



Amir holds strategic talks on government formation



KUNA photo of Japanese calligraphy transforms into an artistic masterpiece, seamlessly blending the beauty of writing and art in a captivating panel. — See Page 12

Opinion

Time wasted can never be recovered

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WHEN studying the political scene in Kuwait, we are led to ask the following: Do we have proper, established relations between the two authorities - the legislative and the executive - in accordance with the constitutional text and based on sound democratic foundations? Or is it like a building that is made of paper and gets blown away by a breeze, leaving behind no traces?

From the 1960s, after we agreed on a democratic system, Kuwait faced several crises. They accumulated over the years, until they became very difficult to solve, because the understanding of democracy was governed by tribal or sectarian fear, and the game of interests.

This is why a sound relationship has not been established between the government and the parliament. The government is usually seeking to restrict the parliament in accordance with the visions of the Prime Minister or the ministerial majority. The parliament persists in taking advantage of the constitutional loopholes and undermining the cooperation between the two authorities in order to dominate the executive administration.

The encroachment of powers, and even bypassing them, represents the tool used by the parliamentary blocs at several occasions, preventing the interests of those in control of it from approving laws that do not meet their interests, or do not serve any tribe and sect, as if the country were "cantons" and not a single state.

That is why appointments, even of the head of a police station or just an employee, were carried out based on the relationship between the minister and the parliamentarian. This quickly turned into a crisis, sometimes leading to the dismissal of the Council of Ministers or the dissolution of the National Assembly.

In recent years, this trend ended in something resembling administrative chaos and the takeover of industrial, agricultural, health, and education sectors, through laws that were tailored to suit the interests of the powerful, and not in the interest of Kuwait.

Throughout the decades that followed the liberation, all governmental attempts to pass laws that served the people had failed. The ones that the legislative authority passed under parliamentary pressure, the Kuwaitis did not accept, such as the law preventing coeducation, and the so-called "negative phenomena" to the point of inspecting people's intentions.

Unfortunately, the encroachment was not limited to the powers of ministers, but also reached the judicial authority, and we saw persistent attempts to dominate it.

No one did anything to prevent this parliamentary encroachment on the two authorities, except for an attempt that took place during the era of the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad but that attempt was met with storms of denunciation, which led to the dissolution of the parliament in 1986 and the suspension of the constitution. It was one of the preludes, as we mentioned yesterday, to the Iraqi invasion.

At that time, there was no strong government working to convince the parliamentarians about the necessity of updating the Constitution and marketing its vision to the people. Also, the regional situation was encouraging tension and inflaming the relations between the social and political components.

All of this was not taken into consideration after the liberation. Rather, things went in the opposite direction, and the control over projects was used to serve personal agendas.

It was as if Kuwait was not a final homeland, but instead a temporary state. In order for these people to seize the highest number of benefits, they deliberately closed the country, for fear of competition.

This dismal scene in Kuwait has affected its economy, and spread corruption in it. Loyalty to the tribe and sect ended up being before the homeland.

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Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held meetings at Bayan Palace on Tuesday, engaging in consultations for the formation of a new government. The attendees included National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun, former parliament speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, a former prime minister.

The audience also included Their Highnesses Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, a former premier, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also a former prime minister, and the current Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The discussions and receptions are integral to the ongoing consultations aimed at shaping the composition of the new government.

'Iran increasing production of highly enriched uranium'

VIENNA, Dec 26, (AP): Iran has increased the rate at which it is producing near weapons grade uranium in recent weeks, reversing a previous slowdown that started in the middle of this year, the International Atomic Energy Agency said in a report to member states.

Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said in the report that Iran "in recent weeks had increased its production

of highly enriched uranium, reversing a previous output reduction from mid-2023," according to an IAEA spokesperson Sunday.

Iran had previously slowed down the rate at which it was enriching uranium to 60% purity. Uranium enriched at 60% purity is just a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog said its

inspectors had verified the increased rate of production since the end of November at facilities in Natanz and Fordow to about 9 kilograms per month, up from 3 kilograms per month since June and representing a return to earlier levels of production.

Enriching uranium means increasing the percentage of uranium-235, the isotope of uranium that can be used in nuclear fission.

Bodies in Iraq belong to missing Kuwaiti, Saudi

Foreign minister confirms grim fate

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26: Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced today that the authorities in the Republic of Iraq have discovered the bodies of a Kuwaiti citizen and a Saudi national residing in Kuwait, who had

gone missing in Anbar Governorate, Iraq.

In a statement received by KUNA, Minister Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah expressed deep sorrow and sadness at this tragic news, extending his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. He prayed for God's mercy upon the deceased and for strength and solace for their grieving families.

The Foreign Minister affirmed that the Ministry had maintained continuous communication with Iraqi authorities, who exerted significant efforts to locate the individuals swiftly. He mentioned ongoing coordination with the government of Iraq to uncover the circumstances surrounding the incident and the findings of the ongoing investigations.

Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah instructed the Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad to closely monitor and facilitate the necessary procedures, commending the prompt and commendable efforts of the Iraqi leadership and authorities in swiftly determining the fate of the deceased.

Earlier, a number of MPs have commented on the alleged kidnapping of a Kuwaiti citizen and a Saudi national residing in Kuwait while they were on a safari trip in the desert area between Al-Anbar and Saldin governorates in Iraq.

According to Al-Sumariya Iraqi TV, DAESH gangs kidnapped the two and burned their vehicle.

Deputy National Assembly Speaker MP Muhammad Al-Mutair called on the interim government to immediately secure the release of the two captives through diplomatic channels and in coordination with the Iraqi authorities.

MP Bader Al-Shemmari said he contacted Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad to intensify their efforts to release the two citizens and guarantee their safe return in collaboration with the concerned Iraqi authorities. He also praised the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Kuwaiti Embassy in Baghdad.

MP Meted Ayed Al-Raathan urged Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah to take the extra mile to release the kidnapped and bring them back to Kuwait as soon as possible.

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stc marks year of remarkable community impact

— Details Page 10 —



Photo shows facilities for transporting and exporting hydrogen. Low-carbon hydrogen is shaping up to become one of the most promising energy resources that would lead to a better environment and help achieve the goal of carbon neutrality set by countries around the world. — See Page 8

Baghdad condemns US strikes on 'Iraqi military sites'

BAGHDAD, Dec 26, (Agencies): Iraq's government condemned US strikes on what they said was Iraqi military sites, referring to the action as hostile and unwarranted.

The Prime Minister's media office said in a statement that the government condemned the US strikes that targeted Iraqi military sites Tuesday, which resulted in the death of a soldier and injured 18 others including civilians.

In a statement Tuesday, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani condemned both the militia attack in Irbil and the U.S. response.

Attacks on "foreign diplomatic mission headquarters and sites hosting military advisors from friendly nations ... infringe upon Iraq's sovereignty and are deemed unacceptable under any circumstances," the statement said.

However, it added that that the retaliatory strikes by the U.S. on "Iraqi military sites" - referring to the militia - "constitute a clear hostile act." Sudani said some of those injured in the strikes were civilians.

US President Joe Biden ordered the United States military to carry out retaliatory airstrikes against Iranian-backed militia groups after three US service members were injured in a drone attack in northern Iraq.

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said one of the U.S. troops suffered critical injuries in the attack that occurred earlier Monday. The Iranian-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah and affiliated groups, under an umbrella of Iranian-backed militants, claimed credit for the attack that utilized a one-way attack drone.

Iraqi officials said US strikes targeting militia sites early Tuesday killed one militant and injured 18. They came at a time of heightened fears of a regional spillover of the Israel-Hamas war.

Iran announced Monday that an Israeli strike on the outskirts of the Syrian capital of Damascus killed one of its top generals, Razi Mousavi, who had been a close companion of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the former head of Iran's elite Quds Force. Soleimani was slain in a U.S. drone strike in Iraq in January 2020.

Iranian officials vowed revenge for the killing of Mousavi but did not immediately launch a retaliatory strike. The militia attack Monday in northern Iraq was launched prior to the strike in Syria that killed Mousavi.

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Regional unrest mounts amid Israel-Hamas strife

RAFAH, Gaza Strip, Dec 26, (AP): Israeli forces bombarded Palestinian refugee camps in central Gaza on Tuesday, residents said, in apparent preparation to expand their ground offensive into a third section of the besieged territory.

The opening of a potential new battle zone points to the long and destructive road still ahead as Israel vows to crush Hamas after its Oct 7 attack on southern Israel. For weeks, Israeli forces have been engaged in heavy urban fighting in northern Gaza and in the southern city of Khan Younis, driving Pales-

tinians into further smaller corners of territory in search of refuge.

Despite international pressure for a cease-fire and U.S. calls for a reduction in civilian casualties, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday warned that the fight "isn't close to finished."

Israel's offensive has been one of the most devastating military campaigns in recent history. More than 20,600 Palestinians, two-thirds of them women and children, have been killed, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, whose

Continued on Page 4



Palestinians mourn relatives killed in Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in Khan Younis, Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2023. (AP)

NewsWatch

ANKARA: The Turkish parliament's foreign affairs committee was poised on Tuesday to resume deliberations on Sweden's bid to join NATO, days after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan linked the Nordic country's admission on U.S. approval of Turkey's request to purchase F-16 fighter jets.

NATO-member Turkey lifted its objection to Sweden joining the trans-Atlantic alliance in July but the ratification process has since stalled in parliament. Turkey accuses Sweden of not taking its security concerns seriously enough, including its fight against Kurdish militants and other groups that Ankara considers to be security threats. (AP)

QAMISHLI, Syria: Turkey intensified its airstrikes against Kurdish groups in Syria and northern Iraq in retaliation for the deaths of 12 Turkish soldiers in Iraq over the weekend.

The Turkish defense ministry said in a statement Monday that it had killed at least 26 militants in the strikes.

In northeast Syria, at least eight civilians were killed in Turkish airstrikes Monday, including two women, Farhad Shami, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. (AP)



















# What's On



A group photo of the male and female trainees participating in the academy.



A group photo of the participants and honorees in the Future Leaders Program.



During a visit to the Shamiya Nature Reserve.



Ahmed Al-Nuwaibit and Anfal Al-Kandari with a group of entrepreneurs and Dr. Heba Al-Musallam.



stc team cleaning the beach.

