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Kuwait Amir congratulates UAE President on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2. (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the advent of his country's 54th National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal lauded the vast achievements and developments in the UAE, expressing pride in the strength of ties and affirming eagerness to bolstering them in all possible domains.

His Highness the Amir wished further

progress and development for the UAE under the country's wise leadership.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the advent of his country's 54th National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the UAE leadership and people further progress and development.

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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

Amir Bahrain-bound for 46th GCC Summit

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2. (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation will depart on Wednesday, heading to Bahrain to chair the Kuwaiti delegation at the 46th Regular Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Over decades, Bahrain has hosted seven GCC summits that marked

major milestones in strengthening political, economic, and security integration among member states and advancing joint Gulf action.

These summits adopted landmark decisions that reinforced GCC institutional development and responded to the aspirations of Gulf leaders and peoples for deeper cooperation.

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Opinion

The government needs to review everything written and spoken

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE stark contrast between the KD 4 billion Kuwaitis spent on tourism abroad last year and the mere KD 206 million generated from visitors to Kuwait highlights a major imbalance.

This huge disparity requires us to consider strategies for revitalizing domestic tourism, thereby reducing outbound spending, and redirecting it toward

local ventures.

Furthermore, action is needed to attract international visitors, bringing Kuwait in line with other GCC countries that have succeeded in the global tourism market.

There is no doubt that the country is fully capable of implementing entertainment projects on both regional and global levels. Moreover, available unused land can be repurposed to support this goal.

Benefiting from these resources properly, free from administrative obstacles, will not only generate significant national benefits but also promote development in all regions of Kuwait.

This would facilitate the allocation of sovereign wealth funds toward such projects, along with contributions from the Social Security Fund and similar entities.

It would also encourage private-sector participation and provide incentives to attract foreign investment, not to mention that banks possess substantial capital they are eager to invest.

Effective planning, sound decision-making, and ensuring equal opportunities for all are essential. This responsibility rests with the current government, which is unburdened by the pressures that hindered previous administrations.

Previous governments were susceptible to pressure and intimidation from members of parliament. These MPs pursued electoral gains, often misusing public funds and promoting wasteful spending to avoid parliamentary questioning.

This misguided approach created a budget deficit and impeded many of Kuwait's economic capabilities. As a result, several projects were halted and plans

shelved. While there is no need to revisit those losses in detail, it is necessary to take into consideration the potential to rectify the damage of the past, particularly now that the government holds both legislative and executive powers and is fully capable of restoring what was lost.

This governmental advantage grants great capacity to boost the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through development projects in all sectors, including the entertainment industry.

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Kuwait lists drug crimes that warrant 'execution'

Supplying drugs to minors now punishable by death

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Ministry of Interior announced that the death penalty for drug trafficking and the use of intoxicants will be enforced in several cases under the new anti-narcotics law, which will come into effect on December 15, 2025, reports Al-

Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the death penalty applies in the following circumstances:

■ If the accused established or ran an organization or gang to commit crimes involving narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.

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Kuwait set to restore oil output

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Kuwait is expected to fully return to its OPEC+ production quota, reaching or surpassing 2.8 million barrels per day, the same level set before the COVID-19 pandemic, by the end of 2026 or early 2027.

According to informed sources, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) is preparing for a comprehensive revitalization of the oil sector beginning in 2026 through the adoption of five main strategies.

The first strategy is focused on in-

tensifying offshore exploration efforts currently being carried out by Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), which have already resulted in the discovery of three oil wells - Al-Julaia, Al-Nukhatha, and Jazah - , along with onshore explorations, the most recent being the Mutriba field.

The second strategy involves supporting international subsidiaries such as Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), which owns thousands of service stations in Europe and is involved in multiple projects in Asia and Oman.

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KPC's CEO commends teams for oil sector strategic success

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah affirmed that the Oil Teams Excellence Award "reinforces our longstanding commitment to excellence and innovation and confirms that the spirit of creativity is deeply rooted within our corporation and its subsidiaries."

He expressed pride in the participation of all companies and the evaluation of more than 60 teams and projects from various sectors of the Kuwaiti oil

sector.

Sheikh Nawaf said, "The competition was intense and closely contested, reflecting the high caliber of work and the extraordinary efforts exerted by the sector's personnel."

Sheikh Nawaf said this during the inauguration ceremony of the "Excellence Awards," which aims to honor outstanding teams that contributed to the successful implementation of projects supporting the sector's strategy during the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

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KPC CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah with attendees at the Excellence Awards ceremony, celebrating outstanding achievements and teamwork across the oil sector.



Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs and Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan receive at Bayan Palace on Tuesday Ambassadors of Hungary and Iran.

Minister of Amiri Diwan, Crown Prince Diwan Chief host envoys

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2. (KUNA): Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday Ambassadors of Hungary and Iran, Andras Szabo and Mohammad Totonji, respectively.

The two diplomats congratulated the Kuwaiti officials on attaining their posts.

In the meeting with Ambassador Szabo, the gathering discuss

bilateral relations and ways to develop them across various fields to achieve the interests of both sides.

During the meeting with Totonji, the Ambassador conveyed greetings from the Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian and Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The meeting also focused on bilateral ties and ways to develop them in all possible domains.

Kuwait revamps MoH operations

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has approved the updated organizational structure of the Ministry of Health, as part of ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency of both health and administrative sectors.

The new structure includes an undersecretary, two assistant undersecretaries, and multiple directors general, all within an integrated administrative framework designed to enhance operational efficiency and clarify lines of responsibility across all sectors.

Under the new structure, the General Department of Legal Affairs will report directly to the minister, and the General Department of Hospitals and Health Centers will fall under the Undersecretary. This reflects the importance of this sector and its role in delivering medical and healthcare services.

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MoE dismisses 'bonus' rumors

MoE dismisses 'bonus' rumors

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Ministry of Education has denied claims circulating from a union regarding the disbursement of the excellent performance bonus, insisting that these claims are completely unfounded and lack accurate or reliable information, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that since the announcement of the regulations governing the disbursement of excellent performance bonus, auditing teams have been diligently reviewing all employee files in accordance with legal frameworks. The relevant departments have already completed the disbursement of the excellent performance bonus to all employees in schools in Capital, Hawally, Ahmadi,

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Kuwait empowers developers to tackle growing housing demand

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Amid government efforts to tackle the country's deeply-rooted housing crisis through successive ministerial measures and amendments to relevant laws aimed at attracting local and international investments, the Real Estate Authority has emerged as a major support mechanism for real estate developers.

This matter was discussed at a seminar titled "The Real Estate Developer... From and To" organized by the Kuwait Economic Society two days ago in the presence of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari, along with a select group of real estate and housing experts.

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Day by Day

DEAR LORD, I prostrated to You and prayed to You even though I have not seen You, so grant me a blessed meeting when I do see You. Let the days unfold as they will, and rest peacefully. Neither night comes before day, nor day before night.

Every movement in this world is measured. Allah, the Creator, is the One who manages all affairs.

Do not burden yourself with imagined worries that may never come, nor with concerns that have not yet arrived.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:01	Asr	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:25	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr	11:37	Isha	18:11

Local

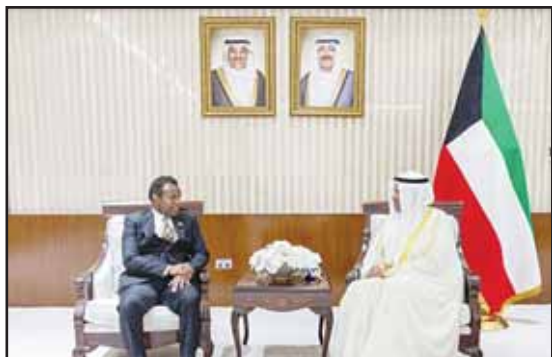
Expected weather for next 24 hrs:			
By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.			
By Night: Rather cold to cold			
Weather			
and partly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	27	19	
Kuwait Airport	26	16	
Abdaly	27	15	
Bubyan	23	11	
Jahra	28	18	
Failaka Island	27	15	
Salmiyah	26	20	
Ahmadi	27	17	
Nuwaisib	28	17	
Wafra	28	15	



Guatemala Ambassador



Solomons Island Ambassador



Fijian Ambassador



Finland Ambassador

KUNA photos

FM receives credentials of new envoys

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Monday a copy of credentials of Ambassador of Finland to Kuwait Johan Mustonen.

During the reception, the minister wished the new ambassador the best of luck in his mission and closer relations between both countries.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Monday received credentials of Jorge Rafael Ruiz, the non-resident Ambassador of the Republic of Guatemala to the State of Kuwait and the resident Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

Minister Al-Yahya received the envoy's papers at a meeting at the Foreign Ministry headquarters.

The minister expressed good wishes to the non-resident

envoy, hoping to see further progress and prosperity in the close bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya received on Monday the copy of credentials of Cornelius Walegere, the new non-resident ambassador of Solomon Islands to Kuwait and resident ambassador in Abu-Dhabi.

Minister Al-Yahya wished the diplomat success in enhancing the bilateral ties.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Monday received credentials of Siddiq Faizal Riyad Koya, the non-resident Ambassador Fiji to the State of Kuwait and resident ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

Al-Yahya wished the Fijian envoy success in his new career and expressed hope for more progress in the friendly relations.

Other Voices

The Pope's trip of hope

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

Pope Leo XIV's recent visit to Türkiye and Lebanon came at a time when many people in the region needed a moment of comfort and encouragement. His trip was simple in style but powerful in meaning. It showed that faith, respect, and human dignity still hold great value even during moments of uncertainty.

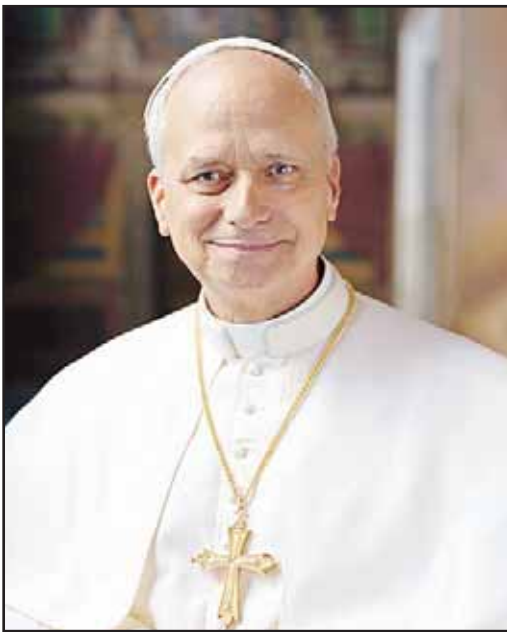
In Türkiye, the Pope was welcomed with warmth in both Ankara and Istanbul. His visit carried a clear message that dialogue is stronger than division. He spoke about the importance of living together in peace, even when views and traditions differ. He met religious leaders, young people, and families who shared with him their hopes for a future filled with stability and trust.

His presence reminded many that respect for each other's beliefs can bring people closer rather than push them apart.

The Pope's stop in Iznik, the historic city that hosted important early councils of the Church, added a deep symbolic meaning to his journey.

Walking through a place that has shaped Christian history, he spoke about the need to protect heritage and to see history as a bridge that connects people. His words were gentle, but they carried a strong message about unity and understanding.

In Lebanon, the Pope's visit meant even more. The country has faced hardship for years, from economic pressure to social strain. Many Lebanese saw his arrival as a sign that the world has not forgotten them. Pope Leo XIV met families who lost loved ones, young people who fear for their future, and leaders who are trying to guide the country through a difficult path. His message was clear. Lebanon deserves peace, stability, and a chance to rise again.



Pope Leo XIV

One of the most touching moments of the trip was his visit to communities that continue to hold on to hope despite challenges. He encouraged them to stay strong and to support each other. He also called on the international community to stand with Lebanon and to offer real help, not just promises.

This journey was more than a formal visit. It was a reminder that leadership can be soft yet strong. It showed that simple words can reach hearts and that presence alone can give comfort.

Pope Leo XIV left the region with a message that hope is still alive and that better days can come when people choose compassion over conflict.

'Soft power helped Kuwait elevate its global standing'

Minister lauds KFAED, KIA role in global stability

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya says Kuwait, since the start of its modern renaissance, has practically demonstrated a fundamental truth - soft power is both a part of the state's identity and a vital instrument of its foreign policy.

He said this during the "Across Borders" event hosted by the Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute on Monday evening, attended by officials and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to Kuwait.

The minister affirmed that Kuwait has long shared its culture, arts, and media globally through initiatives such as "Al-Arabi" magazine, which offered the Arab world a window to the world, and the "World of Thought" series, which encouraged dialogue, knowledge, and intellectual exchange.

He said, "Today, at this esteemed institution, the Saud Nasser Diplomatic Institute, regarded as the 'Eastern School' that shaped Kuwait's renaissance, history repeats itself as it continues preparing and training diplomats and qualifying future leaders."

Minister Al-Yahya affirmed that Kuwait's national symbolism reflects an ongoing commitment to human development.

He said, "This very institution has hosted high-level international figures, developed pro-



Photo by Rizk Taufiq

Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya at the symposium.

grams to enhance the capabilities of Kuwaiti diplomats and senior officials, and forged connections with young diplomats worldwide through diplomatic hospitality initiatives.

When we speak of openness to the world, we recall Kuwait University, the first university in the Gulf region, which from its inception has served as a platform for cultural exchange with sisterly and friendly nations.

Kuwait's doors are open through scholarships, with over 600 awarded this year alone. Over the

past decade, the Ministry of Higher Education has sent nearly 145,000 students to 16 countries, enabling them to build international ties while sharing Kuwait's values and culture.

Because human beings are at the core of the State of Kuwait's vision, we must recognize the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development as a landmark institution that, over more than 63 years, has built a solid foundation for aid and development work. Its activities have reached over 107 countries through development projects, driven by a noble vision to support stability and contribute to peacebuilding. This developmental role has been complemented by the creation of economic and investment bridges with the world.

Since 1953, the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) has been among the top sovereign wealth funds globally, and today it stands as a strategic partner in major world economies, which reinforces Kuwait's position as a reliable economic actor on the international stage.

Through the active roles of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, KIA, and Kuwaiti humanitarian institutions, the pillars of foreign policy help promote peace, encourage growth and prosperity, and uphold human dignity."

In addition, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Dr. Naser Muhaisen highlighted the ministry's keenness to participate in the "Across Borders" event.

He highlighted that it reflects the state's efforts to reinforce Kuwait's position as a hub of communication and influence, strengthen strategic partnerships with diplomatic bodies and centers within the country, and open new avenues for international cooperation.



Minister of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the Board of Directors of PAI, Khalifa Al-Ajeel visits a facility in Al-Rai.

Minister tours Al-Rai, Shuwaikh

'We will not allow anyone to exploit industrial plots'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) announced that the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the Board of Directors of PAI, Khalifa Al-Ajeel, conducted an extensive inspection tour of several industrial and service plots in Al-Rai and Shuwaikh on Monday.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the minister was accompanied by a team from the relevant regulatory bodies.

The tour aimed to assess compliance with designated land uses, evaluate the efficiency of operational processes, and address any violations or issues that could affect the quality of the country's industrial environment.

During the tour, the minister inspected several industrial, service, and commercial plots under PAI's jurisdiction, and reviewed the status of the plots, ongoing factory activities, expansion projects, and the operational challenges faced by industrial investors.

The tour was carried out in coordination with several relevant government agencies, including the Kuwait Fire Force, Kuwait Municipality, Environment Public Authority, Public Authority for Manpower, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This was aimed to ensure strict enforcement of laws and regulations concerning security, safety, environmental protection, licens-

ing, labor, and the designated uses of industrial plots. This joint effort reflects a new approach to multi-agency oversight, enabling prompt and comprehensive action to address any violations.

This tour follows the minister's decision to form specialized inspection committees, led by three judges, tasked with conducting comprehensive surveys of industrial plots, identifying all violations, and taking strict legal action against offenders without exception.

These efforts are part of a series of decisive measures implemented this year, during which more than 50 industrial, craft, and service plots, along with non-compliant work sites, were revoked in just one year.

This unprecedented action in the history of PAI underscores the ministry's and the authority's commitment to tackling violations and restoring order within the sector.

PAI has intensified its inspection campaigns recently through joint teams comprising representatives from relevant authorities. This is aimed to ensure the optimal use of industrial plots and prevent violations that could weaken the sector's competitiveness or compromise its operating environment.

The campaigns form part of a wide reform agenda led by the ministry, focused on enhancing governance, improving the quality of national products, and creating a safe and attractive industrial environment.

Kuwait wins AAEU Presidency

TUNIS, Dec 2, (KUNA): Kuwait, represented by the Chairman of the Kuwait Agricultural Engineers Society, Consulting Engineer Abbas Abdulredha, won the presidency of the Arab Agricultural Engineers Union (AAEU) on Monday.

This came during the meetings of the Union's Executive Office and General Conference in its 46th session held in Tunisia, AAEU said in a press statement.

The President of the Jordanian Agricultural Engineers Association, Engineer Ali Abu Noqta, was also elected Secretary-General of the Union, statement added.

Abdulredha expressed pleasure at earning the confidence of the Arab del-

egations for this position, extending his thanks and appreciation to Tunisia for its warm hospitality.

The next stage will focus on developing the Union, strengthening Arab integration in the agricultural sector, and enhancing agricultural resources, Abdulredha said.

He emphasized on supporting Arab engineering talent in ways that contribute to achieving Arab food security and promoting sustainable development across all our countries.

Arab Agricultural Engineers Union (AAEU) is considered a professional, scientific, non-governmental Arab organization affiliated with the Arab League.

Co-ops ponder why shortage of eggs crisis has come back

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi and Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Head of the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS) Mariam Al-Awad held an expanded meeting to discuss the egg shortage crisis in co-operative societies, investigate its causes, and develop urgent solutions to ensure product availability for consumers.

Present at the meeting was the Director of Commercial Control at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari, Financial Controller of UCCS from the Ministry of Social Affairs Dalal Al-Anzi, and General Supervisor at the Kuwait United Poultry Company under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Duaij Al-Hussein, as well as representatives from companies in the poultry sector.

During the meeting, they discussed establishing a joint coordination mechanism with the Kuwait Poultry Producers Union to monitor the crisis and prevent its recurrence.

Representatives from the poultry sector explained that the current decline in supply is seasonal, and occurs each year between the start of winter and the reopening of schools. During this period, farms replace older, non-productive hens with new ones, which require one to one and half months to reach full production. This leads to temporary reduction in availability. Production

is expected to return to normal levels by December 10, following the completion of the poultry renewal cycle. It was agreed to grant suppliers a grace period after this date for them to complete supply procedures.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and UCCS urged companies to submit clear plans to prevent a recurrence of the problem next year, and the companies assured that they will coordinate replacement operations to avoid simultaneous disruptions, especially among large producers, for ensuring stable supply levels and preventing market gaps.

It was highlighted that the suppliers' compliance will be monitored regularly to ensure the continuous flow of required quantities and prevent any new shortages in the markets.

Meanwhile, Faisal Al-Ansari emphasized that the ministry is taking proactive measures to maintain the stability of essential goods.

He stated that ensuring the availability of table eggs in adequate quantities at reasonable prices is a top priority and affirmed that any actions threatening market stability or creating artificial shortages will not be tolerated.

Al-Ansari noted that inspection teams monitor companies daily to ensure full compliance with pricing regulations.

He stressed that the ministry is prepared to take immediate action against any entity that violates pricing decisions or disrupts the market.

Modern tools needed to boost audit output

JEDDAH, Dec 2, (KUNA): The 15th General Assembly of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI) convened on Tuesday in Jeddah with the participation of President of Kuwait State Audit Bureau (SAB) Essam Al-Roumi, alongside heads of Arab supreme audit institutions and representatives of international and regional organizations.

President of Saudi Arabia's General Court of Audit and ARABOSAI Chair, Dr. Hussam Al-Anqari, said in his opening address that the meeting comes amid rapid global developments, underscoring the need for audit institutions to adopt advanced tools and technologies to enhance their performance and strengthen public financial oversight.

He added that the meeting reflects a strong commitment to promoting joint action, supporting the organization's role, and elevating its regional and international standing, while affirming ARABOSAI's dedication to assisting its members in keeping pace with global changes to improve institutional efficiency.

For her part, First Vice President of the Tunisian Court of Accounts and ARABOSAI Deputy Secretary-General Fadhiha Gargouri, highlighted the organization's efforts in recent years to enhance cooperation among member institutions, strengthen shared work mechanisms, and support the achievement of sustainable development goals.

She stressed the importance of expanding partnerships with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and peer organizations to advance audit quality in Arab countries.

Meanwhile, President of Egypt's Central Auditing Organization and President of the INTOSAI Counselor Mohammad Al-Faisal, said the assembly serves as a distinguished professional platform that embodies Arab cooperation in public auditing.

LOCAL

diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Bahrain the island of life and source of eternity

“SINCE Bahrain was known as the land of immortality, its stories have flowed like gentle breezes from the heart of history, touching souls even before the dawn of Dilmun, the kingdom that rose from legend to a memory passed down through generations,” Kuwaiti writer **Sheikha Hessa Al-Hamoud Al-Salem Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“It is no wonder that the Sumerians knew Bahrain as the land of gods, paradise, immortality, and life, and that the oldest epic poem in history - the Epic of Gilgamesh - is connected to it. Its hero searched for the secret of immortality in the depths of the Dilmun Sea, seeking the herb of life, before resting on the shore. The epic tells of a Dilmun serpent emerging from the sea, taking the herb, shedding its skin, and diving back into the depths to hide the herb of life, keeping it a secret to be revealed only to those worthy of immortality.



Sheikha Hessa

“This island, where reality and imagination intertwine, is called a legend not because it is imaginary, but because it is a real civilization around which ancient peoples weave an aura of sanctity and symbolism. Time itself seemed to honor the beauty of this epic, shaping a new tale for each generation to be told on the shores of the Gulf. Water was the lifeblood of this legend. The freshwater springs of Bahrain gushed forth from the waves like a heavenly fountain, softening the sea’s harshness with their sweetness. Divers drank from these springs before plunging for pearls, and fishermen quenched their thirst after struggling against the waves. Traveling merchants stood in awe before an island that embodied both saltness and freshness, hardship and gentleness, reality and legend.

“Since the dawn of history, Bahrain has seemed to offer its visitors a second life, nurtured by water and sanctified by stories. From the womb of this profound heritage, modern Bahrain emerged, not by shedding the dust of the past, but by wearing it as a crown upon its head.

“Under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the vision of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahrain has risen to become a bridge between the modernity of the present and the richness of history. Bahrain has combined the spirit of Dilmun with the vision of the future. It is as if the herb of life has returned, now in the form of knowledge, vision, and determination. The Dilmun serpent remains as a hidden symbol, protecting the land and preserving its identity against the tides of time.

“Bahrain continues to write a new chapter in its history, guided by a steadfastness worthy of its heritage and a vision that embraces the horizons of the future without losing sight of its origins. On Bahrain’s National Day, Dilmun returns to infuse its spirit into the present, becoming the herb of life, a symbol of a renaissance built on knowledge and determination.

“The Kingdom remains an island that weaves

together the sea, its people, and its history into a single fabric. Today, it is not the Dilmun serpent that guards Bahrain, but the loyalty of its people, the strength of their sense of belonging, and the harmony of their society. On this joyous day, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Kingdom of Bahrain and its noble people, with whom Kuwait shares deep-rooted bonds of brotherhood. From the ancient caravan routes to the present era of cooperation and shared destiny, the Kuwaiti and Bahraini peoples have remained united in heart, spirit, and blood.

“On Bahrain’s National Day, we renew our wishes for the continued prosperity and safety of this great nation, and for the bonds between our two peoples to remain as strong and steadfast as the islands shaped by the waves of the Gulf.”

Also:

“Some of the wealthy and affluent in Kuwait have a rare hobby, one that is not shared by other wealthy individuals around the world. Their favorite pastime is to harass the poor, the working class, and the middle class of Kuwaiti society,” Kuwaiti writer **Hussein Al-Rawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Recently, a Kuwaiti economic expert emerged to call for an end to the financial aid provided to university students. He went on with his so-called reform project by demanding the elimination of subsidized food items that thousands of families rely on. The issue was not the proposal itself, as differences over economic policies are perfectly legitimate, but rather the way it was presented. It was the kind of absurdity that drifts out from the windows of historic palaces when their inhabitants speak about the hunger of the poor. This wealthy individual seemed perplexed as to why ordinary citizens eat state-subsidized meals and why students receive assistance that enables them to complete their studies.

“These are questions typically asked only by those who have lived far removed from the struggles of ration-card holders, far from the families who depend on subsidized basic goods, and who know nothing of the reality faced by a student whose family works tirelessly to help him finish his studies, only for him to later seek a low-paying job to ease the financial burden. There is nothing wrong with discussing the effectiveness of government subsidies, but the problem arises when the discussion is carried out with cold indifference, without considering the plight of the citizen who thinks twice before purchasing the cheapest item, or the student who counts every dinar just to continue his education.

“The problem is when economic discourse turns into a moral guillotine, used by the affluent to strike at others simply because they have grown accustomed to luxuries that others do not have. The strangest thing about some of the wealthy is that they only feel the pleasure of wealth when the poor are deprived of their most basic needs. May God protect His Highness the Amir, the leader. May God protect our country and spare us from the evil of every miserable person who finds satisfaction only in humiliating others.”

□ □ □

14 yrs jail, KD 30m fine suspended

Royal’s embezzlement cases hearing adjourned to Jan 26

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Court of Cassation has adjourned to January 26, 2026, the hearings of two embezzlement cases involving public funds in the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense, in which former Minister of Interior and Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled is accused.

This decision to adjourn the cases was made after the court heard arguments from Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled’s defense team.

The Court of Cassation had previously suspended the execution of the two rulings of the Court of Appeals against Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled, which sentenced him to 14 years in prison, imposed a fine, and ordered him to repay a total of KD 30 million.

