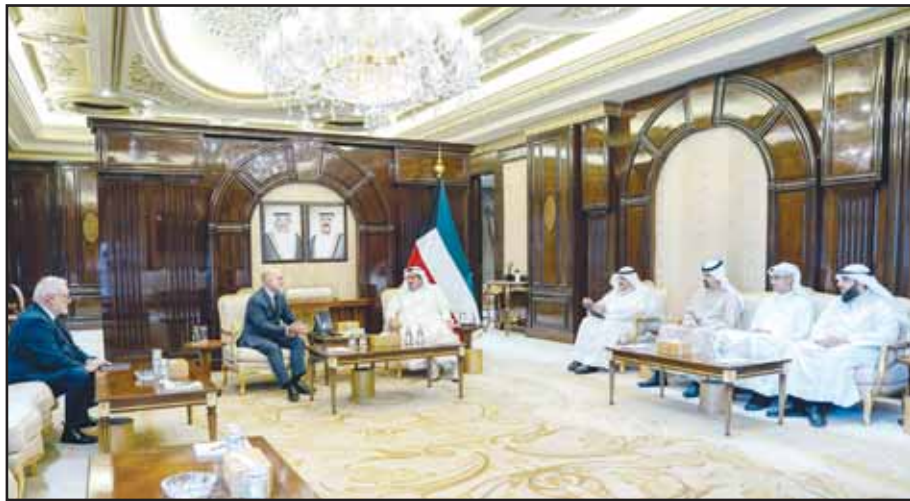




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Kuwait to enhance health sector quality



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives CEO of Gustave Roussy Hospital Professor Fabrice Barlesi and the CEO's international advisor Remi Thiolet on their visit to the country.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace, in attendance of Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, CEO of Gustave Roussy Hospital Professor Fabrice Barlesi and the CEO's international advisor Remi Thiolet on occasion of official visit to the country.

His Highness the Prime Minister affirmed on Tuesday keenness to strengthen partnership

with Gustave Roussy Hospital and to bring in leading international medical centers to provide the most advanced diagnostic and therapeutic protocols, in order to serve patients and enhance the quality of healthcare services in the country.

Also in attendance were Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Sabah and Managing Director of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) Sheikh Saud Salem Al-Sabah.

Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Your Excellency Minister of Commerce, go easy on the industrialists

NO ONE disputes the state's right to collect its dues, nor the right of ministries, including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, to perform their responsibilities in this regard.

However, this should not prevent facilitating matters for the public, particularly owners of industrial plots and others who have suffered significant losses in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent regional events that have negatively impacted all aspects of life.

Furthermore, widespread corruption in state institutions harmed commercial, service, and industrial activities. Arbitrary decisions and personal interests in dealing with industrial project owners have contributed to a decline in all activities, prompting many plot owners to delay fulfilling their obligations to the state.

Kuwait has the potential to be competitive in industry and other sectors, but several constraints worsen the challenges. These include bureaucratic procedures, lengthy paperwork, limited availability of industrial plots, weak government support, and recent decisions to withdraw plots from beneficiaries.

These obstacles increase industrial costs and, in turn, place greater pressure on the state.

Unlike other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Kuwait cur-

rently lacks sufficient incentives for investors. For example, Saudi Arabia offers a range of programs to support industrial growth, including financial subsidies, streamlined licensing processes, and extended payment periods.

The United Arab Emirates has supported its industrial sector by providing incentives through the "Operation 300 Billion" strategy, aiming to boost its contribution to GDP. Oman provides a wide range of incentives to attract industrial investments, while Bahrain and Qatar offer similar support.

These countries strive to enhance competitiveness, promote sustainable economic growth, and create job opportunities for citizens.

This approach in neighboring Gulf countries contrasts sharply with the situation in Kuwait, where decisions hinder development. As a result, commercial and industrial activity in Kuwait has been negatively impacted, leading to a decline in overall consumer spending.

Continued on Page 5

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KUNA photo
Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah and UAE military personnel visit the Dubai Airshow 2025.

Kuwait-UAE military bonds strong; mutual exchange of expertise eyed

DUBAI, Nov 18, (KUNA): UAE National Guard Commander Major Gen. Saleh Al-Ameri met on Tuesday in Dubai with Kuwait National Guard Commander of Military and Security Affairs Brigadier-General Abdullah Saleh Abdullah to discuss ways to enhance cooperation.

The meeting also discussed coordinating efforts and exchanging expertise between the two sides, said the Kuwaiti National Guard in a statement to KUNA.

The visit by the Kuwaiti delegation to the UAE comes to participate in the Dubai Airshow 2025, which began on Monday, to explore the latest developments in civil and military aviation.

Dubai Airshow exhibition hosts more than 1,500 exhibitors, 148,000 visitors, and 490 military and civilian delegations from 115 countries, and continues until November 21.

Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah underlined Monday the depth and strength Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates military relations.

Sheikh Dr. Abdullah made this remark during his participation in the opening ceremony of the 19th Dubai Airshow, according to a press statement by the Ministry of Defense.

Continued on Page 5

Amiri Diwan minister, Crown Prince Diwan chief meet envoys



Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receive EU Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen.



Amiri Diwan photos
Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receive Italian Ambassador to Kuwait Lorenzo Morini.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday ambassadors of Tajikistan, Oman, EU, and Italy. During their meeting with Tajikistan's Ambassador and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps to Kuwait, Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov, they reviewed bilateral relations and ways to further develop them in all fields, especially in commerce and economic aspects.

During their meeting with the Omani Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr. Saleh Al-Kharousi, they underscored the strong historic ties between Ku-

wait and Oman and the shared commitment to expand cooperation for the benefit of both countries and their peoples.

During their meeting with the Ambassador of the European Union to Kuwait, Anne Koistinen, they reaffirmed the strong Kuwait-EU partnership and the commitment to expanding cooperation and dialogue, while discussing regional and international developments of mutual concern.

During their meeting with the Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, Lorenzo Morini, they reaffirmed the strong bilateral relations and the mutual keenness to expand cooperation in various fields for common benefit.

Kuwait visit milestone in budding partnership

Time-tested friends in perilous times: PM Chinh



Photo by Samer Shaqair
The Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh is presented a memento during his visit to the Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute.



PM Diwan photo
The Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh and his spouse leave Kuwait after an official visit

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh said the strategic partnership between Vietnam and Kuwait should not end with the signing of documents and statements, while affirming that his visit is an important milestone in the growing partnership between the two countries.

tween the two countries.

Chinh and his accompanying delegation departed Kuwait on Tuesday after a three-day official visit. Advisor at the Prime Minister's Office Sheikh Dr. Basel Al-Sabah headed the send off party at Kuwait International Airport, including Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Jawhar Hayat, and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Vietnam Yousef Al-Sabbagh.

Continued on Page 5

Filipinos send home \$453m in 1st 9 months of year '25

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Filipino workers in Kuwait sent home \$453 million in remittances during the first nine months of 2025, marking a 4.7 percent increase compared to \$432.6 million in the same period last year, according to official data from the Central Bank of the Philippines via "Mubasher Info", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Overall, remittances from Filipino workers in all six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries rose 6.03 percent year-on-year, reaching \$4.50 billion in the first nine months of 2025, representing 96.67 percent of total remittances from Filipino workers in the Middle East, which amounted to \$4.66 billion.

Remittances from the Gulf also accounted for 42.92 percent of the total remittances sent by Filipino workers from Asia during this period, which totaled \$10.49 billion.

According to official statistics, Filipino workers worldwide sent a total of \$26.03 billion in remittances between January and September 2025, marking an increase from \$25.23 billion during the same period in 2024. Of this total, 17.3 percent originated from GCC countries.

Among the GCC nations, the United Arab Emirates recorded the highest annual growth rate at 8.09 percent, while Oman reported the lowest at 1.85 percent. Saudi Arabia received the largest share of remittances at around \$1.66 billion, followed by the UAE with \$1.16 billion. Bahrain accounted for the lowest remittances at \$201.2 million during the first nine months of the year.

Mol busts racket selling visas for money, human trafficking

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (Agencies): The Ministry of Interior announced Tuesday the arrest of a domestic labor recruitment office in Rumaithiya involved in human trafficking and facilitating visa issuance for financial gain.

According to a ministry statement, the office recruited domestic workers and then transferred them to other individuals for fees ranging between KD 1,200 - KD 1,300 per worker, well above the official rates.

Some citizens involved also received KD 50 - KD 100 per worker for facilitating the visa process.

All individuals implicated in the case have been referred to the competent authorities for legal action.

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PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the meeting.

Cabinet OK's draft decree-law regulating e-commerce sector

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet held its weekly meeting on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at Bayan Palace under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Following the meeting, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for

Cabinet Affairs Shuraidah Abdullah Al-Muwaisharji provided details of the discussions.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmad briefed the Cabinet on the outcomes of his official talks yesterday with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and

Continued on Page 5



9 National Bank of Kuwait & Kuwait Finance House co-lead a landmark KD 1.5 bln syndicated facility for KPC

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:51	Asr	14:32
Sunrise ..	06:14	Maghrib ..	16:52
Zohr	11:33	Isha	18:12

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h.
By Night: Rather cold with light to moderate freshening at times

Weather			
over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	28	20	
Kuwait Airport	28	20	

Abdaly	29	14
Babyan	24	14
Jahra	28	19
Failaka Island	25	17
Salmiyah	26	21
Ahmadi	32	18
Nuwaisib	30	21



Left: Vietnam Prime Minister with Tariq Sulaiman Al-Roumi. Center: Vietnam Prime Minister with Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah. Right: Vietnam Prime Minister with Sheikh Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah.

Vietnam PM hosts Kuwaiti oil and finance officials

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: His Excellency the Prime Minister of the friendly Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Pham Minh Chinh, received today the Minister of Oil, Tariq Sulaiman Al-Roumi.

His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam also

received the Vice Chairman of the Board and CEO of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah.

His Excellency also received Sheikh Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, a member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Investment Authority.

Kuwait showcases oil refinery to Vietnamese Prime Minister

PM's spouse visits Al-Salam Palace Museum

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): Visiting Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh on Monday toured Al-Zour Oil Refinery, where he met with CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Wadha Ahmad Al-Khateeb.

During his tour of the oil facility, he listened to an explanation from KNPC officials about the refinery's oil derivatives and role in providing local power plants with their clean fuel needs, along with applicable environmental criteria and requirements.

The Vietnamese prime minister was accompanied by Advisor at His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan and Chief of the Accompanying Mission

of Honor Sheikh Dr. Basel Humoud Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti Ambassador in Vietnam Yousuf Al-Sabbah.

The spouse of the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Le Thi Bich Tran, and her accompanying delegation visited Al-Salam Palace Museum on Tuesday, accompanied by Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila.

She was received upon arrival by the wife of His Highness the Prime Minister, Mrs. Mona Al-Kulaib, and the

General Supervisor of the museum, Sheikhha Mona Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

The tour included various sections of the museum and its historical artifacts and documents that highlight important aspects of the history of the State of Kuwait, in addition to its main wings: the Museum of the History of Kuwait through its rulers, the Museum of the History of Al-Salam Palace, and the Museum of the History of Civilizations that settled in Kuwait.



His Excellency the Prime Minister of the friendly Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Pham Minh Chinh, with the CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company, Wadha Ahmed Al-Khatib in group photo with Al-Zour Refinery employees.



Prime Minister Diwan photos: His Excellency the Prime Minister of the friendly Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Pham Minh Chinh, visited Al-Zour Refinery, where he met with the CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company, Wadha Ahmed Al-Khatib.



KUNA photo: Spouse of the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam during her visit to Al-Salam Palace Museum, accompanied by Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila, Minister of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs.

Belgian Embassy celebrates National Day

Belgium honors Kuwait's peace efforts

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms lauded the unwavering support of Kuwait for peace and dialogue, as well as its generous humanitarian aid worldwide, stressing that "Kuwait possesses a quiet, yet wise ability to engage with other countries and support peace and dialogue."

Dooms made the statement at a celebration organized by the Embassy of Belgium on the occasion of their National Day, with Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi, and a number of heads of diplomatic missions and international organizations in attendance.

He said "the Kingdom of Belgium and Kuwait have been enjoying strong relations since the independence of Kuwait, such that Belgium participated in the international coalition to liberate Kuwait from its invaders. I am particularly proud to mention the outstanding contribution of the Belgian Navy to mine-clearing operations. The last Belgian ships left



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq: Belgian Ambassador Christian Dooms with Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Sadiq Marafi during the cake-cutting ceremony.

the Gulf on July 14, 1991. Our fleet of mine-sweepers discovered and destroyed 280 mines.

It was a remarkable achievement."

He pointed out that Belgium is renowned as a leader in advanced technology, innovation, artificial intelligence, higher education, research, pharmaceutical and chemical production, wind energy, hydrogen, and creative industries -- from film to fashion.

He added that the trade volume between the two countries is approximately 925 million, and he believes there is still room to increase this figure.

While unveiling his intention to promote successful Belgian companies, he put the spotlight on the strong Kuwaiti economic presence in Belgium, citing the presence of more than 500 petrol stations operated by Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8). He also pointed out the significant involvement of Q8 in the petrochemical sector in the port of Antwerp.

He said "I intend to strengthen people-to-people ties and trade flows between Belgium and Kuwait. To succeed in this endeavor, I must overcome a big obstacle -- the lack of direct flights between Brussels and Kuwait. I will continue to work on this crucial issue."

Crown Prince, PM send wishes

Amir congratulates Morocco, Latvia on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, sent a cable of congratulations to the King of Morocco, King Mohammad VI, on the occasion of his country's 70th Independence Day anniversary.

In the cable, His Highness expressed pride in the deep-rooted bilateral relations between Kuwait and Morocco, as well as in the remarkable achievements accomplished by the Kingdom.

He wished King Mohammad VI good health and well-being, and wished Morocco and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, also sent a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Latvia, Edgars Rinkevics, on his country's Independence Day.

In the cable, His Highness wished President Rinkevics good health and well-being, and wished Latvia and its people continued progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince,

Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, sent a cable of congratulations to King Mohammad VI on Morocco's 70th Independence Day anniversary.

In the cable, His Highness wished the King good health and well-being, and wished Morocco and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, also sent a cable of congratulations to President Edgars Rinkevics on Latvia's Independence Day.

He wished the President good health and well-being, and wished Latvia continued progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, sent cables of congratulations to both King Mohammad VI of Morocco on the 70th Independence Day anniversary, and to President Edgars Rinkevics of the Republic of Latvia on the occasion of his country's Independence Day.

Other Voices

End workplace bullying

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

Workplace bullying is something many people experience but few talk about. It can happen in any office, company, or team. It is not always loud or obvious. Sometimes it begins with small actions that slowly become part of someone's daily life at work. When this happens, it can make a person feel stressed, anxious, and even afraid to go to their job.



Al-Hajeri

Bullying does not always look like shouting or insults. It can be much quieter. It can be when someone is left out on purpose, ignored in meetings, or treated as if their ideas do not matter. It can also be when a manager uses their position to make someone feel small or powerless. Even constant jokes aimed at one person can become a form of bullying when they are meant to embarrass or hurt them.

The problem with workplace bullying is that it does not stay at work. It follows people home.

It affects their sleep, their confidence, and their relationships. Many people stay quiet because they fear losing their job or being labeled as "too sensitive." Others believe that nothing will change even if they speak up. Because of

this, the problem can continue for months or years.

Creating a healthy workplace begins with awareness. Every person in a team must understand what bullying looks like. This includes managers, who should lead by example. A respectful atmosphere does not happen by accident. It requires effort, communication, and clear boundaries. When people know that kindness and fairness are expected, bullying has less space to grow.

It also helps when employees feel safe to speak about their concerns. A supportive environment encourages people to come forward when something feels wrong. Listening without judgement is the first step toward solving the issue. Sometimes a simple conversation can clear misunderstandings. Other times, it may require stronger action from senior staff or human resources.

Workplace bullying is not a small matter. It affects productivity, morale, and the overall spirit of a team. A workplace where people feel valued will always perform better than one where fear and tension exist. Respect is not a luxury. It is the foundation that allows people to grow, share ideas, and work with confidence.

In the end, everyone deserves a workplace where they feel safe, heard, and respected. Standing against bullying is not only the right thing to do. It is the only way to build a workplace that truly supports the people who keep it running every day.

48th Kuwait Book Fair opens with Oman as guest of honor

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, received Tuesday Oman's Minister of Information Dr. Abdullah Al-Harrasi, upon his arrival in Kuwait to attend the opening of the 48th Kuwait International Book Fair, held under the patronage of His Highness the Prime

Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In a statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the meeting, Al-Mutairi affirmed how honored Kuwait is to have Oman as the guest of honor for this edition, in recognition of its profound cultural heritage and rich history, and its distinguished historical ties with Kuwait.



Minister of Information receives Oman's Minister of Information.

Kuwait champions women with disabilities in development goals

CAIRO, Nov 18, (KUNA): Director General of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs Dr. Dalal Al-Othman emphasized Kuwait's keenness on achieving sustainable development goals that empower the status of women in society, applying principles of justice and equality, Monday.

This came in a speech by Dr. Al-Othman before the Fifth Regional Conference of the Arab Forum of Women with Disabilities (AFOWD).

She pointed out that providing women with disabilities economic empower-

ment, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities in education and work, as well as social inclusion empowers them to become capable of being leaders and partners in production, and is the key to independence and active participation.

Al-Othman added that Kuwait has been keen to ensure the integration of women into the labor market within the government's work program, and has allocated an indicator to measure women's participation in the labor market as part of its development priorities.

Kuwait, Oman relations based on true affection, noble stances

“IN A world where faces and trends change rapidly, some nations remain steadfast in their values, like a mountain rooted since the dawn of creation. When we speak of the Sultanate of Oman, we refer to a nation that has never sought attention through noise, but has earned respect through its calm and undeniable authenticity,” Kuwaiti writer **Sheikha Hessa Al-Hamoud Al-Salem Al-Sabah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“Oman has combined a civilization rich in history with a balanced present and a future shaped with deliberate, thoughtful steps. On Oman’s National Day, the nation stands as a new page being turned, reminding its people that steadfastness in values is the highest form of nobility. National Day arrives to commemorate a long journey of building and development. Despite changing circumstances in the region, Oman has maintained its calm and wise approach, creating civilizational stability and becoming a model of responsible engagement with the world.

“One cannot speak of the Omani Renaissance without mentioning the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said (May God have mercy on him), who founded the modern state and left a profound mark on the hearts of his people. Sultan Qaboos bin Said led a balanced renaissance, staying close to the people and deeply attuned to the nation’s needs. Today, Sultan Haitham bin Tariq continues this journey with a spirit of development and renewal, while preserving the wise approach that has always defined the Sultanate.

“The administrative and economic reforms reflect a serious desire to enhance state efficiency and open new horizons. When we speak of the Sultanate of Oman, we also speak of places that embody its history and beauty. Forts and castles such as Nizwa Fort, Bahla Fort, Jabrin Fort, and Muttrah Fort stand proudly, bearing witness to the passage of time and the richness of civilizations, like pages from an open book of a long history.

“Among the mountains and valleys, visitors encounter the grandeur of Jebel Shams and the serenity of Jebel Akhdar. Between the valleys of Shab and Bani Khalid, one can breathe in the magic of untouched Omani nature. Along the coasts, the waters of Ras al-Hadd, Ras al-Jinz, and Sur



Sheikha Hessa

carry the whispers of the sea and the memories of generations of fishermen.

“Cities like Muscat, Salalah, and Sohar offer a complete picture, blending ancient civilization with the calm of daily life. Every corner tells the story of a nation that preserves both its history and its natural beauty. As a Kuwaiti citizen, on this cherished occasion, I wish to highlight the depth of Kuwaiti-Omani relations, which are founded not on fleeting interests, but on steadfastness and mutual respect.

“Kuwait’s relationship with Oman is built on true affection and the noble stances recorded in history between the two countries, making it a model of Gulf unity that we proudly celebrate. The closeness between our two peoples reinforces the conviction that Oman is not just a sister nation, but a land dear to our hearts, sharing with us a common spirit and deeply rooted values. On this national occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Oman, its leadership, and its people, wishing them continued stability and prosperity.

“Oman has confidently charted its path, drawing on its past to build the present and move toward a brighter future. Each time Oman’s National Day is celebrated, our deep respect for this nation, which combines wisdom with tranquility, is renewed in the hearts of Kuwaitis. I pray to Almightly that the bonds of love between Kuwait and Oman remain as firm as their mountains, castles, and towering fortresses.”

Also:

“A person feels comfortable when he lives well and is comfortable in his private life and relationships with others,” columnist **Dr. Khalid Al-Janfawi** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“Priority refers to what takes precedence in a person’s life, particularly the importance of living in a moderate and self-fulfilling way. Among the factors I believe contribute to personal well-being in today’s turbulent world are the following:

- Inner harmony: Inner harmony is achieved when a person is psychologically mature, his emotions are balanced, and all aspects of his personality are in alignment. It also requires the ability to control oneself and balance personal motivations with rational thinking. When the inner self is balanced, the outer self follows, making personal well-being easier to achieve.
- Harmony or separation: The relationships of a psychologically and intellectually balanced person with others

are guided by the principle of either harmony or separation. Either the other person contributes positively to the individual’s life, or the relationship ends.

A wise person should never feel obligated to maintain a relationship with someone who has a narcissistic or destructive personality, even if there is a family connection. The door is always open to step away.

- Psychological and physical health: A conscious person’s top priority is caring for their own psychological and physical health. This includes managing stress in a healthy way, eating nutritious food, and taking time to rest and recharge from the demands of daily life.
- Not participating in others’ battles: A wise person avoids getting involved in conflicts, disputes, or struggles that do not concern them.
- They must be careful not to present themselves or their abilities as tools for narcissistic conflicts, nor to become a means for others to achieve personal goals at their own expense. Personal well-being is maintained by remaining completely neutral in such matters.
- Rejecting blind subservience: A wise person refuses to be subservient to another individual who is equal to them in rights, duties, and moral responsibilities.
- One of the most damaging forms of subservience is blind obedience, particularly to those with charisma or influence, climbers, manipulators, and those seeking power at the expense of the public.
- How, then, can a self-respecting person compromise their innate psychological and intellectual freedom to serve a narcissist’s well-being at their own expense?”

