



Al-Kandari urges review of public sector recruitment suspension

MP calls for experienced officials in new government

Opinion

Sheikh Mohammad, read these lines

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

THE salaries of the public sector have reached KD 14 billion in total, and are subject to constant increase. Investment spending is KD 2 billion annually. We import everything from needles and tissues to cars and heavy equipment. Our food security depends on other countries for all food commodities from parsley to canned goods. All this definitely means that our economy is dependent, and we lack immunity to resist the changes that occur globally.



Al-Jarallah

Since 1956, the war on oil has been continuing. Some Gulf countries realized this fact after the 1973 war and worked to build a strategy of self-reliance, even within the limits that ensure its sufficiency. This conviction was consolidated with the Iraq-Iran war, which represented a model for the Gulf to limit its dependence on the outside.

Also, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was a harsh lesson for the region. That is why it accelerated the process of relying on local capabilities.

As for Kuwait, which had to change the function of the state, it depends on oil for its strategic income to this day.

The decision-making circles did not think about food security and industrial infrastructure. The solutions were limited to improvised decisions based on the ideas of merchants and importers who worked to develop the spirit of dependence and fight productive projects, because they consider them as competition for them, not intended for economic integration.

Since the 1980s, the Gulf states have sought to abandon dependence on oil and began establishing an industrial and agricultural structure, taking advantage of the vast deserts and financial abundance.

This is why the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been able to compete. Many of the goods exported to the Arab world are Saudi-made.

Likewise, when wheat prices rose and its supply chains were disrupted, the Emirate of Sharjah worked to cultivate large areas of wheat. It used to import 330,000 kilograms of wheat annually but last season it produced a total of 1,600 tons.

With technological development, crops do not require large areas. There is the so-called vertical agriculture. These days, even factories no longer need armies of workers.

However, all this requires vision, non-hesitation in making a decision, and not listening to traders alone, because they perpetuate the dependent economy that all studies and research institutes in the world have warned against.

Unfortunately, Kuwait is still relying on this type of economy, as if the ideas did not exist, or the officials put on dark glasses that obscure their vision of the reality of what the country is suffering from.

That is why when we wrote about Kuwait being an investment repellent, we relied on facts and annual reports since 2009. We warned of an economy that drains about 65 percent of wealth, and also increases the annual fiscal deficit.

Here it must be pointed out that no matter how high the oil prices are, remedies based on distributing grants and increasing salaries without a productive return are futile. This is due to the fact that parliamentarians are trying to enhance their electoral assets by increasing rentierism and ensuring the false well-being of the citizens.

This is like someone who drinks from the sea. The more he drinks the seawater, the thirstier he becomes. This does not build a real economy.

For all of this, the vision must be changed, and the state must have a goal and a project for the future. There is no doubt that Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem, who is an economic expert, realizes that the strength of a state is based on material and moral resources, as well as self-reliance. Great powers are not based on their roles, areas or population, but on the ability to confront crises without resorting to resources imported from abroad.

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Day by Day

I WOULD like to ask the incoming ministers of Finance, Commerce and Industry to discuss the case of numerous Kuwaitis who established their businesses in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other neighboring countries. These citizens received a lot of privileges from these countries, including industrial plots and commercial licenses. They also launched their businesses smoothly and quickly in those countries.

The next ministers, particularly the ministers of Finance, Commerce and Industry, must find the answer to this question: Why Kuwait is closed to both the national and foreign investors? Please look for the envious and corrupt who made the laws that prompted the investors to escape from Kuwait.

.... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The parliamentary Youth and Sports Affairs Committee on Wednesday discussed the procedures and regulations adopted by the Public Authority for Sports regarding the official proclamation and cancellation of sports clubs and associations, as well as the approval of their budgets and suspension of the disbursement of allowances.

They also deliberated on ways to develop local sports and reasons behind the abolition of some sports clubs.

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'Deliver cancer patients' medicines to their homes'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Representative Badr Nashmi has proposed collaboration between the Ministry of Health and relevant authorities to facilitate the delivery of cancer patients' medications to their homes, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative is driven by a desire to enhance the quality of life for cancer patients, alleviate the burden on their families, improve the efficiency of health sector services, combat cancer, and ensure optimal medical care for patients.

Nashmi underscores the severe pain experienced by most cancer patients, emphasizing its negative impact on their mobility, sleep, mood, social relationships, and daily activities.

This proposal aims to address these challenges, considering the physical and psychological effects stemming from hormonal imbalances, immune responses, and various treatments like chemotherapy.

License in peril as Kuwait warns labor offices on recruitment halt

Kuwait opens new cybersecurity center

13 suspended

By Najeh Bilal and Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry will soon impose deterrent penalties on domestic labor recruitment offices that stop hiring domestic workers from the labor exporting countries due to the new procedures and decisions issued by Kuwait, say reliable sources.

Sources disclosed the penalties could be as severe as withdrawing licenses permanently. They affirmed that the inspection campaigns of the tripartite committee -- whose members are from the ministry, its interior counterpart and the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) -- will continue in order to implement the latest decisions regarding the fees for recruiting domestic workers.

Sources said the Sri Lankan domestic labor offices have stopped sending workers following the labor-related decisions issued by Kuwait. Sources also confirmed that the Sri Lankan government has not issued an official decision in this regard.

Sources revealed the Sri Lankan domestic labor recruitment offices decided to suspend the recruitment process until they meet among themselves and coordinate their efforts in relation to the recent decisions of Kuwait.

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NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable on Wednesday to the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq, congratulating him on the fourth anniversary of his throne assumption.

In his cable, His Highness the Amir praised the accomplishments of the Sultan and wished him everlasting health and Oman more progress and prosperity. (KUNA)

RIYADH: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud discussed cooperation with German Vice-Chancellor for Economics and Climate Protection Robert Habeck on Wednesday.

A Saudi Foreign Ministry statement said that the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and cooperation, in addition to discussions on the latest regional and international developments. (KUNA)

TOKYO: An agreement between Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on defense equipment and technology transfers entered into force on Tuesday, following the completion of their necessary procedure, the Japanese Foreign Ministry announced.

Earlier in the day, the two governments exchanged diplomatic notes informing each other that their respective internal procedures for the entry into force of the deal, which was signed in May 2023, have been completed, the ministry added in a statement. (KUNA)



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah inaugurated on Wednesday a new cybersecurity center as part of national efforts to bolster security against potential cyber threats. Hailing the new center as a 'cornerstone' of information technology infrastructure,

a foreign ministry statement described it as part of a national cybersecurity system aiming to deal with internal and external threats. Boosting cybersecurity awareness among foreign ministry personnel is chief among the newly-opened center's objectives, added the statement.

Houthis launch largest Red Sea missile attack

DUBAI, Jan 10, (AP): Yemen's Houthi rebels fired their largest-ever barrage of drones and missiles targeting shipping in the Red Sea, forcing the United States and British navies to shoot down the projectiles in a major naval engagement, authorities said Wednesday. No damage was immediately reported.

The attack by the Iranian-backed Houthis came despite a planned United Nations Security Council vote later Wednesday to potentially condemn and demand an immediate halt to the attacks by the rebels, who say their assaults are aimed at stopping Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

However, their targets increasingly have tenuous - or no - relationship with Israel and imperil a crucial trade route linking Asia and the Middle East to Europe. That raises the risk of a U.S. retaliatory strike on Yemen that could upend an uneasy ceasefire that's held in the Arab world's poorest country.

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Israel slammed

Lebanon files complaint against Israel aggression

BEIRUT, Jan 10, (KUNA): Lebanon on Wednesday instructed its Permanent Representative to the United Nations Hadi Hashem to lodge a grievance before the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in response to a recent Israeli complaint regarding Lebanon's alleged non-compliance with UNSC Resolution 1701.

In a press release, the Lebanese Foreign Ministry said Lebanon strongly condemns the nonstop hostilities committed by Israeli occupation forces against Lebanon since October 7, coinciding with its war on Gaza, citing documented evidence of Israel's violation of Resolution 1701.

The ministry highlighted incidents where Israel targeted Lebanese territories, manipulating facts by blaming Lebanon for its blatant violations of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The complaint includes extensive evidence of Israeli occupation military operations breaking Para 1 of Resolution 1701, it said, citing the use of internationally banned phosphorus shells targeting areas in southern Lebanon.

S. Africa calls for halt in conflict

ICJ set to hear South Africa's case against Israel over Gaza genocide

By Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is set to hold a two-day hearing tomorrow, 11 and 12 Jan, 2024 on the case brought by South Africa against Israel, for committing genocide in its ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, in violation of its obligation under the United Nations Genocide Convention.

On 3 January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) announced that it will hold public hearings at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the seat of the Court in The Netherlands, in the proceedings instituted by South Africa against Israel on 29 December 2023.

The Court recalled that South Africa filed an Application instituting proceedings against Israel concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on

the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the 'Genocide Convention') in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The Court added that the hearings will be devoted to the Request for the indication of provisional measures contained in South Africa's Application. In its Request, South Africa asks the Court to indicate provisional measures in order to "protect against further, severe and irreparable harm to the rights of the Palestinian people under the 'Genocide Convention'" and "to ensure Israel's compliance with its obligations

under the Genocide Convention not to engage in genocide, and to prevent and to punish genocide".

The ICJ, also called the World Court, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established by the United Nations Charter in June 1945 and began its activities in April 1946. The Court is composed of 15 judges elected for a nine-year term by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands).

The Court has a twofold role: first, to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States; and, second, to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized United Nations organs and agencies of the system.

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Kuwait pavilion stands out at Cairo exhibition

CAIRO, Jan 10, (KUNA): Leading Kuwaiti plastic and petrochemical manufacturers had a big turnout on Wednesday in Plastics 2024 expo held in Cairo.

The Kuwaiti pavilion exhibited multiple different plastic products, which attracted the attention of people visiting the expo, which lasts until January 12 and draws 30,000 exhibitors.

The products include architectural cladding materials designed in decorative styles compliant with global and Gulf-specific eco-friendly

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KUNA photo
The Kuwaiti pavilion at the Plastics 2024 expo held in Cairo on Wednesday.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:20 Asr 14:48
 Sunrise .. 06:44 Maghrib .. 17:07
 Zohr 11:55 Isha 18:29

Local

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

Weather

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speed of 12-35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain and a chance for fog forming at night.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-42 km/h with a chance for scattered rain and a chance for fog forming at night.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	23	16
Kuwait Airport	25	11
Abdaly	25	07
Jahra	25	12
Salmiyah	22	18
Nuwaisib	25	11
Wafra	24	10

Move to help diminish carbon emissions: Dr Al-Zaydan

EPA aims to expand natural reserves to 15 percent of country's area

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Deputy Director General of the Technical Affairs Sector at the Environment Public Authority (EPA), Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaydan, disclosed the authority's ambition to elevate the percentage of natural reserves in Kuwait from 13% to 15% of the nation's total land area. This expansion aligns with international commitments to diminish carbon emissions, reports Al-Rai daily.

In an interview with Al-Rai, Dr. Al-Zaydan highlighted the collaborative efforts among various governmental agencies overseeing the reserves to enhance biodiversity. The discussion unfolded on the occasion of a recent visit by a Ministry of Education delegation to the Jahra Reserve. Established in 1985, the Jahra Reserve stands as a vital location for migratory birds, hosting around 400 species.

Dr. Al-Zaydan emphasized the reserve's diverse ecosystems, including terrestrial, sabkha, freshwater, and coastal, with ongoing expansion pushing its size to approximately 18 square kilometers. This growth is integral to promoting eco-tourism in the region.



Dr. Al-Zaydan

Dr. Al-Zaydan shed light on the reserve's significant role in the restoration of Kuwait's mangrove plant, a collaborative effort involving Kuwaiti expertise and seeds provided by the Sultanate of Oman. The gray mangrove, known for its resilience to high salinity levels, has proven to be a potent carbon dioxide reducer, surpassing tropical forests threefold. The reserve's importance was underscored during the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging as a primary destination for ecotourism.

Collaboration with various government entities, including the Ministry of Education, has been a longstanding practice, with Dr. Al-Zaydan emphasizing the collective commitment to environmental initiatives.

Dr. Ghanem Al-Sulaimani, Director of the Educational Technologies Department in the Ministry of Education, expressed appreciation for the Environment Agency's support in facilitating educational visits, including the recent delegation to the Jahra Reserve. The aim is to familiarize Ministry staff with Kuwait's crucial reserves, document their experiences, and share valuable insights with students.

This collaborative effort underscores Kuwait's dedication to environmental conservation and education, as it strives to meet international environmental commitments.



A lake at the Al-Jahra Reserve, north of Kuwait City.

Al-Rai photo



Overflowing sewage water in Jleeb streets makes walking difficult.

Sewage network overloaded

'Need to treat Jleeb wastewater'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: In a report submitted to the Joint Committee overseeing the current situation in the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh region, the Ministry of Public Works has recommended both permanent and temporary solutions to address infrastructure issues in the area, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The permanent solution involves the complete overhaul of the region's infrastructure, and the ministry has initiated the tendering process (Tender No. H/S/160) for this purpose.

The report outlines that the temporary solution involves the installation of wastewater treatment units, particularly to handle the flows resulting from the high population density in the region. These units will serve as an interim measure until the underlying problem is fundamentally resolved.

The ministry is actively seeking the necessary approvals to establish 24 wastewater purification and treatment units in 12 areas of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in coordination with the Environment Public Authority, with the required budget allocation.

The report highlights that it has been almost three decades since the construction of the sewage network in the area, initially designed for a private residential setting. Over time, the region underwent substantial changes due to construction violations, transforming into an unregulated investment area with a significantly higher population density than the existing infrastructure can accommodate.

The Ministry emphasizes its commitment to finding effective solutions to reduce pollutants in the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area and mitigate the impact on neighboring areas such as Seville, Al-Rehab, Rabieh, Muhammad bin Al-Qasim Street, and the Al-Nasr Sports Club.

Since the committee's inception, the Ministry has addressed (704) complaints in the region, replacing (22) manhole covers, addressing (61) asphalt potholes, and replacing a main sanitation line on Street 165, along with a main rainwater and emergency drainage line on Street 170.

Additionally, a chemical and biological treatment tank was installed on the rain and emergency network to reduce pollutants before reaching the sea. The ministry also installed (23) new carbon baskets on drainage networks, bringing the total to (279) carbon baskets to minimize toxic gas emissions and ensure the safety of residents in the affected areas.

Illegals nabbed

Traffic raids in Al-Rai

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The General Traffic Department (GTD) and Operations Sector in the Interior Ministry recently carried out an intensive inspection campaign in Al-Rai Al-Herfiyya; resulting in the issuance of several traffic violation citations, impounding of vehicles and arrest individuals who violated the Residency and Labor laws, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The campaign covered plots, garages and industrial workshops in the area, during which a vehicle was impounded as it had earlier figured in a theft case, along with another vehicle and a motorcycle that emitted annoying sounds.

In a press statement, officer at the Public Relations and Media at GTD Major Abdullah Bu Hassan disclosed that the campaign is in compliance with the directive of Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Rajaib, under the field supervision of Assistant Director for Technical Affairs at GTD Brigadier General Muhammad Al-Adwani and Brigadier Ashraf Al-Amir, and in coordination with the Residency Investigation General Department, Ministry of Commerce, Public Authority for Industry, Ministry of Electricity and Water, Kuwait Municipality, and the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN).

Bu Hassan confirmed that 120 citations for various traffic violations were issued, while the Technical Inspection Department inspectors impounded three vehicles and a motorcycle, the industry inspectors issued 22 arrest reports and three citations for sheltering absconding workers, electricity inspectors put warning stickers on a workshop and a garage and the commerce inspectors issued 72 violation reports for garages, workshops and craftsmen.

He added the officers from the Residence Investigation General Department arrested five individuals proven to have violated the Residency and Labor laws, while the Municipality inspectors placed 41 warning stickers on abandoned vehicles and issued 12 violations to workshops, and the PAFN inspectors issued six warnings.

Gallows await Kuwaiti in murder

Long-term jail for Kuwaiti, Egyptian, KD 6m fine in funds scam

By Jaber Al-Hamoud/ Munaif Naif
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Dr. Khaled Al-Omeira, sentenced a Kuwaiti man to death by hanging, after he was convicted of killing his wife, dismembering her body into several small parts because she told him that she was pregnant with his child, and throwing her body parts in different areas of all the governorates of Kuwait.

The legal team representing the victim's family demanded the maximum penalty, which is death, against the defendant.

The team affirmed that the accused committed this crime, and demanded, adding the charge of possession of a cold weapon, which was a cleaver and a knife, that the accused had purchased to commit his crime.

In this regard, the defendant's lawyer denied that his client committed the crime, saying, "My client is not the killer, and the murdered person was not his wife. She was his ex-wife, and she was not missing."

'Coke' found in parcel: Airport customs officers managed to thwart the entry of 29 grams of the expensive narcotic substance "Cocaine", which was found inside a parcel that arrived from Canada via an air freight company.

According to a customs source, the customs officers, under the supervision of Director of Air Cargo Customs Mutlaq Al-Enezi and Superintendent Fahad Al-Taflan, were able to seize the shipment which was placed inside a box of colored pencils. The seized contraband was referred to the concerned authority in preparation for finding the person who imported it.

10 yrs jail, KD 6m fine: In the case of misuse of the overseas medical treatment program, the Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Khaled Al-Amira, sentenced the first accused - the fugitive Egyptian director of a travel office to ten-year imprisonment, and fined him KD 6 million.

The court also sentenced a Kuwaiti official of the Ministry of Health to seven-year imprisonment and fined him KD 300,000 for profiting from facilitating the embezzlement.

The Public Prosecution conducted investigations in the case of squandering of public funds through the embezzlement of KD 15 million of funds for overseas treatment. The accused was an Egyptian expatriate who had fled the country, and a Kuwaiti citizen who had been arrested.

The Ministry of Health, through its representatives who was part of the Public Prosecution's investigations, confirmed that the first accused, worked as the director of a travel office, created fake invoices related to treating citizens abroad and booking hotels for them, exploited the absence of a health office in one of the European countries, and was able to pocket more than KD 15 million.

Husband threatened: The Court of Appeals acquitted a woman who was accused of abusing, insulting, and threatening her husband via WhatsApp messages.

According to the case file, the husband accused his wife of using the WhatsApp program to insult him by sending him audio clips and posts of insults, threats, and abuse.

The Public Prosecution charged the accused with insulting the victim in a way that dishonored him and affected his reputation in a private conversation on WhatsApp, and of deliberately misusing a means of telephone communications to threaten the victim using voice messages.

During the court session, Lawyer Muhammad Al-Sayegh, who represented the accused, pleaded the absence of intent to harm his client, demanding that the ruling of the Court of First Instance be overturned and the court acquit her of what was attributed against her.



Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Makrad and Major General Jamal Badr visiting the injured officer.

Fire chief visits injured officer

Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Makrad, Chief of the General Fire Force, paid a visit to Sergeant Abdul Wahab Muhammad, who sustained injuries while on duty, at Al-Razi Hospital yesterday. During the visit, Lieutenant General Al-Makrad received updates on the health condition of Sergeant Abdul Wahab Muhammad and conveyed warm regards and appreciation from Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, who closely monitored the situation. Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid expressed his sincere wishes for the speedy recovery of Sergeant Abdul Wahab Muhammad, reports Al-Anba daily.

The medical professionals at Al-Razi Hospital provided reassurance, confirming that the injured sergeant's health was stable. The dedicated medical team ex-

pressed their hopes for his swift recovery and anticipated his discharge from the hospital at the earliest possible time.

Lieutenant General Al-Makrad was accompanied during the visit by Major General Jamal Badr, Deputy Chief of the Force for the Control Sector, along with Dr. Nayef Al-Harbi, the Director of Al-Razi Hospital, and the attentive medical staff overseeing Sergeant Abdul Wahab Muhammad's case.

The visit underscored the commitment of the General Fire Force leadership to show solidarity and support for their injured colleague. Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Makrad and Major General Jamal Badr, alongside the medical professionals, demonstrated a collective effort to ensure the well-being and recovery of Sergeant Abdul Wahab Muhammad.

Awqaf initiates training courses

Call for humane care in prisons

By Abdel Nasser Al-Islami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, in collaboration with the private security sector and correctional institutions within the Ministry of Interior, particularly the Planning and Training Department, has initiated training courses for the qualification of personnel in the Holy Qur'an centers within correctional and care institutions, as well as the Department of Rehabilitation and Evaluation. The objective is to enhance awareness regarding the regulations and conditions for entering prisons and to provide guidance on humane treatment within established frameworks.

Mohammad Al-Mutairi, the Assistant Undersecretary for Media and Foreign Relations at the Ministry, stated in a press release yesterday that the first session, titled "Regulations and Conditions Governing Prison Entry and Prohibited Acts by Law," began for men and will conclude today.

The session for women is scheduled for the 15th and 16th of this month. Additionally, the second session, focusing on "Humane Treatment within the Framework of Ethical Conduct in Prisons," is set for men on February 12 and 13, fol-

lowed by women on the 19th and 20th of the same month.

Al-Mutairi emphasized that these courses represent a valuable addition to the experiences of participants, broadening their knowledge within the Holy Qur'an Affairs and Islamic Studies sector, both inside and outside correctional institutions, events, and the Department of Rehabilitation and Evaluation.

The men's centers participating in the courses include Rehabilitation of Repentants, Integrity, Guidance, Faith, Will, Educational Adulthood, and the House of Correction for Boys. The women's centers include Al-Huda and Mubarak Centers.

Al-Mutairi expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Interior, specifically the Correctional Institutions and Sentences Implementation Sector, for organizing these purposeful and beneficial courses. He extended his best wishes to all participants, hoping they would derive maximum benefit and achieve the intended goals of the training sessions.



Al-Mutairi

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Weak govts, ministers lacking vision lead to political chaos'

"DESPITE Kuwait being blessed with liberation in February 1991, confusion continues to persist. The perplexing scenarios are numerous, and the outlook for stability, recovery, and rebuilding raises question marks," columnist Dr **Mohammad Al-Moqatei** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"One of the key scenes involves the arrangement of the ruling family's dynamics, attempts to disrupt power centers within, and the challenges faced by the designated Prime Minister.

"Notably, the decisions of His Highness the Amir are taking shape, evident in the selection of Sheikh Muhammad Sabah Al-Salem. Continuous meetings with influential family members have averted unnecessary government conflicts.

"Another bewildering scene revolves around the subordination of the executive authority to the legislative authority, allowing encroachment on its jurisdiction. The absence of equality and oversight, coupled with reluctance to address violations, poses a risk to constitutional integrity.

"The article calls for a halt to such transgressions to prevent a repeat of an authority waiving its jurisdiction, as outlined in Article 50 of the Constitution.

"The absence of public policies is identified as a source of confusion, hindering institutional processes. The Council of Ministers is criticized for not fulfilling its designated role, leading to randomness and inconsistency in decision-making.

"Weak governments with ministers lacking vision contribute to this disorder, exacerbated by changes in government formation.

"The hope is for a return to a more stable era, free from the issues that plagued Kuwait between 1962 and 1996.

"Political and parliamentary work faces a decline, with National Assembly members often prioritizing personal interests over public service. Blackmail and threats become commonplace, exceeding constitutional boundaries and undermining the separation of powers. The recent amendment to the Constitutional Court Law is noted for diminishing the powers of the judiciary.

"The tampering with the electoral system is considered a painful scene, with collusions to preserve factional compositions within the National Assembly. The opposition to adopting a rational and national system for electoral districts is seen as an attempt to maintain the status quo and perpetuate negative electoral phenomena.

"The most alarming scene involves the potential change in the political structure by granting naturalized citizens the right to vote. This move is criticized for its absurdity, politicization, and negligence in naturalization processes.

"Allegations of nationality forgery and fraudulent data add complexity to the situation, prompting a call for reform before any elections following the dissolution of the National Assembly in accordance with Article 107 of the Constitution."

Also:

"Embarking on a hopeful journey, Kuwait is experiencing a surge of optimism with the nomination of Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem to become the next Prime Minister. The prevailing question on everyone's mind is,



Al-Moqatei

"What lies ahead of us," columnist Dr **Turki Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

"While predicting the future remains a challenge, the mantra remains to be cautiously optimistic, echoing a sentiment reiterated time and again. The focus shifts towards the evaluation of the government's performance, particularly in the selection of ministers and senior officials.

"This calls for adherence to crucial leadership criteria:

■ Possession of a distinguished academic background and a profound knowledge base reflecting a valid culture.

■ Display of a well-balanced personality marked by maturity and commendable conduct.

■ Substantial practical experience in a high-ranking executive or administrative role, with flexibility across different fields, given the leader's emphasis on soft skills such as leading, directing, containing, and motivating. Addressing any domain-specific gaps can be achieved through seasoned consultants.

■ An age criterion is introduced, with emphasis on individuals aged 50 and above.

"Studies suggest that effective leadership is most prevalent within the age range of 50 to 70, bringing forth a wealth of experience, maturity, and wisdom.

"Hence, this is a dream that may come true! The intention is not to dismiss the potential contributions of the younger generation but to underscore the distinct advantages that experience and age bring, fostering a more nuanced perspective and effective leadership, as previously discussed in another article.

"The dream commences with the enactment of laws aimed at elevating the standard of living and addressing the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people, as outlined in the priorities of the two authorities. This vision extends to enhancing the quality of education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other longstanding issues.

"The call is for dreamers to be cautiously optimistic, urging restraint until the unveiling of forthcoming decisions. Timing is deemed critical, especially in matters where swift action, such as the implementation of e-government, can bring about positive change by eliminating intermediaries.

"Reflecting on past endeavors, the article questions the efficacy of prior visits to other countries for knowledge transfer, emphasizing the need for tangible results and swift decision-making. The enduring challenge lies in the perceived inadequacies of leadership, a sentiment echoed not just in the author's words but also in a global McKinsey report from 2004.

