



Central Bank champions financial safety with anti-fraud drive

'Robust measures'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) had carried out a number of measures to counter financial fraud through directives for financial institutions and banks as well as awareness campaigns for clients and the general masses.

In February of 2020, the CBK finalized a strategic framework for the banking sector's cybersecurity, which met the minimum needs for governance, risk management, administrative operations, Cloud technology and systems protecting online payment.

On the level of financial institutions, the CBK had put out a number of directives to banks in 2019 to ensure proper governance and boost administrative responsibility, which in turn act as a fail-safe in case of financial fraud.

The CBK made a mandate for the banking sector to implement the strategy in addition to informing clients on suspicious activities as well as recommending password changes and other measures.

The CBK also advised Banks' board of directors to find the most effective means to safeguard information and bolster online security, making it a necessity and a common practice.

Security actions also included the ability to cancel cards and accounts of clients within a short period in addition to preventing the use of credit cards on unauthorized devices.

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MPs seek clarity on vision change and airlift mission

Parliament advances sweeping reforms

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

Kuwait sets Dec 31, Jan 1st New Year's holiday

— Details Page 2 —

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: MP Hani Shams has submitted a proposal to allocate a plot in Ahmadi Governorate for the Public Authority for Youth to establish a sports complex, including an integrated sports club, for the benefit of those residing in Khiran, Sabah Al-Ahmad City and Wafra.

Shams pointed out these remote areas are suffering from lack of venues for the youths to enjoy their leisure time and improve their physical capabilities.

He also submitted a proposal to establish branches of ministries and other public institutions in the governorate for its residents to complete their transactions easily and quickly.

On the other hand, the parliamentary Housing and Real Estate Affairs Committee on Monday discussed the amendment of the bill regarding real estate agencies/authorization and the bill on dealing with the monopoly of plots which was approved in its first reading on Nov 14.

The Women, Children and Family Affairs Committee also met on Monday to deliberate on the bills regarding protection from family violence, enhancing children's rights, and allowances for housewives and Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis.

Representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Civil Service Commission, Supreme Council for Family Affairs and Public Authority for Manpower attended the meeting.

In another development, MP Hamdan Al-Azmi called for suspension of the appointment of senior officials until the relevant bill is ratified on Jan 9, 2024. He explained this is aimed at dispelling the allegation that the government is using such procedure to obtain the support and loyalty of some MPs.

Meanwhile, MP Majed Al-Mutairi asked acting Minister of Public Works and Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Jaseem Al-Ostad if the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) signed a contract for the establishment of a firefighting unit and an administrative building, value and term of the contract if the response is in the affirmative, if projects are implemented as scheduled or delayed, reasons in case of delay, action taken against contractors proven to have committed violations, if the DGCA filed cases against these contractors, copies of the relevant documents if the answer is 'yes', value of variation orders in the projects if any, if the monitoring institutions recorded their comments in this regard, and list of officials tasked to follow up and oversee the implementation of projects.

MP Muhammad Al-Mahan asked Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Adel Al-Manea if the Supreme Council for Education signed a contract with a global organization for the development of education in Kuwait. If yes, he requested for details about the organization like its history, achievements, purpose and conditions of the contract; if the council has a strategy for developing education and increase its quality; copy of the strategy if the answer is 'yes'; and measures taken by the National Center for Education Development (NCED) to improve the classification of Kuwait's education in international indexes.

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Opinion

Realization of Franklin's prophecy, and Arabs are insulting each other

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

NewsWatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Monday National Assembly Speaker Ahmad Abdulaziz Al-Sadoun.

His Highness also received Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Oil and Minister of State for Economy and Investment Affairs Dr. Saad Al-Barrak. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) said Monday, that KISR Efficiency Technologies Program Manager Dr. Fotouh Al-Raqum, has received the "Distinguished Service" award from the United States Association of Energy Engineers (AEE), for her scientific and research contributions in the field of energy efficiency.

In a statement, KISR said that Al-Raqum won many local, regional and international awards during her 20-year scientific career, and still providing important research contributions to invest in technology outcomes that help respond to the requirements of the future and Kuwait needs. (KUNA)

JERUSALEM: Yemen's Houthi rebels seized an Israeli-linked cargo ship in a crucial Red Sea shipping route Sunday and took its 25 crew members hostage, officials said, raising fears that regional tensions heightened over the Israel-Hamas war were playing out on a new maritime front.

The Iran-backed Houthi rebels said they hijacked the ship over its connection to Israel and would continue to target ships in international waters that were linked to or owned by Israelis until the end of Israel's campaign against Gaza's Hamas rulers.

"All ships belonging to the Israeli enemy or that deal with it will become legitimate targets," the Houthis said. (AP)

ANKARA: Turkish rescuers on Monday recovered the body of a crew member of a cargo ship that sank off Turkey's Black Sea coast in severe storms, officials said. Eleven other crew were reported missing.

The Turkish-flagged Kafkameter sank on Sunday after hitting a breakwater outside the harbor off the town of Ereğli, some 200 kilometers (124 miles) east of Istanbul. Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu said the vessel, which was on its way to the western Turkish port of Izmir, lashed into the breakwater several times before it sank. (AP)



Medics prepare premature babies for transport to Egypt after they were evacuated from Shifa Hospital in Gaza City to a hospital in Rafah, Gaza Strip, Monday, Nov. 20, 2023. (AP)

28 premature babies transported to Egypt

Israeli tanks shell Kuwait school in Gaza

RAMALLAH, Nov 20, (Agencies): The Israeli occupation forces bombed the Kuwait school near the Indonesian Hospital in Gaza earlier on Monday in a new act of brutal aggression, said a Palestinian media source.

The Palestine News and Info Agency (Wafa) revealed that the Israeli artillery and tanks besieged the Indonesian Hospital and bombed it since the early hours of last evening, adding that the forces fired several shells directly at the Kuwait school, which housed a number of displaced people.

The Palestinian agency indicated that number of martyrs and injured affected by the bombing was yet undetermined due to a telecommunications outage in the north of the Strip.

Additionally, the source said that ambulances were unable to reach the school due to the occupation force siege on the Indonesian Hospital and its surrounding areas.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces pressed their offensive against Hamas in northern Gaza on Monday, battling militants around a hospital where thousands of patients and displaced people have been sheltering for weeks, raising Palestinian fears of another painful standoff and evacuation of a medical facility.

A shell struck the second floor of the Indonesian Hospital, killing at least 12 people, according to a medical worker inside the facility and the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. Both blamed Israeli

forces. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The advance came a day after the World Health Organization evacuated 31 premature babies from Shifa Hospital. At least 28 were transported to Egypt on Monday. More than 250 critically ill or wounded patients remain stranded at the compound that Israeli forces stormed days ago.

The plight of Gaza's hospitals is the focus of a battle of narratives over the war's brutal toll on Palestinian civilians, thousands of whom have been killed or buried in rubble since the conflict was sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7 rampage into southern Israel. In the wake of the assault, Israeli leaders vowed to eradicate Hamas, destroy its ability to rule Gaza and uproot its militant infrastructure.

Israel says Hamas uses civilians as human shields and operated a major command hub inside and beneath Shifa, while critics say Israel's siege and relentless aerial bombardment amount to collective punishment of the territory's 2.3 million Palestinians.

Marwan Abdallah, the medical worker at the Indonesian Hospital, said Israeli tanks were operating less than 200 meters (yards) from the hospital, and that Israeli snipers could be seen on the roofs of nearby buildings. As he spoke over the phone, the sound of gunfire could be heard in the background.

Abdallah said the hospital had received dozens of dead and wounded in airstrikes and shelling overnight.

Microsoft recruits OpenAI founders in surprise hiring

LOS ANGELES, Nov 20, (AP): Microsoft announced Monday that it has hired Sam Altman and another architect of ChatGPT maker OpenAI after they unexpectedly departed the company days earlier in a corporate shakeup that shocked the artificial intelligence world.

Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella tweeted that the U.S. tech giant is committed to its partnership with OpenAI, whose chatbot kicked off the generative AI craze by producing human-like text, images, video and music.

Nadella wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, that he looked "forward to getting to know"

OpenAI's new chief executive, former Twitch management team.

Microsoft invested billions of dollars in the startup and helped provide the computing power to run its AI systems. Now, it's bringing two of OpenAI's co-founders directly into the fold.

"We're extremely excited to share the news that Sam Altman and Greg Brockman, together with colleagues, will be joining Microsoft to lead a new advanced AI research team," Nadella said.

In reply on X, Altman said "the mission continues," while OpenAI co-founder and former President Brockman posted, "We are going to build something new & it will be incredible."

Also:

LONDON: The new head of ChatGPT maker OpenAI said Monday that he would launch an investigation into the firing of co-founder Sam Altman and work to reform the company's management following a corporate shakeup that shocked the artificial intelligence world.

In a post Monday on X, OpenAI's new chief executive Emmett Shear said he would hire an independent investigator to look into what led up to Altman's ouster and write a report within 30 days.

"It's clear that the process and communications around Sam's removal has been handled very badly, which has seriously damaged our trust," wrote Shear, who co-founded Twitch, an Amazon-owned livestreaming service popular with video gamers.

He said he also plans in the next month to "reform the management and leadership team in light of recent departures into an effective force" and speak with employees, investors and customers.

Rosalynn Carter, former US first lady, dies at 96

ATLANTA, Nov 20, (AP): Former first lady Rosalynn Carter, the closest adviser to Jimmy Carter during his one term as U.S. president and their four decades thereafter as global humanitarians, has died at the age of 96.

The Carter Center said she died Sunday after living with dementia and suffering many months of declining health. The statement said she "died peacefully, with family by her side" at 2:10 p.m. at her rural Georgia home of Plains.

"Rosalynn was my equal partner in everything I ever accomplished," the former president said in the statement. "She gave me wise guidance and encouragement when I needed it. As long as Rosalynn was in the world, I always knew somebody loved and supported me."

President Joe Biden called the Carters "an incredible family because they brought so much grace to the office."



Former US first lady Rosalynn Carter listens to a speaker at The Carter Center in Atlanta on April 6, 2011. Rosalynn Carter, the closest adviser to Jimmy Carter during his one term as U.S. president and their four decades thereafter as global humanitarians, has died at the age of 96. (AP)

Day by Day

IT IS good for the Kuwaiti people and their leaders to know about corruption and who benefits from it.

So, let us find out where some funds have gone. Leaders are required to clear their conscience and put people in front of the saying: "Oh today's news, tomorrow's money is free." Kuwait wants the news to reveal the truth about corruption.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

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52nd ARMED FORCES DAY OF BANGLADESH

Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh

UN convention on special people's rights not yet implemented: KALD

'7,197 students suffering from learning difficulties in Kuwait'

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Chairperson of the Kuwait Association for Learning Differences (KALD), Amal Al-Sayer says Kuwait has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2013, which obligates it to implement comprehensive educational inclusion within five years, but this has not been achieved on the ground.

She said this in a speech she delivered at the opening of the 10th Parents' Forum, which was organized by the association with the support of the Kuwait Projects Foundation recently at the headquarters of the Women's Cultural and Social Society, under the title "Deficiency in Executive Functions between Understanding and Optimal Coexistence: Practical Applications."



Al-Sayer

Al-Sayer explained that the number of students suffering from learning difficulties in Kuwait reached 7,197, according to statistics from the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA).
 Choosing "Executive Functions" as the topic for this year's forum was because of its importance in understanding the challenges facing those with dysfunction, such as students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The international expert suggested calling this disorder "Executive Function Disorder".
 She stressed the importance of activating comprehensive integration education programs for the disabled students in Ministry of Education schools, and preparing

and training teachers for the success of the integration process.
 Meanwhile, the general coordinator of the forum and professor of teaching methods at the College of Education at Kuwait University Dr. Wafaa Al-Yassin confirmed that executive functions are needed by a person to perform many mental operations that help him coexist in his surroundings and interact with them in a positive way.
 She said the forum included an open dialogue with parents that focused on three axes to address deficiencies in executive functions for those suffering from learning differences - memory and its types, attention, and the issue of foods that enhance it.

Bangladeshis pay homage to war heroes, martyrs

B'desh Armed Forces Day's significance

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Bangladesh celebrates 21 November as the Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh. The day bears special significance in the history of Bangladesh. Members of Bangladesh Armed Forces take special pride in organizing ceremonies on this day in befitting manner with honour and dignity.

Following 23 years of ceaseless struggle to establish rights, with historic declaration of independence by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, liberation war of Bangladesh began on 26th March 1971. The war lasted for 9 months. Initially it was the guerrilla resistance movement consisting of the Bangladeshi military, paramilitary and civilians.

Liberation war

At the later stage of the liberation war, Bangladesh Liberation Forces were organized as conventional Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force. From 21 Nov 1971, the simultaneous and coordinated operations of the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force gain offensive momentum. Subsequently, occupation forces surrendered on 16 Dec 1971, Bangladesh emerged as independent country in the world map. The independence of Bangladesh came at the cost of supreme sacrifice of 3 million martyrs, 200 thousand women lost their sanctity and many suffered war injuries.

On this special day, all Bangladeshis pay homage to their war heroes, martyrs. The day inspires the members of Bangladesh Armed Forces to renew their oath to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their motherland. It also signifies the paramount importance of comradeship, togetherness and jointness in arms to fight collectively against enemy.

Bangladesh Armed Forces which were organized during liberation war, is also known as armed forces of the people.

