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HH Amir extends condolences to Saudi King over princess' passing

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, expressing sincere condolences over passing of Princess Jawaher bint Saad Al-Saud, and prayed to Allah to grant the family solace and patience.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled

Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, expressing sincere condolences over passing of Princess Jawaher bint Saad Al-Saud, and prayed to Allah to bestow the deceased with mercy.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in sending condolences to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia.

2,162 to lose Kuwaiti nationality

56,689 women acquired Kuwaiti citizenship via marriage by 2020

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Official statistics show 56,689 women from various nationalities obtained the Kuwaiti citizenship through marriage to Kuwaiti men, as per Article 8 of the nationality law by the beginning of 2020, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Data provided by former Interior Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Hamoud indicates that up to 1992, 18,184 women were

granted citizenship in this category. From 1993 to early 2020, the figure rose significantly, with 38,505 women acquiring Kuwaiti nationality, as detailed in a response by former Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh to a parliamentary inquiry by ex-MP Ahmed Al-Fadhel.

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Iran's 5.4 quake sends aftershocks to Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Kuwait National Seismic Network, part of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, reported detecting a strong earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale in western Iran at 7:00 am Kuwait time today.

The earthquake, which occurred at a depth of 10 kilometers, had its epicenter located 273 kilometers from Kuwait City.

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KUNA photo
India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya.

Kuwait FM, India PM focus on boosting relations, cooperation

NEW DELHI, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya tackled on Wednesday with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi ways to bolster relations and cooperation in various fields.

According to a statement by Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Indian Premier received Al-Yahya during his official visit to India.

Al-Yahya conveyed greetings on behalf of the Kuwaiti leadership and people to the Indian leadership, wishing them success and prosperity.

Al-Yahya also held official talks on Wednesday with India's Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaisankar, during his official visit to New Delhi, accompanied by a delegation.

At the outset of the talks, Minister Al-Yahya conveyed the warm greetings of the leadership, government, and people of Kuwait to the leadership, government, and people of India, wishing them continued growth and prosperity. He praised the historic friendship between the two nations, highlighting decades of close cooperation and strong partnership.

On his part, the Indian Minister of External Affairs expressed his best regards to the political leadership of Ku-

wait and valued the deep ties between the two countries and their peoples.

Jaishankar expressed his country's pride in the distinguished friendship and close cooperation with Kuwait in various fields.

During the official talks, both sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations and advance them towards further development and growth.

Additionally, they discussed the latest developments on regional and international fronts, with a focus on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The two sides also discussed ways to enhance joint cooperation and support international efforts to halt ongoing escalation, ensuring the conflict does not widen, and intensifying diplomatic and political efforts to find a fair and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue, aiming to bring peace and stability to the region.

Both ministers reiterated their mutual commitment to strengthening stability and security in the region and the world.

Following the meeting, a memorandum of understanding was signed to establish a joint committee for bilateral cooperation, reflecting both countries' determination to elevate their bilateral relations.

Bills of exchange out in Kuwait car rental rules

Comprehensive insurance, photos now required

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Ziad Al-Najem has confirmed the issuance of a decision to restructure car rental contracts.

Al-Najem said Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajl issued Ministerial Resolution No. 231/2024; which mandates comprehensive insurance coverage and that all terms be clearly specified in the

contract, along with documented photos of the car upon receipt and delivery. He explained the new guidelines eliminate the practice of requiring customers to sign bills of exchange, take on unclear financial obligations or accept vague terms that previously burdened consumers.

He elaborated that under the new resolution, lessors are required to deliver the car in a sound and safe technical condition, meeting all safety standards and equipped with essential accessories.

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Mol combo photo shows 17 persons of different nationalities arrested for trafficking in alcoholic beverages.

Kuwait busts 17 with KD 100,000 in booze

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Officers from the Drug Control General Department (DCGD), led by Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard, recently arrested 17 individuals of various nationalities for distributing both locally-produced and imported liquor in different locations in the country. This operation reflects their continued success in combating drug and liquor dealers and promoters.

According to the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior, the Criminal Security Sector's DCGD successfully apprehended the 17 individuals and seized approximately 1,284 bottles of alcoholic beverages of various types and sizes, with an estimated market value of around KD 100,000.

The suspects were referred along with the seized items to the Drug and Alcohol Prosecution for necessary legal measures.

DCGD reaffirmed its commitment to continue intensive security campaigns aimed at apprehending drug and prohibited substance dealers and promoters.

It stressed the importance of protecting society from these dangerous substances and ensuring the safety and security of both citizens and residents.

Cabinet lauds HH Amir's speech at GCC Summit, Kuwait Declaration



8 Zain Group and ZainTECH scoop three awards at Fast Company Middle East Innovation Awards 2024



9 KFH participates in NEXUS 2024 - Kuwait



9 NBK marks 'International Fraud Awareness Week,' intensifies financial awareness



11 The confluence of two textile traditions from Kuwait and India

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): The Cabinet, in its weekly meeting on Wednesday, commended His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's speech at the 45th GCC Summit, which Kuwait hosted on Sunday and the Summit's declaration.

In a statement following the Cabinet meeting, held at Bayan Palace under the Chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji said the Cabinet hailed the content of His Highness the Amir's speech at the opening session of the summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council Member States leaders.

The Cabinet also shed lights several key points in His Highness the Amir's speech and the Kuwait Declaration.

During his speech, His Highness the Amir affirmed that this gathering

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KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti diving team, affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, announced on Thursday its win of the national certificate for the 2024 Energy Globe Award, honoring the team's efforts in protecting the marine life in Kuwait islands.

Dr. Dhari Al-Huwail, the team's External Relations Officer, told KUNA that the Austria-based foundation praised the team's innovative and sustainable work in preserving marine ecosystems and exploring creative solutions to protect the environment.

He added that the recognition enhances Kuwait's image as a supporter of environmental initiatives and encourages global collaboration in marine protection.

Dr. Al-Huwail added that this recognition enables the team to connect with global partners in marine conservation while showcasing Kuwait's commitment to serious environmental efforts and promoting volunteerism.

He further explained that the team's project was selected as the best initiative from Kuwait and was featured alongside

Team praised for innovative and sustainable work in preserving marine ecosystems

Kuwait diving team bags recognition at Energy Globe Award 2024



KUNA photo
Kuwait diving team removes nets from the seabed.

over 2,000 global projects submitted by participants from more than 141 countries.

Over the past 30 years, the team has removed over 100 tons of waste, including

abandoned fishing nets and debris, from coral reefs around islands such as Qaruh, Umm Al-Maradim, and Kubbar, and also installed 130 marine moorings to prevent anchor damage and collaborated with the

University of Queensland on coral health monitoring.

The team's recent project, Jaber Al-Kuwait Marine Reserves, has created 24 artificial marine habitats to restore damaged coral reefs and support marine life, and they actively raise environmental awareness through educational programs, exhibitions, and media campaigns.

Dr. Al-Huwail highlighted that the team's efforts include educational programs for students, active participation in exhibitions and conferences, and the dissemination of environmental awareness materials through social media, television programs, and publications.

The Energy Globe Foundation is a non-profit organization and a global leader in sustainability, and it aims to raise global awareness about the importance of using resources sustainably, creating a better future for upcoming generations, and improving living conditions in developing countries.

The Energy Globe Award, established in 1999, is one of the world's most prestigious environmental honors, recognizing innovative sustainability efforts globally.

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: KUNA and Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute signed a memorandum of understanding on joint cooperation to organize training courses.

In a statement on Thursday, KUNA Director General **Dr Fatma Al-Salem** said the agency is eager to develop the skills of employees of different state bodies, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic institute, while also allowing KUNA's staff to benefit from the institute's expertise. (KUNA)

DUBAI: Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Narges Mohammadi** was released temporarily from prison Wednesday after undergoing a complex surgery in Iran that saw part of a bone in her right leg removed over cancer fears, her supporters said. (AP)

Kuwait envoy to UN reaffirms GCC solidarity with Palestine

NEW YORK, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai affirmed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries' solidarity with the Palestinian people, condemning the Israeli occupation's aggression on Gaza and the West Bank.

Al-Bannai delivered a statement, on behalf of the GCC, during the resumed tenth emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on the Israeli occupation's illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territories.

He stated that since the last emergency special session, tensions in the region have escalated, with the GCC countries condemning the violence in Lebanon and Palestine and warning of serious consequences.

He emphasized the UN General Assembly's responsibility to resolve the Palestinian cause in a just, permanent, and comprehensive manner, in accordance with the UN Charter, stressing the need to protect regional security and prevent the expansion of the conflict.

On behalf of the GCC, the Kuwaiti ambassador urged action on the Security Council resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza, release of hostages, prisoner exchange, return of civilians, humanitarian aid delivery, and the withdrawal of occupation forces.

Al-Bannai expressed support for efforts aimed at achieving these goals and acknowledged the tireless efforts made by Egypt and Qatar to reach an agreement.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:03	Asr	14:31
Sunrise ..	06:27	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr	11:38	Isha	18:11

Local

Weather			
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Warm and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate northerly wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-35 km/h.			
By Night: Rather cold to cold and partly cloudy with light vari-			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	20	14	
Kuwait Airport	23	09	
Abdaly	22	13	
Bubyan	22	10	
Jahra	22	12	
Failaka Island	22	14	
Salmiyah	20	17	
Ahmadi	23	12	
Jal Aliyah	21	10	
Nuwaisib	23	13	



Educator Clive McFarland poses for a picture with the students.

British Embassy photo

Educator McFarland visits Kuwait at invitation of British Embassy

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: As the UK and Kuwait continue celebrating 125 years of official diplomatic relations, Northern Irish author Clive McFarland visited Kuwait City at the invitation of the British Embassy, says a press release issued by the British Embassy in Kuwait. McFarland, an author, illustrator, and educator whose work has been shortlisted for the Irish Book Awards' Children's Book of the Year Prize and two Association of Illustrators (AOI) World Illustration Awards, led a series of engaging workshops for primary school students from British schools in Kuwait. Each 45-minute workshop, held at a mix of schools and the National Library of Kuwait, featured a reading of one of McFarland's stories, a draw-along session encouraging children to create their own interpretations of the characters, an interactive game where they acted out the characters' movements, and an

opportunity to ask questions. The goal was to foster creativity in children and strengthen their love for reading. Reflecting on his visit, McFarland said, "I had a fantastic time visiting local schools and the National Library of Kuwait. I was so impressed with how engaged the children were during our sessions and with all their brilliant drawings. The joy they found in literature was clear, reminding me of the profound impact children's books can have on young readers. I will always treasure my experience here and am grateful for the opportunity to share my stories." HE Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to Kuwait, commented, "The 125 Years of Partnership celebrates the collaboration between Kuwait and the UK. It was an extra pleasure to welcome Clive from County Tyrone in Northern Ireland, where the children's literature scene is strong and vibrant.

"The UK is a global leader in creative industries, with British books, art, music, films, theatre, fashion, and design widely popular in Kuwait and around the world. I look forward to exploring more opportunities to showcase our cultural connections and strengthen our collaboration in this exciting space," she said. Ms. Siham Al-Azmi, Director General of the National Library of Kuwait, which hosted several workshops, said, "The National Library of Kuwait is pleased, especially in the context of the ongoing 125 Years of Partnership celebrations, to collaborate with the British Embassy in hosting this visit. The library is eager to expand cooperation with organizations and institutions both inside and outside of Kuwait, promoting cultural and knowledge exchange and encouraging people to embrace reading."

'Kuwait-China ties enter new cooperation, friendship era'

Trade between two countries hits \$22 billion: Al-Najem

By Fahad Al-Saeed

BELJING, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to China Jassim Al-Najem confirmed Wednesday that Kuwaiti-Chinese relations represent a unique model of integration and cooperation that has met the aspirations of the leaderships of both countries since the beginning of diplomatic ties in March 1971. In an exclusive interview with the (KUNA), Ambassador Al-Najem stated that the strategic partnership established in 2018 inaugurated a new era of constructive cooperation and fruitful friendship. This partnership has become a key factor in expanding the scope of economic relations, with trade between the two countries reaching approximately (USD 22 billion) in 2023, solidifying China's position as Kuwait's largest trading partner for the ninth consecutive year. This, he noted, is "a living testament to the depth of their economic ties." Al-Najem added that Kuwait was the first in the Middle East to sign a cooperation document with China under the "Belt and Road Initiative" in June 2014. He described the initiative, launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, as an ambitious plan that reshapes both regional and international cooperation. Ambassador Al-Najem elaborated that China participates in major and pivotal projects aligned with Kuwait's Vision 2035, such as the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, the Shuqaiya Renewable Energy Complex, part of the New Kuwait International Airport, as well as bridges, highways, renewable energy projects, and residential areas. Additionally, Chinese companies contributed to the construction of the new headquarters of the

Central Bank of Kuwait. He also highlighted the important visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to China in September 2023 (when His Highness was Crown Prince), during which he held official talks with President Xi Jinping. Which resulted in the signing of seven memorandums of understanding, the first being a joint statement on the five-year plan for bilateral cooperation for the years 2024-2028, and a memorandum on cooperation in the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project. Furthermore, the visit also saw agreements between the Public Authority for Housing Welfare of Kuwait and China's Ministry of Commerce for cooperation in housing development and between Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and China's National Energy Administration for cooperation in the energy system and renewable energy development. Additionally, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding between Kuwait's Ministry of Public Works and China's National Development and Reform Commission for cooperation in the environmental infrastructure of wastewater treatment plants, and another between Kuwait Municipality and the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission on launching a low-carbon green system for waste recycling. The seventh memorandum of understanding was signed between Kuwait's Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and China's Ministry of Commerce regarding cooperation in free zones and economic zones. On energy, Ambassador Al-Najem commended

China's global leadership in renewable energy, noting its role as a key partner in Kuwait's renewable energy projects, especially in the Shuqaiya Renewable Energy Plant. Chinese companies, with their advanced technology and expertise in solar panels and wind turbines, will support Kuwait's vision for a transition to clean energy. He further noted that Kuwait is the first country in the Middle East to have complete 5G network coverage, thanks to Chinese telecom companies that have expertise in this field. He added that Kuwait could benefit from Chinese expertise in developing 6G networks, especially as China leads the global race in communications. Regarding digitization and the smart government agenda, Ambassador Al-Najem mentioned that Kuwait and China are working on joint projects in digital technology, such as enhancing IT infrastructure and adopting artificial intelligence technologies. Kuwait has sought Chinese expertise in digitalization and cloud computing to achieve the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035. A memorandum of understanding on enhancing cooperation in the digital economy between the two countries was signed in May, which will further strengthen technological collaboration. He emphasized that Kuwait Vision 2035 provides opportunities for increased and expanded bilateral cooperation with China, especially as the future vision aligns with China's Belt and Road Initiative. China possesses advanced technologies in many fields, enabling Kuwait to benefit from Chinese expertise in various projects. On the economic and trade front, Al-Najem explained that discussions continue between Kuwait and China on establishing a joint free trade area, as part of Kuwait's efforts to benefit from the Belt and Road Initiative.



French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin speaking at the ceremony. Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Strategic ties with France hailed

Kuwaiti citizens, students learning French language on rise – Ma'arafi

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Ma'arafi has affirmed the "distinguished and strategic" relations between Kuwait and France, indicating this relationship is exceptional, and that cooperation between the two countries is ongoing. In a press statement after attending a reception hosted by French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin to celebrate the International Day of French Language Teachers recently Ma'arafi also revealed that a new Kuwaiti ambassador will soon assume his duties in Paris, following the recent arrival of the new French ambassador to Kuwait. He confirmed Kuwait's strong partnership with French-speaking countries such as Belgium and Switzerland, as well as its distinction as the first country in the region to have a French school. He said the number of Kuwaiti students enrolled in this school is rising, as well as the number of Kuwaitis speaking French -- a cultural aspect that the country takes great pride in. He is hoping for the establishment of a French university in Kuwait considering the existing French cultural center and embassy library, as well as the broader cultural and social ties between the two nations. He believes these ties will pave the way for opening a French university and an increase in the number of Kuwaitis studying in France. Meanwhile, in his speech during the ceremony -- a part of which was dedicated to

honoring the efforts of 1,500 French language teachers working in various educational institutions in Kuwait (from primary schools to universities); Gauvin pointed out the significant role of the French language in Kuwait, stressing it is the third most taught language in the country after Arabic and English. He disclosed that more than 30,000 students learn French annually, with around 10,000 taking the French language exam in high school. "The French Language Department at Kuwait University plays a pivotal role in promoting French language and culture, with 300 students currently enrolled in the department," he added. The ambassador praised the establishment of the Council for the Promotion of Francophonie in 2021, which brings together ambassadors from Francophone member states, and enjoys the support and honorary chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad. He also celebrated Kuwait's achievements in the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics; in which 14,900 athletes from 206 countries participated. He expressed pride in the outstanding performances of Kuwaiti athletes in the 2024 Paris Olympics like Khaled Al-Mudhaf and Mohammad Al-Daihani in shooting, Yousef Al-Shamlan in fencing, Mohammad Zubaid and Lara Dashti in swimming, Amina Shah in sailing, Amal Al-Roumi in athletics, Dhari Batti in shot put and Suad Al-Faqan in rowing. He said Al-Faqan's achievement as the first Kuwaiti to compete in an Olympic water competition was highlighted as particularly inspiring for young girls in Kuwait.

'Kuwait steadfast in humanitarian efforts support'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Msuya, praised Kuwait's consistent support for humanitarian work throughout its history. In a statement to KUNA Wednesday, during her visit to Kuwait to launch the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) 2025 by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Msuya highlighted Kuwait's unwavering and neutral support for the UN and its agencies over the past six decades. She emphasized that this support is not only from the government but also from the private sector and the people of Kuwait, who have generously contributed to humanitarian efforts and high



Joyce Msuya

humanitarian principles. Msuya noted that Kuwait's neutral stance in the UN membership "gives us tremendous credibility." She also pointed out Kuwait's ongoing efforts to encourage the international community through conferences and regional platforms to fund humanitarian assistance to disaster-stricken nations and invest in their infrastructure to create more welcoming environments for people worldwide. "Despite the raging fires (conflicts) around the world, particularly in the Middle East, Kuwait represents a beacon of hope," she said, commending the collective efforts, particularly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its officials, to provide humanitarian aid to people around the world. Msuya stressed the importance of the release of the Humanitarian Overview by OCHA, as it provides a roadmap for directing humanitarian assistance to the 305 million people affected by conflict and natural disasters worldwide. The report also outlines the required funding of USD 47 billion for 2025 to assist 190 million

people in 72 countries, noting that this amount represents "less than 4 percent of global financial market profits." This funding will go toward providing children with food and the opportunity for a dignified, normal life. She also emphasized the importance of regional and global partnerships, stating, "The UN cannot do its work alone; it needs the support of member states, local organizations, and individuals." Msuya recognized the invaluable sacrifices made by humanitarian workers who risk their lives to provide essential aid in conflict zones, including food, water, shelter, and critical medical care, often in areas where human rights and international laws are disregarded, and civilians are the usual victims. She highlighted that in 2024, despite funding reaching only 43 percent of the USD 49 billion required, the UN and its partners, through support for local organizations, reached over 116 million people.

Asian hangs to death

2 Asians die after inhaling coal fumes while sleeping

By Munif Nayef
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Two individuals, believed to be Asians, tragically died after inhaling fumes from a coal stove while sleeping in a tent in Abdali. According to security sources, the two victims were asleep inside the tent when they succumbed to the fumes from the coal stove. Their bodies were transferred to the Forensic Medicine Department to determine the exact cause of death. The Kuwait Fire Force has been repeatedly warning against the use of coal stoves in enclosed spaces, especially while sleeping, as this practice can be fatal, particularly with the drop in temperatures. It urged desert travelers to never leave a coal stove burning while sleeping. Asian commits suicide: An Asian national committed suicide inside his sponsor's house in Saad Al-Abdullah. His body was referred to the Forensic Medicine Department. According to a security source, when the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room received information about the incident, security personnel and paramedics were immediately dispatched to the site of the report. Upon arrival, they found the man hanging from the ceiling in one of the rooms.

'GCC ... United Journey', 45th Gulf Summit slogan met aspirations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA) : "GCC... United Journey" -- the slogan for the 45th Gulf Summit, held in Kuwait last Sunday, -- fulfilled regional countries collective desire to realize the aspirations and dreams of the people in the region and reinforce Gulf countries' presence globally. Through its final communique and "Kuwait declaration", GCC leaders took center stage and vowed to realize several comprehensive goals in boosting ties amongst the council's members, reinforcing regional presence in face of growing challenges as well as expanding strategic partnerships with world countries, international political blocs and organizations. Since establishment in 1981, the GCC has been keeping up with developments and world happenings through coordinating efforts on all possible domains. As the region was going through a critical period, the summit called for speeding up GCC economic integration as the main drive for cooperation plans to recreate stability and sustainable development in the region and the world. The GCC leaders focused on digital

economy during the grand event, saying that setting a unified digital market amongst Gulf countries would enable countries in the region to compete on the global level. Meanwhile, as the slogan for the summit suggested, being in a unified journey required all to fend off threats through defense cooperation and coordination as part of leaders intentions to jump from a state of "cooperation" to "unity". Onwards to the Kuwait declaration, the GCC summit had reiterated members firm convictions on Arab and Islamic issues chiefly the Palestinian cause, the establishment of an independent state within the June 1967 borders for the people of Palestine with eastern Jerusalem as capital, a demands based on the Arab peace initiative and international laws. In this regard, the GCC summit did not hesitate to condemn the Israeli occupation's brutal aggression against the Gaza Strip and its people, saying that "enough is enough" and the world must move towards a sustainable peace in the Middle East via an international coalition pushing for a two-state solution.

GENEVA, Dec 5, (KUNA): The Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN and other International Organizations Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen affirmed on Wednesday that Kuwait's selection to launch the Global Humanitarian Overview 2025 was a testament to its prestigious status in the world as the "Global Capital of Humanitarian Action". He attributed accomplishment to the wise leadership and guidance of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Speaking at the event launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview organized by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Geneva, Ambassador Al-Hayen said that Kuwait's role in promoting humanitarian diplomacy has been a central element of its foreign policy for decades. He said that Kuwait's selection reflected its commitment to international laws and conventions, reaffirming its recognized role in alleviating the suffering of affected population. He noted that Kuwait's strategic partnership with the United Nations confirmed its belief in multilateral international action



Al-Hayen

and its continued support for humanitarian causes. He also said that Kuwait plays a pivotal role in supporting international efforts to coordinate humanitarian and relief assistance and in providing air-bridges to regions around the world particularly in Gaza Lebanon Sudan and other crisis-hit areas. Al-Hayen highlighted that the world was facing a critical phase requiring global cooperation and urged the UN Security Council to prevent the expansion of armed conflicts and address the ongoing violations by Israeli occupation forces who breach international conventions and kill innocent civilians especially in Gaza where people face starvation adding "this is a crime for which the entire international community bears responsibility." Al-Hayen also emphasized Kuwait's humanitarian efforts in regions suffering from crises due to climate change and war particularly in Gaza and Lebanon, which continue to endure the aftermath of conflict despite ceasefire agreements. He reiterated his call on the international community to strengthen cooperation and collective action to address the growing humanitarian crises and to promote peace and stability worldwide. OCHA launched today the Global Humanitarian Overview simultaneously in Kuwait under the auspices of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as at the UN Headquarters in Geneva and in Nairobi Kenya in cooperation with the African Union.

