



GULF STATES CEMENT COMMITMENTS IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE



Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

Left: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the accompanying delegation arrive in Manama, Bahrain. His Highness the Amir and the accompanying delegation were received by the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain, Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa. Right: Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa delivers his opening remarks at the 46th Summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Kuwait Amir highlights unity, stability at summit in Bahrain

MANAMA, Dec 3, (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has relied on time and again on unity as a proven policy that deters challenges and achieves the mutual benefit of countries in the region, said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Wednesday.

Delivering his speech to the 46th GCC Summit held in Manama, Bahrain, His Highness the Amir reiterated that Gulf countries, through the awareness and vigilance of their people, had overcome highly complicated regional and international challenges.

He added that stability, via collective security and unified destiny, will ensure peace in the region, saying that the previous 45th session of the GCC, headed by Kuwait, had addressed challenges and also focused on ways to boost cooperation among the council's members as well as regional and international partners.

His Highness the Amir congratulated the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and his country on hosting the current session of the GCC, asserting that the Kingdom would help further boost cooperation amongst the six member countries.

His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad also congratulated Bahrain on becoming a non-permanent member at the UNSC for 2026-27, reflecting Bahrain's strong international presence in global peace and security.

Regarding issues of regional and international importance, His Highness the Amir condemned the Israeli occupation aggression against the State of Qatar, saying that the attack was considered an assault against the whole of the GCC.

His Highness the Amir expressed condemnation of the Israeli occupation aggression against the Palestinian people, asserting that occupation must end and the establishment of a Palestinian state within the June 4, 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital must see light in accordance with intensified international efforts aimed at the two-state solution, as well as ending the aggression on Gaza Strip.

His Highness the Amir also vowed Kuwait's commitment to continue work with Iraq, based on understandings and mutual agreements, to complete marine boundary demarcation beyond mark 162 in accordance with international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).



Amiri Diwan photo

A warm reception greets HH the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as he arrives in Bahrain for the GCC Summit.

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PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives the Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Dr. Jihad Azour and his accompanying delegation on their visit to the country. - See Page 8

Winter power deal in works

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has submitted a request to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for approval to finalize the procedures for signing a power purchase agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) for the period from January 1 to the end of March 2026.

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Day by Day

I PONDERED for a long time over the saying that the poor envy the rich, while the rich may be understandable. But for the rich to envy the poor, that is the height of despair and moral failure.

It is unsettling to think that the rich could envy those with so little.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

MoH updates on-call hours and pay rules

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued a ministerial decree for amending some provisions on job descriptions, allowances, and bonuses for employees in the Ministry of Health's pharmaceutical and paramedical services sectors.

The aim is to enhance governance, optimize assignments, and maximize operational efficiency.

The decree sets a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 48 on-call hours per month. Employees will be compensated for on-call hours worked, but not if they take any leave, including annual or sick leave.

It prohibits combining on-call allowances with overtime or shift compensation, ensuring strict regulation of working hours and payments. Work centers must prepare and approve monthly on-call schedules in line with regulatory requirements and the administrative hierarchy.

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Illegal currency trading in Kuwait could cost you jail ... KD 3,000 fine

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced in a press release that the Cabinet has approved a draft decree-law introducing a new Article (12 bis) to the Commercial Licensing Law No. (111) of 2013. This legal amendment represents a decisive step toward criminalizing what is commonly known as "Alternative Remittance Systems" (ARS) or hawala, one of the most dangerous illicit financial practices that poses a direct threat to the country's financial and economic security.

The Ministry explained that this amendment falls within Kuwait's broader efforts to strengthen its national framework for combating money laundering and the financing of illicit activities, and to close unregulated channels through which funds may be transferred beyond the reach of competent authorities.

What is the Alternative Remittance System, and Why is it a Threat?

The Alternative Remittance System is an informal method of transferring funds outside the official financial system. It relies on individual brokers who receive money in Kuwait and deliver its equivalent abroad through unlicensed networks, without passing through regulated banks or licensed exchange companies, and without any formal documentation or financial records.

This method establishes a parallel and opaque economy that operates outside regulatory oversight. It creates fertile ground for money laundering, enables the movement of funds for prohibited purposes, undermines fair competition with licensed exchange companies, and erodes confidence in the stability and integrity of the national financial system.

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Counterfeit sweep hits Hawally, Salmiya stores

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari announced that inspection teams from the Hawally branch carried out two major seizures, which resulted in immediate closures and the referral of violators to the Commercial Prosecution.

The first seizure involved a shop in Hawally which sold counterfeit bags and shoes with protected trademarks. Approximately 3,000 items, including bags, shoes, clothing, and accessories, were confiscated. The shop was closed immediately, and a report was

filed during a field campaign led by Al-Ansari, with inspectors from the Jabriya Evening Center participating.

The second seizure occurred at a warehouse in Salmiya which was being used illegally to sell used tires. The warehouse was immediately closed, a report was filed, and the case referred to the Commercial Prosecution following inspections by the Jabriya Center.

During a routine check of a clothing and footwear store, inspectors discovered counterfeit clothing, bags, shoes, and accessories bearing protected trademarks. This led to the store's immediate closure and the filing of a report.



Kuwait Army photo

Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian with Commander of US Naval Forces Central Command/US 5th Fleet Vice Admiral Curt Renshaw.

Kuwait Army Chief meets US 5th Fleet Commander

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian and Commander of US Naval Forces Central Command/US 5th Fleet Vice Admiral Curt Renshaw discussed topics of mutual concern on Wednesday.

According to a statement released by the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Lieutenant General Al-Shuraian received Vice Admiral Renshaw and his accompanying delegation upon their visit to Kuwait.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

She brought the ruler under control ... and Socrates' patience defeated his wife's tyranny

Her sharp tongue forced her husband to leave every dawn

The wise philosopher lived amid ignorance

His calm demeanor reportedly led to his wife's death from a heart attack

Arwa al-Qayrawaniyya imposed a condition on Caliph al-Mansur, forbidding him from taking another wife

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:03	Asr	14:30
Sunrise ..	06:27	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr	11:38	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 06-28 km/h with a chance for drizzle.
By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather			
and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	25	17	
Kuwait Airport	27	13	

Abdaly	26	13
Bubyan	23	11
Jahra	27	16
Failaka Island	23	13
Salmiyah	24	19
Ahmadi	24	14
Nuwaisib	26	—
Wafra	26	13

Kuwait Amir receives Italian PM



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah discussed means to bolster the strong ties in all possible sectors with the Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in Bahrain.

MANAMA, Dec 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Wednesday at his residence in Bahrain the Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and the accompanying delegation. The meeting focused on means to bolster the strong ties in all possible sectors to achieve the interests of both countries. The meeting also touched on issues of mutual interest and recent regional and international developments.

All parties must uphold peace deal: Al-Bannai

‘Palestinian cause central to Mideast conflict’

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (KUNA): The Arab Group at the UN reaffirmed that the centrality of the Palestinian cause within the Middle East, saying that it was crucial to resolving the conflict in the region.

Chair of the Group and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Headquarters in New York Ambassador Tareq Al-Bannai told a UNGA session on the issue of Palestine that it was important to enable the Palestinian people to determine their own destiny.

He underlined the importance of establishing an Independent Palestinian State within the June 4, 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as the capital of the country.

Ambassador Al-Bannai lauded the previously held high-level international meeting on the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue, co-organized by Saudi Arabia and France, saying it was an important step to politically revive the cause and bolster international support for the two-state solution.

He conveyed a welcome on the part of the Arab Group to the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip, which enabled the delivery of much-needed relief aid to civilians, the release of prisoners, and the renewal of hope for sustainable peace in the region.

Ambassador Al-Bannai also welcomed US President Donald Trump's signing of the declaration for peace and prosperity during his participation in the Sharm El-Sheikh Peace Summit, expressing at the same time, appreciation to the mediation efforts by Egypt, Qatar, Turkiye, and the US leading to the ceasefire agreement.

The Kuwaiti diplomat said that maintaining the agreement was a collective responsibility, stressing that the Israeli occupation must fully abide by the agreement. He indicated that the Arab Group condemned acts of violation by the Israeli occupation aimed at hindering regional and international efforts for peace and lessening the humanitarian burden on the Palestinian people, which would pave the way for renewing the political path based on international legitimacy.

Ambassador Al-Bannai also said it was important to allow the entry of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip without obstructions and restrictions in accordance with international law, stressing that all crossings must be reopened to allow food, water, and all necessities to enter the war-struck region without delay. Kuwait's representative called for allowing UN and world humanitarian partners to operate in Gaza without restriction to avoid catastrophe, saying that the Israeli occupation had been committing grave violations adding



Tareq Al-Bannai

KUNA photo

to the misery of the Gazans.

He expressed eagerness to effectively partake in the Gaza reconstruction conference scheduled in Cairo, stressing the importance of participation and enabling the immediate reconstruction of the Palestinian enclave.

The conference required serious global community commitment, Ambassador Al-Bannai affirmed, noting that talks about reconstruction should not steer dialogue away from accountability for which the Israeli occupation has a lot to answer for. He commended the role of UNRWA, saying that the agency was a lifeline for millions of Palestinians through its operations and that any hindrance to its activities would affect lives.

On the increasing illegal settlers' hostilities in the West Bank, Ambassador Al-Bannai expressed worry over the escalation propagated by the Israeli occupation authorities, which are clear violations of humanitarian and international laws.

Kuwait joins world in anti-corruption fight

Sound strategy pivotal: Nazaha

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (KUNA): Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has affirmed its commitment to advancing national, regional, and international cooperation in measuring, analyzing, and combating corruption.

Speaking at the UN-hosted Second Global Conference on Harnessing Data to Improve Corruption Measurement, held December 2-4, Vice President of Nazaha Counselor Nawaf Al-Muhammal, who headed Kuwait's delegation, stressed that accurate measurement and risk assessment are essential tools for designing effective anti-corruption strategies.

Al-Muhammal noted Kuwait's strong engagement in international initiatives, including the Global Survey on the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies, whose findings and

methodologies are being reviewed during the conference. He said such tools help strengthen legislative, institutional, and procedural frameworks to prevent corruption.

He highlighted Kuwait's recent hosting of the GCC Experts Committee on Anti-Corruption in August, which produced recommendations calling for comprehensive and transparent measurement methodologies aligned with global standards.

Al-Muhammal outlined Nazaha's efforts to develop precise measurement tools,

including analysis of international indicators, surveys, public opinion polls, and quantitative data derived from reports, financial disclosures, and compliance evaluations - such as adherence to the Right to Access Information Law.

He added that Nazaha is working on a fully integrated operational plan to strengthen its statistical framework, noting that comprehensive data systems are vital for objectively tracking progress in anti-corruption initiatives.

He said that Kuwait looks forward to the adoption of a Saudi-proposed draft resolution titled "Enhancing Data Collection for Measuring Corruption and Assessing the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption and Integrity Measures" during the 11th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention Against Corruption.

Al-Muhammal thanked the international organizers for supporting global cooperation and promoting technological approaches to combating corruption, reaffirming Kuwait's full support for all international efforts aimed at establishing scientific, technological, and practical standards for corruption measurement.

Kuwait's delegation to the conference included Deputy Chairman Nawaf Al-Muhammal and Khaled Al-Muzaini, Director of Planning and Follow-up at Nazaha.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics and supply, Major General Engineer Salah Al-Azmi with Egyptian, Tunisian military officials at the Defence Expo (EDEX 2025).

Kuwait to boost military ties with Egypt, Tunisia

CAIRO, Dec 3, (KUNA): Kuwait's Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics and supply, Major General Engineer Salah Al-Azmi held a series of meetings with military delegation leaders participating in the Egypt Defence Expo (EDEX 2025).

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement on Wednesday that the meetings took place during the participation of a Kuwaiti Army delegation headed by Maj. Gen. Al-Azmi in the exhibition, held in Cairo from December 1 to 4.

According to the statement, Al-Azmi met with Egyptian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ahmad Khalifa and Tunisian Army Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Al-Ghoul.

The discussions focused on enhancing military cooperation

with Egypt and Tunisia, particularly in supply, logistics, and support services, they also exchanged views on issues of mutual interest to strengthen joint military efforts. Al-Azmi also met with several heads of other participating delegations to explore prospects for cooperation and the exchange of expertise in defense industries and military supply systems.

The meetings included reviews of the latest technologies and systems presented by international companies to support development and readiness within military institutions.

EDEX is considered one of the region's leading defense and security exhibitions, bringing together global companies and military organizations to showcase the latest advances in weapons systems and defense technologies.



KUNA photo
Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah with officials and children at the 'I Am Talented' exhibition.

‘We are impressed by skills, abilities of special children’

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah expressed her delight in attending the "I Am Talented" exhibition, and praised the participating children's exceptional skills and artistic abilities that make Kuwait proud.

In a press statement issued at the sidelines of the event held recently at The Avenues Mall, Dr. Al-Huwailah said, "We are happy to be here today at the 'I Am Talented' exhibition. We are impressed by the diverse skills and creativity of our children, from drawing and writing to poetry, Quran memorization, and other talents that deserve support and attention."

She affirmed that these efforts are based on the directives of the political leadership and in line with the state's efforts and laws to serve people with disabilities.

Dr. Al-Huwailah stressed the importance of collaboration between the government,

private sector, and civil society organizations to provide the best services and ensure effective implementation and activation of relevant legislation.

On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Dr. Al-Huwailah highlighted Kuwait's participation in the global celebration, saying, "Today, Kuwait celebrates its people. Here we see beautiful examples of what makes us proud, the performances, arts, and talents of our children, which confirm that disability is not an obstacle to creativity." She noted that the ministry is working on a comprehensive development plan to enhance programs and services for various disability groups, emphasizing, "Kuwait has always been a pioneer and leader in this field, through laws, legislation, and specialized programs for this valued segment of society. Kuwait continues to strengthen its position as a leading model in the care and empowerment of people with disabilities, through an integrated legislative and service system that aims to build an inclusive society that advances social progress."

Kuwait Audit Bureau strives to hike professional performance

JEDDAH, Dec 3, (KUNA): Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative, Financial, Legal Affairs and Prior Audit Dr. Saud Al-Zamanan affirmed that Kuwait's experience in financial oversight and accounting represents a comprehensive professional development model reflecting advanced regulatory practices.

He stated this during his presentation of the Audit Bureau's working paper at the technical seminar held alongside the 15th General Assembly of the Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI), currently convened in Jeddah.

Al-Zamanan explained that Kuwait's oversight model integrates theoretical learning with practical application, encourages research and innovation, strengthens participation in local and international oversight communities, and develops distinguished auditing competencies capable of addressing current and future financial and accounting challenges.

He noted that the Audit Bureau's paper, titled "Enhancing Capacity Development for Auditors in Accordance with ISSAI

150 and International Education Standards (IAES)," focused on four primary components aimed at elevating professional auditing performance.

The paper outlined international education frameworks including IAES and IS-SAI 150, emphasizing global competency requirements, organizational standards for effective oversight, and structured policies for assessing auditor performance, monitoring development, and accurately measuring training outcomes across regulatory fields.

It also highlighted Kuwait's continuous professional education model, detailing its objectives, learning pathways, and reliance on specialized certifications, while presenting recommendations that ensure auditors consistently upgrade skills, reduce professional obsolescence, and remain capable of meeting evolving oversight responsibilities.

The accompanying seminar showcased successful experiences of Arab and international supreme audit institutions, discussed strategic approaches for capacity building, and reviewed methodologies for measuring the impact of training programs on institutional performance. The Audit Bureau participated with a delegation led by its President, Essam Al-Roumi, in the 69th Executive Council meeting and the 15th General Assembly of ARABOSAI, with sessions concluding Thursday during the 70th Executive Council gathering.



Dr. Al-Zamanan

UAE, Kuwait ties deep-rooted

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the State of Kuwait Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi praised on Tuesday the exceptional and constantly growing Emirati-Kuwaiti relations.

In statements to reporters during his participation in an event held by the state-owned Kuwait Tourism Projects Company at Luna Park to celebrate the 54th National Day of the sisterly United Arab Emirates, Ambassador Al-Neyadi described the UAE President Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan's

recent initiative to celebrate bilateral relations as "a sincere expression of the deep-rooted ties that unite the two countries."

"Kuwait's participation in the UAE's 54th National Day celebrations embodies the strength of our fraternal relations which will always be a source of strength and unity between our two countries," he said.

"The joy of UAE National Day is not limited to Abu Dhabi alone, but extends to Kuwait, which always shares in the UAE's celebrations, reflecting the distinguished ties binding the two countries."

UK greets thousands of Kuwaiti students

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Head of the Political and Programs Section at the British Embassy in Kuwait, Palan Suchak, stated that the United Kingdom receives between 10,000 and 14,000 Kuwaiti students annually, most of whom study through the Ministry of Higher Education's scholarship programs in various academic disciplines.

Speaking exclusively to daily, a representative of the embassy highlighted the importance of the annual education forum organized by IDP Kuwait at the Millennium Hotel recently.

The forum, which was attended by embassy representatives and education experts from multiple countries, provides a crucial platform for schools, advisors, and specialists to learn about the UK education system, which is a highly sought-after education destination for Kuwaiti students.

The representative emphasized that UK universities are "unparalleled," ranking second globally in higher education, with 90 institutions among the top 300 worldwide, along with a long history of research and curricula development.

She noted that universities such as Oxford and Cambridge are the most prestigious globally, while London universities such as LSE, UCL, and King's College attract students interested in social sciences and law.

Furthermore, Head of Political Affairs and Deputy Consul at the Australian Embassy, Saif Khan, said the embassy's participation in the annual education forum organized by IDP Kuwait reflects the long-standing partnership between Kuwait and Australia.

He emphasized that the event provides an important platform to connect with students and parents and offer a clear understanding of the educational experience in Australia.

Khan said, "Last year, we celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Australia, and over these decades, our partnership has developed in various fields, especially education." He revealed that approximately 500 Kuwaiti students travel to Australia to study each year.

Khan indicated that Australia is a preferred destination for medical students in all its branches, from general medicine to specialized fields.

He said, "We have 43 Australian universities offering comprehensive programs in almost every discipline."

Meanwhile, Louis Coughlin and Lulu Haboub, who serve as advisors and education sector officials at the Canadian Embassy in Kuwait, delivered a visual presentation, and offered a comprehensive explanation regarding the option of studying in Canada.



Suchak

HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



She brought the ruler under control... and Socrates’ patience defeated his wife’s tyranny

PATIENCE is always the remedy for the most difficult afflictions, while those who lack it are often doomed.

Who would have imagined that the Greek philosopher Socrates, famed for his wisdom and culture, lived with a wife known for her shouting, ignorance, and fiery temper?

She was sharp-tongued, strong-willed, and domineering. Socrates was forced to leave the house each morning at dawn and not return until after sunset.

Yet Socrates once said of his wife, “I am indebted to this woman. Without her, I would not have learned that wisdom lies in silence and happiness in sleep.”

One day, while sitting with his students, his wife began shouting at him as usual, but this time she poured water over his head. Socrates calmly wiped his face and said, “We should have expected it to rain, after all that thunder.”

It is said that Socrates’ calm demeanor and patience had contributed to his wife’s death from a heart attack.

One night, she ignited a fierce argument, raging like a volcano, while Socrates remained silent and composed. The stress caused her severe pain, and she passed away that night.

Four women who changed the course of history

History has been shaped by remarkable women who left their mark in unique ways.

Arwa al-Qayrawaniyya, wife of Caliph Abu Ja’far al-Mansur, imposed the first marriage contract on him that prohibited polygamy. She was also a driving force behind the founding of Baghdad, insisting that the city reflect the rich traditions of Yemen, Africa, and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Umm Malal al-Sanhajiyya was the only woman to rule Africa. She founded the Moroccan city of Beni Mellal and paved the way for al-Mu’izz ibn Yadis to govern Morocco and establish Sunni doctrine.

- Her sharp tongue forced her husband to leave every dawn
- The wise philosopher lived amid ignorance
- His calm demeanor reportedly led to his wife’s death from a heart at-tack
- Arwa al-Qayrawaniyya imposed a condition on Caliph al-Mansur, forbidding him from taking another wife
- Umm Malal al-Sanhajiyya was the only woman to rule Africa
- Umm al-Banin founded the University of al-Qarawiyyin, the world’s oldest university
- Zaynab al-Nafdhawiyya encouraged her husband to establish the city of Marrakesh
- Sheikh Nasser Al-Mubarak possessed a rare and remarkable memory
- Throughout his life, he was known for his piety and deep devotion to worship

Fatima al-Fihri from Qairawan, known as Umm al-Banin, was a patron of science and scholars. She founded the University of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco, recognized as the oldest university in the world.

Zaynab al-Nafdhawiyya, known as the wife of Sultans, played a major role in encouraging her husband, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, to found the city of Marrakesh.

Sheikh Nasser al-Mubarak (Kaab al-Ahbar)
Sheikh Nasser Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, one of the sons of Kuwait’s seventh ruler, was blind yet remarkably intelligent and possessed a sharp memory, earning him the

nickname Kaab al-Ahbar.

He studied religious sciences, including jurisprudence, theology, and the Arabic language, under scholars in Kuwait.

Sheikh Nasser began writing a commentary on al-Suyuti’s explanation of Ibn Malik’s Alfiyya, but did not complete it. His private secretary, Sulaiman Al-Adasani, assisted him with reading and research.

Known throughout his life for his piety and righteousness, Sheikh Nasser had a profound love for worship, diligently observing prayer, fasting, and the pursuit of knowledge. He was highly respected by the people of Kuwait.

The Poor, the Poorer, and Contentment

It is said that on the morning of Eid, a poor man looked out from his balcony and saw people grilling meat and exchanging greetings. Returning to his room, he found that his wife had prepared a simple meal of boiled fava beans, which she served with a smile and Eid greetings.

The man sat down to eat, muttering to himself, “Everyone else is eating meat while I eat fava beans.” Frustrated, he threw the bean pods out the window with a sigh. Minutes later, he went outside and saw a very poor man sitting under his window, picking up the crumbs from the bean pods, cleaning them, and eating them, repeating, “Praise be to God who has provided food for me without any effort or power on my part.”

The man wept and said, “O God, I am satisfied. O Lord, all praise is due to You as befits the majesty of Your countenance and the greatness of Your dominion.”

Do not deny God’s blessings upon you. Perhaps you possess a blessing you do not fully recognize, while others wish they were in your situation. Praise God and be content with what He has allotted you, for He knows what is best.

■ No matter how cunning a thief may be, he will meet a painful end and die a miserable death.

●●●●

■ Every day, we hear that Gulf countries are introducing new procedures and incentives for visitors, investors, and tourists, in addition to the facilities offered to shoppers.

●●●●

■ Kuwait could adopt similar measures. Visitors and investors deserve to be welcomed and well cared for.

●●●●

■ Although somewhat delayed, the Sultanate of Oman is advancing rapidly thanks to its kind people, their excellent hospitality, and the establishment of projects that showcase and make use of Oman’s beautiful locations.

●●●●

■ In Kuwait, there are thousands of security restrictions. Why aren’t these files reviewed and resolved? Many of these restrictions involve deceased individuals, innocent people, or stem from personal disputes.

Two Arab expats caught selling phony \$100,000 currency notes

Ex-PIFSS director general acquitted

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Misdemeanor Court, presided over by Judge Thamer Abu Salib, acquitted Ahmed Al-Thunayan, the former Director General of the Public Institution for Social Security, of charges of obstructing justice during investigations into a bribery and commissions case involving a Swiss bank, in which Fahad Al-Rajaan and others were accused.

