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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

MINISTER of Justice, Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait, is commendably leading a comprehensive workshop aimed at amending Kuwaiti laws.

This significant undertaking stems from the urgent need to address shortcomings in existing legislation, much of which, having been developed over past decades, has either become outdated or contained

fundamental flaws.

The minister has highlighted the sheer magnitude of the task, noting that approximately 980 laws require amendment to align with contemporary needs and standards.

Amid this sweeping legal overhaul, a major concern for the public is the potential impact of these changes.

Specifically, there is considerable hope that amendments, particularly those affecting personal rights or resulting in financial losses, will not be applied retroactively.

This sentiment reflects the fundamental legal principle of non-retroactivity, which holds that laws should govern only future events in order to protect legally acquired rights.

Applying a law retroactively can cause significant harm by undermining established rights and inter-

ests, including those secured through irrevocable powers of attorney and other recognized social and commercial agreements.

Such rights should be relinquished only by the individual's choice, not invalidated by new legislation.

The fundamental legislative principle, recognized worldwide, is that the law must not harm individuals or their interests.

Retroactive application violates this principle, causing significant damage to both society and the business community.

Consequently, it is essential to correct this legal flaw. Any correction, however, must be carried out without disrupting societal norms or creating new harm.

In this context, many have pointed to the potential infringement of rights resulting from certain amendments.

However, the Minister of Justice emphasizes that the true measure lies in implementation.

If any flaw is identified during implementation, the ministry will take steps to correct it. This is what His Excellency the Minister is taking into consideration.

This assurance must be reinforced through action, ensuring that no loopholes remain that could be exploited to deprive individuals of their rights or obstruct access to justice, particularly in the business sector and related agreements.

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Photo by Samer Shiqr

Glowing hues transform animals and architectural wonders into magical scenes at the newly-opened Fiesta City on Messilah Beach.

TEC launches Fiesta City on Messilah Beach

The Tourism Enterprises Company (TEC) inaugurated its new entertainment destination, Fiesta City, on Messilah Beach on Thursday, as part of its strategy to develop world-class entertainment venues and provide unique experiences for all age groups.

The city offers a variety of innovative entertainment zones that combine imagination, adventure, and modern visual experiences,

including the Light City, Giant Dinosaur World, a dedicated children's play area, and a large outdoor theater for artistic and entertainment events catering to all ages.

The Light City is one of the main attractions of the project, immersing visitors in a vibrant world of glowing colors where lights, interactive effects, and illuminated structures come together to create a magical,

otherworldly atmosphere.

Giant Dinosaur World is another major attraction at Fiesta City, as it offers an experience that combines education, adventure, and imagination.

The area has life-sized dinosaur models equipped with the latest technology to simulate movement, sounds, and breathing patterns, delivering a highly realistic experience. (KUNA)

Kuwait's PACI unveils AI-powered digital twin

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has made tremendous strides over the past two years in modernizing

its operations to provide exceptional services to citizens and residents.

Among its achievements are the continuous registration of all members of society, issuance of unified national ID cards for citizens and residents, assignment of a unique

identification number for every individual, and provision of information and statistical data services to government agencies and institutions.

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Kuwait closes loopholes, targets evolving smuggling networks

1,063 deported ahead of new drug law rollout

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Kuwait is set to enter a new phase in its fight against drugs with the implementation of the new drug law, effective December 15.

The law comes more than 30 years after the previous legislation, during which Kuwait has seen the emergence of new substances not previously listed under the old law. Smuggling methods by sea, land, and air have evolved significantly, along with the activity of organized international networks that rely on constantly changing chemical compounds.

In recent years, the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) has achieved substantial seizure figures, which reflects the scale of the effort and confirms that security operations continue around the clock under the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef.

On the importance of the law and its penalties and provisions, Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard, Director of DCGD, and his assistant, Brigadier General Sheikh Hamad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, emphasized in an interview with the daily that the

law marks a qualitative leap with tougher penalties, which reflect the state's determination to dismantle major networks, uncover funding sources, and prevent any attempts to exploit influence.

Following is the interview held with the Director of the Drug Control General Department Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard:

Question: What are the most prominent amendments introduced by the new drug law?

Answer: The new law provides a comprehensive legislative framework with 84 articles across 13 chapters, covering all aspects of narcotics, including regulation of medical use and monitoring distribution. It addresses the emergence of new types of narcotics, including compounds constantly modified to evade criminalization, by establishing clear and unified schedules.

Q: How have penalties changed under the new law?

A: Penalties are now standardized and significantly harsher for crimes such as importation, trafficking, and promotion. They can include the death penalty, life imprisonment, and fines of up to two million dinars. Under the previous law, penalties ranged from 10 to 15 years' imprisonment.

Q: Does the law address treatment for addicts?

A: Yes, the law mandates treatment for addicts and allows families to report drug users up to the third degree of kinship. Individuals who enter a treatment program are exempt from punishment.

Q: How does the law address crimes involving the exploitation of a public sector official in drug-related offenses?

A: The law is decisive and clear. Anyone who exploits their position to engage in smuggling or facilitate the entry of narcotics faces penalties up to the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Q: Why are such crimes treated so severely?

A: The legislator aimed to prevent any abuse of influence, as these crimes are considered especially dangerous because they open doors that should remain closed and protected.

Q: Are there examples of such cases?

A: Yes, there have been cases of security personnel smuggling narcotics into prisons, and those involved are now serving sentences.

Q: Some clinics dispense prescriptions containing narcotics. How does the new law address this problem?

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Panel highlights legal frameworks

Kuwait, France unite in violence against women



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Olivier Gauvin, the French Ambassador to Kuwait, during a panel discussion.

By Inaas Awad
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Women's Cultural and Social Society, in collaboration with the French Embassy in Kuwait, hosted a panel discussion on Thursday at its headquarters, which was part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and focused on "International Partnerships to Combat Violence against Women: Kuwaiti and French Experiences and Best Practices."

Notable attendees at the panel discussion included:
■ Olivier Gauvin, the French Ambassador to Kuwait

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KUWAIT TARGETS DRUG SYMBOLS, IMAGERY

KD 500 fine for glorifying drugs

DGCD busts major narco ring

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Ministry of Interior has issued a warning that anyone who wears, uses, or displays items that promote or encourage drug-related activities, including images, symbols, writings, or logos, may face fines of up to KD 500.

This warning was communicated via awareness messages posted on the ministry's social media accounts as part of its "Safeguarding Our Homeland" campaign.

The ministry also warned that individuals who associate with users of narcotic or psychotropic substances, even if they do not consume with them, may face imprisonment of up to three years, a fine of up to KD 5,000, or both penalties.

It urged the public to comply with the regulations and to report any violations through official channels.

Meanwhile, Al-Seyassah daily reported that the Drug Control General Department (DCGD), which is affiliated with the Ministry of Interior, announced a major success in its anti-drug efforts with the seizure of a large quantity of narcotics destined for distribution within Kuwait.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Interior, the operation reflects the intensive efforts of the Criminal Security Sector to combat drug crimes and dismantle drug smuggling and trafficking networks.

Acting on precise security intelligence, authorities uncovered a criminal operation involving two individuals illegally residing in the country. One of the suspects is currently serving a life sentence at the Central Prison for drug trafficking. The pair was involved in storing and preparing narcotics for

distribution.

The ministry quickly deployed a specialized field team that tracked one of the suspects to West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, where he was monitored and apprehended.

Further investigations led authorities to his camp in Al-Salmi desert, which had been used as a storage and preparation site for narcotics.

A search of the location resulted in the seizure of a large and varied cache of drugs, along with related equipment and paraphernalia.

The seized items included the following:

- 40 kilograms of synthetic cannabinoids (Chemical)
- 60 kilograms of Lyrica powder
- 8 kilograms of marijuana
- 500 grams of hashish
- 5 liters of methamphetamine liquid
- 300 liters of synthetic cannabinoid liquid
- 7 kilograms of synthetic cannabinoid paper
- Two precision scales
- A set of tools and equipment used for preparing and processing narcotics

The ministry stated that initial investigations indicated the drugs were intended for trafficking.

The suspects and the confiscated items were taken into custody, and the case was referred to the competent investigative authority for the necessary legal action.

The Ministry of Interior reaffirmed DCGD's ongoing and steadfast efforts to pursue anyone who threatens public safety or seeks to spread this destructive scourge.

It stressed that the long arm of the law reaches criminals wherever they may be, with continuous monitoring and surveillance operations conducted around the clock.

Residency fees quadruple

Farmers slam new bank salary rule, warn of worker hardship

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Kuwait Farmers Union held a meeting recently with the Director of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Rabab Al-Osaimi and Director of Unions and NGOs in PAM Mishal Al-Azmi to discuss the decision requiring the salaries of thousands of agricultural workers to be paid monthly through national banks to ensure timely payment, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Union opposed the decision, stating that agricultural workers earn

low wages and that bank branches are largely absent in remote agricultural areas, including Wafra and Abdali, and many of the employed workers are illiterate.

The union highlighted that existing salary disbursement mechanisms in parts of Abdali and Wafra are inadequate to implement the new bank payment requirement effectively.

Farmers also criticized the decision

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan conducted a field visit to Arabian Gulf Street to monitor ongoing maintenance work and the laying of a new asphalt layer, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The visit, which reflects the ministry's commitment to directly overseeing projects, was aimed at ensuring the completion of all necessary tasks.

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration will be expanding its ban on travel for citizens of certain countries to more than 30, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said, in the latest restriction to come since a man from Afghanistan was accused of shooting two National Guard members.

The expansion would build on a travel ban already announced in June by the Republican administration, which barred travel to the U.S. for citizens from 12 countries and restricted access to the U.S. for people from seven others. (AP)



Zain, ZainTECH, Microsoft launch AI-driven SME bundles in Kuwait

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Navigating Kuwait's legal maze: A guide for startups

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NBK and Weyay sponsor NEXUS 2025 to drive digital innovation

Kuwait tomato game levels up

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Young Kuwaiti farmer Abdullah Mohammed Al-Mutairi, from Wafra Agricultural area in southern Kuwait, is reportedly the first to supply field-grown tomatoes in commercial quantities to the "Wafra" market in Sulaibiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

His tomatoes, which were harvested from his fertile Al-Wafra farm, will be distributed to vegetable and fruit markets in all residential areas until the end of April. These tomatoes will also be available during Ramadan at affordable prices.

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:04	Asr	14:31
Sunrise ..	06:28	Maghrib ..	16:49
Zohr	11:39	Isha	18:11

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-32 km/h with a chance for light fog forming at night.

By Night: Rather cold and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over some areas.

Weather	Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
	Kuwait City	27	15
	Kuwait Airport	28	10
	Abdaly	28	12
	Jahra	29	15
	Failaka Island	25	12
	Salmiyah	26	19



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister

Kuwait Amir congratulates Thailand on National Day

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent Friday a congratulatory cable to King of Thailand Maha Vajiralongkorn on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the King good health and for his country further progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Friday sent a congratulatory

cable to King of Thailand Maha Vajiralongkorn on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished the King good health and for his country further progress and prosperity.

Prime Minister

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Friday sent a congratulatory cable to King of Thailand Maha Vajiralongkorn on the occasion of his country's National Day.

320 interviewed for 23 top positions in co-ops

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The committee responsible for filling supervisory positions in cooperative societies has completed interviews with 320 applicants who passed the written exams, as part of the process to fill vacancies in cooperative societies.

According to an informed source at the Ministry of Social Affairs, the process covers 23 positions in five cooperative societies, including a general manager, a deputy general manager for commercial affairs, a deputy general manager for administrative affairs, and heads of public relations, procurement, and IT departments.

The committee includes representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies, and the Public Authority for Manpower.

The names of those selected for the supervisory positions will be announced next Monday, and a lottery will be held to choose among candidates who receive the same score in the primary and reserve rounds.

The lottery will be conducted in the presence of the Kuwaitization committee and will be audio and video recorded to ensure transparency.



KUNA photo

The Kuwaiti delegation at the Kuwait Health Office in London.

Healthcare bills file closed: MoH

'Citizens welfare priority'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): The Ministry of Health (MoH) has tackled accumulated due funds for British hospitals required for treating Kuwaiti patients. The ministry said in a statement on Thursday that this issue was tackled during meetings of the UK-Kuwait Joint Steering Group (JSG), held in London, with participation of the assistant undersecretary for external health services, Dr. Hisham Kalandar, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The financial file that had been open for a long period was folded, the ministry affirmed in a statement, indicating that the successful handling of the issue would lead to enhancing mutual confidence with the British medical institutions and ensuring continuing of external treatment for the nationals without financial hurdles.

It has affirmed the State of Kuwait's adherence to honor its financial liabilities.

Dr. Kalandar for his part lauded efforts of the Kuwaiti Health Office in London and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "for attaining this achievement," affirming that his step would back up the program of external treatment and rationalize its "financial processes."

Health of the citizens remains on top of the priorities, he has affirmed further.

Minister eyes tools to teach special people digital hi-tech

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): Minister of Education Dr. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei discussed on Thursday with Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO Dr. Ali Al-Mudhaf the latest developments related to the UNESCO/ Late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, and the ongoing efforts to advance the prize's international standing.

In a press release, the Ministry stated that the minister affirmed during the meeting that the prize represents one of Kuwait's prominent humanitarian initiatives, launched in the name of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may his soul rest in peace, in partnership with UNESCO since 2001. He noted that the prize reflects a noble vision aimed at spreading knowledge, promoting digital equity, and offering meaningful tools to empower persons with disabilities worldwide.

Al-Tabtabaei stressed that Kuwait, under a leadership that places the human being at the forefront, continues to strengthen its global role in supporting humanitarian and developmental initiatives, adding that the prize is an extension of this longstanding approach.

The minister underscored the need to treat the prize as a national priority that must be executed efficiently and at an accelerated pace.

He instructed the preparation of a comprehensive implementation plan that includes a clear timeline and detailed phases covering administrative, technical, and media requirements, whether through coordination with UNESCO or through the efforts of the National Commission and Kuwait's permanent delegation in Paris.

"We are keen for the prize to reflect Kuwait's international standing and to be managed with the highest level of professionalism, ensuring the continuation of its humanitarian impact in promoting digital innovation supporting persons with disabilities," he said.

He emphasized the importance of expanding global visibility for the prize by broadening outreach efforts and attracting high-quality submissions from institutions and individuals with impactful technological contributions in support of persons with disabilities. He noted that the prize serves as a distinguished international platform to highlight inspiring models and innovative solutions that improve the quality of life, social integration, and daily accessibility for this group.

The meeting was attended by Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Eng. Hamad Al-Hamad; former Permanent Delegate to UNESCO; Dr. Adam Al-Mulla; Director of the Public Relations and Educational Media Department Arwa Al-Ayyar; Acting Head of the UNESCO Section Athari Al-Qallaf; and Senior Translator Shahad Matar from the National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science.



Al-Tabtabaei

Kuwait, Mongolia can boost trade ties: Purev

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): Mongolia's Ambassador to Kuwait Sergelen Purev affirmed Saturday that bilateral relations have witnessed remarkable development over the past five decades, as both sides commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties this year.

In an interview with Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Ambassador Purev said that since relations were established in 1975, Mongolia and Kuwait have built a solid and mutually respectful partnership founded on trust, shared interests and a commitment to international cooperation.

He added that Kuwait was the first GCC country to forge diplomatic relations with Mongolia, a milestone that paved the way for a long-standing friendship and expanding cooperation across political, economic, cultural and humanitarian fields.

He highlighted Kuwait's important role in supporting Mongolia's development efforts through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), which has financed projects in health, infrastructure, renewable energy, roads, transport and the environment.

He stressed that the government and people of Mongolia highly appreciate this valuable contribution.

The ambassador noted that bilateral cooperation has accelerated significantly in recent years; for instance In October 2025, Mongolia began exporting meat and meat products to the Kuwaiti market, marking an important step in enhancing trade and contributing to Kuwait's food-security objectives.

The ambassador underlined the broad potential for expanding trade and investment ties, particularly after the successful launch of meat exports to Kuwait. Based on market demand, he said Mongolia sees the possibility of increasing sup-



Sergelen Purev

plies to 100-150 tons per week.

He emphasized the importance of strengthening business-to-business cooperation, noting that the first Mongolia-Kuwait Business Forum was held in Kuwait City in 2023, resulting in several Memoranda of Understanding and ongoing commercial engagements, given that Mongolia's rich resources in cashmere, copper, gold, coal and rare earth elements also offer promising avenues for investment.

He praised the Kuwait Fund's continued support, noting that it has invested around USD 80 million in Mongolia in five major projects in infrastructure, energy and health sectors.

Cultural relations have also flourished, supported by shared traditions such as nomadic heritage, strong family values and respect for history, Ambassador Purev said.

He added that in January 2025, the two governments signed an Air Services Agreement that creates the legal framework for direct flights between the two countries, with both sides actively working to operationalize the route. This development, he said, will strengthen people-to-people links and boost economic and commercial exchange.

Cooperation in sports and education has also grown rapidly. Kuwait University offers two annual scholarships for Mongolian students to study the Arabic language, and several graduates are now serving as diplomats in Mongolian embassies across the Middle East, he added.

On the political front, the ambassador stated that Mongolia and Kuwait have achieved several milestones in high-level exchanges, saying that the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, visited Mongolia 11 times, contributing significantly to mutual understanding.

Mongolia, meanwhile, has undertaken multiple high-level visits to Kuwait, including three presidential visits, one by the Speaker of Parliament, one by the Prime Minister and five by Foreign Ministers, he said, revealing that several high-level visits are being prepared by both sides for the coming two months.

At the multilateral level, Ambassador Purev affirmed that Mongolia and Kuwait enjoy close coordination within the United Nations and other international platforms as both countries share similar views on many global issues, including peace and security, sustainable development and climate change.

He cited their election to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, where each supported the others candidacy, as a recent example of this cooperation.

KDT volunteers in 'Al-Zour' beach cleanup



KUNA photo

A young volunteer of the Kuwait Dive Team (KDT) during the beach cleaning campaign taking some photographs.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): The Kuwait Dive Team (KDT), affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF), took part in cleanup of Al-Zour beaches removing tons of plastic, wood waste and discarded nets littering the seabed.

The team's chief, Walid Al-Fadhel, indicated to KUNA that the activity coincided with the International Volunteer Day that falls on December 5.

"Every contribution matters" is the logo of this year's occasion, he said, indicating that the theme was intended to boost group action.

The annual occasion, he continued, was proclaimed by the UN in 1985 to honor volunteers and promote public awareness of their role.

Plastic waste is hazardous to the ecosystem and the marine creatures, Al-Fadhel said, alluding to a UN report that affirms that plastic waste causes death of millions birds around the world a year, in addition to killing one million marine creatures including turtles.

The team will continue with its tasks, removing abandoned boats and fishing nets entangled with the coral reefs, he said.

They will also continue launching campaigns to preserve the environment, he said.

The Dive Team had set up a pavilion within the recently organized International Kuwait Book Fair.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr. Anthal Al-Huwailah affirmed on Friday that volunteer work Kuwait is an integral part of the national identity and a deeply rooted tradition in the society, on the International Volunteer Day, observed annually on December 5.

We look forward to institutionalizing volunteer work and developing its tools so that it becomes a strategic pillar that supports Kuwait's objectives, Minister Al-Huwailah said in a statement to KUNA.

She praised the outstanding model presented by volunteer teams and participants in the national campaign "This Is Your Role", which concluded last Thursday.

Huge turnout as Mol hosts drug prevention exhibition

By Munif Nayef

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: An awareness exhibition on drug prevention was held at The Avenues Mall, coinciding with the upcoming enforcement of the new drug law, which is set to take effect on December 15.

Titled "Safeguarding Our Homeland," the exhibition ran from December 4 to December 7, and was organized in collaboration with the Kuwait Lawyers Society and the Ministry of Health.

There was a significant turnout of citizens and residents, who received information about the importance of the new legislation, with lawyers available to answer legal questions.

The Ministry of Interior continues its "Safeguarding Our Homeland" campaign, which is aimed at raising awareness about the new law on combating drugs and psychotropic substances.

As part of this initiative, Brigadier General Nasser Abu Salib, Director General of the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media, visited the campaign's booth at The Avenues Mall.

The visit highlights the ministry's commitment to engaging the public directly in their communities and using modern, effective

methods to promote legal awareness.

The Drug Control General Department also contributed by educating visitors about the different types and dangers of narcotics, thereby enhancing public understanding of the risks posed by this destructive scourge.

Brigadier General Nasser Abu Salib explained that the campaign is a strategic initiative by the ministry aimed at raising public awareness about the dangers of drugs and clarifying the provisions of the new law.

This legislation represents a major advancement in terms of introducing stricter penalties and strengthening deterrents to protect the community, particularly its youth.

The General Department of Public Relations and Security Media oversaw the preparation, organization, and coordination among the participating entities.

These efforts were carried out under the directive of the Ministry of Interior's senior leadership to consolidate media and awareness initiatives, fostering genuine public understanding that protects society and reinforces knowledge of drug-related laws.

The booth witnessed participation from several important organizations, including the General Department for Drug Control, the Kuwait Lawyers Society, and the Ministry of Health's Addiction Treatment Center.

PAHW inks KD 20.6 mln deal for service center

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The acting Director General of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) Rashid Al-Enezi announced the signing of a new contract for the construction of public facilities, infrastructure, and service works in the N5 suburb center within Al-Mutlaa Residential City, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He explained that the contract covers the construction, completion, and maintenance of ten public buildings, including the main central market, main health center, ambulance center, police station, citizen services building, municipality building, post office, social unit building, community development center, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry building.

The contract also includes the construction of commercial shops and three electrical substations, along with the implementation of infrastructure and service works in the N5 suburb center.

Al-Enezi revealed that the contract is valued at KD 20,619,380 and is scheduled to be completed within 900 days.



Kuwait University photo

Kuwait University participants in the conference.

KU participates in IoT, AI confab

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Kuwait University is participating in the Gulf Conference on the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) through its Department of Information Sciences at the College of Life Sciences, the Al-Khwarizmi Center for IT Training, the Technical Support Department, the Information Systems Center, and the Public Relations and Media Department.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, its participation is aimed at showcasing its efforts in promoting digital

transformation and applying modern technologies in education and university services.

The conference will be held on December 3-4 at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel in Kuwait, with advanced workshops taking place on December 1-2.

The conference will include specialized sessions and workshops highlighting the latest practices in AI, IoT, cybersecurity, and large language models (LLMs), with participation from leading international experts and speakers.

diwaniya

حيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

State laws keep society safe & justice is upheld

“FIFTY years ago, in 1975, five of us were on a hunting trip in Sudan. We traveled in a Jeep belonging to our colleague at the Qatari embassy, Abdullah Al-Thawadi. It was a difficult experience, filled with fear and apprehension, because we had left the city where police and laws exist, and entered a desert without rules or protection,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“In such a situation, we felt the fear that we might encounter someone in the desert, and they might attack us, rob us, or even kill us. No one would know what could happen except God. On the road, we encountered a masked shepherd who signaled for us to stop. I shouted to the driver, who was a Syrian Christian, “Don’t stop! Don’t stop!” He replied, “Ahmad, they are Arabs, they won’t harm us”, and we continued driving and passed without incident.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

“So why then are laws so important for individuals and society? If people lived without laws, violence would spread throughout the community. When laws govern society, people feel secure, justice is upheld, and every person can protect their life and the lives of their family. We will give examples of nations where laws are applied, and others where chaos and violence prevail.

“For instance, former US President Barack Obama once went to a restaurant in New York after attending a United Nations Security Council session, but the restaurant refused to accept his credit card, causing him embarrassment in front of those present. His wife, who was with him, paid the bill. Similarly, the son of the late Queen Elizabeth II was fined for parking in a prohibited area, and the police issued him a traffic ticket. In Hawaii, there are strict laws prohibiting sitting or lying on sidewalks during certain hours.

“Former German President Christian Wulff was tried for abuse of power. Japan imposed penalties on state employees who leaked secrets. Vietnam executed officials for embezzlement, and a Spanish court ruled against the sister of the Spanish king for tax evasion.

“At Nebraska Airport, police stopped Brian Schmidt, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist, and asked him who had given him the 24-karat gold prize worth ten thousand dollars. He replied, “The King of Sweden.” However, the police did not make an exception for him and interrogated him extensively. Similarly, the United States decided to revoke the passports of tax evaders. In Guatemala, the president was imprisoned on corruption charges, and the people elected a replacement.

“As for countries plagued by chaos, violence, and the absence of law and justice, there are many, mostly in Africa and Asia. The civil war in Sudan continues unabated, and the situation in Congo has long been dire, with killings and rapes of both men and women, and even cases of cannibalism against the pygmies. In Burundi, a military coup overthrew the president, sparking ethnic fighting and leaving bodies dumped in the streets. In Eritrea, poverty and oppression prevail, and the government imposed compulsory military service on the entire population, driving many to flee to Europe.