"A plea is made to steer clear of political considerations when addressing crucial matters like electoral system reform, leadership appointments, and the perceived financial deficit.

"Instead, the focus should be on leveraging the country's inherent goodness, wealth of experiences, and capabilities to propel Kuwait to the forefront in various fields.

"This is an appeal to withhold judgment until the unveiling of subsequent decisions and appointments, with a hopeful wish for divine assistance."

□ □ □

"First, we congratulate His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem for gaining the trust of His Highness the Amir. We wish

him success in selecting the members of his ministerial team, which should consist of statesmen with experience, competence and distinction," columnist **M. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"They must also live up to the responsibility placed on their shoulders, as the challenges are many. Intensified efforts and wisdom are needed in dealing with issues. The country has gone through something that requires boldness in handling issues and the ability to solve problems, rather than ideas from outside the box. It is also necessary to stay away from canned solutions.

"Without a doubt, the fruitful cooperation between the two authorities -- the legislative and the executive -- is necessary. They should work together in a way that serves national interest and relieves the citizen of many burdens caused by the past stage. This necessitates agreement on specific priorities that serve the ultimate goal of getting out of the development stagnation. They should remove all obstacles caused by the government-parliamentary conflicts over the past five years due to the spread of deals between the nation's representatives and the ministers.

"At this point, it must be emphasized that based on what the nation experienced in the last few years and the abject failure -- whether parliamentary or governmental, Kuwait can no longer tolerate councils of ministers that practice trial and error on us or hesitate to make decisions. For this reason, the government should have clear vision and goals aligned with the priorities of the nation and the citizen. It must implement directives and policies.

"Its work program must have realistic goals and timetable, instead of merely copying the programs of previous governments just to gain parliamentary trust, after which things will return to how they were before.

"This also requires innovative methods and specific mechanisms, in which responsibilities are clear, along with a timetable that includes accountability.

"The absence of accountability means loss of efforts and failure of the Council of Ministers. The major catastrophe is that there is no more time to be wasted on trivial disputes or waiting for miracles, because the situation that the previous five cabinets left has exacerbated the crises.

"It must be taken into account that regional and international changes necessitate rapid action to consolidate the internal front and ensure national unity. This is in addition to strengthening economic and political immunity. We are fully aware that idealism does not exist in politics, but fear about one's fate is the legitimate right of the people.

"Any imbalance in the structure of an institution indirectly affects the entire entity, especially if it is an appointed or elected authority. If there is a force capable of correcting the defect, identifying problems and solving them in a way that does not lead to collateral damage and preserves the prestige of the law, then there will be political, economic and social stability.

"If the State's mission is to protect society and its members, the greater mission is to raise generations who can bear responsibilities and produce or create knowledge. Unfortunately, all these are missing in Kuwait. As mentioned earlier, we need ministers who are statesmen and wise. This is the big challenge that His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem is currently facing."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

Other Voices

Agility facilitates quick navigation in difficulty

By Ahmad alsarraf

Our governments are commonly characterized as "rational," yet in our current circumstances, it would be more advantageous for them to embody "agility." Similar to a human being, a government operates optimally when agile -- free from excess weight, flexible, and capable of swift movements.



alsarraf

Agility facilitates quick navigation through challenges, optimal decision-making, and adaptability. However, in my observation, our governments have often leaned towards a cumbersome structure, symbolized by extensive powers that dominate all state affairs.

This heavyweight system has resulted in a failure to achieve goals due to an overwhelming number of tasks and powers. The government is burdened with managing numerous ministries, agencies, councils, bodies, and companies, leading to a failure to make vital decisions or the improper execution of temporary measures that become permanent.

The excessive expansion of government agencies is driven by the desire of many individuals to create entities for their associates to manage. Examples of this abound, such as the establishment of a Roads Authority with unprecedented powers that were later frozen by the Minister of Public Works.

The creation of redundant organizations, like a catering company and the Kuwait Flour Mills Company, deviates from their core functions, and the need for a Ministry of Information and a news agency is questionable in the current era.

The government's ownership and management of lands for various purposes, control of sectors such as electricity, water, and telecommunications, and involvement in the education and medical sectors are areas where the government's focus could be better directed.

There are numerous questions surrounding these practices, and it is essential for the government to reconsider its role, focusing on facilitating commercial activities, monitoring performance, preventing exploitation, enacting systems, issuing laws, and legislating in collaboration with the Council.

Streamlining the government apparatus and transferring certain responsibilities to the private sector, which has demonstrated competence, would contribute to creating a more agile and efficient government. Addressing these issues will be crucial for the success and effectiveness of the next government.

□ □ □

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Kuwaiti, 6 expats jailed in diesel smuggling case

Expat wanted in theft of 13 iPhones

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Court of Cassation has closed the curtain on a case of diesel smuggling abroad by sentencing a Kuwaiti citizen to ten-year imprisonment, two expatriates to four-year imprisonment, and four other expatriates to jail terms ranging between three months and one year.

The Public Prosecution had charged the defendants with exporting quantities of state-subsidized diesel overseas after purchasing it from the parties designated to sell it, and reselling them. It also charged them with customs smuggling and engaging in an activity that led to the pollution of marine areas.

Adverse effects: Referring employees for retirement once they complete 30 years or more in service in the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy could have adverse effects; considering the three-month suspension of the recruitment, transfer and secondment of employees in government agencies remains in effect, report Al-Anba daily quoting sources from the ministry.

Sources revealed that following the statement of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) in response to the ministry's letter number 2/8540 regarding employees entitled to pension, the Administrative Affairs Sector was instructed to quickly take the necessary measures to refer the above-mentioned employees for retirement.

Sources said the list includes department heads, controllers and directors; warning about the possibility of work disruption due to the inability to fill up vacant leadership positions in the coming period.

She stressed that there is no need to rush in referring employees for retirement, pointing out that the Ministry of Public Works issued a decision last week to extend the concerned employees' work period for two months to guarantee the smooth flow of work.

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120 bottles liquor seized: The Fahaheel police have arrested three expatriates for selling locally made alcohol in the Fahaheel area. The individuals were found in possession of 120 bottles of booze intended for sale.

According to a security source, the arrest took place during a routine security patrol in the Fahaheel area yesterday evening, reports Al-Anba daily.

This operation was conducted as part of a security plan for rapid deployment overseen by Brigadier General Ghoneim Al-Atel, the commander of the Fahaheel region.

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13 iPhones stolen: As per the directive of the deputy attorney general, an expatriate was included in the list of individuals wanted by law for stealing seven iPhone 13 Pro Max mobile phones in Jahra and a case was registered under No. 3/2024, reports Al-Anba daily.

The director of a company selling mobile phones in a complex in Jahra disclosed that the expatriate employee disappeared when the theft was discovered, indicating the total value of the stolen phones is more than KD 2,000. He said the company officials tried to contact the accused, but he turned off his mobile phone. He provided the investigators with the surveillance camera recordings showing that the employee stole the phones.

On the other hand, detectives at Jahra Police Station requested for viewing the surveillance cameras in a shopping center to identify the person who stole a router from the shop.

According to a security source, an expatriate, who works as an agent of the shop, reported the theft, without naming any suspect.

Another expatriate filed a report at the same station, stating that an unknown person sneaked into his house while he was sleeping and stole KD 800.

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'Wanted' car seized: Patrol officers of the northern roads referred a judicially "wanted" vehicle to Mina Abdullah Police Station.

According to a security source, the patrol officers, while patrolling King Fahad Expressway, stopped a vehicle. Upon inquiring about it, it became clear that it was "wanted" and they seized it and referred it to Mina Abdullah Police Station for necessary legal action.

Hit-and-run black jeep sought

Brothers run over in camp brawl

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Jahra Governorate Search and Investigation Department has formed a task force to look for an unidentified suspect who is wanted by law in connection with a felony, reports Al-Anba daily.

The accused was reported to have been traveling in a black American four-wheeler. The informant, although unfamiliar with the accused, provided security officials with comprehensive details, including the license plate of the vehicle in question.

In terms of case specifics, a source in the security department disclosed that an undocumented resident approached the Jahra police station and filed two medical reports under Felony Case No. 1/242. The

first report documented his own fifth metatarsal fracture, while the second detailed his brother's right femur bone fracture.

According to the informant, the injuries were inflicted by an unknown person driving a four-wheeler who had allegedly struck and run over both the informant and his brother. The informant's brother is currently hospitalized in Ward 13 of Jahra Hospital.

Providing insight into the incident, the informant explained that he had noticed a vehicle circling around a camp. Upon requesting the driver to leave, the driver refused, resisted, and subsequently ran him over. When the informant's brother intervened to assist, he was assaulted and also run over by the accused.

Major events in Kuwait during 2023

Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED)

Feb 27: Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah announced that KFAED, is to provide Yemen with three additional grants worth USD five million in cooperation with international agencies.

April 25: KFAED said its contributions to UN institutions and programs to fighting malaria and pandemics reached KD 4.76 million (USD 15.5 million) up until April 2023.

May 22: KFAED said its development and humanitarian assistance contributed to 1,012 projects in more than 100 countries.

June 19: KFAED Acting Director General Waleed Al-Bahar said the fund extended 27 grants refugees and displaced persons regionally and globally reaching USD 85 million.

Dec 3: KFAED signed a joint statement with the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to enhance joint climate action and contribute to achieving UN sustainable development goals in the Middle East.

Achievements:
Jan 3: Kuwait's first satellite, Kuwait Sat-1, was successfully launched into space in what was hailed as a milestone effort in setting up the country's space industry.

Jan 7: The renowned Creighton University hospital and the hospitals organization, CHI, in the US State of Nebraska have appointed the Kuwaiti surgeon Waddah Al-Rifai as head of the surgery, Technical and academic research department.

Jan 16: Kuwait's Dr. Saqer Al-Mulla elected deputy chief of Asian gymnastics federation.

Jan 18: Sabah Al-Ahmad center for giftedness and creativity honored student Hawraa Mirza as she was awarded with the Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashed award for exceptional academic performance.

Jan 21: The Kuwaiti national Saad Al-Tami suffered from ADHD symptoms and stuttering since childhood but grew up to become the first Arab to address to the graduates' ceremony of Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University.

Feb 4: Army Captain Engineer Youssef Al-Shatti achieved a new Kuwaiti world record as fastest swimmer to cross a creek for men's category.

Feb 12: Kuwait nabbed yet another Guinness world record with the largest "Bisht," traditional clothing, in the world.

Feb 13: France awarded Kuwaiti novelist Taleb Al-Refai the rank of Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters for his contributions to building cultural bridges between the two countries.

Feb 25: Student Jenan Al-Sharif of Kuwait was elected president of the Arab Parliament for the Child.

March 10: Kuwaiti Member of Parliament, Dr. Jenan Bushehri, was elected by the Arab states group in the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a seat in the Bureau of Parliamentary Women's Forum.

To be continued

'Eggs in one week at rates fixed by MoCI'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Chairman of the Pricing, Importing and Collective Purchasing Committee at the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies Morshed Al-Morshid disclosed that the Union recently met with local egg production companies in the presence of the representatives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Consumer Protection Society, during which the companies agreed to produce and supply larger quantities of table eggs to cooperative societies in the coming days and at prices set by the ministry, reports Al-Jarida daily.

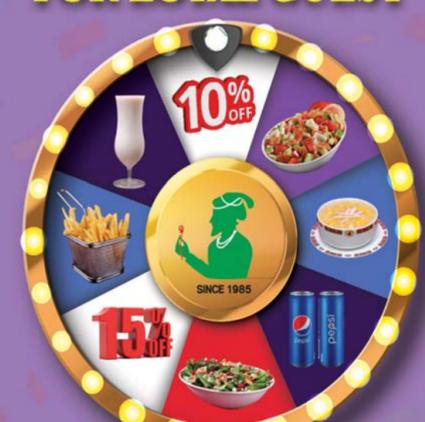
In a press statement, Al-Morshid confirmed that eggs will be supplied to cooperatives in large quantities within a week, that is, after the Kuwaiti farms produce quantities needed by the local market.

He pointed out that the Union does not accept intermediaries and it has the right to import directly from the manufacturers if there is a shortage of any commodity, especially the basic goods.

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Dr Al-Haroun expresses joy over winning IASTE-Berkeley prize

Kuwaiti academic wins int'l architectural prize at Riyadh event

MEW expects 1,250 MW surplus to tackle summer 2024 demand

CSC approves flexible hours for employees at Energy Ministry

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy revealed an estimated increase of 530 megawatts to the expected maximum load of energy generated by electricity production plants in the upcoming summer season of 2024.

This is done by calculating the difference between the ministry's expectations for the maximum load during the coming summer, which was estimated at 17,250 megawatts, and the summer of last year 2023, which was estimated at 16,707 megawatts. This is confirmed by the ministry's official figures and statistics.

The sources explained that the quantities of electricity production expected to meet the maximum load requirements for the 2024 summer season represent twice the productivity of a complete station such as the Shuwaikh station, which has an installed capacity of 252 megawatts.

The ministry will have a surplus in productivity estimated at 1,250 megawatts to meet the expected maximum load by deducting the total expected load from the total productivity of all stations affiliated with the ministry, including North Zour station, phase one.

The total productivity is 18,500 megawatts in the case of full operation of all station units, which does not happen because some units are under maintenance or some of them are outdated and not technically and engineeringly ready for operation.

The sources warned of the slowdown in implementing electricity production projects to cover the increasing demand with the steady increase in popu-

lation and the expansion of the housing area through the new cities in Mutlaa and other new housing cities that the state has developed within the government's work program.

They explained that the existing surplus in productivity does not guarantee the safe operation of the electricity network when the maximum load expected by the ministry to meet next summer is reached. The evidence of this is the ministry's report to the Gulf electrical network every year.

It also intends to provide electricity when needed from international companies. In the absence of a comfortable surplus, the network is exposed to difficult challenges due to the pressure of consumption, including, for example, the burning of secondary and main stations and cables, and a high rate of malfunctions in the components of the network, which leads to an increase in unacceptable outage rates in light of the high temperatures during the summer season.

Expedite

The sources called for the need to expedite the completion of the procedures for two important projects, which are to produce 900 megawatts from the Subiya station and another to produce 250 megawatts from the same station, especially since the two projects have taken important steps towards awarding and starting implementation. They need to water down obstacles to starting implementation to add 1,150 megawatts in the near term for full productivity.

The sources highlighted the need for the ministry to rely primarily during the coming summer on awareness and rationalization campaigns through various means and committees formed for this, and to focus on reducing consumption through excessive air conditioning use, as air conditioners alone drain 70 percent of the total energy production during the summer season.

In addition, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced the launch of

electricity supply to the Khaitan residential project, parts of Block 1. The ministry will receive requests to connect electricity to 95 plots.

Meanwhile, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has agreed to implement the flexible working hours system for employees at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy; such that they have the option to start work between 7:00 am to 8:00 am with half an hour grace period, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry sent the proposal to the CSC; indicating the employees have the right to choose any time to start their shift from 7:00 am to 8:00 am, while granting them half-hour grace period during which they will not be considered tardy.

In the meantime, sources told the daily that the ministry has many projects line up until the year 2029 to produce 13,780 megawatts of electricity; provided these projects are implemented as scheduled.

Sources revealed these projects include two projects in Subiya station (fourth phase) to produce 900 megawatts of electricity, stating that the experimental operations are scheduled for the years 2025 to 2027. Sources said one of the largest projects is the Nuwaiseeb station (first phase) to produce 3,600 megawatts during the years 2028 to 2029.

Another project aims to enhance production at the Subiya station by adding 250 megawatts, which is scheduled to be operated experimentally in 2026; in addition to producing 2,700 megawatts at North Zour station (phases two and three) scheduled to be operated experimentally during the years 2027 and 2028.

Sources added the public-private partnership projects include the first phase of Al-Khiran project to produce 1,800 megawatts in 2028; Al-Shaqaya project (second phase) to produce 1,100 megawatts in 2026; another 1,100 megawatts in the third phase; 1,500 megawatts in the fourth phase and 1,700 megawatts in the fifth phase.

RIYADH, Jan 10, (KUNA): Kuwait University's (KU) assistance professor at the Department of Architecture Dr. Yousef Al-Haroun won on Monday the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments' IASTE-Berkeley prize at its event held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Speaking to KUNA, Dr. Al-Haroun expressed joy over winning the prize at the IASTE 2024 Riyadh held on January 5-9 under the title "The Dynamism of Tradition".

The academic said that his research, which won the prize focused on the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on archi-

ecture design, identity, and cultural making of Kuwait and the GCC region.

The research enables architects to use AI to maintain Gulf cultural identity, while seeking improvements in design and construction.

The International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE) was established at the First International Symposium on Traditional Dwellings and Settlements held at Berkeley in April 1988.

IASTE is keen on comparative, cross-cultural, and inter-disciplinary understanding of traditional dwellings and settlements as an expression of cultural conventions.



KUNA photo

KU's assistance professor at the Department of Architecture Dr Yousef Al-Haroun.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's humanitarian officials at the border crossing.

Delegation checks relief aid delivery to Gaza

Kuwaiti humanitarian officials visit Al-Arish and Rafah border crossing

CAIRO, Jan 10, (KUNA): Representatives of two Kuwaiti charitable organizations visited the Egyptian city of Al-Arish and the Rafah border crossing on Tuesday to follow up on the delivery of Kuwaiti humanitarian aid to the war-traumatized people of the Gaza Strip.

The humanitarian delegation, headed by the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General and Chairman of the Kuwait-based International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO), Dr. Abdullah Al-Maatouq and included several officials of the IICO and the Al-Salam Association for Humanitarian and Charitable Works.

In statements to KUNA following a tour of the aid warehouses, Al-Arish Hospital and Rafah Border Crossing, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Al-Salam Association Dr. Nabil Al-Aoun that the Kuwaiti delegation supervised the upload-

ing of Kuwaiti humanitarian aid on trucks in preparation for transporting them to the Strip via the Rafah crossing point.

Al-Aoun explained that 90 percent of the Kuwaiti relief aid have been entered into the Gaza Strip.

The remaining 10 percent consists of large-sized electric generators in addition to solar-powered refrigerators, he said, noting that arrangements are being made to transport them to the Strip.

He pointed out that the delegation oversaw the entry of 30 aid trucks loaded with tents, food supplies, blankets, in-kind materials, and clothes with a capacity of up to 700 tons into the Strip.

He unveiled that the IICO and the Al-Salam Association have built a displaced camp including a thousand tents inside the Gaza Strip and plan to construct four others including two of wood and iron panels.

Major events in Kuwait during 2023

Feb 28: Fireworks show lit up the sky on occasion of the national holidays, next to Kuwait towers.

April 19: The Tourism Enterprises Company (TEC) signed a contract with Edward Miller's Entertainment to operate Winterland 2023 and Sabahiya 2023 entertainment projects.

May 4: TEC signed contracts to develop the sea fronts.

June 7: The world tourism organization's Middle East committee elected State of Kuwait as vice-chairman.

Sept 14: The Touristic Enterprise Company (TEC) opened an event in the Avenues for three upcoming projects Al-Blajat Beach, Winter Wonderland and South Subahiya park.

Sept 26: TEC opened Al-Blajat Beach project as part of the waterfront development project.

Oct 10: Al-Sadu Street, new project reflecting Kuwait's heritage and identity was opened.

Oct 15: Winter Wonderland amusement park was opened with a capacity of 15,000 visitors daily.

Dec 12: The South Subahiya amusement park was opened with a capacity of 10,000 visitors on daily basis.

Sports:
Jan 3: Kuwaiti powerlifters bagged some 29 medals, including a gold, at the concurrent Qatar-hosted West Asia and Qatar Cup International contests.

Jan 4: The Kuwaiti soccer team arrived in Basra for partaking in the 25th Arabian Gulf Cup tournament.

Jan 5: Kuwait Special Olympics, the first local championship for athletes with metal disabilities, concluded with the participation of 14 bodies from schools, clubs and institutions concerned.

Jan 10: Kuwaiti soccer team won against Emirati counterpart one goal to nothing as part of 25th gulf cup tournament.

Jan 13: The third round of Kuwait speedboat championship for 2022-23 season concluded.

Jan 13: Kuwait national soccer team left the Basra-hosted gulf cup tournament after tying with Bahrain 1-1.

Jan 14: Kuwait modern pentathlon club hosted local laser run championship for men, women and youth.

Jan 15: The state of Kuwait is to host

upcoming gulf cup tournament, announced the championship's federation chief, Hamad Al-Khalifah.

Jan 17: Kuwaitis Abdulaziz Al-Saad, Mansour Al-Rashidi and Mohammad Al-Daihani won silver in the men's skeet team event at the 2023 ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Rabat.

Jan 19: Kuwaiti fencers took home a silver and five bronze medals across individual and team men's and women's events at the closing day of the Arab Championship in Bahrain.

Jan 21: Mohammad Burubaye and Mohammad Al-Rashidi and Mohammad Al-Daihani won silver and second, respectively in the Jet Ski race (GPI) of UAE International Aquabike Championship.

Jan 22: Kuwait came fourth in the trap mixed team event of the ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Rabat.

Jan 23: Kuwaitis Shahad and Sara Al-Hawal alongside Hajer Abdulmalek won a bronze medal in the women's trap team event as the ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Rabat.

Jan 25: Sports public authority launched first awareness program aiming to promote health and sports activity for Kuwaiti women.

Jan 27: For the first time, Kuwait hosted the second and third rounds of the regional Middle East Formula championship (FR) and the Emirati Formula (F4) championship.

Feb 1: Kuwait Football Association chief, Abdullah Al-Shaheen, won membership of Asian federation executive office for the term (2023-27).

Feb 2: The fifth Arab clubs karate championship kicked off for men and women with around 150 players from 17 clubs representing eight Arab countries.

Feb 4: Kuwaiti Al-Fatat club was crowned champion of the URC futsal championship.

Feb 4: The annual Kuwait International Camel Racing Championship kicked off with a large participation of camel owners in Kuwait and a number of Gulf and Arab countries.

Feb 6: Al-Arabi SC crowned champion of His Highness the Crown Prince Football cup for the ninth time in its history.

To be continued



January

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Legal experts, scholars and professionals from Kuwait and beyond participate

KCCI workshop focuses on 'Conflicts of Interest in Arbitration Process'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Kuwait Center for Commercial Arbitration, under the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), recently organized a workshop under the title "Conflicts of Interest in the Arbitration Process." This initiative aims to advance the arbitration process and align with rapid developments in employing modern mechanisms during its sessions, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Arbitration has emerged as a crucial

tool for dispute resolution, offering a judicial process sanctioned by various legislation for disputing parties. It deviates from conventional litigation methods before state courts, prioritizing the swift resolution of commercial disputes to bolster investment.

As arbitration adheres to the principle of the parties' will, both sides select an arbitrator. Consequently, the chosen arbitrator may adopt the stance of the appointing party, potentially

influencing the case.

The workshop, attended by legal experts, scholars, and professionals from Kuwait and beyond, featured Dr. Yassin Al-Shazli, a professor of private law at Ain Shams University and Qatar University. Dr. Al-Shazli delved into various topics related to conflicts of interest in the arbitration process.

The discussions explored the arbitrator's obligation to disclose any doubts concerning their impartiality

and independence.

A conflict of interest was defined as a direct and current contradiction in the arbitrator's person between personal interests and the interests of the third party they are tasked with safeguarding. This involves ensuring the proper administration of arbitral justice, prioritizing it over personal interests.

A comparison was made between Egypt and Gulf countries regarding legislative jurisprudence on conflicts

of interest, emphasizing the duty of disclosure endorsed by national arbitration legislation and arbitration center rules.

The presentation covered judicial precedents related to non-disclosure and its impact on arbitrators' rulings. Considering the complexity of commercial and economic relations and the emergence of problems due to differing interests and goals, there was a need to develop new methods for resolution. The goal is to align

with rapid development, achieve swift justice required for such transactions, and establish unified rules and a secure mechanism for implementing arbitration awards.

The lecturer also explored the feasibility and importance of incorporating artificial intelligence in arbitration. The discussion questioned whether AI is universally applicable or if each country should tailor its customs and legislation to accommodate it.

Kuwait pavilion

Continued from Page 1

standards, in addition to durable plastic pallets suitable for heavy-duty use.

The Kuwaiti pavilion included eight leading companies in the plastic and petrochemical industries like Al-Sharhan Industries, Al-Mannai Plastic, Kuwait Packing Materials Manufacturing Company, Al-Arabi Plastic Factory, Plastic Industries Company, Kuwaiti United Factory, and International Partners for the Production of Plastic derivatives, as well as the Awatn International factory.

MP calls

Continued from Page 1

Representatives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of State for Sports and Youth Affairs, and Public Authority for Sports attended the meeting.

On the other hand, the Disabled Affairs Committee met on the same day to discuss Decree No. 229/2023 issued by the interim government to return the ratified bill on amending Disabled Affairs Law No. 8/2010 to the National Assembly. The decree includes the interim government's comments on the bill, including the high cost and privileges granted to non-Kuwaitis.

Meanwhile, MP Hamad Al-Obaid forwarded queries to acting Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari about the vacant senior positions in both ministries as of June 18, 2023; number of vacant positions filled since then; criteria in filling up these vacancies; if a committee was formed to evaluate and choose who among the nominated officials will occupy the senior positions; if the nominees were asked to present their strategies in developing the institutions they will lead; and if those appointed were given a probationary period to prove their leadership capabilities.

MP Saud Al-Asfour asked acting State Minister for Municipal and Communication Affairs Fahd Al-Shaulah about the news that Al-Jarida daily published on Jan 2, 2024; stating that the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has given approval to the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) to sign a contract valued at KD169.34 million directly with AMPLES International Co. Limited to execute, develop and support the Cybersecurity Operation Center to be the accredited provider of services stated in the agreement signed by the government and Google Cloud.

