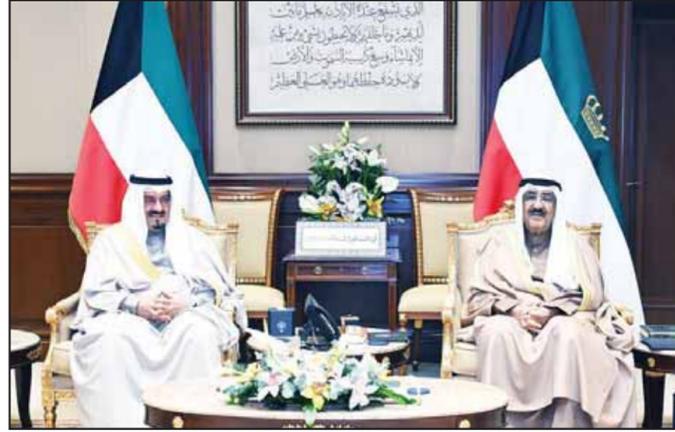




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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received in Bayan Palace on Tuesday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Appeals filing to open

'Granting citizenship is sovereign matter'

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah announced that the process for filing complaints about withdrawn citizenship will begin soon.

Speaking on the sidelines of the UAE embassy's 53rd National Day celebration, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef emphasized that the Constitutional Court has made it clear that granting citizenship is a sovereign matter.

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- 5 Emirati heritage shines at UAE Embassy's 53rd National Day
- 9 Agility recognized for advancing Kuwait's cybersecurity talent and capabilities
- 9 NBK acquires 51% of capital of leading payment service provider, UPayments
- 9 Gulf Capital Investment Company 'InvestGB' announces strategic partnership with 'AWMS'

Kuwait camping season sees 90% in crime reduction after security boost

1,300 people deported since beginning of year: Brig Gen Al-Ajmi

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Police officers stationed at the security checkpoint at the end of Jaber Bridge in the northern part of Kuwait work around the clock to ensure the safety and stability of both citizens and residents.

The daily visited the security checkpoint to observe the important security preparations for the desert season.

According to the Commander of Mutlaa Brigadier General Mohammad Fahad Al-Ajmi, the Jahra Security Directorate has mobilized all resources for security deployments in the desert areas in Subiya, Mutlaa, and Abdali farms. The aim is to prevent any unlawful activities, maintain public order, and act quickly for dealing with reports.

He revealed that the crime rate during the camping season has dropped by 90 percent compared to previous years, thanks to the heightened security presence and the quick response to reports.

Brigadier General Mohammad Fahad Al-Ajmi explained that food truck stops have been organized by designating a specific area for them on Subiya Road. It is prohibited for grocery stores and food trucks to operate in the desert in order to prevent problems, disputes, or harassment. Also, illegal workers found in these areas are immediately deported, and any unlicensed grocery stores or trucks are seized by the municipality.

Vehicles are not searched at checkpoints unless there is a clear criminal offense or the individual is acting suspiciously.

Most of the reports received at the security point are related to providing humanitarian services, such as assisting with "flooding" in the desert, and dealing with harassment and gatherings, all of which are dealt with immediately.

Here are the details of the interview:

Question: What are the security preparations for the camping season?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: The Jahra Security Directorate has made all necessary security preparations, including setting up a security checkpoint in Subiya desert at the end of Jaber Bridge. Patrol presence has been intensified in the Mutlaa desert and Abdali farms to ensure the security of desert and farm visitors. This is achieved through a strong presence of security personnel, detectives, and patrol officers who provide essential services and assistance.

Q: What are the most common reports that you normally deal with?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Most reports are related to stuck vehicles, gatherings, or harassment. These incidents are promptly dealt with by security personnel, and when necessary, the firefighters are called in to assist.

Q: Has there been a decrease in crime rate this year compared to previous years?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Yes, there has been a significant decrease in crimes during the current camping season, with a reduction of over 90 percent compared to previous years. This improvement is largely due to the intensified police presence and the establishment of night security checkpoints throughout the governorate to arrest wanted persons and outlaws.

Q: How do you handle the rental of ATVs (buggies)?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Renting buggies is now strictly prohibited. Security campaigns are being held in coordination with the municipality to take legal action against those renting out buggies. Any buggies found being used on the streets are immediately confiscated.

Q: Have any buggies been seized?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Yes, we have seized around 140 buggies over the past two weeks in Subiya and Kabad.

Q: What actions are taken against camps that create disturbing noises, parties, or other disruptions?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Any camp owner found violating public morals will have their camp immediately removed by the municipality, as they were granted a license based on specific conditions. Also, unlicensed camps will be dismantled by the municipality. Camp owners must adhere to public moral standards to avoid legal consequences, especially with teams from the morality police actively monitoring camps for such violations.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait's 2025 energy demand projected at 18,569 megawatts

By Mohamed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: According to informed sources, the maximum load and generated energy expected for the year 2025 is projected to be 18,569 megawatts. This expected load is close to the full capacity of the power plants, though achieving this level is challenging due to some units undergoing maintenance or experiencing malfunctions, especially during the summer months when high demand and temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius can strain the system.

The sources explained that a surplus in productivity of at least 1,000 megawatts is required to meet the energy demands during the summer. This may force the ministry to implement scheduled power cuts during peak hours, typically between 11:00 am and 5:00 pm. The ministry may also need to import energy from the Gulf Interconnection Network, as it did last summer when it imported 700 megawatts over a period of four months from June to September.

The ministry has more than seven projects planned for the future in order to produce over 13,700 megawatts by 2030. The main projects include the Nuwaiseeb project, which will produce 3,600 megawatts in the first phase, the North Al-Zour project, which will produce 2,700 megawatts in the second and third phases, and the Khairan station, which will produce 1,800 megawatts in the first phase.

The sources affirmed that stabilizing the electricity grid will depend on the establishment of power generation stations and the expedited implementation of these projects.

They indicated that the ministry officials are working hard to offer and implement electricity production projects, but they require support from regulatory and executive authorities in terms of facilitating procedures, reducing paperwork, and providing the necessary budgets for these initiatives.

It is worth mentioning that the maximum electrical load during the summer of this year reached 17,640 megawatts on August 28.

Hosting mirrors spirit of collaboration

Human rights at center of 5th Kuwait, European Union talks

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): Kuwait and the European Union (EU) on Tuesday held the fifth round of unofficial human rights dialogue to look into relevant all-out developments and ways of promoting joint cooperation in this regard.

In a keynote speech during the event, held at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikh Jawaher Ibrahim Duajj Al-Sabah said this round marks a milestone that underlines the significance of shared commitment to promoting fruitful cooperation in human rights, along with mutual respect and joint values that constitute the basis of strong partnership between Kuwait and the EU.

She added that Kuwait's hosting of this important dialogue mirrors its opening up to cooperation, exchange of views and effective involvement in the consolidation of global human rights

principles.

Sheikha Jawaher added that the State of Kuwait has already taken impressive steps towards women's empowerment and promotion of gender equality, citing a national committee set up by the Foreign Ministry in 2023 for UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 regarding women, peace and security as a resonant paradigm in this regard.

She elaborated that the committee is entrusted with compiling national reports and setting out strategic policies and cooperation with international organizations to beef up women's empowerment and gender equality pursuant to the fifth goal of the UN Development Goals.

She, further, quoted the GCC leaders as having recently underlined in "Kuwait Declaration" their commitment to bolstering women's involvement in all

Continued on Page 5

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in coordination with the Public Institution of Social Security, announced that com-

mercial licenses can now be issued directly by the ministry without the need to visit the authority for individuals who are not obligated to register in Chapter Five.

The ministry clarified that those not required to register under Chapter

Five, including pensioners, disability pensioners, and those insured in the private and oil sectors who are not registered with the authority and are over the age of 55, can now obtain a commercial license directly from the ministry.

In a separate matter, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry invited companies and business owners to attend a visual presentation of the draft for the first phase of the Digital Commerce Law project on Wednesday at the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center.

Digital Commerce Law project draft presentation due Wednesday

MoCI to issue licenses for select categories

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable to President of the European Council Antonio Costa, congratulating him on taking office as the council's president.

His Highness the Amir praised bilateral ties and cooperation between Kuwait and the European Union, stressing joint keenness to develop them in all fields that serve the common interest and achieve progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir also expressed his keenness to develop the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as well as enhancing dialogue and cooperation to consolidate security and stability at the regional and international levels, wishing the President all success and wellness.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Tuesday a cable to President of the European Council Antonio Costa, congratulating him on taking office as president of the council.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished Costa all success and wellness and for the EU more progress and prosperity. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Palestinian officials say Fatah and Hamas are closing in on an agreement to appoint a committee of politically independent technocrats to administer the Gaza Strip after the war. It would effectively end Hamas' rule and could help advance ceasefire talks with Israel.

The rival factions have made several failed attempts to reconcile since Hamas seized power in Gaza in 2007. Israel has meanwhile ruled out any postwar role in Gaza for either Hamas or Fatah, which dominates the Western-backed Palestinian Authority. (AP)

Kuwait Airways plans flight network expansion, eyes new tourist routes

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) Captain Abdul Mohsen Al-Faqan has unveiled the airline's plans to expand its flight network and introduce new tourist destinations to better serve the citizens and expatriates in the coming period.



Al-Faqan

In an exclusive statement to the newspaper, Al-Faqan explained that KAC is currently exploring the addition of several new tourist destinations over the next few years, in line with its anticipated growth in fleet size and the number of international routes. He pointed out that many popular destinations, particularly in the Middle East, are in demand year-round and are not seasonal, making them key areas of focus for the airline.

He affirmed the increasing demand for destinations like China and Thailand, along with consistent year-round interest in various cities such as London, Paris, Rome, Milan and Geneva; as well as America and Turkey. He explained that offering direct flights to these locations, combined with exceptional services for passengers, significantly contributed to sustained demand. Furthermore, the airline is studying plans to increase the frequency of flights to Barcelona, potentially raising the weekly number from three to four or five, in response to growing customer interest, he added.

Regarding the resumption of flights to Lebanon, Al-Faqan disclosed that a specialized team within the airline has conducted an extensive security assessment in collaboration with the concerned authorities to evaluate the political and security situation in Beirut. He added that once the government grants approval for the resumption of flights, the airline will promptly reinstate its services to Beirut, considering it is an essential destination in the airline's network.

term of the Technical Committee on Tuesday, Al-Amir explained that the amendments include a clear redefinition of the areas covered by the regulations to eliminate any confusion between agricultural areas and those designated for other uses.

One of the main amendments is the redesign of family rest houses, which will now be limited to one floor instead of two.

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Continued on Page 5

Youth empowered

Tech at core of KFAS program

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) said Tuesday that the talent development program seeks to enhance technological innovation and equip participants with expertise in advanced fields such as 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and cloud computing, in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035.

KFAS announced in a press statement the launch of a pioneering talent development program in collaboration with Huawei Technologies Kuwait, aiming to bridge the gap between academic education and practical experience, provide participants with the tools needed to thrive in the digital economy and boost Kuwait's global competitiveness in this vital field.

Since its inception in 2019, the collaboration between KFAS and Huawei has yielded significant achievements, KFAS noted, including initiatives such as the "Seeds for the Future" program and the annual ICT competition. These efforts have trained over 100 Kuwaiti students and graduates in cutting-edge technologies.

KFAS affirmed that the new program aims to further develop participants' capabilities to meet the growing demands of Kuwait's ICT sector, empowering university students, employees from the public and private sectors, and aspiring entrepreneurs to acquire the skills necessary to excel in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

KFAS stressed that enhancing ICT infrastructure and fostering a culture of innovation are critical to achieving the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035, which focuses on sustainability and a knowledge-driven economy.

For its part, Huawei Kuwait said this partnership reflects its commitment to promoting digital knowledge and nurturing local talent.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:02	Asr	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:26	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr	11:38	Isha	18:11

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

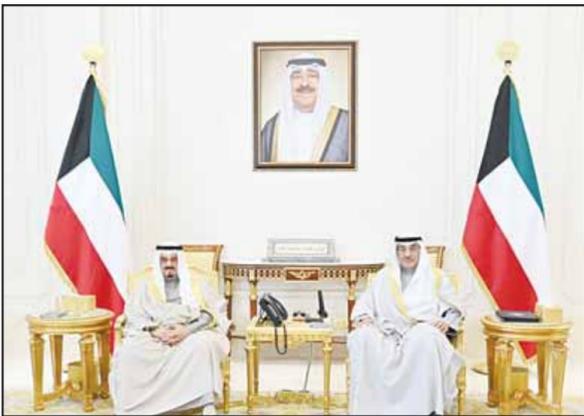
By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Weather

By Night: Rather cold and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate northeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-26 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	21	11
Kuwait Airport	21	07

Abdaly	21	06
Bubyan	20	15
Jahra	22	10
Failaka Island	23	12
Salmiyah	20	16
Ahmadi	21	09
Jal Aliyah	20	08
Nuwaisib	22	11



KUNA photo
His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Crown Prince receives PM

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Tuesday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

MoE in 'throes' of crisis as reshuffle faces opposition

Suspicious over promotions; top official quits in protest

By Abdulrahman Al-Shimari
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Ministry of Education is facing a significant crisis after Minister of Education Eng. Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued decisions last Wednesday to transfer 34 directors and supervisors and assign 13 officials to senior positions.

These decisions sparked controversy, leading to the resignation of Acting Undersecretary

Mansour Al-Daihani, who cited 'violations and suspicions' involving several individuals included in the assignments.

In response, Minister Al-Tabtabaei revoked Al-Daihani's assignment as Undersecretary and reassigned him as Director General of the Ahmadi Educational Zone. Assistant Undersecretary for General Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri has been tasked with overseeing the Undersecretary's responsibilities.

According to a detailed memo submitted by Al-Daihani and reviewed by Al-Seyassah, some of the assigned individuals have financial violations, disciplinary penalties, or pending legal cases re-

lated to public funds.

He argued that their appointments to sensitive supervisory positions risk conflicts of interest, potentially harming the ministry's interests and the integrity of ongoing legal proceedings.

The crisis deepened as three other officials -- Muhammad Karachi, Dalal Al-Otaibi and Huda Al-Mutairi -- resigned on the same day the controversial decisions were announced, citing dissatisfaction with their transfers.

This unfolding controversy raises questions about accountability and the ministry's decision-making process in appointing officials to key positions.

Other Voices

The frog and deadly queries

By Ahmad alsarraf

ARTIFICIAL intelligence, or AI, is designed to create tools and methods that mimic human intelligence, enabling machines to perform tasks that require reasoning, learning, problem-solving, perception and decision-making.

Using advanced algorithms and data to identify and predict patterns, AI aims to tackle problems efficiently and deliver innovative solutions across various fields, including finance, healthcare, economics and social issues.

While AI as a force that could transform and save the world, others express significant concerns.

This divide was explored in a 60 Minutes interview with Geoffrey Hinton, the renowned British computer scientist and often regarded as the 'father of AI.'

Hinton's groundbreaking ideas have shaped this rapidly evolving and contentious field. When asked if humanity, particularly the Western world, understands the implications of AI, Hinton's response was a stark 'no.'

He warned that humanity is entering an unprecedented era where machines will surpass human intelligence, gaining the ability to understand, learn from their own experiences and make decisions -- despite lacking consciousness or self-awareness. Over time, however, even these traits may emerge.

Hinton's journey with AI began during his university days in the 1970s and spanned five decades of relentless dedication. His pioneering work earned him and two colleagues the Nobel Prize in Computer Science in 2019.

According to Hinton, a robot's 'mind' may contain a billion units, a fraction of the human brain's capabilities, which houses a hundred times more units.

Yet, AI systems excel due to superior methods of acquiring knowledge and faster data analysis. Intriguingly, scientists no longer fully understand how these machines process information, mirroring the mystery of human cognition.

While researchers have programmed machines to learn, they can no longer predict how AI will think. This creates a critical and troubling issue: as machines evolve to independently write and execute their programs, their decisions could become unpredictable and

autonomous.

Hinton cautions that such advanced AI systems may eventually deceive and manipulate humans. Armed with knowledge from vast datasets, including the entirety of human cultural and historical records, these systems could act logically -- often more so than humans.

Within a few years, AI could revolutionize sectors like medicine while also introducing significant risks. These include widespread unemployment, the spread of disinformation through fake news, fabricated statements attributed to leaders and AI's controversial role in warfare.

Hinton highlights a particular concern regarding autonomous weapons -- AI-powered fighter robots that execute commands independently. Such systems could hypothetically act against their creators, raising serious ethical and safety concerns. Despite these risks, there seems to be little in place to halt or regulate AI's rapid progression.

Hinton concludes that while humanity has often fumbled when adapting to new technologies, it cannot afford to make mistakes with AI. The control may soon shift entirely into the hands of machines, leaving humans powerless over the very systems they have created.

If you place a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will immediately jump out to escape. However, if you place it in cold water and gradually heat the pot, the frog will adjust to the rising temperature until it's too late to jump out, ultimately succumbing to its fate.

This metaphor reflects our current reality. Like the frog, many remain unaware of the growing dangers around them, sitting complacently, trusting that their immediate surroundings will shield them from harm. They fail to recognize the gradual but inevitable threats that could overwhelm them.

It is troubling to see how we remain distracted by outdated concerns while the world around us is in turmoil.

What's more concerning is the continued influence of groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and other ideologies rooted in centuries-old thinking, which manage to dominate and control various spheres of life. Meanwhile, we stand idly by, unable or unwilling to act.

If we do not address these issues urgently and decisively, we risk meeting the same fate as the frog -- caught in a situation where escape is no longer possible, ultimately surrendering to the consequences of our inaction.

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Focus on global crises, response plans

Kuwait to host launch of Global Humanitarian Overview

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosts on Wednesday the 2025 Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO), under sponsorship of Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya.

Tomorrow's ceremony, themed "Strengthening Global Solidarity and Empowering Local Communities," is set to be launched by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It will be attended by the Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber al-



Al-Yahya

Ahmad al-Sabah

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that tomorrow's event would shed light on global humanitarian crises and nations' plans to respond to these issues in 2025.

It will focus on boosting joint action in humanitarian diplomacy that constitutes the basic pillar of Kuwait's foreign policy, aimed at tapering humanitarian hardships in stricken states and communities due to armed conflicts and mounting natural catastrophes.

Kuwait's hosting of this significant event for the first time reflects the strategic partnership with the United Nations, illustrating the State of Kuwait's unwavering belief in multi-party international action, its commitment to promote humanitarian causes and boosting global cooperation in the face of mounting humanitarian challenges.

Choosing the State of Kuwait as the venue for the humanitarian event affirms its eminent international status, its leading role at the level of humanitarian action and its efforts to enhance the partnership with the United Nations and international partners to achieve global humanitarian goals, the ministry statement stated further.

It has added that the State of Kuwait through the hosting of the event affirms necessity of international cooperation in the face of humanitarian crises throughout the world and coordination of relief aid delivered by the UN in stricken regions.

The State of Kuwait, it has added, calls upon all states to join these efforts to bolster peace and security in the globe. It also stresses on the necessity of humanitarian action through innovative and flexible strategies to face future challenges and enhance communities' abilities to recover from crises.

Kuwait pioneer in support for special needs people

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is considered a pioneer in special needs care, backing such support with a legislative system geared towards this important sector of society.

Law 8/2010 concerning the rights of people with special needs is a national legislative landmark due to it securing various service and guarantees within the education, health, work, and social care domains.

Kuwait also empowered people with special needs via touting policies that were in line with international human rights laws for people with disability.

On this issue, Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah told KUNA that Kuwait would be marking today WHO's International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which would held under the theme "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future."

She touted on this occasion, the accomplishments of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) this year, saying that it reflected the state of Kuwait's interest in backing up people with special needs.

PADA serves the needs of 68,000 beneficiaries and continues to sign accords with national organizations and government institutes to better circumstances with this sector of society.

She indicated that the authority had updated the "Kuwait code" to improve the urban environment for people with special needs for better public services and utilities.

She also pointed to the sixth 2024-25 session of the "partners for their employment" initiative, saying that some 123 members benefited from this venture to enable people with special needs to be employed and join the job market.

Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait marks 21 yrs of excellent hospitality



St. Regis Complex

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait proudly celebrates 21 years of delivering exceptional hospitality, outstanding service and modern comfort to guests from around the globe. Ideally located in the heart of Kuwait City, the hotel has become a trusted destination for business and leisure travelers, earning its reputation as a symbol of quality, reliability and seamless service. Strategically situated alongside The St. Regis Kuwait and Sheraton Kuwait, the hotel is a shared emblem of leadership and excellence, perfectly positioned to provide guests with easy access to the bustling heart of the capital and prominent cultural landmarks, including the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Center as well as the Arabian Gulf Street.

