



Amir receives Crown Prince, top officials
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21 Kuwait projects yet to start

Citizen participation key to privatization success

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The latest annual plan follow-up report revealed that 21 projects, representing 15 percent of the total 141 projects in the development plan, have yet to commence.

These projects involve 42 ministries and government entities and include major projects such as power procurement, the development of the

Northern Economic Zone, and the Carbon Footprint Reduction Technologies Development Center.

The 2025-2026 annual development plan report highlighted a focus on expanding the privatization of government assets and services through four important policies.

The report explained that these policies are designed to support the implementation of the Public Privatization Program, one of nine programs included in the plan. The program aims to expand the privatization of government assets and services by updating the legislative framework and introducing new privatization initiatives in operational sectors. It also seeks to enhance public finance reform, diversify revenue sources, improve service quality, and create job opportunities for citizens in the private sector.

The policies outlined in the report are:

■ Developing legislative and regulatory frameworks to increase citizen ownership in companies designated for privatization.

■ Supporting reforms to competition regulations in relevant sectors, a policy currently in progress.

■ Establishing a public-private partnership (PPP) company in targeted sectors, with shares allocated to citizens in the education and health sectors at nominal prices.

■ Developing a social safety net by providing education and health insurance for citizens following the privatization of operational sectors and reducing the budget deficit by capping it at 5 percent of current expenditures.

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Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Anti-Monopoly Land Law a crucial step

THE new Anti-Monopoly Land Law is expected to curb land speculation, although the full effects will take time to materialize.

By preventing monopolistic practices, the law targets traders who hold vast, undeveloped land for long periods to artificially inflate prices.

This practice severely impacted many Kuwaiti families, forcing them into prolonged waits for housing or to allocate more than half of their income to rent.

The current measure is vital for price control, but remains inadequate unless other legislation, such as the Residential Building Law, is amended as well.

This law is crucial for narrowing the gap between purchasing power and actual income. Prior to this, land prices per square meter reached KD2,000 in some areas and an astonishing KD10,000 in investment areas.

Meanwhile, the soaring prices of residential land, which reached KD1,000 to KD1,500, triggered a major crisis.

This crisis is marked by exorbitant rents for commercial and residential properties, consequently fueling the inflation rate and placing a heavy burden on Kuwaiti families and the residents.

Although citizens are entitled to housing welfare, the protracted waiting times—a result of slow allocation procedures or infrastructure project delays—created an opportunity for land speculators.

These speculators are exploiting the situation by aggressively hiking both land prices and rental fees.

This new law is significant because it mandates the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to provide housing within two years of housing grant application submission.

This is a dramatic change, consider-

ing that official statistics from last year showed a 10-year waiting period, with tens of thousands of pending applications.

A critical question arises: Are all these pending applications truly eligible?

Ultimately, housing welfare is a deeply complex issue affected by multiple factors. A comprehensive review of the existing laws governing this matter is necessary.

This review should address the convoluted process of land allocation involving oil companies, PAHW, Kuwait Municipality and State Property Authority, as this intricate relationship is a key source of infrastructure project delays.

Hence, the Anti-Monopoly Land Law is designed to achieve two main goals: first is to interrupt the pattern that historically blocked citizens from securing housing, and second is to foster economic growth by delivering affordable housing units and new investment opportunities.

The proposed high, progressive fees on monopolized land are designed to deter land speculation.

Since the legislation cannot be circumvented, monopolists will be compelled to either develop the land by constructing apartment buildings or selling their plots, thereby, increasing the overall land supply.

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Kuwait promotes tourism, boosts coordination



KUNA photo

Minister of Information, Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi chairs a meeting of the supreme tourist committee.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Information, Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Sunday affirmed significance of promoting tourist enterprises in the State of Kuwait and boosting cooperation among the concerned authorities to attain the aspired objectives at this level.

Minister Almutairi, speaking as he chaired a meeting of the supreme

tourist committee, called for disseminating information about tourist activities and ventures to all Kuwaiti citizens and residents of the country, as well as the visitors to Kuwait.

The minister along with the participants in the meeting examined proposed and planned tourist and entertainment activities during the winter, pending the posting of information about them on "Visit Kuwait" website.

