

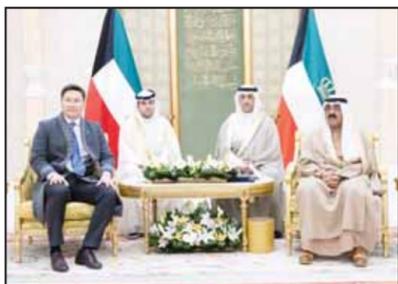
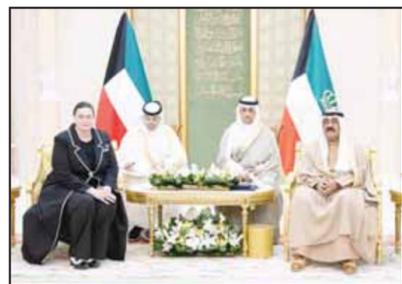


Pistons edge Pacers, tie franchise record with 13th consecutive win Pages 14 & 15



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## Amir receives credentials of new envoys



Amiri Diwan photos

Left: HH the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the Canadian ambassador. Right: HH the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the Kazakhstan ambassador.

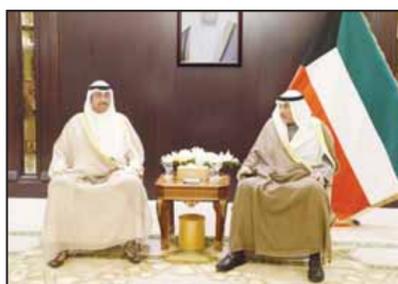
KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday, the credentials of five newly appointed ambassadors to Kuwait at Bayan Palace.

The envoys included the Ambassadors of Algeria, Omar Belhaj Ibn Mohammad; Kazakhstan, Yerzhan Yelekeyev; Argentina, Ramiro Hernan Velloso; Canada Tara Shearwater; and Djibouti, Issa Khairi Robleh.

The ceremony was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director of His Highness the Amir's Office retired Lieutenant General Jamal Al-Thayab, and Amiri Diwan Undersecretary Sheikh Abdulaziz Meshal Al-Sabah.

Also in attendance also Deputy Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Al-Essa, along with other senior officials.

## Crown Prince, GCC DMs, UNAMI Chief meet



Crown Prince Diwan photos

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the Kuwaiti Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah and his counterparts from Gulf states.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah and his counterparts from Gulf States. This includes UAE's Mohammad bin Mubarak Al-Mazrouei, Bahrain's Lieutenant-General Abdullah bin Hassan Al-Nuaimi, Khalid bin Salman Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, Oman's Deputy Prime Minister for Defense Affairs Sayyid

Shihab Al-Said and Qatar's Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

His Highness the Crown Prince also met with GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi, and Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian, on occasion of the 22nd meeting of the Joint Defense Council of GCC Defense Ministers in Kuwait.

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## Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Stop subsidies, raise salaries and you will be the winners

SUBSIDIES might have been a necessity in the early days of the country, but they have become a huge financial burden over the last 50 years.

In this era of parliamentary chaos, they have transformed into a form of bribery, not only through the slogan, "Do not touch the citizen's pocket" — a pretext for political and electoral gains — but also through haphazard hiring. This is why a third of the State budget goes to the first chapter (of the budget), a situation unique to Kuwait.

Furthermore, the massive annual cost of subsidies, exceeding KD7 billion (\$21 billion) — nearly a quarter of the KD24.5 billion budget — is a major contributor to the continuous financial deficit.

A significant issue is the absence of any strategy to rationalize these subsidies, let alone eliminate

them, despite the fact that they no longer effectively serve the target population. This lack of vision also extends to the employment policy.

While the Constitution mandates the State to employ its citizens, this obligation should not become a financial burden. This is particularly problematic given that a substantial portion of the government workforce relies on expatriate staff.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on: @Ahmedaljarallah Ahmed aljarallah ahmed@aljarallah.com Scan QR code to visit the website: aljarallah.com

## Strong GE Vernova bonds support Kuwait Vision 2035, says minister

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance, and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem said on Tuesday that the 10th anniversary of the General Electric (GE) Vernova Technology Center in Kuwait reflects the strength of bilateral strategic cooperation and its role in supporting Kuwait Vision 2035.

Speaking at a ceremony held by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and GE Vernova under the sponsorship and in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, he said Kuwait's long-term development priorities, as set out in the National Development Plan (NDP), depend on deep integration between academia, research, and industry to build a diversified, sustainable, knowledge based economy.

The training center within the facility has already helped upskill 1,500 engineers from around the world, equipping young and experienced Kuwaiti and foreign professionals with highly specialized skills in power generation, he noted. This, he added, has also created jobs and directly supports the human capital goals of Kuwait Vision 2035.

The site's engineering center is a leading platform for technology services and drives innovation, mainly in Kuwait's energy sector, Al-Mukhaizeem explained.

It is GE Vernova's only center worldwide that can quickly and accurately simulate complex turbine control issues.

Meanwhile, Vice President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for GE Vernova's Gas Power business across Eu-



PM Diwan photos

His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during his tour of the GE Vernova Technology Center.

rope, the Middle East, and Africa Joseph Anis said GE Vernova has been a strategic partner to Kuwait's energy sector for 50 years.

The 10th anniversary of the company's technology center in Kuwait crowns this long-standing cooperation and symbolizes a strategic partnership with the State in advancing local innovation and building national capabilities to support the country's energy transition, he added.

Continued on Page 5

## Illegal activities forced Mol to 'raze' buildings

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Under the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, a joint field campaign was launched on Monday morning in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, resulting in the demolition of the first dilapidated building that violated safety and security regulations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The campaign included participation of the Criminal Security Affairs Sector, the Security Directorates Affairs Sector, Kuwait Municipality, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, and Emergency Medical Services Department.

The site was secured, utilities were disconnected, and demolition work was carried out in a manner that ensured the safety of residents and workers.

The campaign followed the detection by the Criminal Security Affairs Sector, represented by the General Department of Criminal Investigation's Farwaniya Investigation Department, of several unlicensed activities, including restaurants and clinics operating within dilapidated buildings, as well as sites used as liquor factories and residences for immoral activities, which provided shelter for outlaws. In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior affirmed that the remaining violating buildings will be removed in the coming days.

It explained that, following a technical inspection carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Public Works, it was determined that the demolished property posed a direct threat to lives and property.

Legal and technical procedures are being finalized for other non-compliant properties in preparation for their demolition.

The ministry affirmed its ongoing joint field operations with relevant authorities to address non-compliant properties and sites that endanger lives and property, and to take legal action against those occupying them.

Continued on Page 5

# Kuwait people count spirals to over 5 mln

Highest growth since 2021: report

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Kuwait's population reached 5.17 million in 2025, marking the highest growth rate since 2021, with a 3.6 percent increase, reports Al-Rai daily.

During the first nine months of 2025, the population rose by 181,000, reaching 5.169 million at the end of the third quarter, compared to 4.988 million at the end of December 2024.

According to quarterly statistics from the Central Bank of Kuwait, based on data from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), the population at the end of September 2025 increased by approximately 4.44 percent year-on-year, a rise of 223,000 compared to 4,946 million at the end of September 2024. It also grew by 1.37 percent compared to the end of the second quarter of 2025, when the population was 5.099 million, an increase of about 70,000.

Population growth in Kuwait has remained relatively stable since 2021, registering 2.3 percent in 2022, 2.59 percent in 2023, and 2.6 percent at the end of 2024.

## Lawyers, citizens welcome Mol decision

## Visa fees move to help cut illegal entry

By Munif Nayef and Jaber Al-Hamoud Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The new decision to raise residency and visit fees of all types, issued by the Ministry of Interior and published in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm", set to take effect on December 23, has been widely welcomed by citizens, who insisted that the fee increase is not excessive.

Lawyer Ali Al-Wawan stated that the new fees represent a necessary leg-

islative step to regulate the residency market and organize visits, particularly given the rise in violations.

He explained that the aim of the decision is not to collect money, but to regulate entry and protect the state from misuse. The increasing number of cases involving marginal workers and the misuse of residency permits makes the decision essential. The new fees are intended as a regulatory measure, not a form of punishment, filling a legislative gap and promoting fairness between legal residents and violators. Lawyer Al-Wawan affirmed that the

decision serves the public interest and ensures that residency or visit visas do not become a loophole for abuses or a burden on state services.

Meanwhile, Lawyer Inaam Haidar said the new fees would reduce pressure on public services and ensure entry for those with a genuine desire to visit or reside.

She stressed that the decision is expected to positively impact the labor market without harming legitimate visitors.

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait's Mol arrests citizen linked to group under 'ban'

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (Agencies): Ministry of Interior said on Tuesday it has detained a citizen affiliated with banned group accused of targeting the country's security.

The ministry added in a statement that the arrest came as part of ongoing efforts by the ministry to safeguard national security and maintain stability, noting that State Security tracked and apprehended the suspect following detailed in-

vestigations. The investigation showed that the suspect had received instructions from leaders of the group to build explosive and plan attacks on places of worship, the statement revealed. The suspect also attempted to recruit minors by entering online gaming platforms to spread extremist ideology and attract them to terrorist organizations.

Continued on Page 5

## Surprises await travelers in '26

T2 to put Kuwait on tourism map

By Najeh Bilal Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Kuwait Airways is currently studying ways to develop its resources, particularly as it continues to address losses incurred by the national carrier several years ago, for which the current board of directors, appointed in September 2023, is not responsible.

According to informed sources, the company is presently focusing on balancing its budgets and reinforcing its austerity measures. It is considering establishing a number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) affiliated with the national carrier. The plan aims to provide services to Kuwait Airways while also contributing to solving the employment issue.

The sources indicated that the offers Kuwait Airways provides during off-season travel periods are aimed to break stagnation and boost sales.

They confirmed that the airline plans to present major surprises for travelers in the summer of 2026, including numerous exclusive offers.

The sources explained that factors affecting the company's profits include delays in aircraft deliveries from manufacturers and rising jet fuel prices, in addition to the airline's commitment to providing high-quality meals and services, particularly for first-class passengers. It is exploring all options to provide top-quality services with the launch of Kuwait International Airport Terminal 2, scheduled between 2026 and 2027, focusing on increasing the number of aircraft and enhancing passenger services.

They confirmed that the opening of the new airport will mark a significant step in placing Kuwait on the global tourism map, especially through its partnership with the Ministry of Information on the "Visit Kuwait" platform.

## GCC boosts nuke emergency readiness after bloc-wide drill

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA): Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states stand ready to deal with any radiological and nuclear emergencies in case they were to arise, the chief of a bloc-wide emergency management center said.

Underlining public safety as the primary objective, GCC Emergency Management Center Director Dr. Rashed Al-Marri said that the center is now in "full activation" mode, just days after an exercise, involving GCC member states, was held in the UAE.

The drill enhanced the GCC preparedness and the joint response plan to deal with potential nuclear and radioactive emergencies, he underlined. He went on to espouse the merits of the exercise, "Barakah," in boosting efficiency and allowing GCC member states to share their experiences on the matter, subsequently putting in place a "unified" response plan in the event any nuclear emergencies were to ensue, he added.

Hailing the drill as having set a "precedent" for Gulf Arab cooperation, he said that the GCC emergency management center routinely organizes similar exercises in a bid to ratchet up preparedness across the six-member bloc, emphasizing that the drill has met its objectives.

The exercise, held via video link on Wednesday, was part of GCC efforts to raise the level of preparedness across the Gulf Arab region to deal with any nuclear or radioactive emergencies.

The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) is participating in the high-level International Forum on Nuclear Technologies for Addressing Plastic Pollution, held over two days in Manila, headed by Director General Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan.

Continued on Page 5

## Day by Day

O GOD, I do not question Your decree, but I ask that You grant me strength and the ability to bear everything on my own.

O God, I seek Your protection, so that no harm may befall me, and that no sorrow may bring me to tears. I do not fear facing lions; what concerns me are the tyrant dogs.

Yet tomorrow is another day...

Zahed Matar



8 Zain drives Kuwait's digital agenda through technology partnerships



8 KIB showcases cutting-edge digital technologies to advance the real estate appraisal profession

## Prayer Timings

|            |       |            |       |
|------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Fajr ..... | 04:56 | Asr .....  | 14:30 |
| Sunrise .. | 06:20 | Maghrib .. | 16:50 |
| Zohr ..... | 11:35 | Isha ..... | 18:11 |

## Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

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

**By Night:** Rather cold to cold

## Weather

with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-24 km/h.

## Station

Kuwait City

Kuwait Airport

Abdaly

## Max Exp

30

29

29

## Min Rec

15

09

10

Jahra 29

Salmiyah 28

Ahmadi 28

Nuwaisib 27

Wafra 29

Salmiyah 27

Managish 29

10

15

14

12

11

10

11



Ministry of Information photo  
Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, chairing the meeting of the Higher Committee for Tourism.

# Kuwait tourism boost hinges on private sector partnership

Ministry aims for high-quality events and seamless transport

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA):** Minister of Information, Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi affirmed Monday that the private sector is a key partner in developing the country's tourism system, stressing that this partnership is among the most important the ministry seeks to establish within a clear strategy.

Minister Al-Mutairi made this statement, while chairing the meeting of the Higher Committee for Tourism at the Regency Hotel.

He explained that during its previous meeting, the committee discussed a number of important points and activities, which are being incorporated into a clear vision to ensure their proper implementation and follow-up.

Minister Al-Mutairi emphasized that all upcoming events must be organized at a high professional level, offering high-quality content that meets tourism standards and provides a distinguished experience for visitors. He

noted that those interested in these events will find announcements, scheduled dates, and venues on the "Visit Kuwait" platform.

The meeting also discussed the importance of aligning the country's transportation network with Kuwait's tourism vision, particularly through promoting the use of specialized electronic applications for passenger transport.

In addition, the meeting addressed items from previous sessions, early coordination for National Day celebrations and accompanying activities, and the importance of private sector participation in these events.

## 'Unforgettable Experiences — Healing is the New Luxury' takes centre stage as Thailand deepens its engagement with key GCC markets

# Thailand targets luxury travelers with new global campaign in Kuwait

By John Fernandes

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25:** The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) placed its new global campaign, "Unforgettable Experiences — Healing is the New Luxury," at the centre of the third Middle East Luxury Trade Meet (MLTM) 2025, which opened in Kuwait City on 24 November. The Kuwait edition of the annual roadshow served as a strategic platform to introduce Thailand's renewed focus on luxury and wellness tourism, highlighting a shift towards meaningful and emotionally restorative travel experiences.

Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, TAT Governor, said the campaign reflects Thailand's commitment to value over volume, balanced and inclusive tourism, and long-term sustainability. She noted that global travellers are increasingly seeking experiences that restore well-being, deepen cultural connection, and offer meaningful engagement, and that Kuwaiti travellers continue to show strong appreciation for privacy, comfort, wellness, family-friendly facilities, and personalised service.

"TAT is proud to present a campaign that speaks to what travellers value most today. Thailand offers world-class wellness, serene natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, exceptional gastronomy, and the warm hospitality of the Thai people — all designed so every visitor returns home feeling renewed, inspired, and genuinely cared for."

The Kuwait edition of MLTM 2025, held in partnership with Gulf Air, brought together 18 Thai luxury sellers and more than 70 Kuwaiti buyers for free-flow business-matching sessions, market briefings, and networking activities. The evening began with remarks by Miss Uraivan Courtaud, Minister Counsellor, Royal Thai Embassy Kuwait, followed by presentations from Ms. Thapanee and Mr. Shams Saleh Aldoseri, Country Manager of Gulf Air Kuwait. The programme supported TAT's goal to strengthen partnerships, co-develop new products, and expand opportunities for high-value tourism growth between the two countries.

Thailand continues to see strong performance from the Kuwait market. In 2024, arrivals reached 90,949, an increase of 15 per cent, generating 9.67 billion Baht in revenue, up around 36 per cent year-on-year. Demand is supported by Kuwaitis' preference for Thailand's internationally accredited medical services and leading hospitals with Arabic-speaking staff, as well as beach destinations offering privacy, women-only facilities, and private sea access.

For 1 January–30 November 2025, Thailand is expected to welcome about 81,697 Kuwaiti visitors, with a year-end target of 90,000 visitors generating approximately 7.15 billion Baht. Kuwaiti travellers typically stay around 16 days and favour five-star hotels or private villas with halal-certified kitchens, prayer rooms, and dedicated Arabic-speaking service.

Connectivity also continues to support demand. Kuwait Airways operates direct flights between Kuwait and Bangkok at seven frequencies per week in the summer schedule and 11 per week in winter, enabling strong year-round travel potential.

The next stop of the MLTM 2025 will take place on 26 November in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain. The roadshow has grown significantly since its debut in Doha in 2023, expanding to two cities — Dubai and Doha — in 2024, and now to Kuwait and Bahrain for the 2025 edition.

TAT remains active across the Middle East through key marketing initiatives including the annual MLTM (2023–present); Qatar Travel Mart 2025 in Doha; AirArabia's Sharjah–Krabai inaugural flight welcome on 28 November 2025; the TAT–Expedia Joint Digital Campaign 2025; a joint sales promotion with dnata travel group covering the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Oman from November 2025 to March 2026; and the Amazing Thailand Networking Dinner 2025 in Riyadh on 2 December 2025, which will introduce the new "Healing is the New Luxury" campaign to the Saudi market.

Mrs. Uraivan Courtaud, Chargée d'Affaires, of the Royal Thai Embassy in Kuwait, opened the "Middle East Luxury Trade Meet 2025" with a warm welcome to distinguished guests, including the Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and leading figures from Kuwait's tourism, hospitality, aviation, and media sectors. The event highlighted over six decades of strong Thai–Kuwaiti relations, with tourism emerging as one of the most dynamic areas of cooperation. Kuwaiti travel to Thailand continues to rise sharply — surpassing 96,000 visitors in 2024 — with many Kuwaitis viewing Thailand not just as a holiday spot, but as a true second home.

To make travel even smoother, the Embassy recently launched the online Thai e-Visa system, offering faster and more convenient access to Thailand. Collaboration is also expanding in health and wellness tourism, following a well-received event held last year with Kuwait's Ministry of Health and



Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, TAT Governor



Mrs. Uraivan Courtaud, Chargée d'Affaires of the Royal Thai Embassy in Kuwait



Top & above: Photos during the third Middle East Luxury Trade meet.

major private hospitals from both countries.

Cultural ties are strengthening as well. Kuwait now hosts 12 Thai restaurants, while the Embassy's annual food and cultural festivals continue to draw enthusiastic participation, underscoring the deep affection Kuwaitis and expatriates have for Thai culture.

Mrs. Uraivan Courtaud, Chargée d'Affaires closed by thanking all partners and reaffirming its commitment to further enhancing the close relationship between Thailand and Kuwait.

**In an Exclusive Interview by John Fernandes, Arab Times Online Media Manager, Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, shared her insights.**

**Question:** What are Thailand's plans for the next three to five years to attract repeat Kuwaiti visitors in the luxury tourism segment?

**Answer:** When we talk about luxury tourism, we must focus on elevating both our tourism products and services. It's important to understand what "luxury" truly means to today's travelers. Health and wellness are becoming increasingly significant, as people are prioritizing longevity and better quality of life. Thailand is well-positioned to be a leading destination for medical, health, and wellness tourism, and we intend to strengthen our role in this growing wellness economy.

At the same time, we aim to enhance high-end services tailored to luxury travelers, with a strong emphasis on sustainability. Luxury offerings such as yachts and cruise experiences in Thailand also present promising opportunities for further development. In addition, our rich cultural and historical assets provide immense potential. We simply need to elevate these experiences to meet the expectations of the luxury travel segment.

Our long-term goal is to position Thailand as the #1 repeat destination for premium GCC travelers



John Fernandes, Arab Times Online Media Manager, with Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

— especially for wellness, family travel, and transformative experiences. Kuwaitis are loyal and emotionally attached to Thailand. With deeper collaboration between airlines, travel partners, and luxury brands, we aim not just for more visitors — but for higher-value, longer staying, repeat travelers.

**Q:** How does the Middle East Luxury Trade Meet (MLTM) in Kuwait strengthen Thailand's position as a leading luxury destination for Kuwaiti

travelers?

**A:** MLTM Kuwait is a strategic and conversion-focused platform that brings Thailand's luxury industry directly to Kuwait's top travel agents and corporate buyers. Last year, Thailand welcomed over 90,000 Kuwaiti travelers, and Kuwaitis consistently rank among the highest spenders in Thailand, especially in luxury, wellness, and family travel. This year, despite challenges such as regional conflicts and the recent earthquake in Thailand, demand for premium travel to Thailand remains strong. By bringing 18 leading Thai luxury sellers to meet face-to-face with more than 60 decision makers in Kuwait, we are not just promoting Thailand — we are closing deals, securing contracts, and co-creating exclusive products tailored to Kuwaiti preferences. The event also supports the launch of Thailand's new global campaign, "Unforgettable Experiences — Healing is the New Luxury," positioning Thailand as the destination where luxury is not only seen, but deeply felt.

**Q:** What types of luxury travel experiences is Thailand showcasing to appeal to Kuwaiti travelers in 2025–2026?

**A:** Kuwaiti travelers value privacy, personalization, and comfort. Thailand responds with private pool villas, branded beach resorts, luxury residences suitable for multi-generation families, and fully cus-

tomized itineraries. What differentiates Thailand is the emotional impact — travelers feel welcomed, understood, and genuinely cared for. Our new campaign reflects this direction by emphasizing that true luxury is not about cost, but about meaning. Whether it's a private yacht excursion, Michelin-level dining, or a cultural experience made just for them, Thailand delivers luxury that feels personal and memorable.

**Q:** How does the partnership with Gulf Air enhance the premium and wellness travel segment from Kuwait to Thailand?

**A:** Gulf Air elevates the premium journey before travelers even arrive in Thailand. With a strong premium cabin product, attentive onboard service, and efficient connections to Thai destinations, Gulf Air complements Thailand's world-class hospitality. Together, we are developing exclusive Thailand packages that combine luxury stays with wellness experiences in Bangkok, Phuket, and Chiang Mai. The goal is to make the journey as seamless and elevated as the destination.

**Q:** What outbound travel trends are you seeing among Kuwaiti travelers, and how is Thailand adapting to shifts in sentiment?

**A:** Kuwaiti travelers are shifting from seeking "luxury that impresses" to "luxury that restores." They prefer privacy, Muslim-friendly services, spacious accommodation, and highly personalized itineraries. Wellness and preventive healthcare are becoming key motivations for travel — from medical checkups and longevity programs to stress-relief retreats. Although regional war news and the earthquake in Thailand temporarily influenced booking sentiment, demand from Kuwait remains resilient. Kuwaitis are repeat travelers, emotionally connected to Thailand, and known for high expenditure per trip. Thailand is enhancing privacy-focused luxury offerings, introducing more Muslim-friendly experiences, and promoting premium wellness to match this evolving mindset.

**Q:** Beyond hotels and spas, what new luxury offerings should Kuwaiti travelers discover in Thailand?

**A:** Thailand's luxury offering has expanded from accommodation to lifestyle and culture. Kuwaiti travelers can now enjoy private access to art galleries, bespoke jewelry and gemstone ateliers, Thai silk and fashion houses that create made-to-measure pieces, and Michelin-quality culinary journeys rooted in Thai heritage. Luxury in Thailand is more than what you see — it's how the experience stays with you.

**Q:** How does your latest campaign, "Unforgettable Experiences — Healing is the New Luxury," reflect Thailand's direction in the luxury market?

**A:** The campaign shifts the definition of luxury from consumption to transformation. Today's travelers, especially from Kuwait, don't just want to stay in a beautiful place — they want to feel better after the trip than before. Thailand delivers this through deeply personalized wellness, meaningful cultural connection, and an unmatched sense of hospitality. In Thailand, luxury is not found in what you purchase — it is found in how you feel when you return home.