□ □ □

“In the late 1950s, Kuwait experienced a shocking murder that was unprecedented in the country. The crime was committed by a Gulf Arab resident, influenced by the victim’s wife, with whom he had a secret relationship. Together, they dismembered the body, put different parts in a number of bags and threw them into garbage containers,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

“In the early 1960s, another tragic incident occurred when a young man with mental health challenges attacked and murdered his elderly mother. During that era, crimes in Kuwait were extremely rare. For example, shopkeepers in the popular Bin Daieej market would cover their goods with just a cloth, go home for lunch and a nap, and return to their shops in the

evening, with everything remaining in place.

“We witnessed a similar peaceful scene in other markets like Al-Ghurabli and Al-Wajef, where crimes and thefts were virtually unheard of. Kuwait was a country where poverty and begging were rare. However, in recent years, especially after the Iraqi invasion and liberation, and with shifts in social culture, crime rates have increased, including cases of murder, robbery, kidnapping, and sexual assault. Many link this rise to the spread of drug use and other harmful behaviors.

“Drug users and dealers are often involved in violent crimes, including assaults and murders within families. This is reflected in recent tragic cases, such as a son murdering his father. Recently, a list ranking countries by their lowest crime rates was published, and Kuwait was among the safest nations. But can we truly claim to be an angelic society where everything is perfect, and the country is completely safe and secure? I hope the police will provide transparency about both the reported and unreported causes and statistics of crimes.



Hassan Ali Karam

“As citizens, we are often unaware of the reasons behind crimes or the identities of the perpetrators. Yet, the country has witnessed some truly horrific crimes. Crime is no longer solely a male domain, as women have increasingly taken on leading roles in criminal acts. They are mothers and citizens; so why do we continue to ignore this harsh reality? When a woman kills her husband with a hammer, or a mother, along with her lover, murders her disabled child, or another sets fire to a wedding tent, these are far from ordinary crimes.

“Yes, there are young people who use drugs, and those who promote and traffic in drugs and alcohol, whether locally produced or smuggled. There are also fraudsters and others engaged in illicit activities. Are we deceiving ourselves by claiming to be a safe and secure country? While crime rates may not be as high as in countries notorious for violence, we must acknowledge the problem honestly and work toward solutions instead of burying our heads in the sand.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



The western expat, on tourist visa, in police custody.

‘Tourist visa’ expat held for vandalizing vehicles

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The Security Directorate Affairs Sector, represented by the Hawally Security Directorate, apprehended a man who was seen in a video circulating on social media damaging several parked vehicles in Salmiya, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

According to a press statement issued on Monday by the Ministry of Interior, a support team was dispatched to the location after monitoring the video and receiving a report.

Authorities found the man in an abnormal condition, carrying an iron bar, and having smashed the windows of seven vehicles.

Security personnel subdued and detained the man by force due to his aggressive behavior and transferred him to Salmiya Police Station for legal procedures.

Vehicle owners have been instructed to visit the station to complete the necessary formalities.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed its commitment to acting quickly and decisively against anyone who damages public or private property, ensuring the safety and security of the community, citizens, and residents.

Meanwhile, *Al-Rai* daily reported that the arrested individual is a Canadian citizen who entered Kuwait on a tourist visa.

KFF shuts down around 70 shops in ‘Mubarakiya’

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) conducted a campaign at Al-Mubarakiya Market on Monday evening under the supervision of the Prevention Director of the Capital Governorate Brigadier General Mohammed Yousef Ahmed, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

In an official statement, KFF revealed that the campaign resulted in the administrative closure of 70 establishments and shops, along with the issuance of several notices and warnings for violations of safety regulations and requirements.

Prior to the campaign, KFF, led by Deputy Chief of Civil Protection Brigadier General Omar Abdulaziz Hamad, conducted an inspection tour of the market in the morning.

In a post on its X account, KFF affirmed that the tour was aimed at identifying locations for KFF vehicles and developing a plan to protect market visitors and ensure their safety.

Draw cheats to stay in custody

Doctor escapes jail-term

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The Criminal Court on Monday rejected the request to release the defendants detained in connection with the bribery, money laundering and forgery in commercial draws, while it granted the request of the defense team to postpone the hearing until Dec 8 to present the closing arguments.

The case involves complex charges related to receiving bribes, committing money laundering, and forging documents related to commercial draws. It has garnered significant attention due to the scale of the incidents and the number of individuals involved.

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Doctor escapes ... : Following an appeal filed by Lawyer Sarah Al-Jassem Al-Qenaei on behalf of a doctor, the Court of Appeals overturned the six-month prison sentence issued by a lower court against her client on charges of alleged medical malpractice, and instead imposed a fine of KD 75. The court also dismissed the Public Prosecution’s appeal, which had sought a harsher penalty.

Lawyer Al-Qenaei explained that the elements of medical liability justifying imprisonment were not present. Investigations did not show gross negligence or serious professional misconduct that could have caused direct harm to the patient. The incident was a professional error within the scope of normal medical practice.



National Guard personnel deployed at the clinic.

National Guard begins evening clinics for officers and families

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: In the presence of senior National Guard commanders, Under-secretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas inaugurated the evening clinics at Al-Tahrir Camp to serve retired officers, active-duty National Guard officers, and their immediate family members, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

In an official statement issued by the National Guard, Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas explained that this initiative was launched under the direction of the Head of the National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Ham-

She stressed that the ruling is in line with established principles in medical malpractice cases, which distinguish between gross negligence warranting punishment, and ordinary negligence, where no significant harm is proven. Lawyer Al-Qenaei warned that excessive criminalization or overly strict measures could negatively impact the health sector and create an uncomfortable work environment for doctors.

□ □ □

Couple acquitted: The Criminal Court acquitted a man and a young woman of possessing psychotropic substances with intent to use, based on the testimony of a security officer. A first sergeant from the Ministry of Interior was conducting a security patrol in the area when he noticed a vehicle stopped at a roundabout, apparently damaged from hitting the curb.

Upon approaching the vehicle, he found that the driver, the first defendant, was behaving abnormally and speaking with slurred speech.

The officer noticed a bottle next to the first defendant containing a suspicious substance, which the defendant admitted was an intoxicant. A search of the vehicle revealed a large bottle suspected to contain an intoxicant under the front seat.

During the search, the officer was surprised to find a young woman asleep in the back seat, appearing to be under the influence of drugs. The defendants were then referred to the Public Prosecution.

The defense counsel of the young woman, Lawyer Bashar Al-Nassar, argued that the arrest and search were unlawful, stating that the mere presence of his client asleep in the back seat, or the claim that she was under the influence, did not constitute a case of flagrante delicto justifying the officer’s arrest and search. Consequently, all subsequent procedures were nullified.



Municipality personnel removing tents set up illegally without permits.

Municipality uproots 33 tents, impounds 22 illegal food vans

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Inspection teams from Kuwait Municipality recently removed 33 camps set up in unauthorized areas, issued 60 removal warnings and impounded 22 unlicensed food trucks , reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

The public sanitation teams at the Jahra Governorate branch, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Environment Public Authority (EPA) and Kuwait Fire Force

(KFF) removed the camps as they were set up without permits or outside the designated camping areas.

The Public Relations Department at the Municipality confirmed that the municipal teams will continue their work at the camping sites to ensure compliance with regulations, and take the necessary measures to enforce the relevant decisions and bylaws.

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Capital Governorate photo
The Capital Governor launches the national initiative during a meeting held at the Capital Governorate headquarters.

Capital Governorate set to launch ‘Capital of Opportunities’ initiative

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The Capital Governorate will launch the national initiative “Capital of Opportunities” on Thursday at Shaheed Park (2) in the presence of the Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al Ali, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The announcement was made during a meeting held recently at the Capital Governorate headquarters, in the presence of representatives of government agencies and the private sector participating in the initiative. During the meet-

ing, they reviewed the initiative’s program, its various events and activities, and discussed coordination and follow-up mechanisms among the participating entities, reflecting the capital’s role as a hub for innovation and opportunity.

They emphasized that the national initiative aligns with the directives of the political leadership to enhance the investment environment, empower national talent in entrepreneurship, and support small businesses, thereby strengthening the capital’s position.

Minister Al-Huwailah appoints 5 Directors General

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah issued decrees appointing five Directors General, based on the new organizational structure of the ministry, which reorganized sectors and defined responsibilities to improve performance and raise the level of governance and transparency.

In a press statement on Monday, Al-Huwailah revealed that these appointments are considered a crucial step in the development of the ministry. She said the current phase necessitates aligning leadership positions with the restructured organization and selecting individuals capable of leading the administrative transformation and imple-

menting strategic plans.

She indicated that the selection process was based on rigorous professional criteria that considered experience, career path, and the ability to manage critical files and drive development. She affirmed that these appointments mark the beginning of a more integrated phase in the work of the ministry, within an updated organizational structure aimed at developing the performance of various sectors and improving services provided to the public, in line with the vi-



Dr. Al-Huwailah

sion and future plans of the ministry.

Iman Al-Anzi was appointed Director General of the Social Development General Department with the authority to assume the duties of Assistant Undersecretary for Social Welfare and Development, Dr. Sayed Issa Mahmoud as Director General of the Planning and Administrative Development General Department in the Financial and Administrative Affairs and Cooperative Sector with the authority to assume the duties of Assistant Undersecretary for the sector, Faisal Al-Kandari as Director General of the Financial and Administrative Affairs General Department, Nadia Al-Azmi as Director General of the Social Welfare General Department, and Athari Al-Matrouk as Director General of the Cooperative Affairs General Department.



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Capital Committee OK’s utility expansion for Al-Shaheed Park

Committee retains review of Sharq parking project

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The Capital Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Dr. Hassan Kamal, held its meeting on Monday, during which

it approved the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy to expand the main transformer station in Soor Gardens (Green Belt) to serve Al-Shaheed Park.

The committee also approved the request of the Kuwait Municipality to transfer own-

ership of plot number 12 in Qibla from the Ministry of Finance (State Property Administration) to the Municipality.

The committee retained on its agenda the request to reconsider and amend the decision of the council to approve the addition of an extra floor to the multi-storey parking project and the landscaping of adjacent State-owned squares in Block Seven, Sharq.

New runway under review after fog

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The recent diversion of flights arriving at Kuwait International Airport to neighboring countries due to dense fog triggered questions regarding the specifications of the new runway, which was inaugurated only two days prior to the incident, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The design contract states that the runway is capable of accommodating aircraft when visibility is as low as 50 meters, while during the incident, visibility fell below 100 meters, according to a statement issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The contract of DGCA with a Canadian company—valued at KD3 million and signed in March 2021—for the design, development, training

and maintenance of the third runway, included an agreement for supplying CAT IIIB navigation systems to Kuwait International Airport. This category is also used at Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports to lessen the impact of weather conditions on air traffic and the financial losses that may affect the State, companies and passengers.

It is important to note that this category is among the highest precision levels for airport approach and landing systems. It enables aircraft to land in extremely low visibility, relying almost entirely on instrument landing technology. Runway visibility ranges from 50 meters to under 200 meters, and in certain cases, landings are allowed even when visibility drops to between 40 and 50 meters, provided the lighting systems are of high quality.

Call Center staff complete training

CAPT approves KD87.28m Subiya power plant maintenance tender

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved awarding the tender for providing highly efficient and continuous engineering services for the open-cycle gas turbines (Phase Two) at Subiya power and water desalination plant to the lowest bidder, for a total amount of KD87.28 million.

This decision was made at the request of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

This followed CAPT’s review of the Ministry of Finance’s letter containing the financial allocation for the tender, which the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy submitted with its request to award the contract to the lowest bidder.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is scheduled to submit the tender documents to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review and approval before commencing work.

The tender includes maintenance works to extend the plant’s lifespan and ensure safe operation, particularly during the summer months when high temperatures pose significant challenges to all power plants.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy concluded

a training program for employees of the Communications Department (Unified Call Center 152) in cooperation with Zain Telecommunications Company.

Official spokesperson of the ministry Eng. Fatma Hayat said the ministry completed the training of 99 employees working in the Communications Department at the Unified Call Center (152) in collaboration with Zain Telecommunications Company.

She affirmed that the employees who participated in the training program demonstrated positive and productive interaction with the instructors. She added that the experience was successful and had a tangible impact on achieving the training objectives and enhancing the participants’ skills in dealing with the public.

She disclosed the ministry is keen on continuing its cooperation with the company in the future to benefit from its distinguished expertise in this field.

She commended Zain’s efforts in cooperating with the ministry in training the employees, as well as the officials of the Administrative Development and Training Department who supervised the implementation of the program, which was divided into five groups. She added the results of the program are the fruits of cooperation between the public and private sectors.



Al-Baghli Foundation photo
Chairman of Al-Baghli Foundation for the Dutiful Son Ibrahim Taher Al-Baghli inaugurates the second Dutiful Son Photography Exhibition along with Dr. Suad Al-Hamr, the President of the Kuwaiti Society for Photographic Arts.

37 photographers vie for top honors

Al-Baghli Foundation opens second ‘Dutiful Son’ photography exhibition

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Chairman of Al-Baghli Foundation for the Dutiful Son Ibrahim Taher Al-Baghli inaugurated the second Dutiful Son Photography Exhibition on Monday evening.

Head of the Judging Committee Mansour Salmeen, President of the Kuwaiti Society for Photographic Arts Dr. Suad Al-Hamr, and the participating photographers whose work met the criteria for the 2025 Dutiful Son Award competition attended the event.

During the opening ceremony held at the Ibrahim Taher Al-Baghli Events Hall in Rumaithiya, Al-Baghli stated “it is an honor and a pleasure to sponsor this event. We have been contributing to and supporting the blessed journey of the foundation since the inception of the Al-Baghli Dutiful Son Award.

“This award, one of the social and community projects of the foundation for the past 19 years, has instilled the principles of social work and strengthened community relations between individuals and civil society organizations. It aims to achieve several goals that benefit all segments of Kuwaiti society,” he asserted.

He said the foundation announced the Al-Baghli Dutiful Son Award photography competition last June, and the competition closed with 37 participants

interested in the art of photography.

He affirmed that organizing the exhibition dedicated to the works participating in the award is among the procedures undertaken by the award’s Higher Committee and the judging and evaluation team, comprised of experts in the field.

He explained that the judging team is sorting the submitted works for study and evaluation according to standards of quality and excellence, focusing on aspects that reflect the realism of the data provided by the participants. “This is a crucial stage in the evaluation and judging process before selecting the winners and their rankings in the award,” he added.

He indicated that the judging team identified the winning works from individuals and civil society organizations who will be honored, along with the winners in all the award’s competitions, and the Dutiful Sons of Kuwait for 2025 will be recognized at the award’s closing ceremony, which will be held under the patronage and in the presence of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Huwailah on Dec 10.

In addition, Al-Hamr confirmed the participation of 37 individuals in the photography competition. She said the photos were reviewed and 14 photographs are competing for the top prizes.

Over 1,800 patients visit the center monthly as awareness rises on prevention

Al-Saqr Center highlights diabetes challenge in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Head of the Internal Medicine Department at Al-Saqr Specialized Center Dr. Hamed Hanafi revealed that around 1,800 patients visit the diabetes clinics of the center monthly, including new cases and routine checkups, disclosing the center has 12 specialized clinics -- four diabetes clinics, two chronic disease clinics and six general medicine clinics.

Hanafi made the statement to the newspaper on the sidelines of the celebration of World Diabetes Day at the center on Tuesday, with the theme, "Diabetes and Well-being," sponsored and attended by Director of the center Dr. Sanaa Mubarak Al-Ali, and with the participation of all departments and several organizations.

According to Hanafi, diabetes has become a major



Staff and participants gather at Al-Saqr Specialized Center during the World Diabetes Day event, promoting awareness, prevention, and healthy living.

challenge for the health sector in the country, especially with the increasing number of cases. He said there are three types of diabetes -- Type One affects about 400 per 100,000 adults and children in Kuwait, Type Two affects 22 percent of adults, and gestational diabetes, which appears in some pregnancies and usually disappears after childbirth.

He also explained the 'pre-diabetes' stage, which is a risk factor for developing diabetes and can be prevented by following a balanced diet and engaging in physical activity. He added that the event focused on raising public awareness about this stage to reduce diabetes rates.

He added that a medical exhibition was held alongside the event to respond to public inquiries, raise awareness about the risks of developing the disease and how to prevent it, and highlight methods of diagnosis, treatment and proper nutrition.



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti charity Namaa is implementing new relief and development projects in Somalia.

Kuwait's Namaa charity expands humanitarian projects in Somalia

KHARTOUM, Nov 18, (KUNA): Kuwait-based Namaa charity announced Monday the implementation of a wide range of relief and development projects in Somalia.

The projects included performing 100 eye surgeries, distributing food baskets to 200 families, providing meat and hot meals to another 200 families, and supporting 15 families with income-generating projects.

This initiative was part of a field visit by a delegation from Namaa, and aimed at supporting those affected by poverty and drought.

Khaled Al-Shamri, Head of the Development and Projects at Namaa, told KUNA that the delegation oversaw a specialized medical camp for eye surgery, during which 100 successful operations were performed to restore or improve vision.

Al-Shamri added that the camp ended

the suffering of hundreds of patients whose visual impairments had impacted their ability to work and integrate into society.

Al-Shamri noted that the team conducted field visits to provide urgent assistance to 15 families living in dire humanitarian conditions, in addition to launching income-generating projects aimed at empowering these families to transition from dependency to self-sufficiency and productivity.

He noted the implementation of a large-scale food project that benefited 200 families by providing them with essential supplies sufficient for several weeks.

This included distributing meat to 200 families who lack regular access to it, as well as distributing hot meals to 200 families suffering from food shortages, particularly in the areas most affected by the drought.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Acting Secretary General of Kuwait University and Vice President for Medical Sciences Dr. Noura Al-Suwaih conducted a comprehensive visual presentation at the Government Communication Center, showcasing the achievements of the university in education, scientific research, sustainability and university services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Suwaih confirmed the inclusion of 47 faculty members in Stanford's 2025 list of the most influential scientists, registration of 87 patents, and implementation of more than 5,104 research projects, including 475 with external funding.

She presented plans to expand newly introduced programs that meet labor market needs, such as Cybersecurity, Data Analysis, Artificial Intelligence, Financial Mathematics and Actuarial Science, in addition to specialized graduate programs in Media, Anthropology and Criminal Law. She explained that this expansion aims to improve the quality of academic output and support the strategy of the university toward preparing graduates capable of competing and innovating.

She cited the scientific achievements of the university over the past period as follows:

- The College of Pharmacy obtained Canadian academic accreditation for its Pharmacy program in June 2024.
- Renewal of accreditation for the Department of Occupational Therapy in the College of Allied Medical Sciences from the World Federation of Occupational Therapy until 2031.
- Recommendation for the renewal of accreditation for the College of Administrative Sciences for six years from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).
- Implementation of a comprehensive update to the graduation requirements in the College of Life Sciences to ensure that academic programs align with international accreditation standards.

She pointed out that all these steps reinforce the



Photos by Mohammad Morsi
Officials during the session at Kuwait University's presentation on academic and research achievements.

commitment of the university to maintain quality and efficiency of its academic system.

She also presented the academic achievements like KuwaitSat-1 satellite, which continues to capture remarkable satellite images, and the organization of a total lunar eclipse observation event, a collaborative effort between the Physics Department and Kuwait National Center for Space Research, under the auspices of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). She said this event affirmed the role of the university in spreading scientific culture and providing opportunities to observe cosmic phenomena, in line with its commitment to expand its scientific and community roles.

Regarding the integrated university environment, the presentation covered the completed projects at Sabah Al-Salem University City, such as the opening of the College of Sharia with its north and south buildings, planned opening of the College of Law in the 2024/2025 academic year, and relocation of student housing to the University City.

She reviewed the launch of the internal electric transportation system (Masar), utilizing specially equipped, air-conditioned, and environmentally friendly vehicles for students and people with disabilities. She confirmed the adoption of the Masar electric transportation system's guidelines, which promote a sustainable learning environment that prioritizes student safety and comfort -- a testament to the commitment of the university to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of its infrastructure.

Continued from Page 1

Your Excellency

Therefore, the relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Finance, and Kuwait Municipality must work on promoting the industrial sector, which is the cornerstone of national development. True progress cannot be achieved without a thriving industrial sector.

The responsibility now lies with Minister Khalifa Abdullah Al-Ajil, a businessman well aware of the important role of revitalizing various sectors to achieve the development goals set by the political leadership.

Owners of service and industrial projects carry substantial obligations to banks and other entities. The state should support them rather than abandon them. They need the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Public Authority for Industry to adopt a more flexible approach and avoid decisions that discourage investors.

His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has directed officials and government institutions to open new investment pathways, and urged them to cooperate in creating more economic opportunities. It is therefore imperative that all parties work diligently to remove obstacles facing entrepreneurs and owners of industrial, service, and agricultural plots.

Kuwait visit

The Vietnamese Prime Minister concluded his visit to Kuwait with a lecture at Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute entitled, "Vietnam's Foreign Policy and its Vision for Vietnamese-Kuwaiti Relations." He said that Kuwait was the first country in the Middle East to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam on Jan 10, 1976, immediately after the country's reunification and the restoration of its full independence, adding that Kuwait was also among the first countries to elevate its relations with Vietnam to a strategic partnership. He stated that last March, an agreement was reached to raise bilateral relations to a higher level, reflecting the depth of mutual trust and the aspirations of both sides for a closer future.

He expressed his happiness over the opportunity to be at the Institute, which he described as a prestigious academic and research institution that produced many of Kuwait's diplomatic leaders. He affirmed his appreciation for the preservation of Kuwaiti architectural and cultural identity in the building, since its construction more than 80 years ago, making it a testament to the history and accumulated memory of generations of diplomats.

He recalled the words of HH the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, who affirmed in a speech that the peoples of the world, regardless of their religions, cultures and ethnicities, "share a common aspiration for peace, security and justice." He stressed that these values remain a common ground uniting Kuwait and Vietnam up to this day, confirming that HH the late Amir's directives contributed to Kuwait's leaders focusing on Vietnam and strengthening relations at the time, as reflected in vital projects, such as Nghi Son Refinery in Vietnam and Kuwaiti funds' investments in the Vietnamese economy.

He then talked about the shared vision for Vietnamese-Kuwaiti relations, stressing that history has proven that "when two nations share common values of peace, independence and development, geographical distance and cultural differences transform from potential obstacles into an added asset that strengthens the partnership." He believes that Kuwait stands today at a "significant historical juncture", which qualifies it to become a model of cooperation between Southeast Asian countries and the Arab world, and a vital bridge connecting Asia and the Middle East. Regarding Vietnamese-Kuwaiti relations, Chinh reiterated that the two countries share a common aspiration for peace, independence, and rapid and sustainable development. He said Vietnam and Kuwait stood by each other during the darkest periods of history, including the wars that both countries endured, and that the bitter experience of war has proven that "no one

truly emerges victorious from war," as its human, material and moral costs are exorbitant for everyone.

