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KUWAIT AIRWAYS ACTIVATES NEW RUNWAY SAFETY SYSTEM

A320 upgrades may delay flights

PACA ensures secure air travel; hotline activated for passenger support

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Kuwait's Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) announced on Saturday that Airbus issued a global technical circular requiring updates to several safety-related systems on the A320 model, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Official spokesperson of PACA Abdullah Al-Rajhi clarified that these updates are part of the required procedures aimed at raising the level of operational safety for this model, which is one of the most widely used aircraft in the world.

Al-Rajhi added that implementing these procedures may lead to minor delays or rescheduling of some flights in the coming period. He emphasized that the safety of passengers and flight crews remains the top priority, stressing that taking such measures are an essential part of ongoing efforts to maintain the highest levels of safety and quality in the civil aviation sector.

In a related development, Kuwait Airways confirmed in a statement posted on its official account on the X platform that it is carrying out the necessary software updates for its A320 aircraft as per the recommendations of the manufacturer.

It explained that these updates could lead to flight delays, hence, the need for passengers to contact customer service at 171 if they are in Kuwait or +965 24345555 ext. 171 if they are outside the country or through WhatsApp number

+965 1802050 for inquiries.

Moreover, Kuwait Airways has installed and started operating the Runway Overrun Prevention System (ROPS) on the aircraft, making it among the first airlines to operate the top safety system.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the national carrier Abdulwahab Al-Shatti confirmed the recent installation of ROPS systems, indicating that certain update procedures resulted in the temporary modification of the operating network, specifically the night and dawn flights on Saturday. He apologized for the inconvenience that the technical modifications might have caused for the passengers.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Celebrate more visitors of Kuwait, whether for business or tourism

RIGIDITY and openness are mutually exclusive. The government has approved opening the door to visits, but some concerns remain. For example, why are tourists not treated better than they are being treated now? It is as if tourists are doing them a favor, instead of being the ones who encourage public spending and boost commercial activity in the nation.

In this sense, numerous issues must be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities in order to address them, following the example of other Gulf countries that encourage everyone to visit, because they believe that visitors are the lifeblood of the economy, in one way or another.

On the other hand, people who come to us might be looking for an opportunity to develop a project that benefits the country, or they might be seeking work that adds value, or they might want to visit their family or friends. In all cases, they spend money they would have spent in their home countries when visits were prohibited. Spending on tourism abroad was substantial, and this undoubtedly cost the State a lot. So why, for instance, are they preventing someone to look for work if he holds a visit visa?

This is a significant step and we thank those who have taken it. However, it can be utilized to support the national product if the issues are resolved. The country needs numerous projects – service-oriented, developmental, tourism-related and others. This will open the door for investors to actively engage in the available investment opportunities.

Without a doubt, this also necessitates many facilities, not for foreigners, but for the local investor who is a reflection of the local economy to others – whether foreign, Arab or even from the Gulf. If capital owners see the obstacles that local investors are facing, they will not be comfortable dealing with them. This is why they are reluctant to invest in Kuwait.

As a result, when we compare ourselves to our Gulf neighbors, we highlight our shortcomings, which must be addressed quickly, particularly regarding the freedom of commercial activity and the openness that these countries have fostered to attract a huge number of investors, visitors and others who contribute to their economies.

While we observe these countries easing life for locals and tourists by granting everyone many

amenities, the opposite is happening in Kuwait. For example, if a visitor has the same name as another person, the visitor is denied entry. If someone has an outdated security restriction and belongs to a nationality not permitted to visit Kuwait, but holds residency in another Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country, he is prevented from entering or face obstacles. In contrast, in other GCC countries, their procedures are expedited, allowing them to enter, conduct their business and leave.

What about the projects we have and those of others? In Dubai alone, more than 10 projects that cost hundreds of millions of dollars are currently under construction. Some rely on government funding, while others involve investors from other countries. New hotels are also being built. Similarly, Abu Dhabi has several entertainment projects, the same is true in Ras Al Khaimah, while waterfront development projects are underway in Umm Al Quwain.

All these projects serve the economy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Last year, the non-oil sector accounted for more than 75 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country.

Meanwhile, in Kuwait, we have been hearing about entertainment projects for years. Newspapers are filled with ministerial statements about some of them. Nevertheless, in reality, most people see them as mere dreams. Citizens have not seen any of these projects materialize, because the government has neither implemented them, nor allowed citizens to do so, nor opened the door for foreign investments. Furthermore, it has not provided incentives or facilities for local investors to become active and implement any development projects.

Thus, if we are to keep pace with other Gulf economies, we must begin by developing the service infrastructure, including hotels, entertainment projects and other development initiatives. We must provide incentives for local and foreign investors to implement such projects.

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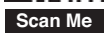
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Vintage cars seen at a classic cars show in Capital Governorate, Kuwait on Nov. 28, 2025. (Xinhua)

‘Affordable home ownership’

No Jleeb plans under new ‘Real Estate Finance Law’

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: While denying any current plans to revalue Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, the Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdul Latif Al-Mishari says the Real Estate Finance Law is in its final stages and is under review by relevant government entities ahead of its approval, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a lecture, titled “Kuwait’s Housing Vision under the Real Estate Developer Law” delivered recently at the College of Architecture in Kuwait University, Minister Al-Mishari explained that the Real Estate Finance Law is beneficial not only for the state but also for its citizens. For the first time, Kuwaiti families can own homes through bank financing, with husbands and wives able to obtain sufficient funding to purchase a housing unit using their combined salaries.

The initial study for the first three projects under the “Real Estate Developer” system includes 5,000 housing units in the first phase. The ministry is currently studying projects for the second and third phases to offer them to the private sector. Several prime locations are being considered for new housing projects, most notably Mirqab due to its central location, and the Sulaibikhat Beach area with its direct sea view.

The minister stated that he could not specify prices at this time, but they would be aligned with the loan amounts stipulated in the Real Estate Finance Law, insisting that the ministry would not offer any project beyond the financial reach of the majority of citizens.

He confirmed that the ministry is currently studying the infrastructure for new housing projects, stressing that allocation will only occur after a clear plan and precise timelines are established to ensure that citizens are not negatively affected during the construction phase.

In response to a question about including Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh in housing projects, Al-Mishari denied any current plans to do so, as the area is privately owned.

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Milestone in oil industry

KIPIC, KNPC merger boosts refining power

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The final stages of the merger of Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) and Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) will be completed in the coming days, sources disclosed.

Sources pointed out that after the final step, KNPC will become one of the leading oil refining companies globally and in the Arab world, with its daily refining capacity reaching around 1,413,000 barrels. Sources affirmed this development is important, since the production capacity of Zour Refinery reached an average of 615,000 barrels per day, while the official refining capacity of Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries reached around 789,600 barrels per day by the first quarter of 2025.

Sources stated that the integration of Zour Refinery into KNPC will mitigate the impact of temporary production declines resulting from unforeseen malfunctions. Sources asserted this is relevant given that the refinery’s processing rate in the first quarter of 2025 reached 507,458 barrels per day, significantly lower than its total production capacity of 615,000 barrels per day. Sources attributed this production drop to several challenges encountered in the heavy crude oil refining process.

They added that production shutdowns during maintenance operations were also a major contributing factor, while highlighting the advantages of the project, which will utilize the 905,000-square-meter site after the integration of the three refineries.

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GCC residents ‘score’ longer Qatar access

DOHA, Nov 29, (KUNA): Qatar Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and the Permanent Committee for Managing Visitor Entry, has announced updates to the “Hayya” GCC Residents Visa (A2), according to the official Qatar News Agency (QNA).

The new features are designed to make travel to Qatar smoother and more convenient during a season rich in international sporting, cultural, and entertainment events.

The updates, which will take effect on November 30, 2025, allow visitors from GCC countries to stay in Qatar for up to two months and offers multiple-entry access.

These enhancements are designed to make it easier for visitors to attend a variety of events throughout the season and enjoy a seamless entry experience across all points of arrival.

These updates come at a key moment as Qatar prepares to welcome regional visitors for the 2025 FIFA Arab Cup alongside a packed events calendar.

The new visa features allow GCC residents to move in and out of the country with ease, enabling fans to attend matches and enjoy Qatar’s broader cultural and entertainment offerings.

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Prostate cancer hits 51 Kuwaitis, 40 expats annually

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) Campaign launched its prostate cancer awareness campaign under the slogan, “Your Health Deserves your Attention.”

The campaign is held in November, which is designated globally as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. It is being conducted in cooperation with the Kuwaiti Urological Association.

Chairman of CAN Board of Directors Dr. Khalid

Al-Saleh stated that this campaign is part of ongoing efforts to promote preventative healthcare and raise awareness about prostate cancer.

He revealed the campaign aims to provide the public with the necessary medical information through the specialized medical teams offering consultations in shopping malls.

He added that awareness lectures will be organized and men will be encouraged to undergo tumor marker testing, which helps in the early detection of cancer, treatment and prevention, especially for older men.

He pointed out that the campaign includes various activities to reach the largest possible segment of the target age group, taking into consideration the increasing rate of this type of cancer among men.

He cited the 2020 statistics issued by Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC), indicating that 51 cases of prostate cancer are discovered among Kuwaitis annually -- 8.7 percent of all registered cancer cases, while non-Kuwaitis account for around 40 cases annually or 6.6 percent of the total.

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Dasman Diabetes Institute applauds Dr. Bahman’s achievements

2 Kuwaiti researchers win L’Oreal-UNESCO Awards



Dr. Fatemah Bahman from Dasman Diabetes Institute receiving the L’Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Middle East Award for 2025.

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) announced on Friday that two Kuwaiti researchers won the L’Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Middle East Award for 2024 and 2025, in recognition of their scientific contributions in the fields of Chemistry and genetics, reports Al-Seyassah.

KFAS disclosed on its official X account that Dr. Entessar Al-Hetlani, Chemistry Professor at Kuwait University (KU), won the 2024 award for her research on deep ultraviolet Raman spectroscopy and its applications in forensics and materials detection.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The State of Kuwait marked on Saturday the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and renewed its unwavering stance with Palestinians and their just cause.

In a statement by the Foreign Ministry, the State of Kuwait reflected its strong support towards the Palestinian people and their undeniable struggle to attain their rights in an independent state within the June 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital of the country.

The statement went on to reflect Kuwait’s admiration of the resilience of the Palestinian people and their just cause, condemning in the same breath, the abhorrent and illegal practices of the Israeli occupation forces, which require an unequivocal international stance to stop violations and injustices. (KUNA)



3 Kuwait eyes IMO co-operation to enhance ‘maritime’ safety



8 ALSAYER promotes hybrid vehicle awareness



15 More than 10,000 participants join the 11th edition of the Gulf Bank marathon

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:59	Asr	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:23	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr	11:36	Isha	18:11

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.
By Night: Rather cold and cloudy with light to moderate

Weather			
southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-28 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	25	17	
Kuwait Airport	27	10	

Abdaly	28	10
Jahra	27	14
Failaka Island	25	13
Salmiyah	24	19
Ahmadi	26	13
Nuwaisib	27	14
Wafra	27	12

Rich mixture of heritage, culture on offer: envoy

14,000 Kuwaitis visited Russia in 9 months; Sochi poised to attract travelers : Zheltov

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Russian Ambassador to Kuwait Vladimir Zheltov confirmed that tourism between the two countries is experiencing rapid growth, indicating that Russia welcomed 16,200 Kuwaiti tourists in 2024, while the first nine months of 2025 witnessed the arrival of 14,000 Kuwaiti tourists -- an increase of nine percent compared to the same period last year, and that this number is expected to reach around 18,000 by the end of 2025.

In his speech at the Sochi Winter Roadshow at the Radisson Blu Hotel recently, Zheltov pointed out that this increase is a manifestation of “the growing interest among Kuwaiti travelers in exploring Russian destinations.”

He said the upcoming winter sea-



Vladimir Zheltov

son, from December to February, will offer a unique experience for

Kuwaiti travelers, combining the charm of the warm Black Sea with the snow-capped peaks of the Caucasus Mountains.

“This is a blend of marine and recreational activities with world-class ski resorts, all in one trip. Sochi is poised to become a new and attractive winter destination for Kuwaitis,” he disclosed.

He clarified that Russia is not limited to Sochi alone, as Moscow and St. Petersburg continue to offer a rich mix of heritage, culture, world-class cuisine, events and the unique character of Russian winter.

He then thanked the Russian and Kuwaiti entities involved in organizing the roadshow, along with Jazeera Airways.

He wished the participants a successful and rewarding experience.



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister

Amir congratulates Albania Pres. on Independence Day

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Friday a cable to the President of Albania, Bajram Begaj, congratulating him on his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir wished the president and the people of Albania further progress and development.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Friday a cable of con-

gratulations to the President of Albania, Bajram Begaj, on his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the President good health and welfare.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Friday a cable to the President of Albania, Bajram Begaj, congratulating him on his country's Independence Day.

Kuwait keen to boost rights protection

National cadres undergo training in humanitarian law

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): Deputy Chairman of the National Committee for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Adviser Abdulrahman Al-Mehanna affirmed the committee's keenness on preparing national cadres capable of training officials, and building sustainable capacity to disseminate knowledge and strengthen compliance with international obligations.

Al-Mehanna made the statement to KUNA following the conclusion of the second phase of a training program organized by the National Committee.

The program is in cooperation with the regional delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Foreign Ministry's human rights department, and the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, under the title “Accredited National Trainer in International Humanitarian Law.”

He said the significance of preparing accredited national trainers lies in reinforcing the State's institutional capacity to spread IHL rules across official bodies, ensuring the presence of qualified experts able to deliver specialized training when needed, and establishing a unified understanding of the State's international obligations.

It also lies in developing training programs compatible



Participants of the forum.

KUNA photo

with national realities and supportive of governmental readiness in handling issues related to conflicts and emergencies in line with international standards.

He explained that the first phase focused on core IHL principles, including protection of persons and civilian ob-

jects, rules of international and non-international armed conflicts, responsibility for violations, and mechanisms for implementing the law.

The second phase, he expounded, addressed evaluation of research and presentations, training methodologies, prepa-

ration of training material, information delivery, and mock trials.

He noted that the program's lecturers and trainers included national experts in IHL, comprising judges, advisers, and professors of international criminal law, in addition to specialized legal experts from the Red Cross regional delegation.

He added that participating bodies included the Ministry of Justice, Fatwa and Legislation Department, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defense, Health, and Information, along with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

He extended sincere appreciation to the ICRC Regional Delegation, the Foreign Ministry's Human Rights Department, and the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies for their fruitful cooperation with the National Committee for IHL in ensuring the program's success and supporting all efforts that enhance human rights protection and uphold IHL principles.

Concluding his statement to KUNA, the Deputy Chairman expressed the committee's aspiration to develop accredited national trainers to strengthen institutional awareness, integrate IHL rules into national training and policies, and raise practical compliance with its provisions.

The training program, held from November 23-27 at the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, comes with efforts to promote IHL principles, realize the objectives of relevant international conventions, enhance international cooperation in this field, and expand national awareness of these principles.

900 programs underway in 130 countries

PAI lauds UNIDO for industrial innovation, clean energy

RIYADH, Nov 29, (KUNA): Acting Director General of Kuwait's Public Authority for Industry (PAI) Shamlan Al-Juhaidli praised the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for carrying out over 900 development programs and initiatives across 130 countries worldwide.

Al-Juhaidli said in his speech at the 21st UNIDO General Conference in Riyadh, held recently, that these initiatives focused on industrial innovation, clean energy, supply chain

development, and enhancing the productive efficiency of developing countries.

He highlighted UNIDO's programs for helping cut over 15 million tons of emissions annually through circular economy practices and clean technologies.

This supports global efforts to protect the environment and balance economic growth with environmental sustainability, he added.

Al-Juhaidli stressed the need to support national industries and boost their com-

petitiveness and innovation, in line with UNIDO's goals of enhancing international cooperation, sharing expertise, and empowering women and youth, as well as with the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN 2030 Agenda.

The Kuwaiti delegation also took part in a high-level roundtable that reviewed countries policies on localizing value-added industries and explored ways to benefit from these approaches.



The Kuwaiti delegation taking part in the forum.

KUNA photo

Kuwait Radio updates shows on KAC aircraft

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): Dr. Yusuf Al-Suraye, Director General of the General Directorate of Radio at the Ministry of Information, said the Kuwait Radio Station has continuously updated programs presented on the Kuwait Airways screens.

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Al-Suraye said the continuous cooperation between the radio station and the KAC aimed at promoting the Kuwaiti cultural and media heritage, entertaining passengers with top programs broadcast since the 60s.

These programs were the making of top actors from Kuwait and other Gulf countries, pioneers of the vocal audio drama.

Among the programs available on the KAC screens are “shadi al-khaleej,” “gahwat bu rashed,” “nojoom al-qemaa,” “mol' al-hawaye,” “githarat adabiya,” “nafeza ala al-tareekh,” “bagaya alleil,” “akhbar juhaina,” and “anbar akhu belal.”

These programs, he added, are intended to enable passengers get acquainted with Kuwait's artistic identity and preserve the audio-visual heritage.

Kuwait's external debt reaches KD 22 bln by Q2, 2025, up 8 pc

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Kuwait's total external debt rose by approximately 8.06 percent year-on-year at the end of the second quarter of 2025, equivalent to KD 1.64 billion (USD 5.35 billion), coinciding with the enactment of the Liquidity and Finance Law, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Kuwait's external debt reached KD 22 billion (USD 71.78 billion) at the end of the second quarter of this year, compared to KD 20.36 billion (USD 66.43 billion) in the same quarter of 2024.

According to quarterly statistics issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait's external debt grew by approximately 8.21 percent compared to its level in the first quarter of 2025 (KD 20.33 billion).

The data includes government external debt balances, comprising end-of-period

loan balances and other credit facilities as detailed in the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (Sixth Edition), as well as the Central Bank of Kuwait's external liabilities and Special Drawing Rights allocations. It also includes external debt balances of the private sector, which cover local banks, investment companies, exchange companies, insurance companies, and non-financial private sector companies.

It is worth noting that the Cabinet issued Decree Law No. 60/2025 in March 2025 concerning financing and liquidity, which set the limit for public debt at a maximum of KD 30 billion or its equivalent in convertible foreign currencies. The law also authorized the government to issue financial instruments with maturities of up to 50 years.

Issa stressed “we will not hesitate in imposing legal and administrative penalties on them to safeguard the shareholders' funds, which are entrusted in the hands of the ministry. These penalties will not be limited to employees of the cooperative sector, as they extend to the board of directors or private company supplying goods, food and consumer products proven to be involved in violations or manipulations to achieve undue financial gain or serve personal interest at the expense of the cooperatives.”

He explained that inspectors play a crucial role, serving as the link between the ministry and the boards of directors of cooperatives. He emphasized that their reports, including audit findings and recommendations, have significant implications, leading to important decisions, such as dissolving the board, dismissing members, or referring cases to the prosecution.

matter to the Public Prosecution.

In a press statement, Issa pointed out that “the investigation referrals are in compliance with the directive of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, and in line with the slogan of the ministry regarding the regulation of cooperative work based on ‘cooperation without compromise’. This measure serves the interests of the inspectors and protects the reputation and work of those who are competent and work diligently, devotedly and sincerely. Their reports, which are submitted to the ministry periodically and cover all the activities of the boards of directors, have contributed to proving the violations and transgressions committed.”

Regarding incompetent inspectors whose negligence or collusion harmed the cooperatives or negatively affected their financial standing and solvency,

Kuwaiti team attends event

Forum ponders ways to build cities preserving Arab identity

CAIRO, Nov 29, (KUNA): The activities of the “Sustainable Cities with an Arab Identity” forum kicked off Saturday, organized by the Federation of Arab Engineers (FAE).

It is held in cooperation with the Arab Committee of Consulting Engineering Offices and Institutions and the Arab Architects Committee, under the patronage of the Arab League.

Secretary-General of the FAE Dr. Adel Al-Hadithi said in his opening speech that the main challenge is “how to build modern cities that meet today's requirements, energy efficiency, smart resource management, sustainable transport, and high quality of life, while preserving the spirit and Arab identity.” He stressed that sustainability in the Arab world goes beyond green buildings and renewable energy, highlighting the value of sharing successful urban models from across the region.

The conference presents advanced engineering solutions, including smart construction, modern waste-management systems, electric and shared mobility, AI applications in city management, and sustainable materials. Al-Hadithi called for strategic partnerships among engineers, architects, researchers, policymakers, the private sector, and civil society, emphasizing that sustainable development requires coordinated efforts, supportive policies, proper financing, and strong technical capacity.

He urged the development of a shared Arab framework for future cities, adaptable to each country yet aligned with a

common vision, as well as updated educational programs to prepare the next generation of engineers and planners.

Dr. Adel Al-Mishri, Chairman of the Arab Consulting Engineering Offices and institutions, welcomed participants, noting that Arab civilization has long viewed cities as systems of values and balanced development. He said the challenges of the 21st century, climate change, resource pressure, population growth, require rethinking the sustainable city to balance heritage and modernity and to establish a lasting Arab identity. He described the Arab-identity sustainable city as “a civilizational project inspired by our history to build a modern and sustainable future.”

Waleed Al-Arabi, Head of Housing and Urban Development at the Arab League, said Arab cities need new visions and innovative tools that support growth while preserving authenticity. He noted the Arab League's recent focus on sustainable development through joint strategies in housing, urban development, environment, and energy, as well as capacity-building and knowledge-exchange initiatives. He affirmed the League's readiness to translate the forum's recommendations into practical programs.

The forum gathers experts, researchers, ministries, municipalities, universities, engineering offices, and environmental bodies from across the Arab world, serving as a regional platform for exchanging expertise and shaping future urban visions with a sustainable Arab identity.

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs and Director General of the Department of Planning and Administrative Development at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Sayed Issa revealed that 28 financial and administrative controllers appointed by the ministry in 15 cooperative societies and unions have been referred for internal investigation.

This is due to a number of serious financial and administrative violations committed by the boards of directors of the cooperatives and unions, as proven by investigation committees formed to review their operations and accounts. Ministerial decisions were issued to dissolve or dismiss members and refer the

diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

The good aspects ignored by Western media

"FROM time to time, European and American media outlets misrepresent Arabs when discussing the Arab region, portraying it as a place of Islamic terrorism and highlighting women wearing headscarves, while declaring Finland as the happiest country in the world," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Their analysis is unfair. What about Europe? I visited Helsinki, the capital of Finland, in 2008. I wished I did not go. For example, when I asked where is the supermarket, they told me to take a taxi to the airport. The fare was equivalent to KD28 each way, meaning I had to pay KD56 or about \$200, just to enter a cooperative society.

What is this? Furthermore, Finns pay taxes to the government to avail services, including healthcare. I felt a longing to leave and visit another European country, from where I could take a flight back home.

"Let us look at Kuwait. There are no taxes, expatriates receive free healthcare, and the inflation rate is low, not exceeding three percent. That is not all. Look at Kuwaiti charities that benefit people, and then the proposal to pay the debts of those in financial distress, such that members of society contribute to paying the borrowers' debts. This is an initiative that has not been implemented in any other country around the world.

"Moreover, Kuwait contributes to the development of remote countries in Central America, in addition to its aid for Arab countries. Tell me, is there any other country besides Kuwait that gives loans to the entire world? Therefore, Kuwait and other Gulf countries deserve the Nobel Prize in Economics.

"During a visit to Milan, Italy, my family and I entered a restaurant and asked where the restroom is. They said, 'No, sit at a table and order your food, then you can go to the restroom.' In our Arab countries, we say, 'Please come in', to anyone.

