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Panel: More global expertise eyed for current and future mega projects



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and ministers review the state's major development projects.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired the 35th meeting of the ministerial committee tasked with reviewing the state's major development projects, at Bayan Palace on Thursday.

During the meeting, His Highness the Prime Minister reviewed a set of issues pertinent to priority output as part of the road-map set out to achieve sustainable development goals, underlining the significance of continuing appropriate assessment and legal and technical review of the country's major projects.

In this context, His Highness the Prime Minister instructed the committee members to follow up the strategic priorities of carrying out major development projects in a way that fosters the country's relations with different countries, hoping that more global expertise would be used for current and future mega

projects.

He reiterated the government's commitment to drawing more world companies to open regional offices in Kuwait, and commended many giants' interest in having regional offices in the country.

His Highness also directed the Investment Authority to work with other state bodies concerned with major development projects to take the required procedures of contracting a financial advisor who can choose the legal advisors and technicians and other specialized advisors for all projects in the country.

For his part, Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and rapporteur of the committee, Ambassador Sameeh Hayat said the meeting discussed the reports of state bodies entrusted with the implementation of major development projects at Mubarak Al-Kabeer port, and cooperation in power grid, renewable energy, waste recycling, housing, sewage water treat-

ment plants, environment and afforestation.

Attending the meeting were Chief of His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora A-Mashaan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdulatif Al-Mashari, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy as well as Acting Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs Dr. Sa-beeh Al-Mukhaizeem.

Also present were Director-General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department Counselor Saleh Al-Majed, and Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat.

National Day marked

Kuwait congratulates as Omanis celebrate

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah on Thursday sent a cable of congratulations to Oman's Deputy Prime Minister for Defense Affairs Shihab bin Tariq bin Taimur Al-Said on the occasion of Oman's National Day.



Sheikh Abdullah

Oman marks on Thursday the 55th anniversary of its National Day amid continued development and renaissance, as it is seeking to keep abreast of global advancement side by side with other Gulf countries.

The Sultanate has been taking steady steps towards a bright future under the leadership of its leader Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said in the context of the country's Oman Vision 2040, which was launched by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

The State of Kuwait joins Oman's celebration of its National Day at a time when bilateral relations have been developing in a continuous, deep and steady manner under the directions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said for further promoting and pushing relations to wider horizons of joint cooperation covering all fields.

Kuwaiti-Omani relations are considered a model for Gulf, Arab and international relations, with this sincere fraternity and cooperation having developed from the conventional mode of bonds to high official and unofficial levels.

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Kuwait urges Iran to boost IAEA ties

VIENNA, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Talal Al-Fassam affirmed on Thursday Kuwait's stance in supporting the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), viewing it as the technical authority responsible for verifying the peaceful nature of nuclear programs.

During a speech before the IAEA Board of Governors discussing the Safeguard Agreement with Iran, Al-Fassam praised the professional and continuous efforts made by the Director General Rafael Grossi and the Agency's team in carrying out their work.

He clarified that Kuwait encourages Iran to continue its positive approach with the Agency and urges it to enhance its cooperation with the IAEA as well as take further steps that contribute to building trust and transparency.

Al-Fassam emphasized the importance of Iran fulfilling its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement as a key step to ensure the peaceful nature of the nuclear program.

He announced Kuwait's support for diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching long-term solutions based on international law and the Agency's regulations.

Kuwait riled over 'Bibi' Syria visit

Support pledged for independence, sovereignty

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (Agencies): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday strongly condemned the Israeli occupation prime minister's entry, with several aides, into occupied Syrian territory, calling it a blatant violation of Syria's sovereignty, a clear breach of international law, and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

In a statement, the ministry reiterated Kuwait's full support for Syria's independence and sovereignty over all its territory.

It urged the Security Council to uphold its responsibilities by ensuring full compliance with international legitimacy resolutions, especially the 1974 ceasefire agreement, and called for stopping ongoing Israeli attacks on Syrian territory and other countries in the region.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday toured the buffer zone on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights, the prime minister's office said, amid reports of contacts aimed at reaching a new security arrangement in the area.

Netanyahu was accompanied by Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, military chief Eyal Zamir, and Shin Bet director David Zini, among others. "The prime minister arrived at an IDF (Israel Defense Forces) outpost where he observed the area, and then held a security briefing," the office said in a statement.

Speaking to soldiers at the outpost, Netanyahu said Israel attaches "great importance" to its capabilities, "both defensive and offensive, in this area," to "protecting our Druze allies" in the Syrian side of the Golan Heights, and

"above all, to safeguarding Israel and its northern border facing the Golan."

"This is a mission that can develop at any moment," he said, without elaborating.

Israel and Syria have been holding U.S.-brokered talks on a security agreement concerning areas of southern Syria that Israeli forces have been controlling after the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

Earlier this month, Syrian interim leader Ahmed al-Sharaa visited the White House, where he and U.S. President Donald Trump discussed a possible security deal and partial U.S. sanctions relief.

In the following interviews, al-Sharaa confirmed the talks but denied any imminent agreement, noting that any deal would require Israel to pull back from the areas of southern Syria it has held, a condition Israel has rejected.

Earlier this week, Israel's public broadcaster Kan reported that the talks have stalled.

The Israeli military carried out barrages of airstrikes in southern Lebanon Wednesday on what it said were Hezbollah sites, including weapons storage facilities, after a drone strike earlier in the day killed one person and wounded several others, including students on a bus.

The new wave of strikes came a day after an airstrike killed 13 people in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Hilweh, the deadliest of Israeli attacks on Lebanon since a ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah war a year ago.

Meanwhile, after Israel reported its soldiers were fired on in southern Gaza, health officials in the territory said Israeli strikes killed at least 25 Palestinians in one of the deadliest days in Gaza since the Oct. 10 ceasefire agreement took effect. Separately, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu traveled to a buffer zone in Syrian territory that Israel seized last year.

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Slight dip in mercury expected during weekend



KUNA photo

Kuwait City skyscrapers engulfed in mild fog Thursday morning.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department has forecasted that Kuwait's weather over the weekend will generally be warm to moderate during the day and cool to cold at night.

The acting Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the country is under the influence of an extension of a northwestern high-pressure system, accompanied by a relatively moderate and dry air mass. This is expected to cause a slight drop in temperatures, with northwesterly to variable winds that are light to moderate in speed and occasionally gusty.

On Friday, daytime weather will be moderate, with northwesterly winds blowing at light to moderate speeds of 12 to 38 km/h. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 26°C and 28°C, and the sea will be light to moderate, with waves reaching two to five feet.

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Citizenships of more Kuwaitis withdrawn

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): The Supreme Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship held a meeting on Thursday, chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

During the meeting, the committee decided to revoke Kuwaiti citizenship from a number of cases, with the matter to be referred to the cabinet, it said in a statement to KUNA.

Those citizenships were revoked due to forgery and fraud, it said.

Kuwait, India to tackle dirty cash proliferation

NEW DELHI, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to India, Meshal Al-Shamali, met with Additional Secretary in the Indian Ministry of Finance and head of India's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Diwakar Nath Misra, to discuss boosting bilateral cooperation in combating money laundering and terror financing.

In a statement issued by the Kuwaiti Embassy in New Delhi, Al-Shamali said Kuwait has adopted a series of corrective measures - including reforming legislation and institutional frameworks - to better align its anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing laws with international standards.

He reiterated Kuwait's commitment, through its Financial Intelligence Unit (KFIU), to supporting global efforts to tackle illicit financial flows that threaten both national and international financial systems.

The two sides also noted the memorandum of understanding signed in July between KFIU and its Indian counterpart, which facilitates the exchange of financial information under international financial mechanisms.

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Digital commerce bill promotes innovation, entrepreneurship

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): The draft law regulating digital commerce approved by the Cabinet marks a milestone that strengthens innovation and entrepreneurship by establishing a modern environment for digital business growth.

The law introduces an integrated framework covering privacy safeguards, clear terms and conditions, and efficient dispute-resolution mechanisms, designed to reinforce trust in electronic transactions and promote a safer, transparent digital commerce landscape in Kuwait.

The legislation arrives as Kuwait's

e-commerce sector rapidly expands, driven by rising consumer spending, a large youth demographic, and increasing demand for digital solutions in retail, services, delivery, and financial technology.

The framework balances economic freedom with regulatory oversight, strengthens the investment environment, and aligns national development priorities with efforts to modernize Kuwait's economic legal systems.

Considered a pillar of Kuwait's economic transformation, the law advances the shift toward a knowledge-based,

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Kuwait proud to work for rights of children

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait has renewed its firm and longstanding commitment to protecting children's rights and ensuring their well-being, in line with the Constitution, national legislation and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Kuwait ratified in 1991.

This came in a press release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday marking World Children's Day.

The ministry stated that Kuwait takes pride in its active role in supporting regional and international efforts to advance children's rights, as well as its humanitarian partnerships that provide relief assistance-particularly in conflict and disaster-affected areas-to meet the needs of affected children.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwaiti Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah inaugurated the Ministry of Defense's spring camp for the 2025-2026 season in the Subhan area.

The Ministry stated that this initiative reflects its commitment to enhancing the social and recreational well-being of its military and civilian personnel.

In a press release, the Ministry of Defense noted that the opening ceremony featured a performance by the Kuwaiti Army's folk arts troupe, followed by a tour of the camp's facilities, including the new expansions added for this season.

During the tour, the Minister was briefed on the various recreational services and social activities provided for Ministry employees and their families.

The Minister expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the camp's organizing team, emphasizing that establishing such a camp aligns with the Ministry's dedication to creating meaningful social and recreational opportunities for its members. (KUNA)

KFAED, UNDP ink \$4 mln deal for Sudan resilience, recovery

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) on Thursday signed two grant agreements with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), providing a total of USD four million to strengthen community resilience across Sudan amid mounting humanitarian needs.

Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund Waleed Al-Bahar told KUNA the agreements aim to expand access to clean energy as well as reinforce food and water security for vulnerable communities throughout Sudan.

He said Kuwait's support for Sudan reflects the country's longstanding humanitarian approach, which prioritizes assisting peoples affected by crises and responding to urgent humanitarian conditions with timely and effective aid.

Al-Bahar stressed that Sudan's challenges require joint efforts and coordinated action to alleviate suffering and help communities overcome current hardships through practical solutions that improve living conditions and enhance resilience.

He noted that the Fund's cooperation

with UNDP since 2013, totaling eight contributions worth USD 14.6 million, demonstrates how international partnerships can create real impact by enabling Sudanese communities to produce food, access safe water, and generate job opportunities.

The first agreement targets support for internally displaced persons, refugees, and host communities in eastern Sudan through a joint contribution with Switzerland and UNDP totaling USD 6.8 million, benefiting 160,000 people in Kassala, Al-Qadiri, and Red Sea states.

This project will restore livelihoods by supporting climate-resilient agriculture, strengthening fisheries and livestock production, and expanding access to solar-powered water and energy solutions for community services, while boosting local capacities through training with at least 50 percent female participation.

The second agreement supports agriculture across Sudan with USD two million fully funded by the Kuwait Fund, assisting 500,000 smallholder farmers in White Nile, Jazira, Kassala, and Red Sea states.



KUNA photo

Chief of Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraian met with Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine, and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for the Middle East Michael DiMino. Kuwait Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah was also present.

Kuwait, US discuss boost in defense ties, regional peace

WASHINGTON, Nov 20, (KUNA): Visiting Chief of Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Shuraian met with Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine, and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for the Middle East Michael DiMino.

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2 Mohammed bin Salman's visit and the shifting calculations in Washington

8 Weyay Bank launches exclusive 'Jeel Dasman' card to promote financial literacy among students and showcase their talents

9 Almutawa: KFH demonstrates leadership in advancing the SMEs sector

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:53	Asr	14:31
Sunrise ..	06:16	Maghrib ..	16:50
Zohr	11:34	Isha	18:12

Local



Part of the dialogue sessions organized under the National Initiative 'Capital of Opportunities'. Photos by Mohammad Morsi

Governor highlights investment potential

Kuwait City hub for investors

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Governor of the Capital Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali affirmed that Kuwait City abounds with promising investment opportunities, owing to its strategic location, diverse vital sectors and developmental foundations that qualify it to be an attractive center for investors and entrepreneurs.

In a speech he delivered at the launching ceremony for the national initiative, 'Capital of Opportunities', organized by the Capital Governorate on Thursday at the Martyrs Park (2), Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali pointed out that the above-mentioned characteristics of Kuwait City solidify its position as the capital of opportunities and sustainable development, and a model worthy of emulation in terms of supporting innovation and stimulating economic growth.

He stated that since its inception, Kuwait has been toeing a firm path of development and construction. He stressed that this blessed journey continues today under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who established a clear approach to launching initiatives aimed at strengthening the investment environment and empowering national talent in entrepreneur-



The Governor of the Capital, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, during the launch ceremony of the national initiative 'Capital of Opportunities'.

ship by supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs). He believes this approach improves Kuwait's standing among the nations and fulfills the aspirations of its people for more progress and prosperity.

He pointed out that the concerted efforts among all partners from State institutions and the private sector, working as one team, form a fundamental pillar for transforming challenges into achievements and aspirations into realities. "This contributes to building a strong and sustainable economy, and makes Kuwait City a model in supporting investment and empowering national talent," he added.

He then thanked the partners of the national initiative for their dedication in supporting the realization of its objectives.

Moreover, acting Director General of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises Development Basma Al-Jassem commended the initiative, confirming that it aligns with national efforts aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurial environment and empowering Kuwaiti entrepreneurs. She expressed her pride in the National Fund for being a strategic partner in this event, which embodies a clear vision for supporting and diversifying the national economy.

Al-Jassem stated that the selection of the Capital Governorate as host of this event is a manifestation of its vital role in developing the economic landscape and underscores its position as a platform for innovation and entrepreneurial projects, in light of the commitment of the State to build a knowledge-based and creative economy.

She disclosed that the launching of the initiative coincides with the celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Day, a global event that highlights the vital role of entrepreneurs, their contributions to sustainable development, and the importance of supporting and empowering them to become key partners in economic development.

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild with light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds ranging from 12-38 km/h.

By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather
with light to moderate northwesterly wind to wind, with speeds ranging from 08-32 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	29	18
Kuwait Airport	28	16
Abdaly	28	14

Jahra	28	16
Failaka Island	27	14
Salmiyah	27	20
Ahmadi	29	13
Nuwaisib	31	16
Wafra	29	16
Salmy	26	13

Amir congratulates Sultan of Oman on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable of congratulations to Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Sultanate's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir commended deep-rooted fraternal and historical relations between the State of Kuwait and Sultanate of Oman, along with major development accomplishments

made under the Sultan's leadership. His Highness the Amir wished the Sultan of Oman good health and the Sultanate and its people more progress and prosperity under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable of congratulations to Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Sultanate's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Sultan of Oman good health and the Sultanate and its people more progress and prosperity under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent Thursday a cable of congratulations to Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the Sultanate's National Day.

Kuwait honors excellence in charitable work

Sixth Khaled Al-Essa Al-Saleh Award celebrates humanitarian leadership

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: "Charitable work is the language of humanity that unites everyone, and the Khaled Al-Essa Al-Saleh Award is a beacon of excellence and a symbol of innovation in the charitable sector," says Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi.

Al-Ajmi made the statement at the distribution ceremony for the Sixth Khaled Al-Essa Al-Saleh Award for Institutional Excellence, organized Thursday by the Union of Charitable Societies and Foundations.

He pointed out that "the sixth edition of the award confirms that Kuwait is not just a country which provides aid, as it is an icon of humanitarian leadership in the Islamic and Arab world." He praised the winning associations and charities as they embodied the values of commitment, transparency and quality, transforming the competition for good deeds into a driving force for innovation and community service.

He added "we cannot overlook the pioneering role of the State of Kuwait, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, making the country a global symbol of humanitarian giving. Kuwait is a beacon of goodness, a haven for those in need, and a model to be emulated in charitable and relief work."

He explained that the participation of a member of the Social Affairs Ministry in the judging panel reinforces the in-



A scene from the ceremony honoring the competition winners. Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

tegration between the government and civil society organizations, and ensures the adoption of the highest professional standards and transparency.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Union of Charitable Societies and Foundations Saad Al-Otaibi welcomed the attendees, emphasizing that the award honors deeply rooted values and a long history of giving initiated by the pioneers of charitable work, foremost among them was the late Khaled Al-Essa Al-Saleh -- one of the most prominent founders of the union, which was established in 2017.

Al-Otaibi explained that the award was created to be a tool for building and a platform for development, not just a celebration. "It provides each participating association with a detailed technical report that helps them improve their performance and enhance their compliance with the regulations of the ministries of Social Affairs and Foreign Affairs, thus, contributing to

the advancement of Kuwait's model of charitable work.

He said "we believe that governance and transparency are not just administrative requirements, but a culture that must be ingrained in every aspect of charitable work. They are considered the path towards preserving trust and maximizing the impact of every Kuwaiti dinar spent on good deeds."

He pointed out that this year, the award witnessed a qualitative addition -- the participation of an official representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the Arbitration Committee. He thinks this step enhanced the credibility of the award and consolidated the standards of professional justice.

He added that the broad Gulf participation witnessed by the award this year is a testimony that the Kuwaiti experience in charitable work has transcended national borders to become a regional model, which is appreciated and emulated.

Other Voices

Mohammed bin Salman's visit and the shifting calculations in Washington

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

The reception given to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Washington suggested more than a return to routine engagement. It reflected a broader reassessment within the American policy establishment regarding Saudi Arabia's internal transformation and the Crown Prince's anticipated role in shaping regional dynamics.

The United States aimed to convey an unmistakable message through the full range of its institutional engagement. That message was that the Crown Prince is regarded as a partner whose importance in the coming decades cannot be set aside.

American institutions tend to evaluate foreign leaders over extended periods. In the early years of the Crown Prince's rise, Washington observed his consolidation of authority and ambitious agenda



Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

with measured caution. Over time, the initial years evolved into a deeper understanding of how he manages sensitive portfolios and recalibrates priorities, and this is why current American reliance is built on tangible performance rather than assumptions.

This long timeframe carries its own strategic value. A partnership anchored in sustained leadership

offers a sense of continuity rarely available with short term political actors, and this extended horizon gives the relationship a weight that is unusual in a region defined by rapid transitions.

Engagement during the visit involved far more than ceremonial protocol. It reflected the judgment of institutions that increasingly view Saudi Arabia's restructuring as an enduring factor in regional politics. This does not imply full alignment with Saudi policy choices. It does signal recognition that the Crown Prince's decisions will influence the region's economic, energy and security landscape for many years.

If Saudi Arabia is entering a generational phase of change, Washington sees value in engaging the person guiding that process.

Kuwait tourism sector gears up for expansion

Committee calls for partnerships

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's Supreme tourism committee, in its second meeting, discussed on Wednesday new promotional projects to attract visitors to Kuwait.

Chairing the meeting at Marine Museum at Radisson Blue Hotel, Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said every meeting will be held in a tourist site or places specialized in tourism, Ministry of Information and Culture said in a statement.

This delivers a message that "we are seeking to develop tourism system which needs the partnership of all state's institutions," Al-Mutairi, also head of the committee, noted.

He underlined the need for a partnership among all state institutions - government sectors, private sector, or civil society - so that "we can complement one another in proposing ideas, identifying any challenges that can be addressed through our cooperation".

He referred that there would be some steps if there are certain regulations, infrastructure and important opportunities to make success in the tourism sector.

Tourism system is related to all the state's sectors, including health, culture, art, media, environment and others, he said, pointing to global tourism standards which will be applied.



Members of the Supreme Tourism Committee, chaired by the Minister of Information and Culture. Minister of Information photo

Tourism sector in Kuwait has big potential and wide environment, he said, stressing the importance of private sector in developing this sector.

In addition, the meeting focused on a mechanism to activate the digital promotional campaign of the platform and develop content as well as provide new expertise bringing together entertainment, culture and maritime heritage in a manner that contributes to boosting Kuwait's status as an improved destination on both regional and international levels, it stated.

Significance of Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Bangladesh observes 21 November as its Armed Forces Day, a date of great historical importance for the nation. Members of Bangladesh Armed Forces take deep pride in marking this occasion with ceremonies conducted in a dignified and honourable manner.

After 23 years of relentless struggle for their rightful freedom, the Liberation War of Bangladesh began on 26 March 1971.

The war continued for 9 months. In its early stages, the war was driven by a guerrilla resistance movement composed of Bangladeshi military personnel, paramilitary forces, and civilians.

At the later stage of the liberation war, Bangladesh Liberation Force was organized as conventional Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force.

Beginning on 21 Nov 1971, the coordinated and simultaneous operations of the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force gained offensive momentum.

This ultimately led to the surrender of the occupying forces on 16 December 1971, when Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation on the world map.

This hard-won independence



Bangladesh observes November 21 as its Armed Forces Day.

came at the cost of the supreme sacrifices made by countless brave citizens and members of the Armed Forces.

On this significant day, people across Bangladesh pay tribute to the nation's war heroes and martyrs.

The day inspires members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces to renew their oath to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their motherland.

It also highlights the essential values of comradeship, unity, and joint effort in confronting any ad-

versary.

Formed during the Liberation War, the Bangladesh Armed Forces remain a source of national pride and a symbol of trust and confidence in Bangladesh.

Beyond their traditional defence role, Bangladesh Armed Forces play important role in nation building activities, disaster management and internal security duties. Bangladesh, today stand as the third largest troops contributing country in the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations, with over 6,000 personnel currently

deployed in 7 United Nations missions worldwide.

The Armed Forces of Bangladesh are being modernized under the 'Forces Goal 2030' initiative and maintain strong, friendly relations with militaries around the world.

The partnership between Bangladesh Armed Forces and Kuwait Armed Forces is particularly notable.

In addition to mutual visits and training exchanges, Bangladesh Armed Forces has played a constructive role in Kuwait's development. For the past 34 years, the Bangladesh Military Contingent to Kuwait - consisting of several contingents - has provided skilled technical and professional support in engineering, medical, communications, security, administration, and other fields to rebuild Kuwait.

A total of 99 members of Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel have sacrificed their lives while discharging duties for the friendly country Kuwait.

Today, more than 5,000 Bangladeshi military personnel continue to serve here with dedication.

Long Live the Bangladesh and Kuwait Armed Forces, long live the enduring friendship between Kuwait and Bangladesh.

Namaa Society provides vital aid to displaced families in Somalia

KHARTOUM, Nov 20, (KUNA): The Kuwait-based Namaa society has offered a package of relief and development assistance to displaced and poor families in Kismayo city in Somalia.

Speaking to KUNA in a statement on Wednesday, Khaled Al-Shammari, head of Namaa's projects sector, said the aid included distributing 230 food baskets, building two houses, inaugurating two wells and operating a water desalination plant, with a capacity of 5,000 liters per hour.

Such projects are carried out as part of Kuwait's humanitarian support for

vulnerable families in Somalia and aim to mitigate the suffering of those displaced as well as ensure clean water and food access to the largest number of families, he added.

Assistance also included offering aid to mosques and Islamic centers in the city to help it enhance its societal services.

Some beneficiaries affirmed that the aid came at a very critical time as it has contributed to improving their living conditions.

They thanked Kuwait, its leadership, government and people for continued humanitarian efforts.



Namaa Charity Association provides extensive aid to displaced people in Somalia. Namaa Charity photo

National identity between the ‘zubaidi’ and ‘naqrour’

“EVERY country has its own distinctive characteristics. The Egyptian personality is known for its cheerful spirit, the Palestinian for patience and courage, the Omani for calmness and composure, the Mauritanian for eloquence, the Syrian for business acumen, and the Lebanese for a balanced temperament.” Kuwaiti writer **Hussein Al-Rawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Each nation has a unique flavor that shapes its identity and leaves its mark on the map of peoples. In Kuwait, a peculiar phenomenon has emerged in recent years - the so-called “experts on anthropology, dialects, and traditional cuisine.” These individuals have an uncanny ability to turn a dialect, a dish, or even a proverb into a major national issue. From time to time, one of them appears in a video to announce a great discovery that a certain word or phrase, as pronounced by the people of their region, is the only correct and authentic version. Then, another quickly steps in to refute this “technological breakthrough,” insisting that the true and authentic word is the one spoken in his own region.

“This is how the battle over dialects begins among this complex group of anthropologists, dialect experts, and folklore specialists, who bombard Kuwaiti society as if their goal is to unify all Kuwaitis into a single dialect. This does not happen in any other country on earth. Years ago, an incident occurred that made me laugh a lot. There was an official at Kuwait Television who, upon his promotion, suddenly turned into a “national sociologist and anthropologist.” He gathered the male broadcasters and issued a directive forbidding them from wearing the red shemagh while presenting the news, arguing that the red shemagh was not part of Kuwaiti tradition.

“The next day, Al-Watan newspaper responded by publishing on its front page several photos of the esteemed Al Sabah rulers of Kuwait wearing the red shemagh. May God curse bigotry. Let’s take a look at the situation in the Arab countries.

“Saudi Arabia has 13 administrative regions and 136 cities. Egypt has 27 governorates, with approximately 200 cities. Morocco has 12 regions and 75 cities. Oman has 11 governorates and 61 provinces. Iraq has 18 governorates and more than 120 districts.