**Q:** During the period of mourning for the King's Mother, how will TAT adjust its marketing presence and communication in Kuwait and the region?

**A:** Out of respect during the mourning period, TAT has shifted from high-visibility promotional activities to a low-tone and relationship-focused approach. Instead of entertainment-driven campaigns, we are prioritizing corporate networking, private meetings, partnership strengthening, and trade-focused activities such as MLTM. Our communication will remain calm, respectful, and aligned with cultural sensitivity. Thailand continues to welcome guests warmly, while ensuring that our messaging is appropriate and dignified during this time.

**Q:** What specific marketing and PR activities are planned for Kuwait in 2026?

**A:** Kuwait is a strategic luxury and family market for Thailand. Our plan includes:

■ Launching joint sales promotions with top luxury travel agencies, airlines and OTAs in Kuwait,

■ Running customized campaigns that showcase luxury wellness and family-friendly travel,

■ Hosting media and influencer familiarization trips featuring private villas, wellness, gastronomy, and Thai culture. We are shifting from broad awareness to precision marketing and ROI-driven partnerships — ensuring every activity leads to real bookings.

**Q:** What role does personalization play in Thailand's positioning for Kuwaitis?

**A:** Personalization is the core of luxury. Kuwaiti travelers prefer tailor-made itineraries, private transportation, halal-friendly dining options, and dedicated service throughout their stay. In Thailand, personalization is not an upgrade — it is standard. Every detail can be customized around the traveler's preferences, from private yacht days to wellness checkup scheduling.



Four-year term highlights the country's regional and international cultural standing

# Kuwait elected member of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee

PARIS, Nov 25, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait was elected Monday as a member at the UNESCO's World Heritage Committee for a four-year term.

The election took place during the 25th session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the 1972 Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in Paris.

Celebrating this achievement, Secretary General of Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr. Mohammad Al-Jasser told KUNA that this election demonstrates Kuwait's outstanding regional and international cultural status.

It also shows the world's recognition of Kuwait's rich culture and heritage, Al-Jasser said, expressing pride of Kuwait's winning of the UNESCO committee seat.

It is an important turning point in Kuwait's cultural work as it would strengthen its role in shaping international policies related to the preservation of world heritage, Dr. Al-Jasser clarified.

This success was the result of Kuwait's political leadership unlimited support to culture and arts as well as the strenuous efforts of the Minister of Information and Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and NCCAL Chairman Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi to



KUNA photo Kuwait's delegation, headed by Dr. Mohammad Al-Jasser, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, at the 25th session of the UNESCO General Assembly.

promote national culture and heritage as well as upgrading Kuwait's representation at international cultural bodies.

Al-Jasser also praised the "exceptional role" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Delegation of the State of Kuwait to UNESCO in securing support for the State of Kuwait in the election. He affirmed that the NCCAL would continue its efforts to enhance Kuwait's role in the Committee and working to qualify Kuwait's tangible heritage sites for inscription on the World Heritage List and support international initiatives aimed at preserving tangible heritage.

He underlined the importance of the World Heritage sites in support to tourism, economic development and cultural rapprochement between countries.

The 21-member Committee serves as UNESCO's main executive body overseeing the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Its mandate includes supervising the formation of the UNESCO World Heritage List, ensuring the recognition, conservation and transmission of cultural and natural heritage to future generations.

The Committee is also responsible for determining the use of the World Heritage Fund, providing financial assistance for conservation, management plans, emergency interventions and capacity-building projects for member states.

# PAM backs union democracy rules

Transparency, fairness ensured

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) stated that Ministerial Decision No. 20/ 2025, issued by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef to regulate the procedures for convening general assemblies and filling vacant seats on the boards of directors of trade unions, is a vital step towards consolidating the principles of transparency and democratic practice in trade union work, in accordance with international conventions and national laws regulating trade union rights and freedoms.

In a press statement on Sunday, PAM affirmed that the new decision aims to ensure clear and public announcement to all members regarding the dates and agendas of general assemblies, as well as the election process. This will lead to broader and equitable participation among all members and remove barriers that restrict access to information for one group over the other.

The decision also focuses on ensuring the democratic nature of trade union work, emphasizing the need to exclude prohibitive conditions in the internal regulations of any trade union, as these



Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Interior

conditions could hinder the oversight role of general assemblies.

PAM underscored the importance of accountability and oversight, as well as restricting members' right to resign or run for board positions, as such practices contradict the democratic principles adopted by the State.

It also clarified that its role in this context focuses on providing guidance and direction to ensure the proper application of the law, with full respect for the independence of trade unions and their internal regulations in accordance with the legislation governing trade union work. It concluded that this decision is an important regulatory tool aimed at protecting trade union work from illegal or unregulated practices, thus, preserving the rights of members and activating their role in supporting the reform and development procedures in their organizations.

## Chairman Al-Mahri praises Gulf's enduring partnership

# Kuwait hosts GCC Municipal delegations

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Municipal Council Chairman Abdullah Al-Mahri praised the long-standing historical ties that bind the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, ties passed down through generations over many years of cooperation and integration, making municipal work an integral part of their renaissance and progress in various fields.

Al-Mahri made the statement during the visit of delegations from the Gulf countries participating in the 'Third Gulf Municipal Week' held in Kuwait to the Council, accompanied by Director General of Kuwait Municipality Manal Al-Asfour. He said "I extend to you my deepest respect and appreciation. Warmest greetings and welcome. We appreciate your esteemed presence, which reflects the depth of fraternal relations and



Municipal Council Chairman Abdullah Al-Mahri with Manal Al-Asfour, Director General of Kuwait Municipality.

historical partnership between municipal institutions in the GCC countries."

He then pointed out that Manama Municipality in the Kingdom of Bahrain, established in 1919, is one of the oldest municipalities in the Gulf, having served as a starting point for municipal development and urban planning in the region.

He added "we are proud that the Kuwaiti Municipal Council is among the oldest municipal councils in the Gulf. It was established after the founding of Kuwait Municipality in 1930. Since then, it has been the cornerstone in the development and organization of the State, supporting State efforts in urban planning and the provision of modern services."

He emphasized that municipalities and municipal councils in the GCC countries play a vital role in improving the quality of life, promoting development, and achieving urban renaissance through sound planning, efficient urban management, and the development of services that meet the aspirations of citizens and expatriates.



Municipal Council members with the GCC delegations during the 'Third Gulf Municipal Week' held in Kuwait.



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

## CSC mandates OT clock-in

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) mandated employees in the morning and evening shifts to clock in at the beginning of overtime work, that is, after completing their official working hours, reports Al-Anba daily.

However, the circular did not stipulate the requirement for employees to clock out when leaving after their overtime hours.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The Ministry of Communications announced a public tender to select a specialized consulting firm to prepare the technical, financial, and legal studies required for the establishment of Kuwait Post Company, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This initiative is part of the ministry's efforts to modernize and develop the postal sector and comes within the framework of cooperation with the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP).

The acting Undersecretary of Communications Meshaal Al-Zaid stated in a press release on Tuesday that the ministry, in coordination with KAPP, has finalized the general and specific specifications for contracting the consulting firm responsible for preparing all essential requirements for establishing Kuwait Post Company. Al-Zaid explained that the ministry published the public tender on Sunday in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm" for inviting specialized consulting firms and

consortia to submit their technical and financial proposals for preparing the feasibility study and tender documents, in accordance with Law No. 116/2014 on public-private partnerships.

The deadline for submitting bids is February 23, 2026. A preliminary meeting to discuss applicants' inquiries will be held on December 23 at the ministry's headquarters in the Communications Complex Building at the Liberation Tower.



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State of Kuwait | دولة الكويت

### RECALL INFORMATION



**BPB002b1BK, BPB002b1WH**

**RECALL REASON**

Due to a manufacturing defect, in some circumstances, the portable wireless battery charging stand's lithium-ion cell component may overheat, which could pose a fire hazard to consumers.

**REMEDY**

Belkin is voluntarily recalling BPB002 units from the market. Belkin will be providing notice to consumers on their website and will provide letters to distributors and retailers regarding the recall. Full refund to be offered to consumers.

**CONTACT**

Consumers may visit  
<https://www.XCITE.com/>  
Tel No. : 1803535

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and48)of no.(27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

## Maintenance prioritized

### KIPIC enhances leak prevention, safety protocols at Zour Refinery

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) Wadha Al-Khatib underscored the need to take periodic maintenance measures at Zour Refinery in order to prevent minor fire incidents that are controlled in record time, ensure operational continuity and protect the health of workers.

Sources told the newspaper that Zour Refinery is one of the largest refineries in the world with a refining capacity of 615,000 barrels per day.

Sources said Al-Khatib also stressed the importance of providing all the necessary equipment to prevent leaks, and the necessity of implementing current and future protection requirements to prevent minor fire incidents, which may recur or result from errors during operation.

Sources pointed out that the recent minor incidents are normal occurrences in most global refineries, especially the large ones. They affirmed that KIPIC places special importance on holding training courses in the field of security and safety, indicating the attendance rate for these courses exceeded 99 percent among the employees and specialists.

Sources stated that KIPIC prioritizes in its contract awards the full commitment to inspecting and measuring hazardous airborne materials, such as chemicals and toxic gases. "This move aims to guarantee a clean and safe environment for employees at KIPIC and those working for contracting companies executing refinery projects. The company mandates regular medical checkups for all employees ensure they are healthy. As evidence of this commitment, 4,003 employees exposed to confined spaces underwent medical examinations by the end of the first quarter of 2025. The company prioritizes as well the training of its employees in safe working practices. The training centers at Zour Refinery conducted several operational safety, health and environmental training courses for employees, and technical courses to qualify technical staff," sources revealed.

Sources added that KIPIC organized vaccination campaigns against allergies and influenza for its employees and those of contracting companies, with the participation of 2,004 employees. They said these preventative measures aim to strengthen the immunity of the employees.

Sources confirmed that KIPIC completed a study on mitigating risks in certain areas, while emphasizing the importance of taking the necessary precautions and using personal protective equipment to safeguard workers' hearing.

Sources also affirmed the 100 percent completion of the traffic safety enhancement project, resulting in smoother traffic flow and easier movement for both vehicles and pedestrians. "These measures included installing speed limit signs, traffic barriers, ceramic curbs and guardrails, as well as repositioning signs to eliminate blind spots that could pose a risk. Road markings, pedestrian crossings and traffic signs in the refinery were defined to ensure effective and safe traffic management," they elaborated.



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Ministry of Commerce & Industry  
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### RECALL INFORMATION



**MMA008my05BK, MMA008my05BKAPL**

**RECALL REASON**

Due to a manufacturing defect, in some circumstances, the portable wireless charging stand's lithium-ion cell component may overheat, which could pose a fire hazard to consumers.

**REMEDY**

Belkin is voluntarily recalling MMA008 units from the market. Belkin will be providing notice to consumers on their website and will provide letters to distributors and retailers regarding the recall. Full refund to be offer to consumers.

**CONTACT**

Consumers may visit  
<https://www.XCITE.com/>  
Tel No. : 1803535

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and48)of no.(27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

Other Voices

## Security with accountability

By Ahmad alsarraf

I searched the list of the world's ten safest countries according to the Global Peace Index, and Kuwait did not appear among them. Expanding the list to twenty, then thirty countries, Kuwait was still absent. This highlighted the inaccuracy of the rankings, especially given that some countries on the list are clearly less safe than Kuwait. So, what does it take for Kuwait to truly be recognized as safer?



alsarraf

One of the most difficult tasks for any official is balancing national security requirements with the need to ensure citizens and residents enjoy a free and dignified life. This equation is a complex challenge and a constant point of debate in both political philosophy and modern law.

This balance can be achieved through several principles and effective mechanisms, including:

1. Ensuring that laws are strict, transparent, and clear.
2. Guaranteeing that security measures, such as surveillance or electronic monitoring, are legally justified and strictly limited to protect the fundamental rights of all individuals.
3. Subjecting security procedures to regular review to prevent arbitrary use, while preserving the right to challenge and legally contest these measures through independent judicial mechanisms.
4. The principle of proportionality must be upheld, ensuring that all security measures correspond to the level of threat and that only the minimum necessary restrictions are imposed, avoiding any unjustified limitation of freedoms.
5. Security measures should be essential for maintaining public order without infringing upon freedom of expression and privacy.
6. Civil society and the media

should be actively involved in monitoring and oversight, helping detect violations and fostering a culture that respects freedoms without overemphasizing security.

Transparency within security agencies builds trust and allows citizens to accept exceptional measures during crises without feeling constantly threatened.

7. The government must guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, and provide society members with ample space for movement and expression. At the same time, clear limits should be set on the scope of state intervention, with authorities strictly adhering to the principles of justice and accountability.

8. Individual privacy must be protected, and the conditions for collecting and using personal data, particularly in electronic surveillance, must comply with transparency standards. This measure is necessary due to the spread of rumors on social media, requiring relevant authorities to reassure the public that their private lives are protected. Security personnel have no right to enter homes without a warrant from the Public Prosecutor and must act strictly within the law. Deportation should occur only when required by national security.

Yes, we have a problem related to the high percentage of expatriates compared to citizens (70:30), combined with an increase in serious crimes committed by a specific group that is difficult to eliminate or manage. It is essential to find effective ways to deal with this issue, given the importance of reducing the scale and severity of these violations, which continue to rise.

I hope that cameras and recording devices will be used to document interactions between security personnel and detainees or offenders. This would prevent any abuse or misconduct by either party, protect the rights of both sides, and ensure justice is upheld.

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

# Kuwait reaffirms humanitarian role in UNHCR refugee forum

Call for stronger partnerships and urgent aid

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
**KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in cooperation with the Union of Charitable Societies in Kuwait, held a panel discussion on Tuesday at the headquarters of Namaa Charitable Society for Social Reform to discuss humanitarian response mechanisms for the refugee and displacement situation in Sudan and Bangladesh.**

The meeting tackled the urgent needs of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, in addition to the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons in Sudan as a result of the escalating crisis there.

Representatives from the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Social Affairs participated in the discussion, along with UNHCR field teams through video conference, who provided updates



Photo by Rezk Tawfik  
Official bodies participating in the special session on the humanitarian response to refugee and displacement situations in Sudan and Bangladesh.

on the displacement situation and critical needs.

The panel discussion concluded with a call to strengthen partnerships and implement joint humanitarian projects focusing on shelter, education, healthcare and winter assistance.

Director of the Charitable Societies and Foundations Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulmohsen Al-Makhial stated that Kuwait remains a beacon of charitable and humanitarian work, given its long history of supporting those in need and providing relief to victims of disasters in various countries around the world. He emphasized that charitable work is

one of the most important pillars of the humanitarian identity of Kuwait, and it reflects its unwavering commitment to the principles of giving and social responsibility.

He said the Ministry of Social Affairs welcomes all initiatives presented by charitable societies and foundations, and supports their efforts to provide aid and assistance to all those in need without exception. He stressed that the ministry is keen on strengthening its partnership with these entities and empower them to fulfill their noble mission, thereby, contributing to expanding the scope of humanitarian work and meeting the growing needs

in and outside Kuwait. UNHCR Representative in Kuwait Nisreen Rabaian expressed her appreciation for the leading role played by Kuwaiti charities. She asserted "Kuwait has always been a symbol of compassion and leadership in humanitarian efforts. With more than 117 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, partnerships - including our collaboration with the Union of Charitable Societies - are essential to delivering life-saving assistance to those most in need."

She pointed out that the ongoing crisis in Sudan and the Rohingya refugee emergency in Bangladesh underscore the importance of maintaining humanitarian solidarity, especially given the escalating global challenges and dwindling resources.

Dr. Saad Al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Union of Charitable Societies and Foundations, affirmed that the panel discussion comes at a critical time, given the scale of the challenges that communities affected by displacement in Sudan and Bangladesh are facing. He explained that humanitarian crises, however complex, can be addressed through organized collaborative work that combines UNHCR's expertise with the capabilities of Kuwaiti charitable organizations, which are known for reaching the most vulnerable populations.

## Arab League praises Kuwait's support for media talent

CAIRO, Nov 25, (KUNA): The Arab League commended on Tuesday Kuwait's leading role in honoring and supporting Arab media talent through its sponsorship of the Excellence Award, which recognizes creative work in the media field.

This came in a speech by the League's Assistant Secretary-General and Head of Media Affairs, Ambassador Ahmad Khattabi, during the opening of the 103rd regular session of the Permanent Committee for Arab Media, chaired by Qatar.

Khattabi expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to Kuwait for its annual sponsorship of the Media Excellence Award, praising this initiative, which aims to encourage talented and creative Arab journalists.

He added that the award will be presented to the winners on Wednesday during

the 55th session of the Council of Arab Information Ministers.

Khattabi confirmed Tuesday's meeting will discuss several items on the agenda of the Arab Ministers of Information, including activating the new version of the Arab Media Code of Ethics, the media strategy for combating terrorism, the media and information literacy strategy, the environmental media plan, and developing an executive program for the 2030 media roadmap for sustainable development.

He added that the agenda also includes a request for the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) and the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport to join the Council of Arab Ministers of Information as observers.

### Continued from Page 1

### Stop subsidies,

Official statistics underscore this inefficiency, showing that a government employee's productivity is only 47 minutes, resulting in increased costs and wasted time for the State. Employment management must be reformed to prioritize and increase productivity.

Therefore, it is essential to correct this inverted pyramid structure, broaden the scope of productivity, provide support to those in need, raise salaries and offer incentives to the private sector to employ citizens. To achieve this, well-conceived plans are necessary, offering incentives for companies and institutions, while providing training opportunities for young people in all sectors and professions.

In contrast to Kuwait, citizens in many developed countries - often significantly wealthier - are employed in diverse fields. The government's only expenditure in this context is the cost of facilities provided to support the private sector.

The national economy of Kuwait is increasingly burdened by an ill-conceived management style, which is a daily reality, not mere speculation.

This approach, characterized by the lack of proper planning and reliance on impulsive decisions, creates growing obstacles. A major consequence of this haphazard management is the significant dependency of the population on the public sector - about 85 percent of 1.57 million citizens rely entirely on public sector salaries.

This financial burden is compounded annually as the majority of new graduates enter the public job market. Moreover, the government's current fiscal priorities exacerbate the annual budget deficit.

The deficit continues to worsen year after year by heavily subsidizing essentials like food, electricity, water and fuel, while neglecting strategic spending, which is vital for the economy's future.

Therefore, it is vital that the government strategically utilize funds from subsidy cuts to increase public sector salaries and provide incentives for the private sector to hire young Kuwaitis.

Anyone familiar with the economic vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will realize that current ministerial practices and rushed decisions are hindering progress toward income diversification, attracting high-quality investments, and cultivating an appealing business environment for local and foreign investments.

The overarching goal is to transform Kuwait into a leading regional and international financial and commercial hub. This involves localizing technology and expertise, generating employment for young citizens, and empowering the private sector to spearhead economic development.

Consequently, it is vital that ministerial initiatives are aligned with the vision of the highest leadership to ensure the country becomes what His Highness the Amir aspires it to be.

### Illegal activities

Meanwhile, Chief of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Mohammed Al-Roumi conducted a field inspection on Monday morning of the fire stations assigned to the demolition sites in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

According to a statement issued by KFF, the tour included reviewing the progress of field operations and ensuring

the readiness of participating teams and equipment to guarantee the safe and effective execution of demolition operations while protecting residents and property.

During the tour, Major General Al-Roumi affirmed the importance of ongoing coordination between KFF, Kuwait Municipality, and other relevant authorities to ensure the work is completed according to the highest public safety standards and to facilitate field procedures in the targeted areas.

### GCC boosts

Dr. Al-Humaidan told KUNA that Kuwait's participation reflects its active partnership with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in efforts to combat plastic pollution at regional and international levels.

### Kuwait's Mol

The ministry stressed that it will combat anyone who attempts to risk the country's security or threaten public safety, reaffirming that justice will reach anyone who seeks to destabilize Kuwait.

Security agencies continue their field operations to protect lives and uphold a safe lawful environment.

In another development, the Customs Investigation and Search Department, in coordination with Kuwait International Airport Customs - Terminal 4, foiled an attempt to smuggle hashish concealed within the body of a passenger who arrived from London Heathrow Airport, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) explained that the passenger was arrested after receiving accurate confidential information from a reliable source that he was attempting to smuggle narcotics into Kuwait by concealing them inside his body.

The passenger was placed under surveillance and apprehended with 312 grams of hashish. He was then transferred to Farwaniya Hospital to remove the remaining narcotics from his body.

Medical procedures revealed that the total amount of hashish the passenger attempted to smuggle was 412 grams.

GAC affirmed that the successful operation highlights the significant and ongoing efforts of the Customs Investigation and Search Department and airport customs personnel in combating drug smuggling and strengthening the customs security system to protect society.

### Crown Prince,

His Highness the Crown Prince relayed the greetings of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and his well wishes of success.

Attending the meeting were director of Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Sabah and other top officials.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Mohammad Al-Has-

san on occasion of official visit to the country.

### Visa fees

Lawyer Haider explained that, in recent years, family visits have often been exploited as a means of bringing in illegal workers. The new fees aim to restore order and form part of a comprehensive strategy to reform the demographic structure.

### Strong GE

The center, with its global reach and strong local capabilities, is a major driver in strengthening Kuwait's position as a leading regional and international hub for advanced energy solutions, Anis said.

Its role, he underlined, goes beyond technical work to active engagement in the local community through comprehensive social responsibility programs.

These include strategic partnerships with universities, training and qualification programs for promising talent, educational field visits for students, and a range of community initiatives.

The center regularly organizes specialized engineering competitions to encourage interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), directly helping to build the capacities of Kuwaiti youth and promote a culture of innovation, making it a national platform for preparing future leaders in the energy and technology sectors, he mentioned.

The center was established in 2015 as a cornerstone in supporting the transformation of the energy sector.

It spans 6,000 square meters and houses advanced training, equipment, and engineering facilities operated by a distinguished team of Kuwaiti professionals.

It is the first site of its kind outside the US and reflects GE Vernova's long-term commitment to Kuwait, its people, and the wider region.

It also supports KDIPA's goals of drawing in foreign direct investment that accelerates technology transfer and skills development.

The GE Vernova Technology Center held a ceremony under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, marking the 10th anniversary of its establishment in Kuwait.

His Highness the Prime Minister toured the center, the first regional facility of its kind outside the United States, where he viewed research and development units specializing in power generation technologies, control systems, laboratories for testing, and maintenance solutions.

In a press statement, His Highness affirmed the importance of cooperation between the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and the GE Vernova Technology Center, noting the center's advanced control systems and operational capabilities that support the national power grid. He also highlighted its role in preparing future leaders by developing and training national competencies in modern energy technologies.

## Justice Minister appoints PAMA deputies

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Minister of Justice and Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs (PAMA) Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait issued a decision to appoint Manar Fayeze Al-Subaie as Deputy

Director General of PAMA, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The minister also issued a decision to appoint Fahad Saleh Al-Mansour as Deputy Director General for Minors' Funds Development.

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'USCIS ready to uphold the law and ensure the refugee program is not abused'

# Trump administration plans to review refugees admitted under ex-president Biden

WASHINGTON, Nov 25, (AP): The Trump administration plans a review of all refugees admitted to the US during the Biden administration, according to a memo obtained Monday by The Associated Press, in the latest blow against a program that has for decades welcomed people fleeing war and persecution into the country.

The review is likely to sow confusion and fear among the nearly 200,000 refugees who came to the United States during that period. It is likely to face legal challenges from advocates, some of whom said the move was part of the administration's "cold-hearted treatment" of people trying to build new lives in the US.

