

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	05:01	Asr .....	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:24	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr .....	11:37	Isha .....	18:11

# Local

VACCINE REGISTRATION WEBSITE: [https://cov19vaccine.moh.gov.kw/SPCMS/CVD\\_19\\_Vaccine\\_Registration.aspx](https://cov19vaccine.moh.gov.kw/SPCMS/CVD_19_Vaccine_Registration.aspx)

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind with speeds of 15-40 km/h.  
**By Night:** Rather cold and part-

## Weather

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	27	17
Kuwait Airport	28	11
Abdaly	28	11

Jahra	29	14
Salmiyah	27	20
Ahmadi	26	20
Nuwaisib	28	13
Wafra	28	10
Salmiyah	28	12
Jal Aliyah	29	16

## Variants

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He said other variants also have sparked this quirk in PCR test results, but not the delta variant. With delta so dominant in the U.S. right now, an S-dropout result will get noticed, Bedford said. (Bedford receives funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press Health and Science Department.)

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said it is "inevitable" that omicron will make its way into the United States.

Many experts said it's probably already here and will be picked up by the surveillance system soon. But the question is, then what?

University of Wisconsin AIDS researcher David O'Connor noted: "We don't have the sorts of interstate travel restrictions that would make it possible to contain the virus in any one place."

Instead, genomic surveillance will tell officials if omicron is spreading unusually fast somewhere and whether more resources should be sent to those places, he said.

When omicron does surface, public health authorities will have to consider other variables in their triage efforts, such as the level of infection already present in that community and the vaccination rate. Serious outbreaks in highly vaccinated areas would be particularly concerning.

Still, the University of Minnesota's Beckman sees little upside in vastly ramping up sequencing.

"You don't need to sequence more than a few percent of positive cases to get a feel for how quickly it's growing," he said.

Unlike in some other countries, U.S. government officials haven't exercised the authority to force people to quarantine if they test positive for worrisome variants. Given that, sequencing is mainly a surveillance tool for tracking mutations' spread.

"I think it's important to track variants, but I don't think it's practical to think that we're going to be able to sequence quickly and broadly enough to stop a variant in its tracks," Beckman said. (AP)

## Variant keeps

Continued from Page 1

"CDC is evaluating how to make international travel as safe as possible, including pre-departure testing closer to the time of flight and considerations around additional post-arrival testing and self-quarantines," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said earlier Tuesday.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's plans before the announcement, said options under consideration also include post-arrival testing requirements or even self-quarantines.

CDC currently recommends post-arrival testing 3-5 days after landing in the U.S. from overseas and self-quarantine for unvaccinated travelers, though compliance is voluntary and is believed to be low.

The move comes just weeks after the U.S. largely reopened its borders to fully vaccinated foreign travelers on Nov. 8 and instituted a two-tiered testing system that allowed fully vaccinated travelers more time to seek a pre-arrival test, while requiring a test within a day of boarding for the unvaccinated.

Much remains unknown about the new variant, which has been identified in more than 20 countries but not yet in the U.S., including whether it is more contagious, whether it makes people more seriously ill, and whether it can thwart the vaccine. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, said more would be known about the omicron strain in two to four weeks as scientists grow and test lab samples of the virus.

A Romanian state-owned aircraft brought 70 passengers from South Africa to Bucharest after concerns about the omicron variant of the coronavirus led to flight cancellations that left people stranded.

Romania's foreign ministry said 46 of the passengers on the flight that landed Tuesday afternoon were Romanian citizens and included members of a professional Romanian rugby team. The remaining passengers were citizens of European Union nations or other countries, the ministry said.

"European solidarity is a tangible reality," Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu wrote online after the aircraft landed, noting that 18 EU citizens not from Romania were on the flight.

Seven Romanian citizens in Cape Town failed to board the repatriation flight due to logistical reasons or lack of a PCR test, authorities said.

More on the pandemic:  
 - New information shows omicron spread wider earlier than thought

- The EU's medical agency says it will take two weeks to have an indication whether the current COVID-19 vaccines will be able to deal with the new omicron variant

- U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell says new COVID-19 variant could slow the economy and hiring, while also raising uncertainty about inflation.

