year is warm, while the expected amount of rain is normal and that this weather is very suitable for camping; adding the weather in the holy month of Ramadan will be

reports

Al-Anba daily. Director of the Meteorology Department at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi revealed that the weather forecasts this winter

moderate,



peratures are higher than normal, so this year's winter is warm compared to last

He said "it has been observed that the temperature has increased.

Nevertheless, this does not prevent the presence of some cold air masses that will affect the country and the region in general, especially at the end of January and the beginning of February. This will lead to a drop in temperatures. We are still in the rainy season, which extends until next May 31. The forecasts are not clear in the next five days and the chances of rain this year will be normal. The amount of rain during 2023 was less than the previously recorded rates. It is expected that in 2024, the amount of rain will be lower.

Asked about the temperatures this summer, he explained the seasonal forecast is for three months and it is difficult to predict that, but it is expected that it will be within the normal rates for each year. He said the density of dust depends on the summer weather systems, the extent of their depth, and the lack of rain in the surrounding area in general, such as the Iraqi desert, which is considered a major source of dust in Kuwait, as well as the vegetation cover if the area is small and this also coincides with the deepening of the Indian monsoon.

President of the Astronomical Society Adel Al-Sa'adoun pointed out that based on the climatic history of Kuwait, the usual weather from Dec 7 until the end of the month is cold.

He pointed out it has been observed at the beginning of January that the weather is warm, indicating this is a result of global warming. He was quick to clarify that there is still a chance for "cold," especially in the next 10 days. He said "this is called 'Shabat' and the temperatures may not reach zero, but the weather will

Regarding the possibility of rainfall, he stated that rain is not expected in the next four days or more. He cited data from the Meteorological Department, indicating there is no rain during this period while not discounting the possibility of light rain based on the cloud formations.

Meteorologist Fahd Al-Otaibi pointed out that the winter season usually starts from Dec 22 and ends on March 21. He disclosed the cold waves come in winter as the European high brings a cold air mass from central and southern Europe or the Siberian high, which is accompanied by a very cold air mass. He said the presence of a deep surface depression between the two air highs led to a delay in Kuwait being affected by one of the cold

Al-Otaibi stated that the Kuwaiti winter is usually cold during the day and very cold at night after mid-January due to the influence of the European or Siberian high. He added the rains will be light to moderate due to the country being affected by a low pressure extending in the East of the Mediterranean Sea.

Regarding spring and the transitional period from March 22 to June 21, he said: "Kuwait is affected by the Sudan seasonal low, and there are sudden weather fluctuations -- whether dust storms, thunderstorms and high wind speeds that could stir up local dust or dust coming from outside. He stated that rainfall helps stabilize the soil and reduce the density of dust, especially local dust. During winter, cold waves will pass and temperatures may reach three degrees Celsius and next summer is expected to be very hot, he added.

On the weather during Ramadan, he affirmed it will be moderate, God willing, especially at night and in the morning, as it coincides with the Sarayat period. He said it is expected that there will be dust and chances of rainfall that will continue until spring, reiterating that there will be no cold waves in January and February.

Drug dealer acquitted in appeal

Jail for famous eatery owner

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Misdemeanor Court sentenced the head of a restaurant company to one-month imprisonment and imposed a fine of KD 5,000 for violating the delivery prices and raising them to 500 fils instead of

According to a complaint filed by a Kuwaiti woman to the Consumer Protection Department, the "Burger King' restaurant violated the legally prescribed delivery prices, which amount to 250 fils for delivery within the area of the location of the restaurant and 500 fils for delivery to areas away from the restaurant location. The fixed order invoice was attached, which included the violating delivery fees

As a result, the Consumer Protection Department referred the complaint to the Commercial Affairs Prosecution, which in turn filed charges against the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the restaurant company to which the restaurant belongs and referred him to court.

It was proven by the court that the restaurant violated the delivery fees stipulated in accordance with the law and the decisions of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which it based on convicting the first official, Chairman of the Board

of Directors of the company to which the restaurant belongs, with the aforementioned ruling, to impose the prestige of the law and the necessity of respecting it by companies and restaurants with regard to delivery fees and the resulting preservation of customer rights guaranteed to them by law.

Drug dealer acquitted: The Court of Appeals overturned the verdict issued by the Criminal Court which sentenced a dealer in heroin, opium, and psychotropic substances to life imprisonment. It instead ruled to acquit him because the prosecutor failed to provide enough evi-

Representing the defendant was Lawyer Enam Haider who said the search and arrest procedures were invalid and that the file lacked evidence that the narcotics and psychotropic substances in the accused's possession were intended for

The court stated in the merits of its ruling that it was not reassured by what the incident officer decided, either in what he proved in the report of his investigations or what he testified to in the Public Prosecution's investigations, that the accused was not caught red handed, which made it impossible to establish any criminal

KCB reveals Dec '23 statistics

KD 43.8m real estate loans disbursed

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Kuwait Credit Bank revealed that the total amounts disbursed for real estate loans in December 2023 amounted to KD

In a report published on its X account, the bank explained that these amounts include KD 36,893,350 for the construction of houses on government plots, KD 1,114,912 for the construction of private houses, KD 2,442,846 for the purchase of houses, and about KD 774,363 for the expansion and restoration of government

The value of the expansion and renovation of private houses amounted to KD 260,545. The bank also granted people with special needs an amount of about

The total number of social loans and donations amounted to KD 3,476,000, of which KD 1,316,000 were social loans, and about KD 1,160,000 were social donations. Also, about KD 160,000 was spent on expansion and restoration work.

The total amount disbursed for real estate loans in the month of last November was about KD 56,526,996, about KD 4,046,000 for social loans and donations, and KD 235,000 for expansion and renovation activities.

Other Voices

'Use powers to rectify course'

By Sattam Ahmed Al-Jarallah

6 Why is the Constitution not fully implemented? Without a doubt, the accumulations left by the ambiguous relationship between the executive and the legislative authorities over the past two decades have cast a shadow on the general situation in the

country and prompted many Kuwaitis to raise a specific question: Why did the legislative authority fail to address the concerns of the people?"



question, a de-

sire was born among a broad segment of the young generation to search for a way out of the crisis, because they are victims of what happened in recent years. There were many ideas about what could be done to get out of the impasse, while the question of young people today is: Why does the leadership not use the constitutional powers granted to them to change the landscape as a whole?

"The Constitution stipulates the leadership's powers and outlines ways out of any crisis. However, the political exaggeration that has been practiced for decades regarding the use of these powers has cast a shadow over everything, while those keen on keeping the situation as it is consider any change a violation.

"On the call for changing the social contract, they deliberately forgot that nothing in the Constitution suggests its suspension, but there is a provision for its development within a certain mechanism and it does not violate the social contract.

"When about 65 people act like rulers and each of them has a wrong understanding of the text, then correction must be made even if it is through a painful surgical procedure, because the fate and future of Kuwait are not dependent on what the lawmaker and the minister see. as they are merely seeking to maintain temporary privileges that they are trying to preserve for the longest

possible period.
"The constitutional text states that

Kuwait is a monarchy even if the names differ. Hence, the head of State has many powers that he can use to address the imbalance, which surfaced after the liberation.

"Correcting the course and restoring relations between the authorities begin with a test that seems difficult for some, yet it is the only solution -to start the constitutional procedures outside the norm, not outside the text.

"This means there should not be multiple heads of the State, while it is under the command of one leader who chooses whoever he wants to assist him in approving laws and to choose whomever he deems appropriate to exercise his powers through the ministers.

'The appointment of Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem as Prime Minister gives the people a glimmer of hope in starting the correction workshop.

"Nevertheless, it still requires a capable ministerial team, as well as a consultative legislative authority, more than an authoritarian legislature that undermines the Constitution and infringes on the executive powers of the head of State.

"Article 50 of the Constitution clearly states: 'The system of Government is based on the principle of separation of powers functioning in cooperation with each other in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. None of these powers may relinquish all or part of its competence specified in this Constitution.

"Article 51 clearly defines the legislative power of the Head of State: 'The legislative power is vested in the Amir and the National Assembly in accordance with the Constitution.' 'Thus, when the Assembly contradicts this article, it is violating the authority of the head of State.

"It also violates Article 52 because it limits the head of State's exercise of his authority. This article states: "The legislative power is vested in the Amir and the National Assembly in accordance with the Constitution.

'Therefore, the solution is to recorrect the course by exercising the powers, which can neither be divided into two nor misinterpreted.'

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Photo by Samer Shagair

Municipality takes away abandoned cars.

Abandoned cars lifted

Kuwait Municipality carried out a search operation on Sunday penalizing land encroachers and removing abandoned Faisal Al-Otaibi, the cleaning director

in Hawalli Governorate, told KUNA dur-

ing the inspection tour that the munici-

cleaning companies, vendors and monitoring stray harmful animals. He indicated that a number of cita-

pality was examining works of the public

tions were issued against encroachments and 11 neglected vehicles were lifted. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: At a time the Kuwaiti public is waiting for the announcement of the new government headed by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, it is expected that the 45th government in the country's history and the first under the reign of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will witness massive change in terms of the names of ministers, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting sources. Sources confirmed that since the time His Highness

the Amir issued an Amiri Decree on the appointment of Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as Prime Minister and assigned the latter to nominate members of the new government; the formation has been ongoing, because a new concept is being adopted in the selection of ministers.

Sources stressed that HH the Prime Minister will choose members of the new government based on their competence, ability to plan and change the country's conditions for the better, realize the citizens' ambitions and aspirations, complete stalled development projects, fight against corruption, address defects in the performance of State agencies, and correct the path in compliance with the directives of His Highness the Amir.

Public support for HH the Prime Minister remains strong due to his good reputation; as well as his political, economic and diplomatic experience. Everyone is waiting for the new government formation, headed by the country's 10th Prime Minister -- Sheikh Dr Mohammad Salem Al-Sabah, to begin the steps toward work and achievement, sources added.

National plan on 'cards' to curb human peddling

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs at the Ministry of Justice and member of the Permanent National Committee in charge of implementing the National Strategy to Prevent Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, Raya Al-Rashidi, disclosed that the committee chaired a meeting held on Dec 27, 2023, reports Annahar daily.

Present at the meeting were the entire Secretariat General of the committee, representatives of the Ministry of Interior including Director of the Department of Combating Public Immorality and Trafficking in Persons Brigadier Haitham Al-Othman,

Head of the Search and Investigation Department at the General Administration of Residency Affairs Investigations Colonel Abdulaziz Al-Kandari, and Observer at the Evaluation and Follow-up Unit in the Labor Relations Department Ali Al-Dalmani, as well as a representative of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM).

According to Al-Rashidi, they discussed the frame works for developing the work of the committee by laying down an action plan that includes implementing the national strategy to prevent trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. She also cited the national referral system, which aims to prevent trafficking in persons in a way that is consistent with the reality of the crime in the State of Kuwait and the best international practices in this field

She then stressed the need to intensify the efforts of national authorities concerned with combating trafficking in persons, especially at the level of strengthening cooperation between all parties and unifying visions to combat this crime that is not in line with the values of the Kuwaiti

Options discussed

'Rebuild Jleeb again'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: In a report provided to the joint committee to follow up the current situation in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, the Ministry of Public Works recommended permanent and temporary solutions to the infrastructural problems in that area, indicating that the permanent solution is to renew the entire infrastructure of the area for which it will prepare Tender No. H/160, reports Al-Sevassah daily.

The report explained that the temporary solution involves installing units to treat wastewater, especially those resulting from the high population density in the area, until the problem is radically resolved. Necessary approvals are being obtained to establish units for purifying and treating wastewater for Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh at a rate of 24 units in 12 locations, in coordination with the Environment Public Authority to allocate the necessary

Also, it had been nearly 30 years since the construction of the sewage network in the area. The design of the network was based on a private residential area. With the passage of time, the area changed completely due to building violations, and it eventually turned into an unregulated investment area with huge numbers many times higher than the capacity of the existing sewage system.

The ministry affirmed its keenness to develop the best solutions and reduce pollutants in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, and the impact of the neighboring areas such as Ishbiliya, Rehab, Rabiya, Muhammad bin Al-Qasim Street and Al-Nasr Sports Club.

The ministry explained that it had received 704 complaints since the start of the committee's meeting. It replaced 22 manhole covers and dealt with 61 asphalt potholes. It had also replaced a main sewer line on Street 165 and a main rainwater and emergency sewer line on Street 170. It had installed a chemical and biological treatment tank on the rain and emergency network that serves Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and its neighboring areas of Ghazali C6 drain and CS drain to reduce pollutants reaching the sea. It installed 23 new carbon baskets on the drainage networks in various places of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and the neighboring affected areas.

Also, the total number of carbon baskets that were installed reached 279 to reduce the emission of toxic and unpleasant gasses and maintain the safety of the residents

diwaniya والنية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'PM poised to garner love, respect by all factions in Kuwaiti politics'

"A MAJESTIC princely aspiration aligning with a widespread desire and ambition culminated in the appointment of Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem as the Prime Minister," columnist Ghunaim Al-**Zuaibi** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"Kuwaitis greeted this news with joy and optimism, looking forward to numerous positive aspects associated with Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah. His venerable diplomatic background, shaped under the tutelage of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad, renowned as

the doyen of educational diplomacy, instilled in him the intricacies of regional and global politics. "Furthermore, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah's academic prowess and distinguished econom-

ic specialization from the esteemed Harvard University provide assurance for steering the country's economic affairs adeptly.

"The anticipation is for a strategic adjustment of the financial trajectory, aiming for surpluses and diversifying income sources, steering away from reliance on a depleted single-resource economy. "Kuwait, endowed with a distinctive geograph-

ical location, is envisioned to continue being a hub for economic exchange between our region and the world.

"His extensive educational background, including a tenure as a doctor at Kuwait University and a lecturer in prestigious international universities, positions him to envision and implement educational advancements

"Recognizing the accelerated development in the developed world over the years, he is expected to bring Kuwait's education system in line with contemporary global standards.

"Noteworthy is the humane aspect of Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem's personality, witnessed personally during the mid-nineties in Washington. As an ambassador at the time, he displayed a kind and compassionate demeanor when approached with a special problem, addressing it with paternal care and resolving it.

"This compassionate facet of Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah's character is poised to garner him the love and respect of all factions within Kuwaiti politics. With a hopeful outlook, it is anticipated that he will facilitate consensus and an action program that benefits the nation and its citizens.

"In conclusion, heartfelt wishes for success and the best outcomes are extended to Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem. May God, the Lord of the Great Throne, guide his steps and grant him continued success.'

"National identity forms an impervious barrier that must not be overlooked, as neglecting it constitutes a betrayal to the homeland and its

people who hold deep appreciation and loyalty," columnist Dr Saud Mohammad Al-Asfour wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"It is imperative for those proclaiming patriotism to safeguard it diligently, acting as a formidable deterrent to anyone attempting to breach it. No compromise should be allowed when personal interests supersede the interests of the country.

"The nation is weary of those feigning patriotism, arising sporadically as supposed defenders of various causes, whether claiming to protect human rights or championing groups under the auspices of a state apparatus.

"This central organization is entrusted with overseeing their affairs, delivering justice, and exposing any counterfeit attempts to disrupt security in Kuwait and its diverse demographic composition.

"While maintaining utmost respect for parliamentary representatives and their genuine national affiliations, there's a concern that they might unwittingly succumb to pressure from undeserving factions, unintentionally becoming advocates for perceived injustices.

There is even a risk of them publicly advocating for the abolition of the central apparatus in addressing the situation of illegal residents, neglecting its vital role in demographic management.

"In the hypothetical scenario where calls to dismantle the central apparatus are entertained, who will thwart the schemes of counterfeiters and expose the true affiliations of those making dubious claims about their

"This poses a grave danger, as the agency's vigilance and investigation into the conditions of these individuals are crucial in preventing the exploitation of Kuwait's wealth by those with ulterior motives.

"It is essential for everyone to recognize that human rights in Kuwait are safeguarded under wise leadership and supportive charitable committees. These entities have extended their goodness not only to the nation's legal residents but also to those residing illegally. The virtue and humanitarian efforts of Kuwait have received acclaim from various organizations, and only the ungrateful or negligent would deny this

"Rejecting the calls of counterfeiters and claimants is crucial for maintaining a cohesive Kuwaiti society, where individuals understand their worth. The matter has been settled, and the vital apparatus has been renewed under the leadership of individuals like Saleh Al-Fadala, a virtuous figure recognized by authentic Kuwaitis across all social strata.

"In unequivocal terms, it is urged, with a sense of love and appreciation, to cease these calls and spare the people of Kuwait and the country's reputation in international forums.

'The advocated actions only serve to undermine national unity, creating discord and confusion among humanitarian organizations that have long commended Kuwait's efforts.

"These efforts have focused on repairing and enhancing the homeland

for the collective benefit and prosperity of its people, and it is paramount to acknowledge and appreciate these contributions".

"Oversight is one of the tasks and responsibilities of a member of the National Assembly, in addition to legislation and accountability that ensure the success of democracy. However, some Assembly members, may Allah guide and reform them, exaggerate their proposals and bills, going beyond the scope of their responsibilities in serving the nation and its people. Some of them believe that they are greater than everyone due to their right to hold accountable the head and members of the Council of Ministers," columnist Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad wrote for Al-**Seyassah** daily

"Such a lawmaker could cause parliamentary-governmental chaos without knowing it, especially after the Sun shone on him while he was in the dark. He engages in such acts in a bid to increase the number of his supporters. He sees himself as the savior of the nation, so he demands for the implementation of his proposals even if they harm the citizens, up to the point that his voters no longer understand the motive behind his persistence to push for the approval of his proposals, most of which pose a danger to the country and the future generations. Rather, the benefit goes to those who are outside Kuwait, until others receive it with applause, encouragement and praise on social media.

"Such a representative and others like him do not honor their voters, their seats in Abdullah Al-Salem Hall and the nationality they hold. Therefore, the government must ignore such proposals, as they are not in the interest of Kuwaitis. These proposals are just for electoral gains, personal interests and false heroism.

"Note that I have criticized some lawmakers for years and I still do. I also applied to them the colloquial proverb: 'The garment that is longer than you will wear you out.' This is not out of hatred for the legislative authority. It is out of hatred for the practices of some lawmakers who distorted democracy, up to the point of prompting most Kuwaitis to wish for legislative suspension for several years, until those mentioned understand that legislation and oversight are different from benefiting

"I dedicate the following verses to the honorable Assembly member in order to warn the government:

'The hearts of human beings are no longer pure. I understand the concepts of trust. I understand the explanation.

Whoever places his spear and sword in the presence of the people will not be safe from being stabbed or from being wounded."

"May God protect Kuwait, its people and its Amir from all forms of

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Major events in Kuwait during 2023

Media and Culture:

Jan 17: Ministry of Information organized a workshop on strategic communications combating extremism and terrorism with the participation of experts from Kuwait and the European Union.

Jan 24: The National Council for Culture, Art and Literature participated in the 54th international book fair in Cairo.

Jan 24: The permanent committee for official and national holidays approved the visual identity for the '23 national holidays, as well as approved a webpage with a comprehensive guide for the festivities.

flag hoisting ceremonies, announcing the start of the national celebrations.

March 6: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature inaugurated Ishbiliyah's public library, which includes more than 15,000 versatile books.

March 13: Permanent committee for Arab Media began activities of 98 regular session as part of 16th regular Arab information ministers' executive office meet-

March 15: His Highness the Prime Minister Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sponsored and attended the 28th Qurain cultural festival concluding ceremony at Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.

March 19: Abdulaziz Al-Babtain cultural foundation launched its 18th session, sponsored by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

April 30: Islamic book fair, organized by Social Reforms Society, opened, featuring 12 participation of government departments and 49 publishing companies.

May 2: The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters said Kuwait was lifted from the list of the US intellectual property list.

May 4: Kuwait News Agency's (KUNA) Director General Dr. Fatma Al-Salem announced launch of a metaverse platform, the first in the region, to allow visitors visit the agency's headquarters and was part of KUNA's digital transformation.

May 9: Ministry of Information released Kuwait Al-Yawm (official gazette) smart phone application.

May 28: Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) launched its first artificial intelligence Avatar presenter.

June 17: Information Ministry said the government press registered KD 140,000 in revenues since 1975. June 19: Arab standing media committee approved to name Kuwait as the Arab Me-

dia Capital for 2025. June 20: Kuwait TV's Al-Jahra Reserve won the Arab Environment Media excellence award.

July 11: The Kuwaiti Sadu Society launched a specialized platform in cooperation with the International Council of Museums (ICOM) for museum curators.

Al-Zuaibi

July 24: Ministry of Information began operating new radio news studio with advanced technologies and devices.

July 29: Oxford University chose a verse from one of the poet Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's poems to be engraved on its walls in appreciation of the poet's pioneering projects in poetry and literature.

Aug 1: Al-Salam Palace Museum presented a production dubbed "Liberation" on occasion of the 33rd memory of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.



Ahmad Nawaf



Al-Mutairi

Sept 4: Activities of summer cultural festival, in its 15th edition, launched on Sheikh Jaber Cultural Center Theater. Sept 18: The 23rd edition of the Music Festival, organized by the National

techniques.

Aug 30: Kuwait News Agency

(KUNA) inaugurated "KUNA Oa-

sis" specializing in

artificial intelligence

Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, launched under the patronage of the Minister of Information, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi. Sept 19: Kuwait

signed with Swiss company Nussli for the design of its pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. Sept 22: Kuwait was elected as a member of the Conference on Archeology and Cultural Heritage in the Arab World, which concluded its 26th session in Fez, Morocco.

Oct 1: Information Ministry signed fiveyear contract valued at KD 5.050 million (approx. USD 15.4 million) for the establishment of an integrated digital platform.

Oct 14: Suad Al-Sabah publishing house announced withdrawal from the 75th International Frankfurt Book Fair in protest of fair organizer remarks in support of Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza.

Oct 18: Nationals and residents amass at Al-Erada square in solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Nov 3: Information Ministry launched

new online services for tourism sector per-

Security campaign launched in Al-Rai

Liquor factory busted in Salmiya

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Officers from the Criminal Security Sector in the Criminal Investigation General Department arrested four people for selling locally manufactured alcoĥol în Salmiya, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, the Public Relations and Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior confirmed that 58 barrels filled with alcohol, 76 bottles of alcohol intended for sale and an undisclosed amount believed to be the proceeds from selling alcohol were found in the possession of the suspects.

In addition, officers from Ahmadi Governorate Investigation Department arrested two people for selling locally-made alcoholic drinks, with 102 bottles of local alco-

hol and some money in their possession. All those arrested were referred to the concerned authorities.

Traffic drive launched: The General Traffic Department (GTD), under the guidance of Director Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, launched a security campaign in Al-Rai with the participation of officials from a number of government agencies, which resulted in the issuance of 120 citations for various traffic violations. They also seized a stolen vehicle, and arrested five violators of the residency law, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Millions spent on e-games

21,924 traffic citations issued in 1 week

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Kuwait's expenditure on the electronic games market for the year 2023, reached approximately \$260 million, reports Al-Anba daily, according to Bloomberg data.