Delusional claims of victory in battle that killed, destroyed

“THERE are some people who were weak when they were young, but they are mischievous, they harass those who are stronger than them to fight them, and are beaten severely until their bodies hurt and their faces swell, and when those who are stronger than them leave them lying on the ground from the severity of the pain, these mischievous people, while they are in pain from the beating, scream loudly in order to provoke those who beat them by saying in the colloquial dialect: “What’s wrong with you, you cowards? You didn’t hurt us in the first place,” that is, in classical Arabic: “Why did you make them go, you cowards?” We didn’t feel any pain from your beating, but you were the ones who were afraid of us so they ran away’.” columnist Hamad Al-Marri wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.



Hamad Al-Marri

“This applies to Hezbollah and Hamas, who follow Iran’s orders and its media policy, which is based on blatant lies. Despite Gaza’s heavy loss due to Hamas’s foolishness in what is called ‘Al-Aqsa Flood’, the killing of about 43,374 Palestinians, the vast majority of whom were women, children and elderly people, the wounding of about 102,261, many of whom became physically disabled, the complete destruction of Gaza, and the liquidation and killing of Hamas’s front-line leaders, its political and media leaders declare that they have won this war, that Israel is the loser, and that it is the one seeking a ceasefire.

“After Israel launched a military attack on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon, it assassinated its Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah and his successor Hashem Safieddine, killed first and second-tier leaders, and destroyed the party’s infrastructure.

“The World Bank estimated the cost of damage to housing alone at three billion dollars, and killed about 3,800 Lebanese, including women and children, and wounded 16,000 others, Hezbollah asked the countries of the world to seek political support from Israel to stop the fire. However, after a ceasefire agreement was reached according to Israel’s terms, Hezbollah politicians and media professionals declared that they had won the war.

“The party published its first statement after the ceasefire, saying: ‘The resistance was able to achieve victory over the delusional enemy that could not undermine its resolve or break its will, and that the final word was for the field, which, with its mujahedeen men, was able to bring down the enemy’s targets and defeat its army.’

“I do not know if the party lives in another world, and wants with this lie to conceal the truth from the Lebanese people. Does this party not know that the world today is different from the world in the fifties and sixties of the last century as there was no rapid media at that time that transmitted information in sound and image as it happened, like the speed of information transmission that we are currently experiencing?

“Or does it want with this lie to delude itself that it has won, and force the Lebanese people to believe it? Even the ceasefire was carried out according to Israel’s conditions, including ‘the return of unarmed Lebanese residents to the southern towns – preventing the return of Hezbollah elements – disarming the party in the area between the Litani and the border with the occupation – the deployment of the Lebanese army in the southern regions – preserving the freedom of the occupation army in southern Lebanon if Hezbollah violates the agreement and the Lebanese army withdraws.’

“However, Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem stated that his party had achieved a great victory, greater than the victory it had achieved in 2006, and that the legendary steadfastness of the resistance had terrified the occupation army and brought despair to its politicians and people.

“It is as if the party had basically achieved a victory in 2006, forgetting the statement of its former secretary-general, Hassan Nasrallah, when he said: “If we had known that the reaction would be this, we would not have kidnapped the soldier.” after southern Lebanon was destroyed as it is being destroyed now.”

Also:

“People often envision the future as a beautiful journey leading them toward their aspirations. For the student, it’s the pursuit of success and a degree, for the young adult, it’s the dream of marriage and starting a family and for the merchant, it’s the ambition to expand trade and increase profits,” columnist Abdul Aziz Al-Kandari wrote for Al-Rai daily.

“This anticipation makes the journey itself exhilarating. Many people take the opportunity to plan their goals either at the beginning or end of the year. While the timing of planning is significant, what truly matters is taking the first step. As the proverb says, ‘A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.’ Life’s beauty lies in striving toward one’s goals.

“However, human life is rarely free from troubles, challenges, and occasional failures – whether at home or work. The most profound struggles are often internal, involving psychological battles and the pressures of daily life. Dealing with these challenges requires mastering the art of emotional control and thoughtful decision-making.

“Time, an unstoppable force, governs life. It flows forward, whether we plan for it or not. Yet, few people in our societies actively plan their lives. Those who do, however, often achieve their aspirations because, as the principle goes, ‘What

you think about, you attract.’ Your life is shaped by your thoughts. Management expert Peter Drucker aptly said, ‘What cannot be measured cannot be managed.’

“It is essential to ask yourself: What do I want from my life? What do I aim to achieve? What are my ambitions? Reflecting on these questions with honesty and clarity is crucial. Allow yourself moments of calm to create a concrete plan. A few focused days of planning can make a tremendous difference in realizing your goals. Avoid procrastination; your life deserves deliberate thought, effort, and dedication.

“No one succeeds without encountering failure. Learning from these experiences brings you closer to achieving your dreams. Avoid excessive worry and approach your journey with confidence, determination, and reliance on God Al-mighty.

“Be content with witnessing others’ success, harboring goodwill rather than envy. As Stephen Covey advises, ‘Instead of attacking a successful person, strive to become more successful yourself. That is the difference between hatred and ambition.’

“Faith in God and resilience against despair and frustration are vital for success. Perseverance is essential, as Najeed Al-Zamel noted: ‘Those who continue on the path to tomorrow understand the need to clear the obstacles along the way, knowing that the price paid is never cheap. But reaching the realms of hope and promise is priceless.’

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplifies optimism even in the most challenging circumstances.

“His actions and words inspire hope, teaching us that our efforts must be accompanied by trust in God. In life, we always have a choice between optimism and pessimism, hope and despair. When faced with negativity, taking action – whether through work or exercise – can uplift your spirit.

“God Almighty said: ‘Indeed, God will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.’ As the year draws to a close, it is an opportune time to assess your goals – whether personal, familial, professional, or spiritual.

“The future belongs to those who move beyond the past. As Ghazi Al-Gosaibi wisely stated, ‘How can a nation build its future while clinging to its past, exhausting every ounce of its energy?’ The key to success lies in planning, perseverance, and unwavering faith, as failure itself is often the gateway to greatness.”



“Since its establishment in 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has witnessed over 40 years of milestones, challenges, and achievements,” columnist Wasmia Al-Musallam wrote for Al-Anba daily.

“It has solidified its international presence and played a vital role in building a regional organization that unites efforts, organizes initiatives, and elevates the regional and global standing of the Gulf region. The GCC continues to be a key player both regionally and internationally.

“The 45th Supreme Council Summit of the GCC, held in Kuwait, symbolized the deep historical and fraternal ties that bind the member states.

“It reflected the collective commitment to Gulf unity and joint action to advance cooperation in ways that serve the interests of our peoples and meet their aspirations.

“The summit emphasized the importance of integration among the GCC states, adapting to regional and global developments, and fostering continued progress for a future of greater stability and prosperity in the region.

“This summit took place amidst complex and critical circumstances, marked by regional and global instability and heightened tensions.

“The increasing challenges and crises demand solidarity and a shared sense of responsibility to confront dangers and address crises effectively.

“Unified stances are crucial in facing the escalating threats posed by the Israeli occupation and the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, including the destruction, killing, and displacement they endure.

“The summit reiterated support for the Palestinian cause, emphasizing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.


“Additionally, the summit addressed unresolved issues with Iraq, aiming to enhance regional security and stability. It called for the reinforcement of principles of good neighborliness, the establishment of relations based on mutual respect, adherence to international laws, and joint action to achieve a prosperous future.

“The GCC remains committed to its lofty goals, including strengthening strategic partnerships, enhancing security and defense cooperation, addressing cybersecurity challenges, advancing digital transformation, tackling climate change, and improving infrastructure.

“Initiatives such as electricity interconnection, railway integration, technological collaboration, countering terrorism and drug trafficking, traffic linkage, economic diversification, and the development of ports, roads, and airports were highlighted as priorities to overcome technological and economic challenges.

“We hold great hope that God Al-mighty will continue to bless our nations and peoples with security, stability, and prosperity. Under the wise leadership of Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the GCC states, we look forward to achieving further cooperation and integration for the benefit of our homelands.”

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



KUNA photo

Head of the National Guard, Mubarak Hamoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, receives the UAE Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi.

KNG chief hails Kuwait-UAE relations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday praised the historical relations between Kuwait and the UAE. This came in a press statement by the KNG, during Sheikh Mubarak’s reception in

his office of the UAE ambassador to Kuwait Dr Matar Al-Neyadi who congratulated him on assuming office.

The statement added that in return, the KNG Chief expressed his appreciation to the ambassador for his kind words.

Security directors of six governorates reshuffled

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, has issued a decision to rotate the security directors and their assistants across the six governorates of Kuwait.

The reshuffle aims to enhance security operations and improve efficiency in the country’s law enforcement.

The key appointments include:

- Brigadier Hamad Rashid Al-Tawala as Director General of Ahmadi Security, with Brigadier Hussein Dashti as his assistant.
- Brigadier Saleh Aqla Al-Azmi as Director General of Hawalli Security.
- Brigadier Ziad Al-Khatib as Director General of Jahra Security.
- Brigadier Eid Al-Mutairi as assistant to the Director General of Jahra Security.
- Brigadier Mohammad Mutlaq Al-Mutairi as Director General of Farwaniya Security.
- Brigadier Mohammad Ahmed Amin as Director General of Capital Security.
- Brigadier Suleiman Al-Jarrah as Director General of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Security.
- Brigadier Abdullah Hamoud Al-Mutairi as assistant to the Director General of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Security.

These appointments reflect the ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Interior to ensure strong leadership and coordinated security measures across the different regions of Kuwait.



Sheikh Fahad

Kuwaiti woman acquitted in KD 28 mln real estate fraud

Businessman, aide absolved in KD 4m forgery case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Court of Appeal has acquitted a Kuwaiti “businesswoman” of charges related to money laundering and real estate fraud in London, amounting to KD 28 million.

Previously, the Criminal Court had sentenced her to seven-year imprisonment for laundering KD 28 million and fined her KD 1,152,000 for defrauding citizens by offering fictitious student apartments near British universities. She was also ordered to compensate 28 victims with KD 5,001 each.

The citizen was arrested by Interpol in October 2023 after fleeing the country in response to multiple complaints filed against her. She had deceived her victims, claiming to be a businesswoman who could help them invest in her commercial and real estate projects, only to take their money and flee the country.



Bank detects forgery case: The Criminal Court has acquitted a businessman and his financial advisor of charges related to forging bank documents and attempting to fraudulently obtain 4 million Kuwaiti dinars from a local bank.

The Public Prosecution had alleged that the two, in collaboration with an unknown person, falsified a real estate appraisal certificate and used fraudulent methods to seize the funds, but their plans were thwarted when the bank discovered the forgery.

According to the prosecution, the businessman and an accomplice were accused of working with an unknown person to forge a bank document -- a summary of a real estate report dated February 10, 2023 -- attributed to a local bank.

The forgery reportedly mimicked the style of authentic bank documents and included falsified signatures of bank employees, aiming to misrepresent false information as true.

The prosecution further alleged that the forged document was used as part of a fraudulent scheme to claim 4 million dinars. However, the attempt failed when the bank uncovered the document’s falsity during routine checks.

Lawyer Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, representing the businessman, argued before the court that the elements of the alleged crimes were not substantiated. He emphasized the lack of criminal intent on the part of the accused and asserted that his client had no knowledge of the forgery.

Additionally, Al-Qattan highlighted the absence of evidence directly linking the accused to the crime.

The court found the arguments compelling, ruling that the required criminal intent and evidence were not present.

The acquittal signifies that the charges could not be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, absolving both the businessman and his financial advisor of all allegations.



Beware ‘food cheats’: A defamation case has been referred to the Cybercrime Division following the promotion of fresh meat at an unusually low price of half a dinar per kilogram, along with an incident of defamation against a citizen via a voice recording, reports Al-Anba daily.

The defamation complaint was filed at the Al-Shamiya police station.

According to the details, the complainant stated that while he was browsing the Instagram, from his home in Faiha, he came across an advertisement that appeared to impersonate a well-known fresh meat company.

This happened when the man contacted the WhatsApp number provided on the account, inquiring about the price. Suspicious of the low price, he replied with, ‘Lies, you shouldn’t deceive people’, given that the price for the meat was about half a dinar per kilogram. In response, the person at the other end insulted him using offensive language in a voice message.

An official security source has warned citizens and residents about fraudulent offers promoting seafood, chicken and meat at unrealistic prices, which require a payment of one dinar to confirm the reservation. The source emphasized that responding to such messages and links could lead to account balance theft.



Illegal transfer of plots: The Public Prosecution has ordered the detention of a businessman, his lawyer, and three government employees for 24 hours as part of an ongoing investigation into the illegal transfer of industrial plots, valued at over KD 100 million, from a well-known car dealership. The transfers were made in exchange for bribes (vehicles) and without the consent of the remaining partners.

According to informed sources, the prosecution is awaiting the final report from the investigation department.

The scope of the case is expected to expand, with additional defendants likely to be charged. Witnesses from the government sector have also been summoned for questioning.



KFF photo

Foam is sprayed on an overturned fuel tanker to prevent explosion.

Driver injured as oil tanker skids, overturns on road near airport

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: A fuel tanker overturned on Airport Road on Tuesday evening, resulting in injuries to the driver of the tanker.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), when the Control Room of KFF received information about the accident involving a fuel tanker on Airport Road, firefighters and personnel

from Subhan Fire Station and Shadadiya Hazardous Materials Center rushed to the location where they handled the incident and brought it under control. Paramedics referred the injured driver to the nearest hospital for treatment. The site was handed over to the relevant authorities for necessary measures.

Cyber crimes top security chiefs meet

TUNIS, Dec 5, (KUNA): The 48th conference of the Arab police and security chiefs got underway at the headquarters of the Arab Interior Council Secretariat General on Wednesday with Kuwait’s participation.

Conferees are scheduled to address various issues namely organized crimes and cross border crimes. The head of the Kuwaiti delegation, the assistant undersecretary for general security affairs, Major General Hamad

Al-Munaifi, said in a statement to KUNA that the conference addresses cyber financial fraud, as one of the most dangerous crimes happening in the Arab states. He affirmed the need for coordinated efforts to combat cyber crimes.

For his part, the council secretary general, Mohammad Koman, noted that narcotics have turned into a threat to the Arab states’ economies because they are affiliated to corruption and money laundering.



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Kuwait Municipality, ACI celebrate excellence in construction design



Minister Abdul Latif Al-Mishari with the Maternity Hospital project team that won the Excellence Award.

Photo by Samer Shaqir

New Maternity Hospital wins 2023 Excellence Awards

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Eng. Abdul Latif Al-Mishari reaffirmed Kuwait Municipality's commitment to supporting and regulating high-quality construction practices in the country.

In his remarks at the annual ceremony organized by the American Concrete Institute (ACI) branch in Kuwait, Al-Mishari highlighted the importance of such initiatives

for the country's development, underlining the government's dedication to fostering growth in the construction sector.

The event, which took place at the College of Engineering and Petroleum in Sabah Al-Salem University City, also served as a platform to announce the winners of the 2023 Excellence Awards.

Eng. Al-Mishari praised the ACI's branch in Kuwait for its efforts to improve concrete quality and construction practices in the country through various educational activities, such as scientific lectures, training courses, and conferences.

Architect Aziz Mamouji, Vice President of the ACI branch in Kuwait, delivered a speech on behalf of

branch president Ghassan Al-Ghawas. He explained that the ACI is a non-profit professional organization focused on enhancing the quality of concrete and construction in Kuwait.

Mamouji, as Chairman of the Awards Committee, presented the 2023 Excellence Award to the New Maternity Hospital Project. This medical facility stood out for its sustainable design and aesthetic appeal.

The Ministry of Public Works received the award as the project developer, with an honorary shield given to the project consultant, Pace Office. The award was accepted by Pace Office's chairman, Tarek Shoaib.

The Excellence Award also recognized the main contractor and concrete supplier, the Italian Impre-

sar Pizzarotti Group. Dr. Salvatore Lorenzano and Engineer Khaled Al-Khazri, representatives of the group, accepted the award on behalf of the company.

The 2023 Achievement Award was presented to Dr. Rana Al-Fares, in recognition of her dedication, academic contributions, and professional development efforts that have significantly enhanced the construction environment in Kuwait.

The event, held under the patronage of Eng. Al-Mishari, was attended by a large number of guests and recognized individuals and projects that have significantly contributed to advancing the engineering profession and enhancing Kuwait's infrastructure.

Kuwait Amir congratulates Thailand on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable to King of Thailand Maha Vajiralongkorn, congratulating him on his country's national day.

His Highness the Amir wished the King good health and wellbeing, and the people of Thailand further progress and prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh

Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable to King of Thailand, Maha Vajiralongkorn, congratulating him on his country's national day, and wishing him good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable to King of Thailand, Maha Vajiralongkorn, congratulating him on his country's national day.

Strengthening regional identity

Sheikh Mubarak advocates for Gulf media overhaul in Oman

MUSCAT, Dec 5, (KUNA): The director general of the GCC Programs Production Institution, Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, on Wednesday visited the headquarters of the Omani Ministry of Information where he met with the Minister Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Khrousi and ministry officials.

The two sides discussed means of updating the media sector in the face of the common GCC challenges. He toured divisions of the ministry, examining the various studios and departments.

The ministry organized for Sheikh Mubarak and his delegation a visit to the Omani Youth Center, the Opera in Muscat, the Oman museum and Zawa fortress.

Following the visit, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah affirmed necessity of promoting the Gulf identity, dedicating concern to overhauling the Gulf media network through training and habilitation of the young cadres for facing future challenges.

He affirmed necessity to shed light on the youth contributions.



KUNA photo

Head of the GCC joint programs visits Oman's ministry of information.

Experts push for better access

Activists praise State of Kuwait's care for special needs' segment

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): Participants in a panel discussion on Middle East and North Africa have lauded the State of Kuwait's efforts in the realm of caring for cases of special challenges.

The head of the Kuwait Union for Women Societies Sheikhha Fadia Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah -- that organized the workshop -- said in remarks to KUNA that the conferees who concluded the activities today recommended boosting leading role for women and girls of such cases in various fields.

The participants have also advised that care for such cases be among priorities of states' general policies and tackling ob-

stacles hindering them from enjoying full rights, she said.

The workshop that marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and attended by the UN special rapporteur for protecting the handicapped Heba Hagrass, also recommended promoting the UN mechanisms to pin point the obstacles facing peoples of special needs.

It also recommended that this segment attain full social services and care to facilitate their integration into the society and protect them against indiscriminate, in addition to developing the teaching curricula to secure education for them.



KUNA photo

Group photo of participants at the consultation session.

Lifespan extended, efficiency improved

MEW set to modernize Doha West plant with 173 million dinar project

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Ministry of Electricity and Water is set to sign a major contract valued at 173 million dinars to upgrade the steam boilers at the Doha West Power and Water Distillation Plant.

According to informed sources, this initiative aims to extend the plant's operational lifespan by an additional 25 years while enhancing efficiency and environmental sustainability.

The modernization project, which received approvals from all regulatory authorities, will span seven years. It involves the sequential refurbishment of the plant's eight boiler units rather than all at once, ensuring a steady operation throughout the process.

The upgrades will guarantee high-quality and efficient steam supply to feed the distillers and turbines, reducing emergency outages caused by boiler malfunctions.

A key environmental objective of the project is to cut carbon emissions by 35 percent, aligning with global sustainability goals.

The station will also transition to operate entirely on environmentally friendly fuel, marking a significant step toward greener energy production in Kuwait.

In a parallel effort, the ministry reported the completion of 20,357 transactions in 2023 via its electronic portal and the "Sahel" government services app, highlighting its commitment to digital transformation.

These include -- electricity connection requests: 6,394 transactions; utility bill payments: 2,663 transactions and water connection for new buildings: 1,852 transactions.

The Ahmadi governorate led in electronic transaction completions with 6,713 cases, followed by Farwaniya (4,020) and the Capital (2,894).

The ministry extended electricity to 5,277 properties during the year, with a total of 597,549 registered customers. Investment housing topped the list with 313,355 clients, followed by private housing (184,852) and commercial properties (69,480).

The total energy provided for these extensions reached an impressive 1,110,150 million kilowatts, underscoring the ministry's efforts to meet growing energy demands while modernizing infrastructure.

This project and related developments mark significant strides in Kuwait's efforts to enhance its energy and water sector, positioning the country closer to achieving its Vision 2035 goals of sustainability and technological advancement.



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Palestinian identity explored at Kuwaiti exhibition

Ambassador Tahboub lauds Kuwait's support for Palestine in all int'l forums

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Kuwait Declaration has mentioned Palestine five times, which is a huge indicator of the Gulf's commitment to the Palestinian cause, particularly the leadership role played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in advocating for the two-state solution.

The Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub expressed confidence in Saudi Arabia's efforts and assured complete trust in Kuwait's ongoing support for the Palestinian issue in all international forums.

During the opening of the "They" exhibition by Jordan-based Palestinian artist Raya Qassieh, the ambassador said, "The Palestinian issue is always at the forefront of Gulf summit priorities".

He explained that the exhibition explores the Palestinian identity prior to the 1948 Nakba and its evolution, especially in light of the recent aggression in the Gaza Strip and other occupied Palestinian territories.

The artist's artwork reflects how Palestinians lived before 1948, and counters the Western narrative that they brought development to the Palestinian people. Through her paintings, she has affirmed that Palestinians have a long history of civilization, spanning hundreds of years.

Some of the paintings featured in the exhibition include images of the artist's grandmother, dating back to pre-1948, and showcase the Palestinian people's rich history and civi-

lization, which existed long before Western interference. Her work aims to challenge misconceptions and illustrate that it was Palestinians who contributed to the development of the region and the world, not external forces.

The exhibition reflects the identity conflict and internal struggles of the Palestinian people, particularly those living outside the occupied territories. Within the paintings, there is a symbolic shell that, when removed, reveals the true Palestinian identity.

The artist aims to reach the Arab audience, particularly given that the exhibition is being held in Kuwait.

The ambassador affirmed that both the Kuwaiti people and the Palestinians shared a common history before 1948, with Kuwaitis being well-acquainted with the Palestinian people and their cause.

He called for an end to the aggression against the Palestinian people in both Palestine and the Gaza Strip, and expressed hope for an immediate halt to the bloodshed occurring in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. He also stressed the need for a quick resolution to the ongoing violence.