## Driving engagement, collaborations, and building partnerships to make a long-lasting impact

# stc ... marking a year filled with exceptional community contributions

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26: Supporting the community in various ways has been a longstanding commitment under stc's extensive and sustainable corporate social responsibility (CSR) program. Considering its role as a pioneer in Kuwait's telecom market, stc leveraged its resources and expertise to launch or participate in community driven initiatives that have a far-reaching and positive impact on the community. With a focus on key areas such as education, environmental sustainability, sports, youth empowerment, and entrepreneurship, stc has implemented programs that aim to foster long-term growth and development in the community. These programs are designed to empower individuals and businesses, especially the younger generation, SMEs, and entrepreneurs, by providing them with the knowledge, support, and opportunities to succeed. Through these efforts, stc has established itself as more than just a telecom provider, but a strong contributor to the social and economic fabric of Kuwait.

stc's programs and initiatives in 2023 were diverse and sustainable, each targeting specific community needs and causes that coincided the Company's values and beliefs. These efforts were reflected through various programs, including the three primary initiatives launched under the CSR agenda. Under the 'Weyak' umbrella, the first of stc's three primary initiatives for the year, the emphasis was on supporting young entrepreneurs, business start-ups and SMEs, capitalizing on the strong momentum gained from previous campaigns. The second primary initiative was the educational 'upgrade' umbrella, which aims to contribute towards empowering the youth and supporting the local education initiatives. The last primary initiative is the 'Because we care', which aims to spread awareness on health and wellness, environment and other humanitarian causes. Numerous activities were organized under each initiative in line with stc's approach to creating lasting positive changes and building a better future for the younger generation in Kuwait.

Driven by a commitment to create a meaningful difference in the community, stc effectively orchestrated, led, and engaged in a range of initiatives designed to uplift and empower Kuwaiti society. These initiatives, reflecting stc's dedication to social responsibility, were executed in partnership with an array of key players, including the Kuwaiti Government, well-established businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), specialized service providers, and community members. This collaborative approach ensured the successful implementation of various projects and programs that aligned with stc's CSR framework, demonstrating the company's holistic and inclusive strategy in addressing societal needs and fostering positive change.

### Empowering Youth and Entrepreneurs with "Weyak"

The 'Weyak' umbrella played a pivotal role in stc's CSR framework by empowering Kuwait's younger generation and the entrepreneurial landscape. This innovative program was specifically designed to cater to the needs and aspirations of Kuwait's youth, as well as SMEs and startups. By providing essential support, 'Weyak' helped young entrepreneurs and innovators transform their visionary ideas into tangible realities. This initiative fostered an environment where creativity and business acumen could flourish, significantly contributing to the nation's economic vitality.

A crucial element of the 'Weyak' initiative was stc's collaboration with Dawrat & COFE App. The partnership with 'dawrat' brought forth a variety of educational programs, workshops, and courses, all tailored to equip young entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in a competitive market. By integrating digital technology into these learning modules, stc ensured that participants were well-versed in the latest digital trends and practices, which are indispensable in today's digitally evolving business world. While stc continued to enable and activate the strategic agreement with COFE App, the region's premiere online coffee marketplace, through a series of interactive activities including online activations and special events.

Further amplifying the impact of 'Weyak' was the launch of inspireU Program in the Kuwait Market, an entrepreneurial state-of-the-art incubator and accelerator designed to support startups and SMEs in Kuwait. Three start-ups were selected from the Kuwaiti market to take part in the 10th intake of inspireU program hosted by stc group, based on the criteria defined under the program to be among the 20 companies participating in the tenth edition of the inspireU program. Winning projects will have access to several networking opportunities through participation and visits to international conferences. In addition, inspireU provides financial support to enable start-ups to realize their ideas and dreams.

In essence, the 'Weyak' initiative included multifaceted programs that exemplified stc's commitment to nurturing a thriving ecosystem for young entrepreneurs and innovators. This commitment was reflective of stc's understanding that the progress and prosperity of Kuwait are deeply rooted in the empowerment of its youth and the growth of its entrepreneurial sector. Supporting this segment of the community has been a focus of stc's CSR program for several years, aligning with the Company's strategic objective of serving as an enabler of digital transformation in Kuwait by introducing innovative concepts and technology that can be utilized by individuals and corporates.

### Focusing on education through 'upgrade'

The 'upgrade' initiative, another key component of stc's 2023 CSR program, demonstrated the Company's deep commitment to education stewardship. Several initiatives were launched throughout the year under the umbrella of the educational 'upgrade' initiative, each serving a different purpose. This focus mirrors stc's understanding of the nature of academic excellence in building a sustainable future.

One of the notable initiatives focusing on education was stc's sponsorship of the



A group photo of the work teams from COFE and stc.



Group photos of the participants with the judging panel.



stc CEO Mazayd bin Nasser Al-Harbi with CEO of Tourism Projects Fadel Al-Dosari.

2nd Wathfeeti Career Fair during 2023. This event presented a pivotal opportunity for young Kuwaitis to explore a wide array of career paths and professions. By bringing together over 120 entities from both the private and public sectors, the fair served as a vibrant setting of opportunity and guidance. For stc, the Wathfeeti Career Fair also served as a strategic investment in the nation's future, ensuring that young people had access to the information and networks necessary to make informed career choices.

stc continued its support for academic excellence by sponsoring the graduation ceremony for disabled students for the second year in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. 100 students with physical disabilities were honored amongst their proud families, friends and teachers in a celebratory initiative that aligned with stc's core values of promoting leadership and self-growth. It is worth mentioning that stc adopted this graduation ceremony for the 1st time in Kuwait last year as part of the MOE initiative to bring all students together under one roof to celebrate their success.

As part of stc's strategic partnership with the Kuwait University to support and empower students, the Company held several 'stc Diwaniya' sessions in the presence of social media influencers and personalities along with young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs at Kuwait University. The strategic partnership with Kuwait University aims to provide students with a unique learning curve and the motivational drive that will assist them in reaching their goals and aspirations in their future careers.

With various other programs and activities organized throughout the year, the educational 'upgrade' initiative showcased stc's dedication to nurturing an educated conscious society. By supporting educational growth, stc aspires to play a crucial role in shaping a more informed, responsible, and sustainable Kuwait. These efforts reflect the Company's broader vision of social responsibility, one that encompasses not just immediate community needs but also the long-term well-being and prosperity of the nation.

**Prioritizing health and environmental causes under 'Because we care'**  
The 'Because we care' initiative, the third primary campaign under stc's 2023 CSR framework, illustrated the Company's deep commitment to fostering health and environmental sustainability within the Kuwaiti community. This initiative, launched prior to 2023, encompassed various campaigns, each designed to make a tangible impact on the well-being of individuals and the environment. stc launched

and participated in numerous campaigns that aimed to spread awareness on various health issues and environmental causes that impact members of the community

A highlight of the 'Because we care' initiative for 2023 was the "Our Environment, Our Life" campaign, a collaborative effort with Kuwaiti personality Youssef Al-Omran, also known as "Bu Jarrah", and a large group of volunteers. This campaign focused on the environmental preservation and safety of Abu Al-Hasaniyah Beach. The shoreline cleanup and proper maintenance of this beach area primarily focused on protecting the delicate coastal ecosystem and having a safe environment for beachgoers.

Another significant aspect of the 'Because we care' initiative was the organization of the annual health initiatives related to Blood Donation, Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer where stc collaborated with various entities to promote and raise awareness on these health issues and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The comprehensive nature of the "Because We Care" initiative, with its focus on both environmental sustainability and personal health, reinforced stc's role as a responsible corporate citizen. These efforts showcased the Company's dedication to the welfare of the Kuwaiti community, extending its impact beyond the realms of technology and telecommunications. These initiatives launched by stc aimed to contribute to the development and well-being of Kuwait, which can be witnessed on several fronts. By prioritizing health, wellness, and environmental sustainability, stc aspires to enhance the quality of life for individuals while playing a crucial role in the broader societal and environmental progress in Kuwait.

### Creating memories at second season of 'Winter Wonderland Kuwait'

In an effort to empower and enable the youth, stc sponsored 'Winter Wonderland Kuwait', in strategic partnership with TEC as it aligns with the Company's

commitment to participate in various initiatives that engage with the community, especially with the areas of education, youth empowerment, health, sports, entrepreneurship, and others that serve the community.

stc's sponsorship falls in line with the Company's extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, which aims to create a positive social impact, especially through strategic collaborations with government entities and companies within the private sector.

### Strengthening community ties through strategic partnerships

Collaborating with a diverse range of partners, including the Kuwaiti Government, private enterprises, non-profit organizations, and community members, stc has exemplified the power of collective effort in driving social change. These partnerships have broadened the scope and impact of stc's CSR program and enriched the Company's understanding and approach to addressing complex societal challenges. The synergy between stc and its partners underlines the notion that social responsibility transcends individual or corporate boundaries. It is a collaborative journey that unites different sectors of society towards a common goal. Through these alliances, stc has been able to amplify its impact, bringing innovative programs and sustainable practices to the forefront of its social initiatives.

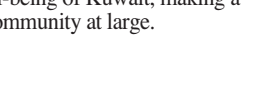
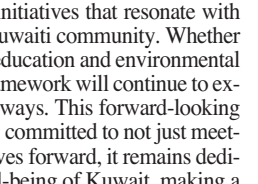
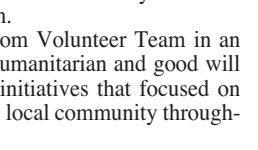
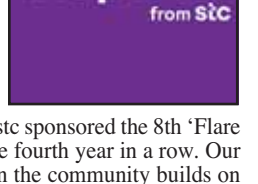
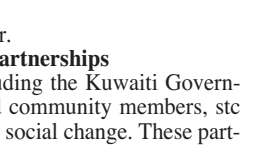
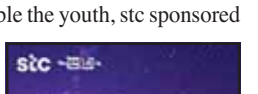
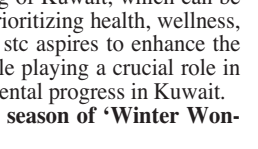
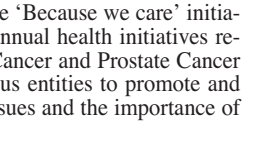
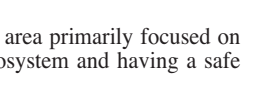
Through our strategic partnership with Flare Fitness, stc sponsored the 8th 'Flare Festival', one of the largest of its kind in Kuwait, for the fourth year in a row. Our participation and support towards such initiatives within the community builds on stc's strive to promote healthy living, amongst the youth.

stc continued to extend its collaboration with Tarahom Volunteer Team in an effort to support the Kuwaiti society through various humanitarian and good will initiatives. This year's campaign consisted of several initiatives that focused on spreading joy and happiness to the hearts of many in the local community throughout the holy month of Ramadan.

