



Scan the QR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

HAS Kuwait progressed after 47 governments and 18 National Assemblies, or has it sunk into a pit of decline due to the agreements made at its expense between ministers and parliamentarians, whose sole goal was to usurp public funds, secure appointments, and further personal

# May the Almighty assist the Amir to reform the country and regain its pioneership

interests and behaviors that are uncharacteristic of Kuwaitis?  
The political and economic conditions have remained unstable over the past few decades, leading to numerous crises, many of which were fabricated.  
Hence, the concept of "Hala February" emerged as a symbol of Kuwait's desire for life, joy, openness, tolerance, and leadership. It reflected the urgent need among people for joy and self-expression through every beneficial activity.

The goal of the Hala February project was to stimulate all national activities, not just shopping. It has had a significant, positive impact on the nation's economy.  
As a result, Hala February became the first of its kind in the Gulf and even the Arab world. During this month, Kuwait transformed into a hub of activity, creativity, and happiness.  
Sadly, this initiative faced disapproval from those driven by personal interests and extremist beliefs. They pressured the

government to first limit the activities of Hala February, then suspend them entirely under the guise of the COVID-19 pandemic, and eventually cancel them altogether.  
As a result of these limitations and many other improvised decisions by short-sighted individuals, society suffered significant harm. We found ourselves trapped in a state of stagnation, which extended far beyond the political and economic circumstances.

His Highness the Amir realized from the beginning that the only way out of this impasse of backwardness was to develop and modernize the laws.

Continued on Page 5

Email: ahmed@aljarallah.com

Follow me on:



ahmedaljarallah@gmail.com

## Kuwait calls for POWs, missing files resolution

NEW YORK, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN headquarters in New York Ambassador Tareq Al-Banai called for speeding up the process of finding and identifying the remains of Kuwaiti POWs, missing persons and properties through tangible action, rather than procrastination.

The Kuwaiti diplomat made the call during a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) session on the situation in Iraq late Friday.

He added that UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' 41st report on the file of Kuwaiti POWs had shown a painful human story that dates back to the 1990s and concerns POWs' families, pointing out continued efforts to find the remains of 308 missing persons.

In this context, he underlined the significance of UN following up on the field activity of concerned parties, in addition to transparency in manifesting the image in its genuine reality through the UN chief's periodical reports.

Slowness

"It is no secret that everyone, particularly the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the International Committee of the Red Cross, member states of the tripartite and sub-technical committees - Saudi Arabia, the US, UK, France, Iraq and Kuwait - are aware of slowness on the ground regarding the file," he said.

"Any procrastination or reluctance would unquestionably hamper this file," he said, citing the recent committee meetings' minutes as unequivocal proof of sluggishness and recalcitrance.

Regarding the end of the UNAMI mission late this year, the Kuwaiti diplomat said his country is only interested in finding a UN mechanism that could push this track forward in an effective manner in a bid to find the remains of missing persons and regain all Kuwaiti properties, including the national archive.

He urged the UN to appoint a high-level coordinator for the dossier, noting that this UN mechanism had enabled high-level coordinators to contribute to identifying the remains of 234 missing persons and overseeing the regaining of multiple properties that were seized during the occupation.

Continued on Page 5

# Kuwait charts tax revamp with 15 pct corporate rate

KD 1.5 mln turnover cap could grant exemption

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Ministry of Finance finds itself racing against time as discussions heated over the proposed introduction of a Corporate Income Tax, a development first highlighted by Al-Seyassah on October 27 under the headline 'The Ministry of Finance is racing against time ... Corporate Income Tax in 2025', reports the daily.

According to a draft of the Business Profits Tax Law, the government is leaning toward imposing a 15 percent income tax on the business activities of companies operating within Kuwait and Kuwaiti companies operating across multiple markets.

However, a significant exemption is proposed - companies whose annual business turnover does not exceed one and a half million dinars during the tax period would be exempt.

The draft indicates that the tax would apply to profits starting after January 1, 2025, specifically targeting multinational groups.

Furthermore, advance tax payments would be delayed until the beginning of 2026. Broader categories of taxable businesses would fall under the law beginning on January 1, 2027.

The tax law, as noted in Al-Seyassah's observations, proposes a flat 15 percent rate on taxable income. Yet, there are exceptions - income derived by legal entities wholly owned by the state would be tax-free.

Business income originating from the divided zone or submerged divided zone would attract a tax rate of 30 percent. However, this would be reduced to 50 percent if the taxpayer has already paid 50 percent of the tax owed to Saudi Arabia.

Continued on Page 5

## Bahraini Crown Prince highlights deep Kuwait-Bahrain bonds



KUNA photo

The Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister of Bahrain receives the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister and his accompanying delegation during their visit to participate in the Manama Dialogue Forum 2024, highlighting the strong diplomatic ties between the two nations.

MANAMA, Dec 7, (KUNA): Bahraini Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa hailed the strong historic Bahraini-Kuwaiti relations and cooperation on all levels.

According to BNA on Saturday, Prince Salman's statement came during his meeting with Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya late Friday, on the sidelines of the 20th session of the Manama Dialogue, held until December 8.

He noted the continuous development of Bahraini-Kuwaiti ties, due to efforts of Bahrain's King Hamad bin Essa Al Khalifa and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He added that the two countries are eager to further enhance their cooperation and coordination in different fields, and to develop joint work.

On Saturday, Bahraini Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa met with Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and his accompanying delegation.

Al-Yahya, who is visiting Bahrain to partake in Manama Dialogue, conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa and

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait resolves cleaning companies strike

### Maintaining a focused learning space is non-negotiable: education minister

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: As the first semester final exams approach, Kuwait's Minister of Education, Eng. Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, announced the resolution of the cleaning companies' strike, ensuring the continuation of their services across all educational institutions.

The move aims to maintain a stable and healthy learning environment critical for academic success.

Al-Tabtabaei highlighted that under the directives of the political leadership and the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Education has disbursed overdue financial dues to the contracted companies after comprehensive reviews aligned with existing regulations.

This resolution was achieved in cooperation with relevant authorities, ensuring uninterrupted service delivery.

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait seeks GWO constituent status

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait desires to join Global Water Organization (GWO) established in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, as a constituent member, upon the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, said a Kuwaiti minister on Saturday.

Speaking in a press statement, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Mahmoud Boushehri said the organization whose establishment was announced by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Tuesday during the "One Water Summit" aims to address water challenges in a comprehensive way through unifying international efforts.

Continued on Page 5

## Customs sniffs out Lyrica pills in dog food shipment

By Munif Naif  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Customs officers seized approximately 250,000 Lyrica pills that were hidden in a shipment labeled as "dog food" from China.

The General Administration of Customs reported that customs officers discovered the narcotic substance "Lyrica" after inspecting suspicious shipments that arrived from China. Upon examination, they found bags of animal food filled with roughly 250,000 psychotropic pills.

A seizure report was prepared, and the necessary customs procedures were initiated.

250,000 pills seized

## NewsWatch

GAZA: At least 52 Palestinians have fallen martyrs and 142 others were wounded in several Israeli occupation air strikes on the Gaza Strip, Gaza health authorities said on Saturday.

The Israeli occupation forces have committed, over the past 24 hours, four massacres against some families in the Strip, causing the above-mentioned casualties, authorities said in a press statement. (KUNA)

BEIRUT: Syrian insurgents have reached the suburbs of Damascus as part of a rapidly moving offensive that has seen them take over some of Syria's largest cities, opposition activists and a rebel commander said Saturday. Rami Abdulrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said insurgents are now active in the Damascus suburbs of Maadamiyah, Jaramana and Daraya. (AP)

MANAMA: Kingdom of Bahrain and the United States announced on Saturday a joint statement to invite the United Kingdom to accede to the Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement (C-SIPA). The joint statement stressed that the agreement represents a major step forward in fostering broader regional security integration, bolstering mutual deterrence against external threats, and expanding cooperation in the fields of commerce, science, and technology with like-minded states in support of peace and prosperity in the Middle East, according to Bahraini News Agency (BNA). (KUNA)

## Donation campaign concludes

## Kuwait reiterates unwavering support for Lebanon, people

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The three-day campaign titled "Kuwait Wants Your Safety" concluded its activities at the Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait today.

In-kind donations began arriving at the embassy on Friday morning, consisting of medicines, medical supplies, and items for children and women.

Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Development and International Cooperation Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan expressed his joy at participating in the donation campaign launched by the Lebanese Embassy.

He praised the tremendous efforts made by the embassy, the Lebanese community and other communities, and the Kuwaiti

Continued on Page 5

## Citizenship revocation stirs administrative controversy

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: In light of the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Nationality's announcement of the withdrawal and revocation of 2,162 citizenships, significant legal and administrative developments have unfolded, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

These cases, now under review by the Council of Ministers, include business owners whose files have been suspended by the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), effectively barring them from conducting further business activities.

Sources within PAM revealed the ongoing efforts to address the resulting challenges, particularly regarding workers registered under these revoked citizenships who may require work permit renewals or transfers.

Continued on Page 5

8 KFH wins 'Bank of the Year' award from The Banker magazine

8 NBK named 'Best Foreign Exchange Provider in Kuwait' for 2025



9 Gulf Bank celebrates decade of excellence at annual gala, highlighting key milestones and future growth

10 Zain showcases leadership in tech innovation and support for entrepreneurs



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	05:05	Asr .....	14:31
Sunrise ...	06:29	Sunset ....	16:50
Zuhr .....	11:39	Isha .....	18:11

# Local

**Expected Weather for the Next 24 hrs**  
**By Day:** Warm with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speed of 10-38 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.  
**By Night:** Rather cold to cold with light to moderate northwest-

Weather			
erly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08-32 km/h and some high clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	24	14	
Kuwait Airport	24	11	
Abdaly	26	10	

Bubyan	26	10
Jahra	24	13
Failaka Island	24	15
Salmiya	23	17
Ahmadi	24	12
Jal Aliyah	24	11
Nuwaisib	24	14



The Secretary-General of the Arab League meets with Kuwaiti diplomats at the conclusion of a training program at the General Secretariat.

## Delegation briefed on key regional issues

# Arab League chief meets Kuwaiti diplomatic trainees

CAIRO, Dec 7, (KUNA): Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abulghait on Thursday held a meeting with members of the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry program for training diplomats.

The meeting was held at the end of a training program prepared by the league Secretariat General for a delegation from the Kuwaiti Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute (December 1-5). It was attended by the Kuwaiti Permanent Delegate at the Arab League Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi and the Assistant Secretary General, the Head of the Administrative and Fi-

nancial Affairs Divisions, Ambassador Mohammad Al-Ojairi.

The secretary general briefed the Kuwaiti delegation about the organization's role as to boosting cooperation among the member states regarding social, political and economic challenges at the regional level and its role in cementing bonds among the member countries. He also briefed the delegation about role of the specialized ministerial councils and affiliate organizations.

For his part, the Kuwaiti permanent delegate, Ambassador Al-Mutairi, expressed gratitude to the league chief for the briefing about the league's role

in enhancing joint Arab action.

The State of Kuwait, he said, recalls with pride the constructive role of the secretariat general with respect of supporting Arab causes including the issues and interests of the State of Kuwait.

Dr. Mubarak Al-Asfour, the deputy assistant foreign minister for the affairs of Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute, said the institute had sent the delegation to Cairo in response to an invitation by the Arab Organization for Administrative Development -- affiliated to the Arab League.

Dr. Al-Asfour said in a state-

ment to KUNA that the delegation's agenda includes lectures, a visit to the organization headquarters, the local Diplomatic Studies Institute and Cairo Center for settling Strifes.

Saud Al-Nasser Institute seeks to boost cooperation with counterparts at the regional and international levels for enabling the foreign ministry personnel enrich their knowledge and examine others' expertise, Dr. Al-Asfour added.

The five-day training program featured a lecture about the Arab League history, tasks and efforts at the level of the joint Arab security, combating terrorism and migration.

# Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Finland President on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday sent a congratulatory cable to President of Finland Alexander Stubb on the occasion of his country's National Day, wishing him good health.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the President of Finland good health, and Finland and its friendly people more progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Friday sent a congratulatory cable to President of Finland Alexander Stubb on the occasion of his country's National Day, wishing him good health.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Friday sent a congratulatory cable to President of Finland Alexander Stubb on the occasion of his country's National Day.

# Kuwait PM calls for quick execution of China MoUs

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has urged the concerned ministers to follow up on the implementation of the agreements and memoranda of understanding signed between the State of Kuwait and the friendly People's Republic of China.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah instructed the ministers during a cabinet meeting he chaired at the Bayan Palace on Wednesday.

He directed the ministers to speed up the pace of the exaction of the development projects in the country.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a milestone visit to China in September 2023, when he was the Crown Prince, and held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

This visit ushered in a new phase of cooperation for pushing forward the Belt and Road Initiative and showed both countries' determination to harmonize the Belt and Road Initiative and the Kuwait National



KUNA photo  
Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Vision 2035.

During this visit, a number of agreements and MoUs were hammered buttress cooperation between the two friendly countries in various domains.

# PAHW distributes 42,669 housing units to citizens in last ten years

87% of homes are plots

**By Mohammed Al-Enezi**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: A recent government report revealed that the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) distributed 42,669 housing units to citizens in the last ten years, with an average of 356 units per month. This includes residential plots, government houses, and apartments, with a notable disparity in the distribution rates among different types of housing.**

The statistics, included in the annual bulletin of social services issued by the Central Statistical

Bureau for the period from 2014 to 2023, showed that residential plots accounted for the largest share of distributions, totaling 37,188 plots, or 87.2 percent of the total distributed units, with an average of about 310 plots per month. Distributions have been largely concentrated in recent years, with 2022 recording the highest number of plot distributions at 10,518, followed by 2021 with 9,572 plots.

Government houses accounted for a total of 4,581 units, or 10.7 percent of the overall distribution, with a monthly average of approximately 38 houses. This distribution pattern largely ceased after 2015, a year in which 2,555 government houses were distributed, which is the highest number recorded.

In subsequent years, the distribution of government houses decreased significantly, with no

houses being distributed until 2021, except for 425 houses that year and just 84 in 2022, which were covered by the "Who Sold His House" law.

Residential apartments were the least distributed type, with a total of only 900 units, representing 2.1 percent of the total distributed housing, and a monthly average of just 7.5 apartments.

The distributions covered several key areas, including Northwest Sulaybiyeh, Jaber Al-Ahmad, Sabah Al-Ahmad, Wafra Al-Qaim, West and South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Sabahiya, Southern Khaitan, and Mutlaa. Among these, Mutlaa received the largest share of housing plots.

The statistics revealed noticeable fluctuations in the annual distribution of units, with no distributions recorded in 2016, 2019, and 2020. However, 2022 saw a peak in distributions, with a total of 10,518 units, followed by 2023, which recorded 9,826 units.



KUNA photo  
Kuwaiti youth leaders delegation in Manama.

# Young Leaders 2024 offers key platform for regional dialogue

MANAMA, Dec 7, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti delegation participating in the "Young Leaders 2024" program in Bahrain stressed on Friday the importance of the program in allowing constructive dialogue on "strategic issues", especially security ones.

This came in a statement to KUNA by the delegation participating in the program, prepared by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, on the sidelines of the 20th "Manama Dialogue" session that began today and will go on until next Sunday.

Assistant Director General for Islamic Artefacts at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Sheikh Dr. Al-Anoud Ibrahim Al-Sabah assured the importance of young people participating in the program, providing them with a space for dialogue and empowering them for a better future.

She added that programs like this broadens their understanding of foreign policy, discuss regional issues facing the Middle East, and create inspiring leaders that can make a dif-

ference.

She noted the continuous success achieved by Bahrain over the last 20 years since the Manama Dialogue, adding that it is the most important security-political gathering that includes prominent figures in those fields.

For his part, Head of International Relations in the Office of First Deputy Prime Minister, Interior, and Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Sabah Al-Salam said that Arab Gulf countries are facing many challenges at present time, resulting from economic, social, political, regional and global transformations.

He stressed the importance of participating in the program as it allows the youth to exchange experiences and opinions in many fields.

The Special Assistant to the Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations Aya Taqi expressed her honor to represent Kuwait in the program, adding that it provided her an opportunity to meet with professionals from across the region.

# Security campaign in Jaber Al-Ahmad nets 18 arrests

**By Munif Naif**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Based on directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Interior conducted an extensive security campaign in Jaber Al-Ahmad, which resulted in the issuance of 1,638 traffic citations, the arrest of 18 wanted individuals, and the

seizure of eight violating vehicles.

They also arrested three individuals for violating residency and labor laws, seven wanted persons, two individuals who were reported as absconding, and three for lacking any identification documents. Also three individuals were referred to traffic police, and four minors were sent to juvenile investigations.

According to the Security Media Department

of the Ministry of Interior, multiple sectors participated in the campaign including Public Security, Traffic, Operations, Special Security, and Women's Police. These campaigns are part of a comprehensive strategy to enhance security and maintain public order. They will continue efforts to apprehend violators and wanted persons in order to ensure a safe and stable environment throughout the country.

# Kuwait proposes digital platform at UN for responsible norms in ICT use

NEW YORK, Dec 7, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has presented a proposal to the United Nations to develop a digital platform for voluntary and non-binding norms for responsible behavior of states in the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The proposal was presented to the UN by Director of the Kuwait Information and Communications Technology Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Qadeeri at the UN Open-Ended Working Group meeting on the Safe Use of ICT.

He pointed out that the platform aims to help Member States effectively implement the UN norms, addressing gaps, and adapt to changing threats arising from the use of ICT with greater efficiency and better cooperation. Kuwait will provide the United Nations with the source code for the platform and all necessary documents to ensure its smooth and efficient operation, Al-Qadeeri said.

He noted that Kuwait has already started the development of the platform, which reflects its firm commitment to



KUNA photo  
Abdullah Al-Qadeeri, Director of the Information and Communications Technology Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

pushing this initiative forward.

Al-Qadeeri stressed that the Kuwaiti initiative comes within the framework of the United Nations approved voluntary norms for responsible behavior of states and it aims to improve capacity and enhance confidence-building among Member States.

## Al-Omar highlights Vision 2035 and startup support

# Kuwait keen on becoming regional tech hub

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait is keen on becoming a regional technology and innovation center through the efforts of youth and business oriented personnel, Minister of State for Communication Affairs Omar Al-Omar affirmed on Thursday.

This statement by Al-Omar came during the opening of the three-day "NEXUS" exhibition for technology and innovation.

The minister indicated that the directives of the Kuwaiti leadership and Kuwait Vision 2035 for development called for such events that would boost national economy propelling it into the global scene.

He affirmed his ministry's support of such exhibitions that would bolster cooperation among public and private entities and help promote small and medium size enterprises.

Minister Al-Omar said that the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cloud computing were important components of the modern state, which sought overall progress, stressing that technological advancement also required a human core and involvement.



KUNA photo  
Minister of State for Communications Omar Al-Omar during his speech.

According to the NEXUS exhibition, on December 5-7, the event will bring together over 60 leading companies from a diverse range of sectors.

NEXUS features an expansive exhibition space where attendees could engage with technologies and solutions.

From startups to industry giants, the exhibitors represent the forefront of technological advancements and innovative practices.

In addition to the exhibition, NEXUS hosts a series of conferences and workshops led by seasoned professionals.

These sessions are tailored to provide attendees with valuable insights, practical knowledge, and opportunities for learning that can be directly applied to their respective fields. Whether it is the latest trends in artificial intelligence, the future of blockchain or advancements in renewable energy, the conference lineup is designed to inspire and educate.

NEXUS also features the first-of-its-kind Startup Challenge, where 100 emerging startups will compete for six mega prizes totaling KD 30,000, including a grand prize of KD 10,000.

These startups will present their groundbreaking ideas and business models to a panel of esteemed judges and a captivated audience.



diwaniya

ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Dangerous situation in Syria

“I WRITE from memory, in brief. Syria once lived in self-sufficiency and the situation was relatively calm. However, in 2011, a Western conspiracy swept across the Arab world, an event some referred to as the ‘Arab Spring,’” columnist **Ahmed Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The regimes were overthrown in Tunisia, Libya and Yemen, though it failed in Egypt. In Syria, the unrest began with a popular uprising in Daraa, which quickly escalated into the formation of armed rebel factions — some Islamic, others secular. The Kurds also moved to challenge the Syrian regime.

“By 2015, the government sought assistance from Hezbollah in Lebanon and military militias from Iran. Russia joined with airstrikes and by 2018, the civil war largely ended in favor of the regime, restoring a degree of calm.

“However, the government only controls about 70 percent of Syria. Kurdish forces dominate the east, rebels hold the northwest and Turkey occupies parts of the northern territories.

“On October 7, Hamas launched an attack on Israel, prompting a severe response that devastated Gaza, killed thousands and targeted senior Hamas leaders.

“Hezbollah in Lebanon subsequently escalated its activities against Israel, which retaliated with overwhelming force, destroying parts of southern Lebanon, the Bekaa and southern suburbs of Beirut.

“The Israeli strikes killed around 4,000 Hezbollah fighters, assassinated party leaders and targeted missile manufacturing facilities in Iran.

“In the aftermath, armed factions in Syria perceived Hezbollah as weakened and Russia as preoccupied with the war in Ukraine. Believing this, the rebels advanced in northwest Syria, taking control of Idlib and Aleppo and pushing toward other cities.

“However, Russia intervened with airstrikes, supported by Iranian and Iraqi militias. The conflict is ongoing, leaving Syria in a precarious and volatile state.

“In my view, the Arab nations should support the Syrian government. The rebel factions, comprising extremist Islamists, secular groups and factions with diverse ideologies, pose significant risks.

“Should they overthrow the Assad regime, internal divisions would likely spark fierce infighting, plunging the country into deeper chaos.

“Such a scenario would exacerbate the suffering of the Syrians and potentially destabilize Jordan, Iraq and the broader Arab region.”

**Also:**

“Recent years have witnessed a radical shift in the design of cities around the world, with the emergence of the concept of ‘smart cities’ as a major focus for sustainable development,” columnist **Dr. Dhari Adel Al-Huwail** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“However, this massive technological transformation is hardly without challenges, most notably those related to cybersecurity. This issue was the main focus of discussion in the dialogue session on cybersecurity in smart cities within the proceedings of the ‘International Conference on Smart Governance and Innovation for Sustainable Cities’, organized by the Arab Open University in Kuwait.