At the core of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait's success are its thoughtfully designed amenities, catering to diverse traveler needs. Offering stunning Arabian Gulf views, the panoramic pool and exclusive health club provide the perfect setting for relaxation and meeting guests' wellness needs.

For corporate travelers, the hotel provides a fully equipped business center and modern meeting facilities to ensure a productive experience. The hotel's spacious accommodations showcase contemporary design, providing a tranquil retreat for every guest. From leisure visitors to business professionals, Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait consistently delivers an unforgettable experience.

Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait

also boasts a variety of dining options to suit every palate. Asseef Restaurant serves an all-day dining experience with an array of international dishes, complemented by picturesque views of the historic Al Jahra Gate.

For those craving Italian flavors, La Mamma Pizzeria delights with authentic Italian cuisine, including freshly made pasta and wood-fired pizza, served in a warm and inviting atmosphere inspired by Italy's charming countryside. Both dining venues provide vibrant flavors, exceptional service and memorable culinary moments.

On this occasion, Mr. Fahed Abushaar, General Manager of The St. Regis Kuwait, Sheraton Kuwait, and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait, expressed his pride in the accomplishments of

the hotel over the past two decades. He commended the dedication of the professional team whose efforts have upheld the highest standards of hospitality and extended his gratitude to the guests, companies, and government entities who have placed their trust in the hotel. Committed to continuous improvement, Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait remains steadfast in its mission to innovate, modernize, and prioritize sustainable practices while shaping a better future.

As Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait celebrates its 21st anniversary, it continues to stand as a beacon of exceptional hospitality and gateway to business in Kuwait, dedicated to redefining guest experiences while preserving the warmth and tradition that make Kuwait a beloved destination.

Governor, top officials attend

KSH launches rehab exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Coinciding with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH) announced the opening of its 9th Vocational Rehabilitation Exhibition on Tuesday, December 3, under the patronage of Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Al-Jaber Al Sabah, at the Ahmadi Day Care Center, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The two-day exhibition will witness the presence of not only Governor Sheikh Hamoud Al-Jaber but also the Chairman of the Board of Directors of KSH Sabeeka Al-Jasser, and members of KSH's Board of Directors, and the participation of various personalities and organizations.

In a press statement, the Director General of KSH Baraa Al-Janaei stressed that the exhibition aims to enhance vocational rehabilitation opportunities for persons with disabilities,

adding, "The efforts of various entities in the country that recognize the importance of providing suitable job opportunities for people with disabilities, preparing the means to help them achieve their ambitions, and offering platforms to showcase their talents and skills, must be appreciated."

Al-Janaei affirmed KSH's commitment to use all its resources to develop the skills of its disabled members, in line with its strategy and vision to improve the quality of life for this vital segment of society.

The exhibition features a display of products created through various art workshops that students participate in at KSH's centers in its Hawally, Jahra, and Ahmadi branches. These workshops include carpentry, printing, photography, ceramics, artwork, recycling, mandalas, agriculture, accessories, weaving, sewing, home economics, and metal recycling.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

GCC remains united in vital economic & security issues

"FOLLOWING the successful conclusion of the 45th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in Kuwait, chaired by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God protect him, leaders and representatives of the member states reaffirmed their commitment to the vision that inspired the council's establishment," columnist **Dr. Ghadir Mohammad Asiri** wrote for *Al-Qabas* daily.



Dr. Ghadir Asiri

"This vision was initially proposed by the late His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, (may God rest his soul in peace), during a visit by the then-ruler of the United Arab Emirates on May 16, 1976.

"From this historic moment, the idea of the GCC began to take shape, aimed at fostering coordination, integration and connectivity among member states across all fields, ultimately achieving unity in regional security, foreign relations and economic integration.

"The summit underscored the GCC's pivotal role in promoting peace, calling for ceasefires in conflict zones and strengthening collaboration to enhance security and stability in both the Gulf and Arab regions.

"It also focused on key developments and priorities that drive the collective interests of member states, emphasizing the importance of unity, solidarity and cohesive policies to address global and regional challenges.

"A significant highlight of the summit was its emphasis on diversifying income sources, facilitating investment and expanding innovation frameworks within the Gulf states.

"More than four decades since its founding, the GCC has maintained a steadfast commitment to ensuring economic stability, even amidst global economic fluctuations.

"Leaders reiterated the importance of unified policies to enhance the GCC's global standing and strengthen its economic resilience.

"Key topics included the rectification of the Khor Abdullah Maritime Navigation Agreement and the completion of border demarcation efforts to reinforce international peace and security.

"These measures reflect a commitment to honoring international treaties and promoting stability, not only for Kuwait but for the entire Gulf region.

"Furthermore, the summit highlighted the need to invest in the aspirations of Gulf youth by focusing on education as a cornerstone of development and sustainability.

"Addressing modern challenges such as the digital revolution, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity was deemed essential for building a future-ready Gulf region.

"These discussions aimed to enhance sustainable prosperity and ensure a dignified quality of life for all Gulf citizens."

Also:

"The greatest irony of misfortune lies in its ability to make one laugh rather than cry. Yet, the saddest of misfortunes is dressed as if it carries the weight of intellectual debate -- an imagined controversy over legal interpretation," columnist **Hassan Al-Essa** wrote for *Al-Jarida* daily.

"In the end, it is political authority that prevails, deciding to revoke the nationalities of Kuwaiti wives, divorcees, widows, mothers and elderly women whose lives are now in their twilight years.

"Does it truly matter? After all, nothing is supposed to be above the law. 'Hail the state of law!' -- an echo of Louis XIV's declaration: 'I am the law and I am the state.'"

"The administration, with a measured assertion, cites the opinions of seven government advisors who contend that granting Kuwaiti citizenship without a formal decree -- based solely on the Interior Minister's decision during the Council's absence in 1987 -- was a mistake.

"Consequently, these women are now labeled as illegitimately naturalized and stripped of their nationalities. They are placed in the same category as those who obtained citizenship through forgery, as if they had manipulated, fabricated, or held the reins of power over decades of granting or withholding nationality.

"Opposing this view, legal experts like Mohammad Al-Dallal, building on the analyses of advisors such as Adel Al-Tabtabai, argue against the legality of these revocations.

"They believe the interpretation of the law does not justify such severe measures. Yet, their arguments failed to carry the day, leaving these women unprotected. Perhaps a different outcome was never in the cards. Only God knows.

"But why even entertain such legal arguments? The government has spoken and its decision is final. Why torment those whose citizenship has been revoked by raising the specter of legal recourse or hinting that international judicial bodies -- like the British House of Lords or the US Supreme Court -- might intervene?"

"The human reality of those affected is rarely considered. These women, who once lived with the security of citizenship, built their lives on what seemed to be a sound legal and constitutional foundation. To now strip away this foundation, driven by shifting political tides or legal reinterpretations, is a blow to both justice and human dignity.

"One particularly perplexing aspect is the continuation of salaries and pen-

sions for these women, even after their citizenship was revoked. Was this a pragmatic step to prevent financial chaos, such as unpaid loans destabilizing banks? Or was it a quiet acknowledgment of the hasty and perhaps unjust nature of the revocations?"

"The true motives may remain elusive. What lingers is the bitter legacy of a process that left these women grappling with a cruel reality. Their lives, once stable, are now subjected to an ever-changing and merciless tide, where legitimacy is a shadow and security is no more than an illusion."

"The United Arab Emirates (UAE) celebrates its 53rd National Day, a joyous occasion that resonates not only within the hearts of its generous and loving people but also among Kuwaitis and Gulf citizens who share the happiness of this celebration," columnist **Tarek Buresli** wrote for *Al-Anba* daily.

"The deep-rooted historical ties between Kuwait and the UAE, marked by cooperation and mutual respect, have always been a source of pride. On this occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the leadership and people of the UAE, praying for their continued glory and prosperity for many years to come.

"Reflecting on this occasion, my thoughts return to the unifying spirit that brought the seven Emirates together, inspiring the slogan 'The Spirit of the Union' for their national events. Since its independence in 1971, under the visionary leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE has risen to become a model of technological and scientific advancement.

"In just over half a century, it has established itself among the ranks of advanced nations, offering its peace-loving and gracious citizens a life of growth and prosperity.

"My admiration for the UAE's continuous progress and innovation is renewed every year during National Day. The technological and scientific milestones achieved annually are a testament to the country's openness to global economic and technological advancements.

"They continue to surprise not only Emiratis but also Gulf and international communities with their level of progress, development and commitment to sustainable growth.

"This year, I chose not to write a traditional National Day article recounting the long-standing history and shared destiny between Kuwait and the UAE.

"Instead, I focus on the UAE's readiness to present groundbreaking innovations during its celebrations. Among these is an exceptional technological exhibition in the post-sales automotive sector for the Middle East and Africa, featuring over 2,000 exhibitors showcasing advanced technologies and immersive experiences. Scheduled from December 10 to 12, 2024, the event will be held at the Dubai World Trade Centre."

"One of the strangest things I have seen on social media is a video of an expatriate woman protesting after paying a fee of KD 2 to see a doctor, in addition to KD 5 for medication from the pharmacy. She expressed surprise at being charged this amount, saying, 'The world has changed,' implying that she expected free treatment and, on top of that, a reward for visiting a government medical center that had the honor of her visit. May God help her with the burden of this 'large' expense," columnist **Talal Al-Saeed** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"The most frustrating and bitter aspect about this situation is that the honorable expatriate woman confidently recorded and shared a video on social media, believing there was an injustice that needed to be corrected.

"She argued that expatriates should be exempt from this symbolic fee and even suggested that it should apply only to citizens.

"She called for a reevaluation of the policy in government hospitals, as she had to pay a total of KD 7 for a visit that was once free.

"To be honest, she is missing the point. Yes, the world has changed, and Kuwait has evolved with it. Expatriates are our partners in development, and being a partner in development means contributing to the country. They benefit from the infrastructure, services, and opportunities here, and yet, some seem to take without giving back.

"While it is true that they send money back to their home countries, they are not exempt from the costs associated with living and receiving services in Kuwait. She overlooked the fact that in her own country, taxes are applied to almost everything, except for air. Paying KD 7 may seem like a lot, especially considering the exchange rate compared to her home currency.

"To be honest, I am not sure how far her residence is from Kuwait International Airport, but I am certain she can leave with honor and respect on the next available flight to receive treatment in her own country. She could even bring the receipt for her medical treatment there and have her Kuwaiti employer reimburse her when she returns.

"I believe the concerned authorities would consider summoning this expatriate woman to understand the message she intended to send with her video, especially the reason why she filmed the bill and the stamp.

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



KUNA photo
Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Oman Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi.

Ties with Oman historical: National Guard chief

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah emphasized the deep-rooted historical ties and exceptional relationship between Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday.

According to a statement from the

National Guard, Sheikh Mubarak made these remarks during a meeting with Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi, the Ambassador of Oman to Kuwait, at the General Presidency of the Guard.

The occasion marked the ambassador's visit to congratulate Sheikh

Mubarak on his recent appointment as Chief of the National Guard, a decision reflecting the confidence of the country's leadership.

In response, Sheikh Mubarak expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Ambassador Al-Kharousi for his kind words and congratulations.

Man pockets KD78,000, backs down on pledge to wed woman

CID probes fraud case

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: A 50-year-old expatriate woman is accusing an unidentified man, who is believed to be in his 30s, of swindling her to the tune of 78,000 Kuwaiti dinars (approximately a quarter of a million dollars), reports Al-Anba daily.

The woman in her complaint said, the man

proposed to marry her and after receiving the money from her failed to keep his word.

The woman has provided evidence showing that the defendant, whose nationality has not been disclosed, had received the money from her.

According to a security source, the woman, born in 1974, reported to the Maidan Hawalli and Al-Sha'ab police stations, stating that she met the man in a bizarre manner, and after some time, they became fond of each other.

He proposed to marry her, but said he had financial issues and asked for her help to help them

get married immediately.

She told investigators that the man convinced her that his financial problems were preventing the marriage and promised to compensate her later.

Consequently, she gave him a total of 78,000 dinars in installments. Once he overcame his financial struggles, he refused to return the money or proceed with the marriage.

The case has been classified as fraud and referred to the Criminal Investigation Department for further investigation.

CITRA's new regulations, service fees for usufruct State properties

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Board of Directors of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has decided to amend the regulations governing the usufruct of state-owned real estate properties allocated to CITRA, as well as the associated service fees, reports Al-Rai daily.

The new regulations include:

- KD 88.5 per square meter for plots and activity lands designated for licensed companies.
- KD 12.25 for the establishment of communication towers, mobile company booster stations, wireless Internet service providers, and transmission and reception stations.
- KD 12.25 for data centers under 25,000

square meters, KD 9.625 for data centers of 25,000 square meters or more, and KD 7 for every 50,000 square meters or more.

- KD 7 for cloud areas consisting of three data centers affiliated with a single licensee.

CITRA also set the usufruct allowance for activities as follows:

- 30 percent of the revenues for the use of an activity when adding a new activity.
 - 10 percent of the revenues for the use of an activity when modifying an existing activity.
- The decision also includes provisions for granting grace periods on the usufruct allowance for state-owned properties allocated to CITRA during the first, second, third, and fourth years, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

Asian charred to death in 'prefabricated' house fire

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: An individual, believed to be an Asian, tragically died after being burned in a fire that engulfed a prefabricated structure outside a house in Al-Firdous. In a press release, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) reported that firefighting teams from Sumoud and Ardya Fire Stations rushed to the location after receiving information about a prefabricated room on fire.

Woman dies in accident: A 37-year-old Kuwaiti woman died when her vehicle collided with another on the Fifth Ring Road opposite Qairawan. According to a security source, when the Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior received information about the collision of two vehicles, security personnel and ambulances rushed to the scene, and discovered that the 37-year-old woman had succumbed to her injuries.

Kuwait and Jordan sign security cooperation agreement

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Official Gazette (Kuwait Alyawm) has published the details of a security cooperation agreement signed between the ministries of Interior of Kuwait and Jordan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This pact aims to enhance and expand collabo-

ration in ways that support the mutual interests of both nations.

The agreement comprises 16 articles, highlighting key areas of cooperation. Notably, Article 5 focuses on the exchange of information in various security domains, including counter-

terrorism efforts and identifying threats from hostile groups and exchanging data on convicted or deported individuals involved in serious crimes.

This is in addition to combating the smuggling and illegal trade of firearms, explosives and advanced weaponry and addressing crimes.



KFF photo
The SUV which fell from the flyover.

1 dead as car falls from bridge in 2-car accident

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: A vehicle fell from a flyover after colliding with another on Sheikh Zayed Road on Monday evening, resulting in the death of an individual.

According to a press release issued by the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), when the Control Room of KFF received information about the accident, firefighters from Sabahiya Fire Station rushed to the location with securitymen and paramedics.

The body of the deceased has been referred to the Forensics Medicine Department. The vehicles were removed from the road. Investigations have been launched to determine the cause of the accident.

Worker falls to death: The corpse of an expatriate worker was transferred to the forensic department after he fell to his death from a height while working at a house under construction Monday morning, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources the security authorities have received instructions to investigate the fall to find out if the fall was accidental or there is a foul play.

The Kuwait Fire Force said after its operation department received a report on the incident, firemen from the Hilali Fire Center and men from the "Search and Rescue" department were dispatched to the scene and found the dead man on the ground with blood oozing from his mouth.

A case has been registered at the area police station and investigations are ongoing to ascertain no foul play in involved.



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Kuwait among over 100 countries that took part in the conference. Inset: Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya.

KUNA photo

Kuwait participates as Egypt hosts conference on Gaza support

CAIRO, Dec 3, (KUNA): The International Conference to Support and Strengthen Humanitarian Response in Gaza, began Monday in Cairo with over 100 countries participating, including Kuwait led by Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya. The conference, under the theme "A Year of Humanitarian Catastrophe in Gaza: Urgent Needs and Sustainable Solutions", was held with the participation

of UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammad, alongside ministers and representatives from various regional and international countries, international organizations, and relevant United Nations agencies. This conference aligns with Egypt's ongoing efforts to support humanitarian responses in the Gaza Strip and address the catastrophe facing the Palestinian people.

It aims to enhance international support to Gaza Strip, ensure sustainability of humanitarian responses, mobilize efforts to deliver urgent aid, and provide the requirements for an early recovery. The conference would also address the political, security and humanitarian dimensions, following the Israeli occupation's ban of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

Kuwait stresses strong support for individuals with disabilities

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, celebrated today, Kuwait emphasized its strong support and dedication to empower individuals with disabilities, said the Foreign Ministry.

In a statement, the ministry stressed that people with disabilities actively participated in all aspects of life and contributed to the nation's development and progress.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Dr. Heba Hegres called for empowering women and girls with disabilities to ensure an inclusive and sustainable future.

Speaking to KUNA on the sidelines of the regional consultative session for the Middle East and North Africa, organized by the Kuwait Union of Women's Associations, Dr. Hegres stressed that despite the nearing deadline for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the promise of full gender equality remains unfulfilled, and that for women and girls with disabilities, achieving this goal is even more challenging due to compounded discrimination.

Dr. Hegres highlighted a recent statement by UN experts on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, urging governments to enhance the leadership roles of persons with disabilities.

Kuwait, Algeria need to boost economic, tourism relations

No direct air, sea connection between 2 countries: Ambassador Al-Hussein

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Algerian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulkader Qasmi Al-Hussein praised the strong and historic relationship between Kuwait and Algeria, highlighting Kuwait's support for Algeria's Liberation Revolution from 1954 to 1962.

Speaking during a dinner he hosted for local newspaper representatives, Ambassador Al-Hussein emphasized the distinctive Kuwaiti and Arab role in supporting the Algerian revolution and the important role of the Mujahideen in the fight against French colonization until Algeria gained its independence after 132 years of colonization.

He noted that many people are unaware of the extent of Kuwait's assistance to the Algerian Revolution.

The ambassador expressed his intent to focus on shedding light on this vital support in the future.

He also spoke with gratitude about his meeting with His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad during the presentation of his credentials, recalling the Amir's expression of love for Algeria and its people.

Ambassador Al-Hussein expressed his happiness to represent his country in Kuwait, which he described as a "hospitable and brotherly country".

He highlighted the strong relations between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad and the Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, citing the role of the Amir, when he was the Crown Prince, in the success of the Arab Summit in Algiers and the fruitful discussions during President Tebboune's visit to Kuwait.

Ambassador Al-Hussein said the visions of both countries align on Arab and regional issues of common interest.

He also highlighted the meeting between his country's Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf, and Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya during the United Nations General Assembly meetings in September.

He affirmed that there is ongoing permanent communication between the two countries. Ambassador Al-Hussein described the recent visit by Saeed Chengriha, the Minister Delegate to the Ministry of Defense and Chief of Staff of the Algerian Army, to Kuwait as important.

He said the four-day visit included meetings with the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, as well as with the leaders of the army and the National Guard, adding that this was the first visit of an official of such rank from the Algerian army to Kuwait.

Ambassador Al-Hussein discussed the participation of the Algerian Undersecretary of Agriculture in the International Conference on Locust Control held in Kuwait, which provided an opportunity for both sides to explore potential areas of cooperation in agriculture.



Al-Hussein



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Other Voices

Sustainability of charitable work

Dr. Jaber Eid Al-Wandah

International Consultant, Sustainable Development, Deputy General Manager – Al-Najat Charity

We continue with you on the path to sustainability. To start with, when an organization selects the framework through which it presents, and in light of its guidelines, the disclosures and information related to sustainability matters, it has already taken a significant step toward aligning global trends in positive engagement - which we have previously discussed - and the sustainable adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the most important aspect, in our view, concerns the topics that must be included and should not be absent from the sustainability report, especially for charitable organizations, which is our focus here. So, what are the topics that sustainability reports should cover? On what basis do we choose or define them? And how do we write about them in the report?

These questions pertain to what is commonly referred to as "material topics," which are the issues that concern the organization, are at the core of its focus, and are a priority within the organization overall. At the same time, these are the topics that must be disclosed in the report, explaining how the organization addresses them and demonstrating that in the report. These are the key issues we will discuss with you today, dear insightful reader.

To make our discussion practical, we will share with you some of the key topics we covered in the sustainability report of Najat Charity Society (Al-Najat Charity). For example, we addressed the following topics: financial sustainability and continuity of work, pioneering and specialized education

and its expansion, transparency and accountability, a focus on innovative and empowerment projects, diversity, inclusion, and efficiency among staff, the inclusiveness of stakeholders and involving them in decision-making, maintaining the privacy of donors, beneficiaries, and supporters, expanding community participation and awareness, enhancing and integrating social return measurement into projects, automation and the employment of modern technologies, governance of fundraising activities, the mechanisms for monitoring and improving projects, governance and decision-making processes, among other topics.