The acquittal followed arguments present-



Ali Al-Dahi

ed by Lawyer Ali Al-Dahi, who asserted his client’s lack of personal liability. Lawyer Al-Dahi explained that the judicial delegation had been carried out by a team formed by the institution, not by Al-Thunayan individually. This contradicted the testimony of the prosecution witnesses, who were aware that Al-Thunayan was not personally responsible for the statements in question.

■ ■ ■
Actor consuming drugs: The Criminal Court adjourned to December 30 the case filed against a well-known Kuwaiti artist for drug use.

The case began months ago when the artist was arrested and charged with drug use.

The Public Prosecution subsequently released the accused on bail of KD 200 and ordered her to undergo medical observation for treatment and recovery.

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Phony US dollars sold: The Criminal Security

Sector has apprehended two Arab expatriates for circulating counterfeit US dollars, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the Counterfeiting and Forgery Crimes Department arrested the two expatriates for fraud and deception, as they promised quick riches by selling forged US dollar bills at half their value.

Counterfeit bills totaling \$100,000 in \$100 denominations were found in their possession. The bills had been produced by photocopying the original notes and packaged in tightly sealed plastic bundles, ready for distribution to unsuspecting victims.

The suspects and the seized counterfeit currency have been referred to the relevant authorities for legal action.

The ministry affirmed that security forces continue to combat all forms of fraud and counterfeiting.

It urged the public to exercise caution, avoid falling for promises of quick profits, and immediately report any suspicious activity.

MPW to expedite road repairs



Road maintenance continues in Al-Ardhiya area.

MPW photo

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan affirmed that the ministry is actively monitoring major maintenance projects under new contracts in various parts of the country. She stressed the importance of expediting completion while adhering to the highest approved technical standards.

In an official statement, Minister Al-Mashaan explained that ministry teams visited the work site in Ardiya, Block 2, Street 2, to review the latest progress in ongoing

maintenance operations. The current work involves laying the surface layer (Type 3), with similar work already completed in Blocks 1, 4, and 5, as well as on Barrak Al-Haifi Street, under the same maintenance contract.

Technical reports submitted by the supervisor of Contract 11 in Ardiya, Abdullah Al-Mutairi, confirm the field teams’ adherence to the approved work plans.

The minister emphasized that this direct monitoring reflects the ministry’s commitment to enhancing the efficiency of road networks and improving the quality of infrastructure in residential areas.

Total hits eight as MoH opens new travel clinic

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The number of travel health clinics has increased to eight in all governorates with the opening of a new clinic at Farwaniya Hospital, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Ministry of Health announced the opening of the Farwaniya Hospital clinic as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance guidance and prevention services for travel-related illnesses. This brings the total number of travel health clinics to eight, distributed across various governorates, ensuring easy access and improving the quality of services provided to citizens and residents.

The ministry revealed that several of these clinics operate on a two-shift system - morning and evening - to meet travelers’ needs and provide flexibility for booking appointments and completing vaccinations and preventive treatments.

It emphasized the importance of visiting travel health clinics well in advance of travel, especially for those going to less developed countries or areas with high epidemiological risk, to receive necessary vaccinations, preventive treatments, and medical advice prior to traveling.

The ministry urged all travelers to take advantage of this specialized national service, consult the interactive travel map on the ministry’s website to learn about the requirements of each destination, and contact the nearest travel health clinic to know about the available services.

KISR mode sounds pollution alarm

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Dr. Abdulah Al-Enezi, the acting Executive Director of the Environment and Life Sciences Research Center at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), announced a specialized training course on the Air Quality Forecasting System, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Al-Enezi emphasized that the system, which was developed by

KISR in collaboration with the Italian company ARIANET, is the first and only one of its kind in Kuwait.

He explained that the launch of this system marks a significant step in protecting public health by providing early warnings when pollutant levels rise. The availability of accurate data enables decision-makers and relevant authorities to respond proactively to mitigate the effects of air pollution.

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Closing ceremony set for December 10 under patronage of Minister Al-Huwailah

Al-Baghli Foundation announces winners for 19th ‘Dutiful Son’ award

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Ibrahim Al-Baghli, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Ibrahim Taher Al-Baghli Foundation for the Dutiful Son and sponsor of the award for the 19th consecutive year, announced the winners of all competitions of the Al-Baghli Dutiful Son Award, as well as the names of the 2025 Dutiful Sons of Kuwait who will be honored at the closing ceremony.

During a press conference, Al-Baghli said the closing ceremony will be held on Wednesday, December 10 under the patronage of the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah. He praised the minister’s efforts in supporting the award’s events, programs, activities, and competitions. Al-Baghli expressed his great satisfaction in sponsoring the award for 19 consecutive years. He said, “This responsibility represents a great challenge and a major responsibility towards volunteer, humanitarian, and charitable work. It motivates the foundation to exert greater effort and give more to achieve our goals in establishing the foundations of social, humanitarian, and volunteer work for the benefit of all



Officials and committee members announce winners of the Al-Baghli Dutiful Son Award during a press conference.

segments and groups of society.” Al-Baghli also announced plans to coordinate with the Ministry of Social Affairs to launch a new competition for those overseeing elderly services in the ministry. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and institutions that have supported and promoted the award, with special thanks to the Minister of Social Affairs, the ministry’s Undersecretary, the Assistant Undersecretary for Social Development Affairs, the Assistant Undersecretary for Social Welfare, and the Director of the Elderly Care Department. Al-Baghli also extended his appreciation to the press and media, public benefit associations, charitable organizations, governmental and private institutions, and volunteers who have provided moral and media support for the award since its inception. Meanwhile, Chair of the Higher Commit-

tee for the award, Ali Hassan, affirmed that the award continues to fulfill its mission, which is to inspire creative energies and honor those with distinguished talents and innovative thinking for serving the charity’s mission and addressing important charitable issues. He said the award seeks to support and empower individuals and civil society organizations to overcome challenges, instill optimism, and hope for a brighter future, recognizing them as the cornerstone of volunteer, charitable, and humanitarian work. Hassan explained that the 19th edition of the award attracted 338 participants, including 98 males and 240 females. A total of 27 winners were selected, including 15 males and 12 females. While female participation exceeded male participation, the number of male winners surpassed that of females. The participants competed for top positions in ten competitions in the “Righteous Son” category, with winners’ names and rankings determined by specialized judging panels. In addition, Head of the award’s evaluation and judging committee, Mansour Al-Salamin, announced the names of 22 distinguished Kuwaiti citizens. He said, “This recognition reflects what we have witnessed firsthand through the positive interaction and outstanding participation of the award’s contestants over its nineteen-year history. It has inspired and motivated us to continue fulfilling our social responsibility. It also challenges us to preserve and build upon these achievements, strengthening our moral and social duty to promote volunteer work. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of implementing the State of Kuwait’s public policies to promote and develop philanthropy in all its forms among individuals and civil society institutions, which is reflected in our continued sponsorship of the Al-Baghli Dutiful Son Award.” Al-Salamin expressed his great pleasure with the humanitarian and social impact of the award, noting its role in raising social awareness, promoting the values of righteousness, filial piety, and patriotism, and its growing influence among all segments of Kuwaiti society. He explained that this impact is clearly reflected in the statistics, which are evidence of the award’s sustained success over the years, as well as the increasing number of participants in its competitions. Efforts are continually made to diversify the topics and categories to engage the widest possible range of individuals and civil society institutions.

Council OK’s KPC Durra site, Subhan housing expansion

Facade design guide for further study

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Technical Committee of the Municipal Council, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, approved the Ministry of Finance’s request to add a fourth floor to residential buildings in a workers’ housing complex in Subhan.

Other items on the agenda that the committee approved are: ■ Kuwait Petroleum Corporation’s request to allocate a site for the Durra field project in Al-Zour ■ A proposal submitted by the Deputy Chairman Khalid Al-Mutairi to include car wash and detailing services among the permitted activities in Abu Futaira, Al-Qurain Markets, and Ardiya Industrial. ■ A project to subdivide a property in Salmiya ■ Granting a license to use sidewalk space for a refreshment cooler of a grocery store/central food market ■ Meanwhile, the committee referred to the executive branch for further study the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources’ request regarding the removal of the current bird market and construction of a modern facility. In addition, the committee returned to the executive branch for consideration, the proposal submitted by member Fahad Al-Abdaljader on issuing a design guide for architectural facades in Kuwait.

Tool enables flexible reporting

PACI rolls out ‘Statistical Designer’ platform for smart data-reporting

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has launched a new digital platform, “Statistical Designer”, which allows users to create statistical reports and display data interactively according to their needs in an easy and flexible manner, reports Al-Seyassah daily. It enables data presentation in tables, graphs, and maps in both Arabic and English, with quick access to and updating of the required data to meet user needs. This initiative reflects PACI’s commitment to developing digital tools that facilitate flexible and efficient user access to statistical information. The platform also supports retrieving historical data, creating future forecasts, and offers an interactive tour to introduce its features and usage.

Kuwait’s envoy in Brussels affirms importance of hosting ICI meeting

BRUSSELS, Dec 3, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Ambassador to Belgium and Head of its Missions to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Nawaf Al-Enezi, affirmed on Tuesday the importance of Kuwait hosting the seventh meeting of the Political Advisory Group of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) and NATO at the Alliance’s Regional Center during the period of 8-9 December 2025 in Kuwait. Ambassador Al-Enezi told KUNA that Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and NATO Secretary-General’s Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood, Javier Colomina, will participate in the opening session of the seventh meeting of the Political Advisory Group. The session will be held with the participation of representatives of NATO member states and representatives of the ICI states, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait, in addition to the participation of Saudi Arabia, Oman, the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the European Union (EU), and experts from several think tanks. During the meeting, round-table discussions will be held to address the challenges faced by partner countries and allies in various fields, as well as ways to strengthen the partnership through practical cooperation and capacity-building in areas such as maritime security, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and combating terrorism and



KUNA photo
Nawaf Al-Enezi, Kuwait’s Ambassador to Belgium and Head of its Missions to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

extremism, as well as countering the proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. It is worth noting that Kuwait hosted the second and fourth sessions of the meetings of the Political Advisory Group of the ICI and NATO in 2015 and 2018. Kuwait has hosted NATO’s Regional Centre since 2017, and it joined the ICI in 2004.

Strict reporting deadlines mandated

CSC initiates secondment wave from National Assembly staff to ministries

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: In a move to enhance administrative efficiency and meet the needs of government institutions for qualified Kuwaiti personnel, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) initiated the secondment process of several employees from the General Secretariat of the National Assembly and the Ministry of State for National Assembly Affairs to various ministries and government agencies, effective from the beginning of December, reports Al-Rai daily. This process is in accordance with the official lists issued by CSC to the relevant ministries and agencies. CSC explained that the seconded employees were selected based on objective criteria, ensuring equal opportunity and fairness. Factors considered included academic qualifications, job titles, technical competencies, and alignment with the staffing requirements of each entity. CSC also referred to the Civil Service Council’s decision issued at its March meeting, which stipulated that employees of the General Secretariat of the National Assembly and the Ministry of State for National Assembly Affairs are exempt from the circular suspending transfers, secondments, and assignments, and that employee consent must be obtained prior to any secondment. It emphasized to government entities the necessity of adhering to a set of regulatory controls. The important requirements include ensuring that seconded employees report to their duties on the specified date. All necessary administrative and financial measures will be taken against those who fail to report, and employee data must be entered into the integrated civil service systems. Allowances and bonuses due to each employee are to be determined by December 7, in accordance with Civil Service Council decisions and without prejudice to the provisions of Resolution No. 38/2006. CSC also highlighted the importance of reviewing and auditing the payroll of seconded employees before approval and disbursement. In addition, the Administrative Affairs departments in each entity are responsible for assigning seconded employees to appropriate work locations according to the needs of their respective sectors.

MoE OK’s 1st semester exam sched

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs at the Ministry of Education, Eng. Hamad Al-Hamad, has approved the examination schedules for the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year for high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12, in the science, arts, and religious education sections, reports Al-Seyassah daily. In an official statement, the Ministry of Education explained that exams for grades 10 and 11 in the science and arts sections will begin on Wednesday, December 17. Exams for grade 12 in the science and arts sections will start on Sunday, January 4, 2026. Exams for grade 12 in the religious education section will begin on Sunday, December 28, 2025. The ministry clarified that 15 minutes will be added to the exam time for each subject to allow students to read instructions and verify the number of exam papers. Also, half an hour will be added for students with learning difficulties in all subjects, in accordance with a decision issued by the General Guidance Council.

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Other Voices

Asil ... who snatched me from the kite

By Ahmad alsarraf

Two days prior to a two-week trip, I had started reading “The Kite Runner” by the internationally acclaimed Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini, which was later adapted into a successful film.

The novel is widely regarded as Hosseini’s first and finest work. I had read it in English a quarter of a century ago.

This time, I found the Arabic version on the Kindle app, which I now use to read books in both languages instead of printed copies. The device is easy to carry and navigate, doesn’t require a lamp at night, is lighter than any book, and lets me look up meanings, origins, and translations of words instantly.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the novel, even though I had forgotten many of the details and plot points, yet it remained vivid in my memory. The story traces much of Afghanistan’s history from 1973 onward, covering Daoud Khan’s coup against his cousin King Zahir Shah, the abolition of the monarchy, the Soviet invasion, the civil wars, the mujahideen’s struggles, and the Taliban’s rise to power after expelling the Russians, along with other events that we have already witnessed in history.

The novel’s richness compelled me to read more slowly, and I found myself rereading certain passages several times.

While packing my suitcase, my housekeeper handed me an envelope. Inside, I discovered the novel “Cloud and Predators” by Asil Abdulhamid Amin, who had written an article two months earlier about her grandfather, Muhammad Amin, famously known as Amin Singer (the name associated with the well-known sewing machine brand of which he was an agent in Kuwait,



alsarraf

which brought him fame and perhaps wealth).

I set the book aside, as I wasn’t in the mood for printed books at that moment, especially while traveling. However, after a short break, I returned to it, flipped through its pages, and my eyes landed on the following passage - “... There... in the Cyclades archipelago, nestled in the heart of the Aegean, the windmills of Mykonos greet the sun at every sunset in a breathtaking spectacle, both poetic and vibrant. The five white windmills stand like maidens, joyfully twirling, dancing. Their dresses swirl with them, rising and soaring like white daisies in the air. The millstones’ blades turn and turn, grinding love, merriment, madness, and revelry into wheat within their bellies.

Those who approach them help knead the bread of life and bake it in the blazing ovens of pleasure—bread unlike any other. Bread that satisfies human hunger and transforms it into a spark of joy, breathing new life into it like a meteor streaking through the darkness of a long night. Perhaps it will ease the weariness of our relentless journey through this grinding existence. Although those ancient windmills, built by the Venetians in the 16th century, have long since fallen into disuse and become mere icons of the island, I still see them this way whenever I visit Mykonos, as they greet me upon my arrival at its port.”

I became completely absorbed in the novel, captivated by its youthful energy, meticulous details, and engaging style. Within hours, it had fully drawn me away from “The Kite Runner”. I found myself wishing it wouldn’t end before the heroine finally met... Muhammad!

The novel “Cloud and Predators” is beautiful and intelligent, just like its author, whom I know little about. I hope she continues writing novels and enriches us with more... soon.

email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Food aid to benefit over 20K people

Namaa Charity provides Gaza relief project to 3,353 families

GAZA, Dec 3, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Namaa Charity, part of the Social Reform Society, announced Tuesday a Gaza relief project providing one food parcel to each of 3,353 families, benefiting about 20,118 people with an average of six members per family.

Khaled Al-Shammari, Head of Development and Relief Sector at Namaa, said in a press statement that the project aims to ease the suffering of thousands of families and improve food security in Gaza amid very difficult humanitarian conditions, where basic needs are rising and food supplies are shrinking.

He underlined that this initiative is part of Namaa’s ongoing commitment to support the Palestinian people and help families facing exceptional hardship.

Supporting 3,353 families despite logistical and humanitarian challenges inside Gaza is a significant achievement that reflects the strength of Namaa’s local partnerships and the effectiveness of its relief operations, he explained, noting that each food parcel includes essential items that cover daily needs and help reduce the impact of severe food shortages.

The average of six members per family reflects the nature of Palestin-



KUNA photo

Kuwait’s Namaa Charity launches Gaza project, helping over 3,000 families.

ian households and their urgent need for regular food assistance, especially with rising displacement and loss of income, he mentioned.

Namaa follows strict field procedures to ensure aid reaches those most in need, without discrimination, with priority for vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and families of martyrs and the wounded, Al-Shamari pointed out.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait Amir

His Highness the Amir also expressed appreciation towards GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi and the staff at the GCC Secretariat, thanking them for their dedication.

His Highness the Amir concluded his speech reiterating his gratitude towards Bahrain for hosting the current session of the GCC.

The 46th GCC Summit convened in Manama on Wednesday with the participation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The summit is chaired by King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain, with the attendance of GCC leaders or their representatives, while Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is participating as the Guest of Honor.

The summit is held amid strong interest by GCC leaders in supporting the Gulf cooperation process and enhancing its institutional capabilities to meet the aspirations of Gulf peoples and strengthen the Council’s role in addressing regional developments and advancing Arab causes.

Over the past two days, Manama hosted a series of coordination meetings for foreign ministers and officials from ministerial and technical committees, during which they discussed the draft final communique and summit declaration, and agreed to refer their recommendations to the Supreme Council for approval at the 46th summit.

Inaugurating the 46th Summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council, current Chair King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifah of Bahrain, spoke of the challenges facing member states and highlighted achievements.

He said the GCC countries were keen on meeting aspirations of their people, as well as eager on collective action to addressing regional and international challenges.

GCC Secretary General Jassem Al-Budaiwi, for his part, spoke of the accomplishments achieved throughout the last session, which was headed by State of Kuwait.

The GCC Summit then turned into a closed-door session, where attending leaders will be delving into regional challenges and ways of addressing them.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to advancing the path of joint Gulf cooperation, which is rooted in strong fraternal ties and unified goals and destiny, said the Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa.

In his opening remarks of the 46th Summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council, King Hamad conveyed his sincere appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the wise leadership of the previous session and the fruitful outcomes achieved in support of the supreme interests of the GCC and the aspirations of its peoples.

King Hamad’s statement noted that a reflection on the GCC’s distinguished journey, initiated by the founding fathers with dedication and goodwill, reaffirms the soundness of their vision regarding deeper integration and unity, in line with the region’s strategic weight and its influential role in regional and international politics, as stipulated in the Council’s basic charter.

He emphasized that practical experience has demonstrated the success of the GCC model as a comprehensive developmental framework capable of balancing global competitiveness with sustained stability and prosperity.

These achievements would not have been possible without a shared vision, unified policies, and clear priorities centered on reinforcing Gulf security, safeguarding national sovereignty, respecting the principles of good neighborliness, and rejecting interference in internal affairs, King Hamad added.

King Hamad further praised the progress achieved across various fields of cooperation, particularly in the areas of Gulf citizenship and economic unity, expressing hope for the completion of the customs union and the Gulf common market, as well as the expansion of partnerships in food and water security, the digital economy, renewable energy, and other vital sectors.

In light of the rapid developments in the region, King Hamad underscored the importance of continuing joint efforts with determination, wisdom, and openness to address regional issues, foremost among them the Palestinian cause, through dialogue and political and diplomatic solutions that enhance stability and open sustainable prospects for the region’s security and development.

King Hamad shed light on his country’s reaffirmation of the importance of implementing the Gaza peace plan, viewing it as a positive step toward de-escalation and creating conditions conducive to achieving just and lasting peace, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

On Gulf security and regional stability, King Hamad stressed the need to protect maritime navigation and international trade from any threat, and to preserve the region’s freedom from weapons of mass destruction, in line with the GCC’s strategic orientations in security and collective defense.

King Hamad concluded his speech by calling for continued efforts to make the GCC a renewed pledge for unity, a fair and open Gulf market, and a soft power capable of preserving identity, safeguarding social cohesion, and shaping a future where development is built on knowledge, innovation, and dignity.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah later attended a luncheon hosted by King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifah of Bahrain, at Sakhir

Palace on Wednesday, held in honor of Gulf leaders visiting Bahrain to attend the 46th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit.

Gulf leaders, in the final communique of the 46th GCC Summit, held in Bahrain Wednesday called for enhancing cooperation amongst member states on all avenues as well as addressing the various challenges facing the region.

The final communique, issued by the Supreme council of the GCC, examined report on vision of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on boosting joint Gulf work regarding economic unity and security and defense systems, as well as coordinating positions on regional and international fronts.

The council directed with multiplying efforts to continue implementing the vision according to a certain timetable and meticulous supervision, and tasked the GCC general secretariat with submitting a detailed report on this to the next session.

As for joint Gulf work, the supreme council looked into negotiations on late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud suggestion of taking the cooperation to a federation.

The council affirmed its keenness on the strength and cohesion of the Cooperation Council, unity, achieving greater coordination, integration and cohesion in all fields, in order to achieve the aspirations of the citizens of the Council countries.

The Supreme Council reviewed the developments of the economic unit of the Gulf Cooperation Council and approved the gradual operation of the customs data exchange platform during the second half of the year 2026.

The Council assigned the relevant ministerial committees to finish addressing the remaining requirements of the Customs Union and submit an executive action plan and timetable as soon as possible.

Within the framework of the Gulf Common Market, the Supreme Council stressed following up with the implementation of regulating the supply of cross-border trade in services between the GCC countries, measure its economic and social impact on a periodic basis, and determine mechanisms for recognition of qualifications and service licenses between member states.

The Supreme Council welcomed the proposal to hold a “Made in the Gulf” forum and exhibition, with the aim of highlighting the distinguished industrial capabilities in the Council countries and promoting industrial integration.

The Council approved the establishment of the GCC Civil Aviation Authority, headquartered in the United Arab Emirates, and the general agreement to connect the GCC countries with the railway project.

It also approved the unified rules for joint property owners in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Furthermore, it praised the recommendations of the first Gulf Conference for the future of judicial, and legislative cooperation, which was held in Kuwait, as well as the findings of the nineteenth regular meeting, of the heads of the Shura, Representatives, National, and Nation Councils in the GCC countries, and appreciated the achievements and efforts made by member states in the field of Islamic affairs and endowments.

The Supreme Council praised the efforts and achievements made by member states in strengthening governance, transparency, accountability, integrity and anti-corruption tools through joint Gulf action, and the practical steps towards building an integrated monitoring and accounting system.

The Supreme Council also approved the Gulf security strategy to combat money-laundering crimes and praised the gains and achievements of the Council countries in regards to human rights, including their achievements in the field of combating human trafficking.

The Council reviewed the views of the advisory body on the topics that it had previously been assigned to study, including confronting natural disasters, developing unified policies and legislation for the use of artificial intelligence, and obstacles to the integration of services between member states, as well as environmental protection, climate change, and renewable energies.

The Supreme Council emphasized the strengthening of joint action to enhance work related to energy transformations and climate change, and to activate cooperation, exchange of experiences, within the framework of Green Middle East Initiative.

It stressed the importance of supporting the stability of global energy markets, adopting a balanced approach without excluding energy sources, and working to innovate technologies that enable managing emissions and making use of all energy sources with high efficiency, to enable sustainable economic growth for all.

It appreciated the achievements and efforts made by member states in the circular carbon economy approach.

The Supreme Council congratulated UAE’s Sheikhha Nasser Al-Nowais on winning the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations Tourism Organization for the period 2029-2026.

The Council expressed its support for the United Arab Emirates to host, in partnership with the Republic of Senegal, the 2026 United Nations Water Conference.

It also congratulated the United Arab Emirates on the success of the activities of the 12th session of the World Government Summit.