Inflation hits 2.39%

Kuwait consumers feel pinch of expenses spike

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) said Sunday that the consumer price index (inflation) went up 2.39 percent on an annual basis in August, while it inched up 0.07 percent compared with July.

The annual increase was mainly driven by higher prices for key groups such as food and beverages, health, clothing, housing services, household furnishings, communications, recreation and culture, education, restaurants and hotels, and miscellaneous goods and services, while transport costs fell, CSB stated in a report to KUNA.

Food and beverages prices rose 6.02 percent yearly in August, tobacco 0.07 percent, clothing 3.11 percent, housing services 0.98 percent, household furnishings 3.08 percent, health 2.77 percent, communications 0.48 percent, recreation and culture 1.61 percent, education 0.71 percent, restaurants and hotels 1.86 percent, and miscellaneous goods and services 4.32 percent, it added.

Transport prices dropped 1.75 percent compared with August 2024, CSB explained.

Excluding food and beverages, inflation in Kuwait rose 1.53 percent yearly in August and 0.07 percent from the previous month, CSB pointed out.

Bullish sentiment drives Kuwait gold to KD 41.23

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The local gold market saw the price of a gram of 24-karat gold reach KD 41.23 (approximately \$135) last week, while 22-karat gold was priced at around KD 37.38 (approximately \$123), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a report released by the Kuwaiti Bullion House, one kilogram of silver was trading at KD 624 (approximately \$2,036) in Kuwait.

Globally, gold prices closed last week at \$4,198 per ounce, supported by growing expectations of a US interest rate cut and ongoing geopolitical tensions in several regions. A report by Kuwaiti company Dar Al-Sabaek issued on Sunday noted that US inflation remaining near three percent reinforces expectations of a more flexible monetary policy, pointing to

potential further interest rate cuts. This trend enhances gold's appeal as a safe haven amid increasing global economic uncertainty.

The report highlighted the upcoming US Federal Reserve meeting as the main focus of this week's economic calendar.

It explained that official US data beyond September is unavailable due to the recent government shutdown, making markets particularly sensitive to any signals from the Federal Reserve.

The US is set to release delayed economic data, including October jobs figures and Q3 2025 employment costs, while Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Brazil, and Turkey are preparing to announce new interest rate decisions.

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Kuwait nabs 9 in drug sweep

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior announced on Sunday the arrest of nine suspects of various nationalities found in possession of assorted narcotics and psychotropic substances during a series of security operations targeting multiple locations.

In a press statement, the ministry said that inspection and raid operations conducted by the General Department of Anti-Drug Trafficking and the Al-Ahmadi Criminal Investigation Department resulted in the seizure of approximately

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Kuwait 'revokes' citizenship from preacher, others

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Three decrees and a Cabinet decision were published on Sunday in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Yaum" concerning the revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship from 24 individuals and their dependents, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Decree No. 227/2025 orders the revocation of citizenship from one individual and their dependents.

Decree No. 228/2025 orders the revocation of citizenship from three individuals.

Decree No. 229/2025 orders the revocation of citizenship from 14 individuals.

Cabinet Decision No. 1586/2025 orders the revocation of citizenship from six individuals and their dependents.

According to Al-Jarida daily, the individual affected by Decree No. 227/2025 is a prominent Islamic preacher.

Q8 becomes 100% KPC-owned Kuwaiti company

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Board of Directors of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) approved the transformation of Kuwait Petroleum International (Q8) into a closed Kuwaiti shareholding company wholly owned by KPC, in accordance with Supreme Petroleum Council Resolution No. 125/2 issued on June 18, 2025.

The decision followed a review of Law No. 6/1980 on the

establishment of KPC, and defined the powers of its Board of Directors, as well as the new company's Articles of Association.

The board assigned Shafi Taleb Al-Ajmi as Chief Executive Officer of the company. It also approved the recommendations of the Compensation and Employee and Leadership Development Committee of KPC and its subsidiaries regarding the formation of the company's Board of Directors.

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Association of African Women Diplomats launched in Kuwait

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Ambassador of Sierra Leone and President of the Association of African Women Diplomats in Kuwait, Haja Ishata Thoms, affirmed that the establishment of the association represents a significant step in strengthening cultural and social cooperation between African countries and Kuwait.