He thinks that shared values -- rejection of war, pursuit of development, and the commitment to sovereignty and independence -- made Hanoi and Kuwait closer and opened broader horizons for strengthening their partnership, particularly in the fields of energy, food security, investment, education, and scientific and technological cooperation.

He pointed out that the world is going through a challenging period, and that "the more intense the crises, the greater the need for solidarity, and the greater the risks, the more cooperation and adherence to international rules become the only way to build a more peaceful, stable and prosperous world." He expressed his confidence that Vietnam and Kuwait, through their strong ties, will continue to contribute to building this shared future.

He added the partnership between Vietnam and Kuwait should not stop at signing joint documents and statements, as it should transform into "a journey of trust, joint action and heartfelt connection," beginning with cooperation between the two governments and official institutions, extending to universities and research centers, the business and investment sectors, and ultimately reaching the citizens of both countries.

He also highlighted the humanitarian role of Kuwait during the COVID-19 pandemic, disclosing that his country received 600,000 vaccine doses from Kuwait "completely free of charge." He added "a single vaccine dose in those circumstances meant saving a life." He asserted this gesture embodied a genuine partnership and sincere solidarity during a time of hardship.

On the other hand, Assistant Foreign Minister for Institute Affairs Ambassador Nasser Al-Subaih confirmed that Vietnam and Kuwait share a deep-rooted friendship based on mutual respect, shared values, and a unified vision for achieving peace and prosperity. He said "your visit to the Institute today is an important milestone in the growing partnership between our countries. We are deeply honored by your presence. Our countries have achieved remarkable developmental progress. This meeting provided us with a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of the foundations of Vietnamese foreign policy and explore new avenues for strengthening bilateral ties." He added that Vietnam continues to play a crucial role on both the regional and international stages.

Mol busts

The Ministry emphasized its ongoing efforts to pursue anyone who violates laws, or exploits workers illegally, stressing that human trafficking is among the most serious crimes affecting human values and community security.

Meanwhile, in a bid to enhance coordination and cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the oil sector, the General Directorate of Facilities Security hosted Vice Chairman and CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud, and CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Wadha Al-Khatib, reports Al-Seyassah daily. According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Interior, they discussed ways to unify efforts and strengthen the security of oil and vital facilities, thereby enhancing overall security preparedness and keeping pace with the evolving nature of operations in the oil sector.

The visit included a presentation detailing the tasks and work mechanisms of the General Directorate of Facilities Security, along with a field demonstration showcasing inspection procedures and responses to potential sabotage attempts. The Ministry of Interior revealed that Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud and Wadha Al-Khatib were received by Head of the Special Security and Correctional Institutions Sector Brigadier General Dakheel Al-Dakheel.

Kuwait-UAE

On sideline of his participation, Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Sabah met with the UAE Undersecretary of Defense Lieutenant General Engineer Ibrahim Al-Alawi, the Chief of the General Staff of the UAE Armed Forces Lieutenant General Engineer

Issa Al-Mazrouei and several other UAE defense officials.

Both sides discussed the latest developments in defense industries, especially the cutting-military edge technologies and systems displayed in the exhibition.

The Kuwait and UAE officials also explored avenues for co-operation and the exchange of expertise between the two sisterly Arabian Gulf countries.

Sheikh Dr. Abdullah conveyed the greetings of the Minister of Defense, Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah, to the leadership of the UAE Ministry of Defense, congratulating them on the success of the opening ceremony of the Dubai Airshow.

He also expressed his appreciation for the warm UAE hospitality and reception of the Kuwaiti delegation.

Kuwait's ministries of defense and interior and the Kuwaiti Civil Aviation Authority are participating in the event.

This participation reflects the depth of bilateral relations and the integration between the aviation sectors of the two brotherly countries, added the statement.

Sheikh Dr. Abdullah and Chairman of the Kuwait Civil Aviation Authority Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah visited the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior's pavilion at the exhibition, where they viewed a police helicopter, highlighting Kuwait's police capabilities and helicopters' role in enhancing efficiency of security operations.

The Dubai Airshow 2025, themed "The Future Starts Here," continues until November 21st, with wide participation from various government and private aviation companies from around the world. The exhibition also hosts more than 1,500 exhibitors, 148,000 visitors, and 490 military and civilian delegations from 115 countries, showcasing the latest technologies in the aviation, space, and defense sectors.

Cabinet OK's

his delegation, highlighting efforts to strengthen bilateral relations and expand cooperation between Kuwait and Vietnam across multiple sectors. Both sides affirmed their commitment to advancing strategic bilateral ties and exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. During the visit, Kuwait and Vietnam signed a protocol amending the visa exemption agreement for diplomatic and official passport holders, as well as a memorandum of understanding between the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute and the Vietnamese Diplomatic Academy.

His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Youssef Saud Al-Sabah, updated the Cabinet on the 42nd GCC Interior Ministers' meeting held last week in Kuwait. Discussions focused on Gulf security cooperation, measures to combat organized crime and cybercrime, leveraging modern technologies and artificial intelligence, and preparations for upcoming Gulf security initiatives, including the 2026 Counter-Terrorism Strategy Workshop and the 2027 GCC Security Conference.

On public finance matters, the Cabinet reviewed the second report (October 2025) of the Public Funds Follow-up Committee, presented by Minister of Justice and Committee Chairman Nasser Youssef Al-Sumait. The Cabinet instructed all relevant authorities to fully cooperate with the committee to ensure effective monitoring of public fund cases and the recovery of public assets. The Cabinet also approved a draft decree-law regulating the digital commerce sector, establishing a modern legal framework to support economic innovation, protect consumers, and ensure transparency in digital transactions. The draft, which includes 45 articles across 10 chapters, will be submitted to His Highness the Amir for approval. To enforce regulations on subsidized foodstuffs, the Cabinet instructed relevant authorities to strengthen monitoring to ensure these goods are provided only to eligible Kuwaiti citizens and to prevent smuggling through land, sea, and air borders.

Additionally, the Cabinet reviewed reports from the Ministerial Economic Affairs Committee, including updates on the Abdali Economic Zone project and the 10th annual report of the Direct Investment Promotion Authority. Several agenda items were approved, while others were referred to relevant ministerial committees for further study.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor with the Municipal Council officials.

Farwaniya Governor hosts Municipal Council officials

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received the Vice Chairman of the Municipal Council, Khaled Mufleh Al-Mutairi, and Municipal Council Member Waleed Al-Dagher on Sunday morning at the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting aimed to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the governorate and the Municipal Council to support projects and enhance public services.

During the meeting, several topics were discussed concerning the importance of addressing citizens' needs and improving the quality of services provided to residents.

The meeting also reviewed joint plans aimed at developing infrastructure and enhancing the urban environment in various areas of the governorate.

The governor expressed his appreciation to the Municipal Council members for their continuous efforts and cooperation, highlighting the importance of maintaining close, on-the-ground collaboration to achieve shared goals and advance development in Farwaniya Governorate in line with the state's general strategy.

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US president says to sell F-35s to Saudi Arabia

After years away from Washington, Saudi Crown Prince to get warm embrace from Trump

WASHINGTON, Nov 18, (AP): US President Donald Trump was set to fete Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Tuesday at White House.

The two leaders unveil billions of dollars in deals and huddle with aides to discuss the tricky path ahead in a volatile Middle East. They'll end their day with an evening White House soiree, organized by first lady Melania Trump, to honor the prince.

"They have been a great ally," Trump said of the Saudis on the eve of the visit.

Ahead of Prince Mohammed's arrival, Trump announced he has agreed to sell the Saudis F-35 fighter jets despite some concerns within the administration that the sale could lead to China gaining access to the US technology behind the advanced weapon system.

The president in his first term had helped forge commercial and diplomatic ties between Israel and Bahrain, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates through an effort dubbed the Abraham Accords.

Trump sees expansion of the accords as essential to his broader efforts to build stability in the Middle East after the two-year Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

And getting Saudi Arabia - the largest Arab economy to sign on would create an enormous domino effect, he argues. The president in recent weeks has even predicted that once Saudi Arabia signs on to the accords, "everybody" in the Arab world "goes in."

But the Saudis have maintained that a clear path toward Palestinian statehood must first be established before normalizing relations with Israel can be considered. The Israelis, meanwhile, remain steadfastly opposed to the creation of a



US President Donald Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman gesture as they meet delegations at the Royal Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, May 13. (AP)

Palestinian state.

The US Security Council on Monday approved a US plan for Gaza that authorizes an international stabilization force to provide security in the devastated territory and envisions a possible future path to an independent Palestinian state.

The leaders certainly will have plenty to talk about including maintaining the fragile ceasefire in Gaza, mutual concerns about Iran's malign behavior, and a brutal civil war in Sudan.

And the Saudis are looking to receive formal assurances from Trump defining the scope of US military protection for the kingdom, even though anything not ratified by Congress can be undone by the next president.

Prince Mohammed is also looking to reestablish his position as a global player and a leader determined to diversify the Saudi economy away from oil by investing in sectors like mining, technology and tourism.

To that end, Saudi Arabia is expected to announce a multi-billion dollar investment in US artificial intelligence infrastructure, and the two countries will lay out details about new cooperation in the civil nuclear energy sector, according to a senior Trump administration who was not authorized to comment publicly ahead of the formal announcement.

In addition to White House pomp, the two nations are also planning an investment summit at the Kennedy Center on Wednesday that will include the heads of Salesforce, Qualcomm, Pfizer, the Cleveland Clinic, Chevron and Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national oil and natural gas company, where even more deals with the Saudis could be announced.



A surfer rides a wave as clouds gather above Bolsa Chica State Beach in Orange County, Calif, on Nov 15. (AP)

Thunderstorms bring flood risk after atmospheric river drenches Calif

A powerful atmospheric river had mostly moved through California after causing at least six deaths and dousing much of the state, but lingering thunderstorms brought the risk of mudslides in areas of Los Angeles County that were recently ravaged by wildfire.

Flood advisories remained in place through Sunday afternoon for LA, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, where localized showers were still possible after heavy downpours on Friday and Satur-

day.

"Due to the abundant rainfall the past couple of days, it will not take as much rainfall to cause additional flooding/rockslide conditions," the National Weather Service said in a Sunday update.

Authorities on Sunday were still searching for a 5-year-old girl who was swept into the ocean by 15-foot (4.6-meter) waves at a state beach in Monterey County on Friday. The girl's father, 39-year-old Yuji Hu, of Calgary, Alberta, was killed while

trying to save his daughter, sheriff's officials said.

In Sutter County north of Sacramento, a 71-year-old man died Friday after his vehicle was swept off a flooded bridge, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Off the coast of San Diego, a wooden boat believed to have been ferrying migrants toward the U.S. from Mexico capsized in stormy seas, leaving at least four people dead and four hospitalized, the Coast Guard said Saturday. (AP)

PM Carney's Liberals win budget vote and avoid election in Canada

TORONTO, Nov 18, (Agencies): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's budget narrowly passed on Monday, avoiding a possible election.

Carney's Liberal government does not have enough votes to pass the budget on its own but it passed 170-168 with the support of a Green Party member of Parliament and some New Democratic Party abstentions.

"Canadians do not want an election right now," Don Davies, the interim New Democratic Party leader, said. "The consequences of defeating this budget would not be to improve it or to help Canadians. It would be to plunge the country into an election only months after the last one. And while we still face an existential threat from the Trump administration."

The budget vote is considered a vote of confidence in the minority Liberal government.

"Parliamentarians decided to put Canada first," Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne said. "There is enough uncertainty in the world."

The Liberals don't have a majority of seats in the House of Commons and must rely on an opposition party to pass legislation.

The last time a budget vote triggered



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney rises during Question Period, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Nov 17. (AP)

an election in Canada was in 1979.

Carney's Liberal Party scored a stunning comeback victory in an election last April in a vote widely seen as a rebuke of U.S. President Donald Trump. But the Liberals fell just short of winning an outright majority in Parliament.

Carney's rival, populist Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, was in the lead until Trump took aim at Canada with a trade war and threats to annex the country as the 51st state.

A Conservative opposition lawmaker joined Carney's governing Liberal Party earlier this month, a political coup on a day the government announced its budget for the year.

Meanwhile, Carney announced the second tranche of projects aimed at strengthening the economy as part of broader national strategies to boost the country's competitiveness.

The projects, focusing on unlocking Canada's vast natural resources, strengthening energy security and expanding critical infrastructure, will represent more than 56 billion Canadian dollars (40 billion US dollars) in new investment and support 68,000 careers, according to a news release on the prime minister's official website.

"Faced with uncertainty, Canada's new government is making bold choices to grow our economy stronger than ever before with major investments, faster approvals, and a clear signal to workers and industry," said Carney in the release. "We're taking control of our future and building Canada strong."

Tennessee judge blocks White House use of National Guard in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Nov 18, (AP): A Tennessee judge on Monday blocked the use of the National Guard in Memphis under a crime-fighting operation by President Donald Trump but also put the order on hold, giving the government five days to appeal.

Davidson County Chancellor Patricia Head Moskal's decision sides with Democratic state and local officials who sued, contending that Republican Gov. Bill Lee cannot deploy the Tennessee National Guard for civil unrest unless there is rebellion or invasion, and even then, it would require action by state lawmakers.

The plaintiffs also said another provision spells out a need for a request from a local government to use the Guard in some scenarios, including a "breakdown of law and order," they said.

Moskal agreed that the defendants have a likelihood of success in their lawsuit based on their claims that calling the National Guard into the city violates the state's military code and that they have shown "they are suffering or will suffer irreparable harm" if the injunction isn't granted.

But she also paused the order for at least five days so that the government has time to file an "immediate application for permission to appeal," without providing her reasoning for that timeline.

The state has said Tennessee law gives the governor "the authority to dispatch the Guard when needed and to determine when that need exists."

The judge concluded that the gover-



Members of the National Guard stand watch at the intersection of B.B. King Blvd. and Beale Street on Oct 24, 2025, in Memphis, Tenn. (AP)

nor's power as commander-in-chief of the National Guard "is not unfettered."

In a statement posted on the social platform X, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, a plaintiff in the case, said he is pleased with the decision.

"The injunction does not take effect immediately, and the state has a chance to seek leave to appeal," he wrote. "However, this is a positive step toward ensuring the rule of law applies to everyone, including everyday Tennesseans and even the Governor."

Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward whose legal

team is representing the plaintiffs, in a statement called the ruling "a powerful affirmation that no one-not a president, not a governor-is above the law."

Spokespeople for the governor's office and the state attorney general's office did not immediately respond to requests for comment late Monday.

Since their arrival on Oct. 10, troops have been patrolling neighborhoods and commercial areas of Memphis, including near the iconic Pyramid in downtown, wearing camouflage and protective vests that say "military police," with guns in holsters.



People hold mobile phones with flashlights during a rally to celebrate the 36th anniversary of the pro-democratic Velvet Revolution, in Bratislava, Slovakia on Nov 17. (AP)

Slovaks protest populist PM Fico on 'versary of Velvet Revolution

Tens of thousands of people in Slovakia on Monday protested against populist Prime Minister Robert Fico and his pro-Russian stance, taking advantage of the anniversary of the 1989 Velvet Revolution that ended decades of communist rule in the former Czechoslovakia.

Rallies and marches took place in dozens of communities. The protesters in Freedom Square in the rainy capital, Bratislava, chanted, "We have enough of Fico," "We want a change" and "Resign."

One banner in the crowd displayed the words by late Czechoslovak and Czech President Václav

Havel that became the motto of the Velvet Revolution: "Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred."

Fico has long been a divisive figure in Slovakia, and thousands have repeatedly rallied to protest his policies. Most recently, his government canceled the national holiday on Monday that marked the Velvet Revolution, calling it part of austerity measures.

Michal Simeka, leader of the major opposition Progressive Slovakia party, rejected that explanation.

"It has nothing to do with economy or savings," Simeka said. "Robert Fico just wants to tell us that the

holiday of freedom is useless, that freedom is useless. We value freedom and we will not let it be taken away from us."

Fico also recently angered many in Slovakia by telling students in the city of Poprad that they should go to fight for Ukraine if they don't agree with his pro-Russian views.

Fico has met Russian President Vladimir Putin three times since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and cancelled all Slovakian bilateral military support for Ukraine. He also has openly challenged the European Union's policies on Ukraine. (AP)

Zelenskyy and US envoy to visit Turkey in new bid to end the Russia-Ukraine war

KYIV, Ukraine, Nov 18, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday that he will travel to Turkey this week in an attempt to jump-start negotiations on ending Russia's invasion, which began nearly four years ago.

US special envoy Steve Witkoff will join Zelenskyy in Turkey, a senior Turkish official told The Associated Press, but the Kremlin said that Russia won't be sending anyone.

Turkey provided a setting for low-level talks between Ukraine and Russia earlier this year, though the only significant progress in Istanbul was on exchanging prisoners of war. US-led international peace efforts have brought no breakthrough, either.

Zelenskyy said that he would be in Turkey on Wednesday, a day after visiting Spain where he hoped for pledges of new support on Tuesday.

"We are preparing to reinvigorate negotiations, and we have developed solutions that we will propose to our partners," Zelenskyy said on social media, without providing details. "Doing everything possible to bring the end of the war closer is Ukraine's top priority."

US President Donald Trump has ex-



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, attends a joint press conference with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris on Nov 17. (AP)

pressed frustration with Russian President Vladimir Putin's refusal to budge from his demands for putting an end to the invasion.

Heavy new American sanctions on Russia's all-important oil industry, devised to push Putin to the negotiating

table, are due to take effect on Friday. The sanctions against oil companies Rosneft and Lukoil seek to starve Putin's war machine of cash and halt its grinding war of attrition, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives in Ukraine.

Europe

'Russia behind railway blast': Evidence suggests that Russian secret services appear to have ordered the blowing up of a railway line in Poland over the weekend that is on a crucial route that delivers aid to Ukraine, a government spokesman said on Tuesday.

"Everything indicates" that the rail incident was "initiated by the Russian secret services," **Jacek Dobrzynski**, the spokesman for Poland's secret services minister, said on Tuesday morning, according to the Polish Press Agency, or PAP.

In what Prime Minister Donald Tusk called an "unprecedented act of sabotage," a segment of a rail line linking Poland's capital, Warsaw, to the border with Ukraine was blown up over the weekend. Another segment further south was also damaged in what officials say was likely sabotage as well.

That rail line is being used to transport aid to Ukraine,



Dobrzynski

Polish officials said. (AP)

UK unveils major asylum system overhaul: The British Home Office on Monday unveiled a sweeping overhaul of the country's asylum system, with Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood warning that the current framework is in "crisis."

Under the new policy paper, people granted asylum will be required to wait 20 years before becoming eligible to apply for permanent settlement in the United Kingdom (UK). Earlier applications may be permitted for those who arrive through "safe and legal routes" and can demonstrate verified contributions to British society.

The Home Office also plans to impose visa penalties on countries that fail to cooperate with the UK on returning rejected asylum seekers. In her statement to the House of Commons, Mahmood singled out Angola, Namibia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, urging them to "comply with international rules and norms."

The department said it would move ahead with domestic reforms to the application of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, aiming to close what it described as "loopholes" that allow "failed asylum seekers to make unlimited and free Article 8 claims to slow down their impending removal." (Xinhua)

Lee’s approval rating rises to 69.3 pct: poll

S.Korea pulls out of joint maritime search, rescue drill with Japan

TOKYO, Nov 18, (Xinhua): The South Korean Navy has informed Japan that it will not participate in a joint search and rescue drill with the latter’s Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), which was scheduled for later this month, local media reported Monday.

While the two countries are arranging to cancel the joint exercise, they aim to calm the situation and avoid escalating tension that could damage bilateral relations, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported, citing sources from both governments.

South Korea’s withdrawal from the drill is believed to be related to Japan’s cancellation of planned refueling support for South Korean Air Force planes at a Self-Defense Forces base earlier this month, the report said.

The planned refueling was scrapped by Japan following revelations that South Korea had conducted training flights near the disputed islets lying halfway between the two countries, called Dokdo by South Korea and Takeshima by Japan.

The scheduled joint drill was intended as a chance for vessels from both countries to cooperate and confirm the sequence of rescue operations.



A North Korean military guard post, top, and a South Korean post, bottom, are seen from Paju, South Korea, near the border with North Korea, on June 18, 2024. (AP)

Exercises like this were held 10 times between 1999 and 2017, but ceased after a 2018 incident in which a South Korean navy ship locked fire-control radar onto an MSDF patrol aircraft.

Meanwhile, South Korea’s National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik has raised concerns about Japan’s perception of history.

In response to Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi’s recent claim that Dokdo is Japanese territory historically and under international law, Woo said on social media that the Japanese government has expanded the so-called “territorial sovereignty exhibition hall,” which asserts sovereignty over the Dokdo islets.

Since the opening of the hall in 2018, South Korea has continued to demand its closure, but Japan added an educational space to the hall recently in an apparent attempt to instill incorrect perceptions in future generations, he said.

Also:

SEOUL: South Korean President **Lee Jae-myung’s** approval rating rose 1.5 percentage points from a week earlier to 69.3 percent last week, a weekly poll showed Monday.

The negative assessment on Lee’s conduct of state affairs decreased 1.7 percentage points to 29.5 percent, according to computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) by local pollster Flower Research.

The ruling liberal Democratic Party’s support retreated 1.6 percentage points to 53.7 percent, while the conservative opposition People Power Party’s approval score dipped 3.8 percentage points to 25.2 percent.

Support rate for the minor left-leaning Rebuilding Korea Party and the minor rightist New Reform Party logged 2.6 percent and 3.6 percent each last week.

China’s foreign minister holds talks with Syrian counterpart

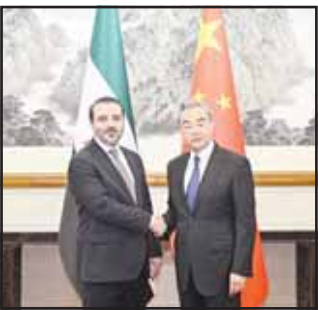
BEIJING, Nov 18, (Xinhua): Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Monday held talks with Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Asaad Hassan al-Shibani in Beijing.

Wang, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said that China is pursuing a friendly policy toward the Syrian people and respects their independent choices.

The two sides should have mutual respect for each other’s core interests, refrain from interfering in each other’s internal affairs, carry forward their tradition of friendship, and bring bilateral relations back on track, Wang said. China appreciates Syria’s commitment to the one-China principle, he said.