The Supreme Council congratulated the inauguration of the Bahrain International Commercial Court, in an important step that embodies the Kingdom of Bahrain’s keenness to develop the justice system.

It also congratulated Bahrain for its distinguished

success in hosting the 2025 Asian Youth Games under the patronage of King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifah.

The Supreme Council congratulated Saudi Arabia for the success of the Hajj season, and expressed its appreciation for the efforts and facilities provided by the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

It also congratulated Saudi Arabia on the occasion of its victory in hosting the World Cup, 2034.

The Council congratulated Kuwait on the success of hosting the 26th Gulf Cup Football Championship, extending its congratulations to Bahrain for winning the tournament.

The Supreme Council praised the success of Oman in hosting the Indian Ocean Conference eighth session in Muscat.

It appreciated the efforts of Qatari diplomacy in reaching the Doha Framework Agreement for peace between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo River Alliance.

The council also congratulated Qatar on the success of the U-17 World Cup, and expressed its wishes for success for the State of Qatar in the eleventh edition of the Arab Cup Championship.

It praised the success of the State Qatar in hosting the Second World Summit for Social Development, and welcomed the Doha Political Declaration.

The Supreme Council expressed its support for the State of Qatar’s bid to host the 2036 Olympic and Paralympic Games, wishing it success in hosting this global sporting event.

The Council congratulated Kuwait on the occasion of its selection as the Capital of Arab Culture and Media for the year 2025, which reflects the cultural and media heritage of the State of Kuwait and its role as a beacon of culture and a platform for creativity in the Arab world.

The Supreme Council welcomed the State of Kuwait’s hosting of the third Arab-Chinese summit, scheduled to be held in 2030, hoping that the summit will contribute to strengthening cooperation relations and achieving common interests.

Moreover, it congratulated Kuwait on its victory to host the 2026 Asian Handball World Cup, wishing it success in hosting this important sporting event.

The leaders of Gulf Arab states agreed to further solidify unity within the six-member bloc as part of ambitions to keep development in the region on an upward trajectory, according to a declaration issued after a summit on Wednesday.

Such a measure stems from the “joint values and intertwined fates” that have long been a hallmark of the “historic and brotherly” relations that bind Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, the declaration underlined after the 46th GCC summit in Sakhir area, south of the Bahraini capital Manama.

Since the bloc’s inception in 1981, its pioneers and founding fathers had backed all efforts aiming to usher in greater development, security and prosperity in the Gulf Arab region, an ideology shared by GCC leaders to this very day, all of whom expressed their glee over the achievements seen in member states as of late, it said.

Respecting the sovereignty of GCC member states and the non-interference in their internal affairs was another core matter the declaration underlined, saying any threat to the security and stability of a member state was tantamount to targeting the Riyadh-based bloc as a whole, it emphasized, while rejecting the use of force or threatening rhetoric.

As part of efforts to stifle all conflicts and unrest plaguing the Middle East region, the declaration vociferously called for an end to the war on the Gaza Strip and allow the unimpeded delivery of aid to the Palestinian enclave, inevitably leading to the formation of an independent Palestinian state based on 1967 border lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Accelerating initiatives to build a digital-based economy as part of efforts to keep growth steady was another matter highlighted in the declaration, encompassing trade and tourism, in addition to investment in strategic projects across the areas of infrastructure, transport, energy and telecommunications, it said, citing these measures as instrumental towards bolstering sustainable economic growth.

The Gulf Arab leaders went on to agree on the necessity to bolster cooperation in key realms running the gamut from technology and Artificial Intelligence to cybersecurity, all of which comprise “knowledge integration” efforts and the exchange of know-how over the proper use of digital infrastructure, it added.

On the fight against climate change, the declaration backed “sustainable initiatives” that include efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions to achieve carbon neutrality, in addition to green initiatives as part of common GCC endeavors to promote environmental sustainability while cushioning the worsening impacts of climate change.

The declaration reiterated the need to ratchet up “strategic cooperation” in a bid to bolster the Gulf Arab region’s security and stability, while bringing common goals and ambitions to fruition, it said, highlighting the bloc’s unwavering belief in these principles.

Illegal currency

The Ministry stressed that the proliferation of such practices contradicts international compliance standards and weakens the state’s ability to monitor financial flows and ensure their legitimacy—necessitating firm legislative action.

Criminalization and Strengthened Penalties

Under the newly introduced Article (12 bis), engaging in any activity related to currency exchange, whether buying, selling, or transferring local or foreign currencies inside or outside Kuwait without an official license is now strictly prohibited.

Violations are subject to penalties that may include imprisonment of up to six months and fines of up to 3,000 Kuwaiti dinars. Repeated violations or offenses committed through commercial establishments may result in significantly harsher consequences, including the closure of the establishment or its branches, confiscation of funds and tools used in the illegal activity, and publication of the court judgment in the official gazette.

The Public Prosecution has been granted full jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute all offenses arising under this article, ensuring swift and effective handling of related cases.

A Core Step Toward Protecting the National Economy

The Ministry emphasized that amending the Commercial Licensing Law represents a foundational step in shielding Kuwait’s economy from the risks posed by unregulated financial transfers. The new measures are expected to enhance compliance levels across the market, reinforce investor and consumer confidence, and directly support the state’s efforts to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and all forms of illicit financial activity.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry affirmed that it will not tolerate any conduct that undermines the safety of Kuwait’s financial system or threatens market stability. The criminalization of alternative remittance systems and the tightening of oversight over unlicensed currency exchange activities form part of a broader national commitment to building a transparent, secure, and law-abiding financial environment.

The Ministry concluded by underscoring that the law will be enforced without exception, and that safeguarding the national economy requires full compliance with the legal and regulatory framework governing these activities—ensuring the stability of the state and the confidence of all market participants.

Winter power

According to informed sources from the ministry, the ministry will await SAB’s approval before beginning preparations to sign the three-month agreement.

An existing 600-megawatt power purchase agreement between the ministry and the GCCIA remains in effect until the end of 2025.

The ministry will continue purchasing power from the GCCIA during the winter months to allow for thorough and precise maintenance of power generation plants, ensuring their optimal performance in the coming summer.

The sources expect the purchase agreements to be renewed periodically, in coordination with the GCCIA, until the ministry’s power generation projects are completed, including the 900-megawatt Subiya Power Plant (Phase 4) project.

They noted that the ministry began purchasing power from GCCIA in mid-March 2025, with purchase levels ranging from 500 to 900 megawatts depending on the needs of the national grid.

Meanwhile, the ministry is close to completing the electrical interconnection line between the Wafra subplant, which is part of the GCCIA, and the Sabah Al-Ahmad substations, which will increase capacity.

The sources expect the project to be completed this month, explaining that it will enable the ministry to utilize the grid during peak electricity demand in the coming summer.

MoH updates

These schedules must be submitted through the “Enjaaz” system, with an official copy maintained in the designated register.

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Police officers block a street as demonstrators march at a protest opposing ‘Operation Midway Blitz’ and the presence of ICE on Sept 9. (AP)

US halts immigration applications for migrants from 19 travel-ban nations

WASHINGTON, Dec 3, (AP): The Trump administration is pausing all immigration applications such as requests for green cards for people from 19 countries banned from travel earlier this year, as part of sweeping immigration changes in the wake of the shooting of two National Guard troops.

The changes were outlined in a policy memo posted Tuesday on the website of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, the agency tasked with processing and approving all requests for immigration benefits.

The pause puts on hold a wide range of immigration-related decisions such as green card applications or naturalizations for immigrants from those 19 countries that the Trump administration has described as high-risk. It's up to the agency's director, Joseph Edlow, on when to lift the pause, the memo said.

The administration in June banned travel to the US by citizens of 12 countries and restricted access for those from seven others, citing national security concerns.

The ban applied to citizens of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen while the restricted access applied to people from Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

At the time, no action was taken against immigrants from those countries who were already in the US before the travel ban went into effect.

But now the news from USCIS means those people already in the US - regardless of when they arrived - will come under extra scrutiny.

The agency said it would conduct a comprehensive review of all "approved benefit requests" for immigrants who entered the country during the Biden administration.

The agency cited the shooting of two National Guard troops by a suspect who is an Afghan national as a reason for the pause and heightened scrutiny for people from those countries. One National Guard soldier was killed and another wounded in the Thanksgiving week shooting near the White House.

"In light of identified concerns and the threat to the American people, USCIS has determined that a comprehensive re-review, potential interview, and re-interview of all aliens from high-risk countries of concern who entered the United States on or after January 20, 2021 is necessary," the agency said.

The agency said in the Tuesday memo that within 90 days it would create a prioritized list of immigrants for review and if necessary, referral to immigration enforcement or other law enforcement agencies.

Since the shooting, the administration has announced a flurry of decisions it was taking to scrutinize immigrants already in the country and those seeking to come to the US.

Last week, the director of USCIS said in a social media post that his agency would be reexamining green card applications for people from countries "of concern." But the policy directive Tuesday goes further and lays out in more detail the scope of who will be affected.

USCIS also said last week that it was pausing all asylum decisions, and the State Department said it was halting visas for Afghans who assisted the US war effort.

Hegseth cites ‘fog of war’ in defending follow-on strike on alleged drug boat

Doodling, drowsiness and conspicuous misspelling highlight Trump last Cabinet meeting of ‘25

WASHINGTON, Dec 3, (AP): With Tuesday's White House Cabinet meeting chugging past the two-hour mark, US President Donald Trump's eyes fluttered and closed. His budget director busied himself doodling a fluffy cloud. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth was lucky enough to speak early, but the title on his nameplate was misspelled.

The sleepy, and occasionally slipshod, gathering nonetheless ended with a flurry of news. Trump declared that he didn't want Somalis in the US and Hegseth cited the "fog of war" in defending a follow-up strike on an alleged drug-carrying boat in the Caribbean Sea in September.

The president started things off by noting that it was the last time his Cabinet would gather until 2026. And, though marathon sessions with his top advisers lavishing praise have become a Trump trademark since he returned to the White House, this latest installment felt at times like a holiday break was needed.

Trump offered lengthy opening comments largely rehashing his key previous policy announcements from recent months. He also repeated old grievances, going back to his falsehoods about having won the 2020 election.

The president then gave each Cabinet member a chance to speak, declaring, "We're gonna go quickly." That did little to stop most Cabinet members from offering long presentations.

Hegseth went first and praised the Trump administration's move to rename his agency the Department of War - something that can't be officially done without an act of Congress. But the nameplate in front of Hegseth labeled him the "ssecretary of war," including a mistaken double "S" that quickly became the source of searing online ridicule.

After that, as each official took turns speaking, a TV camera trained on Trump showed him struggling to stay alert. The president sat back in his chair with his eyes occasionally drooping and sometimes shutting completely.

Trump's apparent sleepiness followed his criticism of a recent New York Times story examining his schedule and stamina at age 79. Trump again slammed the Times story early in Tuesday's meeting and even slipped into the third person to assure all involved that "Trump is sharp."

Another indication that things were dragging came from budget director Russell Vought, who was spotted sketching a bucolic scene on White House letterhead.

Vought drew mountains framed by pine trees topped by the kind of friendly-seeming clouds that public television legend Bob Ross preferred to crowd his serene landscape paintings with. The budget chief also sketched an arrow underneath his mountain. Where it was supposed to be pointing was not clear.

Just as Trump's admonishments to



US President Donald Trump speaks during a cabinet meeting at the White House on Dec 2, in Washington, as Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, looks on. (AP)

nestly detailing how they were indeed seeking to reduce prices nationwide.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins talked about economic pressures on farmers. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent called affordability a "crisis," and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Scott Turner said that hundreds of thousands of Americans becoming first-time homebuyers was an example of how the administration was making strides to achieve greater affordability.

The final speaker was Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who spoke for several minutes and acknowledged: "I know I'm last, so I wanted to be fast. But there's a lot to cover."

All told, Tuesday's gathering lasted more than two hours. That fell short of Trump's Cabinet meeting record: an August marathon that stretched to a whopping three hours and 17 minutes.

Still, even the president acknowledged that the latest meeting was going long. "We're spending a lot of time in here," he said.

Trump wrapped things by taking questions from reporters, but only after jokingly asking, "After that, do you WANT to ask any questions?" He also pointed at a journalist holding a boom mic to capture sound from the Cabinet meeting and playfully offered, "How strong are you?"

"You've been holding that for two hours," the president continued, drawing laughs from Cabinet members. "There are very few people who could do that. I'm very proud of you."

Reporters' questions shook off the doldrums.

Hegseth said he did not see that there were survivors in the water when the second strike on the boat off Venezuela was ordered and launched in early September. He said "the thing was on fire" and cited the "fog of war" in defending what occurred. He also said he "didn't stick around" for the remainder of the Sept. 2 mission following the initial strike.

In response to a later question, Trump declared he didn't want Somali immigrants in the U.S., adding that residents of the war-ravaged eastern African country should stay there and try to fix their homeland. He also accused Somalis of being too reliant on U.S. aid programs while offering little to the nation in return.

That drew applause from his Cabinet, though the questions ended abruptly with journalists soon hustled out of the room. Trump punctuated the conclusion by slapping his hand twice on the table, pushing his chair back, standing up and thumping Hegseth on the shoulder.



Prime Minister Mark Carney meets with ironworkers in Calgary, Alta on Nov 27. (AP)

Canada joins EU defense fund

Canada has joined a major European Union defense fund, Prime Minister Mark Carney's office said Monday, as the country looks to diversify its military spending away from the United States.

The plan allows Canadian defense companies access to a 150 billion euro (\$170 billion) EU loan program, known as Security Action for Europe, or SAFE. That would allow Canadians firms to secure cheap, EU-backed loans to procure military equipment.

"Canada's participation in SAFE will fill key capability gaps, expand markets for Canadian suppliers, and attract European defense investment into Canada," Carney said in a statement. (AP)

Europe

Georgian PM slams BBC: Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze on Tuesday sharply criticized the BBC for publishing what he described as fabricated allegations aimed at harming Georgia's national interests.

He made the remarks following a BBC report on Monday claiming that "a World War One-era chemical weapon" may have been used against protesters in Tbilisi last year.

According to Kobakhidze, the BBC relied on unverified claims and ignored the government's detailed response. "The BBC was deliberately provided with false information that was directly aimed at undermining our national interests, and this can legitimately be regarded as a crime," he told the press. (Xinhua)

Belgian police arrest 3: Authorities in Belgium arrested three people on Tuesday after raiding the offices of the European Union's diplomatic service in Brussels and a college in Bruges as part of a fraud investigation, the European Public Prosecutor's Office said in a statement.

Police searched the properties of suspects, several buildings of the College of Europe in Bruges, and at the headquarters of the European External Action Service (EEAS) that sits at the center of the 27-nation bloc's institutions in Brussels, the EPPO said.

The EPPO, an independent public organization of the EU, said it had "strong suspicions" of fraud in awarding a tender for running a 2021 to 2022 training program at the EU Diplomatic Academy for junior diplomats. Former Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell ran the EEAS. (AP)



Europeans accuse Putin of feigning interest in peace after talks with United States envoys

KYIV, Ukraine, Dec 3, (AP): Ukrainian and European officials accused Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday of feigning interest in peace efforts after five hours of talks with US envoys at the Kremlin produced no breakthrough.

The Russian leader "should end the bluster and the bloodshed and be ready to come to the table and to support a just and lasting peace," said U.K. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha urged Putin to "stop wasting the world's time."

The remarks reflect the high tensions and gaping gulf that remain between Russia on one side and Ukraine and its European allies on the other over how to end a war that Moscow started when it invaded its neighbor nearly four years ago.

A day earlier, Putin accused the Europeans of sabotaging the US-led peace efforts - and warned that, if provoked, Russia would be ready for war with Europe.

Since Moscow invaded Ukraine in 2022, European governments, along with the US, have spent billions of dollars to support Kyiv financially and militarily. Under President Donald Trump, however, the US has tempered its support - and instead made a push to end the war.

On Wednesday, the Kremlin spokesman said he wouldn't discuss



This image made from video provided by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on Dec 2, shows an air-view of a damaged building of the National Technical University in Pokrovsk, a city in the Donetsk region, Ukraine. (AP)

the substance of the talks but pushed back on any suggestion that Putin had rejected the US peace plan.

Where the peace talks go from here depends largely on whether the Trump administration decides to increase the pressure on Russia or on Ukraine to make concessions.

A US peace proposal that became public last month was criticized for being tilted heavily toward Moscow because it granted some of the Kremlin's core demands that Kyiv has rejected as nonstarters.

Many European leaders worry that

if Russia gets what it wants in Ukraine, it will have free rein to threaten their countries, which already have faced incursions from Russian drones and fighter jets, and an alleged widespread sabotage campaign.

Putin met Tuesday in Moscow with Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner. The Russian and American sides agreed not to disclose the substance of the talks, but at least one major hurdle to a settlement - the fate of four Ukrainian regions Russia partially seized and occupies and claims as its own - remains.

German president's UK state visit to celebrate strategic ties

LONDON, Dec 3, (AP): Britain's royals welcomed German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier to the UK on Wednesday for a state visit that will celebrate the close ties between the countries while also remembering the scars of the past.

Britain rolled out the red carpet of pageantry led by two of its most popular royals, Prince William and Princess Catherine, usually known simply as Kate. The visitors were then whisked to Windsor Castle, a 1,000-year-old fortress west of London.

King Charles III will fete Steinmeier and his wife, Elke B udenbender, at the start of a three-day tour featuring all the pomp and ceremony the UK traditionally rolls out for its honored guests. But there will also be a somber note as Steinmeier becomes the first German head of state to make a formal state visit to Britain in 27 years.

On Friday, the couple will visit Coventry Cathedral to commemorate the Nazi bombing of the city, which killed at least 568 people and destroyed or damaged more than half of its homes on the night of Nov. 14, 1940. It was the single most concentrated attack on a British city during World War II.

Germany has apologized more than once for the Nazi regime's atrocities. And during Charles' own state visit to



German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, (third right), with his wife Elke B udenbender, (fourth right), stand with Britain's King Charles III, (second right), Queen Camilla, (right), Prince William, (second left), and Kate, Princess of Wales, during the ceremonial welcome at the start of his State Visit to the United Kingdom, at Windsor Castle in Windsor, England on Dec 3. (AP)

Germany in 2023, he acknowledged the devastation caused by the war, laying a wreath at the remains of St. Nikolai Church in Hamburg to commemorate the more than 30,000 people who were killed during the Allied bombing of the city in July 1943.

But the timing of this event makes

it unique, a veteran royal watcher said.

While state visits are hosted by the king, they are scheduled at the request of the elected government to reward friends - and sometimes nudge reluctant partners - with a red carpet treatment only Britain's royal family can provide.

‘French president committed to defend fair and reciprocal market access’

Macron arrives in China for talks with Xi on trade ties and Russia’s war in Ukraine

BEIJING, Dec 3, (AP): Emmanuel Macron arrived in China on Wednesday for a three-day state visit focusing on trade and diplomatic talks as the French president seeks to enlist Beijing in pressuring Russia toward a ceasefire with Ukraine.

Macron will advocate for an agenda of cooperation in economic and trade matters aimed at achieving a balance that ensures “sustainable, solid growth that benefits everyone,” his office said.

France is aiming to attract more investment from Chinese companies and facilitate market access for French exports. During the visit, officials from both nations are expected to sign several agreements in the energy, food industry, and aviation sectors. Macron is committed to defend “fair and reciprocal market access,” his office said.

He and his wife Brigitte wore open overcoats against the winter chill as they stepped off a plane after nightfall at an airport in Beijing and walked down a red-carpeted jetway. They were greeted by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who spoke with Macron before the French leader and his wife departed in a limousine.

They are expected to visit the 18th-century Qianlong Garden complex in the Forbidden City, the former palace of China’s emperors, on Wednesday evening. The garden, which dates from the Qing dynasty, recently reopened to the public after a major renovation.

France will host the Group of Seven summit in 2026 involving the world’s most advanced economies, while China will chair the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which includes the United States, South Korea, Japan, Australia, and Russia.

The 27-nation bloc runs a massive trade deficit with China - over 300 billion euros (\$348 billion) last year. China alone represents 46% of France’s total trade deficit.

France and the European Union have described China as a partner, competitor and systemic rival. Recent years have been marked by multiple trade disputes



French President Emmanuel Macron is welcomed by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, upon his arrival in Beijing, capital of China on Dec 3. (Xinhua)

across a range of industries after the EU undertook a probe into Chinese electric vehicles subsidies. China responded with investigations into imports of European brandy, pork and dairy products.

In July, Macron welcomed exemptions for most cognac producers as a positive

step. France is China’s first supplier of wine and spirits.

Macron’s talks with President Xi Jinping will also address Russia’s war in Ukraine, particularly following a meeting Monday in Paris with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss potential terms for a ceasefire.

“What we want ... is that China can convince and influence Russia to move toward a ceasefire as quickly as possible and consolidate that ceasefire through negotiations which, in our view, should lead to solid security guarantees for Ukraine,” a French top diplomatic official said.

Paris expects Beijing to “refrain from providing Russia with any means whatsoever to continue the war,” the official said, speaking anonymously in line with the French presidency’s customary practices.

China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said last week that Beijing believes in “dialogue and negotiation” to resolve the Ukraine war and supports “all efforts” leading to peace. Since the beginning of the Ukraine conflict, China “has played a constructive role in promoting a political resolution of the crisis,” she said.

On Thursday, Macron will meet with Xi at the Great Hall of the People. Both leaders will then participate in a Franco-Chinese business forum. In the afternoon, Macron’s agenda includes talks with Zhao Leji, chairman of the National People’s Congress, and Chinese Premier Li Qiang. The French presidential couple will then travel to Chengdu in China’s Sichuan province.

On Friday, Macron and Xi will have talks in Dujiangyan, on the site of one of the world’s oldest irrigation system. Macron will later meet with students from the Sichuan University.

Chengdu is also home to the Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda, where Yuan Meng, the first giant panda born in France that was named by first lady Brigitte Macron, is now staying. France last month sent back to China a couple of star giant pandas who lived in the country for 13 years and gave birth to three cubs.

UN chief Guterres saddened by flooding, landslide deaths in 4 Asian countries

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 3, (Agencies): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life caused by severe flooding and landslides across Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, his spokesperson said Tuesday.

Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement that the UN chief conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and expressed his solidarity with all those affected by the devastating floods.

The United Nations is in close contact with authorities in all four countries and stands ready to support relief and response efforts, and UN Country Teams remain at the disposal of governments to provide necessary assistance, he added.

Parts of Asia were reeling after torrents of rain unleashed catastrophic floods and landslides last week, killing more than 1,400 people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia. The disaster has also laid bare stark economic disparities in the region.

Indonesia has borne the heaviest blow, recording at least 753 deaths, followed by Sri Lanka with 465. Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake said it’s too early to determine the exact number of dead in his country. At least 185 people in Thai-



This aerial drone photo taken on Dec 2, 2025 shows a view of the mud-covered area in Pidie Jaya Regency, Aceh province, Indonesia. (Xinhua)

land and three in Malaysia have also been confirmed dead.

Rescue teams on Wednesday were racing against time to reach isolated communities, as more than 1,000 remain missing and as villages lie buried under mud and debris amid ongoing power and telecommunications outages.

Indonesia’s President Prabowo Subianto visited a disaster zone Monday, promising aid and support for re-

building though he has yet to declare a national emergency or sought international assistance like his counterpart in flood-stricken Sri Lanka.

Hard-hit Indonesia and Thailand, both middle-income economies with comparatively stronger fiscal capacity, are able to mobilize extensive rescue operations, deploy military assets and channel emergency funds, while Sri Lanka is responding under far more strained conditions.