She highlighted that the announcement coincides with the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign, giving the occasion a humanitarian dimension and a message of global solidarity.

The ceremony, organized by the association, was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs, Ambassador Tahani Al-Nasser, as well as several ambassadors and female diplomats.

In her speech, she stated that the day "is not merely an announcement of establishment, but a celebration of the strength of resilience, the unity of diversity, and the collaborative work that

brought these women together to reach this moment." Ambassador Thoms emphasized that the success achieved is the result of the efforts of a small group of women who laid the foundation for the association years ago.

She also expressed special thanks to the former Ambassador of Chad, Abatoul Zakaria, who proposed the idea in 2020, noting that African women have always been a driving force in shaping history.

Ambassador Thoms explained that the association functions as the "women's arm" of the African diplomacy in Kuwait with the aim of building an active network that unites African women diplomats and promoting professional, cultural, and social exchange.

The association also seeks to strengthen relations between Africa and Kuwait through cultural and social diplomacy, establish partnerships with local and international organizations in areas such as women's empowerment and gender equality, and support initiatives aligned with the African Union's vision and relevant United Nations themes.

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'GCC standard for workers'

Philippine officials applaud Kuwait's expatriate shelter

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Eng. Rabab Al-Osaimi received Hans Leo J. Cacadac, Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) of the Philippines, along with his delegation, at the Expatriate Labor Shelter Center in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

According to an official statement by PAM on its website, the delegation's visit to the expatriate labor shelter center provided it an opportunity to review the center's procedures for receiving

expatriate workers and to observe how government agencies collaborate to ensure a safe and supportive environment for female residents. The delegation also learned about the comprehensive services offered at the center, including healthcare, psychological counseling, and legal assistance.

During the meeting, the officials were presented with detailed data and statistics concerning the center's residents and the procedures in place.

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PAM photo

Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Eng. Rabab Al-Osaimi with Hans Leo J. Cacadac, Secretary of the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) of the Philippines, along with his delegation, during a tour of the Expatriate Labor Shelter Center in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:05	Asr	14:31
Sunrise ..	06:29	Maghrib ..	16:50
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

Weather

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.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	27	16
Kuwait Airport	28	12

Abdaly	30	11
Jahra	28	15
Failaka Island	23	14
Salmiyah	24	20
Ahmadi	31	15
Wafra	29	11
Salmay	27	12
Managish	29	13

Amir receives Crown Prince, top officials



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Sunday.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Sunday.

His Highness the Amir then received Chairman of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Sunday. His Highness the Amir also received Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace on Sunday.

Qualified, competent only will get top posts in co-ops

MoSA spells out conditions to apply for jobs

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Dr. Amthlal Al-Huwaila issued Ministerial Decree No. 306/2025 concerning the appointment of specialized, technically graded cooperative oversight positions in the Ministry of Social Affairs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Article 1 of the decree states that applications for these positions will be accepted following an announcement on the ministry's official website, in accordance with applicable regulations and procedures.

The announcement must specify the application opening and closing dates, eligibility requirements, required documents, and the number of vacancies available.

Article 2 outlines the eligibility requirements, which include:

- The candidate must hold a Bachelor's degree with a minimum overall grade of "Very Good" or its equivalent under a points system from Kuwait University or a university accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education, in one of the specializations listed in Civil Service Council Resolution No. 34/2016 regarding the positions and compensation of Kuwaiti employees in specialized, technically graded cooperative oversight positions at the Ministry of Social Affairs, as amended by Resolution No. 1/2018.
- The candidate must not be a current member of a cooperative society's board of director or a former member who had been dismissed.
- The applicant must not be older than 40 years of age on the closing date for applications.



Dr. Al-Huwaila

■ The candidate must successfully pass the written exam and personal interview according to the procedures specified by the ministry.

According to Article 3, applications for the position must be submitted using a standardized form via the designated link on the official website of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The following documents must be attached to the application:

- Academic qualification certificate and transcript (with an equivalence certificate from the Ministry of Higher Education for graduates of universities other than Kuwait University)
- A copy of a valid civil ID card
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- A personal photograph
- Phone number and email address, if available
- A certificate of career progression (experience certificate)
- A criminal record certificate issued by the Ministry of Interior
- A declaration acknowledging awareness of the ministerial decision regulating the application mechanism and conditions, using the form downloadable from the designated link on the ministry's official website
- A letter from the current employer approving secondment and transfer, if the applicant is accepted for the position.