“In North Korea, the president executed his defense minister for dozing off during a meeting attended by the head of state. And in Myanmar, a corrupt military junta committed massacres and atrocities against Muslims there more than two years ago. In the absence of proper implementation of laws, a country is in a state of successive crises. Chaos reigns, laws are violated, corruption spreads, forged certificates and citizenships are sold, drug trafficking and abuse increases, traffic congestion worsens, embezzlement appears in government agencies, and competent employees face injustice, often obtaining their rights and promotions only through long struggles and court battles. These were just some of the unjust and dangerous practices.

“Today, we have entered a new era that upholds law, stability, and security in Kuwait, and guarantees justice and fairness for all. Let us thank God for the blessings of safety, stability, and good governance.”

Also:

“Coffee transcends being just a beverage. It has held a prominent place in human culture since the 15th century and has become one of the world’s most important food commodities in recent years. Coffee has had an impact on the economies of many countries, as it journeys from developing, coffee-producing nations, most notably Ethiopia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and countries in South America, to advanced, industrialized consumer nations,” Kuwaiti writer, **Reem Ahmed Al-Hazim**, Ph.D (Botany), wrote for

Al-Seyassah daily.

“Who doesn’t know the story of Kaldi, the Ethiopian goat herder, and his famous tale from 800 BC, when he rested his head on a tree trunk for a nap while his flock grazed and played among the trees? According to the story, Kaldi awoke to find his goats unusually energetic and lively, and he could not figure out the cause. He observed the herd until he discovered that the goats had been eating berries resembling cherries . He decided to try them himself and soon felt a surge of energy throughout his body.

“Since then, coffee has been known as a beverage that has gained widespread popularity, with consumption growing exponentially year after year, rivaling tea and natural juices. Coffee is the most widely consumed drink after water and is also the second most important economic commodity in the world after oil. Coffee beans are harvested from two types of trees - the Arabica tree, which produces 70 percent of the world’s coffee, and the Robusta tree, which produces the remaining 30 percent.

“Most people have become accustomed to drinking coffee regularly in the mornings, which has influenced the fast pace of life, daily routines, and social interactions, thereby affecting consumption patterns. The German philosopher and scientist Jürgen Habermas argues that coffee was a major factor in the rise of the Enlightenment, helping create a conducive and fertile environment. Coffee played a pivotal role when cafés became centers for discussion and for shaping public opinion.

“Cafés first appeared prominently throughout the Ottoman Empire and then spread to Europe, the Arab world, and eventually the rest of the world. Coffee shops became hubs for social and political discussion, influencing thought, culture, and the economy. Businessmen recognized the value of coffee in boosting their energy and productivity, allowing them to take breaks to drink it. This habit then spread to all segments of society, including students and teenagers.

“Coffee has changed the course of history and is now a cornerstone of global culture. It has been, and continues to be, an essential part of daily life for millions of people around the world. Statistics indicate that more than two billion cups of coffee are consumed annually, generating about \$90 billion in revenue. It is important to note that excessive coffee consumption can negatively affect overall health. Most doctors recommend drinking two to three cups a day before sunset.”



“I read on the “X” platform how some people were overjoyed by Zahran Mamdani’s victory in the New York City mayoral election, as he was the first Muslim to win this position. They considered this victory as proof that America is a land of freedom and that Muslims have achieved a prominent position there. Some even viewed it as a clear triumph for Islam and Muslims. For this reason, I am writing this article, hoping that it will be beneficial and serve as a lesson and a reminder,” Kuwaiti writer **Saud Bader Al-Azmi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“I would like to address how Zahran Mamdani is presented to us as a “Muslim” candidate, without going into the economic aspects of his platform. Did Mamdani win solely because he is Muslim, or because he was supported by the Democratic Party? To answer this question, we must examine what Mamdani presented in his electoral platform. We saw him express support for LGBTQ+ individuals and participate in their marches, which contradicts Islamic teachings and principles. We also saw the support he received from Jewish voters, to the extent that one of them said, “We think you will ultimately turn out to be a Jewish man.”

“Mamdani also wore a Jewish skullcap (kippah). We reject the Western attempt to portray a new image of the “new” Muslim as someone who supports homosexuality and aligns closely with Jewish communities. We must remember how some Muslims rejoiced at Barack Obama’s victory in the American presidential election, even writing articles welcoming him. Yet afterward, all we saw from Obama was destruction, the spread of revolutions and crises, and the export of the so-called “Arab Spring,” which brought misery to the Arab world.

“We must keep in mind a crucial point - the West does not accept a Muslim who is firmly committed to his faith; they want a Muslim who abandons his values and principles. In conclusion, I ask God to grant goodness to Islam and Muslims throughout the world.”

— Compiled by Simi K.Kutty



KUNA photo

Participants of the 49th Conference of Arab Police and Security Leaders.

Conference calls for updated anti-drug legislation

TUNIS, Dec 6, (KUNA): The 49th Conference of Arab Police and Security Leaders on Thursday urged member states to update national legislation to cover all chemicals used in synthetic drugs, and to tighten controls on their import, export and circulation to prevent diversion into illicit activities.

The General Secretariat of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers said in a statement that Arab police chiefs stressed the need to establish specialized units to counter synthetic drug manufacturing networks and provide them with the required technical expertise.

They also called for comprehensive national awareness campaigns targeting youth and families on the health, psychological and social risks of synthetic drugs, and underlined the importance of marking the Arab Week for Drug Prevention and Control, requesting coordination with member states in this regard.

The conference asked the General Secretariat to coordinate with the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation to strengthen Euro-Arab cooperation against synthetic drugs and support joint security efforts in addressing regional challenges. The conference opened Wednesday chaired by

Kuwait, represented by Director General of Border Security and Coast Guard Affairs Major General Mujbil Al-Rashidi, with the participation of Arab security directors.

Discussions focused on trends and emerging threats linked to synthetic drugs, outstanding security practices among member states, and the outcomes of this year’s sectoral meetings.

Kuwait’s delegation included Brig. Sunaidan Al-Mutairi, Col. Abdulhadi Al-Mayyas, Col. (Legal) Hiba Bousaffar, Lt. Col. Nawaf Al-Saeedi, Capt. Ahmad Al-Mutar and first Lt. Aliya Al-Azmi.

‘New strategy eyed’

Crackdown intensified on cyber crime: Al-Essa

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior (MoI) affirmed its commitment to implementing progressive development plans that strengthen national security, enhance sector readiness, and support sustained stability across the community in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.

Colonel **Fahad Al-Essa**, director of traffic awareness at the traffic and operations sector, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the ministry continues executing comprehensive strategies designed to reinforce security and stability by advancing sector capabilities and adopting a preventive, proactive operational framework.

He explained that the ministry prioritizes upgrading infrastructure, expanding smart services, and strengthening community partnerships while building a modern and coherent security system that creates an attractive, safe, and sustainable environment for citizens, residents, and investors.

Al-Essa noted that the ministry encompasses vital sectors including Public Security, Traffic, Residency Affairs, Border and Coastal Security, Criminal Security, Operations, Civil Defense, Firefighting, Maritime Rescue, and Security Information Systems, alongside national rehabilitation and correctional institutions.

He stressed that coordination among these sectors operates through joint operation rooms and advanced technological platforms enabling real-time information exchange, faster response times, and enhanced field effectiveness across all operational units in the ministry.

Regarding crime prevention, Al-Essa said the ministry intensifies efforts against organized and cybercrime through specialized units, cooperation with Interpol, regional and international agencies, and continuous development of capabilities and regulatory frameworks aligned with rapid digital developments.

He added that the ministry employs artificial intelligence, data analysis, and crime-pattern monitoring to reinforce preventive action, protect society, and support early-intervention mechanisms that reduce risks and strengthen national safety.



Al-Essa

‘Nazaha drive’ targets public sector integrity

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) organized the National Integrated Program titled “Promoting Integrity and Transparency in the Public Sector” for government employees, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

A total of 88 trainees from various government entities participated in the program. Its objective was to enhance integrity and transparency in the public sector by familiarizing employees with the concept of corruption, its causes and effects, and the application of international and local legal frameworks for combating it.

The program covered a range of important topics related to corruption and employed modern educational methods, including case studies, interactive activities, and practical exercises, helping employees develop skills in detecting and reporting corruption and implementing effective anti-corruption strategies.

The training program covered the international legal framework for combating corruption, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption, international cooperation in anti-corruption efforts, the local legal framework and laws, the role of oversight bodies and competent authorities, and governance principles and tools.

Financial crimes such as money laundering, bribery, and illicit enrichment, along with methods to combat them, were also discussed.

The program provided an overview of conflicts of interest, whistleblower protection, and the promotion of a safe reporting environment.

It is worth highlighting that the National Integrity Program was launched as part of Kuwait’s strategy to promote integrity and combat corruption.

New traffic diversion opens on Sabhan Rd

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) announced the opening of a new traffic diversion on Sabhan Road (Route 51) towards the Seventh Ring Road (Al-Maqwa) early Friday morning, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a statement on its X account, PART explained that the diversion aims to regulate traffic and improve access to the following:

- Kuwait Aviation Fueling Company (KAFCO)
- Headquarters of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation
- Air Traffic Control Tower
- Kuwait Control and Meteorological Center (KCMC)

The old road will be closed, and traffic will be re-directed to the alternative route. Drivers are urged to follow the directional signs and designated route for safety and smooth traffic flow.

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Al-Mutairi urges standards, committee coordination

Kuwait gears up for major sports events

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi chaired on Thursday a meeting with the heads of committees affiliated to the supreme commission of organizing major sports events in Kuwait.

In a press release after the meeting, the Public Authority for Sport said the minister stressed the importance of applying the technical and organizational criteria regarding the country's hosting of sports events in a manner that ensures success.

Al-Mutairi also underlined the need of boosting the governance of applied measures to benefit from for-

mer experience in organizing sports activities, it added.

He further affirmed the necessity of integrating all efforts of the committees to achieve the goals to present an honorable example showing Kuwait's status, it noted.

The minister expressed appreciation to all government and private sector bodies as well as civil society organizations for their cooperation and supportive efforts to the success of major national events.

Meanwhile, the heads of committees reviewed the key projects and acts related to the duties of every committee to make sure of all preparations and ensure full readiness to fulfill duties.



Ministry of Information photo
Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi during the meeting.

'Int'l Volunteer Day deepens Kuwait humanitarian legacy'

KRCS pushes for greater engagement in service

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Secretary General Fahad Al-Mandeel said Friday that strengthening community participation and adopting policies that support volunteer work are key to expanding humanitarian efforts in society and enhancing volunteers' role in development.

Speaking to KUNA on Interna-



Fahad Al-Mandeel, Kuwait Red Crescent Society Secretary General

tional Volunteer Day, marked annually on December 5, he said the day is an opportunity to thank all

male and female volunteers, and for institutions concerned with volunteerism to boost their contributions and continue Kuwait's deep-rooted tradition of giving.

The occasion is a yearly reminder to celebrate volunteers who embody the highest values of generosity and humanity and highlight Kuwait's leading role in humanitarian work, Al-Mandeel said.

He described volunteers as Kuwait's present and future, noting that the past year witnessed major achievements by Kuwaiti youth driven by responsibility and commitment to their community.

International Volunteer Day is both a moment of celebration in what has been achieved over the past year and a

starting point for a new year of wider humanitarian action by Kuwait and its institutions at regional and international levels, he added.

Al-Mandeel underlined that KRCS volunteers have had a strong presence in many initiatives inside and outside Kuwait, and that volunteerism has become a noble human value celebrated globally in recognition of its role in supporting sustainable development.

He called for further promoting a culture of volunteerism, raising awareness of the importance of humanitarian work, and highlighting KRCS efforts in various fields, confirming that supporting volunteer initiatives is a direct investment in building a strong and cohesive society.

PAHW awards 170 units to eligible Kuwaiti

Women's Housing lottery marks major step in allocation process

By Mohammed Al-Anzi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Women's Housing Committee at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) conducted its first lottery on Tuesday for Kuwaiti women who had submitted applications for rented housing up to 2001.

The lottery resulted in the allocation of 170 housing units in Sulai-biya and Taima to eligible women who had updated their information.

The Committee Chairwoman Sheikhha Bibi Al-Yousef explained that the Women's Housing Committee was established to address the housing needs of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis. During the data update process, it became evident that over 4,000 applications were decades old, while only 600 women had updated their information.

Sheikhha Bibi Al-Yousef questioned, "Where are the rest of the applications? Why haven't they been updated yet?"

She went on to explain that the lottery covered the first batch of eligible applicants, and the second draw is scheduled for December 23, followed by a third draw two weeks later to finalize the files of the 600 women before proceeding to applications from 2001 to 2010. Applicants who fail to update their information will be disqualified from participating in the lottery, in accordance with the ten approved allocation criteria.

Sheikhha Bibi also warned against renting out or using the housing units for purposes other than their intended use.

She confirmed that the committee conducted a survey of unauthorized housing units and will take immediate action to reclaim them for redistribution to eligible recipients, indicating that some of these units were being used as grocery stores,

workshops, restaurants, and nurseries.

Sheikhha Bibi highlighted that joint committees from the Ministry of State for Housing Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense are continuing their field inspections. She praised the cooperation of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense in providing a large number of units.

Regarding housing for people with disabilities, Sheikhha Bibi revealed that the committee had identified more than 150 ineligible applications in the previous round.

She noted that a meeting was held recently with the Director General of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs Dr. Dalal Al-Othman to finalize the review process ahead of the second lottery for this category.

Sheikhha Bibi reiterated that 170 housing units have been allocated from the 600 applications that met the criteria.

She clarified that rental housing is granted only to Kuwaiti women residing in the country, highlighting that the units in Sulai-biya and Taima are considered "temporary" until the beneficiaries are transferred to new areas.

Sheikhha Bibi also announced a new measure being implemented for the first time by the Ministry of State for Housing Affairs, which is allowing the transfer of a rental unit from non-Kuwaiti military personnel to their Kuwaiti wives before the end of the service period, provided the wife has a valid housing application.

She emphasized the focus on humanitarian cases, stating, "We do not evict people with disabilities or elderly women cared for by their children. We live in a country guided by humanity, and our leadership is always keen to preserve the dignity of citizens and maintain family cohesion."

Ministries, firms seek approvals

Council weighs infrastructure requests

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Municipal Council will hold a regular session, chaired by Abdullah Al-Muhairi, on Monday to discuss a range of pressing issues on its agenda.

The main topics slated for discussion are:

- Kuwait Municipality's delay in providing the Ministry of Education with alternative locations for schools currently operating in private residential areas.
- The Ministry of Interior's request to expand the radar network site in Khairan, which was previously approved under a decision by the council.
- The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy's request to allocate an absorption pit in Abu Kharjeen and Sabahiya, adjacent to the expansion of the Zour water distribution system.
- The Public Authority for Civil Aviation's proposal to establish a wind culling station in the central region.
- Executive Authority's response to Council Member Munira Al-Amir's proposal for adopting and implementing electronic

review of engineering plans in the Municipality

- A letter from the Insurance Regulatory Unit concerning the localization of insurance activities in industrial zones in accordance with Law No. 125/2019.
- Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's request for a site for the Al-Durra field project in Zour
- A real estate firm's request to authorize the subdivision of a property in Salmiya
- The Ministry of Finance's request to add a fourth floor to the workers' housing complex project in Subhan.
- Deputy Speaker Khalid Al-Mutairi's proposal to allow car wash and detailing services in Abu Futaira (Qurain Markets) and Ardiya Industrial
- The United Refreshments Company's request for a license to use sidewalk space for water coolers and refreshments
- Ministry of Electricity and Water's request to allocate two secondary transformer stations in Salwa
- The executive branch's response to Council Member Nasser Al-Jadaan's proposal for a secondary entrance opposite Rumaithiya.

University boosts academic ties

KU hosts Sudan, Kenya ambassadors

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: President of Kuwait University Prof. Dina Musaed Al-Mailem, received the Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to Kuwait, Awadelkarim Elrayah Balla, on Tuesday, December 2, at the university campus in Sabah Al-Salem University City.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the meeting was held in the presence of the acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, Prof. Osama Al-Omair, and Assistant Vice President for Assessment and Measurement, Dr. Sulaiman Al-Rifai.

Discussions during the meeting focused on ways to enhance academic and research cooperation between Kuwait University and the University of Khartoum.

They also discussed a memorandum of understanding between the two universities, aimed at facilitating the exchange of scientific and research expertise, developing joint academic programs, and supporting training and development opportunities for faculty members and students.

Prof. Dina Al-Mailem highlighted the strong academic and cultural ties between Kuwait and Sudan, reaffirming Kuwait University's commitment to expanding collaboration with esteemed Arab and African universities to advance higher education and scientific research in the region.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Awadelkarim Elrayah Balla expressed his appreciation for Kuwait University's pioneering role in supporting Arab education and emphasized the University of Khartoum's interest in partnering with Kuwait University to enhance scientific collaboration and create new opportunities for academic exchange.

The meeting reflects Kuwait University's ongoing efforts to strengthen its Arab and international relationships and to activate partnerships with regional and global universities in line with its strategic goals of academic and research excellence.

President of Kuwait University Prof. Dina Musaed Al-Mailem received the Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the State of Kuwait Halima Mah-



Prof. Dina Al-Mailem receives Sudanese Ambassador.



Prof. Dina Al-Mailem receives Kenya's Ambassador.

moud on Tuesday, December 2 at Sabah Al-Salem University City.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the meeting was attended by Vice President for Planning and the acting Vice President for Academic Affairs Prof. Osama Al-Omair, and Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs for Assessment and Measurement Dr. Sulaiman Al-Rifai.

During the meeting, they held discussions about the latest academic and research developments to strengthen cultural and intellectual exchange between Kuwait and Kenya.

Prof. Al-Mailem highlighted that the visit was an opportunity to explore academic and research advancements and discuss ways to enhance cooperation between Kuwait University and public universities in Kenya, with the goal of supporting research collaboration and reinforcing cultural and academic ties between the countries.





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LOCAL



KUNA photo

The Kuwaiti delegation participating in the meeting.

Kuwait pushes for unified Arab internet governance

CAIRO, Dec 6, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait emphasized on Thursday its commitment to enhancing regional co-operation in internet infrastructure and governance to keep pace with rapid digital transformations and ensure support for future services in the region.

Vice Chairman of Kuwait's Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Eng. Manal Al-Mazyad made this remark during her participation in the 9th Roundtable Meeting for Arab Governments and Regulatory Authorities in Cairo.

She underscored the importance of "the Arab role in regional and international internet governance processes to ensure adequate Arab representation in shaping the future of digital governance globally".

Eng. Al-Mazyad noted that Kuwait is looking forward to developing a shared vision that supports the digital economy and enhances the Arab region's standing in this field.

"We are also committed to capacity building and empowering national tal-

ent in the field of infrastructure development," she said.

Eng. Al-Mazyad raised the ongoing partnership with RIPE NCC, which has contributed to advanced training programs and preparations for hosting Internet Measurement Day in May 2026.

On her participation in the Cairo meeting, Eng. Al-Mazyad said it comes within the framework of the country's 2035 vision to transform Kuwait into a regional financial and commercial hub that attracts investment.

"The meeting reflects the need to unify Arab efforts to ensure a secure and sustainable digital infrastructure," She added.

She boasted that Kuwait was ranked first global in 5G technology leadership for 2024.

Eng. Al-Mazyad noted that the Kuwait's delegation to the meeting would focus a number of Key issues namely: supporting the deployment of the IPv6 protocol, enhancing routing security (RPKI), supporting Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), and localizing data traffic.

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Saud Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute hosted two senior representatives from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, UNHCR Representative in Syria, and Maria Stavropoulou, UNHCR Representative in Jordan.

They delivered a humanitarian briefing titled "Syria: The Journey of Return, Stability, and Response on the Ground," providing a comprehensive overview of the latest humanitarian developments concerning Syrian refugees.

Ambassador Abdullah Al-Khubaizi explained that the event was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, stakeholders involved in the Syrian crisis, and a number of students from Kuwait University. The institute regularly invites these students to encourage them to engage with current political and humanitarian issues beyond the traditional university lecture framework. The institute will continue to welcome experts, students, and all those interested in international affairs, in line with its mission to promote political, diplomatic, and humanitarian awareness and to foster a culture of critical thinking and analysis among the younger generation.

Ambassador Al-Khubaizi highlighted that Kuwait's engagement with the Syrian issue has been steadfast since the early days of the crisis.

He recalled Kuwait's role between 2013 and 2015, when it hosted three international donor conferences that helped mobilize billions of dollars to support those affected.

Ambassador Al-Khubaizi emphasized that this support was not a political stance but a reflection of a deep humanitarian conviction that those who are suffering deserve assistance.

He noted that Syria's entry into "a new phase" calls for renewing Kuwait's message to the Syrian people - "Kuwait stands with you."

Meanwhile, the UNHCR Representative in Syria, Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, described Syria as experiencing "a historic and pivotal moment."

He highlighted that the changes the country witnessed last December have had a profound impact on Syrians both inside and outside the country, adding



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

UNHCR representatives Maria Stavropoulou (left) and Gonzalo Vargas Llosa (right) join Ambassador Abdullah Al-Khubaizi (center) at the Saud N. Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute during a briefing on Syrian refugee returns and humanitarian developments.

that his presence in Kuwait is "a great honor," given the pivotal role Kuwait has played for decades in supporting humanitarian efforts.

Llosa explained that the fall of the former Syrian regime on December 8 and the formation of a new transitional government marked a significant turning point that restored a measure of hope and confidence to Syrians. This was directly reflected in the voluntary return movement, with approximately 1.3 million Syrians returning from neighboring countries within a single year, in addition to the return of two million internally displaced persons.

He described this as "one of the largest return movements the region has witnessed in decades," predicting that the pace of returns could continue through 2026 if current improvements persist.

At the same time, Llosa stressed the importance of respecting the right of those who choose to remain in their host countries, emphasizing that the return of

Syrians is a cornerstone of the recovery of Syrian society after 14 years of displacement.

He highlighted cases where returning refugees found their homes occupied by neighbors who had lost their own, underscoring the need for systematic solutions to prevent conflicts.

Llosa stressed that the UNHCR program provides a range of assistance, including basic housing repairs, a \$600 cash grant for the most vulnerable families, legal support for obtaining personal documents, and the rehabilitation of civil registry and land registry offices.

He noted the growing international openness toward Syria, expressing the view that easing sanctions could help attract investments and launch recovery projects.

However, Llosa emphasized that these benefits would take years to reach citizens, making sustained humanitarian support an urgent necessity.

Continued from Page 1

The Minister

Such agreements can lead to substantial losses if undermined by inappropriate amendments or changes made for reasons unrelated to the public interest.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that amendments not only avoid causing harm but also support investors and businesspeople in their efforts to enhance national productivity.

In this regard, anyone who raises questions with the Minister of Justice will find that the ministry, its advisors, and the relevant team are actively addressing shortcomings and working to correct them, with implementation monitored at the highest levels.

The aim is genuine improvement, building on positive aspects of the existing system.

Despite these efforts, the pressing issue is that no amendments should be applied retroactively.

As previously noted, retroactive amendments could cause significant losses for the people, further worsening the economic problems the country faces due to international developments.

What is needed is to offer meaningful support and protect the national economy through modern, effective legislation.

When the cause of potential harm is clear, it reflects the presence of a wise minister who understands the proper application of laws.

Indeed, the task facing the Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait is both significant and challenging.

Given his extensive legal background and experience in various roles, particularly in commerce and related sectors, it is clear that the complexity of these matters is a primary concern for him.

As a result, there is strong public hope that he will prevent any retroactive amendments that could cause harm.

People are instead eagerly anticipating substantial positive changes in the near future, particularly the removal of obstacles created by previous decisions from certain ministries and agencies that have negatively impacted commercial and industrial activity.

This expectation is reinforced by the minister's repeated assurances that any legal amendments will be implemented carefully to avoid adverse effects or harm.

Kuwait, France

■ Dr. Lubna Al-Qadi, member of the Women's Cultural and Social Society and former head of the Kuwaiti Women's Studies and Research Center

■ Mona Al-Mutairi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs

■ Ghada Al-Ghanim, former Secretary-General of the Women's Cultural and Social Society, member of the Committee to Combat Domestic Violence, and head of the "My Paper" project

■ Mayne Gounbay, Director-General of the French National Network for Women's Solidarity against Violence against Women

Dr. Manal Al-Daihani, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Women's Cultural and Social Society, stated that the international community, through its agreements and charters, most notably the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Goal 5 on gender equality, recognizes that empowering women and protecting them from violence is essential for achieving equitable and inclusive development.

She highlighted that United Nations reports show nearly one-third of women worldwide have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime, which is a staggering figure that imposes a clear moral, legal, and societal responsibility on everyone.

In her opening remarks at the panel discussion, Dr. Al-Daihani emphasized that addressing violence against women requires more than merely responding to incidents after they occur.

She stressed the need to build a comprehensive system for prevention, protection, and redress, encompassing legislation, public policies, health, social, and judicial services, as well as societal culture, media, and educational curricula.

Dr. Al-Daihani also highlighted that current debates surrounding personal status issues are crucial, as they play a central role in preventing and protecting women from violence.