The memo, signed by the director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, Joseph Edlow, and dated Friday, said that during the Biden years "expediency" and "quantity" were prioritized over "detailed screening and vetting." The memo said that warranted a comprehensive review and "re-interview of all refugees admitted from January 20, 2021, to February 20, 2025."

The memo indicated that there will be a list of people to re-interview within three months.

Advocates of the refugee program say that refugees are generally some of the most vetted of all people coming to the United States and that they often wait years to be able to come.

The memo also immediately suspended green card approvals for refugees who came to the US during the stated time period.

If the agency determines that a person shouldn't have qualified for entry as a refugee, the person "has no right to appeal," according to the memo, although if they are put in removal proceedings and sent to immigration court, they can then plead their case there. The memo also stated that even those who have already received their



US President Donald Trump talks to reporters as he departs from the South Lawn of the White House on Nov 22, in Washington, en route to Joint Base Andrews. (AP)

green card would be reviewed.

"USCIS is ready to uphold the law and ensure the refugee program is not abused," Edlow wrote.

People admitted to the US as refugees are required to apply for a green card one year after they arrive in the country and usually five years after that can apply for citizenship.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Department of Homeland Security and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The moves described in the memo are the latest to take aim at the refugee program, which the administration suspended earlier this year and later set a limit for entries to 7,500 mostly white South Africans - a historic low of refugees to be admitted to the US since the program's inception in 1980. The Trump administration more broadly has ramped up immigration enforcement as part of its promise to increase deportations of illegal immigrants.

The Biden administration admitted 185,640 refugees from October 2021 through September 2024. Refugee admissions topped 100,000 last year, with the largest numbers coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela and Syria. Refugee advocates slammed news of the review, saying that it will traumatize people who have already gone through extensive vetting to make it to the US in the first place. "This plan is shockingly ill-conceived," said Naomi Steinberg, vice president of U.S. policy and advocacy at HIAS, a refugee resettlement agency. "This is a new low in the administration's consistently cold-hearted treatment of people who are already building new lives and enriching the communities where they have made their homes."



Residents clean up storm damage in the Memorial Northwest subdivision, in Spring, Texas on Nov 24. (AP)

## Tornado damages more than 100 homes

More than 100 homes have been damaged after a tornado touched down in a residential area outside Houston, authorities in Texas said Monday. No injuries were reported.

Photos and drone video posted on Facebook by the Harris County Precinct 4 constable showed roofs with shingles ripped off. Some debris blocked roads. The damage affected the Memorial Northwest neighborhood, according to the office of Mark Herman, the constable. The Houston Fire Department dispatched five members of its saw team to cut up and remove toppled trees, spokesperson Rustin Rawlings said. (AP)

## Senator dismisses investigation as work of 'bullies'

# Kelly probed by Pentagon over unlawful orders video

WASHINGTON, Nov 25, (AP): The Pentagon announced Monday it is investigating Democratic Sen Mark Kelly of Arizona over possible breaches of military law after the former Navy pilot joined a handful of other lawmakers in a video that called for troops to defy "illegal orders."

The Pentagon's statement, posted on social media, cited a federal law that allows retired service members to be recalled to active duty on orders of the defense secretary for possible court martial or other measures.

It is extraordinary for the Pentagon, which until President Donald Trump's second term had usually gone out of its way to act and appear apolitical, to directly threaten a sitting member of Congress with investigation. It comes after Trump ramped up the rhetoric by accusing the lawmakers of sedition "punishable by DEATH" in a social media post days after the video was released last week.

In its statement Monday, the Pentagon suggested that Kelly's statements in the video interfered with the "loyalty, morale, or good order and discipline of the armed forces" by citing the federal law that prohibits such actions.

"A thorough review of these allegations has been initiated to determine further actions, which may in-



US Sen Mark Kelly speaks during the Senate Armed Services Committee confirmation hearing for Pete Hegseth, US President-elect Donald Trump's choice to be Defense secretary, at the Capitol in Washington on Jan 14. (AP)

this administration accountable, it won't work," Kelly said in a statement.

Kelly was one of six Democratic lawmakers who have served in the military or intelligence community to speak "directly to members of the military." The other lawmakers are Sen. Elissa Slotkin and Reps. Jason Crow, Chris Deluzio, Maggie Goodlander and Chrissy Houlahan, who are seen as possible future aspirants for higher office and elevated their political profiles with the video's wide exposure.

Kelly, who was a fighter pilot before becoming an astronaut and then retiring at the rank of captain, told troops that "you can refuse illegal orders," while other lawmakers in the video said they needed troops to "stand up for our laws ... our Constitution."

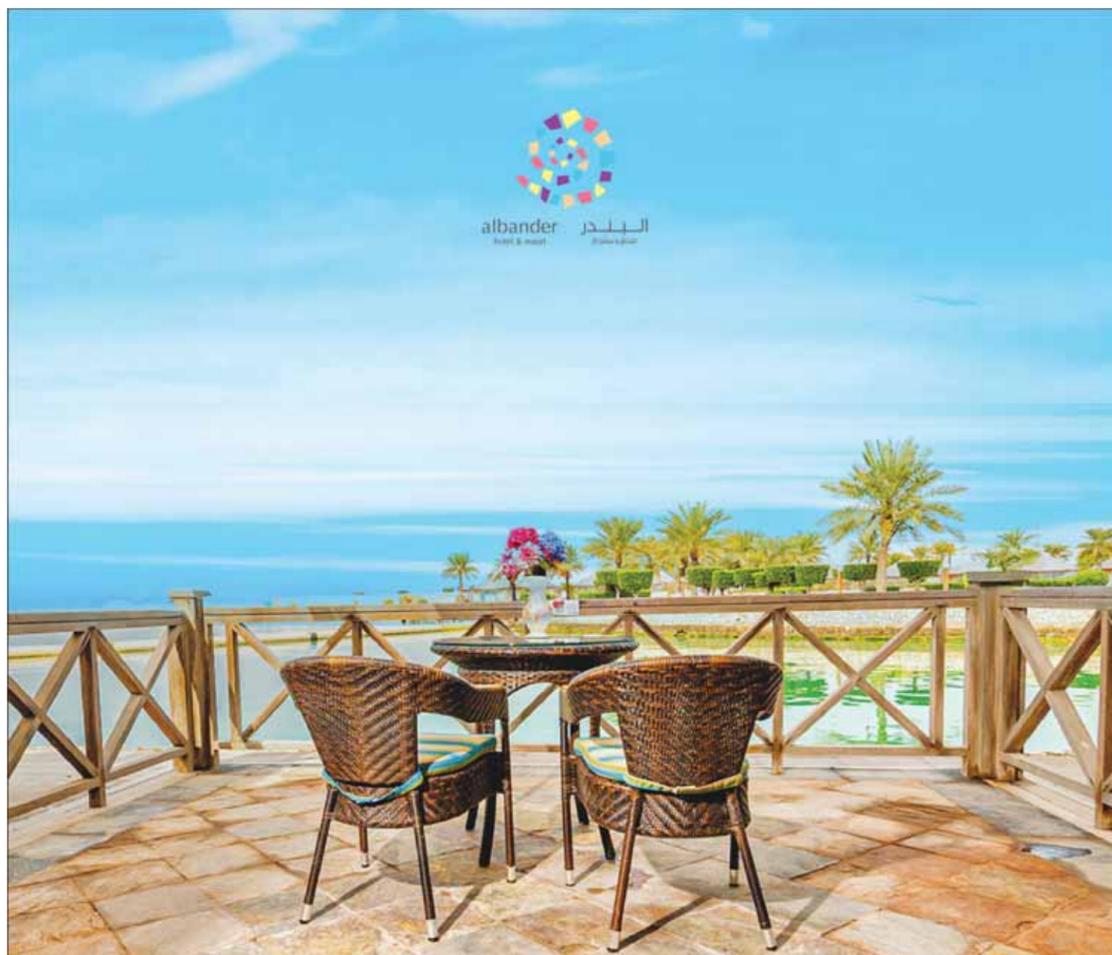
Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Kelly was facing investigation because he is the only one of the lawmakers who formally retired from the military and is still under the Pentagon's jurisdiction.

"Kelly's conduct brings discredit upon the armed forces and will be addressed appropriately," Hegseth said on his personal X account. Of the wider group, he added that "their foolish screed sows doubt and confusion - which only puts our warriors in danger."

clude recall to active duty for court-martial proceedings or administrative measures," the statement said.

Kelly said he upheld his oath to the Constitution and dismissed the Pentagon investigation as the work of "bullies."

"If this is meant to intimidate me and other members of Congress from doing our jobs and holding



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Firefighters put out the fire after a drone hit a multi-storey residential building during Russia's night drone attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on Nov 25. (AP)

# Russia attacks kill 7 in Kyiv as talks on peace plan continue

KYIV, Ukraine, Nov 25, (AP): Russia launched a wave of attacks on Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, overnight, with at least seven people killed in strikes that hit city buildings and energy infrastructure. A Ukrainian attack on southern Russia killed three people and damaged homes, authorities said.

The attacks came during a renewed US push to end the war that has raged for nearly four years and talks about a U.S. peace plan. Army Secretary Dan Driscoll met with Russian officials for several hours in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday, a US official told The Associated Press.

Driscoll, who became part of the US negotiating team less than two weeks ago, is heading up the latest phase of talks involving the terms of a possible peace settlement with Russia.

The U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive negotiations, declined to give details on how long the negotiations would last or what topics were being discussed, but noted that the Ukrainians were aware of the meeting and all sides have indicated they wanted to reach a deal to halt the fighting as quickly as possible.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Monday that "the list of necessary steps to end the war can become workable" after progress was made in Sunday's talks between U.S. and Ukrainian delegates in Geneva. He said he planned to discuss "sensitive" outstanding issues with President Donald Trump.

Rustem Umerov, a senior adviser to Zelenskyy, wrote on social platform X on Tuesday that the Ukrainian leader hoped to finalize a deal with Trump "at the earliest suitable date in November."

Russian officials have been reserved in their comments on the peace plan. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday that Moscow is in touch with American officials about peace efforts.

"We expect them to provide us with a version they consider an interim one in terms of completing the phase of coordinating this text with the Europeans and the Ukrainians," Lavrov said.

European leaders have cautioned that the road to peace will be long.

Russia fired 22 missiles of various types and over 460 drones at Ukraine overnight, Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. The strikes knocked out water, electricity and heat in parts of Kyiv. Video footage posted to Telegram showed a large fire spreading in a nine-story residential building in Kyiv's eastern Dniprovskiy district.

Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said 20 people were injured in Kyiv. The Russian Defense Ministry said it targeted military-industrial facilities and energy assets. The strikes were a response to Ukrainian attacks on civilian objects in Russia, it added.

## Europe

**Winter storm sweeps Germany, killing 4:** Germany's first major winter storm of the season left at least four people dead and many others injured on Monday, as snow and icy roads caused widespread accidents and travel disruptions.

In the southern state of Bavaria, three people were killed in a collision involving two trucks and a car, where police reported extremely slippery road conditions. Two others were critically injured, and several more suffered moderate injuries.

A fourth fatality occurred in the southern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, where a 68-year-old man died after losing control on an icy stretch of road and crashing into another vehicle. The second driver was seriously injured. (Xinhua)

**Belgian unions begin strike:** Belgium is launching a three day national strike starting Monday in response to a call by labor unions protesting the reforms proposed by conservative Prime Minister Bart De Wever.

The unions reject these reforms, which aim to rebalance public finances according to the Belgian government.

The socialist, Christian, and liberal unions which form a "unified union front" affirmed that the strike carries a clear message to the government to withdraw what they consider "social dismantling" measures, especially since the reforms have not yet been approved and can still be amended. (KUNA)

## INTERNATIONAL

Radio, TV sets fixed to state-run channels

## News from outside disappears in N.Korea

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov 25, (AP): For two hours every day, Lee Si-young and her colleagues broadcast uncensored foreign news into authoritarian North Korea. Her radio audience could go to jail if caught listening.

Lee's Seoul-based Free North Korea Radio station has tried for two decades to give real-time news to North Korea's 26 million people. But Lee says she now feels a sense of crisis about her work as big government-funded broadcasters in the United States and South Korea have fallen silent this year because of major funding cuts and policy changes.

"Our frustrations with the US and South Korean governments are growing over their suspensions of radio broadcasts," said Lee, a defector who heads the small, nongovernmental FNK radio station. "We're afraid that they've abandoned North Korean residents."

In North Korea, all radio and TV sets are fixed to state-run channels.

But defectors have testified that they modified their radios or used smuggled ones to covertly tune in to foreign broadcasts at night for news their government didn't want them to hear. That includes outside perspectives of the North's ruling Kim dynasty, more affluent and freer Western lifestyles, and success stories about defectors.



Paek Yosep, a staff of the Korea Internet Studio, works at his office in Seoul, South Korea on Nov 18. (AP)

But a respected academic website focused on North Korea, 38 North, assessed last month that such outside radio broadcasting toward North Korea was down by 85% after cuts made by the US and South Korean governments.

Two major US-funded broadcasters - the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia - were forced to stop their Korean-language radio broadcasts after US President Donald Trump in March signed an executive order effectively

dismantling the agency that oversaw or provided funding to media networks. Trump said the networks had a liberal bias or were wasteful.

South Korea's liberal government led by President Lee Jae Myung halted cross-border radio broadcasts in an attempt to lower animosities with North Korea. His government also turned off frontline loudspeakers blaring K-pop songs and world news, and banned activists from flying balloons with propaganda leaflets and USB sticks across the border.

## Rights groups slam US for ending Myanmar deportation protection

BANGKOK, Nov 25, (AP): Rights groups on Tuesday slammed the Trump administration's decision to end protected status for Myanmar citizens due to the country's "notable progress in governance and stability," even though it remains mired in a bloody civil war and the head of its military regime faces possible UN war crimes charges.

In her announcement Monday ending temporary protection from deportation for citizens of Myanmar, also known as Burma, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem cited the military's plans for "free and fair elections" in December and "successful ceasefire agreements" as among the reasons for her decision.

"The situation in Burma has improved enough that it is safe for Burmese citizens to return home," she said in a statement.

The military under Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing seized power from democratically-elected Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021 and is seeking to add a sheen of international legitimacy to its government with the upcoming elections. But with Suu Kyi in prison and her party banned, most outside observers have denounced the elections as a sham.



Smoke rises from debris and corrugated roofing of a school structure that was burned to the ground in Taung Myint village in the Magway region of Myanmar on Oct. 16, 2022. (AP)

"Homeland Secretary Kristi Noem is treating those people just like her family's dog that she famously shot down in cold blood because it misbehaved - if her order is carried out, she will literally be sending them back to prisons, brutal torture, and death in Myanmar," Phil Robertson, the director of Asia Human Rights and Labor Advocates, said in a statement.

"Secretary Noem is seriously deluded if she thinks the upcoming elections in Myanmar will be even remotely free and fair, and she is just

making things up when she claims non-existent ceasefires proclaimed by Myanmar's military junta will result in political progress."

The military takeover sparked a national uprising with fierce fighting in many parts of the country, and pro-democracy groups and other forces have taken over large swaths of territory.

The military government has stepped up activity ahead of the election to retake areas controlled by opposition forces, with airstrikes killing scores of civilians.

China's Xi meets Tonga's king

## US President Donald Trump says to visit Beijing in April

WASHINGTON, Nov 25, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump said Monday that he has accepted an invitation from Chinese leader Xi Jinping to visit Beijing in April and that he reciprocated by inviting Xi for a state visit to the US later next year. Trump made the announcement after he spoke with Xi by phone nearly a month after the two leaders met in person in South Korea, saying they discussed issues including Ukraine, fentanyl and purchases of American soybeans.

"Our relationship with China is extremely strong!" Trump wrote in a Truth Social post. Beijing, which announced the phone call first, said nothing about the state visits but noted that the two leaders discussed trade, Taiwan and Ukraine. Xi told Trump that Taiwan's return to mainland China is "an integral part of the postwar international order," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said - a crucial issue to Beijing that Trump did not mention in his post.

The omissions from each side signal that sticking points remain for the two superpowers even as they highlight common ground following a series of talks to ease a trade war that has threatened the global economy. The conversation



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan pose for a group photo with King Tupou VI of the Kingdom of Tonga and his wife Queen Nanasipau'u in Beijing, capital of China, Nov 25. (Xinhua)

came as China-Japan relations have plunged to a new low following recent remarks from Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. She said the military in Japan, a key U.S. ally, could get involved

if China were to take action against Taiwan, the self-governing island that

Also:

**BEIJING:** Chinese President Xi Jin-

ping met with visiting King Tupou VI of the Kingdom of Tonga on Tuesday, saying that China is willing to enhance the alignment of development strategies with Tonga.

Noting that China and Tonga are true friends who have weathered storms and braved hardships together, Xi said that since the establishment of diplomatic ties, the two countries have been unwaveringly supportive of each other's core interests and major concerns. The pragmatic cooperation has yielded fruitful results, and the China-tonga comprehensive strategic partnership has been steadily deepened, thus setting an example of friendly cooperation between countries with different social systems and varying sizes, said Xi.

"No matter how the international situation changes, China has always been a trustworthy and good partner of tonga and has always supported tonga in safeguarding its national independence and sovereignty," Xi said.

Xi said China is willing to expand cooperation with Tonga on trade and investment, agriculture and fisheries, infrastructure, clean energy, medical and health care, tourism, and climate change response.

## Asia

**2 climbers die on NZ's highest peak:** Two mountain climbers have died on Aoraki, New Zealand's tallest peak, and two others from the same group were rescued, authorities said on Tuesday.



Walker

The dead climbers' bodies have been found and specialist searchers were working to recover them "in a challenging alpine environment." Police Area Commander Inspector Vicki Walker said. None of the climbers has been publicly identified, but the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association said in a statement that one of those who died was a member of their organization and the other was that guide's client. Sgt Kevin McErlain told The Timaru Herald the pair had been connected by a rope when they fell near the summit of Aoraki, also known as Mount Cook. The authorities learned late Monday night local time that four climbers needed help on the mountain, which is on New Zealand's South Island. (AP)

**'3D-printed guns toy-inspired revolvers':** Inoperable pistols gifted by FBI Director Kash Patel to senior New Zealand security officials, who had to relinquish them for destruction because they were illegal to possess, were revolvers inspired by toy Nerf guns and popular among amateur 3D-printed weapons hobbyists, documents obtained by The Associated Press show.

The AP first reported that Patel gifted plastic 3D-printed replica revolvers as part of display stands given to New Zealand's police and spy chiefs, along with two cabinet ministers in July. Police documents released this week identified the model as the Maverick PG22, a working revolver modeled on the brightly colored toy gun of the same name. (AP)

**Australian Sen Hanson suspended:** An Australian senator who is campaigning for a national burqa ban was barred Tuesday from Parliament for the rest of the year for wearing the Muslim garment in the chamber. Pauline Hanson, the 71-year-old leader of anti-immigration One Nation minor party, was accused of performing a disrespectful stunt on Monday when she walked into the Senate shrouded in the head-to-ankle garment to protest fellow senators' refusal to consider her bill that would ban the burqa and other full-face coverings in public places. (AP)



The USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier leaves Naval Station Norfolk on June 23, in Norfolk, Va. (AP)

Trump ramps up pressure on Venezuela

## Top US military adviser visits Caribbean

WASHINGTON, Nov 25, (Agencies): The nation's top military officer is visiting American troops Monday in Puerto Rico and on a Navy warship in the region, where the US has amassed an unusually large fleet of warships and has been attacking alleged drug-smuggling boats.

Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and President Donald Trump's primary military adviser, will be joined by David L. Isom, the senior enlisted adviser to Caine. Caine's office said in a statement that the men will "engage with service members and thank them for their outstanding support to regional missions."

This will be Caine's second visit to the region since the US military started building up its presence, which now includes the nation's most advanced aircraft carrier. Caine and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth came to Puerto Rico in September after ships carrying hundreds of US Marines arrived for what officials said was a training exercise.

Hegseth said then that the deployed Marines were "on the front lines of defending the American homeland."

Caine's visit this week comes as Trump evaluates whether to take military action against Venezuela, which he has not ruled out as part of his administration's escalating campaign to combat drug trafficking into the US. The buildup of American warships and the strikes, which have killed more than 80 people on 21 alleged drug boats, are seen by many as a pressure tactic on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to resign. Trump's administration has ramped up pressure on Ven-



Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro speaks during a state-led civic-military event in the Petare neighborhood of Caracas, Venezuela on Nov 15. (AP)

ezuelan President Nicolás Maduro by designating the Cartel de los Soles as a foreign terrorist organization. But the entity that the U.S. government alleges is led by Maduro is not a cartel per se.

The designation, published Monday in the Federal Register, is the latest measure in the Trump administration's escalating campaign to combat drug trafficking into the US. In previewing the step about a week ago, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio accused Cartel de los Soles, or Cartel of the Suns, of being "responsible for terrorist violence" in the Western Hemisphere.

Meanwhile, The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America- Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP)

on Monday "categorically" rejected the US designation of Venezuela's "non-existent" Cartel de los Soles as a "terrorist organization."

The US policy of aggression and threats against Venezuela has been strongly and almost unanimously rejected by the international community, it added.

The bloc urged the United States to stop the policy against the region, particularly against Venezuela, since such actions cause instability, falsehoods and unnecessary risks to regional co-existence. The Venezuelan government on Monday rejected Rubio's designation of the "nonexistent" Cartel de los Soles as a terrorist organization.

## Pakistan denies Afghanistan claims of airstrikes killing ten, mostly kids

KABUL, Afghanistan, Nov 25, (AP): Afghanistan's Taliban government on Tuesday accused Pakistan of launching deadly overnight strikes in three eastern provinces, but Pakistan's military dismissed the claim and said no such strikes were carried out.

The Pakistani denial came hours after Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesperson for the Afghan government, said on X that Pakistan "bombed" the home of a civilian in Khost province, killing nine children and a woman. He also claimed additional strikes were carried out in the Afghan provinces of Kunar and Paktika, injuring four people.

Mujahid described the attacks as "atrocities" and said the strikes were "a violation of Afghan territory." Afghanistan "considers the use of its airspace and territory and defense of its people to be its legitimate right, and at the appropriate time, it will give the necessary response," he said.

Afghanistan's report of new strikes came more than a month after cross-border clashes erupted when the Afghan government claimed Pakistani drone strikes hit Kabul.

Pakistan military spokesperson Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry denied the Afghan government's claim Tuesday. Pakistan does not target and kill civilians, he said, stating that strikes carried out in October targeted the hideouts of Pakistani Taliban who were behind the



Locals prepare graves for victims of an overnight attack on a home that, according to an Afghan government spokesman, was carried out by Pakistan, in the Gurbaz district of Khost province, Afghanistan on Nov 25. (AP)

surge of violence in the country.

"We announce and acknowledge whenever we carry out such strikes," he said during a news briefing in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

The ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkey between the two sides in October still held Tuesday despite the reported strikes. There was no immediate comment from Qatar and Turkey.

Iran in recent weeks also has offered to play a role in defusing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Ali Larjani, the secretary of Iran's

Supreme National Security Council, said Tuesday on X that he met with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad, a day after arriving on a previously scheduled visit. Dar's office was also expected to release a statement about the meeting.

In Khost, residents combed through the rubble of the destroyed home, retrieving belongings. "You see the cruelty with your own eyes, that young children, a woman and nine children, were martyred," said Muhammad Iqbal, who said the dead were his cousin's family.

## 'RSF commits war crimes in Darfur'

CAIRO, Nov 25, (AP): Amnesty International on Tuesday said that atrocities committed by a Sudanese paramilitary group in a Darfur city constituted war crimes, the latest such accusation in the country's devastating war.