This positions Kuwait as the eighth-highest spender in the Arab world in the electronic games market. Saudi Arabia leads the list with a spending volume of \$1.89 billion, reflecting a 13% increase from 2022. Egyp t secured the second spot with a spending volume of \$1.71 billion last year, marking a 17% surge from 2022. Iraq claimed the third position among Arab countries with the highest spending on electronic games in 2023, totaling \$900 million, reflecting an 11.1% increase from the previous year.

In the ranking for 2023, Iraq secured the third position with total spending reaching \$900 million, showing an 11.1% increase from 2022. Algeria followed in the fourth position, with total expenditures for the year reaching \$720 million. The UAE occupied the fifth spot, with total expenditures reaching \$660 million.

21,924 citations issued: The General Traffic Department, led by Major General Yousef Al Khadda, has reported a total of 324 major traffic accidents and 916 minor from December 30 of last year to Jan 5, 2023, reports Al-Anba daily. The weekly statistics highlight the outcomes of traffic cam-

paigns, which resulted in the issuance of 21,924 various types traffic citations. Additionally, 37 juveniles were arrested for driving without license and were subsequently referred to the Juvenile Prosecution, and fines imposed on the owners of vehicles for allowing juveniles to have access to their vehicles.

Furthermore, the law enforcement authority arrested 83 people and impounded their vehicles for either committing breach of trust or involvement in judicial cases.

The traffic police detained 20 violators at various police stations for committing serious violations. The General Traffic Department also impounded 235 vehicles and 85 motorcycles and towed them to the ministry garage.

Additionally, 11 violators of the residence law, 25 individu-

als with outstanding warrants, and 14 people subject to arrest were taken into custody.

Traffic violator an addict: General Traffic Department (GTD) officers assisting the Jahra Security Directorate have arrested an unidentified person, believed to be a bedoun, for possessing and consuming drugs, reports Al-Anba daily. The daily added, the man was arrested on suspicion in the

suburb of Al-Qasr for violating a traffic law. While issuing a citation, the officer discovered the man was in abnormal condition and a thorough search of the vehicle

yielded a piece of hashish, along with drug paraphernalia. He has been handed over to the concerned authorities.

No promotions: The recent meeting of the University Council did not touch on the promotion of faculty members, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources. Sources clarified that promotions are usually included in the

new work item, as colleges submit lists of faculty members eligible for promotion to the Council for approval. However, due to the suspension of appointment, promotion, transfer and secondment procedures in State agencies for three months or more; the Council did not tackle promotions in its recent meeting, sources revealed.

4 hurt in accident: An accident on the King Fahd Road between a vehicle and a sandblaster injured four people, reports The daily added, upon impact one of the vehicles went up

in flames. The accident was dealt with by the Nuwaiseeb Fire Brigade.

2.288 reports in Dec: Statistics issued by the Ministry of

Public Works recently showed that the ministry dealt with 2,288 reports made through the emergency line in December, reports Al-Anba daily. Farwaniya Governorate registered the highest number of re-

ports with 490, followed by the Capital with 476, Jahra with 396, Ahmadi with 319, Hawally with 224 and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 125.

Contract concluded: CSC

Indian seeks his dues 33 years on

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: After more the citizen returned to India during (MoE) demanded his end-of-service benefits for his period of work in the Ministry, which extended for about 10 years, before he left the country for his homeland following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Indian, was working as a sanitary technician assistant (plumber) under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education during the period from 1980 to 1990, and he received a salary of 70 dinars, according to a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was contained in a letter he addressed to the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs relied on a letter from the Indian embassy in which it explained that

than 33 years, a former Indian employee in the Ministry of Education of-service gratuity and vacation salary for a period of 3 months, calling on "the Kuwaiti authorities to look into the matter citing humanitarian reasons, and to help him secure his outstanding benefits from his employer.

For its part, the Ministry of Education reviewed the integrated systems, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that the end-of-service reward is within the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission, and not the Ministry. Also, after examining the data of

the aforementioned Indian worker in the integrated systems, it became clear that the entity's review phase had been completed, and found the contract concluded between the Ministry and the worker.



Leaders of Sri Lanka, Algeria, Ukraine and Eswatini send greetings

HH Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad congratulated on assuming power

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter Monday from President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe, congratulating him on assuming power.

In the letter, he wished His Highness the Amir eternal good health and further success in leading Kuwait's progress and development.

In return, His Highness the Amir sent a letter to the President of Sri Lanka, expressing his sincere appreciation for his kind words and heartfelt sentiments, and wishing him eternal good health.

Algeria

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal received a cable from Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, congratulating His Highness the Amir on assuming the office.

President Tebboune expressed his sincere congratulations, wishing His Highness the Amir success and good health, prosperity and progress for Kuwait.

His Highness the Amir sent a reply cable to the president expressing his appreciation for the heartfelt sentiments and wishing him good health.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Mishal received a phone call on Monday from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, expressing his condolences over the demise of the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Ukrainian president then congratulated His Highness the Amir on assuming office and wished him health and a prosperous future for Kuwait under his wise leadership.

In turn, His Highness the Amir

thanked the Ukrainian president for his kind words and sincere sentiments, wishing him good health and Ukraine further progress.

Eswatini

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal received a letter from Eswatini's Prime Minister Russell Dlamini, carrying congratulations from King Mswati III and the Queen Mother for

In the letter, the King wished His Highness the Amir success in leading Kuwait's development march, and good health and wellbeing.

His Highness the Amir sent Eswatini's Prime Minister a letter expressing his gratitude and appreciation to the King for his heartfelt sentiments, wishing him long-lasting health and Eswatini further progress and pros-

important positions with strategic dimen-

sions, will significantly contribute to ad-

Al-Bassam added that the Prime Min-

'Adopting united strategy to deal with municipal solid waste vital'

Council member probes landfill impact, waste conversion

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Municipal Council member Alia Al-Farsi Saturday, submitted several questions to the executive body of Kuwait Municipality, including questions regarding the treatment of municipal solid waste and construction waste.

She called for adopting a united strategy to deal with municipal solid waste, in accordance with health, technical and environmental requirements in Kuwait.

Al-Farsi highlighted the country's need for environmentally-friendly solid waste treatment facilities in proportion to the huge amount of waste resulting from population growth.

She pointed out the workshops and field visits that took place at landfill sites in Kuwait, the construction of which is considered a depletion of natural resources from vacant lands, and results in significant pollution on land, adding that, "Over



money for the rehabilitation process. Through her questions, Al-Farsi first

Alia Al-Farsi convert

municipal solid waste into dry fuel for the benefit of Kuwait Cement Company, and the executive position of the project related to converting municipal solid waste into dry fuel (RDF), as well as the obstacles that prevent its implementation and the necessity of mentioning them, if any.

She also asked about the waste

landfill sites that are related to the above mentioned project.

Al-Farsi asked if there are any waste landfills that will be closed and rehabilitated after the project, and if there is a technical feasibility study for the project, adding, "If the answer is yes, please provide us with

Regarding the solid waste treatment project in Kabd", Al-Farsi indicated that she had previously submitted a question about the project, and the executive branch reported that the project had been canceled due to the investor's unwillingness to continue, and because of her belief in its importance as it converts waste into electrical energy. She asked whether there is an intention to re-introduce the project, and if there is a plan to convert treated solid waste into electrical energy to operate new cities and suburbs in the

She said, "Through the project to treat and benefit from construction waste, and based on the field visits carried out by the Municipal Council to visit manufacturers to receive and

process construction waste through the private sector to produce steel and materials suitable for construction, what is the extent of benefit from these manufactured and recycled materials? Do the specifications of the treated building materials match the standards of building materials required by consulting offices and approved contracting companies? Is there a need to expand the area of construction waste recycling plants to serve new city and suburb locations such as Al-Mutlaa City? Are there any obstacles in the process of recycling construction waste? If the answer is "yes", please

mention the obstacles. Al-Farsi also asked about street water coolers and food refrigerators, stressing that their widespread random distribution may lack many cultural and health controls and requirements. She asked several questions in this regard, such as the necessary licenses to install refrigerators and freezers, if any controls are followed in regulating their locations and spread, and the body in charge of their maintenance.

DHAMAN emphasizes pivotal role of PM in implementing New Kuwait Plan

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Health Assurance Hospitals Company (DHAMAN) has stated that the appointment of Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-

Sabah as Prime Minister will play a pivotal role in implementing the various provisions and objectives of the National Development Plan (New Kuwait).

Mr. Hamed Al-Bassam, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of DHA-

Al-Bassam MAN, mentioned that the Prime Minister's possession of numerous national

responsibilities and international expe-

riences, resulting from holding various

ister's highest confidence in nominating new members of the state's ministries is a step hoped to have a tangible positive impact in achieving the aspirations of Kuwait in various fields, including the health sector. DHAMAN is one of the most important components within the

services in Kuwait.

vancing development.

help diversify sources of income and develop healthcare. Al-Bassam pointed out that DHA-MAN represents the late Amir of Kuwait. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's desire - may God rest his soul in peace - to advance various areas of health

New Kuwait Plan through the partnership

between the public and private sectors to



Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (including Kuwait), Jasem Al-Budaiwi and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell discussed the developments in Gaza. This came during a meeting between both officials at the headquarters of the GCC Secretariat-General in Riyadh late Sunday, the Secretariat said in a statement. Both sides also discussed ways to enhance international and regional efforts aimed at ending the crisis in Gaza and putting an end to this humanitarian disaster, it said. The meeting also addressed GCC and EU senior officials' regional security dialogue, which is duled to be held on the 24th of January at the headquarters of General in Riyadh. (KUNA)



Photo by Samer Shiqer A traffic officer checks for documents of one of the motorists.

Priority for new residential cities

Works ministry plans to execute fourteen water-related projects

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Informed sources in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy revealed a plan to implement 14 projects to develop and modernize water networks and affiliated water facilities.

They explained that the ministry has set a priority for projects serving the new residential cities, given that water service is one of the main services in those cities that the state relies on to provide adequate housing for the citi-

The city of Mutla has a large share of water projects, numbering five projects, which include the construction of three ground water tanks with a capacity of 115 million imperial gallons, as well as the construction of 18 fresh water towers and a fresh water filling station, in coordination with other government agencies, including the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, with the aim of providing fresh water to the

residents throughout the day without interruptions.

The water projects include two projects in West Al-Funaitees, one for building a fresh water filling station instead of the existing water filling station in Mishref, as well as the establishment of fresh water transmission lines from West Al-Funaitees to Shuwaikh. There is also a project to establish one water line of 1,600mm diameter from the Abdullah Port Water Complex to West Al-Funaitees Complex, and another water line of 1,200mm diameter from the Abdullah Port Water Complex to Al-Zour with the aim of providing fresh water to

The sources indicated that the 14 projects are included in the ministry's plan and will be offered according to a specific timetable that depends on providing the necessary financial funds to propose and implement the projects, especially since a large number of these projects have had their tender procedures studied and prepared by the relevant sector.



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Citizens urged to educate workers in camps, farms and parks

KFSD cautions against using coal, gas heaters in enclosed spaces

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) has issued a cautionary appeal to both citizens and residents, urging them to exercise utmost care and vigilance when utilizing coal, wood, gas heaters, or kerosene for heating purposes in homes, camps, farms, and enclosed park spaces, reports Al-Rai daily.

Brigadier General Muhammad Al-Gharib, the Director of the Public Relations and Media Department at the Fire Department, emphasized the potential hazards associated with the emission of toxic carbon monoxide gas resulting from burning in confined spaces. He underscored that such emissions could lead to cases of suffocation, poisoning, injuries, or even fatalities

Al-Gharib highlighted that instances of injuries or deaths attributed to the use of coal, wood, or gas often result from a failure to adhere to safe usage practices, especially when these heating methods are employed in closed environments, with an elevated risk when used during sleep.

Citizens were urged to actively educate workers in camps, farms, and parks about the dangers inherent in using coal, gas, and kerosene heaters in enclosed spaces. Al-Gharib recommended replacing these devices with approved heating alternatives while strictly adhering to essential security and safety guide-

Emphasizing the significance of preventive measures, Al-Gharib advised individuals to exercise caution when lighting coal, ensuring the presence of a fire extinguisher, and properly ventilating the area to allow fresh air in, thereby mitigating the risk of suffocation from toxic gases.

Furthermore, Al-Gharib warned against the use of gas for heating and stressed the importance of checking extensions and connections to detect and rectify any potential leaks. He urged individuals to turn off the gas source before sleeping, using the main switch and disconnecting it from the cylinder.



A coal fire being lit.

Al Rai photo

Kuwait University

Continued from Page 1

Highlighting the benefits, Mohammad Al-Suleiman, KU's executive for utilities, and Yousef Al-Khamees, the acting head of security and safety, emphasized that the online form empowers students to prioritize their studies while ensuring prompt access to assistance when feeling

The form collects essential information, health conditions, and medical history, equipping experts to respond effectively to any health emergency.

They urged students to take advantage of this initiative, emphasizing its role in securing their wellbeing and optimizing services for a seamless experience.

Kuwait passport

Continued from Page 1

allows entry to 177 countries). The top 5 in the Arab world -- 1. UAE, 2. Qatar, 3. Kuwait, 4. Saudi Arabia - Bahrain, 5. Oman

The top 5 in the world -- 1. UAE; 2. Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands; 3. Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg, Austria, Switzerland; 4. Denmark, Belgium, Portugal, Poland, Ireland; 5. Greece, Norway, Czechoslovakia, United Kingdom, Hungary, South Korea.

MP presses

Continued from Page 1

The committee also deliberated on a number of complaints submitted by disabled individuals against PADA. The meeting was held in the presence of the representatives of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and PADA.

Chairman of the fact-finding committee tasked to investigate the armament deals (Eurofighter and Caracal helicopters) MP Adel Al-Damkhi confirmed the completion of the report on the issue. He said it has been proven that the contracting French company committed several violations concerning public funds and endangered the lives of Kuwaiti pilots. He added the committee found that a number of senior officials at the Ministry of Defense; including ministers, undersecretaries and major commanders at the Kuwait Army are involved in the case; because they covered the violations of the contracting company, concealed important information, and neglected their task to follow up the execution of the contract in line with the regulations. He added the violations include the installation of engines in two aircraft, although they did not meet the specifications stated in the contract. He revealed the contracting company lied when it said it did not pay commissions to anybody. He asserted this was proven wrong as per the final arbitration verdict, indicating he cannot divulge the other violations as they are considered classified information. He was quick to add though that details of such violations are included in the report of the committee.

The lawmaker stressed the need for the Ministry of Defense to terminate the contract, do not settle the remaining unpaid value of the contract -- around 400 million Euros, impose penalties on the company as stipulated in the contract and obligate it to pay compensation. He pointed out that the amount of compensation must not be less than the estimated damages caused to public funds and the pilots' safety. He said the committee concluded that the cost of the violations is estimated at 349 million Euro -- around 32 percent of the total value of the contract.

He urged HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah to take serious steps, similar to his courageous move in 2012 when he submitted important information about the illegal bank transfers to the

accounts of some MPs then. Chairman of the Human Resources Development Committee MP Fares Al-Otaibi affirmed that the panel unanimously approved the Private Oil Sector Bill, which is aimed at

protecting the jobs and rights of national workers. He added the government and representatives of workers in the private oil sector also approved the bill, which will be referred to the Assembly for inclusion in the legislative agenda. He added the bill meets the demands of the workers and it is in line with the strategy to nationalize jobs in the oil sector.

On the other hand, MP Badr Nashmi Al-Anzi forwarded queries to Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, Economic and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barrak; State Minister for Municipal and Communication Affairs Fahd Al-Shaulah; Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al-Ostad; Minister of Justice and State Minister for Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Raqaba; Minister of Finance Fahd Al-Jarallah; and Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban.

He asked about the mechanism of coordination among the ministries and subsidiaries to guarantee the sustainability of measures to diversify the sources of national income, budget allocated for the development strategy aimed at diversifying the sources of national income in the last five years till date, expected amount of non-oil revenues that each ministry and their subsidiaries will collect for fiscal 2023/2024; and strategy in boosting non-oil revenues.

MP Muhammad Al-Hewaila forwarded queries to Minister of Elecater and Renewable Energy and acting Minister of Public Works Jassem Al-Ostad about the strategy of the Ministry of Public Works to develop and maintain the roads in Wafra, Sabah Al-Ahmad and Khiran residential areas, list of contracting companies in charge of these road works, and fines imposed on those who violated the provisions of the

contracts, if any. He also asked Minister of Health Ahmed Al-Awadhi about the plan of the ministry to increase the number of clinics in public schools located in Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer, considering the huge size of both

governorates. MP Khalid Al-Tamar forwarded queries to Al-Awadhi based on the latter's response to the previous questions, particularly the reasons behind the delayed inauguration of Dhaman Hospital. He wants to know if all the requirements for operating the hospital have been completed; number of nurses, doctors and dentists that the hospital needs; if the doctors who will be assigned at the hospital have obtained the license to practice the profession; date when Dhaman Hospitals Company applied for licenses at the Ministry of Health; if the issuance of the licenses has been delayed; if the ministry is committed to the conditions stated in the relevant tender; copies of related correspondences if the answer is 'yes'; reason for the ministry's non-compliance with Article 12 of the tender document although it previously approved the items included in the document; total value of the health insurance policy; and services that will be provided to the beneficiaries.

Furthermore, National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al- Saadoun presided over the meeting of the Executive Committee at the Inter-Parliamentary Group on Monday.

Present at the meeting were Undersecretary of the Group MP Hamad Al-Matar, Secretary MP Muhammad Al-Mahan, Treasurer MP Hamad Al-Obaid and members MP Dawoud Maarefi, Shuaib Shaaban, Fahd Falah Bin Jame'e; as well as Secretary General of the Assembly Khalid Busleeb and acting Assistant Secretary General for Public Relations Muhammad Al-Anzi.

Israeli airstrike

Continued from Page 1

escalated since an Israeli strike killed a senior Hamas leader in Beirut last week.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is back in the region this week, appears to be trying to head off a wider conflict.

Israel says it has largely wrapped up major operations in northern Gaza and is now focusing on the central region and the southern city of Khan Younis. Israeli officials have said the fighting will continue for many more months as the army seeks to dismantle Hamas and return scores of hostages taken during the militant group's Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war.

The offensive has already killed over 23,000 Palestinians, devastated vast swaths of the Gaza Strip, displaced nearly 85% of its population of 2.3 million and left a quarter of its residents facing starvation.

Medics, patients and displaced people fled from the main hospital in central Gaza as the fighting drew closer, witnesses said Monday. Losing the facility would be another major blow to a health system shattered by three months of war.

Doctors Without Borders and other aid groups withdrew from Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah in recent days, saying it was too dangerous. That spread panic among people sheltering there, causing many to join the hundreds of thousands who have fled to the south

of the besieged territory.

Tens of thousands of people have sought shelter in Gaza's hospitals, which are also struggling to treat dozens of people wounded each day in Israeli strikes. Only 13 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are even partially functioning, according to the U.N. humanitarian office.

Omar al-Darawi, an employee at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, said the facility has been struck multiple n recent days. He said sands of people left after the aid groups pulled out, and that patients have been concentrated on one floor so the remaining doctors can tend to them more easily.
"We have large numbers of

wounded who can't move" he said. 'They need special care, which is unavailable.'

More dead and wounded arrive each day as Israeli forces advance in central Gaza following heavy airstrikes. Gaza's Health Ministry said Monday that 249 Palestinians have been killed and 510 others were wounded across the territory in the last 24 hours.

World Health Organization staff who visited Sunday saw "sickening scenes of people of all ages being treated on blood-streaked floors and in chaotic corridors," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the head of the U.N. agency, said in a statement. "The bloodbath in Gaza must

The situation is even more dire in northern Gaza, which Israeli forces cut off from the rest of the territory in late October.

Entire neighborhoods have been demolished, and hundreds of thousands of people have fled, while those who remain face severe shortages of food and water. The WHO said late Sunday it has not been able to deliver supplies to northern Gaza in 12 days.

Even there, Israel is still battling what it describes as pockets of mili-

An airstrike early Sunday flattened a four-story home filled with displaced people in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp, killing at least 70, including women and children, according to Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesman for Gaza's civil defense. There was no immediate confirmation from the Health Ministry, which has struggled to maintain its opera-

tions in the north. Search efforts were still underway on Monday. The civil defense circulated a graphic video showing the aftermath of attack, with several bodies scattered among the

Jabaliya, which was built for Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation and is now a dense, built-up neighborhood, has seen weeks of heavy

More than 23,00 Palestinians have been killed, and more than 58,000 wounded, since the war began, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. The death toll does not distinguish between combatants and civilians. Health officials say about two-thirds of those killed have been women and minors.

KSPS marks '22/23 achievements ... emphasizes global leadership

'We plan to strengthen surgical community'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Kuwait Society of Plastic Surgeons (KSPS) has unveiled a series of notable achievements from 2022 to 2023, affirming that it has strengthened its position as a leading reference in the field of cosmetics and enhancing patient safety, reports Al-Anba daily. In a statement to the daily, Head

of the Society Dr Hisham Bourezq disclosed: "We witnessed the launch of the distance educational program with global participation, as audiences from all over the world benefited from this educational initiative. The society also succeeded in reaching an agreement to provide medical insurance for specialized surgeons at a discounted price.'

Dr Bourezq stated that in the context of international communication, the society played a leading role in organizing the BRAdayQ8 III & BRAday-GULF I event in co-



Dr Hisham Bourezq

operation with the group of plastic surgeons in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, focusing on raising awareness on breast reconstructive procedures.

He disclosed that at the level of international cooperation, the society signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the American, British and Russian associations of plastic surgeons, which opened new horizons for the exchange of experiences and international medical cooperation. At the local level, the society organized its annual conference in cooperation with the International Society of Plastic Surgery (ISAPS). The event witnessed exceptional attendance and positive appreciation,

Within the framework of educational development, he explained that the associations of Plastic, Otorhinolaryngology and Maxillofacial Surgery, launched an anatomical workshop for open rhinoplasty operations. They also launched a WhatsApp forum for plastic surgeons in Africa and Asia to facilitate discussion of cases and provide educational opportunities for them, he added.

Meanwhile, Deputy Head of the Society Dr Sabreen Al-Zamila asserted: "We are proud of the achievements of the society within the above-mentioned period. We intend to intensify our efforts to strengthen the surgical community in Kuwait academically and clinically, while focusing on patient safety.'

She considers these achievements an important turning point in the history of the society, indicating that "we aspire for more progress and innovation in the future.'

KPA given more than **KD** 22 mln in damages

DGCA to award 2 tenders worth over KD31.22 mln

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is in the process of moving forward with awarding two tenders worth more than KD31.22 million, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved the directorate's request to award the general design and supervision of the middle runway, cargo aircraft parking, VIP aircraft parking and support infrastructure in Kuwait International Airport at a value of KD6.45 million.

Meanwhile, CAPT postponed the awarding the tender for the operation, management, training, monitoring, maintenance, control, improvements and development of air navigation services at the airport, estimated at KD24.77 million.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Ports Authority has been given more than KD 22 million in compensation by a number of firms found to have committed legal infractions, it said on Monday, citing a court decision on

The measure aims to clamp down on any practice that is deemed detrimental to the management of public funds, besides putting in place a business environment that is conducive for foreign investment, it said in a statement, commending a court decision to resolve the matter.