The lawmaker asked for a copy of the contract, number of employees at AMPLES International including their nationalities and specializations, names and qualifications of the members of the executive board at AMPLES International, and tasks carried out by AMPLES International in Kuwait and abroad before signing the aforementioned contract.

MP Bader Al-Mullah asked interim Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil, Economic and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barrak if the Ministry of Oil published advertisements to hire employees specialized in renewable and alternative energy, and if there is a strategy to benefit from the skills of those specialized in this field.

Al-Mullah also asked acting Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Manea if there is a strategy to hire renewable and alternative energy experts at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

Moreover, MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari called on HH the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to instruct the new government to review the decision issued on Dec 6, 2023 about the three-month suspension of the recruitment, secondment and reshuffling procedures in the public sector. He requested for exemption of some categories like the newly hired employees who have completed the recruitment procedures, those eligible for promotion based on administrative regulations, and those who applied through the recruitment system of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). He warned about the accumulation of jobless citizens due to the suspension, especially since a number of graduates are expected to apply for jobs at the end of the current academic year.

He also urged HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem to choose ministers who can help him realize his vision and make the citizens trust him more. He said the premier should listen to experienced officials in ministries and other public institutions rather than the politicians. As an example, he stated that with due respect to the academicians, it is not necessary to appoint a minister of Education and Higher Education from the academic staff at Kuwait University or the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). He pointed out it might be better to choose from the executive and administrative officials at the concerned ministry, because they are fully aware of the shortcomings and are more capable of addressing them. He added he is hop-

ing for the immediate formation of the new government in order to continue the work on the legislative agenda approved by the interim government.

Lastly, Assembly Speaker Ahmed Al-Saadoun greeted Speaker of the Consultative Assembly in Oman Sheikh Khalid bin Helal bin Nasser Al-Maalouli and Chairman of the Council of Oman Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al-Khalili on the fourth anniversary of the ascension of Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to the throne.

License in

Continued from Page 1

Sources explained that all applications submitted and those whose contracts were signed before this date are valid and will not face any problems, as the Sri Lankan labor recruitment offices will continue working on them. Sources reiterated these offices will not process applications according to the new recruitment fees until they clarify their vision in this regard.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) launched the smart ID for the employees of domestic labor recruitment offices and companies through the 'My ID' application in the interest of the public and to develop the work mechanism.

In a press statement, the authority announced that the offices and companies recruiting domestic workers must issue the smart ID for employees registered under their licenses and submit copies to the Licensing Section at the Department for Regulating the Recruitment of Domestic Workers. It stressed the need to instruct the employees to show the ID upon request; indicating that when citizens visit the recruitment offices and companies, they must verify the employees' smart ID and match the contracts and receipts belonging to the offices and companies they are dealing with.

Moreover, the tripartite committee has announced the suspension of 13 domestic labor recruitment offices on the second day of the inspection tour for violating the law and decisions of the Ministry of Commerce.

The committee added this step was taken after the implementation of the ministerial decision stipulating the fees for recruiting domestic workers and the joint statement regarding the commitment to use K-Net devices for the collection of such fees.

ICJ set

Continued from Page 1

The ICJ is not to be confused with the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is also in The Hague, but is a treaty-based institution concerned with war crime cases committed by individuals.

The UN Genocide Convention obliges all States that signed the Convention to not commit genocide and also to prevent and punish it. The treaty defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group". Although the case brought on by South Africa, involves the occupied Palestinian territories, Palestinians have no official role in the proceedings because they are not a United Nations member state.

During the arbitration process, the 15-judge panel at the ICJ is expanded by an additional judge from each side in the case. The Court, which usually adjudicates on border disputes, has increasingly handled cases brought by states accusing others of breaking UN treaty obligations. Both South Africa and Israel are signatories to the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, this gives the ICJ the jurisdiction to rule on disputes over this treaty.

The two-day ICJ session will be open to the public. Millions around the world will certainly follow it. Some lawyers and experts will represent South Africa, a country with first-hand experience of war crimes and apartheid. Hundreds of experts from other countries, such as Chile, Bolivia, Malaysia, Jordan and Turkey will support it. Israel has chosen a British lawyer, Malcolm Shaw, to represent it. He is considered one of the world's leading experts on international law, and teaches a course at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as a guest lecturer every year.

In its 84-page case filing, South Africa says that by killing tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza, causing serious mental and bodily harm to them, and denying them access to essential food, water, medicine, fuel, shelter and other humanitarian assistance, as well as by conducting a sustained bombing campaign that has laid much of the Gaza Strip to waste and forced the evacuation of over 1.9 million residents, Israel has been committing acts of genocide against the Palestinian people.

In response to the case filed against it at the ICJ, Israeli President Isaac Herzog said the ICJ case was "atrocious and preposterous". Israel, he said, makes utmost efforts to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza. He noted that the Israeli offensive was triggered by

the 7 October 2023 cross-border Hamas attacks in which Islamist fighters killed 1,200 people and abducted 240, according to Israeli figures.

"We will be there at the International Court of Justice and will proudly present our case of using self-defense under our most inherent right under international humanitarian law," Herzog said.

At the ICJ hearings scheduled for 11 and 12 January 2024, both South Africa and Israel will have two hours on the two separate days to make their case for or against emergency measures. There will be no witness testimony and there will be no opportunity for cross-examination. The presentation will be mostly legal arguments brought by state officials and their teams of international lawyers.

The interim emergency measures that South Africa requested in its petition is a first step in a case that will take several years to complete, as the Court will not make a final determination on the genocide allegations until a hearing of the case on the merits, which is probably years away. Formalized provisional measures, they are meant as a kind of restraining order to prevent a dispute from getting worse while the court looks at the full case.

This week's hearings are only about possibly granting emergency measures. For provisional measures the court only has to decide if at first glance, or prima facie, it would have jurisdiction and the acts complained of could fall within the scope of the genocide treaty. Judges at the ICJ often grant such measures, which generally consist of asking a state to refrain from any action that could aggravate the legal dispute.

Regardless of the progress of the procedures and the position that the court will take at a later stage, experts confirm that South Africa's move faces challenges that may prevent it from achieving its goals, most notably the absence of an actual mechanism for the implementation of sentences, as well as the adoption of positions in support of Israel by major countries, led by the United States.

During the hearings on 11 and 12 January 2024, South Africa will present its oral argument on the first day from 10am to 1pm, while Israel will present its oral argument on Friday, 12 January from 10am to 1pm. A decision on the provisional measures is expected in the weeks following the hearings. While the ICJ's rulings are final and without appeal, it has no way of enforcing them. A ruling against Israel could hurt the country's international reputation and set legal precedent.

The case, filed by South Africa, sets a precedent as the first at the ICJ relating to the siege on the Gaza Strip, where more than 23,000 people have been killed since October 7, 2024 nearly 10,000 of them children.

The ICJ will play out as a case where Israel, for the first time, stands as a defendant before the world's most important court. The outcome of this case could set a precedent, opening the way for multiple cases in the future, both individually and collectively, for Israel's victims. More importantly, a ruling in favor of South Africa will force the ICC to step in and look into what Israeli soldiers, officers, and politicians have done, or even said, to instigate what much of the rest of the world already defines as genocide.

Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry, served as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the General Budget Committee of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (PCA) and an observer in the 124th Administrative Council of the Court and the Consul at the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the Netherlands during this period from 2013 to 2020.

Houthis launch

Continued from Page 1

The assault happened off the Yemeni port cities of Hodeida and Mokha, according to the private intelligence firm Ambrey. In the Hodeida attack, Ambrey said ships described over radio seeing missiles and drones, with U.S.-allied warships in the area urging "vessels to proceed at maximum speed."

Off Mokha, ships saw missiles fired, a drone in the air and small vessels trailing them, Ambrey said early Wednesday. The British military's United Kingdom Marine Trade Operations also acknowledged the attack off Hodeida.

The U.S. military's Central Command said the "complex attack" launched by the Houthis included bomb-carrying drones, anti-ship cruise missiles and one anti-ship ballistic missile.

It said 18 drones, two cruise missiles and the anti-ship missile were downed by F-18s from the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, as well as by American Arleigh Burke-class destroyers the USS Gravelly, the USS Laboon and the USS Mason, as well as the United Kingdom's HMS Diamond.

No changes in visa procedures for Kuwaitis: Australian envoy

Kelly discusses student visa reforms

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Melissa Kelly said there is no plan to exempt Kuwaitis from entry visa to her country or to change the current visa procedures, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Kelly told the daily that in fiscal 2022/2023, Australia granted 182 student visas to Kuwaitis; while in the first five months of fiscal 2023/2024, 106 student visas were granted to Kuwaitis. She expects to see the continuation of the rising number of Kuwaitis studying in her country.

She explained that the period for completion of transactions varies, indicating a calculator for average execution period is available on the Ministry of Internal Affairs website. She said the current data show that 50 percent of student visa applications (subcategory 500) are completed within 14 days of submitting the application.

She added: "To improve transac-

tion completion times, we encourage applicants to 'verify twice, apply once,' which means ensuring that all required information is completed, that there are no errors, especially in the spelling of names and dates of birth, and that all attachments are included, including translations."



Kelly

Measures Asked if Australia took new measures regarding visas for students and whether these measures apply to Kuwaitis, she pointed out that the reforms announced on Dec 11 last

year were the results of a comprehensive review of the overall immigration program in all visa categories; affirming they apply to international students including Kuwaitis.

She also warned that some education service providers help students to illegally obtain work rights in Australia through the use of a student visa, in addition to incidents of

exploitation of international students. "We are committed to ensuring that the international education program in Australia continues to flourish, and student visas play a role in facilitating this. For this reason, we have introduced reforms to enhance the integrity of the student visa system to ensure that only genuine students receive visas to pursue study opportunities.

"We want to ensure that real students have a positive experience in Australia, through the highest standards of quality, safety and integrity in our educational system. The students will still be able to choose whether they use their qualifications to return to their countries, join the global workforce or apply their skills to a career in Australia," she clarified.

She also stated that the reforms make it easier for graduates to remain in Australia to work in areas requiring their skills. She then expressed her country's appreciation for international students, considering it benefits from the diverse skills and ideas that they bring to the Australian society.

Major events in Kuwait during 2023

Sports

Feb 7: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) team won a silver in bronze medal in the athletics competitions of the Qatar-hosted GCC Universities tournament.

Feb 8: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) team won five medals - two silver and three bronze, in the swimming competitions of the Ninth Sports Tournament for GCC Universities and Higher Educational Institutes, held in Qatar.

Feb 9: Kuwait International Camel Racing Championship culminated with Qatari camel crowned with golden sword.

Feb 9: The Arab Federation of Sports Pioneers' Executive Committee approved Kuwait's membership in the federation, represented by the President of the Kuwaiti Athletes Association, Nawaf Al-Bughaili.

Feb 12: The second sport games tournament for higher education launched.

Feb 13: Kuwait's national team crowned champion of Arab police practical shooting championship.

Feb 14: Kuwait women's basketball team won the second place in Doha-hosted Arab championship.

Feb 16: The international championship for Arab Egyptian horses was launched as part of Kuwaiti horses' festival with the participation of 211 horses.

Feb 16: The 13th Kuwait international sailing championship, organized by Kuwait Sea Sport Club (KSSC), kicked off with the participation of 11 teams.

Feb 19: Meshari Al-Dhefiri, of Kuwait, led the second round of the 2023 Qatar International Rally, FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC 2).

Feb 21: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah annual international shooting championship launched with the participation of 400 shooters.

Feb 24: Kuwait's national equestrian team made its first appearance at the FEI Endurance World Championships (EWC) held in Abu Dhabi.

Feb 25: Kuwaiti Mohammed Burebaye won first place in the Pro competitions of the Qatar international aquabike championship.

Feb 25: Rashed Al-Dawas of Kuwait won first place in the GB2 competitions of the Qatar international aquabike championship.

Feb 27: The National day modern pentathlon championship launched for women and men with the participation of more than 120 players.

March 1: The steed, Adham, was crowned champion of His Highness the Crown Prince equestrian race championship.

March 11: Sports for all conference, organized by the sports public authority, kicked off under the sponsorship of information minister and state minister for youth affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

March 12: Activities of Kuwait-hosted Sports for All festival launched with the participation of 15 state delegations.

March 14: The Executive office of Arab Sports for All Federation recommended Kuwaiti Hamed Al-Hazeem to be federation's first vice-president.

March 15: The State of Kuwait candidate, former chairperson of the local Athletics Federation, Sayyar Al-Enezi, has been elected without contestation as chairperson of the West Asian Athletics Association for the term (2023-27).

March 17: Kuwait Club has been crowned champion of the 39th edition of the Gulf Clubs Men's Handball Championship.

March 19: Kuwaiti rally champion Meshari Al-Dhafeeri won first place in the light vehicle category of Qatar's international baja rally.

March 26: Kuwait won the 2023 International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) World Championship Division IV's bronze, held in Mongolia.

March 27: Al-Qadisiya sporting club crowned champion of Zain's football club.

April 3: Kuwait SC won Kuwait Handball Association's (KHA) premier league for the 11th time in a row and 13th in the club's history, beating Burgran SC 41-31.

April 4: Kuwait hosted the first Arab ice hockey championship.

April 8: Kuwait SC won Kuwait Volleyball Association's (KVA) premier league after beating Qadisia SC 3-2.

April 9: Kuwait SC won the futsal won the local Cup for the third time in its history after beating Kazma SC 2-1.

April 15: Al-Fatat girls SC won the national basketball league for third consecutive time after beating Salwa Al-Sabah SC 76-52.

April 17: Kuwait SC won KVA Cup after beating Qadisia SC with three clean sets.

April 17: Kuwait national Karate team won the world league for the group Kata, in the event held in Canada.

April 27: Fajr Mandani registered a new personal record of 40.81 meters and came fourth in the hammer throw at the West Asia Championship in Qatar.

April 27: Obaid Al-Enezi maintained his presidency of the Asian Judo federation for a fifth term after he was nominated by the General Assembly members.

April 29: Kuwait athletics team won 19 medals, of them three gold, in the West Asia Championship in Qatar.

May 5: Kuwait national futsal team qualified for the World Cup after beating Kyrgyzstan 6-3.

May 5: Kuwait hosted the first Abu Dhabi Combat Club's (ADCC) jujitsu championship, and Kuwaiti fighters won 14 gold medals.

May 6: Abdulmohsen Al-Fozan won the international triathlon junior championship in Bahrain.

May 7: Kuwait figure skating team won seven medals - three gold and four silver - at an international championship in the UAE.

May 8: Kuwait SC won the KHA Cup after beating Burgran SC 31-23.

May 9: Kuwait SC won the Amir football Cup for the 16th time in the club's history after beating Kazma SC 3-0.

May 9: Arab ice hockey federation nominated president of Kuwait winter games club Fuhabi Al-Ajmi as chairman for a four-year term.

May 11: Mai Al-Bader won its first medal in the world's free diving pool championship, bagging a bronze in the

stated event.

May 12: Kuwait SC won the national futsal league after beating Kazma SC 5-4.

May 12: Kuwait national wheelchair basketball team qualified for the Asian games after beating Hong Kong 52-45.

May 15: Kuwait SC won the West Asia Basketball Super Cup for the Gulf region after beating Manama of Bahrain 95-85.

May 19: Kuwait SC won Zain premier football league for the 18th time in the club's history after beating Arabi SC 2-0.

May 21: Kuwait national team won three gold medals and two silver in five categories of the world jet ski championship in Poland.

May 22: Kuwait national triathlon team bagged nine medals: seven gold and two silver, at Sharm El-Sheikh international championship.

May 23: Kuwait SC won Kuwait Basket Association's (KBA) Cup for the seventh time in a row and 16th in the club's history after beating rival Qadisia SC 97-77.

May 28: Kuwait SC beat Kazma SC 8-1 to win Zain football league.

May 31: Kuwait SC won KBA League after beating Kazma SC 104-85.

June 3: Kuwait national table tennis team won two gold and three bronze medals in the Jordan's international championship for people with disabilities.

June 14: Kuwait Television sport channel won right to show remaining matches of football league in Argentina in the Middle East region.

June 21: Yaqoub Al-Yoha won the 110 meters hurdles race in the Arab athletics championship in Marrakech, Morocco.

June 24: Essa Al-Zankawi won the discus throw event at the Arab Athletics Championship.

June 25: Abdulaziz Al-Raish came second and won silver medal in the 100m junior swimming championship for the masters for the final category.

June 25: Kuwait special Olympic team won seven gold, 10 silver and four bronze medals at the summer special Olympics in Berlin, Germany.

June 26: Mansour Al-Mansour won the 50m underwater event at the junior swimming championship for the masters.

July 7: The Kuwaiti teams participating in the Emirates National Championship for Professional Jiu Jitsu in Abu Dhabi won nine various medals five gold, three silver and one bronze.

July 8: Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad Al-Sabah won presidency of the Olympic Council of Asia after obtaining 24 votes compared to 20 votes for Hussein Al-Musallam.

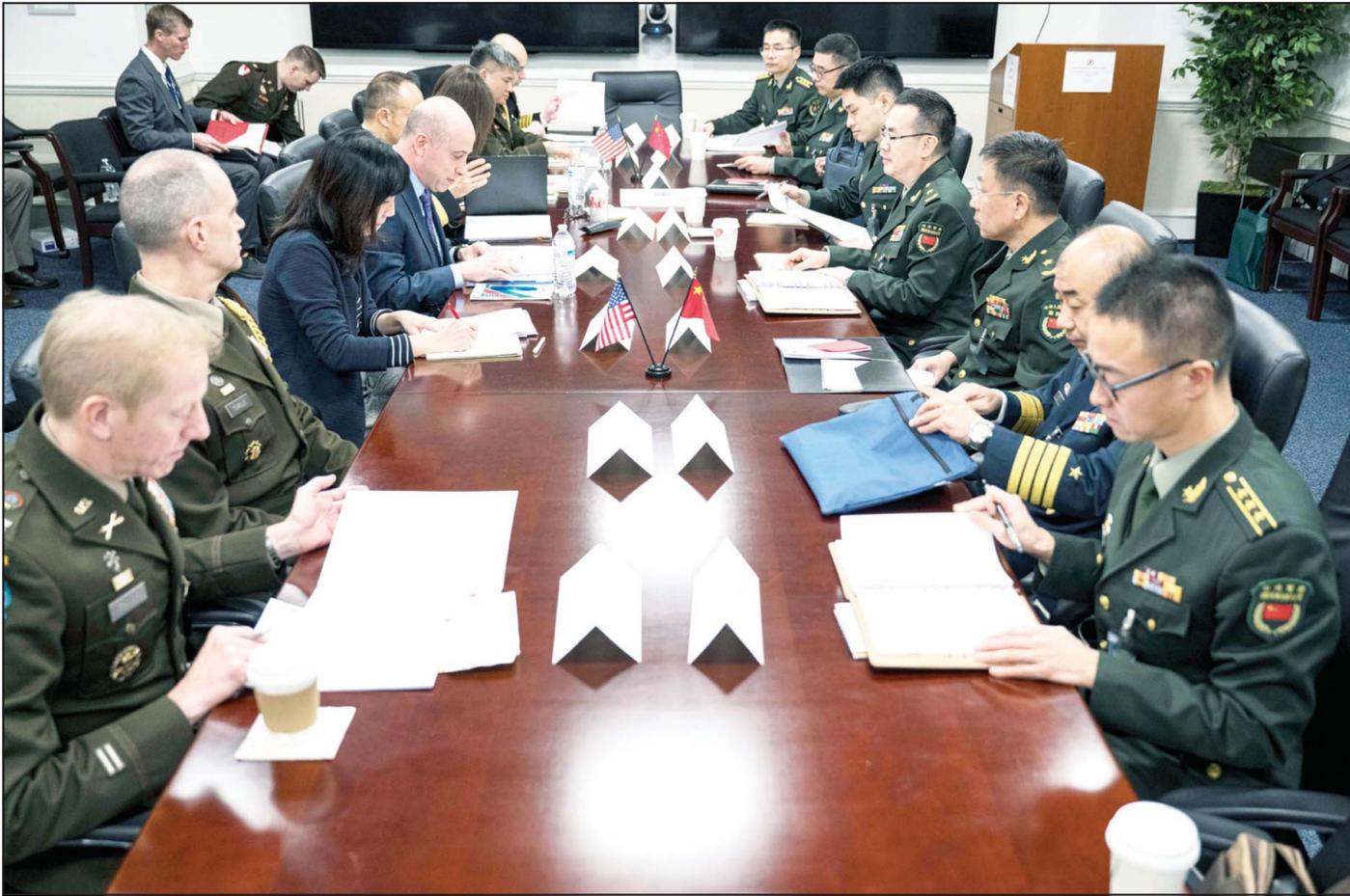
July 11: The Asian Athletics Association approved the recommendation of Kuwaiti Sayyar Al-Enezi for the position of deputy for the period (2023-27).

July 12: The Kuwaiti team participating in the Arab Games held in Algeria two gold medals four silver, and five bronze.

July 23: Kuwaiti rally racer Meshari Al-Dhafeeri won first place in the overall standings for the T3 category in the fourth round of the World Desert Rally Championship.

To be continued

World News Roundup



In this photo proved by the Defense Department, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for China, Taiwan and Mongolia Michael Chase hosts delegates from China for the annual U.S.-PRC Defense Policy Coordination Talks at the Pentagon, on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024. U.S. and Chinese military officers have resumed talks that were frozen after former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in 2022. It's a development U.S. officials have said is key to keeping the growing competition between the two great powers from turning into direct conflict. (AP)

US, Chinese military officers resume talks

U.S. and Chinese military officers have resumed talks that were frozen after former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in the summer of 2022, a development U.S. officials have said is key to keeping the growing competition between the two great powers from turning into direct conflict.

During the deputy-level talks at the Pentagon, the two parties discussed setting future meetings between their military officers, including potentially scheduling a future meeting

between Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and newly appointed Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun.

Austin is currently hospitalized due to complications from prostate cancer treatment. He had not been scheduled to attend Tuesday's meeting. Dong is a former naval commander who was appointed in late December after his predecessor, Li Shangfu, was removed from office. (AP)

Europe

Solidarity in action
Zelensky visits
Baltic countries

VILNIUS, Lithuania, Jan 10, (AP): Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelensky** began a visit Wednesday to the Baltic countries, arriving in Lithuania as his country seeks to bolster its air defenses amid Russia's intensified missile and drone onslaughts in the 22-month-old war.

The focus of his two-day trip to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Zelensky said on his official Telegram channel, will be security concerns, Ukraine's hopes to join the European Union and NATO, and building partnerships in drone production and electronic warfare capacities.

Zelensky thanked Lithuania for its military assistance and goodwill. He was expected in Estonia and Latvia on Thursday.

"We know how tiring this long-running war is, and we are interested in Ukraine's complete victory in it as soon as possible," Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda told reporters.

The small countries are among Ukraine's staunchest political, financial and military supporters, and some in the Baltics worry that they could be Moscow's next target.

They have pushed Kyiv's other Western allies to provide increasingly sophisticated weapons since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The three countries were seized and annexed by Josef Stalin during World War II before regaining independence with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. They joined NATO in 2004, placing themselves under the military protection of the U.S. and its Western allies.

"Democratic countries have done a lot to help Ukraine, but we need to do more together so that Ukraine wins and the aggressor loses," Estonian President Alar Karis said in a statement.

"Then there is the hope that this will remain the last military aggression in Europe, where someone wants to dictate to their neighbor with missiles, drones and cannons what political choices can be made," he said.



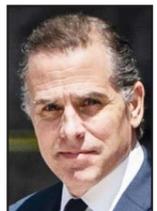
Zelensky

America

Mayorkas in crosshairs

House GOP to charge
Biden with contempt

WASHINGTON, Jan 10, (AP): Republicans are taking the first step toward holding **Hunter Biden** in contempt of Congress after he defied a congressional subpoena, an extraordinary step from a bitterly contested oversight process that seems likely to result in the U.S. House recommending criminal charges against a member of President Joe Biden's family.



Biden

The House Oversight and Judiciary committees will each vote Wednesday on contempt resolutions against Hunter Biden as Republicans move into the final stages of their impeachment inquiry into Joe Biden. The inquiry, which began in September, has so far failed to uncover evidence directly implicating the president in wrongdoing.

If the committees approve the contempt resolutions as expected, they would go to the full House for consideration. And if the House votes to hold Hunter Biden in contempt, it will be up to the Department of Justice to decide whether to prosecute.

The contempt referral would be yet another headache for federal prosecutors already under heavy scrutiny for their handling of charges against Hunter Biden related to his taxes and gun use.

Shelving the contempt of Congress charges would likely further stoke conservative criticism that the Justice Department is politicized - especially given that two one-time advisers to former President Donald Trump were prosecuted for contempt of Congress by the Biden administration. But prosecuting contempt cases can be difficult.

Hunter Biden has defended his lack of compliance with the GOP-issued subpoena, which ordered him to appear for closed-door testimony in mid-December. Biden and his attorneys said information from private interviews can be selectively leaked and manipulated by House Republicans and insisted that he would only testify in public.

"It's clear the Republican chairmen aren't interested in getting the facts or they would allow Hunter to testify publicly," Hunter Biden's attorney, Abbe Lowell, said in a statement Friday. "Instead, House Republicans continue to play politics by seeking an unprecedented contempt motion against someone who has from the first request offered to answer all their proper questions."

He added, "What are they afraid of?" Further angering Republicans, Hunter Biden did come to the Capitol on the day specified by the subpoena - but not to testify. Instead, he stood behind microphones outside the U.S. Capitol complex - a couple hundred feet away from the awaiting GOP investigators - and delivered a rare public statement defending his business affairs and castigating the years-long investigations into him and his family.