In a report, the international rights group said that it gathered testimony describing barbarities carried out by the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, when its fighters wrestled control of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur province, from the army late last month.

The group said that the atrocities included executing dozens of unarmed men, and raping women and girls. Amnesty said that other people were taken hostages by RSF fighters for ransom, and that witnesses said they saw "hundreds of dead bodies left lying" in the city's streets and on main roads out of el-Fasher. The RSF didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. The group has acknowledged that some of its fighters committed violations in the city and vowed to investigate.

## Brazilian Supreme Court upholds ex-prez Bolsonaro's incarceration

BRASILIA, Brazil, Nov 25, (AP): Brazil's Supreme Court on Monday upheld former president Jair Bolsonaro's incarceration after he admitted to trying to break his ankle monitor while under house arrest.

A justice saw the action as an attempt to escape and avoid a 27-year prison sentence for leading a coup attempt.

Bolsonaro, 70, was arrested and kept in a cell at the country's federal police headquarters in the capital, Brasilia, early Saturday.

A four-member panel of the court unanimously ruled that Bolsonaro should remain under preemptive arrest.

Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who

issued the arrest warrant on Saturday, considered Bolsonaro to be a flight risk. The former president is set to begin serving his 27-year prison sentence for attempting a coup to remain in office after his 2022 election defeat to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

De Moraes' decision was approved by his peers Flávio Dino, Cristiano Zanin and Carmen Lúcia in an online session of the court.

Bolsonaro told an assistant judge on Sunday that a change in his medication caused him to have a nervous breakdown and hallucinations, which led him to try and break his ankle monitor. His doctors and lawyers repeated his claims while talking to reporters.

However, De Moraes wrote in his decision that "Bolsonaro ... confessed he had broken the ankle monitoring in a serious foul play, repeated non-compliance with precautionary measures (that allowed him to stay in house arrest) and evident disrespect to the court."



Bolsonaro

## Kuwaiti oil price drops to \$63.43 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by USD 1.72 to USD 63.43 per barrel on Monday, compared to USD 65.15 per barrel last Thursday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

on Tuesday. In global markets, the price of Brent crude increased by 81 cents to reach USD 63.37 per barrel. The same occurred with the West Texas Intermediate, which rose by 78 cents to USD 58.84 pb.

# Business

Company sponsored the SAP Business Suite Innovation Day

## Zain drives Kuwait's digital agenda through technology partnerships



Minister Omar Al-Omar, Ambassador Hans-Christian Reibnitz, and Sundus Boushahri honoring Hamad Al-Marzouq in recognition of Zain's support.



Al-Omar and Boushahri with Al-Marzouq, Al-Oud, Al-Khashti, and Zain's team at the company booth.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Zain Kuwait sponsored the SAP Business Suite Innovation Day, titled 'Kuwait's Digital Future: Driven by Connected Applications, Data and AI'. The event was joined by senior executives, decision-makers, and industry experts from across Kuwait's public and private sectors.

The company participated in the opening ceremony held under the patronage and attendance of H.E. Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar, H.E. Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kuwait Hans-Christian Reibnitz, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munaifi, Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Zain Kuwait Hamad Al-Marzouq, Chief Technology Officer Daajj Al-Oud, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, and Country Managing Director at SAP Kuwait Sundus Boushahri.

Zain's support to this event comes as part of its strategy to drive Kuwait's digital agenda through its partnerships in the technology sector, such as the close partnership with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy to roll-out the smart meters projects, which back in 2017 marked one of the first digital transformation collaborations in Kuwait.

In addition, the company collaborates with leading global technology players like SAP to enable institutions to adopt cloud solutions and rely on trusted data and artificial intelligence to enhance operational efficiency, improve customer experience, and support the objectives of New Kuwait Vision 2035 to build an advanced economy based on innovation and knowledge.

This event is considered a top gathering in the field of digital transformation

locally, as it focused on anticipating Kuwait's digital future that will be driven by connected applications, data, and artificial intelligence through keynotes, panel discussions, and inspiring presentations that highlighted the role of smart technologies in reshaping the national digital landscape and enabling institutions to innovate with confidence in a rapidly changing business environment.

Through this participation, Zain reaffirms commitment to its role as a key digital partner for both the public and private sectors by providing advanced digital service infrastructure and by helping to build an integrated ecosystem of solutions and technologies that connect enterprise applications, data, and artificial intelligence in a way that enhances Kuwait's position as a regional hub for advanced digital services.

### Program on analytical skills

## UIC concludes intensive week of advanced financial training

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The Union of Investment Companies (UIC), through its Investment Studies Center (ISC), concluded one of its most comprehensive and impactful training initiatives of the year—an intensive week of advanced programs held from 16th to 20th November 2025. The initiative brought together professionals from investment firms, brokerage houses, asset-management companies, risk units, and financial institutions, offering them an integrated learning journey designed to strengthen their analytical expertise, operational readiness, and strategic capabilities in line with global financial-market developments and Kuwait's broader economic ambitions.

The week began with the Advanced Financial Statement Analysis Program, a two-day masterclass that reshaped the way participants interpret corporate financials. The program explored the interconnected nature of the income statement, balance sheet, and cash-flow statement, emphasizing how these relationships reveal a company's capacity to generate sustainable profits, manage liquidity, and preserve long-term financial stability. Participants examined revenue patterns and the strategic implications of pricing, market behavior, and expansion decisions, while gaining an in-depth understanding of cost structures, industry benchmarking, and capital-efficiency dynamics. The discussions extended into scenario and sensitivity analysis, equipping attendees with tools to assess financial resilience in the face of market shocks, cost fluctuations, and operational disruptions. By the end of the program, participants had strengthened their ability to translate financial indicators into strategic insights, better supporting valuation, governance, and informed decision-making.

Following this foundation, the focus shifted to the Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs): Construction, Evaluation & Strategic Use Program, which offered a deep, structured exploration of one of the most influential investment innovations of the past two decades. Over two days, the program took participants through the full lifecycle of ETFs, from their structural design and regulatory evolution to the mechanics underpinning real-time price efficiency. Attendees gained a clear understanding of the roles played by Authorized Participants and market makers in the creation and redemption processes and in maintaining liquidity and accurate market pricing through arbitrage. The course further compared ETFs with mutual funds and individual equities, highlighting distinctions in transparency,

tax efficiency, and trading flexibility. Specialized ETF categories—such as inverse, leveraged, commodity, currency, and fixed-income ETFs—were examined to illustrate how each caters to different portfolio needs and market conditions. The program culminated with hands-on applications of industry-standard performance metrics, enabling participants to evaluate ETF quality, manager effectiveness, and suitability for strategic or tactical investment objectives.

The final day of the training week was dedicated to the Market Makers Uncovered: Building Liquidity & Managing Risks Program, a focused exploration of the essential role market makers play in ensuring efficient, liquid, and orderly financial markets. Participants engaged in a detailed examination of Kuwait's market-making framework, including the operational rules and licensing requirements set by Boursa Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority. The program provided a realistic assessment of liquidity challenges in the local market, such as thinly traded securities and inventory limitations, and discussed how advancements in technology could enhance market-making effectiveness. These local insights were complemented by a deep dive into global best practices, featuring prominent firms such as Citadel Securities, Jane Street, Virtu Financial, and Flow Traders. Through these case studies, attendees learned how leading international market makers rely on dynamic pricing algorithms, real-time risk controls, and rapid execution systems to maintain market presence even under extreme volatility. The program also addressed the spectrum of risks faced by market makers, including adverse selection, inventory exposure, volatility spikes, and technological failures—illustrated vividly through the well-known Knight Capital incident of 2012. Participants explored advanced techniques in hedging, order-book analytics, algorithmic trading, and VaR-based monitoring, applying these concepts to simulations reflective of Kuwait's market environment.

In its concluding remarks, UIC emphasized that this integrated sequence of programs delivers far more than technical training; it represents a strategic investment in the human capital that will shape the future of Kuwait's financial landscape. By equipping professionals with cutting-edge analytical, operational, and technological skills, UIC continues to support the development of a more robust, transparent, and competitive market environment—one capable of attracting investment, fostering innovation, and contributing to the country's long-term economic vision.



Group photo during the workshop.

## Boursa Kuwait general index rises 0.26%

Main market index gains 0.32%

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA): The Boursa Kuwait closed Tuesday's trading session on a positive note, with its general index advancing 23.23 points, or 0.26 percent, to settle at 8,843.92 points. Trading activity saw 309 million shares exchanged through 20,168 cash transactions, with a total value of 79 million Kuwaiti dinars (about 241.7 million U.S. dollars).

The main market index recorded a gain of 26.37 points, or 0.32 percent, closing at 8,256.77 points. It witnessed trading of 185.8 million shares

across 10,907 deals, valued at 28.5 million dinars (roughly 87.21 million dollars).

Similarly, the premier market index rose by 23.62 points, or 0.25 percent, reaching 9,426.94 points. A total of 123.14 million shares changed hands through 9,261 transactions, amounting to 50.4 million dinars (approximately 154.2 million dollars) in value.

In contrast, the Main 50 Index slipped by 14.82 points, or 0.18 percent, ending the session at 8,347.60 points. It registered a trading volume of 79.16 million shares across 5,421 transactions, with a value of 15 million dinars (about 45.9 million dollars).



Group photo during the event.

### With accredited appraisers from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry

## KIB showcases cutting-edge digital technologies to advance the real estate appraisal profession

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: As part of its ongoing efforts to support digital transformation and enhance the professionalism of real estate sector practitioners, the Real Estate Department at Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently organized a visual presentation highlighting the proposed digital initiative the Bank is developing through its technology arm, Innovatech. The event was attended by a select group of real estate appraisers accredited by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The initiative aims to enhance the business environment for real estate appraisers by introducing innovative digital solutions that improve performance efficiency while increasing transparency and accuracy in appraisal processes. During the presentation, the Bank showcased the key proposed solutions designed to streamline appraisers' workflows and elevate the experience of beneficiaries of real estate appraisal services. This initial step is intended to gather market feedback and technical requirements from appraisers before the official launch of the initiative.

The Bank noted that the initiative remains in the phase of identifying and collecting market and appraiser requirements, emphasizing that it forms part of a broader vision to establish an integrated digital platform linking beneficiaries with appraisal offices accredited by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The platform will enable users to request services, receive and compare offers, and manage every stage of the appraisal process electronically with ease and transparency.

The Bank added that, once officially launched, the platform will be the first of its kind in Kuwait, bringing together advanced technological solutions and



Fahad Al-Saleh, Hossam Al-Kolak

the professional expertise of accredited real estate appraisers. This innovative model is expected to elevate the quality of appraisal services across the local market.

The initiative's key objectives include facilitating beneficiaries' access to real estate appraisal service providers, empowering and encouraging accredited appraisal offices, and offering digital solutions that enhance the quality and efficiency of appraisal reports. The initiative also features a set of proposed benefits, most notably exclusive engagement with entities licensed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the ability to receive multiple offers from appraisers, electronic payment options through the KNET service, and an integrated accounting system based on standardized invoices that protect the rights of all parties.

The platform will also enable users

to track every stage of the appraisal process electronically, with future integration planned with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's system. Additionally, it will provide a comprehensive electronic archive for securely storing documents in compliance with regulatory requirements, thereby strengthening governance and transparency standards across the sector.

The initiative also stands out for its adoption of the requirements set forth in Ministerial Resolution No. (152) of 2023 regarding the minimum standards for real estate appraisal reports, as well as its alignment with the International Valuation Standards (IVS). The proposed digital system provides precise formulas for applying both the cost and comparison approaches, ensuring a high level of professional and regulatory compliance while enhancing the quality and accuracy of real

estate appraisal outputs.

Commenting on the occasion, Eng. Fahad Al-Saleh, Senior Manager of the Real Estate Advisory and Digital Solutions Department at KIB's Real Estate Department, stated: "This initiative reflects KIB's commitment to adopting advanced digital solutions that elevate the real estate appraisal profession and enhance transparency and efficiency in the local market. We are currently gathering technical feedback from accredited real estate appraisers to ensure the platform is developed in line with their needs and real operational requirements. We look forward to this platform, once launched, becoming a fully integrated digital model that supports the advancement of Kuwait's real estate sector".

Al-Saleh added that through this initiative, the Bank aims to leverage its technical and professional expertise to support Kuwait's real estate sector and enhance its overall operating environment. He emphasized that close collaboration with ministries and government entities will be essential to ensuring the project's success and long-term sustainability once officially launched.

It is worth noting that, through this initiative, KIB continues to reinforce its role in delivering innovative digital solutions that support the development of Kuwait's real estate sector and align with government efforts toward digital transformation and improved service quality for the community. The Bank reiterates its commitment to advancing initiatives that elevate the real estate appraisal ecosystem, strengthen stakeholder confidence, and enhance the overall efficiency of Kuwait's real estate market.

Workshop led by Dr. Arezou Harraf focuses on entrepreneurial mindset and effective communication

AmCham Kuwait hosts Kuwait 4SMEs workshop to enhance soft skills for entrepreneurs

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The American Chamber of Commerce in Kuwait (AmCham Kuwait), in collaboration with DHL Express Kuwait as Co-Host, The National Fund for SME Development, and Learn & Evolve LLC, hosted the "Kuwait 4SMEs – Mastering Soft Skills for Business Success" workshop.

The event took place on Sunday, November 16th, 2025, aiming to support entrepreneurs and small business owners by strengthening the soft skills that drive business growth and sustainability.

Led by Dr. Arezou Harraf, Vice-Chair of AmCham Kuwait, Founder of Learn & Evolve, and Dean of the College of Business at Box Hill College Kuwait, the workshop focused on bridging the gap between technical skills and interpersonal competencies emphasizing that while technical expertise builds a business, soft skills sustain it.

The agenda explored four core areas aligned with the workshop's



Group photo during the workshop.

- theme:
- Soft Skills that Drive Entrepreneurial Growth
  - Elevating Your Entrepreneurial
- Edge
- Entrepreneurial Mindset
  - Effective Communication for Entrepreneurs

Participants engaged in interactive and experiential sessions designed to enhance decision-making, self-awareness, communication,

adaptability, leadership presence, and confidence. Activities simulated real-life challenges, enabling participants to practice emotional regula-

tion, resilience, and persuasive communication.

The National Fund for SME Development played a key role as a strategic partner, supporting the workshop's mission to empower Kuwaiti entrepreneurs through practical knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and development-focused initiatives. The workshop aligns with the National Fund's ongoing efforts to enhance entrepreneurial competencies and strengthen the SME ecosystem in Kuwait.

The event also provided meaningful networking opportunities for participants to exchange insights, collaborate, and engage with ecosystem partners to further drive innovation and entrepreneurial success in Kuwait.

AmCham Kuwait expressed its sincere gratitude to DHL Express Kuwait, The National Fund, and Learn & Evolve LLC for their valuable partnership and contributions to the success of the Kuwait 4SMEs workshop.

Bahrain sees steady growth

GCC trio eyes stronger 2026 growth despite oil pressures

By National Bank of Kuwait

Economic growth in Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar is forecast to mostly improve in 2026, lifted by looser monetary policy and sustained government reform drives. A softer oil price environment will weigh on Bahrain's fiscal accounts, with the deficit on a widening path despite consolidation efforts. Meanwhile, Oman's successful reform rollout continues to improve its economic prospects with non-oil growth accelerating. In Qatar, the outlook remains robust with solid non-hydrocarbon sector growth rates and imminent, albeit slightly delayed, inauguration of LNG expansion plants.

Oman: Solid growth momentum continues on back of reforms

Oman's economic activity is expected to gain further momentum over the forecast period, with GDP growth rising to 3.2% in 2025 and 4.0% in 2026, led by steady non-hydrocarbon sector growth (3% on average) and a fast-expanding hydrocarbon sector (2.0% and 5.4% in 2025 and 2026, respectively). Construction, manufacturing, trade, and tourism will increasingly drive activity in the former, while the latter will benefit from higher oil production as OPEC+ continues to unwind members' supply cuts. Inflation will remain subdued, increasing gradually to 1.3% in 2026 (0.9% in 2025), supported by the currency peg and stable food and energy prices.

Lower oil prices will weigh on the fiscal and external positions. The fiscal balance will likely shift from a small surplus in 2024 (1.3% of GDP) to a deficit of 1.6% by 2026.

However, fiscal discipline and reform momentum – along with the repayment of debt during the oil windfall years – have strengthened macro stability and lowered public debt to around 34% of GDP in mid-2025 and earned Oman an investment-grade rating upgrade in 2024. The expected higher financing requirement and moderate nominal GDP growth, though, could see public debt (excluding GRE debt) rise in 2026 to 37.5% of GDP. Foreign reserves are adequate (\$18.5bn), covering nearly four months of imports.

Hydrocarbon dependency and regional geopolitics are still vulnerabilities, but increasingly mitigated by Oman's successful reform rollout, which has enhanced its resilience and bolstered the non-oil growth outlook. The newly introduced 10-year Golden Residency program aims to attract long-term investors and skilled professionals, while the planned 5% personal income tax on high-income residents from 2028 – the first in the GCC – will diversify revenues and improve fiscal sustainability.

Qatar: Reform push enhances non-hydrocarbon outlook

GDP growth is forecast to rise from 2.7% in 2025 to 3.2% in 2026. The non-hydrocarbon sector will spearhead the expansion, growing by 3.7% in 2026 from 3.5% in 2025 with gains especially in trade and services. Tourism stands out, with visitor arrivals and hotel occupancy rates increasing year-on-year, leveraging the country's FIFA World Cup and events pedigree. The outlook is supported by

investment and reform momentum under the Third National Development Strategy (NDS3), which aims to shift economic growth from the public to the private sector by developing clusters in manufacturing, logistics, and tourism, alongside the LNG expansion plan with positive spillovers. Falling borrowing costs amid monetary easing should also lift consumption and credit demand.

Meanwhile, we hold a conservative estimate for hydrocarbon sector growth (2.2% in 2026) due to slower LNG train rollout from the North Field East Expansion project, expected in H2 2026. LNG capacity will rise significantly after that, increasing by 63% to 127 mtpa by 2028. Inflation will average just 0.4% in 2025 amid deflation in housing rentals and transportation, accelerating to a still-contained 1.4% in 2026.

Higher expenditures and lower energy receipts should see the public finances slip into a modest deficit in 2025-2026 of less than 1% of GDP. This will likely be short-lived as gas production ramps up in 2027, bringing sizeable volumetric gains to LNG exports. Public debt will continue trending lower (to 38.4% in 2026), supported by robust nominal GDP growth. Risks to the outlook include lower energy prices, reflecting a potential global economic downturn, and regional geopolitical hostilities (which materialized for a while in 2025 during the Hamas-Israel war albeit with limited economic impact for Qatar on that occasion). Large sovereign assets, NDS reforms, and a strong track record on project delivery bolster resilience and strengthen the outlook.

Bahrain: Growth decent, but wide fiscal deficits on the horizon

Bahrain's economy is projected to see further decent growth in 2026, though fiscal pressures continue to cloud the outlook. The non-oil sector should lead the way with growth of a respectable 3.3% and 3.1% in 2025 and 2026, respectively, reflecting the ongoing diversification push, robust service-sector activity, and lower interest rates.

Meanwhile, after six years of contraction, oil output is set to steady in 2026 as energy market conditions stabilize. After averaging only 0.3% in 2025, inflation is set to pick up to (a still mild) 1.7% in 2026 alongside firmer economic momentum and continued monetary policy easing.

Softer hydrocarbon prices are set to pressure the fiscal and external accounts. The budget deficit, despite consolidation efforts, is seen widening to 7.7% of GDP in 2025 and to 8.5% in 2026, pushing gross public debt to approximately 135% of GDP by end-2026. Meanwhile on the external front, the current account surplus is expected to narrow to 3.4% of GDP in 2025 and 1.6% in 2026, while foreign reserves remain low at just over one month of imports. These vulnerabilities highlight the urgency of structural reforms to improve resilience, especially to contain the worsening debt trajectory and ballooning debt-servicing costs. Nonetheless, Bahrain is expected to rely – if needed – on renewed financial support from key GCC partners, as seen in previous events, to sustain external buffers and preserve the long-standing peg.



His Excellency Essa Kazim, Isam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, and Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair during the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new branch.

New branch holds Category 1 license

NBK expands regional footprint with new DIFC branch in Dubai

DUBAI, Nov 25: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Kuwait's leading financial institution and a cornerstone of regional banking excellence, celebrated the official inauguration of its new branch in Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), the leading global financial hub in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (MEASA) region. The event underscores NBK's commitment to deepening economic ties between Kuwait and the UAE, while reinforcing cross-border banking solutions within one of the world's most dynamic financial landscapes.

Attended by senior executives, regulatory officials, and key stakeholders, the inauguration reflects NBK's strategic vision to drive sustainable growth, innovation, and cross-border collaboration across the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (MEASA) region. The new DIFC branch, holding a Category 1 license from the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), the independent regulator for business undertaken from or in DIFC, is NBK's fourth in the UAE, complementing its strategic footprint across the country. The branch serves as a key hub for NBK's international operations, providing a comprehensive range of financial services that support its diverse client base across global markets.

Leveraging DIFC's world-class legal and regulatory framework and connectivity, NBK aims to facilitate seamless cross-border capital flows, empower clients navigating complex markets, and contribute to the UAE's economic diversification and broader GCC integration. This expansion coincides with renewed focus on GCC financial cooperation, highlighted during the 124th GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee meeting in Kuwait, emphasising regional collaboration.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, NBK leadership shared insights on the strategic drivers behind this expansion.

Isam Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of NBK, addressed the gathering, emphasising the profound alignment between Kuwait and the UAE. "The unbreakable bond between Kuwait and the UAE has long been a catalyst for regional prosperity, rooted in shared history, mutual respect, and a vision for collective advancement," said Al-Sager.

"This new DIFC branch is more than an expansion, it's a testament to our dedication to greater financial integration and the seamless flow of cross-border capital that fuels economic growth across the GCC".

"In DIFC, a globally renowned financial powerhouse, we are establishing a presence that forges pathways for innovation, stability, and



Senior executives and officials gather at the National Bank of Kuwait's newly inaugurated branch in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), marking a significant milestone in NBK's regional expansion and commitment to strengthening cross-border financial cooperation.



Omar Bouhadiba and Zaid Al-Sager

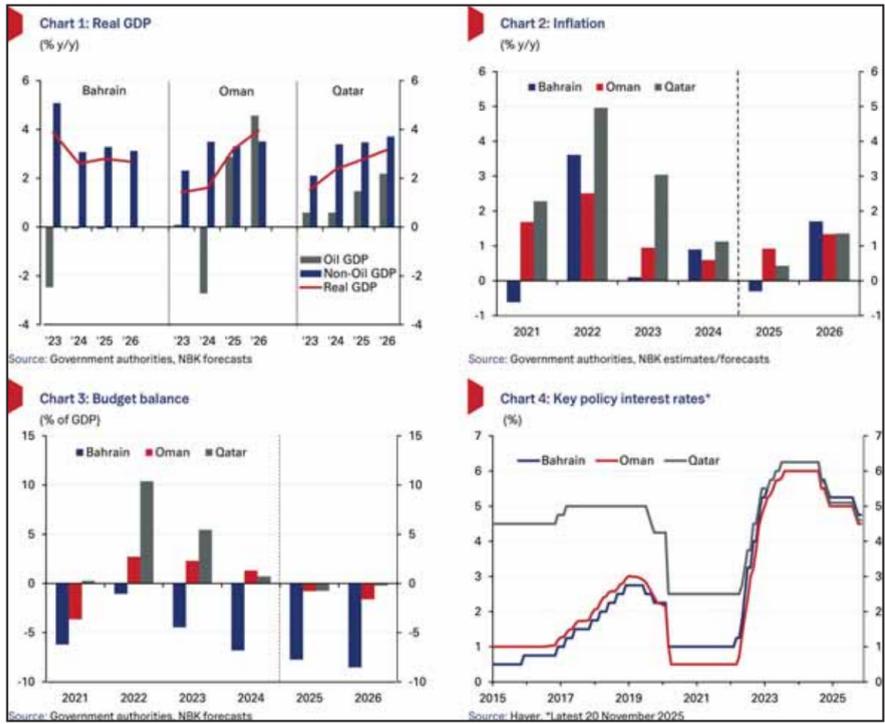
opportunity benefiting generations to come. NBK remains steadfast in its role as a bridge-builder, leveraging its expertise to navigate geopolitical complexities and deliver value that strengthens the region's global standing," Al-Sager added.