□ □ □

Justice system boost: The Ministry of Justice stated that the issuance of Decree No. 194/2025, which amends certain provisions of Decree No. 37/1994 concerning the Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, represents a significant step in developing the judicial and legal training system and enhancing the institute’s role in supporting the justice system.

Municipality gets tough

Crackdown on dirty surroundings

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced that field teams from the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy departments are intensifying inspection tours in all governorates to monitor and remove violations of hygiene and road occupancy regulations, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Municipality conducted extensive inspections in residential areas to enhance cleanliness and

remove obstructions that affect the city’s appearance.

During the tour, teams lifted 45 abandoned vehicles, scrap metal, boats, commercial containers, and motorcycles. Also, 48 violations related to public hygiene and road occupancy were recorded, and 64 removal notices were issued for abandoned vehicles and illegally placed commercial containers. The municipality also replaced 134 old waste bins with new ones and installed 142 additional bins.

homes, describing them as an effective tool for early detection of leaks that could lead to serious accidents.

He stressed the importance of closing the gas cylinder valve after each use and regularly inspecting the pipes to ensure they are intact and free from damage or cracks.

Brigadier General Al-Gharib emphasized the need to store the cylinder in a safe location, away from heat sources and open

flames. “During the 1967 war, Ahmed Saeed, a broadcaster on the “Voice of the Arabs” radio station, claimed from the very first moment the fighting began that the Arab armies had advanced into specific areas of Palestine, captured thousands of Israeli soldiers, and made other similar statements that, six days later, proved to be entirely false propaganda. As a result, the Arabs are still dealing with the consequences of that aggression today, as is often the case in the Arab world,” columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“I began with this introduction because numbers are not fiction, and the accuracy of figures is essential for building studies that reflect people’s daily lives, particularly when the goal is to show the extent of specific damage inflicted on a particular country. Exaggeration only fuels public anxiety, while transparency is the only remedy, because the ultimate aim must always be the truth.

“When any figures are published in the media, they are taken seriously. It is standard practice in Western media, and in much of the Arab media, to verify data and consult specialists before broadcasting reports containing numbers, in order to avoid errors that could lead to sensationalism. People want the truth so they can form informed opinions. Therefore, official data leaves no room for exaggeration or myths. A few days ago, I came across exaggerated figures regarding the cost of education and healthcare borne by the state for certain individuals whose citizenship, obtained fraudulently, had been revoked. These figures contradict official reports, which estimate the cost of healthcare per citizen at approximately KD 499, and education at around KD 500 to KD 2,200 annually.

“If we study the figures recently circulated, claiming that the state has spent four trillion dinars on education and healthcare since the liberation of Kuwait, we can easily see that these numbers are incorrect and unrealistic. Considering the average national income of approximately 25 billion dinars annually, the total since liberation does not exceed 750 billion dinars. From this, it is clear that the circulated figures have no basis in reality and are intended solely to provoke public opinion. This benefits neither society nor the state. Undoubtedly, it also raises questions about the accuracy of other figures being circulated.

“My point is that transparency is essential when it comes to figures, indicators, and other data. People have the ability to research and understand the facts. Errors in published numbers do not serve the public interest. If the figures released last week are accurate, they point to a serious problem. But if they are merely rough estimates not based on actual statistics, then this is nothing more than unwarranted sensationalism.”

– Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

CARIRS seeks proof in Art. 5 revocations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Central Agency for Remedying Illegal Residents Status (CARIRS) announced on Sunday that it has begun accepting applications for proof of seriousness from individuals whose citizenship, granted under Article 5, was revoked, as well as from their dependents who were residing illegally (Bedoun) prior to acquiring citizenship, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It declared that applications can be submitted through the CARSIR website - <https://es.carirs.gov.kw>.

Start of drugs use!

60 under probe for false assets report

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Tuesday referred 60 individuals subject to financial disclosure regulations to the Public Prosecution on suspicion of submitting inaccurate financial disclosure statements or failing to submit them within the legally specified deadlines, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Nazaha emphasized to all individuals subject to financial disclosure regulations the importance of accurately completing and submitting their statements within the legally mandated deadlines, stressing that this is both a legal and ethical obligation aimed at protecting public funds, promoting transparency and integrity, and strengthening public trust in state institutions.

□ □ □

How drugs use starts?: The General Department of Public Relations and Media Security at the Ministry of Interior has launched a series of awareness videos to illustrate the early stages of drug use, reports Al-Anba daily.

The videos show how a single trial dose, a tempting pill, or even the influence of bad company can pull young people into the cycle of addiction and ultimately lead them down a path toward death.

The department also distributed brochures detailing the penalties outlined in the new law.

Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah honors a senior police officer.

Gov. lauds vital role played by police in restoring order

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received a group of distinguished security personnel from the General Traffic Department and the General Emergency Department in Farwaniya Governorate on Tuesday morning, in recognition of their outstanding efforts to enhance traffic safety and security.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting was attended by Director of the Farwaniya Traffic Department Colonel Raed Mohammed

Al-Sulaiman, the acting Director of the Farwaniya Emergency Department Colonel Mishari Shujaa Al-Mutairi, and several senior security officers.

The governor praised the vital role played by traffic and emergency personnel in maintaining order, responding promptly to incidents, and protecting lives and property.

He expressed his gratitude to the security leaders for their continued cooperation, and emphasized his support for all initiatives that strengthen security in the governorate.

‘Harsher penalty to deter runners’

Drug use spirals: lawyers

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: A number of legal experts praised the comprehensive awareness campaign launched by the Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Interior ahead of the implementation of Decree-Law No. 159/2025 on combating drugs and psychotropic substances and regulating their use and trafficking.

In this regard, Lawyer Inaam Haidar affirmed that the new law represents a huge leap in legislative policy against drugs, particularly in light of the rise in drug use and trafficking cases in recent years.

She explained that the harsher penalties are intended to deter anyone attempting to threaten societal security or exploit youth, as well as provide users with the opportunity to recover through treatment and rehabilitation programs that consider human and familial dimensions.

The law seeks to protect families from the devastation caused by drug use. It highlights that early intervention, increased awareness, and access to appropriate treatment are essential in preventing users from becoming criminals or posing greater societal risks.

Furthermore, Lawyer Abdulmohsen Al-Qattan stated that the new law provides the Public Prosecution with more powerful tools to act

proactively and closes procedural loopholes previously exploited by drug traffickers.

He stressed that distinguishing between drug users seeking treatment and dealers spreading narcotics is a cornerstone of reform in terms of strengthening justice and protecting youth.

Lawyer Al-Qattan emphasized that the precise application of the law will cut off sources of crime before they reach the streets.

In addition, Lawyer Fadhel Al-Basman believes that the new law adopts a balanced approach between deterrence and treatment, reflecting a sophisticated legislative philosophy that takes into account the social factors behind drug use.

He highlighted that the law goes beyond punishment, as it seeks

to save drug users before their lives are lost, protect families from disintegration, and provide a comprehensive model for social reintegration.

Lawyer Al-Basman emphasized that awareness campaigns are not merely complementary to the law but are an essential component of its success and a cornerstone of primary prevention.

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Install gas, smoke detectors to prevent fire accidents

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Director of Public Relations at the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Brigadier General Mohammed Al-Gharib affirmed that KFF prioritizes prevention and safety to protect lives and property, reports Al-Rai daily.

He emphasized that following simple preventive measures can significantly reduce the number of accidents.

Brigadier General Al-Gharib stressed the need to install gas and smoke detectors in

flames.

In the event of a suspected leak, he advised evacuating the premises immediately, opening windows and doors for ventilation, and avoiding the use of electrical appliances or lighting any fires.

Brigadier General Al-Gharib highlighted the importance of keeping a fire blanket or suitable fire extinguisher at home and training family members on their proper use.

Kuwait tackles corporate gaps after revocations of citizenship

Plan aims to protect remaining partners

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The practical experience of citizenship revocation cases, particularly those involving forgery, has revealed procedural challenges in companies where the affected individuals hold shares, impacting the rights and status of the remaining shareholders, reports Al-Rai daily.

Officials at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry are coordinating with relevant authorities, primarily the Ministry of Justice, to develop legal and procedural solutions that protect the interests of the remaining shareholders and prevent any negative effects on their financial and legal standing.

In this context, informed sources explained that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently received inquiries from owners of unlisted companies whose Kuwaiti citizenship was revoked due to forgery related to strategic shareholdings. These owners requested that the ministry develop procedures to resolve their cases, ensuring the renewal of their commercial licenses and the uninterrupted flow of funds to and from the company's accounts, as any disruption could negatively affect liquidity generated from the company's operations.

Among the cases under legal and procedural review by the ministry are companies where non-Kuwaiti shareholders hold approximately 49 percent of the shares, while the remaining 51 percent are owned by individuals whose Kuwaiti citizenship was revoked due to forgery. Although the 49 percent shareholders hold a general power of attorney for the affected partner, and one of them serves as the company's general manager, they face legal and procedural obstacles in renewing the commercial license and in implementing the process to replace the partner whose citizenship was revoked. This is due to the regulations of the Ministry of Justice, as the individual being removed is on a blacklist, preventing the disposal of any of his assets, including cash, company shares, or other funds.

The sources said, "Since the entry of new partners and the exit of existing ones requires official documents proving the eligibility of the partner and the consent of all parties, the 49 percent shareholder faces obstacles in removing the partner whose citizenship has been revoked or dissolving the partnership. This limits the ability of the remaining shareholders to fill the power gap necessary to ensure the company's continued operation at the same level of

efficiency and to prevent potential legal disputes with the partner or the state.

The general power of attorney issued in the name of the partner whose citizenship has been revoked is no longer valid with the Ministry of Justice. Consequently, the company's shareholders face challenges in renewing the commercial license, as the law requires a Kuwaiti partner holding 51 percent of shares, a requirement that cannot be fulfilled while the partner whose citizenship was revoked remains under a legal block."

The sources indicated that officials of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry are exploring potential legal solutions to this unprecedented issue, which current company law does not adequately address, adding that the situation reflects recurring cases and therefore requires a proper procedural mechanism to protect the rights of all parties, including the state.

The sources explained that one proposal under consideration is to suspend the shareholder whose citizenship has been revoked, effectively freezing their share, while allowing the remaining owners to continue managing the company. These owners would assume responsibility for their decisions and protect the company's interests, as they currently hold a majority enabling them to operate the business.

Alternatively, authorities could permit the revoked partner to withdraw their share and appoint a guardian for the transferred share until a decision is made by the relevant authorities, whether for liquidation or continued freezing. During this period, a mechanism would be established to regulate the entry and exit of funds from the company's accounts, preventing circulation in cash or personal transactions and minimizing the risk of payment defaults that could adversely affect the company's financial stability and the interests of its shareholders.

One of the initial scenarios under discussion involves allowing the relevant state authorities to offer shares in companies, whose ownership was affected by citizenship revocation due to forgery, through a public auction. The proceeds from such sales would be allocated to the state treasury. This approach would protect the state's rights while simultaneously preserving the financial and legal standing of the remaining shareholders.

The sources emphasized that all these scenarios are preliminary proposals, and any action would require Cabinet approval, as it is the body responsible for authorizing mechanisms for handling citizenship revocation cases.

They clarified that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Justice would serve as the executive bodies tasked with implementing Cabinet decisions in this regard.

KAAA holds financial, entrepreneurship workshops

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: As part of its awareness and educational initiatives, the Kuwait Accountants and Auditors Association (KAAA) is organizing four free workshops on financial literacy and entrepreneurship at its headquarters in Maidan Hawally from December 3 to 15, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

KAAA Treasurer and board member Dr. Fahad Mutlaq Al-Jafour explained that the association is committed to advancing professional education and enhancing understanding of the accounting

and auditing profession among its members and interested individuals of all ages.

It will host a workshop on December 3, 2025, which will be presented by lecturer Amal Al-Mutawa. The workshop will cover topics including livelihood, abundance, the net profit equation, the concept of duality, methods of dividing funds, and financial laws.

A workshop will be held on the importance of intellectual property to the economy, presented by Rashid Al-Owaihan on December 15. This work-

shop will cover the origins, significance, and impact of intellectual property on the national economy.

Head of the Training and Development Committee at KAAA Talal Al-Assad announced that the workshop "A moment before you start your business" will be held on December 9. Presented by Abdullah Essam Al-Faleej, the workshop will cover the important steps for starting a business, selecting the right idea, basic marketing techniques, and choosing the right partner.





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Crown Prince, PM extend wishes

Kuwait HH Amir congratulates President of Laos on Nat’l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated in a cable on Monday the President of Laos Thongloun Sisoulith on the advent of his country's National Day.

His Highness the Amir expressed wishes of good health and welfare to the President and his people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable to the

President of Laos Thongloun Sisoulith, congratulating him on his country's National Day.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed wishes of welfare and progress to the President and his people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of Laos Thongloun Sisoulith on his country's National Day.

Other Voices

After October 7 attack

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE impact of the October 7 attack on Israel is difficult to overstate, as it affected the state itself, the perception of Jews both within and outside Israel, and the global image of Zionism, particularly in the United States.

Despite centuries of European anti-Semitism, there were periods when Jews were regarded as victims deserving of compassion and protection. For generations, Jews were admired for their material success or intellectual achievements. Yet never in their more than three-thousand-year history has the image of the Jewish people been so heavily tarnished as it has in the past two years, after many came to recognize the threat that Zionism poses, not only to the Palestinian and American peoples but to humanity as a whole.

The events of October 7th shattered long-held narratives and prompted a shift in the thinking of prominent leaders, philosophers, politicians, artists, thinkers, and media figures. These events lifted the veil from their eyes and freed them from the fear of being labeled antisemitic. The impact of October 7th even reached the heart of the Jewish community and those living outside Israel. Tucker Carlson, the well-known American media personality and former far-right figure, was among the prominent voices that Zionism lost. The same was true of British journalist Piers Morgan, who, along with Carlson, played a significant role in raising public awareness in their respective countries.

Their positions helped deepen the divide now affecting the conservative, pro-Zionist movement, particularly among those aligned with former President



alsarraf

Trump. His meeting with young American right-wing influencer Nick Fuentes had a notable impact, further widening the rift within the conservative movement. Both emphasized prioritizing American interests over those of Israel, arguing that Israel is irrelevant, a stance in stark contrast to the views of Trump and all his predecessors. Carlson described Israel as a country of no strategic importance and a burden on the United States.

Carlson expressed his bewilderment at the backlash over his hosting of Fuentes, saying he didn't understand what was so controversial about his guest. Conservative commentator Ben Shapiro, an Orthodox Jew, labeled Fuentes as antisemitic.

What surprised many during Carlson's interview with Fuentes was his apparent indifference to his guest's extreme views, including Holocaust denial, admiration for Adolf Hitler, and disdain for Black people, particularly the American Vice President's wife, who is of Indian descent.

Even when Fuentes expressed admiration for Joseph Stalin during the interview, Carlson merely suggested moving on without addressing it. He also remained silent when Fuentes voiced concerns about organized Judaism in America. Carlson had previously mocked the concept of "God's chosen people."

Ultimately, the interview marked, in many ways, the culmination of Carlson's growing antagonism toward Israel, a country he had long defended staunchly, and toward his fellow conservatives.

Carlson, along with dozens of others who champion similar causes, has gained significant influence over public opinion in many countries. Their positions have caused Israel considerable concern, especially as journalist and influencer Megyn Kelly has expressed support for Carlson while criticizing his detractors, including Shapiro and Mark Levine. President Trump and his vice president continue to maintain friendly ties with Carlson.

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PACI opens tender for new visitor parking investment

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) announced floating a tender for investment in a parking area for visitors at its headquarters in South Surra, according to the terms and specifications outlined in the tender documents, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The terms and specifications include the following:

- 1- Tender documents can be obtained from the Finance Department, Treasury Section (South Surra, Ministries Area, Ground Floor), during official working hours for a fee of KD50.
- 2- The deadline for submitting bids is at 12:00 noon on Dec 18, 2025. Any bid submitted after this time will be rejected.
- 3- Visiting the tender's site will be at the

PACI headquarters on Dec 7, 2025, during official working hours from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm.

- 4- A preliminary meeting will be held at 10:30 am on Dec 10, 2025, for companies that intend to participate in the tender, at the PACI headquarters, Multipurpose Hall, Ground Floor.
- 5- The initial bid bond must be at least two percent of the bid value and must be paid through a certified bank check or a guarantee issued by a local bank in Arabic, covering the entire bid period.
- 6- The final bid bond must be 10 percent of the total bid value and issued by a local bank in Arabic.
- 7- The contract will commence from the date of signing it.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait set

Furthermore, KPC plans to expand the operations of the Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), whose investments extend to most continents. The corporation aims to strengthen KUFPEC's global presence by providing opportunities for participation in additional acquisitions.

As for the third objective, it involves the corporation's participation, through its subsidiary Kuwait Gulf Oil Company, in a joint venture with Saudi Arabia to develop the Al-Durra offshore oil field.

The fourth objective focuses on expanding petrochemical activities through the Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), which holds substantial investments both locally and internationally. PIC holds a 100 percent stake in the Kuwait-Vietnam Petrochemical Company and has acquired shares in more than eight companies operating in various petrochemical sectors in South Korea, Bahrain, and several other countries.

The fifth objective is to expand the capacity of both local and international refineries, particularly in light of the steadily rising global demand for petroleum products.

It is worth noting that Kuwait's OPEC+ quota increased by 37,000 barrels per day over the past three months, according to an official document. The quota stood at 2,492 million barrels per day in August, rose to 2,515 million barrels per day in September, and further increased to 2,552 million barrels per day in October.

This increase is expected to positively impact the profits of KPC, which declined to KD 1.365 billion in the 2024/2025 fiscal year, compared to KD 1.46 billion in 2023/2024. KPC's annual profits had surged in 2022/2023, reaching KD 2.6 billion.

The sources attributed the fluctuation in the corporation's profits in recent years to

the OPEC+ decision to reduce the quotas of the 23 member countries in 2023, which Kuwait complied with, followed by voluntary cuts implemented by eight countries, including Kuwait. They stressed that the reduction in Kuwait's quota played a major role in the corporation's profit fluctuations, particularly given the significant contribution of oil revenues to the state budget as a whole.

MoE dismisses

and Mubarak Al-Kabeer educational zones. This includes all educational levels, religious education institutes, special education schools, private sector schools, and the Ministry of Education headquarters, covering a total of 60,649 beneficiaries.

Notifications were sent via the Sahel app to 13,711 beneficiaries in the Jahra Educational Zone, in preparation for transferring the bonuses to their bank accounts.

The auditing process for the Farwaniya Educational Zone is currently underway, paving the way for bonus disbursement in the coming days.

The ministry emphasized that ensuring the accuracy of employee data is a top priority to guarantee fairness in disbursements and protect public funds.

It affirmed that any delays are due to standard technical and administrative verification procedures aimed at completing disbursements with full transparency and reliability.

The Ministry of Education insisted that it will take all necessary legal measures against anyone who deliberately publishes misleading information, reiterating its commitment to full transparency and the protection of employee rights.

It urged all employees, concerned parties, and media outlets to ensure accuracy and rely on official, accredited sources for information.

Continued from Page 1

The government

One of the most important benefits of entertainment is its ability to create jobs for citizens. It also stimulates increased consumer spending and encourages investment in vital infrastructure and related sectors such as hospitality and food services.

While the government has the right to impose fees and taxes to strengthen the public treasury through these projects, it must also ensure that services and facilities are accessible, allowing citizens to enjoy their own country rather than relying solely on financial gain.

Despite a generally comfortable financial environment, many Kuwaitis have nonetheless felt a sense of isolation, which led them to travel abroad for leisure and vacations, unlike the attractions that typically draw tourists to Kuwait.

Kuwait must embrace investment strategies that have already proven successful internationally, as these models can be easily replicated domestically. Keeping pace with global developments is essential.

Furthermore, diversifying sources of income is no longer a matter of choice but an imperative, given the inherent risks of depending on a single revenue stream.

Therefore, to strengthen the national economy, the government should prioritize harnessing local investment opportunities rather than allowing national resources to be drained by overseas investments.

Kuwait is in a strong economic position, supported by its profitable sovereign wealth funds and other local investment resources. These resources can be strategically deployed to launch a variety of projects, including service, agricultural, industrial, and entertainment ventures, which would boost the local economy and enhance regional competitiveness.

Kuwait lists

- If the accused forced another person to use narcotics or psychotropic substances, or introduced them into their body without their knowledge, resulting in death.
- If the accused planted narcotics on another person to falsely accuse them of possession or conceal evidence, without the victim's knowledge, and the victim was subsequently convicted and sentenced.
- If the convicted individual repeats the same crime.
- If the accused used a minor or a mentally ill person to commit the crime.
- If the crime occurred in prisons, police stations, rehabilitation or addiction treatment centers, places of worship, educational institutions, or sports clubs.
- If the perpetrator abused their official position to commit the crimes.
- If the perpetrator provided narcotic or psychotropic substances to a minor for personal use.

See Also Page 3

Amir Bahrain-bound

The Third Summit, held in Bahrain in 1982, approved the establishment of the Gulf Investment Corporation with capital of USD 2.2 billion to support joint projects and enhance development capabilities.

The summit also issued defense recommendations that laid the foundation for a new phase of Gulf security coordination.

The Ninth Summit in 1988 represented a major step toward economic integration by approving citizen participation in companies across member states and facilitating cross-border capital movement.

These measures strengthened investment flows and expanded the base for Gulf economic cooperation.

The 15th Summit in 1994 emphasized security coordination, affirming a unified Gulf stance against extremism, violence, and terrorism.

The 21st Summit in 2000 supported implementation of the GCC customs union, initiated steps toward a unified currency, and approved the Joint Defense Agreement.

The 25th Summit in 2004 addressed key regional issues and urged unencumbered UN cooperation with the Iraqi interim government to recover Kuwait's national archives and assets seized by the former Iraqi regime.

In 2012, Bahrain hosted the 33rd Summit amidst sensitive regional conditions. The summit focused on enhancing defense and security cooperation, as well as reinforcing GCC's ability to face accelerating challenges.

The 37th Summit in 2016 examined boosting political, security, and economic cooperation amid regional and international changes.

Bahrain is now gearing up to host the 46th Summit, on December 3, at a critical time that requires augmenting coordination and cooperation.

The summit is expected to delve into political, security, and economic files to further bolster regional stability and strengthen Gulf cooperation.

KPC's CEO

The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Oil and Chairman of KPC's Board of Directors Tariq Sulaiman Al-Roumi, along with leaders from the oil sector.

Sheikh Nawaf explained that the award received wide participation, with more than 60 projects submitted by teams within the sector. Of these, 19 projects were shortlisted as nominees for seven awards covering various areas of the oil sector's operational chain, highlighting the sector's diversity and the wealth of initiatives supporting the corporation's strategic goals.

The CEO praised the sincere efforts

of oil sector employees in all positions, highlighting how their teamwork embodies the spirit of "one team" and drives continuous success at every level.

Sheikh Nawaf expressed gratitude to the CEOs and managing directors who supported their teams and encouraged participation, emphasizing that "their support was the cornerstone in highlighting these achievements."

He explained that the recently discovered wells - Al-Nukhatha, Al-Julaia, and Jazah - constitute an integrated system of promising offshore reservoirs. Releasing detailed data is still premature, but the indicators point to a highly promising future for the offshore sector.

The Kuwaiti oil sector is entering a promising phase, marked by new discoveries, the development of the institutional structure, and the strengthening of national talent simultaneously. The corporation is following a clear path that is expected to yield significant economic and strategic returns for Kuwait in the coming years.

KPC is focused on a single goal, which is maximizing the returns from the country's natural resources.

Highlighting the value of human capital, Sheikh Nawaf said, "The people of the sector represent the most important element in the continued success of the corporation and its subsidiaries."

Regarding recent appointments, he noted that KPC had announced several vacancies, which attracted a strong turnout of young Kuwaiti talent, adding that job postings are made regularly, based on sector needs.

Sheikh Nawaf encouraged young people to excel in their studies and careers, as this prepares them to compete for the growing and diverse opportunities in the oil sector, especially with the expansion of projects and mergers.

In conclusion, Sheikh Nawaf addressed all candidates, saying, "You are all creative, and your achievements are a source of pride for you and the oil sector... We wish you success."

Meanwhile, the Managing Director of Human Resources and Comprehensive Services Hisham Ahmed Al-Rifai affirmed that the launch of the "Excellence Award" reflects the corporation's commitment to encouraging innovation, developing employees' talents and creative abilities, and reinforcing the value of human capital.

He noted that the award motivates employees through initiatives that cultivate a culture of excellence.

Al-Rifai also highlighted that the event embodies the deeply rooted values of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, particularly excellence, innovation, and teamwork, serving as a platform to honor creativity, promote cooperation among work teams, and support continued success and leadership in the oil sector.

Kuwait revamps

The Assistant Undersecretary for Support Services will report to the Undersecretary and oversee the General Department of Administrative Affairs, the General Department of Financial Affairs, the General Department of Engineering and Projects, the General Department of Digital Health Affairs, and the General Department of Service Affairs.

The Assistant Undersecretary for Technical and Health Affairs will also report to the Undersecretary and oversee the General Department of Technical Affairs, the General Department of External Health Affairs and International Health Relations, the General Department of Medicines and Medical Supplies, the General Department of Private Medical Services, the General Department of Pharmaceutical Oversight, the General Department of Public Health, the General Department of Dentistry, the General Department of Allied Medical Services, the General Department of Primary Healthcare, and the General Department for Targeted Groups.

Kuwait Amir

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the occasion of his country's 54th National Day.

Meanwhile, the Ambassador of the UAE to the State of Kuwait, Dr. Matar Al-Neyad, affirmed on Monday that Kuwaiti-Emirati ties are heading towards broader horizons of cooperation and sustainable partnership.