"In 1982, I was working at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Belgrade when I read about tourists from Yugoslavia who traveled to Egypt and returned, publishing their impressions in Belgrade newspapers and praising the Egyptian people. In Denmark, I asked a Dane for directions to a certain street, but he completely ignored me. In Germany, I stood next to an ATM, hesitant to insert my card for fear it would get stuck. A German man looked at me and said, 'Get away from the machine. Go away.'

"In Britain, there are numerous taxes, such as inheritance tax, savings tax, milk tax and death tax. The British suffer from the local economic situation, and many have fled to Dubai for two reasons: increased taxes and high crime rates. I worked in New York as my country's permanent delegate to the United Nations in 1985, during President Ronald Reagan's administration. The most pressing global issues at the time were the disastrous earthquake in Mexico,

debts of developing countries and famine in Africa. I felt that life there boiled down to two words: 'buildings' and 'work'.

"I lived on Second Avenue. When I went downstairs to buy food, a man asked me, 'Do you want drugs?' Another said, 'Give me money', and I gave it to him out of fear. They enforce laws and we have good feelings. I am not saying that Arab countries are paradise, but we have beautiful feelings, generosity and a wonderful history. These are the most beautiful aspects of life—something that Western newspapers do not mention."

Also :

"First, I congratulate the Wafra farmers on the opening of their seasonal market, nestled in the midst of their productive farms in the far southern part of Kuwait. I also congratulate the Abdally farmers on the opening of their seasonal market in the midst of their productive farms in the far northern part of Kuwait," Kuwait Farmers Union Secretary **Ahmad Nasser Al-Shabak** wrote for **Al-Seyassah**.

"Both markets are a source of pride for every Kuwaiti farmer and every consumer looking for fresh, healthy and safe agricultural products at reasonable prices.

"We, at the Union, adopted a policy of opening high-quality marketing outlets and organizing agricultural festivals throughout winter and spring in numerous agricultural and residential areas to serve Kuwaiti farmers.

"This marketing policy also aims to provide services to consumers in various regions at reasonable prices for the benefit of both consumers and producers.

"Based on this policy adopted by the Union, the oldest agricultural association in Kuwait, and in cooperation with Wafra Agricultural Association, Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) and other relevant authorities, and in accordance with the directives of the political leadership, agricultural markets in Wafra and Abdally have become a reality during weekends and official holidays throughout the winter and spring months.

"The Union market, located behind Al-Shuraian Mosque, which is bustling with diverse agricultural and food activities, reopened this season to be available to all productive farmers in Abdally under the direct management of the Union and through trusted supervisors.

"The doors of the Union in Al-Rabia are open to any farmer who submits a suggestion. Our utmost priority is the satisfaction of all Kuwaiti productive farmers.

"Thanks Allah, things are improving.

"The Union believes in having multiple licensed agricultural markets in agricultural areas, specifically Abdally and Wafra.

"The Union also believes in the concept of tourism farms, such that each farm has a licensed agricultural exhibition equipped with public facilities and dedicated to selling agricultural products to visitors at reasonable prices.

"Selling agricultural and food products, especially in exhibitions, designated locations, and outlets, at clean stalls in a comfortable

atmosphere at the entrance of the farm, and under the supervision and inspection of the relevant food and nutrition authorities, is better for consumers than selling agricultural and food products in haphazard locations, which lack general hygiene and health and environmental standards.

"PAAAFR submitted a proposal to the relevant authorities to grant farmers in agricultural areas the opportunity to market their local products in a portion of their farms according to the terms and conditions.

"This makes marketing sites in agricultural areas beneficial for farmers, consumers and the State, which could collect good annual fees from farm owners.

"In most agricultural countries around the world, there is what is known as the 'agricultural countryside', which attracts lovers of greenery and beautiful countryside to spend pleasant times, returning with supplies enough to last a whole week.

"Visiting remote border agricultural areas is very important for young people from educational, cultural and patriotic perspectives, as it allows them to learn about parts of their country, understand the importance of manual labor, and witness firsthand the effort that producers make to provide them with fresh and safe vegetables and fruits."

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"In today's turbulent world, I believe that a rational person, especially the one who is socially aware, is required to deal with everything he encounters in a logical and balanced manner, particularly when interacting with different personalities," **Khaled Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"For example, one cannot insist on rudely treating someone who treats him kindly, and vice versa.

"Therefore, whoever wants to live a moderate, balanced and psychologically stable life must treat others according to what they deserve and what the situation demands.

"Some examples in this context include rudeness towards rude people. A rude person is usually coarse and sometimes lacks understanding, such that he does realize his rude behavior alienates others, prevents them from treating him kindly, and he may even provoke them.

"A rational person cannot continue to treat a foolish person kindly, because he only understands the language of rudeness, insolence, shamelessness and verbal abuse.

"A rude person cannot be reformed because he chose to be rude and coarse. A well-adjusted person is not required to reform him, but rather to deal with him according to his rudeness.

"On the other hand, kind and polite people should be treated with kindness."

— **Compiled by Simi K.Kutty**



KUNA photo
Director General of the Kuwait Coast Guard, Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah meets IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez.

Kuwait eyes IMO cooperation to enhance 'maritime' safety

LONDON, Nov 29, (KUNA): Director General of the Kuwait Coast Guard, Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah, led Kuwait's delegation Friday to the 34th session of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Assembly in London.

Kuwait's participation included attending the Assembly's presidential elections to choose the president and vice presidents, with Kuwait's Ambassador to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland Bader Al-Munayekh joining the session.

Kuwait's engagement reflects its com-

mitment to supporting the IMO's leadership bodies and contributing to the development of its future policies.

On the sidelines of the meetings, Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali-Sabah discussed with IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez Kuwait's role in maritime safety and security, shipping-related technical matters, and its continued commitment to cooperation with the IMO, enhancing maritime transport efficiency, navigation safety, and protection of the marine environment.

'No encroachments, illegal trade activity'

MC seeks ministries help

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The fact-finding committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Waleed Al-Dagher, held an extensive meeting on Thursday, with the directors of the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department, Sanitation Department, Road Works Department, Municipal Services Audit and Follow-up Department, and the safety departments in the governorate branches of Kuwait Municipality in attendance.

The committee discussed two items in its agenda -- encroachments on State properties for commercial use and engaging in commercial activities in unlicensed locations. It focused on the most important field observations, methods for controlling encroachments, and mechanisms for strengthening oversight and ensuring the readiness of technical teams to work firmly and seriously in order to protect State properties, ascertain proper enforcement of the law, and safeguard public funds.

It recommended retention of the two items in the agenda for further study, based on its objectives and working mechanism. This mechanism includes defining the geographical scope of the research (municipal branches in the governorates), establishing a mechanism for receiving complaints, observations and official correspondence, and reviewing reports from the Engineering Audit and Follow-up, Sanitation and Road Works departments regarding encroachments and commercial exploitation of State properties.

The directors of the relevant departments in the Municipality briefed the committee about the procedures in uncovering encroachments or unauthorized use of State properties. They talked about the possibility of coordination between the Municipality and the ministries of Finance and Commerce to deal with illegal activities on State properties.

Moreover, the committee deliberated on the need to identify priority locations for field inspections, such as industrial areas, public squares, public properties, and commercially exploited government plots, as well as scheduling field visits and collecting relevant data.

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Center opened: The Ministry of Interior announced the opening of the Citizens Service Center for the elderly and people with disabilities in Ardiya, reports Al-Anba daily.

The center aims to enable the beneficiaries to complete their transactions easily and without leaving their vehicles, and providing them with more flexible and humanitarian services.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives the General Manager of Sahara Al-Rawla Company Abdulaziz Matrouk Al-Ruwaili, along with Farwaniya Project Manager Engineer Ahmed Kamel Abdul Hamid and Engineer Sharif Ibrahim from the Projects Monitoring Department.

Governor reviews road repair progress in Farwaniya region

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received the General Manager of Sahara Al-Rawla Company Abdulaziz Matrouk Al-Ruwaili, along with Farwaniya Project Manager Engineer Ahmed Kamel Abdul Hamid and Engineer Sharif Ibrahim from the Projects Monitoring Department.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the delegation presented the governor with a detailed report on

the company's activities in Farwaniya Governorate, specifically regarding major road maintenance projects. Progress achieved and work plans for the upcoming period were also reviewed.

The governor expressed his appreciation for the company's efforts in enhancing the governorate's road network, stressing the importance of maintaining the highest quality standards to ensure improved infrastructure and smoother traffic flow.

Checkbook stolen

Motorist flees car loaded with drugs

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Jahra police patrol officers seized a car containing a large quantity of various narcotics after its driver fled upon sensing police presence in an undisclosed area in Jahra Governorate, reports Al-Anba daily.

The officers were conducting routine patrol in the area when they noticed a car parked in a suspicious manner. When they approached the car, the driver fled on foot.

The area was immediately cordoned off and the car was searched thoroughly.

The search led to the discovery of 44 Lyrica pills, 31 bags of synthetic cannabinoids (chemicals), seven packs of methamphetamine (crystal meth), two packs of Lyrica powder and various drug paraphernalia.

The Criminal Investigation Department in the Interior Ministry has been instructed to apprehend the suspect.

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Checkbook stolen: A citizen filed a report at Nugra Police Station, in his capacity as his wife's legal representative, indicating his wife owns a commercial establishment and a checkbook was stolen from the establishment, reports Al-Anba daily.

The complainant indicated that he found out the checkbook theft on Oct 2, 2025, when an embassy contacted him, informing him about the financial claim of a factory based on the check issued by the establishment. Upon verification, it was confirmed that the check was taken from the missing checkbook.

The complainant accused a former employee of stealing the checkbook. A case was registered and investigations are ongoing.

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40 pigeons stolen: A Gulf national lodged a complaint at Kabad Police Station, stating that his pigeon coop in Kabad was burglarized and an unknown person stole about 40 pigeons of a valuable breed, which he was planning to sell in an auction, reports Al-Anba daily.

The complainant stated that he does not suspect anyone and that the coop showed no signs of forced entry. He believes the thief gained access by climbing over the wall.

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15 days closure: The General Traffic Department at the Interior Ministry announced the partial closure of Arabian Gulf Street, going towards Kuwait Towers, for 15 days, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to the department, the road closure affects one lane of Arabian Gulf Street, going towards Kuwait Towers, starting from the Second Ring Road intersection to the Kuwait Engineers Society intersection.

It added that the decision took effect at 6:00 pm on Saturday and will continue for a period of 15 days.

PAM, Mol for workers' safety

Probe on workplace accidents

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has intensified investigations into workplace accidents and it is preparing technical reports in this regard in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, reports Al-Anba daily.

PAM affirmed that in line with the efforts of the State to improve the work environment and enhance occupational health and safety standards, its National Center for Occupational Health and Safety continues to intensify the investigation of workplace accidents and injuries in various sectors. This includes assessing the establishments' compliance with safety regulations in cooperation with the Investigations General Department at the Interior Ministry.

PAM revealed that the concerned teams are now preparing comprehensive tech-

nical reports, which include an analysis of circumstances leading to the accident, identification of its causes, evaluation of preventive measures implemented in the workplace, and monitoring observations or violations that may have contributed to the accidents in order to guarantee the protection of the rights of both the workers and employers.

It stressed that this cooperation embodies the institutional partnership between government entities and contributes to establishing a culture of safety in workplaces, as well as reducing accidents and injuries. This is in addition to the awareness and oversight roles that the Authority plays to ensure compliance with professional standards, while reaffirming its commitment to increase the efficiency of its inspection teams.

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Jahra Governorate photo
Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi participates in the World Diabetes Day event.

Jahra Governor joins ‘Diabetes Day’ drive

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi participated in the World Diabetes Day event organized by the Jahra Health Zone at the Jahra Health Center, in the presence of several health and medical officials.

According to a press release issued by Jahra Governorate, the participation reflects the governorate’s support for national programs aimed at promoting health awareness and establishing a culture of prevention and early detection of chronic diseases.

The event focused on educating the public about diabetes prevention, promoting healthy lifestyles, and raising awareness of best health practices to reduce associated risks. Activities included medical consultations, vital signs measurements, and educational programs targeting various age groups to enhance community health and build a sustainable health environment.

During his tour, Jahra Governor Al-Habashi praised the efforts of the health staff and the event’s organization, emphasizing the Jahra Governorate’s commitment to supporting health initiatives that aim to protect the community and raise health awareness among citizens and residents.

MPW highlights massive infrastructure overhaul

Kuwait's transport future takes shape

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Ministry of Public Works highlighted its most prominent achievements and future projects in a comprehensive presentation delivered by its official spokesperson Eng. Ahmed Al-Saleh on Wednesday at the Government Communication Center, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He highlighted the significant progress made in road and infrastructure maintenance projects, as well as major transportation projects, along with efforts to enhance governance and digital transformation.

Eng. Al-Saleh explained that the ministry achieved substantial progress in implementing major maintenance contracts, including paving 9.5 million square meters of asphalt on internal roads in various governorates and 5.5 million square meters on highways, through 12 contracts for internal road maintenance and six contracts for highways.

The ministry is following a clear plan in coordination with the Ministry of Interior to ensure smooth traffic flow during road maintenance.

He affirmed the ministry’s commitment to meeting citizens’ needs and overcoming any obstacles they may face.

Eng. Al-Saleh revealed that the Gulf Railway project will extend from the Nuwaiseeb border crossing to Shadadiya, covering 111 kilometers, with a main station in Shadadiya covering an area of two million square meters.

He highlighted that the project also includes a high-speed rail link between Kuwait and Riyadh, and disclosed that the final design will be submitted in January 2026, paving the way for implementation and completion between 2028 and 2030.

Eng. Al-Saleh announced the imminent signing of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project contract next month, as part of the memorandum of understanding with China.

He highlighted the huge progress on the new Kuwait International Airport project, which includes three components - the passenger terminal, parking



Al-Saleh

facilities, and roads and services - and is expected to become a landmark for air transport in the region.

Eng. Al-Saleh highlighted several recent achievements, including the opening of the Darwazat Al-Abdulrazzaq intersection and the Avenues Mall bridge.

He noted the nearing completion of vital sections of the Damascus Street development project, the South Surra roads, and the Sabah Al-Nasser bridge, which are expected to significantly reduce traffic congestion.

Eng. Al-Saleh also discussed the ministry’s efforts in developing wastewater infrastructure.

He explained that the Umm Al-Hayman wastewater treatment plant project is being implemented through a public-private partnership. The plant will have a production capacity of 500,000 cubic meters of tertiary and quaternary treated water for supplying agricultural areas and gardens in the southern and central regions.

Work is also ongoing to upgrade the Kabad North wastewater treatment plant to improve the wastewater system in the northern region and maximize the use of treated water for landscaping.

Eng. Al-Saleh emphasized the ministry’s commitment to the highest quality standards by upgrading road laboratories and the government center for testing, quality control, and research with the latest technologies.

He highlighted the importance of strengthening governance and transparency through the adoption of the Corporate Governance Guide, participation in the “Performance” project in cooperation with the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), and the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

Eng. Al-Saleh affirmed the significant progress the ministry has made in digital transformation, including the launch of new e-services through the Sahel application and the development of a unified GIS system to accurately monitor road projects and maintenance, while documenting data for many years.

He said the ministry has achieved 100 percent Kuwaitization of government contracts in maintenance projects, ensuring job security for Kuwaiti employees and training them to operate and maintain wastewater treatment plants.

Eng. Al-Saleh concluded by emphasizing the strong support provided by the political leadership and His Highness the Prime Minister for the ministry’s projects, praising cooperation with various government entities, and commending the public’s understanding of ongoing efforts to provide advanced and sustainable infrastructure befitting Kuwait.

Approved channels outlined

Social Affairs urges charities to mobilize aid for Sudanese

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Charitable Societies and Foundations Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs contacted the heads of the boards of directors of charitable organizations regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese, based on an official letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In its circular, the department stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested coordination with charitable organizations to look into the possibility of providing relief for displaced persons and refugees among the Sudanese through certain channels. These channels include cooperation with Sudanese

humanitarian and charitable organizations accredited in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ electronic humanitarian work system, which includes a number of officially accredited Sudanese entities.

The circular added that other channels are cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent or the Humanitarian Aid Commission in Sudan in providing aid, as well as international organizations affiliated with the United Nations, on condition that this is done after obtaining the necessary approvals and permits.

The department asked the charitable organizations to inform it of the extent of their ability to participate in relief efforts for the refugees and displaced persons among the Sudanese, such that the necessary action is taken as per the response of the organizations.

Farwaniya Governor hosts social activist Hala Al-Enezi

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received social activist and writer Hala Al-Enezi at his office on Thursday.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Al-Enezi presented the governor with a copy of her new book in appreciation of the governorate’s efforts to support cultural and social initiatives. During the meeting, the governor praised Al-Enezi’s contributions to raising community awareness, and affirmed Farwaniya Governorate’s commitment to supporting creativity and encouraging national talent in various fields.

Al-Enezi expressed her gratitude for the warm reception and commended



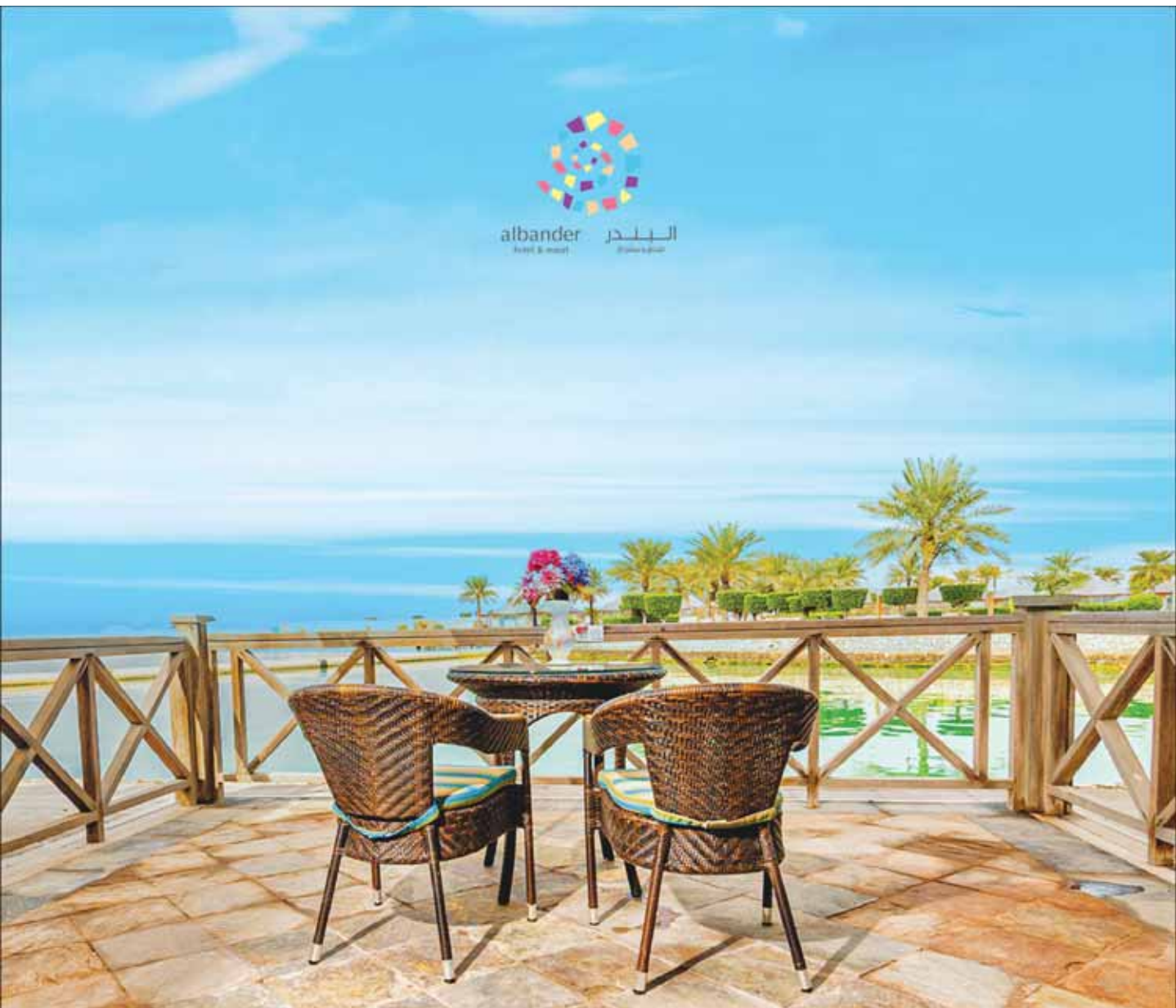
Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor with social activist and writer Hala Al-Enezi.

the governorate’s ongoing support of cultural and social activities.

Egyptian Consulate closed Dec 2-3

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Egyptian Consulate in Kuwait announced that it will be closed on Tuesday, December 2 and Wednesday, December

3, due to the parliamentary elections and vote counting. Work will resume on Thursday, December 4, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



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AU engineering students clinch 2nd place at Kuwait AI Summit

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Engineering Students from the Australian University (AU) secured second place in the Kuwait AI Summit, highlighting the university’s continued commitment to innovation and emerging technologies.

The event was hosted by the Arab Open University, featuring more than 18 projects represented by various Kuwait’s universities. AU students from Civil Engineering department Salman Hussain and Yousef Albkoor earned recognition for their graduation project, which was supervised by Dr. Ahmed Assad, Assistant Professor at AU. The project utilizes advanced YOLO deep-learning models to classify 15 types of heavy



Australian University photo
The winning team.

construction equipment with an accuracy of 94%, providing a powerful AI solution for real-time site monitoring, safety enhancement, and operational efficiency.

This achievement underscores AU’s dedication to empowering students with the skills and opportunities needed to excel in next-generation engineering fields.

Commenting on the achievement, Dr. Assad said: “This achievement

reflects our commitment to equipping our civil engineering students with the skills and knowledge needed to lead the digitalization of the construction industry. Through hands-on training in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and computer vision, we aim to prepare our students for the emerging era of Construction 4.0 and the technological transformation shaping our field.”

10 projects to modernize networks

CAPT clears MEW’s KD 202m tenders

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) approved the awarding of 10 tenders for the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy in November, at a total value of KD 202.199 million.

Reliable sources informed the newspaper that these tenders fulfilled all stages stipulated in the Public Tenders Law, from announcement to award, in accordance with applicable regulations and laws, and based on the lowest prices that met the technical specifications and requirements.

Sources said the tenders are awaiting approval from the State Audit Bureau (SAB), indicating that the tenders aim to support the work in various sectors of the ministry, which is keen on modernizing the electricity and water networks and their components, from production plants to main substations, to ensure full readi-

ness to handle loads, especially during the summer months when energy demand increases.

Sources confirmed these tenders also contribute to the supply of fresh water for new residential areas, given that electricity and water are among the most vital services in these areas.

Sources revealed that the three highest tender amounts were for high-efficiency engineering works for open turbines – Phase II in Subiya Power Station at a value of KD87.28, followed by the tender for the initial operation of the feeder lines for Khairan Thermal Power Station and the development of the fuel station and Zour Power Station infrastructure at a value of KD57.2 million, and then the tender for the construction of Mutlaa Pumping Station at a value of KD29.9 million.

Sources added that the 10 tenders are scheduled to be referred to SAB for audit and review, prior to approval and commencing work if the bureau has no objection.

Notarization Law gets major overhaul

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Amiri Decree Law No. 147/2025 introduced major amendments to some provisions of Notarization Law No. 10/2020, particularly the regulation of issuing powers of attorney, their validity periods, and the mechanism for their notarization, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Notarization Department at the Ministry of Justice started implementing the amendments immediately upon their issuance. This involved updating the procedures in place at the Notarization Department and its offices and adopting the new controls to ensure the smooth processing of transactions and raise the level of accuracy and reliability of official documents. The ministry broadcasted a video featuring Khalid Suleiman Al-Haddad from the office of the Assistant Undersecretary for Judicial and Legal Affairs, explaining the most important aspects of the amendments.