Bangladesh Armed Forces are a symbol of pride, a symbol of trust and confidence in Bangladesh. In addition to constitutional role, Bangladesh Armed Forces play key role in nation building activities, disaster management and internal security duties etc. Bangladesh Armed Forces played very important role in successfully combating COVID-19 situation and in managing forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals of more than one million. Bangladesh Armed Forces stand today as the largest troops contributing country in the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations. Bangladesh now has more than 7,000 Armed Forces personnel deployed in 10 United Nations missions across the globe.
 Bangladesh Armed Forces are being modernized under "Forces Goal-2030". Bangladesh Armed Forces maintains very friendly relation with many Armed Forces of the world.

Cooperation

The cooperation between Bangladesh Armed Forces and Kuwait Armed Forces is very special. Apart from exchange of visit, training etc, Bangladesh Armed Forces has a constructive role in Kuwait. Presently, being divided in 11 contingents, skilled personnel of Bangladesh Military Contingent to Kuwait is providing technical and vocational expertise support in the fields of engineering, medical, communication, security, administration etc to rebuild Kuwait for the past 32 years.

A total of 96 member of Bangladesh Armed Forces sacrificed their lives while working for the friendly country. More than 5,200 personnel of Bangladesh Armed Forces are serving now in Kuwait. Defence Wing, Bangladesh Embassy takes pride in celebrating Armed Forces Day with friendly country Kuwait. Long live Bangladesh Armed Forces, long live Kuwait-Bangladesh Friendship.

November

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Promo period from 1st – 30th November 2023 Terms & conditions apply*

Realization of

Continued from Page 1

Today, when we look at the European and American positions on the brutal Israeli aggression on Gaza, we realize that the creation of influence begins with domination of the financial and media industry, and research and university education institutions in any country.

That is why Europeans today fear the return of the Jews to their countries. Franklin's prophecy has come true and has become a nightmare for everyone in the West.

The Arabs and Palestinians have not worked in their history to build soft power, like the one that Zionism currently has. Therefore, Israel will continue to enjoy power and influence, while the Arabs will continue to assert their rights, be content with statements, and insult each other.

MPs seek

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MP Hassan Jawhar forwarded queries to Minister of Justice and State Minister for Housing Affairs Faleh Al-Raqaba about the procedures followed in the establishment of the Higher Elections Commission as per Article Two of Law No. 120/2023. He pointed out this law was published in Kuwait Gazette on Aug 27, 2023; indicating the Justice Ministry emphasized the need to establish the commission before the issuance of the executive regulations for the law.

He wants to know the difficulties that Al-Raqaba faced in forming the commission if any, if the minister has started receiving nominations for members of the commission, and level of the minister's commitment to form the commission considering it should be done within six months after the publication of the law in Kuwait Gazette.

He also asked Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Khalid Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah about the tasks of the Supreme Council for Governorates; number of meetings it held from Dec 12, 2022 till date; number of employees appointed at the council's Secretariat General; if it is separated from the Council of Ministers; copy of the relevant decision if the answer is 'yes'; number of employees at the Supreme Council for Governorates; their career history and achievements of the council since 2020 till date.

The lawmaker asked Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for National Assembly and Cabinet Affairs Essa Al-Kandari if the Amiri Diwan was informed about changing the national vision from Kuwait 2035 to 2040 as per the statement of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil and State Minister for Economic and Investment Affairs Saad Al-Barrak. He wants to know why the statement of Al-Barrak about the vision is different from that of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. MP Dawoud Maarefi asked Minister of

Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Youth Affairs Muhammad Al-Aiban if there is coordination between public institutions and other concerned entities to implement ministerial Decision No. 29/2023 on the formation of a committee to conduct a study on specifying delivery charges, conclusion and recommendations of the committee if any, and if there is a comprehensive plan to regulate delivery charges.

MP Mehalhal Al-Mudhaf forwarded queries to HH the Prime Minister about Amiri Aircraft G650 (Flight No. KUG069) that took off Kuwait International Airport at night on Oct 27, 2023 for the evacuation of Kuwaitis stranded in Lebanon. He wants to know if this is part of the plan of Kuwait to evacuate its citizens, list of evacuated citizens through this flight, list of all those onboard the aircraft when it went to Lebanon including their positions and tasks, and if the purpose of the trip included meeting the concerned Lebanese parties as part of Kuwaiti diplomatic tasks.

Central Bank

Continued from Page 1

In April of 2023, the Central Bank issued a memo to local banks in regards to payment links for individuals, mandating that the clients, involved in this type of transactions, must provide the necessary information from banking statements, which includes names of the clients and the reason for the payment. This particular transaction via online link must not exceed 24 hours and must have a certain daily and monthly value ceiling.

The CBK, last September, also issued a notification for local banks to ban the use of the malicious "Anydesk" application on smartphones. It also tasked Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) to establish a round the clock-command center to deal with financial fraud and reports from clients in Kuwait.

To reinforce banking cards, the CBK had made imperative for banks to remind clients to activate their cards with their respective banks before usage in addition to measures such as locking the cards in the case of three failed attempts of entering passwords.

In regards to further protecting clients, the CBK launched in December 2022 as cyber unit to protect clients, which gathers complaints from them against local banks.

The Central Bank had been encouraging local financial institutes to establish their respective units in this regard since January of 2011. In 2013, it established the clients' 186444 complaints hotline.

A comprehensive guide for clients' rights protection was also issued in 2015 to create a safe environment in Kuwait and bolster efforts to counter fraud.

The CBK's measures also focused on boosting the public awareness of financial fraud, launching the "Let's Be Aware" campaign to prevent online fraud. The campaign saw the cooperation of the public and private sectors in addition to the participation of experts.

Municipal Council panels meet

Draft okayed regarding regulating cultivation of state-owned squares

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Legal and Financial Committee of the Municipal Council, during its meeting Saturday, headed by Fahad Abduljader, approved the draft ministerial decision regarding the ordinances regulating the cultivation of state-owned squares adjacent to private and model residential homes. It also approved a proposal for increasing registration fees for bidders and reconsidering fees for selling auction documents and company qualification booklets.



Al-Abduljader

In a related context, on Tuesday, the Joint Committee of the Technical Committee and the Legal and Financial Committee of the Municipal Council will hold a meeting headed by Dr. Hassan Kamal to discuss the items on its agenda.

These items are - the amendments to the proposed schedule regarding the special requirements and specifications for establishing public radio communications stations in all regions of Kuwait, the draft communications list, the letter of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health regarding the third meeting of the joint committee between the Technical Committee and the Legal and Financial Committee, and a letter from the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Communications and Information Technology Commission regarding the eighth meeting of the Joint Committee, in addition to the final version of the proposed schedule regarding the special requirements and specifications for establishing public radio communications stations in all different parts of Kuwait.

On Wednesday, the Environmental Affairs Committee of the Municipal Council, headed

by Alia Al-Farsi, will hold a meeting to discuss the letter submitted by the Kuwait Green Wall Association regarding the Green Oasis Project in the area between the Abdullah Port Refinery and Zour Refinery.

It will also discuss the letter of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) regarding the call for the second meeting of the Environmental Affairs Committee, in addition to the two proposals submitted by the member Alia Al-Farsi regarding the service of removing bulky residential waste of large quantities and sizes (bulky waste).

Also, the proposal to allocate land for date palm cultivation in the north of the country, in addition to the proposal submitted by member Sherifa Al-Shalfan regarding maintaining the cleanliness of the marine environment will also be discussed.

On Thursday, the Capital Governorate Committee of the Municipal Council will hold a meeting headed by Fahad Al-Abd Al-Jader to discuss a number of important issues on its agenda.

Among the most prominent issues are the letter from the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature regarding the restoration and rehabilitation of Sheikh Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah Palace, a request submitted by NCCAL regarding the Jableh Cultural Project, a letter submitted by the Ministry of Public Works regarding the practice of radical road maintenance work in the Capital Governorate, and a letter from the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation regarding the documents related to the allocation of the oil complex to the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation.

Other issues include the squares designated as gardens within the cadastral plan for the Qurtuba area, the letter of the Public Authority for Industry regarding the parking lots located south of the authority's main building in South Surra, and the request for approval to open the discussion on licensing a commercial complex for the Athletics Union located in Kaifan.

Diesel crisis 'hits' fish markets

'Prices rising'

By Abdul Nasser Al-Aslami

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: According to the Kuwait Fishermen Union, the diesel crisis has affected the market and prices, especially since the Sharq and Fahaheel markets are almost devoid of the local product. The supply is much lower than before, and prices are rising due to the lack of supply, as if we are revolving in a vicious circle. Urgent solutions must be developed before reaching a dead end. Many fishermen are considering selling their licenses and boats and relieving their workers due to the high operational cost and the insufficient share of subsidized diesel.

In a press statement, the union explained that the cost of a basket of shrimps has touched KD 100.

What is happening with the Kuwait Fishermen Union has not happened with any other food security union.

The decision to spend half of the diesel quota subsidized and the other half unsubsidized has disastrous proportions and will cause fishermen to refrain from going into the sea. This is due to the fact that the cost of a fishing trip is more than KD 400, and this will double due to unsubsidized diesel. Entering the sea will then be of no benefit and will inflict more losses on the fishermen.

The union called on the Subsidy Committee to review its decision and disburse the full share as it did in past years.

It affirmed that it did not find a justification for stopping the subsidized diesel share at times, and reducing it to half at other times, and then the subsidy committee would resort to returning half of the diesel share as subsidized and the other half as unsubsidized. This is what the fishing license holders were upset about. They are wondering about the reasons that led to the fight against the local product of fish and shrimp.

The union said, "We often hear from some officials about the necessity of supporting the local product, but unfortunately we find that they are just slogans. There are those who deliberately place obstacles in front of the local product, as we see in the issue of withholding subsidized diesel. It is as if someone is trying to eliminate the entire fishing profession - this ancient traditional profession - and is pushing in the direction of relying on imported products."

Flexible working hours not suitable for MoH: minister

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, confirmed that flexible working hours are not appropriate for the work of the Ministry of Health, citing "the special nature of work in all the ministry's facilities which is not compatible with

flexible working hours, and therefore the ministry has not issued any decision in this regard," reports Al-Rai daily.

Al-Awadhi was responding to a parliamentary query submitted by MP Osama Al-Shaheen, when told that the

"Public Authority for Food and Nutrition had already issued the Administrative Resolution No. 637/2023 specifying flexible official working hours from Sunday to Thursday, 7 hours work in accordance with the provisions of this decision."

عمليات الخفجي المشتركة



AL-KHAFJI JOINT OPERATIONS

الشركة الكويتية لنفط الخليج
KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)

ارامكو لأعمال الخليج
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Aramco Gulf Operations Company Limited ("AGOC") and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (K.S.C) ("KGOC"), (Al Khafji Joint Operations) invites intending bidders to participate for the Tender No.: GT819PC23 Construction of Non-Directional Beacon (NDB) Building.

Each intending bidder may purchase the tender documents upon payment of Saudi Riyals Five Hundred (SR 500) or Kuwaiti Dinars Forty (KD 40) only which is non-refundable by visiting our Contracts Department at Al- Khafji, Saudi Arabia, or KGOC's Main Office in Al- Ahmadi, Commercial Affairs Group. The bidder may visit our KJO website: www.kjo.com.sa and follows the path; E-Services □ Tendering □ Contractors □ Ongoing Tenders to review part of tender documents, before purchasing.

The sale of Tender Documents will be effective from November 20, 2023, until 12:00 Noon, December 13, 2023.

Attending the Pre- Tender Meeting and Site Visit are Mandatory.

A Pre-Tender meeting will be held for interested bidders at KJO Auditorium, Office Park Building, at Al-Khafji Joint Operations, Saudi Arabia, at 10:00 AM local time on December 13, 2023. A site visit will be held soon after the pre-tender Meeting.

The bid proposal shall be delivered by hand-delivery or thru courier service to the Contracts Department in Al- Khafji Joint Operations, Al- Khafji, Saudi Arabia on or before the closing date 14:00 Hours, Monday, January 15, 2024 of the time stipulated in the tender document.

For more Information, You May Contact The Following Nos.

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AMGH Beach Clean-up Day group photo.

EPA joins hands in keeping environment clean and sustainable

Al Mulla Group employees volunteer to keep Kuwait's waterfront clean

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: In collaboration with Kuwait's Environment Public Authority, and as part of our CSR and Corporate Governance Policies that encourage Group employees to participate in community activities in support of a good cause, such as environmental initiatives aimed at achieving a sustainable clean environment in Kuwait, over 100 employees from across Al Mulla Group have recently participated in the annual Beach Cleaning initiative, which took place on Saturday November 18th 2023 at the Shuwaikh Beach.

The voluntary activity was well-attended by many of our colleagues from across the Group's divisions including: Automotive Group, Al Mulla Engineering, Al Mulla Finance, Al Mulla Exchange, Al Mulla Rental & Leasing, as well as several members of Kuwait's Environment Public Authority. In addition to the interactive activity of the beach cleaning, our employees have also enjoyed a special complimentary breakfast and coffee at the end of the day.



Volunteers during the Beach Clean-up Day initiative by Al Mulla Group in collaboration with Kuwait's Environment Public Authority.