She said, "Framing personal status issues as a battle between men and women, or as a struggle between victors and the defeated, is misleading and superficial. Such an approach reinforces the perception of conflict, demonizes each side in the eyes of the other, and turns differences of opinion into disputes, which directly affect family stability and erode public trust in any legislative reform process."

Dr. Al-Daihani also warned against the misuse of the term "feminism" when it is wielded as a stigma, a pretext for accusations, a tool for intimidation, or a means to silence dissenting voices and legitimate demands for rights.

She said, "Many of the stereotypical images of 'feminism' circulating in global discourse and on social media do not reflect the role Kuwaiti women have played, and continue to play, in defending their rights and those of their families."

On the contrary, the accumulated national efforts of Kuwaiti women represent a sound reformist approach, rooted in a national framework, in line with the principles of Islamic law and the spirit of the Kuwaiti constitution, and based on a conscious, responsible partnership between women and men, not on antagonism, exclusion, or the displacement of one by the other.

The association's panel discussion goes beyond diagnosing the problem. It provides a platform for dialogue between local and international experts, both official and non-governmental, to exchange lessons learned and review best practices in combating violence against women. This aims to enhance the quality of policies and services for victims of violence while supporting family stability."

Dr. Al-Daihani concluded by explaining that since its establishment six decades ago, the Cultural Association has made the protection and empowerment of women and families a central part of its mission. The association has worked to raise awareness of rights, provide consultations and services, and build partnerships with state institutions and international organizations, recognizing that combating violence is a shared responsibility that cannot be shouldered by any single party.

She expressed her belief that international cooperation and the exchange of experiences between societies enhance the quality of policies and procedures, giving women who are victims of violence a stronger voice and greater protection.

Meanwhile, the French Ambassador to Kuwait, Olivier Gauvin, stated that the panel discussion was part of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign and in line with France's international strategy for feminist foreign policy (2025-2030).

He emphasized that France firmly believes gender equality is the foundation of peace, justice, and development.

The ambassador explained that France's feminist foreign policy is based on five key pillars:

- defending the rights and freedoms of women and girls
- preventing and combating all forms of violence against women
- promoting women's participation in decision-making processes and institu-

- tions
- addressing economic and social inequalities affecting women
- mobilizing funding and partnerships to support concrete, long-term action.

Since 2020, through its fund supporting women's organizations, France has assisted more than 1,400 women's civil society organizations in 75 countries, establishing itself as a global leader in supporting women's NGOs.

Combating violence against women requires ongoing dialogue, particularly with civil society.

Ambassador Gauvin expressed pride in co-hosting the panel discussion with the association, which included Mayne Gounbay, Director General of the French Women's Union "Solidarity Women".

He stressed that the union manages a network of 83 women's organizations in France and operates the national hotline 3919, which is a crucial resource for protection in the country.

Ambassador Gauvin praised the contributions of two prominent figures who shaped the history of the Women's Cultural and Social Society and advanced women's rights in Kuwait. They are:

■ Lulwah Al-Qatami - the first woman to teach French in Kuwait and president of the Kuwaiti Association for Social Solidarity for 25 years, recognized as an exceptional pioneer whose legacy continues to inspire

■ Lulwa Al-Mulla, whose pioneering efforts in social modernization and defending women's rights laid the foundation for many initiatives that continue to influence progress today.

He stressed that violence against women is a global issue, affecting every country to varying degrees, including France and Kuwait.

However, the ambassador affirmed that meaningful progress in tackling and ultimately overcoming this problem is possible through collective action, dialogue, cooperation, and active participation by both institutions and civil society.

1,063 deported

A: The law states that dispensing a prescription containing controlled substances to someone who does not medically need them is a crime punishable by up to three years' imprisonment.

In recent years, clinics have issued prescriptions for medications like Lyrica without justification, contributing to their misuse. The new law makes the legal responsibility of the prescribing doctor clear.

Q: What is the legal position regarding prescriptions from public sector hospitals or for overseas treatment?

A: Prescriptions issued by government hospitals are acceptable. However, prescriptions for overseas treatment must be authenticated by the Kuwaiti embassy in the issuing country. No controlled substances are allowed to enter Kuwait without proper authorization.

Q: According to official figures, how have drug case statistics evolved recently?

A: From January 2025 until December 1, we handled 2,858 cases involving 3,632 defendants.

In 2024, there were 3,247 cases with 4,131 defendants, and in 2023, 2,649 cases with 3,373 defendants were recorded. These numbers do not necessarily indicate a rise in drug-related crime but rather reflect increased monitoring and enforcement efforts.

Q: What about the quantities of drugs and psychotropic substances seized in recent years?

A: The quantities seized indicate the transnational nature of these crimes.

From January 2025 until December 1, authorities confiscated 2.82 tons of narcotics and 10 million intoxicant pills. In 2024, 3,455 tons of narcotics and 9 million pills were seized, while in 2023, 3,315 tons of narcotics and 26 million pills were seized.

These figures highlight the efforts of the Drug Control General Department, the Coast Guard, and the General Administration of Customs in combating drug smuggling operations.

Q: How many expatriates were deported this year?

A: From January 1 until December 1, a total of 1,063 individuals of various nationalities were deported after their involvement in drug-related offenses was confirmed.

Q: How is the new law expected to affect drug use and trafficking rates?

A: The new legislation is expected to have a significant impact. The consolidation of penalties and their increased severity will make smuggling and trafficking extremely risky. The expanded scope of mandatory treatment is likely to reduce the number of addicts within a few years.

Q: Have drug smuggling crimes by sea decreased?

A: Yes, the decrease is clear and substantial. The sea used to be the most vulnerable entry point. Today, a comprehensive maritime system within the Coast Guard, advanced technologies, and continuous patrols, combined with joint efforts with the Customs Administration, have significantly reduced smuggling operations across all border crossings.

Q: What is the importance of the "supervised delivery" mechanism in controlling international cases?

A: Previously absent, this mechanism has become one of the most important tools for international cooperation. "Supervised delivery" allows authorities to track shipments from their country of origin until they reach their destination in Kuwait.

Q: What are the most prominent types of drugs currently being dealt with?

A: "Shabu" and "Chemical" drugs are the most prevalent. Their prices have risen due to intensified and continuous security crackdowns on traffickers and dealers, which have reduced their availability in the local market. All referrals received by the department undergo thorough investigations, and our officers and personnel are highly trained and competent.

Q: How do you assess international cooperation against drug networks?

A: International cooperation is a cornerstone of our success. We have participated in joint operations with Gulf and Arab countries, and successfully intercepted many shipments before they reached Kuwait. Faster and more accurate information exchange has also helped dismantle networks operating across multiple countries.

Q: How are you preparing for the implementation of the new law starting December 15?

A: An intensive training plan is in place for officers, enlisted personnel, and commissioned officers to ensure they are fully prepared to enforce the new regulations, particularly in cases of smuggling, trafficking, and promotion, as this scourge threatens the entire society.

Q: How do you anticipate crime patterns will change following the implementation of the new law?

A: The law is expected to have a significant impact. Its effects will become clear after implementation, especially as traffickers and smugglers realize that penalties now include execution or life imprisonment and that the legal space for maneuvering has become extremely limited.

Q: What are the responsibilities of officers at DCGD?

A: The duties of the officers go beyond drug seizures to include comprehensive security and intelli-

gence work. This involves gathering information, conducting thorough investigations, tracking smuggling networks inside and outside Kuwait, and executing high-quality security operations with utmost secrecy and precision.

The department maintains continuous coordination with the Coast Guard, and security agencies in neighboring and allied countries to address cross-border issues effectively.

Q: How is DGCD structured?

A: The department comprises divisions that focus on both local and international drug control.

Q: Does the department include female personnel?

A: Yes, the department employs female personnel who actively participate in various security tasks and operations according to their specialization. They are involved in arrests, searches, and investigation procedures.

Q: How do you handle reports of addiction, and ensure they are not malicious?

A: Reports are handled with meticulous methodology and complete confidentiality. Each case undergoes thorough verification to confirm its authenticity. If a report is found to be malicious or intended to cause harm, legal action may be taken against the whistleblower, including potential imprisonment. The aim is to protect society while preventing the misuse of reporting to harm others.

Q: What about the crime of planting drugs on innocent people to falsely implicate them?

A: DCGD has dealt with such cases in the past. Several incidents were uncovered where accusations were proven to be malicious, including the well-known "Doctor's Case," in which the accused received a five-year prison sentence.

We do not tolerate injustice against anyone, and all our actions are based on thorough and comprehensive security investigations.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Mohammed Munawer Al-Mutairi, Assistant Director of DCGD, explained that the campaign seeks to raise awareness about drug-related crimes and promote legal knowledge among various segments of society, including the general public, students in schools, universities and public and private institutes. The campaign delivers a clear message encouraging drug users or their families to seek help.

He highlighted that Article 61 of the Narcotics Law explicitly exempts individuals who voluntarily enter treatment from criminal prosecution, allowing families to assist their loved ones without fear of legal consequences.

Lt. Colonel Al-Mutairi affirmed that the law allows relatives up to the third degree to request compulsory treatment for drug users, with treatment lasting up to three months within a specialized program.

He noted that the treatment centers are affiliated with the Ministry of Health and are supervised by the Ministry of Interior to ensure a safe and controlled environment.

Furthermore, Lt. Colonel Al-Mutairi explained that the ministry will launch a series of awareness initiatives on social media. A three-day exhibition was held at The Avenues Mall starting Thursday. Additional exhibitions will be held in other shopping malls to further raise public awareness about the new law. The exhibitions feature the participation of the Kuwait Society for Lawyers, the Anti-Narcotics Department, the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media, and several legal professionals.

He stressed that the department is available 24/7 for inquiries or assistance via the hotline No. 1884141, its Instagram account, or by visiting the DCGD headquarters.

Kuwait tomato

It is worth noting that field-grown tomatoes, cultivated in open fields under natural sunlight and fresh air, are considered superior to greenhouse tomatoes in both taste and nutritional value.

Meanwhile, farmer Faisal Abdullah Al-Lafi explained that "laying down hanging tomato plants inside greenhouses and agricultural complexes is unsuitable for Kuwait's agricultural environment."

It is preferable to allow the tomato plants to grow upwards, and the top bud can be pruned before reaching the roof of the greenhouse or agricultural complex."

He said, based on several growing seasons on his farm in Al-Abdali, he observed that laying tomato plants along the soil surface limits fruit size and increases the risk of contamination. Allowing the plants to grow above the ground, however, produces larger fruits with better shape and color.

Farmers slam

to raise fees for bringing in agricultural workers and stamping their residency permits for the first time, from KD 60 to KD 210, which, according to the union's Secretary, Ahmed Al-Shabak, adds a huge financial burden on Kuwaiti farmers.

The meeting was attended by Kuwait Farmers Union Chair Ahmed Al-Awdani, Secretary Ahmed Al-Shabak, and farmers Faleh Mazbad Al-Rashidi, Meshal Nader Al-Otaibi, and Sultan Faisal Al-Dammak.

Al-Shabak highlighted the cooperative spirit during the discussions and expressed optimism that a solution addressing the farmers' concerns and serving the public interest would soon be reached.

Kuwait's PACI

PACI's ambitious development projects reflect its commitment to keeping pace with modern standards and serving the community effectively.

The most notable projects include the "Unified Platform for Data Exchange between Government Entities," designed to enhance efficiency and strengthen cooperation among government agencies in delivering services to the public.

This centralized system removes the need for government entities to request paper copies of documents for verification, as the process is managed directly through the platform.

Other projects include expanding the infrastructure of the Sahel application to accommodate growing demand and ensure compatibility with current IT systems.

In addition, the Electronic Lease Contract project provides a platform to regulate and monitor lease agreements by standardizing the registration process for contracts and property owners.

The project facilitates commercial transactions and ensures clear, regulated relationships between all parties involved in leasing.

Among the ambitious projects undertaken by PACI is the introduction of Artificial Intelligence technologies to automatically update data for the Geographic Information System, and reduce reliance on manual processes.

The project also includes creating a digital twin of the State of Kuwait, designed to utilize the data collected by PACI through its various projects to replicate real-world conditions with high precision, documenting all features on the Earth's surface to create an accurate digital representation.

Released 911 calls reveal desperate pleas during Texas Hill Country flood

KERRVILLE, Texas, Dec 6, (AP): Many of the voices were frantic and desperate. A few were steady and calm amid mounting, frightening danger, and in some cases, inescapable doom.

They came from families huddled on rooftops to escape rising, swirling waters, mothers panicked for the wellbeing of their children and onlookers who heard people yell for help through the dark as they clung to treetops.

One man, stuck high in a tree as it began to break under the pressure of the floodwaters, asked emergency dispatchers for a helicopter rescue that never came.

Their pleas were among more than 400 calls for help across Kerr County last summer when devastating floods hit during the overnight hours on the July Fourth holiday. The recordings of the 911 calls were released Friday.

The sheer volume of calls would overwhelm two county emergency dispatchers on duty in the Texas Hill Country as catastrophic flooding inundated cabins and youth camps along the Guadalupe River.



Damage is seen on July 8, 2025, near Hunt, Texas, after a flash flood swept through the area. (AP)

“There’s water filling up super fast, we can’t get out of our cabin,” a camp counselor told a dispatcher above the screams of campers in the background. “We can’t get out of our cabin, so how do we get to the boats?”

Amazingly, everyone in the cabin and the rest of campers at Camp La Junta were rescued.

The flooding killed at least 136 people statewide during the holiday weekend, including at least 117 in Kerr County alone. Most were from Texas, but others came from Alabama, California and Florida, according to a list released by county officials.

One woman called for help as the water closed in on her house near

Federal judge appears skeptical of Trump’s ongoing command of Calif National Guard

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec 6, (AP): A federal judge on Friday sharply questioned the Trump administration’s authority and need to maintain command of California National Guard troops it first deployed to Los Angeles in June following violent protests.

At a hearing in San Francisco, US District Judge Charles Breyer suggested conditions in Los Angeles had changed since the initial deployment, and he questioned whether the administration could control state Guard troops “forever” under its interpretation of federal law.

“No crisis lasts forever,” he said. “I think experience teaches us that crises come and crises go. That’s the way it works.”

He pressed an attorney for the government for any evidence that state authorities were either unable or unwilling to help keep federal personnel and property in the area safe and noted President Donald Trump had access to tens of thousands of active duty troops in California.

California officials have asked Breyer to issue a preliminary injunction returning control of remaining California National Guard troops in Los Angeles to the state. Breyer did not immediately rule. He has previously found



Members of the California National Guard and U.S. Marines guard a federal building on June 17, in Los Angeles. (AP)

the administration’s deployment of the California National Guard illegal.

“The National Guard is not the president’s traveling private army to deploy where he wants, when he wants, for as long as he wants, for any reason he wants, or no reason at all,” California Attorney General Rob Bonta said after the hearing.

Trump initially called up more than 4,000 California National Guard troops in response to the protests over his stepped-up enforcement of immigration laws, but that number had dropped to several hundred by late October, with only a 100 or so troops remaining in the Los Angeles area.

‘Republican Party on path towards losing majority next year’

US Speaker Johnson pleads with GOP to keep concerns private after tumultuous week

Washington, Dec 6, (AP): US House Speaker Mike Johnson is imploring his fellow Republicans to stop venting their frustrations in public and bring their complaints to him directly.

“They’re going to get upset about things. That’s part of the process,” Johnson told reporters. “It doesn’t bother me. But when there is a conflict or concern, I always ask all members to come to me, don’t go to social media.”

Increasingly, they’re ignoring him.

Cracks inside the GOP conference were stark this week as a member of Johnson’s own leadership team openly accused him of lying, rank-and-file Republicans acted unilaterally to force votes and a leadership-backed bill faltered. It’s all underscored by growing worries that the party is on a path towards losing the majority next year.

“I certainly think that the current leadership and specifically the speaker needs to change the way that he approaches the job,” GOP Rep Kevin Kiley of California said.

Kiley, who has grown vocally critical of Johnson after the GOP’s nationwide redistricting campaign backfired in California, said that the speaker has been critical of rank-and-file Republicans, so “he needs to be prepared to accept any criticism that comes with the job.”

“And I think, unfortunately, there’s

been ample reason for criticism,” he added.

For the first part of 2025, Johnson held together his slim Republican majority in the House to pass a number of President Donald Trump’s priorities, including his massive spending and tax cut plan.

But after Johnson kept members out of session for nearly two months during the government shutdown, they returned anxious to work on priorities that had been backlogged for months - and with the reality that their time in the majority may be running out.

First was a high-profile discharge petition to force the vote on releasing the Jeffrey Epstein files, which succeeded after it reached the 218-signature threshold. Other lawmakers are launching more petitions, a step that used to be considered a major affront to party leadership.

“The discharge petition, I think, always shows a bit of frustration,” said GOP Rep Dusty Johnson.

Another discharge petition on a bill that would repeal Trump’s executive order to end collective bargaining with federal labor unions reached the signature threshold last month, with support from seven Republicans.

And this week, GOP Rep Anna Paulina Luna of Florida brought a long-anticipated discharge petition for a bill to bar members of Congress from



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, (center), speaks during a news conference at the Capitol Hill Club on Capitol Hill on Dec 2 in Washington. He is joined by, from left: House Republican Conference Chairwoman Lisa McClain, Rep Zachary Nunn, and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise. (AP)

trading stock. A number of Republicans have already signed on, in addition to Democrats.

“Anxious is what happens when you get nervous. I’m not nervous. I’m pissed,” Luna wrote on social media, responding to leadership comments that she was overly anxious.

GOP Rep. Nancy Mace of South Carolina signed both Luna’s petition

and the one to release the Epstein files. She told reporters that she expressed her frustrations directly to Johnson in a phone call, and also in what she described as “a deeply personal, deeply passionate letter, that we are legislating by discharge petition.”

“We have a very slim majority, but I want President Trump’s executive orders codified,” Mace said. “I want to

see his agenda implemented. Why do we have to legislate by discharge petitions?”

At the center of Johnson’s pleas for members to bring concerns to him privately instead of on social media is the chairwoman of House Republican leadership, New York Rep Elise Stefanik.

Angered that a provision she championed wasn’t included in a defense authorization bill, Stefanik blasted Johnson’s claims that he wasn’t aware of the provision as “more lies from the Speaker.” She conducted a series of media interviews criticizing Johnson, including one with The Wall Street Journal in which she said he was a “political novice” who wouldn’t be re-elected speaker if the vote were held today.

Johnson told reporters Thursday that he had a “great talk” with Stefanik the night before.

“I called her and I said, ‘why wouldn’t you just come to me, you know?’” Johnson said. “So we had some intense fellowship about that.”

Asked if she had apologized for calling him a liar, Johnson said: “Um, you ask Elise about that.”

Illinois Rep. Mary Miller released a statement Thursday providing support for Johnson, saying that while there are differences among members “our mission is bigger than any one individual

or headline.”

Democrats, who have had leadership criticisms of their own, have revealed in the GOP’s disarray. House Republican leaders attempted to muscle through an NCAA-backed bill to regulate college sports after the White House endorsed it, before support within Republican ranks crumbled. Some GOP lawmakers pointedly said they had bigger priorities before the end of the year.

“It’s not that Congress can’t legislate, it’s House Republicans that can’t legislate. It’s the gang that can’t legislate straight. They continue to take the ‘my way or the highway’ approach,” said House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

All eyes in the US House were on a special election Tuesday night in a Tennessee district that a Republican had won in 2024 by nearly 21 percentage points, with Trump carrying the area by a similar margin.

Republicans hoped the contest would help them regain momentum after losing several marquee races across the country in November. Democrats, meanwhile, argued that keeping the race close would signal strong political winds at their backs ahead of next year’s midterms, which will determine control of both chambers.

Republican Matt Van Epps ultimately won by nearly 9 percentage points.



In this July 13, 2007 file photo, French Marine officers wait atop ‘Le Vigilant’ nuclear submarine at L’Île Longue military base, near Brest, Brittany. (AP)

France probes illegal drone overflight

French officials are investigating an illegal drone overflight of the Atlantic coast base for France’s nuclear-armed submarines, authorities said Friday.

French media reported that several drones were detected Thursday night over the Île Longue base in Brittany, western France, but military authorities wouldn’t detail their number or type. The base is the home port of France’s four nuclear ballistic missile submarines - Le Triomphant, Le Téméraire, Le Vigilant and Le Terrible. Defense Minister Catherine Vautrin confirmed that troops at the base intercepted an overflight, without detailing whether they fired shots, used electronic jamming or other means against the aerial intruders. It wasn’t clear who was responsible.

“Any overflight of a military site is prohibited in our country,” Vautrin said. “I want to commend the interception carried out by our military personnel at the Île Longue base.” A number of European Union member countries have reported mysterious drone flights in their airspace in recent months. Some led to airport shutdowns, disrupting commercial flights. Others have been detected near or over military facilities. (AP)

Trump’s security strategy slams European allies and asserts US power in Western Hemisphere

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, (AP): US President Donald Trump’s administration has set forth a new national security strategy that paints European allies as weak and aims to reassert America’s dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

The document released Friday by the White House is sure to roil long-standing US allies in Europe for its scathing critiques of their migration and free speech policies, suggesting they face the “prospect of civilizational erasure” and raising doubts about their long-term reliability as American partners.

At the same time the administration is sharply critical of its democratic allies in Europe and carrying out a pressure campaign of boat strikes in South America, it chides past US efforts to shape or criticize Middle Eastern nations and seeks to discourage attempts for changes in those countries’ governments and policies.

The strategy reinforces, in sometimes chilly and bellicose terms, Trump’s “America First” philosophy, which favors nonintervention overseas, questions decades of strategic relationships and prioritizes US interests.



US President Donald Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting at the White House on Dec 2 in Washington, as Secretary of State Marco Rubio, (left), and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, (right), look on. (AP)

The US strategy “is motivated above all by what works for America - or, in two words, ‘America First,’” the document said.

This is the first national security strategy, a document the administration is required by law to release, since the Republican president’s return to office in January. It is a stark break from the course set by President Joe Biden’s Democratic administration, which sought to reinvigorate alliances after many were rattled in Trump’s first term and to check a more assertive Russia.

Democratic Rep. Jason Crow of Colorado, who sits on House commit-

tees overseeing intelligence and the armed forces, called the strategy “catastrophic to America’s standing in the world and a retreat from our alliances and partnerships.”

“The world will be a more dangerous place and Americans will be less safe if this plan moves forward,” Crow said.

The United States is seeking to broker an end to Russia’s nearly 4-year-old war in Ukraine, a goal that the national security strategy says is in America’s vital interests. But the document makes clear that the US wants to improve its relationship with Russia after years of Moscow being treated as a global pariah and that ending the war is a core US interest to “reestablish strategic stability with Russia.”

The document also accuses America’s longstanding European allies, which have found themselves sometimes at odds with Trump’s shifting approaches to the Russia-Ukraine war, of facing not just domestic economic challenges but, according to the US, an existential crisis.

Economic stagnation in Europe “is eclipsed by the real and more stark prospect of civilizational erasure,” the strategy document said.

Europe

German prez visits WWII bombing site: Germany’s president laid a wreath Friday at Coventry Cathedral in central England, symbolically atoning for the atrocities of World War II as his country and the United Kingdom seek to bolster an alliance to combat the new war raging in Europe.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier’s pilgrimage commemorates the Nazi bombing of Coventry on the night of Nov 14, 1940, which destroyed the 14th-century Gothic cathedral, leaving behind a roofless ruin that stands as a reminder of the ravages of war. At least 568 people were killed and more than half of Coventry’s homes were damaged or destroyed in what was the single most concentrated attack on a British city during the war.

Steinmeier’s appearance wraps up a three-day state visit to Britain, the first by a German head of state in 27 years. (AP)



Steinmeier

Spanish police arrests 11: Spanish police said they had broken up a criminal network linked to smuggling 300 workers into the country, mostly from Nepal.

The workers were placed illegally on farms in central and eastern Spain.

Police arrested 11 people and are investigating two others. A total of 322 people, most from Nepal, were among the victims. Of those, 294 lacked proper documentation to live

and work in Spain.

In a statement, police said most of those smuggled had entered on tourist visas - including for other countries within the European Union’s so-called Schengen area, which is made up of 25 of the 27 EU member countries, plus Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

Once in Spain, the workers were recruited and moved to various parts of the country, where their labor rights were denied, police said.

In a video released by Spanish police, scores of people sat side-by-side on mattresses lined up in a dingy, low-lit room.

Police said the criminal network arranged for the victims’ accommodation in Albacete, in south east Spain. They were crammed into rooms with poor ventilation and limited access to bathrooms in “living conditions that were completely undignified and inhumane,” police said. (AP)

Storm brings heavy rains in Greece: A powerful storm, named Byron by local meteorologists, continued to batter Greece for a second consecutive day on Friday, triggering widespread flooding.

Mandra, a town in the western Attica region roughly 20 km from Athens, was among the hardest-hit areas. The severe flooding revived painful memories of the 2017 disaster there, when 24 people lost their lives during a similar extreme weather event. Streets turned into lakes, and homes and businesses were submerged in mud amid heavy rainfall.