Operating beyond the license date expiry was among the violations committed one of these companies, added the statement, hailing the court decision as a victory for the rule of law.

Major events in Kuwait during 2023

Aug 30: Gulf bank announced approval of Kuwait central bank capital increase by KD 26.1 million (approx. USD 79.6 million).

Sept 15: Fitch Agency ratings affirms Kuwait AA- rating with stable outlook. Sept 18: Kuwait Ministry of Finance countered a cyber attack targeting one of its systems.

Sept 19: Kuwait central bank directed national banks and local banks to take measures protecting customers from cyber fraud attempts.

Sept 23: Insurance Regulatory Unit issued a decision organizing warehouses to encourage innovation and development of systems and technical

Sept 26: Finance Ministry announced that the cyber-attack that took place on September 18 had copied documents of state property contracts as well as valid and expired

Sept 27: Boursa Kuwait suspended trading with five listed companies.

Sept 27: Eurostat data showed that Kuwait's exports to the European Union reached EUR 3.16 billion (approx. 3.3 USD billion) while imports from the union reached EUR 3.44 billion (approx. 3.6 USD billion) and the period from January to July.

Oct 2: The Central Bank of Kuwait announced KD 240 million (approx. USD 792 million) of bonds and tawarruq for six months with 4.5 percent

Oct 9: Ministry of Finance presented 18 initiatives and nine MoUs with Saudi Arabia to achieve economic integration.

Oct 9: Baitak exhibition launched in the international fairground with more than 135 local and regional companies exhibiting the latest in the world of constructions.

Oct 17: Boursa Kuwait indices rose to unprecedented levels prior to clo-Oct 19: Insurance regulatory unit

achieved best performance since establishment with revenues of KD 7.3 million (USD 23.6 million). Nov 16: CBK governor and Chief of

the Institute of Banking Studies Basel Al-Haroun announced launch of 15th Harvard program. Nov 20: Data from the Central Sta-

tistics Bureau showed increase in infla-

tion by 3.8 percent last October. Dec 3: Central Bank of Kuwait declared that 62 branches and 417 are trained and equipped to speak sign language as well as 67 ATMs ready to provide banking services for people with disabilities.

Education. higher education and scientific research:

Jan 9: Kuwait University inaugurated 43rd design exhibition with 78 innovative projects. Jan 18: Kuwait Institute for Scientif-

ic Research logged six new inventions in the American Patent and Trademark Office. Jan 19: Kuwait Institute for Scientific

Research inked deal with United Nations human settlements project to finance project treating dust issue affecting Kuwait and other Gulf countries. Jan 25: Acting Kuwait University

President Suad Al-Fadhli headed to Dammam, Saudi Arabia, to represent Kuwait in 25th meeting of Gulf university heads. Feb 2: Kuwait's cabinet issued deci-

sion 145 for the year 2023 granting the national bureau for academic accreditation and education the ability to set academic accreditation requirements for private universities. Feb 6: Kuwait National Seismic

Network recorded 7.8-magnitude earthquake in southern Turkiye. Feb 6: Kuwait University published new issue documenting its scientific

innovations and research outputs. Feb 9: Minister of Education Hamad Al-Adwani announced that Abdullah Al-Salam University will be receiving first batch of students in the fall semester of 2023-24.

Feb 9: Kuwait University won four medals, two gold and two bronze, in the Qatar-hosted sports tournament for universities.

Feb 12: The 13th international inventions conference in the Middle East, organized by Kuwait Science Club, was launched with the participation of 235 inventors.

Feb 17: Kuwait University was awarded two medals in the 13th international inventions conference in the Middle East

Feb 25: The Arab Union of Pioneer Scouts and Guides presented Kuwaitis Ibrahim Al-Baghli and Abdullah Al-Turaiji appreciation awards.

Feb 26: American Baccalaureate School in Kuwait was awarded first place in the high school category and presented with two other awards in competition held in the United Arab

Feb 27: Kuwait Science Club won the first place in Egypt's international contest and exhibition of science and technology.

March 4: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) announced successfully cultivating and harvesting "Sheem" fish in pools for the first time.

March 7: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) launched 26th specialized libraries conference and exhibition.

March 8: KISR's petroleum re-

search center attained a patent from the

American Patent and Trademark Office for a new device used to determine metals' likeliness to crack or collapse due to stress. March 13: The educational technology conference kicked off, under spon-

sorship of Minister of Education, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani. March 21: KISR attained a patent

from the American Patent and Trademark Office in field on Nano technology. April 7: The national team of Ku-

wait Satellite (Kuwait Sat I) said the satellite took the first picture of the State of Kuwait and put in a mosaic framework of the eastern side of the April 9: Kuwait Culture Office in

Bahrain signed an MoU with the Irish

royal college of surgeons regarding enrollment of Kuwaiti students in medi-May 2: chairperson of the constituent board of Abdullah Al-Salem

Uniersity. Dr. Moudhi AlHumoud said the university was ready to receive the first group of students beginning of academic year 2023-24. May 3: Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Infor-

award to Vice President of Google Cloud Company Vinton Cerf. May 8: Kuwaiti students won first

matics Award extended its honorary

positions at the Arab robots' competitions, held in Oatar. May 17: The Council of government universities approved establishment of

three faculties at Abdullah Al-Salem University: Engineering and Energy, Computers and systems, and business management. May 22: Kuwait University regis-

tered a patent at the US patent office about an innovative method to minimize distribution of polluted water.

May 25: students at Kuwait University's faculty of engineering and petroleum set up UNExpire project to address food waste and improve food consumption behavior.

June 1: Kuwait University improved at the Times Higher Education's index

June 7: Minister of Education and Minister of higher Education Dr. Hamad Al-Adwani opened Basic Education College girls building in Fahaheel, which has a capacity of around 5,000 students.

To be continued

World News Roundup

America

Perils of hate

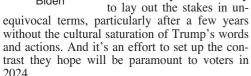
Biden wants Americans to grasp election stakes

WILMINGTON, Del., Jan 8, (AP): US President **Joe Biden** wants Americans to grasp the extraordinary stakes of this year's presidential election, as he sees them. As part of that effort, he's revisiting some of the nation's worst traumas to highlight what can happen when hate is allowed to fester.

Biden heads to Charleston, South Carolina, to Mother Emanuel AME Church, the site of a 2015 racist massacre in which nine Black churchgoers were shot to death during Bible study. The event comes after a blunt speech by the Democratic president on the eve of the anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, in which he ex-

coriated former President Donald Trump for "glorifying" rather than condemning political violence.

It's a grim way to kick off a presidential campaign, particularly for a man known for his unfailing optimism and belief that American achievements are limitless. But his campaign advisers and aides say it's necessary



"It shows the campaign meeting the moment," former Biden communications director Kate Bedingfield said. "We're facing a fundamental threat to our democracy in the form of Donald Trump, and rather than a cookie cutter launch - you know, here are my five policy platforms - he's speaking to people in a way that connects that and that lays out the stark challenges that are coming down the barrel."

Ignite

It was June 17, 2015, when a 21-year-old white man walked into the church and, intending to ignite a race war, shot and killed nine Black parishioners and wounded one more. Biden was vice president when he attended the memorial service in Charleston, where President Barack Obama famously sang "Amazing Grace."

Biden's aides and allies say that episode was among the critical moments when the nation's political divide started to sharpen and crack. Though Trump, the current Republican presidential frontrunner, was not in office at the time and has called the shooting "horrible," Biden is seeking to tie

Trump's current rhetoric to such violence.

Two years later, at the "Unite The Right" gathering of white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia, some carrying flaming torches, erupted in violent clashes with counterprotesters. Trump refused to condemn the white nationalists, saying "there is blame on both sides."

Biden and his aides argue it's all part of the same problem: Trump refused to condemn the actions of the white nationalists at that gathering. He's repeatedly used rhetoric once used by Adolf Hitler to argue that immigrants entering the U.S. illegally are "poisoning the blood of our country," yet he insisted he had no idea that one of the world's most reviled and infamous figures once

used similar words.

And Trump has continually repeated his false claims that he won the 2020 election, as well as his assertion that the Capitol rioters were patriotic. He's called the long prison sentences handed down for some offenders - whom he calls "hostages" and were convicted of crimes like assaulting police officers on Jan. 6 or seditious conspiracy - "one of the saddest things."

Fate

Jim Clyburn, a South Carolina Democrat, said this year's election "will determine the fate of American democracy, our freedoms, and whether this country will stand up against hate and vitriol embodied by Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans," a reference to Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan.

"Few places embody these stakes like Mother Emanuel AME - a church that has witnessed the horrors of hate-fueled political violence and a church that has spoken to the conscience of this nation and shown us the path forward after moments of division and despair," Clyburn said in a statement.

In his Jan. 6 anniversary speech, Biden told people in his audience that Trump doesn't care about their future. "Trump is now promising a full-scale campaign of 'revenge' and 'retribution' - his words - for some years to come," Biden said. "They were his words, not mine. He went on to say he would be a dictator on Day One."

Biden has repeatedly suggested that democracy itself is on the ballot this year, asking whether it is still "America's sacred cause."

Trump, who faces 91 criminal charges stemming from his efforts to overturn his loss to Biden and three other felony cases, argues that Biden and other top Democrats are themselves seeking to undermine democracy by using the legal system to thwart the campaign of Biden's chief rival.

South Carolina is the first official Democratic nominating contest where Biden is looking to flex his political muscle this year, and it's where his turnaround in 2020 began on his way to the White

Biden is expected to meet with the families of the victims of the church shooting, and it's in these moments when his aides believe he's most effective.

"This is a personal strength of his, and his ability to do this in an emotional way that connects with people is not to be underappreciated," Bedingfield said. "Because these are hard things to talk about. And it's hard to talk about them in a way that doesn't make people feel defeated. And he can do that."



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, a view of private houses damaged by a Russian missile attack in Novomoskovsk near Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine, Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. Inset: Rescuers help a wounded person after residential houses were destroyed by a Russian missile attack. (AP)

Heavy wave of Russian missile attacks pounds areas across Ukraine

Russia launched its latest barrage of hypersonic and cruise missiles against Ukrainian targets early Monday, striking near the front lines of fighting in the east as well as in central and western parts of the country, officials said. At least four civilians were reported killed and at least 30

injured.

Western officials and analysts had previously warned that Russia was stockpiling its cruise missiles in preparation for a strategy of winter bombardment, as bad weather keeps the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line largely static after 22 months of war.

Unlike last winter, when the Kremlin's forces targeted Ukraine's power grid, Russia is now aiming at Kyiv's defense industry, they say. But the almost daily barrages have repeatedly hit civilian areas.

Monday's attacks struck a string of urban areas, including housing and a

shopping mall, across Ukraine.

Russia fired 51 missiles of various types, as well as eight Shahed drones, at Ukraine, Ukrainian commander-inchief Valerii Zaluzhnyi said.

The Ukrainian Air Force intercepted 18 of the cruise missiles and all the drones, he said. (AP)



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump stands on stage after speaking during a commit to caucus rally, Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, in Clinton, Iowa. (AP)



Wagenknecht



Christodoulides

Europe

German opposition starts new party: A high-profile German opposition politician on Monday formally founded a new party that combines left-wing economic policy with a restrictive approach to migration and other positions that some observers believe could help it take votes away from the far-

right Alternative for Germany.

Sahra Wagenknecht said her "Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance - Reason and Fairness" will make its electoral debut in the European Parliament election in June. She said she is confident that it also will run in three state elections in September in eastern regions where Alternative for Germany, or AfD, is very strong.

Wagenknecht broke in October with the Left Party, an opposition party in which she was long one of the leading figures, and announced her intention to launch the new venture. She and nine followers who quit the Left Party with her kept their seats in the German parliament.

Wagenknecht offers a mixture of leftleaning economic policy, with high wages and generous benefits, and a restrictive approach to migration. She also questions some environmentalists' plans to combat climate change and opposes current sanctions against Russia, which was once Germany's leading gas supplier, as well as German arms supplies to Ukraine. (AP)

Cyprus' prez shakes up Cabinet: Cy-

prus' president on Monday moved ahead with a considerable shake-up of his Cabinet, replacing his ministers of defense, health, justice and environment as well as the deputy ministers responsible for digital policy and European affairs in one fell swoop after just 10 months in power.

Monday's move comes after weeklong speculation about which of the 16 Cabinet posts would see new faces following a newspaper interview in which President Nikos Christodoulides indicated that the

Politics

Raising expectations

Trump heading into Iowa caucuses

NORTH LIBERTY, Iowa, Jan 8, (AP): When Donald Trump launched his 2024 presidential campaign after a disappointing midterm election for Republicans, his trajectory was something of a mystery. But seven days before Iowa's kick-off caucuses, his standing among the GOP faithful is hardly in doubt.

Voters, campaign operatives and even some of the candidates on the ground here overwhelmingly agree that the Republican former president is the prohibitive favorite heading into the Jan. 15 caucuses - whether they like it or not

"Everybody sees the writing on the wall," said Angela Roemerman, a 56-year-old Republican from Solon, Iowa, as she waited for former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley to arrive for a weekend rally at Field Day Brewing Co. in North Liberty.

"It's a little depressing," Roemerman said as her order of tortilla chips arrived, lamenting "all the drama" surrounding Trump. "We don't need another four years. But Trump's going to win."

Just beneath all the perceived certainty about Trump's victory, however, lies serious risks for the front-runner. Trump continues to fuel sky-high expectations, despite questions about the strength of his voter-turnout operation, a closing message clouded by lies about the 2020 election and stormy weather forecasts that could dissuade supporters from showing up.

Few believe such issues will lead to a

changes were coming soon. The appoint-

Vassilis Palmas, the new defense minis-

ter, is a veteran politician who has acted as

government spokesman and a deputy minis-

ments take effect on Wednesday.

straight-up loss next week in Iowa, but in the complicated world of presidential

Should Trump fail to meet expectations with a resounding victory in Iowa, he would enter next-up New Hampshire and South Carolina much more vulnerable. Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis continue to pour millions of dolars into Iowa advertising as they cross the state, backed by well-funded allies with robust get-out-the-vote operations, in a relentless effort to narrow Trump's margin of victory.

Traditional

At the same time, Trump's team privately acknowledges that it has cut back on its door-knocking, get-out-the-vote operation heading into the final week. They insist they can ensure his loyalists show up on caucus day more effectively by relying on rallies, phone calls and a peer-to-peer text message program. That's even as allies of DeSantis and Haley push ahead with traditional get-out-the-vote plans at voters' doorways.

New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, who has endorsed Haley and spent the weekend campaigning with her across Iowa, conceded that "it will be tough" to beat Trump here.

"There's obviously a strong implication Trump's gonna likely win the Iowa caucus," Sununu told The Associated Press, even as he insisted momentum was building for Haley that will show up more clearly in

The new health minister, Michalis Da-

mianos, is a lawyer with his own practice,

while history professor Maria Panayiotou

gets a promotion from environment com-

ter in two previous administrations.

New Hampshire's Jan. 23 first-inthe-nation primary. "In New Hampshire, she clearly has a chance to do something no one thought was possible, which was to beat Trump in an early state."

Aware of the risks, the former president's team is scrambling to lower expectations for Iowa.

Trump's advisers in recent days

have been quick to remind reporters at least privately - that no Republican presidential candidate has won a contested Iowa caucus by more than 12 points since Bob Dole in 1988. The Trump campaign sees Dole's

margin as the floor for Trump's victory, a senior adviser told The Associated Press, requesting anonymity to share internal discussions. The adviser described the mood on the campaign as confident but not comfortable, acknowledging questions about the strength of rival organizations and, as always, the weather, which could affect turnout if there is snow or extreme cold.

Heavy snowfall, blowing and drifting snow and dangerous travel conditions are expected Monday and Tuesday of this week to be followed by frigid temperatures that could drift below 0 degrees by caucus day.

The weather has already forced the Trump campaign to cancel multiple appearances by Arkansas Gov. Sarah Sanders and her father, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, who had been scheduled to court Iowa voters on Trump's behalf Monday.

been scheduled to court Iowa voters on Trump's behalf Monday.

missioner to environment and agriculture minister. (AP)

Ex-Gambian interior minister on trial: A former interior minister of Gambia was going on trial Monday in Switzerland on charges including crimes against humanity for his alleged role in years of repression by the west African country's security forces against opponents of its longtime dictator.

Advocacy groups hailed the trial of Ousman Sonko, Gambia's interior minister from 2006 to 2016 under then-President Yahya Jammeh, as an opportunity to reach a conviction under "universal jurisdiction," which allows the prosecution of serious crimes committed abroad.

Sonko was taken Monday in a police van to Switzerland's federal criminal court in southern Bellinzona.

He applied for acylum in Switzerland

He applied for asylum in Switzerland in November 2016 and was arrested two months later. The Swiss attorney general's office said the indictment against Sonko, filed in April, covers alleged crimes during 16 years under Jammeh, whose rule was marked by arbitrary detention, sexual abuse and extrajudicial killings.

"The trial of Ousman Sonko is another major step in the search for justice for victims of brutal crimes and their families committed under Jammeh's rule," said Sirra Ndow, coordinator of the Jammeh2Justice campaign. (AP)



Dozens of people from all over the world line in front of the central registration center for asylum seekers in Berlin, Germany, Monday, Sept. 25, 2023. The number of people applying for asylum in Germany last year rose to 351,915, an increase of 51.1% compared with the year before. (AP)

Japan

Flights resume at Haneda

Homeless face uncertainty as quake toll jumps to 168

WAJIMA, Japan, Jan 8, (AP): Thousands of people made homeless overnight are living in weariness and uncertainty on the western coast of Japan a week after a powerful earthquake left at least 168 dead and doz-

The rescue effort since the magnitude 7.6 New Year's Day quake has drawn thousands of troops, firefighters and police who picked through collapsed buildings Monday hoping to find survivors.

Authorities warned of the danger of landslides, exacerbated by a heavy snowfall, throughout the quake's epicenter on the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa prefecture. The landscape blanketed in fluffy white revealed burned and crumbled houses, ashen blocks of a city, highways with gaping holes and cracks.

The deaths included 70 people in Wajima, 70 in
Suzu, 18 in Anamizu and the



Kishida

rest were spread among four other towns. At least 323 people were still unaccounted for, a jump from some 100 earlier in the day as rescuers pour over a list of the region's popula-tion. Another 565 people were injured, and 1,390 homes were destroyed or seriously damaged.

A tsunami of several meters (feet) followed the initial major quake, adding to the damage.

Aftershocks have continued daily. Japanese meteorological officials warned strong quakes could persist for another month. Their frequency, while gradually diminishing, remained high compared to past quakes, totaling more than 1,000.

For the residents, recovery work has barely started. Shuji Yoshiura, a fisherman, said his boats were damaged and he could not go out on the sea.

Before the quake, Wajima was a tourist town with a shopping street offering seafood and traditional crafts. Much of it was destroyed in the fires that broke out after the Jan. 1 disaster.

Kentaro Mitsumori, who runs a corner grocery shop, slept in his car with his wife to guard against looting. Their store still stands but has no lock, electricity or running water. Everything sold out in three days. But he plans to close his business.

'Even if I manage to fix up the place, there just aren't going to be enough customers. I don't know how Wajima can survive," he said.

Infections

Nearly 30,000 people staying in schools, auditoriums and other evacuation centers worried about infections as cases of COVID-19 and other illnesses

In the shelters, people were still sleeping on cold floors. After initial help of a piece of bread and a cup of water for each person a day, more aid is allowing some facilities to begin serving hot food cooked in

People were delighted by the temporary bathing facilities set up by soldiers, sitting in the hot water they had missed for days.

Still, exhaustion and stress are wearing them down. Many are in mourning. The main quake struck on New Year's Day, a time for families to gather in Japan. Some survivors said they were all alone because they lost their loved ones.

Mizue Kaba, 79, was lucky she survived, as did her daughter, son-in-law and grandson, who were visiting on New Year's from Osaka in central Japan.

Kaba is sleeping at a school, and no one is sure what might happen when schools open in a week after the New Year's break.

Three stoves were not enough to heat the school's big hall, and more heaters arrived.

'It's so cold," Kaba said.

Japan is one of the fastest-aging societies in the world. The population in Ishikawa and nearby areas has dwindled over the years. A fragile economy centered on crafts and tourism is now more imperiled than

In an unusual gesture from nearby North Korea, leader Kim Jong Un sent a message of condolence to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Saturday.

Japan received messages earlier expressing sympathy and promises of aid from United States President Joe Biden and other allies.

Japanese government spokesperson Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters that Japan was grateful for all the messages, including the one from North Korea. Hayashi said the last time Japan received a condolence message from North Korea for a disaster was in 1995.

Also:

TOKYO: Flights resumed Monday on a repaired runway at Tokyo's Haneda airport a week after a collision between a Japan Airlines plane and a coast guard

aircraft believed to have been caused by human error. The coastal runway is one of four at Haneda and its reopening means the airport is near returning to normal operations.

The collision occurred Tuesday evening when JAL Flight 516 carrying 379 passengers and crew landed right behind the coast guard aircraft preparing to take off on the same seaside runway, engulfing both aircraft in flames. All occupants of the JAL's Airbus A350-900 airliner safely evacuated in 18 minutes. The captain of the coast guard's much smaller Bombardier Dash-8 escaped with burns but his five crew members

At the coast guard's Haneda base, colleagues of the five flight crew lined up and saluted to mourn for their deaths as black vehicles carrying their bodies drove past them. The victims' bodies were to return to their families Monday after police autopsies were conducted as part of a separate investigation into possible professional negligence.

Haneda reopened three of its four runways the night of the crash, but the last runway had remained closed for the investigation, cleanup of the debris and repairs.

The collision caused more than 1,200 flights to be canceled, affecting about 200,000 passengers during the New Year holiday period. The airport was crowded with passengers Monday. All scheduled flights have resumed except for 22 JAL flights cancelled through Tuesday.

The investigation focuses on what caused the coast guard flight crew to believe they had a go-ahead for their takeoff while the traffic control transcript showed no clear confirmation between them and the traffic control. Traffic control staff assigned to the runway apparently missed an alert system when it indicated

the unexpected coast guard entry. The Haneda airport traffic control added a new position Saturday specifically assigned to monitor the runway to step up safety measures.



Farm land is flooded near Bendigo, Australia, Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. Hundreds of people were ordered to evacuate their homes after parts of Victoria state were inundated by flooding as wild weather continues to batter Australia's east coast. (AP)

Hundreds evacuate homes, 38 rescued from floods in southeast Australia

Hundreds of people were ordered to evacuate their homes on Monday after flooding inundated parts of Victoria state, as wild weather continues to batter Australia's southeast.

The issue was ordered for badly hit areas in the small towns of Seymour and Yea, about 70 miles north of Melbourne. Authorities told residents and tourists to leave immediately as floodwaters rose to dangerous levels

Multiple flood and thunderstorm warnings were in place across Victoria with the deluge filling streets with water. Authorities rescued 38 people from flooding and almost 1,000 calls were made for help, Victoria State of Emergency Services said.

Rainfall in the northeast of Victoria was expected to reach more than 200 millimeters (7.88 inches). Authorities warned that flooding above the floor level of a single-story house was likely, and access to

key roads would be difficult.