At Al Mulla Group, we are continuously committed to support community voluntary initiatives that aim at reinforcing positive community engagement among our employees in support of a good public cause and help maintaining

a sustainable clean environment in Kuwait. Furthermore and at previous community initiatives, Al Mulla Group has organized several CSR campaigns this year such as: Breast Cancer Awareness, Blood

Donation, Food Baskets Distribution and many others. Guided by our Core Values of Innovation, Excellence and Professionalism, Al Mulla Group is committed to excelling in everything

that we do and especially when it comes to giving back to the communities where we operate. For more information about Al Mulla Group please visit www.al-mullagroup.com

Employees shared STEM expertise with Giftedness Academy students

Zain's Innovation Campus hosts Science Month initiative

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Under their strategic partnership to empower gifted young people, Zain and Sabah Al Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) – a center of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) have jointly hosted a special open day event for students from SACGC's Joint Academy School for Giftedness.

During the event, some of Zain's outstanding employees shared their personal and professional journeys in STEM areas with the bright young students.



Students with Zain and SACGC officials.

This special program came under the umbrella of Zain's Innovation Nation initiative and KFAS's Science Month, where the Foundation and its centers celebrate Kuwait's scientific community and encourage young people to pursue STEM degrees and careers.

This event is one of the successful outcomes of the two agreements Zain recently signed with KFAS and SACGC, both of which focus on a number of strategic pillars and sustainable goals like fostering innovation in the community, investing in young people's digital skills, supporting entrepreneurs and startups, and more.

The open day, held at Zain's Innovation Campus (ZINC), welcomed a number of talented young students from SACGC's Giftedness Academy, where various inspiring sessions were held to encourage the students to pursue their passions to drive their future careers.

In addition, a number of outstanding Zain employees joined the open day to share their life experiences and professional successes with the students. The employees represented some of the company's core STEM-related departments like business intelligence, data office, drones division, and more. They also showcased Zain's success stories in embracing tech innovation to drive digital transformation in the community.

The event also witnessed a hands-on session where certified trainers from SACGC introduced the students to the fundamentals of 3D printing. The session aimed at developing the students' digital and technical skills to prepare them for the career market.

This program came in line with Zain's Innovation Nation initiative, under which all of Zain's innovation and entrepreneurship programs fall, especially within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. The initiative mainly targets the youth, and centers around a number of pillars, including entrepreneurship, investment, startup acceleration, supporting inventors, fostering innovation, and more.



Classrooms buzzed with excitement as tiny hands transform recyclables into masterpieces.

'Looking after Planet Earth'

Students explore wonders of art

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: At Royal Britannia, the classrooms buzzed with excitement as tiny hands transform recyclables into masterpieces. In line with our theme of "Looking after Planet Earth" the nursery has woven creativity activities into the daily routine, turning learning into an adventure focused on environmental stewardship.

From vibrant collages crafted from recycled material to imaginative paintings and glue-sticking galore, students explored the wonders of art while understanding the value of reusing and re-

cycling. Each masterpiece tells a unique story, not just of creativity, but a deeper understanding of the planet's precious resources. RB commitment to fostering a love for learning extends outdoors, where children explore the garden, discovering natural materials to incorporate into their art work.

These hands-on experiences are more than just fun and games, they are building blocks for a future generation that values and protect the environment.



Event developed young people's technical skills.



Zain employees shared their experiences with the students.

Singer avoids the risk of prison sentence

Shakira reaches a deal with Spanish prosecutors in tax fraud trial

BARCELONA, Spain, Nov. 20, (AP) — Pop star Shakira agreed to a deal with Spanish authorities on the first day of a tax fraud trial in Barcelona on Monday, avoiding the risk of a prison sentence.

Shakira told the presiding magistrate, José Manuel del Amo, that she accepted the agreement reached with prosecutors. She answered “yes” to confirm her acknowledgement of six counts of failing to pay the Spanish government 14.5 million euros (about \$15.8 million) in taxes between 2012 and 2014.

Under the deal, Shakira is to receive a suspended three-year sentence and a fine of 7 million euros (\$7.6 million).

The trial, which would have included more than 100 witnesses over the following weeks, was instead called off after just eight minutes.

Prosecutors said in July that they would seek a prison sentence of eight years and two months and a fine of 24 million euros (\$26 million) for the singer, who has won over fans worldwide for her hits in Spanish and English in different musical genres.

The case hinges on where Shakira, now 46, lived during that period. Prosecutors in Barcelona have alleged that the Colombian singer spent more than half of that period in Spain and therefore should have paid taxes on her worldwide income in the country even though her official residence was still in the Bahamas. Tax rates are much lower in the Bahamas than in Spain.

Shakira’s public relations firm said she had already paid all that she owed and an additional 3 million euros (about \$3.2 million) in interest.

The multiple Grammy and Latin Grammy winner waved and blew a kiss to a small crowd of bystanders before entering the courthouse.

Shakira turned down a deal offered to her by prosecutors to settle her case in July 2022, saying, via her Spanish public relations firm Llorente y Cuenca, that she “believes in her innocence and chooses to leave the issue in the hands of the law.” The details of that potential deal were not made public.

Defense

Shakira was named in the “Paradise Papers” leaks that detailed the offshore tax arrangements of numerous high-profile individuals, including musical celebrities such as Madonna and U2’s Bono.

The defense team for Shakira, the Barcelona firm Molins Defensa Penal, said in November 2022 that she had not spent more than 60 days a year inside the country during the period in question, adding she would have needed to have spent half the year in Spain to be considered a fiscal resident. Her defense argued that she was away from Barcelona for long stretches on a world tour in 2011 and then spent a lot of time in the United States as part of a jury for the NBC television music talent show *The Voice*.

Spanish prosecutors disagreed, and the investigating judge, Marco Juberías, wrote in 2021 on the conclusion of a three-year probe into the charges that he found there existed “sufficient evidence of criminality” for the case to go to trial. Shakira defended her innocence when she

was questioned by Juberías in 2019.

She lost an appeal to have the case thrown out last year. Shakira established her fiscal residency in Spain in 2014 at the same time her oldest child was enrolled in school in Barcelona, according to her defense team, as she was going to spend more time in the country with her family.

In Spain, an investigative judge carries out an initial probe and decides either to throw the case out or send it to trial. A court can waive prison time for first-time offenders if they are sentenced to less than two years behind bars.

In a separate investigation, Spanish state prosecutors charged Shakira in September with alleged evasion of 6.7 million euros in tax on her 2018 income. They accused her of using an offshore company based in a tax haven to avoid paying the tax.

Spain has cracked down on soccer stars such as Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo over the past decade for not paying their full taxes. The former Barcelona and Real Madrid stars were found guilty of evasion but both avoided prison time after their sentences were suspended.

Shakira, whose full name is Shakira Isabel Mebarak Ripoll, has two children, Milan and Sasha, with Barcelona soccer star Gerard Piqué. The couple lived together in Barcelona before ending their 11-year relationship last year. Since then, she has resided in Miami. After triumphing at the Latin Grammy Awards gala in Seville on Thursday, Shakira thanked her fans in Spain for “being with me in the good times and the bad.”

MUSIC

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Julianne Moore, (left), and Natalie Portman in a scene from ‘May December.’ (AP)

Film

Moore, Portman are electric in their scenes

Emotional complexity in ‘May December’

By Lindsey Bahr

There is hardly a false note in “May December,” an audaciously self-aware, mischievously funny and emotionally complex drama that defies simple categorization.

Filmmaker Todd Haynes, working from a script by newcomer Samy Burch, deftly mixes cheesy movie of the week tropes with the psychological depths of Bergman to make this wholly singular piece that never quite lets the viewer relax on solid ground.

The set up involves an actor, Elizabeth Barry, played by Natalie Portman, who is spending some time with the real person she’s decided to play in a film. That subject is Gracie Atherton-Yoo (Julianne Moore), who, when she was 36, was arrested and imprisoned for starting a physical relationship with a 12-year-old boy. Two decades later Gracie and that boy, Joe (Charles Melton), are married with three kids, one in college and twins about to go.

There have been cheap, seemingly exploitative movies made about them before, which we get brief glimpses of. Gracie tells Elizabeth, on their first meeting, that she just wants her to tell the story right. Elizabeth responds that she wants her to “feel seen and known.” Both Moore and Portman are smiling sweetly, on perfectly polite stranger behavior, but it is also deeply uncomfortable. Is one lying? Are both? Who can we trust? Who do we like? Does it matter?

We already knew that Haynes was a master of melodrama, with films like “Carol” and “Far From Heaven,” but in “May December” he gestures to the aesthetics of ripped-from-the-tabloids Lifetime fare. He layers that with a boldly dramatic score, borrowed from the past (the late French composer Michel Legrand’s theme from “The Go-Between”) and brilliantly deployed in both comedic and serious ways. Early in the film, Gracie is preparing for Elizabeth’s arrival and opens her refrigerator when the score dips. We brace for something serious and dramatic as the camera zooms in on Moore: “I don’t think we have enough hot dogs,” she says.

Elizabeth isn’t just there to watch them eat dinner

and ask some questions. She is wildly driven to get to some sort of truth about Gracie, running around town like an investigative journalist interviewing everyone she can. Portman plays Elizabeth as impishly manipulative, utilizing the full power of her character’s celebrity and its effect on people to get intimate confessions. It is a deliriously fun and unnerving send-up of both stardom and an actor’s process. Late in the film, she calls it a story. Joe reminds her that it’s their actual life. You can almost imagine Elizabeth Barry’s deeply untruthful press tour for the film.

Gracie is harder to grasp, but she will keep the audience, and Elizabeth, on their toes for the duration. Just when you think you have a handle on something, she subverts it. We are, however, treated to some of her private moments that only Joe sees — her fragility, her delusions, her naivete. And Moore and Portman are electric in their scenes together, masterful performers whose characters are similarly performing for one another.

Conversation

It’s wonderfully fun to watch what they do, how they can make even the most basic of interactions slyly subversive and catty and how both try to maintain control over every conversation. But that they are great is not the big surprise of the film: Melton is. He will break your heart and not because of any huge Oscar-reel moment, but all the small ones leading up to the very earned tears. He’s the sobering reminder that behind all the intrigue and scandal and fun of the quest for truth, if we accept the reality of “May December” as some sort of reality, then we have to accept the tragedy of Joe.

Melton plays this 36-year-old father of three college age kids quietly. His first scenes with Gracie show a relationship that reads more mother-son than wife-husband, and not even just because of the age difference. At times he seems like a shadow of a person, playing the role of beer-drinking, hot dog grilling contented dad with an almost empty nest. He is, in this movie, still becoming, and maybe just now starting to grapple with the truth, as he raises his monarch butterflies and attempts to flirt over text with another person.

In fact, Joe, and Melton, might be the biggest masterstroke of “May December.” Scandalous fun and camp are, you imagine, relatively easy with performers like this. But to give it a soul, too? It makes it monumental.

“May December,” a Netflix release in theaters Nov. 17 and streaming Dec. 1, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for “some sexual content, graphic nudity, drug use and language.” Running time: 117 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Also:

NEW YORK: The Golden Globes have found a new broadcast home at CBS after the troubled awards show lost its longtime home at NBC and the Hollywood Foreign Press Association was dissolved after years of scandal.

The 81st Golden Globes will air live on CBS and stream on Paramount+ on Sunday, Jan. 7, CBS and the Globes announced Friday. The show will also be available on the CBS app.

The network declined to comment on the terms of the deal, including how long the agreement runs for. NBC broadcast the 2023 Globes on a one-year basis after the 2022 edition was essentially canceled. After a 2021 report revealed the Hollywood Foreign Press Association had no Black members, stars and studios boycotted the Globes before returning for this year’s awards.

After the 2023 broadcast, held on a Tuesday evening, NBC opted not to renew its contract. A near-record low of 6.3 million viewers tuned in, according to Nielsen.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association has since been reorganized and no longer exists in name. Earlier this year, Dick Clark Production, a property of Penske Media, and Eldridge Industries, a holding company owned by the billionaire investor **Todd Boehly**, acquired rights and properties to the Globes. A newly formed, for-profit organization will vote on the awards.

CBS, which also broadcasts the Grammys, aired the Globes in 1981 and 1982 before the award show ran for years on NBC. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: “The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes” topped the North American box office in its first weekend in theaters with \$44 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

It was a busy weekend at the multiplex, leading into the often lucrative Thanksgiving corridor. And while there was plenty to choose from at the buffet, not everything could be a hit. Audiences had “The Marvels,” which plummeted a record 78% in its second weekend, as well as the nationwide debuts of the family-friendly “Trolls World Tour,” **Taika Waititi**’s soccer comedy “Next Goal Wins” and the R-rated slasher “Thanksgiving” all in wide release.

“The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes” is an interesting case study for a franchise that’s been dormant for 8 years and is testing the waters for a new era. Its \$44 million from 3,776 locations, including 1,610 premium screens, marks a low for films carrying “The Hunger Games” in the title. The four **Jennifer Lawrence** films all broke \$100 million in their first weekends (the high point was the first with \$158 million in 2013, the low was the last one with \$102.7 million in 2015).

But it’s a more nuanced story for Lionsgate, which operates differently from legacy studios by licensing its titles to international distributors which helps cover a significant portion of the film’s budget. The filmmakers kept this around \$100 million, which was also offset by tax credits for filming in **Germany**.

