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KUWAIT SPEEDS AHEAD WITH TRAFFIC LAW AWARENESS DRIVE

Buckle up for tougher traffic fines

April 22 marks start of new amendments

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Ministry of Interior, through the General Department of Security Relations and Media and in collaboration with the General Traffic Department, announced the launch of a comprehensive awareness campaign to highlight the recent

amendments to certain provisions of the Traffic Law following the issuance of Decree-Law No. 5/2025, which amends some provisions of Decree-Law No. 67/1976 regarding traffic.

The new amendments will take effect in 90 days on April 22, 2025, and the awareness campaign will continue until the law is fully implemented. The campaign aims to educate citizens and residents about the most important

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Committee revokes citizenship of 3,856

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): The Supreme Committee to Investigate Kuwaiti Citizenship held a meeting on Thursday under the chairmanship of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, who is also head of the committee.

The commission decided during the meeting to strip 3,856 individuals of the Kuwaiti citizenship, the Ministry of Interior said in a press release, adding that the decision would be submitted to the Cabinet.

The ministry underlined that the decision came in line with the Kuwaiti Citizenship Law.

Tariff reform on horizon

Kuwait weighs bracketed electricity, water pricing

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The issuance of a decree-law, which cancels Law No. 79/1995 regarding fees and financial costs for the use of public facilities and services, along with Decree No. 1/2025, stipulates that each entity will determine the fees and costs for the use of public facilities and services through a decision of the competent authority, in accordance with the law governing each entity, and with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

This decree raises an important question: Will the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy reconsider the electricity and water consumption tariffs and apply a bracket system to achieve cost recovery, while ensuring social justice and not negatively impacting the minimum standard of living? This is particularly relevant given the annual deficit faced by the ministry, with expenses exceeding revenues by an average of KD 1.5 to 2 billion annually, primarily allocated for energy support (oil, gas, and oils used in operating stations).

In response to this question, former minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Mohammad Boushahri explained that the current electricity and water tariffs are unfair, as they treat a citizen who owns a single house of 400 square meters the same as a citizen who owns a larger house. It also treats a citizen who owns a single house the same as one who owns a larger property.

The optimal solution to this issue is to implement the bracket system, following a comprehensive study of consumption patterns. This, in turn, requires completing the smart meter system in all housing sectors (private, investment, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and governmental).

In a press statement, Eng. Boushahri explained that the aim of the newly issued decree is to deal with the ongoing economic and social changes and to increase flexibility in resource management. This necessitates a review of current electricity and water tariffs to achieve a reasonable level of cost recovery for electricity and water production. These costs, which range between KD 1.5 billion and 2 billion annually, depend on the oil prices.

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Al-Husni claws back more ground as sightings surge

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): The Environment Public Authority (EPA) has documented the spread of the Arabian red fox, recognized as the largest of the Arabian foxes and is locally known as "Al-Husni," across Kuwait's desert regions.

Deputy Director General of the Technical Affairs Sector, Dr. Abdullah Al-Zaidan told KUNA on Thursday that the Arabian red fox was recently observed in northern areas, including North Salmi and Mutlaa, as well as the southern desert regions and natural reserves such as Al-Jahra Natural Reserve and Sabah Al-Ahmad Natural Reserve.

Al-Zaidan explained that wildlife cameras and drones were used to study this species, which is one of the most widespread desert mammals, in their natural habitat and their presence in the wild.

He noted that the Arabian red fox inhabits diverse environments, including mountains, coastlines, deserts, and open areas near urban centers, where food was available and easily accessible, the red fox is drawn to areas near camps and human settlements in its search for food.

Al-Zaidan highlighted that these carnivorous animals endure harsh climatic conditions, with summer temperatures exceeding 50 Celsius and winter temperatures dropping to near zero, they are well-adapted to environmental and desert changes.

He added that the male foxes are larger than females, and an Arabian red fox can reach a body length of approximately one meter, with a tail length of about 40 centimeter (cm) and an average weight ranging from 2.7 to 4.5 kilograms.

The species typically lives in underground burrows, active at night, and exhibits reduced activity during the day.

Al-Zaidan stated that the Arabian Peninsula is the fox's primary habitat, and it is one of the most common wild species in the region, it is found in Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Yemen.

The EPA has collaborated with the Scientific Center-an affiliate of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS)-for several years on programs aimed at rehabilitating and releasing the Arabian red fox into Kuwait's natural desert habitats.

The species is listed under Appendix III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to curb the illegal fur trade.

He also mentioned that the Arabian red fox was classified as a species of "Least Concern" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, and that the EPA is committed to protecting Kuwait's ecosystems and conserving native desert wildlife by mitigating habitat destruction and ensuring their sustainability for future generations.

Rare glimpse of the elusive Arabian red fox, or 'Al-Husni,' caught on camera in Kuwait's desert, revealing its growing presence. (KUNA)

2025 to mark crucial turning point for Kuwait's Vision 2035: finance minister



KUNA photo Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam at the World Economic Forum.

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan 23, (KUNA): Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Noura Al-Fassam affirmed that 2025 will be a pivotal year for Kuwait as the government works to implement ambitious plans within a clear strategy to achieve Vision 2035.

This came in the Minister's speech during a high-level dialogue session entitled (Long-Term Growth in the Middle East and North Africa Countries) within the activities of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum held in Davos during the period from January 20 to 24, 2025.

The Minister touched on the expectations and aspirations towards economic development prospects in light of the challenges and opportunities available, in addition to expectations of economic growth in the region, stressing that reliance on a single source of income is no longer acceptable.

She also stressed the importance of enhancing digital infrastructure with the participation of the private sector within the public-private partnership system, noting that providing legislation that attracts foreign investment is necessary to build a promising future for the upcoming generations.

The Minister said that geopolitical risks, climate change and artificial intelligence are among the most prominent global challenges for 2025, stressing that confronting these challenges requires close cooperation between the public and private sectors to employ technology.

The panel discussion highlighted the growing role of technology and innovation in reshaping the region's economic landscape, as rapid developments in the fields of artificial intelligence, smart industry and energy transformation open new horizons for economic growth, contributing to enhancing the ability of regional economies to achieve economic diversification and sustainability.

Banks to close Jan 30 for Al-Isra and Al-Mi'raj

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): The Kuwait Banking Association announced that local banks will suspend operations on Thursday, January 30, in observance of the anniversary of Al-Isra and Al-Mi'raj.

Sheikha Alissa, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Kuwait Banking Association, stated in a press release on Wednesday that this day is considered an official holiday.

She indicated that banks will resume operations on Sunday, February 2, based on the circular issued by the Central

Bank of Kuwait regarding this matter.

The Council of Ministers, in its weekly meeting held on January 14, chaired by His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, decided to suspend work in all ministries, government agencies, and public institutions on Thursday, January 30, in recognition of the anniversary of Al-Isra and Al-Mi'raj, making it an official holiday, with regular work resuming on Sunday, February 2.

Occupation forces West Bank op enters 3rd day

Kuwait strongly condemns Israeli aggression on Jenin

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait strongly condemned Israeli occupation aggression on the city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, which resulted in the death of dozens of Palestinian civilians, in addition to the widespread destruction of infrastructure and the displacement of a large number of families.

In a statement Thursday, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that the continued Israeli occupation's fla-

grant violations of international and humanitarian laws and its breach of international legitimacy resolutions without accountability constitutes a threat to regional security and stability, and undermines the chances of achieving a just and comprehensive peace.

Meanwhile, the Muslim World League also condemned

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The State of Kuwait welcomed the mediation efforts led by the Sultanate of Oman, which resulted in the release of the ship "Galaxy Leader" crew who had been detained off the Yemeni coast since November 2023.

In a statement Thursday, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed appreciation for the humanitarian efforts made by Oman, which reflect its firm commitment to promoting regional peace and stability. (KUNA)

JEDDAH: Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salma and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday discussed the latest regional and international developments.

This came during a phone call received by the Saudi prince from the US secretary, in which they considered several issues of mutual interest, according to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA). (KUNA)

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah welcomes WMF delegation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): Ambassadors of World Monuments Fund (WMF) visited the Amricani Cultural Centre, an affiliate of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI), on Wednesday as

part of a 60-night trip around the globe to mark WMF's 60th anniversary.

Welcoming the WMF delegation's

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KUNA photo The WMF delegation listens to an insightful briefing at the Amricani Cultural Center during their visit.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:19 Asr 14:58
 Sunrise .. 06:42 Maghrib .. 17:18
 Zohr 12:00 Isha 18:38

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate northeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-24 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

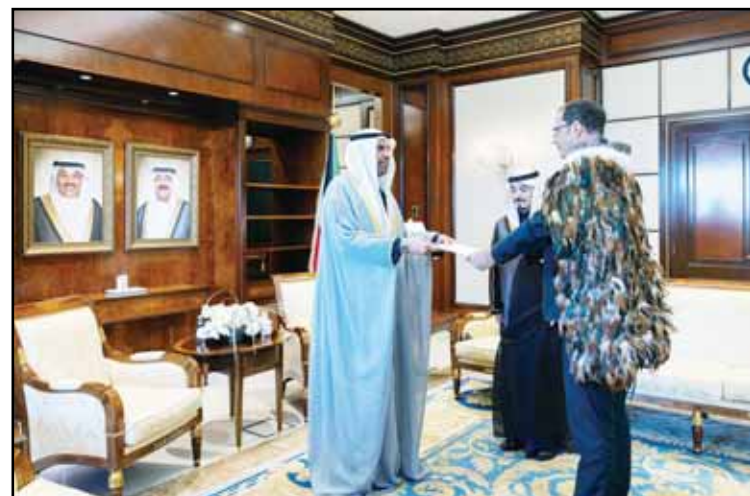
By Night: Cold and partly

Weather

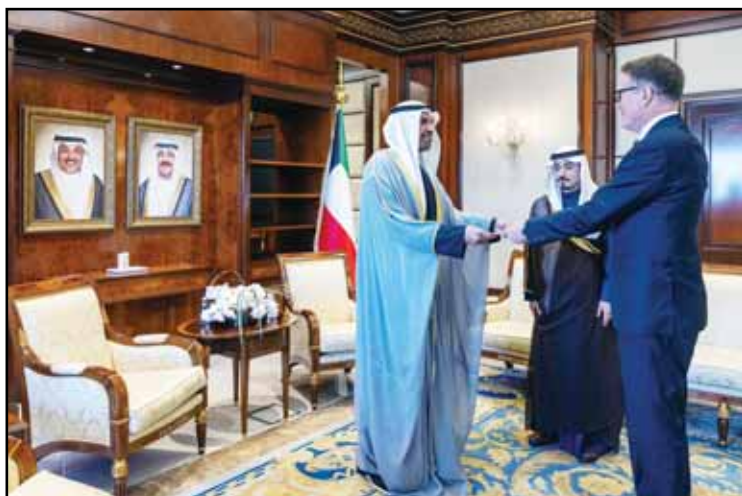
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	21	12

Weather	Temperature
cloudy with light to moderate northeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-24 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over coastal areas and scattered light rain.	21
	08
	07
	10
	11
	13
	14
	10
	09
	08

Kuwait's FM receives credentials of ten newly appointed ambassadors



New Zealand envoy presents credentials.



Sweden envoy presents credentials.



Angola envoy presents credentials.

KUNA photos

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Wednesday credentials of non-resident ambassadors to Kuwait at the ministry's headquarters.

The Minister received credentials of non-resident Ambassador of Norway to Kuwait and Ambassador to Abu Dhabi Olav Myklebust, non-resident Ambassador of Colombia to Kuwait and Ambassador to Abu Dhabi Luis Hoyos, and non-resident Ambassador of Seychelles to Kuwait and Ambassador to

Abu Dhabi Gervais Moumou.

The Minister also received credentials of non-resident Ambassador of Latvia to Kuwait and Ambassador to Abu Dhabi Dana Goldfinca, non-resident Ambassador of Angola to Kuwait and Ambassador to Abu Dhabi Julio Maia-to, non-resident Ambassador of Sweden to Kuwait and Ambassador to Abu Dhabi Fredrik Floren, and non-resident Ambassador of Estonia to Kuwait and Ambassador to Abu Dhabi Maria Belovas.

Al-Yahya also received credentials of non-resident Ambassador of New Zealand to Kuwait and Ambassador to Riyadh Charles Kingston, non-resident Ambassador of Uganda to Kuwait and Ambassador to Riyadh Isaac Biruma Sebulime, non-resident Ambassador of Rwanda to Kuwait and Ambassador to Qatar Igor Marara.

Minister Al-Yahya wished the new ambassadors success in performing their duties, further progress and prosperity for bilateral relations.

Platform launched to combat water scarcity

\$10 bln eyed to develop projects in Arab world

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: To tackle the biggest challenge facing the Arab world today and in the future, which is water scarcity, the Senior Advisor to the Director General of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development Mirza Hassan announced the launch of the "Our Water, Our Life" platform. This platform focuses on develop-

ment projects in the water sector and provides financing solutions for these projects.

In a press statement, Hassan said he expects the platform to generate USD 10 billion in its current phase, with the support of donor organizations and private sector companies.

He said this yesterday on the sidelines of the conclusion of the Middle East and North Africa Water Forum, organized by the fund in collaboration with the World Bank.

Hassan revealed that the fund has established an operational system to continuously activate the platform for promoting water development projects in all Arab coun-

tries.

Praising the forum as "the first of its kind in the Arab world", Hassan highlighted the huge losses incurred by Arab economies due to water scarcity, estimating that the economic impact ranges from 6 to 14 percent, depending on the country.

He said the high participation from organizations, the private sector, and government officials underscores the success of the forum and the importance of dealing with water scarcity in the Arab world.

Hassan emphasized that the forum highlighted the need to find solutions to the challenge of providing water at reasonable prices to ensure a high quality of life, and the

importance of maintenance to achieve sustainability for water projects adopted as part of the forum's outcomes, which include the establishment of six desalination plants in Morocco and three plants in Tunisia.

He noted the signing of several partnerships with the ten most important development organizations in the Arab world, which will fund various water treatment projects. These include the Saudi Fund, the Abu Dhabi Fund, the Islamic Fund, and the OPEC Fund.

In conclusion, Hassan revealed the forum's success in identifying practical and realistic solutions to the water challenges faced by the Middle East, North Africa, and the entire Arab region.

Burden piling up on employees; urgent action sought

MoE in quandary over filling leadership positions

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: According to reliable educational sources, the Ministry of Education is facing an unprecedented crisis in filling supervisory and leadership positions, with over 300 vacant positions at the senior and middle management levels. These vacancies include important roles such as the undersecretary, assistant undersecretaries, department directors, supervisors, superintendents, school principals, assistant directors, and department heads in the ministry's head office, educational zones, and central departments.

The sources explained that these positions, which have been vacant for several years without being filled, are placing an increasing burden on the employees in many educational sectors and departments. It is now necessary to find solutions that include reviewing the mechanisms for filling supervisory and leadership

roles, and evaluating the ministry's ability to resolve the crisis and its impact on the stability of the organization.

The ministry has called for a listing of the vacant supervisory positions in the ministry's office and educational zones, along with a clear mechanism for filling them, in addition to listing the educational vacancies in schools by educational stage supervisors for all specializations, with the aim of filling these positions based on waiting lists and in order of roles.

If the waiting lists are empty, vacancies will be announced in accordance with ministerial resolution No. 157/2016, which outlines the procedures for promotion to supervisory positions. These procedures require candidates to pass a written test, followed by a personal interview, as well as completing a training course and achieving a minimum passing rate of 70 percent. Vacancies will be filled based on the actual needs of the educational field, with flex-

ibility in the application of these requirements, provided it does not compromise the selection of qualified candidates.

The sources revealed that the ministry has begun re-evaluating the rules governing the filling of supervisory positions in order to develop a comprehensive approach to improving current procedures, but the ongoing vacancies in these positions have hindered this process.

They explained that the continuation of the vacancy crisis is placing great pressure on the educational process, with increasing burdens on schools and teachers. This situation threatens the stability of schools and the quality of education. Urgent action is needed to resolve the vacancy issue and fill leadership and supervisory positions to ensure the stability of the educational and teaching sectors.

The sources affirmed the importance of developing sustainable solutions rather than relying on temporary measures.



A mobile clinic dispensing medical care to people in a village in Yemen.

IICO launches mobile clinic project in Yemen; 4,500 to get treatment

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): The International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) launched a mobile medical clinic project in Yemen to treat 4,500 patients at an estimated cost of USD 77,250.

The organization said in a press statement on Thursday that the project is launched in Al-Wadea District of Abyan Governorate and would provide free medicines and medical

supplies to poor patients, pregnant and lactating women, and children in the areas of Azan and Labu Amrak.

The project was launched under the slogan (Kuwait is by your side), implemented by (Nedaa) Foundation for Development and came within the vision of the IICO to provide support to the needy and the poorest in Yemen.

MEW vows to overcome hitches before summer

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: In his first meeting with the assistant undersecretaries since his appointment as undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Adel Al-Zamil affirmed his full commitment to overcome the obstacles that the ministry's sectors may face in preparation for the summer of 2025.

The meeting provided a platform to review the current condition of the sectors including the existing challenges, obstacles and development visions.

Al-Zamil expressed gratitude to the employees for their teamwork and dedication, confirming his pride in the distinguished national staff.

He also urged leaders to enhance the work system and requested weekly reports from all sectors on the status of tenders to proactively address anything that could hinder the provision of electricity and water services. He stressed the importance of addressing any delays or problems in maintenance contracts, and underscored the need to enable national cadres to carry out all engineering and technical tasks in line with the replacement policy.

The meeting included a comprehensive review of the status of main transformer stations, high-voltage overhead lines, and readiness for any emergencies. Ongoing maintenance programs for secondary transformer stations and integrated distribution units were discussed as well, along with the readiness of emergency teams in the event of power outages.

successes in organ transplants, including stem cell and pancreas transplantation programs.

The minister explained that the Kuwait Center for Kidney Diseases and Transplantation, located in the Sabah health zone, was inaugurated last year. The center features 80 beds and is equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment and devices.