China welcomes Syria’s participation in cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, and in strengthening cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations and the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, Wang said.

He said China supports Syria



in achieving peace at an early stage, in adhering to the “Syrian-led, Syrian-owned” principle, in conducting inclusive dialogue, in integrating actively into the international community, and in finding a national reconstruction plan that conforms to the will of its people through political dialogue.

Philippine President Marcos rejects drug use accusations by sister

MANILA, Philippines, Nov 18, (AP): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr’s estranged sister, a senator, publicly accused him Monday of being a longtime drug addict whose alleged cocaine dependence has led to problems in his governance, including corruption, allegations that his spokesperson said was a recycled issue that has long been disproven.

Communications Undersecretary Claire Castro said Sen. Imee Marcos’ baseless accusations against her own brother may have been a desperate attempt to distract ongoing investigations into a corruption scandal involving flood control projects that may implicate her allies in the Senate. “Sen. Imee, I hope you’ll be a patriot and help in the investigation that your own brother has been doing and condemn all the corrupt,” Castro said. “Don’t side with them, don’t hide them. Let President Marcos work to stop all the corruption.”

An independent fact-finding commission created by Marcos, a Senate committee and government agencies have been investigating allegations that influential members of Congress and the Senate have pocketed huge kickbacks from construction companies, which had won lucrative contracts to build flood-control projects, which turned out to be substandard, incomplete or nonexistent. The scandal has sparked outrage in an Asian country long prone to deadly flooding and typhoons.

The senator is a high-profile ally of her brother’s harsh critic and predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.

Duterte was arrested on an International Criminal Court warrant in March and flown to and detained in the Netherlands for alleged crimes against humanity over his brutal anti-drug crackdowns that left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead. Duterte has denied any wrongdoing. Duterte’s family and allies have blamed Marcos and his administration for what they claim was the ex-president’s illegal arrest and

detention by the global court. His daughter, Vice President Sara Duterte, is also one of the most vocal critics of the current president but is a close ally of the senator.

In a speech Monday night before a huge rally by a religious group in a Manila park, the senator said that her brother’s drug addiction started when their father, the namesake of the current leader, was still a president and has continued to this day. She claimed it has affected his health and ability to govern. The president and his elder sister were children of a then-dictator, who was ousted in an army-backed “people power” uprising in 1986.

She alleged that the president’s wife and children were also drug users and added that she and her brother mostly haven’t talked since he became president in 2022. Liza Marcos didn’t immediately comment but her son, Rep. Sandro Marcos, said her aunt’s accusations were baseless and “dangerously irresponsible.”

“It pains me to see how low she has gone to the point that she resorts to a web of lies aimed at destabilizing this government to advance her own political ambitions,” he said.

The senator said in her speech without offering any evidence that the president’s “addiction became the cause of the flood of corruption, the lack of direction and very wrong decisions, the absence of accountability and justice.”

Addressing the military, police and other officials, she said that they should help her “improve his condition,” adding “I’m not his enemy. His enemy is himself.”

Castro blasted the senator for not calling out Rodrigo Duterte, who has acknowledged using fentanyl in the past and his being linked, along with his daughter, the vice president, by critics to alleged corruption. Both Duterte and his daughter have denied involvement in corruption, including her alleged misuse of confidential funds.



Members of the religious sect Iglesia Ni Cristo gather during a three-day anti-corruption rally at Manila’s Rizal Park, Philippines on Nov 16. (AP)

Rights office calls on Colombia to suspend airstrikes after confirming five deaths of kids

BOGOTA, Colombia, Nov 18, (AP): Colombia’s human rights ombudsman called on President Gustavo Petro Monday to suspend airstrikes against rebel groups in the South American country, after revealing that at least five teenagers had been killed in strikes conducted by Colombia’s military in October and November.

In a video published Monday, human rights ombudswoman Iris Marin said that at least one teenager, a female, was killed in a strike against the FARC-EMC rebel group in Arauca province last week, while four teenagers who had been forcibly recruited by the group were killed in another strike in the first week of October. On Saturday, Marin had revealed that seven minors were killed in another strike against the FARC-EMC in the southern province of Guaviare, where the government has launched an offensive against Nestor Gregorio Vera, a powerful rebel leader known also as Ivan Mordisco.

That means that at least 12 minors have been killed this year in airstrikes conducted by Colombia’s government.

Military prosecutors in Colombia announced Monday they had launched an inquiry into the airstrike in Guaviare, to determine if it had complied with international law.



“I want to urge the President to suspend strikes against groups in which minors could be present,” Marin said on Monday. “The life story of each one of these minors who dies in the bombardments is heart wrenching.”

Colombia’s government confirmed the deaths of the teenagers Monday, but officials have refused to suspend the strikes, and blame criminal groups in the country for putting children in danger by forcibly recruiting them into their ranks. In a message on social platform X Monday, Petro wrote that “if strikes are suspended mafia bosses will recruit more children” because they will have realized that they will be safe from attacks if they have children among their ranks.

AU applauds Doha framework as ‘landmark step’ to address DRC and M23 rebels conflict

ADDIS ABABA, Nov 18, (Agencies): African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf has welcomed the signing of the Doha framework for a comprehensive peace agreement between the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the March 23 Movement (M23) rebel group in Qatar.

Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday announced the signing of the framework agreement, marking a new step toward a long-awaited peace deal aimed at ending the conflict in the eastern DRC. Commending the two parties for “demonstrating courage, political will, and commitment to dialogue,” Youssouf also expressed “deep appreciation to Qatar for its constructive facilitation and steadfast support” to the peace process.

The AU urged all stakeholders to uphold the letter and spirit of the framework, and ensure its timely and faithful implementation, including through the timely conclusion of the six follow-on protocols. Youssouf reiterated the AU’s “unwavering commitment” to proactively continue engaging and supporting the Doha process with a view to lay the foundation for lasting peace and stability in the DRC.

He also reaffirmed the AU’s contin-



M23 rebels escort government soldiers and police who surrendered to an undisclosed location in Goma, Democratic republic of the Congo on Jan 30. (AP)

ued support to all initiatives aimed at fostering peace, security, reconciliation, and development in the DRC and across the Great Lakes region.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi expressed on Sunday his welcome for the signing of the Doha Framework Peace Agreement between the Democratic Republic of

Congo and the Congo River Alliance “March 23 Movement.” Al-Budaiwi applauded the significant and valuable efforts exerted by Qatar in hosting and supporting the negotiation process, noting its effective contribution which underscores its firm commitment towards supporting regional and international security as well as resolving conflicts through peaceful means.

WASHINGTON, Nov 18, (AP): US President Donald Trump on Monday did not rule out military action against Venezuela despite bringing up a potential diplomatic opening with leader Nicolás Maduro, who has insisted that a US military buildup and strikes on alleged drug boats near his South American country are designed to push him out of office.

Trump reiterated that he “probably would talk to” Maduro, but underscored that he is not taking off the table the possibility of military action on Venezuelan territory. Hours later, Maduro said he is open to dialogue with the Trump administration. “I don’t rule out that. I don’t rule out anything,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office a day after he first floated the possibility of having “discussions” with Maduro. Trump, however, sidestepped questions about whether Maduro could say anything to him that would lead to the US backing off its military show of force.

“He’s done tremendous damage to our country,” said Trump, tying Maduro to drugs and migrants coming into the US from Venezuela. “He has not been good to the United States, so



we’ll see what happens.”

The comments from both leaders deepened the uncertainty about the Trump administration’s next steps toward Maduro’s government. The U.S. has ratcheted up the pressure in recent days, saying it was expecting to designate as a terrorist organization a cartel it says is led by Maduro and other high-level Venezuelan government officials.

Kuwait oil price plunges to \$65.39 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 14 cents to USD 65.39 per barrel on Monday, compared to USD 65.53 per barrel last Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

In global markets, the prices of Brent Crude and West Texas Intermediate decreased by 19 and 18 cents, settling at USD 64.20 per barrel and USD 59.91 per barrel, respectively.

\$151 mln investment in green tech

Duqm Refinery reports 560 global shipments since 2023

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Official reports revealed that the Duqm Refinery, jointly owned by Kuwait Petroleum International and Oman's OQ Group, exported around 560 shipments to countries worldwide from the start of operations in 2023 until the end of September 2025.

As of the end of July 2025, the refinery had already reached approximately 500 shipments.

The reports attributed this achievement to a 10 percent increase in production capacity over the past year from 230,000 to 255,000 barrels per day.

The refinery's main products include liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), petroleum coke, diesel, naphtha, and jet fuel.

The Duqm Refinery exported over 370 shipments to countries worldwide during 2024. The refinery also treated 3,445,379 cubic meters of water during the year.

The refinery adheres to all sustainability and environmental standards, generating more than 6.2 gigawatt-hours of solar energy and treating 85 percent of its highly hazardous wastewater, converting it into energy.

Duqm Refinery was awarded second place in the energy sector category at the 18th Arab Social Responsibility and Sustainability Awards 2025.

In 2024, the Duqm Refinery treated approximately 77 percent of its non-hazardous waste, converting 23 percent into energy, while recycling accounted for around six percent in 2023.

The refinery invested approximately \$151 million in developing advanced environmental protection technologies, implementing

water conservation initiatives, and adopting a comprehensive waste management strategy aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency, and delivering cleaner products to global markets.

In addition, Duqm Refinery established a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant to recycle used water, which has played a major role in treating all water emissions across the facility.

The plant also plays a crucial role in odor removal and the incineration of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Duqm Refinery invested approximately \$39 million in Omani small and medium-sized enterprises and spent around \$412.4 million last year to ensure its continued success and leadership.

The refinery's management follows strict accountability and transparency procedures to maintain a level playing field for suppliers and other qualified service providers.

Duqm Refinery successfully passed the borrower reliability test last year, highlighting its excellence and achievements while underscoring the stability and high efficiency of its operations.

As part of its commitment to digital innovation, Duqm Refinery has prioritized digital transformation to enhance the efficiency of information management.

In October, the refinery launched the DOQ8 Electronic Document Management System (EDRMS) on the SharePoint platform. This advanced system complies with the standards of the National Records and Archives Authority as well as international ISO requirements, providing a highly professional and smart management solution.

Educating on banking rights

Gulf Bank supports the Diraya campaign through Kuwait TV



Gulf Bank executives promote 'Diraya' on Kuwait TV.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: As part of its continued support for the "Diraya" campaign, Gulf Bank participated in the Layali Al-Kuwait program on Kuwait TV, represented by Executive Manager of the Marketing Department, Mahdi Sulaiman, and Assistant Manager of the Consumer Banking Department, Manal Al-Kandari. Their participation aimed to raise public awareness about various types of online fraud, inform people of their banking rights and responsibilities, highlight the different types of financing, and emphasize the importance of promoting a culture of saving within society.

Mahdi Sulaiman noted that the "Diraya" campaign serves as a key social responsibility initiative for Gulf Bank, as it addresses all segments of society—from children and youth to seniors. He explained that the bank ensures its awareness messages reach everyone by preparing tailored content for each group, with a particular focus on educating young people, using Gulf Bank official channels including social media, branches, television, radio, and newspapers.

Mahdi Sulaiman added that fraudsters are increasingly using artificial intelligence to carry out scams, including voice imitation. He warned against answering calls from unknown sources, as fraudsters may attempt to record the victim's voice and contact their acquaintances to request money transfers.

For her part, Manal Al-Kandari noted that fraud attempts increase during the summer and travel seasons, as scammers exploit people's preoccupation with booking flights and hotels to send fake payment links. They also create fraudulent airline-booking websites and use eSIM technologies to steal banking data. She stressed the bank's com-

mitment to intensifying its awareness campaigns during these periods to protect customers.

Al-Kandari offered several important tips for customers, including:

- Ignoring any message or call requesting banking or personal information, regardless of the source, and refraining from sharing any information before verifying the identity of the requesting party.
- Avoiding the use of public Wi-Fi networks—such as those in airports or shopping malls—when logging into the bank's app, as these networks may be exploited to steal data.
- Immediately deactivating cards through the Gulf Bank App or by contacting customer service if they notice any suspicious or unknown payment transactions.

At the end of the interview, Al-Kandari emphasized that no official entity will ever ask customers to share their personal or banking information. Suleiman encouraged the public to follow Gulf Bank's accounts and the "Let's Be Aware" campaign to stay updated on the latest awareness messages.

It is worth noting that the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with the Kuwait Banking Association, launched the "Let's Be Aware" banking awareness campaign in 2021 to educate bank customers about the most important banking services available to them, enhance their ability to conduct transactions safely, ensure secure dealings, and promote financial inclusion as well as monetary and economic stability. The campaign also aims to raise awareness of customers' rights and obligations, highlight the benefits of electronic financial transactions, and explain how to avoid associated risks, thereby ensuring cybersecurity.

Business



A group photo of the team from Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. and Cura Health, with His Excellency the Swedish Ambassador, Mr. Fredrik Floren, in the center.

Bringing Swedish innovation to Kuwait market

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. & Cura Health sponsor Kuwait-Sweden 60th anniversary

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW), and its subsidiary, Cura Health, sponsored the 60th anniversary celebration of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Sweden.

The event was held last Wednesday in the Radisson Blu Hotel. This sponsorship underscored AAW's longstanding commitment to fostering business relations with premier Swedish brands, introducing Swedish innovation and life-science excellence to the Kuwaiti market.

Chairman and CEO Mr. Faisal Ali Al Mutawa said: "We are delighted to join the Swedish Embassy and His Excellency the Ambassador of Sweden to Kuwait, Mr. Fredrik Floren, as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Sweden.

These long-standing ties are historically deep and manifest today in robust economic and trade partnerships. We take pride in our association with leading Swedish brands. We are pleased to sponsor this special event and



Mr. Faisal Al Mutawa with the Swedish Ambassador, Mr. Fredrik Floren.

look forward to the establishment of a permanent Swedish embassy in Kuwait."

AAW is a key partner for Swedish brands, bringing advanced Swedish pharmaceutical solutions to Kuwait's healthcare sector through operational excellence and a strong patient-centric approach. Cura Health, a subsidiary of AAW, reinforces this mission by distributing global pharmaceutical and healthcare brands across both the public and private sector.

Through its portfolio, Cura Health supports Kuwait's national healthcare infrastructure, enhances patient access to trusted medication, and strengthens public health and wellbeing.

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Company is one of the largest retail and distribution companies in Kuwait, operating across multiple sectors and representing more than 100 global brands in the wholesale and retail markets.

The company remains committed to collaborating with leading Swedish brands to introduce innovative medications and high-quality products to the Kuwaiti market.

Zain, Arab Open University team up to expand youth empowerment, education, and innovation efforts

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Zain Kuwait has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Arab Open University - Kuwait (AOU) with the aim of establishing a general framework for partnership between the two sides in the areas of youth support and empowerment, education, innovation, corporate social responsibility, and employment. This collaboration will help empower national youth talent and reinforce the role of education in building a knowledge-based digital economy in Kuwait.

The MoU was inked at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) at the company's HQ in Shuwaikh, joined by Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally and Arab Open University Rector Dr. Salah Al-Hammadi, along with senior officials from both parties. This step underlines Zain's commitment to strengthening its collaboration with national academic institutions, and to aligning higher education outputs with labor market needs, especially in the technology sector.

Commenting on the partnership, Nawaf Al-Gharabally said: "At Zain, we believe that real investment starts with people, and that building a thriving digital economy requires an integrated ecosystem that connects the private sector and national academic institutions. Our partnership with AOU represents a new step in this direction, as we work together to create an educational and training environment capable of empowering our youth with the knowledge and skills they need to confidently and competently pursue careers in technology, telecom, and innovation."

Al-Gharabally added: "Through this collaboration, we aspire to redouble our efforts to create opportunities for students and graduates, whether through practical training, joint innovation projects, or recruitment programs that attract national talent. This partnership will further strengthen our role as an active partner in supporting education and empowering youth, and it is fully aligned with our aspirations to contribute to achieving Kuwait's vision for a diversified, knowledge and innovation-based economy."

Arab Open University Rector Dr. Salah Saleh



Nawaf Al-Gharabally and Dr. Salah Al-Hammadi signing the MoU.

- **Nawaf Al-Gharabally:** "We strive to build a thriving digital economy through an ecosystem that connects the private sector with academic institutions"
- **Dr. Salah Al-Hammadi:** "The partnership with Zain will open new horizons that amplify AOU's impact in serving the community"

Al-Hammadi, affirmed that "the signing of this cooperation agreement with Zain marks a pivotal milestone in the University's journey to broaden the scope of innovation and enhance the research ecosystem." He explained that "the partnership with Zain, as one of the leading national companies in the telecom and technology sector, will open broad horizons for students and researchers to benefit from advanced practical expertise, high-quality training programs, and joint initiatives that amplify the University's impact in serving the community."

Al-Hammadi added that "the agreement reflects AOU's vision to build strategic alliances with leading institutions, contributing to equipping the next generation with future-ready skills, supporting digital transformation, and creating tangible impact on national development."



Al-Gharabally and Al-Hammadi with officials from Zain and AOU.

Kuwait’s largest dinar-denominated financing deal

National Bank of Kuwait & Kuwait Finance House co-lead a landmark KD 1.5 bln syndicated facility for KPC



Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Salah Al-Fulaij and Khaled Al-Shamlan, during the signing of the financing agreement.



Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Essam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Salah Al-Fulaij, Khaled Al-Shamlan, and officials from the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, the National Bank of Kuwait, and Kuwait Finance House in a group photo.



Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Isam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Salah Al-Fulaij, Hisham Al-Refai, and Khaled Al-Shamlan.



Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Isam Al-Sager, Sheikh Khalid Al-Sabah, Bader Al-Attar, and Hisham Al-Rifai.



Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Isam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, and Hisham Al-Refai.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) and Kuwait Finance House (KFH) signed a KD 1.5 billion syndicated term facility agreement with Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). Acting as Joint Lead Arrangers and Facility Agents, the two banks structured and arranged a syndicated facility for KPC comprising two main tranches: a KD 825 million conventional term loan and a KD 675 million Islamic financing facility.

This financing represents the largest transaction of its kind denominated in Kuwaiti Dinars, underscoring the strength of Kuwait’s banking sector and its ability to fund major strategic projects. It also reflects the deep mutual trust between the country’s banking and oil sectors.

NBK served as the Global Agent, Conventional Facility Agent, and Conventional Documentation Agent, while KFH acted as the Murabaha Term Facility Agent and Islamic Documentation Agent. Both banks also served as Joint Lead Arrangers and Joint Bookrunners for the transaction.

Participating in arranging and providing the conventional financing tranche were Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait, Burgan Bank, Commercial Bank of Kuwait, and Gulf Bank, alongside National Bank of Kuwait. The Islamic financing tranche was arranged and provided by Boubyan Bank, Kuwait International Bank, and Warba Bank, in addition to Kuwait Finance House.

NBK’s participation in the facility amounted to KD 495 million, comprising an initial tranche of KD 330 million and an optional additional tranche of KD 165 million, reaffirming its position as the largest lender within the conventional tranche. Meanwhile, KFH’s financing commitment totaled KD 405 million, divided into an initial tranche of KD 270 million and an optional additional tranche of KD 135 million, establishing it as the largest financier within the Islamic tranche.

During a press conference following the signing of the financing agreement, Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, stated:

“This financing represents a significant milestone in KPC’s ongoing efforts to diversify its funding sources and enhance its financial resilience. It marks the first joint financing of this scale denominated in Kuwaiti Dinars, reflecting the strong confidence KPC enjoys from the local banking sector. The importance of this loan lies in its role in strengthening the Company’s ability to fund its strategic capital projects under the five-year plan, while also enhancing the efficiency of its financing structure and meeting its future funding needs. Moreover, it reinforces the long-standing partnership between KPC and the local banking sector.”

“We take pride in this partnership between the oil and banking sectors, which reflects KPC’s commitment to supporting our national economy and creating sustainable added value for the State of Kuwait,” Al-Sabah added.

A Historic Role

Meanwhile, Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer of Na-



Isam Al-Sager and Shaikha Al-Bahar are pictured between Bader Al-Attar and Sheikh Khalid Al-Sabah.



Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, Isam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, and Salah Al-Fulaij.

Al-Sabah: A landmark syndicated financing that strengthens KPC’s ability to implement its five-year strategic plan
Al-Fulaij: NBK’s leading role in this major financing deal reflects the Bank’s long-standing commitment to supporting Kuwait’s landmark national projects
The deal underscores NBK’s extensive expertise in managing banking syndications and its deep-rooted relationship with the oil sector
Al-Shamlan: KFH’s leadership of this major financing deal confirms its position as the largest contributor within the Islamic tranche and reflects its role as a primary strategic partner in financing the oil sector and all key development projects
A longstanding track record of leadership and expertise in steering major financing transactions that support economic development

tional Bank of Kuwait (NBK) – Kuwait, stated: “NBK’s leadership in this major financing transaction comes as an extension of its historic role in supporting Kuwait’s landmark national projects, particularly in the oil and energy sector, which remains a cornerstone of the country’s economy.”

He explained that the portion of the facility arranged by NBK, amounting to KD 495 million, along with its role in structuring and managing the transaction, reflects the Bank’s strong financial position and extensive expertise in managing banking syndications and executing large-scale financing deals that meet the needs of major institutions.

Al-Fulaij noted that the long-standing relationship between NBK and the oil sector, represented by KPC and its subsidiaries, was a key factor in the success of this transaction. He emphasized that the mutual trust between both parties continues to strengthen prospects for future collaboration.

Moreover, Al-Fulaij emphasized that the robust participation of local banks in this landmark transaction stands as a powerful testament to the strength, resilience, and depth of Kuwait’s banking sector, and its proven capability to deliver innovative and high-caliber financing solutions that support the nation’s economic objectives.

He reaffirmed NBK’s unwavering commitment to sustaining its pioneering role in structuring and leading major financing alliances that propel Kuwait’s sustainable growth and long-term development.

A Distinguished Leadership Role

Commenting on the deal, Mr. Khaled Youssef Al-Shamlan, Group Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Finance House, stated: “KFH’s leadership of this major facility reflects its strong financial position, high credit worthiness, and pivotal role in the Islamic finance market, as well as its long standing expertise in structuring and arranging large-scale transactions that contribute to the growth of the national economy.”

He added that KFH’s contribution of KD 405 million un-

derscores its active role in supporting the pillars of development in line with the realization of Kuwait Vision 2035. He also highlighted the long-standing relationship between KFH and the oil and gas sector, emphasizing that the oil and gas industry represents one of the country’s most critical pillars.