Regarding the employment of Palestinian teachers in Kuwait, Ambassador Tahboub stated that the door for recruitment has been open since 2017, but the current difficult circumstances in Palestine have been the only obstacle to hiring a new batch of teachers.

He stressed that Kuwait will resume sending Palestinian educational missions when the aggression ends.



Photos from the exhibition

Photos by Rezk Tawfiq



Commemorative plaque being presented to the Farwaniya Governor.

Governor hosts livestock union leaders

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received at the General Diwan of Farwaniya Governorate Wednesday morning the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Union of Livestock Breeders and Chair of the Animal Wealth Cooperative Society Mohammad Saleh Al-Baghli, and the esteemed board members.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser warmly welcomed the guests and praised the dedicated national efforts of livestock breeders, recognizing them as one of the main pillars of the national economy.

He listened attentively to a detailed briefing from Al-Baghli and

the attendees regarding the challenges faced by breeders and producers in various professions and fields.

The governor expressed his commitment to supporting their demands, and acknowledged the importance of these requests and the benefits they bring to both citizens and residents of Kuwait.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the attendees expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser for his warm reception.

In appreciation of his outstanding support for the Kuwaiti Union of Livestock Breeders and the Animal Wealth Cooperative Society, two commemorative plaques were presented to the Farwaniya Governor.

Kuwaiti dinar

Continued from Page 1

This proactive approach, implemented by the Central Bank of Kuwait, has already exposed two significant money-laundering cases involving transfers to and from blacklist countries.

Furthermore, the association underscored the need for a risk-based approach in regulating charitable and civil society organizations, which are considered high-risk for misuse in terrorist financing.

It called for balanced measures to protect these sectors while avoiding disruption of legitimate activities.

During the meeting, Dr. Al-Huwailah reiterated Kuwait's commitment to FATF's recommendations, aligning with directives from the political leadership to enhance transparency and bolster the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.

The session concluded with a call for stronger collaboration between national and international entities to elevate oversight efficiency and align Kuwait's procedures with global standards, thus reinforcing its position in the fight against financial crimes.

This intensified focus on combating money laundering reflects Kuwait's determination to safeguard its financial reputation and uphold international commitments while addressing evolving challenges in the financial landscape.

Bills of

Continued from Page 1

He added all car rental companies, institutions and offices must ensure the inclusion of the following conditions in their rental contracts with customers:

1. The lessor is obligated to deliver the car in a technically sound and safe condition, ensuring it meets all safety requirements and is equipped with necessary accessories such as emergency tools and spare tires.

2. The condition of the car must be documented before delivery through video or photographs, with detailed

Kuwait envoy

Continued from Page 1

He also addressed the immediate ceasefire agreement in Lebanon after weeks of intensified Israeli occupation aggression, which left thousands dead and injured, expressing hope for its implementation.

He further hoped that a similar agreement would follow, leading to a halt in the war on Gaza and the attacks on the West Bank.

Al-Bannai reaffirmed the GCC's solidarity with the UN's Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which plays a vital

role in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with millions of Palestinian refugees relying on its essential services.

He pointed to the Kuwaiti Declaration of the 45th GCC Summit, which reiterated the Council's firm position on the Palestinian cause.

Al-Bannai stated that its time to end the occupation and support the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over all territories occupied since June 1967, and to establish an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

He emphasized the efforts of the Saudi-led ministerial committee, formed at the Arab-Islamic summit on Israeli aggression, and the international coalition's work to achieve a two-state solution for a Palestinian state.

Al-Bannai urged the implementation of the two recent General Assembly resolutions adopted during its tenth emergency special session, (Resolution 10/23) on Palestine's eligibility for full membership in the UN and (Resolution 10/24) concerning the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the illegality of the Israeli occupation.

56,689 women

Continued from Page 1

Breaking down the figures, Al-Saleh's response highlighted that from 1993 to 1999, 10,403 women were granted citizenship. The number increased to 16,305 during the decade from 2000 to 2010 and stood at 11,797 from 2011 to early 2020.

These statistics were included in an official parliamentary response deposited with the General Secretariat of the National Assembly, shedding light on the evolution of Kuwaiti citizenship grants under Article 8.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality, chaired by the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, has decided to withdraw the Kuwaiti nationality from 2,162 persons, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision will be presented to the Council of Ministers for further review.

The approved items were:

■ The Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy's request to allocate a five-meter-wide fresh water path.

■ The approval to create a new exit on the Sixth Ring Road leading to Ishbiliya.

■ A proposal by member Khaled Al-Dagher for the creation of an entrance and exit in South Khaitan on the Sixth Ring Road.

The committee referred the following items to the executive body for further action:

■ The cancellation of a proposed public park in Ishbiliya, Block 1, Street 135, as another park already exists just 100 meters away.

■ The cancellation of a proposed traffic light on Alaa Bin Al-Jaroud Street in Firdaus, between Block 7 and Block 8, with plans to create a roundabout for further study.

The committee kept the following items on its agenda:

■ The request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation to create a road linking the university campus in

Abdullah Al-Mubarak to the Seventh Ring Road.

■ The allocation of a site for building a mosque in Abdullah Al-Mubarak between blocks 1 and 5.

■ The creation of a roundabout between the prisons area and Firdaus blocks 3 and 4.

■ A proposal submitted by member Walid Al-Dagher for creating a roundabout at the intersection of Khalaf Al-Ahmar Street and Umm Al-Mu'minin Street as an alternative to the traffic light.

Farwaniya Council moves forward on new road exits and utility path

Several proposals sent for further review

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Farwaniya Committee of the Municipal Council, during its fifth meeting of the third legislative session held yesterday headed by Vice Chair of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi, approved three items out of eight on its agenda.

CAIRO, Dec 5, (KUNA): A number of Kuwaiti entities participating in the 19th Kuwaiti Week in Egypt on Wednesday, asserted importance of this year's event due to the size and diversity of participations from both countries, as well as their role in enhancing cooperation between the two countries in various fields.

Ministry of Information participated with a large pavilion for the external media sector, which included a number of its publications and publications, which varied between paper and digital, and aimed to introduce the Egyptian public to the latest purposeful publications.

Alaa Al-Mutawa, the person in charge of the Ministry of Information's pavilion, told KUNA that the aim of this participation is to introduce the Egyptian public to the recent achievements in the field of Kuwaiti media, culture and folk arts, in addition to exchanging experiences and information with other participating entities.

She considered that the participation of the Ministry of Information in this event comes as an affirmation of the importance of cultural and media exchange between the two countries.

Al-Mutawa pointed to the publications displayed in the pavilion, which varied between publications from the "Babtain Central Library", the "Kuwait Research and Studies Center" and the "Red Crescent Society."

Regarding the participation of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Oil, Mohammad Al-Nafisi from the Public Relations Department said in a similar statement to KUNA that their participation aims to shed light on the achievements of the ministry and the progress it has achieved in artificial intelligence and complete digital transformation, noting that the paper era has ended in the Ministry of Oil and correspondence has become via the Internet and modern technology.

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Iran's 5.4

Continued from Page 1

The tremor was felt by many Kuwaiti citizens and residents throughout Kuwait, prompting concerns across the country.

Shortly after, the network recorded two aftershocks: the first, a magnitude 5.2 quake, occurred about 20 minutes after the main earthquake.

A second aftershock, measuring 5.0 on the Richter scale, was detected at 8:38 am in the same region, also at a depth of 10 kilometers.

Authorities are continuing to monitor the situation, though there have been no reports of significant damage or injuries in Kuwait.

Cabinet lauds

Continued from Page 1

"is a testament to our unity, an embodiment of the strength of our union, and a reflection of our unwavering belief in the necessity of enhancing and unifying GCC joint action."

"Together, we strive to broaden the scope of cooperation to meet the aspirations of our people, ensuring security, prosperity, and stability for our nations," he said.

"This necessitates accelerating our efforts to achieve GCC economic integration through unified policies, diversification of non-traditional income sources, facilitation of trade and investment, and support for local industries."

His Highness the Amir also called for expanding innovation and entrepreneurship, especially in emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), to enhance the competitiveness of our economies regionally and globally.

"Our journey toward building an integrated Gulf economy relies on key pillars, foremost among them education," he indicated, adding, "We aim to nurture the talents of our youth, inspiring them to contribute to the integrated Gulf economy we envision."

His Highness the Amir also reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of the Israeli Occupation brutal aggression on Palestinian territories and the

genocides committed against Palestinian people.

He urged, "The international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to fulfill its responsibilities by ensuring the implementation of relevant resolutions, halting the violence, providing international protection for innocent civilians, and securing safe corridors for urgent humanitarian aid."

"We reiterate our unwavering support to Palestine and to end the Israeli occupation, attain all their political rights, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international resolutions," he stressed.

His Highness Sheikh Meshal also denounced the Israeli Occupation's repeated attacks on Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Iran.

He underlined that the principle of good neighborliness and dialogue is fundamental in overcoming challenges.

"We reaffirm our call to Iraq to rectify the legal status of the agreement regulating maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah, resume the meetings of the technical teams associated with it, and return to work in accordance with the 2008 Security Exchange Protocol," he said.

"Additionally, we urge the resumption of meetings of the joint legal technical teams to complete the demarcation of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi maritime borders beyond boundary point number 162 in accordance with international law and UN's Convention on 1982 Law of the Sea," he also added.

His Highness the Amir added, "we would also like to emphasize our hope that the support of the leaders will ensure the continued follow-up by the Security Council, exclusively, on the issues of prisoners, missing persons, and Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, after the expiration of the mandate of the UN's Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The Cabinet also reviewed the Kuwait Declaration which was issued at the conclusion of the 45th GCC Summit on Sunday.

On Lebanon, the Kuwait Declaration recalled Kuwait and GCC efforts to support Lebanon and expressed full solidarity with the sisterly country. The GCC leaders also welcomed the 60-day ceasefire

agreement in Lebanon, expressing hope it would lead to an end to the conflict, Israel's withdrawal from Lebanese territories, implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701, and the return of displaced people.

The Declaration condemned Israeli attacks causing civilian casualties and infrastructure damage, as well as assaults on UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

On the situation in the Gaza Strip, the GCC leaders in their declaration condemned the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and the targeting of innocent civilians forced to be displaced and even killed if refusing to move.

They called for an immediate ceasefire and the uninterrupted entry of humanitarian relief aid to the war-torn Palestinian region.

They affirmed that the Israeli occupation must take full responsibility for the killing of tens of thousands of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip, namely women, children, and elderly, which were all crimes against humanity.

In the Kuwait Declaration, the GCC leaders highlighted the importance of strategic investments in areas including artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity.

These technologies, they noted, have placed the GCC in a leading position to capitalize on the global digital transformation, with applications in renewable energy, healthcare, education, transportation, and financial services.

The leaders also called for enhanced cooperation among GCC countries to develop joint digital strategies, facilitate e-commerce, advance digital payment systems, and strengthen cybersecurity.

Regarding Al-Durra Field, the GCC leaders affirmed that Al-Durra Field lies entirely within Kuwait's maritime zones, and reiterated that the natural resources in the submerged area adjacent to the Saudi-Kuwaiti divided zone, including the entirety of Al-Durra Field, are jointly owned by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

These two countries have the rights to exploit the resources in accordance with international law and relevant agreements, and the leaders firmly rejected any claims by other parties over the field or the adjacent submerged area.



Members of the New York police crime scene unit pick up cups marking the spots where bullets lie as they investigate the scene outside the Hilton Hotel in midtown Manhattan where Brian Thompson, the CEO of United-Healthcare, was fatally shot on Dec 4, 2024, in New York. (AP)

Police hunt for healthcare boss killer

Investigators are searching for clues that could help them identify the masked gunman who stalked and killed the leader of one of the largest U.S. health insurance companies on a Manhattan sidewalk, then disappeared into Central Park. UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, 50, died in a dawn ambush Wednesday as he walked to the company's annual investor conference at a Hilton in Midtown, blocks from tourist draws like Radio City Music Hall and the Museum of Modern Art.

The killing, and the shooter's movements in the minutes before

and afterward, were captured on some of the multitudes of security cameras present in that part of the city. One video showed him approach Thompson from behind, level his pistol and fire several shots, barely pausing to clear a brief gun jam while the dying health executive tumbled to the pavement. Other security cameras captured the initial stages of the gunman's escape. He was seen fleeing the block across a pedestrian plaza, then escaping on a bicycle into Central Park, where he vanished. (AP)

US defense secretary endorses women in combat roles

WASHINGTON, Dec 5, (AP): US Defense Secretary **Lloyd Austin** used a speech at West Point Wednesday to forcefully endorse having women in combat roles and emphasize the military's obligation to defend the US Constitution - ideals some fear may come under fire in the upcoming Trump administration.



Austin

Speaking to cadets at the US Military Academy in New York, he recalled commanding troops during the early days of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He said he wanted to keep his command post at the front where he could see the fight, but he told his soldiers that the risks were serious and any of them could stay back and no one would think less of them. It was one of the women, he said, that was first to challenge him on it. "In no uncertain terms, they were telling me to stop talking and get to the fight. And that is who the women of the United States military are," said Austin.

His remarks are in contrast to some made by the man Trump has tapped to be Austin's successor to lead the Pentagon. Pete Hegseth, a Fox News co-host and former Army National Guard soldier, has made it clear that he believes men and women should not serve together in combat units. A month ago, he told podcast host Shawn Ryan that, "I'm straight up just saying we should not have women in combat roles. It hasn't made us more effective. Hasn't made us more lethal. Has made fighting more complicated." Austin, a retired four-star general who has spent more than 40 years in the Army and commanded at every level, pushed back, saying he's seen incredibly capable and brave women fighting for their country in battle. "So look, if I get a little fired up about this, it's just because this isn't 1950. It isn't 1948. It is 2024," said Austin. "And any military that turns away tough, talented patriots - women or men - is just making itself weaker and smaller. So enough already." While never mentioning President-elect Donald Trump, Hegseth or the incoming administration, Austin also admonished the cadets to remember their sworn duty to defend the Constitution.



Emergency personnel state outside the Feather River Adventist School after a shooting on Dec 4, in Oroville, Calif. (AP)

2 hurt, gunman dead in Calif shooting

Two children were in "extremely critical condition" Wednesday after being shot at a tiny religious K-8 school in Northern California and the gunman died at the scene, apparently from a self-inflicted gunshot, police said. The gunman may have targeted the Feather River School of Seventh-Day Adventists in Palermo because of its religious affiliation, but isn't believed to have had a prior connection to the victims or the school, Butte County Sheriff Kory L. Honea said. He didn't explain further. "Whether or not this is a hate crime or whether or not it's part of some sort of larger scheme at this point I don't have enough information to

provide an answer to that," he said. The wounded children, boys ages 5 and 6, are kindergarteners at the school and are being treated at a trauma center in the Sacramento area, officials said. "I am thankful that they're still alive, but they've got a long road ahead of them," Honea said. The shooting occurred shortly after 1 p.m. at the private Christian school with fewer than three dozen students in Palermo, which has about 5,500 people and is about 65 miles (104 kilometers) north of Sacramento. It was the latest among dozens of school shootings across the U.S. (AP)

GOP made incremental gains in state legislature

California plays key role again in setting US House's political balance

LOS ANGELES, Dec 5, (AP): Democrats and Republicans agreed on at least one thing before November's election: California would play a central role in determining control of the US House. Indeed it did. Democrat Adam Gray's come-from-behind victory over Republican Rep. John Duarte in a Central Valley farm-belt district Tuesday - the final House contest decided this year - gave Democrats their third pick-up of a GOP-held seat in the state, a small victory in a tough year for Democrats nationally. While Democratic wins narrowed the gap in the House, Republicans held their ground in two other toss-up contests that helped the GOP defend its fragile majority in Washington. Republicans won 220 House seats this election cycle, with Democrats holding 215 seats. Despite falling short of a majority, Democrats stressed that the party will gain seats next year, leaving the chamber even more closely divided.

"Netting three seats was a very big deal," Rep. Pete Aguilar, the third-ranking Democrat in the chamber, who lives in Redlands, east of Los Angeles, said in Washington. Democratic enthusiasm was tempered, however, by turnout figures that lagged the 2020 presidential election in the heavily Democratic state, even with Kamala Harris leading the Democratic ticket in her home state. Also, Republicans made incremental gains in the state Legislature. Voters overwhelmingly endorsed a ballot proposal that makes shoplifting a felony for repeat offenders again and increases penalties for some drug charges amid frustration over retail crimes, a proposal opposed by some Democrats. The election showed Democrats will need to pay closer attention to issues like crime and the cost of living, even in a state where the party holds every statewide office and dominates the Legislature and congressional delegation. Claremont



Central Valley Assembly members, Democrat Adam Gray, of Merced, (center), and Republican Heath Flora of Ripon, (right), confer during the Assembly session at the Capitol in Sacramento, Calif., on May 27, 2022. (AP)

McKenna College political scientist Jack Pitney said. In the House, Democrats "were hoping that California would push

them over the top to gain a majority. But their gains elsewhere were not strong enough," Pitney added, pointing to GOP wins in North Carolina.

Gray won by a margin of less than 200 votes, with election officials reporting Tuesday all ballots had been counted. Duarte captured the seat in 2022 when he defeated Gray by one of the closest margins in the country, 564 votes. He was often listed among the most vulnerable House Republicans given that narrow margin of victory in a district with a Democratic tilt - about 11 points over registered Republicans. Gray said in a statement: "We always knew that this race would be as close as they come, and we're expecting a photo finish this year, too." In other Democratic House gains, first-time candidate Derek Tran ousted Republican Rep. Michelle Steel in a Southern California district anchored in Orange County, while Democrat George Whitesides toppled Republican Rep. Mike Garcia in a district north of Los Angeles. In a district east of Los Angeles, Republican Rep. Ken Calvert again held off Democrat Will Rollins in a

repeat of their 2022 contest. And Republican Rep. David Valadao kept his grip on a farm-belt seat, despite its heavy Democratic registration edge. The outcome will leave Republicans with nine of the state's 52 U.S. House seats next year. Although California is often seen as a liberal monolith, a string of House districts has proved volatile in recent elections, spotlighting their importance to both parties. Democrats snatched seven seats from Republicans in 2018, then Republicans seized four from Democrats in 2020. In the 2022 elections, Republicans gained one seat, from 11 to 12, while Democrats dropped to 40 seats from 42, after California lost a House seat in reapportionment after the 2020 census. Overall, the state dropped to 52 districts from 53. The state played a pivotal role in securing the gavel for Republicans in 2022 and installing Rep. Kevin McCarthy of Bakersfield as speaker.

US First Lady Biden in capital of United Arab Emirates on last solo foreign trip

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Dec 5, (AP): US First Lady Jill Biden toured the capital of the United Arab Emirates on Thursday as part of her final solo foreign tour. Biden, 73, arrived in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday night after stopping in Italy and visiting her ancestral home of Gesso in Sicily. The UAE, an autocratically ruled federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, has been a key US ally in the region and

hosts thousands of American troops. The country's Jebel Ali port in Dubai also is the US Navy's busiest port of call outside of the US. The UAE also is a major buyer of Boeing Co. aircraft for its long-haul airlines Emirates and Etihad, and has been focused on winning American support for its push into artificial intelligence. On Thursday Biden traveled to the Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi and Qasr

Al Hosn, a historic site. She was expected to speak at a summit later in the day. Biden has come to the country previously. In March 2016, she accompanied her husband, then the vice president in the last year of the Obama administration, on a trip to the Emirates. This trip comes after President Joe Biden pardoned his son Hunter Biden over federal crimes after previously pledging that he wouldn't. The president dodged questions about the pardon while he was on a trip to Angola. For her part, Jill Biden on Monday said: "Of course I support the pardon of my son." Biden will travel next to nearby Qatar. After that she'll fly to Paris and join President-elect Donald Trump and other dignitaries in Paris to celebrate the reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral. She'll then return to Washington. Biden will focus throughout the trip on the issues she has championed as first lady, including support for military families, education, and research into cancer and women's health, and will also highlight US partnerships in these areas with the countries hosting her, according to her office. She is the first Italian American to become first lady and has planned a side trip to her ancestral hometown of Gesso, the tiny Sicilian village where her father's family hailed from.



US First Lady Jill Biden, (right), and her daughter Ashley Biden, (behind), walk during a visit to the Kasr Al Hosn Fort in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on Dec 5. (AP)



French Prime Minister Michel Barnier gets applause from ministers and parliament members after addressing the National Assembly prior to a vote on a no-confidence motion that would bring him down and his cabinet for the first time since 1962 on Dec 4, in Paris. (AP)

French Prime Minister Barnier resigns after govt loses in no-confidence vote

PARIS, Dec 5, (Agencies): French Prime Minister Michel Barnier submitted his resignation to President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday after a no-confidence vote against him and his government by the French Parliament. According to BFM TV, Barnier left the Elysee Palace after a one-hour meeting with Macron, during which he officially stepped down. Macron had held in-person and phone meetings last week to assess potential candidates for the now-vacant prime ministerial position, aiming to avoid delays like those seen last summer after the dissolution of Parliament, the report noted. BFM revealed that Macron anticipated Barnier's downfall, considered replacements like Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu and Pau Mayor Francois Bayrou, and is reportedly determined to appoint a successor within 24 hours. Meanwhile, Macron was expected to give a speech to the nation later today regarding the recent developments. Barnier's resignation followed his failure to secure parliamentary support after invoking Article 49.3 to bypass a parliamentary vote and push through the controversial 2025 social security budget as part of the national budget.

The 2025 budget, which failed to gain parliamentary backing, aims to reduce France's massive deficit by saving USD 60 billion and introducing new taxes. Notably, Barnier's government is the first to face a successful no-confidence vote since 1962. The National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament, is deeply fractured, with no single party holding a majority. It comprises three major blocs: Macron's centrist allies, the left-wing coalition New Popular Front, and the far-right National Rally. Both opposition blocs, typically at odds, are uniting against Barnier, accusing him of imposing austerity measures and failing to address citizens' needs. Speaking on TF1 television after the vote, National Rally leader Marine Le Pen said "we had a choice to make, and our choice is to protect the French" from a "toxic" budget. Le Pen also accused Macron of being "largely responsible for the current situation," adding that "the pressure on the President of the Republic will get stronger and stronger." Speaking at the National Assembly ahead of the vote, hard-left lawmaker Eric Coquerel had called on the government to "stop pretending the lights will go out," noting the possibility of an emergency law to levy taxes from

Jan. 1, based on this year's rules. "The special law will prevent a shutdown. It will allow us to get through the end of the year by delaying the budget by a few weeks," Coquerel said. Macron must appoint a new prime minister, but the fragmented parliament remains unchanged. No new legislative elections can be held until at least July, creating a potential stalemate for policymakers. Macron said discussions about him potentially resigning were "make-believe politics" during a trip to Saudi Arabia earlier this week, according to French media reports. "I'm here because I've been elected twice by the French people," Macron said. He was also reported as saying: "We must not scare people with such things. We have a strong economy." While France is not at risk of a US-style government shutdown, political instability could spook financial markets. France is under pressure from the European Union to reduce its colossal debt. The country's deficit is estimated to reach 6% of gross domestic product this year and analysts say it could rise to 7% next year without drastic adjustments. The political instability could push up French interest rates, digging the debt even further.