Lee weighs apology to N.Korea over allegations of leafleting, drone use

SEOUL, South Korea, Dec 3, (AP): South Korean President Lee Jae Myung said Wednesday he’s weighing a possible apology to North Korea over suspicions that his ousted conservative predecessor intentionally sought to raise military tensions between the war-divided rivals in the buildup to his brief martial law declaration in December 2024.

Speaking to reporters on the first anniversary of imprisoned former President Yoon Suk Yeol’s ill-fated power grab, Lee - a liberal who won a snap presidential election following Yoon’s removal from office in April - stressed his desire to repair ties with North Korea. But asked about North Korea’s yearslong detentions of several South Korean nationals, Lee said he wasn’t aware of the issue, drawing criticism from relatives who call for their safe return.

A special prosecutor last month indicted Yoon and two of his top defense officials over allegations that he ordered drone flights over North Korea to stoke tensions. South Korean media also reported Monday that South Korea’s military under Yoon’s presidency flew balloons carrying propaganda leaflets across the border.



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung speaks during a news conference to mark the first anniversary of the Dec. 3 martial law crisis at the Blue House in Seoul, South Korea on Dec 3, 2025. (AP)

While the drone and leafleting allegations have yet to be proven in court, Lee still said he personally wishes to apologize to North Korea.

“I do think we need to apologize, but I haven’t been able to say so because I worry it could be used to smear (me) as pro-North Korean or spark political ideological battles”

in South Korea, Lee said. “That’s all I will say for the time being.”

The main conservative opposition People Power Party criticized Lee’s comments as politically divisive and urged him to safeguard the military’s honor.

North Korea publicly accused Yoon’s government of flying drones over Pyongyang to drop anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets three times in October 2024. South Korea’s military has declined to confirm the claims.

Since taking office in June, Lee has taken proactive steps to ease inter-Korean tensions, including turning off frontline loudspeakers that blared K-pop and world news and banning activists from flying balloons carrying propaganda leaflets toward North Korea. Pyongyang has so far ignored Lee’s overtures, with leader Kim Jong Un stating his government has no interest in dialogue with Seoul.

Lee lamented North Korea’s stance but promised to continue to make peace gestures. He said the suspension of regular South Korea-U.S. military drills, which North Korea views as invasion rehearsals, could be an option to consider to convince Pyongyang to return to talks.

Hernández freed after US president pardon

Zelaya accuses Trump of meddling in Honduras elections

TEGUCIGALPA, Dec 3, (Agencies): Former Honduran President Manuel Zelaya on Tuesday accused US President Donald Trump of “foreign interference” in Honduras’ presidential elections, after Trump publicly backed the conservative National Party’s candidate and pardoned another former president from the same party.

A day after Honduran electoral authorities stopped reporting updates to the presidential vote count because of “technical problems,” candidate Salvador Nasralla of the conservative Liberal party had a slight edge Tuesday over Nasry Asfura, the National Party candidate endorsed by Trump.

With votes from about 62% of polling places counted, Nasralla had 39.94% to Asfura’s 39.83%. Only about 2,000 votes separate the two conservative candidates. Rixi Moncada of the governing democratic socialist LIBRE or Liberty and Refoundation Party, trailed with 19.17% of the vote.

The website Honduran electoral authorities set up to share vote tallies experienced “technical problems” that caused it to crash and leave the public in the dark about the extremely close presidential and other contests, the National Electoral Council said earlier Tuesday.

The website had been updating vote counts since shortly after the close of polling in Sunday’s election, but it went down around midday Monday and there had been no official updates



Honduras’ President Juan Orlando Hernandez speaks during the opening ceremony of the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland on Nov 1, 2021. (AP)

of the vote count’s progress until Tuesday afternoon. When the site went down, only 515 votes separated leader Asfura from Nasralla. Neither of the two top candidates are from the Libre party of incumbent President Xiomara Castro, though Nasralla has been both rival and ally, serving for a couple years as her vice president.

The council said it has asked the contractor running the website to come up with a solution as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the council creating a space for media outlets to observe the vote count where it was happening so the public could see what’s happening.

Trump wrote on Truth Social social media platform Monday while the vote count site was down: “Looks like Honduras is trying to change the results of their Presidential Election. If they do, there will be hell to pay!”

Former Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernández, sentenced last

year to 45 years in prison for his role in a drug trafficking operation that moved hundreds of tons of cocaine to the United States, was released from prison following a pardon from Trump, officials confirmed Tuesday.

Hernández was released Monday from US Penitentiary Hazelton in West Virginia, a spokesperson for the Federal Bureau of Prisons told The Associated Press. The bureau’s online inmate records also reflected his release.

The release of Hernández - a former US ally whose conviction prosecutors said exposed the depth of cartel influence in Honduras - comes just days after the country’s presidential election. Trump defended the decision aboard Air Force One on Sunday, saying Hondurans believed Hernández had been “set up,” even as prosecutors argued he protected drug traffickers who moved hundreds of tons of cocaine through the country.

The pardon also unfolds against the backdrop of Trump’s aggressive counter-narcotics push that has triggered intense controversy across Latin America. In recent months, U.S. forces have repeatedly struck vessels they say were ferrying drugs north, a series of lethal maritime attacks that the administration argues are lawful acts of war against drug cartels - and that critics say test the limits of international law and amount to a pressure campaign on Venezuela’s President Nicolás Maduro.



Flight officer Rayan Gharazeddine scans the water in the southern Indian Ocean off Australia from a Royal Australian Air Force AP-3C Orion during a search for the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 on March 22, 2014. (AP)

‘Search resuming for MH370’

Malaysia’s transport ministry said Wednesday that the deep-sea hunt for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 will resume Dec. 30, renewing hopes of finally locating the jet that vanished without a trace more than a decade ago.

The Boeing 777 plane disappeared from radar shortly after taking off on March 8, 2014, carrying 239 people, mostly Chinese nationals, on a flight from Malaysia’s capital, Kuala Lumpur, to Beijing. Satellite data showed the plane turned from its flight path and headed south to the far-southern Indian Ocean, where it is believed to have crashed.

The transport ministry said in a statement that US-based marine robotics firm Ocean Infinity will search intermittently from Dec 30 for a total of 55 days, in targeted areas believed to have the highest likelihood of finding the missing aircraft.

“The latest development underscores the government of Malaysia’s commitment in providing closure to the families affected by this tragedy,” it said.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said, “We ... appreciate the efforts made by the Malaysian side.” (AP)

Amnesty accuses Sudanese paramilitary of war crimes in assault on refugee camp

CAIRO, Dec 3, (AP): An international rights group on Wednesday accused the paramilitary group fighting against Sudan’s military of committing war crimes during its attack earlier this year on the country’s largest displacement camp in the Darfur region.

The Rapid Support Forces, which is at war with the Sudanese military, rampaged through the Zamzam camp in April as part of its siege of the city of el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur province. The RSF seized city, the military’s last stronghold in Darfur, in October.

Amnesty International said in a report that the RSF’s multi-day attack on Zamzam involved killings of civilians, hostage taking and the destruction of mosques, schools and health clinics, and that they must be investigated as war crimes.

“The RSF’s horrific and deliberate assault on desperate, hungry civilians in Zamzam camp laid bare once again its alarming disregard for human life,” said Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International’s secretary-general.



Sudanese soldiers from the Rapid Support Forces unit patrol during a rally for Dagalo, in Garawee town, north of Sudan on June 15, 2019. (AP)

Amnesty’s report was the latest by an international rights group to accuse RSF of atrocities in Sudan’s 30-month war. These have included mass killings and rapes in attacks on towns and

cities, particularly in Darfur. The Sudan military also has been accused of atrocities in the war. A power struggle between the military and the RSF erupted into war in April 2023.

Africa

Tunisian police detain rights defender:

Tunisian police on Tuesday arrested prominent opposition lawyer and longtime human rights defender Ayachi Hammami at his home outside the capital, acting on a five-year prison sentence issued against him last week in a prominent “conspiracy against state security” case, his family said.

Hammami is among at least 40 individuals, including politicians and business figures, who were handed down sentences of between two and 45 years in prison in the same case. Rights groups including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International condemned the charges as politically driven and part of a broader systematic effort by President Kais Saied to quash dissent in the country once known as the birthplace of the Arab Spring. After his arrest on Tuesday, Hammami announced in a pre-recorded video published on Facebook that he would begin an open-ended hunger strike until his demands for freedom are met. (AP)

Guinea-Bissau unable to finalize results:

Guinea-Bissau’s electoral commission said Tuesday that it’s unable to finalize results of a disputed presidential vote after armed men broke into its office and stole vote tally sheets the same day the military seized power.

The announcement did not identify the armed men. It said the break-in happened on Nov. 26, three days after presidential and legislative elections in which incumbent President Umaro Sissoco Embaló and opposition candidate Fernando Dias da Costa each claimed victory.

The military then seized power and installed former army chief of staff Gen. Horta Inta-a as the head of the military government, which will oversee a one-year transition period. (AP)

Hoax ‘bomb threat’ causes emergency landing in India

NEW DELHI, Dec 3, (Xinhua): An IndiGo flight travelling from Kuwait to Hyderabad, India on Tuesday made an emergency landing at the airport in Mumbai, India’s financial capital, after authorities received a bomb threat, which turned out to be a hoax, officials said. The flight was diverted midair after an email warning of a “human bomb” on board was received by officials.

Upon landing at Mumbai, the flight was immediately taken to an isolation bay at the airport. However, the scare turned out to be a hoax as nothing suspicious was found inside.

Also:

NEW DELHI: India’s civil aviation watchdog, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), on Tuesday said it was investigating Air India for operating an Airbus A320 aircraft eight times with an expired airworthiness license.

The DGCA said the aircraft has been grounded and “concerned personnel” have been de-rostered from service pending the outcome of the probe.

“Air India, on the instructions of the DGCA, is carrying out an internal investigation to identify deficiencies in their system and put corrective measures in place to prevent such failures from occurring in the future,” the aviation regulator said.

NEW DELHI: At least three persons died, and nearly 15 others were injured when the bus they were travelling in collided with an electric pole and caught fire in India’s northern state of Uttar Pradesh early on Tuesday, confirmed a local police officer over the phone.

Six injured persons were critical. Among the victims were some Nepali nationals, added the officer.

Kuwait oil price down to \$62.97 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil decreased by 43 cents to USD 62.97 per barrel on Tuesday after being at USD 63.40 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

In global markets, Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate went down each by 72 cents and 68 cents to USD 62.45 per barrel and USD 58.64 pb.

Business

Global recognition in Paris highlights ZGI's 15+ years of regional innovation and startup acceleration

Zain Great Idea named ‘Corporate Rising Star’ by International Chamber of Commerce and Mind the Bridge

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced that its flagship startup accelerator, Zain Great Idea (ZGI), was recognized as one of the Corporate Rising Stars for 2025 at the Corporate Startup Stars Awards in Paris. The recognition highlights Zain's leadership and structured approach to open innovation and startup acceleration for over 15 years in the region.

The announcement took place at a gala event hosted at the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) headquarters in Paris, co-organized with global innovation advisory firm Mind the Bridge. Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait, received the award from Marco Marinucci, CEO of Mind the Bridge.

Now in their tenth edition, the Corporate Startup Stars Awards spotlight corporations worldwide that embed open innovation into their strategy and build robust pipelines of startup collaboration through initiatives such as accelerators, venture builders, venture capital funds, intrapreneurship programs, and procurement fast tracks.

The Corporate Rising Star category specifically celebrated five high-potential companies that demonstrated an outstanding commitment to working with startups and nurturing emerging innovation ecosystems.

ZGI is Zain's regional tech startup accelerator, designed to turn promising startups into investable, scalable ventures. Launched in 2010 as a Kuwait-focused initiative, the program has steadily evolved and, in 2025, opened applications to innovators in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Today it operates as a Group-wide platform that identifies, mentors, and connects founders with routes to capital, pilots, and regional scale through Zain's enterprise and consumer businesses.



Nawaf Al-Gharabally receives the award from Marco Marinucci.

Powered by Zain Ventures, the Group's investment arm, and ZainTECH, its regional digital solutions provider, ZGI combines strategic governance with practical market access. Startups receive hands-on support across cloud, cybersecurity, data, AI, IoT, and robotics, and are matched with Zain's technical, enterprise, and commercial teams to explore proof-of-concepts and commercial partnerships in eight markets.

In November 2025, top entrepreneurs from the ZGI 2025 edition joined an international accelerator program in Silicon Valley to stress-test their business models with global operators, investors, and industry leaders, further strengthening Zain's role as a bridge between regional founders and global innovation hubs. Trips to Silicon Valley for the top startups have been undertaken since 2010.

Over 15 years, ZGI has upskilled more than 7,000 entrepreneurs through over 110 bootcamps, while alumni have raised more than USD 135 million from regional investors over the last five years. The program also builds on



Al-Gharabally with executives at Paris.

Zain's broader ecosystem work, including long-term collaboration with regional entrepreneurship platforms that have trained thousands of founders and helped launch hundreds of startups across MENA. These outcomes position ZGI as a core pillar of Zain's '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' strategy, integrating innovation and AI-enabled digital transformation with a clear path from initiation to investment.

The announcement underlines Zain's commitment to open innovation as a strategic discipline rather than a stand-alone initiative. It reinforces the company's role as an active partner to founders, investors, and ecosystem builders, and reflects how ZGI has become a platform for regional startup acceleration and scaling that is tightly connected to Zain's technology infrastructure and commercial capabilities.

This latest recognition builds on Zain Great Idea's track record of regional and international accolades. In 2023, Entrepreneur Middle East's E-Business Awards named ZGI "Ecosystem Enabler of the Year", honoring its role in accelerating the regional tech startup ecosystem.

Kuwait PM hosts IMF's Azour at Bayan Palace

Talks focus on fiscal reforms, subsidy targeting

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received at Bayan Palace on Wednesday the Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Dr. Jihad Azour, and his accompanying delegation on their visit to the country.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance, and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem.

Discussions focused on cooperation between Kuwait and the IMF within the framework of "Kuwait Vision 2035," particularly in the areas of increasing non-oil revenues, reforming subsidy systems to better target eligible beneficiaries, ensuring fiscal sustainability, and



His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, received at Bayan Palace on Wednesday Dr. Jihad Azour, Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the International Monetary Fund.

implementing selective taxation.

His Highness the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of continuing regular consultations with the IMF to follow up on progress in these areas and to support the country's economic development goals.

The meeting was also attended by the Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan Abdulaziz Al-Dakhil, along with several officials from the Ministry of Finance's departments of international economic cooperation, financial planning and follow-up, and public debt.

In collaboration with S&P Dow Jones indices

InvestGB joins CFA Kuwait panel on advancing factor investing strategies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Gulf Capital Investment Company "InvestGB", the investment arm of Gulf Bank, participated in a panel discussion titled "Unlocking the Power of Factor Investing with Index Strategies," organized by CFA Society Kuwait, a member of the CFA Institute, in collaboration with S&P Dow Jones Indices, the world's leading provider of financial market indices.

The session explored key global insights on the evolution of factor investing and how index-based strategies can be applied across various markets to achieve diversified and risk-adjusted returns.

The panel featured distinguished speakers including Mr. Tareq Al-Saleh, Acting Chief Investment Officer and Managing Director of Wealth Management at InvestGB; Ms. Elizabeth Bebb, Director of Factor and Dividend Indices at S&P Dow Jones Indices; and Mr. Ljubomir Krispinovic, Senior Vice President of Regional Equities and Fixed Income at InvestGB.

Commenting on the collaboration, Mr. Tareq Al-Saleh, Acting Chief Investment Officer and Managing Director of Wealth Management at InvestGB, said:

"Our participation in this panel reflects InvestGB's ongoing commitment to enhancing our clients' financial knowledge and encouraging dialogue around innovative investment strategies. At InvestGB, we believe in empowering investors through education and thought leadership that bridges global expertise with local opportunity."

He added: "Through such partnerships, InvestGB continues to reinforce its mission of delivering innovative, performance-focused investment solutions that contribute to the growth and diversification of Kuwait's financial landscape."

Mr. Fahd Chaudry, Head of Sales,



A group photo of the Invest GB team, with Hani AlAwadhi and Lamia Karam in the center.

Middle East & Africa at S&P Dow Jones Indices added:

"S&P Dow Jones Indices is proud to partner with the CFA Society Kuwait and InvestGB to share valuable insights on passive investing, particularly in the realm of factor strategies. Our thought leadership on index-based strategies, aims to support a clearer understanding of how these tools can be used to manage portfolios in today's dynamic market landscape. S&P DJI is committed to collaborating with the CFA community to build and strengthen the capital markets in the region."

The event provided a valuable platform for investment professionals in Kuwait to gain practical insights into factor-based investing, a systematic approach that combines the rules-based discipline of passive investing with the return-seeking objectives of active management. Attendees also had the opportunity to network and exchange perspectives on evolving market dynamics, technological innovation, and the future of index-driven investment approaches in the region.

S&P GCC composite index declined by 7.4% in Nov

Markaz: Kuwait's economic landscape demonstrated positive momentum

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" released its Monthly Market Review report for November 2025. Kuwait's main equity index declined in November 2025 amid negative global sentiment and profit booking from investors. However, the decline was lower than most other GCC markets. Kuwait All Share Index declined by 1.9% in November, led by stocks in the Technology (-19.0%), Utilities (-7.7%), and Oil & Gas (-5.6%) sectors. Kuwait's banking sector index declined by 2.1% for the month. Among banking stocks, index heavyweight National Bank of Kuwait declined by 4.5% for the month. Commercial Bank of Kuwait and Gulf Bank declined the most, falling by 9.5% and 5.5% respectively during the month. Gulf Bank announced its results for Q3 2025, with its net profit for 9 months declining 2.5% y/y to KD 32.4 million. Among sectors, Consumer Staples was the top gainers, rising by 21.4%, driven by performance of Mezzan Holding. Mezzan Holdings' stock prices rallied after announcing its results for the first nine months of 2025, with net profits increasing by 20.6% y/y to KD 13.5 million. Jazeera Airways increased by 17.4% for the month following its results for the first nine months of 2025, with net profits increasing 60.3% y/y to KD 23.0 million.

Kuwait's economic landscape demonstrated positive momentum in November, headlined by S&P upgrading the sovereign credit rating to AA- with a stable outlook, citing progress on fiscal reforms, the new financing law, and strong government asset positions despite persistent deficits and hydrocarbon reliance. Domestic credit grew by a robust 7.5% YTD, driven by a surge in lending to financial institutions and a steady recovery in household and business credit, which offset declines in the oil and real estate sectors. Simultaneously, the non-oil private sector accelerated, with the PMI rising to 52.8, fueled by increased output, new orders, and the strongest business confidence since June, setting a solid foundation for the forecasted 2% economic growth through 2028.

All GCC equity indices, except Oman, ended the month on a negative note with S&P GCC composite index registering a decline of 7.4%. The S&P GCC Composite Index experienced a month-long decline in November 2025, falling consistently due to negative global sentiment, which led to broad-based losses across Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, and Bahrain. This weakness was compounded by the Q3 2025 results from Saudi Aramco, which reported a 10% year-on-year



revenue decline and a 2.2% fall in net income, driven by reduced crude prices (averaging \$70/bbl) and lower sales volumes. However, the month witnessed two major structural announcements that provided long-term optimism. ADNOC unveiled a massive USD 150 billion investment strategy (2026-2030) to boost production capacity, and Saudi Arabia strengthened strategic ties with the US, resulting in USD 270 billion in bilateral deals focused on AI, technology, and a major expansion of the mining sector. Despite these economic diversification initiatives, profit-taking and weak oil market fundamentals dictated the short-term negative trajectory of the region's main indices. In contrast, The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose due to strong macroeconomic endorsement from the IMF's favorable economic outlook and continued high net buying by foreign investors.

The UAE's domestic credit growth reached a decade-high of 8.2% y/y in September, primarily propelled by a significant rebound in public sector credit growth to 5.2% y/y, despite a slight moderation in private sector credit, particularly in personal lending. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia saw its GDP growth accelerate to 5% y/y in Q3 2025, the strongest since Q1 2023, largely fueled by a three-year high in oil sector growth at 8.2% y/y as production cuts unwound and robust non-oil growth at 4.5% y/y.

Global equity markets, as measured by the MSCI World Index, posted a marginal gain of 0.2% in November 2025, reflecting a month of mixed performance driven primarily by fluctuating sentiment around AI-related stocks and U.S. monetary policy expectations. The S&P 500 also saw a minimal increase of 0.1% in November, as persistent concerns over high stock valuations and the profitability of AI investments were largely offset by a late-month rally fueled by dovish Federal Reserve comments and hopes for a December rate cut. Performance diverged across major economies, with Japan rising 1.4% on the back of expectations of tighter policy by the Bank of Japan, while Emerging Markets (MSCI EM) declined by -2.5%. Chinese equities fell by 1.7%, mainly due to persistent concerns over lackluster domestic demand, and the impact of the global tech stock sell-off.

The yield on the 10-year US treasury notes declined by 9 bps during the month to 4.02%, primarily caused

by increased investor expectations of a future Federal Reserve interest rate cut coupled with a flight-to-safety sentiment. Global economic uncertainty surrounding equity valuations and reports of poor economic performance in key international markets likely fostered a risk-off environment, prompting investors to move capital out of riskier assets like stocks and into the relative safety of US government debt.

Oil (Brent) prices closed the month at USD 63.02 per barrel, declining by 2.9% during the month, its fourth straight monthly decline. This was primarily driven by persistent concerns over excess global supply combined with the US' move to push an aggressive peace proposal between Russia and Ukraine, which the market interpreted as a step toward resolving the nearly four-year-long conflict. This led to the belief of an effective increase in available global supply and the reduction of the geopolitical risk premium attached to oil prices.

The key driver for market movements in December will be the highly anticipated Federal Reserve meeting, where clarity on the interest rate trajectory will be sought, especially given the increased expectations for a rate cut following recent dovish commentary. This will be complicated by the release of a backlog of U.S. economic data delayed by the government shutdown, which could introduce further volatility in the markets. For the GCC markets, the focus should ideally shift to domestic fundamentals and oil price movements, as the overhang of the negative global sentiment and profit booking from investor minimizes.

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.61 billion (USD 5.28 billion) as of 30 September 2025. Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics and help Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), Forsa Financial Fund (the first options market maker in the GCC since 2005), and the GCC Momentum Fund (the first passive fund of its kind in Kuwait and across GCC that follows the momentum methodology), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

Benchmark gains 39.62 points

Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed higher on Wednesday, with the benchmark index rising 39.62 points to 8,819.16, a gain of 0.45%. About 237.6 million shares changed hands across 19,260 cash transactions, totaling roughly KD 65.5 million (around USD 200.4 million).

In contrast, the Main Market slipped, down 10.12 points or 0.12%, ending at 8,134.91 after 121.7 million shares were traded in 12,185 cash transactions, valued at KD 21.6 million (about USD 66 million).

The Premier Market bucked the trend, climbing 53.75 points or 0.57% to 9,424.67, with 115.9 million shares traded in 7,075 transactions, worth KD 43.9 million (roughly USD 134.3 million).

The Main 50 Index advanced 73.39 points, or 0.89%, to finish at 8,320.50, with 63.9 million shares traded across 11.6 cash transactions valued at about KD 11.6 million (approximately USD 35.4 million).

Discussions on SME credit, BNPL

CINET concludes regional credit conference in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Kuwait Credit Information Network Company (CINET) concluded the activities of its Credit Conference “Empowering Vision, Enabling Decision”, held in Kuwait with the participation of members of the Arab Committee on Credit Information under the Arab Monetary Fund. The event brought together representatives from Arab central banks, chief executives of regional credit bureaus, and senior leaders from the finance, technology, telecommunications, and real estate sectors. The significant attendance underscored the importance of credit information systems and their pivotal role in supporting financial stability across the region.