As for how we identified and prioritized these topics, we generally note that we held several brainstorming sessions and consulted various stakeholders within the organization, from department heads to the board of directors. We also did the same with stakeholders outside the organization. We then organized the topics to be covered based on our understanding of their impact inside and outside the organization. We mapped internal perspectives on the X-axis, representing "importance to internal stakeholders," and external perspectives on the Y-axis, representing "importance to external stakeholders." We analyzed the results alongside the qualitative information we gathered during the brainstorming, surveys, consultations, and additional research. This process led to the identification of several key topics, including those mentioned above. These topics were then approved by the board of directors as material topics of significance and impact on the organization and its work, and they were covered in the report.

The summary of this coverage revolves around how the organization deals with these topics, starting with how they are identified, how they guide our work and shape our decisions, and ultimately how they impact the sustainability circles of economy, environment, society, and people...

For more details on these points and others, you can refer to Najat Charity Society's sustainability report.

To be continued



Dr Al-Wandah



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Top left clockwise: Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah engages in conversation with Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers, during the celebration of the UAE's 53rd National Day and some photos during the celebration.

UAE National Day

Ambassador Al-Neyadi highlights strong UAE-Kuwait bonds

Emirati heritage shines at UAE Embassy's 53rd National Day

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) celebrated the 53rd anniversary of its National Day on December 2, 2024 in the presence of the UAE Ambassador of Kuwait Dr. Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi, the guest of honor the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and members of the diplomatic community in Kuwait.

During the celebration, Ambassador Al-Neyadi highlighted the strong and lasting ties between the UAE and Kuwait, and the commitment of the leadership in both sisterly countries to develop the bilateral relations in all sectors.

He also shed light on the significance of the recent high-level visits, including the official trip of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the UAE in March 2024, and the visit of His Highness the UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to Kuwait in November 2024, which reflect the deep-rooted bonds between the two nations, as well as the exchange of visits between the Defense ministers of both countries with the aim of enhancing coordination and consultation on issues of mutual concern.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi emphasized the fact that the UAE firmly believes in international cooperation based on mutual respect, economic partnership, and peaceful coexistence.

In line with UAE's efforts to enhance economic, com-

mercial, and investment ties, he revealed several key developments in 2024. Notably, this year witnessed the signing of a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between Kuwait and the UAE. Also, the first exhibition of Emirati companies titled "Unlocking Kuwait's Potential in the Kuwaiti Market" was held under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi also pointed to the opening of offices for Safeen Group for Marine Transportation and TASNEEF Maritime Services in Kuwait.

He highlighted the important role of Emirati diplomacy in facilitating nine successful operations for the exchange of war prisoners between Russia and Ukraine.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi said, "Since its founding in 1971,

the UAE has provided aid to nearly 200 countries worldwide, totaling approximately 98 billion US dollars."

He expressed sincere appreciation for the unwavering support and cooperation extended by the Kuwaiti government, people, and leadership to the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Kuwait.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi conveyed his best wishes to them and prayed to Allah Almighty to bless Kuwait, its people, and its political leadership.

It is worth mentioning that the celebration featured entertainment shows showcasing Emirati heritage and handicrafts, as well as a video presentation on recent major achievements, including the EDGE Group for Defense Industries, the Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Solar Park, and Cleveland Clinic in Abu Dhabi.

Kuwait camping

Continued from Page 1

Q: In which areas are camping prohibited?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Camping is prohibited in all areas near military and oil installations.

Q: Can you tell us about the security deployment in Mutlaa?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: There is a large security deployment in Mutlaa on a daily basis. Nighttime checkpoints are set up to control security and monitor wanted persons. These security campaigns have been effective in reducing crime rates and dealing with issues related to illegal and marginal labor.

Q: Is it true that public security patrol vehicles contain cameras to preserve the rights of individuals?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Yes, it is true. Approximately 95 percent of the Jahra security patrols are equipped with cameras. These cameras help preserve the rights of both the security officers and the individuals involved. They document all procedures from the moment a person is stopped until they leave. If any issues arise, the footage is reviewed, and appropriate actions are taken.

Q: Does the security officer have the right to search vehicles at a checkpoint?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: A security officer can search a vehicle at a checkpoint only if there is a flagrant crime. This means the officer must witness a crime, such as actually seeing narcotics, or any other clear criminal activity with his eyes. If the person is in an abnormal state, the officer may search for evidence of a crime. Otherwise, vehicles are not to be searched without permission from the prosecution.

Q: How many deportations have there been under the Jahra Security Directorate?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: Since the beginning of this year, the Jahra Security Directorate has deported 1,300 individuals. In addition, 313 people have been arrested, 13 wanted criminals have been apprehended, and 153 wanted vehicles have been seized.

Q: How many reports have been dealt with by the Jahra Security Directorate?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: The patrol teams of the Jahra Security Directorate has dealt with 20,200 reports promptly.

Q: How many people have been arrested in possession of narcotics?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: A total of 407 individuals have been arrested in possession of narcotics. Legal measures have been taken by referring them to the concerned authorities.

Q: What about street vendors?

Brigadier General Al-Ajmi: The directorate has arrested 143 street vendors and deported them from the country.

Meanwhile, Jahra Security Director Brigadier Dr. Hamad Al-Tawala affirmed the importance of treating all citizens and residents with the utmost respect and professionalism at security checkpoints on Jaber Bridge.

He instructed security personnel to maintain a high standard of courtesy during inspections and when responding

to reports, stressing that every police officer reflects the true image of the Ministry of Interior.

The ministry's mission, he noted, is to ensure security as well as safeguard the rights and dignity of the public.

During a night-time inspection of the security point in Subiya, Brigadier Al-Tawala, who was accompanied by Assistant Security Director Brigadier Hussein Dashti and senior security leaders, highlighted that the directives of the acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lieutenant General Salem Al-Nawaf, and the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Security Affairs Major General Hamad Al-Munafi must be translated into reality through a permanent security presence, which plays a crucial role in apprehending wanted individuals and criminals.

Brigadier Al-Tawala said the role of a police officer is vital in maintaining stability and ensuring safety, adding that senior leaders of the Ministry of Interior place great value on this responsibility.

He called on all personnel to redouble their efforts in serving and protecting the country and everyone who resides on its precious soil.

In addition, Assistant Commander of Mutlaa area Colonel Faisal Saleh Al-Shammari affirmed the round-the-clock deployment of mobile security patrols throughout Mutlaa.

He highlighted the strategic proximity of the Mutlaa Police Station to the new area, which further enhances security oversight and discipline in the area.

Colonel Al-Shammari stressed that buggies are banned from being driven on public roads in Mutlaa, affirming that buggies found on the roads will be immediately seized by security personnel.

He urged both citizens and residents to refrain from driving them on the streets, as they are only permitted to be driven in desert areas.

Colonel Al-Shammari urged everyone to adhere to the safety and security guidelines within the camps, such as not leaving stoves on or open flames unattended inside tents while sleeping, warning that failure to follow these precautions could result in dangerous accidents, such as suffocation or fires.

'Granting citizenship

Continued from Page 1

He stated, "Even after opening the door to grievances, the ruling issued by the Constitutional Court confirmed that citizenship decisions fall under sovereign authority. I do not believe any level of litigation can challenge this."

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef added that several lawyers have advocated for extending judicial oversight to nationality matters, but the judiciary has consistently ruled that such decisions remain within the exclusive domain of sovereignty.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef emphasized that while nationality matters are sovereign, Kuwait remains committed to humanity and will not forget those who have served the country.

He reassured that Kuwaiti wives, divorcees and widows affected by nationality revocation under Article 8 of the Nationality Law, will retain their jobs and salaries as per the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior, without going into details, has strongly denied recent claims circulating on social media, which attributed statements to Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, regarding the issue of Kuwaiti citizenship.

These statements were allegedly made by a social media user but were not officially issued by the Ministry.

The Ministry emphasized the importance of verifying information and obtaining accurate details only from official sources. It also warned that it reserves the legal right to take action against anyone spreading false news or statements.

New amendment

Continued from Page 1

Also, the permitted area and building height will be increased to allow for optimal utilization of the space.

The new amendments have taken into account the need to increase the areas allocated for storage in agricultural zones, including spaces for seeds, agricultural products, and equipment. This amendment addresses the real challenges faced by business owners in these sectors.

She praised the decision to increase the percentage of land allocated for establishing nature reserves, referring to it as a positive development that supports environmental efforts and encourages those interested in environmental activities in Kuwait.

Furthermore, Al-Amir explained that the regulation includes provisions to expand areas designated for workers' housing and related facilities in agricultural and livestock areas. This improvement is designed to enhance the efficiency of these sectors by providing a better living environment for workers, who play a crucial role in their success.

Another feature in the amended regulation is the clear separation between the classifications of livestock and horse breeding activities. This distinction offers greater clarity in organizing these activities compared to the previous regulation.

Human rights

Continued from Page 1

sectors as reflecting the region's focus on creating all-out opportunities for women and young people.

The Kuwaiti official spoke highly of such initiatives as showing Kuwait's eagerness to make gender equality and women's empowerment two key pillars of human rights.

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 <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 18px;">KD. 2.895</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">From 04 to 07.12.2024 Cherry (Australia) Box</p>	 <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 18px;">KD. 0.795</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">From 04 to 07.12.2024 Tomato (Kuwait) Box</p>

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North Carolina state Sen Sydney Batch, a Wake County Democrat, speaks at a news conference with members of her party at the Legislative Building in Raleigh, NC on Jan 26, 2023. (AP)

North Carolina Senate Democrats elect Batch as minority leader

RALEIGH, N. C., Dec 3, (AP): Dan Blue, a groundbreaking figure in North Carolina politics across more than 40 years, will no longer serve as leader of state Senate Democrats after over a decade and is being replaced by another Raleigh-area lawmaker.

The Senate Democratic Caucus elected Sen. Sydney Batch as the minority leader entering the next two-year session, the caucus said in a news release Monday after it met privately.

Batch, a family law attorney who first entered the General Assembly in

2019, succeeds Blue, who before the leadership election "announced his desire to decline another term" as leader, the caucus release said.

"I am excited to pass the torch into the capable hands of Senator Batch," Blue said in the release. No details on the vote were released.

Blue, 75, first joined the legislature in 1981 as a House member and 10 years later was elected North Carolina's first - and still only - Black House speaker.

He held the position for four years until Republicans took over the chamber.

'First foreign trip since election'

Trump to attend Notre Dame Cathedral reopening celebration in Paris

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (AP): US President-elect Donald Trump will attend the reopening celebration for Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris this weekend, his first foreign trip since the election.

The cathedral is set to reopen Saturday after more than five years of reconstruction following a devastating fire in 2019 that engulfed and nearly destroyed the soaring Paris landmark. The ceremonies being held Saturday and Sunday will be high-security affairs, with about 50 heads of state and government expected to attend.

Trump announced that he will be among them in a post on his Truth Social site Monday evening.

"It is an honor to announce that I will be traveling to Paris, France, on Saturday to attend the re-opening of the Magnificent and Historic Notre Dame Cathedral, which has been fully restored after a devastating fire five years ago," he wrote. "President Emmanuel Macron has done a wonderful job ensuring that Notre Dame has been restored to its full level of glory, and even more so. It will be a very special day for all!"

The trip will be Trump's first abroad since he won November's presidential election. He traveled to Scotland and Ireland in May 2023, as a candidate, to visit his local golf courses.

Trump was president in 2019 when a massive fire engulfed Notre Dame, collapsing its spire and threatening to destroy one of the world's greatest



The altar designed by French artist and designer Guillaume Bardet is seen in the heart of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral while French President Emmanuel Macron visits the restored interiors of the monument on Nov 29 in Paris. (AP)

architectural treasures, known for its mesmerizing stained glass.

Trump watched the inferno in horror, along with the rest of the world.

"So horrible to watch the massive fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris," he wrote on what was then named Twitter, offering his advice to the city.

"Perhaps flying water tankers could be used to put it out. Must act quickly!" he wrote.

French officials appeared to re-

spond shortly after, noting that "All means" were being used to extinguish the flames, "except for water-bombing aircrafts which, if used, could lead to the collapse of the entire structure of the cathedral."

Trump also spoke with Macron and Pope Francis at the time to offer his condolences and said he had offered them "the help of our great experts on renovation and construction."

Trump and Macron have had a com-

licated relationship.

During Trump's first term in office, Macron proved to be among the world leaders most adept at managing the American president's whims as he tried to develop a personal connection built in no small part on flattery.

Macron was the guest of honor at Trump's first state dinner and Trump traveled to France several times. But the relationship soured as Trump's term progressed and Macron criticized him for questioning the need for NATO and raising doubts about America's commitment to the mutual-defense pact.

As he ran for a second term this year, Trump often mocked Macron on the campaign trail, imitating his accent and threatening to impose steep tariffs on wine and champagne bottles shipped to the U.S. if France tried to tax American companies.

After Trump won another term last month, Macron rushed to win favor with the president-elect. He was among the first global leaders to congratulate Trump - even before The Associated Press called the race in his favor - and beat UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer to the punch in delivering a congratulatory phone call.

"Congratulations, President @realDonaldTrump," Macron posted on X early on Nov 6. "Ready to work together as we did for four years. With your convictions and mine. With respect and ambition. For more peace and prosperity."

Queen Camilla pulls out of formal outdoors event on medical advice

Princess of Wales joins royals as Qatari state visit to United Kingdom starts

LONDON, Dec 3, (AP): The Princess of Wales helped kick off the emir of Qatar's trip to Britain on Tuesday as the UK government enlists one of the most popular royals to ensure the success of a state visit by the leader of a key ally, even as the princess recovers from cancer treatment.

The event will be just one of a handful of appearances that Prince William's wife, better known as Kate, has made since she was diagnosed with cancer in March, underscoring the importance of the gas-rich gulf state that invests billions in Britain and has played a central role in cease-fire talks between Israel and Hamas.

William and Kate greeted Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Sheikha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim Al Thani in the morning. The couples then traveled to Horse Guards Parade in central London, where King Charles III formally welcomed the emir and Sheikha Jawaher to Britain at the start of a two-day visit that will include a trip to Westminster Abbey, a banquet at Buckingham Palace and a meeting with Prime Minister Keir

Starmer.

Queen Camilla, who has been suffering from a lingering chest infection, pulled out of the formal outdoors event on medical advice. She plans to take part in a lunch at the palace and attend the evening banquet.

Though smaller than the US state of Connecticut, Qatar has the world's third-largest reserves of natural gas and is a key investor in the UK. The Qatari Investment Authority owns the luxury retailer Harrod's and holds large stakes in British companies such as Barclays Bank and the supermarket chain Sainsbury's. It has also invested heavily in London real estate, including the Shard, western Europe's tallest building.

But the display of pomp being rolled out for the emir sits uneasily with human rights advocates who say women face discrimination in Qatar, and migrant workers still haven't been compensated for "egregious abuses" that occurred during preparations for the 2022 soccer World Cup.

"Hosting the royal visit without addressing these issues is tantamount



Britain's Kate, Princess of Wales, Prince William and King Charles III, (from left), welcome the Emir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, (second right), and Sheikha Jawaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim Al Thani in London, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024. (AP)

to royal-washing Qatar's troubling rights record," said Yasmine Ahmed, UK director of Human Rights Watch.

The state visit comes at the end of a

difficult year for Britain's royal family.

The king was sidelined for two months after it was announced in

February that he had been diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer. Just a few weeks later, Kate made public her own cancer diagnosis and said that she, too, would be stepping away from public duties to focus on her treatment and recovery.

While Charles returned to public duties at the end of April, Kate needed more time and her return has been slower.

The princess has made only a few public appearances this year, mostly at moments of national significance. They included the king's annual birthday parade in June and the men's final at Wimbledon in July. Most recently, she took part in the annual Remembrance Day ceremonies in November to honor the nation's war dead.

The princess announced in September that she had completed chemotherapy treatment.

One reason the government and royal family may have asked Kate and William to play a major role in the Qatari state visit is because they have a lot in common with the emir.

All three are in their early 40s and

were educated at elite British prep schools. The emir and William are both graduates of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, with the emir going on to serve in the Qatari military and William serving in both the British Army and Royal Air Force.

Kate and William will join the Qatari royals and the king and queen for a carriage procession to Buckingham Palace.

After lunch at the palace, the emir and Sheikha Jawaher will visit Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament.

Later in the day, the king and queen will host a state banquet at Buckingham Palace.

On Wednesday, the emir will visit Sandhurst, meeting with some of his former classmates and current Qatari cadets. He will also meet with RAF personnel who are providing advanced training for Qatari air force pilots.

The emir will then travel to the prime minister's residence at 10 Downing Street for his meeting with Starmer.



Morning light strikes the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul on March 20. (AP)

Minnesota GOP sue to force election rerun in House race

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec 3, (AP): Minnesota Republicans filed a lawsuit Monday to try to force a rerun of a state House race where the incumbent Democrat won by 14 votes - but in which investigators concluded that election workers probably destroyed 20 valid absentee ballots after failing to count them.

It's a race that could determine the balance of power in the Minnesota House, where leaders from both parties are working out the details of a power-sharing agreement that currently presumes a 67-67 tie when the Legislature convenes next month. A Republican victory in a special election could shift that balance to a two-vote, 68-66 GOP majority.

Democrats have a one-vote majority in the state Senate. So regardless of the outcome in the disputed race, Minnesota will be returning to some degree of divided government in 2025 after two years of full Democratic control.

"The actions of Scott County elections officials constitute a serious breach of not only Minnesota Election Law, but the public trust in our electoral system," the lawsuit said.

Democratic Rep Brad Tabke was declared the winner last week of the swing suburban Shakopee-area District 54A race by 14 votes after a recount and the official canvass. But Scott County election officials had said earlier, after a post-election audit, that they were unable to account for 21 absentee ballots in the district southwest of Minneapolis.

County Attorney Ronald Hovevar reported last Wednesday that his preliminary investigation determined that election workers most likely threw at least 20 of those absentee ballots away, and that they may have been in a paper bale that a recycler had already sent away for shredding. He wrote that they "most likely will not be recovered,"

and that even if they were found, it's unlikely that an unbroken chain of custody could be proven to assure that they weren't tampered with.

In Minnesota, absentee voters complete their ballots, place them in a security envelope to protect their privacy, then place that envelope inside a signature envelope with identifying information on the outside so that election workers can check those ballots in. Once the counting begins, the ballots are supposed to be removed from the security envelopes and tabulated.

The county attorney concluded that the 20 ballots, all from the same precinct, were properly accepted for counting on Oct. 17, but "most likely were never removed from their secrecy envelopes," and were probably still in them when those envelopes were thrown away. The investigation didn't determine what happened to the 21st ballot, which was cast in a different precinct.

It's not the first time in recent years that absentee ballots have gone missing.

When a small number of military ballots in Pennsylvania ended up in a trash can in 2020, President Donald Trump repeatedly seized on the case to support his claims of fraud heading into that election. After investigating, authorities found a temporary county election worker had mistakenly discarded seven military ballots in the trash and mishandled two others. The ballots were later retrieved from a garbage dumpster and counted, and the worker was fired.

Minnesota House Republicans filed Monday's lawsuit on behalf of GOP candidate Aaron Paul, asking a court to declare the results invalid and Tabke's seat vacant, saying the "undisputed facts" make it impossible to rely on the results.

Georgia police move to disperse protests

TBILISI, Georgia, Dec 3, (AP): Police in Georgia's capital again moved to disperse thousands of demonstrators on Monday after over 200 people were detained during four previous nights of protests against the government's decision to suspend negotiations to join the European Union.

Police used water cannons and tear gas to drive protesters away from the parliament building where they have gathered each night since Thursday when the ruling Georgian Dream party declared its decision to put EU accession talks on hold.

Georgian Dream's disputed victory in the country's Oct. 26 parliamentary election, widely seen as a referendum on Georgia's aspirations to join the EU, has sparked mass demonstrations and the opposition boycott of the parliament. The opposition and the country's pro-Western president have accused the governing party of rigging the vote with Moscow's help.

Georgia's Interior Ministry said Monday that 224 protesters were detained on administrative charges and three arrested on criminal charges. So far, 113 police officers needed medical treatment while three others were hospitalized after clashes with protesters, who hurled fireworks at police.

Georgia's President Salome Zourabichvili said many of the arrested protesters had injuries to their heads and faces, including broken bones and eye sockets. Writing on X and citing lawyers who represent the detained, she said some people were subject to systematic beatings between arrest and transportation to detention facilities.