Opp'n party leader arrested in Georgia

TBILISI, Georgia, Dec 5, (AP): Georgian police on Wednesday raided the offices of an opposition party and arrested its leader in an apparent attempt to squelch a wave of mass protests triggered by the governing party's decision to suspend negotiations on joining the European Union. During the past six nights, riot police used water cannons and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators, who threw fireworks at police officers and built barricades on the Georgian capital's central boulevard. More than 300 protesters have been detained since Thursday and over 100 people have been treated for injuries. On Wednesday, the Coalition for Change opposition party said that police raided its offices and detained its leader, Nika Gvaramia. It shared a video showing several officers dragging Gvaramia into a car.



Demonstrators use lasers against the police during a rally outside the parliament building to protests against the government's decision to suspend negotiations on joining the European Union in Tbilisi, Georgia on Dec 5. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL



New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki, (centre), is seen in the Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park, on Aug 17, 2020. (AP)

Weather hampers search for 3 climbers missing on NZ's Aoraki

New Zealand authorities have "grave concerns" for three mountain climbers from the US and Canada who are missing after a planned ascent of the country's highest peak, Aoraki, as efforts to find them stalled for a third day amid bad weather.

Strong winds meant an aerial search for the men could not resume as anticipated on Thursday,

Police Area Commander Inspector Vicki Walker said in a statement.

The Americans - Kurt Blair, 56, from Colorado and Carlos Romero, 50, of California - are certified alpine guides, according to the website of the nonprofit American Mountain Guides Association. New Zealand authorities have not named the Canadian climber at the

request of his family.

The men flew to a hut partway up the mountain on Saturday to begin their ascent and were reported missing on Monday when they did not arrive to meet their prearranged transport after the climb. Searchers hours later found several climbing-related items believed to belong to the men, but no sign of them, police said. (AP)



This photo shows the site of a ground collapse in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province on Dec 5. Thirteen workers went missing following a sudden ground collapse at a railway construction site in Shenzhen, local authorities said on Dec 4. (Xinhua)

Rescuers search for 13 missing after ground collapse in China

Rescuers in southern China were searching Thursday for 13 workers missing after a railroad construction site caved in in the business center of Shenzhen.

An emergency management bureau's statement said the collapse occurred at about 11 pm Wednesday at a construction site on a section of the Shenzhen-Jiangmen

Railway in Bao'an district. The line will link Shenzhen, a tech hub, and Jiangmen, both cities in Guangdong province neighboring Hong Kong.

Residents living nearby have been evacuated. An investigation into the cause was underway.

State broadcaster CCTV reported some roads were closed during

the operation.

China has seen collapses of a highway and a bridge that killed dozens of people earlier this year.

The collapses have raised questions about the safety of China's road and bridge infrastructure, which was built rapidly in recent decades. (AP)

Leader calls for deeper cooperation with US territory

Taiwan and Guam should defend freedom in region: Lai

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Dec 5, (Agencies): Taiwan and Guam should work together to defend freedom and democracy in the region, Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said Thursday on a visit to the American territory.

Guam was Lai's second US stop during an ongoing tour of the Pacific Islands, following a visit to Hawaii last weekend. China's government claims Taiwan as its territory and says the self-governing island must come under its control at some point in the future.

Lai, speaking to Guam's legislature, emphasized the shared values and strategic importance of Taiwan and Guam in the Indo-Pacific region.

"Let us together become the crucial force in defending freedom, democracy in the first island chain," he said, referring to a string of islands off the Asian continent that includes Japan, Taiwan and part of the Philippines.

China, which considers Taiwan a renegade province, opposes any official interaction between the island's government and the United States. The US is the main overseas supplier of arms for Taiwan's defense, and has naval and air force bases on Guam.

In Beijing, China's Foreign Ministry announced sanctions on Thursday on 13 American companies and six executives in response to



In this photo released by Taiwan Presidential Office, Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te, (center right), is greeted by Guam Gov Lou Leon Guerrero as he arrives at an airport in Guam on Dec 4. (AP)

recently announced weapons sales to Taiwan. The executives include the president and vice president of Raytheon's Naval Power strategic business unit. The sanctions include a ban on entering China, including Hong Kong and Macao.

Earlier this week, the ministry said it "strongly condemned" US support for Lai's visit to Hawaii and had lodged a complaint with the United States.

A resolution from Guam's legislature welcomed Lai and expressed appreciation for Taiwan's "sig-

nificant contributions to Guam's economy and community," Speaker Therese Terlaje said.

Lai called for deeper cooperation with Guam, highlighting aquaculture, hydroponic agriculture, construction projects and alternative energy as potential areas of partnership.

Lai arrived in Guam on Wednesday night after visits to the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. He was scheduled to fly to Palau, the final stop on his trip.

The three Pacific Island countries

are among 12 governments that recognize Taiwan diplomatically. The rest of the world, including the United States, has official ties with the Chinese government in Beijing.

China urges the United States to stop aiding and abetting "Taiwan independence" separatist forces, foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said.

Lin made the remarks at a regular press briefing when asked to comment on Lai holding a phone call with former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as Lai is on a Pacific trip that includes a stop in Hawaii.

Lin said China firmly opposes any form of official interaction between the United States and the Taiwan region, and firmly opposes any form of US moves to aid or abet "Taiwan independence" separatists and their separatist activities.

The Taiwan question is at the core of China's core interests, and the first red line that cannot be crossed in China-US relations, Lin said.

He urged the US to fully see the separatist nature of Lai and the Democratic Progressive Party authorities, fully understand the grave damage of "Taiwan independence" separatist activities to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, fully abide by the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués, and stop meddling in affairs related to Taiwan, which are China's internal affairs.



In this photo provided by the Philippine National Police Regional Office 9, a policeman checks an area on Oct 18, 2024, where an American identified as Elliot Onil Eastman, from Vermont, was reportedly abducted by gunmen in Sibuco town, Zamboanga del Norte province, southern Philippines. (AP)

Philippine police verify claims of abducted American's death

MANILA, Philippines, Dec 5, (AP): Philippine police officials said Thursday they are checking reports that a kidnapped American died after being shot twice while resisting his Oct. 17 abduction by gunmen in the country's south.

Elliot Onil Eastman, 26, from Vermont, was shot twice with an M16 rifle while trying to fight off his four kidnappers, who posed as police officers, in the coastal town of Sibuco in Zamboanga del Norte province, police said.

The kidnappers dragged him to a

motorboat and sped off, according to earlier police reports.

A massive search for Eastman and his abductors led to the arrest of a number of suspects, but he has not been found. Three suspects were killed in a gunbattle with police in the south last month.

Regional police spokesperson Lt. Col. Ramoncelio Sawan said investigators received information from a relative of one of the suspects that Eastman died due to gunshot wounds in the thigh and abdomen while being taken away by his abductors.



Supporters of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol rally in Seoul, South Korea on Dec 5. (AP)

Parliament moves to vote on impeachments

South Korea leader replaces defense minister

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 5, (AP): South Korea's president replaced his defense minister Thursday as opposition parties moved to impeach both men over the stunning-but-brief imposition of martial law that brought armed troops into Seoul streets.

The Democratic Party and other small opposition parties submitted a joint motion to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol on Wednesday over his martial law declaration the previous night. Martial law lasted about six hours, as the National Assembly quickly voted to overrule the president, forcing his Cabinet to lift it before daybreak Wednesday.

Jo Seoung-lae, spokesperson of the Democratic Party, said it will push for a National Assembly vote on Saturday evening to provide time for ruling party lawmakers to make their decisions on what he described as an "unconstitutional, illegal rebellion or coup."

On Thursday, Yoon's office said he decided to replace Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun with Choi Byung Hyuk, a retired general who is South Korea's ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Vice Defense Minister Kim Seon Ho will be the acting minister until Choi assumes the job after a parliamentary hearing. The hearing is a formality as the president holds the power to appoint ministers outside of the prime minister without the approval of lawmakers.

Yoon's office didn't provide any further comments by him. He hasn't appeared in public since his televised announcement that martial law was lifted.

The opposition parties earlier submitted a motion to impeach Kim, alleging he recommended that Yoon impose martial law. Kim had offered to resign and apologized for causing disruption and concern to the public. Kim said that "all troops who performed duties related to martial law were acting on my instructions, and all responsibility lies with me," according to the Defense Ministry.

On Thursday, the Democrats and other opposition lawmakers voted to impeach Choe Jae-hae, chairman of South Korea's auditing board, and three top public prosecutors, including Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office chief Lee Chang-soo. The four will be suspended until the Constitutional Court rules whether to remove them from office. Members of the Yoon's People Power Party boycotted the votes, leaving the totals far over the threshold to impeach them.

Choe has been accused of softening a review of Yoon's 2022 decision to move the presidential office from a downtown palace to the Defense Ministry compound, which critics saw as inexplicable waste of money. The prosecutors were accused of watering down an investigation involving Yoon's wife, Kim Keon Hee, linked to suspected stock price manipulation.

The Democratic Party's continued attempts to impeach senior government officials and prosecutors have been a major source of conflict with Yoon, who during his martial law announcement accused the opposition of "anti-state activities" and "paralyzing the government."

Mexican troops seize record fentanyl haul in northern Sinaloa state

MEXICO CITY, Dec 5, (AP): Mexican soldiers and marines have seized over a ton of fentanyl pills in two raids in the north, with officials calling it the biggest catch of the synthetic opioid in the country's history.

The raids came after a sharp drop in fentanyl seizures in Mexico earlier this year, and days after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump threatened to impose 25% tariffs on products from Canada and Mexico unless those countries cracked down on the flow of migrants and drugs across the border.

Experts say the timing may not be a coincidence.

"It is clear that the Mexican government has been managing the timing of fentanyl seizures," said security analyst David Saucedo. "But under the pressure by Donald Trump, it appears President Claudia Sheinbaum's administration is willing to increase the capture of drug traffickers and drug seizures that Washington is demanding."

Saucedo said it's clear the Mexican government "doesn't see fentanyl as one of its own problems, and fighting it isn't its priority." He added there would only be big busts "when there is pressure from Washington."

Mexico's top security official said soldiers and marines late Tuesday spotted two men carrying guns in the northern state of Sinaloa, home to the drug cartel of the same name.

They chased the men, who ran into two houses. In one house soldiers found about 660 pounds (300 kilograms) of fentanyl, and in the other a truck packed with about



Mexican military and police patrol in Culiacan, Sinaloa state, Mexico on Jan 6, 2023. (AP)

1,750 pounds (800 kilograms) of the drug, mostly in pill form.

"In Sinaloa, we achieved the biggest seizure in history of fentanyl," Public Safety Secretary Omar Garcia Harfuch wrote in his social media accounts. Several guns were also seized and two men were arrested.

Africa

Journo abducted in Guinea:

An investigative journalist was abducted by men in security forces uniforms in Guinea's capital, his wife and his lawyer told reporters Wednesday, as the military regime continues to tighten its grip on independent media.

Habib Marouane Kamara, the editor-in-chief of the online investigative outlet lerevelateur224.com, was headed to meet with a businessman and a friend in Conakry on Tuesday evening, his wife, Mariama Lamarana Diallo, told reporters Wednesday in the city.

Diallo said that, according to the friend who was with her husband, they were stopped by men wearing security forces uniforms in a pickup.

The policemen broke the rear windshield and took Kamara out of the vehicle by force, the friend said, an account which was corroborated to The Associated Press by a witness who asked not to be named for fear of repercussions.

The men beat Kamara with batons until he fainted, and then picked him up and threw

him in their truck, and drove off, Diallo said. Kamara's friend was also forced into the police vehicle, but was then released and has gone into hiding.

Kamara's wife and his lawyer, Salifou Beavogui, said they have not heard from Kamara since yesterday. (AP)



Kamara

Kamara's wife and his lawyer, Salifou Beavogui, said they have not heard from Kamara since yesterday. (AP)

3 illegal miners killed: Police said on Wednesday that three illegal miners died in an abandoned mine in Sabie, Nelspruit, capital of Mpumalanga Province in northeastern South Africa.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) in Mpumalanga confirmed that six miners, including two foreign nationals, have been rescued, while 150 remain trapped underground.

This was discovered on Tuesday afternoon as members of a security company were patrolling the area when they encountered four men who appeared to be fleeing the scene. (Xinhua)

Market Movements				5-02-2024			
		Change	Closing pts			Change	Closing pts
↑ JAPAN	- Nikkei 225	+0.30	39,395.60	↓ PHILIPPINES	- PSEI	-0.58	6,690.77
	PAKISTAN - KSE 100	+3.01	108,310.50		DUBAI - DFMGI	-0.69	4,820.37
	SAUDI - TASI	+0.38	11,931.85				

Business

Recognized for leading innovation in the workplace

Zain Group and ZainTECH scoop three awards at Fast Company Middle East Innovation Awards 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has scooped up three prestigious accolades at the Fast Company Middle East Awards 2024 – one for being the “Most Innovative Workplace” for Zain’s groupwide ‘Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (IDE) program, the other two for ZainTECH as the ‘Most Innovative AI and Data Science’ Companies, as well as the ‘Most Innovative Enterprise’ company regionally.

These accolades shine a spotlight on Zain’s game-changing innovation within the ICT industry and across the region that are driving impactful operational and strategic outcomes.

The awards were presented at an exclusive event in Dubai, where over 200 pioneers, visionary entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, and influential business leaders gathered to celebrate the best in innovation. This year’s gathering highlighted how creativity

fuels transformation, with companies making bold, future-defining decisions shaping a better tomorrow.

Ravi Raman, Publisher of Fast Company Middle East said, “The growth of the Most Innovative Companies list in the Middle East indicates how companies in the region like Zain are focusing on innovation, using technology and strategy in all aspects of the business. It is a testament to the leadership and a highly conscious consumer base.”

More on IDE

As a people-first business, to further its organizational mission and ambitious business targets, Zain introduced its Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (IDE) office in 2017, as the first telecom entity in the region to have established an IDE department aiming to create an inclusive workplace where all employees feel valued and empowered, regardless of gender, disability, age, or background.

To make our people happier and more productive, the IDE strategy



Fast-Company-Awards2024

focuses on embracing various programs that leverage Zain’s employees’ strengths and diversity. This is in alignment with the company’s ‘4Sight’

corporate strategy that recognizes the critical nature of focusing on enhancing personal and professional development and positioning Zain as a global

force for positive change through six strategic programs: 1. IDEU in partnership with Spain’s IE University; 2. WE, gender diversity initiative; 3. WE ABLE, disability inclusion program; 4. ZY, youth empowerment program; 5. ZAINIAC, internal innovation platform; 6. BE WELL, employee well-being program

More on ZainTECH

As the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, with respect to the AI and Data Science accolade, ZainTECH is leading innovation in this domain regionally, combining advanced technology, AI, and analytics to provide precise decision-making tools and ensure secure, responsible data use. Ijaba.AI, the company’s AI-powered tool, extracts tailored information and expert opinions, thereby automating labor intensive tasks through AI and data science, helping organizations accelerate data monetization and discover new ways to complex business challenges.

ZainTECH also runs a data lab which serves as a multidisciplinary and collaborative innovative hub for data experimentation, bringing together passionate minds with innovative ideas and an ecosystem of data alliances and partnerships promoting the effective, secure, and responsible use of data.

The Enterprise category win for ZainTECH was motivated by the company’s expanded portfolio of cloud, cybersecurity, big data and AI, software licensing, drones and robotics, modern infrastructure, and digital solutions, available across eight markets regionally. The company’s ICT Hub in Dubai Internet City, combined with the establishment of its physical points of presence in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan and Bahrain are turning ZainTECH into a reference for quality enterprise services delivery, regionally. These developments are also in line with ZainTECH’s firm commitment to ESG, helping ensure sustainable digital transformation.

Kuwait and Saudi sign pact to eliminate double taxation and boost investments

Riyadh hosts third Zakat, Tax, and Customs conference

RIYADH, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Nora Al-Fassam and her Saudi counterpart Mohammad Al-Jadaan signed an agreement aimed at avoiding double taxation and enhancing investment cooperation, during the third edition of the “Zakat, Tax, and Customs” conference held in Riyadh.

The agreement aims at encouraging investments by easing off taxation and creating equal opportunities for investors.

The third edition of the “Zakat, Tax, and Customs” conference kicked off today, under the theme “Shaping the Future for a Sustainable Economy and Enhanced Security”. With the participation of Kuwaiti Minister of Finance

and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Engineer Noora Al-Fusam, along with a selection of officials and experts from around the world.

In his speech at the conference, which is organized by the Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority in Saudi Arabia and will continue until December 5, Saudi Minister of Finance Mohammad Al-Jadaan stated that the conference contributes to enhancing international cooperation to address tax and customs challenges, aiming to support economic growth and exchange expertise, helping everyone achieve economic recovery.

Al-Jadaan added that Saudi has made significant progress in achieving the initiatives and goals of Saudi Vision 2030, with the Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority playing an active role in achieving these targets.

He mentioned that the Authority achieved a 99.35% score in the United Nations Digital Government Index,



Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Nora Al-Fassam and her Saudi counterpart Mohammad Al-Jadaan.

thanks to the development of its digital services and the implementation of more than 350 requirements according

to this index.

For his part, the Governor of the Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority,

Suhail Abanmi, stated that the Authority aims, through this conference, to strengthen local, regional, and international efforts toward building advanced zakat, tax, and customs systems that contribute to enhancing global economic growth and addressing security and economic challenges.

Abanmi noted that the conference will focus on several topics, including the role of zakat as a fundamental pillar for building cooperative societies. Tax and customs policies and discussions will also receive special attention during the conference.

The first day of the conference includes a series of panel discussions featuring many ministers, experts, and leaders, along with a concurrent exhibition that includes about 90 local, regional, and international entities. Additionally, over 70 workshops will be held, and several agreements and memorandums of understanding will be signed.

CAS reports drop in DPPI by 1.4 pc

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) reported a decrease in the domestic producer price index by 1.4 percent during the third quarter of 2024, reaching 110.2 points compared to the previous quarter, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decline was largely due to a 3.4 percent drop in the extractive industries group, primarily driven by a decrease in oil extraction prices.

However, the manufacturing industries group saw a 1.4 percent increase in its index, thanks to a 1.9 percent rise in the oil refining sector.

When comparing the third quarter of 2024 with the same period in 2023, the producer price index decreased by 10.2 percent.

This drop was again attributed to a 10.3 percent reduction in the extractive industry group, primarily driven by lower oil extraction prices.

Two programs parts of Kafa’a

KIBS honors graduates of Risk Management Leaders Program’s third cohort and Certified Sharia Auditor Program’s fifth cohort

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Under the patronage of the Central Bank of Kuwait’s (CBK) Governor and Chairman of the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS), Mr. Basel A. Al-Haroon, Ms. Rana A. Al-Nibari, Director General of the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) honored the Risk Management Leaders Program’s third graduating cohort and Certified Sharia Auditor Program’s fifth graduating cohort today on Wednesday, December 4, 2024.

These two programs are parts of Kafa’a, an initiative launched by CBK in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks and the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies with the aim to create a pipeline of qualified nationals able to fill leadership positions in major economic, financial and banking institutions.

Risk Management Leaders Program

The Risk Management Leaders Program took place from January 28 to June 14, 2024, across four well-structured phases. The first two phases, held in Kuwait, featured a series of training sessions and interactive lectures on risk management. These were conducted in collaboration with the prestigious London Institute of Banking and Finance (LIBF) and the Professional Risk Managers’ International Association (PRMIA), allowing participants to earn accredited and specialized certificates in risk management. Local and international expert lecturers led the training, offering participants valuable insights and expertise.

The third phase required participants to submit case studies and graduation projects. This was followed by the fourth and final phase, where participants engaged in a two-week intensive hands-on field training at the Centre for Governance, Risk and Regulations at LIBF. The 14 trainees gained practical experience, attended workshops, participated in interactive educational sessions, and conducted field visits to renowned financial institutions in the UK, equipping them with the professional competencies



Certified Sharia Auditor Certification Program



Risk Management Leaders Program

needed in the field of risk management.

Certified Sharia Auditor Program

As for the Certified Sharia Auditor Program, it was held from February 5 until May 9, 2024. 24 Participants from different sectors graduated from this program. This program is designed to strengthen governance in Sharia supervision within Islamic banks in Kuwait, reinforcing the im-

portance of Sharia auditing in the banking sector. Reflecting the need for enhanced expertise in this field, the program focuses on improving the capabilities of Sharia audit personnel by offering both scientific and professional training.

The program’s distinguishing feature is its focus on the practical aspects of Sharia auditing, with half of the training hours dedicated to Sharia audit procedures, while the remain-

ing time dedicated to foundational knowledge and Sharia standards in the Islamic financial industry. This comprehensive certification program, prepared with the latest scientific materials and best practices, is accredited by the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority and the Kuwait Center for Islamic Economy.

Director General’s Remarks

Ms. Rana A. Al-Nibari, Director General of KIBS, congratulated the graduates during her speech and extended her gratitude to the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Mr. Basel A. Al-Haroon, and the Board of Directors for their continuous support. She also thanked the HR directors of participating banks for their commitment to the success of these programs.

Kafa’a Initiative

These programs are part of the broader Kafa’a initiative, a strategic effort aimed at developing highly skilled national talents. The initiative equips participants with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the ever-evolving financial and banking sectors, ensuring they are well-prepared for the demands of the labor market.

Digital Commerce ‘vital’ sector, part of GDP

Al-Ajeel launches ‘Digital Trade Empowerment Project – Phase I’

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Minister of Commerce and Industry, Khalifa Al-Ajeel, has launched the “Digital Trade Empowerment Project – Phase One,” to regulate the digital trade, protect consumer rights and foster growth in the digital trade sector.

The project outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges of the current business environment, which, despite its commercial activity, lacks the necessary organization to protect consumers and enable sector growth.

The draft law, unveiled at the Jaber Cultural Center, introduces key provisions, including the obligation for service providers to adopt electronic payment options approved by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

It also emphasizes the use of advanced technologies like Blockchain, smart contracts, and artificial intelligence to enhance digital commerce efficiency. Additionally, the law mandates communication and product information to be available in Arabic, ensuring clarity in purchasing and payment processes.

Other significant provisions include:

■ Establishing commercial and digital registers for e-stores and unregistered professionals.

■ Protecting consumer data and ensuring timely reporting of security breaches.

■ Implementing efficient mechanisms for managing complaints and resolving disputes.

■ Introducing a system to resolve disputes swiftly through specialized committees, reducing court burdens and Regulating influencer advertising to prevent misleading promotion and ensure compliance with anti-money laundering standards.