Also, the Organ Transplantation Department at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital was inaugurated, along with the launch of the National Kidney Transplantation Program through family exchanges. This groundbreaking initiative represents a major step forward with the aim of improving the success rates of kidney transplants by expanding the pool of potential donors and increasing the likelihood of successful procedures.

Meanwhile, Head of the Kidney Diseases De-

partment at the Kuwait Center for Kidney Diseases, President of the Kuwait Society for Organ Transplantation, and Head of the conference Dr. Turki Al-Otaibi said, "This distinguished medical gathering aims to enhance cooperation and advance healthcare in the field of kidney diseases and transplantation, and addresses one of the most significant global health issues, which is kidney diseases."

Kidney diseases represent a global health challenge, affecting approximately 10 percent of the world's population. Millions of people suffer from kidney failure each year due to the lack of access to appropriate treatment. This challenge is particularly acute in developing countries, where there is a severe shortage of kidney dialysis machines and treatment costs place a huge strain on the budgets of health ministries.



Photo by Rizk Tawfiq
 Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah takes a round of the newly opened outlet for Kuwaiti agricultural products.

'New agricultural outlet to help farmers market their products'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah inaugurated Wednesday a new outlet for Kuwaiti agricultural products to support Kuwaiti farmers and help market their products.

In a statement to KUNA after the outlet's inauguration in the Sulabiya Industrial Area, the minister said the outlet covers an area of 5,000 square meters and operates around the clock.

This is a qualitative step to facilitate marketing of agricultural products and ensure they reach consumers in high quality, the minister argued.

She added that the outlet's strategic location on the Sixth Ring Road facilitates entry and exit for farmers' vehicles and cooperative societies.

Moreover, the site employs an automated system that uses barcodes to record all relevant data, including quantity, quality grade, weight, and the farm's unique number, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and reducing waste, the minister pointed out.

The outlet adheres to the highest safety and security standards, equipped with surveillance cameras and a permanent security staff, in addition to emergency exits complying with the requirements of the General Fire Department, she said.

Al-Huwailah praised the efforts exerted to bring this project to fruition, stressing that the launch of the outlet strengthens cooperation between the Kuwaiti Farmers Union and cooperative societies and represents a significant step towards achieving sustainable development and food security.

Markets gearing up for Ramadan

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Commercial Control Department of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in coordination with the Technical Authority for Supervision of Goods and Price Determination, held a meeting this morning to assess market preparedness for the upcoming holy month of Ramadan.

Director of the Commercial Control Department Faisal Al-Ansari met with the heads of the inspection and emergencies

departments to discuss plans for monitoring central markets, cooperative societies, meat and date shops, restaurants, sweet shops, and mills before the start of Ramadan.

He instructed that intensive inspection campaigns be launched next week to ensure compliance with ministry-approved prices and to compare them before and after Ramadan.

In addition, Al-Ansari stressed the importance of inspecting sweet shops to ensure the safety of food items prepared for the Girgean celebration during the holy month.

Al-Fikri held, session set for Feb 6

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Anwar Al-Fikri has been arrested and detained pending the State Security case filed against him for allegedly challenging the powers of His Highness the Amir. The case has been postponed to the session on February 6.

In a separate circuit, the Criminal Court decided to withdraw from the case and referred it to the head of the general court.

Meanwhile, the first session of the

Criminal Court involved the hearing of the State Security case filed against the media figure Fajr Al-Saeed. The court adjourned the case to February 6, and ordered Al-Saeed to remain in detention.

She has been charged with spreading false news and advocating for normalization of ties with Israel.

Al-Saeed denied all charges, and her defense team requested a delay to review and photograph the case. They also requested for her release on bail.

He affirmed that the ministry is committed to supporting ambitious programs, building on its

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

The Golden Age of America: a perspective on Trump's vision

“THE Golden Age of America has just begun” – With this opening line, former President Donald Trump set the tone for his second term vision. In his characteristic style, Trump used a bold and confident narrative, one that not only promised a revival of American greatness but also criticized the perceived decay brought about by Democratic leadership and the left-leaning ideologies of recent years.” columnist **Sheikha Hessa Al-Hamoud Al-Salem** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

“Trump’s rhetoric pointed to the societal disruption caused by political correctness – a concept championed by the secular left in both Europe and America. While intended to foster inclusivity and combat racism, this ideology has arguably backfired, suppressing talent, silencing dissent and distorting justice under the guise of equality.

“In many ways, this extreme political correctness mirrors the oppressive tactics of radical groups. Just as extremists use physical force and fear to impose their ideologies, the secular left employs legal and social pressure to enforce acceptance of controversial agendas.

“Criticism of LGBTQ+ rights, radical feminist movements, or even addressing the shortcomings of individuals from minority groups often leads to public and legal persecution, all under the pretext of combating discrimination.

“Trump’s appeal lies in his pragmatic approach and willingness to confront issues head-on. He recognizes the fractures within the fabric of modern Western societies – fractures exacerbated by policies that prioritize identity politics over merit and equity.

“His leadership style, while divisive, resonates with those who seek a return to what they perceive as traditional values.

“From my perspective, Trump is uniquely suited to lead a nation grappling with these challenges. His policies, anchored in pragmatism and mutual interests, reflect a desire to restore a sense of balance.

“He openly opposes what he views as the erosion of natural human instincts and societal norms, positioning himself as a guardian of values that align with religious teachings and natural law.

“Trump’s initiatives – ranging from declaring a border emergency with Mexico to counter illegal immigration and drug trafficking, to proposing economic moves like purchasing Greenland – underscore his ambitious vision for America.

“His focus on revitalizing industries such as automobile manufacturing and healthcare insurance speaks directly to the aspirations of the younger generation.

“Perhaps the most striking element of his recent address was his declaration that his administration would officially recognize only two genders – male and female. This stance, coupled with his emphasis on peace and conflict resolution through decisive military action, underscores a leadership philosophy rooted in traditionalism and assertiveness.

“In Trump’s vision, the youth are the cornerstone of national strength and preserving their natural inclinations is a matter of national security. His policies champion the idea that peace and justice are not mere slogans but actions that stem from a firm moral compass.

“For Trump, leadership is about wielding power with integrity, grounded in religious and ethical principles that prioritize the sanctity of life, the preservation of human nature and the equitable administration of justice.

“While his methods may polarize, his vision for America’s ‘Golden Age’ is undoubtedly compelling, particularly for those who long for a return to fundamental values.”



Sheikha Hessa

Also:

“Over the past year, Kuwait has embarked on a transformative journey, implementing reforms across various sectors to achieve a comprehensive economic and developmental renaissance,” columnist **Sultan Musaed Al-Jazzaf** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“These reforms are anchored in a strategic vision that emphasizes sustainability, justice and transparency. By addressing critical issues such as corruption, administrative inefficiencies and legislative gaps, Kuwait aims to establish a robust foundation for long-term prosperity and stability.

“At the heart of these reforms is the fight against corruption, a priority championed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti government. Efforts to hold individuals accountable for encroachments on public funds have significantly enhanced transparency and integrity across state institutions.

“In addition, a sweeping overhaul of government leadership has introduced young, dynamic and productive leaders into key positions, reinvigorating administrative performance. The modernization of the security system further underscores the government’s commitment to safeguarding public trust and national stability.

“The government has also taken decisive steps to tackle the longstanding challenges associated with the citizenship file, including cases of fraud and irregularities. By ensuring fairness and transparency in naturalization processes, Kuwait is striving to uphold the principles of legal justice.

“Similarly, the approval of new traffic laws marks a critical step in addressing road safety concerns, reducing violations and safeguarding citizens. Revisions to labor and human trafficking laws further reflect the government’s commitment to protecting workers’ rights and combating exploitation.

“Kuwait’s reforms extend to prudent fiscal management, with a focus on reducing unnecessary expenditures and curbing financial waste. By adopting sound financial policies, resources are being directed toward priority development projects, ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

“To invigorate the local economy and diversify revenue streams, the government has introduced several key economic reform laws.

“The revised Tenders Law has streamlined and enhanced transparency in government contracting, while the Real Estate Law is fostering a more regulated and investment-friendly property market.

“Additionally, imposing taxes on multinational corporations ensures greater tax equity and bolsters government revenues.

“Significant strides have been made in advancing strategic projects such as the Southern Economic Zone, housing initiatives and energy developments. These projects are expected to serve as catalysts for economic growth and job creation.

“The government’s efforts to complete stalled projects, regulate cooperative societies and simplify visit procedures further demonstrate its commitment to improving governance and fostering international collaboration.

“These ambitious reforms reflect Kuwait’s unwavering commitment to building a sustainable and diversified economy rooted in integrity, justice and balanced development.

“By addressing key challenges and implementing forward-thinking policies, Kuwait aspires to enhance its position as a regional leader and secure a brighter future for its citizens.

“Through these comprehensive efforts, Kuwait is not just setting a new standard for governance and development but is also paving the way for a prosperous and stable society that prioritizes the well-being of its people and the nation’s long-term success.”

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



Al-Seyassah photo
First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah welcomes Sarah and her father during the portrait presentation.

Minister praises student’s talent

The First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, received talented student Sarah Ya’aqoub Jassem Al-Saidi, who presented to the minister an artistic portrait she had drawn as a gesture of appreciation for his national role, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, expressed his delight at this thoughtful gesture, considering the portrait a refined expression of admiration and respect.

He praised Sarah’s exceptional tal-

ent, which reflects her creativity and high artistic sensibility. He affirmed that such talents are a source of pride for the community and deserve full support and nurturing to further develop their abilities, wishing her continued success and brilliance.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, also emphasized that the creativity of young people in various fields reflects the civilized image of the nation, underscoring the importance of supporting talents in all areas for their positive impact on the country’s future.

‘Girls born to surrogate mother’; court refuses to accept lineage

DNA test leaves couple in predicament

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Khaled Abdulaziz Al-Khaled, refused to recognize the lineage of three daughters of a Kuwaiti citizen, who were born to a ‘surrogate mother’ through artificial insemination because his wife cannot bear children.

Upon his return to Kuwait, he was asked to do a DNA test and the results proved that the genes of the children matched the husband’s, but not the wife’s genes, since she was not the owner of the egg used in artificial insemination.

Accordingly, the General Department of Births and Deaths Affairs at the Ministry of Health rejected the request to issue birth certificates, which prevented the extraction of the remaining documents necessary for his daughters, prompting him to file a lawsuit.

Case files indicate that the Kuwaiti citizen married a Gulf woman, but they did not have children. After several attempts to have children and repeated visits to doctors, it became clear that they were unable to have children.

Later, they visited a hospital in an Asian country, where doctors advised them to undergo ‘artificial insemination’, using a reproductive cell

from the husband to fertilize the egg of a foreign woman and implant it in the wife’s womb. They underwent this procedure that resulted in the birth of three children through artificial insemination in the wife’s country.

After obtaining birth certificates from the wife’s country and temporary travel documents from the Kuwaiti embassy there, the couple returned to Kuwait and the husband requested for birth certificates for his three children in preparation for obtaining nationality cards, civil identification cards and passports. The concerned authorities asked the couple to conduct a DNA test to verify the biological relationship with the children and everyone underwent the required test.

However, the results were contrary to what the couple expected, as the children’s genes matched the husband’s, but not the wife’s since she was not the owner of the egg used in artificial insemination. Accordingly, the administration rejected the request to issue birth certificates, which prevented the extraction of the rest of the necessary documents.

These developments prompted the husband to file a lawsuit requesting proof of the children’s lineage to him and his wife, and to enable him to obtain birth certificates for them, in addition to the civil identification cards, passports and nationality cards.

After a dispute over the competent court section, the case was referred to the First Instance Court- Jaafari Family Section.

When this court considered the case, it ruled to prove the children’s lineage to the couple, and the resulting effects, including registering the children in the birth registry, and enabling the father

to obtain birth certificates, nationality cards, passports and civil identification cards for his three children.

Since Jaafari Personal Status Law No. 124/2019 does not regulate this issue, the first-degree ruling was based on a fatwa issued by the religious entity that authorized this procedure.

The court based its decision to the fatwa on Article Three of the law, which states: “Everything not mentioned in this law is referred to the opinion of the most knowledgeable living authority of the Jaafari faith who meets the conditions of imitation.”

Nevertheless, this ruling was not accepted by the Public Prosecution, which prompted it to appeal. When the Court of Appeals deliberated on the case, it ruled to cancel the appealed ruling, based on the fact that this procedure is contrary to public order, public morals and Islamic Law.

The court then explained in its ruling: “Mixing a man’s semen with the egg of a woman who is not his wife, even if it results in the creation of a child from the wife’s womb, is an act that is forbidden by Sharia Law. It contradicts the Sharia Law and purpose in preserving lineage, because it meets in one source with the product of the sinful relationship between a man and a woman outside the legitimacy of marriage.

Saying that this prohibition by Sharia Law does not mean preventing those who are afflicted with the deprivation of a child from modern medical methods that give couples hope of achieving their goal, as one should not be carried away by emotions or human conflicts in explaining the Sharia ruling on these methods.



KFF photo
KFF inspectors issuing citations.

Basement fire tackled

KFF tours Abdullah Port, eyes safety rule checks

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Based on directives of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and under the direct supervision of Chief of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Mohammad Al-Roumi, an inspection campaign was carried out in the Abdullah Port area recently.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the campaign was carried out with the cooperation of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Information, Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Industry, Environment Public Authority, Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, and the Public Authority for Manpower.

It was aimed to inspect buildings and facilities for compliance with safety and fire prevention regulations.

The campaign resulted in the issuance of a number of citations, and many facilities were administratively closed for failing to meet the safety requirements set by KFF, and the regulations of the other authorities.

Basement fire tackled: Firefighters from Mangaf, Fahheel, and Al-Bairaq fire stations controlled a fire that broke out in a building’s basement, which was being used as a warehouse, on Monday evening.

According to a press release issued by KFF, no casualties were reported, and investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of the fire.

Nazaha receives 46,099 assets disclosures by end of year '24

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Financial Disclosures Receipt Supervisor at the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Mohammad Abdullah announced that the authority received 46,099 financial disclosures, representing 99.6 percent of the required submissions, as of December 31, 2024, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

Abdullah explained that the disclosures received included 20,608 first-time declarations for individuals assuming positions covered by financial disclosure regulations. Nazaha had received 17,832 updates for disclosures that were three years old, as well as 7,659 final declarations related to individuals who had ceased holding positions covered by the disclosure requirements.

Nazaha is committed to its ongoing work of receiving financial disclosures and ensuring compliance with the relevant provisions.

He emphasized that Nazaha continues its efforts in receiving financial disclosures from individuals covered by the relevant provisions.

Abdullah highlighted Nazaha’s commitment to continuous coordination and cooperation with the entities to which these individuals belong, adding that this

collaboration aims to encourage timely submission of declarations within the legal deadlines.

He urged declarants to check the start dates for submitting their financial disclosure statements via the Sahel platform to avoid any delays in the submission process.

Furthermore, he stressed the need to print and complete the declaration forms before visiting Nazaha’s headquarters to submit the financial disclosure statement.

Abdullah revealed that all necessary forms are available on the official Nazaha website - www.nazaha.gov.kw.

He highlighted the important role of authorities in regularly updating the data of employees required to submit financial disclosures.

Abdullah stressed the importance of cooperation with the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority to ensure it receives the required data.

He reiterated the significance of the financial disclosure statement in preventing financial corruption, protecting public funds, and enhancing oversight over individuals in public positions, adding that this process plays a huge role in protecting public employees and upholding transparency and integrity within state agencies.






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Experts tackle legal reform

GCCAC hosts int'l arbitration leaders

MANAMA, Jan 23, (KUNA): The GCC Commercial Arbitration Centre announced, Thursday, that the inaugural Gulf Law and Arbitration Week would feature the participation of no less than 1,000 international leaders in the field of arbitration.

The event aims to bolster and localize arbitration practices within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

In a statement, the center noted that the weeklong event begins on Sunday in Manama and would run for five days, it will include dialogue sessions led by more than 30 prominent figures in the legal and arbitration sectors.

The opening session will address two key topics; financial and banking sector legislation and regulations and legislation and regulations for the entertainment and culture sector.

The second session will cover industry sector legislation and regulations and municipality and housing sector legislation and regulations, the third session will focus on the judicial and legal system and dispute resolution in Saudi Arabia.

On the second day, the sessions will explore legislation, investments, and dispute resolution in the United Arab Emirates and legislation, investments, and dispute resolution in Oman.

The third day will include two sessions: the first on investment legislation and laws in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain and the second on judicial systems and dispute resolution in Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain.

On the fourth day, the first session will address transport, logistics, and supply chain legislation in the GCC, while the second will focus on legal aspects of the construction sector in the GCC.

The fifth and final day will include sessions on legal aspects of real estate development in the GCC and judicial and commercial dispute resolution in the GCC and globally.

The week will also include a ceremony to honor distinguished Gulf figures who have made significant contributions to the legal, judicial, and arbitration sectors.

Secretary-General of the GCC Commercial Arbitration Centre, Kamal Al-Hamad described the event as a historic forum aimed at enhancing the investment and economic climate within the GCC, and added that it provides a platform for knowledge exchange, cooperation, and addressing the unique legal challenges faced by investors and businesses, including those from G20 countries.

The event is backed by the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority and features collaboration with legal publishing partner LexisNexis, a global leader in legal publishing, information, and analytics.

Activities for the Gulf Law and Arbitration Week will take place at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre, with strategic partnerships from multiple organizations.



Dr. Al Hamad



Group photo of the 20th meeting of attendees at Sabah Al-Salem University City.

KUNA photo

Academic leaders meet in Kuwait to align education with global standards

KU hosts 20th meeting of GCC deans of admission, registration to strengthen educational cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Kuwait University has emphasized on the commitment of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to advancing society by leveraging the role of universities in enhancing education and supporting development plans across the region, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This was highlighted by Dr. Osama Al-Saeed, the Acting Director of Kuwait University, during his speech at the 20th meeting of the Deans of Admission and Registration of universities and higher education institutions in GCC countries.

The meeting was held at the Sabah Al-Salem University City, attended by academic leaders and specialists in the fields of admission and registration.

