



SMALL, MEDIUM ENTERPRISES GET CORPORATE TAX EXEMPTION

No income tax for individuals in Kuwait for now: Al-Fassam

Finance minister maps out growth, diversification goals

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: With a vision of optimism rooted in improving economic performance and strong global ratings, Kuwait's Minister of Finance, Noura Al-Fassam, has announced significant steps toward economic growth and diversification, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting 'Al Arabiya Business'.

The daily added, during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Al-Fassam highlighted key initiatives aimed at creating a resilient and sustainable economy.

Al-Fassam projected a 2.6 percent economic growth for 2025, citing increased capital expenditure and serious financial reforms. "We are optimistic about the near future as Kuwait moves to diversify its economy and achieve financial balance," she stated.

Addressing concerns about taxation, Al-Fassam confirmed that no income tax will be imposed on individuals at this time, though discussions are ongoing in collaboration with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. She emphasized that any new taxes introduced would align with Kuwait's priorities and provide tangible benefits to the state.

Regarding corporate taxation, Al-Fassam revealed that a draft law is underway to introduce a 15 percent income tax on corporate earnings, while small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and vital sectors will be exempt to encourage growth and innovation.

As part of Kuwait's broader economic strategy, efforts are being directed toward in the following area:

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Kuwait strengthens legal framework with reforms

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The recent issuance of laws concerning Kuwaiti nationality, residency of foreigners and traffic regulations marks just the beginning, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



Al-Sumait

It signals that the wave of legislative and reformative initiatives is well underway. In this context, the Minister of Justice, Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait, has submitted a draft decree to amend the Judicial Organization Law Decree No. 23 of 1990 to Dr. Adel Boursli, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, for review and feedback.

The draft law, comprising 81 meticulously crafted articles and an explanatory memorandum, reflected a steadfast commitment to justice and integrity.

One of its cornerstone amendments was embedded in Article 19, which set strict criteria for appointing judges.

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Gang nabbed after KD 4,600 heist in Mahboula



Video and photo from the Ministry of Interior show the daring armed robbery at a currency exchange office in Al-Mahboula and the swift capture of the gang behind it.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: An African gang was apprehended by the Criminal Security Sector's the General Department of Criminal Investigations within 24 hours of their armed robbery of a foreign exchange office in Mahboula. The gang stole approximately KD 4,600 in foreign currencies, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a statement by the Ministry of Interior, the gang meticulously planned the heist by observing money exchange offices from nearby rooftops to identify peak business hours. They also used stolen license plates to disguise their vehicles.

Investigators arrested one of the suspects in Mahboula, and he

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Kuwait okays property rights for children of Kuwaiti moms

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: In a significant move toward fostering social stability and economic development, the Kuwaiti Cabinet has approved amendments to the 1979 property ownership law for non-Kuwaitis, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision, made during the Cabinet's recent meeting, introduces humanitarian and economic reforms to property ownership regulations in the country.

One of the key changes addresses the rights of children born to Kuwaiti mothers and Arab fathers. These individuals are now allowed to permanently inherit and retain property passed down from their mothers. This amendment underscores Kuwait's commitment to human rights and aims to enhance social stability for affected families.

The amendments also target economic growth by granting exemptions to licensed entities, such as publicly listed companies, investment funds and portfolios regulated by the Kuwait Stock Exchange and other authorities. These entities can now own real estate essential for their operations.

However, strict measures have been implemented to prevent speculative trading and ensure that properties are used solely for developmental and investment purposes.

In addition to property law changes, the Cabinet approved amendments to the 1980 Civil and Commercial Procedures Law to streamline judicial processes.

According to the changed law, the minimum claim value for cases heard by the Court of Cassation has been raised to 30,000 Kuwaiti dinars, or cases of undetermined value, reducing the number of minor cases brought before the court and filing appeals has been made easier, with adjustments to guarantees and the removal of procedural redundancies like attaching lower court files.

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'Initial phase yields progress'

Kuwait TV archive essential for media overhaul: info min

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22, (KUNA): Minister of Information, Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi affirmed that the archive of Kuwaiti Television is substantial within the process of overhauling the State of Kuwait's media infrastructure.

Speaking during inauguration of the second phase of the television archive project on Wednesday, the minister indicated that much work had already been accomplished in the preliminary phase of the process, aimed at documenting and protecting the national heritage at this level.

He expressed aspiration that the second stage would witness a qualitative leap in keeping contents, facilitating research and digital retrieval of the items and data. The project, he continued, is designed to secure much of Kuwait's history for the coming generations through digitizing no less than 220,000 hours of archival materials, along with classification and indexing.

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Kuwait reaffirms support for Palestinian statehood, welcomes ceasefire deal

Cabinet congratulates Trump on inauguration

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet reviewed the outcomes of the meeting of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with King Charles III during his visit to the United Kingdom on January 14-16.

The cordial meeting, which came in response to a royal invitation to His Highness the Amir, dealt with the historical, deep-rooted relationship between the State of Kuwait and the United Kingdom.

The weekly Cabinet meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Tuesday, reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to co-operation with the United Kingdom in all areas and on all levels, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereedah Abdullah Al-Mousherji in a press release.

The Cabinet congratulated US President Donald Trump on his inauguration and wished him success and everlasting wellbeing.

Praising the strength and depth of the relationship, the Kuwaiti Cabinet wished the friendly United States more progress and prosperity under the leadership of President Trump.

Welcoming the recently-announced ceasefire-hostage deal in Gaza Strip, the Cabinet appreciated the successful mediation efforts, led by the State of Qatar, the Republic of Egypt and the



PM Diwan photo

HH the PM chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

United States.

The Cabinet members thanked all parties that contributed to the deal which brought a glimpse of hope for ending the suffering of the Palestinian people and allowing a durable delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged people in Gaza.

The Cabinet renewed Kuwait's firm support to the Palestinian people's right to establish an independent state within the June 4, 1967, borders with East Jerusalem as its future capital city.

On the domestic affairs, the Cabinet heard a presentation by Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthar Al-Huwailah on the central assistance system providing a gateway for entitled aid recipients to apply for assistance.

The new system, covering all charities, helps save the time and effort of both staffers of the ministry and aid recipients, she told the cabinet members.

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90% of accidents in Kuwait due to inattention: Brig. Al-Subhan

61,553 seatbelt and phone violations in Q4 2024

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22, (KUNA): The number of motorists' offenses, namely abstention from tightening the safety belt and using the mobile phone while driving, hit 61,553 in the last quarter of the past year (2024).

Number of traffic accidents in 2024 (the whole year) reached 65,991 and related fatalities 284, said Brigadier Mohammad Al-Subhan, the director of coordination at the (MoI) traffic department, as he spoke in a lecture to-

day during a seminar of the Gulf Traffic Week, themed, "driving without the phone."

Up to 90 percent of the accidents were caused by lack of attention, distraction and ten percent resulted from malfunction of the vehicle, Brig. Al-Subhan said.

He affirmed that the MoI had determined that it was necessary to enforce stricter penalties in light of mounting violations.

Elaborating he said there were 1,926,320 (less than two million) exceeding speed cases in 2024, in addition to 174,793 crossing the red light offenses, followed by those of refraining from tightening the belt, amounting to 152,367, for using the phone and lack of focus 79,519 in addition to a number of cases related to emitting piercing and annoying loud noises and sounds from the vehicles, reckless driving and negligence.

Day by Day

If you pass through hardship, be patient, for life is full of both trials and ease. This saying aligns with the principle that "with hardship comes ease," reminding us that life demands patience and perseverance.

Today, we stand at the threshold of a new year, with a few days already passed. Let us see what fate, in all its ups and downs, has in store for us, a fate we have come to accept with both its good and its bad.

A new year is here following the end of the previous one, which brought both sorrow and joy, knowledge and wisdom.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Ministry of Public Works photo

Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan during inspection visit of Fahaheel Expressway.

Minister Al-Mashaan inspects Fahaheel road pre-renovation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22, (KUNA): Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan on Wednesday inspected the key highway, the Fahaheel Expressway, pending kick-off of its renovation.

In a statement, the minister said that her department is proceeding with executing ventures for maintaining the roads in the country's various regions, ensuring good quality and compatibility with international specifications.

She indicated that fundamental face-lifting projects would be carried in the six governorates, noting that work would begin in the most damaged sections. Ministry' teams will oversee

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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Al-Mughira's cleverness saved him ... and God's grace provided for the blind man

A seeker of the king's favor sold the fish to one who sought God's provision.

They collected one hundred thousand dinars and then accused the governor of stealing them.

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My many children drove me to embezzle from the royal treasury.

This man is lying, so I sought to disgrace him, but God disgraced him instead.

He ordered ten pieces of gold to be hidden inside a grilled fish.

I will not ask the king for anything if I meet him... for God will enrich me.

He sought our favor, but God deprived him... while the other sought the grace of the Most Merciful, and He granted it to him.

8 Burgan Bank launches responsible waste management initiative in collaboration with Tadwire



9 Zain empowers Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to showcase their digital startups to the investment community



10 Gulf Bank joins the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Matrix, an initiative by ABCK - AmCham Kuwait in collaboration with KWEPP

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:19	Asr	14:57
Sunrise ..	06:42	Maghrib ..	17:17
Zohr	12:00	Isha	18:38

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and cloudy to partly cloudy with light variable wind to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

By Night: Cold to very cold

Weather

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	19	11	Abdaly	20
Kuwait Airport	20	06	Bubyan	18
			Jahra	20
			Failaka Island	20
			Salmiyah	17
			Ahmadi	22
			Jal Aliyah	19
			Nuwaisib	23
				09



Chief Executive of CEFAS Neil Hornby.

KUNA photo

'Global collaboration to battle climate change crucial'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22. (KUNA): UK Chief Executive for the Center for Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture Science (CEFAS) Neil Hornby affirmed Wednesday the importance of knowledge sharing in tackling global environmental challenges, including climate change.

In an interview with KUNA after concluding an official visit to Kuwait with the assistance of UK's Embassy in Kuwait to commemorate the 10th anniversary of CEFAS work with multiple environmental entities in Kuwait, Hornby lauded the ongoing cooperation with Kuwait highlighting the vital data and multi-projects that aim to safeguard the marine environment in Kuwait and in turn the region and the world for future generations.

Meeting with officials from the Regional Organization For The Protection of The Marine Environment (ROPME), Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Environmental Public Authority (EPA), Hornby stated that vital work is being done in various projects to study the effects of climate change, human im-

pact and pollution on the marine environment and to tackle those challenges by bridging and connecting the various environmental agencies, institutes and governments.

He explained that CEFAS is collaborating with those entities to help better understand the marine ecosystem and improve ways to collect information and properly monitor it, which are important in boosting the efforts to preserve it and help nourish it.

Hornby noted that Kuwait is situated in the hottest region in the world and is by the hottest sea in the world, the Arabian Gulf, making it at the forefront of the challenges climate change is introducing and that CEFAS is collaborating with the various entities in Kuwait to assist in managing, maintaining and protecting the marine species from the coral reefs to fishes.

Hornby also reiterated the vital data that is being gathered here in Kuwait such as the coral resistance to temperature changes and the heat of the sea it lives in which is shared globally through either CEFAS and other environmental institutes to help protect the marine ecosystems

around the world from which more than 25 research papers were published by the efforts of joint collaboration between Kuwaiti and UK scientists in the field.

He also highlighted the importance of spreading awareness across the education systems and the youth regarding the environment lauding what he has witnessed from enthusiastic response from students during his visit to Kuwait International English School in Kuwait noting that they have established a beach cleaning club and that CEFAS has provided tools to help them accomplish their mission of keeping Kuwait's beaches clean and habitable by the rich marine life they host.

When asked about the most challenging aspects of the work here in Kuwait, Hornby said that the rising heat is the most significant challenge the scientists are facing in this region with temperatures soaring above 50c during the summer, yet "the continued work by our scientists and their counterparts here is but a testament of the dedication they have to the importance of their work," he reiterated.

KOC plans new infrastructure to expand oil exploration ops

Drilling likely to find one new well in 2025

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Due to the success of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) in discovering two wells in less than six months, it is expected to discover a third well in the marine area in 2025 as part of its current plan to drill six wells.

Sources revealed the company aims to implement an infrastructure project at the Kuwaiti marine area in a bid to expand oil exploration operations in marine fields to make up for what is produced from the stock of onshore fields.

According to the sources, KOC will conduct a research to estimate the cost of pro-

ducing oil from Kuwaiti territorial waters, particularly since the price of oil extracted from marine fields is higher than that of oil extracted from onshore fields. This is because the cost of producing one barrel of Kuwaiti oil this year is almost KD4, compared to KD 3.500 last year, sources disclosed.

Sources said KOC does not only aim to drill 16 offshore wells, as its target is to drill more wells in the future; that is, upon completion of the wells included in the current plan, which will be implemented in stages.

Sources explained that each stage includes the exploration of six wells; indicating it is difficult to determine the timeframe for exploration, especially since this requires extensive procedures and work, as discovering a single well may take several months.

They added that Kuwaiti marine waters constitute about a third of the country's area, so KOC is expanding in offshore explora-

tion; considering it has extensive experience in oil exploration operations.

Sources stated that the company is also focusing on extracting oil that complies with global environmental requirements, as it strives to achieve carbon neutrality in line with the State's 2050 vision; hence, the use of advanced technologies to reduce carbon emissions.

In contrast to Al-Nukhdha offshore field, which was discovered last July and is estimated to contain 3.2 billion barrels of oil; sources said the low percentage of hydrocarbon resources in the Jaliyah field that is estimated to contain 800 million barrels of medium-density oil and 600 billion standard cubic feet of associated gas is not significant, particularly since the company has many aspirations for the four remaining offshore wells in the current and future offshore drilling plans.



KUNA photo

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi chairs the meeting.

MoSA, KNG collaboration to bolster govt sector operation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22. (KUNA): Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi said that activating the cooperation protocol with the National Guard comes as part of the strategy to strengthen integration among governmental entities and aims to develop joint efforts in various fields.

In a press statement on Tuesday, Al-Ajmi stated that cooperation with the National Guard seeks to enhance emergency preparedness and crisis management, in addition to their participation in ministry-affiliated exhibitions, including the Family Product Marketing Exhibition.

He affirmed that adopting the timeline for the cooperation protocol program with the National Guard represents a qualitative step in promoting social responsibility and supporting community development.

Al-Ajmi pointed out that the protocol

includes training programs aimed at building capacities and strengthening national identity and loyalty among residents of the social care sector. He emphasized that the partnership with the National Guard serves as an effective model for joint governmental collaboration.

He added that the protocol seeks to develop the skills of beneficiaries in craftsmanship and artistic fields, praising the National Guards essential role as a partner in fostering national identity, loyalty, and belonging.

Concluding his statement, Al-Ajmi commended the exceptional efforts exerted by the National Guard in supporting community development and achieving social stability. He stressed that the ongoing cooperation between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Guard aligns with achieving the desired developmental goals.

Francophone diwanias resume in Kuwait after hiatus of 6 mths

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Lebanon in Kuwait Ahmed Arfa says Lebanon is an active member of the International Organization of La Francophonie, as a large portion of the Lebanese population speaks French.

He highlighted that the Francophone Diwanias held in Kuwait was the first such event for Francophone countries to be organized this year.

Arfa expressed his happiness over the resumption of diwanias, particularly after the end of the Israeli aggression on Lebanon and the election of General Joseph Aoun as Lebanon's new president, which marked a pivotal moment in the nation's history.

He praised the positive international, Arab, and Gulf responses to the election of President Aoun and the appointment of Prime Minister Judge Nawaf Salam, and wished for success and stability for Lebanon's future.

Arfa highlighted that Lebanon holds a special place in the hearts of people in the Gulf and Arab countries, particularly Kuwait, adding that official visits to Lebanon have continued since the election of the president.

Describing Kuwait as a friendly and sis-

terly country, he commended Kuwait's unwavering support for Lebanon, especially in the aftermath of the presidential election.

He stressed the ongoing close communication between the leadership of Kuwait and Lebanon, and highlighted the upcoming visits of the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister and the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council to Lebanon as a clear message of solidarity and a testament to the strong relationship between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese Consul and Head of Mission Mia Al-Adem expressed her joy at the relaunch of the Francophone Diwanias, in collaboration with the French Embassy and the French Institute in Kuwait, following a hiatus of over six months.

She affirmed the significance of the Lebanese cultural presence in the Francophone world and highlighted the diwanias's role as a cherished element of Kuwait's traditional heritage.

Al-Adem reaffirmed the Lebanese Embassy's commitment to strengthening connections between French speakers in Kuwait and promoting linguistic diversity.

She extended her congratulations to Lebanese citizens on the election of President Aoun and the appointment of Prime Minister Salam, expressing optimism that these political developments would usher in a new era of hope and vitality for Lebanon.

'Celebrate national events with pomp & pageantry'

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Ministry of Information has stressed on the importance of supporting and organizing national events in a manner that reflects the reputation and status of the State of Kuwait.

In a letter sent by the Permanent Committee for Celebrating National Holidays and Occasions at the Kuwait Municipality, the Ministry shared a copy of the procedural guide it has prepared for controlling the quality of national celebrations.

The guide aims to ensure that national activities and events are executed with the highest standards of quality and efficiency, while encouraging excellence and creativity in all organizational aspects. The Ministry noted that the guide's preparation aligns with the state's readiness to prepare for this year's national celebrations, highlighting the deep significance and goals of the holidays that embody national responsibility and spread joy throughout Kuwait.

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Camping violations fall: Head of the Spring Camps Committee at Kuwait Municipality Faisal Al-Otaibi said, "The number of violations during the current season has significantly decreased compared to the previous season", reports Al-Rai daily

In an interview, he explained that this improvement is due to the field campaigns conducted by municipal teams and other agencies, as well as the numerous removals carried out since the season began.

According to monitoring and daily inspections of camping sites, the compliance rate has reached 90 percent, leading to a substantial decrease in problems. He said, "While the camping season is scheduled to end on March 15 as per the law, the possibility of an extension is still under consideration.

The matter will be discussed during the next committee meeting, should there be a request to do so, although it is likely to conclude on time".

Al-Otaibi indicated that camp insurance will be refunded through the Sahel application, after the site is inspected by the Environment Public Authority, adding that the refund will be credited to the licensee's account within 14 days following the inspection.

No to telecom towers on private housing property

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Kuwait Municipality issued warnings to 34 private housing properties and citations to 12 others for violating regulations by placing communication towers on their rooftops.

The municipality affirmed that the warnings were ignored, adding that any encroachments on state property related to communication towers are immediately removed by the supervisory body within the Violation Removal Department.

In response to a question from the Municipal Council member Walid Al-Dagher regarding the potential health risks posed by the proximity of communication towers to residential areas, the municipality advised him to coordinate with the Ministry of Health for further information.



KUNA photo

A truck loaded with aid is headed for Gaza.

'Al-Salam' sends Gaza 41 aid trucks

CAIRO, Jan 22. (KUNA): Kuwait-based charity Al-Salam Association for Humanitarian and Charitable Activities announced on Tuesday that 41 trucks carrying relief assistance took off to the people of Palestine, in Gaza Strip.

The association manager councilor, Jassim Al-Tammar, told KUNA that the trucks contained 1,045 tons of medicines, destined for the Kuwaiti Specialized Hospital and Nasser Medical Complex in Gaza. Additionally, 1,750 tents, toilets,

blankets, clothes, and food were provided.

Al-Tammar added that the aid will assist Rafah City in coordination with the Egyptian side, represented by the Red Crescent.

The humanitarian aid were collected from donors in Kuwait and other GCC countries, Al-Tammar said.

He thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs in Kuwait, and the Egyptian Red Crescent.



Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdul Latif Al-Mishari, Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah inspecting design of a future project.

Farwaniya Gov., minister discuss measures to enhance cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Naser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah visited the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and the Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdul Latif Al-Mishari this morning.

According to a press release by Farwaniya Governorate, they discussed various issues related to the municipality during the meeting. They also discussed ways to enhance cooperation and coordination between the governorate and the municipality to deal with all negative phenomena.

Sheikh Athbi Al-Naser affirmed his commitment to strengthening communication with all service agencies to better meet the demands and needs of the governorate's residents.

Meanwhile, Minister Al-Mishari high-

lighted that he, from the time he took responsibility for the ministry, has focused on implementing necessary steps and decisions to advance development projects, improve municipal work, and keep pace with geographical and urban development.

The governor stressed the importance of continued communication and building bridges of cooperation between service agencies to improve the quality of services.

He said the true measure of service development and excellence is the satisfaction and comfort of citizens.

Sheikh Athbi affirmed the need for collective cooperation to achieve this national goal in various fields.

He appreciated the efforts of Minister Al-Mishari in supporting and advancing the goals of Farwaniya Governorate.

Avoid cash transactions, warns MoCI

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has reiterated its directive to domestic labor offices to avoid cash transactions.

Acting Undersecretary for Supervision and Consumer Protection Affairs at the ministry Eng. Ahmed Falah Al-Mutairi affirmed to the Union of Domestic Labor Offices the importance of adhering to the ministerial Resolution No. 99/2022, which bans cash transactions for offices and companies involved in recruiting domestic workers.

In an official letter to the union, Al-Falah reaffirmed the ministry's continued commitment to enforcing the aforementioned

resolution. He urged domestic labor recruitment offices and institutions to comply with the provisions of the resolution and warned that legal action would be taken against any non-compliant offices.

It is noteworthy that Law No. 99/2022 mandates that all licensed offices, institutions, and companies involved in domestic labor recruitment, including those with commercial licenses from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and licenses from the Public Authority for Manpower, must refrain from conducting cash transactions for any contract or transaction. It stressed the need to make payments through authorized cash payment instruments as allowed by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



Al-Mughira's cleverness saved him ... and God's grace provided for the blind man

When corruption becomes widespread, plots often emerge as the easiest way to get rid of officials who work honestly to combat it.