In a press statement marking the 54th UAE National Day, Ambassador Al-Neyadi revealed that this year saw the signing of 16 accords in various domains, which would further boost relations.

He revealed that non-oil commercial exchange reached USD seven billion in the first half of 2025, an increase of 15 percent compared to the same period last year.

The same category in the last nine months saw a growth of USD 10 billion, an increase of 7.6 percent from last year, he said.

He asserted that Kuwait was one of the UAE's important commercial partners, adding that Kuwait's non-oil exports to the UAE amounted 20 percent.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi predicted that commercial exchange between the two countries this year would witness an increase in exports, affirming that this reflected the two countries' strong relations.

The diplomat mentioned the recent UAE leadership's announcement regarding celebrating decades of relations on January 29, saying that it was another indication of the strength of ties.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi indicated that his country's National Day celebration this year would focus on remembering the founding of the country and the continuous achievements throughout the decades whether in politics, the economy, technology, renewable energy and other domains.

The UAE marked on Tuesday its 54th National Day, remembering decades-long achievements that reflected the spirit of the Emirates' union.

Kuwait empowers

While participants agreed on the Real Estate Authority's importance in regulating housing and real estate activities, the discussion highlighted a clear divergence of opinions regarding its role in shaping visions and establishing procedures for real estate developers.

Some viewed it as essential for the project's success, while others stressed that existing law already empowers the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to issue licenses and undertake related actions.

In this regard, Deputy Director General for Investment and Private Sector Projects at PAHW Eng. Ahmed Al-Ansari explained that the authority has worked to transfer most risks beyond the investor's control to the state, while guaranteeing the rights of investors and financiers.

He explained that PAHW is currently focused on enhancing its performance and expanding its investor base both locally and internationally, drawing on successful experiences from other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries within a framework tailored to the Kuwait market. It has signed agreements with four international companies, each possessing strategic, technical, financial, and legal expertise gained through previous experience in other Gulf countries.

It recently launched three investment packages, comprising 5,000 residential units in the cities of Al-Mutlaa, Saad Al-Abdullah, and Jaber Al-Ahmad, as part of its efforts to strengthen partnerships with the private sector as a development partner.

Al-Ansari indicated that the Real Estate Developer system is an optional track running parallel to the traditional method of providing plots to citizens, not a replacement.

He stressed that residential lands in South Saad Al-Abdullah and South Sabah Al-Ahmad are still under development and distribution.

He highlighted that PAHW is working on transforming government lands into development projects through advanced partnership contracts, engaging consulting firms with proven Gulf experience, adding that these contracts help minimize risks for the private sector while ensuring clear obligations and responsibilities.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Real Estate Union Ibrahim Al-Awadhi provided a detailed analysis of the ongoing housing transformations, emphasizing that the concept of a real estate developer differs fundamentally from that of a contractor.

He explained that a developer assumes responsibility for the entire project, from design and execution to construction, financing, sales, and management, whereas a contractor's role is limited to executing the construction work without bearing any financial risk.

In traditional housing projects, the government pays contractors the contract value in exchange for execution. In contrast, the real estate developer model relies on the developing company to finance the project independently, without imposing a direct financial burden on the government.

The shift to the real estate developer system emerged in response to rising housing demand and the government's inability to keep pace. Currently, there are approximately 105,000 housing applications, a number projected to increase to 197,000 over the next ten years.

Real estate companies possess greater speed and efficiency in completing projects. The current trend extends beyond local firms to include foreign companies, which are already being attracted through established qualification mechanisms and approved pathways.

Al-Awadhi emphasized that the Real Estate Union played a fundamental role in drafting the 2023 law and its 2025 amendment in collaboration with PAHW.

He highlighted that the current legislation represents an important transitional step, with practical experience serving as the ultimate guide for evaluating and developing any law.

Regarding the financing mechanism, Al-Awadhi explained that while the details are not yet fully defined, there is a clear direction toward two main channels - through the Kuwait Credit Bank and through commercial banks, in tandem with the anticipated approval of the mortgage law.

In response to concerns about rising prices, he said, "The law is not the cause of increasing costs. The real issue is the scarcity of projects, not the financing mechanisms."

Regarding the relationship between the Real Estate Authority and developers, Al-Awadhi emphasized that while the authority plays a vital role in regulating Kuwait's real estate market, it is not directly tied to the developers.

He explained that the law grants the authority full responsibilities, including obtaining approvals and issuing licenses. However, the main challenge facing the real estate sector is the absence of a comprehensive database and the essential information required to make informed decisions.

In addition, Lawyer Abdullah Al-Bakr emphasized the importance of the ongoing discussion about real estate developers following the 2025 law amendment.

He noted that international experiences present significant opportunities that Kuwait should capitalize on.

Lawyer Al-Bakr expressed his full support for establishing a Real Estate Authority to assist developers, stressing that specialization and centralization are essential for ensuring transparency.

He highlighted the need for a single entity responsible for issuing licenses, providing information, and protecting the interests of all stakeholders.

Lawyer Al-Bakr praised the authority's role as a partner, regulator, and overseer, asserting that the recent amendments have marked a qualitative leap in the real estate development sector.

He underscored the necessity of offering guarantees to developers in case of declining demand for units, as well as implementing safeguards to protect citizens' funds.

GCC forms committee to fight money laundering

Al-Budaiwi outlines 2026-30 security strategy

By Bader Al-Sharhan

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi said Tuesday the bloc established a committee tasked with implementing the 2026-30 security strategy to combat money laundering, whose mandate would be based on five pillars.

The committee's operation will be based on legislation and security policies, joint investigations and security operations, technology and security analysis, international security cooperation and coordination, and training and building capabilities, he said.

Al-Budaiwi, in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), said the committee would oversee the strategy's implementation and monitor performance in cooperation with the Secretariat's statistical center.

The strategy is part of collective efforts aimed at cracking down on terrorism and terrorism financing.

Al-Budaiwi said the Gulf Cooperation Council was bound to high-level security cooperation and coordination, citing formation of a committee designed to fight terrorism.

This committee, he added, has a mandate of preparing legislation, anti-terrorism plans, proposing training programs, participate in regional and international conferences and exchange visits between anti-terrorism experts.

This is in addition to a 2010 strategy to fight extremism associated with terrorism, all with the aim of eliminating violence, extremism, crime and ideologies.

The security cooperation amongst the GCC countries also includes a unified electronic system that links traffic violations.

"This project increased awareness among drivers which resulted in a decline in accidents," said Al-Budaiwi, adding that Gulf Traffic Week aimed at raising awareness of roads users.

Meanwhile, Al-Budaiwi said the upcoming GCC summit, due in Bahrain tomorrow, would be held amidst "critical and accelerated" developments in the Gulf and Middle East regions, which reflect importance of the high-level meeting.

He said cooperation among the Gulf countries was an example to follow in terms of integration, development and progress.

"We witnessed the solid and wise decisions by the GCC countries during crises, and see how the member countries exert efforts to achieve common objectives," he said.

Al-Budaiwi said the Bahrain summit would discuss the Israeli occupation's aggression on Qatar, the Iranian nuclear program, free navigation and maritime security in the Gulf waters and the Red Sea.

"We reaffirm importance of compliance with the UN Charter, international conventions, good neighborliness principles, respect of sovereignty of countries and non-interference in their domestic affairs, peaceful resolution of conflicts and not to use force of threaten to use force," he said.

Al-Budaiwi also called for rallying regional and international efforts to reach a comprehensive solution for the Palestinian cause in a way ending the grave violations against the civilians and preserve legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, foremost establishing an independent and viable state in line with the Arab peace initiative, UN resolutions and two-state solution on the June 4 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital.

On the other hand, Al-Budaiwi said the GCC sought to enhance cooperation with other countries and organizations. The GCC held meetings with the European Union in October 2024, the US in May 2025, the ASEAN on one side and the GCC-ASEAN-China on the other last May.

"These summits aim at cementing cooperation between the Gulf and these countries and organizations towards wider horizons. The GCC summit will discuss the outcome of these meetings, in addition to challenges, crises, global economic and trade issues," said Al-Budaiwi.

Al-Budaiwi, meanwhile, gave detailed answers over contributions of the GCC to addressing conditions in Syria, Lebanon and the Iranian nuclear file.

The GCC acted shortly after collapse of the Syrian regime, he said, and held an urgent ministerial meeting on December 26, 2024 in Kuwait to coordinate positions regarding Syria.

The ministers agreed to send Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, accompanied by Al-Budaiwi, to Syria and Lebanon to convey messages of solidarity and assess immediate needs of the two countries.

Four days later, Al-Yahya and Al-Budaiwi met with Syrian leader Ahmad Al-Sharaa, Foreign Minister Asaad Al-Shaibani and Intelligence chief Anas Khattab in Damascus to convey a message of solidarity with Syria and its people during the critical transition period.

Al-Budaiwi said they reaffirmed support to Syria's sovereignty and independence, and their readiness to extend support at political, economic, development and humanitarian levels.

The GCC has ever since been discussing the Syrian issue in all its meetings and other meetings with regional and international partners, with the aim of supporting the Syrian government. The Gulf bloc intensified efforts to lift sanctions to enable economic recovery.

The "GCC believes Syria's stability is a strategic interest for the Middle East because it helps restore control of cross-border threat, drug smuggling and terrorist groups, while there are promising investment opportunities that the private sector and investment institutions could benefit from," he said.

Al-Yahya and Al-Budaiwi visited Beirut last January and met with the Lebanese political leadership, reaffirmed support to Lebanon's sovereignty, security, stability and territorial integrity.

The message the GCC conveyed to the Lebanese leaders that political and economic reforms were essential because they would help the country overcome its political and economic crisis. Lebanon should also not be a launch pad for terrorism and drug smuggling, affirmed Al-Budaiwi.

"We made it clear for the Lebanese leaders that it is important to implement UN Security Council resolution on Lebanon, especially resolution 1701, and the Taef agreement to restore security and stability.

Regarding Iran's nuclear file, Al-Budaiwi reiterated importance of continuing "constructive" negotiations to reach a comprehensive solution for this file, that the negotiations should include issues of concern to the GCC, need of the GCC's participation in relevant regional and international meetings, and that Tehran and the International Atomic Energy Agency should cooperate in a constructive spirit.

The GCC, said Al-Budaiwi, sought to boost confidence among all parties to achieve regional and international stability, citing the important role of the 5+1 group in achieving this goal despite the US withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear agreement in 2018.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are working on different fronts to further boost their economies, from connecting the six members by railroad, diversifying income, attracting foreign investments, which would eventually create more jobs for citizens, the bloc's chief said.

"The railroad is one of the major joint Gulf projects and has been progressing at different levels, as some members completed the tracks within their territories like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, and other countries are working on finalizing the necessary technical procedures," Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi said Tuesday.

Al-Budaiwi, in an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), said the railroad project, scheduled to be operational by December 2030, would facilitate inter-GCC trade, create jobs, help domestic support industries, attract foreign investment, involve private sector and reduce highways maintenance cost.

He said the train service was expected to carry around six million passengers by 2030 and eight million in 2045. "This



KUNA photo
Jassem Al-Budaiwi, GCC Secretary General

will certainly contribute to increasing transport among the GCC countries, especially alongside huge investment in the tourism sector," he added.

Asked about the so-called "one-stop" travel system, Al-Budaiwi explained it allowed Gulf nationals to travel from one Gulf country to another without needing to pass through immigration counters at arrival points because passengers would be identified by facial recognition cameras.

The passengers, he added, who would walk through a special lane for the Gulf trips, could immediately head to collect his/her luggage and leave the airport.

"The advantage is reducing pressure on immigration counters and contributing to the smooth flow of passengers, reducing waiting time for passengers and making them happy," said Al-Budaiwi.

This project would be implemented in phases, he said, and all Gulf citizens and expatriates would benefit from it.

Asked about reducing dependency on oil and diversifying income, Al-Budaiwi said the six-member GCC saw big progress towards diversifying income based on "ambitious visions and wide-scale economic reforms."

These efforts, he went on, boost non-oil sectors, which contributed to 76 percent, or USD 1.7 trillion, to the GCC gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024, driven by noticeable growth in tourism, logistical services, technology, renewable energy and manufacturing industries.

The GCC countries, he said, also improved their investment and entrepreneurship environments, as well as the role of the private sector. Despite progress in economic diversification, he said, oil would remain a key component in world energy security and stability.

Al-Budaiwi also said the GCC made large strides towards renewable energy and green economy, as the region was witnessing huge solar and wind projects, considered among the biggest worldwide, like Mohammad bin Rashed Solar Park in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the NEOM clean energy in Saudi Arabia, Hydrogen projects in Oman and the Shaqaya solar energy park in Kuwait, as well as other ventures in Qatar and Bahrain.

Arab Gulf countries adopted strategies aimed at improving energy efficiency, reducing emissions and increasing clean energy contribution, he said, making the GCC a driving force towards sustainable and secure energy.

Al-Budaiwi spoke about the free trade agreements with third countries and organizations, saying the first FTA was signed with Lebanon in 2004, Singapore in 2008 and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 2009. FTA negotiations stopped because of the international financial crisis. Negotiations resumed and were ongoing with the UK, Turkey, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Korea, Japan and Indonesia.

Asked about compliance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015-30), Al-Budaiwi said the GCC achieved 80-90 percent of the health and education goals, with over 70 percent compliance with other SDGs in the past few years.

He cited the 2025 global sustainable development report which indicated that Gulf countries' compliance with SDGs was above average regarding clean energy (SDG Seven), innovation and industry (SDG Nine), which was driven by renewable energy projects and economic diversification.

The Secretary General said GCC improved education, reduced child mortality rate, expanded social protection programs, while major cities witnessed less emissions.

Asked how youth empowerment contributes to economic and social development, Al-Budaiwi said it resulted in more productivity, boosted entrepreneurship, innovation, transition to knowledge-based and digital economy, in addition to reducing dependency on foreign workers.

Empowerment, he added, promoted social stability and sense of belonging, improved voluntary initiatives and quality of life.

Youth empowerment is a strategic choice supported by the GCC leaders, thus guaranteeing sustainable development through investing in human capital.

Improving human development index is based on promoting health, education and income, major components in the global index.

Al-Budaiwi said the Gulf countries were expanding health services and preventive medicine, updating curricula, diversifying the economy and creating jobs.

"It is due to these endeavors, the Gulf countries are classified very high regarding human development, and they contribute to improve this index in line with their future national visions," he said.

Meanwhile, Al-Budaiwi said the Arab Gulf countries have witnessed remarkable development in health, social and sport sectors, citing health insurance, supporting social cohesion, building new sport facilities to host major international competitions thus promoting sport diplomacy, and how sport could effectively develop health society.

"This development reflects the keenness of the GCC countries to building healthier and prosperous communities, achieving comprehensive development and boosting its status globally," he said.

Founded in 1981, the GCC consists of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman.



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White House releases doctor’s memo

‘Trump had preventative screening MRI on heart, abdomen with perfectly normal results’

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s doctor says the president had MRI imaging on his heart and abdomen in October as part of a preventative screening for men his age, according to a memo from the physician released by the White House on Monday.

Sean Barbabella said in a statement that Trump’s physical exam included “advanced imaging” that is “standard for an executive physical” in Trump’s age group. Barbabella concluded that the cardiovascular and abdominal imaging was “perfectly normal.”

The White House released Barbabella’s memo after Trump on Sunday said he would release the results of the scan. He and the White House have said the scan was “part of his routine physical examination” but had declined until Monday to detail why Trump had an MRI during his physical in October at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center or on what part of his body.

“I think that’s quite a bit of detail,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Monday when announcing

the memo’s release.

The Republican president said Sunday during an exchange with reporters as he traveled back to Washington from Florida that the results of the MRI were “perfect.” “If you want to have it released, I’ll release it,” Trump said. Trump added Sunday that he has “no idea” on what part of his body he got the MRI.

Doctors typically order an MRI to help with diagnosing symptoms or to monitor an ongoing health problem. So-called “preventive” cardiac and abdominal MRIs are not part of routine screening recommendations. What Trump’s doctor called an “executive physical” generally refers to adding extra, non-routine tests including MRIs to pricey and lengthy exams, not covered by insurance, that are marketed to wealthy people.

Also:

HALLANDALE BEACH, Fla: US President **Donald Trump** has commuted the prison sentence of former investment manager **David Gentile**, who was convicted of defrauding investors



US President Donald Trump speaks with reporters while in flight on Air Force One from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla., to Joint Base Andrews on Nov 30. (AP)

- the latest in a series of clemency actions Trump has taken in white-collar criminal cases.

Gentile had reported to prison on Nov. 14, just days before Trump com-

muted his sentence, according to a White House official who requested anonymity to provide details of the clemency action. Gentile had been the CEO and co-founder of GPB Capital,

which had raised \$1.6 billion in capital to acquire companies in the auto, retail, health care and housing sectors.

He had been sentenced to seven years in prison after an August 2024 conviction for his role in what the Justice Department at the time described as a scheme to defraud more than 10,000 investors by misrepresenting the performance of three private equity funds.

But the White House official said GPB Capital had disclosed to investors in 2015 that their capital might go to pay dividends to other investors, which the White House said undercut claims that the company had engaged in a “Ponzi” scheme in which new investments are used to reimburse previous investors.

WASHINGTON: US President **Donald Trump**’s former personal lawyer **Alina Habba** is disqualified from serving as New Jersey’s top federal prosecutor despite his administration’s maneuvers to keep her in the role, an appeals court said Monday.

A panel of judges from the 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals sitting in

Philadelphia sided with a lower-court judge’s ruling after hearing oral arguments at which Habba was present on Oct. 20.

“It is apparent that the current administration has been frustrated by some of the legal and political barriers to getting its appointees in place. Its efforts to elevate its preferred candidate for US Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Alina Habba, to the role of Acting US Attorney demonstrate the difficulties it has faced - yet the citizens of New Jersey and the loyal employees in the US Attorney’s Office deserve some clarity and stability,” the court wrote in a 32-page opinion.

It concluded: “We will affirm the District Court’s disqualification order.”

The ruling comes amid the push by Trump’s Republican administration to keep Habba as the acting US attorney for New Jersey, a powerful post charged with enforcing federal criminal and civil law. It also comes after the judges questioned the government’s moves to keep Habba in place after her interim appointment expired and without her getting Senate confirmation.

America

‘3 NY offices targeted with bomb threats’: Senate Democratic leader **Chuck Schumer** said Monday that three of his New York offices were targeted with emailed bomb threats from an email address alleging the “2020 election was rigged.”

Schumer said in a statement that local law enforcement received bomb threats referencing his offices in Rochester, Binghamton and Long Island with the email subject line “MAGA.”



Schumer

President Donald Trump lost the 2020 election to former President Joe Biden but has falsely claimed since then that it was “rigged” or “stolen.” But courts dismissed or ruled against the campaign in dozens of lawsuits and the votes were certified by election officials in all 50 states. (AP)

Barnes enters Wisconsin gov race: Democrat Mandela Barnes, who served four years as Wisconsin’s lieutenant governor and narrowly lost a 2022 U.S. Senate bid, jumped into the battleground state’s open race for governor on Tuesday.

Given his prominent name recognition and statewide funding network, Barnes enters the 2026 race as the presumptive front-runner in a crowded primary of lesser known candidates who have no built-in network of support.

Wisconsin is a politically divided state that elected President Donald Trump in 2016 and 2024 and President Joe Biden in 2020. All three elections were decided by less than a percentage point.

The message in Barnes’ campaign launch video will likely appeal to many Democratic primary voters. He highlights his father’s union background and attacks Trump, saying the Republican has focused on “distraction and chaos to avoid accountability.” He says Trump is focusing on “lower taxes for billionaires, higher prices for working people.” (AP)

Navy admiral ordered follow-up strike on alleged drug boat: WH

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): The White House said Monday that a Navy admiral acted “within his authority and the law” when he ordered a second, follow-up strike on an alleged drug boat in the Caribbean Sea in a September US military operation that has come under bipartisan scrutiny.

White House press secretary **Karoline Leavitt** offered the justification for the Sept 2 strike as lawmakers announced there will be congressional review of the US military strikes against vessels suspected of smuggling drugs in the Caribbean and the eastern Pacific Ocean. The lawmakers cited a published report that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued a verbal order for a second strike that killed survivors on the boat.



Leavitt

Navy Vice Adm. Frank “Mitch” Bradley, who Leavitt said ordered the second strike, is expected to provide a classified briefing Thursday to lawmakers overseeing the military.

Leavitt in her comments to report-

ers did not dispute a Washington Post report that there were survivors after the initial strike. Her explanation came after President Donald Trump a day earlier said he “wouldn’t have wanted that - not a second strike” when asked about the incident.

“Secretary Hegseth authorized Admiral Bradley to conduct these kinetic strikes,” said Leavitt. “Admiral Bradley worked well within his authority and the law, directing the engagement to ensure the boat was destroyed and the threat to the United States of America was eliminated.” Late Monday, Hegseth posted: “Admiral Mitch Bradley is an American hero, a true professional, and has my 100% support. I stand by him and the combat decisions he has made - on the September 2 mission and all others since.”

A month after the strike, Bradley was promoted from commander of Joint Special Operations Command to commander of US. Special Operations Command.

Concern over the Trump administration’s military strikes against the alleged drug-smuggling boats has been building in Congress, but details of this follow-on strike stunned many lawmakers from both parties and generated stark questions about the legality of the attacks and the overall strategy in the region, and particularly toward Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.



An American airplane arrives at the O'Hare International Airport in Chicago on Nov 30. (AP)

Northeast preps for major snowstorm

The Northeast was getting ready Tuesday for its first major snowstorm of the season, just as the Midwest began to escape snow and ice that snarled travel after the Thanksgiving holiday. Some parts of northern New England were expecting up to 10 inches (25.4 centimeters) of snow. A windy, potentially icy storm was headed to the region and could soak some parts of the area’s six states while piling snow in others, forecasters said.

The National Weather Service issued winter storm warnings and winter weather advisories in states including Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Connecticut and New York ahead of the snow’s arrival.

The winter blast is set to arrive days after more than 8 inches (20.32 centimeters) of snow fell at Chicago O’Hare International Airport over the weekend, setting a record for the highest single calendar day snowfall in November at the airport, according to the weather service. The previous record was set in 1951. Snow in the Great Lakes region was tapering off, but the new storm was heading to the mid-Atlantic and Northeast, with up to a foot (30 centimeters) of snow by Tuesday, said National Weather Service meteorologist Andrew Orrison. (AP)



Police clash with protesters during a rally against austerity measures in next year’s draft budget, in Sofia on Dec 1. (AP)

Bulgaria govt withdraws controversial budget after major protests

Bulgaria’s government said Tuesday it is withdrawing a controversial budget proposal after protests against it drew tens of thousands of people and saw clashes between police and protesters.

Opposition and business groups have warned that plans for higher taxes, increased social security contributions and spending increases could hurt investment and expand the shadow economy as the country prepares to join the eurozone at the start of next year.

The government first promised to withdraw the draft for thorough revision after protests last week, but later refused to do so, sparking protests in the capital, Sofia,

and other major cities Monday night. Organizers said that 50,000 people attended the protest in Sofia.

The protest in Sofia, which was dominated by young people, was largely peaceful at first, but it was followed by violent clashes.

Jumping and chanting slogans like “We will not allow ourselves to be lied to; we will not allow ourselves to be robbed” and “Resignation,” demonstrators demanded the government revise the draft or step down. In front of the Parliament, banners were displayed reading “Generation Z is Coming” and “Young Bulgaria Without the Mafia.” (AP)



Pope Leo XIV waves as he boards a flight back to the Vatican after his visit to Lebanon at Beirut International Airport in Beirut, Lebanon, on Dec 2. (AP)

Pope Leo XIV sends message of support to Lebanon

BEIRUT, Dec 2, (AP): Pope Leo XIV referenced the ongoing conflict in southern Lebanon in his farewell speech at the Beirut airport and sent a message of support to people of the south as he wrapped up the first foreign trip of his pontificate on Tuesday.

Christians in the south had been disappointed that his visit did not include a visit to their areas.

“I greet all the regions of Lebanon that I was unable to visit: Tripoli and the north, the Beqaa and the south of the country, which is currently experiencing a state of conflict and uncertainty,” Leo said. Pope prayed at the site of a deadly 2020 Beirut port explosion that has become a symbol of dysfunction.

UK plans to scrap some jury trials in attempt to clear court backlog

LONDON, Dec 2, (AP): The right to trial by jury will be pared back in Britain in an attempt to clear a backlog of cases clogging up the justice system, the government announced Tuesday.

Justice Secretary David Lammy said overload and delays had created “an emergency in our courts” that risks collapsing trust in British justice.

The UK court system has struggled to clear a backlog of cases built up since the COVID-19 pandemic. The government says there are almost 80,000 cases waiting to be heard in criminal courts in England and Wales, more than double the pre-pandemic figure, with some cases taking several years to reach trial.

Under the changes, crimes with a likely sentence of three years or less will be tried before a judge alone, up from the current two years. Judges will also be able to sit without a jury in some complex fraud and financial cases.

Magistrates, who handle less serious offenses, will be able to impose sentences of up to 18 months, rather than the current 12 months, allowing them to handle more cases.



Britain’s Prime Minister Keir Starmer arrives ahead of a speech in central London on Dec 1. (AP)

The changes apply to England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have separate judicial systems.

Lammy said the reforms would deliver swifter justice for victims.

“We’re all proud of our justice system rooted in the Magna Carta, but we must never forget that it implores us not to deny or delay justice,” Lammy told lawmakers in the House of Com-

mons. “When victims are left waiting for years, justice is effectively denied to them.”

He said the changes would reduce by about a quarter the number of cases heard by juries, but that “jury trials will continue to be the cornerstone of the system for the most serious offenses,” including murder, manslaughter, rape, serious assault and robbery.