The project also introduces various new mechanisms to further develop Kuwait’s digital economy, such as:

■ Intellectual Property Protection – Safeguarding digital content and preventing unauthorized use.

■ Transparency in Logistics Services – Ensuring safety and transparency in delivery and logistics opera-



KUNA photo Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel speaks during the visual presentation organized by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

tions and Consumer Rights in Delayed Deliveries – Allowing consumers to terminate contracts and reclaim payments if deliveries exceed a 15-day delay.

Minister Al-Ajeel outlined the stages of the law’s preparation, with feedback from the business community due by December 18.

The law is expected to be reviewed by the Council of Ministers in March 2025, with activation set for later in the year.

Additionally, the Minister highlighted the Ministry’s recent regulatory achievements, such as:

■ Streamlining the governance of limited liability companies

■ Introducing beneficial ownership disclosure requirements

■ Restricting cash transactions to combat money laundering.

■ Overhauling construction support to prioritize owners and manufacturers.

■ Merging real estate brokerage and appraisal services to improve market accuracy.

■ Launching an electronic real estate broker system, reducing processing times by 45 working days.

These measures aim to enhance the regulatory environment and facilitate smoother business operations in Kuwait.

Bank’s focus on technological development emphasized

Kuwait Finance House participates in NEXUS 2024 – Kuwait



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar, surrounded by Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, Tariq Al-Ajeel and the Bayt.com team



Review of your home services to the Minister of Communications.



Sameh El Meligy, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh, Tarek El Ajeel and the Baitak team at the Baitak pavilion at the conference.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: KFH Deputy General Manager Public Relations and Media, Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH’s participation in NEXUS 2024, a premier technology and innovation event in Kuwait, un-

derscores the bank’s commitment to and support for initiatives and events promoting technological advancement and innovation. He highlighted KFH’s significant focus on technological development, digitization, and

cybersecurity, recognizing the crucial role of technology and digital content creation in modern life. Al-Ruwaieh emphasized that KFH’s participation in NEXUS-Kuwait underscores its pioneer-

ing role in digital transformation, offering secure, competitive, and sustainable digital solutions to meet the evolving needs of customers and society. These efforts align with the global trend of leveraging modern technology in banking.

He noted that KFH’s participation in NEXUS aligns with its commitment to supporting digital transformation, innovation, and technology. While NEXUS - Kuwait brings together top tech experts from

both the public and private sectors to share experiences and discuss best technological practices, Al-Ruwaieh said that participating in such initiatives helps foster a culture of innovation and digital development.

Featured events and awareness messages

KFH concludes Movember campaign to promote men’s health awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) concluded its comprehensive Movember campaign to raise awareness of men’s health and encourage preventive measures throughout November. This initiative aligns with the bank’s commitment to promoting health awareness in the community, reinforcing KFH’s CSR leadership, and building on the awareness campaigns organized by KFH throughout the year. The campaign included various comprehensive initiatives and activities. These included illuminating the main KFH building in blue in November and organizing numerous employee

awareness activities, such as health tips. Additionally, KFH offered discounts and promotions from renowned stores in various fields, including gyms, healthy food providers, dental clinics, supplement and nutrition stores, and physical therapy centers, among others. The campaign also featured numerous sporting events, most notably the Padel championship and the Strength Challenge, both organized at KFHZone in



Faisal Al-Sareea



Movember awareness campaign. Winter Wonderland. These activities aim to encourage the public to adopt a healthy lifestyle through sports, while KFH has published numerous awareness videos and posts on its social media accounts and channels under the

brand name KFH Group, in collaboration with doctors and experts. KFH organized a special campaign to raise awareness of prostate cancer, offering tips on healthy living and encouraging early examinations for male employees. Similar to the breast cancer awareness campaign, which primarily targets women, the global Movember campaign, held annually in November, aims to raise awareness of men’s health issues. It’s worth noting that KFH, aligned with its CSR strategy, has a proven track record of supporting the health sector. This support extends to sponsoring various health-related initia-



Movember Padel Championship.

tives, such as diabetes awareness events, first aid courses, and blood donation campaigns,

as well as numerous other campaigns aimed at preventing a variety of diseases.

Kuwait supports stability of global oil market, says Minister Al-Roumi

OPEC+ alliance putting off production increase

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait is keen on supporting the stability of the global oil market, which is important to achieve balance between supply and demand, said Minister of Oil, Tareq Al-Roumi on Thursday. This affirmation came while the minister headed the delegation of the State of Kuwait participating in the 57th meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) and the 38th Ministerial Meeting of the OPEC+ group, held via video conference. The delegation included OPEC Governor -- State of Kuwait, Mohammad Al-Shatti, and Kuwait’s National Representative to OPEC, Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Salem Al-Hamoud Al-Sabah. In a press statement issued by the Ministry of Oil, the Minister emphasized Kuwait’s pivotal role in supporting the stability of global oil markets. He highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation among producing countries to achieve a balance between supply and demand, ensuring the sustainability of global economic growth. The Minister added, “The two meetings represent an important opportunity to review market developments and discuss the best ways to address current challenges by intensifying joint efforts between OPEC members and Non- OPEC producing countries.” Al-Roumi praised the decision made by Kuwait and several other producing countries to extend the voluntary production cut until the end of March 2025, describing it as a positive step that reflects the commitment of producing nations to their responsibilities toward market stability. Al-Roumi affirmed that Kuwait supported efforts to enhance market stability, emphasizing the strategic role played by the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee in monitoring compliance with production cut decisions, compensation programs, and achieving the goals of the OPEC+ partnership. The Minister of Oil concluded his statement by emphasizing that Kuwait would continue its commitments and close cooperation within OPEC+ to achieve sustainable stability in the global market. Meanwhile, eight members of the OPEC+ alliance of oil exporting countries decided Thursday to put off increasing oil production as they face weaker than expected demand and competing production from non-allied countries - factors that could keep oil prices stagnant into next year. The OPEC+ members decided at an online meeting to postpone production increases that had been scheduled to take effect Jan. 1. The plan had been to start gradually restoring 2.2 million barrels per day over the course of 2025. That process will now be pushed back to April 1, 2025 and production increases will gradually take place over 18 months until October 2026. OPEC+, which includes Saudi Arabia as the dominant member of the OPEC

producers’ cartel, and Russia as the leading non-OPEC member in the 22-country alliance, have imposed several sets of cuts to agreed output to support prices. Oil prices have been slack due to weaker than expected demand from China as well as increased production from countries like Brazil and Argentina that aren’t in OPEC+. Among the beneficiaries of the current state of the oil market are U.S. motorists, who have seen gasoline prices fall to their lowest in 2 1/2 years to near \$3 a gallon. Oil analysts have been busy reducing their estimates for demand for next year, meaning that OPEC+ could remain in a bind well into 2025. The Saudis need oil revenue to carry out Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman’s ambitious plans to diversify his country’s economy, including the development of Neom, a \$500 billion futuristic city in the desert. For Russia, oil export revenues are a key pillar of state finances and funding for the war against Ukraine. Holding back production risks losing market share. Yet increasing production and sales could lower prices in a global economy that analysts say is already well supplied with oil. U.S. oil has been stuck around \$70 per barrel for weeks and traded little changed at \$68.75 on Thursday after the announcement, down from \$80 in August. International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$72.57 per barrel, down from around \$80 in July. One result of those slack prices is that U.S. average pump prices for gasoline fell to \$3.03 a gallon this week, the lowest since May, 2021 and well down from their record peak of \$5.02 from June, 2022, according to motoring club AAA. Thirty-one U.S. states now have average gas prices below \$3 a gallon. U.S. oil price levels of \$70 or less “are great for consumers,” said AAA spokesman Andrew Gross. Crude oil makes up about half the price of a gallon of gasoline, making crude the key factor on top of distribution costs and taxes. Motorists in Europe see far smaller fluctuations because taxes make up a much bigger chunk of the cost. OPEC has cut its forecast for 2025 demand growth to 1.54 million barrels per day, from 1.85 million barrels per day in July. That is at the high end of estimates compared to those from the International Energy Agency at 990,000 barrels per day, U.S. Energy Information Administration at 1.22 million and energy intelligence firm Rystad Energy at 1.1 million. Analysts at Commerzbank foresee Brent prices averaging \$75 per barrel in the first quarter of next year and \$80 for the remaining three quarters. In the United States, Donald Trump’s return to the White House will likely lead to more fossil fuel production. Not only has the President-elect campaigned on more drilling, but his Treasury secretary nominee Scott Bessent has put together an economic plan with the goal of increasing domestic oil production by the equivalent of 3 million barrels a day. Bessent has indicated that the additional oil production would reduce inflationary pressures for U.S. consumers. But the Trump team has not fully outlined why oil producers would ramp up supplies and lower prices to levels that could hurt their profits.

GCC chief: Gulf-Jordan trade exchange hits USD 36 bln

AMMAN, Dec 5, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jasem Al-Budaiwi said that GCC-Jordanian trade exchange had edged up to over USD 36 billion between 2020 and 2023. Al-Budaiwi announced the figure during a Gulf-Jordanian investment conference, organized by the Jordan Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of GCC Chambers, with Kuwaiti Ambassador in Jordan Hamad Al-Marri attending. He added that the GCC member countries seek to promote trade facilitation and spur potential to develop and maximize trade exchange and bolster cooperation and investment in service trade, e-commerce, financial technology, tourism and digital trade. Jordanian Investment Minister Mothanna Gharaibeh said that his country is keen on giving Gulf investment

due care, and facilitate and stimulate them in Jordan, particularly regarding projects of green hydrogen, water, transport, fun cities and highly-value industries. He added that Gulf investments make up around 40 percent of Jordan’s overall foreign direct investments covering such strategic sectors as industry, information technology, energy, farming, tourism and financial services. For his part, Chairman of the Federation of GCC Chambers Faisal Al-Rawas said service trade plays a significant role in bilateral relations between the GCC member countries and Jordan, citing Gulf tourists and students in Jordan annually. He added that more than 780,000 Jordanians are working in the GCC countries, sending their homeland money transfers worth more than USD 3.3 billion every year.

Bank organizes various activities for employees

NBK marks ‘International Fraud Awareness Week,’ intensifies financial awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: As part of its ongoing efforts to promote financial and fraud risk awareness, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) marked the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)’s annual International Fraud Awareness Week by organizing various activities and initiatives for employees to highlight the importance of fraud prevention strategies and protecting individuals and companies from this ever-evolving threat. In this context, NBK launched an exclusive competition for employees on its internal Instagram account related to fraud awareness, offering a cash prize to encourage participation and deepen understanding of fraud prevention strategies. In addition, Digital Communications team displayed fraud prevention tips on digital screens across NBK Headquarters to reinforce key messages and ensure continuous visibility for all employees. The team also conducted an interactive social experiment to test employees’ knowledge about fraud, which received impressive results showing all NBK employees are well-informed about fraud-related issues. Such initiatives and activities reflect NBK’s dedication to empowering its employees and educating them on the latest common fraud scams. This also aligns with supporting the global efforts to raise financial awareness to combat all types of fraud, promote economic stability, and strengthen trust in the banking sector. NBK firmly believes that awareness is the key to combating fraud. Therefore, it aims to continuously enhance financial literacy and protect customers from fraud by sharing educational materials and awareness content across all its social media plat-



Fraud awareness flyer

forms and digital channels. By empowering employees with the necessary knowledge, the bank strives to create a secure banking environment for both employees and customers. This is particularly instrumental in view of the fast-paced technological advancements including AI, which resulted in sophisticated fraud tactics. NBK employs its strong customer communication capabilities as well as all its sector-leading digital platforms to maximize the reach of the “Let’s Be Aware” campaign’s objectives among the public. It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key promoter and partner in all CBK’s campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among all sectors. As the leading financial institution, the bank frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector.

Bursa closes with modest gains across all indices

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Thursday’s trading session on a positive note, with all indices showing slight gains. The general index climbed 11.78 points, or 0.16 percent, to close at 7,289.24 points. Trading volume was robust, with 348.3 million shares changing hands through 17,350 cash transactions, valued at KWD 58.7 million (USD 190.9 million).

The main market index advanced 10.14 points, or 0.15 percent, reaching 6,658.53 points. It saw 257.4 million shares traded through 10,648 cash transactions, worth KWD 28.6 million (USD 93 million). Similarly, the premier market index rose 12.78 points, or 0.16 percent, to 7,808.37 points, with 90.8 million shares traded through 6,702 transactions, valued at KWD 30.1 million (USD 97.9 million).

Ambassador: Kuwaiti investments in Jordan reaches \$20 billion

‘Jordan’s economy enjoys mature, stimulating investment climate’

AMMAN, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan, Hamad Al-Marri, said , Kuwaiti investments in Jordan, which have reached approximately USD 20 billion, primarily contribute to the prosperity of the Jordanian economy, which enjoys a mature and stimulating investment climate. This remark came in a statement by Ambassador Al-Marri to KUNA following his chairing of the Kuwaiti delegation participating in the First Gulf-Jordan Investment Conference, which was inaugurated Wednesday, organized by the Jordan Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Chambers, under the patronage King Abdullah II of Jordan. “Jordan’s secure investment environment is a key advantage that



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Marri participating in the Gulf-Jordanian Investment Conference.

has enabled investors and companies to expand their businesses in recent years and establish new investments, driving the country’s development and creating more opportunities,” he said.

The ambassador highlighted the Kuwaiti investments in Jordan that are largest and most diverse among the GCC countries, spanning various sectors, including telecommunications, banking, industry, and

mining, with a total value exceeding USD 20 billion. He also expressed Kuwait’s pride in its strong ties with Jordan, stressing the importance of enhancing these relations in all areas, particularly in investment, to elevate the level of cooperation in line with the aspirations of the leaderships of both nations. Ambassador Al-Marri expressed hope that the conference would help build strong partnerships between the private sectors of the GCC and Jordan, achieving the desired outcomes for the integrated development of the Arab economy. The conference includes specialized working sessions related to sectors where Jordan holds particular strengths, such as tourism, information technology, mining, creative industries, and energy.



LKG children dazzle the audience with their musical fiesta.

Event designed to foster skills in a fun and engaging way

LKG Fiesta (2024-25): A musical and mystical euphoria

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 5: FAIPS Kindergarten provides an environment where children expand their abilities to learn, organize information, and work collaboratively through play-based methods. The LKG Fiesta is one such event designed to foster these skills in a fun and engaging way.

On November 27, 2024, the FAIPS Auditorium came alive with energy and creativity as the LKG Fiesta unfolded. With the spirit of "HAKUNA MATA-TA! No worries for the rest of the days," the little ones showcased their immense talents. The event commenced with the recital of the Holy Quran and the Kuwait National Anthem, followed by a warm address from FAIPS Principal Mr. Ravi Ayanoli. He spoke about the importance of strengthening the parent-teacher relationship and emphasized the holistic development of the child. Mr. Ayanoli also welcomed the distinguished guests: The Chief Guest, H.E. NurlanTokobaev, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the State of Kuwait, and Dr. Shaima Al-Ansari, Educational Activity Supervi-



Photos from the event.

sor, Ministry of Education.

The morning's festivities kicked off with an array of breathtaking performances. The LKG children dazzled the audience with their musical fiesta, beginning with a rendition of "Top of the World" by the American pop duo, The Carpenters. Their adorable dance moves and creative use of

stick props captured the hearts of everyone present.

The next performance, "The Marching Song," symbolized unity in learning while instilling a sense of discipline in the young performers. Their synchronized steps were a visual delight. The children continued to impress with a lyrical medley, where their



The excitement didn't stop there. A Bollywood mashup medley followed, featuring a captivating dance performance that set the stage on fire. This was followed by a performance to "Hall of Fame," a song by the Irish pop-rock band The Script, before wrapping up with a high-energy performance to "The Final Countdown" by the Swedish rock band Europe.

As the event neared its conclusion, the children performed a Hindi medley, dazzling the audience with their creative formations and cheerful dance moves. The grand finale saw the little ones bidding farewell to the audience with a joyous performance to "HakunaMatata" and "So Long, Farewell."

KG Headmistress, Mrs. Bharti Tiwari, concluded the event with a vote of thanks, expressing her heartfelt gratitude to the Chief Guests, Principal, staff, parents, and management for their unwavering support. The LKG Fiesta was a grand success, leaving both guests and parents in awe of the children's incredible performances.

Thanima Kuwait – Tug of War Championship and Pearl of the School Award ceremony set

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The 18th National Tug of War Championship, organized by Thanima Kuwait for the Sanselia Ever Rolling Trophy, will take place on December 6th, Friday, at the Open Flood Light Stadium, Abbasia Indian Central School from 12:00 noon until 8:00 pm, announced Onathanima Convener Dilip DK. The venue, named Raju Zakaria Nagar in honor of the late Raju Zakaria, a former member of Thanima, will be inaugurated for the audience by the Chief Guest, Suresh Karthik, a former athlete and Kuwaiti businessman. The organizers revealed that South African Ambassador Dr. Manelisi P. Genge will serve as the distinguished guest at the general meeting.

Onathanima Convener Dileep D.K., Program Convener Babuji Bathari, Thanima Office Secretary Jinu K Abraham, Thanima General Convener Jojimon Thomas, Thanima Treasurer Rana Varghese, Onathanima Joint Convener Kumar Trithala, and Onathanima Finance Convenor Shaji Varghese were present at the press conference.

On that day, the Dr. Abdul Kalam Pearl of the School Award will be presented to students excelling in both academic and extracurricular subjects from 26 Indian schools in Kuwait.

This year is notable because, for the first time, tug-of-war competitors from various regions of the globe are taking part in a competition featuring over 20 teams that have been training for months are rotating.

Athletes chosen from the tag-of-war Federation of India-approved events can represent as NRI Kuwait team in national contests taking place in India. Trophies that continuously roll and stand 5-6 feet tall are distinctive to Thanima Tug of War.

All sports enthusiasts are welcome to enjoy the completely free tug of war contests



Photos during the press conference.

KFAS & KU's College of Science host 'AI & Cybersecurity' event

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), in collaboration with the College of Science at Kuwait University, organized the "AI & Cybersecurity" event as part of the Science Month activities held by KFAS.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the event witnessed the participation of various entities, institutions, and departments at Kuwait University concerned with artificial intelligence, as well as several companies specialized in the field of cybersecurity.

A series of scientific workshops and lectures were presented during the exhibition with the aim of enhancing the skills of students and participants in the field of cybersecurity.

The sessions focused on the latest technologies and applications related

to managing advanced cyber attacks, and the importance of protecting data, networks, and systems from cyber threats, and managing cyber risks.

In his speech during the honoring ceremony, the acting Dean of the College of Science Dr. Mohammed Hussein bin Sabt explained that the event aimed to highlight the role of the 4th Industrial Revolution, particularly in the fields of computer science and its link with other scientific disciplines.

He affirmed the importance of artificial intelligence and digital transformation, showcasing the latest developments in these fields and their impact on society, while also presenting technologies and methods for protecting devices and networks from cyber threats.

KIB announces winners of Al Dirwaza account's monthly and weekly draw

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winners of the monthly and weekly draw held under the Al Dirwaza account's 2024 campaign, which is distinguished by the highest number of winners throughout the year.

The monthly and weekly draw, based on customers' November's deposits, recently took place in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank.

Ali Mohammad Ali Altheeban, Sheikah Hammoud Obaid Saeed, were named the lucky winners in the monthly draw, with each customer walking away with a prize of KD 5,000.

As for the weekly draw, the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Kamel Ismael Jaber, Afaf Abdulrahman Barahim Alhajri, Abdulmajid Abdulhay Abdullah, Amar Humoud Naser Almusallam, Jassim Mohammed Awaad Alshammari, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Naser Saleh Jaber Alenezi, Nadia Shohdy Gabra Morgan, Khadeejah Hussain Ahmad Falah, Fatemah Hamad Kareem Saeed, Sameerah Abdullah Saleh Alhamad, Mohammad Hamed Hussain Alali, Meshal Ali Salman Alosaimi.

It serves to note that Al Dirwaza account is a savings account for individual customers, based on the Wakala investment principle, launched by KIB as one of its banking products for individuals.

The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward.

The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the weekly, monthly and annual draws on the condition of main-



KIB flyer

taining at least KD 100 in their account.

For the weekly and monthly draws, each KD 1 that has completed a full month's cycle in the account will count for one chance, and chances are calculated based on the lowest monthly balance preceding the draw. As for the mega draw, chances are calculated for each KD 1 that completes a two-month cycle in the account – based on the lowest two monthly balances prior to the draw.

Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Supervisory Board.

Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account.

To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.

India-Kuwait Startup Ecosystem Conference to gather top minds

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait is organizing the India-Kuwait Startup Ecosystem Conference on Sunday, Dec 8.

The registration for the event will happen from 10.30 am-11:00 am and the event will start at 11:00 am and will last until 12.30 pm at the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) in Mishref.

Venue: GUST

This conference will bring together prominent speakers and thought leaders from the startup ecosystems of both India and Kuwait, sharing their

success stories, experiences, and insights on fostering collaboration between the two countries.

The Key highlights will include:
- Perspectives on the growth and challenges faced by startups in India and Kuwait.

- Insights into collaboration opportunities for Indian and Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.
- A discussion on how synergies between both nations can drive innovation and mutual growth.

This important event will showcase the vibrant startup landscapes of both India and Kuwait.



Photo from the event.

Heritage

Crafting the future: Tradition meets innovation

The confluence of two textile traditions from Kuwait and India

By Chaitali B. Roy

Special to the Arab Times

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: From Nov 23 to Nov 26, Sadu House and Kashmir Loom, two creative powerhouses from Kuwait and India, came together to blend age-old traditional weaving craftsmanship from Kashmir with contemporary expressions of the ancient craft of sadu weaving, creating a collection that celebrates the best in both cultures. The event also featured a three-day workshop by a Kashmir Loom craftsman, who demonstrated the Ari embroidery technique, a tradition popular in Kashmir.

Like Sadu House, Kashmir Loom, founded by Jenny Housego and Asaf Ali, preserves and conserves Kashmir's textile heritage by infusing a touch of the contemporary into the embroidered shawls. Jenny Housego is a noted textile historian, and Asaf Ali describes her as a mentor and guru, emphasising her significant influence on the organisation. "Jenny Housego lives in Delhi. India is her home. She is the inspiration behind Kashmir Loom. She loves India, Indian craft and the artisans. Kashmir Loom is her inspiration. She is my mentor and guru."

On the Nov 23, Ali's presentation highlighted the importance of innovation in preserving and conserving textile heritage. Asaf Ali spoke of leveraging digital technologies, such as printing and digitalisation, to enhance traditional embroidery techniques while respecting the artisans' work. "For large embroidered pieces, we used digital printing to create the base, which saved time compared to the traditional approach," said Ali.

