



Opinion

Expand the ‘Independent Supplier’ model - it is the right option

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy and a leading company to establish the first power generation station under the “independent supplier” model marks a major step in Kuwait’s energy sector, which represents a pioneering leap as it contributes to achieving the sustainable development goals sought by the new era.

For years, we have been calling to release electricity

production and distribution from the grip of bureaucracy, which has strained public finances and contributed to the growing annual deficit due to the inefficient distribution of electricity subsidies.

In contrast, many countries solved this problem decades ago by adopting the so-called “independent supplier” model for production, distribution, and fee collection. This approach involves both local and foreign companies in building power plants, which in Kuwait could include more than ten such facilities. The role of the relevant ministry is then limited to supervision and laying out development strategies.

There is no doubt that building a project of this scale requires a stable working environment. Therefore, the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) system needs to be upgraded. How can an investor be expected to build large-scale power or water stations, only to be asked to vacate and abandon the project after five or ten years? Incentives and

protections must be provided to independent suppliers, as is the case in most countries worldwide.

In Spain, France, Germany, Japan, and other countries, such companies are granted project management concessions of up to 99 years.

Since its independence, Kuwait has provided subsidies for all services, including electricity, despite the high costs involved, and the consumption of vast amounts of oil for electricity production.

The subsidy system does not differentiate between an average consumer with a limited income living in an apartment or small house, and a wealthy consumer who resides in a palace. This indiscriminate distribution of subsidies drives up costs. As a result, we often face critical electricity load conditions during the summer due to high consumption. The concept of rationalization has remained a mere slogan without any real impact.

Most countries categorize consumers into different

groups based on their needs. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain adopted this system years ago, taking into account the interests of citizens with limited income.

In some countries, subsidies are limited to those most in need, rather than being extended to all citizens. Also, service fees must be paid by consumers, even if no electricity consumption is recorded during a specific period. These fees are required regardless of whether the consumer used any electricity.

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KUWAIT LAUNCHES MULTILINGUAL TRAFFIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Court awaits repeat traffic offenders

Mol targets safer roads with new rules

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Brigadier Mohammed Al-Subhan from the General Traffic Department says the recent amendments to the traffic law differentiate between reconciliation orders and court referrals for serious violations. The department will accept reconciliation and payment for violations directly at the General Traffic De-

partment. However, violators who commit multiple serious offenses will be referred to court.

In an interview with Al-Akhbar Channel, Brigadier Al-Subhan explained that serious violations referred to court will carry fines ranging from KD 600 to KD 1,000, with prison sentences ranging from one to three years. For example, a reconciliation order for running a red light costs KD 150, but if the case is referred to court, the fine will not be less than KD 600.

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KD 12 mln approved for ICT in T2 project

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Ministry of Public Works has received approval from the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to activate a reserve amount of KD 6 million for information and communications technology (ICT) for the construction and completion of the second package of buildings (service buildings, roads leading to the new passenger terminal T2, and parking lots). The ministry also obtained approval for a further increase of KD 6.018 million, bringing the total to KD 12.095 million.

According to informed sources, the communications and information technology network is one among the components of the new passenger terminal T2 project, which aims to electronically link all parties involved in airport operations after its completion and handover to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the beneficiary entity.

The ministry had allocated a total of KD 83 million to cover this aspect for the various stages of the project’s implementation.

On the other hand, the sources indicated that the ministry recently received approval from CAPT to proceed with a contract for the study and design of infrastructure improvement works in Abdullah Al-Salem and Nuzha, at a total cost of KD 301,500.

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PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Gulf-Arab collaboration in arts highlighted in three-day confab

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): A three-day Culture, Art, and Literature Conference, organized by the Youth Public Authority, concluded on Tuesday, featuring numerous workshops, panel discussions, and working sessions with notable participation from Gulf and Arab delegates.

Acting Deputy General Director of Youth Public Authority, Abdullah Al-Adwani emphasized the conference’s significance in fostering joint Gulf and Arab youth collaboration across various fields.

He also noted that the event provided young intellectuals, writers, and artists with valuable opportunities to gain expertise in their respective areas.

Al-Adwani highlighted that the conference shed light on Kuwait’s leading role in the Arab cultural, literary and artistic spheres, and that participating delegations were also given a platform to showcase their countries’ achieve-

ments in these fields through video presentations.

He added that the event’s organizing committee enabled Arab youth to share their experiences and inspiring success stories in the fields of culture, art, and literature through workshops and working sessions.

To prepare for the conference, a joint committee was established, including state institutions and civil society organizations, to curate the most impactful content and activities that cater to Arab youth interested in these fields.

The committee included representatives from the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters, Kuwait University, the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts, and the Kuwaiti Writers Association, whose work received positive feedback from the participating delegations.

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KUNA photo
Kuwaiti delegation being honored during the three-day Culture, Art, and Literature Conference.

Turkish and Korean bidders vie for Kuwait’s T4 contract

By Mohammed Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: According to informed sources, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has opened bids for the operation, management, service improvement, training, maintenance, and development of the T4 passenger terminal at Kuwait International Airport.

They explained that technical bids from two companies have been opened and referred to the Directorate

General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), along with a price list. DGCA will review the technical bid documents and submit its recommendations within one month.

After DGCA receives the notification from CAPT, a decision will be made to award the contract to the best-qualified company both technically and financially. The decision will then be referred to the State Audit Bureau to review the tender procedures.

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Reduced Iran influence will bring balance to Mideast: Dr Al-Zindani

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Yemen’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Dr. Shaie Al-Zindani, has expressed optimism about Yemen’s future, stating, “Yemen will one day return to being the happy country it once was.”

He praised the deep-rooted and historical relations between Kuwait and Yemen, highlighting Kuwait’s unwavering sup-

6.9mn transactions show Sahel impact

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Civil Service Commission has reported that the ‘Sahel’ application completed a total of 6,923,312 transactions in 2024, and sent 20,703,560 notifications, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Among the various transactions, there were 2,010,492 inquiries about central employment, 592 withdrawals from employment registration and 2,071 cases involving the suspension of social allowances for children and spouses.

Additionally, 276 modifications were made to the value of social allowances, while 3,659 social allowance disbursements for wives were completed.

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Sustainability focus

EPA advances green vision at conference

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): Acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA), Eng. Samira Al-Kandari, reaffirmed the authority’s dedication to achieving the sustainability goals outlined in Kuwait Vision 2035 by promoting green building standards and protecting the local environment.

Speaking at the launch of the second Gulf Green Building Conference and Exhibition held at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Al-Kandari described the event as a vital platform for sharing expertise and showcasing innovative solutions to combat climate change and optimize natural resource use.

She emphasized that the conference, sponsored by the EPA, reflects its commitment to advancing environmental sustainability and increasing awareness of green building practices throughout the region. The event will run through tomorrow, featuring discussions on modern technologies that support a sustainable future.

Acting Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense for Military Facilities Engineering, Eng. Hosam Al-Ateeqi, also underscored the Ministry’s commitment to integrating environmentally friendly standards in military facility designs. He highlighted the Ministry’s ongoing support for projects and initiatives aligned with Kuwait’s goal of fostering a clean and sustainable environment.

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KISR, IAEA workshop vital step in bolstering nuke security, aligning policies with world



AAW participates in 13th HORECA Kuwait Exhibition



15 Yun Ho Lee scores a 'Hole-in-One' at Hankook Golf 2025

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:18	Asr	15:02
Sunrise ..	06:40	Maghrib ..	17:23
Zohr	12:01	Isha	18:42

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.
By Night: Cold with light to moderate northwesterly wind,

Weather			
with speeds of 12-35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	20	12	
Kuwait Airport	21	07	
Abdaly	23	07	

Bubyan	20	07
Jahra	22	11
Failaka Island	22	13
Salmiyah	20	14
Ahmadi	22	08
Jal Aliyah	21	09
Nuwaisib	21	11

KISR, IAEA workshop vital step in bolstering nuke security, aligning global policies



Dr. Nader Al-Awadhi and representatives of government agencies during the workshop.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Dr. Nader Al-Awadhi, the Executive Commissioner for International Cooperation at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the National Liaison Officer with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), inaugurated a workshop on reviewing Kuwait's National Plan for Sustaining Nuclear Security.

The workshop, held in collaboration with the IAEA, took place from January 27 to 30, 2025 and aims to evaluate and update the National Nuclear Security Sustainability Plan in line with international standards and Kuwait's goals to enhance its nuclear security system.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Al-Awadhi highlighted the significant role of the IAEA in supporting Kuwait's national efforts to maximize the benefits of nuclear applications across sectors such as health, agriculture, environment and industry.

He emphasized Kuwait's commitment to strengthening its nuclear security system, citing the country's ratification of key international agreements like the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material

(CPPNM) and the Convention on the Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism.

Kuwait has been committed to nuclear security for decades, having ratified the CPPNM in 1985 and its 2005 amendment in 2016. Furthermore, Kuwait joined the Nuclear Terrorism Convention and has adhered to its obligations.

The Radiation Protection Department, established in 1977 within the Ministry of Health, is responsible for regulating the use of radioactive materials in Kuwait and has developed a robust regulatory framework to ensure nuclear security.

Dr. Al-Awadhi also acknowledged international recognition of Kuwait's nuclear security efforts, noting the positive evaluation by the International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) in 2023.

The mission praised Kuwait's development of a nuclear security system that meets international standards. In closing, Dr. Al-Awadhi reaffirmed Kuwait's dedication to further improving its nuclear security framework and expressed his gratitude to the IAEA for its continued support. The workshop serves as a crucial step in strengthening Kuwait's nuclear security and aligning the country's policies with global standards.

MoE acts to curb corruption, waste of funds, work neglect

Minister discovers accumulated debts of KD12 million

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: In a bid to enhance transparency, tighten financial control and combat all forms of corruption or negligence at work, Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei issued a decision to form a fact-finding committee to investigate the non-implementation of thousands of administrative decisions with financial impact that have accumulated over the years, resulting in the discovery of debts estimated at KD12 million that were not collected for the State treasury.

This is in response to the comments and information that Al-Tabtabaei repeatedly received about the accumulated debts on current and former employees in the Ministry of Education, which is considered wastage of public money. He immediately instructed the inspection and audit team in his office to

verify this information and submit a comprehensive report in this regard.

Field visits and audits conducted by the inspection team in cooperation with the director of the Financial Department and his team resulted in the discovery of serious violations, including more than 100,000 unimplemented administrative decisions (from previous years), resulting in huge financial obligations that were not collected for the ministry's treasury and financial dues for employees at the ministry -- a blatant violation of governmental rules and regulations.

According to the ministerial decision issued by Al-Tabtabaei, the fact-finding committee will carry out multiple tasks.

Al-Tabtabaei confirmed that the ministry is reforming the administrative and financial systems and enhancing the efficiency of internal operations in a way that serves the interests of the State and guarantees justice among employees. He said the ministry will continue to monitor performance, and take stringent decisions to ensure everyone's commitment to the required professional and ethical standards.

The minister also affirmed his full commitment to protecting public money, stressing that the above-mentioned amount requires legal accountability and the necessary measures must be taken

to recover the money in accordance with the approved legal and administrative frameworks.

He stressed importance of improving the management of financial resources to prevent the recurrence of such violations.

He added that commitment to the principle of accountability and the protection of public money constitutes a fundamental pillar for consolidating citizens' confidence in the ministry. He pointed out that protecting public money is not just a legal obligation, as it is rather a national trust and a moral and societal responsibility that requires hard work to guarantee integrity and transparency, and that the rights of employees and their financial dues are an administrative obligation which cannot be compromised.

He stressed that strict financial oversight of all transactions in the ministry is a national responsibility; and that implementing financial systems and regulations is not an option, but a permanent commitment and priority that must be adhered to without exception.

He indicated that the ministry will take legal action against any employee proven to have been negligent or involved in administrative violations, including referring the file to the Public Prosecution if necessary. He said such practices are a violation of the standards of integrity and financial and administrative discipline.



KUNA photo
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives Director of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Department at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Alexander Kinshchak.

Ways to boost ties discussed

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Tuesday received Director of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Department at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amba-

sador Alexander Kinshchak, who was on an official visit to the country. They discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations, as well as the latest developments regionally and internationally. (KUNA)

Other Voices

Harnessing waste of supplies

By Ahmad alsarraf

News has recently spread on social media about the government's plan to overhaul the way the supply company, responsible for providing subsidized food to citizens, operates.

The idea is to shift away from the traditional method of distribution and instead deliver a more limited range of products directly to citizens' homes, based on orders submitted through the Sahel program.

This program allows for more accurate tracking of eligible family members and their monthly share of materials. Notably, the percentage of non-Kuwaiti citizens and workers involved in this process is almost half of the country's population.

Undoubtedly, the proposed shift could bring significant benefits, such as reducing waste, cutting down on the number of company branches and eliminating excessive paperwork and routine operations.

However, the plan would also require the acquisition and management of a fleet of vehicles to deliver materials to over two hundred thousand homes and apartments in a timely manner.

Additionally, there would be logistical challenges such as securing parking spaces for the vehicles, managing their maintenance and covering their insurance premiums.

Monitoring their usage would also require a substantial workforce of



alsarraf

employees and technicians, many of whom would likely only be employed on a temporary basis, adding to the overall cost and inefficiency.

Therefore, a more efficient alternative could be to streamline the process by allowing citizens to electronically request their materials and then select a specific time to pick them up in person or send a representative to collect the order, without the need for a lengthy wait. This method would eliminate the need for a costly transport fleet and associated infrastructure.

The issue of waste and the depletion of state resources remain unresolved, largely due to the current inability to properly manage the system.

Running a company of the scale of 'Al-Tamween' shouldn't be more complicated than managing major food companies that deal with hundreds of products and yet they don't face the same issues.

Since its inception, the catering company has been criticized by various groups, including those who want its operations regulated and those who are directly affected by its existence.

However, the company has often chosen not to respond, which doesn't necessarily indicate that everything is running smoothly.

In fact, a report from the Ministry of Commerce revealed that 61,000 ration cards were cancelled within two months, a clear sign of waste.

How did such a large number accumulate without being cancelled earlier and how can we be sure that these cards weren't exploited before being revoked?

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MoE initiates measures to reduce weight of school bags

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Ministry of Education has started taking steps to reduce the weight of the school bag by up to 50 percent.

It can be recalled that the newspaper published a report on Nov 17, 2024 entitled "Al-Tabtabaei issues a directive to reduce the weight of the school bag". The ministry stated that the concerned sectors -- educational research, curricula, general education and finance -- have developed a series of practical solutions that balance the efficiency of education and the safety of students. The most im-

portant of these solutions is printing school books for the second semester of 2024/2025 academic year with specifications aimed at reducing the weight of the school bag, it added.

It indicated that the new procedures include dividing the school book for the second semester into two parts in line with the study plans approved by the General Technical Guidance for subjects at all levels. These amendments were made without compromising the quality of printing or educational content, which ensures the continued provision of educational curricula in an effective and advanced manner, the ministry asserted.

It confirmed that all measures to reduce the

weight of school bag were taken without any additional cost; as the approved budget for printing school books was adhered to, based on the commitment to achieve balance between providing education at the required level and preserving the State's financial resources.

It stressed that this trend reflects its deep commitment to protect the health of students and guarantee their safety from the effects of carrying weights exceeding the recommended capacity for different age groups in schools. It explained that this step aims to ensure the provision of an educational environment; which meets the needs of students, and supports their educational and health development.



The Italian envoy Lorenzo Morini addressing the event.

Italian embassy organizes event

Connect-IT exhibit explores physical, cultural and emotional connections

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Connect-IT exhibition, organized by the Embassy of Italy in Kuwait in collaboration with the Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST), celebrated Italy's ability to shape connections -- physical, cultural and emotional.

Created under the scientific curatorship of Professor Tullia Iori and the artistic guidance of Spazio Taverna, the exhibition explored the art and science behind the structures that bridge communities, landscapes, and histories.

The exhibition organized around five thematic capsules -- landscape, cities, history, heritage and borders; each capsule showcased how Italian infrastructure, both past and present, has risen to the challenge of blending functionality with aesthetic harmony.

At the entrance of each capsule, writer Emanuele Trevi's evocative texts weaved a narrative that connects infrastructure to Ita-

ly's cultural memory and its role as a bridge between history and modernity.

The works on display -- photographed by Luca Campigotto -- captured 25 groundbreaking projects realized in the past decade. From bridges to creative urban designs and expertly restored historical buildings, these projects illustrate the uniquely Italian approach: a regard for the environment, a humanistic sense of design, and a commitment to innovation.

Each capsule further enhanced by immersive multimedia installations, including Gabriele Gianni's video projections and Michelangelo Lupone's custom soundscapes, resulted in a multisensory experience that heightens the emotional resonance of the works.

The exhibition culminated in a sixth capsule, highlighting Italian companies' contributions abroad. These projects demonstrate Italy's ability to export its expertise, blending its heritage of craftsmanship and innovation with an international perspective.

KRCS, ICRC join efforts to provide Gazans aid

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Khaled Al-Mughamis, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has commended the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for its dedicated humanitarian and relief efforts to aid those in need, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This came during a meeting with Mamadou Sou, head of the ICRC's regional mission for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and his accompanying delegation.

Al-Mughamis highlighted the Kuwait Red Crescent's commitment to collaborating with international humanitarian organizations, particularly the ICRC, to enhance global relief initiatives.

The discussions covered the close cooperation between the two organizations, future prospects, and strategies for strengthening humanitarian efforts in response to regional crises and disasters.

He also detailed Kuwait's support for Gaza, Syria, Sudan, and Lebanon, emphasizing the importance of coordination between national societies and the ICRC to maximize the impact of relief efforts.

Mamadou Sou, in turn, outlined the ICRC's immediate response efforts in Gaza and praised the Kuwait Red Crescent's significant role in addressing the needs of disaster-stricken communities, particularly in the Middle East.

He also underscored the importance of further collaboration between the ICRC and the Kuwait Red Crescent to improve the lives of those affected by crises.



Head of the ICRC's regional mission for GCC Mamadou Sou and Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Khaled Al-Mughamis.

PADA nationality revocations to rise as 1,119 already withdrawn

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The total number of individuals in the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) whose citizenship was revoked, particularly among the disabled, has reached 1,119 cases. This marks an increase of 303 cases compared to last week, reports Al-Jarida daily quoting informed sources.

They explained that the revoked citizenship cases are categorized as follows: 322 people with special needs, 514 of those assigned to care for disabled persons, 264 women caregivers, and 19 employees.

The number of revocations has in-

creased by 80 cases for people with disabilities, 145 for caregivers of disabled persons, and 74 for female caregivers, while the increase for employees was just four cases. The number of PADA members whose citizenships have been revoked is expected to rise in the coming days, as the Supreme Committee continues to issue decisions and decrees regarding citizenship withdrawal.

In addition, PADA regularly receives updates on those whose citizenship has recently been revoked and cross-checks the data to take the necessary legal actions against them.

Education catalyst for people power and a thriving society

“EDUCATION is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, serving as the foundation for unlocking human potential and capabilities,” columnist Dr. Ghadir Mohammad Asiri wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

“Since its inception, the State of Kuwait has recognized the vital role of education in the country’s growth, transitioning from a primitive, illiteracy-prone education system to a modern, compulsory and institutionalized one through the implementation of Law No. 11 of 1965.



Dr. Ghadir Asiri

“Education was also integrated into Kuwait’s national development plans, reflecting the government’s belief that investing in human capital is essential for sustainable progress.

“It is through education that individuals refine their skills, enhance their capabilities and become agents of transformation and development in the country.

“Historically, education has been crucial in preparing qualified national cadres who helped Kuwait overcome past challenges.

“Its significance continues into the present, as it is key to building a knowledge economy rooted in innovation and excellence.

“With the rapid pace of global change and growing digital demands, education has become an indispensable tool for advancing society and empowering individuals to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

“By developing individuals’ intellectual and scientific abilities, education opens up greater opportunities for professional and personal success. The expansion of universities, scientific institutes and research centers – such as Kuwait University, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training and the private higher education sector – ensures that the next generation acquires specialized knowledge and technological skills to compete in the global job market.

“Furthermore, education strengthens national values and reinforces Kuwait’s cultural identity through curricula designed to meet the demands of the modern era.

“The establishment of universities and specialized institutions plays a pivotal role in investing in the Kuwaiti people.

“The collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as partnerships with international institutions, enhances the quality of higher education and scientific research, driving innovation and excellence.

“Education is also integral to building a robust future economy, as it produces skilled professionals capable of addressing national development needs and offering innovative solutions to social and economic challenges.

“By investing in higher education, Kuwait promotes social justice, ensures equal opportunities for all and contributes to comprehensive, long-term development. This, in turn, helps reduce unemployment and strengthens Kuwaitization policies, especially in leadership positions.

“The development of education in Kuwait is not a short-term goal but a long-term investment in the future. Efforts to improve education quality and create innovative ways to invest in human capital continue to strengthen Kuwait’s commitment to comprehensive and sustainable development.

“Education is not just a means of learning but a catalyst for empowering individuals, unleashing their potential and contributing to the creation of a prosperous and thriving society, one that is on par with the leading countries in the world.”