In such cases, some individuals resort to falsely accusing these honorable people in an effort to tarnish their reputations in front of leaders or presidents, particularly when the corrupt are influential. These corrupt individuals do not miss any opportunity to spread lies about honest officials who fear only God Almighty.

In the following lines, we will share the story of a cunning Arab who became the target of a plot orchestrated by those seeking to remove him. We will also recount the tale of two men: one who sought the king's favor and hoped for financial gain, and the other who desired only the satisfaction of God and relied entirely on Him for his livelihood. How did each of them end up?

Al-Mughira bin Shu'ba was a cunning Arab who was known for his sharp wit and intelligence.

During the time of Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattab, Al-Mughira bin Shu'ba was appointed as the Amir of Bahrain. He was firm in his governance of the people of Bahrain, which led to complaints against him. As a result, the Caliph dismissed him from his position.

However, the people of Bahrain feared that the Caliph, who held Al-Mughira in high regard, might reinstate him. To prevent this, they devised a conspiracy to ensure he would never return to them.

They collected one hundred thousand dinars and sent their sheikh/leader to the Caliph. The sheikh went to Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattab, accompanied by Al-Mughira. The sheikh told the Caliph, "I have come from Bahrain with the regards of the people. I brought one hundred thousand dinars, which Al-Mughira stole from the treasury of the Muslims. He entrusted the money to me, and I present it to you as a witness to this."

Omar turned to Al-Mughira and asked, "What do you say?"

Al-Mughira replied, "He is lying. I didn't steal

● A seeker of the king's favor sold the fish to one who sought God's provision.

● They collected one hundred thousand dinars and then accused the governor of stealing them.

● He admitted to stealing two hundred thousand and accused the sheikh of stealing the rest.

● My many children drove me to embezzle from the royal treasury.

● This man is lying, so I sought to disgrace him, but God disgraced him instead.

● He ordered ten pieces of gold to be hidden inside a grilled fish.

● I will not ask the king for anything if I meet him... for God will enrich me.

● He sought our favor, but God deprived him... while the other sought the grace of the Most Merciful, and He granted it to him.

just one hundred thousand dinars; I stole two hundred thousand. This man only brought half of the amount; he has stolen the rest."

Omar then asked, "What led you to do that?"

Al-Mughira confessed, "I have many children and little money. I was in need, and I admit that I took two hundred thousand dinars."

The sheikh was shocked by Al-Mughira's confession and said, "I swear by God, he did not give

me a single dinar or dirham. This money was collected by the people of Bahrain as part of a plot to prevent Al-Mughira from returning to them."

Omar turned to Al-Mughira and asked, "How did this happen?"

Al-Mughira replied, "This man accuses me of theft, but he is lying. I intended to disgrace him, but it is God Almighty who has disgraced him."

The King and the Blind Men

The king, disguised, left his palace to check on the people. As he walked, he overheard two blind men sitting and whispering to each other.

The first man asked the second, "If you were to see the king, what would you ask him for?"

The second man replied, "Nothing." The first man responded, "As you wish. As for me, I would ask the king for money."

The second man then said, "And I will seek nothing but God's grace."

Upon hearing this, the king returned to his palace and decided to reward the man who had sought God's favor. He ordered ten pieces of gold to be hidden inside the belly of a grilled fish and sent to the man who had asked for money.

A few days later, the king returned in disguise to visit the blind men. He approached the first one and asked, "Hasn't our favor made you rich?"

The first blind man replied, "Your favor? What do you mean?"

The king said, "The grilled fish."

The blind man responded, "I sold it to my blind friend sitting next to me for two pieces of gold sent to him by the king."

The king smiled and thought to himself, "The one who sought our favor was deprived by God, while the other, who sought God's favor, was granted it and made rich."

■ The people we admire are those whose weapon is the mind, rather than the tongue.



■ The wise say: "Possess whatever you can in this world, but remember, you will leave empty-handed, just as you arrived."



■ We say this to those who constantly seek wealth. Their behavior is akin to that of wild animals. They exhaust themselves chasing after money, but in the end, they will only collect what God has destined for them.



■ Kuwait Municipality, we endure great difficulty in obtaining the description certificate required by banks for ever lending transactions and every need of real estate sellers. The bureaucracy and paperwork in our country are among the worst.



■ The experienced say: "If your footsteps leave marks on the ground, your words leave marks on the heart. Marks on the heart are much harsher than those on the ground. You do not need to please everyone, but you must never hurt anyone. Tolerance is a greater strength than power."



■ We do not want oppressed people raising their hands to God Almighty who created the heavens and spread the earth, seeking vengeance on those who wronged them... There are many examples of those who have been punished.



KUNA photo

Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah meets UAE officials.

Kuwait, UAE eye military ties boost

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah on Wednesday met with the Deputy Chief of Staff of the UAE Armed Forces, Major General Sheikh Ahmad bin Tahnoon Al-Nahyan, discussing ways to strengthen cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the military field.

In a statement, the Ministry of Defense said that Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusuf received Major General Sheikh Ahmad bin Tah-

noon Al-Nahyan as part of his official visit to the country. The talks focused on enhancing cooperation between the two nations.

This visit is part of the distinguished relationship between the armed forces of both countries, aimed at bolstering defense cooperation.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi, and several senior officers and leaders from both sides.

3 officers involved in deadly police chase released on bail

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: A colonel, a lieutenant colonel, and a police officer, who are accused of being involved in a security chase in Qashaniyyah that resulted in the death of a young Bedoun resident, have been released on bail worth KD 500 each, with a travel ban imposed on them.

The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Defense Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef referred them, along with six other security personnel, to the Public Prosecution on charges related to the death of the young Bedoun resident and injuries to another suspect during the chase.

The security personnel initially claimed that the victim's death was caused by his vehicle overturning. However, the Public Prosecution charged them with murder after discovering gunshot wounds on the

body of the deceased.

■ ■ ■
Suicide attempt foiled: An unidentified female domestic worker, whose nationality is not known, has been arrested and detained at a police station for allegedly attempting to commit suicide at her sponsor's house in Al-Salam area, reports Al-Anba daily.

The case has been registered under the title 'attempted suicide' and according to reliable security sources the woman is expected to be expelled from the country if there and no legal obstacles to prevent her from being sent to her home country.

A security source stated after the Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior received a report about the incident, police patrols dispatched to the house saw the woman had inflicted a wound on her hand.

Emergency medical services personnel then administered first aid and the woman was taken to the police station.

Ex-Mol officer gets 15 years jail in money-exchange robbery bid

Taxi stolen at gunpoint to flee scene

By Jaber Al-Hamoud/Munif Naif
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Muteb Al-Ardhi, sentenced a former officer from the Ministry of Interior to 15 years in prison with hard labor after he was convicted of stealing a taxi, breaking into the money exchange office in Fintas, and using a weapon to threaten an employee.

According to the case file, he was unable to complete the robbery as his weapon malfunctioned, leading him to flee the scene. He stole a taxi after brandishing his weapon during the escape.

Upon receiving the report, detectives from the Ahmadi Investigations Department, affiliated with the General Department of Criminal Investigations of the Criminal Security Sector, worked tirelessly to gather information and evidence. By tracking the suspect's movements using surveillance cameras, investigators were able to gather all necessary details.

After acquiring the necessary legal authorization, they were able to arrest the suspect. He admitted to the crime and disclosed the location where he had hidden the firearm. He was subsequently referred to the relevant authorities for legal proceedings.

During the trial, the defense lawyer requested a psychiatric evaluation of the defendant, but the court concluded that the defendant was fully responsible for his actions. The court sentenced him to 15 years in prison with hard labor for all charges.



■ **'Arsonist' let off:** The Court of Appeal has ruled not to punish a Jordanian man who set fire to a branch of a well-known café in the suburb of Rumaithiya, allegedly in support of Palestine.

The Public Prosecution had charged the accused with intentionally setting fire to the café's property.

When the accused appeared before the court, he was confronted with the charges but denied them entirely. His defense team requested leniency in the case.



■ **6 hurt in eatery fire:** A fire broke out in a restaurant in Salmiya, resulting in six Asian workers suffering various burn injuries.

The workers were rushed to the area hospital for treatment. Firefighters are said to have responded swiftly, battling the flames and bringing the fire under control.

The concerned authorities are investigating the cause of the incident.

Meanwhile, at dawn Wednesday, fire brigades from Farwaniya and Sabhan controlled a blaze that broke out in an apartment in Khaitan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The fire teams promptly fought the fire, managing to bring it under control.

Unfortunately, one person sustained injuries during the incident. The building has been handed over to the relevant authorities for further investigation.

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Kuwait ramps up summer prep with Gulf energy imports and safety drills

Mock evacuation enhances safety protocols at key power station

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy for Stations Affairs Haitham Al-Ali announced that coordination with GCC countries to purchase energy from the Gulf Interconnection Network for the upcoming season began at the end of last summer, and the expected quantity to be purchased will amount to approximately 1,000 megawatts from several Gulf countries, not just one.

This announcement followed a mock evacuation exercise conducted yesterday at the Doha West Station by the National Guard in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior's Kuwait Fire Force, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The exercise was part of ongoing training programs to enhance responses to emergency incidents that may occur at the station.

Al-Ali affirmed the significance of the evacuation exercise in improving emergency response procedures.

Meanwhile, Al-Ali revealed that maintenance work of the electricity units and the distillates have been completed by about 30 percent and 60 percent respectively, with maintenance efforts expected to peak in March.

He said the maintenance plan, which began at the end of last September, is scheduled to continue until May.

Al-Ali urged consumers, both individuals and institutions, to adhere to consumption rationalization, particularly during peak times when electricity demand is highest.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy for Stations Affairs Haitham Al-Ali with Major General Hamad Al-Barjas with participants in the mock evacuation exercise.



Photos by Samer Shaqir

Mock evacuation exercise conducted at the Doha West Station.

Meanwhile, the Commander of Protection and Reinforcement in the National Guard Major General Hamad Al-Barjas stated in his speech that the evacuation exercises are designed to increase awareness in real emergency situations, which would save lives and protect properties.

He highlighted the National Guard's commitment to regularly conduct such exercises to ensure safety.

Major General Hamad Al-Barjas commended the cooperation of all participating parties, and praised the effective use of equipment and the demonstrated efficiency of the forces and personnel involved in fulfilling their duties under similar circumstances.

Furthermore, the Director of the Doha West Station Mohammad Al-Shammari said the evacuation process is consid-

ered one of the important exercises to prepare for any emergency at the station, which is a main facility in Kuwait's electricity and water production.

Regarding the preparations for the upcoming summer season, he highlighted the progress in the ongoing maintenance efforts, with three out of eight units already completed, as well as the completion of four distillers.

Accessibility proposals under review

Council OKs land regulation, weighs new marina initiative

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: In its meeting, the Technical Committee of the Municipal Council, led by Munira Al-Amir, approved a proposal to issue a regulation governing land allocation procedures across the country.

Additionally, the committee referred to the executive body a project initiative to design and establish multi-story marinas for small and medium-sized boats, with no financial cost to the state.

The Ministry of Information's letter regarding the Media Street plots in Al-Ardiya was also referred for

detailed studies.

The committee returned the proposal by Chairman Abdullah Al-Mahri and member Abdullah Al-Anzi concerning the addition of restaurant and café activities in the Al-Rai area for further updates.

It also returned a proposal regarding the addition of a goldsmith workshop activity for revision.

The committee reserved decisions on a joint proposal submitted by members Fahad Al-Abdul Jader, Saud Al-Kandari and Ismail Behbehani to expand the list of hotels and motels.

This is in addition to a proposal from members Farah Al-Roumi and others to establish an independent municipality for the Kuwait City.

It also reserved the proposal by member Alia Al-Farsi to form a joint committee for following up on the implementation of requirements for people with disabilities and the Kuwait Code for Accessibility.



Al-Amir

Nazaha refers co-op ex-board members, ministry staff to prosecution for forgery

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Public Authority for Combating Corruption (Nazaha) has referred former board members of two cooperative societies, along with employees from the Ministry of Social Affairs, to the Public Prosecution on charges of suspected forgery and corruption, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement released yesterday, Nazaha said, "managers have been appointed to two cooperative societies to manage the affairs."

Nazaha also announced that, following comprehensive investigations and evidence collection, the decision was made to submit the case to the prosecution.

The Authority has reiterated its commitment to pursuing all credible reports of corruption, emphasizing its dedication to examining, collecting evidence and conducting thorough investigations into such cases.

Nazaha expressed its appreciation for whistleblowers, recognizing their crucial role in providing the Authority with the information and data necessary to uncover corruption.

The statement also reaffirmed Nazaha's commitment to safeguarding whistleblowers by ensuring their protection and maintaining the confidentiality required by law and its executive regulations.

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Group photo during the signing of the memorandum of understanding.

Move aims to advance dispute resolution

Kuwait Society of Engineers signs MoU with GCC Arbitration Center

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Chair of the Kuwait Society of Engineers Faisal Al-Otol, and Secretary-General of the Arbitration Center for the Gulf Cooperation Council Dr. Kamal Al-Hamad signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation in the fields of commercial and engineering arbitration.

The signing ceremony was attended by Chair of the Board of Directors of the Engineering Arbitration Center and Vice President of the Kuwait Society of Engineers Mohammed Al-Subaie, along with the Executive Director of the Arbitration Center for the Gulf Cooperation Council Nasser Al-Mutairi, and members of the center Anas Al-Harbi and Dr. Barjas Al-Dousari.

Al-Otol explained that the memorandum aims to support and advance the Engineering Arbitration Center within the Kuwait Society of Engineers. It will enable mem-

bers to benefit from arbitration opportunities in the GCC and enhance their skills through specialized training and collaborative programs. The agreement seeks to encourage businesses and companies to adopt alternative dispute resolution methods, particularly for disputes arising from engineering, contracting, and commercial contracts.

He said, "We are also committed to promoting arbitration as an alternative to judicial procedures for resolving commercial disputes and conflicts in engineering projects and contracts."

Al-Otol stressed that the memorandum would facilitate cooperation in organizing training programs, seminars, conferences, and consulting studies on alternative dispute resolution methods.

He also highlighted the potential for exchanging training expertise, qualification, and accreditation programs with the aim of preparing arbitrators, mediators, experts, and secretaries for both parties.

Accessibility standards ignored

PADA exposes educational failures

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: In a recent series of field inspections conducted by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) significant violations were observed across educational institutions affiliated with the Authority, including Arab and foreign schools, nurseries and rehabilitation centers, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The inspections, carried out in collaboration with relevant government agencies, resulted in the refusal to renew the licenses of several institutions until they rectify their violations and bring their operations in line with required standards.

Among the prominent violations discovered during the inspections were the poor condition of some school buildings, which were found to be dilapidated and outdated.

Additionally, several institutions failed to adhere to the "Kuwait Code for Accessibility," which sets the necessary specifications for facilitating the movement and use of people with special needs within build-

ings. PADA has since sent official letters to the Ministry of Education, urging the imposition of legal penalties on the violating schools.

These penalties include the deduction of 5 percent of the total fees charged to students attending these institutions. The inspection also revealed discrepancies in the educational plans of some institutions, which were not up to date and differed from what was being taught to students.

The inspection also led to the discovery of labor law violations, with workers found to be in violation of residency and labor laws.

Several workers, who were not registered in the institutions' official files, were found to be holding residency article number 22 (joining a family) and were not authorized to work in the private sector.

Furthermore, the Kuwait Fire Force issued violations against institutions that failed to comply with necessary security and safety requirements.

This was despite clear instructions from the Minister of Social Affairs, Dr. Amthar Al-Huwailah, emphasizing the need to ensure safety protocols are strictly followed to protect the lives of people with disabilities.



Dr. Al-Huwailah



The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait HE Dr Adarsh Swaika met with Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Yousef Al-Sabah, Director General of Coast Guard of Kuwait. Discussions focused on bilateral cooperation between the Coast Guards of India and Kuwait in the context of recent MoU on Defence cooperation.

MoE to start student transfers on Feb 2 based on civil ID addresses

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Ministry of Education has announced that, starting February 2, the planning departments in educational zones will begin processing transfer requests from male and female elementary and intermediate students. Transfers will be based on the addresses listed on their civil ID cards.

The ministry's goal is to organize the educational process and ensure students attend schools near their homes, which will reduce the burden on both students and parents.

The transfer process will take into account school and classroom capacity, with the aim of balancing student distribution and minimizing commut-

ing distances.

Transfers will be based on ministry's guidelines, and parents are required to submit necessary documents, including updated civil ID cards. Planning departments are ready to facilitate and implement transfer requests through efficient processes.

The ministry affirmed that transfers based on civil ID cards will help prevent overcrowding in some schools and under-utilization in others, caused by students enrolling in schools outside their designated residential areas.

Parents are urged to meet the deadlines for submitting applications and completing procedures to ensure their children are placed in appropriate schools for the second semester.

Kuwait reaffirms GCC's commitment to counter-terrorism efforts in Africa

Al-Bannai calls for intensified global action at UN

NEW YORK, Jan 22, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai has affirmed the GCC has been paying much attention to counter-terrorism efforts in all its forms in Africa.

Speaking during the Security Council open debate on counter-terrorism in Africa late Tuesday on behalf of GCC members, Al-Bannai said GCC members during its supreme council's meeting held in Kuwait on December 1, 2024, underlined the need to intensify joint action and coordination among African Union (AU) members to specify the best ways and methods accredited to combat "terrorist" groups and dry up their funding.

The final communique of that meeting referred to Kuwait's initiative to host the Fourth Dushanbe Conference to include for the first time African countries, out of keenness on directly listening to the concerns of the AU members and working together to achieve joint goals, he stated.

The measures of combating terror



KUNA photo

Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations in New York.

are multiple, and the international coalition against the so-called Daesh is a main pillar and a platform that provides studies and strategies to enable people to better deal with this scourge, Al-Bannai affirmed.

He expressed his honor to deliver this speech on behalf of the GCC members - the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar along Kuwait -, supporting the statement made by Egypt's permanent representative, on behalf of the Arab League mem-

bers. He reiterated the GCC group's support for efforts in maintaining international peace and security, out of "our belief of the need of doubling international and UN efforts to curb extremist and terrorist thoughts" that destabilize security, and threaten the African developing nations and their economic growth and living conditions.

Undoubtedly, terror has clearly posed threats to international secu-

city and peace mainly in Africa and the Sahel, he said.

He said combating this scourge is not the responsibility of Africa only; urging the international community to back solutions made by this Continent to overcome these challenges it faces.

He extolled changes made by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to address these complicated challenges that were announced by a meeting in Abuja last April.

Al-Bannai highlighted the great risks caused by terror in Africa, reaffirming GCC readiness to continue to offer support efforts, and its unwavering commitment to combating terror on all levels.

He said this would be done through some principles like intensifying international efforts to back the countries most affected by terrorism, in line with the UN Security Council resolutions.

He demanded enhancing technological and technical collaboration, and building partnerships among relevant parties to eradicate terror.

Al-Bannai concluded that GCC states are looking forward to implementing the outcomes of the Dushanbe conference through holding a high-level congress in New York in 2026.



KUNA photo

Beneficiaries of Kuwait's Al-Najat charity projects in Yemen in 2024.

Kuwait's Al-Najat charity helped 380,000 Yemenis

The Kuwaiti Al-Najat charity declared that more than 380,000 Yemenis have benefited from its aid in Yemen, within framework of the campaign "Kuwait on your side," proceeding for the 10th year in a row.

Abdullah Alshehab, the chair of the association's division of programs and projects, said in a statement to

KUNA some of the relief projects in Yemen were construction of seven villages, drilling 52 wells, building eight bakeries, five schools and supporting 210 students.

Moreover, the association built a medical center, provided aid to nearly 6,000 patients and distributed food and relief supplies to some 120,000 people. (KUNA)

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait TV

It also contributes to the ministry's effort to attain full digital transformation and employ modern technological means for managing the media assets.

Cabinet congratulates

Dr. Al-Huwailah apprised the Cabinet of the decision to dissolve some charities for failing to honor their obligations under Article 27 of Act 24 (1962) on public benefit corporations.

The cabinet heard a presentation by Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Mohammad Al-Mashaan, Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya, President of the Legal Advice and Legislation Dept. Salah Al-Majed and Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Sameeh Johar Hayat on the progress of the three-phase Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port under a MoU with China.

The Cabinet members highlighted the vital importance of this project on Bubiyan Island for economic and urban development in the northern part of Kuwait.

The Cabinet approved bid, submitted by state-owned China Communications Construction Company, Ltd., to implement all stages of the project in keeping with the relevant MoU.

Acting on a recommendation from the Ministry of Health, the Cabinet approved and appreciated two donations - on from Kuwait Finance House (KFH) to build and equip a cardiovascular research center, and another from the family of deceased Khaled Zaid Al-Khaled to build and equip a kidney dialysis center.

The Cabinet meeting approved the minutes of the higher committee on verification of Kuwaiti citizenship, including a decision to strip some persons off the citizenship pursuant to Act 15 (1959) and the subsequent recommendations.

No income

Increasing Non-Oil Revenue: Initial targets aim to raise non-oil revenues to 10 percent, with aspirations to reach higher benchmarks similar to other Gulf states.

Attracting Investments: Key sectors for investment include renewable energy, infrastructure, technology and family-focused tourism, particularly from the Gulf region. Successes such as the Gulf Cup have already demonstrated the potential of family tourism.

Foreign Investment Success: Kuwait's Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) has successfully attracted over 5 billion Kuwaiti dinars since its inception.

The Finance Minister noted the government's commitment to legislative reforms, which include strengthening public-private partnerships and improving the business environment.