Zelenskyy tours Europe

US envoy Witkoff to meet Putin in Moscow

MOSCOW, Dec 2, (AP): US special envoy Steve Witkoff was due to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Tuesday, taking to the Kremlin an embryonic peace plan that Washington hopes can bring about an end to the nearly four-year war in Ukraine.

Coinciding with Witkoff’s trip, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy went to Ireland, continuing his visits to European countries that have helped sustain his country’s fight against Russia’s invasion.

After months of frustration in his efforts to stop the fighting, US President Donald Trump is deploying officials to get traction for his peace proposals.

Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law, will join the meeting between Putin and Witkoff, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. He said that the talks would take “as long as needed” and will involve only Witkoff, Kushner and an interpreter from the U.S. side.

So far, the talks have followed parallel lines, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio sitting down with Ukrainian officials, and now Witkoff heading to Moscow.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff shake hands during their meeting at the Kremlin, in Moscow, on Aug 6. (AP)

Zelenskyy said that he met Tuesday with the Ukrainian delegation that returned from the latest round of negotiations with the US representatives in Florida. Rubio said that those talks made progress, but added that “there’s more work to be done.”

Zelenskyy said that the Florida talks took as their cue a document that both sides drafted at an earlier meeting in Geneva. The Ukrainian leader said that document was now “finalized,” although he didn’t explain what that meant.

Europe

Norway unveils defense drone strategy: The Norwegian government on Monday unveiled a new drone strategy for its defense sector. While launching the strategy, Norwegian Minister of Defense Tore O. Sandvik said that success in enhancing the nation’s drone capabilities depends heavily on a coordinated effort between the military, the private sector, research institutions, and allied nations.

The strategy emphasizes that competence in new technologies often lies outside the traditional defense industry. Consequently, the government aims to leverage Norway’s existing technological strengths to build a robust drone ecosystem. While the strategy sets a long-term direction, the Norwegian Armed Forces have already taken steps by reallocating 1.5 billion Norwegian kroner (148 million US dollars) to a drone program recently. (Xinhua)

Spanish police arrest 3: Spain’s National Police on Monday announced the arrest of three suspected members of a neo-Nazi terrorist cell linked to “The Base,” a white-supremacist group designated as a terrorist organization in the European Union (EU) and several other countries.

The suspects were detained on Nov. 25 during coordinated raids in the eastern province of Castellón. According to police, officers seized firearms, bladed weapons, military-style equipment and extremist propaganda during the operation.

The detainees are accused of belonging to a terrorist organization, illegal possession of weapons, and attempting to recruit and indoctrinate others. Investigators described them as “highly radicalized” and aligned with accelerationist ideology encouraging violent attacks. (Xinhua)

One dead in wall collapse

Australia govt releases nat’l AI plan

CANBERRA, Dec 2, (Xinhua): The Australian government on Tuesday released a national plan to give guidance to industry, researchers, governments and the public on how to safely and beneficially use artificial intelligence (AI).

Under the National AI Plan, the government says it will prioritize supporting and reskilling workers whose roles are affected by AI, boost investment in data centers and share the productivity benefits of AI across the economy.

Tim Ayres, the minister for industry and innovation and minister for science, said that the plan would keep Australians safe as AI technology continues to evolve. From 2026, a new government-funded AI Safety Institute announced by Ayres in November will be responsible for evaluating emerging AI capabilities and supporting timely responses to address potential risks.

Also:

SYDNEY: One man has died and another has been hospitalized with serious injuries after a wall collapsed at a construction site in the Australian



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese gestures during a press conference in Sydney, Australia on Dec 12, 2024. (AP)

city of **Brisbane** on Tuesday morning. Police in the state of **Queensland** said that emergency services were called to reports that two workers were trapped at an industrial site in Brisbane’s West End around 8:30 a.m. local time on Tuesday.

A 45-year-old man was declared deceased at the scene and a 19-year-old man was taken to hospital in a

serious but stable condition.

Inspector **Chris Pemberton** from the Queensland Police Service (QPS) told reporters at the scene that the 19-year-old was trapped for over an hour before being freed. He said that the fellow workers likely saved the 19-year-old’s life by helping police officers remove a large amount of concrete from his chest.

‘10 foreign domestic helpers killed, 3 injured’

Lee orders full probe into HK residential fire

HONG KONG, Dec 2, (Xinhua): The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government will set up an independent commission chaired by a judge to conduct a thorough investigation into the recent residential fire and ensure full accountability for those responsible, John Lee, HKSAR chief executive, told reporters on Tuesday. The fire has claimed 151 lives and injured 79 people, said Lee, adding that the police are following up on approximately 30 remaining cases of missing individuals.

Three task forces established earlier are working relentlessly to pursue accountability, investigating all relevant parties and leaving no responsible person unpunished, Lee noted.

He emphasized that the HKSAR government is sparing no effort to support those affected. Measures include activating temporary shelters and arranging for some 2,500 people to take up temporary residence in transitional housing and hotels in phases.

The chief executive pointed out that the blaze has exposed failures across multiple links, making systemic reforms imperative. An independent commission will be set up to probe the fire, Lee said, adding that the HKSAR government will



People offer flowers for the victims near the site of a deadly fire at Wang Fuk Court, a residential estate in the Tai Po district of Hong Kong's New Territories on Dec 2. (AP)

provide all necessary data and other support required for the investigation, and the commission will submit recommendations and reports to him.

Meanwhile, Secretary for Labor and Welfare of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government Chris Sun said on Tuesday that 10 foreign domestic helpers were

killed and three others were injured in a major residential fire that broke out on Nov. 26 in Tai Po.

Sun told a press briefing that each of the foreign domestic helpers who died in the fire will receive about 800,000 Hong Kong dollars in compensation, including statutory compensation and one-off assistance.

‘Hidden forces of insurrection should be revealed’

South Korean president proposes restoring communication channels with DPRK

SEOUL, Dec 2, (Xinhua): South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Tuesday proposed restoring communication channels with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), according to the presidential office.

Lee made the remarks at the inauguration ceremony of the 22nd Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, which advises the president on unification issues, stressing that reviving the inter-Korean dialogue, suspended for seven years, will be the starting point for new inter-Korean relations of peaceful coexistence.

He said inter-Korean meetings should begin to prevent accidental military clashes, resolve the sufferings of people caused by the divided Korean Peninsula and discuss various pending issues between the two sides, proposing the restoration of inter-Korean communication channels for the resumption of frank dialogue.

The president, who serves as chairman of the council, noted that the two sides can gradually start with inter-Korean exchange and cooperation projects in areas such as climate and environment, disaster and safety, and public health and medical services.

Lee emphasized that his government will continue efforts to end the state of war on the peninsula, pursue a nuclear-free peninsula and establish lasting peace, vowing to end hostility and confrontation between the two Koreas and create new inter-Korean relations of peaceful coexistence.

The peninsula technically remains in a state of war as the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Meanwhile, Lee Jae Myung said Tuesday that the forces of insurrection hidden in every corner should be fully revealed to truly open the door to a just



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung delivers his speech during a celebration to mark 77th Armed Forces Day in Gyeryong, South Korea on Oct 1. (AP)

national unity.

Lee made the opening remarks at the cabinet meeting ahead of the first an-

niversary of the emergency martial law, declared on Dec. 3 last year by his impeached predecessor but revoked hours later by the National Assembly.

It was consistent with his comments the previous day that if the hidden acts of insurrection are left unchecked, they will surely recur someday.

Lee, who took office on June 4 through a snap presidential election, said his government will award meaningful certificates, such as commendations, to people who joined in stopping the martial law and draw up measures to remember people’s efforts and the spirit of popular sovereignty for generations to come.

Lee’s approval rating rose 2.1 percentage points from a week earlier to 71.1 percent last week, a weekly poll showed Monday.

The negative assessment on Lee’s conduct of state affairs declined 1.9 percentage points to 27.9 percent, according to computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) by local pollster Flower Research.

The ruling liberal Democratic Party’s support advanced 1.6 percentage points to 56.2 percent, while the conservative opposition People Power Party’s approval score decreased 4.5 percentage points to 24.5 percent.

Support rate for both the minor left-leaning Rebuilding Korea Party and the minor rightist New Reform Party logged 2.8 percent last week.

The pollster’s separate survey of automated response system (ARS) showed that Lee’s approval rating edged down 0.2 percentage points to 61.9 percent last week compared to the previous week.

The CATI and the ARS surveyed 1,002 and 1,007 voters each from Friday to Saturday. The polls had plus and minus 3.1 percentage points in margin of error with a confidence level of 95 percent.

Hundreds flee gunfire, burning homes

Gangs launch large-scale attack in Haiti

SAINT-MARC, Haiti, Dec 2, (AP): Heavily armed gangs attacked Haiti’s central region over the weekend, killing men, women and children as they set fire to homes and forced survivors to flee into the darkness.

Police made emergency calls for backup, asserting that 50% of the Artibonite region had fallen under gang control after the large-scale attacks targeting towns including Bercy and Pont-Sondé.

“The population cannot live, cannot work, cannot move,” one of Haiti’s police unions, SPNH-17, said Sunday on X. “Losing the country’s 2 largest departments - West and Artibonite - is the greatest security failure in modern Haitian history.”

The bulk of Haiti’s police force and the Kenyan officers leading a UN-backed mission to help repel gangs are in the capital, Port-au-Prince, which itself is largely held by gangs.

Guerby Simeus, a Pont-Sondé official, told The Associated Press by phone on Monday that he had confirmed nearly a dozen deaths, including a mother and her child and a local government employee.

“The gangs are still in Pont-Sondé,”



Police chief André Jonas Vladimir Paraison speaks at a press conference where he presented results from his 100 days as director of the National Police force, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Nov 28. (AP)

he said, noting that no additional police had arrived.

Many survivors fled to the coastal town of Saint-Marc, where hundreds of angry people on Monday demanded that the government take action against gangs who have repeatedly attacked

Haiti’s central region.

“Give me the guns! I’m going to fight the gangs!” said René Charles, who survived the attack. “We’ve got to stand up and fight!”

The crowd tried to break into the mayor’s office with one unidentified man telling the AP that they weren’t going to rely on the government any longer: “We’re going to take justice into our own hands!”

Charlesma Jean Marcos, a political activist, said the gang announced last week that they were going to invade the area, and that they alerted authorities to no avail.

“For now, the only people really fighting (the gang) is the self-defense group,” he said. “A country cannot run like this.”

Marcos urged all the survivors sleeping on the street and in public parks to instead sleep inside police stations and government offices until the government can take back Artibonite.

“A lot of people are going to be hungry,” he warned. “We can support you today, we can support you tomorrow, but we won’t be able to support you forever.”



Military officials attend an ECOWAS meeting in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau on Dec 1. (AP)

Talks with Guinea-Bissau coup leaders to continue: ECOWAS

A delegation from the West African regional bloc known as ECOWAS made no headway in talks Monday with coup leaders in Guinea-Bissau, but said at the end of its visit that discussions would continue later this month.

The ECOWAS mission, led by its chairman, President of Sierra Leone Julius Maada Bio, came to Guinea-Bissau to appeal to the military - which seized power last Wednesday - for a “complete restoration of constitutional order.”

The coup came three days after a closely contested presidential election which the two main contenders claim to have won.

Sierra Leone’s Foreign Minister Timothy Musa Kabba described the discussions as “fruitful” and said both sides “expressed their different concerns.” The ECOWAS chairman condemned the coup while the military said it was necessary to “to restore order and security.” (AP)

Trump weighs options on Venezuela after Maduro reportedly refuses to step down

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (Xinhua): US President Donald Trump on Monday evening met with his top national security advisors at the White House Oval Office to weigh next steps, including potential land attacks on Venezuela.

According to media reports, Trump set last Friday as a deadline for Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to relinquish power and leave the oil-rich South American country with his family during a phone call between the two on Nov 21, but Maduro refused to comply.

During the phone call, Maduro declined the ultimatum, demanding “global amnesty” for himself and others, according to reports published Sunday and Monday. Trump on Sunday confirmed that a call between the two leaders had occurred, telling reporters: “I wouldn’t say it went well or badly, it was a phone call.”

Sources told the Miami Herald, a US newspaper, that Trump sent a “blunt message” to Maduro during the phone call. “You can save yourself and those closest to you, but you must leave the country now,” Trump allegedly said, offering safety to Maduro and his family “only if he agreed to resign right away.”

However, Maduro allegedly refused to give up power and reportedly made his own demands, including global immunity from prosecution and being allowed to retain control of the military if he steps down.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro addresses supporters during a swearing-in event for government-organized community committees at the presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela on Dec 1. (AP)

The Miami Herald said no further contact between the two leaders has occurred, although Maduro supposedly asked for a second call after Trump closed Venezuela’s airspace.

Venezuela does not want “a slave’s peace,” Maduro told supporters Monday as US military deployment has been “testing” his country for months.

“We want peace, but peace with sovereignty, peace with equality, peace with freedom; we do not want the peace

of slaves or the peace of colonies. A colony never, slaves never,” Maduro declared, noting that the 22-week US military “aggression” can be described as “psychological terrorism.”

Maduro stressed that national power is grounded in citizen participation and “rests on the immense strength of its people, their awareness, their institutions, their rifles and their determination to build this homeland above any difficulty.”

India mandates pre-installation of govt cyber safety app on all smartphones

NEW DELHI, Dec 2, (AP): India’s telecoms ministry has directed smartphone manufacturers to pre-install a government-run cybersecurity app on all new devices, according to a government order, raising concerns of data privacy and user consent in one of the largest handset markets in the world.

The Ministry of Communications’ order issued Monday asked smartphone makers to pre-install the government’s “Sanchar Saathi” app on all new devices within 90 days and to prevent users from deleting it. The order also requires manufacturers to push the app onto older models through a software update, extending the mandate beyond phones available in the market.

The ministry said the app, which is available to India’s 1.2 billion smartphone users, was essential in “curbing misuse of telecom resources for cyber frauds and ensuring telecom cyber security.” But privacy advocates say the order marks an effort to erode user privacy and consent.

“This is the beginning. It is government testing the waters,” said Nikhil Pahwa, a digital policy expert and founder of the tech site MediaNama. “Once a government app is forcibly pre-installed on our devices, what’s to stop them from pushing future apps



An Indian government-run cybersecurity app ‘Sanchar Saathi’ is seen on a mobile phone in New Delhi, India on Dec 2. (AP)

that could be used for surveillance?”

Amid growing criticism, India’s telecom minister, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, on Tuesday called the app a “voluntary and democratic system” and said users can choose to activate it and “easily delete it from their phone at any time.”

Scindia did not clarify Monday’s directive instructing smartphone manufacturers to ensure the app’s “function-

alities are not disabled or restricted.”

The “Sanchar Saathi” app, which was released in January, was designed to let users block and track lost or stolen phones and to identify and shut down fraudulent mobile connections. Since its launch, it has drawn more than 5 million downloads and helped recover more than 700,000 lost devices, according to government data.

Kuwaiti oil price drops to \$63.40 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by USD 1.47 to USD 63.40 per barrel on Monday, compared to USD 64.87 pb last Friday, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

The Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate in global markets went up by 79 cents and 77 cents, respectively, reaching USD 63.17 pb and USD 59.32 pb.

Business

Notes bank's strong franchise and solid capitalization

Fitch affirms Gulf Bank's 'A' rating with Stable Outlook

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Fitch Ratings has affirmed Gulf Bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'A' with a Stable Outlook. Fitch has also affirmed the Bank's Viability Rating (VR) at 'bbb-'. According to the recently published Fitch Ratings commentary, Fitch stated that: "Gulf Bank's IDRs reflect potential support from the Kuwaiti authorities, as reflected in its Government Support Rating (GSR) of 'a'. The Stable Outlook on Gulf Bank's Long-Term IDR reflects that on the Kuwaiti sovereign rating." Fitch also added in their commentary: "Gulf Bank's Viability Rating reflects the Bank's good domestic franchise, cautious risk approach, sound loan quality and capitalization, and stable funding."

Fitch further noted: "Gulf Bank had a good market share of 6.1% of consolidated bank assets at the end of the third quarter of 2025, supported by a good brand." In addition, Fitch highlighted the Bank's stable operating environment, low Stage 3 loan ratios, high levels of provisioning, sound capitalization, and



Dalal Al-Dousari

stable funding profile. Commenting on Fitch's credit rating announcement, Ms. Dalal Al-Dousari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank, said: "We are pleased with Fitch's affirmation of our Long-Term Issuer Default Rating at 'A' with a Stable Outlook. This affirmation reflects Gulf Bank's strong domestic franchise, cautious risk approach, and the resilience of our asset quality and capitalization."

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized internationally for its creditworthiness and financial strength, with "A" ratings from all three major credit rating agencies. In addition to Fitch Ratings' affirmation of Gulf Bank's Long-Term IDR at 'A' with a Stable Outlook, the Bank holds a Long-Term Foreign Currency Rating of 'A+' with a 'Stable' Outlook from Capital Intelligence Ratings and a Long-Term Deposits Rating of 'A3' with a 'Stable' Outlook from Moody's Investors Service.

Property transactions fall sharply, commercial sector surges

Real estate deals drop 29% in weekly report

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The weekly report from the Real Estate Registration and Documentation Departments at the Ministry of Justice showed a decline in real estate transactions to 119 deals worth KD 103.1 million, compared to 167 deals valued at KD 122.8 million the previous week. This marks a 28.7 percent drop in transaction volume and a 16 percent decrease in value.

Residential property transactions for the week of November 23 to 27 were modest, with 86 deals worth KD 36.2 million, compared to 118 deals valued at KD 50 million the previous week. This represents a 27 percent decline in the number of transactions and a 27.6 percent decrease in value, reflecting a slowdown in home and private residence purchases amid anticipation of new financing legislation.

Investment property transactions dropped sharply, with 26 deals worth KD 36.8 million, down 43.4 percent in number and 8.9 percent in value from 46 deals

totaling KD 41.5 million the previous week.

In contrast, the commercial sector witnessed strong growth, recording five transactions worth KD 24.2 million, compared to just two deals worth KD 11.3 million. This represents a 114 percent increase in value and a 75 percent rise in the number of deals, reflecting the conclusion of large high-value commercial transactions.

The industrial sector recorded two deals totaling KD 4.9 million, while other segments, including shops and coastal plots, saw no activity.

Marking the company's first real estate fund in the Kingdom

NBK Wealth – KSA concludes real estate transaction in Riyadh to develop a mixed-use property with total cost of \$80 million

RIYADH, Dec 2: In a new affirmation of NBK Wealth Group's success in strengthening its presence in Saudi Arabia, NBK Wealth – KSA, through a real estate fund, has acquired a prime land plot in Riyadh to develop a mixed-use property.

This acquisition represents the first real estate investment fund and transaction for NBK Wealth Group in the Kingdom.

The land, which spans 4,000 square meters, is strategically located at the intersection of King Fahd Road and Prince Mohammed bin Salman Road, a key area within Riyadh's urban landscape. The project will include office, commercial, and residential spaces, reflecting NBK Wealth's commitment to supporting integrated and sustainable urban developments.

The total development cost is estimated at approximately SAR 300 million (USD 80 million). The Group successfully attracted investments from both Saudi and international investors, underscoring NBK Wealth's ability to draw foreign capital into the Saudi market.

Mr. Musaad Al-Sudairy, Board Member and CEO of NBK Wealth –



Musaad Al-Sudairy, Board Member and CEO of NBK Wealth – KSA

KSA, said: "This acquisition represents a significant milestone for NBK Wealth Group as part of our expansion in Saudi Arabia. Our first Saudi real estate fund reflects our commitment to supporting investments that contribute to urban development and promote economic diversification in line with Vision 2030."

"We are proud to have attracted in-



vestors from both within Saudi Arabia and abroad, which underscores our ability to mobilize capital and pursue value creation in the region," Al-Sudairy added.

Al-Sudairy highlighted that the real estate market in the Kingdom is witnessing strong growth, driven by urban expansion, government initiatives, and rising demand for mixed-use developments. This creates diverse investment opportunities and vibrant urban spaces that support the Kingdom's economic diversification goals.

NBK Wealth has established a distinguished position by offering unique services that go beyond investment, encompassing asset management, trading, lending, deposits, and financial advisory services, among others. These tailored and innovative offerings are designed

for high-net-worth individuals and families, and are delivered by a specialized wealth management team comprising more than 120 investment experts and brokers, and 75 relationship managers.

The Group leverages its extensive market knowledge, distinguished global reach, and commitment to innovation in investment strategies to help clients pursue their long-term financial goals with unwavering confidence. At the same time, NBK Wealth has valuable partnerships with J.P. Morgan Asset Management and Interset that enhance its offerings across various areas, including advisory services and the development of new investment solutions.

NBK Wealth is a brand registered under the name of National Bank of Kuwait S.A.K.P. ("NBK"), for use by the Asset Management business of, among other NBK Group entities, including Watani Investment Company K.S.C.C. ("NBKW"), the leading investment firm, and its affiliates worldwide, as well as NBK Wealth Management, combined with the Private Banking services of NBK worldwide, which is one of the largest and oldest financial institutions in the region.

Reaffirming its commitment to advancing Kuwait's digital economy

talabat backs KDIPA roundtable on reshaping Kuwait's digital future

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Expanding on its leadership role in Kuwait's digital landscape, talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, participated as an Executive Sponsor in the second edition of the roundtable series hosted by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and organized by The Business Year (TBY), under the umbrella of the Thought Leadership Circle, titled "Reshaping the Digital Landscape".

Held at Chairman's Club in KIPCO Tower and headed by H. E. Omar Saud Al-Omar, Minister of State for Communication Affairs, the roundtable brought together key representatives from private and public sectors to explore cooperation opportunities aimed at realizing Kuwait's strategic vision of becoming a regional hub for digital innovation and AI. talabat's participation in the discussion comes as an extension for its ongoing efforts to enable the country's digital transformation and adoption of the latest technologies, in line with its committed support for Kuwait Vision 2035.



H.E. Omar Saud Al-Omar, Minister of State for Communication Affairs, among the speakers in the roundtable.

underscored four primary axes of talabat's sustainable growth in Kuwait and across MENA: foundations of a regional integrated digital hub; strategic collaborations; cybersecurity and resilience; and investing in human capital and the digital workforce.

"It's vital to remember that any market, no matter how digitally driven, begins and ends with people," noted Al-Ghanim. "Despite the novelty of talabat's business model and the market's unfamiliarity with on-demand e-commerce in its earliest days, our success is owed to our people-centric culture, which listens closely to the market's needs, honors and celebrates the human talents who drive the business, whether employees or partners, and invests heavily in the development of human capital and preparing a future-ready pool of talents capable of utilizing the latest technologies in line with our market's needs."

On this note, Al-Ghanim expanded

on the numerous technologies utilized at talabat, including the latest AI tools to translate data into valuable insights that allow for constant service development in line with people's evolving needs and aspirations – including customers as well as riders and other partners. Furthermore, these insights point to areas of development within the company's human resources, which consequently enabled the learning and talent development department to innovate new approaches to upskilling employees and future professional talents. Equally integral to talabat's success is its rigorous cybersecurity strategy, which guarantees the utmost safety for all customers' transactions and personal information as well as stakeholders' data. Nonetheless, Al-Ghanim highlighted the importance of fostering a culture of cyber awareness that engulfs all parties, from service providers to merchants, customers, financial partners, telecom operators,

and the public sector at large – especially in light of the development of most fraud schemes that accompany almost every new digital technology.

The roundtable discussion further highlighted Kuwait's existing achievement on its mission to establishing itself as a regional digital hub, namely represented by its growing digital infrastructure and culture of collaboration, which encourages dissolving silos and growing through strategic partnership – a format that resonates with talabat's journey of business growth and regional expansion.

It is worth noting that talabat's sponsorship of the roundtable series, hosted by KDIPA and organized by The Business Year, is part of a broader set of strategic efforts by the company to strengthen digital capabilities in Kuwait. This includes its continued support for Academy X, the country's largest initiative dedicated to empowering women in technology and entrepreneurship.

Bridging theory & real-world innovation

Warba Bank's Rowad 6.0 inspires GCC innovators

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Warba Bank's "Rowad" program, now in its sixth edition, continues its successful journey in nurturing and developing young talent as it reaches the midpoint of its training workshops. Participants have demonstrated remarkable progress, showcasing exceptional creativity, collaboration and problem-solving skills. This year's edition reaffirms the Bank's commitment to investing in national and Gulf talent and equipping them with the competencies needed to lead the future of key sectors.



Anwar Al-Ghaith, Deputy CEO of Support Services and Treasury

Rowad 6.0 brings together 25 participants, including undergraduate, Master's, and PhD students. This year, applicants came from four GCC countries: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait, and study at prestigious global universities such as Oxford, Manchester, Durham, University College London and others. Their fields of study include data science, artificial intelligence, fintech, cybersecurity, biomedical engineering and more, reflecting the depth and diversity of talent hosted by the program.

From Theory to Real-World Application at the Midpoint of Rowad 6.0

Investing in Young Minds

Commenting on the program's progress, Anwar Bader Al-Ghaith, Deputy CEO of Support Services and Treasury at Warba Bank, said: "We are witnessing a remarkable transformation among the participants, as their early ideas evolve into innovative projects with solid foundations. This stage is more than just a halfway point. It is a defining moment in which we see the early signs of future leaders transitioning from theoretical knowledge to practical application in real market contexts."

Al-Ghaith emphasized that the participants' commitment and passion affirm that investing in young talent is an investment in the future of the Kuwaiti and Gulf economies.

He added: "The program is designed as an immersive experience that goes far beyond traditional training. Through intensive workshops and one-on-one mentorship with industry experts, participants gain critical thinking skills, leadership abilities and teamwork capabilities. Our goal is not simply to prepare future employees, but to empower entrepreneurs and innovators capable of developing sustainable solutions for our communities."

"This vision, enabling young talent to turn today's challenges into tomorrow's opportunities, is a direct embodiment of Warba Bank's philosophy and vision: 'Let's Own Tomorrow.'"