With an added \$54.5 million from 87 international markets, the film has already earned \$98.5 million out of the gates. The studio considers it a strong start for the prequel, set 64 years before **Katniss Everdeen** entered the picture, with a new cast led by **Tom Blyth** and **Rachel Zegler**.

“Historically attempting to do prequels, especially with no returning cast, can be a very challenging proposition,” said **Adam Fogelson**, the vice chair of the Lionsgate Motion Picture Group. “The fact that we’re sitting here at basically \$100 million on opening weekend around the world is, I think, a testament to the quality of the movie, the quality of the talent

that worked on the movie and a campaign that was both successful and efficient.”

For Fogelson and the filmmakers, “The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes” represents something completely new, darker and more dramatic that opens up new possibilities, provided author **Suzanne Collins** wants to tell more stories.



Zegler



Lawrence

To judge it against the Jennifer Lawrence movies at the height of Collins’ books popularity, he said, would be “a complete disservice to this movie as a standalone.”

Also, he noted, “From a pure crass business perspective, it’s going to end up being an incredibly successful proposition for Lionsgate.”

However, critics were mixed on this one, which is an origin story about future Panem President **Coriolanus Snow**. It currently carries a 61% on Rotten Tomatoes. Audiences were more positive and moviegoing behavior around holidays can be skewed. **Paul Dergarabedian**, the senior media analyst for Comscore, said that some

audiences might also be waiting to watch it with their families during days off around Thanksgiving.

Unlike many of its big-budget peers, “The Hunger Games” prequel also had the benefit of having its stars promote the film in its lead-up, having secured an interim agreement before the SAG-AFTRA strike ended. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2023

People & Places

Books

'Absolution' gripping

Graff's 'UFO' explores the unexplained truth

The truth may be out there, but making sense out of it isn't easy.

Discussion about unidentified flying objects has moved over the years from fodder for science fiction movies or jokes to the subject of congressional hearings.

Graff offers an authoritative and objective look at the history of UFO sightings and research into the possibility of extraterrestrial life over the past 75 years.

It's a narrative as compelling as Graff's other works, including his history of Watergate, and requires the same skill that he's demonstrated in navigating government documents.

The deeply researched history traces the ways the government has struggled to wrap its arms around the questions raised by UFOs - or, as they're now known, "unidentified aerial phenomena" - sightings going back to the 1940s.

"It's not that the government knows something it doesn't want to tell us," Graff writes at the outset of the book. "It's that the government is uncomfortable telling us it doesn't know anything at all."

Graff profiles a sprawling cast of characters who have played a role in the search for UFOs and alien life over the years, from amateur ufologists to famed astronomer Carl Sagan to Blink-182 frontman Tom DeLonge.

They're all battling hoaxes and public skepticism and trying to overcome the lingering question first posed by physicist Enrico Fermi: If extraterrestrial life is prevalent, why don't we see more of it?

Graff highlights the advances in science that are made over the years in trying to answer that question, but also in showing just how vast and unknown the universe is.

The book shows how attitudes toward UFOs have changed over the years, not just by scientists and the government but also in popular culture. Those shifting attitudes have led to more openness about discussing sightings, and the national security implications of not knowing what they could be.

Graff is unlikely to convert firm skeptics, but he may at least convince them to keep an open mind the next time they read about UFOs or UAPs.

Living in Western diplomatic privilege with cooks and maids and drivers, the women in the new novel "Absolution" spend their days attending luncheons, lectures and cocktail parties as the Vietnam War rumbles in the background.

It's 1963 Saigon, but the wives of ambitious American attorneys and engineers are focused on writing clever letters with French phrases to be slipped into light blue airmail envelopes and the daily dressing rituals that include girdles, stockings and white dress shields fastened with tiny gold safety pins.

Alice McDermott's ninth novel perfectly captures the manner and mood of that era and the constricted lives that women led as "helpmeets" for their husbands. McDermott won the National Book Award for her novel "Charming Billy."

In "Absolution," Irish American newlywed Tricia is just 23, proud of her handsome engineer husband who is on loan to the Navy and hoping they can quickly start a family during their time in southeast Asia.

Tricia soon meets Charlene, who is slightly older and has three children. Charlene is dedicated to doing good by raising money to stuff baskets with toys and candy that she and the other ladies deliver to hospitals and later a leper colony. Tricia is pulled into the group of women right away.

Barbie dolls are a new trend and Charlene comes up with an idea for a doll outfit that the other Americans can't resist: a traditional Vietnamese ensemble of slim white pants and overdress, topped off with a conical hat.

Barbie's Vietnamese-style getup made by a talented local seamstress is huge success and Charlene raises ever more cash for her charitable deeds.

The words "absolution" and "absolved" pop up repeatedly in the book that serves as a nod to "The Quiet American," another look at early US involvement in the Vietnam War. Its author, English writer Graham Greene, was a Catholic convert who used his own novels to study the moral questions of modern times.

Tricia, raised a devout Catholic in the years before Vatican II, learns during her year in Vietnam about obligation, grace and sacrifice even as everything seems to collapse around her. She's looking for absolution - a forgiveness of sins - in an imperfect world she can't control and she doesn't always understand.

Tricia finally has some questions answered 60 years later, when Charlene's daughter, Rainey, finds her living as a widow in Washington and they relive their memories of that time.

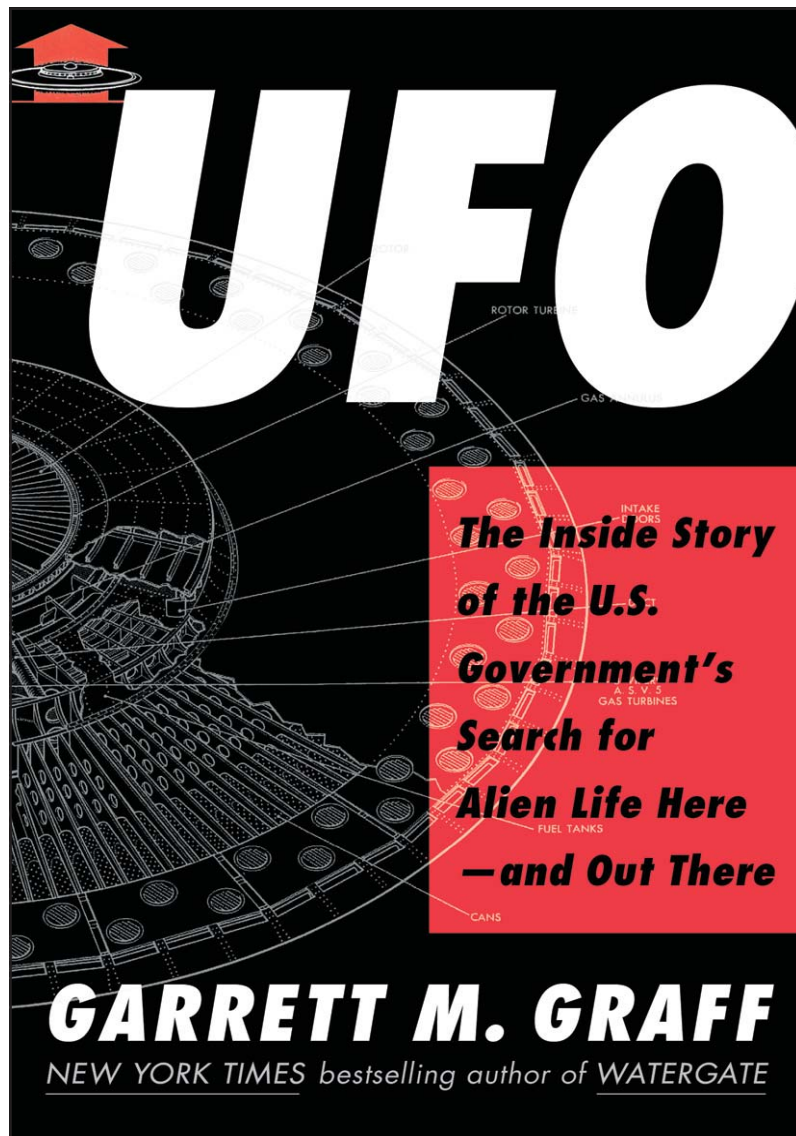
Just like America's involvement in Vietnam, Tricia looks back to see that even good intentions can have terrible consequences, but absolution is possible in the end.

Also:

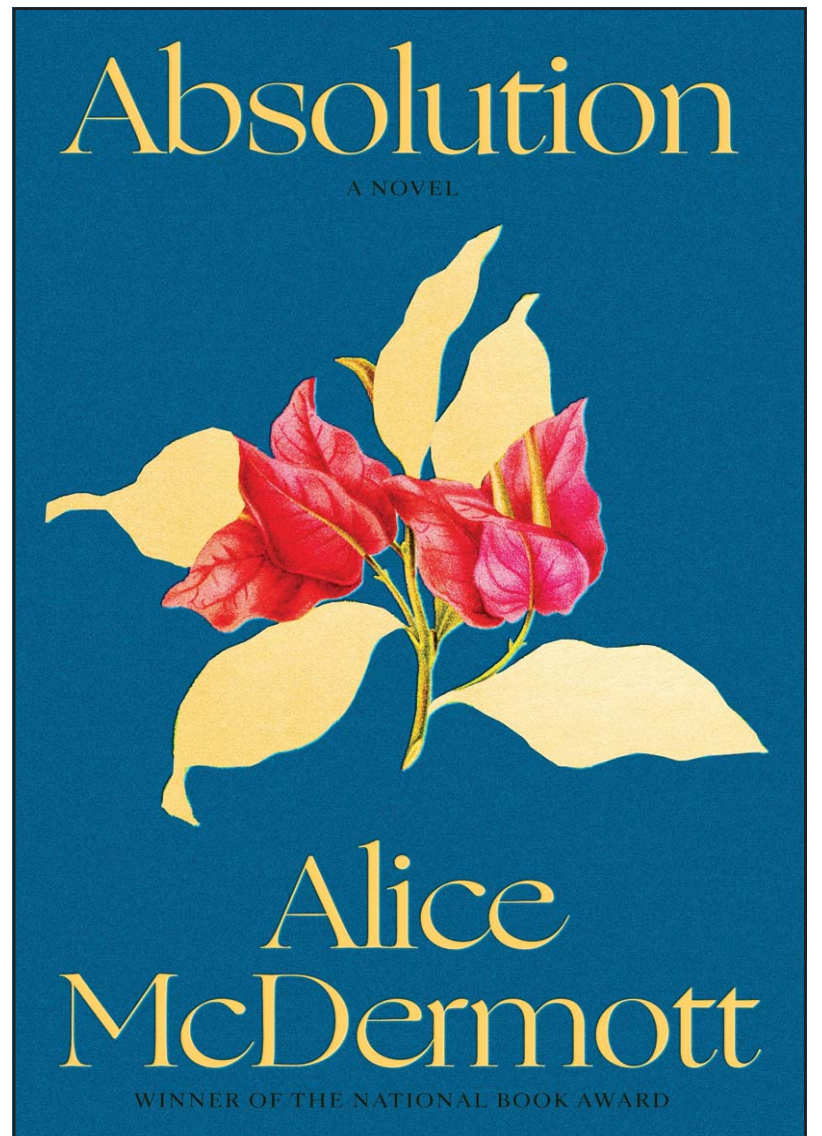
NEW YORK: Justin Torres' novel "Blackouts," a daring and illustrated narrative that blends history and imagination in its recounting of a censored study of gay sexuality, has won the National Book Award for fiction.

On Wednesday night, the nonfiction prize was awarded to Ned Blackhawk's "The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History" and young people's literature was won by Dan Santat's "A First Time for Everything." Craig Santos Perez's "from incorporated territory (ámot)," the fifth work in his series about his native Guam, was cited for best poetry, and Stênio Gardel's "The Words That Remain," translated from Portuguese by Bruna Dantas Lobato, won for literature in translation.

Torres, whose book imagines a conversation between a dying man and the young friend he educates about a real history called "... Variants," gave a brief acceptance speech before he was joined by more than a dozen nominees who gathered to present a statement about the Israel-Hamas war. Read by fiction nominee Aaliyah Bilal, the statement condemned the "ongoing bombardment of Gaza," antisemitism, anti-Palestinian sentiments and Islamophobia and called for a humanitarian cease-fire. The authors received a standing ovation after Bilal finished.



This cover image released by Avid Reader Press shows 'UFO: The Inside Story of the US Government's Search for Alien Life Here - and Out There' by Garrett M. Graff. (AP)



This cover image released by Farrar, Straus and Giroux shows 'Absolution' by Alice McDermott. (AP)

Film

'We like to laugh at ourselves'

Waititi on his quest to quit Hollywood

TORONTO, Nov. 20, (AP) — Sports movies typically culminate, after stirring locker-room speeches, in a dramatic bid for athletic glory. Taika Waititi's "Next Goal Wins" concerns the quest of a historically bad national soccer team, the 2011 American Samoa men's squad, in their struggle to qualify for the FIFA World Cup after an infamous 31-0 drubbing against Australia.

The 48-year-old Maori filmmaker of 2019's Oscar-winning "Jojo Rabbit" and 2022's "Thor: Love and Thunder" met a reporter the morning after "Next Goal Wins" premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. He was speaking while the writers and actors strikes were ongoing, which, for him, was a welcome hiatus after a whirlwind stretch of work, with plenty of projects (including a "Star Wars" film in development) still in the wings.