Also:

“With Donald Trump officially assuming office for a second four-year term on January 20, 2025, it’s crucial for the Arab and Islamic world to carefully consider the implications of his new policies when engaging with the United States,” columnist **Walid Ibrahim Al-Hamad** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

“According to Axios, Trump’s wealth has surged to around \$60 billion, largely due to the launch of his cryptocurrency just three days before his inauguration, skyrocketing from \$7 billion in a matter of days – a feat he had failed to achieve in fifty years.

“The fact that the ruler of the United States is a real estate mogul and investor, rather than a career politician, means his approach to international relations is likely to be driven by material interests. His administration prioritizes financial gains and his worldview reflects a focus on what benefits him and his country – often at the expense of global cooperation.

“For example, Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organization, as well as his stance on refugee resettlement and immigration, underscore his materialistic approach to governance.

“He has shown little regard for global institutions or agreements, instead promoting the idea of ‘Me and my people and after me, the flood.’

“Additionally, his move to suspend the refugee resettlement program and his resistance to granting automatic citizenship to children of illegal immigrants born in the US further illustrate his nationalistic and often controversial views.

“Even his attempt to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America highlights his unpredictable and at times aggressive approach to international diplomacy, driven by a mix of personal beliefs and political goals.

“Trump’s focus on the oil wealth of the Arab Gulf states and his demand for these countries to bear the cost of US defense highlights the transactional nature of his foreign policy.

“What was once a relationship based

on mutual strategic interests is now increasingly about financial exchanges -- America offers protection and in return, the Gulf states pay for it.

“However, Arab nations should not panic about Trump’s rhetoric. As long as oil remains vital to global markets and the region holds strategic economic importance, Trump will be cautious not to alienate his allies in the Middle East.

“His fear of increasing Russian and Chinese influence in the region will likely temper his more extreme actions. Thus, Arab countries have the leverage to influence US policy, forcing him to reconsider and adjust his stance in the region.

“One of the few notable positive announcements from Trump at the start of his second term was his decision to reverse policies under the Biden administration that promoted sexual diversity and LGBTQ+ rights.

“This marks a return to his conservative stance on social issues, where he advocates for traditional gender roles and values.

“His position on this matter resonates with his base and aligns with his broader view of American society, which rejects progressive policies on gender and sexual identity.

“In this light, Trump’s second term seems focused on consolidating his base by rejecting what he considers moral decay, while continuing to position America as an economic and political powerhouse with a strong nationalist agenda.

“Ultimately, while Trump’s leadership will likely create new challenges for international diplomacy, especially with the Arab world, it also offers opportunities for calculated and strategic engagements.

“As long as the Middle East continues to hold valuable economic assets and remains central to global power dynamics, the US-Arab relationship will likely persist, albeit on more transactional terms.”

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“Every now and then, gambling companies return to the scene to defraud people with an unofficial currency called ‘Bitcoin’. They advertise it in newspapers and websites, as it happened recently in the conversations in Kuwaiti diwanis. One of them said: ‘I put KD5,000 to trade in that currency, but I was surprised with the sharp decline in the value of my money, as it reached only KD1,450. I lost KD3,550.’ There are many examples,” **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Citizens and expatriates have suffered huge losses, because they dealt with something akin to gambling. It is nothing but fraud and deception. We have written about it. For those who read, here is the story about money.

“In ancient times, man lived a primitive life. For example, he had a cow, he drank its milk. He hunted a deer or a rabbit to eat. Perhaps, he raised some chickens and picked fruits and vegetables when money did not exist.

“People were bartering. If someone wanted to exchange eggs for some meat, the owner of the eggs would search for the owner of the meat. If he found him, he would ask him to slaughter the cow so he could give him part of it. Of course, the owner of the cow would not slaughter it in order to give the owner of the eggs part of it, so what would he do with the rest of the meat? They had no refrigerator, so the barter was annoying.

“Over time, people agreed to use something that could be easily carried and accepted by everyone. People would exchange it as a price for food or goods. It could be stored at home and it had value. For instance, they decided to use salt, because of its importance. Someone would take out a handful of salt, say the size of the palm, to buy eggs or meat. However, salt dissolves in water and could spoil, so it was not suitable as a medium of exchange. Then, human societies used oysters and snails and other things.

I give you so-and-so oysters and you give me such-and-such.

“This went on until man discovered that gold and silver are not affected by climate conditions over time. They are easy to carry and store their value at home, so they were used thousands of years ago. One gives another a piece of gold or silver to buy, and the other takes it and buys with it as well, instead of carrying salt.

“More than a hundred years ago, when the First World War broke out or around that date to facilitate analysis, Europe did not have enough gold and silver, and was fighting each other. Since the country had to pay salaries to soldiers, and the balance of gold and silver was not enough, Europe thought of issuing paper money (‘note’ or ‘not’ as we say) to pay the soldiers, on the condition that the State pledges to pay the holder of the paper a quantity of gold if he wanted to spend it in the bank. Gradually, people got used to this currency and did not go to banks to receive gold instead, reassured and confident in the value of the paper issued by the government in the form of money, so people began to use ‘paper money’. We studied this in the Faculty of Economics.

“This is money, how it appeared and people exchanged it. It is issued by the central bank. It has a value that people accept in buying and selling. It is money represented by paper currency, checks or precious metals, such as gold and silver.

“As for the digital currency ‘Bitcoin’ that is promoted on the Internet, it is not recommended by financial analysts. It is a global craze. It is gambling, not an investment. Trading it is fraught with enormous risks that cause losses to people.

“President of El Salvador Nayib Bukele (of Arab origin) used ‘Bitcoin’ in the summer of 2021 as a currency within his country, but the currency system did not work. The people hated it.”

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes / Mahmoud Attiyeh**



KFF photo

KFF personnel during a fire drill at the Kuwait University.

KFF conducts fire drills at KU, cooperative sites at one time

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 27: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted a drill on Monday at the Kuwait University site in Mubarak Al-Abdullah.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the building was evacuated during the exercise, simulated injuries were treated, and a virtual fire was extinguished. KFF carries out such training as part of its commitment to ensuring the safety of lives and properties, and maintaining an efficient and rapid response to emergencies.

The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) also

conducted a drill on Monday at the administration building of the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Cooperative Society.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the exercise included a virtual evacuation, the rescue of simulated injuries, and the extinguishing of a virtual fire.

KFF carries out such practical drills as part of its commitment to enhancing rapid and efficient responses to fire emergencies, ensuring the safety and protection of lives and property, and promoting community safety.

Any security officer has right to issue traffic ticket: official

Singles in private housing dealt as per law: Al-Mutairi

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: **Head of the Operations Department in the Public Security Sector, Captain Bader Musaed Al-Mutairi, said that the role of the Public Security Sector is to maintain security, receive reports and transfer them to the relevant sector, department or police station, and receive service orders issued by the General Department of Central Operations, reports Al Anba daily.**

Captain Al-Mutairi explained, during his

meeting yesterday morning on Kuwait Radio, that any security officer in the Public Security Sector has the right to issue a traffic ticket against any violator, indicating that the Public Security Sector patrols head to reports of recklessness and rashness that occur in some areas, where they are arrested and referred to the General Traffic Department.

Al-Mutairi said that any report received by the Public Security Sector operations or the police station about a quarrel or problems in private housing by bachelors, security patrols head to the location of the report, arrest the quarreling parties and transfer them to the police station. As for bachelors who live in private housing, if there are complaints against them, coordination

is made and the municipality is notified to take the necessary action.

Captain Al-Mutairi confirmed that the Public Security Sector, in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, the Municipality and the General Authority for Public Force, is carrying out security campaigns against violators of the residency and labor law and wanted persons in all governorates within a special security plan.

Captain Al-Mutairi added that there is a security plan for the Public Security Sector to establish checkpoints at the entrances and exits of the areas within the daily work of the security patrols, during which the “fingerprint” device is used, which is a device for identifying the person, in order to arrest wanted persons and violators of the law.

Restoring Audit powers enhances transparency, accountability

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Dr. Khaled Al-Barrak, Chairman of the National Union of Employees and the Union of Workers at the Ministry of Higher Education, hailed the Cabinet’s decision to restore the Audit Bureau’s full powers, including access to copies of decisions and contracts, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

He emphasized that this step is crucial for pro-

moting transparency and financial accountability, as mandated by Law No. 30 of 1964, to safeguard public funds and ensure efficient government operations.

Al-Barrak highlighted the importance of the Audit Bureau’s role in overseeing financial practices across government agencies while preserving their independence.

He urged for greater coordination between the Bureau and government entities through workshops and training to raise awareness of regulatory laws and streamline oversight.

Al-Barrak also called for fostering a transparent and cooperative work environment while accelerating financial and administrative reforms to serve national and public interests.



An abandoned car is taken away.

‘Forgotten’ cars lifted

3 Kuwaiti juveniles held driving without license

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: In a security campaign conducted by the Ahmadi Security Directorate, three Kuwaiti juveniles were apprehended for reckless and dangerous driving, which posed a threat to their safety and the safety of others. The juveniles have been referred to the Juvenile Prosecution for further action, reports **Al Anba** daily.

A security source revealed that nine traffic violations were issued during the campaign for offenses such as driving without a license, reckless driving, and creating disturbances. The vehicles involved were impounded and transferred to the traffic impoundment garage.

Additionally, five abandoned vehicles found parked in dirt lots in the Mahbula area were towed by municipal authorities and moved to the municipality’s storage facility.

Plan to nationalize jobs in cooperative societies

By **Fares Al-Abdan**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, has announced plans to nationalize jobs in vegetable sales within cooperative societies and sales outlets.

Following a meeting with the committee monitoring the support of locally produced agricultural goods in cooperative societies, Al-Huwailah emphasized the importance of promoting local produce.

She highlighted the need to enforce strict oversight to ensure compliance with regulations supporting local products and to hold non-compliant cooperative societies accountable.

Ex-MP Al-Fikr gets one year jail in libel lawsuit

By **Jaber Al-Hamoud**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Misdemeanor Court has sentenced former MP Anwar Al-Fikr to one year in prison with hard labor.

This came following a complaint filed by the Ministry of Interior with the Public Prosecution based on statements he made during an election seminar that included interference in the powers of His Highness the Amir of the country.

□ □ □

Fadala declares assets: Abdul Aziz Abdul Latif Al-Ibrahim, Chairman of the Public Authority for Combating Corruption (Nazaha), met with Saleh Al-Fadala, Chairman of the Central Agency for Illegal Residents, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

During the meeting, Al-Fadala submitted his financial assets declaration in compliance with Law No. (2) of 2016, which governs the establishment of Nazaha and mandates the disclosure of financial assets under its executive regulations.

□ □ □

Child hurt in accident: An 11-year-old GCC national sustained multiple facial injuries after being struck by a vehicle on Restaurants Street in Salmiya, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

According to a security source, when authorities received a report about the incident, security personnel and paramedics were immediately dispatched to the scene.

The child was quickly transported to the nearest hospital for medical treatment, and the driver was apprehended.

□ □ □

Al-Khudair resigns: The Director General of the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents, Brigadier Fawaz Al-Roumi, honored Brigadier Mohammad Salem Al-Khudair, Director of Administrative Affairs, following his request for retirement, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

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Higher Education expands academic programs in Saudi, Lebanon and US

New degrees include speech pathology, disaster management

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal has issued a decision to add some academic programs and degrees to the list of higher education institutions authorized to enroll students in undergraduate and postgraduate programs at Alfaisal University in Saudi Arabia and in Lebanon.

This decision was made based on the recommendation of the Committee for Setting Standards and Determining Higher Institutions in Medical Specializations and Programs outside the State of Kuwait, as well as the presentation from the director general of the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, taking into account the public interest.

The decision, in its first article, includes the addition of the Master's Program in Clinical Speech and Language Pathology at Alfaisal University to academic Resolution No. 7/2014, which was issued on May 14, 2014, and permits enrollment in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Saudi Arabia.

It stipulates that students must attend classes regularly throughout the school week, and the study program they join must follow the traditional education system.

The program must also adhere to the prescribed study period required for granting the degree, which will be confirmed by the graduation of the first batch from the college offering the program. Also, enrollment and study system regulations for educational institutions outside the State of Kuwait must be followed, and the degrees awarded must meet the criteria set by the Ministry of Higher Education in Kuwait.

This decision takes effect from the date it is published in the official gazette, and any provisions contradicting it are hereby canceled.

Minister Al-Jalal also issued a decision to add a range of new study programs and degrees to the list of accredited universities eligible for scholarships in the United States of America.

The list includes various specializations such as disaster management, emergency management and planning, education, and public relations.

According to the decision, Kuwaiti students can now enroll in these newly added programs offered by renowned American universities, including Tulane University, the University of North Texas, the University of California Santa Barbara, and Temple University.

The decision specifies that the study programs must be based on regular attendance throughout the school week, while adhering to the standards of traditional education. It also stressed the importance of students meeting the requirements for obtaining a degree according to the applicable regulations. This decision aims to diversify scholarship opportunities and provide new educational options for students, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of higher education outcomes and meeting the needs of the labor market.



Dr. Al-Jalal

Draft law reviewed in key talks

Al-Mishari discusses housing solutions with Kuwaiti banks

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Abdulatif Al-Mishari, held a discussion with representatives of the Union of Kuwaiti Banks regarding the draft real estate financing law for those eligible for housing care, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a press release from the Public Authority for Housing Care, the meeting focused on



Al-Mishari

the draft law and the financial flexibility it offers to those in need of housing care.

The proposed real estate finance law is part of a comprehensive strategy to address the housing crisis in Kuwait sustainably. The meeting underscored the government's strong commitment to moving forward with the law and enhancing the overall housing care system.

It was attended by representatives from various institutions, including the Public Institution for Housing Welfare, the Credit Bank, the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Kuwait.

This effort reflects the government's ongoing dedication to finding viable and long-term solutions for the country's housing challenges.



Dr. Reem Al-Fulajj with EU envoy Anne Koistinen.

PAFN photo

Kuwait Food Authority eyes closer EU collaboration on public health

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Dr. Reem Al-Fulajj, Chairman and Director General of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, met with Anne Koistinen, the European Union Ambassador to Kuwait, to discuss the Authority's efforts in food safety and public health promotion, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the visit, Dr. Al-Fulajj out-

lined the Authority's key initiatives, including the mechanism for issuing halal certificates, which play a crucial role in ensuring that food products in Kuwait meet Islamic law standards and are of the highest quality.

Both parties expressed interest in enhancing food trade between Kuwait and the European Union.

Governor of Farwaniya hosts Uzbek delegation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi, the Governor of Farwaniya, hosted an Uzbek delegation led by Delfoza Uralova, Governor of Bujft District and Mahabat Mustafa Kulova, Assistant Governor, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During their meeting, they discussed strengthening bilateral ties and shared interests, particularly in fostering cooperation between the Farwaniya Governorate and the Uzbek region.

This collaboration focuses on exchanging experiences in local administrative systems as part of their strategic partnership.

Uralova emphasized the robust relationship between the two countries, noting that it has significantly grown in recent years and highlighted the abundant investment opportunities available in Uzbekistan across various sectors.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Adhbi Al-Nasser with Uzbek delegation.



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15 warnings, 2 violations in Shuwaikh sweep

Municipality cracks down on violators

By Enaas Awad
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Public Relations Department of Municipality reported that an inspection tour by the Safety Department of the Capital Governorate Municipality branch in Shuwaikh Industrial resulted in two violations for non-compliance with safety regulations, encroachment

on government property and absence of a safety license.

The Municipality also issued 15 warnings citing various reasons.

The Municipality has urged property owners to prioritize safety measures and comply with regulations, including the prompt removal of construction debris by contractors and property owners, to avoid legal repercussions.

KFAED hosts Tanzanian military delegation to explore Fund's 'development initiatives'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development recently welcomed a military delegation from the United Republic of Tanzania as part of their scientific visit to Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The visit is aimed at providing the delegation with an overview of the Fund's development initiatives and activities.

During the meeting, Ayad Al-Gharaballi, Operations Department Supervisor for Central, South and East African Affairs, delivered a detailed presentation highlighting the Fund's achievements since its inception, emphasizing its commitment to development and humanitarian aid in line with Kuwait's foreign policy.

The discussion included an overview of the Fund's policies for financing development projects and the mechanisms for submitting loan requests from beneficiary countries.

Major General Stephen Munkand, the head of the Tanzanian delegation, expressed his admiration for the Kuwait Fund's role in supporting development globally, stating, "I have always heard about the Kuwait Fund and its activities in my country, but today I am happy to visit the Fund and meet the officials. The Fund's strategic partnerships with Arab and developing countries on economic and social levels are truly commend-



Al-Gharaballi and the head of the Tanzanian delegation exchange commemorative shields.

able."

He also expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality and valuable insights shared during the visit. To commemorate the occasion, both parties exchanged shields, reinforcing the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect.

The Kuwait Fund remains a pioneering institution in the Middle East, playing a vital role in global development efforts and fostering sustainable development through its initiatives.

It continues to serve as a bridge of friendship and solidarity between Kuwait and countries worldwide.

Environmental review

Council set to visit Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Alia Al Farsi, the Head of the Environmental Affairs Committee in the Municipal Council, shared that the committee plans to organize a visit to the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area next month.

This visit will include participation from parties involved in the workshop held last November, titled 'Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Environmental System - Community Participation between Evaluation and Solutions.'

The workshop resulted in eight recommendations, which were approved by the Municipal Council and ratified by the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Abdul Latif Al-Mishari, at the end of last month.

The main focus of these recommendations is to address the 'catastrophic' environmental situation in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

It calls for a field visit to assess the area, evaluate the enforcement of regulations by the municipality and the Environment Public Authority and implement more stringent monitoring and inspection tours to reduce violations.

Maintenance begins

New road projects for Abdullah Al-Mubarak

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Minister of Public Works, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, announced the launch of extensive road maintenance projects in Abdullah Al-Mubarak as part of new contracts covering highway and internal road maintenance, encompassing 18 major practices.

Dr. Al-Mashaan expressed gratitude for the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, emphasizing their support for road infrastructure development as a cornerstone of the "New Kuwait 2035" vision.

She noted that the decision to initiate major maintenance efforts in the Farwaniya Governorate aligns with recommendations by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah and reflects the government's commitment to preserving and upgrading Kuwait's infrastructure.

Chinese construction workers push ahead with Kuwait’s housing project during Spring Festival

\$305 mln smart city development moves forward with progress

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (Xinhua): As hundreds of millions across China gather with loved ones to celebrate the Chinese New Year, a team of Chinese construction workers in Kuwait’s expansive desert is pushing forward with an ambitious housing project, making the most of the country’s brief, cooler winter months to accelerate progress.

The project, part of Kuwait’s South Sabah Al-Ahmad New City development, highlights deepening ties between the Gulf state and China. Under the relentless desert sun, workers from the China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) are toiling on the construction site near the Kuwaiti-Saudi border, underterred by sandstorms and other daily challenges.

Launched on Sep. 1, 2024, the 305.8-million-U.S.-dollar proj-

ect aims to deliver roads, utilities, and sewage systems for 7,623 housing units in South Sabah Al-Ahmad New City, the futuristic “smart city” located 80 kilometers south of Kuwait City.

By January 2025, the site was buzzing with over 350 pieces of heavy machinery and a workforce of more than 450, including Chinese, Kuwaiti, Indian, and Sri Lankan laborers.

“Spring Festival is very special for us, but this work is important,” said Zhang Fengkun, a field engineer from Tianjin, northern China. “We’re striving to complete the project quickly to provide comfortable homes for Kuwaiti families. Though I miss my family, I’m proud to contribute to the friendship between China and Kuwait.”

Despite the demanding work schedule, the spirit of the Spring Festival was not forgotten. The construction site’s modest cafeteria was adorned with red lanterns and the Chinese character “Fu,” symbolizing luck and prosperity. The workers gathered to share traditional festival foods and enjoy Chinese cultural performances, creating a warm atmosphere

of cross-cultural celebration.

For many Chinese workers, the holiday is a time of longing. But they found solace and pride in their mission abroad. “It’s a sacrifice, but it’s worth it,” said one worker.

The collaboration is not without its challenges. Harsh weather, language barriers, and cultural differences have tested the team’s resilience. However, CSCEC’s management has implemented measures to bridge these gaps, such as hiring Arabic-speaking Chinese managers and providing regular training for foreign workers.

“We’ve formed specialized technical groups to align with local standards while maintaining open communication with Kuwaiti authorities,” said Zhu Xiangang, the project manager. “This ensures mutual understanding and smooth progress.”

The broader impact of the project extends beyond housing. Local resident Abdullah Al-Dosari expressed optimism about its benefits. “This will transform our quality of life, improving housing and driving national development,” he said.

Sherif, a young Kuwaiti worker, spoke of how the experience had broadened his horizons. “I’ve learned new skills and gained a deep appreciation for the dedication of Chinese workers,” he said.

The partnership also reflects Kuwait’s strategic alignment with China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

Tarek, an Egyptian project coordination manager, emphasized the value of this cooperation. “China’s focus on mutual benefit ... creates a positive environment for regional peace and development,” he said, urging Arab nations to strengthen ties with China.

As the winter months offer optimal construction conditions, the team is accelerating efforts to meet deadlines. For the workers, this endeavor transcends the physical structures they are building.

“This is more than just a project; it’s a testament to the enduring friendship between China and Kuwait,” Zhu said.

New limits on livestock areas and structures

PAAAFR implements ‘stricter’ grazing license requirements

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) issued Resolution No. 21 of 2025, amending Article Two of Resolution No. (110) of 1999 regarding the conditions and procedures for granting grazing licenses, in accordance with the provisions of Decree Law No. (41) of 1988.