Al-Ghaith concluded: "We eagerly look forward to the program's final phase, where participants will refine and present their projects. We are confident that the solutions they develop will leave a clear mark on the banking sector and beyond, strengthening Kuwait's position as a hub for innovation and emerging talent."

As the program enters its second phase, participants are now developing prototypes and converting theoretical concepts into practical solutions. The current phase includes weekly virtual workshops, intensive mentorship sessions with Warba Bank leaders and industry experts and continuous team collaboration to prepare for the final showcase in December 2025.

Voices from the Inside: Testimonies from the Participants

Anas Al-Haddad, PhD candidate in Engineering and Innovation Management at the University of Manchester, said: "Rowad 6.0 goes far beyond traditional training. It is a unique platform that brings together minds from various disciplines to create real solutions. What sets Rowad apart is its ability to bridge advanced academic research with actual market needs, giving us an opportunity to apply our knowledge in a practical, innovative context."

Aya Al-Owaish, Business Administration student at Cardiff University, added: "Through Rowad 6.0, we didn't just learn management theories, we applied them in a competitive yet supportive environment. Working with a diverse team sharpened my communication, leadership, problem-solving and creative thinking skills."

Khaled Al-Muzayad, Computer Science student at Queen Mary University of London, said: "As a computer science student, I always look for challenges that push me to apply what I've learned. Rowad 6.0

Al-Ghaith: A defining moment where we see the early signs of future leaders transitioning from theoretical knowledge to real-world application.

offered that through real-world projects that require advanced technical and creative thinking. The collaborative atmosphere encourages idea exchange and continuous development, something essential in the fast-moving tech world."

From an Internal Initiative to a Regional Talent Platform

Over the past six years, the Rowad program has evolved from an internal innovation initiative for Warba Bank employees into a prominent regional platform for identifying and developing young talent. Its growth trajectory began with students from Kuwaiti universities, expanded to include Kuwaiti students in the UK and now, its sixth edition, welcomes students from across the GCC studying in Europe.

In just five years, the program has graduated nearly 100 young leaders, who transformed their ideas into more than 25 practical projects in areas such as fintech, AI and digital banking solutions, directly contributing to enhancing customer experience and advancing the banking sector.

A Strategic Partnership with DIFC Innovation Hub: A Bridge to Global Innovation

A key pillar of Rowad's success is its strategic partnership with the DIFC Innovation Hub, which combines Warba Bank's expertise in Islamic finance with DIFC's advanced innovation ecosystem. Through this collaboration, participants gain access to cutting-edge tools, international fintech expertise and immersion in a global innovation community.

This ecosystem connects them with startups, major financial institutions and technology experts, offering a rare opportunity to broaden their professional networks and enrich their practical experience.

A Practical Reflection of the Vision: "Let's Own Tomorrow"

Rowad is a living embodiment of Warba Bank's vision, "Let's Own Tomorrow", a philosophy centered on building a sustainable future through investing in young talent. The program does more than train participants; it creates future leaders capable of driving digital transformation and economic growth in the region.

This investment in human capital reflects Warba Bank's belief that education and innovation are the cornerstones of sustainable development and highlights the Bank's role as a responsible financial institution committed to empowering the next generation.

Warba Bank continues to make remarkable progress in a short period, securing a leading position in Islamic digital banking. With one of the highest shareholder bases among local banks, Warba remains close to all segments of society, reaffirming its position as a trusted financial partner that combines innovation with social responsibility, aligned with its vision: "Let's Own Tomorrow."

Overview of Rowad 6.0 Participants

- Total participants: 25 (17 males, 8 females)
- Nationalities: Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia
- Academic levels: 3 PhD, 6 Master's, 16 Bachelor's
- Top universities: Oxford, Manchester, Durham, Liverpool, UCL, Newcastle
- Key fields of study: Data Science, Cybersecurity, Fintech, Innovation Engineering & Management, Business Administration, Law, Biomedical Engineering
- Number of competing teams: 6

Committing to customer security

ABK promotes Diraya campaign on 360 FM

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: As part of its ongoing initiatives to support the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Banking Association's banking awareness campaign, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) promoted the 'Let's Be Aware' Campaign on 360 FM discussing the campaign's key objectives, raising awareness on banking fraud, and ways to ensure comprehensive customer protection.

On this occasion, Ali Bu Hamad, Head of Complaints and Customer Protection at ABK, outlined the campaign's key goals and highlighted the most important methods for protecting customers and safeguarding their information.

The interview emphasized the importance of never sharing personal information with any third party, and avoiding interaction with fraudulent advertisements requesting card numbers or PINs. It also underscored the need to check the accuracy of information displayed in OTP messages before entering the code when conducting electronic transactions.

Listeners were encouraged to contact the Bank immediately if they suspect any unusual or unauthorized activity, enabling ABK to promptly suspend the affected cards. He advised that customers can reach the Bank through several channels, including the Call Center, IVR service, the mobile app, or by visiting any ABK branch across Kuwait.

The discussion further highlighted ABK's adherence to the highest security standards in safeguarding all customer accounts, while advising customers, especially when traveling abroad, to ensure they use secure ATMs located inside bank branches or public areas and to keep your bank cards safely with you.

ABK continuously delivers rich and informative content related to the "Let's Be Aware" campaign across its social media platforms, branch screens, website, and mobile application, reaffirming its role as a leading and responsible banking institution committed to supporting financial awareness in the local market.

The radio interview comes as part of a series of initiatives and activities ABK participates in throughout the year to support the "Let's Be Aware" campaign, which helps familiarize customers with their rights and responsibilities when dealing with banks, the different types of cards and accounts, digital services, offerings for people with special needs, and licensed savings and investment channels approved by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Banking Association.

Part of the interview.

'AI benefits unevenly'

UNDP warns AI could widen global inequality

BANGKOK, Dec 2, (AP): Behind the hoopla over the promise of artificial intelligence lay difficult realities, including how such technology might affect people already disadvantaged in a data-driven world.

A new report by the United Nations Development Program notes most of the gains from AI are likely to be reaped by wealthy nations unless steps are taken to use its power to help close gaps in access to basic needs, as well as such advanced know-how.

The report released Tuesday likens the situation to the "Great Divergence" of the industrial revolution, when many Western countries saw rapid modernization while others fell behind.

Questions over how companies and other institutions will use AI are a near universal concern given its potential to change or replace some jobs done by people with computers and robots.

But while much of the attention devoted to AI focuses on productivity, competitiveness and growth, the more important question is what it will mean for human lives, the authors note.

"We tend to overemphasize the role of technology," said Michael Muthukrishna of the London School of Economics, the report's main author, told reporters. "We need to ensure it's not technology first, but it's people first," he said, speaking by video at the report's launch in Bangkok.

The risk of exclusion is an issue for communities where most people are still struggling to access skills, electric power and internet connectivity, for older people, for people displaced by war, civil conflict and climate disasters. At the same time, such people may be "invisible" in data that will not take them into account, the report said.

"As a general-purpose technology, AI can lift productivity, spark new industries, and help latecomers catch up," the report says.

Better advice on farming, analysis of X-rays within seconds and faster medical diagnoses, more effective weather forecasts and damage assessments hold promise for rural communities and areas prone to natural disasters.

Poverty

"AI systems that analyze poverty, health, and disaster risks enable faster, fairer, and more transparent decisions, turning data into continuous learning and public value," it says.

Still, even in wealthy nations like the United States, the potential for data centers to devour too large a share of electricity and water has raised concerns. Ramping up power generation to meet higher demand may hinder progress in limiting the emissions of carbon from burning fossil fuels that contribute to global warming, while also causing health hazards.

The technology raises ethical, privacy and cybersecurity concerns: researchers have found hackers using AI to automate portions of cyberattacks. There also is the problem of deepfakes that can misinform or facilitate criminal activity.

Asian nations including China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore are well placed to take advantage of AI tools, the report notes, while places like Afghanistan, the Maldives and Myanmar lack skills, reliable power and other resources needed to tap into the computing potential of AI. Inequalities between regions within countries mean some places even in advanced economies are prone to be left behind.

About a quarter of the Asia-Pacific region lacks online access, the report says.

If such gaps are not closed, many millions may be excluded from the kinds of devices, digital payment systems, digital IDs and education and skills that are required to participate fully in the global economy, falling further behind, said Philip Schellekens, the UNDP's chief economist for the Asia Pacific.

Other risks include misinformation and disinformation, surveillance that violates rights to privacy and systems that can act as "black boxes," reinforcing biases against minorities or other groups. So transparency and effective regulations are crucial guardrails for ensuring AI is used in fair and accountable ways, he said.

"We believe we need more balance, less hysteria and hype," Schellekens said.

AI is becoming essential for modern life, like electricity, roads, and now the internet, so governments need to invest more in digital infrastructure, education and training, fair competition and social protections, the report says.

"The goal," it says, "is to democratize access to AI so that every country and community can benefit while protecting those most at risk from disruption."



شركة الاستثمارات الوطنية
National Investments Company

NIC Appoints Mohammed AlKharafi as Senior Executive Officer for DIFC Office

The National Investments Company (NIC) has announced the appointment of Mohammed Adel AlKharafi as Senior Executive Officer (SEO) of its Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) office. This appointment marks a key milestone in NIC's five-year strategy to build a regional distribution network that provides seamless access to global investment opportunities. AlKharafi will lead NIC's regional operations from Dubai, with a dual mandate: establishing the DIFC office as a booking center and serving as the launchpad for NIC's fixed income business. His leadership is expected to strengthen NIC's regional presence and deliver innovative investment solutions tailored to client needs.

Sulaiman Abdulaziz AlDerbas, Managing Director of Strategy at NIC, commented: "Appointing Mohammed AlKharafi reflects NIC's commitment to hiring exceptional talent to drive our strategic vision. His expertise will be instrumental in expanding our regional footprint and delivering world-class investment offerings."

AlKharafi brings over 18 years of experience in asset and investment management, including senior roles at the Kuwait Investment Authority, where he led fixed income strategies and built high-performing teams. He holds an MBA from Bayes Business School in London and is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) charterholder.

Mohammed Adel AlKharafi stated: "I am honored to lead NIC's DIFC office and contribute to its strategic growth. Our goal is to create an investment platform that combines global market access with tailored strategies, enabling clients to optimize opportunities while managing risk effectively."



Mohammed Adel AlKharafi

This appointment underscores NIC's commitment to attracting top-tier talent and advancing its regional expansion strategy, positioning the company as a leading provider of innovative financial solutions in the region.

Through 11 smart branches spread across Kuwait

KFH offers banking services powered by modern technology

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: In line with its commitment to meeting customer needs and keeping pace with the latest technologies, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) offers through its smart branches leading banking services that are convenient, secure, and seamless, ensuring the highest standards of excellence.

These efforts affirm KFH's leadership in digital transformation and innovation, enabling the Bank to offer digital financial and banking solutions that add value to customer experience.

KFH is keen to strengthen the presence of its smart branches, which are currently 11 spreading across Kuwait. Customers can find these branches in The Avenues and the co-op societies of Ishbiliya, Jabriya, Mangaf, Sabah Al-Ahmad, Al-Salam, and Abu Fatira. The branches are also located in Shuwaikh KFH Auto Showroom, Al-Khiran Mall branch, as well as Abdullah Al-Salem and Airport branches.

Thanks to their success and ease of access to various banking transactions, KFH aims to increase the number of its smart branches to meet the needs of customers in most areas of Kuwait.

Additionally, KFH continues to strengthen its service delivery channels through smart branches, KFHOnline application, social media platforms, as well as through robotic and AI technologies, among many other innovative alternatives to traditional banking channels.

Through its network of electronic branches across Kuwait, customers are able to access a wide range of interactive banking services such as Murabaha transactions, requesting credit and prepaid cards, updating personal data and mobile number, activating cards, instant cheque book printing, instant card issuance, receiving 10gram gold bullions, opening accounts, buying and selling gold, and cardless cash withdrawals via mobile using a QR code, civil ID, or mobile number, among other fast and secure financing and banking transactions.

Affirming its leadership in digital innovation, KFH comprehensively updated its ATMs and KFHOnline mobile app, featuring a sleek modern design and smart services. Currently, KFHOnline provides over 200 banking services.

The e-banking transactions also include instant virtual prepaid card issuance, checking the PINs of the credit and debit cards, opening an additional bank account online without having to visit the branch, temporarily suspending cards, opening deposits, adding beneficiaries, balance inquiry, requesting financing, checking the financing obligations and the number of installments, reviewing investment plans, receiving account balances and deposits summary, in addition to managing children's accounts through Baiti account, in addition to many other online e-services.

It is worth noting that the fully automated smart branches which operate 24/7 reflect the significant progress in the retail banking industry amid the growing users' reliance on technology for quick and highly efficient banking services.



KFH go

World economy shows resilience amid Trump's trade wars: OECD

Global growth forecast to 3.2%

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): The world economy has proven surprisingly durable in the face of President Donald Trump's trade wars, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said Tuesday, upgrading its outlook for global and U.S. economic growth this year.

The 38-country OECD now forecasts that the world economy will grow 3.2% this year, down a tick from 3.3% in 2024 but an improvement on the 2.9% it had predicted for 2025 back in June. The organization, which does economic research and promotes international trade and prosperity, expects global growth to slow to 2.9% next year.

The OECD also raised its forecast for U.S. growth this year - to 2%, up from the 1.6% it had forecast in June. Still, even with the upgrade, the American economy - the world's largest -- would have grown considerably more slowly than it did in 2024 (2.8%).

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has overhauled U.S. trade policy, imposing taxes on imports to build a protectionist wall around the previously open American economy.

The trade barriers were widely expected to slow growth and push up costs. But his tariffs have come in lower than the ones he threatened to impose in the spring. Many companies beat the levies by importing foreign goods into the United States before they took effect. And the U.S. and world economies are getting a boost from massive investments in artificial intelligence.

"The global economy has been resilient this year, despite concerns about a sharper slowdown in the wake of higher trade barriers and significant policy uncertainty," OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann wrote in a commentary accompanying the forecasts. Still, he added: "We expect higher tariffs to gradually feed through to higher prices, reducing growth in household consumption and business investment."

The OECD expects China, the world's No. 2 economy, to grow 5% this year, same as in 2024. It sees the 20 economies that share the euro currency collectively expanding 1.3% in 2025, lackluster but up from 0.8% in 2024.

India, which has supplanted China as the world's fastest-growing major economy, is expected to generate 6.7% growth this year, up from 6.5% in 2024.

Bitcoin briefly dips below \$85,000 in crypto rout

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): Bitcoin and companies tied to cryptocurrencies extended a nearly two-month swoon Monday, tracking with a broader market sell-off in technology companies that many see as overvalued.

Bitcoin slid 5.6% after being down nearly 12% earlier in the day, settling in just above \$86,000. Early Tuesday, it was trading around \$86,650.

The most-traded cryptocurrency is down about 33% since hitting a record \$126,210.50 on Oct. 6, according to crypto trading platform Coinbase. Bitcoin had soared since April in line with the stock market and driven partly by a more crypto-friendly tone in Washington.

Companies that enable investors to buy and sell cryptocurrencies, as well as the growing number of companies who have made investing in bitcoin their main business focus, were hammered in Monday's sell-off.

Coinbase Global fell 4.8% and online trading platform Robinhood Markets lost 4.1%. Bitcoin mining company Riot Platforms dropped 4%.

Strategy, the biggest of the so-called crypto treasury companies that raises money just to buy bitcoin, fell 3.3%. The company has reported holding 649,870 bitcoin. As of 4 p.m. EST Monday they were worth about \$55.7 billion. Earlier, Strategy said it expects bitcoin to end the year between \$85,000 and \$110,000, down from an Oct. 30 forecast of \$150,000. American Bitcoin, in which President Donald Trump's sons Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr. hold a stake, fell 15.6% and is now down nearly 47% since Sept. 30.

Other Trump-related crypto ventures have declined as well. The market value for the World Liberty Financial token, or \$WLFI, has fallen to about \$4.14 billion from above \$6 billion in mid-September, according to coinnmarketcap.com And the price of a meme coin named for President Donald Trump, \$TRUMP, is \$5.70, a fraction of the \$45 asking price just before his inauguration in January.

One popular way of investing in bitcoin is through spot bitcoin ETFs, or exchange-traded funds, which allow investors to have a stake in bitcoin without directly owning the cryptocurrency. According to data from Morningstar Direct, investors pulled \$3.6 billion out of spot bitcoin ETFs in November, the largest monthly outflow since the ETFs began trading in January 2024.

Bitcoin futures are down nearly 24% in the past month. At the same time, gold futures are up almost 7%. Analysts point to a number of factors that have led to the sell-off in bitcoin and other crypto investments, including a broad risk-off sentiment that has gripped markets this fall, sending investors toward safer havens such as bonds and gold.

In a research note to clients last week, Deutsche Bank analysts also attributed the recent declines in crypto to institutional selling, other long-term holders collecting profits and a more hawkish Federal Reserve. Stalled crypto regulation has also contributed to the uncertainty, Deutsche Bank said.

"While volatility remains inherent, these conditions indicate Bitcoin's portfolio integration is being tested, and raises questions of whether this is a temporary correction or a more prolonged adjustment," the analysts wrote.

On the regulatory front, the crypto industry received a boost in July when Trump signed into law regulations that set initial guardrails and consumer protections for stablecoins, which are tied to assets like the U.S. dollar to reduce price volatility compared with other forms of cryptocurrency. But a bill that creates a new market structure for cryptocurrency remains stalled in the Senate. The bill has been a top priority for the crypto industry since it spent heavily to elect Trump and install other allies in Washington.

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!

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Zain launches three inclusion initiatives to accelerate WE ABLE 2030 vision

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has launched three strategic disability inclusion initiatives to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd. The initiatives advance the company's WE ABLE 2030 vision, powered by its '4WARD - Progress with Purpose' strategy, embedding disability inclusion as a core business and talent differentiator across its footprint.

Together, these three initiatives translate WE ABLE 2030 from vision into action across Zain's entire ecosystem, from how the company buys, hires, and develops, to how it advocates and shows up in the community. They include a new strategic partnership with Business Disability Forum to embed accessibility into procurement; the opening of applications for a new GROW program batch tailored for graduates with disabilities; and the introduction of personalized Individual Development Plans for employees with disabilities.

Launched earlier this year, WE ABLE 2030 is Zain's long-term vision to ensure people with disabilities are safeguarded and empowered as co-creators of the technologies and experiences shaping the future. It focuses on inclusive hiring and retention practices, accessible products and services, global recognition for storytelling and advocacy, and clear pathways to career progression and leadership for persons with disabilities.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, commented: "Accelerating our WE ABLE 2030 vision through these three initiatives are part of a deliberate effort to redesign how we hire, develop, procure, and advocate, so that accessibility and disability inclusion are built into every decision we make. We are moving from commitments to systemic shifts to operationalize our vision across the entire value chain."

Al-Kharafi added: "By partnering with global leaders, investing in future graduates with disabilities, and personalizing development paths for our own people, we are signalling the kind of region we want to help shape. WE ABLE 2030 is about inside-out transformation. It brings our purpose of 'Better Lives, Lasting Connections.' to life by ensuring persons with disabilities are not only included but are leading and influencing the next chapter of digital progress."

More on the three strategic initiatives to accelerate WE ABLE 2030

1. Strategic partnership with Business Disability Forum (BDF): Zain has become the first telecom operator in the MENA region to partner with BDF, a leading international membership organization. This strategic collaboration advances the Accessible Products and Services pillar, as Zain Group's procurement team are integrating accessibility criteria into sup-



Zain x BDF 2025

plier evaluation processes. The partnership also strengthens the Global Recognition pillar, by opening access to BDF's global network of more than 600 organizations.

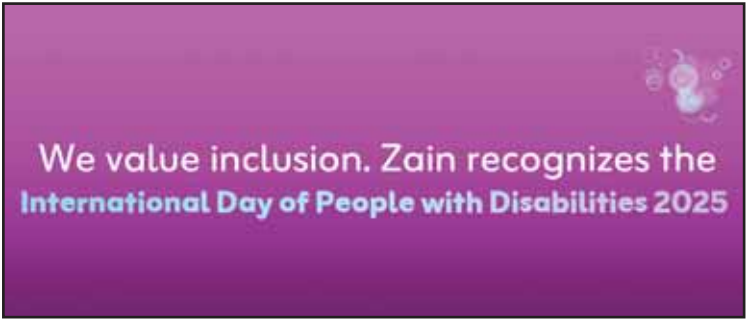
2. Opening applications(zain.com/en/grow) for a new GROW program batch for graduates with disabilities: As part of the Inclusive Hiring and Retention Practices pillar, Zain is inviting graduates with disabilities to apply for a three-month specialized training and internship track that will be rolled out in 2026 across four Zain operations. The program, designed specifically for graduates with disabilities, will provide equitable access to high-quality learning and a structured internship opportunity at Zain premises.

3. Personalized Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for employees with disabilities: To ensure employees have tailored development plans and reinforce clear pathways to career progression and leadership. Each IDP is built from a comprehensive 34-question internal survey, capturing individual aspirations and specific support needs.

From commitments to systems change

These three initiatives deepen the implementation of the WE ABLE 2030 vision and complement Zain's broader efforts, including its long-standing commitments to accessible infrastructure, inclusive training, and assistive technologies.

The impact of the WE ABLE vision is also reflected in significant achievements over the past year, including the global publication of two case studies by PurpleSpace and Be My Eyes, highlighting Zain and WE ABLE's role in driving meaningful change in the region. Throughout the



Bader Al-Kharafi:

- "Redesigning how we hire, develop, procure, and advocate, so that accessibility and disability inclusion are built into every decision we make"
- First telecom in MENA to partner with Business Disability Forum
- Opening applications for a new GROW batch and personalised individual development plans for employees with disabilities to ensure career progression and growth.

year, more than 20 disability etiquette sessions were delivered to hundreds of employees by Zain personnel with disabilities across the group. Furthermore, Zain employees volunteering on the Be My Eyes platform completed over 1500 successful calls during 2025.

By aligning its disability inclusion agenda with its '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' strategy, Zain is working to set a new regional benchmark where accessibility is not an afterthought, but a catalyst for innovation, value creation, and more inclusive growth across the MENA region. Graduates with disabilities are invited to apply for GROW: zain.com/en/grow

IWG organizes 'Around the World in the Garden'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The International Women's Group (IWG), together with distinguished women ambassadors and diplomatic representatives from countries whose plants are featured in the garden, had the honor of being the very first visitors welcomed this year into the private botanical sanctuary of Sheikhha Sherifa Jaber A. Al-Sabah.

Held on 29 November 2025, the VIP tour offered guests a remarkable journey titled "Around the World in the Garden," an immersive experience that brought together plant species from across five continents. Many of which have successfully grown and thrived in Kuwait for the first time.

As the garden opens to visitors only once a year, Sheikhha Sherifa's personal invitation was a rare and deeply appreciated honor for IWG members and the attending diplomatic community.

The President of the International Women's Group, Spouse of Georgian Ambassador, Mrs. Marika Kochlamazashvili expressed heartfelt appreciation to Sheikhha Sherifa Jaber A. Al-Sabah, for granting the group the privilege of visiting this extraordinary sanctuary, a true paradise flourishing with precious plants from around the world.

She emphasized that Sheikhha Sherifa's passion and dedication not only bring the wonders of nature closer to the community, but also inspire a deeper awareness and admiration for the immense beauty of our planet Earth.

Julaia Bay is a private garden established in 2010, now recognized as one of Kuwait's most diverse and pioneering botanical environments. Many exotic plants showcased there have bloomed for the first time not only in Kuwait but in the entire Gulf region. Each passage revealed rare species, botanical curiosities, and stories of seeds that crossed oceans before finding new life in Kuwait's soil.

Sheikhha Sherifa personally guided the tour, generously sharing the history and scientific background behind each tree and plant. Guests learned about the environmental principles essential to sustaining the garden, such as the importance of water features, soil balance, and micro climates carefully cultivated within the space.

The day-long program blended nature, culture, and hospitality. Visitors enjoyed: Live music throughout the pathways, a specialty ice-cream corner offering unique, garden-inspired flavors, a floral bouquet station where guests could create personalized arrangements, a presentation from one of Kuwait's well-known organic farmers, showcasing fresh local produce.

Each experience was thoughtfully curated to enrich the atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of nature.

This garden is a clear example that greening the environment and caring for nature are among the most important responsibilities, ensuring a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations.



'Around the World in the Garden' immerses guests in Global Flora.

Young talents with 378 creative dream car entries

ALSAYER Group honors 18th Toyota Dream Car Art winners

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: ALSAYER Group is proud to award and announce the conclusion of the 18th Toyota Dream Car Contest (TD-CAC). Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. (MNSS) and Group Corporate Excellence Department hosted an award ceremony at ALSAYER Multi-Purpose Hall in Ardiya in front of an audience consisting of ALSAYER management, winners, teachers, parents, and community members.

This year's drawing competition promoted the Go Digital initiative by incorporating QR Codes, allowing participants to conveniently download the TDCAC Application Forms, Terms & Conditions, and the best drawing Guidelines. Participants were encouraged to submit their artwork either in person at Toyota Showrooms or electronically to the CE-CSR email. This process supported children between the ages of 4 to 15 to submit around 378 wonderful drawings that showcased their dreams filled with imagination and creativity.

Their creative designs tackle social and emotional issues that are intertwined for the benefit of humans, animals, and the Earth. They generate unique and amazing scientific ideas to create sustainable vehicles that confront challenges such as zero carbon emissions, eliminate plastic pollution, and introduce innovation in space travel to connect with others who share a passion for imagination! Through these works, the children's art showcases the possibilities of combining their artistic talents with practical solutions that could realistically be achieved in the future to enhance our communities and the planet.