“Despite this vast expanse and the great geographical and human diversity in these countries, not a single citizen has claimed that their dialect is the original one, or that the cuisine of their region defines patriotism. Here in Kuwait, despite our small size and limited number of old neighborhoods, we witness a farcical conflict between “dialect experts,” “food connoisseurs,” and “experts on folk proverbs.” Some have even gone so far as to hand out certificates of patriotism based on food preferences. Imagine questioning a citizen’s patriotism simply because they don’t like a particular dish.

“The nation does not need such debates. It needs a spirit of unity, understanding, and harmony to move forward, not to fight among ourselves. A few days ago, the esteemed Fahad Al-Abduljalil, head of the Kuwaiti Heritage Society, appeared in a video calmly stating that the most popular dish in Kuwait is not the zubaidi fish, as commonly believed, but the naqrour fish. He added a popular proverb - “He who has tasted the eye of the naqrour will not cross the gate.” I know Fahad personally, as he is my colleague in the Kuwaiti Writers Association and is known for his fine character and dignified personality.

“Based on his expertise in Kuwaiti heritage, he presented a simple statement, free from any bias or insinuation. However, his words did not sit well with certain individuals, who criticized him. Al-Abduljalil then returned to his historical arguments, citing old Kuwaiti sources that support his statement regarding the proverb about “the eye of the naqrour and the gate.” I don’t care whether the most popular dish in Kuwait is zubaidi, naqrour, or tashreeb. These are matters of personal taste, not national standards.

“What’s surprising is how agitated some people become over any differing opinion on our heritage, as if we fear losing our “identity of the broth” or the dialect of our proverbs. It is time we looked at our heritage with broader and calmer eyes. Heritage isn’t limited to a single dish, dialect, or proverb; it’s the spirit that unites us. We must preserve our capacity for diversity without resorting to verbal attacks against one another. Kuwait isn’t a country of a single dialect or a single dish, but a shared memory filled with all those beautiful details that distinguish us... whether it’s naqrour or zubaidi fish.”

Also:

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recently announced that it will grant lifetime residency to anyone who

purchases property there. This undoubtedly provides many incentives for investors, which will boost Saudi Arabia’s GDP. The move goes beyond simply buying property; it aims to stimulate commercial activity,” columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Saudi Arabia is not alone; all the Gulf states have opened their doors to investors, while Kuwait has remained hesitant, or at least limited itself to superficial procedures that do little to increase GDP. In recent weeks, I have heard many stories of individuals whose citizenship has been revoked or whose companies have been shut down, leaving them unable to access their funds in banks or invest them in projects.

“It is true that the government is working to rectify this situation by offering incentives to those whose citizenship has been revoked. But wouldn’t it have been better to study the matter carefully before making such a decision? Since it is a sovereign issue, it is not open to debate. I believe that when given the opportunity, these individuals will seek to take advantage of incentives offered in other Gulf states, where they can invest their money. This means Kuwait will lose out on these projects.

“Undoubtedly, this issue has many aspects that must be considered very carefully. This is Kuwait’s money, and it should benefit the country rather than being diverted to another country that shares similarities with Kuwait in culture, customs, and traditions. I fully realize that this is a complex issue, but we must approach it in a way that serves Kuwait, particularly by encouraging investments, which are the lifeblood of any active economy. Investments create numerous job opportunities and help develop society.

“It is well known that the more job opportunities available, the lower the crime rate, which is a point that must be addressed. When individuals, including those whose citizenship has been revoked, are able to settle down and feel secure, they will work freely, and their contribution to society will be greater.”

“Among the top five Arab airlines, Kuwait Airways is conspicuously absent, despite the fact that these airlines are relatively new, no more than a decade or two old,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Kuwait Airways (The Blue Bird) was until recently a highly sought-after airline. What happened to the Blue Bird? What caused it to fall from the ranks of leading airlines, as if it had become outdated? “Some wish for the Blue Bird to disappear from the competition. For a long time, there have been those who lament that Kuwait Airways continues to operate, carrying passengers of all nationalities, some from Kuwait, but most transit passengers. This airline has a long history of transit flights, especially from America and Europe to East Asian countries.

“Kuwait Airways could have been sold, as some dreamers wished and hoped. I would like to thank the government and every official who stood firm and refused to sell Kuwait Airways. Kuwait Airways is not merely a passenger or cargo airline, or a logistics provider; it is a national symbol and an integral part of Kuwait’s history, a history we all cherish.

“We should not cling to or make excuses based on the tragic and harsh period our nation endured. The brutal Iraqi invasion wasn’t just about seizing Kuwait Airways; it was about taking the entire nation. But Kuwait triumphed over its enemies, and we rebuilt the country stronger and more beautiful than before. Kuwait Airways is part of this reconstruction, so what is missing?”

“This national and historical symbol needs to rise again and reclaim its position as a national carrier, renowned for its excellent service and rich history. It is said that money doesn’t buy success, but talent does. Does Kuwait Airways lack capable, professional, and intelligent management? Is there insufficient investment to maintain its historic and successful standing?”

“I am not referring to Kuwait Airways’ ranking compared to its regional counterparts. What saddens me is seeing Kuwait Airways in decline. History is not the problem. Age does not mean obsolescence. If we want a successful national airline like Kuwait Airways, we must avoid nepotism in appointments. Kuwait Airways represents Kuwait’s face to the world. Shall we import a foreign-style management team after more than half a century of aviation?”

— Compiled by Simi K.Kutty



Hussein Al-Rawi



Jahra Governorate photo

Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi receives the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Kuwait Abdullah Ibn Issa, at his office.

Morocco keen to boost relations with Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi received the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Kuwait Abdullah Ibn Issa, at his office in Jahra Governorate headquarters.

According to a press release issued by Jahra Governorate, the governor welcomed the Ambassador, and highlighted the deep bilateral relations between the two sisterly countries and the strong ties that unite them.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance and develop joint cooperation in various fields to serve mutual interests.

The ambassador affirmed the Kingdom of Morocco’s keenness to strengthen relations with Kuwait. He praised the role of Jahra Governorate in supporting various initiatives and joint cooperation, and expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and generous hospitality he received.

Mol refutes reports on minister remark

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Ministry of Interior denied reports circulating on some social media platforms attributing a statement to the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, claiming he had proposed canceling food supplies for certain categories of citizens, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The ministry affirmed that this claim is completely false and has no basis in reality.

In a statement, it urged the public to exercise caution, refrain from circulating or republishing such misleading news, and obtain information only from official and accredited sources.



Jahra Governorate photo

Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi poses for a picture with the visitors.

Bid to address Jahra traffic chaos issues

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi received the Assistant Director General for Planning and Research at the General Traffic Department Brigadier General Omar Al-Sari on Thursday at the governorate headquarters.

According to a press release issued by Jahra Governorate, Brigadier General Al-Sari was accompanied by a team of engineers from the Roads Engineering Department.

The meeting was part of ongoing cooperation with relevant authorities to address traffic issues in Jahra Governorate especially in Mutlaa City.

During the meeting, the governor discussed the efforts being made to study traffic issues and develop appropriate solutions. He highlighted the vital technical and professional role of road engineers in improving traffic flow and enhancing safety on both main and secondary roads.

The meeting reviewed the current traffic plans for ongoing and future projects, as well as recently implemented regulatory changes that have helped improve traffic efficiency and reduce congestion.

A big part of the discussion focused on Mutlaa City, where proposed solutions to address traffic challenges and enhance the efficiency of the existing road network were explored. Future plans for developing infrastructure projects, including bridges and supporting engineering works aimed at reducing congestion, were also discussed.

At the end of the meeting, the governor affirmed the importance of conducting field visits to priority locations to monitor traffic management on the ground.

He highlighted the ongoing cooperation between the governorate and the General Traffic Department to serve the public interest and enhance the quality of services provided to residents of the governorate.

500 violations detected in PAM industrial raids

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), through the National Center for Occupational Health and Safety, intensified its monitoring campaigns recently, as part of its ongoing efforts to promote a safe working environment and ensure compliance with professional standards in industrial facilities.

In a press statement issued on Thursday, PAM disclosed that the inspection teams conducted more than 1,000 visits to industrial facilities in various governorates to ensure the application of approved occupational health and safety standards.

It stated that these campaigns resulted in the discovery of more than 500 violations related to safety requirements, including the lack of personal protective equipment, deficiencies in emergency and evacuation systems, and failure to adhere to preventive maintenance procedures for machinery and equipment.

It added that the campaign also uncovered cases of workers operating outside their registered workplaces, which is a violation of the Labor Law and regulations. It affirmed that it has taken legal measures against the violators in accordance with the established procedures.

No cams in mosques without prior assent

PAM raids industrial units

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Mosque administrations in the governorates issued a circular on Wednesday, urging imams and muezzins to adhere to regulations governing the installation of surveillance cameras inside mosques, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

The circular is based on the under-secretary of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs’ letter No. 1374, issued on November 3, highlighting the importance of preserving the sanctity of mosques

and protecting their facilities.

The mosque administrations emphasized that no one is permitted to install camera systems or security monitoring in mosques without consulting the General Services Department at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs.

The circular stressed that any installation carried out without the ministry’s knowledge will make the mosque’s imam and muezzin fully responsible.

It also highlighted the necessity of officially reporting any cameras previously installed inside mosques by donors without the ministry’s approval, to update the data and ensure compliance with regulations.

10 serious violations uncovered

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari said the campaigns conducted by inspection teams in markets, maintenance workshops and car showrooms in Shuwaikh resulted in the discovery of 10 serious violations affecting consumer rights and contravene laws regulating commercial activity.

Al-Ansari enumerated the violations as follows:

■ Failure to dispose used tyres according to the regulations,

- Failure to comply with vehicle window tinting regulations,
- Failure of several suppliers to display information in Arabic on goods, their packaging and in their display locations,
- Failure to comply with regulations on sports car exhaust systems,
- Failure to display warranty schedule for new, refurbished and used spare parts in conspicuous locations,
- Illegal use of the images of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, State emblem and Kuwaiti flag,
- Repairing vehicles damaged in traffic accidents without obtaining a written authorization from the Ministry of Interior.

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MoH launches ‘Salem’ app for seamless, AI-enabled services

New platform streamlines access to healthcare

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi announced the pilot launch of the “Salem” application, describing it as a new phase in the digital transformation of the healthcare sector.

This app comes six years after the launch of “Kuwait Health” app in 2019, which exceeded one million users and registered 90,000 citizens since its activation.

During a presentation organized by the Ministry of Health at the Government Communication Center, Dr. Al-Awadhi explained that “Salem” app is designed to consolidate healthcare services into a unified platform, bringing patients closer to medical services and providers. It features a comprehensive health record linked to all ministry systems, an advanced electronic appointment booking system, instant notifications, and access to family health records.

The app allows users to add family members—parents and children—into a single file, a first of its kind in Kuwait. It includes a vast medical database containing 85,000 radiology reports, 400,000 medical reports, 4 million vaccination records, 17 million clinic or health center visits, 18 million laboratory tests, and 19 million prescriptions, all fully archived within the “Salem” system.

The app facilitates appointment booking by integrating eight separate systems into one. It also offers electronic payment services with direct, one-step payment, simplifying access to various services for citizens and residents.

It uses artificial intelligence technologies through a medical “ChatGPT” model, capable of reading medical records, communicating via text and voice, summarizing and translating medical content, as well as providing medication instructions and guidance on how to use medications.

Dr. Al-Awadhi insisted that artificial intelligence is not intended to replace doctors or pharmacists but serves as a supporting tool to enhance awareness and simplify access to health information. He stressed that the app integrates with the electronic civil ID card system, “My Identity,” to ensure the highest levels of security and privacy,



Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi during the application presentation.

adding that the app’s main menu includes five sections - health file, main services, appointments, prescriptions, and medical care.

Dr. Al-Awadhi affirmed that community participation is essential to the application’s success, urging citizens and residents to complete their medical data, as this will help develop accurate future plans for monitoring prevalent diseases and improving the quality of healthcare services.

He highlighted that the ministry is proud to have transformed sick leave into a fully integrated digital system, allowing users to obtain it electronically without visiting health centers, adding that the app also provides access to test results, X-rays, and medical records from all hospitals.

The minister revealed that starting next year, a service for tracking prescriptions for children and parents will be added, enabling families to monitor treatments and appointments more easily.

He explained that the app allows users to track medical reports issued within hospitals, including doctor and hospital reports, medical services, vaccinations, and patient visits to clinics and hospitals, as well as data on various diseases. It also enables users to view diagnoses for chronic diseases, whether issued at a clinic or hospital, and track medical examinations and follow-ups, as well as

add them directly to the patient’s file.

Dr. Al-Awadhi highlighted that the application allows users to submit premarital medical examination requests and book appointments with the Medical Council for citizens and residents. It also facilitates booking appointments with visiting doctors, inquiring about medication prices, and includes an interactive hospital map to help users navigate services. In addition, the app enables users to request rodent control services in any area, with the recent launch of 20 vehicles providing free rodent control services.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Digital Health Affairs at the Ministry of Health Adel Al-Rashidi stated that the app helps expedite access to services, provides general medical information, and enables users to access the virtual clinic, in addition to displaying laboratory results for chronic disease tests and other medical information.

He said the “Salem” application allows for real-time monitoring of lifestyles and provides health data and general indicators, contributing to an accurate understanding of the health status of citizens and residents.

In addition, the official spokesperson for the Ministry of Health, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, stated

Draft law opens financing options

Kuwait’s ‘mortgage reform’ set to ease housing crunch

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

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The mortgage and real estate finance law is the main focus of Kuwait’s current legislative activity, as the state seeks practical and comprehensive solutions to the housing issue and aims to revitalize the real estate sector in all its branches.

Head of the Real Estate Union Ibrahim Al-Awadhi confirmed that the features of the mortgage law are still incomplete.

He explained that the recently circulated version is only a preliminary draft. The mortgage benefits will be limited to those eligible for housing assistance and individuals purchasing units from real estate developers’ projects.

The draft shows the primary objective of the law is to reduce the growing pressure on the Kuwait Credit Bank in providing traditional government financing channels to support the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) in meeting housing demands.

The law will not directly affect the traditional residential sector or the investment market, in order to avoid disrupting trading activity or driving up prices.

The legislature is currently focusing on two main objectives - enabling those eligible for housing assistance to obtain homes quickly through new financing mechanisms, and ensuring that any new legislation does not affect prices or create distortions in the real estate market.

The legislative framework will become clear once the law and its implementing regulations are issued. The Central Bank is expected to prepare these regulations, which will define rules and mechanisms for financing, repayment rates, and loan eligibility criteria.

Kuwaiti banks have significant liquidity and high solvency, allowing them to compete in providing financing that benefits citizens while generating profitable returns for the banking sector, creating a three-way advantage for the state, citizens, and banks.

The initial draft of the law reflects the state’s commitment to protecting borrowers by setting borrowing limits based on the citizen’s financial capacity and exempting them from interest, with repayment limited to the principal over a period that may extend up to 25 years.

The draft provides solutions in case of default, including rescheduling installments through negotiation between the citizen and the bank, or the possibility of state intervention, whereby the government purchases the debt and transfers it to the Kuwait Credit Bank.

While many GCC countries have successfully implemented effective mortgage laws, directly applying these experiences in Kuwait is not feasible due to the unique nature of the local housing system, which relies on housing welfare and direct government support.

Al-Awadhi added that the success of any law in Kuwait depends on achieving a fair balance between the rights of lenders and the guarantees of borrowers, while preserving the social and family stability of citizens.

Meanwhile, Head of the Real Estate Brokers Union Emad Haidar confirmed that mortgages are an important tool in addressing the housing issue but cannot be the sole solution.

He stressed the need for a comprehensive system that combines activating the role of real estate developers, providing undeveloped land, and ex-

panding electricity and service infrastructure.

Haidar explained that implementing a mortgage system requires a delicate balance between the interests of banks and citizens, ensuring lenders’ rights are respected while protecting Kuwaiti families from arbitrary practices. This balance cannot be achieved without a clear government guarantee.

The participation of the private sector in housing projects has become an urgent necessity, whether in the development of villas or apartments.

He highlighted successful local models from before 2008 that could be utilized, along with experiences from other Gulf countries.

Haidar emphasized that the re-engagement of banks, financing institutions, the private sector, and Islamic banks in the residential market would significantly stimulate transactions, increase the number of deals, and inject liquidity.

He cautioned against potential price increases and a resurgence of speculation in the real estate sector, which is gradually recovering from the 2022 inflation wave and price bubble.

Haidar stressed that the aim is not to abolish the mortgage law but to address its prominent shortcomings, particularly regarding guarantees for families in cases of loan default.

Furthermore, Lawyer Dalal Al-Mulla described the mortgage and real estate finance law as a pivotal legislative step that is in line with the current needs, particularly given the rising demand for housing and the lack of effective financing tools.

She explained that the law’s significance lies not only in providing financing but also in establishing a legislative framework that regulates the relationship between lenders and borrowers, sets clear rules for mortgages, and enhances legal security and confidence in real estate transactions. It addresses a legal gap that was affecting the market, notably the absence of comprehensive legislation regulating mortgages and citizens’ reliance on government financing without a complete legal framework. It will protect both banks and clients from unforeseen legal or financial risks.

Lawyer Al-Mulla predicted that transactions will increase after the law’s implementation due to improved purchasing power.

She affirmed that the law’s success depends not only on financing but also on a supporting legislative framework, including a modern and efficient real estate registration system that ensures full legal validity of contracts, clear and rapid judicial enforcement procedures in case of default, and precise property valuation controls to protect borrowers.

Lawyer Al-Mulla emphasized that the executive regulations must include clear measures such as the loan-to-value ratio, interest and fee limits, rules protecting private property rights, and the borrower’s right to reschedule installments before any enforcement actions.

She stressed the importance of raising legal awareness among citizens on handling long-term contracts and noted that while the law is an important legislative step, its success depends on the executive regulations and strict legal oversight.

In addition, real estate expert Alaa Behbehani stated that financing is a crucial component of the housing crisis, along with land and real estate developers.

He explained that addressing the crisis requires simultaneous and coordinated action on all three elements, warning that focusing on only one will complicate rather than resolve the situation. Enacting the mortgage law without completing the other components of the system would inject significant liquidity into the market, potentially driving prices higher.



Al-Awadhi



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Farwaniya Governor pushes for faster road project completion

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received at his office Wednesday morning the Director of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) Eng. Khaled Dhawi Al-Osaimi to discuss avenues for joint cooperation.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, they discussed the ongoing road projects in the governorate, reviewed future development plans, and explored ways to expedite project completion and enhance infrastructure efficiency to better serve residents and improve traffic flow.

In a separate meeting, the governor received the Director of Sahara Al-Rawla Company Abdulaziz Al-Matrouk Al-Enezi, and the company’s Executive Director Engineer Abdullah Al-Ruwaili.

It is worth mentioning that Sahara Al-Rawla Company is responsible for road maintenance in Farwaniya Governorate.

They discussed the progress of current maintenance work and reviewed plans to address field observations and improve road quality.



Farwaniya Governor with Eng. Khaled Dhawi Al-Osaimi.



Farwaniya Governor with Sahara Al-Rawla Company officials.

At the end of the meeting, the guests expressed their gratitude to the governor for his continuous support and cooperation,

commending his dedication to monitoring road projects and developing infrastructure services in Farwaniya Governorate.



Participants of the Third Marathon for Persons with Disabilities. KUNA photo

Third annual Marathon for People with Disabilities celebrates hope and unity

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Third annual Marathon for People with Disabilities embodies a vibrant and determined celebration of humanity, where the moments of starting and moving send a clear message of hope - sports can open doors, unlock hidden potential, and support their integration into society, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The marathon features participants from diverse backgrounds, including individuals with autism, Down's Syndrome, and intellectual disabilities, all coming together on a single course, united by the same passion and determination to complete the event.

The scenes capture dynamic interactions filled with perseverance, where each step and growing self-confidence blend into a humanistic display of inclusion and acceptance of differences.

The event highlights the crucial support of families through encouragement and motivation, alongside the organizational efforts and safety measures provided by official bodies. This underscores the significant attention given to people with disabilities and emphasizes that their empowerment is a shared responsibility reflecting both cooperative spirit and humanitarian commitment.



'We nurture them so they may blossom' is an activity that brings joy to children's faces.



The coloring activity was one of the segments that received a remarkable response during the event.



Official bodies involved in the care and support of persons with disabilities. KUNA photos

PADA marks World Children's Day for children with disabilities

The Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) organized an event on Thursday on World Children's Day, emphasizing the importance of providing a safe and recreational environment that contributes to the development of motor and social skills of children with disabilities.

The event strives to empower children with disabilities as well as enhancing their self-confidence to enable them to interact positively

with those around them in society.

The occasion highlights the role of families of children with disabilities, who form the primary support system for their children, helping them enhance their communication through specialized centers, improving their children's quality of life and active participation in society. (KUNA)

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait riled

Israel's military warned Wednesday it would strike targets in several villages in southern Lebanon, describing them as Hezbollah infrastructure, and called on people to move away from the locations. More than an hour later, strikes began in the villages of Shehour and Deir Kifa.

Israel's military said Hezbollah was working to reestablish itself and rebuild its capacity in southern Lebanon, without providing evidence. It said the weapons' facilities targeted were embedded among civilians and violated understandings between Israel and Lebanon. Israel agreed to a ceasefire and withdraw from southern Lebanon last year and Lebanon agreed to quell Hezbollah activity in the area.

Earlier Wednesday, an Israeli airstrike on a car in the southern Lebanese village of Tiri killed one person and wounded 11, including students aboard a nearby bus, the Lebanese Health Ministry and state media said. State-run National News Agency said the school bus happened to be passing near the car that was hit.

Israel's military later said it killed a Hezbollah operative in the drone strike.

In Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp, just outside the port city of Sidon, life appeared normal Wednesday. Lebanese authorities prevented journalists from entering. At the scene of the strike, paramedics searched for human remains around a wall that was stained with blood. Several cars were burned and broken glass and debris littered the ground.

The Israeli military said it struck a Hamas training compound that was being used to prepare an attack against Israel and its army. It added that the Israeli army would continue to act against Hamas wherever it operates.

Hamas denied in a statement that the sports playground that was hit was its training compound.

Gaza's Ministry of Health said that Israeli strikes killed 25 Palestinians and injured 77 since the afternoon in one of the deadliest days since the Oct. 10 ceasefire took effect. Hospital officials who received the bodies said they came from on both sides of the yellow line established in last month's ceasefire. The boundary splits the enclave in two, leaving the border zone under Israeli military control while the area beyond it is meant to serve as a safe zone.

Officials at al-Ahli, Shifa, Nasser and Kuwaiti hospitals reported they received the bodies of those killed from Gaza City, Khan Younis and the Muwasi area, the southern Gaza displacement camp. An Israeli strike also killed

one person in Shijaiyah, a Gaza City neighborhood outside the safe zone where Israeli forces remain deployed.

The Israeli military said its strikes responded to militants who had opened fire on Israeli forces in Khan Younis earlier in the day. It said no soldiers were killed.

On Wednesday Hamas condemned the Israeli strikes across Gaza City and Khan Younis, calling them a "shocking massacre." In a statement, the group denied firing toward Israeli troops.

Israeli strikes have decreased since the ceasefire agreement took effect, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, though they have not stopped entirely. After Wednesday evening's strikes, the ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, has reported more than 300 deaths since the truce began, an average of more than seven per day. Each side has accused the other of violating its terms, which include increasing the flow of aid into Gaza and returning hostages - dead or alive - to Israel.

Digital commerce

innovation-driven economy and moves the country from legislative fragmentation to regional regulatory leadership in the digital economy.

With implementation underway, the law positions the e-commerce sector within a dynamic ecosystem that closes regulatory gaps, enhances legal clarity, boosts consumer confidence, protects rights, and supports sustainable growth opportunities in Kuwait's digital economy.

The law replaces outdated rules with modern provisions aligned to global digital-economy standards, opening pathways for innovation, streamlined licensing, and entrepreneurial activity in competitive online markets.

Key provisions include full legal recognition of electronic contracts, records, and signatures, simplifying procedures, reducing paperwork, and accelerating operations for businesses in Kuwait's evolving digital-services landscape.

It defines the digital merchant, streamlines licensing, establishes a supervised regulatory sandbox for testing innovative products, and creates specialized committees to resolve digital-commerce disputes swiftly without resorting to courts.

Consumer-protection measures guarantee data privacy, transparent advertising, refund rights, and flexible technology-neutral language adaptable to AI, block chain, and modern digital-payment methods.

Slight dip

Friday night will be cool, with northwesterly to variable winds at light to moderate speeds of 8 to 32 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 11°C and 13°C, and the sea will remain light to moderate, with waves between two and four feet.

On Saturday, daytime weather will be moderate, with northwesterly to variable winds blowing at light to moderate speeds of 10 to 32 km/h. Maximum temperatures are expected to range between 26°C and 28°C, and the sea will be light to moderate, with waves of one to four feet.

Saturday night will be cool to cold, with northwesterly to variable winds at light to moderate speeds of 8 to 28 km/h. Minimum temperatures are expected to range between 12°C and 14°C, and the sea will remain light to moderate, with waves between one and three feet.

Kuwait congratulates

Kuwaiti-Omani relations have been further cemented following the state visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait to Oman on February 6, 2024 and his attendance of the inauguration of Oman's Duqm Refinery project in Oman, which is the largest joint investment project and the fruit of their close relations.

Political cooperation between both sisterly countries has seen significant steps this year, mainly His Highness the Amir's second visit to Muscat on October 14, 2025, leading a high-level delegation, where both leaders exchanged views on major regional and international issues.

