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MPs, Kuwaitis commend security forces' swift action

Lawmakers urge vigilance following foiled terror attempt

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh and Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: MPs praised the efforts exerted by the Interior Ministry in foiling a terror attempt targeting Shiite worship places.

MP Hamad Al-Elyan pointed out that this indicates the urgent need for security authorities to be vigilant in order to thwart any attempt against Kuwait, its citizens and the expatriates.

MP Jenan Bu Shehri stressed the need to maintain national unity, and ensure the safety and security of the nation. She called on everyone to be vigilant in order to foil attempts to destabilize the State.

MP Meteb Al-Raathan said Kuwait is not an easy target for terrorist groups, thanks to the unity of its people, and their commitment to protect the nation and adhere to the Constitution. He urged the concerned institutions to conduct studies in order to determine the objectives of terrorist action, particularly the political objectives.

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Opinion

Strike terrorism with hand of steel

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

THE return of ISIS to threaten Kuwait through a large-scale terrorist act is not only alarming, but also raises many questions that everyone must take into consideration. This is especially since what the relevant agencies published about this plan is greater than what some people imagined. Why is it resurfacing now after it had faded away?

When three non-Kuwaitis come to the country to commit such a massacre, from which Almighty Allah spared Kuwait, the questions that must be asked are - Who facilitated their entry and provided everything they needed? Why were no official inquiries conducted about them? Were the citizens who supported them not known by the security services?"

No one can undertake this act on his own. There must be an incubating environment for such people that cover them up and provide them with all the requirements. More than that, it provides such elements with the legal status of their presence in the country. All of these matters cannot be hidden from the security services, which are supposed to have benefited from the experiences of the past, both distant and recent, in dealing with these files.

Unless democratic chaos has reached this security fence, it is necessary to re-consider the overall situation, identify the mistakes, and work on fortifying the internal arena.

Since the 1970s, Kuwait has been subjected to various attempts to destabilize its security, either through bombings, assassination attempts, or other terrorist acts, and every time there have been indications of those acts before they were carried out.

Some even believe that it is part of democracy to gossip and innuendo from a sectarian, factional, or tribal channel, and they have the right to say what they want in this regard.

In fact, campaigns are being launched against a certain component, and no one is doing anything. Negative behavior in this matter is bound to lead to serious consequences. We have an example nine years ago in the bombing of Al-Sadeeq Mosque.

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Middle East tourism en route to recovery

MADRID, Jan 27, (KUNA): The Middle East continues to lead global tourism recovery following COVID-19, with growth persisting in 2024, said a senior official at the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

In an exclusive interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) during the International Tourism Trade Fair (FITUER 2024), Basmah Al-Mayman, UNWTO Regional Director for the Middle, said that in 2023, several countries in the region achieved remarkable milestones in their tourism recovery.

Al-Mayman said the Middle East witnessed the strongest performance among global regions in 2023, with a growth rate of 122 percent, explaining that it was the first region globally to recover pre-pandemic numbers in the first nine months of the year until last September.

Additionally, she noted, the Middle East was the only region to surpass 2019 tourism levels in the past year.

KUWAIT PRIME MINISTER INSPECTS 'MUBARAK' FORCE



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah paid Saturday an inspection visit to headquarters of 'Mubarak' Brigade; of Kuwait Land Force, north of the country. His Highness the Premier was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah. His Highness was briefed with the different duties of the brigade before conveying

greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, to all army personnel.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad urged personnel to keep defending their dear homeland as their ancestors did, stressing the government's readiness to provide the army with resources needed to achieve its duties in a perfect manner.

KD 800 salary cap for family visas OK'd, with exemptions

Israel presses on with war against Hamas

Kuwait amends criteria

Kuwait backs ICJ's ceasefire decision

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait welcomes the interim ruling, adopted on Friday by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), to order the Israeli occupation to prevent the genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip.

The emergency ruling on case, brought to the ICJ by South Africa, indicates that the aggressive acts of the Israeli occupation forces are in breach of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, according to a press release from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Though it falls short of meeting the demand for ceasefire as part of interim measures, the ruling constitutes an important step towards putting an end to the malpractices of the Israeli occupation, including the extensive destruction of civilian life in the occupied Palestinian territories.

It stresses the need of respect by the occupation entity for all principles of the international law, the humanitarian law and the relevant UN resolutions, the statement noted.

Appreciating the South African initiative in bringing the genocide case to the ICJ, the State of Kuwait urges the international community to pressurize the occupation entity into halting the ongoing brutalities that claimed more than 26,000 civilian lives, mainly women and children, over more than three months.

The State of Kuwait reiterates the call for collective and decisive action to impose ceasefire and prevent forcible displacement of the Palestinian citizens and ensure immediate delivery of humanitarian aid to needy people in Gaza, the statement added.

Military offensive

Elsewhere, two women and a man were killed early Saturday in what witnesses said was an Israeli airstrike on a home in the southernmost part of Gaza, as Israel pursued its military offensive against the Palestinian enclave.

The strike came less than a day after the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza. As part of its binding ruling, the top United Nations court asked Israel for a compliance report in a month, meaning the military's conduct will be under increasing scrutiny.

The court stopped short of ordering a cease-fire, but the orders its judges issued were in part a stinging rebuke of the army's conduct so far in Israel's nearly 4-month-long war against Gaza's Hamas rulers. Friday's decision came in a case brought by South Africa, which alleged Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian territory's people, a charge Israel vehemently denies.

The war has killed more than 26,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, destroyed vast swaths of Gaza and displaced nearly 85% of a population of 2.3 million people. It was triggered by an unprecedented Hamas attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7 in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took about 250 hostages.

The overall Palestinian death toll in the war rose to 26,257 as of Saturday, with 174 deaths over the past day, the Health Ministry in Gaza said. The ministry does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count, but has said about two-thirds are



KUNA photo
In more than 100 mosques all around Kuwait, Istisqaa Prayers (rain-seeking prayers) were held early on Saturday (at 10:30 am). - See Page 2

women and children. It said the total number of wounded surpassed 64,000.

Israel holds Hamas responsible for civilian casualties, saying the militants embed themselves in buildings used by civilians. Israel says its air and ground offensive in Gaza has killed more than 9,000 militants.

Bilal al-Siksik, who lost his wife, a son and a daughter in Saturday's strike in Rafah, a town on Gaza's border with Egypt, said the decision by the world court meant little since it did not stop the war.

"No one can speak in front of them (Israel). America with all its greatness and strength can do nothing," he said as he stood beside the pile of rubble and twisted metal that was once his home. "What can people do, who have no power or anything?" He said his family was asleep when their residence was struck.

Rafah and its surrounding areas are crammed with more than 1 million people after the Israeli military ordered civilians to seek refuge there from the fighting elsewhere in the territory. Despite those orders, the designated evacuation areas have repeatedly come under airstrikes, with Israel saying it would go after militants as needed.

Some Gaza residents expressed dismay that the U.N. court based in The Hague, Netherlands, did not order an immediate end to the fighting as South Africa had requested.

"The court's decisions were disappointing to us," Yahya Saadat, who was displaced from the northern city of Beit Hanoun and now lives in the central town of Deir al-Balah, said late Friday. "We were waiting for the International Court of Justice to issue stricter decisions than that, such as a cease-fire, our return to our homes in the north, and stopping the bloodshed in the Gaza Strip."

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Kuwaiti literature captivates crowd

CAIRO, Jan 27, (KUNA): Kuwait pavilion participating in the 55th session of the Cairo International Book Fair witnessed, on Friday, a remarkable presence to view Kuwaiti publications that address all age groups.

The Ministry of Information, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, the Kuwaiti Research and Studies Center, the Foundation for Scientific Advancement, and a number of other publishing houses are participating with various publications.



KUNA photo
Children hoist Kuwait's flag at the Cairo book fair.

Newswatch

BEIRUT: The United States and Iraq held a first session of formal talks Saturday in Baghdad aimed at winding down the mission of a U.S.-led military coalition formed to fight the Islamic State group in Iraq.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a statement that he had sponsored "the commencement of the first round of bilateral dialogue between Iraq and the United States of America to end the mission of the Coalition in Iraq." (AP)

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Fajr 05:18 Asr 15:01
 Sunrise .. 06:40 Maghrib .. 17:22
 Zohr 12:01 Isha 18:41

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	22	15	Kuwait Airport	23
			Abdaly	18
			Jahra	21
			Salmiyah	19
			Nuwaisib	22
			Wafra	23

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

All goals achieved: MP Al-Zaid

Kuwait lawmakers laud outcome of talks with Austrian counterparts

VIENNA, Jan 27, (KUNA): Members of the fifth parliamentary friendship group of Kuwait's National Assembly hailed Thursday the outcome of talks held in Vienna with Austrian peers.

"The parliamentary group's visit to Austria was a success," head of the parliamentary group MP Osama Al-Zaid told KUNA and Kuwait TV, adding that all the visit goals were achieved.

Al-Zaid pointed out that the Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation has gained the Austria's support to Kuwait in a number of important issues, mainly the Khor Abdullah waterway navigation agreement, which was signed between Kuwait and Iraq in 2012.

He stated that the talks with the Austrian lawmakers tackled a wide array of key political, economic and educational issues.

Al-Zaid pointed that they touched upon the ongoing Israeli occupation's aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Despite disagreement, there was a desire to bring views closer on this issue, he said.

The Kuwaiti lawmaker reiterated Kuwait's support to the Palestinian people's struggle to get their legitimate rights.

He stressed that need to differentiate between terrorism and the occupied people's right to defend themselves.

Al-Zaid said that an invitation was presented to the Austrian lawmakers to visit Kuwait for further talks.

For his part, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Austrian Parliament, Dr. Christoph Matznetter said in a similar state-

ment that Kuwait is an important partner of Austria, and they have diplomatic relations that go back decades.

He recalled Austria's support of Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation in 1990.

Matznetter said that during the talks, the Austrian lawmakers expressed their country's support for Kuwait's position regarding the Khor Abdullah navigation agreement.

On the Gaza War, he pointed out that the Austrian parliament backed the draft UNSC resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza last October, in line with Austria's position as a neutral country.

He stated that the Austrian and Kuwaiti sides held fruitful talks and that there was a consensus in views on the need to stop Gaza war as soon as possible.

He renewed his country's position in support of the two-state solution to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

He welcomed the invitation extended to Austrian parliamentarians to visit Kuwait.

During this visit, Austrian economic experts and investment companies in the field of solar energy and recycling will be accompanied, he said.

On his part, Kuwaiti MP Shuaib Sha'aban hailed as "very successful" the visit to Austria, saying it focused on parliamentary cooperation on various issues of common concern.

The Austrian PMs promised to support a draft resolution, to be presented by Kuwait to the coming session of the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) this March, regarding the Kuwait-Iraq agreement on maritime navigation through Khor Abdullah, he said.

The talks with the Austrian MPs dealt with the question of Khor Abdullah, Kuwait stance on Palestine cause, and the efforts to halt the Israeli aggression on Gaza and other parts of the occupied Palestinian territories, Sha'aban noted. Dealing with economic cooperation, Kuwaiti MP Abdul-Wahhab Al-Isa highlighted, in similar statements to KUNA, the importance of encouraging the Austrian investors to do business in Kuwait.

The meeting reviewed the promising investment opportunities in such areas as solar energy and other renewables, waste recycling technologies, he said, expressing Kuwait's desire to draw on Austria experience and hi-tech in those areas.

While Austria has a competitive edge in hi-tech, Kuwait enjoys ample investment opportunities in the fields of renewable energies and waste recycling, Al-Isa explained.

MP Hamad Al-Alyan said the talks dealt also with Austria's educational system which differs somehow from those of other European countries, he said, noting that he will brief the leaders of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education on Austria's experience in this field.

The meeting with the Austrian parliamentary committee on education focused on bilateral cooperation regarding the draft legislations on education, scholarships, training and joint scientific research, Al-Alyan added.



Osama Al-Zaid



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah chairs the meeting.

HH PM visits Abdali border post

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah paid Saturday an inspecting visit to Abdali port, and was briefed about varied monitoring and surveillance systems.

His Highness was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad conveyed greetings of His High-

ness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, to all police personnel.

His Highness also stressed the key role of the Ministry of Interior's personnel and their efforts to maintain the country's security, affirming the government's readiness to enhance the ministry's capabilities to help its personnel achieve their duty in a perfect manner.

'Unite forces, save environment'

Key panel launched on World Clean Energy Day



KUNA photo
Prayers were held in mosques seeking rain, as per the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s sunnah on Saturday morning.

'Rain-seeking' prayers held

In more than 100 mosques all around Kuwait, Istisqaa Prayers (rain-seeking prayers) were held early on Saturday (at 10:30 AM).

The prayers, held in supplication to his Almighty Allah for rain, are also in line with Prophet's (PBUH) Sunnah.

The two-rakaas prayer is led by an

imam. The first rakaa begins with reciting Allahu Akbar seven times and the second starts with five.

Worshippers after the prayers are addressed with a sermon, then the imam and the attendees pray to Almighty to bless the country with rain. (KUNA)

All countries must stop backing Israel, end genocide: SA envoy

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The Ambassador of South Africa to Kuwait, Dr Manelisi Genge, in a significant address at an event hosted by the independent think tank Reconnaissance Research, shared insightful views on South Africa's stance regarding the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and its ongoing commitment to international diplomacy and human rights.



Dr. Genge

The Ambassador emphasized South Africa's historical journey, highlighting the country's struggle for independence and the significant role played by various formations, including the liberation movements, namely the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress; those inside South Africa, as well as some in the international community. Reflecting on the profound words of former President Nelson Mandela, the Ambassador reiterated South Africa's stance its true freedom cannot be enjoyed until Palestine is free.

The speech touched upon South Africa's long-standing relationship with Palestine, dating back before 1994. The Ambassador acknowledged the country's internationalist approach and the belief in not isolating itself from global issues. Considering this, South Africa has been actively involved in advocating for the lifting of sanctions on countries like Cuba and is part of the international community that is engaged in diplomatic efforts to finding solutions to global challenges.

The Ambassador specifically addressed the recent developments concerning Israel and Palestine. South Africa, he noted, condemned the actions of Hamas against Israel on 07 October 2023, but also views the reaction of Israel as dis-

proportionate, particularly concerning the indiscriminate bombing of civilians, including women and children and properties. This stance aligns with the country's commitment to international norms of conflict, which emphasize the focus on combatants over civilians.

South Africa's diplomatic approach is deeply influenced by the philosophy of Ubuntu, which means that I am, because you are, signifying interconnectedness, and coexistence among people. This philosophy underpins the country's diverse society, which strengthens and guides its moral and diplomatic decisions, especially regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The Ambassador detailed South Africa's actions in the international arena, including its push for a ceasefire at the United Nations and its decision to refer the Israel-Palestine case to the International Criminal Court. Despite not being a member of the UN Security Council, South Africa actively uses its presence in the UN General Assembly to advocate justice and peace for the current unfortunate situation in

Palestine

In December 2023, South Africa suspended its diplomatic relations with Israel until a sustainable solution is found in the current developments between Palestine and Israel. Additionally, the country took the significant step of filing its case against Israel at the International Court of Justice. This appeal included requests for provisional measures, primarily focusing on a ceasefire, and the advancement of the case to the merit argument phase.

The Ambassador concluded by reiterating South Africa's commitment to seeking an immediate ceasefire and restoring the humanity and dignity of the Palestinians. The speech was a powerful affirmation of South Africa's unwavering dedication to internationalism, human rights, and the pursuit of a just and equitable world.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Ibtisam Al-Haddad, Chairman of the Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance Sustainability Committee at the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) and General Manager of Strategic Planning and Follow-up at the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, highlighted the significant milestone of establishing a dedicated committee, reports Al-Jarida daily.

This move, she said, underscores the banking sector's commitment to advancing sustainability nationwide, coinciding with the inaugural World Clean Energy Day. The United Nations General Assembly designated January 26, the anniversary of the founding of the International Renewable Energy Agency in 2009, as World Clean Energy Day.

Al-Haddad emphasized the committee's focus on environmental, social, and corporate governance sustainability standards, aligning with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the country's broader development plan. She stressed the banking sector's decisive role in directing financial flows towards national projects through sustainable financing, particularly in strategic investments in clean energy and infrastructure projects.

The newly formed committee, operating under the Kuwait Banking Association, is seen as a pivotal step towards fostering collaboration across the banking sector in Kuwait. This initiative aims to unify efforts and enhance effective contributions within the realm of sustainable development.

Al-Haddad urged a renewed commitment to sustainable practices on World Clean Energy Day, calling for collective efforts to usher in a more environmentally responsible era. She emphasized that today's transformation sets the stage for a sustainable future.

Illegal food supplements, medicines found in store

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) recently raided a central market and a warehouse that stored, displayed and sold a large quantity of prohibited nutritional supplements and medicines of unknown origin, reports Al-Anba daily.

The inspectors found the items without commercial information or expiration dates and whose circulation is not authorized except under medical supervision in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Health; hence, these products are considered a threat to the health and safety of consumers.

The raid was carried out after several stores were shutdown in Salmiya and Hawally a few days ago for selling the above-mentioned products. A search and monitoring plan was put in place to find the source, until the suspect was caught in the act of distributing the products to the stores.

An undisclosed quantity of meat and chicken without commercial data, country of origin and expiration date were also confiscated.

A case was registered and legal measures are being taken against those proven to have committed violations.

Website not ours: Mol: The Ministry of Interior has warned the public about the dangers of responding to a fake website impersonating the ministry with the aim of stealing money, reports Al-Anba daily.

The ministry stressed in a press statement that the website, whose administrators send messages demanding payment of KD450 as the alleged fine for browsing obscene websites, aims to steal from the bank account of whoever responds to it.

The message sent to certain people states that they need to use a credit card to pay the KD450 fine for browsing prohibited sites, claiming that non-payment of the fine would lead to arrest and referral to the court. The message also states that the punishment for the transgression committed by the person includes two years imprisonment and a fine of KD1,180.

Traffic crackdown: The General Traffic Department continued its campaigns in all governorates based on instructions from the Director of the department Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, says Al-Seyassah daily.

Through these campaigns, the department was able to issue 23,122 traffic citations, impound 381 vehicles, and refer 27 teenagers to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving vehicles without a driver's license.

Cabinet discusses priorities, action plan of government

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah chaired Thursday a consultative cabinet meeting at Seif Palace, in the presence of heads of the General Secretariat Supreme Council for Planning and Development.

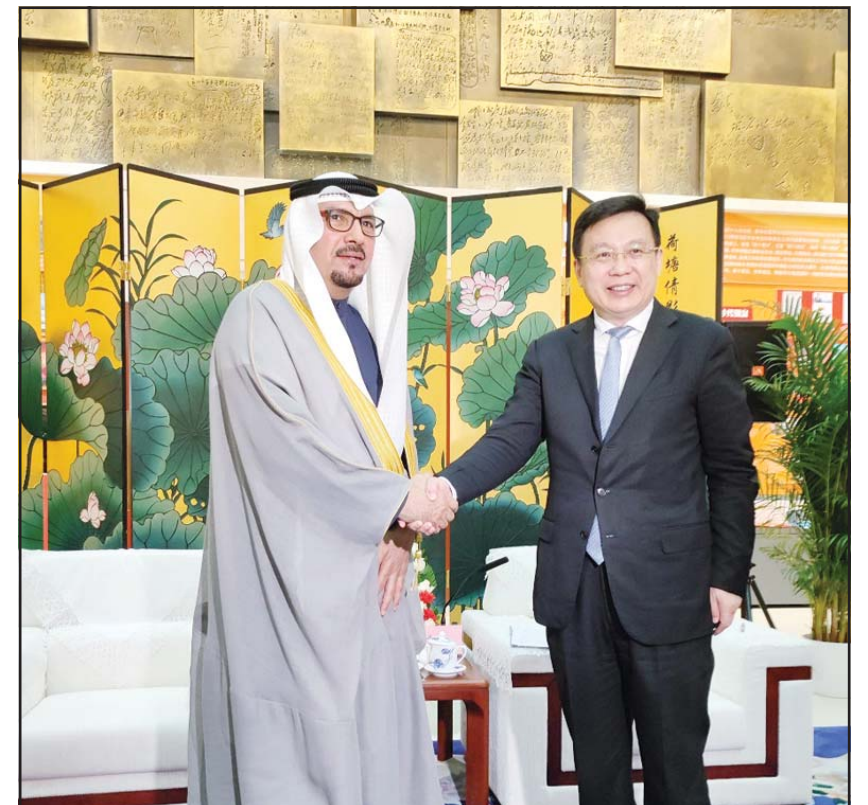
The meeting aims to determine priorities and review initiatives of the government's action program in light of the content of the decree of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The meeting is in line with the government's keenness to follow up preparing its action program and submit it to the National Assembly in a manner that

meets aspirations of the Kuwaiti people, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, and Acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Feras Saud Al-Sabah said.

His Highness the Prime Minister extolled efforts and keenness of the ministers and those tasked with preparing the program, Sheikh Feras noted.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad underlined the necessity of constructive cooperation and coordination between the legislative and executive branches to achieve national goals and aspirations of the country and its people amid a sincere desire for positive work and fruitful cooperation between the two sides.



KUNA photo
Director General of the New China News Agency (Xinhua) Fu Hua during the meeting with the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to China, Jassem Al-Najem.

Xinhua head meets envoy

Strategic ties with Kuwait hailed

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27, (KUNA): Kuwait was among the first countries that established diplomatic relations with China in 1971, said a Chinese official Friday, lauding strategic ties with Kuwait.

President of Chinese News Agency (Xinhua) Fu Hua made the remarks during a meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to China Jassem Al-Najem, Kuwait Embassy to China said in a statement of which KUNA obtained a copy.

Kuwait is the first country in the Middle East region that joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, Fu said.

Fu commended the important visit made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China last September when he served as the Crown Prince.

The Chinese official said that the visit caught much attention of China's media, expressing readiness of Xinhua to boost and develop cooperation with KUNA in a manner that suits distinguished ties between the two countries.

He affirmed that fruitful cooperation between media outlets is an essential part to push relations between the two countries for wider horizons.

Meanwhile, Al-Najem extolled the historical visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China where he attended the 19th session of the Asian Games.

During the visit, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held official talks with Chinese President, and seven memoranda of understanding on development and infrastructure projects were signed following the talks.

Kuwait-China ties are witnessing the best phases especially because Kuwait is paying much attention to the Belt and Road Initiative, which is compatible with Kuwait Vision 2035, the ambassador noted.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two sides in 1971, Kuwait has been supporting, and sticking to, the One China principle, he said.



Contraband seized from the suspect.

'Shabu', knife seized

Three people nabbed for peddling in drugs

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Security personnel from the Al-Jahra Governorate have referred a citizen of an unidentified Gulf country to the General Administration for Narcotics Control after he was arrested in Taima while under the influence of drugs, reports Al-Anba daily.

He was found in possession of 13 bags of shabu, narcotic chemicals, and a knife.

During routine security check he abandoned his vehicle and attempted to flee but was arrested and during subsequent investigations he admitted to consuming and trafficking in drugs.

Meanwhile, the Jahra security forces have arrested a Kuwaiti in his thirties for possessing and consuming drugs. He was arrested at a checkpoint on Kabd Road, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source said, when the man was told to pull over, he could hardly talk and showed signs of uneasiness. A subsequent search of the vehicle yielded a piece of hashish and drug paraphernalia. The suspect, along with the seized hashish, was subsequently handed over to the General Administration for Drug Control.

In another news, the Ahmadi Security Directorate have arrested another person, whose nationality has not been disclosed for trafficking in drugs and seized from him some quantity of drugs which had been prepared for sale.

During the investigation, the man admitted that he was planning to sell the drugs.

MoCI latest statistics on subsidized 'food'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The latest data issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry regarding the types of food supplies and their prices in 2024 showed that Kuwait provides beneficiaries of the food ration system with about 103 subsidized and reduced-priced food commodities, compared to a list consisting of 154 goods last November, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the data, milk and baby food items account for about 47 percent or 48 of the rationed food supplies, while chicken accounts for 30 percent or 31 items and fish consists of eight items including shrimp, grouper, salmon and Zubaidi.

Former Minister of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Al-Aiban issued a decision in early December to cancel 42 subsidized goods.

In addition, 85 percent or 86 items of the currently available food supplies are subsidized, while discounted items account for 15 percent of the total food items with 17 items, and the prices of available food items start from 90 fils up to KD5.25.

The subsidized items includes rice at 120 fils per kilo, sugar at 90 fils, vegetable oil at KD1.05 per package, lentils at 270 fils per kilo, milk powder at KD1. per kilo, two types of tomato paste at 270 fils per package, 48 types of milk and baby food at prices starting at 305 fils up to KD2.81 and 31 types of chicken at prices starting from 505 fils to 630 fils per kilo.

The list of discounted food items includes nine types of milk in different sizes, starting at prices of 85 fils up to 300 fil; three types of shrimp at prices starting from KD1.75 up to KD4, a type of grouper at KD2.965 per kilo, two types of Zubaidi fish at a price of KD4.985 per kilo, and two types of salmon fillets at KD4.375 and KD5.250 respectively.

Probe on as Mol officer steals guns, opens fire

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The Al-Ahmadi Governorate Search and Investigation Department successfully apprehended a military officer affiliated with the Ministry of Interior who had orchestrated the theft of two machine guns, ammunition, and a security patrol last week. The incident culminated in the individual opening fire in a densely populated area, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior operations received a report regarding the absence of a military officer from his designated post, coupled with the alarming information that he had absconded with two M16 machine guns, two ammunition stores, and a security patrol. Concurrently, another report surfaced detailing gunfire at a residence in the Sabahiya area, fortunately resulting in no injuries. Subsequent investigations revealed that the perpetrator behind the shooting incident was the same military officer accused of stealing the aforementioned weapons and patrol.

In response, a rapid-response team was swiftly assembled, successfully identifying and apprehending the accused at his concealed location. The ongoing investigation aims to uncover the circumstances surrounding the case and the motives that prompted the accused to discharge his firearms at a residence in Sabahiya subsequent to the theft of the machine guns, ammunition, and patrol.

The security source indicated that, once the investigation is complete and the mental well-being of the accused is ascertained, he will face multiple criminal charges and be referred to the prosecution for legal proceedings.

Encroachments removed: The Road Works Team at the Public Sanitation and Road Occupancy Department in the Kuwait Municipality branch at the Capital Governorate recently removed encroachments on State properties along Wattiya Beach and issued citations for the violations, reports Al-Anba daily.