Al-Shamlan noted that KFH is the primary strategic partner in financing all major national development projects, affirming its commitment to providing innovative and diversified financing solutions that meet the requirements of large-scale vital development initiatives and support comprehensive and sustainable growth.

He also pointed out that KFH, through this transaction, has succeeded in providing financing solutions that comply with Islamic Sharia principles, thereby reinforcing the role of Islamic finance in supporting the execution of major strategic projects and affirming the strong and longstanding partnership between KFH and KPC.

Furthermore, he praised the strong participation of local Islamic banks in this financing, noting that KFH will continue to play its active role, as the largest Islamic financier in supporting development projects that enhance the competitiveness of Kuwait’s economy both regionally and globally.

This syndicated loan represents an advanced model of integration between conventional and Islamic financing. It highlights the capability of Kuwait’s banking sector to provide flexible and comprehensive financial solutions that meet the needs of major national institutions, while underscoring the importance of partnership between the financial and oil sectors in driving sustainable development.

This facility comes at a pivotal time as Kuwait Petroleum Corporation advances its ambitious strategic agenda under Vision 2040, focused on deepening the integration of its operational and investment activities while expanding its global footprint across the energy sector. Through this close collaboration with Kuwaiti banks, KPC reaffirms its unwavering commitment to bolstering the national economy, enhancing the country’s energy infrastructure, and creating sustainable long-term value for future generations.

Additionally, this milestone reflects the strong confidence that KPC enjoys among local financial institutions and reaffirms its solid credit worthiness. It paves the way for future partnerships that will further support Kuwait’s economic development journey and strengthen the country’s position as a regional hub for finance and energy.

Emphasizing the importance of a digitally empowered Kuwait

stc concluded its sponsorship of the 4th Digital Transformation Kuwait Conference 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, concluded its Platinum Sponsorship of the 4th Digital Transformation Conference 2025. The conference was attended by Acting Director General of The Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Ms. Najat Ibrahim, Eng. Manal Khaled Saleh Al-Mazyad, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors at The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) along with His Highness Sheikh Mohammed AlSabah, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Association of Artificial Intelligence of Things (AAIoT) who inaugurated the event and also delivered a keynote address during the event.

As part of its sponsorship and participation, Anoud Muthaib, Chief Transformation and Synergies Officer at stc, delivered one of the keynote addresses at the conference, highlighting the importance of digital transformation and the supporting cutting-edge technological innovations that are supporting various sectors.

Aside from supporting a platform that shares valuable insights on the digital and technology sectors, stc’s sponsorship of the conference also aligns with the Company’s exten-



Anoud Muthaib during her speech at the opening of the conference.

sive corporate social responsibility program and its strategic approach to enabling digital transformation in Kuwait.

The Company’s has been continuously supporting platforms and initiatives that strengthen the technology sector while educating the community.

The conference welcomed an exceptional number of distinguished attendees and served as Kuwait’s leading national platform dedicated

to advancing the country’s digital journey in line with Kuwait Vision 2035. The two-day event took place from November 17th till the 18th at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel, and brought together government officials, industry leaders, and global technology experts. The conference also covered the latest developments driving Kuwait’s digital future. Topics included artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud infrastructure, smart city development, and digital



Issam Al Asousi and Anoud Muthaib in group photo with company employees participating in the conference.

upskilling, all of which play a key role in shaping a resilient and future-ready economy.

Commenting on her participation in the conference, Muthaib said, “stc is proud to have taken on a contributing role in this essential conference that brings together industry leaders and market experts to discuss and share their insights on the latest innovations that can transform the local market. The conference also highlighted the importance of cross

collaboration between the public and private sectors to pave the way forward for a smarter, more agile, and digitally empowered Kuwait.”

She added, “On behalf of stc, I would like to extend my appreciation to the organizers and partners for their role in the conferences’ success, which enabled meaningful dialogue around the technologies that are shaping the future. Looking ahead, stc will continue to participate in initiatives that prepare our community

for the opportunities of tomorrow and strengthen Kuwait’s digital ecosystem.”

Through continuous investment in next-generation technologies, advanced infrastructure, and innovative business solutions, stc aims to enable a secure, connected, and inclusive digital environment that supports government entities, businesses, and individuals alike, while contributing to the achievement of Kuwait Vision 2035.

Fed’s Lisa Cook rejects mortgage fraud claims

‘Historic Fed firing attempt’

WASHINGTON, Nov 18, (AP): In a letter to Attorney General Pam Bondi on Monday, lawyers for Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook disputed allegations by a Trump administration official that she committed mortgage fraud.

President Donald Trump used the accusation as a basis to seek her firing, the first time a president has sought to remove a Fed governor in the central bank’s 112-year history.

The letter is the first response by Cook to a criminal referral in August by Bill Pulte, director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency. Pulte has made several other mortgage fraud accusations, including against leading Democrats such as New York Attorney General Letitia James, Sen. Adam Schiff of California, and California Rep. Eric Swalwell.

The attempted firing occurred as Trump has repeatedly attacked the Fed for not cutting its key interest rate quickly enough. If Cook is ultimately removed from her position, it would give the president the opportunity to appoint a fourth member to the Fed’s seven-member board, securing a majority.

Cook sued to keep her job, and the Supreme Court ruled last month that she could remain in the position while she fights the administration in court. The Supreme Court has said it would hear arguments in the case in January.

In the letter Monday, Cook’s attorney, Abbe Lowell, wrote that the case against her largely rests on “one stray reference” in a 2021 mortgage document that was “plainly innocuous in light of the several other truthful and more specific disclosures” about the homes she has purchased. “There is no fraud, no intent to deceive, nothing whatsoever criminal or remotely a basis to allege mortgage fraud,” the letter said.

Cook is the first Black woman to serve on the Fed’s governing board, and was appointed in 2022 by President Joe Biden.

A Justice Department spokeswoman said the department “does not comment on current or prospective litigation including matters that may be under investigation.” The FHFA did not respond to a request for comment.

Accused

In August, Pulte accused Cook of committing mortgage fraud by declaring two different homes - one in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the other in Atlanta - as her “primary residence.” Such declarations can result in lower mortgage rates or a smaller down payment requirement than if a property is declared to be a second or vacation home.

“Do not declare two principal residences in President Trump’s America,” Pulte said Aug. 20 on social media platform X. “Mortgage fraud is a serious crime and must be prosecuted as such.” Yet Lowell said Monday that Pulte has pursued mortgage fraud on a partisan basis, focusing on Democrats and refusing to pursue similar allegations against Republicans.

Pulte made a criminal referral to the Justice Department in August, and followed up with a second referral on a third property in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Pulte alleged that Cook also classified that property as a primary residence, even though she rented it out.

Lowell argued that Cook has mostly lived in the Ann Arbor property since first purchasing it in 2005. As a result, it was accurate for her to refer to it as her “primary residence” in a June 2021 application to refinance its mortgage, the letter said.

A month later she purchased a condominium in Atlanta, and in a July 2021 document also referred to it as her “primary residence.” Lowell said that it was

an “isolated notation” that did not reflect an intent to defraud. An earlier mortgage application to the same lender in May 2021 had referred to the Atlanta condo as a “vacation home,” Lowell said. Cook also referred to it as a second home in federal filings during her confirmation process to become a Fed governor.

“It would be impossible to conclude that she intended to defraud the lender by inadvertently listing the property as her ‘Primary Residence,’” the letter said.

Lowell wrote that there was similarly no fraud involved in the Cambridge home, which she obtained while working as an economist for Harvard University.

Cook worked for the school for roughly five years when she bought the home in 2002 and obtained a mortgage that listed it as her primary residence. It remained her primary residence until she was hired as a tenure-track academic by Michigan State University and moved, Lowell said. She refinanced the Cambridge property in 2021 and redesignated it as a second-home, according to mortgage documents provided by Lowell.

Nomination

On financial filings submitted to the government in connection with her nomination to the Fed, Cook also disclosed the home as a rental property and second home, the letter said.

“Once again, Director Pulte offers no evidence indicating that Governor Cook had the ‘required specific intent to defraud’ in relation to the Cambridge property,” Lowell wrote. “On the contrary, when Governor Cook refinanced the Cambridge property, she updated the mortgage to reflect that it was no longer her primary residence.”

Pulte has shown little appetite to investigate similar allegations of mortgage misconduct by members of Trump’s administration, allies of the president and even Pulte’s own father, which Cook’s attorney noted. “One would expect that he would have made referrals to you based on the same types of documents about others,” Lowell wrote.

Though the White House has repeatedly defended Pulte, over the past month he also found himself the subject of unwanted scrutiny - and has angered other members of the administration. Earlier this month, he persuaded Trump about the allure of a 50-year mortgage as a way to increase home buying and building - a proposal that was widely criticized because it would drastically increase the overall price of a loan.

Pulte, who appointed himself chairman of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, has also rattled the housing industry by purging ethics officials and top leaders of the two government-sponsored mortgage giants, which hold trillions of dollars in assets.

Other top executives at Fannie Mae were forced out last month after they voiced alarm that a Pulte confidant had shared confidential pricing data with Freddie Mac, a top competitor.

The data sharing exposed the company to claims that it was colluding with a rival to fix mortgage rates, the AP reported last week.

Separately on Monday, Lowell, who also represents Letitia James, the New York attorney general charged by the Justice Department in a mortgage fraud investigation, asked a judge to dismiss a case that had also been pushed by Pulte.

Lowell cited what he said was “outrageous” conduct by Pulte and other officials and said that since his appointment to lead the FHFA, he had transformed the “little-known agency into a weapon to be brandished against President Trump’s political enemies.”

Pulte sought to press the investigation forward, the defense filing states, even as internal Fannie Mae investigators did not find clear and convincing evidence of fraud.

Partnership supports KSA Vision 2030 goals

Jazeera Airways, SAMI Alsalam ink heavy maintenance MoU

DUBAI, Nov 18: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait’s leading low-cost carrier and SAMI Alsalam Aerospace Industries Company, a subsidiary of Saudi Arabian Military Industries (SAMI), a PIFcompany, today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the Dubai Airshow 2025 to explore heavy maintenance opportunities for the airline’s growing fleet.

The MoU was signed by Barathan Pasupathi, CEO of Jazeera Airways and Eng. Sami Alnajem, CEO of SAMI Alsalam Aerospace Industries, in the presence of Marwan Boodai, Chairman, Jazeera Airways and Eng. Thamer AlMuhid, CEO of SAMI and chairman of SAMI Alsalam.

The MoU establishes a framework for cooperation to assess the feasibility, scope, and potential implementation of heavy maintenance services at SAMI Alsalam’s state-of-the-art facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said: “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a pivotal market for Jazeera Airways. As we continue to expand our network, we are pleased to partner with SAMI Alsalam to meet the region’s rising travel demand. This collaboration aligns closely with the ambitions of KSA Vision 2030 and supports our strategic growth across one of our fastest-growing markets.

The MoU enables us to explore high-quality, locally supported heavy maintenance solutions that will enhance fleet availability, improve turnaround times, and reinforce our five-year expansion plan—from 24 to 50 aircraft and from 63 to 100 destinations. We value the opportunity to work with a regional leader that shares our commitment to operational excellence and long-term, sustainable growth.”

This partnership also underscores the strong aviation ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and highlights Jazeera Airways’ continued investment in strengthening its regional footprint, particularly as it expands services across multiple Saudi cities in support of the Kingdom’s tourism and connectivity ambitions.



Group photo during the signing of MoU.

Eng. Sami Alnajem, CEO of SAMI Alsalam Aerospace Industries, said: “Our partnership with Jazeera Airways represents another important milestone in SAMI Alsalam’s renewed entry into the commercial aviation sector. By leveraging our advanced MRO capabilities, we aim to provide world-class maintenance support while contributing to the Kingdom’s aviation growth and the localization goals of Vision 2030.”

The collaboration marks SAMI Alsalam’s return to the commercial aviation market and reinforces its position as a regional leader in Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) services. It reflects SAMI Alsalam’s commitment to advancing localization, strengthening technical expertise, and fostering international partnerships in alignment with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030.



Jazeera Airways, SAMI Alsalam Aerospace Industries Company sign MoU to explore heavy maintenance opportunities.

To enhance Kuwait's pilot training capability & support the airline's 5-yr growth plan

Jazeera Airways announces arrival of new A320 neo R7e Full Flight Simulator from Acron Aviation

DUBAI, Nov 18: At the Dubai Air Show 2025, Jazeera Airways announced a major advancement in its training and operational capability with its brand-new Acron Aviation A320neo R7e Full Flight Simulator, set to arrive in Kuwait in early 2026. The state-of-the-art device, which will be ready for training in Q2 2026, represents the first R7e simulator in Kuwait and marks a significant step in strengthening the national aviation training infrastructure.

The new simulator underscores Jazeera Airways’ commitment to world-class pilot training, enhanced safety standards, and long-term operational resilience. The investment comes as the airline progresses its five-year growth plan, which includes expanding its network from 63 to 100 destinations, growing its fleet from 24 to 50 aircraft, and nearly doubling its annual passenger capacity from 5 million to 10 million. With this expansion, Jazeera Airways is also set to create more than 700 new direct and indirect jobs, further contributing to Kuwait’s aviation ecosystem and wider economic development.

The addition of the R7e simulator will enable Jazeera to train and upskill a larger pool of pilots locally, reduce reliance on overseas training centers, and support the airline’s rapidly growing operations.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said:

“The introduction of the Acron Aviation R7e simulator is a transformative step for our training ecosystem and for Kuwait’s wider aviation capability. As we expand our fleet and network over the next five years, having cutting-edge training infrastructure allows us to build pilot capacity faster, maintain the highest safety standards, and support our growth plans. Over the years we have trained over 200 pilots – both male and female, and by training around 300



Jazeera Airways acquires first Kuwait R7e Simulator.

more pilots at home in Kuwait, we open new pathways for local talent, and continue advancing the progress already made. This milestone reflects our support to Kuwait’s Vision 2035 with a long-term investment in people, technology, and operational excellence — which will contribute to creating more than 1,000 new jobs across our operations.”

The A320neo R7e Full Flight Simulator features advanced visual systems, enhanced motion technology, and next-generation flight modeling—ensuring pilots receive realistic, high-fidelity training aligned with global regu-

latory requirements.

Jazeera Airways, an Approved Training Organization (ATO), will operate the simulator from a dedicated training facility in Kuwait, offering opportunities not only for its own flight crew but also for regional airlines seeking high-quality A320neo training within the GCC.

With this acquisition, Jazeera Airways reinforces its role as one of the region’s fastest-growing and most forward-thinking low-cost carriers, investing in capabilities that directly support Kuwait’s position as an emerging aviation hub.

Royal Mint marks Queen front man's Live Aid concert

New coin honors Freddie Mercury and his 4-octave range

LONDON, Nov 18, (AP): Britain's Royal Mint is celebrating Freddie Mercury with a new coin design that marks 40 years since his iconic Live Aid concert performance.

The coin features an image of the Queen front man, head thrown back and holding the microphone stand mid-performance. A musical stave that runs around the edge of the coin represents his four-octave vocal range.

The first coin was struck by Mercury's sister Kashmira Bulsara at the Royal Mint in Wales last week.

"As Freddie died young, he didn't get the chance of being awarded a royal medal for his talents in the music world. So to have a royal coin this way is wonderful and very fitting," she said.

"The coin perfectly captures his passion and the joy he brought to millions through his music," she added. "I think the design is very impressive and they managed to catch the most iconic pose of Freddie, which is so recognizable worldwide."

The Royal Mint's director of commemorative coin, Rebecca Morgan, said the timing was perfect



This photo provided by Royal Mint on Nov. 15, shows a UK coin to celebrate one of the greatest showmen of all time, Freddie Mercury. (AP)

for Mercury to be celebrated with his own coin. She said fans had been "calling out" for it and "this felt like the year to do it," because it's 40 years since he captivated audiences at the 1985 Live Aid concert, hailed by many as the greatest live gig of all time.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of Mercury's solo studio album, "Mr Bad Guy."

Mercury died at age 45 in 1991, just one day after he publicly announced he was HIV positive.

The Royal Mint has issued special coins to celebrate other music legends including David Bowie, George Michael, Shirley Bassey and Paul McCartney.

The coins go on sale on the Royal Mint website on Tuesday. Prices start at 18.50 pounds (\$24.4) for an uncirculated 5-pound denomination version. A 2 oz. gold proof coin costs 9,350 pounds (\$12,315.)

The Royal Mint said it will donate a special gold edition of the coin to the Mercury Phoenix Trust, a charity that was started in the singer's memory and donates funds to those living with AIDS and HIV. (AP)



The lead singer of the band Queen, Freddie Mercury, performs during an open air concert in Cologne, Germany, on July 20, 1986. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: The December lineup for "Saturday Night Live" now includes **Ariana Grande** as host on Dec. 20, with Cher returning as musical guest for the first time in nearly 40 years.

It's Grande's third time hosting. Cher hasn't been on the "SNL" stage since 1987. Josh O'Connor will make his hosting debut Dec. 13, with Lily Allen as musical guest, NBC announced Monday.

Grande has been out and about of late promoting "Wicked: For Good," while O'Connor stars in the upcoming "Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery." It's Allen's second appearance on the show. She just released her fifth album, "West End Girl."

"SNL" veteran host Melissa McCarthy will return Dec. 6 for her sixth time. Dijon will make his debut as musical guest. He has two Grammy nominations for his album, "Baby."

The NBC sketch comedy show airs at 11:30 p.m. Eastern and streams live on Peacock. (AP)

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LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said Monday it's investigating a new sexual battery allegation against hip-hop mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs, who is serving a four-year prison sentence on prostitution-related convictions.

A male music producer and publicist said he was asked to attend a photo shoot in 2020 at a Los Angeles warehouse, where Combs engaged in inappropriate behavior and directed the accuser to participate, according to NBC News, citing a police report.

The accuser, whose name is redacted in the police report, said he did not tell anyone for several years because he felt embarrassed. He came forward to police in Largo, Florida, this September, shortly after Combs was convicted on other charges.

Combs' lawyer did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press seeking comment on the latest allegations.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said it received an official copy of the report from the Florida department on Friday, and will be investigating the allegations.

The report also details an incident from March 2021 in which the accuser claims two men covered his head before Combs came into the room and called him a snitch, according to NBC. (AP)

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LOS ANGELES: "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson filed a petition Monday for his two rape convictions and long prison sentence to be thrown out, saying that his trial lawyer failed to call key witnesses and introduce essential evidence that might have exonerated him.

The petition for habeas corpus filed with California's 2nd District Court of Appeal argues that lawyer Philip Cohen did not represent Masterson properly at the 2023 retrial that ended with the actor being convicted of raping two women at his Los Angeles home in 2003. He was sentenced to 30 years to life in prison.

The petition also argues that the trial judge demonstrated a bias against the Church of Scientology, allowing an "un-constitutional intrusion" into the church's doctrine and a misinterpretation of its scripture.

Masterson is a member of the church, whose practices were a major issue at his trial, and the women are former members.

The petition says that Cohen spoke to only two of the 20 potential witnesses brought to his attention by his co-counsel and an investigator. It says the witnesses included some who would have testified that the women spoke favorably of the sexual relationships they had with Masterson. And they included psychological and pharmacological experts who would have testified about the effects of alcohol and drugs on memory. (AP)

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PARIS: The Louvre Museum in Paris said Monday it is temporarily closing some employees' offices and one public gallery because of structural fragility.

The announcement came as the world's most visited museum, housed in a former medieval palace, is preparing for ambitious renovations announced earlier this year. The Louvre is also still reeling from last month's heist of crown jewels worth more than \$100 million.

The museum said in a statement that a technical report submitted Friday flagged "particular fragility of certain beams holding up the floors" of the second level of the southern wing of the Louvre's Sully wing because of "recent and unforeseen developments." It did not elaborate.

Museum management decided to block access to the second-level offices and temporarily relocate the 65 employees working there for three days while experts assess the damage. The museum is also closing the Campana Gallery - which is situated below the offices and exhibits antique Greek ceramics - as a precautionary measure. (AP)

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NEW YORK: The Trump administration is calling its new immigration sweep in North Carolina's largest city "Operation Charlotte's Web."

But the granddaughter of E.B. White, the author of the classic 1952 children's tale "Charlotte's Web," said the wave of immigration arrests goes against what her grandfather and his beloved book stood for.

"He believed in the rule of law and due process," Martha White said in a statement. "He certainly didn't believe in masked men, in unmarked cars, raiding people's homes and workplaces without IDs or summons."

White, whose grandfather died in 1985, works as his literary executor. She pointed out that in "Charlotte's Web," the spider who is the main character devoted her life on the farm to securing the freedom of a pig named Wilbur.

The Trump administration and Republican leaders have seized on a number of catchy phrases while carrying out mass deportation efforts - naming their holding facilities Alligator Alcatraz in Florida, Speedway Slammer in Indiana and Cornhusker Clink in Nebraska. (AP)

Gregory Bovino, a Border Patrol official now on the ground in Charlotte, was the face of the "Operation At Large" in Los Angeles and "Operation Midway Blitz" in Chicago, two enforcement surges earlier this year. (AP)

Film



This image released by Netflix shows Joel Edgerton in a scene from 'Train Dreams.' (AP)

Bentley's film wins fans with un-Hollywood style

'Train Dreams' paints a nostalgic elegy

TORONTO, Nov 18, (AP): It's popular in Hollywood to follow the tax credits wherever they go, but that was never going to be much of an option for "Train Dreams."

When director Clint Bentley embarked on adapting Denis Johnson's 2011 novella, he knew the book's early 20th century Idaho and Washington setting would take him into the Pacific Northwest forests. Johnson's book is a small miracle: a slender and quiet tale of the simple life of a logger and railroad worker named Robert Grainier. He's a small, almost infinitesimal piece in a larger drama of time's march forward and the inexorable maw of progress cutting through an untamed landscape.

In scouting for "Train Dreams," Bentley, 40, found it harder than ever to find the old growth forests of the book. If "Train Dreams" is about unearthing a forever-lost American past, locating it for the film was fittingly elusive.

"When we were looking for locations, it proved the point of the film," Bentley says. "It's hard to find those old trees. There are protected areas you can get to. We drove three hours north from Spokane, up to this grove of old trees by the Canadian border. You get there after a hike and it's not that big of a stand of old trees. It's the few they couldn't get to."

"Train Dreams," meditative and radiant, seeks to evoke an ever-changing land upon which Grainier anonymously labors. This is a time of seemingly slower pace but one constantly in flux, with forests being cleared, railroads being laid and lives being sacrificed along the way.