Al-Fassam emphasized that these

reforms are crucial for accelerating sustainable development and reducing fiscal pressures.

She concluded by revealing that the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) will launch several projects soon, further accelerating Kuwait's developmental trajectory.

Kuwait's focused efforts on economic diversification, tax reforms and investment promotion demonstrate a clear commitment to achieving a resilient and forward-looking economy.

Gang nabbed

confessed to surveilling the locations and notifying his accomplice when the offices were clear of customers.

The second suspect was apprehended in the Qurain Markets area, and the stolen money and a small quantity of the narcotic substance "Shabu" were found at his residence.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed that the suspects, along with the seized items, were referred to the Public Prosecution for necessary legal action.

Kuwait okays

This is in addition to provisions that allow consultation chambers to reject non-meritorious appeals directly, saving time and resources.

These measures aim to alleviate the burden on the Court of Cassation, which currently handles approximately 20,000 new appeals annually. The reforms are expected to reduce this number by 20 percent, or about 4,000 cases per year, while addressing a backlog of 82,000 pending appeals.

To further ensure the seriousness of appeals, the guarantees for filing appeals have been raised as follows:

- Appeals against judgments now require a deposit of 250 dinars, up from 50.
- Cassation appeals require a deposit of 500 dinars, up from 100.

These reforms highlight the Kuwaiti government's efforts to balance humanitarian considerations, economic development and judicial efficiency, reflecting a commitment to fostering a stable and progressive society.

Kuwait strengthens

From now on, only those with original Kuwaiti nationality, impeccable character and a legal degree or its equivalent could ascend to the bench. Individuals with criminal or disciplinary records, even if pardoned or rehabilitated, were firmly excluded.

The reform also addressed pressing administrative and technological challenges. To reduce the mounting backlog of cases in the Court of Cassation, the draft allowed for the secondment of appellate court judges, ensuring swift resolution of disputes. It introduced the possibility of con-

ducting trials and hearing testimonies electronically, embracing modernity without compromising the principles of transparency and fairness.

The draft unified the appointment terms for judicial leaders, capping their tenure at four years with a single renewal. It also reinforced the principle that justice should be served by the nation's own citizens.

To this end, the Minister of Justice, in collaboration with the Supreme Judicial Council, was tasked with gradually replacing non-Kuwaiti judges with Kuwaiti nationals, a process to be completed within five years.

The government, in its explanatory memorandum, emphasized that these changes were part of a comprehensive reform wave inspired by the address of His Highness the Amir on May 10, 2024.

The reforms not only aimed to strengthen the judiciary but also to realize a long-held dream: entrusting the scales of justice to the capable hands of Kuwait's sons and daughters.

Recognizing the challenges faced by the judiciary, the draft law introduced measures to alleviate administrative burdens on the head of the Court of First Instance.

By appointing three to five deputies, the reform ensured smoother management of the increasing caseloads. Moreover, it limited judicial appointments to law degree holders, excluding those with purely Sharia-based qualifications, while preserving the positions of existing Sharia graduates until their retirement.

As the draft decree made its way through the halls of the Supreme Judicial Council, it carried with it the hopes of a nation yearning for reform. With each step, it reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to justice, transparency and modernization, paving the way for a judiciary that would stand as a beacon of integrity and fairness for generations to come.

And so, the story of Kuwait's judicial transformation unfolded, a testament to the power of vision and determination, as the nation embarked on a path toward a brighter, more equitable future.

Minister Al-Mashaan

the projects' execution, she stressed.

The issue of maintaining and repairing the streets is among priorities of the political leadership, she said, praising instructions in this regard by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, noting their support for maintaining the roads as a foundation of new Kuwait vision (2035) strategy.

MoHE eyes new support policies

Tuition hikes and academic setbacks spark call for regulation, student aid

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Academic sources have emphasized the importance of regulating tuition fees for internal scholarships at private universities and monitoring the performance of struggling students as one of the proposed solutions to mitigate the negative effects of high costs and academic failure. These measures aim to maintain the primary objective of internal scholarships to enhance educational development.

This comes as the Private Universities Council, chaired by Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, discussed the financial impact of academic failure on internal scholarship students, and the implementation of these measures starting from the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

Data regarding tuition fees for internal scholarships at private universities and colleges reveals a significant rise in costs over the past few years. This increase highlights the financial challenges students face in managing tuition payments and the financial implications involved.

The sources explained that, despite the financial burdens resulting from increased fees and student failures, the internal scholarship system is seen as a valuable investment in education and the development of national competencies. These programs offer students the opportunity to pursue various specializations that align with labor market needs, and enhance the long-term efficiency of the national human resources.

The total fees for internal scholarship students constitute a major financial strain on the state budget, as the Ministry of Higher Education covers the costs. With the rising number of students enrolled in private universities under the internal scholarship program, government spending on these scholarships has escalated considerably.

Also, failure of students in academic subjects are cited as one of the main challenges facing the internal scholarship system. This not only delays graduation but also

results in higher tuition costs due to the need for re-registration in courses and delayed graduation.

This stumbling block not only costs the government additional funds but also creates psychological and social challenges for struggling students and their families.

They have called for a review of tuition fees at certain universities and the introduction of support mechanisms for struggling students, such as academic reinforcement programs or the provision of academic advisors to help students overcome their difficulties.

They also stressed the need to establish a system to evaluate the academic performance of universities and ensure that the quality of education aligns with the high costs.

Meanwhile, the Private Universities Council convened a meeting, chaired by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, in the presence of the acting Secretary-General of the Private Universities Council Adel Al-Bader and its members at the Ministry of Higher Education's headquarters in Sanabel Tower.

Al-Bader announced that the Council reviewed the agenda items, including the ratification of the minutes from the previous meeting and a follow-up on the procedures taken by the General Secretariat to implement the decisions issued in meeting No. 91.

The Council also discussed the financial implications of academic setbacks for internal scholarship students, with the new policies set to take effect starting from the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. In this context, tuition fees for two semesters range from KD 3,560 at some technical colleges to as much as KD 6,480 at others.

It appears that the fees vary from one university to another, with some maintaining stable rates over recent years, while in others, the fees for students during the academic year remain below KD 4,162.

In addition, Al-Bader stated that the Council reviewed the recommendation of the Applications Study Committee regarding the detailed statement submitted by the Al-Salam University Educational Company for the establishment of Al-Salam University, as well as the proposal submitted by the National Technology Projects Company for the establishment of the British International University.



Dr. Al-Jalal

Upgrade for six Al-Mutlaa areas

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: According to informed sources, a local contracting company is set to begin the executive works to develop the infrastructure of six government areas in Al-Mutlaa Residential City, after signing a contract worth KD 6,977,094 with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) last month, reports Al-Anba daily.

They explained that the project includes the construction, completion, and maintenance of road works and infrastructure service networks, marking a pivotal step in preparing these new areas for residential plots to be delivered to citizens.

The tender that was awarded to the local company witnessed strong competition among eight Kuwaiti companies, with financial offers ranging from KD 6.9 million (the lowest bid) to KD 13.47 million (the highest offer).

The project will focus on constructing main roads and service networks in six areas within Al-Mutlaa City, which is one of the largest housing projects in Kuwait and will provide numerous residential plots for Kuwaiti families.



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He's going to push it to the max: Tuberville

Trump finds new ways to flex presidential power after returning to WH

WASHINGTON, Jan 22, (AP) — US President Donald Trump is swiftly breaching the traditional boundaries of presidential power as he returns to the White House, bringing to bear a lifetime of bending the limits in courthouses, boardrooms and politics to forge an expansive view of his authority.

He's already unleashed an unprecedented wave of executive orders, daring anyone to stop him, with actions intended to clamp down on border crossings, limit the constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship and keep the popular Chinese-owned TikTok operational despite a law shutting down the social media platform.

Democrats and civil rights organizations are rallying to fight Trump in court, but legal battles could drag on before slowing the president down. Meanwhile, Trump is drafting a new blueprint for the presidency, one that demonstrates the primacy of blunt force in a democratic system predicated on checks and balances between the branches of government.

"He's going to push it to the max," said Sen. Tommy Tuberville, a Republican from Alabama.

Trump tried to take a similar approach in his first term, with mixed

results. This time, there are fewer guardrails.

His administration has few of the establishment figures that once tried to curb his penchant for upheaval. The U.S. Supreme Court is stocked with conservative justices, and recently decreed that presidents are broadly immune from prosecution for any official actions taken during their term. Republicans are in complete control on Capitol Hill, where the leaders owe their majority positions to Trump's support or acquiescence.

In a striking display of Trump's dominance, almost no one from his party challenged the decision to pardon almost everyone charged in connection with the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

"We're not looking backwards, we're looking forward," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota.

It's the kind of scenario that Democrats warned about during last year's campaign, when they claimed that Trump would govern as a dictator if elected to another term.

Sitting in the Oval Office just hours after being inaugurated on Monday, Trump rejected the characterization.



US President Donald Trump stands after taking the oath of office at the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the Rotunda of the US Capitol in Washington on Jan 20. (AP)

"No, no," he said, shaking his head and pursing his lips. "I can't imagine even being called that."

Then he continued scrawling his signature on executive orders that were laid out across the Resolute Desk.

Trump's blitz didn't surprise Barbara Res, who worked for the future

president years ago at his namesake company.

"Politics is about compromise. Business is all about leverage," Res said. "He's not a compromiser."

Although Trump got his start in the brick-and-mortar field of real estate, he appears to be taking a page from the

"move fast and break things" tactic of technology company executives who spent millions bolstering his presidential bid and attended his inauguration.

John Yoo, a law professor at the University of California at Berkeley who helped expand presidential authority while working for George W. Bush, said Trump's executive orders were "unprecedented in terms of the sweeping scope of the orders and in the sheer number."

Although such orders can be easily reversed by a future president, they could have a profound impact for now.

Yoo described as "legally shaky" Trump's effort to allow TikTok to keep operating even though US officials have described it as a national security threat because of fears that China could access user data or manipulate the content algorithm. A law signed by President Joe Biden required the platform to shut down in the United States unless its Chinese parent company found a new owner by Sunday, the day before Trump took office.

But Trump directed his Justice Department not to enforce the ban, which Yoo compared to a student asking for more time on an exam after it was due.

Yoo also said Trump is trying to

"really push the envelope" by declaring that migrants who are entering the country constitute an "invasion." The president directed the military to help take "operational control" of the U.S. border, but troops are not allowed to handle law enforcement, whether it's seizing drugs or arresting migrants.

"This is without historical parallel," Yoo said. "This is really an extraordinary claim of presidential power."

Nearly two dozen states have already sued Trump over his executive order intended to limit birthright citizenship, part of his sweeping effort to curb immigration. The president's opponents said the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution requires that people born in the U.S. are citizens, including people whose parents were not legally citizens at the time of their birth.

"Presidents have broad power but they are not kings," said New Jersey Attorney General Matt Platkin, a Democrat.

Depending on how the legal battles play out, Yoo said Trump could set a new standard for his successors.

"If he's successful with even half the executive orders, every future president is going to want to do the same thing," he said.



People walk past posters encouraging participation in the 2020 Census in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood on April 1, 2020. (AP)

Republicans renew efforts to limit people in US illegally from census count

WASHINGTON, Jan 22, (AP) — Republican efforts to exclude people in the US illegally from numbers used to divvy up congressional seats among states have begun anew, with four Republican state attorneys general suing to alter the once-a-decade head count even before President Donald Trump's second term in office began Monday.

Trump joined in the battle immediately upon returning to office, signing an executive order on Monday that rescinded a Biden administration order and signaled the possibility of a push by his new administration to change the 2030 census. Those efforts may get a boost from the GOP-controlled Congress, where Republican U.S. Rep. Chuck Edwards from North Carolina earlier this month re-introduced legislation that would put a citizenship question on the census form.

During his first term, Trump signed an order that would have excluded people in the US illegally from being included in the 2020 census numbers used to allot congressional seats and Electoral College votes to each state. The GOP president also mandated in a second order the collection of citizenship data through administrative records. A Republican redistricting expert had written that using citizen voting-age population instead of the total population for the purpose of redrawing congressional and legislative districts could be advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.

Trump issued the memos after the

US Supreme Court blocked his earlier attempt to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census questionnaire. The high court said the administration's justification for the question "seems to have been contrived."

Both Trump orders were rescinded when President Joe Biden arrived at the White House in January 2021, before the 2020 census figures were released by the U.S. Census Bureau, the nation's largest statistical agency.

"I think it's an open question about how much energy the administration and Congress will try to bend the statistical system to its will," historian Margo Anderson said about Trump's second term. "Not because they wouldn't like to, but because there are other parts of the national government that they are more interested in."

The Fourteenth Amendment says that "the whole number of persons in each state" should be counted for the numbers used for apportionment, the process of allocating congressional seats and Electoral College votes among the states based on population. The numbers also guide the distribution of \$2.8 trillion in federal dollars to the states for roads, health care and other programs.

The lawsuit filed Friday by the GOP attorneys general of Kansas, Louisiana, Ohio and West Virginia seeks to exclude people in the country illegally or temporarily from the numbers used to apportion congressional seats. It claims that Ohio and West Virginia

each unfairly lost a congressional seat and an electoral vote after the 2020 census because people in the U.S. illegally were included, and that each of the four states stands to lose a congressional seat and electoral vote after the 2030 census if that doesn't change.

Projections released last month by Election Data Services don't show those four states losing seats after the 2030 census. The projections instead say California, New York and Illinois - states with Democratic majorities - are likely to lose the most seats and electoral votes.

The Census Bureau on Tuesday didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment. Opponents of the citizenship question on the 2020 census said it discouraged participation by immigrants and residents who were in the country illegally, resulting in inaccurate figures. A Census Bureau simulation released in 2023 indicated that a significant number of noncitizens were missed in the count, which took place during the last year of the first Trump administration and at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Demographers and researchers expect the second Trump administration to change or reverse recent actions by the Biden administration related to U.S. statistical agencies. They include combining into a single question race and ethnicity questions that previously were asked separately on forms and adding a Middle Eastern and North African category.

Dems struggle to pick message against Trump's shock-and-awe campaign

NEW YORK, Jan 22, (AP) — Democrats knew this was coming.

President Donald Trump promised a shock-and-awe campaign to deliver major policy victories immediately after he took office. Much of it was outlined in the Project 2025 document that Democrats predicted he would adopt.

But in the hours since Trump's inauguration, Democrats are struggling to confront the sheer volume of executive orders, pardons, personnel changes and controversial relationships taking shape in the new administration.

In less than two days, the Republican president has moved to end diversity and inclusion programs across the federal government, withdrawn the U.S. from the Paris climate accords, blocked a federal law banning TikTok, and sought to end the constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship. He has also pardoned the rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and granted unprecedented access to some of the world's richest men, raising questions about his commitment to the working-class voters who enabled his election.

Each of those actions enrages part of the Democratic base. Together, they make it difficult to formulate a response by an already fractured party.

"It is a fire hose right now. That's what he does. He creates a ton of chaos so it's hard to keep up with it," said Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Texas, who instructed her staff to track Trump's executive orders, so her constituents could keep up. "Everything is overload."

The Democratic National Committee, under the direction of retiring



US Rep Jason Crow, D-Colo., holds a copy of Project 2025 as he speaks during the Democratic National Convention on Aug 22, 2024, in Chicago. (AP)

chair Jaime Harrison, has been running an active rapid response this week, issuing press releases and social media posts to push back against Trump's actions. That stands in contrast to the party's operation following Trump's 2017 inauguration, which was largely dark as a far more active protest movement became the focal point of the Democratic resistance.

For now, the Democratic establishment is largely focused on the prominent role of billionaires in Trump's nascent presidency, which follows Biden's farewell warning about the rise of oligarchs.

The DNC shared talking points with its allies on Tuesday, encouraging

them to focus on "Trump's plans to screw over America." Specifically, the talking points focus on the new president's move to rescind a Biden order designed to limit the cost of prescription drugs.

The DNC guidance also seizes on ultra-wealthy tech executives like Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and Space X, and Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon and Blue Origin, who were seated in front of some of Trump's Cabinet picks during his inauguration. On Musk, the talking points accuse him of giving multiple Nazi salutes during Trump's inauguration parade.

Right-wing extremists are celebrating Musk's straight-arm gesture during a speech Monday, although his intention wasn't totally clear and some hate watchdogs are saying not to read too much into it.

The seating for some of the world's richest men at the inauguration - with big-state governors and major allies relegated to an overflow area - initially offered Democrats an issue to rally around. Beyond the tech leaders featured at the inauguration, the Republican president has tapped more than a dozen billionaires for prominent roles.

Democratic strategist Andrew Bates, who left his job as a White House spokesman on Friday, attacked Trump's GOP for "partying with right-wing billionaires" on their first day in control of Washington and "plotting tax welfare for the super rich" on Day 2.

"Republicans have revealed their establishment-bought true colors and are selling out every American except their well-connected donors," Bates said.



This photo provided by Michael Grimes of 409 Droneography shows snow over Galveston, Texas on Jan 21. (AP)

'Familiar face'

Ireland finally set to get new government

DUBLIN, Jan 22, (AP) — Veteran politician Micheál Martin was set to become Ireland's prime minister for a second time on Wednesday when lawmakers formally approve him as head of a coalition government.

The confirmation comes almost two months after an election in which Martin's Fianna Fáil party won the most seats, but not enough to govern alone.

After weeks of talks, the long-dominant center-right parties Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael agreed to form a coalition with the support of several independent lawmakers.

Under the deal, Martin 64, will be taoiseach, or prime minister, for three years, with Fine Gael's Simon Harris - the outgoing taoiseach - as his deputy. The two politicians will then swap jobs for the rest of the five-year term.

Members of both parties have ratified the government agreement, and Martin is set to be confirmed by members of the Dáil, parliament's lower house, on Wednesday. He will then be formally appointed to the job by President Michael D. Higgins before appointing his Cabinet.

In Ireland's Nov. 29 election, voters bucked a global trend that saw incumbent governments ousted around the world in 2024. Fianna Fáil won 48 of



Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin and deputy leader Jack Chambers during the Fianna Fail conference at the Radisson Hotel, in Dublin on Jan 19. (AP)

the 174 legislative seats and Fine Gael 38. They've secured backing to govern from the mostly conservative Regional Independent Group, which will be given two ministerial positions.

Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil share broadly similar center-right policies but a century-old rivalry stemming from their origins on opposing sides of Ireland's civil war in the 1920s. They

formed an alliance after the 2020 election ended in a virtual dead heat.

Their new agreement shuts out left-of-center party Sinn Féin, which will stay in opposition despite winning 39 seats. Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have refused to work with them because of their historic ties with the Irish Republican Army during three decades of violence in Northern Ireland.

Winter storm spreads into Florida and Carolinas

A major winter storm that slammed Texas and blanketed the northern Gulf Coast with record-breaking snow moved east overnight, spreading heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain across parts of the Florida Panhandle, Georgia and eastern Carolinas.

The weather warning areas included big cities like Jacksonville, Florida, which is expected to see snow, sleet and accumulating ice into Wednesday. The Jacksonville International Airport closed because of the weather Tuesday evening and said it planned to reopen at noon Wednesday. Schools

canceled classes, and government offices were closed Wednesday.

"We are expecting some winter weather we're not used to in Northeast Florida," the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office posted on Facebook. "The safest place you can be Tuesday night and Wednesday is at home!"

In eastern North Carolina, drifting snow was expected with near-blizzard conditions in the state's Outer Banks, where up to 8 inches (20.3 centimeters) were predicted to fall.

Dangerous below-freezing temperatures with even colder wind chills were also expected to last

over much of the week in the region. Authorities say three people have died in the cold weather.

The heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain hitting parts of the Deep South came as a blast of Arctic air plunged much of the Midwest and the eastern U.S. into a deep freeze.

It had been more than a decade since snow last fell on New Orleans. Tuesday's rare snowfall set a record in the city, where 10 inches (25 centimeters) fell in some places, far surpassing its record of 2.7 inches (6.8 centimeters) set Dec. 31, 1963, the National Weather Service said. (AP)

America

Grisham sets priorities: Democratic Gov Michelle Lujan Grisham is tasking lawmakers to come up with public safety solutions amid a persistently high violent crime rate that is twice the national average and has left many communities on edge.

She delivered her State of the State address Tuesday, kicking off a 60-day legislative session in which curbing crime and boosting child wellbeing will be top priorities. It's likely the last chance for her to tackle big legislative initiatives before she terms out of office in 2026.

In a speech that touched on every-



Grisham

victim of a serious crime. (AP)

Fire risk continues: Parched Southern California was forecast to face

thing from making child care affordable to addressing climate change, the governor kept going back to public safety. She noted that one third of New Mexicans say either they or a loved one has been the

more dangerous winds on Wednesday but could get some badly needed rain this weekend, dampening the prospects of another round of deadly wildfires though even a small amount of precipitation could create new challenges like toxic ash runoff.

Los Angeles officials were preparing for that prospect even as a small number of residents were allowed to return to the devastated Pacific Palisades and Altadena areas and firefighters quickly controlled small blazes that broke out.

Mayor Karen Bass issued an executive order Tuesday to expedite cleanup efforts in burn areas and mitigate the environmental impacts of fire-related pollutants. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL

Search resumes after deadly flooding, landslides in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Jan 22, (AP): Indonesian rescuers retrieved two more bodies after they resumed their search Wednesday for people missing after floods and landslides on Indonesia's main island of Java, bringing the death toll to 19.

Waters from flooded rivers tore through nine villages in Pekalongan regency of Central Java province and landslides tumbled onto mountainside hamlets after the torrential rains Monday.

Videos and photos released by National Search and Rescue Agency showed workers digging desperately in villages where roads and green-terraced rice fields were transformed into murky brown mud and villages were covered by thick mud, rocks and uprooted trees.