Remarkably, both nations share the same approach of resolving regional and international conflicts and crises by diplomatic and peaceful means, based on the respect of countries' sovereignty and independence, abidance by international law and charters and support for Gulf efforts to ensure regional and international stability and peace.

At the behest of both countries' leaderships, senior officials of their foreign ministries met on May 18 to weigh a number of issues pertinent to the Kuwaiti-Omani Joint Committee.

The committee has contributed to broadening the scope of bilateral cooperation in the domains of economy, trade, education, scientific research, youth, civil service, environment and other developmental areas.

An antitrust memo of understanding (MoU) and another one related to consumer protection came into effect on July 28 and August 31, 2025, respectively.

Economically, Al-Duqm Refinery project, run by Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8) and OQ Group, is considered one of the most significant joint ventures between Kuwait and Oman.

Kuwait, India

For his part, Misra praised Kuwait's national efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

Earlier, an official Kuwaiti delegation headed by Chairman of the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Dr. Hamad Al-Mekrad discussed with British officials strengthening cooperation in fighting money laundering and terrorist financing.

The Kuwaiti delegation explored with officials from the British Treasury prospects for upgrading partnership and exchanging experiences in this important domain.

The two sides affirmed their keenness to buttress bilateral coordination and support joint efforts to improve efficiency of related systems and procedures to enhance the safety of the financial sector.

Kuwait proud

Kuwait also called on the international community to renew its commitment to protecting children worldwide and to implement relevant international conventions to ensure a dignified life for all children.

Kuwait, US

The meeting was held at the Pentagon's H.Q in Washington where Kuwait Ambassador to the US Sheikhha Al-Zain Al-Sabah was present, Kuwait's Chief of General Staff said in a press release.

During the meeting, bilateral relations and means of developing joint military cooperation were discussed, along with standing strategic partnerships and ways of boosting them in a manner that serves common interests, it noted.

The two sides further touched upon efforts aiming to strengthen regional stability and security, and pursuing coordinating stances in multiple military and defense issues of common interests, it noted.

Accompanied by a high-profile delegation of senior Kuwaiti military officials, Al-Shurairan visited the Pentagon's H.Q where he was informed about some departments and sections.

PAHW launches online rent allowance service via Sahel

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) announced the launch of a new online service through the Sahel app, which allows eligible citizens to apply for a rent allowance if they meet the relevant requirements and have not previously applied, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It explained that the rent allow-

ance service is part of a suite of online services available through the Sahel app, bringing the total number of available services to 33. These services aim to meet citizens' needs and help them save time and effort. A dedicated team is available at its headquarters to provide support, answer citizens' inquiries, and guide them on how to use the online services.



Dr. Mohammad Al Sharika, Director of the Arab Center for Educational Research for the Gulf States holding an educational meeting on strategies for teaching and learning English in the primary stage. KUNA photo

GASERC moves to update primary 'English' teaching

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): The Gulf Arab States Educational Research Center (GASERC) held a meeting Thursday on "Strategies for Teaching and Learning English in Primary Schools," bringing together experts and education officials from member states of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States.

The center's Director Dr. Mohammad Al Sharika told KUNA that the meeting aimed to present the results of a program implemented by the Center on this topic, discuss effective strategies for teaching and learning English at the primary level, and exchange experiences from Gulf countries.

Al Sharika emphasized that the meeting reflects the Center's ongoing efforts to develop English curricula for primary education, which is a critical stage for children's linguistic, cognitive, and emotional growth.

He highlighted the importance of adopting a unified Gulf approach to teaching English, grounded in scientific

research, global best practices, and objective analysis of local educational realities, to enhance language skills and prepare students for the demands of the 21st century.

The meeting included three main sessions focusing on global trends in English teaching, the current status of English education in Gulf primary schools, and methods to advance English teaching across member countries.

Participants issued key recommendations, including adopting evidence-based teaching methods, benefiting from leading international models, and implementing comprehensive teacher training programs.

They also stressed the importance of the communicative approach in primary English education, integrating 21st-century skills and technology-enhanced learning into curricula, and incorporating project-based educational activities aligned with effective curriculum design principles.

PAHW inks KD19m deal for Mutlaa N12 District Center

Contract includes 10 public service buildings

By Mohammad Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has signed a contract for the construction of public buildings, facilities and infrastructure in the N12 District Center in Mutlaa Residential City, at a cost of KD19,127,406 and target completion within 900 days.

In a press statement on Wednesday, acting Director General of PAHW Rashid Al-Enezi revealed that the contract covers the construction and maintenance of 10 public buildings -- main central market, main health center, ambulance center, police station, citizen services build-

ing, Kuwait Municipality building, post office, social services building, community development center, and Ministry of Commerce and Industry building. This is in addition to the construction of shops and three electrical substations, as well as the services and infrastructure works.

He said the PAHW is currently following up the implementation of 131 service buildings, including three congregational mosques, three residences for the Imam and Muezzin in suburbs N2, N4 and N7, 13 kindergartens in suburbs N1-N6 and N8-N12, 10 primary schools for boys or girls in suburbs N2, N4, N5, N7, N11 and N12, six intermediate schools for boys or girls in suburbs N2,



Al-Enezi

N7, N8 and N11, four secondary schools for boys or girls in suburbs N1, N3, N8 and N12, a specialized health center in suburb N5, three general health centers in suburbs N2, N4 and N6, three integrated health centers with ambulance centers in suburbs N7, N9 and N10, three gas stations in suburbs N2, N4 and N6, six buildings designated for central markets, police stations, citizen service centers, post offices, municipal offices, social services units, community development centers, and Ministry of Commerce and Industry centers, and shops in suburbs N2, N4, N6, N7, N9 and N10, 25 shops in suburbs N1, N2, N3, N5, N8, N9 and N12, a fire station, a telephone exchange, and main post office building in the non-residential suburbs.

He added that PAHW previously completed the construction of 116 buildings in the city, all of which have been handed over to the relevant government agencies for operation.

Summer readiness and staff well-being prioritized

MEW steps up maintenance work

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy is intensifying maintenance work on electricity generation units and water desalination plants in preparation for the upcoming summer season.

According to informed sources, a total of 37 generation units are currently undergoing maintenance, with 29 units on standby. Meanwhile, 45 electricity generation units are operational to meet demand, supplemented by electricity imported from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Grid. The maintenance work is proceeding according to the annual schedule.

The ministry is also carrying out maintenance on water desalination plants, taking advantage of the current mild weather, which has reduced electricity and water consumption compared to the summer months, when demand typically reaches record highs.

On another note, the fact-finding committee continues its investigation into the reasons behind the recent power generation unit outages.

The committee was formed by the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable

Energy, Acting Minister of Finance, and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, and is chaired by former Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Mohammed Boushehri.

Sources revealed that the committee recently met with officials from the Doha East power station to discuss the causes of the sudden unit outages. They said the committee is expected to submit its final report to Minister Dr. Al-Mukhaizeem by the end of this month or early December.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy organized a health exhibition recently at its main building, under the patronage of Undersecretary of the ministry Eng. Adel Al-Zamil.

The official spokesperson for the ministry Fatima Hayat stated that the two-day exhibition highlights the ministry's commitment to the health of its employees, emphasizing that good health is closely linked to efficiency and performance.

She noted that several specialists from various departments, including health, physiotherapy, and chronic diseases, were present at the exhibition, offering free preliminary health checkups to ensure the well-being of the ministry's employees.



US First lady Melania Trump and second lady Usha Vance pose for photographs with students at Lejeune High School in Jacksonville, NC on Nov 19. (AP)

Melania Trump and Usha Vance making early holiday visit with N.Carolina military families

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION NEW RIVER, NC, Nov 20, (AP): Melania Trump and Usha Vance took their first trip together, spending time in North Carolina on Wednesday with service members and their families to show appreciation for their service and sacrifice as the holidays approach.

The wives of President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance, a former Marine, visited with military personnel, their children, and relatives at Camp Lejeune, the largest Marine Corps base on the East Coast, and Marine Corps Air Station New River.

"Thank you for your service. My husband, the president, is sending best regards. We are both thinking of you," Trump told students at Lejeune High School, where 10 marines stationed out front had saluted as their motorcade arrived.

The first lady added that she and the president always think of US service members but "especially during the holidays" and wished students and

teachers a happy Thanksgiving.

She spoke at a gymnasium, where the school was assembling 2,000 care packages for service members stationed far from home. Among the items included in each were dude wipes, handy-wipes marketed toward men, and jerky sticks.

Melania Trump told the students that if they were ever at the White House they'd be welcome to visit her there.

Her speech came after Trump and Vance entered the classroom and met with students in an advanced placement research class from the Lejeune High "Devilpups" - recalling the Marine Corps' "Devil Dog" nickname - for discussions about technological development and artificial intelligence.

Trump and Vance sat with four tables of students with laptops, and listened to them deliver a presentation on electronic media affecting sleep and adolescent wellbeing, as well as a study on social media addiction and its impact on young people's esteem and

body image.

The students demonstrated how they used AI to generate videos as part of their presentation. The first lady could be heard asking one group how they used AI in school, and was seen nodding along as they chatted. The students described rules that kept them from using AI to improperly complete assignments.

Trump and Vance subsequently visited an elementary school, taking seats at separate tables that each had folders from the first lady's child-focused Be Best initiative.

Trump told one of the girls she was "beautiful." The youngster had a patriotic ribbon pinned to her light blue top, meaning she's related to someone who is actively deployed. Vance later chatted and smiling as she talked to a teacher.

Both women have appeared together at other public events, most notably at the inauguration of their husbands at the Capitol in January.

Summers takes leave from teaching at Harvard

US president signs bill to release Jeffrey Epstein case files

WASHINGTON, Nov 20, (AP): US President Donald Trump signed legislation Wednesday that compels his administration to release files on convicted offender Jeffrey Epstein, bowing to political pressure from his own party after initially resisting those efforts.

Trump could have chosen to release many of the files on his own months ago.

"Democrats have used the 'Epstein' issue, which affects them far more than the Republican Party, in order to try and distract from our AMAZING Victories," Trump said in a social media post as he announced he had signed the bill.

Now, the bill requires the Justice Department to release all files and communications related to Epstein, as well as any information about the investigation into his death in a federal prison in 2019, within 30 days. It allows for redactions about Epstein's victims for ongoing federal investigations, but DOJ cannot withhold information due to "embarrassment, reputational harm, or political sensitivity."

It was a remarkable turn of events for what was once a farfetched effort to force the disclosure of case files from an odd congressional coalition of Democrats, one GOP antagonist of the president, and a handful of erstwhile Trump loyalists. As recently as last week, the Trump administration even



US 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 on Nov 17 in Washington. (AP)

summoned one Republican proponent of releasing the files, Rep Lauren Boebert of Colorado, to the Situation Room to discuss the matter, although she did not change her mind.

But over the weekend, Trump did a sharp U-turn on the files once it became clear that congressional action was inevitable. He insisted the Epstein matter had become a distraction to the GOP agenda and indicated he wanted to move on.

"I just don't want Republicans to take their eyes off all of the Victories that we've had," Trump said in a social media post Tuesday afternoon, explaining the rationale for his abrupt about-face.

The House passed the legislation on a 427-1 vote, with Rep. Clay Higgins, R-La., being the sole dissenter. He argued that the bill's language could lead to the release of information on innocent people mentioned in the fed-

eral investigation. The Senate later approved it unanimously, skipping a formal vote.

It's long been established that Trump had been friends with Epstein, the disgraced financier who was close to the world's elite. But the president has consistently said he did not know of Epstein's crimes and had cut ties with him long ago.

Before Trump returned to the White House for a second term, some of his closest political allies helped fuel conspiracy theories about the government's handling of the Epstein case, asserting a cover-up of potentially incriminating information in those files.

Also:
WASHINGTON: Former US Treasury Secretary **Larry Summers** abruptly went on leave Wednesday from teaching at Harvard University, where he once served as president, over recently released emails showing he maintained a friendly relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, Summers' spokesperson said. Summers had canceled his public commitments amid the fallout of the emails being made public and earlier Wednesday severed ties with OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT. Harvard had reopened an investigation into connections between him and Epstein, but Summers had said he would continue teaching economics classes at the school.



New York Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani and New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch visit the New York City Police Memorial on Nov 17. (AP)

agenda that over one million New Yorkers voted for just two weeks ago."

Trump for months has slammed Mamdani, falsely labeling him as a "communist" and predicting the ruin of his hometown if the democratic socialist was elected. He also threatened to deport Mamdani, who was born in Uganda and became a naturalized American citizen in 2018, and to pull federal money from the city.

Corruption scandal pressures Ukraine leader to show greater accountability

KYIV, Ukraine, Nov 20, (AP): Pressure is mounting on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to take stronger action to show accountability in the face of a corruption scandal presenting the greatest threat to his government since Russia's full-scale invasion.

Last week, Zelenskyy dismissed two top officials and imposed sanctions on close associates after government investigators revealed that \$100 million had been embezzled from the energy sector through kickbacks paid by contractors.

But that hasn't quieted the political storm. After more than three years of war in which Ukrainians face regular power outages as a result of Russia's fierce bombardment, allegations of corruption in the energy sector aren't sitting well with the public. Calls are growing for Zelenskyy to remove his longtime chief of staff, Andrii Yermak, considered by many to be Ukraine's de facto vice president.

Neither Zelenskyy nor Yermak have been accused of any wrongdoing by those leading the corruption investigation. Yet Zelenskyy's political opponents - as well as allies worried the scandal could weaken their parliamentary governing coalition - say more



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy talks to journalists during a joint press conference with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan following their meeting at the presidential palace in Ankara, Wednesday, on Nov 19. (AP)

senior leaders need to be held accountable to restore public trust.

Zelenskyy's term officially ended in May 2024, but he has continued to govern without elections, saying they cannot be held while Russia is occupying a

fifth of the country.

His critics say it's also important to bolster credibility with Ukraine's Western allies, whose support is vital to the war effort and in eventually negotiating an end to the conflict.

"It's really hard to imagine that all this is happening at the behest of people from the outside without political support," Anastasia Radina, the head of parliament's anti-corruption committee, said on Facebook on Wednesday. By not cutting ties with Yermak, Zelenskyy is "provoking an even greater internal crisis," she said.

Ukraine has been plagued by corruption since gaining independence, and Zelenskyy was elected on a mandate to eliminate graft.

Two officials in Zelenskyy's office say the president has not made any decision to dismiss Yermak. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief journalists.

The investigation conducted by Ukraine's anti-corruption watchdogs implicated high-ranking officials with pressuring contractors to pay up to 15% kickbacks in exchange for construction business with Ukraine's state-owned nuclear energy company, Energoatom.



Rescuers at the scene after an express train collided with a passenger train on the line between Zliv and Divcice in the Ceské Budejovice region in the southern Czech Republic on Nov 20. (AP)

Trains collide in Czech Republic, leaving dozens of people injured

An express train collided with another passenger train in the southern Czech Republic on Thursday, injuring dozens of people, officials said.

The accident took place near the city of Ceske Budejovice at around 6:20 a.m.

A total of 57 people suffered mostly light injuries but two were seriously injured, the regional rescue service said.

But a hospital in Ceske Budejovice later said five people it admitted had serious injuries.

The traffic between Ceske Budejovice and the city of Plzen was halted and was not expected to resume until the afternoon.

Authorities were investigating the cause of the crash. (AP)

As reports of US-Russia peace plan circulate, Europe and Ukraine must be involved: diplomats

KYIV, Nov 20, (AP): Ukraine and Europe must be consulted on any efforts to end Russia's invasion of its neighbor, top European diplomats said Thursday, as reports circulated about a US-Russian proposal to end the war at a time when corruption allegations have rattled Ukraine's government.

The talk of a secret peace plan piled more pressure on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is also marshaling his country's defenses against Russia's bigger army, visiting European leaders to ensure they continue their support for Ukraine, and negotiating a major corruption scandal involving the embattled energy sector that has caused public outrage.

"For any plan to work, it needs Ukrainians and Europeans on board," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said at the start of a meeting in Brussels of the 27-nation bloc's foreign ministers.

Representatives of EU countries agreed. German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl said that "all negotiations about a ceasefire, regarding the further peaceful development of Ukraine, can only be discussed and negotiated with Ukraine. And Europe will have to be included."



European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, (second left), talks with Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon, (left), Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos, (second right), and Malta's Foreign Minister Ian Borg, (right), as they arrive for an EU general affairs meeting at the European Council building in Brussels on Nov 20. (AP)

It wasn't clear whether the foreign ministers had seen the peace plan, reportedly drawn up by U.S. and Russian envoys, and which was said to include forcing Ukraine to cede territory, a prospect Zelenskyy has ruled out.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio

said on social platform X late Wednesday that American officials "are and will continue to develop a list of potential ideas" for a lasting peace agreement which "will require both sides to agree to difficult but necessary concessions."

Europe

BiH police detain criminal group: A total of 13 individuals were arrested for suspected involvement in the smuggling of migrants from Serbia into Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the BiH Border Police said Wednesday.

The arrests, conducted on Tuesday and Wednesday in the northeastern border town of Zvornik and in the capital Sarajevo, include ten BiH citizens and three foreign nationals of Afro-Asian origin.

Authorities said the suspects organized and carried out migrant smuggling from Serbia into BiH under the guise of taxi services to obtain unlawful financial gain.

As part of the criminal group operated in Serbia, the action was coordinated closely with Serbia's Ministry of Internal Affairs, the police said. (Xinhua)

Italy OKs blast suspect extradition: Italy's highest court on Wednesday approved the extradition to Germany of a Ukrainian man suspected of setting off explosions that damaged Nord Stream pipelines between Russia and Germany more than three years ago.

The defense lawyer for 49-year-old Serhii Kuznetsov said that his client would be turned over to German authorities within the next few days, after the Cassation Court rejected a final defense appeal. Defense lawyer Nicola Canestrini expressed confidence that his client would be acquitted at trial.

The explosions ruptured the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, which carried Russian natural gas to Germany under the Baltic Sea until Russia cut off supplies at the end of August 2022. (AP)



This photo provided by Swedish Coast Guard shows a leak from Nord Stream 2 on Sept 28, 2022. (AP)

Hacking suspect arrested on resort island: Police have arrested a suspected Russian hacker on the Thai resort island of Phuket who was wanted by the FBI on allegations he was behind cyberattacks on US and European government agencies, officials said.

The 35-year-old, who entered Thailand on Oct. 30 at Phuket Airport, was taken into custody earlier this month at his hotel and is now being held pending possible extradition, Thai police said.

The suspect's name was not released but Russian state-run news agency Russia Today identified him as Denis Obrezko, a native of Stavropol. It reported that his relatives confirmed the Nov. 6 arrest and were planning to fight his extradition to the United States. (AP)

Myanmar raids second major online scam center and detains foreigners

BANGKOK, Nov 20, (AP): Myanmar’s military government extended its crackdown on online scam activities to a second major location, detaining hundreds of foreigners and seizing thousands of mobile phones used to carry out the fraud, state media reported Wednesday.

Myanmar is notorious for hosting cyberscam operations responsible for bilking people all over the world, which usually involve gaining victims’ confidence online with romantic ploys and bogus investment schemes. Authorities raided a major scam center in mid-October called KK Park on the outskirts of Myawaddy, a major trading town on the border with Thailand.

On Tuesday, the army raided a scam compound in the town of Shwe Kokko, also near Myawaddy, military spokesman Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun said in a statement published Wednesday in Myanma Alinn and other state newspapers.

He said authorities detained 346 foreigners and confiscated nearly 10,000 mobile phones along with other related equipment, while blocking people who were trying to flee across the border.

The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime has estimated that hundreds of industrial-scale scam centers based



White smoke billows after an explosion at KK Park online scam center in Myawaddy township, Karen State, Myanmar on Oct 25. (AP)

primarily in Southeast Asia generate just under \$40 billion in annual profits.

Myanmar’s military government says it began its crackdown on cross-border online scams and illegal gambling in early September. Following the raid on KK Park last month, more 1,500 people from about two dozen nations who had worked there crossed into Thailand, and Zaw Min Tun said the site’s buildings have been demolished, including by controlled explo-

sions.

The entire area is only loosely under the control of Myanmar’s military government, and also comes under the influence of ethnic minority militias.

Several ethnic Karen militias are active in the area, including the military-backed Border Guard Force, which has signed a ceasefire with the army, and the Karen National Union – KNU -- which is fighting against the army an part of the nationwide resistance war against military rule.

Asia

5 injured after inhaling gas in S.Korea: Five people were injured on Thursday after inhaling toxic gas at a steel plant in the southeast of South Korea, according to Yonhap news agency.

Three workers collapsed while cleaning sludge outdoors at the plant of the country’s steelmaker POSCO in Pohang, about 260 km southeast of the capital Seoul, around 1:30 p.m. local time.

Two of them were found in cardiac arrest. The police said all five victims in the gas inhalation accident were taken to a nearby hospital.

It was believed that they were exposed to a harmful gas while cleaning around the facilities.

The fire authorities stated that it was presumed to be carbon monoxide asphyxiation. (Xinhua)

Cambodia bus accident kills 13: Thirteen people were killed and 24 others injured after a bus crashed into a bridge’s rail and plunged into a river in central Cambodia’s Kampong Thom province early Thursday, a local police officer said.

The fatal accident occurred on a national road in Santuk district at around 3:00 a.m. local time, said Siv Sovanna, deputy police chief of Santuk district.

“Thirteen people, including eight women, were pronounced dead, as 24 others sustained injuries,” he told Xinhua over the telephone. “Drowsy driving was the most likely cause of the accident.”

The death toll from road traffic accidents remains high in the Southeast Asian nation. In the first nine months of 2025, some 1,062 people had been killed in road crashes, and 2,256 others got wounded, according to a government report. (Xinhua)

Thailand’s flood death toll reaches 25: The death toll from ongoing floods across Thailand has reached 25, authorities said on Wednesday, as an estimated 444,000



Members of the coast guard conduct rescue work after a passenger ferry ran aground in waters off western South Korea on Nov 19. All 267 people were rescued according to the coast guard. (Xinhua)

people across 12 provinces remained affected by water runoff and river overflows.

According to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, fatalities have been reported in five provinces, with 19 deaths recorded alone in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, north of Bangkok.

Meanwhile, the meteorological department has issued warnings that heavy rainfall through Sunday could result in flash floods and forest runoff in the southern region. (Xinhua)

2 dead in Australia truck crash: A woman and a child died after two trucks collided on a highway in the north-eastern Australian state of Queensland on Wednesday night.

The Queensland Police Service said in a statement on Thursday that emergency services were called to reports that two trucks had collided near the town of Canoona, over 550 kilometers northwest of Brisbane, around 10:40 pm local time.

Two passengers in one of the trucks, a toddler and a woman in her 20s, died at the scene. The driver of the same vehicle, a man in his 20s, sustained serious injuries and was airlifted to hospital. (Xinhua)

More bodies found after landslides, raising death toll to 23

Volcano eruption forces rescue of more than 170 climbers on Indonesia’s Mount Semeru

JAKARTA, Indonesia, Nov 20, (AP): Indonesian authorities said Thursday they helped more than 170 climbers who were caught a day earlier by Mount Semeru’s sudden eruption to return to safety as the seismic activity of Java island’s highest volcano indicated that the eruption will continue.

About 178 people, including climbers, porters, guides, tourism officials and tourists, started their way up the the 3,676-meter (12,060-foot) mountain in the Lumajang district of East Java province Wednesday and became stranded at the Ranu Kumbolo camping area.

“They are safe and now being helped to return,” said Priatin Hadi Wijaya, head of the Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation, told a video news conference.

Another official at the center, Hetty Triastuty, added that Ranu Kumbolo is a safe area located outside the main danger zone of 8 kilometers (5 miles) from the crater. The camping area is on the northern slope of the mountain, which is not in the path of the hot cloud flow that was observed moving south-southeast. However, the climbers may have been exposed to volcanic ash.

Mount Semeru in East Java province unleashed searing clouds of hot ash and a mixture of rock, lava and gas that traveled up to 13 kilometers (8 miles) down its slopes in succession from midday to dusk Wednesday, while a thick column of hot clouds rose 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) into the air, prompting scientists to raise the volcano’s alert to the highest level, Indonesia’s Geology Agency chief Muhammad Wafid said.

He said a series of pyroclastic density currents traveled down the mountain’s slopes and incandescent avalanches of volcanic material were visible descending through the Besuk Kobokan River valley on the southern flank.

“Mount Semeru’s seismicity activity indicated that the eruption continued at a high level with increasing numbers of signals indicating avalanches,” Wafid said.

He warned people to keep away from an area along the Besuk Kobokan River, which is the path of the lava flow as searing gas flowed down Semeru’s slopes, adding that authorities are considering to expansion of the danger zone from the current 8 kilometers (5 miles).

Nearly 1,000 residents in three villages most at risk in the district of Lumajang were evacuated to government shelters, said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari. No casualties have been reported.



People carry their belongings as they evacuate their homes at a village affected by the eruption of Mount Semeru in Lumajang, East Java, Indonesia on Nov 20. (AP)

Videos on social media showed a dense cloud of ash sweeping through plantations and a forested valley to a river beneath a bridge.

The eruptions that unfolded throughout the day blanketed several villages with thick volcanic ash and blocked sunlight. Local media reported some residents were exposed to an odor of sulfur and that two motorcyclists crashed due to hot ash on a bridge, resulting in severe burns on their bodies.