Meanwhile, Marching ahead with impeachment plans, House Republicans have set their sights on Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who they intend to prove is "derelict in his duty" over handling the surge of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Speaker Mike Johnson gave his nod to Wednesday's hearing at the Homeland Security Committee, which launches Mayorkas' impeachment proceedings at a peculiar political moment: On one side of the Capitol, a bipartisan group of senators has been engaged in almost daily negotiations with Mayorkas over a landmark border security package. On the other, the House wants to remove him from office.



This screen grab of live video from the TC Television network shows a masked, armed person standing over journalists during a live broadcast, in Guayaquil, Ecuador, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024. The country has seen a series of attacks after the government imposed a state of emergency in the wake of the apparent escape of a powerful gang leader from prison. (AP)

Africa

Tshisekedi elected prez: Congo's constitutional court on Tuesday upheld the results of last month's election that declared President **Felix Tshisekedi** the winner, rejecting a petition by an opposition candidate to annul the vote.

"Mr. Tshisekedi Tshilombo Felix Antoine has been elected president of (Congo) by a majority of votes cast," said Judge Kamuleta Badibanga Dieudonne, president of the constitutional court.

The court called a petition by opposition candidate Theodore Ngoy to redo the vote unfounded. Ngoy, who finished with less than 1% of the vote, was the only candidate to file an appeal.

Tshisekedi will be sworn in at the end of January. About 18 million people cast ballots in the election, which had a turnout of more than a 40%, according to the election commission.

Tshisekedi won reelection with more than 70% of the vote as opposition candidates and their supporters questioned the validity of the results.

The vote was mired with logistical problems. Many polling stations were late in opening or didn't open at all. Some lacked materials, and many voter cards had smudged ink that made them illegible. (AP)

Niger releases Bazoum's son: Niger's military tribunal on Tuesday ordered the provincial release from house arrest of ousted president **Mohamed Bazoum's** son, who has been detained at the presidential palace alongside his family since a military coup last July.

Mohamed Bazoum Salem has been granted provincial release after six months of house arrest, according to a court statement in the capital Niamey.

The Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) has repeatedly condemned the July 26 coup, calling for the release of Bazoum and the restoration of democratic rule. (KUNA)

Kenyan court warns prosecutors: A Kenyan court warned prosecutors Tuesday it will release under its own terms a pastor and others accused of being behind the deaths of 429 people believed to be his cult followers if they aren't charged within two weeks.

For months since the arrests last April, prosecutors have asked the court for permission to keep holding Paul Mackenzie

Politics

Urgency could spark fireworks

DeSantis, Haley face off in Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa, Jan 10, (AP): Just two Republican presidential candidates, former U.N. Ambassador **Nikki Haley** and Florida Gov. **Ron DeSantis**, will meet on the debate stage Wednesday night. With just five days before the Iowa caucuses, the debate may be their last, best chance to change the trajectory of the race before voting begins.

The big front-runner, Donald Trump, was the only other candidate to meet the 10% polling threshold to participate. But as he has six times before, the Republican former president is declining to show up given his overwhelming lead in the polls.

Here's what we're watching heading into the 9 p.m. EST event that will be hosted by CNN:

And then there were two. In style, if not substance, Wednesday's one-on-one debate may offer the closest thing to a general election debate preview that we've seen. Only Haley and DeSantis will be on stage. There is no place to hide and no other candidates to get in the way.

Some of the most memorable moments in past debates have featured Haley feuding with Vivek Ramaswamy. That's all in the past, given that Ramaswamy didn't meet the polling threshold this time. DeSantis' allies are also quick to note that Chris Christie won't be there either to defend Haley, as he did in the last debate.

The same challenges apply to DeSantis, however. The Florida governor has improved as a presidential candidate, but he's not particularly natural on stage. That's notable because body language and tone may end up playing a more prominent role in this meeting given that both will be on camera almost constantly.

And there is an added dynamic with a man and woman on stage. Who could forget the image of Trump looming behind Hillary Clinton in a 2016 general election debate?

Iowa Republicans will vote in less than a week. Both candidates are fighting with everything they've got to emerge as the clear alternative to Trump. And to do that, they need momentum coming out of the debate to score a strong second-place finish in Monday's caucuses.

and 28 others while they look into the case that shocked Kenyans with the discovery of mass graves and allegations of starvation and strangulation.



Tshisekedi



Bazoum

DeSantis is especially eager to finish no worse than second given that he has practically lived in Iowa for months and moved his national campaign headquarters here. And he has actually been predicting an outright victory over Trump.

All that urgency will likely lead to fireworks on the debate stage.

We're told that Haley may want to focus more on Trump than DeSantis, but DeSantis won't make that easy. Given that the survival of his campaign is at stake, he'll aim for deep cuts. Haley has had some of her best moments in past debates when things get heated - at least with Ramaswamy - and her team insists she won't be bullied.

That could make it hard for CNN moderators Jake Tapper and Dana Bash to control the action Wednesday night.

Haley has proven to be a strong debater. But she has stumbled in recent days on the campaign trail as pressure - and attention - builds heading into the voting phase of the campaign.

Her gaffes give DeSantis obvious lines of attack. And he's likely to use them aggressively.

Haley suffered one of her first significant missteps when she declined to cite slavery as a cause of the Civil War at a recent New Hampshire campaign stop. She later drew criticism for talking about her Black friends at a CNN town hall. While neither is likely a serious problem with Iowa's overwhelmingly white Republican electorate, she definitely irked Iowa voters by saying that New Hampshire, which hosts its presidential primary on Jan. 23, is going to "correct" Iowa's vote.

DeSantis featured the gaffe in one of his closing TV ads, and it's become a standard line in his stump speech. Haley laughed it off as a joke, but she may need a better answer in the debate.

DeSantis, of course, has had his share of gaffes, although his worst came during the summer and fall. Did anybody forget when he called Russia's invasion of Ukraine a "territorial dispute" or defended Florida's new public school curriculum which highlights the benefits of slavery?

But Shanzu Senior Principal Magistrate Yusuf Shikanda noted that the suspects had been detained for 117 days since the last application for an extension and it was enough time to have completed investigations.

The defense has argued that the constitutional rights for bail for Mackenzie and the others were being violated since they haven't been charged.

The magistrate said the suspects had been detained without trial for longer than anyone in Kenya since the adoption of the country's 2010 constitution that outlawed detention without trial.

Mackenzie is serving a separate one-year prison sentence after being found guilty of operating a film studio and producing films without a valid license. (AP)

Navalny isolated: Russian opposition leader **Alexei Navalny** said Tuesday that officials at the Arctic penal colony where he is serving a 19-year sentence have him in a tiny punishment cell over a minor infraction, the latest step designed to ramp up pressure on President Vladimir Putin's fiercest political foe.

Navalny said in a social media statement relayed from behind bars that prison officials accused him of refusing to "introduce himself in line with protocol" and ordered him to serve seven days in a punishment cell.

"The thought that Putin will be satisfied with sticking me into a barracks in the far north and will stop torturing me in the punishment confinement was not only cowardly, but naive as well," he said in his usual sardonic manner.

Navalny, 47, is jailed on charges of extremism. He had been imprisoned in the Vladimir region of central Russia, about 230 kilometers (140 miles) east of Moscow but was transferred last month to a "special regime" penal colony - the highest security level of prisons in Russia - above the Arctic Circle.

His allies decried the transfer to a colony in the town of Kharp, in the Yamalo-Nenets region about 1,900 kilometers (1,200 miles) northeast of Moscow, as yet another attempt to force Navalny into silence. (AP)

Convicted politicians nabbed: Polish police on Tuesday arrested two politicians convicted of abuse of power who had taken refuge for hours in the palace of President Andrzej Duda, in a dramatic escalation of a standoff between the new and previous governments.

Duda welcomed the members of the former ruling party into the presidential palace as police went to their homes to arrest them. Polish media reported the men were arrested inside the palace. Warsaw police gave no details, saying only that the arrest was "in accordance with the court order."

The events escalated a dispute between the new government, led by Prime Minister Donald Tusk, and the conservative Law and Justice party that governed Poland for eight years until last month following its defeat in a general election in October.

Duda is closely aligned with Law and Justice and is making it clear that he will oppose Tusk's agenda. Duda's second and final term runs until mid-2025. (AP)

Migrants killed in Greece: Two migrants were killed and 30 were rescued in Greece Wednesday after a dinghy crashed into rocks in high winds on the island of Lesbos, local authorities said.

The incident occurred near the resort town of Thermi on the east of the island, facing the nearby coast of Turkey.

Authorities said many of those rescued were found in a remote area on land near the accident site, apparently trying to make their own way to the nearest town. A search was also launched at sea but it remained unclear whether others were missing.

Strong winds disrupted ferry traffic in many parts of Greece Wednesday.

Lesbos remains a transit point for illegal migration into the European Union despite rigorous patrolling by the Greek coast guard and the EU border protection agency Frontex. (AP)

Koreas

Assailant reveals motive

South Korea principal enemy, says Jong Un

SEOUL, Jan 10, (AP) — North Korean leader **Kim Jong Un** has called South Korea “our principal enemy” and threatened to annihilate it if provoked, as he escalates his inflammatory rhetoric in an election year in South Korea and the U.S.

The White House meanwhile said it has evidence that Russia had fired at Ukraine additional ballistic missiles provided by North Korea. The U.S., South Korea and their partners issued a statement Wednesday condemning both North Korea and Russia over the missile transfer.

Experts say Kim will likely further raise animosities by test-firing more missiles to try to raise stakes in the standoff with his rivals and influence the results of South Korea's parliamentary elections in April and the U.S. presidential election in November.

During tours of munitions factories this week, Kim said it's time to define South Korea “as a state most hostile” toward North Korea because of its long-running attempts to topple the North's socialist system. He said North Korea must bolster its nuclear war deterrent, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported Wednesday.

If South Korea dares to use its military force against North Korea, Kim said, “We will have no hesitation in annihilating (South Korea) by mobilizing all means and forces in our hands,” according to KCNA.

He has made similar threats recently, and analysts say Kim likely hopes that South Korea's liberal opposition, which is seeking reconciliation with North Korea, would win the April elections. Kim apparently also believes he can win U.S. concessions if former President Donald Trump returns to the White House, analysts said. Kim and Trump met three times as part of high-stakes nuclear diplomacy in 2018-19.

There are concerns that North Korean provocations could trigger limited clashes between the two Koreas along their heavily armed border.

Last Friday, North Korea fired artillery shells near the disputed western sea boundary with South Korea, prompting South Korea to stage its own firing drills in the same area. South Korea accused North Korea of continuing with firing drills in the area over the weekend.

Three bloody naval skirmishes between the Koreas have occurred along the disputed sea boundary since 1999, and two attacks blamed on North Korea killed 50 South Koreans in the area in 2010.

Kim's visit to the munitions factories could also be related to North Korea's reported supply of conventional arms to Russia in return for sophisticated Russian weapons technologies. The factories could include a missile-producing facility as KCNA said they carried out the plan for deploying new weapons to major missile units. Photos released by North Korea showed missile launch vehicles.

U.S. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Tuesday that the North Korea-supplied missiles were fired on the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv on Jan. 6. The White House last week declassified U.S. intelligence determinations that the Russians fired North Korea-provided missiles on Ukraine on Jan. 2 and Dec. 30.

Kirby said that the U.S. would raise the matter at Wednesday's U.N. Security Council meeting and underscored that the transfer of ballistic missiles from North Korea “directly violates” multiple U.N. resolutions. Russia, a permanent member of the U.N. council, supported those resolutions.

In a joint statement, the top diplomats of 48 countries including South Korea, the U.S. and Japan and the European Union said they “condemn in the strongest possible terms” North Korea's missile exports and Russia's use of those weapons against Ukraine.

Lee's assailant reveals motive: The man accused of stabbing South Korean opposition leader Lee Jae-myung in the neck told investigators that he wanted to kill him to prevent him from becoming the country's president, police said Wednesday.

Lee was released Wednesday from the hospital after eight days of treatment, including surgery.

Police said they believe the suspect acted alone when he attacked Lee, 59, in the southeastern city of Busan on Jan. 2, leaving him bleeding and slumping on the ground.

During questioning, the suspect said he had determined to kill Lee to prevent him from running for South Korea's presidency, Busan police chief Woo Cheol-Mun told a televised briefing. Woo said the suspect said he was unsatisfied with what he believes were authorities' failures to punish Lee over his corruption allegations.

Woo said the suspect left a eight-page note that shows similar motives for his attack. Woo said the suspect bought an outdoor knife last April and followed Lee on five events since June.

“It's analyzed that the suspect's subjective political belief led to the extreme crime,” Woo said.

During police questioning, the suspect had no defense lawyer, according to Busan police.

Police handed over the suspect to prosecutors, who will determine whether to indict him and send him to a trial. If he's indicted but still has no lawyer, a court will appoint one. A Busan court earlier approved an arrest warrant for him on alleged attempted murder.

“I caused concerns. I'm sorry,” the suspect, who was not identified, said in brief comments to reporters at the Busan police station. Asked by a reporter whether he plotted the attack alone, he said, “Yes. How could I plan this with someone else?”

Democratic Party officials confirmed the suspect became a member last year. The ruling People Power Party said he is currently not their member but media reports said the man was previously affiliated with the party's predecessor.

Earlier Wednesday, Lee expressed hopes for an end of “politics of hatred” when he left Seoul National University Hospital.

“Our respected and dear citizens, I feel sorry for causing concerns for you and I'd like to say thank you. Our people saved me,” Lee said, as his supporters shouted his name.

Lee said he hopes the attack will serve as a chance “to end politics of hatred and politics of confrontation and return to politics of mutual respect and co-existence.”

Lee, from the Democratic Party, is a tough-speaking liberal who narrowly lost the 2022 presidential election to President Yoon Suk Yeol. Their closely fought race and post-election political bickering have intensified South Korea's already-toxic conservative-liberal divide.



A reclamation work is resumed at a construction site off Henoko in Nago, Okinawa prefecture, southern Japan, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024. Inset: People stage a protest near a gate of the Camp Schwab in Henoko, Nago, Okinawa prefecture, southern Japan, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024.

Japan resumes landfill work at new US military site on Okinawa despite local opposition

Japanese construction workers on Wednesday resumed landfill work at the new site of the U.S. military base on Okinawa despite protests by the island's residents that the move tramples on their rights and raises environmental concerns.

The planned relocation site for the base, on Okinawa's eastern coast, has been at the center of a dispute between the government in Tokyo and the local authorities at a time of the island's growing strategic importance.

Okinawa is becoming key for the Japan-U.S.

military alliance in the face of growing tensions with China while Japan also rapidly seeks to build up its military in the southwestern region.

Three weeks ago, the Fukuoka High Court's Naha branch ordered Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki to approve the central government's modified landfill plan, and allowed the Land and Transport Ministry to order the work to resume by overriding the governor's disapproval.

On a barge brought to the location on Wednesday, a pair of loader machines scooped up mounds

of rock and gravel and dumped them into the sea as part of reclamation needed to reinforce the extremely soft seabed at the site planned for U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

Tamaki, who has appealed the order to the Supreme Court, said the court ruling was unjust and goes against the will of the residents. Under Japanese law, construction can proceed while the court decision is pending. He called the resumption of the landfill work “extremely regrettable.” (AP)

Japan

'Most vulnerable can be overlooked'

Deaths in shelters add to quake toll

TOKYO, Jan 10, (AP) — The 7.6 magnitude earthquake that hit the western coastline of Japan on New Year's has killed 206 people as of Wednesday. Eight of the deaths were at evacuation centers, where rescued people died from injuries and sickness.

Such deaths weren't directly caused by the quakes, fires and mudslides. They happened in alleged safety.

“The pressures and stress of living in a place you aren't used to lead to such deaths,” said Shigeru Nishimori, a disaster official in Ishikawa prefecture, the hardest-hit region.

Some 26,000 people whose homes were destroyed or deemed unsafe are staying at schools and other makeshift facilities. Even minor rain and snow can set off landslides where the ground is loose from the more than 1,000 aftershocks that rattled the region for more than a week. Half-collapsed homes might flatten.

Shinichi Kuriyama, director at the International Research Institute of Disaster Science, who has studied the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster that hit northeastern Japan in 2011, warned that the chances for death double among populations undergoing a disaster.

He said the number of deaths in Ishikawa evacuation centers surprised him.

“I'm really shocked,” he said. “Communication is key and it appears to be sorely lacking.”

Kuriyama said the most vulnerable can be overlooked, missing food that's being distributed, for instance, because they are unaware or can't reach it. He added that Japanese tend to “suffer in silence,” which can make things worse.

Deaths from the New Year's temblor centered on Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa have climbed daily, as rescue teams pull more bodies from the rubble. Of the deaths, 91 were in Suzu city, 83 in Wajima and 20 in Anamizu, with the rest in smaller numbers among four other towns. The number of missing people declined in recent days and now stands at 52.

Those injured totaled 567, and 1,814 homes were destroyed or seriously damaged, according to Ishikawa officials. More than 14,000 homes were without electricity, and nearly 59,000 homes had no running water.

A tsunami reaching as high as about 3 meters (10 feet) spewed into coastal homes after last week's biggest quake. A fire destroyed part of Wajima city. A search began Tuesday into the remains of the fire for bodies.

Authorities warned about the raised risk of infectious diseases

breaking out among people crammed into shelters. Food and drinking water supplies were short, especially initially.

People slept on cold floors, some without blankets, amid dropping temperatures and harsh winds. Sheets were hung for partitions to provide privacy and in an effort to curtail the spread of disease.

A week after the disaster hit Ishikawa, camping tents were set up at a big hall to accommodate 500 people - a change that could prevent further post-disaster deaths. People who are pregnant, sick or old get priority for the revamped accommodations.

Soon, they'll be able to move to the 110 hotels and inns that volunteered to accept 3,000 people from the quake-damaged region. Nearby prefectures were also offering to open up their hotels.

With schools shuttered, people worried about the children, although some classes were moved to other campuses.

As criticism grew about the government's disaster response, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's administration earmarked 4.7 billion yen (\$33 million) for the disaster to provide food, water, blankets, milk and clothing. The spending was expected to grow.



Ko Wen-je, Taiwan People's Party (TPP) presidential candidate, offers incense at a temple in New Taipei City, Taiwan, on Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024. Taiwan's elections for president and the 113-member legislature will take place Saturday under intense pressure from China, which makes the outcome important to much of the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to the U.S. (AP)



Tobgay



Kakar

Subcontinent

Bhutan's PDP wins election: The People's Democratic Party won the most seats in Bhutan's parliamentary elections Tuesday and will form the new government as residents hope politicians make good on promises to fix the economic crisis in the Himalayan nation.

Latest figures from the Bhutan Broadcasting Service, a national broadcaster, showed the PDP had won 30 of the 47 National Assembly seats to return to power, and the Bhutan Tendrel Party had secured 17.

It was the country's fourth general elections since its transformation from a traditional monarchy to a parliamentary form of government in 2008.

The Election Commission of Bhutan will make its final declaration Wednesday.

Candidates on Tuesday's ballot represented by the PDP of former Prime Minister **Tshering Tobgay** and the BTP led by former civil servant Pema Chewang. A primary round of voting in November eliminated three other parties, including the ruling center-left Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa party.

Bhutan is located between China and India, with both neighbors vying for influence in the landlocked nation of around 800,000 people.

The severe economic crisis played a major role in campaigning. According to the World Bank, Bhutan's economy grew at a rate of 1.7% over the past five years. With unemployment a chronic problem, an exodus of young people in search of higher education and jobs abroad is undermining the country's economic potential.

In a bid to overcome the economic challenges, Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck announced in December plans for a megacity in Gelephu, a town on the border with the northeastern Indian state of Assam, that will have zero-carbon indus-

tries with foreign investment.(AP)

Pak's PM calls for global unity: Pakistan's prime minister on Wednesday called for unified efforts to tackle global infectious diseases like COVID-19 and emergencies caused by climate change, nearly 1 1/2-year after devastating floods killed 1,700 people in his nation.

Representatives from 70 countries, the World Health Organization, and other international organizations attended a two-day summit. It comes as reports show that millions of people who lost their homes in

the floods were still living in tents for the second consecutive harsh winter.

The 2022 unprecedented flooding, which started in mid-June that year and which experts attribute in part to climate change, at one point left a third of Pakistan submerged.

Caretaker Prime Minister **Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar** told the meeting in Islamabad that “no state in the world, no matter how powerful it is, can meet such challenges” alone.

Kakar said Pakistan is the eighth most vulnerable country to the impacted by climate change. He said while the developed world has systems in place to timely respond to health emergencies, a similar setup

is lacking in the developing world.

Dozens of countries and international institutions at an international conference in Geneva in January 2023 pledged more than \$9 billion to help Pakistan recover and rebuild from the summer floods.

According to the U.K.-based Islamic Relief charity, the progress has been far too slow, with only an estimated 5% of damaged and destroyed homes fully rebuilt. It said many rural flood survivors feel abandoned, with a worsening mental health crisis in some communities.

The donor conference “was widely seen as a success, but most of the money pledged has not yet reached people on the ground,” the group said. It said millions were still living in tents or basic shelters, without access to decent livelihoods or basic services. (AP)

Ex-PM Khan and wife indicted: A Pakistani court on Tuesday indicted imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife on graft charges of retaining state gifts from when Khan was in power, including jewelry from Saudi Arabia's government, authorities said.

The latest indictment was another blow to Khan and his political party ahead of parliamentary elections on Feb. 8. Officials said Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, pleaded not guilty when the charges were read out at a court at the prison in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

Khan's legal team confirmed the indictment of Khan and his wife in the case filed by the National Accountability Bureau. Khan was ousted from power in a no-confidence vote in Parliament in April 2022. The 71-year-old former cricketer, Pakistan's most popular opposition figure, is serving time on a corruption conviction and has multiple other legal cases hanging over him. (AP)



Britain's Princess Anne, center, greets after arriving at the Colombo International Airport in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024. (AP)

Kuwait oil drops

The Kuwaiti oil price fell 99 cents to reach USD 78.96 a barrel in trading on Tuesday, compared to USD 79.95 the day earlier, announced Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday. Comparatively, in international markets, the Brent crude futures rose USD 1.47 to USD 77.59 a barrel, and U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures by USD 1.47 to USD 72.24. (KUNA)

USD rises

The exchange rate of the US dollar on Wednesday rose by 0.05 percent to KD 0.307, while the Euro dropped by 0.16 percent to KD 0.335, compared to Tuesday's rates. The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said in its daily bulletin that the Sterling Pound by 0.32 percent to KD 0.390, the Swiss Franc by 0.52 percent to KD 0.360 and the Japanese Yen dropped by 0.75 to KD 0.002. Currency rates declared by the CBK reflect average rates and not actual trades. (KUNA)

Kuwait's oil exports to Japan declined in Nov

In November 2023, Kuwait's oil exports to Japan reached around 7 million barrels, compared to 7.26 million barrels in November 2022, marking a decrease of 3.58%, reports Al-Seyassah daily. Official data from the Japanese government revealed a 0.95% increase in Japan's crude oil imports from five Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain), with a rise of 693 thousand barrels during November 2023.

Among the Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia ranked as the largest oil supplier to Japan, with oil imports totaling 33.23 million barrels in November 2023, representing 42.7% of the total imports for the month. The UAE secured the second position with oil exports of 29.23 million barrels, constituting 37.6% of Japan's total imports in November 2023, showing a decline of 9.02% compared to November 2022. Kuwait ranked third in terms of oil ex-

ports to Japan, contributing around 7 million barrels or 7% of total imports. The exported quantity decreased by 3.58% compared to November 2022. Qatar followed in fourth place, exporting 3.61 million barrels, making up 4.7% of total Japanese imports, representing a 7.19% decline from the previous year. (KUNA) Bahrain did not export oil to Japan in November 2023, while it had exported 967 thousand barrels in the same month in 2022. (KUNA)

Market Movements 10-01-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts		
UAE	-	DFM +0.30	4,130.02	PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100 -0.23	63,912.85
JAPAN	-	Nikkei +2.01	34,441.72	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEi -1.09	6,546.11
				SAUDI	-	Tadawul -0.50	12,136.90
				EGYPT	-	EGX 30 -0.48	25,466.75

Business

Boursa Kuwait 'indices' see upward trajectory in 6 consecutive sessions

Robust market gains triggered by investor optimism

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Boursa Kuwait indices extended their upward trajectory, marking a continuous rise over six consecutive sessions since the start of 2024. The market value surged by 4.8%, reaching 1.93 billion dinars.

It increased from 40,259 billion dinars on December 28 to 42,189 billion dinars in the latest session, breaking the 42 billion dinars barrier. This represents the highest level in five months, reaching 42,313 billion dinars on August 13.

Investor optimism regarding the new government led by Sheikh Mohammed Al-Sabah, coupled with expectations of economic improvement and increased liquidity due to new fund and investment portfolio entries, fueled the robust market gains.

The First Market's value rose by 5.21% to 1.659 billion dinars, up from 31,821 billion dinars to 33.48 billion dinars. The main market also witnessed a 3.2% increase, reaching 270 million dinars from 8,438 billion dinars to 8,708 billion dinars. Key indices experienced notable growth: the first market index rose by 11.6%, the main index increased by 6.6%, and the main 50 index rose by 8.02%. Liquidity for the six sessions totaled about 376.6 million dinars, involving 1,596 billion shares through 82.5 thousand transactions.

Analysts anticipate the market's upward trend to persist, driven by optimism about accelerated economic activity, improved project implementation, and enhanced development plans and economic diversification. Investor confidence also rests on expectations of corporate and bank profit growth, and they anticipate strong dividends for the fiscal year 2023.