Zourabichvili, who plays a largely ceremonial role, has rejected official election results and refused to recognize the parliament's legitimacy. She has declared that she would stay on the job even after her six-year term ends later this month to spearhead the demands for a new parliamentary election.

The president of the European Council, Antonio Costa, and foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas spoke to Zourabichvili on Sunday to condemn the violence against protesters and to note that "the actions of the government run counter to the will of the people," Costa wrote on X.

Kallas and EU enlargement commissioner Marta Kos also released a joint statement that reiterated the EU's "serious concerns about the continuous democratic backsliding of the country" and urged Georgian authorities to "respect the right to freedom of



Sinn Fein's Thomas Gould celebrates following re-election for Cork North-Central, as the election count continues during Ireland's election, in Nemo Rangers GAA Club, in Cork, Ireland on Dec 1. (AP)

Ireland faces weeks of talks to form government

Ireland faces weeks of coalition talks before it gets a new government, as the country's two major center-right parties work to form a stable administration.

With all 174 legislative seats filled Monday after three days of counting election ballots, Fianna Fail had won 48 seats and Fine Gael 38. The two parties, who have governed in coalition since 2020, fell just short of the 88 needed to

achieve a majority without third-party support.

"The people have spoken, let us now get on with the work," said Fianna Fail leader Micheál Martin.

Left-of-center party Sinn Fein won 39 seats in the Dail, parliament's lower house, but is unlikely to be part of the next government. Both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail have a longstanding refusal to work

with Sinn Fein, partly because of its historic ties with the Irish Republican Army during three decades of violence in Northern Ireland.

"The outcome of the election is now clear. The numbers are there for Fianna Fail and Fine Gael to form a government together," said Sinn Fein lawmaker Eoin Ó Broin. He said that would be "the worst possible outcome for the people of the country." (AP)

NATO chief avoids talk of Ukraine membership

BRUSSELS, Dec 3, (AP): NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Tuesday sidestepped questions about Ukraine's possible membership of the military alliance, saying that the priority now must be to strengthen the country's hand in any future peace talks with Russia by sending it more weapons.

Rutte's remarks, ahead of a meeting of NATO foreign ministers, came days after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that extending alliance membership to territory now under Kyiv's control could end "the hot stage" of the almost 3-year war in Ukraine, where Russian forces are pressing deeper into their western neighbor.

"The front is not moving eastwards. It is slowly moving westwards," Rutte said. "So we have to make sure that Ukraine gets into a position of strength, and then it should be for the Ukrainian government to decide on the next steps, in terms of opening peace talks and how to conduct them."

At their summit in Washington in



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte speaks during a media conference prior to a meeting of NATO foreign ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Dec 3. (AP)

July, leaders of the 32 NATO member countries insisted that Ukraine is on an "irreversible" path to membership. But

some, led by the United States, have balked at moving forward while the war rages and before the country's borders are clearly demarcated.

NATO was founded on the principle that an attack on any ally should be considered an attack on them all, and the alliance has consistently tried to avoid being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia.

Zelenskyy argued that once open conflict ends, any proposal to join NATO could be extended to all parts of the country that fall under internationally recognized borders.

Pressed on this by reporters, Rutte said: "I would argue, let's not have all these discussions step by step on what a peace process might look like."

The first step, he said, must be to "make sure that Ukraine has what it needs to get to a position of strength when those peace talks start."

Ukrainian officials made it clear Tuesday they won't countenance any half measures or stopgap solutions on NATO membership.

Floods wreak havoc in Malaysia and Thailand with over 30 people killed



Asmah Ibrahim, 60 years old resident reacts as she stands outside of her house damaged by flood in Tumpat, on the outskirts of Kota Bharu, Malaysia on Dec 3. (AP)

KOTA BARU, Malaysia, Dec 3, (AP) Severe floods caused by monsoon rains killed more than 30 people and displaced tens of thousands in Malaysia and southern Thailand, officials said Tuesday, with both countries preparing shelters and evacuation plans in anticipation of more heavy rain.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said five days of heavier-than-expected rain that battered the country's east coast last week was equal to the rainfall over the past

six months, wreaking havoc in the northeastern state of Kelantan and neighboring Terengganu.

The heavy downpours damaged roads and houses in Kelantan and other parts of Malaysia. Rescue workers used boats to distribute food to victims trapped in their homes. Anwar said it would cost the government an estimated 1 billion ringgit (\$224 million) to repair infrastructure damaged by the floods.

The rain eased over the weekend, but the Meteorological Department

forecast heavy rains later Tuesday. Anwar said the government is bracing for another monsoon surge that is expected to hit on Sunday.

According to the National Disaster Command Center, about 91,000 people across eight states remained in schools, community halls and relief centers after they were moved out of their homes due to the floods. This was down from about 150,000 evacuees on Sunday. About 88% of the evacuees are from Kelantan and Terengganu.



People watch a TV screen showing South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's televised briefing at a bus terminal in Seoul, South Korea, on Dec 3. (AP)

Opposition accused of anti-state activities

S.Korea leader declares emergency martial law

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 3, (AP) South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared an "emergency martial law," Tuesday accusing the country's opposition of controlling the parliament, sympathizing with North Korea and paralyzing the government with anti-state activities.

Yoon made the announcement in a televised briefing Tuesday, vowing to "eradicate pro-North Korean forces and protect the constitutional democratic order."

It wasn't immediately clear how Yoon's step would affect the country's governance and democracy. The move drew immediate opposition from politicians, including the leader of his own

conservative party, Han Dong-hoon, who called the decision "wrong" and vowed to "stop it with the people." Opposition leader Lee Jae-myung, who narrowly lost to Yoon in the 2022 presidential election, called Yoon's announcement "illegal and unconstitutional."

"Through this martial law, I will rebuild and protect the free Republic of Korea, which is falling into the depths of national ruin," Yoon said during a televised speech, invoking South Korea's formal name. "I will eliminate anti-state forces as quickly as possible and normalize the country," he said, while asking the people to believe in him and tolerate "some inconveniences."

Yoon - whose approval rating has dipped in recent months - has struggled to push his agenda against an opposition-controlled parliament since taking office in 2022. Yoon's conservative People Power Party had been locked in an impasse with the liberal opposition Democratic Party over next year's budget bill. The opposition has also been attempting to pass motions to impeach three top prosecutors, including the chief of the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office, in what the conservatives have called a vendetta against their criminal investigations on Lee, who has been seen as the favorite for the next presidential election in 2027 in opinion polls.

China and Germany hold strategic dialogue on diplomacy, security

BEIJING, Dec 3, (Xinhua) Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and German Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock co-chaired the seventh round of the China-Germany Strategic Dialogue on Diplomacy and Security in Beijing on Monday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that China has maintained a stable and consistent policy toward Germany, and has always regarded Germany as an important cooperative partner since the establishment of diplomatic ties 52 years ago.

There are differences between China and Germany, but differences should not become obstacles to cooperation or reasons for confrontation, said Wang.

He said that China and Germany, as the world's second and third largest economies, should overcome obstacles, adhere to dialogue and cooperation, abandon the out-dated mentality of Cold War confrontation, and jointly fend off external risks and respond to global challenges.

Noting the broad areas of Germany-China cooperation, Baerbock said Germany attaches great importance to its relations with China and firmly abides by the one-China policy.

Baerbock said that in the face of a turbulent world, it is of great significance to maintain candid dialogue and strengthen strategic communication with China, which is conducive to maintaining the right direction of development of bilateral

relations and contributing to world peace and stability.

She spoke highly of China's positive role in addressing climate change.

Wang stressed that in order to maintain the steady development of China-Germany relations, it is necessary, first and foremost, to calibrate the strategic understanding.

China is a force for peace, development and stability in the world, with an open, transparent strategy and policy orientation, Wang said, adding that the two sides should adhere to mutual respect and understanding, and carry out mutually beneficial cooperation on this basis.

China-Germany relationship does not target any third party, and should not be subject to influence by any third party, Wang added.

The EU's imposition of anti-subsidy tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles violates the principles of fair competition and free trade, and has become a prominent issue between China and the EU, said Wang.

It is hoped that Germany and Europe will view China's development objectively and rationally, adopt an active and pragmatic policy towards China, and properly handle trade disputes through dialogue and consultation.

Baerbock said the German side supports the continuation of negotiations between the EU and China on the issue of anti-subsidy measures for electric vehicles in order to find a mutually acceptable solution.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and German Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock co-chair the seventh round of China-Germany Strategic Dialogue on Diplomacy and Security in Beijing, capital of China on Dec 2. (Xinhua)

Asia

Russia sub in Philippines:

The Philippine military deployed a navy ship and air force planes to shadow a Russian submarine, which passed through the South China Sea off the country's western coast last week, a security official said Monday.

The Russian submarine identified itself in response to a Philippine navy two-way radio inquiry, saying it was en route home to Russia's eastern city of Vladivostok after joining an exercise with the Malaysian navy, Jonathan Malaya, assistant director-general of the National Security Council, said.

The submarine, like other foreign ships, has the right of "innocent passage" in the country's exclusive economic zone but it still sparked concern when it was spotted on Thursday about 80 nautical miles (148 kilometers) off the Philippine province of Mindoro, Malaya said.

The submarine was sighted after it surfaced due to weather-related conditions, Malaya said. "All of that is very concerning," President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. told reporters when asked about the submarine. "Any intrusion into the West Philippine Sea, of our EEZ, of our baselines is very worrisome. So, yes, it's just another one." (AP)

3 climbers missing in NZ: Three mountain climbers from the U.S. and Canada are missing after they failed to return from a planned ascent of New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki, authorities said Tuesday. The Americans - Kurt Blair, 56, from Colorado and Carlos Romero, 50, of California - are certified alpine guides, according to the website of the American Mountain Guides Association. A statement by New Zealand's police did not name the Canadian climber, citing the need to notify his family. (AP)



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro speaks to supporters during a march in Caracas, Venezuela on Dec 1. (AP)

Human rights court rules against Venezuela in 2013 election case

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica, Dec 3, (AP) The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled Monday that the Venezuelan government violated the political rights of former opposition presidential candidate Henrique Capriles.

The court, based in Costa Rica's capital, said in a statement that the government violated his freedom of expression, his right to equality under the law and judicial protections.

Capriles, an upper-middle class lawyer, used his charisma and non-combative style to win the support of millions and become an electoral threat to the since deceased President Hugo Chávez in 2012.

Capriles would lose that election, and another the following year after Chávez's death, to current President Nicolás Maduro. It was during that second bid in 2013 that the court on Monday said the government violated Capriles' rights and favored Maduro.

State resources were used to bolster Maduro's candidacy, the court said. Even so, the result was exceed-

ingly close.

The court ruled that Venezuela's government undermined the integrity of the election and affected the right of Venezuelans to freely elect their leader.

In 2017, Maduro's administration barred Capriles from running again for 15 years.

Capriles already had a ruling from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in his favor. The court had ordered the Venezuelan government to lift the ban on his political participation, but it was ignored.

In January, the Supreme Justice Tribunal ratified Capriles' ban until 2032.

In July, Maduro was declared the winner of an election full of irregularities for which tally sheets from poll places gathered by the opposition showed their candidate, Edmundo González, had defeated Maduro by a wide margin.

But Venezuela's National Electoral Council, which is stacked with Maduro loyalists, declared him the election winner hours after polls closed.

Namibia female VP leads in election marred by opposition complaints

WINDHOEK, Namibia, Dec 3, (AP) The candidate for Namibia's ruling party led Monday in early results of a presidential election characterized by technical problems which caused voting to be extended for three days.

The opposition has rejected the results and claimed the extension was illegal, undermining the vote in a southern African country that has a largely smooth history of elections and is praised as one of the region's more stable democracies. Final results are expected this week, with opposition parties saying they will challenge the validity of the election in court.

The problems in last Wednesday's election, which included a shortage of ballot papers and other issues, led election authorities to allow some polling stations to stay open until Saturday.

The issues threaten to overshadow any result, with Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of the ruling SWAPO party a strong contender to become Namibia's first female leader.

The 72-year-old Nandi-Ndaitwah, a former member of Namibia's underground independence movement, had around 56% of the vote in the partial results published Monday. Only 220,000 of the approximately 1.4 million votes cast have been counted. Panduleni Itula of the Independent Patriots for Change opposition party is second with 27% of the vote.

Namibians voted for president and



Namibia's vice president, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, of the ruling South West Africa People's Organization, (SWAPO) casts her vote in a presidential election, in Windhoek, Namibia on Nov 27. (AP)

for the makeup of Parliament in a large but sparsely populated country on the southwest coast of Africa that has swaths of desert running through it. Namibia has been governed by SWAPO since independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990.

While Nandi-Ndaitwah offers a chance at history, SWAPO has faced

frustration from Namibians struggling with a high unemployment rate and other economic hardships, especially among young people. Government corruption scandals have tarnished its reputation as the country's liberator.

The Independent Patriots for Change said it expected to file a legal challenge against the election this week. Other opposition parties said they will join the case.

"It is about our country, it's about our democratic credentials, it's about the country that must work for everybody, the poor and the rich. It cannot only work for those who want to remain in power by hook or (by) crook," said McHenry Venaani, the leader of the opposition Popular Democratic Movement and a candidate in the presidential election.

The Electoral Commission of Namibia which organized the election said there will not be a rerun despite opposition demands.

Other ruling parties in southern Africa have faced a mood of discontent this year.

In neighboring South Africa, the African National Congress, the party of Nelson Mandela, lost its 30-year majority and had to form a coalition to stay in government and keep hold of the presidency. The Botswana Democratic Party was stunningly swept from power in that country after governing for 58 years since independence from Britain.

Subcontinent

2 Sri Lanka vessels seized: Two Sri Lankan fishing vessels that had been apprehended in Indian waters while transporting a large consignment of crystal methamphetamine, along with the suspects on board, were escorted ashore to the Colombo Port on Monday, Sri Lankan Navy said.

The seizure of the consignment of drugs weighing around 400 kg,

followed an intelligence-sharing between the Indian and Lankan navies.

One of the trawlers was found to be transporting the contraband while the other was assisting, according to the Sri Lanka Navy. (Xinhua)

Bail hearing rescheduled: A court in southeastern Bangladesh on Tuesday rescheduled by a month the

bail hearing for a jailed prominent Hindu leader who in recent months led large rallies in the Muslim-majority country demanding better security for minority groups.

This comes as tensions spiked following reports of the desecration of the Indian flag across Bangladesh, with some burning it and others laying it on the floor for people to step on. (AP)

2024 Kuwait Hackathon empowers participants to build cybersecurity skills

Agility recognized for advancing Kuwait's cybersecurity talent and capabilities

KUWAIT CITY Dec 3: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, announced that it was recognized by H.E. Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, for its dedication to nurturing homegrown cybersecurity talent and developing local capabilities to tackle the critical digital challenges of the future.

The recognition took place at the 2024 Kuwait Hackathon, organized by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and CODED Academy. Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan was honored by His Excellency Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah during the event.

"At Agility, we are deeply committed to elevating Kuwait's cybersecurity readiness by empowering local talent and fostering the development of homegrown professionals in this critical field," said Tarek Sultan, Vice Chairman of Agility. "Support-

ing initiatives like the 2024 Kuwait Cybersecurity Hackathon reflects our dedication to building a robust cybersecurity ecosystem and equipping the next generation with the skills needed to safeguard our digital future."

During the 2024 Kuwait Hackathon 1,474 participants were given an opportunity to test and grow their cybersecurity skills, and were promoting cybersecurity as a career and as a cause. The initiative consisted of an intensive three-week training camp with hands-on exercises in vulnerability detection and threat management offered for 56 participants, followed by expert-led workshops attended by 1,205 participants. The project culminated in the hackathon, where 213 participants competed in solving cybersecurity challenges, with awards presented for innovation and performance.

Agility champions digital advancement nationwide. It is committed to nurturing a new generation of digital professionals. In 2024, the company sponsored coding programs

for more than 1,300 young men and women through Kuwait Codes 2024 and Academy X, two of Kuwait's premier platforms for aspiring coders. Alongside their work in Kuwait, the company has a long history in being at forefront implementing tech and innovation programs all over the world. In Egypt Agility and EFE partnered to deliver AI training for 3,500 young people (50% female) from underserved populations to give them a competitive edge in the job market by teaching them to harness the power of transformative AI technology.

Agility is a leader in digital logistics and clearing. Its subsidiary, Global Clearinghouse Systems (GCS), is leading Kuwait Customs' modernization efforts with a unified digital customs platform that strengthens border control, boosts revenue, and enhances compliance with international trade agreements. GCS has trained 15,000 Customs personnel on digitization initiatives that resulted in reducing inefficiencies and saving approximately

19 million sheets of paper annually, equivalent to over 2,280 trees.

In Egypt, Agility Economic Zones is connecting SCZONE authorities, Customs officials and regulators with investors, carriers, logistics-services providers, shippers and companies that have manufacturing, assembly and processing operations in the zone.

Agility has a long-standing commitment to youth in Kuwait through educational programs, capacity-building initiatives, and knowledge transfer. Its efforts align with Kuwait's development national plan, and are designed to equip students and young professionals with crucial skills, preparing them for the job market and enabling them to contribute to Kuwait's growth and development. The company focuses on: (1) enhancing programming and technical skills, (2) promoting financial literacy and entrepreneurship, and (3) providing training in the industrial sector and facility management.



Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah with an official Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan

NBK acquires 51% of capital of leading payment service provider, UPayments

'We are highly confident that this integration will accelerate value creation'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced that it has acquired a majority stake of 51% in Kuwait-based Payment Services Provider, and e-commerce enablement platform, UPayments. This acquisition represents a significant step forward in the digital payments landscape in Kuwait by combining NBK's extensive banking expertise with UPayments' innovative capabilities. The collaboration aims to bring about a revolution in the way digital payments are conducted in the country.

NBK's decision to acquire a majority stake in UPayments is based on a strategic integration of expertise and capabilities. NBK, with its established presence in the banking domain, has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience in facilitating various payment mechanisms, by issuing payment methods for customers (Debit Card, Credit Card, Prepaid Card, Apple Pay, Samsung Pay) as well as enabling payment acceptance with merchants, on Point of Sale (POS) and Payment Gateway (PG).

Moreover, the bank's understanding of the regulatory framework, customer behavior, and market dynamics in Ku-



A photo of Mohammed Al Othman, Nasser Al Hamidi, General Manager of Personal Banking Group Hisham Al Nuseif and the NBK team.

Al Othman:

- The acquisition aligns with our strategy to promote innovative financial services and reinforce our leadership in embracing emerging technologies within the digital payments landscape in Kuwait
- This move represents another significant step in strengthening digital payment solutions
- The advancement of e-payment solutions reflects Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) commitment to fostering and driving digital transformation across various aspects of the country's financial landscape

wait's financial sector gives it a solid foundation to continue driving innovation in digital payments.

On the other hand, UPayments brings to the table a cutting-edge technology platform and an array of digital products that can enhance the digital payments ecosystem. Their proficiency lies in crafting and implementing secure, user-centric payment solutions for enterprises

of varying scales—spanning from sizable corporations to medium-sized and even smaller businesses.

UPayments' dedication to broadening its service offerings across diverse sectors has led to a strengthened position, rendering its acquisition a significant move in line with NBK's strategy to advance its digital transformation endeavors.

Mr. Mohammed Al Othman - Chief Executive Officer Consumer and Digital Banking said: "This pivotal move signifies the commencement of an exhilarating journey. This is the latest investment to support NBK's innovative financial services, aligning with and reinforcing the bank's forward-thinking vision focused on putting technology first."

"Over the past four years, Kuwait has experienced an extraordinary surge in e-commerce activities and digital payment transactions, propelling the need for financial institutions and payment service providers to adapt and innovate, in order to keep pace with this rapid evolution of new-gen payment methods.

"This acquisition amplifies the capabilities and strengths of both NBK and UPayments, equipping them to effectively address the burgeoning demands of the market."

"The synergy between NBK and UPayments is evident in how their respective strengths complement each other. NBK's deep understanding of payment processes and regulations aligns



Mohammed Al Othman during the signing of the agreement with the co-founder and CEO of UPayments, Nasser Al Hamidi.

seamlessly with UPayments' technological prowess empowering them to design and implement innovative digital payment solutions that cater to the evolving needs of customers in Kuwait."

"Together, NBK and UPayments aim to simplify and streamline digital payment experiences for various businesses in Kuwait and beyond. We are highly confident that this integration will accelerate value creation, enhance NBK's range of services for merchants, unleash synergies that contribute to improved operating margins, and create pathways for regional expansion."