Designs

They then combined this with the traditional embroidery techniques to create the final design. Kashmir Loom has been working on recreating old traditional Kashmiri shawl designs found in museums. By digitizing and studying these historical designs, they translate them into new embroidered pieces while respecting the original craftsmanship. "We are trying to preserve what we can of our heritage, culture, skills, and craft. We are recreating lots of past examples, giving it a new dimension. We still have the best craftsmen who weave and do fine embroidery. I am very optimistic about the future." Ali expressed optimism about the future of traditional crafts in India, citing the enthusiasm of young people and the country's large number of artisans. Speaking of the future of traditional crafts in India, he said, "In India, we don't see that. We have a lot of young people who are interested in art and craft. We have the highest number of artisans in the world. I don't have any fears about our crafts dying."

During Asaf Ali's last visit to Kuwait, Sheikhha Altaf Al Sabah, founder of Sadu House, anthropologist and a person whose whole life is dedicated to cultural exchange and continuity, suggested a collaboration resulting in this exhibition. "Sheikhha Altaf's brilliance got us here," said Asaf Ali. "She suggested we collaborate,



Sheikhha Altaf Al Sabah with Asaf Ali, co-founder of Kashmir Loom.

which motivated us to think differently and push ourselves," said Ali. Keeping within the traditional repertoire, artisans from Kashmir Loom worked on easily recognisable sadu patterns, giving them form and texture with the help of traditional Kashmiri embroidery.

In his presentation, Asaf Ali detailed the

conventional and innovative processes in Kashmir embroidery and textile crafting. To create sadu-inspired pieces, Indian artisans innovated using tie-dyed threads and new embroidery techniques. "We took inspiration from Sadu and tried to translate them into shawls and other items in our way," said Ali. The team

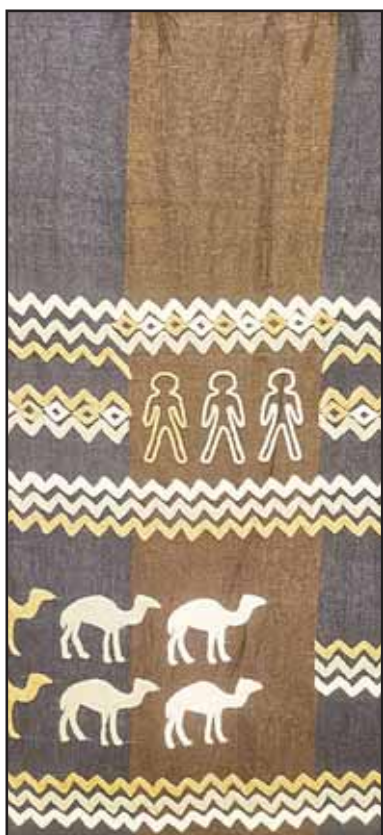
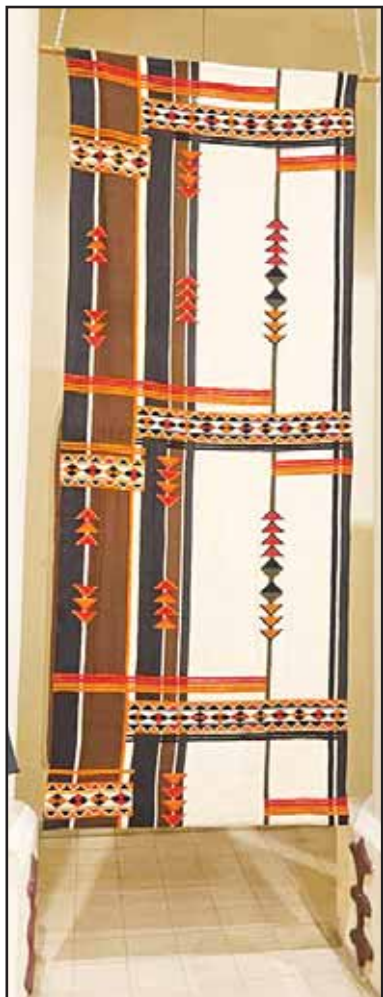
from Kashmir Loom, led by their designer, Pankhuri and Ali, also translated this collaboration into artwork. "We saw how best this could be done," said Ali. "The geometric pattern of Sadu was a new design attempted by us. To successfully execute it, we used new techniques. I wasn't sure of success, but when Sheikhha Intisar, who was visiting India, showed her appreciation for our efforts, we were encouraged to continue." Asaf Ali spoke of respecting and understanding artisans, motivating them to experiment and innovate. The Kashmir Loom team aims to preserve traditional techniques while incorporating modern elements to create unique, high-quality textile art.

Necessity

Like the Bedouin weaving of Kuwait, weaving in Kashmir has a long tradition. Like any other craft, weaving started in Kashmir as a necessity, and it is only recently that the craft grew into an art form with a broad reach. Pashmina comes from the Persian word 'pashm', which means wool. Pashmina was woven to provide people living at high altitudes with a protective wrap from the devastating cold. The origins of Pashmina in Kashmir date a long way back. With time, pashmina diversified into various Cashmere blends and flattering colours that are extraordinarily popular in countries like the US, UK and Japan.

Asaf Ali spoke of experimental techniques and digitalisation, craftsmanship and artistic evolution, innovation, and the intersection of traditions. "Culture is communication, and communication is culture," said Sheikhha Altaf Al Sabah. "This kind of exchange is important to preserve tradition."

The key seems to be finding the right balance between leveraging digital tools and preserving the artisans' traditional skills and techniques. Kashmir Loom emphasizes the importance of respecting the master craftsmen, understanding their work, and allowing them to contribute their artistic vision. By combining digital innovations with the expertise of the artisans, they have been able to create unique, high-quality textile art that respects traditional craftsmanship. The sadu pieces on display



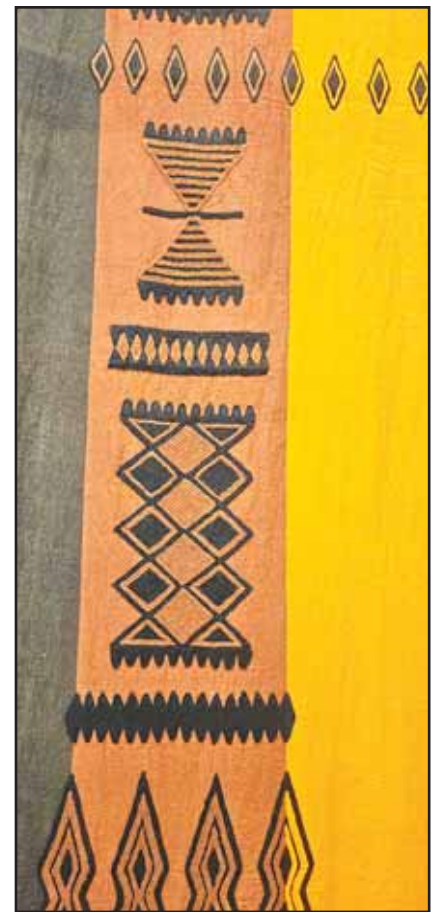
Kuwait and Indian traditional weaving crafts



Sheikhha Intisar Al Sabah at the opening of the exhibition.



Kuwaiti and Indian traditional weaving works on display.



Recognition promotes Balkan nation's cultural diversity

Serbia's ethnic Slovak naïve paintings join UNESCO list

KOVACICA, Serbia, Dec 5, (AP): Nearly a century ago, two farmers in an ethnic Slovak village in northern Serbia started painting to pass the time during the long winter months. This week, their art is being inscribed on UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list.

The farmers' paintings and those of others from the village of Kovacica are what is known as naïve art - a form that depicts everyday scenes, landscapes, village life and farm surroundings with a childlike simplicity.

With their bright colors and folk motives, the self-taught naïve painters of Kovacica, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) northeast of Belgrade, Serbia's capital, have developed a unique tradition among the country's ethnic Slovak minority.

"Naïve art in Kovacica began in 1939 when Martin Paluska and Jan Sokol started painting," explained Ana Zolnaj Barca, the head of the Gallery of Naïve Art in the village. "They were farmers with only four grades of elementary school."

Paluska and Sokol initially painted scenes they saw on postcards, such as Venetian gondolas or wild animals, explained Zolnaj Barca. But their

art really bloomed over time, when they turned to their own surroundings rather than far-away lands, she said.

The village's naïve art gallery, established in 1955, now holds the works of nearly 50 recognized artists and hosts some 20,000 visitors each year.

Among its most famous artists

is Zuzana Chalupova, who often painted children and whose work was featured on millions of UNICEF postcards. Another Kovacica artist, Martin Jonas, depicted farmers with oversized hands and feet but small heads - meant to symbolize their hard-working life.

And though the Kovacica style of

naïve paintings originated in the village, it has since spread far beyond the area.

"An identifying factor, the practice is a means of transmitting the cultural heritage and history of the Slovak community in Serbia," UNESCO said in its citation.

Serbia's government said Tues-

day that the UNESCO decision to inscribe Kovacica's naïve paintings confirms the Balkan nation's "promotion of cultural diversity."

For gallerist and expert Pavel Babka, naïve art represents a treasure chest of traditional ways and customs - he points to a painting in his gallery showing a girl in traditional Slovak

multi-layered skirt being sent off to church alone for the first time.

Another painting in Babka's gallery features a horse-drawn cart and a yellow house dating back to Austro-Hungarian times, testifying of the long presence of the ethnic Slovak community in what is today Serbia.

Contemporary naïve artists, Babka said, often also seek inspiration in the tales of the past and "would rather paint a horse than a tractor."

Artist Stefan Varga, 65, agrees. He said he paints images based on the "stories my grandmother told me from when she was a little girl."

Those times weren't easy but they were "simple and beautiful," he said.

Varga's paintings feature cheerful, red-cheeked villagers in traditional clothes, bright colors, farm animals and huge pumpkins. The main characteristics of naïve painting are "joy and purity, the purity of heart and colors," he said.

"Naïve painters usually use simple colors," said Varga. They "use the simplest way to say what they want to say so everybody can understand them, whether they are Chinese, Japanese, English or Serb."



Pavel Babka, gallerist and naïve art expert shows painting of a girl in traditional Slovak multi-layered skirt (left) and painting of a horse-drawn cart and a yellow house dating back to Austro-Hungarian times in the village of Kovacica, Serbia, Nov. 28, 2024. (AP)





This image released by Netflix shows Keira Knightley in a scene from 'Black Doves.' (AP)

A high-stakes thriller

Knightley steps into spy world with ‘Black Doves’

LOS ANGELES, Dec 5, (AP): Keira Knightley starred in one of the most popular Christmas films of the 21st century, the 2003 romantic comedy “Love Actually.” Her new Netflix series “Black Doves” is also set during the holidays, but in this, she plays a spy alongside Ben Whishaw’s assassin. Knightley says the show, debuting Thursday, falls under the “Die Hard” category of Christmas fare.

“It’s like, ‘I’ve spent too much time with my family, I hate them all, I need to watch something blow up,’” Knightley said during a recent interview alongside Whishaw. “If you’re having a nice time, you can watch ‘Love Actually.’ And if you’re feeling quite cross, you can watch ‘Black Doves.’ Christmas entertainment is provided. You’re welcome!”

Knightley’s character Helen is a spy for a secret agency called Black Doves, which has no alliances but is contracted by the highest bidder. When Helen’s lover is murdered, an old friend, Sam (played by Whishaw), who calls himself a “trigger man,” is brought in to protect her. He also vows to help Helen get revenge.

“It’s appealing to do something you’ve never done before,” said Whishaw. “I felt like the character had this sort of core truth, even though they all are in a quite heightened world where it is possible to be sort of blasted out of a five-story building and not get a scratch.”

Knightley also found something relatable about her character - everyone has different sides of themselves that they show to different people.

“I have two kids. My identity as a mother is very big, but I also hold quite contradictory identities within myself, which are also true but don’t necessarily exist at the same time as I am being a mother,” she said.

She also loved that Sam and Helen’s friendship is “between these two very strange characters,” said Knightley. “They can’t be themselves with anybody else in the world, but they can be their whole selves with each other.”

The roles on the show are atypical for a spy series. Sam and Helen report to a woman as their stoic spy director, played by Sarah Lancashire. Women were also cast to play the heads of crime syndicates. Sam is a lethal killer who happens to be gay.

“It’s always more interesting doing things which are less expected,” said the show’s creator Joe Barton of his casting choices.

The job gave Whishaw the opportunity to learn stunts and appear in action sequences which he found “frightening” in the beginning.

“I hadn’t done that sort of stuff before. And I guess if I’m honest, I am very slightly built and I feel like (action) is the territory or the terrain of like, big blokes. I had to really get over something in myself but I’m pleased I did.”

Byzantium art

700-yr-old script unveils true identity of painter

THESSALONIKI, Greece, Dec 5, (AP): Crime-solving techniques applied to a medieval illuminated manuscript in Paris may have solved a centuries-old puzzle - the true identity of a leading Byzantine painter who injected humanity into the rigid sanctity of Orthodox religious art.

A contemporary of Giotto, considered the father of Western painting, the artist conventionally known as Manuel Panselinos was equally influential in a totally different tradition that’s largely overlooked in the West.

But nothing is known of his life, and scholars now believe Panselinos was just a nickname that eventually supplanted the real name of the man for whom it was coined - likely Ioannis Astrapas, from the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki.

The art of Byzantium, that decorates churches across Greece, Serbia and other Orthodox countries, stands out for the stark formalism of its elongated, glowering saints, quasi-cubist mountains and doe-eyed Madonnas.

Work attributed to Panselinos, from the late 13th and early 14th centuries, is considered the finest produced in an empire that straddled Europe and Asia and endured from the fall of Rome until the capture of the imperial capital Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Art historians had long suspected that the name - Greek for “full moon” - could have originated as a nickname for some member of the so-called Macedonian School of painting, based in Thessaloniki.

Recent research by a Greek monk and linguistics scholar linked “Panselinos” with Macedonian School painter Astrapas. Now court handwriting expert

Christina Sotirakoglou has matched lettering on a manuscript tentatively attributed to Astrapas with characters on a church painting in northern Greece, long seen as Panselinos’ best work.

Father Cosmas Simonopetritis, a former senior administrator in Mount Athos, the semiautonomous monastic community where the Protato church stands, says Sotirakoglou’s and his own research “clearly prove” Panselinos’ real identity.

“Panselinos was a real person, and (the name) was just the nickname by which Ioannis Astrapas became known,” he told The Associated Press.

Constantinos Vafiadis, a professor of Byzantine art in Athens who was not involved in the studies, said he found merit in the nickname theory and Astrapas link, even though it appeared more than one painter had undertaken the Protato project.

“I agree with attributing part of the paintings to Ioannis Astrapas,” he said. “But again there remains much ground for future research into that person, because other Mount Athos monuments from the same period have not yet been sufficiently published.”

“Panselinos” - a role model for generations of painters - and his contemporaries are associated with a renaissance of kinds in Orthodox art that revived forms and techniques inherited from antiquity. Facial expressions acquired a deeper humanity, and greater attention was paid to proportion and depth of field in composition.

Father Cosmas said Astrapas was an “extremely gifted painter ... with vast knowledge who harmonically combined the ancient, classical world with Orthodox Byzantine spirituality.”



Christina Sotirakoglou a handwriting expert, observes Byzantine paintings based on photographs prints, at her office, in Thessaloniki, northern Greece, Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024. (AP)

Variety

MIAMI: One of Venezuela’s most popular bands canceled its homecoming tour after President **Nicolas Maduro** criticized the group for what he said were sexist lyrics - a lashing out that many said was an attack by the leftist leader over the band’s embrace of his political opponents.

Rawayana, a 2025 Grammy nominee, was to play across the country to sold-out shows, starting this week but the concerts were abruptly cancelled on Tuesday night.

On Sunday, Maduro laid into the group for its hit song “Veneka” - a term long used by Latin Americans to refer to Venezuelans but which has become pejorative over the past years as millions of Venezuelans fanned across the continent, fleeing poverty and Maduro’s increasingly authoritarian rule.

“The group that made that song



Maduro

didn’t just mess things up, they stepped in it, they stepped in it,” an angry Maduro said at a rally in Caracas, the country’s capital. “The women of Venezuela are called Venezuelan with respect and dignity. They are Venezuelans, not venekas!” (AP)

□ □ □

NEW YORK: Oprah Winfrey has a new book club pick and a new platform to talk books and other topics of the day.

Recently Winfrey launched “The Oprah Podcast,” a weekly series airing on her YouTube channel that will feature book club authors and guests ranging from “global newsmakers” to “cultural changemakers.” Upcoming podcasts will feature author-chef Ina Garten and Dr. Vivek Murthy, the U.S. surgeon general, among others.

Winfrey began “The Oprah Podcast” with Irish author Claire Keegan, whose prize-winning historical novel “Small Things Like These” is her latest book club selection. “Small Things Like These,” published in 2021, was adapted into a film starring Cillian Murphy that came out this year.

“To know that Oprah Winfrey took pleasure in reading my book is the most exquisite compliment, which will last my lifetime,” Keegan said in a statement. (AP)

Music



Taylor Swift performs during ‘The Eras Tour,’ Monday, Aug. 7, 2023, at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles. (AP)

Swift’s tour breaks records, captures hearts

‘Eras’ end leaves Swifties heartbroken

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Dec 5, (AP): After more than 150 shows across five continents over nearly two years, the global phenomenon that is Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour is coming to an end.

There is no simple way to encapsulate the effects of Swift’s decision to put on a 3 ½-hour concert, showcasing 44 songs representing 10 different “eras” of her career - a feat she kicked off in March 2023 and will end Sunday in Vancouver, Canada. The tour shattered sales and attendance records and created such an economic boom that even the Federal Reserve took note.

But for many who attended the concerts, and the millions more who eagerly watched fan-broadcasted livestreams on their screens, the tour also became a beacon of joy - a chance not only to appreciate Swift’s expansive music career, but also celebrate the yearslong journey fans have taken with her.

“Right now we have this special designated time to be together, talk about the show and hang out,” said Tess Bohne, a stay-at-home mom of three turned content creator dedicated to livestreaming Swift’s concerts - by attending herself or coordinating with others to highlight their streams. “For some, it’s their therapy.”

Livestream

Bohne, who has earned the title among the Swiftie community as the “livestream queen,” says she often interacts with fans hosting parties to watch an Eras concert live at home with their closest friends. People have also made lasting friendships as they geek out together watching the show from afar.

Swift has long been known for leaving Easter eggs for her fans to pinpoint and decipher, a quirk that quickly took on a life of its own during the tour as eagle-eyed devotees began analyzing the possible meaning of her outfits, surprise songs and subtle lyric swaps. The buzz has been so large that multiple mobile apps were launched so fans could guess and track all the various changes. There’s even a game that gives out prizes for correctly predicting various particulars of a show, including what color guitar Swift uses while playing “Lover.”

“Imagine your favorite sports team,” Bohne said. “They’re still a team, but they’re not going to play any games for the foreseeable future. That’s going to leave a hole for some folks.”

Swift herself appeared to struggle that the end was near while performing at her 100th Eras show in June at Liverpool.

“This is the very first time I’ve ever acknowledged to myself and admitted that this tour is gonna end in December,” she said, stressing that “this tour has really become my entire life.” Late last month, in Toronto, she briefly broke down at the thought of the tour’s impending end.

Stadiums

Swift kicked off the Eras tour in Glendale, Arizona, the first of many sold-out stadiums as the tour progressed first in the U.S. and later into South America, Asia, the United Kingdom and Canada.

By the end of 2023, it had become the first tour to ever gross over \$1 billion and saw hundreds of millions of dollars spent on merchandise. She is likely to bring in over \$2 billion by the time the tour wraps on Dec. 8, according to concert trade publication Pollstar.

Throughout the tour, Swift was named Time Magazine’s Person of the

Year. Apple Music named her its artist of the year and Spotify revealed she was 2023’s most streamed artist globally. She dropped a box office-topping concert film and helped send NFL viewership skyrocketing when she began dating Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce. Toward the end of the tour, she released a coffee table book.

And if that wasn’t enough, she released re-recordings of her Nashville-era 2010 record, “Speak Now ” and 2014’s record “1989,” as well as released her 11th studio album, “The Tortured Poets Department.”

“I think it’s perfect in these times to have somebody like Taylor to kind of give us distraction, give us inspiration, give us hope,” said Ralph Jaccodine, an assistant professor at Berklee College of Music and a former concert promoter who has worked with Bruce Springsteen and others. “And this is a woman that owning it, she’s come a long way. And now she can talk about artist rights and women’s rights and equality. And really, just her work ethic is relentless.”

Even the word “era” has become ubiquitous, with fans and casual observers using the term to explain both frivolous and transformative phases - are you in your “villain era” or a “healing era”?

“I think this tour really solidified

her position as a legend,” said Kayla Wong, an influencer who runs the popular Swift-focused Instagram account @headfirstfearless. “Whether or not you like her music, whether or not you think she’s talented, the numbers really speak for themselves. The tour broke so many records and was such a global phenomenon for so long that I think she’s achieved a level where it’s undeniable as to how everlasting her impact is.”

Experience

Yet the tour did experience its own dark moments. In Brazil last year, one concertgoer - 23-year-old Ana Clara Benevides - passed out and later died of heat exhaustion. In July, British police charged a 17-year-old with murder over a stabbing attack during a Taylor Swift-themed summer holiday dance and yoga class that left three little girls dead. News outlets reported that Swift met with some of the survivors backstage in London.

And in August, all three of Swift’s concerts in Vienna were called off after officials announced arrests over an apparent plot to launch an attack on an event in the city. Tens of thousands of Swifties from around the world had traveled to Vienna for the shows.

“Having our Vienna shows cancelled was devastating,” Swift later wrote in a statement. “The reason for the cancellations filled me with a new sense of fear, and a tremendous amount of guilt because so many people had planned on coming to those shows.”

Through the hardships and celebrations, Swift’s connections to her fans has only ballooned and deepened throughout the tour. After the Vienna cancellations, many fans flocked to the streets to sing Swift’s songs and placed friendship bracelets - which also became an iconic feature of the shows - on a nearby tree.

Over the past two years, the fandom has welcomed new audiences - both old and new.

“I feel like years ago, we were kind of all the same age and fans for the same reason,” Wong said of Swifties. “Now the fandom has people from all kinds of backgrounds, all ages, all different reasons for following her in the first place.”



Taylor Swift fans pose in front of a mural before attending Swift’s concert on June 21, 2024 in London. (AP)

Kuwait to expand healthcare with 11 new centers by 2027

Primary healthcare is the core of medical system: minister

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi said on Thursday that primary healthcare is considered the cornerstone of the country's medical system amid health challenges.

The minister made the statement while addressing the sixth Annual Medical Conference on Primary Healthcare, saying that the primary healthcare system would witness significant expansion with 11 new health centers expected to open by 2027.

The minister underscored the exceptional importance the Ministry of Health places on primary care, highlighting the ongoing efforts to launch a new five-year national health strategy.