ALSAYER Group management showed their appreciation to the winners by distributing rewards. They also thanked the teachers and parents for cultivating such an incredible pool of talent and instilling creativity as a core attribute in their minds. The ceremony was attended by Mr. Martin Aherne Senior Business Director Toyota Sales,



Photo during the contest.

Eng. Nehad Mohammad AlHaj Ali Group Manager of the Corporate Excellence Department and Shibu Mohamed CSR Manager from ALSAYER Group. Attendees from the jury council included Visual Artist Hanoof Al Marjan, Writer and Artist Mahmoud Shaker, and Art Educator, Amal Haider.

It's amazing to share that this year 9-year-old Kamalika Manikandan achieved the "Best Finalist Award" at the World Art Contest in Japan. The 18th (2025) Toyota Dream Car Art Contest (DCAC) saw about 660,000 entries from 90 different countries and regions, and they picked 26 award winners in total, and one of the top finalist is from Kuwait. Kamalika's Toyota Firewall Car is all about safeguarding cyber lives and online communities from scams and digital threats. This car helps shield users from the vicious side of modern tech and works to keep their digital lives running smoothly.

The Toyota Dream Car Art Contest invites children worldwide to imagine and illustrate the future of mobility through creative artwork, inspiring nearly 9.4 million young

18th Kuwait Toyota DCAC National Winners			
National Winners	Category	Age	Title of Artwork
1 Jazlyn Ponjoyson	A	4.6 years	My Honeybee Car
2 Mithran Thillai Govindaraj	A	5 years	Air Car
3 Janna Mostafa Ahmed	A	6 years	Universe Protection Car

National Winners	Category	Age	Title of Artwork
1 Rahmah Mohamed Elmorsi	B	11 years	The Positive Car
2 Kamalika Manikandan	B	9 years	Toyota Firewall
3 Yaseen Sameh Mohamed	B	11 years	My Giant Industrial Car

National Winners	Category	Age	Title of Artwork
1 Sachin Kolanchi	C	12 years	Toyota the Life Changer
2 Aarya Rajeev	C	12 years	From Car to Incuba - Nannybot
3 Krithick Sridhar	C	12 years	AI - Enabled Smart Farming

participants from 144 countries since 2004. By nurturing limitless imagination, the contest helps shape the next generation of inventors, thinkers, and dreamers committed to building a better world. In Kuwait, ALSAYER actively promotes the

contest to empower young talents with new skills, encourage innovation, and foster artistic expression, supporting key Sustainable Development Goals as part of our Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility initiatives.

Kuwait Adventist free health awareness campaign

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The Health Department of the Adventists in Kuwait organized a free community health awareness campaign on 29 November 2025, with the aim of promoting overall well-being and encouraging healthier lifestyle habits through the NEWSTART model.

Held from 3 PM to 6 PM, the initiative offered a variety of activities including fitness sessions, health screenings, nutrition education, and mental wellness workshops, all designed to support both physical and mental health.

Doctors and nurses from different branches of the ministry joined forces to promote healthy living among members and the wider community. Their objectives included reducing stress, improving mental wellness, encouraging regular physical activity, identifying potential health risks through preven-



Photo during the event.

tive screenings, and boosting productivity and morale.

The program featured fitness activities, nutrition and diet education, physical examinations, health age assessments, cardiovascular fitness tests, healthy cooking demonstrations, and an informative health education talk.

The Health and Wellness Campaign was highly successful and well attended, drawing more than 100 participants. Attendees expressed deep gratitude to the health team for their generosity and service.

The event highlighted the positive impact of investing in holistic wellness—showing clear benefits in stress reduction, productivity, and health awareness. Continued dedication to such initiatives will contribute to improved well-being and longevity for all.

Film offers satisfying finale amid a slow ride

‘Wake Up Dead Man’ mixes religion, mystery in ‘Knives Out’ film

LOS ANGELES, Dec 2, (AP): After two installments of his “Knives Out” franchise skewered old and new money, director and writer Rian Johnson targets religion in his third, a gloomy and clunky outing that may test fans’ faith in the filmmaker.

“Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery” gets a new starry cast to orbit Daniel Craig’s foppish detective Benoit Blanc, mixes operatic overacting with sly humor and bites off more than it can digest attempting cultural satire. The pacing is off, too. You won’t exactly need to be nudged awake but it gets pretty soggy there for a while in the middle.

Blanc takes his sweet time to appear, which means that the first half of the movie is carried by the young Catholic priest Jud Duplenticy - a name Johnson apparently thinks is witty - who is sent to a troubled New York parish called Our Lady of Perpetual Fortitude run by a Monsignor who is “a few beads shy of a rosary.”

The young priest - played by a really winning and soulful Josh O’Connor - is a former boxer with a troubled past who in his new faith has found guidance and meaning. He preaches the gospel of love and calls himself “young, dumb and full of Christ.”

What he finds is that the parish is run by a thunder-and-lightning Monsignor who preaches the gospel of fear. Played deliciously by Josh Brolin, Monsignor Jefferson Wicks uses shame and guilt to keep his tiny flock in line against a permissive world. “Anger lets us fight back,” he announces. “I hold the line.” Johnson is making a leaden dig at those in power who inflame divisions for their own power.

When Wicks is found dead, Blanc finally shows up. The manner of the death is a classic detective book trope: The so-called locked-room mystery. Blanc calls this crime’s “Holy Grail.”

There are many suspects, of course: His devoted secretary (Glenn Close), an alcoholic doctor (Jeremy Renner), the groundskeeper (Thomas Haden Church), a sci-fi novelist in decline (Andrew Scott), a cellist with nerve pain (Cailee Spaeny),



This image released by Netflix shows Josh O’Connor, (left), and Daniel Craig in a scene from ‘Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery.’ (AP)

and a MAGA-like political hack (Daryl McCormack), and the woman who raised him, a resentful lawyer (Kerry Washington). Johnson tries hard to give each depth, despite their sheer number, with telling details, like the way they tap a spoon on a tea cup.

Chief among the suspects is our bare-knuckle priest, whose relationship with the older Man of God has gone from bad to worse. “You’re poisoning the church,” he tells the Monsignor and vows to “cut you out like a cancer.” No wonder the town’s police chief (Mila Kunis) quickly zeros in on the younger man.

There’s no way you can solve this one so just relax and let it stutter-stop several times to its overcooked end. Along the way, Johnson makes jokes about Oprah, “The Phantom of the Opera” and even Netflix, the hand that feeds him, while dead bodies go headfirst down the stairs thunk-thunk-thunk, an \$80 million diamond appears and suspects scream, as storms swirl, that “Vengeance is mine!”

Perhaps the movie’s best bits are when the young priest and detective team up to solve the crime. Blanc reveals himself to be a “proud heretic” who only “kneels at the altar of the practical” and believes religion is just storytelling, a means of control. The younger priest believes the opposite and is torn between sleuthing and his ministry, his open heart propelling the movie while Craig’s Foghorn Leghorn, Southern-fried dandyism grows increasingly tiresome. (Although fans do get to hear him utter “Scooby Dooby Doo.”)

Johnson has so far made a few glancing blows against cults of personality and the dynamics of in-groups, but nothing terribly crushing. He then comes to more tricky waters when the Monsignor seemingly emerges alive from three days in a crypt, a riff from a foundational tenet of Christianity: the resurrection itself. It’s the ultimate in glib.

A satisfying conclusion awaits but, truth be told, it has been a bit of a slog, with soft digressions into social critiques and the meaning of faith grafted onto a setup that, by the third movie in the franchise, shows its seams instantly. Wake up, indeed.

“Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery,” a Netflix release in theaters now that hits the streamer Dec. 12, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for violent content, bloody images, strong language, some crude sexual material and smoking. Running time: 140 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Awards

Jafar Panahi sweeps multiple honors

‘One Battle After Another’ tops Gotham Awards

NEW YORK, Dec 2, (AP): Paul Thomas Anderson’s “One Battle After Another” was crowned best feature film and the dissident Iranian director Jafar Panahi won three awards Monday at the 35th annual Gotham Awards, a starry kickoff to the film industry’s awards season.

The Gothams, presented by the Gotham Film & Media Institute, aren’t considered an Oscar bellwether. But the black-tie affair, held at Cipriani Wall Street in downtown Manhattan, is known for celebrating smaller films while also dishing out generous helpings of tribute awards to Oscar hopefuls.

That made “One Battle After Another,” a studio release that cost at least \$130 million to make, unlike any previous winner at the Gothams. Past winners include indies like “Past Lives,” “Everything Everywhere All at Once” and the surprise 2024 winner, “A Different Man.”

“I remember when the Gotham Awards were for low-budget movies,” joked Adam Sandler, presenting a tribute to Noah Baumbach. “For ‘The Squid and the Whale,’ they paid Jeff Daniels in potato skins.”

Protest

But in 2023, the Gotham Awards dispensed with their \$35 million budget cap for films. And this year, “One Battle After Another,” a father-daughter tale of multigenerational protest, is widely seen as the best-picture front-runner and the movie to beat at March’s Academy Awards.

“I didn’t expect this, actually,” said Anderson, accepting the award. “I started to think I didn’t know what was going on.”

“Thank you very much, everybody,” added Anderson. “Let’s go home or let’s go to a bar somewhere or something.”

While the Gothams help the industry get into the swing of awards season, they’re quirkier than bigger-name ceremonies. Small juries select nominees and winners, which often leads to unexpected results. Both of the acting winners on Monday weren’t even in attendance.

Best lead performance went to Sopé Dirisú for the British-Nigerian drama “My Father’s Shadow.” His award was accepted by the film’s director, Akinola Davies Jr., who also won for breakthrough director. Other nominees in the category included Jessie Buckley (“Hamnet”), Jennifer Lawrence (“Die My Love”) and Ethan Hawke (“Blue Moon”).

Best supporting performance went to Wunmi Mosaku of “Sinners,” a victory that came over nominees such as Teyana Taylor (“One Battle After Another”), Stellan Skarsgård



Tessa Thompson poses with the film tribute award at the Gotham Film Awards. (AP)



Julia Roberts, (left), and Luca Guadagnino pose with the film tribute award at the Gotham Film Awards. (AP)



Jacob Elordi, (left), Guillermo del Toro, Oscar Isaac and J.J. Abrams pose with the vanguard tribute award. (AP)



Jafar Panahi poses with the awards for best international feature, best original screenplay and best director at the Gotham Film Awards. (AP)



(“Sentimental Value”) and Jacob Elordi (“Frankenstein”). “Sinners” director Ryan Coogler accepted her award.

Panahi won three awards for his revenge drama “It Was Just an Accident”: best director, best original screenplay and best international film. Earlier Monday, Panahi’s attorney, Mostafa Nili, said the director had been sentenced to one year in prison and a two-year travel ban.

Panahi was jailed for months shortly before making “It Was

Just an Accident” and only released after going on a hunger strike. In 2010, he was barred from filmmaking or traveling out of Iran. Yet he continued to make films without the government’s permission. Since 2023, and until Monday’s ruling, Panahi had been permitted to leave Iran. In May, his film won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

“I would like to dedicate the honor of this award to independent filmmakers in Iran and around the world,” said Panahi accepting the



screenplay award. “Filmmakers who keep the camera rolling in silence without support and, at times, risking everything they have, only with their faith in truth and humanity.”

Other winners Monday included Harry Lighton (“Pillion”) for adapted screenplay; Abou Sangaré (“Souleymane’s Story”) for breakthrough performer; and Julia Loktev’s “My Undesirable Friends: Part 1 - Last Air in Moscow” for best documentary.

Among the tribute honor-



Zoey Deutch attends the Gotham Film Awards at Cipriani Wall Street on Monday, Dec. 1 in New York. (AP)



Miles Caton, (from left), Yao, Li Jun Li, Delroy Lindo, Michael B. Jordan, Ryan Coogler, Jayme Lawson, Omar Benson Miller, Francine Maisler and Lola Kirke pose with the film tribute award. (AP)



From left: Amanda Seyfried, Jennifer Lawrence and Teyana Taylor attend the Gotham Film Awards. (AP)

ees were: Guillermo del Toro’s “Frankenstein,” Scott Cooper’s “Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere”; “Hedda” star Tessa Thompson; “Jay Kelly” director Noah Baumbach; the cast of “Sinners”; Luca Guadagnino and Julia Roberts of “After the Hunt”; and “Song Sung Blue” stars Hugh Jackman and Kate Hudson.

“This is a time for all of us to remember what unites us and what brings us together,” said Jackman. “And that is awards season, everybody.”

Panahi gets 1-yr sentence in Iran

CAIRO, Dec 2, (AP): Iran has sentenced acclaimed director Jafar Panahi to a year in prison in absentia, even as he received new awards for his latest movie.

The Tehran court also imposed a two-year ban on Panahi leaving Iran after convicting him on charges of “propaganda activities against the system,” his lawyer Mostafa Nili said in a post on X. Nili said he would appeal the ruling.

Word of the sentence came as Panahi was in New York City on Monday evening, receiving three awards at the annual Gotham Awards for his movie “It Was Just an Accident,” which also received the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in September. Panahi did not comment on the sentence, and there was no immediate word if he planned to return to Iran.

Panahi is among the most celebrated of contemporary Iranian directors and has continued making movies despite repeatedly being imprisoned, banned from traveling and put under house arrest by Iranian authorities over the past 20 years. He filmed “It Was Just an Accident” clandestinely in Iran following a seven-month stint in prison that only ended in 2023 once he went on a hunger strike.

Variety

BUDAPEST: An exhibition, titled “Timeless Modernity -- The Shanghai Legacy of Hungarian Architects,” opened in Budapest on Monday, highlighting the contributions of Hungarian architects to Shanghai’s urban development in the first half of the 20th century.

Jointly organized by the China Cultural Center in Budapest and the Hungarian-Chinese Friendship Association, the exhibition showcases the architectural achievements of four Hungarian architects, including Laszlo Hudec, Karoly Gonda, Bela Matrai, and Rudolf Somjen. Through photographs, films, archival documents, models, and installations, it illustrates how their modernist designs became integrated into the evolution of Shanghai’s urban landscape.

In his opening speech, Istvan Jakab, deputy speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, said the exhibition is “not a simple showcase, but a milestone in the history of Hungarian-Chinese cultural relations.” He noted that the works on display “represent a true cultural bridge between the two nations.” (Xinhua)

□ □ □

AMMAN: The 2025 China Film Festival kicked off Monday evening in the Jordanian capital Amman, attracting a full-house audience.

Running for four days until Thursday, the festival features four Chinese films: Dead to Rights, The Sinking of Lisbon Maru, I Am What I Am 2, and The Lychee Road.

In his opening speech, Chinese Ambassador to Jordan Guo Wei described cinema as “an art that transcends the boundaries of language and geography,” noting that film cooperation has become a significant cultural bridge between China and Jordan.

The themes of the presented movies “encompass history, culture, and daily life in China, giving the Jordanian audience a deeper perspective on Chinese civilization,” he added.

Speaking to Xinhua on the sidelines of the opening, Mohanad Al-Bakri, managing director of the Royal Film Commission of Jordan, underscored the long-running relationship between the two countries, saying the cooperation in filmmaking is both strategic and culturally rooted. (Xinhua)



Hellenistic limestone dolphin statue found in Vilja.



KUNA photos
Kuwait receives award for its participation in the exhibition, presented to Mohammed bin Redha.



Neolithic flint arrowheads discovered in Al-Sabiayah.



Terracotta incense burner shaped like a cloaked woman's head found in Vilja.

Over 25 Kuwaiti artifacts featured in exhibition

Kuwait showcases its heritage at GCC Archaeology Exhibition in Riyadh

RIYADH, Dec 2, (KUNA): Around 25 Kuwaiti artifacts were featured in the GCC Joint Archaeology Exhibition, currently held at the Saudi National Museum in Riyadh, offering a notable contribution to a showcase that brings together distinctive heritage pieces from all six Gulf states.

Mohammad bin Redha, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for the Antiquities and Museums Sector at Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters, told KUNA

that Kuwait's participation includes stone and pottery tools, inscriptions, artworks, architectural pieces, jewelry, and items from daily life.

The exhibition features interactive programs and digital technologies that recreate historical scenes and offer visitors an immersive educational experience, deepening understanding of the Arabian Peninsula's cultural trajectory.

Mohammad bin Redha praised the strong Gulf participation, describing it as clear evidence of the depth of coopera-

tion among GCC countries in preserving shared heritage.

He also expressed pride in this year's organization, noting that such cultural collaboration enhances the preservation of Gulf identity and supports the development of museum work and knowledge exchange.

He stressed that exhibitions of this kind play a vital role in raising public awareness about the importance of heritage as a foundation for building the future.

The event is organized by the Saudi Heritage Commis-

sion, in cooperation with the National Museum and the Saudi Museums Commission, and in strategic partnership with the GCC Secretariat-General, aiming to strengthen the region's cultural presence locally and internationally.

The exhibition, held every two years and hosted in rotation by GCC states, kicked off on Monday and runs until December 30. The Kuwaiti delegation includes Mohammad bin Redha and archaeology researcher Anfal bin Shaaban.

Fashion



Lily Allen arrives for 'The Fashion Awards 2025' in London. (AP)



Kylie Minogue poses for photographers. (AP)



Zara Martin poses for photographers upon arrival at 'The Fashion Awards 2025' in London, Monday, Dec. 1. (AP)



Helena Christensen poses for photographers.



Lila Moss at 'The Fashion Awards 2025' in London. (AP)

Lorenzo Bertelli to lead Versace's next chapter

Prada buys fashion rival Versace in nearly \$1.4bn deal

MILAN, Dec 2, (AP): The Prada Group announced Tuesday that it has officially purchased Milan fashion rival Versace in a 1.25 billion euro (nearly \$1.4 billion) deal that puts the fashion house known for its sexy silhouettes under the same roof as Prada's "ugly chic" aesthetic and Miu Miu's youth-driven appeal.

The highly anticipated deal is expected to relaunch Versace's fortunes, after middling post-pandemic performance as part of the US luxury group Capri Holdings.

Prada said in a one-line statement that the acquisition had been completed after receiving all regulatory clearances.

Prada heir Lorenzo Bertelli will steer Versace's next phase as executive chairman, in addition to his roles as group marketing director and sustainability chief.

The son of co-creative director Miuccia Prada and longtime Prada Group chairman Patrizio Bertelli has said he doesn't expect to make any swift executive changes at Versace. But Bertelli has said that the company, which places among the top 10 most recognized brands in the world, has long been underperforming in the market.

Prada has underlined that the 47-year-old Versace brand offered "significant untapped growth potential."

Versace has been in the midst of a creative relaunch under a new designer, Dario Vitale, who previewed his first collection during Milan Fashion



A man walks with a Prada shopping bag in front of a Versace shop, at the Montenanapoleone luxury fashion street, in Milan, Italy, Tuesday, Dec. 2. (AP)

Week in September. He had previously been head of design at Miu Miu, but his move to Versace was unrelated to the Prada deal, executives have said.

Capri Holdings, which owns Michael Kors and Jimmy Choo, paid \$2 billion for Versace in 2018, but had been struggling to position Versace's bold profile in the recent era of "quiet luxury."

Versace represented 20% of Capri Holdings 2024 revenue of 5.2 billion euros. An analyst presentation for the Prada deal said that Versace would represent

13% of the Prada Group's pro-forma revenues, with Miu Miu coming in at 22% and Prada at 64%. The Prada Group, which also includes Church's footwear, reported a 17% boost in revenues to 5.4 billion euros last year.

The Prada Group has already begun preparations to incorporate crosstown rival Versace into its Italian manufacturing system, a point of pride for the group.

"Making a bag for one brand or another, the know-how is the same," Bertelli told reporters last week at the group's Scandicci leather goods factory, which already makes bags for the Prada and Miu Miu brands and will soon add Versace.

The Prada Group's has invested 60 million euros in its supply chain this year, including a new leather goods factory near Siena, a new knitwear factory near Perugia as well as increasing production at its factory Church's footwear factory in Britain and expanding another Tuscan factory. That's on top of 200 million euros in investments from 2019-24.

Prada's efforts include an academy that has trained some 570 new artisans over the last 25 years in an in-house training academy operating in the Tuscany, Marche, Veneto and Umbria regions.

Last year, Prada hired 70% of the 120 artisans who trained in the academy. The number of trainees rose by 28% to 152 this year.

Variety

BAGHDAD: Iraq has launched a major reconstruction and heritage revival initiative, dubbed the "Mosul Pulse" project, to revitalize the historic alleys and neighborhoods of the war-battered old city of Mosul, a government official confirmed Monday.

Turhan al-Mufti, advisor to Iraqi Prime Minister Shia' al-Sudani, told the official Iraqi News Agency that the first phase, launched by al-Sudani on Sunday and aimed at reviving Mosul's heritage, will focus on the rehabilitation of the 1,800-meter-long Al-Farouq Street.

The key artery will link numerous areas, connecting vital landmarks like the iconic al-Nuri Mosque, al-Mufti said.

The initiative, which is planned to eventually encompass all of Mosul's areas, will be funded by the Iraqi government alongside contributions from the Iraqi Private Banks League and international organizations, he said. (Xinhua)

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LONDON: Searching for a gift for that special royal watcher in your life?

How about a Christmas stocking made from the drapes of King Charles III's Sandringham estate and handstitched by a sewing circle at Dumfries House in Scotland, where the king's charitable foundation works to preserve traditional skills and crafts?

Deftly tugging their needles through the royal fabric, members of the Dumfries House Sewing Bee recently put the finishing touches on the festive decorations, which will be auctioned off to raise money for the King's Foundation. While the rain splattered against the windows of the 18th century mansion south of Glasgow, the women chatted amiably, hot drinks by their sides.

"It's been absolutely great," said Christine Wilson, 72, a retired finance officer. "It's a great atmosphere in the sewing bee, a great group of friends, and we do a lot for charities as well." (AP)

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PRETORIA: A South African radio presenter appeared in court on Monday accused of recruiting men to fight for Russia in the war in Ukraine.

Nonkululeko Mantula, 39, was arrested alongside four men after a tip off, South African police said. She is accused of recruiting the four men and organizing for them to join the Russian army.

South African police said three of the men were detained while trying to board a flight to Russia via the United Arab Emirates. Police said they believed another person had already traveled to Russia after being recruited by Mantula.

It is illegal in South Africa to fight for another country's army without permission from the government. The five suspects arrested in South Africa were ordered to be held in custody until a bail hearing next week. (AP)



Christmas trees decorate the Cross Hall of the White House during a press preview of the Christmas decorations 'Home is Where the Heart Is,' Monday, Dec. 1, in Washington. (AP)

Melania Trump reveals White House holiday decorations

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): Melania Trump on Monday unveiled the holiday decorations for her family's first Christmas back at the White House and her theme is "Home Is Where the Heart Is."

The decor also nods to next year's 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and founding of the United States of America.

Several dozen volunteer decorators from across the country helped deck the halls of the Executive Mansion with 75 wreaths, 51 Christmas trees, more than 700 feet (213 meters) of garland, more than 2,000 strands of lights, over 25,000 feet (7,620 meters) of ribbon, over 2,800 gold stars, more than 10,000 butterflies and 120 pounds (54 kilograms) of gingerbread.

But a couple of things are different this year because President Donald Trump tore down the East Wing to build a ballroom he's long desired.

The official White House Christmas tree, which is always on display in the Blue Room, is doing double duty by also honoring Gold Star families, those that lost a member during active-duty military service.



Graduates pose for a group photo with their teacher after the performance at Xinjiang Open University for Seniors in Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, June 27, 2025. (Xinhua)

Chinese seniors making their mark in digital world

BEIJING, Dec. 2, (Xinhua): At 65, Yang Su still plays the piano most evenings, just as he has for decades. The only change is that a phone propped beside him quietly streams his music to the internet.

Known online as Grandpa Su, the silver-haired pianist first found an unexpected audience on Douyin, China's short-video platform, after a young relative casually uploaded a 15-second clip of him playing "Moscow Nights" in 2017.

He did not chase attention, yet it arrived anyway. His following continued to grow -- at one point reaching 3.8 million -- simply because he kept doing what he had always done: sit down and play.

Now living in Hangzhou, the eastern city known for its booming livestream industry, Yang has uploaded more than 1,200 videos, earning over 23 million likes. On weekdays, he livestreams for about an hour and a half, chatting lightly with viewers between songs.

For Yang, what he has been doing is less about influence than connection -- a way to stay in tune with

the world outside his door. "I don't worry about traffic data," he said. "I just play what people like and chat with people."

His experience is not unique, though others engage differently.

For 57-year-old Lu Caiyun, a domestic helper in Beijing for more than a decade, the camera serves a quieter purpose. Over the past year, she has posted more than 1,000 videos -- simple clips of cooking, square dancing, or resting after work -- for an audience of just over 50, most of them her friends from the same hometown.

"I use these videos like a journal," Lu said. "Life after work used to be boring, but recording it makes every day feel different."

Yang and Lu represent two ends of the same movement: older generations stepping into the digital age, whether with millions of viewers or merely a dozen.

At a time when aging is a global concern, their presence online signals a subtle but meaningful change.

More seniors in China are declining to be defined solely as "grandpa" or "grandma." They seek connection, new skills, and a place to express themselves.

"Young people often overestimate seniors' need for basic comfort while underestimating their desire for self-fulfillment and for being recognized by others," said Zhang Xin, an associate professor at Peking University's School of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics show that by the end of 2024, China's total population aged 60 and older reached 310.31 million. According to a July report from the China Internet Network Information Center, China has 160 million internet users aged 60 and above. This means roughly one in two seniors in China is online.

A study by Beijing Normal University, surveying 2,000 seniors nationwide, highlights how digital life is taking root among older generations: over 75 percent have created short videos at least once, and 28 percent post content frequently.

Why humans are wired to give

The science behind why doing good also makes us feel good

WASHINGTON, Dec 2, (AP): The holiday season is a time for giving thanks, giving gifts - and for many, a time for giving back.