Waititi, himself, doesn't know much about soccer and professes to know even less after making "Next Goal Wins," which opened in theaters Friday. He's also, as he said in the interview, less and less interested in Hollywood, a game he's already tempted to walk away from.

AP: Are you a fan of any sports movies? Waititi: I don't know. I don't really watch that many sports movies. I'd say I like them but I can't really remember many of them.

AP: Not "Any Given Sunday"? You quote from it in the film. Waititi: I just remember that being so long. So long and so many zoom shots. No, I like that film. I think "Cool Runnings" is probably the closest to this.

AP: Your last "Thor" movie took apart masculinity and superhero convention, and "Next Goal Wins" seems just as disinterested in sports movie traditions.

Waititi: Yeah. Well, my second film ("Boy") is a sort of deconstructed anti-feelgood family film. It's just a comedy about child abuse. I guess "What We Do in the Shadows" is the same. Just trying to fight against what the normal filmmaking would be or what the normal idea of what that film

should be. I'm interested in soccer but I'm not passionate about it. I don't care about it like I care about stories about people, stories about family.

AP: Your films return often to the idea of family. You've said your notion of family isn't defined by blood.

Waititi: I have a big family but a couple friends are way closer to me than any of my family. For me, this idea of blood family being so important, it comes from when villages were tiny and people in Europe were obsessed with keeping the bloodline alive. I just don't think it's such an important thing anymore. Adoption is such a great thing because it's not who you come from, it's who raises you. You adopt a kid, they become a version of you because of the things you teach them and how you raise them.

AP: Along with "Reservation Dogs," which you helped create, "Next Goal Wins" captures Indigenous people in a celebratory, less self-serious way than we often see in film.

Waititi: For good reason, there needs to be respect. But I think Polynesian, Pasifika people, we're very self-deprecating. We like to laugh at ourselves. If this was made by a Westerner or was a white-led film, it would be just too respectful and the kind of saccharine bulls—. That's the reason Native Americans have been misrepresented for so long in film. It's not because it's not an authentic portrayal of what they look like. They're always portrayed as stoic, mysterious, quiet, wise characters who speak in sage advice passed down by ancestors. It's like, god, what a boring existence if that's the way you live. And it's not the way we live. This is why I really believe films about cultures need to be made by people from that culture or who have at least lived amongst that culture.

AP: What was it like assembling a cast of largely Indigenous actors for a production shot in Hawaii?

Waititi: To be able to swim while you're shooting and go to the beach before work and after work when the sun is going down and you're losing light, go home, play with the kids,

have dinner. I understand now why Adam Sandler did all those films in Hawaii. A lot of people like to torture themselves in filmmaking. They want to go and live in the snow and eat carcasses and live the experience. I don't. I grew up super poor and I don't want to do that again. I basically hate working and want to retire, but if I have to work, I'll make it as pleasant as I can.

AP: But you work all the time. Waititi: Yeah, but do I? People say I work all the time. Only I know the truth. Listen, your name can be a lot of headlines about work that apparently you're doing. Doesn't mean you're doing it. Having some press release about me being attached to a project, that's someone else doing the work. It's not me doing the work.

AP: Is this what you're saying you're not doing a "Star Wars" film? Waititi: I'm not saying anything about anything. I'm not having any of these conversations because I'm not allowed to. I can't wait for the strike to be over but, selfishly, this has probably been the best thing for me, in terms of me getting to take a break. I needed to be forced to stop working for a bit.

AP: How have you been spending your time? Waititi: Now and then I'll think about ideas I might want to do. And then very quickly I get very tired just thinking about them and I fall asleep or find anything else in the world to do that's not a job. This summer I was in Europe, enjoying the sun, back on beaches. It's all I want to do for the rest of my life. Go to the beach. I grew up on beaches and then I worked for so long without getting a chance to go back to the beach until this film. This is probably what reminded me - just like Michael's character learning there's more to life than football - there's more to life than film. There's more to life than being in the entertainment industry. You think it's going to be so cool - what a great life it's going to be in show business. Hollywood is just sad people eating lukewarm food out of cardboard boxes in offices with windows looking on other offices.



Director Taika Waititi poses for a portrait to promote his latest film during the Toronto International Film Festival on Sept. 11, 2023, in Toronto. (AP)



ASAP

Brand

Variety

LOS ANGELES: ASAP Rocky could learn Monday whether he will be ordered to trial on allegations that he fired a gun at a former friend and collaborator outside a Hollywood hotel.

A Los Angeles judge is set to hear evidence Monday against the 35-year-old rap star and father of two children with Rihanna as he decides whether he should stand trial on two felony counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm. He has pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutors allege that outside the W. Hotel in Hollywood on Nov. 6, 2021, Rocky pointed a handgun at Terrell Ephron, then in a confrontation soon after fired shots that grazed Ephron's knuckles and left him with minor injuries.

At the first day of the hearing earlier this month, Ephron, who once went by ASAP Relli, testified that he and Rocky were close friends as teens along with the other members of the ASAP collective, a group of New York high school students who sought to make music and pursue other art forms. He said their friendship lasted until well after Rocky became a star, but began to fray after he felt that Rocky had failed to follow through on promised business ventures and had neglected the other members of their high school collective, who were having difficult lives. The tension came to a head when the shots were fired in 2021, he said. (AP)

PARIS: A faded and cracked felt bicorne hat worn by Napoléon Bonaparte sold for \$2.1 million at an auction Sunday of the French emperor's belongings.

Yes, \$2.1 million. The signature broad, black hat - one of a handful still in existence that Napoléon wore when he ruled 19th-century France and waged war in Europe - was initially valued at 600,000 to 800,000 euros (\$650,000-870,000). It was the centerpiece of Sunday's auction in Fontainebleau of memorabilia collected by a French industrialist who died last year.

But the bidding quickly jumped higher and higher until Jean Pierre Osenat, president of the Osenat auction house, designated the winner.

"We are at 1.5 million (euros) for Napoléon's hat ... for this major symbol of the Napoleonic epoch," he said, as applause rang out in the auction hall. The buyer, whose identity was not released,

must pay 28.8% in commissions according to Osenat, bringing the overall cost to 1.9 million euros (\$2.1 million). (AP)

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador: Miss Nicaragua Sheynnis Palacios won the Miss Universe competition late Saturday night in El Salvador, the first to wear the

coron from her country. Palacios is a 23-year-old communicationist, who said she wants to work to promote mental health after suffering debilitating bouts of anxiety herself.

Miss Thailand, Anntonia Porsild, was first runner-up and Miss Australia, Moraya Wilson, the second runner-up. Eighty-four women competed for the crown in the 72nd edition of the competition.

Palacios appeared to secure the win when she confidently answered the question of which woman's shoes would she like to spend a year in by saying Mary Wollstonecraft, the 18th-century English writer and philosopher. Wollstonecraft was an advocate of women's rights and is considered one of the forerunners of feminism. (AP)

LONDON: Comedian Russell Brand has been interviewed by British police over three alleged sexual offenses, UK media reported Sunday.

The Sunday Times and BBC said Brand, 48, was interviewed last week at a London police station.

Without naming Brand, the Metropolitan Police force said that "a man in his 40s attended a police station in south London on Thursday November 16, 2023. He was interviewed under caution by detectives in relation to three non-recent sexual offenses. Inquiries continue." (AP)



Colombian performer Shakira, right, leaves court in Barcelona, Spain, Monday, Nov. 20. Global pop star Shakira is summoned on Monday to a Barcelona court for the opening day of her trial for allegedly defrauding Spanish tax officials of millions of euros. Shakira faces six counts of failing to pay the Spanish government 14.5 million euros (now \$15.8 million) in taxes between 2012 and 2014. (AP) — Details Page 11

Telco committed to digital transformation and enrich customers' lifestyle

solutions by stc upgrades 'My Business,' self-care portal for B2B clients

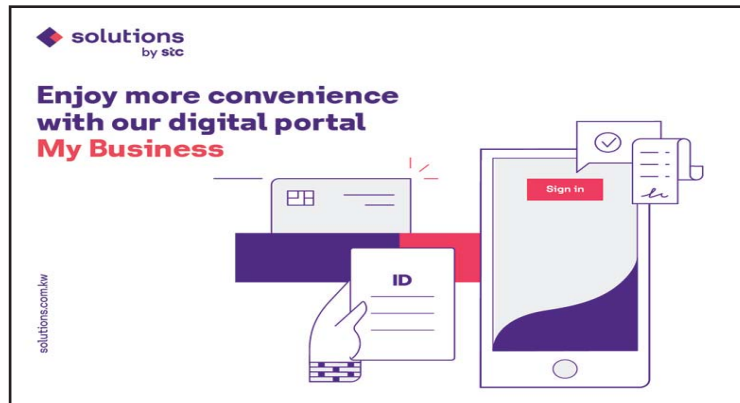
KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, announced the launch of its upgraded self-care portal offered to its B2B customers called 'My Business'. The redefined portal falls in line with solutions by stc's application of modern technologies to enable digital transformation and enrich the lifestyle of its customers.

Offering a range of added new features, the revamped experience provides B2B customers with more flexibility in managing their accounts and subscriptions. solutions by stc now enables admin

and super admin users to perform multiple actions on the subscribers' lines, such as subscribing to new services, activating lines, suspending lines, changing SIMs, and more.

They can also directly pay through the portal by selecting one or multiple numbers under the account, whether they are fixed or mobility services, including the ability to pay on contract level.

The portal will also allow users to manage their profiles by changing their names, profile picture, resetting their password, or even viewing their PIN/PUK codes. Additionally, the portal is highly



secure with a built-in security system that allows managers to designate the type of access given to the users.

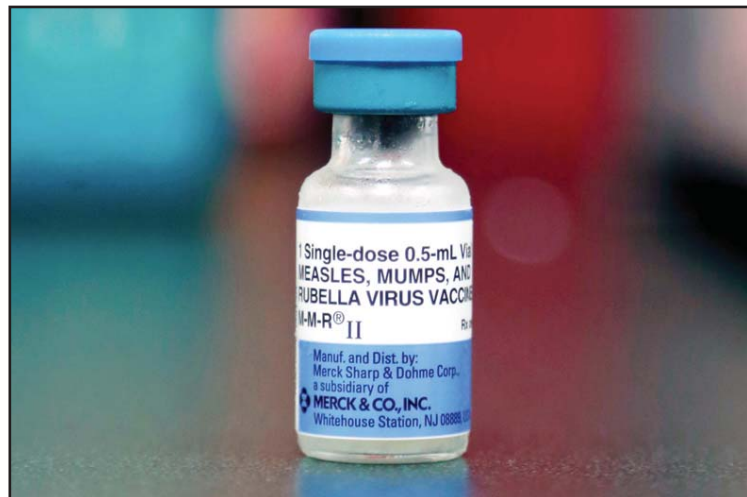
solutions by stc released a statement on how the revamped portal and its added features complement the Company's one-stop business solution mindset and its own digital transformation strategy, while focusing on enhancing customer experiences.

The Company progressively evolved and expanded its offering line within the past couple of years to emerge as a world-class digital services provider, and has since grown into a powerful one-stop shop for business and wholesale solutions, catering to the needs of government and corporate entities nationwide and across the region.

solutions by stc now offers a range of connectivity solutions such as fixed or wireless services, 5G technology led by stc, as well as ICT, IoT, AI, and other IT products and services.

The Company will continue to introduce pioneering technology enabled solutions based on the latest innovations in this digital era, serving as the preferred gateway to its customers through digital transformation.

To find out more about solutions by stc, visit www.solutions.com.kw, send an email to business@solutions.com.kw with your inquiry or contact solutions by stc at 155.



A vial of a measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is seen in Mount Vernon, Ohio, Friday, May 17, 2019. (AP)

Flu soaring across US

Measles deaths worldwide jumped 40% last year: WHO

LONDON, Nov 20, (AP): Measles deaths globally spiked by more than 40% last year and cases rose after vaccination levels dramatically dropped during the pandemic, leading health agencies said Thursday.

The highly infectious disease triggered epidemics in 37 countries last year, versus 22 countries in 2021. It sickened 9 million children and killed 136,000, mostly in poorer countries, the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a new report.

The number of measles cases also rose by nearly 20% after immunization levels dropped to their lowest in 15 years during the pandemic, the agencies said.

"The increase in measles outbreaks and deaths is staggering, but unfortunately, not unexpected given the declining vaccination rates we've seen in the past few years," said CDC's John Verteufuille, said in a statement.

Vaccine

Two doses of the measles vaccine are highly protective against the disease. Children in developing countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America and India are at highest risk. WHO and CDC said that immunization rates in poorer countries are about 66%, "a rate that shows no recovery at all from the backsliding during the pandemic."

Measles is among the most infectious diseases known and spreads in the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is most common in children under 5. Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose and a distinctive rash.

Most deaths are due to complications like encephalitis, severe dehydration, serious breathing problems and pneumonia. Complications are most likely in young children and adults over 30.

The disease has also surged in some rich countries in recent years. British health authorities warned in July that there was an extremely high risk of

outbreaks in London, with some areas of the capital reporting that only 40% of children were vaccinated.

Immunization rates against measles in the UK have never fully recovered since spurious claims that linked the vaccine to autism were made by discredited British doctor Andrew Wakefield more than two decades ago. No scientific studies have ever confirmed the link, but Wakefield's research led to millions of parents worldwide abandoning the shot.