The law sets the power of attorney period at five years, or a period agreed upon by the parties to the power of attorney, provided that the expiry date of the power of attorney is specified in the document.

Powers of attorney issued before this decree fall into two categories:

1. Fixed-term powers of attorney, which remain valid until their expiry date, the five-year period stipulated in this law, or their expiry for any reason, whichever comes first.
2. Indefinite-term powers of attorney, which remain valid for two years from the date this decree took effect on Nov 2, 2025, or their expiry for any reason.

The ministry clarified that certain powers of attorney are exempt from the amendments, like the commercial powers of attorney or those issued through the decision of the justice minister.



KUNA photo
Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader, Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs

Stronger inter-Gulf cooperation

Kuwait pledges support for GCC ahead of 46th summit

MANAMA, Nov 29, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs, Ambassador Najeeb Al-Bader, affirmed on Friday his country's support to the vision and mission of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Speaking to KUNA on the occasion of the 166th meeting of the GCC ministerial in Bahrain, Al-

Bader revealed that draft laws and recommendations continue to be formulated ahead of the 46th GCC Summit on December third. He indicated that the committee's meeting reflected an earnest desire to bolster inter-GCC cooperation in various fields, including politics, the economy, security, and development.

Kuwait's 'GCC presidency' reflects strategic vision for unity: Al-Yahya

Market, security and global standing accelerated

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, and current chair of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Ministerial Council, said Kuwait's presidency marked a key breakthrough in joint Gulf action, advancing integration, strengthening regional security, and boosting the Council's visibility at regional and international levels.

In an interview with KUNA on Saturday, ahead of the end of Kuwait's GCC presidency, Al-Yahya said Kuwait focused from day one on a solid institutional approach based on active consultation and closer coordination among member states.

The Kuwaiti presidency gave top priority to the economic file as a key cornerstone of the Gulf future, he noted.

Efforts centered on speeding up completion of the common Gulf market and customs union, easing the movement of capital, goods, and services, and creating a more competitive, enticing investment environment to support growth and development, he said. Kuwait also paid special attention to food and water security and renewable energy, he pointed out.

On the political front, Al-Yahya said the GCC maintained a solid, united stance on regional issues, with the Palestinian cause at the forefront. The Council consistently called for an immediate end to the aggression on Gaza, unhindered humanitarian aid, and support for international efforts



Al-Yahya

to revive the peace process based on international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Regarding Yemen, he underscored that the GCC continues to back United Nations efforts to reach a comprehensive political solution that preserves Yemen's unity and sovereignty, and restores security and stability in line with the Gulf initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, and UN Security Council Resolution 2216.

On Lebanon, he reiterated the GCC's steady position in supporting the country and providing ongoing assistance to safeguard its sovereignty, security, and stability.

As for Sudan, Al-Yahya said the GCC supports all regional and international initiatives to restore security and stability there, expressing deep concern over continued fighting and worsening humanitarian conditions.

He urged all parties to respect international humanitarian law, protect civilians, and meet basic needs.

On Syria, he said GCC states have expressed readiness to support recon-

struction and development efforts that help rebuild state institutions and improve living and humanitarian conditions for the Syrian people.

Al-Yahya noted that Kuwait's presidency was marked by strong diplomatic activity, including the GCC-US Summit held in Riyadh on May 14, which discussed ways to enhance cooperation in regional security, energy, innovation, and the digital economy, as well as key regional and international developments.

He also highlighted the GCC-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and the trilateral GCC-ASEAN-China Summit, held in Kuala Lumpur on May 27, describing them as a major step in strengthening Gulf-Asian cooperation.

Kuwait, as current GCC chair, also hosted on October 6 the 29th GCC-EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, along with the Dialogue and Security Conference between the two sides on October 5-6.

These meetings advanced strategic partnership in trade, investment, renewable energy, regional security, mobility, and political dialogue, he mentioned.

Participants master dubbing and vocal techniques

KUNA hosts podcast and voice workshop

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): The KUNA Media Skills Development Center concluded its training program on podcasting, dubbing, and voice-over techniques, with the participation of staff from Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the Public Authority for Youth, and the State Audit Bureau.

The program held since last Sunday and delivered by media specialist Dr. Bassam Al-Jazzaf, included practical training on producing professional podcast from idea selection and identifying target audiences to scripting, recording, editing, and publishing.

Participants also received coaching on professional voice delivery, including tone control, breathing, pacing, vocal coloring, and effective audio expression.

The Training further covered various forms of voice over performance, dubbing, and voice acting, including character analysis, synchronizing audio with movement, scene recording, and performance direction.

The program also introduced participants to recording tools, sound equipment, and editing techniques to achieve professional-grade audio quality and build a cohesive vocal identity.

Dr. Al-Jazzaf told KUNA that such programs have become essential in modern media work, noting that voice has become a strategic tool for institutions to communicate their messages and strengthen their presence and influence.



KUNA photo

Participants in the training program.

He added that strong vocal delivery, expression skills, and audio content creation are now key requirements for professionals in media and corporate communication, adding "the voice can build direct connection with audiences and deliver messages more clearly and effectively than any other medium."

He explained that the program's practical

component allowed participants to apply skills immediately, helping them enhance their vocal performance and produce publishable real world content.

Meanwhile, the KUNA Media Skills Development Center was established in December 1995 and is considered one of Kuwait's leading media training institutions.

Kuwait secures top GCC academic honors

Education Minister congratulates Kuwait's Hamdan Award winners

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): The Ministry of Education on Friday congratulated two Kuwaiti winners of the Hamdan bin Rashid Award for Distinguished Academic Performance after their official selection in the Gulf Cooperation Council's 2025 cycle.

The winners include Huda Al-Mutairi, a psychology teacher at Awatif Al-Adhabi Al-Sabah Secondary School in Ahmadi (Outstanding Teacher category), and student Hessa Al-Kakak from Fatima Al-Surraawi Secondary School in Hawalli (Outstanding Student category).

Education Minister Dr. Adel Al-Tabtabaei told KUNA he phoned both winners to congratulate them, praising their achievement and the high level they demonstrated, which reflects the strength



Dr. Al-Tabtabaei

of Kuwait's education sector in Gulf forums.

He said the success was the result of dedication and sustained effort, commending the team that prepared and followed up the nomination files, particularly the role of award coordinator Mohammed Al-Otaibi for his oversight and detailed work.

The ministry noted that the award files documented three years of professional and academic performance and underwent rigorous evaluation, including professional review and online personal interviews.

It added that the results were formally approved by the Hamdan bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Foundation for Medical and Educational Sciences, with official honoring procedures to be announced later.

The ministry expressed pride in this national educational achievement, affirming its commitment to supporting outstanding national talents. The winners will be honored at a GCC-level ceremony in March.

Authority bans commercial import of pets

PAAAFR plans integrated stray dog shelter

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Plans are underway to establish an integrated shelter for stray dogs in an area measuring 10,000 square meters, reports Al-Rai daily.

Supervisor of Animal Health and Epidemic Control at the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Dr. Ahmad Al-Hamad confirmed that the Authority banned the importation of dogs and cats for commercial purposes. He stated that each citizen is allowed to import only one dog per year, in accordance with the procedures and regulations aimed at addressing the stray dog problem.

Al-Hamad made the statement at a seminar organized by Kuwaiti Lawyers Association recently with the theme "Towards a Compassionate Legal Environment", during which he pointed out that Kuwait witnessed a significant rise in the number of stray dogs and cats in residential areas in recent years. He disclosed this

increase has prompted PAAAFR to intensify its field operations and regulatory measures to address the issue in a way that protects residents and preserves ecological balance.

He said the PAAAFR teams captured thousands of stray dogs in various residential areas within a year, responding to reports received through the emergency hotline and communication channels allotted for residents' complaints. He added the Authority also designated a direct phone line and WhatsApp service at 56575070 to facilitate reporting and speed up response times.

He revealed the efforts of PAAAFR extend beyond capturing animals and include sterilization programs for a number of dogs to control their population before releasing some into suitable environments. He affirmed that some animals are offered for adoption once their health is checked -- a measure aimed at reducing pressure on residential areas and en-

couraging adoption, instead of leaving animals on the streets.

He went on to say that the Authority submitted a request to allocate a 10,000-square-meter land for the establishment of an integrated shelter for stray dogs, away from residential and commercial areas. He added this shelter will include facilities for veterinary care, sterilization and quarantine, in preparation for adoption or rehabilitation.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Lawyers Association announced the formation of a committee for the protection of animal welfare, headed by Attorney Alaa Al-Makhial, to activate the social and environmental roles of the Association, alongside its legal mission.

Secretary of Kuwait Institute for Legal Studies Jarrah Al-Enezi affirmed that the Association is ready to adopt draft animal protection laws, in cooperation with the concerned government agencies.

KU affirms institution's role as pioneering academic hub

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): Kuwait University Director Dr. Dina Al-Mailam said on Thursday that the university will continue its national role as a leading institution, adding that its longstanding journey has been a cornerstone in preparing graduates that supported the country's progress.

In a statement marking the 59th anniversary of the university's establishment, Dr. Al-Mailam stated the Kuwait University - founded in 1966-has consistently contributed to nation-building by promoting education, scholarship, and knowledge.

Over the decades, she noted, the university has continued to develop its academic programs to keep pace with the rapid transformations in the labor market, enhance the quality of its graduates and train them with competitive skills that meet the real needs of future jobs, while expanding cooperation with national and international

institutions.

She highlighted the university's status as a leading research institution by boosting scientific research through advanced laboratories, facilities and specialized centers that allow researchers to pursue innovative solutions to various challenges.

Scientific research, she stressed, is a strategic commitment that contributes to achieving national priorities and future directions, while expanding partnerships locally and globally to strengthen the university's role in developing human capital.

Dr. Al-Mailam expressed pride in the strong support and patronage the university receives from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

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What prevents us from having the largest mall in the region, as well as a major hotel chain, entertainment venues, and more? Does Kuwait have no right to compete in these sectors, given the government and private funds invested abroad due to the difficulties with local investment?

We pose these questions to His Highness the Prime Minister and to all those concerned, in the hopes of moving beyond mere dreams and pronouncements to a reality where citizens play an active role in the development of a regionally competitive economy.

2 Kuwaiti

KFAS added that Dr. Fatemah Bahman, a researcher at Dasman Diabetes Institute, won the 2025 award for her research on genetic links between diet and inflammation and their relationship to metabolic diseases.

KFAS said a ceremony was held in Dubai on Thursday to honor distinguished female scientists in the Middle East region, with the aim of supporting and promoting the role of women in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

It is worth noting that the L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science is a global partnership, which aims to support and empower women in Science

and activate their role in scientific research by honoring outstanding female scientists worldwide.

Dr. Fatemah Bahman from Dasman Diabetes Institute, which was founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), is one of the Arab women honored in the L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Middle East Regional Young Talents Program this year.

Her dedication, scientific excellence and contributions to the advancement of health research continue to inspire the community and solidify scientific progress in Kuwait and the Middle East.

Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) congratulated Dr. Bahman, indicating her achievements are a source of pride for everyone at the Institute.

The L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science Middle East Regional Young Talents Program recognizes the groundbreaking work of female Arabs in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) whose discoveries address urgent challenges and inspire future generations.

Since its global launch in 1998, the program has celebrated more than 4,700 researchers from over 140 countries and associated territories, including 63 researchers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, awarding a total of AED3.8 million in endowments.

Guided by the ethos, "The world needs Science, and Science needs

women," the program continues to champion inclusivity in STEM and highlight women's indispensable role in shaping a more sustainable future.

The Institute expressed pride over this milestone, stressing that it remains dedicated to fostering an environment where scientific innovation thrives.

KIPIC, KNPC

They stated this integration will streamline sales and purchase operations, such as the sale of liquefied natural gas (LNG) by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to KNPC, which purchased about 145,700 metric tons of LNG from KPC in fiscal 2024/2025.

At the same time, it was confirmed that acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KIPIC Wadha Al-Khatib was able to overcome KIPIC's losses in previous years through the initial merger, thereby, achieving net profits of KD52.2 million in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, compared to a loss of KD482.4 million in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

Sources asserted that the acquisition of the three local refineries by KNPC will enable it to utilize all technical and service aspects, leading to an increase in the operational capacity of all local refineries. Sources said this resulted in the total domestic and international refining capacity of KPC reaching 1.83 million barrels per day.

Sources indicated that the initial

and final stages of the mergers are being conducted according to legal procedures executed in a meticulous and professional manner.

Sources added the merger of KPC and KNPC is considered the most remarkable achievement within the comprehensive restructuring strategy of KPC for its subsidiaries, aiming to reduce the number of subsidiaries to just four. Sources said the purpose of the mergers is to streamline expenditures and improve operational efficiency, while unifying budgets to reduce the costs incurred by companies responsible for monitoring and evaluating budgets based on data from the oil companies.

It is worth noting that the production of the three foreign refineries leads to an increase in added value, as the Duqm refinery, which officially began its operation in February 2024, was able to raise its production capacity from 230,000 barrels per day to 255,000 barrels per day. The Vietnamese Nghi Son refinery, in which Kuwait has 35.1 percent share, has a daily refining rate of 200,000 barrels, raising its operational capacity by 20 percent in 2024. The Italian Milazzo Refinery, in which KPC has 50 percent share, produces about 230,000 barrels per day.

Prostate cancer

He explained that KCCC launched this campaign to encourage men over

50 years old to adopt a healthy lifestyle and undergo PSA (prostate-specific antigen) testing. He said a family history of the disease and obesity are among the most significant risk factors. He stressed that adopting a healthy lifestyle, both in terms of diet and physical activity, is the first line of defense against various diseases, including prostate cancer, in addition to maintaining a healthy weight and undergoing regular checkups.

GCC residents

Through the Hayya Platform, Qatar continues to ensure a smooth arrival experience and strong operational readiness for the tournament and other major events during peak periods.

Commenting on the new updates, Director of Hayya, Saeed Al Kuwari said: "These measures go beyond simple procedural changes. They reflect Qatar Tourism's broader vision to strengthen the country's openness to the region, facilitate visitor movement during major sports and cultural events, increase arrivals, and enhance tourism's contribution to the national economy. They also reinforce Qatar's position as a leading regional destination for tourism and international events." Operated by Qatar Tourism, Hayya serves as Qatar's official e-visa digital platform. As Qatar's central digital gateway, Hayya streamlines access to the country through inte-

grated visa processing and event access, all within a single, user-friendly interface.

By making entry seamless for GCC residents, Qatar Tourism is enabling more visitors from neighbouring countries to enjoy the season's events, strengthening Qatar's global tourism profile, and supporting economic growth.

Hayya offers five distinct visa categories: the Tourist Visa (A1), GCC Resident Visa (A2), Visa with ETA (A3), Companion of GCC Citizen Visa (A4), and the Visa-Free for US Citizens (F1).

No Jleeb

He clarified that the ministry's role is currently limited to the urban development of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh to ensure it is suitable and sustainable.

Meanwhile, Ahmed Al-Ansari, Director of the Investment Department at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, stated that the Real Estate Developer Law enables the state to move from a provider role to that of a regulator and market facilitator, focusing on strategic planning and oversight.

He clarified that real estate developers are responsible for the design, financing, construction, operation, maintenance, and sale of housing units.



A surfer rides through blowing snow as Lake Michigan waves crash into the St. Joseph Inner and Outer Light-houses on Nov 26, in St. Joseph, Mich. (AP)

Snow, rain and cold in store for some Thanksgiving travelers

Snow and chilly temperatures have already greeted some Thanksgiving travelers and plenty more could be on its way this holiday weekend, with winter storm warnings Saturday across much of the northern part of

the country. Storm warnings and advisories extended from Montana to New York, the National Weather Service said. Snow was expected to start Friday and last well into the weekend in

some areas with Iowa and Illinois getting the brunt of it. Six inches (about 15 centimeters) to a foot (30 centimeters) or more of snow is expected in much of west-central Illinois Friday night through Saturday night. (AP)

America

California mall shooting injures 2: Police in California evacuated a shopping mall Friday, one of the busiest shopping days of the year, after a shooting left two people with gunshot wounds.

The shooting was an isolated incident, the San Jose Police Department said on the social platform X. Officers evacuated and cleared Valley Fair Mall in Santa Clara to confirm there was no threat to public safety.

The wounded were taken to a hospital, police said. San Jose and Santa Clara are neighboring cities about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of San Francisco.

The day after Thanksgiving, known in the retail industry as “Black Friday,” marks the official start of the holiday shopping season in the US and is the biggest shopping day of the year. (AP)



Law officials spread out through an apartment complex during a raid on Feb 5 in east Denver. (AP)

officer overheard the men allegedly discussing plans to kill immigration officers, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said.

John Wilson Bennett and Mark Booth Bennett, both US citizens, were arrested late last week on allegations they were planning to carry out attacks against Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, the department announcement said.

It said the department began an investigation Nov. 17 with the Virginia Beach Police Department after an off-duty Norfolk, Virginia, police officer reported he heard the brothers allegedly discussing plans to “kill police officers and ICE agents.”

Mark Bennett also was overheard allegedly saying he was going to Las Vegas to meet with other people to purchase firearms to carry out the attacks, according to the department statement. It said Mark Bennett was arrested Nov. 19 at the Norfolk International Airport, where he was set to fly to Las Vegas. Later that day, it said, John Bennett, an assistant principal at Kempsville High School, was arrested in Virginia Beach. (AP)

Quake rocks Anchorage area of Alaska: A 6.0-magnitude earthquake rocked the Anchorage metropolitan area Thursday morning, according to the US Geological Survey.

The quake struck at about 8:11 a.m. local time at a depth of 69 kilometers (43 miles), according to the USGS. Its epicenter was located 12 kilometers (7 miles) west-northwest of Susitna, Alaska, an area about 67 miles (108 kilometers) northwest of the city. There were no immediate reports of significant damage.

Municipal inspectors also did not find any issues in key public infrastructure after the earthquake, according to a social media post by Anchorage Mayor Suzanne LaFrance.

A tsunami also was not expected, the US Tsunami Warning System said. (AP)

‘2 brothers plotted to kill ICE agents’: Two brothers in Virginia have been arrested after an off-duty police

US halts all asylum decisions

Trump wants to permanently pause immigration from ‘Third World countries’

WASHINGTON, Nov 29, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump has announced his intention to permanently pause immigration from what he described as “Third World countries.”

In a post on his social media platform Truth Social, Trump claimed that “immigration policy has eroded” national progress, and he would “permanently pause migration from all Third World Countries to allow the US system to fully recover.”

He also threatened to take measures to reverse immigration decisions made under President Joe Biden, and to “remove anyone who is not a net asset to the United States.”

In his post, Trump also announced plans to end all federal benefits and subsidies to “noncitizens,” calling for the denaturalization of migrants who, in his view, “undermine domestic tranquility.”

He emphasized a hardline stance, stating he would deport foreign nationals who are deemed “public charges,” “security risks,” or otherwise “incom-

patible with Western civilization.”

Trump’s remarks came following the death of a National Guard member on Thursday after being shot near the White House by an Afghan national.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has halted all asylum decisions and paused issuing visas for people traveling on Afghan passports days after a shooting near the White House that left one National Guard member dead and another in critical condition.

Investigators continued Saturday to seek a motive in the shooting, in which the suspect, Rahmanullah Lakanwal, now faces charges including first-degree murder.

Lakanwal is a 29-year-old Afghan national who worked with the CIA during the Afghanistan War. He applied for asylum during the Biden administration and was granted it this year under Trump, according to a group that assists with resettlement of Afghans who helped US forces in their country.

The Trump administration has



US President Donald Trump speaks to troops via video from his Mar-a-Lago estate on Thanksgiving on Nov 27 in Palm Beach, Fla. (AP)

seized on the shooting to vow to intensify efforts to rein in legal immigration, promising to pause entry from

some poor countries and review Afghans and other legal migrants already in the country. That is in addition to

other measures, some of which were previously set in motion.

Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, 20, died after the Wednesday shooting, and Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe, 24, was hospitalized in critical condition. They were deployed with the West Virginia National Guard as part of Trump’s crime-fighting mission in the city. The president also has deployed or tried to deploy National Guard members to other cities to assist with his mass deportation efforts but has faced court challenges.

US Attorney Jeanine Pirro’s office said the charges against Lakanwal also include two counts of assault with intent to kill while armed. In an interview on Fox News, she said there were “many charges to come.”

Trump called the shooting a “terrorist attack” and criticized the Biden administration for enabling entry by Afghans who worked with U.S. forces.

The director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, Joseph Edlow, said in a post on the social platform X that asylum decisions will be paused

“until we can ensure that every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible.”

Experts say the US has rigorous vetting systems for asylum-seekers. Asylum claims made from inside the country through USCIS have long faced backlogs. Critics say the slowdown has been exacerbated during the Trump administration.

Also Friday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said his department paused “visa issuance for ALL individuals traveling on Afghan passports.”

Shawn VanDiver, president of the San Diego-based group #AfghanEvac, said in response: “They are using a single violent individual as cover for a policy they have long planned, turning their own intelligence failures into an excuse to punish an entire community and the veterans who served alongside them.”

Lakanwal lived in Bellingham, Washington, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of Seattle, with his wife and five children, former landlord Kristina Widman said.



People demonstrate against the planned re-founding of the AfD youth organization in Giessen on Nov 29. (AP)

Thousands of protesters gather in Germany

Thousands of demonstrators gathered in the western German city of Giessen on Saturday, some clashing with police as the far-right Alternative for Germany’s new youth organization was set to kick off its founding convention.

Groups of protesters blocked or

tried to block roads in and around the city of some 93,000 people in the early morning. Police said they used pepper spray after stones were thrown at officers at one location. In another case, police said they used water cannons to clear a blockade by some 2,000 pro-

testers after they ignored calls to leave.

The new youth organization of the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany, or AfD, is to be set up in a meeting at Giessen’s convention center, which had yet to start two hours after the planned time. (AP)

Zelenskyy’s chief of staff resigns

Russian attacks kill three in Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, Nov 29, (AP): Russian drone and missile attacks in and around the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, killed at least three people early Saturday, officials said, as the country’s representatives traveled to the US to work on a renewed push to end the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on X that the delegation, headed by national security chief Rustem Umerov, was on its way to “swiftly and substantively work out the steps needed to end the war.” A US delegation is then expected to travel to Moscow for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the second half of next week.

The Kyiv City Military Administration said two people were killed in the strikes on the capital, and a woman died and eight were wounded in a combined missile and drone attack on the broader Kyiv region, according to the regional police.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko said 29 people were wounded in Kyiv, noting that falling debris from intercepted Russian drones hit residential buildings. He also said the western part of Kyiv had lost power.

US President Donald Trump last week released a plan for ending the nearly four-year war. The 28-point proposal heavily favored Russia, prompting Zelenskyy to quickly engage with American negotiators. European leaders, fearing for their own future in the



Rescuers search for victims after a drone hit a residential building during Russia’s night missile and drone attack in Kyiv, Ukraine on Nov 29. (AP)

face of Russian aggression, scrambled to steer the negotiations toward accommodating their concerns.

Trump said Tuesday that his plan to end the war had been “fine-tuned” and that he’s sending envoy Steve Witkoff to Russia to meet with Putin and Army Secretary Dan Driscoll to meet with Ukrainian officials. He suggested he could eventually meet with Putin and Zelenskyy, but not until further progress has been made in negotiations.

Zelenskyy announced Friday the resignation of his powerful chief of staff, Andrii Yermak, who was also the country’s lead negotiator in talks with the U.S., after anti-corruption investigators searched Yermak’s residence.