"The thing that's beautiful about the book is that it feels like an elegy for a lost time. That's what I wanted the movie to feel like," says Bentley. "And I think a big part of that is we look around and we see, 'Oh, that was a forest, and now there's a Costco there.'"

Bentley's film, currently playing in theaters before streaming Nov. 21 on Netflix, is resonating with audiences in part because of how deeply un-Hollywood it is. Grainier,

played by Joel Edgerton in the film, doesn't talk much. He isn't leading a heroic or even particularly notable life. It's more that life is happening to him.

"What hooked me was about the significance of what we would otherwise presume of an insignificant life," Edgerton says. "We go to the cinema to watch what we hope for ourselves, that we would be more active and in control and heroic. But I think the majority of us share similarities to Robert in that we don't presume to have full control of things in the world, and we absorb the blows of the world. We're not the controllers of our universe."

When "Train Dreams," which first debuted at the Sundance Film Festival, was premiering at the Toronto Film Festival, Edgerton, Bentley and Greg Kwedar, the co-screenwriter, gathered to discuss a movie that tends to inspire soulful rumination. Bentley and Kwedar, the writing-producer partners behind 2024's "Sing Sing" and 2021's "Jockey," have shown a rare knack for crafting textured American stories.

"We want to build our stories from the dirt up," says Kwedar, 41.

Bentley and Kwedar write together but take turns directing. Their script to "Sing Sing," the acclaimed real-life inspired prison drama populated by formerly incarcerated men, was Oscar nominated. (Clarence Maclin and John "Divine G" Whitfield were also credited as writers.)

Yet little about Johnson's novella, first published in a 2002 issue of The Paris Review, screams movie adaptation. It's harsh and unsentimental. Grainier experiences tragedy. His life is mostly hard and remains a mystery to him. But it contains small joys and moments of epiphany.

Over the years, "Train Dreams" has gone from a cherished cult favorite to an established classic, "an American epic writ small," as one critic called it. In 2012, "Train Dreams" was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Last year, The New York Times included it on a list of the best books of the 21st cen-

tury, praising how its soft-spoken protagonist "bears witness to the real-time formation of a raw, insatiable nation."

Edgerton read it around the time "Train Dreams" was published as a book, and inquired about the adaptation rights. But they were taken.

"I remember thinking there would be a great movie in here, but how difficult of an undertaking it would be," Edgerton says. "The fear would be how much would you have to bend Denis' work and alter it so much that it lost a few of the elements so beautiful about it. In order to put it on the screen, you might end up destroying the best of it."

Years later, when Bentley and Kwedar began writing the adaptation, they proceeded carefully, trying to stick to the spirit of the book while reshaping it for film. As they describe the reverence they had for the book ("The quality of the prose, you feel like you're in the presence of greatness," Kwedar says), Edgerton smiles.

"I just had the image of someone coming to you guys and going, 'Hey, can you restore this church for me?'" Edgerton says.

The way "Train Dreams" evolves as a series of disjointed encounters, with narration and lyricism filling in between, has led to a lot of comparisons to the film's of Terrence Malick. The film's supporting cast includes Felicity Jones as Gladys, Grainier's wife, William H. Macy as a well-traveled explosives expert and Kerry Condon as a woman Grainier meets later in life. Like the book, the movie slowly, subtly gathers a force that you only fully feel in the movie's final, profound moments.

"Someone said, 'Across this whole movie we're going to build a fire and at the end of it, we're going to light it,'" Bentley says.

"You just hope the box of matches isn't wet," Edgerton jokes.

But they collectively trusted that "Train Dreams" could get there. They knew Johnson's book held a recognizable truth.



Renee Zellweger, (left), and writer Helen Fielding pose for photographers during the unveiling of the Bridget Jones statue. (AP)



The unveiling of the Bridget Jones statue. (AP)



Sally Phillips, (from left), Leo Woodall, Renee Zellweger and Chiwetel Ejiofor during the unveiling of the Bridget Jones statue. (AP)

Bridget Jones' new statue joins other film icons in London's Leicester Square

Bridget Jones has joined Harry Potter, Mary Poppins and Paddington as permanent residents of London's famed Leicester Square.

A new bronze statue of the romantic comedy heroine was unveiled Monday to mark 25 years since the release of the first "Bridget Jones" film.

Actor Renée Zellweger, who has played the titular

character four times since the first "Bridget Jones' Diary" was released on big screens in 2001, attended the unveiling along with author Helen Fielding, whose books inspired the films.

The statue, which depicts Zellweger dressed in a mini skirt and clutching a diary and a pen, is the newest addition to the "Scenes in the Square" trail in Leicester

Square, the home of numerous international film premieres.

The attraction, launched in 2020 to celebrate a century of cinema, also features statues of Mr. Bean, Bugs Bunny, Laurel and Hardy, Batman and Wonder Woman.

"Bridget Jones: Mad About The Boy," the fourth film in the franchise, was released earlier this year. (AP)

Gaming platform implements Persona age estimation

Roblox steps up age checks and creates age-based chat groups

NEW YORK, Nov 18, (AP): Roblox is stepping up its age verification system for users who want to privately message other players and implementing age-based chats so kids, teens and adults will only be able to message people around their own age.

The moves come as the popular gaming platform continues to face criticism and lawsuits over child safety and a growing number of states and countries are implementing age verification laws.

The company had previously announced the age estimation tool, which is provided by a company called Persona, in July. It requires players to take a video selfie that will be used to estimate their age. Roblox says the videos are deleted after the age check is processed. Users are not required to submit a face scan to use the platform, only if they want to chat with other users.



The gaming platform Roblox is displayed on a tablet, Oct. 30, 2021, in New York. (AP)

Roblox doesn't allow kids under 13 to chat with other users outside of games unless they have explicit parental permission - and unlike different platforms, it does not encrypt private chat conversations, so it can monitor and moderate them.

While some experts have expressed caution about the reliability of facial age estimation tools, Matt Kaufman, chief safety officer at Roblox, said that between the ages of about five to 25, the system can accurately estimate a person's age within one or two years.

"But of course, there's always people who may be well outside of a traditional bell curve. And in those cases, if you disagree with the estimate that comes back, then you can provide an ID or use parental consent in order to correct that," he said.

After users go through the age checks, they will be assigned to age groups ranging from under nine, nine

to 12, 13 to 15, 16 to 17, 18 to 20 and over 21. Users will then be able to chat with their age group or similar age groups, depending on their age and the type of chat.

Roblox said it will start enforcing age checks in Australia, New Zealand, and the Netherlands in the first week of December and the rest of the world in early January.

A growing number of tech companies are implementing verification systems to comply with regulations or ward off criticism that they are not protecting children. This includes Google, which recently started testing a new age-verification system for YouTube that relies on AI to differentiate between adults and minors based on their watch histories. Instagram is testing an AI system to determine if kids are lying about their ages.

Fashion



Photos from the launch of Elegance 2025 by Sunanda Creations.

Sunanda Creations unveils Elegance 2025: A night of style and culture

Elegance 2025, presented by Sunanda Creations, lit up Blooms Hotel in Kuwait City on November 14 with a vibrant showcase of fashion, culture, and artistic flair.

Helmed by designer Sunanda Rajeev, the event reflected her refined vision and distinctive blend of sophistication and creativity.

The evening was seamlessly hosted by Dr. Reeby, whose charm and energy kept the audience fully engaged. Expert choreography by Soumya Pratap brought structure and artistic harmony to each segment, enhancing the overall visual experience.

A highlight of the night was a series of captivating ramp walks featuring women, men, and children, each radiating confidence and individuality.

The Mr. and Ms. Elegance competition added an exciting competitive edge, judged by Mr. Jagan, Associate Professor at Kuwait Dental College, and Mrs. Arundhati, Director of Nrithayadhana Dance School—both lending expertise and prestige to the proceedings.

The event drew a large and enthusiastic audience, contributing to the lively and spirited environment. A curated selection of stalls further

enriched the experience, including a Mural Art Stall showcasing culturally inspired handmade artworks and a Beads Stall offering exquisite handcrafted accessories.

The celebration concluded with a festive dinner, marking the success of an evening that transcended a traditional fashion show to become a memorable celebration of unity, creativity, and artistic excellence.

Elegance 2025 stands as a proud milestone for Sunanda Creations and everyone who played a part in bringing it to life.

Newest buzzword

‘Agentic’ AI: The next step beyond chatbots

NEW YORK, Nov 18, (AP): For technology adopters looking for the next big thing, “agentic AI” is the future. At least, that’s what the marketing pitches and tech industry T-shirts say.

What makes an artificial intelligence product “agentic” depends on who’s selling it. But the promise is usually that it’s a step beyond today’s generative AI chatbots.

Chatbots, however useful, are all talk and no action. They can answer questions, retrieve and summarize information, write papers and generate images, music, video and lines of code. AI agents, by contrast, are supposed to be able to take actions on a person’s behalf.

But if you’re confused, you’re not alone. Google searches for “agentic” have skyrocketed from near obscurity a year ago to a peak earlier this fall.

A new report Tuesday by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Boston Consulting Group, who surveyed more than 2,000 business executives around the world, describes agentic AI as a “new class of systems” that “can plan, act, and learn on their own.”

“They are not just tools to be operated or assistants waiting for instructions,” says the MIT Sloan Management Review report. “Increasingly, they behave like autonomous teammates, capable of executing multistep processes and adapting as they go.”

AI chatbots - such as the original ChatGPT that debuted three years ago this month - rely on systems called large language models that predict the next word in a sentence based on the huge trove of human writings they’ve been trained on. They can sound remarkably human, especially when given a voice, but are effectively performing a kind of word completion.

That’s different from what AI developers - including ChatGPT’s maker, OpenAI, and tech giants like Amazon, Google, IBM, Microsoft and Salesforce - have in mind for AI agents. “A generative AI-based chatbot will say, ‘Here are the great ideas’ ... and then be done,” said Swami Sivasubramanian, vice president of Agentic AI at Amazon Web Services, in an interview this week. “It’s useful, but what makes things agentic is that it goes beyond what a chatbot does.”

Transformations

Sivasubramanian, a longtime Amazon employee, took on his new role helping to lead work on AI agents in Amazon’s cloud computing division earlier this year. He sees great promise in AI systems that can be given a “high-level goal” and break it down into a series of steps and act upon them. “I truly believe agentic AI is going to be one of the biggest transformations since the beginning of the cloud,” he said.

For most consumers, the first encounters with AI agents could be in realms like online shopping. Set a budget and some preferences and AI agents can buy things or arrange travel bookings using your credit card. In the longer run, the hope is that they can do more complex tasks with access to your computer and a set of guidelines to follow.

“I’d love an agent that just looked at all my medical bills and explanations of benefits and figured out how to pay them,” or another one that worked like a “personal shield” fighting off email spam and phishing attempts, said Thomas Dietterich, a professor emeritus at Oregon State University who has worked on developing AI assistants for decades.

Dietterich has some quibbles with certain companies using “agentic” to describe “any action a computer might do, including just looking things up on the web,” but he has no doubt that the technology has immense possibilities as AI systems are given the “freedom and responsibility” to refine goals and respond to changing conditions as they work on people’s behalf.

“We can imagine a world in which there are thousands or millions of agents operating and they can form coalitions,” Dietterich said. “Can they form cartels? Would there be law enforcement (AI) agents?”

Milind Tambe has been researching AI agents that work together for three decades, since the first International Conference on Multi-Agent Systems gathered in San Francisco in 1995. Tambe said he’s been “amused” by the sudden popularity of “agentic” as an adjective. Previously, the word describing something that has agency was mostly found in other academic fields, such as psychology or chemistry.

But computer scientists have been debating what an agent is for as long as Tambe has been studying them.

In the 1990s, “people agreed that some software appeared more like an agent, and some felt less like an agent, and there was not a perfect dividing line,” said Tambe, a professor at Harvard University. “Nonetheless, it seemed useful to use the word ‘agent’ to describe software or robotic entities acting autonomously in an environment, sensing the environment, reacting to it, planning, thinking.”

The prominent AI researcher Andrew Ng, co-founder of online learning company Coursera, helped advocate for popularizing the adjective “agentic” more than a year ago to encompass a broader spectrum of AI tasks. At the time, he also appreciated that mainly “technical people” were describing it that way. “When I see an article that talks about ‘agentic’ workflows, I’m more likely to read it, since it’s less likely to be marketing fluff and more likely to have been written by someone who understands the technology,” Ng wrote in a June 2024 blog post.

Ng didn’t respond to requests for comment on whether he still thinks that.

Hotel team brings joy to children in hospital

Four Seasons Kuwait turns World Kindness Day into a journey of care and connection

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: At Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya, kindness is more than a gesture. It is a way of life woven into every interaction, every welcome, and every moment of sincere care. This World Kindness Day, that spirit came to life across the hotel in a celebration grounded in empathy, community, and human connection.

The day began far beyond the lobby doors, with a visit to the children of Al Jahra Hospital in collaboration with KACCH & BACCH. Carrying fifty filled with vibrant colors and heartfelt words, the hotel team set out with one simple intention: to bring a moment of joy to a child’s day. The smiles that greeted them became the heart of the story, gentle reminders that kindness often starts small but it never stays small. It expands, touches lives, and returns in ways that resonate deeply.

That same spirit flowed back into the hotel, where kindness continued its quiet journey from person to person. Employees arrived to find anonymous notes of appreciation from colleagues, simple messages that uplifted, encouraged, and reminded each team member of the supportive community they belong to. Balloons added a sense of lightness, transforming an ordinary workday into a shared celebration of care.

As the day unfolded, guests became part of the story as well. At Al Soor Lounge, warm coffee came with thoughtful Kindness Day messages, creating small moments of reflection in the middle of busy mornings. In the lobby, a flower booth blooming with red roses, created in collaboration with Ali Marafie Co, invited guests to pause, pick a flower, and carry a little kindness with them as they continued their day.

Families gathering for breakfast at Elements watched as children decorated their own muffins, a joyful scene that turned kindness into a playful and creative expression. Later, when guests entered their rooms, many discovered beautifully hand painted cards created by the young artists of Bayt Abdullah Children’s Hospice. These heartfelt pieces were placed as part of the in room welcome amenities, creating a meaningful connection between the community and the guest experience.

World Kindness Day at Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait was not defined by a single moment or gesture. It was a gentle thread linking the community, the team, and the guests in a shared experience of compassion. It served as a reminder that kindness does not need to be grand to be meaningful. It simply needs to be genuine.

And when it is genuine, it grows.



Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya team with handmade Kindness Cards.

Vietnamese gov’t warns of potential flu outbreak

Antimicrobial resistance threatens decades of progress: WHO

MANILA, Nov. 18, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization warned Tuesday that antimicrobial resistance is already causing a global health emergency, threatening to erase nearly a century of medical progress as common infections become increasingly challenging to treat.

Saia Ma'u Piukala, the WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, said in a statement released Tuesday that the discovery of antimicrobials almost a century ago changed the course of modern medicine.

But that is changing, he said, due to misuse and overuse of these medicines, bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites are quickly changing and becoming resistant to antimicrobials.

One in six bacterial infections worldwide now resists standard antibiotics, Piukala said. Nearly 5 million deaths in 2019 were associated with bacterial antimicrobial resistance, including about 1.3 million directly caused by drug-resistant infections.

In the Western Pacific region alone, as many as 5.2 million people could die from drug-resistant bacterial infections between 2020 and 2030, according to WHO estimates.

"Antimicrobials are precious, fragile tools -- and we are in danger of losing them," Piukala said, adding the current alarming trends demand collective regional and global action.

At the 2024 UN General Assembly, governments adopted a political declaration committing to a 10 percent reduction in deaths from drug-resistant infections by 2030.

Despite those commitments, rural clinics in many countries still lack basic diagnostics and access to antibiotics, while hospitals struggle to implement antimicrobial stewardship programs because of staffing shortages and delayed laboratory reporting.

Piukala said curbing antimicrobial resistance starts with responsible antibiotic use.

"When people take antibiotics only when necessary, they help protect everyone. When clinicians prescribe wisely, they safeguard hard-won medical advances. When hospitals strengthen infection control and invest in reliable, affordable diagnostics, lives are saved," Piukala said.

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Bird flu: Vietnam's Ministry of Health has warned of a potential flu outbreak after the country logged up to 11,000 cases of seasonal influenza per month over the past three months, a sharp rise from the mid-year figures, local media VnExpress reported Tuesday.

Since the beginning of the year, more than 132,000 flu cases have been recorded nationwide, including three deaths, the report said.

Elderly individuals, those with underlying conditions, pregnant women and children under five are at risk of severe complications.

The ministry advises citizens to maintain personal hygiene, wash hands frequently with soap, and cover mouths when coughing or sneezing. Those with flu-like symptoms should seek medical advice promptly.

The Vietnamese government has proposed to the National Assembly (NA) waiving hospital fees for near-poor households and elderly individuals aged over 75, starting in 2027, local daily Thanh Nien reported.

Minister of Health Dao Hong Lan made the proposal at the ongoing session of the 15th NA on Monday.

The government has also proposed that from 2026, citizens will be entitled to at least one free annual health check-up or screening.

Funding for these periodic health check-ups will come from the health insurance fund and the state budget, ac-

Cancer, heart, infectious disease research hit

NIH funding cuts disrupt clinical trials for over 74,000 participants: report

NEW YORK, Nov 18, (AP): Over 74,000 people enrolled in experiments have been affected by the National Institutes of Health's funding cuts, according to a new report.

Between the end of February and mid-August, funding ceased for 383 studies that were testing treatments for conditions including cancer, heart disease and brain disease. The cuts disproportionately impacted efforts to tackle infectious diseases like the flu, pneumonia and COVID-19, researchers found.

The funding cuts likely disrupted patients' lives in different ways.

Some may have signed up for trials that never began or got delayed as institutions scrambled for alternate funding. Others could have lost access to medication or been left with an unmonitored device implant.

More still could have participated in trials only for the results to never get published.

"The disruption to the research enterprise was profound and substantial," said Heather Pierce, who has followed NIH grant cuts for the Association of American Medical Colleges.

More broadly, the lost research harms patients who could have benefited from a possible new treatment, researchers said in the report published Monday in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine.

"The whole purpose of these clinical trials is to generate evidence on what works and doesn't work in medicine," said study co-author Anupam B. Jena with Harvard Medical School.

Researchers counted 11,008 NIH-funded studies during the study period. Of those, 1 in 30 lost funding.

Those clinical trial cuts may also erode trust between people and the medical institutions that support them, said Jeremy Berg, a former director of an NIH institute. Patients could think twice before participating in future research projects, worried that the funding could get pulled abruptly.

"Anybody else who's ever approached about a clinical trial could easily feel, 'Why should I be involved in this?'" said Berg.

Andrew Nixon, a spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said in an email that the NIH is realigning its priorities, and funding was likely cut for the clinical trials because they "prioritized ideological agendas over scientific rigor and meaningful outcomes for the American people."

"We strongly reject the intentionally misleading portrayal of our grant management process," said Nixon.

The NIH has cut billions of dollars in research projects under the Trump administration.

A Supreme Court decision in August paved the way for the NIH to axe hundreds of millions in a push to cut diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. Challenges to NIH's attempted cuts to the so-called indirect costs of medical research are also making their way through the courts.



National Institute of Health researchers test patient samples in Bethesda, Md., on Nov. 20, 2019. (AP)

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Call to cover obesity treatments

Novo cuts Wegovy prices, but doctors still see cost challenges for patients

NEW YORK, Nov 18, (AP): Novo Nordisk is chopping prices again for Wegovy, but doctors say the expense will remain challenging for patients without insurance.

The drugmaker said Monday that it has started selling higher doses of the injectable obesity treatment for \$349 a month to patients paying the full bill. That's down from \$499, and in line with terms of a drug pricing agreement outlined earlier this month by President Donald Trump's administration.

Novo also started a temporary offer of \$199 a month for the first two months of low doses of Wegovy and the drug's counterpart for diabetes, Ozempic. The new pricing will be available at pharmacies nationwide, through home delivery and from some telemedicine providers.

Rival Eli Lilly also plans price breaks for its weight-loss drug Zepbound once it gets a new, multi-dose pen on the market. Lilly has said it will sell a starter dose of Zepbound for \$299 a month and additional doses at up to \$449. Both represent \$50 reductions from current prices for sales directly to patients.

Obesity treatments like Zepbound and Wegovy have soared in popularity in recent years. Known as GLP-1 receptor agonists, the drugs work by targeting hormones in the gut and brain that affect appetite and feelings of fullness.

In clinical trials, they helped people shed 15% to 22% of their body weight - up to 50 pounds or more in many cases. But affordability has been a persistent challenge for patients.

A recent poll by the nonprofit KFF found that about half of the people who take the treatments say it was hard to afford them.

Both Lilly and Novo announced price cuts earlier this year that brought the cost of higher doses of their treatments down to around \$500 a month.

Previous research has shown that people have difficulty paying for a medication when the cost rises above \$100 per month, said Stacie Dusetzina, a Vanderbilt University Medical Center professor and prescription drug pricing expert.

She said Novo's new prices are "not going to really move the needle for a person who doesn't have a pretty reasonable amount of disposable income."

Dr. Laura Davison said the medication would still be unaffordable for patients on Medicaid in states where the government-funded program for people with low incomes doesn't cover the drug.

The bigger issue is expanding coverage of the treatments, said Davison, a West Virginia University obesity specialist.

"We've had hundreds of people lose coverage over the last couple of years, and we keep seeing more and more insurers drop coverage," she said, adding that her practice has started a group support program to help those who have lost coverage.

Coverage is slated to improve starting next year for at least one big payer under a deal announced by the Trump administration. The federally funded Medicare program, mainly for people ages 65 and older, will begin covering the treatments for people who have severe obesity and others who are overweight or obese and have serious health problems.



Boxes for the medications Wegovy and Zepbound are arranged for a photograph in California on May 8, 2025. (AP)

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Measles remains a top child killer

Pakistan starts drive to vaccinate 57m kids

ISLAMABAD, Nov 18, (AP): Pakistan on Monday began a two-week nationwide vaccination campaign targeting more than 57 million children, aiming to curb rising cases of measles, rubella and polio, the country's National Emergency Operations Center said.

The drive, running through Nov. 29, will provide measles and rubella shots to 34.5 million children and administer polio drops to 23.3 million, it said in a statement. The campaign follows training by the World Health Organization of more than 140,000 health workers to support vaccination teams.

Measles typically begins with a high fever and a rash that spreads from the face to the neck. While most children recover, the disease remains a leading cause of death among young children, according to WHO.

Over the past three years, Pakistan has reported more than 131,000 measles cases, highlighting the urgency of the effort.