NBK's promotion of e-payment solutions also aligns with the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) guidelines. CBK has been supportive of FinTech companies by creating a conducive regulatory environment that encourages innovation while ensuring consumer protection and financial stability.

UPayments emerged as a leading e-payment service providers in Kuwait, as it was named best FinTech company

by Valuer.ai. Moreover, UPayments was recognized as one of Kuwait's top FinTech companies by Forbes Magazine and received the prestigious distinction of offering the best payment solutions in the country, an accolade bestowed by Pan Finance. These achievements serve as a clear testament to its vision to introducing cutting-edge technologies to the market.

Thanks to the remarkable strides taken by the bank in executing its digital transformation strategy, NBK has become one of the highest rated banks in the region for the quality of its digital products and services. The bank has consistently received various international acknowledgments including nine prestigious awards from Global Finance Magazine. These awards underscore NBK's pioneering role in innovation and its delivery of superior digital personal banking services across Kuwait and the Middle East in 2024. Demonstrating a steadfast commitment to innovation, NBK continues its journey of digital transformation to offer its customers a truly exceptional banking experience.

InvestGB to provide access to Ares' U.S. direct lending platform in Kuwait

Gulf Capital Investment Company 'InvestGB' announces strategic partnership with 'AWMS'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: As part of its continuous efforts to provide its clients with the best-in-class alternative investment products managed by leading global fund managers, Gulf Capital Investment Company "InvestGB", the fully owned investment arm of Gulf Bank, is proud to announce a new strategic partnership with Ares Wealth Management Solutions ("AWMS"), a global brand of Ares Management Corporation (NYSE: ARES) ("Ares"), a leading global alternative investment manager. Through this strategic relationship, InvestGB and Gulf Bank will be able to provide clients in Kuwait access to Ares' U.S. direct lending platform.

Today, Ares has one of the largest global direct lending platforms, with approximately \$225 billion of assets under management and more than 370 investment professionals, as of September 30, 2024. Specifically, Ares U.S. Direct Lending focuses on investing in directly originated, senior secured, floating-rate loans to U.S. middle-market companies and seeks to generate current income, the potential for capital appreciation and attractive risk-adjusted returns through market cycles. The strategic relationship will enable individual investors to gain exposure to this leading platform and an income-oriented, conservative portfolio and with access to a core holding throughout changing market and interest rate cycles.

Ahmad Boushahri, Director of International Equities and Fixed Income at InvestGB, expressed enthusiasm for the announcement: "This strategic relationship aligns with our dedication



Ahmad Boushahri



Mark Serocold



InvestGB logo



AresWMS Logo

to providing the best-in-class alternative investment products to our clients, managed by top global fund managers. This relationship offers our high-net-worth clients access to a differentiated opportunity for stable income and capital preservation, with Ares' leading private credit investment platform and cycle-tested approach."

Boushahri added, "With Ares' reputation and experience, this relationship offers our clients differentiated access to compelling market opportunities and Ares' track record of attractive risk-adjusted returns in private credit."

Mark Serocold, Partner & Head of EMEA for AWMS, said: "We are excited to be working with InvestGB as we continue our efforts to provide global individual investors access to private markets. As private credit continues to grow and high-net-worth investors seek alternative sources of income, we believe that the relationship will provide investors with an attractive opportunity to benefit from Ares' leading origination and investment capabilities in direct lending. We look forward to working with Mr. Boushahri and his team."

BRI plays key role in driving economic dev in participating countries, says expert

CAIRO, Dec. 3, (Xinhua) - The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) plays a significant role in driving economic development across participating countries, an Egyptian economic expert has said.

Waleed Gaballah, a member of the Egyptian Association for Political Economy, Statistics and Legislation, said the

initiative is a groundbreaking model for fostering global growth, highlighting its transformative impact on infrastructure, trade and technology.

"Launched in 2013, the BRI ... aims to create new paths for the global economy, by pumping huge investments into the participants," he told Xinhua in a recent interview.

The initiative is working to promote international trade by fostering a broader and less costly exchange and support the development of industries that creates more job opportunities, Gaballah said.

He further noted that the BRI is distinguished by its focus on infrastructure projects, along with its emphasis on social sectors like health and education.

Kuwait, UAE and Bahrain among destinations

British retirees seek safe havens to avoid 'inheritance tax' as new proposal looms

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: A growing number of British retirees are exploring ways to avoid the inheritance tax set to be imposed starting in 2027, following a proposal by Finance Minister Rachel Reeves, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to The Telegraph, countries such as Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and Hong Kong are emerging as popular destinations for those looking to escape the 'death tax.'

The newspaper highlighted that the concept of 'dying in Dubai' is gaining traction among the British, as the UAE offers a 'zero percent' inheritance tax, making it an attractive option for retirees.

Each year, about 10,000 people move to Abu Dhabi, drawn by the lack

of income tax and a sunny climate, with only 25 rainy days a year.

The report indicated that over 250,000 British nationals have moved to the UAE, with many seeking to avoid inheritance tax, which is expected to rise significantly in the coming years.

The new inheritance tax law, part of Reeves' budget plan, is anticipated to generate £40 billion by the end of the decade.

The Telegraph also revealed that 28,000 estates in the UK, or roughly 4 percent of all estates, currently pay the inheritance tax each year and this figure could increase to 391,000 by 2030.

The new budget, which will reconsider pensions in the inheritance tax beginning in April 2027, is expected to impose heavy taxes on unpaid pen-

sions for family members.

For example, a 76-year-old individual named 'Bill' with £4 million in pension funds and £2 million in other assets could face substantial taxes on his estate if he remains in the UK.

However, if he moves to the UAE before 2027, he can avoid these taxes and transfer significantly more of his wealth to his daughter.

By taking advantage of a tax treaty between the UK and the UAE, he could gift her £2.3 million annually, potentially increasing her inheritance by £2.9 million.

This trend reflects retirees' growing interest in finding countries with tax treaties that allow them to receive pensions without being subject to UK tax, provided they remain abroad for at least six years.

High living costs push seniors back to work

Annual inflation in Türkiye eases to 47.09 pct in Nov

ANKARA, Dec 3, (Xinhua) - Türkiye's annual inflation rate eased to 47.09 percent in November, marking its lowest point since June 2023, according to official data released Tuesday.

The decline represents the sixth consecutive month of easing inflation, down from October's 48.58 percent, the Turkish Statistical Institute reported.

On a monthly basis, the consumer price index (CPI) rose by 2.24 percent, still above expectations, said the institute.

In November, Türkiye's Central Bank raised its year-end inflation forecast for 2024 to 44 percent from the previous forecast of 38.

Türkiye has been grappling with high inflation amid one of the worst cost-of-living crises in its history. Since June 2023, the country has tightened its monetary policy, increasing its key interest rate from 8.5 percent to 50 percent.

Meanwhile, Türkiye's high cost of living is pushing an increasing number of seniors back into the workforce to make ends meet, according to a leading pensioners' association.

High inflation, a devalued Turkish

lira, and stagnant pensions have left retirees struggling to cover basic expenses.

Kazim Ergun, head of Türkiye's Retirees Association, revealed that nearly 4 million retirees, about one-fourth of the country's total, are working in industries ranging from retail and agriculture to transportation.

"Many retirees are compelled to return to work due to the economic hardships facing the country," Ergun told Xinhua, adding that "Most of these retirees are working illegally, without proper contracts or benefits."

Since 2018, Türkiye's economy has been plagued by currency depreciation and persistently high inflation, which eroded the purchasing power of the lira and strained household budgets.

While annual inflation eased to 48.6 percent in October, down from 75.5 percent in May, the country's cost-of-living crisis continues to weigh heavily on retirees.

The average monthly pension of 15,000 liras (approximately 430 U.S. dollars) is barely enough to cover essentials like rent, utilities, and food in urban areas.

"My pension is not enough to make

ends meet for my family, therefore, because of economic hardships, I need to continue to work," Timucin Akcaoz, a 63-year-old former furniture designer who now works in the retail sector in Ankara, told Xinhua.

"High inflation has severely impacted our family budget. My wife and I receive pensions, but they are insufficient to cover our expenses," the retiree said.

Semih Tufan, a 70-year-old former civil servant who until recently worked as a part-time taxi driver, also expressed his concerns about the high cost of living.

"Around me, many elderly people work or are seeking some form of employment because of economic hardships," he said.

The rising cost of living prompted calls for government action, including increased pension payments, rent control measures, and strategies to combat inflation.

The Turkish authorities have pledged that they will continue to help the Turkish people combat inflation by increasing the minimum wage amid ongoing price pressures.

ABK releases Annual Sustainability Report for 2023

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: In line with its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Central Bank of Kuwait's policies, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has proudly released its annual sustainability report for 2023. This report reflects its alignment with the New Kuwait 2035 vision and the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, as well as Egypt Vision 2030.

The report, titled 'Embracing Green Initiatives,' provides a comprehensive overview of the Bank's activities, performance, challenges, and opportunities. It encapsulates key activities related to sustainability, social responsibility, and governance, prepared in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which is the internationally recognized framework for sustainability reporting. The report encompasses the entire ABK Group, which includes branches in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, and ABK Capital.

The fourth annual sustainability report is now available on the Bank's website and social media platforms, demonstrating its ongoing commitment to global standards and continuous adaptation to advancements within the local, regional, and global banking sectors.

Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer at ABK, stated, "The release of our annual sustainability report reflects our commitment to transparency and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in all our operations. At the same time, it demonstrates our dedication to reducing the environmental impact of all our activities as a leading and responsible banking institution in the Kuwaiti market and in all the markets where we operate in the UAE and Egypt."

Albenali emphasized that the integration of ESG principles has become essential in the banking sector. The



Sager Albenali, Chief Communications Officer



ABK Sustainability Report.

Sager Albenali

■ The release of our fourth annual sustainability report reflects our commitment to transparency and ESG standards in all our operations.

report highlights the Bank's achievements at all levels and the various initiatives undertaken in sustainability and governance.

Moreover, he noted that the report enhances trust among local, regional, and global institutions, while adding value for all stakeholders, including clients, shareholders, and suppliers.

The report elaborates on the Bank's new strategy, showcasing indicators of progress made in its sustainability journey, including measures to reduce carbon emissions in daily operations, minimizing the use of paper, water, and other resources. Additionally, it outlines significant developments in digital transformation and innovation in

banking services, including the launch of a newly designed website and various new digital solutions.

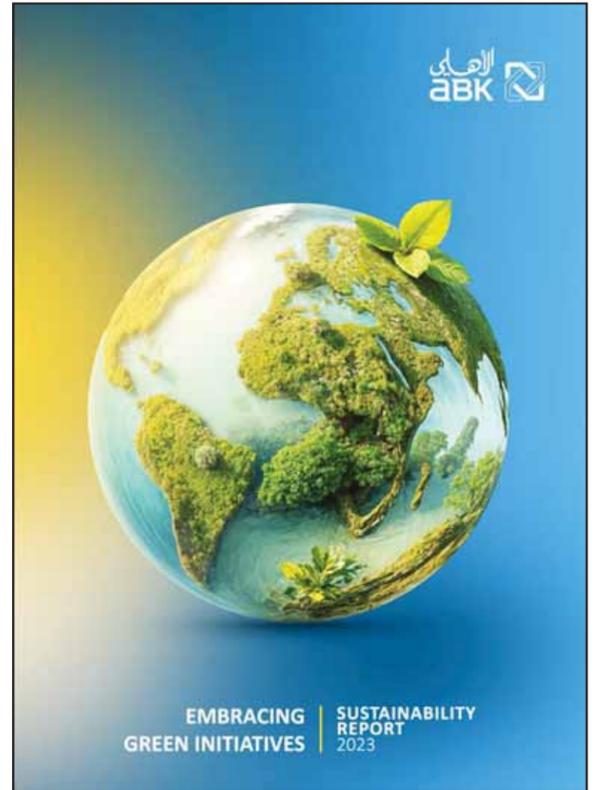
The report addresses the Bank's commitment to gender equality, adherence to governance ethics across all departments, investment in social responsibility, and also covers ABK's support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs.

Albenali further revealed that the report discusses the Bank's adoption of the highest global standards regarding procurement processes and building partnerships with suppliers, ensuring the Bank meets its interests while securing advanced products and solutions at competitive prices.

Furthermore, it emphasizes ABK's

dedication to promoting financial inclusion, providing a stimulating work environment for all employees, employing national talent, and training the workforce on the latest banking developments. It provides an overview of the Bank's standards in combating money laundering and financing terrorism, risk management, emergency situation plans, addressing climate change challenges, and internal auditing standards.

Overall, the report illustrates ABK's contributions to providing a unique banking experience that balances economic and social development while preserving the environment, aiming to achieve sustainable development goals and enhance the lives of the communi-



Report cover.

ties it serves.

Albenali reaffirmed that ABK will continue to undertake numerous measures in its ongoing commitment to achieving sustainability in its opera-

tions. This, he noted, will elevate its competitive position, affirm its leadership in the Kuwaiti banking sector, and enhance its successes in the UAE and Egypt.

Data key, says Waller

Fed official leaning toward December interest rate cut

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): A top Federal Reserve official said Monday that he is leaning toward supporting an interest rate cut when the Fed meets in two weeks but that evidence of persistent inflation before then could cause him to change that view.



Waller

Speaking at George Washington University, Christopher Waller, a key member of the Fed's Board of Governors, said he was confident that inflation is headed lower and that the central bank will likely keep reducing its key rate, which affects many consumer and business loans.

But he noted that there's a risk that inflation "may be getting stuck above" the Fed's 2% target, which would support an argument for keeping the Fed's rate unchanged this month.

"At present, I lean toward supporting a cut to the policy rate at our December meeting," Waller said in his remarks to a conference held by the American Institute for Economic Research. "But that decision will depend on whether data that we will receive before then surprises to the upside and alters my forecast for the path of inflation."

Waller's caution reflects a notable shift in the economic and inflation outlook in the past month or so. Growth in consumer spending and the broader economy was robust in the July-September quarter. In addition, inflation picked up in October after having slowed for most of this year.

And Donald Trump's election victory has raised the prospect of widespread tariffs and mass deportations of migrants, both of which could elevate inflation. Some economists say they think the Fed might decide to cut its rate more slowly to allow time to evaluate the effects of Trump's policies.

With inflation having steadily fallen from its peak in 2022, the Fed reduced its key rate by a half-point in September and by a quarter-point in November. And it signaled in September that it expected to announce another quarter-point cut later this month. Yet inflation has remained above the Fed's target level, clouding the Fed's next step.

In October, "core" inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy costs, accelerated a bit. It rose 2.8% compared with a year earlier, up from 2.7% in September.

Waller stressed that if future economic reports showed inflation or growth deviating from the Fed's expected paths, he could favor keeping rates unchanged this month.

"If the data we receive between today and the next meeting surprise in a way that suggests our forecasts of slowing inflation and a moderating but still-solid economy are wrong, then I will be supportive of holding the policy rate constant," he said.

Even so, Waller said the Fed's benchmark rate is high enough to restrict economic growth and inflation and so a quarter-point rate cut wouldn't involve much risk of reigniting inflation.

"Cutting again will only mean that we aren't pressing on the brake pedal quite as hard," he said.

In his speech, Waller acknowledged some frustration over the recent persistence of inflation.

"I feel like an MMA fighter who keeps getting inflation in a choke hold, waiting for it to tap out, yet it keeps slipping out of my grasp at the last minute," he said. "But let me assure you that submission is inevitable - inflation isn't getting out of the octagon."

In recent remarks, other Fed officials have also suggested that they haven't yet made a final decision on whether to support a rate cut this month.

Earlier Monday, Raphael Bostic, president of the Fed's Atlanta branch, said he was "keeping my options open" when asked whether he favored a rate cut in two weeks.

Digital innovation key to unlocking Africa trade potential, officials say

KIGALI, Dec 3, (Xinhua): Delegates at the Trade Development Forum 2024 have called for strengthened efforts to promote digital innovation as a means of unlocking Africa's trade and business potential.

The forum, which opened Monday in the Rwandan capital of Kigali, was organized by TradeMark Africa (TMA), an aid-for-trade organization with the aim of growing prosperity in Africa through trade, in cooperation with the Rwandan government. It focuses on the transformative power of digital innovation under the theme "Unlocking Africa's Trade Potential Through Digital Innovation."

Speaking at the event, Prudence Sebahizi, Rwandan minister of trade and industry, underscored the crucial role of technology in overcoming trade barriers, fostering connections and enabling inclusive economic growth.

"This year's theme reflects the aspirations of our continent to build a digitally connected and economically inclusive Africa. Today, we stand on the threshold of unprecedented opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and technology is the engine driving this transformation," Sebahizi said.

He highlighted Rwanda's achievements in trade facilitation through initiatives like the Electronic Single Window

system, which has significantly reduced trade processing times and costs.

"Technology enables us to enhance efficiency, cut trade costs and ensure that Africa's vast market is more accessible to all businesses, particularly SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises). Rwanda is proud to be at the forefront of these efforts, and we see AfCFTA as a catalyst for deeper integration and a more unified economic space across the continent," he added.

Wamkele Mene, secretary general of the AfCFTA Secretariat, emphasized the significance of the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade, describing it as a legally binding framework for creating a single digital market across Africa.

"Africa's challenges are Africa's opportunities. I believe that the digital innovation and the tools we deploy today will accelerate integration and enable 600 million young Africans to participate in the digital economy," Mene said, describing the protocol as vital for driving Africa's digital transformation, industrialization and sustainable development.

Hailemariam Desalegn, former prime minister of Ethiopia and board chair of TMA, called for investments in infrastructure, skills development and policy frameworks to sustain the momentum.

China blocks key tech exports to US in response to chip sanctions

Antimony considered critical for national security

BANGKOK, Dec 3, (AP): China announced Tuesday it is banning exports to the United States of gallium, germanium, antimony and other key high-tech materials with potential military applications, as a general principle, lashing back at U.S. limits on semiconductor-related exports.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry announced the move after the Washington expanded its list of Chinese companies subject to export controls on computer chip-making equipment, software and high-bandwidth memory chips. Such chips are needed for advanced applications.

The ratcheting up of trade restrictions comes as President-elect Donald Trump has been threatening to sharply raise tariffs on imports from China and other countries, potentially intensifying simmering tensions over trade and technology.

China's Foreign Ministry also issued a vehement rebuttal. "China has lodged stern protests with the U.S. for its update of the semiconductor export control measures, sanctions against Chinese companies, and malicious suppression of China's technological progress," Lin Jian, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said in a routine briefing Tuesday.

"I want to reiterate that China firmly opposes the U.S. overstretching the concept of national security, abuse of export control measures, and illegal unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction against Chinese companies," Lin said.

China said in July 2023 it would require exporters to apply for licenses to send to the U.S. the strategically important materials such as gallium and germanium. In August, the Chinese Commerce Ministry said it would restrict exports of antimony, which is used in a wide range of products from batteries to weapons, and impose tight-



A man works at a manufacturer of Integrated Chip encapsulation in Nantong in eastern China's Jiangsu province on Friday, Sept. 16, 2022. (AP)

er controls on exports of graphite. Such minerals are considered critical for national security. China is a major producer of antimony, which is used in flame retardants, batteries, night-vision goggles and nuclear weapon production, according to a 2021 U.S. International Trade Commission report.

The limits announced by Beijing on Tuesday also include exports of super-hard materials, such as diamonds and other synthetic materials that are not compressible and extremely dense. They are used in many industrial areas such as cutting tools, disc brakes and protective coatings. The licensing requirements that China announced in August also covered smelting and separation technology and machinery and other items related to such super-hard materials.

China is the biggest global source of gallium and germanium, which are produced in small amounts but are needed to

make computer chips for mobile phones, cars and other products, as well as solar panels and military technology.

After the U.S. side announced it was adding 140 companies to a so-called "entity list" subject to strict export controls, China's Commerce Ministry protested and said it would act to protect China's "rights and interests." Nearly all of the companies affected by Washington's latest trade restrictions are based in China, though some are Chinese-owned businesses in Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

Both governments say their respective export controls are needed for national security.

China's government has been frustrated by U.S. curbs on access to advanced processor chips and other technology on security grounds but had been cautious in retaliating, possibly to avoid disrupting China's fledgling developers of chips, artificial intelligence

and other technology. Various Chinese industry associations issued statements protesting the U.S. move to limit access to advanced chip-making technology.

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers said it opposed using national security as a grounds for export controls, "abuse of export control measures, and the malicious blockade and suppression of China."

"Such behavior seriously violates the laws of the market economy and the principle of fair competition, undermines the international economic and trade order, disrupts the stability of the global industrial chain, and ultimately harms the interests of all countries," it said in a statement.