Mount Semeru, also known as Mahameru, has erupted numerous times in the past 200 years. Still, as is the case with many of the 129 active volcanoes in Indonesia, tens of thousands of people continue to live on its fertile slopes.

Semeru’s last major eruption was in December 2021 when it left 51 people dead and several hundred others burned in villages that were buried in layers of mud. The eruption forced the evacuation of more than 10,000 people. The government moved about 2,970 houses out of the danger zone.

Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 280 million people, sits along the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” a horseshoe-shaped series of fault lines, and is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity.

Also:

JAKARTA, Indonesia: Rescuers recovered more bodies in the search for people buried under landslides in two areas of Indonesia’s main island of **Java**, raising the confirmed deaths to 23, officials said Thursday.

Workers dug through tons of mud and rubble with nearly two dozen excavators in the **Cilacap** district of Central Java province retrieved four bodies Wednesday after landslides triggered by torrential rains last week hit dozens of houses in three villages, said **Abdul Muhari**, spokesperson for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency.

The finds raised the death toll to 20 in that area. He said the search for three people still missing was continuing.

Local officials also said 296 houses would be moved from the landslide-prone area within the next six months, and each family waiting for a new house will receive 600,000 rupiah (\$36) per month in compensation.

Rescuers also Wednesday retrieved a body from a landslide in another part of Central Java, raising the toll there to three.

More than 500 rescue personnel have been deployed to search for 25 people reportedly missing after a landslide struck part of Banjarnegara district Saturday, burying at least 54 houses and sending nearly 1,000 residents into government shelters, Muhari said.

Images released by the agency showed green-terraced rice fields transformed into murky mud and rescue workers digging with excavators in villages covered by thick mud, rocks and uprooted trees.

Seasonal downpours cause frequent landslides and floods in Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or in fertile flood plains.

Pakistani forces step up raids near Afghan border, killing 23 militants

ISLAMABAD, Nov 20, (Agencies): Pakistani security forces raided two Pakistani Taleban hideouts in the country’s northwest near the Afghan border, triggering intense shootouts that left 23 militants dead, the military said Thursday.

There were no details on any casualties among the military. The raids took place on Wednesday in Kurram, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to a military statement. The operation followed raids earlier this week across northwestern Pakistan that the army said killed 38 militants.

The military identified the killed militants as “Khawarij,” a term authorities use for militants they allege are backed by Afghanistan and India, including those linked to the banned Pakistani Taleban, a charge Kabul and New Delhi deny..



Afghan refugees sit beside trucks loaded with their belongings as they wait their turn to leave for their homeland through a border crossing point which partially opens following Oct.19 ceasefire, on the outskirts of Chaman, a border town on the Pakistan Afghan border on Oct 29. (AP)

Revenue (FBR).

Acting on credible intelligence, Pakistan Customs’ enforcement teams recently intercepted a vehicle near the bordering area of **Panjkur** and **Washuk** districts of the province, the FBR said on Tuesday.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani authorities have confiscated 30 kg of crystal methamphetamine valued at over 450 million rupees (about 1.6 million US dollars) in the country’s southwest **Balochistan** province, according to the Federal Board of

Colombian leader’s spending sparks backlash

Petro releases bank records to counter US drug claims

BOGOTA, Colombia, Nov 20, (AP): Colombian president Gustavo Petro has publicly released his bank records in an effort to demonstrate he has no ties to drug trafficking, an unsubstantiated claim made by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Colombia’s Financial Information and Analysis Unit this week began releasing the president’s bank statements to the press from 2022 to June of this year after the president ordered their release on Monday.

“Don’t you find it alarming that my bank accounts and transactions contradict President (Donald) Trump’s assessment of a president democratically elected by Colombians?” Petro wrote Wednesday on the social network X.

Petro is referring to the sanctions imposed by the US Treasury Department on him, first lady Verónica Alcocer, and his eldest son Nicolás Petro, all of whom were accused of drug trafficking links without evidence. However, analysts are skeptical that publishing his accounts will achieve this goal, warning that the move has instead sparked a public debate about his private life.

If there were alleged drug trafficking transactions, they “surely will not



Colombian President Gustavo Petro speaks during the swearing-in ceremony of Gen. William Rincon as the new national police director in Bogota, Colombia on Oct 24. (AP)

appear in the president’s accounts,” Yann Basset, a professor of political science at the Universidad del Rosario, told The Associated Press, adding that he does not believe Petro’s move will convince experts or the United States.

It is “more an act of transparency toward the public,” Basset said.

The released accounts have so far shown no sign of suspicious transactions but have revealed payments for a house mortgage, purchases at stores like Gucci and Ralph Lauren, and a transaction at a club. This has led to criticism from the local press.

“Your analysis is quite immature,”

Petro wrote on X Wednesday after being questioned about his spending. “It implies that if you’re a socialist you’ll starve, because all food in capitalism involves buying goods.”

Petro came to power on a platform that directly challenged concentrated power groups, promising structural changes to significantly reduce Colombia’s inequality and poverty.

Meanwhile, Colombia’s human rights ombudswoman said that seven children were killed in a controversial airstrike against a rebel group in the country’s south earlier this week, as the administration of Petro steps up efforts to regain control of rural areas in Guaviare province.

In a statement, ombudswoman Iris Marin said the minors killed in the strike against the FARC-EMC rebel group had been forcibly recruited and were being used as “human shields.”

Marin called on the Colombian government and rebel groups in the country to respect international humanitarian law. The public defender had initially said that six minors were killed in the strike, but updated the death toll following a statement from Colombia’s Forensic Medicine institute.

Lat/Am

Mexico arrests suspect in mayor’s killing: Mexican authorities on Wednesday announced the arrest of a man they say was involved in planning and ordering the killing of a popular mayor earlier this month in the western state of Michoacan.

Public Security Secretary Omar García Harfuch said in a news conference that investigators found the suspect through messages discovered on the cellphones of two men who were killed in the days after Uruapan Mayor Carlos Manzo’s assassination and that the criminal cell he led was tied to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel.

Michoacan state prosecutor Carlos Torres Piña said that the suspect, identified only as Jorge Armando N. in keeping with Mexican privacy rules, was arrested Tuesday afternoon. (AP)

‘Protect three Salvadoran men’: The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights called on the government of El Salvador to protect three Salvadoran men deported by the United States in a decision published Tuesday that said they had been held without the ability to communicate with their lawyers or relatives since arriving.

The Salvadoran government said in the case that William Alexander Martínez Ruano, 21, and José Osmin Santos Robles, 41, were being held in a prison in Santa Ana and the third, Brandon Bladimir Sigarín Cruz, 22, who the government said was an active member of the Mara Salvatrucha gang, had been held in the country’s new gang prison since March. (AP)

Africa

Congo river barge capsizes, 64 missing: A boat capsized in central Congo, leaving 64 people missing, authorities said Wednesday.

The river barge sank on Monday on the mouth of the Sankuru River in Kasai province, an area known for its powerful and turbulent currents, local administrator François Ahaka told The Associated Press.

“The boat initially had 120 passengers on board. So far, we have 56 survivors and 64 people missing,” he said, adding that search efforts were still underway.

The vessel had left the port of Bena Dibe in Sankuru province on Nov. 13, bound for the capital, Kinshasa, which is located more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) from its point of departure, Ahaka said.

The capsizing of boats is becoming increasingly frequent in this central African nation as more people are abandoning the few available roads for cheaper, wooden vessels crumbling under the weight of passengers and their goods. (AP)

Gunmen kills 2 in Nigeria: Gunmen attacked a church in Nigeria and killed two people, authorities said.

No group has claimed responsibility for Tuesday night’s attack in Eruku town in central Nigeria. Police responded to gunfire and found one person fatally shot inside the church and another nearby, Kwara state police spokesperson Adetoun Ejire-Adeyemi said in a statement.

Kwara State Gov AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq in a statement on Wednesday praised Nigerian President Bola Tinubu for the deployment of 900 additional troops there. (AP)

Bangladesh top court restores nonpartisan caretaker system but not for next elections

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Nov 20, (AP): Bangladesh’s Supreme Court on Thursday restored a nonpartisan caretaker government system for national elections but said it won’t apply to the polls being held early next year.

The caretaker system was introduced in 1996 and widely accepted by Bangladesh’s people and by international observers as a step toward election fairness in the a parliamentary democracy of 170 million people. In two subsequent elections, two retired chief justices formed nonpartisan governments that held the elections within 90 days and transferred power to the winners. The election in 2008 was held under a former central bank governor.

But political disputes led to the system being scrapped at the court’s suggestion in 2011 under then- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, whose opponents said she aimed to manipulate future elections. Her administration oversaw national elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024 that kept Hasina in power and were not considered credible. The Bangladesh Nationalist



Bangladesh Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman, center sitting, and senior lawyers address a press conference after Supreme Court restored a nonpartisan caretaker government system for national elections but said it won’t apply to the polls being held early next year, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Nov 20. (AP)

Party headed by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Hasina’s main rival, boycotted elections in 2014 and 2024, demanding the restoration of the caretaker government system, but Hasina rejected it.

Kuwait oil price surges to \$65.50 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait crude oil went up 24 cents during Wednesday trading to reach USD 65.50 per barrel compared with USD 65.26 pb the day before, Kuwait Petroleum Corpo-

ration (KPC) said Thursday. Brent futures dropped USD 1.38 to USD 63.51 pb and West Texas Intermediate went down USD 1.30 to USD 59.44 pb.

Business

Parents can instantly open accounts and monitor children’s spending via the Weyay App

Weyay Bank launches exclusive ‘Jeel Dasman’ card to promote financial literacy among students and showcase their talents

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: As part of the partnership announced last October between Weyay Bank and Dasman Bilingual School, the Bank launched an innovative initiative aimed at creating a direct impact on the students by developing their financial skills and nurturing their talents under the supervision of Dasman’s art teachers.

The initiative consisted of a competition to design the “Jeel Dasman” card, giving students the opportunity to express their individuality and showcase their creativity through the card design. At the same time, it equipped them with essential knowledge to manage their money responsibly and consciously, preparing them to be better ready for future life requirements. The competition resulted in selecting a design created by a talented Dasman student to be exclusively available for the school’s students for a limited time. Parents can contact Weyay Bank’s Solutions Center to complete the process of opening a Weyay account for the parent and a “Jeel”



Alya Al-Sane



‘Jeel Dasman’ card

card for the student within minutes through the Weyay app. Afterwards, the exclusive card will be delivered and can be used at all stores—not only online—inside and outside Kuwait.

The launch of the “Jeel Dasman” card aligns with Weyay Bank’s vision to promote financial literacy among the younger generation through “Jeel”, offering innovative digital tools that empower informed financial decisions from an early age.

Designed specifically for the ages 8 to 14, the “Jeel” card fosters independence and financial awareness, complemented by the “Jeel” app, which is a simplified banking experience tailored for young users. Parents can also monitor and guide their children’s spending through integrated controls in the Weyay app, ensuring a balance between financial freedom and parental oversight.

As the first product of its kind in Kuwait, “Jeel” enables children to enjoy seamless digital banking services, hold a bank card in their own name, and use digital wallets such as Apple Pay, instilling a sense of responsibility and financial culture from an early age.

Commenting on this initiative, Alya Al-Sane, Head of Marketing at Weyay Bank, said: “We are proud to introduce the “Jeel Dasman” card as an extension of our partnership with Dasman Bilingual School. This initiative reflects our commitment to equipping the next generation with the financial and digital skills they need for a brighter future. What makes this card truly special is that it represents the students’ identity and creativity.”

Through this initiative, Weyay Bank continues to lead in social responsibility, not only as a financial institution but as a partner in education delivering innovative solutions that help build a financially and digitally aware generation.

Main market index up 53.62 points

Boursa Kuwait general index rises 17.27 points

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Thursday’s session with a positive performance, as the general index climbed 17.27 points (0.20%) to close at 8,831.39 points. Trading activity included 329.2 million shares exchanged in 21,775 cash transactions, reaching a total value of KD 78.5 million (about USD 240.2 million).

The main market index advanced by 53.62 points (0.65%) to 8,339.88 points, on a volume of 196.9 million shares and 12,498 transactions, valued at KD 28.6 million (about USD

87.5 million). The premier market index rose 9.06 points (0.10%) to 9,390.42, with 132.2 million shares traded in 9,277 transactions, totaling KD 49.8 million (about USD 152.3 million). Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index gained 70.74 points (0.84%) to reach 8,484.99 points, due to 89.7 million shares traded over 6,508 transactions worth KD 17.5 million (about USD 53.5 million).

This upward momentum reflects continued investor confidence and heightened trading volumes across various market segments.

Initiative enhances processing speed

Warba Bank launches digital invoice platform for suppliers

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: As part of its strategy to drive digital transformation across all services and products offered to its customers and meet their evolving needs, Warba Bank announced the launch of its new digital platform, Warba Invoice Gate, designed to streamline and accelerate the processing of supplier invoices related to individual financing products (auto financing, medical financing, education financing, and housing financing). The launch reflects the Bank’s commitment to adopting advanced technological solutions and strengthening its relationships with suppliers as strategic partners in its growth and development.

Warba Invoice Gate introduces an innovative digital solution that enables suppliers to upload their invoices electronically, allowing for automated review, approval, and payment without the need for paper correspondence or in-person visits. This significantly improves the supplier experience, enhances transparency and processing speed, and supports the Bank’s efforts to elevate the customer journey through operational excellence and sustainable service delivery.

Speaking about the new service, Layali Mustafa Al-Fahad as Chief Operations Officer at Warba Bank, said: “The launch of Warba Invoice Gate reflects our belief at Warba Bank that true success is built on partnership and understanding the needs of our stakeholders including suppliers, who are strategic partners in our journey of growth and leadership within the Islamic banking industry. We believe in creating an integrated ecosystem that supports their needs and aligns with our shared values, driving progress, efficiency, and long-term trust between the Bank and its partners.”

Al-Fahad emphasized that digital transformation is a core pillar of the Bank’s strategy. She said: “Digital transformation is not merely a technology initiative, but a mean to redefine the banking experience and reinforce Warba Bank’s commitment to continuous innovation and smart solutions that elevate operational efficiency and provide partners and customers with a transparent, exceptional experience.

She added: “Warba Invoice Gate embodies the spirit of our vision ‘Let’s Own Tomorrow.’ It is a step that brings together innovation and



Layali Al-Fahad

values while placing the customer at the center. We believe that when technology is invested in to serve people, it becomes more than a tool; it becomes a message, a meaningful experience that builds trust and shapes the future.”

Al-Fahad further noted: “At Warba Bank, we view sustainability and progress as shared responsibilities toward our nation, environment and community. Launching this digital platform also reinforces our commitment to reducing environmental impact and minimizing paper usage, an important step that aligns with Kuwait’s Vision 2035 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and reflects our role as a national partner in building a more sustainable future.”

A Leading Position in Digital Transformation

Warba Bank continues to roll out advanced digital initiatives across all areas of banking operations, from online banking services and cutting-edge mobile applications to innovative technology-driven solutions. These efforts confirm the Bank’s firm commitment to digital transformation and its pioneering role in modernizing the Kuwaiti banking sector, in line with its vision, “Let’s Own Tomorrow,” and its promise to deliver exceptional banking services to all customers and partners.

Warba Bank has achieved significant success in a short period, establishing itself as a leader in Islamic banking services and ranking among the local banks with the largest number of shareholders, bringing it closer to all segments of society. This achievement reaffirms the Bank’s position as a trusted financial partner that delivers high-value products and services through innovation and social responsibility, in line with its vision “Let’s Own Tomorrow.”

Higher oil output, stronger investment to drive 2026 outlook

Kuwait growth to accelerate in 2026 despite global headwinds

By National Bank of Kuwait

Economic growth should gain further momentum in 2026, boosted by higher oil production, incremental improvements in business and projects activity, and a more stable consumer spending climate following recent weakness. The fiscal deficit will likely widen in FY26/27 amid softer oil prices and despite ongoing projected restraint in government spending. Public debt issuance has provided financing headroom and raised the prospect of greater infrastructure investment. Risks to the outlook center on oil prices, the health of the global economy and domestic investment and reform progress.

Growth to accelerate despite challenging global context

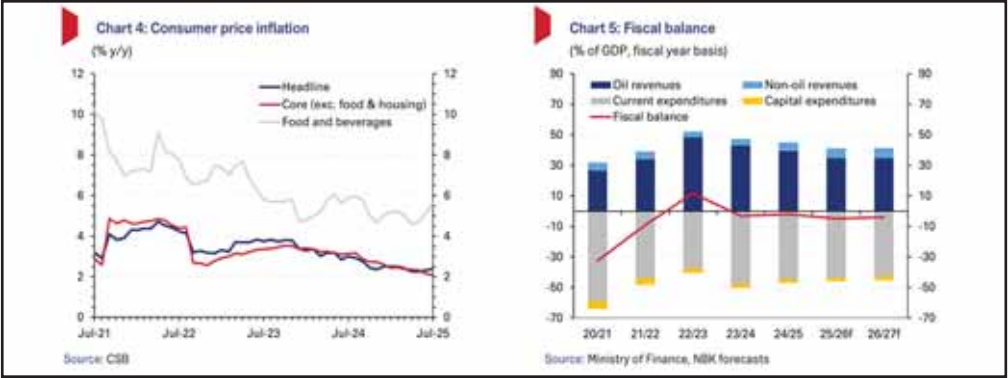
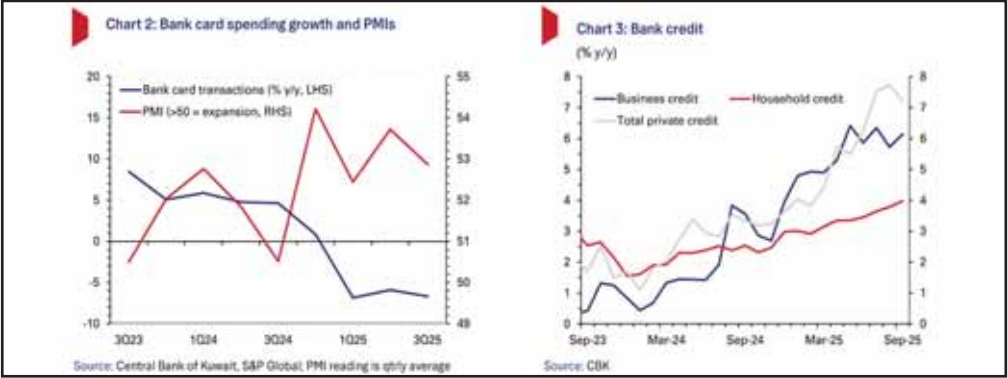
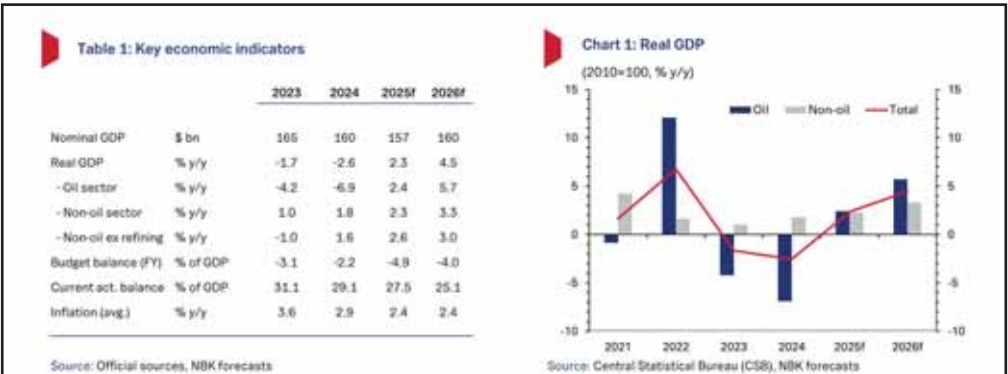
Economic growth is expected to gain further momentum next year, after turning positive in H125 (+1.3% y/y) for the first time in two years on the back of higher oil production and improving non-oil sector activity (+2.5% y/y), the latter supported by improved business sentiment, rising investment spending and looser monetary policy. We think the growing investment push by both business and the government, evident in 2025 with robust corporate lending (6.1% y/y in September), double-digit real estate sales growth (up a cumulative 28% y/y over 9M2025) and stronger project awards (on track to at least match 2024’s solid KD2.6bn), will play an important part in the narrative going forward. We forecast non-oil growth at 3.3% in 2026, up from 2.3% in 2025, which is also in-line with PMI readings that have consistently signaled solid expansion (53 in 2025). One weak spot has been consumer spending (proxied by cards data), which has declined in 2025. There is a good chance that this weakness begins to unwind in 2026, underpinning the improvement in non-oil activity. The external context remains challenging, though, from trade tariff frictions to geopolitical tensions, although the direct impact of these on Kuwait’s economy should be limited.

Oil output to see further – albeit uncertain – expansion

For the first time since 2022, Kuwait’s oil sector is seeing output gains as OPEC-8 unwinds two tranches of voluntary supply cuts (+263 kb/d cumulative for Kuwait) from 2023-24 to recapture market share. OPEC-8 has paused supply increases for Q1 2026 amid signs of an over-supplied market, but Kuwait’s crude production should still top 2.6 mb/d in 2026, boosting oil GDP by 5.7% from 2.4% in 2025. Current oil capacity of around 3.2 mb/d means that Kuwait is among the few OPEC+ members able to increase volumes and stabilize the market in the event of a supply shock.

Reforms off the ground, but pace needs to pick up

The authorities’ emphasis on delivery of Vision 2035 (‘New Kuwait’) development goals has seen movement on key infrastructure projects, such as the Mubarak Al-Kabeer port, the Al-Zour North IWPP project and housing cities. To address fiscal sustainability, various service fees have been repriced, a 15% top-up tax on multinationals introduced and the long-delayed public debt law approved. A housing finance law is also close to being finalized. The government recognizes that the reform pace will need to accelerate to improve the business environment, increase FDI, encourage the development



of non-oil industries and raise labor force productivity. Of critical importance to lifting sustainable non-oil growth rates is reversing Kuwait’s historically low investment rate, which has lagged GCC peers. The new debt law or a previously mooted domestic investment fund could provide additional funds.

Inflation (2.4% y/y in July 2025) is projected steady at 2.4% on average in 2026, as price pressures in the food and clothing categories especially moderate further. Domestic interest rates, meanwhile, will continue to trend lower albeit perhaps more slowly than US monetary policy easing: the Central Bank of Kuwait has lowered its benchmark discount rate by a less aggressive 50 bps, to 3.75%, in the current cycle compared to the Fed’s 150 bps reduction.

Fiscal deficits to persist, liquidity boosted by debt law

The fiscal deficit is expected to widen over FY25-FY26 to about 4.4% of GDP on average (from 2.2% in FY24), given the likelihood of lower oil prices (\$65/bbl in 2026) and still limited non-oil revenues. That said, within the context of ongoing fiscal consolidation, spending will likely grow more gradually (1% y/y on average in FY25-FY26) compared to previous years as the government restrains public sector

wage and headcount increases and strives for efficiency gains. We think capex will need to increase substantially for development plan targets to be met. Non-oil revenues, meanwhile, are being augmented by corporate taxes and higher fees and fines (worth about 0.8% of GDP per year) while implementation of excise duties and VAT (worth up to 2.4% of GDP in total) is pending. The debt law has expanded the authorities’ financing options and alleviated liquidity pressures, with a total of KD5.5bn in public debt issued so far in 2025, including one heavily oversubscribed Eurobond (\$11.3bn). This volume alone is more than sufficient to fully finance two years’ worth of our deficit estimates. Public debt has risen from 2.9% of GDP to about 14%, but is still very low by international standards.

Oil, global economy and local reforms key to outlook

Downside risks to the outlook center on lower oil prices, regional geopolitical strife or a weakening global economy, linked potentially to trade tariff tensions. On the upside, further traction with government reforms and initiatives, such as the forthcoming housing finance law, which will stimulate credit demand and the housing sector more broadly, and higher public investment rates could materially upgrade Kuwait’s outlook and strengthen its credit rating.

Advisory agreement with Ministry of Energy to develop gas-to-power project

Lebanon, IFC sign agreements to boost investment

BEIRUT, Nov 20, (Xinhua): Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam on Thursday presided over the signing of five cooperation agreements between Lebanon and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), aimed at enhancing investment in the country.

The records include four direct investment agreements supporting microfinance, industrial production, and small businesses, alongside an advisory agreement with the Ministry of Energy.

Following the signing ceremony, Economy and Trade Minister Amer Bisat said the IFC package includes up to 80 million U.S. dollars in microfinance lending, a 30 million-dollar investment in Matalak, a manufacturer of electrical tools for export, and a 40 million-dollar investment in MEDCO, a regional chemicals producer active in Lebanese and regional markets.

He added that the advisory agreement with the Ministry of Energy will support an IFC-backed

assessment of a gas-to-power project, noting that the proposed venture could entail substantial capital mobilization once feasibility work is complete.

IFC regional director Khawaja Aftab Ahmed said the IFC is committed to partnering with the Lebanese government and private sector, describing the agreements as a step toward “a new beginning” for the country’s economic reconstruction.

As part of the bank’s participation in the ‘Capital of Opportunities’ initiative

Almutawa: KFH demonstrates leadership in advancing the SMEs sector

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Group Chief Corporate Banking Officer, Yousef Almutawa, said that KFH is strengthening its role in supporting SMEs clients by providing financing, and adopting advisory partnerships. This support is rooted in KFH’s recognition of the significance of this sector as a pillar of local economy and a driver of social impact, especially in creating employment opportunities and developing national young talents.