The authority stated in a press release on Tuesday that the new resolution stipulates that the license applicant must be a Kuwaiti citizen and at least 21 years old. It also requires submitting a certificate of good conduct and behavior, confirming that the applicant has not been sentenced to a penalty restricting freedom for a crime that violates honor or trust, whether a felony or misdemeanor.

Additionally, the resolution stipulates that the license applicant must own at least 50 heads of sheep and

goats, or five heads of camels or cows. The resolution also requires a deposit of only KD 100, explaining that the grazing license is issued for a value of only five dinars.

The authority pointed out that the duration of the temporary facilities referred to will be determined by the authority. It emphasized that it is prohibited to set up temporary facilities without first obtaining the approval of the Kuwait Municipality and then the approval of the authority.

The decision also states that the area of the enclosure should not exceed 10 square meters per sheep and 25 square meters per camel. It permits the installation of a tent with an area not exceeding 8x5 meters and a ready-made mobile house with an area not exceeding 12x4 meters. The decision prohibits the erection or placement of any type of fences or earthen agricultural trenches on the site permitted for graz-

ing, or the establishment of any other temporary facilities except those specified. It is essential to determine the duration and location of these temporary facilities according to the authority’s regulations.

The authority stressed that these temporary facilities must be located away from security and oil sites, as well as nature reserves. It further emphasized that it reserves the right to request the removal of any permitted temporary facilities at any time, with no objection from the licensee. If the licensee fails to remove the facilities, the authority has the right to remove them at the licensee’s expense.

The authority also confirmed that it will take the legal measures outlined in Decree Law No. (41) of 1988 to cancel the license administratively in the event of a violation of the aforementioned clauses.



KUNA photo

The 14th plane of the Kuwaiti airlift carrying 40 tons of various aid arrives in Syria.

Kuwait’s 14th aid plane arrives in Syria

DAMASCUS, Jan 28, (KUNA): The 14th Kuwaiti relief aid plane arrived at Damascus International Airport on Tuesday carrying 40 tons of food and shelter supplies, organized by Al-Salam Association for Humanitarian and Charitable Works, as part of the humanitarian campaign “Kuwait is by Your Side.”

The Kuwaiti air bridge to Syria total load is estimated at some

400 tons of various relief aid, with the participation of the Health Ministry, Zakat House, Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Kuwait Relief, ICO, Islamic Heritage Revival Society, Namaa Charity, Najat Charity, Nouri Charity, Direct Aid, Patient Helping Fund Society, and Global Mercy.

Items like flour, dates, lentils and other foods that can be easily stored for long periods were sent,

as well as blankets, heavy fabrics, gloves and winter supplies, in addition to sending wheelchairs for people with disabilities and ambulances to support the health sector there.

Kuwait will continue to send more relief aid to Syria according to a schedule determined by the Kuwaiti Air Force, in coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, which in turn distributes it to areas most in need.

Continued from Page 1

Expand the

In Kuwait, the current subsidy system, particularly in electricity, is problematic. The indiscriminate subsidy allows owners of residential and commercial complexes, buildings, and private facilities to profit substantially, while they pay minimal amounts to the state.

The concept of the independent supplier should not be limited to electricity but could also extend to water. Also, other sectors could be privatized if there is a genuine intention to initiate a real recovery process that aligns with the ambitious goals of the new era leadership, which seeks to accelerate development and stimulate the economy.

On this basis, it is necessary for all to support this shift, ensuring that we do not squander the opportunities that are available now, as we have done in the past.

Court awaits

Serious violations include reckless driving, racing, negligent driving, running a red light, driving in the opposite direction on highways or ring roads, and driving “backwards.” Previously, the fine used to be KD 5 but it is now set at KD 150. If a settlement cannot be reached at the Traffic Department, the case will be referred to court.

In a related development, the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior announced that, in line with the Directorate General of Security Relations and Media’s commitment to delivering awareness messages to all segments of society, six key languages have been included in its comprehensive campaign to raise awareness about the new amendments to the traffic law - English, Persian, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, and Tagalog.

The campaign aims to promote traffic and legal awareness, clarify the amended provisions of the Traffic Law, and contribute to enhancing traffic safety and compliance with regulations. This is part of the ministry’s plan to reduce traffic accidents and create a safer traffic environment.

The ministry affirmed that the campaign will use a variety of traditional media outlets and social media platforms, and visual and auditory awareness materials will be distributed in multiple languages. This reflects the ministry’s commitment to providing a comprehensive legal environment that embraces Kuwait’s cultural and linguistic diversity.

EPA advances

Chairman of the Scientific Committee, Eng. Mohammed Al-Saleh, noted that the conference offers an excellent opportunity for specialists to exchange insights into the latest advancements in the green construction industry. Al-Saleh highlighted the presence of top local and international speakers who will present cutting-edge green building technologies aimed at reducing

carbon emissions and supporting sustainable development goals.

Engineer Yasmine Al-Kandari, a member of the scientific committee, revealed that the committee received over 40 research papers, of which 18 were selected for presentation across the two-day event. These papers will focus on innovative methods for minimizing carbon emissions and achieving environmental balance.

The conference gathers experts and specialists from the Gulf region and beyond, alongside representatives from government, private organizations, and leading companies in construction and sustainability. The event features specialized scientific sessions, workshops, and an exhibition showcasing the latest innovations in green construction technologies.

Turkish and

The two companies bidding to operate T4 passenger terminal are the Turkish company TAV and the Korean company Incheon.

The sources revealed that the contract of the current operator Incheon will end on August 15.

Gulf-Arab

Al-Adwani extended his gratitude to Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, for his support of the organizing committee, and also thanked all participating delegations for their active involvement, which contributed to the event’s success.

The event concluded with a ceremony honoring the participating delegations and a tour of the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center to introduce visitors to Kuwait’s cultural landmarks.

KD 12 mln

They said the contract aims to assess the needs for upgrading the old sewage network, enhancing its efficiency, eliminating the malfunctions caused by aging infrastructure and the end of its useful life, as well as preserving the environment and reducing pollution.

In addition, the sources revealed that an executive tender for the project will be issued once the study is complete, after which CAPT will offer it to companies to compete for it by submitting technical and financial bids.

6.9mn

Regarding ‘Certificate Inquiry’ transactions, the bureau processed a total of 4,617,191 transactions, including 3,848 certificates for training course completions, 182 initial leave approvals, 68,976 ‘Manpower’ certificates, 17 certificates for those delegated to study missions and 10,260 transaction inquiries.

This data highlights the significant

role of digital platforms like ‘Sahel’ in streamlining government services and improving efficiency.

Reduced Iran

“Sectarianism has no place in Yemen,” he said, urging the Houthis to acknowledge their true position within Yemen’s diverse society.

On external interventions, Dr. Al-Zindani emphasized that Iran’s meddling has emboldened the Houthi insurgency by providing advanced weapons and financial support. He called on Iran to cease its interference and allow Yemenis to determine their future independently.

When asked whether curbing Iran’s role would stabilize the Middle East, Dr. Al-Zindani stated, “Certainly, limiting Iran’s influence would contribute significantly to regional stability.

Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has acted as a destabilizing force -- from the Iraq-Iran war to its interventions in Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Weakening Iran’s role will positively impact the region’s overall security.”

Discussing Houthi threats to maritime security in the Red Sea, Dr. Al-Zindani dismissed the group’s justification linking these actions to the Gaza conflict. “Now that the Gaza war has ended, their pretext no longer holds. Will they commit to stopping such acts?”

Dr. Al-Zindani revealed discussions with Kuwaiti officials on political co-operation, humanitarian and economic support and ongoing development projects led by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development.

These projects include vital infrastructure like the Marib Gas Plant and vocational training centers to support Yemen’s economy.

Dr. Al-Zindani praised Kuwait’s early role in hosting peace talks in 2016, despite the Houthis’ last-minute withdrawal from signing an agreement. He welcomed any renewed Kuwaiti or Gulf initiative to mediate and resolve the Yemeni crisis.

The minister highlighted Yemen’s dire economic situation due to resource shortages, especially after Houthi attacks halted oil and gas exports, which previously accounted for 70 percent of revenues.

Efforts are underway to streamline spending and attract international support to rebuild the economy, he said.

On combating terrorism, Dr. Al-Zindani acknowledged cooperation with key nations, expressing optimism about progress in addressing this issue in Yemen.

Dr. Al-Zindani outlined government plans to enhance institutional frameworks in liberated regions, acknowledging current weaknesses and the need for stronger governance to ensure security and stability.

He noted that shifts in Syria, Lebanon and Iran’s position within the so-called ‘Axis of Resistance’ could weaken the Houthis’ standing and influence in Yemen.

Dr. Al-Zindani stressed the importance of a unified Yemen, free from sectarian violence. He called for the disarmament of militias, adherence to international resolutions and a state monopoly on military power.

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Justice Department fires officials

US places senior aid officials on leave, citing possible resistance to Trump orders

WASHINGTON, Jan 28, (AP): At least 56 senior officials in the top US aid and development agency were placed on leave Monday amid an investigation into an alleged effort to thwart President Donald Trump's orders.

A current official and a former official at the US Agency for International Development confirmed the reason given for the move Monday. Both spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Several hundred contractors based in Washington and elsewhere also were laid off, the officials said.

It follows Trump's executive order last week that directed a sweeping 90-day pause on most US foreign assistance disbursed through the State Department.

As a result of the freeze, thousands of US-funded humanitarian, development and security programs worldwide had stopped work or were preparing to do so. Without funds to pay staff, aid organizations were laying off hundreds of employees.

An internal USAID notice sent late Monday and obtained by The Associated Press said new acting administrator Jason Gray had identified "several actions within USAID that appear to be designed to circumvent the President's Executive Orders and the mandate from the American people."

"As a result, we have placed a number of USAID employees on administrative leave with full pay and benefits until further notice while we complete our analysis of these actions," Gray wrote.

Trump has signed many executive orders since taking office a week ago, but the notice did not say which officials the employees were suspected of violating.

The senior agency officials put on leave were experienced employees who had served in multiple administrations, including Trump's, the former USAID official said.

Before those officials were removed from the job Monday, they were scrambling to help US-funded aid organizations cope with the new funding freeze



USAID humanitarian aid destined for Venezuela is displayed for the media at a warehouse next to the Tienditas International Bridge on the outskirts of Cucuta, Colombia, Feb 19, 2019. (AP)

and seek waivers to continue life-saving activities, from getting clean water to war-displaced people in Sudan to continuing to monitor for bird flu globally, the former official said.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has specifically exempted only emergency

food programs and military aid to Israel and Egypt from the freeze on foreign assistance.

The Trump administration and GOP lawmakers, many of them skeptical of the need for foreign aid and eager to see other countries pay more, say they will review each foreign assistance program to determine whether it is directly in US interests and eliminate those that are deemed wasteful or liberal social engineering.

Politico first reported the USAID officials being put on leave.

Meanwhile, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has fired officials who were involved in investigating Trump, US media reported Monday.

These DOJ employees had been involved in special counsel Jack Smith's investigation over Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results in the lead-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot, as well as his handling of classified documents.

"Today, Acting Attorney General James McHenry terminated the employment of a number of DOJ officials who played a significant role in prosecuting President Trump," NBC News quoted a Justice Department official as saying.

"In light of their actions, the Acting Attorney General does not trust these officials to assist in faithfully implementing the President's agenda. This action is consistent with the mission of ending the weaponization of government," the official said.

ABC News reported that the Justice Department is firing "over a dozen" officials who were part of Smith's investigation teams.

Trump has long accused the Joe Biden administration's Justice Department of weaponizing the government, and has vowed to seek retribution during his campaign.

In late November, after Trump's election victory, Smith sought to drop both cases against the then-president-elect.



Police respond to the scene of a deadly shooting at a grocery store on Jan 27, in Elkhart, Ind. (AP)

Indiana store shooting kills 3

A shooting at a grocery store in northern Indiana on Monday left three people dead, including the suspected shooter, and two police officers wounded, officials said.

Police received a 911 call at about 5:30 pm about a shooting at Martin's Super Market in Elkhart, the city police department said in a social media post. When officers arrived, they found two shooting victims dead inside the store.

When police "engaged" the shooting suspect outside the store, two officers were wounded and the suspect was fatally shot, according to the Elkhart Police Department post, which was made to update information given at an earlier news conference.

The officers were taken to hospi-

tals with gunshot wounds, the post said. One has since been released and the other is in stable condition, it said.

"In this horrific situation, words cannot express the pain felt in our community when a tragic incident like this happens," Elkhart Police Department Chief Dan Milanese said in a statement. The names of the victims, suspect and officers will not be released until families have been notified.

Erin Swary, a pregnant mother, was at the store checking out and talking with the person bagging her groceries when she heard a pop, she told WNDU-TV. She said she first thought the sound was a balloon but then saw everyone ducking down so she did, too. (AP)

US president caps first week in office

Trump pushes border crackdown at House GOP retreat

DORAL, Fla. Jan 28, (AP): US President Donald Trump regaled House Republicans on Monday with a rhetorical highlight reel from his first week in office, and he urged them to support his immigration crackdown and border security proposals.

"We have no apologies and we're moving very fast," Trump said.

"I really focus on the border more than anything else," he said, downplaying the importance of inflation, an issue that fueled his candidacy last year but one that he has less control over as president.

Speaking at House Republicans' annual policy retreat, Trump made clear his political ambitions as he rallied lawmakers to advance their conservative agenda.

"We're forging a new political majority that's shattering and replacing Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal coalition, which dominated American politics for over 100 years," he said.

The conference is being held at Trump National Doral Miami, a posh resort with four golf courses owned by the billionaire president. Although Republicans are euphoric over election victories that have given them total control in Washington, they're also facing difficult negotiations in the coming weeks and months.

They need to find consensus on a spending bill before a March 14 deadline, when funding for the federal government expires.



US President Donald Trump speaks at the 2025 House Republican Members Conference Dinner at Trump National Doral Miami in Doral, Florida on Jan 27. (AP)

In addition, Republicans are working on a budget blueprint that would set the stage for their broader plans, including tax cuts, fossil fuel development and border security. With thin majorities in the House and Senate, they will need near-unanimity to pass their proposals without Democratic support.

Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, set the first week of February for the House Budget Committee to pass the blueprint that is key to the whole process.

"That will be where the lion's share

of these campaign promises we made are fulfilled," Johnson said. "And that's what all the hard work here is, in the room with all of us negotiating and coming to consensus."

Political capital is almost always at its peak at the start of a new presidential term, even more so because this is Trump's second and he is prevented under the Constitution from a third.

However, that didn't stop Trump from joking Monday about running again.

"I think I'm not allowed to run again," Trump said as he turned to

Johnson. "Am I allowed to run again, Mike?"

Johnson is trying to lump many of the Republican priorities into one massive catch-all bill that Senate Democrats cannot filibuster, but many Republican senators think it would be better to do two bills - the first focused on border security and defense, and the second on extending and expanding upon the tax cuts passed in Trump's first term.

"Whether it's one bill, two bills, I don't care," Trump said in Doral.

Republicans are also eyeing potential changes to key safety net programs, such as work requirements for those participating in Medicaid, to help offset the cost of enacting their priorities. Trump has pushed expensive ideas like exempting tipped wages and Social Security checks from income taxes.

House Republicans said they expect more specifics to be announced after the retreat in Doral. Until then, they were highlighting Trump's first week in office, particularly reveling in the show-down Trump had with Colombia this past weekend over accepting flights of deported migrants from the U.S.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement that Colombia agreed to all of Trump's terms, "including the unrestricted acceptance of all illegal aliens from Colombia returned from the United States, including on U.S. military aircraft, without limitation or delay."

Serbia's prime minister resigns as anti-corruption protests grow

BELGRADE, Serbia, Jan 28, (AP): Serbia's populist Prime Minister Milos Vucovic resigned Tuesday in an attempt to calm political tensions following weeks of massive anti-corruption protests over the deadly collapse of a concrete canopy.

The canopy collapse in November, which killed 15 people in the northern city of Novi Sad, has become a flashpoint reflecting wider discontent with the increasingly autocratic rule of Serbia's populist President Aleksandar Vucic.

He has faced accusations of curbing democratic freedoms in Serbia despite formally seeking European Union membership for the troubled Balkan nation.

"It is my appeal for everyone to calm down the passions and return to dialogue," Vucovic told a news conference announcing his resignation.

Novi Sad Mayor Milan Djuric also will step down on Tuesday, Vucovic said.

Vucovic's resignation could lead to an early parliamentary election. The resignation must be confirmed by Serbia's parliament, which has 30 days to choose a new government or call a snap election.

Pro-government media said President Vucic will attend a Cabinet session on Tuesday evening to



Outgoing Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucovic speaks during a pre-election rally of his ruling Serbian Progressive Party in Belgrade, Serbia on Dec 2, 2023. (AP)

decide whether a new prime minister-designate will be appointed or an early election called.

Opposition parties have said they would insist on a transitional government that would create conditions for a free and fair election. Vucic's populists have faced accusations of irregularities during past elections.

Vucovic became the prime minister in April 2024, after the Serbian Progressive Party won most votes in an election marred by tensions.

Dozens take oath of US citizenship

WASHINGTON, Jan 28, (AP): Carlos Wriedt came to the US from Mexico in his 40s with his wife to pursue their dream of starting a business and to build a better life for their daughter, then 10 months old.

He and his wife became US citizens Monday, taking their oaths in a ceremony at the Kansas Statehouse in Topeka, along with 28 others, as their families watched, waved small flags and recorded the event on their cellphones. Wriedt, his wife and his daughter have lived in the US for more than 20 years, and he and his wife now have a business in Wichita offering translation services to courts, medical providers and others.

Wriedt had a green card proving he is a legal permanent resident, and ahead of last year's election - in which President Donald Trump made illegal immigration a key issue - he wasn't worried that he wouldn't be able to renew. But he and his wife applied for citizenship anyway. Their daughter became a citizen in September.



After he and the other immigrants sang the concluding "home of the brave" in the National Anthem, took the oath renouncing foreign princes and potentates and pledged allegiance to the American flag, Wriedt said he still had goosebumps but that he also felt relief.

"Now, nobody can take that away from us unless we misbehave - but of course we won't," he said.

The US naturalized more than 818,000 new citizens from October 2023 through September 2024, an average of about 68,000 a month, according to the federal government. In Topeka, the 30 new citizens came from 18 different nations, and the ceremony gave speakers a chance to stress their own immigrant roots, with Kansas Gov Laura Kelly noting that her family emigrated from Ireland.

But it also occurred against the backdrop of Trump's promise of mass deportations of immigrants living in the US illegally, his suspension of refugee resettlements and his effort to end the constitutional promise of birthright citizenship for children born in the US to immigrant parents.

"I'm disappointed at the climate and the rhetoric right now," said Kansas state Rep Tobias Schlingensiepen, a Topeka Democrat and United Church of Christ minister. "It promotes people with short fuses doing things they shouldn't do."



People attend a rally organised by the association of the families of victims of the Tempi train collision, which killed 57 people almost two years ago, at central Syntagma square, in Athens, Greece on Jan 26. (AP)

Protesters in Greece, abroad demand justice for '23 rail crash victims

Tens of thousands of Greeks took to the streets in 110 cities Sunday, including 13 locations abroad, to demand justice for the 57 victims of the country's deadliest rail disaster in 2023.

The largest marches, with about 30,000 taking part in each, took place in Greece's two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki. They were mostly peaceful, although in each city, small groups of people attacked police

forces with rocks and flares. Police responded with tear gas and flash-bang grenades. The clashes only lasted a few minutes.

In London, about 500 people demonstrated outside the Greek Embassy in the Holland Park neighborhood. More protests were staged in Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Cologne, Helsinki, London, Nicosia, Reykjavik and Valetta, Malta. (AP)

Leader seeks help from allies over Greenland

Denmark PM Frederiksen on European tour

BERLIN, Jan 28, (AP): Denmark's prime minister embarked on a tour of major European capitals Tuesday as the continent faces what she called "a more uncertain reality" and her country moves to strengthen its military presence around Greenland.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen planned stops in Berlin, Paris and Brussels, the latter to meet NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte. Her trip comes as new U.S. President Donald Trump has said he would not rule out the use of military force to seize control of Greenland, an autonomous territory belonging to NATO and European Union member Denmark.

On Monday evening, her government announced a roughly 14.6 billion-kroner (nearly \$2 billion) agreement with parties including the governments of Greenland and the Faeroe Islands to "improve capabilities for surveillance and maintaining sovereignty in the region." Those will include three new Arctic naval vessels, two additional long-range surveillance drones and satellite capacity, the Defense Ministry



Prime Minister of Denmark Mette Frederiksen, (left), and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz hold a joint press conference after their bilateral talks at the Federal Chancellery in Berlin on Jan 28. (AP)

in Copenhagen said.

Frederiksen didn't directly mention Trump's threat in comments at a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, but she said that "we are facing a more uncertain reality, a reality that

calls for an even more united Europe and for more cooperation." She pointed to Russian activities in Ukraine and beyond and said that "it is up to Europe to define the future of our continent, and I think we have to take more responsibility for our own security."