His Excellency Essa Kazim, Governor of DIFC, said: "The addition of National Bank of Kuwait to our financial ecosystem reflects DIFC's growing appeal as the destination of choice for GCC banks seeking global scale. As more regional institutions establish operations here, they are capitalising on DIFC's world-class legal and regulatory framework, connectivity, and depth of capital markets to serve regional and international clients and capture new opportunities. This valuable addition underscores our position as the leading global financial hub in the MEASA region."

NBK envisions the DIFC branch as a strategic platform to drive digital innovation, foster sustainable

finance, and provide next-generation advisory solutions in line with its commitment to responsible and forward-looking banking. Supported by strong credit ratings from all major global agencies and recognised through numerous awards across diverse categories, NBK continues to demonstrate financial strength, operational excellence, and strategic foresight. The branch reinforces the Group's strategy to capture growth opportunities, enhance cross-border client services, and contribute to sustainable economic development.

This strategic foothold in DIFC enhances NBK's ability to serve its clients across the region while advancing the broader GCC vision for integrated and resilient economies. Leveraging DIFC's dynamic growth, spirit of innovation, and its prominent concentration of private wealth, NBK is poised to deliver solutions that connect markets, manage risk effectively, and empower regional trade and investment.



Supporting local economic resilience and advancing digital transformation in support of Kuwait Vision 2035

# talabat welcomes West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op Society to its platform

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Upholding its commitment to guaranteeing convenience in everyday shopping and delivering goodness across Kuwait, talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, announced its partnership with West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op Society. The announcement was made during a signing ceremony held at the Co-op and attended by representatives from talabat and West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op, making it the eighth to join talabat. This partnership expands on the company's strategy for growing and reinforcing its network of partners to cover the most in-demand retail markets as well as meet customers' needs across Kuwait. This network expansion also echoes talabat's committed contribution to strengthening the local economy and achieving Kuwait Vision 2035 goals.

This collaboration enables residents of West Abdullah Al-Mubarak to enjoy full access to the hypermarket's wide assortment with one tap on the talabat app. This includes all grocery categories, from fruits and vegetables, food and pantry, to personal care, skincare, and much more. The in-app experience will also mirror the in-store promotions, retaining all the benefits that customers are used to from West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op. In addition, orders will be delivered directly to their doorsteps within an average of 30 minutes, ensuring round-the-clock convenience.

Commenting on the platform's newest partnership, Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Communica-



Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Communications, Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility of talabat, and Faisal Al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Board of West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op Society.

tions, Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility of talabat, stated: "Bringing greater convenience and variety to customers across Kuwait is at the heart of our mission. We understand that true convenience isn't just about offering the products people love, it's also about upholding the comfort and familiarity of the stores they trust. By onboarding West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op, we are ensuring the community can continue enjoy-

ing a comfortable grocery shopping experience while benefiting from the ease of talabat."

Al-Mansour added: "West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op has continued to develop and grow, responding to its neighborhoods' growth and customers' evolving needs, which makes it an ideal partner for expanding talabat's presence in the area. We firmly believe our partnership will simplify the daily lives of both current and future residents, while

contributing to the area's growth across multiple fronts. This partnership highlights talabat's commitment to making convenience more accessible, taking strategic steps to bring our digital services to the communities and areas where they are most needed."



Abdullah Al-Mansour and Faisal Al-Otaibi with the talabat and Co-op teams.

From his side, Faisal Al-Otaibi, Chairman of the Board of West Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op Society, said: "Serving our customers at a speed that matches their lifestyle is

crucial for their continued trust in us, and consequently, our ongoing success. That's why joining talabat marks an important step in our journey of serving our community and responding to their day-to-day grocery and household needs. The advanced technological infrastructure that talabat has built empowers our Co-op to reach more customers, provide them with greater convenience, and strengthen our contribution to the local economy."

As a committed supporter of homegrown businesses, talabat continues to enable local merchants, such as the Co-op Societies, through its future-ready platform and the seamless digital expansion tools it offers. This falls within talabat's role as a contributor to Kuwait's growing local economy, under the umbrella of its support for Kuwait Vision 2035's goals of economic diversification, digital innovation, and community empowerment.

# Britain braces for budget tax hikes amid sluggish economy

Labour lawmakers question leadership as polls slide

LONDON, Nov 25, (AP): After being elected in a landslide last year, Britain's Labour Party government delivered a budget it billed as a one-off dose of tax hikes to fix the public finances, get debt down, ease the cost of living and spur economic growth.

A year on, inflation remains stubbornly high, government borrowing is up and the economy is turgid. The annual budget, due on Wednesday, is expected to bring more tax hikes in pursuit of the same elusive economic boom.

Rain Newton-Smith, head of business group the Confederation of British Industry, said Monday that "it feels less like we're on the move, and more like we're stuck in 'Groundhog Day.'"

It's not just businesses who are concerned. Alarmed by the government's consistently dire poll ratings, some Labour lawmakers are mulling the once-unthinkable idea of ousting Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who led them to victory less than 18 months ago.

Luke Tryl, director of pollster More in Common, said voters "don't understand why there has not been positive change."

"This could be a last-chance saloon moment for the government."

The government says Treasury chief Rachel Reeves will make "tough but right decisions" in her budget to ease the cost of living, safeguard public services and keep debt under control.

She has limited room for maneuver. Britain's economy, the world's sixth-largest, has underperformed its long-run average since the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, and the center-left Labour government elected in July 2024 has struggled to deliver promised economic growth.

Like other Western economies, Britain's public finances have been squeezed by the costs of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war and U.S. President Donald Trump's global tariffs. The U.K. bears the extra burden of Brexit, which has knocked billions off the economy since the country left the European Union in 2020.

The government currently spends more than 100 billion pounds (\$130 billion) a year servicing the U.K.'s debt, which stands at around 95% of annual national income.

Adding to pressure is the fact that Labour governments historically have had to work harder than Conservative administrations to convince businesses and the financial markets that they are economically sound.



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, holds up the traditional red ministerial box containing her budget speech, as she poses for the media outside No 11 Downing Street, before departing to the House of Commons to deliver the budget in London, Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2024. (AP)

Reeves is mindful of how financial markets can react when the government's numbers don't add up. The short-lived premiership of Liz Truss ended in October 2022 after her package of unfunded tax cuts roiled financial markets, drove down the value of the pound and sent borrowing costs soaring.

Luke Hickmore, an investment director at Aberdeen Investments, said the bond market is the "ultimate reality check" for budget policy.

"If investors lose faith, the cost of borrowing rises sharply, and political leaders have little choice but to change course," he said.

The government has ruled out public spending cuts of the kind seen during 14 years of Conservative government, and its attempts to cut Britain's huge welfare bill have been stymied by Labour lawmakers.

That leaves tax increases as the government's main revenue-raising option.

"We're very much not in the position that Rachel Reeves hoped to be in," said Jill Rutter, a senior fellow at the Institute for Government think tank.

Instead of an economy that has "sparked into life," enabling higher spending and lower taxes, Rutter said Reeves must decide whether "to fill a big fiscal black hole with tax increases or spending cuts."

The budget comes after weeks of messy mixed

messaging that saw Reeves signal she would raise income tax rates - breaking a key election promise - before hastily reversing course.

In a Nov. 4 speech, Reeves laid the groundwork for income tax hikes by arguing that the economy is sicker and the global outlook worse than the government knew when it took office.

After an outcry among Labour lawmakers, and a better-than-expected update on the public finances, the government signaled it preferred a smorgasbord of smaller revenue-raising measures such as a "mansion tax" on expensive homes and a pay-per-mile tax for electric vehicle drivers.

The government will try to ease the sting with sweeteners including an above-inflation boost to pension payments for millions of retirees and a freeze on train fares.

Critics say more taxes on employees and businesses, following tax hikes on businesses in last year's budget, will push the economy further into a low-growth doom loop.

Patrick Diamond, professor in public policy at Queen Mary University of London, said satisfying both markets and voters is difficult.

"You can give markets confidence, but that probably means raising taxes, which is very unpopular with voters," he said. "On the other hand, you can give voters confidence by trying to minimize the impact of tax rises, but that makes markets nervous because they feel that the government doesn't have a clear fiscal plan."

The budget comes as Starmer is facing mounting concern from Labour lawmakers over his dire poll ratings. Opinion polls consistently put Labour well behind the hard-right Reform UK party led by Nigel Farage.

The prime minister's office sparked a flurry of speculation earlier this month by preemptively telling news outlets that Starmer would fight any challenge to his leadership. What looked like an attempt to strengthen Starmer's authority backfired. The reports set off jitters verging on panic among Labour lawmakers, who fear the party is heading for a big defeat at the next election.

That election does not have to be held until 2029, and the government continues to hope that its economic measures will spur higher growth and ease financial pressures.

But analysts say a misfiring budget could be another nail in the coffin of Starmer's government.

"Both Starmer and Reeves are really unpopular," Rutter said. "They may be hanging on for now, but I don't think people will be giving you great odds that they'll necessarily last the course of the Parliament," which runs until the next election.

## Anand highlights new foreign policy

# Canada moves to strengthen ties with India, China

TORONTO, Nov 25, (AP): Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand said Monday that Canada and India will move quickly to advance a trade deal after two years of strained relations, noting Ottawa has a new foreign policy in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war.

Anand's statement follows a meeting between Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Group of 20 summit in South Africa this past weekend, where the leaders agreed to restart stalled talks for a new trade deal.

Relations between Canada and India have been strained since Canadian police accused New Delhi of playing a role in the June 2023 assassination of a Canadian Sikh activist near Vancouver.

"The leaders were adamant that this work proceed as quickly as possible so that timing is going to be expeditious," Anand said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press.

Carney will visit India early next year.

Anand noted Carney's goal to double non-U.S. trade over the next decade. Canada is one of the most trade-dependent countries in the world, and more than 75% of Canada's exports go to the U.S. Most exports to the U.S. are exempted by the USMCA trade agreement but that deal is up for review in 2026.

"This is a completely new approach to foreign policy that is responsive to the global economic environment in which we find ourselves," Anand said. "There is a new government, a new foreign policy, a new prime minister and a new world order where countries are becoming more protectionist and this is a moment for Canada as a trading nation."

Canada is also seeking better relations with Beijing. Carney and Chinese President Xi Jinping took a step toward mending the long-fractured ties between their

countries last month with a meeting at the Asia-Pacific summit.

In 2023, Ottawa suspended trade talks after going public with allegations from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that the Indian government was behind an assassination of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Nijjar, 45, was fatally shot in his pickup truck after he left the Sikh temple he led in Surrey, British Columbia. An Indian-born citizen of Canada, he owned a plumbing business and was a leader in what remains of a once-strong movement to create an independent Sikh homeland.

Four Indian nationals living in Canada were charged with Nijjar's murder and are awaiting trial in Canada.

Relations improved in June when Carney invited Modi to the G7 summit in Alberta and when both countries agreed to restore their top diplomats in August.

"This is a step by step process. And in the last six months, significant steps have been taken," Anand said.

Anand said both countries expect to be able to double bilateral trade by 2030, to US\$50 billion, and noted that Canada is India's seventh largest trade partner for goods and services, and one of the largest foreign investors in India.

Trump ended trade talks with Carney after the Ontario provincial government ran an anti-tariff advertisement in the U.S., which upset him. That followed a spring of acrimony, since abated, over the president's insistence that Canada should become the 51st U.S. state.

Anand said Canada remains ready to resume trade talks with Trump.

"We are operating under the fact that the United States has fundamentally changed all of its trading relationships," Anand said. "We look forward to getting back to the table."

## Travelers gear up for busiest Thanksgiving since shutdown

THE turbulence caused by the longest U.S. government shutdown may still be fresh on the minds of travelers this Thanksgiving, but experts say preparing for the usual holiday crush of winter weather, heavy traffic and crowded airports can help ease the jitters.

"I think the shutdown at this point is history for air travel. The airlines understand this time of year so well. They know exactly what they need to do," said Sheldon H. Jacobson, an airport and airlines operations expert. "The real challenge is making sure travelers can help themselves."

Here's a guide to navigating the busiest travel week of the year:

Travel forecasts point to packed airports, roads and trains.

A week after lifting the unprecedented flight restrictions it placed on commercial airlines during the shutdown, the Federal Aviation Administration is preparing for its busiest Thanksgiving in 15 years, with more than 360,000 flights scheduled between Monday and next Tuesday. That's more than 17.8 million people who will be screened at airports, according to the Transportation Security Administration.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Monday at a news conference that air traffic controller staffing levels have stabilized in time for what he says will be the busiest Thanksgiving on record for travel, while the head of the FAA reassured passengers that they can "fly with confidence" this week.

AAA projects 1.3 million more travelers will be on the roads than last year, pushing the total number of people traveling by car to at least 73 million.

You can't control the weather, but you can control how prepared you are if a storm hits. If your flight is canceled or delayed, will you drive instead or postpone or cancel your trip? Knowing your options ahead of time can reduce stress if a storm leaves you stranded.

The Weather Channel offers a Thanksgiving weekly forecast highlighting major airports and highways that could be affected by bad weather - including snow, ice and rain - along with a free online tool in the Weather Channel app that shows how or if your travel route might be impacted.

Forecasters warned of flooding rain and the possibility of severe thunderstorms Monday from Texas to Arkansas and Louisiana into Mississippi. By Monday evening, more than 1,000 flights into and out of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport were delayed and over 100 canceled, according to the flight-tracking site FlightAware.

On Tuesday, the FAA's busiest day with more than 52,000 flights scheduled, forecasters say rain is expected in the Pacific Northwest and in much of the eastern U.S. Airports in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Seattle and Washington, D.C. could be impacted, according to the Weather Channel. Another winter storm in the central U.S. could also take shape late Friday into Saturday.

"The details will come into better focus over the next few

days, but anyone traveling home after Thanksgiving should check in on the evolving forecast and be ready for changing conditions," said Matt Sitkowski, science editor-in-chief at the Weather Channel.

Jacobson, whose research contributed to the design of TSA PreCheck, recommends starting your packing by unpacking.

Check every pocket in case TSA-restricted items, like full-sized bottles, were left behind from a previous trip. This simple scan can help you get through security faster, especially when airports are crowded.

If you're traveling with gifts, Jacobson suggests wrapping them at your destination because TSA agents may need to open them.

When deciding which clothes and shoes to pack, James Belanger, vice president of meteorology at the Weather Company, said to check the "feels like" temperature for a better sense of the weather, especially for those not used to the cold.

And don't forget a REAL ID is required to fly within the U.S., or bring another accepted form of ID, like a passport or military ID.

People with iPhones can now also add their U.S. passport details to Apple Wallet, which can be scanned at participating airports if travelers don't have a REAL ID. More than a dozen states already accept some form of a mobile ID at airport checkpoints, and travelers can go to the TSA website for more details.

Whether driving is your top choice or backup plan, AAA spokesperson Aixa Diaz suggests checking your tires, car battery and fluids, then hitting the road with a full tank of gas as early as possible to avoid traffic. Last year, AAA said, it responded to nearly 600,000 emergency roadside assistance calls during the Thanksgiving travel period to help drivers stranded by dead batteries, flat tires and empty tanks.

According to an analysis by Google Maps:

- Traffic on Wednesday is expected to be 14% heavier than usual between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., with peak traffic from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

- On Thanksgiving Day, the roads will be busiest between noon and 3 p.m.

- When it's time to head home, avoid driving from 12 to 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, when traffic is heaviest.

"...is an informed passenger," Jacobson likes to say.

Download your airline's app to track your flight status, and check it regularly as your travel date approaches. That way, if your flight is canceled the day before, you can quickly look for alternatives.

Driving or flying, leave earlier than you think you need to. Knowing you won't have to rush to your destination can help calm any nerves, whether it's lingering anxiety from the shutdown or because you're traveling with young kids or someone who needs extra help getting around.

"These are some very simple things to think about, but they're important things to think about," Jacobson said. (AP)

## Bentley's film turns a simple life into a grand, soulful canvas

# Joel Edgerton delivers a profound performance in 'Train Dreams'

LOS ANGELES, Nov 25, (AP): There is nothing particularly grand about Robert Grainier's existence in the world. The main character of "Train Dreams" is not a great thinker, artist or athlete. He doesn't know who his parents are, or even exactly how old he is. He's not particularly chatty, or passionate.

Robert Grainier is a man, portrayed by a bearded, contemplative Joel Edgerton, who seems to live life simply because it's there. What other choice does he have?

Yet Clint Bentley's adaptation of Denis Johnson's novella, set at the beginning of the 20th century, gives this small life in the Idaho Panhandle a grand, soulful canvas. Robert might just be a logger and day laborer, cutting down trees for paycheck wherever the next job calls, but with a poetically minded narrator (Will Patton) and a cinematographer (Adolpho Veloso) with an eye for landscapes at magic hour, "Train Dreams" (streaming Friday on Netflix) makes his life quietly epic.

Bentley and cowriter Greg Kwedar choose to begin Robert's story differently than Johnson, however, who opened with Robert's complicity in the murder of a Chinese laborer - a bold and alarming way to introduce a character who is, essentially, a good man. This adaptation does include this incident, but later on, as though an audience might not be able to handle any contradictions or ambiguity. Perhaps they couldn't.

Instead, Bentley opens on a different kind of casual violence, the image of railroad tracks through a human-made tunnel overlaid by Patton's narrator saying: "There were once passageways to the Old World, strange trails, hidden paths."

The great conflict in "Train Dreams" is change, in which an Old World is indifferently destroyed in the name of development and evolution. With every thousand-year-old tree chopped down to lay railway track, to build bigger buildings, we are, "Train Dreams" says, getting further away from standing "face to face with the great mystery, the foundation of all things."



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

And thus you have people like Robert, instruments of progress who don't quite understand their role in it, though they will suffer at its hands, ambling through life grasping for meaning and purpose. He finds something like that in the beautiful

Gladys (Felicity Jones), who against all odds singles him out to approach, to love, to marry and to build a little life with on one acre of land. Their love is idealized and simple, all contentment and peace in their tiny cabin surrounded by nature, as their little family grows to three with the arrival of a daughter, Kate. "Train Dreams" owes a great debt to Terrence Malick and his disciples.

Bentley and Kwedar save the incident with the Chinese laborer (Alfred Hsing) until a ways through the film, where it becomes a more blatant omen of tragedy to come as Robert worries whether evil deeds come back to haunt. He also meets another worker on a job, Arn Peeples (a nearly unrecognizable William H. Macy) whose philosophical musings have an undercurrent of superstition and paranoia. This is work, Arn tells a group of mostly uninterested loggers, that is hard on the soul. On Robert's next trip home he's greeted, from the train, with the sight of billowing smoke from a raging wildfire.

With comfort and love comes the possibility of loss, after all, and Robert again has no choice but to continue on in quiet solitude. It's an understated character and an understated performance, which can be a difficult thing to celebrate properly when more often than not acting accolades go to those doing the most. But Edgerton knows he's just a small part of this milieu. Robert is mostly an observer of others, and he's good at that. When the focus turns toward him, as Gladys boldly introduces herself for the first time, he can barely get out a coherent sentence.

"Train Dreams" might veer a little too close to sentimental at times, but perhaps that's an intentional respite from the aching loss at its core. Bentley's film is haunting and patient, a dreamlike journey through a world that was disappearing in real time and an ode to the beauty that's remained.

"Train Dreams," a Netflix release currently streaming, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "some violence and sexuality." Running time: 102 minutes. Three stars out of four.

### 'Action too slow'

## BBC leaders 'grilled' amid Trump's threat

LONDON, Nov 25, (AP): The BBC's chairman acknowledged Monday that it was too slow in responding over a misleading edit of a speech by US President Donald Trump but rejected claims that the broadcaster's impartiality was being undermined from within its own board.

Senior BBC leaders were quizzed by Parliament's Culture, Media and Sport Committee amid a major crisis at the publicly funded corporation after its director general and head of news both quit earlier this month and Trump threatened to file a billion-dollar lawsuit.

The BBC drew Trump's ire - and deep public scrutiny - after an internal memo compiled by one of its former external advisers was leaked to the British media. The memo criticized cases of alleged biased reporting over a documentary on Trump that was aired days before the

2024 US presidential election, as well as other BBC coverage including its stance on transgender issues, Gaza and race.

Chairman Samir Shah said the broadcaster should have acted much quicker in addressing the allegations.

The third-party production company that made the documentary - titled "Trump: A Second Chance?" - spliced together three quotes from a speech Trump gave on Jan. 6, 2021, into what appeared to be one quote in which Trump urged supporters to march with him and "fight like hell."

The editing made it look like Trump was directly encouraging his supporters to storm the US Capitol as Congress was poised to certify President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election. Shah has acknowledged that the documentary gave "the impression of a direct call for violent action."

### Discourse

"I think there's an issue about how quickly we respond ... why do we take so much time?" he told lawmakers Monday. "We should have pursued it to the end and got to the bottom of it, and not wait, as we did, till it became public discourse."

The BBC said last week that Shah sent a letter to the White House saying that he and the corporation were sorry for the edit of the speech. But the broadcaster said it had not defamed Trump and rejected the basis for his lawsuit threat.

On Monday, Shah also defended board member Robbie Gibb, a nonexecutive director of the BBC's board who has been the subject of wide scrutiny because he was the director of communications for former Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative government.

Critics have accused Gibb of pro-Conservative Party bias and political interference at the BBC.

"I think I've become weaponized in terms of how I'm perceived," Gibb said.

He rejected claims that a coup from within the BBC board forced the resignations of senior news leaders as "complete nonsense."

Last week Shumet Banerji, a BBC board member, also said he was stepping down over "governance issues," sparking further questions about the corporation's leadership.

Asked whether his own position was in doubt, Shah said his priority was to "steer the ship" and find a new director general.

Earlier, lawmakers at the parliamentary session focused on questions about editorial standards raised by Michael Prescott, a former journalist and external editorial standards adviser to the BBC.

Prescott was the author of an internal note to BBC bosses that raised concerns about the editing of the Trump speech as well as other instances perceived as showing a left-leaning bias at the broadcaster. Among other things, it alleged that the broadcaster's reporters promoted a pro-trans agenda and warned about an anti-Israel bias in the BBC's Arabic service.

### Film



This image released by Focus Features shows Jessie Buckley in a scene from 'Hamnet.' (AP)

## Buckley startles and shimmers in her latest film

# A meditation on love, loss and art in 'Hamnet'

LOS ANGELES, Nov 25, (AP): "Tell me a story," the earthy young woman asks the shy Latin tutor early in Chloé Zhao's "Hamnet." What story, he asks? "Something that moves you."

She's made a shrewd choice of storyteller. This awkward young man seems to have a way with words as he recounts the tragic myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. As well he should: One day he'll be known as the finest wordsmith in the world.

But Agnes, though being wooed by William Shakespeare himself, doesn't have the same relationship with words, nor need for them. Unlike her bookish suitor, her mystical nature - some say her mother was a forest witch! - and appetite for life lend her ready access to a seemingly volcanic array of emotions, from giddy joy to unfathomable grief, all at the tips of her earth-soiled fingers.