Any application submitted after the deadline specified in the announcement or that does not include all required documents and meet the stated conditions will be rejected. In accordance with Article 4, the Human Resources Development Department, in coordination with the Cooperative Control and Inspection Department and the Computer Department, is responsible for reviewing and sorting applications and preparing a list of candidates who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Article 2 of this decision. The list is then submitted to the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, who invites the candidates to take an examination before a specialized committee formed by the undersecretary's decision.

Teamwork stressed to enhance Mol performance

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Acting Interior Ministry Undersecretary Maj. Gen. Ali Al-Adwani on Sunday chaired a coordination meeting at the ministry headquarters with assistant undersecretaries and sector heads to review workflow and discuss key security and administrative updates. The ministry said in a press statement that Al-Adwani conveyed the greetings of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah to the attendees.

The meeting addressed progress in implementing approved work plans, strengthening coordination mechanisms among sectors to ensure high levels of discipline, readiness, and efficient delivery of security services.

It also reviewed several issues related to field and administrative tasks.

Al-Adwani stressed the importance of continued teamwork, improving performance across all sectors, facilitating procedures, and further developing security plans and programs aimed at enhancing stability and public safety in the community.



KUNA photo
Acting Interior Ministry Undersecretary Maj. Gen. Ali Al-Adwani chairs the meeting.

Kuwait welcomes UN move to extend UNRWA mandate

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday welcomed a recent United Nations (UN) resolution to extend the mandate of the UN refugee agency (UNRWA) by three more years until 2029.

In a press statement, the ministry said that the UN move reflects the continuation of the agency's vital role in providing basic humanitarian services to Palestinian refugees in its operation areas.

It underlined that the resolution also shows the international community's solidarity and commitment to supporting the rights of Palestinian refugees, and affirms that it is essential for the UNRWA to keep doing its humanitarian missions.

The ministry also restated Kuwait's untiring stance and support for UNRWA and international efforts to empower it to continue offering its humanitarian services to Palestinian refugees.

‘Art of Reels Production’ course started by KUNA

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): KUNA Development Center on Sunday launched its training program titled "Art of Reels Production," with participants from various government sectors, including Qatar News Agency.

The program, delivered by Abdullah Al-Mushawah and running until 11 December, provides progressive training on defining reel objectives, selecting topics, understanding algorithms, mastering mobile production

tools, applying hands-on content creation, and building effective short-form videos that strengthen digital presence and support commercial growth.

Established in December 1995, KUNA Development Center is considered one of the region's leading media training hubs, having delivered hundreds of specialized programs to develop media capabilities and elevate professional standards across the sector.

Negligence in using gas cylinder main fire cause

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has urged citizens and residents to follow safety regulations when using gas cylinders, warning that their improper use is a leading cause of fires, reports Al-Anba daily.

It outlined five important safety steps to prevent cylinder-related fires. They are:

- Ensure the cylinder is undamaged,
- Place the cylinder in a well-ventilated area,
- Regularly check the hose,
- Close the valve if a leak is detected, and open doors and windows
- Call the hotline No. 112 immediately for emergencies.

KFF stressed that adhering to these precautions is essential for protecting both lives and property.

Diwan advisors: A decree was published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm" on Sunday regarding the appointment of Dr. Khaled Al-Fadhel as an advisor at the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister, with the rank of minister for a four-year term, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Another decree was published concerning the renewal of the appointment of Dr. Bassel Al-Sabah as an advisor at the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister, with the rank of minister, for a four-year term starting January 25, 2026.

PAM appointments: The official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm" Sunday published Cabinet Resolution No. 1607/2025 on the appointment of non-executive members to the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs (PAMA), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The resolution appoints the following non-executive members for a four-year term, renewable once:

- Saud Salem Al-Sabah representing the Kuwait Investment Authority,
- Eng. Jenan Muslim Al-Zamel representing the General Secretariat of Awqaf
- Marwa Badah Al-Jaidan representing the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Disciplinary penalties: A decree was published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm" for amending Article 7 of Decree No. 124/1998 regarding disciplinary penalties for police force members, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This decree replaces the article with the following text - "A disciplinary violation shall lapse five years from the date it was committed. This period shall be interrupted by any investigative, accusatory, or trial procedure, and the period will restart from the date of the last procedure that interrupted the statute of limitations.