This strategy builds on the previous annual and five-year plans, aiming to enhance the healthcare system's capacity to meet the community's needs amid population



Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi addresses the sixth Annual Medical Conference on Primary Healthcare.

growth and rapid advancements in the medical field.

Dr. Al-Awadhi noted that the strategy was based on a comprehensive

sive vision to improve the quality of healthcare services and expand the range of services provided, focusing on sustainability and innovation



KUNA photos
Director of the Central Department for Primary Healthcare, Dr. Dina Al-Dhabib

to provide integrated care for all age groups.

He added that primary healthcare

remains a fundamental pillar of this vision, offering comprehensive and integrated services that address the needs of all segments of society, while playing a critical role in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.

The minister reiterated the Ministry of Health's commitment to continuously expanding primary healthcare centers in line with population growth and urban development in new residential areas.

He highlighted that the number of primary healthcare centers in Kuwait has reached 116, with four new centers-Mutlaa N1, Mutlaa N2, Abdali, and Fahaheel Health Center-opened this year alone, and some centers have been rehabilitated to enhance their efficiency and better meet community needs.

Director of the Central Department for Primary Healthcare at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Dina Al-Dhabib stated that the number of

chronic disease clinics rose from 86 in 2022 to 127, spread across 102 health centers, to address the growing number of patients.

Mental health clinics also saw unprecedented growth, increasing from just 16 to 72 clinics, and since the introduction of mental health services in 2022, these clinics have recorded 19,237 visits to date.

She further explained that by 2029, the number of doctors graduating from Kuwait Family Medicine Residency Program is expected to double, adding 400 physicians to bring the total to 800, representing 46 percent of all doctors working in the primary healthcare sector.

Dr. Al-Dhabib praised the accreditation of 51 primary healthcare centers as training facilities by the Royal College of Physicians in November, and this number is expected to increase to 61 centers by next year.



Manas Raj Patel, First Secretary of the Indian Embassy presenting the first copy to Dr. Ahmad Asad, Assistant Undersecretary of Dental Administration at the Ministry of Health.

Guide addresses common dental pain issues

IDAK releases 9th Oral Health Guide

By Paulo Francisco X. Fernandes
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Indian Dentists' Alliance in Kuwait (IDAK) recently hosted a grand ceremony at The Regency in Al Bidaa, to celebrate the release of the highly anticipated 9th Volume of its Oral Health Guide titled Decoding Dental Pain: Care to Cure.

The event, held under the patronage of HE Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al Awadhi, Minister of Health in Kuwait, brought together prominent figures from the dental and medical community and other distinguished guests.

This edition of the guide marks another milestone in IDAK's ongoing commitment to advancing oral health awareness and education.

The comprehensive volume offers valuable insights into understanding and managing dental pain, providing both practitioners and the public with practical knowledge on effective dental care and treatment strategies.

The event highlighted IDAK's dedication to fostering a culture of oral health within the community, while also reinforcing the collaborative efforts between the Indian dental community and Kuwaiti health authorities.

The Oral Health Guide, published biannually, is a key initiative aimed at raising awareness on important dental issues. The latest edition, edited by the IDAK Editorial Committee led by Dr. Lini Mathew, focuses on educating the public about dental pain, one of the most common oral health concerns.

The publication was officially

launched by Manas Raj Patel, First Secretary of the Indian Embassy in Kuwait, who presented the first copy to Dr. Ahmad Asad, Assistant Undersecretary of Dental Administration at the Ministry of Health.

The event was attended by prominent figures in the dental profession, including Dr. Rashed Al Azemi, Dean of the College of Dentistry at Kuwait University.

In his address, Dr. Azemi praised IDAK for its continued efforts to advance dentistry in Kuwait and expressed his full support.

Dr. George P. Alex, President of IDAK, reaffirmed the organization's 18-year commitment to enhancing the dental profession in Kuwait. He also expressed his gratitude to the people of Kuwait and its leadership for warmly welcoming Indian dentists.

Presentation

The event included several key moments, including the presentation of the IDAKian of the Year awards for 2023 and 2024 to Dr. E.T. Roy and Dr. Jacob Lonappan for their exceptional contributions, with the awards presented by Dr. Ahmad Asad.

Patel, in his address, commended IDAK's service in Kuwait and encouraged its members to continue fostering Indo-Kuwait relations.

The event was further enhanced by Dr. Jijan Sam Thomas, General Secretary, who welcomed the gathering, while Vice President Dr. Roshila Mathew proposed the Vote of Thanks. The program was expertly hosted by Dr. Reeby Thomas, Dr. Smida Devadas, Dr. Shalin Simon and Dr.

Amrita Geevarghese.

Adding a cultural touch to the evening's festivities, the IDAK Cultural Committee, led by Dr. Aysha John, presented Cinephilia - Icons Reimagined, a captivating cultural show that celebrated iconic cinematic characters from around the world, spanning various genres and eras.

Directed by Mrs. Soumya Pratap, the spectacular production showcased the talents of over 120 performers, including IDAK members, their spouses and children.

The entirely in-house performance featured breathtaking choreography, elaborate sets and immersive LED backdrops that left the audience mesmerized.

The stage design was masterminded by Dr. Santosh C.V. and his team, while Dr. Divya John curated the costume designs.

The LED backdrops, crafted by Dr. George P. Alex, complemented the vibrant performances, while sound mastering was expertly handled by Nebu Alexander of Audio Kraft.

The stage lighting was controlled by Shymon Chelad and the event was efficiently managed by Dr. Aju Wilson and TAG Events. IDAK also extended its heartfelt gratitude to Royal Jazzaf Advertising Company, Upasana Dance Studio, Diva Fashions, Envy Studio and Sunanda Creations for their invaluable support in bringing the show to life.

The evening concluded with a sumptuous buffet dinner and acknowledgments to sponsors -- ATC, Taiba Hospital, Phoenix Group, Al Mulla Exchange, KDD, My Tour Compass, Mango Hyper, Ford Alghanim, Alpha Medical, NBK and Logident.

Lymphoma blood cancers most common

Prenatal blood test might 'hint' at cancer in expectant mothers

NEW YORK, Dec 5, (AP) - Many moms-to-be opt for blood tests during pregnancy to check for fetal disorders such as Down syndrome. In rare instances, these tests can reveal something unexpected - hints of a hidden cancer in the woman.

In a study of 107 pregnant women whose test results were unusual, 52 were ultimately diagnosed with cancer. Most of them were treated and are now in remission, although seven with advanced cancers died.

"They looked like healthy, young women and they reported themselves as being healthy," said Dr. Diana Bianchi, the senior author of the government study published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

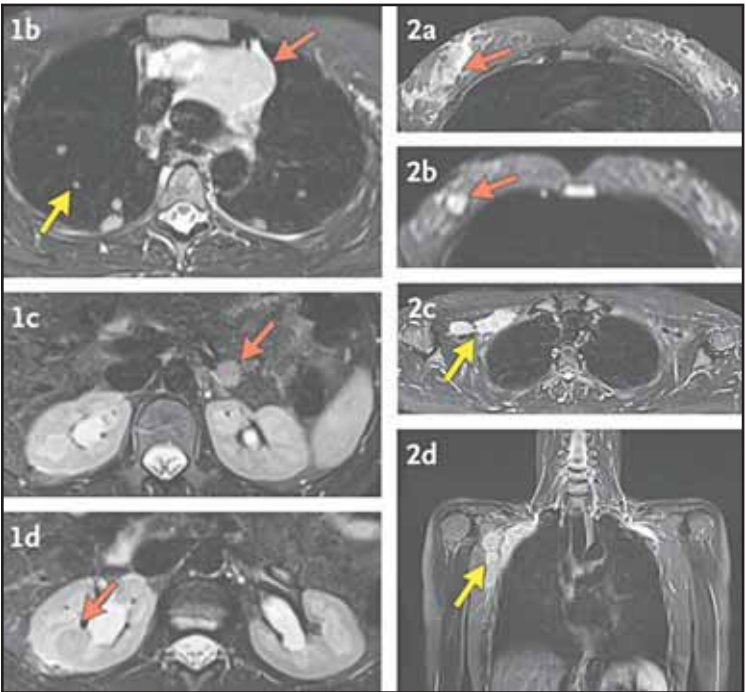
Of the discovered cancers, lymphoma blood cancers were the most common, followed by colon and breast cancers.

The blood test is called cell-free DNA sequencing. It looks for fetal problems in DNA fragments shed from the placenta into the mother's bloodstream. It also can pick up DNA fragments shed by cancer cells.

Of the millions of pregnant women each year who have a cell-free DNA test, 1 in 10,000 will get a result back that is unusual and difficult to interpret, neither positive or negative for a fetal abnormality. This small number of people - perhaps only 250 a year in the U.S. - may be at risk for cancer.

"They and their care providers need to take the results seriously and have additional testing because in that population there is a 48% risk of cancer," said Bianchi, who leads the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The study looked at what should be done next, and the researchers concluded that it's best to do a whole-body MRI to look for cancer. A physical exam or



These MRI images with arrows indicating cancer were made during a study by researchers at the National Institutes of Health and published Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024, in the New England Journal of Medicine. (AP)

taking a family history is not enough, Bianchi said.

About five years ago, commercial labs that do these tests and doctors started telling women with unusual results about the study. The National Institutes of Health paid for study volunteers to travel to its research hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, where the participants had their family and medical histories reviewed, a complete physical examination, whole-body MRI scans and other tests performed.

The research identified a recognizable

"very chaotic" pattern in the DNA sequencing of the women diagnosed with cancer, Bianchi said. The study is continuing to look for more evidence to indicate who should be screened for cancer.

Many medical groups now recommend offering cell-free DNA tests during pregnancy, though many expectant parents decide against the optional test. Considered reliable for detecting Down syndrome and two other disorders, the tests have come under scrutiny for too many false alarms for extremely rare fetal problems.

Congo 'on alert' over mystery flu-like disease

KINSHASA, Congo, Dec 5, (Agencies): Congo's health minister said Thursday the government is on alert over a mystery flu-like disease that in recent weeks killed dozens of people, nearly half of which were children.

Authorities have so far confirmed 71 deaths, including 27 people who died in hospitals and 44 in the community in the southern Kwango province, health minister Roger Kamba said.

"The Congolese government is on general alert regarding this disease," Kamba said, without providing more details.

Of the victims at the hospitals, 10 died due to lack of blood transfusion and 17 as a result of respiratory problems, he said.

Authorities have said that symptoms include fever, headache, cough and anaemia. Epidemiological experts are in the region to take samples and investigate the disease, the health minister said.

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Days after Bove collapsed on same field, Fiorentina loses on penalties

Frankfurt follows Bayern with early exit from German Cup

LEIPZIG, Germany, Dec 5, (AP): The top two teams in the Bundesliga are out of the German Cup after Eintracht Frankfurt followed Bayern Munich with an early exit on Wednesday.

Frankfurt lost 3-0 at Leipzig, which ended a run of six winless matches - having lost five of those. Bayern lost its third-round match 1-0 at home to defending champion Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday.

Benjamin Sesko fired Leipzig in front with a delightful goal in the 32nd work after good play from Antonio Nusa.

Lois Openda netted twice in the second half and both goals were also set up by Nusa.

Augsburg scraped through to the quarterfinals by beating second-division Karlsruher 5-4 on penalties after the match had ended 2-2.

Augsburg was on the verge of being eliminated before Rubén Vargas leveled in stoppage time of extra time.

Marvin Wanzeltz had missed an early penalty for Karlsruher but converted the opening one of the shootout as well as scoring in extra time.

All the players converted theirs before Karlsruher midfielder Robin Heußner saw his saved by Finn Dahmen and Maximilian Bauer scored to send Augsburg to the next round.

Wolfsburg cruised into the quarterfinals with a 3-0 win over Bundesliga struggler Hoffenheim.

It was tighter in the all second-division match where Cologne needed a penalty in the final minute of extra time for a 2-1 win over Hertha Berlin, which had played



Leipzig's Benjamin Henrichs, right, and Frankfurt's Niels Nkounkou battle for the ball during a German Cup match between RB Leipzig and Eintracht Frankfurt at the Red Bull Arena, in Leipzig, Germany. (AP)

most of the match in 10 men after defender Deyovaisio Zeefuik was sent off in the 25th minute for violent conduct - having headbutted Timo Hübers and shoved Tim Lemperle.

Hertha was 1-0 up at that point but Cologne leveled five minutes later.

The 10-man visitors held out resolutely but Cologne denied them a penalty shootout by scoring one

of its own, with Dejan Ljubičić converting after teammate Florian Kainz had been brought down by Gustav Christensen.

With teammate Edoardo Bove watching from his hospital bed, Fiorentina was knocked out of the Italian Cup on penalties by Empoli.

Empoli won the shootout 4-3 after the match had ended 2-2. Emmanuel Ekong sent his spot kick wide for Empoli but Fiorentina missed two - with Luca Ranieri seeing his saved and Moise Kean firing over the bar.

Sebastiano Esposito converted the winning penalty to send Empoli into the quarterfinals, where it will face either Juventus or Cagliari.

The match was being played just three days after Bove collapsed on the same field in the 16th minute of a Serie A match against Inter Milan. The 22-year-old has been awake and alert since Monday and had asked his teammates to play the cup match - as it was being considered whether to postpone.

There were plenty of banners in support of Bove in the stands and a huge No. 4 - his jersey number - was displayed before kickoff.

Ekong also held up four fingers after scoring the early opener for Empoli.

Kean, who had hit the crossbar in the first half, eventually equalized in the 59th minute and Robin Gosens completed the turnaround 11 minutes later.

But Esposito struck 15 minutes from time and the encounter went to penalties, with no extra time being played in the Cup at this stage.

Miami rolls past struggling Lakers

Hawks halt the Bucks' winning streak

MIAMI, Dec 5, (AP): Tyler Herro scored 21 of his 31 points in the third quarter and the Miami Heat set a franchise record for assists in beating the Los Angeles Lakers 134-93 on Wednesday night.

The Heat had 42 assists, one more than the previous mark of 41 against Portland on March 29. They tied another franchise record with 24 3-pointers, and the 41-point margin of victory was the third-biggest in team history.

Jimmy Butler scored 17 points and Bam Adebayo had 14 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists for the Heat.

LeBron James scored 29 points for the Lakers, who have lost six of eight - their last two by a combined 70 points. Rui Hachimura added 14 for the Lakers.

Hawks 119, Bucks 104

In Milwaukee, Jalen Johnson had 23 points and 13 rebounds and the Atlanta Hawks halted Milwaukee's winning streak at seven games, beating the Bucks.

De'Andre Hunter scored 20 points, Trae Young 17, Bogdan Bogdanovic 15, Onyeka Okongwu 13 and Zacharie Risacher 12 as the Hawks extended their winning streak to five games. Clint Capela added 17 rebounds.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points and 10 rebounds to lead Milwaukee. Damian Lillard added 25 points and Gary Trent Jr. had 11 points off the bench. Taurean Prince, the league's leading 3-point shooter had seven points in the first quarter for Milwaukee, but didn't score again until late in the fourth, finishing with 10 points.

The Hawks improved to 12-11 while Milwaukee slipped to 11-10. The teams are neck-and-neck for fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

Timberwolves 108, Clippers 80

In Inglewood, Julius Randle scored 16 of his 20 points in the first quarter, Anthony Edwards added 16 and the Minnesota Timberwolves rolled to a victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Randle had all of his points in the first half, including four 3-pointers, to help Minnesota win its third straight after losing four in a row. The Timberwolves were up by 27 at halftime and their large



Orlando Magic's Franz Wagner, right, goes up for a shot against Philadelphia 76ers' Guerschon Yabusele during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Philadelphia. (AP)

est lead was 41 in the second half.

Bones Hyland led the Clippers with 18 points, including a season-high five 3-pointers. Derrick Jones Jr. scored 14 points.

The Clippers had their nine-game home winning streak snapped.

Celtics 130, Pistons 120

In Boston, Jaylen Brown had 28 points with nine assists and Kristaps Porzingis added 26 points and nine rebounds to lead the Boston Celtics to their ninth victory in 10 games, a victory over the Detroit Pistons.

Derrick White had 14 points and 11 assists and Payton Pritchard scored 19 points off the bench for Boston. The Celtics scored 12 straight to take an 18-4 lead less than four minutes into the game and led by 20.

The Celtics held a double-digit lead until the fourth quarter, when Detroit hit four straight 3-pointers to come within eight points, 109-101, and force Boston coach Joe Mazzulla to put Brown back in. The Pistons cut it to five in the final minute on Tobias Harris' 3-pointer, but Pritchard's 3 sealed it.

Cade Cunningham had 27 points, 14 assists and nine rebounds for Detroit. Harris also scored 27 points, and Malik Beasley had 23 off the bench.

Magic 106, 76 ers 102

In Philadelphia, Franz Wagner scored 35 points and Jalen Suggs had 17 to lead the Orlando Magic to a win over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Wagner made 12 of 23 shots from the floor with a 3-pointer and converted all 10 free throws to lead the Magic past the short-handed Sixers.

Philadelphia was not at full strength. Joel Embiid, Paul George, Andre Drummond and Kyle Lowry sat out due to injuries or rest.

An expected Eastern Conference favorite in the preseason, the Sixers dropped to 5-15. Coach Nick Nurse said there was a chance Embiid, who has played only four games this season, could play Friday when the teams play again in Philadelphia.

Wagner scored 25 points through three quarters before snapping a tie game in the fourth and helping the Magic stretch the lead.

Suggs hit four of Orlando's eight 3-pointers.

Jared McCain, Philadelphia's first-round pick who has emerged as an early Rookie of the Year candidate, scored 24 points. Tyrese Maxey had 16.

The Magic, an emerging team out of the Eastern Conference, played only four players off the bench but three of them scored in double digits.

F1 feud deepens

Russell accuses Verstappen of bullying, threatening behavior

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Dec 5, (AP): Mercedes driver George Russell has accused Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen of bullying and threatening behavior as a dispute between the two at last week's race in Qatar deepened Thursday.

Verstappen said Sunday he had "lost all respect" for Russell after an incident between them in qualifying cost him pole position on the grid for the Qatar Grand Prix.

"I've known Max for 12 years, I've respected him all of this time but now I've lost respect for him because we're all fighting on track and it's never personal," Russell said in comments broadcast by Sky Sports on Thursday ahead of the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday.

"Now he's made it personal and someone needs to stand up to a bully like this. And so far people have let him get away with murder."

Russell alleged Verstappen had threatened Saturday to "purposefully crash" into him.

"For me that is unacceptable and he's gone beyond the line here and I'm not going to accept it. So somebody's got to stand up to a guy like this before it gets out of control," Russell added.

Russell also criticized Verstappen's treatment of other drivers on track, bringing up incidents such as Verstappen's tactics against Lando Norris at this year's Mexican Grand Prix, for which the Dutch driver picked up two penalties, and while battling Lewis Hamilton in the past.

"Whenever anything is not going his way, he lashes out with unnecessary anger and borderline violence," Russell said. "That is not a guy who I respect and I wish he would be a better role model."

Verstappen was fastest, with Russell second, in Saturday's qualifying in Qatar but a stewards' inquiry gave him a one-place penalty for driving "unnecessarily slowly" on the rac-



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands attends a news conference ahead of the Formula One Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, UAE. (AP)

ing line in an incident with Russell, who moved up to first on the grid.

Russell complained over the radio that it was "super dangerous" that he'd had to avoid Verstappen ahead of him, though neither was trying to set a competitive lap time at that stage of the session. Grid penalties for incidents in qualifying that don't affect the results are relatively rare.

Speaking Thursday in Abu Dhabi, Verstappen said he stood by his earlier comments and accused Russell of having lied to ensure he got a penalty last week.

"No regrets at all because I meant everything I said and it's still the same. If I had to do it again, maybe I would have said even more," Verstappen said. "Just never expected someone to really try and actively get someone a penalty that badly and lying about why I was doing what I was doing. But clearly, it had an influence to (the stewards). It was just really not nice and actually very shocking what was going on."

Alabama beats North Carolina

CHAPEL HILL, N.C., Dec 5, (AP): Mark Sears scored 20 points, Aden Holloway and Labaron Philon each had 15 points and No. 10 Alabama beat No. 20 North Carolina 94-79 in the ACC-SEC Challenge.

Clifford Omoruyi and Derrien Reid each scored 11 points and Grant Nelson had 10 points to help the Crimson Tide (6-2) beat three straight Top 25 opponents for the first time in three seasons.

The rematch of Alabama's Sweet 16 victory last season wasn't close.

Freshman Ian Jackson scored a season-high 23 points, RJ Davis had 18 and Seth Trimble added 12 points for the Tar Heels (4-4). They've lost three in a row.

A 9-0 run early in the second half pushed Alabama to a 52-38 lead on the way to what became an 18-point spread.

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Vonn to make her comeback to downhill racing at age 40

WASHINGTON, Dec 5, (AP): At age 40, Lindsey Vonn is going to enter an official ski race for the first time in nearly six years this weekend.

Having already announced last month that she was coming out of retirement, Vonn will race lower-level FIS downhill and super-Gs on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, in Copper Mountain, Colorado, U.S. Ski Team head coach Paul Kristofic told The Associated Press.

Vonn needs some decent results to improve her long-dormant ranking so she can enter World Cup races this season under a new wild card rule.

"Obviously her history speaks for itself and she's definitely the most decorated speed skier out there and has done amazing things throughout her career," Kristofic said Wednesday. "So it will be really, really fun and interesting to see what she can do." It's likely that many of the current World Cup racers will be competing alongside Vonn at Copper Mountain.

Vonn is a three-time Olympic medalist, including a downhill gold at the 2010 Vancouver Games.

Her 82 World Cup race victories stood as the record

for a woman until that total was eclipsed in January 2023 by fellow American Mikaela Shiffrin, who is still active and is now up to 99 wins - more than any Alpine ski racer in the history of the sport.

Vonn's last competition came in February 2019, after she dealt with a long series of injuries throughout her career.

There were broken arms and legs, torn knee ligaments, concussions and more.

Just this April, years after leaving the World Cup circuit, she had surgery for a partial knee replacement.

During training at Copper Mountain with the rest of the U.S. team, Kristofic said Vonn's performance was "really promising." "It's getting better every time she goes out on the hill. It's been a lot of work to catch up after five years away. But she's motivated and pushing hard and I think really enjoying it, too," he said.

Can Vonn be competitive right away? "I think it will be a building process," Kristofic said. "The full race intensity is something that's difficult to replicate."