Director of the department Mishari Al-Modyan has confirmed the continuation of inspection campaigns to uncover violations. He disclosed the recent campaign at Wattiya Beach targeted the owners of sitting rooms and tents, as some are renting sitting rooms and tents to beachgoers -- a violation of the Municipality's rules and regulations and the ministerial resolution prohibiting the use of squares and sidewalks without obtaining a permit from the Municipality.

Al-Modyan added all encroachments on State properties at the beach were removed and the necessary measures were taken against those proven to have committed violations. He warned that the Municipality will not allow anyone to use State properties unless a permit is obtained.

'Youths must try their best to quit drug use'

Rehabilitation camp set up

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Director of the Rehabilitation and Evaluation Department Dr. Nasser Al-Ajmi inaugurated the spring camp for those recovering from drug addiction, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Affairs in Sulabiya next to the Public Authority for Youth Affairs.

The opening event took place in the presence of a representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Director of Public Activities and Media Khaled Al-Qahatani, and a representative of the Addiction Treatment Center.

In this regard, Dr. Nasser Al-Ajmi revealed that young people who have fallen into the traps of addiction must try their best to recover from it, and work on improving oneself.

He affirmed the role of the Rehabilitation Department in establishing the principle of partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior.

Dr. Al-Ajmi said, "The camp will end before the month of Ramadan. During the camp period, events, lectures, and psychological and social meetings will be held. Psychological support will be provided to halfway house residents and

those recovering from addiction to complete the path of recovery and their proper integration into society."

In a parallel matter, the Rehabilitation and Correction Department of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, with the cooperation of the correctional institutions of the Ministry of Interior, held a lecture titled "Happy Life", which was presented by Sheikh Fahad Al-Ajmi to the male inmates of the Central Prison.

In it, Al-Ajmi addressed the image of a happy life and those responsible for it, stressing that, "Life lasts for just a few days and each person must decide how to live it. If he makes himself happy and takes the means of true happiness in accordance with God's law, he will be happy, gain profit, and live happily with God's pleasure in this world and the hereafter."

The Rehabilitation and Correction Department of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, with the cooperation of the correctional institutions of the Ministry of Interior, also held a lecture titled "Happiness in Faith" for the inmates at Al-Irshad Prison. It was presented by Sheikh Abdul Jalil Al-Awadhi, in which he discussed the importance of faith and stressed that it is the source of happiness and psychological stability. The lecture had a significant impact in filling the souls of the inmates with beliefs. This was based on the department's keenness to achieve its desired goals within its rehabilitation, faith-based and psychological programs, and to reintegrate them into society.

It is worth noting that the department provides its rehabilitation, faith-based, educational and psychological programs with the aim of rehabilitating inmates in correctional institutions to properly reintegrate them into society.



Dr. Al-Ajmi

KD 16,000 worth power cables stolen

One perishes in apartment fire

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Fire on fifth floor of an apartment in Maidan Hawalli resulted in the unfortunate death of one person even after the Directorate-General of Fire Department (DGFD) swiftly responded with firemen from the Salmiya, Hawalli, and Al-Hilali stations to tackle the blaze, reports Al-Anba daily.

Residents were promptly evacuated, and the firefighting teams successfully fought, controlled, and extinguished the fire. Regrettably, the incident led to a loss of life, and the site was handed over to the relevant authorities.

In a separate incident, a paramedic sought treatment at Farwaniya Hospital for first- and second-degree burns sustained in a heater explosion at his residence in the Khaitan area.

The Ministry of Interior's operations received a report about the expatriate's injury, prompting swift ambulance response and registration of a fire and injury case.

Power cables stolen: The Criminal Security Sector of the Jahra Governorate Search and Investigation Department are looking for unidentified thieves who stole electric cables worth approximately 16,000 dinars and in the process destroyed 14 wooden poles in the Rawdhatain area and stole 3,000 meters of cable of 100 mm thickness, reports Al-Anba daily.

A case was registered under No. 2/2024 with the title "Theft by Destroying Infrastructure" at the Al-Qashaaniyah Felony. The arrest came after a Kuwaiti employee of the Ministry of Electricity and Water, reported the theft to the police station. The theft involved breaking 11 wooden poles, each approximately 11 meters long, for the Rawdhatain line.

The stolen electrical cable was about 2,225 linear meters long, with a thickness of 100 mm, valued at approximately 12,667 dinars. Another belonging to the Abdali line was also stolen in the same location, involving the breaking of 3 wooden poles, each 11 meters long. The stolen cable was approximately 649 linear meters long, with a thickness of 100 mm, valued at approximately 3,956 dinars.

The Ministry detected the theft after observing disruptions in electricity distribution in the area. Forensic officers

Road repairs begin

'Get rid of potholes'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) has announced the resumption of its maintenance and repair works in internal and external roads in various parts of the country, affirming that the concerned sector has made great strides in covering the largest number of damaged streets in all governorates, especially those with cracks and potholes that cause accidents, reports Annahar daily.

The ministry unveiled its plan to repair all damaged roads throughout the country upon completion of the work of the field team in charge of surveying and monitoring the roads that need rapid intervention in order to protect the lives of road users.

The ministry also stressed that it will continue to implement road maintenance projects until all road issues raised by citizens are eliminated, asserting it spares no effort in harnessing all capabilities to guarantee the safety of road users.

visited the site, collected evidence, and assessed the availability of surveillance cameras to expedite the identification of the perpetrators.

Woman beaten, robbed: Personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department are investigating an incident in which an unidentified young bedouin woman was allegedly assaulted and robbed by an unidentified assailant, reports Al-Anba daily.

After the MoI received a report police patrol went to the site of the incident and found the woman sitting by the roadside in a pathetic condition and had to be taken to a hospital in an ambulance.

In her statement, the victim told police she only knows the first name of the suspect, but gave his description who, she said, physically assaulted her and escaped with her bag and a mobile phone. A case has been registered at Khaitan Police Station.

Cleanliness campaign launched

Abandoned cars, food truck lifted

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The public sanitation teams at the Kuwait Municipality have intensified their efforts to ensure strict compliance with regulations on public sanitation, road occupancy and selling on the streets, reports Al-Anba daily.

Recently, the Public Sanitation Team at the Municipality branch in Farwaniya Governorate carried out a massive cleanup drive in a bid to remove violations, in addition to the impounding of abandoned cars and vending carts in Ardiya Vocational Area.

The campaign led to the impounding of 12 abandoned cars and a food truck, placing violation notification stickers on 90 abandoned cars, issuance of violation citations to two street vendors and removal of 54 tons of rubble whose origin remains unknown.

Bid to counter rain: Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr Noura Al-Mashaan has confirmed that the ministry is currently working on the development of infrastructure and implementation of plans to deal with rain-related problems, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The concerned officials at the Ministry of Public Works and Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) conducted a presentation on the procedures followed in addressing rain issues in previous years in the presence of the minister.

An official directive was issued for the concerned entities to closely monitor critical sites, immediately find solutions, and ask for the assistance of other concerned government agencies.

diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Clear vision, sound solutions vital to tackle nationality file

"NUMEROUS perspectives surround the discourse on handling citizenship matters, with varying opinions on whether it should be addressed or left untouched due to its potentially explosive nature. This article focuses on the viewpoint advocating for a careful examination of this sensitive issue," columnist Dr. Muhammad Hussein Al-Dalal wrote for 30 daily.



Dr. Al-Dalal

"While some adopt an extremist and sometimes racist stance, risking societal confusion, there is a second vision advocating for an objective, scientific, and constitutional approach to citizenship matters, avoiding destabilization. I align myself with the latter group.

"Globally, countries recognize the significance of citizenship and immigration as fundamental components of national security. In Kuwait, the lack of a clear vision and integrated solutions exacerbates the issue of citizenship tampering.

"Accusations of fraud without evidence against certain citizens contribute to the problem, perpetuating racism and societal divisions. It is crucial to uphold the principle that all Kuwaiti nationals enjoy constitutional rights, except those found, after investigation, to have obtained citizenship illegally or through deception.

"Some factions point fingers at citizens or specific societal segments regarding citizenship tampering, even implicating members of the National Assembly.

"This oversimplification overlooks the central role of the executive authority in managing the nationality file. The law grants absolute authority to the executive authority, primarily the Ministry of Interior and the Council of Ministers, to grant, revoke, or withdraw citizenship. The National Assembly and the judiciary lack the authority to veto or cancel decisions in this domain.

"While supporting the investigation of citizenship tampering and judicial accountability, it is essential to approach it in alignment with constitutional principles. Objective and practical methods should be employed, ensuring defense guarantees for all involved parties. Proposals for legal amendments to grant the judiciary the authority to scrutinize citizenship-related matters are crucial for justice and impartiality.

Also:

"Upon the announcement of the government formation led by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah, and even before the ministers took their oaths, Twitter and WhatsApp analysts swiftly began sharing their analyses and comments," columnist Asrar Jowhar Hayat wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"Surprisingly, there was a unanimous agreement among them, a rare occurrence, suggesting that the government formation hinted at being a solution-oriented government.

"The prevailing sentiment among these analysts implied that His Highness the Prime Minister, through this formation, might declare the government, have the ministers take their oaths before His Highness the Amir, submit a letter of non-cooperation, leading to the dissolution of the Na-

tional Assembly. Subsequently, new elections and a fresh parliament would be established, ultimately resulting in a new government.

"While some analysts provided logical assessments, noting that parliamentary cooperation might not reach the levels seen in the previous government-parliamentary consensus, the majority based their opinions on their knowledge of the ministers, their names, and their social media activities. They rushed to pass judgments even before the ministers were officially sworn.

"Interestingly, despite expectations that the National Assembly would exhibit a lack of cooperation, especially due to the absence of certain names, no signals or statements opposing cooperation between the two authorities emerged. On the contrary, the meeting between the heads of the two authorities hinted at positive developments.

"Turning to social media, it's customary for users to evaluate ministers and predict their performance before the government formation decree.

"The moment rumors circulate about potential ministerial appointments, Twitter users engage in discussions, evaluations, and examinations without affording the candidates a fair chance.

"Negative opinions about ministerial candidates dominate the discourse, with little attention given to their positive aspects. The mere association of a name with rumors of a ministerial nomination often results in a negative portrayal, hindering the individual's aspirations.

"In conclusion, the question arises: Why do we tend to anticipate political events and assume the worst? For instance, the assumption that this government is solely a solution-oriented one might overshadow its potential to address various crises, such as corruption and developmental challenges.

"It is essential to grant His Highness Sheikh Dr. Mohammad and his government team the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities in governing the country."

"In ancient times, it was said that 'a village is not good if it has two markets.' It means the village must have only one market. This has many benefits for the village and its people. We are not going to discuss them, but we mentioned this proverb when we remembered the sublime speech when HH the Amir took oath before the National Assembly when he assumed power," columnist Talal Al-Saeed wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The speech was clear, frank and direct, and everyone applauded it, including the members of the Assembly themselves. One of the points stated in the supreme speech 'that the poor performance of the Assembly and the government has harmed the interests of the people and the country.'

"Then, an Amiri decree was issued that nullified all decisions deemed to have led to political chaos. For the first time, an Amiri decree was issued in this regard! Analysts believed that an Assembly moving toward such direction cannot continue, and that the tendency to dissolve it and call for fresh elections is in line with the new era. The reasons for dissolution were mentioned in the supreme speech of the Amir, and they are constitutional reasons that necessitate dissolution!

"The surprising aspect was His Highness the Prime Minister's statement after his meeting with members of the Assembly, denying the intention to dissolve the Assembly while affirming that the current members are his partners in development!"

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes

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Questions and proposals submitted to executive municipality branch

Municipal Council members seek answers on public beach project

Kuwait ... 10th largest economy in MENA

GDP reached \$159.7 billion in 2023

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Kuwait is the 10th largest economy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), according to the report issued by the Middle East Economy, which included a list of the 10 largest economies in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), reports Al-Anba daily.

Data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revealed that Kuwait was expected to achieve a GDP of \$159.7 billion in 2023, while Turkey came in first place with \$1.15 trillion.

Kuwait is considered one of the richest countries in the world. It enjoys a vibrant economy that derives momentum primarily from its abundant oil resources. Its oil reserves and the tax exemption system have pushed the Kuwaiti dinar to become the most valuable currency in the world at the level of \$3.25 and it is considered a clear evidence the economic stability of the country.

Economic diversification

While progress in achieving economic diversification and structural reforms is gradual, Kuwait's greater economic resilience is supported by the large foreign assets of the sovereign wealth fund managed by Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA).

The MENA region includes some of the most important economic powers in the world, not to mention that it is home to a number of the largest and most ancient oil-producing countries, which enhances the region's position and dominance on the global stage.

Regarding the economic prospects for MENA, the report stated that despite the slowdown in economic growth in the region in 2023 due to oil production cuts, high inflation rates and a tight financial environment, the region will see improvement in 2024.

IMF was also quoted as saying: "The future outlook for MENA carries expectations that growth will improve in 2024 with the disappearance of some factors affecting current economic activity, but growth in the medium term is expected to be below average. History is in the midst of ongoing structural challenges. Countries in the Middle East region, in particular, could recover, bringing the growth of their economies to 3.4 percent in 2024.



The Minister Plenipotentiary at the Embassy, Amira Al-Dashti, mediates with Marine Staff Colonel Ahmed Al-Baz, Lieutenant Colonel Hamad Al-Gharib, Head of the Military Office, Brigadier General Khaled Al-Otaibi, and Brigadier General Jassem Nasrallah.

Two Kuwaiti officers graduate from NATO Defense College

On Friday, two Kuwaiti officers graduated from the NATO Defense College as part of the "Istanbul Cooperation Initiative." The ceremony took place at the Military Academy in Rome, Italy, with the Acting Chargé d'Affaires, Counselor Amira Al-Dashti, and Brigadier General Khaled Al-Otaibi, Head of the Kuwaiti Military Office, in attendance, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The college's commander, Lieutenant General Max Nielsen, awarded graduation certificates to Marine Colonel Hamad Al-Baz and Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Al-Gharib.

They were part of the "143rd Advanced Course for Higher Ranks" at the NATO College, representing the Kuwaiti Armed Forces.

Counselor Al-Dashti congratulated the Kuwaiti graduates for their successful completion of the academic course at NATO's esteemed military institute. She highlighted the significance of national defense and security cadres participating in such courses, emphasizing the importance of acquiring international experience and fostering cooperation through these initiatives.

ed to be below average. History is in the midst of ongoing structural challenges. Countries in the Middle East region, in particular, could recover, bringing the growth of their economies to 3.4 percent in 2024.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales shares this view with the IMF and it forecasts that the region will grow at 3.2 percent, which is higher than their global GDP growth forecast of 2.1 percent. It is worth noting that non-energy sectors will push the region's

growth forward, especially in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Fund defined GDP as the total value at current prices of final goods and services produced within a country during a specific period of time, and that the most common measure for economic growth is to calculate gross domestic product by adding consumer spending, government spending, and commercial investment to the aspect of net exports that refer to the difference between exports and imports.

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Municipal Council members – Dr. Hassan Kamal, Farah Al-Roumi and Sharifa Al-Shalfan – submitted questions and proposals to the executive body on the first working day after the end of the spring break for the Municipal Council members.

The Municipal Council member Dr. Hassan Kamal asked the executive branch questions about the project for beautification and maintenance of public beaches in the State of Kuwait.

He pointed out in the preamble to his questions that the municipality is implementing its projects through the projects sector of the Kuwait Municipality's executive branch.

He explained that among these projects, the contract No. BK / A / 9 (A) - 2015/2016 was signed, which is related to the beautification, and maintenance of the public beaches in the State of Kuwait. There is also a contract for the maintenance and beautification of the beaches of Anjafa, Fintas, Shuwaik and others.

Dr. Kamal asked the municipality to provide him with information related to the aforementioned project, such as the date of signing this contract, the contractual time period, the schedule for its work, and the percentage of project completion to date.

Failure

He also inquired about the public sites and beaches included in the project, the reasons for the disruption of the implementation of its work and whether they were related to the contractor's failure to implement it, the contractor's data and the reasons for his failure, and the change orders in the project, the type of change order, its duration, and its value.

Dr. Kamal also asked a question about the expected date for completion of the project work.

He asked for the revised timetable and the final cost of the project, and committed the municipality to the legal period to answer members' questions based on law No. 33/2016.

In turn, another member of the Municipal Council, architect Sharifa Al-Shalfan, also submitted some questions to the executive branch regarding the controls for sorting municipal waste.

In the preamble of her letter on the questions, she highlighted the issuance of the ministerial resolution No. 354/2023 regarding municipal waste management and public hygiene regulations, which imposes sorting at the source, for the first time in Kuwait, according to the text of clause A of article 2, which states, "The source of waste must sort it according to the municipality's instructions, take it to the collection sites specified by the municipality on the dates it announces, and place it in sealed containers or bags. The municipality shall specify the places and conditions in which each type is used and its specifications."

Al-Shalfan explained that implementing the item she mentioned is linked to the controls set by the municipality, as well as including them in contracts for public cleaning and new landfills, and educating residents and companies about those controls.

She asked the executive body, "Have the instructions and controls mentioned in

the above article regarding sorting of waste been adopted? If the answer is no, please specify a date for issuing these controls, and provide us with them once they are finalized. If the answer is yes, please provide us with those controls."

In addition, another Municipal Council member Farah Al-Roumi presented a proposal for preparing a sustainability list and guidelines for rehabilitating and preserving archaeological sites and historical buildings.

In the preamble to her proposal, she referred to the Amiri decree No. 11/1960 regarding the Antiquities Law and the amendments thereto in 1994, according to which the task of preserving antiquities is entrusted to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL).

Al-Roumi said, "It alone has the responsibility of assessing the archaeological and historical character of objects, sites and buildings. In accordance with article 3 and 4 of the Antiquities Law referred to above, historical buildings and archaeological sites are considered immovable antiquities that must be preserved, and what should be preserved must be maintained."

She explained that the Department of Architectural and Engineering Affairs at NCCAL, in accordance with the provisions of the Antiquities Law and its explanatory memorandum, cooperated with government agencies in the country, especially the municipality, to conduct a study to survey and evaluate various historical buildings in the State of Kuwait and classify them according to their historical importance, architectural character and structural condition.

The department also issued restoration and maintenance methods for historical buildings and technical specifications used in the maintenance and restoration of historical buildings, which contained a description of the basic stages that a historic building restoration project must pass through. It highlighted the necessity of preserving the architectural character of antiquity and all the decorative and artistic elements without distortion or deformation, and that the restoration of these buildings should be done by taking advantage of the traditional materials and methods used in creating these archaeological buildings.

After reviewing the methods, it became clear that they are not concerned with the technical aspect of applying the principle of sustainability to these historical buildings, as there is no clear regulation of the mechanism for maintaining and restoring the buildings, or the nature or sources of the materials to be used, other than indicating the necessity of taking into account the architectural character and making use of traditional materials and methods.

Thus, NCCAL's procedures for maintaining and restoring historical buildings focus on inspecting the correct technical reference for preserving the archaeological and architectural values of archaeological sites and historical buildings. The project for their maintenance and restoration must be according to a clear strategy that achieves their sustainability and preserves their value.

Contract ends on February 8

UPAC to conclude T4 parking project

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC) has received notification from the Incheon International Airport Corporation regarding the expiration of a project contract at Kuwait International Airport – the contract, related to the development, operation, and maintenance of parking lots at Terminal 4, which will end on February 8, 2024.

In response to Incheon's request, UPAC will initiate the necessary procedures for the handover of the project. The company will undertake the required measures to ensure a smooth transfer and delivery of the project. The completion of this process will be reflected in UPAC's financial statements.

Although the cessation of project revenues is expected to result in an annual decrease of approximately one million Kuwaiti dinars in combined revenues, the net profits are not anticipated to be materially affected due to the operational costs associated with the project.

UPAC reported a profit of 3.53 million dinars in the first nine months of the previous year, marking a notable increase of 132.5% from the corresponding period in 2022, according to the latest financial statements.

Minister urges 'unity' for T2 project success

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: After presiding over the regular meeting related to the T2 airport project yesterday, which included all concerned and relevant parties, the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan stressed the need to cooperate and overcome all obstacles to complete the implementation of the project.

Dr. Al-Mashaan said, "Kuwait deserves from all of us to work as one team, cooperate with all parties, and work as one party in order to advance projects and services that would advance the position and status of Kuwait in various fields."

Meanwhile, informed sources from the ministry reported that the expected date for completion of the first package of the project will be July 7, 2025, and the completion date of the second package for parking is April 12, 2025.

As for the third package for aircraft parking, the award procedures will be completed within two years from the date of signing the contract.

They indicated that the cost of the first and second packages is KD 1.495 billion, with KD 1.326 billion for the first package and KD 169 million for the second.

PIFSS overcomes challenges

Progresses on retiree hospital project

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 25: The Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) has come a long way towards overcoming the obstacles and starting to study, design, build and operate the hospital for retirees, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The daily obtained a copy of a document stating that Kuwait Medical City Company is currently implementing the project at an estimated cost of KD55.8 million.

Kuwait Medical City Company was established in January 2012 in accordance with the Commercial Companies Law and its amendments. It has a capital of KD40 million and PIFSS owns 99.94 percent of the company through one of its portfolios under Wafra International Investment Company.

The document confirmed that Kuwait Medical City Company is racing against time to obtain approval from several government agencies to start the establishment of the hospital. The company has handed over to the ministries of Electricity, Water, Renewable Energy and Public Works, as well as the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) all the necessary plans to move forward in removing

obstacles and start the infrastructure works for the hospital.

The hospital will be located in Amghara with an area of 860,000 square meters with a capacity of 400 beds and the possibility of expanding it to 800 beds. It will consist of five centers specialized in heart disease, respiratory system, digestive system, urinary tract, kidneys and bones, in addition to many other medical services (outpatient clinics, long-term care and rehabilitation services). The hospital will also be surrounded by non-medical areas (residential, commercial, entertainment, services, infrastructure and green spaces).

The target completion date is on March 31, 2026; but it is expected that it will be delayed until the end of 2027.

The objectives for establishing the company include the establishment and management of hospitals, medical products, import medical devices and equipment, and recruit specialized workers. The company has the right to invest its available financial surpluses in financial portfolios, according to its articles of incorporation and articles of association.

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PM sends warm regards to India as Nat'l Assembly Speaker congratulates counterparts

HH Amir extends congratulations to India's President on National Day



Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya with GCC chief Jassem Al-Budaiwi.

KUNA photo

Kuwait FM meets GCC chief on regional issues

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Thursday with visiting Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jassem Al-Budaiwi to discuss the progress of the Arab joint action and the relations among the GCC member states.

During the meeting Al-Budaiwi congratulated Al-Yahya on taking up the foreign portfolio, and wished him success in pushing forward the GCC regional integration and solidarity.

The meeting also dealt with the latest developments of the situations in the Middle East and beyond.

Strike terrorism

Continued from Page 1

Since the bombings in the 1970s and 1980s, and after the Iraqi invasion, Kuwait has been under the microscope of extremist groups.

Actually, an environment was created for it. Unfortunately, the internal front was not fortified. Also, the matter was left to the detriment of the moods of the influential people who support these ideas.

They also reached the National Assembly, all under the slogan of democracy, which was misunderstood, or exploited by those groups to impose more extremism.

In this matter, ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and other sectarian groups are equal, as they are all affiliated with parties that want to harm Kuwait.

Today, with the revelation of this terrorist plan, which, if implemented, Allah forbid, would have added more fuel to the fire of division, it cannot be allowed to hide behind any cloak or slogan. Firmness is required, and the rulings must be deterrent and quick. No calculations must interfere with them that make the punishment not equal to the crime, nor be appropriate to incite any strife. Everyone is in the same boat.

Also, since the revelation of what was being prepared for Kuwait, some sectarian voices and those spreading poison have become active, especially on social media, which is filled with various gossip, accusations, and insinuations, all of which serve to fuel the strife that everyone must fight today.

Hence, all of this must be under the supervision of the leadership so that such an act is not repeated. The measures must be firm and decisive to block anyone who tries to undermine the stability of Kuwait. Otherwise, this will allow for any interventions.

Investigations and trials should be quick and public, because the situation cannot tolerate more confusion, either internally or regionally.

KD 800 salary

Continued from Page 1

Article 30 of this decision, is excluded from the requirement of obtaining a university qualification.

As for granting regular residency to join a family for those residing or born inside the country, and those born outside the country to parents who are residing in the country and whose age does not exceed five years old, the Director General of the Residence Affairs General Department is responsible for excluding them from the salary requirement referred to in the first paragraph of this article in accordance with the rules and regulations specified by the department.

Article Two of the decision stipulates that the acting undersecretary must implement this decision and it shall take effect on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

The professions stipulated in Article 30 of Ministerial Resolution No. 957/2019 are:

1. Advisors, judges, prosecutors, experts and legal researchers in the government sector
2. Doctors and pharmacists
3. Professors in universities, colleges and higher institutes
4. School principals, deputies, educational mentors, teachers, social workers and laboratory technicians in the government sector
5. University financial and economic advisors
6. Engineers
7. Imams, preachers, muezzins in mosques, and memorizers of the Holy Qur'an
8. Librarians in government agencies and private universities
9. Ministry of Health employees, in-

cluding nurses, paramedics and those holding medical technical positions in various specializations, and those working in the field of social service

10. Social workers and psychologists in the government sector

11. Journalists, media professionals and correspondents

12. Coaches and players in the federation and sports clubs

13. Pilots and flight attendants

14. Preparers of the dead and those responsible for burying them.

Lawmakers urge

Continued from Page 1

MP Muhammad Al-Mahan thanked the ministry for its dedication to maintain national security and guarantee the safety of the people. He emphasized the need to take all the necessary measures to foil terrorist attempts, especially since the arrested members of the cell are connected to foreign and regional terrorist groups.

Meanwhile, in a show of unwavering confidence, Kuwaiti citizens commend their security services for successfully monitoring and neutralizing ISIS elements attempting to carry out terrorist bombings in Shiite places of worship.

Emphasizing national unity, citizens, both Shiites and Sunnis, stand united against attempts to sow discord, acknowledging the equitable approach of Kuwaiti rulers throughout history.

During discussions with the Al-Seyassah newspaper near the Imam Hussein Mosque, Kuwaiti citizens expressed solidarity, asserting that Kuwait's diverse population, including Sunnis, Shiites, Bedouins, and Hadhras, are one cohesive entity.

Despite suspicions about external influences, particularly from the Zionist entity, citizens are resolute that Kuwait, with its capable security services, remains a haven against terrorism.

Praising Kuwaiti intelligence, Khaled Al-Tamimi lauded the security forces' vigilance in arresting the terrorists before executing their plans. Malek Abu Hamza echoed this sentiment, affirming Kuwait's commitment to security and safety under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Sabah.