The area is popular with vacationers.
"If you live in a flood-prone area, please make the necessary plans. Especially people living in caravan parks and camping along creeks and other waterways," Victoria emergency management commissioner Rick Nugent said. "Falling tree branches and flash floods are the highest risk. Please don't drive through flood waters." (AP)



A Muslim woman holds a placard against remission of sentence by the government to convicts of a gang rape of a Muslim woman in communal violence in 2002 in western Gujarat state, during a protest in New Delhi, India, Aug. 27, 2022. India's top court Monday cancelled remission of sentence to 11 convicted rapists who had been jailed for life for gang raping a Muslim woman during the country's deadly 2002 religious riots and asked them to surrender before the authorities within two weeks. (AP)





Subcontinent

Sheikh Hasina re-elected: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has swept to power for a fourth consecutive term in Bangladesh, following an election on Sunday that was boycotted by opposition parties and roiled by violent protests and international scrutiny.

Her Awami League party won 224 seats out of 299, according to local media, cementing a majority in Parliament and extending her 15-year-long rule that has already made Hasina one of the most defining and divisive leaders in the nation's

Official results from the Election Commission were expected later Monday.

Hasina's victory, which was widely seen as inevitable, came amid low voter turnout at 40% in a severely fractured climate that saw opposition members jailed ahead of the polls. The clampdown on political foes and stifling of dissent, analysts say, puts Bangladesh's democracy in a fragile place, risks triggering political turmoil and may test some of its diplomatic ties.

Campaigning was rife with violence and the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its allies boycotted the election saying that Hasina's government could not oversee free and fair polls.

"This is not a story of a thumping, resounding reaction from the people. There is a question mark in the public's mind about this election, so the result that has come will face this taint," said Avinash Paliwal, who specializes in South Asia relations at London's SOAS University.

It has also spotlighted a troublesome electoral record, with the latest polls being the third in the last 15 years to be dogged by credibility concerns. The previous two votes were widely seen as flawed with allegations of vote-rigging, which authorities denied, and another opposition boycott. All three elections were held under Hasina's rule. The main opposition party has rejected

the latest results as a one-sided election.

This is likely "to ratchet up rather than rein in political tensions" and fan further polarization and mistrust instead of reconciliation, said Michael Kugelman, director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center.

The government has consistently defended the polls as open and inclusive, but critics have pointed out that many smaller opposition groups and independent candidates belonged to the ruling party, which

Myanmar

Military denies responsibility

Airstrikes kill 17, including children

BANGKOK, Jan 8, (AP): Airstrikes by Myanmar's military on a village under the control of the pro-democracy resistance in the country's northwest have killed at least 17 civilians, including nine children, local residents and a human rights group said Sunday.

The morning aerial attacks on Kanan village in Sagaing region's Khampat town, just south of the Indian border, also wounded about 20 people, they said.

Myanmar is wracked by violence that began after the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyı in February 2021. After peaceful demonstrations were put down with lethal force, many opponents of military rule took up arms, and large parts of the country are now embroiled in conflict.

The country's independent online media and the BBC's Myanmar-language service reported the air attack Sunday, but the military government denied responsibility, claiming that it was false news spread by Khit Thit Media, an independent online news service sympathetic to the anti-military resistance.

The report by the state-run MRTV television in its Sunday night news broadcast cited an unnamed official from the area as saying there had been no plane flying in the area on Sunday morning.

The military government in the past two years has stepped up airstrikes against two enemies: the armed prodemocracy Peoples Defense Force, and ethnic minority guerrilla groups that have been fighting for greater autonomy for decades. The two groups sometimes carry out joint operations against the army.

In response to accusations of abuses, the military government often accuses pro-democracy forces in the area of carrying out violent campaigns of terror. But analysts for the United Nations and non-governmental organizations have gathered credible evidence of large-scale human rights abuses by the army, including the burning of entire villages and displacement of close to 2 million people that has triggered a humanitarian crisis.

Sagaing region, near the border with India, has been a stronghold of armed resistance to the army. A district capital and two small towns, including Khampat, have been seized in the past few months by a coalition of resistance forces and the Kachin Independence Army, one of the stronger ethnic rebel

Rescue

A local resident who helped carry out rescue work told The Associated Press on Sunday that a jet fighter dropped three bombs on the village of Kanan, on the outskirts of Khampat, about 280 kilometers (170 miles) northwest of Mandalay, the country's second-biggest city, killing 17 civilians who were in buildings near the village school.

Most of the residents in Khampat town are from the Chin ethnic minority, the vast majority of whom are Christians, generally Baptist. Myanmar is largely Buddhist, led by the Burman majority. The ruling military identifies with a nationalistic strain of Buddhism that shows hostility to non-Burman and non-Buddhist populations, found mostly in the border areas where much of the current fighting takes place.

About 10 houses near the school were destroyed by bombs, said the resident who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was afraid of being arrested by the military.

He provided a possible explanation for the attack, noting that a ceremony had been scheduled for Sunday to mark the completion of combat training for new members of the resistance forces at another school in the village, and that might have been the intended target of the attack. He added that the bombing might have been the consequence of a tip-off by a military in-Another resident, who also spoke

on the condition of anonymity due to security concerns, said nine of the dead were children and 20 other people were injured. He also provided AP with photos of the aftermath of the attack, including dead and wounded people and damaged buildings. Salai Mang Hre Lian, a program man-

ager of the Chin Human Rights Organization, also confirmed the number of the victims and charged that it was a deliberate attack by the military on the civilians and children at the school.

"If the international community continues to allow war crimes to be committed like this, then they let themselves to be knowingly complicit in the violations of international humanitarian laws, including the Geneva Conventions and Rome Statues," Salai Mang Hre Lian said in text messages.

The military stepped up airstrikes after an alliance of three ethnic minority armed groups in late October launched a major offensive, seizing towns in the country's northeast, along with major border crossings for trade with China.

The resistance forces scored a major victory last week when it forced the army to give up the city of Laukkaing in northern Shan state near the Chinese

The independent Myanmar Pressphoto Agency and Shan media reported that at least five people, including three teachers, were killed Sunday in an airstrike on Namhsan township, which was captured last month by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, a members of the Three Brotherhood Alliance that launched the October offensive.

left voters with few options. While Hasina is often credited with

presiding over Bangladesh's impressive growth in recent years, experts say its economy is now sputtering. The nation's foreign exchange reserves have dwindled to less than three months worth of imports, the price of groceries has surged

and a wave of labor protests from the country's prized garment industry has highlighted dissatisfaction with the government. (AP)



Blast kills 5 in N. Pakistan: At least five policemen were killed and 22 others injured on Monday in a blast targeting a police van in Pakistan's northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province on the borders with Afghanistan, said officials.

The blast took place near a police van in the Mamund tehsil of tribal district Bajaur in KPK, while the banned outfit Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack, according to a statement by District Police Officer Kashif Zulfigar.

"About 12 of the wounded were being treated at the hospital, while 10 others who were seriously injured transferred to a medical facility in the provincial capital," said the doctor in charge at the government-run District Headquarters Hospital, Dr. Wazir Khan Safi.

On his part, the caretaker KPK Chief Minister of Justice Arshad Hussain Shah condemned the blast and expressed his grief at the "martyrdom of police officials", praying for the speedy recovery of the wounded, and directed the district administration to ensure aid to them.

The blast comes at a time when the Pakistan military is carrying out operations against militants after the banned outfit Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government last year. (KUNA)



Young evacuees take a meal together in a shelter in the earthquake-hit Anamizu, Ishikawa prefecture, Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. Thousands of people made homeless overnight are living in weariness and uncertainty on the western coast of Japan a week after powerful earthquakes hit the region. (AP)

CBK Bonds

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240) millions for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.375%).

The Industrial Bank of Kuwait (IBK) managed during the past 50 years to become a main factor in supporting local industries by offering services that helped achieve Kuwait's

industrial development.

The Industrial Bank of Kuwait which was established in 1973 with a government initiative, is a bank specialized in supporting the Kuwaiti industry by providing medium and long-term financing for the establishment, expansion, and mod-

ernization of the industrial sectors with a capital worth KD 20 million. IBK's Chief Executive Officer

Industrial Bank of Kuwait marks 50th anniversary

(CEO) Ali Khajah said in a statement to KUNA on the bank's 50th anniversary, that the bank succeeded since day one in achieving its main goal of supporting and financing local industrial develop-

Khajah said that the bank also offers a full range of developmental finance, commercial banking,

Change Closing pts

64,225.17

6.609,22

12,252.06

25,344.63

-0.48

-0.31

and treasury products to meet the needs of its industrial development, adding that from 1974 until 2022, IBK achieved its goals by funding 1,179 industrial projects and 527 Industrial facilities in various fields

in the country.

He noted that the bank manages three financial portfolios on behalf of the government, consisting of industrial financing, with a capital valued at KD 100 million, which provides medium and long-term financing. (KUNA)



Industrial Bank of Kuwait

Market Movements

UAE Nikkei **JAPAN**

Change Closing pts +0.03 4,089.40 +0.27 33,377.42

PAKISTAN SAUDI

PHILIPPINES - PSEI **TADAWUL** EGX 30

08-01-2024

Business

Pandemic impact revised down

New figures show that Kuwait GDP contracted in Q2 '23

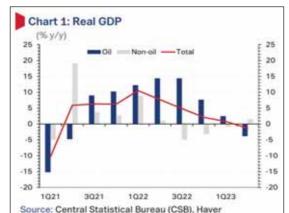
By National Bank of Kuwait

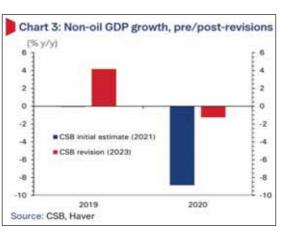
A fter a long hiatus, official figures on Kuwait's GDP have been published, with data up to Q2 2023. Real economic growth was negative in Q2 2023 at -1.3% y/y, with oil output weighed down by OPEC-mandated production cuts. Non-oil growth improved after several negative quarterly readings, but remained disappointingly soft given other, more upbeat high frequency data. The release also came with substantial revisions to the historical data, which raised non-oil output in both 2019 and 2020, resulting in a much smaller negative impact

from the pandemic than previously estimated. The contraction in Q2 23 GDP was due to a decline in oil sector output of -3.9% y/y. (Chart 1.) Oil GDP largely tracks Kuwait's crude oil production, which tends to move in line with the country's participation in OPEC+ production policy and which, since H2 2022, has been focused on restricting output to support prices amid uncertain global demand prospects. In Q2 23, Kuwait signed up to an additional 128 kb/d of voluntary cuts over and above curbs it agreed to in late 2022, lowering its crude production to 2.55 mb/d for the duration of 2023. Crude output is going to be reduced further to 2.41 mb/d through Q1 2024, following OPEC's November decision to take additional steps to balance the oil market.

Meanwhile, non-oil activity grew 1.5% y/y in Q2, a sharp improvement on the 0.9% y/y contraction recorded in Q1. Growth in Q2 was driven by strong gains in the transportation (+35%) and construction (+21%) sectors, with the latter reflecting the rebound seen in project awards witnessed in recent quarters. Combined, these two sectors added 2.5% points to year-on-year non-oil GDP growth in Q2. (Chart 2.) On the other side, growth in the utilities (-5%), communications (-1.6%) and manufacturing (-1.6%) segments was in negative territory. The reported contraction in manufacturing output seems at odds with the expansion in the oil refining sector, which usually accounts for around half of all manufacturing output. Data published by the international Joint Organizations Data Initiative showed refining output surging 45% y/y and 32% y/y in Q1 and Q2, respectively, boosted by the commissioning and launch of the 615 kb/d Al-Zour refinery at the end of 2022.

Overall, the picture painted by the recent data is less rosy than we had anticipated. Non-oil growth in H1 2023 stood at just 0.2% y/y, an improvement on the end of 2022 though still short of what was being signaled by solid growth in other indicators during the same period, such as bank card transactions (a proxy for consumer spending, which grew 10% y/y in cash terms) and imports

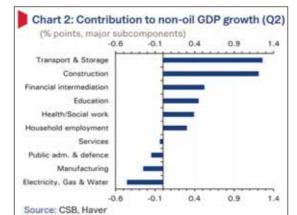


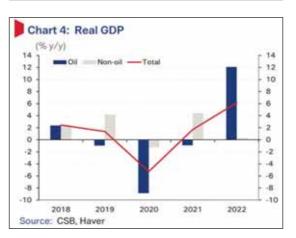


(+9%). We acknowledge that these provisional GDP data are subject to change in future releases, and we also see scope for growth to have picked up in H2 23, continuing the improvement recorded in Q1. Still, if unrevised, the latest numbers would make our full year 2023 non-oil growth estimate of 3.6% difficult to achieve. Conversely, however, the weak 2023 base would make meeting our 3.4% non-oil growth forecast for 2024 easier

Revisions to the historical data show better-thanexpected non-oil GDP readings

As mentioned above, there were also some substantial revisions to the historical time series, especially in 2019 and 2020. (Chart 3.) The level of real non-oil GDP was raised in 2019 by 4% and in 2020 by an eye-catching 13%. The latter was driven by huge upward revisions to





output in the manufacturing, construction and telecommunications sectors, with previous data collection across the board disrupted by the pandemic, according to analytical notes from the Central Statistical Bureau that accompanied the data release. The result of the changes is that non-oil growth in 2019 is marked up to 4.2% from the previous -0.1% and in 2020, even more strikingly, from -8.8% to just -1.2%. If left unrevised, Kuwait's nonoil GDP performance in 2020 would place it first among its GCC peers in terms of resilience in what was the year of largest economic disruption during the pandemic. Oil sector GDP, by contrast, was unchanged from previous

Post-pandemic, the economic performance is mixed Looking at the new, post-2020 figures, the message re-

garding the recovery from the pandemic is mixed. Non-oil growth rebounded 4.4% in 2021, which was stronger than our initial estimate of 3.8%. But this was followed by a sharp slowdown in 2022 to just 0.3%, much weaker than our estimate of 4.3% (which captured some of the expected increase in refining output from Al Zour). (Chart 4.) Admittedly, slower growth was partly due to volatility in the 'imputed bank service charges' component, which was likely pushed up as interest rates rose, and a recorded increase in subsidies. Without these, non-oil growth would have been a somewhat better 1.7%. Also, the better-than-expected non-oil performance in 2020 raised the baseline and thus lessened the 'catch up' growth that would have otherwise been expected subsequently. Indeed, at face value Kuwait's non-oil economy recovered from the pandemic remarkably quickly, topping pre-pandemic levels in 2021 rather than in

some structural features of the Kuwaiti economy. First, total GDP in nominal terms stood at KD56 billion in 2022, or \$183 billion. This means Kuwait has the 4th largest economy in the Gulf region (above Oman but below Qatar) and represents 8% of GCC GDP overall. Second, the year-on-year decline in total GDP in Q2 23 reflects the continued outsized role of the oil sector in the economy, which accounted for a large 52% of GDP in 2022 in real terms (excluding refining). In nominal terms, the oil sector accounted for a larger 55% - the difference reflecting the evolution of the sectors since the 'base year' of 2010 used for the national accounts. (An updated base year with a new set of weights would likely change this share, affecting the sector's impact on overall growth. The direction of the shift would depend on the exact year chosen, but in general oil's share of GDP has trended lower in recent years, averaging 42% in the five years to 2021.) For comparison, the hydrocarbon sector's share of nominal GDP in 2022 stood at 44% in Qatar,

compounded average rate of 1.8% per year in real terms, comprised of 2.5% per year for the non-oil sector and 1.3% per year for the oil sector. These structural features highlight the opportunity to press ahead with economic diversification to reduce the oil sector's share of GDP closer to the levels of Kuwait's GCC peers - something that can be achieved by boosting growth in the non-oil sector, which, at a trend rate of 2.5% in the past, is too low in our opinion. The government's ambitions to increase investment and expand the role of the private sector in the economy are critical in this regard.

Market value of non-Kuwaiti ownership in Kuwaiti banks declined by 8% in 2023

Aggregate value reached KD3.561bln by end of Dec

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Throughout 2023, the Boursa Kuwait witnessed a notable shift in the market value of non-Kuwaiti ownership in Kuwaiti banks, reflecting a decline of 8%.

The aggregate value reached 3.561 billion dinars by the end of December, down from 3.873 billion dinars recorded at the close of 2022. This decline in non-Kuwaiti ownership is intricately tied to the broader dynamics influencing the banking sector's market valuation on the stock exchange.

Analyzing the broader market trends, the banking sector experienced an 8.3% decrease in its overall market value during 2023, translating to a significant reduction of about 2.217 billion dinars. Despite the general downturn, foreign ownership exhibited a 3.4% uptick in December, culminating in a total value of 3.561 billion dinars by the month's conclusion. This particular surge in foreign ownership towards the end of the year suggests some recovery and stabilization in the market.

Digging deeper into the specifics, the first market, which includes seven local banks, saw a 2.4% increase in its market value during December, reaching 31.821 billion dinars. However, this positive monthly performance didn't counterbalance the overall annual decrease, which amounted to approximately 5.56 billion dinars or a 13.8% downturn.

Individual banks showcased varying trends in foreign ownership. Notably, the National Bank of Kuwait witnessed the most significant decline, with foreign ownership decreasing by 13.7%, from 2.012 billion dinars in December 2022 to

Kuwaiti banks extending credit facilities to foreign cos boosts growth

Loans granted total KD5.8 bln

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Kuwaiti banks have continued their expansion in providing credit facilities to foreign companies operating in the country, reaching a historic high of approximately 5.8 billion dinars by the end of November 2023, reports Al-Anba daily.

This surge is attributed to the increased pace of awarded projects in Kuwait, experiencing an annual jump of 179% and reaching \$7 billion in 2023.

As per data from the Central Bank of Kuwait, credit facilities for nonresidents are extended to individuals without Kuwaiti work or residence permits, as well as foreign companies and commercial establishments licensed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry or other relevant

This includes foreign companies engaged in special contracts with the government and foreign diplomatic bodies along with their affiliated en-

The statistics reveal a 5.2% annual increase in the balance of facilities for economic activities for nonresidents, amounting to 290 million dinars by the end of November. The total facilities for non-residents stood at about 5.4 billion dinars during November of the previous year. On a monthly basis, net credit facilities to non-residents amounted to 277.6 million dinars in November compared to October 2023.

In details, the credit facilities to non-residents are concentrated in the

■ Loans from local banks to foreign banks, including subscribed bonds, amounted to a value of 2.18 billion dinars as of The end of November 2023, compared to 2.169 billion as in the balance of December 2022, compared to 1.962 billion for the corresponding month of November 2022, with a growth rate equivalent

■ Other services included in the credit facilities provided to non-Kuwaitis recorded about 1.2 billion dinars, compared to the value of 1.08 billion dinars at the end of December last year, i.e. a growth rate equivalent to 13%.

■ Loans granted to insurance and exchange companies, investment companies, and foreign financing companies operating in Kuwait re-corded about 798.5 million dinars at the end of November 2023, compared to about 560.5 million dinars at the end of December 2022, with a growth rate equivalent to 42.4%.

■ Loans granted to commercial companies amounted to about 153.8 million dinars, compared to 180.3 million dinars, a decrease of 14.6%. ■ Industrial loans to non-residents amounted to about 399.5 million di-

nars at the end of November 2023,

compared to 424 million dinars at

the end of December 2022, a decrease of 5.7%.

■ Construction loans recorded an increase from the level of 196.8 million dinars at the end of December 2022 to record 207.3 million dinars at the end of November 2023, with a growth of 5.3%.

Loans granted to foreigners to purchase securities amounted to about 67.2 million dinars at the end of November 2023, distributed among 62.2 million dinars for foreign companies and institutions and 5.1 million dinars for foreign individuals, a decrease of more than 12%, as they recorded cumulatively at the end of December 2022 about 76.4 million. Dinar.

■ Loans granted to foreign companies operating in the oil and gas sector locally amounted to about 542.6 million dinars at the end of November 2023, compared to 571.7 million dinars at the end of December 2022, recording a decrease of about 5%.

■ Loans granted to foreign real estate companies amounted to about 124.3 million dinars at the end of November 2023, compared to 125.6 million dinars at the end of December 2022, a decrease of 1%.

■ Public service loans cumulatively amounted to 152.6 million dinars at the end of November 2023, compared to 196.1 million dinars at the end of December, a decrease of

22.1%.

Local banks usually do not grant any personal facilities to foreigners who do not hold any residency in the country, as this item is devoid of any facilities. Overall, it is expected that the value of credit facilities provided to foreign companies operating in Kuwait will increase during the current year as a result of the country's implementation of a large number of projects in construction and oil sec-

The "MEED" magazine monitored that the total value of active projects in Kuwait amounts to \$129.8 billion, distributed in two phases, the first of which is the pre-implementation phase and is worth \$100.6 billion, while the value of projects under implementation amounts to \$29.2

Regarding the future outlook, credit growth is likely to continue while receiving support through the recovery of economic activities, in conjunction with the easing of monetary tightening and the trend of global central banks, including the Central Bank of Kuwait, to reduce interest rates during 2024, which will reflect positively on revitalizing the economy and encouraging the private sector loans, not to mention the rise in oil prices, which enhances levels of confidence, and the potential improvement in the pace of project awarding.

2022 as previously thought. More broadly, the GDP figures provide an update on

39% in Saudi Arabia and 30% in the UAE.

Third, between 2010 and 2022, total GDP grew at a

Libya suspends oil production at field

CAIRO, Jan 8, (AP): Production at Libya's largest oil field was suspended Sunday, the country's state-run oil company said, after protesters forced the facility to close over fuel short-

The National Oil Corp. declared force majeure at the Sharara oil field in the country's south starting Sunday. Force majeure is a legal maneuver that releases a company of its contractual obligations because of extraordinary

circumstances. The company said in a statement that the closure of the field forced the suspension of crude oil supplies to the western Zawiya terminal on the Mediterranean

Libya produces more than 1.2 million barrels of oil per day, and Sharara is the country's largest field, with a capacity of up to 300,000 barrels per day.

The company said negotiations with the protesters were underway to resume production "as soon as possible."

Local media reported that residents of the desert town of Ubari, about 950 kilometers (590 miles) south of the capital Tripoli, shut down the field to protest fuel shortages.

The protesters also called for rehabilitating infrastructure and repairing roads in the southwestern region of Fezzan, one of the historic three provinces of Libya. They had closed the field for two days in July.

Libya's light crude has long featured in the country's yearslong civil conflict, with rival militias and foreign powers jostling for control of Africa's largest oil reserves.

Libya has been in turmoil since a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. The North African nation has for most of the past decade been split between rival administrations in the east and the west, each backed by militias and foreign governments.

1.736 billion dinars by December 27, 2023. In contrast, KFH experienced a 2.6% increase, reaching a total of 1.375 billion dinars in foreign

Boubyan Bank recorded a sub-

stantial decrease of 17.3% in foreign ownership, amounting to 145.74 million dinars. Other banks, such as Gulf Bank and Burgan Bank, also witnessed declines in their foreign ownership values throughout 2023.

Despite a positive monthly performance in December, indicated by a 2.2% increase in the market value of listed companies, the overall market value experienced a 13.8% reduction during the year, totaling about

6.4 billion dinars. This decline is reflective of various market dynamics and challenges that influenced both the broader market and the banking sector specifically throughout the course of 2023.