This time, no casualties were reported in Mandra or anywhere else in Greece. Since Thursday morning, the Fire Brigade has received nearly 600 calls for assistance, including requests to evacuate 22 people to safety, 10 of them in Mandra. (Xinhua)

Russia unleashes massive missile attack on Ukraine as diplomatic talks continue

KYIV, Ukraine, Dec 6, (AP): Russia unleashed a major missile and drone barrage on Ukraine overnight into Saturday, after U.S. and Ukrainian officials said they’ll meet on Saturday for a third day of talks aimed at ending the nearly 4-year-old war.

Following talks that made progress on a security framework for postwar Ukraine, the two sides also offered the sober assessment that any “real progress toward any agreement” ultimately will depend “on Russia’s readiness to show serious commitment to long-term peace.”

The statement from US special envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner as well as Ukrainian negotiators Rustem Umerov and Andriy Hnatov came after they met for a second day in Florida on Friday. They offered only broad brushstrokes about the progress they say has been made as Trump pushes Kyiv and Moscow to agree to a US-mediated proposal to end the war.

Russia used 653 drones and 51 mis-



Workers and military inspect Ukrainian Fire Point’s Flamingo missiles during handover to the military in an undisclosed location in Ukraine on Dec 4. (AP)

siles in the wide-reaching overnight attack on Ukraine, which triggered air raid alerts across the country and came

as Ukraine marked Armed Forces Day, the country’s air force said Saturday morning.

Renewed fighting threatens agreement brokered by Trump

DR Congo and Rwanda sign United States-brokered peace deal to end eastern conflict

KINSHASA, Dec 6, (Agencies): The leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda have signed a US-brokered peace deal in Washington, aimed at ending the decades-long conflict in eastern DRC.

Endorsed on Thursday by DRC President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame, the accord was hailed by the White House as “historic,” intended to resolve “one of the worst conflicts on Earth.”

First signed on June 27 by the two countries’ foreign ministers, the agreement was confirmed after a series of bilateral and trilateral meetings involving the Congolese, Rwandan, and US presidents.

US President Donald Trump praised the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda for their courage as they signed onto a deal on Thursday aimed at ending the conflict and opening the region’s critical mineral reserves to the US government and American companies.

The moment offered Trump - who has repeatedly and with a measure of exaggeration boasted of brokering peace in some of the world’s most entrenched conflicts - another chance to tout himself as a dealmaker extraordinaire on the global stage and make the case that he’s deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize. The USleader hasn’t been shy about his desire to receive the honor.

“It’s a great day for Africa, a great day for the world,” Trump said shortly before the leaders signed the pact. He added, “Today, we’re succeeding where so many others have failed.”

“This conflict and efforts have lasted for 30 years, but none have succeeded in resolving the underlying issues,” Kagame said at the signing ceremony, flanked by several African leaders, including Kenyan President William Ruto, Angolan President Joao Lourenco, Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye, and Togolese President of the Council of Ministers Faure Gnassingbe.

Tshisekedi described the agreement as “not just another document” but “a real turning point” toward ending years of armed tensions and humanitarian crises in the war-torn region.

Eastern DRC has long been plagued by recurring violence, fueled in part by the March 23 Movement (M23), which Kinshasa accuses Kigali of supporting. Rwanda denies the claim and accuses the DRC of colluding with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, linked to the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.



The deal outlines three essential objectives: ending violence in the east, restoring the DRC’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and dismantling illicit mineral supply chains that finance war, according to DRC presidential spokesperson Tina Salama.

Kagame emphasized Africa’s role in sustaining peace: “It’s up to us in Africa, working with our partners, to consolidate and expand this peace. There will be ups and downs on the road ahead... Rwanda, I know, will not be found wanting.”

Yet implementation has lagged. The Barometer of Peace Agreements in Africa reports “worrying stagnation” since June, with only 19 of 30 identified tasks initiated and “minimal” progress on halting hostilities.

“Peace is not just a signature; the hardest part is implementation,” DRC govern-

ment spokesperson Patrick Muyaya said.

On the ground, that warning is tangible. The Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and M23 forces have accused each other of violating the ceasefire in South Kivu, including in the provincial capital, Bukavu. FARDC reported M23 attacks on government positions, while the M23 said FARDC operations in Kaman-yola killed at least four civilians and injured six.

Salama urged patience, noting, “Diplomacy has its own tempo... Sometimes it may seem slow, but it needs time. There is diplomacy on one side, and operations on the other.”

Beyond security, Kinshasa and Kigali formally signed the Regional Economic Integration Framework to strengthen bilateral cooperation and transform peace dividends into tangible development. Its provisions will only take effect upon “satisfactory execution” of two military instruments in the peace accord.

“This is neither joint management, nor a merger, nor in any way a loss of sovereignty,” Salama said, clarifying that it is about establishing a better-structured economic space conducive to joint projects that can improve living conditions for local populations. “Peace first, then the economy.” Enditem

Meanwhile, residents of eastern Congo said fighting has intensified despite a peace agreement that was signed by the Congolese and Rwandan presidents in Washington, DC, with Trump in attendance.

Presidents Felix Tshisekedi of Congo and Paul Kagame of Rwanda met with Trump on Thursday to sign a wide-ranging deal that attempts to stop the ongoing war between the Congolese armed forces and the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group in the eastern part of Congo.

But residents said Friday the fighting has intensified in recent days, with the town of Kaman-yola near the borders with Rwanda and Burundi bearing the brunt.

“People are fleeing; they are leaving the neighborhoods where the bombs are falling to go to areas considered calm, and others are fleeing towards Rwanda,” Kaman-yola resident Urban Dunia told The Associated Press by telephone Friday.

“Yesterday, we saw that agreements were signed, but we don’t see any positive impact on this situation, and that worries us,” said Samson Alimasi, also from Kaman-yola. “We only see bombs falling without knowing which side they are coming from.”

‘Many bodies are still buried under mud’

Survivors plead for urgent aid after catastrophic floods in Asia

ACEH TAMIANG, Indonesia, Dec 6, (AP): Emergency crews raced against time on Friday after last week’s catastrophic floods and landslides that struck parts of Asia, killing more than 1,500 people. Relief operations were underway, but the scale of need overwhelmed the capabilities of rescuers.

Authorities said 883 people were confirmed dead in Indonesia, 486 in Sri Lanka and 185 in Thailand, as well as three in Malaysia.

Many villages in Indonesia and Sri Lanka remained buried under mud and debris, with nearly 900 people still unaccounted for in both countries, while recovery was further along in Thailand and Malaysia.

As the waters recede, survivors find the disaster has crippled their villages’ lifelines. Roads that once connected the cities and districts to the outside world are severed, leaving some areas accessible only by helicopter. Transmission towers collapsed under the weight of landslides, plunging communities into darkness and causing internet outages.

In Aceh Tamiang, the hardest-hit area in Aceh province, infrastructure is in ruins. Entire villages in the lush hills district lie submerged beneath a thick blanket of mud. More than 260,000 residents



fled homes once on green farmland. For many, survival hinges on the speed of aid as clean water, sanitation and shelter top the list of urgent priorities.

Trucks carrying relief supplies crawl along roads connecting North Sumatra’s Medan city to Aceh Tamiang, which reopened almost a week after the disaster, but distribution is slowed by debris on the roads, said the National Disaster Management Agency’s spokesperson Abdul Muhari.

An Associated Press photojournal-

ist described widespread devastation in Aceh Tamiang after flash floods tore through the area, with cars overturned and homes badly damaged. Animal carcasses are scattered among the debris. Many residents are still haunted by the 2004 tsunami that devastated Aceh and killed around 230,000 people globally, with 160,000 in Aceh alone.

On a battered bridge spanning the swollen Tamiang River, families found shelter under makeshift tents of bed sheets and torn fabric.

A survivor there, Ibrahim bin Usman, cradled his grandsons on the muddy ground where his home once stood. He recounted how floodwaters full of logs hit his house and the houses of his children and his siblings, forcing his family of 21, including babies, to cling to the roof of a warehouse before being evacuated by a small wooden boat by fellow villagers.

“Six houses in my family were swept away,” he said. “This wasn’t a flood - it was a tsunami from the hills. Many bodies are still buried under mud.”

With wells contaminated and pipes shattered, the floodwaters have turned necessities into luxuries.

Resident Mariana, who goes by a single name like many Indonesians, broke down in tears when recalling how she survived as water surged into her village on Nov. 27. “The water kept rising, forcing us to flee. Even at higher ground, it didn’t stop. We panicked.” The 53-year-old widow said she and others eventually reached a two-story school, but survival was grim: there was no food or clean water. “We drank floodwaters after letting it settle and boiling it. Children drank it too,” said Mariana, whose home was flattened.

Ex-leader Bolsonaro’s eldest son to run for Brazil presidency in ‘26

SAO PAULO, Dec 6, (Agencies): Brazilian Sen **Flávio Bolsonaro**, the eldest son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, said Friday that his father decided he should represent their political group and run for president in 2026.

Bolsonaro was arrested last month and began serving a 27-year prison sentence after being convicted of attempting a coup. The far right leader has already been barred from running for office until 2030 as part of a separate process against him.

The office of Sen. Bolsonaro confirmed to The Associated Press that he will challenge President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is running for a fourth nonconsecutive term, as the candidate of Bolsonaro’s Liberal Party. The office also said Flávio Bolsonaro visited his father in prison on Tuesday.

Flávio Bolsonaro was elected senator in 2018 for an eight-year term, following a career as a state legislator in Rio de Janeiro. The politician was at the center of allegations of embezzlement of public funds involving the family’s political offices. Prosecutors charged him, but the case was dismissed by the courts. The senator has denied any wrongdoing.



Also:
WASHINGTON: US President **Donald Trump** spoke by phone with his Brazilian counterpart, **Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva**, with the two sides focusing on fighting organized crime, trade and sanctions.

“We had a great talk. We talked about trade. We talked about sanctions, because, as you know, I sanctioned them having to do with certain things that took place. But we had a very good talk,” Trump told reporters at the White House.

Later in the day, Trump said on Truth Social that the call was “very productive” and they also discussed “how our Countries could work together to stop Organized Crime.” “I look forward to seeing and speaking with him soon. Much good will come out of this newly formed partnership,” Trump added.



Supporters of Pakistan’s imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan hold a demonstration outside Islamabad High Court, in Islamabad, Pakistan on Dec 2. (AP)

Khan ‘mentally ill’: Pakistan army

Pakistan’s military pushed back Friday after imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan called the country’s army chief “mentally unstable.” The army labeled Khan “mentally ill” and accused him of using family visits and social media posts to attack the armed forces and sow division.

Army spokesperson Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, without directly naming Khan, described him as a “narcissist” whose political ambitions had grown so extreme that he believed “if I am not in power, nothing else should exist.”

Chaudhry told a televised news conference that people meeting Khan in prison were being used “to spread poison against the army.” His remarks came after one of Khan’s sisters met with him at a prison, and said her brother was angry at army chief Gen. Asim Munir. (AP)

Sudanese paramilitary drone attack kills 79 people in Kordofan, says state govt

KHARTOUM, Dec 6, (Agencies): The death toll from the drone strike that hit civilian areas in the city of Kalogi in southern Sudan’s South Kordofan state on Thursday has risen to 79, among them 43 children, the state government said on Friday.

South Kordofan state government said in a statement that the attack was launched by the opposition Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) forces “in coordination with the rebel paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia.”

It said a drone dropped four missiles and “hit a kindergarten, the Ghadeer Hospital, and several densely populated areas, also injuring 38 people, including 11 children and 6 women.”

The state government called on the international community to “take a clear stance” on the attack, designate the RSF as a “terrorist organization” and hold accountable the parties involved in the attacks. On Thursday, volunteer groups reported that nine people were killed, and seven others injured in the drone strike, blaming it on the RSF and the SPLM-N, which controls vast areas of South Kordofan.

Neither the RSF nor the SPLM-N



has commented on the attacks.

Fighting between the Sudanese army and the RSF erupted in April 2023, and has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions in Sudan, fueling one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises. UN humanitarianism warned repeatedly that violence in the Kordofan region has sharply escalated recently, triggering

large-scale displacement and civilian suffering. Enditem

Thursday’s attack is the latest in the fighting between the paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces, also known as the RSF, and the Sudanese military, who have been at war for over two years. It is now concentrating in the oil-rich Kordofan states.



Vehicles drive along a street in the aftermath of an overnight exchange of fire between Afghan and Pakistani forces along the border in Spin Boldak, Kandahar province, Afghanistan on Dec 6. (AP)

‘Overnight exchange of fire along Afghan-Pakistan border kills five’

JALALABAD, Afghanistan, Dec 6, (Agencies): An overnight exchange of fire between Afghan forces and Pakistani troops along the two countries’ tense border killed five Afghan civilians and wounded five others, while three civilians were also wounded on the Pakistani side, officials from the two countries said Saturday.

Each side has blamed the other for triggering the clash in violation of a tenuous two-month ceasefire.

Those killed in the border area near the Afghan city of Spin Boldak, in southern Afghanistan’s Kandahar province, included three children and one woman, said Ali Mohammad Haqmal, the head of information of Spin Boldak District.

Pakistani police and a hospital official in the Pakistani city of Chaman, Mohammad Awais, said three people, including a woman, were wounded in the shooting and shelling that came from the Afghan side. The clashes lasted until dawn Saturday, police said.

Tension between the two countries has been high since October, when deadly border clashes killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and suspected militants, and wounded hundreds on both sides. The violence erupted after explosions in Kabul, the Afghan capital, on Oct 9 that the Taliban government blamed on Pakistan and vowed to avenge.

The fighting has been the worst between the neighbors in recent years. A Qatar-mediated ceasefire began in October and has largely held, but peace talks have so far failed to produce an agreement.

Pakistan has suffered several militant attacks inside its country, and has blamed most of them on the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP. Though

separate from the Afghan Taliban, the TTP is closely allied with it, and many of its fighters are believed to have taken refuge in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power there in 2021, further straining relations.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have both blamed each other for the cross-border exchange of fire that broke out Friday night.

Haqmal said the Afghan side didn’t respond for 10-15 minutes after Pakistani forces began shooting, and that once the Afghan side responded, it stopped firing “within an hour.” The shooting by the Pakistani side continued until Saturday morning, he said.

However, Mohammad Sadiq, a local Pakistani police official, claimed the shooting started from the Afghan side and that Pakistani troops returned fire near the Chaman border crossing, a key transit route.

Also:
KABUL: Afghan counter-narcotic police have uncovered large quantities of weapons and ammunition in northern Afghanistan’s Balkh province, the statement of the provincial police office said Friday.

The weapons and ammunition include four Kalashnikov rifles, four hand grenades, an air rifle, two anti-personnel grenades, a PK gun, a scope, hundreds of rounds of bullets and cartridges, and other illegally stored military equipment, the statement said.

The statement did not mention whether any arrests were made in connection with this case. The cache was discovered during an operation conducted by police at a residential house in Zari district of this province.

Africa

South Africa shooting kills 11: At least 11 people were killed and 14 others wounded in a shooting early Saturday at a hotel in South Africa’s administrative capital Pretoria, local police said.

Brigadier Athlenda Mathe, spokesperson for the South African Police Service (SAPS), said 10 victims died at the

scene in Saulsville, Atteridgeville, and another succumbed to gunshot wounds later in a hospital, while 14 others are receiving medical treatment. (Xinhua)

2 Cameroonian soldiers killed: At least two Cameroonian soldiers were killed and several others injured on Friday in an ambush by separatists in the country’s war-torn English-speaking region of Northwest, security sources said. (Xinhua)

Kuwaiti oil price rises to \$63.04 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 35 cents to USD 63.04 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared to USD 62.69 pb the earlier day, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

on Saturday. In global markets, Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate rose by 49 cents and 41 cents to USD 63.75 and USD 60.08 pb respectively.

Other Voices

Producers tighten costs

Oil prices expected to stay weak in 2026

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

As the new year approaches, questions arise about the future price of crude oil, whether it will remain weak or drop further compared to the current year. So far, indicators suggest that prices are likely to remain low, with no strong signs of rising above 2025 levels. Currently, oil prices stand at \$59 per barrel for U.S. crude and around \$63 per barrel for Brent.



Al-Harami

The forecast for next year estimates U.S. crude prices to range between \$49 and \$57 per barrel. Meanwhile, the break-even price for U.S. producers to drill new wells ranges between \$61 and \$71 per barrel. This is certainly positive news for U.S. consumers but disappointing for producers.

To cope with lower prices, U.S. oil companies are expected to implement cost-cutting measures, including reducing staff. This is a typical strategy in American industry to ensure long-term survival and business continuity.

The same outlook applies to the internationally dominant Brent crude, which is forecasted to fall to around \$62 per barrel, about \$2 lower than today's price of \$64. This is certainly not favorable news for global oil producers.

On the other hand, such low prices are likely to encourage higher oil consumption, which could eventually lead to an in-

crease in prices due to rising demand, especially if production is restricted or quotas are enforced.

This could be further influenced by developments toward a resolution or peace agreement between Ukraine and Russia, which may lead Europe to lift its boycott on Russian oil and petroleum products. Such a move would increase the supply of crude on global markets, forcing OPEC+ to consider new production quotas or potentially causing Brent crude prices to fall to the \$50 range.

Alternatively, OPEC+ may choose not to intervene, allowing crude prices to drop further, while oil-producing countries turn to international banks for financing, using their substantial oil reserves as collateral.

It is neither feasible nor advisable for oil producers to sell their assets at current low prices, making bank loans a more practical option, with the expectation that oil prices will eventually rise. Additionally, producers may be reluctant to increase production levels, particularly U.S. producers, in an effort to push prices upward.

On the other hand, OPEC+ countries cannot fully commit to production quotas, as some members tend to ignore restrictions once oil prices rise by a few U.S. dollars. This remains a major challenge that is difficult, if not impossible, to resolve.

The outlook for next year does not appear promising. Brent crude is unlikely to reach \$70 per barrel and is expected to hover around \$63-\$65 at best, unless unforeseen factors emerge that could push prices above 2025 levels.
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Appointment effective from Dec 7

Al-Munaifi takes over Kuwait Gulf Oil Company leadership

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Board of Directors of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) issued a decision to appoint Bader Al-Munaifi as CEO of Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC), effective Sunday, December 7.

The decision was based on a letter from the KPC and its subsidiaries' Compensation and Development Committee, issued by the Board of Directors in early December, regarding the results of the selection process for leadership positions within KPC and its subsidiaries.

Al-Munaifi served as the acting CEO of KGOC, in addition to his role as Executive Vice President of Joint Operations.

In 2023/2024, Al-Munaifi assumed the position of Executive Vice President of Gas and Innovation at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

Meanwhile, oil analyst and expert Kamel Al-Harami stated that the continued budget deficit over the past

ten years, and the projected deficit of 6 billion dinars in the current budget, is due to the decline in the price of a barrel of oil.

Speaking to Al-Seyassah, Al-Harami explained that the price required for a barrel of oil to balance revenues and expenditures should not be less than \$90. The current price of Kuwaiti crude, fluctuating between \$65 and \$66, results in a loss of up to \$24 per barrel.

Al-Harami confirmed that the three offshore discoveries in the Al-Nukhatha, Al-Julaia, and Jazah fields contain enormous quantities of free gas, which will strengthen national income sources and help reduce Kuwait's gas import costs by approximately 4 billion dinars annually.

He suggested benefiting from the expertise of major international companies specializing in exploration and drilling, as they possess modern equipment and technology that can achieve the desired results quickly and efficiently.

Board cites operational needs

KPC extends KOC CEO Ahmad Al-Eidan's term until July 2027

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The Board of Directors of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) issued a resolution that renews its confidence in Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) CEO Ahmad Jaber Al-Eidan by extending his term for one year, until July 4, 2027.

According to the resolution, the board reviewed Law No. 6/1980 on the establishment of KPC, specifically Article 14, which outlines the powers and responsibilities of the board.

The resolution also referenced KPC Board Resolution No. 58/2022, issued at the board's twelfth meeting of 2022, regarding the appointment of the CEO of KOC.

It highlighted the provisions governing the termination of service for senior executives at KPC and

its subsidiaries, which allow, due to operational needs, the extension of service for senior officials who have completed 35 years of service for one year, up to a maximum of five years, or until they reach the age of sixty, whichever comes first.

The board based its decision on a letter from the Chair of the Compensation and Development Committee for Employees and Leaders at KPC and its subsidiaries, issued on December 1, 2025, which included the results of the leadership selection process and the committee's recommendations.

The first article of the decision approved the extension of service for Ahmad Jaber Al-Eidan, CEO of KOC, for one year, from July 5, 2026, to July 4, 2027.

The second article authorized the Vice Chairman of the board and CEO of KPC to take the necessary steps to implement this decision.

No connectivity needed: Simplified, cost-efficient SME modernization

Zain, ZainTECH, Microsoft launch AI-driven SME bundles in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Zain Kuwait, the country's leading digital innovator in collaboration with ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, and Microsoft, have launched Microsoft 365 Bundles and Managed Services, an integrated offering designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kuwait shift to more secure, modern and AI-enabled ways of working locally and across the region. This collaboration will expand across other Zain markets in due course.

The announcement was made as part of Zain's sponsorship of the second edition of the NEXUS Exhibition 2025, Kuwait's premier technology and innovation event, held at The Arena Kuwait, where global leaders, startups, and change makers gathered under one roof to explore the future of AI, FinTech, digital transformation, and cybersecurity. The event was attended by H.E. The Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar and Zain Kuwait Chief Technology Officer Daajj Al-Oud.

The new bundles combine Microsoft 365 Business and Enterprise licenses, including Copilot add-ons, with ZainTECH's end-to-end managed services. Delivered directly by Zain as a single trusted provider, the service provides SMEs a practical and cost-efficient way to upgrade their workplace tools, improve collaboration, and strengthen governance. These bundles include Microsoft licenses and managed services only, with no connectivity requirements.

This rollout reinforces Zain Group's long-term investment in workplace modernization, cloud adoption, and AI-ready digital infrastructure. It also marks a significant milestone in the Zain-ZainTECH-Microsoft partnership, strengthening a shared commitment to supporting organizations and governments as they enhance security, modernize operations and adopt intelligent digital tools.

Hamad Al-Marzouq, Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Zain Kuwait, said: "Our partnership with ZainTECH and Microsoft reflects our operation's long-term commitment to building a



Group photo during the exhibition.

- Offering Business and Enterprise licenses with Copilot AI-enabled productivity tools
- Collaboration will expand across other Zain markets empowering businesses to grow, innovate, and compete on a global scale

digital ecosystem that empowers businesses to grow, innovate, and compete on a global scale. It is also a strategic step in enabling secure, intelligent, and AI-ready workplaces within Kuwait. As organizations evolve, we are investing in the capabilities and partnerships that ensure they have access to world-class technologies delivered with simplicity, trust, and real impact."

Andrew Hanna, CEO, Zain TECH said: "As the ICT arm of Zain Group, Zain TECH is focused on enabling organizations to become more intelligent, digital, and resilient, by strengthening their security, simplifying operations and adopting AI capabilities to create measurable impact Through our Managed Services offering with Microsoft 365 and other distinguished global technology pro-

viders, we support SMEs across the region move from traditional set ups to secure, cloud-based, and intelligent environments that support long term efficiency and resilience. We're giving businesses the governance, protection, and operational excellence they need to modernize with confidence and prepare for the next generation of AI-driven capabilities."

Through the new offering, SMEs gain access to Microsoft 365 Business Basic, Business Standard, Business Premium, and Enterprise E3/E5 licenses, in addition to Copilot add-ons that enable advanced AI-powered productivity. These licenses are supported by ZainTECH's managed services, which provide comprehensive configuration and lifecycle management, enhanced collaboration and communication gov-

ernance, advanced threat protection, continuous threat monitoring, and security posture assessments.

By consolidating these capabilities into a single, streamlined service - without any connectivity requirements - the offering delivers a simplified and cost-efficient path for SMEs looking to modernize their digital workplace and adopt AI-driven innovation at their own pace.

The introduction of these Microsoft 365 Bundles and Managed Services gives SMEs access to the digital capabilities they need to operate securely, scale efficiently, and prepare for a future shaped by AI. By simplifying adoption and strengthening protection, the offering empowers organizations to build the resilient digital workplaces required for sustained growth.

Participates as a Platinum Sponsor at the NEXUS Technology Exhibition

Gulf Bank expands digital payments and security focus

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: In line with its continued commitment to advancing digital excellence in the banking sector and delivering modern technological solutions that address evolving customer needs, Gulf Bank concluded its participation as a Platinum Sponsor in the NEXUS Technology Exhibition. The three-day event was held at the Arena and Grand Hyatt Hotel, under the patronage and attendance of the Minister of State for Communications Affairs, H.E. Omar Saud Al Omar. The opening ceremony also witnessed the presence of senior Gulf Bank executives, including Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer Faisal AlAdsani and Chief Marketing Officer Najla Aleisa, who attended the exhibition to underscore the Bank's commitment to advancing technological innovation and strengthening its role in Kuwait's digital ecosystem.