The Kuwaiti people, buoyed by the swift action of security forces, attend Friday prayers without fear, confident in the protection afforded by both divine intervention and robust security measures. Muhammad Taqi, recalling past incidents, emphasized the importance of maintaining lessons learned to prevent the recurrence of such threats.

Ahmed Ashkanani, expressing gratitude for the security and safety in Kuwait, suspected the involvement of external forces, pointing to Kuwait's staunch support for the Palestinian cause. Despite these challenges, citizens underscored the enduring strength of national unity and called for curriculum amendments to further enhance cohesion.

Muhammad Al-Tamimi concluded by asserting that such terrorist attempts will not weaken Kuwaiti unity, highlighting the historical efforts of rulers to strengthen national unity. The citizens collectively pray for continued blessings of security and stability in Kuwait.

In latest development, the Public Prosecution has ordered the imprisonment of two Arab residents on charges of joining a banned group and planning terrorist acts inside the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The prosecution stated that the two residents entered the country for this purpose, and sought to monitor the places of worship of the Shiite sect, survey their security conditions, and count the numbers of worshippers there.

They also learned to make explosives for the purpose of using them in these operations. They had agreed that each of them would target a place of worship and go to it with the intention of killing its visitors, but this did not happen.

The prosecution interrogated the defendants and charged them with joining a group whose purpose was to illegally spread principles aimed at destroying basic systems, engaging in activities that would harm the country's national interests, and training in the manufacture and use of explosives for illegal purposes, and misusing telephone communications.

Further investigations are ongoing. The prosecution also ordered the provisional detention of two Kuwaiti citizens on charges of joining the same banned group. The first accused had received at his home two Gulf nationals who are members of that group. He facilitated the way for them to travel to foreign countries where its members reside so that they could participate in the ranks of its fighters.

The accused expressed his intention to participate with them in the fighting, but he was unable to do so. He instead transferred money to its members to help them. He directed the second accused to social media channels through which the latter was able to correspond with the leaders of that group, and those leaders urged him to carry out terrorist acts inside the country.

He sought to study methods for manufacturing explosives, published research on them, and purchased one of the basic chemicals used for manufacturing explosive devices with the aim of blowing up one of the camps affiliated with the Ministry of Interior.

The Public Prosecution interrogated the defendants and charged them with joining a group whose purpose was to spread principles aimed at destroying basic systems through illegal means, and engaging in activities that would harm the country's national interests.

It also charged them with carrying out hostile acts against foreign countries, financing a terrorist group illegally under the knowledge of the purpose for which the money is used, and defaming the entity of the Amir publicly, as well as attempting to use explosives with the intention of killing people and spreading terror among them, and manufacturing explosive materials without obtaining a license. The charges also included receiving training on the use and manufacture of explosives with the intention of achieving an illicit purpose, and misusing telephone communications.

Others saw Friday's rulings from a 17-judge panel as a significant, if symbolic, step.

Kuwait backs

Continued from Page 1

"The measures approved by the court are mostly in the interest of the Palestinian people regarding human suffering, violation of international law, and many other issues," said Mazen Muhaisen, who also was sheltering in Deir al-Balah.

The court ruled that Israel must refrain from harming or killing Palestinian civilians while doing all it can to prevent genocide, including punishing anyone who incites others to support the destruction of Gaza's people. The judges also ordered Israel to urgently get basic aid to Gaza.

The interim orders did not address the substance of the case - the genocide allegations - and a final ruling is expected to take years.

Although the provisional measures issued Friday are legally binding, it is unclear if Israel will comply. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to move ahead with the war, saying the fact that the court did throw out the genocide charges was a "mark of shame that will not be erased for generations."

The Israeli military said Saturday it had conducted several "targeted raids on terror targets" in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, killing "numerous terrorists." It did not mention Rafah.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, conveyed warm congratulations to Indian President Droupadi Murmu on the occasion of her country's national day. In the cable, His Highness extended sincere wishes for the president's good health and expressed hopes for further progress in India.

Similarly, His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable to Indian President Droupadi Murmu on the occasion of her country's national day.

Furthermore, Kuwait National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Sadoun

Kuwait's HH Amir and Prime Minister congratulate Australia on National Day

KUWAIT, Jan 27, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations on Friday to Governor-General of Australia General David Hurley on his country's national day.

conveyed felicitations in a cable sent on Friday to his Indian counterparts, Jagdeep Dhankhar (Vice President of India and Chairman of the Coun-

cil of States) and Om Birla (Speaker of the House of the People), congratulating them on the Republic Day of India.

Palestinian ambassador happy over lifting of Israel's immunity

Lawsuit prevails

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub affirmed that the decision taken by the International Court of Justice to lift from Israel the immunity that the United States granted it for the past 75 years is a historic decision.

In a press statement issued yesterday, he explained that accepting South Africa's lawsuit against Israel for the crime of genocide is a clear message to Israel and those who support it that no state is above the law. Justice applies to everyone without exception. It also puts an end to Israel's impunity for its crimes against the Palestinian people, which were represented by decades of occupation, persecution, and apartheid.

Tahboub called on the international community to put immediate pressure on Israel to stop its aggression, stop the crime of genocide and forced displacement, and implement UN Security Council resolution No. 2720 immediately.

He also stressed the need to allow the entry of humanitarian aid and the return of the displaced to their homes, adding that the countries that supply Israel with weapons must stop doing so immediately in order to avoid becoming a party to the case before international justice.

Tahboub extended his thanks and gratitude to the Republic of South Africa for its courage in taking this major step, which represented actual solidarity with Palestine and its people.

He also thanked and appreciated the millions of people of the world who did not stop demonstrating in



Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer with British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis.

KRCS underlines importance of media's role in supporting humanitarian efforts

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer met with British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis at the Society's headquarters last Thursday, reports Al-Qabas daily.

KRCS disclosed on its account on X (formerly Twitter) that the British Ambassador was briefed on the Society's efforts to help those affected by disasters and humanitarian crises around the world.

On the other hand, Vice Chairman of the KRCS Board of Directors Anwar Al-Hassawi stressed the importance of the media's role in supporting the humanitarian and volunteer efforts of the Society, particularly in conveying the latter's message to the public and mobilizing support for its various activities.

In a press statement on the sidelines of the visit of the delegation of the External Media Department in the Ministry of Information to KRCS,

Al-Hassawi affirmed that KRCS has realized the importance of the media in humanitarian work; especially in revealing the suffering of the afflicted.

Al-Hassawi also pointed out the importance of the media in depicting a bright picture of humanitarian work in Kuwait and highlighting the interest in following up humanitarian and charitable activities.

He added that KRCS contributed to the broadcasting of media messages that depict the real picture of Kuwaiti charitable work in the form of publications and through social media engines.

He stressed the importance of media work, especially in the modern era, pointing out that the media aims to enlighten the public and share correct information, while having a positive impact on increasing public awareness. He confirmed that the media did not fail to cover the activities and humanitarian and relief efforts of KRCS, expressing his deep gratitude to them.

order to "stop this crazy war on our people in the Gaza Strip and the entire occupied State of Palestine. The

struggle of our Palestinian people is for the sake of all humanity and must not be neglected."

Latin culture gateway for other languages

Spanish a bridge between Arabs and Spain

By Aqeel Al-Azmi

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27, (KUNA): Spanish is the official language or one of the official languages of twenty countries in Europe, and Central, South, and North America, with more than 540 million native speakers, becoming one of the most widely spoken languages in the world.

Arabic speakers seem close to the Spanish language considering the history between Arabs and Spain as the Andalusian Islamic conquest from 711 AD to 1492 spanned 800 years.

There are 4,000 Spanish words of Arabic origin - for example, Almond (Hazelnut), Aceite (oil), Arroz (rice), and Azucar (sugar). Although being a phonetic language, meaning pronounced as written, there are differences in the Spanish language, although few, in dialects between regions and countries.

There are Spanish language enthusiasts in Kuwait who can learn the language in many centers, one is Kuwait University's Department of Community Service and Continuing Education.

Kawthar Al-Qallaf, a student who loves to learn new languages, started with Spanish because she has many friends from Puerto Rico, a country in South America speaking Spanish language.

Al-Qallaf thinks learning Spanish will help her understand the Porto Rican culture, and talking to her friends in their mother language will allow her to know them better.

"The Spanish language was a start for me because in my mind, Spanish is the first step to learning Portuguese and French languages," Al-Qallaf said.

Anfal Al-Houli took a Spanish class while she was in college.

Al-Houli found herself drawn to



KUNA photo
H.E. Miguel Moro Aguilar - Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait.

learn."

Dr. Mulla Ali advised those who want to learn Spanish to be confident in learning a new language. "It is not hard but not easy, and they will love the sound of listening to Spanish," she said.

Spanish Ambassador in Kuwait, Miguel Moro Aguilar, said Kuwait is a pioneering country in the cultural realm in the Gulf region.

In an interview with KUNA, Aguilar said Spain boast a rich cultural background, and that both countries share a common history, which makes cultural cooperation "natural and fluent."

Aguilar said that Kuwaiti and Spanish societies share many interests, such as music, flamenco, gastronomy, cinema and sports.

"The cultural cooperation the Spanish Embassy has developed with Kuwait has been very successful and has led to a better understanding between both people," he said.

"We appreciate the work of the National Council (of Culture, Arts and Letter), Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyah, Al-Babtain (Central Library for Arabic Poetry), the National Library, JACC (Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center), and many other actors in the cultural sector of Kuwait because, without their continuous support," Aguilar said, this cooperation would not be possible.

Spain combines tradition and modernity, and it shows in its cultural landscape. "That is the reason why the cultural activities implemented by the Embassy have been so diverse, ranging from flamenco, classical guitar, and bel canto to promising young writers in Spanish language or a conference regarding the first circumnavigation around the world carried out by Magallanes and Elcano."

World News Roundup

Europe

Charles doing well

Putin blames Ukraine for POWs plane crash

MOSCOW, Jan 27, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged Friday to make public the findings of Moscow's investigation into the crash of a transport plane that he alleged Kyiv's forces shot down despite having been informed that Ukrainian prisoners of war were on board.

In his first public remarks on Wednesday's crash, Putin repeated previous comments by Russian officials that "everything was planned" for a prisoner exchange that day when the IL-76 military transport went down in a rural area of Russia's Belgorod region with 65 Ukrainian POWs on board.

"Knowing (the POWs were aboard), they attacked this plane. I don't know whether they did it on purpose or by mistake, through thoughtlessness," Putin said of Ukraine at a meeting with students.



Putin

Authorities in the Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, said all 74 people on the plane, including six crew members and three Russian servicemen, were killed when the aircraft crashed in a huge ball of flames.

Putin offered no details to support the allegation that Ukraine was to blame, which other Russian officials have also made. Ukrainian officials have not said whether their military shot down the plane, but they called for an international investigation. Independent verification of Moscow's claim was not possible.

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Reporter's detention extended: A court in Moscow extended the pre-trial detention of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, arrested on espionage charges, until the end of March, Russian news agencies reported Friday.

United States Consul General Stuart Wilson attended the hearing, which took place behind closed doors because authorities say details of the criminal case against the American journalist are classified.

In video shared by state news agency Ria Novosti, Gershkovich was shown listening to the ruling, standing in a court cage wearing a hooded top and light blue jeans. He was pictured a short time later walking towards a prison van to leave the court.

□ □ □

Charles doing well after treatment: King Charles III is doing well after undergoing a "corrective procedure" for an enlarged prostate, Queen Camilla said Friday as she left the private hospital where he was being treated.

The 75-year-old monarch was admitted to the London Clinic, where the Princess of Wales, his daughter-in-law, is recovering from abdominal surgery, Buckingham Palace said Friday. The king, who entered the hospital with Camilla at his side, visited Kate at the clinic after he arrived.

Charles, who ascended the throne 16 months ago, was diagnosed with the benign condition on Jan. 17 after he experienced undisclosed symptoms. He canceled engagements and was urged to rest ahead of the procedure, which had concluded by Friday afternoon.

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North Macedonia govt resigns: North Macedonia's prime minister and his cabinet formally submitted their resignations to parliament on Thursday, paving the way for a caretaker government to be installed ahead of general elections this May.

The main political parties agreed last month to hold general elections on May 8, two months early and at the same time as the second round of presidential elections.

The main opposition party, the center-right VMRO-DPMNE, had been pressing for early elections, accusing the government led by the center-left Social Democrats and their junior coalition partners of corruption, nepotism and incompetence.

□ □ □

Poland govt, opposition disagree: The fate of two Polish opposition politicians became the focus Thursday of a running feud between the country's new pro-European Union government and conservative opposition as the sides disagreed whether they can remain lawmakers.

The weeks-old government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk has moved to reverse policies of his predecessors that were deemed harmful and led to clashes with the EU, especially in the judiciary.

However, the previously ruling right-wing Law and Justice party, frustrated over its loss in the October parliamentary elections, has been protesting the moves.

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Protesters gather outside Serbian court: Opponents of Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic rallied outside the Constitutional Court building on Friday to press their demand that last month's election be annulled and held again over reported widespread irregularities.

The Serbia Against Violence group has accused Vucic's populist government of orchestrating a fraud in the Dec. 17 parliamentary and local voting, particularly in the capital Belgrade. Vucic has denied the accusation.

The state election commission has declared Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party the election winner and rejected the opposition's complaints. The Constitutional Court is yet to rule on the dispute.

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Cyprus govt unveils support measures: The government of ethnically split Cyprus on Friday promised breakaway Turkish Cypriots a package of measures aimed at winning their trust ahead of a renewed United Nations attempt to revive long-dormant peace talks.

It includes promises to expedite citizenship applications, grant pensions to widows, offer more job training opportunities and allow easier access to Muslim places of worship, the government announced.

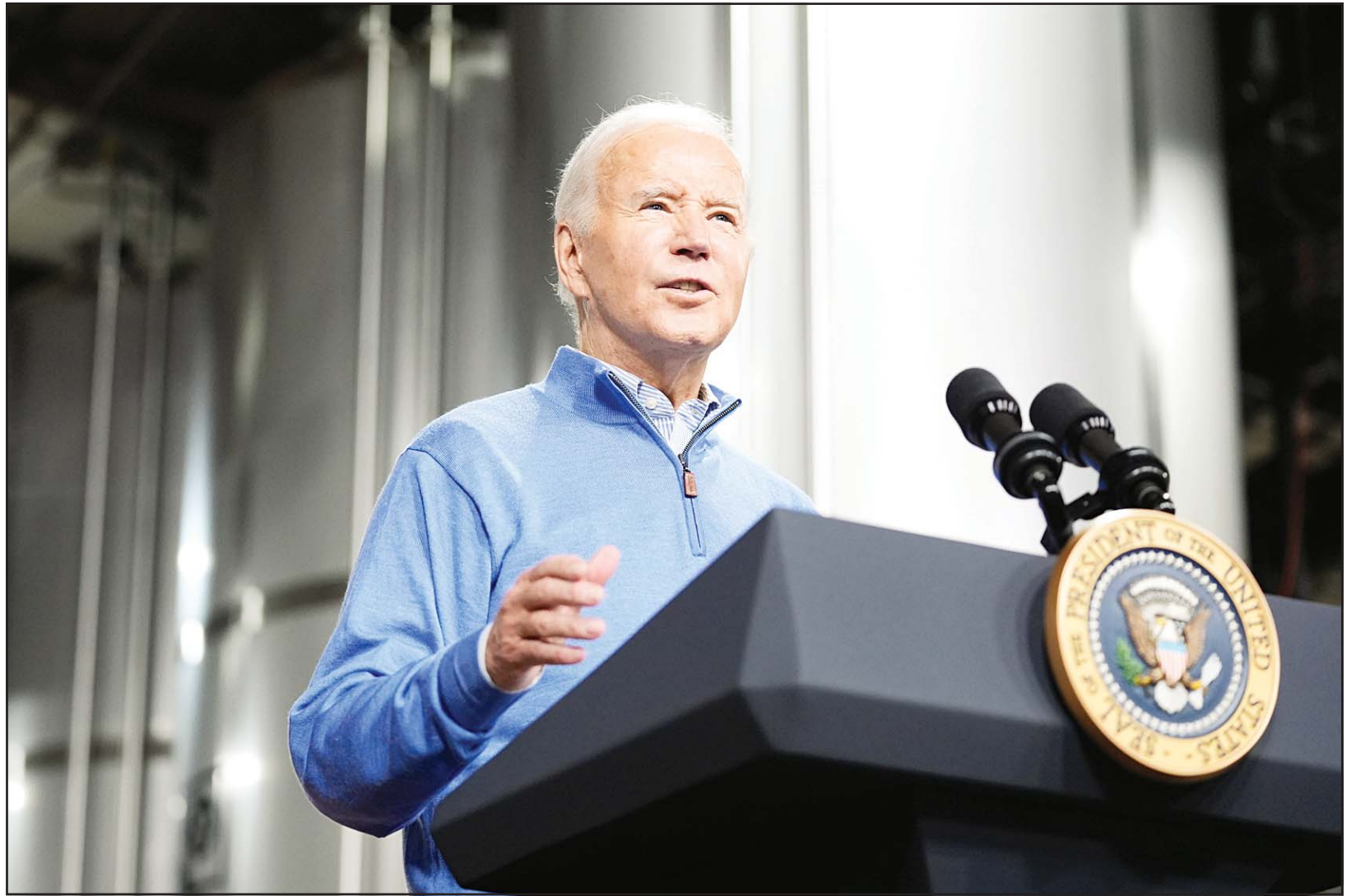
Cyprus was divided along ethnic lines in 1974 when Turkey invaded following a coup aimed at uniting with Greece.

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Person taken hostage, but rescued: A person was taken hostage in a cafe in the southern German city of Ulm on Friday night but was later rescued unharmed, police said.

At about 6:45 pm local time, an armed man reportedly took an individual hostage inside a Starbucks in the city center, police said. At 8:20 p.m., the suspect left the building with the hostage and tried to flee.

Officers fired shots as the assailant sought to escape and were able to arrest the suspect, police said in a statement. The hostage was unharmed.



US President Joe Biden speaks on Jan 25, in Superior, Wisconsin. (AP)

Politics

US president returns to South Carolina

Biden urges Congress to embrace border bill

WASHINGTON, Jan 27, (AP): US President Joe Biden has pressed Congress to embrace a bipartisan Senate deal to pair border enforcement measures with Ukraine aid, but House Speaker Mike Johnson suggested the compromise on border and immigration policy could be "dead on arrival" in his chamber.

The Democratic president said in a statement late Friday that the policies proposed would "be the toughest and fairest set of reforms to secure the border we've ever had in our country." He also pledged to use a new emergency authority to "shut down the border" as soon as he could sign it into law.

Biden's embrace of the deal - and Republican resistance - could become an election-year shift on the politics of immigration. Yet the diminishing prospects for its passage in Congress may have far-reaching consequences for US allies around the globe, especially Ukraine.

Request

Senate Republicans had initially insisted that border policy changes be included in Biden's \$110 billion emergency request for funding for Ukraine, Israel, immigration enforcement and other national security needs. But the Senate deal faced collapse this week as it came under fire from Republicans, including Donald Trump, the likely presidential nominee, who eviscerated the deal as a political "gift" to Democrats.

Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, on Friday sent a letter to colleagues that aligns him with hardline conservatives determined to sink the compromise. The speaker said the legislation would have been "dead on arrival in the House" if leaked reports about it were true.

A core group of senators negotiating the deal were hoping to release text early next week, but conservatives already say the measures do not go far enough to limit immigration. The proposal would enact tougher standards on migrants seeking asylum as well as deny asylum applications at the border if daily migrant encounters grow

to numbers that are unmanageable for authorities.

"Rather than accept accountability, President Biden is now trying to blame Congress for what he himself intentionally created," Johnson said in the letter.

The speaker's message added to the headwinds facing the Senate deal, closing a week in which Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell acknowledged to his colleagues that the legislation faced tough opposition from Trump that could force them to pursue Ukraine aid another way. He later clarified that he was still supportive of pairing border measures with Ukraine aid.

Collapses

If the deal collapses, it could leave congressional leaders with no clear path to approving tens of billions of dollars for Ukraine. Biden has made it a top priority to bolster Kyiv's defense against Russia, but his administration has run out of money to send ammunition and missiles. Ukraine supporters warn that the impasse in Congress is already being felt on battlefields and leaving Ukrainian soldiers outgunned.

Oklahoma Sen. James Lankford, the lead GOP negotiator in the border talks, has repeatedly urged lawmakers to refrain from passing final judgment on the bill until they receive legislative text and said some of the reports of its contents in conservative media are not accurate depictions of the bill.

The Republican speaker was already deeply skeptical of any bipartisan compromise on border policy. On Friday, he again pointed to a sweeping set of immigration measures that the House passed last year as being the answer to the nation's border challenges. But that bill failed to gain a single Democratic vote then and has virtually no chance of picking up Democratic support now, which would be necessary to clear the Senate.

As they enter an election year, Republicans are seeking to drive home the fact that historic numbers of migrants have come to the US during

Biden's presidency. His administration has countered that global unrest is driving the migration and has sought to implement humane policies on border enforcement.

Also:

COLUMBIA, SC: Joe Biden doesn't need to worry about his prospects in South Carolina's Democratic primary next week. He's got that locked up.

He also knows he's not likely to win the solidly red state come November. It hasn't voted for a Democrat since 1976.

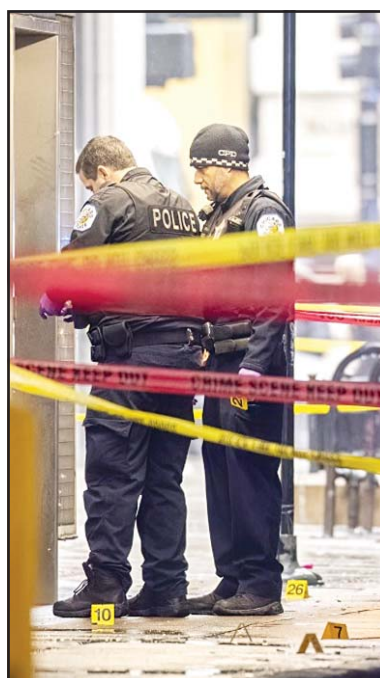
He's spending this weekend in the state nonetheless, intent on driving home two messages: He's loyal to the state that saved his campaign in 2020 and he's determined to win back Black voters here and elsewhere who were central to his election last time but are less enthused this go-round.

Biden will be the keynote speaker Saturday night at the state party's fundraising dinner ahead of its first ever "first-in-the-nation" Democratic primary on Feb. 3. He'll stick around to attend a political event at St. John Baptist Church on Sunday, in a state where politics and faith are intertwined.

Deputy campaign manager **Quentin Fulks** said of the primary that Biden's team was working to "blow this out of the water" by running up the score against longshot challengers. The Biden campaign also wants to learn lessons about activating Black voters - the backbone of the party - ahead of an expected 2024 rematch with GOP front-runner **Donald Trump**.

The president has been getting mixed reviews from some Black voters in the state that came through for him in 2020, including discontent over his failure to deliver on voting rights legislation and other issues.

Last year, at the outset of Biden's reelection bid, conflicting views among the same South Carolina Democratic voters whose support had been so crucial to his nomination provided an early warning sign of the challenges he faces as he tries to revive his diverse winning coalition from 2020.



Chicago police work the scene where two high school students were shot and killed just blocks from Millennium Park, in Chicago on Jan 26. (AP)



Carroll



Trump

America

Trump must pay Carroll \$83.3m: A jury awarded \$83.3 million to E. Jean Carroll on Friday in a stinging and expensive rebuke to former president Donald Trump for his continued social media attacks against the longtime advice columnist over her claims that he sexually assaulted her in a Manhattan department store.

The award, coupled with a \$5 million sexual assault and defamation verdict last year from another jury in a case brought by Carroll, raised to \$88.3 million what Trump must pay her. Protesting vigorously, he said he would appeal.

Carroll, 80, clutched her lawyers' hands and smiled as the seven-man, two-woman anonymous jury delivered its verdict. Minutes later, she shared a weepy three-way hug with her attorneys.

She declined comment as she left the Manhattan federal courthouse, but issued a statement later through a publicist, saying, "This is a great victory for every woman who stands up when she's been knocked down, and a huge defeat for every bully who has tried to keep a woman down."

Trump had attended the trial earlier in the day, but stormed out of the courtroom during closing arguments by Carroll's attorney. He returned for his own attorney's closing argument and for a portion of the deliberations, but left the courthouse a half hour before the verdict was read. (AP)

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Two teenage boys killed: Two teenage boys were shot and killed Friday afternoon while they were leaving school, authorities said.

The boys, ages 16 and 17, were among a group of students walking out of the Innovations High School around 12:25 pm when they were shot, Chicago police said.

Masked suspects got out of two vehicles and fired shots at the group, police said. The boys died at a hospital.

No immediate arrests were made. "Wherever the tragedy like this strikes in the city, it's heartbreaking for families and everybody affected by the tragedy, no matter where it happens," Deputy Chicago Police Chief Jon Hein said at the scene.

Mayor Brandon Johnson issued a statement lamenting the shooting.

"I extend my deepest condolences to their families and the Innovations High School community as they grapple with unimaginable

pain and trauma caused by this senseless act of violence," the statement said. (AP)

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Suspect fatally shot by police: An alleged carjacking suspect was fatally shot by police Friday at a California ski resort near Lake Tahoe, authorities said.

The shooting occurred around 10 am near an event center that often hosts weddings

at Palisades Tahoe, according to California State Parks. The suspect's identity was not immediately released.

The parks agency said one of their officers tried to pull over a vehicle that had been involved in a carjacking in Tahoe City, about 10 miles (16.09 kilometers) away. A pursuit ensued, and it ended in a crash near the events center.

The suspect, allegedly armed with a



Britain's Queen Camilla departs The London Clinic where King Charles is being treated for an enlarged prostate in central London on Jan 26. King Charles III is doing well after undergoing a "corrective procedure" for an enlarged prostate, Queen Camilla said Friday. (AP)

knife, got out of the vehicle, and the officer opened fire, the parks department said.

Details such as where the pursuit began and the officer's identity were not immediately available.

Palisades, the site for the 1960 Winter Olympics, is on the western side of Lake Tahoe, about 40 miles (64 kilometers) from Reno, Nevada. A Jan 10 avalanche there killed one skier, marking the first US avalanche fatality of the season. (AP)

□ □ □

Woman charged in stabbings: A Baltimore woman suspected of striking people with her car and randomly stabbing others in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC, was charged Friday with attempted murder.