Dr. Al-Saeed stated that the purpose of the meeting was to foster closer cooperation between GCC countries in education, particularly in higher education, in order to build a more advanced and developed Gulf society.

This is especially important as the Gulf countries experience rapid scientific and technological development,

requiring efforts to enhance knowledge and contribute to the advancement of higher education in the region.

He stressed that the significant support and attention given to educational institutions by the leaders of GCC countries must be reflected in the universities, which play a crucial role in developing sciences, knowledge, and addressing challenges.

One key aspect of this progress is the development of admission and registration systems within Gulf universities, which align with international standards and contribute to the preparation of skilled graduates. This effort, he noted, plays a vital role in ensuring high-quality outputs and bolstering the competitiveness of Gulf universities.

Dr. Al-Saeed also highlighted the importance of the attendance of Dr. Abdullah Al-Marhi, the Secretary of the Committee of Deans of Admission and Registration at Gulf Universities, and the deans from other GCC institutions, as it reflects their shared commitment to strengthening ties and advancing joint educational efforts across the region.

He expressed hope that the meeting would pave the way for the creation of advanced educational systems that would benefit Gulf societies.

Dr. Fadhel Aziz, Acting Dean of Admissions and Registration at Kuwait University, noted that the university's hosting of the meeting would further promote cooperation and the exchange of successful experiences among GCC universities.

He emphasized that the working papers presented during the meeting, which focused on issues such as attracting international students and improving universities' international rankings, would serve as valuable insights for the development of admission policies.

These contributions are aligned with the vision of GCC leadership to ensure that universities meet institutional and programmatic accreditation goals.

The meeting is seen as an important step towards strengthening joint efforts among Gulf universities and advancing the educational systems of the region in line with future aspirations.

Kuwait University welcomes 56 foreign students

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Acting Dean of Admissions and Registration at Kuwait University Dr. Fadhel Abbas Aziz has announced that 56 foreigners have been accepted to study at the university at their own expense.

These foreigners are high school

graduates of various nationalities and were accepted in accordance with the university's admission rules.

Aziz clarified that the acceptance of these foreign students was based on the order of preference and the approved quota for admission, in line with the decisions of the University Council and the Council of Governmental Universi-

ties.

The admission policy for the academic year 2024/2025 states that the percentage or average grade of any non-Kuwaiti student in their secondary school certificate must not be lower than the lowest percentage for Kuwaiti students accepted in the same specialization.

All accepted students have been notified of their acceptance and their specialization through text message. They are required to confirm their acceptance online through the electronic admission system and pay the required fee of KD 10. All students who applied for admission can view the result of their application on the electronic admission system.

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MEW gets SAB nod for KD45.9mn Subiya deal

Upgrade ensures reliable summer operations

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy has obtained conditional approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB) to sign a contract for the provision of highly efficient and sustainable engineering services for open-cycle gas turbines and their auxiliary equipment for Station Two in the Subiya Power Generation and Water Distillation Station at a cost of KD 45.939 million; which will result in savings of KD 20,944 once audited and studied by SAB.

Among the requirements of SAB are the commitment to the terms of the agreement (LTSA) regarding maintenance periods and the number of times of operation according to the operation and maintenance manual of the original factory of the units throughout the contract period; as stated in the ministry's response dated Jan 14, 2025.

Also, the amounts allocated for unforeseen and emergency works shall not be used for works that fall within the obligations of

the contractor; while the tender work under consideration shall not be repeated or overlapped with any current or future contracts and the items included in the tender under consideration shall not be repeated or overlapped, taking into account the need to notify the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) and the Ministry of Finance of the value of the subject of the research after the reduction.

This is in addition to the commitment to the period of studying the bids specified in the referral letter from CAPT; so that the delay does not result in the withdrawal of the lowest-priced bidder and additional burdens on public funds, considering the technical study period reached 122 days.

Meanwhile, sources from the ministry disclosed that the tender includes the completion of high-precision and efficient engineering services and maintenance to increase the service life and ensure the safe operation of the station, particularly during summer, when high temperatures impose difficult challenges on all stations, including the Subiya station.

This station is one of nine power generation stations that the ministry relies on primarily to produce electricity, as its installed capacity is 7,046 megawatts, consisting of gas and steam units -- more than 34 percent of the ministry's total production capacity of 20,250 megawatts.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Photo taken during the meeting of the governors, convened by the Minister of Public Works.

Farwaniya Governor joins key meeting on infrastructure with Minister Al-Mashaan

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 22: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah participated in a meeting of the governors, convened by the Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan on Wednesday morning at the Ministry of Public Works building in South Surra.

According to a press release by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting was aimed at discussing ways to enhance joint cooperation between the governorates. They discussed the main challenges related to infrastructure, particularly road maintenance, as well as future projects and plans along with their implementation strategies, with the

aim of improving public services, ensuring the maintenance of roads and infrastructure, and being in line with the state's general policy in accordance with the directives of the political leadership for meeting the aspirations of citizens in all governorates.

Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser affirmed the importance of collaboration between the Ministry of Public Works and the governorates to accelerate the completion of development projects.

He expressed his appreciation for Dr. Al-Mashaan's efforts and her dedication to completing all projects that improve quality of life and support sustainable development.

'Gardenia' exhibition highlights Kuwait's rich heritage

NCCAL announces cultural extravaganza on Feb 10

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) announced that it will hold the "Gardenia" exhibition on February 10 at the Kuwait National Museum. The exhibition will feature a rich and diverse program of cultural and artistic activities.

Acting Assistant Secretary-General for the Antiquities and Museums Sector at the council, Mohammed bin Redha, stated in a press release on Thursday that this event is held in cooperation with the National Council for Culture as a government partner. It is part of the council's strategy to enhance partnerships with the private sector to support and develop Kuwait's cultural and artistic scene.

Bin Redha explained that the exhibition, which will run until the end of February, is the largest of its kind in Kuwait in terms of the activities it offers. It will feature the most significant artistic collections, including paintings from the National Council for Culture, as well as musical and folkloric performances in collaboration with the arts sector. The exhibition will also include a section dedicated to agricultural

products and outdoor sessions focused on gardens.

He noted that specialized workshops and seminars will be organized alongside the exhibition, covering topics such as lighting design for gardens and urban planning. These sessions will provide a platform for learning and interaction with experts in these fields. Bin Redha emphasized that the exhibition is an opportunity to foster innovation and creativity in Kuwait while linking cultural aspects with nature and the arts.

He also mentioned that the Kuwait National Museum will host a series of distinguished exhibitions alongside the "Gardenia" exhibition, highlighting Kuwait's history and rich heritage. This includes the Archaeological Discoveries Exhibition, which features the most important artifacts discovered in Kuwait, reflecting the country's ancient history and its civilizational role throughout the ages.

Bin Redha further explained that the museum will also organize a Popular Heritage Exhibition, which will showcase aspects of traditional life in Kuwait, such as daily life tools, clothing,



KUNA photo
Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Antiquities and Museums Sector, Mohammed bin Redha, visits the Gardenia Exhibition.

handicrafts, and popular councils, offering visitors a chance to learn about the culture of their ancestors.

Additionally, the Planetarium will present engaging documentary and scientific shows suitable for visitors of

all ages. These shows aim to educate the public about astronomy and nature in an entertaining and educational manner, making the exhibition an ideal destination for those interested in culture and science.

Crown Prince, PM extend sympathy

Kuwait's Amir offers condolences to Mongolia over ex-president passing

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences on Thursday to Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh over the passing of former Mongolian President Ochirbat Punsalmaa. In the cable, His Highness expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy, praying to Allah Almighty to grant patience to his family and loved ones.

His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of condolences to Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, expressing his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the family and loved ones of the late Ochirbat Punsalmaa.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable of condolences to Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, mourning the passing of former President Ochirbat Punsalmaa.

CSC guarantees full monthly rewards for revoked nationals under Article 8

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Civil Service Commission has announced that all government agencies have been instructed to begin finalizing employment contracts for female employees whose nationalities were revoked under Article 8 of the Nation-

ality Law, reports Al-Seyassah daily. The new contracts will take effect the day after the nationality was withdrawn, with a comprehensive monthly reward equal to the total of the last monthly salary the employee received before the nationality withdrawal.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity opens residential village with its service facilities in southern Yemen.

Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity inaugurates new fully equipped residential village in southern Yemen

ADEN, Jan 23, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Al-Najat Charity Society inaugurated on Wednesday the residential village "Al-Khayreen 9", which comprises 30 housing units in addition to a school and healthcare center, in Abyan Governorate, southern Yemen.

Yanabee Al-Khayr, a Yemeni organization that supervised the implementation of the project, stated in a press release that the village consists of 30 furnished housing units equipped with power-generating solar systems.

Moreover, the benefiting families would also be provided with a source of income to improve their livelihoods, the organization said. It added that the village's school has three classrooms and the Kuwaiti charity promised to pay teachers' salaries for an entire academic year and provide students with school bags, uniforms, and textbooks.

The project also included the construction of a mosque with its facilities and a fully equipped health unit with necessary medical supplies, as well as a solar-powered water project to meet the needs of the village residents.

Mahdi Al-Hamoud, the Deputy Governor of Abyan, praised the significant role played by Al-Najat Charity Society in supporting local communities and achieving sustainable development through its projects that address residents' needs and improve their living standards.

Tawfiq Al-Baab'i, the head of Yanabee Al-Khayr, expressed gratitude to Kuwait, its leadership, and its people for their non-stop support to the Yemeni people.

The opening of "Al-Khayreen 9" is part of a series of five residential villages that will soon be inaugurated as part of Al-Najat's efforts to support development in Yemen.

Social Affairs plans to reclaim wedding venues from donors

Al-Huwailah pledges reforms and transparency

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah reaffirmed the ministry's plan to reclaim the wedding venues that had been returned to the donors.

During her meeting with officials from the ministry's community development centers, Al-Huwailah responded to employees' requests to reinstate the shift allowance for inspectors, stating, "Kuwait is a land of goodness and does not fall short; it is generous to those who deserve it."

She affirmed that she takes full political responsibility for any shortcomings within the ministry.

The minister said, "It is my policy to meet with all employees of the ministry because this matter is very important to me. I learn from them, and I take full political responsibility for any shortcomings. I do not shy away from my responsibilities, and we do not blame others. In this ministry, we contribute to building and serving this country, and every effort is appreciated by me and the leadership."



Photo by Rezk Taufiq
Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah during her meeting with supervisors of community development centers and halls.

"We are all involved in addressing any shortcomings, and your role as employees is to alert us to shortcomings, if any, so that we can deal with them. I have confidence in every employee, each in their position, to put forth their best effort. We are all in the same boat, and my office door is always open. I am here to listen to any grievances or suggestions, and to serve you and your interests."

She highlighted that Kuwait is currently serving as the presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council for ministries of Social Affairs this year.

Continued from Page 1

Dar al-Athar

visit were DAI Supervisor General Sheikh Hussa Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and Acting Assistant Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) Sheikh Al-Anoud Ibrahim Al-Sabah.

The State of Kuwait boasts unrivalled collection of relics that reflect the depth of the country's rich culture and humanitarian history, Sheikh Al-Anoud said in a welcoming speech.

"The historic visit of the delegation provides us with an opportunity to share experience on the best ways to conserve cultural heritage with world-renowned experts," she pointed out.

Led by Shaikha Mai Bint Mohammad Al-Khalifa - founder and chairperson of Sheikh Ebrahim bin Mohammad Al Khalifa Center for Culture and Research of Bahrain, the delegation includes President and CEO of the World Monuments Fund Benedicte de Montlaur.

Founded in 1965, the WMF preserves the world's diverse cultural heritage using the highest international standards at more than 700 sites in 112 countries.

Buckle up

provisions of the amended law and promote greater adherence to traffic regulations to enhance road safety.

It will use a variety of platforms, including traditional media such as press, television and radio, and social media, to ensure that the awareness messages reach all segments of society.

Traffic messages will also be broadcast in multiple languages, and media meetings will be held with officials to explain the importance of these amendments in reducing accidents and creating a safer traffic environment.

The ministry stated that the previous penalties will remain in effect until the new penalties are implemented.

It urged everyone to familiarize themselves with the amendments and comply with them, emphasizing that adherence to the law is a collective responsibility that helps protect lives and property.

The amendments to the traffic law include an increase in fines, with some violations now carrying a penalty of up to KD 150. Penalties for certain violations may include imprisonment. The lowest fine is KD 15 for a "no parking" violation.

The amendments also introduce a fine ranging from KD 1,000 to KD 2,000 for anyone who, using a device or communication method, takes and shares photos, videos, or audio clips while committing any of the offenses stipulated in the law.

Kuwait weighs

This annual expenditure is directed towards supporting energy production through the state's general budget, which contradicts the state's goal of rationalizing spending and eliminating sources of budgetary waste.

Eng. Boushahri stressed the need to reconsider the current electricity and water tariffs and implement a bracket system based on rationalizing consumption rather than simply collecting fees.

He said this approach would ensure that citizens with limited income or reasonable consumption are not unduly affected, adding that private housing is one of the sectors with high consumption levels.

Eng. Boushahri went on to say, "When customers, whether citizens or residents, feel the financial impact of their consumption, they will be more motivated to reduce it. As a result, expenses would decrease not only for the individual but also for the state's general budget."

When the electricity and water tariffs were amended in 2016, an agreement was made between the Ministry of Electricity and Water and the National Assembly's relevant committee to study the bracket system two years after the amendment. However, this study has not yet taken place.

He stressed that there is a draft law for pricing energy services, listed as a legislative requirement from the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, which needs to be finalized and approved through official channels, adding, "Such legislation could play an important role in establishing fair electricity and water tariffs, in line with the ministry's goals of rationalizing expenditures, eliminating budget waste, and directing support to those who truly need it. This would be achievable after the completion of the smart meter system and the identification of actual consumption patterns through a thorough scientific study."

Kuwait strongly

on Thursday the Israeli occupation's aggression on Jenin, the West Bank.

Secretary General of the League Dr. Mohammad Al-Essa denounced in a press release this dangerous violation saying that it adds to a series of continuous violations to all international and humanitarian laws.

He indicated that this threatens with even more civilian losses and undermines opportunities of peace and stability in the region.

The Israeli occupation continues aggression against city of Jenin and its

camp for the third day in a row, leaving behind 12 martyrs and major destruction to infrastructure.

Elsewhere, the Palestinian Public Authority for Civil Information affirmed Thursday that two Palestinians were killed by Israeli occupation's bullets in Jenin in West Bank, where occupation forces are launching a wide operation for the third consecutive day.

In a press release, the authority said that it informed the Health Ministry about the death of Qutaiba Shalbi and Mohammad Nazal in Burqin village by occupation forces on Wednesday and keeping their bodies.

On Wednesday evening, Israeli occupation forces surrounded a house in Burqin and fired at it, according to what eyewitnesses reported to KUNA.

Israeli Channel 12 claimed that special units and Shabak security agency were able to reach and assassinate the perpetrators of the operation that took place near Al-Funduq village two weeks ago, resulting in killing three settlers and injuring others.

The occupation army continues the military operation that it began in Jenin on January 21, which has so far resulted in the death of 12 young men and the injury of dozens.

Eyewitnesses told KUNA that the occupation army forced a number of families to leave the camp and that soldiers were deployed in its neighborhoods and on the rooftops of buildings.

The occupation forces continue to impose a stifling siege on the West Bank through hundreds of barriers and iron gates erected at the entrances to Palestinian cities and towns.

The occupation's measures hindered the movement of citizens between cities and villages and deprived students of access to their schools and universities and employees to their workplaces.

The Israeli occupation army announced last week that within the framework of the agreement and preparations for the release of prisoners and after the political decisions in the West Bank, combat forces will be strengthened in defense and attack.

Israel continued its military operation in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin for a second day, killing at least ten people, the military said on Wednesday, as Palestinian sources reported that Israeli troops also injured dozens.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement that since the operation began on Tuesday, Israeli forces have killed "over 10" people, all of whom were claimed to be militants.

"Additionally, aerial strikes on terror infrastructure sites were conducted, and numerous explosives planted on routes by the terrorists were dismantled," read the statement.

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School bus arrives at a unification site following a shooting at Antioch High School in Nashville, Tenn on Jan 22. (AP)

Teen fatally shoots female student and himself at Antioch High School in Nashville, police say

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Jan 23, (AP) — A shooting in a Nashville high school cafeteria Wednesday left a female student dead and another student wounded, nearly two years after another deadly school shooting in the city that ignited an emotional debate about gun control in Tennessee.

The 17-year-old shooter, who was also a student at Antioch High School, later shot and killed himself with a handgun, Metro Nashville Police spokesperson Don Aaron said during a news conference. Police identified him as Solomon Henderson.

Police Chief John Drake said the shooter “confronted” student Josselin Corea Escalante, 16, in the cafeteria and opened fire, killing her.

The wounded student was grazed by a bullet. He was treated and released from the hospital, Drake said. Another student was taken to a hospital for treatment of a facial injury that happened during a fall, Aaron said.

Metro Nashville Police, federal and state agencies are examining “very concerning online writings and social media posts connected to 17-year-old Solomon Henderson” as they work to establish a motive, police said in a statement Wednesday evening.

Investigators at this point have not established a connection between Henderson and the victims, and police said the gunfire may have been random, according to the statement.

Two school resource officers were in the building when the shooting happened around 11 a.m., Aaron said. They were not in the immediate vicinity of the cafeteria and by the time they got down there the shooting was over and the gunman had killed himself, Aaron said.

The school has about 2,000 students and is in Antioch, a neighborhood about 10 miles (16 kilometers) southeast of downtown Nashville.

At a family safety center close to a hospital, officials helped shocked parents reunite with their children.

Dajuan Bernard was waiting at a Mapco service station to reunite with his son, a 10th grader, who was being held in the auditorium with other students Wednesday afternoon. He first heard of the shooting from his son, who “was a little startled,” Bernard said. His son was upstairs from the cafeteria but said he heard the gunfire.

“He was OK and let me know that everything was OK,” Bernard said. “This world is so crazy, it could happen anywhere,” he said. “We’ve just got to protect the kids, and raise the kids right to prevent them from even doing this. That’s the hardest part.”