In the latest session, the market value of the Boursa Kuwait grew by 0.87% to 42,189 billion dinars, while the First Market's value increased by 1% to 33.48 billion dinars, and the main market rose by



Participants seen during the seminar.

Navigating economic challenges in the MENA region

The IMF-Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) in Kuwait co-organized, with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), a high-level event on Navigating Economic Challenges in the MENA Region on Tuesday, January 9, 2024. Mr. Paulo Drummond, Director of the CEF, said the objective of the event was to stimulate an open debate on the evolving economic challenges and policy tradeoffs faced by policymakers in the Middle East and North Africa region. Keynote Speaker Jihad Azour, Director of the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia Department, presented the economic outlook for the MENA region to a hybrid audience that included representatives from the public and private sectors, civil society, international organizations, the press, and the diplomatic community. The event was moderated by Mr. Merza Hasan, AFESD's senior advisor.

Mr. Azour, presented the outlook, risks for the MENA region and policy priorities to build resilience and foster sustainable and inclusive growth.

Mr. Azour highlighted that across the MENA region, the combined effects of global headwinds, domestic chal-

lenges, and geopolitical risks are weighing on economic momentum. He noted that the conflict in Gaza and Israel—which is causing immense human suffering—will have consequences for the broader region and add to the already high outlook uncertainty. Where the economic impact of the conflict is acute or risks are elevated, prudent crisis management and precautionary policies will be critical in the near term. MENA countries, especially those with already diminishing policy space and significant structural challenges, should not lose sight of the important reform and resilience agenda.

"Undoubtedly, this crisis will reshape the region's future. This crisis could inaugurate an era of high uncertainty for many countries if not properly addressed and absent a lasting ceasefire, even if the conflict remains contained, Mr. Azour said.

He underlined the strong partnership between the IMF and the Arab countries and highlighted the IMF's continued efforts to help countries mitigate the impact of adverse shocks and spillovers. He also stressed that the IMF stands ready to step up needed support through policy advice and technical expertise.

0.28% to 8,708 billion dinars. The general index and primary market index increased by 0.87% and 1.02%, respectively. The session's liquidity expanded by 12.6% to

78.09 million dinars, trading volumes increased by 19%, and deals rose to 19 thousand.

The session saw the rise of six sectors, led by communications

with a 2.43% increase, while six other sectors, led by utilities, experienced a 1.10% decline. The healthcare sector was the only one that remained stable.

2022 saw both monthly and annual upticks

9 percent decline in banks' investments in financial derivatives to 11.7 billion dinars

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Local banks experienced a notable decline in their investments in financial derivatives over the 11 months of 2023, marking a 9.3 percent decrease from 12.95 billion dinars in December 2022 to 11.77 billion dinars in November 2023, according to data from the Central Bank of Kuwait for that month.

On an annual basis, these investments saw a 19 percent increase, reaching 1.872 billion dinars compared to 9.87 billion dinars in November 2022. Additionally, there was a monthly uptick of 6.9 percent, amounting to approximately 758.2 million dinars, following the 10.98 billion dinars recorded at the end of

October.

Throughout 2023, bank investments in financial derivatives witnessed fluctuations, starting from 12.95 billion dinars in December 2022 and reaching a low of 9.725 billion dinars in June. The values rose and fell within this period, reaching a peak of 10.986 billion dinars in October.

Financial derivatives encompass diverse investment instruments deriving their value from financial assets or other assets like stocks, bonds, real estate, currencies, and commodities.

These instruments, such as futures contracts, options contracts, and swaps, can be bought, sold, and traded on various exchanges.

Futures contracts involve a binding agree-

ment to sell or buy an asset at a future date and agreed-upon price. They can cover various assets, including currencies, interest rates, and stock indices. Forward contracts, on the other hand, represent an agreement to sell or purchase an asset at a predetermined price on a future date.

Options contracts are agreements that grant one party the right (but not the obligation) to buy or sell the underlying asset at a specific price on a future date, in exchange for a premium.

Over the past years, several Kuwaiti banks have gained approval from the Central Bank of Kuwait to establish special purpose companies in the Cayman Islands, aimed at engaging in financial derivatives contracts.



Bahraini Minister of Oil and Environment Mohammed Bin Dainah during the opening of the Middle East Sustainability Forum.

Bahraini Oil Minister speaks at forum

SFME strengthening international and regional sustainability efforts

MANAMA, Jan 10, (KUNA): Bahraini Minister of Oil and Environment, Mohammad Bin Daina, said on Tuesday that the Sustainability Forum Middle East (SFME) aims to strengthen regional and international efforts to exchange sustainable ideas.

During the opening speech, the Special Envoy for Climate Affairs praised the achievement of the forum's first edition, as well as the topic included in this second edition that contributes to strengthening efforts to achieve carbon neutrality, the green economy and sustainable development.

He stressed that Bahrain continues to implement national projects, programs and environmental initiatives to achieve sustainable development goals and climate commitments in regards to national strategic plans.

Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Bapco Energies Mark Thomas, the forum's strategic part-

ner and the integrated energy company leading the energy transformation process in Bahrain, said that SFME is a regional platform that aims to enhance dialogue to push climate action towards a low carbon future.

Managing Director at FinMark Communications, organizer and founder of the forum, Laila Danesh thanked all partners, which contributed to the success of SFME's second edition, and their support in climate action.

She indicated that during 2024, events will be hosted throughout the region to enhance a series of high-level roundtables discussions to build the skills necessary for a low-carbon future.

The forum, gathered more than 350 business and sustainability leaders in Bahrain on 8-9 January 2024 focusing on "Achieving Net Zero - Pathways to Accelerating Implementation".

Three entities to establish regulatory framework for brokerage companies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The regulatory authorities, including the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, have collaborated to establish a regulatory framework for dealing in derivatives and standardizing conditions for companies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Several decisions have been issued to regulate the derivatives market, with a significant one being the Capital Markets Authority's November 2021 decision.

This directive mandates that companies engaged in brokerage of financial derivatives or those marketing services related to derivatives must submit a request to regularize their status within a one-year transitional period. It's important to note that the Authority's oversight is limited to financial deriva-

tives issued or traded exclusively in Kuwait.

Concurrently, the Boursa Kuwait, in collaboration with the Kuwait Clearing Company, a subsidiary of the Kuwait Stock Exchange Company, has taken measures to enhance the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti capital market for foreign investments.

The Kuwait Clearing Company conducted tests for the central broker (CCP) to meet system requirements, ensuring financial brokerage companies' ability to manage settlement operations for membership qualification.

Tests were also conducted with the Central Bank of Kuwait and local banks in preparation for the stock exchange's introduction of various products, including index funds (ETFs), the bond and sukuk market, and the financial derivatives market.

Egypt signs \$1.5b wind power deal with consortium

CAIRO, Jan 10, (KUNA): Egypt signed Wednesday a USD 1.5 billion agreement with a consortium led by the Saudi ACWA Power Company for a 1.1 gigawatt wind power plant project in Suez Gulf and Gabal El-Zeit areas.

The agreement was signed by CEO of the Egyptian New and Renewable Energy Authority (NREA) Mohammad Al-Khayat and Vice-Chairman of ACWA Power Company for Business Development in Africa Mohammad Hamdoush and the company's Country Director in Egypt Hasan Amin and CEO of Hasan Allam Utilities Dalia Wahba, with Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli attending, the cabinet said in a press

release.

Following the signing of the deal, Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy Mohammad Shaker said under the agreement, the consortium will undertake completing site studies and securing project finance.

He commended the project as being the largest of its kind in the Middle East and the world for power production.

He added that the project, once completed, would contribute to offsetting 2.4 million tons of carbon dioxide per year, providing roughly 840,000 tons of fuel per annum, creating some 6,000 jobs and offering electricity to a million households.

How InfiRay thermal cameras safeguard oilfields against security threats

DUBAI, UAE, Jan 10, (PRNewsWire): "In the past, oilfield security mainly relied on our security team, requiring the deployment of numerous patrol vehicles every day. Now, with the introduction of the InfiRay 360° Infrared Panoramic E.O.S XSENTRY, our security measures have significantly improved. Through its thermal imaging capability, it scans 360° every two seconds, providing real-time, all-weather coverage. Once someone is detected entering the area, the set electronic fence immediately triggers an alarm." The actual application of InfiRay's oilfield surveillance

solution in the Middle East region has received high praise from the chief engineer.

For oilfield production companies, the equipment and facilities in the oilfield are often scattered. Manual inspections are challenging to conduct 24/7, and various factors have led to frequent theft incidents in oilfields, resulting in significant economic losses for oilfield production. InfiRay's oilfield surveillance solution addresses these challenges and ensures the safe and smooth operation of oilfield production.

The InfiRay 360° Infrared Panoramic E.O.S XSENTRY, equipped

with advanced high-definition infrared stitching technology, is deployed at the top of a 40-meter oilfield tower. It provides real-time surveillance and scanning of the entire oilfield in a 360° view. This system effectively observes various oilfield locations, including oilfields and oil pipeline points, and helps prevent theft incidents.

Oilfields occupy vast areas and require a wide, clear, and comprehensive view. Traditional products have fixed and narrow surveillance angles, which can easily create blind spots. However, one infrared panoramic radar is equivalent to mul-

iple traditional cameras, capturing a 360° view without blind spots in just 2 seconds, providing an instant panoramic image of the oilfield.

The XSENTRY offers a versatile custom surveillance area mode, allowing users to draw custom surveillance zones. Within these zones, users can designate "shielded area" to filter out legitimate or non-critical areas, reducing false alarms and improving surveillance efficiency.

When suspicious targets are detected, the XSENTRY links with visible-light devices to track and zoom in on the targets, capturing and documenting video image informa-

tion for real-time visualization and rapid target tracking. This capability provides decision-making and command personnel with valuable reference information.

In oilfields, where minimal personnel activity during nighttime, unauthorized individuals can more easily infiltrate and sabotage equipment without detection. Thermal imaging technology compensates for the limitations of visible light, allowing observation of fine details in pitch-black darkness or extreme weather conditions, ensuring uninterrupted surveillance and guaranteeing oilfield security round the clock.

As a leader in infrared thermal imaging, InfiRay has independently developed the world's first smallest pixel-sized thermal imaging detector. The 360° Infrared Panoramic E.O.S is equipped with a 12µm detector, providing richer details and clearer images compared to a 17µm detector with the same image size.

For end-users, the advantages of choosing InfiRay's 360° Infrared Panoramic E.O.S for oilfield surveillance management are evident. It offers long-range surveillance capabilities, high-resolution infrared imagery, and meets the demands of wide-area surveillance.

Italy thrives

Number of employees in November 2023 reached an unprecedented level, more than 23.74 million, signaling a noticeable fall of joblessness.

The National Institute of Statistics, Istat, said in a report on Tuesday that the total employees' number also settled at a record level; 23.734 million, increasing by 31,000 compared to October and 520,000 compared to the previous year.

Employment proportion remained unchanged in November, 61.8 percent of the total labor force, while joblessness dropped from 7.7 percent in October to 7.5 percent. (KUNA)

Indonesia grounds Boeing 737 MAX 9

Indonesia has temporarily grounded three Boeing 737 MAX 9 jetliners, following an incident last week in which an Alaska Airlines plane suffered a blowout that left a gaping hole in the side of the fuselage.

The three aircraft, grounded since Saturday, belong to the Indonesian budget carrier Lion Air. The decision was made by the country's Transportation Ministry in coordination with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to ensure the safety and security of flight operations.

An emergency landing on Friday by the Alaska Airlines jetliner prompted U.S. federal authorities to ground some Boeing 737 MAX 9 aircraft. The FAA grounded all MAX 9s operated by Alaska and United and some flown by foreign airlines for inspection. The inspections are focused on plugs used to seal an area set aside for extra emergency doors that are not required on United and Alaska MAX 9s.

The grounded Lion Air planes use a mid-cabin emergency exit door that is different than the one on the Alaska Airlines' plane involved in the incident, said Adita Irawati, a Transportation Ministry spokesperson. (AP)



A Boeing 737 MAX 9 airplane performs a demonstration flight at the Paris Air Show in Le Bourget, east of Paris, France, June 20, 2017. Indonesia has temporarily grounded three Boeing 737 MAX 9 jetliners, following an incident in which an Alaska Airlines plane suffered a blowout that left a gaping hole in the side of the fuselage. (AP)

European Commission cites competition concerns

Microsoft's OpenAI investment could trigger EU merger review

LONDON, Jan 10, (AP): Microsoft's multibillion-dollar investment in ChatGPT-maker OpenAI could trigger a European Union merger investigation, the bloc's executive branch said Tuesday.

The European Commission said it's "checking whether Microsoft's investment in OpenAI might be reviewable" under regulations covering mergers and acquisitions that would harm competition in the 27-nation EU.

The review could lead to a formal investigation into whether the deal should be unconditionally cleared, allowed with concessions from the companies or blocked. Britain's antitrust watchdog opened a similar review last month.



OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, (left), appears onstage with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella at OpenAI's first developer conference, on Nov. 6, 2023, in San Francisco. The European Union says Microsoft's multibillion-dollar investment in ChatGPT-maker OpenAI could trigger a merger investigation. The EU's executive branch said Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024, it's 'checking whether Microsoft's investment in OpenAI might be reviewable' under regulations covering mergers and acquisitions that would harm competition in the 27-nation bloc. (AP)

Measures

Antitrust enforcers in the U.S. also have signaled concerns about competition in the AI industry. The Federal Trade Commission in November approved new measures enabling it to more easily investigate AI products and services, noting that "AI can raise competition issues in a variety of ways, including if one or just a few companies control the essential inputs

or technologies that underpin AI."

OpenAI has received several rounds of funding from Microsoft, includ-

ing an initial \$1 billion in 2019 and a multibillion-dollar investment last year.

X Corp has slashed 30% of trust and safety staff

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 10, (AP): X Corp., the owner of the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, has slashed its global trust and safety staff by 30% including an 80% reduction in the number of safety engineers since billionaire Elon Musk took over in 2022, Australia's online safety watchdog said on Thursday.

Australia's eSafety Commission, which describes itself as the world's first government agency dedicated to keeping people safer online, released summaries of answers provided by X to questions about how its policies about hateful conduct were enforced.

The commission said in a statement while X had previously given estimates of the reduction in staffing, the answers were the first specific figures on where staff reductions had been made to become public.

Since the day before Musk bought control of San Francisco-based Twitter on Oct. 28, 2022, until a report-

ing period imposed by the commission closed May 31, 2023, trust and safety staff globally had been reduced from 4,062 to 2,849 employees and contractors. That reduction is 30% globally and 45% of those in the Asia-Pacific region.

Engineers focused on trust and safety issues at X had been reduced from 279 globally to 55, a fall of 80%. Full-time employee content moderators had been reduced 52% from 107 to 51. Content moderators employed on contract fell 12% from 2,613 to 2,305.

X had also revealed it had reinstated 6,100 previously banned accounts, including 194 who had been suspended for hateful conduct. The commission said it understood those accounts were Australian. X did not provide global figures, but technology newsletter Platformer reported in November 2022 that 62,000 suspended accounts had been reinstated.

OpenAI's generative AI chatbot ChatGPT has captured world attention with its advanced capabilities, catapulting the San Francisco-based startup to the top ranks of AI companies. Generative AI systems like ChatGPT can spit out new text, images, videos or audio recordings based on prompts from users.

The European Commission, the bloc's top antitrust enforcer, is asking businesses and experts for input on any competition issues that they see in generative AI and has asked "several large digital players" - which it didn't identify - for information.

The commission is "also closely monitoring AI partnerships to ensure

they do not unduly distort market dynamics," the EU's antitrust enforcer, Margrethe Vestager, said in a press release.

Vestager is due to meet with OpenAI executives on a trip this week to the U.S., as well as Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Apple CEO Tim Cook and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang.

Government urges negotiations

Germany grinds to halt as train drivers launch a massive strike

BERLIN, Jan 10, (AP): A union representing many of Germany's train drivers started a nearly three-day strike early Wednesday in a rancorous dispute with the country's state-owned main railway operator over working hours and pay.

Train travel across the country and in many cities came to a near standstill with commuters and other travelers struggling to find alternatives involving long-distance bus or car travel or flights.

State-owned Deutsche Bahn said only around 20% of its long-distance trains were running and many regional and commuter trains in cities like Berlin were also not in operation.

"The strike by the train drivers' union GDL has had a massive impact on train services in Germany," said Deutsche Bahn spokeswoman Anja Broeker. "We regret the restrictions and hope that many people who were unable to reschedule their journey will get to their destination."

The GDL union's strike on cargo trains began on Tuesday evening.

Germany's Transportation Minister Volker Wissing called on both sides to return to the negotiating table.

"A way has to be found that both sides can get along with," the minister told daily newspaper Bild. "That means talking to each other. I urge both sides to return to the negotiating table."

However, union head Claus Weselsky said it was now up to Deutsche Bahn to present an improved offer.

Offer

If there's no new offer until Friday, "we'll take a break and go into the next strike," Weselsky said in an interview on public broadcaster ZDF's morning show after the start of the train drivers' strike.

Mike Walter from Frankfurt expressed a lack of understanding about the strike.

"I have an appointment for a surgery at 10 a.m., that I've been waiting for months," he told The Associated Press in Berlin on Wednesday morning, adding that he had to change his travel plans and come to Berlin a day earlier and stay at a hotel to avoid the strike.

"I mean, if you limit it to 50% or something like that, that's fine. But you can't go to zero," Walter said. "That's just inconsiderate."

Dieter Nettersheim, who was standing near an information counter of Deutsche Bahn inside the unusually empty main train station in the western city of Cologne, did also not seem to approve of the strike.

"I think they have to keep negotiating to get results so that (their dispute) is not being carried out at the expense of the customers," the 55-year-old told the AP.

The train drivers' strike coincides with an unrelated one-week strike by farmers who have been blocking city streets and highway access roads in parts of the country since Monday. They have snarled traffic with their tractors to protest against a government plan to scrap tax breaks on diesel used in agriculture and led to further traffic problems in Germany.

Wage dispute

In the wage dispute, the GDL union had already called two previous warning strikes last year, which lasted a maximum of 24 hours in passenger transport. The current strike lasts until Friday at 6 p.m.

Deutsche Bahn had tried to legally prevent the strike until the very end, but on Tuesday night a court ordered that the strike could go ahead.

Late last month, members of GDL voted overwhelmingly to stage open-ended strikes in a bitter dispute.

In addition to pay raises, the central issue is the union's call for shift workers' hours to be reduced from 38 to 35 hours per week without a pay reduction, a demand for which employers so far have balked.

GDL argues that it would make working for the railway more attractive and help attract new recruits, while Deutsche Bahn says the demand can't practically be met.



Deutsche Bahn ICE trains are parked on the tracks at the DB Fernverkehr plant in Hamburg, Germany, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024. A union representing many of Germany's train drivers started a nearly three-day strike early Wednesday in a rancorous dispute with the country's state-owned main railway operator over working hours and pay. (AP)

US SEC denies unauthorized ETF approval, triggers market chaos

Account on X hacked

NEW YORK, Jan 10, (AP): The Securities and Exchange Commission said that a post sent from the agency's account on the social platform X announcing the approval of a long-awaited bitcoin exchange-traded fund was "unauthorized," and that the agency's account was hacked.

The price of bitcoin briefly spiked more than \$1,000 after the post on X, formerly known as Twitter, claimed "The SEC grants approval for #Bitcoin ETFs for listing on all registered national securities exchanges." Cryptocurrency investors had already driven bitcoin's price above \$46,000 in anticipation of the approval.

Invest

An ETF would provide a way to invest in bitcoin without having to buy the cryptocurrency outright on a crypto exchange such as Binance or Coinbase.

But soon after the initial post appeared, SEC Chairman Gary Gensler said on his personal account that the SEC's account was compromised and, "The SEC has not approved the listing and trading of spot bitcoin exchange-traded products." Gensler called the post unauthorized without providing further explanation.

"Welp," wrote Cory Klippsten, CEO of Swan Bitcoin, on X. Like many bitcoin investors, Klippsten had been expecting the agency to approve bitcoin ETFs potentially as soon as this week.

The price of bitcoin swung from about \$46,730 to just below \$48,000 after the unauthorized post hit, and then dropped to around \$45,200 after the SEC's denial. It was trading around



The seal of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission at SEC headquarters, June 19, 2015, in Washington. The Securities and Exchange Commission said Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024, that a post on X, formerly known

as Twitter, announcing that the securities regulator had approved the trading of exchange-traded funds holding bitcoin was fake, and that the agency's account had been 'compromised.' (AP)

\$46,150 at 6:15 p.m. ET.

Shortly after Gensler's statement, it appeared that the SEC had gotten back control over the account.

It was unclear exactly how the SEC's social media account was hacked. X's @Safety account tweeted on Tuesday night that a preliminary investigation by the platform determined "an unidentified individual" got control of a phone number associated with the account "through a third party."

It did not elaborate, though it did say that the compromised SEC account, @SecGov, did not have two-factor authentication activated.

Even before that news, politicians

who have long expressed frustration at how Gensler operates the SEC - Republicans in particular - expressed anger at what they suggested were lax SEC security controls over its accounts.

"Just like the SEC would demand accountability from a public company if they made a colossal market-moving mistake, Congress needs answers on what just happened," said Republican Sen. Bill Hagerty of Tennessee, who sits on the Senate Banking Committee.

This is not the first time there has been false market-moving information about the future of bitcoin on regulated exchanges. A false report back in October implied that fund manager BlackRock had gotten approval for bit-

coin ETF, causing bitcoin prices to jump sharply.

Elon Musk gutted Twitter's content moderation and security teams after taking over the platform in late 2022. And while internet watchdog groups have complained about a spike in toxic content, including antisemitic and other hate speech on X, many also worry about account integrity.

"The consequences of account takeovers could potentially be significant, and especially during an election year," said Brett Callow, an analyst with the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft.

A spokesperson for X did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Germany's last major department store chain files for insolvency protection for the 3rd time

BERLIN, Jan 10, (AP): Germany's last remaining major department store chain filed for insolvency protection on Tuesday, its third filing in less than four years, after its owner ran into difficulties.

Galeria Karstadt Kaufhof, which currently runs 92 stores and employs more than 15,000 people, said it filed for insolvency at a court in Essen, German news agency dpa reported. The company is seeking a new owner and talks with potential investors are already underway.

The move follows insolvency filings by several companies in the trading and real estate group of Austrian businessman Rene Benko - including Signal Retail Selection, Galeria Karstadt Kaufhof's owner.

Galeria is the result of a merger a few years ago of rivals Karstadt and Kaufhof. It shut around 40 stores and cut some 4,000 jobs after seeking protection during the first lockdown of the

coronavirus pandemic in April 2020, and reportedly was granted 680 million euros (\$745 million) in state aid.

In October 2022, it again sought protection from creditors, citing a steep rise in energy prices, high inflation and weak consumer spending. In March 2023, it announced plans for another round of store closures. The last 18 stores being closed as part of those plans are shutting their doors this month.

Galeria CEO Olivier van den Bossche said that the old ownership structure was weighing on the company. He said that "the insolvencies of the Signa Group are damaging Galeria massively, hindering ongoing business and seriously limiting future development possibilities as a result of high rents and expensive services."

Signa had pledged 200 million euros (\$219 million) in several instalments through next year to help restructure Galeria.



People enter and leave a branch of the department store Galeria Karstadt Kaufhof in Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024. Germany's last remaining major department store chain has filed for insolvency protection, its third such application in less than four years, after its owner ran into difficulties. (AP)

Near perfect day for White Elephants

TEC Challengers Cup 2024 promises exciting finish on January 12th

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The eagerly awaited cricket tournament of the Kuwait Engineers Forum (KEF), the TEC Challengers Cup, organized by the Thrissur Engineering College Alumni Association Kuwait Chapter (TECAL KUWAIT), commenced on January 5th at the KOC cricket stadium. The stadium boasts a unique charm with its lush green outfield, picturesque surroundings, and well-connected amenities, providing fans with an unforgettable cricketing experience. The 2024 edition of the tournament, featuring the T10 format, had a picturesque opening ceremony that marked the beginning of the action. Abdul Jabbar, Chairman of TECAL KUWAIT, addressed the gathering, and Santhosh Abraham, General Convener of KEF, officially opened the tournament with an inspiring speech. The stadium buzzed with excitement as the games got underway, and the cool winds only added to the perfect cricketing conditions.

Following the established trend, teams winning the toss continued to opt for bowling first to capitalize on the early morning dew factor. In the inaugural match, White Elephants elected to put Orange Warriors into bat. The White Elephants' bowlers demonstrated excellent discipline, adhering to their plans and effectively containing the formidable top-order batsmen of the Orange Warriors. A late surge in the final over by their top scorer, Ajin Skariah (20 runs), propelled the Orange team to a total of 55 runs for the loss of 4 wickets in 10 overs. In pursuit of this modest target, White Elephants maintained a run rate of one per ball, securing victory in the 9th over. Shyam Madhusoodanan led the charge in their chase, contributing 21 runs and remaining unbeaten. Brief Scores: Orange Warriors 55/4 in 10 overs (Ajin-20*, Suresh-18, Shyam M.2-9, Basith 1-16) lost to White Elephants 56/3 in 8.5 overs (Shyam M.-21*, Abhilash 1-9).

In the second match, Kuwait Super Kings had a promising start when they batted but couldn't build on it, concluding their innings at 58 runs for the loss of 4 wickets. Adharsh played a lone role, contributing 23 runs with some well-placed hits. The Black Panthers faced a challenging chase, with the Super Kings having the upper hand at the end of the sixth over, as the Panthers struggled at 29 for 3 wickets. However, Maneesh Mohan's aggressive innings of 23 runs, including two big sixes, turned the tide, leading the Panthers to vic-



Photos during the commencement of the TEC Challengers Cup 2024.

tory in the 9th over. The final scores were Kuwait Super Kings 58/3 in 10 overs (Adharsh-23, Aneesh-9, Nimesh1-7, Sebastain1-10) losing to Black Panthers 59/3 in 8.2 overs (Maneesh -23*, Binu Kailas -12, Kuriakose 1-14, Jordy 1-16).