The conference shed light on the fast-evolving dynamics of the credit industry and the central role of data in strengthening the reliability of financial decision-making. Discussions featured digital identity solutions, electronic Know Your Customer (eKYC) model, and the importance of the Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) in enhancing transparency and trust within regional markets. The event also highlighted the latest practices in credit analytics, SME risk assessment, and instant credit approval solutions.

The conference welcomed several leading regional institutions, including the Oman Credit and Financial Information Centre (Mala’a), Bahrain Credit Reference Bureau (BENEFIT), the Saudi Credit Bureau (SIMAH), Qatar Credit Bureau, and Egypt’s iScore. It also featured participation from global and regional technology and financial firms such as Modelfinance Italy, Qarar Saudi Arabia, and Ernst & Young. These entities presented diverse case studies demonstrating the role of credit data in enabling innovation and shaping the development of financial services.

The event’s agenda included a series of specialized panel discussions, including “Practical Applications of Credit Bureau Data in the Real Estate Sector,” which brought together stakeholders from real estate, finance, and technology, and a discussion on “Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL),” which explored the future of deferred payment companies and their implications for consumer behavior and the broader financial ecosystem. Participants further discussed the importance of integrating telecom sector data into evaluation models to support financial inclusion and enhance the precision of credit decisions.

Commenting on the conference, **Alia Bader Al-Humaidhi**, Chairperson of CINET, said: “The conference highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing in advancing credit ecosystems, particularly given the rapid technological shifts taking place. Participants offered valuable perspectives on the future of data and its applications in strengthening financial stability and supporting economic development across the region. We are pleased that Kuwait served as a platform for such constructive dialogue among regulators and financial institutions from the Arab world”.

From her side, **Mai Bader Al-Owaish**, CEO of CINET, stated: “The sessions emphasized the essential role of credit data in promoting financial inclusion and enhancing the quality of decision-making. At CINET, we are committed to accelerating innovation in the Kuwaiti market and deepening regional cooperation to develop unified standards that empower Arab markets in navigating emerging challenges. This conference laid important groundwork for the next phase of strategic projects and initiatives we are driving”.



Alia Bader Al-Humaidhi



Mai Bader Al-Owaish

Food prices soar

Iran rial hits 1.2 million per dollar on sanctions squeeze

TEHRAN, Dec 3, (AP): Iran’s rial currency fell Wednesday to a new low of 1.2 million to the U.S. dollar as nuclear sanctions squeeze Tehran’s ailing economy.

Traders offered the new exchange rate as attempts so far to restart negotiations between America and Iran over its nuclear program appear stalled.

The new record low is increasing pressure on food prices and other costs have been making daily life that much more challenging for Iranians. Prices are up on meat, rice and other staples of the Iranian dinner table.

Meanwhile, people worry about a new round of fighting between Iran and Israel - as well as potentially the United States - after June’s 12-day war.

“Life will not only become more difficult for ordinary people, but it will also fuel public concern over whether the government - given the limited inflow of foreign currency caused by sanctions - has the resources to maintain and repair the country’s aging infrastructure,” said Ali Moshtagh, a 53-year-old

electrical engineer.

Iran’s economy has been severely affected by international sanctions, particularly after U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran’s nuclear deal with world powers in 2018. At the time of the 2015 deal, which saw Iran drastically limit its enrichment and stockpiling of uranium in exchange for lifting of international sanctions, the rial traded at 32,000 to the dollar.

After Trump returned to the White House for his second term in January, he restarted his so-called “maximum pressure” campaign targeting Tehran with sanctions. He again went after firms trading Iranian crude oil, including those selling at a discount in China.

In late September, the United Nations reimposed nuclear sanctions on Iran via what diplomats referred to as its “snapback” mechanism. Those sanctions again freeze Iranian assets abroad, halt arms deals with Tehran and penalize any development of Iran’s ballistic missile program, among other measures.

Monthly CPI rise slows

Türkiye inflation eases to 31.7% in November

ANKARA, Dec 3, (Xinhua): Türkiye’s annual inflation was recorded at 31.65 percent in November, down from 32.87 percent in October, data from the Turkish Statistical Institute showed on Wednesday, marking a further easing in underlying price pressures.

The data also showed that monthly producer prices rose 0.84 percent, while annual producer inflation stood at 27.23 percent.

Among the three main expenditure groups with the highest weight in the consumer basket, food and non-alcoholic beverages increased 27.44 percent year-on-year, while transportation prices rose 29.23 percent.

The largest jump was in the housing category, where annual

inflation reached 49.92 percent, according to the data.

Türkiye has wrestled with high inflation since a 2018 currency crisis, and elevated price pressures have eroded the purchasing power of households and businesses.

The country’s central bank has been gradually cutting its benchmark one-week repo rate since mid-2025.

In mid-2023, the central bank reversed its low-rate stance. The bank sharply raised its benchmark interest rate from 8.5 percent in June 2023 to 50 percent by March 2024.

As inflation began to ease, the bank started cutting rates in December 2024. Following a 100-basis-point reduction on Oct. 23, the policy rate sits at 39.5 percent.

Aligned with its commitment to developing a future-ready national banking workforce

NBK launches the 9th cohort of its distinguished ‘High-Fliers’ program for developing young banking leaders

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: In line with its strong belief that human capital is its greatest asset, and as part of its unwavering commitment to building a national workforce able to keep pace with the rapid changes in the banking sector, National Bank of Kuwait announced launching the ninth cohort of its leading High-Fliers Program for developing young leaders, in collaboration with IE Business School.

The program, which spans a challenging and innovative period of six months, exposes participants to six comprehensive training modules covering the latest leadership and business world topics, including leadership skills, modern marketing trends, intelligent negotiation, change and innovation management, building a culture of excellence, performance measurement and management, effective communication and strategic thinking.

The NBK High-Fliers Program is not limited to training; rather, it is an intensive journey that aims to create banking leaders capable of facing the future with confidence and competence and an innovation lab that reflects the spirit of competition and creativity, where participants work in teams to provide innovative solutions for current banking challenges.

The winning team will be selected at the end of the program by a panel that consists of the bank’s Executive Management and representatives from IE Business School.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Sager, SVP - Head of Talent Management and Learning at NBK, commented: “At NBK, we believe that investing in young leaders is an investment in sustaining the bank’s success and leadership locally and regionally.

“The NBK High-Fliers program does not



Najla Al-Sager: NBK does not simply train its employees but makes future leaders in the private sector.

■ Investing in young leaders is an investment in sustaining the bank’s success as well as its local and regional leadership.

■ Our collaboration with IE Business School ensures that NBK offers world-class training programs.

■ We place great importance on developing our employees’ skills by dedicating all our resources to help them achieve professional growth.

simply train employees but makes future leaders in the banking sector”.

Al-Sager added: “The launch of the program’s ninth cohort is a new step towards preparing a generation that leads digital transformation and innovates unconventional solutions, a generation that raises the bar of ambition and redefines banking leadership”.

Moreover, Al-Sager emphasized that the High-Fliers Program embodies the bank’s culture of promoting creative energies and empowering national talents to unleash their potential and incorporate technical skills into leadership skills to ultimately master strategic thinking.

Additionally, Al-Sager noted that this program embodies NBK’s strategy aimed at investing in human capital by equipping them with the latest knowledge and leadership skills in line with global changes in the financial sector.

She also stressed that NBK is keen to enhance

its employees’ capabilities and contribute to their professional development through training programs made in collaboration with leading international learning institutions.

This collaboration with IE Business School, which was founded in 1973 and is one of the world’s leading business schools according to rankings by international economic magazines and newspapers such as Forbes, Financial Times and The Economist, confirms NBK’s commitment to providing training programs with global standards, enhancing its leading position locally and regionally, and preparing its staff to assume leadership roles in the future.

The NBK High-Fliers Program is part of the bank’s ongoing efforts to enhance human capital, develop talent, and prepare future leaders capable of continuing the bank’s successful journey that has spanned decades.



Group photo during the program.

Committed to maintaining top international safety standards across all branches

NBK successfully conducts a fake evacuation drill

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: As part of its unwavering commitment to implementing the highest security and safety standards, National Bank of Kuwait successfully conducted an evacuation drill at NBK building in Al-Rai area. The drill aimed to assess the readiness of the bank’s security and safety teams to handle emergencies, and to enhance employee awareness of proper evacuation procedures, ensuring a safe working environment as per top international practices.

NBK’s Security Department supervised the execution of this drill in cooperation with the relevant government agencies, represented by the General Directorate of Civil Defense at the Ministry of Interior, the Emergency Medical Services Department at the Ministry of Health, and the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate to ensure rapid response and effective procedures.

On this occasion, Mr. Khalid Al-Matrouk, Chief Security Officer and Head of Anti-Financial Crime-Kuwait at National Bank of Kuwait, said: “At NBK, we are keen to conduct evacuation drills periodically to test the readiness of systems and facilities and enhance employee awareness of how to deal with emergencies, in addition to raising our security teams’ level of expertise in dealing with such situations”.

Al-Matrouk also noted that the safety and security of employees and customers is a top priority for NBK, further stressing its commitment to implementing the latest international standards in this field.



Khalid Al-Matrouk: Evacuation drills aim to ensure the readiness of systems and facilities and enhance employee awareness of emergency response methods.

Moreover, Al-Matrouk added: “The commitment of the employees to implementing the guidelines and using the emergency exits according to the plan reflects the success of this experiment and confirms the importance of continued cooperation with the government agencies that did not hesitate to provide support and assistance, most notably the General Directorate of Civil Defense at the Ministry of Interior, the Emergency Medical Services Department at the Ministry of Health, and the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate”.

NBK continues to regularly organize training courses and educational seminars for its employ-

ees that pertain to security and safety procedures, stemming from its dedication to promote a culture of safety in the work environment, and to apply the highest internationally approved standards.

It is worth noting that the NBK building in Al-Rai is part of the NBK’s vital infrastructure, and its design takes into account the highest international safety standards, not only in terms of engineering design, but also in the selection and distribution of materials, in addition to adopting the latest fire extinguishing, alarm and emergency exit systems, which aim to ensure top safety levels.



Photos during the evacuation drill.

Cyber Week online sales hit \$44.2 bln, Cyber Monday tops \$14.25 bln

US shoppers boost online & in-store spending despite economic jitters

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (AP): The nation's shoppers may feel gloomy about the economy, but they certainly were in the mood to shop over the five-day Thanksgiving weekend that wrapped up on Cyber Monday.

As Wall Street analysts and retailers sift through the data from the weekend - the unofficial start to the season and a good barometer of shoppers' financial health and the strength of the economy - the figures show that shoppers went online and in stores to scour for deals on everything from TVs to clothing. But all that economic uncertainty did affect spending. Shoppers were very focused and selective, some malls reported.

Of course, the weekend looks a lot different from 15 years ago, when shoppers camped out in the wee hours of the morning and fought in store aisles for doorbusters like TVs. Shoppers are still heading to stores, but the biggest growth is online, which now accounts for 30% of total holiday sales. That's up from 15% in 2012, according to the National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group.

Adobe Analytics reported Tuesday that so-called Cyber Week - the five-day period from Thanksgiving to Cyber Monday - brought in \$44.2 billion online overall, up 7.7% year-over-year, bolstered by record spending online during Black Friday.

On Cyber Monday, consumers spent \$14.25 billion, up 7.1% and making it again the year's biggest online shopping day.

National Retail Federation's CEO Matt Shay said Tuesday that shoppers wall off the winter holidays from all the economic noise, building a moat around the season.

"The holidays is really very much an emotional purchase," Shay said. "Families plan for it. They invest in it. And as a component of the holidays, the five-day Thanksgiving weekend is really the psychological kickoff of the holidays."

Based on the group's survey of shoppers from the weekend, Shay called the period a "very solid beginning" to the holiday season.

The group still expects sales over November and December of between \$1.01 trillion and \$1.02 trillion. That would be up 3.7% to 4.2% more than last year.

Here's a look at the data, the discounts, and what's next for retailers among other issues:

Software company Salesforce reported that for Cyber Week - it measures from Nov. 25 through Monday - global online sales increased to \$336.6 billion, up 7% compared with the year-ago period. U.S. online sales increased to \$79.6 billion, up 5% year for that week, compared with the year-ago period.

The Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, reported on Tuesday that more than 235,000 people visited the iconic center on Black Friday, making it the busiest Black Friday on record in the mall's history. The traffic number was up 8.5% compared with the same day on 2024 and nearly 2% above pre-pandemic



Shoppers wait in lines before they browse through stores at Mall of America for Black Friday deals, Friday, Nov. 28, 2025, in Bloomington, Minn. (AP)

2019, the mall said. Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks in-person and online spending, reported Saturday that overall Black Friday sales excluding automotive rose 4.1% from a year ago. The retail sales indicator, not adjusted for inflation, showed online sales jumped by double digits - 10.4% - while in-store purchases inched up 1.7%. Still, shoppers were laser-focused.

William Lewis, marketing director of Westfield Garden State Plaza in Paramus, New Jersey, noted on Black Friday that, "People are definitely buying." But Lewis noted that shoppers are more targeted and have done their homework ahead of time on social media or store sites.

"They know exactly where they are going," he added. Ahead of the Thanksgiving weekend, promotions didn't come as early as last year or were more muted, according to some malls and analysts. But for the big weekend, retailers ramped up discounting to be in line with last year's sales event, according to Adobe and big malls like Mall of America.

But if shoppers were dilly dallying about buying a specific sweater and waiting

for the prices to go down after this weekend, that may not be the best strategy. Discounts won't improve on many items, and stores came into the season with leaner inventory amid an uncertain economy, analysts said.

Vivek Pandya, Adobe's director of Adobe Digital Insights, noted that prior to the Thanksgiving weekend kickoff, discounts on average ranged from 10% to 17% and then accelerated to an average range of 18% to 30% for the holiday kickoff.

But he expects that retailers will likely pull back from those discounts and will hover a little above what shoppers saw to the run-up of Black Friday. The exception would be poor-selling seasonal items, which need to be sold before Dec. 25, Pandya said.

As for inventory, there were fears of empty shelves when tariff rates ballooned in April, but analysts said stores were able to navigate the vacillating tariff policy, bringing in goods at lower rates.

Nikki Baird, vice president of strategy at Aptos, a retail technology firm which works with fashion clients, noted that, "I think consumers will continue to find the things that they're looking for, but there will be fewer choices."

Shoppers are using AI tools to track prices or get gift recommendations, though the usage is still modest. On Cyber Monday, AI traffic to U.S. retail sites - measured by shoppers clicking on a link - increased by nearly eightfold, according to Adobe. From Nov. 1 through Dec. 1, AI traffic is up nearly ninefold, it said.

The services were used most in categories including video games, appliances, electronics, toys, and personal care products, according to Adobe.

Salesforce reported that across Cyber Week, AI and agents influenced 20% of all orders, accounting for \$67 billion in global sales. In the U.S., AI and agents drove 17% of orders, or \$13.5 billion in sales. The figure encompasses everything from a ChatGPT query to AI-supplied gift suggestions on a retailer's website.

The Thanksgiving weekend is a key barometer of spending for the season. But with worries of rising prices, will shoppers taper their spending as the season progresses? And what about next year?

Baird said she will be looking at the period between the post-Thanksgiving weekend and the last week before Christmas to see whether spending keeps up.

"I think that will help us answer the question of whether this was a concentration of spending or a trend of spending," she said.

Tiffany Yeh, a managing director and partner at Boston Consulting Group, believes there will be strong spending throughout the rest of the holiday season. Her concern is what's in store for 2026. Yeh cited the consultancy's shopper surveys pointing to consumers delaying purchases in order to spend during the holidays. She wonders if shoppers will mute their spending or instead steady their buying.

Trump tariffs ruled illegal, refunds uncertain

Costco sues for Trump tariff refunds pre-SCOTUS ruling

WASHINGTON, Dec 3, (AP): Costco is joining other companies that aren't waiting to see whether the Supreme Court strikes down President Donald Trump's most sweeping import taxes. They're going to court to demand refunds on the tariffs they've paid.

The specialized U.S. Court of International Trade in New York and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington ruled earlier this year that Trump's biggest and boldest import taxes are illegal. The case is now before the Supreme Court. In a Nov. 5 hearing, several of the high court's justices expressed doubts that the president had sweeping power to declare national emergencies to slap tariffs on goods from almost every country on earth.

If the court strikes down the tariffs, importers may be entitled to refunds on the levies they've paid. "It's uncertain whether refunds will be granted and, if so, how much," said Brent Skorup, a legal fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute. "But the possibility has prompted many companies - in-

cluding Costco - to file actions in the U.S. Court of International Trade to get in line, so to speak, for potential refunds."

Trump claims that he has an almost unlimited right to impose tariffs - a power the Constitution gives to Congress, under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) - but has now lost twice in court. Trade lawyer Joyce Adetutu, a partner at the Vinson & Elkins law firm, said that Costco is trying to "make sure that if and when the Supreme Court overturns the IEEPA tariffs, which could come as late as the summertime, they have the judgment in place" and can collect a refund.

In a complaint filed last week with the trade court in New York, Costco said it is demanding the money back now "to ensure that its right to a complete refund is not jeopardized."

The operator of warehouse-sized stores expressed concern that it might struggle to get a refund once its tariff bills have been finalized - a process called "liquidation" - by the Customs and

Border Protection agency, a process Costco says will start Dec. 15. Importers have 180 days after liquidation to protest the tariff bills. Costco worries that "their timeline might be whittled away depending on how long it takes to get a Supreme Court decision," Adetutu said.

Revlon and canned seafood and chicken producer Bumble Bee Foods have made similar arguments in the trade court.

The tariffs facing the court challenge have raised around \$90 billion so far.

It's unclear how a refund process would work. As import tax bills are finalized and sometimes appealed, Customs and Border Protection "refunds tariffs every day, but not to this extent," Adetutu said. "This is a substantial amount of tariff income that has been collected. And really there hasn't been a case where there's been an influx of refund requests."

Trump warned back in August that the loss of his tariffs would destroy that American economy and lead to "1929 all over again, a GREAT DEPRESSION!"

Trump tariffs on Indian goods raise pressure over Russian oil imports

Putin heads to India for high-stakes summit with Modi

NEW DELHI, Dec 3, (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin will be in India this week for a summit aimed at deepening economic, defense and energy ties, a visit that will also test New Delhi's efforts to balance relations with Moscow and Washington as the war in Ukraine grinds on.

Putin is scheduled to arrive on the state visit Thursday and hold talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday. They are expected to review progress on bilateral ties, discuss issues of mutual interest and sign interdepartmental and business agreements, both governments said.

India has continued to buy discounted Russian oil, despite warnings from Washington that this is partly keeping Moscow's revenues afloat to fund the Ukraine war. U.S. President Donald Trump has imposed additional 25% tariffs on Indian imports, raising the total duties to 50%, in retaliation.

India has defended its imports as essential for meeting the growing energy needs of its 1.4 billion people.

Putin last visited India in 2021. Modi was in Moscow last year, and the two leaders briefly met in September in China during a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit.

The India-Russia summit comes as the United States renews its push for a Ukraine peace plan and seeks broader cooperation from key partners.

Putin met U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner in the Kremlin Tuesday to discuss the proposals, which critics have described as too heavily tilted toward Moscow. Yuri Ushakov, one of Putin's senior advisers, told journalists after the meeting that talks had been "productive" but said that much work still remained.

Modi has avoided condemning Russia for the fighting in Ukraine while emphasizing the need for a peaceful settlement.

Sreeram Sundar Chaulia, an international affairs expert at the Jindal School of International Affairs near New Delhi, said India has avoided taking on an overt mediating role because it could complicate its ties with both Russia and the U.S.

"But behind-the-scenes diplomacy by Modi is feasible, and has happened already to some extent," Chaulia said.

Modi could try to nudge Putin "to accommodate some Ukrainian and European concerns to bring about a cessation of hostilities," he added.

India and Russia will look at bolstering their bilateral relationship and are expected to deliver a package of documents centered around economic cooperation, trade facilitation, maritime, health-care and media exchanges, according to Indian officials involved in the summit's preparation. They spoke on condition of anonymity as the details



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi examine a hall prior to the award ceremony of Narendra Modi with the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle the First-Called, in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, on July 9, 2024. (AP)

aren't public.

India is keen to increase exports of pharmaceuticals, agriculture and textiles to Russia and is seeking the removal of non-tariff barriers. New Delhi is also seeking long-term supplies of fertilizers from Moscow.

Another key area where the two countries are working to finalize an agreement is the safe and regulated migration of Indian skilled workers to Russia.

The U.S. has pressed India to halt purchases of discounted Russian oil, accusing New Delhi of helping fund Moscow's war effort. In August, Trump imposed a 50% tariff on Indian imports to increase pressure over the issue.

India rejected the charge, saying it follows international sanctions and prioritizes its national interest and energy security. But its position could become more complicated after new U.S. sanctions on Russian oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil. Indian officials said the country will avoid buying oil from sanctioned producers, while keeping options open with companies not targeted by the restrictions.

"India will certainly underscore that there is no Indian desire to cut off energy supplies from Russia completely," said Harsh Pant, vice president of foreign policy at the Observer Research Foundation, a New Delhi-based think tank.

Pant said future imports will depend "on the market forces and how effective sanctions are in weaning away Indian private sector or Indian state-run companies from Russian energy sources."

Energy cooperation is expected to feature prominently at the summit, including India's investments in Russia's Far East and expanded civil nuclear collaboration. The Kudankulam nuclear power

plant in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, built with Russian assistance, remains the centerpiece of that partnership, and officials said talks continue on localized equipment manufacturing and potential joint projects in third countries.

India is expected to push Russia for faster delivery of two further S-400 surface-to-air missile systems, after receiving three under a 2018 deal worth about \$5.4 billion. The delay has been tied to supply chain disruptions linked to the war in Ukraine.

Indian authorities are also likely to explore the possibility of acquiring additional S-400 units or an upgraded variant, though no contract or announcement is expected.

Indian defense planners say the S-400 proved effective during a brief military standoff with Pakistan in May.

"The meeting will focus on broader elements of institutional cooperation on defense between our two sides and will try to ensure that delivery delays are ended. Potentially, S-400 additional is not ruled out, but don't expect any announcement during the visit," India's Defense Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said at a security conference in New Delhi last week.

Talks are also expected on upgrading India's Russian-made Su-30MKI fighter jets and accelerating deliveries of critical military hardware, as well as improving coordination on joint exercises and disaster relief.

Despite India diversifying its procurement of military hardware over the last few years, Russia continues to be its biggest supplier. Moscow is keen on selling its stealth fighter jet Su-57 to India, but New Delhi has kept its options open to other foreign suppliers as well.

Sharp tech correction ahead

BoE warns of potential AI-driven market bubble

LONDON, Dec 3, (KUNA): The Bank of England has warned of a "sharp correction" in the value of major tech companies with growing fears of an artificial intelligence bubble.

The central bank's financial stability report said share prices in the UK are close to the "most stretched" they have been since the 2008 global financial crisis, while equity valuations in the US are reminiscent of those before the dotcom bubble burst.

It warned valuations are "particularly stretched" for companies focused on AI.

In its report the Bank also announced plans to lower the amount of capital High Street banks need to hold in a bid to boost lending and spur economic growth.

It marks the first reduction in the amount lenders need to hold since the 2008 financial crisis, and followed stress tests showing they would be able to withstand a crisis scenario with unemployment doubling, house prices plummeting and the economy contracting by 5 percent.