House passes immigrant detention bill that would be Trump’s 1st law to sign

Trump meets with more Republicans as they hash out legislative roadmap

WASHINGTON, Jan 23, (AP) — US President Donald Trump met Wednesday with a small contingent of the most politically endangered House Republicans as the party struggles to agree on a strategy for implementing the tax cuts and other priorities that it promised voters.

The meeting happened as Trump tried to advance other priorities during the first week of his second term. Roughly 160 aides at National Security Council were sent home while they are reviewed to determine if they align with Trump’s agenda. The Pentagon planned to send as many as 1,500 active-duty troops to support border security efforts.

“The American people have been waiting for such a time as this,” said Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary.

Stephen Miller, a top Trump adviser, met with Senate Republicans to update them on plans for deportations and reinstating what’s known as Title 42, a policy that was put in place during the coronavirus pandemic to stop border crossings.

Although Republicans control the White House and both chambers of Congress, they have only thin majorities in Capitol Hill, and there are disagreements on how to

move forward with so many issues on the table.

Trump’s meeting unfolded amid a series of private “listening sessions” with House Speaker Mike Johnson, whose ability to unite his conference will be sorely tested in the weeks and months ahead. Trump has held his own dinners with Republican lawmakers at Mar-a-Lago, and he’s preparing to address them next week at their private retreat in Doral, Florida, where the president owns a resort.

“We’re working very closely in close coordination with the White House because this is an America First agenda that takes both of those branches of government to work in tandem,” Johnson said Wednesday at a news conference.

Referring to Trump’s meeting, Johnson said the president “is kicking-starting what will ultimately be our legislative agenda.”

Those attending the meeting included Mike Lawler of New York, Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania and Don Bacon of Nebraska. All three of their congressional districts were won by Democrat Kamala Harris in last year’s presidential election.

A lengthy first meeting with Trump and Republican leaders at the White House on Tuesday was



US House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., (center), joined from left by Rep. Jeff Hurd, R-Colo., Republican Conference Chair Lisa McClain, R-Mich., and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., during a news conference at the Republican National Committee headquarters in Washington on Jan 22. (AP)

described as more of a first date than a marriage, said one person granted anonymity to discuss the private session.

They’ve been debating the best strategy for advancing their agenda of tax cuts, deportations and massive reductions to the federal workforce, among other Trump promises.

two-step approach that would involve first providing money Trump needs to ramp up border wall construction and mass deportation plans, along with domestic energy development and other resources for the Pentagon.

That would save the thorny issue of tax and spending cuts for a second package.

It’s not just strategy but substance that divides Republican lawmakers, despite their broad agreement on the need to lower taxes and reduce the size of the federal government.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The House on Wednesday gave final approval to a bill that requires the detainment of unauthorized immigrants accused of theft and violent crimes, marking the first legislation that President Donald Trump can sign as Congress, with some bipartisan support, swiftly moved in line with his plans to crackdown on illegal immigration.

Passage of the Laken Riley Act, which was named after a Georgia nursing student who was murdered last year by a Venezuelan man, shows just how sharply the political debate over immigration has shifted to the right following Trump’s

election victory. Immigration policy has often been one of the most entrenched issues in Congress, but a crucial faction of 46 politically vulnerable Democrats joined with Republicans to lift the strict proposal to passage on a 263-156 vote tally.

“For decades, it has been almost impossible for our government to agree on solutions for the problems at our border and within our country,” said Sen. Katie Britt, an Alabama Republican. She called the legislation “perhaps the most significant immigration enforcement bill” to be passed by Congress in nearly three decades.

Still, the bill would require a massive ramp-up in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s capabilities, but does not include any new funding.

Meanwhile, the new president has launched a slew of executive orders intended to seal off the border of Mexico to immigration and ultimately deport millions of immigrants without permanent legal status in the U.S. On Wednesday, Trump also canceled refugee resettlement and his administration has signaled intentions to prosecute local law enforcement officials who do not enforce his new immigration policies.

Russian victory over Ukraine would have costly impact on alliance’s credibility: NATO chief

BRUSSELS, Jan 23, (AP) — NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte warned on Thursday that a Russian victory over Ukraine would undermine the dissuasive force of the world’s biggest military alliance and that its credibility could cost trillions to restore.

NATO has been ramping up its forces along its eastern flank with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, deploying thousands of troops and equipment to deter Moscow from expanding its war into the territory of any of the organization’s 32 member countries.

“If Ukraine loses then to restore the deterrence of the rest of NATO again, it will be a much, much higher price than what we are contemplating at this moment in terms of ramping up our spending and ramping up our industrial production,” Rutte said.

“It will not be billions extra; it will be trillions extra,” he said, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Rutte insisted that Ukraine’s Western backers must “step up and not scale back the support” they are providing to the country, almost three years after Russia’s full-fledged invasion began.

“We have to change the trajectory of the war,” Rutte said, adding that the West “cannot allow in the 21st century that one country invades another country and tries to colonize it.”

“We are beyond those days,” he said.

Anxiety in Europe is mounting that US President Donald Trump might seek to quickly end the war in talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on terms that are unfavorable to Ukraine, but Rutte appeared wary about trying to do things in a hurry.

“If we got a bad deal, it would only



Switzerland’s Defense Minister Federal Councillor Viola Amherd, (right), shakes hands with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, (left), prior to a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on Jan 22. (AP)

mean that we will see the president of Russia high-fiving with the leaders from North Korea, Iran and China and we cannot accept that,” the former Dutch prime minister said. “That would be geopolitically a big, big mistake.”

Trump’s new envoy for special missions, Richard Grenell, criticized allies who talk of continuing the war but still won’t increase their defense spending to NATO guidelines. He said Americans think it is “outrageous” that the Biden administration refused to talk to Putin.

NATO leaders have agreed that each member country should spend at least 2% of gross domestic product on their military budgets. The alliance estimates that 23 members will reach that level this year, although almost a third will still fall short. Poland and Estonia spend most in GDP terms.

“You cannot ask the American people to expand the umbrella of NATO when the current members aren’t paying their fair share,” Grenell said. The United States spends most within NATO on its own budget, in dollar terms, and allies rely on its military might for their defense.

“When we have leaders who are going to talk about more war, we need to make sure that those leaders are spending the right amount of money,” Grenell said. “We need to be able to avoid war, and that means a credible threat from NATO.”

He also insisted that former President Joe Biden was wrong not to talk to Putin, who was indicted for war crimes in 2023 by the International Criminal Court for the “unlawful deportation” of children from Ukraine to Russia.



Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk arrives to deliver his speech during the presentation of the programme of activities of the Polish Presidency, at the European Parliament on Jan 22 in Strasbourg, eastern France. (AP)

‘If Europe is to survive, it must be armed’

EU needs to end military dependency on US: Tusk

BRUSSELS, Jan 23, (AP) — The European Union cannot rely on the United States to defend it and must increase military spending and security preparedness to help Ukraine and deter Russia from targeting any more of its neighbors, top EU officials warned on Wednesday.

“Ask not of America what it can do for our security. Ask yourselves what we can do for our own security,” Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, whose country holds the EU presidency, said, paraphrasing a quote from US President John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address in 1961.

In an address to EU lawmakers, Tusk urged the 27-nation bloc to “take control” of its own security and to identify its weaknesses. “If Europe

is to survive, it must be armed,” he said.

Anxiety is mounting that US President Donald Trump might seek to quickly end the war in talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on terms that are unfavorable to Ukraine, or once again refuse to defend European allies who do not boost their military budgets.

“We need to believe again in our power,” Tusk told the assembly, in Strasbourg, France. “We are strong, we are equal to the greatest powers in the world. The only thing we have to do is believe in it.”

Tusk said that his country is spending close to 5% of its gross domestic product on its defense budget, more than any NATO ally including the

United States. He urged his European partners to match that rate at least until Russia backs down.

“It is today that we need to radically increase our defense spending (but) not forever and ever.”

In Brussels, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas warned of the dangers that Russia already poses, laying out a list of acts of sabotage, cyber-attacks, disinformation campaigns and electronic GPS jamming that she accuses Moscow of underwriting.

“Many of our national intelligence agencies are giving us the information that Russia could test the EU’s readiness to defend itself in 3 to 5 years,” she said at a European Defense Agency gathering. “Who else are we listening to if not to them?”

Knox gets final shot at clearing name

ROME, Jan 23, (AP) — Amanda Knox has a final shot at clearing her name of the last vestige of criminal wrongdoing when Italy’s highest court on Thursday hears her appeal of a slander conviction for falsely accusing a Congolese bar owner in the 2007 murder of her British flatmate.

But the innocent man she accused, Patrick Lumbumba, told reporters outside Italy’s Cassation Court that he hopes the conviction stands and “stays with her for the rest of her life.”

The ruling should bring an end to a sensational 17-year legal saga that saw Knox and her Italian ex-boyfriend convicted and acquitted in flip-flop verdicts in 21-year-old Meredith Kercher’s brutal murder, before being exonerated by the highest Cassation Court in 2015.



Amanda Knox arrives flanked by her husband Christopher Robinson, right, and her lawyer Luca Luparia Donati at the Florence courtroom in Florence, Italy on June 5, 2024. (AP)

Europe

Merz demands tougher rules: Germany’s opposition leader vowed Thursday to bar people from entering the country without proper papers and to step up deportations if he is elected chancellor next month, as a knife attack by a rejected asylum-seeker spilled over into an election campaign in which he is the front-runner.

Two people, including a 2-year-old boy, were killed and three injured Wednesday in the Bavarian city of Aschaffenburg. The suspect, arrested shortly afterward, is a 28-year-old Afghan with a history of psychiatric problems and violence who said over a month ago that he would leave Germany voluntarily.

His asylum application was rejected in 2023 and authorities failed

to send him back to Bulgaria, where he first arrived in the European Union, according to Bavarian officials, who pointed the finger at the federal migration office.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose center-left party trails in polls ahead of Germany’s Feb 23 election, met the heads of the country’s security services on Wednesday evening and said they will “draw the necessary consequences. Now.” He didn’t specify what those would be.

His main election challenger, **Friedrich Merz**, whose center-right



Merz

Union bloc leads polls, stepped up his party’s vows to toughen migration policy. (AP)

□ □ □

5 treated after UK stabbing: Five people have been treated following a stabbing Thursday morning in south London, according to London’s Ambulance Service.

London’s Metropolitan Police said a man has been arrested following the stabbing in Croydon. British media reports said the stabbing happened near an Asda supermarket.

The ambulance service said one person was taken to a major trauma center in London and four other people were hospitalized.

“We sent a number of resources to the scene, including ambulance crews, a paramedic in a fast response car, an incident response officer, members of our Tactical Response Unit and London’s Air Ambulance,” the service said. (AP)

Sri Lankan leader issues guidelines

COLOMBO, Jan 23, (Xinhua): The office of Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has issued new guidelines to ministers and deputy ministers, capping the size of their staff, vehicle use, and other expenses in a bid to reduce government spending.

The instructions issued on Jan. 21 were released to the media on Thursday.



Dissanayake

According to N.S. Kumaranayake, secretary to the president, ministers are permitted a maximum of 15 support staff, while deputy ministers are allowed 12. Most of these staff members must be recruited from the existing state service, and none can include family members or close relatives, as per the instructions.

The Presidential Secretariat also outlined regulations regarding the use of official vehicles, fuel allocations, and telephone expenses. Ministers and deputy ministers are limited to two official vehicles. If they use state-owned vehicles or rent vehicles from private entities, the ministry secretary must ensure that these procurements adhere to the regulations set by the Presidential Secretariat.

South Korea to remove concrete barriers near runways

S.Korean investigators call for indictment of detained Yoon

SEOUL, South Korea, Jan 23, (AP): South Korean investigators asked prosecutors to indict the country's detained President Yoon Suk Yeol over his short-lived imposition of martial law last month, as it accused him of rebellion, abuse of power and obstruction of parliament on Thursday.

Yoon defended his actions again as he appeared at a court hearing for the second time Thursday, saying the Dec. 3 martial law decree was only meant to inform the public of the danger of an opposition-controlled National Assembly. He argued that the martial law imposition ended early because he quickly withdrew troops after the assembly voted down his decree.

"The reason for the declaration of martial law wasn't about a warning to the opposition. I was trying to appeal to the people to draw their strict supervision and criticism of the opposition," Yoon told a hearing at the Constitutional Court. "No matter how many warnings I would issue to the opposition, they would have been useless."

Yoon was impeached and suspended by the assembly on Dec 14. The Constitutional Court is now deliberating to determine whether to formally throw Yoon out of office or reinstate him.



Supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stage a rally to oppose his impeachment near the Constitutional Court in Seoul, South Korea on Jan 23. (AP)

Appearing at the same hearing, Yoon's defense minister at the time of the martial law enforcement, Kim Yong Hyun, supported the president's

argument, saying that he drew up the decree and proposed it to Yoon.

Kim, a close associate of Yoon who is also in detention, claimed that Yoon

asked him to remove a public curfew from the decree, deploy a much smaller number of soldiers to the assembly than he initially proposed, and prevent

troops from carrying live ammunition.

Kim's arguments couldn't immediately be independently verified. He has previously said all responsibility for the imposition of martial law rests solely with him. He was stopped from attempting suicide while in detention, days after the ill-fated martial law enactment.

Also:

SEOUL, South Korea: South Korea will remove concrete embankments near airport runways in response to a recent air disaster, media reports said Thursday.

The embankments contain antennas called localizers designed to guide aircraft during landings and have been blamed for making last month's crash of a Jeju Air plane worse.

The Boeing 737-800 skidded off a runway in the South Korean city of Muan on Dec. 29 after its landing gear failed to deploy, slamming into the concrete structure and bursting into flames, killing all but two of the 181 people on board.

The Transport Ministry said it will replace the structures with breakable materials that are safer, the Korea JoongAng Daily newspaper and other media reported.

Mexican border states prepare migrant shelters as Trump begins deportation campaign

CIUDAD JUÁREZ, Mexico, Jan 23, (AP): Mexico raised sprawling tents on the U.S. border Wednesday as it braced for President Donald Trump to fulfill his pledge to carry out mass deportations. In an empty lot tight against the border with El Paso, Texas, cranes lifted metal frames for tent shelters in Ciudad Juárez.

Enrique Serrano, an official in Chihuahua state, where Ciudad Juárez is located, said the tents erected for Mexican deportees were just the initial phase of a potential larger operation, and something authorities would scale up if the number of migrants gathering on the border continued to mount. He suggested migrants from other countries expelled from the U.S. would be relocated to Mexico City or southern regions of Mexico as they've done previously.

Nogales, Mexico - across from Nogales, Arizona - announced that it would build shelters on soccer fields and in a gymnasium. The border cities of Matamoros and Piedras Negras have launched similar efforts.

At a border crossing in Tijuana, Mexico, on Tuesday night, one man shouted to journalists that he was being deported in a group that was arrested that morning in farm fields near Denver. Another man said he was in a group that had been brought from Oregon. Everyone carried their belongings



Migrants eat at a shelter on Jan 22, in the border city of Tijuana, Mexico. (AP)

in a small orange bag.

Neither man's account could be independently confirmed.

The number of people deported Tuesday was lower than the daily average of about 500 last year, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum noted at her daily press briefing. And many border shelters that have long offered refuge to migrants remained comparatively empty to the soaring levels of migrants seen just a year before. Still, heads of those migrant

shelters like José María García, director of the Tijuana shelter Movimiento Juventud 2000 were bracing for what could come.

"Mass deportations in the United States and the arrival of thousands of migrants from the south could overwhelm the city of Tijuana and other border cities, creating a crisis," he said.

Though quickly ramping up deportations - as Trump pledges - faces logistical and financial challenges.

Asia

2 Philippine soldiers killed: Gunmen killed two soldiers and wounded 12 others who were deployed to secure a UN livelihood project in the southern Philippines, military officials said Thursday.

The attack Wednesday in Sumisip town in Basilan province sparked a clash in which two gunmen were also killed, they said. The military said the attackers included members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an armed Muslim group that signed a 2014 peace deal with the government.

An army truck carrying soldiers assigned to secure a UN Development Program project was fired on in an ambush by the attackers, the military said.

Philippine army chief Lt. Gen Roy Galido said the army was working with provincial officials and law enforcers to ensure "justice be served to our fallen heroes." (AP)

4 die in Cambodia capital: Four people died and five others were injured Thursday as a crowd scrambled for a handout of food and cash from one of Cambodia's richest people as a Chinese Lunar New Year gift, officials said.



Galido

The victims were crushed as the crowd of hundreds surged forward when the gates to Sok Kong's walled compound in Phnom Penh opened to start the distribution of \$10 in cash and two kilograms (4.5 pounds) of rice, police spokesperson Sam Vichhika said. (AP)

1 dead in Japan stabbing: One person died and two others were injured in a knife attack Wednesday night outside a train station in Nagano in central Japan, and police were looking for a suspect who fled, authorities said.

Nagano police and fire department officials said a 49-year-old man was pronounced dead at a hospital. A 37-year-old man was wounded but conscious, while a 46-year-old woman had a head injury from falling.

Those attacked described the suspect as an unfamiliar middle-aged man, the Kyodo News agency reported. The stabbing occurred near a bus terminal outside Nagano station. (AP)

Man gets death in China: A Chinese man who injured a Japanese mother and her child and killed a Chinese bus attendant trying to protect them in a knife attack near Shanghai last June has been sentenced to death, according to a Japanese government official.

A court in the city of Suzhou said Zhou Jiasheng, 52, stabbed the three because he was indebted and did not want to live any longer, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters in Tokyo on Thursday. (AP)

Colombian president visits southern Haiti

UN chief warns gangs could overrun Haiti capital

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 23, (AP): Gangs in Haiti could overrun the capital, Port-au-Prince, leading to a complete breakdown of government authority without additional international support for the beleaguered national police, the United Nations chief warned.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a report released to coincide with a Security Council meeting Wednesday on the deteriorating situation in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country that "time is of the essence."