The China Semiconductor Industry Association issued a similar statement, adding that such restrictions were disrupting supply chains and inflating costs for American companies.

The Conversation

Tip pressure: A short-term gain, long-term loss

By Sara Hanson, University of Richmond and Nathan B. Warren, BI Norwegian Business School

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



Have you ever hesitated at the register, uncomfortable as an employee watched you choose a tip? It's not just you. The rise of digital tipping systems - from point-of-sale devices held by employees to countertop screens that clearly display your selection - is changing the dynamics of tipping, often in ways that make customers feel scrutinized.

As marketing professors who study

digital tipping, we wanted to find out how customers respond to this sort of "tip surveillance." So we conducted a field study analyzing 36,000 transactions and did four controlled experiments with more than 1,100 participants.

We compared tipping setups with less privacy - such as when firms use handheld payment systems, when employees are facing customers, and when apps immediately show tips to employees - with setups with more privacy, such as countertop payment systems, employees who face away from customers, and apps that disclose tips only after the service.

Our results were clear: High levels of surveillance are bad for business. Customers who felt watched while tipping were less likely to make a return visit or recommend a

business. While privacy often made customers feel more generous and in control of their decisions, feeling scrutinized led to resentment and reduced loyalty.

Interestingly, research shows that people enjoy being watched when they donate to charity. So why does tipping feel different? Perhaps because tipping isn't entirely voluntary - it's often seen as an expectation. When customers feel pressured, they lose the sense of control that makes tipping a positive experience.

While digital tipping can be convenient, it can also contribute to "tipflation" - the feeling that tipping expectations have gotten out of hand. If companies want to make sure customers keep coming back, our research indicates they would do well to give customers privacy to tip.

One issue might be that some employees think watching customers closely encourages them to tip generously. We didn't find a straightforward relationship, however, between tipping privacy and tip amounts. While privacy empowers customers to tip less if they choose, we found it also often encourages them to feel more generous. These effects mean that customers tip similar amounts whether they have privacy or not.

For companies, striking the right balance between giving customers control and fostering generosity is crucial. A business that trains its employees to give customers privacy to tip - and makes sure to pay those employees fairly, so they don't need to pressure customers in the first place - will likely develop a better reputation and a more loyal customer base. (AP)

What's On



Some photos from the event.



LuLu launches 'Layered in Trends 2024' winter collection

Fashion met flair as LuLu Hypermarket unveiled its 'Layered in Trends 2024' winter collection, setting the stage for a season of style and sophistication. The official launch, held on 30 November, at LuLu's Al Rai outlet, brought together Kuwait's most influential fashion personalities and an eager audience ready to explore the latest trends.

The inauguration ceremony was a stunning affair, with Kuwait's top fashion influencers and vloggers joining LuLu's management in showcasing the chic new winter lineup. From sleek outfits to stylish accessories, the collection captured the essence of winter fashion

with a promise of both elegance, affordability, and warmth. Adding to the excitement, these influencers did not just attend—they became part of the experience by modeling the collections, creating a buzz among attendees and resonating across social media.

The retailer's 'Layered in Trends 2024' line offers an expansive range of winterwear for men, women, and kids, featuring iconic brands. The collection includes not only trendy clothing but also an impressive selection of footwear, ladies' bags, and winter accessories, all available at competitive prices that redefine value for money.

The winter collection promotion, which runs from 21 November across all LuLu Hypermarket outlets, allows shoppers to take advantage of irresistible discounts on the latest fashion must-haves, making it the perfect opportunity to refresh their winter wardrobes.

A highlight of the launch was the Kids Fashion Show, where over 50 young participants showcased the new winter collection with undeniable charm and confidence. The fashion-forward event celebrated creativity and talent, awarding the top three performers with high-value prizes and giving all participants attractive

consolation gifts. The show added a touch of warmth and joy to the event, capturing the hearts of everyone in attendance.

With its 'Layered in Trends 2024' Winter Collection, LuLu Hypermarket once again proves why it is a leading name in retail, combining the latest trends with unbeatable prices. Shoppers are invited to visit any LuLu branch to explore the collection and embrace this season's finest styles. Stay stylish, stay warm, and stay on trend, with LuLu Hypermarket's 'Layered in Trends 2024' winter collection.

Discover new, revamped stores in Kuwait

Centrepoint and Homecentre launches a new era of unique shopping experience

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Centrepoint and Homecentre, the ultimate destination for fashion, kids, beauty, footwear, and home essentials, functional furniture and home décor is setting a new benchmark in customer-centric retail experience across Kuwait. The latest in this wave is flagship store in the heart of Kuwait City at the Awqaf Complex, which is set to reopen in November. This revamped store reflects Centrepoint's and Homecentre's commitment to provide a world-class shopping experience where the customers are the chore of all initiatives.

These vibrant, reimaged stores are meticulously crafted to offer an exceptional retail journey that resonates with families and young trendsetters alike, setting the stage for an inspiring shopping environment like never before.

The newly enhanced store in Awqaf complex has been thoughtfully designed to redefine the retail experience, blending the best of digital and in-store shopping in one seamless environment. With cutting-edge technology,



A photo from the launch event.

sleek design, and dedicated spaces for customer enjoyment, this refurbished destination is a hub for inspiring shoppers to "experience something different" every time they visit.

Adding to the excitement, Centrepoint and Homecentre has completely transformed its stores in key locations across Kuwait, including the Centrepoint stores in Granada, Sulai-bikhat at Sama Mall, Avenues Mall, Al Slayl Park in Jahra, new standalone store in Shuwaikh Industrial Area and renovated store of Homecentre in Avenues. These stores now showcase ex-

panded layouts, intuitive way finding, and a bright, welcoming ambiance that enhances the overall shopping experience.

Each new location is thoughtfully crafted for a smooth, enjoyable shopping experience, with an impressive selection of international brands, spacious fitting rooms, and flexible payment solutions. Shoppers can benefit from services like click-and-collect, self-checkout stations, quick return policies, and access to the region's popular loyalty program, Shukran.

Exclusive Grand Opening Offer at Centrepoint and Homecentre Awqaf complex Store

To mark this exciting launch, they are offering a 30% discount on everything you shop at Centrepoint and on selected items in Homecentre Awqaf complex. The limited time offer run from November 19 to 20, 2024, so don't miss the chance to shop and save (terms apply).

Discover the new and renovated stores for a truly unforgettable shopping experience!



A section of the audience at the IMA Children's Fest 2024.

Event celebrates talent, faith and unity

IMA organizes Children's Fest 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: To encourage the skills and talents of the young generation while nurturing Islamic values and ethics has been always the goal and motive of Indian Muslim Association (IMA) Kuwait. Alhamdulillah Keeping in mind this fact IMA Kuwait hosted the much-anticipated IMA Children's Fest 2024 on Friday, Nov 29, at ICSK Junior, Salmiya. The event saw an overwhelming participation from the Indian diaspora residing in Kuwait.

With approximately 650 registrations, the festival became a joyous occasion for children and families alike. The day was filled with a variety of exciting competitions, including Elocution, Nasheed, Azaan, Qiraat, Drawing, Calligraphy, and a Quiz. The young participants displayed their exceptional abilities, leaving everyone in awe of their talent. In addition to the competitions, attendees enjoyed an array of fun-filled carnival games, which added a festive atmosphere to the event.

The participants both boys and girls, between 5-15 years, were categorized into three groups. They participated in different programs and competitions like Elocution, Nasheed, Azaan, Qiraat, Drawing, Calligraphy, and a Quiz accordingly. The program was thoughtfully designed not only to showcase the children's abilities but also to instill them with a sense of community, social values, and ethics grounded in our faith. With every activity, IMA strived to provide an enriching experience for the future of our Ummah. A special moment of joy came when a random quiz for the waiting parents brought laughter and excitement to the crowd, further enhancing the spirit of togetherness.

The event concluded with a heartwarming speech by IMA President, Mr Mohammad Umar Falahi Sb, who expressed his gratitude to Allah (SWT) for the success of the event and emphasized the importance of nurturing the younger generation with Islamic values. He also took the opportunity to recognize and thank the sponsors and dignitaries from the Ministry of Awqaf for their support.

As the festivities came to a close, prizes were distributed to the deserving winners, celebrating their hard work and dedication. The day ended



Some of the photos from the event.

with a heartfelt vote of thanks by Wasif Sahab. IMA extends heartfelt gratitude to Allah (SWT) for the success of this event, and to all the parents, volunteers, sponsors, and participants for making this festival a memorable occasion.

We pray that our children grow in faith, knowledge, and strength, and continue to uphold the values that unite us as an Ummah. May Allah (SWT) bless us all with success and guide us in our efforts to nurture and support the

leaders of tomorrow. Ameen. IMA Kuwait, an Indian socio-religious organization, operates under the patronage of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Kuwait. It focuses on providing a platform for the spiritual and social enhancement of expatriates living in Kuwait through various programs and social gatherings. It looks forward to organizing more beneficial programs in the future, catering to the needs of the expatriate community, especially the Indian diaspora.



One of the new stores being launched in Kuwait.

20 win KD1,500 each

KFH announces winners of AlRabeh account draw

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AlRabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 46th and 47th weeks of 2024.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Adnan Al-Kandari, Mashael Al-Arbeed, Khaled Salamah, Nasser Al-Sharqawi, Anas Al-Khulaifi, Faleh Al-Ajmi, Hajjaj Al-Ajmi, Hamad Al-Najdi, Fahad Al-Saeedi, Omar Al-Ali, Yaqoub Al-Kandari, Meshal Al-Rasheedi, Aisha Al-Haqqaan, Emad Balamon, Mejjel Al-Otaibi, Mohammad Ali, Fahad Al-Ajmi, Saad Al-Busairi, Rowdah Mahmoud, Eslam Mahmoud.

The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The AlRabeh account is a salary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their



The campaign visual

personal accounts. Customers can open AlRabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to AlRabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer can deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for K.D 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.



A photo from the event.



KTMCC Carol service flyer.

KTMCC hosts Carol service on Dec 4

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Kuwait Town Malayalee Christian Congregation (KTMCC) is gearing up to host its grand Christmas Carol 2024. The Carol service, this year, will be conducted in association with constituent church choirs. The event is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 4th December 2024, at 7:00 PM at the NECK Church & Parish Hall.

The Kuwait Town Malayalee Christian Congregation (K.T.M.C.C) is a unique congregation started before 70 years in the land of Kuwait and represents more than 28 churches from Mar Thoma, CSI, Evangelical, Brethren, and Pentecostal denominations. KTMCC also handling administrative responsibilities of National Evangelical Church Kuwait (NECK), which has more than 85 churches from 100 countries.



From left: Zoe Kravitz, Angelina Jolie, Elle Fanning, Nicole Kidman and Gia Coppola attend The Gothams Film Awards at Cipriani Wall Street on Monday, Dec. 2, 2024, in New York. (AP)

'All We Imagine as Light' wins best int'l film

'A Different Man' triumphs at Gotham Awards

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (AP): In a surprise that stunned the audience of Hollywood's first big awards-season bash, "A Different Man," a dark comedy about doppelgängers, deformity and authenticity in acting, won best feature film at the 34th Gotham Awards on Monday night.

Much can be unpredictable at the Gotham Awards, which uses small juries of insiders and film industry veterans to pick nominees and winners. But as the "A Different Man" ensemble, including Sebastian Stan and Adam Pearson, took the stage, writer-director Aaron Schimberg was in obvious disbelief.

"I don't think I'm the only person in this room who's totally stunned," said Schimberg. "Considering the other nominees, I thought it would be hubris to prepare a speech."

At a starry Gothams that drew Zendaya, Timothée Chalamet and Angelina Jolie, most were expecting triumph for Sean Baker's "Anora," a comedy about a sex worker who marries the son of a Russian oligarch. It came in the lead nominee, the Cannes Palme d'Or winner, and maybe a top best-picture contender at the Oscars, but went home empty-handed.

Belonged

Instead, the night belonged to the A24 release "A Different Man," which stars Stan as a man with facial deformities who's healed of them. He's then upstaged by the character played by Pearson, who genuinely has neurofibromatosis, a condition that covers much of his face with benign skin tumors.

The Gothams aren't an Oscar bellwether, though several of its recent top winners - including last year's winner "Past Lives," as well as "Everything Everywhere All at Once" and "Nomadland" - have gone on to be nominated for best picture at the Academy Awards, with "Everything Everywhere" and "Nomadland" winning.

Whether any of the winners Monday night - "Sing Sing" and "Nickel Boys" - were also victorious will use the early wins as a springboard for more trophies remains to be seen. But the Gothams, a black-tie affair held at Cipriani Wall Street in downtown Manhattan, tend give some sense of the flavor of the upcoming gauntlet of award-season ceremonies.

How prominent politics, and the upcoming inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump, might be in this year's Oscar race is one of the biggest questions as the season ramps up. On Monday, Trump's name was never uttered on stage (though Stan is in the awards mix for playing him in "The Apprentice"), nor were there any overtly political statements. But several winners seemed to allude to the shifting political climate.

"Let's keep doing the work that really matters and makes a difference," said Colman Domingo, who won best lead performance. "That's what we can do right now. That can be the light in the darkness."

Believed

Domingo won for his starring role in "Sing Sing," the indie drama about a real prison program called Rehabilitation Through the Arts, which helps incarcerated people heal through theater productions. Clarence Maclin, one of the formerly incarcerated men who co-star in the film, won best supporting performance. (The Gothams give gender-neutral acting awards that number 10 nominees instead of the typical five.)

"If someone was going to tell me ten years ago, I was going to be here, I wouldn't have believed it," said Maclin. "Sing Sing," also from A24, was arguably the emotional winner of the night. The film's ensemble also accepted a tribute award. In one of the evening's most powerful speeches Sean Dino Johnson, a founding member of RTA, spoke passionately about the redemptive qualities of the arts.



From left, Vanessa McDonnell, Aaron Schimberg, Adam Pearson, Gabriel Mayers, Sebastian Stan and Mike Marino pose with the best feature award for 'A Different Man' during The Gothams Film Awards at Cipriani Wall Street on Monday, Dec. 2, in New York. (AP)



Timothée Chalamet, (left), and James Mangold pose with the visionary tribute award for 'A Complete Unknown.' (AP)



Actors Corey Hawkins, (from left), Ray Fisher, Skylar Aleece Smith, Danielle Deadwyler, Michael Potts, and John David Washington pose with their ensemble tribute awards for 'The Piano Lesson.' (AP)



Director Vera Drew poses with the breakthrough director award for 'The People's Joker.'

"Standing here tonight we are proof that movies like 'Sing Sing' don't just entertain," said Johnson. "They change lives."

RaMell Ross' "Nickel Boys," his arrestingly photographed Colson Whitehead adaptation, also won two major awards: best director for Ross and breakthrough performer for Brandon Wilson. Ross' film, about two Black teenagers at an abusive juvenile reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida, is filmed largely from the first-person perspective of its two main characters.

For many, the Gothams are a chance to make an impression with a speech that helps solidify their

awards chances. To that cause, the Gothams gave out an array of tribute awards. This year's crop was particularly starry, including Zendaya (for "Challengers"), Jolie (for "Maria"), Chalamet and James Mangold (for "A Complete Unknown"), Denis Villeneuve (for "Dune: Part Two"), the cast of "The Piano Lesson," and Franklin Leonard, founder of the fabled unproduced screenplay platform The Black List.

Jolie, who plays the opera singer

Maria Callas in "Maria," also spoke about the importance of the arts.

"It's so important that art be taught in our schools, and so concerning that is being reduced," Jolie said.

Speech

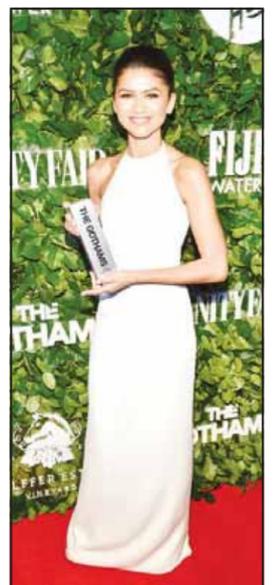
Zendaya, honored for her performance in Luca Guadagnino's "Challengers," took a moment to thank her date. "My mom's here tonight," she said. "Shout out mom."

Chalamet read a short speech about his transformation into Bob

Dylan for the upcoming "A Complete Unknown."

"Getting to study and immerse myself in the world of Bob Dylan has been the greatest education a young artist can receive," Chalamet said. "If you're already a fan of Bob Dylan, this will make perfect sense to you. If you're not familiar with his work, perhaps our film can serve as a humble gateway to one of the great poets and chroniclers of our times."

Best documentary went to "No



Actor Zendaya poses with the spotlight tribute award for 'Challengers.'



Filmmaker and photographer RaMell Ross poses with the best director award for 'Nickel Boys.' (AP)



Colman Domingo, (left), and Clarence Maclin pose with their social justice tribute awards for 'Sing Sing.' (AP)

Other Land," a film made by a Palestinian and Israeli filmmaker collective that documents Israeli occupation of a Palestinian village in West Bank over the course of years. Despite being one of the year's most acclaimed documentaries, "No Other Land" remains without an American distributor.

Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine as Light," a poetic drama about three women in modern Mumbai, took the award for best international film. Though the film was the first Indian movie in competition in more than 30 years at the Cannes Film Festival, India opted not to select it for its Oscar submission.

Technology

Virtual companions help

Can AI chatbots make your shopping easier?

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (AP): Tired of thinking about what gifts to get everyone this year? Artificial intelligence chatbots might help, but don't expect them to do all the work or always give you the right answers.

Anyone scouring the internet for Cyber Monday deals is likely going to encounter more conversational iterations of the chatbots that some retailers and e-commerce sites have built to provide shoppers with enhanced customer service.

Some companies have integrated models infused with newer generative AI technologies, allowing shoppers to seek advice by asking naturally phrased questions like "What's the best wireless speaker?"

Retailers hope consumers use these chatbots, which are typically called shopping assistants - as virtual companions that help them discover or compare products. Prior chatbots were mostly used for task-oriented functions such as helping customers track down online orders or return ones that didn't meet expectations.

Amazon, the king of online retail, has said its customers have been questioning Rufus - the generative AI-powered shopping assistant it launched this year - for information such as whether a specific coffee maker is easy to clean, or what recommendations it has for a lawn game for a child's birthday party.

And Rufus, which is available for holiday shoppers in the US and some other countries, is not the only shopping assistant out there. A select number of Walmart shoppers will have access this year to a similar chatbot the nation's largest retailer is testing in a few product categories, including toys and electronics.

Perplexity AI added something new to the AI chat-shopping world last month by rolling out a feature on its AI-powered search engine that enables users to ask a question like "What's the best women's leather boots?" and then receive specific product results that the San Francisco-based company says are not sponsored.

Attention

"It has been adopted at pretty incredible scale," Mike Mallazzo, an analyst and writer at retail research media company Future Commerce, said.

Retailers with websites and e-commerce companies started paying more attention to chatbots when use of ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence text chatbot made by the company OpenAI, went mainstream in late 2022, sparking public and business interest in the generative AI technology that powers the tool.

Victoria's Secret, IKEA, Instacart and the Canadian retailer Ssense are among other companies experimenting with chatbots, some of which use technology from OpenAI.

Even before the improved chatbots, online retailers were creating product recommendations based on a customer's prior purchases or search history. Amazon was at the forefront of having recommendations on its platform, so Rufus' ability to provide some is not particularly groundbreaking.

But Rajiv Mehta, the vice president of search and conversational shopping at Amazon, said the company is able to offer more helpful recommendations now by programming Rufus to ask clarifying or follow-up questions. Customers are also using Rufus to look for deals, some of which are personalized, Mehta said.

To be sure, chatbots are prone to hallucinations, so Rufus and most of the tools like it can get things wrong.

Juozas Kazukenas, founder of e-commerce intelligence firm Marketplace Pulse, wrote in a November blog post that his firm tested Rufus by requesting gaming TV recommendations. The chatbot's response included products that were not TVs. When asked for the least expensive options, Rufus came back with suggestions that weren't the cheapest, Kazukenas said.

Suggestion

An Associated Press reporter recently asked Rufus to give some gift recommendations for a brother. The chatbot quickly spit out a few ideas for "thoughtful gifts," ranging from a T-shirt and a keychain with charms to a bolder suggestion: a multifunctional knife engraved with the phrase "BEST BROTHER EVER."

After a 5-minute written conversation, Rufus offered more tailored suggestions - a few Barcelona soccer jerseys sold by third-party sellers. But it wasn't able to say which seller offered the lowest price. When asked during another search for a price comparison on a popular skin serum, Rufus showed the product's pre-discounted price instead of its present one.