- Face masks are again mandatory in England in shops and on public transport due to the new variant

- See all of AP's pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## National Bank of Kuwait rallies 13 files, Jazeera Airways slips

## Boursa kicks off month with robust rebound, volume shrinks

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 1: Kuwait bourse witnessed robust rebound on Wednesday as it kicked off the month on a solid note. The All Shares Index, after a wobbly start, vaulted 139.44 points to 6,929.40 pts paced by blue chips.

The Premier Market soared 175.20 points during whole of November while Main Market jumped 60.68. The BK Main 50 galloped 89.97 points to 5,953 points. The volume turnover meanwhile retreated following Tuesday's rebound. Over 387 million shares changed hands - down 8 pct from the day before.

The sectors closed mostly in green turf. Financial Services outshone the rest with 2.45 percent gain whereas Energy shed 0.98 pct, the worst performer of the day. Volume wise, Financial Services topped with 199.2 million shares while Banking sector dominated in value with KD 32.19 million.

Among the prime movers, National Bank of Kuwait rallied 13 files to 997 files on back of 4.2 million shares while Kuwait Finance House sprinted 18 files with a volume of 12.9 million. Boubyan Bank soared to jump 18 files to 776 files and Ahli United Bank BSC galloped 21 files

to 285 files. Mabane Co scaled 12 files while Humansoft Holding darted 50 files to KD 3.250. Noor Financial Investment Co surged 16 files to 327 files.

Zain rallied 16 files to 585 files on back of over 3 million shares whereas Ooredoo stood pat at 647 files, stc eased 1 fil to 849 files and logistics major Agility sprinted 9 files to 931 files. KIPCO rose 3 files to 143 files while National Investment Co dialed up 2 files after pushing 3.4 million shares. Tameen Real Estate Co shed 8 files and Real Estate Trade Centre slid 16 files to 69.5 files. Mezzan Holding paused at 590 files.

National Industries Group climbed 15 files to 270 files on back of 4.5 million shares and Gulf Cable followed suit to end at 920 files. Boubyan Petrochemical Co rose 10 files to 835 files while Qurain Petrochemical Co added 3 files. Jazeera Airways clipped 2 files whereas ALAFCO scaled 5 files after pushing 3.4 million shares. Integrated Holding and Aznour took in 2 files whereas Boursa Kuwait Securities gave up 6 files.

The market opened gap up and rose briefly in early trade. The main index flipped and headed south to plumb the day's lowest level of 6,855 points before pivoting north as buying picked up at

low levels. It drifted sideways in the second half and closed with strong gains.

Top gainer of the day, IFA Hotels and Resort soared 14.40 percent and GFH scaled 10.84 pct to stand next. Marakez declined 18.7 percent, the steepest decliner of the day and GFH also topped the volume with 124 million shares.

Reflecting the day's gain, the market spread was heavily skewed towards the winners. 97 stocks advanced whereas 37 closed lower. Of the 143 counters active on Wednesday, 9 closed flat, 15,591 deals worth KD 71.75 million were transacted during the session.

In the banking sector, Gulf Bank climbed 4 files to 248 files on back of 7.8 million shares and Borgan Bank followed suit. Kuwait International Bank paced 3 files while Warba Bank took in 2 files.

Kuwait Cement Co climbed 13 files to 239 files whereas Kuwait Portland Cement was unchanged at 979 files. HEISC rose 5 files to 465 files and Shuaiba Industrial added 2 files. Metal and Recycling Co paced 3.5 files with thin trading whereas Kuwait Foundry Co gave up 4 files. ACICO Industries was up 3 files at 126 files NCCI dialed up 2 files and Equipment Holding inched 0.3 fil lower to 51.7 files.

Kuwait and Gulf Links Transport Co took in 1.7 files whereas Educational Holding closed 4 files in red. Independent Petroleum Group dropped 10 files to 590 files and Kuwait Hotels gave up 11.8 files. Warba Capital Holding slipped 4.8 files to 95 files and NICBM climbed 8 files to 198 files. Sultan Centre rose 4 files to 218 files and Arabi Group Holding took in 1 fil.