The attacks occurred over roughly two hours Thursday night in Prince George's County. Six people were injured, including two stabbing victims who were hospitalized in critical condition, police said.

Police said in a news release Friday that officers arrested the 31-year-old suspect, Tanay Stallings-Brown, in Baltimore after tracking her car. The vehicle had significant damage, including a broken windshield, when officers pulled her over late Thursday, police said.

She was taken back to Prince George's County and charged with multiple counts of attempted first-degree murder, assault and other charges, police said.

"The motive for these crimes remains under investigation," police said in the news release. "At this time, it appears she chose her victims at random." (AP)

Lat/Am

Ramagem probed

Venezuela blocks oppn leader presidential run

CARACAS, Venezuela, Jan 27, (AP): The prospect of a free presidential election in Venezuela was dealt a heavy blow Friday when the country's highest court upheld a ban on the candidacy of **María Corina Machado**, a longtime government foe and winner of the primary held by the opposition faction backed by the United States.

The ruling came months after President Nicolás Maduro and the US-backed opposition reached an agreement aimed at leveling the playing field ahead of the election later this year. The deal led Washington to ease economic sanctions on Maduro's government.

Machado, a former lawmaker, won the opposition's independently run presidential primary in October with more than 90% of the votes. Her victory came despite the government announcing a 15-year ban on her running for office just days after she formally entered the race in June.



Machado

She was able to participate in the primary election because the effort was organized by a commission independent of Venezuela's electoral authorities. She insisted throughout the campaign that she never received an official notification of the ban, and said that voters, not ruling-party loyalists, are the rightful decision-makers of her candidacy.

After the court issued its ruling, Machado tweeted that her campaign's "fight to conquer democracy through free and fair elections" is not over.

"Maduro and his criminal system chose the worst path for them: fraudulent elections," she wrote. "That's not gonna happen."

She did not offer any details of her next steps, and her campaign declined to comment.

Machado had filed a claim with Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal of Justice in December arguing the ban was null and void and seeking an injunction to protect her political rights.

Instead, the court upheld the ban, which alleges fraud and tax violations and accuses her of seeking the economic sanctions the US imposed on Venezuela last decade.

Sanctions

The US eased some of the sanctions on Venezuela's oil, gas and mining industries in October after Maduro's government and the opposition group known as the Unitary Platform signed the agreement addressing electoral conditions. The accord also led to a swap of prisoners between Washington and Caracas in December.

The deal signed on the Caribbean island of Barbados narrowed the scheduling of the presidential election to the second half of 2024 and called on both sides to "promote the authorization of all presidential candidates and political parties" to participate as long as they comply with the law. The latter provision prompted the government to allow candidates to appeal their bans.

The administration of US President Joe Biden has threatened to reverse some of the sanctions relief if Maduro's government fails to lift bans preventing Machado and others from running for office, and if it fails to release political prisoners.

The US State Department did not immediately comment on the court's action.

Geoff Ramsey, senior analyst on Venezuela at the Atlantic Council think tank, said Maduro's government was never going to let Machado be a presidential candidate because "her popularity makes her too much of a threat."

"The timing of this will make it almost impossible for the US government to ignore," he said. "The problem for Washington is that it's essentially run out of ways to pressure Maduro. How do you threaten a regime that's already endured multiple coup attempts and years of crippling sanctions?"

The harshest sanctions were imposed after Venezuela's last presidential election, which was widely considered a sham and cost Maduro international recognition as the country's legitimate leader.

Also:

MEXICO CITY: At first it sounds like a typical case of bad behavior aboard airplanes.

The Mexico City International Airport acknowledged in a statement Friday that a man had opened an emergency exit and walked out on a wing of a plane that was parked and waiting for takeoff Thursday. The airport said the man had been turned over to police.

But dozens of fellow passengers signed a written copy of a statement saying the airline made them wait for four hours without ventilation or water while the flight was delayed. According to photos of the statement posted online, fellow passengers said he acted "to protect everyone, with the support of everyone."

The airport said in a statement that "yesterday a passenger on a flight to Guatemala opened an emergency door on a plane while it was stationary at a remote position, stood on a wing and then re-entered the cabin, without affecting the aircraft or anyone else."

"In line with international security regulations, this person turned himself over to the authorities," it said.

At least 77 passengers aboard the AeroMexico flight to Guatemala signed a statement handwritten on notebook paper, photos of which were posted on social media, supporting the man's actions.

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's federal police are investigating the country's former intelligence chief as part of a wider probe into alleged spying on political opponents under former President **Jair Bolsonaro**, court records showed.

The former intelligence chief, **Alexandre Ramagem**, was among those targeted by the 21 search warrants that the Supreme Court authorized and that were carried out by police early Thursday morning.

Police are investigating an "organized crime" group that operated within the intelligence agency, known by its Portuguese acronym ABIN, during Ramagem's tenure, according to a police statement.

The group essentially ran a "parallel structure" within ABIN, using the agency's tools and services "for illicit actions, producing information for political and media use, to obtain personal benefits and interfere with police investigations," it said.

Police suspect Ramagem used a software known as FirstMile, developed by Israeli company Cognyte, "to monitor targets and public authorities ... with the aim of creating false narratives," according to Supreme Court Justice **Alexandre de Moraes'** 38-page decision authorizing the warrants.

The document also detailed the group's purported modus operandi.



Chinese coast guard ships block Philippine coast guard BRP Cabra as it tried to head towards Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin Shoal, at the disputed South China Sea during a rotation and resupply mission on Aug 22, 2023. Simmering tensions in the South China Sea between China and several Southeast Asian nations now regularly spark direct confrontation, while coordinated attacks on the military-run government that seized control of Myanmar three years ago have grown to the point that most say the country is now in a civil war. It's with this backdrop that Laos, the poorest and one of the smallest countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, is taking over as the bloc's rotating chair. (AP)

Asia

Tensions simmering in the South China Sea

Beijing steps up military pressure on Taiwan

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Jan 27, (AP): China sent more than 30 warplanes and a group of navy ships toward Taiwan, the island's defense ministry said Saturday.

The military pressure comes on the heels of an announcement that senior American and Chinese representatives were expected to meet in the Thai capital as the two countries seek to cool tensions.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army sent 33 aircraft, including SU-30 fighters, and six navy vessels around Taiwan, between 6 am Friday to 6 am Saturday. Of these, 13 warplanes crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait - an unofficial boundary that's considered a buffer between the island and mainland. Taiwan has monitored the situation and employed its own forces in response to the activities.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and in recent years has shown its displeasure at political activities in Taiwan by sending military planes and ships. Taiwan said six Chinese balloons either flew over the island or through airspace just north of it days after the self-governing island elected Lai Ching-te as the new president. Lai's Democratic Progressive Party largely campaigned on self-determination, social justice and a rejection of China's threats.

United States National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi were both in Bangkok for talks, though it wasn't clear when the meeting would take place or if it already had.

Also:

BANGKOK: Simmering tensions in the South China Sea between China and several Southeast Asian nations now regularly spark direct confrontation. Fighting in Myanmar against the military government that seized power three years ago has grown to the point that most say the country is now in a civil war.

Hopes were high that **Indonesia** might be able to make significant inroads on both issues during its 2023 chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, using its clout as the bloc's largest country, but little progress was made. Now Laos, the bloc's poorest and one of its smallest countries, has taken over the rotating chair.

As foreign ministers gather in **Luang Prabang** for this year's first top-level meetings over the weekend, many are pessimistic that ASEAN can keep its biggest challenges from festering and growing.

agreement and denied working against it. (AP)

Congo rebel group kills 19: At least 19



Polling officers count votes in New Taipei City, Taiwan on Jan 13. Voters in Taiwan recently repelled a wave of disinformation seeking to undermine their democracy ahead of this month's recent election. Experts say Taiwan was able to rebuff China's efforts to meddle with their democracy by taking the challenge of disinformation seriously. In doing so, the island can offer lessons to the US and other nations holding their own elections amid the threat of foreign disinformation. (AP)

SKorean police probes 14-year-old boy

9 suspected militants killed in Philippines

MANILA, Philippines, Jan 27, (AP): Philippine troops killed nine suspected Muslim militants in the volatile south, including two key suspects in a bomb attack last month that left four Christian worshippers dead, the army said Saturday.

Four army scout rangers were slightly wounded in Thursday's operation against the Dawlah Islamiyah, a small outfit aligned with the Islamic State group, in the hinterland village of Tapurug near Piagapo town in Lanao del Sur province, army spokesman Col Louie Dema-ala said.

Army forces clashed with about 15 militants in a series of shootouts from Thursday to Friday after some villagers tipped off the military of their presence, Dema-ala, adding that the surviving militants escaped and were being pursued.

Maj Gen Gabriel Viray III, an army infantry division commander, said the militants retreated from fierce exchanges of fire until they were trapped in a rural house, where they tried to fight back before being taken down.

Eight of the nine bodies had been identified, including those of Saumay Saideen and Abdul Hadi, who were among the suspects in the Dec. 3 bombing that killed four Christian worshippers and wounded dozens of others during Sunday Mass in a state-run university gymnasium in southern Marawi city, he added.

SEOUL, South Korea: North Korea said Friday it was hosting a visit by a Chinese government delegation led by Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, as it continues its efforts to strengthen ties with Beijing and Moscow in the face of deepening confrontations with Washington.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Sun's delegation arrived in the capital, Pyongyang, on Thursday after crossing the land border between the countries. The report didn't provide further details about the visit.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been trying to boost the visibility of its partnership with China and

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: An assailant who repeatedly struck a South Korean lawmaker with a rock as she tried to resist was a 14-year-old boy who was sent to a mental health facility Friday, Seoul police said as they continue to investigate the attack.

The attack Thursday on **Bae Hyunjin**, a member of the conservative ruling party, came just weeks after a man stabbed opposition leader **Lee Jae-myung** in the neck, and it raised further concerns about the toxic discourse around the country's intensely polarized politics.

BEIJING: Beijing confirmed Friday that a longtime British businessperson in China had been sentenced to five years in prison in 2022 on an espionage charge.

Ian J. Stones was convicted of being bought off to provide intelligence to "external forces," Foreign Ministry spokesperson **Wang Wenbin** said when asked about the case at a daily briefing. He did not provide any specific details about the charges.

Both the **United Kingdom** and **United States** governments have warned about the risk of detention under China's national security laws.

Russia as he tries to break out of diplomatic isolation and strengthen his regional footing by joining a united front against the United States.

Kim traveled to Russia's Far East in September for a rare summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin and some experts say he is also likely seeking a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

While Kim has prioritized his ties with Russia, which has raised concerns about an arms cooperation that would help fuel Putin's war on Ukraine, the North Korean leader has also invited senior Chinese officials to major state events in recent months while vowing to strengthen bilateral relations.

The rebels shelled the town of Mweso, where they "indiscriminately dropped mortar bombs," which also injured 27 other civilians, army spokesman Lt Col Guillaume N'djike Kaiko said in a statement read on state television.

The town's streets were empty Thursday evening, after most of its residents took refuge in the Mweso General Hospital, Kaiko added. The army blamed the attack on the M23 rebel group, which rose to prominence 10 years ago when its fighters seized Goma, eastern Congo's largest city on the border with Rwanda. Its name refers to a March 23, 2009, peace deal, which it accuses the government of not implementing. (AP)

50 shot dead in Plateau: Gunmen killed at least 50 villagers over two days in Nigeria's north-central Plateau state, survivors said Thursday, prompting a 24-hour curfew and calls for authorities to end violence between nomadic cattle herders and farming communities.

No group took responsibility for the killings that took place in remote villages over a two-day period, the second such attack in less than a month in the restive state where more than 140 people were killed in December.

Gunmen stormed villages in Plateau's Mangu district on Monday and Tuesday firing on residents and setting fire to houses, the Mwachavul Development Association community association said. Reports of the attacks were delayed because of difficulty in accessing the area. (AP)



Mali Prime Minister Abdoulaye Maiga at the COP28 UN Climate Summit, Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Mali's junta has terminated the 2015 peace deal with the Tuareg rebel groups 'with immediate effect' because the rebels have failed to comply with its terms and because of 'acts of hostility' by Algeria, which has been the main mediator in the peace efforts, government spokesperson Col. Abdoulaye Maiga said on state television on Jan 25. (AP)



Aukot

Dujarric

Africa

Officers deployment unconstitutional:

Kenya's high court on Friday blocked the United Nations-backed deployment of Kenyan police officers to Haiti to help the Caribbean country bring gang violence under control.

Kenya's parliament passed a motion in November allowing the deployment of 1,000 officers to lead a multinational force in Haiti. But Judge Chacha Mwita said Kenya's National Security Council, which is led by the president, does not have the authority to deploy regular police outside the country.

"It is not contested that there is no reciprocal arrangement between Kenya and Haiti and for that reason, there can be no deployment of police to that country," Mwita said.

The judge said Kenya's offer was noble but needed to be carried out in accordance with the constitution.

Mwita made the ruling in response to an application from Thirdway Alliance Party leader **Ekuru Aukot**, who argued that the government's plan to send the officers to Haiti was illegal.

Kenyan government spokesperson Isaac Mwaura said it will appeal the decision.

UN spokesperson **Stephane Dujarric** noted the government's announcement that it will appeal and said: "The need for this multinational force authorized by the (Security) Council remains extremely high." (AP)

Mali ends deal with rebels:

Mali's junta has terminated a crucial agreement with local rebels that helped maintain a fragile peace in the country's north, the government announced, raising concerns about a possible escalation of violence.

The 2015 peace deal with Tuareg rebel groups is ending "with immediate effect" because the rebels have failed to comply with its terms and because of "acts of hostility" by Algeria, which has been the main mediator in the peace efforts, government spokesperson Col. Abdoulaye Maiga said on state television Thursday night.

Representatives of the rebel group did not immediately comment but Algeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that it "deeply regrets" Mali's decision to end the

oil rises

Price of the Kuwaiti oil rose USD 1.29 to USD 83.71 per barrel on Friday compared to USD 82.42 pb Thursday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation said on Saturday.

In international markets, forwards of the Brent crude oil climbed by USD 1.12 to USD 83.55 pb and those of the West Texas Intermediate crude by 65 cents to settle at KD 78.01 a barrel. (KUNA)

commitment to renewable energy

Dr. Falah Al-Hajraf, Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, along with Minister of State for Housing Affairs, reiterated Kuwait's dedication to expanding renewable energy projects. This commitment is in line with the country's vision to generate a minimum of 15 percent of electrical energy during peak times from renewable sources by 2030, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

On the occasion of International Clean Energy Day, Minister Al-Hajraf emphasized the need to expedite the implementation of the Al-Shaqaya rena-

ble energy project. The project boasts a production capacity of 4,500 megawatts, distributed across four phases utilizing diverse solar energy technologies. The objective is to pave the way for a sustainable future for Kuwait.

It is noteworthy that January 26 has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly as International Clean Energy Day. The day aims to enhance global awareness and promote efforts for a just and comprehensive transition to clean energy for the betterment of humanity and the planet.

gold loses its luster for 2nd consecutive wk

Gold prices are on a downward trend for the second consecutive week, influenced by the robust performance of the US economy, which has maintained the dollar close to its recent highs. Investors are eagerly awaiting key inflation data set to be released later today.

Kelvin Wong, Chief Market Analyst for the Asia-Pacific region at OANDA, noted that the ongoing resilience of the US economy is restraining the strength of gold. Official data indicates that the US economy surpassed growth expectations

in the fourth quarter, with a decrease in inflationary pressures attributed to strong consumer spending.

The dollar index recorded a 0.2 percent increase over the week, remaining close to a six-week high. This situation renders the precious metal less appealing to holders of other currencies.

All eyes are currently on the Federal Reserve's preferred gauge of inflation, the Personal Consumption Expenditures Index, scheduled to be disclosed at 1330 GMT.

Market Movements

26-01-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
PHILIPPINES - PSEI	+0.19	6,686.09	UAE - DFM	-0.24	4,163.33
EGYPT - EGX 30	+0.29	27,666.18	JAPAN - Nikkei	-1.34	35,751.07
			PAKISTAN - KSE 100	-0.68	63,783.28
			SAUDI - Tadawul	-0.10	12,161.56

Business

Spot and future prices remained below USD 80/b mark by close of year

Crude oil mkt overlooks geopolitics on oversupply & demand concerns

By Kamco Invest

Crude oil market overlooks geopolitics on oversupply & demand concerns...

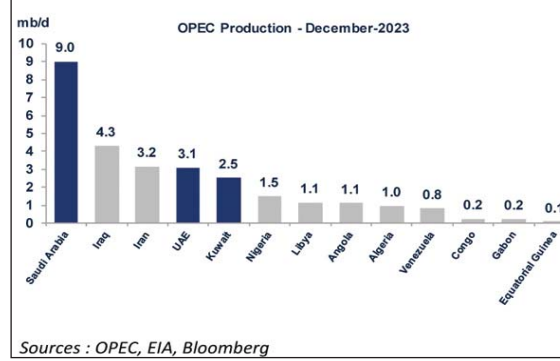
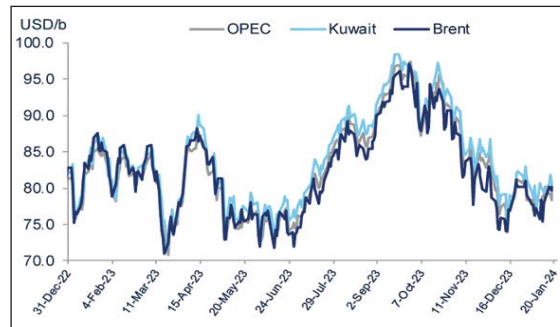
The year 2023 turned out to be yet another volatile year for the crude oil market with prices swinging more than 30% within a span of merely three months followed by an almost equivalent decline over the next three months. Spot and future prices remained below the USD 80/b mark by the close of the year as interest rates, inflation, tepid demand forecasts, over supply concerns and a strong greenback for most part of the year continued to maintain a downward pressure on prices, partially offset by geopolitics and war on Gaza.

The volatile trend continued in 2024 but crude oil mostly trended upwards due to the attack on cargo ships in the Red Sea and the resultant retaliation from the US and UK governments. As a consequence, data showed a declining number of crude oil cargoes passing through the Red Sea. The cost of shipments as well as insurance costs swelled as cargoes have to take a longer route to reach their destinations and avoid the Red Sea. As tensions escalated, Brent moved swiftly above the USD 80/b mark getting further support from a renewed conflict between Russia and Ukraine with drone strikes on Russia's Baltic coast.

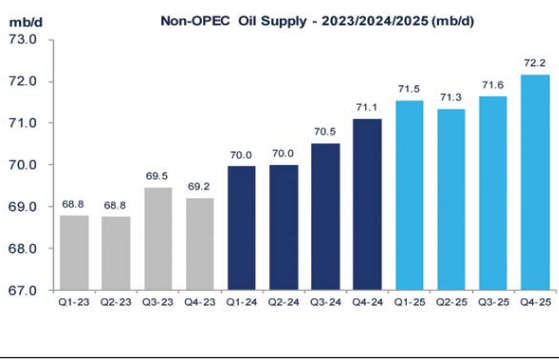
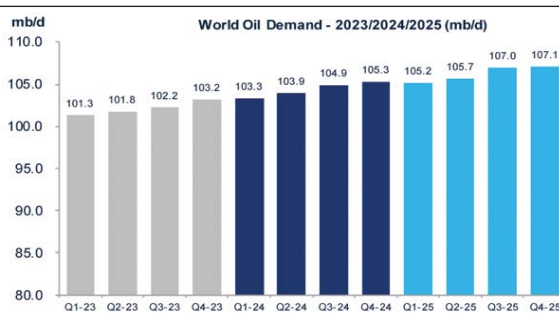
On the other hand, demand side factors remained subdued and offered little support to crude oil prices also offsetting geopolitical concerns. The problems in China's recovery continued as the government pumped in more money into key sectors hoping for a revival or insulating from an uncontrolled decline. News reports suggested an infusion of around 2.0 Trillion Yuan (USD 278 Bn) in Chinese stock market via international units of state companies in order to stabilize the stock market. Recent economic data for China have also shown weaker-than-expected GDP growth in the country despite government measures. Nevertheless, a lower-than-expected decline in economic performance elsewhere, especially in the OECD, prompted many forecasters to upgrade demand growth projections for 2024.

Supply side factors remained the key to the downward pressure on crude oil prices. Despite the extension of OPEC+ production cuts, oil prices remained little changed as higher supplies, especially from the US offset most of the concerns. The IEA addressed this in its latest monthly report and said that oil supply growth in the US continues to outpace expectations. Supplies from Brazil and Guyana are also upbeat, offsetting efforts from the OPEC. The latest weekly data on US oil production showed output at a record high of 13.3 mb/d during the week ended 12-January-2024. On the other hand, OPEC production (including data for Angola from Bloomberg) showed a small decline in output during December-2023 to average at 28.1 mb/d. African producer Angola announced last month that it would quit the OPEC group starting January-2024 with reports showing disagreements over output quota as the reason for the exit.

Crude oil market sees another bumpy year...
Geopolitical events continued during 2023 with the deadlock associated with the ongoing Russia/Ukraine war and the embargo on Russian crude oil exports. Moreover, geopolitical issues moved closer to the oil producing OPEC region with the attacks on Gaza. The situation further escalated towards the end of the year following the attacks on Red Sea cargoes that led to obstruction in the passage through the Suez Canal. However, despite the geopolitical issues, oil prices still declined during 2023. The market also overlooked the existing OPEC+ cuts as well as an extension to the cuts into 2024, that was over and above the voluntary



Sources : OPEC, EIA, Bloomberg



cuts mainly from Saudi Arabia and Russia.

In terms of prices, crude oil traded in a broad range during 2023. OPEC reference basket prices peaked at an eleven month high level of USD 97.5/barrel during September-2023 on the back of tightening market as OPEC curbed output in addition to supply concerns from the US at the time that led to declining inventories of crude oil and gasoline. Brent spot prices also peaked around the same time at USD 97.1/barrel. On the other hand, the lowest point during the year was seen in March-2023 when OPEC reference basket prices reached USD 70.8/barrel while Brent spot crude reached USD 71.0/barrel. The decline was triggered by the US banking crisis as well as weak economic data from China. Decline was also seen towards the end of the year with Brent falling to USD 74.1/barrel during mid-December-2023 while OPEC crude oil price declined to USD 73.9/b. This decline was led by concerns on the demand front coupled with oversupply in the market. The year closed with OPEC reference basket trading at USD 78.4/barrel resulting in a decline of 3.5% during the year, while Brent prices saw a slightly bigger yearly decline of 6.2% after reaching USD 77.7/barrel by the end of the year. Future prices witnessed an even steeper decline of 10.3% for near term Brent contracts.

Higher interest rates and persistent inflation during most of 2023 also ruined the rally for most of the other commodities. This was evident from the 12.6 percent decline in the Bloomberg commodities index. The decline also came from higher base prices during 2022 after the start of the Russia/Ukraine war at the start of the year. The decline this year was led by fall in benchmarks for base metals and grains along with energy commodities (oil and gas prices) while precious metals performed relatively better during the year. Inflation remained one of the key concerns with higher y-o-y CPI until the May-2023, however, a steep decline in the following months alleviated some of these concerns.

Consensus estimates on crude oil grades underwent drastic changes during 2023 as unprecedented events occurred during the year, in addition to underwhelming recovery in

global oil demand, especially in China. The Bloomberg estimate for Brent crude oil future prices in 2023 started the year with a forecast of USD 93.9 per barrel but closed the year significantly lower at around USD 80 per barrel. A similar downgrade was seen in forecasts from the EIA for both Brent and WTI crude grades.

OPEC Production

The OPEC+ once again remained active in dynamically adjusting its production policies each month depending on the crude oil market and have clearly stated a similar strategy with the existing cuts that are in effect until Q1-2024. OPEC production remained elevated at the start of 2023 peaking in February-2023 at 29.2 mb/d, according to Bloomberg data. However, the general trend in production was downward since the peak as Saudi Arabia and Russia, along with other small producers, implemented voluntary production cuts starting from July-2023. Average OPEC crude oil production declined during 2023 after seeing two consecutive years of growth. Output from the 13-member in the OPEC averaged at 28.1 mb/d during the year as compared to 28.9 mb/d during 2022, registering a decline of 2.6% or 739 tb/d, according to data from OPEC secondary sources. The decline was led by fall in output from 7 out of the 13 producers in the group while the remaining 6 producers reported higher production. The biggest decline was reported in output from Saudi Arabia that dropped by 918 tb/d during 2023 followed by Iraq and the UAE with production declines of 164 tb/d and 115 tb/d, respectively.

Oil output in Saudi Arabia remained at around the 9.0 mb/d level since the implementation of the voluntary cuts as compared to an average production of 10.3 mb/d during 1H-2023, based on data from OPEC secondary sources. Oil production in Iraq averaged at around 4.3 mb/d during the last three quarters of the year as compared to 4.4 mb/d during Q1-2023 and around 4.5 mb/d during 2H-2022. The decline in production during the latter half of 2023 was mainly due to the blockade of oil exports from the Kurdistan region due to issues with Turkish authorities. Meanwhile, average production in the UAE once again went below the 3.0 mb/d

mark during 2023 to reach 2.95 mb/d as compared to 3.07 mb/d during 2022.

On the other hand, Iran reported the biggest increase in output during the year reaching 2.9 mb/d in 2023 as compared to 2.6 mb/d during 2022. Higher production in Iran came after US softened its stance on the country as a result of a lengthy negotiation between the two countries. Swing producers, Libya and Nigeria, were next in terms of growth in production. Libya added 183 tb/d during the year with producing at an average rate of 1.2 mb/d, the highest yearly average in thirteen years, since the decline in 2011. Nigeria also increased production by 103 mb/d during the year to reach an average output of 1.3 mb/d, partially recovering from a decline in 2022. The country was successful in limiting the output loss due to theft and disruption of oil facilities during 2023.

US crude oil production

Oil production in the US showed a healthy growth of 8.5% or 1.0 mb/d to reach a record average output rate of 12.92 mb/d in 2023. This was the second consecutive year of growth after an increase of 5.7% or 0.6 mb/d during 2022. The growth reflected higher shale output during the year as producers were encouraged to grow production to book profits from the elevated oil prices. Data from Bloomberg showed shale oil output reaching a record during 2023, averaging at 9.7 mb/d as compared to 8.9 mb/d during 2022. Output from the Permian Basin alone reached 5.9 mb/d in 2023 as compared to 5.4 mb/d in 2022.