Canceled flights piling up

Alaska and United stuck without their grounded Boeing jets

PORTLAND, Oregon, Jan 8, (AP): Alaska Airlines and United Airlines grounded all of their Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners again on Sunday while they waited to be told how to inspect the planes to prevent another inflight blowout like the one that damaged an Alaska

Alaska Airlines had returned 18 of its 65 737 Max 9 aircraft to service Saturday, less than 24 hours after part of the fuselage on another plane blew out three miles (4.8 kilometers) above Oregon.

The reprieve was short-lived.

The airline said Sunday that it received a notice from the Federal Aviation Administration that additional work might be needed on those 18 planes.

Alaska said that it had canceled 170 flights - more than one-fifth of its schedule - by midafternoon on the West Coast because of the groundings.

"These aircraft have now also been pulled from service until details about possible additional maintenance work are confirmed with the FAA," the airline said in a statement. "We are in touch with the FAA to determine what, if any, further work is required."

United Airlines said it had scrapped about 180 flights Sunday while salvaging others by finding other planes not covered by the grounding.

Alaska and United are the only U.S. airlines that fly the Max 9.

United said it was waiting for Boeing to issue what is called a multi-operator message, which is a service bulletin used when multiple airlines need to perform similar work on a particular type of plane.

Boeing is working on a bulletin but had not yet submitted it to the FAA, according to a person familiar with the situation. Producing a detailed, technical bulletin frequently takes a couple days, the person said. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the company and regulators have not publicly discussed the process.



Kelvin Lau, left, waits with his family, including daughter Chloe, 3, to rebook a canceled Alaska Airlines flight, Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, in SeaTac, Washington. (AP)

Boeing declined to comment.

A panel used to plug an area reserved for an exit door on the Max 9 blew out Friday night shortly after Alaska Airlines flight 1282 took off from Portland, Oregon. The depressurized plane, carrying 171 passengers and six crew members, returned safely to Portland International Airport with no serious injuries.

Hours after the incident, the FAA ordered the grounding of 171 Max 9s including all those operated by Alaska and United until they could be inspected. The FAA said inspections will take four to eight hours.

Boeing has delivered 218 Max 9s worldwide, but not all of them are covered by the FAA order. They are among more than 1,300 Max jetliners - mostly the Max 8 variant sold by the aircraft maker. The Max 8 and other versions of the Boeing 737 are not affected by the grounding.

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., chair of the Senate's Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, said she agreed with the decision to ground the Max 9s.

"Safety is paramount. Aviation production has to meet a gold standard, including quality control inspections and strong FAA oversight," she said in a statement.

Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board searched Sunday for the paneled-over exit door that blew out from flight 1282. They have a good idea of where it landed, near Oregon Route 217 and Barnes Road in the Cedar Hills area west of Portland, NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy said at a news conference late Saturday.

"If you find that, please, please contact lo-

cal law enforcement," she said.

Early Sunday afternoon, some local residents were scouring a patch of land with dense thickets, sandwiched between busy roads and a light rail train station. The area is located across from a sprawling hospital complex.

Searcher Adam Pirkle said he had ridden 14 miles (22 kilometers), maneuvering his bicycle through the overgrowth. "I've been looking at the flight track, I was looking at the winds," he said. "I've been trying to focus on wooded areas.3

Daniel Feldt navigated the same thickets on foot, equipped with binoculars after searching the area from the roof of a parking garage. "Didn't see any holes in the bushes that looked obvious where something had fallen through," he said.

Lisa Helderop, communications director at Providence St. Vincent, the hospital in the area of southwest Portland where the NTSB said the door might have fallen, said two NTSB agents also looked around the hospital campus Sunday with members of the hospital's security team.

Fatal crash

There has not been a fatal crash involving a U.S. passenger carrier within the country since 2009 when a Colgan Air flight crashed near Buffalo, New York, killing all 49 people on board and one person on the ground. In 2013, an Asiana Airlines flight arriving from South Korea crashed at San Francisco International Airport, killing three of the 307 people on board.

Flight 1282 took off from Portland at 5:07 p.m. Friday for a two-hour flight to Ontario, California. About six minutes later, the chunk of the fuselage blew out as the plane was at about 16,000 feet (4.8 kilometers). One of the pilots declared an emergency and asked for clearance to descend to 10,000 feet (3 kilometers), the altitude where the air would have enough oxygen to breathe safely.

Videos posted by passengers online

showed a gaping hole where the paneled-over exit had been and passengers wearing masks. They applauded when the plane landed safely about 13 minutes after the blowout. Firefighters then came down the aisle, asking passengers to remain in their seats as they treated the injured.

It was extremely lucky that the airplane had not yet reached cruising altitude, when passengers and flight attendants might be walking around the cabin, Homendy said.

"No one was seated in 26A and B where that door plug is, the aircraft was around 16,000 feet and only 10 minutes out from the airport when the door blew," she said. The investigation is expected to take months.

The aircraft involved rolled off the assembly line and received its certification two months ago, according to online FAA records. It had been on 145 flights since entering commercial service Nov. 11, said FlightRadar24, another tracking service. The flight from Portland was the aircraft's third of the day.

Aviation experts were stunned a piece would fly off a new aircraft. Anthony Brickhouse, a professor of aerospace safety at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, said he has seen panels of fuselage come off planes before, but couldn't recall one where passengers "are looking at the lights of the city."

The Max is the newest version of Boeing's venerable 737, a twin-engine, singleaisle plane frequently used on U.S. domestic flights. The plane went into service in May

Two Max 8 jets crashed in 2018 and 2019, killing 346 people. All Max 8 and Max 9 planes were grounded worldwide for nearly two years until Boeing made changes to an automated flight control system implicated in

The Max has been plagued by other issues, including manufacturing flaws, concern about overheating that led FAA to tell pilots to limit use of an anti-ice system, and a possible loose bolt in the rudder system.

Zhongzhi Enterprise Group file for bankruptcy

Evergrande EV's top exec detained

BANGKOK, Jan 8, (AP): A top executive of China Evergrande's electric vehicle company has been detained by police in the latest sign of trouble for the world's most heavily indebted property devel-

China Evergrande New Energy Vehicle announced the detention of Liu Yongzhuo, its vice chairman and an executive director, in a notice Monday to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. Its shares plunged nearly 11% after they resumed trading later in the day.

That followed news over the weekend that Zhongzhi Enterprise Group, a major shadow bank in China that has lent billions in yuan (dollars) to property developers, filed for bankruptcy liquidation after it was unable to pay its debts.

A crackdown on excessive borrowing that began several years ago has left dozens of Chinese developers out of business or struggling for survival. The industrywide meltdown has snagged a vital cog in China's economic engine, reverberating through financial

Share prices sank Monday in Hong Kong and Shanghai, with the benchmark Hang Seng index down 2.2%. Evergrande Group's shares lost 1.4%.

Debt obligations

Evergrande has been in crisis since it defaulted on its debt obligations two years ago.

It is in the midst of a restructuring that includes selling off assets to avoid defaulting on \$340 billion

Evergrande confirmed in late September that its chairman Hui Ka Yan had been subjected to "mandatory measures in accordance with the law due to suspicion of illegal crimes." His status is unclear.

Evergrande New Energy Vehicle saw its shares tumble nearly 20% last week after it said a deal to sell shares to Dubai-based NWTN Motors had lapsed.

The brief announcement of Liu's detention on "suspicion of illegal crimes" made no mention of that or other details.

The company has delayed its plans for beginning manufacturing after running into difficulties in attracting enough funding.

The Beijing No. 1 Intermediate Court said late Friday that it had approved Zhongzhi Enterprise Group's application for bankruptcy liquidation.

It said the company was facing a "severe shortage of working capital and is unable to recover most of its accounts receivable.'

Zhongzhi, one of China's larg-

est private asset management companies, said in November that its debts of up to 460 billion yuan (\$64 billion) were more than twice its assets of 200 billion yuan. Soon afterward, Beijing police said they were investigating suspected crimes of a Chinese wealth company owned by Zhongzhi. According to the Chinese finan-

cial magazine Caixin, it manages nearly 1 trillion yuan (\$130 billion) in assets, but the company's finances have suffered as the once thriving property market has languished.

Shadow banks play an important role in Chinese finance, operating outside traditional banking regula-

Zhongzhi expanded rapidly after was founded by the late tycoon Xie Zhikun in 1995, and operates in insurance, leasing, trust, and other financial industries.

Vietnam's VinFast to build \$2 billion EV plant in India



Workers assemble a car at a VinFast factory in Hai Phong, Vietnam, on Sept. 29, 2023. Vietnamese automaker VinFast agreed on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2024, to invest up to \$2 billion into building an electric vehicle factory in southern India's Tamil Nadu state. (AP)

Plan highlights company's commitment zero-emission

HANOI, Vietnam, Jan 8, (AP): Vietnamese automaker VinFast says it plans to spend up to \$2 billion to build an electric vehicle factory in India, the world's third-largest auto market by sales.

The factory in southern In-

dia's Tamil Nadu state will be the company's first foray into India and follows VinFast's launch of sales in the United States and other major markets.

The plan highlights the company's commitment to a "vision of a zero-emission transportation future," Tran Mai Hoa, the company's deputy CEO of sales and marketing, said in a statement.

is absolutely insufficient. We can't

The budget revamp that included

the disputed cuts was required after

Germany's highest court annulled

an earlier decision to repurpose 60

billion euros (almost \$66 billion)

originally meant to cushion the

fallout from the COVID-19 pan-

demic for measures to help combat

climate change and modernize the

The maneuver fell afoul of Ger-

many's strict self-imposed limits

carry this additional tax burden."

VinFast said it is committing \$500 million in the first phase of construction and plans to transform the region around port city of Thootukudi into a "first-class electric vehicle production hub." The factory will have a capacity to roll out 150,000 cars annually, it said. It gave few other details.

VinFast is part of Vingroup, a sprawling conglomerate that began as an instant noodle company in Ukraine in the 1990s that was founded and is run by Vietnam's richest man, Pham Nhat Vuong.

Exports

This will be VinFast's first foray into India and is part of a global expansion that has included exports of EVs to the United States. It is building a \$4 billion EV factory in North Carolina, where production is slated to begin this year.

The company aims to be selling in 50 markets worldwide by the end of this year. In October, it said it plans to build a \$400 million electric vehicle factory in Indonesia. It has started shipping EVs made in Vietnam to neighboring Laos to serve as a fleet for Green SM, an EV taxi operator that is mostly owned by VinFast's founder.

Last year, Vinfast listed its shares on Nasdaq, seeing them balloon in value with its market value shooting briefly above those of General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co. in late August. But investor enthusiasm has cooled down and the company lost more than \$1.4 billion in the first three quarters of 2023.

While it has struggled to sell its EVs in the U.S. and its early cars have received bad reviews, the company maintains that if it can succeed in the crowded and competitive American market, it can succeed anywhere.

Proposals part of a package to fill \$18.6-bln hole in 2024 budget

German farmers stage protests against plan to scrap diesel tax breaks

BERLIN, Jan 8, (AP): Farmers blocked highway access roads in parts of Germany Monday and gathered for demonstrations, launching a week of protests against a government plan to scrap tax breaks on diesel used in agri-

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's unpopular three-party coalition infuriated farmers last month by drawing up plans to abolish a car tax exemption for farming vehicles and the diesel tax breaks.

The proposals were part of a package to fill a 17-billion-euro (\$18.6-billion) hole in the 2024

The government on Thursday climbed down partially, saying that the car tax exemption would be retained and the cuts in the diesel tax breaks would be staggered

over three years. But the German Farmers' Association said it was still insisting on the plans being reversed fully and would go ahead with a "week of action" starting Mon-

The Evergrande Group headquarters logo is seen in Shenzhen in southern

China's Guangdong province on Sept. 24, 2021. (AP)

In some areas, farmers used tractors to block entry roads to highways early Monday.

A protest was planned in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, and a string of other demonstrations with tractors were planned across the country.

Protests

The protests are under scrutiny after a group of farmers on Thursday prevented Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck from disembarking a ferry in a small North Sea port as he returned from a personal trip to an offshore island.

That incident drew condemnation from government and opposition figures and the farmers association.

Authorities have warned that far-right groups and others could try to capitalize on the protests.

Farmers association chairman Joachim Rukwied told RBB Inforadio Monday that "we will ensure we are not infiltrated" by such

Of the government's partial climbdown, Rukwied said: "This



Farmers demonstrate with their tractors in front of the state parliament in Kiel, Germany, Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. Farmers blocked highway access roads in parts of Germany Monday and gathered for demonstrations, launching a week of protests against a government plan to scrap tax breaks on diesel used in agriculture. (AP)

On top of potential disruption caused by the farmers' protests, travelers in Germany face a nearly three-day strike later this week by a union representing many of the country's train drivers, which is stepping up its ac-

on running up debt.

tion against state-owned railway operator Deutsche Bahn in an unrelated dispute over working hours and pay. The GDL union is calling on

its members to walk out from 2 a.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Fri-



Model series continues long model history of classic E-Class

Al Mulla Automobiles announces arrival of new Mercedes-Benz E-Class in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Al Mulla Automobiles Co., member of the Al Mulla Group and the sole authorized distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, has recently announced that the arrival of the new Mercedes-Benz E-Class in Kuwait. For over 75 years, the E-Class has set the standard for mid-range luxury saloons. The new E-Class combines tradition and modernity: on the one hand, the model series continues the long model history of the classic E-Class; on the other hand, its new appearance builds a bridge to the avant-garde trendsetters. The new E-Class will be showcased in the Mercedes-Benz Flagship showroom in Al Rai and the Mercedes-Benz boutique in Avenues for guests and will be available for on-the-spot test drives.

Classic proportions and special character lines in the exterior design The new E-Class has the proportions of a classic three-box saloon: the short front overhang and long bonnet

are followed by a greenhouse which is set well back. The "cab-backward" design is rounded off by the well-pro-

portioned rear overhang. A black panel-like surface connects the radiator grille with the headlamps. This insert in high-gloss black is visually reminiscent of the electric vehicle models by Mercedes Benz. The three-dimensionally designed radiator grille is either progressive or classic, depending on the equipment line. A chrome radiator grille surround backlit by optical fibers is optionally available for all lines (Avantgarde, Exclusive and AMG Line). The new E-Class has high-performance LED headlamps as standard. As an optional extra, DIGITAL LIGHT is available without and with a projection function. All headlamp variants offer a distinctive day and night design. As a typical feature of the brand, the daytime running lights take the shape of an eyebrow. Power domes accentuate the bonnet.

The side view shows off the harmonious proportions and the distinctive "cab-backward" design to particularly good effect. The flush-fitting door handles familiar from the luxury Mercedes-Benz models are available as an option. The two separate character lines on the side emphasize the car's sporty character.

Highlights at the rear include the two-section LED lights with a new contour and special design: The unique star motif makes the day and night design of the rear lights unmistakable.

MBUX Super screen as a highlight of the interior design

The dashboard makes for the digital experience in the interior. If the E-Class is equipped with the optional front passenger screen, the large glass surface of the MBUX Super screen extends to the central display. Visually detached from this is the driver's display in the driver's field of vision. The models without a passenger display feature a large trim element that extends to the center. Visually detached, the central display appears to float above the concave surface of this trim element.

The front section of the instrument panel is illuminated by the light strip of the Active Ambient Lighting. This runs in a wide arc from the windscreen, past the A-pillars and into the doors. This creates a generous feeling of space. An apparently free-floating control array in the upper section of the door panels matches the look of

the glass surfaces of the screens. The center console is designed as a homogeneous unit and merges in a straight line into the lower section of the dashboard. At the front, a stowage compartment with lid and cup holders is integrated into the three-dimensionally shaped trim element. There is a soft padded armrest in the rear part of the center console.

The door center panel merges seamlessly into the armrest with a







concave sweep. The front section here is designed as a metallic high-tech element. It serves as a grab and closing handle, and incorporates the switches for the power windows. Another highlight is the free-floating control array incorporating the door opener and the controls for the seat functions.

The contours of the seat surface and backrest flow elegantly from the inside to the outside, and appear to float above the base of the seat thanks to their layer design. Indented vertical lines follow the outer contour, widening out towards the top.

When it comes to spaciousness, the E-Class is one of the favorites in its segment. The driver enjoys five millimeters more headroom than in the preceding model. The rear passengers particularly benefit from the two-centimeter longer wheelbase: Kneeroom and maximum legroom are increased by 10 and 17 millimeters, respectively. The increase in elbow width in the rear is even greater: it is now 1519 millimeters. This is an increase by 25 millimeters, and almost S-class level. The luggage capacity is up to 540 liters.

AIRMATIC and rear-axle steering are optionally available

The agile handling of the new E-Class is due in large part to precise guidance of the front wheels by four control arms each. At the rear axle, an optimized multi-link independent rear suspension with five links ensures excellent wheel control and excellent straight-line stability. At both axles, the springs and dampers are combined in a single strut and are not involved in wheel guidance tasks, therefore the suspension responds with corresponding sensitivity. The front subframe and rear axle carrier decouple the suspension and body from vibrations and

The new E-Class is especially agile and stable with the optional rear-axle steering and the accompanying, more direct steering ratio at the front axle. The steering angle at the rear axle is 4.5 degrees. This reduces the turning circle by up to 90 centimeters

ment experience

tent can be experienced with almost all the senses in the E-Class. Thanks same time, the electronic architecture is more software-driven and less hardware-driven.

The computing functions of previously separate domains take place in single processor. Screens and the MBUX infotainment system thus share a new, very powerful central onboard computer. This form of networking improves the performance and speed of the data streams.

available for the new E-Class. It includes Mercedes me connect services and a data package from a third-party provider. Depending on the market, a communication module with 5G as the transmission technology is used. The mobile phone standard 5G makes much faster data rates possible than

simply by the driver carrying a com-

Impressive, immersive entertain-

Music, games and streaming conto digital innovations in the interior, the E-Class is now more intelligent, achieving a new dimension of personalization and interaction. At the

The Entertainment package (MBUX Entertainment Plus) will be Entertainment LTE/UMTS.

Digital Vehicle Key is now available for iPhone and Apple Watch
With the Digital Vehicle Key, the

E-Class can be started and locked







patible iPhone or Apple Watch with them. Key sharing is also possible: various digital channels can be used to invite family members or friends to use the E-Class. In doing so, the main user of the Mercedes me account can assign different rights, granting only access to the vehicle or also allowing it to be driven. The vehicle can recognize several users at once, and the Digital Vehicle Key can be shared with up to 16 people. In those markets where Mercedes me connect services are available, the pre-installation for the Digital Vehicle Key forms part of the KEYLESS-GO Comfort Package. This equipment combination is available in the new E-Class from the Premium Package onwards.

Music becomes visible: Sound Visualization

With the new Active Ambient Lighting with Sound Visualization, occupants in the new E-Class can experience music with three senses: pieces of music and sounds from films or apps can be heard (with Dolby Atmos® technology if desired), felt (by means of sound resonating transducers in the optional Burmaster® 4D surround sound system) and now also "seen". Visualization takes place on the light strip of the Active Ambient Lighting (optional extra). For the first time, this applies throughout in the E-Class. For example, fast sequences of beats can cause rapid light changes, while flowing rhythms can create softly merging lighting moods.

The entertainment experience for the front passenger is always impressive. On their optional screen, the front passenger can watch dynamic content such as TV or video streaming even when the driver at the wheel is looking over at them. This is because the display is switchable. The advanced camera-based privacy function reduces its brightness and therefore the risk of driver distraction.

Added day-to-day convenience: the routines

Mercedes-Benz is working on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) so that the car learns which comfort systems vehicle occupants use repeatedly. Given the same circumstances, the aim is for AI to automate such functions. The result is personalized automation. Mercedes-Benz uses the term 'routine' for this innovation, the development of which is already well advanced.

On the launch of the new E-Class. customers will be able to use templates for standard routines. They also have the option of creating routines themselves. In doing so, the occupants can link several functions and conditions. For example, "Switch on the seat heating and set the ambient lighting to warm orange if the interior temperature is below twelve degrees Celsius"

For enhanced well-being: ENER-GIZING COMFORT and THERMO-TRONIC with Digital Vent Control (both optional)

Soothing sounds, mobilizing massage, activating light - Mercedes-Benz offers a comprehensive wellness programmer with the variously configured ENERGIZING COMFORT programmers and the individual recommendations of the ENERGIZING COACH. The new E-Class generation marks the debut of two innovations: The anti-travel sickness program of ENERGIZING COMFORT can help affected passengers to alleviate the symptoms. A bio-feedback function is planned for the ENERGIZING COACH in the medium term. This can reduce the feeling of stress with breathing exercises.

With THERMOTRONIC automatic climate control (optional extra), Digital Vent Control enhances the comfort experience. It automatically adjusts the front air vents to a desired ventilation scenario. This can be done for each seat via the user profile, for example. However, the nozzles can also be aligned by hand as usual.

Numerous driving assistance systems, some of which have been developed further

The standard equipment of the E-Class with driving assistance systems includes Active Distance Assist DIS-TRONIC, ATTENTION ASSIST, Active Brake Assist, Active Lane Keeping Assist, Parking Package with reversing camera and Speed Limit Assist. The status and activity of the driving assistance systems are shown as a full-screen view in the Assistance mode of the driver's display.

The Driving Assistance Plus pack-

age is also offered as an optional extra, for example as part of the Premium package. Components include Active Steering Assist, which assists with lane-keeping. As already on motorways, the E-Class can now also restart automatically in city traffic and on country roads after a longer standstill. Another new feature: If Active Steering Assist is no longer available because the lane markings are not clearly visible, it signals this to the driver by vibrations in the steer-

Sophisticated body concept and coordinated restraint systems

The safety concept of the E-Class is based on a body with a particularly rigid passenger cell and specifically deformable crash structures. The restraint systems, e.g. seat belts and airbags, are specifically adapted to this. In the event of an accident, they can be activated in such a way that their protective effect for the occupants is adapted to the situation.

In addition to driver and front passenger airbags, a knee airbag on the driver's side is also standard. It can protect the legs from contact with the steering column or instrument panel in a severe frontal crash. The standard windowbags can reduce the risk of head injuries. In the event of a serious side-on collision, the window airbag on the side of the impact extends from the A- to the C-pillar like a curtain over the front and rear side windows. If a rollover is detected, the window airbags can be activated on both sides. In addition to the head protection system, side airbags can also cover the thorax area in the event of a severe side impact - including on the outer rear seats (optional).

In addition, the vehicles are equipped with a center airbag, depending on the country. Pyrotechnic belt tensioners and belt force limiters are standard on all outer seats, as is belt height adjustment.

The E-Class as a long-standing suc-

Mercedes-Benz has produced more than 16 million upper mid-range vehicles since 1946. The heritage of the E-Class goes back to the very early days of the brand. At the beginning of the 20th century, the preceding companies from which Mercedes-Benz emerged brought corresponding vehicles to market.