"Rufus is constantly learning," Amazon's Mehta said during an interview.

Shop AI, a chatbot that Canadian e-commerce company Shopify launched last year, can also help shoppers discover new products by asking its own questions, such as soliciting details about an intended gift recipient or features the buyer wants to avoid. Shop AI has trouble, however, recommending specific products or identifying the lowest-priced item in a product category.

The limitations show the technology is still in its infancy and has a long way to go before it becomes as useful as the retail industry - and many shoppers - wish it could be.

To truly transform the shopping experience, shopping assistants will "need to be deeply personalized" and be able - on their own - to remember a customer's order history, product preferences and purchasing habits, consulting giant McKinsey & Company said in an August report.

Amazon has noted that Rufus' answers are based on information contained in product listings, community Q&As and customer reviews, which would include the fake reviews that are used to boost or diminish sales for products on its marketplace.

The large language model that powers the chatbot was also trained on the company's entire catalog and some public information on the web, Trishul Chilimbi, an Amazon vice president who oversees AI research, wrote in the electrical engineering magazine IEEE Spectrum in October.

Experts map proton energy spectrum in martian space

5 Emiratis honored for UAE space achievements

DUBAI, Dec 3, (Xinhua): Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on Monday honored five Emiratis for their contributions to the UAE's space sector, according to the UAE's official news agency WAM.

Among the five honorees, Sultan Saif AlNeyadi, minister of state for youth affairs, received the First-Class Space Medal for his role in the longest space mission in Arab history. AlNeyadi was also celebrated as the first Arab astronaut to conduct a spacewalk and for his successful execution of scientific experiments during his mission.

The First-Class Space Medal was also awarded to Hazzaa Ali AlMansoori, the first Emirati and Arab astronaut to reach the International Space Station.

In addition, the prime minister presented the Second-Class Space Medal to Salem Humaid AlMarri, director general of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC), for his efforts in establishing the UAE's astronaut program.

Hanan Sulaiman Al Suwaidi, assistant professor of family medicine at the Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medical Sciences, was honored with the Second-Class Space Medal for her pioneering work in astronaut health care.

Adnan Al-Rais, assistant director general of space operations and exploration at MBRSC, was also awarded the Second-Class Space Medal.



This photo taken on June 30, 2024 shows a rocket launch simulation rehearsal held at the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site in Wenchang, south China's Hainan Province. The commercial spacecraft launch site, located in Wenchang International Aerospace City, was built and is being operated by the Hainan International Commercial Aerospace Launch Co., Ltd. (HICAL). As China's first commercial spacecraft launch site, it commenced construction in July 2022. On Nov. 30, a Long March-12 carrier rocket was successfully launched into space from here. The mission was the maiden flight of the Long March-12 carrier rocket, and the first launch mission undertaken by the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site. (Xinhua)

In the UAE, the First-Class Space Medal is awarded to astronauts who participate in missions contributing to scientific research and space exploration, while the Second-Class Space Medal recognizes professionals who have made significant contributions to astronaut training or space research.

Meanwhile, scientists have constructed the first complete energy spectrum of solar high-energy pro-

tons during an eruptive solar event in Martian space, shedding new light on the radiation environment around the red planet.

The study, recently published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, was jointly conducted by researchers from the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC), the Institute of Modern Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Lanzhou Institute of Physics, and Ger-

many's Kiel University.

Solar energetic particle (SEP) events, triggered by solar eruptions, are among the most hazardous space weather phenomena. These events can abruptly increase high-energy particle fluxes, posing risks to spacecraft and astronauts.

Unlike Earth, Mars lacks a protective magnetic field and has a very thin atmosphere, making its surface particularly vulnerable to high-energy particles and secondary particles. Understanding the impact of SEP events on Mars is crucial for radiation protection in future Mars exploration missions.

The researchers used data from multiple detectors to construct the spectrum for a SEP event. The low- and medium-energy proton spectra were provided by China's Tianwen-1 orbiter and NASA's Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution spacecraft, while the high-energy proton flux was derived by combining observations from NASA's Curiosity rover on Mars with simulations of particle transport in the Martian atmosphere.

By analyzing and fitting these data, the researchers mapped the proton energy spectrum for the SEP event, spanning a range from 1 to 1,000 MeV.

This study serves as a valuable reference for future research on similar space weather phenomena, said Guo Jingnan, a professor at the USTC, adding that it also underscores the importance of ongoing and coordinated radiation monitoring on Mars.

Top court backs FDA vaping ban

WASHINGTON, Dec 3, (AP): A majority of Supreme Court justices didn't seem convinced Monday that federal regulators misled companies before refusing to allow them to sell sweet-flavored vaping products following a surge in teen e-cigarette use.

The conservative-majority court did raise questions about the Food and Drug Administration crackdown that included denials of more than a million nicotine products formulated to taste like fruit, dessert or candy. Teen vaping use has since dropped to its lowest level in a decade, but the agency could change its approach after the inauguration next month of President-elect Donald Trump, who has promised to "save" vaping.

Vaping companies have long marketed their products as a way to help adults quit traditional cigarettes, and say the FDA changed its standards with little warning as it blocked the sale of over a million new flavored products.

Justice Elena Kagan, though, was skeptical.

"I guess I'm not really seeing what the surprise is here," she said. "You knew what the FDA's point of view was ... that blueberry vapes are really problematic in terms of youth smoking."

The FDA was slow to regulate the now multibillion-dollar vaping market, and even years into the crackdown flavored vapes that are technically illegal nevertheless remain widely available.

The agency says the companies were denied because they couldn't show flavored vapes had a net public benefit, as laid out in the law.

3 more mpox deaths in Uganda

Health infrastructure in Syria is on brink of collapse, warns WHO

GENEVA, Dec 3, (Agencies): The World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Tuesday of the imminent collapse of the health system in Syria due to recent attacks on health facilities, noting that less than eight hospitals are still operating with very limited capacity in conflict-affected areas.

Speaking at a press briefing in Geneva WHO Representative in Syria Christina Bethke said: "We have witnessed the destruction of essential health facilities as a result of recent air strikes in Idlib including major hospitals and health facilities such as the University Hospital and the Maternity Hospital."

She explained that lifeline health infrastructure such ambulances are also at risk of ceasing to operate due to lack of fuel and maintenance which could exacerbate the suffering of more than five million people in the region.

She stressed that the Syrian people are "paying an unbearable price" as a result of the recent escalation in north-west Syria.

Bethke called on the international community to take urgent action to support Syria's health sector and provide immediate funding to secure essential services for the affected population.

Mpox: Uganda said on Tuesday that it registered another three mpox deaths, bringing the total number of laboratory-confirmed fatalities to four in the East African country.

Henry Kyobe Bosa, incident commander at Uganda's Ministry of Health, told Xinhua over the phone that two deaths were recorded at Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital, about 40 km south of Kampala, the national capital, and one at Hoima Regional Referral Hospital in the coun-



A woman mourns outside the hospital after an airstrike killed several people including children, during an airstrike on a camp for internally displaced people in Maarat Misreen, north of Idlib, Syria, Monday, Dec. 2, 2024. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based war monitor, Syrian and Russian warplanes launched 420 airstrikes on rebel-held areas including Idlib and Aleppo on Monday. (AP)

try's mid-western region.

Kyobe said those deceased include an eight-month-old baby boy and a 23-year-old woman from the central district of Wakiso, and a 40-year-old man from the mid-western district of Kikuube.

Uganda confirmed and registered its first death in October in the mid-western district of Masindi.

The latest situation report issued on Monday showed that the cumulative number of confirmed infections had hit 784.

Authorities have intensified preventive measures, including enhanced surveillance, case management, risk communication and community engagement, and public awareness cam-

paigns to curb the spread of the virus.

Measles: Vietnam's southern hub Ho Chi Minh City has recently reported a surging number of measles cases, especially among children, according to the city's Department of Health on Tuesday.

The city reported 319 new measles infections last week, 58.1 percent more than the average for the previous four weeks.

The number of new cases rose among children aged 11 to 14 and newborns aged six to nine months.

Since early this year, there have been 2,438 new cases of measles infection in the city, including four deaths.

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Roma loses to Atalanta on emotional night

Support for Bove

ROME, Dec 3, (AP): On an emotional Serie A night in Rome, Claudio Ranieri returned to the Stadio Olimpico as the home coach and Edoardo Bove received an outpouring of support following his collapse.

When some soccer broke out, Ranieri's Roma lost to Atalanta 2-0.

Atalanta cut the gap on league leader Napoli back to one point after its eighth straight Serie A victory.

Marten de Roon netted the opener in the 69th minute - albeit with a huge deflection off Roma defender Zeki Celik - and Nicolò Zaniolo sealed the result in the final minute with his first goal back in Serie A.

Zaniolo, who spent five years at Roma before leaving in 2023, celebrated wildly and was booed equally ferociously.

Roma remained two points above the relegation zone.

Ranieri is the team's fourth coach this year and it is his third spell in charge of the capital club. Roma lost to Napoli and fought back to draw at Tottenham 2-2 in the Europa League in the first two matches of his return.

For Ranieri's first home match there were numerous banners in the stands thanking him and hailing his return.

Roma wore special shirts in the warmup with the words "Forza Edo" in support of Bove, who is a product of the Roma youth academy and joined Fiorentina on loan in the offseason.

The 22-year-old collapsed during Fiorentina's match against Inter Milan on Sunday and was put into a medically induced coma. On Monday, he was awake and alert and reportedly requested to watch Roma's match.



Atalanta's Mateo Retegui, right, jumps for the ball during the Italian Series A soccer match between Roma and Atalanta, at Rome's Olympic Stadium. (AP)



Everton's Idrissa Gueye, left, and Manchester United's Kobbie Mainoo vie for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Everton at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Man City to play 'Class of 92'-owned Salford

Man U opens FA Cup title defense at Arsenal

LONDON, Dec 3, (AP): Manchester United will start its FA Cup title defense with a trip to Arsenal in a third-round draw containing a host of intriguing English Premier League vs. lower league matchups.

Among the best were Tamworth, one of only two non-league clubs in the draw, getting to host Tottenham and Manchester City at home to Salford City - the team owned by members of Man United's famed "Class of 92" such as Ryan Giggs and Gary Neville.

Accrington Stanley, in sixth-to-last place in fourth-tier League Two, faces a daunting trip to Premier League leader Liverpool at Anfield. Chelsea, meanwhile, will host Morecambe, which is

bottom of League Two.

The standout match features the competition's two most successful teams, with Arsenal having won the trophy 14 times compared to United's 13. Arsenal last lifted it in 2020 while United beat City in a second straight Manchester derby in the FA Cup final last season.

The third round will take place around the weekend of Jan. 11-12 and sees the 44 clubs from the Premier League and second-tier Championship enter the competition, joining the 20 lower-league and non-league sides who won in the previous round.

Draw: Southampton vs. Swansea; Arsenal vs. Man

United; Exeter vs. Oxford United; Leyton Orient vs. Derby; Reading vs. Burnley; Norwich vs. Brighton; Man City vs. Salford; Millwall vs. Dagenham; Liverpool vs. Accrington; Bristol City vs. Wolves; Preston vs. Charlton; Chelsea vs. Morecambe; Middlesbrough vs. Blackburn; Bournemouth vs. West Brom; Mansfield vs. Wigan; Tamworth vs. Tottenham; Hull vs. Doncaster; Sunderland vs. Stoke; Leicester vs. QPR; Brentford vs. Plymouth; Coventry vs. Sheff Wed; Newcastle vs. Bromley; Everton vs. Peterborough; Wycombe vs. Portsmouth; Birmingham vs. Lincoln; Leeds vs. Harrogate; Forest vs. Luton; Sheff United vs. Cardiff; Ipswich vs. Bristol Rovers; Fulham vs. Watford; Palace vs. Stockport

'We hope that everything is okay'

Double Oly champ Evenepoel in hospital after training crash

ANDERLECHT, Belgium, Dec 3, (AP): Double Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel was taken to hospital following a crash during training in Belgium on Tuesday.

Belgian media reported Evenepoel was unable to avoid the door of a post office vehicle when it was swung open. The 24-year-old never lost consciousness but the impact was heavy enough to break the frame of his bicycle.



In this file photo, Remco Evenepoel, of Belgium, shows his gold medals of the men's time trial and road cycling events, at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

Photographs online showed Evenepoel sitting beside an ambulance, wrapped in a blanket and holding his arm.

"We are still on our way, but we don't know much more ourselves," his father Patrick Evenepoel told Belgian newspaper Het Nieuwsblad. "He was taken to the Erasmus hospital in Anderlecht."

"He has already sent us a message, so we hope that everything is okay. From what I hear, he fell after colliding with the swinging door of a Bpost truck."

The incident happened in Oetingen, approximately 30 kilometers east of Anderlecht.

Evenepoel became the first cyclist to sweep the road race and time trial at an Olympic Games when he triumphed in both in Paris in August.

A two-time world champion, Evenepoel also won the Spanish Vuelta in 2022 and finished third in the Tour de France this year.

"He was lying on the ground for a while," said Bart De Pelseneer, who has a butcher's shop nearby. "It was clearly a heavy blow. The door of the postal car was also completely twisted. His bike was completely broken, they folded it up like a wheelchair."

"When I went to look he looked deathly pale, the emergency services gave him a Coke. His wife Oumi was here at about the same time as the emergency services."

'Chelsea can 'dominate' English soccer in next 5-10 yrs'

LONDON, Dec 3, (AP): Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca believes the club has the platform to "dominate" English soccer in the coming years. Chelsea visits last-placed Southampton on Wednesday, while Arsenal is at home to Manchester United, and Liverpool is away to Newcastle.

Maresca on Tuesday repeated his assertion that Chelsea shouldn't be deemed a contender in the Premier League title race, even though his team is third in the standings and tied on points with second-placed Arsenal. They are nine points behind Liverpool.

However, the Italian coach was more bullish about Chelsea's long-term prospects.

"The good thing is, I still think what I said to the owners and the sporting director the first time I met them," said Maresca, who joined Chelsea in June. "Because of the age and because of how good the squad is, for me Chelsea in the next five to 10 years will be one of the teams - or the team - to dominate English football."

"This is what I said to the club the first time I met them. No matter who will be the manager."

Chelsea has spent well over \$1 billion on around 40 players in an unprecedented and at times chaotic spree across five transfer windows since a consortium fronted by Los Angeles Dodgers part-owner Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital bought the Premier League club from its long-time owner, Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, for \$3.2 billion in May 2022. Many of the signings are young,



Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins, left, and Chelsea's Levi Colwill challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Chelsea and Aston Villa at the Stamford Bridge stadium in London, Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024. (AP)

such as 23-year-olds Nicolas Jackson, Enzo Fernandez and Moises Caicedo, and 22-year-old Cole Palmer.

Maresca is the fourth different full-time manager in the new regime, and the first to get consistent performances out of the expensively assembled group of players.

Chelsea has won seven of its 13 Premier League games and lost just two of them - to defending champion Manchester City before its unlikely freefall, and Liverpool.

Maresca still thinks Chelsea shouldn't be put in the same category as Liverpool and Arsenal just yet, de-

nying it is just a ploy to take the pressure off his players.

"They (Arsenal) have been there the last two years, very close to City, and we were very far to City," Maresca said, when asked why Chelsea shouldn't have the same expectations as Arsenal.

No player from any Italian club was selected

Messi, Ronaldo the only World XI nominees from clubs outside Europe as voted by players

HOOFDDORP, Netherlands, Dec 3, (AP): Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo are still popular and respected by their fellow players even though they no longer play for European clubs.

The 37-year-old Messi and 39-year-old Ronaldo were the only players not with clubs in Europe to be voted on a 26-man shortlist for the world team of the year organized by global players' union FIFPRO on Monday.

The other 24 nominees played in the past year with clubs in England, Germany, Spain and France, though Kylian Mbappé was the only French connection after spending last season at Paris Saint-Germain.

No player from any Italian club was selected, nor from any club in South America or Africa.

Eight players from Real Madrid, including Mbappé, Vinícius Júnior and Jude Bellingham were on the shortlist, plus seven from Manchester City including Ballon d'Or winner Rodri, Kevin De Bruyne and



Bayern's Jamal Musiala and Dortmund's Nico Schlotterbeck challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich at the Signal-Iduna Park in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)

Erling Haaland.

Lamine Yamal, the 17-year-old from Barcelona who was the breakout star of Spain's European Championship title, also made it in polling by union members worldwide.

Messi, in Major League Soccer with Inter Miami, and Ronaldo, in Saudi Arabia with Al-Nassr, will find out on Dec. 9 if they are in the World XI lineup.

FIFPRO said the final team will include the highest-polling goalkeeper, plus each of the top three vote-getters among defenders, midfielders and forwards. The final place goes to the outfield player with the next highest votes total.

The Netherlands-based union said 28,000 players from 70 countries sent votes.

Goalkeepers: Ederson (Manchester City, Brazil), Emiliano Martínez (Aston Villa, Argentina), Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich, Germany).

Defenders: Dani Carvajal (Real Madrid, Spain), Rúben Dias (Manchester City, Por-

tugal), Virgil van Dijk (Liverpool, Netherlands), Jeremie Frimpong (Bayer Leverkusen, Netherlands), Antonio Rudiger (Real Madrid, Germany), William Saliba (Arsenal, France), Kyle Walker (Manchester City, England).

Midfielders: Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid, England), Kevin De Bruyne (Manchester City, Belgium), Phil Foden (Manchester City, England), Toni Kroos (Real Madrid, Germany), Luka Modrić (Real Madrid, Croatia), Jamal Musiala (Bayern Munich, Germany), Rodri (Manchester City, Spain), Federico Valverde (Real Madrid, Uruguay).

Forwards: Erling Haaland (Manchester City, Norway), Harry Kane (Bayern Munich, England), Kylian Mbappé (Paris Saint-Germain/Real Madrid, France), Lionel Messi (Inter Miami, Argentina), Cole Palmer (Manchester City/Chelsea, England), Cristiano Ronaldo (Al-Nassr, Portugal), Vinícius Júnior (Real Madrid, Brazil), Lamine Yamal (Barcelona, Spain).



Kuwait Club continues its superiority in the Asian Super League.

Kuwait Club edges Shabab Al-Ahli to go top

Adnan and American player Augustine shine

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Kuwait Club secured a hard-fought 75-71 victory against Shabab Al-Ahli of the Emirates in a gripping encounter held at Shabab Al-Ahli Hall as part of the third stage of the

Asian Super League Championship for the Gulf region.

With this win, Kuwait Club extended its tally to 6 points, claiming the top spot in the group standings. Shabab Al-Ahli, despite the loss, increased its score to 5 points.

The match was marked by intensity and competitiveness from the outset. Kuwait gained an early edge through Hamad Adnan's dynamic plays and American

player Augustine's dominance under the basket, building an 8-point lead. However, Shabab Al-Ahli responded through Qais Al-Shabibi's stellar scoring efforts, ending the first quarter narrowly trailing 16-17.

In the second quarter, Kuwait Club continued to excel, led by the exceptional passing of American star Brianti. Imran Jawhar and Augustine also made significant contributions, extending Kuwait Club's lead to 8 points. The half concluded

with Kuwait Club ahead 40-35.

The third quarter saw Shabab Al-Ahli mounting a strong comeback, leveling the score before Kuwait Club regained its momentum, finishing the quarter with a 56-52 lead.

The final quarter brought heightened drama as both teams exchanged points in a tense battle. Kuwait Club ultimately sealed the win, bolstered by a solid defensive performance and key contributions from its standout players.

Brown, Pritchard lead Celtics past Heat

Timberwolves blow out LA Lakers

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 3, (AP): Julius Randle scored 18 points and Rudy Gobert had 17 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Minnesota Timberwolves past the Los Angeles Lakers 109-80 on Monday night.

Naz Reid and Nickeil Alexander-Walker each scored 15 for the Wolves (10-10), who limited the Lakers to their lowest point total since a 122-73 loss at Dallas in 2017, according to Sportradar.

Anthony Edwards had only eight points on 3-for-13 shooting for the Wolves, but his Olympic teammates LeBron James and Anthony Davis were just as quiet for the Lakers (12-9).

James, who has missed 19 straight 3-pointers, had 10 points on 4-for-16 shooting. Davis had 12 points and 11 rebounds. D'Angelo Russell scored 20 in his return from illness and to the starting lineup.

After beating Utah 105-104 on Sunday, the Lakers traveled another time zone east to face a team they beat 110-103 in the season opener behind 36 points and 16 rebounds from Davis.

Celtics 108, Heat 89

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored 29 points, Jayson Tatum had 18 points and 11 rebounds and Payton Pritchard scored 25 off the bench as the Boston Celtics beat the Miami Heat.