In the thrilling third match, Kerala Tuskers won the toss and chose to bat against High Range Blasters. The aggressive approach of High Range Blasters was evident from the first over, and they maintained a healthy run rate until the midway point of their innings. Stephen and Ronnie's powerful hitting added the necessary

acceleration, pushing their total to 79. Despite a quickfire knock of 31 from young Ethan Cheriyan, Kerala Tuskers seemed in control at 56 for 3 from 7 overs. However, Jayeshnath's excellent spell of 2 wickets for 2 runs in the 8th over stifled Tusker's run flow, leading to High Range Blasters securing a 9-run victory. The final scores were High Range Blasters 79/8 in 10 overs (Stephen-15, Ronnie-10, Mukesh 2-15, Ethan 2-22) beating Kerala Tuskers 70/8 in 10 overs (Ethan-31, Deepak-11, Jayesh 2-13, Ronnie2-19, ShyamS. 1-6). Binu Kailas' impactful knock of

18 runs provided Black Panthers with a strong start in the fourth match, having been elected to bat by White Elephants. However, Basith thwarted Panthers' plans for a substantial total by claiming 2 wickets for just 3 runs in his 2 overs. In response to Panthers' modest score of 60 runs, White Elephants demonstrated prudent batting, reaching the target with 11 balls to spare. Rakesh played a pivotal role in this successful run chase, remaining unbeaten with 28 runs. Brief Scores: Black Panthers 60/8 in 10 overs (Binu Kailas - 18, Nabeel-9, Basith 2-3, Ab-

dul Muneer 2-10) were defeated by White Elephants 61/3 in 8.1 overs (Rakesh-28*, Basith -10*, Jasir 2-17, Nimesh 1-14).

In the fifth match, Kuwait Super Kings had a promising start after Kerala Tuskers chose to bowl first upon winning the toss. However, they lost momentum and could only manage 63 runs in 10 overs. Kerala Tuskers easily chased down the target, with their young talent Ethan Cheriyan showcasing powerful hitting skills with 20 runs from 9 balls, helping Tuskers secure their first win with 2 overs to spare. Brief Scores:

Kuwait Super Kings 63/4 in 10 overs (Joseph-14*, Anfar-12, Aneesh -11, Lindo 2-12, Presoon 1-11) were defeated by Kerala Tuskers 64/3 in 8 overs (Ethan -20, Deepak -17, Sha-beer - 11, Jordy 1-6, Ziyad 1-14).

After winning the toss in the sixth game and opting to bat, High Range Blasters faced a challenging situation against the disciplined bowling of Orange Warriors. Early wickets fell, and they struggled at 23 for 5 in the initial 5 overs. Captain Ronnie's counterattack, contributing 27 runs, helped them reach a respectable total of 62 runs in 10 overs. Orange Warriors' openers, Ajin and Suresh, formed a solid, unbroken partnership. Ajin, scoring 40 runs after a cautious start, accelerated in the middle overs, enabling the Warriors to chase down the target in 8 overs and secure their first victory. The final scores were High Range Blasters 62/6 in 10 overs (Ronnie-27, Jayesh-8, Abhilash 2-10, Dileep 1-9), losing to Orange Warriors 63/0 in 8 overs (Ajin-40*, Suresh-14*).

In the last league match of the day, White Elephants displayed another outstanding all-round performance to defeat Kerala Tuskers. Choosing to bat after winning the toss, they made a quick start led by skipper Nithin's 34 runs, including 2 huge sixes. Basith added to the momentum with a rapid 17 runs off 7 balls, featuring 2 sixes, bringing the White Elephants' total to 92 runs in 10 overs. In response, Kerala Tuskers could only manage 75 runs, suffering their second defeat. The brief scores were White Elephants 92/4 in 10 overs (Nithin-34, Basith-17, Rakesh-16, Sha-beer 1-13, Ethan 1-19), defeating Kerala Tuskers 75/5 in 10 overs (Ethan-18, Sha-beer-15, Sanjay-14, Nithin 1-5, Basith 1-8).

White Elephants demonstrated their diverse strengths, emerging as the sole undefeated team on the first day, securing victories in all three of their league matches. Following the completion of seven league matches on Day 1, they secured a spot in the semifinals with a total of 9 points. Meanwhile, Orange Warriors, Black Panthers, High Range Blasters, and Kuwait Tuskers find themselves tied with 3 points each. Unfortunately, Kuwait Super Kings experienced defeat in both of their matches. With a fair chance of advancing to the knockout phase of the TEC Challengers Cup 2024, all five clubs anxiously await the outcomes of the last two league games scheduled for January 12th, marking the final day of the tournament.

Empowering diplomacy

AUKMUN students excel in Georgetown Qatar MUN Conference



AUKMUN in Qatar

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Students from the American University of Kuwait's Model United Nations (AUKMUN) recently participated in the Georgetown Qatar MUN Conference. The conference featured discussions on critical global issues, fostering debates aimed at formulating effective solutions.

Representing AUKMUN were Mariam Abusharkh, Ahmad Kanaan, Aya Elhaddello, Suad Alawadhi, Judy Alnaimy, and Zaina Zakarneh.

Each student delegate was assigned a specific country and topic for a three-day debate session. The culmination of their efforts involved preparing comprehensive resolutions in UN format, presented at the conclusion of the conference.

Mariam Abusharkh, AUKMUN president, conveyed her appreciation for the opportunity, "I would like to thank AUK for always pushing us to get such enriching experiences as well as giving us the

chance to represent our university on an international level. The students all got such a valuable experience and lessons from going on this trip."

As AUKMUN continues to foster a culture of engagement in global affairs, the success at the Georgetown Qatar MUN Conference becomes not just an achievement for these students but a testament to the University's commitment to nurturing future diplomats.

The Conversation

Plagiarism not always easy to define or detect

By Roger J. Kreuz
University of Memphis

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



Quite a few high-profile careers in higher education have been upended as of late amid questions of academic integrity. Marc Tessier-Lavigne, who had served as president of Stanford University for seven years, stepped down in 2023 after it was determined that he had co-authored several academic papers that contained manipulated data. The latest casualty is Claudine Gay, who resigned her presidency at Harvard after questions arose about her scholarship, in addition to her response to antisemitism on campus following the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on Israel by Hamas.

In the following Q&A, Roger J. Kreuz, a psychology professor who is working on a manuscript about the history and psychology of plagiarism, explains the nature and prevalence of plagiarism and the challenges associated with detecting it in the age of AI.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas without providing them with appropriate credit or compensation. This could be a melody, a design or some other creative work. Plagiarism isn't a legal concept, but those seeking compensation can sue the plagiarist for copyright infringement.

In higher education, plagiarism typically refers to the appropriation of words written by someone else. However, the same term is used to refer to a wide variety of behaviors.

Plagiarism can be the inadequate citation of a source, paraphrasing without providing a reference, the wholesale copying of someone else's work - or anything in between. And what if a student submits the same paper in two different courses? Some instructors consider this to be unethical self-plagiarism, whereas others do not. The concept is so broad that reasonable people can disagree about what constitutes plagiarism.

Faculty members have greatly differing perceptions about whether plagiarism is a widespread problem. For example, instructors who teach large numbers of students from other countries, where there are different cultural perceptions regarding plagiarism, may encounter this issue more frequently.

The lack of a consistent definition for plagiarism means that different studies have arrived at different estimates of its pervasiveness. A 2019 study of university students in Australia found that 64% had engaged in some form of plagiarism at least once.

These researchers found that this number has remained stable for a decade and was down a bit from 82% in 2004.

The actual rate of plagiarism may even be higher than this, however, because people tend to underreport problematic behaviors in surveys.

The decline in plagiarism over time may be due to the widespread adoption of plagiarism detection tools like Turnitin, PlagScan, and iThenticate. One study found that when students are given access to such tools, they are less likely to plagiarize. In another study, however, students were warned that their work would be checked, and this had no effect on the rates of plagiarism.

Professors suspected of plagiarism may be given the benefit of the doubt by their institutions or afforded the opportunity to make corrections to their published work. University administrators assume that faculty members know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, but that they were just a little sloppy with their citations or use of quotation marks.

Students, on the other hand, are governed by fairly strict university policies regarding academic conduct. Harvard, for example, warns that students may be forced to withdraw from the college if they plagiarize. Work written by students is more likely to be scrutinized and run through plagiarism detection tools than faculty theses or book chapters. (AP)

IMA Kuwait to conduct 'Exploration Tour of Masjid'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Indian Muslim Association (IMA) has invited all to join for a special Masjid Tour organized by them in collaboration with Salsabeel Society on January 12, 2024 commencing at 3:30 pm.

Event Details:
Date: January 12, 2024
Time: 3:30 pm
Location: Masjid Ghanim Kharafi - Sulaibikhat
Google Location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/civ5RCPpFTaz6KY9>

Embark on an illuminating journey to discover the elegance and tranquility of Masjid Ghanim Kharafi through a guided tour. Immerse yourself in the profound cultural and spiritual experience that awaits.

Save the Date!
Feel free to bring friends and family along. Let's unite to strengthen our ties with the community and enhance our comprehension of our faith.
Open for Men & Women of all faiths!

For more information or to confirm your attendance, please contact 9406 1143 | 9791 1808.

Looking forward to seeing you there! For further details and queries, please refer attached flyer.

Visit: www.imakuwait.org

Exploration Tour of Masjid-IMA Salsabeel.

DAI poster

'Last of Us,' 'Ted Lasso' garner wins ahead of Emmy night

LOS ANGELES, Jan 10, (AP) - The 2023 Emmy Awards are arriving in 2024. Hollywood's two strikes meant a four-month delay for television's annual celebration of itself. But both have now been resolved and the show will go on. Here's a look at the telecast, the ceremony, and the series and stars up for awards.

The 75th Primetime Emmy Awards will be held on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Monday night at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. Anthony Anderson will host. It will be telecast live on the Fox network starting at 8 p.m. Eastern, and available to stream the following day on Hulu.

Fox is taking its turn this year in an annual rotation between the four networks. Anderson, who was nominated for lead actor in a comedy seven times for his work on ABC's "black-ish," is a first-time Emmys host, although he's hosted the NAACP Image Awards eight times.

He also has a fresh connection to Fox - his new game show "We Are Family" premiered in early January.

Now with a TV-themed name, downtown LA's Peacock Theater, formerly the Microsoft Theater and the Nokia Theatre, has been the go-to home for the Emmys since 2008.

As is typical at the Emmys, HBO shows dominated the nominations when they were announced way back in July. The top three nominees - "Succession" with 27, "The Last of Us" with 24, and "The White Lotus" with 23 - were all from the gilded cable channel.

"The Last of Us" comes in with a big head start on the grand total after winning eight at the Creative Arts Emmys, which are held about a week before the main ceremony. The dystopian video-

game adaption won best guest actor and guest actress in a drama for memorable one-episode performances from Nick Offerman and Storm Reid. And it dominated in the technical categories, winning best visual effects and best prosthetic makeup for its fungus-faced walking dead.

"White Lotus" took four trophies at the Creative Arts Emmys, winning for its music, its casting and its hairstyling.

Dominate

"Succession" came up empty, but the fourth and final season of the show about a generationally dysfunctional family of one-percenters could still dominate in major categories on Monday. It's probably still the favorite for best drama, which it has won at two of the past three Emmys, and the acting categories are overloaded with its ensemble cast. Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin are all up for best actor in a drama, four more men from the show are up for best supporting actor and Sarah Snook got a best actress nomination.

"The White Lotus" managed to get five nominees in the supporting actress category, including Jennifer Coolidge and Aubrey Plaza.

And if voters' affection continues for "The Last of Us" it could also win best drama; its stars Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey are nominated in the lead acting categories.

"The Bear," nominated in comedy categories despite being heavy on drama, won four Emmys at the Creative Arts ceremonies and is nominated for 13 overall. "Ted Lasso," which won two, was tops among comedies with 21 overall nominations for its final season. The Emmys

have loved the Apple TV+ soccer series since its kickoff. It won best comedy series and best actor for Jason Sudeikis in each of its first two seasons and is nominated to threepat in both categories.

Hollywood's historic work stoppage among writers and actors, both essential to the Emmys, meant the show had a rare delay for an unprecedented four months.

Leaders of the Television Academy were among those breathing a sigh of relief when actors voted to approve their new strike-ending contract on Dec. 5 and put a period on the entire stoppage.

With an autumn show date based around the traditional broadcast TV season, the Emmys have for years had some quirks based on the far more scattered schedule of cable and streaming. The delay makes those oddities even odder.

To give one example, the nominations for "The Bear" are for its first season, even though the awards will be handed out six months after its second season dropped. (Sunday's Golden Globes heaped awards on "The Bear" - for its standout second season.)

In another anomaly, by the time of the ceremony, all the winners will have been established, the metaphorical envelopes sitting unopened for more than four months. That's because the Television Academy wanted at least the voting to be the same as always, so its approximately 20,000 members had to cast their ballots by Aug. 28.

The January date puts the Emmys within the rest of Hollywood's awards season, a week after the Golden Globes and about six weeks before the Screen Actors Guild Awards - both ceremonies that honor television along with movies.

Television

Variety



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Andrew Scott in a scene from 'All of Us Strangers.' (AP)

Film

Actor startled by his vulnerability in new film

Scott's performance sparks Oscar buzz

NEW YORK, Jan 10, (AP) - On a recent winter day in New York when the sun was shining, Andrew Scott rushed into a coffee shop between recording sessions for an upcoming series.

"I'm scheduled tighter than a teenage pop star," he said, beaming.

The interview had been postponed once, and the location was switched at the last minute to save Scott some time in traffic. But he sat down fully engaged and eager to start talking. Immediately, though, a passerby tapped on the storefront glass and asked for a photo. Scott, without a grumble, sprinted out to oblige, even though the gesture seemed more like a command ("You're under arrest," joked Scott) than a polite request.

Scott, the 47-year-old Irish actor, is in demand like never before. That's partly due to accrued good will. A regular presence on stage in the West End, Scott is known to many as the "Hot Priest" of "Fleabag" or the cunning Moriarty of "Sherlock." Soon, he'll play Tom Ripley in the Netflix series "Ripley," adapted from the Patricia Highsmith novel.

But the real reason Scott's time is short right now is Andrew Haigh's new film, "All of Us Strangers." In it, Scott plays a screenwriter working on a script about his childhood. The film is gently poised in a metaphysical realm; when Adam (Scott) returns to his childhood home, he finds his parents (Claire Foy, Jamie Bell) as they were before they died many years earlier.

At the same time, the movie, loosely adapted from Taichi Yamada's 1987 book "Strangers," balances a budding romance with a neighbor (Paul Mescal), a relationship that unfolds with profound reverberations of family, intimacy and queer life. In a dreamy, longing ghost story, Scott is its aching, shimmering soul.

"The challenge of it was to try to go to that place but not gild the lily too much," Scott says. "As an actor, I have to be in touch with that playful side of myself and that part of you that's childish. I was actually quite struck by how vulnerable I looked in the film."

Scott's acutely tender performance has made him a contender for the Academy Awards. He was named best actor by the National Society of Film Critics. At

the Golden Globes on Sunday (Scott wore a white tux and t-shirt), he was nominated for best actor in a drama.

Scott has long admired actors like Anthony Hopkins, Judi Dench and Meryl Streep - performers with a sense of humor who, he says, "are able to understand what you feel and what you present." Scott, too, is often funny on screen (see Lena Dunham's medieval romp "Catherine Called Birdy"). And even in quiet moments, he seems to be buzzing inside at some discreet frequency. Something is always going on under the surface.

He's been acting since he was young; drama classes were initially a way to get over shyness. Scott's first film role came at age 17. He has often spoken about seeking to maintain a childlike perspective in acting. In that way, "All of Us Strangers" is particularly fitting. On Adam's trips home, he sort of morphs back into the child he was. In one scene, he wears his old pajamas and crawls into bed with his parents.

Imagination

"So many of the things that are required of you as an actor are a sense of humor and some ability to be able to put yourself in a situation. Because it's all down to imagination," says Scott. "For me, that's the thing you need to keep. That's the thing - because I started out when I was young - I don't want to move too far away from. Like when kids go, 'OK, you be this and I'll be this.' That ability doesn't leave us. What does leave us is a lack of self-consciousness. Our job is to hold on to that."

Haigh, the British filmmaker of "45 Years" and "Weekend," began thinking of Scott for the role early on. They met and talked through the script for a few hours.

"He's a similar generation to me. He's a tiny bit younger than me, but he's from the same generation," says Haigh. "He understands that experience."

Scott came out publicly in 2013, but his natural inclination is to be private. "I feel like I've given so much of myself in the film, you think you don't want to give it all away," he says. He describes "All of Us Strangers" - which Haigh shot partly in his childhood home - as

personal, but not autobiographical in its depiction of the alienation that can linger after coming out.

"Mercifully, I feel very comfortable for the most part. But it stays with you that pain, and it actually makes you more compassionate, I think. Because we shot in Andrew's childhood home, that sort of threw down the gauntlet in relation to how much of his own personality he was giving," says Scott. "I wanted it to be sort of unadorned, unarmored and raw. That's why I think there's such tenderness in the film."

Scott has sometimes recoiled from how sexuality is talked about the media and in Hollywood. He recently said the phrase "openly gay" should be done away with. As of late December, Scott hadn't yet watched "All of Us Strangers" with his parents, though he planned to.

"The best way to express it is to say I'll be very sensitive to how they watch it and how they feel about it, and how it makes me feel them watching it," Scott says.

On-screen chemistry is an amorphous quality that the film industry has long tried to turn into a science with camera tests and marketing that flirts with real-life romance.

But for Scott, it's something different. Pinpointing that quality is something Scott pondered during Simon Stephens and Sam Yates' recent staging of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya" at the National Theater. Scott played all eight roles, meaning he essentially had to have chemistry with himself.

"Chemistry isn't just about sexual chemistry. It's something to do with listening, and I think it's something to do with playfulness," Scott says. "Your ability to listen to someone and take note of what someone is doing is chemistry. You have to wait and see what the other actor is doing."

A few moments later, Scott will have to rush out just as quickly as he arrived. But before that, he leaned back, naturally lit by the winter sun, and pondered whether "All of Us Strangers," in the nakedness of his performance, had taken him somewhere he hadn't before as an actor.

"Yeah, I think so," said Scott. "Or else to return to something that perhaps I've been before."

Features

ARABO TIMES

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024

NEW YORK: New York Jets quarterback **Aaron Rodgers** denied he implied comic **Jimmy Kimmel** was a pedophile and condemned those who do, but he stopped short of apologizing for his role in escalating their burgeoning feud.

Rodgers returned to ESPN's "The Pat McAfee Show" on Tuesday for his weekly appearance and addressed comments he made the week before that appeared to suggest Kimmel's name might appear on a list of associates of **Jeffrey Epstein**, a millionaire accused of sex trafficking involving underage victims before he died by suicide.

"Any type of name calling is ridiculous and I'm not calling him (a pedophile), and neither should you," Rodgers said on the show Tuesday.

The feud between ABC's late-night star and Rodgers, who regularly appears on the daily ESPN show, has proven embarrassing for The Walt Disney Co., the parent company to both television networks.

Rodgers criticized **Mike Foss**, an ESPN executive who oversees McAfee's show, for saying that Rodgers had made "a dumb and factually inaccurate joke" about Kimmel.

"Mike, you're not helping," Rodgers said. "You're not helping because I just read earlier exactly what I said. This is the game plan of the media and this is what they do: They try to cancel, you know, and it's not just me."

Rodgers last week said a lot of people, "including Jimmy Kimmel," are really hoping that a list of Epstein's associates doesn't come out publicly. Kimmel, who has denied any association with Epstein, threatened Rodgers with a lawsuit for the comment and said the NFL star was putting his family in danger.

Rodgers suggested that people were reading too much into what he said, that he was not stupid enough to accuse Kimmel of being a pedophile. (AP)

NEW YORK: Short fiction by **Yiyun Li**, **Bennett Sims** and **Paul Yoon** are finalists for the 20th annual Story Prize, given for the year's outstanding short story collection.

Prize officials announced Tuesday that the nominees are

Li's "Wednesday's Child," Sims' "Other Minds and Other Stories" and Yoon's "The Hive and the Honey." The Story Prize was founded in 2004 by editor **Larry Dark** and philanthropist **Julie Lindsey**, who pick the finalists. Three outside judges then choose the winners. The top prize is \$20,000 and the runners-up get



Kimmel



Rodgers

\$5,000 each. The winner will be announced March 26. Previous recipients include **Anthony Doerr**, **George Saunders** and **Edwidge Danticat**. (AP)

LONDON: Irish singer-songwriter **Sin ad O'Connor** died from

"natural causes" in July, a coroner said Tuesday.

London's Metropolitan Police had said the singer's death was not considered suspicious after she was found unresponsive at a home in southeast London on July 26. O'Connor was 56.

The Southwark Coroner's Court confirmed that O'Connor died

of natural causes, which means circumstances when an illness or condition is not linked to external forces. It did not provide details.

The singer, who began her career performing on the streets of **Dublin**, rose to worldwide fame with her cover of **Prince's** ballad "Nothing Compares 2 U," released in 1990. (AP)

People & Places

In Memoriam

Year in review

Influential people who died in 2023

Ron Cephas Jones, 66. A veteran stage actor who won two Emmy Awards for his role as a long-lost father who finds redemption on the NBC television drama series "This Is Us." Aug. 19.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, 62. As head of the Wagner Group, he made his name as a profane and brutal mercenary boss before mounting an armed rebellion that was the most severe and shocking challenge to Russian President Vladimir Putin's rule. Aug. 23. Plane crash.

Bob Barker, 99. The enduring, dapper game show host who became a household name over a half century of hosting "Truth or Consequences" and "The Price Is Right." Aug. 26.

Samuel "Joe" Wurzelbacher, 49. He was thrust into the political spotlight as "Joe the Plumber" after questioning Barack Obama about his economic policies during the 2008 presidential campaign. Aug. 27.



Richardson

loafing into a billion-dollar empire of restaurants, resorts and frozen concoctions. Sept. 1.

Bill Richardson, 75. A two-term Democratic governor of New Mexico and an American ambassador to the United Nations who dedicated his post-political career to working to secure the release of Americans detained by foreign adversaries. Sept. 1.

Steve Harwell, 56. The longtime frontman of the Grammy-nominated pop rock band Smash Mouth that was behind the megahit "All Star." Sept. 4. Acute liver failure.

Ian Wilmut, 79. The cloning pioneer whose work was critical to the creation of Dolly the Sheep in 1996. Sept. 9.

Roy Kidd, 91. He coached Eastern Kentucky to two NCAA Division I-AA football championships in a Hall of Fame career. Sept. 12.

Eno Ichikawa, 83. He revived the spectacular in Japanese Kabuki theater to woo younger and global audiences. Sept. 13.

Michael McGrath, 65. A Broadway character actor who shined in zany, feel-good musicals and won a Tony Award for "Nice Work If You Can Get It." Sept. 14.

Fernando Botero, 91. A renowned Colombian painter and sculptor whose depictions of people and objects in plump, exaggerated forms became emblems of Colombian art around the world. Sept. 15.

Giorgio Napolitano, 98. The first former Communist to rise to Italy's presidency and the first person to be elected twice to the mostly ceremonial post. Sept. 22.

Matteo Messina Denaro, 61. A convicted mastermind of some of the Sicilian Mafia's most heinous slayings, Italy's No. 1 fugitive was captured after decades on the run. Sept. 25. Died in a prison hospital.

David McCallum, 90. The actor who became a teen heartthrob in the hit series "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." in the 1960s and was the eccentric medical examiner in the popular "NCIS" 40 years later. Sept. 25.

Dianne Feinstein, 90. A centrist Democrat from California and champion of liberal causes who was elected to the US Senate in 1992 and broke gender barriers throughout her long career in local and national politics. Sept. 28.

Michael Gambon, 82. The Irish-born actor knighted for his storied career on the stage and screen who gained admiration from a new generation of moviegoers with his portrayal of Hogwarts headmaster Albus Dumbledore in six of the eight "Harry Potter" films. Sept. 28.

Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan, 98. A renowned agricultural scientist who revolutionized India's farming and was a key architect of the country's "Green Revolution." Sept. 28.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 85. A prominent Egyptian-American academic and pro-democracy activist during the reign of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Sept. 29.

October

Tim Wakefield, 57. The knuckleballing workhorse of the Red Sox pitching staff who bounced back after giving up a season-ending home run to the Yankees in the 2003 playoffs to help Boston win its curse-busting World Series title the following year. Oct. 1.

Dick Butkus, 80. A Hall of Fame middle linebacker for the Chicago Bears whose speed and ferocity set the standards for the position in the modern era. Oct. 5.

Michael Chiarello, 61. A chef known for his Italian-inspired Californian restaurants who won an Emmy Award for best host for "Easy Entertaining" with Michael Chiarello and appeared on Bravo's "Top Chef" and "Top Chef Masters." Oct. 6. Allergic reaction that resulted in anaphylactic shock.

Burt Young, 83. The Oscar-nominated actor who played Paulie, the rough-hewn, mumbling-and-grumbling best friend, corner-man and brother-in-law to Sylvester Stallone in the "Rocky" franchise. Oct. 8.

Kevin Phillips, 82. The author, commentator and political strategist whose landmark book, "The Emerging Republican Majority," became a blueprint for GOP thinking in the 1970s and beyond. Oct. 9.

Louise Meriwether, 100. The author and activist whose coming-of-age novel "Daddy Was a Number Runner" is widely regarded as a groundbreaking and vital portrait of race, gender and class. Oct. 10.