Further delays in providing the police with additional officers for the multinational force trying to curb gang violence or additional assistance "carry the risk of a catastrophic collapse of national security institutions," he said.

"This could allow the gangs to overrun the entire metropolitan area, resulting in a complete breakdown of state authority and rendering international operations, including those to support communities in need, in the country untenable," Guterres said.

He told the Security Council: "We must urgently do everything in our power to prevent such an outcome."

Kenya is leading the multinational police force, and 217 additional officers arrived over the weekend, bringing its total deployment to more than 600, below the 1,000 officers the country's president pledged. An additional 150 Guatemalans and an advance team of



Colombia's President Gustavo Petro greets people upon arriving in Jacmel, Haiti on Jan 22. (AP)

eight Salvadorean troops have also arrived, but the force remains far below its anticipated strength of 2,500 officers.

The power of gangs in Haiti has grown since the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

More than 5,600 people were reported killed across Haiti last year, according to the United Nations. The number of killings increased by more than 20%

compared with all of 2023, according to the U.N. Human Rights Office.

Meanwhile, Colombian President Gustavo Petro visited Haiti on Wednesday as part of a whirlwind trip to strengthen ties with the violence-ravaged country.

Petro arrived in the southern coastal city of Jacmel, bypassing the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, whose main international airport remains void of commercial air traffic ever since gangs opened fire on several airlines in November.

His visit comes as Haiti's prime minister and a transitional presidential council continue to reach out to various countries as Haitian police officers and a UN-backed mission led by Kenya struggle to contain gang violence.

"In a crucial moment for Haiti's stability, Colombia reaffirms its commitment to the strengthening of democracy and the development of the region," Petro's office said.

Haiti's government spent more than \$3.8 million to overhaul Jacmel's crumbling infrastructure in preparation for Petro's visit. Projects included restoring electricity, renovating the town hall and more than doubling the runway length at the local airport to accommodate Colombian military aircraft.

Prior to arriving in Haiti, Petro met with officials in the neighboring Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti.

M23 advances in E. Congo's Goma

NZULU, Congo, Jan 23, (AP): The M23 rebel group's advance toward eastern Congo's largest city has displaced over 178,000 people in the past two weeks, the United Nations said, as the fighters closed in on Goma on the border with Rwanda.

The M23 has been making significant advances, though it was unclear whether the rebels will try to capture Goma, which they seized in 2012 and controlled for over a week. Congolese authorities said Tuesday its fighters seized the town of Minova, on a key supply route for Goma, a regional hub for security and humanitarian efforts. M23 is one of about 100 armed groups that have been vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern Congo in a decades-long conflict that has created one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. More than 7 million people have been displaced.



People fleeing M-23 rebel advances arrive by boat in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo on Jan 22. (AP)

Pakistan proposes sweeping controls on soc-med

ISLAMABAD, Jan 23, (AP): Pakistan's opposition said Thursday the government is seeking to further suppress freedom of speech a day after it proposed sweeping controls on social media that could include blocking platforms and sending users to prison for spreading disinformation.

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, introduced in the National Assembly by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday, would create

an agency with the power to order "unlawful and offensive content" blocked from social media, and to ban individuals and organizations from social media.

Social media platforms would be required to register with the new Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority, and those failing to comply with the law could face temporary or permanent bans.

The law also makes spreading disin-

formation a criminal offense, punishable by three years in prison and a fine of 2 million rupees (\$7,150).

The move comes nearly a year after Pakistan blocked the X platform ahead of an election that the opposition party of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan says was rigged. X is still blocked in the country, although many people use virtual private networks to access it, like in other countries with tight internet controls.

Kuwait crude oil falls to \$82.21 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil lost 88 cents during Wednesday's trading to reach USD 82.21 per barrel compared with USD 83.09 pb the day before,

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Brent futures dropped 29 cents to USD 79 pb and West Texas Intermediate (WTA) declined 39 cents to USD 75.44 pb.

Business

Program aids youth to equip with key communication skills

Gulf Bank sponsors LOYAC's Influencer Program to empower youth

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: As part of its ongoing commitment to empowering youth, Gulf Bank has announced its sponsorship of the Influencer Program, organized by LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) – an affiliate of the non-profit organization LOYAC. The program is designed to provide young people aged 15 to 19 with unique training opportunities that develop their public communication and leadership skills. The training sessions will run from January 20 to February 17, 2025.

The Influencer Program offers an exceptional platform for young individuals to enhance their abilities through a series of specialized workshops and activities. These sessions focus on critical areas such as effective communication, leadership development, presentation and public speaking skills, photography and video editing, digital marketing, and podcast production.

Delivered by experienced trainers and industry professionals, the program equips participants with the tools and knowledge they need to make a meaningful impact in their communities.



Gulf Bank Logo.

For the third year in a row, Gulf Bank is

proud to sponsor the Influencer Program, emphasizing its dedication to fostering community sustainability. This initiative reflects Gulf Bank's commitment to supporting organizations that empower and inspire young people to reach their full potential.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait's leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the

bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

Program by CBK set for April 2025

Central Bank announces leadership course in partnership with Harvard

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's central bank (CBK) will be organizing a Harvard Business School-level training course for the development of "strategic leadership" skills, its chief Basel Al-Haroon said on Wednesday, citing that it would be the 16th edition of the program.

The program, slated for April 12-17 is entitled, "Strategic Leadership in the Age of Financial Sustainability," which will cover two primary themes, including financial strategy and leadership, both of which will focus on the crucial role of the leadership and management to "anticipate and respond quickly and effectively to changes in financial markets," he said.

On the intricacies behind the course, he said it deals with Harvard's "proven case-study methods" to enhance the analytical skills of the participants and provide them with the tools, techniques and methodologies that boost performance, innovation and organizational culture.

Discussing the targeted cohort, the CBK chief said that "executive managers or the equivalent," are eligible for the training program, all of whom will receive a certificate of at-



Central Bank of Kuwait.

KUNA photo

tendance from the Harvard Business School upon completing the course, he added.

On CBK's "productive and ongoing cooperation" with Harvard Business School, the official said that their partnership dates back to 2009, while the first edition of the training course was held in Kuwait a year later, describing the initiative as the

"first custom designed program" offered by Harvard in Gulf Arab countries.

Outlining CBK's chief priorities, he said that "strengthening the performance of the national workforce" will remain a top strategic priority, given their "crucial role" in achieving sustainable growth of the banking and financial sector.

Zain achieves key climate milestone with SBTi-approved net-zero targets

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: Zain Group, a leading provider of ICT innovative technologies and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced its latest set of ambitious climate targets, officially approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

This approval marks a significant step in Zain's commitment to combat climate change and positions the company as the only Kuwaiti-based corporate to have its emission reduction targets verified by the SBTi.

It also follows last year's ranking whereby Zain maintained its region-leading carbon emission disclosure CDP score of A- for third straight year, positioning the company as the highest ranked and only telecom operator in the Middle East and Africa to achieve this high rating.

The approved targets include Zain's overarching goal to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across its entire value chain by 2050. Additionally, the SBTi has validated Zain's updated near-term and new long-term targets, which are aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Zain Group Chief Sustainability Officer, Jennifer Suleiman, and Chief Technology Officer, Mohammad Al-Marshed, jointly commented, "Climate change is a key priority for Zain. We



Zain logo

are committed to transforming our operations and value chain to significantly reduce our carbon footprint as we target halving our carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This approval from the SBTi validates our commitment and endorses our efforts that has placed Zain at the forefront of climate action in the region." Zain's approved targets include:

- Near-Term: Reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by 42% by 2030 from a 2020 base year.

- Long-Term: Reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by 90% by 2050 from a 2020 base year.

- Long-Term: Reduce absolute Scope 3 GHG emissions by 90% by 2050 from a 2020 base year.

The Science Based Targets initiative provides companies with a clearly defined pathway to reduce GHG emissions, helping to prevent the worst impacts of climate change and future-proof business growth. Zain's commitment to these targets reflects its leadership in corporate sustainability and its proactive approach to addressing the global climate crisis.

In 2022, Zain developed a compre-



SBTi logo

hensive Climate Change Compliance Framework to structure its climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives, aiming to reach net-zero by 2050. During the same year, the company officially submitted its commitment to setting science-based targets to SBTi.

In order to reach its near-term and long-term targets, Zain has devised a detailed climate change mitigation strategy with Board-level oversight and governed by a company-wide climate change compliance framework. This strategy entails, but is not limited to, the deployment of various initiatives across Zain's operating entities with the aim of the abatement of emissions in line with science by reducing energy consumption, shifting to renewable power sources and implementing carbon dioxide removal solutions in the future when feasible.

For more, please visit: <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/companies-taking-action#dashboard>

US natural gas prices jump 19.6% amid polar vortex

Global natural gas prices surge in 2024, driven by supply and demand shifts

By KAMCO Invest

Key global natural gas prices have increased during 2024. According to the World Bank, US average monthly natural gas prices for December 2024 increased by 19.6% y-o-y to reach USD 3.02/MMBtu. Similarly, European natural gas prices for December 2024 jumped 20.4% y-o-y, averaging the month at USD 13.86/MMBtu reflecting a steeper-than-expected decline in storage levels and increased uncertainty surrounding the Ukrainian transit of Russian gas. Meanwhile, the average monthly Japanese LNG price for December 2024 witnessed an 11.6% y-o-y drop at USD 12.76/MMBtu. Overall, the World Bank's natural gas index witnessed a 16.9% y-o-y increase during 2024 to close the year at an average of 111.2 points. The jump in US and EU natural gas prices was mainly attributed to record heating demand triggered by the cold induced by an incoming polar vortex and the adjustment of supply disruptions respectively.

Aggregate global natural gas consumption is estimated to have increased for the second consecutive year in 2024 and to witness a 2.8% y-o-y increase to reach 4,212 bcm, compared to 4,097 bcm in 2023, according to the IEA. Comparatively, total global natural gas production witnessed a smaller gain of 1.4% to reach 4,191 bcm compared to 4,134 bcm in 2023. The Asia-Pacific region witnessed the biggest portion of natural gas consumption growth in 2024, comprising 43.5% of the 50 bcm increase in global natural gas consumption, led by China, which alone comprised 29% of the global natural gas consumption gain.

On the other hand, despite an overall expectation of unchanged natural gas consumption in Europe. The region's gas storage levels declined at the fastest rate in eight years towards the end of 2024, mainly due to a combination of colder temperatures and reduced wind speeds.

Global natural gas supply realignment induced by the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to influence the world's natural gas supply chains. As EU countries looked to wean themselves off Russian natural gas, new natural gas (LNG) suppliers entered the market, led by the US. US LNG exports are estimated to have reached a new record high of 86.9 million metric tons in 2024 (0.8% higher than US LNG shipments in 2023), of which 50.4% is expected to be destined for Europe.

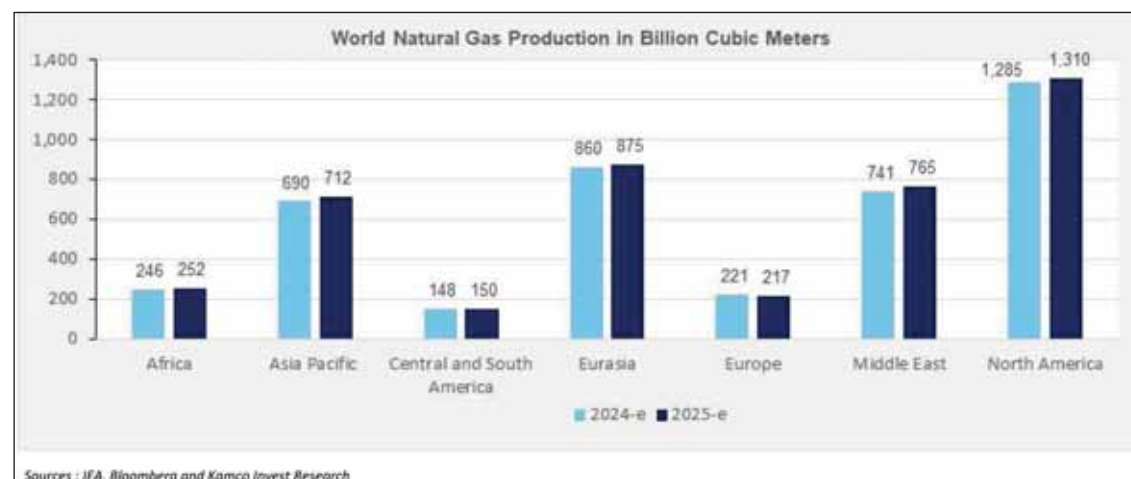
The US was the largest global LNG exporter in 2023. However, Europe's natural gas purchases from the US stabilized over the last two years. According to Kpler, Europe is expected to purchase 43.8 million tons of LNG from the US in 2024 compared to 56.5 million tons of LNG in 2023. The decline of EU LNG imports forced US LNG exporters to find new buyers.

In the Asia-Pacific region, natural gas consumption witnessed moderate growth of 5.5% y-o-y to reach 956 bcm in 2024 compared to 906 bcm in 2023, according to the IEA.

China represented nearly 45% of the Asia-Pacific region's natural gas consumption in 2024, reaching 426 bcm, up from 393 bcm in 2023. Comparatively, natural gas consumption in North America edged up marginally by 1.8% y-o-y in 2024 to reach 1,178 bcm compared to 1,157 bcm in 2023. US natural gas con-

EIA Forecast - US Natural Gas Supply and Consumption in Billions Cubic Feet Per Day				
	2023	2024	2025-e	2026-e
Marketed Production	104.00	103.00	105.00	107.00
Consumption	89.00	90.00	91.00	90.00
LNG Exports	12.00	12.00	15.00	16.00
Henry Hub Spot Prices (\$/thousand cubic feet)	2.50	2.20	3.10	4.00

Sources: EIA and Kamco Invest Research



Sources: IEA, Bloomberg and Kamco Invest Research

sumption in 2024 reached 946 bcm, up from 928 bcm in 2023.

Natural Gas Consumption

In the Asia-Pacific region, the growth in natural gas demand was mainly driven by a strong increase from China and India, where both markets recorded robust growth rates during 2024. In particular, the combination of economic growth, low LNG prices during the first half of the year, and widespread heatwaves in the region underpinned the overall growth of natural gas consumption. Lower domestic LNG prices compared to diesel prices, coupled with increased gas demand due to the summer heatwave, underpinned China's natural gas consumption growth in the transport and power sectors, respectively. In contrast, natural gas consumption in Japan remained flat for the first ten months of 2024, according to the IEA. Gas consumption in Japan's power generation sector improved due to the cold weather in March 2024 and the summer heatwave. However, the uptick in natural gas consumption in the country was offset by a 2% decline in activity in the industrial sector.

Natural gas consumption in the North America region witnessed an estimated marginal (20 bcm) improvement in 2024, mainly driven by growth in the gas-to-power sector. In contrast, gas consumption in the residential and commercial sectors remained flat during the year. US natural gas consumption in 2024 was mainly driven by growth in the power sector due

to higher electricity consumption caused by heatwaves.

Similarly, gas consumption in Canada improved moderately during 2024, mainly supported by gas demand growth in the industrial and power sectors. According to the IEA, natural gas consumption in the North America region is estimated to be close to the current yearly consumption level due to the balance between expected gas use in the residential and commercial sectors, weighed down by an anticipated decline in gas-to-power consumption in the region.

In OECD European countries, natural gas consumption stayed flat, recording a marginal uptick of 0.5% (2.5 bcm) during 2024. Natural gas consumption in OECD European countries plummeted during Q1-2024 due to mild weather conditions, which led to lower heat demand during the period. This decline in demand was mainly offset by robust natural gas demand during the fourth quarter of the year, mainly because of colder weather and lower wind power production.

Natural Gas Production

Global natural gas production growth in 2024 was single-handedly driven by an increase in Russian natural gas production. Overall, global natural gas production increased by 57 bcm from 2023 to 2024, of which 44 bcm came from Russia. Despite driving global natural gas production growth in 2024, Russia's

production was still lower than its pre-war level. Russian natural gas production stood at 762 bcm in 2021 compared to 682 bcm in 2022. The decline was mainly the result of EU sanctions prompted by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, leading to lower piped gas exports to Europe. According to Bruegel, EU gas imports from Russia stood at 54.5 bcm in 2023, down from 157 bcm in 2021. On the other hand, natural gas production in the US remained flat in 2024 at 1,060 bcm, slightly down from 1,061 bcm in 2023. Comparatively, gas production in the Middle East region improved by 2.2% (16 bcm) to reach 741 bcm compared to 725 bcm in 2023.

In its latest short-term energy outlook, the EIA forecasted that US natural gas consumption in 2025 would be 1.1% higher than in 2024 at 91.0 bcf/d (2.57 bcm/d), reflecting an expected stabilization in consumption. The EIA also estimates that US natural gas marketed production will reach 105.0 bcf/d (3.0 bcm/d) in 2025, witnessing an increase of 1.9% from 2024 to 2025. In terms of sectors, the EIA forecasts the US natural gas share of electricity generation to fall from 43% in 2024 to 41% in 2025.

In terms of natural gas prices in the US, the EIA forecasts the Henry Hub natural gas spot price to average USD 3.10/MMBtu during 2025 and increase to USD 4.0/MMBtu in 2026 due to expected rising demand for LNG exports.

US net LNG exports are expected to grow by an estimated 25% in 2025 to reach 15.0 bcf/d (0.42 bcm/d). This growth will be supported by two new LNG export facilities (Plaquemines LNG and Corpus Christi LNG Stage 3) that started production in December 2024. Moreover, the EIA estimates that US LNG exports will grow further from 15 bcf (0.42 bcm) in 2025 to 16 bcf (0.53 bcm) in 2026. Additional export capacity from the Golden Pass facility, expected to come online in mid-2026, will also boost LNG exports.