If the act constitutes a criminal offense, the disciplinary violation shall not lapse until the criminal case is concluded. A disciplinary penalty shall lapse three years from the date the decision imposing it becomes final."

Hajj costs KD 1,800 average

6,699 get power connections in all Kuwaiti sectors: report

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Statistical reports issued by the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy show that electricity was extended to 6,699 customers between January and October of last year. These connections spanned six residential sectors - private, industrial, commercial, governmental, investment, and agricultural - in the country's six governorates.

According to the reports, private residential customers made up the largest share, with 6,110 connections, representing 91.2 percent of the total. The governmental sector followed with 222 customers, and the investment sector accounted for 139.

It is worth highlighting that the Ministry provides the necessary infrastructure for new electricity connections in all governorates and offers online services through its website for connecting electricity, which has contributed to simplifying and streamlining procedures for all customers.

In a related development, the ministry is awaiting approval from the State Audit Bureau to contract the supply, installation, and maintenance of medium-voltage overhead lines and related civil

works on Al-Salmi Road at a cost of KD2.354 million.

The tender has been submitted to the bureau and is now under auditing, review, and approval.

The project aims to modernize and develop the electrical transmission network on Al-Salmi Road, one of the country's major highways.

■ ■ ■

KD 1,800 average for Hajj: Head of the Kuwaiti Hajj Caravans Union Ahmed Al-Dhuwailhi says Hajj campaign prices vary depending on the program, reports Al-Anba daily.

He explained that prices vary depending on hotel ratings and their proximity to the Grand Mosque. Campaign prices start from KD 1,800.

All campaigns operate under the supervision of the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and the General Authority for Tourism, and adhere to high standards in serving pilgrims.

All hotels and accommodations used by Kuwaiti Hajj campaigns in the holy sites comply with the requirements set by a committee established by the Kuwaiti Hajj Mission.

Al-Dhuwailhi congratulated those accepted for Hajj this year, 1447 AH, wishing them a blessed pilgrimage and the forgiveness of their sins.

Arab expat held in major fraud

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: A 1989-born Palestinian expatriate has been arrested for embezzling KD 35,000 from a Hawally-based travel agency, reports Al-Anba daily.

The accused, who previously worked at the agency, had confessed to taking the funds and apologized but the company rejected his apology and pressed for legal action.

According to a security source, the lawyer representing the agency explained that the agency noticed the missing money over a period of time. Internal investigations revealed the suspect had exploited the company's trust. While handling travel and hotel reservations for clients, he redirected payments to his personal bank account via links he provided, embezzling the funds without the agency's knowledge.

edge.

The company's lawyer submitted documents confirming the embezzlement, including invoices signed by the accused and a written apology addressed to both the clients and the agency, in which he admitted to the crime and requested that no legal action be taken against him.

Investigators traced the accused's personal bank account and verified that funds matching the embezzled amount had been deposited.

The Public Prosecution referred him to the Central Prison for legal proceedings and placed his name on a travel ban list pending trial.

It requested that investigations continue to determine whether the accused conducted any other financial transactions using the same method.

DNA test reveals new case of fake Kuwaiti nationality

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The General Department of Nationality Investigations successfully uncovered a complex case involving a Kuwaiti citizen and his Syrian wife, which led to two Syrians illegally obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship, one of whom is the brother of the citizen's wife, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to sources, the case centers on two Syrian men, identified as "So-and-so" and "Allan," who have fled Kuwait. Both were registered in the Kuwaiti citizen's file as his "sons." However, investigations and DNA testing later confirmed that they were Syrian and had no biological relation to the citizen.

The Kuwaiti citizen had married a Syrian woman who convinced him to register her brother "So-and-so" in his file as his son. He complied, listing him under his second wife's name.

Further investigation uncovered an even more complex situation. The documents showed that "So-and-so's" father's first wife was actually his sister, while the "mother" recorded in the file had no relation to him at all.