“During the symposium, me and a group of experts were honored to highlight the importance of cooperation between academia, industry and the public sector to address the cyber challenges that threaten the infrastructure of these cities.

“A report issued by the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority indicated that smart cities face increasing cyber challenges due to their extensive reliance on interconnected digital infrastructure, which makes them highly vulnerable to cyber attacks.

“Cyber attacks risks in smart cities include targeting transportation systems, healthcare and public services, which put people’s lives and safety at risk.

“For example, Ukraine witnessed cyber attacks targeting electricity grids, which led to widespread service outages and a significant impact on the population.

“In Kuwait, the challenges center around weak integration between different systems and a shortage of specialized cybersecurity personnel.

“Strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors will enhance flexibility and response to accelerating challenges. There is no doubt that higher education institutions play a pivotal role in preparing cadres and building knowledge in the field of cybersecurity.

“However, academic curricula are usually far from the latest developments due to the long documentary cycle to update curricula to suit the changing requirements of smart cities.

“The private sector has great potential to enhance cybersecurity by providing innovative technological solutions, investing in joint research and providing training programs that bridge the gap between education and market needs.

“These efforts contribute to the development of advanced monitoring systems, along with applications that rely on big data to effectively analyze cyber threats.

“To achieve these goals and to enhance cooperation between universities and the private sector, the state has a vital role by establishing effective policies that support innovation and encourage sustainable partnerships by encouraging the establishment of technology incubators and providing funding for joint research projects, in addition to aligning local policies with international standards for safe smart cities.

“It is also necessary to raise citizens’ awareness of the importance of cyberse-



Ahmed Al-Dawas

curity and enable them to participate in protecting their smart cities and benefit from global expertise and transfer knowledge through strategic partnerships with countries that have made great strides in this field and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries are good examples for us.

“Public-private partnerships can enhance resilience and response to emerging cyber challenges and incidents. Building safe, secure smart cities requires close collaboration between academia, industry and the public sector.

“With the increasing reliance on technology in every aspect of life, enhancing cybersecurity is no longer an option, but an urgent necessity. Decision-makers must take strategic steps to enhance this collaboration to ensure a safer and more sustainable future for the country and its smart cities.”

□ □ □

“The international community celebrates Human Rights Day on December 10 each year to commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948,” columnist **Dr. Hind Al-Shoumer** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

“This declaration outlines a comprehensive set of fundamental rights and freedoms enjoyed by all individuals, ensuring equality without discrimination based on nationality, residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status.

“It serves as a global blueprint for laws and policies at international, national and local levels and forms the foundation for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“This year’s theme, ‘Our Rights, Our Future, Now,’ emphasizes the transformative power of human rights in enabling individuals and communities to build a better tomorrow.

“By fully embracing and upholding human rights, societies can achieve greater peace, equality and sustainability, aligning with the vision of a more just and harmonious world.

“The purpose of this celebration is to empower nations and other national institutions to fulfill their commitments to human rights, uphold the rule of law and foster a culture of human rights.

“This, in turn, helps achieve lasting peace and security while empowering populations to claim and realize their fundamental rights.

“The campaign this year seeks to highlight the tangible impact of human rights by focusing on pressing global issues and showcasing achievements, practical solutions and the significance of protecting human dignity.

“Upholding human rights is essential to safeguarding the humanity of every individual, ensuring a life of dignity, equality and freedom irrespective of race, gender, religion, or social status.

“Since its independence and the adoption of its Constitution in 1962, Kuwait has demonstrated its commitment to human rights by incorporating numerous articles aligned with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international conventions. Kuwait continues to enact laws and measures that reflect its deep respect for human rights.

“Human rights play a pivotal role as a preventive, protective and transformative force in addressing the most pressing concerns of individuals.

“Defending these rights averts harm before it occurs and unites people in a shared mission to promote peace, stability and justice. Ultimately, human rights serve as a protective shield for a better and more secure future.”

□ □ □

“The 1959 Nationality Law outlines specific cases under which Kuwaiti nationality may be granted by decree, based on the recommendation of the Minister of Interior,” columnist **Dr. AbdulRahman Al-Jeeran** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

“These cases are detailed in Article 4, Clause 4, which states nationality may be granted for those deemed ‘sufficient or providing services the country needs,’ and in Article 5, Clause 1, which includes those who ‘offer distinguished services to the country.’

“However, debate persists regarding the interpretation of these provisions, with some advocating for stricter limitations and others favoring broader applications. The controversy lies in how these terms — such as ‘distinguished services’ — are interpreted and applied, revealing inconsistencies in their implementation.

“Legal principles dictate that legislative texts must be clear, specific and devoid of ambiguity to ensure consistent application. When terms like ‘noble works’ are applied in practice, challenges arise due to subjective interpretations, leading to cases where decisions appear questionable, even in critical matters.

“Thus, a balanced interpretation aligned with constitutional principles and national sovereignty is essential to uphold justice.

“Modern legal thought emphasizes that justice is not achieved by blindly repeating precedents but by considering evolving societal norms, circumstances and priorities.

“Laws must adapt to changing needs and developments to serve the nation’s supreme interests and security. As stated in legal and constitutional principles, judicial decisions must correspond to the gravity and context of the actions they address.

“To achieve balance, it is necessary to adhere to the literal meaning of the text while expanding its interpretation within the framework of higher national interests.

“The term ‘noble works’ should be understood not merely as acts of personal virtue but as contributions that align with the principles and values of the state such as honesty, integrity and societal benefit.

“Islam itself emphasizes excellence in all fields, encouraging individuals to pursue work that benefits society and upholds high ethical standards.”

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Photo taken during the campaign.

Raising awareness, distributing safety kits to campers

KFF launches ‘Safety in the Desert’ campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Public Relations and Media Department of the Kuwait Fire Force launched its ‘Safety in the Desert’ campaign at the KFF camp Friday afternoon, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative was organized in collaboration with the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) and is timed to coincide with the desert camping season.

The primary objective of the campaign is to raise preventive awareness among desert-goers about the potential risks and dangers associated with this season’s activities. The campaign aims to protect lives and property by minimizing risks and preventing accidents.

Key elements of the campaign included -- distribution of safety kits,

a protective equipment bag was distributed, containing essential items complete with a fire extinguisher, a smoke detector, a fire blanket, a first aid kit and awareness leaflets with vital safety information.

The comprehensive safety plan campaign included a structured plan focused on education and prevention to ensure a safe desert experience.

The KFF emphasized the importance of promoting safety and preventive measures for individuals engaging in camping and outdoor activities this season.

The initiative combines awareness, education and the distribution of essential safety tools to encourage preparedness and quick responses to emergencies.

Interior ministry unravels human trafficking ring, arrests 3 suspects

Court acquits prisoner over unlawful search

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: In a significant ruling, the Criminal Court Thursday acquitted a prisoner serving a 15-year sentence for drug use and smuggling drugs into prison, citing procedural errors.

The court deemed searches conducted without prior authorization from the Public Prosecution or outside cases of flagrante delicto as invalid, sending a clear message to prison authorities.

The court emphasized that personal freedom, as a fundamental human right, cannot be restricted arbitrarily. The ruling highlighted that searches and arrests are permissible only under specific legal conditions, such as cases of flagrant offenses or with explicit permission from the Public Prosecution.

These protections extend to prisoners, who cannot be searched without legal justification.

Defense lawyer, Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, argued that his client’s case fell outside the exceptions granted by law.

He pointed out that the Prisons Organization Law explicitly outlines specific circumstances where searches are permitted, such as the mandatory search of prisoners upon entry (Article 22) and the review of prisoner correspondence in category B (Article 42).

Beyond these exceptions, the law does not authorize general searches of prisoners, affirming their rights akin to any individual under legal protection.

This ruling underscores the necessity for adherence to legal procedures and safeguards against violations of personal freedoms, reinforcing Kuwait’s commitment to upholding the rule of law and human rights standards.

**Also:**

The Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of a Kuwaiti citizen, a Pakistani and an unidentified individual by the General Department of Residence Affairs Investigations on charges of human trafficking, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Investigations revealed that the duo collaborated to bring expatriate workers into the



The human traffickers in custody.

Mol photo



KFF photo

The bus involved in the collision on the Sixth Ring Road.

Fatal collision claims 2 lives on 6th Ring Road

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: A devastating collision Friday evening on the Sixth Ring Road between a sand truck and a bus resulted in the loss of two lives, with initial reports indicating the severity of the collision, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Mishref Fire Force personnel who were the first to arrive at the site of the accident worked diligently to manage the aftermath of the accident.

After ensuring the safety of all parties involved and addressing the immediate needs, the fire brigade handed over the site to the competent authorities to conduct further investigations.

Details surrounding the cause of the collision remain under investigation as officials work to determine the sequence of events that led to this unfortunate tragedy. Authorities are expected to release additional information as the investigation progresses.

KFA warns fans of fake tickets for Gulf Zain 26

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): The Kuwait Football Association has warned fans about fake websites and accounts selling tickets for the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup (Gulf Zain 26). They emphasized that ticket sales are only announced through the association’s official websites.

In a press statement released Friday, the association stated, “The websites claiming to sell tickets for the Gulf Zain 26 tournament are fraudulent, and all prices listed on them are incorrect.

Kuwait will host the Gulf 26 tournament from December 21 to January 3. Eight teams will participate: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iraq, and Yemen.

PAM launches new services on Sahel

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has announced the launch of new online services through the “Sahel” application, integrated with the “Fakhrna” platform. These services allow individuals, who are eligible for graduation bonuses and job search allowances and are enrolled in military courses, to have their bonuses refunded upon completion of the course period, reports Al-Jarida daily.

PAM explained that the process involves accessing the application, selecting electronic services from the platform, and choosing the “Refund - End of Military Course” service. Users must then upload the certificate confirming the end of service approved by the relevant authority (if applicable), and await approval from the concerned department to finalize the disbursement process.



MUGHAL MAHAL

“We Cater, You Party!”

Wedding | Anniversary | Birthday | Events

Corporate Party & much more

ORDER US DIRECTLY

DISCOUNTS & PROMOTIONS

1800 188 5501 1985

@mughalmahalkuwait

www.mughalmahal.com



Ambassador Al-Maliki emphasizes deep bonds of kinship with Kuwait

Bahraini ambassador commends social care collaboration

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Ambassador Salah Al-Maliki praised on Saturday the initiative that allowed members of Abdulrahman Kanoo Social Club for Parents Care to visit Kuwait, stressing its role in strengthening bilateral ties.

Ambassador Al-Maliki's statement to KUNA came on the occasion of the conclusion of the visit made by members of the club to Kuwait, which was an initiative of the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, with the support of Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah and ministry officials.

Ambassador Al-Maliki stressed the depth of the unique and distinguished relations between the two countries, noting that these ties depict the concept of one family that is united by cohesion, kinship, and sincere and distinguished love in prosperity and adversity.



Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Ambassador Salah Al-Maliki

He praised the role and support of the wise political leadership of the two countries, appreciating the generous initiative of the visit made by Ambassador Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah.

He explained the importance of the initiative and its role in bringing "joy and happiness to our brothers and fathers of great respect" through their visit to their second country, Kuwait, for which they hold all love and appreciation to its leadership and people.

Al-Maliki said that the club members included men who had a fundamental role in building their families and homelands, and defended unified Gulf, adding that some of them had participated in the liberation war of Kuwait, some were teachers, and some were loyal employees.

He noted the care given by the governments of Bahrain and Kuwait to this group and the support and participation of civil societies and clubs to provide all means and capabilities to serve them.

Ambassador Al-Maliki expressed his thanks to the leadership, government and people of Kuwait for all the support, assistance and appreci-

ation for the great love they always express on every occasion towards the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people.

President of Hamad Town Charitable Society and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kanoo Club Yousef Al-Mahmeed confirmed, in a previous statement to KUNA, that the three-day trip would strengthen cooperation and integration between the peoples of the GCC countries in the field of elderly care and discuss the latest aspirations in this field.

He stressed that Kuwait is one of the leading countries in the field of elderly care through its centers and care homes, in addition to its interest in various fields, including disability and childhood.

He appreciated the interest of the Minister of Social Affairs and officials in informing the visiting Bahraini delegation about Kuwait's experience in caring for and serving the elderly.



Photo from the training program.

Program includes lectures, field training

NCCAL, French institution team up for heritage conservation program

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) joined a French institution in a training program to rehabilitate and conserve the heritage sites.

The innovative program, organized by the French Research Center for the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA), was attended by NCCAL Secretary General Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar and France Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin.

Speaking to KUNA on Thursday, CEFREPA Director Makram Abbas said the training program falls in the framework of cultural cooperation between the French center and NCCAL which date back to 2015.

The program aims to provide the Kuwaiti architects and archeologists with more skills and modern tools of, and clear insight into,

rehabilitation of historical building, he said, adding that it included lectures and field training under supervision of the French institution.

Abbas commended the joint Kuwaiti-French initiatives in the field of conservation of heritage.

On her part, Zahraa Alibaba, in charge of NCCAL's historical buildings dept., said the program started on Sunday, December 1, and continues until Thursday, December 12.

The lectures and workshops of the program help build the capacity of the Kuwaiti architects in the rehabilitation and documentation of heritage sites and historical buildings, she said in similar statements to KUNA.

The field training included the two historical buildings of Al-Gharballi and Najaf bin Redha at Souq Mubarakia.

MEW to retire 85 employees, advance Kuwaitization goals

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has announced plans to refer 85 employees to retirement next March.

According to informed sources, the retirement process targets those who have served 35 years

11,505 water connection repairs in 2023

(for men) and 30 years (for women), in alignment with civil service regulations.

In other news, the ministry continues to make progress on Kuwaitizing its workforce. Sources revealed a significant reduction in non-Kuwaiti employees, from 1,362 in 2017 to 871 by the end of the 2023 fiscal year.

This reflects the implementation of Civil Service Resolution No. 11 of 2017, aimed at prioritizing jobs for Kuwaiti nationals.

Over the same period, the number of Kuwaiti employees surged from

19,078 in 2017 to 33,705 in 2023, now constituting 97.5 percent of the ministry's workforce, up from 93.3 percent. The total workforce of the ministry currently stands at 43,576 employees.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to the Kuwaitization initiative, emphasizing collaboration with the Civil Service Bureau to integrate more national graduates across various specializations and ensure sustainable employment opportunities for Kuwaiti citizens.

Meanwhile, in 2023, the Ministry

of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy successfully repaired 11,505 water connection repairs, comprising 10,409 fresh water incidents and 1,096 brackish water cases, according to informed sources.

October recorded the highest number of fresh water damages at 1,124, while January saw the most brackish water issues, with 136 cases.

The ministry continues its efforts to maintain and improve water infrastructure, ensuring efficient services for residents and addressing issues promptly.



KUNA photo

Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Austria and its Permanent Representative to the United Nations and International Organizations in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam delivers an oral statement at the International Court of Justice.

Al-Fassam reaffirms Kuwait call

International synergy a must for climate solutions: Kuwait

BRUSSELS, Dec 7, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has affirmed that international collective actions and UN charter are the basis for addressing the challenges arising from the climate change.

This came in Kuwait's oral statement, at the International Court of Justice hearing on the States' legal obligations with respect to climate change, which was delivered Kuwait's Ambassador to the Republic of Austria and its Permanent Representative to the United Nations and International Organizations in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam, with the participation of international legal advisor Professor Dan Sarooshi.

Al-Fassam stated that Kuwait believes that multilateral action must be the basis for addressing global challenges.

The United Nations remains the cornerstone of this international cooperation and its charter represents the framework for all efforts to tackle global challenges, including those caused by the climate change, he elaborated.

Al-Fassam reaffirmed Kuwait's call for enhancing international cooperation to achieve a sustainability for the benefit of future generations, noting that confronting climate change requires joint effort and effective global synergy.

In this regard, the Kuwaiti envoy boasted that his country was among the leading countries to sign the Framework Convention on Climate Change, join the Kyoto Protocol and ratify the Paris Agreement, which are the main pillars of international efforts to address greenhouse gas emissions.

He reiterated Kuwait's full commitment to these agreements and affirmed its determination to take the necessary measures to mitigate the effects of climate change and adapt to them.

The Kuwaiti diplomat also addressed the clear effects of climate change on Kuwait, including desertification, lack of rainfall, rising temperatures, and the country's reli-

ance on desalination to meet needs of drinking water.

It highlighted Kuwaiti efforts at the national, regional, and international levels to counter the climate change.

At the national level, Kuwait launched the National Adaptation Plan based on the Climate Change Convention and announced plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2060.

Kuwait also established the Environment Public Authority in 1995 and enacted the Environmental Protection Law No. 42 of 2014 in addition to executing the Clean Fuel Project at a cost of USD 15.5 billion to produce environmentally friendly petroleum products with very low emissions, he pointed out.

In terms of diversifying energy sources, Kuwait has set ambitious goals to meet 50 percent of electricity needs through solar energy by 2050.

At the international level, Kuwait continues to support developing countries through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which finances development projects, including projects related to combating climate change. Moreover, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, which is one of the least emission-intensive oil producers in the world, announced plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

On this issue of the duty to prevent climate-related transboundary harm, Al-Fassam indicated this principle shall not be applied to climate change because it only applies only in a bilateral context when one country suffers from environmental damage clearly caused by activities of a neighboring country.

He emphasized that the duty to prevent transboundary harm cannot be applied in parallel with the Paris Agreement, the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which are the central treaties for resolving the issues presented to the Court.

14 companies get approval for car auction project in Amghara

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Central Tenders Committee has opened the financial bids for the highly anticipated car auction project in the Amghara area, a significant initiative led by the Ministry of Public Works, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The bidding results, revealed on Wednesday, highlighted key developments as the next phase of evaluation begins.

Out of the companies that submitted their bids, 14 were accepted, while one company was excluded from consideration in line with Article 45 of the Tenders Law. This ensures that the selection process remains transparent and adheres to legal requirements.

The Amghara car auction project is part of the Ministry of Public Works' broader strategic plan for the current fiscal year. Spanning an implementation period of 730 days (approximately two years), the project's objectives include upgrading and maintaining vital infrastructure in the Amghara area.

The ambitious project will focus on improving and maintaining several areas of public infrastructure, including roads (both main and secondary), sidewalks and temporary roads, asphalt squares and parking lots, rainwater drainage and sewage networks.

With this development, the Ministry seeks to enhance connectivity, address drainage issues and upgrade facilities to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors in the region.



أعياد البعث

Celebrate Bahrain

DECEMBER

Room Promotion





One Night Stay in a Queen Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of breakfast was BHD 76.230

Now **BHD 49.550** Net

One Night Stay in a 2 Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of breakfast was BHD 170.247 Net

Now **BHD 110.661** Net

Promo period from December 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, excluding December 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Terms & conditions apply\*

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com |  @albanderhotelandresort



‘People with disabilities active contributors to development’

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah stated Thursday that people with disabilities are an integral part of society, and are active contributors to the development of the country.

Al-Huwailah made these remarks to KUNA on sidelines of International Day of Persons with Disabilities event organized by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA).

Minister Al-Huwailah stressed the importance of furthering efforts to better disabled people’s quality of life, and boost their active participation.

The State of Kuwait has prioritized issues of people with disabilities, indicated the Minister citing

law (8) for the year 2010 that aims to provide a comprehensive system of rights and services, enabling them to achieve their aspirations.

PADA official, Dr. Shaima Al-Qattan told KUNA that this annual ceremony seeks to highlight the talents and creativity of people with disabilities.

She mentioned that the event, done in cooperation with more than 16 concerned entities, is an opportunity for people with disabilities to become acquainted with efforts exerted towards providing them with better services.

As for Bahraini Ambassador to the country, Salah Al-Malki, he hailed Kuwait’s efforts in supporting people with disabilities, saying that it conveys a message of empowerment.



KUNA photo Attendance from participating official bodies and children from educational bodies.



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq From right: Hamad Al Shammari, Saud Al Farhan, Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah Ahmed Al Jarallah, Faisal Al Ansari, Khaled Al Otaibi, Adnan Al Khalidi, Dalal Nassar, Afnan Ashkanani, Reem Al Mousawi, Maryam Al Safi, Nouf and Dalal Al Anzi

Al-Jarallah receives in his office MoCI delegation

Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers received on Thursday in his office a delegation from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The delegation was touring the Shuwaikh Industrial Area as part of their ongoing efforts to keep a tap on commercial violations.

During the meeting, the Dean of Arab Journalism Al-Jarallah praised the Ministry’s continuous efforts to protect the Kuwaiti consumer. He emphasized the importance of sustained

media support, which, he noted, enhances the Ministry’s ability to carry out its duties effectively.

On the other hand, Faisal Al-Ansari, Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce, expressed gratitude for newspapers’ role in covering inspection tours and consumer-related matters.

He highlighted the critical role of media in supporting the Ministry’s work and extended his appreciation to Brigadier Al-Jarallah for the warm

reception and continuous support.

Deputy Editor-in-Chief Suleiman Al-Jarallah also welcomed the visiting delegation and the discussions focused on pressing issues impacting citizens, particularly matters related to prices and consumer rights protection.

The meeting emphasized the importance of collaboration between government bodies and media outlets to address shared concerns and achieve goals that directly benefit the citizens.

May the

Continued from Page 1

True reform begins with legislative changes, but it requires active and honest ministerial work, without any external interference.

What remained from the previous stages, particularly laws shaped by narrow self-interests and decisions, lacked a true foundation for progress.

That is why we were thrilled to see the return of Hala February, which indicates that Kuwait is on the path to recovery and is regaining its true essence, which some tried to strip away in favor of a more uniform, monotonous state, reminiscent of “Tora Bora”.

The unachievable requirements for obtaining an entry visa made it seem impossible for anyone to visit this month. Also, regressive decisions were made, such as preventing a 60-year-old resident from renewing his residency or reuniting with his family, despite having lived in the country for many years.

Kuwait has indeed lost a lot over the decades, and that era has left its heavy legacy.

Yet, we remain hopeful and say: “May the Almighty guide the Amir in his efforts to reform the country, and may the time come soon when the Council of Ministers and those dedicated to this difficult task can bring this huge project to completion quickly.”

According to those close to the leadership, the future looks promising for restoring the country’s path to purity and progress. Kuwait, once a pioneer in every field, is set to reclaim its place at the forefront of innovation and kindness.