And volcanic is the best way to describe Jessie Buckley's startling performance in "Hamnet," Zhao's unabashedly emotional adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's acclaimed novel. Also starring a magnetic Paul Mescal as Will, it's a story that imagines the early life of the young couple from Stratford. And as O'Farrell's readers know, it centers on a life-altering loss: the death of their 11-year-old son, Hamnet.

You may have heard that early viewings of the film left swaths of the audience in tears. Spoiler alert: This is no surprise. Zhao, co-writing with O'Farrell, goes straight for the tear ducts, with crucial help from a superb cast led by Buckley - who, like her character, seems to have an extraordinary ability to dispense with artifice and access a wildness shimmering beneath the surface. We'd tell you to watch her face during the riveting conclusion, where she's part of a large crowd. But really, your eyes won't go anywhere else.

So we begin with a heady love story, soon to be tested. "Love doesn't die, it transforms," Zhao has said. Her first task is to show how even the sturdiest love can be trans-

formed by grief.

But of course, there's another act. In "Hamnet," love is transformed by grief and then transformed again, by art. Which art, you ask? Well, that's obvious from the title. The play's the thing.

Speaking of "Hamlet," a crucial fact is laid out at the very start: In 16th-century England, the names "Hamnet" and "Hamlet" were interchangeable.

Scholars also know that Shakespeare and his wife, Anne Hathaway (also called Agnes), indeed had a son named Hamnet who died at 11. Little else is known, including how he died or what - if any - connection there was to the creation, a few years later, of what many call the greatest play in the English language. A play, it bears noting, about untimely death and grief.

Author O'Farrell, of course, imagines a deep connection. The movie stays largely faithful to her book but changes its structure, moving chronologically rather than toggling between time periods.

It starts with a vision of Agnes, curled in a tree hollow as if born there. No wonder Will is enchanted as he looks out his classroom window and spies this free spirit, whose chief companion is a hawk. He figures she's a maid; actually, she's the eldest daughter of the house where he's tutoring to fulfill family debts. Their connection is electric. Soon, she's pregnant.

Agnes will birth their first child, a daughter, alone in nature, clinging to tree branches. (Cinematographer Łukasz Łal makes especially deft use of light and lush foliage.) A few years later, when she gives birth again, Will's stern mother (Emily Watson) insists she stay inside. She delivers twins - a boy, then a girl who at first seems stillborn, but is revived by mother's touch.

Still, Agnes is terrified, because she's had a vision of two children - not three - at her deathbed. Meanwhile, Will is spending much time in London, pursuing business opportunities and, then, his theater ambitions. Agnes herself encouraged the move. But that changes when Hamnet (Jacobi Jupe, nobly endearing), who promised his father he'd look after everyone, takes ill.

When he succumbs, Agnes falls into inconsolable grief. And when a devastated Will comes home, she matter-of-factly explains how, no, he has actually no idea what it was like. "You weren't here," she says coldly. If he had been, he could have said goodbye.

But soon Will must leave again. He's working on a play. We see early rehearsals of "The Tragedie of Hamlet," and at one point Mescal - frustrated with his players - shows his Shakespearean chops with an angry rendition of the "Get thee to a nunnery!" speech. (Side note: If all this leads to Mescal playing Hamlet someday in a theater somewhere, we're here for it.)

The mastery of these words, and their delivery, contrast starkly with Agnes' most impactful scenes, which often occur with few or no words at all. We've already alluded to the walloping conclusion, where love, grief and art all converge in the film's most powerful moment. To watch Buckley here is to appreciate that even in a story about Shakespeare, it can be the gaps between words that resonate profoundly.

So, yes, watch Agnes' face as she listens. The famous words coming from the stage are only part of the equation. The rest - OK, we'll say it - is silence.

"Hamnet," a Focus Features release, has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association "for thematic content, some strong sexuality, and partial nudity." Running time: 125 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

### Variety

**PALM SPRINGS, Calif.:** Udo Kier, the German actor whose icy gaze and strange, scene-stealing screen presence made him a favorite of filmmakers including Andy Warhol, Gus Van Sant and Lars von Trier, has died at 81.

His partner, artist Delbert McBride, told Variety that Kier died on Sunday in Palm Springs, California.

A longtime arthouse favorite, Kier also had an unlikely run as a character actor in Hollywood blockbusters including "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" with Jim Carrey.

The most recent of Kier's more than 200 credits in a nearly 60-year career was this year's Brazilian political thriller "The Secret Agent," which could vie for Oscars and other major awards in the coming season.

Kier had his breakout as the star of two films produced by Warhol and directed by Paul Morrissey: 1973's "Flesh



Kier

for "Frankenstein" and 1974's "Blood for Dracula."

German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder put Kier in several films later in the decade, including "The Stationmaster's Wife" and "The Third Generation."

Kier was introduced to many American moviegoers through Van Sant's 1991 film "My Own Private Idaho," starring River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves. Madonna, a fan of that film, invited Kier to appear in photos for her 1992 culture-shaking book "Sex," and in the video for her song "Deeper and Deeper." (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Los Angeles police have blocked the county coroner's office from releasing details about the death of a teen girl whose body was found in the trunk of a car registered to the singer d4vd, the medical examiner's office said Monday.

Celeste Rivas Hernandez was found dead on Sept. 8 in an impounded Tesla in Los Angeles just after her 15th birthday. Several news outlets reported the car belonged to d4vd, whose legal name is David Anthony Burke, 20.

The medical examiner's office said in a statement that it has received a "court order, initiated by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), to place a security hold" on Rivas Hernandez's case. The order issued on Friday

demands that "no records or details associated with the case, including the cause and manner of death and Medical Examiner report, can be released or posted on the website until further notice," the statement said.

The order came several days after multiple Los Angeles TV stations reported police consider the Houston-born alt-pop singer a suspect, citing anonymous sources. The LA Police Department has not confirmed that and d4vd's lawyer Blair Berk did not respond to request for comment on Monday.

LAPD Capt. Mike Bland said the security hold was not sought to undermine transparency, but to maintain the integrity of the police investigation, which is ongoing by detectives with the Robbery Homicide Division.

Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Odey Ukpo said such security holds are "virtually unheard of in other counties" in California. (AP)

**BELGRADE:** "In China, I got to see what the future could look like," Serbian documentary producer Bosko Kozarski said after spending several days filming in Beijing.

It was Kozarski's first time in China. He told Xinhua that he was drawn to the capital's combination of deep historical heritage and fast-paced digital life.

"I felt how comfortable and delightful everyday life in Beijing is, which really surprised me," he said.

The idea for the project emerged while he was working on a film about Chinese history. Accompanied by Tatjana Soldat, director of the Serbian Cultural Center in Beijing, Kozarski spent his days filming at well-known cultural sites.

Soldat recalled Kozarski's reaction at the Great Wall. "Every corner left him in awe. He repeatedly filmed the details, marveling at the wisdom of Chinese civilization."

The documentary premiered in Belgrade two months later, showing scenes of the bustling Great Wall, young women in traditional Chinese attire, traditional Beijing business streets and steaming copper hotpot.

Audience member Vesna Markovic said, "The way Beijing was presented - through culture, everyday life, history and its hidden details - was so inspiring," adding that it strengthened her desire to visit this fascinating country.

Zhang Aimin, director of the Chinese Cultural Center in Belgrade, said the documentary depicted China's development and cultural charm "from the perspective of a Serbian media professional ... allowing Serbian audiences to see a real and relatable China." (Xinhua)

## Turning clay into witnesses of the human cost of war

## Palestinian artist chronicles Gaza's struggles in clay



Asef Hamidi, (left), and Fairouz Ziani, winners in the News category for 'Gaza, Search for Life,' appear in the press room during the 53rd International Emmy Awards at the New York Hilton Midtown on Monday, Nov. 24, in New York. (AP)

GAZA, Nov. 25, (Xinhua): In a modest workshop in Gaza, clay mounds lie scattered across the floor as artist Khaled Hussein works intently on a small clay sculpture, soft light streaming through a window and his fingers absorbed in bringing the clay's stories to life.

In the cramped space, lumps of raw clay are being transformed into human faces that mirror the hardships endured by Gaza's residents throughout the two-year conflict. The walls are lined with photographs of the sculptures Hussein has crafted since the war began.

Some faces appear frozen in silent pain, while others evoke grief and the loss of loved ones. Scattered among these images are pieces of metal and plastic salvaged from destroyed homes-objects that Hussein uses as tools or stands, each carrying fragments of shattered lives.

"Each sculpture is more than a shape. When I sculpt, I feel as if I am communicating with every person who lived through this suffering," the 45-year-old father of four told Xinhua while working on a new figure.

Hussein, like many residents of the war-torn Gaza Strip, lost his home in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip after the Israeli military expanded operations in May 2024.

He was displaced multiple times, losing not only his residence but also hundreds of sculptures he had created over more than a decade. The experience deeply affected him before he eventually resumed his artistic work.

## Lost

"I lost everything, home, work and my memories," he lamented.

In a bid to capture the depth of Gaza's humanitarian crisis, he decided to portray the psychological and physical exhaustion of its residents by sculpting real individuals who have endured war, hunger, fear, and displacement. For him, these works are not only art pieces but also part of the process of historical documentation.

"Each sculpture represents a real person," he said. "Some survived, others did not. Their stories remain

embodied in these statues."

Hussein relies on simple, mostly improvised tools such as spoons, small knives, and his own hands to shape the clay. The scarcity of equipment forced him to return to basic methods.

"Before the war, I had professional tools," he recalled. "Now I use whatever is available. Even a bicycle wheel has become a tool to help support and rotate the clay."

The clay itself is often gathered from the rubble of destroyed homes, which, in Hussein's view, gives each sculpture a special meaning.

Forced to relocate more than five times during the war, Hussein has adopted a process of sculpting, photographing, documenting, and then dismantling each piece. Though painful, he says it has become necessary.

"Taking apart a sculpture feels like losing one of my children," he said. "But I have to, because carrying a heavy clay figure while fleeing is impossible. These sculptures are as fragile as we are. We share the same hardships -- searching for food, water, or a safe place to stay has become a daily struggle."

## Food

Kuwaiti cuisine creates career paths for youth

## Culinary arts in Kuwait combine individual creativity with academic rigor

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25, (KUNA): Culinary arts in Kuwait are no longer a hobby practiced at home, they have become an established profession, combining individual creativity with academic rigor, and opening new horizons for Kuwaiti youth towards comprehensive career paths.

Kuwaiti cuisine, once confined to recipes passed down through generations, is now making its way onto the global stage thanks to the efforts of Kuwaiti chefs who have blended local traditions with modern cooking techniques. As part of their national identity, diverse success stories have emerged from Kuwait, placing it on the map of professional cuisine.

Chef Faisal Al-Nashmi, a co-founder of a restaurant management company, told KUNA that he has been working for years to develop local food brands, explaining that his role extends beyond traditional cooking to include overseeing operations and development to ensure the quality of the final product.

## Training

He emphasized that the culinary profession in Kuwait needs a clear training system that can transform individual talents into productive forces, that the biggest challenge facing Kuwaiti chefs today is the lack of institutional guidance, and the existence of an official body or specialized association to support chefs would be a major turning point for the profession.

Al-Nashmi pointed out that talent alone is incomplete without a comprehensive understanding of the sector, strategic partnerships and a business background are essential for success in this profession. He noted that Kuwaiti cuisine possesses a richness that qualifies it to be a global competitor if presented correctly.

In a similar statement to KUNA, Chef Sheikha Al-Mohammad explained that her experience working at the Kuwait Aviation Services Company (KASCO) as a development chef presented a unique challenge, given that cooking for aviation involves precise conditions related to changes in taste and flavor at high altitudes, which requires in-depth scientific knowledge in addition to practical experience.

She indicated that registering her name as the first Kuwaiti development chef with the Civil Service Commission (CSC) was a positive step for the culinary profession in Kuwait, considering this step an official recognition of Kuwaiti chefs, one that opens the door for the profession to be recognized professionally and academically.

Chef Sadiqah Esmail told KUNA that her culinary journey began in her childhood, she later trav-



Chef Faisal Al-Nashmi in his kitchen, surrounded by tools and flavors.

KUNA photo

eled abroad to study at prestigious academies such as Le Cordon Bleu in London and Ferondi in Paris, adding that this academic training broadened her perspective and instilled technical skills, precision, and creativity in her, enabling her to return to Kuwaiti cuisine and present it in a contemporary style while preserving its authentic taste and flavor.

She explained that she presented Kuwaiti cuisine in the style of fine dining and created recipes that combined international and local flavors, such as French macarons with Kuwaiti flavors, Zubaidi fish fillet with herb and saffron sauce, Khathra with lime caviar, and Trifle Sub Al-Qafsha, to convey the message that the flavor of Kuwaiti cuisine is capable of competing in the finest international restaurants.

For his part, Fahad Al-Arbash Chairman of the Kuwaiti Restaurants, Cafes, and Catering Services Federation told KUNA that the restaurant management and operation sector in Kuwait has witnessed a remarkable qualitative leap in recent years, the entry of Kuwaiti chefs as consultants and project owners has added a new dimension to the market by strengthening Kuwaiti identity and developing the hospitality experience.

## Demand

He explained that projects managed or owned by Kuwaiti chefs have been met with widespread demand and outstanding success, some of whom have achieved international recognition through their participation in events and projects outside Kuwait.

Al-Arbash added that the Federation is working to enhance employee efficiency and organize specialized workshops in establishing professional and operational standards that align with global health and safety requirements, to transform Kuwait into a leading center for hospitality and innovative cuisine in the region.

Kuwaiti chefs share the view that it is still too early to establish cooking as an academic and professional field, but, however, it provides many opportunities for generations to come since it has become related to educational bodies and professional legislation capable of making a breakthrough in this regard.

With Kuwaiti chefs maintaining their individual and collective experiences, a clear-cut message remains that cooking has become a message of expressing identity and promoting Kuwait's status in the global cultural and economic scene.



Al-Nashmi shares his expertise with fellow chefs during a practical training session.

KUNA photo

## Most expensive comic book ever sold

## Rare Superman comic book fetches \$9.12m at US auction

NEW YORK, Nov 25, (AP): A copy of the first Superman issue, unearthed by three brothers cleaning out their late mother's attic, netted \$9.12 million this month at a Texas auction house which says it is the most expensive comic book ever sold.

The brothers discovered the comic book in a cardboard box beneath layers of brittle newspapers, dust and cobwebs in their deceased mother's San Francisco home last year, alongside a handful of other rare comics that she and her sibling had collected on the cusp of World War II.

She had told her children she had a valuable comic book collection hidden away, but they had never seen it until they put her house up for sale and decided to comb through her belongings for heirlooms, said Lon Allen, vice president of comics at Heritage Auctions. The brothers uncovered the box of comics and sent a message to the auction company, leading Allen to fly out to San Francisco earlier this year to inspect their copy of "Superman No. 1" and show it to other



A view of a DC Comics, Superman No. 1 issue is shown Monday, Nov. 24, in Irving, Texas. (AP)

experts for appraisal.

"It was just in an attic, sitting in a box, could have easily been thrown away, could've easily been destroyed in a thousand different ways," Allen said. "A

lot of people got excited because it's just every factor in collecting that you could possibly want all rolled into one."

The "Superman No. 1" comic, released in 1939 by Detective Comics Inc., is one of a small number of copies known to be in existence and is in excellent condition. The Man of Steel was the first superhero to enter pop culture, helping boost the copy's value among collectors, alongside its improbable backstory, Allen said.

The previous record for the world's most expensive comic book had been set last year, when an "Action Comics No. 1" - which first introduced Superman to the world as part of an anthology - sold for \$6 million. In 2022, another Superman No. 1 sold for \$5.3 million.

A small, in-house advertisement in the comic book helped experts identify it as originating from the first edition of 500,000 Superman No. 1 copies ever printed. Allen estimates there are fewer than 500 in existence today.

## Holiday dessert debate

## Thanksgiving pie wars? Pumpkin or sweet potato

FLOWOOD, Miss., Nov 25, (AP): They're both round, orange and probably bad for your health, but which is the better Thanksgiving dessert: pumpkin or sweet potato pie? For most people, the answer likely depends on where they're from.

The two Thanksgiving favorites have more in common than not. They're similar in color, taste and texture, and derived from European carrot pie. Those similarities make them all the easier to compare.

"Pumpkin," said Lori Robinson, a customer at Sugar Magnolia Takery in Flowood, Mississippi. "My mom cooks it every Thanksgiving, Christmas, every time. It's way better than sweet potato."

Unlike some bakeries in the area, Sugar Magnolia Takery makes both pumpkin and sweet potato pies.

Owner Elizabeth Arnold said the main difference between the pies in her bakery comes down to spice. Sweet potato is sweeter, made with white and brown sugar. Pumpkin pie is less sweet and spicier.

"Sweet potato pie. All day," said Xavier Pittman, another customer.

At Arnold's bakery, sweet potato tends to outsell pumpkin.

## Surprising

That's not surprising in a southern bakery, explained Adrian Miller, a culinary author known as the "Soul Food Scholar."

Sweet potato pie, he said, is particularly popular in the South, where sweet potatoes have deep roots in the region's culture, economy and painful past.

"If there were to be a Mount Rushmore of soul food desserts, sweet potato pie would definitely be there," Miller said.

Pumpkin pie, while ubiquitous, is more often associated with the northern part of the country.

The stereotypes boil down to this: Pumpkin pie is favored by white northerners while sweet po-

tato pie is a favorite among Black southerners. But for culinary historian and author Michael W. Twitty, the issue is more nuanced.

With both desserts ingrained in American history, tradition and culture, the debate over which is better, Twitty argues, is really about identity.

"We can have fun with good-natured ribbing between regions and cultures," Twitty said. "At the same time, don't let it get too serious to the point where it's like hard, fast markers of who you are, who I am, who we are."

Raised in Washington, D.C., Twitty didn't grow up in the Deep South. But the South, he said, has grown up in him. His family's southern roots stretch back to the 17th century.

## Accessible

"Everybody would always bring like two homemade sweet potato pies," Twitty said of his childhood Thanksgivings.

The intertwining of sweet potatoes and southern Black culture began with slavery. Sweet potatoes were a staple for many enslaved people in the Americas, Twitty said. It was an accessible, familiar food, similar to the yams and cassava that make up a cornerstone of African cuisine.

Enslaved people are credited with perfecting the sweet potato pie recipe, though Europeans are thought to be the first to attempt such a delicacy.

Some believe slavery is the reason sweet potato pie didn't take off in the North. An abolitionist movement advocated boycotting goods produced by enslaved people but, Twitty said, the answer is likely simpler: access.

Sweet potatoes and pumpkins were both available in the South. In the North, however, early Americans didn't have much access to the orange sweet potatoes we think of today, Miller said. Instead, northern sweet potatoes had white flesh and a more mealy texture.



Pies, fresh out of the oven, cool on a baking rack on Friday, Nov. 21, in Flowood, Miss. (AP)

## Variety

**HARBIN:** Full-scale construction on the world's largest ice-and-snow theme park, Harbin Ice-Snow World, started in Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, on Tuesday.

Work on the park, which is set to span a record 1.2 million square meters this winter, began three days earlier than last year. About 10,000 workers will use some 200,000 cubic meters of ice stored for over 10 months for building ice sculptures and buildings, as rivers have not yet fully frozen this winter, according to Cong Peiyu, director of the design and development department of Harbin Ice-Snow World Co., Ltd.

The early start and use of reserved ice will help the park open as scheduled in late December, Cong said. (Xinhua)

**BANGKOK:** Myanmar's military government has begun broadcasting extensive video on state television of its crackdown on online scam centers, showing buildings being bulldozed and over 1,000 foreigners detained.

Myanmar is notorious for hosting cyberscam operations that target people all over the world. They usually involve gaining a person's confidence with romantic ploys and

luring them into bogus investment schemes. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime has estimated that such activities generate just under \$40 billion in annual revenue for criminal gangs.

The unusual length and detail of the reports beginning late last week on MRTV television appear to reflect the military government's desire to publicize its efforts after months of bad publicity and international pressure. It is already ostracized by many nations for seizing power from Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in 2021 and brutally fighting opponents. (AP)

**COLUMBUS, Ohio:** Vice President JD Vance's memoir, "Hillbilly Elegy," has a storied history as a New York Times bestseller, as the then-31-year-old's introduction to the nation as a "Trump whisperer," as a divisive subject among Appalachian scholars, and, eventually, as a Ron Howard-directed movie.

Its latest role? Secretly transporting drugs into an Ohio prison.

The book was one of three items whose pages 30-year-old Austin Siebert, of Maumee southwest of Toledo, has been convicted of spraying with narcotics and then shipping to Grafton Correctional Institution disguised as Amazon orders. The others were a 2019 GRE Handbook and a separate piece of paper, according to court documents. (AP)

## Nigeria to experience hunger at unprecedented level in 2026

## More than 12,000 women in Gaza suffer long-term disabilities

GENEVA, Nov. 25, (Agencies): The UN Women office announced on Tuesday that more than 12,000 women and girls are currently living with long-term disabilities caused by the ongoing bombardment of Gaza Strip.

Head of UN Women's office in Geneva, Sophia Calltorp, explained during a press briefing held in Geneva to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls that more than 57,000 women have now become heads of their households "struggling to rebuild in the impossible even with a ceasefire as food is still scarce and completely out of reach for Women with no income".

Calltorp said women in Gaza are living "a psychological war parallel to the military one" noting that every woman she met had lost at least two members of her family.

She stressed that women in Gaza "are waiting for real peace" adding "the attacks have decreased but the killing has not stopped."

Calltorp explained also the dire condition in Gaza saying that the recent waves of rain and cold have exposed the fragility of the temporary tents which leak water and leave children shivering through the night.

She called for increasing the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza in a systematic and safe manner for ensuring that the ceasefire holds as well as reaching a peace that guarantees life and safety for every woman and girl and for all civilians.

She emphasized UN Women's commitment to continue working alongside the women of Gaza and to enable them to play a central role in recovery and reconstruction efforts.

□ □ □

A spike in attacks by militants across northern Nigeria is "driving hunger to levels never seen before" and is expected to result in the worst levels of food



Displaced Palestinians walk through mud at a temporary tent camp following heavy rainfall in Gaza City on Tuesday, Nov. 25. (AP)

insecurity in Africa next year, according to a World Food Programme report released Tuesday.

The food agency of the United Nations projected 35 million people are likely to experience severe hunger in Nigeria by 2026, the highest on the con-

tinued and the largest since the agency began recording data in Nigeria.

The WFP also predicted at least 15,000 people in Borno state, the epicenter of Nigeria's security crisis, will experience catastrophic hunger including famine-like conditions next year. Borno will be classified as Phase 5, the agency's highest classification of food insecurity, similar to what has been seen in some parts of Gaza and Sudan.

"Northern Nigeria is experiencing the most severe hunger crisis in a decade, with rural farming communities the hardest hit," the WFP said in a statement.

Widespread attacks by various armed groups have deterred farmers from using their land, officials said.

In October, al-Qaeda-affiliate Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin took responsibility for its first attack in Nigeria, making the group the latest entrant in a pool of armed groups launching attacks in the country.

More than 300 students and 12 teachers were kidnapped from a school in Niger state on Nov. 21, only four days after after 25 schoolchildren were abducted 170 kilometers (106 miles) away in neighboring Kebbi state.

Nigeria also has been hard hit by a massive scaling down of U.N. food assistance following U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to gut the United States Agency for International Development.

The USAID cut ceased funding to the WFP, which said it will run out of resources for emergency food and nutrition assistance in December. Nigeria is one of the few other countries in the region where the cut has deepened the food crisis. In July, the agency suspended food assistance across West and Central Africa.