Borgan Company For Well Drilling fell 2 files to 140 files whereas Combined Group Contracting Co paced 5 files. IFA Hotels and Resorts gained 7.3 files on back of over 3 million shares and OSOS Holding dialed down 2 files. Automated Systems Co was flat at 102 files whereas KCPC eased 1 fil to 519 files. United Projects Co soared 25 files to 275 files.

Egypt Kuwait Holding fell 2 files to 416 files and Mubbaard Holding closed 3.1 files in green. Oula Fuel Marketing tripped 2 files whereas Soor Fuel Marketing added 2 files. Inovest BSC rose 3 files to 110 files while GFH Financial Group sprinted 9 files to 92 files.

The market has been mixed so far during the week and has dipped 188 points in last four sessions. It has slid 327 points during whole of November and is up 1,383 points year-to-date.

▼	USS/KD 0.30240/50
▲	Euro/KD 0.3432
▲	Yen/KD 0.0027
▲	British £/KD 0.4032
■	Indian Rs/KD 0.0040
■	Philippines Peso/KD 0.0060
▲	FTSE +79.24 pts at 18:50 Dec 01
▲	Nikkei +113.86 pts at closing Dec 01
▼	Gold \$1786.80 per oz (London)
▲	NYMEX crude \$68.43 pb
▲	Brent crude \$71.55 pb
	LIBOR rate 0.17325%



Editor in Chief of the Arab Times and Al Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah meets in his office the Belgium Ambassador to Kuwait, Marc Trenteseau.

## Belgian envoy visits Al-Seyassah

Editor-in-Chief of the Arab Times and Al Seyassah newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah received in his office the Belgium Ambassador to Kuwait, Marc Trenteseau. The two discussed about matters of mutual interest.

## 'Traders push for VAT will never succeed'

## Bill proposes 2 hours off for new moms

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
 Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 1: MP Saleh Ziaib Al-Mutairi submitted a bill to amend Children and Women's Rights Law No. 21/2015 in order to grant female Kuwaiti public sector employees who are taking care of their children two hours off to carry out their maternal duties; such that they report for work from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm without salary deduction.

He affirmed the bill is based on the Constitution that states the family is the basic unit of society and its rights must be protected.

MP Abdullah Al-Turaiji has proposed naming playgrounds and entrances at Jaber Al-Ahmad Stadium after the Kuwaiti athletes with remarkable achievements -- those who won medals in group or individual sports. He said the Ministry of Education and Public Authority for Sports should specify the criteria and requirements for choosing these athletes, adding their short biographies will be displayed in public sports facilities.

MP Hesham Al-Saleh submitted a proposal for the Ministry of Public Works to receive the plots ready for construction in blocks one and two in Khaitan from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), and then distribute them to the housing grant beneficiaries. He explained the proposal aims to save time, instead of waiting for the entire area to be free from rubble.

MP Hamad Rouhaldeen has proposed exempting beneficiaries of housing plots in Khaitan from paying KD15,000 for the plot and then require them to shoulder the cost for the removal of debris.

In a related development, Rouhaldeen asked Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Information Technology Affairs Rana Al-Fares why the PAHW has yet to receive the housing project site in Khaitan. He wants to know the reason behind the delay, steps taken against whoever caused the delay, when did PAHW find that the site contains rubbles, measures taken in this regard, expected date of implementing the debris removal plan if any, cost of removing the debris, and if PAHW conducted a study on requiring the beneficiaries to remove the debris on their own expense.

MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa forwarded queries to Minister of Oil and Higher Education Dr Muhammad Al-Fares about the delayed implementation of the project of Kuwait National Petroleum Corporation (KNPC) and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) for the exploration of gas and oil in Gulf waters.

He disclosed the tender was awarded to Schlumberger Company which offered the lowest price -- KD140 million; but KNPC cancelled it later and then replaced Schlumberger with the company that offered the second lowest price -- KD40 million higher than the offer of Schlumberger. He said the project was supposed to start on June 1, 2019 but nothing has been

## MEW staff get deadline

## Update data before Feb

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 1: As of yesterday, 14,500 employees out of about 27,000 employees in the Ministry of Electricity and Water responded to the calls of the planning, follow-up and administrative affairs sectors to update their data according to the new fingerprint system implemented by the ministry, reports Al-Anba daily.