In his speech during the national initiative “Capital of Opportunities”, held under the presence and patronage of the Governor of Kuwait Capital City, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Almutawa added that KFH takes pride of its leading position in developing the SMEs sector, in terms of financing volume, customer segment, the diversity and quality of its products and services. He pointed out that



Yousef Almutawa

many of the SMEs began their success story by securing financing from KFH.

“We are hopeful of witnessing further successful stories led by young ambitious entrepreneurs as



Yousef Almutawa receiving an award from His Excellency the Governor of the Capital.

part of our commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and enhancing the role of SMEs, considering the vital role in social and economic development” Almutawa further noted, “This commitment is also

in line with our efforts to enhance our market share in this sector, and develop our suite of services and products to support businesses and activities across all economic sectors in which these companies

operate.”

Almutawa highlighted KFH’s major products and services offered to support and develop SMEs in Kuwait, pointing out that KFH is one of the first banks

to establish a dedicated department for financing this segment and provide a set of integrated banking and financing solutions tailored to their needs.

He added: “KFH’s main cash financing services include Murabaha, Tawarruq and Ijara. The non-cash finance includes various types of letters of credit and letters of guarantee. KFH also offers other services such as Point of Sales, e-banking services that facilitate the management of the businesses’ accounts and transfers in addition to other various innovative services.”

During a ceremony held to honor the sponsors and participants of the event, the Governor of Kuwait Capital City, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah honored KFH in recognition of the Bank’s efforts geared towards supporting SMEs and its participation in the forum. Meanwhile, Yousef Almutawa received an honor trophy on behalf of KFH.

62% revenue jump

Nvidia earnings surge, easing AI bubble fears

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov 20, (AP): Nvidia’s sales of the computing chips powering the artificial intelligence craze surged beyond the lofty bar set by stock market analysts in a performance that may ease recent jitters about a Big Tech boom turning into a bust that topples the world’s most valuable company.

The results announced late Wednesday provided a pulse check on the frenzied spending on AI technology that has been fueling both the stock market and much of the overall economy since OpenAI released its ChatGPT three years ago.

Nvidia has been by far the biggest beneficiary of the run-up because its processors have become indispensable for building the AI factories that are needed to enable what’s supposed to be the most dramatic shift in technology since Apple released the iPhone in 2007.

But in the past few weeks, there has been a rising tide of sentiment that the high expectations for AI may have become far too frothy, setting the stage for a jarring comedown that could be just as dramatic as the ascent that transformed Nvidia from a company worth less than \$400 billion three years ago to one worth \$4.5 trillion at the end of Wednesday’s trading.

Nvidia’s report for its fiscal third quarter covering the August-October period elicited a sigh of relief among those fretting about a worst-case scenario and could help reverse the recent downturn in the stock market.

“The market should belt out a heavy sigh, given the skittishness we have been experiencing,” said Sean O’Hara, president of the investment firm Pacer ETFs.

The company’s stock price gained more than 5% in Wednesday’s extended trading after the numbers came out. If the shares trade similarly Thursday, it could result in a one-day gain of about \$230 billion in stockholder wealth.

Nvidia earned \$31.9 billion, or \$1.30 per share, a 65% increase from the same time last year, while revenue climbed 62% to \$57 billion. Analysts polled by FactSet Research had forecast earnings of \$1.26 per share on revenue of \$54.9 billion. What’s more, the Santa Clara, California, company predicted its revenue for the current quarter covering November-January will come in at about \$65 billion, nearly \$3 billion above analysts’ projections, in an indication that demand for its AI chips remains

feverish.

The incoming orders for Nvidia’s top-of-the-line Blackwell chip are “off the charts,” Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said in a prepared statement that described the current market conditions as “a virtuous cycle.” In a conference call, Nvidia Chief Financial Officer Collette Kress said that by the end of next year the company will have sold about \$500 billion in chips designed for AI factories within a 24-month span Kress also predicts trillions of dollars more will be spent by the end of the 2020s.

In a conference call preamble that has become like a State of the AI Market address, Huang seized the moment to push back against the skeptics who doubt his thesis that technology is at tipping point that will transform the world. “There’s been a lot of talk about an AI bubble. From our vantage point, we see something very different,” Huang insisted while celebrating “depth and breadth” of Nvidia’s growth.

The upbeat results, optimistic commentary and ensuring reaction reflects the pivotal role that Nvidia is playing in the future direction of the economy - a position that Huang has leveraged to forge close ties with President Donald Trump, even as the White House wages a trade war that has inhibited the company’s ability to sell its chips in China’s fertile market.

Trump is increasingly counting on the tech sector and the development of artificial intelligence to deliver on his economic agenda. For all of Trump’s claims that his tariffs are generating new investments, much of that foreign capital is going to data centers for AI’s computing demands or the power facilities needed to run those data centers.

“Saying this is the most important stock in the world is an understatement,” Jay Woods, chief market strategist of investment bank Freedom Capital Markets, said of Nvidia.

The boom has been a boon for more than just Nvidia, which became the first company to eclipse a market value of \$5 trillion a few weeks ago, before the recent bubble worries resulted in a more than 10% decline. As OpenAI and other Big Tech powerhouses snap up Nvidia’s chips to build their AI factories and invest in other services connected to the technology, their fortunes have also been soaring. Apple, Microsoft, Google parent Alphabet Inc. and Amazon all boast market values in the \$2 trillion to \$4 trillion range.

Trump’s economy depends on AI for growth, a reality made clear in Saudi crown prince’s visit

Saudi Crown Prince commits to \$1 trillion investment with US companies

WASHINGTON, Nov 20, (AP): President Donald Trump is increasingly counting on the tech sector and the development of artificial intelligence to deliver on his economic agenda, a reality laid bare this week as he hosted Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The crown prince has committed to invest \$1 trillion with U.S. companies, a pledge that is largely about using Saudi Arabia’s oil and natural gas reserves to pivot his nation into becoming an AI data hub.

“We will work closely with friends and partners like those in this room to build the largest, most powerful, most innovative AI ecosystem in the world,” Trump said at the U.S.-Saudi Investment Forum on Wednesday.

Sitting in the front row of the audience at the Kennedy Center were Nvidia co-founder Jensen Huang and tech billionaire Elon Musk.

Trump took credit for the new investments and stock market performance this year - both of which have been a function of the AI buildup. For all of Trump’s claims that his tariffs are generating new investments, much of that foreign capital is going to data centers for AI’s computing demands or the power facilities needed to run those data centers.

The president called the stock market gains “amazing,” yet leading stock indices fell Tuesday over growing anxiety about whether AI companies are fueling a broader financial bubble.

There are also growing political risks for Trump if the AI buildup further pushes up utility prices for American consumers or if the jobs he promises in the sector fail to materialize.



President Donald Trump with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, during the Saudi Investment Forum with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the Kennedy Center, Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

The consultancy Oxford Economics released an analysis Tuesday that said AI investments offset the “extreme uncertainty” in the U.S. economy this year - uncertainty caused in part by Trump’s tariff hikes that have elevated inflation and potentially contributed to a slowdown in hiring.

The firm noted that AI companies are starting to rely on debt to pay for the growth in the sector, which could suggest “a more vulnerable phase” next year for the boom.

The race for investments is evidenced in Saudi Arabia’s own commitments, which rose from \$600 billion during Trump’s visit there in May to \$1 trillion when Prince Mohammed came to the White House on Tuesday.

Trump said he’s already pushed Prince Mohammed to increase that figure, saying he lobbied the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia backstage before their appearance at the Kennedy Center.

“While we were taking the picture, I said, ‘Could you make it \$1.5 trillion?’” Trump said. “So he’s got something to think about.”

When Blackstone Group CEO Stephen Schwarzman was asked at the forum what the most important growth stories were at the summit, the billionaire investor said, “AI and, you know, power.”

“Those are the two things that we spend a lot of time on,” he said. “At Blackstone, my company, we’re the largest developer, the largest owner, of data centers in the world. And this is a really explosive area.”

Tareq Amin, CEO of Humain, said his Saudi-backed AI company was launched when Trump visited the Middle Eastern nation in May. His company saw the opportunity to build data centers and AI infrastructure by leveraging Saudi Arabia’s energy production and U.S. technology.

“Yes, it is an ambitious, crazy thing,” Amin said with confidence.

Musk, whose xAI company has a chatbot called Grok, predicted that AI and robots would eventually allow work to become optional for human beings, that money would become “irrelevant” and poverty would cease to exist.

“AI and humanoid robots will actually eliminate poverty,” said Musk, the head of Tesla and SpaceX. He added that robots would “make everyone wealthy.”

Nvidia’s Huang, appearing on stage with Musk, did not make as bold a prediction. He said: “Everybody’s jobs will be different. I think that that’s for sure.” Huang spoke ahead of the \$4.5 trillion computer chip company announcing its quarterly earnings Wednesday.

During Trump’s remarks, the president asked Huang if any other country could compete with its Blackwell chip that is enabling much of the AI development.

“Not yet, sir,” said Huang from the front row.

Unemployment rate expected to remain steady at 4.3% despite data gaps

Labor Department releases September jobs numbers nearly seven weeks late

WASHINGTON, Nov 20, (AP): During the 43-day U.S. government shutdown, investors, businesses, policymakers and the Federal Reserve were groping in the dark for clues about the health of the American job market. The federal workers who collect data on hiring and unemployment had been furloughed and couldn’t do their jobs.

Now that the shutdown is over, the Labor Department will finally let a little light in Thursday, releasing jobs numbers for September - nearly seven weeks after they were due.

Economists expect to see a continuation of what was happening in the spring and summer: weak hiring but few layoffs, an awkward pairing that means Americans who have work mostly enjoy job security - but those who don’t often struggle to find employment.

Economists predict that U.S. employers added 50,000 jobs in September, unimpressive but an improvement on the paltry 22,000 they added in August. And the forecasters expect that the unemployment rate remained at a low 4.3%, according to a survey by FactSet.

Normally the stock and bond markets would shrug off such old data, said market strategist Matthew Ryan at the financial services firm Ebury. But investors are so desperate for fresh economic numbers that “we expect volatility around the report to be extremely high.”

The job market has been strained this year by the lingering effects of high interest rates engineered to fight a 2021-2022 spike in inflation and uncertainty around Trump’s campaign to slap taxes on imports from almost every country on earth and on specific products - from copper to foreign films.

Labor Department revisions in September showed that the economy created 911,000 fewer jobs than originally reported in the year that ended in March. That meant that employers added an average of just 71,000



In this May 7, 2020, file photo, the entrance to the Labor Department is seen near the Capitol in Washington. (AP)

new jobs a month over that period, not the 147,000 first reported.

Since March, job creation has slowed even more - to an average 53,000 a month. During the 2021-2023 hiring boom that followed CO-

VID-19 lockdowns, by contrast, the economy was creating 400,000 jobs a month.

Stephen Stanley, chief U.S. economist at the bank Santander, is a bit more optimistic about September hiring than most of his peers. He forecasts that employers added 75,000 jobs.

President Donald Trump’s crackdown on illegal immigration is expected to reduce the number of people looking for work, which means that the economy can create fewer jobs without sending the unemployment rate higher.

In the past, Stanley wrote in a commentary Wednesday, the “break-even” point for monthly job creation was seen as somewhere between 125,000 and 150,000; but as fewer immigrants seek work, he says, the job market can remain stable even if employers add just 50,000 jobs a month, maybe fewer.

Once the September numbers are out, businesses, investors, policymakers and the Fed will have to wait awhile to get another good look at the numbers behind the American labor market.

The Labor Department said Wednesday that it won’t release a full jobs report for October because it couldn’t calculate the unemployment rate during the government shutdown.

Instead, it will release some of the October jobs data - including the number of jobs that employers created last month - along with the full November jobs report on Dec. 16, a couple of weeks late.

That puts an even more intense focus on September jobs numbers released Thursday. They are the last full measurement of hiring and unemployment that Fed policymakers will see before they meet Dec. 9-10 to decide whether to cut their benchmark interest rate for the third time this year.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT

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Company sponsored World Diabetes Day event at The Avenues in cooperation with MoH

Zain underlines private sector's role in promoting community health

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Zain Kuwait supported the World Diabetes Day event organized by the Ministry of Health at The Avenues Mall, held alongside the health awareness campaign titled 'Better Health with Diabetes' organized by the Endocrinology and Diabetes Department at Al-Amiri Hospital under the patronage and attendance of H.E. the Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi.

This step comes in line with Zain's ongoing efforts to implement its corporate social responsibility, which places support for health initiatives among its priorities, as the company is keen to play an active role in activities that aim to raise awareness of chronic diseases and methods of prevention.

The company also continues to support campaigns and programs launched by official bodies and healthcare institutions, foremost



Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi with Zain's team and the organizers.

among them the Ministry of Health, affirming the role of the private sector as a key partner in promoting community health and achieving

sustainable development goals related to quality of life.

The event featured participation from members of the Endocrinology

and Diabetes Department team at Al-Amiri Hospital, who offered free medical tests and engaged with visitors of all ages, in addition to pro-

viding specialized medical consultations that help raise awareness about prevention, treatment, and proper management of diabetes.

This event comes within the framework of the Ministry of Health's plan and strategy for health awareness and direct outreach to all segments of society, coinciding with World Diabetes Day, which falls on 14 November each year, and aiming to strengthen prevention and limit the spread of the disease and its associated complications by offering awareness and educational activities in interactive venues close to the public.

The event presented a complete picture of collaboration between the medical team of doctors, nurses, technicians, and administrators and members of the community, through their on-site presence at one of Kuwait's largest shopping centers. This helps spread awareness of the importance of early screening and encourages patients and those at risk to monitor their health on a regular basis.

Highlighting unity & cultural diversity

FAIPS LKG celebrates annual day with 'Friendship' theme

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The spirit of camaraderie and joy illuminated the FAIPS Auditorium on November 13, 2025, as the LKG students hosted their Annual Day under the heartwarming theme, "Friendship: The Greatest Sweetener of FAIPS KG." The event was a vibrant tribute to the invaluable bonds of sharing, mutual support, and sheer delight forged during these foundational years.

The festivities commenced with a tone of reverence and tradition, featuring the recital of the Holy Quran and the Kuwait National Anthem, followed by the symbolic lighting of the ceremonial lamp.

A distinguished assembly of guests graced the occasion. Principal, Mr. Ravi Ayanoli, extended a warm welcome to the Chief Guest, Her Excellency, Manthabiseng Phohleli, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho to Kuwait, and the Guest of Honour, Dr. Mohammad Umar Tak, renowned Pediatric Specialist at KOC hospital. Also present was Ms. Bushra Al-Abd Al-Hussein, Foreign Education Supervisor from the Ministry of Education. In his address, the Principal emphasized the critical role of FAIPS's foundational education, which is meticulously integrated with core morals, discipline, and essential human values like friendship and mutual support.

The stage quickly transformed into a mesmerizing kaleidoscope of energy, showcasing the LKG students' confidence and burgeoning dreams. The performances, all centered on companionship, began with the universally beloved "You've Got a Friend in Me," instantly making the children's shared joy contagious.

The show quickly diversified, featuring acts like the mechanically precise "Robo Boogie" troupe and a high-energy lyrical mash-up of Bollywood and Hollywood hits. The "Learning to Fly" segment shared heartwarming life lessons and aspirations, highlighting the courage that friendship inspires, followed by a rhythmic dance celebrating

pure, unadulterated joy and perfect coordination. A truly unique and globally conscious segment was the "Cherry Blossoms" performance, where the young dancers performed to a Japanese composition about friendship, even singing parts of the song in Japanese, captivating the audience with their graceful movements and global spirit.

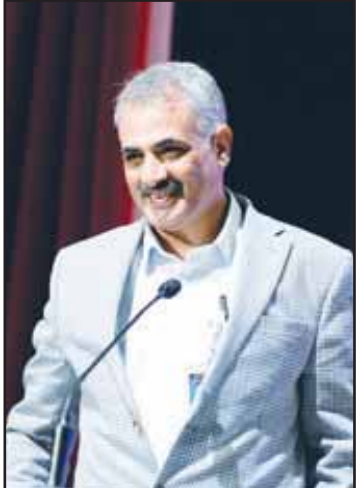
The spectacular finale was a celebration of cultural diversity, culminating in a resounding standing ovation for a fascinating multilingual showcase: one student beautifully sang the emotional Hindi song, "Jeevan ke din," while another performed the classic Tamil song, "Morraka."

Following the performances, the distinguished guests addressed the gathering, their unified message echoing the day's theme: that friendship is the greatest sweetener of life, and the bonds nurtured at FAIPS Kindergarten are set to bloom and grow throughout the children's educational journey.

Her Excellency, Manthabiseng Phohleli, appreciated the school management and teachers for their unwavering support of the students' overall development and warmly congratulated the students and their parents for the wonderful performance. Dr. Mohammad Umar Tak, the Guest of Honour, offered a poignant analogy, comparing the tiny tots to seeds that must be nourished by teachers and parents in the right perspective at the right time.

The successful event concluded with a sincere Vote of Thanks from Headmistress Mrs. Bharti Tiwari, who expressed gratitude to the parents, dedicated teachers, students, and all guests for their unwavering support.

The FAIPS LKG Annual Day 2025 was widely regarded as more than just a performance; it was a grand, heartfelt celebration of collaboration, kindness, and mutual respect, reinforcing the cherished belief that friendship truly is the sweetest, most vital part of life, leaving everyone with joyful memories to last forever.



Photos during the event.

Event focuses on Diabetes prevention, early detection

Lulu Hypermarket supports Diabetes awareness at Public Authority for Applied Education and Training

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Lulu Hypermarket proudly participated in the Diabetes awareness session "Health & Diabetes... A Relationship of Awareness," organized by the Student Affairs Deanship at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training in cooperation with the Construction Training Institute. The initiative aimed to enhance the understanding of trainees and staff regarding diabetes prevention, early detection, effective management, and the importance of adopting healthier lifestyle choices.

The event featured an extensive health fair with the participation of more than 15 organizations from government sectors, private companies, and non-profit entities. Attendees had the opportunity to explore educational booths, benefit from free medical screenings, and engage in interactive activities designed to promote overall well-being and strengthen community engagement.

A key highlight of the program was an awareness lecture titled "Diabetes Under Control," presented by Ms. Zahraa Rahma from the Dasman Diabetes Institute. Her insightful session addressed both the medical and psychological aspects of diabetes, offering practical strategies for managing the condition while maintaining a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

As one of the standout contributors, Lulu Hypermarket showcased a dedicated selection of diabetes-friendly, sugar-free, and low-glycemic products, reflecting its commitment to supporting community health and raising awareness about nutritional choices. Lulu enhanced the visitor experience with specialized sampling stations that allowed attendees to taste a variety of nutritious alternatives suitable for daily use and diabetes management.

Through active engagement from Lulu Hypermarket and all participating entities, the event successfully fostered a reached over 200 trainees along with institute staff and faculty members in a vibrant atmosphere filled with education, awareness, and meaningful engagement.



Lulu showcases sugar-free and low-glycemic products with sampling stations.



The Kuwait Tamil Drivers Service Centre successfully hosts free medical camp at Shifa Al Jazeera Hospital

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The Kuwait Tamil Drivers Service Centre successfully organized its Fourth Annual Grand Free Medical Camp at Shifa Al Jazeera Hospital, Fahahel, attracting nearly 600 beneficiaries from the general public.

The event was graced by Dr. S. M. Hyder Ali, Chairman of the M. A. Hythar Group, who attended as the Chief Guest and event was presided over by Mr. Thurai Abbas.

A number of distinguished personalities from India addressed the gathering through Zoom video conference, including Mr. Avadi Nasser, Tamil Nadu Minister for Minority Welfare; Mr. SenjiMasthan, Former Tamil Nadu Minister for Minority Welfare; Mr. R. S. Bharathi, Organizing Secretary, DravidaMunetraKazhagam (DMK); Mr. Nellai Mubarak, State President, SDPI; and Mr. A. K. S. Vijayan, Special Representative of the Government of Tamil Nadu in New Delhi.

The medical camp was supported and facilitated by the key members of Shifa Al Jazeera Hospital Dr. K. T. Rabeulah – Chairman; Mr. Gunaseelan Pillai – Administration Manager; Dr. Jayakrishnan – Medical Director; Dr. Dhiviya Mahesh – Specialist, Internal Medicine, Diabetes & Hypertension and Dr. Vivek – Ophthalmology (Eye Specialist). Their expertise and dedicated service played a vital role in delivering high-quality medical care to all attendees.

The event was efficiently coordinated by Lalgudi Syed Imam Jafar. Key office-bearers who contributed to the successful conduct of the camp included President -JainulAbdeen, Treasurer - Mukannamalaipatti-Jegabar Ali, Chief Advisor - Muthupettai K. M. Naina Mohammed, General Secretary - VittukattiMasthan



Photos during the event.

and Head of Medical Team - Ansari. Prominent Kuwaiti senior lawyer Mr. Marzook, representatives from various Tamil associations, political party members in Kuwait, and community leaders and members of the

general public were also present in large numbers to extend their support.

The medical camp offered a range of essential health services, including general check-ups, spe-

cialist consultations, and diagnostic support. With more than 600 participants benefiting from the initiative, the event was widely appreciated as a significant contribution to community welfare.

National Book Awards celebrate literature across the globe

Alameddine's tale of family bonds in Lebanon wins fiction prize

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): National Book Awards judges honored authors worldwide on Wednesday night, from Lebanese novelist Rabih Alameddine's "The True True Story of Raja the Gullible (and His Mother)" to Chicago-born poet Patricia Smith's "The Intentions of Thunder."

Alameddine's narrative of intense family bonds within the chaos of modern Lebanon received the fiction prize, while Smith, who has received numerous previous awards for her lyricism and intensity, won for poetry. The nonfiction prize was given to the Canadian Iranian novelist-journalist Omar El Akkad for his fierce indictment of the contemporary West, "One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This."

Iranian American Daniel Nayeri's "The Teacher of Nomad Land: A World War II Story" won for young people's literature and Argentine Gabriela Cabezón Cámara's "We Are Green and Trembling," translated from Spanish by Robyn Myers, was cited for translated literature.

Winners each receive \$10,000.

The awards have often served as a kind of counter voice to current events. The night's honorees expressed gratitude for prizes bestowed and for literature itself, and horror and disenchantment at the political and social climate, from immigration raids in the U.S. by masked agents to the carnage in the Middle East.

"I'm going to speak in Spanish because there are fascists who don't like that," Cabezon Cámara said, her words translated on stage by Myers.



National Book Award in Fiction winning author Rabih Alameddine attends the 76th National Book Awards ceremony at Cipriani Wall Street on Wednesday, Nov. 19, in New York. (AP)

El Akkad said it was "very difficult to think in celebratory terms about a book that was written in response to a genocide (in Gaza). It's difficult to think in celebratory terms when I spent two years seeing what shrapnel does to a child's body."

Alameddine's speech, like his novel, combined humor and agony. He began with a lament for the bombing of a

Palestinian refugee camp, but went on to joke about the demands of his agent, Nicole Aragi, and thank everyone from his gastrointestinal doctor to the "psychiatrist who has been telling me to get over myself for more than 20 years."

Smith, in a highly emotional speech, offered a litany of racial and social barriers she confronted, including harsh words from her ailing mother, while offering tribute to poetry as a path to transcendence.

Hundreds of writers, publishers, editors and other industry professionals gathered at Cipriani Wall Street in Manhattan. The 76th annual National Book Awards, the so-called Oscars of book publishing, were a celebration, a protest and a performance.

Musical guest Corinne Rae Bailey opened the ceremony with a relaxed, funky "Put Your Records On," and introduced host Jeff Heller, who greeted the "glitterati of the literati."

The Emmy-winning actor joked that he wasn't sure why he was the host, thanked everyone from celebrities who lead book clubs to independent store owners and lamented that a typo in early editions of his recent book, "A Certain Actress," left some readers thinking he had published "A Certain Actress."

"Can you imagine Madeleine L'Engle discovering the cover of her book read 'A Wrinkle in Time'?"

Honorary awards were presented to fiction writer George Saunders and author-publisher-mentor Roxane Gay.

Saunders, widely praised for his legacy of dark humor and

warm compassion, was this year's recipient of the medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, previously given to Toni Morrison and Robert Caro among others. He remembered his early growth as a writer, and how revision changed him on the page and in real life, a "truth-seeking" process that sets the artist apart from the dictator and other bullies.

"We're open to finding out how things actually are, not how we think they are, not how we wish they are, but how they actually are," he said. "And this puts us in a less delusional relation to reality."

Gay, given the Literarian medal for her contributions to the book community, noted that writing was a solitary endeavor but that sharing the word was a different challenge. She cited proudly her history of publishing and promoting diverse voices, mocked the idea that "straight white men just can't catch a break" and urged the industry to change.

"There is room for all of our voices and there are people in this very room who have the power to do better," she told the audience. "You have the power to abandon old ways of thinking and nonsense metrics like social media followings as a determining factor in buying a manuscript."

The National Book Awards were presented by the non-profit National Book Foundation. Each competitive category was voted on by judging panels that include writers, booksellers and critics. They select winners from hundreds of books submitted by publishers.