Food banks, services that deliver meals to seniors and other US charities typically see a surge in volunteering between Thanksgiving and the end of the year. But there are good reasons to volunteer at any time of the year.

Alfred Del Grosso volunteers weekly to work the lunch shift at Shepherd's Table, a food bank in Silver Spring, Maryland. "I feel more connected to the broader community," he said.

Most Thursdays, the retired chemist from Kensington, Maryland, also lends an unpaid hand to help clear fallen trees and brush from local trails with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. "It's mostly volunteers who help maintain the trails," he said.

Researchers who study human evolution and social psychology say that giving back is deeply rooted in human nature. Volunteers say they feel closer ties to the communities they serve.

"When we feel grateful for all we have, that motivates us to do good things for other people who have helped us, and also to do good things for new people," said Sarah Schnitker, a psychologist at Baylor University.

"There's a nice upwards reciprocal spiral between gratitude and generosity," often enhanced at holiday times, she said.

For many in the US, the season most associated with giving, receiving and volunteering runs from Thanksgiving and Christmas to New Year's.

But around the world, a giving season or festival is present in many cultures, said Amrisha Vaish, a developmental psychologist at the University of Virginia.

"Nearly all cultures have events or public festivals that allow people to express gratitude," she said. "In Hinduism, Divali is a time of lights and festiveness and good eating, but also a time in which people give gifts to really express what people have meant to them."

For Muslims, Ramadan, which ends with the festival of Eid al-Fitr, is a time for reflection, gratitude and acts of charity. Many Buddhist traditions also emphasize gratitude.



A volunteer waves to a student as she waits in line at Miles Intermediate Elementary School in Atlanta after receiving new shoes from Mercedes-Benz USA, as a part of their Season to Shine holiday program, on Dec. 7, 2022. (AP)

The common purpose of such seasons, which also include non-religious acts of service, is to reinforce our natural cooperative tendencies, Vaish said.

"In human evolutionary history over hundreds of thousands of years, we've had to become cooperative in order to work together and survive as a species," she said.

"We don't have sharp claws, high speed, many other natural abilities. But what we do have is that we're super cooperators; we can do more in groups than alone."

Of course, humans aren't always cooperative and generous - sometimes we're

also selfish and stubborn.

The tension between selfishness and altruism was recognized even by Darwin, said Michael Tomasello, a psychologist at Duke University. "That's why life is so complicated. We have all these motives mapped together."

But reflecting with gratitude on what we have, and seeing others do good, can encourage our most generous tendencies, experts say.

On an individual level, "giving, volunteering and generosity have the ability to increase our sense of meaning and purpose in life," said Jenae Nelson, a developmental psychologist at Brigham Young University.

"There's a quick dopamine hit sometimes called the 'helpers high.' But there's also that deeper reward of helping us to establish purpose and meaning," she said. "By helping other people and believing that small acts can change the world, you can bring coherence to your own life."

After Mia Thelen retired as a nurse in Owosso, Michigan, she began volunteering for the American Red Cross, starting out by minding the office phones during blood drives before gradually taking on more organizational and administrative responsibilities.

"It's a good way to spend your time, making the lives of others a little easier," Thelen said. "I wanted to do something that helps the community."

"And I'm learning a lot: learning computer skills, learning communication skills. I have great co-volunteers." She enjoys feeling more connected with her neighbors. Another common holiday tradition - sending greeting cards to family and old friends - also provides a chance to enhance or renew social ties, which people are often surprisingly reluctant to do, said Lara Aknin, a social psychologist at Simon Fraser University.

Her research has shown that "people are actually hesitant to reach out to old friends, they worry about being a burden or an inconvenience," she said. But on the flip side, "people who've just heard from old friends report it as a really positive experience."

So go ahead and write those cards or make those phone calls, she said. Use the holidays as an excuse to reconnect, and share a laugh or a warm mulled drink.

Biological, environmental triggers explained

Why do people get headaches, migraines?

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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By Katherine Cobb-Pitstick
University of Pittsburgh

Curious Kids is a series for children of all ages. If you have a question you'd like an expert to answer, send it to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com.

Why do people get headaches? - Evie V., age 10, Corpus Christi, Texas

Whether sharp and stabbing or dull and throbbing, a headache can ruin your day. But your brain doesn't actually feel pain. So what is going on when it feels like your head is in a vise or about to explode?

I am a child neurologist - that is, a doctor who specializes in diseases of the brain in kids. Most of my patients are kids and adolescents who are struggling with headaches.

Head pain is complicated, and there is still a lot to learn about what causes it and how it can be treated. But researchers know there are a few key players that take part in generating

pain.

Nerves communicate information like pain through electrical signals between the body and the brain.

While the brain itself doesn't have any nerve sensors to feel pain, blood vessels in the head and structures that protect and surround the brain do sense pain. When these tissues detect injury or damage, they release chemicals that trigger transmission of electrical signals through nerves to tell the brain the head is hurting.

The brain will also use nerves to signal the body to respond to pain with symptoms like feeling tired, teary eyes, runny nose, upset stomach and discomfort in bright or loud environments. It's not clear why humans evolved to feel these symptoms, but some scientists theorize that this can lead to healthier lifestyle choices to decrease the chance of future headache attacks.

Often, headaches are a sign that the body is under some kind of stress. That stress triggers chemical and physical changes to the nerves and blood vessels around your brain, head and neck that can cause headaches.

Many types of stresses can cause headaches, including an infection, allergies, hormone changes during pu-

erty and menstrual cycles, not getting enough sleep, not drinking enough water, skipping meals or drinking too much caffeine or alcohol. Sometimes, headaches happen with emotional stress, like feeling anxious or depressed. Even pressure in your sinuses due to changes in the weather can cause your head to hurt.

One in 11 kids have had a type of severe headache called a migraine. They feel like a pulsing and pounding pain in your head and come with other symptoms, including nausea or being sensitive to lights and sounds. During a migraine, it can be hard to do everyday activities because they can make the pain worse. It is also very common to feel unwell or irritable before the head pain starts and after the pain is gone.

Migraines occur when the nerves and other structures used in signaling and interpreting pain aren't working properly, leading to pain and discomfort from stimulation that wouldn't normally provoke this. There are many environmental and genetic factors that contribute to this dysfunction. Some people are born with a higher risk of developing migraines. Most people with migraines have someone in their family who also experiences them. (AP)



A girl carries bread as she walks past destruction left by Israeli air and ground operations in Gaza City Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025. (AP)

Nearly 1,000 patients died in Gaza awaiting treatment abroad

Health authorities in the Gaza Strip announced on Monday the death of about 1,000 Palestinian patients while waiting for the border crossings to open to travel for treatment, despite having obtained administrative forms ensuring their medical transfer outside the strip.

Director-General of health authorities in Gaza Dr. Munir Al-Barsh, said in a statement that the joint medical referral committees with the World Health Organization (WHO) have received more than 22,000 cases since the beginning of the war, of which 18,100 were approved, including 5,000 cancer patients, 7,000 injured, and 5,000 children.

He added that "all the files are with the United Nations and the World Health Organization," emphasizing the importance of opening the Rafah land crossing as soon as possible.

Al-Barsh pointed out that the number of injured people needing complex surgeries unavailable in the strip has exceeded 170,00 due to the complete collapse of the health system and the depletion of surgical capacities.

He explained that the healthcare sector is suffering from a severe shortage of medicine and medical supplies, noting that the majority of essential and emergency medicines, medical supplies, bone fixatives and gauze are unavailable.

The available medical supplies are enough for only one month despite the declared ceasefire, noting that the "WHO has three thousand medical aid trucks ready in the Egyptian city of Al-Arish, but they have not been able to bring them in," added Al-Barsh. (KUNA)

Online pet trade growing

Endangered species convention proposes new rules for growing exotic pet trade

NEW YORK, Dec 2, (AP): A growing exotic pet trade has conservationists calling for stronger regulations to protect the reptiles, birds and other animals in the wild that are increasingly showing up for sale on internet marketplaces and becoming popular on social media.

The two-week Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is scheduled to run through Friday in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Several proposals related to the pet trade will be considered Tuesday.

Participants have proposed tighter regulations or complete bans on the trade of several species including iguanas from the Galapagos Islands, more than a dozen species of Latin America tarantulas and an odd-looking turtle from Africa.

"What we're seeing is the pet trade much more looking at reptiles, amphibians. People want rare species and they don't have to go into a pet shop," said Susan Lieberman, vice president for international policy at the nonprofit Wildlife Conservation Society. "They go online and there are thousands of animals, including endangered species, illegally obtained species, all available on the internet."

In the past, the trade was dominated by sales in animal parts like elephant ivory and tiger bones. But Matt Collis, the senior director of international policy at the International Fund for Animal Welfare, said live animals for the pet trade are increasingly turning up on the internet.

"The dramatic growth in online marketplaces has put consumers directly in touch with wildlife traders and criminals around the world," Collis said. "In today's society where pretty much



In this May 2, 2020 photo, a marine iguana suns on the edge of a boardwalk in San Cristobal, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. (AP)

anything can be bought with a click of a button and shipped anywhere in the world in a matter of days, no wildlife is safe."

Social media influencers, who have made owned exotic pets cool, are also contributing to the problem, Collis said.

Several of the species proposed for greater protection at the CITES conference are in Latin America, where an IFAW report last year found illegal trade is on the rise. The report, covering 18 Spanish speaking Latin American countries, says there were more than 100,000 animals seized or poached from 2017 to 2022, with seizures increasing every year.

The report found the live pet trade accounted for a growing piece of the trade, with reptiles representing about 60% of the animals, while nearly 30% were birds and more than 10% were amphibians. Many animals were traded locally or regionally but there also was evidence of animals shipped

to collectors in Europe, Asia and the United States.

More than 90% of the seized wildlife destined for Europe were live animals, confirming the demand for pets was a key driver of the illegal trade, the report said. Among the reptile species up for tighter trade controls is Home's Hinged-back Tortoise, a critically endangered turtle found in West Africa that has a unique hinge on its back allowing it to close off its back legs and tail.

There are proposals to regulate the trade in two vipers species endemic to Ethiopia, two species of rattlesnake found mostly in Mexico, the leaf-tailed gecko from Australia and two species of sloths from South America, which are increasingly turning up in sloth-themed cafes in Asia.

A proposal from Ecuador would ban the trade in marine and land iguanas from the Galapagos, which are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as critically endangered or vulnerable.

'275,000 kids among 1.4m hit by cyclone in Sri Lanka'

Measles shots roll out in rebel-held Congo

KACHEHEMBE, Congo, Dec 2, (Agencies): Measles vaccines have arrived in a rebel-held area of eastern Congo nearly a year after a deadly outbreak of the highly contagious disease began.

The seizure of parts of the region early this year by Rwanda-backed M23 rebels has affected the delivery of health care in one of the world's most dire humanitarian crises, residents and aid groups have said.

This week, anxious parents clutching small children have been lining up in Kachehembe in North Kivu province to receive the vaccine from medical charity Doctors Without Borders, also known as MSF.

"Children are suffering greatly from this disease," said Silas Bazimaziki Rugiriki, a father who brought his son.

Africa has seen measles outbreaks across multiple countries. Congo has reported over 36,000 suspected cases and 565 deaths across nearly all of its 26 provinces this year as of July.

The outbreak is stretching resources in Congo, which also has dealt with outbreaks of Mpox and Ebola in recent months, along with the rebel threat.

Since January, the M23 rebel group has seized key cities in the mineral-rich east. Thousands of people have been killed. Peace efforts led by the United States and Qatar continue.

MSF said it has treated at least 1,000 children for measles this year in Kachehembe alone, and 11 have died. Its vaccination campaign targets



A school child receives a measles vaccination at the Kachehembe health center in Rubaya, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Monday, Dec. 1. (AP)

children under 5. Such campaigns are challenged by mass displacement in eastern Congo as attacks by multiple rebel groups continue.

"The area is experiencing a constant influx of displaced families, which is increasing demand," Dr. Toussaint Selemani, medical director of the measles response at MSF, told The Associated Press.

In a nearby hospital, Selemani said 53 children were being treated for measles.

Sarah Noëlla, 37, watched her 2-year-old son Fariji Jacques, who she said came down with a fever last week. His eyes turned red, and specks appeared around his mouth.

"I thought it was the flu," Noëlla said. Other mothers recounted a rapid deterioration in their children. Without financial resources, they said they de-

pend on MSF's help.

"We are living in a war zone, we have nothing," said Irène Shashire, 21, a mother of two.

In another development, at least 275,000 children are among the 1.4 million people affected by Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka, UNICEF said in a statement on Tuesday.

UNICEF said they are deeply concerned about the destruction the cyclone has caused to children and the vital services they depend on.

Emma Brigham, UNICEF representative in Sri Lanka, said children urgently need help and that it is a race against time to reach the most vulnerable families.

Widespread damage to infrastructure and essential services has forced thousands into temporary shelters, increasing the risks of disease outbreaks, malnutrition, and severe emotional distress among children, UNICEF said.

According to a 2025 World Bank report, poverty in Sri Lanka has more than doubled since 2019, rising from 11.3 percent to 24.5 percent.

UNICEF said it is working with the government and partners to assess needs and deliver urgent assistance. The agency is scaling up support and appealing for additional funding to provide clean water, nutrition supplies, psychosocial care, and emergency education kits for displaced children and mothers.

Over 400 Sri Lankans have been killed by landslides and floods caused by the cyclone.

S. Africa renews commitment to end AIDS

Researchers invent new therapy to cure HIV

BEIJING, Dec. 2, (Xinhua): A research team at the Wuhan University of Science and Technology (WUST) has recently developed a new targeted delivery system to send gene editing tools into cells. The tools will precisely locate the HIV virus and cut its genome into fragments, thereby achieving a functional cure, the China Science Daily reported on Tuesday.

Current HIV treatment methods include the widely used cocktail therapy, as well as emerging approaches like immune cell therapy and gene therapy. Cocktail therapy aims to suppress viral replication to the greatest extent, improving the quality of life and survival rates of patients. However, it cannot eradicate the virus.

Immune cell therapy can only identify and eliminate cells that are actively replicating the virus, leaving dormant infected cells unchanged. Existing gene therapies, such as those using adeno-associated viruses as delivery vectors, suffer from shortcomings such as poor targeting capabilities

and toxicity due to excessive dosages. For the WUST study, the results of which have been published in the Molecular Therapy journal, a team led by Gu Chaojiang invented the exosome-mediated targeted CRISPR-Cas12a delivery system (EMT-Cas12a) based on engineered exosomes.

Meanwhile, marking World AIDS Day, South African Deputy President Paul Mashatile said Monday that the country's theme, "Renewed Efforts and Sustainable Commitments to End AIDS," underscores the need to reinforce HIV prevention and treatment programs at a time of tightening budgets.

Speaking at an official commemoration in Limpopo Province, Mashatile called the fight against HIV/AIDS a long-term strategic investment, stressing the need to sustain momentum even as global priorities shift. The commemoration emphasizes "the importance of our commitment to accelerate our efforts to end AIDS," Mashatile noted.

WHO issues global guidance on GLP-1 use for obesity

GENEVA, Dec. 2, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization (WHO) released on Monday its first guideline on the use of Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) therapies for treating obesity as a chronic, relapsing disease.

The guideline aims to address the growing global health challenge of obesity, which affects more than 1 billion people and is associated with 3.7 million deaths worldwide in 2024. Without decisive action, the number of people with obesity is projected to double by 2030.

In September 2025, WHO added GLP-1 therapies to its Essential Medicines List for managing type 2 diabetes in high-risk groups. With the new guideline, WHO issues conditional recommendations for using these therapies to support people living with obesity in overcoming this serious health challenge, as part of a comprehensive approach that includes healthy diets, regular physical activity and support from health professionals.

"Obesity is a major global health challenge that WHO

is committed to addressing by supporting countries and people worldwide to control it, effectively and equitably. Our new guidance recognizes that obesity is a chronic disease that can be treated with comprehensive and lifelong care," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general.

"While medication alone won't solve this global health crisis, GLP-1 therapies can help millions overcome obesity and reduce its associated harms," he said.

Obesity is a complex, chronic disease and a major driver of noncommunicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer. It also contributes to poorer outcomes for patients with infectious diseases.

Beyond its health impacts, the global economic cost of obesity is predicted to reach 3 trillion U.S. dollars annually by 2030. The guideline can help efforts to reduce skyrocketing health costs associated with managing the condition and its related health complications.

Australia batter Khawaja ruled out

England picks Will Jacks for second Ashes test

BRISBANE, Australia, Dec 2, (AP): In the only change from the first test, Will Jacks has been named in England’s team for the second Ashes test against Australia, with the all-rounder preferred to Shoaib Bashir for the day-night match starting Thursday in Brisbane.

Jacks made two test appearances in Pakistan three years ago and has been used mostly in limited-overs cricket since.

With paceman Mark Wood out injured, England preferred a slow bowling option over back-up seamers Josh Tongue and Matthew Potts.

Bashir has been England’s favored spinner for most of the last two years, taking 68 wickets in 19 appearances. The 22-year-old Bashir was the spare man in a squad of 12 for the first test which England lost in two days.

England team: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (captain), Jamie Smith, Will Jacks, Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer.

Usman Khawaja has been ruled out of the second Ashes test at the Gabba in Brisbane with a back injury, Cricket Australia said Tuesday.

The 38-year-old Khawaja’s place in the starting side for the day-night test in Brisbane starting Thursday



England’s Brydon Carse celebrates the wicket of Australia’s Usman Khawaja, right, during the first Ashes cricket test match between Australia and England in Perth. (AP)

had been under scrutiny since back spasms forced him from the field in the two-day first-test victory over England and meant he could not open the batting.

Travis Head opened instead in the Perth test and scored a century to lead Australia to victory.

Khawaja completed light training

duties during the team’s optional session at the Gabba on Monday. But on Tuesday afternoon, Cricket Australia confirmed he had pulled up sore from his injury and would miss the second test.

It means Head is likely to again partner Jake Weatherald at the top of the order.

‘Series is a monopolistic bully’

Hamlin breaks down in tears as 1st witness testifying at antitrust trial

CHARLOTTE, N.C. Dec 2, (AP): The landmark federal antitrust trial against NASCAR opened with three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin breaking down in tears minutes into his testimony as the first witness in a case that could upend the venerable stock car series.

Hamlin’s 23XI Racing, which he co-owns with Michael Jordan, and Front Row Motorsports claim the series is a monopolistic bully that leaves its teams no option but to comply with rules and financing they don’t agree with.

As Jordan watched from the gallery, Hamlin began to cry and had to stop and compose himself when asked how he got into racing. He disclosed to The Associated Press last month that his father is dying, and he said on the stand he was emotional because his dad “is not in great health.”

“We got to when I was about 20 and a decision had to be made, I could keep racing or go out and work for my dad’s trailer business,” Hamlin testified, adding that he later was thinking about what retirement looked like and found a team going out of business. He needed a partner and turned to Jordan, who he had developed a friendship with when the Basketball Hall of Famer owned the Charlotte Hornets and Hamlin was a season-ticket holder.

“If I can’t be successful with Michael



Front Row Motorsports owner Bob Jenkins, left, and 23XI co-owner Denny Hamlin arrive in the Western District of North Carolina in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

as a partner, I knew this was never going to work,” he said.

The references to his early days in auto racing and the sacrifices his family made were intended to show how difficult it is for both team owners and drivers to make it at the top level of the sport. He said he never would have been able to start 23XI in 2021 had he not partnered with Jordan.

Because of Jordan’s presence with the team, Hamlin testified, 23XI has turned a profit in all but one of its five seasons

of operation. His attorney, Jeffrey Kessler, said in his opening statement that fast-food restaurant entrepreneur Bob Jenkins has never turned a profit since starting his Front Row team in 2004.

Front Row won the 2021 Daytona 500. At the heart of the lawsuit is NASCAR’s revenue sharing model, which 23XI and Front Row argue is unfair to race teams that often operate at a loss. Hamlin testified it cost \$20 million to bring a single car to the track over a 38-race season, not including overhead expenses such as driver salary.

Kessler said a NASCAR-commissioned study found that 75% of teams lost money in 2024.

“So, why would these people do this if you are just going to lose money because NASCAR isn’t giving you a fair deal?” Kessler said as Jordan watched from the gallery. “Because you love stock car racing, and there’s nowhere else to do it.”

The charter agreements signed for this year that triggered the lawsuit guarantee the teams \$12.5 million in annual revenue. NASCAR argues the guaranteed payouts are an increase from \$9 million from previous agreements, but Hamlin noted that 11 of the first 19 chartered teams are no longer in business. All three charters 23XI purchased came from teams that ceased operations.

Vardy grabs first Serie A brace as Cremonese halts Bologna streak



Cremonese’s Jamie Vardy, left, and Bologna’s Nicolo Casale, right, challenge for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between FC Bologna and Cremonese in Bologna, Italy. (AP)

Valencia comes from behind to draw at Rayo

BOLOGNA, Italy, Dec 2, (AP): Bologna’s 12-match unbeaten run came to an ignoble end when it went down 3-1 at home to Cremonese, for which Jamie Vardy scored his first double in Serie A.

The match pitted a home side unbeaten in 12 games against a visitor that lost its last three league matches by a combined score of 6-2.

Yet it was Cremonese that struck first after half an hour. Matteo Bianchetti’s poised through ball put Martin Payero on goal and his assured finish gave the goalkeeper no chance.

Four minutes later, Jamie Vardy made it 2-0 with a carbon copy of the opener. Federico Bonazzoli’s pass set him free of a leaden back four and he coolly slotted home from almost exactly the same position as Payero.

Riccardo Orsolini pulled a goal back from the penalty spot on the stroke of halftime for Bologna but Vardy, the summer signing from Leicester City, restored Cremonese’s two-goal cushion five minutes into the second half when he stole in at the near post to tap home an inviting cross from the right.

It was an uplifting night for Vardy, who was reportedly the victim of a robbery last week.

U.K. media said thieves entered his home near Lake Garda and made off with 80,000 pounds worth of valuables while he was playing a league game in Rome.

The result was also a boost for his club. After winning its first two matches of the campaign Cremonese had won only one since.

Bologna fell to sixth, behind Como on goal difference.

It was the first time that Vincenzo Italiano’s side allowed three goals in one game all season.

In Madrid, a deflected shot gave Valencia a 1-1 draw at Rayo Vallecano in La Liga.

The visitor started the night a point above the relegation zone and ended it one point and one place better off thanks to a second half strike from Diego López.

His strike through a packed penalty box appeared to take a deflection off Nobel Mendy and wrong-foot Rayo keeper Augusto Batalla.

It was an unfortunate moment for Mendy, who had been one of the home side’s top performers in the first half.

The Senegalese defender put Rayo 1-0 up in the 37th minute when his perfectly placed header rounded off a short corner routine.

Rayo dominated much of the game but could not capitalize on its pressure. The point lifted it into ninth, one clear of a four-team pack.

Valencia was 15th but only six points separate Rayo in ninth and Girona in 18th.

2026 Giro to start in Bulgaria

ROME, Dec 2, (AP): Next year’s Giro d’Italia will start with three stages in Bulgaria and will likely be decided in the Dolomites before the mostly ceremonial finish in Rome.

The route for the 109th Giro, scheduled for May 8-31, was presented in Rome.

It’s the 16th time the Italian Grand Tour is starting abroad.

After the opening in Bulgaria, the peloton will fly to Calabria to begin a climb up boot-shaped Italy, passing through Naples and a difficult ascent to Blockhaus in Abruzzo.

The race’s only time trial is a 40.2-kilometer (25-mile) individual race against the clock in Stage 10 from Viareggio to Massa along the Tuscan coast.

The toughest leg, known as the queen stage, is slated to be Stage 19 from Feltre to Alpe di Siusi going over five climbs including the Passo Giau, which marks the “Cima Coppi” as the race’s highest point at 2,233 meters (7,326 feet).

Then there are two ascents the next day to Piancavallo in the penultimate leg, which could decide the winner.

“This year we have designed a more modern Giro, with shorter stages that are no less demanding for the general classification contenders, alternating with stages that will suit riders looking to make an impact with long-range attacks,” race director Mauro Vegni said. “There will be seven summit finishes, the same number of stages for the sprinters.”

The nine-stage Women’s Giro will start in Cesenatico on May 30 and finish in Saluzzo on June 7. There are two summit finishes at Nevegal and Sestriere, with the latter stage including the famous climb to Colle delle Finestre.

Adam Yates and Elisa Longo Borghini won the Giro this year.

Yates is expected to try and defend his title, and could be joined by Vismalease a Bike teammate Jonas Vingegaard, the two-time Tour de France champion. Other challengers could include rising Mexican rider Isaac del Toro, who lost the lead to Yates in the penultimate stage this year, and Primož Roglič, the 2023 Giro champion.

“The emotions I felt at the end of this (year’s) Giro were incredible and I really hope to experience them again,” Yates said.

Red Bull voices regret, Antonelli threatened over Norris incident

DOHA, Dec 2, (AP): Red Bull expressed regret following “clearly incorrect” comments alleging that Mercedes’ Kimi Antonelli had let Lando Norris past at the Qatar Grand Prix, influencing the Formula 1 title fight, after the Italian rookie received death threats on social media.

Standings leader Norris was in fifth place behind Antonelli toward the end of Sunday’s race when the Italian slid wide and Norris overtook him for fourth place. That allowed the McLaren driver to stay 12 points in front of Red Bull’s Max Verstappen ahead of the season finale this week in Abu Dhabi.

Verstappen’s race engineer Gianpiero Lambiase suggested to the Dutch four-time champion over the radio that it seemed Antonelli had let Norris pass him, and Red Bull adviser Helmut Marko claimed Antonelli “waved him by” in comments to Sky Sport Germany.

“Comments made before the end of and immediately after the Qatar GP suggesting that Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli had deliberately allowed Lando Norris to overtake him are clearly incorrect,” Red Bull posted on social media.