### Envisioning a sustainable path forward

Looking ahead, stc is set to build on the solid foundation established through its comprehensive and sustainable CSR program over the years. This past year has been a testament to stc's unwavering commitment to creating a positive and lasting impact in the community through various sustainable initiatives, a dedication that is expected to grow stronger in the future. The focus for the upcoming year is to nurture and expand the relationships formed, emphasizing collaborative efforts as a central driver of societal progress. stc envisions a sustainable future where its partnerships with government bodies, private sector entities, and community organizations will continue to address a broader spectrum of societal needs and challenges, combining diverse perspectives and expertise to create more effective and sustainable outcomes.

In 2024, stc aims to further introduce or participate in initiatives that resonate with its core sustainable values and the evolving needs of the Kuwaiti community. Whether through empowering youth and entrepreneurs, advancing education and environmental awareness, or promoting health and wellness, stc's CSR framework will continue to explore new opportunities to give back to society in various ways. This forward-looking approach solidifies stc's role as a dynamic agent of change, committed to not just meeting but exceeding its social responsibility goals. As stc moves forward, it remains dedicated to playing a pivotal role in the development and well-being of Kuwait, making a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and the community at large.



# Peacock Theater readies for TV's glittering night of excellence

Television

LOS ANGELES, Dec 26, (AP): The 2023 Emmy Awards will be held in 2024. Hollywood's two strikes meant a four-month delay for television's annual celebration of itself. But both have now been resolved and the show will go on. Here's a look at the telecast, the ceremony, and the series and stars up for awards.

The 75th Primetime Emmy Awards will be held on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Monday night, Jan. 15, at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. Anthony Anderson will host. It will be telecast live on the Fox network starting at 8 p.m. Eastern, and available to stream the following day on Hulu.

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

He'll also have a fresh connection to Fox by the time he takes the Emmys stage - his new show "We Are Family" is set to debut in early January.

No presenters have yet been announced.

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

As is typical at the Emmys, HBO shows dominated the nomina-

tions when they were announced way back in July. The top three nominees were all from the gilded cable channel.

"Succession" is the leading nominee, getting 27 for its fourth and final season, including best drama, an award it has won at two of the past three Emmys. Brian Cox, Jeremy Strong and Kieran Culkin are all up for best actor in a drama. Four more men from the show are up for best supporting actor. And Sarah Snook got a best actress nomination.

HBO's "The Last of Us" got 24 nominations, including best drama, best actor for Pedro Pascal and best actress for Bella Ramsey.

## Nominations

"The White Lotus," yes, also from HBO, got 23 noms for its second season. Jennifer Coolidge and Aubrey Plaza are among the whopping five nominees from the show in the single category of best supporting actress.

"Ted Lasso" was tops among comedies with 21 nominations, including best comedy series, and best actor for Jason Sudeikis. The Apple TV+ series won both awards for each of its first two seasons.

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

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

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

To give one example, the 13 nominations for Hulu's "The Bear" are for its first season, even though the awards will be handed out six months after its second season dropped.

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

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

The delay is the first time the Emmys have been postponed since 2001, when the 9/11 attacks came just five days before the planned ceremony. That ceremony would end up being held in November.

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Timothee Chalamet in a scene from 'Wonka.' (AP)

Film

## Roald Dahl's daring is missing

# Chalamet charms in whimsical 'Wonka'

By Jake Coyle

The original 1971 "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" may have been a delicious dream, lined with trees of gumballs and fields of lollipops. But never has there been a more cautionary tale about the danger of too much of a good thing.

Magical as that Roald Dahl-scripted film was, it remains lodged in our imaginations less for its sugary goodness than the way darkness, satire and even mania ebb around its edges - flowing down that nightmarish watery tunnel and pooling somewhere in the back of Gene Wilder's eyes. Charlie Bucket and Grandpa Joe may bubble with laughter all the way up the ceiling, but there's a spinning metal blade up there.

"Wonka," the latest attempt to revisit Dahl's masterpiece, bears no such danger. It's going more for the taste of an Everlasting Gobstopper - an ingenious confection that piles flavor on top of flavor. Tasty though that can be, you miss the daring of Dahl in the more wanly whimsical "Wonka."

Still, the movie has two big things going for it: the charisma of its winning star, Timothee Chalamet, and the dazzling designs of its director, Paul King, the don of "Paddington." To a large degree, King has applied much of the formula that defined "Paddington" - and that "Godfather Part II" of sequels, "Paddington 2" - to a Wonka origin story that populates a delightfully detailed world with a delightful array of supporting characters (many of whom are "Paddington" veterans). Did I say it's delightful?

Yet it's that strain to delight that keeps "Wonka" from achieving liftoff. King's film is lively but too neutered to do Dahl justice; congenial but not clever enough to match the giddy joy of "Paddington 2." If Tim Burton's 2005 film, with Johnny Depp giving Wonka a Michael Jackson spin, leaned into creepiness, "Wonka" goes the opposite direction.

And you might fairly wonder: What's so wrong that? Who doesn't want a cynicism-free, candy-colored charm overload? "Wonka" may be too much of a good thing, but for many (particularly kids) it

will surely, well, delight. Even for a movie predicated on retooling IP, "Wonka" comes across as remarkably sincere in its feel-good aspirations.

In the film's opening scenes, Willy (Chalamet) breezes into a frigid, unnamed European-styled city, singing "I've got nothing to offer but my chocolate and a hatful of dreams." He arrives like a too-confident traveling salesman, eager to sell his chocolate to the world.

Immediately fleeced of his few coins, Willy sets down on a bench for the night and pulls a candle out of his hat that he lights with a gentle blow. He's offered a bed for the night at an inn. There, the innkeeper Mrs. Scrubit (Olivia Colman) and her henchman Bleacher (Tom Davis) trap needy drifters into years of indentured labor with elaborate contracts.

## Imagination

This Wonka can't read, a twist that I doubt Dahl would have endorsed, given how much, for him, reading and imagination were intertwined. Before Willy has even gotten started, he finds himself imprisoned with a handful of other similarly misfortunate souls, including the young Noodle (a very natural Calah Lane).

But inspired by his late mother (Sally Hawkins, seen in tender childhood flashbacks), Willy isn't much daunted in his dream to open a shop alongside other candy makers in the Galeries Gourmet. He manages to escape repeatedly to dazzle customers with chocolates of exotic ingredients before slipping through manhole covers to make a getaway, like Harry Lime in "The Third Man."

Sensing the potential power of Wonka's enchanting chocolates (some cause levitation), the monopolizing local chocolatiers - Slugworth (Paterson Joseph), Prodnose (Matt Lucas) and Fickelgruber (Mathew Baynton) - band together to squash Willy with the aid of a chocolate-addicted police chief (Keegan-Michael Key), whose waistline expands throughout the film.

That bit, like most others in the film, doesn't quite land despite the good cheer it's delivered with.

"Wonka" assembles a wide array of top-notch comic actors - not only Key and Colman but Hugh Grant as an Oompa Loompa; Simon Farnaby (who co-wrote the script with King) as a security guard, mirroring his "Paddington 2" cameo; and Rowan Atkinson as a corrupt priest.

But most of the jokes in "Wonka" are as memorable as its songs. The gag of Grant, the "Paddington 2" MVP, smothered in orange makeup and green hair as a proudly debonair Oompa Loompa, is never quite as clever as the movie thinks it is. (On the press trail for the film, Grant has been 10 times funnier.)

Neil Hannon's songs are generic, but Chalamet sings them well. When a few notes from Leslie Briscusse and Anthony Newley's "Pure Imagination" float by, they only serve as a reminder to how much better the tunes were in the original.

I may be being too hard on "Wonka." This is an eminently pleasant movie, propped up by its indefatigable good cheer and King's immaculately tidy craftsmanship. The costumes (Lindy Hemming), cinematography (Chung-hoon Chung) and, in particular, the ingenious production design (Nathan Crowley) craft a wonder-filled backdrop. A film doesn't need scenery this good for Chalamet to carry it. His Wonka is simpler and brighter than Wilder's, more a figure of pure optimism, like Paddington.

But we've also had some exemplary Dahl adaptations lately that didn't forget that worlds of imagination come alive when the cruelties of life and of childhood aren't just paid lip service. (Veruca Salt or Mike Teavee, for instance, wouldn't fit anywhere in "Wonka.") I'm thinking of Wes Anderson's inventive Dahl-adapted shorts, released this fall on Netflix, and Matthew Warchus' terrific "Matilda the Musical," from last year. "Wonka" is a more mixed addition: More tailored for kids yet less about childhood.

"Wonka," a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for "some violence, mild language and thematic elements." Running time: 116 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

HOUSTON, Texas: Beyoncé's childhood home caught fire early on Christmas morning, though the family living there escaped safely.

The fire was reported at about 2 a.m. Monday and the Houston Fire Department arrived on the scene of the two-story brick house within three to five minutes, the Houston Chronicle reported.

"We had it contained in about 10 minutes," Houston Fire Department District Chief Justin Barnes told the newspaper.

Beyoncé Knowles' family bought the home on the 2400 block of Rosedale in 1982 and Beyoncé lived there until she was 5 years old. She was seen taking photos of the property when she was in her hometown for her Renaissance World Tour.

The home in the historic Riverside Terrace neighborhood was built in 1946.

A messages sent to Beyoncé's publicist was not immediately returned late Monday.

The cause of the blaze was under investigation. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Kamar de los Reyes, a television, movie and voice actor best known for playing a gang member-turned-cop in the soap "One Life to Live" and a villain in the video game "Call of Duty: Black Ops II," has died in Los Angeles at 56, the family announced.

De los Reyes died Sunday following a brief battle with cancer, according to a statement from Lisa Goldberg, a publicist for de los Reyes' wife, Sherri Saum.

In "One Life to Live," de los Reyes starred as Antonio Vega, a former gang member who became a lawyer and then a cop, alongside Saum. In the popular video game "Call of Duty: Black Ops II," he played the villain Raul Menendez. He also had roles in Fox's "Sleepy Hollow," ABC's "The Rookie" and CW's "All American."