The exhibition featured a comprehensive program showcasing the latest innovations and technological solutions presented by leading local, regional, and global companies. It also included a dedicated competition for startups, providing an important platform for emerging talents to present their concepts directly to investors and industry leaders.

Gulf Bank participated with an engaging and interactive booth that showcased its most advanced digital services, offering visitors a real-time experience of the Gulf Bank Mobile App; one of the most widely used banking applications in Kuwait. Through live demonstrations, attendees explored how the app enables customers to manage their banking needs with exceptional ease and efficiency, including transfers, bill payments, instant account opening, card management, and a comprehensive range of additional services designed to simplify everyday banking. The Bank also emphasized its commitment to supporting secure and seamless digital payment solutions, which provide customers with fast, reliable, and convenient payment options across a wide range of channels.

Gulf Bank also contributed to the conference sessions through the active participation of Hasan Fayyadh, Head of Digital Banking at Gulf Bank, who joined a panel discussion focused on advanced technology innovation and mobile app development. During the session, he outlined the Bank's strategic approach to designing and enhancing its digital platforms, highlighting the continuous updates to the Gulf Bank Mobile App, the adoption of modern development practices, and the importance of security, reliability, and user friendly design in delivering a seamless banking experience.

In addition, Gulf Bank showcased the Gulf Points Program, widely recognized as the most rewarding loyalty program in Kuwait. The program provides customers with a comprehensive suite of redemption options, including cashback, gifting points, and redeeming points through the Gulf Points online store. This platform, the first of its kind in the local banking sector, offers a seamless digital shopping experience that enables customers to exchange their points for a wide variety of products and services across multiple categories. The program reflects the Bank's ongoing commitment to enriching customer value through innovative and technology-driven solutions.

Gulf Bank's presence at the NEXUS Technology Exhibition reaffirms its leadership in accelerating



Minister Omar Al-Omar in a group photo with Gulf Bank officials, led by Faisal AlAdsani and Najla Aleisa.



Hasan Fayyadh, Head of Digital Banking at Gulf Bank, during his participation in one of the seminars at the exhibition.

digital transformation within the banking industry. It underscores the Bank's continuous investment in advanced technologies that elevate customer experi-

ence, streamline financial journeys, and support Kuwait's broader ambitions for a more innovative and technology-enabled future.

Trade delegations to exchange and showcase investment prospects

Kuwait Chamber seeks expanded trade ties with Russia

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6, (KUNA): The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has affirmed its keenness to enhance cooperation with the Russian Federation in the economic and commercial fields through the exchange of trade delegations, the holding of exhibitions, and increasing available investment opportunities and trade laws.

In a press release issued after receiving a delegation of business owners from the Russian Federation representing information and communications

technology companies, the (KCCI) stressed the need to exert more effort to increase the volume of intra-regional trade and investment partnerships in order to achieve the desired economic goals.

It pointed out the need to increase the volume of cooperation with the Russian Federation, especially since it possesses great economic capabilities and considered one of the leading countries in the fields of cybersecurity and technology, the press release added.

The statement said that the Russian delegation considered this visit to reflect the depth of trade relations between Kuwait and the Russian Federation, stressing that there are many investment opportunities in the field of information and communication technology.

The Russian delegation called on Kuwaiti companies to forge strategic partnerships with their Russian counterparts to open new economic horizons between the two friendly countries.

Contributing to the advancement of Kuwait's digital ecosystem

stc announces its support towards the innovation and startup ecosystem in Kuwait by sponsoring Nexus 2025 - Kuwait's Tech & Innovation Summit

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship, for the second year in a row, of the ‘Nexus Technology & Startup Summit 2025’, a leading regional platform for technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship. The summit was held under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of State for Communication Affairs, Omar Saud Abdulaziz Al-Omar, and attended by CEO of stc, Eng. Muataz Aldharab and other members of the executive management at the Company. The sponsorship comes under stc’s comprehensive corporate social responsibility program, with a focus on supporting local entrepreneurs and start-ups, as well as empowering the younger generation.

Held from December 4th to the 6th at The Arena Kuwait in 360 Mall, the summit gathered over 60 leading companies, startups and experts to showcase cutting-edge technologies, exchange insights, and explore emerging trends shaping the digital economy. Designed as an immersive platform for learning and engagement, the summit featured an integrated program that includes an interactive exhibition, startup challenge, investor networking lounge, and expert-led conferences and workshops covering key themes such as artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and the future of digital innovation.

As a platinum sponsor, stc and its subsidiaries hosted a series of interactive workshops at its booth covering various technological concepts and innovations. The Company also announced the signing of several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with leading companies and applications, demonstrating its continued commitment to building strong partnerships that support business growth and digital enablement. Additionally, stc participated in



stc signs MoUs to strengthen digital partnerships.

a panel discussion titled “Telco – Innovation, Startups & Partnerships”, during which stc representatives shared perspectives on the telecom sector’s evolving role and its contribution to fostering innovation.

solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, showcased a lineup of advanced business technologies, including

solutions such as Modar Cloud Managed Network, WiFi 7 technology, vehicle monitoring systems, and Push-to-Talk services. These solutions reflect the Company’s broader efforts to support organizations in their digital transformation journeys while supporting the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035. The booth also highlighted exclusive Nexus offers for businesses, as well as special offers

for members of stc’s ‘weyak’ initiative. As part of its engagement at the Summit, stc hosted a series of live podcast sessions throughout the event featuring discussions with industry specialists, innovators, and thought leaders. These sessions aimed to discuss key topics such as digital transformation, emerging technologies, and the future of the innovation ecosystem.

stc emphasized that its participation in the Nexus Technology & Startup Summit 2025 reflects its strategic commitment to enabling digital transformation and empowering the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. With today’s rapidly evolving digital world, new technologies and solutions are being introduced to the market on a daily basis. stc highlighted the importance of supporting essential platforms that educate the community and bring together industry experts to share their insights and valuable contributions to the public. Additionally, the Company highlighted its advocacy role in supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kuwait, as well as platforms that aim to educate the younger generation.

In line with its ongoing commitment to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kuwait, stc has developed a diverse suite of products and services tailored to meet the needs of this expanding segment, both directly and through its subsidiaries. The Company has participated in and sponsored multiple platforms that help startups and small businesses enhance their operations, improve efficiency, and accelerate their digital transformation journeys. Through various value-adding initiatives and targeted forms of support, stc continues to create opportunities for business owners to grow and thrive, building on its strategic commitment to empowering the younger generation and strengthening Kuwait’s startup ecosystem.

Other Voices

Navigating Kuwait’s legal maze: A guide for startups

By Shaikha Aljulaibi
Attorney

With the rising trend in the number of startups in the Kuwaiti business landscape, the young business owners are faced with the realization that the legal system in the country or region presents complexity that they are not familiar with yet forms a crucial part in ensuring that they are successful. Apart from ensuring that the business complies with the laws of the country or region in which it operates, awareness of the laws also plays a significant role in ensuring the sustainability of the business. This can be noted in areas such as the safeguarding of intellectual properties, employees, and finances.

The Rise of the Startups - and the Maze of Laws Awaiting Them

The innovators from within the boundaries of Kuwait have had quite an influence in the economy of the country through the ideas that they have developed. However, with the good news comes wise money in the legal issue as the legal obligations that the innovators behind the startups have underestimated in most cases. The startups would have to pass through the legal system through employment laws, licensing laws, laws regarding data protection, laws concerning contracts, and laws regarding investment. By dealing with all this when they are still in the beginning stages, one gets past this problem from escalating in most cases and moving towards developing a good name regarding the startups that they are creating.



Shaikha Aljulaibi

1. Protecting Intellectual Property: Protecting Your Ideas

The country with a regulated system regarding trademarks, copyrights, patents, and industrial designs is Kuwait under Law No. 13 of 2015. Many startups tend to wait until the absolute end or even after the onset of registration of their business names or works of art in order to put themselves in a position that makes them lose everything. Among the many things that would befall those who become victims of the loss of trademarks to the business competitor include the demolition of one’s reputation and weakening of market positions. The registering not only makes it the prerogative of the startup to protect ideas but also helps in ensuring fair competition in the ever-rising world of innovation in Kuwait.

2. Employment Legislation: Creating a Secure and Fair Workplace Environment

Under Labor Law No. 6 of 2010, employers are mandated to provide employees with employment contracts that include the employees’ rights, responsibilities, salaries, and working hours. The startups that tend to rely more upon unspoken agreements are faced with conflicts regarding pay or power. The issue of contracts among employees is basically the granting of trust and also boosts the efficiency of the business, which is quite essential especially when in the early stages of expanding the business in the market.

3. Contracts and Agreements: Clarity Prevents Conflict

The Kuwaiti Civil Code (Law No. 67 of 1980) accentuates the

need of formal agreements. This may create complications regarding the payment or delivery partnership in case the parties end up disputing the agreements not being entirely documented. This lack of professionalism in contracting may result in legal complications being most likely reduced through clear and well-written contracts.

4. Compliance with Regulations: The License to Operate

All startups are required to comply with Companies Law No. 1 of 2016 (as amended) and Commercial Law No. 68 of 1980 regarding the registration of business and operational requirements. For example, delivery companies are required to comply with the rules imposed by the Ministry of Health, while those selling through e-commerce platforms must comply with commercial licensing rules. Meeting the standard requirements does not only involve submitting papers but also serves as assurance for consumers and boosts business credibility.

5. Funding and Investment: Transparency Helps Protect Entrepreneurs and Investors

The Capital Markets Authority Law (Law No. 7 of 2010) and the Companies Law prescribe the rules of the game in terms of investment, shareholders’ rights, and financial disclosure. Informal or unregistered funding of business may be seen as the best way by the business owners in terms of smoothness and ease of doing things. However, this often results in ownership conflicts if the business turns out to be highly profitable. The right documents are a key indicator of equity and promote investor confidence.

6. Data Privacy and Cyber Security - Trust in the Digital Economy

Moreover, digital startups operating in areas such as fintech, e-commerce, and other services are required to comply with the rules outlined in the Cybercrime Law No. 63 of 2015 and Electronic Transactions Law No. 20 of 2014. The misuse of customer data and the absence of protection may cause legal repercussions and reputation damage. Moreover, ensuring effective cybersecurity systems be implemented is no longer optional but has become the key point in retaining the support and confidence of the community.

7. Dispute Resolution: Arbitration - The ‘Smart’ Alternative

Through the use of Arbitration Law (Decree Number 10 of 1979), arbitration procedures are available for use by the startups in yielding solutions to the conflicts arising among them. Compared to the process in the courts, arbitration involves lower costs and helps in keeping the relationship intact between the parties in the dispute, and this rate of delivery would be taken into consideration by most startups that operate in a fast-paced world like in startups.

Conclusion: The Emerging Paradigm - Innovation Made Visible

Knowledge about laws needs to be embedded in every start-up’s business plans. Familiarization with laws from the initial stages of starting up is the best approach in safeguarding one’s inventions. This not only works like a magnet in attracting investors but also works in favor of forging strong business partnerships in the market. By unifying aspirations with legal responsibilities, the Kuwaiti entrepreneur has the power to create a business environment marked by transparency in business, business resilience in tough situations, and being ready for enhanced future business.

CEO Amit Somani: Sama X to bridge regional connectivity gaps

Sama X debuts at Nexus Kuwait 2025 with satellite solutions

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Sama X, a newtech venture and part of Alghanim Industries (Kutayba Alghanim Group, made its local debut at Nexus Kuwait 2025 (4-6 December, Arena & Grand Hyatt, Kuwait – Booth B10) with a range of satellite-powered connectivity solutions. As an authorized global reseller of Starlink, the world’s most advanced satellite internet provider, the company presented end-to-end connectivity offerings tailored for professional, enterprise, and government users across the region, both on land and at sea.

Kutayba Y. Alghanim, Executive Chairman of Alghanim Industries, introduced Sama X earlier this year with plans to rapidly expand services across the region and beyond, and the business’ participation at Nexus Kuwait marks an important milestone in this journey.

Sama X offers a full lifecycle service model: consulting to assess connectivity needs, rapid deployment of Starlink hardware and subscriptions, ongoing service monitoring and management, and localized multilingual 24/7 customer and technical support. At Nexus Kuwait, attendees will get to explore Sama X’s solutions, meet specialists, and discover how our technology is set to transform connectivity in every environment – whether by powering telemedicine for rural clinics, cost-effectively extending telecommunication networks into underserved areas, or delivering high-speed low latency internet to maritime vessels worldwide, in addition to a wide range of other applications.

“We are ideally positioned to address the connectivity shortfalls that persist across our regions, and our participation at Nexus Kuwait marks a significant step in our regional rollout,” said Amit Somani, CEO of Sama X. “Our appearance builds on recent successes across the region, where we have seen a lot of



Minister Omar Al-Omar with Sama X team.

excitement from businesses and individuals alike, all of whom recognize the transformative power of delivering high-speed, low-latency connectivity wherever customers may be.”

Sama X also introduced its proprietary customer portal, MatriX, which gives clients direct access to monitor and manage their networks in real time - from usage tracking to support requests - enhancing transparency, control and responsiveness. By pairing customer accessibility, convenience, and ease of use with Sama

X’s rapid installation capabilities and 24/7 support in English and Arabic, the business’s service model can accommodate customers seeking both performance and peace of mind. With Starlink already authorized for maritime use in the UAE and having secured approvals in Jordan, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Lebanon, Sama X has already engaged with several regulators in the region to obtain necessary approvals to launch satellite-based connectivity solutions across the region tailored for each specific market.

Committing youth empowerment and ESG goals

Burgan Bank sponsors Nexus 2025 and launches Investathon

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Burgan Bank concluded its participation and strategic sponsorship of NEXUS Technology and Startup Summit 2025, Kuwait’s premier technology and entrepreneurship event held under the patronage and presence of H.E. Omar Saud Al-Omar, Minister of State for Communications Affairs. This year’s edition marked a major leap forward for the event and for Burgan’s participation, drawing thousands of visitors and energizing the country’s rapidly expanding innovation ecosystem.

As part of its ongoing commitment to empowering entrepreneurs and enabling a digitally driven future for Kuwait, Burgan Bank introduced a landmark initiative at this year’s edition: Kuwait’s first-of-its-kind Investathon – a high-impact financial simulation challenge designed to strengthen financial literacy, strategic thinking, and investment readiness among youth and aspiring founders.

A New Benchmark: Kuwait’s First of its Kind Investathon

Through the Investathon, Burgan Bank invited participants to step into a real-world investment environment, compete individually or in teams, and test their portfolio-management skills through a dynamic, gamified simulation. Navigating real-time market challenges and situations, participants were challenged to grow and sustain their portfolio.

Participants competed for three major prizes, with KD 1,000 for first place, KD 750 for second, and KD 500 for third. The final winners were: Naser Alradwan, Ali Manoh and Aadarsh Sridhar in first, second and third place respectively.

The initiative reflected the Bank’s deep commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), particularly its focus on community empowerment and youth development as part of its support of Kuwait Vision 2035.

“Innovation and entrepreneurship will continue to be the engines of Kuwait’s future economy,” said Mr. Barrak Jassem AlMattar, General Manager - Information Technology at Burgan Bank, who served as one of the official jurors of the Nexus Startup Challenge. “Our role at Burgan is not limited to supporting this ecosystem, it is to actively shape it. Through initiatives like the Investathon and our engagement at Nexus, we aim to empower aspiring innovators with the knowledge, tools, and platforms they need to thrive.”

“The idea for the Investathon was born during the latest iteration of Burgan’s Ro’ya leadership program, where our colleagues proposed creating an initiative that empowers the community to expand its investment horizons through learning and innovation – with a unique gamified model that’s relevant to today’s tech-savvy audience. Bringing it to life here at Nexus reflects that vision,” added AlMattar. “This competition also directly supports Burgan Bank’s efforts to promote financial awareness and responsible decision-making – turning the experience into a



H.E. the Minister visiting Burgan Bank’s booth.

practical learning journey that builds real skills and capabilities.”

Throughout the event, Burgan Bank also continued its committed support of Diraya (Let’s Be Aware). In addition to helping participants and the general better understand key investment concepts, the Bank distributed key educational material and shared key awareness messages with visitors, further reinforcing Burgan Bank’s role in empowering the public with practical financial knowledge.

“Supporting Kuwait’s SME community is a core pillar of our social responsibility and ESG commitments,” said Ms. Danah Faisal Al-Jasem, General Manager – Corporate Communications at Burgan Bank. “Entrepreneurs and startups play a crucial role in driving the progressive growth of our economy, and Nexus offers a powerful platform for them to innovate, connect, and gain visibility. Our participation – from the Investathon to our support of the Startup Challenge – underscores Burgan Bank’s commitment to enabling the next generation with the knowledge, resources, and opportunities that strengthen Kuwait’s innovation ecosystem.”

Supporting the Nation’s Brightest Founders

This year, the Nexus Startup Challenge drew an unprecedented 175 startup registrations, from which 20 standout teams were shortlisted for the final pitch stage. Ahead of the challenge, the finalists underwent a rigorous five-day bootcamp designed to elevate their market readiness, refine business models, and sharpen pitch strategies – preparing them

for their live presentations at the Arena’s main stage. Restore, the dental AI software, was selected as the winner of the challenge.

Throughout the pitch sessions, Mr. AlMattar joined the judging committee in evaluating the finalists’ ideas, technologies, and scalability, reinforcing Burgan’s role as a key patron of emerging talent and digital entrepreneurship in Kuwait.

Empowering the Public to Champion Innovation

Beyond formal judging, Burgan Bank further expanded public engagement at NEXUS 2025 by inviting visitors to vote for their favorite startup directly and exclusively at the Bank’s booth. This interactive element amplified community participation and strengthened the culture of open innovation that Nexus seeks to foster.

Driving Impact Across Kuwait’s Innovation Ecosystem

Burgan Bank’s participation in Nexus 2025 builds on its long-standing vision to support digital transformation, cultivate economic opportunity, and empower SMEs – a commitment reflected across the Bank’s initiatives, partnerships, and ESG strategy.

By hosting the Investathon, supporting the Startup Challenge, and contributing thought leadership across the event, Burgan Bank once again reaffirmed its role as a leading enabler of Kuwait’s tech and entrepreneurship landscape – and a keen supporter of Kuwait Vision 2035.

For the 14th consecutive year

NBK named Best Foreign Exchange Bank in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Confirming its leadership in the local and regional banking sectors and recognizing its exceptionally advanced and innovative solutions in the foreign exchange market, National Bank of Kuwait won the award for Best Foreign Exchange Bank in Kuwait for the year 2026 from Global Finance magazine, marking its 14th consecutive win. This is part of the 26thannual World's Best Foreign Exchange Banks Awards, which are presented under the Gordon Platt Foreign Exchange Awards program.

Global Finance awarded this prize to NBK based on several global criteria, including transaction volume in the foreign exchange market, market share, global coverage, customer service quality, pricing competitiveness, and innovative technologies, as the bank distinguished itself remarkably in all these areas that reflect operational efficiency and market leadership. This, consequently, further confirms the success of NBK's strategy in this vital field.

Following a full and rigorous evaluation process conducted by Global Finance that is based on in-depth analysis of bank data and opinions of leading banking analysts, corporate executives, and FinTech specialists, the magazine announced the winners of its Best Foreign Exchange Banks Awards for 2026 in 87 countries and areas across seven global regions with in several international categories.

The magazine also reported that in a time of global economic uncertainty and rapid technological advancements, the banks that won the Best Foreign Exchange Banks Awards in 2026 demonstrated exceptional expertise, resilience, and innovation in the foreign exchange sector, continuing to deliver value and reliability to their clients worldwide, and asserting their leadership in a dynamic and challenging business environment.

Leadership and Innovation

Winning this prestigious award from Global Finance magazine, a lead-



er in the world of finance and business, reflects NBK's leadership in providing the best foreign exchange services and ability to develop innovative solutions that keep pace with the rapid changes in global markets, making it the first choice for customers in Kuwait and the region.

Moreover, the award indicates customer confidence in the quality of the innovative services offered by the bank that meet their various needs at more competitive prices. This is because NBK has always committed to making huge investments in developing its infrastructure, in addition to its investments in its human resources, which are among the best banking talents.

Global Finance, founded in 1987 and based in New York, is one of the most reputable magazines specializing in finance and economics. It has a circulation of 50,000 readers, including chief corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment and strategic decisions at financial institutions in 193 countries around the world. The magazine conducts various surveys annually about innovation and profitability for banks and financial institutions all over the world, based on which it selects top performers on the regional and international levels.



NBK headquarter

Uniting to raise awareness

MRC & Omniya sign MoU to boost plastic recycling

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: As part of its commitment to supporting national efforts toward achieving sustainable development goals, Metal and Recycling Company (MRC), a leading provider of waste management and industrial sustainability solutions, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Kuwait based non-profit plastic recycling company Omniya.

Under the MoU, Omniya will be responsible for collecting various types of plastic waste from the source, while MRC's specialized facilities will process the collected waste in line with global best practices to ensure its safe reuse in other industries.

Key Objectives:

- Promote source-level plastic sorting as a green lifestyle.
- Empower students and educators to take environmental action.
- Encourage public participation through visible, community-driven efforts.
- Set a national example by aligning with global best practices in recycling.

The MoU reflects both parties' shared commitment to building a greener economy and supporting Kuwait's national sustainability goals. It also underscores MRC's leadership in environmental solutions, backed by its deep expertise and advanced facilities, which ensure safe, efficient, and scalable waste management.

Tarek Al-Mousa, Vice Chairman and CEO of MRC said: "Industrial sustainability is at the heart of what we do at MRC. We help our clients and partners in aligning their operations with environmental and social responsibility,

ity, whether through our waste management solutions or by putting our advanced facilities to work in support of environmental and community initiatives. Supporting Omniya's mission to promote source-level plastic waste sorting is part of that commitment. Together, we aim to raise awareness and move closer to a more sustainable future for the next generation."

Farah Shaban, Omniya's CEO, said: "Our partnership with MRC aims to raise environmental awareness and promote the circular economy in line with Kuwait's vision, the Sustainable Development Goals, and ESG principles. Through this collaboration, we continue our mission to organize source-level plastic waste sorting and strengthen public-private cooperation. A key focus for us is the education sector, where we aim to equip the next generation with the mindset and skills to protect the environment. We appreciate MRC's role in receiving and recycling all sorted plastics, helping revive a promising industry and strengthening Kuwait's circular economy."

Since 1987, MRC has provided waste management, recycling solutions, and industrial services to Kuwait's private and public sectors. A leader in industrial sustainability and listed on Boursa Kuwait, it is the region's largest provider of medical waste treatment services, safely disposing of over 40 tons of medical waste daily, equivalent to approximately 14,600 tons annually. The company also recycles up to 60,000 tons of scrap metal each year and with the resumption of its plastic recycling operations, the plant now has a production capacity of 25 tons per day.



Mr. Tarek Al-Mousa shakes hands with Ms. Farah Shaban following the MoU signing.

Bank underscores commitment to Kuwait Vision 2035

NBK and Weyay sponsor NEXUS 2025 to drive digital innovation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Under the patronage and presence of Kuwait's minister of state for communications and information technology affairs, Omar Saud Al-Omar, NBK and Weyay announces their official sponsorship of NEXUS 2025, one of the region's leading platforms for innovation and technology. The event, held from December 4 to 6, bring together industry leaders and innovators to spotlight the latest advancements in digital transformation and the future of banking.

This sponsorship reflects NBK and Weyay's commitment to supporting Kuwait's digital transformation journey and delivering innovative solutions that meet customer needs and align with Kuwait Vision 2035.

NBK showcases its achievements in digital transformation through its advanced mobile banking app and smart services that ensure a secure and seamless banking experience. The Bank also highlights its business solutions, including dedicated account managers for personalized support, point-of-sale financing solutions, and comprehensive product bundles designed to accelerate SME growth.

NBK emphasizes its focus on empowering employees through participation in specialized workshops and panel discussions, aimed at enhancing skills in innovation and digital strategies—ultimately improving customer experience and operational excellence. NBK also reinforces its commitment to adding value for startup owners and entrepreneurs through interactive sessions and open discussions, providing insights into the latest digital trends and practical solutions to help businesses grow.

As Kuwait's first fully digital bank,



Group photos during the exhibition.

Weyay presents its innovative approach to banking, offering a user-friendly app interface and interactive features that make managing finances simple and engaging.

Mohammed Al-Othman, Chief Executive Officer, Consumer and Digital Banking at NBK Group, said: "Our sponsorship of NEXUS 2025 reflects

our strong commitment to driving Kuwait's digital transformation. At NBK, we continuously invest in innovative solutions and advanced digital banking services to deliver a safer, more seamless experience for our customers and strengthen our leadership in the banking sector. Through this event, we also aim to empower young entrepreneurs

and startup owners by sharing knowledge and providing solutions that help them grow and innovate in a rapidly evolving digital landscape."

Through this collaboration, NBK and Weyay reaffirm their leadership in driving Kuwait's digital transformation, offering smarter, simpler, and more connected banking experiences.