GCC

In the GCC region, natural gas production in Qatar recorded a 2% y-o-y decline, mainly due to decreasing domestic consumption as the country's rapid solar photovoltaic (PV) rollout takes effect. Qatar previously unveiled plans to produce 30% of the country's energy needs from solar by 2030 as part of its clean energy transition efforts. As global LNG supply rebalances due to conflicts and clean energy initiatives, Qatar has diversified its customers by signing long-term contracts with both new and old clients. In Q3 2024, Qatar signed a long-term natural gas supply contract with Kuwait. The two GCC countries signed a 15-year agreement for Qatar to supply 3 million tons of LNG per year to Kuwait's LNG terminal Al-Zour. According to the IEA, Qatar's natural gas production is expected to remain flat in 2025, as the nearest major gas expansion project is not expected until 2026. On the other hand, natural gas production in Saudi Arabia increased by 2% in 2024, driven by additional gas from the Hawiyah Gas Plant expansion project. Moreover, the Kingdom's natural gas production is poised to grow by 4% in 2025, mainly due to the commencement of gas projects (Jafurah Phase 1 and Tanajib).

Event seeks to exchange insights and gather feedback to enhance the program's impact on students

NBK hosts panel discussion for school principals participating in the Bankee Program

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) hosted a panel discussion with some principals of public schools participating in the Bankee Program. The session provided a platform for knowledge exchange, allowing the participants to share their insights and suggestions for the program's development. The discussion also focused on assessing how school administrations have benefited from the program and its overall impact on students.

Bankee, a pioneering program in Kuwait, is offered by NBK in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority "Nazaha". The program aims to introduce students to fundamental economic concepts and practices, including earning, spending, saving, and managing financial obligations.

The program also strives to instill core values in students, including honesty, integrity, personal development, responsibility, cooperation, and teamwork. It aims to raise a generation of Kuwaiti youth who recognize the significance of financial stability and independence, equipping them with the financial knowledge and skills essential for contributing to the sustainable development and economic well-being of both individuals and society.

During the meeting, participating school principals exchanged experiences and ideas on how to further develop the program and maximize its benefits for both schools and students. The importance of maintaining ongoing communication between the bank and schools was also emphasized, with a focus on continuously sharing perspectives and innovative ideas throughout the year.

The school principals expressed their gratitude for NBK's commitment to supporting education and promoting positive values among younger generations. They highlighted the significant impact of the Bankee Program in enhancing students' skills, behaviors, and financial literacy.

On this occasion, Manal Al-Mattar, Deputy General Manager & Head of Group Corporate Communications at NBK stated, "This meeting reflects NBK's commitment to fostering productive collaboration with all state institutions to drive societal development and enhance human resources, which are the cornerstone of growth and prosperity. We are particularly focused on education, and the bank is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to its advancement."

"The program has achieved remarkable success over the past year, leading many schools to apply for participation. This success can be attributed to its unique program design and its positive impact on students' behaviors, equipping them with essential skills for managing their financial affairs. Furthermore, there has been a notable improvement in their financial literacy following the program's implementation in their schools," she added.



National Bank of Kuwait team during the event.



Creative Confidence Team



Abeer Al-Gharibi - Principal of Amoria Primary School



Ghadeer Al-Muhanna - Principal of Al-Fadl Bin Al-Abbas Elementary School



Zainab Bahro - Principal of Sharifa Al Qatami Primary School



Hanai Al-Muqahwi - Principal of Abdullah Khalaf Al-Dahayan Elementary School for Boys

"As part of our commitment to enhancing the Bankee Program's content, we have launched dedicated accounts on various social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. These platforms allow all participants to access valuable content, activities, and events from schools throughout the year. Additionally, the program's website has been launched in both Arabic and English to further expand its reach and impact," she emphasized.

She emphasized that the visits by the bank's executive management to schools and their follow-up on the program's implementation played a crucial role in enhancing its significance. These visits were marked by the strong presence of parents, who expressed immense satisfaction with the positive changes they observed in their children's behavior and financial awareness.

Meanwhile, Eng. Abrar Al-Hamad, Assistant Secretary General at Nazaha, emphasized that the outstanding success of the Bankee Program reflects the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at embedding principles of integrity and transparency within educational frameworks. She underscored that cultivating awareness of ethical values and fostering societal protection aligns with Nazaha's core mission, particularly in safeguarding public funds.



Laila Al-Sayegh - Director of Shaikhan Al-Farsi School



Khazna Mutlaq Al-Otaibi - Principal of Aisha Al-Sharif Primary School

Sumayah Al-Jasem, General Manager and Founder of Creative Confidence, highlighted the Bankee Program's evolution into a success story that resonates beyond Kuwait's borders. She attributed this achievement to the program's innovative approach, which integrates realistic economic simulations with practical methodologies in an interactive learning environment. As a pioneering initiative, Bankee is dedicated to advancing financial inclusion, particularly among school students, while fostering enhanced financial literacy across the broader community.

Positive Impact

Abeer Al-Gharibi, the principal of

Amoria Primary School, expressed her immense satisfaction with the meeting, which brought together a distinguished group of school principals. She noted that the gathering provided an excellent opportunity for exchanging experiences and ideas about the Bankee Program. According to Al-Gharibi, the program has exceeded expectations, leaving a clear and positive impact on students' behavior while instilling valuable values in the younger generation.

Promoting Financial Literacy

In the meantime, Zainab Bahro, the principal of Sharifa Al Qatami Primary School, praised the Bankee program, describing it as a wonderful initiative that quickly

garnered widespread admiration. She highlighted the clear and positive impact it had on the behavior of both teachers and students. Additionally, Bahro noted that the program received extensive praise from parents, who observed significant improvements in their children's behavior.

Al Mattar:

- The unique design of the Bankee Program has driven numerous schools to actively participate
- Since its launch, the program has made a significant impact on students' behaviors, leaving a lasting impression
- Parents have expressed great satisfaction with the positive behavioral changes observed in their children

Engaging participation

Khazna Mutlaq Al-Otaibi, Principal of Aisha Al-Sharif Primary School, emphasized that the success of the Bankee Program motivated their decision to join its second season. She praised the program's profound impact on both teachers and students, especially in fostering a deeper understanding of financial literacy.

In the meantime, Hanai Al-Muqahwi, Principal of Abdullah Khalaf Al-Dahayan Elementary School for Boys, discussed the positive impact of the Bankee Program on students, stating, "The program has enabled us to achieve several objectives, including shaping students' behaviors. The interactive program system, which allows students to engage with a digital platform for conducting financial transactions, combined with a rewards and penalties system, has been effective in promoting a sense of responsibility for their actions."

At the conclusion of the meeting, the school principals expressed their optimism regarding the future of the Bankee Program. They emphasized the importance of continuing such meetings to strengthen cooperation and align efforts toward achieving the program's educational goals. They also extended their gratitude to NBK for its ongoing efforts and the pivotal role it plays in supporting Kuwait's education system, contributing to the nation's prosperity.

NBK is committed to the significance of initiatives led by the private sector in collaboration with government entities, aimed at equipping young people with the knowledge and skills essential for the well-being and prosperity of both individuals and society in Kuwait.

NBK was awarded the Bronze Award by Qorus in the Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) category for Bankee Program. This recognition highlights the bank's efforts in integrating sustainability and ESG standards into its initiatives.

Crown Prince congratulates Trump

Saudi seeks \$600 billion in US investment over 4 years

RIYADH, Jan 23, (KUNA): Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman congratulated Donald Trump for taking the constitutional oath as President of the US.

Prince Mohammad, in a phone call with Trump, conveyed greetings of King Salman bin Abdulaziz and discussed bilateral cooperation to achieve peace, security and stability in the Middle East, as well as countering terrorism, the foreign ministry said in a statement Thursday.

Prince Mohammad, it said, said he was confident Trump would create a prosperous economy to which Saudi Arabia could contribute.

Saudi Arabia, he added, was keen on expanding investment and trade relations with the US in the coming four years with at least USD 600 billion.

Trump thanked the Saudi leadership and said he was looking forward to working closely with the Kingdom for the best mutual interest.

AIDSMO and AEO sign MoU to enhance energy cooperation

RABAT, Jan 23, (KUNA): The Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO) on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Arab Energy Organization (formerly OAPEC) to boost cooperation in realms of joint concern.

AIDSMO Director General Adel Al-Sagr said in remarks to KUNA during the signing ceremony that the MoU aims at enhancing scientific and technical cooperation between the two agencies in industries, mining and energy.

The move will be helpful in exchange of expertise, technical information, training and developing potentials, he said, underscoring the AEO's crucial role for the aspired pan-Arab integration in these sectors.

Meanwhile, Jamal Al-Loughani, Secretary General of the energy organization said that the memo calls for promoting awareness of the technological progress at the global level and publications issued by the two organizations.

Türkiye cuts benchmark interest rate by 250 basis points to 45 pct

ANKARA, Jan 23, (Xinhua): Türkiye's central bank on Thursday cut its benchmark interest rate by 250 basis points to 45 percent, marking its second rate cut after keeping rates steady for months.

"While the underlying trend of inflation decreased in December,

leading indicators point to an increase in January, in line with the projections. This increase is mainly driven by services items with time-dependent pricing and backward indexation," the bank's Monetary Policy Committee said in a statement.

KOC celebrates 90 years with major achievements

Company targets 2 bln cubic feet of gas output by 2040

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23, (KUNA): State-owned Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) "ambitious" strategies have contributed immensely towards national development and prosperity, an oil ministry official said on Thursday, hailing such initiatives as highly beneficial to the economy.

A month after celebrating the 90th anniversary of the company's inception, KOC has only grown in prominence since then, with its history dotted with notable achievements, dating back to a 1938 oil well discovery, the ministry's chief public relations officer Sheikh Tamadhur Al-Sabah told a

panel discussion over the company's "illustrious journey."

On more recent endeavors, KOC has made rapid progress in a "digital drive" and "environmental sustainability" initiatives, both of which fall in line with Kuwait's 2035 development strategy, which envisions transforming the country into a global energy and technological hub, the official underlined.

She went on to praise the "diligent efforts" of the company's workforce, saying that the immense progress KOC has achieved over the years would not have been possible if not for the dedication and commitment of its staff.

Describing it as a multi-faceted firm, KOC's Senior Planner Qutaiba Okasha said the company engages in both exploration and production work, while it has revamped its "organizational structure" as part of efforts to deal with potential

challenges that could encumber output volume and productivity.

The state-owned company has seen a slew of significant achievements over the last few years, chief among them its first offshore exploratory and drilling operations for oil, in addition to a record gas output of 683 million cubic feet per day in November 2024, he said.

Discussing the company's long-term plans, the official cited an ambitious strategy to maintain growth in Kuwait's gas production capacity, with the goal of ratcheting up output to some two billion cubic feet per day by the year 2040, he said.

Another similar strategy deals with relying on energy sources with the "lowest carbon emissions globally," he said, emphasizing the company's commitment to achieving zero neutrality by 2050, which includes investing in alternative energy sources.

EU discusses advancing free trade agreement

GCC chief discusses cooperation with WEF director

RIYADH, Jan 23, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi discussed with Director of the World Economic Forum for the Middle East and North Africa (WEF) Maroun Kairouz ways to improve cooperation.

The GCC Secretariat said in a statement on Thursday that the discussion took place on the sidelines of the 55th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos, Switzerland.

The meeting addressed key topics, including the WEF's work in the Middle East and North Africa region, ways to enhance the GCC Secretariat's participation in upcoming forums to achieve shared goals, and discussions on various regional and international issues of mutual interest, statement added.

Also:

RIYADH: The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council



KUNA photo Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi with Director of the World Economic Forum for the Middle East and North Africa (WEF) Maroun Kairouz.

(GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi discussed with the European Union Commissioner for Trade, Economic Security, and Institutional Cooperation, Maros Sefcovic the opportunities available to move forward with the negotiations for the free trade agreement between the GCC and the EU.

The Secretariat-General stated in a press release that this took place during a meeting held on the sidelines of the 55th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum 2025 in Davos.

The statement indicated that they have also discussed several strategically important topics view a view to strengthening economic and trade cooperation and enhancing growth opportunities between the two sides.

Both sides emphasized the importance of continuing dialogue and coordination to strengthen the economic partnership and support efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development for the benefit of the people of both regions.

A new era in classical music takes the stage in NYC

Conductor Pichon makes delayed NY debut at 40

NEW YORK, Jan. 23, (AP) — Raphaël Pichon was at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport with his Ensemble Pygmalion orchestra and chorus on March 12, 2020, catching a plane to New York for his US debut nine days later at the Park Avenue Armory in Monteverdi's "Marian Vespers."

First the flight was delayed. Then it was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"In the middle of the night they closed the skies," the conductor said.

His American debut was delayed until December 2021 with Boston's Handel and Haydn Society. He makes first New York appearance at age 40 on Thursday night, leading the Orchestra of St. Luke's in a program with baritone Christian Gerhaher and soprano Ying Fang titled "Mein Traum (My Dream)" featuring works by Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann and Carl Maria von Weber.

"I think he's really the future of classical music," said James Roe, the St. Luke's orchestra president. "He sees the potential of the concert experience in a way that's both expansive and welcoming and of the next generation. And he wants the concerts to propose a story, a narrative, an odyssey, a way of moving an audience member from their everyday life to something extraordinarily pleasurable."

Roe first met Pichon at the 2023 Salzburg Festival

in Austria, where Pichon led a new production of Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" by director Martin Kušej that included cocaine-fueled fights and a predator priest. Pichon's wife, soprano Sabine Devieilhe, sang Susanna.

"I think, sadly, the stage director was in a very, very bad mood and a very difficult moment of his life, and, sadly, the consequences were big," Pichon said.

The Vienna Philharmonic in the pit produced a different sound than the leaner approach Pichon is used to from Pygmalion's period instruments. As the Salzburg Festival's resident orchestra since 1922, the Vienna Philharmonic performs in numerous operas and concerts.

"Sometimes 100% of the orchestra is changing from one night to the next night, so it could create some fantastic nights and some really banal moments, so it's really strange," Pichon said. "I'm not sure it's really music, but an amazing experience. Learned a lot. Never again. You understand many things about Salzburg, about Austrian culture, about Viennese culture, their role in this classical music world. It's really something, but it's a really strange philosophy. Vienna Philharmoniker - it's a society inside a society. It's a really strange world."

Alex Fortes, a St. Luke's violin player, said Pichon made an immediate positive impression this week.

"He has both an incredible clarity and a physical movement in terms of communicating what he wants," Fortes said, "as well as incredibly eloquent and precise language to describe those things quite figuratively and beautifully that inspire the orchestra."

Born in Brittany, Pichon played violin when he was young, started singing in a choir when he was 10 and gave that up for piano and harpsichord. He met Devieilhe while singing in a youth choir. They live together with their two young children in Paris' 13th arrondissement, a unit combined from several apartments that is soundproofed, allowing each a piano to practice with.

Gerhaher first encountered Devieilhe when they sang together at Munich's Bavarian State Opera last summer. "She was just absolutely outstanding and amazing and I thought, well, her husband must be equally brilliant. Otherwise they can't stay together," Gerhaher said with a laugh.

Pichon founded Pygmalion in 2006. It performs 60-70 concerts per year, including at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, the Dutch National Opera and Paris' Opéra-Comique, where Pichon conducted an opera with his wife for the first time, Léo Delibes' "Lakmé," in 2022.

Pichon has commissioned a comic opera from French-Argentine composer Oscar Strasnoy to premiere there in 2027.



This image provided by the Orchestra of St. Luke's shows Raphaël Pichon in New York on March 18, 2024. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Lawyers for Sean "Diddy" Combs filed a defamation lawsuit Wednesday against a man they said had falsely claimed to possess videos implicating the music mogul in sexual assaults on eight celebrities.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in New York City, accuses



Combs

Courtney Burgess and his lawyer, Ariel Mitchell, of fabricating "outrageous lies" as part of an effort to potentially profit off of the media frenzy around Combs, who was indicted in September on

sex trafficking charges. Combs also sued Nexstar Media, saying its cable news network, NewsNation, aired Burgess' allegations without looking into whether they were true. The videos, the lawsuit claimed, simply don't exist.

"These defendants have willfully fabricated and disseminated outrageous lies with reckless disregard for the truth," said Erica Wolff, an attorney for Combs. "Their falsehoods have poisoned public perception and contaminated the jury pool. This complaint should serve as a warning that such intentional falsehoods, which undermine Mr. Combs' right to a fair trial, will no longer be tolerated." (AP)

NEW YORK: Charles Phan, the San Francisco chef credited as an innovator for bringing Vietnamese food to fine dining at his Slanted Door restaurant, has died.

The restaurant announced his death from cardiac arrest in an Instagram post on Tuesday, calling it "heartbreaking" and "unexpected." Phan was 62.

"Charles was more than a chef. He was one of the most generous humans," the restaurant stated. "Our hearts are heavy with this tremendous loss."

The James Beard Award-winning restaurateur is known for growing the Slanted Door into a globally recognized fixture with two other Bay Area locations in Napa, San Ramon and one in France. The flagship location - which had been at San Francisco's Ferry Building but closed in 2020 due to the pandemic - was set to reopen in its original location in the Mission neighborhood this spring. It remains unclear how Phan's death might impact those plans.

Chefs and others in the culinary world have been paying tribute to Phan on social media. It's no surprise as Phan always made himself available to dole out advice, said Carolyn Jung, a longtime food and wine writer in the San Francisco Bay Area. (AP)

ORLANDO, Fla.: Aaron De Groft, a former head of the Orlando Museum of Art who left the institution under a cloud in 2022 after it was raided by the FBI as part of an art fraud probe into more than two dozen forged Jean-Michel Basquiat paintings, has died. He was 59.

De Groft died last weekend after a brief illness, the Neptune Society, a cremation service provider, said without providing further details. The Orlando Sentinel also reported that his wife, Kathryn Lee De Groft, had submitted an obituary to the news outlet.

"We were saddened to hear about the passing of Aaron De Groft," the museum said in an emailed statement. "Our thoughts are with his family at this time of loss."

De Groft became executive director of the Orlando Museum of Art in 2021 following art museum administration jobs in Jacksonville, Sarasota, and Williamsburg, Virginia.