Italy sends 49 more migrants to Albania for processing

SHENGJIN, Albania, Jan 28, (AP): An Italian navy ship arrived Tuesday in Albania with 49 migrants intercepted in international waters for processing of their asylum applications at special Albanian centers, in the third such attempt following hurdles earlier raised by Italian courts.

Italy's Interior Ministry did not specify the nationality of the migrants brought to the port of Shengjin, 66 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of the capital, Tirana, but Italian media said they were from Bangladesh, Egypt, Ivory Coast and Gambia.

The attempt at processing in Albania

follows two previous failures in October and November, when Italian judges refused to approve the detention of two small groups at the Albanian centers, built under a contentious agreement between Italy and Albania. The courts ruled that the migrants' countries of origin weren't safe enough for them to face the possibility of being sent back by the centers.

The cases have been referred to the European Court of Justice, which earlier established that asylum applicants could not undergo a fast-track procedure that could lead to repatriation if their home countries are not deemed completely safe.

The European court hearing on the case is scheduled for Feb. 25.

Italian Premier **Giorgia Meloni's** government has vowed to reactivate the two centers in Albania after they remained dormant following the Italian courts' decisions.



Meloni

Asia

Philippine ship fire kills 2: Two men have been killed after being trapped in the storage room of a ship that caught fire while in the shipyard in the Philippine capital, the Philippines' Bureau of Fire Protection said Tuesday.

Firefighter Ronald Sanchez said the blaze, which broke out around 9 p.m. local time on Monday, killed the two welders, both men, among the 25 workers repairing the vessel in the shipyard in Navotas City under its Mayor **John Reynald Marcelo Tiangco**. (Xinhua)

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3 held over crash: Three teenagers have been arrested after a motorcyclist was killed in a crash involving a stolen vehicle that was being chased by police north of Sydney.

Police in the state of New South Wales (NSW) said that officers initiated a pursuit of the vehicle, which had been reported stolen, at about 7:15 a.m. local time on Tuesday near the small town of Gunnehah, more than 300 km north of Sydney. (Xinhua)

'Spat with Trump over deportations'

Hundreds of US visa appointments canceled in Colombia

BOGOTA, Colombia, Jan 28, (AP): Visa appointments at the US Embassy in Colombia were canceled Monday following a dispute between President Donald Trump and his Colombian counterpart Gustavo Petro over deportation flights from the US that nearly turned into a costly trade war between the two countries.

Dozens of Colombians arrived at the US Embassy in Bogota and were handed letters by local staff that said their appointments had been canceled "due to the Colombian government's refusal to accept repatriation flights of Colombian nationals" over the weekend.

Later on Monday, Colombia's Foreign Affairs Ministry said the government was sending a Colombian Air Force plane to San Diego to pick up a group of Colombians who were on a deportation flight that was not allowed to land on Sunday morning.

The victory claimed in Washington turned Colombia into an example of what other nations could face if they stand in the way of Trump's illegal immigration crackdown. It also put on display a clash with a leftist leader of a country that had long been a US partner against drug trafficking.

US State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said Monday the Trump administration will take action if coun-



tries do not abide by their agreements, such as accepting deportees.

"This was about reminding Colombia that there is a price to pay if you go against your agreements, things that you promise," she said in an interview on Fox News' "The Story." "Ultimately, what one would expect to happen did happen. They said 'oh, our bad,' and they reversed everything."

Colombians, like most non-US citizens, require a visa to travel to the United States for tourism, business or other purposes.

But in Colombia it can take up to two years to get a visa appointment

at the US embassy in Bogotá, which has also been handling visa requests from neighboring Venezuela for several years. Those who had their Monday appointments cancelled will likely have to wait several months for a new appointment. And many said they were frustrated with the unexpected cancellations.

"President Petro did not represent our interests," said Elio Camelo, a US visa seeker from the city of Cali who had traveled to Bogota for his appointment.

"There is a lot of uncertainty now over what will happen next," said Mauricio Manrique, who had his Monday morning appointment canceled. He had traveled from Popayan, about 600 kilometers (about 370 miles) south of Bogota, for his appointment.

Tensions between Colombia and the US escalated Sunday after Petro wrote an early morning message on X saying he would not allow two U.S. Air Force planes carrying Colombian deportees to land in the country.

Petro also shared a video that showed another group of deportees reportedly arriving in Brazil with shackles on their legs. He said Colombia would only accept deportation flights when the United States had established protocols that ensured the "dignified

treatment" of expelled migrants.

Trump responded with a post of his own on Truth Social, in which he called for 25% emergency tariffs on Colombian exports to the United States, and also said that the U.S. visas of Colombian government officials would be revoked, while goods coming from the South American country would face enhanced customs inspections.

Meanwhile, the State Department said Sunday it would stop issuing visas to Colombian nationals until deportation flights resumed.

Tensions decreased Sunday night following negotiations between the countries, with the White House saying in a statement that Colombia had allowed the resumption of deportation flights and "agreed to all of President Trump's terms," including the arrival of deportees on military flights.

Last year Colombia accepted 124 deportation flights. But those were charter flights organized by U.S. government contractors.

The White House said tariffs on Colombian exports would be put on hold, but added that visa restrictions on Colombian officials and enhanced custom inspections would remain "until the first planeload of Colombian deportees is successfully returned."

China woos leaders with offers of funding and loans

New Zealand reviews aid to Kiribati after Pacific island nation snubs official's visit

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Jan 28, (AP): New Zealand is reconsidering all development funding to the aid-dependent island nation of Kiribati, following a diplomatic snub from the island nation's leader, government officials said.

The unusual move to review all finance to Kiribati was prompted by the abrupt cancellation of a planned meeting this month between President Taneti Maamau and New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters, Peters' office told The Associated Press on Monday.

It followed months of growing frustration from Australia and New Zealand - jointly responsible for more than a third of overseas development finance to Kiribati in 2022 - about a lack of engagement with the island nation. Tensions have risen since Kiribati aligned itself with China in 2019 and signed a series of bilateral deals with Beijing.

The bond between Kiribati - population 120,000 - and its near neighbor New Zealand, a country of 5 million people, might not appear the South



Pacific's most significant. But the acrimony reflects concern from western powers that their interests in the region are being undermined as China woos Pacific leaders with offers of funding and loans.

That has provoked a contest for influence over Kiribati, an atoll nation that is among the world's most imperiled by rising sea levels. Its proximity to Hawaii and its vast exclusive economic zone - the world's 12th largest - have boosted its strategic importance.

Kiribati, one of the world's most aid-dependent nations, relies heavily on international support, with foreign assistance accounting for 18% of its national income in 2022, according to data from the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank. About 10% of development finance that year came from New Zealand - which contributed 102 million New Zealand dollars (\$58 million) between 2021 and 2024, official figures show.

However, officials in Wellington and Canberra have expressed frustration over a lack of engagement from Tarawa regarding development projects. Frictions escalated when Kiribati suspended all visits from foreign officials in August, citing a need to focus on the government formation process after elections that month.

Kiribati switched its allegiance from pro-Taiwan to pro-Beijing in 2019, joining a growing number of Pacific nations to do so. Self-governing Taiwan is claimed by China and since the shift, Beijing has increased aid to Kiribati.

Peters was scheduled to meet

Maamau, who has led the country since 2016, in Kiribati on Jan 21 and Jan. 22, Peters' office said, but was told a week before the trip that Maamau could not accommodate him. It would have been the first visit by a New Zealand minister in more than five years.

"The lack of political-level contact makes it very difficult for us to agree joint priorities for our development program, and to ensure that it is well targeted and delivers good value for money," a statement supplied by Peters' office said. New Zealand will review all development cooperation with Kiribati as a result, the statement added.

The government of Kiribati did not respond to a request for comment, although Education Minister Alexander Teabo told Radio New Zealand on Tuesday that Maamau had a long-standing engagement on his home island - and denied a snub.

New Zealand cautioned that the diplomatic rift could have broader consequences, including impacting New Zealand resident visas for Kiribati citizens and participation in a popular sea-

sonal work scheme that brings Pacific horticulture and viticulture workers to New Zealand. New Zealand - home to large populations of Pacific peoples - is a popular spot for those from island nations to live and work.

"In the meantime, New Zealand stands ready, as we always have, to engage with Kiribati at a high level," said the statement.

The decision to review all development funding is a "different, and more forceful approach" than New Zealand has taken before, said Blake Johnson, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, and contrasted with a different tack taken recently by Australia - which is Kiribati's biggest funder.

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles traveled to the island nation this month as planned to deliver a patrol boat promised to Kiribati in 2023 - even though he did not meet with Maamau. Australia's foreign ministry said in a statement Tuesday that the country "remains committed to its longstanding partnership with Kiribati."



A general view shows a Security Council meeting at the United Nations headquarters on Jan 17. (AP)

ICC prosecutor seeks arrest warrants for those accused of atrocities in West Darfur

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 28, (AP): The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced that his office will be seeking arrest warrants for those accused of atrocities in Sudan's West Darfur region, which has seen reported ethnic cleansing by paramilitary forces that have been fighting government forces for 19 months.

Karim Khan told the UN Security Council that crimes are being committed in Darfur "as we speak and daily" and are being used as a weapon of war. He said that conclusion is the result of "a hard-edged analysis" based on evidence and information collected by his office.

Sudan plunged into conflict in mid-April 2023, when long-simmering tensions between its military and paramilitary leaders broke out in the capital, Khartoum, and spread to other regions, including the vast western Darfur region.

Two decades ago, Darfur became synonymous with genocide and war crimes, particularly by the notorious Janjaweed Arab militias, against populations that identify as Central or East African. Up to 300,000 people were killed and 2.7 million were driven from their homes.

Khan told the council in January there were grounds to believe both government forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Force, which was born out of the Janjaweed, may be committing war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide in Darfur.

The Biden administration, just before it left office this month, determined that the RSF and its proxies are committing genocide in Sudan's civil war. And the ICC prosecutor told the council Monday that there are "very clear echoes" in the current conflict of what happened 20 years ago.

"The pattern of crimes, the perpetrators, the parties, tracked very closely with the same protagonists, the same targeted groups as existed in 2003" and led the Security Council to refer Darfur to the ICC, Khan said. "It's the same communities, the same groups suffering, a new generation suffering the same hell that has been endured by other generations of Darfuris, and this is tragic."

Human Rights Watch in a major report last May said the Rapid Support Forces and their allied militias carried out attacks against the ethnic Masalit and other non-Arab groups in El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state, from April to June 2023, with attacks intensifying that November.

At least thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced during the attacks, according to the report by the leading rights group.

Demonstrators attack foreign embassies in Kinshasa to protest rebels' advance in east

GOMA, Congo, Jan 28, (AP): Dozens of demonstrators attacked several foreign embassies, including those of Rwanda, France and Belgium, on Tuesday demanding that they oppose the advance of Rwanda-backed M23 rebels into a major city in the country's conflict-battered east.

Police fired teargas at the protesters as they marched to the embassies in Kinshasa, looting and setting fires to parts of the buildings. The embassies of Kenya and Uganda were also attacked, according to Associated Press journalists at the scene.

Congo's security forces were attempting to slow the rebels, who advanced into Goma, a key eastern city, in a major escalation of the decades-long conflict.

The M23 rebels are one of about 100 armed groups vying for a foothold in the mineral-rich region in the conflict, one of Africa's largest.

The protesters demanded that the international community pressure Rwanda over the rebel advance.

"We denounce the hypocrisy of the international community," said Timothée Tshishimbi, one of the protesters. "They must tell Rwanda to stop this adventure."

Residents reported gunfire overnight in Goma, a city of 2 million people which the rebels claimed to have captured on Monday. Explosions and gunfire were heard near the now-shut Goma airport.

Goma is a regional trade and humanitarian hub holding hundreds of thousands of the more than 6 million people displaced by eastern Congo's prolonged conflict over ethnic tensions that have resulted in one of the world's largest humanitarian crises.

The M23 rebels temporarily took over Goma in 2012 before being forced to pull out under international



People protest in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo on Jan 28, against the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels' advances into eastern Congo's capital Goma. (AP)

pressure, and resurfaced in late 2021 with increasing support from Rwanda, according to Congo's government and United Nations experts. Rwanda has denied such support.

It was unclear how much of Goma is controlled by the rebels, who marched into the city early Monday to both fear and cheers among residents. It was the culmination of weeks of fighting during which the rebels captured several towns in a shocking advance.

"Since morning we have heard bomb explosions and crackling bullets," said Sam Luwawa, a resident of Goma. "So far we cannot say who really controls the city."

Three South African peacekeepers were killed on Monday when the rebels launched a mortar bomb toward the Goma airport which landed on the nearby South African National Defense Force, while a fourth soldier succumbed to injuries sustained in

fighting days ago, the South African Department of Defense said Tuesday.

That makes 17 peacekeepers and foreign soldiers who have been killed in the fighting, according to UN and army officials.

"The humanitarian situation in Goma 'is extremely, extremely worrying, with a new threshold of violence and suffering reached today,'" Bruno Lemaquis, the United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Congo, told reporters in a video news conference on Monday. He said hundreds of thousands of people were attempting to flee the violence.

There were active combat zones in all areas of the city, with civilians taking cover and heavy artillery fire directed at the city center on Monday, Lemaquis said. He said several shells struck the Charité Maternelle Hospital in central Goma, "killing and injuring civilians, including newborns and pregnant women."

Rail union goes on strike

Trains canceled across Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Jan 28, (AP): Trains were canceled across Bangladesh on Tuesday as railway staff went on strike for higher pensions and other benefits, affecting tens of thousands of passengers and freight transport.

Saidur Rahman, acting president of the Bangladesh Railway Running Staff and Workers Union, said the strike was called after a meeting with the interim government headed by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus failed to reach a deal late Monday.

Rahman said the strike would continue indefinitely if the government does not accept their demands.

The state-run railway system carries some 65 million passengers per year in the densely populated nation of

170 million people. It employs about 25,000 people and operates a network of over 36,000 kilometers (22,000 miles).

The main Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital, Dhaka, was mobbed by hundreds of disappointed passengers who were not aware of the strike. Many waited for hours before going home.

As the country's railway adviser visited, passengers shouted complaints.

Fouzul Kabir Khan, the country's railway affairs adviser, told reporters that such a nationwide strike was "regrettable" and he urged the protesters to end the strike.

He said that "doors for discussion" were open to resolve the standoff.



Stranded passengers wait at a railway station, after trains across the country have been canceled as railway workers went on strike for higher pensions and other benefits, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Jan 28. (AP)

Subcontinent

Pakistan's Senate passes bill: Pakistan's upper house of parliament on Tuesday passed a controversial bill that critics argue is designed to suppress freedom of speech.

The bill, which was passed by the lower house of parliament last Thursday, grants the government extensive powers to impose heavy fines and incarcerate social media users for spreading disinformation.

The approval on Tuesday by the Senate removes the last obstacle in the bill's path. It will now be sent to the President **Asif Ali Zardari**, who is likely to sign it quickly.

Under the Prevention of Electronic

Zardari (AP)

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Blast kills 2 in Afghanistan: Two children were killed as an explosive

Crimes Act, authorities would create an agency with the power to order the immediate blocking of content deemed "unlawful and offensive" from social media, such as content critical of judges, the armed forces, parliament or provincial assemblies.

device left over from past wars went off in southern Afghanistan's Kandahar province on Monday, provincial police spokesman Asadullah Jamshid said Tuesday.

The deadly incident took place in the mountain area of Spin Boldak district where two children were taking care of their goats when they found a toy-like object and began playing with it, but the device exploded killing both the children on the spot, the official added. This is the second kind of such case since the weekend in Afghanistan. In the previous incident, one child lost his life and five others sustained injuries after a mine left over from past wars went off in Zazai Aryub district of the eastern Pakhtia province on Sunday. (Xinhua)

NBK reports net profit of KD 600.1 million for FY2024

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced its financial results for the financial year ended 31December 2024. The Bank reported a net profit of KD 600.1 million (USD 1.9 billion), compared to KD 560.6million (USD 1.8 billion) for the financial year 2023, an increase of 7.0% year-on-year.

Earnings per share (EPS) stood at 69 fils by the end of 2024, compared to 65 fils by the end of 2023, Meanwhile, total assets as of December 2024 grew by 7.1% year-on-year, reaching KD 40.3 billion (USD 130.9 billion).

Customer deposits grew by 4.2%, totaling KD 22.9 billion (USD 74.2 billion) as of December 2024. Meanwhile, Group loans and advances reached KD 23.7 billion (USD 76.9 billion) by December 2024, reflecting a growth of 6.4% year-on-year.

In the meantime, shareholders' equity also saw an increase, standing at KD 3.9 billion (USD 12.7 billion), up by 5.9% year-on-year.

In terms of distributions, the Board of Directors has proposed a cash dividend of 25 fils per share for the second half of 2024, bringing the total cash dividend for the year to 35 fils, equivalent to around50% of net profits. Furthermore, the Board has recommended the distribution of bonus shares at a ratio of 5%. These proposed distributions are subject to the approval at the Annual General Assembly (AGM).

Adapting To Changing Conditions

Commenting on the bank's annual financial results, Hamad Al-Bahar, NBK Group Chairman stated, "In 2024, we delivered strong performance, showcasing the resilience and adaptability of our flexible, diversified business model in response to varying economic conditions. This success was bolstered by a robust capital base, high asset quality, strong liquidity, and prudent risk management."

He explained that the bank remains committed to balancing the achievement of optimal returns for its shareholders while addressing the evolving needs of its customers. He further emphasized that sustainability has become a key driver in strengthening the bank's long-term growth prospects, as it continues to implement significant initiatives that support responsible business practices and contribute to the sustainable development of Kuwait's economy.

"In 2025, NBK aims to accelerate its sustainable financing efforts, targeting a sustainable asset portfolio of approximately USD 10 billion by 2030," stated Al-Bahar. He further highlighted that the bank continues to implement various initiatives as part of its efforts to achieve carbon neutrality.

Al-Bahar stated that throughout 2024, NBK strengthened its social contributions by launching and supporting numerous programs and initiatives across various sectors, including health, social development, the environment, youth, education, and women's empowerment. These efforts are aimed at reinforcing the foundations of sustainable development in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the National Development Plan (NDP), further advancing NBK's leading position as the largest contributor to social responsibility in Kuwait.

Sustainable Growth

Meanwhile, Mr. Isam J. Al-Sager, NBK Vice Chairman and Group CEO, said: "Despite heightened geopolitical tensions regionally and globally in 2024, along with their adverse economic repercussions and the onset of declining interest rates, NBK successfully maintained its trajectory of sustainable growth. The Group's net operating income grew by 7.2% year-on-year, reaching KD 1.3 billion (USD 4.1 billion)".

Al-Sager emphasized that NBK's financial results for 2024 reflect exceptional operational performance across its various business sectors, particularly its core banking operations. He highlighted the significant contributions of the Group's international operations and Boubyan Bank, the Group's Islamic banking arm, to both revenues and net profits during the year.

Al-Sager highlighted NBK's ongoing efforts to expand its customer base by offering innovative digital products and services of international standards, coupled with exceptional customer service. He emphasized the bank's continued investments in technology and innovation, reinforcing its leadership in digital banking solutions that drive sustainable growth. These efforts not only maximize value for customers and shareholders but also contribute positively to our communities and to all stakeholders. This commitment has earned the bank numerous prestigious accolades, including being named the "Best in Innovation- Global Winner" for 2024, for the second consecutive year by Global Finance magazine.

Al-Sager emphasized that NBK Group is dedicated to further advancing its



Hamad Al-Bahar



Isam J. Al-Sager

Al-Bahar:

- NBK's robust performance underscores the resilience and adaptability of our flexible, diversified business model across varying economic conditions
- We are focused on delivering optimal returns to our shareholders while addressing the evolving needs of our customers
- Throughout 2024, we reinforced NBK's leadership as Kuwait's leading contributor to social responsibility initiatives

Al Sager:

- We continue delivering sustained growth, even in the face of escalating geopolitical tensions and the onset of declining interest rates
- The 2024 financial results highlight the exceptional operational performance across our diverse business lines, with the core banking activities leading the way
- The strong contributions from our International Banking Group, as well as Boubyan Bank, were instrumental in driving the Group's revenues and net profits
- Our ongoing investments in technology and innovation continue to strengthen our leadership, as we introduce innovative products and services that meet global standards
- We remain committed to strengthening NBK's position as a trusted financial partner by deepening our relationships with existing customers and capitalizing on emerging opportunities
- NBK has made significant strides in executing its ESG strategy, further reinforcing its role in creating a more sustainable future for all
- We are optimistic about the acceleration of project awards, fueled by political stability
- Weare hopeful that this will be complemented by passing of key laws which supports domestic economic growth

reputation as a trusted financial partner by fostering deeper relationships with existing customers and capitalizing on emerging opportunities. He highlighted the Group's commitment to reinforcing its leadership in investment and wealth management services across the region, noting the launch of the "NBK Wealth" brand in 2024, which has established the largest wealth management entity in Kuwait and positioned it among the leading providers in the region.

Al-Sager highlighted NBK's significant advancements in sustainability



NBK headquarters

during 2024, emphasizing the bank's commitment to its ESG strategy, which underscores its leading role in shaping a more sustainable and prosperous future for all. He noted that NBK was the first bank in Kuwait to join the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) and achieved a major milestone by issuing Kuwait's first green bonds, valued at USD 500 million, solidifying its position as a trailblazer among financial institutions in the country.