Music

Cody Johnson wins male vocalist of the year

Wilson wins big at 2025 CMA Awards



Kelsea Ballerini performs 'I Sit In Parks.' (AP)



Lainey Wilson, (center), performs 'Ring Finger.' (AP)



Shaboozey, (left), and Stephen Wilson Jr. perform 'Took A Walk.' (AP)



Vince Gill accepts the lifetime achievement award. (AP)



Zach Top poses with award for new artist of the year. (AP)



Megan Moroney, (center), performs '6 Months Later.' (AP)

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): The top prize of entertainer of the year at the 2025 Country Music Association Awards went to none other than Lainey Wilson, who hosted, performed and barely left the stage Wednesday night.

"It takes a village," she said in her acceptance speech. "We about to party." She beat out Luke Combs, Cody Johnson, Chris Stapleton and Morgan Wallen, last year's winner in the category.

Earlier in the night, she won album of the year for "Whirlwind" - marking her second career win in the category - and earned the trophy for female vocalist of the year. It was her fourth time winning that title.

She celebrated other women in country music - and had a few choice words for those who don't.

"For the folks that are sitting at home, in your mama's basement, eating your Cheetos, trying to pit women against each other," she concluded her speech. "Y'all need to find something better to do."

In some ways, it echoed 2023's award show, where Wilson took home five trophies including entertainer of the year.

But it wasn't just Lainey celebrating at the 59th annual CMA Awards, which aired live from Nashville's Bridgestone Arena. It was also a big night for Ella Langley and Riley Green from the jump. The duo's retro radio hit, "You Look Like You Love Me," took home both single and song of the year at the 2025 Country Music Association Awards Wednesday night.

"This song is the gift that keeps on giving," Langley said.

"How cool is it that a song with talking verses wins song of the year," added Green.

The legendary Vince Gill was presented with the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award, serenaded with his classic "When I Call Your Name" by Brandi Carlile and Patty Loveless.

"His guitar playing is amazing. His songwriting is amazing. His singing is amazing," said George Strait. He handed the award to Gill, his friend, and said there was none more deserving. "He's just an immense talent. And oh, yeah, he plays with The Eagles."

Gill joked throughout his accep-



Lainey Wilson receives the award for female vocalist of the year during the 59th Annual Country Music Association Awards on Wednesday, Nov. 19, at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)



Ella Langley, (left), and Riley Green accept the award for song of the year for 'You Look Like You Love Me.' (AP)



John Hall, (from left), Brandon Coleman, Zachary Rishel, Andrew Bishop, and Andrew Nix of The Red Clay Strays accept the award for vocal group of the year. (AP)



Cody Johnson poses with the award for male vocalist of the year during the CMA Awards. (AP)



Ronnie Dunn, (left), and Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn receive the award for vocal duo of the year. (AP)

tance speech. First, about his high vocal tone, and later, that he might be the only person to win the award "that's never smoked any weed," a nod to its namesake and his friend Nelson.

Brooks & Dunn won vocal duo of the year, their 16th victory in the category. "I heard earlier tonight, 'Man, y'all ever get sick of this?'" Kix Brooks said in his acceptance speech. "Hell no!"

Male vocalist of the year went to Cody Johnson, his first win in the category.

Combs opened the show with a fiery rendition of his single "Back in the Saddle," setting the stage for Wilson to launch into a spirited medley. She was joined by a star-studded crew of surprise collaborators, Little Big Town and Keith Urban among them.

Performances arrived fast and fierce from there: Moroney, Stapleton, Kelsea Ballerini, The Red Clay Strays, Stephen Wilson, Jr. and Kenny Chesney shined, one after another. Old Dominion performed on a small stage in the middle of the audience, working their way through a medley of "Break Up with Him," "Memory Lane," "One Man Band," "Hotel Key" and "Snapback."

Shaboozey brought some much needed depth; Wilson's funky "Ring Finger" further proved she can do it all. Langley, Green, Tucker Wetmore and rapper BigXThaPlug held it down for a new generation of country music fans. The latter was especially noteworthy: Combs joined the Texas MC for their duet "Pray Hard," further confirmation of country and rap's crossover.

Zach Top, who performed his ode to six-strings, "Guitar," early in the show, took home the trophy for new artist of the year. "I can't remember if I was supposed to put my beer down first or not," he joked in his speech before taking a swig. It was his first CMA Award.

The CMA Awards are nominated and voted on by members of the Country Music Association, which includes music executives, artists, publicists, songwriters and other industry professionals.

The CMA Awards were broadcast live on ABC and will be available to stream Thursday on Hulu.

Chef celebrates neighbors in new PBS special

Bastianich hits the road in search of community

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): Lidia Bastianich grew up in a small town in Italy where neighbors were like extended family. If kids came home from school and mom was out, they went to the neighbors for a snack. If someone had a problem with a sibling, they went next door.

The Emmy Award-winning TV host, author and restaurateur remembers her grandmother making an extra pot for lunch and sending young Lidia next door with it to feed her blind, elderly neighbor.

That sense of community is not specific to Italy, of course. "It exists in America in smaller situations, but we need to nurture that ever more," Bastianich says.

She's hoping to spotlight and cultivate togetherness with her 14th TV special, "Lidia Celebrates America: A Nation of Neighbors," which premieres Nov. 25 on PBS and streams on PBS.org.

"It's my way of really thanking America. I think that there's no better place in the whole world than the United States of America and somehow it's been maligned," she says. "What I know is that out there, in the midst of America, there's a lot of good American people."

Bastianich travels to wildfire-scarred neighborhoods outside Los Angeles, a pay-how-you-can café in Denver, a Japanese-American community center in Portland, Oregon, and a first-of-its-kind free grocery market in San Francisco. At every stop, there are hands reaching out to help.

"That connection makes you feel good, it makes you feel more of a human being. And it gives you back that kind of desire to live on positively," she says.



This image released by PBS shows Lidia Bastianich, host of 'Lidia Celebrates America: A Nation of Neighbors,' premiering Nov. 25 on PBS. (AP)

The hourlong special starts in Altadena, California, hurtingling from the recent wildfires. Bastianich joins volunteers making 175 five-course meals that are delivered to victims. One of the volunteers is someone himself living out of his car because the flames had made him homeless.

"I got the shivers. I just needed to hug him," she recalls. "I know that he needed that. I know he was in his car by himself, and yet he found it within him to give. That takes fortitude. It takes character."

She also meets self-taught cook Kiki Ruff in Porter County, Indiana. Ruff hosts a viral TikTok series that helps families struggling with food insecurity stretch their groceries, using recipes from the Depression,

recessions and wartime.

In Denver, Bastianich visits a restaurant - SAME, which stands for So All May Eat - where guests can offer money, produce or volunteer their time in exchange for a meal.

"You could pay for dinner or lunch and that goes to subsidizing the whole thing. But if you have a garden and you grow certain things and have excess, you can bring in vegetables or fruit and you get a meal," she says.

"Or you can work, you can go behind and begin to pack vegetables or whatever. But it doesn't only get you a meal. It gets you interacting with other people and giving."

Another spot she visits is a Portland community hub for Japanese-American elders that offers meals, tai chi, and connection for seniors and families.

Bastianich, whose latest book is "Lidia's The Art of Pasta: An Italian Cookbook," with her daughter, Tanya Bastianich-Manuali, has herself benefited from community aid. She was born in 1947 in Istria, an Italian territory ceded to Yugoslavia after World War II. She spent the first years of her life under communist rule, then fled with her family across the border to Italy. There, they lived in a refugee camp for two years until an aid organization helped bring them to New York in 1958.

Bastianich's last stop is in San Francisco, home of the nation's first legislatively supported free grocery market, which serves thousands of residents. Shoppers there find shelves full and are free to pick what they want.



The life-size wax figure of Lady Diana is presented at Grevin Museum in Paris, France, Thursday, Nov. 20. (AP)

'Critical thinking matters'

The do's and don'ts of using AI for schoolwork

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): The rapid rise of ChatGPT and other generative AI systems has disrupted education, transforming how students learn and study.

Students everywhere have turned to chatbots to help with their homework, but artificial intelligence's capabilities have blurred the lines about what it should - and shouldn't - be used for.

The technology's widespread adoption in many other parts of life also adds to the confusion about what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Here are some do's and don'ts on using AI for schoolwork:

Don't just copy and paste

Chatbots are so good at answering questions with detailed written responses that it's tempting to just take their work and pass it off as your own.

But in case it isn't already obvious, AI should not be used as a substitute for putting in the work. And it can't replace our ability to think critically.

You wouldn't copy and paste information from a textbook or someone else's essay and pass it off as your own. The same principle applies to chatbot replies.

"AI can help you understand concepts or generate ideas, but it should never replace your own thinking and effort," the University of Chicago says in its guidance on using generative AI. "Always produce original work, and use AI tools for guidance and clarity, not for doing the work for you."

So don't shy away from putting pen to paper - or your fingers to the keyboard - to do your own writing.

"If you use an AI chatbot to write for you - whether explanations, summaries, topic ideas, or even initial outlines - you will learn less and perform more poorly on subsequent exams and attempts to use that knowledge," Yale University's Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning says.

Do use AI as a study aid

Experts say AI shines when it's used like a tutor or a study buddy. So try using a chatbot to explain difficult concepts or brainstorm ideas, such as essay topics.

California high school English teacher Casey Cuny advises his students to use ChatGPT to quiz themselves ahead of tests.

He tells them to upload class notes, study guides and any other materials used in class, such as slideshows, to the chatbot, and then tell it which textbook and chapter the test will focus on.

Then, students should prompt the chatbot to: "Quiz me one question at a time based on all the material cited, and after that create a teaching plan for everything I got wrong."

Cuny posts AI guidance in the form of a traffic light on a classroom screen. Green-lighted uses include brainstorming, asking for feedback on a presentation or providing research. Red lighted, or prohibited AI use: Asking an AI tool to write a thesis statement, a rough draft or revise an essay. A yellow light is when a student is unsure if AI use is allowed, in which case he tells them to come and ask him.

Or try using ChatGPT's voice dictation function, said Sohan Choudhury, CEO of Flint, an AI-powered education platform.

"I'll just brain dump exactly what I get, what I don't get" about a subject, he said. "I can go on a ramble for five minutes about exactly what I do and don't understand about a topic. I can throw random analogies at it, and I know it's going to be able to give me something back to me tailored based on that."

Do check your school's AI policy

As AI has shaken up the academic world, educators have been forced to set out their policies on the technology.

In the US, about two dozen states have state-level AI guidance for schools, but it's unevenly applied.

It's worth checking what your school, college or university says about AI. Some might have a broad institutionwide policy.

The University of Toronto's stance is that "students are not allowed to use generative AI in a course unless the instructor explicitly permits it" and students should check course descriptions for do's and don'ts.

Many others don't have a blanket rule.

The State University of New York at Buffalo "has no universal policy," according to its online guidance for instructors. "Instructors have the academic freedom to determine what tools students can and cannot use in pursuit of meeting course learning objectives. This includes artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT."

Don't hide AI use from teachers

AI is not the educational bogeyman it used to be.

There's growing understanding that AI is here to stay and the next generation of workers will have to learn how to use the technology, which has the potential to disrupt many industries and occupations.

So students shouldn't shy away from discussing its use with teachers, because transparency prevents misunderstandings, said Choudhury.

"Two years ago, many teachers were just blanket against it. Like, don't bring AI up in this class at all, period, end of story," he said. But three years after ChatGPT's debut, "many teachers understand that the kids are using it. So they're much more open to having a conversation as opposed to setting a blanket policy."

Teachers say they're aware that students are wary of asking if AI use is allowed for fear they'll be flagged as cheaters. But clarity is key because it's so easy to cross a line without knowing it, says Rebekah Fitzsimmons, chair of the AI faculty advising committee at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy.

"Often, students don't realize when they're crossing a line between a tool that is helping them fix content that they've created and when it is generating content for them," says Fitzsimmons, who helped draft detailed new guidelines for students and faculty that strive to create clarity.

The University of Chicago says students should cite AI if it was used to come up with ideas, summarize texts, or help with drafting a paper.

"Acknowledgment of this in your work when appropriate," the university says. "Just as you would cite a book or a website, giving credit to AI where applicable helps maintain transparency."

And don't forget ethics

Educators want students to use AI in a way that's consistent with their school's values and principles.

The University of Florida says students should familiarize themselves with the school's honor code and academic integrity policies "to ensure your use of AI aligns with ethical standards."

Oxford University says AI tools must be used "responsibly and ethically" and in line with its academic standards.

"You should always use AI tools with integrity, honesty, and transparency, and maintain a critical approach to using any output generated by these tools," it says.

Museum



The Origami Holiday Tree stands at the American Museum of Natural History, Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025, in New York. (AP)

Holiday tree with origami decorations opens in NYC museum

A beloved Christmas tree tradition is returning to Manhattan for the holiday season next week. No, it's not the towering spruce at Rockefeller Center, which is lit in early December.

The comparatively smaller Origami Holiday Tree that's delighted crowds for decades at the American Museum of Natural History opens to the public on Monday. The colorful, richly decorated 13-foot (4-meter) tree is adorned with thousands of hand-folded paper ornaments created by origami artists from around the world.

This year's tree is inspired by the museum's new exhibition, "Impact: The End of the Age of Dinosaurs," which chronicles how an asteroid crash some 66 million

years ago reshaped life on Earth.

Talo Kawasaki, the tree's co-designer, said the tree's theme is "New Beginnings," in reference to the new world that followed the mass extinction.

Located off the museum's Central Park West entrance, the artificial tree is topped with a golden, flaming asteroid.

Its branches and limbs are packed with origami works representing a variety of animals and insects, including foxes, cranes, turtles, bats, sharks, elephants, giraffes and monkeys.

Dinosaur favorites such as the triceratops and tyrannosaurus rex are also depicted in the folded paper works of art. (AP)

'Children need real human friendship'

Parents urged to avoid AI toys for kids

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): They're cute, even cuddly, and promise learning and companionship - but artificial intelligence toys are not safe for kids, according to children's and consumer advocacy groups urging parents not to buy them during the holiday season.

These toys, marketed to kids as young as 2 years old, are generally powered by AI models that have already been shown to harm children and teenagers, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, according to an advisory published Thursday by the children's advocacy group Fairplay and signed by more than 150 organizations and individual experts such as child psychiatrists and educators.

"The serious harms that AI chatbots have inflicted on children are well-documented, including fostering obsessive use, having explicit sexual conversations, and encouraging unsafe behaviors, violence against others, and self-harm," Fairplay said.

AI toys, made by companies such as Curio Interactive and Keyi Technologies, are often marketed as educational, but Fairplay says they can displace important creative and learning activities. They promise friendship but also disrupt children's relationships and resilience, the group said.

"What's different about young children is that their brains are being wired for the first time and developmentally it is natural that for them to be trustful, for them to seek relationships with kind and friendly characters," said Rachel Franz, director of Fairplay's Young Children Thrive Offline Program. Because of this, she added, the amount of trust young children are putting in these toys can exacerbate the harms seen with older children.

Fairplay, a 25-year-old organization formerly known as the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, has been warning about AI toys for more than 10 years. They just weren't as advanced as they are today. A decade ago, during



This image provided by The Public Interest Network shows artificial intelligence-powered toys tested by consumer advocates at PIRG. (AP)

an emerging fad of internet-connected toys and AI speech recognition, the group helped lead a backlash against Mattel's talking Hello Barbie doll that it said was recording and analyzing children's conversations.

"Everything has been released with no regulation and no research, so it gives us extra pause when all of a sudden we see more and more manufacturers, including Mattel, potentially partnering with OpenAI, potentially putting out these products," Franz said.

Warning

It's the second big seasonal warning against AI toys since consumer advocates at U.S. PIRG last week called out the trend in its annual "Trouble in Toyland" report that typically looks at a range of product hazards, such as high-powered magnets and button-sized batteries that young children can swallow. This year, the organization tested four toys that use AI chatbots.

"We found some of these toys will talk in-depth about sexually explicit topics, will offer advice on where a child can find matches or knives, act dismayed when you say you have to leave, and have limited or no parental controls," the report said.

Dr. Dana Suskind, a pediatric surgeon and social scientist who studies early brain development, said young children don't have the conceptual

tools to understand what an AI companion is. While kids have always bonded with toys through imaginative play, when they do this they use their imagination to create both sides of a pretend conversation, "practicing creativity, language, and problem-solving," she said.

"An AI toy collapses that work. It answers instantly, smoothly, and often better than a human would. We don't yet know the developmental consequences of outsourcing that imaginative labor to an artificial agent-but it's very plausible that it undercuts the kind of creativity and executive function that traditional pretend play builds," Suskind said.

California-based Curio Interactive makes stuffed toys, like rocket-shaped Gabbo, that have been promoted by the pop singer Grimes.

Curio said it has "meticulously designed" guardrails to protect children and the company encourages parents to "monitor conversations, track insights, and choose the controls that work best for their family."

"After reviewing the US PIRG Education Fund's findings, we are actively working with our team to address any concerns, while continuously overseeing content and interactions to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for children."

Still, Suskind and children's advocates say analog toys are a better bet for the holidays.

"Kids need lots of real human interaction. Play should support that, not take its place. The biggest thing to consider isn't only what the toy does; it's what it replaces. A simple block set or a teddy bear that doesn't talk back forces a child to invent stories, experiment, and work through problems. AI toys often do that thinking for them," she said. "Here's the brutal irony: when parents ask me how to prepare their child for an AI world, unlimited AI access is actually the worst preparation possible."

Variety

MILAN: Prada heir Lorenzo Bertelli will have a major strategic role as executive chairman of Versace after the Prada Group completes its 1.25 billion-euro (\$1.4 billion) deal to buy its rival, expected in the coming weeks, the Prada Group confirmed Thursday. Bertelli made the announcement about his next role on an Italian-language Bloomberg podcast Wednesday.

He said he doesn't expect any big shake-ups at Versace at least for the first year after the acquisition is complete as he gets to know the company and its executive team. But he underlined that the 47-year-old fashion house founded by the late Gianni Versace has been underperforming its potential. (AP)

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MELBOURNE, Australia: Technology giant Meta on Thursday began sending thousands of young Australians a two-week warning to downland their digital histories and delete their accounts from Facebook, Instagram and Threads before a world-first social media ban on accounts of children younger than 16 takes effect.

The Australian government announced two weeks ago that the three Meta platforms plus Snapchat, TikTok, X and YouTube must take reasonable steps to exclude Australian account holders younger than 16, beginning Dec. 10.

California-based Meta on Thursday became the first of the targeted tech companies to outline how it will comply with the law. Meta contacted thousands of young account holders via SMS and email to warn that suspected children will start to be denied access to the platforms from Dec. 4. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Artificial intelligence pioneer Yann LeCun said Wednesday he will be leaving his job as Meta's chief AI scientist at the end of the year.

LeCun said he will be forming a startup company to pursue research on advanced forms of AI that can "understand the physical world, have persistent memory, can reason, and can plan complex action sequences."

His announcement, after more than a week of rumors, comes after Meta Platforms, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, began cutting roughly 600 AI jobs this fall.

LeCun said in a social media post that Meta will partner with the new startup and that some of the research will overlap with Meta's commercial interests and some of it will not. (AP)

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ATLANTA: The music artist and entertainment executive Usher is suing a group of investors who have been trying to open a new restaurant and lounge in Atlanta.

Usher Raymond IV lent \$1.7 million to the investor group toward the purchase of property for the planned Homage ATL, his lawyers said in a lawsuit filed recently in Atlanta.

In late 2024, three men approached Usher with their plan to open the restaurant and lounge, which involved the purchase of a commercial property in the city's Buckhead neighborhood, the lawsuit states. Usher declined to become an investor in Homage ATL, but he agreed to loan the group \$1.7 million toward purchasing the property. (AP)

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LOS ANGELES: The Oscars are making room for one more award on their live broadcast in 2026. The new prize for achievement in casting will be part of the 98th Academy Awards in March, the academy told The Associated Press on Wednesday. That brings the total award count to 24 for the Oscars broadcast on March 15, where statues for best picture, best actor and actress will be among the others awarded.

The board of governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced the addition of the new prize last year, though it was not confirmed if it would be part of the official broadcast. Not counting the short-lived "popular film Oscar" which never came to be, the addition of the casting prize marked the first time the academy has added a category since best animated feature film was established in 2001. (AP)

Some patients fully recover with early diagnosis and care

A man’s battle with autoimmune disease that stole his memory

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): “My year of unraveling” is how a despairing Christy Morrill described nightmarish months when his immune system hijacked his brain.

What’s called autoimmune encephalitis attacks the organ that makes us “us,” and it can appear out of the blue.

Morrill went for a bike ride with friends along the California coast, stopping for lunch, and they noticed nothing wrong. Neither did Morrill until his wife asked how it went - and he’d forgotten. Morrill would get worse before he got better. “Unhinged” and “fighting to see light,” he wrote as delusions set in and holes in his memory grew.

Of all the ways our immune system can run amok and damage the body instead of protecting it, autoimmune encephalitis is one of the most unfathomable. Seemingly healthy people abruptly spiral with confusion, memory loss, seizures, even psychosis.

But doctors are getting better at identifying it, thanks to discoveries of a growing list of the rogue antibodies responsible that, if found in blood and spinal fluid, aid diagnosis. Every year new culprit antibodies are being uncovered, said Dr. Sam Hornig, a neurologist at Mount Sinai Health System in New York who has cared for patients with multiple forms of this mysterious disease.

And while treatment today involves general ways to fight the inflammation, two major clinical trials are underway aiming for more targeted therapy.

Still, it’s tricky. Symptoms can be mistaken for psychiatric or other neurologic disorders, delaying proper treatment.

“When someone’s having new changes in their mental

status, they’re worsening and if there’s sort of like a bizarre quality to it, that’s something that kind of tips our suspicion,” Hornig said. “It’s important not to miss a treatable condition.”

With early diagnosis and care, some patients fully recover. Others like Morrill recover normal daily functioning but grapple with some lasting damage - in his case, lost decades of “autobiographical” memories. This 72-year-old literature major can still spout facts and figures learned long ago, and he makes new memories every day. But even family photos can’t help him recall pivotal moments in his own life.

“I remember ‘Ulysses’ is published in Paris in 1922 at Sylvia Beach’s bookstore. Why do I remember that, which is of no use to me anymore, and yet I can’t remember my son’s wedding?” Morrill wonders.

Encephalitis means the brain is inflamed and symptoms can vary from mild to life-threatening. Infections are a common cause, typically requiring treatment of the underlying virus or bacteria. But when that’s ruled out, an autoimmune cause has to be considered, Hornig said, especially when symptoms arise suddenly.

The umbrella term autoimmune encephalitis covers a group of diseases with weird-sounding names based on the antibody fueling it, such as anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis.

While they’re not new diseases, that one got a name in 2007 when Dr. Josep Dalmau, then at the University of Pennsylvania, discovered the first culprit antibody, sparking a hunt for more.



Christy Morrill, 72, who lost decades of memories to autoimmune encephalitis, holds up a viewfinder with a slide film of himself as a college student, Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2025, at his home in San Carlos, Calif. (AP)

That anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis tends to strike younger women and, one of the bizarre factors, it’s sometimes triggered by an ovarian “dermoid” cyst.

How? That type of cyst has similarities to some brain tissue, Hornig explained. The immune system can develop anti-

bodies recognizing certain proteins from the growth. If those antibodies get into the brain, they can mistakenly target NMDA receptors on healthy brain cells, sparking personality and behavior changes that can include hallucinations.

Different antibodies create different problems depending if they mostly hit memory and mood areas in the brain, or sensory and movement regions.

Altogether, “facets of personhood seem to be impaired,” Hornig said.

Therapies include filtering harmful antibodies out of patients’ blood, infusing healthy ones, and high-dose steroids to calm inflammation.

Those cyst-related antibodies stealthily attacked Kiara Alexander in Charlotte, North Carolina, who’d never heard of the brain illness. She’d brushed off some oddities - a little forgetfulness, zoning out a few minutes - until she found herself in an ambulance because of a seizure.

Maybe dehydration, the first hospital concluded. At a second hospital after a second seizure, a doctor recognized the possible signs, ordering a spinal tap that found the culprit antibodies.

As Alexander’s treatment began, other symptoms ramped up. She has little clear memory of the monthlong hospital stay: “They said I would just wake up screaming. What I could remember, it was like a nightmare, like the devil trying to catch me.”

Later Alexander would ask about her 9-year-old daughter and when she could go home - only to forget the answer and ask again.



This photo provided by Gianluca Masi shows the interstellar comet 3I/Atlas as it streaks through space, 190 million miles from Earth, on Wednesday, Nov. 19. The image was taken from Manciano, Italy. (AP)

Comet offers a glimpse into the ancient universe

NASA unveils close-up photos of 3I/Atlas comet

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Nov 20, (AP): NASA unveiled close-up pictures on Wednesday of the interstellar comet that’s making a quick one-and-done tour of the solar system.

Discovered over the summer, the comet known as 3I/Atlas is only the third confirmed object to visit our corner of the cosmos from another star. It zipped harmlessly past Mars last month.

Three NASA spacecraft on and near the red planet zoomed in on the comet as it passed just 18 million miles (29 million kilometers) away, revealing a fuzzy white blob. The European Space Agency’s two satellites around Mars also made observations.

Other NASA spacecraft will remain on the lookout in the weeks ahead, including the Webb Space Telescope. At the same time, astronomers are aiming their ground telescopes at the approaching comet, which is about 190 million miles (307 million kilometers) from

Earth. The Virtual Telescope Project’s Gianluca Masi zoomed in Wednesday from Italy.