Anyone who goes through the speeches of His Highness the Amir can clearly see that His Highness has not only spoken, but has also taken decisive action. He has issued clear directives to officials, urging them to dedicate their efforts to restoring Kuwait to its former glory and pioneership.

Kuwait charts

Continued from Page 1

A supplementary tax would also be implemented for multinational groups whose effective tax rates are lower than the minimum 15 percent.

Additionally, a 5 percent withholding tax would apply to certain payments made to non-residents without deducting costs. This includes dividends, royalties, rent for movable and immovable property, technical services and insurance premiums -- unless those payments are linked to permanent establishments within Kuwait.

The proposed law outlines that these withholding taxes are the responsibility of the tax deductor to withhold and remit to the tax administration. Income originating from various sources, including sports or artistic activities, exploitation of real estate within Kuwait, dividends from Kuwaiti-held shares and capital gains, would fall under this framework.

The draft law establishes that taxpayers must register with the tax administration within 30 days of commencing their business activities. Failure to do so would leave the tax administration authorized to register the entity based on available information and notify the entity appropriately.

Furthermore, taxpayers must submit tax returns within six months of the end of their tax period, including audited financial statements. Taxpayers subject to supplementary taxes would have a 15-month window for submission.

Advance tax payments are a significant part of the draft law, with taxpayers required to pay estimated taxes in four quarterly installments, based on financial statements submitted every three months. Any surplus paid through these advance payments can be claimed for refund when reconciling the final tax return.

The tax law also provides details on allowable deductions. These include losses from prior tax periods, which can offset taxable income for up to five years after the period in which they were incurred. However, losses must not exceed 75 percent of the taxable income for the relevant tax year.

Additionally, certain costs such as salaries, wages, depreciation, technical services and contributions to the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences are allowable deductions, with specific limits and guidelines set in the executive regulations.

Taxpayers are required to retain their accounting and financial records for ten years to ensure compliance with tax reporting requirements. In the event of a tax dispute or error, the taxpayer has the right to challenge tax assessments through objections and appeals.

Tax objections must be submitted within 60 days of receiving a tax assessment, supported by proper documentation. If rejected, taxpayers may escalate their appeals to the Tax Grievances Committee, which has 90 days to respond to such grievances. Further appeals can be made to the competent courts.

A special Tax Grievances Committee will oversee these disputes, composed of members appointed by the Minister. The committee would consist of members from the Tax Administration, tax experts and other representatives such as advisors from the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

If tax debts are deemed at risk of being lost, the Tax Administration may seek a court order to seize assets to recover owed sums, although taxpayers can lift these actions by providing sufficient guarantees.

Late payment would result in a 1 percent fine for every 30 days that the tax or remittance remains unpaid. This fine would apply in several cases, such as the failure to submit timely tax declarations, failure to remit taxes withheld at the source, or delays in advance payments.

The draft proposes comprehensive tax reforms that would reshape the fiscal landscape of Kuwait, impacting multinational corporations, small enterprises and local businesses alike.

These new mechanisms aim to ensure a fair and transparent system for all taxpayers while aligning Kuwait with international tax standards.

Maintaining a

Continued from Page 1

Acknowledging the importance of public-private sector collaboration, the Minister emphasized that cleaning companies are essential partners in fostering a safe educational environment. He reiterated the Ministry’s commitment to safeguarding workers’ rights within these companies to prevent future disruptions in essential services for schools.

“Disrupting the learning environment or educational process is unacceptable,” Al-Tabtabaei affirmed, adding that the Ministry will take necessary measures to guarantee smooth and timely service provision.

He also assured adherence to regulatory frameworks to protect the interests of all stakeholders, with a focus on prioritizing students and teachers.

The Minister stressed the Ministry’s dedication to creating an ideal educational environment that supports academic achievement and aligns with Kuwait’s national goals for education development.

Al-Tabtabaei concluded by reaffirming the Ministry’s resolve to collaborate with all relevant parties to sustain support services for school administrations.

This resolution reflects Kuwait’s proactive measures in addressing challenges while maintaining its commitment to educational excellence.

Kuwait reiterates

Continued from Page 1

volunteers who contributed to preparing the aid for shipment to Lebanon.

The ambassador said, “Kuwait has sent six military aircraft to Lebanon, carrying 180 tons of medicines and medical supplies.”

He affirmed that Kuwaiti-Lebanese relations are long-standing and deep-rooted, and will continue to grow.

Regarding the delivery mechanism, Al-Mashaan explained that the aid would be received and distrib-

uted by the Lebanese Red Cross and the Lebanese Red Crescent Society. All previous aid was delivered directly to the Lebanese government, which provided a list of the specific needs of the Lebanese people.

The process of obtaining the necessary licenses from the Lebanese Embassy had been carefully coordinated through all stages, starting with submitting the application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which worked with the Ministry of Social Affairs to ensure everything was in order.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab World Affairs Ahmed Al-Bakr reiterated Kuwait’s unwavering support for Lebanon and its people.

Bahraini Crown

Continued from Page 1

Crown Prince as well as the Bahraini people, Kuwait’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

During the meeting, sisterly bonds and deep-rooted historic relations between the two countries and their nations were discussed.

The gathering also stressed reciprocal keenness on continued development of joint action and pushing for further integration in a manner that contributes to meeting mutual aspirations, and serving the two countries and their sisterly peoples, it noted.

Citizenship revocation

Continued from Page 1

The government is reportedly exploring several options to mitigate the fallout, balancing legal, civil and human rights considerations.

Amidst these developments, lawyer Hani Hussein has announced plans to file a direct constitutional appeal to the Constitutional Court.

The appeal seeks to verify the legality of decisions made by Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, concerning the withdrawal of citizenships, specifically under the now-repealed Article 8.

Kuwait seeks

Continued from Page 1

During the summit, some topics have been discussed like main frameworks and rules to upgrade water security system regionally and internationally to achieve a number of goals, Boushehri said.

The summit focused also on some issues to curb negative impacts of drought and desertification and water pollution on food security, human health and climate change, he noted.

As part of the summit’s agenda, the minister took part in a coordinative meeting during which he stressed the need of concerted efforts among GCC states and international organizations to develop water production from different sources.

Kuwait calls

Continued from Page 1

On Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations, the Kuwaiti Permanent Representative to the UN headquarters in New York said the existing decline in the bilateral relationship is not restricted to following up on the dossier of POWs and missing Kuwaitis, but it involves several other outstanding issues as well.

Al-Banai added that last year Iraq had taken decisions that culminated in this decline and bilateral agreements, which were in effect for years, were consequently rescinded, and even undermined bilateral progress made over the past years.

He cited such decisions as abolishing the 2008 security exchange protocol, failing to comply with Kuwait’s demands for joint technical teams’ meetings on the 2012 agreement regulating maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah, and suspending joint legal teams’ maritime boundary delimitation meetings.

Teachers to register single fingerprint for exam duties

Effort to enhance supervision efficiency

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: In an effort to ensure smooth workflow and flexibility by the end-of-year exam committees, teachers assigned to invigilate exams at the intermediate and secondary levels will only be required to register a “single fingerprint” either in the morning or after completing their invigilation duties at the assigned school.**

According to reliable sources from the education sector, there is a plan to activate the fingerprint system for school invigilators assigned to the “twelfth” grade committees. This eliminates the need for teachers to return to their schools to record their fingerprint. This approach aims to provide flexibility and ensure teachers’ attendance is recorded and their early arrival at the committees is documented, which will enable them to carry out their responsibilities without difficulty.

The fingerprint system will capture teachers’ attendance either at the start of the day or after completing their duties, depending on what best suits the workflow of the exam committees. This procedure is designed to protect teachers’ rights and ensure they are not penalized by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) for attendance-related issues.

On the other hand, other sources explained that official directives have been issued to address the curriculum for the primary stage, stipulating the need for strict adherence to the approved study plan and ensuring that students are not dismissed before the designated end of the school year.

These directives aim to guarantee the continuity of the educational process, maximize the use of the allocated study time, and enhance students’ academic achievement by following the 16-week scheduled timetable.

These measures will help improve the quality of education at the primary stage by fully utilizing every school day to meet established educational and teaching goals. School administrations have been urged to comply with the study plan schedule, and ensure that all classes are implemented as planned and monitored effectively.


3 KRCS volunteers honored at GCC Forum

DOHA, Dec 7, (KUNA): The GCC fifth edition of the Gulf Volunteer Work Forum for Red Crescent Societies and associations honored Thursday a number of volunteers from Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS).

The honorees are Anwar Al-Atayyah, Dr. Mohamad Al-Qattan, and Eman Al-Sharrah.

In a statement to KUNA, Head of the Kuwaiti delegation to the forum Abdulla Al-Rashidi stressed the importance of such forums, which highlight the role of volunteer work in enhancing community cohesion, unity, and sense of social responsibility.

Al-Rashidi, who also heads (KRCS) pointed out that volunteering, is an act that also contributes to enhancing human values and achieving positivity in society, expressing his thanks and appreciation to the Qatar Red Crescent Society for its good organization, extending his thanks to the General Secretariat of the GCC for their efforts in strengthening the joint Gulf system.



JOINT OPERATIONS

WAFRA

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC)

KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)

Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

Kuwaiti and Saudi Merchants, registered with either Company wishing to participate in any of the under- mentioned Tenders are invited to collect the Tender documents from Purchasing Section, Purchasing & Logistic Division, Administration Building, Ground Floor, Joint Operations, Wafra, during the official working hours from **8 DEC 2024** up to **19 DEC 2024** for a non-refundable fee mentioned against each tender.

Tender Fees to be deposited in the National bank of Kuwait (NBK) Account No. 1001132057. Saudi Suppliers can collect the tender documents from Saudi Arabian Chevron office in Al-Khobar Telephone No.: (013) 8645104 - Fax No.: (013) 8985436

The closing date for the following Tenders will be on **Thursday, 26 DEC 2024 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES ( KD )
1	026858 - R1	S/F 3-PHASE PRODUCTION SEPARATOR, JCI FILT. & SEPA. INC	35
2	027359 - R1	S/F LUFKIN PUMPING UNITS	5
3	027360 - R1	S/F NUOVOPIGNONE PUMP	25
4	027361 - R1	NETAPP SOLUTION MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT RENEWAL	5

Note :

Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender document and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail [HBJH@chevron.com](mailto:HBJH@chevron.com) and [CBMS@chevron.com](mailto:CBMS@chevron.com) at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact:

Tel No.: **23983639** - Ext : **2502 - 3477**





US Senate Elections Committee Chair Jenifer Branning, explains a facet of an absentee-ballot bill during floor debate at the Capitol in Jackson, Miss., June 15, 2020. (AP)

Branning wins Supreme Court seat

US State Sen Jenifer Branning has won a seat on the Mississippi Supreme Court, defeating Justice Jim Kitchens.

The Associated Press on Friday declared the race for Branning as counties reported official results from the Nov. 26 runoff election.

Kitchens and Branning advanced to the runoff as leaders among five candidates in the Nov.

5 general election. They ran in District 1, also known as the Central District, which stretches from the Delta region through the Jackson metro area and over to the Alabama border.

Mississippi judicial candidates run without party labels. But Democratic areas largely supported Kitchens, and Republican ones supported Branning. (AP)

NYC mayor faces federal corruption charges

Adams warms to Trump, doesn't rule out becoming Republican

NEW YORK, Dec 7, (AP): New York City Mayor Eric Adams appears open to switching parties to become a Republican, as he declined to rule out a future change in political allegiances during a pair of interviews Friday that came as he has increasingly warmed to President-elect Donald Trump.

The comments from Adams, the top Democrat in one of the country's most liberal cities, riled critics who have grown concerned over the mayor's increasing willingness to throw his support behind Trump and his headline immigration policies.

Adams, who faces federal corruption charges, was a registered Republican in the 1990s and early 2000s but has spent his political career as a Democrat.

In a Friday morning interview with the local cable news station NY1, Adams was asked if he would consider a return to the GOP. The Democrat appeared to leave open the possibility of a switch.

"The party that's the most important for me is the American party," he said. "I'm a part of the American party. I love this country. This is the home of the free, the land of the brave."



New York City Mayor Eric Adams leaves Manhattan federal court after an appearance on Sept 27 in New York. (AP)

In another interview about a half-hour later on PIX11, Adams said he would run for reelection as a Democrat but still appeared to leave some wiggle room for his future.

"So no matter what party I'm on or vote on, I'm going to push for the American values," he said. "And I

the weeks since Trump's election victory, particularly on immigration, with Adams boosting the president-elect's platform and appearing enthusiastic about the incoming administration.

Rather than restricting cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as he once promised, Adams recently expressed a willingness to roll back the city's so-called sanctuary policies, and he plans to meet with Trump's top border official over concerns about what the mayor said was the "rising illegal alien crime rate in New York City."

He has also praised those in Trump's orbit, including Elon Musk, who has claimed falsely that Democrats are illegally "importing" migrants to garner votes.

"This is a racehorse that wanted to run its right pace and we've been holding back that racehorse out of fear of being canceled," Adams said of the country Tuesday. "And now you have a bunch of people who are not afraid of being canceled."

The shift comes as Adams is trying to fight off an indictment on federal corruption charges while governing the city and gearing up to run for a second term.

US president's pardon power absolute

Biden considers preemptive pardons for officials, allies before Trump takes office

WASHINGTON, Dec 7, (AP): US President Joe Biden is weighing whether to issue sweeping pardons for officials and allies who the White House fears could be unjustly targeted by President-elect Donald Trump's administration, a preemptive move that would be a novel and risky use of the president's extraordinary constitutional power.

The deliberations so far are largely at the level of White House lawyers. But Biden himself has discussed the topic with some senior aides, according to two people familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity Thursday to discuss the sensitive subject. No decisions have been made, the people said, and it is possible Biden opts to do nothing at all.

Pardons are historically afforded to those accused of specific crimes - and usually those who have already been convicted of an offense - but Biden's team is considering issuing them for those who have not even been investigated, let alone charged. They fear that Trump and his allies, who have boasted of enemies lists and exacting "retribution," could launch investigations that would be reputationally and financially costly for their targets even if they don't result in prosecutions.

While the president's pardon power

is absolute, Biden's use in this fashion would mark a significant expansion of how they are deployed, and some Biden aides fear it could lay the groundwork for an even more drastic usage by Trump. They also worry that issuing pardons would feed into claims by Trump and his allies that the individuals committed acts that necessitated immunity.

Recipients could include infectious-disease specialist Dr Anthony Fauci, who was instrumental in combating the coronavirus pandemic and who has become a pariah to conservatives angry about mask mandates and vaccines. Others include witnesses in Trump's criminal or civil trials and Biden administration officials who have drawn the ire of the incoming president and his allies.

Some fearful former officials have reached out to the Biden White House preemptively seeking some sort of protection from the future Trump administration, one of the people said.

It follows Biden's decision to pardon his son Hunter - not just for his convictions on federal gun and tax violations, but for any potential federal offense committed over an 11-year period, as the president feared that Trump allies would seek to prosecute his son for other offenses. That could serve as a model for other pardons Biden might



US President Joe Biden speaks during a ceremony lighting the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse near the White House in Washington on Dec 5. (AP)

issue to those who could find themselves in legal jeopardy under Trump.

Biden is not the first to consider such pardons - Trump aides considered them for him and his supporters involved in his failed efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election that culminated in a violent riot at the Capitol on Jan 6, 2021. But he could be the

first to issue them since Trump's pardons never materialized before he left office nearly four years ago.

Gerald Ford granted a "full, free, and absolute pardon" in 1974 to his predecessor, Richard Nixon, over the Watergate scandal. He believed a potential trial would "cause prolonged and divisive debate over the propriety

of exposing to further punishment and degradation a man who has already paid the unprecedented penalty of relinquishing the highest elective office of the United States," as written in the pardon proclamation.

Politico was first to report that Biden was studying the use of preemptive pardons.

On the campaign trail, Trump made no secret of his desire to seek revenge on those who prosecuted him or crossed him.

Trump has talked about "enemies from within" and circulated social media posts that call for the jailing of Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, former Vice President Mike Pence and Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer. He also zeroed in on former Rep. Liz Cheney, a conservative Republican who campaigned for Harris and helped investigate Jan. 6, and he promoted a social media post that suggested he wanted military tribunals for supposed treason.

Kash Patel, whom Trump has announced as his nominee to be director of the FBI, has listed dozens of former government officials he wanted to "come after."

Richard Painter, a Trump critic who served as the top White House ethics lawyer under President George W.

Bush, said he was reluctantly in support of having Biden issue sweeping pardons to people who could be targeted by Trump's administration. He said he hoped that would "clean the slate" for the incoming president and encourage him to focus on governing, not on punishing his political allies.

"It's not an ideal situation at all," Painter said. "We have a whole lot of bad options confronting us at this point."

While the Supreme Court this year ruled that the president enjoys broad immunity from prosecution for what could be considered official acts, his aides and allies enjoy no such shield. Some fear that Trump could use the promise of a blanket pardon to encourage his allies to take actions they might otherwise resist for fear of running afoul of the law.

"There could be blatant illegal conduct over the next four years, and he can go out and pardon his people before he leaves office," Painter said. "But if he's going to do that, he's going to do that anyway regardless of what Biden does."

More conventional pardons from Biden, such as those for sentencing disparities for people convicted of federal crimes, are expected before the end of the year, the White House said.

Romania's top court annuls first round of presidential vote won by Georgescu

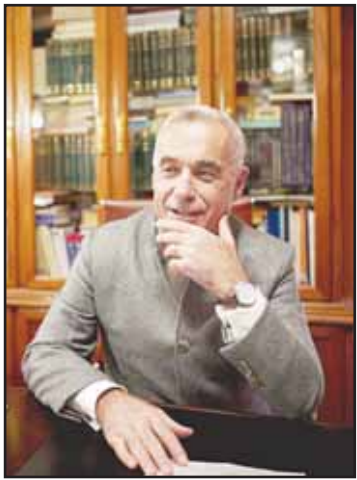
BUCHAREST, Romania, Dec 7, (AP): A top Romanian court has annulled the first round of the country's presidential election, days after allegations emerged that Russia ran a coordinated online campaign to promote the far-right outsider who won the first round.

The Constitutional Court's unprecedented decision - which is final - came after President Klaus Iohannis declassified intelligence on Wednesday that alleged Russia organized thousands of social media accounts to promote Calin Georgescu across platforms such as TikTok and Telegram.

The court, without naming Georgescu, said that one of the 13 candidates in the Nov. 24 first round had improperly received "preferential treatment" on social media, distorting the outcome of the vote.

Georgescu denounced the verdict as an "officialized coup" and an attack on democracy, as did the second-place finisher, reformist Elena Lasconi of the center-right Save Romania Union party.

Despite being an outsider who declared zero campaign spending, Georgescu emerged as the frontrunner who was to face Lasconi in a runoff on Sunday. Some 951 voting stations had already opened abroad on Friday for the runoff for Romania's large diaspora,



but also gains for far-right nationalists. Iohannis said that once the new government is formed, the date of the new presidential vote would be set.

On Wednesday the president had released intelligence files from the Romanian Intelligence Service, the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Special Telecommunication Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In a televised statement Friday, Iohannis said he was "deeply concerned" by the contents of the intelligence reports. "Intelligence reports revealed that this candidate's campaign was supported by a foreign state with interests contrary to Romania's. These are serious issues," he said.

The Constitutional Court in its published decision cited the illegal use of digital technologies including artificial intelligence, as well as the use of "undeclared sources of funding." It said one candidate received "preferential treatment on social media platforms, which resulted in the distortion of voters' expressed will."

Georgescu slammed the verdict as putting "democracy is under attack."

Lasconi also strongly condemned the court's decision, saying it was "illegal, immoral, and crushes the very essence of democracy" and that the second round should have gone forward.

but had to be halted.

Iohannis said he would remain in office until a new presidential election could be rerun from scratch. On Dec. 1, one week after the first round of the presidential race, Romania also held a parliamentary election, which saw pro-Western parties win the most votes



Firefighters stand by a building destruction at the site of an explosion which destroyed several apartments and injured multiple people, at The Hague on Dec 7. (AP)

Dutch city explosion injures multiple people, damages apartments

An explosion and fire rocked a neighborhood in the Dutch city of The Hague early Saturday, destroying several apartments and injuring multiple people, according to authorities.

The cause of the disaster is unclear, but police said they are looking for a car seen leaving the scene. Emergency authorities said four

people have been rescued from the rubble and taken to the hospital, but could not say how many people may still be under the rubble. Local media reported that one of those hospitalized was a child.

A line of ambulances could be seen waiting nearby in anticipation of more victims. The spokesperson

for the local hospital said that they were on standby to deal with injuries.

Residents of the northeastern neighborhood of Mariahoeve in The Hague heard a huge bang and screams before dawn. One woman told local media that she thought an earthquake had happened. (AP)

Storm batters UK, Ireland; one dead

LONDON, Dec 7, (AP): A man died and hundreds of thousands of people in Britain and Ireland were left without power Saturday as high winds and heavy rain battered the region.

Gusts of up to 93 miles per hour were recorded as officials sent a rare emergency alert by phone to about 3 million households in Wales and southwest England early Saturday.

The official alert, which came with a loud siren-like sound, warned people to stay indoors and was sent to every compatible mobile phone in the areas impacted by Storm Darragh.

In northwest England, a man in his 40s died when a tree fell onto his van while he was driving on a highway near Preston, about 36 miles (58 kilometers) north of Manchester.

On Friday the U.K.'s weather forecasters, the Met Office, issued a red weather warning - the most serious type. Thousands of homes, many in Northern Ireland, Wales and western England, were left without power overnight.



Waves crash during storm Darragh over the seafront in Porthcawl in Wales on Dec 7. (AP)

'We want to bring Germany forward again'

AfD nominates candidate for chancellor

BERLIN, Dec 7, (AP): The far-right Alternative for Germany party on Saturday presented its candidate for chancellor in the country's upcoming election.

In practice, Alice Weidel has no chance of taking the chancellery as other parties refuse to work with the populist party.

But Alternative for Germany, or AfD, which was founded in 2013, has been getting strong approval rates and is currently the second strongest party in the country after the center-right Christian Democrats. It is polling between 18% and 19% in nationwide surveys.