The Bank said the growth of the AI sector in the next five years would be fuelled by trillions of dollars of debt, raising financial stability risks if the value of the compa-

nies falls.

It cited industry figures forecasting spending on AI infrastructure could top USD 5 trillion and said much of this would be funded by AI firms themselves, but around half would come from outside sources, mostly through debt.

"Deeper links between AI firms and credit markets, and increasing interconnections between those firms, mean that, should an asset price correction occur, losses on lending could increase financial stability risks," it said.

The central bank also said the risks to financial stability had risen during 2025, citing geopolitical tensions, global trade wars and rising borrowing costs for governments.

It said growing tension between countries had specifically raised the prospect of cyber-attacks and other disruptions.

After assessing High Street lenders' ability to cope in a crisis situation, the Bank has proposed lowering the benchmark for Tier 1 capital requirements for firms to 13 percent from the 14 percent level it has been at since 2015.

The requirement refers to the buffer banks must hold in case of any losses from risky lending.

Pakistan, Turkiye sign mining and energy cooperation MoUs

ISLAMABAD, Dec 3, (KUNA): Pakistan and Turkiye on Tuesday signed Memorandums of Understanding and agreements in the field of mining during the visit of Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Alparslan Bayraktar to Pakistan.

According to a press release by PM House, the visiting Turkish minister called on Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the PM House.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to further expanding cooperation with Turkiye, particularly in the energy sector.

He emphasized on the importance of expanding collaboration between Pakistan and Turkiye in energy, petroleum, and mineral sectors.

PM Sharif noted with satisfaction that Turkish Petroleum had joined offshore and onshore exploration activities in Pakistan, marking a major milestone in bilateral energy cooperation.

He also extended an invitation to Turkish companies to increase their investment footprint in Pakistan's energy market.

Recalling the Turkish President's visit this year, the Prime Minister underscored the need to ensure close coordination between the two sides in view of the fast evolving regional and global environment.

It was agreed between the two sides that a Ministerial delegation from Pakistan will visit Turkiye soon to explore further cooperation between the two countries es-

pecially in the field of energy and power sector.

The two leaders also witnessed exchange of Memorandums of understanding and agreements between Turkiye and Pakistan in the field of mining, including Deed of assignment -Eastern Offshore Indus-C, Petroleum Concession agreement Ziarat North Block, Petroleum Concession agreement Sukhpur-II Block, Petroleum Concession agreement Deep C block and Offshore Deep F Block.

Moreover, the Turkish minister also called on Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters in eastern Rawalpindi city.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest were discussed, with a particular focus on expanding Pak-Turkiye cooperation in the energy sector, strengthening bilateral ties, and exploring avenues for strategic collaboration, said Pakistan military's media wing Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing partnership in areas of shared objectives and regional stability. The Army Chief highlighted the deep-rooted and historic brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye, expressing appreciation for Turkiye's steadfast support to Pakistan at various international forums.

Minister Bayraktar conveyed Turkiye's desire to deepen cooperation across the energy domain and acknowledged Pakistan's efforts toward regional peace, stability, and sustainable development, said the release by ISPR.

Can AI ever be funny?

Some comedians embrace AI tools but they're still running the show

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (AP): A baby and his family dog sit across from each other in a podcast studio.

"Welcome to the talking baby podcast," says the infant, wearing headphones and sounding like a deep-voiced radio broadcaster. "On today's episode, we'll be talking to the weird-looking person who lives at my house."

So begins a series of humorous interactions between two characters animated by artificial intelligence that's attracted millions of views on social media. They're a nod to the 1989 movie "Look Who's Talking" but produced in a matter of hours and without a multimillion-dollar Hollywood budget.

AI helped do all of that, but it didn't craft the punch lines. It's a relief to comedian Jon Lajoie, who made the videos, that AI chatbots just aren't "inherently funny."

"It can't write comedy," said Lajoie. "It can't do any of that."

For now, at least, they won't take his job.

Lajoie's viral videos have gained him attention as an AI-adopting entertainer that's he's not entirely comfortable with as he grapples with what all this means for the future of his very human craft of making people laugh.

King Willonius is not feeling so cautious. His first big hit was an AI-generated song called "BBL Drizzy" that made fun of rapper Drake during the height of his feud with Kendrick Lamar. He's since moved into making AI video parodies like "I'm McLovin It (Popeye's Diss Song)" and "I Want My Barrel Back (Cracker Barrel song)."

"It's very similar to somebody who's writing for The On-



Willonius Hatcher, also known as King Willonius, with his presentation entitled 'I'm McLovin It (Popeye's Diss Song)' at the a16z AI Creative Gallery in New York. (AP)

ion or SNL," Willonius said. "I try to find out, OK, what's my comedic angle on this particular topic? And then I'll generate a video from that."

He starts with writing his own notes on an idea, then refines it with a chatbot, and puts that language - known as a prompt - into AI tools that can generate imagery, video, music and voices. The key, he says, is to keep iterating.

But he wouldn't just ask it for a joke - Willonius says most chatbot-generated comedy lacks the "nuances or complexities that it takes for jokes to really land."

A scholar of comedy, Michelle Robinson, said "a lot of the stuff that I've seen AI produce is corny as hell."

"It does seem fluent in the basic grammar of jokes, but sometimes they're slightly off," said Robinson, a professor of American studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "They may be moderately funny, but I think they're really missing an important element of what makes us laugh."

What are they missing? She's not totally sure, except that most good jokes are a little edgy or dangerous and chatbots can't seem to calibrate "whatever provocation is in the joke to the moment that we're living in."

Caleb Warren, a professor who studies marketing and consumer psychology at the University of Arizona, said that leaves comedy writers with an opportunity to make use of tools that can't completely outsource their skills.

"The ideas that are driving the humor are coming from the human comedian," but the AI tools can help them execute and illustrate them, Warren said.

Willonius was a struggling comedian and screenwriter who began experimenting with AI during Hollywood's actor and writer strikes in 2023.

"I leaned all the way into AI because I didn't know what else to do with my free time," he said. "I was doing everything I could to try to break into Hollywood. And once the

writers' strike happened, that kind of shut that down. I started to learn these AI tools and get really good at them and started to cultivate an audience."

While Willonius saw an opening, the rise of generative AI has stoked division and posed challenges to other professional comedians.

Sarah Silverman joined book authors in suing leading chatbot makers, alleging they infringed the copyright of her "The Bedwetter" memoir. The daughter of the late Robin Williams called it "gross" and "maddening" when users of OpenAI's AI video generator Sora conjured up realistic "deepfakes" of the beloved actor to churn out what she described as "horrible TikTok slop puppeteering."

"You're not making art, you're making disgusting, overprocessed hot dogs out of the lives of human beings, out of the history of art and music, and then shoving them down someone else's throat hoping they'll give you a little thumbs-up and like it," Zelda Williams wrote in October.

And the estate of legendary comic George Carlin last year settled a lawsuit against podcasters who purportedly cloned his voice to make a fake hourslong comedy special.

Comics have also relished mocking AI tools. A recent "South Park" episode called "Sora Not Sorry" had a bumbling police detective investigate a scourge of fake videos.

Lajoie, known for his work on the TV series "The League" and comic songs on YouTube, tried to see what would happen if he asked ChatGPT to help craft a bizarre movie script idea.

Tour begins in Ohio

'Spamalot' takes audiences on a hilarious musical ride

NEW YORK, Dec 3: (AP): Eric Idle sometime gazes up into the heavens and wonders about something if we ever make contact with aliens: Will they have a sense of humor?

"I think the answer must be yes, because it's about self-awareness," says the founding member of the comedy group Monty Python's Flying Circus. "It's about laughing at yourself and your own death and your inevitable end, which you can do nothing about."

Until there's some intergalactic meeting, Idle's mission on Earth has been to make us laugh, and he continues that crusade with a national touring version of his hit musical "Spamalot," which begins in Ohio this week.

"I think laughter is essential, and it's both a relief and a corrective on how to look at life," he says.

The tour will travel to more than 30 cities in its first year including Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Las Vegas, San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, Atlanta, Dallas, New Orleans, St. Louis, Houston and Milwaukee.

"The comedy musical is the most fabulous form of theater there is because it's got everything you want - it can have drama, but also laughter, dancing, girls. It's got it all," Idle says.

"Spamalot" is built on shenanigans that include a group of knights fond of shrubbery, folks clicking coconuts to mimic the sound of horse hoofs, a singing and dancing plague victim, flutulent Frenchmen and killer rabbits.

The stage tale is loosely based on the 1975 movie "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," which concerns King Arthur and his quest to corral some knights who'll go off with him to find the grail, the cup Jesus drank from at The Last Supper.

Idle recalls that the original movie cost \$400,000 to make - funded in part by members of Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and Jethro Tull frontman Ian Anderson, looking for a tax write-off - and was filmed over five weeks in Scotland. "It was cold and miserable, but it was funny," Idle says.

The inspiration to turn it into a stage show came when Idle was working on a CD-ROM game based on "The Holy Grail." "I suddenly went, 'Wait a minute, if you could turn 'The Holy Grail' into a game, you can certainly turn it into a Broadway musical.'"

Idle wrote the story and lyrics and the music is by John Du Prez. Idle says the secret to the show's success was tapping legendary director Mike Nichols. "Mike knew everything about funny," he says. It arrived on Broadway in 2005 and won the best new musical Tony Award.

A few years ago, Idle came across his long-forgotten diaries of the time, revealing the tense moments and behind-the-scenes struggles in making the musical. He's published them as "The Spamalot Diaries." "It is a sort of how-to about making a musical," he says.

Two of the show's highlight are the Act II opening song "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life," which was borrowed from another Python film, "Life of Brian," and the rousing final number - "Find Your Grail," with the lyrics "Keep your eyes on the goal/Then the prize you won't fail/That's your grail."

Idle says one of his favorite moments was watching patrons leaving the Broadway show singing "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" and clicking coconuts they bought at the merch kiosk.

"If you can just brighten people's lives to be silly in the street immediately afterwards, I think you've done a great job," he says. "Not many shows do that."

Made up of Idle, Michael Palin, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones and Graham Chapman, Monty Python brought a unique blend of satire, surrealism and silliness to British TV screens in a series that ran from 1969 to 1974 and later in several movies.



In this file photo, Eric Idle, from left, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Michael Palin and Terry Jones of the comedy troupe Monty Python appear in London. (AP)



In this file photo pedestrians walk under the marquee of the Broadway show 'Monty Python's Spamalot' in New York. (AP)

Film



This image released by Amazon Prime shows Michelle Pfeiffer in a scene from 'Oh. What. Fun.' (AP)

Movie promises laughs but delivers little, Pfeiffer still sparkles

'Oh. What. Fun.' falls flat in holiday chaos

LOS ANGELES, Dec 3, (AP): Michelle Pfeiffer plays a mom on the edge at Christmas time in the new movie "Oh. What. Fun." If the sarcastic punctuation wasn't enough of a tip-off, Pfeiffer's character Claire is not having the best time.

Claire's grown kids (Felicity Jones, Chloë Grace Moretz, Dominic Sessa) don't appreciate her efforts. Her husband (Denis Leary) is supportive without being helpful. And she is operating as a one-woman show, managing this precious time with her family and trying to keep it all cozy and happy and fun through constant, thankless labor (cooking, cleaning, wrapping, planning). She even looks fabulous on her many, many (too many?) garbage runs. But after one particularly cruel oversight from her family, she takes off from her suburban prison and doesn't tell anyone. For once, she's decided to go do something for herself.

Promising though it may seem, "Oh. What. Fun." is a movie that does very little with its setup and terrific cast (including the likes of Danielle Brooks, Joan Chen, Maude Apatow, Rose Abdoo, and Eva Longoria in almost cameo-sized roles), opting instead for the most generic version of itself.

The movie, streaming Wednesday on Prime Video, begins with a kind of "low point" (for a beautiful, well-off, stay-at-home Texas mom, that is) in which she tells some children in a neighboring car at a gas station to be nicer to their exhausted mother in the front seat. "She'll be dead someday," she says calmly and seriously. She wishes the mother a Merry Christmas, gives the kids a piercing look, and then we get the dreaded freeze-frame/record scratch and a voiceover about being entitled to a little outburst around the holidays and a half-hearted rant about how many holiday movies are

about men. Already, this movie is making this poor woman apologize.

"They need to make a movie about the true heroes of the holidays: Moms," Claire says. Sure, yes, preach Claire, even if her exclusions are suspect and her examples need further review. I'm pretty sure "Home Alone" was at least a little bit about the mom, and that "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" doesn't deserve the vitriol. Alas, noble intentions aside, "Oh. What. Fun." probably wasn't what she had in mind.

Director Michael Showalter co-wrote the script with the short story's author, Chandler Baker, and is committed to keeping the proceedings light and breezy (no cancer diagnoses here). But the effect is a movie that seems almost embarrassed to commit to its own silly premise, rushing through everything instead of letting us enjoy this cast. Everyone gets assigned one tidy problem or flaw and no one has any sort of lived-in familial chemistry with one another.

Channing (Jones) is the oldest and is married to Doug (Jason Schwartzman), who really wants her younger sister Taylor (Moretz) to think he's cool although Taylor, a serial monogamist who always brings a new woman home for the holidays, is just mean to him. Sessa is the youngest: Underemployed and recently dumped. There are two grandchildren, too, Channing and Doug's twins, but they're nonentities.

Claire wants one thing for Christmas: For her family to submit her to a contest to meet her favorite daytime talk show host, Zazzy Tims (Longoria). Of course, no one got the hint. But her breaking point really comes when she realizes everyone has gone to an event that she planned without her. No one noticed she wasn't

in one of the cars. And so instead of driving herself to meet them, she decides to drive to Burbank and crash the Zazzy Tims show instead.

Showalter attempts to turn this road trip into a kind of "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" journey, even having her share a dingy motel room with Brooks, playing a suspiciously contented delivery driver (a little on the nose for an Amazon movie). But it barely commits to the bit and they soon go their separate ways instead of embarking on a buddy trip.

There must be a kind of director's jail for such restrained use of a performer like Schwartzman (as Claire's son-in-law), or using Chen as a one-joke "perfect" neighbor with her all-white and silver Christmas decorations.

In its own way, "Oh. What. Fun." has also accidentally tapped into the cinematic zeitgeist. This is a year in which on-screen mothers aren't just on the edge - they're in complete and total freefall. Jennifer Lawrence's feral barking in "Die My Love," Rose Byrne's waking nightmare in "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You," Jessie Buckley's primal agony in "Hamnet." Even Teyana Taylor's postpartum apathy in "One Battle After Another" could fit.

Lighter versions are welcome too - there's nothing like comedic release. But if the idea was to make something for the moms, "Oh. What. Fun." is about as thoughtful as a hastily scribbled card on a piece of printer paper the morning of her birthday. We can all do better.

"Oh. What. Fun." An Amazon MGM Studios release streaming Dec. 3 is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association. Running time: 106 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Variety

ENGLAND: British television presenter Laura Woods collapsed live on air Tuesday during pre-game coverage of the women's international match between England and Ghana.

Footage showed Woods stumble forward at the side of the field at Southampton's St Mary's Stadium when she was caught by co-presenters Ian Wright and Anita Asante.

She later posted on Instagram that the incident was "a bit weird" and that she was embarrassed it had happened on TV.

"Sorry to worry everyone, I'm OK, the wonderful paramedics at Saints have said it's probably a virus, just need a bit of rest & hydration," she posted.

British broadcaster ITV swiftly cut to a commercial break before replacing Woods with stand-in presenter Katie Shanahan.

"As you have probably noticed we don't have the wonderful Laura Woods because she's just been taken ill," Shanahan said. "But she's in very good hands so I'm stepping in at late notice."

Shanahan later added: "We want to reassure you all she is doing OK." (AP)

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WASHINGTON: Rap artist Toosii is taking time off from his multi-platinum music career by going forward with his dream to pursue football after saying he has committed to Syracuse University.

The 25-year-old made the announcement in a message posted Monday on social media, and a person with knowledge of the decision confirmed Toosii's commitment to The Associated Press on Tuesday. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because Syracuse has not released that information.

It's unclear whether Toosii has been offered a scholarship, or will join the team as a walk-on.

"COMMITTED. For every kid who ever had a dream, make it reality," Toosii wrote, before indicating he received interest from Syracuse coach Fran Brown. "When Coach Fran called, I knew it was a sign from God. So with that being said, Cuse I'm coming home."

Toosii was born Nau'Jour Grainger and grew up in Syracuse before relocating to Raleigh, North Caro-

lina. He played receiver in high school, and began exploring his return to football this summer by making an official visit to Maryland in August. (AP)

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SINGAPORE: China mounted its largest presence to date at the 26th Asia TV Forum and Market (ATF) as the event held its opening ceremony on Wednesday, drawing strong interest from buyers and producers worldwide.

The China Pavilion has expanded to 270 square meters this year, with 24 participating companies, both record highs. Exhibitors range from major media groups, such as China International Television Corporation and Shanghai Media Group, to studios including XiXi Pictures and Huace Film and TV. Animation producers, streaming platforms and industry service firms are also part of the delegation.

The pavilion is showcasing 156 Chinese-language titles, spanning TV series, micro dramas, films, documentaries, animation and variety shows. It will also host a series of presentations and networking sessions. (Xinhua)



Palestinian couples participate in a mass wedding ceremony in Hamad City in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip. (AP)



Palestinians watch and celebrate a mass wedding ceremony in Hamad City in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip. (AP)



We want to be happy like the rest of the world

Mass wedding in Gaza celebrates new life after years of war and tragedy

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip, Dec 3, (AP): Eman Hassan Lawwa was dressed in traditional Palestinian prints and Hikmat Lawwa wore a suit as they walked hand-in-hand past the crumbled buildings of southern Gaza in a line of other couples dressed in exactly the same way.

The 27-year-old Palestinians were among 54 couples to get married Tuesday in a mass wedding in war-ravaged Gaza that represented a rare moment of hope after two years of devastation, death and conflict.

“Despite everything that has happened, we will begin a new life,” Hikmat Lawwa said. “God willing, this will be the end of the war,” he said.

Weddings are a key part of Palestinian culture that have become rare in Gaza during the war. The tradition has begun to resume in the wake of a fragile ceasefire, even if the weddings are different from the elaborate ceremonies once held in the territory.

As roaring crowds waved Palestinian flags in the southern city of Khan Younis, the celebrations were dampened by the ongoing crisis across Gaza. Most of Gaza’s 2 million residents, including Eman and Hikmat Lawwa, have been displaced by the war, entire areas of cities have been flattened and aid shortages and outbursts in conflict continue to plague the daily lives of people.

The young couple, who are distant relatives, fled to the nearby town of Deir al-Balah during the war and have struggled to find basics like food and shelter. They said they don’t know how they’re going to build their lives together given the situation around them.

“We want to be happy like the rest of the world. I used to dream of having a home, a job, and being like everyone else,” Hikmat said. “Today, my dream is to find a tent to live in.”

“Life has started to return, but it’s not like we hoped

it would,” he added.

The celebration was funded by Al Fares Al Shahim, a humanitarian aid operation backed by the United Arab Emirates. In addition to holding the event, the organization offered couples a small sum of money and other supplies to start their lives together.

For Palestinians, weddings are often elaborate day-long celebrations, seen as both an important social and economic choice that spells out the future for many families. They include joyful dances and processions through the streets by massive families in fabric patterns donned by the couple and their loved ones and heaping plates of food.

Weddings can also be a symbol of resilience and a celebration of new generations of families carrying on Palestinian traditions, said Randa Serhan, a professor of sociology at Barnard College who has studied Palestinian weddings.

“With every new wedding is going to come children and it means that the memories and the lineages are not going to die,” Serhan said. “The couples are going to continue life in an impossible situation.”

On Tuesday, a procession of cars carrying the couples drove through stretches of collapsed buildings. Hikmat and Eman Lawwa waved Palestinian flags with other couples as families surrounding them danced to music blaring over crowds.

Eman, who was cloaked in a white, red and green traditional dress, said the wedding offered a small moment of relief after years of suffering. But she said it was also marked by the loss of her father, mother, and other family members who were killed during the war.

“It’s hard to experience joy after such sorrow,” she said, tears streaming down her face. “God willing, we will rebuild brick-by-brick.”

Variety

ABU DHABI: The Zayed National Museum, the national museum of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), opened to the public here on Wednesday.

Designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster, the museum features over 1,500 objects across six permanent galleries, showcasing the UAE’s history, heritage and the legacy of its founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, according to a statement by the Abu Dhabi Media Office.

Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism-Abu Dhabi, said the museum “tells the unfolding story of the land and its people,” and will serve as a world-class center for research and learning, according to the statement.

The museum is the centerpiece of Saadiyat Cultural District, and blends archaeological artifacts with multimedia and contemporary installations. (Xinhua)

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CAIRO: Egypt recovered two major ancient artifacts from Belgium that were illegally smuggled out of the country, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities announced.

The pieces were formally handed over following a sustained diplomatic and legal pursuit that spanned several years, according to a ministry statement.

The recovered treasures include a painted and gilded wooden coffin dating back to the Late Period of ancient Egypt (664-332 BC), notable for its intricate decorations that reflect the funerary rituals and advanced coffin-making techniques of that era.

In addition, a wooden beard from an ancient Egyptian statue, originating from the Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 BC), was also returned, said the statement.

The recovery dates back to 2016, when Belgian authorities seized four Egyptian artifacts that were displayed in a local gallery after investigations confirmed a lack of legal documentation proving ownership, it said.

Egypt had already succeeded in repatriating two smaller wooden statues from this group in 2022, it added.

Over the past few years, Egypt has recovered tens of thousands of smuggled antiquities from different countries. (Xinhua)

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VIENNA: An exhibition featuring art from China’s Forbidden City opened at Vienna’s Kunsthistorisches Museum, exploring the parallels and contrasts between East and West in their artistic expressions of power, culture, and ideals of life.

Titled Art and Aesthetics from China’s Forbidden City, the special exhibition showcases 76 masterpieces from the Palace Museum in Beijing, most of which were being shown in Europe for the first time.

The Palace Museum is a world-leading museum with an absolutely superb collection, part of which can be seen here, said Jonathan Fine, director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum.

The works on display include jade, porcelain, lacquerware, enamel objects, and clocks, reflecting the artistic and technical achievements of 18th-century Chinese court art and craftsmanship.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a gilt-bronze filigree ruyi sceptre inlaid with jade. It demonstrated not only the exquisite craftsmanship of Chinese filigree work but also carried the auspicious meaning of “happiness and blessing.” (Xinhua)

Fashion



Tilda Swinton attends the CHANEL 2025/26 Métiers d’art fashion show, in New York. (AP)



A model walks the runway during the CHANEL 2025/26 Métiers d’art fashion show at Bowery subway station in New York. (AP)



A model walks the runway during the CHANEL 2025/26 Métiers d’art fashion show at Bowery subway station in New York. (AP)



A model walks the runway during the CHANEL 2025/26 Métiers d’art fashion show at Bowery subway station on Dec. 2, 2025, in New York. (AP)



Models walk the runway during the CHANEL 2025/26 Métiers d’art fashion show at Bowery subway station on Dec. 2, 2025, in New York. (AP)

Métiers d’Art debuts underground

Chanel’s Blazy turns NYC subway into runway

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (AP): Chanel’s new showman, Matthieu Blazy, took his designs on the road Tuesday - or rather, underground, with a buzzy New York runway show staged on an actual subway platform.

The designer, just weeks after his splashy Paris debut for Chanel in October, took over a decommissioned part of Manhattan’s Bowery station for his first Métiers d’Art collection. The annual show, which takes place in a different city each year, celebrates the craftsmanship of the artisans that partner with Chanel.