The comet is visible from Earth in the predawn sky by using binoculars or a telescope.

“Everyone that is in control of a telescope wants to look at it because it’s a fascinating and rare opportunity,” said NASA’s acting astrophysics director, Shawn Domagal-Goldman.

The closest the comet will come to Earth is 167 million miles (269 million kilometers) in mid-December. Then it will hightail it back into interstellar space, never to return.

ESA’s Juice spacecraft, bound for Jupiter, has been training its cameras and scientific instruments on the comet all month, particularly after it made its closest pass to the sun. But scientists won’t get any of these observations back until February because Juice’s main antenna is serving as a heat shield while it’s near the sun, limiting the

flow of data.

Named for the telescope in Chile that first spotted it, the comet is believed to be anywhere from 1,444 feet (440 meters) across to 3.5 miles (5.6 kilometers) across. Observations indicate that the exceptionally fast-moving comet may have originated in a star system older than our own - “which gives me goose bumps to think about,” said NASA scientist Tom Statler.

“That means that 3I/Atlas is not just a window into another solar system, it’s a window into the deep past and so deep in the past that it predates even the formation of our Earth and our sun,” Statler told reporters.

NASA officials were quick to dispel rumors that this friendly solar system visitor, as they called it, might be an alien ship of some sort. They said that because of the federal government shutdown, they weren’t able to respond to all the theories cropping up in recent weeks.

Experts warn fossil fuel plans are inadequate

Lula joins negotiators at UN climate talks, but no deal yet on major issues

BELEM, Brazil, Nov 20, (AP): The arrival of Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at UN climate talks on Wednesday was hoped to spur nations to meet a self-imposed early deadline for progress on tough issues. For now, it hasn’t worked.

In a news conference late Wednesday, Lula skipped over any update on the status of talks. Instead, he renewed his earlier calls for action, making the case to delegates that the world must reduce its use of fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal.

“We haven’t found another place to live,” Lula, flanked by Brazilian negotiators and his wife, said.

Lula and several other leaders are pushing to create a road map toward transition to renewable energies. But in his remarks Wednesday, he was careful to say there’s no intention to “impose anything on anybody,” that countries could transition at their own pace and count on financial help to do so.

Lula’s return to the talks, along with the presence of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, had stirred some optimism that COP30, as the talks are known, would move forward more quickly ahead of Friday’s scheduled wrap up. Host Brazil had pushed for progress on some key issues Wednesday, but it’s routine for negotiators at these talks to miss deadlines.

COP30 President André Corrêa do Lago had given negotiators a Wednesday deadline for a decision on four interconnected issues that were initially excluded from the official agenda: whether countries should be told to toughen their new climate plans; details on handing out \$300 billion in pledged climate aid; dealing with trade barriers over climate and improving reporting on transparency and climate progress.

Scores of countries, rich and poor, are also pushing for a detailed road map on how to phase out fossil fuels. And that’s key to toughening new climate plans for a shot at limiting future warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), the global goal set in 2015’s Paris Agreement.

In 2023, after days of contentious debate, climate talks agreed to language calling for a transition away from fossil fuels - coal, oil and natural gas. But little has been done since to clarify or amplify on that one sentence. Protesters inside and outside the conference venue kept pushing for a phaseout.

A group of scientists Wednesday criticized current proposals for a fossil fuel phaseout road map as inadequate, particularly to reach the goal of zero fossil fuel emissions by 2045 at the latest.



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during a news conference at the COP30 UN Climate Summit, Thursday, Nov. 20, in Belem, Brazil. (AP)

“A road map is not a workshop or a ministerial meeting. A road map is a real workplan that needs to show us the way from where we are to where we need to be, and how to get there,” said a letter from seven prominent scientists, including some who are advising the COP30 presidency.

Lula, in talking to leaders earlier in Belem, boosted the efforts of clarifying how to wean the world from the fuels that emit heat-trapping gases, the chief cause of climate change.

The Brazilian president has also been pushing for more participation in a new multibillion international fund financed by interest-bearing debt instead of donations, called the Tropical Forests Forever Facility. It seeks to make it more lucrative for governments to keep their trees rather than cut them down.

Iskander Erzini Vernoit, director of the IMAL Initiative for Climate and Development, an independent think-tank based in Morocco, said it won’t be easy for Guterres and Lula to find common ground among negotiators.

“Various apparent impasses still remain, and chief among these from an African point of view is the unwillingness of the EU and other rich countries to engage on their obligation to provide climate finance,” Erzini Vernoit said.

Going into this two-week conference, Brazilian leaders emphasized the importance of focusing on implementation, starting action on agreements, targets and pledges already made, over new deals.

Why you should raise fiber slowly, not suddenly

Fiber becomes next big food trend, but experts warn on ‘fibermaxxing’

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (AP): US consumers who have had their fill of finding protein added to everything from cereal to ice cream are about to meet the next big food fad: fiber.

Americans have been boosting their protein intake for years; even Pop-Tarts and Starbucks are selling protein-enhanced products. But the number of new products promoted with high or added fiber saw a big uptick in the US this year, according to market research firm Mintel. Hundreds of videos on social media celebrate the benefits of dietary fiber and share recipes to help viewers get more of it.

There’s even a term for trying to meet or exceed the recommended daily fiber intake: fibermaxxing.

“I think fiber will be the next protein,” PepsiCo CEO Ramon Laguarta said during a recent conference call with investors. “Consumers are starting to understand that fiber is the benefit that they need.”

Unlike muscle-building protein, fiber isn’t sexy. It’s a carbohydrate found in plants that your body can’t break down. It helps feed gut bacteria and move food through the digestive system.

“Folks don’t want to talk about it at a dinner party,” said Debbie Pettipain, a registered dietitian nutritionist and a spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

There are two main types of fiber. Soluble fiber dissolves in water and forms a gel-like material that feeds gut bacteria. It’s found in foods like oats, peas, beans, apples and carrots. Insoluble fiber doesn’t dissolve in water and moves food through the digestive system. It’s found in whole wheat flour, popcorn, wheat bran, nuts, green beans and potatoes.

Studies have shown that fiber lowers cholesterol levels, regulates blood sugar and promotes weight loss, since high-fiber foods tend to make eaters feel more full. It may also protect against heart disease, diabetes, diverticulitis and colon cancer, according to the American Heart Association.

Pettipain said rising use of GLP-1 weight loss drugs could be one reason for the renewed focus on fiber, since GLP-1s naturally slow digestion and fiber can prevent constipation. She said fiber has seen similar spikes in interest when people wanted to alleviate symptoms from high-fat diets like



Boxes of cereal promoting fiber are for sale at a Kroger grocery store, in Ann Arbor, Mich., Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025. (AP)

Atkins or keto.

Most people in Western countries could use more fiber because their diets are low in vegetables, fruits and whole grains, said Sander Kersten, director of the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University.

Under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s guidelines, adults should aim for 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories they consume. That’s about 25 grams of fiber for women and 38 grams for men each day. Pettipain said Americans generally only get about two-thirds of that amount.

For reference, 1 cup of raspberries contains 8 grams of fiber, while a banana contains 3.2 grams, according to the USDA. One-half cup of avocado contains 5 grams of fiber and 1 cup of lima beans contains 13.2 grams. Fiber One, a bran cereal, packs 18 grams of fiber into a 2/3-cup serving.

Kersten said long-term studies about the benefits of fiber have looked at the consumption of whole foods and not packaged products with added fiber.

“The way it is consumed as an additive and part of a diet that doesn’t contain a lot of fiber may be different than a naturally fiber-rich diet,” Kersten said. “You can eat a very processed, Western diet and consume foods that are enriched, but we don’t know if it confers the same benefit.”

Whole foods also help the body in

other ways, Pettipain said. An apple contains 4.8 grams of fiber as well as water, vitamins and minerals, for example.

Here are some recommendations from the Mayo Clinic for adding fiber to your diet:

- Choose a breakfast cereal with 5 grams or more of fiber a serving. Top it with a sliced banana or berries.
- Choose breads with at least 2 grams of fiber per serving and try other grains like brown rice, whole-wheat pasta and quinoa.
- When baking, substitute whole-grain flour for white flour. Add wheat bran to muffins and cookies.
- Try to eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables daily. If you eat canned fruit, make sure it’s canned in fruit juice and not syrup, and make sure canned vegetables are low in sodium.

There is no defined upper limit for fiber intake, Kersten said. But increasing fiber can cause painful gas and bloating, especially if it’s done quickly.

Pettipain said people should increase their fiber intake gradually and drink plenty of water.

“You’re feeding gut bacteria a food, and you can’t break it down. You rely on them, and if you give them second, third and fourth servings, there’s not enough of them to handle the extra load,” Pettipain said.

Sydney issues measles alert

SYDNEY, Nov. 20, (Xinhua): A measles alert has been issued for Sydney after health authorities in Australia’s state of New South Wales (NSW) said on Thursday that the highly infectious disease is likely circulating in the city.

NSW Health said in a statement on Thursday that a person has recently been confirmed to have acquired measles in Sydney despite not having had known contact with another measles case nor having attended any known exposure sites.

“With the source of the infection unknown, it is likely measles is currently circulating within the community, and other people may have been unknowingly exposed to measles,” NSW Health said.

Residents and visitors in Sydney have been urged to ensure they are up to date with their vaccinations and monitor for measles symptoms, including fever, runny nose and a cough followed by a blotchy rash that spreads from the head to the rest of the body.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Director of Public Health, Mitchell Smith, said that it can take up to 18 days after exposure to measles for symptoms to appear.

Cancer breakthroughs

Experts find way to target aggressive blood cancer

MELBOURNE, Nov. 20, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia have discovered a new way to kill cancer cells in acute myeloid leukemia (AML), one of the most aggressive and hard to treat forms of blood cancer.

The team found that AML cells, especially stem cells that drive relapse, rely on a common molecule called heme to survive and keep multiplying. When this process is blocked, the cancer cells die through a newly identified form of cell death known as cuproptosis, according to a statement of Australia’s Peter MacCallum Cancer Center on Thursday.

“By blocking AML cells from producing heme, we can switch on cuproptosis, a unique form of cell death, and effectively kill the cells most responsible for causing a cancer relapse,” said Alexander Lewis, postdoctoral researcher at Peter Mac.

“We’ve uncovered a fundamental weakness in AML cells ... This opens the door to new therapies that are potentially more powerful and longer lasting,” said Lewis, lead author of the research, published in Cell and conducted with multiple Australian research institutes.

Each year, about 900 Australians are diagnosed with AML, with half relapsing after remission and median survival for relapsed patients between

four and six months, researchers said.

The study also identified additional metabolic pathways to combine with heme-blocking strategies for enhanced treatment efficacy, the statement said.

In another development, researchers in Australia have launched a new digital platform aimed at accelerating breakthroughs in pancreatic cancer, one of the world’s deadliest cancers.

Developed by scientists at Australia’s Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI), the PURPLE (Pancreatic cancer: Understanding Routine Practice & Lifting End results) Translational Platform is a centralized online hub designed to support the development of new approaches to treating the disease and improve patient access to clinical trials, a WEHI statement said on Thursday.

Pancreatic cancer, expected to be Australia’s second-deadliest cancer by 2030, is often diagnosed late due to non-specific early symptoms, with most cases detected after the cancer has spread to nearby organs, it said.

The online hub integrates data from the PURPLE registry, tracking over 6,000 patients across 57 global cancer centers, enabling analysis of de-identified clinical data to enhance diagnosis and treatment, it added.

‘We can rise together’

Haiti’s troubles fade briefly as it revels in World Cup qualification

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Nov 20, (AP): Haiti held its breath for nearly two hours as its troubles seemed to fade with the promise of its first World Cup qualification since 1974.

Forgotten ever so briefly was the violence, hunger and homelessness after Loucius Deedson scored nine minutes into Tuesday’s game against Nicaragua, and Ruben Providence followed up with a header just before halftime in a 2-0 win to send Haiti to the World Cup for just the second time in the country’s history.

Shouts in Haitian Creole of “Grenadye, alaso!” filled the country’s streets, homes and makeshift shelters as fans urged their team, the Grenadiers, to attack.

Haiti didn’t just need a win over Nicaragua; it wanted to prove that despite the multiple crises weighing the country down, it could still pull through and hold its head high like it has throughout its troubled history.

“It means more than just a win. It is hope, it is unity at a time when the country faces so many challenges,” said Pierre Jean-Jacques, a 25-year-old mechanic who watched the game at home. “I was fully focused. My heart was racing.”

After the match, he joined thousands of fans who

bounced late into the night through streets normally empty at that hour out of fear of being killed or kidnapped.

“This victory brings a moment of joy,” he said. “I’m proud. I believe we can rise together.”

Tuesday night’s win coincided with the 222nd anniversary of the historic Battle of Vertières, which helped Haiti become the world’s first Black republic.

“They couldn’t have chosen a better date for our warriors to go to the World Cup,” said Vladimir Dorvale, 18, who had a small Haitian flag tied around his neck and was walking briskly to a friend’s house to talk about the game.

But the odds were against Haiti, where euphoria remained high on Wednesday.

The team played all their home games in the tiny Dutch Caribbean island of Curaçao because it was too dangerous to do so in Haiti, where armed gangs control up to 90% of its capital, Port-au-Prince.

Their coach, Sébastien Migné, told France Football magazine that he remotely managed certain players who were in Haiti. He couldn’t fly to the country where gang violence has shut down the main international airport several times.

When Deedson knocked the first ball in, gunfire erupted in André Michaud’s neighborhood, startling

the 23-year-old student who watched the game at a bar near his house because it had a generator and the power was out again.

“I didn’t know if the gangs had invaded,” he said, adding that he settled down after realizing it was celebratory.

“All my life, I’ve been supporting other teams in the World Cup: Brazil, Argentina,” he said. “Now, I can finally support my country. I’m hopeful that Haiti can go far.”

Shortly after the victory, a joyful crowd marched through the narrow streets of one neighborhood under the rain, playing music and chanting, “Haiti has qualified! We don’t have a state!” in reference to the deep political instability rocking Haiti.

Thousands of other fans danced through the streets of Pétionville late into the night. When gunfire erupted briefly during the celebration, the crowd raised its hands and cheered. Such noise normally scatters people in a country where more than 4,300 were killed from January to September.

“I hope you guys are going to enjoy it. It’s not finished. It’s just the start,” forward Duckens Nazon said after the game in a video posted online. “There are many people who didn’t believe in us, but us, we believe in us.”



Fans watching a 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying match between Haiti and Nicaragua celebrate Haiti’s first goal, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. (AP)

Lyonnes and Juventus draw in 6-goal thriller



Wolfsburg’s Lineth Beerensteyn, left, and Manchester United’s Maya Le Tissier in action during the Women’s Champions League soccer match between VfL Wolfsburg and Manchester United in Wolfsburg, Germany. (AP)

Arsenal beats Real Madrid

LONDON, Nov 20, (AP): Record eight-time champion OL Lyonnes rallied from three goals down at half-time to salvage a 3-3 draw at Juventus in the Women’s Champions League.

Defending champion Arsenal also came back, beating Real Madrid 2-1 at home with striker Alessia Russo scoring twice.

Earlier, veteran Lyon defender Wendie Renard, who has scored more than 150 goals for Lyon, equalized with a well-taken penalty in the 90th minute following a handball by Juventus captain Cecilia Salvai.

Lyon found itself 3-0 down at half-time as forward Chiara Beccari tormented the defense. After scoring in the 12th minute with a lob from the right, Beccari was involved in goals for striker Michela Cambiaghi and midfielder Tatiana Pinto.

Lyon replied through Tabitha Chawinga in the 60th and substitute Marie-Antoinette Katoto in the 79th.

Elsewhere, Dutch duo Ella Peddemors and Lineth Beerensteyn scored two each as two-time champion Wolfsburg beat Manchester United 5-2 at home.

Unbeaten Lyon leads with 10 points from four games in the 18-team standings while Wolfsburg and United have nine points along with Barcelona.



Juventus’ Tatiana Pinto, left, celebrates scoring during the Women’s Champions League soccer match between Juventus Women and OL Lyonnes Women in Biella, Italy. (AP)

Sixth-place Real Madrid has seven points - one more than Arsenal, which is eighth after a second win in four games.

The top four enter the quarterfinals and teams placed fifth to 12th join the knockout playoffs while the bottom six are eliminated.

Real Madrid’s Caroline Weir volleyed into the bottom corner in the 43rd after Arsenal’s defense failed to clear a free kick from the right.

Russo’s looping header from a right-wing cross early into the second half drew Arsenal level at Meadow Park

line after being easily beaten on the first goal.

Beccari’s slick pass was cleverly dummied by Amalie Vangsgaard on the edge of the area and Pinto ran through to score in the 37th for seventh-placed Juventus.

Juventus goalkeeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin, who was born in Lyon and started her career there, was beaten by Chawinga’s low shot from the left on the hour.

Katoto headed in a cross with 10 minutes remaining before Salvai’s clear handball from a right-wing cross gave Lyon a lifeline.

Sweden winger Fridolina Rolfö put United ahead in the 14th against her former team, but Wolfsburg equalized three minutes later through Peddemors.

Peddemors scored again in the 37th and Beerensteyn’s fine shot into the top corner made it 3-1 in the 45th, only for French forward Melvine Malard to net in first-half stoppage time.

Beerensteyn pounced again midway through the second half and Vivien Endemann added the fifth deep into stoppage time.

Paris FC beat Benfica 2-0 with goals from 18-year-old Maeline Mendy and Maelle Garbino either side of halftime. The visitors had Danish midfielder Caroline Møller sent off in the 30th at Stade Jean Bouin.

Vålerenga went 2-0 up inside 20 minutes against St. Pölten of Austria but the visitors hit back to draw 2-2 in Oslo.

Cortina sliding track to host test races without fans

CORTINA D’AMPEZZO, Italy, Nov 20, (AP): There won’t be any spectators for the opening test races at the controversial sliding venue for the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics.

That’s because while the track itself is mostly complete, the surrounding area remains a massive construction site.

Still, the upcoming World Cup bobsled and skeleton meet from Friday to Sunday will double as an Olympic test event.

Luge athletes have also been testing

out the venue ahead of the Feb. 6-22 games.

“We’ll have had about 250 athletes test the track over the span of a month. So that’s a good stress test for the future,” said Fabio Saldini, the Italian government commissioner who has been overseeing the venue’s construction.

The old Eugenio Monti track first opened in 1923 then closed in 2008 because of rising maintenance costs.

The International Olympic Committee wanted sliding events for these

Al-Moussawi takes over as head coach of Burgan

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Burgan Club has reached a near-final agreement with Yaqoub Al-Moussawi to take charge of the first handball team for the remainder of the current season. The club president met with Al-Moussawi to finalize the remaining details ahead of the official signing.

Al-Moussawi resigned from his post at Salmiya’s handball team on October 19, stepping in to replace Burgan’s former coach Hussein Habeeb, who had resigned on the 10th of the same month.

Al-Moussawi brings a strong résumé, having served as Salmiya’s assistant coach for four years before leading the team as head coach for two seasons. During his tenure, he guided Salmiya to a runner-up finish in the penultimate edition of the Arab Club Championship, where it lost the final to Kuwait Club.

Burgan is currently competing in the preparatory tournament and earned a 30–22 victory over Arabi



Yaqoub Al-Moussawi

last Tuesday in Week 5, which also featured Qurain’s 44–34 win over Naser.

Yarmouk leads the competition standings with nine points, followed by Burgan with eight, Fahheel with six, Qurain and Salmiya with five each, Sulaibikhat with four, Arabi with three, and Naser still without a point.

Marseille and Lens facing tough games

PSG struggling to open sizeable gap on rivals in Ligue 1 title race

PARIS, Nov 20, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain needed stoppage-time winners in the last two league games to narrowly stay atop Ligue 1.

The defending champion is two points ahead of Marseille and third-placed Lens heading into the 13th round, where PSG hosts Le Havre on Saturday.

There could be a shakeup with Marseille and Lens both facing tough games.

Marseille is first up at southern rival Nice on Friday night.

Although Nice’s form picked up nicely for a while, coach Franck Haise’s side has lost its last two games. Marseille’s inconsistent defense is on a good streak and Roberto De Zerbi’s side seeks a third straight clean sheet in Ligue 1.

Third plays fourth on Saturday when Lens hosts Strasbourg.

Both are good in attack. Lens is sharper since France winger Florian Thauvin joined from Udinese and coach Pierre Sage’s side has netted seven goals in two games, including a 4-1 rout of Monaco away from home.

Strasbourg boasts one of Ligue 1’s most dangerous strike pairings with Dutchman Emmanuel Emegha - the club’s top scorer last season with 14 league goals - alongside summer signing Joaquin Panichelli.

Panichelli tops the scoring charts with nine goals so far and the Argentine - whose father was also a striker - mixes penalty-box instinct with a penchant for spectacular strikes.

João Neves can’t stop scoring.

The midfielder’s hat trick for Portugal in a recent World Cup qualifier added to goals in consecutive games for PSG since his return from a minor thigh injury.

In PSG’s last game, the diminutive Neves timed his header perfectly to score a stoppage-time winner against Lyon. He also scored a hat trick for PSG this season.

Paul Pogba was once among Europe’s best goal-scoring midfielders but has not played for over two years. The 32-year-old former France and Juventus star could finally make his Monaco debut after a minor ankle injury. Coach Sébastien Pocognoli hopes to finally have him available for Saturday’s trip to Rennes.

Monaco defender Eric Dier, who only recently recovered from a hamstring injury, is out with another muscle injury.

PSG’s star fullbacks Achraf Hakimi (ankle) Nuno Mendes (knee) are out for weeks along with forward Désiré Doué (thigh) and Ballon d’Or winner Ousmane Dembélé (calf).

Lille central defender Alexsandro is nursing a thigh injury. The Brazil international wants to continue his recovery at the Aspetar clinic in Qatar rather than have the operation his club wanted.

PSG is locked in a courtroom battle with Kylian Mbappé, the club’s record scorer with 256 goals.

Both parties are demanding hundreds of millions of euros amid intense score-settling relating to Mbappé’s contract prior to joining Real Madrid in the summer of 2024. The \$800 million case includes accusations of bullying, betrayal and harassment and is to be decided on Dec. 16 by an industrial court in Paris.

Meanwhile, promoted Lorient feels ambitious.

Club president Loïc Féry wants to fold his stake into the Black Knight Football Club group, which would become the sole shareholder.

BKFC owns the Vegas Golden Knights in the NHL and acquired a minority ownership interest in minnow Lorient in January 2023 as part of its multi-club ownership strategy.

Féry wants to develop the club’s 18,000-capacity Le Moustoir Stadium amid what he calls soccer’s “hypercompetitive environment.”

Kuwait Club, Kazma and Arabi in high-profile Federation Cup Pool

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Defending champions Kuwait Club has been drawn into a tough Group A in the Basketball Federation Cup, joining Kazma, Arabi, and Al-Qurain. Group B features Qadsia, Sulaibikhat, Naser, and Sahel.

The draw took place at the conference hall of the Basketball Federation headquarters in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, attended by Federation Vice President Mohsen Al-Suhmi, Treasurer Ghazi Al-Otaibi, Acting Assistant Secretary and Head of the Training and National Teams Committee Mohammed Al-Hassawi, Assistant Treasurer Mishal Mohammed, and several club representatives.

Kuwait Club will open its title defense with a preliminary-round matchup against Arabi, while Al-Qurain will face last season's runner-up Kazma in the same group. In Group B, Qadsia meets Sulaibikhat, and Naser takes on Sahel.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Al-Hassawi announced that the federation has signed Serbian coach Marko Ichelich to take charge of the youth and junior national



A glimpse of the Basketball Cup draw.

teams, alongside his compatriot Milan Galic as fitness coach. He added that the federation is also working to appoint a physiotherapy specialist as part of preparations for upcoming commitments.

Al-Hassawi noted that the Training Committee has set up a comprehensive preparation plan for the national teams, including two friendlies next week against Thailand's senior squad, followed by a training camp in Serbia ahead of

the Gulf Games and the FIBA Asia Cup qualifiers. He added that the youth national team will be thoroughly prepared ahead of its participation in the Gulf Basketball Championship, the qualifier for the FIBA Asia Cup finals.

Meanwhile, national coach Khaled Al-Qallaf has begun training sessions for the women's national team as they gear up for the Gulf Women's 3x3 Basketball Championship, which kicks off next week in Muscat, Oman.

Team Kuwait set to depart for the ACC Men's U19 Premier Cup 2025



Kuwait Squad for the ACC U19 Premier Cup.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The ACC Men's U19 Premier Cup is a youth cricket tournament organized by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) in a 50-over format. It serves as a qualifier for the ACC U19 Asia Cup. The 2025 edition will be held in the UAE from November 21 to December 1, featuring 14 teams. Nepal won the previous 2023 edition, defeating the UAE in the final. The tournament showcases emerging cricket talent from across Asia.

Kuwait Cricket proudly announces the squad powered by MEC Study Group for the ACC Men's U19 Premier Cup 2025 in the UAE from 19–30 November.