The family statement said that at the time of his death, de los Reyes was filming "All American" - and had recently shot roles in Marvel's upcoming "Daredevil" series and Hulu's yet to be released "Washington Black," starring Sterling K. Brown.

De los Reyes was born in Puerto Rico and raised in Las Vegas. According to a biography provided by the family, he caught the bug for acting when he arrived

in Los Angeles in the late '80s. Early roles include playing Pedro Quinn in the 1994 off-Broadway play, "Blade to the Heat," and Ferdinand in director George C. Wolfe's production of "The Tempest" for Shakespeare in the Park. On the big screen, de los Reyes appeared in Oliver Stone's "Nixon," playing Watergate



Beyoncé



De los Reyes

burglar Eugenio Martinez, as a secret service agent in "Salt," with Angelina Jolie, and in "The Cell" with Jennifer Lopez. (AP)

KANSAS CITY, Mo.: Pop superstar Taylor Swift walked into Arrowhead Stadium alongside Santa Claus on Monday to watch

her boyfriend and Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce as they played the Las Vegas Raiders in a Christmas Day showdown.

Swift and Kelce have become one of the hottest celebrity couples in the world since they began dating early in the season, and the 12-time Grammy Award-winner has watched her boyfriend numerous

times at Arrowhead Stadium.

This time she showed up in a festive red shirt under a black jacket with St. Nick by her side.

Swift wasn't the only celebrity in Arrowhead Stadium on Monday. Iowa basketball star Caitlin Clark, the reigning AP women's player of the year, was on the sideline for pregame warmups. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2023

People & Places

Quotes

'From the heart'

Quotes summing up human story in 2023

NEW YORK, Dec 26, (AP): To feel 2023 is to listen closely and think on the words of awe, dread, anger, disconnect, loss - and yes, love - that flowed from people directly involved in the world's most recent turns of history.

To help tell the story, The Associated Press presents quotes from people around the world who shared their experiences, thoughts and insights. Some are universal and insightful, others intimate and specific and a few cases - looking at you, **Elon Musk** - may require a double take. In many instances, the sharing itself was an act of courage at a time when people are increasingly isolated.

Perhaps, they'll make you feel less alone as this year of war, chaos and beauty comes to a close.

"It's like hunger or thirst. It's a feeling the body sends us when something we need for survival is missing."

■ US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy in an interview with The Associated Press in May after his office reported that loneliness is an epidemic in the US that was dramatically worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organization says anxiety and depression increased by 25% globally since the outbreak the COVID-19 global crisis.

"Ten years of war and struggle. And it seems like the blood has only just begun to flow, truly. I regret nothing. But, God, it's just so tiresome."

■ Dmytro Riznychenko, a 41-year-old psychologist, walking through Kyiv's Independence Square in November as he considered an uprising that unleashed a decade of momentous change for Ukraine, eventually leading to the current war with Russia.

"I'm feeling the goosebumps, and it's a very happy moment ... You can see the energy. It's beyond words."

Celebrations

■ Shriini Singh as she watched the live broadcast of Indian spacecraft Chandrayaan-3 landing on the lunar surface, making India only the fourth country to achieve this milestone. The successful landing showcasing India's rising standing as a technology and space powerhouse sparked celebrations across India. Singh was speaking in New Delhi on Aug 23.

"We are the best actors in the world. We act like people. When really, we are other beings frozen in our acutely agonizing desolation."

■ Ibrahim Lubbad, a 30-year-old computer engineer arrested in Beit Lahiya in the Gaza Strip on Dec. 7 with a dozen other family members and held overnight. Israeli wartime roundups, in which people have been taken to a camp at an undisclosed location, nearly naked and with little water. The roundups revealed an emerging tactic in Israel's ground offensive in Gaza, experts say, as the military sought to solidify control in evacuated areas in the north and collect intelligence about Hamas operations.

"We are here all together, all the world together, to combat climate change and really, we're negotiating for what? We're negotiating for what in the middle of a genocide?"

■ Hadeel Ikhmais, a climate change expert with the Palestinian Authority, on Dec. 1 during the COP28 talks in Dubai. The Israeli offensive has killed more than 18,700 Palestinians as of the weekend of Dec. 16-17, the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory says.

"There will come a point where no job is needed. You can have a job if you wanted to have a job for personal satisfaction. But the AI would be able to do everything ... One of the challenges in the future will be how do we find meaning in life."

■ Tesla CEO Elon Musk on AI, in conversation Nov. 20 with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

"They told me that this country was different. But for me, it's been hell."

■ Karina Obando, 38, a mother from Ecuador who has been given until Jan. 5 to leave the former hotel in New York City where she has been staying with her two young children. She is one of thousands of migrant families in an emergency shelter system who has been ordered by the city to clear out, with winter setting in. Mayor Eric Adams says the order is necessary to relieve a shelter system overwhelmed by asylum-seekers crossing the southern US border.

"What is most painful is that years after the brutalities and the stealing of our land, British companies are still in possession of our ancestral homes, earning millions from their comfortable headquarters in the UK, while our people remain squatters."

■ Joel Kimutai Kimetto, 74, speaking to the AP in a phone interview during King Charles III's visit to Kenya in October. Kimetto said his grandfather and father were kicked out of their ancestral home by the British.

"God gave me a new lease on life."

Devastated

■ Osama Abdel Hamid, weeping at a hospital in Idlib, Syria, after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake, the deadliest in decades, devastated his war-ravaged country and parts of Turkey Feb. 6. He said most of his neighbors died when their shared four-story building collapsed. As he fled with his wife and three children, a wooden door fell on them, shielding them from falling debris.

"We did not die from hunger or the earthquake, but we will die freezing from the cold. It shouldn't be this way. No one is sending help."

■ Commander of the 11th National Guard Brigade's anti-drone unit who is known on the battlefield as Boxer, voicing discontent among Ukrainian soldiers - once extremely rare and expressed only in private. He was speaking about Ukraine's attacks against well-armed Russian troops on the other side of the Dnieper River in the southern city of Kherson. Soldiers are asking why these difficult amphibious operations were not launched months ago in warmer weather.

"This is probably the most uniquely horrible choice I've had in my life."

■ Andrew Collins, 35, an independent from Windham, Maine, on the likely showdown in next year's election between political foes men who each have served one term as president, Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden. Collins participated a poll this month from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, in which American voters made clear how less than jazzed they are about such a rematch in 2024.

"It is amazing to see this huge berg in person - it stretches as far as the eye can see."

■ Taylor Swift, Time's Person of the Year, describing the summer of 2023 being dominated culturally by her Eras tour, the Barbie movie and Beyoncé's blockbuster Renaissance Tour.



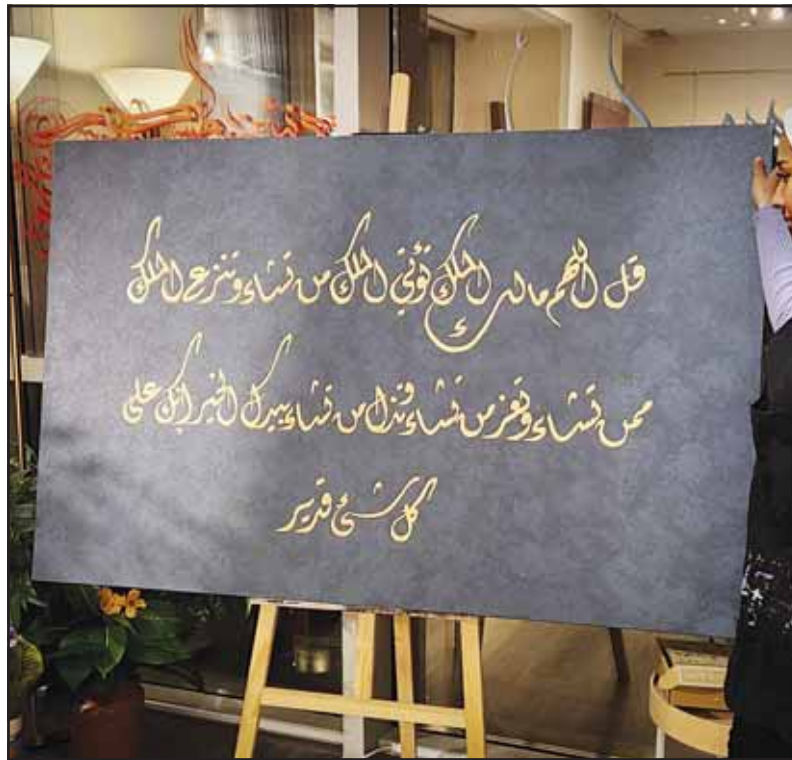
Musk



Japanese calligraphy in an artistic panel that combines writing and art.



Participation with the Sanabil script panel in the exhibition in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia 2023.



A written panel in Diwani script on gold paper.



The Arabized Japanese script is a fusion developed by calligraphers between Kanji script and Arabic letters.



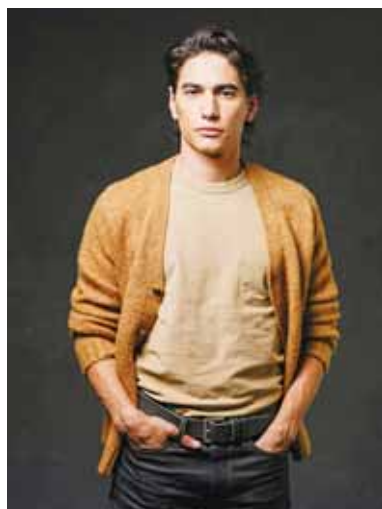
Writing on pottery in Arabized Shodo script.



Arabic and Japanese calligraphy share traditional bamboo pens and specific types of paper and ink.



The calligrapher developed the drawing of Arabic letters and blended them with Japanese writing.



Actor Enzo Vogrinic poses for a portrait to promote the film 'Society of the Snow' on Friday, Oct. 27, 2023, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: The return of "Night Court" and new music from the K-pop act TVXQ are some of the new television, movies and music headed to a device near you.

Also among the streaming offerings worth your time as selected by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists are a true crime story on Max, a new version of "America's Got Talent" and a streaming guide to the year's best films.

■ As the year winds down, most of the movie action is in cinemas. But if you're not heading out to see "The Color Purple," "Poor Things" or "Ferrari," there's no better time to catch up on some of the year's best movies. Many of the films that made the top 10 lists of myself and AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr are available in various places to stream.