Mark Goddard, 87. An actor best known for playing Major Don West in the 1960s television show "Lost in Space." Oct. 10.

Rudolph Isley, 84. A founding member of the Isley Brothers who helped perform such raw rhythm and blues classics as "Shout" and "Twist and Shout" and the funky hits "That Lady" and "It's Your Thing." Oct. 11.

Louise Glück, 80. The Nobel laureate was a poet of unblinking candor and perception who wove classical allusions, philosophical reveries, bittersweet memories and humorous asides into indelible portraits of a fallen and heartrending world. Oct. 13.

Piper Laurie, 91. The strong-willed, Oscar-nominated actor who performed in acclaimed roles despite at one point abandoning acting altogether in search of a "more meaningful" life. Oct. 14.

Suzanne Somers, 76. The effervescent blonde actor who played Chrissy Snow on the television show "Three's Company" and later became an entrepreneur and New York Times best-selling author. Oct. 15.

Martti Ahtisaari, 86. The former president of Finland and global peace broker who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 for his work to resolve international conflicts. Oct. 16.

To be continued



Carol Littleton (from left), Mel Brooks, Angela Bassett, and Michelle Satter pose with their honorary awards during the Governors Awards on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at the Dolby Ballroom in Los Angeles. (AP)



Lily Gladstone (left), and Leonardo DiCaprio arrive at the Governors Awards on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at the Dolby Ballroom in Los Angeles. (AP)



Elba



Canto

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Adan Canto, the Mexican singer and actor best known for his roles in "X-Men: Days of Future Past" and "Agent Game" as well as the TV series "The Cleaning Lady," has died. He was 42.

Publisher **Jennifer Allen**, told The Associated Press Canto died of appendiceal cancer and had opted to keep his diagnosis private.

"Adan had a depth of spirit that few truly knew. Those who glimpsed it were changed forever," Allen wrote in a statement. "He will be greatly missed by so many."

Born in **Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, Mexico** and raised in **Texas**, Canto began his career at age 16, when he left home for **Mexico City** to work as a singer-songwriter. He then began pursuing acting, making his TV debut on the 2009 Mexican series "Estado de Gracia." His American debut came later, on **Kevin Williamson's** 2013 Fox drama series "The Following," which starred **Kevin Bacon**.

His notable roles include Vice President-elect **Aaron Shore** on "Designated Survivor," Colombian politician **Rodrigo Lara Bonilla** on "Narcos," and the mutant Sunspot in "X-Men: Days of Future Past." Canto starred in **Halle Berry's** directorial debut, "Bruised," as well as "Agent Game." He also directed his first short film in 2014 and a second one in 2020, a provocative western starring **Theo Rossi**. Canto was starring as **Armand Morales** on Fox's "The Cleaning Lady" at the time of his death, which is currently filming its third season. He was unable to participate in the production due to his illness but was hoping to rejoin later in the season. (AP)

NEW YORK: She doesn't even go here, but **Lindsay Lohan** still joined the cast of the new "Mean Girls" at the musical film's premiere Monday night in New York.

Lohan, the star of the original 2004 film, reunited with **Tina Fey** - who wrote both the classic film, the Broadway show it inspired and this new adaptation - and posed with the new **Cady Heron, Angourie Rice**, on the pink carpet.

"It was an amazing movie to work on when I did it, and I can't wait to see this new iterative version of it. I think it's gonna be wonderful," Lohan told The Associated Press.

Lohan said it "felt great" to hear of the movie's impact on teens over the years and was excited that the new film, which releases Friday, will deal with new topics. "I loved Lindsay's performance in the

Awards

Laughter and tears at the 14th Governors Awards

Brooks, Bassett honored with Oscars

LOS ANGELES, Jan 10, (AP): Mel Brooks received his second Oscar Tuesday night at a private dinner in the heart of Hollywood. The event, the 14th Governors Awards, was untelevised but the crowd was as starry as they come with the likes of Martin Scorsese, Christopher Nolan, Leonardo DiCaprio, Penélope Cruz, Natalie Portman, Bradley Cooper and Jon Batiste in the audience.

"I promise not to sell this one," Brooks said.

Hollywood's awards season can start to feel a little gratuitously self-congratulatory, but the Governors Awards is a bit of a respite from the horse race and a chance to celebrate some of the industry's living legends, including Brooks, Angela Bassett and film editor Carol Littleton, who all collected honorary Oscars at the Ray Dolby Auditorium, just steps from where the Academy Awards will be broadcast in March. Michelle Satter, a founding director of the Sundance Institute, also received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award.

The evening produced both laughs and tears, with heartfelt tributes to the honorees and acknowledgement of recent, tragic losses. Matthew Broderick and Nathan Lane serenaded Brooks with a medley, urging the crowd to join in for "Springtime for Hitler." Regina King toasted her "Boyz n the Hood" co-star for being "excellence in human form." Glenn Close thanked Littleton for making her look like a "really good dancer" in her second film, "The Big Chill." And Ryan Coogler and Chloé Zhao told Satter how much her guidance meant to them when they were just starting out.

John Mulaney hosted the proceedings and got things off to a lively start.

"It's such an honor for me to be hosting this," Mulaney said. "Growing up, as a boy, I would always watch the non-televised Governors Awards even though they only started 14 years ago. We would all gather in front of the turned off TV. It was the only time I ever saw my dad smile."

The annual event is put on by the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to

recognize contributions to the industry and a life's achievement. It used to be part of the Oscars telecast but shifted to a separate occasion in 2009, where there would be no time constraints on the speeches.

Mulaney offered gentle ribs about Rami Malek's screentime in "Oppenheimer" and Bradley Cooper's preparation for "Maestro" as well as his own status in the industry, reading a real email from his agents about auditioning for the role of "young cop" in an untitled Maggie Gyllenhaal project, which had the audience in stitches.

Speaking about Bassett, he said "she got an Oscar nomination for a Marvel movie...that's like getting a Pulitzer Prize for a Reddit comment."

The event, which was delayed from its original November date because of the actors strike, is also a de facto campaign stop for the current season's awards hopefuls. Voting for the 96th Oscars begins on Thursday and nominations will be announced on Jan. 23 for the March 10 ceremony.

Before the tributes started, actors and filmmakers from the top movies of the year, including "Oppenheimer," "Barbie," "Killers of the Flower Moon," "Maestro," "Poor Things" and "The Color Purple," mingled.

Exchange

"May December" breakout Charles Melton introduced his screenwriter

Samy Burch to "The Holdovers" star Da'Vine Joy Randolph and went on to exchange numbers with another fresh face: Dominic Sessa. A few steps away Paul Giamatti chatted with Julianne Moore, while Carey Mulligan caught up with Robert Downey Jr. Mulligan was soon pulled away by her "Promising Young Woman" and "Saltburn" director Emerald Fennell and both took a moment to gush over Barry Keoghan's ruffled shirt.

Across the room Nicholas Cage and Zac Efron were deep in conversation, while Ayo Edebiri and Greta Lee held hands and posed for a photo. Fantasia Barrino and Margot Robbie also spoke at length, sitting on opposite sides of the table, while Greta Gerwig chatted with Diane Warren. But all dutifully took their seats when asked, knowing

that this night was for the honorees.

Brooks was up first and kept it light and brief, joking about having to sell his first Oscar for writing "The Producers" because times were tough. At the ceremony, in 1969, he said he wanted to "thank the academy of arts sciences and money for this wonderful award."

The 97-year-old, who began his career writing for Sid Caesar's "Your Show of Shows," and over the next 70 years would write, direct, act, produce for film, television and Broadway and write books, including a recent memoir, is among the rare breed of EGOT-winners. (Those are entertainers who have won Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Awards.) Lane joked that with this honorary award he's now an "EGOOT" winner. He also received two other Oscar nominations, for writing the lyrics to John Morris' "Blazing Saddles" song and another screenwriting nod for "Young Frankenstein," which he shared with Gene Wilder.

Littleton worked frequently with both Lawrence Kasdan and Jonathan Demme, editing films like "Body Heat," "The Big Chill," "Swimming to Cambodia" and "The Manchurian Candidate." She received her first and only Oscar nomination for "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial," the only film she's edited for Steven Spielberg. She was also married to cinematographer and former Academy president John Bailey, who died in November at age 81.

Bassett gave an impassioned speech, talking about acting as not just a career but a calling. She said the honorary Oscar is not just another award but "a testament to my legacy." In the audience, Barrino stood while Bassett spoke, cheering her on at key moments. After the event, "The Color Purple" director Blitz Bazawule said it was "like church."

The 65-year-old received her first Oscar nomination for her portrayal of Tina Turner in "What's Love Got to Do With It" and her second last year for playing the grieving queen in "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever." She noted that she's only the second Black actress to receive the honorary Oscar, following in the footsteps of the late Cicely Tyson who she considered a mentor.

2004 film so much, it's one of my favorites," Rice said. "So in everything I did, I just hoped that my performance would be adding to the legacy that she started."

Just like the 2004 version, the musical

movie follows Cady's move to the suburbs, where she experiences the treacherous hierarchies of high school. There, she finds herself accepted by an elite yet shallow group of girls known as the Plastics, led

by **Regina George** - here played by **Renée Rapp**. It's billed as "a new twist from Tina Fey," incorporating songs and new technology, but Fey said the "core story" still resonates two decades later. (AP)



Florence Pugh (from left), Emily Blunt, Cillian Murphy, and Robert Downey Jr. arrive at the Governors Awards on Tuesday, Jan. 9, at the Dolby Ballroom in Los Angeles. (AP)

LONDON: Actor **Idris Elba** on Monday urged the British government to ban machetes and serrated "zombie" knives to help stop young people falling victim to knife crime. The London-born star of "The Wire" and "Luther" joined protesters from the "Don't Stop Your Future" campaign outside Parliament, posing with clothes and shoes representing people killed by knives.

In the **UK**, which has strict gun-control laws, about four in 10 homicides involve a knife or sharp instrument. There is particular concern about knife crime involving young people in Britain's cities. In London, 21 teenagers were killed in 2023, 18 of whom were stabbed to death.

"I can't stay silent as more young lives are lost to these brutal and heartless crimes," Elba said. "As school returns, too many young people will not be joining their classmates and too many grieving families have lost a young person they love in recent years."

The government announced a ban on machetes and knives that are designed to look threatening in August 2023, but the law has yet to be approved by Parliament. (AP)

The Conversation

No proven treatment for the ancient virus

Rabies resurgence: Experts share insights on protection

By **Rodney E. Rohde**, Texas State University and **Charles Rupprecht**, Auburn University

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

A feral kitten in Omaha, Nebraska, tested positive for rabies in November 2023. It died of the raccoon variant of the virus, which is typically found only in the Appalachian Mountains. Detecting this variant hundreds of miles away in the Midwest raised concerns about a potential outbreak and launched a public health task force to vaccinate all raccoons in the area.

While the case was likely contained, a better understanding of how rabies is transmitted can help prevent future outbreaks. Researchers Rodney Rohde and Charles Rupprecht explain how rabies vaccination works and how to protect yourself from infection.

Rabies is an ancient viral disease that has been around for thousands of years. Considered a neglected tropical disease, rabies typically occurs in poorer communities without the infrastructure for adequate surveillance, prevention and control.

Rabies is unpredictable. Stages of infection include an incubation period that ranges from days to months, early flu-like symptoms, a period of severe neurological effects, coma and then death. Common early-stage symptoms in people, such as fatigue, fever and nausea, are often nonspecific. Neurological symptoms can involve aggression, confusion, difficulty swallowing and paralysis.

The pathogens that cause rabies belong to a genus of viruses called Lyssavirus that target warm-blooded vertebrates. Although researchers believe that all mammals are susceptible to infection, only certain animals are reservoirs: environments, habitats or populations where a pathogen can live, multiply and transmit. In the US, the highest-risk animal reservoirs for rabies are skunks, bats, foxes, coyotes and raccoons.

Most people who become infected with rabies get it from an animal bite. Less common routes include contact with open wounds or the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or mouth. Once the virus enters the body, it can begin replicating in muscle tissue or after traveling directly to the brain. Once it spreads to other organs, patients typically die of brain inflammation.

Measuring the global burden of rabies is difficult because surveillance is often inadequate.

Vaccination

While human incidence of rabies are rare in the US, averaging one to three cases per year, this disease causes tens of thousands of deaths worldwide annually.

Rabies rates in animals vary each year. During 2021, 54 US jurisdictions reported 3,663 rabid animals, an 18.2% decrease from the previous year. Lower- and middle-income countries, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, have experienced disruptions to animal vaccination for rabies due to vaccine production and access issues and increased feral animal populations.

Human rabies cases have risen in several countries because of multiple ecological and socioeconomic factors. For example, in China, rabies cases are associated with proximity to urban populations and transportation hubs. The closer a susceptible animal is to a community experiencing an outbreak, the greater the likelihood for spread.

Increased temperatures due to climate change are also linked to increased rabies transmission because

of changes in animal ranges. For example, as regions warm, the relative distribution and abundance of certain reservoirs, such as tropical species like vampire bats, may increase. Rising Arctic temperatures may increase how often red and Arctic foxes interact and lead to outbreaks.

Higher rates of interactions between humans and animals, as well as lower levels of rabies education and prevention measures, are also linked to an increased risk of infection.

Prior attempts to control rabies include animal culling and vaccination. Culling animal populations did not lead to reduced infection. Rather, it raised significant economic, ecological and ethical concerns. Besides killing likely healthy animals, culling also isn't cost-effective.

Animal vaccination, on the other hand, can protect both animals and humans with minimal risk and reduced costs. Oral rabies vaccination of wildlife began during the 1970s with the distribution of vaccine-laden baits in the local environment. Officials saw success in rabies control among coyote, fox and raccoon populations in Europe and North America.

Education

We both participated in the inaugural oral rabies vaccination campaign in Texas. This effort eventually led to the elimination of canine rabies in the state.

Oral vaccines are also being considered for the prevention and control of rabies in animals in other countries, such as dogs in India and Thailand.

There is no proven treatment for rabies, so prevention through education and vaccination is critical. Rabies can be prevented by avoiding exposure or receiving vaccination before or after an exposure.

Preexposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, involves exposing the immune system to a harmless version of the virus to prevent a future infection. For people who work in high-risk occupations, such as wildlife biologists, veterinarians and animal control personnel, two doses of a rabies vaccine can offer significant protection.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention currently recommends a booster dose for people at elevated risk of exposure. People traveling to areas with a high prevalence of rabies may also want to consider vaccination.

Postexposure prophylaxis, or PEP, means taking a vaccine or medications to prevent an infection as soon as possible after exposure. In most cases, this involves a dose of human rabies immune globulin, or HRIG, as well as a rabies vaccine dose on the day of exposure.

Also known as passive immunization, HRIG gives your body the antibodies to neutralize rabies virus until your immune system can produce its own antibodies. Three more doses of the rabies vaccine are given three to 14 days after exposure. People who are immunocompromised may receive a fifth dose as well.

Regular and appropriate pet and livestock vaccinations are also important to help curb rabies virus exposures. Animals typically receive a yearly rabies booster.

There are several new rabies vaccines for animals and people in development to improve their safety, cost and efficacy. Researchers are also developing treatments to control rabies when the infection reaches the central nervous system.

Some people may not realize they were bitten by an animal if the bites are small. Because of the long incubation period of the virus, they also may

World's first 'kidney tumor' treated using the novel sonic beam therapy

Breakthrough in non-invasive medicine

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan 10, (Agencies): HistoSonics, developer of a non-invasive platform and novel sonic beam therapy called histotripsy, has announced the treatment of the first patient in its pivotal #Hope4Kidney Trial. The FDA approved the investigational device study earlier last year and it is designed to evaluate the safety and efficacy of the company's breakthrough Edison System to destroy targeted kidney tumors, completely non-invasively and without the need for needles or incisions. The #Hope4Kidney Trial is a multi-center, open label, single arm trial planned to enroll up to 68 patients.

The procedure was performed by urologist Michael McDonald M.D., a leader and pioneer in advanced urologic procedures, including robotics, at AdventHealth Celebration in Osceola County. "At the start of my surgical career in the

1990's open surgical techniques were the primary method of medical operations. However, this quickly changed with the introduction of laparoscopic surgery in the late 1990's and robotic surgery in the early 2000's," said Dr. McDonald. "I'm excited about the potential of emerging technologies such as histotripsy to improve patient safety and outcomes." The procedure was conducted under the auspices of the AdventHealth Research Institute, where physicians and researchers are currently conducting more than 650 studies and clinical trials. AdventHealth Celebration is internationally recognized as a hub for robotic surgery, treating patients and training surgeons from around the world in the latest techniques and technologies.

In 2020, there were an estimated 628,355 people living with kidney and renal

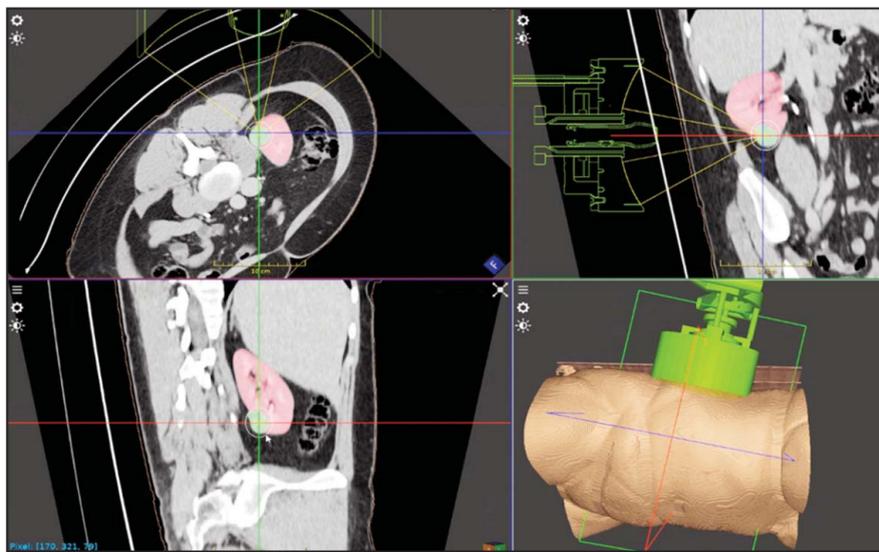
pelvis tumors in the United States and an additional 81,000 people were diagnosed with kidney tumors in 2023. Current kidney therapies such as partial nephrectomy and thermal ablation are invasive and exhibit complications from bleeding and infection that non-invasive histotripsy may avoid. While surgical intervention is the "gold standard" in removing kidney tumors, a non-invasive approach with histotripsy provides the potential to destroy targeted tumors without damaging non-targeted kidney tissue. Additionally, histotripsy's purely mechanical mechanism of cellular destruction could preserve function of the kidney's urine collecting system.

"We are extremely excited to have Dr. McDonald and his team at AdventHealth Celebration treat the first patient at part of the #Hope4Kidney Trial," said HistoSonics President and CEO, Mike Blue. "Our goal is to enable physicians to precisely target and destroy kidney tumors with our novel, non-invasive solution, avoiding the morbidity and complications seen with current invasive surgery or ablative techniques," added Blue. The Company expects to take advantage of key learnings from its initial Phase I kidney study, called the Cain Trial, and technical enhancements with its Edison platform during the #Hope4Kidney Trial.

HistoSonics' image guided sonic beam therapy system uses advanced imaging and proprietary sensing technology to deliver non-invasive, personalized treatments with precision and control. The science of histotripsy uses focused sound energy to produce controlled acoustic cavitation that mechanically destroys and liquefies targeted tissue at sub-cellular levels. The company believes that the novel mechanism of action of their proprietary technology provides significant advantages to patients, including the ability of the treatment site to recover and resorb quickly. Uniquely, the HistoSonics' platform also provides physicians the ability to monitor the destruction of tissue under continuous real-time visualization and control, unlike any modality that exists today.

The Edison System is intended for the non-invasive mechanical destruction of liver tumors, including the partial or complete destruction of unresectable liver tumors via histotripsy. The FDA has not evaluated the Edison System for the treatment of any specific disease or condition.

Use of the Edison System in kidney applications is limited by federal law to investigational use. The #Hope4Kidney Trial is expected to support a future expansion of the indication to include the destruction of kidney tissue/tumors.



FDA approved the HistoSonics technology targeting kidney tissue to be destroyed in a non-invasive histotripsy procedure. (AP)

A. for all addresses drug shortages

Generic version of sodium acetate launched

MINNETONKA, Minn., Jan 10, (Agencies): Milla Pharmaceuticals Inc., an A. for all company, announced that its partner, Woodward Pharma Services LLC, has just commercialized its Supplemental Abbreviated New Drug Application (sANDA) approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a generic version of Sodium Acetate Injection 4 mEq/mL marketed by Fresenius Kabi USA LLC.

Sodium Acetate Injection 4 mEq/mL is indicated as a source of sodium for addition to large volume intravenous fluids to prevent or correct hyponatremia in patients with restricted or no oral intake. It is also used as an additive for preparing specific intravenous fluid formulas

when the needs of the patient cannot be met by standard electrolyte or nutrient solutions.

Milla Pharmaceuticals was previously granted a Competitive Generic Therapy (CGT) designation for its generic drug product, Sodium Acetate Injection, 2 mEq/mL, by the FDA in 2021, which has been commercialized since July 2021. The newly launched 4 mEq/mL is a more concentrated version marketed by Fresenius Kabi USA LLC.

The approval of this Supplemental Abbreviated New Drug Application (sANDA), which occurred under priority review from the FDA because of its shortage status, has been consistent with A. for all's last two FDA filings which were First Cycle Review Ap-

provals. The Sodium Acetate Injection 4 mEq/mL has been consistently listed on the FDA Drug Shortages List for the last several years.

"Our joint mission of making affordable medicines available to all is more than ever at the centre of what we do every day," commented Filip Van de Vliet, CEO of A. for all. "With this sANDA, an alternative concentration of the Sodium Acetate Injection we launched two years ago, we again substantially increase the availability of a life-saving drug that U.S. patients would otherwise be lacking. Once again, the strength of our product development and regulatory teams has allowed us to bring a fast and high-quality solution to those in need."

Never attempting to feed wildlife.

Treating animals respectfully. Do not tease an animal, disturb its sleep or handle its offspring.

Always reporting a bite to an animal control officer, game warden or health care professional.

World Rabies Day, which marks the death of rabies vaccine developer Louis Pasteur, is Sept. 28. (AP)

infection is recommended after any suspected bat exposure.

There are many practical ways to protect yourself from rabies such as:

■ Vaccinating and supervising your pets.

■ Handling wild animals that seem to be acting strangely.

■ Not touching sick, injured or dead animals.

■ Never attempting to feed wildlife.

■ Treating animals respectfully. Do not tease an animal, disturb its sleep or handle its offspring.

■ Always reporting a bite to an animal control officer, game warden or health care professional.

World Rabies Day, which marks the death of rabies vaccine developer Louis Pasteur, is Sept. 28. (AP)

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Irving leads Mavs past Timberwolves



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) shoots against Toronto Raptors forward Chris Boucher (25) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024. (AP)

Pelicans dismiss Kings 133-100

DALLAS, Jan 10, (AP): Kyrie Irving made the tying and go-ahead 3-pointers, finishing with 35 points to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 115-108 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Sunday night.

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 play.

Derrick Jones Jr. sealed the win with a driving dunk with 24 seconds to go.

Anthony Edwards topped West-leading Minnesota with 36 points on 14-of-27 shooting.

Pelicans 133, Kings 100

In Sacramento, Calif., CJ McCollum scored 30 points, making seven 3-pointers, and New Orleans led by 50 points in a rout of In 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 points.

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.

Domantas Sabonis had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings, but star guard De'Aaron Fox scored just three points on 1-of-10 shooting.

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 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.

Barrett, acquired from the Knicks on Dec. 30, made 11 of his first 14 shots and wound up 13 for 20 from the floor with six rebounds and six assists.

Klay Thompson scored 25 points for Golden State. Draymond Green returned to the practice floor for the Warriors' pregame walkthrough a day after being reinstated by the NBA following a 12-game suspension.

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.

The Pistons dropped their fourth straight game. This skid comes on the heels of ending their NBA record-tying 28-game losing streak against Toronto on Dec. 30.

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 games.

BASKETBALL

Mikal Bridges scored 42 points and made the tying jumper with 1.5 seconds 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 go-ahead 3-pointer with 1:30 to play. Morant was sidelined because of soreness in his right shoulder.

Kevin Durant returned for Phoenix after missing three games because of soreness in his right hamstring. He had 23 points and 10 rebounds. Devin Booker led the Suns with 24 points.

Magic 117, Hawks 110, OT

In Orlando, Fla., 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.

Saddiq Bey's dunk with 18.8 seconds left in the fourth tied it for the Hawks, and Houstan missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer to send it to overtime.

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 victory.

Victor Wembanyama had 24 points, 10 rebounds and five blocked for San Antonio.

Smith to open, Green recalled

Australia not to pick a specialist to replace Warner

SYDNEY, Jan 10, (AP): Steve Smith was elevated to open the batting to make room for Cameron Green's recall to Australia's test XI after selectors opted not to pick a specialist to replace the retired David Warner for the series-opening match against West Indies.

Cricketer Australia's chief selector George Bailey confirmed Wednesday that Smith will push up the order from No. 4 to partner Usman Khawaja. Green will bat at No. 4 in his first test since losing his spot as allrounder to Mitch Marsh last July.

The 13-player squad includes Matt Renshaw, who has opened for Australia, and fast bowler Scott Boland as injury cover.

"We have selected a team we believe contains the best six batters in the country," Bailey said in a statement before confirming the batting lineup in a news conference.