Flu: The US flu season is underway, with at least seven states reporting high levels of illnesses and cases rising in other parts of the country, health officials say.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention posted new flu data on Friday, showing very high activity last week in Louisiana, and high activity in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, New Mexico and South Carolina. It was also high in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, the US territory where health officials declared an influenza epidemic earlier this month.

"We're off to the races," said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University infectious diseases expert. Traditionally, the winter flu season ramps up in December or January. But it took off in October last year, and is making a November entrance this year.

Flu activity was moderate but rising in New York City, Arkansas, California, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. And while flu activity has been high in Alaska for weeks, the state did not report data last week, so it wasn't part of the latest count.

Tracking during flu season relies in part on reports of people with flu-like symptoms who go to doctor's offices or hospitals; many people with the flu are not tested, so their infections aren't lab-confirmed. COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses can sometimes muddy the picture.

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): For most of her life, Claudia Stearns dreaded Thanksgiving. As a person who struggled with obesity since childhood, Stearns hated the annual turmoil of obsessing about what she ate — and the guilt of overindulging on a holiday built around food.

Now, after losing nearly 100 pounds using medications including Wegovy, a powerful new anti-obesity drug, Stearns says the "food noise" in her head has gone very, very quiet.

"Last year, it felt so lovely to just be able to enjoy my meal, to focus on being with friends and family, to focus on the joy of the day," says Stearns, 65, of Somerville, Massachusetts. "That was a whole new experience."

As millions of Americans struggling with obesity gain access to a new generation of weight-loss drugs, Stearns' experience is becoming more common — and more noticeable at the times of year when cooking, eating and a sense of abundance can define and heighten gatherings of loved ones and friends. Medical experts and consumers say the drugs are shifting not only what users eat, but also the way they think about food.

Diabetes

Others say it saps the enjoyment from social situations, including traditionally food-centric holidays like Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

"It's something that really changes a lot of things in their life," says Dr. Daniel Bessesen, chief of endocrinology at Denver Health, who treats patients with obesity. "They go from food being a central focus to it's just not."

The new obesity drugs, originally designed to treat diabetes, include semaglutide, used in Ozempic and Wegovy, and tirzepatide, used in Mounjaro and recently approved as Zepbound. Now aimed at weight loss, too, the drugs delivered as weekly injections work far

more effectively than any diet. They mimic powerful hormones that kick in after people eat to regulate appetite and the feeling of fullness communicated between the gut and the brain. Users can lose as much as 15% to 25% of their body weight, studies show.

"That's how it works — it reduces the rewarding aspects of food," explains Dr. Michael Schwartz, an expert in metabolism, diabetes and obesity at the University of Washington in Seattle. For Stearns, who started treatment in 2020, using the weight-loss medications means she can take a few bites of her favorite Thanksgiving pies — and then stop.

"I would not feel full," she says, "but I would feel satisfied." Yet such a shift can have broader implications, both religious and cultural, because it alters the experience of festive and religious holidays that are often built around interactions with

No more Thanksgiving 'gastronomic delight'?

New obesity medications change how users think of holiday meals



Cookies cool on a table on Saturday, Dec. 21, 2013, in Enid, Okla. Holiday meals may be changing for millions of Americans struggling with obesity and taking a new generation of weight-loss drugs in 2023. (AP)

food — and lots of it. "I'm Italian. For us, it's like going to church, going to a table," says Joe Sapone, 64, a retiree from Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, who lost about 100 pounds with dieting and Mounjaro. He no longer needs what he called "culinary extravaganzas" of a holiday, but he acknowledges it was an adjustment.

"Part of succeeding at this is disconnecting a good time with what you eat," he says. "Am I still going to have fun if I don't eat that much?" Many users welcome what they say is greater control over what they eat, even during the emotionally charged holiday season.

"I may be more selective of the items I put on my plate," says Tara Rothenhoefer, 48, of Trinity, Florida. She lost more than 200 pounds after joining a clinical trial testing Mounjaro for weight loss in 2020. "I don't care about the bread as much. I still eat what I enjoy."

But others on the drugs lose their

appetites entirely or suffer side effects — nausea, vomiting, diarrhea — that undermine the pleasure of any food.

"I've had a handful of patients over the years who were really miserable because they didn't enjoy food in the same way," says Dr. Katherine Saunders, an obesity expert at Weill Cornell Medicine and co-founder of IntelHealth, a clinical and software company that focuses on obesity treatment.

Weight

But, she added, most people who have turned to weight-loss medications have spent years struggling with the physical and mental burdens of chronic obesity and are relieved to discover a decreased desire for food — and grateful to shed pounds.

When people stop taking the drugs, their appetites return and they regain weight, often faster than they lost it, studies show. One early analysis found that two-thirds of patients who started taking weight-loss drugs were no longer using them a year later.

Part of that may be due to high cost and ongoing supply shortages. But the larger question of what it means to alter a basic human drive like appetite needs to be considered as well, says Dr. Jens Juul Holst of the University of Copenhagen. He is one of the researchers who first identified the gut hormone GLP-1, or glucagon-like peptide 1, which eventually led to the new class of obesity drugs.

Speaking at an international diabetes conference this fall, Holst offered a philosophical critique of the new medications' real-world impact.

"Why is it that you've lost weight? That's because you've lost your appetite. That's because you've lost the pleasure of eating and the reward of having a beautiful meal," Holst told his colleagues. "And how long can you stand that? That is the real, real question."

Consumers warned of risk of vision loss or blindness

Indian manufacturer recalls eyedrops cited in FDA warning

WASHINGTON, Nov 20, (AP): The Indian manufacturer of more than two dozen varieties of eyedrops subject to a US safety warning has officially recalled the products, which were sold by CVS Health, Target, Rite Aid and other national retailers.

Kilitch Healthcare India issued the recall recently and the Food and Drug Administration published the notice. The recall is something of a formality, since the FDA had already alerted

US stores last month to stop selling the over-the-counter drops.

Consumers should not use the products due to the risk of vision loss or blindness, the FDA said. FDA officials don't have the legal authority to force manufacturers to recall their products, and instead rely on companies to "voluntarily" do so. The FDA previously stated it recommended the manufacturer recall the eyedrops on Oct. 25.

Mumbai-based Kilitch Healthcare

said it has not received "any reports of adverse events" related to its products. The lubricating drops were distributed in the US by Velocity Pharma, based in Farmingdale, N.Y., and carry expiration dates between November 2023 and September 2025. The FDA said in its initial warning that agency inspectors found unsanitary conditions and bacterial contamination at the factory where the drops were manufactured. Agency records show no prior inspec-

tions for Kilitch Healthcare. FDA only publishes inspections to its online database after they have been completed and processed. That suggests agency officials may still be finalizing documentation from the inspection that triggered the latest recall. The FDA is responsible for assuring the safety of foreign products shipped to the US, though it has long struggled to keep pace with international pharmaceutical supply chains that increasingly begin in India.

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SPORTS

Aberg caps off amazing 6 months with another win

Yang cashes in at LPGA finale

ST. SIMONS ISLAND, Ga., Nov. 20, (AP) — Ludvig Aberg added to his astonishing second half of the year when he closed with a second straight 9-under 61 on Sunday to win the RSM Classic, his first PGA Tour title to go along with a European tour victory and a winning debut in the Ryder Cup.

And to think the 24-year-old Swede was still at Texas Tech six months ago.

Not only did he win the final event of the PGA Tour season, he did it in record fashion. His final birdie allowed Aberg to tie the 72-hole scoring record on the PGA Tour, matching the 253 of Justin Thomas at the 2017 Sony Open.

His 61-61 finish set the tour record for lowest closing 36 holes, beating by one the mark shared by Matt Jones at Kapalua in 2022 and Patrick Rodgers at Sea Island in 2019.



Amy Yang, of South Korea, poses with the trophy after winning the LPGA CME Group Tour Championship golf tournament, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023, in Naples, Florida. (AP)



Nicolai Hojgaard of Denmark kisses his trophy after he won the final round of the DP World Tour Championship golf tournament, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023. (AP)

up a valuable prize of her own. She won the points-based LPGA player of the year for the first time.

In Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Nicolai Hojgaard claimed the biggest title of his career Sunday after running off five straight birdies down the stretch for an 8-under 64 to win the season-ending World Tour Championship by two strokes.

The 22-year-old Dane delivered a clinic in iron play to set up close-range birdies start on the 13th hole. He finished at 21-under 261 to hold off Tommy Fleetwood, Viktor Hovland and Matt Wallace.

Hojgaard has now won a tournament for three consecutive years on the European tour but this was easily his biggest, earning him \$3 million.

Fleetwood closed with a 68. Hovland, already a winner in the PGA Tour finale, had also shot 68, while Wallace had a 69.

Hojgaard's twin brother, Rasmus, was on course to claim one of the 10 PGA Tour cards from the Race to Dubai rankings. He hit his second shot into the water guarding the green and only made par. Matthieu Pavon followed him and hit a wedge inside 2 feet for a birdie that lifted him above Rasmus Hojgaard, who missed out on PGA Tour status by less than 27 points.

Other Tours: Yuta Sugiura became the seventh amateur to win on the Japan Golf Tour, closing with an even-par 71 at the Dunlop Phoenix for three-shot victory over Keita Nakajima and Taiga Semikawa, two of Japan's leading players who also won as amateurs. ... Gaganjeet Bhullar of India shot a 4-under 67 to complete a wire-to-wire win at the BNI Indonesian Masters on the Asian Tour. He won by five shots over Karandeep Kochhar. ... Alexandra Forsterling of Germany closed with a 5-under 67 for a five-shot victory in the Mallorca Ladies Open on the Ladies European Tour. ... David Micheluzzi closed with a 4-under 68 for a one-shot victory over Ben Eccles in the Victorian PGA Championship on the PGA Tour of Australasia. ... Serena Aoki held off Mao Saigo with a 4-under 67 for a one-shot victory in the Daio Paper Elleair Ladies Open on the Japan LPGA. Saigo closed with a 65.

Yang holed out for eagle on the 13th fairway to overcome an early three-shot deficit, and then she let Nasa Hataoka make the mistakes in crucial moments down the stretch. Hataoka closed with a 69 and Alison Lee had a 66 to tie for second. Lee was never closer than two shots along the back nine at Tiburon Golf Club. Lee, still winless on the LPGA Tour, closed out her season with three runner-up finishes on the LPGA and a victory in Saudi Arabia on the Ladies European Tour.

Lilia Vu, a two-time major champion this year and No. 1 in the women's world ranking, closed with a 65 to finish alone in fourth and picked



Ludvig Aberg, of Sweden, watches his drive off the seventh tee during the final round of the RSM Classic golf tournament, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023, in St. Simons Island, Ga. (AP)

Esports superstar Faker's team wins trophy at League of Legends World Championship

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov. 20, (AP) — South Korea's esports powerhouse T1 won the League of Legends World Championship by defeating China-based Weibo Gaming.

South Korea's Lee "Faker" Sang-hyeok — arguably the most well-known face in the esports world — jumped out of his seat to celebrate with fellow team members Zeus, Oner, Gumayusi, and Keria as they outperformed Weibo Gaming by winning three consecutive rounds in Seoul on Sunday.

It was the team's record fourth win in one of the most popular esports tournaments in the world.

Thousands of fans, many in League of Legends costumes, filled a baseball stadium in Seoul for the championship which has become a mainstay for the billion-dollar global esports industry.



Members of team T1 celebrate with winners' trophy after winning the finals stage of the 2023 League of Legends World Championship between team T1 and team Weibo Gaming in Seoul, South Korea, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023. (AP)

ESPORTS

Wacharakorn Maneechote, a 25-year-old fan, said he flew in from Thailand to watch the final game and to cheer his favorite player Faker.

"God of our time," he said, referring to T1's leading player.

League of Legends is one of the most popular video games, where two teams of five powerful champions face each other in a bid to destroy the other's base. "Everyone plays League of Legends these days," said Jung Byeong-il, a South Korean fan.

Lee, who won gold with South Korea at the Asian Games this year, is a rock star in South Korea where gaming culture is prevalent.

Esports players are known to retire young, usually logging off before the age of 25. Lee said he will make a retirement plan "later" after "working hard for the remaining years."

Lee said one of the challenges he'd given himself was to keep his composure regardless of what was happening in the game.

"My personal goal in this final was actually to imagine an instance when we'd lose 3-0 but I'd still be smiling, and I tried to play with such a mindset," Lee said.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol made note of T1's victory on Monday, congratulating the team on his official Facebook page.

"In Hangzhou Asian Games, for which esports was selected as an official sport for the first time, South Korea won four medals. In continuation of this success, (T1) has won the League of Legends World Championship) and with this win, our country's reputation as a front-runner in esports has once again been announced to the world," Yoon said.

The championship attracted six million concurrent viewers at its peak according to the tracking and analytics service Esports Charts.

The statistics don't include Chinese live-streaming platform views due to "the unreliability of the data they provide" according to the company.

Boswell propels Arizona to win over UT-Arlington

Abmas stars as Texas outlasts Louisville

NEW YORK, Nov. 20, (AP) — Max Abmas hit a fallaway jumper at the buzzer as No. 19 Texas outlasted a stiff challenge from Louisville to earn an 81-80 victory Sunday in the Empire Classic.

In a game with 21 lead changes and 14 ties, Abmas gave the Longhorns (4-0) the dramatic win off a successful in-bounds play.