Strategic partnership aims to enhance social impact

Warba Bank becomes official sponsor of 'Forsa'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Warba Bank has announced its official sponsorship of Forsa, a non-profit nationwide platform dedicated to empowering individuals by providing them with volunteering opportunities in partnership with diverse sectors. The step reflects the Bank's commitment to promoting sustainable development by enabling community participation and enhancing social impact.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Mohammad Barakat, Chief Marketing and Corporate Communication Officer at Warba Bank, expressed his appreciation for this strategic collaboration, saying: "We are pleased to partner with Forsa in what marks the beginning of an important and fruitful collaboration. Forsa adopts global best practices in volunteer management and helps reinforce Warba Bank's leadership in this vital field. This sponsorship reaffirms our commitment to offering innovative solutions to our customers and strengthening our role as a key supporter of national development."

Dr. Barakat emphasized Warba Bank's longstanding commitment



Forsa-Warba collaboration to expand innovative volunteer services nationwide.

to supporting volunteer initiatives, both for individuals and communities, noting that this sponsorship is an extension of the Bank's volunteer-driven philosophy, one that integrates its solid market experience with Forsa's advanced digital platform.

He added that innovation remains a core value at Warba

Bank: "Our sponsorship stems from our belief in innovation as a driver for elevating banking services. Volunteer work is an opportunity to build a better society and enrich people's lives and strengthens their sense of responsibility toward their nation."

From her side, Hind Al-Jasser, Founder of Forsa, said: "Our col-

laboration with Warba Bank represents an important milestone in our journey toward expansion and the development of innovative services. Forsa is one of the first platforms in Kuwait to focus on community engagement and volunteering across all sectors from government to private and non-profit organizations in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims to support the growth of the non-profit sector, accelerate digital transformation, and empower individuals through an integrated volunteer ecosystem."

Al-Jasser added that Forsa aims to create inspiring community participation that enhances individuals' experiences, supports their development, and contributes to improving their quality of life.

She also praised Warba Bank's leadership in supporting national volunteer projects and digital initiatives, confirming that Forsa will continue to offer volunteering opportunities that help develop individuals, elevate civic participation, drive solutions to societal challenges, and strengthen the culture of responsibility and giving among citizens and residents.

During a comprehensive training program organized for the 5th consecutive year

Alhammad: Kuwait Finance House aims to equip people with disabilities for labor market inclusion

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Acting Group Chief Human Resources and Transformation Officer, Ahmad Alhammad, affirmed the Bank's commitment to fulfilling its pioneering social responsibility role in the community.

Speaking at the closing ceremony honoring the fifth cohort of trainees with special needs, organized in cooperation with the Kuwait Society for the Handicapped (KSH), Alhammad said that supporting and developing national capabilities, especially people with special needs, is a long-term strategy at KFH.

"This underlines KFH's social role and reflects its keenness to address key social matters and serve different segments of society. It also demonstrates the Bank's ambitious vision toward enhancing human talents to help them contribute to development efforts."

Alhammad expressed his pride in honoring this cohort in collaboration with KSH, coinciding with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities that falls on 3 December each year. The event marks the conclusion of the training program organized by KFH, designed to hone the skills of trainees with special needs in innovation and creativity, help them overcome challenges and achieve their goals through the best possible means.

He added: "KFH established a partnership with KSH five years ago to train and qualify distinguished groups of young Kuwaitis with disabilities. We were delighted to witness their strong commitment to self-development and their high ability to engage with the training



KFH honors fifth cohort of trainees with special needs.

content. This confirms that we are dealing with a group of highly determined individuals who can serve their country and themselves."

Alhammad pointed out that the initiative is a successful step towards integrating this segment into society and practical life, helping them build a better future.

He extended his appreciation to everyone who contributed to organizing and ensuring the success of this training program, which comprised 100 training hours during which the trainees rotated across various departments, including

branches, HR, Cards and others.

Alhammad congratulated the trainees who demonstrated commitment and determination to achieve, wishing them continued success in their social and practical lives.

It is worth noting that KFH continues to focus on individuals with special needs across all age groups. This is evident in the Bank's active participation in initiatives and programs that are designed for this segment. Additionally, KFH contributes to many initiatives related to people with special needs with the aim of supporting their wellbeing and integrating them with their peers. These

efforts are held in cooperation with KSH and the Kuwaiti Society for the Guardians of the Disabled.

KFH also organizes training courses for employees to equip them with skills needed to deal with people with disabilities, such as sign language, as well as the proper principles for handling and serving customers with disabilities and elderly individuals in branches and sales centers. The Bank also offers ATMs and various e-channels with technical assistance to facilitate banking transactions for this society segment.

Organizers decline to expel Israel

Will Eurovision survive? Boycotts threaten its future

LONDON, Dec 6, (AP): The Eurovision Song Contest, which aims to be an upbeat celebration of music and unity, is facing the biggest crisis in its seven-decade history after four countries walked out of the competition over Israel's participation and others weighed whether to join the boycott.

Spain, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Slovenia announced they will not take part in the 2026 contest in Vienna in May after organizers declined to expel Israel over its conduct of the war against Hamas in Gaza.

Iceland is considering whether to follow suit. The walk-outs cast a cloud over the future of what's meant to be a feel-good cultural party, dealing a blow to fans, broadcasters, and the contest's finances. Eurovision expert Paul Jordan said Friday, "It's unlikely we'll see a mass exodus," but that 2026 will be a "tense year."

Founded in 1956, in part to help unite a shattered continent after World War II, Eurovision pits acts from dozens of countries against one another for the continent's musical crown. Overtly political symbols and lyrics are prohibited, but global tensions have often imposed themselves. Russia, for example, was expelled in 2022 after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Tensions rose again after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which killed some 1,200 people, and Israel's subsequent campaign in Gaza that has left more than 70,000 people dead. The last two Eurovision contests have seen pro-Palestinian protests both outside the venues and inside, forcing organizers to clamp down on political flag-waving.

A number of performers and countries have called for the exclusion of Israel, which has taken part in Eurovision since 1973, one of a few non-European countries to compete. The

Geneva-based European Broadcasting Union - a group of public broadcasters from 56 countries that runs Eurovision - tried to assuage concerns by tightening rules on contest voting and campaigning in response to allegations that Israel manipulated the public vote in favor of its competitor Yuval Raphael.

She came second in this year's contest behind Austrian singer JJ. The EBU's general assembly approved the new rules on Thursday, but did not hold a vote on Israel's participation. It said "a large majority of members" felt the contest "should proceed as planned, with the additional safeguards in place."

Eurovision Director Martin Green told Swedish television that the meeting reaffirmed "the belief that the Eurovision Song Contest shouldn't be used as a political theater. It must retain some sense of neutrality."

Immediately after the EBU decision, broadcasters RTVE in Spain, AVROTROS in the Netherlands, RTE in Ireland, and Slovenia's RTVSLO announced they were pulling out. RTVE said the situation in Gaza, despite the recent ceasefire, and "Israel's use of the contest for political purposes, make it increasingly difficult to maintain Eurovision as a neutral cultural event."

RTE said participation was "unconscionable given the appalling loss of lives in Gaza." Icelandic broadcaster RUV, which had recommended Israel be barred, said its chiefs will meet Wednesday to discuss whether to join the walkout.

Other countries' broadcasters, including Norway's NRK and Britain's BBC, welcomed the decision to keep Israel in the competition. "We support the collective decision made by members of the EBU," the BBC said in a statement.

"This is about enforcing the rules of the EBU and being inclusive." French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Noël Bar-

rot said his country opposes a cultural boycott of Israel. "I am pleased that Eurovision did not give in to pressure, and that France helped prevent a boycott of Israel in this forum," he wrote on X.

"I deeply regret that several European television channels made a different choice." Israeli President Isaac Herzog said on social platform X that he was "pleased" Israel will again take part and hoped "the competition will remain one that champions culture, music, friendship between nations and cross-border cultural understanding." Some Israelis said they were glad their country was participating but felt the debate around them was unfair. "I'm happy, but I'm not dancing in the streets," Izhar Cohen, who won Eurovision in 1978, told The Associated Press in Tel Aviv.

"Eurovision should be a meeting and gathering together with no politics of all the people from all nations," he said. Tel Aviv resident Bret Katz said, "It's a terrible, terrible thing to ostracize a country and not to understand who was attacked on October 7, 2023."

The boycotting countries will not send a musical act to the 2026 contest and will not broadcast it. That will likely cut into the viewership of a contest that typically draws more than 150 million viewers. Fans in the boycotting countries should still be able to watch on digital platforms, including YouTube, and another Dutch broadcaster, NPO, said it will air the show in the Netherlands.

The boycotts are a financial blow to Eurovision, which is funded largely by participating broadcasters, and to public broadcasters at a time when many are under financial pressure from government funding cuts and competition from social media.



Izhar Cohen, an Israeli singer who won the 1978 Eurovision song contest poses for a photo in Tel Aviv, Israel. (AP)

Obituary

Awarded every major prize

Frank Gehry, most celebrated architect of his time, dies at 96

LOS ANGELES, Dec 6, (AP): Frank Gehry, who designed some of most imaginative buildings ever constructed and achieved a level of worldwide acclaim seldom afforded any architect, has died. He was 96.

Gehry died Friday in his home in Santa Monica after a brief respiratory illness, said Meaghan Lloyd, chief of staff at Gehry Partners LLP.

Gehry's fascination with modern pop art led to the creation of some of the most striking buildings ever constructed. Among his many masterpieces are the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain; The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles and Berlin's DZ Bank Building.

He also designed an expansion of Facebook's Northern California headquarters at the insistence of the company's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg.

Gehry was awarded every major prize architecture has to offer, including the field's top honor, the Pritzker Prize, for what has been described as "refreshingly original and totally American" work.

Other honors include the Royal Institute of British Architects gold medal, the Americans for the Arts lifetime achievement award, and his native country's highest honor, the Companion of the Order of Canada.

Years after he stopped designing ordinary looking buildings, word surfaced in 2006 that the pedestrian Santa Monica mall project that had led to his career epiphany might be headed for the wrecking ball. Gehry admirers were aghast, but the man himself was amused.

"They're going to tear it down now and build the kind of original idea I had," he said with a laugh.

Eventually the mall was remodeled, giving it a more contemporary, airy outdoor look. Still, it's no Gehry masterpiece.

Gehry, meanwhile, continued to work well into his 80s, turning out heralded buildings that remade skylines around the world.

The headquarters of the InterActiveCorp, known as the IAC Building, took the shape of a shimmering beehive when it was completed in New York City's Chelsea district in 2007. The 76-story New York By Gehry building, once one of the world's tallest residential structures, was a stunning addition to the lower Manhattan skyline when it opened in 2011.

That same year, Gehry joined the faculty of his alma mater, the University of Southern California, as a professor of architecture. He also taught at Yale and Columbia University.

Not everyone was a fan of Gehry's work. Some naysayers dismissed it as not much more than gigantic, lopsided reincarnations of the little scrap-wood cities he said he spent hours building when he was growing up in the mining town of Timmins, Ontario.

Princeton art critic Hal Foster dismissed many of his later efforts as "oppressive," arguing they were designed primarily to be tourist attractions. Some denounced the Disney Hall as looking like a collection of cardboard boxes that had been left out in the rain.

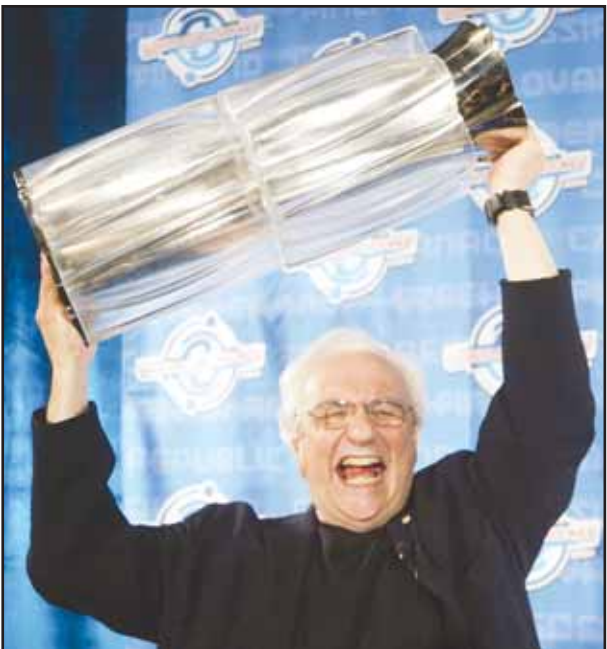
Still other critics included Dwight D. Eisenhower's family, who objected to Gehry's bold proposal for a memorial to honor the nation's 34th president. Although the family said it wanted a simple memorial and not the one Gehry had proposed, with its multiple statues and billowing metal tapestries depicting Eisenhower's life, the architect declined to change his design significantly.

If the words of his critics annoyed Gehry, he rarely let on. Indeed, he even sometimes played along. He appeared as himself in a 2005 episode of "The Simpsons" cartoon show, in which he agreed to design a concert hall that was later converted into a prison.

He came up with the idea for the design, which looked a lot like the Disney Hall, after crumpling Marge Simpson's letter to him and throwing it on the ground. After taking a look at it, he declared, "Frank Gehry, you've done it again!"

"Some people think I actually do that," he would later tell the AP.

Ephraim Owen Goldberg was born in Toronto on Feb. 28, 1929, and moved to Los Angeles with his family in 1947, eventually becoming a U.S. citizen. As an adult, he changed his name at the suggestion of his first wife, who told him antisemitism might be holding back his career.



In this file photo, world renowned architect Frank Gehry hoists the World Cup of Hockey Championship trophy, which he designed, at a news conference in Toronto. (AP)

Entertainment



The Warner Bros. water tower is seen at Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank, Calif. (AP)

\$72 billion merger shakes up streaming industry

Netflix stuns Hollywood with Warner Bros. takeover

NEW YORK, Dec 6, (AP): Netflix struck a deal Friday to buy Warner Bros. Discovery, the Hollywood giant behind "Harry Potter" and HBO Max, in a \$72 billion deal that would bring together two of the biggest players in television and film and potentially reshape the entertainment industry.

If approved by regulators, the merger would put two of the world's biggest streaming services under the same ownership - and join Warner's television and motion picture division, including DC Studios, with Netflix's vast library and its production arm, which has released popular titles such as "Stranger Things" and "Squid Game."

The proposal could draw intense antitrust scrutiny, particularly for its effects on movie-making and streaming subscriptions. "Netflix is the top streaming service today. Now combined with HBO Max, it will absolutely cement itself as the Goliath in the streaming industry," said Mike Proulx, vice president and research director at Forrester, a market research company.

The cash and stock deal is valued at \$27.75 per Warner share, giving it a total enterprise value of \$82.7 billion, including debt. The transaction is expected to close in the next 12 to 18 months, after Warner completes its previously announced separation of its cable operations. Not included in the deal are networks such as CNN and Discovery. One of the big unanswered questions, Proulx added, is whether HBO Max and Netflix would "stay as separate streaming services or combine into a mega streaming service."

But either way, he said, customers could see some price relief in the form of a single subscription bill or bundle promotions, which would be a welcome change as streaming prices continue to rise and consumers feel



The Netflix logo is shown in this photo from the company's website in New York. (AP)

the pinch of paying for multiple services. Of course, that all depends on whether the deal goes through. Netflix on Friday maintained that the addition of HBO and HBO Max programming will give its members "even more high-quality titles" and "optimize its plans for consumers." Others warned that a Netflix-Warner combo could create an even bigger entertainment titan with ramifications for both consumers and people working across the film and TV industry.

Critics said the consequences could include job losses and a reduced variety of content. Gaining Warner's legacy studios would mark a notable shift for Netflix, particularly its presence in theaters. Under the proposed acquisition, Netflix has promised to continue theatrical releases for Warner's studio films, honoring Warner's contractual agreements.

Netflix has kept most of its original content within

its core online platform. But there have been exceptions, including qualifying runs for its awards contenders, including this year's "Frankenstein," limited theater screenings of a "KPop Demon Hunters" sing-a-long and its coming "Stranger Things" series finale. "Our mission has always been to entertain the world," Ted Sarandos, co-CEO of Netflix, said in a statement, adding that merging with Warner will "give audiences more of what they love."

David Zaslav, CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery, added that merging with Netflix "will ensure people everywhere will continue to enjoy the world's most resonant stories for generations to come." Critics said a Netflix-Warner combo would be bad news for moviegoers and for people who work in theaters. Cinema United - a trade association that represents more than 30,000 movie screens in the U.S. and another 26,000 screens internationally - was quick to oppose the deal, which it said "poses an unprecedented threat to the global exhibition business." "Netflix's stated business model does not support theatrical exhibition. In fact, it is the opposite," Michael O'Leary, CEO of Cinema United, said Friday.

"Theaters will close, communities will suffer, jobs will be lost." The Writers Guild of America sounded a similar alarm and called for the merger to be blocked. The Producers Guild of America said the Netflix deal must prove that it protects workers' livelihoods and theatrical distribution. "Legacy studios are more than content libraries - within their vaults are the character and culture of our nation," the union added. Warner Bros., which is 102 years old, is one of the "big five" studios left in Hollywood. If the Netflix sale goes through, the remaining legacy studios would be Disney, Paramount, Sony Pictures and Universal.

Variety

TOKYO: Prominent American playwright and actor, Jeremy O. Harris, known for his Tony-nominated "Slave Play," was arrested in Japan on suspicion of smuggling the psychedelic drug ecstasy, officials said Saturday.

Officers at Naha Airport on Japan's southern island of Okinawa arrested Harris on Nov. 16 for an alleged violation of customs law for having 0.78 grams (0.0275 ounces) of the crystalized drug, also known as MDMA, in a container in a tote bag he was carrying, according to Okinawa Regional Customs spokesperson Tatsunori Fukuda.

Harris, 36, had left London's Heathrow Airport two days earlier and transited in Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport before arriving in Naha for sightseeing, Fukuda said. Okinawa is a popular resort destination with mild weather throughout the year.

Fukuda said Harris was arrested on the spot and taken into custody by the Tomishiro police, which filed a criminal complaint to the Naha District Prosecutors' Office Thursday for further investigation and possible indictment. (AP)

NEW YORK: Rapper Tekashi 6ix9ine was sentenced to three more months in prison Friday for violating the terms of his supervised release in a New York gang case by assaulting a man and possessing drugs.

The 29-year-old artist from Brooklyn, whose real name is Daniel Hernandez, admitted to the violations during a hearing in federal court in Manhattan, where Judge Paul Engelmayer expressed frustration that Hernandez keeps getting into trouble. The rapper got a 45-day sentence late last year for breaking the supervised release terms.

"From time to time your actions suggest that you believe that ordinary rules don't apply to you," said

the judge, who said another prison sentence was needed to send a message to Hernandez. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Vanity Fair is parting ways with West Coast editor Olivia Nuzzi amid ongoing controversy over her relationship with profile subject Robert F. Kennedy Jr. while she was the Washington correspondent for New York magazine.

A joint statement from the magazine and Nuzzi Friday said they "have mutually agreed, in the best interest of the magazine, to let her contract expire at the end of the year." She had been hired as its West Coast editor in September.

Nuzzi, 32, had been a star reporter for New York magazine known for colorfully written political profiles until last fall, when it was revealed she had an intense personal relationship with Kennedy, now head of the Department of Health and Human Services. Nuzzi was fired by New York for not disclosing her relationship. (AP)

Shenzhen museum welcomes dazzling Mughal artifacts from Al-Sabah collection

Kuwait and China deepen cultural bonds with ‘Blossoms and Blades’ exhibition

BEIJING, Dec 6, (KUNA): The “Blossoms and Blades” exhibition was organized by Kuwait, in cooperation with China, in the Chinese city of Shenzhen.

The exhibition includes about 143 artistic masterpieces from the Al-Sabah archaeological collection that are showcased for the first time in the Chinese city, as part of a new round of global cultural cooperation.

The exhibition titled “Blossoms and Blades: Treasures of the Mughal Court from the 16th to the 19th Century” was inaugurated, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) of Kuwait and the Shenzhen Museum in China, the Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah - Al-Sabah Collection said in a statement, a copy of which was obtained by KUNA.

Representing Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, NCCAL Chairman Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar conveyed, in a speech, the greetings of Minister Al-Mutairi, saying that this cultural cooperation was the fruit of a firm vi-



NCCAL Chairman Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar in the ‘Blossoms and Blades’ exhibition.

sion made by the late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his wife Sheikha Hessa Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, who is the general supervisor of the Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah.

The event featured Kuwait’s Consul

in Guangzhou City, Abdullah Turki Al-Turki and other officials.

Al-Jassar added that the exhibition is an extension of joint cultural initiatives between the two countries, like the 2024 conference-Distances Apart,



KUNA photos

Relations Close: The Silk Road as a Bond Between Two Worlds.

He affirmed that this year carries significant cultural momentum as it coincides with Kuwait’s naming as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media.

The opening ceremony began with the reception of Kuwait’s delegation at the VIP lounge, and then a welcoming speech delivered by Deputy Director of the Shenzhen Museum Cai Huiyao. Cai voiced the museum’s pride in

hosting this major artistic event, and underscored the importance of the cultural partnership between Kuwait and China.

Hosting this exhibition is a key step to strengthening cultural collaboration between Kuwait and China, he noted.

He pointed out that the museum and the Chinese audience are interested in getting informed about Mughal and Islamic heritage through one of the most outstanding artistic groups across the world.

The exhibition brings together a selection of masterpieces from the Al-Sabah Archaeological Collection that reflect the grandeur of the Mughal court and the arts of India across four centuries.

The showcased pieces include daggers and weapons decorated with precious stones such as emeralds, rubies, and diamonds, most notably a 17th-century katar dagger, as well as crystal vessels and artifacts adorned with intricate floral motifs showing the skill of artisans in the royal workshops.

Also, royal jewelry is showcased that highlights the opulence and sophistication that characterized the Mughal court and others.



Queen Latifah arrives to attend a session celebrating women in cinema during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)



Jessica Alba arrives to attend a session celebrating women in cinema during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)



Juliette Binoche arrives to attend a session celebrating women in cinema during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Film

Hollywood meets the Middle East

Red Sea International Film Festival opens in Jeddah

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Dec 6, (AP): The fifth edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival, one of the Middle East’s largest film festivals, opened in the coastal city of Jeddah, marking a significant moment for the kingdom’s growing film industry.

Running from Dec. 4 to 13, the Red Sea International Film Festival brings together filmmakers and talent from around the world, screening more than 100 films from over 70 countries.

The festival’s prestigious “Red Sea: Competition” strand features a selection of 16 narrative features, animations and documentaries from the Arab world, Asia and Africa, all vying for the top honor: the Yusr Awards, which will be presented at the closing ceremony.

The festival takes place in Jeddah’s Al-Balad district - a UNESCO World Heritage site - blending Saudi heritage with international cinema.

This year, the selection jury is being led by the Academy Award-winning filmmaker Sean Baker, best known for “Anora,” which won five Oscars, four of which went to Sean Baker himself.

“This festival is really exciting because of how big it’s become just in the last five years,” Baker said. “It’s rare that I see a festival just exploding in terms of importance and impact on world cinema.”

The festival opens with “Giant,” a true story of legendary British-Yemeni boxing champion Prince Naseem ‘Naz’ Hamed. The film stars Egyptian-British actor Amir El-Masry as Hamed and Pierce Brosnan as his Irish trainer, Brendan Ingle, and is directed by British filmmaker Rowan Athale.

“It was probably one of the hardest roles I’ve ever done,” El-Masry said, noting that his preparation involved four and a half weeks of training, during which he lost about eight kilos.

“It’s been a passion project for me for a long time,” said Athale. “I come from a similar neighborhood - actually within a few miles of Naz. He was a hero of mine growing up, particularly being multiracial in the region. I’ve always wanted to make a film about him. So it’s a privilege to make it.”

Reflecting on the premiere, he added,



Stars of movie Palestine 36, pose with the film director Annemarie Jacir, 5th right, during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)



Faisal Baltyuor, right, CEO of the Red Sea International Film Festival, greets Giancarlo Esposito as he arrives to attend a session celebrating women in cinema during the Red Sea International Film Festival, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)



Halal Al Tawil, flashes V sign before the display of his movie Palestine 36, during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

ed, “To have it as the opening night film here - I mean, look at this. I’ve never seen anything like this. Not at Cannes, not anywhere. It’s daunting, it’s terrifying, but it’s an honor.”

The opening night drew a wide range of international stars, including Hollywood and Bollywood figures including Adrien Brody, Sir Michael Caine, Vin Diesel and Ana de Armas walking the red carpet.

Veteran actor Giancarlo Esposito, also attending the festival, said the gathering reflects the unifying power of cinema. “This celebration at the Red Sea Film Festival is really about celebrating film,” he said.

The Red Sea International Film Festival was founded by Saudi Arabia’s Ministry of Culture and supported by the Red Sea Film Foundation. It is funded by the

kingdom’s Public Investment Fund sovereign wealth fund and private sponsors. It aims to play a vital role in promoting regional filmmakers and fostering global connections.