This is the first time that the AfD has nominated its own candidate for chancellor.

"We want to bring Germany forward again. We want to be at the top again worldwide," Weidel said as she accepted the nomination.

The 45-year-old economist said she would put the country's ailing economy on track again, turn back the Germany's climate-friendly energy transition and cut down harshly on immigration.

The party's fierce anti-immigration



Alice Weidel, (right), federal spokesperson of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party attends the presentation of her candidacy for Chancellor in the 2025 federal elections in Berlin, Germany on Dec 7. At left is Tino Chrupalla, the party's second federal spokesperson. (AP)

stance and revelations about other German far-right movements' plans to deport millions of immigrants and their

descendants if they come to power in Germany led to weekslong protests in the country last winter.

At the same time, it helped the AfD win a state election for the first time, in Thuringia in September.

Weidel called irregular migration to Germany "the source of all evil" on Saturday.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government coalition collapsed last month. Scholz, who is currently leading the country with a minority government, plans to call a confidence vote in parliament on Dec. 16. He is expected to lose, paving the way for an election on Feb. 23.

Deep discontent with Scholz's government - which was notorious for infighting, inflation and a weak economy - as well as anti-immigration sentiment and skepticism toward German military aid for Ukraine are among the factors that contributed to support for the AfD.

AFD is at its strongest in the east, and the domestic intelligence agency has the party's branches in both Saxony and Thuringia under official surveillance as "proven right-wing extremist" groups.





Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Legal, Human Rights, Immigration and Correctional Affairs Yusril Ihza Mahendra, (left), shakes hands with Philippine's Justice Undersecretary Raul Vasquez during the signing ceremony of a deal to send home Mary Jane Veloso, a Filipino death-row drug convict, in Jakarta, Indonesia on Dec 6. (AP)

Indonesia agrees to repatriate Filipina

Indonesia and the Philippines have signed a deal to send home a Filipino death-row drug convict who was nearly executed by firing squad in 2015, as the new administration of President Prabowo Subianto seeks to shore up diplomatic ties with neighboring countries.

The agreement, after a decade of negotiations, will allow Mary Jane Veloso to return home by the end of the month, Raul Vasquez, the Undersecretary at the Department of Justice of the Philippines, told a joint news conference with Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Law, Human Rights, Immigration and Correctional.

"It is a fitting gift that affirms the good relationship between the two countries," said Vasquez. "We do

understand and we respect the Indonesian court decision with respect to the sentence.. and we will endeavor to let her serve her sentence."

Although there is no treaty between the countries, Indonesia and the Philippines are both members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the transfer of convicts in the ASEAN region is in accordance with the bloc's Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, Vasquez said,

"Because of the international committee and mutual courtesy that exists between and among member states of the United Nations and fellow countries in the ASEAN, we do have that mutual desire and intention to promote human rights and to protect human rights of all our citizens," he said after a signing ceremony in the capital, Jakarta. (AP)

Lai calls on China to refrain from threats ahead of military drills

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Dec 7, (AP): Taiwanese President **Lai Ching-te** called on China to "open its arms rather than raise its fists" as he wrapped up his first overseas tour since taking office in May.

His remarks at a news conference Friday in Palau, a Pacific Island nation, came in response to widespread speculation that China will hold military drills around Taiwan in response to his trip.

"No matter how many military exercises and warships and aircraft are used to coerce neighboring countries, they will not be able to win the respect of any country," he said.



Lai

The president spoke a day after China's Foreign Ministry announced sanctions on 13 American companies and six executives in response to recently announced US weapons sales to Taiwan.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 during a civil war that saw the victorious communists take control in Beijing and the Nationalists set up a rival government in Taiwan, an island of 23 million people off China's east

coast. China's long-ruling Communist Party says that Taiwan is part of China and must come under its control at some point.

Lai's trip to the Pacific, which included US stops in Hawaii and Guam, took him into the heart of a maritime region where China is jockeying with the United States and its allies for influence and control. He also visited the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Palau, three of the 12 countries that have diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The rest of the world, including the US, has official ties with China.

The Taiwanese leader, who spoke by phone with US congressional leaders while in Guam, dismissed concern that U.S. President-elect Donald Trump may be less committed to Taiwan's cause than current President Joe Biden has been.

"Taiwan is confident that it will continue to deepen cooperation with the new government, resist authoritarian expansion, create prosperity and development for both countries, and contribute more to regional stability and peace," he said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian, speaking at a daily briefing in Beijing, accused Taiwan and the US of engaging in official exchanges in Hawaii and Guam and said the U.S. stops provided a platform for Taiwanese independence and separatist activities.



In this image taken from a video provided by National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS), a Chinese coast guard vessel, right, fires a powerful water cannon at a Philippine bureau of fisheries vessel near a disputed shoal in the South China Sea on Dec 4. (AP)

US, Japan, Philippine forces patrol in sea

The United States deployed a reconnaissance aircraft while Japan and the Philippines sent navy ships in a joint patrol in the disputed South China Sea on Friday, two days after the allied forces condemned actions by Chinese coast guard vessels against Philippine patrol ships.

The US Indo-Pacific Command said the joint patrol was conducted in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone by allies and partners to "uphold the right to freedom of navigation and overflight " and "other lawful uses of the sea and international airspace."

Those phrases are used by the US, Japan and the Philippines to oppose China's increasingly aggressive actions in the disputed waters.

Two Philippine security officials

said the patrol was staged about 40 nautical miles (74 kilometers) from Scarborough Shoal, a fishing area hotly disputed by Beijing and Manila off the northwestern Philippines. The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they didn't have authority to discuss such details publicly.

China claims the South China Sea virtually in its entirety and has guarded it assertively with its coast guard, navy and suspected militia fleets. They have confronted forces from rival claimant states including the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei.

Indonesia also has had faceoffs with Chinese coast guard ships escorting fishermen in the gas-rich Natuna waters in the southern fringes of the South China Sea. (AP)

Yoon apologizes for martial law declaration

South Korean president's impeachment fails as ruling party boycotts vote

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 7, (AP): A South Korean legislative push to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his short-lived imposition of martial law fell through on Saturday after most lawmakers from his conservative governing party boycotted the vote.

The defeat of the motion is expected to intensify public protests calling for Yoon's ouster and deepen political chaos in South Korea, with a survey suggesting a majority of South Koreans support the president's impeachment.

Yoon's martial law declaration drew criticism from his own ruling conservative party, but it is also determined to oppose Yoon's impeachment apparently because it fears losing the presidency to liberals.

Impeaching Yoon required support from two-thirds of the National Assembly, or 200 of its 300 members. The opposition parties who brought the impeachment motion had 192 seats, but only three lawmakers from PPP participated in the vote. The motion was scrapped without ballot counting because the number of votes

didn't reach 200.

National Assembly Speaker Woo Won Shik called the result "very regrettable" and an embarrassing moment for the country's democracy that has been closely watched by the world.

"The failure to hold a qualified vote on this matter means we were not even able to exercise the democratic procedure of deciding on a critical national issue," he said.

Opposition parties could submit a new impeachment motion after a new parliamentary session opens next Wednesday.

There are worries that Yoon won't be able to serve out his remaining 2 ½ years in office because his leadership took a huge hit. Many experts say some ruling party lawmakers could eventually join opposition parties' efforts to impeach Yoon if public demands for it grow further.

If Yoon is impeached, his powers will be suspended until the Constitutional Court decides whether to remove him from office. If he is removed, an election to replace him must take place within 60 days.



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol bows at the end of his announcement at the presidential office in Seoul, South Korea on Dec 7. (AP)

Woo repeatedly urged ruling party members to return to the chamber to participate in the vote, waiting several hours for them to come.

At one point, Democratic Party lead-

ers visited a hall on the floor below the main chamber where PPP lawmakers were gathered, attempting to persuade them to vote. After being blocked from entering, they angrily accused the con-

servatives' leadership of preventing its lawmakers from voting freely.

Earlier Saturday, Yoon issued a public apology over the martial law decree, saying he won't shirk legal or political responsibility for the declaration and promising not to make another attempt to impose martial law. He said would leave it to his party to chart a course through the country's political turmoil, "including matters related to my term in office."

"The declaration of this martial law was made out of my desperation. But in the course of its implementation, it caused anxiety and inconveniences to the public. I feel very sorry over that and truly apologize to the people who must have been shocked a lot," Yoon said.

Since taking office in 2022, Yoon has struggled to push his agenda through an opposition-controlled parliament and grappled with low approval ratings amid scandals involving himself and his wife. In his martial law announcement on Tuesday night, Yoon called parliament a "den of criminals" bogging down state af-

fairs and vowed to eliminate "shameless North Korea followers and anti-state forces."

The turmoil resulting from Yoon's bizarre and poorly-thought-out stunt has paralyzed South Korean politics and sparked alarm among key diplomatic partners like the U.S. and Japan.

Tuesday night saw special forces troops encircling the parliament building and army helicopters hovering over it, but the military withdrew after the National Assembly unanimously voted to overturn the decree, forcing Yoon to lift it before daybreak Wednesday. The declaration of martial law was the first of its kind in more than 40 years in South Korea. Eighteen lawmakers from the ruling party voted to reject Yoon's martial law decree along with opposition lawmakers.

Yoon's speech fueled speculation that he and his party may push for a constitutional amendment to shorten his term, instead of accepting impeachment, as a way to ease public anger over the martial law and facilitate Yoon's early exit from office.

Pakistan court indicts former premier Khan

ISLAMABAD, Dec 7, (AP): A Pakistani court indicted imprisoned former prime minister Imran Khan and dozens of his associates on charges of inciting people to attack military and government installations last year, officials and his party said.

Khan pleaded not guilty when charges were read out to him in court in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, according to officials and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or PTI. Khan and the others will go on trial under anti-terrorism laws that carry punishments up to life in prison.

PTI said that top party official Omar Ayub Khan, the current opposition leader in Parliament, also was arrested by police on Thursday. He was wanted on separate charges that included incitement of violence in the capital last week.

The indictments against Khan and the dozens of his party members stem from widespread violence on May 9, 2023 that was sparked by Khan's arrest at the time on corruption charges.



Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan, (right), and Bushra Bibi, his wife, speak to the media before signing documents to submit surety bond over his bails in different cases, at an office of Lahore High Court in Lahore, Pakistan, on July 17, 2023. (AP)

'Litmus test for democracy'

Ghanaians vote in high-stakes elections

ACCRA, Ghana, Dec 7, (AP): Ghanaians headed to the polls Saturday in presidential and legislative elections poised to be a litmus test for democracy in a region shaken by extremist violence and coups.

Some 18.7 million people are registered to vote in the West African country hit by one of the worst economic crises in a generation. However, the

two main candidates offer little hope for change for the nation.

Polls opened at 7 am GMT and will close at 5 pm GMT, with early results expected late on Saturday. The first official results will be released by Tuesday.

Ghana used to be a poster child for democracy in the region. At a time when coups threatened democracy in West Africa, Ghana has emerged as a

beacon of democratic stability with a history of peaceful elections. It had also been an economic powerhouse, priding itself on its economic development.

But in recent years, it has struggled with a profound economic crisis, including surging inflation and a lack of jobs.

According to an opinion poll released earlier this year by Afrobarometer, a research group, 82% of Ghanaians feel their country is headed in the wrong direction

Although 12 candidates are running to become Ghana's next president, Saturday's election - like previous ones since the return of multiparty politics in 1992 - has emerged as a two-horse race.

Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia is the candidate of the ruling New Patriotic Party, or NPP, which has struggled to resolve the economic crisis. He faces off against former President John Dramani Mahama, the leader of the main opposition party National Democratic Congress, or NDC. He was voted out in 2016 after failing to deliver on promises for the economy.

Opinion polls point at a potential comeback for Mahama. A local research company, Global InfoAnalytics says he is projected to get 52.2% of the vote, followed by Bawumia, with 41.4%.



A woman casts her ballot in the general elections in Accra, Ghana, Saturday on Dec 7. (AP)

Bangladesh court bans publication of speeches by ousted premier Hasina

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Dec 7, (AP): A special tribunal in Bangladesh has banned the publication of any speeches by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is in exile in India after being ousted in August following mass protests.

The decision came a day after Hasina made her first public speech in a virtual address to supporters of her Awami League party in New York. In the speech, she accused Bangladesh's interim leader, Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, of perpetrating genocide and failing to protect minorities, especially Hindus, since her ouster.

The Dhaka-based International Crimes Tribunal made the decision in response to a request by government prosecutors for a ban on any speeches by Hasina on mainstream or social media, prosecutor Golam Monawar Hosain Tamim said.

Hasina fled to India after being ousted in a mass uprising in July and



Bangladesh then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina checks her watch as she waits for the official opening time to cast her vote in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Jan 7. (AP)

August in which hundreds of protesters were killed and thousands were injured. She faces many court cases over the deaths, including some on charges of crimes against humanity. The tribunal has already issued arrest warrants for Hasina and her close aides, and the government has sought help from the international police organization Interpol for her arrest.

Prosecutors said in their request to the tribunal that some speeches and phone calls by Hasina had been disseminated on electronic media and could interfere in the investigation of the charges against her by influencing or frightening witnesses.

"If speeches like these are published and broadcast, we won't be able to bring witnesses to the tribunal during trials," Tamim said. He said the tribunal also ordered authorities to remove leaked speeches and phone conversations from media platforms.



Anti-drug police officers present packages of drugs seized, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on Dec 6. (AP)

Dominican Republic seizes 9.5 tons of cocaine, marking new record

Authorities in the Dominican Republic have announced that they confiscated nearly 9.5 tons of cocaine, the largest drug seizure in the country's history.

The \$250 million worth of drugs were found nestled inside a banana shipment that arrived at the Caucedo port in the capital of Santo

Domingo, the country's most important seaport. The shipment had been sent from Guatemala and was destined for Belgium, said Carlos Devers, spokesman for the Dominican Republic's Anti-Drug Agency.

Ten suspects have been detained, he said at a press conference.

Authorities so far this year have

seized nearly 47 tons of drugs.

The second biggest seizure on record was reported in 2006, when officials found more than 5,680 pounds (2,580 kilograms) at the Caucedo port.

The Dominican Republic has long been considered a major drug transit point. (AP)



## Kuwait crude oil down 36 cents: KPC

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti crude oil fell 36 cents during Friday's trading to reach USD 72.32 per barrel (pb), compared with USD 72.68 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Saturday. Brent futures dropped 97 cents to USD 71.12 pb and West Texas Intermediate fell USD 1.10 to USD 67.20 pb.

# Business

In recognition of its excellence and leadership in the Kuwaiti banking sector

## KFH wins ‘Bank of the Year’ award from The Banker magazine

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) was named Bank of the Year 2024 - Kuwait by The Banker, a leading financial publication owned by the Financial Times Group.

KFH's second consecutive win of this prestigious award underscores its excellence and leadership in the Kuwaiti banking sector. It further solidifies its position as Kuwait's largest bank by market capitalization and the world's second-largest Islamic bank.

Aligning with the criteria for selecting winners, The Banker Awards recognize institutions that demonstrate strong financial performance and strategic advantages, such as investing in new technology or innovating to expand their business and increase customer satisfaction.

A panel of global industry experts judges the Banker Awards, considering criteria and performance improvements over the past 12 months.

Deputy General Manager Corporate Banking and Syndication at KFH, Nasser Alshaya received the award at The Banker Awards ceremony, held in London, in the presence of CEOs, CFOs, and senior executives from financial institutions worldwide.

### Record financial performance

Alshaya expressed KFH's pride in this global recognition, highlighting the bank's leading position and its consistent ability to achieve record performance. This achievement reflects KFH's solid institutional approach and ambitious vision, aligned with the latest global banking trends.

He emphasized that KFH remains committed to sustainable growth, underpinned by prudent risk management and investment in high-quality assets. By focusing on core banking activities, operational efficiency, and exceptional customer experiences for both retail and corporate customers, KFH aims to solidify its leading position in the Islamic finance industry.



Nasser Alshaya receiving the award.

### Largest merger deal

Alshaya emphasized that KFH has achieved significant milestones in 2024, a testament to its immense potential. This makes it an exceptional

banking entity, deserving of prestigious awards and top rankings.

Among KFH's notable achievements is the successful cross-border acquisition of the Ahli United Bank - Bahrain Group, one of the largest transactions of its kind in the region. Additionally, KFH completed the largest merger in the history of the Kuwaiti banking sector, merging with (formerly) Ahli United Bank - Kuwait. The bank integrated operational processes in record time while maintaining high efficiency. This transition was seamless for shareholders, customers, and employees.

Furthermore, the bank's strong financial performance is evidenced by its net profit for shareholders, which reached KD 482.9 million by the end of the third quarter of 2024. This marks the highest quarterly profit in KFH's history and in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

### Latest digital banking solutions

Alshaya added that KFH's digital banking services and technological infrastructure have been significantly developed, in line with its strategy of building a comprehensive, high-quality digital financial services and solutions ecosystem. He noted that the bank's significant success in this area has led to a strategic shift toward enhancing customer experience and fulfilling their aspirations.

### Sustainable banking model

He explained that KFH's award win reflects its success in building a sustainable banking model incorporating ESG dimensions. The bank's commitment to responsible practices and sustainability adds value for both shareholders and customers.

It's worth noting that the Bank of the Year Awards are among the most prestigious and sought-after awards in the global banking industry. These awards recognize excellence across over 120 countries worldwide.

## For the 13th consecutive time in Global Finance's annual survey

## NBK named ‘Best Foreign Exchange Provider in Kuwait’ for 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) received the award of “Best Foreign Exchange Provider in Kuwait” for 2025, marking its 13th consecutive win, in Global Finance's annual survey based on the input from industry analysts, corporate executives and technology experts around the world.

The criteria for choosing the Foreign Exchange Providers Award winners included transaction volume, market share, scope of global coverage, customer service, competitive pricing and innovative technologies. Global Finance also considered bank submissions, input from industry analysts, corporate executives and technology specialists.

“In a time of global economic uncertainty and rapid technologi-

cal advancement, Global Finance's Best Foreign Exchange Banks 2025 have demonstrated exceptional expertise, resilience, and innovation in the FX sector, consistently delivering value and reliability to their clients worldwide, and excelling in a dynamic and challenging market environment,” mentioned Global Finance.

Global Finance magazine has named the winners of its 25th annual World's Best Foreign Exchange Banks chosen in 87 countries, territories and districts, seven regions and multiple global categories.

This prestigious award reaffirms NBK's position as a local and regional leader in providing top-notch innovative banking solutions to its clients, reaping the rewards of the huge investments

in developing its infrastructure to offer high-quality services as well as its investments in high-caliber banking professionals. This helped the bank ensure providing clients with highly competitive rates, top-notch customer service, and innovative solutions tailored to their individual needs.

Global Finance, founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York, is one of the most reputable magazines specialized in finance and economics. It has a circulation of 50,000 readers in 193 countries around the world, including senior corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment and strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions.

The magazine conducts various surveys annually about innova-



Best FX Banks Award

tion and profitability for banks and financial institutions all over the world, based on which it selects top



NBK Tower

performers on the regional and international levels.

For more information about

Global Finance's Best Foreign Exchange Provider Award 2025, please visit their website.

## Kuwait oil sector eyes gas production growth with KGOC-KOC collaboration

### Leaders discuss Jurassic gas projects

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: A high-level delegation from Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) recently visited Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) to enhance their expertise in the gas sector and foster knowledge exchange, sources from the oil sector revealed.

Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KGOC Abdul Wahab Al-Madhen led the delegation that included Deputy CEO for Joint Operations Bader Al-Munifi and Managing Director for Planning and Finance at Kuwait Petro-

leum Corporation (KPC) Bader Al-Attar.

The primary purpose of the visit was to promote the transfer of expertise and exchange of information on gas field projects, particularly at KOC's Jurassic Gas Production Facility 4.

The discussions focused on strengthening co-ordination in local strategic oil and gas initiatives, considering gas production plays an increasingly critical role in meeting Kuwait's domestic energy needs.

During the visit, the KGOC delegation was welcomed by KOC officials, including Director of the Projects and Production Group (Gas) Abdul Mohsen Al-Mutairi, Director of the Fields Development Group (Gas) Mohammad Al-Bahar and Director of Gas Drilling Group Bandar Al-Mutairi.

Team leaders from these three groups were also present.

Sources indicated that the visit provided an opportunity to review the progress of gas development in the Jurassic fields, evaluate production capabilities, and discuss both current and future plans to meet the production targets of KGOC.

It is worth mentioning that the newspaper published a report on July 17, 2024 about the release of an official document detailing the steps for merging KGOC with KOC. This merger is part of a broader plan to consolidate Kuwait's oil companies into four key entities. Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is closely monitoring the transfer of KGOC's shares to KOC as part of this restructuring process.

## Bid to strengthen its presence in the global investment market

## KIB Invest takes part in the issuance of Kingdom of Bahrain's seven-year Sukuk as Joint Lead Manager

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait International Bank, through its investment arm KIB Invest, proudly served as Joint Lead Manager (JLM) in the issuance of a seven-year, USD-denominated senior unsecured 144A/Regulation-S Sukuk for the Kingdom of Bahrain via CBB International Sukuk Programme Company W.L.L. Rated B+ (stable) by both Fitch and S&P, the issuance garnered exceptional market interest, reflecting strong investor confidence. The Sukuk, structured under Ijara and Murabaha principles, raised USD 1.25 billion and attracted an overwhelming USD 3.5 billion in orders—an oversubscription of 2.8 times. Priced at a competitive fixed coupon rate of 5.875%, and listed on the London Stock Exchange, this successful offering underscores Bahrain's appeal in the global Islamic finance market.

The success of this landmark Sukuk issuance was further enhanced by the collaboration of other esteemed Joint Lead Managers, globally recognized for their expertise and leadership in Islamic finance. Alongside KIB Invest,



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen

other JLMs included Dubai Islamic Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, J.P. Morgan, Mashreq, National Bank of Bahrain, and Standard Chartered Bank.

“Shariah-compliant banking and investments offer solutions to the modern market's most pressing sustainability concerns regarding the industry's impact on the local and global communities. That's why more and more stake-



Al-Barrak

holders worldwide are turning their attention to the investment opportunities that Islamic banking offers,” commented Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB. “With the traction Shariah-compliant investments have today, we are proud to remain a trusted partner for some of the world's biggest investors and market players.”