"Without confirmed funding, millions will be left without support in 2026, fueling instability and deepening a crisis that the world cannot afford to ignore," the agency said.

## New vessel to assist stranded astronauts' return

## China sends Shenzhou-22 to orbit, completing first emergency mission

JIUQUAN, Nov. 25, (Xinhua): China on Tuesday launched the Shenzhou-22 spaceship to provide a return vessel for the three Shenzhou-21 astronauts in orbit. This momentous occasion marked the accomplishment of the first emergency launch mission in the country's manned space program.

The spaceship, atop a Long March-2F Y22 carrier rocket, blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China at 12:11 p.m. (Beijing Time), according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

About 10 minutes after the launch, the spaceship separated from the rocket and entered its designated orbit. The CMSA declared the launch mission a complete success.

After entering the orbit, the spaceship made a fast, autonomous rendezvous and docking with the front port of the space station's core module Tianhe at 3:50 p.m. (Beijing Time), the agency said.

The spaceship, flying without a crew aboard, carried a cargo of space food, medical supplies, fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as devices for fixing the cracked window on the Shenzhou-20 spaceship.

The launch of the new spaceship followed the return of the three Shenzhou-20 astronauts back to Earth on Nov. 14 by the Shenzhou-21 spacecraft.

The return mission, initially scheduled for Nov. 5 by the Shenzhou-20 spaceship, was delayed due to a suspected debris impact on the Shenzhou-20 return capsule's viewport window.

The Long March-2F Y22 rocket and the Shenzhou-22 spaceship -- already on standby at the launch site upon the contingency -- were swiftly prepared for launch.

After the initiation of the contingency plan, all teams involved in the project demonstrated a composed and methodical approach.

Within 20 days, all participating research and testing units collaborated and completed a series of critical tasks, including risk assessment, solution analysis and decision-making, personnel and material deployment, crew return aboard a replacement vessel, as well as an emergency launch, offering a world-class example of managing an in-orbit emergency, the CMSA said.

The success of this mission fully demonstrated the strengths of China's new system for mobilizing resources nationwide, it noted.

To save time, the launch site streamlined procedures,



In this photo provided by China's Xinhua News Agency, the Shenzhou-22 spaceship, atop a Long March-2F Y22 rocket, blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Jiuquan, northwestern China, Nov. 25. (AP)

said Liu Feng, an expert from the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), noting that there were three unchanged aspects for the rocket system in this emergency mission.

The life-and-safety-first principle, the rocket's fundamental technical specifications and the overall flight plan remained unchanged, Liu said.

Since the Shenzhou-12 mission, China's manned spaceflight has adopted a "rolling backup" model, with one combination of the spaceship and rocket for launch and another combination designated as backup for each mission. This ensures that a backup combination of launch vehicle and spaceship is always on standby, ready to be rapidly deployed for an emergency space station rescue mission.

"As the first ship of the new batch, Shenzhou-22 incorporates upgrades covering its instrumentation system, payload installation space, and electronic components," said Diao Weihe, an expert from the CASC.

The newly launched spaceship will later serve as a return vehicle for the Shenzhou-21 astronauts in orbit. They were launched aboard the Shenzhou-21 spacecraft on Oct. 31, and are expected to return to Earth after completing a six-month mission.

They are now in good condition, and are performing their in-orbit duties as planned, the CMSA said.

## Experts achieve first non-invasive insulin delivery

## Skin patch could replace insulin injections

BEIJING, Nov. 25, (Xinhua): Diabetes patients troubled by the inconvenience caused by long-term injections may be able to get rid of syringes in future.

A research team led by scholars from Zhejiang University in east China has achieved the world's first non-invasive delivery of insulin through skin, securing a blood sugar-lowering effect comparable to regular insulin injections.

Details regarding this revolutionary approach were recently published in the journal Nature, according to a China Science Daily report.

For hundreds of millions of diabetes patients worldwide, subcutaneous insulin injection remains the standard treatment for both type 1 diabetes and advanced type 2 diabetes. However, the pain and psychological fear associated with daily injections make certain groups, such as children and elderly patients, particularly resistant to this form of treatment.

Repeated injections can also easily cause skin infections and fat hyperplasia, which can affect drug absorption. Some patients even opt to reduce the number of injections, leading to poor blood sugar control. This injection dilemma has long plagued clinical treatment efforts in combating diabetes.

Transdermal drug delivery has a long history, and currently, certain small-molecule drugs, such as anesthetics and those used for treating cardiovascular diseases, have achieved non-invasive transdermal delivery.

However, the skin barrier tends to allow only a few specific small molecules to penetrate. Biological macromolecules like insulin, due to their large molecular weight and complex structure, are difficult to get through the skin barrier.

NEW POLYMER COURIER  
Shen Youqing, a professor at the College of Chemical and Biological



Photo taken on Nov. 7, 2021 show new anti-diabetes injections at the booth of Novo Nordisk at the Medical Equipment and Healthcare Products Exhibition Area of the 4th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in east China's Shanghai. (Xinhua)

Engineering at Zhejiang University and co-corresponding author of the paper, led a team that discovered a polymer called OP in preliminary research.

It exhibited outstanding permeability in tumor tissues and was able to efficiently deliver anti-tumor drugs.

"From then, we wondered whether OP could also efficiently permeate skin tissues," Shen recalled.

In experiments that followed the initial discovery, the team found that OP also demonstrated high permeability on skin. "This shattered the conventional understanding that macromolecules cannot penetrate the skin barrier," Shen said.

His team then collaborated with teams led by Zhou Ruhong from Zhejiang University and Chen Rongjun from Imperial College London to conduct systematic research, analyzing the specific pathways and mechanisms of OP's penetration through the skin and exploring its potential applications in drug delivery.

Zhou explained that they used molecular dynamics simulations and binding free energy calculations to elucidate this intelligent drug delivery mechanism at the atomic level.

The team also conjugated OP with insulin to create the conjugate chemical OP-I, which can penetrate deep layers of the skin and eventually enters the systemic circulation through lymphatic vessels in the dermis, achieving systemic delivery of insulin.

In the delivery process, OP acts as the "courier," carrying the insulin as the "package" through the skin and delivering it to the bloodstream.

To verify the effectiveness and safety of this transdermal drug delivery technology, the researchers conducted evaluations in two diabetic model animals. The results showed that OP-I can efficiently target key tissues involved in blood sugar regulation, such as the liver, fat and muscles.

## Dengue deaths

## Pakistan urged to up polio fight

ISLAMABAD, Nov. 25, (Xinhua): Experts have called for enhanced efforts to eradicate the infectious disease of polio from the South Asian country.

Over the decades, Pakistan has eliminated two of the three strains of wild poliovirus and built one of the world's most sensitive surveillance networks, Pakistan Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication Ayesha Raza Farooq said at a seminar on polio on Monday.

Advances in genetic sequencing, data-driven interventions and expanded environmental surveillance are giving Pakistan efficient tools to detect and stop transmission. The country has reduced annual polio cases by 99.6 percent from 20,000 in the early 1990s to 74 in 2024 and only 30 so far in 2025.

Karim Damji, a professor and dean of the Medical College at Aga Khan University, said that continued partnership is the need of the hour, emphasizing that polio eradication is within sight and can be achieved through persistence, community engagement and collective action.

"Eradicating polio forever is not just the right thing to do; it is the smartest," said World Health Organization Representative in Pakistan Luo Dapeng.

Dengue: Bangladesh reported 778 new dengue cases and eight new deaths on Sunday, taking the tally to 90,264 and the death toll to 364 so far this year, the Ministry of Health said.

According to the data, 20,402 dengue cases were recorded so far in November, after 22,520 in October.

Dengue fever, typically a monsoon-season illness in Bangladesh, is now spreading beyond its usual June-September period.

## Cargo-only test flight

## Boeing Starliner won't carry astronauts on next ISS flight

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Nov. 25, (AP): Boeing and NASA have agreed to keep astronauts off the company's next Starliner flight and instead perform a trial run with cargo to prove its safety.

Monday's announcement comes eight months after the first and only Starliner crew returned to Earth aboard SpaceX after a prolonged mission. Although NASA test pilots Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams managed to dock Starliner to the International Space Station in 2024, the capsule had so many problems that NASA ordered it to come back empty, leaving the astronauts stuck there for more than nine months.

Engineers have since been poring over the thruster and other issues that plagued the Starliner capsule. Its next cargo run to the space station will occur no earlier than April, pending additional tests and certification.

Boeing said in a statement that it remains committed to the Starliner



In this photo provided by NASA, Boeing and NASA teams work around NASA's Boeing Crew Flight Test Starliner spacecraft after it landed uncrewed, Sept. 6, 2024, at White Sands, New Mexico, after undocking from the International Space Station. (AP)

program with safety the highest priority.

NASA is also slashing the planned number of Starliner flights, from six to four. If the cargo mission goes well, then that will leave the remaining three Starliner flights for crew exchanges before the space station is decommissioned in 2030.



This photo provided by the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance shows Gramma, a Galapagos tortoise and the oldest animal at the San Diego Zoo, eating at the San Diego Zoo in San Diego, Oct. 30, 2024. (AP)

## San Diego Zoo's oldest tortoise 'Gramma' dies at about 141

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 25, (AP): After more than a century of munching on her favorite foods of romaine lettuce and cactus fruit, beloved Galapagos tortoise Gramma, the oldest resident of the San Diego Zoo, has died.

Gramma was born in her native habitat and was estimated to be about 141 years old, zoo officials said. She died Nov. 20.

It's not clear exactly when the tortoise arrived at the San Diego Zoo, but zoo officials said she came from the Bronx Zoo in either 1928 or 1931 as part of their first group of Galapagos tortoises.

As the world changed around her, she delighted visitors with her sweet, shy personality. She lived through two World Wars and 20 U.S. presidents.

Her care specialists affectionately

called her "the Queen of the Zoo." She was suffering from bone conditions related to her old age that progressed recently before she was euthanized, the zoo said.

Many visitors commented on social media about getting to first visit Gramma when they were young, and being able to come back years later with their kids.

Cristina Park, 69, said one of her earliest memories from her childhood was going to the San Diego Zoo when she was 3 or 4 years old and riding on the back of a tortoise. That's no longer allowed, but the experience inspired her to keep a small desert tortoise as a pet and learn more about tortoise conservation.

"Just how amazing it is that they man-

aged to live through so much," Park said. "And yet they're still there."

Galapagos tortoises can live for over 100 years in the wild, and close to double that in captivity.

The oldest known Galapagos tortoise was named Harriet, who lived at the Australia Zoo until the age of 175. She was collected from the Galapagos Islands in 1835, when she was just the size of a dinner plate, according to the zoo. This means that she hatched somewhere around 1830, and she died in 2006.

Galapagos tortoises include 15 subspecies of tortoises from the islands, three of which were deemed extinct. The rest are all vulnerable or critically endangered, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

## Experts tie Parkinson's to vascular damage

## 3-drug combo offers hope for MND patients

MELBOURNE, Nov. 25, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia have identified a three-drug combination that greatly extends the survival of motor neuron cells in lab tests, providing new hope for motor neuron disease (MND) patients.

Scientists used an innovative stem cell platform to test more than 100 drugs, converting skin cells donated by people with MND into motor neurons, the nerve cells affected by the disease, said a Tuesday statement by The Florey in Australia, the largest brain research center in the Southern Hemisphere.

MND, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, causes progressive paralysis affecting movement, speech, swallowing, and breathing. Patients typically live two to three years with current treatments, with riluzole, the only approved drug, prolonging survival by about 3 months, it said.

The researchers discovered that a triple combination of riluzole, an anti-inflammatory drug and a medication developed to treat dementia, was 6.5 times more effective than riluzole alone at prolonging the survival of nerve cells in the laboratory.

The model paves the way to better understanding MND and the development of new treatments, according to the study, published in Nature Neuroscience.

Associate Professor Chris Bye, who co-led the study with Professor Bradley Turner at The Florey, said MND is difficult to study because its causes are complex and incompletely understood.

"About 10 percent of cases have a known genetic cause. Our focus is on finding treatments for the 90 percent of 'sporadic' or unexplained cases," Bye said.

"Drugs are traditionally developed in the lab, tested in mice, and if they show promise, they might make it to hu-

man trials. Since the discovery of riluzole over 30 years ago, more than 170 drugs for sporadic MND discovered with this approach have failed in clinical trials," Turner said.

The innovative platform at The Florey enables testing drugs directly on motor neurons from MND patients for the first time, he added.

□ □ □

**Parkinson's disease:** Researchers in Australia have found that Parkinson's disease causes significant and progressive changes in the brain blood vessels, changing the understanding of the disease, which may open up new treatment avenues.

While Parkinson's disease is characterized by alpha-synuclein protein deposits, this research has shifted understanding of the disease, demonstrating that region-specific changes to blood vessels in the brain underlie disease progression, Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) said in a media release on Tuesday.

"Traditionally, Parkinson's researchers have focused on protein accumulation and neuronal loss, but we have shown the impacts on our cerebrovasculature -- the blood vessels in our brain," said NeuRA postdoctoral student Derya Dik, who carried out the work.

"Our research identified region-specific changes in the brain's blood vessels, including an increased presence of string vessels, which are non-functional remnants of capillaries," Dik said.

NeuRA researchers, in collaboration with the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney, also observed changes relating to how blood flows in the brain and how the blood brain barrier operates, according to the findings, published in Brain.

16 teams showcase discipline, sportsmanship, and fierce competition

## Silvey Strikers triumph in 7th Annual Tape Ball Cricket event

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Under the banner of Youth Wing – Islamic Education Committee (IEC) Kuwait, the 7th Annual Tape Ball Cricket Tournament 2025 concluded in a highly organized and exciting manner at the Farwaniya Cricket Ground. The tournament saw 16 teams competing across four groups, showcasing discipline, sportsmanship, and fierce competition.

Champions: Silvey Strikers

The Silvey Strikers emerged as the champions, delivering stellar performances throughout the tournament.

The tournament began with a dignified ceremony attended by Youth Wing IEC officials, distinguished guests, and team captains. The event opened with a recitation of the Holy Quran and a prayer. Players were encouraged to uphold fair play, positivity, and brotherhood during the matches.

### League Matches

Eight thrilling league matches energized spectators:

- APD vs Dandies Eleven
- Pak Shaheen vs Silvey Strikers
- PK Tigers vs Pak Warriors
- Jubilee Eleven vs Ansar Eleven
- Fighter Eleven vs Telly Rangers
- Fayaz Eleven vs Manqaf Eleven
- BPCC vs Friends Eleven
- Farwaniya Falcons vs Hadiqa Eleven

All matches featured competitive gameplay and outstanding performances, earning appreciation from the crowd.

### Quarter Finals

Four intense quarter-final matches were played:

- Silvey Strikers vs APD
- Pak Warriors vs Ansar Eleven
- Telly Rangers vs Fayaz Eleven
- BPCC vs Farwaniya Falcons

Teams displayed remarkable teamwork, fitness, and skill.

### Semi Finals

Semi Final 1: Silvey Strikers vs Pak Warriors

Silvey Strikers scored 144/6 in 8 overs.

Pak Warriors failed to chase the target.

Man of the Match: Bilal Tahir (Silvey Strikers) for excellent batting.



Participants pose with officials after the closing ceremony.

Semi Final 2: Telly Rangers vs BPCC

Telly Rangers posted 159/3 in 8 overs.

BPCC could not reach the target.

**Man of the Match:** Atif Mazhar (Telly Rangers) for an all-round performance.

**Final Match:** Silvey Strikers vs Telly Rangers

Silvey Strikers won the toss and invited Telly Rangers to bat.

Telly Rangers scored 93/5 in 8 overs.

Silvey Strikers chased the target in 5 overs with 2 wickets down.

**Man of the Match:** Haider (Silvey Strikers) for outstanding batting and bowling.

Silvey Strikers were crowned champions with a flawless performance.

Awards

**Champion Trophy:** Silvey Strikers

**Runners-up:** Telly Rangers

**Man of the Match Awards**

**Best Batsman & Best Bowler Medals**

**Special Shields:** Abdullah Sharif & Faisal Kayani for outstanding event organization

The tournament aimed to guide youth toward healthy and positive activities, while promoting teamwork, discipline, brotherhood, and unity. Youth Wing IEC Kuwait demonstrated its ongoing commitment to constructive engagement and leadership for the community's youth.

The event concluded with a prayer led by Athar Makhdoom, General Secretary of IEC. The IEC media team provided professional-level live coverage throughout the tournament, marking it a resounding success.



The winning team.



Outstanding player receives Man of the Match award.



Special Shields for event organizers.

San Diego pips Minnesota United to advance to Western Conference final



San Diego FC defender Jeppe Tverskov (6) shoots past Minnesota United midfielder Robin Lod (17) during the first half of MLS soccer's Western Conference semifinal in San Diego. (AP)

SAN DIEGO, Nov 25, (AP): Anders Dreyer scored in the second half and Pablo Sainza made three saves to lead expansion side San Diego FC to a 1-0 victory over Minnesota United in a Western Conference semifinal at a sold-out Snapdragon Stadium.

San Diego will host the second-seeded Vancouver Whitecaps on Saturday with a chance to play for the MLS Cup on the line. No. 5 seed New York City FC travels to play third-seeded Miami for the Eastern Conference title, in Saturday's first match.

Dreyer, the Newcomer of the Year and Best XI honoree, used assists from Corey Baird and Jeppe Tverskov to find the net in the 72nd minute. The 27-year-old midfielder from Denmark had 19 goals and 19 assists during the regular season to help San Diego earn the top seed. He has four goals and two assists in his first four playoff appearances.

It was Tverskov's first postseason goal contribution in his fourth appearance. Baird's first three postseason assists have come this season. He had one goal in 10 prior playoff appearances with three different clubs.

Sainza, who made only four regular-season starts for San Diego, earned his second clean sheet in his second postseason start. He made a dazzling save in the 64th minute to keep it scoreless.

Dayne St. Clair did not have a save in his 11th career playoff start for No. 4 seed Minnesota United, which made a second straight exit in the conference semis in its sixth trip to the postseason since joining the league in 2017.

Coach Mikey Varas' San Diego squad set MLS records for an expansion team with 19 victories and 63 points on the way to a first-place finish.

### Best of the Rest

**Racing beats River to reach last eight:** Gaston Martirena scored in the 93rd minute as Racing reached the quarterfinals of Argentina's Primera Division Clausura tournament with a 3-2 home win over River Plate.

Santiago Solari gave the hosts the lead in the fourth minute at El Cindiro by heading in after a Gabriel Rojas cross from the left wing.

The visitors equalized just after the hour through Ian Subiabre, who took a touch to control Sebastian Driussi's cross before drilling a shot past goalkeeper Facundo Cambeses.

River took the lead two minutes later when Colombian midfielder Juan Fernando Quintero intercepted a defensive clearance before driving a 20-yard shot into the bottom right corner. (Xinhua)

## Pistons edge Pacers, tie franchise record with 13th consecutive win

Rockets roll past Suns despite missing Durant

INDIANAPOLIS, Nov 25, (AP): Cade Cunningham had 24 points and 11 rebounds and the Detroit Pistons won their 13th straight game to tie the franchise record, holding off the Indiana Pacers 122-117.

The Pistons matched winning streaks by their 1989-90 and 2003-04 championship teams, two seasons after losing 28 in a row to break the NBA season record and tie the overall mark. Eastern Conference-leading Detroit is 15-2.

Down 18 early in the fourth quarter, the Pacers pulled as close as two points. Benedict Mathurin missed a 3-pointer with a chance to tie it with 11 seconds left.

Caris LeVert added 19 points for Detroit, and Jalen Duren had 17 points and 12 rebounds. Jaden Ivey scored 12 points in his second game back after breaking his left fibula in January.

**Rockets 114, Suns 92**  
In Phoenix, Amen Thompson scored 28 points, Aaron Holiday added 22 off the bench and the Houston Rockets beat the Phoenix Suns, despite not having star forward Kevin Durant in the lineup for the first time this season.

The Rockets won for the 11th time in 13 games, bouncing back from Friday night's loss to the Nuggets. The Suns three-game winning streak was snapped.

Houston was in control for most of the night, never trailing after early in the first quarter. The Rockets took an 84-75 lead into the fourth and the Suns never got closer than six.

Thompson shot 10 of 16 from the field and added eight assists and seven rebounds. Holiday made six 3-pointers. Durant - a 15-time All-Star averaging a team-high 24.6 points per game - missed the game for personal reasons.

The matchup was a bit of a letdown after Sunday's announcement that Durant wasn't playing, delaying his return to the city where he spent the previous 2 1/2 seasons.



Golden State Warriors guard Brandin Podziemski (2) drives to the basket against Utah Jazz guard Walter Clayton Jr. during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

**Warriors 134, Jazz 117**

In San Francisco, Stephen Curry made six 3-pointers and scored 31 points, Jimmy Butler had 18 points, seven assists and six rebounds and the Golden State Warriors beat the Utah Jazz.

Curry shot 12 for 24 on the way to his fifth 30-point game in the last six. Moses Moody had 15 points and six rebounds, while Gary Payton II contributed nine points, career-best eight assists and six rebounds in a rare start.

Keyonte George finished with 28 points on 10-of-17 shooting, seven assists and six rebounds to lead Utah, which has lost four straight and five of six after dropping the first game of a back-to-back at home Sunday to the Lakers.

Coming off their first home loss of the season Friday against Portland, the Warriors shot 49.5%, committed only 10 turnovers, scored 14 points off the 17 they forced and finished with 52 points by the bench - 20 by Buddy Hield.

**Knicks 113, Nets 100**

In New York, Karl-Anthony Towns had 37 points and 12 rebounds, Jalen Brunson scored 27, and the New York Knicks beat the Brooklyn Nets at Barclays Center.

Towns shot 14 for 20 from the field and made each of his six free throws to

lead the Knicks to their 12th consecutive victory over Brooklyn.

New York's last loss to the Nets was Jan. 28, 2023, when they were defeated 122-115.

Mikal Bridges finished with 16 points and Jordan Clarkson added 12 off the bench for the Knicks.

**Heat 106, Mavericks 102**

In Miami, Tyler Herro scored 24 points in his season debut after recovering from ankle surgery. Kel'el Ware had 20 points and 18 rebounds, and the Miami Heat held off the Dallas Mavericks.

Bam Adebayo had 17 points for Miami, which was held nearly 20 points below its season average but improved to 8-1 at home.

P.J. Washington scored 27 points for Dallas, which got 15 from Max Christie, 13 from Klay Thompson and 12 apiece from Cooper Flagg and Brandon Williams.

**Raptors 110, Cavaliers 99**

In Toronto, Brandon Ingram scored 15 of his season-high 37 points in the third quarter, Scottie Barnes had 18 points and 11 rebounds, and the Toronto Raptors beat the Cleveland Cavaliers for their eighth straight win.

Sandro Mamukelashvili scored 12

points and Immanuel Quickley had 11 for Toronto, which has won 12 of 13.

Two of the Raptors' victories in their streak have come against the Cavaliers. Toronto swept the season series for the first time since the 2019-20 season.

**Nuggets 125, Grizzlies 115**

In Memphis, Jamal Murray had 29 points and eight assists, Peyton Watson scored 14 of his 27 points in the third quarter, and the Denver Nuggets held off a late push by Memphis, defeating the Grizzlies.

Nikola Jokic recorded his 10th triple-double of the season with 17 points, 16 assists and 10 rebounds for Denver, which has won three of four.

**Trail Blazers 115, Stumping Bucks 103**

In Milwaukee, Jerami Grant scored a season-high 35 points and the Portland Trail Blazers rolled to a 115-103 victory while handing the Milwaukee Bucks their fifth consecutive loss.