National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said flooding triggered a landslide that buried two houses and a cafe in the

Petungkriyono resort area. The disasters all together destroyed 25 houses, a dam and three main bridges connecting villages in Pekalongan. At least 13 people injured and nearly 300 people were forced to flee to temporary government shelters.

The search and rescue operation that was hampered by bad weather, mudslides and rugged terrain was halted Tuesday afternoon due to heavy rain and thick fog that made devastated areas along the rivers dangerous to rescuers.

On Wednesday, they searched in rivers and the rubble of villages for bodies and, whenever possible, survivors in worst-hit Kasimpar village, said Budiono, who heads a local rescue office.

Scores of rescue personnel recovered two mud-caked bodies as they searched a Petungkriyono area where tons of mud and rocks buried two houses and a cafe. Rescuers are still searching for seven people reported missing.



Workers clear a road cut off by a landslide following a flash flood in Pekalongan, Central Java, Indonesia on Jan 22. (AP)



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, holds talks with Adviser for Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of Bangladesh Touhid Hossain in Beijing, capital of China on Jan 21. (Xinhua)

Wang calls on China, Bangladesh to successfully host Year of People-to-People Exchanges

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on China and Bangladesh to consolidate traditional cooperation, expand emerging fields, successfully hold the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties and Year of People-to-People Exchanges to push forward bilateral ties.

Wang made the remarks during a talk with Touhid Hossain, Adviser for Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of Bangladesh on Tuesday in Beijing.

Noting that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bangladesh and the Year

of People-to-People Exchanges, Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said there are new opportunities in the development of bilateral relations.

China is willing to work with Bangladesh to continue the traditional friendship, strengthen strategic communication, deepen practical cooperation, and jointly promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation to advance the China-Bangladesh comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, said Wang.

China supports Bangladesh in safeguarding

its independence, sovereignty and national dignity, and exploring a development path suited to its national conditions, respects the choice of the Bangladeshi people, and stands ready to continue to provide assistance for Bangladesh's economic and social development, said Wang.

China is further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization, which will generate more opportunities for the rest of the world, especially its neighbors, Wang said, adding that the two sides should coordinate the promotion of major landmark projects and "small but beautiful" livelihood projects. (Xinhua)

Beijing's navy commissions new-generation frigate

China and US partners move closer as Trump returns to White House

BEIJING, Jan 22, (AP): China's relations are starting to improve with Japan, India and other countries that former US president Joe Biden courted, just as Donald Trump brings his more unilateralist approach back to the White House.

The change of leadership in Washington on Monday could be an opportunity for China, which has long railed against Biden's strategy of building partnerships with "like-minded countries" to counter its growing influence.

Biden reinvigorated a grouping known as the Quad - the United States, India, Japan and Australia. China's relations with all three of those US partners are improving, as are its ties with Britain. The durability of Biden's legacy is now in question. During his first term, Trump didn't hesitate to challenge traditional US partners.

"It is possible that Trump may drift away from US allies, making them pay more attention to China's role, and in fact it has provided a chance for China's diplomacy," said Wu Xinbo, dean of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai. "I think we should grasp the chance."

But US National Security Council spokesperson Brian Hughes said that Trump "has a record of rallying the world toward a more competitive stance with China." Trump agreed to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy that Japan introduced during his first term and he backed excluding Chinese companies from telecom networks in the US and many of its partners.

On Tuesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio - hours after he was sworn in - met with the foreign ministers of Australia, India and Japan in Washington, a move that suggested engaging the Quad countries and countering China's influence will remain a priority for Trump.

Beijing's rapprochement with the UK and Japan is in its early stages, and major differences remain that limit and could derail it.

India turned the page with China on a bitter border dispute last October, but protested when Beijing created two new counties in an area claimed by both nations. Still, new leaders in Australia, the UK and Japan have shown a desire to warm relations with China, the world's largest manufacturer and a source of strategic minerals. The government in Beijing has reciprocated in part because it wants foreign investment to help revive its economy, which could be set back if Trump follows through on a threat to impose higher tariffs.

Chinese President Xi Jinping told European Council President Antonio Costa in a phone conversation last week that both sides could bring more "stability and certainty" to the turbulent global situation. China and Britain restarted eco-



From left: US President Joe Biden, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa and China's President Xi Jinping gather for a G20 Summit world leaders' group photo, in Rio de Janeiro on Nov 19, 2024. (AP)

nomie and financial talks after a six-year hiatus when the UK Treasury chief visited Beijing this month. "From China's point of view, improving relations with American allies and increasing economic cooperation will offset the shock to China-U.S. economic relations," Wu said.

In Washington, there's a strong bipartisan consensus that the U.S. must prevail in its economic and tech rivalry with China to maintain its global leadership. During his confirmation hearing, Rubio called China "the most potent and dangerous near-peer adversary this nation has ever confronted." Biden kept the tariffs Trump levied on China and imposed more on Chinese electric cars and solar cells.

But unlike Biden, Trump has irked US allies and partners with his recent remarks on possibly annexing Greenland, an autonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark, and making Canada the 51st American state.

Hal Brands, senior fellow at the Washington-based think tank American Enterprise Institute, said he believes some top strategists in Beijing are "salivating at the damage they think Trump is going to do to US alliances and the opportunities this creates for Beijing to resurrect some of its relationships with ... Japan and Europe that had moved in a very sharply anti-China direction since COVID."

Also:

TAIPEI, Taiwan: China's navy has commissioned a new-generation frigate as competition rises with the U.S. and other regional powers, saying the ship will "play a vital role in enhancing the overall combat effectiveness" of its forces.

China already has the world's largest navy in terms of number of hulls, although its technology is sometimes seen as lagging. Its largest competitor, the U.S., has warned its Navy could be outnumbered and has called for a building program as well as reforms to put damaged ships into action sooner.

China's People's Liberation Army Navy operates mainly in waters off the Chinese east coast and in the huge and strategically crucial South China Sea, which China claims almost in its entirety. A key mission also remains backing up the army in any attack on Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy about 160 kilometers (100 miles) off the Chinese coast that Beijing has vowed to annex by force if necessary.

The first Type 054B frigate, christened the Luohe, was commissioned Wednesday in Qingdao, a port city in northern China where the PLAN's northern fleet is based.

The ship has a displacement of approximately 5,000 tons and includes stealth technology, combat command systems and firepower integration, "significantly enhancing overall performance," the navy said.

"With strong capabilities for comprehensive combat operations and diverse military missions, the warship will play a vital role in enhancing the overall combat effectiveness of naval task forces," it added.

The Luohe's armaments include a variety of machine guns for close combat and anti-air and anti-ship missiles, according to defense publications, some of which say the ship could become the backbone of the Chinese navy.



Residents cross the Tarra River to Venezuela from Colombia's Tibu on Jan 21, following guerrilla attacks that killed dozens and forced thousands to flee their homes in the Catatumbo region. (AP)

Colombians flee to Venezuela as clashes between groups escalate in border region

TRES BOCAS, Colombia, Jan 22, (AP): The Colombian border village of Tres Bocas has become a ghost town as residents flee to neighboring Venezuela to escape a new wave of violence in Colombia's Catatumbo region that has left at least 80 people dead and displaced thousands.

According to the United Nations, more than 18,000 people have fled the northeastern region as fighting between the National Liberation Army or ELN, and a rival group known as the FARC-EMC intensifies. Of those who had fled, about 1,000 have sought shelter in Venezuela.

"Many of them are afraid of the fire-fights that have broken out" in rural areas, said Jaime Botero, president of a community association in the town of Tibu, which is about 10 km (6 miles) to

the west of Tres Bocas.

Located on Colombia's border with Venezuela, the Catatumbo region has around 300,000 residents and produces 15% of Colombia's coca crop.

The FARC-EMC and the ELN have long battled for control of the region and its lucrative drug trafficking routes, but had recently held a truce.

But violence escalated last week when members of the ELN attacked civilians, accusing them of collaborating with the FARC-EMC, with ELN rebels reportedly dragging people out of their homes and shooting them at close range.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro suspended peace talks with the ELN on Friday, accusing the rebels of committing war crimes. On Monday night, Petro said he would issue an emer-

gency decree that would enable him to pass legislation related to the conflict without congressional approval.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the killing of civilians, including former combatants who signed the 2016 peace agreement, in the violence, UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said. And he is concerned by the reported displacement of thousands of civilians.

"The secretary-general calls for an immediate cessation of acts of violence against the civilian population and for unhindered humanitarian access," Haq said late Tuesday.

The United Nations urged the ELN and other armed groups in the Catatumbo region to respect civilians' rights. The U.N. said that two human rights defenders were killed last week.

Africa

Warlord held, then expelled: Italian police arrested a Libyan warlord on a warrant from the International Criminal Court, but an Italian tribunal refused to approve the arrest and he was instead sent back to Libya, Italy's state-run RAI television reported.

Ossama Anjem, also known as Ossama al-Masri, heads the Tripoli branch of the Reform and Rehabilitation Institution, a notorious network of detention centers run by the government-backed Special Defense Force.

The SDF acts as a military police unit combating high-profile crimes including kidnappings, murders as well as illegal migration.

Like many other militias in western Libya, the SDF has been implicated in atrocities in the civil war that followed the overthrow and killing of longtime Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Recently, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor issued arrest warrants over alleged crimes in Libya beyond the civil war, including in detention facilities where human rights groups have documented abuses.. (AP)

FLA frees Spanish national: A rebel alliance in Mali said Tuesday it has freed a Spanish man who was kidnapped in southern Algeria last week.

The Azawad Liberation Front, or FLA, a coalition of separatist armed groups in Mali's predominantly Tuareg north, said on X that it freed Spanish citizen Gilbert Navarro.

"The former Spanish hostage, Mr Navarro Giane Gilbert, has been released by the FLA and is in good health," said Mohamed Maouloud Ramaadan, a spokesperson for the separatist movement. (AP)



Gaddafi



Image provided by Mexico's Presidency shows Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum speaking during her morning press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City, capital of Mexico on Jan 21. (AP)

Mexico amused by Trump's order to rename Gulf of Mexico

MEXICO CITY, Jan 22, (AP): Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has an answer for U.S. President Donald Trump about his idea of renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America": he can call it whatever he wants on the American part of it.

Sheinbaum on Tuesday had been working through the raft of executive orders from Trump that relate to Mexico, emphasizing Mexico's sovereignty and the need for dialogue,

but when she got to the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico, she couldn't help but laugh.

"He says that he will call it the Gulf of America on its continental shelf," Sheinbaum said. "For us it is still the Gulf of Mexico, and for the entire world it is still the Gulf of Mexico."

Trump said in his inaugural address Monday that he will change the name, an idea he first brought up earlier this month during a news conference.

Former El Salvador president Funes dies

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador, Jan 22, (AP): Former El Salvador president Mauricio Funes, who spent the final years of his life in Nicaragua to avoid various criminal sentences, died late Tuesday. He was 65.

Nicaragua's Health Ministry said in a statement that Funes had died of a serious chronic illness.

Funes governed El Salvador from 2009 to 2014. He lived his final nine years under the protection of Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega, whose government had given him citizenship, allowing him to avoid extradition.

Funes had pending sentences in El Salvador for corruption and making deals with the country's powerful street gangs that amounted to more than 26 years, but he never set foot in prison.

The journalist-turned-politician came to power with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, the leftist party born of El Salvador's civil war and a powerful national political force for three decades that was left with no seats in the Congress after last year's election.



Funes

Kuwaiti oil price drops to \$83.09 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 49 cents to USD 83.09 per barrel (pb) on Tuesday, compared with USD 83.58 pb the previous day, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Wednesday. At the global level, the Brent crude went down by 86 cents to USD 79.29 pb, and the West Texas Intermediate also fell by USD 1.99 to USD 75.89 pb.

Business

Confirming its commitment to sustainability and the highest ESG standards

Burgan Bank launches responsible waste management initiative in collaboration with Tadwire

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Burgan Bank announced launching a waste management and recycling initiative at its head office in collaboration with Tadwire, the first recycling facility of its kind in Kuwait. This initiative reinforces the Bank's dedication to upholding the highest environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in the banking sector. It is the latest in a long series of dedicated efforts to reduce its carbon footprint across all operations, cementing Burgan's role as a leader in corporate responsibility and supporter of the New Kuwait 2035 Vision.

"Environmental sustainability has become an indispensable pillar for the success of businesses and projects, which is why we consistently evaluate the impact of our business choices on the environment and our community," commented Mr. Saud AlHadbah, Deputy General Manager – General Services Administrations. "We integrate ESG considerations into our core operations, from the design of new products and services to our energy consumption habits, as well as the management of our regular and electronic waste. Partnering



Saud AlHadbah

with Tadwire to manage Burgan's recycling and waste management underscores our commitment to environmental sustainability and support for impactful local businesses."

"At Tadwire, we recognize that while meaningful progress has been made, there is still much more to be done to advance sustainability efforts in Kuwait," said Mr. Waleed Esbaitah, Managing Partner at Tadwire. "We commend Burgan Bank for their



Burgan Bank partners with Tadwire for sustainability efforts.

long-standing commitment as a partner in this journey. Over the years, their support has been instrumental in enabling initiatives that address critical waste management challenges and pave the way for a greener future. This collaboration reflects the potential for businesses to come together and make a real impact for the environment and the community alike."

By collaborating with Tadwire, Burgan Bank aims to enhance environmental awareness at its head office, with plans to expand these efforts to include the entire Burgan network of branches. This partnership enables Burgan Bank to adopt best practices in responsible waste management across multiple areas, including collecting, recycling, up-

cycling, and repurposing different materials and types of waste, including cardboard, paper, plastic, and wood, as well as electronic waste.

As a committed environmental and social sustainability champion, Burgan Bank has launched numerous green initiatives that aim to inspire positive change within the organization and the community. Among the Bank's most notable environmental sustainability efforts is the eco-friendly refurbishment design applied at its head office, which earned the Bank the prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – LEED v4.1 O+M: EB (Operations and Maintenance – Existing Buildings) Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

About Burgan Bank

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Burgan Bank has majority-owned

subsidiaries, collectively known as the "Burgan Bank Group", in the MENA region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), and Burgan Bank Turkey. Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank's brand has been built on a foundation of real values – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank's core philosophy of "Driven by You" is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed.

Boursa Kuwait sees positive momentum in Wed trading

Stock exchange to sell securities for debt settlement

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22, (Agencies): Boursa Kuwait concluded Wednesday's trading session with its General Index gaining 68.42 points, or 0.90%, to close at 7,691.01 points, reports KUNA.

A total of 392.3 million shares changed hands in 21,645 cash transactions, with a combined value of 104.14 million Kuwaiti dinars (approximately \$320.7 million).

The Main Market Index advanced 75 points, or 1.04%, to settle at 7,254.84 points, driven by the trade of 200.4 million shares through 10,576 transactions worth 36.4 million dinars (around \$112.11 million).

The Premier Market Index rose 69.98 points, or 0.86%, closing at 8,178.07 points, with 191.9 million shares traded in 11,069 transactions valued at 67.7 million dinars (roughly \$208.5 million).

Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index climbed 84.09

points, or 1.17%, to reach 7,250.92 points, with 129.4 million shares traded in 6,098 transactions worth 27.4 million dinars (about \$84.3 million).

Also:

KUWAIT CITY: The Kuwait Stock Exchange has announced that the sale of listed securities on behalf of the Ministry of Justice will begin on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The sale is being carried out to settle debts of **Adel Hussein Musa Al-Mousa** and the World Trade Company, totaling 37.94 thousand and 810.19 thousand dinars.

The first sale will involve 8,670 shares of Kuwait House Holding Projects and 8 shares of Boubyan Bank, to settle the debt of Adel Al-Mousa.

The second sale will include 2,170 shares of Boubyan Bank and 499 shares of Al-Oula Local Fuel Marketing, in favor of the debt owed by the World Trade Company.

Gaza unemployment hits 90%

Bank of Palestine chairman hails Kuwait, GCC support during crisis

DAVOS, Jan 22, (KUNA): The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank of Palestine Hashim Al-Shawa said on Tuesday, that the State of Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries contributed to financing the bank's capital and enhancing its ability to withstand the current crisis that the State of Palestine is going through.

This came during Al-Shawa's participation in a dialogue seminar entitled "A Briefing on the Humanitarian Situation in Gaza" during the 55th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, which is ongoing in the Swiss city of Davos.

Al-Shawa confirmed that the bank was able to collect USD 300 million to support its ability to withstand and prepare for work on recovery, thanks to cooperation with many in-

ternational institutions, including the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Palestinians inside, in addition to the Japan Investment Agency, in the past 15 months.

He explained that the economic situation in the Gaza Strip requires urgent intervention, calling for working to reduce the worrying disparities between the West Bank and Gaza, especially in the unemployment rate in the Strip, which exceeded 90 percent compared to 50 percent in the West Bank.

For his part, the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Humanitarian Coordinator Tom Fletcher said during the same seminar that the reconstruction of Gaza might require between USD 40 and USD 80 billion, calling for urgent intervention to address the humanitarian and eco-

nomie situation in the Strip.

Fletcher explained that the United Nations is currently coordinating efforts to provide basic needs, announcing the launch of a distress call to provide funding ranging between USD 3 and 4 billion as a first step to save lives and meet urgent needs in the coming weeks.

He stressed that the current period constitutes a real test for the international community, stressing the importance of partnership between governments, civil society and the sector in reconstruction and providing humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip.

The annual meeting of the Economic Forum kicked off yesterday evening, Monday, in Davos under the title "Cooperation in the Smart Age" and its activities will continue until the 24th of this month.

CMA organizes workshop on GCC investment fund inter-registration

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: In line with the recent implementation of inter-registration for investment funds at the beginning of this month, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) held an awareness workshop Tuesday on the topic, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The workshop was aimed at all licensed professionals involved in collective investment scheme management and subscription (sales).

This development follows the approval of the regulatory framework for inter-registration by the financial markets authorities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) during the twenty-ninth meeting of the Committee of Heads of Financial Markets Authorities. The new framework facilitates the inter-registration of investment funds between member states.

The workshop addressed the definition of inter-registration, the regulating entities involved (the registered entity and the host entity) and the benefits of this initiative.

These benefits include the free movement of Gulf capital, market integration, expanded customer bases, new investment opportunities and the ability to promote funds



Photo taken during the workshop.

across all GCC countries without the need for separate licensing in each country, thus saving time and effort.

The workshop also outlined the steps to activate inter-registration for local funds licensed by the CMA, as well as for Gulf funds regulated by other entities.

The requirements for Gulf funds entering Kuwait, including promotion through licensed individuals and special offerings for professional cli-

ents only, were clarified.

Additionally, the workshop explained the CMA's fees for inter-registration and reviewed amendments to local funds' Articles of Association and the inter-fund subscription prospectus for Gulf funds.

The inter-registration regulation is a key part of the comprehensive strategy aimed at integrating the financial markets across GCC countries.

'ASEAN a model for regional cooperation'

GCC Chief affirms bilateral relations with ASEAN states on various levels

RIYADH, Jan 22, (KUNA): Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Al-Budaiwi affirmed on Wednesday that the GCC and ASEAN countries share distinguished bilateral relations on various levels.

This came in a statement during his participation in a roundtable entitled "ASEAN's Journey Towards Unity: Lessons in Diplomacy and Regional Cooperation," at the invitation of the ASEAN organization that was held in Davos, Switzerland, on the sidelines of the 55th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2025.

Al-Budaiwi described the relationship between the two organizations as successful, having developed over time.

He pointed out to the recent summit in 2023, where Their Majesties and Highnesses the leaders of the GCC and the leaders of ASEAN expressed a sincere desire to enhance relations, as evident in the final statement.

He attributed the continuity and



KUNA photo Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Al-Budaiwi during his participation in roundtable discussion.

enhancement of this relationship to several factors, including shared interests at the time of both organizations' founding, opportunities to boost economy and trade, and the distinguished bilateral relations among member states.

The GCC Chief also praised ASEAN as a model for regional cooperation, economic growth, and diplomatic stability, commending its diplomatic approach and multilateral cooperation in promoting unity amid regional and global diversity.

Highlighting its unparalleled expertise and regional leadership in the real estate sector

Markaz secures two Euromoney awards for real estate excellence

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" has reaffirmed its position as a leader in the Middle East region's real estate investment sector by earning two prestigious accolades from the Euromoney Awards 2024. Markaz has been recognized as 'The Best Real Estate Investment Manager in the Middle East' and 'The Best Real Estate Investment Manager in Kuwait,' highlighting its commitment to excellence and innovation in the regional real estate sector.

The awards reflect Markaz's exceptional real estate results throughout 2024, driven by impressive fund performance, strategic development projects, and remarkable technological advancements in sustainability. Through innovative property management solutions introduced during the year, Markaz Real Estate Fund (MREF) has demonstrated efficiency



Milad Elia

in managing assets over more than 20 years. The latest recognitions bring Markaz's total awards this year to nine, earned from esteemed platforms, including EMEA Finance, MEED, Euromoney, and Global Finance.

Milad Elia, Executive Vice President of MENA Real Estate at Markaz, commented on the awards: "We are delighted to conclude the year on



Best Real Estate Investment Manager Kuwait.

a high note with these prestigious industry recognitions. Awards like these highlight the excellence of MREF, Kuwait's first and oldest real estate fund, known for generating stable returns with monthly distributions while adhering to Islamic Shari'ah principles through investments in a diverse portfolio of local properties. These accolades reflect the excep-



Abdullatif Al-Nusif

tional efforts of our team in crafting sustainable and innovative solutions that cater to the evolving needs of our clients."