On his part, Jamal Hamad Al-

Barrak, CEO of KIB Invest, said: “We are privileged to collaborate with industry leaders as we participated in the launch of Central Bank of Bahrain's new sukuk. KIB Invest's participation in a major issuance at such an early point in its journey is a testament to its competitive capacity to establish itself as a trusted investment partner in regional and global markets.”

Al-Barrak further highlighted that this marks the first sovereign issuance in which KIB Invest has served as a Joint Lead Manager (JLM), underscoring the confidence regional issuers have placed in KIB Invest's financial expertise and market reach. KIB Investis committed to delivering Shariah compliant investment products and serviceresthrough a diversified suite of investment solutions tailored to meet clients' evolving needs. In adherence to KIB's commitment to international market standards of Islamic investment excellence, KIB Invest relies on a team of seasoned professionals with extensive experience in local and global markets.

## Other Voices

### Bad news for OPEC+ in 2025

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

OPEC+ is sending a clear message to the oil markets: Expect more delays, and do not expect any increase in supply. It is urging its members to stick to their production quotas.

Russia, Iraq, and Kazakhstan are the main offenders in not fully meeting their quota commitments. Meanwhile, the oil price remains fixed at \$70 per barrel, which, while not causing immediate alarm for OPEC+, still doesn't cover their annual expenditures.

OPEC has no choice but to continue with this approach. Despite calls for Russia to assist in the group's efforts, there has been little progress in improving oil prices or supporting their annual budgets.

The fact is that OPEC and its new allies are neither enhancing their global influence nor benefiting the oil group. Operating alone, OPEC+ is not advancing its interests.

Pressure is mounting on OPEC to allow its members to increase production quotas. For example, the United Arab Emirates was granted permission to raise its output by 300,000 barrels, but this has now been postponed until April next year.

The outlook for next year does

not appear much brighter than the current one. Demand from China is sluggish, and more oil is expected from the United States, which will likely weaken the oil prices further. OPEC+ is left with no choice but to rely on its traditional strategy of crude oil production cuts, but this will likely result in a loss of market share as non-OPEC countries are increasing supply by more than 1.6 million barrels per day in the coming year.

Oil prices are expected to weaken in 2025. Demand growth is projected to be lower by 300,000 barrels per day compared to the previous year, and any production cuts by OPEC will likely be offset by non-OPEC producers. On the other hand, any increase in oil prices would benefit non-OPEC members as well.

Given the current outlook, things do not appear particularly positive for OPEC and its partners in terms of price stability, with prices expected to remain weak. OPEC is fortunate that the price is currently at a level of \$70 per barrel, but with more supply anticipated to enter global markets, this level could face further pressure.

2025 is going to be a difficult year for oil. Should more volumes flood the market, especially with the U.S. pushing for higher crude oil production, output could exceed 15 million barrels per day or more.

For now, let us be satisfied with \$70 per barrel for the coming years. OPEC must find a magic solution, if any, to deal with these challenges.

Email: nafitkuwait@yahoo.com



Al-Harami

## Bursa ends week on positive note with green closings across indices

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The green trend continued for the third consecutive session this week, marking the final session of the first week of the last month of the year as all three main indices closed higher, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The General Market Index rose by 0.16 percent or 11.78 points, closing at 7,289.24 points, with liquidity reaching 58.7 million dinars.

A total of 348.3 million shares were exchanged through 17,350 transactions, with 62 shares gaining, 42 losing, and 25 remaining unchanged.

The Premier Market Index also

saw a modest increase of 0.16 percent or 12.78 points, ending at 7,808.37 points with liquidity at 30.1 million dinars.

A total of 90.8 million shares were traded in 6,702 transactions, with 16 shares gaining, 12 losing, and only 6 remaining stable.

Similarly, the Main Market Index gained 0.15 percent or 10.14 points, closing at 6,658.53 points, with liquidity of 28.6 million dinars.

A total of 257.4 million shares changed hands through 10,648 transactions, with 46 shares gaining, 30 losing, and 19 remaining unchanged.



Remarkable milestones achieved

# Gulf Bank celebrates a decade of excellence at annual gala, highlighting key milestones and future growth

**Waleed Khaled Mandani:** We sincerely thank our employees for their unwavering dedication, which has played a key role in strengthening the bank's leadership in the banking sector.

The bank now benefits from a strong technological infrastructure, recognized as one of the most advanced in the industry.



Waleed Khaled Mandani delivers his speech.



Salma Al-Hajji delivers her speech.

**Salma Al-Hajji:** We take pride in the sense of unity and communication among our employees, which truly reflects the bank's values and its exceptional work culture.

The Ajyal program has seen tremendous success in identifying talent and supplying the bank with outstanding banking professionals across various departments.



Group photo of the bank's officials and leaders.



Group photo of Generations 9 graduates, with Waleed Khaled Mandani and Salma Al-Hajji among the participants.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Gulf Bank recently hosted its highly anticipated annual gala, bringing together employees to celebrate key milestones. The event highlighted the graduation of the ninth cohort of the Ajyal program and marked 10 years of success for the Ajyal program, the Gulf Bank Marathon, and the Women of Wisdom (WOW) initiative. Acting CEO of Gulf Bank, Mr. Waleed Khaled Mandani, joined senior executives and employees to honor these remarkable achievements.

During the event, Mr. Mandani extended his heartfelt appreciation to Gulf Bank's employees for their dedication and hard work throughout the year. He highlighted that their collective efforts have been key to the bank's achievements and its continued leadership in the banking sector. "The remarkable milestones we've achieved are a testament to the collabora-

tion across our departments and the spirit of teamwork that defines Gulf Bank," he stated.

**Embracing Innovation**

Mr. Mandani highlighted Gulf Bank's dedication to innovation, showcasing its advanced digital infrastructure, which ranks among the most advanced in the industry. He pointed out that the successful completion of the first two phases of the new core banking system has significantly enhanced operational efficiency and improved the customer experience, positioning Gulf Bank as a leader in digital banking.

**Pioneering Sustainability**

The gala also spotlighted Gulf Bank's progress in sustainability, including its ambitious plan to convert branches into eco-friendly spaces. The initiative started with the Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City branch

and has since expanded to modernize several locations. Additionally, the bank celebrated the successful launch of Invest GB, a platform driven by a talented team of skilled



A section of the audience.

nationally.

**Strategic Growth**

Mr. Mandani shared updates on Gulf Bank's strategic initiatives,

including the Board of Directors' approval of a feasibility study for transitioning to a Sharia-compliant institution. Furthermore, Gulf Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Boubyan Bank for a potential merger, demonstrating its ongoing efforts to drive growth and maximize shareholder value.

**A Decade of Success**

Commenting on the event, Mrs. Salma Al-Hajji, General Manager of Human Resources, expressed pride in the many accomplishments of the past decade. "We are excited to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our employees and the strong sense of unity within the Gulf Bank family. This gala is a reflection of the values and dynamic workplace culture we have built together."

She highlighted key milestones, including the 10-year journey of the Gulf Bank Marathon, which has be-

come a prominent community event, and the success of the WOW program, which has empowered women through monthly discussions, resulting in a 300% increase in female representation within the bank over the past decade.

The Ajyal program was also celebrated for its pivotal role in identifying young talent and equipping them with the skills needed to excel in the banking sector. Targeting employees with less than five years of experience, the program enhances their understanding of banking operations, cultivates individual and institutional capabilities, and fosters a results-driven culture of excellence.

This year's gala showcased Gulf Bank's unwavering commitment to innovation, sustainability, and employee empowerment, setting the stage for another decade of excellence and growth.

## EQUATE underlines importance of vital projects to sustainability and diversity

MUSCAT, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's petrochemicals group EQUATE affirmed on the importance of participating in the 18th Annual Forum of the Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) to highlight important projects and initiatives that reflect its commitment to sustainability, diversity and innovation.

In a statement, EQUATE said that it reviewed its strategy for environmental, social and corporate governance standards and its comprehensive efforts in reducing carbon, through initiatives such as carbon dioxide recovery and adopting renewable energy.

It stated that it participated in the forum with a high-level delegation to showcase its latest innovations and initiatives as a founding member of GPCA and a silver sponsor of the forum for 2024, thus confirming its position as an important driving force behind sustainability in the future of the petrochemical sector.

EQUATE added that the forum this year addressed a number of important topics such as energy efficiency, circular economy practices and de-carbonization of industrial operations.

The statement quoted EQUATE Group CEO Nasser Al-Dosari as saying that the group's commitment goes beyond operational excellence, stressing its keenness to contribute to pushing the entire sector towards a more sustainable and innovative future.

He added in a panel discussion that the forum was a key platform for thought leadership, collaboration and growth across the global petrochemical sector and it is important to engage the next generation of leaders in this movement.

The global "EQUATE" group participated in the forum, which kicked off last Monday and concluded today in the Omani capital, Muscat, under the theme (Leading Sustainable Progress for Global Prosperity).

EQUATE is one of the world's leading petrochemical producers and the second largest producer of Ethylene glycol in the world.

It operates industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe to produce more than six million tons per annum of Ethylene, ethylene glycol, Polyethylene, Polyethylene terephthalate, Styrene, Brazilin, heavy aromatics and gasoline.

# US added a strong 227,000 jobs in Nov in a bounce-back from Oct slowdown

Hourly wages rose 0.4%

WASHINGTON, Dec 7, (AP): America's job market rebounded in November, adding 227,000 workers in a solid recovery from the previous month, when the effects of strikes and hurricanes had sharply diminished employers' payrolls.

Last month's hiring growth was up considerably from a meager gain of 36,000 jobs in October. The government also revised up its estimate of job growth in September and October by a combined 56,000.

Friday's report from the Labor Department report also showed that the unemployment rate ticked up from 4.1% in October to a still-low 4.2%. Hourly wages rose 0.4% from October to November and 4% from a year earlier - both solid figures and slightly higher than forecasters had expected.

The November employment report provided the latest evidence that the U.S. job market remains durable even though it has lost significant momentum from the 2021-2023 hiring boom, when the economy was rebounding from the pandemic recession. The job market's gradual slowdown is, in part, a result of the high interest rates the Federal Reserve engineered in its drive to tame inflation.



Construction crew members wait to pour concrete in a parking lot on Sept. 4, 2024, in Waukegan, Iowa. (AP)

The Fed jacked up interest rates 11 times in 2022 and 2023. Defying predictions, the economy kept growing despite much higher borrowing rates for consumers and businesses. But since early this year, the job market has been slowing.

Thomas Simons, U.S. economist at Jefferies, wrote in a commentary that the recovery from October's strikes and hurricanes likely boosted last month's payrolls by 60,000, suggesting that the job market is strong enough to absorb most job-seekers but not enough to raise worries about inflation.

The healthy gain of 227,000 payroll jobs in November was derived from a Labor Department survey of employers. A separate survey of households, which determines the unemployment rate, looked weaker: The ranks of the unemployed rose by 161,000. And the number of Americans who said they either had a job or were looking for one fell for a second straight month.

Economists also noted that the November job growth was narrowly based: Just three categories of employers - healthcare and social assistance; leisure and hospitality; and

government - accounted for 70% of the added jobs. And the 22,000 jobs that factories gained in November were boosted by the end of strikes at Boeing and elsewhere that restored many workers to their employers' payrolls. Retailers, by contrast, shed 28,000 jobs.

"I don't think we should be misled by the solid number of 227,000," said Julia Pollak, chief economist at the employment firm ZipRecruiter.

Pollak noted that averaging the October and November job gains amounts to a modest 132,000 per month.

"This report offers very little evidence of a labor market rebound," she said.

Still, Americans as a whole have been enjoying unusual job security. This week, the government reported that layoffs fell to just 1.6 million in October, below the lowest levels in the two decades that preceded the pandemic. At the same time, the number of job openings rebounded from a 3 1/2 year low, a sign that businesses are still seeking workers even though hiring has cooled.

The overall economy has remained resilient. The much higher borrowing costs for consumers and businesses that resulted from the Fed's rate hikes had been expected to tip the economy into a recession. Instead, the economy kept growing as households continued to spend and employers continued to hire.

## Gulf-China trade set to surpass Gulf-West trade by 2027: report

LONDON, Dec 7, (Xinhua): A London-based think tank has predicted that trade between Gulf states and China will surpass the Gulf's trade with Western economies by 2027, signaling a historic shift in global economic dynamics.

In a report published Thursday, Asia House projects Gulf-China trade to rise from 225 billion U.S. dollars in 2023 to 325 billion U.S. dollars by 2027. This transition is expected to occur during the midpoint of Donald Trump's potential second term as U.S. president, highlighting the increasing significance of Asian markets to Gulf economies.

Asia House attributes this shift to several key drivers, including China's role as the Gulf's largest energy customer, the Gulf's ongoing efforts to diversify its economy away from hydrocarbons, and a series of high-profile political and economic engagements.

The report also forecasts that

Gulf-Emerging Asia trade will grow from 451 billion U.S. dollars in 2023 to 682 billion U.S. dollars by 2030.

"Asia House has been tracking the Middle East Pivot to Asia since 2017, and it's clear from our research that we are in the midst of a profound shift in the global landscape. These new diplomatic, economic, and commercial relationships are being forged as Western economies become increasingly protectionist," Michael Lawrence, Chief Executive of Asia House, said.

Freddie Neve, Senior Middle East Associate at Asia House and lead author of the report, emphasized the long-term significance of this trend. "This is not just a short-term adjustment but a long-term realignment that positions Asia at the heart of the Gulf's economic strategy. This trend presents transformative opportunities for global businesses and investors," he said.

## China-UAE economic exchange center opens in Dubai

DUBAI, Dec 7, (Xinhua): The China-United Arab Emirates (UAE) Economy and Trade Exchange Center was officially inaugurated on Friday at the China Pavilion in Expo City Dubai, with the witness of over 100 Chinese and UAE dignitaries and guests.

In his opening remarks, Chinese Ambassador to the UAE Zhang Yiming praised the remarkable achievements of China-UAE economic and trade cooperation.

He noted that this year marks the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the UAE. The center's opening serves as the culmination of the anniversary celebrations, providing a platform for deepening bilateral economic ties, injecting fresh vitality into their relationship, and creating new opportunities for shared development.

Najeeb Mohammed Al-Ali, executive director of the Dubai Expo 2020 Bureau, emphasized that Expo

City Dubai is dedicated to building bridges for international cooperation and hailed the center as a vivid example of Dubai's commitment to diversified development.

Shi Dai, director and president of China Merchants Group Limited, underscored her company's role as an important witness, participant, and beneficiary of China-UAE friendship. She pledged to uphold the principles of openness and innovation, ensuring the efficient opera-

tion of the center.

Shi described it as a "window for trade exchange, a bridge for technological cooperation, and a hub for cultural integration," aimed at enhancing global understanding of China, its culture, and its enterprises.

The event also featured an exhibition that highlights the rich history and future potential of cultural exchanges between China and the UAE.



# Zain showcases leadership in tech innovation and support for entrepreneurs

Company platinum sponsor of NEXUS under patronage of Minister of Telecommunications



Minister Omar Al-Omar and Hamad Al-Marzouq at the opening ceremony.



Al-Marzouq at the panel discussion.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Zain, Kuwait's leading technology innovator, announced its platinum sponsorship of NEXUS — the largest technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship gathering of its kind. The three-day event was held at The Arena Kuwait, featuring participation from over 100 entities from the public and private sectors, under the patronage and presence of H.E. Minister of State for Telecommunications Affairs, Omar Al-Omar.

Zain took part in the exhibition's opening ceremony, which was attended by officials, executives, and experts representing a wide range of vibrant industries. The company's support to this event aligns with its strategy to contribute to the national economy, emphasize the private sector's role in supporting the country's digital transformation plans, accelerate the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and foster and empower Kuwaiti talent.

### 'How Technology Shapes the Future'

During the event, a panel discussion titled, How AI, Data, and IoT Will Shape the Future, was held, joined by Hamad Al-Marzouq, Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Zain Kuwait; Abdullah Al-Ajmi, Acting Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA); along with other experts.

During the panel, Al-Marzouq highlighted Zain's leading role in digital transformation and how the company employs IoT and AI technologies to enhance customer experience and promote digital lifestyles. He also discussed some of Zain's innovative solutions to integrate data analytics in smart city projects.

He also discussed key projects in collaboration with government and private institutions to advance smart city initiatives and explored the opportunities that 5G and IoT technologies bring to Kuwait's digital future.

At the panel, Al-Marzouq said, "At Zain, we take pride in being pioneers in adopting AI solutions and new technologies. We extend our gratitude to CITRA for their role in supporting our initiatives and facilitating the necessary licenses for launching technologies such as 5G, data centers, and cloud services in the market."

He continued, "On the consumer side, we were the first to introduce AI-powered customer service solutions, such as our interactive smart platform, zBot, that we launched

### Hamad Al-Marzouq:

■ "Data has become one of today's most valuable resources. At Zain, we harness the power of data to enhance customer experiences and enrich their digital lifestyle."

- At the event, Zain introduced all-new bundles to digitally empower SMEs.
- Company actively engaged in panel discussions and workshops throughout the exhibition.

years ago. We also offer a comprehensive portfolio of IoT solutions that enrich our customers' smart home experiences."

Al-Marzouq added, "For the enterprise sector, we have numerous success stories where we empowered public and private sector entities to adopt the latest solutions such as 5G and 5G Advanced connectivity, and we've worked to enhance the smart city ecosystem by deploying 800,000 smart meters in collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity and Water."

He further elaborated, "Our solid partnerships with global technology giants such as Microsoft, Amazon (AWS), Google Cloud, and others have strengthened our digital infrastructure to provide the best services and solutions for business clients in the Kuwaiti market, including large corporations, SMEs, and the public sector."

Al-Marzouq also highlighted a recent AI-driven platform Zain developed for enterprise clients, which helps track project progress using data-driven insights. Among the notable success stories was the partnership with the Kuwait Credit

Bank to provide an engineering inspection platform using drones, significantly enhancing citizens' experiences.

Discussing the significance of data, Al-Marzouq stated, "Data has become one of the most valuable resources today. At Zain, we recently launched the Zain Data Office, which assists us in making data-driven decisions. We harness the power of data to offer solutions that help overcome societal challenges and create exclusive offerings tailored to our customers' unique needs."

Zain had an engaging presence at NEXUS, showcasing its leading experience in digital transformation, support for Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, and the latest fintech solutions, through its dedicated booth and by sharing expertise during engaging panel discussions and specialized workshops throughout the three-day event.

### Exclusive bundles for SMEs

During its participation at NEXUS, Zain launched all-new exclu-

sive bundles tailored for SME customers. Designed specifically for startups, these packages include a variety of offerings from Zain's business portfolio, such as cloud solutions, 5G services, IoT, 5G connectivity, and more.

These new plans from Zain provide customized, integrated solutions specifically designed for SMEs, helping them manage and operate their businesses seamlessly. The plans are cost-effective by bundling several services at a competitive price, with flexibility to customize and add-on as needed, ensuring small businesses have the tools and support needed for success and sustainable growth.

The bundles target SMEs looking to enhance operational efficiency, providing reliable, fast 5G internet connectivity, hosted collaboration services, access to the latest productivity tools, high-level security, and

flexible payment options.

Alongside the new plans, Zain's booth featured a notable contribution from FOO, Zain's fintech partner, showcasing cutting-edge fintech solutions for institutions, including digital wallets, digital banking, banking-as-a-service, cloud-as-a-service, payment solutions, digital transformation enablement, and more.

### Fostering growth for entrepreneurs

During the event, Haya Al-Mana, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Expert at Zain Kuwait, took part in a panel titled Ecosystem Builders and Enablers. She highlighted Zain's innovation strategy, which aims to support entrepreneurs and empower startups by providing world-class mentorship and acceleration resources.

Al-Mana spoke about Zain's

role in providing resources and mentorship to new entrepreneurs through its award-winning tech startup accelerator, Zain Great Idea (ZGI). She also discussed the challenges startups face in the tech space and how to overcome them to achieve sustainable growth, as well as Zain's efforts to foster innovation and inclusion, especially for women in entrepreneurship.

Zain's booth featured participation from three Kuwaiti entrepreneurs from the finalists of the ZGI program, which recently concluded its global acceleration phase in Silicon Valley in the U.S. The participants included Faisal Tawfiqi and Fahad Alzuabi from USim— the seamless internet roaming app, Abdullah Albusairi from EYON— the Arab live streaming platform, and Abdullah Shaban from Mawqif— the ultimate parking app. They highlighted their competitive services to visitors and shared their experiences from the ZGI program.

NEXUS featured the first-of-its-kind startup challenge, where 100 startups competed for six major awards totaling KWD 30,000, including a grand prize of KWD 10,000. Three startups from the current ZGI cohort participated in the competition: Ghaneema Al-Mutawa, Yousur Al-Mutawa, and Yasmeen Al-Kandari from Seeds Academy; Mohammed Al-Kandari and Khaled Ibrahim from Calieri; and Abdulrahman Al-Fneisan from ADWAA. They presented their pioneering ideas and business models to the judging panel and audience.

### Partnership with "Raha"

On the sidelines of the exhibition, Zain announced a collaboration with Raha, the rapidly growing logistics technology company in Kuwait. Through this collaboration, Raha's subsidiary, Smooth Logistics, will support Zain's logistics operations, leveraging its expertise in advanced AI-powered robotics and automation solutions, considered to be among the best in their class in the logistics industry.

The partnership was announced in the presence of Ahmad Al-Habib, Outbound Department Manager in the Channels Division at Zain Kuwait, and Saleh Al-Tunaib, co-founder and CEO of Raha. Smooth Logistics will provide support in managing Zain's logistics operations, including transporting, storing, and shipping products and orders, following the highest standards of quality and efficiency, and utilizing AI-powered robotic solutions in its state-of-the-art facilities in Kuwait.



Haya Al-Mana joins a panel to highlight Zain's support for entrepreneurs.



Ahmad Al-Habib and Saleh Al-Tunaib announce the collaboration between Zain and Raha.



Zain's team at the company's booth.



ZGI participants join the exhibition.



Festival to present over 120 films from 81 countries

## Hollywood and Middle East mix at Red Sea Int'l Film Festival

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Dec 7, (AP): One of the Middle East's fastest-growing film festivals opened Thursday in Saudi Arabia, attracting filmmakers and stars from around the world, to present over 120 films from 81 countries in Jeddah's historic Al-Balad district.