Though drives against polio are frequently launched in Pakistan, despite militant attacks on vaccination teams and the police officers who escort them, campaigns against measles and rubella drives are usually launched every two to three years.

According to the World Health Organization, Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan remain the only two countries where polio, a potentially fatal, paralyzing virus, hasn't been stopped, according to WHO.

Since January, Pakistan has recorded 30 new polio cases, a setback in the fight to eradicate the crippling disease among children. Militants in Pakistan falsely claim that vaccination campaigns are a Western conspiracy to sterilize children.

Since the 1990s, more than 200 polio workers and police officers assigned to protect them have been killed in attacks.

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Drug addiction: Sri Lanka has designated 10 hospitals to treat individuals suffering from severe drug addiction, a senior minister told journalists on Monday.

Minister of Public Security Ananda Wijepala said the government will also establish an office for the National Council on Drug Control in Colombo.

The minister added that a circular has been issued on Monday instructing all state institutions, schools and universities across the country to set up drug-prevention committees. The move is part of a broader national campaign to eradicate drug abuse and strengthen institutional mechanisms against narcotics.

The minister also said the new office linked to the 1818 hotline of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board will open on Nov. 22 in Colombo.

Wijepala said curbing drugs and crime is a priority for the government.

The Sri Lankan government has recently stepped up its crackdown on drug-related crimes. On Oct. 30, a nationwide anti-narcotics campaign titled "A Nation United" was launched by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

Brazil urges nations find solutions to global warming

Pope Leo XIV calls for urgent climate action, says God’s creation ‘crying out’

BELEM, Brazil, Nov 18, (AP): Pope Leo XIV urged countries at United Nations climate talks to take "concrete actions" to stop climate change that is threatening the planet, telling them humans are failing in their response to global warming and that God's creation "is crying out in floods, droughts, storms and relentless heat."

In a video message played for religious leaders gathered in Belem, Leo said nations had made progress, "but not enough."

"One in three people live in great vulnerability because of these climate changes," Leo said. "To them, climate change is not a distant threat, and to ignore these people is to deny our shared humanity."

His message came as the talks were moving into their second week, with high-level ministers from governments around the world arriving at the edge of the Brazilian Amazon to join negotiations. Monday was dominated by speeches, with several leaders from Global South nations giving emotional testimony on devastating costs of recent extreme weather and natural disasters.

Agreement

Vulnerable nations have pressed for more ambition at these talks as world leaders have begun to acknowledge that Earth will almost surely go past a hoped-for limit - 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) in Earth's warming since pre-industrial times. That was the target set at these talks in 2015 in the landmark Paris agreement.

Scientists say in addition to deadly heat, a warming atmosphere leads to more frequent and deadly extreme weather such as flooding, droughts, violent downpours and more powerful hurricanes.

Leo said there's still time to stay within the Paris Agreement, but not much.

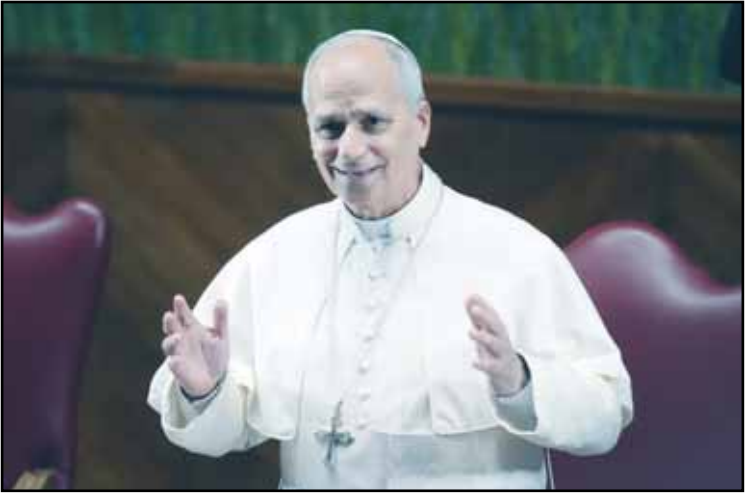
"As stewards of God's creation, we are called to act swiftly, with faith and prophecy, to protect the gift He entrusted to us," he said. And he added: "But we must be honest: it is not the Agreement that is failing, we are failing in our response. What is failing is the political will of some."

Leo made history this year by becoming the first American pope, and has embraced Pope Francis' environmental legacy, including dismissing climate skeptics.

The US, the world's second-largest polluter, is skipping the conference. US President Donald Trump called climate change "the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world" during a speech to the UN General Assembly in September.

UN climate chief Simon Stiell said Leo's words "challenge us to keep choosing hope and action."

Leo "reminds us that the Paris Agreement is delivering progress and remains our strongest tool - but we must work together for more, and that bolder climate action is an investment



Pope Leo XIV gestures as he arrives at the Pontifical Lateran University on the occasion of the opening of the academic year, in Rome, Friday, Nov. 14, 2025. (AP)

in stronger and fairer economies, and more stable world," Stiell said.

David Gibson, director of the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University in New York, said Leo is becoming the world's most prominent moral leader against climate change.

"This message does stake Leo out as a voice for the rest of the world, especially the Southern Hemisphere where climate change is wreaking havoc with the vulnerable in Asia, Africa and Latin America," said Gibson.

And he said it shows that Leo, who spent decades working as a missionary in Peru and is a naturalized Peruvian citizen, "has a Latin American heart and voice."

The Laudato Si' Movement, a Catholic climate movement that takes its name from a 2015 encyclical in which Pope Francis called for climate action, called Leo's message "a profound moral intervention."

Vulnerable

"He reminds the world that creation is crying out and that vulnerable communities cannot be pushed aside. "His voice cuts through the noise of negotiations and calls leaders back to what truly matters: our shared humanity and the urgent duty to act with courage, compassion, and justice," the group's executive director, Lorna Gold, said.

With a direct letter sent to nations, host country Brazil is shifting the U.N. climate conference into a higher gear.

The letter sent late Monday comes during the final week of what has been billed as a historic climate summit, the first ever in the Amazon rainforest, a key regulator of climate because trees absorb carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that warms the planet.

The letter comes ahead of speeches of high-level ministers Tuesday. Headliners include representatives from influential European countries like Ed Miliband, energy secretary of the United Kingdom, and Deputy Prime Minister Sophie Hermans of the Netherlands. More leaders will also speak from small island states and developing countries like Barbados and Bangladesh, both facing loss of land as seas rise because of climate change.

The letter asks leaders to hash out many aspects of a potential agreement by Tuesday night so that much is out of the way before the final set decisions Friday, when the conference is scheduled to end. Climate summits routinely go past their last day, as all nations come to the negotiating table trying to balance domestic concerns with major shifts needed around the world to protect the environment and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Brazil's guidance for the summit, called COP30, is raising hopes for significant measures to fight global warming, which could range from a road map to move away from fossil fuels like oil and coal, or more money to help nations build out clean energies like wind and solar.

For negotiators, Brazil's letter will mean later nights as they seek to strike political bargains across a host of contentious issues.

"There are important concessions we expect from all sides," said André Corrêa do Lago, COP30 president. "It is said you have to give to receive."

That Wednesday timeline is "pretty ambitious" and the stakes are high, said Alden Meyer, a senior associate at climate think tank E3G.

"Whether it's dealing with the impacts of climate change, dealing with increased energy bills and energy insecurity, improving health, creating jobs. Those are the things that people care about. They don't care about some sub-paragraph in a legal decision adopted here in Belem," Meyer said.

"Brazil, the presidency, has made that very clear since the beginning, that that's going to be the litmus test."

He added that the optimistic spirit of the host country "is starting to get a little infectious" and that that is part of building trust and goodwill amongst nations.

"I sense ambition here. I sense a determination," former German climate envoy Jennifer Morgan said Monday morning.

WHO lauds country’s fast action

Ethiopia confirms 3 Marburg virus deaths

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, Nov 18, (AP): Ethiopia on Monday confirmed three deaths from the Marburg hemorrhagic virus that has been detected in an area neighboring South Sudan.

Health Minister Mekdes Daba said Ethiopia's government, which declared a Marburg outbreak on Friday, had conducted tests in 17 suspected cases in the country's south. The outbreak was reported in the Omo region.

The minister said there were no active cases but the government was taking preventive measures. A team from the World Health Organization and the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been dispatched to support with testing and outbreak control.

South Sudan's health ministry on Sunday issued a public health advisory to residents of four counties to wash their hands frequently and avoid contact with bodily fluids to prevent the spread of the virus. Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya last week called the outbreak a concern because South Sudan has a "fragile health system."

The Marburg virus originates in fruit bats and spreads between people through close contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals or with contaminated surfaces, such as soiled bedsheets. Without treatment, Marburg can be fatal in up to 88% of people who fall ill.

Symptoms include fever, muscle pains, diarrhea, vomiting and, in some cases, death from severe blood loss. There is no authorized vaccine or treatment for Marburg.

Marburg outbreaks and individual cases have in the past been recorded in Rwanda, Tanzania, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Congo, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Ghana, according to WHO.

The World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus praised the Ethiopian government's fast action, saying it showed a "commitment to bringing the outbreak under control quickly."

Ethiopia's government had reported on Thursday that it was investigating a possible outbreak of an unidentified viral hemorrhagic fever and was lauded by the continental health emergency body, Africa CDC, for its transparency.

The WHO sent a technical team on Thursday to support the East African country in testing and outbreak response.

"WHO is also providing essential supplies, including personal protective equipment for health workers and infection-prevention supplies, as well as a rapidly deployable isolation tent to bolster clinical care and management capacity," the U.N. agency said in a statement.

The outbreak was reported in the southern region of Omo, which borders South Sudan. Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya said Thursday that the outbreak was a concern because "South Sudan isn't far and has a fragile health system."

No other African country has reported Marburg virus cases in recent weeks.

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Cairo delivers standout championship

ISSF head hails China’s record-breaking season

CAIRO, Nov 18, (Xinhua): International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) president Luciano Rossi has hailed China’s record-breaking season and Cairo’s successful staging of the 2025 ISSF World Championship Rifle/Pistol, saying the athletes, facilities, and organization have made this year’s event a standout edition.

In a recent interview with Xinhua in Cairo, Rossi highlighted China’s exceptional form throughout the 2025 season, noting that Chinese shooters have already set several world records this year.

“The Chinese athletes work very hard and very well, and their scores are very high,” he said, adding that their results reflect sustained progress and high-level performance.

The 2025 ISSF World Championship Rifle/Pistol in Cairo, held from Nov. 6 to 18, has drawn more than 700 shooters from across the globe and delivered some of the season’s strongest performances.

“In Cairo, the shooting range is really beautiful. All the equipment works very well. So, we are very happy, and all the athletes were very happy to compete in this World Championship in Cairo 2025,” Rossi said.

China has topped the medal table with 12 gold, seven silver, and two bronze medals, followed by South Korea and India.

China’s young 21-member squad has produced one of the most dominant showings in recent ISSF history, setting five world records across rifle and pistol events.

All five Chinese women who competed in pistol events won gold and set world records, while 20-year-old Yao Qianxun collected six golds and two silvers, breaking three world records.

Rossi said China’s rise is part of a broader surge in Asian shooting, noting that multiple countries and regions across the continent have significantly improved in recent years, underlining the region’s strong results and continued development.

He added that China will also host a major ISSF World Cup next year in Hangzhou, describing it as “a beautiful city awaiting a great competition.” Rossi said the competition level in Cairo has been “very high,” with the start of the new Olympic cycle creating additional pressure as athletes look to qualify and build momentum for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games. “They know that the World Championship is the second biggest competition after the Olympics.” Looking ahead to LA 2028, he confirmed that the ISSF has maintained 340 athlete quotas and 15 shooting events, with allocations unchanged from previous cycles.

Rossi also revealed that the ISSF will move forward with rifle clothing reforms, amid concerns that increasingly rigid shooting suits and footwear affect performance, cost, athlete health, and the sport’s long-term Olympic standing.

Updated rules are expected to be published by late November, with testing planned during the first three World Cup stages next year before final adjustments are made.

He added that the federation continues to work with all continental and national bodies to modernize formats and improve both the athlete experience and audience understanding.

“We are working together, and we respect all the athletes, all the coaches, all the federations, and all the continents,” he said. “We collect new ideas to get ready for the new format, also for the next Olympics. This is what I promise, and this is what we are doing together.” Rossi emphasized that youth development remains central to the ISSF’s strategy, with new training and competition pathways under study, alongside expanded support for Africa and developing regions.

“The ISSF is always focused on the future. Through innovation and cooperation, we want to make shooting more visible and vibrant around the world,” the ISSF president told Xinhua.



Wang Zifei of China competes during the 50m rifle 3 positions women's final of shooting at the 2025 ISSF World Championship Rifle/Pistol in Cairo, Egypt. (Xinhua)

Wood back bowling in Ashes practice

PERTH, Australia, Nov 18, (AP): Mark Wood is back bowling at pace against his England teammates in practice. Cameron Green is primed and ready to return to bowling for Australia in test cricket.

The Ashes series starts Friday, and every twist and turn this week has implications for selection in the first test of the 2025-26 edition of the traditional rivalry.

Wood withdrew from a trial match against a second-string England team last week because of a hamstring strain in his first game since knee surgery in March, but was cleared after medical scans. The 35-year-old paceman had a 30-minute bowling session in the nets on Tuesday in England’s first practice at Perth Stadium, venue for the first test.

“He was quick enough, I can tell you that from facing him,” England wicket-keeper-batter Jamie Smith told reporters. “He’s bowling very good pace, and it’s obviously great preparation for what we’ve got in store here.”

England could go into the test with

two express bowlers if Jofra Archer and Wood are both selected in a city where quality pace attacks have had success in the past.

“I feel our bowling group have a good chance of getting 20 wickets in the game,” Josh Tongue, one of England’s fast bowling options, said after practice in Perth. Australia’s long-time Australian frontline pace trio will be depleted without veterans Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood, both ruled out of the first test with injuries.

Having allrounder Green back in the test bowling attack for the first time since March 2024 could help to settle the combination for the hosts.

Green, who didn’t play a test for more than a year after undergoing back surgery in the middle of last year, returned to international cricket in June but only as a batter.

He bowled 16 overs across two innings in a domestic first-class match for Western Australia against Queensland in Perth last week and said he’s under no restrictions for the test.

Bulls survive Jokic’s triple-double to hand Nuggets first home loss



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) drives to the basket around New Orleans Pelicans guard Jose Alvarado (15) during the third quarter of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans. (AP)

Miami overcomes frantic rally at buzzer to edge Knicks

DENVER, Nov 18, (AP): Kevin Huerter and Nikola Vucevic hit big 3-pointers down the stretch and the Chicago Bulls overcame a triple-double by Nikola Jokic to hold off the Denver Nuggets 130-127 on Monday night.

The Bulls squandered an 18-point lead in the first half. They also let a 13-point lead in the fourth quarter slip away before rallying late to snap a five-game losing streak.

Huerter hit a go-ahead 3-pointer with 1:25 left and Vucevic later extended the lead with another with 33 seconds remaining. Denver had a chance to tie it, but Jokic’s shot at the buzzer was off the mark.

Ayo Dosunmu and Josh Giddey led six Bulls players in double figures with 21 points each. Giddey also had 14 rebounds.

Chicago handed the Nuggets their first home loss of the season in a game in which the Bulls held a 66-9 advantage in bench scoring.

Heat 115, Knicks 113

In Miami, Norman Powell scored 19 points, Kel’el Ware finished with 16 points and 14 rebounds and the Miami Heat held off a frantic rally in the final moments to beat the New York Knicks.

Davion Mitchell scored 18 points for Miami, which got 14 from Simone Fontecchio and 13 apiece from Jaime Jaquez Jr. and Pelle Larsson.

Deuce McBride scored 25 for New York, which got 23 from Mikal Bridges and a 22-point, 16-rebound effort from Karl-Anthony Towns.

Miami led by 10 with 3 minutes left before the Knicks finished on an 11-3 run. New York got within one point on a 3-pointer by Towns with 22.4 seconds left, and Mitchell pushed Miami’s lead back to two about a second later by making the second of two free throws.

That set up a most eventful final possession for New York, one in which the Knicks thought they tied the game on a goaltending call that was overturned after review.

Thunder 126, Pelicans 109

In New Orleans, Chet Holmgren scored 26 points and grabbed nine rebounds, and the Oklahoma City Thunder raced to an early double-digit lead they maintained throughout in victory over the reeling New Orleans Pelicans.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 23 points and Lu Dort 17 for the Thunder, who set a franchise record for points in a quarter with 49 in the first. Isaiah Hartenstein added 16 points for Oklahoma City, which won its sixth straight for a 14th victory in 15 games to open the season.

Rookie guard Jeremiah Fears scored a season-high 24 and Trey Murphy III added 18 points for the Pelicans, who’ve lost six straight for the second time in their first 14 games, and two straight



Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert (27) goes up to dunk during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Dallas Mavericks in Minneapolis. (AP)

since interim coach James Borrego took over in the wake of Willie Green’s firing on Saturday.

New Orleans played without Zion Williamson (hamstring) who missed his ninth game this season. Saddiq Bey (left ankle) also was scratched for New Orleans. Rookie Micah Peavy scored a season-high 16 points for the Pelicans in a reserve role.

76ers110, Clippers 108

In Philadelphia, Tyrese Maxey scored 39 points, Paul George had nine points and seven rebounds in his season debut, and the Philadelphia 76ers rallied to edge short-handed Los Angeles Clippers.

Quentin Grimes added 19 points and Andre Drummond had 14 points and 18 rebounds while filling in for Joel Embiid.

James Harden scored 28 points for the Clippers, who have lost eight of nine. Harden became the 11th player to eclipse 28,000 career points with a first-quarter layup.

Derrick Jones Jr. sat out after injuring his knee in Sunday’s 121-118 loss at Boston. The Clippers also were without Kawhi Leonard (ankle/foot sprain) for the seventh straight game.

Embiid (right knee injury management) sat out for the third straight game and eighth of 13 this season.

Cavaliers 118, Bucks 106

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 37 points and the Cleveland Cavaliers rallied for a win over the Milwaukee Bucks, who saw All-Star forward Giannis Antetokounmpo leave game due to injury.

Antetokounmpo immediately went to the locker room with 3:03 remaining in the second quarter and did not return due to a left groin strain. The 14-year veteran came into the game tied for second in

the league and leading the Eastern Conference in scoring at 32.6 points per game.

Coach Doc Rivers said there would further testing for Antetokounmpo on Tuesday.

Antetokounmpo was listed as probable on the injury report due to left knee patellar tendinopathy, but finished with 14 points, five rebounds and four assists in 13 minutes.

Mitchell, second in the Eastern Conference in scoring at 30.4 points per game, had 25 points in the first half. It is the fifth time this season he has had at least 35 points in a game.

Timberwolves 120, Mavericks 96

In Minneapolis, Naz Reid scored a season-high 22 points and the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the short-handed Dallas Mavericks.

Reid scored 10 points in the first quarter and led all scorers with 19 points in the first half. He hit a 3-pointer just before the end of third quarter, capping his 22-point game and sending Minnesota into the fourth quarter with a 32-point lead.

Six Timberwolves scored in double figures, including all five starters. Jaden McDaniels and Rudy Gobert scored 15 points apiece and star Anthony Edwards had a relatively quiet night with 13 points on 5-for-14 shooting.

Raptors 110, Hornets 108

In Toronto, RJ Barrett scored the tiebreaking basket with 18 seconds left in the fourth quarter, Brandon Ingram and Scottie Barnes both had pivotal blocked shots in the final moments and the Toronto Raptors won for the eighth time in nine games by beating the Charlotte Hornets.

Ingram scored 27 points, Barnes and Barrett each had 16 and Immanuel Quickley added 15 points and 10 rebounds as Toronto won its fourth straight. Ingram got the crowd on its feet with an eye-popping fourth quarter dunk over Hornets rookie center Ryan Kalkbrenner.

After Barrett’s go-ahead basket, Ingram maintained the lead by blocking Kalkbrenner from behind. On the final possession, Barnes sealed it by blocking Collin Sexton’s putback attempt at the buzzer.

Pistons 127, Pacers 112

In Detroit, Jalen Duren scored 31 points in his return from an ankle injury and Daniss Jenkins added 26 points as the short-handed Detroit Pistons won their 10th straight game, beating the NBA-worst Indiana Pacers.

The Pistons are on their longest winning streak since an 11-game run in 2007-08, despite playing the last three games without several key players. Cade Cunningham (hip), Tobias Harris (ankle) and Ausar Thompson (ankle) were among the players on the sidelines against Indiana.

The 1-13 Pacers, meanwhile, have lost eight straight games. The NBA finalists from a year ago are mired in their longest losing streak since the 2014-15 season.

Real star seeks 260 million euros, ex-club counters with 440 mln

Mbappé, PSG clash in court as both sides demand massive payouts

PARIS, Nov 18, (AP): The legal dispute between Paris Saint-Germain and Kylian Mbappé escalated, with both sides making colossal financial demands.

The France star forward and his former club are at odds over alleged unpaid wages, and the financial dispute was examined by an industrial court.

Mbappé, who did not attend the hearing, previously claimed he was owed 55 million euros (\$63 million) by the reigning European champion. He now demands more than 260 million euros from the club, arguing that PSG owes him that money because his fixed-term contract should be reclassified as a permanent one. Such a reclassification would trigger compensation for unfair dismissal, unpaid wages, bonuses, and severance.

He also claims damages for moral harassment, undeclared work, and breaches of PSG’s duty of good faith and safety toward him.

“Kylian Mbappé is not asking for anything beyond what the law provides; he is simply seeking the enforcement of his legal rights, as any employee would,” the player’s advisers said in a statement.

PSG, meanwhile, is seeking a total of 440 million euros from the striker, including 180 million euros for a “loss of opportunity” to complete his transfer since he left as a free agent after he declined a 300 million euros offer from Saudi club Al-Hilal in July 2023.

PSG said in a statement it also wants compensation for breaches of good faith in both negotiations and contract performance, as well as reputational and image damage.

A decision from the court is expected next month.

Mbappé joined Real Madrid during the 2024 summer on a free transfer after scoring a club-record 256 goals in seven years at PSG, which won the Champions League without him this year.

PSG argued that when Mbappé was sidelined before the 2023-24 season - following his decision not to extend his contract - there was a verbal agreement with him opting to relinquish bonuses to return to the team.