In this case, it was two shows - one in the afternoon and one in the evening. And befitting the first Chanel shows in New York since 2018, there were VIPs aplenty: A\$AP Rocky, Tilda Swinton, Ayo Edebiri, Rose Byrne, Kristen Stewart, Sofia Coppola, Lupita Nyong’o, Jessie Buckley, Margaret Qualley, Bowen Yang, Jon Bon Jovi and many others.

The location had been a closely held secret. Guests entered via a doorway at 168 Bowery, and at first, it seemed like Chanel had perhaps decorated an event space to resemble a subway sta-

tion, complete with tiled walls, turnstiles and a newsstand (with its own bespoke newspapers).

But down a flight of stairs was the real platform. Guests settled into bleacher seats resembling subway benches. “Stand clear of the closing doors!” came the announcement on the soundtrack, familiar to New Yorkers. Then a train came rolling in, and out of the cars came the models.

The show was a marked contrast in vibe with the last Métiers d’Art collection in New York in 2018, when the late designer Karl Lagerfeld took over the Egyptian Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for what felt like a mini-Met Gala, with clothes channeling the luxury of Egyptian royalty.

Blazy was inspired not by royalty but by ordinary urban commuters, of different ages and types, coming together in a mashup of styles from different eras, from the 1920s onward.

“The New York subway belongs to all,” the designer said in his show notes. “Everyone uses it. There are students and game-changers, statesmen and teenagers. It is a place full of

wonderful encounters, a clash of pop archetypes.”

His models strolled the platform, some checking for arriving trains - feigning annoyance at their lateness - or leaning against a post as they waited. Their numbers increased

until, by the end, there was a virtual rush hour of fashion, with the eclectic soundtrack playing the “Happy Days” theme song as a finale.

Some of these commuters wore classic Chanel suits - perhaps with an “I (Heart) NY” T-shirt - and others,



Models walk the runway during the CHANEL 2025/26 Métiers d’art fashion show at Bowery subway station. (AP)

tweed coats, flowing black capes or brightly patterned skirts. All were intended to show off the craftsmanship involved.

“This felt like breaking the system,” said Stewart, speaking after the afternoon show. “I genuinely had an emotional response to the show. I felt like I just saw so many different versions of a person walking. It wasn’t one woman.”

Stewart, like others, had no idea going in what the show’s theme would be, and thought the subway environment felt like “a flurry of fleeting caught moments.”

“Like, ‘Where is she going?’ I wanted to go with them,” Stewart said. “I believed in it. All of this is artifice, but when you do a really good impression of the truth, you find your own. This felt real to me.”

It was real enough that Chanel had printed its own “newspaper” - called La Gazette - to accompany the show, with articles and interviews. An interview with Blazy quoted the designer as saying the collection was inspired partly by the 1931 visit to New York of Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel.

35 specialists share insights on surgery, chemotherapy and radiation

MoH to host Oncology Conference on latest cancer treatments

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Dr. Sadiq Abu Zallouf, a radiation therapy consultant at the Ministry of Health and Head of the Kuwait Oncology Conference, announced that the conference will be held on Decem-

ber 5-6. Titled “Kuwait Conference on the Latest Developments in Oncology,” the event will be held under the patronage of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi and under the auspices of the Kuwait Oncology Association. In a press statement, Dr. Abu Zallouf ex-

plained that the conference is among the region’s most prominent specialized scientific events, with 35 expert speakers and physicians in surgical, chemotherapy, and radiation oncology from various countries in the region. The conference program has 31 scientific lectures covering the latest developments in the treatment of lung, breast,

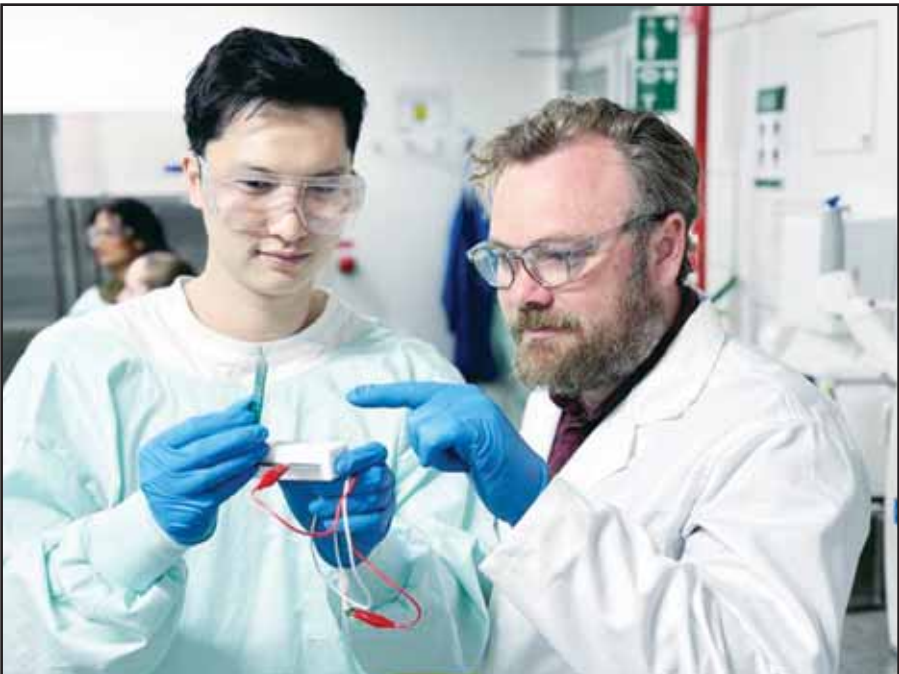
urological, and gastrointestinal cancers, as well as two workshops on modern technologies in cancer therapy using advanced radiation equipment. The conference will include interactive scientific discussions to facilitate the exchange of expertise among specialists and provide insights into the latest devel-

opments in oncology, thus contributing to the advancement of medical practices and enhancing patient care. Dr. Abu Zallouf expressed his hope that the conference would serve as a leading platform for bringing together experts and enriching scientific knowledge in cancer treatment.

Study reveals real-time physical response

Scientists in Australia zap stem cells to boost tissue engineering

MELBOURNE, Dec 3, (Xinhua): Scientists in Australia have discovered how tiny electrical pulses can steer stem cells as they grow, paving the way for improved lab-grown tissues, organs, nerves and bones. Researchers used advanced atomic force microscopy to track how stem cells change their structure when exposed to electrical stimulation, a media statement of Australia’s Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) said Wednesday. The study revealed how living stem cells physically respond to external signals in real time, reshaping themselves within minutes and setting off changes that influence what type of cell they eventually become, it said. The team is exploring how stem cells respond to physical and electrical cues over traditional chemicals, enabling materials that mimic the body’s natural environment for engineered tissues and organs. Amy Gelmi, a senior lecturer at the RMIT School of Science, who led the work, noted that most researchers use chemicals, like special solutions to induce muscle or bone, to control stem cell development, though this approach has limitations. Co-researcher Peter Sherrell from RMIT’s School of Science said the research shows stem cells respond to tiny electrical signals beyond chemicals, enabling precise control to form bone, nerve or muscle, and promising advances in tissue engineering and regenerative medicine. Even subtle electrical changes can alter the stiffness and shape of a cell’s internal skeleton, which in turn affects how it develops, research-



RMIT photo
Dr Kaiwen Zhang and Dr Peter Sherrell (left to right) with the team’s smart electrical stimulus platform, which enables the team to study how stem cells respond to different types electric signals.

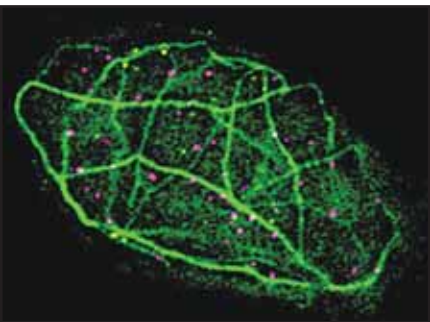
ers said. The team combined experiments with computer modelling to predict how cells respond to different electrical patterns, paving the way for practical therapies for wound healing, implant

integration and organ regeneration. “That gives us a roadmap for designing materials or devices that talk to cells in a language they understand,” said co-researcher Joseph Berry from the University of Melbourne.

Cancer cells’ ‘immortality’ revealed

Major discovery in Australia may improve chemotherapy

SYDNEY, Dec 3, (Xinhua): A new understanding of how cancer cells stay intact to become “immortal” could improve chemotherapy and lead to new treatment options, new research has revealed. This major discovery about cancer cells could help make chemotherapy work better, reduce side effects, and lead to the development of new cancer treatments, a media release of the Children’s Medical Research Institute (CMRI) in Australia said late Tuesday. The research, published in Nature Communications, focuses on how cancer cells keep their chromosomes intact so they can continue dividing relentlessly, the release said. Normally, every time a cell divides, the ends of its chromosomes, called telomeres, get a little shorter. When telomeres become too short, healthy cells stop dividing. But cancer cells find ways to maintain their telomeres so they can become effectively “immortal,” it said. Most cancer cells use an enzyme called telomerase to rebuild their telomeres. Researchers discovered that a network of tiny fibres inside the cancer cell’s nucleus, made of a protein called actin, helps the telomerase enzyme reach the telomeres that need repair. This is an important new role for actin. Outside the nucleus, actin is already well known for helping muscles contract and helping cells move. But this newly identified function takes



A new understanding of how cancer cells stay intact to become ‘immortal’ could improve chemotherapy and lead to new treatment options.

place inside the nucleus, said Professor Tracy Bryan, who leads the Cell Biology Unit at CMRI. When telomeres are damaged, they normally move around a lot. But they get caught on this actin network, like an insect stuck in a spider web,” Bryan said, adding that this makes it easier for telomerase to find and repair them, helping the cancer cell stay alive. The study showed that to survive the DNA damage caused by chemotherapy, cancer cells can use telomerase, along with this actin network, to repair some of that damage and keep multiplying. Bryan said that blocking telomerase or disrupting the actin network could enhance chemotherapy effectiveness and might allow lower doses to reduce harmful side effects.

Acute respiratory cases unabated for years in Indian capital amid lingering air pollution

NEW DELHI, Dec 3, (Xinhua): India’s federal government said that over 200,000 cases of acute respiratory illnesses were recorded in six state-run hospitals in the Indian capital, Delhi, from 2022 to 2024, with air pollution as a notable trigger. Six major hospitals recorded 67,054 acute respiratory illness cases in 2022, 69,293 in 2023 and 68,411 in 2024, according to the federal health and family welfare ministry in the upper house of the Indian parliament, locally called Rajya Sabha. “Of the total 204,758 acute respiratory illness cases, 30,424 required hospitalization,” the ministry said. “Air pollution is one of the triggering factors for respiratory ailments and associated diseases. Health effects of air pollution are synergistic manifestation of factors which include food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity, heredity, etc.,” the ministry pointed out. The ministry said the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) conducts sentinel surveillance of air pollution-related illnesses through the network of more than 230 sentinel surveillance sites spanning across the country. The revelation comes at a time when the national capital territory is battling the rising air pollution levels. For many years in the past, the air quality in Delhi would turn hazardous ahead of winter. Industrial activities and vehicular traffic are significant contributors to air pollution in the city, along with rampant construction. The situation worsens due to the rise in emissions from stubble burning in neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana, which increases the concentration of prominent pollutants in the air much beyond the safety limits.

Lifespan hits 83.7 years

South Korean baby life expectancy hits record

SEOUL, Dec 3, (Xinhua): Life expectancy of South Korean babies hit a record high last year, statistical ministry data showed Wednesday. Average life expectancy of the babies born in 2024 reached 83.7 years, up 0.2 years longer than the previous year, according to the Ministry of Data and Statistics. It marked the longest since relevant data began to be compiled in 1970 when the average life span was 62.3 years. The life expectancy had steadily increased except for the first decrease in 2022, affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Male babies born in 2024 were expected to live 80.8 years, while female babies were forecast to live 86.6 years. The gender gap in life expectancy had declined from 8.6 years in 1985 to 7.3 years in 2000 and 5.8 years in 2024. The average life expectancy for the boys was 2.3 years longer than the average among members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, while the life expectancy for the girls was 2.9 years longer.

Child neurologist explains science of head pain and how to treat it

Why do people get headaches and migraines?

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

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



There are steps you can take to relieve headache pain and prevent future attacks.

and neck that can cause headaches. Many types of stresses can cause headaches, including an infection, allergies, hormone changes during puberty 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. Identifying what type of headache you’re experiencing is crucial to making sure it is treated properly. Because migraines can be severe, they’re the type of headache that most often leads to doctor’s visits for both kids and adults. There are several ways to reduce your chances of having headaches, such as drinking plenty of water and limiting caffeine. Eating, sleeping and exercising regularly are other ways you can help prevent headaches. While painkillers like ibuprofen are often enough to relieve a headache, prescription medications are sometimes necessary to make head pain more bearable. Some medications can also help control or prevent headache episodes. Physical therapy to exercise the body or behavioral therapy to work on the mind can also help you manage headache pain. There are even electronic devices to treat headaches by stimulating different parts of the nervous system. It is important to talk with a doctor about headaches, especially if it’s a new problem or you experience a change in how they usually feel. Sometimes, brain imaging or blood tests are needed to rule out another health issue. Recognizing a headache problem early will help your doctor get started on helping you figure out the best way to treat it. Hello, curious kids! Do you have a question you’d like an expert to answer? Ask an adult to send your question to CuriousKidsUS@theconversation.com. Please tell us your name, age and the city where you live. And since curiosity has no age limit - adults, let us know what you’re wondering, too. We won’t be able to answer every question, but we will do our best. (AP)

Over 1,600 HIV cases reported in Laos in 9 months of 2025

VIENTIANE, Dec 3, (Xinhua): A total of 1,617 new HIV cases were reported in Laos from January to September 2025, with young people aged 15-29 accounting for 53 percent of the new cases, according to the Lao Ministry of Health. Marking World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, the ministry reported that Laos currently has 21,363 people living with HIV, with 14,314 receiving antiretroviral treatment, local news website Lao Phattana News reported on Wednesday. To strengthen prevention and response efforts, authorities highlighted the im-

portance of World AIDS Day in raising public awareness, mobilizing community action, and honoring those who have lost their lives to AIDS. Currently, Laos operates 196 testing facilities and a growing network of treatment centers across the country. To sustain progress despite ongoing challenges, such as limited resources, the Lao government has urged all sectors of society to work together to overcome these obstacles, in line with the 2025 World AIDS Day theme: “Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response.”

SGA scores 38 as defending champ OKC holds off Warriors



Philadelphia 76ers' Tyrese Maxey, center, goes up for a shot between Washington Wizards' Kyshawn George, right, and CJ McCollum during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Philadelphia. (AP)



New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson (1) tries to make a move against Memphis Grizzlies guard Vince Williams Jr. (5) in the second half of an Emirates NBA Cup basketball game, Wednesday in New Orleans. (AP)

Timberwolves edge Pelicans

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec 3, (AP): Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 38 points and made a key 3-pointer with 3:34 left, Jalen Williams added 22 points and six assists, and the Oklahoma City Thunder held off the determined Golden State Warriors 124-112 on Tuesday night.

Chet Holmgren hit a go-ahead 3 from the top with 6:02 remaining and finished with 21 points and eight rebounds for the defending champions.

Brandin Podziemski scored 17 points and Seth Curry added 14 in his Warriors debut with older brother Stephen Curry sidelined for a second straight game because a bruised left quadriceps and muscle strain sustained last Wednesday against Houston.

Pat Spencer's putback with 2:26 left in the third got Golden State to 81-79 then his 3 the next time down made it a one-point game - and he matched his career high with 17 points to go with six assists. Podziemski's buzzer-beating 3 at the end of the third pulled the Warriors within 91-88.

Jimmy Butler didn't play the second half for Golden State because of a sore left knee. He started despite be-

ing questionable because of a bruised left glute muscle after a hard fall in Saturday's win against the Pelicans. He then cut awkwardly under the basket and lost his left shoe midway through the second quarter, limping afterward.

Timberwolves 149, Pelicans 142 OT

In New Orleans, Anthony Edwards scored 34 of his season-high 44 points in the second half, including a driving layup to force overtime, and Julius Randle scored eight points in the extra period to lift the Minnesota Timberwolves to a victory over the New Orleans Pelicans.

Edwards, who came in averaging 37.2 points in his last five games, struggled from long range early, missing 4 of 5 3-point attempts in the first half. But he caught fire in the second half, going 5 of 8 from deep.

Edwards sent the game into overtime by driving past Jose Alvarado for a layup with 2.3 seconds left. New Orleans led 129-125 with 1:03 remaining in regulation on Derik Queen's dunk but went scoreless the rest of the way.

Trey Murphy III led six Pelicans in double figures with 33 points. Saddiq Bey had 22, and Queen and fellow rookie Jeremiah Fears added 21.

Celtics 123, Knicks 117

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored a season-high 42

points, sealing the game with a breakaway dunk in the final seconds as the Boston Celtics beat the New York Knicks in a rematch of last season's Eastern Conference semifinal.

Derrick White scored seven of his 22 points in the last four minutes, after the Celtics turned back a New York charge that cut a 15-point deficit to 102-99. Jordan Walsh had six points and five rebounds in the fourth quarter for Boston.

Mikal Bridges scored 17 of his 35 points in the fourth and went 8 for 12 from 3-point range overall. Karl-Anthony Towns added 29 for the Knicks, who had won four in a row.

Boston has won four of its last five games, beating four of the top six teams in the Eastern Conference.

Spurs 126, Grizzlies 119

In San Antonio, Harrison Barnes scored 31 points, De'Aaron Fox had 29 and the San Antonio Spurs beat the Memphis Grizzlies.

Dylan Harper added 15 points as San Antonio improved to 6-2 since losing Victor Wembanyama to a strained left calf on Nov. 15.

Zach Edey had 19 points and 15 rebounds for Memphis, which had won three straight and five of six without star point guard Ja Morant.

After shooting 1 for 4 on 3-pointers in a 125-112 loss at Minnesota on Sunday, Barnes made his first three 3s to set up a season high. Barnes finished 7 for 12 on 3-pointers and 10 for 20 from the field.

Fox had 11 points in the fourth quarter as San Antonio rallied from a seven-point deficit in improving to 9-2 at home.

Memphis outscored San Antonio 58-42 in the paint with Wembanyama watching from the bench in a brown hoodie.

Raptors 121, Trail Blazers 118

In Toronto, Scottie Barnes scored 28 points to help the Toronto Raptors edge the Portland Trail Blazers .

Barnes was 10 for 18 from the field. He also had seven rebounds, seven assists and two blocks.

Immanuel Quickley had 23 points with eight assists for Toronto, which had lost two in a row. Brandon Ingram scored 21 points, and reserve Grady Dick finished with 14.

Portland wasted a solid performance by Deni Avdija, who had 25 points, 14 assists and eight boards. Toumani Camara added 21 points and seven rebounds, and reserve Shaedon Sharpe - a London, Ontario, native - scored 23 points.

More entertainment from the opening matches

Australia and New Zealand drawn into same group at Rugby World Cup

SYDNEY, Dec 3, (AP): Host Australia and three-time champion New Zealand were drawn into the same group Wednesday for the expanded Rugby World Cup in 2027, with the group winner likely to meet defending champion South Africa in the quarterfinals.

Australia was placed into Pool A from the second band of teams that were ranked from seventh to 12th.

No. 2-ranked New Zealand was the last team pulled out in the draw by World Rugby chairman Brett Robinson. They'll be joined by Chile and Hong Kong in the group stage.

South Africa was drawn into Pool B with Italy, Georgia and Romania. The addition of four teams means the tournament will have a Round of 16 for the first time, a stage that World Rugby chairman Robinson predicted "brings greater jeopardy, earlier knockout drama, and even more entertainment from the opening matches."

The result means the 2023 finalists could meet in the quarterfinals, if both the Springboks and the All Blacks top their groups. England, winner of the last Rugby World Cup staged in Australia in 2003, was drawn into Pool F with Wales, Tonga and Zimbabwe.

The field was expanded to 24 teams for the 2027 tournament, which kicks off in Perth on Oct. 1 and culminates in a Nov. 13 final in Sydney.

The teams were divided into four bands of six based on World Rugby rankings at the time of the draw. Each of the six pools contain one team from each of the four bands.

The Australians, World Cup winners in 1991 and '99 and runner-up the last time the tournament was played Down Under in 2003, missed a seeding in the top six after their first winless November tour to Europe since 1958.

Australia, which missed the quarterfinals for the first time ever in a disastrous 2023 campaign in France under Eddie Jones, was ranked seventh and placed with Fiji, Scotland, Italy, Georgia and Wales.

No. 6 Argentina was drawn into Pool C with Fiji, Spain and Canada, while three-time finalist France will face Japan, the United States and Samoa in Pool E. Ireland is in Pool D with Scotland, Uruguay and Portugal.

Pool A: New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Hong Kong



In this file photo, Australia's Harry Potter catches the ball during the rugby union Nations Series match between France and Australia in Saint-Denis, outside Paris. (AP)

Pool B: South Africa, Italy, Georgia, Romania
Pool C: Argentina, Fiji, Spain, Canada
Pool D: Ireland, Scotland, Uruguay, Portugal
Pool E: France, Japan, United States, Samoa
Pool F: England, Wales, Tonga, Zimbabwe

Strasbourg suspends striker Emmanuel Emegha for one game

PARIS, Dec 3, (AP): Strasbourg suspended striker Emmanuel Emegha for one game on Wednesday for not respecting "the values, expectations and rules" of the Ligue 1 club.

Strasbourg announced the decision in a statement without giving further details, but said that Emegha will return for the following game.

"This decision was made following the player's recent non-respect (breach) of the club's values, expectations, and rules," the statement read.

"Emmanuel remains an important member of our team, who has always given his all for the club on the pitch. He will be reinstated to the squad after this match."

Strasbourg travels to play Toulouse in the French league on Saturday and then goes to Scotland to face Aberdeen in the Europa Conference League on Dec. 11.

French sports daily L'Equipe said the decision was taken after recent comments to the media by Emegha, who is the club captain.

In a post-match interview last month, after scoring twice in a 2-0 win against Lille, he implied Strasbourg had not beaten Monaco and Paris Saint-Germain this season because he didn't

play in those games.

In another interview with a Dutch media outlet, the Netherlands striker reportedly said he thought Strasbourg was in Germany when he was set to join the club two years ago.

The 22-year-old Emegha impressed last season with 14 league goals as Alsace-based Strasbourg finished seventh. He has four league goals in seven games so far this season, and three goals in European competition.

Strasbourg reached the Europa Conference League after beating Danish side Brøndby in a playoff, with Emegha scoring twice in the second leg.

‘New-age peptides are hard to corral online’

Doping at your doorstep: Next Olympic drug crisis could be coming through mail

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo., Dec 3, (AP): The next Olympic doping scandal could be delivered right to your doorstep.

A trove of so-called research chemicals known as peptides, many of them banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency and some not approved for human use in the United States, are available with the simple click of a button through online retailers. One seller is Amazon. Another is Alibaba, a sponsor of the International Olympic Committee.

The easy availability of the drugs combined with their hard-to-detect nature is precisely the toxic combination doping regulators and Olympic officials are trying to avoid. With the Milan Cortina Games just two months away, they are hoping to break a string of scandals involving the Russians and Chinese that have disrupted the Games, both summer and winter, since 2014.

Though online pharmaceuticals and supplements have for years been portrayed as a risk by anti-doping authorities, the influx of certain hard-to-detect peptides - chains of protein-building amino acids marketed to help with anything from anti-aging to workout recovery to weight and memory loss - presents a more difficult challenge.