The new Mercedes-Benz E-Class will be available for test drives and displayed in the Mercedes-Benz Flagship Showroom in Al Rai as well as the Mercedes-Benz Boutique in the Avenues. For more information and queries related to the new E-Class, please visit Al Mulla Automobiles Mercedes-Benz showroom in Al Rai, Mercedes-Benz Boutique in The Avenues, WhatsApp or call the customer center at 1887888 and follow the account on Instagram @MercedesBenz-Kuwait, or visit the website at www. mercedes-benz-mena.com/kuwait/en

New store serves a population of more than 92 thousand people

Sultan bolsters Kuwait presence with opening of 49th store in Mishref



only a good attitude and a creative mind.

DAI Storytime poster.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Sultan Center Food Products Company (Sultan), announced today the opening of its 49th store in Kuwait. The new store, adjacent to the Yarmouk Sports Club in Mishref, is part of Sultan's 2025 vision to have a store within a ten-minute drive from any point in Kuwait's inhabited areas.

Sultan Vice Chairman Mr. Essam Al-Rifai said, "We're very excited to announce that starting today over 92,000 residents in Mishref and surrounding areas are now closer than ever to a Sultan shopping experience and the diverse choices of high-quality food and consumer goods we bring and become the preferred destination in the retail sector."

Mr. Al-Rifai added, "We pledged to open 20 new branches between 2020 and 2025. With the opening of this store in Mishref today, we have successfully launched 15 branches so far, and we are fully committed to achieving our plan to

be closer to our customers." Sultan CEO Ms. Khadija Oubala said, "Earlier this year, we celebrated the unveiling of Sultan's new identity coinciding with the launch of our Adailiya store.

Today, the new store in Mishref embodies our new identity and provides a wide range of indemand local and international food products.

We are also excited to announce that the next phase of the Sultan Mishref project will feature an additional area of 4,000 square meters, including a variety of retail spaces, facilities, essential amenities, and support programs.

This is designed to further enhance the shop-



Sultan Mishref Store

ping experience of Mishref's community, and create a dynamic hub for social interaction and economic growth. We look forward to revealing these new aspects and the ongoing development

Sultan Center Food Products Company is the largest independent retailer on the Kuwait Stock

It owns and operates a network of over 70 stores in the Middle East. This includes 12

branches in Jordan, three branches in Bahrain, and eight branches in Oman. In Kuwait alone, Sultan operates 49 branches, spanning from Jahra to Nwaiseeb, through three distinct store

These include 8 flagship stores, which cater to daily needs in every neighborhood; 11 Sultan Market stores; and 30 Sultan Express stores, which offer quick and convenient shopping op

Obama, Mulaney and Burnett among the Emmy winners

LOS ANGELES, Jan 8, (AP): Barack Obama won his second Emmy, John Mulaney won his third, and Carol Burnett took her seventh Sunday on night two of the Creative Arts Emmy Awards.

Obama won the Emmy for best narrator for his Netflix documentary series, "Working: What We Do All Day," repeating in a category he previously won for narrating a Netflix series on national parks. He also has two Grammys for his voice work on the audiobooks of his two memoirs.

The former president, who was not at the ceremony at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles, beat fellow nominees Morgan Freeman, Angela Bassett, Mahershala Ali and Pedro Pascal in what was by far the most star-studded category at the Creative Arts Emmys, a two-night award-show marathon that mostly honors less-thanfamous artists, crew members and crafts people in television.

Mulaney won his Emmy for writing on his Netflix standup special, "Baby J," in which his work took a darker turn and dealt with his drug addiction and recovery.

"I can't wait to show this award to our son for a special he will never, ever be allowed to watch," Mulaney told wife Olivia Munn, with whom he has a 2-year-old, as he accepted the award.

He previously won Emmys for another standup special and for his writing on "Saturday Night Live."

The 90-year-old Burnett took the stage to accept the last award of the weekend when NBC's "Carol Burnett: 90 Years of Laughter + Love," won best prerecorded variety special.

The comic legend won the first of her seven Emmys in 1961 and took her most recent one in 1997.

The Creative Arts Emmys, which began Saturday and ended Sunday, are a precursor to the main Emmy ceremony that will air 8 p.m. Jan. 15 on Fox, with "black-ish" star Anthony Anderson as host. Just like the main telecast, the Creative Arts Emmys arrive after a four-month delay because of Hollywood's writers and actors strikes.

Sunday's night two, which focused largely on reality shows and

other unscripted TV, was largely overshadowed by the Golden Globe Awards, taking place simultaneously about 10 miles (16 kilometers) away in Beverly Hills.

Other winners included Keke Palmer, who took best game show host for "Password." "I Think You Should Leave with Tim Robinson" was named best short form comedy, drama or variety series; "Queer Eye" was named best structured reality show; and "Welcome to Wrexham" won for best unstructured reality show.

Saturday night's winners included Ed Sheeran, who won his first Emmy for co-writing the song "A Beautiful Game" for "Ted Lasso" on Apple TV+.

TV veterans Judith Light and Nick Offerman each won their first Emmy on Saturday for guest roles. Offerman won his for an episode of "The Last of Us," which took eight Creative Arts Emmys and is a favorite to win several more at the Jan. 15 main ceremony. An edited version of the two-night ceremony airs Jan. 13 on ca-

ble channel FXX.

Variety



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Cillian Murphy in a scene from 'Oppenheimer.' (AP)

Globes

'Poor Things' upsets 'Barbie' in comedy

'Oppenheimer' sweeps Golden Globes

Chalamet and "Wonka" topped the box office charts for the third time in its four weekends in theaters. Warner Bros.' family-oriented musical added \$14.4 million in ticket sales according to studio estimates Sunday, bringing its total domestic grosses to \$164.7

the tradition of a film like 'The Greatest Showman," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. That Hugh Jackman musical opened under \$9 million in December 2017 and went on to gross \$435 million

globally.
"'Wonka' is a perfect crowd pleaser released at the perfect time and it's going to ride that wave into January," Dergarabedian said. "It's an opportune time for it to be in the marketplace.

After finishing 2023 on a high note, 2024 is getting off to a slower start than last year, down around 16%, with the Universal/ Blumhouse horror "Night Swim" as the only major new offering in theaters. The movie stars Wyatt Russell and Kerry Condon as a couple with a sinister, supernatural

swimming pool.
"Night Swim" drew in an estimated \$12 million in its first weekend in 3,250 theaters in North America against a reported \$15 million production budget. Including international showings in 36 markets, "Night Swim" is heading towards a \$17.7 million global debut.

well at the box office, but it's going to make us look at every swimming pool with a little more trepidation," said **Jim Orr**, Universal's head of domestic distribution.

Horror movies are largely criticproof, but with fairly negative reviews and a C CinemaScore rating, it's unlikely to repeat the viral success of last year's demon doll movie "M3GAN."

Way of Water,' which totally dominated the box office a year ago, or 'M3GAN,' which made that a bigger weekend," said Dergarabedian. "But it's a bit early to call it in terms of how the year is going to turn out." (AP)

NEW YORK: A reporter who was fired for his standup comedy has been reinstated to his job at a

LOS ANGELES: Timothée million.

"Wonka" is following in

"Not only did it perform really

"We don't have 'Avatar: The

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Jan 8, (AP): Christopher Nolan's blockbuster biopic "Oppenheimer" dominated the 81st Golden Globes, winning five awards including best drama, while Yorgos Lanthimos' Frankenstein riff "Poor Things" pulled off an upset victor over "Barbie"

to triumph in the best comedy or musical category. If awards season has been building toward a second match-up of Barbenheimer, this round went to "Oppenheimer." The film also won best director for Nolan, best drama actor for Cillian Murphy, best supporting actor for Robert Downey Jr. and for Ludwig Görans-

"I don't think it was a no-brainer by any stretch of the imagination to make a three-hour talky movie - R-rated by the way - about one of the darkest developments in our history," said producer Emma Thomas accepting the night's final award and thanking Universal chief

Along with best comedy or musical, "Poor Things' also won for Emma Stone's performance as Bella, a Victorian-era woman experiencing a surreal sexual

"I see this as a rom-com," said Stone. "But in the sense that Bella falls in love with life itself, rather than a person. She accepts the good and the bad in equal measure, and that really made me look at life differently.

Lily Gladstone won best actress in a dramatic film for Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon." Gladstone, who began her speech speaking the language of her native tribe, Blackfeet Nation, is the first Indigenous winner in the category.

'This is a historic win," said Gladstone. "It doesn't

just belong to me." The Globes were in their ninth decade but facing a new and uncertain chapter. After a tumultuous few years of scandal, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association was dissolved, leaving a new Globes, on a new network (CBS), to try to regain its perch as the third biggest award show of the year, after the Oscars and Grammys. Even the menu (sushi from Nobu) was remade.

"Golden Globes journalists, thank you for changing your game, therefore changing your name," said Downey in his acceptance speech.

It got off to a rocky start. Host Jo Koy took the stage at the Beverly Hilton International Ballroom in Beverly Hills, California . The Filipino American stand-up hit on some expected topics: Ozempic, Meryl Streep's knack for winning awards and the long-running "Op-

penheimer." ("I needed another hour.") After one joke flubbed, Koy, who was named host after some bigger names reportedly passed, also noted how fast he was thrust into the job.

"Yo, I got the gig 10 days ago. You want a perfect monologue?" said Koy. "I wrote some of these and they're the ones you're laughing at.'

Downey's win, his third Globe, denied one to "Kenergy." Ryan Gosling had been seen as his stiffest competition, just one of the many head-to-head contests between "Oppenheimer" and Greta Gerwig's "Barbie." The filmmakers faced each other in the best director category, where Nolan triumphed.

It was two hours before "Barbie," the year's biggest hit with more than \$1.4 billion in ticket sales, won an award Sunday. Billie Eilish's "What Was I Made For?" took best song, and swiftly after, "Barbie" took the Globes' new honor for "cinematic and box office achievement." Some thought that award might go to Taylor Swift, whose "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" also set box-office records. Swift, though, remains winless in five Globe nods.

Sensations

Margot Robbie, star and producer of "Barbie," accepted the award in a pink gown modeled after 1977's Superstar Barbie.

'We'd like to dedicate this to every single person on the planet who dressed up and went to the greatest place on Earth: the movie theaters," said Robbie.

"Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," two blockbusters brought together by a common release date, also faced off in the best screenplay category. But in an upset, Justine Triet and Arthur Harari won for the script to the French courtroom drama "Anatomy of a Fall." Later, Triet's film picked up best international film, too. Though the Globes have no direct correlation with

the Academy Awards, they can boost campaigns at a crucial juncture. Oscar nomination voting starts Thursday, and the twin sensations of Barbenheimer remain frontrunners.

Other contenders loom, though, like "Poor Things"

and "The Holdovers Paul Giamatti and Da'Vine Joy Randolph both won for Alexander Payne's "The Holdovers." Giamatti, reuniting with Payne two decades after "Sideways," won best actor and Randolph won for her supporting performance as a grieving woman in the 1970s-set boarding

interpreted as "inflammatory,"

school drama.

"Oh, Mary you have changed my life," Randolph said of her character. "You have made me feel seen in so many ways that I have never imagined.'

Hayao Miyazaki's "The Boy and the Heron" won best animated film, an upset over "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse.

The final season of "Succession" cleaned up on the television side. It won best drama series for the third time, a mark that ties a record set by "Mad Men" and "The X-Files." Three stars from the HBO series also won: Matt Macfadyen, Sarah Snook and Kieran Culkin.

"It is bittersweet, but things like this make it rather sweeter," said "Succession" creator Jesse Armstrong. Hulu's "The Bear" also came away with a trio of awards, including best comedy series. Jeremy Allen White won for the second time, but this time he had company. Ayo Edebiri won her first Globe for her lead-

ing performance in the Hulu show's second season. She thanked the assistants of her agents and managers. "To the people who answer my emails, you're the

real ones," said Edebiri. "Beef" won three awards: best limited series as well as acting awards for Ali Wong and Steven Yeun.

The Globes also added a new stand-up special award. That went, surprisingly, to Ricky Gervais, who didn't attend the show he so often hosted. Some expected Chris Rock to win for "Selective Outrage," his stand-up

response to the Will Smith slap. A few years ago, the Golden Globes were on the cusp of collapse. After The Los Angeles Times reported that the HFPA had no Black members, Hollywood boycotted the organization. The 2022 Globes were all but canceled and taken off TV. After reforms, the Globes returned to NBC last year in a one-year deal, but the show was booted to Tuesday evening. With Jerrod Carmichael hosting, the telecast attracted 6.3 million viewers, a new low on

NBC and a far cry from the 20 million that once tuned in. The Golden Globes were acquired by Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions, which Penske Media owns, and turned into a for-profit venture. The HFPA (which typically numbered around 90 voters) was dissolved and a group of some 300 entertainment journalists from around the world now vote for the awards.

Questions still remain about the Globes' long-term future, but their value to Hollywood studios remains providing a marketing boost to awards contenders. (The Oscars won't be held until March 10.)

Philadelphia-based public radio station through an arbitrator, who agreed that his jokes were, in some part, funny.

Jad Sleiman, 34, is to be fully reinstated to his position with WHYY, a Philadelphia-based NPR station, after an arbitrator determined that, while the bits posted to social media could be





the organization "rushed to judgment" in its decision to terminate In a phone call Friday, Sleiman said he felt vindicated by the deci-

sion and plans to return to work. "When a news organization says you're a racist, bigot, whatever, people believe them," he said.

"So it was a lot of abuse from a lot of people who have never met me, who've never seen my stand-up just saw what WHYY said about me, which is not great.'

A message seeking comment emailed to WHYY was not immediately returned. Sleiman said he was considering further legal action for statements made by

WHYY about his character. Sleiman had been working as a reporter on The Pulse, a nationprogram, since 2018 when he was terminated a year ago after executives found his social media

ally syndicated health and science account - under Jad S. or @jadslay - that posted clips of his standup comedy. (AP)

People & Places



Paul Giamatti poses with best actor award in a musical or comedy for 'The Holdovers'. (AP)



Christopher Nolan, (left), and Emma Thomas pose with the award for best motion picture, drama for 'Oppenheimer.' (AP)



Cillian Murphy, (left), best actor award winner and Robert Downey Jr., winner of best actor in a supporting role award pose with their awards. (AP)



Lily Gladstone poses with best actress award for 'Killers of the Flower Moon.' (AP)



Yorgos Lanthimos, (from left), Emma Stone, Willem Dafoe, Mark Ruffalo, and Ramy Youssef pose with the award for best motion picture, musical or comedy for 'Poor Things.' (AP)



Lee Sung Jin poses with the award for best television limited series or motion picture for 'Beef.' (AP)



Da'Vine Joy Randolph poses with best actress award in supporting role for 'The Holdovers.' (AP)

List of Golden Globe winners

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Jan 8, (AP): Winners at Sunday's Golden Globe Awards.

■ Best Movie Drama: "Oppenheimer'

■ Best Movie Musical Or Comedy: "Poor Things" ■ Television Comedy Se-

ries: "The Bear" ■ Television Drama Series:

"Succession" ■ Limited Series, Anthology Series Or Motion Picture

Made For Television: "Beef" ■ Cinematic And Box Office Achievement: "Barbie" ■ Male Actor In A Movie

Musical Or Comedy: Paul Giamatti, "The Holdovers" ■ Female Actor In A Movie Musical Or Comedy: Emma

Stone, "Poor Things" ■ Actor In A Movie Drama: Cillian Murphy, "Oppenheimer"

■ Female Actor In A Movie Drama: Lily Gladstone, "Killers of the Flower Moon" ■ Female Actor In A Sup-

porting Movie Role: Da'Vine Joy Randolph, "The Holdovers" ■ Male Actor In A Supporting Movie Role: Robert

Downey Jr., "Oppenheimer" ■ Female Actor In A Limited Series, Anthology Series, Or A Motion Picture Made For Television: Ali Wong,

■ Actor In A Limited Series.

Anthology Series, Or A Motion Picture Made For Television: Steven Yeun, "Beef"

■ Supporting Female Actor In A Television Series: Elizabeth Debicki, "The Crown" ■ Supporting Male Actor In A Television Series: Mat-

sion" ■ Best Screenplay: "Anatomy of a Fall," Justine Triet

thew Macfadyen, "Succes-

and Arthur Harari ■ Female Actor In A Television Drama: Sarah Snook,

"Succession" ■ Male Actor In A Television Comedy: Jeremy Allen

White, "The Bear" ■ Stand-Up Comedy Television Special: Ricky Ger-

vais, "Armageddon" ■ Best Motion Picture, Non-English: "Anatomy of a Fall" (France)

Female Actor In A Television Comedy: Ayo Edebiri, "The Bear" ■ Male Actor In A Televi-

sion Drama: Kieran Culkin, "Succession" ■ Animated Film: "The Boy

and the Heron" ■ Director: Christopher No-

lan, "Oppenheimer"

■ Score: "Oppenheimer," Ludwig Göransson

Original Song: "What Was I Made For?" from "Barbie. ☐ music and lvrics by Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell



Elizabeth Debicki with her award for best supporting actor in a television series for 'The Crown.' (AP)



Finneas, (left), and Billie Eilish pose with award for best original song for 'What Was I Made For?' (AP)

Fashion

Edwin Lee Gibson, (from left), Matty Matheson, Jeremy Allen White, Ebon

Moss-Bachrach, Liza Colon-Zayas, AyoEdebiri, Lionel Boyce, and Abby Elliott, winners of the award for 'The Bear.' (AP)



Dua Lipa



Margot Robbie



Taylor Swift



Jennifer Lopez





Celebrities shine in Gucci, Armani, and Valentino on Globes red carpet

Swift stuns in shimmery green and Robbie goes full Barbie

NEW YORK, Jan 8, (AP): Taylor Swift stunned in shimmery acid green custom Gucci at the newfangled Golden Globes, Sandra Hüller swept onto the red carpet in goddess green and Margot Robbie went full Barbie in pink custom Armani Privé at Sunday's start of the rush-rush awards season.

Colman Domingo honored the man he portrays in "Rustin" - activist Bayard Rustin - in a Nehru tuxedo adorned with pins, while Lily Gladstone, a star of "Killers of the Flower Moon" and a red carpet newcomer, wore Valentino, a white gown with a black overcoat. She had a Bulgari diamond choker around her neck, later winning a Globe for best actress in a dramatic film.

risk-taker Timothée Fashion Chalamet, the latest "Wonka," donned a bedazzled black jacket with black skinny trousers and a low-buttoned black shirt. His designer: Celine Homme.

Swift's stunner by Gucci's Sabato De Sarno included three straps at the back. Robbie, the star and a producer of the blockbuster and heavily nomi-nated "Barbie" film, wore a hot pink sequined gown with a pink tulle boa. Her look was modeled on Superstar Barbie from 1977.

"Taylor Swift wearing Gucci was an absolute coup for Sabato De Sarno. With only one season at the iconic house under his belt, he's already dressing one of the most famous pop icons in the world," said Madeline Hirsch, news director for InStyle. "The look felt very Taylor. She loves

sparkle, but with its bright color and slinky silhouette, it was definitely one of her more interesting looks in recent Hüller, the "Anatomy of a Fall"

star, chose a color from Louis Vuitton

somewhere between emerald and sea

green in Beverly Hills, California. Her bodice was fitted with skinny straps paired with a skirt of gentle pleats that fell to a train. **Jewels** Show host Jo Koy, Christian Friedel, Matty Matheson, Daniel Pember-

ton and Justin Hartley all went wide on the lapels of their tuxedos. Colman Domingo went in a different direction in a custom black look by Louis Vuitton's new men's creative director, Pharrell Williams. He accessorized with pins of pearl and red jewels, and a

single pearl earring.
"(Jawaharlal) Nehru was actually, you know, the first prime minister of India, and he was a colleague of Bayard Rustin, who I am representing tonight as a leading actor in a film. So it all tells the story. So for me, I was like, oh, Nehru. He represented peace and strength and love," Domingo told The Associated Press.

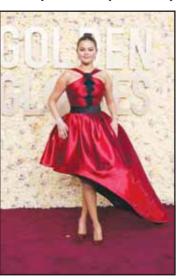
As for his earring, he smiled: "Pearl. Why not? Because why not?" The buttons of his jacket were also pearl.

Dua Lipa showed up in custom Schiaparelli with a Tiffany & Co. necklace from 1962. Helen Mirren went for two hues of purple, including a coat, from Dolce & Gabbana. Julia Schlaepfer, meanwhile, walked in a

white Old Hollywood gown from Danielle Frankel with a flawless drape at the high neck and no back.

Jennifer Lopez also went Old Hollywood in strapless light pink with huge floral sleeves by Nicole + Felicia Couture. Greta Gerwig, the "Barbie" director, wore custom Fendi couture in black, including long black gloves to go with the sculptural silk duchesse look. Jennifer Aniston also went for black, her dress a strapless look with a scallop-pattern skirt. It was Dolce & Gabbana. She rocked her iconic "Rachel" haircut from her "Friends" days.

"It may sound cheesy but it really



Selena Gomez

is true that Old Hollywood glamour is making a comeback on the post-writer strike red carpet," said Brooke Bobb, fashion news director for Harper's Ba-Gillian Anderson won the night when it came to motifs. The "Sex Edu-

cation" star was dressed in an ivory strapless gown by Gabriela Hearst embroidered with vaginas. Why? She told Deadline there were many reasons, the top one this: "It's

brand appropriate.' Quinta Brunson, often a fashion standout, wore a sparkly Balmain

gown in champagne that fell to her



Julia Garner

ankles with a crossover neck and an understated sparkle. "If the Golden Globes were any indication, we're in the midst of a new Hollywood Gilded Age when it comes to fashion," Hirsch said. "Everyone

from Emma Stone to Quinta Brunson glimmered and glittered in shimmering gowns that caught the light. Even Taylor Swift got in on the action wearing a very reputation-coded green sequin A gaggle of stars made a statement

in red: Da'Vine Joy Randolph with a broad peplum at the waist and ruffles at her low-cut neckline from Rodarte,

Jennifer Aniston

and Alma Pöysti in a shiny off-shoulder number and a full ballgown skirt. Heidi Klum also represented the red crew in a strapless look with a huge, high-slit skirt. Selena Gomez, also in red, wore a fun gown with an asymmetrical hemline that began above the

Standout

Rachel Brosnahan (Sergio Hudson), Julianne Moore (Bottega Veneta), Florence Pugh (Valentino), Danielle Brooks (Moschino) and Ayo Edebiri (Prada) also wore red. So did a couple of standout men, including Barry Keoghan of "Saltburn" in Louis Vuitton and John Krasinski, who paired his shiny red jacket with purple trousers.

"I love how every carpet, one color sort of pops. We've had a lot of yellow and pink but red is such a classic red carpet color," said Andrea Lavinthal, editorial director for style and beauty at People.

Pugh debuted a brand new mohawk on the carpet.

"She always delivers an interesting hair look, and this night was no exception. The cool blonde color and 80srockstar styling were punk perfection, and paired with her sheer Valentino gown, all eyes were on her this evening," Hirsch said.

Others sparkled in silver, including Julia Garner in a risque look with chunky embellishment and cut-out sides by Gucci. Issa Rae went for metallic orange from Pamella Roland's spring/summer 2024 collection. It had a geometric tile sequin design.