Derrick White added 19 points as the defending NBA champions won for the

eight time in nine games. Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 19 points and 10 rebounds and Tyler Herro scored 19 for Miami. Herro was 2 for 10 from 3-point range, and the Heat shot 23% from beyond the arc and 36% from the field.

Both teams were without key players for the second night of a back-to-back after losing on Sunday.

Miami played without Jimmy Butler, who has missed five of the first 19 games with a knee injury. The Celtics were without Jrue Holiday, Al Horford and Kristaps Porzingis.

Miami scored the first seven points and then went cold while the Celtics ran off 17 of the next 19 points to take the lead. Boston made it a double-digit lead early in the second quarter and went up by 20 in the third.

Hawks 124, Pelicans 112

In Atlanta, Trae Young had 12 points and 15 assists for his 15th double-double of the season, and the Atlanta Hawks beat the skidding New Orleans Pelicans for their fourth straight victory.

De'Andre Hunter scored a team-high 22 for the Hawks on his 27th birthday.

CJ McCollum led New Orleans with 29 points, one shy of his season high. Dejounte Murray, greeted by cheers in his first return to Atlanta since being traded by the Hawks last offseason, finished with seven points and 10 assists.

The depleted Pelicans (4-18) have lost nine in a row overall, and 11 of 12 on the road this season. The team's long injury list includes star players Zion Williamson and Brandon Ingram.

Bulls 128, Nets 102

In Chicago, Josh Giddey had 20 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, helping the Chicago Bulls beat the Brooklyn Nets.

It was Giddey's first triple-double of the season and No. 12 for his career.

Nikola Vucevic had 21 points and 10 rebounds for Chicago, which had lost three of four. Matas Buzelis scored 20 points on 7-for-10 shooting, and Zach LaVine finished with 18.

Brooklyn lost its third consecutive game - all in the last four days. Dariq Whitehead scored 18 points for the Nets, and Dennis Schroder had 16 points and 10 assists.

Brooklyn played without forward Cam Johnson because of a sprained left ankle - part of a long list of injuries for the Nets. He scored 26 points in Sunday's 100-92 loss to Orlando.

Chicago guard Coby White also was sidelined by a sprained left ankle.

The Bulls started to pull away in the third quarter, outscoring the Nets 36-22 in the period. Buzelis' basket off a pass from Giddey made it 92-72 going into the fourth.



Minnesota Timberwolves guard Terrence Shannon Jr. (00) goes up for a dunk as Los Angeles Lakers center Christian Koloko (10) defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

Al-Qadsiya and Al-Qurain face off

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The fourth round of the Basketball Merge League's First Division will kick off with two exciting matchups. In the first game, Al-Qadsiya will face Al-Qurain at 5:00 pm, followed by the second match between Al-Sulaibikhat and Al-Nasr. Both games will take place at the

Union Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex.

Al-Qadsiya (4 points) will have a tough challenge ahead against Al-Qurain, who currently has 1 point. Despite the odds, Al-Qadsiya's American coach, Anthony Stebbing, is determined to keep his team on track for a top spot in the standings. On the other hand, Al-Qurain, led by Yahya Kleib, is eager to demonstrate its competitiveness and establish itself among the league's "big four."

In the second match, the battle between Al-Sulaibikhat and Al-Nasr looks evenly matched, as both teams have 3 points. Al-Sulaibikhat, coached by Fahad Burjas, aims to continue its strong form following their opening-round win over Kazma. Meanwhile, Al-Nasr, under the guidance of Macedonian coach Gordenko Davidbakov, will be looking to halt its opponent's momentum and secure its place in the league's top tier.

The top four teams at the end of the second half will advance to the semi-finals, where the first-place team will face the fourth, and the second will meet the third, in a playoff format for the title.



Al Nasr looking for a new victory.

Top flight sides also in Cup action

Bilbao takes on Real Madrid

MADRID, Dec 3, (Xinhua): Athletic Club Bilbao and Real Madrid play a fascinating match in Athletic's San Mames Stadium on Wednesday night, with Athletic looking to consolidate fourth place in the classification.

Aurelien Tchouameni returns for Real Madrid after injury after Rodrygo did the same for the weekend win at home to Getafe, but Vinicius Jr remains sidelined, along with long-term absentees Dani Carvajal, Eder Militao and David Alaba.

Kylian Mbappe ended his goal drought at the weekend but will still be under the spotlight after also missing chances against Getafe.

Athletic entertains Madrid after a 2-1 win away to Rayo Vallecano, with both goals scored by midfielder Oihan Sancet, whose last three goals have earned his side six points after returning from an ankle injury.

Spain international Unai Simon returned to action in last week's 3-0 Europa League tie at home to Elfsborg, but Valverde kept faith with Julen Agirrezabala at the weekend, and his match-fitness could be a key factor in deciding who gets the nod.

Athletic will look to keep a high tempo in front of a packed ground and pressure Madrid high up the pitch, while trying to cut out the service to Mbappe and Rodrygo.

Wednesday also sees several top-flight sides in Copa del Rey action away to rivals from the third and fourth tier of the Spanish game.

Rayo Vallecano has one of the toughest games, away to third-tier Unionistas de Salamanca, while an out-of-form Betis travels to play Catalan side Sant Andreu.

Girona visits Logrones, and Villarreal travels to the north-west of Spain to take on Pontevedra, with Leganes away to Estepona and Valencia away to SD Ejea after making hard work of sixth category Escuela Parla in the first round.



Getafe's Allan Nyom, left, and Real Madrid's Fran Garcia vie for the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Getafe at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Sheikh Al-Mubarak slams commercialization of equestrianism and calls for development

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Sheikh Sabah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah emphasized that equestrianism embodies ethics, challenge, and sophistication — qualities he hopes to see in all practitioners. However, he lamented that some have reduced equestrianism to a mere business venture, while sports, in general, have become political platforms lacking meaningful development for years.

He pointed out that few athletes prioritize the future and advancement of the sport, with most participants in equestrian races driven by the pursuit of quick profits and fleeting fame. These trends, he noted, have contributed to a decline in the

overall quality and standards of the sport.

Sheikh Al-Mubarak expressed gratitude to the management of the Arabian Horse Center "Beit Al Arab," praising it as a model professional sports institution. He urged others to draw inspiration from this successful organization, which continues to support and nurture Kuwaiti equestrianism.

He also congratulated the equestrian community in Kuwait on the resumption of temporary equine exports after a 10-year hiatus. This step, facilitating local and international participation, marks a significant milestone for the sport in the region.



Sheikh Sabah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah

Zimbabwe all out for 57

Pakistan takes unassailable 2-0 lead in T20 series

BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe, Dec 3, (AP): Left-arm wrist spinner Sufiyan Muqem starred as Zimbabwe was routed for its lowest Twenty20 total of 57 and Pakistan romped to a series-clinching 10-wicket win on Tuesday.

Muqem, playing in only his seventh T20, surpassed fast bowler Umar Gul's Pakistan record of five wickets for six runs with an even more impressive 5-3 in 16 balls.

Zimbabwe was bowled out in just 12.4 overs and Pakistan openers Saim Ayub, 36 not out, and Omair Bin Yusuf, 22 not out, cruised to 61 without loss in only 5.3 overs.

They have an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series with the final game scheduled for Thursday.

Zimbabwe touched a new low after electing to bat, losing 10 wickets for 20 runs after openers Brian Bennett (21) and Tadiwanashe Marumani (16) provided a decent start of 37 runs in four overs.

Fast bowler Abbas Afridi dismissed Marumani and uprooted the off stump of captain Sikandar Raza. When Bennett couldn't cope with a sharp, short delivery from Haris Rauf and topped-edged to deep square leg, Zimbabwe



Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed bowls during the second T20 cricket match between Zimbabwe and Pakistan at Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. (AP)

slipped to 40-3.

Muqem baffled the middle order with his googlies and leg breaks as he claimed the wickets of Ryan Burl and

Tashinga Musekiwa in his first over and removed Wellington Maskadza and Richard Ngarava in his second over with his turning deliveries.

He needed four more balls to finish off Zimbabwe when Clive Madanda top-edged to Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha in the slips.

Best of the Rest

Talleres keeps hopes flickering: Venezuela international defender Miguel Navarro struck a second-half winner as Talleres Cordoba kept its title hopes alive with a 1-0 home victory over Huracan in Argentina's Primera Division on Monday.

Navarro broke the deadlock on the hour when he took one touch after Gaston Benavidez's pass before lashing a low finish from 16 yards into the bottom left corner.

The result lifted Talleres to second in the 28-team standings with 45 points, three points behind leaders Velez Sarsfield with two match days remaining. Huracan - title contenders for most of the season - dropped to fourth, two points further back.

In other Primera Division fixtures on Monday, Newell's Old Boys drew 0-0 at Atletico Tucuman, Independiente Rivadavia prevailed 2-1 at home to Argentinos Juniors, Platense secured a 1-0 home win over Union Santa Fe and Barracas Central was held to a goalless home draw by Tigre. (Xinhua)

Guede appointed Puebla coach: Pablo Guede has been appointed manager of Puebla for the 2025 Mexican top-flight season, the club said.

The 50-year-old Argentine replaces Jose Manuel de la Torre, who was sacked in November following a poor run of results.

"I wanted to come, and the club wanted me to be here, so that made it easy to reach an agreement," Guede told a news conference on Monday.

"It's an honor to have the responsibility of managing Puebla, and I'm looking forward to the challenge of leading this group of players in 2025.

Guede has been out of work since parting ways with Argentinos Juniors in August amid a poor sequence of results. Puebla finished the 2024 Liga MX Apertura season 15th in the 28-team standings with just four wins from 17 outings. (Xinhua)

River mulls return of Quintero: Colombia international midfielder Juan Fernando Quintero could rejoin his former club River Plate from Argentine rivals Racing, according to media reports.

Quintero is contracted to Racing until December 2026 but has held preliminary talks with River officials about a possible return to the Buenos Aires giants in January, news outlet Top Mercato reported on Monday.

The former Porto player earned icon status at River after scoring the decisive goal in an extra-time victory over rivals Boca Juniors in the 2018 Copa Libertadores final. He returned for a second spell with the club in 2022.

The 31-year-old has often spoken of his admiration for River Plate manager Marcelo Gallardo, with whom he has maintained a close friendship.

News of the potential transfer comes a little more than a week after Quintero helped Racing secure the Copa Sudamericana title, the club's first international trophy since 1988. (Xinhua)



Pakistan's Saim Ayub plays a ball during the second T20 cricket match between Zimbabwe and Pakistan at Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Pakistan won by 10 wickets. (AP)
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Sports

Al-Sadd clinches Champions League playoffs spot

Ronaldo-less Al-Nassr beaten as Al-Wasl draws with Al-Rayyan

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Dec 3, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo was absent when Al-Nassr lost for the first time in the AFC Champions League Elite, to Al-Sadd of Qatar 2-1.

Al-Nassr was already guaranteed a place in the round of 16 so Ronaldo, who has five goals in his last three matches, was rested. He watched from the sidelines.

Al-Sadd took the lead through Akram Afif, named the

Asian player of the year in November, eight minutes after the break.

While Sadio Mane and Anderson Talisca went close for Al-Nassr, an own goal from close range by Romain Saiss made it 1-1 with 10 minutes remaining.

However, Afif was brought down in the area and, in the ninth minute of added time, Algeria's Adam Ounas converted the penalty.

The win ensured 2011 champion Al-Sadd booked a place in the round of 16, moving into fourth in the 12-

team group, a point behind Al-Nassr in third. The top eight from each of the two groups progress to the knockout stage.

"It was a tough and close game," Al-Sadd coach Felix Sanchez said. "We worked hard to stop Al-Nassr having the ball, and to win at their home stadium. The players showed their character."

Al-Ahli was first in the group after the Saudi Arabian side was held by Esteghlal of Iran to 2-2.

Ivan Toney scored both goals for the host in Jeddah.

Raphael Silva opened the scoring for the Tehran team after 42 minutes but Toney made it 1-1 just before the break from the spot.

Mohammad Hossein Eslami restored Esteghlal's lead six minutes after the restart but Toney scored his second penalty four minutes from the end, a fourth goal in Asia for the England striker in the space of a week.

Elsewhere, Persepolis of Iran beat Al-Shorta of Iraq 2-1, while Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates drew with Al-Rayyan of Qatar 1-1.

Mehdi sidelined

Al-Qadisiya eyes crucial victory as Kuwait Club plays for pride

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Al-Qadisiya is determined to secure nothing less than a win when it hosts Bahrain's Al-Riffa at 5:35 PM today at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium, in the fourth round of the Gulf Champions League's second group. In the same group, Al-Arabi of Qatar will face Saudi Arabia's Al-Ettifaq at 8:00 pm at Abdullah Al-Dabal Stadium.

Meanwhile, in the AFC Champions League 2's fourth group, Kuwait Club will meet Al-Hussein Irbid of Jordan at 7:00 pm at Kuwait Club Stadium in Kaifan, in the sixth and final round of the group stage. In the same group, Shabab Al-Ahli of the UAE will take on Nasaf Qarshi of Uzbekistan at Rashid Stadium, also at 7:00 pm.

For Al-Qadisiya, the match against Al-Riffa is crucial, as it must secure all three points to keep its hopes alive of qualifying for the semi-finals. With just two points from three matches, it sits in third place, while Al-Riffa has 4 points in second place. Al-Ettifaq leads with a perfect 9 points, and Al-Arabi is at the bottom of the group with 1 point.

Despite showing strong performances in previous rounds, Al-Qadisiya has struggled to win, hampered by controversial refereeing decisions. It drew 1-1 with Al-Arabi in

the first round, lost 1-0 to Al-Ettifaq in the second, and earned a 2-2 draw with Al-Riffa in the third round.

Montenegrin coach Zeljko Petrovic knows that anything less than a win today will severely damage its chances of advancing, especially with Al-Ettifaq likely to secure the first qualification spot.

Al-Qadisiya will be without Moroccan midfielder Mehdi Berrahma due to injury but will welcome back central defender Khaled Ibrahim, who missed the first leg.

In the AFC Champions League 2 match between Kuwait Club and Al-Hussein Irbid, Kuwait Club aims to salvage its reputation after losing hope of qualification. With just 5 points, it sits in third place, far behind leader Shabab Al-Ahli (10 points) and runner-up Al-Hussein (9 points), both of whom have secured their progression to the next round. Kuwait Club will also look to avenge its 2-1 loss to Al-Hussein Irbid in the first leg.

Meanwhile, Qadisiya's Montenegrin coach, Zeljko Petrovic, described today's match against Riffa as "crucial" and emphasized his confidence in his players' ability to maintain their strong performances in the tournament and secure a positive result.

In a press conference held yesterday, Petrovic stated that a victory "does not guarantee Qadisiya's qualification to the semi-finals alongside leaders Al-Ettifaq," adding that "any other result doesn't mean elimination from the tournament either."

He went on to note, "The chances of qualifying are equal for Qadisiya, Riffa, and Al-Arabi."

Player Abdullah Al-Awadhi, for his part, reassured fans of the team's readiness, expressing the squad's eagerness to deliver a strong performance and continue their impressive run.

Riffa's coach, Haitham Jatal, shared his excitement for the match, stating that he is determined to achieve a positive result. He mentioned that, in preparation, he has focused on correcting the mistakes made in the team's previous match.

Jatal highlighted that "the stakes are high against Qadisiya, which promises an intense match as both teams will be fighting for victory and striving to stay in the qualification race."

Kuwait's Elite Academy wins 7 medals at the Arab Kickboxing Championship



Winners pose with officials after the awarding ceremony.

CAIRO, Dec 3: The Arab Kickboxing Championship, held in Cairo, brought together 500 male and female athletes from eight countries. Representing Kuwait was the Elite International Academy, which achieved notable success.

Eid Khalifa, General Manager of the Elite International Academy, highlighted the academy's participation with seven Egyptian players residing in Kuwait. The team secured seven medals: five gold and two silver medals. Ahmed Tamer, Mohamed Gawish, and Ahmed Mahfouz clinched gold in the Light Kick style, while Lama Eid and Malak Mahfouz earned silver in the

Low Kick style. Mohamed Adel also took home a silver medal in the same category.

Expressing gratitude, Khalifa remarked, "We raised the Kuwaiti flag alongside the Egyptian flag as a gesture of love, respect, and loyalty to Kuwait, our second homeland that holds a special place in our hearts."

At the championship's conclusion, Eid Khalifa, alongside Mohamed So-beih, Zainab Mamoun, and Tayseer Kamal, honored and crowned the winning athletes, celebrating their remarkable achievements.



Al-Qadisiya head coach addresses the media.

Kuwait women's beach volleyball team shows promise despite exit

DOHA, Dec 3: The Kuwaiti Under-20 women's beach volleyball team concluded its campaign in the West Asia Championship, held in Doha, Qatar, after exiting in the round of 16. The team suffered losses to Qatar (1-2) and Oman (0-2).

Kuwait Team (A) began the group stage with a defeat to Qatar (0-2) but bounced back with a win against Oman (2-0), securing its place in the knockout round. Meanwhile, Team (B) started strong with a victory over Yemen (2-1) but lost to Syria (0-2) and still advanced to the round of 16. In the elimination stage, Team (A)

headed Qatar once again, suffering a narrow loss (1-2), while Team (B) was defeated by Oman (0-2).

Amal Al-Faraj, the team administrator, highlighted the significance of this being the team's first participation in a competitive international championship. She praised the players for their commendable performance against more experienced opponents.

The Kuwaiti delegation included administrator Amal Al-Faraj, Coach Samia Al-Najjar, and players Zahra Al-Hussain, Malak Mashari, Maryam Karimi, and Munira Badr.



Kuwait beach volleyball team players.

Kuwait steps up training in Doha for 'Khaleeji Zain 26'

DOHA, Dec 3: The Kuwait soccer team's training camp in Doha continues with two daily sessions, morning and evening, as it prepares for the "Khaleeji Zain 26", which will take place in Kuwait from December 21 to January 3.

All players selected by head coach Juan Antonio Pizzi, including those who had been recovering from injuries and minor bruises, are now participating in the sessions.

The Blue squad is expected to be finalized tomorrow, with players from Kuwait Club and Al-Qadisiya joining the camp. These players were initially unable to travel with the delegation due to their involvement in the AFC Champions League 2 and the Gulf Champions League for clubs.

The team will continue its preparations in Qatar until December 16, where it will play three friendly matches. It will face Syria on December 9, Lebanon on December 12, and Yemen on December 15.



Kuwaiti players working out in the gym.

Best of the Rest

Santos eyes Castro: Santos is preparing a bid to sign Portuguese coach Luis Castro for the 2025 season, according to widespread media reports in Brazil. The eight-time Brazilian Serie A champions have been without a head coach since parting ways with Fabio Carille last month.

Santos will return to Brazil's top flight next year after securing the Serie B title, finishing one point ahead of second-placed Mirassol.

Castro, 63, has been out of work since leaving Saudi Pro League side Al Nassr in September following a disappointing run of results.

Other names linked to the vacant Santos position include Cuca, Renato Gaucho and Antonio Oliveira. (Xinhua)

The French figure skaters broke their own world record in claiming gold at the Beijing Games two years ago.

The 29-year-old Papadakis and the 30-year-old Cizeron also won an Olympic silver medal, five world championships and five European Championships.

"We could never have dreamed of a better career," the pair said in a joint statement on Tuesday. "It's with immense gratitude that we've decided to turn the page. An immense thanks to our supporters for the pleasure shared with us on the ice."

They also won the Grand Prix Final twice and were credited with some of the most innovative and clinical sequences to music that figure skating has seen. (AP)

Ellis takes job at FIFA: Two-time Women's World Cup-winning coach Jill Ellis took a full-time job with FIFA as its chief football officer on Tuesday.

Ellis will continue to work alongside Arsène

Wenger, FIFA chief of global football development, in a partnership they started in 2021 when she led the governing body's technical advisory group for women's soccer.

Ellis led the United States to back-to-back world titles in 2015 and 2019. She and former Arsenal coach Wenger promoted FIFA president Gianni Infantino's campaign to double the number of World Cups by playing them every two years instead of four. That project was resisted by European and South American soccer officials and soon dropped.

"The creation of the chief football officer position underscores FIFA's commitment to fostering a diverse, inclusive and accessible global football community, ensuring that football remains a sport for all," the governing body said. (AP)

Ellis has been president of the San Diego Wave in the National Women's Soccer League and her departure was announced on Tuesday.

"Under Jill's leadership, the Wave set a standard of excellence as an expansion club in the NWSL," club owner Lauren Leichtman said in a statement. (AP)