Squad:
Thewan Dion (C), Het Kishorbhai, Jay Maheshkumar, Umer Ali, Muhammad Aqif, Usman Ghani, Dhaksh Lakshman, Kandarp Tushar, Arsh Sahil, Asmeet Jadhav, Hussain Burha-



Fixtures for the ACC U19 Premier Cup 2025

nuddin, Rayan Aiden, Janath Jeewanga
Reserves:
Vishwa Teja, Rudransh Panchal, Ali, Melrick Vinit

Support Staff:
Mohammed Qasim Ali (Manager), Mohammad Tahir (Head Coach), Muhammad Kashif (Asst. Coach), Muizz Ahmed (Mentor), Nupur Nandan (Physio). Led by Thewan Dion, Kuwait is ready for the regional challenge.

Fixtures:
21 Nov – Kuwait vs Bahrain (Seven Districts Ground)
24 Nov – Kuwait vs UAE (Karwan Ground)
26 Nov – Kuwait vs TBA (Royal Ajman Ground)
29 Nov – Semi Finals
1 Dec – Final

Al-Sakab Club's second show jumping tournament begins



Mohammed Tariq Al-Millem and Bader Tariq Al-Millem honor Nouf Bin Essa.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: The second edition of Al-Sakab Club's show jumping tournament for the new season gets underway this morning at the Al-Messilah Equestrian Club arena in Sabhan. The event features riders from local clubs competing across all levels—beginner, intermediate, and advanced—on jump heights of 60, 80, 100, 110, 120, and 130 cm.

Bader Tariq Al-Millem, President of Al-Messilah Equestrian Club, affirmed that the club's arena is fully ready for the new season's competitions. He praised the strong turnout of male and female riders, particularly in the beginner categories at 60

and 80 cm. He also highlighted the significant progress Kuwaiti equestrian sport has made in recent years, with Kuwait's riders proudly raising the national flag at tournaments both at home and abroad across the Arab world and Europe.

Meanwhile, Al-Sakab Club President and rider Mohammed Tariq Al-Millem stated that the club is committed to elevating riders' technical skills by bringing in top-tier coaches from both Arab and European countries. He emphasized the club's focus on nurturing young riders in the beginner levels to build a new generation capable of competing at higher stages.

Liverpool's EPL title defense in disarray

LONDON, Nov 20, (AP): Three months in and it has already been a season of extreme highs and lows for Liverpool.

A run of five straight wins to start the Premier League title defense. Then a streak of four consecutive losses.

Before the international break an impressive 1-0 victory over Real Madrid in the Champions League was celebrated as some sort of revival. That was immediately shot down in a dispiriting 3-0 defeat at Manchester City, a result Arne Slot has had to stew over for two weeks.

An eight-point deficit to league leader Arsenal isn't insurmountable, and an ounce of form could close the gap.

The English champion has a home match against Nottingham Forest on Saturday. That kicks off a benign run of end-of-year fixtures for Liverpool against West Ham, Sunderland, Leeds, Brighton, Tottenham, Wolves and Leeds again up to Jan. 1.

If the Reds cannot find some form over the next six weeks, then hopes of retaining the league title for the first time since 1984 might be over.

The standout game sees Arsenal host Tottenham in the north London derby on Sunday.

Arsenal's 10 straight wins - eight successive clean sheets - was brought to an end in a 2-2 draw at Sunderland before the break for internationals.

Tottenham has won just two of their last 10 meetings since December 2020.

Manchester City plays before then, at Newcastle in Saturday's late game, and can reduce the gap to one point with a win.

Man City striker Erling Haaland's hot streak rolls on. Another four goals for Norway over the past week lifted his tally to 32 in 20 games in all competitions for club and country.

He has failed to score in just two matches.

Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker has missed the last six weeks because of a hamstring injury but looks set to return for the game against Forest, replacing Giorgi Mamardashvili.

That should help to shore up Liverpool's creaky defense, which has conceded 17 league goals. Only seven teams have let in more after 11 games.

Al-Mutairi sponsors West Asia Women's Volleyball champ'ship

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Salwa Al-Sabah Club, in collaboration with the West Asian Volleyball Federation, has announced that Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi will sponsor the first West Asia Women's Club Volleyball Championship. The tournament will be held at the late Khalid Al-Marzouq Hall from December 3 to 13, hosted by Salwa Al-Sabah Club.

The tournament draw placed host club Salwa Al-Sabah in the highly competitive Group B alongside Al-Arabi (Qatar), Sharjah (UAE), and Al-Nasr (Yemen). Group A features Qatar SC, Al-Fatat (Kuwait), Al-Ula (Saudi Arabia), and Al-Qalamoun (Lebanon), while Group C includes Al-Nasr (Jordan), Al-Quds (Palestine), Al-Fayha (Saudi Arabia), and Sanharib (Iraq).

Al-Mutairi's sponsorship reflects the championship's significance and the strong participation of Arab clubs from across West Asia. It also recognizes Salwa Al-Sabah Club's proven track record in successfully hosting numerous Arab and international tournaments, demonstrating organizational excellence under Chairperson Sheikhha Naima Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The hosting agreement was signed in



Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad and Al-Kuwari at the championship contract signing ceremony.

the presence of Sheikhha Naima Al-Ahmad and West Asian Volleyball President Ali Al-Kuwari. The federation praised Salwa Al-Sabah Club for its initiative, highlighting Kuwait's commitment to supporting women's sports, fostering a competitive environment, and advancing the development of women's volleyball across the region.

Bulls hold off Trail Blazers

Knicks earn rare road win

PORTLAND, Ore., Nov 20, (AP): Nikola Vucevic hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer and Chicago Bulls held off a furious comeback attempt by the Portland Trail Blazers for a 122-121 victory.

Vucevic finished with 27 points and Coby White had 25 off the bench for the Bulls, who led by 21 points in the fourth quarter.

Deni Avdija's 3-pointer tied it for the Blazers at 116 and Donovan Clingan's layup put the Blazers in front with 47 seconds left. Clingan added a free throw to cap a 31-7 run and give Portland a 119-116 lead.

White's 3-pointer with 9.1 seconds pulled the Bulls within 120-119. After Jerami Grant hit the second of two free throws, White popped the ball out to Vucevic on the perimeter for the game-winner.

Knicks 113, Mavericks 111

In Dallas, Jalen Brunson had a game-high 28 points in his return from a two-game absence, Landry Shamet scored a pair of 3-pointers in the final 1:02 and drew a crucial charging foul in the final second, and the Knicks beat the Dallas Mavericks.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 18 points and 14 rebounds while Josh Hart had 16 points and 10 rebounds off the bench for the Knicks, who won for the first time in five road games.

Brunson, who had a grade 1 ankle sprain, hit a free throw with 3.8 seconds left for a two-point lead. Dallas' P.J. Washington inbounded to Brandon Williams at midcourt, Williams drove to the basket and scored with 0.7 seconds left but was called for charging into Shamet.

Nuggets 125, Pelicans 118

In New Orleans, Nikola Jokic had 28 points, 12 assists and 11 rebounds, and the Denver Nuggets defeated the New Orleans Pelicans.

Peyton Watson scored a career-high 32 points as Denver won for the eighth time in nine games. Jamal Murray had 14 points, including a pair of free throws with 31 seconds left.



New Orleans Pelicans center Yves Missi (21) battles under the basket between Denver Nuggets forward Spencer Jones, left, and center Nikola Jokic in the second half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans.

Zion Williamson scored 14 points for New Orleans in 29 minutes in his return from a left hamstring injury that had sidelined him for eight games.

Rookie Derik Queen, who started opposite Jokic at center, scored a season-high 30 points to go with nine rebounds. He also helped cause Jokic to commit nine turnovers and foul out with 2:44 left.

Timberwolves 120, Wizards 109

In Minneapolis, Julius Randle had 32 points and 10 rebounds and the Minnesota Timberwolves held off a late rally by the Washington Wizards for the win.

Heat 110, Warriors 96

In Miami, Norman Powell scored 25 points, Bam Adebayo returned to score 20 and the Miami Heat pulled away late to top the extremely short-handed Golden State Warriors.

Former Warriors forward Andrew Wiggins scored 17 and Kel'el Ware grabbed 16 rebounds for Miami, which outscored Golden State 38-22 in the fourth quarter.

The Warriors, at the end of a six-game, nine-day trip, were without their

four highest-paid players: Stephen Curry (ankle), former Heat forward Jimmy Butler (back), Draymond Green (illness) and Jonathan Kuminga (knee), a group making about \$162 million this season. Al Horford, who isn't playing back-to-backs and appeared in Golden State's loss at Orlando on Tuesday, also sat out.

Rockets 114, Cavaliers 104

Cleveland, Alperen Sengun had 28 points and 11 rebounds, Kevin Durant scored 20 points, and the Houston Rockets extended their winning streak to five with victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Aaron Holiday scored 14 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter for Houston, which is 10-1 since starting the season with two losses. Jabari Smith Jr. scored 14 and Amen Thompson had 12 points, nine boards and five steals.

De'Andre Hunter scored 25 points to pace the Cavaliers. Donovan Mitchell added 21 points, 19 in the final period when they got as close as 77-76 before the Rockets answered with back-to-back hoops by Sengun and Thompson.

Pacers 127, Hornets 118

In Indianapolis, Bennedict Mathurin scored 24 points and grabbed 12 rebounds, and the Indiana Pacers downed Charlotte Hornets to snap an eight-game losing streak.

The Pacers, off to their worst start in franchise history with 12 losses in 13 previous games, pulled away in the second quarter as Mathurin scored nine of his team's last 11 points for a 70-54 halftime lead. Indiana has been without as many as seven players due to injuries, including Mathurin, who returned Monday after missing 10 games with a toe injury.

Raptors 121, 76ers 112

In Philadelphia, Brandon Ingram and RJ Barrett each scored 22 points and the Toronto Raptors won their fifth straight game, surging in the third quarter to beat the Philadelphia 76ers.

Jakob Poeltl scored 19 points, and Immanuel Quickley had 18 - hitting two 3-pointers in the final two minutes - to help the Raptors win for the ninth time in 10 games. Scottie Barnes added 16 points, nine rebounds and five assists.

X CAT powerboat championship second round kicks off in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20, (KUNA): X CAT powerboat kicks off: The second round of the 2025 XCAT World Powerboat Championship got underway Thursday in Kuwait, with the event running through November 22. The championship is organized by the Kuwait Sea Sports Club.

Ali Al-Shammali, Chairman of the Powerboats and Wakeboard Committee at the Sea Sports Club and Director of the Championship, said the round features two races with 12 boats from various countries competing at Marina Waves Beach.

The day began with official practice

sessions, followed by a pole-position race to determine the starting grid, before the first race (Race 1) took place. Al-Shammali reported that the Emirati boat 7 Victory won Race 1, with the Kuwaiti boat 17 Mutheer finishing second and the British boat 8 taking third place.

He invited powerboat fans and marine-sports enthusiasts to attend and enjoy the thrilling races, highlighting the participation of several world-class champions.

Al-Shammali also noted that the championship will conclude with a final third round scheduled for December 12 in Dubai.

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NEWS



Morocco's Achraf Hakimi and Ghizlane Chebbak pose for a photo after receiving the Men's and Women's African player of the year award at the CAF Awards 2025 ceremony, in Sale, Morocco. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait kicks off AFC U-17 qualifiers against Turkmenistan

Sporty and Al-Shamiya open Crown Prince Cup

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Sporty and Al-Shamiya will launch the Crown Prince Cup today at 5:20 p.m. at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Stadium in the preliminary round. The winner will advance to face Al-Jazeera next Thursday at Al-Tadamon Stadium, with the victor securing a place in the main draw.

Sporty sits at the bottom of the First Division standings with no points, while Al-Shamiya is seventh with three points from its single victory—earned against Sporty in a 2-1 win.

The Competitions Committee of the Kuwait Football Association has opted to hold a preliminary phase to reduce the participating teams to 16, who will then compete in the Round of 16.

Both Sporty and Al-Shamiya, newcomers to

the Kuwaiti football scene, are aiming for a breakthrough victory in their first-ever appearance in this prestigious tournament. Al-Jazeera made its debut last season but exited in the preliminary round after losing to Kuwait SC. Sporty and Al-Shamiya have met only once this season—in the fifth round of the First Division “Zain League”—with Al-Shamiya winning 2-1, a result that highlights how closely matched the two sides are, occupying the last two spots in the table.

The Crown Prince Cup was first held in the 1993-1994 season, with Kuwait SC lifting the inaugural title after defeating Kazma in the final. Kuwait SC remains the record holder with 10 titles, followed by Qadisiya and Arabi with 9 each, while Salmiya has won twice and Kazma once.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's U-17 national team begins its AFC Asian Cup qualifying campaign today with

a matchup against Turkmenistan at 11:30 a.m. at Chonburi Stadium in Thailand. The group also features tomorrow's meeting between the Maldives and Mongolia at 3:30 p.m.

Host nation Thailand completes Group F and will open its run on Tuesday against Mongolia. The Azraq prepared for the qualifiers with a training camp in Thailand that included several friendlies, as the team looks to add to its five previous appearances in the finals—the most recent in 2014.

Led by national coach Tariq Al-Khulaifi, the team underwent an extended buildup that began last summer with a camp in Serbia and concluded with another in Thailand. During their preparation, Kuwait drew 0-0 with Singapore, defeated Oman 2-0, and beat a Thai club 1-0. The squad hopes to reach the finals for the sixth time and end a decade-long absence since its last appearance in 2014.



The U-17 team preparing for the qualifiers.

Iraq to face Bolivia or Suriname in playoff

Italy hopes to end World Cup drought with tough two-game playoff run

ZURICH, Nov 20, (AP): Italy will first host Northern Ireland in a World Cup qualifying playoff in March but then will go on the road to reach its first tournament after back-to-back failures at this stage.

FIFA made the playoff draw on Thursday that will send the winner between four-time champion Italy and Northern Ireland on March 26 to travel to face Wales or Bosnia-Herzegovina five days later. At stake was a place at the first 48-team finals tournament in North America.

Italy has not played at a World Cup since 2014 and was pushed into the playoffs by finishing runner-up in a qualifying group won by Norway.

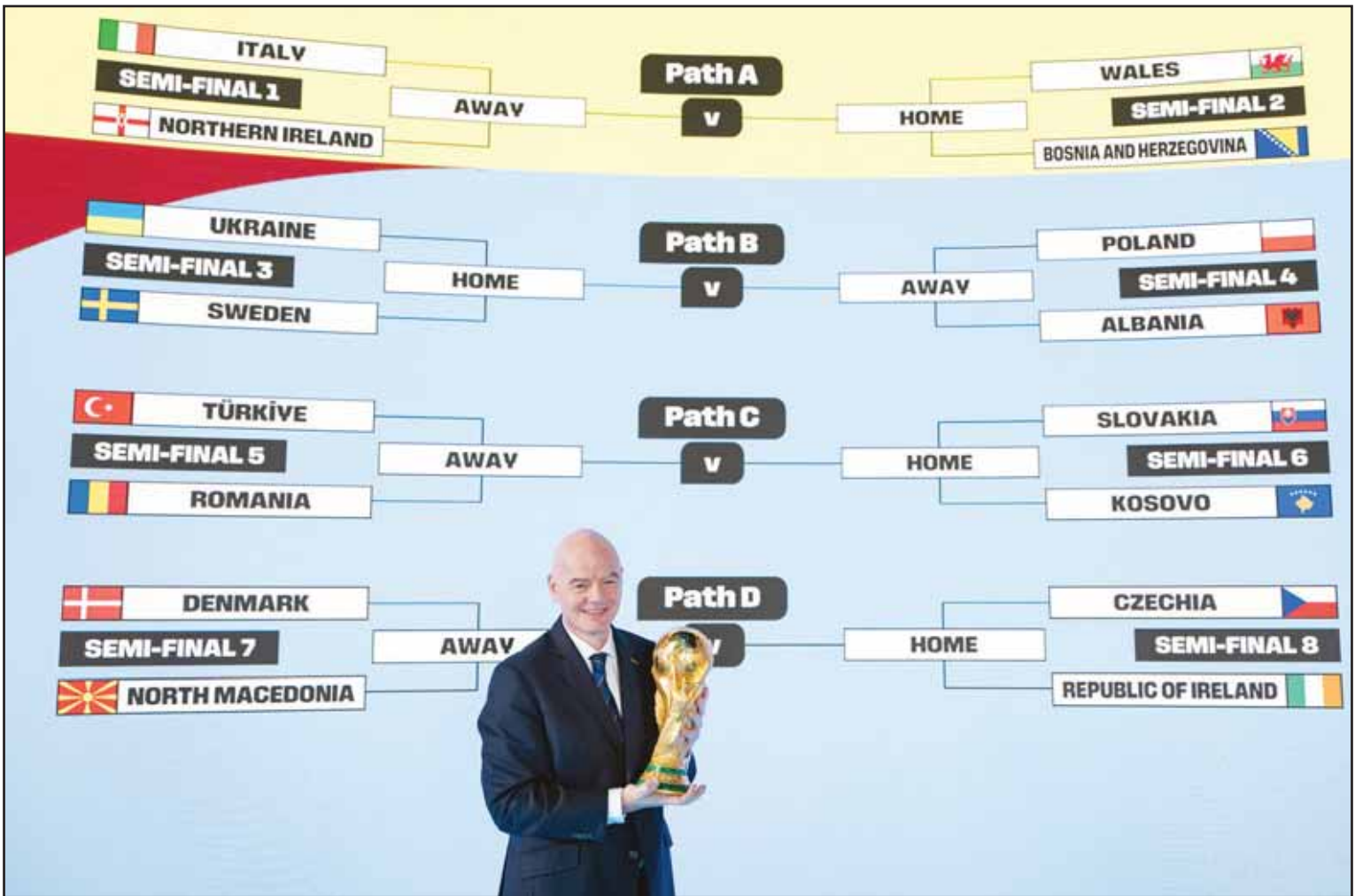
In other European playoff brackets, Ukraine will host Sweden, with the winner then at home to Poland or Albania.

Kosovo's path to a first first-ever World Cup as Europe's newest soccer nation is away to Slovakia, followed by hosting Turkey or Romania.

Ireland's reward for remarkable back-to-back wins over Portugal and Hungary in the past week is a playoff semifinal at the Czech Republic, with the winner then hosting Denmark or North Macedonia.

FIFA also made the draw for the six-nation intercontinental playoffs that do not involve Europe.

Iraq, which was seeded in the



FIFA President Gianni Infantino poses in front of the UEFA playoff grid during the FIFA World Cup 2026 playoff draw in Zurich, Switzerland. (AP)

draw, will have to beat Bolivia or Suriname in a one-game playoff next March to qualify for the

finals tournament co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Congo was seeded in the other intercontinental playoffs bracket and will play the winner of a single-game

semifinal between New Caledonia and Jamaica. The six intercontinental playoff

games will be staged in Mexico from March 23-31 at stadiums in Guadalajara and Monterrey, which each will host four World Cup games next June.

A total of six teams will advance from the two sets of playoffs in March to complete the first 48-nation lineup.

The other 42 teams were confirmed this week when qualifying groups and playoff games were completed on four continents.

The World Cup draw is on Dec. 5 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. There, the six unconfirmed playoff teams will be drawn as placeholders and should come out of the pot of lowest-ranked teams in the seeded draw.

A penalty scored by Iraq in the 17th minute of stoppage time against the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday sent coach Graham Arnold's team through to the global playoffs. Iraq's 2-1 win in Basra sealed a 3-2 victory in the two-leg Asian playoff.

Iraq's only World Cup appearance was in 1986, and Arnold coached his home nation, Australia, at the 2022 tournament in Qatar, reaching the round of 16.

New Caledonia is the lowest-ranked team in the playoffs, at No. 149 of the 211 FIFA member countries.

New Caledonia effectively advanced to the playoffs by beating Tahiti 3-0 in March, before losing the Oceania qualifying final against New Zealand. Coach Johann Siderer's team has played just one game since, beating Gibraltar in a friendly last month.

Kuwait reaffirms support for UN sports initiatives, Olympic Truce



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Diplomatic Attaché Sarah Al-Hassawi delivers a speech.

NEW YORK, Nov 20, (KUNA): Kuwait has reaffirmed its full support for United Nations efforts to promote sport as a tool for development and peace, highlighting its endorsement of the “Olympic Truce” as a symbol of human dignity and equality.

The statement was delivered by Kuwaiti Diplomatic Attaché Sarah Al-Hassawi during a plenary session of the UN General Assembly, discussing the agenda item: “Sport for Development and Peace: Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympic Ideal.”

Al-Hassawi emphasized that sport remains a powerful force for uniting humanity, promoting values of justice, cooperation, and mutual respect. She highlighted Kuwait's National Sports Strategy (2022-2028), launched by the Public Authority for Sports in partnership with the UN Development Programme, and aimed at strengthening sports institutions, empowering youth, and ensuring equal access to sports in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.

She also noted the expansion of school sports programs and community initiatives that integrate physical activity with volunteerism and environmental awareness. On women's empowerment, Al-Hassawi highlighted Kuwait's efforts to increase female participation through the Kuwait Women's Sports Committee, greater representation in sports federations, and specialized training programs. She praised Kuwaiti female athletes for their honorable performance at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Al-Hassawi further commended the UN's “Football for Humanity” initiative supporting Palestinian children and youth, noting that Kuwait recently hosted its first edition under the patronage of Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya in cooperation with the UN.

She concluded by affirming Kuwait's belief that investing in youth and sport is essential for fostering peace and prosperity worldwide.

Al-Otaibi elected President of Kuwait Boxing Federation

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 20: Abdullah Al-Otaibi, representative of Burgan Club, has been elected President of the Boxing Federation's Board of Directors for the remainder of the current term. The election took place during the by-election held the day before yesterday, with the session chaired by the Federation's Secretary-General, Mutlaq Al-Azmi.

Members of the General Assembly congratulated Al-Otaibi on gaining their trust and pledged full cooperation with the Board to advance the sport and support boxers at both the local and international levels.

In an exclusive statement to Al-Seyassah, Al-Otaibi expressed his sincere gratitude to the General Assembly for their confidence and endorsement. He emphasized his commitment to working closely with Board members to develop boxing in Kuwait through local competitions and to prepare the national teams for upcoming events.

He added, “The coming period requires unity and collaboration, placing



Abdullah Al-Otaibi

the interests of boxing above all else. This will guide the Board's agenda, leveraging the experience and dedication of its members to advance and strengthen the sport.”

Al-Otaibi concluded by assuring that work would begin immediately and extended his thanks to the Public Authority for Sport for its continued support of Kuwaiti sports in general, and boxing in particular. He also praised the clubs for their cooperation with the Board in ways that benefit both the sport and its athletes.”

Best of the Rest

Busquets relishing Miami title push: Inter Miami midfielder Sergio Busquets said Wednesday he is eager to savor his time left in football as his team bids for its first MLS title.

Speaking ahead of Miami's Eastern Conference semifinal against Cincinnati on Sunday, the Spaniard told reporters there would be no going back on his September decision to retire at the end of the MLS season.

“There is little time left, but I'm calm. We could be eliminated at any moment and it's something that I've accepted,” the 2010 World Cup winner told a news conference. “I'm enjoying it and I'd like to try to extend it. That would be a great way to say goodbye, but for now I'm just focused on what's next, which is the game against Cincinnati.” (Xinhua)

La Liga returns to action

Barcelona goes back home

MADRID, Nov 20, (Xinhua): FC Barcelona returns to Camp Nou after two and a half years, while Xabi Alonso's Real Madrid faces a test of form when La Liga is back in action.

Around 46,000 fans will be in the Camp Nou when Barcelona ends its longer than expected exile in the former Olympic Stadium with a game against Athletic Club.

Lamine Yamal could be available for Barcelona and Raphinha could be back, but the game will come too soon for coach Hansi Flick to risk Pedri.

Nico Williams looks set to start for Athletic after again rejecting a move to Barcelona over the summer, but the game could come too soon for Athletic's attacking midfielder Oihan Sancet as he recovers from a slight muscle problem.

Real Madrid went into the international break with some doubts over its form after defeat to Liverpool and a 0-0 draw away to Rayo Vallecano, which is enough for a club like Madrid to set alarm bells ringing ahead of its visit to Elche.

Alonso has lost defender Eder Militao to injury, while Dani Carvajal remains sidelined after a knee operation, but the coach's main concern will be to see Kylian Mbappe return to his best form.

Elche has run out of steam since a fine start, and coach Eder Sarabia hopes the weekend off will see some sharpness return to his side's passing game.

Four consecutive wins have kept Atletico Madrid in the title race, ahead of its short trip to play a Getafe side that has the talent of Luis Milla in midfield and Borja Mayoral in attack.

Villarreal remains in third place and with striker Gerard Moreno back to his best, Marcelino Garcia Toral's team is a clear favorite to win at home to Mallorca.

There is a Basque derby with Osasuna seeking three points at home to a Real Sociedad side that has found its feet under coach Sergio Francisco with two wins and two draws in its last four matches.

Osasuna has dropped close to the relegation zone after just one point from the last 12, and coach Alessio Lisci must decide whether to play with a flat back four or three central defenders.

In another derby of the weekend, Valencia is at home to Levante.

A draw against Real Betis was enough to lift Valencia out of the bottom three before the break, and coach Carlos Corberan needs a similar display against a rival that has slipped to 19th with three defeats in four matches.

Other games this weekend see Alaves at home to Celta Vigo, with the home side struggling to turn its improved football into goals. Bottom side Oviedo has become harder to beat since Luis Carrion returned as coach, but he is still looking for his first win as Oviedo entertains Rayo Vallecano.

Betis will provide a stiff test of Girona's slight recovery, and Espanyol looks to end a run of consecutive defeats at home to Sevilla.