The first test against West Indies starts Jan. 17 in Adelaide. The second match will be a day-nighter in Brisbane beginning Jan. 25.

Warner played the last of his 112 tests in the third match of a 3-0 sweep against Pakistan in Sydney last week.

Renshaw, Marcus Harris and Cameron Bancroft were all considered options to fill the vacant spot.

Bancroft, who is among the leading scorers in the domestic competition but has only played two

tests since returning from his nine-month ban following the so-called "Sandpapergate" scandal, urged selectors to go with a specialist opener.

Smith volunteered to open the innings and, ultimately, the 24-year-old Green's immense potential was a deciding factor.

A tall fast bowler, agile fielder and technically solid batter, Green made his debut as an all-rounder against India in December, 2020.

CRICKET

He played 24 tests, averaging 33.6 with the bat and taking 30 wickets, before he was dropped during last year's Ashes series in England.

He played in Australia's World Test Championship final win over India in London, and was also a part of the Australia squad that won the 50-over Cricket World Cup in India last November.

The inclusion of Green and Marsh as well as specialist pacemen Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood gives Australia five big, genuine fast bowling options. Squeezing Green into the batting lineup was the tricky part.

"The way the rest of that batting order is functioning left us feeling like we have someone who we think is pretty talented, who potentially was

going to find it hard to get any test cricket in the next 12 months," Bailey said of Green. "We can get a lot of benefits out of him playing."

Smith, who has been the top-ranked batter in test cricket, has scored 9,514 runs in 105 tests at an average of 58, including 32 centuries. He made his debut batting at No. 8 in England in 2010 and played 17 test at No. 3. Otherwise, all others have been in the middle order.

"Steve's motivated and energized and keen to (open)," Bailey said of the former captain's next challenge.

Selectors have started regenerating the limited-overs squad, with Warner retiring from the format and allrounder Marcus Stoinis and spinner Ashton Agar left out of the squad to play West Indies in a three-match ODI series next month.

Frontline fast bowlers Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and allrounder Mitchell Marsh will be rested for the series, while pacer Lance Morris was included and expected to make his international debut.

Aaron Hardie, Matt Short, Jhye Richardson and Nathan Ellis were selected after missing out on the World Cup squad, and Joe Inglis was preferred as wicketkeeper to test gloveman Alex Carey.

Smith will return as captain to cover for Cummins.

Nebraska tops Purdue for 1st win over top-ranked team in 40 years

LINCOLN, Neb., Jan 10, (AP): Nebraska coach Fred Hoiberg had a single word to describe the Huskers biggest win in 40 years, Tuesday's 88-72 upset of No. 1 Purdue.

Hoiberg called it "incredible." "I'm just so proud of the guys for coming out and getting off to a really good start," he said. "This is a huge win for our program, to come out here and knock off what I think is the best team in the country. It shows us what we're capable of doing."

Nebraska (13-3, 3-2 Big Ten) last defeated a No. 1 team 41 years ago, when it beat top-ranked Missouri 67-51. The Huskers last win over a No. 1 in Lincoln was a 74-73 victory over Michigan in 1962.

No. 2 Houston also lost on Tuesday, 57-53 to Iowa State, the first time since Feb. 26, 2022 when the No. 1 and No. 2 team lost on the same day during the regular season. That year it was Gonzaga and Arizona that went down. It is the eighth time since the 2009-2010 season that the top two teams have lost on the same day in the regular season.

The Huskers got the win, Hoiberg said, with the fast start fueled by forward Rienk Mast, who scored Nebraska's first seven points and led the defense that locked down Purdue's Zach Edey, who had just two points in the first half.

"It doesn't get much bigger than this one, the No. 1 team, the reigning National Player of the Year," Mast said. "I just see that as a challenge and luckily, the shots were going in in the beginning and gave the team a little spark and everybody started believing."

Nebraska built an 11-point halftime lead by holding Purdue scoreless for the final 3 1/2 minutes of the first half, scoring 13 unanswered in a run that began with a pair of 3-pointers by Keisei Tominaga and ended with seven straight from Sam Hoiberg, the coach's son.

"That was the difference in the game," Purdue coach Matt

BASKETBALL

Painter said of the Nebraska halftime lead. "We had a couple good fights there in the second half to where pulled within single digits and one time we got it to two, then they pushed it right back to double digits."

Purdue hit its first four 3-pointers of the second half as it sliced the Nebraska lead to 51-50 on Braden Smith's free throws with 13:51 left. But the Huskers countered with a 14-2 run to go up by 13 on C.J. Wilcher's 3-pointer with 11:52 remaining.

The Boilermakers surged again, cutting the Nebraska lead to 68-62 on Lance Jones' driving layup with 9:09 left. The Huskers responded with a 3-pointer by Wilcher that started a 20-10 game ending run.

Nebraska fans stormed the floor at the buzzer, Hoiberg got doused with water both on the court and off, and the Huskers relished the rare win over the top ranked team.

"It was huge, man, a great thing to see," Wilcher said. "To be a part of this game, just see the growth of our program, to be a part of this is a great experience. It's kind of like full circle from where we came from my first year. It was great. It was dope. I've never experienced that kind of game."

Iowa State 57, Houston 53

In Ames, Iowa, Iowa State knocked off the nation's final unbeaten team on Tuesday night and delivered a message in the process.

Tamin Lipsey scored 14 points, freshman Milan Momcilovic made a baseline jumper with 30.2 seconds left and Iowa State beat No. 2 Houston 57-53.

The Cyclones (12-3, 1-1 Big 12) entered the game with the 284th-toughest schedule, and they were eager to quiet critics who had said their record is misleading.

"We're a young team, we're learning every game," Lipsey said. "But we're going to come out and fight every game no matter who we're playing, no matter where we're playing. Just don't doubt us."

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Iowa State secured its seventh win against a top-10 opponent in the last two seasons - most in Division I. Houston (14-1, 1-1) had a nation's-best 12-game road winning streak snapped in the program's first Big 12 road contest.

No. 1 Purdue lost 88-72 to Nebraska on Tuesday, making it the first time since Feb. 26, 2022 when the No. 1 and No. 2 team lost on the same day during the regular season. That year it was Gonzaga and Arizona that went down. It is the eighth time since the 2009-2010 season that the top two teams have lost on the same day in the regular season.

ISU forward Hason Ward made two free throws with 1:20 remaining, but he was whistled for a lane violation on the second free throw to keep the lead at 53-51.

Jamal Shead split a double team and made a jumper with 55.9 seconds left to tie it at 53-51.

After an Iowa State timeout, Momcilovic spun away from a double team and sank a jumper from a difficult angle for a 55-53 lead. L.J. Cryer's 3-pointer hit hard off the backboard and Momcilovic was fouled at 10.7 before making two free throws for a four-point lead.

Momcilovic finished with 11 points on 4-of-8 shooting for Iowa State. His go-ahead shot was his first basket of the second half.

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Officials pose for a group photo after the inauguration of the sports village.

Baidan inaugurates sports village

Yousef Al-Baidan, the Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, inaugurated the sports village at the Mishrif sports arena, organized by the Kuwait Sports for All Federation. The event was attended by members of the Federation's Board of Directors, led by Mahmoud Abel. This sports initiative, situated in the Mishrif area, is designed to benefit the community, fostering a well-rounded personality by offering sports opportunities to all members of society.

Al-Baidan emphasized that the Mishrif Sports Village is the pioneer of several upcoming villages scheduled to open across all regions of Kuwait. The objective is to cater to the Kuwaiti family, with an anticipated attendance exceeding 60,000 individuals, including Kuwaiti citizens, families, and residents. The project aims to provide an environment conducive to sports and entertainment.

The Sports Villages project, lasting four months, will unfold in every governorate of Kuwait, operating three days a week (Thursday - Friday - Saturday) as part of the Federation's ongoing activities

for Kuwaiti families, according to Mahmoud Abel, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Sports for All Federation. Abel expressed optimism about the project's success, envisioning it as an extension of their plan to deliver community sports services. He outlined the diverse facilities within the village, such as playgrounds, a bicycle path, areas for group and mental games, various electronic sports games, arcades, boxing, a children's play zone, foot-kicking spaces, a games hall for men, and a designated area for women.

Kuwait Equestrian Federation president applauds private-govt collaboration for sports development

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Masoud Johar Hayat, President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation, commended the collaborative efforts of both private and governmental sectors, emphasizing their positive influence on community development in general and the advancement of Kuwaiti equestrian sports in particular. This collaborative approach extends its benefits to a diverse range of male and female riders across all age groups.

International Bank and SAFEX in the sports arena is set to positively impact a large segment of Kuwaiti athletes. Specifically, the upcoming Kuwait International Bank Show Jumping Championship, known as KIB The STADIUM, is scheduled to kick off at Marina Beach, featuring the participation of over 500 male and female

horsemen from January 26 to February 17.

Hayat emphasized that the synergy between Kuwait International Bank and SAFEX will play a pivotal role in fostering the development of Kuwaiti equestrianism, motivating riders to compete and strive for the best results in the upcoming championship.



Masoud Johar Hayat, President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation.

EQUESTRIAN

In a press statement, Hayat highlighted the constructive and fruitful cooperation between the private sector, notably the Kuwait International Bank and SAFEX, and the government sector, represented by the Public Sports Authority. Additionally, he acknowledged the invaluable support and sponsorship from the Kuwait Olympic Committee. Hayat expressed optimism that these partnerships, coupled with the significant backing from Kuwait International Bank and SAFEX, would propel Kuwaiti equestrian sports to new heights, benefiting practitioners of this noble sport.

The collaboration between Kuwait

Three placed on a 'waiting' list

Negotiations heat up as Al-Qadisiya pursue Dr. Muhammad as next head coach

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Al-Qadisiya has opened discussions with Salmiya coach Dr. Muhammad Al-Mashaan to succeed Muhammad Ibrahim as the head coach.

Muhammad Ibrahim, citing health conditions, has expressed regret for being unable to continue leading the "Yellow" team since the conclusion of last December.

Following his team's recent 2-1 victory over Al-Jahra in the fourteenth round of the Zain Premier League, Dr. Muhammad Al-Mashaan confirmed ongoing negotiations with Al-Qadisiya. He expressed a strong desire to be at the helm of the Yellow training pyramid.

With coaching experience at Al-Jahra, Al-Nasr, and Al-Salmiya, along with serving as an assistant to Portuguese coach Jorvan Vieira in "Gulf 22," Al-Mashaan aims to fulfill his dream of leading Al-Qadisiya's training. He plans to discuss this matter with Sheikh Turki Al-Yousef, the president of Salmiya Club.

SOCCER

Al-Mashaan has expressed his reluctance to continue with Al-Samawi following negotiations with Al-Qadisiya, citing "technical and non-technical" issues faced by his current team.

As negotiations between Al-Qadisiya and Al-Mashaan near their conclusion, Al-Salmiya has initiated the search for an alternative coach.

The fate of foreign coaches in negotiations with Al-Qadisiya took a turn, with Pablo Franco apologizing. Additionally, the acceptance of three Croatian coaches - Dragan Talajic, Ante Micha, and Dalibor Starkevic - was not unanimous among some members of the club's board of directors. They have been placed on a "waiting" list until the situation with Dr. Muhammad Al-Mashaan becomes clearer.



Dr. Muhammad Al-Mashaan with Bader Al Mutawa.

Best of the Rest

Tottenham sign Werner: Tottenham signed Timo Werner on loan from Leipzig on Tuesday, giving the Germany forward another shot at the Premier League after his inconsistent stint with Chelsea.

The 27-year-old Werner joined Spurs on a six-month deal that included an option to make the transfer permanent this summer.

In the short term, Werner would plug a gap left by the departure of captain Son Heung-min to the Asian Cup with South Korea potentially until mid-February. (AP)



Werner

Fiorentina reach Italian Cup semis

FLORENCE, Italy, Jan 10, (AP): Last year's runner-up Fiorentina reached the semifinals of the Italian Cup, but it again had to do it on penalties.

Maxime Lopez converted the decisive spotkick as Fiorentina beat Bologna 5-4 on penalties after the match ended goalless in Florence - although the visitors hit the woodwork three times.

Carvalho joins Hull: Liverpool winger Fabio Carvalho has joined Championship team Hull on loan for the rest of the season.

The 21-year-old Carvalho spent the first half of the season on loan at German club RB Leipzig but returned to Liverpool last week after struggling for playing time.

After a penalty masterclass from both teams, Stefan Posch blasted Bologna's final kick over the bar, giving Lopez the opportunity to secure Fiorentina's place in the final four for the third straight year.

Bologna is enjoying a great season and knocked out two-time defending champion Inter Milan in the previous round.

Carvalho joins Hull on loan: Hull coach Liam Rosenior said "I couldn't be happier" about the signing. (AP) "Everyone is aware of Fabio's ability, his qualities as a young player," Rosenior told Hull's website. "Technically, he's outstanding. He can assist, score and run in behind. He's brave, quick, very balanced and takes the ball.



A file photo of Ali Safar in action.

Al-Kuwait lead 'amidst' few goals in 14th round

Strategic shifts expected

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

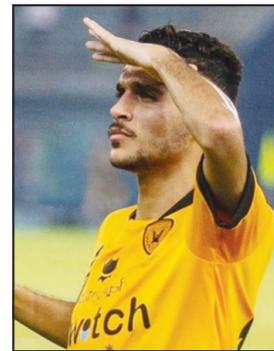
KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The fourteenth round of the Zain Premier League failed to bring about any shifts in the standings of participating teams, despite the outcomes of the five matches.

Aptly dubbed the "Scarcity of Goals," this round saw the lowest goal tally since the competition's inception, with only 9 goals across all matches. The prevalent theme of "Winning with Difficulty" was evident in each of the encounters.

SOCCER

Leaders Kuwait secured their victory against Khaitan, breaking the deadlock in the middle of the second half. Al-Arabi faced a tough challenge but emerged triumphant with a 2-1 win against Al-Fahaheel. Al-Qadisiya clinched victory with a lone goal against Al-Nasr. Al-Salmiya orchestrated a comeback against bottom-ranked Al-Jahra, scoring their second goal in the dying moments of the first half. Al-Shabab secured a single-goal victory against Kazma.

Kuwait, Al-Arabi, and Al-Qadisiya clubs have secured places in the Championship League (Six League), with Al-Fahaheel (7th with 15 points) unable to catch up. The battle for the remaining three seats in the "League of Six" inten-



Eid Al Rasheedi

sifies between Al-Nasr (21 points), Al-Salmiya (20 points), Kazma (17 points), Al-Fahaheel (15 points), and Al-Shabab (14 points). Khaitan face an uphill challenge, while Al-Jahra are the sole team officially guaranteed participation in the "Avoid Relegation" league competi-



Othman Al-Shammari - one of the summoned players.

Kuwait summons players for camp

CAIRO, Jan 10: The coaching team of the Kuwaiti national football team, led by Portuguese coach Rui Pinto, has made decisions regarding player summons for the upcoming training camp in Egypt. The selected players include Aqeel Al-Hazeem and Nasser Falih from Kazima, Salman Misfer from Khaitan, and Abdul Rahman Al-Majdali from Fahaheel.

In a related development, athletes Athbi Shehab and Mohammed Al-Huwaidi from Salmiya, along with Othman

Al-Shammari from Jahra, have joined the camp after completing their engagements in the Zain Premier League.

SOCCER

Meanwhile, the training sessions for Kuwait commenced at the Air Defense Stadium in Cairo. Al-Azraq is set to engage in a friendly match against Libya tomorrow, followed by a match against Uganda on January 19.

Kuwaiti goalkeeper Safar receives offer from Austrian Premier League 'giants'

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: Ali Safar, the esteemed goalkeeper of the na-

tional handball team has received a lucrative professional offer from a prominent team in the Austrian Premier League, eager to enlist the services of the Kuwaiti handball guardian known as "Octopus." Notably, Safar had previously showcased his skills professionally with the Macedonian team Vardar in 2021, making him the first Gulf national to compete at the professional level in Europe.

HANDBALL

Reflecting on his time with Vardar, Safar expressed the significant benefits of the professional experience gained. Having received European offers in the past, he chose to carefully evaluate and study these opportunities, particularly considering his active participation with the national team and the Kuwait Club in various foreign tournaments.



A man walks in front of the Main Media Center of the Asian Cup in Qatar, Doha, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024. Qatar will host the 18th Asian Cup, from Jan. 12 until Feb. 10, with 24 national soccer teams from the continent, competing in six groups for the trophy. (AP)

Sports

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Recognition reflects exceptional contributions to advancement of sports in Kuwait and Arab region

Sheikh Al-Fahad receives Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Award for Sports Creativity

DUBAI, Jan 10: Sheikh Dr. Talal Al-Fahad was bestowed with the prestigious Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Sports Creativity, as part of the Arab Sports Personality Award. The recognition reflects his exceptional contributions to the advancement of sports in Kuwait and the broader Arab region.

Following the conclusion of the ceremony, Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad expressed heartfelt gratitude for this esteemed honor and acknowledged

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid's role. The award serves as a motivation for his continuous efforts in propelling sports development in the Arabian Gulf and on the global stage.

Having traversed a lengthy journey in sports at local, Arab, and international levels, Sheikh Al-Fahad emphasized the significance of this "distinguished" recognition coming from the UAE and its benevolent people. He expressed optimism for the future of Kuwaiti sports, anticipating triumphs

on podiums that elevate the country's name in international and global arenas.

Ambassador Ali Al-Dhaidi, Consul General of the State of Kuwait in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, extended warm congratulations to Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad for receiving this award from the UAE, represented by the Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award. The ambassador highlighted that honoring Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad is a tribute not only to all

Kuwaiti athletes but also to Kuwaiti sports as a whole. He underscored the continuation of Sheikh Talal Al-Fahad's illustrious career, spanning achievements at local, Arab, and Asian levels.

The ambassador affirmed that this honor is a fitting continuation of the legacy established by the late martyr Sheikh Fahd Al-Ahmad, the spiritual father of Kuwaiti sports, who made significant contributions to the nation.



Sheikh Dr. Talal Al-Fahad receives the prestigious Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Sports Creativity.

Kuwait open against Oman

21st Asian Men's Handball Championship kicks off in Bahrain



Kuwait players intensify training for the championship.

MANAMA, Jan 10: The 21st edition of the Asian Men's Handball Championship, serving as the "2025 World Cup Qualifiers," kicks off at Bahrain's Khalifa Sports Hall. Sixteen teams, grouped into four, will compete until the tournament's culmination on the 25th of this month.

The opening day features four matches, starting with the UAE facing Hong Kong in Group Four. The action continues in Group Three with clashes between India and Iraq, followed by Japan versus Saudi Arabia. The host nation, Bahrain, concludes the day's matches against Kazakhstan in Group Four. The Qatari and Chinese Taipei teams join the UAE and Hong Kong in Group One, with the Kuwait making its debut tomorrow against Oman at 5:00 pm.

The tournament format dictates that the top two teams from each group progress to the main round, where they will compete in two groups. The subsequent stage sees the first and second-placed teams from each group advancing to the semi-finals, securing qualification for the upcoming World Championship.

HANDBALL

The Kuwaiti national handball team, led by Handball Federation Secretary-General Qayed Al-Adwani, is part of the competition. The delegation includes Treasurer Khaled Talib, Federation member Mubarak Al-Daihani, administrative staff represented by National Teams Director Faisal Siwan, and First Team Director Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi. The technical staff, headed by Algerian Saeed Hegazy, comprises his compatriot Mohamed Masoudan, physical trainer Issam Al-Lahyani, physiotherapist Mohamed Mahdi, goalkeeper coach Ayman Al-Sheikh, and team worker Masoud Rana.

Kuwait squad comprises 20 players, including goalkeepers Mahdi Khan, Abdulaziz Al-Dhafiri, and Hassan Safar. In preparation for the championship, the team underwent external training in Slovenia and Croatia, engaging in several test matches.

Kuwait team touted as the strongest in competition

Asian Shooting Championship in Kuwait sets the stage for Olympic qualifications

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Jan 10: The Supreme Organizing Committee for the Kuwait Asian Shooting Championship, scheduled at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Ranges Complex from January 12 to 22, has finalized its preparations for the championship's commencement tomorrow. Teams from across Asia have been engaged in training sessions over the past few days, culminating today.

As participants gear up for the Asian Shooting Championship, their sights are set on qualifying for the 2024 Paris Olympics.



Ali Al-Sulaibikh - Bahrain's delegation head.

Delegations from various Asian countries have started arriving in

Kuwait, with the President of the International Shooting Federation, Luciano Rossi from Italy, joining in to witness the tournament.

Kuwait's team, touted as the strongest in the competition, has garnered praise. Saudi delegation official, Badr Al-Ajmi, highlighted the keenness of Saudi shooters to achieve notable results, commending the support provided by the Saudi Shooting Federation in their preparations.

SHOOTING

Bahrain's delegation head, Ali Al-Sulaibikh, acknowledged Kuwait's exceptional organizational and technical standards, expressing that the Bahraini team faces a significant challenge in a championship boasting international and Olympic-level competitors.

The head of the Iranian delegation, Amir Chavoshi, emphasized the ideal atmosphere at the shooting range complex, commending Kuwait's track record in hosting successful shooting championships.

Iran, with six male and female shooters in trap and skeet competitions, aspires to secure spots in the upcoming Paris Olympics, having diligently prepared through intensive training.



Shooters gear up for the Asian Shooting Championship in Kuwait.

Middlesbrough 'upset' Chelsea

Hackney scores the lone goal

MIDDLESBROUGH, England, Jan 10, (AP): Cole Palmer missed from close range and Chelsea lost 1-0 to second-tier Middlesbrough in the first leg of their League Cup semi-final.

Hayden Hackney scored in the 37th minute and Middlesbrough held on at Riverside Stadium against their Premier League opponents.

Mauricio Pochettino's expensively assembled team has been eyeing cup trophies to make up for a disappointing Premier League campaign. They'll have work to do in the second leg at Stamford Bridge on Jan. 23.

"We had too many chances to score where we didn't score. That is football," Pochettino told Sky Sports. "We have another 90 minutes at Stamford Bridge, and I think we need to be positive."

Middlesbrough haven't been this far in the League Cup since winning the competition in 2004.

Hackney scored after sprinting past midfielder Moises Caicedo - a big-money signing last summer - inside the box and poking Isaiah Jones' low cross past goalkeeper Djordje Petrovic into the net.

"It was amazing. Great ball. I just got on the end of it," the 21-year-old Hackney said. "We said before the game - try to keep it tight and catch them on the counter."

Palmer, who shot wide earlier in the first half, just needed a tap in to equalize after Middlesbrough goalkeeper Tom Glover misplayed Enzo Fernandez's shot in the fourth minute of first-half stoppage time.

In what should have been a simple catch, the ball instead bounced off Glover's chest directly to Palmer, who tried to volley it in from about 5 yards out. He got under it, however, and his left-footed effort sailed over the cross-

bar. The 21-year-old Palmer, who joined Chelsea from Manchester City for around \$52 million in the offseason, is Chelsea's co-leading scorer this season with eight goals.

Middlesbrough are 12th in the Championship and lost to Aston Villa 1-0 on Saturday in the FA Cup third round.

SOCCER

"To beat a team of the quality of Chelsea, in any circumstances for us, is unbelievable," said Middlesbrough manager Michael Carrick, the former Manchester United star. "The lads were just exceptional. It was an incredible night."

Meanwhile, Liverpool defender Trent Alexander-Arnold will be sidelined for three weeks because of a slightly torn knee ligament, the team said.



Middlesbrough's Isaiah Jones (right) vies for the ball with Chelsea's (left) Levi Colwill, during the English League Cup semi final first leg soccer match between Middlesbrough and Chelsea, at the Riverside Stadium, in Middlesbrough, England. (AP)

As expected, Djokovic and Swiatek get No. 1 seedings

MELBOURNE, Jan 10, (AP): Playing true to their rankings, defending champion Novak Djokovic and Iga Swiatek will be the top seeds at the Australian Open in the first Grand Slam tournament of the year which begins Sunday at Melbourne Park.

The men's seedings mirror the ATP rankings as of Wednesday from Nos. 1-32, with 24-time major winner Djokovic followed by Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz, the only player to beat him a Grand Slam event in 2023.

The women's seedings followed the WTA rankings from Nos. 1-8, then Barbora Krejckikova is promoted to No. 9 at Melbourne Park because of the injury enforced absence of her fellow Czech Karolina Muchova, the French Open finalist last year.

Muchova hasn't played since losing to eventual champion Coco Gauff in the U.S. Open semifinals last September.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova is pregnant and skipping the year's first major and last year's

U.S. Open semifinalist Madison Keys has an injured shoulder, taking the players ranked 17th and 18th out of the equation for Australia.

The seedings mean that players in the top 32 avoid each other in the early rounds when the brackets are determined for the major tournaments. The top two seeded players cannot meet before the final.

TENNIS

Here is a list of the seedings:

Men

1. Novak Djokovic, 2. Carlos Alcaraz, 3. Daniil Medvedev, 4. Jannik Sinner, 5. Andrey Rublev, 6. Alexander Zverev, 7. Stefanos Tsitsipas, 8. Holger Rune, 9. Hubert Hurkacz, 10. Alex de Minaur, 11. Casper Ruud, 12. Taylor Fritz, 13. Grigor Dimitrov, 14. Tommy Paul, 15. Karen Khachanov.

Women

1. Iga Swiatek, 2. Aryna Sabalenka, 3. Elena Rybakina, 4. Coco Gauff, 5. Jessica Pegula, 6. Ons Jabeur, 7. Marketa Vondrousova, 8. Maria Sakkari, 9. Barbora Krejckikova, 10. Beatriz Haddad Maia, 11. Jelena Ostapenko, 12. Zheng Qinwen, 13. Ludmila Samsonova, 14. Daria Kasatkina, 15. Veronika Kudermetova.



Djokovic