Informed sources in the ministry told the daily that the remaining number should go as quickly as possible to the approved offices in the ministry for the fingerprint team to renew their data so that the team can activate the entire system before next February, according to the terms of the contract with the executing company.

The sources explained the Administrative Affairs Sector had previously issued circulars obligating employees to update their data to avoid legal accountability, in order to ensure the completion of the project on time.

In the same context, the sources announced that one of the sites at the entrance of the ministry was equipped yesterday with the necessary devices to activate the new fingerprint system within 170 sites that were identified in order to ensure the distribution of employees and not to be crowded in one place.

The sources pointed out that the second specified sites were completed, where the devices were installed and tested in preparation for their introduction into the system.

The sources stated that these devices are prepared to receive the face, fingerprint and smart fingerprint, that is, the phone's fingerprint, through which the attendance of the employees can be monitored through special applications on their phones, which are scheduled to start working after the system is fully activated.

done till date. He wants to know the negative effects of such delay on the national oil and gas reserves.

Meanwhile, MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari said the attempts of traders to push for the implementation of Value Added Tax (VAT) will never succeed, indicating these traders are trying to mislead the citizens by claiming that the implementation of VAT will not affect them negatively even if this is an indirect tax that will be added to the prices of most commodities and services in every stage of production and circulation. He warned this will lead to price hikes, asserting the citizens are fully aware of such misleading statements issued by opportunists.

Furthermore, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim sent a cable to greet President of the National Assembly of Central Africa Simplicie Sarandji on the National Day of his country.

Al-Ghanim sent a similar cable to Speaker of the Federal National Council in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Saqr Ghobash Saeed Al-Merri on the 50th National Day of the UAE.

## Visa trading in full swing

'Selling illusions'

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 1: "From Kuwait to Egypt" - this is how brokers of visa trade have crossed borders ... through a criminal activity that is based on trafficking in the sweat of toiling people and selling illusions to those looking for opportunities to earn a "halal" (legitimate) livelihood, reports Al-Qabas daily.**

Just seven months after this issue was highlighted by Al-Qabas daily in its issue on April 30, 2019 regarding one such broker, an Egyptian who fled Kuwait and was arrested in one of the governorates of Upper Egypt, the Egyptian arm of law caught up with him this week and sentenced him to four-year imprisonment with hard labor. The court obligated him to compensate his victims financially.

Investigations into the case, as obtained by the daily, revealed that the accused had professionally brokered to sell visas and bring workers under the sponsorship of fictitious companies. He later fled back to his country after the COVID-19 crisis, but he was arrested there after hundreds of workers whom he conned had filed lawsuits against him.

According to investigations and security information, it was found that the accused possesses bank balances exceeding 400 million Egyptian pounds which he obtained through visa trade. He also owned real estate in various parts of Egypt. For years, he worked for the benefit of fictitious companies, whose owners were convicted in several cases following the COVID-19 crisis.

This week, the victims and their families flocked to a court in Upper Egypt, where the judge listened to the complaints of some of them. They revealed that the accused was residing in Jahra from where he conducted his illicit business of conning hundreds of his countrymen by promising to provide jobs for them in Kuwait at a cost of KD 1,500 per visa but later left them out on the streets to fend for themselves.

The investigations revealed that the broker received 30 percent of the visa-trade proceeds, and the rest went to the owners of fictitious companies who were disavowing workers upon their arrival in Kuwait. All this was exposed during the COVID-19 crisis.

According to security sources, the accused was charged with illicit gain, after discovering that the money he owned originated from Kuwait, where his bank balances exceed millions of pounds. He also owned real-estate properties including houses and lands. With the correspondence of the reports, a suspicion of human trafficking, fraud, and illegal business was detected. Cases are ongoing in regard to other charges.

Since the time of his arrest, reports continued to pile up against him, all of which were related to human trafficking, fraud, selling of fake visas to Kuwait, and establishing partnerships with Kuwaitis who own fictitious companies.

This was based on investigations and information obtained by the Egyptian authorities from their Kuwaiti counterparts, in addition to the statements of the victims.

Locally, coordination is ongoing between the General Department for Residency Affairs and the Public Authority for Manpower to control the fake labor offices, which advertise the sale and transfer of residency through social media platforms, or provide services in exchange for money from October 1 to November 22.