Abdullatif Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, said: "Markaz's outstanding achievements and recognitions in 2024 reiterate the company's position as a lead-



Best Real Estate Investment Manager Middle East.

ing partner in wealth creation. Since its inception 50 years ago, the financial institution has prioritized constant innovation and a client-focused approach. Our growing portfolio across both established and emerging markets will continue to deliver exciting opportunities for our investors. This achievement underlines our unwavering commitment to empowering our

clients through tailored solutions and strategic investments."

The award for the best real estate investment manager in the region emphasizes Markaz's strong performance and adherence to the highest industry standards in serving institutional and individual investors. A hallmark of Markaz's real estate projects is its focus on sustainability, exemplified by the integration of electric vehicle charging stations in luxury residential apartment towers such as Al Maha and Al Nada.

Markaz MENA Real Estate boasts a proven track record in actively managing assets, with current holdings across Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and the Levant valued at USD953.8million. Its domestic income-generating real estate portfolio stands at USD619.6 million. MREF manages real estate assets totaling USD253million across 17 properties.

10 local startups participate in Zain Great Idea Demo Day

Zain empowers Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to showcase their digital startups to the investment community



Al-Gharabally and Zain officials with the ZGI entrepreneurs.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: After six months of continuous development, extensive training, and gaining local and international experiences, Kuwaiti entrepreneurs participated in the ZGI Demo Day, the culminating and most significant stage of Zain's innovative and award-winning Zain Great Idea (ZGI) accelerator. During the event, participants presented their strategic visions and plans to overcome challenges in an era of rapid technological evolution. The event was attended by representatives of investment firms, partners, and the local entrepreneurship community.

Held at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait, the event was attended by Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait; Malek Hammoud, Chief Investment and Digital Transformation Officer of Zain Group; Hamad Al-Marzouq, Chief Enterprise Business Officer of Zain Kuwait; Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH; Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer of Zain Kuwait; Dakheel Al-Dakheel, CEO of Rasameel Investment; and Abdullah Al-Sulaiteen, Technical Director of Architech; alongside Zain executives, representatives from investment companies, government officials, ambassadors and diplomats, and entrepreneurs.

Demo Day provided the finalists an opportunity to present their startups to the local investment community through interactive pitches. In addition, each startup had a dedicated booth to showcase their services and introduce their founders and teams to the attendees.

Entrepreneurs shared their strategic visions, expansion plans for local and regional markets, and approaches to utilizing advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence to address challenges facing startups.

The event also facilitated direct networking between participants and representatives of investment funds and partners, enabling entrepreneurs to share their company stories and strategies for building profitable, sustainable businesses to meet local and regional market needs.

Nawaf Al-Gharabally stated: "We celebrate today the 15th anniversary of our flagship tech startup accelerator program, Zain Great Idea. Back in 2010, when we laid the foundation for this program, conversations around entrepreneurship, empowering entrepreneurs, and accelerating startups were not as prevalent as they are today, and business accelerators were far less common in the market."

He added: "This fills me with pride, both personally and for Zain as a leading national organization. Just as Zain has always been at the forefront of technology and digital innovation, we've also led in community development and fostering creativity."

Al-Gharabally continued: "While ZGI started modestly, its mission has always remained focused on people. Zain has always been a human-centric organization, and our purpose of creating 'Better Lives and Lasting Connections' is deeply rooted in our belief that true investment lies in human talent. It is this talent that fosters innovation and drives technological advancement, strengthening the economy."

He emphasized: "Over the years, the program has evolved into a comprehensive platform, accelerating hundreds of tech startups and empowering thousands of entrepreneurs, many of whom have achieved sustainable success and attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in investments."

Al-Gharabally praised ZGI's legacy as a trailblazer, saying: "Zain Great Idea has consistently set new benchmarks since its inception. By bridging gaps and laying foundations for entrepreneurship, we've significantly contributed to advancing the ecosystem both locally and regionally, a feat made possible by our outstanding team and exceptional partners."

He thanked everyone who contributed to the program's success by saying: "I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped make this program successful, starting with Zain Ventures, a key driver of Zain Group's strategy that continues to pursue investment opportunities in venture capital, fintech, and digital innovations."

He added: "Zain Ventures is actively investing in the startup ecosystem in Kuwait and the region, and is constantly looking for new opportunities, including in ZGI startups. Its active engagement in the program has added significant value and reflects its commitment to supporting the local entrepreneurial ecosystem."

Al-Gharabally also expressed gratitude to ZGI part-



Nawaf Al-Gharabally with Zain executives and ZGI partners.



Haya Al-Mana announces the regional expansion of ZGI's next season.



Professor Paris de L'Etraz delivers his speech.



A participant shares the strategic vision of his company with the audience.



An entrepreneur presents her pitch during the event.



From the event.



A participant presents her startup to investors.

ners, including Rasameel Investment, Architech, current and past members of judgespanels, mentors, experts, and speakers from Kuwait and around the world, the Zain team, and all the talented entrepreneurs and idea owners who have been a part of the program for 15 years.

He concluded by saying: "As we say every year, we do not consider Demo Day to be the final stop for ZGI but rather the first milestone on the journey toward growth and development in the market. We wish our exceptional entrepreneurs all the best and look forward to the signifi-

Nawaf Al-Gharabally:

- "ZGI accelerator has elevated the entrepreneurial ecosystem locally and regionally for 15 years."
- "Zain Ventures is constantly looking for new opportunities in Kuwait and beyond"
- Event brought together Zain executives, representatives from the investment community, key partners, and members of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

cant successes this program will achieve in the future."

At the event, Zain Kuwait Innovation and Entrepreneurship Expert Haya Al-Mana announced that the next edition of the program would expand to include participants not only from Kuwait but also from across the Middle East for the first time in its history. This initiative will bring together participants from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences, introducing fresh perspectives and valuable regional insights. The expansion solidifies ZGI's position as a leading business accelerator in the region.

In addition, ZGI's global acceleration program, which takes place in leading innovation hubs like Silicon Valley, will now accommodate participants from various regional markets, further enhancing their experiences and opportunities for growth.

At Demo Day, founders of 10 Kuwaiti startups presented pitches to investors: Lama Aloraiman and Ksenia Ozkok from BLU DOT— the platform that transforms access to space, Dalal Thani from Akrem— the app that enables secure and easy tipping to service providers, Raghad Al Zamel from MAWADA— the ultimate gifting platform, Hamad Althunayan, Nasser Al Qimlas, and Ryan Dougherty from DAWRATY— the quality education platform, and Abdulrahman Al Hamdan from Nextbite— the platform that revolutionize the dining and hospitality experiences.

The event also featured Faisal Tawfiqi, Fahad Alzuabi, and Maxime Rousselet from USim— the seamless internet roaming app, Eissa Alloughani from STAX— the app that offers one membership to access the best gyms in Kuwait, Abdullah Albusairi from EYON— the Arab live streaming platform, Abdullah Shaban from Mawqif— the ultimate parking app, and Talal Alzafiri from Q8MAPS— the e-mapping and GIS solutions app.

The event also featured a distinguished speech by Professor Paris de L'Etraz from Spain's renowned IE Business School. As one of the global experts involved in delivering the intensive training programs within ZGI, he shared his extensive experience with the program over the years. Professor de L'Etraz also offered valuable advice to the entrepreneurs as they prepared to present their startup pitches to investors.

ZGI kicked-off last year in strategic partnership with Zain Ventures and Rasameel Investment, continuing its decade-long mission to open sustainable growth and investment doors for entrepreneurs and startups in Kuwait.

For 15 years, Zain Great Idea has been a unique success story, establishing itself as one of the most impactful business accelerators locally and regionally. It has provided numerous opportunities for hundreds of ambitious entrepreneurs and startups, connecting many with leading tech companies and organizations in places like Silicon Valley, to gain first-hand experience.

Through this program, Zain aims to empower Kuwait's tech startup ecosystem and foster an innovation-driven environment that creates tangible economic and social impact. This step also translates the company's strategic plans as a business that seeks promising opportunities for diversification and sustainable growth in a highly competitive market. Additionally, Zain may acquire shares in the ZGI startups to boost their potential and commercialization drive.

'We are proud to be part of this pivotal initiative'

Gulf Bank joins the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Matrix, an initiative by ABCK – AmCham Kuwait in collaboration with KWEEN



Salma Al-Hajjaj in a group photo with representatives of the companies that signed the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) matrix.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: In a groundbreaking move toward fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace, Gulf Bank has joined the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Matrix, an initiative by the American Business Council (ABCK) - AmCham Kuwait, in collaboration with the Kuwait Women's Economic Empowerment Platform (KWEEN). The announcement took place during a signing ceremony at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, attended by prominent figures from both the public and private sectors.

The DEI Matrix is an innovative framework designed to help organizations integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion practices into their operations. By joining the matrix, participating companies commit to creating an inclusive work environment that upholds the fundamental values of equality and equal opportunity for all employees. Moreover, they are dedicated to achieving key performance indicators

Salma Al-Hajjaj:

■ "We are proud to be part of this pivotal initiative, which aligns with our core values of fostering a fair and diverse workplace."

(KPIs) for the matrix, with a target of at least 85% by the end of 2025. Companies that surpass this benchmark will earn the DEI badge, issued by AmCham Kuwait and KWEEN, valid for the next two years.

Following the signing of the initiative, Mrs. Salma Al-Hajjaj, Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, remarked: "We are proud to be part of this pivotal initiative, which aligns with our core values of fostering a fair and diverse workplace." She



Salma Al-Hajjaj signs Gulf Bank's official membership in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) matrix.

added, "Our commitment to the DEI Matrix marks a major milestone in our efforts to promote inclusivity and ensure equal opportunities for all our

employees and clients." She further emphasized: "Starting today, we view this initiative as an integral part of Gulf Bank's strategy to

cultivate an institutional culture that fosters innovation and diversity. This will not only enhance the work environment but also enable us to deliver the best banking solutions for our customers. It reflects our strong commitment to our leadership in corporate social responsibility and our significant contributions to building a sustainable economic community."

In a related note, Mrs. Al-Hajjaj highlighted Gulf Bank's receipt of several prestigious awards in 2024, underscoring the bank's commitment to sustainability, diversity, and inclusion. Notably, Gulf Bank was honored with the "Best in Sustainable Development in the Workplace" award at the Gulf International CSR Conference in Bahrain. Additionally, the bank received the "Best in Kuwait for Social Responsibility" award from Euromoney magazine, recognizing its outstanding commitment to social sustainability and empowerment initiatives. Further-

more, Gulf Bank was acknowledged for its leadership in implementing impactful diversity and inclusion initiatives, earning the "Best Diversity and Inclusion Initiative in MENA" award from MEED.

These awards reinforce Gulf Bank's dedication to promoting sustainability principles and fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace that ensures equal opportunities for all.

She also emphasized Gulf Bank's success over the past decade in increasing the number of female leaders within the Bank from 10% to 30%, with women now comprising 42% of the Bank's total workforce. Furthermore, Gulf Bank is the first Kuwaiti bank to eliminate all forms of discrimination between male and female employees, ensuring full equality in employee benefits. The bank is also one of the first signatories of the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles in Kuwait.

Visit underscores bank's commitment to supporting national projects

NBK Executive Management tours new airport T2 project



Part of the tour



NBK Executive Management view the progress of the project.



Executive Management on a project tour.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Executive Management of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) conducted a site visit to the new Kuwait Airport project, where they were provided with an in-depth briefing on the latest advancements in the implementation of its phases.

The visit was attended by Mr. Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of NBK, Ms. Shaikha Al-Bahar, Deputy Group CEO of NBK, Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK-Kuwait, Mr. Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO, NBK-Kuwait, Mr. Faisal Al-Hamad, CEO - NBK Wealth, and Mr. Pradeep Handa, General Manager - Foreign Corporate, Oil and Trade Finance Group and Mr. Ezzat Hallal, General Manager & Chief Engineer, along with the management of the Turkish Company Limak Group, which is overseeing the project's implementation.

The visit underscores NBK's com-

mitment to supporting national projects that drive economic growth and development in Kuwait. During the tour of the project facilities, the bank's executive management received a detailed briefing from project officials on the various stages of implementation.

The new T2 terminal stands as an iconic project among global airport developments. It is a key national initiative aimed at modernizing and enhancing the country's infrastructure, improving Kuwait's connectivity with global destinations, and supporting the nation's economic diversification efforts. This aligns with the vision of a New Kuwait 2035, seeking to transform the country into a regional and global financial and commercial hub that attracts investment.

NBK is an active partner in achieving achievements and successes in Kuwait by financing the country's mega



Executive Management in a group photo with Limak officials.

infrastructure projects, including the new Kuwait Airport project, which will form the new transit gateway with a capacity of 25 million passengers annually and an area of 708,000 square meters.

The Bank maintains a strong and strategic partnership with both the Kuwaiti government and the private sector, actively contributing to the country's development agenda. With an established history of supporting large-scale infrastructure projects that stimulate economic growth, it plays a central role in financing these initiatives. Additionally, the Bank offers expert advisory services and champions community engagement to empower projects that shape Kuwait's future.

This reinforces its leadership as the primary development bank and the preferred financial partner for institutions and major companies within the local market.

Davos 2025: Trade, tariffs, AI and UN chief dominate World Economic Forum agenda

U.S. leader puts pressure on Europe to spend more on defense

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan 22, (AP): A speech by the U.N. chief, economic growth potential in places like China and Russia, the challenges of artificial intelligence, and appearances by leaders from Spain to Malaysia are set to headline the agenda at the World Economic Forum's annual event in Davos on Wednesday.

António Guterres, the United Nations secretary-general, has been one of the highest-profile advocates for the fight against climate change. That effort has been rattled by promises by U.S. President Donald Trump to "drill, baby, drill" and expand fossil-fuel production in the world's largest economy.



Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, speaks during a plenary session in the Congress Hall during the 55th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025. (AP)

Here's a look at what's on tap Wednesday at the annual meeting of elites in the Swiss Alps.

The CEO of AI startup Groq and others take up the idea of artificial gen-

eral intelligence, a futuristic vision of machines that are as broadly smart as humans or at least can do many things as well as people can.

AGI has prompted concern for world

governments and some top scientists have warned that unchecked AI agents with "long-term planning" skills could pose an existential risk to humanity.

A day earlier, Trump highlighted a joint venture that plans to invest up to \$500 billion for infrastructure linked to AI though a new partnership formed by Oracle, SoftBank and OpenAI, the maker of the ChatGPT - whose chatbot has led to fascination with its ability to perform basic business tasks and answer complex questions, albeit with varying degrees of accuracy.

The Stargate project plans to build out data centers and the electricity generation needed by voracious power needs of fast-evolving AI in Texas, the White House said.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez will deliver an address as leaders of the European Union, a key U.S. trading partner, continues to assess the return to power of Trump, who has promised tariffs on goods from friend and foe alike in the coming months.

Hang Seng drops 1.6%

Asian stocks mixed as Trump's talk of tariffs raises uncertainty

HONG KONG, Jan 22, (AP): European markets opened higher while Asian stocks were mixed on Wednesday after U.S. President Donald Trump's latest comments on tariffs raised uncertainty in Chinese markets.

France's CAC 40 gained 0.7% to 7,827.19, and Germany's DAX added 1% to 21,253.12. Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.4% to 8,578.57.

The future for the S&P 500 was up 0.4% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.2%.

Investors in Asia were relieved on Monday after Trump decided not to immediately impose significant tariffs on China. But on Tuesday, Trump said he was considering a 10% punitive duty on Chinese imports over concerns about fentanyl being smuggled from China to the U.S. via Mexico and Canada.

Trump has promised sweeping moves to reshape global trade and the economy, often at the expense of other countries.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 1.6% to 19,778.77, while the Shanghai Composite lost 0.9% to 3,213.62.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 index was up 1.6% to 39,646.25 after Trump an-

nounced a joint venture that aims to invest up to \$500 billion in infrastructure related to artificial intelligence. Softbank Group Corp.'s Japan-listed shares surged 10.6% on Wednesday.

Taiwan's Taicheng also gained 1% after Trump's AI investment push, with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. increasing by 1.3%.

Elsewhere, South Korea's Kospi added 1.2% to 2,547.06 and Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.3% to 8,429.80.

On Tuesday, the S&P 500 climbed 0.9% to 6,049.24, while many markets around the world took only tentative steps following Trump's return to the White House on Monday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1.2% to 44,025.81, and the Nasdaq composite added 0.6% to 19,756.78.

U.S. Treasury yields gave back some of their big recent gains that had cranked up the pressure on stock markets worldwide, while bitcoin pulled back from its record set the day before. The 10-year Treasury yield has been falling since an encouraging update on inflation last week, but it's still well above where it was in September, when it was below 3.65%.

What's On

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait holds weekly draw

ABK names Hawraa Behbehani as Alfouz winner

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Hawraa Mohammad Behbehani as the winner of the Alfouz KD 10,000 weekly draw on Monday, 20 January 2025. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the account has attracted significant attention in the Kuwaiti market. Based on

the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

With a KD 100,000 quarterly draw, in addition to an exciting KD 20,000 monthly draw, the Alfouz account continues to surpass expectations and deliver even more customer satisfaction.

To top it off, ABK has simplified the ability to open the account and win! Customers can enter the draws and get extra entry chances for every KD 10 deposited. The more you save, the higher your chance to be the next Alfouz winner!

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 27 January 2025.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for! To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow ABK's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.

Student delegations explore Kuwait Fund projects

'Be Among High-Achievers' tour Togo, Bosnia

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Male and female student delegations, currently taking part in "Be Among High-Achievers" program, visited several historical and cultural landmarks and a number of Kuwait Fund-financed project sites in the Togolese Republic and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the 14th edition trip organized by Kuwait Fund for high school students, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

During a discovery tour in the Togolese capital Lome, the male students' delegation visited Lome Palace, one of Togo's most renowned historical and cultural landmarks. The students also visited the Independence Monument, built as a tribute to the country's independence following years of anti-colonial struggles.

On the second day, the students paid a visit to the cocoa and coffee plantations, and the local market in the town of Kpalime. Afterwards, they headed to see the Wome Waterfalls, renowned for its fresh water. They also visited the Kpalime Craft Center, where they got acquainted with local handcraft products such as sculptures and traditional textiles.

Mahdi Jaragh, student, said "the cocoa and coffee plantations tour was so fabulous. It was neat to know the traditional method of making these appreciate the efforts exerted by the farmers".

The students also visited a site of one of the projects supervised by the National Fund for Inclusive Finance (FNFI) in Togo, which Kuwait Fund contributed to finance, where they learned about the project's working mechanism, as well as its role in backing microentrepreneurs, boosting entrepreneurship and economic development in local communities, in addition to seeing practical examples of the success achieved by these development-support projects.

Hussain Heydar, student, noted in this vein that "visiting the project was tremendously an inspiring experience as we saw how Kuwait Fund contributes to support FNFI in Togo, which help and empower microentrepreneurs to upgrade their businesses and achieve economic stability".

On the third day, the students visited the Fishing Village in the town of Aneho, where they learned about the significance of fishing as a part of local culture and economy. Afterwards, they headed to visit the Sacred Forest, one of the prominent religious and historic hubs in Togo.

Moreover, the delegation visited the Slave House in the city of Agbodrafo, an influential historical site connected to the slave trade in West Africa region. This visit left a profound impression on the students' understanding of this part of human being history and its impact on the world.

On the other hand, the female student's delegation visited the biggest shopping mall in the city of Sarajevo, in addition to the academy



Photos from the Togo and Bosnia trip by the 'Be Among High-Achievers' students.

of culinary arts, in which they participated in a cooking workshop that included preparing some of the most traditional dishes in Bosnia.

Munira Al-Nasar, student, expressed joy of "shopping around famous commercial stores in the biggest shopping mall in Sarajevo and then joining a Bosnian cooking course, in which we learned how to prepare traditional Bosnian food. It was more than a wonderful experience".

On the second day, the delegation visited the Musala Bridge project site, which Kuwait Fund contributed to build in 2000, that extends over Neretva River and regarded as an eminent landmark reflecting the fruitful cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It connects parts of the city and contributes to

improving traffic and residents' life.

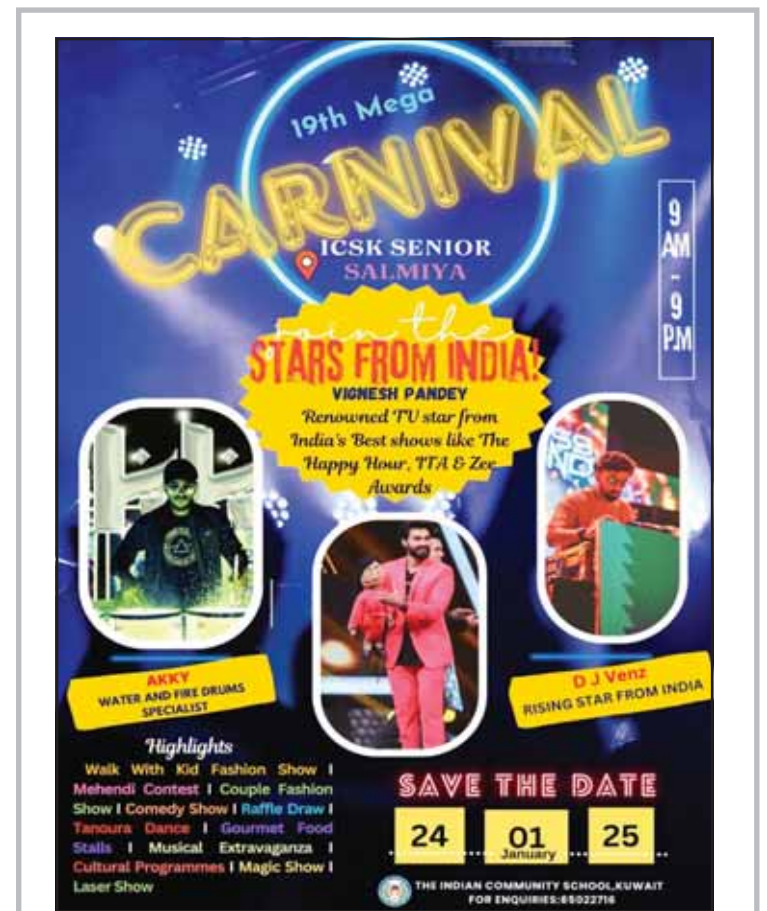
The delegation also visited Kuwait Square, which include a monument depicting the solid relationship between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and reflecting the spirit of co-operation between the two countries. The monument was built in 2001 as an appreciation of the State of Kuwait's efforts in financing development projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On her part, Dr. Senada Demirovic Habibija, Senior Adviser with Urban Planning Department of the City of Mostar, noted that "this project has had a great positive impact on Mostar's residents, and still does to this day", assuring that "the efforts exerted by Kuwait Fund and other financiers pose as a great con-

tribution to the reconstruction of the city, and boosts coexistence among its residents. We thank everyone who contributed to this work".