The festival is part of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 objectives, which include diversifying the economy, strengthening cultural infrastructure and fostering local creative talent.



Uma Thurman arrives to attend a session celebrating women in cinema during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)



Annemarie Jacir arrives on the occasion of the presentation of movie Palestine 36, during the Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

The event comes as Saudi Arabia invests heavily in sectors like film, gaming and sports as part of its broader transformation efforts. However, various rights groups have criticized these actions, saying they serve to draw away attention from the kingdom’s human rights record, including its high rate of executions and restrictions on free expression.

Facebook, Instagram features intentionally addictive to youth

BOSTON, Dec 6, (AP): Massachusetts’ highest court heard oral arguments on Friday in the state’s lawsuit, which argues that Meta designed features on Facebook and Instagram to make them addictive to young users.

The lawsuit, filed in 2024 by Attorney General Andrea Campbell, alleges that Meta did this to make a profit and that its actions affected hundreds of thousands of teenagers in Massachusetts who use the social media platforms.

“We are making claims based only on the tools that Meta has developed because its own research shows they encourage addiction to the platform in a variety of ways,” said State Solicitor David Kravitz, adding that the state’s claim has nothing to do with the company’s algorithms or failure to moderate content.

Meta said Friday that it strongly disagrees with the allegations and is “confident the evidence will show our longstanding commitment to supporting young people.” Its attorney, Mark Mosier, argued in court that the lawsuit “would impose liabilities for performing traditional publishing functions” and that its actions are protected by the First Amendment.

“The Commonwealth would have a better chance of getting around the First Amendment if they alleged that the speech was false or fraudulent,” Mosier said. “But when they acknowledge that it’s truthful, that brings it in the heart of the First Amendment.” Several of the judges, though, seem to be more concerned about Meta’s functions, such as notifications, than the content on its platforms.

“I didn’t understand the claims to be that Meta is relaying false information vis-a-vis the notifications but that it has created an algorithm of incessant notifications ... designed to feed into the fear of missing out, fomo, that teenagers gener-



In this file photo, attendees visit the Meta booth at the Game Developers Conference 2023 in San Francisco. (AP)

ally have,” Justice Dalila Wendland said. “That is the basis of the claim.”

Justice Scott Kafker challenged the notion that this was all about Meta choosing to publish certain information.

“It’s not how to publish but how to attract you to the information,” he said. “It’s about how to attract the eyeballs. It’s indifferent to the content, right? It doesn’t care if it’s Thomas Paine’s ‘Common Sense’ or nonsense. It’s totally focused on getting you to look at it.”

Meta is facing federal and state lawsuits claiming it knowingly designed features - such as constant notifications and the ability to scroll endlessly - that addict children.

Variety

SANTA BARBARA: Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, a Tokyo-born actor known for his roles in the film “Mortal Kombat” and TV series “The Man in the High Castle” has died. He was 75.

Tagawa died surrounded by his family in Santa Barbara from complications due to a stroke, his manager, Margie Weiner, confirmed.

“Cary was a rare soul: generous, thoughtful, and endlessly committed to his craft,” she said in an email. “His loss is immeasurable. My heart is with his family, friends, and all who loved him.”

Tagawa’s decades of film and TV roles truly got off the ground in 1987 when he appeared in Bernardo Bertolucci’s Oscar-winning film “The Last Emperor.” Since then, he appeared in such films as “Pearl Harbor,” “Planet of the Apes” and “License to Kill.”

Tagawa was raised mostly in the U.S. South while his Hawaii-born father was assigned to U.S. mainland Army bases. He lived in Honolulu and on the Hawaiian island of Kauai for a while. (AP)

BEIJING: The National Language Resources Monitoring and Research Center announced the top 10 trending terms featured in Chinese media throughout 2025, including “15th Five-Year Plan,” “Sept. 3 parade” and “Global Governance Initiative.”

At a key Party plenum in October, the Communist Party of China leadership adopted its recommendations for the formulation of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), which became a key media term and drew both domestic and international spotlight.

The Party leadership’s recommendations set the overall direction and priorities of the 15th Five-Year Plan, and the final plan will be submitted for review and approval at the annual meeting of China’s top legislature in March next year.

On Sept. 3, China held a massive military parade in

central Beijing to mark the 80th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. The popular term of “Sept. 3 parade” has spread China’s commitment to peaceful development in a world still fraught with turbulence and uncertainty.

Also in September, the Global Governance Initiative was first proposed by China at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tianjin, and became another trending term.

The initiative outlines five core principles: adhering to sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, practicing multilateralism, advocating a people-centered approach, and focusing on concrete actions. (Xinhua)

BEIJING: China launched its first large artificial intelligence (AI) model dedicated to monitoring and protecting arable land, and it will serve as a new digital tool for the national strategy of storing grain in the land and in technology.

Released by the Institute of Agricultural Resources and Regional Planning under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) on World Soil Day, the model aims to upgrade China’s farmland management from quantity-focused preservation to quality improvement -- a task that traditional manual monitoring can no longer handle efficiently.

Developed by a team led by Tang Huajun, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, the system integrates a central foundation model with dedicated “vertical models” designed for specific tasks such as field segmentation, crop classification and engineering quality inspection.

Wu Wenbin, director general of the CAAS Institute of Agricultural Resources and Regional Planning, said that the AI model goes beyond passive observation. It can diagnose soil health, predict trends and autonomously generate management plans, offering full-life-cycle management for high-standard farmland. (Xinhua)

Here’s the Fact: Harm Reduction Science and Technology

Throughout history, humans have been consistently creative and inventive. We’ve found ways to solve problems to make life easier and more enjoyable. While this is typically a positive, we also learn that creative inventions can also lead to unforeseen problems. Innovation never stops, and with the help of science, technology, and human creativity it allows us to create solutions.

Think about electric cars. The world has become increasingly aware of the harmful effect the combustion engine has on the environment. For years, car companies have been experimenting and developing new technologies to enable fully electric engines. Thanks to years of research and development, electric cars are now a common sight to see on roads. Increasingly, we’re finding ways to power our lives which do less harm to the environment than traditional methods of power generation. We still need to drive cars, but we had to develop a more sustainable way to do it. Energy-saving lightbulb which utilized lead was developed and were much more energy efficient than traditional filament bulbs. So, people still had access to electric light, but with reduced environmental impact.

This is an example of an idea known as harm-reduction. Rather than abandoning the technology because of the harm it causes, harm reduction accepts that innovation needs reviewing and improving, and that there are often better ways to do the same things, which keep the desired effects while minimizing the unintended negatives.

Harm reduction also applies to tobacco. It’s obviously best that nobody smokes and that those who do smoke, quit. Nevertheless, huge numbers of people aren’t doing so. Science and technology have provided a better alternative to continued smoking. Devices such as e-cigarettes and tobacco heating systems are designed to deliver nicotine, but without the burning that takes place while smoking cigarettes.



How does this reduce harm?

It is the smoke produced from burning that contains the high levels of harmful and potentially harmful chemicals associated with smoking related disease. By eliminating combustion, and therefore smoke, scientifically substantiated alternatives can

significantly reduce the average levels of harmful chemicals compared to cigarettes. This does not make them risk-free and they provide nicotine which is addictive. However, they offer the potential to be much better alternatives for adults who would otherwise continue to smoke.

Harm reduction techniques are all around

us in countless ways, and the drive to do better has served us well in the past. There’s no reason we shouldn’t keep trying to find better alternatives and embrace technologies that do less harm.

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

Drifting robot delivers first-ever data beneath E. Antarctic ice shelves

MELBOURNE, Dec. 6, (Xinhua): A robotic float has completed the first oceanographic transect beneath East Antarctic ice shelves, measuring the temperature and salinity from parts of the ocean never sampled before, an Australian study revealed Saturday.

This provides insights into the vulnerability of the ice shelves and their potential contribution to sea level rise, said a media release from the Australian Antarctic Program Partnership (AAPP), a collaboration of Australia’s leading Antarctic research institutions.

The Argo float, a robotic profiling instrument equipped with oceanographic sensors, spent two-and-a-half years drifting about 300 km beneath the Denman and Shackleton ice shelves, collecting nearly 200 ocean profiles, the release said.

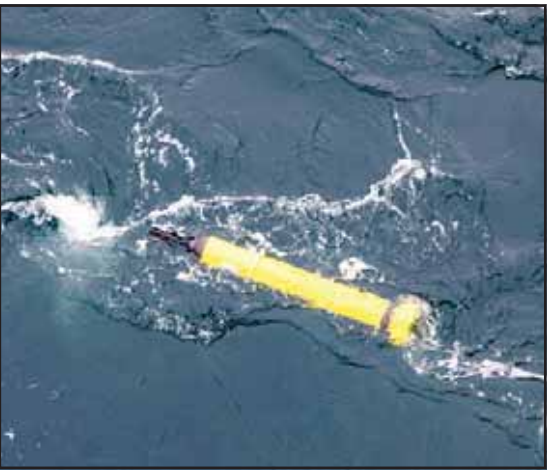
“Our intrepid float drifted beneath the ice and spent eight months under the Denman and Shackleton ice shelves, collecting profiles from the seafloor to the base of the ice every five days,” said oceanographer Steve Rintoul from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Australia’s national science agency, and the AAPP.

The data show the Shackleton ice shelf is not currently exposed to warm water capable of melting it from below, and therefore less vulnerable. But warm water is reaching the base of the Denman Glacier, which could contribute up to 1.5 meters to global sea level rise if destabilized.

The transfer of heat from the ocean to the ice depends on the ocean conditions in the 10-meter-thick “boundary layer” immediately below the ice shelf, according to the study published in Science Advances.

“A great advantage of floats is that they can measure the properties of the boundary layer that control the melt rate,” Rintoul said, adding that float data will refine computer models of ice-ocean interactions, reducing the uncertainty in sea-level rise projections.

“Deploying more floats along the Antarctic continental shelf would transform our understanding of the vulnerability of ice shelves to changes in the ocean,” he said.



A yellow robotic float drifts on the surface of the Southern Ocean, part of a mission to collect the first-ever oceanographic data beneath East Antarctic ice shelves.

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi inaugurated the Dermatology Departments Council Conference, titled “Highlighting Rare Skin Diseases and Chronic Autoimmune Diseases,” which is being held over two days with distinguished participation from the Gulf region and internationally.

In a speech delivered on behalf of the conference’s patron Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Dr. Al-Mutairi explained that the conference reflects the ministry’s commitment to developing dermatology services, enhancing the skills of medical staff, and keeping pace with the latest global developments in this vital specialty. The conference also supports scientific and research activities, contributing to the improvement of healthcare quality for both citizens and residents.

Dr. Al-Mutairi expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the organizing team, highlighting that their work contributed to the conference’s outstanding success, reflecting the high standards of the State of Kuwait.

He noted that the conference coincided with the graduation ceremony of the 2025 Kuwaiti Board of Dermatology program.

Dr. Al-Mutairi affirmed that this achievement reflects the efforts of the Ministry of Health and the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS) to enhance physicians’ capabilities and provide a training and educational environment that meets international standards, thus developing a national generation of medical professionals capable of fulfilling their responsibilities with competence and dedication.

He also pointed out that the conference includes a comprehensive medical exhibition showcasing the latest dermatology equipment and technologies, with participation from pharmaceutical companies and international medical institutions.

Dr. Al-Mutairi stressed that the exhibition aims to inform physicians and specialists about the latest technological and therapeutic innovations, contributing to the improvement of healthcare quality and the advancement of clinical practices.

He affirmed that the conference serves as a prominent scientific platform, bringing together national and international expertise under one roof. It reflects the Ministry of Health’s commitment to supporting scientific and professional development and reinforces Kuwait’s position as a leading regional center in dermatology and specialized care.

Meanwhile, the Head of the Dermatology Departments Council, Dr. Atla Al-Lafi, stated that the conference represents a significant scientific milestone through which the Ministry of Health seeks to highlight the most complex dermatological specialties, particularly rare and chronic autoimmune diseases.

Dr. Al-Lafi said, “The Dermatology Departments Council is committed to organizing a high-quality scientific conference that keeps pace with global developments, enhances continuing medical education, and raises the professional competence of nation-

New generation of dermatologists honored

Kuwait hosts rare skin diseases conference



Delegates and speakers pose at the Kuwait Dermatology Council Conference 2025, highlighting rare and chronic skin diseases and showcasing international collaboration in dermatology.

al staff. This year’s conference reinforces the ministry’s vision of developing diagnostic and treatment pathways and expanding opportunities for scientific collaboration with regional and international centers.

The conference provides a platform for exchanging expertise among international experts from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Egypt, India, and the Sultanate of Oman, along with Kuwaiti physicians working in the field.

This year’s scientific program includes advanced sessions and specialized panel discussions addressing the latest developments in dermatology and exploring clinical challenges with evidence-based treatment options.”

Dr. Al-Lafi praised the efforts of the orga-

nizing teams, emphasizing that their professional coordination and strong commitment contributed to the event’s success, highlighting Kuwait’s prominent position and leadership in the medical field.

She said the conference is hosting a distinguished group of leading dermatologists from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Egypt, India, and the Sultanate of Oman, adding that the scientific program includes sessions and panel discussions showcasing the latest advancements in diagnosing and treating complex skin diseases, along with clinical case presentations by Kuwaiti Board physicians aimed at supporting scientific research and promoting academic publication.

Dr. Al-Lafi also mentioned a comprehen-

sive medical exhibition held alongside the conference, showcasing the latest dermatology equipment and technologies, with participation from pharmaceutical companies and international medical institutions.

She explained that the exhibition aims to inform physicians about the latest innovations that help advance clinical practices and improve the quality of healthcare. The conference’s significance lies in several key areas. It plays a major role in raising awareness about rare and chronic autoimmune skin diseases, supporting local medical research, encouraging scientific publication, and enhancing the capabilities of healthcare professionals through the exchange of international expertise.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Lafi emphasized the conference’s role in promoting continuing medical education and fostering regional and international collaboration, in line with the ministry’s goals for developing the healthcare system.

She said the conference reflects the commitment of the Ministry of Health and the Dermatology Departments Council to scientific and professional development, reinforcing Kuwait’s status as a leading regional hub for specialized care and dermatology.

The 2025 Kuwaiti Board graduates were honored on the sidelines of the conference, under the patronage of the Secretary-General of KIMS, Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and the Assistant Secretary-General, Dr. Abdullah Rajab.

Eight physicians who graduated from the program were recognized for their academic and clinical excellence, highlighting the role of young national talent in advancing specialized healthcare services.



2025 Kuwaiti Board of Dermatology graduates being honored.

'It's a pleasure to be part of the Olympic movement'

Summer Olympians begin torch relay for Milan Cortina Winter Games on 2-month countdown

ROME, Dec 6, (AP): Olympic swimming champion Gregorio Paltrinieri and fellow Summer athletes started off the torch relay for the Milan Cortina Winter Games on Saturday - which marked exactly two months before the Feb. 6 opening ceremony.

Paltrinieri carried the sleek torch around the track of the statue-lined Stadio dei Marmi at the Foro Italico to begin a trek covering 12,000 kilometers (nearly 7,500 miles) that will wind its way through all 110 Italian provinces before reaching Milan's San Siro Stadium for the opening ceremony.

"It's a pleasure to be part of the Olympic movement movement, even if it's Winter Olympics," Paltrinieri said.

In all, there will be 10,001 torch bearers.

Giancarlo Peris, the final torch bearer from the 1960 Olympics in Rome, carried out the Olympic flame in a lantern to get the proceedings going. The 84-year-old Peris was 18 when he lit the cauldron at the Stadio Olimpico - which is located next to the Stadio dei Marmi - more than 65 years ago.

"I didn't think I would be here today," Peris said with a chuckle.

Paltrinieri won gold in the 1,500 meters at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games and has five Olympic medals in all. He and girlfriend Rossella Fiamingo, a fencer, carried Italy's flag at the closing ceremony for last year's Paris Games.

"I used to ski when I was when I was a kid, but then you know for obvious reasons I stopped skiing because it's a little bit dangerous for me," Paltrinieri said. "Skiing is my favorite (Winter Olympic sport). ... Alberto Tomba was one of my biggest idols."



Italian swimmer Gregorio Paltrinieri lights the 2026 Milan Cortina Winter Olympics torch in Rome as it begins its journey through Italy, a journey that will conclude in Milan in February 2026. (AP)

Paltrinieri handed off to retired fencer Elisa Di Francisca, who won two golds at the 2012 London Games.

Up next was Gianmarco Tamberi, the 2020 Olympic high jump cham-

pion.

Also due to carry the torch around Rome on Saturday were tennis player Matteo Berrettini, retired NBA player Andrea Bargnani and former motor-cycle racer Max Biaggi.

The torch relay, which includes 60 city celebrations, will be in Naples for Christmas and in Bari for New Year's Eve. It will reach 2006 Olympics host Turin on Jan 11.

The torch will arrive in Verona on Jan. 18 and pass through Cortina d'Ampezzo on Jan. 26 - on the 70th anniversary of the opening ceremony of the 1956 Winter Olympics held at the resort in the Dolomites.

There will also be a cauldron lit in Cortina on the night of the opening ceremony.

Local organizing committee president Giovanni Malagò noted that the torch relay will pass by all of the country's UNESCO World Heritage sites, of which Italy has more than any other country with 61.

"It's like a giant two-month advertisement," Malagò said.

These games will be held across a large swath of northern Italy and the ceremony will be observed in four different locations, including Livigno (where snowboarding and freestyle skiing will be contested) and Predazzo (ski jumping).

Skating sports will be held in Milan; men's Alpine skiing and ski mountaineering in Bormio; and women's Alpine skiing, sliding sports and curling in Cortina.

The next stops on the torch relay are Viterbo on Sunday and Terni on Monday.

Sales abroad meeting expectations

Nearly half of tickets for Milan Cortina Olympics still unsold

ROME, Dec 6, (AP): Construction on the main hockey arena is still not finished. Spectator and media areas at the controversial sliding venue also need to be completed.

And with exactly two months to go to the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics, there is another major area that local organizers are concentrating on: only slightly more than half of the 1.5 million tickets for the games have been sold.

As the torch relay began in Rome on Saturday, only slightly more than 850,000 tickets had been sold.

While sales abroad are meeting expectations, interest among Italians remains low.

"That's normal. The local fans get interested closer and I think the beginning of the torch relay will be a very important moment for people realizing that," local organizing committee CEO Andrea Varnier told The Associated Press moments before the relay began.

A Black Friday promotion last week included three days of 20% discounts on tickets. And purchasers of both Olympics and Paralympics tickets have the chance to get lift passes for eight euros (\$9) valid at every ski area in Lombardy between Dec. 9-22.

This week, more tickets for the Feb. 6 opening ceremony at the San Siro stadium and the men's hockey gold medal game on Feb. 22 in Milan were put on sale.

"We had some tickets on the market a couple of days ago and they were sold out in in just a couple of hours," Varnier said. "So there is interest."

If past precedence is any indicator, the atmosphere was memorable at the 2006 Turin Winter Games - the last time Italy hosted an Olympics.

Still, organizers would have hoped for more demand after the last Winter Games in Beijing in 2022 were held mostly without fans because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Varnier pointed out that sales have been strong at the recently opened Milan Cortina store in front of the city's cathedral, Piazza del Duomo.

"People are really going in and buying our merchandise, which is also a good sign," he said.

As for the Santagiulia Ice Hockey Arena - the new, 16,000-seat venue on the outskirts of Milan - the scheduled test event for next week had to be pushed back to January.

"We knew about the delays of the hockey arena and we are working with it, but now we are following the right pace," Varnier said. "It has to be ready."

Next week, the secondary hockey venue that has been set up in the Rho Fiera convention center will be tested by hosting under-20 world championship games.

These games will be held across a large swath of northern Italy and athlete parades for the opening ceremony will also be held simultaneously in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Livigno and Predazzo besides Milan.

"It is quite an effort, it's the first time ever," Varnier said. "It's a very important message to have the athletes also staying in the mountain Villages to be able to participate in the ceremony. This was very well received by the NOCs (National Olympic Committees). ... Also, the communities are very happy to have a piece of the ceremonies in their towns."



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) drives against Dallas Mavericks guard Max Christie (00) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City. (AP)

Big night from bench players helps 76ers beat Bucks

HOUSTON, Dec 6, (AP): Kevin Durant had 28 points to become the eighth player in NBA history to score 31,000 career points as the Houston Rockets rolled to a 117-98 win over the Phoenix Suns.

It was Durant's first game against his former team since a blockbuster seven-team trade that sent Jalen Green and Dillon Brooks to the Suns. Durant missed Houston's 114-92 win at Phoenix on Nov. 24 for personal reasons.

Amen Thompson scored a season-high 31 to help the Rockets to their fifth victory in six games.

Durant made two free throws for his first points of the night and hit jumper midway through the first quarter that gave the 15-time All-Star to reach the historic milestone. Durant, who didn't play in the fourth quarter, has 31,024 career points.

76ers 116, Bucks 101

In Milwaukee, Quentin Grimes scored 22 points to lead a productive performance from Philadelphia's bench as the 76ers beat the Milwaukee Bucks.

Paul George added 20 points and Jabari Walker had a season-high 18 off the bench as the 76ers won for a second straight night after beating the Golden State Warriors 99-98 on Thursday.

Philadelphia's reserves scored 61 points to make up for the fact Milwaukee limited Tyrese Maxey to a season-low 12 points.

Neither team had its former league MVP on the floor.

Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo was out after straining his right calf in the first few minutes of a 113-109 victory over Detroit on Wednesday. With the 76ers playing for a second straight night, Philadelphia rested Joel Embiid.

Thunder 132, Mavericks 111

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 33 in three quarters, and the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Dallas Mavericks to claim their 14th straight win.

Gilgeous-Alexander made 10 of 12 field goals and 11 of 12 free throws to help the Thunder improve to 22-1 overall. He scored at least 20 points for the 95th straight game, the second-longest streak in league history behind



Phoenix Suns guard Collin Gillespie (12) shoots against Houston Rockets guard Amen Thompson (1) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Houston. (AP)

Wilt Chamberlain's 126 straight from 1961-1963.

Chet Holmgren and Jalen Williams each scored 15 points for the Thunder, who rolled without injured starters Lu Dort and Isaiah Hartenstein. Oklahoma City shot 56% from the field and made 26 of 28 free throws.

Dallas, though also dealing with several injuries, had won three straight. Star rookie Cooper Flagg, who averaged 27 points during the win streak, scored 16 on Friday.

Jaden Hardy led Dallas with 23 points. He made 8 of 13 field goals, including 5 of 9 3-pointers. Naji Marshall added 18 points for the Mavericks.

Knicks 146, Jazz 112

In New York, Jalen Brunson scored 33 points, including a 3-pointer that capped the Knicks' opening 23-point run - the largest in the NBA since detailed play-by-play for all four quarters began in 1997 - and New York beat the Utah Jazz.

Deuce McBride was 7 for 10 from 3-point range and added 22 points for the Knicks, who didn't allow a point until the first quarter was more than half over. Karl-Anthony Towns had 18 points and nine rebounds in the Knicks' highest-scoring game of the season.

Grizzlies 107, Clippers 98

In Memphis, Rookie Cedric Coward had 23 points and 14 rebounds, part of five Memphis players reaching double figures, and the Grizzlies beat the Los

Angeles Clippers.

Cam Spencer and Jaylen Wells had 17 points each and Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with 13 points as Memphis won for the sixth time in eight games. Zach Edey had 10 points and eight rebounds.

Pacers 120 Bulls 105

In Chicago, Pascal Siakam scored a season-high 36 points, Bennedict Mathurin added 28 and the Indiana Pacers beat the struggling Chicago Bulls.

The Pacers improved to 5-18, looking more like the team that advanced to the NBA Finals last season than the injury-ravaged crew that began the night with the second-worst record in the Eastern Conference. They went on a big run early in the third quarter and withstood a big push by Chicago in picking up their first win in 11 road games this season.

Pistons 122, Trail Blazers 116

In Detroit, Cade Cunningham had 13 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter and the Detroit Pistons rallied to beat the Portland Trail Blazers. Cunningham also had three assists in the quarter and finished with nine. Jalen Duren added 18 points and eight rebounds.

Detroit allowed 22 points off turnovers. The Pistons averaged only 15.0 points off turnovers in their 15-2 start, but have been over 20 in seven straight games while going 4-3.

Celtics 126, Lakers 105

In Boston, Jaylen Brown had 30 points, eight rebounds and eight assists and the Boston Celtics cruised past Los Angeles , with the Lakers playing without LeBron James and Luka Doncic.

Derrick White had five 3-pointers and added 19 points, and Jordan Walsh finished with 17 points for the Celtics, who have won four straight and six out of seven. Boston hit a season-high 24 3-pointers and had 31 assists.

Nuggets 134, Hawks 133

In Atlanta, Nikola Jokic scored 39 points and the Denver Nuggets rallied from 23 points down with a big fourth quarter to beat the Atlanta Hawks.

Jamal Murray had 23 points and 12 assists, and Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 17 points for the Nuggets, who have won nine straight road games.