Oil Prices

Oil prices traded in a tight range at the start of 2024 led by mixed data on the demand/supply front as well as mixed views on the future path of rate cuts by US and other global central banks during the year and its impact on economic growth and oil demand. Brent crude oil futures breached the USD 80/b mark on 22-January-2024 for the first time in four weeks to reach USD 80.1/barrel resulting in a YTD-2024 gain of 3.9%. The prompt timespread on the futures contract showed backwardation, indicating bullish near-term bets. The gains were led by global geopolitical events including the US and UK led strikes on Yemen related to the Red Sea attacks as well as the drone strike on Russia by Ukraine in the Baltic region. A decline in Russian crude oil shipments to the lowest in almost two months due to bad weather also helped prices. Nevertheless, oversupply concerns continued to affect sentiments in the oil market as indicated by the latest monthly report from the IEA. On the other hand, rig count data from Baker Hughes indicated that the aggregate oil rigs in the US once again went below the 500 mark and was reported at 497 for the week ended 19-January-2024. The decline in rig count coupled with higher supplies from the US indicated better well productivity in the sector.

Meanwhile, in its latest forecast, the EIA made a small downgrade to its forecast for Brent crude oil for 2024. The agency expects the crude grade to average at USD 82.49/barrel during 2023 as compared to its previous forecast of 82.57/barrel. The forecast for 2024 is in line with the average Brent crude spot price during 2023. The forecast for the crude grade for 2025 was at USD 79.48/barrel. For the broader consensus estimate, there was downward revision this month for prices expected as of Q1-2024 which is now at USD 82.5/barrel as compared to USD 85.0/barrel expected last month. In terms of monthly trend, Brent crude averaged at USD 78.0/b during December-2023 after witnessing a monthly decline of 6.1% vs. November-2023. The decline in OPEC crude basket was similar at 7.0% to average at USD 79.0/b while Kuwait crude grade declined by 7.2% to average at USD 80.1/barrel.

Continued on Page 9

US inflation slowed further in December

WASHINGTON, Jan 27, (AP) - The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge cooled further last month even as the economy kept growing briskly, a trend sure to be welcomed at the White House as President Joe Biden seeks reelection in a race that could pivot on his economic stewardship.

Friday's government report showed that prices rose just 0.2% from November to December, a pace consistent with pre-pandemic levels and barely above the Fed's 2% annual target. Measured from a year earlier, prices increased 2.6%.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called "core" prices rose just 0.2% from month to month and 2.9% from a year earlier - the smallest such rise since March 2021. Economists

consider core prices a better gauge of the likely path of inflation. The latest data suggests that the economy is achieving an elusive "soft landing," in which inflation falls back to the Fed's target without a recession. That outcome could make it easier for the Fed to consider cutting its key interest rate, which it raised 11 times since March 2022 to attack inflation.

At the sector level, the financial services and banking sectors led the upward trend, with gains of 31.8 percent and 17.4 percent, respectively.

Analysts anticipate continued market growth, attributing optimism to the new government's potential to stimulate economic activity, accelerate project implementation, and diversify the economy away from oil. Investors also express confidence in the profitability of listed companies and banks, with expectations of strong dividends for the fiscal year 2023.

In the most recent session, the stock market exhibited a collective rise with increases in six sectors and declines in seven. Key indices, including the primary market index, the general index, the main index, and the main 50 index, experienced slight gains. However, liquidity in the session decreased by 0.2 percent, quantities dropped by 2 percent, and deals decreased from 15.6 thousand to 43.3 thousand.

Sectorally, energy led the gainers with a 2.96 percent increase, while technology, among others, experienced a decline of 4.29 percent.

Gulf Bank: WISE recorded outstanding returns in '23

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Gulf Bank has revealed that WISE, Kuwait's leading digital investment platform following the Nobel Prize-winning investment methodology, delivered exceptional performance in 2023, surpassing customer expectations. Conservative portfolios saw an average return of 10.7%, high-risk portfolios achieved 20.9%, and WISE's Islamic portfolio emerged as the top performer with a remarkable 22% return. The income portfolio demonstrated solid results, attaining a 9.2% return, supported by substantial annual dividends of 6%.

Ruqayya Al-Rifai, the Executive Director of Investment Advisory, expressed pride in the significant success of WISE in 2023, highlighting the platform's innovative digital investment solutions and considerable competitive advantages in consistently exceeding customer expectations. Al-Rifai emphasized WISE's ability to provide tailored investment solutions, whether for moderate or high-risk investments or Shariah-Compliant investments. Clients have full control of their portfolios, with the flexibility to invest, withdraw, or redeem on a daily basis. Additionally, they benefit from the convenience of monitoring their portfolios effortlessly from any location, and at any time, using smart devices.

Al-Rifai clarified that WISE is built on a foundation of long-term investment in a carefully crafted, diversified global portfolio. This strategy is designed to attain returns consistent with the level of risk, by assessing the client's investment objectives, time horizon, and acceptable risk ratio through a straightforward questionnaire. Subsequently, WISE suggests the most appropriate portfolio tailored to the client's needs. Over the investment duration, investment managers diligently monitor client portfolios, conducting regular meetings to ensure alignment with the client's specified goals.

She emphasized that WISE stands as the optimal solution for



Ruqayya Al-Rifai



WISE logo

global market investments, offering affordability, ease, and transparency. It empowers investors to reach their investment and savings goals, through well-diversified international portfolios. This is done while considering each investor's unique investment objectives, time horizon, and acceptable risk rate.

Al-Rifai concluded by attributing the success of WISE to its innovative portfolio design and allocation, tailored uniquely for customers to aid them in achieving their investment objectives and fostering wealth growth. She also highlighted the collaborative efforts of a team of professional investment advisors. WISE is accessible to both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis holding accounts with Gulf Bank, with a minimum opening amount of \$10,000.

In line with Gulf Bank's 2025 strategy and a dedication to serv-

ing high-net-worth individuals, the bank provides tailored products to address the specific needs of this customer segment.

Noteworthy among these offerings is WISE Investment Service, Gulf Bank's leading digital portfolio management platform, as well as a range of investment advisories and alternative investment opportunities with total assets in client investments under the Bank's management, surpassing KD 1 billion.

Gulf Bank has successfully secured all regulatory approvals for the launch of Gulf Capital Investment Company "InvestGB," a closed joint-stock company specializing in securities activities. This entity, wholly owned by the bank with a capital of KD 10 million, is equipped to engage in asset management, including investment portfolio management, investment advisory, custodianship, investment control, collective investment scheme management, underwriting, and non-stock exchange registered securities brokerage.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience.

Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse sustainability initiatives, strategically selected to benefit the Bank both internally and externally. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with various parties to achieve it.

Boursa Kuwait continued upward trajectory in fourth week of 2024

Market value up by KD 665 mln

By Ahmad Fathi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: In the fourth week of 2024, the Boursa Kuwait maintained its upward trajectory, witnessing a collective increase in indicators. Consequently, the market value surged by 665 million dinars, reflecting a growth of 1.56 percent.

This rise, from 42.697 million dinars on Thursday, January 18, to 43.362 million dinars in the latest session, contributed to the stock market's overall gains of 3.103 billion dinars over 18 sessions since the start of 2024. This marks a growth rate of 7.7 percent from the market value of 40.259 billion dinars on December 28.

The First Market exhibited a 1.77 percent increase during the week, amounting to 596 million dinars.

The market value rose from 33.717 billion dinars to 34.313 billion dinars, reflecting a 7.83 percent increase and a total value growth of 2.492 billion dinars since the beginning of the year. The main market also saw a 0.76 percent increase, with a value of 68 million dinars, pushing the market value up by 7.23 percent to 9.048 billion dinars from the beginning of 2024.

Key market indices demonstrated positive movements during the week. The general index rose by 1.56 percent (112.9 points), the primary market index increased by 1.78 percent (140.7 points), and the main index saw a 0.76 percent uptick (44.9 points). The main 50 index also experienced a 0.95 percent increase, gaining 54.8 points.

Liquidity rates revealed significant growth since the start of 2024, with the general index, first market index, main index, and "Main 50" index all showing positive trends, ranging from 7.26 percent to 7.8 percent.

Despite this positive market performance, the past week witnessed a decline in liquidity and trading volumes. Liquidity decreased by 22.5 percent to 300.03 million dinars, and trading volumes dropped by 23.8 percent to 1.344

billion shares. Deals also decreased from 114.9 thousand to 105.85 thousand.

At the sector level, the financial services and banking sectors led the upward trend, with gains of 31.8 percent and 17.4 percent, respectively.

Analysts anticipate continued market growth, attributing optimism to the new government's potential to stimulate economic activity, accelerate project implementation, and diversify the economy away from oil. Investors also express confidence in the profitability of listed companies and banks, with expectations of strong dividends for the fiscal year 2023.

In the most recent session, the stock market exhibited a collective rise with increases in six sectors and declines in seven. Key indices, including the primary market index, the general index, the main index, and the main 50 index, experienced slight gains. However, liquidity in the session decreased by 0.2 percent, quantities dropped by 2 percent, and deals decreased from 15.6 thousand to 43.3 thousand.

Sectorally, energy led the gainers with a 2.96 percent increase, while technology, among others, experienced a decline of 4.29 percent.

BUSINESS

farmers heap pressure on new French PM

Protesting farmers shut down long stretches of some of France's major highways again Friday, using tractors to block and slow traffic and squeeze the government ever more tightly to give in to their demands that growing and rearing food be made easier and more lucrative. The farmers' spreading movement for better remuneration for their produce, less red tape and lower costs, as well as protection

against cheap imports is increasingly becoming a major crisis for the government. It echoes the 2018-2019 yellow vest demonstrations against economic injustice that rocked the first term of President Emmanuel Macron and lastingly dented his popularity. This time, Macron's new Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, his mettle being sorely tested just two weeks into the job, is hoping to assuage and win over demon-

strating farmers with a series of measures he announced during a visit to a cattle farm in southern France on Friday afternoon. They include "drastically simplifying" certain technical procedures "starting today." Some of the measures will reduce 14 rules to one, Attal said. In another move to placate farmers, he announced the progressive end to diesel fuel taxes for farm vehicles. (AP)

US pauses pending approvals of LNG exports

The Biden-Harris administration announced a pause on pending applications to export liquefied natural gas to non-free trade agreement countries from here in the United States. The energy department's pause will remain in effect until the agency updates key economic and environmental analyzes, Ali Zaidi, the president's national climate advisor, told reporters at the White House on

Friday. "These are the analyzes that underpin the way the Department of Energy makes decisions about these authorization applications," he noted. "Specifically, the Department of Energy has said that it will focus on better understanding energy costs and the implications of future exports on energy costs for American consumers and manufacturers, on

energy security for the United States, here and around the world. "Third, on greenhouse gas emissions and in particular, methane emissions which we now know are more potent than previously understood. "And also on the burden that export potentially places for the frontline communities, where this gas is chilled, liquefied and then exported. (KUNA)

Crude oil

Continued from Page 8

World Oil Demand

World oil demand estimates for 2023 were kept broadly unchanged by the OPEC in its latest monthly report at 2.46 mb/d with total demand expected to reach 102.11 mb/d during the year. However, revisions were made to quarterly data for Q1-2023 and Q3-2023 for the OECD region and for China with the latest published figures. The demand forecast for OECD Americas, China and the Middle East regions also underwent upward adjustments reflecting better-than-expected growth in oil demand in the region.

The demand growth forecast for 2024 was also kept unchanged at a growth of 2.25 mb/d with full year demand expected to reach 104.36 mb/d. The economic growth forecast for the US shows a smaller growth in 2024 as compared to 2023. Meanwhile, monthly report from the IEA showed a much lower demand growth this year. According to the agency, growth in global oil demand in 2024 is expected to be significantly lower than in 2023 and come in at 1.2 mb/d during the year from 2.3 mb/d last year. The forecast from the IEA was, however, upgraded from last month by around 180 tb/d led by relatively better economic growth projections and lower crude oil prices in Q4-2023. Some of the key factors affecting growth in oil demand includes subdued GDP growth in key global economies, energy efficiency improvements by way of EVs as well as the loss in demand post the Covid-19 pandemic is expected to have fully recovered. Moreover, the IEA still expects China to be the key driver of demand growth this year led by an expanding petrochemical sector in the country.

On the regional front, the OPEC monthly report highlighted subdued manufacturing activity in the US that is expected to affect demand for diesel although overall oil demand in the US is expected to increase by around 140 tb/d y-o-y in 1H-2024, supported by demand for jet/kerosene and LPG. For the OECD Europe region, economic growth is expected to strengthen in 2024 and is reflected in rising real household income backed by fall in inflation and firm nominal wages. This is expected to support oil demand growth in 1H-2024 with an expected y-o-y increase of 58 tb/d.

Oil Supply

Global liquids production once again declined during December-2023. According to preliminary data, global oil supply averaged at 100.9 mb/d following a m-o-m decline of 0.4 mb/d. According to OPEC, the decline was also once again led by lower production by non-OPEC producers. Non-OPEC suppliers showed a decline of 0.5 mb/d during the month with production averaging at 74.2 mb/d led by a drop in production in Russia and the US that was partially offset by higher output from Other Eurasia and Canada.

The OPEC estimates liquids production in the non-OPEC countries to grow by 2.1 mb/d during 2023 to reach 69.1 mb/d during the year. The estimate for 2023 includes production figures for Angola that decided to leave the OPEC group during December-2023. Moreover, the OPEC monthly report showed that upward revisions to made to supply estimates for US (+175 tb/d), Russia (+159 tb/d) and Brazil (+29 tb/d) that were partially offset by downward revisions to supply estimates for Canada (-18 tb/d) and Azerbaijan (-11 tb/d). As per the report, supply growth in 2023 for the OECD region was revised up after downward adjustments to supply data for the UK and Norway were more than offset by upward revisions to data for the US. For 2024, non-OPEC liquids production growth forecast was marginally lowered to 1.3 mb/d and supply is expected to average at 70.4 mb/d. The revision included downward adjustment to supply forecast for Azerbaijan by 11 tb/d in 2024. On similar lines, forecasts from the IEA shows world oil supply rising by 1.5 mb/d to 103.5 mb/d led by record production from the US, Brazil, Guyana and Canada.

The OPEC also released its initial forecast for world oil demand and non-OPEC liquids supply for 2025 in its latest monthly report. The agency expects demand growth of 1.8 mb/d in 2025 with bulk of the growth coming from the non-OECD region further supported by marginal growth expected in the OECD region. According to the report, demand in the OECD region is expected to grow by 0.1 mb/d to reach 46.13 mb/d while non-OECD demand is expected to increase by 1.7 mb/d to reach 1.74 mb/d in 2025. China followed by the Middle East region are expected to be the biggest driver of oil demand in 2025 with demand growth of 0.41 mb/d and 0.38 mb/d, respectively. Demand growth in the US is expected to be supported by higher transportation fuel usage, higher demand for LPG and petrochemical requirements partially offset by softer demand for diesel and naphtha, in line with the trends expected for 2024. A relatively higher economic growth in 2025 vs. 2024 is also expected to support oil demand growth during the year.

On the other hand, non-OPEC liquids production is expected to grow by 1.3 mb/d in 2025 to average at 71.7 mb/d during the year. Bulk of the supply growth is expected to come from the OECD region which is expected to increase supply by 0.8 mb/d while the non-OECD region is expected to increase supply by 0.4 mb/d. The US is expected to be the biggest contributor to liquids production growth in 2025 and is expected to increase production by 0.6 mb/d to an average of 21.96 mb/d. Crude oil production in the US is expected to reach 13.44 mb/d in 2025, according to the latest forecast from the US EIA as compared to a forecast of 13.21 mb/d for 2024.

OPEC Oil Production & Spare Capacity

Oil production by the OPEC once again declined during December-2023 as compared to the previous month. Aggregate production reached 28.05 mb/d during the month registering a decline of 40 tb/d, as per Bloomberg data that included production data for Angola, mainly led by lower production in the UAE and Kuwait. Most of the producers in the group kept production unchanged during December-2023 as compared to November-2023. On the other hand, production data from OPEC secondary sources showed a small growth in production during the month by 73 tb/d with aggregate production reaching 26.7 mb/d during the month (excluding data for Angola). The growth, as per OPEC, was led by a healthy growth in production in Nigeria, further supported by higher production in Iraq. This growth was partially offset by marginal decline in production in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Oil production in Libya increased by 20 tb/d during the month, as per Bloomberg. However, recent reports showed closure of the largest oil field in the country, the Sharara oil field that produces 270 tb/d, due to protests. The closure caused the production to go below 1 mb/d during January-2024 and was restarted after almost three weeks.

In a significant development, Angola decided to leave the OPEC group starting from January-2024. Reports suggested that the move was prompted by disagreements over output cut quotas. Contrastingly, the news came weeks after Brazil decided to join the broader OPEC+ group, although the producer said it will not cap output.

The most recent data from Refinitiv Eikon showed OPEC compliance to pledged output cuts at over 300%. Pledged cuts as of December-2023 stood at 1.3 mb/d, excluding the voluntary cuts announced by Saudi Arabia and Russia. Within OPEC, only Gabon failed to comply with the agreed cuts while the rest of the nine producers (excluding exempt producers Iran, Libya and Venezuela) exceeded compliance. In terms of spare capacity, data on average production for 2023, pledged cuts and capacity showed spare production of more than 6.0 mb/d as of the end of December-2023. Saudi Arabia boasted the biggest spare capacity of 2.4 mb/d followed by UAE and Iran at 1.2 mb/d and 1.0 mb/d, respectively. Together, the three producers accounted for more than three-fourth of the spare capacity.

'Exceeding customer expectations bolstered our leadership in market'

Zain and Samsung introduce Galaxy S24 series in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Zain hosted a special event at its headquarters in Shuwaikh to celebrate the launch of the all-new, highly-anticipated Samsung Galaxy S24 series. The event was attended by executive management teams from Zain, Samsung Gulf, and Albabtain, along with Zain's dedicated customers, Samsung enthusiasts, and content creators from the local tech community. Users got to experience the new devices up-close prior to their official launch to learn more about the lineup's top innovations and best features.

In attendance were Zain Kuwait Acting CEO Nawaf Algharabally, Samsung Gulf President Doohee Lee, Samsung Gulf Head of Branch for Kuwait and Qatar Yong Jae Lee, Zain Kuwait CCO Meshal Al Kandari, Samsung Gulf Senior Sales Director Fadi Abu Shamah, Albabtain Business Development and Investment Specialist Abdulwahab Albabtain, and other executives and team members from the three companies.

The special event gathered Zain's most dedicated customers, Samsung fans, and content creators from the local tech community for an exclusive opportunity to experience the all-new lineup, which includes the flagship Galaxy S24 Ultra, Galaxy S24+, and Galaxy S24. Guests were introduced to revolutionary features from the three AI-powered devices, with Samsung's team of specialists available to answer all queries.

During the event, Zain Kuwait Acting CEO Nawaf Algharabally said: "This exclusive experience comes under our strategic partnership with Samsung Gulf and Albabtain. Their presence today cements our years-long relationship that brings to our market the best innovations and technologies."

Algharabally added: "Kuwait's market is a relatively small one in size, but the private sector's contributions, with partnerships like this one that is fueled by Zain's ambition and Samsung's innovation, placed it on the map as one of the most mature and leading markets in the telecom and ICT space, both regionally and globally."

"Two years ago, Zain became the first operator globally to commercially launch voice over 5G (Vo5G) with nationwide coverage on the Samsung Galaxy S series, bringing crystal-clear voice calls over 5G on the nation's biggest network. This was an incredible milestone, not only for



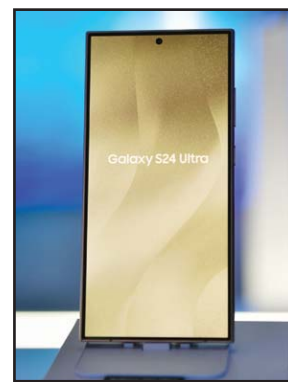
Nawaf Algharabally and Doohee Lee with executives from Samsung Gulf and Albabtain.



Algharabally speaking at the event.



Samsung Gulf President Doohee Lee speaking.



Event gathered Zain's dedicated customers and tech content creators.

Zain, but for Kuwait as a key player in the global telecom community as well." He continued.

Algharabally concluded by saying: "Exceeding customer expectations bolstered the leadership position we enjoy in the market today. Zain's Ookla® Speedtest® award-winning network complements the

S24 lineup's innovations, making it the first and best choice for a seamless digital experience."

During the event, Zain's most dedicated customers who preordered the new devices were given a special opportunity to collect their orders earlier than the official delivery date in appreciation of their loyalty. Guests

Disagreement over beef and cheese

UK's post-Brexit trade talks with Canada break down

LONDON, Jan 27, (AP): The British government has called off post-Brexit trade talks with Canada after discussions broke down over disagreements related to the import and export of beef and cheese.

The two countries have been negotiating a new trade deal over the past two years since Britain fully left the European Union. Trade between the two has largely continued under the same deal that was originally brokered when Britain was a member of the bloc.

In a statement late Thursday, the U.K. government said it "remains open" to restarting talks in the future but that there was no progress so far. Annual trade between the two countries is valued at around 26 billion pounds (\$33 billion).

Over time as the discussions pushed ahead, Canadian negotiators came under mounting pressure from their beef industry and domestic cheesemakers.

The beef industry wanted access to the United Kingdom for its hormone-free beef while the cheesemakers warned about the economic impact of tariff-free cheese from Britain, primarily cheddar. Tariff-free cheese exports from Britain stopped at the end of 2023 after a time-limited side agreement expired, leaving British producers facing higher duties of 245%.

Canada's trade minister, Mary Ng, said on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the Canadian government "will never agree to a deal that isn't good for our workers, farmers and businesses."

Minette Batters, president of the Nation Farmers' Union of England and Wales, praised the British government, especially its apparent refusal to allow hormone-linked beef to be allowed into Britain.

"Trade on agricultural products is always the first thing to be discussed and the last thing to be agreed," she said. "I am pleased the government has stuck to its line and not given way."

One of the main benefits that was being pushed during Britain's 2016 referendum on its membership of the EU was that it would allow the country to pursue its independent trade policy.

However, few new trade deals have been negotiated since Brexit, and any ensuing benefits are widely considered to be modest when put against the impediments to trade that have now been put in place between Britain and the EU. Before Brexit, Britain could trade freely within the bloc.

Britain's Conservative government, which negotiated the post-Brexit trade deal with the EU, sought to downplay the breakdown in the talks with Canada.

European Central Bank leaves key interest rate at record high

Financial markets expecting a 4% rate cut

FRANKFURT, Germany, Jan 27, (AP): The European Central Bank left its key interest rate untouched at a record high Thursday, keeping credit expensive for businesses and consumers as it tries to make sure inflation is firmly under control before cutting borrowing costs - a move expected later this year.

The question is, how much later this year. Financial markets are expecting a rate cut from 4% as early as April, while ECB President Christine Lagarde has indicated it likely would happen this summer.

Analysts expect her to use a news conference Thursday to underline that the bank needs to see more proof that painful inflation - which has made everything from groceries to energy more expensive - has been beaten down.

Lagarde has cautioned that the bank will make decisions based on the latest figures about the economy's health rather than making longer-term promises.

The ECB's statement dropped earlier wording that "domestic price pressures remain elevated" and noted that high rates are helping push inflation down. But it cautioned borrowing costs would stay high for "as long as necessary" without offering a future timetable.

Like the ECB, Norway's central bank kept rates steady Thursday. The same day, the central bank in Turkey, which is suffering from out-of-control inflation of nearly 65%, raised its key rate to 45%, expected to be the last increase for some time.

With inflation falling in major economies, financial markets are frothing in hopes of cheaper credit that would boost business activity and stock prices.

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

The S&P 500, a broad measure of U.S. large company shares, has hit record highs this week, and European indexes also have risen. The global stock rally faces questions about whether gains can continue.

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

Expectations for rate cuts have been fueled by the rapid drop of inflation in Europe to 2.9% in December from the peak of 10.6% in October 2022.



People wearing face masks walk by construction cranes near office buildings at the central business district in Beijing, on March 15, 2023. (AP)

China doubles down on moves to mend economy and fend off a financial crisis

BANGKOK, Jan 27, (AP): China's leaders launched a barrage of new policies this week to prop up languishing financial markets and rekindle growth in the world's second-largest economy.

The moves to support lending and spending with billions of dollars of fresh cash gathered pace when the central bank cut bank reserve requirements and issued new rules to encourage banks to lend more to property companies.

A collapse in China's real estate market has been one of the key factors hindering the country's recovery from the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic. What's at stake: stable financial markets and a major driver of global economic growth.

The Chinese economy grew at a 5.2% an-

nual pace in 2023, exceeding the government's target, and many indicators including factory output and retail sales show signs of improvement. But most economists are forecasting a slowdown this year and next that will drag on global growth. Meanwhile, Chinese stock markets have swooned since late 2023, deepening losses that amount to trillions of dollars over the past several years. A real estate downturn, job losses and other trials of the COVID-19 pandemic have left consumers cautious about spending. That threatens to become what some economists say could be a deflationary spiral as prices for housing and other goods fall, discouraging investment that would create jobs and spur a stronger recovery.



HE Dr Adarsh Swaika during his address to the large Indian community at the embassy premises.



HE Dr Adarsh Swaika during the commemoration ceremony.

Ambassador extends profound gratitude to Kuwait for strong bilateral relations

Embassy of India celebrates 75th Republic Day anniversary

By Paul Francis X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Unfurling the Indian "Tricolor" at the Indian embassy in Kuwait on the 75th anniversary of India's Republic Day, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Dr Adarsh Swaika in his address to the large Indian community at the Embassy premises, said "on this momentous occasion of the 75th Republic Day of India, I extend my warm greetings to all Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin in the friendly State of Kuwait."

"I also take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to all well-wishers and friends of India in Kuwait, particularly the leadership, the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, for their steadfast commitment to close and friendly relations between India and Kuwait. I would like to reiterate India's commitment to further strengthen and expand the long-standing and time-tested partnership with the State of Kuwait."

"This year," he said, "marks the 75th year of coming into force of India's Constitution. The Indian Constitution is the longest written constitution in the world and is a living document that has evolved over time to incorporate necessary changes."

The Ambassador then read the message of the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu addressed to the nation on the eve of Republic Day. Here are some of the excerpts of the message:

"The 75th year of the Republic is truly a historic milestone in the journey of the nation in many ways. This is an especially festive occasion, just as we celebrated the unique greatness and diverse culture of our nation during the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, when we completed 75 years of Independence.

"Tomorrow is the day when we celebrate the commencement of the Constitution. Its Preamble begins with the words "We, the People of India", highlighting the theme of the document, namely, democracy. In India, democratic system is much older than the concept of western democracy. That is the reason why India is called the "mother of democracy".