Similarly, Meriam Dashti, student, said "we learned about one of Kuwait Fund's projects in Mostar, reconstruction of Musala Bridge, and we felt proud of visiting Kuwait Square, which expressed Bosnian residents' appreciation of the State of Kuwait's efforts in financing development projects in their country".

The 14th edition trip of male and female student delegations, partaking in the "Be Among High-Achievers" program, which Kuwait Fund organizes annually for high school students, took off on January 17th to Togo, Benin, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and will last until January 25th.



A flyer of the event.

Fun, frolics, surprises

ICSK hosts the 19th Super Mega Carnival on Jan 24

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Indian Community School, Kuwait, is excited to announce the 19th edition of its much-awaited Super Mega Carnival, which will take place on 24th January 2025 from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm at The Indian Community School, Senior. This highly anticipated event promises a day filled with fun and entertainment, bringing together people of all ages to celebrate and enjoy a wide array of exciting attractions and activities.

The carnival will feature performances by special star entertainers, including Akky, a water and fire drums specialist whose captivating displays combine rhythm with mesmerizing visual effects; Vignesh Pande, India's laughter champion, ventriloquist, actor, anchor and singer, known for his unique comedic talent. A special DJ performance by DJ Venz, a rising star from India, will also be held in the auditorium exclusively for youngsters, creating a vibrant atmosphere for the youth. These gifted artists are specially brought in from India to enrich the celebration, offering the audience a chance to experience and enjoy the rich talents of Indian performers.

In addition to these thrilling performances, the carnival will showcase several special highlights, including Comedy Show, Musical Extravaganza, mesmerizing Laser Dance, performances of Traditional Thanora Dance, Arabic and Folk Dance and much more. Attendees can also look forward to a Family Fashion Show

and Mehendi Contest, adding to the festival's celebratory vibe, and an enthralling Magic Show that will leave everyone spellbound. The event will also feature a Raffle Draw, where participants can win fabulous prizes, including six flight tickets to and from Kuwait and India.

The carnival will be an exciting hub of activities, with 21 gourmet food stalls offering a wide range of delicious international cuisines and 30 shopping stalls showcasing everything from clothing and accessories to handicrafts and unique gifts. Whether you're looking to satisfy your taste buds, shop for one-of-a-kind items, or enjoy exciting performances, the carnival offers something for everyone.

The Super Mega Carnival, a charity event, is dedicated to creating the 'Students Welfare Fund', with the funds raised directed towards supporting the education of underprivileged students. This fund will assist economically disadvantaged students, enabling them to continue their studies and pursue their dreams.

This year's Super Mega Carnival is the perfect way to spend time with family and friends. It's an event that promises to be filled with fun, surprises and magical moments, creating lasting memories for all who attend.

The Indian Community School, Kuwait, invites everyone to join in this spectacular celebration of joy and togetherness.

For more information and inquiries, please contact 'The Indian Community School, Senior'.

GSSCPD joins knowledge dissemination effort

MBRF and UNDP organize 2nd 'Knowledge Journey in Kuwait' for youth empowerment

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the Kuwaiti General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD), will conduct the second phase of the 'Knowledge Journey in Kuwait' initiative on February 5 and 6, 2025. It aims to nurture critical leadership skills such as innovation and creativity among Kuwaiti youth while promoting the nation's long-term sustainable development and enhancing the dynamism of the private sector.

Such initiatives facilitate meaningful conversations between youth and policymakers and collaborations between the public and private sectors, catalyzing Kuwait's transition to a knowledge-driven economy. They also promote data-driven decision-making and positively shape future strategies to strengthen the national economy.

His Excellency Jamal bin Huwairb, CEO of MBRF, said, "The 'Knowledge Journey in Kuwait' is a unique global platform synergizing intellectual knowledge and practical experiences to explore the future of the knowledge domain, as well as its role in shaping societies' intellectual landscape. Such events serve as an ideal avenue to foster innovation, exchange expertise, and bolster essential skills, empowering communities to anticipate and address future challenges. We hope the upcoming

Knowledge Week in Kuwait will inspire Kuwaiti youth to take on a prominent role in elevating the nation's knowledge landscape, paving the way for sustainable growth."

Mr. Sherif Eltokali, Deputy Resident Representative - UNDP Kuwait, said: "The upcoming Knowledge Week will showcase the immense potential of Kuwaiti youth and their role in driving sustainable development. Through this initiative, we seek to nurture an environment that promotes public-private collaboration, in line with the nation's ongoing efforts to achieve economic diversification."

Ms. Eman Al-Sharrah, Director of the National Knowledge Economy Center, said: "The 'Knowledge Journey in Kuwait' initiative marks a key milestone in realizing the objectives of 'Kuwait Vision 2035' and fostering a knowledge-driven society. Events like this drive cross-sector collaboration and empower young people to take on leadership roles as we build a sustainable economy. The initiative will also offer youth the essential tools for embracing innovation and strategic thinking, paving the way for a brighter tomorrow."

The 'Knowledge Journey' has been divided into various phases to promote active participation in the workshops and dialogue sessions with decision-makers. The first phase, which was conducted on October 22, 2024, focused on analyzing and gaining insights into the nation's present

knowledge ecosystem and reviewing the results of the Global Knowledge Index (GKI) 2023.

The second phase, slated for February 5 - 6, will explore the role of innovation and information and communication technology (ICT) as transformative forces in the global economy. It will also discuss show technology, research and development, and digital literacy can be leveraged to drive sustainable development in the Middle East region. On the second day, the need to redesign educational systems in line with future needs and the importance of lifelong learning and vocational training will be explored.

The third phase, titled 'Knowledge Week,' will be held from April 20-24, 2025, marking the conclusion of the 'Knowledge Journey' initiative. The five-day-long discussions will revisit key insights and outcomes of previous phases, with participants presenting their proposals and plans for advancing the knowledge economy to decision-makers. Youth participants can now register for the upcoming phases of the 'Knowledge Journey' via the following link: https://bit.ly/KKJ_CFAA.

The 'Knowledge Journey in Kuwait' builds on the impressive success of the 'Knowledge Week' initiatives held in Jordan and Egypt in 2019 and 2020, respectively. It supports broader global efforts to cultivate knowledge-based societies, aligning with Kuwait's 'Third National Development Plan' and 'Kuwait Vision 2035.'



Photos from the MOU signing event.

Zalmi Talent Hunt 2025

Kuwait Cricket and Peshawar Zalmi partner to nurture talent

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Peshawar Zalmi and Kuwait Cricket officials have signed a historic MoU to nurture the next generation of sporting talent! This partnership aims to open doors for aspiring athletes to achieve their dreams on the global

stage. This historic partnership introduces an exciting exchange program, providing talented cricketers with remarkable opportunities to refine their skills and pursue greater ambitions in cricket and beyond.

Duke of Sussex to receive a substantial sum

Murdoch's UK tabloids settle with Prince Harry, issue rare apology

LONDON, Jan 22, (AP) — Prince Harry claimed a monumental victory Wednesday as Rupert Murdoch's UK tabloids made an unprecedented apology for intruding in his life over decades and agreed to pay substantial damages to settle his privacy invasion lawsuit.

News Group Newspapers offered a "full and unequivocal apology to the Duke of Sussex for the serious intrusion by The Sun between 1996 and 2011 into his private life, including incidents of unlawful activities carried out by private investigators," attorney David Sherborne read from the settlement statement in court.

The statement even went beyond the scope of the lawsuit to acknowledge intruding on the life of Harry's mother, the late Princess Diana.

It was the first time News Group has acknowledged wrongdoing at The Sun, a paper once known for featuring topless women on Page 3.

Harry had vowed to take his case to trial to publicly expose the newspaper's wrongdoing and win a court ruling upholding his claims.

But under English law, he faced astronomical legal bills even if he won, and his lawyer said he achieved the accountability he sought for himself and hundreds of others, including ordinary people.

News Group acknowledged "phone hacking, surveillance and misuse of private information by journalists and private investigators" aimed at Harry. NGN had strongly denied those allegations before trial.

"This represents a vindication for the hundreds of other claimants who were strong-armed into settling without being able to get to the truth of what was done to them," Sherborne

said outside the High Court in London.

"We acknowledge and apologize for the distress caused to the duke, and the damage inflicted on relationships, friendships and family, and have agreed to pay him substantial damages," the settlement statement said.

The bombshell announcement in court came as the Duke of Sussex's trial was about to start. Harry, 40, the younger son of King Charles III, and one other man were the only two remaining claimants out of more than 1,300 others who had settled lawsuits against News Group Newspapers over allegations their phones were hacked and investigators unlawfully intruded in their lives.

Sherborne said the company had engaged in "perjury and cover-ups" to obscure the truth for years.

"There was an extensive conspiracy," he said, in which "senior executives deliberately obstructed justice."

In all the cases that have been brought against the publisher since a widespread phone hacking scandal forced Murdoch to close News of the World in 2011, Harry's case got the closest to trial.

Murdoch shut down the News of the World after the Guardian reported that the tabloid's reporters had hacked the phone of Milly Dowler, a murdered 13-year-old schoolgirl, while police were searching for her in 2002.

As the case was about to start Tuesday morning, his lawyer asked for a one-hour recess, then got a longer adjournment and finally asked to have the rest of the day as it became clear a settlement was in the works.

The case was one of three lawsuits Harry has brought accusing British tabloids of violating his privacy by eavesdropping on phone messages or using private investigators



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle arrive at United Nations headquarters, July 18, 2022. (AP)

to unlawfully help them score scoops.

His case against the publisher of the Daily Mirror ended in victory when the judge ruled that phone hacking was "widespread and habitual" at the newspaper and its sister publications.

During that trial in 2023, Harry became the first senior member of the royal family to testify in court since the late

19th century, putting him at odds with the monarchy's desire to keep its problems out of view.

His feud with the press dates back to his youth, when the tabloids took glee in reporting on everything from his injuries to his girlfriends to dabbling with drugs.

But his fury with the tabloids goes much deeper. He blames the media for the death of his mother, Princess Diana, who was killed in a car crash in 1997 while being chased by paparazzi in Paris. He also blames them for the persistent attacks on his wife, actor Meghan Markle, that led them to leave royal life and flee to the U.S. in 2020.

The litigation has been a source of friction in his family, Harry said in the documentary "Tabloids On Trial."

He revealed in court papers that his father opposed his lawsuit. He also said his older brother William, Prince of Wales and heir to the throne, had settled a private complaint against News Group that his lawyer has said was worth over 1 million pounds (\$1.23 million).

"I'm doing this for my reasons," Harry told the documentary makers, though he said he wished his family had joined him.

Harry was originally one among dozens of claimants, including actor Hugh Grant, who alleged that News Group journalists and investigators they hired violated their privacy between 1994 and 2016 by intercepting voicemails, tapping phones, bugging cars and using deception to access confidential information.

Of the original group, Harry and Tom Watson, a former Labour Party member of Parliament, were the holdouts headed to trial.

News Group had denied the allegations.

Obituary

Iconic instrumentalist

Garth Hudson, master of The Band, dies at 87

NEW YORK, Jan 22, (AP) — Garth Hudson, the Band's virtuoso keyboardist and all-around musician who drew from a unique palette of sounds and styles to add a conversational touch to such rock standards as "Up on Cripple Creek," "The Weight" and "Rag Mama Rag," has died at age 87.

Hudson was the eldest and last surviving member of the influential group that once backed Bob Dylan and helped deepen and reshape modern American music. His death was confirmed Tuesday on The Band's social media accounts, which did not provide additional details. Hudson had been living in a nursing home in upstate New York.

A rustic figure with an expansive forehead and sprawling beard, Hudson was a classically trained performer and self-educated Greek chorus who spoke through piano, synthesizers, horns and his favored Lowrey organ. No matter the song, Hudson summoned just the right feeling or shading, whether the tipsy clavinet and wah-wah pedal on "Up on Cripple Creek," the galloping piano on "Rag Mama Rag" or the melancholy saxophone on "It Makes No Difference."

The only non-singer among five musicians celebrated for their camaraderie, texture and versatility, Hudson mostly loomed in the background, but he did have one showcase: "Chest Fever," a Robbie Robertson composition for which he devised an introductory organ solo ("The Genetic Method"), an eclectic sampling of moods and melodies that segued into the song's hard rock riff.

Robertson, the band's guitarist and lead songwriter, died in 2023 after a long illness. Keyboardist-drummer Richard Manuel killed himself in 1986, bassist Rick Danko died in his sleep in 1999 and drummer Levon Helm died of cancer in 2012. The Band was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1994.

Rocker

Formed in the early 1960s as a backing group for rocker Ronnie Hawkins, the Band was originally called The Hawks and featured the Arkansas-born Helm and four Canadians recruited by Helm and Hawkins: Hudson, Danko, Manuel and Robertson.

The Band mastered their craft through years of performing as unknowns - first behind Hawkins, then as Levon and the Hawks, then as the unsuspecting targets of outrage after hooking up with Dylan in the mid-1960s.

All joined Dylan on his historic tours of 1965-66 (Helm departed midway), when he broke with his folk past and teamed with the Band for some of the most stirring and stormiest music of the time, enraging some old Dylan admirers but attracting many new ones. The group would rename itself the Band in part because so many people around Dylan simply referred to his backing musicians as "the band."

By 1967, Dylan was in semi-seclusion, having allegedly broken his neck in a motorcycle accident, and he and the group settled in the artist community in Woodstock that two years later would become world famous thanks to the festival in nearby Bethel.

With no album planned, they wrote and played spontaneously in an old pink house outside of town shared by Hudson, Danko and Manuel. Hudson was in charge of the tape machine as Dylan and the Band recorded more than 100 songs, for years available only as bootlegs, that became known as "The Basement Tapes." Often cited as the foundation of "roots" music and "Americana," the music varied from old folk, country and Appalachian songs to such new compositions as "Tears of Rage," "I Shall Be Released" and "This Wheel's on Fire."

"There would be an informal discussion, before each recording," Hudson told the online publication Something Else! in 2014. "There would be ideas floating around, and the telling of stories. And then we'd go back to the songs."



Musician Garth Hudson poses in Toronto on Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2010. (AP)

Fashion



Models wear creations as part of the men's Louis Vuitton Fall-Winter 2025-2026 collection, that was presented in Paris, Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025. (AP)

East & West styles merge at star-studded show

Louis Vuitton and Kenzo blend cultures

PARIS, Jan 22, (AP) — Celebrities including Bradley Cooper squeezed into Louis Vuitton Tuesday night as the brand transformed the Louvre's historic heart into a stunning stage for streetwear at Paris Fashion Week.

Outside, limousines clogged the roads, and the crush of onlookers led to tense moments of crowd squishing at the entrance.

Inside, the drama continued with Hitchcockian flourishes, as an orchestra set the tone for Pharrell Williams' latest menswear collection for LV, the crown jewel of conglomerate, LVMH.

This season, Pharrell teamed up with Nigo, the creative force behind Kenzo, another LVMH brand, for a wrapped up dive into Japanese and street aesthetics.

Together, they blended Pharrell's Americana-inspired flared pants and rugged denim with Nigo's loose, preppy silhouettes and intricate Japanese craftsmanship, creating a

harmonious fusion of East and West.

The streetwear-heavy collection, a bold fusion of cultures and styles, saw cherry blossom motifs adorning embroidered varsity jackets.

Pharrell's now-signature rugged denim and flared pants were enhanced with a nod from Japanese-born Nigo in the form of traditional eastern stitching, shibori-inspired techniques, and street influences.

However, as visually dazzling as the collection was, there were occasional moments when the abundance of elements - loose Asiatic cropped pants alongside Western bombers or camo-inspired prints, for instance - felt divergent. There were, after all, two cooks working on this fashion broth.

Accessories were a highlight, with Speedy bags reimaged in new colorways - such as Sakura-pink.

The partnership between Pharrell and

Nigo was described in program notes as "a symbiosis between an archivist and a point of reference." Pharrell emphasized the importance of honoring Japanese artistry while staying true to Louis Vuitton's legacy of craftsmanship. Nigo's contribution added his signature preppy streetwear edge, balancing meticulous detail with playful touches that echoed his Kenzo aesthetic.

While rare, such collaborations aren't without precedent. In 2021, Versace and Fendi made headlines with their 'Fendace' collection, a designer swap that showcased the creativity possible when two distinct visions collide.

The transformation of the Louvre's oldest courtyard, the Cour Carree, into a futuristic runway added another layer of grandeur.

Dramatic lighting and stark white decor contrasted with the venue's classical architectural majesty, while large, glass-fronted

boxes surrounding the circular stage lit up at the finale, unveiling archival Louis Vuitton pieces and underlining the house's philosophy of blending tradition and innovation.

The suspenseful soundtrack, with its Hitchcockian tones, elevated the atmosphere to cinematic heights at the beginning, fusing into foot-tapping bass as the collection filed by.

Louis Vuitton's VIP list reflected its vast cultural reach, with guests spanning the worlds of cinema, music and sports. Hollywood stars Adrien Brody and Bradley Cooper represented the silver screen, mingling with K-pop sensations J-Hope and Jackson Wang, who brought their global fanbase into the mix. From the music world, rap legends Travis Scott, J Balvin and Future added their edge, while basketball phenom Victor Wembanyama, who was seen tapping his foot to the music, showcased the connection to the athletic elite.

Variety

NEW YORK: Two years after her shocking decision to resign as prime minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern is set to publish a memoir.

Crown, a division of Penguin Random House, announced Tuesday that Ardern's "A Different Kind of Power" is scheduled for June 3. Only 37 when elected in 2017, Ardern will reflect on some of the decisions and events that made her known worldwide. She was widely praised for her compassionate response to the 2019 terrorist attacks against two mosques in Christchurch and for her initial handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Some people thought kindness was

sentimental, soft. A bit naive, even. I knew this. But I also knew they were wrong,"



Ardern

it would be the trait with which I would try to lead, no matter what lay ahead." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Nearly a hundred jurors were to pack back into a Los Angeles courtroom on Wednesday with the possibility that they'll serve on the three-week trial of ASAP Rocky, who is charged with firing a gun at a former friend.

Los Angeles prosecutors will do most of their questioning of potential jurors, who were asked by the defense lawyers for the star rapper, fashion maven and actor Tuesday whether they had negative feelings toward hip-hop, guns or even people from New York.

"When I get up here with this ridiculous accent, which I try not to have but I do, is anyone going to have a problem?" asked defense attorney Joe Tacopina, who like his

client is from New York. (AP)

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.: Cynthia Erivo, who is starring in the hit musical "Wicked," was named Tuesday as the 2025 Woman of the Year by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals.

The theater group, which dates to 1844 and claims to be the world's third-oldest still operating, said Erivo will receive her Pudding Pot award at a celebratory roast Feb. 5. Afterward, she will attend a performance of Hasty Pudding Theatricals' 176th production, "101 Damnations." Actor Jon Hamm, who came to fame starring as ad executive Don Draper on the AMC series "Mad Men," is the 2025 Man of the Year. He will receive his Pudding Pot Jan. 31. (AP)

HEALTH



Photos by Mohammed Morsi

Health Minister Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi opened Fourth Conference on Stem Cell Transplantation and Gene and Cellular Therapy for Children.

Minister opens 4th Stem Cell Transplant Conference

Kuwait achieves milestone with 71 stem cell transplants for kids

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi announced that Kuwait has successfully carried out 71 stem cell transplant operations for children since the launch of the stem cell transplant program in October 2020.

In his remarks during the opening of the Fourth Conference on Stem Cell Trans-

plantation and Gene and Cellular Therapy for Children, Al-Awadhi revealed that the country has also signed a contract to establish the third section of the National Bank of Kuwait Hospital, ensuring to provide the latest medical state-of-the-art equipment and medications.

Al-Awadhi highlighted that the successful procedures included 57 stem cell transplants from donors, seven autologous stem cell transplants and seven cases of

cell therapy to enhance stem cells.

Notably, 27 of these procedures involved transplants from semi-identical donors, a highly complex medical process requiring specialized expertise.

He emphasized that these accomplishments showcase Kuwait's significant progress in stem cell transplantation, reinforcing the country's ability to deliver world-class medical care.

Low vaccination

4 viruses strain hospitals in US

SACRAMENTO, United States, Jan 22, (Xinhua): A perfect storm of widespread viral infections and declining vaccination rates is straining US hospitals to the brink in early 2025.

Healthcare workers are grappling with what experts are calling a "quadruple" -- the simultaneous surges of COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and a newly identified more severe strain of norovirus.

The viruses are spreading when vaccination rates have dropped to alarming lows. According to the latest report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released on Friday, only around 23 percent of adults had received the updated COVID-19 vaccine, while merely 43.9 percent had gotten a flu shot. The situation is particularly concerning for children, with 11.1 percent vaccinated against COVID-19 despite rising pediatric hospitalization rates.