If you haven't caught up to "Barbie" or "Oppenheimer" yet, you can digitally rent Christopher Nolan's blockbuster biopic, while Greta Gerwig's pink-hued phenomenon is streaming on Max. Alexander Payne's masterfully melancholic "The Holdovers," starring Paul Giamatti, can be digitally rented also, as can Sofia Coppola's Priscilla Presley drama "Priscilla."

Art

Kuwaiti calligrapher celebrates harmony in writing

Arabic elegance meets Japanese artistry

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti calligrapher and Islamic arts researcher, Shaima Al-Azmi, affirmed the intrinsic artistry of calligraphy, highlighting the unique charm of Japanese calligraphy in particular. She described Japanese calligraphy as akin to an artistic painting, emphasizing the pleasure derived from the fusion of writing and art. Al-Azmi, in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), shared her journey of studying Japanese calligraphy, exploring its origins, and drawing parallels with Arabic calligraphy.

Al-Azmi, proficient in four Diwani scripts, including the Arabized Japanese script she developed, discussed her innovative approach of combining Arabic and Japanese calligraphy. Using traditional reed pens, specific papers, and inks, she showcased calligraphy models that seamlessly integrated both styles. Highlighting the distinct characteristics of Japanese calligraphy, which relies on brushes, and Arabic calligraphy, which uses pens, she envisioned a novel form of writing

that harmoniously blended these two cultural traditions.

The calligrapher delved into the intricacies of Japanese calligraphy, tracing its roots back to the fifth century AD and its exclusive association with high social classes in Japan. Al-Azmi explained the various schools and traditions within Japanese calligraphy, noting its unique tools, arts, and spiritual significance. She emphasized the meticulous rules and traditions governing Japanese calligraphy, such as writing on white paper fixed to velvet made of rice and using a reed stick and brush.

Creation

Discussing her creation of Arabized Japanese calligraphy, which she termed "Arabized Shodo," Al-Azmi outlined the fixed rules and foundations she established to facilitate its teaching and learning. She highlighted the challenges of connecting letters in Arabic calligraphy compared to Japanese, where characters are often written separately. Al-Azmi's innovation involved developing a script that harmoniously connected

letters while retaining the artistic essence of both Arabic and Japanese writing.

Exploring the Japanese script further, Al-Azmi discussed its division into three types: Kaishu with separate letters for official media, Gyushu with semi-connected letters for informal writings, and Soshu representing freehand and cursive letters. She noted the aesthetic appeal of Japanese letters as independent abstract paintings, while Arabic calligraphy, with its circular and oval shapes, allows for flexible design possibilities.

In conclusion, Al-Azmi celebrated the fusion of plastic art and the Japanese language from an artistic perspective. She highlighted the capacity of Arabic writing to acquire diverse geometric shapes through elongation, return, rotation, angle, interlocking, overlapping, and composition. Through her innovative exploration of the intersection between Arabic and Japanese calligraphy, Shaima Al-Azmi continues to contribute to the rich tapestry of artistic expression.



Coppola



Gerwig

"The Eight Mountains," a majestic epic of friendship, streaming on the Criterion Channel.

■ Twenty years ago, SM Entertainment boy band TVXQ helped usher in K-pop's second generation. By the end of first generation, lead by bubble gum pop like H.O.T.'s "Candy," TVXQ emerged with a new kind of charisma, producing soulful harmonies with global resonance and performances alongside Britney Spears. (AP)

## The Conversation

## Do you eat with your eyes, your gut or your brain?

## Expert urges to listen to your hunger during holidays

By Alex Johnson

Michigan State University

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

□ □ □

The holiday season is here, and with it, opportunities to indulge in festive treats. The proverbial saying "you eat with your eyes first" seems particularly relevant at this time of year.

The science behind eating behavior, however, reveals that the process of deciding what, when and how much to eat is far more complex than just consuming calories when your body needs fuel. Hunger cues are only part of why people choose to eat. As a scientist interested in the psychology and biology that drives eating behavior, I'm fascinated with how the brain's experiences with food shape eating decisions.

So how do people decide when to eat?

Food-related visual cues can shape feeding behaviors in both people and animals. For example, wrapping food in McDonald's packaging is sufficient to enhance taste preferences across a range of foods - from chicken nuggets to carrots - in young children. Visual food-related cues, such as presenting a light when food is delivered, can also promote over-eating behaviors in animals by overriding energy needs.

In fact, a whole host of sensory stimuli - noises, smells and textures - can be associated with the pleasurable consequences of eating and influence food-related decisions. This is why hearing a catchy radio jingle for a food brand, seeing a television ad for a restaurant or walking by your favorite eatery can shape your decision to consume and sometimes overindulge.

However, your capacity to learn about food-related cues extends beyond just stimuli from the outside world and includes the internal milieu of your body. In other words, you also tend to eat with your stomach in mind, and you do so by using the same learning and brain mechanisms involved in processing food-related stimuli from the outside world.

## Feelings

These internal signals, also called interoceptive cues, include feelings of hunger and fullness emanating from your gastrointestinal tract.

It's no surprise that the signals from your gut help set the stage for when to eat, but the role these signals play is more profound than you might expect.

Feelings of hunger or fullness act as important interoceptive cues influencing your decision-making around food.

To examine how interoceptive states shape eating behaviors, researchers trained laboratory rats to associate feelings of hunger or satiety with whether they receive food or not. They did this by giving rats food only when they were hungry or full, such that the rats were forced to recognize those internal cues to calculate whether food would be available or not. If a rat is trained to expect food only when hungry, it would generally avoid the area where food is available when it feels full because it does not expect to be fed.

However, when rats were injected with a hormone that triggers hunger called ghrelin, they approached the food delivery location more frequently. This suggests that the rats used this

artificial state of hunger as an interoceptive cue to predict food delivery and subsequently behaved like they expected food.

Interoceptive states are sufficient to shape feeding behaviors even in the absence of external sensory cues. One particularly striking example comes from mice that have been genetically engineered to be unable to taste food but nevertheless show preferences for specific foods solely by caloric content. In other words, rodents can use internal cues to shape their food-related decision-making, including when and where to eat and which foods they prefer.

These findings also suggest that feelings of hunger and the detection of nutrients is not restricted to the stomach. They also involve areas of the brain important for regulation and homeostasis, such as the lateral hypothalamus, as well as centers of the brain involved in learning and memory, such as the hippocampus.

The gut-brain axis, or the biochemical connection between your gut and your brain, shapes feeding behaviors in many ways. One of them involves the vagus nerve, a cranial nerve that helps control the digestive tract, among other things.

The vagus nerve rapidly communicates nutrient information to the brain. Activating the vagus nerve can induce a pleasurable state, such that mice will voluntarily perform a behavior, such as poking their nose through an open port, to stimulate their vagus nerve. Importantly, mice also learn to prefer foods and places where vagal nerve stimulation occurred.

## Stimulation

The vagus nerve plays an essential role in not only communicating digestive signals but also an array of other interoceptive signals that can affect how you feel and behave. In people, vagal nerve stimulation can improve learning and memory and can be used to treat major depression.

Your body's capacity to use both external and internal cues to regulate how you learn and make decisions about food highlights the impressive processes involved in how you regulate your energy needs.

Poor interoceptive awareness is associated with a range of dysfunctional feeding behaviors, such as eating disorders. For instance, anorexia may result when interoceptive signals, such as feelings of hunger, are unable to trigger the motivation to eat. Alternatively, the inability to use the feeling of fullness to dampen the rewarding and pleasurable consequences of eating palatable food could result in binge eating.

Your interoceptive signals play an important role in regulating your daily eating patterns. During the holidays, many stressors from the outside world surround eating, such as packed social calendars, pressures to conform and feelings of guilt when overindulging. At this time, it is particularly important to cultivate a strong connection to your interoceptive signals. This can help promote intuitive eating and a more holistic approach to your dietary habits. Rather than fixating on external factors and placing conditions on your eating behavior, enjoy the moment, deliberately savor each bite and provide time for your interoceptive signals to function in the role they are designed to play.

Your brain evolved to sense your current energy needs. By integrating these signals with your experience of your food environment, you can both optimize your energetic needs and enjoy the season. (AP)

## How gratitude shapes human connections

## Giving thanks is not just a holiday tradition ... it's part of human DNA



Juanita Mengel holds her cat Lola-Pearl in her home in Amanda, Ohio on Monday, Dec. 11. They visit hospitals, nursing homes and even amputee support groups to aid in therapy and other activities to improve well-being in communities. (AP)

## Duo shares amputee journey

## Woman and her prosthetic cat touch lives as therapy partners

TROY, Ohio, Dec 26, (AP) - Each morning when she wakes up, Juanita Mengel removes the silicone liner of her prosthetic leg out from under a heated blanket so that the metal parts of the artificial limb don't feel as cold on her skin when she straps the pieces together.

The 67-year-old Amanda, Ohio, resident then does the same for her 5-year-old dilute tortoiseshell cat, Lola-Pearl, who is missing her left hind leg.

The duo is one of an estimated 200 therapy cat teams registered in the US through Pet Partners. The nonprofit sets up owners and their pets as volunteer teams providing animal-assisted interventions, where they might visit hospitals, nursing homes or schools to aid in therapy and other activities to improve well-being in communities.

## Therapy

"A therapy animal is an animal who's been assessed based on their ability to meet new people and not just tolerate the interaction, but actively enjoy it," said Taylor Chastain Griffin, the national director of animal-assisted interventions advancement at the organization.

Pet Partners registers nine different species as therapy animals: dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, birds, mini pigs, and llamas and alpacas.

As part of her research, Chastain Griffin studies the impact of therapy cats and argues more research needs to be done. There's abundant research on other therapy animals like dogs, she said, but there's often a "shock factor" involved with therapy cats because many don't know they exist.

"They go into a setting and people are like, 'Whoa, there's a cat on a leash. What's happening?'" Chastain Griffin said. "It kind of inspires people to connect in a way we haven't traditionally heard talked about in other therapy animal interventions."

Mengel said she knew Lola-Pearl would be a good therapy cat after she brought her on a

whim to an amputee coalition conference about a month after she adopted the domestic shorthair.

"She was so good with people I just knew she would be a good therapy cat," Mengel said. "People really were attracted to her, too."