Kazma faces tough test against Burqan in Federation Volleyball Championship

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Kazma is set to face a challenging match against Burqan at 7:00 pm this evening in the seventh round of the Federation Volleyball Championship. Earlier in the evening, Al-Arabi will clash with Al-Yarmouk at 5:00 pm. Both matches will take place in the Federation Hall at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex. Burqan enters the match in impressive form, occupying third place with 14 points from five consecutive victories. Kazma, meanwhile, sits in fourth place with 12 points, having secured four wins and a single loss. This pivotal match holds high stakes for both teams, as it will not only solidify their qualification for the next



The draw in progress.

round but also underscore their ambitions to contend for the championship title. In the second match, Al-Arabi, currently sixth with 6 points, appears poised to secure a victory

over seventh-placed Al-Yarmouk, who have earned just 3 points, given the significant technical gap between the two teams. Draw Results for the League and Super Championships In other developments, the draw for the 1 League Championship and the Super Championship for the 2024-2025 sports season took place recently. The League's first-round matches include: Al-Arabi vs. Kazma Al-Shabab vs. Al-Tadamon Al-Sulaibikhat vs. Al-Nasr Al-Qadsiya vs. Al-Sahel Burqan vs. Al-Yarmouk Kuwait Club received a bye for the first round. In the Super Championship, Kuwait Club will face Kazma, while Al-Qadsiya will take on Al-Arabi, with the winners advancing to the final match.

Qadsiya surges to top of league

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: Qadsiya surged to the top of the basketball league standings with an emphatic 118-76 victory over Al-Qurain in the fourth round of the competition's first phase. In another match, Al-Nasr edged out Al-Sulaibikhat in a closely contested game, winning 107-102. With this win, Qadsiya now leads with 6 points, while Al-Nasr follows with 5 points. Al-Sulaibikhat remains at 4 points, and Al-Qurain lags with 2 points. The Qadsiya -Al-Qurain game began as a competitive affair, with the first quarter ending 29-24 in Qadsiya's favor. The second quarter was the first contested until Qadsiya pulled ahead in the final moments, scoring two three-pointers and a decisive basket to lead 49-40 at halftime. The third quarter proved pivotal as Croatian star Zebic dominated from inside and outside the arc, capitalizing on Al-Qurain's rushed plays. This extended Qadsiya's lead to 16 points at 79-63 by the end of the third quarter. Although Al-Qurain managed to close the gap to 10 points early in the fourth quarter, Qadsiya regained control and sealed the game with a commanding



Al-Qadsiya player overcomes an opponent during the league match. performance. In the second match, Al-Nasr asserted dominance early, taking the first quarter 31-13 and maintaining their momentum to lead 53-35 at halftime. Their advantage continued into the third quarter, ending 78-60. Despite a late rally from Al-Sulaibikhat, Al-Nasr held firm to secure the win. These results highlight the growing intensity in the league as teams vie for top positions in the early stages of the competition.

Liverpool held in thriller, Man City returns to winning ways in league



Arsenal's Jurrien Timber, center right, heads the ball to score his side's first goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Manchester United at Emirates stadium in London. (AP)

Chelsea's excellent run continues

LONDON, Dec 5, (Xinhua): Manchester City ended their miserable run of form with a 3-0 win at home to Nottingham Forest in a midweek round of Premier League matches. Kevin de Bruyne was back in the City starting 11 and scored his side's second goal in the 31st minute after Bernardo Silva had calmed nerves for the home fans with an eighth-minute opening goal. Jeremy Doku made it 3-0 in the 57th minute in a win that was much easier than many would have expected against a tough-to-beat rival. League leader Liverpool was held to a thrilling 3-2 draw away to Newcastle United in a match the home side equalized in the last minute after twice leading. Alexander Isak put Newcastle ahead, only for Curtis Jones to equalize. Anthony Gordon scored again for the home side after 62 minutes, but a brace from Mohamed Salah after 68 and 83 minutes looked as if it was going to give Liverpool three points until defender Fabian Schar denied Liverpool two points in the last minute.

Arsenal remains second after second-half goals from Jurrien Timber and William Saliba gave them a 2-0 win at home to Manchester United in a result that shows the new United coach. Chelsea's excellent run continued, and they had their visit to bottom-of-the-table Southampton wrapped up by the 40th minute as they led 3-1 against a rival reduced to 10 men by Jack Ste-

phens' 39th-minute sending-off. Axel Disasi flicked home a near-post corner in the eighth minute to put Chelsea ahead, and although Southampton was level just three minutes later through Joe Aribo's smart finish, their joy lasted just five minutes it took for Christopher Nkunku to score a simple finish after Southampton gave the ball away in midfield.



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah controls the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle and Liverpool, at St. James Park in Newcastle, England. (AP)

Noni Manduke curled in Chelsea's third in the 34th minute, and the game was all but over after the VAR deemed Stephens had to walk after a bad challenge on Marc Cucurella. Cole Palmer scored Chelsea's fourth with 15 minutes left to play, and Jadon Sancho made it 5-1 in the closing minutes. Aston Villa was also on the fast track to victory as they took advantage of Brentford's poor away form to storm into a 3-0 lead after 34 minutes with goals from Morgan Rogers, Ollie Watkins and Matty Cash. Martin Damsgaard pulled a point back for the visitors in the second half, but there was no way back for Brentford. Everton won a relegation 6-pointer at home to Wolverhampton with a much-improved display that saw Ashley Young and Orel Mangala put them 2-0 ahead by the 33rd minute, before Wolves defender Craig Dawson netted two own goals, deflecting the ball into his own goal on both occasions. Crystal Palace won 1-0 away to Ipswich, while Ruud van Nistelrooy had a winning start as Leicester City coach as his side beat West Ham 3-1, leaving West Ham coach Julen Lopetegui in danger of the sack before the weekend.

Handball League action heats up with key matches in 11th round

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex will witness three thrilling encounters in the 11th round of the Handball League's preliminary stage. Defending champion Kuwait Club will face Al-Arabi at 7:30 pm, preceded by Al-Salmiya's clash with Kazma at 6: 00pm, while the day's action begins with an important match between Khaitan and Al-Sulaibikhat at 4:30 pm.



Al Arabi awaits a tough match against Kuwait Club.

Kuwait Club, led by Haitham Al-Rashidi, sits fourth in the standings with 12 points and aims to extend its winning streak against third-placed Al-Arabi, who holds 14 points but has played three more matches than Kuwait Club. This matchup is crucial for both teams to solidify their positions in the standings. In the second game, Al-Salmiya, currently second with 14 points from 10 matches, takes on Kazma, who stands seventh with 10 points but has played only six matches. Both teams are eager to prove their mettle, with Al-Salmiya seeking to stay near the top and Kazma looking to climb the rankings.

In the opening match, Al-Sulaibikhat, eighth with 10 points, is in dire need of a win to keep its hopes alive for qualifying for the Premier League, which features the top six teams from the preliminary stage. They face Khaitan, who is 11th with 6 points and equally determined to turn their fortunes around. These decisive matches promise to deliver excitement as the Handball League preliminary round nears its climax.

Kuwait Equestrian League kicks off with strong participation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5: The fourth edition of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League Championship kicks off its first round today at 1:30 pm at the Kuwait Equestrian Center in Subhan. Riders from all local clubs will compete for total cash prizes amounting to 10,000 dinars for the first-place winners. Masoud Hayat, President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation, expressed confidence in the progress of Kuwaiti equestrianism, emphasizing the federation's success in organizing the league championship over the past three seasons. He also highlighted its achievements in hosting international championships under the supervision of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI). Hayat extended his gratitude to the Public Authority for Sports and private sector companies for their support, which has significantly increased public interest in equestrian events. He noted the strong audience turnout in recent years and called for continued encouragement to help Kuwaiti riders maintain their impressive results. The president also congratulated knight Ali Al-Kharafi for his recent triumph at the Longines International Show Jumping Championship in Ri-



Masoud Hayat

yadh, Saudi Arabia, where he clinched a gold medal in the 145 cm category, bringing pride to Kuwait on the international stage. In other news, the Equestrian Federation's General Assembly is scheduled for December 16 to elect a new board of directors for the 2025-2028 electoral cycle.

Best of the Rest

San Luis eyes place in final: Ricardo Chavez struck a late winner as San Luis took a step toward qualifying for the Liga MX Apertura final with a 2-1 home win over Monterrey. Leo Bonatini opened the scoring for the hosts with a close-range strike before German Berterame put his side on level terms by finishing coolly on the counterattack after combining with Sergio Canales. Chavez restored his side's lead when his long-range effort flew into the bottom-left corner 10 minutes from time. The result means San Luis needs only a draw in the return leg on Saturday to advance to the title decider. (Xinhua)

Milito leaves Mineiro: Argentine manager Gabriel Milito has parted ways with Atletico Mineiro by mutual consent, the Brazilian Serie A club said. Atletico football director Victor Bagu made the announcement following the team's 2-0 defeat at Vasco da Gama on the penultimate match day of Brazil's top-flight season. "We came to an agreement, both on our side and his, that we would not continue working together," Bagu told reporters. "It pains us because Gabriel is a very committed manager but when things aren't going well you need to change direction." Milito, 44, led Atletico to 23 wins, 20 draws and 19 losses after replacing Luiz Felipe Scolari as manager in March. Atletico is currently 14th in the 20-team Brazilian Serie A standings and has not registered a victory since October. Despite their erratic form in the league, the Belo Horizonte outfit reached the final of two major cup competitions this year: the Copa do Brasil and the Copa Libertadores, both of which they lost. Former Barcelona and Argentina international defender Milito had previously managed Argentinos Juniors, Estudiantes and Independiente, among other clubs. (Xinhua)

Toluca parts ways with manager Paiva: Renato Paiva was sacked as manager of Toluca on Wednesday following the club's elimination from the Liga MX playoffs. Despite finishing second in the regular season standings, Toluca crashed out of the Apertura tournament on Saturday with a 4-0 aggregate loss to America in the quarterfinals. "Deportivo Toluca Futbol Club informs that Renato Paiva's time as head coach has ended," Toluca said in a press release. (Xinhua)

Savarino leaves Botafogo on cusp of title

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec 5, (Xinhua): Jefferson Savarino scored a stunning first-half goal as Botafogo edged closer to their first Brazilian Serie A title since 1995 with a 1-0 victory at Interanational. The Venezuelan playmaker put the visitors ahead in the fifth minute at Estadio Beira-Rio in Porto Alegre with a spectacular first-time volley from 20 yards after Thiago Almada's cross from the right flank. The Rio de Janeiro outfit defended stubbornly thereafter to secure their 22nd win of the campaign and remain three points clear of second-placed Palmeiras with one match day remaining. "It was a very difficult game, and

we knew that we had to be prepared physically and mentally," Botafogo defender Alexander Barboza said. "Today was a final, and the next game will be another one. If you're not strong, it can be difficult. But this team fights, and when things don't go our way, we know that our teammates are there to help." The result came four days after Botafogo beat Atletico Mineiro 3-1 in Buenos Aires to secure their first Copa Libertadores title. Artur Jorge's men only need a draw against Sao Paulo at home on Sunday to clinch their third Brazilian top-flight trophy and a historic double. In other Brazilian Serie A fixtures on Wednesday, Vasco da Gama won 2-0 at home to Atletico Mineiro, Flamengo

cruised to a 3-0 win at Criciuma, Juventude prevailed 2-1 at Sao Paulo, Gremio drew 1-1 at Vitoria, Atletico Goianiense eased to a 3-1 home win over Fortaleza and Palmeiras won 2-1 at Cruzeiro. Estudiantes recovered from a goal down to secure a gripping 5-4 away victory over Racing in Argentina's Primera Division clash on Wednesday. Sebastian Boselli gave the visitors an early lead, but Maximiliano Salas and Santiago Solari struck in quick succession to hand Racing the advantage at halftime. Nazareno Colombo, Tiago Palacios and Guido Carrillo scored early in the

second half to fire Estudiantes to a 4-2 lead. But Racing did not surrender, and they were back on level terms after a quickfire double from substitute Luciano Vietto. The game took another turn when Edwain Cetre restored Estudiantes by firing a composed finish into the far corner five minutes from time. The result left Estudiantes 12th in the 28-team standings and all but ended Racing's title hopes. The Buenos Aires outfit is now five points behind leaders Velez Sarsfield with two match days remaining. In Wednesday's only other Primera Division match, River Plate was held to a 1-1 home draw by San Lorenzo.



Pakistan pose with the trophy after winning the T20 cricket series between Zimbabwe and Pakistan at Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. (AP)

Sports

Resilient Al-Qadsiya keeps hopes alive



Players vie for the ball during Al-Qadsiya and Al-Riffa match.

Al-Ettifaq of Saudi Arabia advances

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Dec 5: Al-Qadsiya's coach, Zeljko Petrovic, commended his team's performance against Al-Riffa of Bahrain in the second half, highlighting its resilience as it played for 50 minutes with 10 players after Adhbi Shehab was sent off with a red card.

The match, part of the fourth round of Group Two in the Gulf Clubs Champions League, ended with a 1-0 victory for Al-Qadsiya, courtesy of a goal by Moroccan Ismail Khafi at Mohammed Al-Hamad Stadium. With the win, Al-Qadsiya now sits in second place with 5 points, while Al-Riffa remains in third with 4 points. Meanwhile, Al-Ettifaq of Saudi Arabia secured its spot in the semifinals with 12 points after defeating Al-Arabi of Qatar 3-0, leaving the latter with just 1 point.

At the post-match press conference, Petrovic described his team's performance as "outstanding," especially giv-

en the challenge of playing with a man down. He added that Al-Qadsiya could have extended its lead had it capitalized on opportunities in the first half. "It wasn't an easy task against a strong, determined team," Petrovic said, emphasizing his goal of advancing as far as possible in the Gulf Championship and expressing confidence in his players and loyal fans.

Al-Qadsiya's manager, Musaed Neda, also voiced concerns about the refereeing in the Gulf Championship, noting that his team should have been awarded a penalty in the match against Al-Riffa. He also felt that the 9 minutes of added stoppage time were excessive.

On the other hand, Al-Riffa's coach, Haitham Jatal, remained optimistic about his team's chances of qualifying. Despite the loss to Al-Qadsiya, Jatal stressed that his team's position hadn't changed and that they would need to collect points in upcoming matches against Al-Ettifaq and Al-Arabi to secure progression. Reflecting on the match against Al-Qadsiya, Jatal acknowledged his team's inability to convert its superiority in the second half into goals.

The competition will pause and resume on February 5 with Al-Qadsiya hosting Al-Arabi, while Al-Ettifaq will travel to face Al-Riffa.

Steering Committee presses ahead with preparations for Khaleeji Zain 26

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 5, (KUNA):The Steering Committee of the Khaleeji Zain 26, led by Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, is making significant strides in its preparations for the event, ensuring all aspects are moving forward smoothly.

In a statement following its 15th meeting on Thursday, the committee confirmed that Minister Al-Mutairi, who also serves as Minister of Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, emphasized the need to intensify efforts across all working committees to ensure the championship runs without any issues.

The committee reviewed the progress of various sub-committees, focusing on key areas such as the readiness of the stadiums and other logistical arrangements, stressing the importance of completing all preparations ahead of time.

Additionally, members of the committee were presented with a visual plan by Zain, the official sponsor of the tournament, outlining its marketing and entertainment strategies, including the creation of a mural. The committee also approved an initiative by Al-Wafra Real Estate Company to set up a "Fan Zone" in Sharq Market, alongside the existing fan zones created by Zain.

The committee's ongoing efforts reflect its commitment to hosting a flawless Khaleeji Zain 26.



The Steering Committee meeting led by Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi in progress.

Top-flight sides fall in Copa del Rey

Mbappé enduring 'difficult moment' as Real Madrid loses ground to Barcelona

MADRID, Dec 5, (AP): Kylian Mbappé admitted he is going through a difficult moment as he missed another penalty kick and Real Madrid lost ground to Barcelona in the Spanish league after a 2-1 loss at Athletic Bilbao. In the Copa del Rey, first-division clubs Rayo Vallecano, Valencia and Real Betis all advanced over lower-division teams in the second round, but Villarreal lost 1-0 to fourth-division club Pontevedra and Girona fell on penalties to fourth-tier team Logrones.

Mbappé had his penalty saved by Athletic goalkeeper Julien Agirretxakala in the 68th minute, and later Federico Valverde gifted a late goal by losing possession on defense to allow an easy winner by Gorka Guruzeta in the 80th.

"Bad result," Mbappé posted on Instagram. "A big mistake in a match where every detail counts. I take full responsibility for it. A difficult moment but it's the best time to change this situation and show who I am."

Mbappé sent the penalty shot to his right and Agirretxakala dived that way

to make the stop.

"We knew that he is a good penalty taker," Agirretxakala said. "He missed the last one and I believed that he was going to choose the same side and luckily that's what happened."

Mbappé, who had a goal disallowed for offside in the 13th, had also missed a penalty in Madrid's 2-0 loss at Liverpool in the Champions League last week. He didn't take the one for the club in a Spanish league match on Sunday, but he scored in the 2-0 win over Getafe to ease some of the pressure on him and the club.

But it was another lackluster outing for the France star, who continues to struggle in his first season since finally joining the Spanish powerhouse.

"I won't evaluate the performance of a player because of a missed penalty. Obviously he is sad and disappointed, but you have to move on," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said about Mbappé. "He is not at his best level, but you have to give him time to adapt. You have to give him time to be able to do better."

Ancelotti also downplayed the bad

play by Valverde, saying that mistakes can happen to anyone.

Valverde had control of the ball but gave it away while trying to get past a couple of Athletic players instead of passing it to a teammate, leaving Guruzeta with an easy run into the area for his goal.

Álex Berenguer had put the hosts ahead in the 53rd and Jude Bellingham equalized for Madrid in the 78th.

The defeat left Madrid four points behind Barcelona, which on Tuesday ended a three-match winless streak in the league with a 5-1 rout at Mallorca. Madrid, which has a game in hand, had won three consecutive league games since a 4-0 loss at home in the "clásico" against Barcelona.

Madrid has lost five of its last 11 matches in all competitions.

Athletic moved to fourth place with the victory, its fourth consecutive across all competitions.

Both matches on Tuesday and Wednesday were moved forward in the schedule because the clubs will be playing in the Spanish Super Cup in January.

CAF deadline looms

Doubts remain over Kenya's ability to co-host 2025 CHAN

NAIROBI, Dec 5, (Xinhua): Kenya is under pressure to meet the requirements to co-host the 2025 Africa Home Nations Championships (CHAN), scheduled for February. The tournament, exclusively for locally-based players, will feature 19 teams, with Kenya set to partner with Uganda and Tanzania as co-hosts.

Unlike Uganda and Tanzania, which each boast a FIFA-CAF-approved stadium, Kenya currently lacks a facility that meets international standards. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has given Kenya until December 31 to ensure its readiness, following an inspection last week.

Inspectors toured Nairobi's key stadiums, including the 60,000-seater Moi International Sports Centre in Kasarani and the 30,000-seater Nyayo National Stadium, both under renovation. However, local media, citing CAF's findings, reported concerns that these venues may not be ready on time.

CAF has yet to issue an official statement, but its president, Patrice Motsepe, is expected to make a follow-up visit to Kenya later this month. His inspection will also focus on Kenya's preparations for co-hosting the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals alongside Uganda



Motsepe

and Tanzania.

Kenya's sports minister Kipchumba Murkomen expressed optimism that the deadlines would be met. During his visit to the renovation sites, Murkomen stated that contractors were implementing a 24-hour work schedule to ensure timely completion.

"I am confident that the facility will be completed within the set deadlines," Murkomen said in a statement on Tuesday.

In addition to stadium renovations, Kenya lags behind its co-hosts in forming a local organizing committees for CHAN 2025. The committee is expected to be constituted after Football Kenya Federation's elections, set to take place in Nairobi this Saturday.

Current FKF president Nick Mwendwa, who has completed his two-term limit, is ineligible for re-election. However, he has endorsed vice-president Doris Petra as his preferred successor while running for the vice-president's role himself. Seven candidates are vying for the top FKF position.

Meanwhile, Uganda has designated Mandela National Stadium in Kampala for international matches, while Tanzania uses the Benjamin Mkapa Stadium in Dar es Salaam.

In Kenya, besides Kasarani and Nyayo, other facilities earmarked as training grounds for CHAN teams include Police Sacco Stadium, Ulinzi Complex, MISC Annex, and Kenya Academy of Sports grounds.

Best of the Rest

Dujardin handed 1-year ban: Three-time Olympic equestrian gold medalist Charlotte Dujardin was suspended from all competition for one year on Thursday following a horse-whipping scandal that saw her withdraw from the Paris Games in July.

Dujardin was provisionally suspended by the International Federation for Equestrian Sports on July 23 as the governing body launched an investigation into a video from four years ago showing her repeatedly whipping a horse while coaching another rider.

A complaint was made to the FEI by Dutch equine lawyer Stephan Wensing on behalf of an unnamed client.

Dujardin cannot compete again until July next year, with the suspension back-dated to July 23 of this year. The FEI's sanction, for "engaging in conduct contrary to the principles of horse welfare," also included a fine of 10,000 Swiss francs (\$11,300). (AP)

Neuer facing toughest decision: For Manuel Neuer, overcoming challenges has been a defining feature of his decades-long career. From acrobatic saves to enduring injuries and setbacks, the 38-year-old Bayern Munich goalkeeper has consistently found ways to prevail - often in a manner that earns widespread admiration.

Now, Neuer faces perhaps the toughest decision of his storied career: determining when to step away from professional football.

Widely credited with revolutionizing the goalkeeper role by acting as a sweeper far beyond the penalty area, Neuer has left an indelible mark on the game. As a 2014 FIFA World Cup champion and two-time UEFA Champions League winner, his accomplishments are unparalleled - yet

time may be catching up with him.

Having retired from international football following Euro 2024 after winning 124 caps, Neuer signaled that his focus would remain on his club career. That choice now appears to be part of a path toward retirement. (Xinhua)

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Haiyang to compete in Worlds: Olympic champion Qin Haiyang and silver medalist Tang Qianting will spearhead China's 33-strong team to compete in the World Aquatics Swimming Championships (25M) from December 10 to 15.

Qin, gold medalist of men's 4x100m medley relay at the Paris Olympics, will compete in his favorite breaststroke events, while Tang Qianting, who finished with two silver medals in the women's 100m breaststroke and the mixed 4x100m medley relay in Pairs, will compete in 50m and 100m breaststroke.

At 13, Zhou Yanjun and Lu Xingchen are the youngest among 18 female swimmers, while 16-year-old Chen Shengxin and Li Taiyu are the youngest in the men's squad.

Notable absentees from the Budapest worlds are men's 100m free world record holder Pan Zhanle and twice Olympic gold medalist Zhang Yufei. (Xinhua)

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Durant out at least one week: Phoenix Suns forward Kevin Durant is out for at least the next week after spraining his left ankle in Tuesday night's win over the San Antonio Spurs.

The team announced the extent of the injury on Wednesday and said he'll be re-evaluated in a week.

The 14-time All-Star rolled his left ankle while driving to the basket late in the second quarter of the Suns' 104-93 win. He stayed in the game for a few moments before eventually checking out, finishing with 13 points. (AP)



Athletic Bilbao's Daniel Vivian, left, challenges Real Madrid's Rodrygo during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Athletic Bilbao and Real Madrid at the San Mames stadium in Bilbao, Spain. (AP)