The Conversation

Experts aim to enhance precision, efficacy of radiation therapy

Personalized radiotherapy takes center stage in cancer battle

By Behzad Ebrahimi and Mark Korpics

University of Chicago

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

Nearly half of all cancer patients undergo radiation therapy as part of their care. Ionizing radiation, or the emission of high-energy waves or particles, works as a therapy by damaging a cancer cell's DNA. It's an effective tool for killing cancer cells because they are generally much less adept at DNA repair compared to healthy cells. Damaging specific parts of DNA prevents cancer cells from reproducing, effectively killing them.

A major limitation of radiation therapy is the damage it may cause as it passes through healthy organs to get to tumors located deep in the body. The need to protect healthy organs limits the dose of radiation that can be delivered to cancerous tissue, thereby reducing the chance of successful treatment.

Overcoming this challenge has long been a mission for medical physicists and radiation oncologists like us. Improvements to radiotherapy will enable clinicians to not only better control tumors overall, but also open the door for more favorable outcomes in patients with cancers that are more resistant to radiation.

At the heart of radiation therapy lies the fundamental principle that cancer cells are more susceptible to radiation than healthy cells. However, there are exceptions. Sometimes resistance to radiation in cancer cells may be comparable or even greater than that of their neighboring cells.

When tumors lie close to vital organs that are highly sensitive to radiation, such as the brain or the bowels, it significantly limits the amount of radiation that can be delivered. In cases where tumors are significantly less sensitive to radiation than the organs surrounding it, radiotherapy may not be the best choice.

Toxicity

Patient immobilization is another key aspect to reducing toxicity from radiation. Patients need to be completely motionless during treatments to ensure that the beam of radiation mainly targets tumors and not the healthy tissues surrounding them. If a patient moves during treatment, it can mean the radiation beam is partly or even entirely missing the cancer target. This scenario both underdoses the cancer and increases the risk of harming healthy tissue.

There are a few common types of radiotherapy that deliver radiation in different ways:

External beam radiation involves directing radiation from an outside source to a single part of the body.

Linear accelerators, commonly referred to as LINACs, are currently the most common technology used in radiation treatments. These machines generate beams of high-energy electrons and X-rays that can be aimed at cancer tissue with precision. The high energy of these beams allows in-depth penetration into the body to reach tumors.

Another form of radiotherapy is proton beam therapy, or PBT, which directs protons instead of X-rays at tumors. Currently, PBT is only available at a limited number of locations. It is typically recommended for specific populations such as pediatric patients because, unlike X-rays, it has an adjustable range that minimizes the effects of radiation on organs beyond the target area, potentially reducing toxicity.

In the early 2000s, researchers incorporated CT scanners into LINACs. This enabled real-time imaging of the patient's anatomy just before or during treatment. By acting as the eyes of the care team, imaging reduced uncertainty about the location of tumors and improved the precision and accuracy of radiation therapy.

Newer linear accelerators are now incorporating MRIs, which significantly improve visualization of patient anatomy and tumors, further advancing treatment precision and

Researchers are also adding positron emission tomography, or PET, scanners that provide information about the metabolic function of tumors. This advance makes it possible to increase the radiation dose specifically at the most active areas of tumors.

An emerging approach to radiation therapy called adaptive therapy uses imaging to dynamically adjust treatment as the tumor or its positioning changes each day.

Adaptive

In conventional radiation therapy, patients receive the same treatment plan across multiple treatment sessions. However, adaptive therapy may apply several adjustments or lead to a completely new treatment plan in order to address changes to the tumor's condition over the course of treatment.

Historically, the concept of adaptive therapy was more theoretical than practical. It faced many challenges, including a lack of suitable imaging technologies. Additionally, creating a treatment plan involves heavy computational work and collaboration among various specialties within a care team. The fact that the process needs to be repeated multiple times renders adaptive therapy particularly resource-intensive and time-consuming. However, researchers are looking into ways to use artificial intelligence to automate some of these steps to make this approach more practical.

Brachytherapy — stemming from the Greek word "brachys," meaning "short" — is another widely used method in radiation therapy. It involves placing a radioactive source called a seed near or directly inside a tumor or affected area, reducing the distance from the radiation source to its target.

its target.

In contrast to external beam radiation therapy, where radiation often must pass through healthy tissue to reach cancer cells, brachytherapy applies radiation directly to the tumor. This technique is particularly advantageous for certain cancer types that are accessible through noninvasive or minimally invasive procedures, such as skin cancers, gynecological tumors

and genitourinary tumors.

The conventional approach to brachytherapy involved using needles to place or inject radioactive seeds inside or adjacent to the cancerous tissue. These seeds would remain in the body either temporarily or permanently, with the goal of irradiating the area at a low dose over a long period of time.

An increasingly popular form of brachytherapy called high-dose rate brachytherapy involves using a tube to guide a more highly radioactive seed directly to the affected tissue before removing it after a few minutes. The seed emits a high dose of radiation in a short period of time, which enables clinicians to treat patients quickly in an outpatient setting.

Radiation therapy is continually evolving to more effectively and precisely treat cancer. (AP)

Researchers work out a few remaining kinks

Drugs of the future will be easier and faster to make, thanks to mRNA tech



Sir Roy Calne, of Cambridge University, delivers an acceptance speech after receiving the 2012 Lasker DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award for developing liver transplantation, an intervention that has restored normal life to thousands of patients with end-stage liver disease, Sept. 21, 2012 in New York. (AP)

Remembering a medical giant

Pioneering 'transplant' surgeon Prof Calne dies

LONDON, Jan 8, (AP): Roy Calne, a pioneer of organ transplantation who led Europe's first liver transplant operation in 1968, has died aged 93.

Calne's family said he died late Saturday in Cambridge, England, where he was professor emeritus of surgery at Cambridge

Born in 1930, Calne trained as a doctor at Guy's Hospital in London and developed an interest in organ transplantation in the 1950s - partly inspired, he later said, by his father's work as a car mechanic. At the time he was told the procedure would be

He is considered one of the fathers of organ transplantation, alongside American scientist Dr. Thomas Starzl. Their work on the surgical procedure and treatment to prevent organ rejection was done initially on dogs. In 1960, Calne's dog experiments demonstrated for the first time that a drug could fend off organ rejection. Starzl attempted the first human liver transplant in 1963. That patient died during the procedure.

The next several patients also died within weeks of their transplants, but the surgeries showed that transplanted livers could function.

"It was terrible at the beginning. We had so many dreadful complications," Calne said in 1999.

In May 1968, Calne led a transplant operation on a 46-yearold woman with liver cancer, at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. The patient died two months later of an infection resulting from the immunosuppressive drugs given to prevent rejection.

Calne focused on finding better ways to stop patients' bodies rejecting donor organs. He helped develop the breakthrough anti-rejection drug cyclosporine and was the first physician to administer it to transplant patients.

Anti-rejection drugs transformed patients' survival chances, and liver transplants have saved thousands of lives since they gained wide acceptance in the 1980s.

Calne also helped carry out the world's first triple liver, lung and heart transplant in 1986 and in 1994 led a six-organ transplant of liver, kidney, stomach, duodenum, small intestine and pancreas.

In 1974, Calne was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society, the British national academy of science, and was knighted by Oueen Elizabeth II in 1986.

In 2012, Calne and Starzl shared the prestigious Lasker Award for their research. In 2021, Addenbrooke's Hospital named its transplant unit, one of Britain's largest, after Calne.

By Li LiUMass Chan Medical School

Vaccines have been reliably and affordably protecting people from diseases worldwide for centuries. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, however, vaccine development was still a long and idiosyncratic process. Traditionally, researchers had to tailor manu-

directly transferable to another.

But the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines brought a new approach to vaccine development that has far-reaching implications for how researchers make drugs to treat many other diseases.

facturing processes and facilities for each

vaccine candidate, and the scientific knowl-

edge gained from one vaccine was often not

I am a biochemist, and my lab at UMass Chan Medical School focuses on developing better ways to use mRNA as a drug. Although there are many possibilities for what researchers can use mRNA to treat, some important limitations remain. Better understanding how mRNA-based drugs interact with the immune system and how they are degraded in human cells can help lead to safe, durable and effective treatments for a wide range of diseases.

Messenger RNA, or mRNA, is made of four building blocks denoted by the letters A, C, G and U. The sequence of letters in an mRNA molecule conveys genetic information that directs how a protein is made.

An mRNA drug comprises two essential components: mRNA molecules, which code for desired proteins, and the lipid molecules - such as phospholipids and cholesterol - that encapsulate them. These mRNA-lipid nanoparticles, or LNPs, are tiny spheres about 100 nanometers in diameter that protect mRNA from degradation and facilitate its delivery into target cells.

Once inside cells, mRNA molecules in-

struct the cell's machinery to produce the target protein required for a desired therapeutic effect. For example, the mRNA in the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines directs cells to produce a harmless version of the virus' spike protein that trains the immune system to recognize and better prepare for potential infection.

From a drug development perspective, mRNA drugs offer significant advantages over traditional drugs because they are easily programmable. Hundreds of pounds of mRNA can be made from readily available DNA templates, such that producing a different mRNA drug is as simple as changing the corresponding DNA templates.

Properties

More importantly, different mRNA drugs produced by the same set of methods will have similar properties. They will be delivered to the same tissues, trigger similar levels of immune responses and degrade in similar ways. This predictability significantly reduces the development risks and financial costs of developing mRNA drugs.

In addition to being easy to program, mRNA drugs have several other unique properties. For example, just like the mRNAs your body naturally produces, therapeutic mRNAs have a short half-life in cells: about one day. As a result, current mRNA technology is ideal for treatments that aren't meant to last long in the body.

This is why vaccines are popular candidates for mRNA technology: They provide long-term protection against disease after brief exposure to the drug with few side effects. There are currently more than 30 mRNA vac-

cine candidates, not including vaccines for COVID-19, in clinical trials.

Another critical feature of mRNA drugs is their intrinsic ability to stimulate the immune system. This may sound paradoxical - after all, your cells already contain large amounts of mRNAs. Why would other mRNAs activate your immune system? How does your immune system distinguish between self and nonself mRNAs?

The first reason involves location. Therapeutic mRNAs enter cells using endosomes - sacs made of the cell's membrane that take in materials from the cell's environment. Your immune system can detect mRNA in endosomes because this is usually a sign of an RNA virus infection - cellular mRNAs normally don't enter endosomes. When your immune system labels therapeutic mRNAs as viral material, it triggers a strong inflammatory response that can lead to severe side effects.

Chemicalt

One solution to this problem is to modify mRNA's building blocks - specifically, changing the U, or uridine, to its chemical cousins, pseudouridine and N1-methylpseudouridine. This subtle chemical change prevents the unwanted immune response while allowing the therapeutic mRNA to direct the cell to make the protein it encodes. The 2023 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine was awarded to the scientists who made this breakthrough discovery. Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 mRNA vaccines use this technique.

The second source of unwanted immune response is impurities from mRNA production. To prepare mRNA from a DNA template, scientists use a protein called RNA polymerase that tends to make a small amount of side product called double-stranded RNA. Unlike mRNA, which is single-stranded, double-stranded RNA has two chains that form a double helix. RNA viruses also form double-stranded RNA when they replicate, and exposing cells to double-stranded RNA can lead to a strong immune response.

Removing double-stranded RNA is challenging, especially at the industrial scale. Fortuitously, for mRNA vaccines, the residual amount of double-stranded RNA can stimulate the immune system to enhance antibody responses. However, for applications other than vaccines, a cleaner RNA product is necessary to reduce side effects.

Although mRNA has the potential to transform drug development for various medical purposes, careful consideration is required to identify targets that align with the technology's strengths.

For example, because there is currently a limit to how long mRNA can last in the body, treatments that need a protein to be present for only a short period of time to achieve a lasting therapeutic effect are ideal. One promising example in development is using mRNA that encodes CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing proteins to knock out genes that cause specific diseases

Researchers are exploring this strategy to develop a single-dose treatment for hereditary transthyretin amyloidosis, a rare genetic disease caused by the accumulation of misfolded proteins in the heart and nerves. This disease is an ideal target for mRNA-based CRISPR gene therapy because the target protein is produced by the liver. Because most drugs pass through the liver, this makes it easier to deliver CRISPR-Cas9 mRNA to its target. In the next few years, a new generation of more precise mRNA-based genome editing therapies will enter clinical trials. (AP)







Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp.Police station - Farwaniya

Hall's 15 pts lead S. Carolina over Mississippi St



Purdue center Zach Edey (15) gets a dunk against Xavier during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in West Lafayette, Ind., Monday, Nov. 13, 2023. Purdue defeated Xavier 83-71. (AP)

Kirk makes late birdie, takes PGA Tour season's opener at Kapalua

KAPALUA, Hawaii, Jan 8, (AP): Chris Kirk finds pure joy in golf from the work that's required and how hard it is to succeed, and Sunday at The Sentry was plenty difficult.

A dozen players were lined up behind him, all of them capable of ripping off a low one.

The conditions were so placid the average score in the final round at Kapalua was 66.66, making this the lowest average score to par (6.34 under) of any round on the PGA Tour since it began keeping detailed records in 1983.

Tougher still was being tied for the lead, 209 yards away on the 17th hole with a gorge between him and the flag and a light wind that felt like it was blowing both directions.

Kirk went from a 7-iron to a 5-iron and hit what he considers the best shot of his career to 2 feet for birdie that sent him to an 8-under 65 and a oneshot victory over Sahith Theegala. "When you're about to pull 7 and

you end up hitting 5, that doesn't happen ever. That never happens," he said. "So to be able to commit to it like I did and make that good of a swing was an incredible feeling."

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international

news and events

Kirk is happy to be competing again after stepping away in 2019 for alcoholism and depression, and he capped his long journey back last year by winning the Honda Classic. This was another big step, beating a world-class field on a day when any miss was

GOLF

Theegala stayed with him step for step until his 10-foot birdie putt swirled in and out of the cup, forcing him to settle for a 63. Jordan Spieth was tied for the lead when his tee shot on the 16th plugged into the sand right below the lip, effectively a one-shot penalty. He narrowly missed a 15-foot eagle on the final hole and shot 65 to

Kirk started the final round with a one-shot lead and had to post 65 to win by one. That was hard work. And there was a lot of joy beneath that emotionless demeanor.

There was a time when golf meant nothing to him as he cared only about salvaging a life that had become dependent on the drink.

"I love the process of working to be the best player that I can when I'm working on that, and then working on being as good of a father and husband as I can when I'm off the golf course," he said. "It's a constant process and I'm just loving every minute of it."

It was the third straight year the winner at Kapalua posted a Sunday round of 8 under or better, and Kirk required no less to win the PGA Tour's season opener. Theegala started two shots behind, shot 63 and it wasn't quite

"It's really hard to be sad or upset about having a nice Sunday round," Theegala said. "Parring the last hole leaves a little bit of a sour taste. Honestly, nothing but positives. I felt like I stayed in it until the very end."

Kirk was tied when he hit 5-iron over the gorge to a right pin on the 17th, the ball rolling out to just over 2 feet for a tap-in birdie on the toughest hole on the back nine of the Plantation course. That allowed him to play the 18th conservatively, knowing a par would be enough for his sixth career PGA Tour victory.

ARAB (*) TIMES

COLUMBIA, S.C., Jan 8, (AP): Bree Hall

Virginia Tech edge out NC State

had 15 points including back-to-back 3-pointers in the third quarter to extend an uncomfortably close margin and help No. 1 South Carolina stay undefeated with an 85-66 victory over Mississippi State on

Kamilla Cardoso added 13 points, 14 rebounds and a team-high six assists and Chloe Kitts and Te-Hina Paopao had 12 points apiece for the Gamecocks (2-0 SEC), who opened 14-0 for a second straight season.

Jerkaila Jordan led Mississippi State (13-4, 0-2) with

UCLA 65, Oregon State 54

In Los Angeles, Charisma Osborne had 15 points and eight rebounds, Kiki Rice added 13 points and UCLA

Londynn Jones scored 12 points and joined the 500-point club with a 3-pointer in the first half for the Bruins (14-0, 3-0 Pac-12).

Raegan Beers scored 11 of her 21 points in the first half for Oregon State (12-2, 0-2). The Beavers have lost two straight.

Virginia Tech 63, NC State 62

In Blacksburg, Va, Elizabeth Kitley scored a layup on a cross-court inbound pass with less than a second remaining lifting Virginia Tech over previously undefeated

Kitley shot 12 of 24 from the floor and finished with 27 points for the Hokies (12-2, 3-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who rallied from a 13-point second half deficit to win their seventh consecutive game. The Hokies also won their 19th consecutive home game. Georgia Amoore had 21 points for Virginia Tech.

Madison Hayes paced the Wolfpack (14-1, 2-1) with 21 points and Saniya Rivers finished with 12 points.

Colorado 81, Arizona State 68

In Tempe, Ariz., Aaronette Vonleh scored 18 of her 20 points in the first half and Colorado used a massive run to

The Buffaloes (13-1, 3-0 Pac-12) scored the game's first nine points, had a brief defensive lapse to let the Sun Devils back in it, and then raced away.

The Buffaloes went into a fourth quarter funk, but held on for their first 3-0 conference start in 27 years and first sweep of the Pac-12's Arizona schools since 2012-13. Jalyn Brown led Arizona State (8-7, 0-3) with 35

LSU 84, Mississippi 73

In Oxford, Miss., Angel Reese scored 21 points and Mikaylah Williams made four 3-pointers in a 20-point effort in LSU's victory over Mississippi.
The Tigers (15-1, 2-0 Southeastern Conference) put it

away with a 12-2 run to start the fourth quarter against the Rebels (11-4, 1-1).

BASKETBALL

Flau'jae Johnson scored 16 points. Aneesah Morrow had 13 points and eight rebounds. Hailey Van Lith had 13 points and four assists but also committed seven turnovers, picking up her fourth foul late in the third quarter.

Marquesha Davis scored a season-high 24 points to lead Ole Miss. Madison Scott had 13 points and eight assists, going 1 of 8 from the floor while making 11 of 13 free throws. Snudda Collins scored 12 points.

Stanford 71, Washington 59

In Stanford, Calif., Cameron Brink had 16 points and 16 rebounds and Stanford gave coach Tara VanDerveer er 1 200th victory beating Washington to run its winning streak to six.

VanDerveer is three away from breaking former Duke men's coach Mike Krzyzewski's overall college record. Kiki Iriafen added 19 points and nine rebounds, and Hannah Jump had 13 points for the Cardinal (14-1, 3-0

Pac-12). Nunu Agara finished with 12 points.

Dalayah Daniels led Washington (11-3, 1-2) with 15 points. Ella Ladine added 12.

Southern California 68, Oregon 54

In Los Angeles, JuJu Watkins scored 17 points, including eight in the fourth quarter, and Southern California pulled away late to beat Oregon.

Rayah Marshall and McKenzie Forbes each scored 16 points as the Trojans (12-1, 2-1 Pac-12) delivered a 2-0 week after dropping from No. 6 in last week's poll following a 71-64 loss to cross-town rival UCLA. It was USC's 16th consecutive home victory dating back to last

Grace VanSlooten scored 18 points, while Chance Gray and Sofia Bell each scored 11 added for Oregon (9-7, 0-3), which dropped both games on their trip to Los Angeles. Phillipina Kyei scored 10 points with 11 rebounds for the Ducks.

Connecticut 83, Georgetown 55

In Washington, Aaliyah Edwards scored 18 points on 7 for 11 shooting and a shorthanded Connecticut defeated Georgetown.

The Huskies were playing their first full game without fifth-year forward Aubrey Griffin, who suffered a left knee injury late in the third quarter of Wednesday's game at Creighton. It was the latest in a series of injuries that left the Huskies with nine players against Georgetown. The starters took on the bulk of the playing time and all five scored in double figures.

Ashlynn Shade had 16 points, Paige Bueckers 15, Nika Muhl 14 and KK Arnold 12 for the Huskies (12-3, 4-0 Big East). Muhl added eight assists and four steals.

Two seeded players lose in first round at Adelaide International

ADELAIDE, Australia, Jan 8, (AP): Former French Open champion Barbora Krejcikova and Beatriz Haddad Maia lost their first-round matches Monday at the Adelaide Interna-

Qualifier Anna Kalinskaya beat 2021 Roland Garros winner and No. 4-seeded Krejcikova 7-5, 3-6, 7-5. Kalinskaya had three match points on Krejcikova's serve when leading 6-5 in the deciding set and converted the third for the win. Former French Open finalist Pavlyuchenkova breezed through qualifying and beat fifth-seeded Haddad Maia 6-3,

The joint WTA-ATP tournament is the biggest tune-up event this week for the Australian Open, which begins on Sunday at Melbourne Park.

In another first-round Adelaide result, Ana Bogdan beat Katie Boulter, who represented Britain at last week's United Cup tournament, 6-3, 6-4. Élena Rybakina, who won Sunday's Brisbane Internation-

al, and Jessica Pegula are the top women's seeds. Neither played Monday. Tommy Paul is the top-seeded player in the ATP por-

tion of the tournament. In a first-round result Monday, Jack Draper beat fifth-seeded Sebastian Baez 6-1, 6-3.

At the Hobart International WTA tournament, top-seeded Elise Mehrtens, who won the tournament in 2017 and 2018, beat 2022 Australian Open finalist Danielle Collins 6-2, 6-3.



Indiana guard Xavier Johnson (0) shoots during the second half of the team's NCAA college basketball game against Ohio State, Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, in Bloomington, Ind. (AP)

Graceann Bennett had 13 points and 12 rebounds for Georgetown (12-3, 2-2). Kelsey Ransom scored 12 and Alex Cowan added 10 points.

Indiana 91, Nebraska 69

In Lincoln, Neb., Mackenzie Holmes had 22 points, Sydney Parrish hit six 3-pointers and scored 20, and Sara Scalia sank five 3s and scored 19 as Indiana cruised past Nebraska for its 12th straight victory.

Holmes made 10 of 14 shots and grabbed six rebounds

for the Hoosiers (13-1, 4-0 Big Ten Conference). Parrish sank 7 of 11 shots - 6 of 7 from beyond the arc. She also had six boards. Scalia hit 5 of 10 from distance, adding seven assists and six rebounds. Chloe Moore-McNeil pitched in with 16 points on 6-for-7 shooting. Alexis Markowski had 21 points for the Cornhuskers

(11-4, 3-1) on 9-for-14 shooting. She made all three of her 3-pointers and added six rebounds. Logan Nissley came off the bench to hit three 3-pointers, scoring 13. The Hoosiers, who have won 13 conference games in a

row at home, beat the Cornhuskers for the seventh time in the last eight matchups and lead the all-time series 12-6.

Arizona 71, No. 15 Utah 70, OT

In Tucson, Ariz., sophomore Kailyn Gilbert scored 22 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and sank two free throws with one second left in overtime and Arizona rallied to Gilbert made 7 of 19 shots with two 3-pointers and

she made all six of her free throws for the Wildcats (10-5, 2-1 Pac-12 Conference). Helena Pueyo knocked down 8 of 11 shots, including 4 of 5 from 3-point range, and scored a season-high 20. She added four assists and

Alissa Pili made 9 of 10 from the free-throw line and led Utah (11-4, 1-2) with 18 points. Kennady McQueen scored 16 with six rebounds despite an overnight bout with food poisoning - along with coach Lynne Roberts. Jenna Johnson contributed 13 points, eight rebounds and four assists. Young added 12 points and eight re-

North Carolina 61, Notre Dame 57

In South Bend, Ind., Indya Nivar scored 10 of her 16 points in the fourth quarter and finished with five steals, Lexi Donarski added 13 points and North Carolina beat Notre Dame.