Kadin Shedrick scored a career-high 27 points for Texas. Abmas added 14 as the Longhorns shot 46.3%. Sky Clark and Tre White scored 20 apiece for the Cardinals (2-2), who were unable to finish off their first win against a ranked team since beating Virginia Tech on Jan. 6, 2021.

Arizona 101, UT-Arlington 56

In Tucson, Arizona, Kylan Boswell scored 13 of his 15 points in the second half and Arizona scored 20 straight points spanning the end of the first half and start of the second in a rout of UT-Arlington.

The Wildcats (5-0) had seven players score in double figures and have had five with 10 or more points in every game this season while averaging 99.6 points.

UConn 77, Indiana 57

In New York, Tristen Newton had 23 points and 11 rebounds and UConn pulled away in the second half to beat Indiana in the Empire Classic at Madison Square Garden. After winning their first three games by an average of 39 points, the Huskies (4-0) got their fourth double-digit win thanks largely to Newton, who also had six assists.

Cam Spencer added 18 points for the defending national champions, who led for the final 33:21 in their first meeting against Indiana since 2019. Alex Kara-

BASKETBALL

ban scored 13 and Donavan Clingan grabbed nine rebounds as UConn shot 44.6% and outrebounded Indiana 44-22.

Houston 69, Dayton 55

In Charleston, S.C., LJ Cryer had 18 points and Jamal Sheard had 16 as Houston ran past Dayton to win the Charleston Classic tournament title. Sheard scored his season high and had seven of the Cougars first nine points as they opened a 14-4 lead less than six minutes in. They are 6-0 to open for a second straight season.

Sheard, the senior who started his 66th straight game for Houston, also added six rebounds, four assists and two steals.

Miami 91, Kansas State 83

In Nassau, Bahamas, tournament MVP Nijel Pack scored 20 of his 28 points in the first half against his former school, and Miami topped Kansas State to win the Baha Mar Hoops Bahamas championship.

Norchad Omier scored 23 for the Hurricanes (5-0), who are essentially assured of tying a school record by being

Utah bags Great Alaska Shootout title

Iowa women bounce back from first loss with a win over Drake

IOWA CITY, Iowa, Nov. 20, (AP) — Caitlin Clark had 35 points and 10 assists and Kate Martin had a career-high 25 points as No. 2 Iowa responded from its first loss of the season, beating Drake 113-90 on Sunday.



Clark

The Hawkeyes (4-1), coming off a 65-58 loss to Kansas State on Thursday night, scored a program-record 64 points in the first half, shooting 75% in the first quarter and 65% in the first half.

Sharon Goodman had 15 points and Molly Davis added 10 points for the Hawkeyes. The Hawkeyes shot 64% for the game.

Utah 117, E. Kentucky 72

In Anchorage, Alaska, Alissa Pili scored 28 points, Gianna Kneep-

kens 23 and Ines Vieira added 20 to help No. 4 Utah beat Eastern Kentucky 117-72 to win the Great Alaska Shootout championship.

Pili, a native of Anchorage playing in front of dozens of friends and family, made 11 of 18 from the field and finished with eight rebounds, six assists, two steals and two blocks. Keenpens was 8-of-10 shooting, made 5 of 7 from 3-point

BASKETBALL

range and grabbed eight rebounds and Vieira hit 7 of 8 from the field, made 6 of 6 from behind the arc and had seven assists.

UConn 62, Minnesota 44

In Minneapolis, Paige Bueckers had 12 points, eight rebounds and four assists for eighth-ranked Connecticut in her hometown, and the Huskies stifled Minnesota's outside shooters on the way to a 62-44 victory over the Gophers.



Texas's Max Abmas, left, puts up the winning shot over Louisville's Sky Clark during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game, Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023, in New York. (AP)

in the AP Top 25 for the 17th consecutive week when the new poll comes out Monday. Wooga Poplar and Matthew Cleveland each scored 15 for Miami.

USC 81, Brown 70

In Los Angeles, Boggie Ellis scored 28 points and Isaiah Collier added 24 to

lead USC to victory over Brown. It wasn't easy. Ellis scored 16 points in the first half for the Trojans (3-1) and was pivotal late in holding off the pesky Bears.

Bronny James warmed up with his teammates before the game, which was believed to be the first time he's done so this season. He has yet to make his college debut after he suffered cardiac arrest at a workout at USC in July.

Michigan State 81, Alcorn State 49
In East Lansing, Michigan, Tre Holloman scored 17 points and Jaden Akins added 13 to help Michigan State roll over Alcorn State.

Jeremiah Gambrell led Alcorn State (1-4) with 12 points and Jeremiah Kendall added 11.

Illinois 88, Southern 50

In Champaign, Ill., Terrence Shannon Jr. scored 17 of his 24 points in the first half. Dain Dainja added 12 points and Quincy Guerrier had 10 to lead Illinois over Southern. A 17-point run in the final five minutes of the first half gave Illinois a 45-27 lead at the break. The Illini (4-1) weren't threatened by the Jaguars in the second half, extending their lead to as many as 34 points.

Nine of the 10 players who dressed for Southern (1-4) scored. Tai'Leon Joseph led the way with 16 points, and Jordan Mitchell added 13 points.

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Anticipation high for more spirited performance

Kuwait aim for redemption in crucial clash against Afghanistan

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

RIYADH, Nov 20: In a decisive encounter at Prince Muhammad bin Fahd Stadium in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait is set to face the Afghanistan at 8:00 pm. This match marks the second round of the first group competitions in the joint Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup.

SOCCER

Kuwait needs a win to keep their hopes alive of advancing to the next round of the World Cup. In the previous week, the team faced a setback with a narrow defeat against India, failing to meet fan expectations. Anticipation is high for a more spirited performance in this crucial match.

Portuguese coach Rui Pinto, in recent training sessions, focused on rectifying mistakes made by some players that proved costly in the previous match. Expectations are that the lineup may witness significant changes, particularly addressing the underperformance of certain players in the first



Kuwait coaches issue instructions to the players.

game.

The Kuwait delegation arrived in Dammam on Friday and underwent their first training session on the same day. To bolster the team, coach Rui Pinto decided to summon Kuwait club striker Ibrahim Kamil to fill the void left by the absence of Faisal Zayed (suspended), Ahmed Al-Zenki (enrolled in a military course), and Salman Al-Awadhi (injured).

Despite a lackluster performance in

the first match, Kuwait has a favorable opportunity to secure three points today, given Afghanistan's loss by a significant margin of eight goals to one against the Qatari team in the opening round.

The Asian Football Confederation has appointed a team of referees from Jordan to officiate the match, with the assessment task assigned to Syrian Zakaria Kanal and Thai Tanperit Pairit as the match observer.

Emotional Palestine play Australia in Kuwait

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov 20, (AP): An emotional Palestinian team will play Australia on Tuesday at the neutral venue of Kuwait after its World Cup qualifier was moved from the West Bank due to continuing conflict in the region.

Authorities in Kuwait are expecting a big crowd at the Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium with passionate support for the Palestinians, a team that has never appeared at the World Cup.

"We're very sympathetic for everyone with what's going on," Australia coach Graham Arnold said of the Gaza conflict. "But again, it's a game of football and that brings a lot of joy to everybody."

Australia can take a big step towards the final round of qualification for soccer's 2026 World Cup if it defeats the Palestinians. After beating Bangladesh 7-0 in the opening game, the Socceroos would take control of Group I with another victory against a Palestinian team that drew 0-0 against Lebanon.

Palestinian coach Makram Daboub has been unable to call all his usual squad as three of his players were unable to get out of Gaza to report for a training camp in Jordan. Those that have made it are, the Tunisian said, struggling to focus.

"The players are in the hotel or on the bus most of the

time following the news on their phones and communicating with their families," Daboub said. "They are in a constant state of anxiety with the continued aggression and war in Palestine."

Despite the concerns, Daboub was happy with the performance against Lebanon. "We should have won the game but it is a good point for us. We know that Australia is a strong team and we need to focus on that as best we can."

SOCCER

South Korea has a much shorter journey to take on rival China in Shenzhen. Both teams won opening games in Group C with South Korea, aiming for an 11th successive World Cup appearance, beating Singapore 5-0 and China, going for a second, winning 2-1 in Thailand.

Coach Aleksandar Jankovic is expecting a tough test against South Korea, a team that China has only defeated twice in 36 past meetings. "We will be facing a world-class team. South Korea is a top team, not only in terms of Asian football, but in terms of world football, in terms of individual quality, team stability and confidence," the Serbian said.

Al-Kuwait rout Golden Angel

Abu Al-Hassan takes on key role in aquatics advisory committee



Al-Shammari penetrates the Indian team's defense to score.

Al-Qadsia eye semis at Asian Club Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Kuwait Handball Club secured a resounding 43-19 victory over India's Golden Angel in the 26th edition of the Asian Club Championship at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex, known as "Al-Kuwait now boasts 4 points from two wins. Conversely, it marked the third consecutive loss for the Indian team, which has yet to secure any points in the tournament.

As the competition enters its fifth day, today's schedule includes five matches in the fourth round of the group stage. Among these, the clash between Kuwait and Al-Khaleej Saudi Arabia holds significant importance, as it will determine the two teams qualify-

HANDBALL

ing for the semi-finals in the first group. A similar high-stakes situation applies to the match between Al-Qadsia and Al-Arabi of Qatar, where the host team aims to secure a victory and solidify its spot in the tournament's semi-finals.

Expressing gratitude, Hassan Kamel Saleh, the head of the Lebanese Youth Sports Club delegation (Haret Sidon), extended sincere thanks to Al-Qadsia Club and the organizing committee for hosting the 26th Asian Club Handball Championship. He emphasized the significance of the club's participation in the tournament amid challenging circumstances in Lebanon. Additionally, Hassan Farhan, head of the Iraqi army delegation, highlighted their participation in the continental tournament, emphasizing the importance of such events for Iraqi teams after a prolonged absence from major tournaments.

The competition remains a platform for teams to showcase their skills and determination, contributing to the growth and recognition of handball in the Asian region.



Argentina's Lionel Messi controls the ball during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup 2026 against Uruguay at La Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires, Argentina. (AP)

'Samba Boys' try to avert crisis in Rio

Messi seeks 1st goal against Brazil in World Cup qualifying

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 20, (AP): Lionel Messi has few barriers yet to break in soccer. One of them will be in reach Tuesday, when Argentina visits Brazil in a South American World Cup qualifying match.

The 36-year-old Messi has scored 31 goals for Argentina in World Cup qualifying encounters, but none of those came against Brazil, home or away. He has five goals against the archrival, all in friendly matches.

Brazil's soccer confederation said all 69,000 tickets for the clash at the Maracana Stadium are sold. Both teams will play after defeats in the previous round; the locals lost 2-1 at Colombia and the World Cup champion was defeated at home 2-0 by Uruguay.

Many Brazilian fans are keen to watch Messi in a match that could be his last in Rio de Janeiro playing for Argentina. In the same arena, the star lost the 2014 World Cup final to Germany, and beat the host in the decider of the 2021 Copa America.



Endrick of Brazil's Palmeiras controls the ball during a Copa Libertadores quarterfinal second leg soccer match against Colombia's Deportivo Pereira in Sao Paulo, Brazil. (AP)

Argentina leads the 10-team South American qualifying group with 12 points from five matches. Uruguay is

second with 10 points. Colombia has nine and Venezuela eight. Brazil will host the World Cup champions in fifth position, with seven points.

Ecuador, Paraguay and Chile have five points each. Bolivia has three and Peru one.

The 2026 World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada will include 48 teams, meaning direct entry

SOCCER

for the top six teams from South America. The seventh-place team can earn a berth in an intercontinental playoff.

Optimism is in short supply in Brazil, which lost its two latest matches and is struggling under new coach Fernando Diniz. A defeat to Argentina could be the team's first ever in a home

match of World Cup qualifying, and the hosts will have several absences for that encounter.

Carlos Augusto is likely to start as left-back for the first time, Jesus will take the role of injured Vinicius Junior up front and teenage sensation Endrick is likely to play in the second half.

The 17-year-old Endrick, who will join Real Madrid next year, spoke in a press conference about his expectations of playing against Messi for the first time.

"For me, Pelé is the king and no one will get near him. Messi is phenomenal, the best in the world again, and I want to enjoy playing against him, a man I only saw in the videogames," the striker said. "I am more of a Cristiano Ronaldo fan, but it will be wonderful to see Messi up close."

Argentina will arrive in Brazil late



Faisal Abu Al-Hassan

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The International Aquatics Federation has appointed Faisal Abu Al-Hassan, a distinguished member of the Kuwaiti Federation, to its executive office's advisory committee. Comprising renowned experts, the committee aims to enhance and contribute to the development of the federation's six major competitions, as outlined in a statement released by the Kuwaiti Federation.

Abu Al-Hassan earned this role due to his extensive expertise across all facets of the federation's competitions, encompassing swimming, diving, water polo, artistic swimming (ballet), open water swimming, and high diving, as stated in the official announcement.

Expressing his enthusiasm, Abu Al-Hassan shared that he is now a proud member of the federation's advisory committee, led by Christopher Burton, the President of the American Aquatics Federation. He looks forward to actively participating in the refinement of regulations for the International Federation, as well as continental and national federations, with the overarching goal of benefiting all sports

and athletes. It's noteworthy that the International Aquatics Federation, under the leadership of Kuwaiti Hussein Al-Musallam, has been a pivotal organization since its founding in 1908. Recognized by the International Olympic Committee, it oversees the management of water sports competitions globally.