The Red Sea International Film Festival, now in its fourth year, offers a vibrant lineup featuring a mix of world premieres and acclaimed international films. Since its launch in 2021, the festival has attracted major global talent.

This year, the event will welcome Academy Award winners Viola Davis and Spike Lee, alongside Bollywood icons Aamir Khan and Ranbir Kapoor, strengthening its growing reputation on the international film circuit.

The festival opens with "The Tale of Daye's Family" - a drama from Egyptian director Karim Shenawy that follows a Nubian boy's perilous journey to audition for "The Voice."

"I'm more excited than I am worried, because this film wouldn't have happened without the efforts of so many people, all of whom are here with us. They feel that this is their film," said Shenawy on opening night.

"I hope that the film will be an example of the kind of cooperation between Egypt and Saudi Arabia to produce nice cinema that has value at festivals and is widely accepted by the public. I think that this is a film that people will watch and love."

American actress Michelle Rodriguez, also attending the festival, shared her thoughts on being in Saudi Arabia. "Aside of the vast history, I like the deep sense of identity, and I think it's very rare for people in a country to just have a very similar united point of view. And I think that that's quite beautiful," she said.

The Features Competition will present 16 movies highlighting works from filmmakers across the Arab region, Asia, and Africa. Winners will

be selected by a jury, led by Lee, awarding the Yusr Awards.

"I'm here to see and judge 16 films. This is not a vacation," said Lee on the red carpet. "What's new is that I'm going to see some great films by young filmmakers that I probably ... haven't heard of, but I'll know about a lot of them after this festival."

The movies in competition include Lotfi Achour's "Red Path," featured at the Locarno Film Festival, and Mehdi M. Barsaoui's "Aicha," a Venice Film Festival selection. Also competing is Reema Kagti's "Superboys of Malegaon," an Indian film about an amateur filmmaker's dream in the small town of Malegaon.

The Red Sea International Film Festival - founded by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture and supported by the Red Sea Film Foundation - is funded by the Public Investment Fund and private sponsors. It aims to play a vital role in promoting regional filmmakers and fostering global connections.

### 'Sudan, Remember Us'

## Sudan's forgotten war chronicled in new film

MARRAKECH, Morocco, Dec 7, (AP): In the early days of Sudan's 2019 revolution, Shajane Suliman brought sandwiches, coffee and mint tea to demonstrations in closed-off sections of Khartoum. But as hope made way for despair, she decided more than food was needed to nourish the movement.

Public outcry had sprung up against Sudan's longtime military dictator and his mismanagement of the country's economy. Throughout months of demonstrations, hundreds were killed or injured by security forces suppressing protests.

So Suliman donned a gas mask and headed to the streets carrying posters adorned with lines like, "Souls cannot be killed, let alone ideas."

A continent away, filmmaker Hind Meddeb was finishing "Paris Stalingrad," a documentary about the plight of refugees living in encampments near the edge of the French capital. Sudanese refugees encouraged her to go to Khartoum and film their nascent revolution.

Such is the origin story of "Sudan, Remember Us," Meddeb's 75-minute documentary being shown in competition at the Marrakech Film Festival this week after screening at festivals in Venice and Toronto.

Sudan, a predominantly Arab country on the edge of sub-Saharan Africa, descended into civil war in 2023, as fighting erupted between the military and a paramilitary group known as the Rapid Support Forces that grew out of Darfur's notorious Janjaweed militia.

### Conflict

Though estimates are difficult to come by, at least 24,000 people have been killed and millions displaced in a conflict that has largely been eclipsed in the world's attention by wars in the Middle East and Ukraine.

To Suliman, who ended up as one of its protagonists, the documentary's purpose is similar to what she wrote on a poster five years ago: an effort to motivate a despairing public years after revolution failed to cement civilian rule.

The revolution, she said, felt like "a piece of heaven" despite the violence, full of music, poetry and optimism about Sudan's future.

"Everyone forgot or lost hope," Suliman said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"It's different for us now than when the revolution started. We were together so it was easy. Now we need to change how we want to continue."

Mostly, it brings viewers to 2019, the year that Sudan's military ousted President Omar al-Bashir, paving the way for power-sharing and a short-lived transitional government led by generals and civilians.

Largely shot on a handheld camera in a country that has at times blocked the internet, banned foreign news channels and arrested its own journalists, the movie is both a story of collective hope and a feat of reportage.

### Revolution

Meddeb's observational approach and lingering on poems differs from gripping streaming-friendly protest documentaries such as Jehane Noujaim's "The Square" (2013), Evgeny Afineevsky's "Winter on Fire" (2015) or Kiwi Chow's "Revolution of Our Times" (2021). She captures a revolution documentary's requisite images - the chaos and terror as well as solidarity and joy of demonstrators facing off against security forces.

But the movie aims for a different kind of storytelling.

A former France 24 journalist, Meddeb gravitated toward documentary for the breathing room it offered to let stories unfold in an unpredictable way, she said in an interview.

"It's a very spontaneous film. I was diving into what was happening and filming what was inspiring me," she said at the Marrakech Film Festival.

What she found and was inspired by was a country described as a "land of literature" and a revolution in which women played a central role.

The protests rendered in the documentary pulsate with drums beating at marches and through the rhythm of poems recited at sit-ins. Meddeb takes the audience from phone camera-filmed street fighting to underground cafes to the Nile River as young people discuss their hopes for Sudan.

"The revolution was a time of beautiful feelings and projects," one woman says after security forces killed more than 100 people in a June 2019 massacre. "It made you want to take part. A painting, a poem, anything to bring people together."



Sudanese activist, Shajan Suliman, gestures while attending the screening of 'Sudan, Remember Us' movie, during the Marrakech International Film Festival, in Morocco, Monday, Dec. 2, 2024. (AP)

### Film



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Amy Adams in a scene from 'Nightbitch.' (AP)

Film explores dark side of motherhood

## Adams is mesmerizing in 'Nightbitch'

LOS ANGELES, Dec 7, (AP): The question sounds so basic and friendly. But it's actually loaded, as many mothers can attest. "Do you just love getting to be home with him all the time?" asks the younger, more put-together woman in the supermarket. "Must be so wonderful."

Wonderful, of course - and sometimes brain-numbing and soul-draining too, some exhausted fulltime moms might reply. Especially if, like Amy Adams' character in Marielle Heller's "Nightbitch," they'd left their prized art gallery job to this other woman.

And so Adams responds, twice, showing in this very opening scene exactly why her typically brave, brutally frank performance lifts this movie from an oddly uneven script to something unequivocally worth seeing.

First we get the honest answer, the one no one really gives until later in the shower: she feels "stuck inside of a prison of my own creation," where she torments herself and ends up binge-eating Fig Newtons to keep from crying. She is angry all the time. Oh and, she has gotten dumber.

Then we rewind and director-writer Heller has Adams give her real answer: "I do, I love it! I love being a Mom."

There we are, two minutes and 13 seconds into "Nightbitch" and you may already find yourself wowed by Adams. If not, just wait until her Mother is sitting at a chic restaurant with a bunch of colleagues from the art world, and her fangs come out.

And we don't mean figuratively. We mean literally.

Let's go back to the beginning, shall we? "Nightbitch" is based on the 2021 novel by Rachel Yoder, a feminist fable that the author

has said came from her own malaise when pausing work for child-rearing.

She sets her tale in an unidentified suburb of an unidentified city. Mother (characters all have generic names), formerly an admired installation artist, spends her weekdays alone with her adorable, blond 2-year old Son. Husband has a job that seems to bring him home only on weekends.

The early scenes depicting Mother's life are tight and impactful, a contrast to the confused havoc that will come toward the end of the film. Life revolves around the playground and the home, with occasional trips to storytime at the library where she notes, in narration, that she has no interest in the company of other moms - why should they be friends just because they're moms?

### Wonder

In fact, Mother lives in solitude, and director Heller does a nice job illustrating how that feels. You can almost feel the weight of the afternoon coming around, at this comfortable but hardly ostentatious home, when it's too early for dinner and you've done all the activities already and you wonder if you can make it through the day.

Then things start to get weird. In the bathroom mirror, Mother starts noticing things. Her teeth are getting sharper. There's something weird coming out of an apparent cyst at the bottom of her spine. She finds extra nipples. And that's before she starts eating rare meat. (Also, if you love cats, you may want to close your eyes at one point.)

Somehow Adams, who also produces here, makes these things seem, if not quite natural, then logical. What's happening is that Mother's frustration is becoming ferocious. Dangerously

ferocious. But also - empowering. At night, or so she thinks, she is a wild dog.

Aspects of the film work wonderfully. Mother's relationship with Son (twins Arleigh and Emmett Snowden) is lovely, largely due to a decision to let the young boys talk freely, with the adult actors reacting to their words. It lends a grounding realism to a film that quickly veers surreal.

Less successful is the relationship between Mother and Husband (Scoot McNairy), which takes on too much importance as the film goes on, in a baffling way. (Also, just asking, has anyone in this movie ever heard of a babysitter?)

More importantly, a story that posits itself on such a tantalizing idea - that by transforming into a dog, Mother discovers her true nature and power - resorts late in the game to a safer story about a marriage that never seemed appealing enough for us to care about anyway. It doesn't help that it's hard to grasp the distracting subplot about Mother's own mother.

None of this takes away from the strength of Adams' performance. You believe her love for her child as much as you believe her resentment for what he is taking away from her. And Adams can make almost any line work, including one about a walnut. But we digress.

It's an irony that for reasons of storytelling, characters have generic names - because Adams is such a singular and particular talent. The journey she embarks upon is bizarre indeed, but you won't regret taking it with her.

"Nightbitch," a Searchlight Pictures release, has been rated R by the Motion Picture Association "for language and some sexuality. " Running time: 98 minutes. Two stars out of four.

### Variety

**MINNEAPOLIS:** Nearly two decades after a pair of ruby slippers that were worn by **Judy Garland** in "The Wizard of Oz" were stolen from a Minnesota museum, the iconic shoes are set to be auctioned off to the highest bidder Saturday.

Heritage Auctions estimates the slippers will fetch \$3 million or more. Online bidding opened last month and by Friday had reached \$1.55 million, or \$1.91 million including the buyer's premium, a commission that the buyer pays, said Robert Wilonsky, a vice president with the Dallas-

based auction house.

Over 800 people were tracking the slippers, and the company's web page for the auction had hit nearly 43,000 page views by Thursday, he said.

As Rhys Thomas, author of the book, "The Ruby Slippers of Oz," puts it, the sequined shoes from the beloved 1939 musical have seen "more twists and turns than the Yellow Brick Road."



Garland

They were on display at the Judy Garland Museum in her hometown of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, in 2005 when Terry Jon Martin used a hammer to smash the glass of the museum's door and display case. (AP)



**PHILADELPHIA:** Couples who look awkward on skates - and on dates - had a chance to celebrate their cute clumsiness in a Rocky and Adrian look-alike contest at Philadelphia's RockyFest on Friday.

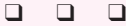
The evening event at the University of Pennsylvania's 1923 Ice Rink was meant to echo the pair's first date in "Rocky."

In the classic 1976 film, the epony-

mous boxer never actually dons ice skates in the scene, but instead shuffles alongside his best friend Paulie's sister as she tries to stay upright.

The contest's winning prize was a dinner at South Philadelphia's iconic Victor Café, where the servers also sing opera, along with a hotel stay and a \$250 certificate for a Rocky-themed gift shop. New York City firefighter Jason Carrion and his wife, Roxanne Carrion, took first place.

"I wanted to do something because we're the biggest 'Rocky' fans, I think, ever. I mean, just look at us," said Jason Carrion, dressed in a leather jacket and hat identical to Rocky's street wear in the movie. (AP)



**ATLANTA:** Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis is seeking to hold a trial early next year for the last five defendants who were originally indicted along with Atlanta rapper Young Thug.

A final plea hearing for the five is set for December 17 and Willis filed a motion Friday asking that a trial begin on February 24.

She estimates that a trial would last about three months.

A grand jury in May 2022 indicted 28 people, including Young Thug, and charged them with racketeering.

The indictment said the rapper co-founded a violent street gang that committed multiple murders, shootings and carjackings over roughly a

decade and promoted its activities in songs and on social media.

A trial for Young Thug, whose given name is Jeffery Williams, and five others began in November 2023 after it took nearly 10 months to seat a jury.

The rapper and three other defendants pleaded guilty in October.

Young Thug was freed on probation with a variety of conditions, including an order to stay away from the Atlanta area for a decade.

A jury on Tuesday found the two remaining defendants in the trial not guilty of racketeering, murder and gang-related charges, though one of them was convicted on a gun charge. (AP)



A symbol of hope and unity

Notre Dame reopens its doors to Macron, world leaders

PARIS, Dec 7, (AP): France’s iconic Notre Dame Cathedral is formally re-opening its doors on Saturday for the first time since a devastating fire nearly destroyed the 861-year-old landmark in 2019.

The restoration, a spectacular achievement in just five years for a structure that took nearly two centuries to build, is seen as a moment of triumph for French President Emmanuel Macron, who championed the ambitious timeline - and a welcome respite from his domestic political woes.

Under the luminous stained glass, many world leaders, dignitaries, and worshippers will gather in the evening to mark the occasion - a rare moment of unity against the backdrop of global divisions and conflicts.

President-elect Donald Trump, America’s first lady Jill Biden and Britain’s Prince William, along with dozens of state and government and



French President Emmanuel Macron, (center left), and his wife Brigitte Macron, (third right), visit the restored interiors of Notre-Dame Cathedral, Friday, Nov.29, 2024 in Paris. (AP)

personalities - 1,500 guests in all - will attend the reopening celebration under Notre Dame’s soaring Gothic arches, led by Archbishop Laurent Ulrich.

Instead of starting from the cathedral’s forecourt as initially planned and because of strong winds forecast for Saturday evening in Paris, the French presidential palace and the Paris diocese said Friday the entire opening ceremony will be held inside Notre Dame.

Notre Dame’s rector, Rev. Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, says the cathedral is “more than just a French monument” and a beloved treasure of world’s cultural heritage.

“The cathedral is a magnificent symbol of unity,” the rector said. “A sign of hope, because what seemed impossible has become possible.”

Saturday’s events will blend solemn religious tradition with cultural grandeur, starting with Ulrich symbolically reopening Notre Dame’s grand

wooden doors.

Tapping them three times with a staff crafted from charred wood salvaged from the cathedral’s fire-ravaged roof, he will declare the cathedral open for worship once more.

Psalms, prayers, and hymns will fill the cavernous space as the cathedral’s thunderous organ, silenced since the fire, is reawakened. The 8,000-pipe instrument, painstakingly restored and cleaned of toxic lead dust, will respond to the archbishop’s invocation, with four organists performing an improvised interplay of melodies.

Later in the evening, a star-studded concert will take center stage inside the cathedral and pay tribute to its resurrection and to those who labored to restore it, offering a universal message of harmony. Pianist Lang Lang, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, and soprano Pretty Yende are among the world-famous artists slated to perform.

On Sunday, Ulrich will lead the inaugural Mass and consecrate the cathedral’s new altar, designed by contemporary artist Guillaume Bardet to replace the one crushed beneath the flaming spire in the blaze.

Nearly 170 bishops from France and abroad will attend, alongside priests from all 113 parishes of the Paris diocese.

The reopening of Notre Dame comes at a time of profound global unrest, with wars raging in Ukraine and the Middle East.

For Catholics, Notre Dame’s rector said the cathedral “carries the enveloping presence of the Virgin Mary, a maternal and embracing presence.”

“It is a magnificent symbol of unity, a sign of hope,” Dumas said.

The range of dignitaries coming to Paris from Africa to the Mideast and the U.S. underline the cathedral’s significance as a symbol of shared heritage and peace.

Film

Actors on fighting for meaningful movies

Binoche, Fiennes reunite for ‘The Return’



Juliette Binoche, (left), and Ralph Fiennes pose for a portrait to promote the film ‘The Return’ on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024, in New York. (AP)

LOS ANGELES, Dec 7, (AP): Ralph Fiennes and Juliette Binoche became friends while playing lovers in “Wuthering Heights.” A few years later, they would share the screen again in Anthony Minghella’s “The English Patient,” that historical epic that would take them all the way to the Oscars.

They’ve kept in touch in the years since, fused by those early experiences and their admiration for one another’s minds and processes. There were dinners and phone calls and trips to catch one another on the stage. Binoche went to see him in “Macbeth.” He went to see her in “Antigone.”

But they hadn’t managed to work together again until now. And, appropriate for the occasion, the story is an epic: the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope.

“We’re very, very, very good friends,” Fiennes said. “There’s a trust, there’s a bond, there’s a respect. There’s the love of friends and we celebrate each other’s work.”

“The Return,” in theaters Friday, has been a passion project for director and co-writer Umberto Pasolini, who worked on it on and off for some 30 years (longer than Odysseus’ entire journey, he noted).

“I thought I was too old,” Fiennes said. “He said, ‘No, no, no, you’re there. This is your last year.’”

Binoche and Fiennes spoke to The Associated Press about the enduring appeal of Homer’s story, their process and the value of fighting for provocative cinema. Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

**AP:** What was the allure of taking this on at this stage?

**Fiennes:** I’ve been fascinated by Odysseus since I was a young boy and my mother read me the Greek myths. I think it’s something about coming home and having the courage and the sort of sense of destiny to take what is yours, to clarify what you have. There are great symbols at work in this piece. Umberto had shared this with me

for some time and we got to the point of, well, when are we going to do this? And who should play Penelope? And I said, “It must be Juliette Binoche.” And he said, “Don’t you think it should be Juliette Binoche?” And I said, “That’s just what I said. Umberto, it has to be Juliette Binoche.”

**Binoche:** On another interview, he didn’t want to say that he chose me. And I said, “Why don’t you say it?” So now he’s saying that three times. I’m so happy.

**Fiennes:** It wasn’t long before Juliette Binoche was the only person on the planet who could play Penelope.

**Binoche:** I didn’t ask that much.

**Fiennes:** I’m saying that. You can’t say that. I can.

**AP:** It’s on the record forever now. How do you prepare to embody these iconic characters?

**Binoche:** You prepared more than I did. Ralph was really training like crazy for it. As for me, you want to be present and allow truth in the moment and make these figures,

these big myths, these archetypes real. Umberto was quite controlling because he wanted to succeed so much with this film, he wanted it to be so close to his dream. We had to relax him in a way so we would have space to engage in this acting moment between us. We wanted to give something special to the film so people would experience as a spectator something ancient and yet very truthful and modern.

**Fiennes:** We felt strongly that once we were going to do it, we were on this shared road. You have the baggage of these two archetypes, symbols that are heightened, mythical. Our job is to make them human. We felt the pressure of that all the time and we were hungry to do it and wanted it. It was a conversation: Please don’t over-define every second of how you’re going to shoot this because we will get to a place where our combined energies will hopefully send you messages about how you want to shoot it.

**AP:** You’re both working a lot and playing really rich roles, “The Taste of Things” and “Conclave” just from releases this year. People tend to be very dark about the state of the industry and yet there are still wonderful films being made. Are you optimistic? Inspired?

**Fiennes:** The industry is challenged. And I know for a fact that the independent film finance world is very challenged. I think I’m a bit of a dinosaur. The days of the independent film that was going to be in cinemas, I think they may be past. The hunger to go to the cinema is something that might be dwindling, and we are always grateful when we hear about films where people have left their homes for the cinema experience.

So that begs the question about what is the cinema experience? Everything is changing and shifting. But there are determined writers, producers, actors, directors who believe in making provocative adult dramas. I read about this film, “The Brutalist.” I’m dying to see it. It sounds extraordinary. It sounds like exactly what I’m trying to describe. A brave filmmaker who is determined to go out there and push the boundaries with a piece of work. There are those people who are determined to keep giving us this expression in cinema. But it’s very tough.

**Binoche:** As an audience, you have to observe what stays in you. Because, of course, you’re going to have a wonderful time while you’re watching and thinking, wow, you’re doing this and that and this color and this pace and the editing is exciting but at the end of the day, what do you bring with you? What stays in you? I think that’s the key question because otherwise you spent hours and hours of watching things and you don’t think about it the next day or the next hour. It’s ridiculous, in my opinion, because it needs to nourish something in your life. I believe that an art form can change your life. And we’re doing it for that purpose.



South Korean writer Han Kang, winner of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature, arrives for a news conference at the Swedish Academy in Gamla Stan, Stockholm, Sweden, Friday Dec. 6. (AP)

Painful memories

Nobel winner Kang stunned by South Korea’s martial law

STOCKHOLM, Dec 7, (AP): South Korean author Han Kang, this year’s winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, said Friday that she was shocked by this week’s martial law announcement in her home country.

Han, awarded by the Nobel committee “for her intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life,” spoke to journalists at a news conference in Stockholm after days of political turmoil back home.

She recalled how she studied martial law imposed in her country in 1979 for her book “Human Acts.” The book is set in 1980 in her birth city of Gwangju following a bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters that left around 200 people dead and hundreds of others injured.

She described the shock of living through another attempt at martial law, this one live-streamed in real-time, when the president announced martial law in a surprise late-night address on Tuesday. It brought back memories for many South Koreans of the country’s past military-backed dictatorships.

“Like everyone else that night, I was

deeply shocked,” the 54-year-old said through a translator. “For me to witness a similar situation unfold before my eyes in 2024 was startling.”

Han, known for her experimental and often disturbing stories that explore human traumas and violence and incorporate the brutal moments of South Korea’s modern history, is South Korea’s first writer to win the preeminent award in world literature.

President Yoon Suk Yeol sent heavily armed soldiers into Seoul’s streets after announcing martial law. But parliament forced him to lift his order within hours and the president is now facing possible impeachment.

Opposition parties are pushing for a vote on Saturday on the impeachment motion, which needs support from two-thirds of the National Assembly to advance to the Constitutional Court, which would decide whether to remove Yoon from office.

Saturday is also the day Han will deliver her Nobel lecture in Stockholm, the Swedish capital. There will be a ceremony and banquet for her and the other laureates next Tuesday, which is December 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel’s death.

‘Feels like a huge honor’

Special Paul McCartney ‘UK coins’ to go on sale

LONDON, Dec 7, (AP): Beatles legend Paul McCartney is being honored in a specially minted British coin collection.