"The nation is in the early years of Amrit Kaal, the period leading to the



HE Dr Adarsh Swaika, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait.



Indian expat waving the Indian flag.

centenary of Independence. This is the time of an epochal transformation. We are given a golden opportunity to take the country to new heights. Contribution from every citizen will be crucial to achieve our goals.

"Republic Day is an occasion to recall our foundational values and principles. When we contemplate any one of them, we are naturally guided to the rest. Democracy implies diversity of culture, beliefs and practices. Celebrating diver-

sity implies equality, which is upheld by justice. Freedom is what makes it all possible. The totality of these values and principles is what makes us Indian. Guided by the sagacity of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the spirit of the Constitution, imbued with these foundational values and principles, has led us invariably on the path of social justice to put an end to all kinds of discrimination.

"The ethos of our Republic brings together more than 1.4 billion of us to live as one family. For this largest family in the world, co-existence is not an imposition of geography but a source of happiness, which finds expression in our Republic Day celebrations.

"The successful organizing of the Group of 20 Summit in the capital, under India's presidency, was an unprecedented achievement. What was all the more noteworthy was the way the people were involved in the G20 events.

"We also progressed further towards the ideal of gender equality, when the Parliament passed the historic Women's Reservation Bill. I believe the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam will prove to be a revolutionary tool of women's empowerment. It will also go a long way in improving the processes of our governance. When more women will be involved in the matters of collective importance, our administrative priorities will be more in tune with the needs of the masses.

"It was also the year when India went to the moon, becoming the first to land on the lunar south pole region. After Chandrayaan-3, the Indian Space Research Organisation rolled out a solar mission as well. Recently, Aditya L1 was successfully put into the halo orbit. We began the new year with the launch of our first X-ray Polarimeter Satellite called XPoSat which will study space mysteries like black holes. Many more space missions are planned in the current calendar year. I am happy to add that India's space journey is slated to cross new milestones.

"Preparations for the Gaganyaan mission, our first human spaceflight program, are proceeding smoothly. We have always been proud of our scientists and technology experts, but now they are aiming far higher than before and delivering too. India's space program is



Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Dr Adarsh Swaika poses for a group photo.

Photos by Rezk Tawfik

aimed at expanding and deepening the role of science and technology for the benefit of the entire humanity.

"The amount of enthusiasm we see in the country for the ISRO's initiatives is heartening. New achievements in this area have fired the imagination of the young generation. More children, I am sure, will become interested in science and cultivate a scientific temper. It will also inspire more youngsters, especially young women, to pursue careers in science and technology.

"India is moving ahead with confidence, which comes from and is also reflected by the robust health of the economy. Our GDP growth rate has remained the highest among major economies in recent years, and we have all reasons to believe that this extraordinary performance will continue in the year 2024 and beyond.

"Our sportspersons have raised India's profile on the international stage. In the Asian Games held last year, we made history with a record-breaking tal-

ly of 107 medals, and we won 111 medals in Asian Para Games. We are glad to see that women are making very impressive contribution to our medal tally.

"Our sports-stars have inspired children to take up diverse sports and games, helping them boost their self-confidence. I am sure that our sportspersons, who are infused with this new confidence, will deliver an improved performance in the upcoming Paris Olympics.

"In recent times, many conflicts have emerged around the world and several parts of it have been suffering from violence. When each of the two conflicting sides believes that it is right and the other is wrong, the way out should be found in the light of reason. Unfortunately, instead of reason, fears and prejudices have fueled passions, leading to relentless violence.

"From Vardhaman Mahavir and Samrat Ashok to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, India has time and again shown that non-violence is

not just an ideal that may be difficult to achieve but it is a distinct possibility – in fact, it is a lived reality for many. Let us hope that the regions embroiled in conflicts will find a peaceful way to resolve conflicts and bring about peace.

"India has launched the 'LiFE Movement' for adoption of environment-conscious lifestyle. The global community has appreciated our country's emphasis on individual behavior-change for dealing with the issues of climate change. People everywhere can and must contribute by bringing their lifestyle in tune with Mother Nature that will not only help save the planet for the generations to come but will also enhance the quality of life.

"My Republic Day greetings to the officials of India's missions abroad and the Diaspora community; let us all dedicate ourselves to serve the nation and fellow citizens in every way we can. My best wishes to all of you in this endeavor," the president concluded.

Vibrant artistry takes center stage at grand opening

Indian Heritage unveils exquisite new store

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Indian Heritage, the renowned exclusive Indian textile house, recently marked a significant milestone with the grand opening of its new store at Al Sama Mall, Egaila. The inauguration ceremony, held on Thursday, January 25th at 7:30 pm, was a momentous occasion for the brand.

Having embraced the philosophy of preserving the Indian heritage and blending it with rich traditions of Kuwait's culture, Indian Heritage began its journey as an exclusive Indian textile house back in 2000. Over the years, it has become one of Kuwait's largest and most reputable stores, offering a diverse range of exclusive designer and heritage products from India. Renowned for its exceptional quality, the brand ensures that all its products are crafted with the finest materials, providing customers with a luxurious and long-lasting product. The brand hopes to array into more



Cutting of the ribbon during the opening of Indian Heritage in Kuwait.

lifestyle products in the future.

The opening ceremony captured the essence of vibrant Indian craftsmanship and artistry, captivating attendees who were present to witness the celebration.

Esteemed guests graced the event, adding to its charm and significance.

The new store, located in Al Sama Mall, Egaila, promises an unparalleled shopping experience with a meticulous-

ly curated collection of items to ensure you have access to the latest trends and timeless classics, all under one roof at reasonable prices.

Indian Heritage already established its presence in Kuwait with two stores: one in Souk Safat, Kuwait City, and another Abu Halifa Magic Mall. With the addition of the Al Sama Mall branch, the brand wants to further celebrate the appreciation for cultural diversity within the region.

The brand has 2 premium stores opening very soon in Al-Khiran and Avenues malls to give Kuwait's residents and visitors an immersive experience in the rich tapestry of Indian fashion that harmoniously blends with rich traditions of Kuwait.

The opening of Indian Heritage in Kuwait is not just a store inauguration; it's an invitation to celebrate modern fashion that has deep roots in tradition and culture of Kuwait and India.



Photos during the opening of Indian Heritage in Kuwait.

Huawei ICT Competition 2023-2024 Middle East & Central Asia



The winning students with Supervising Professor Mohamed Zaki.

University named Best Academy

AU students secure third place in Huawei Regional ICT Competition

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Australian University (AU) students achieved third place in the Huawei Regional Final Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Competition 2023/2024.

The Huawei ICT competition kicked off with two preliminary rounds, engaging participants from over a quarter of a million students across various countries. These participants showcased their skills in three challenge tracks: Computing, Networking and Cloud. The winning students then qualified to the Regional Final Competition which was held in Bahrain.

Representing Kuwait, AU students Otman Muzher, Faisal Alnwayem, and Haya Mansour, guided by Mr.

Mohamed Zaki, Senior Instructor of Industrial Practice in the Electrical and Electronics Engineering department at AU, demonstrated exceptional talent and dedication. At the conclusion of the competition, the AU team secured an impressive third place in the Networking Challenge, competing with 63 participants from 11 countries in the Middle East and Central Asia.

In addition to the achievements, Huawei honored AU with the Best Academy Award for the fifth consecutive year. This recognition not only celebrates individual and team accomplishments but also underscores AU's enduring commitment, led by the Management, to excel academically in both local and regional competitions.

'In the Summers' and 'Porcelain War' win big at Sundance

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan 27, (AP) — "In the Summers," an affecting, years-spanning drama about a complicated parent-children relationship, nabbed the Grand Jury prize at the 40th Sundance Film Festival, while the top honor for documentary went to "Porcelain War," about a Ukrainian couple who craft fragile, intricately painted ceramics while war rages around them.

Those two awards, announced Friday in Park City, Utah, both honored directorial debuts. "In the Summers," written and directed by Alessandra Lacorazza, poetically follows an imperfect father and his daughters over nearly two decades. Lacorazza also won for directing.

"To the queers, to the Latin, to the immigrants, this is for you," said Lacorazza, a Colombian American filmmaker whose film is set in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

"Porcelain War," which follows last year's "20 Days in Mariupol" as a Sundance documentary prize-winner that captures the war in Ukraine, was made by Brendan Bellomo and Slava Leontyev.

"This award is because of the bravery of the people of Ukraine," said Bellomo. "And this award is for the beauty of the people of Ukraine."

"Sujo," about an orphaned boy trying to escape the grip of Mexican cartel violence, took the Grand Jury prize for world dramatic cinema. "A New Kind of Wilderness," about a Norwegian family living off the grid, won the jury award for world documentary.

The Festival Award, voted on by Sundance audiences, went to

"Daughters," Natalie Rae and Angela Patton's moving documentary following four girls as they prepare for a special daddy-daughter dance with their imprisoned fathers. "Daughters" also won the audience award for U.S. documentary.

Sean Wang's "Didi," a coming-of-age film about a 13-year-old Taiwanese American boy, took the audience award for US dramatic film. "Didi" also won a juried award for its ensemble.

"Ibelin," which was acquired by Netflix out of Sundance, won the audience award for world cinema documentary and a juried award for Benjamin Ree's direction. The film follows the story of Mats Steen, a Norwegian who died of a degenerative muscular disease at the age of 25. Only after his death did his parents discover how widely known and celebrated Steen was online for his personal blog and via World of Warcraft.

Audience

"Girls Will Be Girls," about a Himalayan boarding school, won the audience award for world cinema drama. The Darren Aronofsky-produced "Little Death," starring David Schwimmer as a TV writer, won the NEXT Innovator award. The NEXT audience award winner was the Irish drama "Kneecap," about a Belfast rap trio, co-starring Michael Fassbender.

Award winners are available to stream on the festival's website through the close of Sundance on Sunday.

Sundance winners often go on to be some of the most acclaimed films of the year. Last year's festival produced Celine Song's "Past Lives," nominated for best picture and best screenplay on Tuesday by the Academy Awards. Other Sundance titles to reach the Oscars include 2022 best picture-winner "CODA."

Also:

NEW YORK: The Associated Press has won a prestigious broadcast journalism award for "20 Days in Mariupol," its documentary on the war in Ukraine produced with PBS' "Frontline."

The documentary was among 15 winners of the 2024 duPont-Columbia Awards announced at a ceremony at Columbia University in New York on Thursday. Founded in 1942, the awards highlight outstanding audio and video reporting in the public interest.

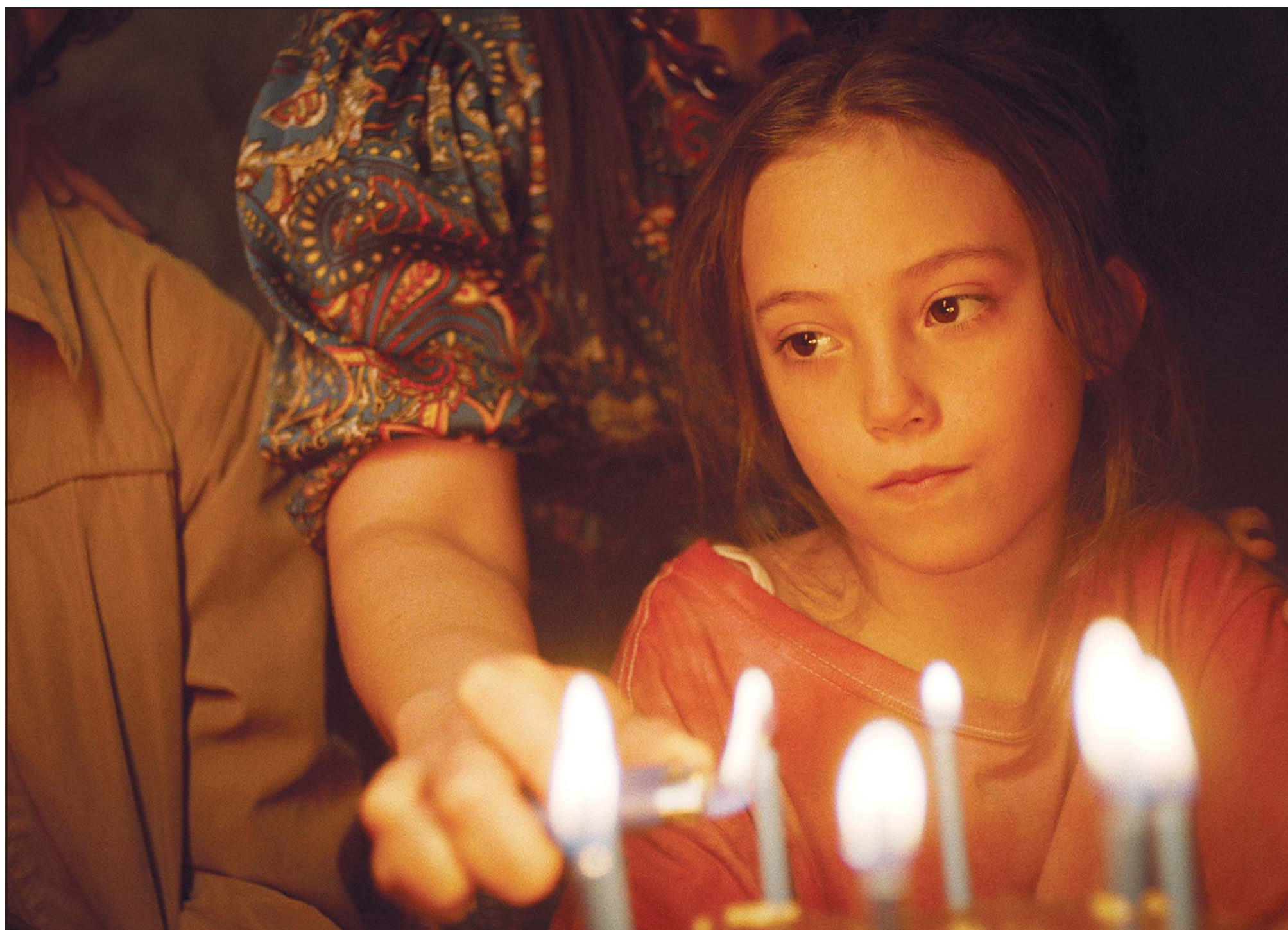
"20 Days in Mariupol" chronicles Russia's siege of the Ukrainian port city and the international journalists who remained, including AP's team that documented Russia's atrocities and captured enduring images of the war.

The film has also been nominated for best documentary at the Academy Awards, marking the AP's first Oscar nomination in the 178-year-old news organization's history.

A co-production between the AP and PBS' "Frontline," it was shot during the first three weeks of the war in Ukraine in early 2022.

Film

Variety



This image released by Sideshow and Janus Films shows Naima Senties in a scene from 'Totem.' (AP)

Film

Nolan's 'Tenet' returns to theaters, in IMAX 70mm

A child's eye-view of death in 'Tótem'

By Jake Coyle

For a film about death, Lila Avilés' "Tótem" is extraordinarily lived in.

Avilés' camera roams through the festive, cluttered gathering of an extended family as they prepare for a birthday celebration that evening. Watching it all is the 7-year-old Sol (Naíma Senties), whose father, Tonatiuh or "Tona" (Mateo Garcia), is to be feted.

The scenes are familiar, unfolding with a natural, warm disorder. Tona's sisters are there. Alejandra (Marisol Gasé) is working in the kitchen and dyeing her hair. Nuri (Montserrat Marañón) is making a cake while her own daughter, Ester (Saori Gurza), lurks about. There's bickering and laughter.

But humdrum as all of this is, colossal and devastating happenings are at work in "Tótem." When we sporadically spy Tona, who stays in his bedroom for much of the film, he's weak and strikingly gaunt, debilitated by cancer. In the film's opening moments, Sol is riding in her mother's (Iazua Larios) car. While passing beneath a bridge, they hold their breath and make a wish.

"Should I tell you what it was?" Sol says after emerging from the darkness. "I wished for Daddy not to die."

With that, the film's title credit appears, allowing you a quick moment to pick your heart off the floor and steel yourself for whatever is to come.

That name, Sol, is a hint. Planets are in motion. Young Sol spends much of "Tótem" spying on another world, the adult world, a place buzzing with activity that seems strangely, perhaps, distracted from the crushing calamity right down the hall.

Everyone around Sol seems intent on shielding her from it. Her family's interactions aren't in any way cruel, but they're trying to put a happy face on it. For the party, Sol is dressed in a clown wig and nose. She wants to see her dad, but she's told repeatedly that she can't. He's resting.

Are they protecting her or distracting her? Either way, in this impeccably observed, aching soulful film, Sol sees through it. She's too perceptive. Though "Tótem" sometimes drifts to other perspectives, it stays closest to Sol. The movie resides in her watchful eyes, and the dawning dread welling up behind them. A world, for

Sol, is being eclipsed.

"Tótem," which was Mexico's shortlisted Oscar submission and begins its theatrical release Friday, more than confirms the talent flashed by Avilés in her 2018 debut "The Chambermaid." The year is young, but you're unlikely to see a film as richly textured as Avilés' masterful child's-eye view of death and family.

Part of the film's power is in how organically the movie unfolds, free of sentimentality or overemphasis. Cinematographer Diego Tenorio shifts room to room and character to character, as if visiting interplanetary bodies in constant orbit around each other.

Family

Sometimes, they can feel genuinely alien. The grave-faced grandfather Roberto (Alberto Amador), who tends to bonsai trees, speaks through a device that renders his halting speech robotic.

But this is, most assuredly, Earth we're on. In the home where the family has gathered, Avilés occasionally turns her focus toward not just each character but some of the insect life that makes its way through the house. Tona may die, but life won't stop moving. In the face of that cold truth, wishes and spirituality have scant usefulness. A psychic is brought in to cleanse the space, with comical results.

And it's that profoundly melancholy perspective on the constant churn of life that so distinguishes "Tótem." Sol is resistant. When the party starts and friends and family have gathered in the garden outside, she solitarily sits on the roof, contemptuously looking down at them.

Later, when they move inside for a kind of talent show to cheer Tona, Sol dresses up, sitting on her mother's shoulders while a cape hides her mom. Sol, lip-syncing opera, stands tall and performs like an adult beyond her years. Before they begin, her mother opens and closes the cape like a magic act.

"Now there's two of us," she says. "Now just one." "Tótem," a Sideshow and Janus Films release, is unrated by the Motion Picture Association. In Spanish with English subtitles. Running time: 95 minutes. Four stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Time isn't inverting: Christopher Nolan's "Tenet" is coming back to movie theaters for a week in IMAX 70mm and on other large-format screens.

The limited re-release of Nolan's mind-bender starring John David Washington will begin on Feb. 23, Warner Bros. Discovery said Thursday. The showings will also feature new footage from Denis Villeneuve's "Dune: Part Two," which opens a week later on March 1. Tickets for the special showings are on sale Thursday.

"Seeing the way audiences responded to our large format presentations of 'Oppenheimer,' I'm thrilled that Warner Bros. is giving audiences a chance to see 'Tenet' the way it was intended to be seen, on the largest IMAX and large format film screens," Nolan said in a statement. "I'm honored to have our movie warm up the film projectors for Denis' jaw-dropping 'Dune: Part Two.'"

"Oppenheimer," which was recently nominated for 13 Oscars, made nearly \$1 billion at the global box office, with a special emphasis on large-format presentations like IMAX 70mm and 70mm. "Tenet" was also filmed entirely on large-format film stock, but never got its full due on the big screen. It was the first major Hollywood film to open in theaters during the pandemic, in September 2020, at a time when cinemas in Los Angeles and New York were still closed and others were operating at limited capacity.

After "Tenet" was released, Warner Bros. made the controversial decision to release all of its 2021 films simultaneously in theaters and on its streaming service, including "Dune." The move was widely criticized by top filmmakers, including Villeneuve and Nolan, who took his next film, "Oppenheimer," to Universal.

Both champions of the big screen experience, Villeneuve's "Dune: Part Two," which was delayed from its original 2023 date to a March release amid the dual Hollywood strikes, was also made with large format presentation in mind.

"On 'Dune,' we shot several sequences for IMAX, and I simply loved it, so for 'Dune: Part Two,' we pushed it to 100 percent of the movie," Villeneuve said in a statement. "Working with the IMAX format was the only way to capture the experience of Arrakis, Giedi Prime and the Imperium for audiences." (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.: Of course Brad Pitt is at the Rolex 24 at Daytona, the most prestigious endurance race in the United States.

The actor is not at Daytona International Speedway as a fan though. He's actually on track filming scenes for his yet-to-be-titled Formula One movie, and the storyline contains an arc in which Pitt, an aging driver, has returned to sports car racing.

His presence has been a bit of a headache to many of the other drivers in the field, mainly because of the heavy security at the driver motorhome lot, where Pitt has a spot for his downtime during filming. IndyCar driver Scott McLaughlin complained he was denied access to his motorhome because he wasn't carrying his credential for entry - an unusual rejection for an athlete clearly in uniform coming directly from the racecar.

NASCAR driver Bubba Wallace, a regular in the Daytona infield lot, said he's been bumped to an overflow lot, same for many of the top drivers in the race. Among them? Former F1 champion Jenson Button and IndyCar driver Colton Herta, who wondered if he should ask Pitt for advice on how to make it into F1.

They've all complained that the filming scenes have kept them awake at night as shooting begins long after the track has been cleared of the actual Rolex 24 practices. A filming session requires at least six cars on track at a time.

Among them are three identically prepared Porsche 911 GT3's painted as the actual movie car. The cars are also identical to the Wright Motorsports entry that will actually race in the twice-around-the-clock event that begins Saturday.

The other cars on track are a Mercedes and a BMW that have been described as "non-descript cars looking like they are racing," as well as a 1999 Lola V8 that is the official "camera vehicle" and rumbles loud enough to sound like a stock car and keep the drivers awake. (AP)

WASHINGTON: A prominent defense attorney whose star clients have included Snoop Dogg

pleaded guilty Friday to leaking grand jury information to reporters about a political conspiracy case against a rapper from the Fugees.

David Kenner, a California-based attorney known for his representation of celebrities like Suge Knight and Tory Lanez, was sentenced to a year of unsupervised probation after pleading



Pitt



Kenner

guilty to a misdemeanor contempt of court charge. He also agreed to pay a \$5,000 fine.

Federal prosecutors say Kenner was representing Prkazrel "Pras" Michel, a founding member of the Fugees, when he gave grand jury information and photos to two reporters for Bloomberg News for "defense-oriented"

stories that ran in March 2023, shortly before the start of the Washington, D.C. trial. Michel's trial included testimony from such figures as actor Leonardo DiCaprio and former US Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

As is typical in criminal cases, Kenner had gotten access to evidence in order to prepare Michel's

defense, but had been ordered by the court not to share the information, prosecutors said.

Kenner's attorney said in court documents that the reporters originally agreed to sign a protective order, but later changed their minds. A Bloomberg News spokesperson declined to comment. (AP)

People & Places

People

'Fake Carlin comedy'

'Deepfakes' of Swift swamp social media

NEW YORK, Jan 27. (AP): Pornographic deepfake images of Taylor Swift are circulating online, making the singer the most famous victim of a scourge that tech platforms and anti-abuse groups have struggled to fix.

Sexually explicit and abusive fake images of Swift began circulating widely this week on the social media platform X.

Her ardent fanbase of "Swifties" quickly mobilized, launching a counteroffensive on the platform formerly known as Twitter and a #ProtectTaylorSwift hashtag to flood it with more positive images of the pop star. Some said they were reporting accounts that were sharing the deepfakes.



Swift

The deepfake-detecting group Reality Defender said it tracked a deluge of non-consensual pornographic material depicting Swift, particularly on X. Some images also made their way to Meta-owned Facebook and other social media platforms.

"Unfortunately, they spread to millions and millions of users by the time that some of them were taken down," said Mason Allen, Reality Defender's head of growth.

The researchers found at least a couple dozen unique AI-generated images. The most widely shared were football-related, showing a painted or bloodied Swift that objectified her and in some cases inflicted violent harm on her deepfake persona.

Researchers have said the number of explicit deepfakes have grown in the past few years, as the technology used to produce such images has become more accessible and easier to use. In 2019, a report released by the AI firm DeepTrace Labs showed these images were overwhelmingly weaponized against women. Most of the victims, it said, were Hollywood actors and South Korean K-pop singers.

Brittany Spanos, a senior writer at Rolling Stone who teaches a course on Swift at New York University, says Swift's fans are quick to mobilize in support of their artist, especially those who take their fandom very seriously and in situations of wrongdoing.

"This could be a huge deal if she really does pursue it to court," she said.

Lawsuit

Spanos says the deep fake pornography issue aligns with others Swift has had in the past, pointing to her 2017 lawsuit against a radio station DJ who allegedly groped her; jurors awarded Swift \$1 in damages, a sum her attorney, Douglas Baldrige, called "a single symbolic dollar, the value of which is immeasurable to all women in this situation" in the midst of the MeToo movement. (The \$1 lawsuit became a trend thereafter, like in Gwyneth Paltrow's 2023 countersuit against a skier.)

When reached for comment on the fake images of Swift, X directed the The Associated Press to a post from its safety account that said the company strictly prohibits the sharing of non-consensual nude images on its platform. The company has also sharply cut back its content-moderation teams since Elon Musk took over the platform in 2022.

"Our teams are actively removing all identified images and taking appropriate actions against the accounts responsible for posting them," the company wrote in the X post early Friday morning. "We're closely monitoring the situation to ensure that any further violations are immediately addressed, and the content is removed."

Meanwhile, Meta said in a statement that it strongly condemns "the content that has appeared across different internet services" and has worked to remove it.

"We continue to monitor our platforms for this violating content and will take appropriate action as needed," the company said.

A representative for Swift didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Friday.

Allen said the researchers are 90% confident that the images were created by diffusion models, which are a type of generative artificial intelligence model that can produce new and photorealistic images from written prompts. The most widely known are Stable Diffusion, Midjourney and OpenAI's DALL-E. Allen's group didn't try to determine the provenance.

OpenAI said it has safeguards in place to limit the generation of harmful content and "decline requests that ask for a public figure by name, including Taylor Swift."

Microsoft, which offers an image-generator based partly on DALL-E, said Friday it was in the process of investigating whether its tool was misused. Much like other commercial AI services, it said it doesn't allow "adult or non-consensual intimate content, and any repeated attempts to produce content that goes against our policies may result in loss of access to the service."

Asked about the Swift deepfakes on "NBC Nightly News," Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella told host Lester Holt in an interview airing Tuesday that there's a lot still to be done in setting AI safeguards and "it behooves us to move fast on this."