The unprecedented search at the heart of Ukraine’s government was a blow to the Ukrainian leader, risking the disruption of his negotiating strategy at a time when Kyiv is under intense U.S. pressure to sign a peace deal.



Pope Leo XIV, (center), walks with Muezzin Musa Asgin Tunca, (third from left), Istanbul’s Mufti Emrullah Tuncel, (fourth from left), the Imam of Mosque Sultanahmet Fatih Kaya, sixth from left, and Turkish Minister for Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, seventh from left, during a visit of the Mosque in Istanbul on Nov 29. (AP)

Pope visits Blue Mosque

ISTANBUL, Turkey, Nov 29, (AP): Pope Leo XIV visited Istanbul’s iconic Blue Mosque on Saturday.

Leo took his shoes off and, in his white socks, toured the 17th-century mosque, looking up at its soaring tiled domes and the Arabic inscriptions on its columns as an imam pointed them out to him.

Leo, history’s first American pope, was following in the footsteps of his recent predecessors, who all made high-profile visits to the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, as it is officially known, in a gesture of respect to Turkey’s Muslim majority. Past popes have also visited the nearby Hagia Sophia landmark, once one of the most important historic cathedrals in Christianity.

After the mosque visit, Leo held a private meeting with Turkey’s Christian leaders at the Syriac Orthodox Church of Mor Ephrem.

Europe

Croatia apartment fire kills 1: A large fire broke out overnight in the attic of a building in Rijeka, the third-largest city in Croatia, leaving the body of an unidentified person at the scene, local media reported Saturday.

The local police confirmed the discovery and said an autopsy will be conducted once firefighters fully extinguish the blaze, Croatian Radiotelevision reported. Several residents sought medical attention for smoke inhalation.

Although the fire has been brought under control, smoke still billows from the building, and crews are continuing to work on the scene, it reported. (Xinhua)

1 dead in Estonia train-cargo collision: A passenger train collided with a cargo truck on Thursday at a railroad crossing in Harju County, northern Estonia, causing the death of the truck driver, the Police and Border Guard Board reported.

The collision also led to the derailment of the train, with one train passenger sustaining minor injuries.

According to the authority, the cargo truck drove onto the crossing in front of the train, which departed Tallinn’s Baltic Station in the morning as scheduled, disrupting rail traffic. The cargo truck suffered severe damage, and the driver died at the scene. (Xinhua)

‘Detain suspect in Nord Stream blast’: A judge at Germany’s Federal Court of Justice on Friday ordered a Ukrainian national to be held in custody over his alleged involvement in the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines.

The suspect, identified as Serhii K., was extradited from Italy on Thursday.

According to a warrant issued by the Federal Court of Justice, Serhii K. allegedly worked as a coordinator of a group that placed explosive devices on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in September 2022 and damaged the gas lines linking Russia and Germany. (Xinhua)

Georgia marks year of protests since EU talks stalled, crackdown intensified

TBILISI, Georgia, Nov 29, (AP): Crowds of demonstrators gathered in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi on Friday to mark 365 days of non-stop protests against the government’s decision to halt talks on joining the European Union.

Carrying drums, whistles, placards and flags, thousands of protesters marched along Rustaveli Avenue, the city’s central thoroughfare.

The daily protests began on Nov 28, 2024, when Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced the country was halting talks on joining the EU. Thousands of protesters poured into the streets following Kobakhidze’s speech, rallying outside the parliament building in Tbilisi and staging demonstrations in other cities.

While the size of the rallies has since fallen, demonstrators have continued to gather each day.

Protester Sopo Batilashvili accused the government of taking away “the future our ancestors fought for and that we were proud of.”

Georgia’s ruling Georgian Dream party has tried to curb the movement by tightening rules on public assemblies, as well as passing a wave of laws targeting rights groups, nongovernmental organizations and independent media.

Critics say some have been modeled on legislation passed in Russia, where



Demonstrators with Georgian, Ukrainian, US and EU flags gather in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, on Nov 28 to mark 365 days of non-stop protests against the government’s decision to halt talks on joining the European Union. (AP)

President Vladimir Putin has harshly stifled dissent.

Wearing face masks, blocking roads or erecting temporary structures now carries up to 15 days of administrative detention for protest participants and 20 days for organizers.

First-time offenders previously faced a fine of 500 Georgian lari (\$185). That

amount has been multiplied tenfold to 5,000 lari (\$1,850). A second offense brings criminal charges.

Hundreds have been detained under the new law. Among them is Rusiko Kobakhidze, a mother of nine and researcher at the Soviet Past Research Laboratory, who has been protesting daily outside Parliament.

Former Philippine president’s family accepts decision

ICC judges reject request to release Duterte from custody

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, Nov 29, (AP): Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte will remain in detention at the International Criminal Court after appeals judges on Friday rejected a request to release him on health grounds.

The octogenarian is facing charges of crimes against humanity for his alleged involvement in dozens of killings as part of his so-called war on drugs when in office, first as the mayor of a southern city and later as president.

Duterte’s lawyers failed to show that an October decision by the lower chamber was unreasonable, Judge Luz del Carmen Ibáñez Carranza said, addressing the full courtroom in The Hague. The former president was not in court on Friday.

The defense said it plans to “re-introduce its request to release” Duterte following the results of a medical examination expected next month, lawyer Nick Kaufman said in a statement.

Duterte’s lawyers say he is “infirm and debilitated” and that it is cruel to keep him in custody during the trial. In September the court postponed a pretrial hearing until a full medical assessment could be made. According to defense filings, Duterte’s cognitive faculties have declined to a level that



Families of drug war victims and supporters jubilate after appeals judges at the International Criminal Court rejected a request to release former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on health grounds as they watch a livestream in Quezon city, Philippines on Nov 28. (AP)

he cannot assist his lawyers.

Last month, judges decided to keep Duterte in custody, finding that he was likely to refuse to return for trial and could use his freedom to intimidate witnesses.

According to court filings, Duterte in-

structed and authorized “violent acts including murder to be committed against alleged criminals, including alleged drug dealers and users.” The charges against him date from Nov. 1, 2011, when he was still mayor of the southern city of Davao, to March 16, 2019, when the

country withdrew from the court. He was president from 2016-22.

Estimates of the death toll during Duterte’s presidential term vary. National police put the figure at more than 6,000, while human rights groups claim up to 30,000. Families of victims hailed Duterte’s arrest in March.

The legal team requested that he be transferred to the custody of another member state while proceedings continue. However the appeals judges agreed with the lower chamber that the risk posed by his released “could not be mitigated” by the undisclosed country, Judge Ibáñez said.

ICC prosecutors announced in February 2018 that they would open a preliminary investigation into the violence that took place during Duterte’s time in power. In a move that human rights activists say was aimed at escaping accountability, Duterte, who was still president, announced a month later that the Philippines would leave the court.

Duterte’s family and allies have blamed current President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for what they claim was the ex-president’s illegal arrest and detention by the global court.

The Duterte family said it accepted the decision “with peaceful hearts.”



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, (left), and Jodie Haydon smile after getting married in Canberra on Nov 29. (AP)

Albanese ties knot, first Aussie premier to marry while in office

MELBOURNE, Australia, Nov 29, (AP): Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese married his partner Jodie Haydon in a secretive and intimate ceremony on Saturday at his official residence in the national capital, Canberra.

Albanese is the first prime minister to marry while in office in the 124-year

history of the Australian federal government.

The couple were married by a civil celebrant before around 60 guests, including several cabinet ministers, in an afternoon ceremony on the grounds of The Lodge. There was no media reporting of the event until after it had occurred.

Indonesia death toll from floods tops 300

Thai PM acknowledges flood response failures

BANGKOK, Nov 29, (AP): Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul on Saturday outlined recovery and compensation plans for the southern part of the country, where severe flooding has killed at least 162 people.

More than 1.4 million households and 3.8 million people have been affected by floods triggered by heavy rains in 12 southern provinces, the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said Saturday.

Government spokesperson Siripong Angkasakuliat said in a news conference in Bangkok that 162 deaths have been confirmed in eight provinces, particularly in Songkhla province which recorded at least 126 deaths.

The scale of the flooding and the high number of casualties have sparked widespread criticism of the government. Anutin told reporters Saturday that he acknowledged the government’s shortcomings in flood management, and said that when he visited the affected areas, he had apologized to the people “that the government was unable to take care and protect them.”

Also:

AGAM, Indonesia: Improved weather on Saturday helped rescuers on In-



A man checks flood damages on a street in Hat Yai, Songkhla province, Thailand on Nov 28. (Xinhua)

onesia’s Sumatra island recover more bodies as they struggled to reach several areas that were hit by landslides and flash floods that left more than 300 dead and scores missing.

Parts of Sumatra, known for its lush rainforests, volcanoes and mountain ranges, were cut off by damaged roads and downed communications lines, and relied on transport aircraft to deliver aid

supplies. Rescue efforts were also hampered by a lack of heavy equipment.

Monsoon rains over the past week caused rivers to burst their banks. The deluge tore through mountain-side village, swept away people and submerged thousands of houses and buildings in the three provinces of North Sumatra, West Sumatra and Aceh.

HK mourns residential building fire victims with flags at half-mast

HONG KONG, Nov 29, (Xinhua): John Lee, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), along with principal officials of the HKSAR government and civil servants, participated in a memorial service at the government headquarters on Saturday, paying tribute to the victims of the residential building fire in Hong Kong’s Tai Po.

The memorial service started at around 8:00 a.m. With the national flag and the HKSAR flag hoisted at half-mast, all officials present observed a three-minute silence in mourning for the fire victims.

The Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the HKSAR, the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People’s Government in the HKSAR, the Commissioner’s Office of China’s Foreign Ministry in the HKSAR, as well as the Hong Kong Garrison of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, also observed silence and hoisted flags at half staff on Saturday morning.

According to the HKSAR government, national flags and the HK-



A memorial service is held for victims of the residential building fire in Hong Kong, south China on Nov 29. (Xinhua)

SAR flags displayed at all government buildings and facilities will be flown at half-mast from Saturday to Monday. During the period, government officials will not attend non-essential public activities.

All entertainment and celebration activities organized or funded by the government will be cancelled or postponed as appropriate.

During the mourning period, the government will set up condolence points in all 18 districts of the city, enabling the public to sign condolence books and mourn the victims.

Hong Kong police said on Saturday that no remains were found after searching two of the seven fire-hit buildings in the residential complex of Wang Fuk Court.

US President Trump plans to pardon former Honduran leader Hernandez

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida, Nov 29, (AP): US President Donald Trump said Friday that he will be pardoning former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez, who in 2024 was convicted for drug trafficking and weapons charges and sentenced to 45 years in prison.

The president explained his decision on social media by posting that “according to many people that I greatly respect,” Hernandez was “treated very harshly and unfairly.”

In March of last year, Hernandez was convicted in US court of conspiring to import cocaine into the U.S.A. He had served served two terms as the leader of the Central American nation of roughly 10 million people.

Hernandez has been appealing his conviction and serving time at the US Penitentiary, Hazelton in West Virginia.

Shortly after Trump’s announcement, Hernández’s wife and children gathered on the steps on their home in Tegucigalpa and knelt in prayer.

It was the same home that Honduran authorities hauled him out of in 2022 just months after leaving office. He was extradited to the United States to stand trial.

García said they had just been able to speak with Hernández and tell him the news.

“He still didn’t know of this news



Former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernandez, (center), is taken in handcuffs to a waiting aircraft as he is extradited to the United States, at an Air Force base in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, April 21, 2022. (AP)

and believe me, when we shared it his voice broke with emotion,” she said.

García thanked Trump, saying that Trump had corrected an injustice, maintaining that Hernández’s prosecution was a coordinated plot by drug traffickers and the “radical left” to seek revenge against the former president.

She said they had not been told ex-

actly when Hernández would return, but said “we hope that in the coming days.”

A lawyer for Hernandez, Renato C. Stabile, expressed gratitude for Trump’s actions.

“A great injustice has been righted and we are so hopeful for the future partnership of the United States and Honduras,” Stabile said. “Thank you President Trump for making sure that justice was served. We look forward to President Hernandez’s triumphant return to Honduras.”

A separate lawyer for Hernandez, Sabrina Shroff, declined comment.

The post was part of a broader message by Trump backing Nasry “Tito” Asfura for Honduras’ presidency, with Trump saying the U.S. would be supportive of the country if he wins. But if Asfura loses the election this Sunday, Trump posted that “the United States will not be throwing good money after bad, because a wrong Leader can only bring catastrophic results to a country, no matter which country it is.”

Asfura, 67, is making his second run for president for the conservative National Party. He was mayor of Tegucigalpa and has pledged to solve Honduras’ infrastructure needs. But he has previously been accused of embezzling public funds, allegations that he denies.



This photo taken on Nov. 28, 2025 shows submerged houses after heavy rains in Kolonnawa, Sri Lanka. (Xinhua)

Sri Lankan president declares state of public emergency

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has declared a State of Public Emergency effective on Friday, as the country confronts one of its worst weather-related disasters in recent years.

The declaration, issued through Extraordinary Gazette No. 246430 and released on Saturday, grants the government sweeping authority under the Public Security Ordinance to impose emergency regulations nationwide. Officials said the move is intended to protect

public safety, maintain national stability, and accelerate disaster response as heavy rains, floods, landslides, and strong winds continue to affect large parts of the island. (AP)

Sri Lanka’s Disaster Management Center (DMC) said on Saturday that the death toll from Cyclone Dityah, which has been affecting the country in recent days, has climbed to 132, with 176 people still missing. (Xinhua)

Africa

S.Africa ex-prez daughter quits Parliament:
A daughter of former South African President Jacob Zuma has resigned as a lawmaker, her party said Friday, after coming under police investigation for allegedly tricking 17 men into joining a Russian mercenary group fighting in the Ukraine war.

Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla had served as a lawmaker since June 2024 for the MK Party, an opposition party led by her father. Jacob Zuma created the party in 2023 following his expulsion from South Africa’s then-ruling African National Congress.

Police say they are investigating any role Zuma-Sambudla played in luring the South Africans to Russia after they ended up on the front lines of the conflict in Ukraine. (AP)

Guinea-Bissau soldiers appoint new PM: Soldiers in Guinea-Bissau on Friday appointed a close ally of the deposed president as prime minister, after seizing power following disputed national elections earlier this week.

The country’s new military leader, Gen. Horta Inta-a, announced the appointment of finance minister Ilídio Vieira Té as prime minister in a decree.

Vieira Té is a close ally of the deposed President Umaro Sissoco Embaló, having served as his party’s campaign director during the legislative election on Sunday.

Soldiers seized power on Wednesday, three days after the closely contested presidential election. During the ongoing military takeover, the president told French media over the phone he had been deposed and arrested. (AP)

Trinidad’s premier retracts comments on US Marines

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad, Nov 29, (AP): The prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago retracted comments where she asserted that no US Marines were currently in the twin-island nation - a development that comes as the U.S. government seeks allies amid ongoing strikes on suspected drug traffickers in the Caribbean and beyond.

Prime Minister **Kamla Persad-Bissessar** told reporters Thursday that US Marines were at the airport on the island of Tobago working on its radar, runway and road just days after she said they had left.

“They will help us to improve our surveillance and the intelligence of the radars for the narco-traffickers in our waters and outside our waters,” she said, without providing details.

Trinidad and Tobago’s attorney general, and the ministers of defense and homeland security did not immediately return messages seeking comment on Friday.

It was not clear if the US government plans to use the radar that they’re working on at the Tobago airport.

It also wasn’t clear whether they were installing a new radar or upgrading the current one. Persad-Bissessar met Wednesday with Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and US President Donald Trump’s primary military adviser, who traveled to Trinidad and Tobago.

A day after the visit, Persad-Bissessar told reporters that Trinidad had not been asked to be a base for any attack against Venezuela, and that Venezuela was not mentioned in recent conversations with the U.S.



Persad-Bissessar

Congo, Rwanda presidents to meet in United States to sign peace deal

KINSHASA, Congo, Nov 29, (AP): Congo’s President Felix Tshisekedi will travel to the US next week to sign a final agreement with his Rwandan counterpart aimed at securing peace in eastern Congo, the Congolese government said Friday, capping monthslong diplomatic efforts spearheaded by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Congo’s government has often said its signing of the deal will be conditioned on Rwanda’s withdrawal of support for the M23 rebels in the conflict-battered east.

Tshisekedi’s confirmation of the Dec. 4 signing comes a day after Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame expressed optimism over the deal, but cautioned that lasting peace in Congo’s eastern region can only be achieved if “people directly concerned are committed to achieve results.”

Eastern Congo has been battered by fighting between government forces and more than 100 armed groups, the most potent being the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels. The conflict escalated this year, with the M23 seizing the region’s main cities of Goma and Bu-



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio hosts a signing ceremony in which Congo’s Foreign Minister Therese Kayikwamba Wagner, (left), and Rwanda’s Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhungirehe, (right), pledge to work toward a peace deal at the State Department in Washington on April 25. (AP)

kavu, worsening a humanitarian crisis that was already one of the world’s largest.

UN experts have said that between 3,000 and 4,000 Rwandan government forces are deployed in eastern Congo, operating alongside the M23. Rwanda denies such support but has said that any action taken in the conflict is to protect its territory.

Kuwaiti crude rises to \$64.87 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti crude oil increased by 61 cents on Friday, reaching USD 64.87 per barrel compared to USD 64.26 per barrel on Thursday, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation announced.

In global markets, Brent crude futures slipped by 14 cents to close at USD 63.20 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures declined by 10 cents to settle at USD 58.55 per barrel.

Other Voices

Key economic figures define Kuwait's 2025–2026 outlook

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

Six essential figures define the Kuwaiti economy and shape our economic situation, thereby, explaining our 2025–2026 budget. These figures indicate the breakdown, borrowing needs and available options.

Our budget calls for total expenses of KD24 billion, with a deficit of KD6 billion. The budget is based on Kuwait exporting crude oil at \$68 per barrel, while our break-even price must be \$90 a barrel. This is far-fetched, as our budget falls short by about \$23 per barrel.



Al-Harami

The current price of Kuwait crude stands at \$67 per barrel, meaning it is highly unlikely for prices to reach such a level. Oil prices are not expected to go above \$70 per barrel in the next few years—certainly not next year nor in 2027. OPEC+ is not yet in a position to take any action while losing volume to other oil-producing countries. OPEC+ is essentially saying, “Enough sacrifices. Let the oil market do its own magic.” More oil-producing countries may join the organization to strengthen its influence, provided there is no cheating among members and there is full adherence to OPEC quotas. Simply put, a more disciplined organization is required to remain reliable and respected in its decisions and actions.

Our current budget shows a shortage of KD6 billion or \$18 billion, which must be financed through the safest or cheapest means. Two viable options are available. The first is to borrow from the open market by obtaining loans from international banks for three or four years. The second is to sell some of our overseas sovereign wealth fund assets. Naturally, the preferred decision is short-term borrowing, avoiding the need to use or sell our overseas assets. Short-term borrowing is easier and cheaper, as Kuwait is endowed with vast oil reserves and substantial overseas investments and assets worth more than \$1 trillion. Let these assets remain in international markets, earning returns and preserved for future generations.

Certainly, Kuwait will pursue additional borrowing as annual budgets continue to grow

to provide for new graduates, create new jobs, and increase salaries under normal economic growth.

Meanwhile, the price of oil—the only and main source of income—is static. The price per barrel is not expected to rise to a level that covers our upcoming deficits.

In other words, oil prices will not reach higher levels this year and will remain in the \$60s or barely at \$70, while our need is around \$90 per barrel to meet the current budget.

Oil prices are not going to rise sufficiently, making replacement or diversification necessary—specifically the need for a long-term alternative source of income.

The recent gas discoveries in three offshore areas near Failaka Island are an encouraging sign for gas development in Kuwait. Complete gas fields have been identified in Jazaa, Juliaia, and a third in Noukhta. This is certainly great news and could serve as a secondary source of income or savings by reducing the need to import gas worth about \$4–5 billion annually. This will complement our oil resources and save substantial cost, with gas being more environmentally friendly.

It is a promising discovery that prepares our next generation for cleaner energy and a second source of income and power.

Kuwait's economic figures, with gas expected to be on stream in the next four years, will gain value through clean energy, increased income, and greater national wealth.

We should not forget, at this early stage, to invite international oil companies to help in developing these new gas discoveries. There is no excuse not to invite them to support us with this new venture.

As we are new to gas development, international oil companies should come in and assist us in the early stages. Gas is a great and promising discovery, and international oil companies are already knocking on our doors.

Soon we will be writing more about our gas fields, their figures, their added value in terms of savings, and even the potential for exporting gas.

Definitely, this is a new venture and another significant figure to be added to Kuwait's economy. Now Kuwait is an oil and gas producing country.



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Business

Japan's crude imports rise

Kuwait's oil exports to Japan surge 141% in Oct

TOKYO, Nov 29, (KUNA): Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan in October skyrocketed 140.6 (one hundred forty point six) percent from a year earlier to 4.91 million barrels, or 158,000 barrels per day (bpd), up for the first time in two months, government data showed Friday.

As Japan's third-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 6.7 percent of the country's total crude imports, compared with 3.1 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural

Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

Japan's overall imports of crude oil in October grew 11.0 percent from a year earlier to 2.38 million bpd for the first expansion in five months.

Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 93.7 percent of the total, down 4.1 percentage points from the year before.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was Japan's top oil supplier last month, with imports from the

country rising 8.0 percent from a year earlier to 1.11 million bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia with 820,000 bpd, down 8.5 percent. Qatar ranked fourth with 129,000 bpd and the US fifth with 106,000 bpd, respectively.

Japan has virtually no significant domestic crude production and relies almost entirely on imports to meet its oil needs.

The country is the world's-third biggest oil consumer after China and the US.

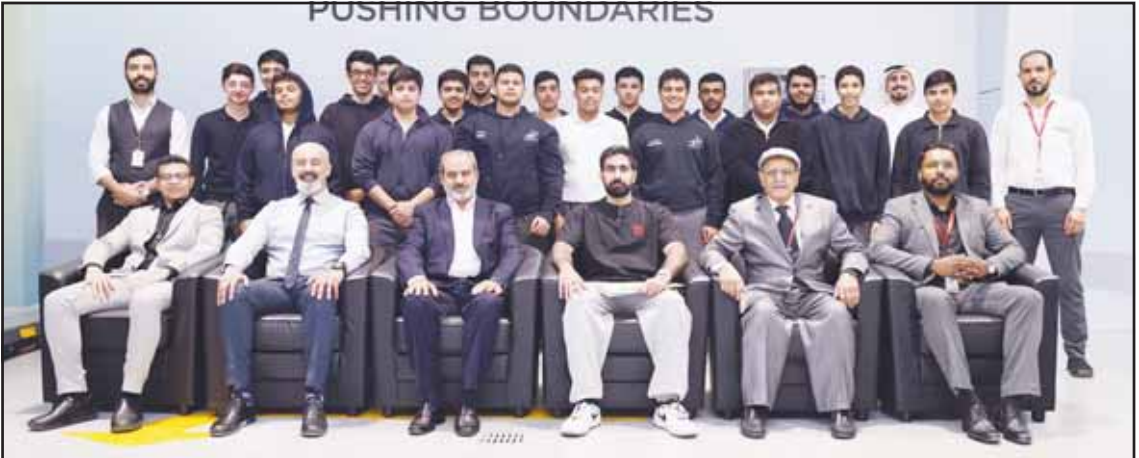
High school students gain hands-on insight

ALSAYER promotes hybrid vehicle awareness

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: ALSAYER Group hosted a training session for students from the Naser Abdul Mohsen High School in the Fahaheel Service Center. The incredible efforts of the ALSAYER training center goes a long way as this event helped students understand the various topics regarding hybrid vehicle awareness and ALSAYER Group's innovative practices in transitioning to selling hybrid-based vehicles. Eng. Mohamed Hussein, Senior Manager of the Technical Training Service, stated that, “it is critical to educate students on ALSAYER Group's development over the years.”