The Royal Mint, which has struck the coins of monarchs from Alfred the Great in the ninth century through to King Charles III, revealed Friday that it is launching a McCartney coin collection for collectors to buy.

On one side of the coins, as is custom, will be the king. On the other, it will be all about McCartney’s career in the wake of the Beatles split in 1970.

The Royal Mint said the range will come in a variety of finishes as well as colored editions. The most valuable one will be the 2-ounce gold proof coin, which will have a face value of 200 pounds (\$255), but will go on sale at a recommended retail price of 5,890 pounds (\$7,510).

Though legal tender, but with the price differential, it’s unlikely - if not irrational - for anyone using the coins in everyday to use them to pay for, say, a McCartney concert.

Among other features, the coins feature McCartney’s iconic Magic Piano, a multicolored upright he first used in 1967 while still in arguably the greatest band of all with John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. A replica was made for McCartney’s 1989/1990 world tour and been used in subsequent tours.

There are other references too, including piano notes chosen by McCartney, his famous Höfner Violin Bass guitar, the logo of his post-Beatles band, Wings, as well as his signature.

“This feels like a huge honor,” McCartney said. “It’s not anything I would have ever expected to happen when I was a kid.”



Undated handout photo issued by the Royal Mint of Sir Paul McCartney with Stephanie Morris, (left), Head of Sales at The Royal Mint, and Rebecca Morgan, Director of Commemorative Coin at The Royal Mint holding the Paul McCartney 2024 UK £5 Coin. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Jay-Z’s popular exhibit “The Book of Hov” in New York is about to live up to its name by becoming an actual book.

“The Book of Hov: A Tribute to Jay-Z” debuts Wednesday, following the success of Jay-Z’s free immersive exhibit at the Brooklyn Public Library, which drew more than 600,000 visitors in a six-month span last year. The 432-page book, released by Assouline, goes on pre-sale Tuesday.

The book serves as both a commemoration and a time capsule of the exhibition that celebrated the life and work of the 24-time Grammy winner, bringing together thousands of archived artifacts from his illustrious career. There are nearly 700 images. In the eight chapters, readers will find everything from iconic stage outfits to rare interviews, awards and never-before-seen photographs.

The chapter titles are drawn from Jay-Z’s lyrics. “The Book of Hov: A Tribute to Jay-Z” unveils Jay-Z’s deep connection with the art world and his rising business ventures, reveals his unique method of composing rhymes mentally and his criminal and social justice activism. It offers a tribute to Baseline Studios where “The Blueprint” and “The Black Album” were birthed. The book also captures him articulating his vision and manifesting his future through a series of interviews spanning several years. (AP)

**NEW YORK:** A prolonged and closely watched

copyright case involving an online library’s unauthorized offering of free e-books has ended after the defendant, Internet Archive, decided not to challenge an appeal’s court’s ruling against it.

In September, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld a Manhattan federal court’s decision that found the Archive in violation of copyright law and granted a permanent injunction. The Archive had until this week to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, but declined to do so.

In 2020, four major publishers - Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins Publishers, John Wiley & Sons and Penguin Random House - sued the Archive, alleging that it had illegally provided free copies of more than 100 books, including fiction by Toni Morrison and J.D. Salinger. The Archive had contended that its program of scanning and sharing books, “controlled digital lending,” was protected by fair use law. (AP)



Ailing Gaza kids die awaiting treatment approval from Israel

Only 378 critical cases evacuated from Gaza since May: WHO

GENEVA, Dec 7, (Agencies): The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that only 378 critical cases out of more than 1,200 have been medically evacuated from Gaza since last May bringing the total number of evacuated people to 5,325 since the start of the Israeli assault on Gaza in early October.

Speaking in a press briefing, WHO Representative in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Rick Peeperkorn said that more than 100,000 people had been injured as a result of the Israeli assault.

Peeperkorn emphasized the urgent need to facilitate medical evacuations and underscored the importance of protecting health workers and ambulances in Gaza from being targeted.

Peeperkorn also expressed deep concern about the heavy bombardment of Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza early this morning which forced the urgent evacuation of patients and staff. He confirmed that “no official evacuation order or prior warning was received,” which led to the deaths of many civilians due to the heavy shelling around the hospital, while others were detained.

He also reported that the Indonesian hospital had also been bombed this morning and said that WHO in coordination with the Palestinian Ministry



Nima al-Askari, right, cares for her 4-year-old son, Qusay al-Askari, in Deir al-Ballah, Gaza Strip, on Nov. 16, 2024. Nima al-Askari said she was told by doctors that her son could become paralyzed if he doesn't get surgery in the next two or three months for a heart defect that constricts his aorta. (AP)

of Health had successfully evacuated several international staff and a local member of the Indonesian medical team to another hospital.

The 12-year-old Palestinian boy was lying in a hospital bed in central Gaza, wracked with leukemia, malnourished and whimpering in pain despite the morphine doctors were giving him,

sons, she said.

Islam died three days after she saw him, Bollen said.

Thousands of patients in Gaza are waiting for Israeli permission for urgently needed medical evacuation from Gaza for treatment of war wounds or chronic diseases they can't get after the destruction of much of the territory's health care system by Israel's 15-month military campaign.

Among them are at least 2,500 children who UNICEF says must be transported immediately.

"They cannot afford to wait. These children will die. They're dying in waiting and I find it striking that the world is letting that happen," Bollen said.

The Israeli military often takes months to respond to medical evacuation requests, and the number of evacuations has plunged in recent months. In some cases, the military rejects either the patient or, in the case of children, the caregivers accompanying them on vague security grounds or with no explanation.

The Israeli decisions appear to be "arbitrary and are not made on a criteria nor logic," said Moeen Mahmood, the Jordan country director for Doctors Without Borders.

COGAT, the Israeli military agency in charge of humanitarian affairs for

Palestinians, said in a statement to The Associated Press that it "makes every effort to approve the departure of children and their families for medical treatments, subject to a security check." It did not respond when asked for details about Islam's case.

A military official said Israel's internal intelligence service reviews whether the patient or their escort have what he called "a connection to terrorism," and if one is found they are refused. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential procedures.

**Cancer**

Osaid Shaheen, who is nearly 2, now faces having his eyes removed after Israel rejected his evacuation for treatment of cancer in his retinas.

The toddler was diagnosed with the cancer in April, after his mother, Soudos Abu Libda, noticed his left eyelid was droopy. The World Health Organization requested his evacuation through the Rafah border crossing in southern Gaza, but the crossing was shut down in May when Israeli troops took it over in an offensive, Abu Libda said.

WHO applied again, this time for Osaid to leave through the Kerem Shalom crossing into Israel, now the only route for evacuees to travel. During the long wait, the cancer spread to the child's other eye and reached stage 4.

In November, Abu Libda was told Osaid was rejected on security grounds with no further explanation.

She was stunned, she said. "I didn't expect that a child could get a security rejection."

Doctors have given the boy three doses of chemotherapy. But with supplies short in Gaza, they're struggling to get more. If they can't, they will have to remove Osaid's eyes or the cancer will spread to other parts of his body, Abu Libda said.

"He's just a child. How will he live his life without seeing? How will he play? How will he see his future and how will his life turn out?" Abu Libda asked, standing outside the house where her family is sheltering in the Beni Sueil district of southern Gaza.

Nearby, little Osaid - who so far still has his sight - toddled around in the rubble of a building destroyed by Israeli forces, smiling as he played with chunks of rubble. When asked about his case, COGAT did not reply.

WHO says 14,000 patients of all ages need medical evacuation from Gaza. The territory's Health Ministry puts the number higher, at 22,000, including 7,000 patients in extreme need who could die soon without treatment, according to Mohamed Abu Salmey, a ministry official in charge of evacuation referrals.

Cessation leads to better disease control

Quitting smoking key to reducing risk of type 2 diabetes: Dr. Rajan

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: In an exclusive interview with Dr. Rajesh Rajan, a senior cardiologist, insightful directions were shared regarding mpox. Dr. Rajan highlighted the potential risks associated with smoking and the increased incidence of type 2 diabetes.

A report developed collaboratively by the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), and the University of Newcastle highlights a significant public health benefit: quitting smoking can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by an estimated 30–40%.

Currently, the IDF reports that approximately 537 million individuals worldwide are living with diabetes, a figure that continues to grow, positioning diabetes as the ninth leading cause of death globally. Type 2 diabetes, in particular, represents over 95% of all diabetes cases and is often preventable through lifestyle changes.

The benefits of quitting smoking extend beyond reducing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. For those already diagnosed, cessation can lead to better disease management and a decrease in the likelihood of complications. Research indicates that smoking adversely affects the body's ability to manage blood sugar levels, thus contributing to the onset of



Dr. Rajesh Rajan

type 2 diabetes.

Moreover, smoking is linked to various diabetes-related complications, including cardiovascular diseases, kidney failure, and vision impairment. It also hampers wound healing and increases the risk of severe outcomes such as lower limb amputations, placing additional strain on healthcare systems.

The call to action is clear: stop-

ping smoking is not solely a measure for lung and heart health; it is a vital strategy for reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes. We urge governments to implement policies that discourage smoking and eliminate tobacco smoke in public areas.

□ □ □

Dr. Rajesh Rajan is a renowned Indian Cardiologist at Amiri Hospital in Kuwait and holds prestigious positions as the current President of the Association of MD Physicians, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Indian Association of Clinical Cardiologists, and the Managing Editor of the esteemed Annals of Clinical Cardiology Journal by Wolters Kluwer. His contributions to the medical community are highly regarded, and he has been honored with Fellowships from esteemed institutions such as the Royal College of London, Edinburgh, Ireland, and Glasgow. Dr. Rajan's expertise and commitment to cardiovascular health are evident through his groundbreaking research and recognition as a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, the European Society of Cardiology, the American Society of Echocardiography, and the American Heart Association.



KUNA photo  
Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadi and several attendees during an awareness event marking World AIDS Day.

Kuwait launches awareness campaign on World AIDS Day

The office of immune deficiency syndrome, affiliated to Kuwaiti Ministry of Health's public health sector, launched on Friday a three-day awareness campaign at the Avenues on World AIDS Day.

The move aims to raise awareness on this disease and viral infections as well as show international solidarity to combat acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Following opening the ceremony under the auspices of, and in the presence of, Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad

Al-Awadhi, head of the office Dr. Sarah Al-Qabandi said the ministry seeks to shed light on the risks of this disease, and ways of prevention, and treatment, from it.

The office is paying much attention to AIDS, set operational policies and coordinate with relevant bodies, she noted. Treatment from this virus is free for citizens, she added, stating that Kuwait is one of the advanced countries in combating this disease and offering health-care. (KUNA)

WHO joins Congo's mystery illness probe

KINSHASA, Dec 7, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization (WHO) is deploying experts to support health authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with investigations to determine the cause of a yet undiagnosed disease that has been reported in Panzi, a locality in Kwango Province in the southwest of the country.

The WHO experts are joining the DRC response team and are on their way to Panzi, the WHO regional office for Africa confirmed in a statement on Friday.

An initial local WHO team has been supporting the health authorities in Kwango since the end of November to reinforce disease surveillance and identify cases.

"Our priority is to provide effective support to the affected families and communities. All efforts are under-

US mandates milk testing for bird flu

NEW YORK, Dec 7, (AP): The U.S. government has ordered testing of the nation's milk supply for bird flu to better monitor the spread of the virus in dairy cows.

Raw or unpasteurized milk from dairy farms and processors nationwide must be tested on request starting Dec. 16, the Agriculture Department said. Testing will begin in six states - California, Colorado, Michigan, Mississippi, Oregon and Pennsylvania.

Officials said the move is aimed at "containing and ultimately eliminating the virus," known as Type A H5N1, which was detected for the first time in March in U.S. dairy cows. Since then, more than 700 herds have been confirmed to be infected in 15 states.

"This will give farms and farmworkers better confidence in the safety of their animals and ability to protect themselves, and it will put us on a path to quickly controlling and

stopping the virus' spread nationwide," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement.

The risk to people from bird flu remains low, health officials said. Pasteurization, or heat treatment, kills the virus in milk, leaving it safe to drink.

Veterinarians, farmers, scientists and academics have been calling for nationwide milk testing for months, said Keith Poulsen, director of the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, who led the efforts.

"It's another step in the right direction," Poulsen said. "They're coming around that we need a better handle on it."

Dairy farmers and processors across the U.S. have been reluctant to test animals or milk for the virus, fearing economic or other repercussions. Jamie Jonker, chief science officer of the National Milk Producers Federation, said the industry supports USDA efforts to eliminate the virus.

MEDICAL CLASSIFIEDS

Take care of your health

To advertise in this page please call: (+965) 24813566 Ext.: 513 or E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

For  
your  
ads on  
this page

Call: 24813805 E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com

www.arabtimesonline.com

مركز شفاء الجزيرة الطبي  
SHIFA AL JAZEERA MEDICAL CENTRE  
الفروانية FARAWANIYA

Dermatology - Cosmetology Dept.

Dr. Abdul Nazer  
MBBS, MD (DVD)  
Skin & Dermatology  
Specialist

Dr. Faizan Kalekhan  
MBBS, MD, DNB  
Dermatology,  
Venereology & Leprosy

Our Services

PRP | Peels | Painless laser hair removal | Treatment for scars, acne scars, wrinkles, Aging, Skin Tightening, Stretch marks | Cellulite, fat, warts, moles, corn | Mesotherapy | Crystal Peel & diamond Microdermabrasion | Carboxytherapy | Dualpeel | Whitening treatment (Localized & Whole body) Botox | Fillers | Hair loss treatment | Nail surgeries | Skin biopsies | Cryotherapy | Dermapen

Behind Maghateer Commercial Complex & Opp. Police Station - Farwaniya  
www.shifaaljazeera.com.kw

Ph: 2473 4000



# Atalanta tops Serie A after late victory over AC Milan



Parma's Lamini Mandela Keita, left, and Inter Milan's Marcus Thuram vie for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Parma at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy. (AP)

## Inter goes 13 games unbeaten

**MILAN, Italy, Dec 7, (AP):** Atalanta went to the top of Serie A when Ademola Lookman scored with three minutes remaining to beat AC Milan 2-1.

Atalanta's ninth win in a row was a fitting gift to coach Gian Piero Gasperini, who was awarded the coach of the month award earlier in the day for guiding his team to a perfect record in November.

Charles De Ketelaere put the home side ahead with a towering header after 11 minutes only for Milan to level 11 minutes later.

Theo Hernández released Rafael Leão on the right wing and his inviting cross was converted by Álvaro Morata.

Milan's Christian Pulisic left in the 38th minute because of a calf injury.

Milan looked set to end Atalanta's impressive run but Lookman nipped in at the back post to nod home a corner in the dying moments.

Atalanta has 34 points, two more than Napoli, which has a game in hand against Lazio on Sunday. Milan was in seventh place.

Serie A champion Inter defeated Parma 3-1 and extended the Milan club's unbeaten run to 13 games.

Federico Dimarco put the home



AC Milan's Emerson Royal, right, fights for the ball with Atalanta's Ademola Lookman, centre, during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Atalanta and AC Milan at the Gewiss Stadium in Bergamo, Italy. (AP)

side ahead five minutes before half-time when he worked a neat one-two with Henrikh Mkhitaryan and fired a low shot past Zion Suzuki.

Nicolò Barella made it two eight minutes into the second half when he finished a fast counterattack with aplomb.

Marcos Thuram's 10th goal of the season made it 3-0 in the 66th.

A Matteo Darmian own goal gave some late consolation for Parma.

■   ■   ■

Paris Saint-Germain failed to

score in Ligue 1 for the first time this season as the reigning champion was denied by outstanding goal-keeping from Auxerre's Donovan León in a 0-0 draw.

León's string of superb saves thwarted PSG's attacking stars.

After a fairly even first 45 minutes, PSG camped in the Auxerre half but could not find a way past León, who made memorable stops from Gonçalo Ramos, Achraf Hakimi, Kang-In Lee, Désiré Nonaka-Maho and Randal Kolo Muani. Vitinha saw one curling shot come

back off the bar.

PSG had 25 shots to Auxerre's six and 15 corners to Auxerre's three but the home side still could have stolen all three points, as PSG keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma had to make a smart stop from Hamed Traorè.

PSG remained eight points clear on top of Ligue 1. Auxerre was eighth.

Canadian striker Jonathan David scored two and made another as Lille brushed past Brest 3-1 to extend its unbeaten run to 10 games in Ligue 1.

The last time Lille lost to Brest at home was in 1989 and that long run never looked likely to fall as David turned in a man-of-the-match performance at Stade Pierre-Mauroy.

He put Lille ahead from the penalty spot after nine minutes and he got away from his marker and crossed for Hákon Haraldsson to clip home a second just before half-time.

Ludovic Ajorque got one back for Brest early in the second half but David restored Lille's two-goal cushion when he pounced on a loose ball to slide home his team's third.

David's goals took his season total to 17 in 23 games. They were his 10th and 11th in the league and lift him to the top of the Ligue 1 goal-scoring chart.

## 'I don't need support, mate'

# Spurs coach Postecoglou shrugs off fans' criticism

LONDON, Dec 7, (AP): Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou might be in for more "direct feedback" from fans if his team underwhelms when Chelsea visits on Sunday.

The Australian coach isn't worried.

"I've lived in this world for long enough to know that when people are unhappy they'll express their opinions. I'm never going to hide. I'm never going to shed that responsibility - that's fine," Postecoglou said Friday at a news conference.

Spurs slipped to 10th in the Premier League standings with a 1-0 loss at Bournemouth on Thursday, and Postecoglou had an exchange with frustrated traveling fans after the final whistle. The coach deemed it "direct feedback" in his postgame comments.

"It doesn't disappoint me, it doesn't frustrate me, it doesn't make me angry," Postecoglou said Friday. "I'm just as determined as ever to get it right. Not because of that but because of my resolve to bring success to the football club.

"I don't need support, mate. I don't worry about contracts, I don't worry about support," he added. "I just want to make sure that what I set out to do I accomplish - bring success to this football club. I'm not going to be deterred in my ambitions or endeavor to do that."

Postecoglou's team has been inconsistent - following up big wins with lackluster performances. After beating Manchester City 4-0, Spurs



Tottenham Hotspur's Pape Matar Sarr, left, and Bournemouth's Tyler Adams battle for a head ball during a Premier League soccer match at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth, England. (AP)

drew 2-2 with Roma in the Europa League, drew 1-1 with Fulham and lost to Bournemouth.

Chelsea enters the weekend in second place.

Central defender Cristian Romero (foot) was due to train Friday before a decision is made about his availability on Sunday at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Center-back Ben Davies was set for a scan on his left hamstring. He left Thursday's game in the 62nd minute.

# Murisier claims 1st World Cup win by beating Swiss teammate

BEAVER CREEK, Colo., Dec 7, (AP): Justin Murisier of Switzerland claimed his first World Cup victory by beating his stellar teammate Marco Odermatt in the opening men's downhill race of the World Cup season.

Murisier beat Odermatt, the defending World Cup overall and downhill champion, by 0.20 seconds. Slovenia's Miha Hrobat was third, 0.35 behind Murisier, to earn a spot on the World Cup podium for the first time in his career.

Bryce Bennett, who holds two career World Cup wins, was the top

American in sixth, 0.88 behind the winner. Teammate Sam DuPratt, the second-to-last skier on the course, took a tough crash and needed to be taken down the Birds of Prey course in a sled.

Murisier finished 50th in his only other downhill event at Beaver Creek in 2022. Odermatt's first World Cup win came five years ago at the Birds of Prey course when he won the super-G.

Norway's Aleksander Aamodt Kilde, who won the previous four races held at Beaver Creek, is out for the season due to injuries.



From left, second place finisher Switzerland's Marco Odermatt, first place finisher Switzerland's Justin Murisier, and third place finisher Slovenia's Miha Hrobat celebrate after a men's World Cup downhill skiing race in Beaver Creek. (AP)

## Goepper claims the men's title

# Gu and Li dominate FIS Freeski Halfpipe World Cup

CHONGLI, China, Dec 7, (Xinhua): Beijing Winter Olympic champion Gu Ailing and Li Fanghui secured a one-two finish in the women's final at the FIS Freeski Halfpipe World Cup held at Genting Snow Park here on Saturday.

Despite the crush in her first run, Gu claimed the title with the game's highest 90.00 points in her second attempt. Li secured the silver medal with her first-run score of 82.75 points. Svea Irving of the United States finished third on 80.00 points.

"I am so grateful for so many of my friends to show up to support me. Some told me that maybe I should drop the competition after my first run, but I decided to carry on considering I'm competing in Genting Snow Park, where one of the best halfpipes in the world is located," Gu told Xinhua with excitement. "Halfpipe competition is tough. The game is half technique and half mentality." "Genting Snow Park has witnessed some of my best runs in my competition career," said 21-year-old Li. "I've been preparing for this season for the whole year. I

withstood the pressure today in this field. I'm really motivated." With this victory, Gu's total number of World Cup wins has reached 16, including 13 titles in the halfpipe, two in slopestyle, and one in big air.

On the men's side, Beijing Winter Olympic freeski slopestyle silver medalist Nicholas Goepper claimed victory with an impressive 95.00 points from his second run. Following closely behind was Alex Ferreira of the United States. The World Cup defending champion achieved 92.25 points in Saturday's final.

"The halfpipe here is incredible. The venue is amazing... (Being the last one to go) is a nerve-wracking position to be in. Everyone was waiting for me, so I had to come down and see," said Goepper after the competition.

The bronze medal was taken by another American athlete David Wise, who earned 89.00 points from his first run.

Meanwhile, ISU President Kim Jae-youl noted that the event further increased the engagement of fans by giving unique cultural identity to each team and creating an excit-



Li Fanghui of China competes during the women's halfpipe qualification at FIS Freeski World Cup 2025 in Zhangjiakou, north China's Hebei Province. (Xinhua)

ing atmosphere in the venue through light and music.

"We want to maximize the potential that short track has, and that is why we are launching the World Tour," Kim said during the Beijing leg, which runs from Friday to Sun-

day at the Capital Indoor Stadium.

He added, "Not just top several strong teams dominate the sport now. Many countries and regions have tough skaters, which makes competition more fierce and more exciting to watch."