The Hawks had a chance for a tying 3-pointer on their final possession, but Murray blocked the attempt by Nickeil Alexander-Walker. The loose ball led to a layup by Alexander-Walker with 2 seconds left, and the Nuggets quickly inbounded the ball and ran out the clock.

Hornets 111, Raptors 86

In Toronto, Kon Knueppel hit five 3-pointers and scored 21 points and the Charlotte Hornets beat the Toronto Raptors to end a two-game losing streak.

Knueppel added eight assists, and Miles Bridges had 15 points and nine rebounds. Hornets guard LaMelo Ball had 11 points, two rebounds and three assists in 12 minutes before leaving the game with left ankle soreness.

Cavaliers 130, Spurs 117

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell had 28 points and eight assists, Jaylon Tyson scored 16 of his 24 points in the third quarter and the Cleveland Cavaliers rallied to beat the San Antonio Spurs.

Evan Mobley had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and Dean Wade added 12 points and eight rebounds for Cleveland, which won for the second time in its last six games and snapped a two-game skid at Rocket Arena. Mobley and Wade also each had five assists.

Magic 106, Heat 105

In Orlando, Franz Wagner scored 32 points, Jalen Suggs added 22 and the Orlando Magic beat the Miami Heat when Bam Adebayo missed a jumper at the buzzer.

The teams will meet again in Orlando on Tuesday night in an NBA Cup quarterfinal. The Magic have won seven of nine, The Heat have lost three of four following a six-game winning streak.

Moeller finishes second

Kriechmayr wins weather-shortened WCup super-G race at Beaver Creek

BEAVER CREEK, Colo., Dec 6, (AP): Vincent Kriechmayr of Austria found the fastest line through challenging conditions to win a World Cup super-G on Friday that was called after 31 racers because of strong wind.

Kriechmayr flew through the difficult Birds of Prey course in 1 minute, 6.77 seconds to hold off Norwegian racer Fredrik Moeller by 0.56 seconds. Kriechmayr's Austrian teammate, Raphael Haaser, wound up third.

Franjo Von Allmen of Switzerland had a scary crash as the 14th racer on the course, but was able to stand back up. Right after his run, there was a course hold with snow falling.

A few racers later, the race was halted because of high wind and then again with Lucas Pinheiro Braathen of Brazil standing in the start gate.

Finally, it was called off for good.

"The race was pretty tough," Kriechmayr said. "The first 14 racers, they had similar conditions, but after the break and after the crash from Franjo - I hope he's well - it wasn't that fair anymore. I have to tell the truth. Of course, you want to have similar conditions for everyone."

No racers after the first delay

were able to climb into the top 10.

Swiss standout Marco Odermatt, the winner of the season-opening super-G last week in nearby Copper Mountain, struggled in the flat light. He ended up in fifth place and 1.23 seconds behind Kriechmayr's time.

Still, Odermatt extended his streak of finishing inside the top 10 in a World Cup super-G to 26 races.

Odermatt won the downhill at Beaver Creek on Thursday. The finish line for the races has been moved up the hill because of a lack of snow at the bottom to properly set the safety fences.

It was World Cup win No. 19 for Kriechmayr. It was also his 24th World Cup podium finish in the super-G, which joins him with Stephan Eberharter for second place on the all-time list among Austrian men in the discipline. Hermann Maier has the most with 38 super-G World Cup podium finishes.

The top American was River Radamus in 12th place. Ryan Cochran-Siegle finished in 13th place a day after taking second in the downhill.

The races at Beaver Creek conclude with a giant slalom scheduled for Sunday.



Austria's Vincent Kriechmayr competes during a World Cup men's super-G skiing race in Beaver Creek, Colo. (AP)

Saudi Arabia dominates Bahrain

Kuwait U-23 loses to Qatar in opener

DOHA, Dec 6: Kuwait’s under-23 national team kicked off its Gulf Cup campaign with a 3–0 defeat against host nation Qatar.

All three goals came in the first half, with Mustafa Asr opening the scoring in the 3rd minute, Mohamed Siraj doubling the lead in the 37th minute, and Ahmed Riad sealing the victory with a stoppage-time goal. Despite efforts in the second half, Kuwait was unable to mount a comeback, handing Qatar its first three points in Group A.

In another Group A match, Saudi Arabia recorded a commanding



Kuwait U-23 player controls the ball during the match against Qatar.

5–0 win over Bahrain.

The tournament, hosted by Qatar until December 16, marks the first edition organized under the Gulf Cup Football Association. In Group B, Yemen defeated Iraq 2–1, while the UAE overcame Oman 2–0.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the semifinals, with Group A’s leader facing Group B’s runner-up and Group B’s leader taking on Group A’s runner-up. The winners of these semifinal matches will progress to the final.

Kristjansson confident in team's talent and commitment

Kuwait road to Handball World Cup starts in Cairo

By Hassan Mosa
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: Kuwait is concluding the preliminary phase of its preparations for the Asian Handball Championship, which will be hosted in Kuwait in mid-January and also serves as a qualifier for the World Cup.

The team will hold its final training session today at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex under Icelandic coach Aron Kristjansson. This follows a rigorous physical conditioning phase at Spark Health Club in Shuwaikh, where the focus was on improving fitness, building muscle mass, and enhancing endurance.

With physical preparation complete, the coaching staff will now shift attention to tactical planning and finalizing the team’s formation for the tournament matches.

Al-Azraq will depart for Cairo on Monday, Egypt, to begin the penultimate stage of preparations, which includes two friendly matches against the Egyptian national team. The team will return on December 20 to continue preparations with a final overseas training camp in Croatia, where offensive and defensive strategies and the final lineup will be refined.

Coach Kristjansson acknowledged the challenge ahead, noting that Asian handball features some of the continent’s top teams, but expressed confidence in the players’ talent, dedication, and commitment to following technical instructions.



A Kuwait handball player fires a shot at goal.

Meanwhile, the medical team, led by physiotherapist Mehdi Al-Bakoush, continues to monitor the players’ health and fitness closely. A structured diet and training program, coordinated with the coaching and administrative staff, is helping to minimize the risk of injuries as the team gears up for the championship.

Jaiswal hits maiden ton, India crushes SAfrica to win series



Indian players pose with the trophy after winning the third One Day International cricket match against South Africa in Visakhapatnam, India. (AP)

Krishna takes the sting out of Proteas with three wickets

VISAKHAPATNAM, India, Dec 6, (AP): Yashasvi Jaiswal’s maiden one-day international century trumped Quinton de Kock’s 23rd as India clinched the series from South Africa by nine wickets on Saturday.

Jaiswal’s unbeaten 116, beside Rohit Sharma’s 75 and Virat Kohli’s unbeaten 65 powered India to the target of 271 with 10.1 overs to spare.

They won the series 2-1 after losing the test series 2-0. The teams start a five-match Twenty20 series on Tuesday in Cuttack.

De Kock’s 89-ball 106 and captain Temba Bavuma’s 48 were South Africa’s only substantial innings before it was all out for 270 in 47.5 overs.

Medium-pacer Prasidh Krishna took the sting

out of the Proteas with three wickets in three overs, including de Kock, after India ended a string of 20 lost tosses in ODIs since the 2023 Cricket World Cup semifinals.

“I don’t think the team has looked at me more proudly after the toss,” India captain Lokesh Rahul said.

South Africa, at 168-2 with de Kock and Matthew Breetzke lashing India to all parts, would have entertained thoughts of 350.

But Prasidh, who’d had an ordinary series and was conceding almost 10 an over, was persisted with and suddenly came through. He trapped Breetzke for 24 and dismissed Aiden Markram on 1 in the same over.

De Kock got his seventh century against India (off 80 balls) in style with a six over square leg but added only six more runs when Prasidh smacked over his off and middle stumps. Prasidh took 3-9 in the spell.

“It was really hard for me (in my first spell). I had to think how to get back,” Prasidh said. “I was

under pressure after the last game. It’s a matter of keeping it simple and being calm.”

Kuldeep Yadav cleaned up the tail with 4-41 and the Proteas were restricted to 270.

Jaiswal and Rohit cruised in the reply with an opening stand of 155 from as many balls until Rohit’s slog sweep misjudged spinner Keshav Maharaaj and he lobbed the ball to deep square leg. He scored 75 off 73 balls.

Jaiswal raised his ton off 111 balls then Kohli raced to the end with 65 off 45 balls, his 128th ODI half-century, and was awarded the player of the series for 302 runs in three matches.

“Just playing the way I have this series has been the most satisfying for me,” Kohli said. “Feel really free in my mind, whole game is coming together nicely.

“You have many phases where you feel doubt. You feel nervous, especially in batting where one mistake can cost you. I’m glad to still contribute to the team. When I play freely, I know I can hit sixes.”

Gunners drop points in third consecutive away game

Villa stuns Arsenal with last-minute victory

LONDON, Dec 6, (AP): Arsenal’s Premier League title challenge was hit on Saturday after Emiliano Buendia struck in stoppage-time to seal a 2-1 win for Aston Villa.

Villa cut the gap to first-place Arsenal to three points and gave Manchester City the chance to close in on Mikel Arteta’s team.

Buendia fired into the roof of the net in the fifth minute of added time at Villa Park to leave the visitors stunned.

“In the manner that happened at the end, obviously, (it is) really difficult to take,” Arteta told TNT Sports.

It was the third time in succession that Arsenal has dropped points away from home after recent draws with Sunderland and Chelsea. Those results have opened the door to rivals like City and Villa to put pressure on at the top.

Villa provisionally moved up to second in the standings after a ninth



Aston Villa’s Ian Maatsen, right, challenges for the ball with Arsenal’s Noni Madueke during the English Premier League soccer match between Aston Villa and Arsenal in Birmingham, England. (AP)

win from its last 10 games. That was after a dire start to the campaign when Unai Emery’s team was winless after five games.

“At the minute we’re on a great run,” said Matty Cash, who put Villa ahead in the 36th. “We know it’s not even Christmas yet, so we have to

keep being demanding, keep being consistent, and then we’ll see where it takes us.”

Leandro Trossard was a halftime substitute for Arsenal and he made a quick impact by leveling the game seven minutes after the break.

Buendia came on in the 87th and proved an inspired substitution – lifting a shot past Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya.

“We fight until the last minute, the last second, it was a really incredible win,” he said.

It was only Arsenal’s second loss of the season and its first since a 1-0 defeat at Liverpool in August.

“We are 18 games unbeaten, and yet still the margin is so small,” Arteta said. “We have to focus on ourselves and set the standards that today, particularly, individually we didn’t raise that level. The effort was absolutely there and use that pain to go again.”

Kuwait clubs start strong

Al-Fatat, Salwa Al-Sabah triumph in West Asia Women’s volleyball

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 6: The West Asia Women’s Volleyball Championship continued in Kuwait, running until December 13, with exciting matches on the day before yesterday. Al-Fatat Club secured a 3–0 victory over Qatar, while Salwa Al-Sabah Club defeated Al-Arabi of Qatar by the same score. Jordan’s Al-Nasr also triumphed over Saudi Arabia’s Al-Fayha in a thrilling five-set match.

Earlier, Al-Fatat had defeated Lebanon’s Al-Qalamoun 3–0. Sanharib Club

of Iraq overcame Al-Fayha of Saudi Arabia 3–0, and Sharjah of the UAE beat Yemen’s Al-Nasr by the same score.

The opening day of the championship, held at Salwa Al-Sabah Sports Club, featured several notable victories: Al-Ula of Saudi Arabia defeated Qatar, Al-Nasr of Jordan overcame Al-Quds of Palestine, and Salwa Al-Sabah defeated Al-Nasr of Yemen, setting the tone for a competitive tournament.

Michael Jordan testifies at NASCAR trial

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Dec 6, (AP): Michael Jordan has had a lifetime of big moments. His latest came on the witness stand in a federal courthouse.

The retired NBA great testified Friday against NASCAR in an antitrust case he is pursuing against the stock car series on behalf of his race team, 23XI, along with Front Row Motorsports. Both want to force NASCAR to change the way it does business with its teams, accusing it of monopolistic behavior.

“Someone had to step forward and challenge the entity,” the soft-spoken Jordan told the jury. “I felt I could challenge NASCAR as a whole.”

It was a different role for the 62-year-old Jordan, known best for the six NBA titles he won with the Chicago Bulls and his business interests in retirement, including his still relatively new role as a NASCAR team co-owner with three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin. 23XI is a combination of Jordan’s longtime jersey number and Hamlin’s race car number.

Dressed in a dark blue suit, Jordan slowly headed to the stand for the afternoon session, adjusted the seat for his 6-foot-6 frame and settled in. Those in the packed courtroom hung on every word.

Jordan said he grew up a NASCAR fan, attending races at 11 or 12 with his family at tracks in Charlotte and Rockingham in his home state but also at Darlington in South Carolina and the Talladega superspeedway in Alabama.

“We called it a weekend vacation,” he said.

There were moments of levity on a dra-

matic day of testimony that also included Heather Gibbs, the daughter-in-law of team owner and NFL Hall of Fame coach Joe Gibbs. People were turned away from the courtroom and U.S. District Judge Kenneth Bell couldn’t help but notice the high attendance in front of him as well as an overflow room nearby.

“I take it Mr. Jordan is the next witness,” Bell quipped.

Outside the courthouse in downtown Charlotte, a crowd gathered for the first time this week for a chance to see Jordan. One woman screamed “Oh My God, Mike! You are an icon, you the best, you the best to do it in the NBA!” Another claimed to have played golf and cards with Jordan acquaintances while asking Jordan to pose for a photo with his daughters.

Jordan said, “Man, it’s cold out here for you guys,” before complimenting the two girls on their Nike-branded hoodies.

A spectator held a sign that read “NASCAR Your Fans Deserve Better” and Hamlin turned to him and said “You’re right” as they tried to make their way through the throng to a caravan of waiting SUVs.

On the witness stand, Jordan noted he was an early fan of Richard Petty, like his dad. He later gravitated to Cale Yarborough, “the original No. 11. Sorry, Denny,” Jordan testified as Hamlin watched from the gallery.

Jordan was asked to outline his career, noting his time with the Bulls and adding he remains a minority owner of the Charlotte Hornets. Did he play anywhere else?

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Ilia Malinin, of the United States, poses after winning the gold medal in the men's event at the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Nagoya, central Japan. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait stumbles as Jordan marches on

Al-Azraq Arab Cup hopes in jeopardy

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

DOHA, Dec 6: Kuwait suffered a 3–1 defeat to Jordan at Ahmed bin Ali Stadium in the second round of Arab Cup Group C, a result that sent the Jordanians through to the quarterfinals with six points. Kuwait, meanwhile, remained stuck on a single point, leaving its hopes of advancing hanging by a thread.

Head coach Hélio Sousa rang the changes, fielding a completely different lineup from the one that faced Egypt. He started with Suleiman Abdulghafour in goal; defenders Mohammed Al-Shuraifi, Nasser Khudhur, Hassan Hamdan, and Rashid Al-Dosari; midfielders Athbi Shehab, Reda Hani, Nasser Faleh, and Eid Al-Rashidi; and forwards Shabib Al-Khaldi and Muath Al-Asaymi.

Both sides opened with high pressure and quick transitions, but Jordan steadily gained control, exploiting Kuwait's lack of preparation and the visible lack of coordination among several players.

Al-Dosari, one of Kuwait's standout performers, blocked Jordan's first real threat in the 12th minute. But the "Nashama" soon struck first, taking advantage

of poor defensive positioning on a free kick. Muhannad Abu Taha unleashed a powerful long-range shot that nestled inside Abdulghafour's right corner to make it 1–0 in the 17th minute.

Kuwait's backline began to show signs of panic. Jordan nearly doubled the lead after a mix-up between Hamdan and Abdulghafour left Yazan Al-Nuaimat with a clear chance, only for the defense to intervene before Mahmoud Al-Mardi smashed the rebound off the crossbar seconds later.

Al-Azraq struggled to create meaningful chances of their own, and just before halftime, Abdulghafour denied Abdullah Naseeb's header to keep Kuwait within reach.

Sousa introduced Mohammed Daham and Ahmed Al-Dhafiri at the start of the second half, replacing Nasser Faleh and Muath Al-Asaymi, but Jordan continued to dictate play. Persistent pressure paid off again when Saeed Al-Rawsan pounced on a loose ball following a failed clearance and powered home Jordan's second goal in the 48th minute. A third goal arrived moments later but was ruled out for offside.

Sousa then made two puzzling substitutions, bringing on Fahad Al-Hajri and Muath Al-Dhafiri for Nasser Khudhur and Mohammed Al-Shuraifi despite trailing by two goals. Later, he introduced Youssef Nasser in search of a spark.

Jordan eased off in the final stages, allowing Kuwait to grow into the match. Youssef Nasser pulled one back in the 84th minute with a well-placed header from Al-Rashidi's cross, and nearly scored a second five minutes later before goalkeeper Abu Leila tipped his shot wide.



Eid Al-Rashidi walks off the field dejected at the end of the match.

Jordan sealed the win deep into stoppage time when Alwan was brought down by Abdulghafour on a counterattack. The forward converted the resulting penalty to make it 3–1 in the 90+7 minute.

Kuwait secures third place in inaugural Arab Challenge Cup

AMMAN, Dec 6: Kuwait's national volleyball team, Al-Azraq, clinched third place in the Arab Challenge Cup, which concluded the day before yesterday in Amman, Jordan.

Tunisia captured the championship, with Egypt finishing second after defeating Al-Azraq 3–0 in their final match (25–15, 25–19, 25–18). Jordan came in fourth, Bahrain fifth, and Palestine sixth.

Al-Azraq played five matches in total, winning against Bahrain and Palestine, while losing to Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan. Both Kuwait and Jordan finished with seven points, but Al-Azraq edged ahead due to a superior point differential. Rashid Anbar, Al-Azraq's standout performer, earned the Best Player award in the Outside Hitter position, highlighting his strong showing throughout

the tournament.

This year marked the inaugural edition of the Arab Challenge Cup in Jordan, with organizers hoping it becomes an annual event featuring more Arab national teams.

The competitive matches in this first edition are expected to contribute significantly to the development of the participating squads.

During the awards ceremony, Sheikh Ali bin Mohammed Al-Khalifa, president of the Arab and Bahraini Volleyball Federations; Princess Aya bint Faisal, president of the Jordanian Volleyball Federation; Dr. Jaber Al-Muray, president of the Kuwaiti Volleyball Federation; and Ali Al-Kuwari, president of the West Asian Volleyball Federation, presented commemorative medals to the players of the top three teams and awarded the championship trophy to Tunisia's captain.



Kuwait players celebrate on the podium after winning bronze in the inaugural Arab Challenge Cup.

Kuwait clinches silver at Asian Show Jumping Championship



Kuwaitis display their silver medals.

BANGKOK, Dec 6, (KUNA): Kuwait's equestrian team claimed second place and the silver medal on Friday at the Asian Show Jumping Championship, which began two days ago in Thailand and will continue until next Sunday.

The Kuwaiti squad featured riders Ali Al-Kharafi, Rayara Al-Hunadi, Fawaz Al-Rashed, and Annaz Al-Annaz. Japan captured the gold medal, while Chinese Taipei took home the bronze.

Sufyan Buqammaz, administrative manager of Kuwait's equestrian delegation, described the achievement as historic, highlighting the intense competition and the dedicated efforts of the riders during their preparation, including training camps and ensuring the horses were in peak condition.

He praised the Kuwait Equestrian Federation for providing an ideal environment and a comprehensive strategy to raise Kuwait's profile in the sport. "This silver medal marks a significant milestone for Kuwait's developing show-jumping program," he said.

Buqammaz also extended gratitude to the country's political leadership for supporting athletes and to the Public Authority for Sport for its ongoing support of the team.

Looking ahead, the riders are fully focused on the upcoming Asian Masters in Tokyo 2026, aiming to further elevate Kuwait's presence in continental equestrian sports.

US starts against Paraguay

Argentina and Messi to open World Cup defense against Algeria

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, (AP): All around the globe, eyes focused on the stage where World Cup paths were sorted, nations' names chosen one by one in a draw that determined Argentina and Lionel Messi will start their title defense against Algeria and the U.S. will open against Paraguay.

Twenty-seven months after qualifying began, teams from five-time champion Brazil to newcomers Cape Verde, Curaçao, Jordan and Uzbekistan learned their group-stage opponents in the expanded 48-nation, 104-game tournament that starts June 11 in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"Exciting for the island, for the people there. They're so proud," said Dick Advocaat, the 78-year-old Dutchman leading Curaçao, a Caribbean country with a population of 150,000, into an opener against four-time champion Germany.

On a day that began with snow falling on the nation's capital, the ceremony at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts included U.S. President Donald Trump receiving a newly created peace prize awarded by FIFA, soccer's governing body. Trump, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney picked up plastic spheres containing their own nations' names from bowls - Sheinbaum drew more applause from those gathered in the hall than Trump.

FIFA's lead-in show, featuring music and stars from sports and entertainment, was almost as long as a soccer match, starting in the 87th minute. Tom Brady, Shaquille O'Neal, Aaron Judge and Wayne Gretzky took part. New Zealand was the last orb picked.

"Just watching Americans on stage and the president giving speeches and performances, it made it feel like an American event already," said U.S. midfielder Tyler Adams, who watched from England, where he plays for the Premier League club Bournemouth. "And I think we know the expectation of what it's going to be like when we go there and there's going to be half-time shows and there's going to be celebrities and the big draw of what America brings to sports."

Three-time champion Argentina opens on June 16 at either Kansas City, Missouri, or Santa Clara, California. Specific sites for all group stage games and kickoff times were to be announced Saturday. The Albiceleste

WASHINGTON, Dec 6, (Xinhua): Following is the final draw for the 2026 FIFA World Cup:

- Group A:** Mexico, South Korea, South Africa, European Playoff winner D (Denmark/North Macedonia/Czech Republic/Ireland);
- Group B:** Canada, Switzerland, Qatar, European Playoff winner A (Italy/Northern Ireland/Wales/Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- Group C:** Brazil, Morocco, Scotland, Haiti;
- Group D:** United States, Australia, Paraguay, European Playoff winner C (Turkey/Romania/Slovakia/Kosovo);
- Group E:** Germany, Curaçao, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador;
- Group F:** Netherlands, Japan,

pan, Tunisia, European Playoff winner B (Ukraine/Sweden/Poland/Albania);

Group G: Belgium, Iran, Egypt, New Zealand;

Group H: Spain, Uruguay, Saudi Arabia, Cape Verde;

Group I: France, Senegal, Norway, FIFA Playoff Winner (Bolivia/Suriname/Iraq);

Group J: Argentina, Austria, Algeria, Jordan;

Group K: Portugal, Colombia, Uzbekistan, FIFA Playoff Winner (New Caledonia/Jamaica/Democratic Republic of the Congo);

Group L: England, Croatia, Panama, Ghana.

then face Austria and Jordan in Group J. Argentina surprisingly lost its 2022 opener to Saudi Arabia before going on to win the final over France on penalty kicks.

Messi, who turns 39 during the tournament, hasn't committed yet to playing but it would be shocking if he decided against appearing in a record sixth World Cup.

"We are just awaiting for him to decide," coach Lionel Scaloni said. "In principle, everything is going well."

The U.S., which reached the semi-

finals at the inaugural World Cup in 1930 and the quarterfinals in 2002, starts Group D against Paraguay on June 12 in Inglewood, California. The Americans play Australia six days later at Seattle, then face Turkey, Romania, Slovakia or Kosovo - one will emerge next year from playoffs - on June 25 back at SoFi Stadium.

The Americans had friendlies against Turkey in June, Australia in October and Paraguay last month.

"We know them but they know us," U.S. coach Mauricio Pochettino said.



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, President Donald Trump and FIFA President Gianni Infantino hold up country names during the draw for the 2026 soccer World Cup at the Kennedy Center in Washington. (AP)

Max takes pole for Abu Dhabi GP

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Dec 6, (AP): Max Verstappen took pole position for the title-deciding Abu Dhabi Grand Prix ahead of Formula 1 title rivals Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri on Saturday.

The thrilling three-way battle will be decided on Sunday at the Yas Marina Circuit. The McLaren driver Norris is 12 points ahead of Red Bull's Verstappen and 16 ahead of McLaren teammate Piastri.

Verstappen is aiming for his fifth straight F1 title - Norris and Piastri are chasing their first. All three drivers have won seven races.

Pole position is crucial in Abu Dhabi, with every driver winning from pole since 2015.

Verstappen had already set the fastest lap on his first go but went even quicker on his second attempt and set a lap time of 1 minute, 22.207 seconds, making him .201 faster than Norris and .230 quicker than Piastri.

"That was insane," Verstappen said over team radio after his eighth pole of the season and 48th overall. "Yes. Lovely."

Verstappen kissed his girlfriend, Kelly Piquet, and shook hands with McLaren CEO Zak Brown.

Norris will win the title if he's on the podium in Abu Dhabi. Even if Verstappen wins, the Dutchman needs Norris to be fourth or lower. If Piastri wins, he requires Norris to finish outside the top five.