During a recent visit to a limb loss support group meeting, Mengel pushed Lola-Pearl around in a stroller - labeled "Therapy Cat" - so attendees could pet the kitty as she woke up from a nap.

Whether she was sitting in the stroller, walking in between participants' legs or cuddling on their laps, Lola-Pearl brought a smile to whoever she decided was worthy of her attention in that moment.

"She's very intuitive of people," Mengel said. Lola-Pearl isn't the only cat in Mengel's life; the former traveling nurse who lost her left leg in 2006 after years of surgeries following a near-fatal car accident is a mother to seven felines, most of which have disabilities.

## Heal

"They find you, you don't find them," she said. Lola-Pearl was found at only a few weeks old with her back legs completely twisted together. She was unable to walk and brought to a friend of Mengel's at an animal shelter in Missouri, where veterinarians could not help her. The shelter found specialists in Iowa who were able to splint Lola-Pearl's legs as an attempt to save them, but they decided her left hind leg needed to be amputated.

Meanwhile, Mengel had been in talks with her friend in Missouri about adopting the cat, and after Lola-Pearl healed from surgery, Mengel officially adopted her.

Despite the obstacles Mengel has been through, she exudes a spirit of gratitude for Lola-Pearl and for the work they do together.

"It's a really rewarding experience," she said, "I get just as much out of it as the people that I visit."

NEW YORK, Dec 26, (AP) - It's the season of giving thanks - and it turns out humans have been doing it for a long, long time.

As more researchers dig into the science of gratitude, they've found the feeling likely played a key role in helping our ancestors band together and survive.

That legacy continues today, as being in the mood for gratitude shapes who we are as a species and how we connect with the people around us.

"This is something that is part of our human DNA," said Sarah Schnitker, a psychologist at Baylor University. "It is a glue, in a sense, that holds us together."

Humans are social animals. That's how we've lasted so long; not by being the biggest or the strongest, but by figuring out how to work together.

A key part of building relationships is the idea of reciprocity: "If you like me and do nice things for me, then I like you and do nice things for you," said Michael Tomasello, a developmental psychologist at Duke University.

The animal kingdom has some parallel give-and-take behaviors, said Malini Suchak, an animal behavior researcher at Canisius University. In experiments with capuchin monkeys and chimpanzees, Suchak found the primates became more willing to help out a partner if that individual had helped them in the past.

Some scientists think the feeling of gratitude evolved to keep the helping exchanges going. In other words, if you were helped, you'd feel like you should repay the debt with a good deed in return, said Jenae Nelson, who researches gratitude at Baylor and Harvard universities.

## Society

"This give and take - this is very, very primal and very important to a cooperative society," Nelson said. "Otherwise, you just get a culture of takers."

In animals and in humans, these aren't always one-to-one transactions. Sometimes, an ape that gets groomed by another will later back that partner up in a fight, Suchak said, showing that reciprocity might not be about keeping exact scores, but forming broader emotional ties.

Though we can't "speak chimp" well enough to know if they're actually saying thanks, Suchak added, it makes sense that some form of this social debt showed up early in our lineage.

"It didn't just pop out of nowhere when humans evolved," Suchak said. Thousands of years later, gratitude has taken root in humans.

Studies have found gratitude may show up in a few spots in our genes and brains - including ones linked to social bonding, feeling reward and seeing other people's point of view.

And the feeling emerges early on: Children as young as 2 and 3 demonstrate they want to return favors, said Amrisha Vaish, who studies moral development at the University of Virginia. At age 4, children also show a tendency to "pay it forward," she added.

In a study, Vaish found that when kids got help completing a task - in this case, finding a key to unlock a box of stickers - they were more likely to share their sticker reward with a new person.

It's that kind of behavior that shows gratitude is more than simple exchange, Schnitker said. It can make us more generous with other people in general - even if they didn't help us first.

Giving thanks might be good for you, too: A 2016 study found that people who wrote letters of gratitude reported better mental health and saw changes in their brain activity - even months down the line.

But Nelson pointed out that recognizing the giver, not just the gift, is key.

So, if Thanksgiving has you in a mood for gratitude, she suggested focusing on thanking the people in your life, rather than just making "gratitude lists" of the stuff you have. This is more in line with why the feeling evolved in the first place, she said.

"It's not just about stuff and materialism," Nelson said. "It's about relationships, and the things that people do for you, and then the things that you can in turn do back for other people."

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# Knicks snap Bucks 7-game winning streak

Celtics defeat Lakers for first time in Christmas Day meeting



Philadelphia 76ers guard Tyrese Maxey (0) shoots as Miami Heat forward Kevin Love, guard Tyler Herro (14) and forward Caleb Martin (16) defend during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Dec. 25, 2023, in Miami. (AP)

## Cody leads Tigers to the Cotton Bowl

# Schrader goes from D-II star to folk hero

COLUMBIA, Mo., Dec 26, (AP): There were very few people willing to wager that Missouri would be playing in a New Year's Six bowl game this season.

Still fewer probably bet that Cody Schrader would someday be an All-American running back.

He received precisely zero Division I scholarship offers coming out of Lutheran South High School in St. Louis, and wound up at Truman State. The Division II school about a three-hour drive from home is known just as much for its accounting school and renowned women's swimming and diving program as it is for the Bulldogs football team.

Schrader never stopped believing in his ability, though. After leading Division II with 2,074 yards rushing two years ago, he bet on himself by entering the trans-

fer portal, and ultimately agreeing to an invitation to walk on at Missouri.

Tigers coach Eli Drinkwitz never met Schrader until he stepped on campus.

Two years later, Schrader not only has taken over the starting job but etched his name in Missouri lore. He ran for 1,625 yards and 13 touchdowns, highlighted by a record-setting day against Tennessee. He led the Tigers to a 10-2 record and a spot opposite perennial heavyweight Ohio State in the Cotton Bowl on Friday.

"It's a dream come true for me and this team," Schrader admitted.

The 5-foot-8 bowling ball of a running back is exactly the kind of dream - the kind of lightning-in-a-bottle success story - that programs such as Missouri rely upon to compete against college football's powerhouses.

Sure, the Tigers have recruited better under Drinkwitz than they have in years, land-

ing five-star prospects such as Luther Burden III, who was among the nation's leading receivers this season. They still lag far behind programs such as Alabama, Georgia and, yes, Ohio State, when it comes to reeling in top prospects from high school and the portal.

Yet players such as Schrader, who are willing to work harder and longer and suffer more than most other players, can bridge that gap between good and great. While the Buckeyes have pro prospects galore - wide receivers Marvin Harrison Jr. and Emeka Egbuka, defensive ends J.T. Tuimolou and Jack Sawyer and defensive tackle Mike Hall Jr. could all be first-round picks in the April draft - the Tigers counter with players every bit as capable who have overachieved to reach that point.

"I'm sure we're going to be a big underdog in the game. I'm sure people are going to write us off," Drinkwitz acknowledged. "I don't love it but I embrace it if it is what it is."

Sort of like how Schrader, who won the Burlsworth Trophy awarded to the nation's top former walk-on, embraced the underdog mentality to rise from Division II afterthought to national sensation.

Drinkwitz certainly learned his name by the time Schrader methodi-

## FOOTBALL

cally passed Stanford transfer Nathaniel Peat on the depth chart last year, helping the Tigers to a 6-6 record and a spot in the Gasparilla Bowl. And the rest of the nation likely learned his name when the Tigers faced Tennessee in a revenge game for a whipping they took last season.

Schrader piled up 207 yards rushing and 116 yards receiving to become one of 10 players at college football's highest level to reach 200 and 100 in the same game. He was just the second to do it against a ranked opponent, helping the Tigers to a 36-7 rout of the Vols, and his total yards from scrimmage were just shy of Devin West's school record.

That was part of a stretch of five straight games to finish the regular season in which Schrader topped 100 yards rushing. He had 217 in their finale against border rival Arkansas to help the Tigers clinch a New Year's Six bowl game, and he will take a nine-game streak of reaching the end zone into the showdown with the Buckeyes.

In the Cotton Bowl. At Cowboys Stadium. Before a national TV audience.

That's a long way from the America's Crossroads Bowl, the annual Division II game that Truman State played in a couple of years ago, when Schrader ran for 219 yards in a win over Hillsdale College at a high school stadium in Hobart, Indiana.

"It's extremely special," Schrader said, "and nobody wanted to be (with the Tigers) on the outside before the season, right? I think this brotherhood, the culture we've built with the guys in this room - it's cool that people might want to transfer here, that other people might want to be a part of it. But my question to a lot of people is: Where were you guys at the start of the year?"

**NEW YORK, Dec 26, (AP): The Bucks hadn't just been beating them, they were beating them easily.**

So in front of a sold-out home crowd and a national TV audience, the New York Knicks used the Christmas stage to make their stand against Milwaukee.

Jalen Brunson scored 38 points and the Knicks snapped Milwaukee's seven-game winning streak, ending their lengthy skid against the Bucks with a 129-122 victory Monday.

The Knicks had dropped nine straight meetings, including a 130-111 loss on Saturday in the opener of this two-game series. The Bucks had routed New York twice while rolling through their December schedule, but they haven't solved Brunson all season, and the point guard got plenty of help from his teammates this time.

Julius Randle added 24 points and nine rebounds, RJ Barrett bounced back from a poor game Saturday with 21 points and Quickley came off the bench for 20.

Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard each scored 32 points for the Bucks, who fell to 9-2 this month. Khris Middleton added 24.

The Bucks rang up 146 points against the Knicks in the quarterfinals of the In-Season Tournament on Dec. 5 and didn't cool off much Saturday. But they seemed short on energy Monday in the middle of an extended Christmas stay in New York, with still another game remaining in the city when they visit Brooklyn on Wednesday.

Milwaukee came in averaging 132.4 points in December but couldn't even break 40 until there were less than four minutes remaining in the first half. The Bucks trailed by 16 with 4 1/2 minutes remaining in the game before a late flurry that made the score closer than the game felt.

Brunson went 15 for 28 from the field, following up games of 45 and 36 points against the Bucks this season. Isaiah Hartenstein had 11 points and eight rebounds, and Josh Hart came off the bench for 10 points and nine rebounds.

Antetokounmpo had 13 rebounds and six assists, but the Bucks fell to 3-3 in their sixth straight Christmas appearance.