### Change Name

I, Ammar holder of Passport No. w7993486 change to ammar (as Given name) ezzy (as Surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name ammar ezzy and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents.

# NBA returning to China for pair of Suns-Nets preseason games in 2025

WASHINGTON, Dec 7, (AP): The NBA is returning to China next season, striking a deal to play preseason games there more than five years after the league was effectively banned over Commissioner Adam Silver not punishing Daryl Morey for tweeting support of anti-government protesters in Hong Kong.

The Brooklyn Nets and the Phoenix Suns will play in China's gambling hub of Macao on Oct. 10, 2025, and again two days later, the NBA announced on Friday. A person with knowledge of the matter told The Associated Press that there are plans for two more preseason games in China in 2026.

The Nets and Suns will play at Macao's Venetian Arena, which is owned

by the Las Vegas Sands Corp. - which is a casino operator there as well. Sands president and chief operating officer Patrick Dumont became governor of the Dallas Mavericks late last year after his family acquired the team.

"We're incredibly excited to be partnering with Sands to bring NBA games back to Macao beginning next year," NBA deputy commissioner Mark Tatum said in Macao, adding that the agreement is "a significant milestone in the continued global growth of basketball."

The Nets are owned by Joe Tsai, the chairman of Chinese tech giant Alibaba.

To essentially kick off the return of NBA games to China, there will be a celebrity game in Macao on Saturday. Basketball Hall of Famers

Tony Parker, Ray Allen and Tracy McGrady, along with former NBA standouts Stephon Marbury, DeMarcus Cousins and Cuttino Mobley are the headline attractions. All took part in Friday's event to announce the Suns-Nets games.

Friday's announcement caps a long series of moves toward some sort of return to normalcy between China and the league. The NBA, on some level, has been welcomed back for a while: Miami's Jimmy Butler, who has an endorsement deal with Chinese apparel company Li-Ning, has toured the country and drawn large crowds in each of the last two offseasons, while Golden State's Stephen Curry and Sacramento's De'Aaron Fox drew enormous crowds when they visited in September.



Kazma stages impressive comeback against Burgan

**By Hassan Mosa**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kazma defeated Burgan 3-1 in the seventh round of the Federation Volleyball Championship, which also saw Al-Arabi secure a 3-0 win over Yarmouk.  
The round began last with a highly anticipated clash between Kuwait Clubb and Qadsia, where the “Whites” team triumphed 3-1. Al-Shabab also claimed a 3-1 victory against Al-Nasr.  
Kuwait Club currently leads the standings with 18 points from six consecutive wins, followed by Al-Qadsia in second place with 15 points. Kazma sits in third place with 15 points but trails on point difference, while Burgan holds fourth place with 14 points. Al-Shabab is in fifth with 10 points, and Al-Arabi ranks sixth with 9 points. Yarmouk occupies seventh place with 3 points, and both Al-Sulaibikhat and Al-Nasr remain scoreless at the bottom of the table.  
Despite Burgan’s strong start, win-



Kazma and Burgan players in action.

ning the first set 25-18, Kazma rebounded with dominant performances in the subsequent sets, claiming victory 25-21, 25-14, and 25-20. This crucial win secured Kazma’s third-place position. In another match, Al-Arabi easily controlled the game, winning all three sets decisively with scores of 25-

16, 25-17, and 25-20.

The championship follows a single-round league format, with the top four teams advancing to the semi-finals. In the next stage, the first-place team will face the fourth, while the second and third teams will compete for a spot in the final.

Kazma edges Al-Salmiya as Kuwait Club rises to second

**By Hassan Mosa**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait Club climbed to second place in the preliminary round of the Handball League after a commanding 31-21 victory over Al-Arabi in the 11th round. The round also featured Kazma defeating Al-Salmiya 3-1 on penalty kicks following a 29-29 draw in regular time, and Al-Sulaibikhat securing a 35-29 win against Khaitan.  
Kuwait Club, nicknamed “Al-Abyad,” raised its tally to 14 points, trailing Burgan, the league leader with 17 points. Al-Arabi fell to fourth place with 14 points, matching Al-Salmiya in third. Kazma improved to 11 points, taking eighth place, while Al-Sulaibikhat moved up to sixth with 12 points. Khaitan remained at the bottom with 6 points.



Arabi attacks the Kuwait Club defense.

Kuwait Club’s victory underscored its intent to maintain dominance in the handball championship. The team controlled the game

against Al-Arabi, demonstrating their tactical strength and securing a 10-goal margin of victory. With three postponed matches, Kuwait has a strong chance of reclaiming the top spot if it secures wins in those games.  
In a closely contested second match, Kazma and Al-Salmiya went to penalty kicks, where Kazma prevailed, earning a single point as per the tournament rules.  
The league adopts a single-round system, with the top six teams advancing to the Premier League, which follows a three-division format.  
Qualified teams will carry forward their preliminary round points.  
Meanwhile, teams ranked seventh to fourteenth will compete in a two-division league to determine final standings.

Celtics spoil Bucks’ Middleton season debut



Philadelphia 76ers’ KJ Martin, right, goes up for a shot against Orlando Magic’s Jalen Suggs during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Philadelphia. (AP)

Hawks hold off slumping Lakers

**BOSTON, Dec 7, (AP): Jayson Tatum had 34 points and 10 rebounds, and the Boston Celtics held on to beat the Bucks 111-105 on Friday night in Khris Middleton’s season debut for Milwaukee.**  
Jaylen Brown added 25 points as the Celtics made 17 3-pointers to earn their 10th victory in 11 games.  
Damian Lillard finished with 31 points for Milwaukee, which has lost two straight since winning a season-best seven in a row. Giannis Antetokounmpo added 30 points and 11 rebounds on his 30th birthday.  
Middleton had 11 points and five assists in 23 minutes after missing the Bucks’ first 21 games while recovering from offseason ankle surgeries.  
Boston led 107-102 after a float-er by Jrue Holiday when Brown was whistled for a foul on a 3-point attempt by Middleton, who hit all three free throws.  
Two free throws by Holiday put Boston ahead 109-105. Antetokounmpo then turned it over, leading to a layup by Al Horford.  
**Hawks 134, Lakers 132**  
In Atlanta, Trae Young hit a 3-pointer with 7.4 seconds left in overtime and the Atlanta Hawks held on for their sixth straight win, beating the slumping Los Angeles

Lakers .  
Young scored 31 points to offset a huge night by the Lakers’ Big Two.  
LeBron James scored 39 points and Anthony Davis had 38, but it wasn’t enough to prevent Los Angeles from taking its third straight loss and seventh defeat in nine games.  
**Jazz 141, Trail Blazers 99**  
In Portland, John Collins scored 20 points, Keyonte George had 17 and the Utah Jazz snapped a five-game losing streak with a rout of the Portland Trail Blazers.  
Walker Kessler had 13 points, 17 rebounds and five blocks for the Jazz in just their fifth win of the season.  
Jerami Grant had 19 points for Portland in its third straight loss.



Chicago Bulls’ Coby White, right, dives and knocks the ball away from Indiana Pacers’ Obi Toppin during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Chicago. (AP)

The Blazers trailed by 46 points and drew boos from the home fans.  
The Jazz raced to a 38-20 lead. The Blazers were hurt early in the game when Toumani Camara limped off the court with a right foot injury and did not return.  
The Jazz led 67-44 at the half and pushed the margin to 30 points at 76-46 in the third quarter. All of Utah’s starters were in double figures at that point.  
**Kings 140, Spurs 113**  
In San Antonio, DeMar DeRozan scored 23 points, Domantas Sabonis had 22 points and 16 rebounds and the Sacramento Kings rolled past San Antonio, handing the Spurs their second straight loss without Victor Wembanyama.  
De’Aaron Fox and Malik Monk added 22 points each for Sacra-

mento, which had a season-high point total.  
San Antonio’s Julian Champagne had six 3-pointers in scoring 30 points, both career-highs. Spurs rookie Stephon Castle had 15 points, and Chris Paul had 11 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds.  
Wembanyama participated in a pregame workout but missed his second straight game with a sore lower back.  
**Pacers 132, Bulls 123**  
In Chicago, Tyrese Haliburton had 23 points and eight assists, and the Indiana Pacers stopped a four-game slide with a victory over the Chicago Bulls.  
Pascal Siakam scored 21 points for Indiana, and Benedict Mathurin finished with 19. The Pacers shot 56.5% from the field and had six players score in double figures.  
Indiana led by 13 at halftime, but Chicago closed to 112-109 on Josh Giddey’s layup with 6:53 remaining.

**76ers 102, Magic 94**  
In Philadelphia, Paul George had 21 points and nine assists second in his game since bruising a bone in his left knee, leading the Philadelphia 76ers to a victory over the Orlando Magic.  
KJ Martin added 20 points to help Philadelphia improve to 6-15. The 76ers have won three of four for the first time this season.  
Franz Wagner scored 30 points for the Magic, and Jalen Suggs has 22. Orlando dropped to 16-9.

Kuwait Equestrian Federation spurs growth with launch of local league

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Equestrian coach Ahmed Al-Omran emphasized that the establishment of a local federation to oversee Kuwaiti equestrianism on January 5, 2021, alongside the launch of the first-ever local league championship during the 2021-2022 season, significantly contributed to the sport’s development in Kuwait. He expressed his gratitude to everyone involved in achieving this milestone, which he described as a source of pride for the nation.  
Al-Omran stated, “Our riders are making remarkable efforts to enhance their skills and compete for titles. I have trained equestrians as young as 5 or 6 years old, and today we have stars recognized in Kuwaiti, Gulf, Arab, and Asian equestrian circles.”  
He added, “The Kuwait Equestrian Center is like a second home to me. Equestrianism is everything in my life—it transforms a person



Ahmed Al Omran

completely. Training is not just a profession for me; it is the essence of my passion for the equestrian world.”

Major milestone reached

20,000 expected to be accredited for Khaleeji Zain 26 in Kuwait



An aerial view of Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The process to officially accredit up to 20,000 people for the Khaleeji Zain 26 is underway, signalling another major organizational milestone reached for the prestigious sporting and cultural celebration taking place in Kuwait from December 21-January 3.  
As with all major sporting events, the accreditation process is one of the key organisational facets to ensure its successful management, particularly on match days, so the centre will become a major hive of activity as the tournament draws closer.  
Up to 5,000 volunteers, around 2,500 media representatives as well as service staff, security,

emergency services, team delegations and match-day personnel are all among those who will be accredited to carry out their vital roles within the tournament organisation.  
The Khaleeji Zain 26 will kick-off on December 21 with an official Opening Ceremony at the 60,000-seater Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, followed by the first match between hosts, Kuwait, and Oman.  
Two weeks of thrilling action will follow, with the eight national teams of the Arabian Gulf set to compete in one of the most open editions of the tournament in its 54-history. Tickets will be going on sale soon.

Best of the Rest

**Estevao calls for focus:** Palmeiras teenager Estevao urged his teammates to remain focused on Friday as the Sao Paulo club seeks back-to-back Brazilian Serie A titles.  
Palmeiras must beat Fluminense at home on Sunday while hoping that leaders Botafogo lose at home to Sao Paulo the same day to secure their 13th top-flight crown.  
Estevao, who has a contract to join Chelsea next July, said the team’s confidence had been boosted by a come-from-behind away win over Cruzeiro on Wednesday.  
“Against Cruzeiro, we were able to stay patient in the game and overcome difficulties,” the 17-year-old told reporters.  
“We also knew the right moment to attack and go for the win. We managed to get on level terms and I was fortunate enough to score the second goal. Now it’s time to focus on the next game, which will be very important for us, at home, with our fans. Hopefully, we can come away with another victory.”  
Estevao has emerged as one of South American football’s brightest talents with 19 goals and 12 assists in 49 games across all competitions for Palmeiras this year.

(Xinhua) □ □ □  
**Garcia eager for success:** Spanish manager Oscar Garcia has vowed to instill a “fearless mindset” as he prepares to take charge of Mexican top-flight side Guadalajara.  
The 51-year-old was presented to the media for the first time since it was announced that he would replace Argentine Fernando Gago, who left the club in October. Arturo Ortega filled the role for the team’s last five games of the season.  
“It’s a responsibility, but if there wasn’t responsibility, if there wasn’t demand, if there wasn’t ambition, I wouldn’t be here, no matter how big the club is,” Garcia told a news conference.  
“The club convinced me very quickly. The truth is that from the first day, I was clear that I wanted to come.”  
Chivas, as the club is known, was eliminated from the Liga MX Apertura title race via a 2-1 loss to Atlas in the first week of the post-season in November.  
Garcia said he was determined to bring success to the club after a seven-year title drought. (Xinhua)

Al-Ittihad extends winning run after beating Al-Nassr

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Dec 7, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo’s goal wasn’t enough as Karim Benzema’s Al-Ittihad defeated Al-Nassr 2-1 to record a ninth successive win and move five points clear at the top of the Saudi Pro League .  
Al-Nassr was fourth, 11 points behind the leader as the league takes a month’s break.  
Benzema opened the scoring in the 55th minute, shooting from inside the area after he was picked out by a perfect Muhannad Al-

Shanqiti cross from the right.  
The home fans in Jeddah were still celebrating when Ronaldo equalized less than two minutes later.  
The five-time Ballon D’Or winner shot past Predrag Rajkovic from close range to join Benzema on 10 league goals and deny the Serbian goalkeeper a sixth consecutive clean sheet.  
Sadio Mane missed his second goal-scoring opportunity for Al-Nassr and the team was

punished in injury time.  
Steven Bergwijn, the Dutch international signed in September from Ajax, curled a shot into the far corner from the edge of the area to win the game for Al-Ittihad and coach Laurent Blanc.  
Al-Qadsia moved above Al-Nassr into third after winning at Al-Kholod 3-0. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang’s second-half strike was sandwiched by two goals from Mexico’s Julian Quinones.





The Khaleeji Zain 26 trophy displayed.

# Sports

Qatari Sports Minister attends the Blues training

## Stadiums ready for Khaleeji Zain 26 as Syria cancels friendly with Kuwait



Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani with the Kuwaiti players.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (Agencies): The training venues for the “Khaleeji Zain 26”, set to take place in Kuwait from December 21 to January 3, have been fully prepared, announced Tariq Al-Kandari, an official with the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation (AGCFF), on Saturday.

In a press statement, Al-Kandari, a member of the higher organizing committee for the event, confirmed that the official matches will be held at Jaber and Jaber Al-Mubarak stadiums, both of which are completely ready for the championship.

He highlighted that all maintenance work has been completed at the stadiums, with Jaber Al-Mubarak being one of the most modern facilities, designed to meet European standards.

Additionally, security, transportation, and emergency plans have all been

put in place for the tournament, he added.

The Kuwaiti team will train at Thamer Stadium at Al-Salmiya Club, while the other participating teams will hold their training sessions at various other stadiums.

The tournament features two groups: Group A, consisting of Qatar, hosts Kuwait, the UAE, and Oman; and Group B, which includes Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen.

Meanwhile, the Syrian national team has apologized for canceling its scheduled friendly match against the Kuwaiti on December 15. The two teams had planned to meet during Kuwait’s training camp in Doha, Qatar.

Kuwait continues its preparations for the upcoming “Khaleeji Zain 26”, which Kuwait will host from December 21 to January 3. The team will play

its first friendly match of the camp against Yemen tomorrow, followed by a second match against Lebanon on December 12.

In the meantime, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Qatari Minister of Sports and Youth, visited the Kuwaiti team’s training session to offer his support. Ayman Al-Husseini, member of the Kuwait Football Federation Board of Directors and head of the national team delegation, expressed gratitude to Sheikh Hamad for his continuous support and dedication to the Al-Azraq camp, highlighting the strong relationship between Kuwait and Qatar.

Al-Husseini also met with Mansour Al-Ansari, Secretary-General of the Qatar Football Association, to thank him and the Qatari Federation for their hospitality and assistance. During the meeting, Al-Husseini presented Al-Ansari with a commemorative shield.

## Kuwait Football Association issues ticket scam warning

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Kuwait Football Association issued a warning about the risks of dealing with fake accounts for purchasing tickets to the “Gulf Zain 26” matches, which will be hosted in Kuwait from December 21 to January 3.

In an official statement on its “X” account, the association confirmed that tickets will only be available through its authorized websites. It also denied rumors circulating on social media about inflated ticket prices. Some “X” accounts had claimed that the association had set excessively high ticket prices, but the Football Association clarified these allegations.

Additionally, the Kuwaiti Association has enlisted specialized companies to assist with logistical support, following the



Khaleeji Zain logo

well-known organizational issues during the Kuwait vs. Al-Arabi match in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

## Kuwait Club aims for top spot as basketball league heats up



Kuwait Club eyes new victory in the basketball league.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait Club is set to face Yarmouk in what is expected to be an easy match at 5:00 pm today in the fifth round of the basketball league. Meanwhile, Kazma will encounter a tougher challenge against Al-Arabi at 7:30 pm. Both games will take place at the Union Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Halls Complex.

Currently, Qadisiya leads the league standings with 6 points, followed by Al-Nasr with 5 points. Kuwait and Al-Sulaibikhat share third place with 4 points each, while Kazma sits in fifth with 3 points. Al-Arabi, Yarmouk, Al-Tadamon, and Al-Qurain round out the standings with 2 points each.

Under the tournament system, the top

four teams from the preliminary league will advance to the semi-finals, where the first will play the fourth and the second will face the third in a best-of-three “play-off” series. The winners of two matches will qualify for the final.

In the first match, Kuwait Club aims to secure a win over Yarmouk and move into a tie for the lead with Qadisiya. Given Kuwait Club’s superior capabilities and the absence of professional players in Yarmouk’s lineup, it is strongly favored to achieve its goal.

The second match promises a serious test for Al-Arabi, who is looking to solidify their place among the top four teams for the second consecutive season. On the other hand, Kazma seeks to bounce back from their opening-round loss to Al-Sulaibikhat and secure a positive result to strengthen their chances of early qualification for the semi-finals.

ADELAIDE, Australia, Dec 7, (AP): Travis Head struck a magnificent 140 off 141 balls as Australia finished Day 2 of the second test against India in dominant style Saturday in the day-night test at the Adelaide Oval.

Head’s eighth test century - including 17 fours and four sixes - helped Australia score 337 runs in its first innings and take a 157-run lead over India’s 180 runs.

In the second innings, India was down to 128-5 in 24 overs at stumps and staring at a potentially colossal defeat on Day 3.

Rishabh Pant was unbeaten on 28 runs, as Pat Cummins (2-33) and Scott Boland (2-39) took a couple of wickets each. India trails by another 29 runs with five wickets remaining.

Earlier in the day, Australia took advantage of good batting conditions to gain the upper hand.

It was placed at 191-4 at lunch with both Head and Marnus Labuschagne scoring half-centuries.

Nathan McSweeney was out caught behind for 39 and Head-Labuschagne added 65 runs for the fourth wicket. In between, Steve Smith was also caught behind for two off Jasprit Bumrah.

Labuschagne fell prior to lunch, out for 64 runs off 126 balls - his second half-century in the past 11 innings.

After lunch though, Head dominated the Indian bowling on his home ground. He smacked Ravichandran Ashwin for three sixes, and hit another one off Mohammed Siraj.

Head had reached 50 off 63 balls before lunch and afterward only accelerated toward his hundred, reaching the milestone off 111 balls.

Wickets did fall at the other end -



Australia’s Travis Head is bowled out by India’s Mohammed Siraj during day two of the second cricket test match between Australia and India at the Adelaide Oval in Adelaide, Australia. (AP)

Mitchell Marsh was caught behind off Ashwin, while Bumrah (4-61) and Siraj finished with four wickets each.

Head was out after Australia crossed the 300 mark, out bowled off Siraj. He walked off to a grand reception from his home crowd while the hosts’ innings finished shortly after the tea break.

It left India to contend with the evening session under lights and its batting lineup failed to rise to the occasion.

Lokesh Rahul was the first to go -

caught behind pulling off Cummins for seven.

Yashasvi Jaiswal got off to a start and hit four fours in his 24 off 31 balls. But he was caught behind off Boland in the ninth over.

Virat Kohli struggled against Boland’s disciplined line and was caught behind too - out for 11 off 21 balls as India was down to 66-3 in 14.3 overs.

There was more to come - Mitchell Starc bowled Shubman Gill for a second time in this test. He scored 28 off 30 balls with three fours.

Cummins then bowled Rohit Sharma (6) before stumps. The Indian skipper has tallied only one 50-plus score in his last 12 innings.

Pant and Nitish Reddy (15 not out) saw away the remaining time, even as Australia seemed poised to level the series.

India took a 1-0 lead in the five-match series after winning the first test by 295 runs in Perth.

The teams will play a third test beginning Dec. 14 in Brisbane followed by matches in Melbourne starting Dec. 26 and in Sydney from Jan. 3.

## Kuwait gears up for 3rd edition of Padel Arabian Gulf Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Supreme Organizing Committee for the Third Edition of the Arabian Gulf Cup in “Padel” for is working diligently to host this exciting event in Kuwait from December 11 to 15, at the Regency Hotel’s courts.

The men’s competition will feature six teams: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait, the tournament’s host. Meanwhile, the women’s category will have four teams, representing Saudi Arabia, Oman, the UAE, and Kuwait.

The men’s competition will be divided into two

groups of three teams, each playing in a round-robin format. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals, followed by knockout rounds leading to the final. The same league system will be applied in the women’s competition.

Kuwait’s men’s national team will be represented by eight players: Abdulaziz Mayouf, Mohammed Al-Turki, Abdullah Al-Roudhan, Mohammed Al-Qattan, Fawaz Al-Ajmi, Hamad Mal Allah, Mishaal Al-Duaij, and Hussein Al-Sarraf. The team is coached by Mark Arcosa, with Antonio as-

sisting as the fitness trainer.

The women’s team will consist of Dana Al-Fulaij, Maryam Al-Sarraj, Nour Hassan, Dalal Al-Jazzaf, Dalal Al-Qanaei, Maryam Al-Sadhan, and Dalal Al-Fares. They are coached by Lisandro, with Omar Al-Masbahi as the assistant coach.

Mansour Bouhamad, the technical director of the men’s team, stated that intensive training for the tournament began on November 2, and the team will begin an internal camp today in preparation for the competition.