"Absolutely this is alarming and terrible, and so therefore yes, we have to act," Nadella said.

Midjourney, OpenAI and Stable Diffusion-maker Stability AI didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Federal lawmakers who've introduced bills to put more restrictions or criminalize deepfake porn indicated the incident shows why the US needs to implement better protections.

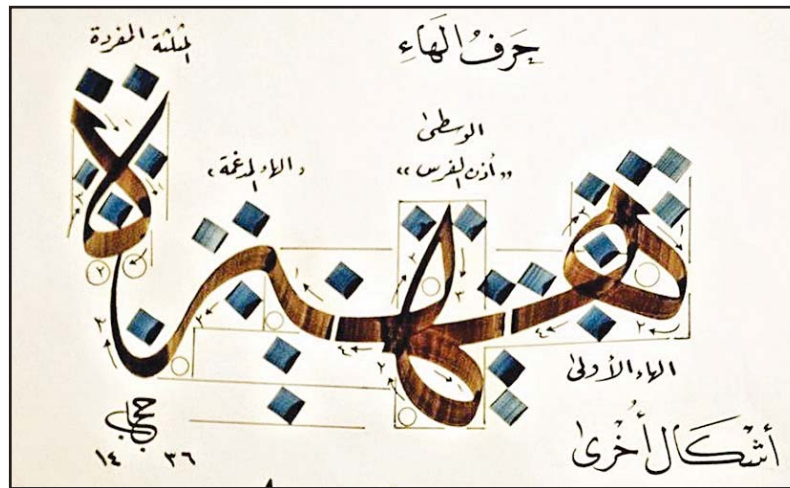
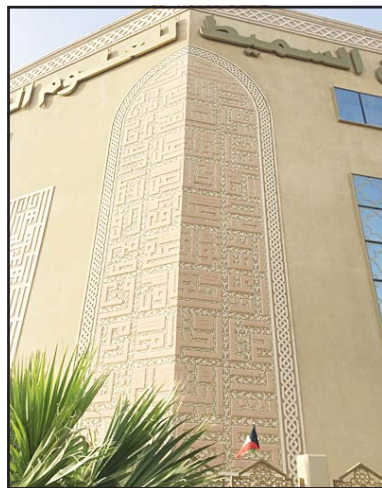
"For years, women have been victims of non-consensual deepfakes, so what happened to Taylor Swift is more common than most people realize," said US Rep. Yvette D. Clarke, a Democrat from New York who's introduced legislation would require creators to digitally watermark deepfake content.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: The estate of George Carlin is suing the media company behind a fake hourlong comedy special that purportedly uses artificial intelligence to recreate the late standup comic's style and material.

The lawsuit filed in federal court in Los Angeles on Thursday asks that a judge order the podcast outlet Dudesday to immediately take down the audio special, "George Carlin: I'm Glad I'm Dead," in which a synthesis of Carlin delivers commentary on current events. Carlin died in 2008.

Carlin's daughter, Kelly Carlin, said in a statement that the work is "a poorly-executed facsimile cobbled together by unscrupulous individuals to capitalize on the extraordinary goodwill my father established with his adoring fanbase."



Arabic calligraphy flourishes globally – from Kuwait's Grand Mosque to international accolades.

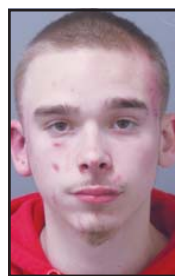
KUNA photos



Ariana DeBose poses for photographers upon arrival at the World premiere of the film 'Argylle' on Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2024 in London. (AP)



Kat Von D



Henderson

Variety

LOS ANGELES: A jury found Friday that celebrity tattoo artist Kat Von D did not violate a photographer's copyright when she used his portrait of Miles Davis as the basis for a tattoo she put on the arm of a friend.

The Los Angeles jury deliberated for just over two hours before deciding that the tattoo by the former star of the reality shows "Miami Ink" and "LA Ink" was not similar enough to photographer Jeffrey Sedlik's 1989 portrait of the jazz legend that she needed to have paid permission.

"I'm obviously very happy for this to be over," Von D, who inked her friend's arm with Davis as a gift about seven years ago, said outside the courtroom. "It's been two years of a nightmare worrying about this, not just for myself but for my fellow tattoo artists."

The eight jurors made the same decision about a drawing Von D made from the portrait to base the tattoo on, and to several social media posts she made about the process, which were also part of Sedlik's lawsuit. And they found that the tattoo, drawing and posts also all fell within the legal doctrine of fair use of a copyrighted work, giving Von D and other tattoo artists who supported her and followed the trial a resounding across-the-board victory. (AP)

Art

A living art weaving poetry, architecture, and spirituality

Arabic calligraphy: A timeless Islamic art

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27. (KUNA): The Islamic civilization has largely inspired and enriched the art of Arabic calligraphy and throughout the decades of Islamic rule it has become on par with poetry and music.

Natives of the Arabian peninsula since pre-Islamic ages had special attachment to the Arabic language, marveling eloquent verbal poetry until the Quran revelation upon Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) that stated in the first verses, "Recite and your Lord is most generous .. He who taught by the pen ..."

Another verse of the Quran says, "Noon (or Nun), the pen and what they write ...," a divine inspiration for writers, chroniclers and calligraphers for centuries since this verse was revealed upon the Prophet (PBUH).

Early form of calligraphy is the Kufic style, distinguished with straight letters making many words look like a square or a rectangle, but with time Muslims calligraphers broadened the art as they mingled with peers from other civilizations, freeing themselves from the rigid patterns and embracing various shapes and forms.

Calligraphy scripts are based on well woven architectural shapes, however,

"it is not lifeless; rather a living creature inspired from diverse arts and formed with the artistic elements; coherence, balance, light, shadow, volume and emptiness," said Farid Ali, the head of Kuwait Center for Islamic Arts at the Grand Mosque in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

Al-Ali, a polymath, narrated how he merged Arabic calligraphy with his formative art works and after studying architecture, he expanded them, mingling factors from the three realms and producing a hybrid exclusive art.

Exhibitions

Al-Ali has been involved in the Arabic calligraphy since 50 years ago and some of his works have been distinguished with 99 black-and-white forms of His Almighty's (Allah) name that have been applauded worldwide. He had also created 500 forms for the messenger's name and published a book titled, "Mohammadiat," available in many countries -- in addition to a number of exhibitions he has held in Kuwait.

Al-Ali, founder of the center, has organized since 15 years ago many exhibitions, competitions, courses, gatherings, seminars, published a number

of books, hosted calligraphers from abroad and supported calligraphy centers abroad.

Some of his works adorn mosques, statues including the Islamic dome at Bayan Palace, "Al-Hamdoallah" sculpture situated on the sixth ring road and effigies in Kufic letters.

The art has noticeably grown and now there are a number of famous non-Arab calligraphers, namely Mohammad Zakaria, the US, Fuad Honda, Japan, Hajj Nouredine, China, and Noria Garcia, Spain. In East Asia alone, there are more than 200 accredited calligraphers.

Several countries have embraced the art. Sharjah, the UAE, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Iran regularly hold international competitions.

Teacher Mohammad Al-Saddani said the Arabic calligraphy is distinguished with creativity unseen in other languages' scripts. It is a main part of "our heritage as it adorns old palaces and mosques ..."

Farid Abdal, an architecture teacher at Kuwait University, says that the Arabic calligraphy and architecture are intertwined, both derived from the philosophy of beauty and harmony.

LONDON: An 18th century British painting stolen by New Jersey mobsters in 1969 has been returned more than a half-century later to the family that bought it for \$7,500 during the Great Depression, the FBI's Salt

Lake City field office announced Friday. The 40-inch-by-50-inch (102-cm-by-127-cm) John Opie painting - titled "The Schoolmistress" - is the sister painting of a similar work housed in the Tate Britain art

gallery in London. Authorities believe the piece was stolen with the help of a former New Jersey lawmaker, then passed among organized crime members for years before it ended up in the southern Utah city of St. George. A Utah man had purchased a house in Florida in 1989 from Joseph Covello Sr. - a convicted mobster linked to the Gambino family - and the painting was included in the sale, the FBI said. (AP)



This image released by Sundance Institute shows Residente, right, in a scene from 'In The Summers' by Alessandra Lacorazza Samudio, an official selection of the US Dramatic Competition at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival. (AP)

ST. LOUIS: A jury found a St. Louis rapper not guilty of murder after the 19-year-old claimed he was acting in self-defense when he shot and killed the driver of the Jeep that was following him on his minibike.

CTS Luh Wick, whose legal name is Michael Henderson, was acquitted of first-degree murder and armed criminal action Thursday, St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

Henderson told the jury that he and his friends were riding their minibikes on Aug. 26, 2022, when a Jeep going in the opposite direction made a U-turn. After the Jeep pulled alongside them and engaged them, Henderson said he saw a gun and heard gunshots. Henderson responded by drawing his own weapon, striking and killing the 42-year-old driver, Joseph Raymond Shaw. (AP)

A common aging concern for many men

How to recognize enlarged prostate symptoms and treat it

LONDON, Jan 27, (AP): The announcement that King Charles III was admitted to a private hospital Friday to undergo a procedure for an enlarged prostate has sparked interest in what is an extremely common condition among older men.

The 75-year-old monarch is in good company. About half of men in their 50s have enlarged prostates and that prevalence climbs to more than 80% of men by the time they reach age 80.

It's a common result of aging, said Dr. Stephen Nakada, a University of Wisconsin urologist.

"It's like getting gray hair," Nakada said.

An enlarged prostate doesn't always cause symptoms, but when it does, they can be annoying. And some men have more trouble than others.

A look at the condition, also known as benign prostatic hyperplasia:

The prostate is part of the reproductive system in men. It makes fluid for semen. It's located below the bladder and it wraps around the urethra, the tube that carries urine and semen out through the penis.

First, it's not cancer. The word "benign" in benign prostatic hyperplasia means the prostate isn't cancerous.

Causes

What causes the prostate to grow isn't completely clear, but it's possibly caused by hormonal changes as men age.

The symptoms of an enlarged prostate can include frequent urination and needing to get up many times in the night to pee. A man might have trouble getting started in the bathroom or dribbling when finished. The inability to completely empty the bladder is also a common symptom.

Doctors may first advise patients to stop drinking fluids after dinner. Antihistamines can contribute to symptoms, as can alcohol and caffeine.

"A good initial intervention would be to decrease caffeine and alcohol intake, even decrease spicy food intake, because those can irritate the bladder," Nakada said.

Doctors will ask about symptoms and medications. They will perform a rectal exam to determine the size and shape of the prostate.

Medicines are available that relax muscles and allow better flow of urine. Another type of medicine can be used to stop the prostate from growing. Erectile dysfunction drugs can help with urine flow too.



This photo provided by US Food & Drug Administration shows the location of a lot number of recalled Robitussin cough syrup on Thursday, Jan. 25. (AP)

Contamination

Cough syrup pulled over yeast worries

WASHINGTON, Jan 27, (AP): The maker of Robitussin cough syrup is recalling several lots of products containing honey due to contamination that could pose a serious risk to people with weakened immune systems.

Haleon's recall covers eight lots of Robitussin Honey CF Max Day Adult and Robitussin Honey CF Max Night-time Adult, which were distributed to stores and pharmacy suppliers. The Food and Drug Administration posted the company's announcement to its website Wednesday.

The products may contain dangerously high levels of yeast, the company said in an emailed message Thursday. Yeast is a natural component of honey, but the levels detected by the company were "beyond allowed measurements," Haleon said.

Ingestion of the contaminated syrup could result in severe fungal infections that would be potentially dangerous for people with weakened immune systems, such as organ transplant recipients or those with HIV. Several million people in the US have conditions that impair the immune system's ability to fight off infections.

Fatal allergic reaction

Mislabelled cookies containing peanuts recalled after a death

HARTFORD, Conn., Jan 27, (AP): Mislabelled cookies containing peanuts that were sold at Stew Leonard's grocery stores in Connecticut were recalled this week after the death of a woman from New York City.

Stew Leonard's announced Tuesday that Vanilla Florentine Cookies sold in its stores in Danbury and Newington from Nov. 6 to Dec. 31 were being recalled in partnership with the Food and Drug Administration. The retailer said about 500 packages of the holiday cookies were sold.

One death may be associated with the cookies that contained peanuts as an unlisted ingredient: the New York resident who ate them at a social gathering in Connecticut, state health and consumer protection officials said.

That person was identified Thursday as Orla Baxendale, 25, by a law firm representing her interests. Baxendale died Jan. 11 after suffering anaphylactic shock resulting from a severe allergic reaction, according to a post on the website for Gair, Gair, Conason, Rubinowitz, Bloom, Hershenhorn,

Steigman & Mackauf.

Baxendale was born in East Lancashire in England and moved to the city to pursue a career as a dancer, according to the post.

"Her passion for dance extended well beyond a single discipline as she was an exquisite ballet, contemporary, and Irish step dancer," read an online obituary for Baxendale.

The cookies were produced by the Long Island-based wholesaler Cookies United and labeled with the Stew Leonard's brand name, according to state officials.

Stew Leonard Jr., president and CEO of the retailer, said in a video posted Wednesday that the supplier went from soy nuts to peanuts in the recipe without notifying their chief safety officer.

Cookies United said in a release that they notified Stew Leonard's last July that the product contained peanuts and that all products shipped to the retailer had been labeled accordingly. Cookies United said the incorrect label was created by Stew Leonard's.

Student vapers face harsh punishments

US schools using surveillance tech to combat vaping epidemic among youth

NEW YORK, Jan 27, (AP): When Aaliyah Iglesias was caught vaping at a Texas high school, she didn't realize how much could be taken from her.

Suddenly, the rest of her high school experience was threatened: being student council president, her role as debate team captain and walking at graduation. Even her college scholarships were at risk. She was sent to the district's alternative school for 30 days and told she could have faced criminal charges.

Like thousands of other students around the country, she was caught by surveillance equipment that schools have installed to crack down on electronic cigarettes, often without informing students.

Schools nationwide have invested millions of dollars in the monitoring technology, including federal COVID-19 emergency relief money meant to help schools through the pandemic and aid students' academic recovery. Marketing materials have noted the sensors, at a cost of over \$1,000 each, could help fight the virus by checking air quality.

E-cigarettes have inundated middle and high schools. The devices can disperse vapor containing higher concentrations of nicotine than tobacco cigarettes. Millions of minors report vaping despite efforts to limit sales to kids by raising the legal age to 21 and ban flavored products preferred by teenagers.

Sensors

Some districts pair the sensors with surveillance cameras. When activated by a vaping sensor, those cameras can capture every student leaving the bathroom.

It can surprise students that schools even have such technology. Iglesias, who graduated in May from Tyler High School in Tyler, Texas, first learned it had sensors after an administrator came into a restroom as students started vaping.

"I was in awe," Iglesias said. The administrator tried to figure out who was involved but ultimately let all the students go.

The episode that got her in trouble happened elsewhere in Texas, at Athens High School, where her debate team was competing last February. Iglesias went into a bathroom to vape. Later that day, her coach told her she had been caught.

"I decided to partake in something that I'm not proud of, but I did it," Iglesias said, adding that her senior year was a stressful time and a close relative of hers was about to come out of jail. "I had had a lot of personal stuff building up outside."

She immediately was pulled from



In this April 10, 2018 file photo, a high school principal displays vaping devices that were confiscated from students in such places as restrooms or hallways at the school in Massachusetts. Schools around the country are installing sensors and cameras to crack down on student vaping, and handing out harsh punishments for many who are caught. Schools have invested millions of dollars in the surveillance technology, including federal COVID-19 emergency relief money meant to help schools through the pandemic. (AP)

the debate tournament and her coach told her she could face charges because she was 18. She was sent to her district's alternative school for 30 days, which was the minimum punishment for students caught vaping under Tyler schools' zero-tolerance policy.

Students found vaping also can receive a misdemeanor citation and be fined up to \$100. Students found with vapes containing THC, the chemical that makes marijuana users feel high, can be arrested on felony charges. At least 90 students in Tyler have faced misdemeanor or felony charges.

The Tyler district declined to comment on the disciplinary actions, saying in a written statement that tracking of vape usage addresses a problem that is hurting children's health.

"The vape detectors have been efficient in detecting when students are vaping, allowing us to address the issue immediately," the school system said.

A leading provider, HALO Smart Sensors, sells 90% to 95% of its sensors to schools. The sensors don't have cameras or record audio but can detect increases in noise in a school bathroom and send a text alert to school officials, said Rick Cadiz, vice president of sales and marketing for IPVideo, the maker of the HALO sensors.

The sensors are marketed primarily for detecting vape smoke or THC but also can monitor for sounds such as gunshots or keywords indicating possible bullying.

"What we're seeing with the districts is they're stopping the vaping in the schools with this, but then we don't want a \$1,000 paperweight that the school invests for no other uses, right?" Cadiz said. "We want it to be a long-term investment."

Pandemic

During the pandemic, HALO noted on its website that monitoring indoor air quality was an approved use for federal COVID relief money.

"With the HALO Smart Sensor, you can combat COVID-19 in your schools and create a safe work and learning environment, while also reaping the benefits of vape detection, security monitoring, and more," the company said.

Schools now also can use some of the nearly \$440 million Juul Labs is paying to settle a lawsuit claiming it marketed its products to youth, Cadiz said.

The company is aware of privacy concerns around the sensors, Cadiz said.

"All it's doing is alerting that something's going on," he said. "You need someone to physically investigate the alert that comes out."

The sensors do not always work as administrators hope.

At San Dieguito Union High School District in California, the vape smoke was so thick in bathrooms some students found it unbearable. In a pilot program, the district installed vape sensors in bathrooms and cameras outside the doors.

"In a way it was too successful," said Michael Allman, a district board member who explained the sensors went off so frequently that administrators felt it was useless to review security footage each time.

On social media, students around the country describe ways to outsmart the sensors. Some report covering them in plastic wrap. Others say they blow the smoke into their clothes.

At the Coppell Independent School District in Texas, sensors are part of a prevention strategy that includes educational videos and a tip line. Students can receive \$50 for reporting vaping by peers and "they were turning each other in right and left," said Jennifer Villines, the district's director of student and staff services.

Anti-inflammatory rescue option for asthma gets FDA nod

NEW YORK, Jan 27, (Agencies): AstraZeneca's new treatment Aisupra (albuterol/budesonide), is now commercially available in the US by prescription. Aisupra received FDA approval in January 2023 for the as-needed treatment or prevention of symptoms of asthma and to help prevent sudden severe breathing problems (asthma attacks) in people aged 18 years and older.

Aisupra contains a short-acting beta2-agonist (SABA), to help relax the smooth muscles of the airways, and an inhaled corticosteroid (ICS), to help decrease inflammation in the lungs. Aisupra was approved based on the results from two Phase III trials, Mandala and Denali. In Mandala, Aisupra was superior to albuterol in reducing the risk of severe

asthma exacerbations in patients with moderate to severe asthma. In Denali, Aisupra had a similar onset of bronchodilation compared to albuterol in patients with mild to moderate asthma.

The approach to treating asthma symptoms with rescue has changed. The 2023 Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) report supports a rescue approach that treats both symptoms and inflammation together. Combination SABA/ICS is now recommended as a rescue option for adults with asthma regardless of ICS maintenance medication. According to GINA, recommendations for a change in rescue approach were largely based on the risk associated with SABA-only treatment of asthma. Aisupra is the only FDA-approved, as-needed SABA/

ICS asthma rescue now available in the US and is designed to treat both symptoms and inflammation.

Priya Bansal MD, Physician and CEO, Asthma and Allergy Wellness Center said: "For over five decades, the medical community has used SABA-only rescue which does not address the inflammatory component of asthma. Now, with Aisupra available we can provide patients, especially those on maintenance therapy, another rescue option for managing their breakthrough symptoms. The Mandala study has demonstrated how these patients can benefit from an as-needed anti-inflammatory rescue to treat their symptoms while helping to prevent an attack even if they are on ICS-containing maintenance therapy."

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Doncic scores Mavs-record 73 pts in win over Hawks



Dallas Mavericks guard Josh Green (8) dunks the ball against the Atlanta Hawks during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Friday, Jan. 26, 2024, in Atlanta. (AP)

Pacers edge past Suns

ATLANTA, Jan 27, (AP) — Luka Doncic scored a franchise-record 73 points, tied for the fourth-most in NBA history and surpassed only by Wilt Chamberlain and Kobe Bryant, to power the Mavericks to a 148-143 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Friday night.

Doncic blew past his personal-best and team-record 60 points after scoring a team-record 41 points in the first half. His record night came only four days after Philadelphia's Joel Embiid scored a franchise-record 70 points, then the most in the NBA this season, in the 76ers' 133-123 victory over San Antonio on Monday night.

A three-point play with 2:58 remaining gave Doncic 70 points. With Dallas leading 140-136, Doncic added another three-point play to cap his night.

Doncic joined Chamberlain and David Thompson among players who scored 73 points. Chamberlain, who holds the NBA record with 100 points, also had a 78-point game, while Bryant had 81.

Trae Young led Atlanta with 30 points.

Pacers 133, Suns 131

In Indianapolis, Obi Toppin broke a tie on a putback with 3.4 seconds left and Indiana spoiled Devin Booker's 62-point night, overcoming a 17-point deficit to beat Phoenix.

Booker broke his own Phoenix record for points in a quarter with 29 in the first. He had a chance to win it at the buzzer, but he slipped on the inbounds pass and wasn't close with a contested 3-pointer. The Suns had won seven straight.

BASKETBALL

Booker had 50 or more points for the second time this season and seventh time in his career. He had a career-high 70 at Boston in March 2017. On Jan. 19, he had 52 at New Orleans.

Pascal Siakam scored 31 points to help Indiana win its second straight - both without All-Star guard Tyrese Haliburton. Toppin had 23 points and 11 rebounds.

Cavaliers 112, Bucks 110

In Milwaukee, Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points, Jarrett Allen had 24 points and 14 rebounds and Cleveland beat Milwaukee for its ninth victory in 10 games.

The Cavaliers gained a measure of revenge after their eight-game winning streak ended with a 126-116 loss at Milwaukee on Wednesday, one night after the Bucks had fired Adrian Griffin as coach.

Joe Prunty, an assistant on Griffin's staff, worked as interim head coach for those two games. The Bucks announced in the final minute of the game Friday that they have hired Doc Rivers as Griffin's permanent replacement.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 22 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists for Milwaukee. Damian Lillard also had 22 points.

Clippers 127, Raptors 107

In Toronto, James Harden had 22 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds for his 75th career triple-double, Paul George added 21 points and Los Angeles beat Toronto for its fourth consecutive victory.

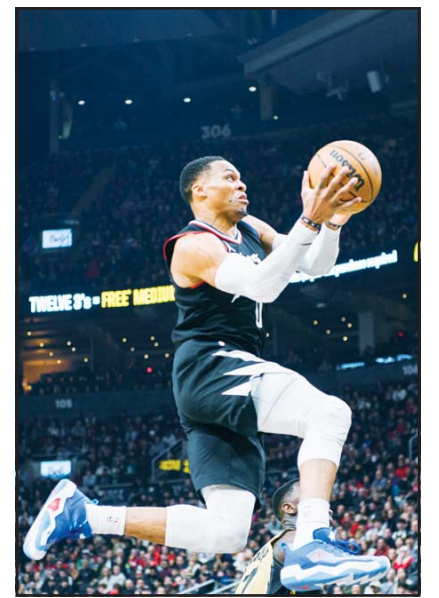
Russell Westbrook scored 20 points and Kawhi Leonard had 16 against his former team as Los Angeles won for the 12th time in 14.

Scottie Barnes scored 14 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter for Toronto.

Thunder 107, Pelicans 83

In New Orleans, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points and Oklahoma City routed New Orleans to improve its NBA-leading road record to 15-8.

Chet Holmgren added 20 points and 13



Los Angeles Clippers guard Russell Westbrook goes up for a layup against the Toronto Raptors during the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, Jan. 26, 2024, in Toronto. (AP)

rebounds to help the Thunder win their fourth straight on the road.

Herb Jones and Jonas Valanciunas each had 14 points for New Orleans. Zion Williamson sat out because of a bone bruise in his left foot.

Rockets 138, Hornets 104

In Charlotte, N.C., Jalen Green scored 36 points, rookie Cam Whitmore had a career-high 24 and Houston routed Charlotte.

Fred VanVleet had 14 points and Amen Thompson added 13 for the Rockets. They shot 30 of 40 from the field in the second half and outscored the Hornets 83-51.

Miles Bridges had 21 points for the Hornets.

Spurs 116, Trail Blazers 100

In San Antonio, Jeremy Sochan had 31 points and 14 rebounds, Victor Wembanyama added 23 points and 12 rebounds and San Antonio held off Anfernee Simons and Portland.

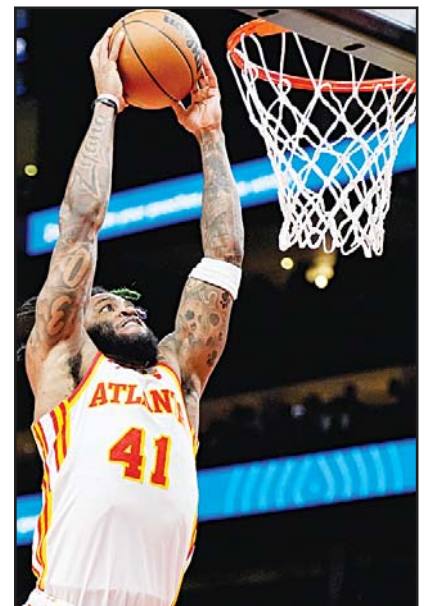
Simons had a season-high 40 points. Keldon Johnson added 21 points for San Antonio, and Devin Vassell had 15. The Spurs won for the fourth time in January, their most in any month this season, to improve to 9-36.

Grizzlies 107, Magic 106

In Memphis, Tenn., Jaren Jackson Jr. had 30 points and eight rebounds, reserve Ziaire Williams added 17 points and Memphis held off Orlando.

Luke Kennard finished with 15 points - all on 3-pointers - and six assists to help the Grizzlies win their third straight.

Paolo Banchero led Orlando with 27 points. The Magic have lost seven of nine.



Atlanta Hawks forward Saddiq Bey (41) dunks the ball against the Dallas Mavericks during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Friday, Jan. 26, 2024, in Atlanta. (AP)

Allegre upsets favorites in World Cup super-G

Mowinckel wins wind-affected Cortina downhill

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy, Jan 27, (AP) — Norwegian skier Ragnhild Mowinckel kept her focus to win a wind-affected World Cup downhill after a series of crashes and delays marked the race Saturday.