Portland won for just the second time in its last seven games and bounced back one night after losing 122-95 at Oklahoma City.

**Kings 117, Timberwolves 112 OT**

In Sacramento, DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points and the Sacramento Kings took advantage of Minnesota's second straight stunning collapse, rallying late in regulation and outlasting the Timberwolves in overtime.

On Friday night in Phoenix, the Timberwolves blew an eight-point lead with less than a minute left in a 114-113 loss. Against the Kings, they were up 10 with three minutes left.

After DeRozan tied it at 101 with two free throws with 34 seconds left in regulation, Anthony Edwards missed a jumper for Minnesota, and DeRozan and Malik Monk missed shots on the final possession.

**Pelicans 143, Bulls 130**

In New Orleans, Zion Williamson tied a season high with 29 points and the New Orleans Pelicans defeated the Chicago Bulls to end a nine-game losing streak and win for the first time under interim coach James Borrego.

Saddiq Bey had 20 points and 14 rebounds, highlighted by a pair of late 3s to help New Orleans hold a lead that was 18 points with 5:15 left but fell to single digits in the last two minutes.

### Change Name

I, FAKHRUDDIN ABBAS  
ALI holder of Indian  
Passport No. W4667503  
having permanent address:  
India, State: Rajasthan, Pin  
Code: 327024 residing in  
Kuwait at present, hereby  
declare that henceforth my  
name will be read as under:  
Given name: Fakhruddin  
and Surname: Pehalwan

## Lang, Trujillo Diaz win 2025 IOC Coaches Lifetime Achievement Awards

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Nov 25, (Xinhua): The International Olympic Committee (IOC) honored Chinese volleyball coach Lang Ping and Cuban wrestling coach Raul de Jesus Trujillo Diaz with the IOC Coaches Lifetime Achievement Awards.

The pair received the awards from IOC President Kirsty Coventry and Sergii Bubka, chair of the IOC Athletes' Entourage Commission.

"It's really special to be here with all of you and to celebrate our two coaches for their incredible commitment and their lifetime of work in serving their athletes to become the best athlete, but also the best

humans that they can be," Coventry said.

Bubka noted that the selection panel received a record 152 nominations this year. "Lang Ping and Raul de Jesus Trujillo Diaz have not only served their sports with great distinction, they have also made a profound impact beyond sport on their respective communities. Both hugely deserve this special honor," he said.

Lang helped China win women's volleyball gold at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics as a player and led China's women's team to Olympic gold as head coach at Rio 2016, becoming the first person in the sport to win the title as both athlete and coach. She also guided

teams to two Olympic silvers, with China at Atlanta 1996 and with the United States at Beijing 2008.

"Coaching is not always glamorous: when things go well, the spotlight is on the team; when things go wrong, it's usually on the coach. But with all of you, every step has been worth it," Lang said.

Lang, now vice president of the Chinese Volleyball Association, grew emotional as she thanked former teammates, athletes and coaches across China, Italy and the United States. "This recognition belongs to all of them," she said.

Trujillo Diaz coached the national wrestling teams

of Cuba and Portugal during five editions of the Olympic Games over a 52-year career.

Under his leadership, Mijain Lopez Nunez won five consecutive Olympic gold medals in men's super-heavyweight wrestling beginning in 2008, becoming the first athlete in any sport to do so in the same event.

"I am very honored to receive this extraordinary recognition," Trujillo Diaz said. "I would like to thank the IOC, all the athletes I have coached over the past 50 years, and United World Wrestling. A big thank-you to someone very special who has always been with me: my family, for their great support."

## SPORTS

## Hessian clinches the Club Cup

## Lazzaz Al-Amiriyah triumphs in Al-Azbah Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: The horse Lazzaz Al-Amiriyah, trained by Mohammed Saree and ridden by jockey Hadi Al-Omar, captured the Al-Azbah Stud Owner Cup for Egyptian Arabian horses over 1,600 meters, clocking a time of 2:14.89. The victory came in the sixth race of the fourth racing meet at the Hunting and Equestrian Club.

Dr. Jarallah Ali Al-Mari, the cup's sponsor, presented the trophy to the winners and congratulated them on their achievement. The club's general manager, Ali Al-Fahad, also presented Dr. Al-Mari with a commemorative shield from the Chairman and members of the Higher Committee for Horse Racing.

Dr. Al-Mari confirmed his continued support for Arabian horse racing at the club, highlighting that the Al-Azbah Stud Cup will be included in the annual racing calendar. He also thanked Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi, owner of Al-Raya Stud, for his initiative in supporting purebred Egyptian Arabian horses.

In other notable results, Hessian claimed the Club Cup in the seventh race, while Hilal Al-Sham won the club's trophy for imported purebred Arabian horses. The first-place winners in races one through four were Ashqar Hamoud, Choc Wave, Laura, and Al-Fateh, respectively.



Ali Al-Fahad presents a commemorative shield to Dr. Al-Mari.

## Al-Ahli Dubai tops Al-Gharafa

## Benzema double in vain as Al-Duhail stuns Al-Ittihad

DOHA, Qatar, Nov 25, (AP): Karim Benzema scored twice but Al-Ittihad lost 4-2 to Al-Duhail of Qatar in the Asian Champions League Elite on Monday.

It was the Saudi Arabian champion's third loss in five games in the continental competition. The top eight from the 12-team western zone group stage - the first round of the tournament is split into geographic halves - advance to the knockout phase.

Algerian forward Adil Boubou put Al-Duhail in control with a hat trick - scoring twice in the first half and adding a third seven minutes after the restart. Polish forward Krzysztof Piatek made it 4-0 with 16 minutes remaining, before Benzema struck twice for the two-time champion.

Ittihad's Jeddah rival Al-Ahli lost 1-0 at home to Al-Sharjah of the United Arab Emirates.

Ousmane Camara put Sharjah ahead with just nine minutes re-



Karim Benzema

maining. Al-Ahli, the defending champion, thought it had rescued a point in the 90th minute, but Ziyad Al-Johani's would-be goal was ruled out for offside.

Earlier, Tractor of Iran continued its solid campaign with a 1-0 win at Uzbekistan's Nasaf Qarshi to move into second behind Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal. Al-Ahli Dubai defeated Qatar's Al-Gharafa 2-0.

## India stumbles to 27-2 as SA sets mammoth target

Jadeja picks 4-62 in 28.3 overs in the second innings

GUWAHATI, India, Nov 25, (AP): Chasing an improbable 549-run target, India was down to 27-2 at stumps on Day 4 of the second cricket test against South Africa.

India lost its openers early - Yashvir Jaiswal was caught behind for 13 runs, while Lokesh Rahul was bowled for six.

At end of play, Sai Sudharsan (2 not out) and nightwatchman Kuldeep Yadav (4 not out) were at the crease, with India needing to play out Day 5 to salvage a draw.

This was after Tristan Stubbs headlined South Africa's second innings, scoring 94 off 180 balls including nine fours and a six.

The Proteas batted deep into Day 4 and declared late in the final session at 260-5 in 78.3 overs, taking an overall 548-run lead.

On Monday, Marco Jansen took 6-48 to help South Africa take a 314-run first innings lead when India was bowled out for 201 in reply to 489.

World Test Championship winner South Africa leads the two-match series after winning the opener in Kolkata by 30 runs. The Proteas are chasing a first test series win on Indian soil since 2000-01.

South Africa had started Day 4 at 26-0 and Aiden Markram and Ryan Rickelton put on 59 runs for the first wicket.

They scored 40 runs in the first hour of play, with Jadeja dismissing Rickelton for 35 off 64 balls, including four fours.

India then struck twice in quick time as the top order wobbled. Jadeja bowled Markram (29) in the 29th over and Washington Sundar then had Temba Bavuma (3) caught at leg slip.



South Africa's players look for a third umpire's decision on the fourth day of the second cricket test match between India and South Africa in Guwahati, India. (AP)

De Zorzi then hit two fours and a six to counter the Indian bowling, and put on 101 runs off 160 deliveries with Stubbs for the fourth wicket on either side of the tea break.

South Africa went to tea at 107-3, with a lead of 395 runs, but it wasn't content yet. De Zorzi scored 49 off 68 balls before he was out lbw to Ravindra Jadeja in the second session. Overall, Jadeja picked 4-62 in 28.3 overs in the second innings even as India's attack toiled hard.

Pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj only shared 11 overs as Jadeja and Washington Sundar (1-67 in 22 overs) picked up most of the bowling load.

Stubbs had missed out on a half-

century in the first innings, but he did score 50 off 129 balls in the second.

He batted on toward a hundred thereafter, along with Wiaan Mulder who scored 35 not out off 69 balls. They put on 82 off 122 balls for the fifth wicket.

South Africa was 220-4 at lunch, and Stubbs tried to accelerate post-break to get to his century. Jadeja bowled him in the 79th over, six runs short, as the declaration came.

It was only the second instance of a visiting team setting a 500-plus target for India - Australia had previously set 543 in 2004 (Nagpur).

Additionally, post 2000, India has only once batted 100-plus overs in

the fourth innings to save a test - against Australia in 2021 (Sydney), where it played out 131 overs.

Faced with a daunting task then, India's openers failed to rise to the challenge. Jaiswal was caught behind off an inside edge, while Simon Harmer broke through Rahul's defense. "I was a little disappointed (to miss out on the hundred), but they are two down now so we will take that. It was about batting time today and we had 40 minutes after lunch. I had to get it done when Jadeja came on to bowl, but missed my chance. Tomorrow, if we bowl in the right areas, there's enough in this wicket (to force a win)," Stubbs said after the day's play.

## Kuwait secures convincing victory against Thailand

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Kuwait's senior basketball team secured an 84-71 victory over Thailand in a friendly match held at the Basketball Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

The match is part of the Kuwait Basketball Federation's preparation plan ahead of upcoming competitions, allowing the coaching staff to evaluate all players. The two teams will meet again today for a second friendly, following the agreement between the Kuwaiti and Thai federations.

The Blues dominated from start to finish, with Serbian coach Marko Ichelich rotating his squad to give significant playing time to key players such as Yousef Naseeb, Faisal Al-Bahar, Ahmed Al-Foudari, Faisal Al-Husseini, Abdul Latif Al-Faraj, as well as young talent Abdulaziz Al-Mutawa.



A player from Kuwait's senior basketball team drives to the basket during a friendly match against Thailand.

The approach helped assess technical readiness and strengthen team cohesion.

## Best of the Rest

**Taricco resigns as assistant coach:** Former Tottenham defender Mauricio Taricco will resign as assistant coach of South Korean champion Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors after receiving a five-match ban for an alleged racist gesture during a K League game, the club said Tuesday. On Nov. 8 as Jeonbuk faced Daejeon Hana, the Argentine assistant was sent off by referee Kim Woo-seong for vehemently protesting a penalty decision. Subsequently, Taricco placed his index fingers besides the corner of his eyes - a gesture the referee interpreted as racist and reported to the league's disciplinary committee.

On Nov. 19, the committee banned Taricco for five games and fined him 20 million won (\$13,646). The 52-year-old, who featured for Tottenham between 1998 and 2004 and also played for Ipswich Town, West Ham and Brighton in England, denied any racist intent, insisting that he was asking the official if he had seen the incident.

"The context of the situation, and the cultural expression and meaning that I've continuously tried to explain, have been disregarded," Taricco said in a statement released by Jeonbuk on Tuesday. "With one moment of misunderstanding, I've been labeled a racist by the so-called authorities." (AP)

**Barreal strike earns Santos point:** A second-half strike from Argentine winger Alvaro Barreal earned relegation-threatened Santos a 1-1 draw at Internacional in Brazil's Serie A on Monday.

Alan Patrick fired the hosts ahead with a first-time effort from six yards after Rafael Borre flicked on Alan Rodriguez's lofted pass. Barreal, who replaced Victor Hugo at halftime, equalized just after the hour by controlling Ze Rafael's cross with his chest before thumping a low shot that beat goalkeeper Sergio Rochet at his far post. The result at Beira-Rio Stadium leaves Santos stuck in the relegation zone with 38 points, three behind Internacional with three matches remaining.

In Monday's only other Brazilian top-flight fixture, Mirassol bolstered its chances of a top-four finish with a 3-0 home rout of Ceara. The team from Sao Paulo state now has 63 points from 35 games, five points clear of fifth-placed Botafogo. Ceara is 14th with 42 points. (Xinhua)

## Former NBA star faces up to 20 years for fraud, money laundering

## Billups pleads not guilty in rigged poker case

NEW YORK, Nov 25, (AP): Portland Trail Blazers coach Chauncey Billups, a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, pleaded not guilty Monday to charges he profited from rigged poker games involving several Mafia figures and at least one other ex-NBA player.

Billups, a five-time All Star who won a championship with the Detroit Pistons, was arraigned in a federal court in Brooklyn on money laundering conspiracy and wire fraud conspiracy charges, each carrying a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Prosecutors say he was involved in a scheme to rig mob-backed illegal poker games in Manhattan, Las Vegas, Miami and the Hamptons. Others face charges of running an illegal gambling business, robbery conspiracy and extortion conspiracy. Prosecutors said Monday that plea negotiations have begun with some defendants but did not identify them.

U.S. District Court Judge Ramon Reyes said he hopes to bring the sprawling case to trial by next September, telling lawyers to "do what you have to do."

Billups, dressed in a dark grey suit, spoke only to answer yes-or-no questions from the judge. His lawyer, Marc Mukasey, entered his plea. They declined to comment after the hearing. Last month, another Billups lawyer called him a



Portland Trail Blazers' head coach Chauncey Billups leaves Brooklyn federal court in New York. (AP)

"man of integrity" who denies the allegations.

Billups, 49, was released on a \$5 million bond secured by his family's Colorado home. He must refrain from gambling, avoid contact with other defendants or alleged victims, surrender his passport and limit travel to seven states, including Oregon and New York, and Washington, D.C.

Inducted last year into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame, Billups was arguably the most prominent among more than 30 people charged in last month's sprawling federal takedown of illegal gambling operations linked to profes-

sional sports.

Ex-NBA player and assistant coach Damon Jones was also charged in the poker scheme, as well as another separate scheme to let gamblers exploit insider information about players to win NBA bets that implicated Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier.

In addition to Monday's arraignment, Billups and his co-defendants attended a status conference and are due back in court March 4.

Prosecutors say the poker-rigging scheme used altered card-shuffling machines, hidden cameras in chip trays, special sunglasses and X-ray equipment built into the table to read

cards. They allege the operation defrauded victims of an estimated \$7 million starting in at least 2019.

Billups allegedly served as a celebrity "face card" that could draw wealthy, unsuspecting players to the games. Prosecutors said organizers texted during one game that a victim "acted like he wanted Chauncey to have his money" because he was "star struck."

Prosecutors say Billups received a portion of the ill-gotten gains, including a \$50,000 wire transfer after a rigged game in October 2020.

Organizers also had to share their proceeds with the Gambino, Genovese and Bonanno mob families for operating within the illegal poker games run by the New York criminal enterprises, prosecutors said. In return, Mafia members allegedly carried out assault, extortion and robbery to collect debts and protect the operation.

During his NBA career, Billups earned about \$106 million. After retiring in 2014, he embarked on a career as a TV analyst before pivoting to coaching.

Billups was selected as the third overall pick in the 1997 draft by the Boston Celtics after starring in college for the Colorado Buffaloes. He played 17 years in the NBA, with stints with the Toronto Raptors, Denver Nuggets, Minnesota Timberwolves, New York Knicks and Los Angeles Clippers.

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Arsenal's Jurrien Timber, left, and Gabriel Martinelli attend a team training session at the Sobha Realty Training Centre, London ahead of Wednesday's Champions League match against Bayern Munich. (AP)

# Sports

## Qadsia set for training camp in Tabuk ahead of Zain of Premier League resumption



Players undergo light training session.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 25: Qadsia has announced a training camp, scheduled to run from early December until the 13th of the month.

The team will play a friendly against Saudi side Neom on December 11, with the club's management working to arrange additional practice matches.

The camp aims to maximize preparation during the current league break ahead of a challenging Zain Premier League clash against archrival Al-Arabi on December 17 in the ninth round.

Currently, Qadsia sits second in the league with 14 points, level on points with third-placed Al-Arabi but ahead on goal difference. It trails league leaders Kuwait Club by five points,

with both Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi having one match in hand.

Al-Arabi, meanwhile, has opted for local preparations, planning several friendly matches before the league resumes. The team, led by national coach Nasser Al-Shatti, is awaiting the arrival of its foreign and international players. Al-Arabi will face Khaitan tomorrow as part of these preparations.

Kuwait Club is yet to finalize its decision on an external camp. The choice depends on the national team's outcome against Mauritania in the Arab Cup playoff. If the team qualifies, Kuwait Club will prepare locally; if not, the club will arrange a Gulf-based camp.

In other news, Al-Salmiya began its training camp in Bahrain yesterday and will play two friendly matches against Al-Ahli and Al-Riffa.

## Kuwait takes on Mongolia as race heats up in U-17 Asian Cup qualifiers

BANGKOK, Nov 25: Kuwait's U-17 soccer team will take on Mongolia at 2:00 p.m. today at Chonburi Stadium in Thailand, in the second round of Group F of the AFC U-17 Asian Cup qualifiers. At the same kickoff time, hosts Thailand will face the Maldives in the same group.

Kuwait opened its campaign with a hard-earned 1-0 victory over Turkmenistan last Saturday in the first round.

Kuwait did not feature in the second-round fixtures held the day before yesterday.

Those matches saw Turkmenistan thrash the Maldives 6-0, while Thailand cruised to a 4-0 win over Mongolia.

Despite Mongolia's defeat in the previous round, the team still sits on three points thanks to its opening 1-0 win over the Maldives.

Kuwait will look to claim a second straight victory and strengthen



A Kuwaiti player is congratulated by his teammates after scoring a goal.

its push for the group's lone qualification spot to the finals, scheduled to be hosted in Saudi Arabia next year.

Only the top team from each of

the seven groups will advance to the finals. The Kuwaiti U-17 side hopes to book its sixth appearance in the tournament, ending a long absence since 2014.

### Best of the Rest

**FIFA, Saudi agency pledge \$1bn:** FIFA and the Saudi Fund for Development have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to allocate up to one billion U.S. dollars to support developing countries and regions with sports infrastructure.

FIFA said the funds will be allocated for the construction and rehabilitation of sports stadiums and es-

sential surrounding infrastructure.

"The program will prioritize developing nations and their respective FIFA member associations, helping them invest in facilities that drive growth, create opportunity, and inspire participation at every level," read a statement.

"This agreement is a crucial step in ensuring our FIFA member associations have the facilities to make football truly global," said FIFA President Gianni Infantino. (Xinhua)

# Kuwait qualifies for Arab Cup in Qatar

## Daham sinks Mauritania

DOHA, Nov 25, (KUNA): Kuwait sealed its place in the Arab Cup Qatar 2025 finals after defeating Mauritania 2-0. Al-Azraq wrapped up the first half with a comfortable lead thanks to a brace from Mohammed Daham, who struck in the 7th and 23rd minutes.

Mauritania pushed hard in the

second half in search of a comeback, but their attempts fell short. The only time they found the net, the goal was ruled out for offside.

The FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025 kicks off on December 1 in Doha, featuring 16 national teams competing across six stadiums: Al Bayt, Lusail, Khalifa International, Ahmad bin Ali, Stadium 974, and Education City.

According to the draw held last May, Kuwait joins Group C alongside Egypt, Jordan, and the UAE.

Al Bayt Stadium will host the opening match, while Lusail Stadium will stage the final on December 18.



The Kuwaiti coach congratulates a player at the end of the playoff.



Kuwaiti players celebrate after qualifying for the Arab Cup.

KUNA photos

## Gueye faces red card controversy

# 10-man Everton silences Old Trafford crowd

MANCHESTER, England, Nov 25, (AP): Everton beat Manchester United 1-0 to slow the home team's recent revival in a Premier League game that will be remembered for an early red card shown to Everton's Idrissa Gueye for striking teammate Michael Keane.

Kieran Dewsbury-Hall scored with a superb strike in the 29th minute, after which Everton was forced to defend its lead. United dominated the visiting 10 men in a one-sided second half but couldn't find a way past England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

"They were the better team, with 11 players or 10," United coach Ruben Amorim said. "I felt from the first minute that we were not there with the same intensity, so they deserve the win. If they have 10, let's push the opponent to the final third. We need to be near on the transition. We needed to be focused. We need to do more."

It was United's first defeat since losing 3-1 at Brentford almost two months ago and the first time in 47 Premier League games that a visiting team has won at Old Trafford with 10 men.

However, the night's unforgettable talking point came after 13 minutes.

Gueye was furious at what appeared



Manchester United's Amad Diallo, left, and Everton's James Garner challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Everton in Manchester, England. (AP)

to be Keane's failure to pick up his pass inside the Everton penalty box. Bruno Fernandes stepped in and fired wide, but an angry Gueye confronted Keane.

Keane shoved Gueye, who responded with a slap to Keane's face. Referee

Tony Harrington displayed the red card for "violent conduct."

"The referee's call of red card to Gueye for violent conduct was checked and confirmed by VAR - with the action deemed to be a clear strike to the face of Keane," the league said in a

social media post.

The Senegalese was the first player to be sent off in the Premier League for fighting with a teammate since Stoke City's Ricardo Fuller saw red after clashing with Andy Griffin in 2008.

Dewsbury-Hall later called it "the situation" but downplayed the incident and said what mattered was Everton's reaction. "I think it was just a moment of madness," the goalscorer said. "It was avoidable, but Idrissa apologized to us all at full-time and said his piece. We move on from it. The reaction from the lads after that is unbelievable. We could easily have crumbled and lost the game comfortably, and if anything, it made us grow as a team."

Gueye apologized to Keane and to "my teammates, the staff, the fans, and the club." He said he takes "full responsibility for my reaction."

"What happened does not reflect who I am or the values I stand for," Gueye wrote on his Instagram account. "Emotions can run high, but nothing justifies such behavior. I'll make sure it never happens again."

David Moyes' team silenced the home crowd by taking the lead 16 minutes after Gueye was dismissed.

## Fan groups demand action on Premier League ticket prices

LONDON, Nov 25, (AP): Fan groups have called on Premier League clubs to freeze home ticket prices for the next two seasons, share pricing data and hold talks with supporters' groups.

More than 100 groups signed a letter, published by the Football Supporters' Association, that said fan loyalty "shouldn't be maximized for profit."

"Football is for everyone. Rising prices are making it harder for regular fans, especially younger generations and working-class communities, to attend matches," the letter reads. "A halt on ticket increases gives us the chance to make sure football stays inclusive and accessible to all." Nineteen out of 20 top-flight clubs raised prices for the 2024-25 season and 13 did so this campaign.

Not hiking prices for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 seasons would halt the "arms race," the fan groups argued.

The letter noted that the existing 30-pound (\$39) away-ticket cap "was a landmark agreement that proved clubs and supporters

can work together to make positive change. It showed that valuing your supporters strengthens the game, and is something that must continue."

Meanwhile, Pep Guardiola has apologized for his confrontation with a cameraman after Manchester City's weekend loss to Newcastle, saying he feels "ashamed."

The City manager had grabbed the cameraman's headset and appeared to say something to directly into his ear after the final whistle of a 2-1 loss at St James' Park.

Guardiola had been involved in heated discussions with Newcastle captain Bruno Guimaraes and match officials. "I apologize. I feel embarrassed, ashamed when I see it. I don't like it."

Guardiola added that he apologized to the cameraman "after one second."

"I am who I am - even (after) 1,000 games, I'm not perfect a person. I made a huge mistake. What is for sure, I defend my team and my club, that's for sure."