In the meantime, Al-Sager emphasized NBK's unwavering commitment to investing in human capital, highlighting that in 2024, the bank continued to attract and nurture young talent through top-tier training and development programs aligned with international standards. These initiatives aim to cultivate a highly skilled generation of banking professionals, with a particular focus on digital competencies that have become indispensable in the evolving landscape of banking transactions driven by advanced technology and artificial intelligence.

Operational Environment

Regarding his outlook for the operational environment in 2025, Al-Sager expressed optimism about the continued momentum in project awards, building on the progress achieved in 2024 amid political stability. He noted that with decision-making now centralized within the government, processes have become more streamlined and efficient. Al-Sager also expressed hope that this positive trajectory would be complemented by the enactment of key laws and legislations aimed to bolster domestic economic growth.

Al-Sager emphasized that NBK aims to play a pivotal role in financing upcoming mega projects, further solidifying its position as the government's primary partner in funding major strategic initiatives. He highlighted that the anticipated improvement in project awards, coupled with the downward trajectory of interest rates, is expected to positively impact credit demand across both corporate and retail sectors. However, he acknowledged the persistence of certain challenges that could have adverse economic repercussions, particularly the ongoing geopolitical tensions at both regional and global levels.

Key financial indicators for FY2024

- Net operating income stood at KD 1.3 billion (USD 4.1billion), up 7.2% year-on-year
- Total assets grew by 7.1% year-on-year, at KD 40.3 billion (USD 130.9 billion)
- Total loans and advances increased by 6.4% year-on-year to KD 23.7 billion (USD 76.9 billion)
- Customer deposits grew by 4.2% year-on-year to KD 22.9 billion (USD 74.2billion)
- Shareholders' equity amounted to KD 3.9 billion (USD 12.7 billion), registering an annual growth of 5.9%.
- Strong asset quality metrics, with NPL/gross loans ratio at 1.34% and an NPL coverage ratio of 263%
- Robust Capital Adequacy Ratio of 17.3%, comfortably exceeding regulatory requirements.

Financial Highlights For Year 2024



Net Profit
+7.0%

KD
560.6
Million
31/12/2023

KD
600.1
Million
31/12/2024

65 fils
31/12/2023

69 fils
31/12/2024

Earnings
Per Share

1.53%
31/12/2023

1.55%
31/12/2024

Return on
Average Assets

15.0%
31/12/2023

15.1%
31/12/2024

Return on
Average Equity

Total
Assets
+7.1%

KD
37.7
Billion
31/12/2023

KD
40.3
Billion
31/12/2024

Shareholders'
Equity
+5.9%

KD
3.69
Billion
31/12/2023

KD
3.90
Billion
31/12/2024

Customer
Loans &
Advances
+6.4%

KD
22.3
Billion
31/12/2023

KD
23.7
Billion
31/12/2024

Customer
Deposits
+4.2%

KD
21.9
Billion
31/12/2023

KD
22.9
Billion
31/12/2024

Net
Interest
Income
+8.3%

KD
905.1
Billion
31/12/2023

KD
980.1
Billion
31/12/2024

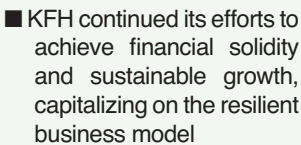
Net
Operating
Income
+7.2%

KD
1.2
Billion
31/12/2023

KD
1.3
Billion
31/12/2024

KFH reports record net profit of KD 601.8 million in 2024

AlMarzouq further noted that KFH continued its endeavors in



He added that KFH maintained its top 3 position in the IILM sukuk

AlShamlan commended the support of the Board of Directors and the regulatory authorities for supporting the banking sector. He also praised the efforts of Executive Management, all employees, partners, and stakeholders for their key role and stressed the continuous efforts to maintain KFH's leading position locally and globally.

	2024	2023
Cash Dividends, including the interim cash dividend by 10% distributed during the current year (interim cash dividend by 10% was distributed during last year)	22%	20%
Proposed Bonus Shares	8%	9%

	2024 %
Investment Deposit "Al-Khumasiya"	4.650
Investment Deposit "Continuous"	4.200
Investment Deposit "Al-Dimah" 12 Months	4.000
Investment Deposit "Al-Dimah" 6 Months	3.825
Long Term Investments Plans	3.700
Investment Deposit "Al-Sedra"	3.350
Investment Saving Account	0.250

The proposed dividends for 2024 are subject to the approval of General Assembly and other regulatory entities.

Profits will be credited to their bank account.

Fraud awareness tied to Kuwait Vision 2035 goals

Gulf Bank warns against cyber fraud via Mobile ID

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: As part of its continued commitment to promoting financial literacy among all segments of society, Gulf Bank has raised awareness among its customers about the dangers of cyber fraud. The warning follows incidents where customers have unknowingly approved authentication requests through the “Kuwait Mobile ID” app without verifying the sender or understanding the purpose of the request.

This warning is part of Gulf Bank’s ongoing support for the Diraya campaign, organized by the Central Bank of Kuwait in partnership with the Kuwait Banking Association. The campaign is focused on raising financial awareness within the

community, educating the public about the role of the banking sector and how to make the most of the services offered by banks.

The Bank clarified that customers may receive unexpected authentication requests through the “Kuwait Mobile ID” app, even if they did not initiate a payment. In some instances, customers may approve the request without fully verifying it.

Gulf Bank emphasized that if a customer unintentionally approves a fraudulent transaction through the “Kuwait Mobile ID” app, they could be at risk of security breaches. Fraudsters may illegally use Civil ID numbers to conduct fraudulent activities.



Diraya campaign

Gulf Bank urged everyone to remain cautious and ensure that any authentication request is legitimate before approving it. If customers notice any suspicious activity or have concerns about transactions, they are

encouraged to contact the Bank immediately for assistance.

The Bank also highlighted the importance of regularly updating account passwords and utilizing available security features – such as two-factor authentication – to protect financial transactions. Furthermore, customers were advised to remain cautious of fraudulent tactics designed to obtain personal banking information or OTP codes.

Gulf Bank further recommended that customers refrain from engaging with suspicious emails and ensure that any websites used for online shopping are secure, with trusted payment gateways, to avoid falling victim to fraud.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait’s lead-

ing 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.

WTI crude declines to \$73.17

Kuwait oil drops to \$81.47 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil lost 33 cents during Monday’s trading to reach USD 81.47 per barrel compared with USD 81.80 last Friday, Kuwait Petroleum Cor-

poration (KPC) said Tuesday. Brent futures dropped USD 1.42 to USD 77.08 pb and West Texas Intermediate futures declined USD 1.49 to USD 73.17 pb.

KOC production crucial for OPEC+ share

Al-Harami criticizes Trump’s oil price reduction strategy

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Oil expert Kamel Al-Harami downplayed US President Donald Trump’s statements about his quest to reduce the price of oil; pointing out that this policy harms America itself before others, especially since its daily production is about 13.5 million barrels, in addition to the fact that OPEC’s production reduction is not linked to inflation and prices in the United States of America, as it is being promoted.

In an interview with the newspaper, Al-Harami stated that oil price could decrease in the future by resolving the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, considering the end of that war will inevitably lead to lifting the international boycott of buying Russian oil. He added Russia’s entry into the export line strongly as it was in the past will raise the value of oil supply in global markets, which will inevitably lead to a decline in the price of a barrel of oil to around \$70 or less by a small margin.

He called for patience and focus on reaching a production level of about three million barrels per day from Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) specifically, due to the company’s leading role and long history in Kuwaiti oil production.

He said production from other companies, such as those operating in the Wafra and Khafji fields, is less reliable due to shared owner-

ship with Saudi Arabia and potential fluctuations in output. “Therefore, consistent production from KOC is essential for securing a larger share in OPEC+,” he suggested.

He also emphasized the need to revitalize the Burgan field’s production capacity by implementing new pumping doses. He said the field, once producing around two million barrels per day, has declined to 1.7 million due to aging. He recommended collaborating with a major international company to restore the field, now referred to as ‘Sheikh Al-Haram’, meaning, very old.

He highlighted KOC’s successful offshore explorations, including the discovery of ‘Nukhada 1’ with an estimated 2.1 billion barrels of light oil and 5.1 trillion standard cubic feet of gas, and ‘Julai’a 2’ with an estimated 800 million barrels of medium-density oil and 600 billion standard cubic feet of associated gas.

He stressed that these discoveries, along with continued onshore exploration, are crucial for increasing Kuwait’s oil reserves and realizing the country’s vision of producing four million barrels per day.

Currently, Kuwait’s production is below three million barrels per day, limiting its crude oil export capacity, so Al-Harami proposed refining the excess oil domestically to produce derivatives; thereby, maximizing its economic value.

CEO highlights firm’s contribution

KPC nationalization hits 91% as workforce grows

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28, (KUNA): The nationalization of state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corporation’s (KPC) workforce has reached 91 percent, its chief executive Sheikh Nawaf Al-Sabah told KUNA in an interview on Monday, citing firm commitment towards the development of national skills.

Against the backdrop of the 45th anniversary of the company’s inception, he said that KPC has relentlessly contributed towards national development plans, having amassed a plethora of accomplishments that have been instrumental in keeping the national economy on an upward trajectory.

Chief among those accomplishments is the company’s ability to forge a “national heritage” based on diligent and serious work, in addition to KPC’s belief in never resting on its laurels and persistently “striving for more,” he added, saying that such principles have launched KPC towards multiple phases of development.

Some five years before it is set to mark its “golden jubilee,” Sheikh Nawaf underlined that the state-run oil firm is “half-way through” its development road trip in terms of meeting its objectives, while it is fully cognizant of the “volatility” gripping the global oil market,

which calls for more “innovation and flexibility.”

On the distinction of Kuwaiti crude, he said that it is the lowest in terms of “output cost and carbon emissions,” while KPC is aware of Kuwait’s growing “significance” towards the global oil market, citing a five-year plan aiming to ratchet up production by 2030 through innovative technologies and digital tools.

Discussing KPC’s future endeavors, he said the company plans to invest in carbon capture and storage technologies to further boost operations, with the goal of storing approximately 26 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2050.

Other plans in the works include the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, a method he described as an “integral” component of KPC’s strategies moving forward, in addition to the company’s commitment to providing its personnel with the platform needed to continuously hone their skills, he added.

The KPC chief went on to heap praise on the company’s employees for their dedication and commitment, while simultaneously thanking Kuwait’s political leadership for their support that has been crucial to the company’s success.

Kuwait bank deposits rise by 1.5% in '24

Govt deposits grow to 5.083 billion dinars

By Mahmoud Shendi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Data released by the Central Bank of Kuwait yesterday showed that the volume of deposits in local banks (for both residents and non-residents) increased by approximately 816 million dinars, or 1.5 percent, in 2024.

This brought the total to 53.823 billion dinars by the end of December 2024, compared to 53 billion dinars at the close of December 2023.

The government deposits also grew by around 390 million dinars, reaching 5.083 billion dinars by the end of 2024, up from 4.694 billion dinars in December 2023.

The deposits from the private sector increased by about 795 million dinars, totaling 41.485 billion dinars by December 2024 compared to 40.690 billion dinars a year earlier.

The Central Bank’s financial statements for December 2024 also indicated a rise in bank credit facilities to economic sectors, which increased by 3.6 billion dinars, reaching 57.17 billion dinars at

the end of 2024, up from 53.55 billion dinars in December 2023.

The personal credit facilities saw a 560 million dinar increase, totaling 19.321 billion dinars by the end of 2024, compared to 18.761 billion dinars in December 2023.

However, the money supply (liquidity) declined by 0.2 percent on a monthly basis, reaching 40.6 billion dinars (approximately 133.9 billion dollars) in December 2024.

The Central Bank’s Economic Research Department reported that private sector deposits in local banks in dinars decreased by 0.2 percent to 37 billion dinars (about \$122 billion).

Meanwhile, private sector deposits in foreign currencies fell by 1.6 percent, amounting to 1.9 billion dinars (approximately \$6.3 billion). The total balances of local banks’ claims on the Central Bank in dinars, represented by Central bonds, decreased by about 16.5 percent, totaling 1.4 billion dinars (around \$4.6 billion).

Additionally, the total assets of local banks increased by 0.3 percent in December to 91.6 billion dinars (around \$302 billion), while their net foreign assets rose by 2.5 percent, reaching 15 billion dinars (approximately \$49.5 billion).

Time deposits at the Central Bank fell by 17.8 percent to 740 million dinars (about \$2.4 billion),

while cash credit facilities (loans) increased by 0.1 percent to 57 billion dinars (about \$188 billion). The average interest rate on one-year treasury bonds remained stable at 4.3 percent.

Furthermore, financing of Kuwaiti imports rose by 50.6 percent, reaching 910 million dinars (around \$3 billion), while the average exchange rate of the US dollar against the dinar increased by 0.1 percent, reaching 307.5 fils.

Kuwait’s official reserve assets stood at 13.69 billion dinars (\$44.55 billion) at the end of December 2024, down from 14.62 billion dinars (\$47.58 billion) in December 2023.

Compared to November 2024, when reserves amounted to 14.27 billion dinars (\$46.44 billion), the reserves decreased by approximately 4.06 percent month-over-month, or 580 million dinars (\$1.89 billion).

This annual decrease was primarily driven by a 6.86 percent drop in the foreign currency and deposits abroad item, which totaled 12.09 billion dinars in December 2024, compared to 12.98 billion dinars in December 2023.

The special drawing rights item also saw a 0.75 percent decrease, reaching 1.32 billion dinars in December 2024, compared to 1.33 billion dinars in December 2023. It remained stable month-over-month.

Over 100 firms attend 13th HORECA Exhibition

AAW participates in 13th HORECA Kuwait Exhibition

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) announced its participation in the 13th edition of HORECA Kuwait, the largest B2B hospitality and food exhibition, through its Consumer Goods Department. Held under the patronage of the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, the exhibition took place at the Kuwait International Fairground from 14 to 16 January.

AAW’s participation at Horeca aligns with the company’s expansion strategy for this year, as it explores new channels targeting the HORECA (hotels, restaurants, and cafés) sector. The company has been a leader in the consumer goods sector in Kuwait, covering the main traditional trade channels, such as grocery shops, as well as the modern trade channels, including co-ops, key accounts, and e-commerce platforms. For over 100 years, AAW has consistently met consumer needs and exceeded their expectations by providing high-quality products to the market.

AAW’s booth at the HORECA event showcased the company’s diverse portfolio across various categories. In the non-food category, they presented a range of household products from brands such as Proctor & Gamble, including Tide, Ariel, Deepio, Fairy, Downy, Pampers, Always, Gillette, and Venus, as well as Clorox products. Their range of food products included brands like Hershey’s, Lindt, Reese’s, Folgers, Al-Aqsaa Rice, Peshawar Rice, and Werther’s Original. AAW also featured outdoor adventure gear from brands such as Coleman, Klean Kanteen, Miir, and Campingaz.

This year, the HORECA exhibition was marked by local and international participation from the hospitality and tourism sectors. Over 100 companies, 500 global brands, and more than 8,000 specialized visitors attended. The event featured workshops and seminars on topics such as tourism, sustainability, food, environment, and hospitality, along-



A group photo of the Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa team.



HORECA Kuwait Exhibition.

side competitions in culinary arts, barista, mocktail, and housekeeping, judged by international experts.

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. is one of Kuwait’s trad-

ing and commercial companies, with business operations across a range of growing sectors, such as Consumer Goods, Pharmaceuticals, Furniture, Real Estate, Kitchen & Home Appli-

ances, Outdoor Equipment, Sports and Lifestyle and Food & Beverages. The company represents over 200 global brands in Kuwait’s retail and distribution market.

Hydrogen stations to expand across Italy and Europe

KPIC to complete 1st hydrogen stations in Italy by 2026

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Kuwait Petroleum International Company is set to complete its first hydrogen filling stations in Italy by May 2026. This initiative is part of the strategy of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and aligns with its climate policy aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The project follows the company’s recent success in securing the rights to operate two fuel stations in Europe.

With the European Union’s keen interest in renewable energy sources, the company plans to expand its hydrogen filling station network in Italy and through-

out Europe.

This strategic move is driven by the recognition that hydrogen, as a clean energy source derived from oxygen, offers a sustainable alternative to traditional fossil fuels. Unlike conventional vehicles that emit carbon dioxide, hydrogen-powered vehicles produce only water vapor, thereby significantly reducing their environmental impact.

According to informed sources, the advantages of using hydrogen as a fuel for cars include fast refueling, as well as the fact that a liter of hydrogen is enough for a small car to travel about 100 kilometers. Hydrogen-powered vehicles operate smoothly without requiring frequent maintenance. Hydrogen fuel is produced from renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, which helps reduce reliance

on limited fossil fuels that contribute to air pollution.

The concept of using hydrogen as a car fuel began in the 1980s, but it has not become widespread due to the global reliance on traditional energy sources. Gasoline-powered cars are expected to remain dominant for the next thirty years, after which hydrogen-powered vehicles are likely to become more common. This is especially evident as some car manufacturers, particularly in Europe and Asia, have started to develop the hydrogen car industry.

Japan, which produces most of the world’s cars, aims to have more than 800,000 hydrogen-powered vehicles on its roads by 2030. Also, countries like Germany, Japan, and South Korea are considered among the important markets for hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

KIPIC-KNPC merger to include job ads, external courses, evaluations

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) is set to fully merge with the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) at the

start of KNPC’s budget term for 2025/2026.

According to informed sources, this merger, which will involve external courses, job advertisements, and annual evaluations, marks the final step in the process of merging the two companies.

What's On



Polish Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Michal Cholewa delivers a speech at the event.



A ceremonial cake being cut at the Poland Travel Roadshow.



Photos by Rezk Tawfik
A photo from the Poland Travel Roadshow.

Polish ambassador highlights strong, growing ties with Kuwait

Polish Embassy in Kuwait hosts Poland Travel Roadshow

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kuwait organized the Poland Travel Roadshow, a special event designed to promote Poland's vibrant tourism industry.

The event, held today at the St. Regis Hotel in downtown Kuwait City, provided an excellent opportunity for travel professionals, media representatives and tourism enthusiasts to explore the endless possibilities Poland has to offer and learn about Poland's stunning landscapes, historical landmarks, and cultural heritage, as well as its growing tourism infrastructure.

In his remarks the Polish Ambassador to Kuwait, HE Michal Cholewa, said he views the relations between Poland and Kuwait as a strong and growing partnership rooted in mutual respect and cooperation across various fields.

Speaking about the Poland Travel Roadshow, the Am-

bassador emphasized its significance as a platform to deepen cultural and economic ties between the two nations, particularly in the tourism sector.

He highlighted Poland's commitment to showcasing its rich history, vibrant culture, and scenic landscapes to Kuwaiti travelers, while also encouraging greater collaboration in promoting people-to-people connections and mutual understanding.

He added, the event reflects Poland's enthusiasm to welcome more Kuwaiti visitors and build on the flourishing relationship between the two countries.

In his address HE Andrzej Szejna, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, who also attended the event, said he is but happy to share insights into the country's strategic tourism goals.

"First and foremost," he said, "I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait for their outstanding cooperation and support in organizing today's event."

"I also extend my heartfelt thanks to HE Osama Al-

Makhyal, Assistant Undersecretary for the Tourism Sector at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information, for joining us and contributing to the success of this important gathering," he added.

This event, he added, is a testament to the strong partnership and shared vision between Poland and Kuwait to promote tourism and strengthen the bond between the two nations.

Szejna thanked the Polish Tourism Organization (PTO) and their partners for their active participation and presence in Kuwait. As a dedicated government agency, he said, the PTO works tirelessly to position Poland as a modern, welcoming destination offering world-class services and competitive prices.

Their mission to showcase Poland's natural beauty, rich culture, and diverse experiences is clearly reflected in today's event.

Having said this, he welcomed the influencers and tourism industry representatives from Kuwait who had the opportunity to visit Poland in collaboration with the

Embassy of Poland and the Polish Tourism Organization. "Your visit was not only a cultural exchange but also a chance to experience firsthand the many treasures Poland has to offer. I hope it left you inspired by our country's charm and hospitality," he added.

He said Poland is proud to host representatives from Polish tourism businesses alongside renowned chefs from Michelin-starred restaurants. "This gathering creates an ideal platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration between Polish and Kuwaiti partners. I am confident that these exchanges will pave the way for even stronger ties and mutually beneficial opportunities in the future."

"One of the most significant milestones in our tourism relationship has been the introduction of direct flights between Kuwait and Krakow. This connection has not only made travel more accessible but also symbolizes the growing bond between our countries. Direct flights enhance people-to-people connections, fostering greater understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures," he added.

Al Dirwaza weekly draw winners revealed

KIB announces Al Dirwaza mega draw winner

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced the winner of its Al Dirwaza account Mega Draw, based on customers' balances from November and December, through a special appearance on Marina FM. The draw was held in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as representatives from the Bank. Mrs. Hayfa Abdulrahman Abdulmughni Alabdulmughni won the grand prize of KD 100,000. As for the weekly draw, based on customers' December deposits, the KD 1,000 prize was awarded to Tahous Talaaq TahousAlazmi,Marshad Obaid Mohammad Alazmi, Khaled Hamad Ayed Aljenfawi, Fouad Ahmed Matowea Hassan, Bader Abdulaziz Mohsen Almutairi, whilst the KD 500 prize was awarded to Awais Razzaq Ahmad Ahmad, Ahmad Ibrahim Sayed Ali Alshammaa, Ayyad Salem Sultan Alshammari, MatroukTouqan Hadian Alenizi, Mousa Yousef Alibrahim, Oufa Ahmad Mohammad, Mohammad Nabeel Ibrahim Albouloushi.