The overhead video board incorrectly listed his brother Thanasis as the starter when lineups were announced, but Giannis quickly reminded everyone who he is, slamming down a lob pass on the opening possession and then making a jumper on the next trip. But Brunson was the best player on the floor the remainder of the period, scoring 15 points to spark the Knicks to a 36-27 lead after one - the same lead the Bucks had Saturday.

Lillard tried to help the Bucks chip away at a 13-point deficit in the second but didn't get much help, with Middleton going 1 for 7 and Antetokounmpo 1 for 6. Randle's 3-pointer made it 62-51 at the break.

Milwaukee cut it to 77-73 midway through the third quarter, but Hart had a good burst of three straight Knicks baskets later in the period as New York pushed it back to 98-87 after three.

## Celtics 126, Lakers 115

In Los Angeles, Kristaps Porzingis had 28 points and 11 rebounds, Jayson Tatum added 25 points and Boston defeated Los Angeles for the first time in a Christmas Day meeting.

Jaylen Brown had 19 points and Derrick White chipped in with 18 points and 11 rebounds. All five starters had at least 18 points for the Celtics, who have won three straight and 12 of their past 14.

Anthony Davis scored a game-high 40 points with 13 rebounds, LeBron James had 16 points, nine rebounds and eight assists, but the Lakers have dropped six of eight since winning the inaugural In-Season Tournament.

Boston successfully kept Los Angeles at arm's length in the final quarter, despite Davis hitting the 40-point mark for the 40th time in a regular season game.

## Mavericks 128, Suns 114

In Phoenix, Luka Doncic scored 50 points to eclipse 10,000 for his career and had 14 assists, lifting Dallas to the win over Phoenix.

Doncic capped a Christmas Day full of NBA games with a stellar performance, hitting 8 of 16 from 3 and all 12 of his free throws. He eclipsed 10,000 career points in the first quarter to reach the milestone in 358 career games, seventh fastest in NBA history.

Dereck Lively II had 20 points and 10 rebounds after missing the previous four games with an ankle sprain and Tim Hardaway Jr. added 18 points.

## BASKETBALL

Phoenix's Grayson Allen scored 19 of his 32 points in the third quarter to help the Suns rally from a 15-point deficit. Chimezie Metu added 23 points and a career-high 19 rebounds.

## Heat 119, 76ers 113

In Miami, rookie Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 31 points and got his first double-double, Bam Adebayo finished with 26 points and 15 rebounds and Miami held on to beat Philadelphia.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra improved to 9-0 on Christmas, the best record in NBA history for head coaches on the holiday.

Tyler Herro scored 22 points, Duncan Robinson added 16 and Kyle Lowry had 12 for the Heat in what became his first Christmas win. Jaquez also grabbed 10 rebounds for Miami, which held a 56-36 edge on the boards.

Reigning MVP and two-time defending scoring champion Joel Embiid missed the game for Philadelphia because of an ankle sprain. Tobias Harris scored 27 points for the 76ers, and Kelly Oubre Jr. added 25. Mo Bamba scored 18, De'Anthony Melton had 15 and Tyrese Maxey - who shot 4 for 20 from the floor - finished with 12.

## Nuggets 120, Warriors 114

In Denver, Jamal Murray scored 28 points, Nikola Jokic overcame an off day from the field by going 18 of 18 from the free throw line and Denver extended its winning streak to five games by holding off Golden State.

Jokic finished with 26 points despite going 4 of 12 from the floor. He also had 14 rebounds and eight assists.

It was a back-and-forth game that featured nine lead changes in the second half.

Andrew Wiggins gave the Warriors a boost by scoring 22 points as he returned to the floor after missing two games with an illness. Stephen Curry took a bit to warm up, not scoring until midway through the second quarter, but heated up late to finish with 18 points.



Dallas Mavericks guard Luka Doncic (77) shoots over Phoenix Suns guard Eric Gordon (23) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Dec. 25, 2023, in Phoenix. (AP)

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## Dagaz secures a spot in the semi-finals

## Syria's Hazem stuns top seed Hassan in Arab Tennis Championship

DOHA, Dec 26: In a surprising turn of events at the Third Arab Elite Tennis Championship hosted by Qatar, Syrian player Mohamed Hazem emerged victorious over the top-seeded Benjamin Hassan from Lebanon in a thrilling quarter-final match. Hazem secured the win in two sets, 7-6, 6-2, at the Khalifa International Tennis Complex in Doha.

Now advancing to the semi-finals, Hazem is set to face Egyptian contender Mohamed Safwat in a highly anticipated match scheduled for today.

Tunisian player Mohamed Aziz Dagaz secured a spot in the semi-finals by defeating Egyptian Karim Mamoun with a decisive 6-2, 6-3 victory. He will face Lebanese player Hadi Habib, who, in turn, overcame Moroccan Yassin Al-Dulaimi in straight sets 7-5, 6-2.

## TENNIS

Speaking on the tournament, Mohamed Safwat emphasized the pivotal role played by the Arab Federation in elevating Arab tennis to new heights. He acknowledged the championship's contribution to enhancing the game's level and fostering enthusiasm among emerging Arab players.

Walid Sami, Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab Tennis Federation and Secretary-General of the Egyptian Tennis Federation, expressed satisfaction with the tournament's success. He stated that Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber, heading the Arab Tennis Federation, aims to continue organizing the championship in the coming years, ensuring its regular occurrence. Sami commended the collabora-



A player returns a shot to an opponent during the singles match at Arab Elite Tennis Championship.

tive efforts of the Qatari Federation in successfully organizing the event and extended gratitude to sponsors,

including the main sponsor Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait and KGL Company, for their support.

## Florida State turns to No. 3 QB, Tate 'opts' out for Orange Bowl

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Dec 26, (AP): Florida State quarterback Tate Rodemaker will not play in the Orange Bowl and Brock Glenn will start against Georgia on Saturday, the Seminoles said Monday.

Earlier in the day, 247Sports and The Athletic reported Rodemaker intends to enter the transfer portal.

Rodemaker participated in open practices leading up to the Christmas break. The Seminoles (13-0) arrived in Fort Lauderdale on Christmas night to begin final preparations for the match-up with Georgia (12-1) and Florida State coach Mike Norvell spoke of Glenn's looming start after getting off the plane.

Glenn also started the ACC championship game for Florida State.

"Definitely excited to see him take the step from his first start to his second start," Norvell said. "A lot of confidence in what he'll be able to do, what he'll be able to accomplish. It's part of the new age of college athletics. I know Brock is going to be fired up and excited for the opportunity that he has."

## FOOTBALL

A redshirt junior quarterback, Rodemaker stepped in for injured Jordan Travis on Nov. 18 to guide Florida State to a win over North Alabama. A week later, he led Florida State to a victory at Florida. In 2023, Rodemaker completed 32 of 56 passes for 510 yards with five touchdowns and no interceptions.

## Excitement and drama in Zain Premier League

Seven red cards issued in the 11th round

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26: Al-Kuwait surged ahead in the Zain Premier League, securing a commanding lead with 26 points after the eleventh round, courtesy of a spectacular six-goal performance against Kazma. This propelled Al-Abyad ahead of Al-Arabi, who held the lead three rounds ago, with a goal difference. Al-Qadsia closely pursued in third place, trailing by just one point.

## SOCCER

The latest round unfolded as the most thrilling, featuring unprecedented events and a flurry of cards. Referees brandished the red card seven times, with notable expulsions including Daniel Gebula and Aziz Nassari of Nigerian Al-Qadsia during the match against Al-Jahra. The clash between Al-Arabi and Al-Shabab witnessed the dismissals of Hamad Al-Qallaf and Moroccan player Walid Sabbar from Al-Arabi, along with Al-Shabab's Mohammed Al-Qabandi. Al-Nasr's Hansel Zapata and Salman Bormia faced ejections against Al-Salmiya, while Al-Fahaheel's Majeed Al-Anzi also saw the red card.

The Al-Arabi match not only featured expulsions but also unusual incidents, including player contact and an attack on the refereeing team in the Al-Nasr and Al-Salmiya match.

## KUNA 'rouths' PIFSS in the futsal league

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26, (KUNA): In the Ministries and public entities futsal league match at Kazma Sports Club, Kuwait News Agency's (KUNA) futsal team secured a 4-0 victory against the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS). The league commenced on Tuesday, featuring group B with participating teams including KUNA, Kuwait National Guard (KNG), PIFSS, Kuwait University (KU), and the Ministry of Education.

In a remarkable turnaround, Al-Kuwait, under the guidance of Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul, achieved the highest result of the season, surpassing their previous triumph over Kazma. Al-Abyad's 5-2 victory sent a clear message to rivals that relinquishing the title would not be an easy task.

Al-Arabi faced a tough challenge against Al-Shabab, securing a late goal in stoppage time to clinch three crucial points, irrespective of the performance level. Al-Qadsia also struggled but secured victory in the dying moments, emphasizing the importance of timing.

While Al-Nasr maintained its fourth position with 17 points, refusing to concede to Al-Salmiya, who remained in fifth place with 15 points, other teams faced setbacks. Kazma continued its decline with 13 points, while Al-Fahaheel's 1-0 win against Khaitan elevated them to seventh place with 12 points, distancing them from the danger zone. Al-Shabab dropped to eighth place with 11 points, consistently losing ground. Al-Jahra, with only two points, faced imminent relegation after suffering its ninth defeat.



Ahmed Dashti celebrates with his titles.

## Dashti, Mabrouk win doubles title in Egypt

Ahmed Dashti, the Kuwaiti player, secured the top spot in the men's doubles category at the Egyptian Open for Pioneer Tennis Championship in Cairo. Paired with Egyptian champion Moataz Mabrouk, Dashti triumphed at the Al-Jazira Club courts.

Remarkably, Dashti, who funded his own participation in the tournament, showcased his skills in a stellar match. The duo claimed victory over the

holders of the recent third Arab Tennis Championship in Jordan, Mustafa Bahnasi and Ahmed Al-Qarsh.

This accomplishment solidifies Dashti's standing in Egypt as he clinched the first position in the

doubles category, adding to his success in winning two different categories. Additionally, he secured a commendable third place in the singles category, further showcasing his prowess on the tennis court.

## Labuschagne notches a gritty score of 44

## Australia reach 187-3 after rain-interrupted 1st day

MELBOURNE, Australia, Dec 26, (AP): Marnus Labuschagne notched a gritty score of 44 not out to guide Australia through a rain-interrupted first day of play in the second test against Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday.