"These substances have proliferated," said Oliver Catlin, president of the Anti-Doping Sciences Institute.

Most of these peptides are so-called "research chemicals" that are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and are also banned by the WADA code, either under its "S2" category that encompasses peptides or under its "S0" classification, a catch-all category for "non-approved substances."

The few substances specifically listed under the "S0" category - such as the popular BPC 157 - are placed there because the pharmacological make-up of the substances don't fit neatly into another category on the banned list.

One tricky part of the "S0" category is that it includes unapproved substances that aren't specifically listed because, for instance, there is no way to test for that drug and regulators don't want to reveal that to users.

Catlin's research found hundreds of the banned or illegal peptides available on the online market and an ever-shifting menu of items, with some of them removed after The Associated Press started asking questions.

"It's not like it happened overnight," he said. "The mainstream use of peptides has exploded in the last five years."

Dan Burke, a former FDA official who now heads intelligence and investigations at the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, said the new-age peptides are hard to corral online because the American law prohibiting their sale dates to 1938 "and it just isn't working and doesn't work to this day."

"The bad guys know it, and that's why the stuff proliferates," Burke said.

Though some peptides - insulin and the newly popular weight-loss dynamo GLP-1 are among the best examples - are time-tested, perfectly legal (with a prescription) and effective, other substances in the category are

not legally marketable, either as supplements or prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

A number of them, including BPC-157, could be found on multiple online sites, including Amazon and Alibaba. The latter is a major IOC sponsor "committed to helping the IOC transform the Olympic Games for the digital era."

Asked by AP about this connection, an IOC spokesperson said Alibaba "confirmed to us that it consistently monitors its marketplaces and that it does not have prohibited substances for sale from the WADA 2025 list." Approached by AP, a representative for Alibaba.com asked for links to "problematic" drugs sold by its marketplace and, after the AP sent two of them, said they had removed those items.

The company said it bars all prohibited substances in accordance to the WADA banned list.

"Although some of these substances may not be legally restricted in ordinary consumer contexts, we have proactively adopted stricter standards to define operational boundaries and our compliance efforts go beyond passive adherence and minimum legal requirements," the company said in a statement.

Amazon told AP it requires all products offered on its marketplace to comply with applicable laws and regulations, and is in the process of removing products that violate its policies. A few days after being contacted by AP, the website removed some of the drugs the AP had asked about, but a number of listings remained and some new ones popped up.

The current peptides boom comes some 25 years after the late Victor Conte became a household name in sports by developing and selling "the clear" and "the cream."

Those were the names for so-called designer steroids that led to the infamous scandal that emerged from Conte's Bay Area Lab Co-operative (BALCO) and engulfed baseball and track.

Like some peptides, designer steroids were impossible to detect at the time but they were not easy to obtain. It took years to uncover their existence, let alone to analyze their efficacy or sanction the athletes who used them.



In this file photo, Olympic rings are seen near the village of Anterselva where the biathlon discipline will take place during the Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics, in northern Italy. (AP)

Mirassol beats Vasco to seal Copa Libertadores debut

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec 3, (Xinhua): Carlos Eduardo scored one goal and set up another as Mirassol secured a historic Copa Libertadores group stage berth with a 2-0 away win over Vasco da Gama.

Renato Marques put the visitors ahead with a first-time finish into the far corner after Eduardo's cross from the right wing on the counter-attack.

Eduardo put the result beyond in stoppage time when he combined with Cristian Renato and then round-

ed goalkeeper Leo Jardim to tap the ball into an empty net.

The result at Sao Januario stadium means Mirassol, which is this year playing in the Serie A for the first time in its century-old history, is now guaranteed a top-four finish in Brazil's top flight.

"The club has done an amazing job to be in the position it's in today," Mirassol defender Reinaldo said after the match.

"Everyone has worked so hard and this is a reward for that. We have a

great atmosphere within the squad, and that helps to give us the confidence needed to perform well in games."

While Mirassol can start preparing for South American football's premier club competition, Vasco is in a battle for survival, sitting just four points clear of the relegation zone.

In Tuesday's only other Brazilian Serie A fixture, Fluminense rose to fifth with a 2-1 victory at Gremio. Enditem

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Declining prize money worries owners

Al-Nisf seeks stronger investment to boost Kuwait's equestrian sport

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Osama Al-Nisf, a prominent horse owner, has called for measures to address the challenges facing horse breeders in Kuwait, despite ongoing efforts by officials and administrators to develop the sport.

Al-Nisf highlighted several pressing issues, including inadequate lighting on racetracks. "Most races are held at night, and poor visibility can affect both horse and rider performance," he said. Early morning training sessions also pose difficulties, as trainers struggle to see their horses clearly, limiting the quality and safety of practice.

He also stressed the need to renovate and modernize the main club facilities. "The venue represents the face of equestrian sport in Kuwait and should reflect the ambition and growth of the industry," Al-Nisf noted.

Another challenge he mentioned is the decline in prize money, which has led many owners to face significant financial losses, given the high costs of breeding and preparing horses.



Osama Al-Nisf, one of the youngest horse owners.

To encourage sustainability and attract young talent, Al-Nisf called for greater private-sector support. "We hope private companies can sponsor and fund the sport, as is common in leading equestrian nations," he said.

Orange eyes second spot

Kazma looks to secure win against Al-Nasr in basketball league

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: Kazma will take on Al-Nasr today in a single match concluding the fifth round of the Kuwaiti Basketball League, held at the Union Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex. Tip-off is scheduled for 7:30 PM.

The match favors Kazma, coached by Slovenian Bojan Lazic, thanks to a strong roster of top local and professional players. The team aims to reach nine points by defeating Al-Nasr and securing second place in the league standings. Key contributors include Hussein Al-Khabbaz, Abdulrahman Al-Sahoo, Hamad Al-Ali, Abdulaziz Faleh, Abdullah Ibrahim, Khalifa Al-Omani, Yusuf Naseeb, along with professional players Phil Green and Jagwan Johnson.

Al-Nasr is relying solely on local talent and without any professional players, faces an uphill battle. The team has struggled this season, recording only



A Kazma Club player drives to the basket during the game.

one win against Al-Sahel while suffering three losses to Qadsia, Kuwait, and Al-Qurain. Despite the odds, league surprises are always possible.

Barça breaks Atletico run with stunning comeback

Olmo leaves injured at Camp Nou



Barcelona's Raphinha kicks the ball next to Atletico Madrid's Koke during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Atletico de Madrid, in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

MADRID, Dec 3, (AP): Barcelona maintained its Spanish league lead by coming from behind to beat Atletico Madrid 3-1, with Dani Olmo scoring the go-ahead goal but hurting his shoulder in the process.

Olmo injured his left shoulder in a fall after sending a left-footed strike into the net in the 65th minute for Barcelona's second goal at Camp Nou stadium. Atletico had opened the scoring with Alex Baena, and Raphinha equalized for the hosts in the first half.

Olmo was in visible pain after

going down and couldn't celebrate the goal that left Barcelona four points ahead of Real Madrid. The Barcelona playmaker was immediately substituted and had to be assisted off the field by the club's medical staff.

The 19th-round match was moved forward because the teams will be playing in the Spanish Super Cup in January.

"It was a key match and these three points were important," Raphinha said after Barcelona's fifth straight league win. "They could help decide the league in the end."

Atletico, sitting in fourth place, dropped six points behind Barcelona after 15 matches. Diego Simeone's team had won seven in a row in all competitions.

"Barça played better," Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak said. "We had a couple of chances to equalize but we couldn't get it done. Unfortunately this ends our good run, but we have to lift our heads and move on."

Barcelona is still playing at a Camp Nou that can't be filled to capacity because of the lack of permits following its major renovation work.

Baena put the visitors ahead in a breakaway in the 19th after picking up a long pass by Nahuel Molina behind the Barcelona defense. The goal had to be confirmed after a video-review check for offside.

Raphinha equalized in the 26th after a nice through ball from Pedri. The Brazil forward cleared Oblak inside the area before find-

ing the open net.

Barcelona had a chance to move ahead in the 36th after Olmo was fouled by Pablo Barrios inside the area to prompt a penalty kick, but Robert Lewandowski sent his shot from the spot way over the crossbar in a rare miss for the veteran Poland striker.

Thiago Almada nearly equalized for Atletico in the 80th after clearing a couple of Barcelona defenders inside the area. Ferran Torres, who replaced Olmo, sealed the victory for Barcelona deep into stoppage time.

Both teams lost players because of apparent injuries in the second half. Barcelona saw Pedri go out in the 74th and Atletico had Baena substituted in the 63rd.

Kuwait Football Association set to unveil French Super Cup sponsors

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The Supreme Committee for the Organization of Major Sports Events was to hold a press conference today at 12:30 PM at Zain Company's headquarters in Shuwaikh to officially announce the sponsors of the French Super Cup. The match will take place at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium on January 8, featuring Paris Saint-Germain against Marseille.

Attendees at the conference include Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousuf, President of the Kuwait Football Association; Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Vice Chairman and CEO of Zain Group; Captain Abdulmohsen Al-Fuqaan, Chairman of Kuwait Airways; and Faisal Al-Yateem, Secretary-General of the Supreme Committee for Major Sports Events.

In October, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousuf confirmed that Kuwait had signed an agreement with the French Professional



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousuf, President of the Kuwait Football Association Football League to host the highly anticipated Super Cup match in Kuwait.

Juve tops Udinese to reach quarters

TURIN, Italy, Dec 3, (AP): Juventus advanced to the Italian Cup quarterfinals with a 2-0 win over Udinese after teenage defender Matteo Palma scored an own goal and conceded a penalty Tuesday.

Juventus, which holds the record for the most Italian Cup trophies with 15, will next face either Atalanta or Genoa, which play each other on Wednesday.

The Bianconeri took the lead midway

through the first half when United States international Weston McKennie did well down the right flank before putting in a low cross that Palma turned into his own net as he tried to anticipate Jonathan David.

A video review in the second half spotted that the 17-year-old Palma had fouled Juan Cabal in the penalty area. Substitute Manuel Locatelli struck the resulting spot kick straight down the middle.

Best of the Rest

Davenport signs on for 2 more years: Lindsay Davenport signed a two-year contract renewal to remain the Billie Jean King Cup captain for the United States, the U.S. Tennis Association announced Tuesday.

Davenport led the Americans to the team competition's final this year, their first appearance in that round since 2018. The U.S. lost to Italy.

Davenport became captain in 2024. As a player, she helped the U.S. win the event three times, in 1996, 1999 and 2000.

She won three Grand Slam singles titles, reached No. 1 in the WTA rankings and was elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2014. (AP)

England defeats Ghana in friendly: A goal in each half gave the Lionesses of England a 2-0 victory over Ghana's women's national team, the Black Queens, in an international friendly in Southampton, Britain, on Tuesday night.

Having qualified for the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), the Ghanaians went into the game determined to beat the European champions. However, the Lionesses took the lead in the fifth minute through Lucia Kendall.

After scoring, England continued to pile on the pressure but were unable to add to the score before halftime, as the Queens' defense stayed resolute and the goalkeeper made several good saves. The Lionesses kept the pressure on the Queens, and their efforts paid off as substitute Alessia Russo earned and converted a penalty in the 96th minute to make it 2-0 for England. (Xinhua)

Hertha routs second-division Kaiserslautern

Leverkusen knocks Dortmund out of German Cup

BERLIN, Dec 3, (AP): Ibrahim Maza's first-half strike was enough for Bayer Leverkusen to knock Borussia Dortmund out of the German Cup with a 1-0 win in their third-round encounter.

Maza scored in the 34th minute after a team move from the back. Alex Grimaldo played the 20-year-old Algeria forward through, and though Waldemar Anton blocked Maza's first effort, he curled the ball in with his second after beating Anton and another Dortmund defender to the ball.

Leverkusen's Martin Terrier had a would-be goal ruled out for offside after a VAR check in the second half.

Karim Adeyemi had two good chances for dominant Dortmund before the break, and the fans thought he'd scored in stoppage time, but it was only side netting with his header from a difficult angle.

"We had a score to settle," said Maza, referring to Dortmund's win in Leverkusen in the Bundes-



Dortmund's Waldemar Anton, left, challenges for the ball with Leverkusen's goalkeeper Mark Flekken, center, and Leverkusen's Robert Andrich, right, during the German Soccer Cup round of sixteen soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and Bayer 04 Leverkusen in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)

liga on Saturday.

Maza's former team Hertha Berlin enjoyed a 6-1 rout of second-division rival Kaiserslautern, the beaten finalist in 2024, to stretch its winning run to seven games across all competitions. The goal it conceded was the first

since its last defeat, a 3-2 loss at Bochum on Oct. 18.

The 16-year-old Kennet Eichhorn netted for Hertha to become the club's youngest goalscorer.

Louis Oppie scored the winner for St. Pauli - which has lost its last nine Bundesliga games - to beat Borussia Mönchengladbach 2-1 away.

Christoph Baumgartner scored twice as Leipzig, the 2022 and 2023 champion, enjoyed a 3-1 win at home over second division Magdeburg.

Fans across all the games stayed quiet for the first 12 minutes again to protest against German government proposals to increase security measures around games. The mooted changes include personalized tickets, increased surveillance including facial-recognition software and centralized stadium bans for alleged troublesome fans. The proposals were to be discussed at a three-day interior ministry conference starting Wednesday.

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NEWS



Golden State Warriors forward Jonathan Kuminga, left, drives to the basket against Oklahoma City Thunder guard Jalen Williams during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

Sports



Kuwait returns a shot during Kuwait-Bahrain match.



Participants in action.

Kuwait beats Bahrain 3-0 to keep hopes alive in Arab Challenge Cup

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

AMMAN, Dec 3: Kuwait's men's volleyball team delivered a standout performance at the inaugural Arab Challenge Cup for men's national teams in Amman, Jordan. The team defeated Bahrain 3-0, with set scores of 25-19, 25-20, 26-24.

The tournament had a rocky start for Kuwait, with losses to Tunisia (0-3) and Jordan (2-3). However, they rebounded with wins over Palestine and Bahrain. Today, Bahrain faces Tunisia and Palestine meets Jordan, while the tournament concludes tomorrow with Egypt vs. Kuwait and Bahrain vs. Jordan.

The competition follows a single-round league format, with the team earning the most points crowned champion. Tunisia leads with 12 points and has already secured the title. Egypt is second with 9 points, Kuwait third with 7 points, followed by Bahrain (3), Jordan (2), and Palestine (0). A victory over Egypt on Friday would secure Kuwait the runner-up spot, while a loss would leave final positions from third to sixth dependent on the remaining results.

Meanwhile, in the West Asia Women's Volleyball Clubs Championship, three matches are scheduled today: Al-Payha (Saudi Arabia) vs. Sanharib (Iraq), Al-Qalamoun (Lebanon) vs. Al-Fatat (Kuwait), and Al-Nasr (Yemen) vs. Sharjah (UAE). The tournament opened yesterday with Al-Ula (Saudi Arabia) defeating Qatar 3-0.

Second Arab Women's Sailing Champ'ship underway in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 3: The second Arab Women's Sailing Championship has kicked off at Al-Messila Beach in Kuwait, featuring 37 athletes from across the Arab world. Organized by the Sailing, Rowing, and Kayak Committee of the Kuwait Sea Sports Club, the championship runs through December 5.

Tournament director Ibrahim Al-Furaih said the event is held under the Arab Sailing Federation, with participants representing Kuwait, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, and Sudan. The championship also includes a panel of international referees from Morocco, Algeria, Italy, Poland, France, and Russia. The competition features three races in each of the Optimist, ILCA 4, and ILCA

6 categories. The championship will conclude on Friday with an awards ceremony to honor the winners.

Al-Furaih highlighted the broader goals of the event: promoting sailing in Kuwait, empowering women athletes, developing the skills of Arab sailors, and preparing them for international competitions, including the Olympic Games.

He also pointed to Kuwaiti sailor Amina Shah, the first Kuwaiti and Gulf woman to qualify for Paris 2024 Olympics in sailing, as a role model. Shah's achievement came through years of dedicated training, preparation, and participation in various competitions, paving the way for future generations of Arab women in the sport.

Serena officially registers for drug tests ahead of comeback

NEW YORK, Dec 3, (AP): Serena Williams has taken the first step that would be required ahead of a comeback to tennis, registering with the sport's drug-testing body, a spokesman for the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) said.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion, one of the greats of the game, has not competed since bidding farewell at the 2022 U.S. Open. At the time, Williams said she didn't want to use the word "retiring" and instead declared that she was "evolving" away from tennis.

It was not immediately clear when or where - or even if - Williams actually will play again. Her agent did not immediately return a request for comment.

Williams, who is now 44, was one of the biggest stars of any sport, a dominant talent on the court and still someone drawing attention away from it. If she does end up returning to the tour, it would be a significant story line.

Her decision to place her name back in the testing pool with the ITIA, which oversees anti-doping and anti-corruption efforts, was first reported by Bounces.

"She is on the list and back in the testing pool," ITIA spokesman Adrian Bassett wrote to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Athletes returning to testing need to provide information on their whereabouts - details on their location when they are not at an official event and times when they are available to give samples. Someone who retires while they are on the list and later comes back needs to be available for testing for six months



In this file photo, Serena Williams, of the United States, returns a shot to Ajla Tomljanovic, of Australia, during the third round of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York. (AP)

before they are allowed to return to competition.

Williams' older sister, Venus, returned to competition this July at age 45 after nearly 1 1/2 years away from the tour; she never had announced her retirement. At the U.S. Open, Venus became the oldest player to play singles at the American Grand Slam tournament since 1981.

When Venus, a seven-time major singles champion, came back at the DC Open, she spoke about wishing Serena would join her back on tour. They claimed 14 Grand Slam doubles titles as a pair.

"I keep saying to my team: The only thing that would make this better is if she was here. Like, we always did everything together, so of course I miss her," Venus said at the time when asked about a video on social media that showed Serena swinging a racket. "But if she comes back, I'm sure she'll let y'all know."

Spain retains Nations League title as Germany crumbles

Pina scores twice in 3-0 victory

MADRID, Dec 3, (AP): Clàudia Pina scored twice and Germany crumbled as Spain retained the Women's Nations League title with a 3-0 victory in the final's second leg.

Vicky López also scored after Pina finally broke the deadlock in the 61st minute with Germany stubbornly hanging on as Spain had done in the first leg, a 0-0 draw in Kaiserslautern on Friday.

Spain was without three-time Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmati, who broke her leg in training on Sunday.

López took Bonmati's place and Spain dominated from the start. Esther González swept the ball just past the post and Mariona Caldentey forced a save from Ann-Katrin Berger early on as the flag-waving fans roared encouragement.

Nearly 56,000 supporters attended the match at Atlético Madrid's Metropolitan Stadium, easily a record for the Spanish team at home. Many children were also present on a cold night in the Spanish capital. None of the supporters seemed to mind the cold with most staying in their seats long after the final whistle.

"One of the most magical nights we have ever experienced, one of the best in my career," two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas said.

"Some of us have been playing for the national team for 13 years and never imagined this," Putellas said of the attendance. "It says a lot about what we have achieved with women's soccer in Spain. We will continue to inspire girls and boys to fight for their dreams, which sometimes come true."

González tried her luck with an acrobatic scissors kick, and Mariona, López, and Mariona again all had good chances before the break, with Berger doing well to deny the latter.

Nicole Anyomi had a rare opportunity for Germany in a one-on-one with Cata Coll before the halftime whistle, only to drag her shot wide of the right post.

"That has to go in, and she had another one in the box in the second half," Germany coach Christian Wuck said. "That's the difference between us and the technically gifted Spanish players."

Pina got the party underway in the 61st when she breezed past a German defender and played a one-two with Mariona before beating Berger with a low shot. Berger got her hand to the ball but couldn't stop its progress inside the right post.

The 19-year-old López scored seven minutes later when she cut in from the right and unleashed a curling shot inside the far post.

Pina sealed the win in the 74th after getting a gift of the ball from Germany's Janina Minge. The Barcelona forward set off for goal and let fly from around 20



Team of Spain celebrates after winning the Women's Nations League final soccer match between Spain and Germany in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

meters (yards) past the despairing Berger.

"The goal was to win again and retain the Nations League title. It was all worth it," Sonia Bermúdez said after winning her first title as Spain coach. The former team captain took over from Montse Tomé in August.

It was only Spain's second win over old foe Germany. The previous came at the European Championship last summer when Bonmati scored in extra time for a 1-0

win in the semifinals. Spain went on to lose to England on penalties in the final.

That was the only disappointment after reaching the finals of the last four tournaments. Spain beat England in the 2023 Women's World Cup and bettered France in the 2024 Women's Nations League. Tuesday's win over Germany makes it three wins from four finals.

Newcastle blows lead against Tottenham

Man City survives late Fulham surge as Haaland scores 100th EPL goal

LONDON, Dec 3, (AP): Erling Haaland scored his 100th Premier League goal, and Manchester City survived a stunning fightback from Fulham.

Haaland became the fastest player to reach a century of goals in the league with his 17th-minute opener in City's 5-4 win at Craven Cottage. But a night of personal glory was nearly wrecked as Fulham came back from 5-1 down and came agonizingly close to an equaliser in added time when Josh King's effort was cleared off the line.

"It's not good enough, and we all know this, and we need to improve as a team," Haaland told Sky Sports.

Haaland's goal - lashed in from close range - was his 100th in 111 games. It saw him break the record of England icon Alan Shearer, who reached that benchmark in 124 games.

Newcastle twice blew the lead against Tottenham to draw 2-2 after Cristian Romero scored the second of his goals in the fifth minute of added time. Jack Grealish scored the only goal of the game as Everton beat Bournemouth 1-0.

City's victory saw it close the gap on first-

place Arsenal, which hosts Brentford on Wednesday. But it was another game when the defensive frailties of Pep Guardiola's team were laid bare.

City blew a two-goal halftime lead against Leeds on Saturday - needing a stoppage-time winner from Phil Foden to avoid dropping points.

It was a similar story against Fulham as City led 3-1 at halftime, with Tijani Reijnders and Foden adding to Haaland's goal, while Emile Smith-Rowe pulled one back before the break.

Foden got his second early in the second half, and a Sander Berge own goal seemingly put City in total control with less than an hour gone.

That was until Fulham mounted a fightback. Alex Iwobi got Fulham's second with a low curling effort from outside the box. Samuel Chukwueze then scored two in the space of six minutes to set up a tense finale.

Josko Gvardiol produced the crucial clearance to seal City's win.

"I know you're going to ask what happened - I don't have an answer. It's the Premier League,

right?" Guardiola said.

With an overhead kick deep into added time, Romero came to Tottenham's rescue at St James' Park. Newcastle took a 1-0 lead through Bruno Guimarães in the 71st after the home team had dominated the first half.

Romero levelled with a near-post header seven minutes later.

Newcastle led again in the 86th when Anthony Gordon converted from the penalty spot, but the drama wasn't over yet. Romero's acrobatic effort stunned the home crowd and salvaged a point for Spurs to prevent its losing run being extended to four games.

Newcastle manager Eddie Howe described the late equaliser as "heartbreaking."

"We've had similar experiences this season in terms of not defending leads at the end of games, and that's something we have to reflect on," he said.

Everton bounced back from defeat to Newcastle on Saturday with a victory at Bournemouth.

Grealish - on loan from Man City - scored his second of the season in the 78th.



Manchester City's Erling Haaland, left, celebrates after scoring the opening goal, the 100th goal in his Premier League career, during the English Premier League soccer match between Fulham and Manchester City in London. (AP)