On this occasion, Othman Tawfeq, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB,said: "Today, we are witnessing significant success, notable interest, and strong motivation that encourage customers to save and enjoy the benefits and rewards of their savings. On this occasion, we are pleased to congratulate the winner of the Mega Draw for Al Dirwaza account. We wish all account customers greater chances of winning in the upcoming draws." He

added: "At KIB, we constantly strive to be innovative in all solutions and products that enable us to reward our customers and achieve the highest levels of satisfaction and trust among them. This is done by offering the best banking experience that solidifies our relationships with them, meets their needs and expectations, and suits their modern lifestyle, in line with our main 'Bank for Life' slogan."

On his part, Ali Alsane, Manager - Product Development, Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence at KIB, said: "The Al Dirwaza campaign has seen significant success since its launch, reflecting the increasing engagement from our diverse customer base. As we announce the grand prize winner, we acknowledge the positive impact this campaign has had on our valued customers. With additional draws on the horizon, we look forward to recognizing more winners and continuing to build on this momentum."

Alsane also noted that KIB continues to embrace an expansion strategy in its banking campaigns, aimed at encouraging customers to open an Al Dirwaza account digitally through the Bank's digital platforms. These platforms include the "KIB Online" platform and the "KIB Mobile" application.

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

als. The account is currently the best of its kind in the sector, with annual expected profits of up to 2% disbursed on a monthly basis, where the customer gets an expected profit of 2% for the first 3 months from the account opening date and up to 1% expected rate onward. The expected profits are automatically deposited into the customer's account within the first day of the beginning of each month.

Al Dirwaza is a draw account as well, whereby numerous winners are announced throughout the year. Al Dirwaza account holders are eligible to enter the monthly and mega draws on the condition of maintaining at least KD 100 in their accounts. Al Dirwaza account is also in compliance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia and approved by the KIB's Sharia Supervisory Board. Furthermore, the account comes with a wide range of benefits, including the ease of opening the account, which does not require a salary transfer, and the customer's ability to open it remotely without visiting a branch through KIB Online on the Bank's website or KIB Mobile application on smartphones.

Additionally, Al Dirwaza account automatically grants customers instant issuance of an ATM card, with a KD 2,000 ATM daily withdrawal limit, as well as the ability to issue credit cards against the cash collateral in the account. To open the account and participate in its draws, a minimum of KD 100 is required and can only be withdrawn upon account closure.



KIB's Dirwaza account's 2025 mega draw winner.

A day of performances, culture and giving

ICSK Mega Carnival thrills thousands in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Indian Community School, Kuwait successfully hosted the 19th Mega Carnival on Friday, Jan 24 at the ICSK Senior Campus. The much-awaited event was a grand celebration of culture, entertainment and charity. It attracted thousands of attendees from across Kuwait to enjoy the day packed with vibrant activities, thrilling performances and the joy of togetherness.

The ICSK campus transformed into a bustling hub of activities, radiating an atmosphere of excitement and festivities.

The event was graced by the esteemed presence of the Chief Guest, Dr. Said Maamar, Deputy Director and Attache Academic, Embassy of France; Guest of Honour, Dr. Shaker Hamzah Alhazeem, Research Director, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research; and Special Guest, Vignesh Pande, India's Laughter Champion, Ventriloquist, Actor, Anchor and Singer. Among the dignitaries were Sheikh Abdul Rahiman, Hon. Chairman to the Board of Trustees, Vinukumar Nair, Hon. Vice Chairman to the Board of Trustees, Azharuddin Amer Muhammed, Hon. Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Sunkara Raju, Hon. Treasurer to the Board of Trustees, Fr. James Tusciano, SDB, Principal of Indian English Academy School, Mrs. K.R Rajalakshmi, Principal of Jabriya Indian school, Dr. V. Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK, K. Gangadhar Shirsath, Principal of ICSK, Khaitan, Rajesh Nair, Principal of ICSK, Amman, Mrs. Sherly Dennis, Director of The Indian School of Excellence and Mrs. C. Sheeja, Principal of ICSK, Junior and Vice Principals of ICSK Branches.

The carnival began with a grand inauguration ceremony, setting the tone for the day's lively events. The ceremony commenced with recitation of verses from the holy Quran by Mst. Farhan. The gathering honored the national anthems of Kuwait and India. Dr. V. Binumon, the Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK, delivered a warm and heartfelt welcome address to the distinguished gathering. In his speech, Dr. Binumon emphasized the significance of organizing such events, stating that while academic excellence is a key priority, the school also focuses on fostering cultural and artistic values among students. He highlighted the institution's commitment to nurturing a positive growth mindset in its students.

The audience was further captivated by a vibrant group song performed by the school choir, Swaranjali. The melodious performance set the stage for the cultural extravaganza that was to follow.

The esteemed Chief Guest, Dr. Said Maamar,



A photo of distinguished dignitaries and ICSK officials at the event.

expressed his immense joy and honor at being part of the celebration. In his inspiring address, he commended ICSK for its noble initiative.He also spoke about the special relationship shared by India and France, underlining the importance of cultural exchange and collaboration. As a token of appreciation, he was presented with a memento by Sheikh Abdul Rahiman, the Honorable Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The Guest of Honour, Dr. Shaker Hamzah Alhazeem, shared his delight at attending the carnival. In his speech, he encouraged students to embrace lifelong learning as a key to success. He was presented with a memento by Azharuddin Amer Muhammed, Hon. Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

Honored

The Special Guest, Vignesh Pande, a renowned ventriloquist, actor, anchor and singer from Indiarenmised about his own school days, appreciating the students' performances and expressing gratitude for the invitation. He, too, was honored with a memento by the Honorable Chairman to the Board of Trustees, Sheikh Abdul Rahiman.

The 19th Mega Carnival of The Indian Community School, Kuwait was officially inaugurated by the esteemed Chief Guest and Guest of Honour. The dazzling lights, vibrant colorsand thunderous applause from the audience added to the celebratory ambience.The event truly came alive with a spectacular cultural performance on the theme 'To Infinity and Beyond' by the students of ICSK Amman. This visually stunning presentation left the audience mesmerized and offered a glimpse into

the creativity and talent nurtured within the school.

The school recognized the invaluable contributions of its sponsors, who played a vital role in ensuring the success of the event. Each sponsor was presented with a memento by the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour as a gesture of gratitude.

A significant highlight of the ceremony was the release of the official Carnival Souvenir by Vinukumar Nair, the Hon. Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees. This special moment marked the importance of the occasion and provided a lasting memory of the event. Vote of thanks proposed by Rajesh Nair, Principal of ICSK, Amman drew curtains to the inaugural ceremony and stated the commencement of a day filled with fun, frolic and community bonding.

The event featured a stellar lineup of 40 different performances including musical extravaganza, comedy show, dazzling dance performance like Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Punjabi dance, Thaanoora Dance, Arabic Dance, Taal Fusion and numerous Bollywood, cinematic and folk dances. Adding a touch of wonder, a mesmerizing magic show enthralled the crowd, holding their attention with spellbinding tricks and captivating moments.

Gifted star entertainers were specially brought in from India to enrich the celebration. Vignesh Pande, celebrated as India's laughter champion and a multitasking entertainer, brought an infectious energy to the event. With his entertaining ventriloquism and humorous skits, he had the audience roaring with laughter. His witty delivery, combined

with his unique ability to bring puppets to life, showcased his versatile talent, spreading joy and leaving a lasting impression on the crowd.

DJ Venz, Rising Star from India, took the energy of the event to new heights with his electrifying DJ sessions held in the auditorium exclusively for the youngsters. Known for his dynamic style and pulse-pounding beats, he delivered an unforgettable mix of high-energy tracks that had the crowd dancing non-stop.

The carnival offered something for everyone. Family Fashion Showand Mehandi Contestbrought families and individuals together to showcase their creativity and cultural pride. Family Fashion Show became a delightful spectacle of style and togetherness, while the Mehandi Contest highlighted intricate artistry, with participants creating stunning henna designs that celebrated tradition and beauty. Interactive activities like games, talent shows, quizzes and on-the-spot contests, kept the crowd engaged and entertained.

Featured

The event also featured 21 gourmet food stalls, offering an array of international cuisines that delighted food lovers. Additionally, 30 shopping stalls showcased an assortment of clothing, accessories, handicrafts and unique gifts, catering to the diverse tastes of the visitors. The vibrant market place buzzed with excitement, appealing to shoppers of all tastes and preferences.

The ICSK campus witnessed an overwhelming response, with more than 20000 visitors joining the celebration. The lively atmosphere, coupled with the extensive lineup of activities and performances, created an unforgettable experience. The digital raffle draw was one of the most anticipated moments of the event, with attendees eagerly awaiting the announcement of winners. Fabulous prizes, including five flight tickets to and fro Kuwait and India, added an air of excitement and anticipation that kept the crowd buzzing with enthusiasm.

As the day drew to a close, Akky, a renowned water and fire drumming specialist from India, captivated the audience with his breathtaking and visually stunning performances. Combining the elements of water and fire into his rhythmic art, he created a multi-sensory experience that left the crowd awestruck.

The closing ceremony was graced by a spectacular cultural performance by the talented students of The Indian School of Excellence. Their high-energy performance captivated the lively audience, leaving everyone in awe.

ABK draw

Mohammed Ali Lal wins Alfouz draw

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is excited to announce Mohammed Ali Lal Ji as the winner of the Alfouz KD 20,000 monthly draw on Monday, 27 January 2025. The draw took place in the presence of a Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative, ensuring transparency.

From the highly coveted mega annual draw of a KD 5,000 monthly salary for 10 years to its KD 10,000 weekly prize, the account has attracted significant attention in the Kuwaiti market. Based on the account's great success, ABK decided to go above and beyond to reward customer loyalty.

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

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

ABK encourages everyone to open an Alfouz draw account or increase their balance to participate in the upcoming draw, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 3February 2025.

Open an Alfouz account today and enjoy increased opportunities to win the lifestyle you've been waiting for!

To learn more about the Alfouz account and its range of exciting draws and prizes, please follow ABK's Instagram account @abk_kuwait, visit eahli.com, contact Ahlan Ahli 1 899 899 or visit one of the Bank's branches across Kuwait.



Mstyslav Chernov, director of the documentary film "2000 Meters to Andriivka," poses for a portrait during the Sundance Film Festival on Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025, in Park City, Utah. (AP)

Chernov in Sundance

The painful price of war in '2000 Meters'

PARK CITY, Utah, Jan 28, (AP): The day Mstyslav Chernov won the BAFTA for his documentary "20 Days in Mariupol" was the day he learned two soldiers he knew had been killed in combat. They were primary subjects of his new film "2000 Meters to Andriivka," a harrowing portrait of modern warfare that puts audiences on the frontlines of the 2023 Ukrainian counteroffensive.

"The film changed along the way," Chernov, a videojournalist with The Associated Press, said last week after its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. "From a story of the success of that operation it became a story of loss, of memory, of the price that soldiers pay for every single inch of the land. And that's where the name came from."

Coming back to Park City, Utah, with a new film has been a sobering, full circle moment for Chernov. It's the place where he first showcased "20 Days in Mariupol" two years ago. Although he received the highest honors a journalist and a filmmaker can get for his work, a Pulitzer Prize and an Oscar included, it's for reportage on a war in his home country that won't end and that he can't stop covering.

The AP spoke to Chernov about "2000 Meters to Andriivka," a co-production between the AP and PBS Frontline, the cognitive dissonance of whipping between a movie release and the frontlines as well as his responsibility to Ukraine. Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Two years ago at Sundance, you were eager to go back to Ukraine. Was this already on your mind that you wanted to show the soldiers?

Chernov: I gave a lot of thought after I left Mariupol. Do I want to continue doing what I was doing? We felt a lot of trauma and a lot of loss, guilt even, that we didn't do enough. But then again, that tragedy you go through, the tragedy of people who you're filming, it doesn't let you to just stop doing what you do. You always want to do more and you actually can't stop.

At every point in this journey I was also editing "20 Days in Mariupol" and then it went on to screen all over the world. The response was great, but more I felt that response and more I saw that things are not changing, more I wanted to go back and to continue shooting, and that's what I did.

At some point in summer of 2023, when Ukraine had a highly anticipated and very important counteroffensive, we also had our theatrical release for "20 Days in Mariupol." So from LA, where at Laemmle Cinema, you would see "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" and "20 Days in Mariupol" posters and (after) speaking to the public, I would fly back to Poland, drive to the frontline and start shooting this film.

The story of Andriivka captured me so much that I would go back and keep following the platoon. And the tragedy was that as more time passed more people who we initially filmed on the journey to Andriivka have died.

AP: With '20 Days in Mariupol' you found yourself in situations and knew to keep shooting. Here, you went in knowing you wanted to make a film. How did that change what you were doing?

Chernov: Making "20 Days in Mariupol" and seeing the impact it ultimately had, seeing how big the audience was, made me think that the impact of journalism could be complemented with an impact of documentary filmmaking and that combination, if you can find the right balance between those two approaches, could be very powerful.

The form of the cinema is much more long lasting than the news. As important as journalism is, unfortunately, there's just so much of things happening in the world, so many important stories, that it takes extraordinary efforts to keep someone's attention on the story, especially if that story is important to you personally. And the story of Andriivka and the soldiers who are trying to get there is personally very important to me.

AP: This film puts audiences on the frontline in ways that we're only used to seeing in fictional war films. How were able to do that?

Chernov: Technology is changing. The audience is changing. So the medium of documentary that talks about important current events has to change as well. To be able to catch up, we constantly need to search for new forms, for new ways of telling the story, for new visual solutions to that. The making of "2000 Meters to Andriivka," the approach is experimental. We are trying to show modern warfare the way no one has done it before or since. Of course there are elements that are classic for the documentary, but I also wanted the story to be so immersive, so on the ground, so experiential for the audience, that they forget that they are watching a narrative fiction film or a documentary. Then when they reach the end of the film, when they realize that everything they just saw was real, it would hit them even harder.

AP: You gave one of the all-time great Oscar speeches. Was Andriivka heavy on your mind when you took that stage?

Chernov: I was thinking about all the boys, yes, when I was on stage. There'd been so many things happening in the background when we were sitting in that beautiful place with all the movie stars and seeing the speeches that they were giving.

I had got hundreds of messages of people who were telling me what to say on the stage, all important. I had a feeling that 40 million Ukrainians, if I will be lucky to go on that stage, will be watching me and every single word that will be said. There is a responsibility, a responsibility to journalism and a responsibility to me being Ukrainian, the responsibility to the people of Mariupol and responsibility to these soldiers that I was, by that time, filming for almost a year.

Awards show to raise funds, awareness for wildfire victims

LA wildfires to transform the 2025 Grammys

LOS ANGELES, Jan 28, (AP): The Grammy Awards will look a little bit different this week.

Each year, the Recording Academy hosts a multitude of events to welcome the music industry during Grammy week and record labels do the same. However, many institutions have canceled their plans - Universal Music Group, Sony, Spotify, BMG and Warner Music Group among them - and instead are allocating resources to help those affected by the devastating Los Angeles-area wildfires.

The Grammys will still take place on Sunday at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles but now will focus its attention on helping wildfire victims.

Within days of fires ravaging the Pacific Palisades and Altadena neighborhoods, the Recording Academy and its affiliated MusiCares charity launched the Los Angeles Fire Relief Effort with a \$1 million dollar donation. According to a letter sent to members on Jan. 13, thanks to additional contributions, they've already distributed \$2 million in emergency aid.

Once the fund was set up, Recording Academy CEO Harvey Mason jr. said they began focusing on reformatting what Grammy week would look like - many conversations conducted "on the road, mobile-y, virtually" as staffers had evacuated their homes.

"That process has really consisted of reaching out to just listen and learn from a lot of people - state officials, local officials, the governor's office, the mayor's office, the fire department. We talked to hotel managers, just really trying to get a grasp on what was happening currently. What did they project was going to happen in the next week to 10 days? Would be safe to have a show?"

Ultimately, the Recording Academy decided to condense

its pre-Grammy week plans to just four events, each featuring a fundraising element.

On Friday, MusiCares, an organization that helps music professionals who need financial, personal or medical assistance, will hold its annual Persons of the Year benefit gala celebrating the Grateful Dead.

On Saturday, the Special Merit Awards Ceremony and Grammy nominees' reception will still take place, followed by Clive Davis' pre-Grammy fundraising event.

Then the Grammys take the stage on Sunday.

Events like the annual pre-Grammy Black Music Collective event, Grammy advocacy brunch, and others scheduled to take place at the immersive pop-up Grammy house have been canceled.

Impact

"We thought consolidating the events would allow us to have more impact," Mason explains. "And we just don't feel it was the right time to have social gatherings or places to party or schmooze and just hang out. We wanted to have our events be places that could be purposeful and impactful. Some of the party settings, we decided to fold down into our fundraising efforts."

"Obviously, we can't have a normal show in the midst of people's belongings being burned or loss of life or other things like that. At the same time, canceling would not have helped," Mason says.

"We needed to raise money. We needed to show unity and come together around music. We need to support the city of L.A. (Over) 6,500 people work on our shows and ancillary gatherings. So, once we decided to move forward,

it was really a conversation with (Grammy producers) Ben Winston, Raj Kapoor and Jesse Collins and myself. And we started to think about, 'How do we make the show have the greatest impact?'"

They decided the path forward was to still give out awards and host performances to give viewers and attendees a bespoke concert experience. But most importantly, the show could raise awareness, drive donations and resources to funds that benefit people in need.

And the conversations are ongoing. "We have some great things in the show that will definitely help to raise funds," he assures. "It will honor some of the heroes that have been protecting our lives and our homes. It will hopefully shine a light on some people that need more help and more services."

Don't expect a traditional telethon, but he says the show will feature announcements and activations in the arena.

"Hopefully we'll be talking about things that have been pledged from the sponsors or from the community," he adds.

"We know right off the bat that we've got almost 3,000 requests for help from our members or people in the music community," Mason says. "So that was just in the first few days."

The immediate needs have been "the basics," as he explains. "Food, water, shelter, the bare necessities to live."

"The next phase will involve, you know, where they're going to live, how are they going to replace maybe damaged or destroyed instruments, studios. How will they make a living? I'm sure there'll be some mental health component that people may need assistance with. But it's really across the board. But the early, immediate relief is around just the bare necessities."

Fashion

Schiaparelli's 'Icarus' soars with gleaming gold

Dior couture explores fashion through time

PARIS, Jan 28, (AP): Designer Maria Grazia Chiuri delved into the storied archives of Christian Dior for her latest haute couture collection Monday, exploring the transformations of time.

The accomplished spring 2025 show - one of Chiuri's best in seasons - drew from the key silhouettes of Dior's iconic past designers, such as Yves Saint Laurent, and infusing them with her distinct contemporary vision.

The show was a commentary on how fashion serves as a lens for understanding time.

Key inspirations included the Trapèze line, originally conceived by Saint Laurent in 1958, and Christian Dior's Cigale silhouette from 1952, both updated with modern fabrics.

Chiuri's vision unfolded with flowing capes adorned with organza-crafted feathers, shimmering black coats embroidered with three-dimensional silver, and lace-trimmed tulle skirts that evoked a sense of playful nostalgia. Crinolines were reimagined as ethereal cages with embroidered branches, and moiré-tailcoat miniskirt ensembles added bold, modern contrasts to classic silhouettes.

A standout piece included a burnished silver gown shimmering with intricate embroidery, creating a sense of movement and transformation. Another highlight featured a cape of delicate petals that turned the model into a surreal flower-woman, blending whimsy with couture precision.

The show garnered a rare standing ovation from powerful US Vogue chief Anna Wintour.

The show unfolded in the picturesque gardens of the Musée Rodin in Paris, attended by guests including actress Jenna Ortega, the star of Netflix's Wednesday, and Anya Taylor-Joy, known for her role in The Queen's Gambit.

Sports icon Venus Williams brought her commanding presence to the event, while Pamela Anderson and French actress and model Laetitia Casta were also present. Dior ambassador Kim Jisoo further underscored the house's international appeal.

The venue itself was part of the spectacle. The walls were adorned with a large-scale textile installation titled "The Flowers We Grew," created by Indian artist Rithika Merchant and translated into fabric by the Chanakya School of Craft. The artwork drew on stories of womanhood across generations, blending botanical motifs and universal symbols.

Dior's commitment to supporting women artists shone through, with this interdisciplinary collaboration highlighting the craftsmanship of Merchant and the Chanakya ateliers.

Schiaparelli

Under the gilded ceilings of the Petit Palais, Schiaparelli opened Paris Couture Week with a dazzling spectacle titled "Icarus." Gleaming gold talismans, envisioned as gleaming suns, lined the runway - a nod to the myth of the boy who flew riskily too close to the sun.

The collection embodied themes of risk-taking by subverting classic couture codes, daring to push boundaries. Unlike Icarus, however, this collection did not fall; it soared.

Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, Marisa Berenson and Kelly Rutherford watched Kendall Jenner and other models walk with stately grace, deliberately evoking old-school couture shows' slow pacing.