Along with a tour conducted of the facilities in the Fahaheel Service Center, the students learned more about what makes a hybrid vehicle. In depth, the students learned about components of the hybrid system, types of hybrid vehicles, the system's operations, and the safety levels of hybrid cars. With this incredible amount of information, students got an in-depth understanding as to why ALSAYER decided to pursue selling hybrid vehicles as they are economically viable and cleaner for the environment.

With their commitment to educating the youth and providing developmental sessions where they can grow and learn, ALSAYER continues to support practices that align with this approach. Through this event, students understood the inner workings of a hybrid vehicle and now carry technical knowledge they gained from this session. Eng. Nehad Mohammad AlHaj Ali, Group Manager of the Corporate



Photos at the ALSAYER Service Center.

Excellence department, noted that, “at ALSAYER Group, youth development and environmental due diligence are the pillars that will create a better future.” Emphasizing the importance of

ALSAYER Group hosting these sessions throughout the year.

This event is a culmination of ALSAYER Group's long-standing efforts in social and community development,

by hosting sessions to uplift young minds and direct their focus to understanding how they can be environmentally better to help their society and country.

KBA stresses private-sector partnership value

Arab banks emphasize PPP role in sustainable growth

BEIRUT, Nov 29, (KUNA): Participants in the 2025 Arab Banking Conference in Beirut stressed on Friday the vital role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in driving development across the Arab region.

Secretary General of the Kuwait Banking Association Dr. Yaqoub Al-Rifai told KUNA during his participation that the conference addressed key regional challenges, especially reconstruction efforts that can unlock growth and investment opportunities.

He noted that enabling investment requirements and improving business infrastructure will encourage greater private-sector, particularly banking, involvement. Al-Rifai underscored the strategic role of Arab banks in financing economic and productive sectors and mobilizing resources for reconstruction when the right investment conditions are met.

He added that the conference highlighted PPPs

as essential for sustainable development, combining state oversight with private-sector execution to improve project success rates.

He cited Kuwait's experience, where private-sector engagement drives economic activity and opens broader opportunities for youth.

Former Lebanese Information Minister and senior financial policy adviser Dr. Manal Abdel-Samad told KUNA that PPPs are now indispensable for sustainable development, merging private-sector innovation with government regulatory capacity.

She noted that PPP models vary by country but their value lies in generating sustainable, privately managed projects. She also highlighted the role of financial institutions in supporting productive, innovative, and sustainable ventures.

On his part, former Lebanese Economy and Trade Minister Alain Hakim stated to KUNA that global

business trends increasingly rely on the private sector to support public institutions, especially in countries like Lebanon facing severe administrative strain.

He stressed the need to strengthen PPP frameworks to enhance the investment climate and broaden their scope beyond major projects to include smaller initiatives such as renewable energy and maintenance services.

The Arab Banking Conference 2025, organized by the Union of Arab Banks, concluded Friday, and was in cooperation with the International Union of Arab Bankers and included the 49th General Assembly meeting of the Union. A delegation led by Union Chairman Mohamed Mahmoud Eltreby also met Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, noting strong participation and wide Arab support for Lebanon, particularly discussions on reconstruction and reinforcing joint Arab action.

Held in Beirut under the theme ‘Investing in Construction and the Role of Banks’

Al-Jarrah represents Kuwait in 2025 Annual Arab Banking Conference

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Representing the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait International Bank (KIB) and a Board Member of the Union of Arab Banks, participated in the 2025 Annual Arab Banking Conference held in Beirut. Themed ‘Investing in Construction and the Role of Banks’, the event took place under the patronage of the President of the Lebanese Republic, General Joseph Aoun.

The conference, held on Thursday and Friday, 27–28 November 2025, at the Inter-Continental Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut, was organized by the Union of Arab Banks in cooperation with the Association of Banks in Lebanon and the World Union of Arab Banks.

Al-Jarrah's participation in this important banking event reaffirmed the State of Kuwait's commitment, through its banking sector, to strengthening joint Arab cooperation and supporting sustainable development strategies across the region. It is also worth noting that he recently took part in a meeting between a delegation from the Union of Arab Banks and President Aoun at the Presidential Palace ahead of the conference.

Commenting on his participation, Al-Jarrah said: “Kuwait's participation in the Annual Arab Banking Conference carries a clear strategic dimension, as it allows the country to engage directly in discussions on banking regulation, digital transformation, and sustainable finance, all fields rapidly advancing at the international level.”

He explained that Kuwait's presence, supported by its strong banks with solid capitalization, high asset quality, and robust profitability and liquidity indicators, enables it to present a practical model for sector stability in a globally volatile environment. It also strengthens the country's influence in shaping joint Arab initiatives and policies.

Al-Jarrah added that active participation in this regional gathering opens new avenues for investment and financing partnerships,



Group photo during the conference.

whether in infrastructure projects or in the development of Islamic finance products, areas in which Kuwaiti banks have made notable progress. He also emphasized that the conference provides an important opportunity to highlight domestic reforms and compare them against the experiences of other Arab markets, helping to strengthen investor confidence and reinforce Kuwait's position as one of the key players in the Arab banking landscape.

Al-Jarrah added: “Kuwaiti banks, particularly KIB, are pursuing strategies that strengthen the role of Kuwaiti financial institutions in the region by providing innovative financing solutions and applying international best practices in governance and digital transformation. This role is reinforced through our regional and international partnerships, which aim to support major development initiatives, especially those related to the conference's main theme, ‘Investing in

Construction’. We are committed to leveraging our capabilities to contribute effectively to economic and financial stability across the Arab region and to presenting an advanced model of Islamic banking that can compete globally.”

In a related context, Al-Jarrah noted that the challenges and emerging trends in the banking sector require concerted efforts and more consultative meetings between decision-makers, bankers, and industry pro-

fessionals. He explained: “The rapid pace of digital transformation, the growing importance of cybersecurity, and the increasing demands of regulatory compliance and anti-money laundering measures all require Arab banks to modernize their operating frameworks and strengthen regional cooperation. These gatherings, which bring together leading Arab banking executives, ministers, and ambassadors, provide an ideal platform for exchanging insights on how to leverage financial technology (FinTech) to expand financial inclusion, enhance corporate governance frameworks, and develop joint strategies to confront global economic shocks”.

He emphasized that “The selection of ‘Investing in Construction and the Role of Banks’ as the theme of the conference reflects the region's need for effective strategies to support development and reconstruction efforts in several Arab countries. This underscores the importance of continued dialogue to build a shared financial roadmap.”

The first day of the event featured the official opening ceremony, which included several keynote addresses, among them a speech by President Aoun. The program also included a welcome address by the Secretary-General of the Union of Arab Banks, as well as remarks by the Chairman of the Union of Arab Banks, Mohammed Al-Etreby, and the Chairman of the World Union of Arab Bankers, Dr. Joseph Torbey. Held alongside the conference was the 49th Ordinary General Assembly of the Union of Arab Banks.

The conference serves as a culmination of the Union of Arab Banks' efforts to unify the Arab banking sector and enhance cooperation in addressing current economic and financial challenges. It brought together more than 500 Arab bankers from a wide range of financial and banking institutions across the region to discuss recent developments and the role of the banking sector in supporting growth, reconstruction, and investment attraction.

In pursuit of enhancing innovation and providing the latest tech solutions

KFH organizes exclusive event to corporate clients in collaboration with Visa

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Driven by its commitment to foster innovation, deliver cutting-edge technology solutions, and drive digital transformation, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized an exclusive roundtable in collaboration with Visa company.

This first-ever event in Kuwait for KFH's corporate clients was designed to optimize the banking experience for businesses and contribute directly to supporting the national economy.

Commenting on the event, KFH Deputy General Manager of Cards, Talal AlArbeed, expressed his delight over the initiative, which served as a platform to bring together key company leaders, decision-makers, and representatives. Discussions focused on key Gulf market developments and the newest trends in digital payments and financial services, specifically addressing the continuous impact of rapid technological and economic shifts on the financial needs of the business sector.

Corporate credit cards
AlArbeed highlighted that KFH and VISA successfully launched corporate credit cards (VISA Signature and VISA Platinum) for the business sector. Designed for business owners and linked to corporate accounts, these cards can be issued to employees for expense management. They enable better cash flow control and offer easy access to transaction statements. Furthermore, KFH provides corporate



Talal AlArbeed

debit cards for deposits and cheques and for use across POS terminals and e-payment gateways.

The first choice for corporates
AlArbeed pointed to KFH's success over many years of continuous cooperation with Visa in developing card products, services, and payment solutions. This collaboration has established KFH as the first choice for corporates, driven market leadership in bank cards, maximized customer satisfaction, and increased its market share.

Meanwhile, Executive Manager- Large Corporates at KFH, Saleh Al-Shaya, said: "This strategic event reflects our shared commitment to strengthening partnerships and expanding the scope of innovative finan-



Saleh Al-Shaya

cial solutions we offer to our corporate clients. The initiative is also a valuable opportunity to meet with a select group of leading experts, business managers, and professional bankers, with the aim of generating new ideas to develop our innovative services and reinforce the spirit of cooperation and partnership with our customers."

KFH is committed to continuously strengthening relationships and developing services to meet the evolving needs of its clients in the corporate and business sectors, Al-Shaya added.

He expressed his pleasure at the participation of the Visa team alongside KFH Corporate executives in the roundtable. This event served as a critical platform to discuss the future



A group photo of the participants in the forum.

of corporate finance, seek new avenues for collaboration, exchange insights, and identify ways to create added value for KFH corporate clients and the

business community.

It serves to note that this event is one of several KFH initiatives aimed at enhancing corporate client com-

munication and exchanging expertise on investment opportunities and how FinTech enables business growth and sustainable development.

Inflation expected to ease

Egypt's economy expected to strengthen with IMF reforms

By National Bank of Kuwait

The economy is expected to strengthen further over the coming year, as the benefits from macroeconomic stabilization efforts and structural reforms under the IMF program feed through. Following the March 2024 policy reset, investment activity is picking up, manufacturing capacity expanding, and tourism receiving fresh impetus amid a more stable currency environment and clearly-articulated and reform-driven macro-fiscal direction. While external obligations remain sizable, global financial conditions volatile and domestic interest rates are still high, the combination of sectoral inflows, diversified funding sources, and improved policy credibility provides a more stable foundation for Egypt.

Growth recovery and investment momentum

Economic activity should strengthen over the forecast period, with GDP growth forecast to accelerate from 4.7% in FY25/26 to 5.1% in FY26/27 as macro stabilization efforts feed through to investment, consumption, and external trade. The newly introduced National Economic Development Narrative (NEDN), which marks a strategic shift toward private-sector-led growth, export competitiveness, and institutional modernization, will play an increasingly significant role going forward. With FX more freely available and a more predictable exchange rate regime, business uncertainty has been reduced and key projects in the tourism, construction, and logistics sectors are moving ahead again. Manufacturing is also emerging as a core driver of our forecast, supported by incentives for export-oriented industries, improved energy availability, and streamlined regulatory procedures. Industrial zones, especially in chemicals, food processing, and textiles, are attracting new investment, with multinational firms expanding domestic production capacity. Non-hydrocarbon exports are becoming more competitive thanks to the more flexible exchange rate and stronger global demand, while agriculture-related exports remain resilient. Recovering domestic demand is expected to quicken further as confidence improves, real wages stabilize, and monetary conditions become more predictable.

Macro stabilization but still limited privatization progress

The economy has benefited from 2024's IMF-mediated policy reset and macro stabilization program. Subsidies have been retargeted, reserves have climbed to all-time highs and banking system NFAs are back at pre-Covid levels. Though on privatization, more tangible progress is being sought by investors, not least to address concerns about market crowding-out. The local debt market is also being deepened (new sukuk program) to diversify funding channels. Preserving a credible, rules-based framework will be essential to

maintaining stability and limiting the buildup of imbalances as the IMF deal winds down in late 2026.

Inflation path and policy direction

Inflation is expected to decline from an average of 14% in 2025 to 11% in 2026, supported by a credible exchange-rate regime, high policy interest rates, easing supply-chain constraints, and softer global food prices. The forecast takes into consideration the (temporary) inflationary impact on fuel and transport costs from the fuel price hike in late 2025. Pass-through will remain contained by stable demand and improved FX liquidity. The Central Bank of Egypt is expected to remain cautious in reducing interest rates, possibly by 600bps in 2026.

Fiscal consolidation and NEDN reforms

The public finances are on a better footing and expected to improve further, with the overall fiscal deficit likely to narrow from 7% of GDP in FY24/25 to 6% of GDP in FY26/27 as the authorities press ahead with paring back subsidies, expanding revenue streams, and rationalizing expenditures. In this vein, to reduce budgetary pressures domestic fuel-prices were again raised in October 2025 closer to global levels. Tax system digitalization, base-broadening, and better public-financial management is also progressing.

External position bolstered by remittances and tourism

Egypt's external balance is improving amid a rebound in FX-generating activities, such as tourism, and more stable capital inflows. The external outlook is further supported by resilient remittances, up significantly after the currency was devalued. We see the current account deficit narrowing from -4.2% of GDP in FY24/25 to around -3% of GDP by FY26/27. Tourism is worth a special mention, as the opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza is expected to lift arrivals, which already surged 21% y/y in 2025, considerably higher. At the same time, the gradual normalization of Red Sea shipping post-Gaza cease-fire has started boosting Suez Canal receipts. These two sectors, along with strategic FDI commitments, such as Qatar's investment in the Alam El-Roum development, will remain central to rebuilding external buffers and improving FX liquidity. FX reserves have climbed to multi-year highs of \$50 billion, covering around 8 months of imports.

Outlook shaped by reforms, interest rates, geopolitics

Downside risks could stem from geopolitical disruptions, global interest-rate volatility and, as a net energy importer, higher oil and gas prices. Progress on privatization could also underwhelm. Conversely, better-than-expected reform progress and outperforming tourism inflows as well as lower energy costs and sustained GCC investor interest would materially improve the outlook.

Programme enhances liquidity diversification & attracts global investments

Warba Bank establishes US\$1 billion Sharia-compliant Certificates of Deposit Programme

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Warba Bank announced the establishment of a US\$1 billion Sharia-compliant Certificates of Deposit Programme. The initiative comes within the Bank's wider strategy to diversify liquidity sources, enhance its financial resilience and attract global investments.

The programme offers short-term Certificates of Deposit with tenors ranging from one month to three years, responding to growing demand from international investors seeking Sharia-compliant instruments that combine safety, liquidity and attractive returns.

Opening New Horizons for Growth

Commenting on the launch, Warba Bank CEO Shaheen Hamad AlGhanem said: "This programme represents a strategic milestone in Warba Bank's journey to strengthen its presence in regional and global financial markets. It reflects the growing confidence that international investors place in Warba Bank and reinforces our strong financial position and our ability to offer innovative investment solutions fully aligned with Sharia principles."

He added: "Diversifying liquidity sources is a core pillar of our financial strategy. It enhances our financial flexibility and enables us to sustain long-term growth while meeting the evolving needs of our clients and partners. This programme opens new avenues for accessing global capital markets and attracting investments from leading international institutions seeking secure and Sharia-compliant opportunities in the GCC region."

A Programme Reflecting Warba Bank's Global Appeal



AlGhanem:

- This programme is a strategic milestone in Warba Bank's journey to strengthen its position in regional and global financial markets
- It reinforces our financial flexibility, enabling sustainable growth and meeting the evolving needs of the market

AlGhanem, said: "This programme comes at a time when we are witnessing increasing international demand for Islamic financial instruments—an indication of the rapid global growth of the Islamic finance industry. As a leading Islamic financial institution in Kuwait, Warba Bank is committed to supporting this growth by offering innovative, world-class products and services that create value for all stakeholders."

He added: "The programme provides investors with access to short-term, Sharia-compliant instruments that offer a balance of security, liquidity and competitive returns, an attractive combination for investors seeking to diversify their portfolios."

AlGhanem confirmed that the programme is fully supervised by Warba Bank's Sharia Supervisory Board, ensuring full compliance with

the highest Sharia governance standards.

The programme also reflects the growing confidence global investors place in Warba Bank, supported by the Bank's strong financial performance, solid capital position, clear strategic direction and commitment to the highest standards of governance and transparency. These strengths position Warba Bank as an attractive destination for investors seeking secure and Sharia-compliant investment opportunities in the Gulf region.

Warba Bank continues to deliver strong financial results and maintains a solid capital base that exceeds regulatory requirements. It also holds a strong credit profile from international rating agencies, further underscoring the Bank's robust fundamentals, its capacity for sustainable growth and its commitment to its vision "Let's Own Tomorrow."

No points, no waiting, plus 50 GB FREE with every redemption

Zain Perks: instant offers from over 50 brands

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: Zain Kuwait announces the launch of Zain Perks, an exclusive program designed to reward customers through instant offers provided by more than 50 partners across fashion, sports & health, home & lifestyle, and more. The program is available through the Zain app and a growing network of local and international brands.

Zain Perks is now automatically available to all Zain customers on postpaid and prepaid voice and internet plans, without the need for any pre-registration or collecting points. Customers can benefit from the offers directly through the Zain app, in a simple experience that reflects the concept of instant rewards without complications or conditions.

The program includes in-store and online offers across a wide range of categories, including fashion, accessories, sports clubs, meal subscription services, furniture, home and lifestyle, and more. This reflects a wide and diverse range of options available to customers in different segments, while new offers are continuously added to expand the network of participating brands.

Zain also provides an additional



incentive, whereby customers receive 50 GB FREE when they redeem any Zain Perks offer. This comes on top of the discounts and perks provided by partners on customer purchases at participating stores or through online shopping, which enhances the value customers receive each time they use the program.

The launch of Zain Perks comes within Zain's strategy to enrich the digital experience of its cus-

tomers and provide added value that goes beyond traditional telecom services, through designing innovative solutions that make customers' daily lives easier and more flexible.

The program aims to enhance the customer experience through instant rewards and exclusive offers, while at the same time supporting the local retail ecosystem by connecting brands directly with a wide segment of Zain's customer

base.

Customers can benefit from the program by downloading or updating the Zain app, then accessing the Zain Perks tab, choosing the desired offer, and following the simple on-screen steps to enjoy the discount and receive 50 GB FREE with every redemption.

Customers can also learn more about the program details and the list of partners by visiting the Zain Perks page on Zain's website.



Jazeera Airways complies with EASA AD for Airbus A320 fleet

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: As with all Airbus A320 operators, Jazeera Airways was notified of the EASA Airworthiness Directive (AD).

Our engineering and operations teams have been performing the required technical actions. We are working towards full compliance with the directive today 29 November, and do not expect any signifi-

cant impact on our fleet operations or network schedule.

Safety remains our number one priority at Jazeera Airways. We thank Airbus, the Kuwait DGCA, and most importantly, our dedicated teams for their swift and professional response in implementing the necessary measures to this EASA directive.



Jazeera Airways

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



Got a birthday or event?
Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!
Email your write-up and photos to
arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com
We'll feature it on our What's On page!



Photos during the campaign.

Camp held at ICSK Junior

UPNRI Forum Kuwait conducts successful Free Check-Up Camp

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: UPNRI Forum Kuwait, in collaboration with the Forum of Indian Doctors (FID), organized a highly successful Free Health Check-Up Camp on 21 November 2025 at ICSK Junior, Salmiya, benefiting more than 500 people with free medical consultations and screenings.

The camp was inaugurated by H.E. Ms. Paramita Tripathi, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, who praised the Forum's continued commitment to community health. The event was led by President Zeeshan Ullah Khan and General Secretary Shafiq Mumtaz, supported by Office Bearers and Executive Members.

UPNRI Forum Kuwait also acknowledged the generous support and cooperation of the ICSK Management, whose venue and facilities played a crucial role in the smooth execution of the event.

59 Doctors, 12 Dentist, 23 Nurses, from FID, IDAK, Kuwait Heart Foundation, Tamil Nadu Nurses Forum and English Optics provided services in general medicine, cardiology, dentistry, ophthalmology, oncology, orthopedics, and preventive care.

The screenings revealed several new medical findings, including severely high blood pressure cases (>180/100), high blood sugar, high cholesterol, cardiac conduction abnormalities (LBBB, RBBB), gallbladder stones, uterine fibroids, hydronephrosis, bladder stones, PCOD, DUB, tennis elbow, presbyopia, refractive errors, multiple dermatological issues, and suspicious results from breast-screening of 37 women who were referred for further investigation. More than 85 ultrasound scans, 100+ cholesterol tests, multiple ECGs and 2D echo evaluations (for the first time in a UPNRI camp) were conducted, along with initial mental health counselling sessions, also introduced for the first time.

Over 125 volunteers, including UPNRI members, students, and youth volunteers, ensured smooth coordination throughout the event.

The Forum also acknowledged the support of its sponsors including Al Mulla Exchange (Platinum Sponsor), MECC, Al Yasra Food Co., Al Ashraf Co., Kuwait Swedish Cleaning Services, Al Kulaib International Trading Co., Universal Chiller Services, KITCO, Caesars Restaurant, Taj Restaurant, Sahara Air Conditioning, Kuwait Import Co., Arabiya Printing Press, and Oxford International Educational Consultancy. The camp reaffirmed UPNRI Forum Kuwait's dedication to community service and the well-being of the Indian diaspora in Kuwait.



Johair Marafi

exclusive offers and exceptional discounts on jewelry pieces that match their preferences."

Marafi expressed her delight with the strong engagement from ABK's clients throughout the event, which showcased the brand's identity, branches, and an array of standout products designed to suit the refined tastes of ABK's distinguished clientele.

She further noted that organizing such events underscores ABK's commitment to strengthening its presence across all customer segments in the Kuwaiti market.

It also reinforces the Bank's efforts to offer unique advantages that position ABK as the preferred financial partner, enhancing customer satisfaction with the services and products provided.

Event reflects ABK's focus on lifestyle interests

ABK organizes exclusive events for its female clients at 'Roberto Coin' jewelry

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: As part of its continued dedication to engaging with customers and providing them with special experiences, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) organized a series of exclusive events for its female clients in collaboration with the Italian luxury jewelry house, Roberto Coin.

The events offered attendees an opportunity to discover the latest jewelry collections, explore their unique features and designs, and enjoy a special discount on their purchases.

The event saw strong interaction from clients, who received detailed responses to all their inquiries regarding Roberto Coin's signature jewelry pieces from the brand's representatives, alongside the attendance of several ABK female employees.

Commenting on the occasion, Johair Marafi, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said, "As part of our continued efforts to engage with all client segments and given the strong demand for luxury jewelry in the Kuwaiti market we chose to collaborate with Roberto Coin.

This partnership reflects our focus on the lifestyle interests of our distinguished female clients and provides them with



ABK team during the event.



Discover the latest jewelry collections.



Group photo during the event.

Marafi added that ABK remains committed to collaborating with partners across various sectors to launch exclusive campaigns and offers that meet diverse customer needs. She highlighted the Bank's continuous efforts to keep pace with developments in the banking industry, supporting its leading competitive position in the

local market.

She concluded by thanking Roberto Coin for its cooperation and for hosting the events across its boutiques and inviting everyone to visit ABK's website and social media channels to learn more about the wide range of products and promotional campaigns launched throughout the year.

In line with its continued commitment to launching learning development initiatives

NBK organizes open dialogue sessions for Bankee program school principals



Manal Al-Mattar, Sumaya Al-Jassim, and NBK & Creative Confidence teams with school principals.



KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: As part of its continued commitment to launching learning development initiatives and enhancing its partnerships with the educational institutions, National Bank of Kuwait organized open dialogue sessions that ran for three days, from 24 to 26 November, joining together the principals of the government and private schools participating in Bankee program at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

Bankee is the largest financial literacy program for elementary schools in Kuwait, offered by NBK in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Anti-Corruption Authority "Nazaha", with the aim of introducing the learners to basic economic concepts such as earning, spending, saving, and financial obligations. The program also focuses on instilling core values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, and teamwork to raise the learners' awareness about the importance of financial independence and sustainable development.

Inspirational Experiences and Constructive Discussions

The goal of the dialogue sessions was to exchange experiences and opinions among school principals, and to discuss ways to develop the program and enhance its implementation in schools to maximize the benefit for both learners and teachers. The meeting also provided the new participating schools with an opportunity to listen to former experiences and learn about best practices in implementing the program within classrooms.

During the sessions, the experiences of school principals with the program were highlighted, as well as its positive impact on the learners' behavior and financial literacy. The participants expressed their appreciation for the efforts of NBK in supporting education, further praising the pivotal role the program plays in instilling positive values and developing financial skills among learners.

Moreover, the school principals confirmed that the program contributed to improving the learners' behavior and developing their financial awareness, and it was very well received by parents who noticed positive changes in their children's financial behaviors. The importance of continuing these meetings was also emphasized to enhance the collaboration

Al-Mattar: The sessions aim to explore ways of developing the program and enhance its implementation in schools.

■ Bankee combines financial literacy with educational values in an interactive learning environment.

■ The growing interest in the program reflects an increased trust in the program's effectiveness and positive impact on the educational environment.

Al-Jassim: This year's version of the program witnessed a complete and comprehensive revamp aimed at enhancing the learning experience.

between the bank and the schools and to develop the program in line with the needs of the educational environment.

Additionally, many of the teachers participating in the program expressed their great appreciation for its content and interactive style, noting that it contributed to improving the learners' behavior and significantly enhanced their financial awareness, in addition to instilling educational values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility.

A Widespread Reach and Tangible Impact

On this occasion, Manal Al-Mattar, EVP - Head of Group Corporate Communications at National Bank of Kuwait commented:

Since its launch, Bankee achieved remarkable success and rapid growth with many public and private schools participating for many academic years with around 100 schools participating this year and 10,000 teachers. Moreover, Bankee contributed to making a clear impact on more than 50,000 learners, which enhances saving and financial responsibility skills at an early age.

Al-Mattar added: "The program contributed to raising the level of financial awareness among thousands of primary school learners, through an interactive educational environment that simulates the real economic system".

Furthermore, Al-Mattar noted: "The field visits conducted by the school administrations and parents showed that the program directly contributed to improving student behavior and developing their skills in managing their financial dealings.

The program also witnessed a growing interest from new schools to join, which reflects an increased trust in its effectiveness and positive impact on the educational environment".

Finally, Al-Mattar emphasized that NBK's executive management is committed to closely monitoring the implementation of the program through field visits to public and private schools throughout the year, noting that these visits witnessed great interaction from parents who expressed their happiness with the positive changes in their children, whether in terms of behavior or financial literacy.

Continuous Development for a Better Learning Experience

Sumaya Al-Jassim, Creative Confidence CEO, which is the operating company of the program inside the schools, commented on her part: "This year's version of the program witnessed a complete and comprehensive revamp aimed at enhancing the learning experience".

Al-Jassim also noted that new features have been added to the digital platform, in addition to increasing the financial literacy content and adding more in-class interactive activities. Moreover, this year's edition of the program considered the suggestions made by teachers and learners last year.

Finally, Al-Jassim stressed that these improvements come in line with the company's commitment to collaborating with NBK to provide an advanced and effective learning experience that meet the teachers and learners' expectations.

It is worth noting that NBK firmly believes in the importance of private sector initiatives in collaboration with government entities to provide future generations with the knowledge and skills that enable them to build a prosperous future. NBK will continue to support education, as it's one of the pillars of its corporate social responsibility strategy that deems investing in people as the most important form of investment to achieve sustainable development.



Egyptian actor Hussein Fahmy receives a recognition at Marrakech Film Festival. (AP)



American actress Jodie Foster attends the opening ceremony of Marrakech Film Festival. (AP)



South Korean filmmaker Bong Joon Ho attends the opening ceremony of Marrakech Film Festival. (AP)



From left: American actress Jenna Ortega; Lebanese actress and film director Nadine Labaki; Anya Taylor-Joy; Moroccan singer Hindi Zahra and Canadian director and screenwriter Celine Song attend the opening ceremony of the 22nd Marrakech Film Festival, in Morocco, Friday, Nov. 28. (AP)

Hussein Fahmy, Jodie Foster, Guillermo del Toro celebrated

Marrakech Int’l Film Festival kicks off with 82 films from 31 countries

MARRAKECH, Nov 29, (KUNA): The 22nd Marrakech International Film Festival opened on Friday evening with a celebratory event to honour Egyptian movie star Hussein Fahmy for his distinguished and significant contributions to Arab cinema.

This year’s edition of the festival also celebrated American actress and director Jodie Foster, Mexican di-

rector Guillermo del Toro, and Moroccan artist Rawia, in appreciation of their substantial contributions to both international and national cinema.

Hussein Fahmy expressed his joy at returning to the festival, having participated in its inaugural edition more than 20 years ago.

He emphasised his special connection to Marrakech,

where his cinematic career began.

The jury, headed by South Korean director Bong Joon-ho, also includes Brazilian director Karim Ainouz, Moroccan director Hakim Belabbes, French director Julia Ducournau, Iranian actor and director Peyman Moaadi, American actress Jenna Ortega, Canadian director Celine Song, and British-Argentine ac-

triss Anya Taylor-Joy.

This edition of the festival features 82 films from 31 countries, distributed across an official competition and various screening sections.

It emphasises the festival’s role as an essential platform for promoting cultural diversity and bringing together varied creative visions.

Variety

SEOUL, South Korea: K-pop band aespa and other South Korean pop stars have announced a flurry of donations to support victims of an apartment fire in Hong Kong that killed at least 128 people in one of the city’s deadliest blazes.

Girl group aespa said they will donate 500,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$64,000) to the Hong Kong Red Cross, according to a post on their official Weibo account. “We express our deepest sorrow regarding this heartbreaking news,” the band said.

Stray Kids pledged 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$129,000) through World Vision Hong Kong for temporary housing and other support for affected children and residents. “We were all very heavy-hearted upon hearing the unfortunate news from Hong Kong,” the group said.

SM and JYP Entertainment, two of South Korea’s biggest entertainment companies, donated a combined 3 million Hong Kong dollars (\$385,000) for emergency relief and disaster recovery. (AP)

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BUDAPEST: Chinese literary translator and writer Yu Zemin, who has lived in Hungary for more than three decades, received the Geza Szocs Cultural Connectivity Award on Thursday evening at a gala ceremony hosted by the Friends of Connectivity Foundation in Budapest.

Yu, known for translating works by Hungary’s two Nobel Prize-winning authors as well as the poetry of Geza Szocs, said the award was a recognition of cultural bridges built between China and Hungary.

“I consider Hungary my second home,” Yu said in his acceptance remarks. He thanked Hungarian literature for allowing him to serve as “a voice of Hungarian literature in China,” and paid tribute to Szocs, whom he met in the 1990s. (Xinhua)

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NEW YORK: Acclaimed architect Robert A.M. Stern, a prominent figure in American architecture who designed notable museums, libraries and residences, died Thursday, according to a statement from the firm he founded. He was 86.

The statement did not specify a cause of death, but said Stern “died comfortably at his home.”

“At RAMSA, we grieve the loss of our founder, mentor, and friend, and remain committed to carrying forth his ideals,” the statement from the firm’s partners said.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1939, Stern founded the Robert A. M. Stern Architects firm, now known as RAMSA, in 1969. He gained acclaim for his decades of work and style, which blended post-modernism with contextual design, drawing inspiration from historic and traditional styles. (AP)

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TBILISI: A screening of the Chinese film “The Hundred Regiments Campaign” and a themed photo exhibition were held here on Wednesday to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

“The Hundred Regiments Campaign” depicts the arduous struggle of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China in their fight against Japan during World War II. (Xinhua)

Film

Epic tales and star power drive Telugu films

How Tollywood is reshaping Indian cinema

HYDERABAD, India, Nov 29, (AP): A fast-rising parallel film industry in India is competing with Bollywood’s musicals and action-packed films and has taken the world by storm: It’s called Tollywood.

As Mumbai is to Hindi films - or Bollywood - the southern Indian city of Hyderabad is to movies made in Telugu, one of the country’s most widely spoken languages. Tollywood films like “RRR” and “Baahubali” have achieved international acclaim at the box office and on the awards stage.

The Telugu-language film industry, widely known as Tollywood, is one of India’s many regional movie-producing centers. But it’s drawn national and global audiences with its high-adrenaline action movies, mythic storylines and grand visual style. It has carved out its own identity separate from Hindi-language Bollywood by leaning toward star-driven spectacle and large-scale epics.

Tollywood primarily operates out of Hyderabad, which is home to Ramoji Film City. The 1,666-acre (674-hectare) facility, recognized by Guinness World Records as the world’s largest film studio complex, houses massive film studio complexes, dozens of production houses, warehouses, movie sets and post-production facilities. The industry churns out around 300 films every year - fewer than Bollywood but still enough to make it one of India’s largest regional industries.

Tollywood’s growing exposure was in large part sparked by the coronavirus pandemic, as the rapid expansion of streaming services in India allowed regional films to find wider audiences. That expansion also coincided with Bollywood’s struggle to lure audiences back to theaters amid repetitive storylines and rehashes of hits from other languages.

What has also worked in favor of Tollywood is that it offers a rare balance of high-octane action films and nuanced movies charged with real human drama.

“Telugu people have a lot of interest in movies. The Telugu audience watch and accept all kind of movies. They are cinema lovers,” says filmmaker T.V. Ravi Narayan, who is working on a biopic based on an 18th-century social activist. “Because they are cinema lovers, be it ‘Baahubali,’ ‘Pushpa’ or ‘RRR,’ be it big budget or small budget, be it realistic or biopics or fantasy movies, the audiences accept it.”

Tollywood is known for its high-energy storytelling, big action set pieces and grand spectacle that are heavy on visual effects. It often blends



Visitors walk past the set of Bahubali in Ramoji Film City, in Hyderabad, India, Tuesday, Nov. 18. (AP)

family drama, action and mythology into movies, increasingly marketed as “pan-India” releases and dubbed in multiple regional languages.

The films, like other big Indian productions, have crowd-pleasing visuals and feature viral songs and dances central to the narrative and usually presented as grand performance set pieces.

Many Tollywood films are also remade in Bollywood, which has become a proven formula to expand Telugu cinema across India. Dubbing - where actors record voice-overs in Hindi or a professional voice artist replaces the track - is also a standard and tested practice that has made Tollywood more accessible.

The industry does also produce smaller, low-budget films that tend to focus on stories rooted in Telugu culture. Most of them are set in rural landscapes and explore themes such as social issues, regional cultures and class inequality. Some of those films are sent straight to streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime, where they enjoy a wide reach across India.

Many Tollywood movie stars like Mahesh Babu, Allu Arjun, Prabhas,

Ram Charan and N.T. Rama Rao Jr. command a near-godlike following, with devoted fan bases that cut across generations. Their movie releases are often tied to regional religious festivals and are preceded by carefully marketed music launch events and dance performances that are a spectacle in itself. Tens of thousands of fans attend such events, as they did recently with the first look of S.S. Rajamouli’s “Varanasi.”

The industry has also led to a massive fan club culture, predominantly centered around male film stars. Some fans are so invested in their favorite stars that they often organize charitable drives and blood donation camps in their names. It is not unusual for fans to perform acts of literal worship, washing male stars’ cardboard cutouts or statues with milk - a ritual usually reserved for Hindu gods.

In theaters across Hyderabad, viewers will commonly dance, whistle and throw confetti in the air during releases of films. Outside, billboards of major stars are a frequent sight in the city.

Telugu cinema has also influenced regional politics as many actors have turned popular politicians. In 1983,

superstar N.T. Rama Rao successfully defeated the Congress Party, led by then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, within nine months of founding the regional Telugu Desam Party. After sweeping state elections, he became the chief minister.

Tollywood’s rapid commercial success and audience acceptance over the past decade has reshaped the country’s entertainment landscape and pushed regional cinema further onto the world stage.

Much of its recent success has been credited to filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli, who favors larger-than-life heroes and imaginative filmmaking. Rajamouli became an international name after “RRR,” or “Rise, Roar, Revolt,” his 2022 three-hour epic set in British India. The sprawling anti-colonial tale became one of India’s biggest hits, a global streaming phenomenon that won an Oscar for best original song. His two-part “Baahubali” series, released in 2015 and 2017, broke box-office records in India and a re-edited version combining the two parts, “Baahubali: The Epic,” released in cinemas worldwide just last month.

“Varanasi,” his upcoming adventure

film that blends time-travel and Hindu mythology, is expected to release in 2027.

“We set out to do something very big that we all are excited about, and we just hope and pray that audiences across the world you know, embrace it as well,” says S.S. Karthikeya, one of the producers of “Varanasi,” who is also Rajamouli’s son.

Just like Bollywood, the Telugu film industry also draws its revenue from theatrical releases, television and music rights, overseas distribution and brand partnerships. It is widely regarded as India’s second-highest-grossing film industry, trailing only Bollywood.

Even though the industry is largely controlled by some regionally influential film families and businessmen that have power over movie distribution and screenings, huge marketing campaigns have carried Telugu films across India and beyond.

Dubbed releases, remakes in other Indian languages and talent collaborations across other regional industries have further positioned Tollywood releases as national events, with stars often raking money from profit-sharing arrangements and brand endorsements as well.

- “RRR” (2022): An epic period action drama film directed by Rajamouli that is set in British India.
- “Pushpa: The Rise” (2021) and “Pushpa 2: The Rule” (2024): A two-part action flick directed by Bandreddi Sukumar that follows the rise of laborer in a violent red-sandalwood smuggling syndicate.
- “Colour Photo” (2020): A period romantic drama film directed by Sandeep Raj.
- “Baahubali: The Beginning” (2015) and “Baahubali 2: The Conclusion” (2017): A two-part action epic directed by Rajamouli about a warrior and his battle to reclaim his kingdom.
- “Mayabazar” (1957): A classic that draws from the epic Mahabharata, directed by K.V. Reddy.



A visitor sits on a throne on the sets of Bahubali. (AP)



Visitors explore the sets of the film ‘Bahubali’. (AP)

‘To see where Iran is today feels unimaginable’

In brief glimpses of Tehran, a journalist sees a changing Iran

TEHRAN, Iran, Nov 29, (AP): As you enter Iran’s capital, it starts with only occasional glimpses - a passenger in a car speeding by or a pedestrian trying to leapfrog through Tehran’s notorious traffic. But as you reach the cooler heights of Tehran’s northern neighborhoods along the city’s sycamore-lined Vali-e Asr Street, they are almost everywhere, women with their brown, black, blonde and gray locks.

More and more, Iranian women choose to forgo the country’s mandatory headscarf, or hijab.

It was something unthinkable just a few years earlier in the Islamic Republic, whose conservative Shiite clerics and hard-line politicians long pushed for strict enforcement of laws requiring women to cover their hair. But the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini and the nationwide protests that followed enraged women of all ages and views in a way few other issues have since the country’s 1979 Islamic Revolution.

“When I moved to Iran in 1999, letting a single strand of hair show would immediately prompt someone to tell me to tuck it back under my headscarf out of fear of the morality police taking me away,” said Holly Dagres, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for



Women cross an intersection in downtown Tehran, Iran, Thursday, Nov. 20. (AP)

Near East Policy. “To see where Iran is today feels unimaginable: Women and girls openly defying mandatory hijab.”

Authorities are overwhelmed by the sheer numbers across the country and worry that if they crack down - at a delicate time marked by power blackouts,

water shortages, and a rotten economy - they could spur Iranians to return to the streets.

I received a three-day visa from the government to attend a summit addressed by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi as tensions remain

high over Tehran’s nuclear program. Access to reporting beyond the summit was limited, but the trip gave me my first look on the ground in Iran since my last visits in 2018 and 2019. In those intervening years, I had watched from abroad in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in my role overseeing the Associated Press’ coverage of Iran and the Gulf Arab states as Iran was roiled by protests over the economy and Amini’s death, the coronavirus pandemic and a 12-day war with Israel.”

For the past 46 years, Iran’s rulers have imposed the hijab rule. At the strictest times, the police and the Basijis, the all-volunteer force of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, kept a close eye on women in the streets to ensure compliance.

Whenever the atmosphere felt laxer, many women pushed their scarves further and further back on their head - small challenges to the government on how much hair can you get away with showing. But they rarely dared to remove it.

Working remotely with my AP colleagues in Iran, I knew from their reporting, photographs and video footage from the streets on even unrelated assignments that women had begun to

drop the hijab completely. But I didn’t fully understand the scale of that refusal until I saw it myself.

Around Tajrish Square, at the foot of Tehran’s Alborz Mountains, one group of young girls who are required to wear the hijab to school immediately removed them after leaving in the afternoon. They darted between cars idling through traffic, laughing and carrying art projects. Women of all ages went uncovered at the Tajrish Bazaar and walking past the blue-tile domes of the Imamzadeh Saleh shrine. Two police officers on the street talked among themselves as the women passed by unremarked.

At the luxury Espinas Palace Hotel, multiple uncovered women walked past the signs reading, “Please observe the Islamic hijab” with the black-and-white outline of a woman in hijab.

A foreign diplomat’s wife attended a dinner for the summit without one. An Iranian woman in attendance briefly put one over her head while in discussion with a hotel staff member, then let it fall fully to her shoulders a moment later.

Those sites were in northern Tehran, an affluent area that is generally more liberal. But even in a more conserva-

tive southern district, an uncovered woman walked quickly down the street among others in the all-encompassing black chador.

“All of my life I had to wear hijab, at school, at university, everywhere in public,” one Iranian woman who recently emigrated to Canada told me after I returned to Dubai, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

“I always tried to follow the rules but it made me feel a lack of confidence ... because I wore the hijab and I didn’t believe in that.”

Signs of the war could be seen too. I saw one apartment building, its top-floor apartment still in ruins from an Israeli strike as well.

Hard-liners within Iran’s theocracy repeatedly have called for increased enforcement of the hijab laws. Iran’s reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian has pushed to halt that, saying in September in an interview with NBC News that “human beings have a right to choose.”

Iran’s top authority, 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has so far left the hijab issue alone after this year’s war with Israel, which also saw the United States bomb Iranian nuclear enrichment sites.

Tradition



Balloon handlers guide the Spider Man balloon.



Balloon handlers guide the Stuart the Minion balloon. (AP)



Balloon handlers guide the Marshall from Paw Patrol balloon during Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York. (AP)



The Shrek’s Onion Carriage balloon floats down Central Park West during the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, Thursday, Nov. 27, in New York. (AP)

Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade brings Pac-Man and Labubu to Manhattan

The Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade brought balloons depicting Buzz Lightyear and Pac-Man to the New York City skies on Thursday, as floats featuring Labubu and Lego graced the streets.

The parade, which started on Manhattan’s Upper West Side and closed at the iconic Macy’s Herald Square flagship store on 34th Street, included dozens of balloons, floats, clown groups and marching bands.

It was a chilly day in the city, with temperatures in the 40s, but wind gusts between 25 mph (40 kph) and 30 mph (48 kph), making it feel colder, according to David Stark, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in New York.

Officials watched the forecast closely, since city law prohibits Macy’s from flying full-size

balloons if sustained winds exceed 23 mph (37 kph) or wind gusts are over 35 mph (56 kph). Weather has grounded the balloons only once, in 1971, but they also sometimes have soared lower than usual because of wind.

But a little cold wasn’t a big deal for Megan Christy, who traveled to the city from Greensboro, North Carolina, for the parade, donning a warm onesie as she staked out a spot along the route.

“It’s not raining. We’re very excited about that. And it’s not too bad. Not too cold,” she said. “It’s just a great day for a parade.”

A star-studded lineup of performances was sprinkled throughout the show, along with a slew of marching bands, dancers and cheerleaders.

Performers included “Wicked” star Cynthia Erivo, Conan Gray, Lainey Wilson, Foreigner,

Lil Jon, and Audrey Nuna, EJAE and Rei Ami of HUNTR/X, the fictional girl group at the heart of this year’s Netflix hit “KPop Demon Hunters.” The Radio City Rockettes were also there, as were cast members from Broadway’s “Buena Vista Social Club,” “Just in Time” and “Ragtime.”

The parade featured a few new balloons, including a large onion carriage featuring eight characters from the world of “Shrek.” “KPop Demon Hunters” was also represented in the sky with the characters Derpy Tiger and Sussie.

The event aired on NBC, hosted by Savannah Guthrie and AI Roker from “Today” and their former colleague Hoda Kotb. On Telemundo, the hosts were Andrea Meza, Aleyda Ortiz and Clovis Nienow. The parade was also simulcast on NBC’s Peacock streaming service. (AP)

War threatens to erase country’s cultural past

An archaeologist races to preserve Sudan’s heritage

PARIS, Nov 29, (AP): In a dimly lit office in a corner of the French National Institute for Art History, Sudanese archaeologist Shadia Abdrabo studies a photograph of pottery made in her country around 7,000 B.C. She carefully types a description of the Neolithic artifact into a spreadsheet.

As the war between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) rages on, the curator from Sudan’s National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) is on a year-long research grant in France with one mission: to build an online database of the African nation’s archaeological sites, museum collections and historical archives.

Soon after the war in Sudan started, in April 2023, museums were looted and destroyed. It’s unclear what exactly went missing, but Abdrabo says her task is to find out - and time is of the essence.

“We have to work fast to secure our collections. We’ve already lost two museums and we don’t want to lose more,” Abdrabo told The Associated Press.

She says two regional museums in El Geneina and Nyala were almost completely destroyed, while in Khartoum, the National Museum - which held an estimated 100,000 objects before the war - was ransacked by militias who posted videos online of their fighters inside the storeroom.

The National Museum had pieces dating back to prehistoric times, including from the Kerma Kingdom and the Napatan era when Kushite kings ruled the region as well as from the Meroitic civilization that built Sudan’s pyramids. Other galleries displayed later Christian and Islamic objects.

Among its most valuable items were mummies dating back to 2,500 B.C., some of the oldest and most archaeologically significant in the world as well as royal Kushite treasures.

UNESCO raised the alarm on reports of plun-



Archaeologist from Sudan’s National Museum Dr Shadia Abdrabo, poses in the hall of the French National Institute for Art History (INHA) in Paris, Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2025. (AP)

dering saying the “threat to culture appears to have reached an unprecedented level.”

“My heart was broken, you know? It’s not just objects that we lost. We lost research, we lost studies, we lost many things,” Abdrabo said.

Last month, hundreds of people were left dead and more than 80,000 others forced into displacement after the capture of North Darfur’s capital, El Fasher, by the RSF. For Abdrabo the work is deeply personal.

“I’m from Nubia, from the north, an area filled with monuments, archaeological sites and ancient life,” she said. The region was home to some of the

world’s earliest kingdoms that rivaled ancient Egypt in power and wealth.

She was working at the national museum in the capital Khartoum when the war started.

“We thought it would finish soon ... but then life started getting really difficult: not just the bombing, but there was no electricity, no water,” she said. With her three sisters, she fled north - first to Atbara, then to Abri, and eventually to Port Sudan.

During that time, Abdrabo and her NCAM colleagues worked tirelessly to try and protect Sudan’s 11 museums and sites - some designated with UNESCO World Heritage status - moving pieces to safe rooms and secret locations.