"I worry we are not as ready as we should be, or were, going into this season ... because our vaccination rates for many of these diseases are very low," Dr. Scott Roberts, medical director at Yale New Haven Health, told ABC News.

Meanwhile, WIFR TV in Illinois reported Tuesday that local hospitals were forced to keep patients waiting for extended periods in their emergency departments while operating at nearly full capacity.

Compounding the crisis, a more aggressive strain of norovirus, known as GII.17, has emerged. Usually coming with stomach bug symptoms, this variant appears to cause more severe illness due to the population's limited immunity.

Previous numbers from the CDC showed that 91 norovirus outbreaks were reported during the week of Dec. 5, up from 69 outbreaks in the last week of November. No vaccine has been currently available to prevent the infection yet.

In California, the San Francisco Chronicle documented a staggering 458 percent increase in norovirus traces at one San Francisco wastewater facility, underscoring the pathogen's rapid spread.

High flu activity and rising COVID-19 hospitalizations among vulnerable populations exacerbated the strain on healthcare systems.

"The entire healthcare system can be impacted when you have high rates of all of these infections at the same time," Dr. Geeta Sood, hospital epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, told Health magazine.

Experts find mechanism

Why is obesity linked to irregular heart rhythms?

By Arvind Sridhar
University of Illinois Chicago
The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

Atrial fibrillation, or A-fib, is an irregular heart rhythm that increases a person's risk of stroke, heart failure and even premature death.

While many risk factors contribute to A-fib, one stands out for its growing prevalence worldwide: obesity.

I am a cardiology researcher, and my team and I uncovered key mechanisms contributing to the harmful effects of obesity on heart function. Targeting these processes may offer new avenues for treatment.

Obesity is far more than a weight issue - it fundamentally alters the body's biochemistry. This in turn changes your metabolism, or the chemical reactions that allow the body to function.

In particular, the increased presence of fatty acids, a hallmark of obesity, puts additional strain on heart cells. Fatty acids can directly damage heart cells by triggering the increased production of reactive oxygen species - specific molecules that can damage tissues and disrupt normal cellular functions. These effects result in a disruption of the heart's electrical signals, leading to irregular beating.

One major source of reactive oxygen species is NOX2, an enzyme that becomes more active in people with obesity. NOX2 influences the activity of several key proteins that regulate the heart's rhythm. It also contributes to oxidative stress in the atria - the heart's upper chambers - altering their size, shape and function. This cardiac remodeling is a key driver of irregular heart rhythms.

My team and I set out to better understand how NOX2 affects the heart, and whether targeting it could reduce the risk of developing irregular heart rhythms among people living with obesity.

We approached this problem

from two directions.

First, we used mice fed a high-fat diet to induce obesity similar to that in people. One group of these mice were able to produce functional NOX2 while another group could not. We tested drugs that specifically inhibit NOX2 and checked how likely the upper chambers of the heart were to develop irregular electrical rhythms.

In parallel, we generated human atrial heart cells from stem cells and treated them with fatty acids to simulate the effects of obesity. While our mouse model would capture the effects of obesity in the body as a whole, our cell model would enable us to study how it affects the heart at the cellular level.

We observed that increased NOX2 activity in both obese mice and treated human heart cells led to significant changes in the heart's electrical properties. Obese mice without NOX2 had less severe atrial fibrillation than obese mice with NOX2. Similarly, obese mice treated with NOX2 inhibitors also showed improvements in the severity of their irregular heart rhythms, though to a lesser extent. And blocking NOX2 in heart cells exposed to fatty acids reversed the cellular changes caused by fatty acid treatment.

In both mice and human heart cells, inhibiting NOX2 reduced oxidative stress and normalized the heart's electrical activity. This finding suggests that NOX2 plays a key role in the development of obesity-induced irregular heart rhythms.

Notably, we found that NOX2 plays a significant role in increasing the activity of a gene called PITX2, which is linked to changes in the heart's electrical function. Our data showed that PITX2 activity was amplified in both obese mice and human heart cells, but reducing NOX2 activity directly lowered PITX2 levels. These findings suggest that oxidative stress and genetic factors play a role in the development of irregular heart rhythms.

Current treatments for atrial fibrillation, particularly for patients living with obesity, have focused more on managing symptoms than addressing the physiological changes that cause it. (AP)

New agreement promotes healthy lifestyles

CAN partners with Sports Authority to fight smoking, raise cancer awareness

KUWAIT, Jan 22, (KUNA): Kuwait's Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) campaign, part of the Kuwait Society for Preventing Smoking and Cancer, signed an agreement with the Public Authority for Sports on Tuesday as part of their joint efforts to reduce smoking and raise awareness about cancer.

The partnership aims to promote the importance of physical activity and exercise in preventing and treating cancer-related diseases.

In a statement following the signing, board member and treasurer of the Society Dr. Hessa Al-Shaheen, said that the agreement focuses on enhancing public health, encouraging a healthy lifestyle within the community, and raising awareness about the dangers of smoking and its link to cancer.

The agreement also aims to promote sports as a healthy lifestyle choice that can help prevent chronic diseases and cancer, as well as organizing sports events and joint awareness campaigns targeting various segments of society, including youth and school students, she added.

The initiatives will also support cancer-related programs and rehabilitation efforts for patients during and after treatment.

Dr. Al-Shaheen further stressed that the agreement reflects their continued commitment to combating smoking, providing psychological support to



KUNA photo
CAN and Sports Authority officials after signing of MoU.

cancer patients, and raising awareness about the disease. She highlighted that sports play a significant role in enhancing both physical and mental health.

For his part, Acting Director-General of the Public Authority for Sports Bashar Abdullah, expressed pride in the partnership, noting that it combines sports with humanitarian and health efforts.

He pointed out that the authority aims, through this collaboration, to raise awareness and encourage the

public to adopt healthy lifestyles that minimize health risks.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Society for Preventing Smoking and Cancer Nayef Sharar, said that future plans include organizing marathons and sports events to raise awareness about cancer and the dangers of smoking, as well as hosting joint seminars on the effects of smoking and the importance of physical activity. The initiatives will also include the establishment of dedicated sports training centers.

Move to improve students' mental health

NY governor proposes school cellphone ban

ALBANY, N.Y., Jan 22, (AP): Students throughout New York state might have to give up their cellphones during school hours starting next fall under a proposal announced Tuesday by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The plan, which would require legislators' approval, would take effect in the next academic year and force students to disconnect from their phones and other personal devices while at school, including in class, during lunch and in hallways.

Hochul, a Democrat, has for months hinted at a potential ban and said limiting access to smartphones during school would help students focus in

class and improve their mental health.

"We're not developing the skills we need because kids are distracted with the cellphones," Hochul said at a news conference in Albany. "And how hard is it for our teachers, trying to teach algebra and geography, and they're competing with viral dances and messages from their friends and sometimes threats, bullying. How do you pay attention to the subject at hand when this is going on?"

At least eight states have enacted measures banning or restricting cellphones in schools, and several others have encouraged districts to enact restrictions or provided funding for equipment to store phones. At least three

other governors have recently proposed similar school cellphone restrictions.

In New York, schools would have some flexibility over how to implement the proposal, with districts deciding how to store students' devices and other rules, according to the governor's office. Students who need access to devices for medical reasons, to help with learning disabilities or because they don't speak fluent English would be exempt.

Hochul announced the plan as part of her budget proposal for the coming year and said the state would provide \$13.5 million to help schools implement the cellphone bans.

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SPORTS

Arizona State beats West Virginia to end 4-game skid

Wisconsin falls to UCLA, snapping the Badgers' seven-game winning streak

LOS ANGELES, Jan 22, (AP): Aday Mara scored a career-high 22 points and UCLA held off No. 18 Wisconsin 85-83 on Tuesday night, snapping the Badgers' seven-game winning streak.

Sebastian Mack had 19 points and Tyler Bilodeau added 16 before fouling out with 1:40 remaining for the Bruins (13-6, 4-4 Big Ten).

Mara and Mack combined to score 13 straight points down the stretch. Mara, a 7-foot-3 sophomore, was 7 of 7 from the floor and 8 of 11 at the line.

John Tonje scored 24 points, making 6 of 7 3-pointers, to lead the Badgers (15-4, 5-3). John Blackwell added 23 points.

The Badgers closed to 81-80 on Blackwell's 3-pointer with a minute remaining.

Mack got fouled, made the first and missed the second.

Blackwell's potential tying jumper in the paint was blocked by UCLA reserve William Kyle III.

Blackwell fouled out seconds later and Skyy Clark made two free throws for an 84-80 lead. After a timeout, Tonje hit a 3-pointer that left Wisconsin down 84-83 with 0.5 seconds left. The Badgers were forced to foul and Clark made the first and deliberately missed the second.

Basheer Jihad scored 17 points, freshman Jayden Quaintance had 15 points and 12 rebounds for his sixth double-double of the season, and Arizona State beat No. 23 West Virginia 65-57.

TJ Freeman added 14 points and Adam Miller scored 10 for the Sun Devils (11-7, 2-5 Big 12), who broke a four-game losing streak.

TJ Bamba scored 21 points and Brandon Angel had 15 as No. 15 Oregon defeated Washington 82-71.

Supreme Cook added 13 points for the Ducks (16-3, 5-3 Big Ten), who shot 51% from the field. Jackson Sheldstad and Keeshawn Barthelemy each scored 11, and Nate Bittle pulled down 11 rebounds.

Great Osobor had 20 points and eight boards to lead Washington. Vazoumana Diallo scored 18 for the Huskies (10-9, 1-7).

Osobor tied it at 62 with 5:49 left, but Bamba followed with two free throws. Angel added a basket and Cook scored inside to push the Ducks ahead 68-62 with 4:10 to play.

Osobor scored to get the Huskies within 68-64, but Oregon followed with five straight points to put away the game.

Yaxel Lendeborg had 24 points in UAB's 81-78 win against UTSA.

Lendeborg also added 14 rebounds, seven assists, and three blocks for the Blazers (12-7, 5-1 American Athletic Conference). Christian Coleman added 14 points while going 5 of 14 and 4 of 4 from the free-throw line while they also had nine rebounds and four blocks. Efreem Johnson shot 5 for 12, including 0 for 5 from beyond the arc to finish with 11 points.

Primo Spears led the Roadrunners (8-10, 2-4) in scoring, finishing with 27 points and eight assists. UTSA also got 21 points, seven rebounds and two blocks from Damari Monsanto. Marcus Millender also had 13 points.

UAB went into halftime leading UTSA 38-32. Lendeborg scored nine points in the half. Lendeborg's 15-point second half helped UAB close out the three-point victory.

LeBron has triple-double as Lakers hand Wizards 11th straight defeat

Towns and Brunson carry Knicks to win over Nets

LOS ANGELES, Jan 22, (AP): LeBron James had 21 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds one day after flying to Atlanta and back to watch a football game on his day off, and Los Angeles sent Washington to their 11th consecutive defeat with a 111-88 victory on Tuesday.

James recorded his 121st career triple-double and his ninth of the season. The top scorer in NBA history showed no ill effects from his long trip Monday to watch his Ohio State Buckeyes' College Football Playoff championship game victory over Notre Dame.

Anthony Davis had 29 points and 16 rebounds for Los Angeles. Dorian Finney-Smith hit four 3-pointers while scoring 16 points, and Austin Reaves added 16.

Bilal Coulibaly scored 17 points for the Wizards, who haven't won since New Year's Day. Jordan Poole and Corey Kispert had 15 points apiece for Washington, which dropped to 1-18 on the road midway through a six-game trip.

Knicks 99, Nets 95

In New York, Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points and 16 rebounds. Jalen Brunson scored eight points down the stretch and finished with 17 as the New York Knicks beat the Brooklyn Nets 99-95.

OG Anunoby scored 20 points and Precious Achiuwa had 11 points off the bench as the Knicks won their second straight game.

D'Angelo Russell finished with 23 points and 10 assists and Cam Johnson scored 16 for the Nets, who have lost four straight games and nine of their last 10.

New York had a double-digit lead



Orlando Magic forward Paolo Banchero (5) and Toronto Raptors guard Jamal Sheard (23) battle for possession during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Toronto. (AP)

in the third quarter before the Nets rallied and moved out to a one-point lead at 88-87 on a 3-pointer by Keon Johnson with 5:18 left.

The Knicks battled back and took the lead 91-90 with 2:18 left on a jumper by Brunson, who ended up making three straight shots, including a step-back jumper with 1:25 to play to put the Knicks ahead 95-92.

Russell answered with a 3-pointer to cut the Brooklyn deficit to 97-95 with 52 seconds left. Johnson then missed a 3-point try before Brunson sealed the win with a pair of free throws.

Nuggets 144, 76ers 109

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 27 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for his 19th triple-double of the season, reserve Aaron Gordon was nearly perfect from the floor and Denver beat Philadelphia, extending the 76ers' losing streak to seven games.

Jokic finished his triple-double late in the third quarter with an assist

that led to a dunk from Gordon. Jokic didn't play in the fourth quarter.

Gordon was 6 of 7 from the floor - 3 of 3 from 3-point range - and hit all four attempts at the free-throw line to finish with 19 points. The Nuggets had six players in double figures, including a 23-point performance from Julian Strawther.

Tyrese Maxey had 28 points and 10 assists for a Sixers team that remains without standout big man Joel Embiid due to swelling in his left knee.

This game was part of the NBA's "Rivals Week" - a matchup that was expected to feature the last four NBA MVPs in Embiid (2023) and Jokic ('21, '22, '24). It got sidetracked by the injury to Embiid, who hasn't played in Denver since 2019.

Trail Blazers 116, Heat 107

In Miami, Anfernee Simons scored 24 points, Deandre Ayton had 22 points and 15 rebounds, and Portland beat Miami.

Jerami Grant finished with 18 points and Deni Avdija added 16 for

the Blazers, who lost by 60 the last time they played in Miami on March 29.

Shaedon Sharpe had 12 points while Scoot Henderson and Dalano Banton finished with 11 each.

Rookie Kel'el Ware had 20 points and 16 rebounds and Duncan Robinson finished with 22 points for the Heat, playing without leading scorer Tyler Herro, who missed his first game of the season because of groin tightness. Jimmy Butler had 13.

The Blazers extended a six-point lead early in the third period with a 21-8 run. Ayton scored eight points during the surge that put Portland ahead 86-63.

Down 21 early in the fourth, the Heat narrowed the gap with a 19-4 run. Jaime Jaquez's two free throws with 1:58 remaining got Miami within 112-105 before Grant made three of four free throws to give Portland a 115-105 lead with 35 seconds left.

Raptors 109, Magic 93

In Toronto, Scottie Barnes had 17 points and 11 rebounds, RJ Barrett scored 19 points and Toronto overcame a 21-point deficit to beat struggling Orlando.

Grady Dick scored 17 points and Bruce Brown had 15 as Toronto snapped a four-game losing streak against Orlando.

The Raptors won for the first time this season when trailing at halftime. Toronto came in 0-23 in such games.

Dick had 10 points in the third, including two dunks, as the Raptors outscored Orlando 40-20 to turn a five-point halftime deficit into a 15-point advantage.

Paolo Banchero had 26 points and 12 rebounds for Orlando, which couldn't hold on after taking leads of 10-0 and 32-11 in the opening period. The Magic have lost four straight.



Dortmund's coach Nuri Sahin, centre left, smiles as he conducts a training one day ahead of their Champions League soccer match against FC Bologna, in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)

Dortmund fires coach Sahin after dismal start to new year

MUNICH, Jan 22, (AP): Borussia Dortmund fired coach Nuri Sahin on Wednesday, a day after its 2-1 loss to Bologna in the Champions League.

The defeat extended Dortmund's losing streak to four games since the new year and dropped last season's Champions League runner-up to 13th in the 36-team standings. The team is also struggling in 10th place in the Bundesliga.

"We really value Nuri Sahin and his work, we had wished for a long cooperation and until recently we hoped that we could manage to turn things around in sporting terms," sporting director Lars Ricken said in a statement.

"After four losses in a row, with just one win from the last nine games and currently being 10th in the Bundesliga, unfortunately we lost our faith in being able to achieve our sporting goals in the current configuration. This decision is personally painful for me too, but it was no longer avoidable after the game in Bologna."

There was no immediate word on a successor. Dortmund's next game is Saturday in the Bundesliga against Werder Bremen before hosting Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League next week.

The 36-year-old Sahin took charge in June. He had been an assistant to Edin Terzic, who resigned following Dortmund's 2-0 loss to Real Madrid

in the Champions League final, saying the club needed to enter a "new era" without him.

Striker Serhou Guirassy celebrated with Sahin in what seemed like a show of support after scoring the opening goal against Bologna. Then Dortmund went on to concede two goals in two minutes against an Italian team which had never won a Champions League game before and which was eliminated despite the victory.

Dortmund's management backed Sahin after a 2-0 loss at Eintracht Frankfurt on Friday but Ricken's tone after the loss to Bologna was less supportive.

Ricken told broadcaster Prime Video on Tuesday that Sahin's attacking tactics were "very brave" with a reliance on young players, and that conceding felt like "a matter of time" even in the first half.

Sahin was a Dortmund fan favorite as a player, having joined the team as a youth prospect in 2001 before a move to Real Madrid a decade later, and later returning for a second spell from 2013 through 2018. However, his only experience as a head coach was a two-year stint with Turkish club Antalyaspor.

"Unfortunately we were not able at the current time to do justice to the sporting ambitions of Borussia Dortmund in this season," Sahin said in a statement. "I wish this special club all the best."

Health issue cited

Uzbekistan coach resigns

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan, Jan 22, (AP): With Uzbekistan close to qualifying for the men's World Cup for the first time, national-team coach Sreko Katanec resigned Wednesday citing health reasons.

The Uzbek soccer federation said Katanec "expressed his regret that he could no longer fulfil his duties professionally and completely in his current condition."

In a statement, the federation wished him "a full recovery and success in his future coaching career." Details of the 61-year-old Slovenian coach's health issues were not given.

Katanec has led Uzbekistan into second place in its 2026 World Cup qualifying group with games resuming in March. Iran leads the six-team standings with four rounds

left. The top two advance to the tournament being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. Third and fourth-place teams progress to another group phase.

Since being hired in 2021, Katanec took Uzbekistan to the quarterfinals of the 2023 Asian Cup and created its best chance to qualify for a World Cup since becoming an independent soccer nation after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Asia now has eight guaranteed entries in the new 48-team World Cup compared to just four in the 32-team format that ended in 2022.

Uzbekistan was the fifth national team coached by Katanec, including two spells with Slovenia, who he led to its tournament debut at the 2000 European Championship.



Portland Trail Blazers forward Jerami Grant, right, shoots as Miami Heat center Bam Adebayo (13) defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Miami. (AP)

Finland takes gold in mixed sprint relay at FISU Winter Games

TURIN, Jan 22, (Xinhua): Finland's Amanda Yli-Futka and Niklas Ekstroem claimed gold in the mixed sprint relay, the second and final ski orienteering event of the Torino 2025 FISU World University Games.

The duo completed the course in 45 minutes, 10 seconds, edging out Sweden's Anna Aasa and Jonatan Stahl, who earned silver at 45:19. Switzerland's Delia Giezendanner and Elias Corsin Boos took bronze, finishing in 45:28.

Yli-Futka, a 20-year-old student-athlete from the University

of Eastern Finland, had already captured gold in the women's sprint final on January 19. "I will put [my medals and mascots] in a very special place," she said. Ekstroem, a multi-discipline athlete from the University of Turku, added, "I think it was a very, very challenging course, but super fun." The Swedish silver medalists also praised the event. "Good weather, good courses, and good skiing," said Aasa and Stahl, reflecting on the favorable conditions that contrasted with earlier days of heavy snow. "We're super happy and super

tired," they added.

Ski orienteering combines cross-country skiing with navigation and route optimization, demanding both physical endurance and mental focus. Despite the sport's challenges, it has steadily gained traction, making its FISU Games debut in 2019 in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, before returning in Torino.

However, the sport still faces hurdles in its global development. Only two of the 21 teams in Tuesday's relay represented Asia, and limited broadcasting capabilities have hampered wid-

er exposure. "Ski orienteering is one of the most difficult sports to broadcast," said Giacomo Steiner, TV director for Pragelato's snow events, citing the need for GPS tracking and other specialized equipment.

Despite these obstacles, optimism persists. The International Orienteering Federation continues to promote the sport, and it will be a compulsory event at the 2027 FISU Winter Games. Advocates hope these efforts will eventually lead to ski orienteering's inclusion in the Winter Olympics.



Gold medalist Carmen Kainz (center) of Austria, silver medalist Elisa Fava (left) of Italy, bronze medalist Kanazawa Noa of Japan pose for photos after the women's snowboard parallel giant slalom competition at the 2025 FISU Winter World University Games in Bardonecchia, Italy. (Xinhua)

SPORTS

Sinner, Swiatek power into Australian Open semis

Shelton overcomes Sonogo

MELBOURNE, Jan 22, (Xinhua): Defending champion Jannik Sinner shrugged off health concerns with an evisceration of eighth seed Alex de Minaur on Wednesday, while women's second seed Iga Swiatek also stormed into the Australian Open semifinals.

There had been concern over Sinner's fitness after he fought through illness during his gruelling fourth round victory over 13th seed Holger Rune.

There was speculation that top seed Sinner might not take his place against de Minaur, but he dispelled those fears with 27 winners in a near flawless 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 victory in one hour and 46 minutes.

It was a bitter disappointment for de Minaur, who was Australia's main title hope but he fell well short of his goal of becoming the country's first men's champion since Mark Edmondson in 1976.