This traditional presentation style was mirrored in the soundtrack, which blended romantic melodies with George Michael's (asterisk)Father Figure(asterisk) - a fusion of classic romance and contemporary edge. This duality was reflected in the collection itself: traditional couture techniques and silhouettes were funky up with daring, avant-garde twists.

Daniel Roseberry's Icarus reimagined traditional couture codes with a provocative edge. Inspired by vintage ribbons,



Models wear creations as part of the Chanel Haute Couture Spring Summer 2025 collection, in Paris, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025. (AP)



A model presents a creation by Schiaparelli during the Haute Couture Week Spring/Summer 2025 in Paris, France, Jan. 27, 2025. (Xinhua)

he turned soft hues like butter, saffron and "toast" brown into bold baroque silhouettes that disrupted tradition.

Feather accents, typically ethereal, became sculptural and dramatic, while embroidered corsets - traditionally symbols of refinement and restriction - featured whimsical rosettes made out of resin, a material more often associated with industrial design. This unexpected choice questioned the seriousness often tied to couture.

Standout pieces included a lace bustier gown with an ab-sinthe green bow-front skirt. Sharp, sculpted hips added architectural structure to flowing gowns. Critics who have noted Roseberry's past reliance on theatrics may praise this collection for focusing on craftsmanship.

The collection's balance between wearability and whimsy - something critics have praised Roseberry's for - was particularly evident here, making Icarus a testament to the evolution of couture itself.

Imane Ayissi

Cameroon-born designer Imane Ayissi fused sumptuous satin and taffeta with ancestral African crafts in a couture collection that celebrated heritage while embracing modernity. This season, Ayissi explored the cultural and symbolic power of fabric, using draping, layering, and artisanal techniques to tell a story of African artistry on the global stage.

Standout looks included a matte black crossover belted coat exuding quiet luxury, a billowing white gown with cascading folds turned up into itself, and a top of interlocking colorful flowers crafted with intricate precision. These pieces highlighted Ayissi's knack for balancing opulence with subtlety.

Ayissi honored African craftsmanship through Kente fabric transformed into striking halter dresses and kimono-inspired jackets, while raffia - his signature - made vivid appearances

in fuchsia and scarlet fringes, capes, and bow details. Circle motifs and bark appliqué flowers lent a modern edge to these traditional materials.

Lanvin

Lanvin, the world's oldest continually operating couture house, founded in 1889, unveiled a new chapter in its storied history with Peter Copping's debut as artistic director. Tasked with restoring focus and relevance to the maison at Paris Fashion Week, Copping took inspiration from Jeanne Lanvin herself, channeling her 1920s and '30s vision into a collection on Sunday night that bridged timeless elegance with modernity.

Copping's designs paid homage to Jeanne Lanvin's panoramic creativity, encompassing everything from couture to perfumes and interiors. The collection revived signature elements of the house, including capes, draped ribbon dresses, and the iconic (asterisk)robe de style(asterisk) Notable looks included a gold metallic lurex dress, a petaled skirt, cascading antique-style lace aprons, and gilded trousers, which deftly balanced historical reference and contemporary allure.

Copping's approach revealed a deep reverence for the house's heritage. While some might wonder whether this homage leaned too close to the past, the collection's richness demonstrated his commitment to preserving the maison's DNA.

Graphic patterns and motifs drawn from Jeanne Lanvin's own home infused the collection with Art Deco sophistication. A standout was a black velvet cape traced with silver studs, paired with a sheer blouse and tailored trousers. Eveningwear took center stage, with dramatic creations like spiral-draped ribbon dresses and mirror-embroidered pieces showcasing Copping's mastery of couture gestures.

More than 15 million US adults diagnosed with the disorder

As diagnoses surge, US adults wonder: 'Do I have ADHD?'

NEW YORK, Jan 28, (AP): Allison Burk's teenage daughter struggled with uncontrolled emotions, a shrinking attention span and a growing tendency to procrastinate. A family doctor suggested ADHD testing, which led to an unexpected discovery: The teen had ADHD, and Burk did too.

During her daughter's evaluation, Burk thought, "Wait a minute. This sounds familiar," she recalled.

"I was able to piece together that this might be something I was experiencing," said Burk, of Columbus, Ohio. She subsequently underwent her own testing and was diagnosed with ADHD - at age 42.

More adults are being diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Diagnoses have been rising for decades but seem to have accelerated in the last few years.

A recent study suggested that more than 15 million US adults - roughly 1 in 17 - have been diagnosed with ADHD. The condition always starts in childhood, but about half of adults with it are diagnosed when they are 18 or older.

Some doctors say the number of people coming in for evaluation is skyrocketing.



Judy Sandler, who was diagnosed in her 50s with ADHD, walks in the woods near her home, Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025, in Lincolnville, Maine. (AP)

"Just in our clinic, requests for assessments have doubled in the last two years," said Justin Barterian, a psychologist based at Ohio State Uni-

versity.

Here's a look at the phenomenon, and how to know if you might have the condition.

ADHD makes it hard for people to pay attention and control impulsive behaviors. It can be inherited, and is often treated with drugs, behavioral therapy, or both.

"It's like there's an engine in you and you feel like it's always running, and you can't turn it off except with medication," said Judy Sandler, a 62-year-old Maine woman who was diagnosed in her 50s.

ADHD has been called the most commonly diagnosed mental health disorder in U.S. children, with more than 7 million kids diagnosed. Historically, it was thought to mainly affect boys (perhaps because boys with ADHD were seen as more disruptive in school) and to be something that kids grew out of.

But experts believe many people aren't diagnosed as kids and live with symptoms into adulthood.

Adults with the condition talk about having trouble focusing on tasks, juggling responsibilities, and planning and managing their time. Some talk about not putting things away, and

straining personal relationships with their restlessness, mood swings and impulsiveness.

Burk said she was grouped with talented and gifted students in grade school but didn't complete college until her 30s because, "when I was 19, I hitchhiked across the country on a whim" and ended up a single mother in her early 20s. She now works in marketing and media relations for Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Diagnoses have been climbing in both kids and adults, and the recent government report found adult ADHD was more common than earlier estimates.

"We haven't had (federal) adult ADHD data in a long time," said one of the study's authors, Angelika Clausen of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There were indicators of the rise, she added. Increasing demand for ADHD medication led to widespread shortages after the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020. A 2023 study showed the rise in prescriptions was particularly notable in adults - especially women.

ADHD diagnoses and prescriptions were increasing before the pandemic,

due partly to a change in general diagnostic criteria in 2013 that broadened the definition of ADHD and reduced the number of symptoms a patient needed to have.

But case counts really seemed to jump in 2020, when schools were closed and many adults were forced to work from home.

"It's very difficult to focus when you are home and you have kids," Clausen said. "That may have exacerbated the symptoms for people who'd had mild ADHD but were able to cope" before the pandemic.

The last few years have seen growing cultural acceptance and curiosity about the condition, fueled by a proliferation of "I have ADHD" social media videos and online medical start-up companies offering 5-minute diagnostic quizzes.

Indeed, the long-held belief that ADHD was underdiagnosed in adults has given way to recent debates about whether it's become overdiagnosed.

There's no blood test or brain scan for ADHD. Experts say it is diagnosed when symptoms are severe enough to cause ongoing problems in more than one area of life, and when those symptoms can be traced to pre-adolescent

childhood.

Ideally, a psychologist or psychiatrist diagnoses it by taking careful histories from patients and from people who know them, experts say. They also might ask patients to take tests designed to check their memory and ability to concentrate. Doctors also must rule out anxiety, depression and other conditions that can have similar symptoms.

But getting an appointment with a mental health professional can take months, and intensive ADHD evaluations can cost thousands of dollars. Many patients turn to family doctors or even online diagnostic quizzes, some of them connected to telehealth companies that prescribe medications.

"There is wide variability in this country in how people diagnose, how strict they are, and who they diagnose," said Margaret Sibley, a University of Washington psychologist.

The American Professional Society of ADHD and Related Disorders is drafting a first national set of diagnosis and treatment guidelines for health professionals who treat adults, and expects to release them later this year.

Risk labeled 'serious'

Coca-Cola recalls soft drinks over high levels of chemical

BRUSSELS, Jan 28, (AP): Coca-Cola has recalled some of its soft drinks in Europe after higher-than-normal levels of a chemical called chlorate were detected in bottles and cans at a production plant in Belgium.

Batches of Coca Cola, Fanta, Sprite, Minute Maid and Fuze Tea were among the products recalled in Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, the company said on Tuesday. The recall concerns drinks with production codes 328 GE to 338 GE.

"We are also in contact with authorities in a very small number of European markets - France, Germany and Great Britain - where a very limited quantity of stock was also shipped," the company said. No produce was recalled in those countries.

Health authorities in Denmark, Portugal and Romania were notified by the European Union's rapid alert system to investigate whether shop shelves or vending machines had been stocked with potentially contaminated soft drinks. It designated the risk as "serious."

Chlorate comes from chlorine disinfectants which are used in the treatment of water used for food processing. The chemical has been linked to potentially serious health problems, notably among children by interfering



Cleared cases of soft drinks sit on a shelf in a supermarket in Antwerp, Belgium, after Coca-Cola recalled some of its soft drinks in Europe, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025. (AP)

with the proper functioning of the thyroid gland.

Coca-Cola said that it tracked the problem back to one specific container used in its water treatment process at its factory in the city of Ghent while conducting routine safety checks.

It has advised customers not to consume drinks from the batches concerned and to return them to the point of sale to obtain a refund. "We apologize to consumers and our commercial partners," the company said.

Experts say consumers would have to drink a lot of any product contaminated with chlorate to suffer vomiting or other serious illness.

Large outbreak

Measles alert issued in Sydney

SYDNEY, Jan 28, (Xinhua): Health authorities in Australia's most populous state have issued a measles warning for western Sydney.

New South Wales (NSW) Health recently advised people to be alert for signs and symptoms of measles after a confirmed case was infectious while in the greater western Sydney region earlier in January.

The case had recently returned from Vietnam, NSW Health said, where there is a large outbreak of measles.

They were not infectious while on their flight, but anyone who attended a

doctor's clinic in Berala, about 16 km west of central Sydney, on the morning of Jan. 18 has been told to monitor for the development of symptoms.

"Symptoms to watch out for include fever, sore eyes, runny nose and a cough, usually followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy rash that starts on the head and face, then spreads to the rest of the body," Mitchell Smith, NSW Health's director of public health for the region, said in a statement.

Smith said that it can take up to 18 days for symptoms of measles to appear after being exposed.

Climate change toll

Study 'projects' millions of heat deaths in Europe

BRUSSELS, Jan 28, (AP): Extreme temperatures - mostly heat - are projected to kill as many as 2.3 million people in Europe by the end of the century unless countries get better at reducing carbon pollution and adapting to hotter conditions, a new study says.

Currently, cold temperatures kill more people in Europe than heat by large margins. But a team from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine used climate simulations of different scenarios and looked at death rates in 854 cities. They found as it warms cold deaths lessen slowly, but heat deaths soar rapidly.

With few reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases and little adaptation like air conditioning and cooling centers, Italy, southern Spain and Greece should see massive increases in the rate of heat deaths due to climate change. On the flip side, much of Scandinavia and the United Kingdom will see fewer temperature-related deaths, mostly due to moderating cold temperatures, the study in Monday's journal Nature Medicine found.

But even in the most optimistic scenarios - with carbon dioxide

emissions from coal, oil and gas cut sharply and massive increases in adaptation - there's a net increase in temperature-related deaths as the world warms, said study lead author Pierre Masselot, an environmental epidemiologist and statistician.

The drop in cold deaths up north are in places not as populated as places further south, where the heat really kicks in and hurts, Masselot said.

"The Mediterranean is a so-called climate hotspot," Masselot said. "It's a region that is warming much quicker than the rest of the world. And Malta is right in the middle of it."

The study projects Malta's temperature-related death rate to increase by 269 people for every 100,000 by the end of the century. By contrast, Ireland's will go down slightly, 15 per 100,000 people.

In general, western Europe being wealthier fares better than eastern Europe, Masselot said.

Several heat waves have killed thousands of people in the last few years in Europe, but one in 2003 is the biggest with about 70,000 deaths.



A man cools off in a fountain during a hot and sunny day of summer in Madrid, Spain, July 19, 2023. (AP)

DDI's Dr. Al Ozairi part of study

New definition, diagnostic criteria of clinical obesity

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: A global panel presented the latest definition and diagnosis of clinical obesity in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology. The Lancet Commission was led by Professor Francisco Rubino from Kings College London and included Dr. Ebba Al Ozairi, Chief Medical Officer at Dasman Diabetes Institute, which was founded by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. The Commission was tasked to redefine obesity, establish criteria for diagnosis, and prioritize interventions and public health challenges.

Obesity is a global health challenge that requires comprehensive guidelines to address its impact. Dr. Ebba Al Ozairi commented that clinical obesity can severely damage organs and lead to life-threatening complications (eg, heart attack, stroke, and renal failure). Preclinical obesity is a state of excess fat storage with a maintained tissue and organ functions, but an increased risk of developing clinical obesity and other non-communicable diseases (eg, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or cancer). To diagnose clinical obesity, healthcare professionals should look for one or both of the following: reduced organ function and/or the inability of a person to carry out daily tasks due to excess fat.



Dr. Ebba Al Ozairi

Professor Carel le Roux from the Irish Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism said that we recommend that the BMI should only be used to assess health risk at a population level, for epidemiological studies, or for screening purposes, and not be used to measure the health of an individual.

Dasman Diabetes Institute was the only Institute in the MENA region to host this important live streaming event. The full article can be found on the Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology journal website, which is one of the leading journals in Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Metabolism.

Physical education revamp

China boosts PE in schools

BEIJING, Jan. 28, (Xinhua): China has unveiled a series of policies aimed at enhancing the quality and quantity of physical education (PE) teachers in primary and secondary schools to address teacher shortages in the historically marginalized subject.

Issued by the Ministry of Education, these measures are part of a broader push for a more holistic approach to education, integrating physical fitness with academic development to cultivate well-rounded students who are prepared for the future.

The new policies focus on diversifying

PE teacher recruitment channels, ensuring PE teachers are treated the same as their colleagues in subjects such as Chinese, math and English, and intensifying efforts to develop key sports such as soccer, basketball and volleyball.

In recent years, PE has gained greater attention due to growing concerns over childhood obesity, myopia, and the subject's expanding prominence in high school entrance exams.

In mid-2022, official data indicated a nationwide shortage of approximately 120,000 PE teachers, with rural areas most affected.

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SPORTS

Duke holds off NC State to stay unbeaten in ACC

Love ties it with halfcourt shot at buzzer, Arizona sinks Iowa State

DURHAM, N.C., Jan 28, (AP): Star freshman Cooper Flagg scored 23 of his 28 points after halftime to help No. 2 Duke hold off North Carolina State 74-64 on Monday night.

Fellow rookie Kon Knueppel had 19 points for the Blue Devils (18-2, 10-0 Atlantic Coast Conference), who have won 14 straight games. And they had to fight the entire way to get there.

That's because the Wolfpack (9-11, 2-7) played loose and fearlessly to build a 13-point first-half lead and then stay within reach of Duke every time the Blue Devils tried to push free in the final 10 minutes.

Dontrez Styles scored 18 points for N.C. State, which shot just 32% after halftime but matched its season high with 10 3-pointers.

Caleb Love hit a tying heave from beyond halfcourt at the end of regulation and made two more 3-pointers in overtime, finishing with 22 points and lifting Arizona to an 86-75 win over No. 3 Iowa State.

The Cyclones (17-3, 7-2 Big 12) appeared to be in control when Joshua Jefferson hit one of two free throws with 2.2 seconds remaining, but they left too much time on the clock.

Love, who was 1 for 10 on 3s at that point, took a couple of dribbles and banked in his shot from behind the midcourt logo, sending a roar through McKale Center.

Love then hit two corner 3s in overtime and Carter Bryant added another to cap Arizona's first win over a top-5 opponent as an un-



North Carolina State's Trey Parker reaches in to knock the ball away from Duke's Isaiah Evans during NCAA college basketball. (AP)

ranked team since beating No. 3 UCLA in 1979.

Anthony Bryant scored 27 points

to help Alabama A&M beat Prairie View A&M 98-82.

Bryant also had six rebounds for

the Bulldogs (7-13, 3-4 Southwestern Athletic Conference). Chad Moodie totaled 16 points and 10

rebounds. Darius Ford scored nine.

The Panthers (4-17, 3-5) were led by Braelon Bush, who posted

28 points and two steals. Tanahj Pettway added 22 points, seven rebounds, five assists and two steals. Zaakir Sawyer had 12 points and two steals.

Eric Dailey Jr. had 16 points, Sebastian Mack came off the bench to score 14 and Aday Mara blocked five shots on his way to a double-double as UCLA beat Southern California 82-76.

UCLA took the lead three minutes into the game and never trailed again. USC fell behind by double digits at the start of the second half. The Trojans battled back and had a chance to take the lead before missing 3 of 4 free throws. Wesley Yates III hit the second of two foul shots with 1:54 left to get USC within a point. Saint Thomas missed twice with 1:37 left and a chance for the lead.

Mack answered with a 3-pointer at the shot-clock buzzer and followed with two free throws to help UCLA prevail.

Jaylen Wysinger's 23 points helped Texas Southern defeat Alabama State 80-69, upping the Tigers' win streak to six.

Wysinger added nine rebounds for the Tigers (9-11, 6-1 Southwestern Athletic Conference). Kavion McClain hit four 3-pointers and scored 20. Kolby Granger shot 5 of 7 from the field and 6 of 6 from the free-throw line to finish with 16 points, while adding eight rebounds.

The Hornets (8-12, 4-3) were led by Antonio Madlock, who recorded 18 points, 13 rebounds and five assists. CJ Hines added 16 points and seven rebounds. Micah Octave totaled eight points and six steals.

Liverpool eyes perfect record

City, PSG risk Champs League elimination on final day

MANCHESTER, England, Jan 28, (AP): The Champions League's new-look league phase concludes on Wednesday, and big names like Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain are in danger of early elimination.

Holder Real Madrid and six-time winner Bayern Munich are fighting to avoid a playoff.

With so much jeopardy going into the last games before the knockout stages, UEFA's revamp of its elite club competition looks to have delivered.

The European Cup has evolved since its inception in 1955 when it was a straight knockout tournament played over four rounds. It expanded over the years and was rebranded the Champions League in 1992.

From 2003, 32 teams played in eight groups of four, with 16 advancing to a knockout stage.

For this season, however, the group stage was scrapped and replaced by one group of 36 teams. The draw was seeded, and each team played one-off games against eight different opponents.

The top eight teams automatically advance to the round of 16. Teams placed ninth to 24th go into a playoff and those below are eliminated.

Traditionally, the group stage finale was split over two days, but all 36 teams will play at the same time on Wednesday. Kickoff is at 9 p.m. CET (23:00 local time).

Only the leader, Liverpool, and second-placed Barcelona qualified for the last 16. Record 15-time winner Real Madrid is one of 16 teams vying to be one of the other six teams to automatically qualify

for the previous 16 and avoid a playoff.

Manchester City, the 2023 champion, needs to beat Brugge to secure a place in the playoffs. Anything less will eliminate it.

PSG beat City last week to move into the playoff spots, but a loss to Stuttgart could still see it go out.

Madrid eased concerns about a potential early exit by defeating

Salzburg 5-1 last week. The defending champion may yet have to settle for a playoff and the possibility of an uncomfortable draw, given so many big teams are in places 9-24.

They include Bayern, Juventus, PSG, and last year's beaten finalist Borussia Dortmund. City will hope to join that list as well.

Liverpool is in first place with a perfect winning record from its first seven games.

Liverpool needs a point against PSV Eindhoven to win the league phase. Barcelona is three points behind and could yet take top spot with a win against Atalanta if Liverpool loses.

That remains to be seen. In a season that has already been congested by the addition of two extra league phase games, there is an obvious advantage to avoiding the playoffs and two more matches.

However, the number of big teams in the playoff spots means there is a chance of drawing one of the favorites in the round of 16.

If the standings remain the same after Wednesday's games, Liverpool will face the prospect of Madrid, Bayern, Juventus, or Celtic in the last 16. This is hardly a reward for finishing top.



Ahead of the Champions League match between VfB Stuttgart and Paris Saint-Germain, Stuttgart's Yannik Keitel (right-left), Joshua Vagnoman, Deniz and Enzo Millot warm up during the final training of VfB Stuttgart, in Stuttgart, Germany. (AP)

Sage fired despite putting Lyon back on track

PARIS, Jan 28, (AP): Lyon coach Pierre Sage has been fired despite leading the French league club out of a crisis last season and having the team within reach of a Champions League place in this campaign.

His dismissal on Tuesday followed a 1-1 draw with Nantes in Ligue 1 over the weekend and left many observers baffled. Sage had rapidly become a fans' favorite after guiding Lyon from the bottom of the standings to a sixth-place finish last season.

And after 19 matches this season, Lyon is sixth in the league - just four points off a Champions League spot - and in a good position to qualify for the knockout stage of the Europa League.

Lyon, however, said the decision to part ways with Sage was a "sporting choice." Lyon is owned by American businessman John Textor, who visited the club in person this week.

Textor, a 59-year-old digital media and entertainment entrepreneur, owns several teams, including in Belgium (RWD Molenbeek), and Brazil (Botafogo) as part of his multi-club model that is becoming more common in soccer.