De Groft negotiated to have the Orlando Museum of Art be the first institution to display more than two dozen artworks said to have been found in an old storage locker decades after Basquiat's 1988 death from a drug overdose at age 27. Basquiat, who lived and worked in New York City, found success in the 1980s as part of the neo-Expressionism movement. (AP)

Oscars



This image released by Netflix shows Selena Gomez in a scene from 'Emilia Pérez.' (AP)

'Wicked' secures leading nods

'Emilia Pérez' leads Oscar noms with 13

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 23, (AP) — In the wake of devastating wildfires in Los Angeles that struck at the heart of the movie industry, an embattled Hollywood lined up behind the Netflix narco-musical about trans identity "Emilia Pérez" in Oscar nominations Thursday.

Jacques Audiard's "Emilia Pérez," a Spanish language, French-made film, dominated the nominations with a leading 13 nominations, including best picture and best actress for Karla Sofia Gascón, making her the first openly trans actor ever nominated for an Oscar. The film also landed nominations for directing, original screenplay, two of its songs and for Zoe Saldña.

Netflix, despite its starring role in Hollywood, has never won best picture. Many of its top contenders have previously racked up large numbers of nominations (including "Mank," "The Irishman" and "Roma") but gone home with only a handful of trophies.

"Emilia Pérez," though, may be its best chance yet. It became the most nominated non-English language film ever, surpassing Netflix's own "Roma," which scored 10 nominations.

Another musical - "Wicked," the smash Broadway adaptation - came away with nearly as many nominations. Jon M. Chu's lavish "Wizard of Oz" riff scored 10 nominations, including best picture and acting nods for its stars Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande.

"The Brutalist," Brady Corbet's postwar epic filmed in VistaVision, also came away with a commanding 10 nominations, including best picture, best director and nominations for actor Adrien Brody, Guy Pearce and Felicity Jones.

The nominees for best picture are: "Anora"; "The Brutalist"; "A Complete Unknown"; "Conclave"; "Dune: Part Two"; "Emilia Pérez"; "I'm Still Here"; "Nickel Boys"; "The Substance"; "Wicked."

In a wide-open Oscar race, the six most honored films - "Emilia Pérez," "Wicked," "The Brutalist," "Anora" (six nominations), "Conclave" (nine nominations) and "A Complete Unknown" (eight nominations) - all fared as expected. The biggest surprises were the Brazilian film "I'm Still Here," which also landed Fernanda Torres a best actress nomination, and Ramell Ross' "Nickel Boys," a POV-shot drama.

The nominations had originally been planned for Jan. 17. But after wildfires on Jan. 7 began burning through the Pacific Palisades, Altadena and other areas around Los Angeles, leaving behind historic levels of destruction, the academy extended its voting window and twice postponed the nominations announcement. Fresh fires outside Los Angeles continued Thursday.



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Ariana Grande as Glinda in the film 'Wicked.' (AP)

One of 2024's most audacious films, "The Apprentice" landed two nominations, for Sebastian Stan and Jeremy Strong. The film dramatizes the formative years of President Donald Trump's emergence in New York real estate under the tutelage of attorney Roy Cohn. Trump has called those involved with the film "human scum."

With so many in the film industry reeling from the fires, some called on the academy to cancel the Oscars altogether. Academy leaders have argued the March 2 ceremony must go ahead, for their economic impact on Los Angeles and as a symbol of resilience for the industry. Organizers have vowed this year's awards will "celebrate the work that unites us as a global film community and acknowledge those who fought so bravely against the wildfires."

"We will reflect on the recent events while highlighting the strength, creativity, and optimism that defines Los Angeles and our industry," Bill Kramer, academy chief executive, and Yang said in an email to members Wednesday.

But much of the usual frothiness Hollywood's award season has been severely curtailed due to the fires, which continue to burn. The film academy canceled its annual nominees luncheon. Other events have been postponed or downsized. On Wednesday, Kramer and Yang said original

song nominees won't be performed this year. Conan O'Brien, whose Pacific Palisades home was spared by the fires, is hosting.

Here is the list of nominees for the Oscars, which will be broadcast March 2 from the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles:

■ Best picture: "Anora"; "The Brutalist"; "A Complete Unknown"; "Conclave"; "Dune: Part 2"; "Emilia Pérez"; "I'm Still Here"; "Nickel Boys"; "The Substance"; "Wicked"

■ Best Actress: Demi Moore, "The Substance"; Cynthia Erivo, "Wicked"; Mikey Madison, "Anora"; Karla Sofia Gascón, "Emilia Pérez"; Fernanda Torres, "I'm Still Here"

■ Best Actor: Adrien Brody, "The Brutalist"; Timothy Chalamet, "A Complete Unknown"; Colman Domingo, "Sing Sing"; Ralph Fiennes, "Conclave"; Sebastian Stan, "The Apprentice"

■ Best Supporting Actress: Monica Barbaro, "A Complete Unknown"; Felicity Jones, "The Brutalist"; Ariana Grande, "Wicked"; Isabella Rossellini, "Conclave"; Zoe Saldña, "Emilia Pérez"

■ Best Supporting Actor: Yura Borisov, "Anora"; Kieran Culkin, "A Real Pain"; Edward Norton, "A Complete Unknown"; Guy Pearce, "The Brutalist"; Jeremy Strong, "The Apprentice"

■ Director: Jacques Audiard, "Emilia Pérez"; Sean Baker, "Anora"; Brady Corbet, "The Brutalist"; James Mangold, "A Complete Unknown"; Coralie Fargeat, "The Substance"

■ Original Song: "El Mal" from "Emilia Pérez"; "The Journey" from "The Six Triple Eight"; "Like a Bird" from "Sing Sing"; "Mi Camino" from "Emilia Pérez"; "Never Too Late" from "Elton John: Never Too Late"

■ Original Score: "The Brutalist"; "Emilia Pérez"; "Conclave"; "Wicked"; "The Wild Robot"

■ Best Sound: "A Complete Unknown"; "Dune: Part Two"; "Emilia Pérez"; "Wicked"; "The Wild Robot"

■ Animated Film: "Flow"; "Inside Out 2"; "Memoir of a Snail"; "Wallace and Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl"; "The Wild Robot"

■ International Film: "I'm Still Here," Brazil; "The Girl with the Needle," Denmark; "Emilia Pérez," France; "The Seed of the Sacred Fig," Germany; "Flow," Latvia

■ Cinematography: "The Brutalist"; Dune: Part Two; "Emilia Pérez"; "Maria"; "Nosferatu"

■ Original Screenplay: "Anora"; "The Brutalist"; "A Real Pain"; "September 5"; "The Substance"

■ Adapted Screenplay: "A Complete Unknown"; "Conclave"; "Emilia Pérez"; "Nickel Boys"; "Sing Sing"

■ Documentary Feature: "Black Box Diaries"; "No Other Land"; "Porcelain War"; "Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat"; "Sugarane"

■ Live Action Short Film: "A Lien"; "Anuja"; "I'm Not a Robot"; "The Last Ranger"; "The Man Who Could Not Remain Silent"

■ Animated Short Film: "Beautiful Men"; "In the Shadow of the Cypress"; "Magic Candies"; "Wander to Wonder"; "Yuck!"

■ Documentary Short Film: "Death by Numbers"; "I Am Ready, Warden"; "Incident"; "Instruments of a Beating Heart"; "The Only Girl in the Orchestra"

■ Visual Effects: "Alien: Romulus"; "Better Man"; "Dune: Part Two"; "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes"; "Wicked"

■ Production Design: "The Brutalist"; "Conclave"; "Dune: Part Two"; "Nosferatu"; "Wicked"

■ Film Editing: "Anora"; "The Brutalist"; "Conclave"; "Emilia Pérez"; "Wicked"

■ Makeup and Hairstyling: "A Different Man"; "Emilia Pérez"; "Nosferatu"; "The Substance"; "Wicked"

■ Costume Design: "A Complete Unknown"; "Conclave"; "Gladiator II"; "Nosferatu"; "Wicked"

e4life devices shine at Dubai's Arab Health

Electromagnetic waves neutralize respiratory viruses

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Jan 23, (AP): e4life will be among the leading players at the historic fiftieth anniversary edition of Arab Health, the Middle East's leading health sector trade fair. The Italian company will be present in Dubai from 27th to 30th January with its innovative devices which use electromagnetic waves to neutralize respiratory viruses present in the air (transported via bioaerosol), thereby

This solution is a world first, with efficacy of over 90% and an almost instantaneous sanitizing action. What's more, since it is 100% harmless to humans and animals, it does not require the evacuation of spaces and environments.

The result of an Italian patent, this solution does not use chemical agents or filter materials, but is based on the transmission of microwaves which, at a specific combination of frequency and power, act on the balance between the internal positive charges of the virus and the negative charges present in the capsid or outer shell, giving rise to a "resonance" phenomenon that destroys the external envelope of the virus and effectively inhibits its power to spread and be transmitted from one individual to another.

The key intuitive moment came during the pandemic period and required

two years of studies and in-depth analysis, based on research carried out by Taiwanese scientists published in the Nature Scientific Report and aimed at discovering a way of inactivating viruses using electromagnetic fields. The first results came from testing different frequencies of electromagnetic waves on Covid and later, on other corona viruses. One of the most interesting features of this new technology is the possibility of having a targeted action, allowing it to be calibrated on specific pathogens.

Effectiveness

Its effectiveness has been certified against Covid, including recent variants, RSV and seasonal flu (in this case the effectiveness exceeds 95%), Avian Flu and Swine Flu. e4life has an important roadmap of research focused on constantly evolve and adapt the devices to an ever-increasing number of viruses and, in the near future, also bacteria.

There are currently three products available using this technology, two for humans and one for animals. e4life personal is the portable, lightweight, compact version (100 grams x 8.5 cm) which is SAR certified. It is comfortable and safe to wear and is able to inactivate viruses by generating a "bubble" with a diameter of about three metres.

Then there is e4life ambient which is the "fixed" version to be installed either on ceiling or walls with a range of action covering about 50 square metres.

Lastly there is e4life FARM, the device dedicated to livestock farms and designed to combat animal viral diseases (actually Avian Flu and Swine Flu) which represent a threat to chicken, turkey and pigs.

"We are looking forward to taking advantage of the opportunity offered by participating in Arab Health. This will allow operators from all over the world to experience this extraordinary technology first-hand," emphasizes e4life CEO Vincenzo Pompa. "The focus and efficacy of our devices perfectly represent the most complete meaning of what we are doing: it is the starting point of our commitment and it is closely linked to the concept of 'One Health', an approach that recognizes and promotes the fundamental interconnection between human, animal and environmental health. Everything we do, the passion that we put into our work every day and the motivation that guides us are driven by this fundamental principle. In nature, on the other hand, there are no watertight compartments and we must therefore adopt a systemic perspective, capable



e4life devices

of respecting and uniting different elements of equal importance. Our goal is to revolutionize the biodefense sector through our solutions which allow each individual to enjoy a natural social life, interacting in safe spaces with no concerns or worries."

Further confirmation of the value and importance of the results achieved by e4life are the numerous examples of recognition it has now received. In actual fact this technology has been

subjected to scientific tests and has been validated by the Celio Military Hospital, the independent ViroStatics institute and two studies published in the Viruses and the European Society of Medicine journals (Source: Esmed.org), representing a worldwide association of doctors, researchers and professionals united by the goal of promoting health on a global scale.

The technology has also been the subject of a test campaign carried out

at Milan University's Department of Biomedical and Clinical Sciences. The results confirm those already obtained from previous test campaigns, i.e. a replicable efficacy of close to 90%. The Bio-Medico Campus at the University of Rome has instead collaborated in working on the control and efficacy of this technology through its Tissue Engineering and Chemistry for Engineering Laboratory.

Furthermore, the JRC-HERA technological prospective study by the European Commission Joint Research Centre includes this technology among that which is currently available that can guarantee an increase in air quality in indoor environments.

This year, the already considerable number of validations has been expanded to include certification obtained from the University of Genoa, which has tested the technology's efficacy of over 90% on influenza, RSV and Covid viruses. A final further "seal of guarantee" comes from an article in the scientific journal Nature Scientific Reports, which describes a study demonstrating the effectiveness of electromagnetic waves in inactivating the avian flu virus.

The e4life devices are currently certified to be marketed in Europe, Australia, Japan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Morocco and Egypt.

Experts warn of risks

US freezes health agency reports and online posts

WASHINGTON, Jan 23, (Agencies): The Trump administration has put a freeze on many federal health agency communications with the public through at least the end of the month.

In a memo obtained by The Associated Press, acting Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services Dorothy Fink told agency staff leaders Tuesday that an "immediate pause" had been ordered on - among other things - regulations, guidance, announcements, press releases, social media posts and website posts until such communications had been approved by a political appointee.

The pause also applies to anything intended to be published in the Federal Register, where the executive branch communicates rules and regulations, and the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention scientific publication.

The pause is in effect through Feb. 1, the memo said. Agencies subject to the HHS directive include the CDC, the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration - entities that fight epidemics, protect the nation's food supply and search for cures to diseases.

Review

HHS officials did not respond to requests for comment on the pause, which was first reported by The Washington Post. Four federal health officials speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the issue confirmed the communication pause to the AP.

A former HHS official said Wednesday that it's not unusual for incoming administrations to pause agency communications for review. But typically, officials working on the president's transition team have the process for issuing documents running smoothly by inauguration day.

"The executive branch is a hierarchy," said Steven Grossman, who now consults for food and drug companies, in an email. "Whether stated publicly

or not, every new administration wants important commitments and positions to wait until new teams are in place and some semblance of hierarchy restored."

A pause is reasonable as a changing executive branch takes steps to become coordinated, said Dr. Ali Khan, a former CDC outbreak investigator who is now dean of the University of Nebraska's public health college.

"The only concern would be if this is a prelude to going back to a prior approach of silencing the agencies around a political narrative," he added.

Functions

During his first term, President Donald Trump's political appointees tried to gain control over the CDC's MMWR journal, which had published information about the COVID-19 pandemic that conflicted with messaging from the White House.

Fink wrote in her memo that some exceptions would be made for communications affecting "critical health, safety, environmental, financial or nation security functions," but that those would be subject to review. The FDA on Tuesday and Wednesday posted notices about warning letters sent to companies and a drug safety notice.

A consumer advocacy group said the communications pause could still threaten public safety.

Americans depend on timely information from the CDC, the FDA and other agencies to avoid foodborne illnesses and stay aware of other health issues, said Dr. Peter Lurie, president of the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed regret over U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement of withdrawing the country from the organization. It hopes the US government will reconsider this decision.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the WHO also said it looks forward to maintaining its partnership through constructive dialogue.



An endangered plant known as the 'corpse flower' for its putrid stink, is about to bloom at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025. (AP)

Endangered plant

A strange 'stinky' flower draws crowds for a whiff

SYDNEY, Jan 23, (AP): The rare unfurling of an endangered plant that emits the smell of decaying flesh drew hundreds of devoted fans to a greenhouse in Sydney on Thursday where they joined three-hour lines to experience a momentous bloom -- and a fragrance evoking gym socks and rotting garbage.

Tall, pointed and smelly, the corpse flower is scientifically known as *amorphophallus titanum* - or *bunga bangkai* in Indonesia, where the plants are found in the Sumatran rainforest.

But to fans of this specimen, she's Patricia -- a portmanteau of "putrid" and "Patricia" eagerly adopted by her followers who, naturally, call themselves Patricia's. For a week, she has graced a stately and gothic display in front of a purple curtain and wreathed in mist from a humidifier at the Royal Sydney Botanic Garden.

Her rise to fame since has been rapid, with up to 20,000 admirers filing past for a moment in her increasingly pungent presence. No corpse flower has bloomed at the garden for 15 years.

The plant only flowers every

7-10 years in the wild.

"The fact that they open very rarely, so they flower rarely, is obviously something that puts them at a little bit of a disadvantage in the wild," said garden spokesperson Sophie Daniel, who designed Patricia's kooky and funereal display. "When they open, they have to hope that another flower is open nearby, because they can't self-pollinate."

There are thought to be only 300 of the plants in the wild and fewer than 1,000 worldwide - including those in cultivation. Among them is Patricia, which arrived at the garden seven years ago.

When her flower was spotted in December she was just 25 centimeters (10 inches) high. By Thursday, she was 1.6 meters (5 feet 3 inches) tall -- and her flower spike was slowly opening like a pleated skirt around a majestic central tuber, the yellow-green outer curling to reveal a burgundy center.

As excitement grew in Sydney about the moment of her bloom, garden staff erected crowd barriers, giving the Victorian greenhouse the air of a rock concert.

Groundbreaking health tech

Myant brings future of disease prevention to Arab Health 2025

TORONTO, Jan 23, (AP): At Arab Health 2025, Myant will showcase its mission to enable human-centric, precise, and preventive care through continuous connection, a vision brought to life by groundbreaking innovations in AI and Textile Computing. Backed by cutting-edge R&D and significant investment, Myant is redefining healthcare as proactive, continuous, and deeply personal.

As the largest healthcare event in the Middle East, Arab Health provides an unparalleled platform for Myant to connect with global healthcare leaders, unveil transformative solutions, and shape the future of medical innovation. Myant's participation underscores its commitment to empowering people to live healthier, longer lives through revolutionary technology and actionable health insights.

Myant will present Myant Care, a comprehensive platform which combines health data to predict and prevent disease, keeping populations healthy by providing early warnings and interventions. Myant Care uses clinical-grade interfaces for real medical decisions, leveraging deep

machine learning to transform continuous health data and scientific literature into actionable care plans.

Central to the platform is Skin Generation 2, the world's first passive, human centric, comfortable, continuous medical-grade remote monitor. It integrates ECG, cuffless blood pressure, breathing pattern and volume, core body temperature, oxygen saturation (SpO2), actigraphy and posture, sleep metrics including sleep apnea diagnosis, offering unparalleled insights into managing hypertension, life-threatening arrhythmias, heart failure, sleep apnea, COPD and other conditions. Skin Generation 2 unlocks powerful new tools for physicians, including live telemetry during teleconsultations and symptom relay.

With continuous multi-modal data, including from numerous third-party point-of-care products and services, physicians gain a holistic understanding of the user's health, supporting early detection, precision medicine, and personalized care - ultimately changing the relationship with patients from reactive and episodic to proactive and continuous.