“Replay footage shows Antonelli momentarily losing control of his car, thus allowing Norris to pass him. We sincerely regret that this has led to Kimi receiving online abuse.”

Mercedes said more than 1,100 comments described as “severe or suspect” were left on Antonelli’s social media accounts, including death threats and comments wishing him harm, and more than 330 severe or suspect comments were left on the team’s accounts.

Mercedes said the comments were flagged up by tools



Mercedes driver Andrea Kimi Antonelli of Italy arrives prior to the Qatar Formula One Grand Prix, at the Lusail International Circuit, in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

which kept them from being visible by the public and will be referred to F1’s governing body, the FIA, as part of its campaign against abuse on social media.

The profile picture on Antonelli’s Instagram was set to a plain black circle.

Antonelli was defended by Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff, who said it was “hard to understand” the claims that the Italian rookie would give up a place, especially when he still had a chance of catching Carlos Sainz, Jr. for third at the time.

“I was pushing hard to stay ahead of Norris in the closing stages and unfortunately just pushed a little bit too hard. I got out of shape through turn nine and then had a massive snap of oversteer,” Antonelli said.

“I was lucky to save the car but sadly dropped the position to the McLaren. It was a frustrating and disappointing way to end what had been a good race up to that point.”

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Sheffield Wed docked 6 more points for financial turmoil

LONDON, Dec 2, (AP): Sheffield Wednesday was deducted another six points amid its financial troubles, leaving the historic English club on -10 points and massively adrift in last place in the second-tier Championship.

It means Wednesday has been docked a total of 18 points since being taken over by administrators last month after plunging into financial turmoil under the ownership of Thai businessman Dejphon Chansiri, which prompted protests from fans and sanctions from the league.

The club, which was founded in 1867 and was an original member of the Premier League in 1992, is 27 points from safety in the Championship and heading for relegation to England’s third division. The latest punishment was for “multiple breaches of EFL regulations relating to payment obligations,” the English Football League said in a statement on X. Wednesday was charged for failing to pay players in March, May, and June this year, and for other non-payments to its staff and Britain’s tax authority.

Cameroon fires coach and new hire omits Onana, Aboubakar

YAOUNDE, Cameroon, Dec 2, (AP): Between being eliminated from 2026 World Cup qualifying and opening the Africa Cup of Nations in three weeks’ time, Cameroon fired its coach and hired a replacement.

New coach David Pagou immediately dropped captain Vincent Aboubakar and goalkeeper André Onana from his squad announced late Monday for the AFCON that opens on Dec. 21 in Morocco.

Pagou replaced Marc Brys, the veteran Belgian coach whose appointment last year seemed to be the sports ministry’s choice against the wishes of the soccer federation led by Cameroon great Samuel Eto’o.

The federation on Monday published a list of grievances

with Brys including claims of subterfuge and insubordination.

The last game for Brys was losing in the African qualifying playoffs for the World Cup last month, 1-0 against Congo.

Pagou is an experienced coach in the Cameroon league and picked a 28-player squad for AFCON missing Onana, playing on loan from Manchester United at Trabzonspor in the Turkish league, and the 33-year-old Aboubakar.

His 45 national team goals are behind only the 56 by Eto’o, and include the late winning goal in the final against Egypt to seal the 2017 African title.

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Inaugural West Asia Women’s Volleyball Clubs Championship kicks off in Kuwait

Sheikha Naima: Hosting the championship reflects our commitment to advancing women’s sports

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Under the patronage of Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, the inaugural West Asia Women’s Volleyball Clubs Championship kicks off today at Salwa Al-Sabah Club Hall. The 10-day event features 12 participating clubs, divided into three groups:

- Group 1: Qatar (Qatar), Al-Ula (Saudi Arabia), Al-Qalamoun (Lebanon), and Al-Fatat (Kuwait)
 - Group 2: Sharjah (UAE), Al-Arabi (Qatar), Al-Nasr (Yemen), and Salwa Al-Sabah (Kuwait)
 - Group 3: Al-Nasr (Jordan), Al-Quds (Palestine), Al-Faihaa (Saudi Arabia), and Sanharib (Iraq)
- Today’s opening-round fixtures include four matches:
- 11:00 AM: Qatar vs Al-Ula
 - 1:00 PM: Al-Nasr (Jordan) vs Al-Quds (Palestine)
 - 3:00 PM: Sharjah vs Al-Arabi
 - 5:00 PM: Al-Nasr (Yemen) vs Salwa Al-Sabah
- The championship will conclude on December 13.

Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairwoman of Salwa Sports Club, affirmed that all organizing committees are fully prepared to host this landmark event, the first of its kind in Kuwait.

Speaking during a press conference held at the club, she highlighted the extensive preparations carried out in coordination with the West Asia Volleyball Federation. Sheikha Naima stressed that hosting the championship stems from the club’s strong belief in supporting women’s sports in Kuwait and showcasing the progress made in recent years.

She noted that Kuwait has increasingly become a preferred destination for women’s sporting events, supported by modern facilities and qualified staff capable of organizing competitions at a regional level.

The organizational plan, she said, included preparing the main hall to international standards, setting up training courts, and ensuring the readiness of medical and technical teams. Coordination with government agencies and the federation helped streamline entry procedures for visiting delegations and ensure smooth transport and accommodation logistics, projecting an image of Kuwait as a capable regional host.

Sheikha Naima also revealed that the West Asia Volleyball Federation had approved Salwa Club’s organizational files, confirming the club’s ability to manage regional tournaments with professionalism.



Sheikha Naima

She emphasized that the tournament represents an important step in elevating the role of women in sports across the Gulf and West Asia, noting that the strong participation underlines the development of women’s clubs in the region and encourages more girls to enter the sports field.

Looking ahead, she said Salwa Club aims to expand its international presence, compete for top honors, and bid to host larger continental competitions, further enhancing the status of women’s sports in Kuwait and developing future generations of female athletes.



Salwa Club stadium ready for Women's Volleyball Championship.

She wished the participating teams’ success and encouraged fans to attend and support the matches, highlighting the positive impact of spectator presence. She also announced the signing of two Russian players and one Serbian player to reinforce Salwa’s squad for the West Asia challenge.

In other news, Kuwait’s men’s national volleyball team earned its first win at the Arab Men’s Challenge Cup, defeating Palestine 3–0 (25–22, 25–12, 25–17) in the third round of the tournament currently underway in Amman, Jordan.

Kuwait had earlier suffered losses to Tunisia and Jordan. The team faced Bahrain yesterday and will wrap up its campaign against Egypt on Friday.

French league condemns attacks

Nice players attacked by fans after losing streak

PARIS, Dec 2, (AP): Nice and the French league have condemned “unacceptable” acts of fan violence after players and staff were attacked following another disappointing performance by the Riviera side over the weekend.

After suffering a sixth consecutive loss across all competitions on Sunday - 3-1 at Lorient in Ligue 1 - Nice players were confronted by a large number of their supporters when they returned to the club’s training and academy center.

Fans shouted insults and demanded greater commitment from the squad as tensions escalated, with reports that some supporters even boarded the team bus.

“The club understands the frustration caused by the series of poor results and performances that fall short of its values,” Nice said in a statement late Monday. “However, the incidents that occurred during this gathering are unacceptable. Several members of the club were confronted and targeted. OGC Nice offers them its full support and condemns these actions in the strongest possible terms.”

L’Equipe reported some players and staff were spat on when they exited the bus, and even punched. Jérémie Boga and Terem Moffi were reportedly the most violently attacked, taking multiple blows, including to the head and groin, while sporting director Florian Maurice was also said to be assaulted.

L’Equipe and RMC reported that Boga and Moffi have been given medical leave. Nice did not immediately respond to a request for comments from The Associated Press.

The French league (LFP) said on Tuesday that the assaults were “completely unacceptable, undermining the integrity of the participants in the game and the values of football.” The LFP added it will join as a civil party in the complaints filed by the players to ensure that the incidents are thoroughly investigated.

“The LFP expresses its full support for the affected players and OGC Nice, and reaffirms its determination to guarantee the safety of all football stakeholders.”

After 14 rounds, Nice sits 10th in the table,



In this file photo, Nice’s Morgan Sanson, left, and Ali Abdi react at the the end of the Europa League opening phase soccer match between FC Porto and Nice in Porto, Portugal. (AP)

14 points behind leader Lens. It has lost seven matches while conceding 26 goals.

The loss against Lorient came just three days after a 3-0 defeat at Porto in the Europa League. The club is bottom of the league phase table, having lost all five of its matches.

“We’re fighting for survival, that’s the reality,” Nice coach Franck Haise said on Sunday. “We’ll fight with those who want to fight. A team exists only when everyone has that desire.”

Maurice pointed to a lack of cohesion within the team after Nice let a 1-0 lead slip against Lorient.

“Every time there’s a slight setback we can’t recover,” he said. “That proves that we lack cohesion, perhaps values, at a given moment, to fight and go and get results.”

In Lorient, several Nice players approached their traveling supporters for an impromptu discussion.

“I know you travel thousands of kilometers for us and I thank you for that. But, I swear, we’re giving our maximum,” midfielder Sofiane Diop told them on the pitch. “We are rubbish right now, we know it.”

Haise signed a new two-year deal with the Ligue 1 club in September until 2029 despite a lackluster start to the season. Nice was knocked out of the Champions League after losing to Benfica in the third qualifying round and has since struggled to get its campaign going.

The 54-year-old Haise took over Nice during the 2024 summer and led the Riviera team to a fourth-place finish last season.

Nice’s next faces Angers at home on Sunday.

Visa challenges loom

CAS clears Russian athletes for Milan Cortina Olympic qualifiers

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Dec 2, (AP): Russian skiers and snowboarders won a court ruling on Tuesday to apply as neutral athletes for qualification events to the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics after nearly four years of being excluded during the war on Ukraine.

Russian sports minister Mikhail Degtyaryov posted on social media that an appeal from Russia to the Court of Arbitration for Sport overturned a blanket ban imposed by the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) within days of the full military invasion in February 2022. FIS renewed the ban in October.

CAS later published its ruling in another legal win for Russian and Belarusian winter sports athletes.

In October, a similar appeal to CAS by the Russian luge federation and athletes ruled against a long-standing blanket ban based on their passports.

Sports bodies have excluded Russians mainly for security reasons to protect athletes and prevent protests that also could disrupt the field of play.

Still, there is little time for FIS to process applications from ath-



A view of the work at the finish area of the Olympia delle Tofane course where the women’s Alpine skiing will be contested at the 2026 Milan Cortina Winter Olympics, in Cortina D’Ampezzo, Italy, in this file photo. (AP)

letes to be approved with neutral status ahead of a Jan. 18 qualification deadline. The Milan Cortina Winter Olympics begin on Feb. 6.

Neutral status can be approved in most sports, following International Olympic Committee guidance, for athletes who have not publicly supported the military invasion of Ukraine and do not have

ties to military or state security agencies.

Russian athletes and team officials also face challenges getting visas to enter some countries that host qualifying events such as on the World Cup circuit in Alpine, cross-country and freestyle skiing, and snowboarding.

FIS runs almost half of the entire Winter Games program - 57 of

116 gold medal events.

CAS said its judges gave an urgent ruling combining separate appeals that Russian and Belarusian athletes who meet eligibility standards set by FIS should be allowed to enter international events.

“Both panels (of judges) found that the FIS statutes protect individuals from discrimination and require the FIS to be politically neutral,” the Lausanne-based court said in a statement.

Some Russian and Belarusian athletes competed at the Paris Summer Games last year without their national identity of flag, anthem and team colors. Both countries were banned from team sports.

The IOC must also assess the neutral status of Russian and Belarusian athletes before inviting them to compete at the Milan Cortina Winter Games.

Two Russian figure skaters and one from Belarus were invited to the Olympics by the IOC last week.

Degtyaryov has said he expects as few as 15 Russian athletes to compete at the Winter Games.

Qurain faces daunting task against Kuwait Club

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: The fifth round of the Kuwaiti Basketball League continues today with two key matchups at the Basketball Federation Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. At 5:00 PM, Al-Arabi will take on Al-Sahel, followed by Qurain facing the reigning champions Kuwait Club at 7:00 PM.

Qurain, currently sitting on 8 points, faces a daunting task against Kuwait Club, the league’s strongest and most experienced team, who also has 8 points. While Qurain boasts young talents such as Adel Al-Saeed, Faisal Al-Bahar, Abdul Latif Al-Faraj, Ahmed Al-Fudari, and Youssef Al-Filkawi, experience and technical skill heavily favor Kuwait Club. Coached by Serbian Dusan Stojkov, the defending champions feature key players including Hamad and Mohamed Adnan, Alexander Al-Ghais, Turki Hamoud, Imran Johar, Sahu Al-Sahu, Youssef Al-Hamdan, Aziz Ramadan, and their trio of foreign professionals: Jamal Jones, Charlie Moore, and Frenchman Geoffrey Lavigne.

Earlier in the day, Al-Arabi, seventh with 5 points, will clash with Al-Sahel, also on



A Kuwait Club player scores during a league match.

5 points. Both sides aim to end their losing streaks, though the pressure is heavier on Al-Arabi. Key players Adel Madid and Fahad Adel could prove decisive in securing the club’s first victory of the season.

Best of the Rest

Gimnasia into semifinals: Manuel Panaro and Franco Torres scored in each half as Gimnasia progressed to the semifinals of Argentina’s Primera Division Clausura tournament on Monday with a 2-0 win over Barracas Central.

Panaro put the visitors ahead in the 22nd minute of the quarterfinal clash when he tapped home from close range after Jeremias Merlo’s cross from the right flank. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Palmeiras will rebound: Palmeiras forward Vitor Roque promised his team would come back stronger after its 1-0 loss to Brazilian rival Flamengo in the Copa Libertadores final on Saturday.

The result at Lima’s Monumental Stadium left Flamengo as the only Brazilian club with four Libertadores titles, while Palmeiras has won three.

“It’s a very painful defeat,” Roque said in a social media post on Monday. (Xinhua)

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NEWS



Orlando Magic guard Desmond Bane reacts after sinking a 3-point shot against the Chicago Bulls during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait pushes Egypt to the brink in Arab Cup thriller

Al-Hoshan shown late red card

Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

DOHA, Dec 2: Kuwait opened its Arab Cup campaign with a valuable point after holding Egypt to a 1-1 draw on Tuesday night at Lusail Stadium in Qatar, in the first round of Group C matches.

Fahad Al-Hajri put Al-Azraq ahead in the 64th minute, before Mohamed Afsha leveled for Egypt from the penalty spot in the 88th.

Helio Sousa made several adjustments to the Kuwaiti lineup compared to the playoff win over Mauritania, handing starting roles to Saud Al-Hoshan, Al-Hajri, Abdulwahab Al-Owadhi, Sultan Al-Enzi, Fawaz Ayed, and Youssef Majed, while dropping Khaled Al-Rashidi, Rashed Al-Dosari, Hassan Hamdan, Redha Hani, Athbi Shahab, and Eid Al-Rashidi.

Egypt took control from the opening whistle, seeking an early breakthrough and pressing Kuwait deep in their own half.

Al-Hoshan pushed away Ghanem Mohamed's shot inside the first minute, then collected a header from Mohamed Elneny (4'). Yassin Marai headed narrowly wide (6'), while Rajab Nabil sent another header over the bar (14').

Kuwait's first chance came when Yousef Nasser fired over from a promising position (20').

Egypt won a penalty after Islam Issa was tripped by Al-Owadhi, but captain Amr Al-Sulaya wasted it by sending his effort wide (38'). Daham tried his luck from distance without success (40'), and Al-Hoshan denied Elneny once more just before halftime.

The second half followed a similar pattern early on, with Egypt pushing forward but failing to beat Kuwait's compact defense and alert goalkeeper. Sousa then refreshed his side by introducing Rashed Al-Dosari, Nasser Falihi, and Eid Al-Rashidi.

The changes sparked Kuwait into life, allowing them to grow into the match. Al-Hajri broke the deadlock with a well-placed header (64'), and Daham came close to a second after excellent work from Falihi, only to shoot straight at the keeper (81').

But a late mistake proved costly. Al-Hoshan brought down substitute Marwan Hamdy inside the box, earning a second yellow card as Norwegian referee Eskas Espen pointed to the spot. Afsha converted confidently to rescue a draw for the Pharaohs (88').

The Syrian national team began its2025 Arab Cup journey with a 1-0 victory over Tunisia , highlighting an unusual source of motivation for the "Eagles of Qasioun": the social deduction game Mafia.

The match-winning goal came from Omar Khrbin in the 48th minute with a perfectly executed direct free kick during the first round of Group A matches.

Syrian player Ahmed Faqa revealed in an interview with FIFA's official website that the card game Mafia has become a daily tradition for the team during breaks. He explained:

"We usually play in a group of ten players. We distribute the cards and begin discussions to uncover the impostor. The game fosters communication and strengthens team bonds."

Mafia is a social game where participants take on assigned roles and form alliances to identify traitors within the group.

Typically played with 7-20 players, each individual is assigned a role such as citizen, detective, or mafia member, making it a strategic and interactive team-building exercise.



Kuwait captain vies for the ball with Egyptian player during the opening match

Jazz outlast Rockets

Suns snap Lakers' 7-game winning streak

LOS ANGELES, Dec 2, (AP): Dillon Brooks scored 33 points, Collin Gillespie added 16 of his career-high 28 in the fourth quarter, and the Phoenix Suns emphatically snapped the Los Angeles Lakers' seven-game winning streak with a 125-108 victory Monday night.

Devin Booker scored 11 points before leaving with two minutes left in the first quarter with a right groin injury, yet the Suns improbably played a remarkable game in their leading scorer's absence.

Gillespie hit a career-best eight 3-pointers for Phoenix, which had lost three of four. The Suns forced 22 Lakers turnovers and streaked to a 21-point lead in the third quarter, blowing out Los Angeles despite Luka Doncic's 38 points.

Jazz 133, Rockets 125

In Salt Lake City, Lauri Markkanen scored 29 points and Keyonte George added 28 as the Utah Jazz outlasted the Houston Rockets.

Kevin Durant, off target much of the game, scored 16 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter for Houston. Alperin Sengun had 31 points and tied a career high with 14 assists. Amen Thompson added 23 points for the Rockets (13-5), who had won five straight on the road.

Sengun's contested layup pulled the Rockets to 126-123 with 52.7 seconds remaining, but George hit 5 of 6 free throws and added a steal down the stretch to seal the win.

Mavericks 131, Nuggets 121

In Denver, Anthony Davis scored a season-high 32 points in his second game back from injury, and the Dallas Mavericks beat the Denver Nuggets.

Rookie Ryan Nembhard had 28 points and 10 assist, both career bests, to help Dallas win consecutive games for the first time this season. Cooper Flagg added 24 points for Dallas, which hit 16 of 31 shots from 3-point range.

The loss was the fourth straight at home for Denver, three of them against teams without winning records. It also spoiled a career night for Spencer Jones, who had 28 points, and Nikola Jokic's

11th triple-double of the season. He finished with 29 points, a season-high 20 rebounds and 13 assists.

Heat 140, Clippers 123

In Miami, Norman Powell scored 30 points against his former team, Bam Adebayo had 27 points and 14 rebounds in 32 minutes and the Miami Heat downed the reeling Los Angeles Clippers .

Tyler Herro and Andrew Wiggins each scored 22 for the Heat, who trailed by two early in the second quarter before going on a 30-2 run. Miami also hit 24 3-pointers, tying a franchise record done on two previous occasions.

Miami went on a 12-0 run in the first 2:02 of the third quarter, all on 3-pointers, two of them by Adebayo. That turned a 20-point halftime lead into a 32-point edge and the outcome was not in serious doubt again.

Magic 125, Bulls 120

In Orlando, Desmond Bane scored 18 of his 37 points in the fourth quarter, helping the Orlando Magic beat the Chicago Bulls.

Bane made a go-ahead 3-pointer with 3:23 left, sparking an 8-0 run for the Magic. He also capped the decisive sequence with a foul shot that made it 117-111 with 2:11 to go.

Bane was 12 for 17 from the field. He also had six rebounds and five assists.

Franz Wagner scored 25 points for Orlando, and reserve Anthony Black had 22 points and nine rebounds. The Magic won for the sixth time in seven games.

Cavaliers 135, Pacers 119

In Indianapolis, Donovan Mitchell scored 43 points to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 135-119 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

Mitchell, who made 16 of 27 shots from the field, also had nine rebounds and six assists. Jaylon Tyson added 27 points on 10-of-13 shooting and a team-high 11 rebounds. Evan Mobley and DeAndre Hunter each scored 13 for the Cavs.

Pascal Siakam had 26 points for Indiana, and Andrew Nembhard scored 21.

Garrison Mathews, who signed a second 10-day contract Monday with the Pacers, added 15 points - hitting all three of his attempts from 3-point range. Jay Huff also scored 15.

Nets 116, Hornets 103

In New York, Michael Porter Jr. scored 35 points, Noah Clowney had 18 and the Brooklyn Nets beat the Charlotte Hornets.

Nic Claxton added 13 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for Brooklyn, which had lost four in a row. Reserves Danny Wolf and Drake Powell each scored 10 points.

Porter went 7 for 11 from 3-point range. The Nets went 17 for 43 from beyond the arc, compared to 12 for 32 for the Hornets.

Kon Knueppel scored 18 points for Charlotte, which had won two in a row. LaMelo Ball had 12 points and 14 assists, and Collin Sexton finished with 15 points.

Wizards 129, Bucks126

In Washington, CJ McCollum scored 28 points, including a 3-pointer with 14.4 seconds remaining that helped the Washington Wizards outlast the Milwaukee Bucks .

The Wizards (3-16) have won two of three following a 14-game losing streak, and Milwaukee only managed a split in two games against Washington and Brooklyn - two of the NBA's worst teams.

It was tied at 115 after former Bucks standout Khris Middleton made a 3-pointer for Washington.

Pistons 99, Hawks 98

In Detroit, Cade Cunningham scored eight of his 18 points in the final 3:21, and the Detroit Pistons rallied to beat the Atlanta Hawks .

Atlanta had a chance to win with 0.1 seconds left, but Jalen Johnson couldn't convert a tip-in as time expired.

Jalen Duren had 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Pistons, who won for the 15th time in 17 games. Caris LeVert added 14 points and made two key defensive plays down the stretch.



Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser presents a commemorative shield to Sulaiman Al-Qanai.

Khataf Al-Nawader captures Al-Rihab Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 2: Khataf Al-Nawader, owned by Mohamed Naif Al-Maimouni and trained by Mohammed Al-Maimouni with jockey Hadi Al-Omar, seized the Al-Rihab Stud Cup, presented by breeder Sulaiman Mohammed Al-Qanai. The Egyptian Arabian horse won the fifth race — a 1,000-meter mixed category event — clocking 1:15.13 minutes during the Hunting and Equestrian Club's fourth race meeting.

The trophy was awarded to the Al-Maimouni stable by Sheikh Sabah

Fahad Al-Nasser, Chairman of the Supreme Committee and Secretary-General of the Club, alongside Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi, owner of Al-Raya Stud, and Sulaiman Al-Qanai, owner of Al-Rihab Stud. Sheikh Sabah also presented a commemorative shield to Al-Qanai.

Al-Qanai reaffirmed his commitment to supporting horse racing at the Club, emphasizing that the rise in private studs has played a key role in preserving the region's rich Arab and Islamic equestrian heritage.

Sheikh Sabah praised horse owners

for their continued support of the sport, noting the strong competition among several contenders battling for the top places.

Meanwhile, Mabrouk (Al-Faraj) captured the Hunting and Equestrian Club Cup over 1,000 meters, while Al-Albani (Al-Daiya) claimed the Club Cup for mixed horses over 2,200 meters.

In earlier races, Mudar, Masha Allah, Sa'adna, and Aws secured the Hunting and Equestrian Club Trophy from the first through fourth races, respectively.

Big games at top and bottom of Premier League

LONDON, Dec 2, (Xinhua): The Premier League midweek round of games continues on Wednesday with six important matches that affect the top and bottom of the table.

Arsenal is at home to a Brentford side that appears to have found its feet under new coach Keith Andrews, but whether that is going to be enough to stop the league leaders in the Emirates Stadium is another question.

Mikel Arteta's side will be frustrated it wasn't able to take all three points from Sunday's game against Chelsea, who played for around an hour with 10 men - although a point away to a title rival away from home in a London derby is far from a bad result.

Chelsea visits a Leeds United that is starting to slip into crisis and although Daniel Farke will be pleased at the personality his side showed

in its fightback against Manchester City, another defeat could edge him closer to the sack.

With another home game against Liverpool at the weekend, Farke needs Leeds' Elland Road Stadium to be as hostile as possible for its rivals.

Chelsea is without Moises Caicedo after his red card against Arsenal and coach Enzo Maresca has advanced that Reece James won't start after his huge effort at the weekend.

Liverpool ended its dreadful recent form with a 2-0 win away to West Ham on Sunday, with Arne Slot dropping Mohamed Salah for the game that saw Alexander Isak score his first goals for the club.

Slot's side now entertain an impressive Sunderland and despite questions over Salah, the Liverpool coach had nothing but praise for the striker, saying on Tuesday morn-

ing he had "been so outstanding for this club for so many years and will be for the future." Elsewhere, fifth place Brighton is at home to fourth placed Aston Villa in what looks like a fascinating game between two sides in their best form of the season.

Second from bottom Burnley has to end a run of four consecutive defeats in a vital match at home to Crystal Palace, where doubts have started to grow over the long-term future of coach Oliver Glasner over the club's lack of activity in the transfer market.

Finally, Wolverhampton continues to look for the first win of the season when Nottingham Forest is the visitor. Forest has improved considerably since Sean Dyche took over as coach, and despite a weekend defeat to Brighton, three points at Molineux would lift the club further away from the relegation zone.



Dallas Mavericks center Anthony Davis, center, struggles to hold onto the ball as Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, left, and guard Peyton Watson defend in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)