Nigeria stumble to 2nd consecutive draw

BUTARE, Rwanda, Nov 20 (AP): Kelechi Iheanacho equalized to salvage a 1-1 draw for Nigeria against Zimbabwe as both sides opened their World Cup qualifying campaigns with two consecutive draws.

Zimbabwe, hosting games in Rwanda because of a lack of suitable stadiums at home, took the lead in the 26th minute through a free kick by forward Walter Musona, who hammered the ball into the top corner from 30 yards out.

The better side in the first half, Zimbabwe appeared unfazed by the opposition's pedigree, knocking the ball around confidently and defending solidly when out of possession.

Nigeria came into the game in the second half, though Zimbabwe also had chances to win.

Leicester forward Iheanacho, a second-half substitute for the Super Eagles, scored the equalizer in the 67th with a clinical finish inside the box after he was set up by captain Moses Simon.

In their opening matches, Zimbabwe drew 0-0 away to Rwanda on Wednesday while Nigeria was surprisingly held to a 1-1 at home draw by Lesotho on Thursday.

The result leaves both teams on two points in Group C, one point behind leader South Africa, which has a game in hand.

Dr. Al-Sharji participates in European Handball Conference



Former technical director of the Kuwaiti Handball Federation Dr. Khaled Al-Sharji addressing participants.

PORTO, Nov 20: Dr. Khaled Al-Sharji, the former technical director of the Kuwaiti Handball Federation, international lecturer, and member of the coaches committee of the Asian Handball Federation, is actively participating in the seventh scientific conference organized by the European Handball Federation in Porto, Portugal.

Presenting a scientific paper

HANDBALL

alongside a distinguished group of handball experts and academics, Dr. Al-Sharji stands as the sole Arab and Asian representative in this esteemed conference. With over 200 researchers and a substantial audience in attendance, the conference serves as a platform for the dissemination of the latest scientific studies and findings in the field of handball.



Pakistan's Haris Rauf reacts after bowling during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup match between Pakistan and England in Kolkata, India. (AP)

Sports

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Al-Arabi considering constructing new stadium in different location

Al-Baidan calls for club privatization and accountability

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Youssef Al-Baidan, Director of the General Authority for Sports, emphasized the responsibility of general assemblies in sports federations for evaluating their performance. Whether their tenure spans a year or completes an electoral cycle, Al-Baidan stated that if a federation fails, it is essential to reward successful initiatives and hold those accountable for failures.

In a recent television interview, Al-Baidan clarified that he is not blaming the Football Association for Kuwait's loss to India, emphasizing that any federation's failure to work or produce results should prompt a change. He highlighted that changing an unsuccessful union is not a mistake, and the authority, as a financial regulatory body, can cease support for any underperforming union according to the law.

Addressing club privatization, Al-Baidan emphasized the need for implementation as part of upcoming professionalism laws. He stated that club allocation should be based on institutional merit rather than random selection, adhering to legal frameworks.



Youssef Al-Baidan, Director of the General Authority for Sports.

Regarding stadium development, Al-Baidan mentioned that design tenders have been signed for Kuwait, Al-Qadsia, and Kazma stadiums. He also noted that Al-Arabi is considering constructing a new stadium in a different location.

Al-Baidan highlighted the importance of transparency in candidate selection, advocating for the availability of CVs

Messi World Cup shirts to be auctioned

LONDON, Nov 20, (AP): Sotheby's is to auction six shirts worn by Lionel Messi during Argentina's winning run at last year's soccer World Cup in Qatar and thinks they could become the most valuable collection of sports memorabilia ever sold at potentially more than \$10 million.

The auction house said Monday that it will put up for sale in New York six of the seven first-half shirts the Argentina captain wore in Qatar, including the one he donned in the dramatic win in the final against France.

Argentina won the final, and its third World Cup, in a penalty shootout after a 3-3 draw at the

Lusail Stadium, in which Messi had scored two goals.

SOCCER

Sotheby's, which was founded in London in 1744, will offer Messi's shirts in New York between Nov. 30 and Dec. 14. The shirts will be on view at its New York headquarters in a free, public exhibition during the bidding dates.

It is working with U.S.-based tech startup AC Memento, which partners with high-profile athletes to help manage their match-worn memorabilia.

for all club and federation members to address challenges to the authenticity of some candidates' credentials.

Regarding investment opportunities,

Al-Baidan affirmed that all clubs have the right to invest, but active participation from boards of directors is crucial for successful outcomes in this aspect.

Al-Kharafi 'emerges' victorious at Jahiz International Show Jumping



Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi receives trophy from Mohammed Al-Barrak.

RIYADH, Nov 20: Kuwait Club and National Equestrian Team rider, Ali Jassim Al-Kharafi, secured victory in the prestigious "Jahiz" International Show Jumping Championship, competing in the "three-star" category. Hosted by the Saudi Equestrian Federation, the event saw the participation of 135 skilled riders from 17 countries worldwide.

EQUESTRIAN

In the Grand Prix race, a challenging 150 cm course featuring 24 male and female riders, Ali Al-Kharafi exhibited exceptional skill aboard his horse "I." In a fierce competition, he emerged triumphant, claiming the coveted first place and the gold medal. The Saudi rider, Kamal Bahamdan, secured second place, followed by Khalid Al-Mubti from Saudi Arabia and Thai rider Jingbahun Kramidage. The crowning ceremony for the champions was conducted by Mohammed Al-Barrak, CEO of Information Technology at Jahaz Company.

Maintaining his stellar performance, Al-Kharafi continued to shine by clinching the top spot in the middle-class race at a height of 135 cm, riding his horse "Karat." In this race, which featured 40 male and female riders, his compatriot Anaz Al-Anaz secured the seventh position riding "Crownie." The awards were presented by Afnan Al-Khader, representing the actor Ready company. Abdullah Al-Awadi achieved a commendable fifth place in the 130 cm race riding his horse "Dee Dee," further adding to Kuwait's success in the championship.

Serbia lock up spot at Euro 2024

Belgium's Lukaku sets record; Spain's Gavi injured

BRUSSELS, Nov 20, (AP): Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku scored four first-half goals to lead a 5-0 rout of 10-man Azerbaijan in their final European Championship qualifying game, and Serbia locked up their spot at Euro 2024 after drawing 2-2 with Bulgaria.

Spain's 3-1 win over Georgia was overshadowed by Barcelona midfielder Gavi suffering what appeared to be a serious injury to his right knee.

Lukaku leads scoring in the qualifiers with 14 goals, four more than Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo and five ahead of France's Kylian Mbappe.

SOCCER

Lukaku's haul is a record for a European Championship qualifying campaign, beating the previous mark of 13 goals held by Poland's Robert Lewandowski (in Euro 2016 qualifying) and Northern Ireland's David Healy (in Euro 2008 qualifying).

The Roma striker took all four of his goals between the 17th and 37th minutes in an awesome display of clinical finishing.

Following Lukaku's opener to make it 1-0, Azerbaijan went down to 10 players in the 24th after Eddy Paschal got his second yellow card.

Belgium had already qualified along with Austria from Group F before the game in Brussels, but the victory meant it finished in first place with 20 points from eight games, one point more than Austria. Sweden beat Estonia 2-0 and ended up third in the group.

Lukaku, who was also celebrating his son's birthday, said that his team was poised to "go far" in Germany.

Lukaku started qualifying by scoring a hat trick against Sweden in March. The 30-year-old striker only failed to score in one of the eight qualifying games. Azerbaijan frustrated him in September in a 1-0 win for Belgium.

He has also scored nine goals in 14 games for Roma since he was loaned to the Italian club from Chelsea in the offseason.

Serbia needed a draw or for Montenegro to not beat Hungary to advance to next year's tournament in Germany.

There was a moment when Serbia appeared to be in trouble after Montenegro went ahead 1-0 against Hungary while Bulgaria led Serbia 2-1.

But Serbia defender Srdan Babic's equalizer in the 82nd ensured that they needed no help.

The already-qualified Hungary rallied to beat Montenegro 3-1, led by midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai's brace.

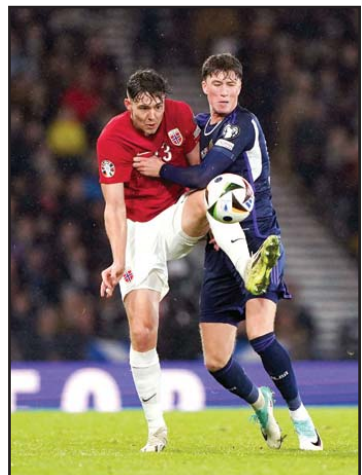
Hungary finished Group G with 18 points from eight games. Serbia are second with 14, and Montenegro third with 11.

Hungary secured their place on Thursday when they won at Bulgaria. The match was marred by violence when local fans clashed with police on the streets of Sofia during a protest over the management of the national soccer union.

Only the top two finishers from each



Serbia's Stefan Mitrovic (left), challenges for the ball with Bulgaria's Viktor Popov during the Euro 2024 group G qualifying soccer match between Serbia and Bulgaria at the Dubocica stadium in Leskovac, Serbia. (AP)



Norway's Jorgen Larsen (left), and Scotland's Jack Hendry battle for the ball during the Euro 2024 Qualifying Group A soccer match between Scotland and Norway at Hampden Park, in Glasgow, Scotland. (AP)

of the 10 groups advance. Another three spots will be determined in a playoff linked to performances in the Nations League. Hosts Germany automatically qualify.

Ferran Torres scored one goal after setting up Robin Le Normand's opener in Spain's win to finish atop Group A.

Gavi was in tears when he limped off the field in the 24th minute in Valladolid.

Gavi's goal for Spain in a 1-0 win at Norway in October had already secured spots for both Spain and Scotland at next year's tournament in Germany.

The 19-year-old Barcelona player took a hard hit to the side of his right

Serb beats Sinner in straight sets

Djokovic wins record 7th ATP Finals title

TURIN, Italy, Nov 20 (AP): Novak Djokovic ended the year just as he started it - by setting records. The top-ranked Djokovic won a record-breaking seventh ATP Finals title on Sunday with a straight-set victory over home favorite Jannik Sinner.

Djokovic took 1 hour, 43 minutes to win 6-3, 6-3 as the Serbian continues to reach new heights at the age of 36.

He started 2023 with a record-extending 10th Australian Open title and went on to claim his 23rd Grand Slam singles trophy at the French Open, breaking Rafael Nadal's mark. Djokovic, who lost the Wimbledon final to Carlos Alcaraz, also won the U.S. Open.

"One of the best seasons I've had in my life, no doubt," Djokovic said. "To crown it with a win against a hometown hero in Jannik, who has played amazing tennis this week, is phenomenal." Djokovic entered Sunday's final tied with

knee when he and a Georgia player collided a few minutes before he had to come off. He kept playing and appeared to hurt the same leg while trying to control a ball. After that he immediately signaled to the team that he could not continue.

Scotland are second with 17 points after they drew 3-3 with Norway in a Glasgow thriller.

Bruno Fernandes and Ricardo Horta scored in Portugal's 2-0 win over Iceland in Lisbon to make it a clean sweep of 10 wins in as many qualifiers for Roberto Martinez's team.

Slovakia beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 2-1 also in Group J, and Luxembourg beat Liechtenstein 1-0.

Portugal and Slovakia had already qualified.

Roger Federer on six titles at the season-ending tournament for the year's top eight players.

And he stretched out his arms and beamed broadly after clinching his seventh when Sinner double-faulted. The victory had echoes of the clinical way Djokovic dispatched second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz in Saturday's semifinal encounter.

TENNIS

"I'm very proud of the performances these last two days against Alcaraz and Sinner, probably the best two players in the world next to me and (Daniil) Medvedev at the moment, and the way they have been playing I had to step it up," Djokovic said.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates with the trophy after winning the singles final tennis match of the ATP World Tour Finals at the Pala Alpitour, in Turin, Italy. (AP)

Rauf pulls out of tour of Australia

ISLAMABAD, Nov 20, (AP): Fast bowler Haris Rauf pulled out of the Pakistan team and three uncapped players were named Monday in an 18-member squad for the test tour of Australia.

Left-handed opening batter Saim Ayub, fast bowler Khuram Shahzad and allrounder Amir Jamal got their maiden call-ups after an impressive run in recent cricket tournaments.

Newly appointed chief selector Wahab Riaz said Rauf was in the plans for Pakistan's three test matches in Australia, but the express fast bowler pulled out on Sunday night despite confirming his availability two days ago.

CRICKET

Riaz said the medical panel of the Pakistan Cricket Board informed him that there were no fitness issues with Rauf and he could play test matches. The chief selector and team director Mohammad Hafeez later sat together with Rauf, but the fast bowler pulled out at the last moment.

Three front-line fast bowlers - Naseem Shah, Ihsanullah and Mohammad Hasnain - all were ruled out of the tour because of injuries.

The selectors have named Shahzad, a 23-year-old fast bowler, alongside experienced bowlers Shaheen Afridi and Hasan Ali. Jamal, who has represented Pakistan in T20s against England, is in the squad as a seam-bowling allrounder.

Squad: Shan Masood (captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shaifque, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Khuram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim, Noman Ali, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel and Shaheen Afridi.