Racing on the course that will be used for the Milan-Cortina Olympics in two years, Mowinckel finished 0.35 seconds ahead of American racer Jacqueline Wiles and 0.44 ahead of home favorite Sofia Goggia.

It was Mowinckel's fourth career World Cup victory and her first since winning a super-G in Cortina a year ago. Mowinckel also won silver medals in downhill and giant slalom at the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics before missing the entire 2019-20 season because of a serious knee injury.

Wiles earned her third career podium result and first since finishing third in the Cortina downhill six years ago - a race that was won by her idol and now good friend Lindsey Vonn. A week after that 2018 result, Wiles crashed in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, and missed two full seasons with serious leg injuries.

Goggia also finished third Friday in the first of two downhill races on the Olympia delle Tofane course.

The last six downhill races have now been won by six different women: Kaja Vickhoff Lie, Ilka Stuhec, Mikaela Shiffrin, Jasmine Flury, Goggia and Mowinckel.

Shiffrin is out of action for several days at least after crashing on Friday. Initial medical reports suggested that the holder of a

record 95 World Cup wins avoided serious injury.

There were more crashes on Saturday, with Shiffrin's and Wiles' teammate Bella Wright sustaining some bruises and a cut on her chin after she went down.

Wright was airlifted off the course but later returned to the finish area with bandages on her chin and in time

SKIING

to take part in the celebration for Wiles' result.

French skier Nils Allegre sped to his first career World Cup victory Saturday as two late starters upset the higher-ranked favorites at a tight super-G on the classic Kandahar course.

Wearing bib 18, Allegre beat Guglielmo Bosca by 0.18 seconds after the Ital-

ian finished and spent two minutes hoping for what would have been his maiden win.

Allegre and Bosca, both 30-year-old veterans on the Alpine skiing circuit, denied the Swiss team a 1-2 finish. Loic Meillard led season dominator Marco Odermatt by 0.03 after the top-10 ranked super-G racers had completed their runs.

"It was great, it was just like something got out of me," Allegre said in tears in a course-side interview when asked about the moment he finished. "I'm 30 years old, it's my 102nd start today, so... I never stopped believing in me and today everything (went) in the right direction."

The Frenchman had not finished better than fourth before, most recently at a downhill in Val Gardena

last December, when he was bumped off the podium when American racer Bryce Bennett took the victory as a late starter.

"It's a good day, I had a perfect feeling on my ski from the top to the bottom, I feel really confident on it, I can push a lot," Allegre said.

Overall World Cup leader Odermatt's fourth position ended his series of 12 straight super-G podiums, a feat previously only achieved by Austrian great Hermann Maier two decades ago. No male skier has ever had a top-three result in 13 consecutive super-Gs.

"A weird race today with small time differences," Odermatt said. "That's because it was a very, very easy and a short super-G, a simple course. In these conditions you cannot make the difference anywhere."

Allegre continued the strong run by the French team, led by Cyprien Sarrazin, in men's speed events this season.

In his breakthrough speed season, former giant slalom specialist Sarrazin won one downhill in Bormio in December and two in Kitzbuehel last week. In Wengen, he was runner-up twice and won the super-G. On Saturday, he finished 0.64 behind Allegre and outside the top 10.

"We get a good result for everybody in the team. This way we try to continue and push more and more and more," Allegre said. "We are one team and it really helps us in the good days but in the bad days, too."

After days of rain and mild temperatures, the course, surrounded by green fields, was weakened and organizers used salt to harden its surface.

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Who will succeed Klopp as Liverpool manager?

LIVERPOOL, England, (AP) — As soon as the shock of Jurgen Klopp leaving Liverpool at season's end wore off, speculation moved into hyperdrive about his replacement.

An "orderly process" to pick a new manager will be conducted privately, Liverpool chief executive Billy Hogan said Friday. "We won't talk about other people and we won't get into the name game," Hogan said.

Here's a look at possible successors:

Xabi Alonso

The 42-year-old Spaniard has Bayer Leverkusen unbeaten atop the Bundesliga in his first full season in charge. He was hired by the German club in October 2022. The former Liverpool midfielder was immediately quizzed about his potential interest. At a news conference on Friday, he said: "I am really happy here. I am enjoying my work here. I'm thinking about where I am right now. I am in a great place. ... What's going to happen in the future I don't know."

Roberto De Zerbi

The 44-year-old Italian shepherded Brighton into European competition for the first time in club history. Brighton finished sixth in the English Premier League last season and has reached the round of 16 in the Europa League. He took over in September 2022 after Graham Potter left for Chelsea. De Zerbi has also coached Ukrainian club Shakhtar Donetsk and had stints with Sassuolo, Benevento and Palermo in Italy.

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Hosts bowled out for 436

Pope's century powers England to 126-run lead over India

HYDERABAD, India, Jan 27, (AP): Ollie Pope scored a hundred to help England storm back into the first test against India on Day 3 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

Pope finished the day at 148 not out and put on three vital partnerships as England reached 316-6 in 77 overs in the second innings, taking a 126-run lead at stumps.

This was after India was bowled out for 436 in its reply to England's 246 in the first innings. The hosts had taken a 190-run lead but it was wiped off nearly by the tea break.

Post-lunch, England's game plan of playing reverse sweep against spin worked wonders. Pope and Ben Duckett extended their second-wicket partnership to 68 runs.

Their stand came off only 57 balls and unnerved the Indian camp, which brought on Jasprit Bumrah to counter with pace.

Bumrah got the ball reversing and bowled Duckett for 47 runs. He faced 52 balls, hitting seven fours in all.

The Indian speedster got a second wicket without delay, trapping Joe Root for just two runs as England was down to 117-3 in 21 overs.

There was a mini-partnership between Pope and Jonny Bairstow - worth 23 runs - before the latter was bowled shouldering arms to Ravindra Jadeja.

Despite that success, Jadeja went for runs through the day and finished with 1-101 in 26 overs, bowling only one maiden.

Ravichandran Ashwin also picked a wicket, bowling Ben Stokes (6) with a sharp off-spinner. England was suddenly five-down and went to tea at 172-5.

On resumption, Pope and Ben Foakes put on the most vital partnership of the innings for England. They put on 112 runs off 183 balls, with both batters looking to score at every opportunity, putting pressure back on the Indian spinners.

Pope had reached 50 off 54 balls in the previous session and marched on to his first second innings' century

CRICKET

off 154 balls. The second 50 runs was more sedate given that England lost a few more wickets, but the scoring rate picked up later on in the last session.

Pope was dropped on 110 off Jadeja, with Axar Patel putting down a regulation chance off yet another reverse sweep.

Patel made amends by bowling Foakes for 34 runs to provide a vital breakthrough for India. Pope, though, denied the hosts further, adding another 41 off 62 balls for an unbroken seventh wicket stand with Rehan Ahmed (16 not out).

It was only the fourth time - after Ken Barrington (1961), Mike Gatting (1984) and Jonathan Trott (2012) - an English batter scored a second innings' hundred in India.

Earlier in the morning session, Joe Root took 4-79 as India crashed from overnight 421-7 to lose three wickets for 15 runs across 21 deliveries.

Jadeja was out for 87, missing out on his fourth test hundred, out lbw to Root who was denied a hat trick.

India's lead was cut down to 101 runs as the English top order set a quick pace in its second innings to reach 89-1 off 15 overs at lunch.



England's Mark Wood fields the ball during their first cricket test against India in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

Drama unfolds as Al-Arabi, Al-Nasr secure Amir Cup quarter-final spots

Salmiya face Khaitan

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Al-Arabi set a date with Al-Nasr in the quarter-finals of the Amir's Cup competition, after they narrowly defeated Sulaibikhat and Al-Sahel 1-0 and 2-1, respectively.

Despite Al-Arabi scoring the sole goal of the match in the tenth minute through Bandar Salama, it was a challenging match. Al-Nasr, on the other hand, clinched their quarter-final spot when Colombian Hancel Zapata scored the winning goal against Al-Sahel in the first minute of stoppage time.

Today's quarter-final matches will be completed, with Salmiya facing Khaitan at 4:30 pm at the



Al-Arabi's Bandar Al-Salama celebrates with teammate after scoring during the Amir Cup soccer game.

Friendship and Peace Stadium, and Kazma playing against Burgan at Thamer Stadium at 7:45 pm.

In the first match, Al-Salmiya is cautious about potential surprises from Khaitan, recognizing the difference between cup matches and the league. Al-Arabi and Al-Nasr's struggles in the previous round serve as evidence of this. Al-Salmiya, under the new coaching of Croatian Ante Misha, aims to advance, while Khaitan seeks to lift morale by

compensating for their league performance.

In the other clash, Kazma, led by coach Mohamed Dehelis, aims to compete for the title after reaching the final last season. Despite experiencing coaching changes, Kazma hopes to surpass Burgan, who is eager to bounce back from their Zain League disappointment and secure a spot in the next round, just as they did in the Crown Prince Cup quarter-finals after defeating Al-Salmiya.

SOCCER

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Al-Kandari recommends sports clubs partnering with academies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Yousef Al-Kandari, a member of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Al-Qurain Cooperative Society, has proposed a new initiative for sports clubs to engage with specialized academies in order to enhance the skill levels, particularly in football. This move aims to provide clubs with players who are well-prepared both physically and tactically, deviating from the traditional approach of relying solely on in-house training.

According to Al-Kandari, this strategy offers several advantages to clubs, including a reduction in financial expenses and administrative burdens related to pensions, coaching staff, administrators, and various equipment. Furthermore, he emphasized that the specialization approach would contribute to elevating the overall caliber and proficiency of players, aligning with the practices adopted by major sports clubs worldwide.



Yousef Al-Kandari

Best of the Rest

Arthur joins Atletico: Atletico Madrid signed teenage Belgium midfielder Arthur Vermeeren from Antwerp on Friday.

Atletico said the 18-year-old Vermeeren agreed to a contract for six and a half seasons. It did not reveal the cost of the transfer.

Vermeeren came up through Antwerp's youth sides before debuting for its senior team in October 2022. Since then he has made 66 appearances and helped it to win the Belgian league and cup. He also has two appearances for Belgium.

Vermeeren impressed by scoring in Antwerp's 3-2 upset of Barcelona in the Champions League group phase this season. (AP)

Bay FC sign Castellanos: Bay FC of the National Women's Soccer League has acquired attacking midfielder Deyna Castellanos via transfer from Manchester City, the expansion team announced Friday.

The team said it signed the Venezuelan international to a contract through 2026 with an option for another year. She'll join Bay FC pending receipt of her visa and International Transfer Certificate.

Castellanos, who won the NCAA College Cup in 2018 at Florida State, played with Atletico Madrid from 2020-22. She joined Manchester City ahead of the 2022-23 season.

She had four goals in 28 appearances across all competitions for Manchester City in her first season with the club. This season she's appeared in eight matches with a goal.

Castellanos is captain of the Venezuelan national team with 22 goals in 38 career matches.

"Deyna is a tremendous talent, who has already gained top-level experience playing abroad in some of the top leagues in the world as well as for her national team, and we believe she will make an immediate impact playing for this club in the NWSL," Bay FC general manager Lucy Rushton said in a statement Friday.

The NWSL opens the season on March 16. Bay FC and the Utah Royals are joining the league this year, bringing it to 14 teams. (AP)



Al-Qadisiya player dunks as his opponent looks on.

Al-Qadisiya look to extend dominance

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: In the upcoming basketball showdown at Al-Itihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, Al-Qadisiya will face Al-Tadamon today at 5:00 pm. The game is expected to be relatively straightforward for Al-Qadisiya, who currently tops the standings with 21 points, facing Al-Tadamon with 12 points, in the fourth round of the second division of the Basketball League. Following this match, another intense face-off is set between Al-Sulaibikhat and Al-Nasr at 7:00 pm in the same hall.

The league format comprises two sections, with the top four teams advancing to the semi-finals after the

BASKETBALL

conclusion of the second section. Under the guidance of American coach Stebbing, Al-Qadisiya is well-positioned for success, having secured a substantial qualification percentage. The team, led by standout players such as Mohsen Mortada, Muhammad Ashkanani, Abdullah Tawfiq, and the American Lowry, enters the game with added motivation following a significant 88-82 victory over Kazma last Thursday.

In the second match, fourth-placed Sulaibikhat, boasting 19 points, aims to maintain its impressive performance under the coaching of Fahd Barjas and secure another victory to stay in contention for the coveted fourth place. On the flip side, Al-Nasr, entering the game with 15 points, seeks redemption after a substantial loss in the last round against Al-Kuwait. The competition for the fourth spot, crucial for advancing to the semi-finals, is fierce between Al-Arabi and Al-Sulaibikhat, making every match crucial, a factor that Al-Sulaibikhat will be keenly aware of in today's matchup.

Hosts reach 60-2 on Day 3 of day-night Test

Australia need 156 runs to beat West Indies

BRISBANE, Australia, Jan 27, (AP): West Indies made early inroads through its pace and made Australia work hard for the first time in its dominant test summer during the day-night test match at the Gabba on Saturday.

Australia lost its recently named test player of the year Usman Khawaja (10) and Marnus Labuschagne (5) to end Day 3 at 60-2, still needing 156 runs to make a clean sweep of its test summer that saw them rout Paki-

CRICKET

stan 3-0 and beat the West Indies by 10 wickets inside three days in the first test at Adelaide.

West Indies wasted numerous opportunities to swell its lead beyond 215 runs as it got bowled out for 193 in the last session after No. 11 batter Shamar Joseph had to retire hurt when he injured his right toe off a searing Mitchell Starc yorker. He was adjudged leg before wicket while negotiating Starc's toe-crushing yorker only to see the bowler had over-stepped.

Josh Hazlewood picked up 3-23 with his impeccable bowling and Nathan Lyon grabbed 3-42 with Starc and Cameroon Green picking up one wicket apiece.

Shamar Joseph walked off in lot of pain and might not be able to bowl in the remainder of the test match, but Alzarri Joseph provided West Indies an early breakthrough when Khawaja edged the pacer down the legside.

Justin Greaves then squared up Labuschagne with a brilliant back-of-the-length delivery as Kevin Sinclair snapped a superb diving catch in the second slip.

Steven Smith, who is yet to make an impression in his new role as an opener after the retirement of David Warner, was unbeaten on 33 with Cameroon Green negotiating the last

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half an hour, not out on 9. On an oppressively hot and humid day, West Indies lost the initiative through careless batting and some smart catching by the Australians. The tourists were progressing well at 148-4, ahead by 170 runs, when first innings half-century-maker Kavem Hodge was sharply run-out by Travis Head.

Hodge had frustrated Australia for 74 balls in scoring a patient 29 before he took few steps outside his crease. Head showed brilliant reflexes at forward short leg and flicked the ball back onto the stumps with Hodge

failing to ground his bat back in time. Kirk McKenzie (41) and Alick Athanaze (35) both looked to have challenge Australian bowlers but both fell to Lyon on either side of the first two sessions as the offspinner found appreciable turn and bounce off the third day's wicket.

Earlier, Green made the first breakthrough of the day having captain Kraigg Brathwaite playing a loose drive which was caught by Labuschagne at cover for 16.

Lyon struck almost immediately when introduced into the attack with the veteran spinner teasing out

Sheikha Naima patronizes extravaganza

Salwa Al-Sabah Club women's volleyball tourney kicks off

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The Salwa Al-Sabah Club women's volleyball tournament kicked off under the patronage of Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairperson of the Club's Board of Directors. The tournament, featuring the "Salwa" clubs alongside Iraqi Acad Ankawa and Lebanese Byblos clubs, is scheduled to run until the 31st of this month.

This event follows the recent friendly women's handball tournament organized by the club, aligning with the board's strategy to attract Gulf and Arab teams for friendly competitions. This approach aims to fortify the club's teams, providing them with valuable experience and a competitive edge before the commencement of local tournaments.

Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad extended a warm welcome to the participating delegations in the friendly volleyball tournament, emphasizing the club's commitment to organizing such events. She highlighted their significance in enabling players to

gain experience through interactions with Arab teams and exposure to diverse volleyball styles.

As part of the club's overarching policy to enhance teams comprehensively, Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad stressed the importance of preparing the teams for both local and international competitions.

In her dual role as one of Salwa Club's volleyball players, Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad played for an honorable representation during the tournament, aspiring to showcase Kuwaiti women's sports prowess.

Shifting to the General Volleyball League, Kazma secured a 3-0 victory over Al-Arabi, while Al-Sahel celebrated its first league win by defeating Al-Sulaibikhat 3-1. The current team standings are as follows: Al-Kuwait, Al-Qadisiya, Kazma, and Burgan each with 31 points (with matches postponed for Al-Kuwait and Al-Qadisiya), Al-Arabi at 28, Al-Shabab at 18, Yarmouk at 16, Al-Tadamon at 15, and Al-Sahel and Sulaibikhat with 3 points each.

McKenzie leg before wicket. Green should have had another wicket in the penultimate over before the dinner break but Smith spilt the one-handed chance at slip to give Athanaze a reprieve.

It was Smith's second error of the innings after dropping a low chance from Brathwaite off Starc late on Day 2.

On Friday, a patient 75 by Khawaja and blistering half centuries by Alex Carey and captain Pat Cummins led Australia's fightback as the host's rallied to 289-9 declared in its first innings, despite still trailing by 22.



Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairperson of the Club's Board of Directors.

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Goalkeeper Hassan Safar and Abdulaziz.

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Kuwait handball players honored on their return from the Asian Handball Championship in Bahrain.

Minister Marafi commends the outstanding achievement

Kuwaiti players receive a heartwarming welcome

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: Kuwait handball team received a warm welcome at Kuwait International Airport's ceremony hall following their participation in the 21st Asian Cup Championship, concluding in Manama, Bahrain. Kuwait secured a commendable fourth place and qualified for the 2025 World Cup in Croatia, Denmark, and Norway, scheduled from January 14 to February 2, 2025.

Leading the delegation's reception were key figures, including the Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and the Minister of State for Communications Affairs, Daoud Marafi. Also present were Sheikh Fahd Al-Nasser, President of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, Yousef Al-Baidan, Director of the Sports Authority, Bashar Abdullah, Deputy Director, Olympic Committee member Fatima Hayat, Handball Federation members, players' families, and a large gathering of media professionals.

HANDBALL

Minister Daoud Marafi commended the outstanding achievement of the team in qualifying for the 2025 World Cup. He conveyed the political leadership's congratulations and emphasized the importance of focusing on and caring for the players, expressing his commitment to resolving challenges faced by Kuwaiti sports and athletes. Minister Marafi announced financial rewards for the players to recognize their efforts in achieving this significant victory.

Sheikh Fahd Al-Nasser considered the qualification after a 15-year absence from the major international stage as confirmation of the team's elite status. He praised the federation's cooperation and the players' dedication, expressing hope for more achievements in various sports competitions.

Fatima Hayat, a member of the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee, deemed Kuwait's achievement as unsurprising,



Daoud Marafi, Sheikh Fahd Al-Nasser, Bashar Abdullah and Talal Al-Otaibi.



Bashar Abdullah receiving Al-Dhiyab, Siwan, Al-Zaabi and Al-Dhafiri.

crediting the well-thought-out plan by the Handball Federation in developing national teams. She wished for continued support from the Ministry of Youth and the Sports Authority for ongoing success.

Qayed Al-Adwani, Secretary of the Handball Federation, acknowledged increased responsibility and affirmed the team's preparation for the World Cup and upcoming Asian Championship. Treasurer Khaled Talib highlighted the success of the Board of Directors and their commitment to

developing a young team for the next decade.

Algerian Saeed Hegazy expressed happiness at qualifying for the World Cup and emphasized the importance of continuous preparation for better performance. Captain Abdullah Al-Khamis dedicated the qualification to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people, expressing joy for restoring cheerfulness to the fans. He stressed the immediate commencement of World Cup preparations after addressing injuries and readying the players.

Manchester City's losing run at Tot-

Sabalenka defends title, Bopanna makes history

Indian becomes oldest man to win GS doubles title

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 27, (AP): In the back of her mind Aryna Sabalenka didn't want to be, in her words, that player who wins a major title and disappears.

Winning her first Grand Slam crown in Australia a year ago gave Sabalenka the confidence she could do it again. Losing the U.S. Open final last September gave her the extra motivation.

TENNIS

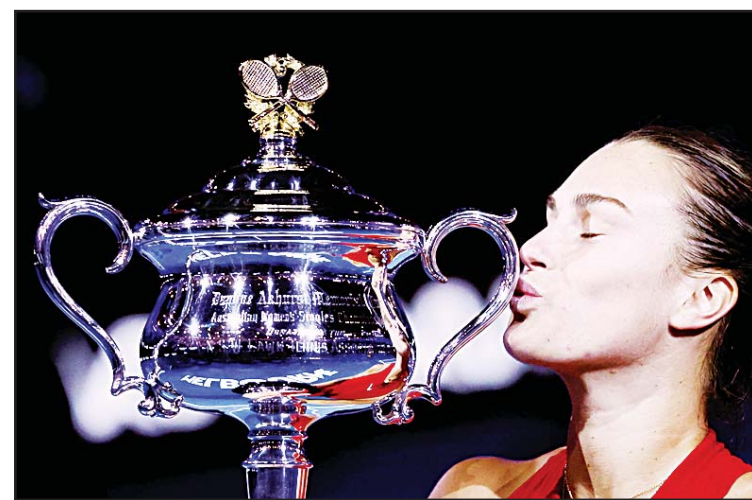
Sabalenka ensured she wasn't a one-hit wonder by clinching back-to-back Australian Open titles with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Zheng Qinwen on Saturday in a one-sided women's final that contrasted sharply with her comeback three-set victory here over Elena Rybakina last year.

In 2022, Sabalenka struggled so badly with her serve in tense moments that she doubted she could win a major. Now she's relying on it to break down opponents. She didn't serve a double-fault in the final, and she didn't face a breakpoint.

No. 2-seeded Sabalenka set the tone with big, deep forehands and converted service breaks early in each set against the 21-year-old Zheng, who was making her debut in a Grand Slam final.

The journey and the destination were equally important for Sabalenka.

In the semifinals, she avenged her U.S. Open final loss to No. 4-ranked Coco Gauff with a straight-set win. That followed straight-sets wins over 2021 French Open winner Barbora Krejickova in the quarterfinals and Amanda Anisi-



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus kisses the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup after defeating Zheng Qinwen of China in the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

move in the fourth round.

And that, she said, gave her more confidence in her game and more self-belief.

Only two things slowed down Sabalenka's progress Saturday to her second Grand Slam singles title.

In the third game of the second set, with Zheng serving, the match was interrupted after an activist started yelling out. The match continued after the man was escorted out by security.

Then, when she was serving for the match, Sabalenka had three championship points at 40-0 but missed two with unforced forehands errors and another with Zheng's clever drop shot.

After giving Zheng a breakpoint chance, she bounced the ball away behind her in disgust. But she recovered her composure to win the next three points.

At 43, Rohan Bopanna became the oldest man to win a Grand Slam doubles title in the Open era when he combined with Matt Ebden on Saturday for a 7-6 (0), 7-5 victory over Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori in the Australian Open final.

It was his first major title in men's doubles - he won a mixed doubles title at Roland Garros in 2017 - and came in his 61st attempt, and with his 19th partner. It was his 17th Australian Open, and Ebden was his 12th partner at Melbourne Park.

"You definitely got to know how old I am," Bopanna told the crowd at Rod Laver Arena. "I've changed it a bit, I say I'm at level 43, not age 43 now!"

Bopanna and Ebden, at a combined age of 79, will top the rankings next week and become the oldest No. 1 pairing in tennis history.

Ake keeps alive Man City treble trophy defense after beating Tottenham

Maidstone become lowest-ranked team since 1978 to reach FA Cup's fifth round

IPSWICH, England, Jan 27, (AP): Non-league team Maidstone pulled off one of the biggest FA Cup upsets in years by beating second-division Ipswich 2-1 on Saturday to become the lowest-ranked team since 1978 to reach the fifth round.

Sam Come scored the winner for the sixth-tier team in the 66th minute and goalkeeper Lucas Covolan made a string of saves in the final minutes to set off wild celebrations among the more than 4,400 away fans at Portman Road.

"The magic of the FA Cup is very much alive," Maidstone manager George Elokobi said.

Maidstone is the first team from outside the top five English leagues to make the fifth round of the FA Cup since Blyth Spartans in 1978.

Lamar Reynolds put the visitors ahead against the run of play by finishing off a quick counter in the 43rd

minute by lobbing Ipswich goalkeeper Christian Walton. Jeremy Sarmiento equalized for Ipswich in the 56th but Walton then set up Come in the area 10 minutes later, and he rifled home inside the near post.

Maidstone beat fourth-tier team Barrow and third-tier side Stevenage to get to the fourth round, and can now dream of a meeting with one of the Premier League giants in the last 16. The draw for the fifth round will be held Sunday.

Ipswich is in second place in the second-tier Championship and on course for promotion to the Premier League, but manager Kieran McKenna gambled by making 10 changes from the team that played Leicester in the league on Monday.

Still, Ipswich dominated early and struck the post twice before being stunned by Reynolds' opener.

Manchester City's losing run at Tot-

tenham is over. Its defense of the treble is very much alive.

Nathan Ake struck in the 88th min-

ute to secure a 1-0 win in the fourth round of the FA Cup.

Defending champion City lost all of



Chelsea's Conor Gallagher (right), fights for the ball with Aston Villa's Youri Tielemans during the English FA Cup fourth round soccer match between Chelsea and Aston Villa at the Stamford Bridge stadium in London. (AP)

its previous five visits to Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and failed to score. It looked like being another frustrating night until Ake's late intervention.

Even then, VAR had to confirm the goal after Spurs players complained goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario was fouled by Ruben Dias before Ake poked home following a corner.

SOCCER

Victory meant City's defense of its trophy treble remained intact after winning the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup last season.

Guardiola joked at the end of last season that he longed to finally score at Tottenham's new stadium.

He must have thought his team's barren run would continue after failing to capitalize on a host of chances.

Substitute Kevin De Bruyne missed the best of them when firing wide from inside the box.

Oscar Bobb was denied an early goal, which was ruled marginally offside, and Julian Alvarez's close-range shot was deflected wide after the break.

Elimination from the cup likely ends Tottenham's chances of a trophy.

Chelsea booked its place in the English League Cup final this week, but Mauricio Pochettino's team still has work to do to advance in the FA Cup after drawing with Aston Villa 0-0 at Stamford Bridge.

The teams will replay at Villa Park. Premier League side Nottingham Forest will also need another match after being held to a goalless draw at second-division Bristol City.

Djeidi Gassama scored in the 84th to earn Sheffield Wednesday a replay after drawing with Coventry 1-1.