But efforts to protect Sudan’s art were too slow, said Ali Nour, a Sudanese cultural heritage advocate.

“While applications were being drafted, sites were being emptied. While risk assessments were reviewed, entire archives vanished,” Nour wrote in an article for the U.K.-based International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

UNESCO said it carried out inventories, trained police and customs officers to recognize stolen antiquities, while appealing to collectors “to refrain from acquiring or taking part in the import, export or transfer of ownership of cultural property from Sudan.”

But, unlike similar cultural emergencies that followed wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, “Sudan has not benefited from strong media coverage denouncing the degradation and plundering of its cultural heritage,” according to researcher Meryam Amarir. “This lack of visibility has reduced the international response.” Ancient Sudan was connected, through trade and military activity, with Egypt, the Mediterranean world and Mesopotamia, and was the source of much of the gold available in the region, according to Geoff Emberling of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan.

4th suspect arrested

Louvre museum to raise tickets for non-EU visitors

PARIS, Nov 29, (AP): Paris’ Louvre museum has approved a ticket hike from 22 to 32 euros (\$25 to 37) for non-European visitors from January to help finance an overhaul of the building whose degradation has been exposed by the Oct. 19 crown jewels heist.

The measure was announced by French President Emmanuel Macron earlier this year as part of a decade-long plan of renovation and expansion of the museum. Security breaches that allowed the 88 million-euro (\$102 million) theft highlighted the urgency of the situation.

From Jan. 14, nationals from outside the European Union will have to pay 10 euros more. The measure was approved Thursday by the Louvre governing board. Nationals from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, countries that signed up to the European Economic Area agreement, will be exempted from the hike.

In 2024, the Louvre welcomed 8.7 millions visitors, 77% of them foreigners. Top nationalities include people from the US (13%), China (6%) and Britain (5%) who are affected by the price hikes.

Earlier this month, Louvre director Laurence des Cars announced more than 20 emergency measures have started being implemented following the robbery. She said the Louvre’s latest overhaul in the 1980s is now technically obsolete.

The cost for the so-called “Louvre New Renaissance” plan is estimated at up to 800 million euros (\$933 million) to modernize infrastructure, ease crowding and give the famed Mona Lisa a dedicated gallery by 2031.

Display

On Oct. 19, thieves forces their way through a window into the Apollo Gallery with the help of a freight lift, using power tools to cut display cases and leave with the loot on scooters in less than eight minutes.

On Tuesday, the Paris prosecutor announced four more arrests in

connection with the heist. Police can hold the two men and two women for questioning until Saturday before a judge decides whether to press preliminary charges.

A man arrested by French police earlier this week is thought to be the fourth member of the team that stole France’s crown jewels from the Louvre Museum, the Paris prosecutor said Friday, meaning that the entire gang that carried out the brazen heist is now believed to have been caught.

Prosecutor Laure Beccuau, whose office is heading the investigation, said the 39-year-old man has a criminal record, with six previous convictions, including for receiving stolen goods, for which he was given a 2-month suspended prison sentence in 2010.

Conspiracy

He has now been handed preliminary charges of robbery by an organized gang, punishable by 15 years imprisonment, and criminal conspiracy, which can carry a 10-year sentence if he is convicted for his suspected role in the stunning Oct. 19 theft at the world’s most-visited museum. The robbery gang’s haul of loot was worth an estimated 88 million euros (\$102 million) - a monetary value that didn’t include the jewels’ huge historical value to France.

The prosecutor’s statement didn’t say what role, exactly, the man is thought to have played in the daylight heist, carried out with angle grinders, a freight lift and subterfuge, with robbers dressed as workers in bright vests.

Three other people also taken into police custody for questioning this week have been released without charge, the prosecutor said.

Police investigators are continuing their work “to locate the stolen jewels and to precisely determine each person’s role in this organized criminal group, as well as to clarify how the theft was planned and perpetrated,” she said.



The Winter Egg by Faberge is displayed at Christie’s auction rooms in London, Thursday, Nov. 27, it is expected to sell for in excess of 20 million UK Pounds when it is auctioned on Dec. 2. (AP)

A crystal Fabergé egg set to sell for over \$26 million

LONDON, Nov 29, (AP): A rare crystal and diamond Fabergé egg crafted for Russia’s ruling family before it was toppled by revolution is going up for auction, valued at more than 20 million pounds (\$26.4 million).

Christie’s auction house says the Winter Egg is just one of seven of the opulent ovoids remaining in private hands. It will be offered for sale at Christie’s London headquarters on Tuesday.

The 4-inch (10-centimeter) tall egg is made from finely carved rock crystal, covered in a delicate snowflake motif wrought in platinum and 4,500 tiny diamonds. It opens to reveal a removable tiny basket of bejewelled quartz flowers symbolizing spring. Margo Oganessian, the head of Christie’s Russian art department, likened it to a luxurious Kinder Surprise chocolate.

The Winter Egg is a superb example of craft and design, “the ‘Mona Lisa’ for decorative arts,” Oganessian said.

One of just two created by female designer Alma Pihl, the egg was commissioned by Czar Nicholas II for his mother Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna as an Easter present in 1913. Pihl’s other egg is owned by Britain’s royal family. Craftsman Peter Carl Fabergé and his company created more than 50 of the eggs for Russia’s imperial family between 1885 and 1917, each elaborately unique and containing a hidden surprise. Czar Alexander III started the tradition by presenting an egg to his wife each Easter. His successor, Nicholas II, extended the gift to his wife and mother.

Five Things Everyone Should Know About Smoking

It’s no secret that smoking is incredibly harmful, but despite all the scientific evidence we have accumulated, an array of myths and misconceptions still circulate about the source of smoking-related harm.

The best thing any adult smoker can do for themselves is quit tobacco and nicotine products entirely, and it’s never too late to make the change. It’s common for people who successfully quit to notice improvements in breathing and sense of taste and smell just a few days after stopping. Within a year, they may have reduced their risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory disease.

For those who choose not to quit, there are alternatives that have the potential to be less harmful than continued smoking. They’re addictive and not risk-free, but they offer adults a better choice than continuing to smoke. Addressing the myths around smoke-free alternatives couldn’t be more important when it comes to exploring these new technologies. So, what are the five things everyone should know about smoking and smoke-free alternatives?

Smoke is the biggest problem

A lit cigarette produces smoke. This smoke contains high levels of chemical about 100 of which have been identified by public health experts as harmful or potentially harmful. The inhalation of these chemicals in smoke is the primary cause of smoking-related diseases.

Nicotine is misunderstood

Contrary to popular belief, nicotine is not the primary cause of smoking-related diseases. Rather, it is a result of the high levels of harmful compounds found in cigarette smoke. Nicotine is a naturally occurring substance found in several plant varieties, including at high levels in tobacco plants. It’s addictive and not risk-free.

Nicotine is one of the main reasons people continue to smoke or use nicotine products, along with other factors such as taste and ritual.

Quitting tobacco and nicotine products is best

After nicotine is absorbed in the body, it binds to specific receptors in the brain and triggers the release of dopamine (which plays a role in how we feel pleasure) and other neurotransmitters.



After repeated nicotine stimulation, the brain adapts to the presence of nicotine, a process that is reversible when a person stops using products containing nicotine.

While it can be hard to do, every year millions of people successfully quit and stop using tobacco and nicotine products. This is the best choice for their health. For smokers who make the decision to quit, there are a vast range of medicinal products and support services available from health professionals to aid them in their journey to quit tobacco and nicotine altogether.

Tar is not what you think it is

When you hear of smoking-related tar, you might think it’s the same sticky black or brown viscous liquid that’s used to resurface roads. In fact, it’s not a substance at all. It’s a machine-based weight measurement of particulate matter left over in cigarette smoke after nicotine and water are removed.

Smoke-free products do not burn tobacco, which makes the chemical composition of their

aerosol fundamentally different from cigarette smoke. The absence of smoke can significantly reduce exposure to harmful chemicals compared to cigarettes and can eliminate the presence of solid carbon particles found in smoke. This doesn’t make them risk-free, but eliminating smoke makes these products different from cigarettes.

Better alternatives exist compared to continued smoking

The fundamental difference between smoke-free products and cigarettes is that smoke-free alternatives deliver nicotine without combustion or burning. When the burning process and subsequent smoke are removed, the levels of harmful and potentially harmful chemicals can be significantly reduced compared with cigarette smoke.

The best decision is always to quit, but those who would otherwise continue to smoke may want to explore the science and innovation behind smoke-free alternatives in more detail.

Smoke-free products like e-cigarettes, heated tobacco, while still addictive and not risk-free, are a much better alternative for adults than continuing to smoke (if scientifically substantiated and manufactured according to appropriate quality standards).

It’s important to remember that smoke-free products are intended for adults, as alternatives to continued smoking. They are not intended to be cessation products that assist with quitting—as they provide nicotine, which is addictive. Quitting tobacco and nicotine altogether is always the best choice, and medical professionals and recognized stop smoking services can provide advice on quitting.

Most of us know someone who smokes—a friend, family member, or even yourself. Understanding the sources of smoking-related harm and having access to accurate information can help those smokers make an informed choice and move away from cigarettes for good.

Sponsored by Philip Morris Kuwait Company W.L.L.

Rising diabetes rate sparks call for prevention, early screening

Kuwait turns to AI, digital tools as diabetes rate climbs to 25.6%

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: With diabetes rates in Kuwait rising to around 25.6% of adults — one of the highest rates regionally and globally — Dr. Walid Al-Dahhi, President of the Kuwait Diabetes Society and Head of the Diabetes and Endocrinology Department at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, reviewed the health situation in the country, noting that the latest statistics from the International Diabetes Federation confirm the urgent need to strengthen national efforts in the areas of prevention and early detection.

This came in a press statement during an event hosted by Roche Diagnostics at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center on the occasion of the launch of the Accu-Chek® SmartGuide continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) device, which represents an important shift in early diagnosis and patient management, and is in line with Kuwait’s Vision 2035 for digital transformation in the health sector. The event, organized by Roche Diagnostics – Kuwait in collaboration with the Kuwait Diabetes Society, and was attended by the Swiss Ambassador to the country, H.E. Dr. Tiziano Balmelli, as well as officials from the Ministry of Health and the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and international experts.

Dr. Al-Dahhi emphasized that modern technologies for monitoring sugar levels, including continuous glucose monitoring



Officials and experts attend the launch of Roche's Accu-Chek SmartGuide at Sheikh Jaber Cultural Center.

devices and smart digital systems, have become an integral part of the national strategy for healthcare development, emphasizing their role in improving the quality of care, enabling patients to accurately monitor their condition, reducing complications, and supporting medical decision-making based on accurate data. He added that the integration of modern health data and the national vision for digital transformation reflects Kuwait’s commitment to developing a more effective and sustainable health system and ensuring high-quality medical care for all citizens.

Swiss cooperation and promoting health innovation (bold)

Swiss ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Dr. Tiziano Balmelli, praised the joint efforts between Kuwait and Switzerland to promote health innovation, noting the active role of both Kuwait Ministry of Health and the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) in creating an environment that supports innovation and investment. He added that cooperation between Kuwait and Switzerland, and between the public and private sectors, reflects a shared commitment to



building a better health future for all citizens.

H.E. Dr. Tiziano Balmelli also praised Roche’s leading role in promoting medical innovation globally, emphasizing that the company is one of the pillars of the Swiss ecosystem’s success in the fields of science, health, and research and development. He explained that Switzerland’s leading position in the Global Innovation Index for more than ten years reflects a successful strategy based on effective partnerships and mutual trust between the state and the private sector, the

same approach that is embodied today in the growing cooperation between Kuwait and Switzerland.

H.E. Dr. Tiziano Balmelli praised Kuwait’s efforts in combating the spread of diabetes, noting that the adoption of continuous glucose monitoring technology represents a real turning point in patient care, as it allows the healthcare system to move from a reactive approach to a proactive one that reduces complications and improves the quality and efficiency of healthcare, in line with Kuwait’s Vision 2035, which places innovation and human health at the heart of its priorities.

Artificial intelligence is central to the future of healthcare (bold)

Dr. Vasilios Bakogiannis, General Manager of Roche Diagnostics Kuwait, said: “Artificial intelligence is central to the future of healthcare, as data-driven smart solutions help patients live more independently, take control of their care, and improve their quality of life.”

He added that Roche is proud of its long-standing partnership with Kuwait, which spans more than 50 years, and strives to continue innovating and promoting digital transformation in the healthcare sector. He emphasized that the use of artificial intelligence technologies in diagnosis and care enables patients and doctors to make faster and more accurate decisions, thereby enhancing quality of life and increasing the efficiency of the healthcare system. He noted that, in line with Kuwait’s Vision 2035, the company is working to accelerate digital transformation in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to provide personalized, patient-centered healthcare.

During the event, Justin McCarthy from IBM gave a presentation on the role of artificial intelligence in diagnosis and healthcare, enabling doctors to make more accurate decisions before complications arise.

It is worth noting that Roche began its legal operations in Kuwait in November 2020, supported by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA).



A KUNA photo
A Kuwait medical team performs first scar-free robotic thyroidectomy.

Health ministry marks new medical achievement

Kuwait doctors perform scar-free thyroidectomy via mouth

KUWAIT, Nov 29, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health (MoH) announced on Thursday that Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital’s endocrine tumor surgery team has achieved a pioneering medical progress by performing thyroidectomy operations using a robot through the oral cavity without any external wounds.

In a press release, the ministry added that this technique made by a national team led by Dr. Salman

Al-Safran is one of the latest global methods in this surgery, thus placing Kuwait on an advanced path on international surgical innovation map.

The technique is a qualitative breakthrough compared with the traditional method that required a cut in the neck, it added.

The new method reduces pain and the time of recovery, and contributes to raising treatment value and improving healthcare outcomes, it noted.

This shows the accelerated progress of robotic services of ministry and at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, and stressed Kuwait’s ability to keep pace with medical developments in the world, it pointed out.

It paves the way for an expanded future phase that aims to use further advanced robotic surgeries, thus boosting the country’s position in developed surgical field, according to the statement.

Experts find potential therapy to bypass resistance in deadly childhood cancer

SYDNEY, Nov. 29, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia have identified a drug overcoming treatment resistance in relapsed neuroblastoma, the deadly childhood cancer.

The discovery could improve neuroblastoma treatment, the most common solid tumor in children outside the brain, which currently claims 9 out of 10 young patients who experience recurrence, a media release of Australia’s Garvan Institute of Medical Research said on Saturday.

The drug combination found by Garvan researchers can bypass the cellular defenses these tumors develop that lead to relapse, it said.

The team has shown romidepsin, an approved lymphoma drug, triggers neuroblastoma cell death via alternative pathways, bypassing blocked routes to improve chemo-resistant cases in children.

Researchers found standard chemotherapy drugs rely on the JNK pathway “switch” for cell death. In relapsed tumors, this switch has often stopped working, meaning treatments are no longer effective.

The findings made in animal models showed that romidepsin combined with standard chemotherapy halts tumor growth via alternative cell-death pathways, bypassing the

blocked JNK pathway common in resistant cases.

The combo reduced tumor growth, extended survival, and allowed lower chemo doses, potentially reducing side effects for young children, according to the findings published in Science Advances.

Meanwhile, scientists in Australia have decoded the molecular contents of blood’s hidden “messenger” particles for the first time.

Scientists at Australia’s Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute have mapped the complete molecular blueprint of extracellular vesicles (EVs), nanosized particles in blood that

act as the body’s secret messengers, a media release of the Baker Institute said late Friday.

Researchers have long known EVs carry proteins, lipids, and genetic material reflecting their cells’ health status. Isolating them from blood -- packed with cholesterol, antibodies, and other particles -- has remained a major scientific challenge, it said.

“These vesicles are like tiny envelopes sent between cells, delivering molecular updates about what’s happening inside the body,” said Alin Rai, postdoctoral fellow at the Baker Institute.

Kuwait hosts 2nd Arab Girls Sailing

Sheikh Khalifa lauds Sea Sports Club

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Executive Committee of the Arab Sailing Federation is set to convene next Thursday morning at the Mövenpick Hotel, on the sidelines of the 2nd Arab Girls Sailing Championship, which Kuwait will host from December 2 to 5.

The meeting will be attended by Federation President Sheikh Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, First Vice President Khaled Al-Fodari, along with the remaining vice presidents, members of the Executive Committee, and the General Secretariat.

In remarks published on the federation's website, Sheikh Khalifa Al Khalifa and Secretary-General Saeed Zada praised Kuwait—represented by the Public Authority for Sport, the Sea Sports Club, and tournament organizing committee chairman Khaled Al-Fodari—for their significant role in embracing and promoting the sport of sailing, encouraging greater female participation, and providing all the elements necessary for the championship's success.

Khaled Al-Fodari, Secretary-General and Chairman of the Sailing, Rowing, and Kayak Committee at the Kuwait Sea Sports Club,



Sheikh Khalifa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, President of the Arab Sailing Federation.

confirmed that preparations for the 2nd Arab Girls Sailing Championship have been completed. He noted the substantial efforts currently underway, especially with the broad participation of 45 athletes representing nine national teams. Competitions will take place in the marine area at the Sailing, Rowing, and Kayak Committee's headquarters at Messila Beach.

Kuwait falls to Tunisia in cup opener

Dr. Al-Mari wins best Arab Sports CEO award

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

MARRAKECH, Nov 29: Dr. Jaber Al-Mari, Chairman of the Kuwait Volleyball Federation, has been named Best Arab Sports CEO by the General Secretariat of the "Global Award." The honor was presented during a recent ceremony in Marrakech, Morocco, where the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Morocco handed Al-Mari the award.

The recognition highlights the progress achieved by Kuwaiti sports administrators and their role in elevating various sports over recent years.

Dr. Al-Mari expressed his deep appreciation to the organizers of the Global Award for their trust in selecting him for this honor. He described the award as a badge of pride and a responsibility that motivates him to continue working to advance volleyball in particular and Kuwaiti sports in general.

He noted that he is the first Kuwaiti sports figure to receive this distinction—an achievement he says reflects the status of Kuwaiti sports across the Arab world.

Al-Mari also praised the ceremony's organization and the presence of prominent Arab figures from a variety of fields. He expressed hope that more Kuwaiti sports leaders will be recognized in the future, noting that Kuwait

continues to produce talented administrators with modern visions and effective planning skills across all sporting disciplines.

In other action, Kuwait's men's volleyball team suffered a 3-0 loss to Tunisia (23-25, 21-25, 24-26) in the opening round of the inaugural Arab Men's Challenge Cup, currently taking place in Amman, Jordan.

Kuwait faced host nation Jordan yesterday, while the tournament teams are scheduled for a rest day today.

Jassem Al-Failakawi, head of the Kuwaiti delegation, said the team delivered a strong performance despite not being fully prepared for the tournament. He added that facing a high-level team like Tunisia—ranked globally and a World Cup participant—offered a valuable test for Kuwait's young players and provided important experience.

He explained that Kuwait entered the match missing four key players due to injury, which posed an additional challenge for the squad. Still, the players on court performed with significant effort and represented the country honorably.

Al-Failakawi affirmed that the team will continue working with focus and determination ahead of the upcoming matches, expressing full confidence in the coaching and administrative staff to help the players improve their results and raise their performance level in the next rounds.



The Ambassador of Oman presents the award to Al-Mari.

Bangladesh Youth Festival Victory Day Cricket Tournament inaugurated in Kuwait



Top and above: Pictures from the event

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: The Bangladesh Youth Festival Victory Day Cricket Tournament 2025 was officially inaugurated in Kuwait, organized by the Bangladesh Cricket Association and held under the patronage of the Bangladesh Embassy.

The tournament opened at the Al-Rai Cricket Ground, with Biman Bangladesh Airlines Country Manager AKM Farhad presiding over the ceremony. The event was hosted by the association's General Secretary Moazzem

Hossain and attended by convener Mir Mosaroff Hossain, acting president Sawardi, Bangladesh Press Club president and senior journalist Moin Uddin Sarker Sumon, and tournament advisors Shoaib Ahmed, Main Uddin Main, Akhtaruzzaman Shams, and Shafiqul Islam Shafiq.

Joint convener Zayedur Rahman, Selim Khan, members Liton Miyazi, Fayez Rahman Sumon, Ismail Sobhan, and a large number of Bangladeshi expatriates were also present.

A total of 10 teams of Bangladeshi expatriates are taking part in this year's tournament. The participating teams are: Bangladesh XI, Jilib Expatriate Cricket Club, Khulna Titans, Bangladesh Friends Sporting Club, IIY Sporting Club, Bangladesh Legends, B-Baria XI, Jilib Knight Riders, Bengal Avengers, and Comilla Victorians.

The media partner for the entire event is Bangladesh Press Club Kuwait.



Germany's Selina Cerci, left, and Spain's Olga Carmo-na fight for the ball during the women's nations league soccer match between Germany and Spain in Kaiserslautern, Germany. (AP)

Spain and Germany deadlock in Nations League final first leg

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany, Nov 29, (AP): Spain escaped Germany with a scoreless draw in the first leg of their Women's Nations League final.

The title will be decided in Madrid on Tuesday at the home stadium of Atletico Madrid.

Germany dominated the first half in Kaiserslautern as world champion Spain was unrecognizable.

Normally masters of possession, the Spaniards continually lost the ball under Germany's pressure. Three-time Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmati was missing in action as Spain hunkered down in its area.

Only Cata Coll's saves kept Germany at bay. The Barcelona goalkeeper deflected shots by Franziska Kett and Klara Buhl and defender Irene Paredes cleared a Jule Brand's goal-bound strike in quick succession around the half-hour mark when the hosts were at their best.

Spain improved in the second half but Sara Bermudez's side was still lucky to not fall behind in its bid to defend its Nations League title.

Alexia Putellas curled a shot just by the post then Esther Gonzalez volleyed a cross by Mariano Caldentey off the woodwork in the 53rd.

But Germany remained dangerous as the game became an exchange of blows with neither midfield able to control the pace. Buhl sent a low shot off the bottom of the post in the 70th and a Brand cross clipped the bar moments later.

Spain's first ever victory over Germany came at the 2025 European Championship semifinals where Bonmati scored in extra time.

Spain has reached the finals of the last four major tournaments. It beat England in the 2023 Women's World Cup and bettered France in the 2024 Women's Nations League. It fell to England on penalties in the Euros 2025 final.

US Soccer has bold plans for the World Cup legacy

'Soccer Everywhere for Everyone' initiative rolled out nationwide

WASHINGTON, Nov 29, (AP): The last time the United States hosted the World Cup, the U.S. Soccer Federation built on the the financial infusion and the public's excitement to help launch Major League Soccer two years later.

Much has changed with the 2026 World Cup. This time the tournament is hosted by three nations, with the United States joined by Mexico and Canada. And the financial windfall will go to FIFA, which is running the tournament for the first time rather than a local organizing committee, such as the one in 1994 that used its \$40 million surplus to fund the U.S. Soccer Foundation - the charitable arm of the national federation.

So what will the World Cup's legacy be for U.S. soccer's governing body? The not-for-profit is undertaking ambitious and sprawling projects to boost the game from the youth ranks to the pros.

U.S. Soccer's ultimate aim is to spread the sport at the youth level through school and community programs, expand fundraising efforts and position the U.S. professional leagues and national teams for future success.

It's a tall order, CEO JT Batson admits.

"We already have this massive engine that is people who love soccer in this country, and the infrastructure of our professional leagues and clubs, and all the youth soccer across the country. That's a really powerful group that if organized and supported, can do some pretty incredible things," he said.