Invited to bat first by Pakistan captain Shan Masood, who won the toss in overcast conditions, Australia reached 187-3 at stumps.

Pakistan squandered a golden opportunity to put Australia on the back foot early, allowing openers David Warner (38 off 83 balls) and Usman Khawaja (42 off 101) to share a 90-run partnership on a pitch offering sideways movement for the seamers.

Warner, in his penultimate test, played a loose shot outside off stump on 38 in the final over before lunch and was caught at slip off the bowling of spinner Agha Salman.

The 37-year-old Warner, who scored 164 in the first test in Perth, was lucky to reach double figures Tuesday. Warner offered a regulation chance on 2 to first slip off the bowling of Shaheen Shah Afridi in the third over, but it was put down by Abdullah Shafique.

## CRICKET

Pakistan fast bowler Hasan Ali said the tourists had a "good day as a bowling unit."

"The best thing is we did not give them enough runs, so I think we are a bit ahead of them," Hasan said.

Unbeaten on 36 at lunch, Khawaja added six runs to his total before he guided a delivery from Hasan Ali to second slip at 108-2. Khawaja is the leading test run-scorer in 2023 with 1,210 runs at an average of 55.00.

Warner described Khawaja's run-scoring feats in 2023 as "phenomenal."

"Now he's just playing like every game is his last. He's going to play as long as he can," Warner said of his opening partner's roller-coaster career in and out of the test side.

"His last 12 months have been absolutely

phenomenal. He can play as long as he wants to and feels comfortable."

Rain interrupted play 37 minutes before the scheduled tea break, with Australia on 114-2 off 42.4 overs.

Play resumed almost three hours later, rewarding those fans among the first-day crowd of 62,167 at the MCG who had waited patiently for the rain to clear.

Steve Smith was given out LBW on 19 to the bowling of Afridi, but the former skipper successfully reviewed the decision as replays showed the ball was going over the stumps.

On 26, Smith was given not out following a caught-behind appeal from Aamir Jamal, but Pakistan successfully reviewed the decision as replays showed a faint edge.

Smith struck only two boundaries in his 75-ball knock, sharing a patient 46-run part-

nership with Labuschagne.

Travis Head was unbeaten on nine at stumps to join Labuschagne in the crease when play resumes Wednesday.

Australia named an unchanged side Tuesday and Pakistan made three changes. Wicketkeeper Sarfaraz Ahmed was replaced by Mohammad Rizwan and fast bowler Khuram Shahzad was ruled out due to a rib injury.

Medium-pacer Faheem Ashraf was dropped as Hasan Ali and Mir Hamza returned to the side.

The third test in the three-match series is scheduled to begin Jan. 3 at the Sydney Cricket Ground, where Pakistan won its last test in Australia nearly 30 years ago.

Australia won the first test in Perth last week by 360 runs.



Referee Ahmed Al-Ali issues a yellow card to Khaitan player Jassim Ateeq.



South Africa's bowler Kagiso Rabada celebrates after dismissing India's captain Rohit Sharma for 5 runs during the first day of the Test cricket match between South Africa and India, at Centurion Park, South Africa. (AP)



Australia's David Warner bats against Pakistan during their cricket test match in Melbourne. (AP)



Kuwait Olympic Committee headquarters

# Sports

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KOC defends rights of athletes

## Kuwait Olympic Committee challenges Minister's controversial move

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26: The Kuwait Olympic Committee has strongly criticized the decision of Muhammad Al-Aiban, the Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, to adopt the recommendation of the Ministerial Investigation Committee and the Board of Directors of the Public Sports Authority. The decision led to the cancellation of the declaration of several sports bodies affiliated with the General Assembly of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, citing a violation of Law No. 87 of 2017.

In a statement released yesterday, the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee expressed deep regret and sadness over the consequences of the ministerial decision. It deemed the decision a clear abuse against sports bodies and an injustice to a significant number of male and female players. The committee raised concerns that such actions might result in a paralysis of the Olympic and sports movement, depriving young athletes of their fundamental rights to engage in sports and represent Kuwait.

The statement outlined the following key points:

The decision by the Minister of Commerce and Industry and the Minister of State for Youth Affairs was considered vague and based on the recommendation of a committee, most of whose members were deemed non-neutral. The committee, formed by the Minister and including individuals from the General Sports Authority, was accused of attempting to control the Olympic sports movement through illegal and non-sporting interference. The Kuwait Olympic Committee highlighted that issuing such a decision violated the principles of the Olympic Charter and norms governing the matter, as it involved canceling the declaration of numerous sports bodies without seeking the opinion of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, some of which are members of its General Assembly.

The Kuwait Olympic Committee emphasized its commitment to its responsibilities, adherence to the Olympic Charter, international federations' regulations, and the law. It asserted that it would continue to recognize the members of its General Assembly from existing sports federations, specialized clubs, and their respective boards of directors.

The committee criticized ongoing actions and interventions by the Minister and the Director General of the General Sports Authority, considering them contrary to sports teamwork and the principle of cooperation necessary between the Kuwaiti Olympic Sports Movement and government agencies. The Kuwait Olympic Committee urged the Minister and the General Sports Authority to cooperate based on Olympic sporting principles, promoting the benefit of Kuwaiti sports and athletes, and avoiding actions that create sporting instability, especially in the lead-up to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

## Forest end 7-game winless streak



Nottingham Forest's Morgan Gibbs-White, right, and Newcastle United's Lewis Miley battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and Nottingham Forest at St. James' Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, England. (AP)

### Wood haunts former team Newcastle with hat trick

**NEWCASTLE, England, Dec 26, (AP): Chris Wood scored a hat trick against his former club as Nottingham Forest beat Newcastle 3-1 in the Premier League on Tuesday.**

Wood, who signed with Newcastle for £25 million (\$32 million) in January before joining Forest in the summer, took advantage of woeful defending at St. James' Park to help Forest end a seven-match winless league run and give new manager Nuno Espirito Santo his first victory.

#### SOCCER

Newcastle took a 23rd-minute lead through Alexander Isak's penalty but missed several opportunities to build on its advantage.

Forest then pulled even in first-half stoppage time when Morgan Gibbs-White sprinted upfield and played a ball to Anthony Elanga, who slid a pass which Wood easily tapped in.

After Gibbs-White sent a header wide in the opening moments of the second half, Wood ran onto a pass from Elanga, turned defender Dan Burn inside out and lifted a shot over Martin Dubavka to put Forest in front in the 53rd minute.

Forest then made it 3-1 seven minutes later when Murillo's through-ball split a ragged defence and Wood deftly stepped around the Dubavka to complete his hat trick.

Isak saw a 67th-minute shot deflected wide and Lewis Miley only just

missed the target two minutes later as Newcastle tried to scrap back into the game, but meeting both fierce resistance and devastating counter-punching, the damage was already done and

there was no way back.

The win lifts Forest up to 16th place while Newcastle's fourth defeat in five league games keep them seventh.



Australia's Steve Smith bats against Pakistan during their cricket Test match in Melbourne. Marnus Labuschagne notched a gritty score of 44 not out to guide Australia through a rain-interrupted first day of play in the second test against Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday. Invited to bat first by Pakistan captain Shan Masood, who won the toss in overcast conditions, Australia reached 187-3 at stumps. Pakistan squandered a golden opportunity to put Australia on the back foot early, allowing openers David Warner (38 off 83 balls) and Usman Khawaja (42 off 101) to share a 90-run partnership on a pitch offering sideways movement for the seamers. (AP)

### Deterrent action vowed

## KFA takes strong stand against 'assault' on referees in league

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 26: The Kuwait Football Association strongly condemned the incidents that unfolded during the matches between Al-Arabi and Al-Shabab, as well as Al-Nasr and Al-Salmiya, in the recent eleventh round of the Zain Premier League.

#### SOCCER

In an official statement, the Football Association expressed its disapproval of the assault on referee Hashem Al-Ibrahim and his officiating crew during the Al-Nasr and Al-Salmiya match. Video footage from the game depicted individuals attacking Al-Ibrahim and his colleagues after the conclusion of the encounter.

The Federation emphasized that such actions severely undermine the integrity of the refereeing system, pledging to address this issue robustly and mete out deterrent penalties for those who verbally or physically assault referees.

In a show of solidarity, the Federation voiced its support for referees and their efforts to counter and prevent such offensive behavior.

This, it stated, is essential for maintaining the reputation and prestige of the Kuwaiti government and the arbitration system within the Kuwaiti Federation.

Furthermore, the Football Association denounced the incidents sur-



Kuwait Football Association logo.

rounding the Al-Arabi and Al-Shabab match, including irresponsible behavior among some attendees in the stands.

Expressing deep regret and complete rejection of such deviations from sportsmanship, the Federation highlighted the potential harm to the Kuwaiti football and sports community.

The statement concluded by confirming that all incidents and associated actions will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. The Committee will then implement necessary penalties in accordance with regulations, actively working to eradicate offensive and unacceptable actions. The Football Association called on everyone involved to uphold a positive spirit and reject such incidents.

### USC's Watkins is poised to step in

LOS ANGELES, Dec 26, (AP): Caitlin Clark - the current Associated Press national player of the year - is in what may be her final season at Iowa. She could stay one more year as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as could Angel Reese of national champion LSU.

Regardless of their futures, JuJu Watkins is poised to step in as the next big star of the women's game.

The Southern California freshman guard is the nation's second-leading scorer at 26.8 points per game, right behind Clark, who leads with 30.5.

Watkins earned Pac-12 Freshman of the Week honors in each of her first five weeks. She broke Lisa Leslie's school record for most 30-point games by a freshman, with five in her first seven games.

She's led the Trojans to a No. 6 ranking in the AP Top 25 poll and a 10-0 record.

Watkins sat out a win at Long Beach State on Dec. 21, with USC only saying she was day-to-day and not explaining further.

She wasn't feeling well in a win over Cal State Fullerton three days earlier, leaving the court twice during the game but still finishing with 23 points, six rebounds and six assists.

The Trojans next play on Saturday at No. 2 UCLA in the teams' Pac-12 opener. The Bruins also are undefeated at 11-0 and the game is expected to be a rare sellout for women's basketball in Los Angeles.

Among the celebrities who've come out to watch Watkins are LeBron James, Kevin Hart, Candace Parker, 2 Chainz, Vanessa Bryant and actor Storm Reid, a fellow USC student.