The seven-time French champions added that his firing "does not call into question the tremendous work carried out at the beginning of 2024, for which Olympique Lyonnais will always be grateful to Pierre Sage and his team."

Sage took over as coach at Lyon at the end of November 2023 following the firings in quick succession of two coaches with good reputations, Laurent Blanc and Fabio Grosso. At the time, Lyon was bottom of the league, with just one win from 12 matches.

A former amateur player, Sage spent most of his coaching career in low-profile jobs, including as a youth coach at Lyon. He returned to Lyon

as director of the club's academy after a stint as an assistant at second-division club Red Star. Propelled into the limelight after Grosso's departure, Sage exceeded expectations, also guiding his team to the final of the French Cup last season.

According to French sports daily L'Equipe, Textor has been in regular contact with Paulo Fonseca in recent years and could appoint him as a replacement for Sage. The former Lille coach has been out of a job since he was fired by AC Milan on Dec. 30.

Lyon also has off-the-pitch issues to deal with and is risking relegation to the second tier at the end of the season because of financial irregularities. However, Textor's Eagle Football company has expressed confidence that it can convince French league's soccer watchdog that the club is sound, announcing Tuesday a cash injection of 83 million euros (\$87 million).

Owen ties Big Bash record with 39-ball century to help Hobart Hurricanes win maiden domestic title

HOBART, Australia, Jan 28, (AP): Mitchell Owen hit the co-fastest century in Big Bash League history as he rushed the Hobart Hurri-

canes to their first Australian Twenty20 domestic title.

Owen's 39-ball ton tied Craig Simmons' century on balls from 2014. He had a chance to break it but a boundary fell just short of the rope.

After a shift up the order to opener, the 23-year-old Owen has become one of the brightest Australian prospects in short-form cricket. He raised his bat for a half-century in just the fourth over, powering on with 11 sixes - a BBL final record - and six fours.

"That was next-level hitting that made it pretty easy for us at the end," teammate

Matthew Wade said.

The sellout crowd of 15,706 at Bellerive Oval chanted Owen's name as the run-rate required ticked

down.

"That was super special," Owen said. "The most special thing is hearing everyone in the crowd enjoying

it. And I'm so grateful, I'm so proud that we could bring this trophy to Tassie (Tasmania)."

Midway through his innings, Owen became the BBL's leading run-scorer for the season, overtaking David Warner.

Owen was out for 108 off 44 balls in the 11th over at 139-3. Chasing 183 to win against the Sydney Thunder, Hobart reached 185-3 with 35 balls to spare and won by seven wickets.

Hobart's success in the 14th BBL left the Melbourne Stars as the only side yet to win the title.



The Hobart Hurricanes' Mitchell Owen, right, celebrates making 100 runs against the Sydney Thunder in Hobart. (AP)

Jota joins Celtic from Rennes

Bayern signs young keeper Urbig as possible successor to Neuer

MUNICH, Jan 28, (AP): Bayern Munich is building for the future by snapping up goalkeeper Jonas Urbig from Cologne.

The Bavarian powerhouse announced the transfer, though it had been expected for some time.

The 21-year-old Urbig is considered one of Germany's best young goalkeepers, and his move to Bayern suggests the club believes he could one day replace Manuel Neuer, who is still No. 1 but heading toward the end of his career at 38.

"We're delighted that we've been able to complete another transfer with a view to the future," Bayern sport director Christoph Freund said, referring to Bayern also signing German youth international Tom Bischof last week.

Freund said Urbig is "very ambitious and has huge potential," calling him "a modern goalkeeper who fits in very well with Bayern's style of play in terms of the way he interprets goalkeeping."

That suggests Urbig will be expected to follow Neuer's example of aggressive goalkeeping, emerging from his goal quickly to snuff out danger with clearances, limiting the occasions he'll be called upon to make a save.

Neuer, who can be far from his goal with his team in possession, is sometimes caught out, but more often he gives the team security going forward and the opposition little time to recover from pressure.

Kicker magazine reported Bayern was paying up to 10 million euro including bonuses to Cologne for Urbig. He is expected to compete with the 36-year-old Sven Ulreich and injured Israeli goalkeeper Daniel Peretz for the No. 2 position behind Neuer.

Neuer, who will be 39 in March, has faced scrutiny already this season after he was sent off for the first time in a German Cup loss to Bayer Leverkusen.

On loan at Stuttgart, the 28-year-old Alexander Nübel is another potential successor for Neuer. Urbig's signing means Stuttgart coach Sebastian Hoeneß can likely count on Nübel in goal again next season, too. Nübel extended his Bayern contract last year to 2029.

Urbig, who will compete with Freiburg's Noah Atubolu to be Germany goalkeeper at the Under-21 European Championship in June, started this season in the second division for Cologne, but lost his place to Marvin Schwäbe after the first 10 league games of the season.

Bayern gave Urbig a contract through June 2029.

"I'm proud to be here now and look forward to getting to know my new team as quickly as possible. My goal is to work on myself professionally every day and to keep up my development in our goalkeeping group around Manuel Neuer," Urbig told the club website.

□ □ □

Celtic signed striker Jota on Monday in time for the Champions League knockout phase, bringing him back to Scotland for about one third of the fee it got selling him to Saudi Arabia 18 months ago.

Jota spent one year with Al-Ittihad before an offseason move to Rennes, which has sold the Portuguese forward to Celtic for a reported 10 million euros (\$10.5 million). Celtic got a reported 29 million (\$30.5 million) selling him after his first spell in Glasgow.

In a second deal between Celtic and Rennes on Monday, the French club signed forward Kyogo Furuhashi for a reported 12 million euros (\$12.6 million). Furuhashi's final game for Celtic was



Cologne goalkeeper Jonas Urbig warms up ahead of the Bundesliga 2 soccer match between FC Köln and SV Elversberg, at the RheinEnergieStadion in Cologne, Germany. (AP)



Bayern's goalkeeper Manuel Neuer stretches himself during warm up before the Champions League opening phase soccer match between FC Bayern and Paris Saint Germain, at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. (AP)

in the Champions League last Wednesday, and he had three disallowed goals in the first half of an eventual 1-0 win against Young Boys.

That win sealed Celtic's place in the knockout playoffs round and Jota will be eligible to play when those games start on Feb. 11. He cannot be selected for Celtic's last opening-phase game at Aston Villa on Wednesday. The playoff draw is made on Friday.

Celtic said the 25-year-old Jota signed a deal through June 2030.

Furuhashi averaged one goal every two matches since joining Celtic in 2021 and helped the team win three straight Scottish league titles.

Rennes hopes the 30-year-old Japan international will be just as prolific in its relegation fight, after six straight seasons also playing in European competitions.

Rennes is 16th, the relegation playoff spot, in the 18-team Ligue 1 with just 17 points from 19 matches. Jota scored only once in nine league games.

Furuhashi signed a 2 1/2-year contract and is the third player to join Rennes during the January transfer window. "I hope to make a rapid contribution to the team's performances," Furuhashi said. "The club is not in the position it has been in for the last few seasons, and our objective will be to climb back up the league table. I feel ready to give my all with Rennes."

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Golfers before Tee-off.

Yun Ho Lee scores a ‘Hole-in-One’ at Hankook Golf 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Hankook Golf Tournament was organized last Friday 24th January at the Sahara Golf Club. An important fixture in Kuwait’s Golf Calendar, it has been held each year for the past nineteen years with the exception of pandemic years.

Though early morning there were apprehensions about intermittent rains, thankfully the sky cleared as the day proceeded, and by mid-morning, it was quite pleasant with bright sunshine and a mild, cool breeze, which ensured conducive conditions for a healthy game of golf.

The tee-off commenced at 8 am, and as usual the game was played in the ‘Stableford’ format with ¾ Handicap Allowance. The players were from diverse backgrounds, covering not just Sahara Club members but other golf enthusiasts as well.

The star of the day was Yun Ho Lee, who came with an impressive shot to score a ‘Hole-in-One’. Not only that, he had the distinction of being over-all third as well as winning the prize for Nearest to

Pin. The first prize went to the upcoming local talent Fahad Al Zouman who scored a fabulous 38 points, closely followed by Jing Hoo Kim on 37 points.

Among other winners, the prize for Longest Drive went to Fred Carsten in Men’s category and Mrs. Kwak in the Ladies. The prize for Nearest to Pin in the Ladies’ group was won by Mrs. Raji Lamba. Finally, Karthic Mani scored net 62 points to win the prestigious prize for Best Net.

Prize distribution was organized in the afternoon in the gracious presence of His Excellency Mr.Chong Suk Park, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and Mr. Jeong Seung Ham, Managing Director of Hankook Tires, Middle East & Africa. Speaking on the occasion Mr. Kuldeep Lamba Managing Director AlMailem Group profusely thanked Hankook for their unwavering support over the last so many years. He expressed his satisfaction at the enthusiastic participation from golfers, and also complimented the Sahara-Team for their professional administration of the tournament.



Group photo of winners.

Company contributing to building a new generation of professional Kuwaiti athletes

Zain renews strategic partnership with Rafa Nadal Academy

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: Zain has renewed its strategic partnership with Rafa Nadal Academy Kuwait for the third time, in collaboration with Tamdeen Sports, a subsidiary of Tamdeen Group. The Academy, the first of its kind in the Middle East, marks the global tennis champion Rafael Nadal’s first academy outside Spain.

The partnership agreement was signed at the Academy’s headquar-

ters, located in the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber International Tennis Complex, in the presence of Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally and Tamdeen Sports CEO Mohammad Mustafa Al-Marzouq, alongside executives from both companies.

Zain has proudly supported this renowned international academy as a strategic partner since its inception in 2020. This aligns with the

company’s comprehensive corporate sustainability strategy, which aims to reflect the role of Kuwait’s private sector in fostering sports and actively contributing to developing a new generation of professional Kuwaiti athletes across various sports disciplines, enabling them to represent their nation at prominent local, regional, and international arenas.

Zain remains committed to participating in and supporting major

projects that reflect Kuwait’s strong standing in sports. The company’s efforts embody the wise vision of the country’s leadership in nurturing youth and athletes and advancing the sports movement in line with the highest international standards.

The Rafa Nadal Academy, situated within the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber International Tennis Complex, is the first of its kind in the Middle East and represents Nadal’s first global expansion outside his hometown of Mallorca, Spain. The tennis legend has won 22 Grand Slam titles.

The Academy boasts a wide range of advanced facilities and a team of internationally recognized coaches and trainers who offer group and individual training in fitness, tennis, padel, and squash. It leverages the expertise of the Rafa Nadal Academy in Spain, where the training team works to develop young players and train beginners looking to explore and enjoy tennis.

The Academy embodies the spirit and commitment of Rafael Nadal, renowned for his work ethic, resilience, and sportsmanship. His legacy inspires players to strive for excellence both on and off the court. The Academy’s training methodology, identical to that followed in Spain, is built around five core pillars: tennis training, physical training, mental conditioning, nutrition, and competition.

The Academy features 15 tennis courts, a state-of-the-art fitness center, two squash courts, three in-

door padel courts, a swimming pool, and a boxing ring. The main covered multi-purpose stadium has a seating capacity of over 5,000, while the outdoor secondary court accommodates 1,500 spectators.

All facilities are equipped with the latest global technologies, adhering to the highest standards. The Academy also includes a dedicated members’ lounge offering healthy dining options, sports shops, and proximity to key amenities such as a 5-star hotel, 360 Mall, and a multi-story parking facility for 2,000 vehicles.

Zain believes in the vital role the private sector plays in advancing youth and sports in Kuwait. The company translates this belief into action by sponsoring and supporting numerous major sports projects and events nationwide.

The company also continues to support and encourage a large number of Kuwaiti athletes representing Kuwait in local, regional, and global arenas, celebrating their achievements year after year with pride.



Al-Gharabally and Al-Marzouq with executives from Zain and the Academy.



Nawaf Al-Gharabally and Mohammed Al-Marzouq sign the strategic partnership.

Mandhana caps a perfect year by earning women’s award

Bumrah named ICC test player of year, Afghanistan’s Omarzai wins ODI award

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Jan 28, (AP): Jasprit Bumrah won the ICC men’s test cricketer of the year award on Monday after the Indian fast bowler finished 2024 with a rich haul of 71 wickets in 13 test matches.

Bumrah singlehandedly kept India in contention for the World Test

Championship final until Australia regained the Border Gavaskar Trophy at home this month and set up June’s final against South Africa.

The right-arm quick bowled a staggering 357 overs in the red-ball format and picked up 71 wickets at a phenomenal average of 14.92.

He was only the fourth Indian

bowler to take more than 70 wickets in a calendar year after Ravichandran Ashwin, Anil Kumble and Kapil Dev.

Bumrah made a big impact since he returned to test cricket in late 2023 after a long layoff from a back injury. He finished the year as a leading wicket-taker in test cricket followed

by Gus Atkinson of England with 52 wickets in 11 test matches.

The 31-year-old Bumrah rounded off a perfect year with 32 wickets in five test matches against Australia, a performance that earned him the player of the series award.

Afghanistan’s Azmatullah Omarzai was named ODI player of the year after the all-rounder finished the year by scoring 417 runs and picking up 17 wickets in 14 white-ball games.

The 24-year-old Omarzai finished the year as Afghanistan’s second highest scorer in ODIs behind Rahmanullah Gurbaz and helped his country win four of the five bilateral series in a calendar year that included victories over South Africa and Bangladesh.

Indian left-handed batter Smriti Mandhana capped a perfect year by earning the ICC’s women’s ODI player of the year award as she racked up 747 runs in 13 ODIs. Mandhana’s run tally put her ahead of Laura Wolvaardt (697), Tammy Beaumont (554) and Hayley Matthews (469).

Mandhana also scored a women’s record of four ODI centuries in a calendar year, hitting 95 fours and six sixes.



In this file photo, India’s Jasprit Bumrah appeals successfully for the wicket of Australia’s Marnus Labuschagne during the second day of fifth test between Australia and India. (AP)

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NEWS



President of Kuwait Winter Games Club and head of the delegation Fahaid Al-Ajmi.

Sports

Kuwait ice hockey team wraps up UAE training camp ahead of 9th Asian Winter Games

ABU DHABI, Jan 28, (KUNA): The Kuwait ice hockey team concluded its 12-day training camp in the UAE in preparation for the 9th Asian Winter Games, set to take place in Harbin, China.

The Kuwaiti delegation is set to compete in four disciplines at the Winter Games: hockey, speed skating, figure skating, and curling.

Speaking to KUNA, Fahaid Al-Ajmi, President of the Kuwait Winter Games Club and head of the delegation, emphasized the team's significant progress during the camp. The training included three friendly matches against professional Emirati teams to prepare for their opening game against Kyrgyzstan next Monday.

"The players underwent three daily training sessions to enhance their physical fitness and refine the technical and tactical strategies developed by the coaching staff," Al-Ajmi noted. He highlighted the importance of this camp in fostering team chemistry, especially following the conclusion of the local league.

Al-Ajmi also shared that the other Kuwaiti teams participating in speed skating, figure skating, and curling had successfully wrapped up their training camps in Qatar, Switzerland, and Malaysia, respectively.

He expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee and the Public Authority for Sports, praising their support as a key factor in the club's development and success.



The Kuwait ice hockey team.

KUNA photo

121 horses participate

Ahmed Al-Shalimi Horse Racing Festival achieves remarkable success in 2nd season



Sheikh Sabah Al-Nasser crowns the winners.

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 28: The Secretary-General of the Hunting and Equestrian Club, Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser, praised the resounding success of the Ahmed Al-Shalimi Horse Racing Festival in its second season. The event attracted over 27,000 spectators to the Hunting and Equestrian Club, eager to witness the thrilling competition. The festival featured seven exciting rounds with the participation of 121 horses from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and it was broadcast live on the club's official platforms.

The 13th meeting race was a highlight of the festival, showcasing fierce competition for the prestigious prizes sponsored by Ahmed Al-Shalimi. These included three cars, three plots of land, and significant cash rewards. Sheikh Sabah described the festival as unparalleled in terms of prizes, audience turnout, exceptional organization, and the intensity of competition.

In the races, the following horses claimed victories across the seven rounds: "Shaqran," "Moon Aspect," "Dalham," "Mubaher," "Yaqlat Laha," "Mut-laa Al-Nawamis," and "Al-Ghadi."

On behalf of the Chairman and members of the Supreme Committee for Horse Racing, Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser presented a commemorative shield to festival sponsor Ahmed Al-Shalimi, in recognition of his generous support.

Sheikh Sabah also highlighted the growing enthusiasm for horse racing in Kuwait, noting that more than 300 horses participated in the festival's races. He emphasized the significant public interest, with families and women attending in large numbers to support the participants and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere.

Surging Rockets edge Celtics after knocking off Cavs twice

BOSTON, Jan 28, (AP): Amen Thompson hit a game-winning floater with 0.7 seconds left and finished with 33 points to lead the Houston Rockets to a 114-112 victory over the Boston Celtics on Monday night.

Dillon Brooks shot 10 of 15 from 3-point range and led Houston with 36 points. The Rockets won for the ninth time in 11 games.

Jaylen Brown had 28 points for the Celtics, and Jayson Tatum added 19 after a scoreless first half. Luke Kornet had 18 and Kristaps Porzingis scored 17 to go with eight rebounds.

The Houston Rockets have been one of the NBA's more surprising teams this season. After their past three games, they shouldn't shock anyone.

The Rockets beat the Eastern Conference-leading Cleveland Cavaliers twice last week before traveling to Boston.

Lakers 112, Hornets 107

In Charlotte, Anthony Davis had 42 points and 23 rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers used a huge first quarter from the All-Star center to build a 23-point lead before beating the Charlotte Hornets for their fourth straight win.

Lakers top Hornets for 4th straight win

LeBron James had 22 points and Austin Reaves chipped in 17 for the Lakers, who never trailed.

Miles Bridges had 26 points for the Hornets, who lost LaMelo Ball in the second quarter to a left ankle injury after he stepped on Jarred Vanderbilt's foot as he backpedaled down the court after draining a 3-point jumper off one foot.

Davis scored 21 points in the first

quarter on 9-of-12 shooting to go along with 11 rebounds as the Lakers bolted to a 39-19 lead.

Cavaliers 110, Pistons 91

In Cleveland, Darius Garland scored 22 points, Donovan Mitchell added 21 and Cleveland snapped a season-high, three-game losing streak with a win over Detroit.

Cleveland, which has led the East-

ern Conference from the start, ended its mini slump with an 11th straight win over Detroit. The Cavs are 22-3 at home.

Kings 110, Nets 96

In New York, Domantas Sabonis had 21 points, 22 rebounds and 10 assists in his seventh triple-double of the season, De'Aaron Fox scored 30 points and Sacramento beat Brooklyn.

DeMar DeRozan added 17 points and Malik Monk finished with 16 for the Kings, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

Sacramento trailed by seven points at halftime and outscored the Nets 33-24 in the third quarter to take an 80-78 lead heading into the fourth.

Heat 125, Magic 119, 2OT

In Miami, Tyler Herro scored 30 points, Bam Adebayo finished with 26 and Miami Heat erased a 14-point deficit in the fourth quarter before beating Orlando in double overtime.

Adebayo had 10 rebounds and nine assists, Herro had 12 assists and eight rebounds, and Kel'el Ware finished with 19 points and 10 rebounds for Miami - which played hours after Jimmy Butler was suspended yet again.

Miami improved to 10-10 without Butler this season. The Heat are 13-12 when he plays.



Toronto Raptors guard Jamal Sheard (23) battles with New Orleans Pelicans guard Dejounte Murray (left) for control of the ball during second-half NBA basketball game action in Toronto. (AP)

Mutual consent

Neymar and Al-Hilal part ways

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 28, (AP): Saudi Arabia club Al-Hilal said Monday it reached an agreement with striker Neymar to terminate his contract by mutual consent.

Neither side confirmed details of the termination after the 32-year-old Brazilian, once hailed as one of the world's best players, played only seven matches for the club, with only one goal and two assists.

Despite being sidelined since October 2023 due to an ACL injury, former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain star Neymar was part of the squad that won last season's Saudi league.

Their deal was due to expire after Al-Hilal participated in this year's FIFA Club World Cup, which will be played between June 15 and July 13 in the United States.

The club said in a statement published on its social media channels that it "expresses its thanks and appreciation to Neymar for what he has provided throughout his career with Al-Hilal."

The striker joined the Saudi club from Paris Saint-Germain in August 2023 for 90 million euros (\$94 million), in one of many transactions that placed the Arab country as one of the new big soccer markets in the world. But Neymar picked up his ACL injury, the most serious of his career, playing for Brazil only months after he joined Al-Hilal.

Neymar returned in October and had his most recent appearance for the Saudi club in November. The Brazilian said in different interviews there were doubts about whether



In this file photo, Al Hilal's Neymar shoots the ball during warm up for the AFC Champions League soccer match against Iran's Nassaji at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran, Iran. (AP)

coach Jorge Jesus would count on him for the rest of the season.

Day Crespo, a spokeswoman for Neymar in Brazil, told The Associated Press that the player will comment on his future at a later date. Local media reported that the footballer was still waiting for documents of the termination before he announced his departure.

Brazilian media has also reported that Neymar and his father are interested in a six-month return to his boyhood club Santos, where he achieved national fame and his first caps for Brazil before he joined Barcelona in 2013.