Soccer Forward, the federation's legacy project announced last year, has started to roll out. With the motto "Soccer Everywhere for Everyone," it sells schools on expanded soccer programs, brings mini-fields into communities where soccer



A file photo of JT Batson, CEO of U.S. Soccer, speaking during a news conference, Sept. 16, 2023, in Atlanta. (AP)

doesn't have a big footprint, and supports community-led efforts to grow the game at a grassroots level. It includes everything from best practices for fundraising, to securing grants for building soccer fields, to tips for youth coaches.

U.S. Soccer says such initiatives are sorely needed: One in four schools have no sports programs.

But it goes beyond just the game, with elements of health and charity. In October, the Kansas City Current partnered with Soccer Forward for an event at the Kansas City Girls Preparatory Academy. More than 100 girls took part in small-sided soccer games and programming focused on women's health. The girls also packaged hygiene kits for women in need.

An emphasis on equity in the sport was aided by a \$25 million donation from Michele Kang, owner of the NWSL's Washington Spirit, as well as Lyon and the London City Lionesses in Europe. The money will be used to grow the women's game through research and innovation projects.

Batson said the goal is to ensure that "everyone who wants to play soccer can play, and that we have the right resources going to the right levels of the game to achieve the right resources."

That means there's an opportunity not just to benefit the kids who want to play recreationally, but to also bring future players into the game who may go on to academies, colleges or professional soccer careers.

"I think one of the big shifts for U.S. Soccer is sort of articulating ourselves as being in service to soccer, and we take that very seriously around our role of supporting those who are brining soccer to life in communities all across the country," Batson said. "This is a huge flipping of how U.S. Soccer sees itself and the role we play with our members and everyone else who loves soccer, and (we) are trying to do things every day to earn the trust of those folks to continue on that journey with us."

Former Deloitte executive Dan Helfrich, hired as the USSF's chief operating officer this month, will help oversee In Service to Soccer, the federation's overarching strategy.

"It is our responsibility to drive lasting legacy from hosting the World Cup," Helfrich said. "We take that responsibility very seriously and believe that we will have national holistic impact that comes from this World Cup, not just sporadic impact limited to a few communities or cities."

To achieve these lofty goals, U.S. Soccer needs funding. So the federation has also launched the Behind the Dream campaign which aims to raise \$250 million - and also hopes to capitalize on the excitement of the World Cup.

In many countries the government helps fund sports federations. For example, the English Football Association gets funding from several government entities, including Sport England. Sports federations in the United States are non-profit organizations.

U.S. Soccer has put an emphasis on fundraising in the past two years. In 2023, U.S. Soccer's expenses exceeded its revenues. That has since flipped.

WANTED (Urgent)

Agriculture Engineer (Wafra)

Nationality : India, Pakistan

Send C.V. to Whatsapp : 66683273

Change Name

I, Ankam Raseswari (old name) holder of Indian passport No. R7728657, Andra Pradesh Annamaya (distick) PIN - 516269,, INDIA. Do hereby change my name to Ashaiji Arifa (New name)

Iran boycotts World Cup draw over visa denial

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Nov 29, (AP): Iran has decided to boycott the 2026 World Cup draw in Washington next week because the U.S. denied visas to members of its delegation, the state-run IRNA news agency reported on Friday.

The agency quoted Iranian soccer federation spokesman Amir-Mahdi Alavi as saying that officials faced visa obstacles that go beyond sports considerations. There was no immediate comment from the White House.

Alavi said the federation had reached out to FIFA and hoped it could help resolve the issue.

Soccer's ruling body didn't immediately reply to a request for comment.

President Donald Trump's administration announced in June a travel ban on citizens from 12 countries including Iran. The list also included Haiti, which last week qualified for the World Cup.

Exemptions, however, were promised for "any athlete or member of an athletic team, including coaches, persons performing a necessary support role, and immediate relatives, traveling for the World Cup, Olympics, or other major sporting event as determined by the secretary of state."

It is unclear whether the exemptions also apply to the World Cup draw, which takes place on Dec. 5 at the Kennedy Center.

The Iranian delegation would have been expected to be led by its soccer federation president Mehdi Taj, one of the most senior officials in Asian soccer and a member of two FIFA committees that have oversight of the World Cup.

He is one of the vice presidents of the Asian Football Confederation and a member of FIFA panels with responsibility for the ruling body's competitions, plus men's national team soccer in general.

Change Name

I, Fatema holder of Indian passport No. V3758598 Issued at Kuwait on 30-12-2021 and permanent residence of C-125, Shastri Colony, Durgapur, PIN - 314001, RAJASTHAN, INDIA. Do hereby change my name from Fatema to Fatema Abbas Naharwala with immediate effect

Kuwait’s first and only globally accredited marathon, officially listed on Visit Kuwait

More than 10,000 participants join the 11th edition of the Gulf Bank Marathon

KUWAIT CITY, Nov 29: In a remarkable display of energy, passion, and community spirit, the 11th edition of the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon commenced yesterday morning in Kuwait City. The event, a cornerstone on Kuwait’s annual sports calendar, has cemented its position as the first and only internationally accredited marathon in Kuwait, welcoming more than 10,000 runners from across the world.

The morning began with a dynamic countdown at 7:30 a.m., after which thousands of runners surged through the start line at Souq Sharq. Clear weather and a celebratory atmosphere created the perfect stage for both seasoned athletes and first-time participants, all determined to complete their chosen challenge.

The race route, renowned for its scenic and cultural richness, took runners on a visually striking journey through Kuwait’s most iconic landmarks: Kuwait Towers, the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC), the Grand Mosque, Souq Al-Mubarakiya, and Gulf Bank’s heritage-listed headquarters- one of the few buildings in Kuwait still operating in its original intended purpose.

Thousands of spectators lined the streets, cheering runners on and contributing to a sense of national unity and collective achievement.

A National Event Rooted in Heritage, Community, and Tourism

Commenting on this year’s milestone edition, Gulf Bank’s Chief Marketing Officer Najla Aleisa said: “The record participation in this year’s marathon demonstrates how deeply the event has become embedded in the social fabric of our country. We are proud to see runners of all ages, backgrounds, and fitness levels come together to celebrate health, wellness, and community spirit.”

She added that the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon now stands as a key pillar in Kuwait’s growing sports tourism landscape. Through its listing on the Visit Kuwait platform, the marathon plays an important role in attracting international visitors and showcasing Kuwait as a dynamic and welcoming destination.

“The marathon is part of a broader movement to position Kuwait on the global tourism map. Sports tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourism segments worldwide, and we are committed to contributing to this momentum by delivering an exceptional event that reflects the richness of Kuwaiti culture and hospitality.”

Aleisa emphasized that the marathon also carries a strong social mission, particularly in promoting healthier lifestyles. With rising rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, encouraging physical activity has never been more critical.

“This event is not just about running; it is about inspiring long-term behavioral change. Our goal is to help individuals and families embrace healthier habits that contribute to overall societal well-being.”

She also highlighted the Gulf Bank’s ongoing commitment to youth empowerment, community engagement, and sustainable development- key pillars of Gulf Bank’s social responsibility strategy.

“The marathon provides a unique platform to support youth-led initiatives, local SMEs, and talented Kuwaiti athletes. We are proud to enable them to shine and represent Kuwait internationally.”

Aleisa concluded by expressing heartfelt appreciation to government stakeholders, particularly the Ministries of Interior, Health, and Youth, for their continued support and partnership.

Economic Impact and Growing Regional Reach

From the organizing partner’s perspective, Ahmed Al-Majed, Chief Operating Officer of Suffix Events, expressed pride in the marathon’s continued evolution and positive economic footprint.

“Our partnership with Gulf Bank has transformed the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon into one of the region’s most admired sporting events. Since the inaugural edition, we have welcomed more than 75,000 participants and driven an annual economic impact of over KD 2 million—benefiting hospitality, retail, transportation, and other sectors.”

Al-Majed highlighted the role of the marathon in strengthening volunteerism in Kuwait. More than 9,000 volunteers have contributed over the years, making the event one of the country’s largest volunteer-driven initiatives.

He added that the GCC presence continues to grow, particularly from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia—two of the most represented nationalities after Kuwait. This year, nearly 5,000 non-Kuwaiti residents and more than 800 international runners flew into Kuwait solely to participate in the marathon.

“We coordinate closely with ministries and emergency teams to ensure a world-class experience. Medical teams deploy across the route, hydration stations support runners every few kilometers, and a highly trained logistics team ensures seamless race operations.”

Fact Box 1: The First and Only Globally Accredited Marathon in Kuwait

The Gulf Bank 642 Marathon is officially recognized by:

- World Athletics Road Race Label
- Association of International Marathons and Dis-



Gulf Bank officials gather for a group photo with Acting CEO Sami Mahfouz at the center.



A group photo of the Gulf Bank and Suffix teams with the winners.



Thousands participate in the Gulf Bank Marathon.

tance Races (AIMS)

Through this accreditation, runners can earn points toward the AbbottWMM Wanda Age Group World Rankings, allowing athletes aged 40+ to qualify for world championship events.

This accreditation positions Kuwait on the global map as a competitive and credible running destination- an achievement that supports both national sports development and tourism strategy.

Fact Box 2: Marathon Statistics

- Since Launch**
- 75,000+ total participants
 - 150 nationalities
 - 9,000 volunteers
 - KD 2 million annual economic benefit
- 2025 Edition – 11th Year**
- More than 10,000 runners
 - 100 international nationalities represented
 - 800 runners traveled from abroad
 - Almost 5,000 non-Kuwaiti residents participated
 - Ages ranged from 10 to 85 years

- 41% female, 59% male participation
- USD 50,000 total prize purse

Fact Box 3: Four Days of Community Celebration

For four consecutive days, Souq Sharq was transformed into a lively athlete village filled with marathon kit distribution, live workouts, entertainment zones, and family-friendly activities creating excitement in the days leading up to race day.

Fact Box 4: “Bu Sarrou” Takes the Stage

This year, Gulf Bank and Suffix unveiled the official marathon mascot “Bu Sarrou”—a culturally inspired character designed to embody strength, excitement, and determination. Children also enjoyed engaging with Gulf Bank’s neo mascot, helping foster financial awareness and responsibility among younger visitors.

Fact Box 5: Sawaed Al-Khaleej Volunteers

More than 500 dedicated volunteers, including members of Gulf Bank’s Sawaed Al-Khaleej volunteer team, played a crucial role in ensuring the marathon’s success,

Najla Aleisa:

- We are proud of the exceptional turnout and the rich diversity of participants, reflecting Kuwait’s vibrant community spirit.
- The marathon has evolved into a national platform that reinforces the country’s tourism aspirations—led by the Visit Kuwait initiative.

Ahmed Al-Majed:

- We remain committed to elevating the marathon experience year after year. The event contributes more than KD 2 million annually to Kuwait’s economy and continues to attract GCC and international participation.

strengthening Gulf Bank’s tradition of community contribution and youth involvement.

Fact Box 6: Showcasing Kuwaiti Talent and Heritage

In celebration of Kuwaiti creativity, the marathon featured local folkloric performances and uniquely designed medals created by Kuwaiti artists, highlighting the nation’s cultural heritage.

The “Qalaleef” brought traditional rhythms to life, reviving the sounds historically associated with Kuwait’s shipbuilding industry and adding an authentic cultural layer to the marathon atmosphere.

Fact Box 7: “Let’s Be Aware” Financial Literacy Campaign

As part of Gulf Bank’s commitment to strengthening financial inclusion and awareness, the bank hosted the Central Bank of Kuwait’s “Let’s Be Aware” campaign at its booth, educating the public about financial safety, fraud prevention, and sound banking practices.

Fact Box 8: Gulf Bank Challenge Team

Ahead of the marathon, Gulf Bank launched the second edition of the Gulf Bank Challenge, training 10 participants to help them achieve personal goals. The participants expressed gratitude to Gulf Bank, event sponsors, and coach Mohammed Al-Hathal for guiding them toward new milestones.

Fact Box 9: Largest Corporate Participation

Gulf Bank was recognized as the largest participating corporation, with 615 employees proudly taking part in this year’s marathon- an all-time record and a testament to the bank’s strong employee engagement culture.

Fact Box 10: Fully Sold Out — A National Milestone

For the first time since its inception, the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon sold out days before the event reflecting a shifting national mindset toward health, wellness, and sports participation. This milestone signifies growing public enthusiasm for large-scale community events that promote healthier lifestyles.



Kid takes part in the marathon.



A truly outstanding family sports day.



Strong presence of people of determination.



Bu Sarrou makes its debut as the mascot of the Gulf Bank Marathon.



Race winner McLaren driver Oscar Piastri of Australia, second right, poses with second placed Mercedes driver George Russell of Britain, second left, third placed McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain, right, and Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic after the sprint race at the Lusail International Circuit ahead of the Qatar Formula One Grand Prix, in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

Sports

Kuwaiti racers shine in Bahrain Drag Racing Championship opener

MANAMA, Nov 29, (KUNA): Kuwait Motor Sports Club racers claimed five top positions in the opening round of the 2025–2026 Bahrain National Drag Racing Championship.

Team manager Sheikh Sabah Dawood Al-Sabah told KUNA on Saturday that the Kuwaiti contingent delivered outstanding performances across multiple categories during Friday evening’s races at Bahrain International Circuit.

He reported that Abdulrahman Bourbaa won first place in the Index 4.5 category, Abdulrahman Bualwa topped the Index 4.8 category, Jassem Zaman secured first place in the Outlaw 6 category, and Nasser Bourbaa finished first in the 8.5 Bike category. Shahab Bourbaa also earned a podium finish, placing third in the 8.5 Bike division.

Sheikh Sabah praised the team’s strong performance and noted that several other Kuwaiti competitors reached the semifinals, reflecting the squad’s solid preparation, technical discipline, and competitive spirit.

The first round featured participants from Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

The championship’s second round will be held from December 23–26, followed by the third round from January 6–9, 2026. The fourth round will take place January 13–16, while the final round is scheduled for March 3–6.



Kuwait Motor Sports Club's racers pose for a group photo.

KUNA photo

Kuwait resumes full squad training ahead of Arab Cup



Players preparing for training under the supervision of the head coach.

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

DOHA, Nov 29: Kuwait resumed full-squad training yesterday at Al-Aqila Stadium in Doha, Qatar, ahead of the Arab Cup.

Kuwait is drawn in Group C alongside Egypt, the UAE, and Jordan. Kuwait will open its campaign against Egypt on Tuesday, face Jordan on December 6, and conclude the group stage against the UAE on December 9. The top two teams from each of the four groups will advance to the quarterfinals.

Following their 2-0 victory over Mauritania in the playoff match, the management granted players a two-day rest. Portuguese coach Helio Sousa addressed the squad before training, urging the team to remain focused, noting that the level of competition in the group stage will be significantly higher. The medical staff has also been ensuring players recover from minor bruises sustained during the Mauritania match.

Meanwhile, Kuwait’s under-23 Olympic team is training in Dubai ahead of the Gulf Cup, which Qatar will host from December 4 to 16. The tournament features eight teams divided into two groups: Group A includes Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain, while Group B features Iraq, the UAE, Oman, and Yemen.

Kuwait’s Olympic team will face Qatar in its opening match next Friday, with the tournament officially kicking off Thursday with Iraq versus Yemen. All 14 group-stage matches will be held at the Aspire Zone Stadiums, which recently hosted the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2025. Fans will have free access to all group-stage matches, providing a great opportunity to watch emerging young talent.

This tournament forms part of Qatar’s packed football calendar this year, which also includes the Arab Cup (December 1–18) and the Club Confederations Cup (December 10, 13, and 17).

Piastri wins sprint race at Qatar GP to close gap on Norris to 22 points

LUSAIL, Qatar, Nov 29, (AP): Oscar Piastri won the Qatar Grand Prix sprint race from pole position Saturday to move 22 points behind McLaren teammate Lando Norris heading into Sunday’s main Formula 1 race.

Piastri’s sprint win gave him eight points with seven going to Mercedes driver George Russell in second place. The championship leader Norris took six points for his third-place finish, and Verstappen got five for finishing fourth.

“Yeah, car was good,” Piastri said. “Let’s keep it going.”

Norris started the sprint from third on the grid and Verstappen from sixth. The Dutchman was let through by his Red Bull teammate Yuki Tsunoda on the first lap but could not get close enough to pressure Norris.

Heading into Sunday’s penultimate race of the season, Norris had 396 points, Piastri 374 and Verstappen 371.

Norris needs to finish four points ahead of Piastri on Sunday to clinch his first F1 title - as long as he is also one point ahead of Verstappen, who is chasing a fifth straight F1 crown.

There is a night-time qualifying session later Saturday for Sunday’s race.

Verstappen complained of bouncing and understeer on his Red Bull on Friday, and the problems persisted.

“The bouncing’s still very bad,” Verstappen said four laps into Saturday’s sprint.

Tsunoda finished fifth ahead of Kimi Antonelli, with both getting five-second time penalties for going off track limits more than the maximum three times.

Aston Martin’s Fernando Alonso got two points in seventh and Williams driver Carlos Sainz collected one point in eighth.

Seven-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton’s slide continued when he placed 17th. He started from the pit lane after a rear wing change.

The F1 season concludes on Dec. 7 in Abu Dhabi.

Reaves drops 38, Doncic adds 35 as Lakers hold off Mavs in Davis return

OKC moves on in NBA Cup; Spurs reach quarterfinals

LOS ANGELES, Nov 29, (AP): Austin Reaves scored 38 points, Luka Doncic added 35 points and 11 assists in his third meeting with his former team, and the Lakers spoiled Anthony Davis’ return to Los Angeles with a 129-119 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Friday night.

Davis had 13 points and five rebounds while on a minutes restriction in his first game in Los Angeles since the Lakers traded him for Doncic 10 months ago.

Reaves scored 19 points and Doncic added 17 in an impressive second half, allowing the Lakers to hold on for their sixth consecutive victory. They also swept four games of NBA Cup group play, earning a home quarterfinal.

LeBron James scored 13 points after managing just two in the first half, but he hit a decisive 3-pointer with two minutes to play. Reaves hit six 3-pointers and Doncic made four.

P.J. Washington scored 22 points and Ryan Nembhard added 17 for Dallas, while Max Christie scored 13 points against his former team. Rookie Cooper Flagg had 13 points, 11 assists and seven rebounds, but the Mavericks lost for the fifth time in six games despite a noticeable improvement on their recent play with Davis’ return.

Thunder 123, Suns 119

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 37 points and eight assists and the Oklahoma City Thunder held on to beat the Phoenix Suns to reach the knockout round of the NBA Cup.

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 15 points in the final seven minutes on 4-of-5 shooting to help the defending champion Thunder win their 11th straight and become the fifth team in NBA history to start 19-1. They finished 4-0 in West Group A.

Chet Holmgren had 23 points and eight rebounds for Oklahoma City.

Jalen Williams had 11 points and eight assists in his return from wrist surgery. He played 29 minutes and made 3 of 12 shots. The All-Star guard/forward had surgery in July to repair a torn ligament in his right wrist and a follow-up procedure to remove a screw that was causing irritation.

Gilgeous-Alexander has scored at least 20 points in 92 consecutive games, matching Wilt Chamberlain for the second-longest streak in NBA history. Chamberlain is first with 126 straight games.

Spurs 139, Nuggets 136

In Denver, Devin Vassell scored a season-high 33 points on the strength of 7-of-9 shooting from 3-point range and the San Antonio Spurs advanced to the NBA Cup quarterfinals with win over the Denver Nuggets.

Julian Champagnie added a season-best 25 points to help the Spurs roar back from an 18-point third-quarter deficit and hand the Nuggets, winners of six straight on the road, their third consecutive defeat at home.

The Spurs made 30 of 32 free throws



San Antonio Spurs forward Julian Champagnie, left, drives past Denver Nuggets forward Cameron Johnson in the first half of an NBA Cup basketball game in Denver. (AP)

and scored 30 points off 17 Nuggets turnovers.

Jamal Murray led Denver with 37 points, Cam Johnson added 28 and Nikola Jokic 21. Murray became the fifth player in franchise history to top 10,000 points for his career.

Jokic flashed another jaw-dropping, behind-the-back assist, this one to Spencer Jones for second-quarter basket as Denver built a 74-59 halftime lead.

Jazz s 128, Kings 119

In Salt Lake City, Keyonte George scored 31 points and Lauri Markkanen added 28 to help the Utah Jazz beat Sacramento Kings and snap a four-game skid. Brice Sensabaugh had 20 points for the Jazz, who finished 1-3 in NBA Cup group play.

Knicks 118, Bucks 109

In New York, Jalen Brunson scored 37 points and the New York Knicks advanced to the knockout round of the NBA Cup, beating the Milwaukee Bucks in Giannis Antetokounmpo’s return from a groin injury.

Miles McBride added 19 points, including two 3-pointers in the opening minutes of the fourth quarter to put the Knicks ahead by 13. New York went 3-1 to win East Group C.

Josh Hart had 19 points and 15 rebounds in his third game back in the starting lineup. Mikal Bridges scored 14 points as the Knicks shot 44%.

Antetokounmpo finished with 30 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists in 28 minutes after missing four games.

Kyle Kuzma added 20 points as Milwaukee lost its seventh straight overall and was eliminated from the tournament with a 2-2 record in group play. A.J. Green finished with 18 points for the Bucks, who shot 52.1% and made 18 3-pointers.

Grizzlies 112, Clippers 107

In Inglewood, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 16 of his 24 points in the second half and



Los Angeles Lakers guard Austin Reaves (15) shoots a 3-pointer as Dallas Mavericks guard Ryan Nembhard (9) defends during the second half of an NBA Cup basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

the Memphis Grizzlies rallied for win over the Los Angeles Clippers in the last game of NBA Cup play for both teams.

The Grizzlies, who outscored the Clippers by eight in the fourth quarter to get their fourth win in five games, went 3-1 in West Group B but failed to secure a wild card into the knockout round because the Phoenix Suns had a better point differential.

Vincent Williams Jr. scored 16 points and Santi Aldama added 13 off the bench for the Grizzlies, who have a three-game road winning streak after dropping their previous five away from home. Zach Edey had 21 rebounds and five points.

Hawks 130, Cavaliers 123

In Atlanta, Jalen Johnson had 29 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists to

lead the Atlanta Hawks past Cleveland Cavaliers. Atlanta eliminated Cleveland from the in-season tournament, meaning neither team advances to the quarterfinal round.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker added 28 points, including a clutch late 3-pointer, helping Atlanta go on an 7-0 run in less than 30 seconds to create separation.

76ers 115, Nets 103

In New York, Tyrese Maxey scored 22 points, Jared McCain had 20 off the bench and the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Brooklyn Nets.

Quentin Grimes added 19 points, and Paul George had 14 to help the short-handed 76ers snap a two-game losing streak.

Hornets 123, Bulls 116

In Charlotte, Brandon Miller scored 27 points, Miles Bridges had 22 points, eight rebounds and seven assists and the Charlotte Hornets beat the Chicago Bulls to snap a seven-game losing streak.

Collin Sexton added 21 points off the bench for the Hornets, who held the Bulls to 8 of 36 shooting from beyond the 3-point arc. LaMelo Ball had 16 points, eight assists and seven rebounds.

Pacers 119, Wizards 86

In Indianapolis, Pascal Siakam had 24 points and 11 rebounds and the Indiana Pacers beat the Washington Wizards 119-86 on Friday night in an NBA Cup game between two of the league’s worst teams.

Benedict Mathurin added 20 points, and T.J. McConnell had 14 points and eight assists to help Indiana end a three-game losing streak and improve to 3-16. Washington dropped to 2-16 to replace the Pacers in last place.

Injury-ravaged Indiana has plummeted without Tyrese Haliburton, the star guard who tore his right Achilles in the Pacers’ Game 7 loss to Oklahoma City in the NBA Finals.