Immunotherapy effective

Study shows improvement in breast cancer cure rate

SYDNEY, Jan 23, (Xinhua): Australian researchers have made a breakthrough in improving the cure rate for the most common form of breast cancer.

An international clinical trial led by Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Center (Peter Mac) has shown that adding the immunotherapy drug nivolumab to the chemotherapy that breast cancer patients receive before surgery can dramatically improve outcomes, according to the latest news release on Peter Mac website.

The trial involved 510 people with the ER+HER2- subtype of breast cancer,

which accounts for about 70 percent of all cases globally, who received chemotherapy to shrink their tumor before it was surgically removed.

Researchers assessed how adding an infusion of nivolumab, or a placebo, during the pre-surgery phase affected their response to treatment.

They found that 25 percent of trial participants treated with nivolumab achieved a pathologic complete response (pCR), which means there was no sign of cancer after surgery, compared to 14 percent in the placebo group.

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SPORTS



Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen and Bashar Abdullah in the middle of the bank team and a number of knights participating in the tournament.



The Kuwaiti flag was proudly raised during the opening ceremony.



Vibrant performance during the opening of the tournament.

A grand start for the first-of-its-kind show jumping tournament by the sea

Kuwait welcomes the return of KIB | The Stadium

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The highly anticipated third season of KIB | The Stadium, Kuwait's first-of-its-kind show jumping tournament by the sea, officially launched with a grand opening ceremony at Marina Beach. This year's edition, organized by KIB's strategic partner Suffix, takes center stage by spotlighting equestrian sports for the second consecutive year over the span of three weeks. The championship builds on the legacy of its previous seasons and promises an even more exceptional experience this year, further reinforcing KIB's commitment to nurturing Kuwait's sporting culture as part of the Bank's expansive social responsibility program.

The opening ceremony was held in the presence of influential figures and distinguished attendees, including H.E. the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah; Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports Bashar Abdullah; President of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation Masoud Hayat; Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB Raed Jawad Bukhamseen; and Chief Operations Officer of Suffix Ahmed Al-Majed; in addition members of KIB's Board of Directors and Executive Management Team, as well as Suffix's Board of Directors, Board of Trustees and Executive Management.

Commenting on the opening ceremony, Marwa Marafie, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, expressed her excitement to see months of preparation for this exceptional mega-sporting event come to life once again.

She said: "Following the tremendous success of last season, we are proud to bring back the country's first-of-its-kind international show jumping competition, set against the stunning backdrop of the sea. KIB | The Stadium is a key initiative that reflects our unwavering commitment to social responsibility, as we strive to promote a culture of sports, particularly equestrianism, which is deeply rooted in Kuwait's rich cultural



From left: Masoud Hayat, Sheikh Dhari Al Fahad, Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah and Raed Jawad Bukhamseen.

heritage. By creating an ideal platform to celebrate and spotlight equestrian talent, we aim to inspire the next generation of athletes and strengthen Kuwait's position as a hub for sporting excellence."

She added: "Together with our strategic partner, Suffix, and with the support of the championship's sponsors, we look forward to delivering a world-class show jumping experience while showcasing our nation as a premier destina-

tion for international sporting events. We invite everyone to join us in witnessing the elegance of equestrian sport, where athleticism and grace come together in a spectacular display of talent."

Continuing the momentum from last season's resounding success, KIB | The Stadium raises the bar yet again, attracting approximately 500 local and international riders and 5,000 spectators. This year's championship brings an exciting lineup of competitions, beginning with a local show jumping competition, followed by a 2-star international competition (CSI2*), and culminating in the prestigious 3-star competition (CSI3-W*), a qualifier for the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) Jumping World Cup.

At the heart of the venue, spectators can enjoy more than just world-class show jumping. The Village Zone features a diverse lineup of F&B vendors and a curated selection of local businesses, creating a vibrant atmosphere for individuals and families alike.

On his part, Ahmed Al-Majed, Chief Operations Officer of Suffix, said: "We ensured that the opening ceremony reflected the rich heritage of equestrian sports in Kuwait through an inspiring performance that combined tradition and innovation. This opening symbolizes Suffix's commitment to delivering an exceptional sporting experience for all participants and attendees, showcasing our passion for advancing equestrianism and positioning Kuwait as a global sports hub."

It is worth noting that this prestigious championship underscores KIB's dedication to its comprehensive social responsibility program, with a particular emphasis on advancing sports development and empowering youth. Guided by its enduring slogan, "Bank for Life," KIB ensures that every endeavor contributes to creating a more prosperous and fulfilling future for its community, empowering individuals to achieve their goals and realize their aspirations.



Officials enjoy proceedings



A participant attempts to clear a hurdle.



Photo from the event

Problems run deeper than him

Dortmund fired coach Sahin to spark a turnaround

DUESSELDORF, Germany, Jan 23, (AP): Borussia Dortmund hoped that reaching the Champions League final would lay a platform for further success. Instead, it's gone backward.

Firing coach Nuri Sahin on Wednesday was largely seen as inevitable after one win from the last nine games, but there's no clear path to a turnaround.

Youth coach Mike Tullberg will take charge against Werder Bremen on Saturday in the Bundesliga while Dortmund searches for Sahin's replacement. Reports in Germany identified the favorite as ex-Bayern Munich and Monaco coach Niko Kovac but he told Austrian TV on Wednesday, "No one has spoken to me."

Whoever does take over will inherit an underperforming squad on course for its worst league placing in years.

Here's a look at what's gone wrong for one of Germany's most storied soccer clubs:

With Dortmund 10th in the Bundesliga, it's on track to miss out on the Champions League next season for the first time in a decade.

Sahin, in charge since June, had rocky patches early in his tenure but things were going from bad to worse with four straight losses to start 2025.

His fan favorite status as an ex-Dortmund player and close relationships with senior players may have

bought him time.

Even before Sahin took charge, Dortmund's run to the Champions League final arguably masked underlying issues.

Dortmund placed fifth in the Bundesliga last season under Edin Terzic, who resigned at the end of the season, and was arguably fortunate to beat Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League semifinals after PSG repeatedly hit the post and crossbar.

Last Friday, Dortmund sporting director Sebastian Kehl pledged Sahin his full support. Five days later,

Sahin was gone.

The apparent hesitation as Dortmund slid down the table over the last month was a contrast to the ruthlessness shown to former coaches. Lucien Favre was fired in December 2020 when Dortmund was fifth, and Peter Bosz lasted five months in 2017.

The difficulties also come at a time when Dortmund's long-term strategy is uncertain. Chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke is leaving later this year after 20 years.

Dortmund used to develop Europe's best young players such as

Erling Haaland, Jude Bellingham and Jadon Sancho. Now it's fighting to keep up.

Dortmund's German rivals Bayer Leverkusen and Leipzig are competing for the best youngsters and Leverkusen's Florian Wirtz is one of the most in-demand players in world soccer.

The 20-year-old English winger Jamie Gittens is having a strong season with 11 goals from 27 games but Dortmund's youth teams are no longer packed with first-team-ready talent.

When teens have covered for injured first-team players this season they've struggled, and players once considered Dortmund's future haven't developed as planned. Injuries have disrupted 22-year-old U.S. attacking midfielder Gio Reyna, while striker Youssoufa Moukoko has scored only twice all season on loan at Nice.

Money isn't the problem at Dortmund after its lucrative Champions League run last season and the promise of millions more at the Club World Cup in the United States.

The issue has been who to spend it on.

Dortmund has relied heavily on experienced names such as Emre Can, Pascal Gross, Marcel Sabitzer and, until he was injured, Niklas Süle. The squad that reached the Champions League final last season was one of the oldest in the competition, too.



Bologna's Dan Ndoye, right, and Borussia's Julien Duranville in action during the Champions League soccer match between Bologna and Dortmund at Renato Dall'Ara Stadium, Bologna, Italy. (AP)

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Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus celebrates after defeating Paula Badosa of Spain during their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Sports

Belarusian on course for a three-peat

Keys upsets Swiatek, faces Sabalenka in Australian Open final

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 23, (AP) — When Madison Keys finally finished off her 5-7, 6-1, 7-6 (10-8) upset of No. 2 Iga Swiatek in a high-intensity, high-quality Australian Open semifinal on Thursday night, saving a match point along the way, the 29-year-old American crouched on the court and placed a hand on her white hat.

She had a hard time believing it all. The comeback. What Keys called an "extra dramatic finish." The victory over five-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek, who'd been on the most dominant run at Melbourne Park in a dozen years. And now the chance to play in her second Grand Slam final, a long wait after being the 2017 U.S. Open runner-up.

"I'm still trying to catch up to everything that's happening," said the 19th-seeded Keys, who will face No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka, the two-time defending champion, for the trophy Saturday. "I felt like I was just fighting to stay in it. ... It was so up and down and so many big points."

Just to be sure, Keys asked whether Swiatek was, indeed, one point from victory. Yes, Madison, she was, while serving at 6-5, 40-30, but missed a backhand into the net, then eventually getting broken by double-faulting, sending the contest to a first-to-10, win-by-two tiebreaker.

Sabalenka beat good friend Paula Badosa 6-4, 6-2 earlier Thursday. Sabalenka, a 26-year-old from Belarus, can become the first woman since 1999 to complete a three-peat.

Still, Sabalenka won her first major trophy at Melbourne Park in 2023, and



Madison Keys of the U.S. plays a backhand return to Iga Swiatek of Poland during their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

she since has added two more - in Australia a year ago and at the U.S. Open last September.

The last woman to reach three finals in a row at the year's first Grand Slam tournament was Serena Williams, who won two from 2015-17. Martina Hingis was the most recent woman with a three-peat, doing it from 1997-1999.

Swiatek had not lost a single service game since the first round, but was broken three times by Keys in the first set alone and eight times in all.

That included each of Swiatek's first two times serving, making clear right from the get-go this would not be her usual sort of day. And while Swiatek did eke out the opening set, she was overwhelmed in the second, trailing 5-0 before getting a game.

This was the big-hitting Keys at her very best. She turns 30 next month and, at the suggestion of her coach, former player Bjorn Fratangelo - who also happens to be her husband - decided to try a new racket this season, an effort both to help her with generating easy power but also to relieve some strain on her right shoulder.

It's certainly paid immediate dividends. Keys is now on an 11-match winning streak, including taking the title at a tuneup event in Adelaide.

She was good enough to get through this one, which was as tight as can be down the stretch.

Sabalenka and Badosa did their best to avoid any eye contact for much of the evening, whether up at the net for the coin toss or when they crossed paths at changeovers.

City's Champions League hopes 'hang' by a thread



Feyenoord's goalkeeper Justin Bijlow, right, makes a save during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Feyenoord and Bayern Munich, at De Kuip Stadium, in Rotterdam, Netherlands. (AP)

Real routs Salzburg to advance, Arsenal and Inter strengthen round of 16 bids

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany, Jan 23, (AP) — Manchester City is on the brink of a humiliating Champions League exit after a stunning loss to Paris Saint-Germain, and Real Madrid is no longer at risk after routing Salzburg.

Man City blew a two-goal lead in a high-stakes clash of super-wealthy underachievers that PSG won 4-2 in Paris yet still could be eliminated alongside the English champion after the final round of games next week.

Only the top 24 in the 36-team standings will advance and Man City, the 2023 champion, will kick off in 25th place needing to beat Club Brugge to squeeze into the knockout playoffs round. PSG, now in 22nd, will play at 24th-place Stuttgart.

Title-holder Madrid is safe, rising from 22nd place

into 16th place after swatting aside Salzburg 5-1.

Arsenal and Inter Milan got expected wins to rise to third and fourth, respectively, though not sure yet to join Liverpool and Barcelona advancing direct to the round of 16.

Arsenal beat Dinamo Zagreb 3-0 and Inter won 1-0 at Sparta Prague.

Bayern Munich fell to a 3-0 defeat at Feyenoord and dropped to 15th in the mid-table morass of storied clubs - including Madrid and Juventus - who risk facing each other in the knockout playoff rounds in February.

Every qualification and elimination issue will be decided in a likely frenetic eighth and final round of games next Wednesday.

All 36 teams will be in action in 18 games kicking off at the same time with just the top 24 advancing to the knockout phase.

Man City looked to set to send PSG close to elimi-

nation by taking a two-goal lead early in the second half. Jack Grealish, a halftime substitute, scored in the 50th minute then set up Erling Haaland for a second four minutes later.

Within six remarkable minutes PSG was level, from goals by Ousmane Dembele and Bradley Barcola, and a stunning turnaround was completed in the 78th when Joao Neves headed the decisive goal. Goncalo Ramos added a fourth in stoppage time.

AC Milan quietly rose to sixth place with a 1-0 win against Girona at San Siro, and Celtic advanced by winning 1-0 against Young Boys, which lost a seventh straight game.

Sporting Lisbon risks elimination next week after losing 2-1 at Leipzig, which ended a six-game losing run, and Shakhtar Donetsk stayed in contention - just - with a 2-0 win against Brest, which will be in the knockout phase.

Real Madrid becomes 1st soccer club to surpass 1 bln euros in annual earnings

MADRID, Jan 23, (Xinhua) — Real Madrid has become the first soccer club to generate over a billion euros (1.04 billion U.S. dollars) in revenue in a single season, according to Deloitte's Money League study published on Thursday.

The study shows Real Madrid generated revenue of about 1.05 billion euros in the 2023-24 season, thanks partly to winning the UEFA Champions League and La Liga.

Madrid's earnings were up 25.8 percent on the previous season's income of 831.4 million euros, with the completion of the reformation of the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium also a big factor as ticket sales almost doubled to about 248 million euros, while commercial earnings increased to about 482 million euros, thanks mainly to



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior scores his side's 5th goal during the Champions League opening phase soccer match between Real Madrid and FC Salzburg at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. (AP)

a new sponsorship deal with Hewlett Packard.

FC Barcelona was the second-high-

est earner in Spain, but saw income drop from 800.1 million euros in 2022-23 to 760.3 million euros last season,

mainly due to the club playing in the smaller capacity Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium at Montjuic as the Camp Nou undergoes refurbishment.

Atletico Madrid is third in the rankings for Spain (12th overall), with income of 409.5 million euros.

The study shows that although Real Madrid creates more income than anyone else, the Premier League is the dominant competition with nine clubs in the top-20 earners and 14 in the top-30.

Manchester City is the second-highest earner with 837.8 million euros. Despite on-field problems, Manchester United was fourth overall with earnings of 770.6 million euros, with Arsenal seventh on 716.5 million euros and Liverpool a place behind on 714.7 million.

Kuwait Club defeats Burgan in the Arab Clubs Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Jan 23: Kuwait Club secured a 3-1 victory over Burgan in the placement matches for 9th to 12th positions at the 43rd Arab Clubs Championship held in Doha, Qatar.

In another match within the same stage, Bahrain's Dar Kulaib edged past the UAE's Bani Yas with a 3-2 win.

Meanwhile, in the 13th to 15th placement round, Al-Hilal of Libya dominated Gaza of Palestine with a 3-0 victory.

In the quarter-finals, Egypt's Al-Ahly and Zamalek both cruised to 3-0 wins over Al-Salam of Oman and Al-Jazira of the UAE, respectively. Additionally, Al-Seeb of Oman triumphed over the host team, Qatar, in a thrilling 3-2 battle, while Qatar's Al-Shorta overcame Libya's



Kuwait Club and Burgan players in action.

Al-Suwaihli 3-1.

The semi-finals are set for today, with Al-Shorta of Qatar facing Zamalek, and Al-Ahly of Egypt taking on Al-Seeb of Oman.

Al-Arabi, Al-Sulaibikhat secure key victories

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 23: The Al-Arabi basketball team dominated Tadamon with a 92-50 victory at the Federation Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex during the eighth round of the preliminary stage. In the same round, Al-Sulaibikhat secured a commanding 93-55 win against Yarmouk.

With this result, Al-Arabi's tally rose to 9 points from 6 matches, while Al-Sulaibikhat improved to 10 points from 7 games. Meanwhile, Tadamon and Yarmouk remain at 6 points each, suffering 6 consecutive defeats.

According to the tournament rules, the top four teams from the preliminary round will advance to the semi-finals, which follow a "best-of-three" playoff format. The first team to win two matches will progress to the final.

Kuwait Club, Qadsia, and Kazma have all but secured their spots in the



Tadamon player attempts to take the ball from Al Arabi player.

semi-finals. Al-Nasr, with 10 points from 6 matches, is the frontrunner for the final qualification slot, facing competition from Al-Arabi, Al-Qurain, and Al-Sulaibikhat. However, Al-Nasr holds a key advantage, having defeated its direct competitors, putting it in a strong position to join the top three teams in the next round.

China drawn with host Saudi Arabia

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23, (Xinhua) — China has been drawn into Group A of AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025 along with the host Saudi Arabia, following the official draw here on Thursday.

The campaign will be held on April 3-20, and the 16 teams, divided into four groups, will not only be bidding for the trophy but also for the eight spots at the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2025, the first edition of the newly expanded 48-team annual tournament.

The Group A also includes Uzbekistan and Thailand, while Saudi Arabia is seeking its third title.

Kenichi Uemura, the head coach

of China noted he has no strong feelings about the draw. "Every team is strong, so every game will be a tough test," he said.

The 50-year-old Japanese disclosed that the players are on good fitness conditions, and that the team will soon make specific plans for every opponent and diversify the tactic setup.

Following is the full draw:

Group A: Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Thailand, China

Group B: Japan, Australia, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates Group C: South Korea, Yemen, Afghanistan, Indonesia Group D: Iran, Tajikistan, Oman, DPR Korea

Best of the Rest

Muani joins Juventus: Juventus bolstered its attack by signing France forward Randal Kolo Muani on loan from Paris Saint-Germain until the end of the season on Thursday.

Juventus is in fifth place in Serie A and is unbeaten. However, Thiago Motta's side has failed to finish teams off and drawn 13 of 21 games so far.

Kolo Muani became PSG's third-most expensive signing when he joined from German club Eintracht Frankfurt for 95 million euros (then \$101 million) at the beginning of last season. But he has failed to settle at the club and coach Luis Enrique used him sparingly this season. (AP)