"I was feeling everything today, but he is a tough competitor," said Sinner, who said he only trained for 30 minutes on Tuesday.

"I feel like when you're young, you can recover fast. I rested and recovered in the best possible way." Sinner's championship defence next goes through flamboyant American Ben Shelton, who overcame Lorenzo Sonogo 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (4) in a high-octane contest that lasted nearly four hours.

The left-handed Shelton relied on his ferocious serve, the fastest clocked at 232kph/144mph, to counter the Italian's cavalier shotmaking as he battled into his second Grand Slam semifinal.

"I'm relieved right now," said the 22-year-old Shelton, who lost to Novak Djokovic in a tempestuous semifinal at the 2023 US Open.

"Shout-out to Lorenzo because that was some ridiculous tennis. I'm just really happy to be through." In the women's draw, Swiatek showed no mercy against eighth seed Emma Navarro with a 6-1, 6-2 romp in one hour and 29 minutes.

The Pole has shown no signs of being affected by the doping saga hanging over her, dropping just 14 games so far in the tournament.

She broke five times to overwhelm a flagging Navarro, who had gritted through four consecutive three-set matches, including a second round thriller against China's Wang Xiyu.

Having previously struggled at the Australian Open by her lofty standards, Swiatek has been on a mission as she reached the final four for the second time from seven appearances in Melbourne.

Swiatek won just five games against American Danielle Collins in the semifinals in 2022.

"I think it was tougher than the score said. I wanted to stay focused until the end and keep my intensity," said Swiatek, who hit 22 winners and broke serve five times.



Iga Swiatek of Poland plays a forehand return to Emma Navarro of the U.S. during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Record-high 34 countries and regions to participate

'Preparations completed for 9th Asian Winter Games'

HARBIN, Jan 22, (Xinhua): The chief spokespersons for the 9th Winter Asian Games met with the public on Wednesday, announcing that preparations for the event are now completed.

They include Zhang Haihua, deputy secretary-general of the organizing committee and vice mayor of Harbin; Zhuang Shichao, deputy secretary-general of the organizing committee and deputy director of the Heilongjiang Provincial Sports Bureau; and Bai Zhiguo, deputy secretary-general of the executive committee and director of the Harbin Municipal Sports Bureau.

"We have prepared 39 hotels for the reception of athletes and carefully designed menus, including halal options. All ingredients and seasonings are subject to full-chain supervision from the source to the dining table. Additionally, 1,090 vehicles have been arranged for event-related transportation, with dedicated shuttle buses from airports to hotels and from hotels to venues. During the event, the Harbin-Yabuli railway will operate 40 trains per day. Furthermore, 31 designated hospitals and more than 600 full-time medical and health personnel have been stationed at the venues," Zhang said.

Zhuang noted that more than 1,270 athletes from 34 countries and regions across Asia have signed up to compete, making this edition of the Winter Asian Games the largest in terms of participating delegations



Spectators react during the flame lighting ceremony for the Harbin 2025 Asian Winter Games at the Sun Island Scenic Area in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. (Xinhua)

and athletes.

To ensure smooth operations during the Games, the executive committee has meticulously planned 17 test events, all of which will wrap up on Thursday. "Through these test events, we have fully grasped the event organization policies and procedures, familiarized ourselves with the operational patterns and characteristics of each sport, and further optimized the division of responsibilities, operational mechanisms, implementation plans, and emergency response strategies. Going forward, we are focusing on the final sprint to ensure the smooth execution of the event," Bai said.

Wang Hongxin, director of the Harbin Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, and Tourism, revealed that, during the Winter Asian Games, major scenic spots, venues, and events will be interconnected to form 12 premium travel routes. Alongside the opening and closing ceremonies, a diverse range of performances and activities will take place across various city locations.

The Sports Department of the Harbin Asian Winter Games Organizing Committee (HAWGOC) has announced that 34 countries and regions will participate in Harbin 2025 from February 7-14.

The figure marks an increase of

four countries and regions compared to the previous record set at the 8th Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan, in 2017, where 30 Asian countries and regions, alongside two other guest countries from Oceania - Australia and New Zealand - made up a total of 32 participating delegations.

Additionally, the 34 countries and regions set to compete in Harbin will be represented by 1,275 athletes, an increase of 128 athletes over the previous high of 1,147 athletes at the Sapporo Games.

Of the 1,275 athletes, 755 are male and 520 are female. Among them, 847 athletes (513 male, 334 female) will compete in ice events in Harbin, while 428 athletes (242 male, 186 female) will compete in snow events in Yabuli.

"Harbin 2025 is expected to host the largest number of participating NOCs and athletes in the history of the Asian Winter Games, reflecting the growing enthusiasm for winter sports across Asia and the attention garnered by Harbin 2025," said Li Guang, Director of the Sports Department and Deputy Chief Director of the Sport Operations Centre of HAWGOC, at a recent press conference.

"Spectacular competitions are crucial to the success of a sports event. HAWGOC is sparing no efforts in competition organization to present a spectacular winter sports gala for spectators across Asia and the world," he added.

Ronaldo tops league scoring charts after Al-Nassr victory



Players battle for the ball during the Saudi Pro League soccer match.

DAMMAM, Saudi Arabia, Jan 22, (AP): Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice for Al-Nassr in a 3-1 victory over Al-Khaleej to move atop the Saudi Pro League goalscoring standings above Aleksandar Mitrovic and Karim Benzema.

The five-time Ballon D'Or winner fired Al-Nassr into the lead after 65 minutes, finding the net with a low shot from the edge of the area for his 100th goal contribution since joining the Riyadh club in December 2022.

While Al-Khaleej made it 1-1 after 80 minutes, Sultan Al-Ghannam quickly restored the lead for Al-Nassr.

Ronaldo sealed victory eight minutes into stoppage time from close range for his 13th Saudi Pro League goal of the season. He is one ahead of Mitrovic of Al-Hilal and two in front of Benzema of Al-Ittihad.

Al-Nassr climbed into third but is 11 points behind Al-Hilal, which later defeated Al-Wehda 4-1 to go three points clear of Al-Ittihad.

I will try to improve

Amorim admits regret over controversial United criticism

MANCHESTER, England, Jan 22, (AP): Ruben Amorim has acknowledged he might have made a mistake when he went public in describing his team as "the worst, maybe, in the history of Manchester United."

Just don't expect him to hold back his opinions going forward.

"If you want, I can be delusional and say different things," Amorim said Wednesday at his first news conference since his remark that captured headlines and widespread attention.

"I say it as I saw it. I said it to the players and I said to you," he told reporters. "I think it's a good thing to be honest. If you want me to say different things - you saw one thing, I saw one thing - I can start to do that. It's easier for me. But what I'm seeing, they know. If you are in the stadium, you can understand. Let's face it and work on it."

Amorim's shocking comment came after a 3-1 home loss to Brighton in the Premier League on Sunday.

It was a fourth loss in United's last five home games in the league, and a seventh defeat in 15 games in all competitions since Amorim took charge in November as the replacement for Erik ten Hag.

United, the record 20-time English champion, is 13th in the 20-team Premier League and closer to the relegation zone than the European qualification spots after 22 of 38 games.

Amorim denied that he was shifting blame toward his players. The 39-year-old Portuguese coach said: "I am (most) responsible for the performances and the results."

"I am a young guy and sometimes I make a mistake. This time I needed to talk. Maybe it was a mistake and I get more nervous and go to the (media) conference really nervous, and then you say things you shouldn't



Manchester United's head coach Ruben Amorim looks on during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Southampton at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

say ... I won't promise I won't do it again but I will try to improve."

Amorim was speaking ahead of United's Europa League game against Scottish rival Rangers at Old Trafford on Thursday. He said his players were "more nervous" and "anxious" playing at home and that was making it harder for the team to pick up results.

"If you have a little inexperience when you fall into this type of context, it's hard to go up - especially when you are in a massive club," Amorim said.

"That was my only point in saying it after that loss. The way I do it? Maybe not but it is what it is. I am like that all the time."

Rosemir takes over as Kazma's new head coach

Al-Nasr strengthens squad with 5 new foreign signings

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Al-Nasr has revamped its roster during the winter transfer window, signing five foreign players to strengthen the team. The new additions include Tunisian Hossam Al-Habasi, Libyan Moatasem Al-Lafi, Frenchman Heikul Gekkhail, Serbian Khoury O'Neill, and Jamaican Nemanja Kojic.

At the start of the season, Al-Nasr brought in Bernardo Villar (Brazil), Karar Amer (Iraq), Zakaria Al-Wardi (Morocco), Carlos Ventura (Dominican Republic), and Onanuga Babatunde (Nigeria). However, all their contracts were terminated at the request of head coach Jamal Belkacem from Tunisia.

Currently ranked ninth in the Zain Premier League with six points, Al-Nasr is striving to improve its position and secure its spot among the

Premier League teams. The team has managed just one victory - against Kazma in the opening round with a narrow 1-0 scoreline - alongside three draws and eight losses.

The newly signed quintet debuted in the recent 1-1 draw against Kazma in the 12th round of the Zain Premier League. While they delivered an encouraging performance, the team requires more games to develop stronger chemistry and cohesion among the players.

Al-Nasr's management hopes the reinforcements will lead to better results in the second half of the season, as the team looks to climb up the standings and avoid relegation.

Meanwhile, Kazma has appointed Bosnian coach Rosemir Sveko to lead the team, replacing Tunisian coach Lassad Al-Shabi.

Rosemir, 53, brings a wealth of experience to the role. He previously guided Al-Arabi to victory in the Crown Prince Cup during

the 2022-2023 season and secured a league runner-up finish with the same team. His career also includes coaching stints with Dalian Mizu Haka in China, serving as an assistant coach for the Bosnian national team, and leading Al-Arabi Saudi Arabia to qualification for the Roshen Professional League. Most recently, he began the season with Raja Casablanca, though the tenure ended on a sour note due to unresolved financial disputes.

Rosemir filed a case with FIFA's Dispute Resolution Committee against Raja Club Athletic after the Moroccan club failed to fulfill its contractual obligations, including outstanding financial dues. This disagreement led to a mutual termination of his contract. The coach expressed frustration, stating that the club's actions damaged his reputation, particularly since the termination was without cause and the club failed to provide proper working

conditions. Rosemir noted his previous successes, having been recognized as the best coach in countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bosnia.

At Kazma, Rosemir becomes the team's third coach this season, following Mohammed Dahilis and Al-Shabi.

Al-Shabi announced his departure after a 1-1 draw with Al-Nasr in the 12th round of the Zain Premier League. The draw left Kazma with 11 points in seventh place, continuing their streak of dropped points and placing them at risk of competing in the relegation group in the second round.

Reflecting on his tenure, Al-Shabi stated, "The match against Al-Nasr is my last with Kazma. I was honored to work in Kuwait and with this team." He added that while the team had an impressive first half, their performance declined in the second half, leading to the draw.



A file photo of Kazma new head coach Rosemir celebrating.



Hossam Al-Habasi showed a remarkable level against Kazma.



Ben Shelton of the U.S. reacts during his quarterfinal match against Lorenzo Sonego of Italy at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. Shelton beats the unseeded Sonego 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (4). (AP) - See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait ice hockey legend Ahmed Al-Ajmi announces retirement after 32-yr career

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Kuwaiti ice hockey star Ahmed Al-Ajmi has officially announced his retirement after a remarkable career spanning over 32 years. The legend will mark this milestone with a retirement festival on February 20, during a match between the Kuwaiti national team and the "Gulf Stars," under the patronage of former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Ahmad Al-Shouhumi.

Al-Ajmi is widely regarded as one of Kuwait's most accomplished ice hockey players. His illustrious career, which began in 1992 and concluded in 2024, includes numerous accolades. He secured the Asian Cup title twice, in 2015 and 2017, and competed in four Asian Winter Games: South Korea (1999), China (2007), Kazakhstan (2011), and Japan (2018). Additionally, he participated in three editions of the World Cup and has been a key figure in the Gulf Championship since its inception.

Al-Ajmi's individual achievements are equally impressive. He was named the Best Player in Asia twice, Best Player in the Gulf three times, Top Scorer in the Gulf Cham-



Husein Al-Musallam with Ahmed Al-Ajmi and Mishaal Fulaitah.

ampionship twice, and Best Player in the Arab Championship once. Domestically, he clinched the National Ice Hockey League title seven times with various teams.

To commemorate the occasion, Al-Ajmi extended a special invitation to Husein Al-Musallam, President of the International Aquatics Federation and Director General of the Olympic Council of Asia, to attend the retirement festival at the

Winter Games Club Hall.

The announcement was made during a meeting between Al-Musallam, Al-Ajmi, and Winter Games Club Secretary Mishaal Fulaitah at the Olympic Council of Asia headquarters. Al-Musallam lauded Al-Ajmi's extraordinary contributions to ice hockey, wishing him continued success in his endeavors and future contributions to Kuwaiti winter sports.

What began as a dream has now flourished: Sheikha Fajr

Marina Beach hosts Kuwait first official Dressage Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Horse enthusiasts are in for a treat as the first official Dressage Championship is set to take place on Marina Beach. The event will feature a series of four championships, including three show jumping competitions and a horse taming championship.

The activities will kick off at 8:00 am next Saturday, offering four competition levels. Riders passionate about dressage—a foundational discipline in equestrianism—will showcase their skills in this thrilling event.

Sheikha Fajr Badr Al-Sabah, a prominent knight and organizer, highlighted the significance of hosting the championship on Marina Beach, marking a new milestone in the growth of the sport. She described it as a continuation of efforts to promote dressage through various championships held in recent years.

"We began horse taming several years ago, and we've had the privi-



Sheikh Sabah and Sheikha Fajr honor Naseeba Al-Muasherji.

lege of organizing numerous events in different clubs with the support of Sheikh Sabah Mubarak Al-Sabah," said Sheikha Fajr. "What began as a dream has now flourished, with dressage gaining popularity in Kuwait. The first championship, held three

years ago, saw just nine participants. Today, we are proud to host over 40 male and female riders."

This championship is set to be an exciting event, celebrating the elegance and discipline of dressage while fostering its growth in Kuwait.

Liverpool through to last 16 as Barca wins epic clash

Dortmund loses at Bologna, Atalanta strengthens qualification push



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah challenges for the ball with Lille's Gabriel Gudmundsson during the Champions League, opening phase soccer match between Liverpool and Lille at Anfield Stadium, in Liverpool, England. (AP)



Atletico Madrid's Julian Alvarez, right, and Leverkusen's Alex Grimaldo fight for the ball during a Champions League opening phase soccer match at the Riyadh Air Metropolitan stadium in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

LONDON, Jan 22, (AP): Liverpool became the first team to guarantee a place in the last 16 of the new Champions League format by beating Lille 2-1, while Barcelona fought back from two goals down to stun Benfica 5-4 in a thriller.

Harvey Elliott's bouncing, deflected shot gave Liverpool its seventh win from seven games, just after 10-man Lille had equalized following Mohamed Salah's opening goal.

Liverpool needed a point at Anfield to be sure of reaching the round of 16 as one of the top eight teams in the league stage, skipping the playoff round for teams ranked ninth to 24th.

Salah raced through in the 34th minute to sweep Liverpool ahead with his 22nd goal in all competitions this season. And when Lille's Aissa Mandi was sent off just before the hour mark, Liverpool looked certain to extend its 100% record in the league phase.

But Anfield was stunned when Canada striker Jonathan David converted from close range to level the score in the 62nd. It didn't take long for Liverpool to regain the lead through Elliott's deflected effort five minutes later.

"All my life I've dreamt of playing Champions League football, not only for my boyhood club but to play here at Anfield in front of our fans and especially to

score, it's kind of a pinch-me moment," Elliott said.

It was a night of high drama in the Champions League with 33 goals scored across nine games. Nine of them came in Barcelona's battle with Benfica.

Raphinha scored in stoppage time to complete a rousing comeback as Barcelona won in Lisbon despite having been 4-2 down with less than a quarter of an hour remaining.

Benfica's Vangelis Pavlidis scored the third-fastest hat trick at the start of a Champions League game, with two of his goals coming after errors by Barcelona goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny. Barcelona stays second with 18 points from seven games and has been unbeaten in six competitions since the new year.

Robert Lewandowski scored two penalties for Barcelona to stay the Champions League's top scorer on nine goals, one ahead of Raphinha, who also scored twice.

Another Spanish club staged a comeback. Julian Alvarez scored a 90th-minute winner to lift Atletico Madrid past Bayer Leverkusen 2-1. Atletico lost Pablo Barrios to a 23rd-minute red card and went into halftime 1-0 down to a Piero Hincapie header for Leverkusen.

Alvarez scored in the 52nd and had the momentum when Hincapie was sent off for a second yellow card before Alvarez struck again to take the win for Atletico.

With Prince William watching on, Aston Villa's hopes of automatic qualification for the round of 16 took a blow after a 1-0 loss to Monaco.

Villa led the standings early in the league phase of the competition after winning its first three games. But the defeat to Monaco left the Premier League club eighth. Wilfried Singo's goal at a corner in the eighth minute was enough to secure the win for ninth-place Monaco.

Borussia Dortmund's 2-1 loss at Bologna. This was Dortmund's fourth consecutive loss at the start of the new year in all competitions.

Serhou Guirassy gave Dortmund, last season's runner-up, the lead with a chipped penalty and ran to celebrate with Sahin.

It looked like the Champions League could provide a much-needed boost for a team floundering in the Bundesliga, but two goals in two minutes from Thijs Dallinga and Samuel Iling-Junior changed the game for previously winless Bologna.

Results elsewhere meant Bologna would be heading out of the competition despite its win, since the Italian club can't finish in the top 24. Sturm Graz and Red Star Belgrade are also out after losing Tuesday.

Atalanta beat Graz 5-0, strengthening the Italian club's push to qualify directly for the round of 16. Atalanta finished the evening fourth.

PSV Eindhoven hung on for a 3-2 win at Red Star despite losing defender Flamingo to a red card just after halftime while leading 3-0. Stuttgart eased to a 3-1 win over Slovan Bratislava, which was already eliminated and has lost all seven of its games. Club Brugge and Juventus drew 0-0.

Injuries take a toll on Al-Qadisiya's Zain Premier League campaign

Kuwait Club, Al-Arabi dominate as title race intensifies

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi continued their fierce battle for the top spot in the Zain Premier League after round 12, each securing thrilling victories. Kuwait Club triumphed 2-1 over Khaitan, while Al-Arabi outclassed Al-Qadisiya 4-2 in a dramatic derby. Kuwait Club retained its lead in the standings, edging Khaitan with a dramatic stoppage-time penalty by Yousef Nasser. Despite a subdued offensive performance, Kuwait clinched the crucial win to stay ahead of Al-Arabi, who also triumphed in a thrilling comeback against Al-Qadisiya. After being 2-0 down at halftime, Al-Arabi turned the game around with four goals in the second half, highlighting the strength of its squad and Coach Nasser Al-Shatti's tactics.

Al-Qadisiya's chances for the title took a significant blow, dropping to fifth place with a 4-2 defeat to Al-Arabi. The team's lack of key players due to injuries and an incomplete foreign squad makes its mission to compete for the title increasingly difficult.

Al-Salmiya maintained third place with a solid 2-0 victory over Al-Tadamon, thanks to standout performances from Libyan Al-Sanussi Al-Hadi and Kuwaiti international Moaz Al-Aseema. Meanwhile, Al-Fahaheel secured a convincing 4-1 win over Al-Yarmouk, powered by a hat-trick from Brazilian William Barros, propelling them to fourth place. Kuwait Club leads with 33 points, followed closely by Al-Arabi with 33 points but trailing on goal difference. Al-Salmiya holds third with 23 points, while Al-Fahaheel follows in fourth with 20 points. Al-Qadisiya's defeat leaves them in fifth, struggling to keep up with the top contenders. At the bottom, Yarmouk remains last, still without a win this season.

In the dramatic Al-Qadisiya vs. Al-Arabi derby, Al-Arabi's Salman Al-Awadhi played a pivotal role in the comeback, scoring the equalizer and winning a controversial penalty. Meanwhile, William Barros' hat-trick for Al-Fahaheel continues to impress, while Vitor da Silva leads the league's top scorers with 11 goals.



Al Arabi star Salman Al Awadhi – the best player of the round.

With Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi continuing to exchange blows at the top, the race for the Zain Premier League title remains intense. Al-Qadisiya's chances are fading, while teams like Al-Salmiya and Al-Fahaheel aim to climb further into contention. The upcoming rounds are set to be critical in shaping the league's future.

Violence fears cited

Feyenoord fans banned from Lille Champions League match

PARIS, Jan 22, (AP): Feyenoord supporters have been banned by French authorities from travelling to Lille for next week's final Champions League group game between the two clubs.

In an order published on Wednesday, France's interior ministry said there was a "real and serious risk of confrontation" between supporters of the two teams.

Lille hosts Feyenoord on Jan. 29 at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy. The French authorities said Feyenoord's travels are often marred by "public order disturbances due to the violent behaviour of certain supporters or individuals claiming to be supporters of this team", and cited several examples of fan violence.

Justifying its decision, the ministry added that 3,600 fans - 500 of whom were identified as being dangerous - had planned to travel to Lille, although only 2,600 seats had been allocated to Feyenoord.

"Of the 1,000 supporters who have nevertheless planned to travel without a stadium admission ticket, it is feared that some will try to force their way into the stadium," it said.

There were violent clashes in France between Marseille and Feyenoord fans outside the Stade Velodrome stadium before the return leg of their Europa Conference League semifinal in May 2022.

One video showed a Marseille supporter apparently unconscious on the ground as he was helped by fellow fans, another showed two groups charging at each other shortly before kickoff just outside the stadium.

Around 400 Feyenoord hooligans were present around the city's seaport and there were also clashes the night before the game and after the match.