“Before the court, the club presented evidence showing that the player acted disloyally by concealing for nearly eleven months, between July 2022 and June 2023, his decision not to extend his contract, thereby depriving the club of any



France’s Kylian Mbappe celebrates the opening goal during a World Cup 2026 group D qualifying soccer match between France and Ukraine in Paris. (AP)

possibility of arranging a transfer.” PSG said in a statement.

“The player then challenged an agreement concluded with the club in August 2023, which provided for a salary reduction should he decide to leave on a free transfer, to preserve the club’s financial stability following the exceptional investment made.”

Mbappé’s camp replied that PSG never produced any evidence of an agreement to waive these payments.

When he accused PSG of moral harassment, Mbappé denounced the ‘lofting’ he claimed to have been subjected to at the club. The word lofting is used in France to describe a practice that involves isolating a player from the main squad for sporting, administrative, or disciplinary reasons.

His relationship with PSG ended amid deep tensions, as the club felt let down after offering him the most lucrative contract in club history when he signed a new deal in 2022.

Mbappé stunned PSG a year later by informing the club he would not take the option for an extra year. With his contract effectively in its final year, it put PSG in the position of needing to sell Mbappé to avoid losing him for nothing when the contract expired. Mbappé had joined PSG from Monaco for 180 million euros in 2017. After telling the club he would not extend, Mbappé was left off a preseason tour to Japan and South Korea and forced to train with fringe players. PSG said it would rather sell him than let the player leave for free in 2024, but he rejected a move to Al-Hilal.

PSG left Mbappé out of the opening league game of that season, but he soon returned to the lineup following talks.

PSG denied accusations of harassment or pressure, stating that Mbappé took part in more than 94% of the official matches of the 2023-24 season “with all sporting decisions made by a coach who is now a Champions League winner - and that he always worked in conditions compliant with the Professional Football Charter.”

Thamer Al-Shaghran triumphs at Hunting & Equestrian Club

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: The horse “Thamer Al-Shaghran”, trained by Khaled Al-Deihani and ridden by jockey Hussein Al-Anzi, claimed the prestigious Ahmad Cup for Al-Durra Stable, owned by Faisal Hamoud Al-Ahmad. Competing in the sixth race of the third horse racing meeting at the Hunting & Equestrian Club, Thamer Al-Shaghran covered 1,200 meters in 1:36.47 minutes, delivering a standout performance in the Egyptian Arabian Horses (Mixed C4) category.

The awards ceremony saw Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser, Chairman of the Higher Authority for Horse Racing and Secretary of the club, along with Faisal Al-Ahmad and Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi, owner of Al-Raya Stable, present the cup to Al-Deihani Stables. Sheikh Al-Nasser also handed a commemorative shield to Al-Ahmad in recognition of his support for Egyptian horse racing.

Faisal Al-Ahmad praised the event, saying: “We are grateful to the Hunting & Equestrian Club for their tremendous efforts. This race has captured the attention of all horse enthusiasts and is a wonderful start for lovers of



Al-Roumi attends as Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser honors Faisal Al-Ahmad.

purebred Egyptian horses. The coming seasons promise even greater achievements.”

Other notable winners included “Mabrouk”, who took the cup in the seventh race, and “Mudar”, victori-

ous in the fifth race. The Hunting Club Trophy for races one through four went to “The Thunderer”, “Halim”, “Hala Shamma”, and “Shock Wave”, highlighting the depth of talent in the Egyptian Arabian horse racing scene.

Kazma falls to Shabab Al-Ahli

Kuwait to face Thailand in friendlies

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Kuwait’s national basketball team is set to play two friendly matches against Thailand on November 24 and 26 at the Basketball Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. The games are part of the Federation’s preparation plan to ready Al-Azraq Basketball for upcoming competitions and to develop players’ skills in competitive matches.

The team is led by Serbian coach Oliver Kostić and his assistant, national coach Khaled Al-Qallaf, as the coaching staff works to ensure the squad is fully prepared for future tournaments.

Meanwhile, Kazma Club suffered a 65-68 loss to Shabab Al-Ahli Dubai in the third round of Group A of the West Asia Super Basketball League – Gulf Zone, played earlier this week.

Following the defeat, Kazma sits in third place with 4 points, from one win and two losses, just ahead



Shabab Al-Ahli player goes for a basket during the game.

of Bahrain’s Al-Muharraq, which has the same point total but a lower goal difference. Saudi club Al-Ittihad leads the group with 5 points from two wins and one loss, ahead of Shabab Al-Ahli on goal difference.

According to the tournament format, group winners advance di-

rectly to the semifinals, while the second and third-placed teams face off in a playoff match to determine the remaining semifinalists. The two finalists will then advance to compete with teams from Central Asia in the final stages of the championship.

US unveils ‘FIFA Pass’ to streamline World Cup visa process

WASHINGTON, Nov 18, (AP): The Trump administration is announcing a new initiative for foreigners traveling to the U.S. for the World Cup next year that will allow them to get interviews for visas more quickly.

Dubbed “FIFA Pass,” it will allow those who have purchased World Cup tickets through FIFA to get expedited visa appointments, as the administration continues to balance President Donald Trump’s tough-on-migration stance with an influx of global travelers for the soccer tournament. The “pass” in the name stands for “prioritized appointments scheduling system.”

“If you have a ticket for the World Cup, you can have prioritized appointments to get your visa,” said FIFA President Gianni Infantino,

who was in the Oval Office with Trump on Monday to explain the new system. Turning to the U.S. president, he added: “You said it the very first time we met, Mr. President, America welcomes the world.”

Trump said Monday that he “strongly” encourages World Cup travelers to the U.S. to apply for their visas “right away.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the administration has dispatched more than 400 additional consular officers around the world to handle the demand for visas, and that in about 80 percent of the globe, travelers to the U.S. can get a visa appointment within 60 days.

Under the new system, those who have bought tickets through FIFA will be allowed to

go through a “FIFA portal” that would help get their visa application and interview prioritized at the State Department.

“We’re going to do the same vetting as anybody else would get,” Rubio said. “The only difference here is, we’re moving them up in the queue.”

During next year’s World Cup, 104 games will be played in Canada, Mexico and the United States. Trump has made the success of the World Cup a top priority, and Infantino has been a frequent visitor to the White House while FIFA prepares for a Dec. 5 World Cup draw at the Kennedy Center, the arts institution now led and managed by Trump loyalists.

Trump once again floated the prospect of moving World Cup games out of one of its

host cities if he deemed it to be unsafe, with the election of progressive activist Katie Wilson as mayor of Seattle who has talked about Trump-proofing the city and protecting its sanctuary city status for migrants. Seattle is one of the 11 host cities in the U.S. next year.

“If we think there’s gonna be sign of any trouble, I would ask Gianni to move that to a different city,” Trump said of Seattle. The FIFA president stepped around the issue without committing to move host cities, noting that “I think safety and security is the number one priority for a successful World Cup” and that “we can see today that people have trust in the United States,” noting the number of tickets that have already been sold.



President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with the White House task force on the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the Oval Office of the White House, Monday in Washington. (AP)

Zeyang and Yujie blaze to 100m titles at China’s National Games



Wang Shun of Zhejiang competes during the men’s 400m individual medley final of swimming at China’s 15th National Games in Shenzhen, south China’s Guangdong Province. (Xinhua)

Shun captures record-extending 19th gold

GUANGZHOU, Nov 18, (Xinhua): Sprinters Li Zeyang of Hubei and Chen Yujie of Zhejiang stole the spotlight at China’s 15th National Games, as Li clocked 10.11 seconds to win the men’s 100 meters and 16-year-old Chen became the youngest women’s champion in the event’s history.

Thirty-four gold medals were awarded on the day, but the blue-riband sprints drew the loudest cheers. Li, 25, had signaled his form with a 10.08 in the heats before storming to his first National Games title. Wang Shengjie of Shandong took silver in 10.15, and Guangxi’s Zeng Keli got bronze in 10.16.

“I’m very satisfied with the result,” Li said. “China’s sprinting future belongs to the younger generation, and I’ll do my part to carry that flag forward.”

Chen, who turns 17 in just over a month, powered to an 11.10 finish - 0.27 seconds ahead of veteran sprinter Wei Yongli of Guangxi - setting an Asian U20 record. Shi Linqi of Anhui finished third in 11.38.

The teenage winner credited calm nerves and cleaner form. “I finally executed the technique

I’ve been working on for so long,” she said. “I felt very relaxed.”

Fujian’s Gong Debin won the men’s 400m hurdles in a national-record 48.68, and Olympian Mo Jiadie took the women’s race in 55.19. Jiangsu’s Su Lingdan secured the women’s javelin gold with a 62.42-meter opener.

Swimming wrapped up with six finals, highlighted by Zhejiang veteran Wang Shun, who captured a record-extending 19th National Games gold with his fourth straight men’s 400m individual medley title in 4:14.90. Wang, 31, advanced to the final only after a late withdrawal despite placing ninth in the heats.

“From 2013 to now, each edition has been a huge challenge,” he said. “This 400 IM might be my last, so every moment meant a lot.”

Shandong’s 18-year-old Zhang Zhanshuo continued his breakout meet, winning the men’s 1,500m freestyle in a personal best 14:52.73 to collect his fifth gold.

Short-course specialists also delivered as Zhejiang’s Xu Jiayu won the men’s 50m backstroke in 24.40 seconds for his fourth gold of the meet, while teammate Wu Qingfeng claimed the women’s 50m freestyle title in 24.21. Thirteen-year-old Yu Zidi of Hebei added the women’s 400m IM title in 4:34.33 for her third gold.

The women’s volleyball knockout round opened as in-form Jiangsu swept Liaoning, while Fujian stunned defending champion Tianjin.

Shanghai defeated Henan, who featured ace Zhu Ting, and Shandong overpowered Beijing.

Despite Zheng Qinwen’s injury withdrawal, tennis remained lively. Guangdong’s Yuan Yue advanced to the women’s singles quarterfinals after Tianjin veteran Wang Qiang quit due to injury, then partnered Wang Xinyu to reach the doubles semifinals.

Badminton delivered upsets across the board. In men’s singles, Anhui youngster Dong Tianyao shocked world No. 4 Li Shifeng of Jiangxi in three games. Zhejiang’s Chen Yufei narrowly held off Jiangxi’s Zhang Yiman in the women’s draw.

On the weightlifting platform, 32-year-old Olympic champion Shi Zhiyong of Zhejiang dominated the men’s 73kg class to claim his third National Games crown before announcing his retirement. “I truly can’t lift anymore,” he said. “Today was a sign telling me it’s time.”

Coastal rowing also concluded, with Liaoning’s Ma Bingbing edging Shandong’s Zhang Yuting for the women’s single sculls gold. The men’s event went to Fujian’s 19-year-old Tan Rukai, who held off Sichuan veteran Long Zhentao.

In canoe sprint, Shandong’s Zhang Dong stormed to the men’s K1 1000m title, while Zhejiang’s Wang Nan dominated the women’s K1 500m.

Beijing, led by race-walk stars Yang Jiayu and 18-year-old Shi Shengji, won the inaugural marathon race walk mixed relay in 2:58:01, setting a personal best for the team.

Kahraba leaves Qadsia

Belagha joins Kuwait Club coaching staff

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18: Salmiya is looking to bring back midfielder Mubarak Al-Fanani, who transferred to Qadsia in May 2023 on a contract running until the end of this season. Al-Fanani has struggled to make an impact with the “Yellow,” largely due to recurring injuries, the most recent of which in September sidelined him for over 60 days.

Badr Hassan Ashour is set to take over as Al-Arabi General Manager of the football department, replacing club president Abdulaziz Ashour as part of the club’s recent organizational restructuring. The move aims to strengthen the team’s performance and challenge for domestic titles after a disappointing previous season.

Last week, Al-Arabi also appointed Nasser Al-Shatti as head coach following the dismissal of Portuguese manager Marco Fich. Fich was let go after the team’s exit from the group stage of the Asian Challenge League and a first-season defeat to bottom-ranked Al-Nasr.

Al-Shatti conducted his first training session with the team on Monday, despite the absence of players called up to the senior and Olympic national teams, as well as foreign professionals. The squad will travel to the UAE at the end of November for a short training camp to prepare for the Qadsia derby on December 17 in the Zain Premier League and the Emir Cup final on December 23.



Midfielder Mubarak Al-Fanani celebrates in action after his goal.

Meanwhile, Qadsia has terminated the contract of Egyptian forward Mahmoud Abdel-Moneim “Kahraba” after underwhelming performances since joining in August. Kahraba becomes the second foreign player to leave the club, following Libyan striker Mohamed Sula, while Congolese forward Neskins Kipano is also expected to depart during the winter transfer window.

Kuwait Club has strengthened its first-team coaching staff with the appointment of Moroccan Toufiq Belagha, joining Montenegrin Nebojša Jović and Tunisian Karim Bouzghiba. Belagha brings extensive experience in Kuwait, having previously worked with youth teams at several clubs.

Injured Alcaraz withdraws from Davis Cup Finals

MADRID, Nov 18, (AP): Carlos Alcaraz will go another year without fulfilling his dream of winning the Davis Cup for Spain.

The top-ranked Alcaraz said he’s heartbroken to withdraw from the Davis Cup Finals in Italy because of a hamstring injury on Tuesday.

The decision was recommended by doctors, he said.

“I’m so sorry to announce that I won’t be able to play for Spain in the Davis Cup in Bologna,” Alcaraz said on X. “I have an edema in my right

hamstring and the medical recommendation is not to compete.”

He was hurt during last week’s ATP Finals and was diagnosed with muscle overload and swelling of his right hamstring.

Alcaraz said he was returning home with a “heavy heart.”

“I’ve always said that playing for Spain is the greatest thing there is, and I was really looking forward to helping us fight for the Davis Cup.”

Alcaraz made his Davis Cup debut in 2022 and

has a 6-2 overall record, 5-1 in singles. Spain’s last triumph was in 2019.

He also didn’t play in the 2023 Davis Cup because of fitness issues. Last year, Alcaraz and Spain were eliminated in the opening round of the Final 8 at home in Malaga, spoiling the final match of Rafael Nadal’s storied career.

The 22-year-old Alcaraz has said he wants “to win the Davis Cup one day ... because for me, it’s a really important, important tournament.”

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NEWS



Miami Heat forward Simone Fontecchio (0) drives to the basket as New York Knicks guard Jordan Clarkson (00) defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Miami. (AP) — See Page 14

Sports

Fan registration opens

Kuwait heads to Doha for Arab Cup playoffs



in this file photo Kuwaiti fans raise the national flags as they cheer on the senior soccer team.

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

CAIRO, Nov 18: Kuwait departs Cairo today after completing a training camp that began on November 10, which included friendly matches against Tanzania and Gambia on November 15 and 18, respectively. These matches served as preparation for its upcoming Arab Cup playoff clash against Mauritania on November 25.

Portuguese coach Helio Sousa has granted the players a rest day following yesterday's friendly against Gambia, with training set to resume tomorrow evening.

Meanwhile, the tournament organizers are finalizing arrangements for the seven playoff matches, scheduled over November 25 and 26. Key fixtures include Syria vs South Sudan and Palestine vs Libya on the first day, followed by

Oman vs Somalia, Comoros vs Yemen, Bahrain vs Djibouti, and Sudan vs Lebanon on November 26.

Fan registration to support Kuwait against Mauritania opens today. Kuwait Football Association has allocated two planes, with an additional plane provided by Zain in cooperation with Kuwait Airways. Registration will take place at the Association's headquarters in Adailiya from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM, closing once capacity is reached. Special seating areas have been reserved for families.

The Association will also provide bus transport from the airport to the stadium, with the first bus departing at 11:30 AM and the second at 11:45 AM.

Fans are required to bring their civil ID, passport, and a registration fee of 10 Kuwaiti dinars (cash or via KNET). Registration is open for individuals 14 years and older, while younger attendees must be accompanied by a guardian.

Tournament features 87 players from 18 Arab countries

Arab Chess Championship underway in Kuwait



The ceremonial kick off.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 18, (KUNA): The 2025 Arab Chess Championship for men and women officially began in Kuwait and will continue through November 25, featuring 87 players from 18 Arab countries.

The opening ceremony was attended by Sheikh Khalid Al-Qasimi, President of the Arab Chess Federation, Bashar Abdullah, Acting Director of Kuwait's Public Authority for Sport, and several Arab diplomats based in

Kuwait.

Acting Director Bashar Abdullah expressed pride in the Federation's decision to select Kuwait as the host country, highlighting how the event aligns with Kuwait's ongoing efforts to promote sports and intellectual competitions.

Dr. Amal Al-Kout, Chair of the Championship's Organizing Committee, said the tournament serves as a platform to unite Arab nations through sport, intellect,

and fair competition.

Meanwhile, Khalaf Al-Azmi, Head of the Referees Committee, explained that the championship consists of nine rounds. Each player is allotted 90 minutes per game.

Participating nations include Kuwait, Egypt, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Somalia, and Palestine.

Germany, Dutch power into World Cup finals

Poland wraps up campaign with win

MUNICH, Nov 18, (AP): So much for Germany being at risk of missing the World Cup.

A 6-0 thrashing of Slovakia on Monday completed Germany's recovery from a shocking start to group play as the four-time champion maintained its proud record of always qualifying for the World Cup. Poland wrapped up its group campaign with a 3-2 win at Malta, squandering the lead twice before Piotr Zieliński netted an 85th-minute winner.

Robert Lewandowski scored the first goal for the Poles, who were already assured of at least second place and are set to have a home semifinal in the March playoffs.

Already-qualified Croatia ended unbeaten in Group L after winning at Montenegro 3-2.

The Czech Republic, assured of second place, beat Gibraltar 6-0.

"A brilliant game from our team, with a lot of pressure," Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said.

The Germans will be competing on soccer's biggest stage for the 21st time in 23 editions. They didn't enter the inaugural 1930 World Cup and were not allowed to enter the 1950 edition.

The Netherlands - a long-standing rival of Germany - also won its group to reach next year's tournament, which will be held in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. A 4-0 win over Lithuania saw the Dutch qualify with an unbeaten record, finishing ahead of Poland.

Slovakia and Poland will be in the

playoffs, the draw for which takes place on Thursday.

Germany and the Netherlands joined England, France, Portugal, Croatia, and Norway as the European teams to have qualified for the 2026 World Cup.

The remaining five automatic spots will be booked on Tuesday when group play is wrapped up.

It was Slovakia that handed Germany a surprising 2-0 loss in the first round of matches in Group A. That was only the Germans' third ever defeat in World Cup qualifying, but they have responded with five straight wins, culminating in the heavy beating of Slovakia in Leipzig, where the pressure was firmly on Nagelsmann's team.

Four of the goals came in the first half; Leroy Sane scored twice after strikes by Nick Woltemade - his fourth in the last three qualifying games - and Serge Gnabry.

The second-half goals were by two Leipzig players - substitute Ridle Baku and Assan Ouédraogo, a 19-year-old midfielder making his debut.

Germany entered the game needing only a draw and finished three points ahead of Slovakia.

"I think we're back on the road," Nagelsmann said. "We can prepare with a free and open mind in March because we don't have the pressure of playing in the playoffs."

No team has reached the World Cup final more times than Germany. It was the winner in 1954, 1974, 1990, and 2014 - the first three as West Germany - and the runner-up in 1966, 1982, 1986, and 2014.

Germany has been eliminated in the group stage in the last two World Cups; however, to damaged



Slovakia's David Hancko, left, and Germany's Leon Goretzka jump for the ball during a group A World Cup qualifying soccer match between Germany and Slovakia in Leipzig, Germany. (AP)

its status as a global heavyweight.

In the group's other game, Luxembourg lost to Northern Ireland 1-0 and finished with zero points.

The Netherlands will get another chance to win that elusive first World Cup trophy, four years

after exiting the 2022 tournament in a dramatic penalty shootout loss to Lionel Messi's Argentina in the quarterfinals.

A draw with Lithuania on Monday also would have been enough for the Dutch, who started the game

three points clear of Poland, but they wound up pouring in the goals in Amsterdam - starting with Tijjani Reijnders in the 16th.

Cody Gakpo made it 2-0 from the penalty spot in the 58th, and there were more goals from Xavi Simons

and Donyell Malen, who scored off a powerful effort at the end of his solo run that began inside his own half.

The Netherlands has been runner-up at the World Cup three times - 1974, 1978, and 2010.

McLaren driver Piastri awarded top honor in Australian sport

MELBOURNE, Nov. 18, (Xinhua): Formula One driver Oscar Piastri has received Australian sport's highest individual honor, winning The Don Award for 2025.

Piastri was named the winner of The Don Award at the annual Sport Australia Hall of Fame ceremony in Melbourne on Monday night, becoming the first motor-sport athlete to receive the top honor.

The Don Award has been presented annually since 1998 to the Australian athlete or team whose achievements are judged to have most inspired the nation.

A driver for the F1 World Constructors' champion McLaren team, Piastri has won seven Grands Prix in 2025 and currently sits second in the drivers' standings with three races left in the season.

Piastri's nine career Grand Prix victories are the equal third-most by any Australian, and if he can surpass teammate Lando Norris to win the drivers' championship, he would become the first Australian to do so since 1980.

Veteran Fluminense defender Silva emerges as Milan transfer target

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 18, (Agencies): AC Milan is considering a move to sign veteran Fluminense defender Thiago Silva, according to widespread media reports in Brazil.

Silva, 41, is contracted to the Rio de Janeiro club until next June, but could leave in January to return to his former club during the European winter transfer window, Globo Esporte reported.

It added that Fluminense was aware of the Italian side's interest and would allow Silva to leave, should he seek to end his contract early.

Silva made 119 appearances for Milan across all competitions from 2009 to 2012 before joining Paris Saint-Germain.

The central defender, who has been capped 113 times for Brazil, returned to his boyhood club Fluminense last year after a four-year spell at Chelsea.

American-owned English soccer club Norwich hired former Club Brugge, Monaco and Rangers coach Philippe Clement on Tuesday aiming to end a historically bad run of home results.

Norwich's eight straight home losses to start this season have the team 23rd in the 24-team second-tier Championship and star striker Josh Sargent lost his place in the United States squad months before co-hosting the World Cup.

Norwich, whose majority shareholder is Mil-

waukee Brewers owner Mark Attanasio, has fired five coaches in four years since last playing in the Premier League. The most recent hire, Liam Manning, was fired after five months.

Clement was given a contract into 2029, Norwich said. His first game is on Saturday at Birmingham, whose American ownership group includes Tom Brady.

The 51-year-old former Belgium defender was fired by Rangers in February after 16 months in Scotland.

He made his reputation winning three straight Belgian league titles from 2019-21, first with Genk then two with Club Brugge.