North Carolina (11-4, 3-0 ACC), which is 5-10 all time against the Irish, won for the first time in six tries at Notre

Sonia Citron returned from a nine-game absence due to a knee injury and scored 18 points for Notre Dame (10-3, 1-2) and Hannah Hidalgo added 17 points and 11 rebounds. KK Bransford scored 12.

The Irish have lost two of their last three games following a nine-game win streak.

Florida State 78, Clemson 72

In Clemson, S.C., Makayla Timpson scored 21 points, Sara Bejedi added 19 and Florida State defeated Clemson for the fifth time in the past six matchups.

High-scoring sophomore guard Ta'Niya Latson, who averages 21-plus points per game, was held to 15 points. She added seven assists. O'Mariah Gordon scored 11 points for the Seminoles (12-4, 3-1 ACC).

Dayshanette Harris scored 20 points, Ruby Whitehorn 17, Amari Robinson 13 and Mackenzie Kramer 11 for Clemson (8-7, 1-2). Robinson had a game-high nine re-

Syracuse 71, Boston College 64

In Syracuse, N.Y., Dyaisha Fair scored 21 points with six assists, Sophie Burrows had 17 points and eight rebounds and Syracuse beat Boston College.

Fair scored eight points in a 10-1 spurt that made it 23-17 midway through the second quarter and gave the Orange (11-2, 1-1 ACC) the lead for good.

Dontavia Waggoner and Teya Sidberry each scored 12 points and T'yana Todd added 11 for Boston College (9-

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League takes a hiatus until next Feb

Al-Salmiya look to end 6-game drought

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Today marks the conclusion of the fourteenth round matches, featuring a pivotal encounter between Salmiya and Al-Jahra at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium at 5:35 pm.

Following this, the league competition will take a hiatus until next February, due to the involvement of certain professionals in the Asian Cup of Nations and the African Cup of Nations. The Amir's Cup is scheduled to commence on January 26.

Al-Jahra, currently positioned tenth

victory in this crucial face-off to sustain its hopes of remaining in the competition and securing a spot among the Premier League clubs for the upcom-

SOCCER

A draw or loss would significantly diminish its chances, especially considering Khaitan in ninth place with 7 points, Al-Shabab in eighth with 11 points, and Al-Fahaheel in seventh with 15 points.

Conversely, Al-Salmiya, boasting

triumph over Al-Jahra, having defeated them 2-1 in the first division.

The team is eager to reignite its winning streak, having been absent from victories in the last six rounds, accumulating 5 draws and one de-

In another hard-fought match of the same round, Al-Qadisiya secured a challenging victory against Al-Nasr with a lone goal scored by Eid Al-Rashidi in stoppage time during the first half.

This win propels the "Yellow" team to second place in the Premier League standings with 32 points, trailing leaders Kuwait by just one point. Al-Nasr, on the other hand, remains in fourth place with a score of 21 points.

The victory did not come easily for Al-Qadisiya, as it faced significant challenges throughout the match. Despite periods of less convincing play, it managed to secure three crucial points. Al-Nasr exhibited offensive boldness, with a goal by Colombian Hansel Zapata being disallowed due to offside in the first half.

Additionally, Zapata missed a penalty in the second half, shooting it high over the goal in a moment lacking con-



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, the former Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Football Association.

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef extends congratulations to Sheikh Hamad

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, the former Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Football Association, warmly congratulated Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani on his recent appointment as the Minister of Youth and Sports in Qatar. Sheikh Al-Yousef expressed his sincere felicitations and commended Sheikh Hamad's selection, highlighting it as a testament to the trust bestowed upon him by the political leadership in Qatar.

Emphasizing the significance

of choosing Sheikh Hamad for the role, Sheikh Al-Yousef underscored that this decision reflects a commitment to the principle of placing the right individual in the right position. He further lauded Sheikh Hamad's wealth of experience in the sports arena, citing a friendship that spans over two decades. Sheikh Al-Yousef acknowledged Sheikh Hamad's remarkable track record of success and his substantial contributions to sports, noting the significant achievements he has brought to both Qatari and Gulf sports over the years.

Team seeks input from 'General' for new coach

Al-Qadisiya Board of Directors target external training camp

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Al-Qadisiya Board of Directors has decided to organize an external training camp for the team, a move initiated immediately after the appointment of the new coach, who will be taking over from the team's former coach, Muhammad Ibra-

SOCCER

Board member Muhammad Reda Marafi emphasized that the Al-Qadisiya administration is actively seeking the input of the "General" to select the new coach. He expressed gratitude to the support staff, led by Saleh Al-Sheikh and Hassan Fadel, for their leadership during the previous period.

Regarding the contract renewal of player Eid Al-Rashidi, Marafie clarified that the player remains under contract until the end of the season. He indicated that discussions on this matter would be facilitated with the club's management and the incoming technical staff.

Al-Qadisiya has initiated negotiations with multiple coaches as potential successors to the departing coach. Among the contenders are Serbian Dragan Talajic, Croatians Dalibor Starkevic and Ante Misha, as well as Spaniard Pablo Franco.

In other team news, player Abdulaziz Wadi has been discharged from the hospital following tests that confirmed his well-being. Wadi had experienced a collision



with teammate Abdullah Mutawa, resulting in a loss of consciousness and prompting the need for medical assessments. On the other hand, Algerian

Al Arabi professional Sofiane Bouchard left for his country yesterday, after ending his association with the team for family reasons.

Al-Akhdar contracted with Bouchard last summer, but the death of his father last October forced him to terminate his contract with Al-Arabi due to the necessity of being with his family.

Reports indicate that his former club, Chabab Belouizdad of Algeria, wants to restore Bouchard's services during the winter transfer

Lakers hold off Clippers to halt 4-game 'losing' streak



Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray (27) drives to the rim as Detroit Pistons center Jalen Duren (0) defends in the first half of an NBA basketball game. (AP)

Green back on the practice floor with Warriors

LOS ANGELES, Jan 8, (AP): LeBron James had 25 points, eight rebounds and seven assists and the Los Angeles Lakers snapped a four-game losing streak with a 106-103 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday night.

Anthony Davis had 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Lakers, who beat the Clippers for the second straight time after losing 11 straight to their hallway

rivals. Norman Powell's 3-point attempt rattled in and out at the buzzer as the Lakers hung on to beat one of the NBA's hottest teams. The Lakers also won for only the fourth time in 14 games since winning the NBA's Inaugural In-Season Tournament.

BASKETBALL

Paul George scored 22 points and Ivica Zubac had 22 points and 19 rebounds for the Clippers, whose five-game winning streak ended.

Mavericks 115, Timberwolves 108 In Dallas, Kyrie Irving made the tying and go-ahead 3-pointers, finishing with 35 points to lead Dallas over Min-

Irving shot 14 of 27, including 6 of 8 from 3-point range. Luka Doncic added 34 points on 12-of-26 shooting, including 5 of 12 on 3s.

Irving's 3 tied it at 106 with 2:59 remaining. He then stole the ball from Rudy Gobert and made another 3 from the right corner with 2:05 to

Pelicans 133, Kings 100 In Sacramento, CJ McCollum scored

30 points, making seven 3-pointers, and New Orleans led by 50 points in a rout of Sacramento.

Jonas Valanciunas added 15 points and 12 rebounds for the Pelicans, who have won six straight on the road and all four matchups this season against the Kings, including a quarterfinal victory in Sacramento in the In-Season Tournament.

Brandon Ingram also scored 15

Both teams, which are in the middle of the pack in the Western Conference playoff picture, entered the game having won four of five. The Pelicans had won four straight before losing by 16 to the Clippers at home on Friday.

Raptors 133, Warriors 118

In San Francisco, RJ Barrett scored a season-high 37 points in his fourth game since being traded to hometown Toronto, leading the Raptors past Golden State.

Stephen Curry had an especially

Olympic team off to Thailand

Kuwait delegation heads to Cairo for training camp

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Kuwaiti national soccer team embarks on a journey to the Egyptian capital, Cairo, where they will establish an external training camp lasting until January 22. During their stay in Egypt, Kuwait will engage in two friendly matches. The first is against

Libya next Friday, followed by a second encounter with Uganda on the 19th of the same month. The Kuwait opted out of the upcoming Asian Cup competitions, commencing next Friday in Doha, Qatar. Instead, their focus is on preparing for the forthcoming challenges, particularly



Kuwait players hold training session.

off night, finishing 2 for 14 with nine points and missing all nine of his 3-pointers in his second-lowest scoring total this season.

Nuggets 131, Pistons 114

In Denver, Jamal Murray scored a season-high 37 points, Nikola Jokic had 16 assists and Denver handed Detroit its 18th straight road loss,

Jokic was more distributor and shot blocker than scorer, taking just three shots and finishing with four points.

The two-time NBA MVP tied a career high with five blocked shots in between setting teammates up for easy buckets around the rim.

Jalen Duren led Detroit with 20 points. The Pistons fell to 1-19 away from home, with their lone road win Oct. 27 at Charlotte.

Trail Blazers 134, Nets 127, OT In New York, Anfernee Simons

had 38 points and 11 assists, Malcolm Brogdon scored eight of his 18 points during Portland's nearly flawless overtime against Brooklyn. Jerami Grant added 27 points and

Shaedon Sharpe chipped in 21 off the bench for the Trail Blazers. They snapped a four-game losing streak and won for the first time in eight road

Mikal Bridges scored 42 points and made the tying jumper with 1.5 sec-

onds remaining in regulation. But Portland then shot 6 for 7 in overtime, with Brogdon hitting all three shots, including two 3-pointers.

Grizzlies 121, Suns 114

In Phoenix, Jaren Jackson Jr. had 28 points and 10 rebounds and Memphis, playing without Ja Morant, overcame an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter to beat Phoenix.

Marcus Smart added 25 points and Desmond Bane had 23, including a goahead 3-pointer with 1:30 to play. Morant was sidelined because of soreness in his right shoulder.

Magic 117, Hawks 110, OT In Orlando, Paolo Banchero scored eight of his 35 points in overtime and

Orlando beat Atlanta.

Caleb Houstan added a career-high 25 points in his first start of the season. Trae Young had 31 points and nine assists for Atlanta. Dejounte Murray added 24 points and Bogdan Bogdanovic had 18 points.

Cavaliers 117, spurs 115

In Cleveland, Jarrett Allen had 29 points and 16 rebounds, Caris LeVert added 23 points and Cleveland beat San Antonio for its third straight vic-

Victor Wembanyama had 24 points,

10 rebounds and five blocked for San

in March for the joint qualifiers leading to the 2026 World Cup finals in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as the 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia. Simultaneously, the Olympic team's delegation is also departing today for Thailand to establish an external training camp, spanning until January 22. Throughout this period, the team will participate in a series of friendly matches. This camp serves as a crucial

the double-header against Qatar

component of the preparations for the AFC U-23 Championship, scheduled to take place in Qatar from April 13 to May 3.

UAE wrap up preparatory camp ahead of Cup

ABU DHABI, Jan 8: UAE concluded its preparatory camp on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi. The team, under the guidance of Portuguese coach Paulo Bento and his assistants, wrapped up their training at New York University Stadium. This preparation is in anticipation of the upcoming Asian Cup finals, scheduled to take place in the Qatari capital, Doha, from January 12 to February 10.

The national team delegation is set to depart for Doha today, comprising a squad of 26 players. The roster includes Khaled Issa, Ali Khasif, Khaled Tawhid, Khaled Al Hashimi, Khalifa Al Hammadi, Mohammed Al Attas, Ahmed Jameel, Khaled Al Dhanhani, Zayed Sultan, Abdul Rahman Saleh, Abdullah Idris, and Badr Nasser. Other players making the journey are Ali Salmin, Yahya Nader, Muhammad Abbas, Majed Rashid, Abdullah Ramadan, Tahnoon Al Zaabi, Abdullah Hamad, Yahya Al Ghassani, Hareb Abdullah, Fabio de Lima, Ali Saleh, Sultan Adel, Ali Mabkhout,

and Caio Canedo. Throughout the camp, the national team engaged in two friendly matches. The first saw them secure victory against the Kyrgyz national team with a lone goal scored by Ali

SOCCER

However, in the second friendly, they faced a defeat against the Omani team, with the opponent securing a single goal. The technical staff prioritized the involvement of a substantial number of players in both matches to assess their technical and physical readiness for the upcoming tourna-



UAE coach looks on as players intensify training for the Asian Cup.



Chris Kirk holds the champions trophy after the final round of The Sentry golf event at Kapalua Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawaii. (AP) - See Page 14

SOME

Latest sports scores at — http://sports.arabtimesonline.com

High hopes as Al-Adwani leads the delegation

Kuwait depart to Bahrain for Asian Handball Championship

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: Kuwait national handball team is set to embark on its journey to the Kingdom of Bahrain for the 21st Asian Handball Championship, scheduled from January 11-25. The championship also serves 2025 World Cup Qualifiers.

Leading the delegation is the Secretary General of the Handball Federation, Qayed Al-Adwani, accompanied by Treasurer Khaled Talib, Federation member Mubarak Al-Daihani, and administrative staff represented by the Director of National Teams, Faisal Siwan, Director of the First Team, Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi, and the technical staff led by Algerian Saeed Hegazy and his compatriot, Mohammed Masoudan. The team is further supported by physical trainer Issam Al-Lahyani, physical therapist Muhammad Mahdi, goalkeeper coach Ayman Al-Sheikh, and national team worker Masoud Rana.

The squad comprises 20 players, including goalkeepers Mahdi Khan, Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri, and Hassan Safar. Other members include Abdullah Al-Khamis, Saleh Al-Moussawi, Ahmed Al-Qattan, Haider Dashti, Muhammad Al-Hindal, Muhammad Al-Erian, Youssef Daif, Muhammad Al-Sanea, Mishari Siwan, Hussein Karam, Saad Al-Haidari, Saif Al-Adwani, Muhammad Ali, Abdulaziz Al-Shammari, Fawaz Al-Shammari, Abdulaziz Salmeen, and Fawaz Abdulhadi.

Prior to their departure, the handball team concluded their last local

training session, with coach Saeed Hegazy refining the squad for their upcoming matches, starting with the opening fixture against the Omani team next Friday. The group stage also features matches against China, Taipei, and Qatar. The team recently participated in a training camp abroad, engaging in trial matches with the Slovenia Olympic team, as well as the Saudi and Georgian teams, during their stay in Croatia and Slovenia.

HANDBALL

Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi, the director of the handball team, expressed optimism about the team's potential to qualify for the World Cup finals despite facing formidable opponents such as the Qatari team, the host country Bahrain, Japan (already qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics), South Korea, and Iran. Al-Zaabi emphasized the team's commitment to presenting a performance befitting Kuwaiti handball and their determination to hoist the Kuwaiti flag high in this significant Asian

Several players voiced their eagerness for the national team to make a strong showing in the Asian Championship and secure one of the four qualifying spots for the upcoming World Cup. Abdulaziz Al-Shammari highlighted the notable cooperation between players and the technical and administrative staff, showcasing everyone's commitment to seeing the team return to podium success.



Kuwaiti players hold their final training session.

Barca edge Barbastro to reach round of 16

Valencia avoid Copa upset against 10-man Cartagena

MADRID, Jan 8, (AP): Barcelona struggled more than expected in a 3-2 win over fourth-division club Barbastro in the third round of the Copa del Rey on Sunday.

It was another lackluster performance for Barcelona, but enough to send the Catalan club into the round of 16.

SOCCER

"We suffered more than necessary," Barcelona coach Xavi Hernández said. "It's a game in which you can score several goals, but when you don't, you end up suffering more than expected."

Barcelona was coming off hard-fought wins against last-place Almeria and midtable Las Palmas in the Spanish league. It hadn't won in three straight games before that in all competitions.

Fermín López opened the scoring for Barcelona with a low shot from near the penalty spot after a cross by Raphinha in the 18th minute, and the

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 8: The Sheikh

Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting

Ranges Complex hosted the inaugura-

tion of the International Shotgun Ref-

erees Course. Qatari international ref-

eree Abdullah Al-Hammadi, serving

as the technical representative of the

International and Asian Federations,

and his Kuwaiti counterpart, Moham-

med Jassim Al-Fahd, Vice Chairman

of the Shotgun Shooting Referees



Arsenal's Jakub Kiwior, (center top), hits the ball to score an own goal during the English FA Cup soccer match between Arsenal and Liverpool at Emirates stadium in London. Liverpool won 2-0. (AP)

Kuwait prepares to host over 500 shooters

International Shotgun Referees Course kicks off

Brazil forward added to the lead himself from close range in the 51st.

The hosts pulled closer with a goal by Adriá de Mesa off a corner in the 60th before Robert Lewandowski came off the bench to add Barcelona's

Committee, are conducting lectures

concurrently with Kuwait hosting the

Kuwait Championship events. This

aligns with the forthcoming Asian

Shotgun Championship, commenc-

ing next Saturday and spanning until

January 23, featuring the participation

of over 500 shooters from 26 Asian

countries, vying for qualification in the

Speaking at the tournament, Abdul-

2024 Paris Olympics.

third by converting an 88th-minute penalty kick. Marc Prat Serrano scored for Barbastro again three minutes into stoppage time.

Barcelona forward João Félix had a goal disallowed for offside near halftime.

lah Al-Hammadi expressed gratitude

to the Kuwaiti Shooting Federation for

their request to organize an interna-

tional tournament aimed at accrediting

new referees with international badg-

es before the initiation of the Asian

Championship, thereby bolstering sup-

port for this crucial continental event.

selection process for Asian competi-

tions, highlighting that the AFC con-

Al-Hammadi elucidated the referee

Xavi rested several of his regular starters ahead of the trip to Saudi Arabia to play in the Spanish Super Cup.

Barcelona defender Íñigo Martínez

had to be replaced about 10 minutes after he entered the game in the second half because of an injury. He was returning from another injury that had sidelined him for about a month.

Barbastro had eliminated Almeria in the previous round.

2-1 and escape an upset against 10man Cartagena, the last-place team in Spain's second division.

Sergi Canós equalized in the 73rd after the hosts had taken the lead through Alfredo Ortuño four minutes into the match. José Luis Gayà netted the winner in the first half of extra time.

Cartagena played a man down after midfielder Iván Calero was sent off in first-half stoppage time. Other topflight clubs to beat lower-

division teams on Sunday included Athletic Bilbao, Celta Vigo, Mallorca, Sevilla, Real Sociedad and Osasuna.

Bilbao cruised past Eibar 3-0, Celta won 4-2 against Amorebieta, Mallorca beat Burgos 3-0, Sevilla won 2-1 at Racing Ferrol, Sociedad topped Malaga 1-0 and Osasuna defeated Castellon 1-0.

tacts its affiliated federations for referee

nominations. The Continental Union

then selects the best referees among

them to oversee competitions. He em-

phasized the distinction between a ref-

eree and a referee level, with the first

level referees eligible for lectures and

participation in prestigious events like

the World Open Championship and the

Olympics. Al-Hammadi underscored

the critical role of referees in ensuring

fair play, stating that they hold the au-

SHOOTING

Emphasizing the elite status of ref-

erees from the Asian continent, espe-

cially the Gulf region, Al-Hammadi

clarified that the ongoing course focus-

es on refining the arbitration element,

offering theoretical insights, and pro-

Muhammad Jassim Al-Fahd, the

Kuwaiti referee, detailed that the cur-

rent session includes 11 participants,

comprising eight from Kuwait, two

from the Emirates, and one from the

Sultanate of Oman. The course, run-

ning from 3:00 pm to 10:00 pm, entails

comprehensive training, tests, and a

minimum score requirement of 85 per-

cent for license acquisition.

viding practical participation.

thority to validate or annul results.

Spurs eye Werner

Mbappé among 'key' players set for possible EPL transfers

LONDON, Jan 8, (AP): It has been a slow start to the January transfer window in the Premier League.

Expect that to change pretty quickly. Deals are being mooted, specula-ion is starting to fly, sought-after stars - like Kylian Mbappé and Ivan Toney - have chosen to talk about their future to the media.

Here's a look at the situation surrounding a number of key players and

SOCCER

Timo Werner

Timo Werner might have won the Champions League during his time with Chelsea from 2020-22 but it was still an underwhelming stint in English soccer for the Germany forward.

It looks like he'll be returning to England - to London again, too - in a bid to ignite his career ahead of the European Championship.

Werner is widely reported to be close to joining Tottenham from Leipzig, initially on loan but with a view to a permanent move. In the short term, he would plug a gap left by the departure of captain Son Heung-min to the Asian Cup poten-

tially until mid-February.

"It's right that Timo wants to go on loan," Leipzig coach Marco Rose said over the weekend, without namechecking Tottenham. "Timo would like to go to the European Champion-

ship." Ivan Toney

Ivan Toney's eight-month suspension for breaching betting rules is almost over, with the Brentford striker available again from Jan. 17. It is interesting timing, with a number of top teams seemingly in need of a proven scorer for the second half of the season.

Toney would fit the bill - he was third in the Premier League's scoring charts last season, behind only Erling Haaland and Harry Kane - and he has been heavily linked with Arsenal, which is in the midst of a scoring slump that is perplexing manager Mikel Arteta.

Toney gave an interview to British broadcaster Sky Sports, published Monday, in which he said he owes Brentford for sticking by him during his long ban. Brentford manager Thomas Frank has said Toney won't be sold in January, and the team needs its star striker after plunging into relegation danger in recent weeks.

Money talks, though, and Toney's future could be a talking point right until the end of the window

Jordan Henderson

Jordan Henderson took plenty of flak when he decided to join the exodus of players moving to Saudi Arabia



In this file photo, England's Jordan Henderson, (front), heads for the ball with France's Adrien Rabiot during the World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between England and France, at the Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor, Qatar. (AP)

on lucrative deals.

Six months later and it appears he wants out, with sections of the British media reporting he will consider a return to the Premier League this month after struggling to settle in the Middle East. Similarly, Roberto Firmino another former Liverpool player - is reportedly willing to leave the Saudi league and Karim Benzema could yet be enticed back to Europe to return to playing at the highest level.

Tottenham and Chelsea could be options for Henderson as they have been light on central midfielders at times this season.

Kylian Mbappé

Something has to give soon in the ongoing transfer saga involving Kylian Mbappé, arguably the world's best

His contract at Paris Saint-Germain is up at the end of the season, when he can leave for nothing. PSG is saying the club will not let him go for free. Mbappe appears happy to stay until the summer, and scored a hat trick in PSG's 9-0 win over sixth-tier side Revel in the French Cup on Sunday.

The widespread belief is that Mbappé will end up at Real Madrid, though there is scope for a team from the lucrative Premier League to come in for

Liverpool has long seemed the most likely destination for the France international if he did move to England. The departure of Mohamed Salah, potentially to Saudi Arabia, would leave a gap in Liverpool's forward line but that won't happen before the summer, by which time it could be too late.

The training course in progress.

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