"So-and-so" was not the only case. Another Syrian man "Allan" was also registered in the citizen's file in the same manner, falsely listed as his son.

After reopening the case and taking the necessary measures, authorities conducted comprehensive DNA testing on all 14 children of the Kuwaiti citizen.

The results confirmed that only 12 were his biological children, while two others (names withheld) were not related to him, verifying that they had been registered improperly.

One of the individuals involved (name withheld) had left the country. His children were summoned for DNA testing, which, by comparing their profiles with those of the Kuwaiti citizen's wife, revealed that she was their aunt.

Regarding dependents, sources revealed the following:

■ (Name omitted), the wife's brother registered as the citizen's son, has 26 dependents on his file.

■ (Name omitted), the second Syrian also registered as a son, has 18 dependents.



KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Ambassador in China Jassem Al-Najem meets Director General of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of West Asia and North Africa Chen Weiqing.

Kuwait to promote Sino-Arab ties to new heights: Al-Najem

BEIJING, Dec 7, (KUNA): A Chinese official on Saturday lauded the continued development of his country's relations with Arab countries, while underlining the significance of promoting partnership between both sides in political, economic and cultural areas.

This came in a statement by Director General of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of West Asia and North Africa Chen Weiqing while meeting Arab ambassadors in Beijing at the Kuwaiti Embassy in the Chinese capital, ahead of an Arab-Sino meeting mid-2026, the embassy said in a press release.

The Chinese official said Sino-Arab relations have developed to new levels, noting that the first Arab-Chinese Summit in Riyadh in December 2022, which was attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Arab leaders, marked a key milestone in the strategic partnership.

He lauded Sino-Arab relations as being based on mutual respect, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, pointing out joint Chinese and Arab efforts to maintain international peace and security.

For his part, Kuwaiti Ambassador in China Jassem Al-Najem stressed Kuwait's commitment to promoting Arab-Sino cooperation through effective participation in all bilateral forums and meetings.

He added that Arab-Sino relations have witnessed steady growth over recent years, affirming Arab commitment to supporting everything that could lead to reinforcing bilateral partnership.

Al-Najem also spoke highly of Beijing's efforts to achieve Middle East peace and security by means of backing international and multilateral initiatives targeting Gaza ceasefire and humanitarian aid.

The Kuwaiti ambassador said that his country looks forward to hosting the third Arab-Chinese Summit in 2030. Estimates show that Arab-Sino trade exchange exceeded USD 407 billion last year amid mutual willingness to boost this figure.

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ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Affluent ... Kuwaitis and Emiratis differ in outlook

“I MET a friend from the United Arab Emirates, and we discussed the well-being of Kuwaiti and Emirati citizens. We found that, in general, both nations enjoy shared aspects of well-being that surpass those experienced by people in many other wealthy countries,” columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

“Naturally, there are some differences, especially regarding the middle class and how it manages the increasing demands of life. This is particularly true for families with children studying in very expensive private schools, along with other costs that force citizens to borrow, leaving them under constant financial pressure.



Adel Al-Kharafi

This affects families who struggle to meet these obligations and pushes many citizens to work in multiple fields. Emirati citizens tend to be more productive because they can complete most of their work remotely through their phones, giving them more time to work.

“Kuwait, despite huge global advancements in technology, still operates at a more limited level. It is to the credit of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled that, during his tenure as Prime Minister, he promoted the use of technology during the COVID-19 crisis, laying the groundwork for what is now known as e-government. However, Kuwait has not yet reached the level of the United Arab Emirates in this area. Nevertheless, the current steps are encouraging and reflect positively on the government. Much more can be done in this field, and progress will require significant achievements. Advancements in this area will undoubtedly contribute to raising the standard of living.

“There is a need to improve living conditions, which depends on several factors, most importantly social protection through solutions to the heavy debt burden that places significant pressure on citizens, as well as meeting their essential needs, including housing. We must acknowledge that there is a flawed perception of what constitutes adequate housing. For example, some citizens are unwilling to live in a 250-square-meter house, while in other countries, this size is considered very large. Emirati citizens, however, view 250 square meters as more than sufficient. As a result, some people believe that allocating housing in remote areas is somewhat unfair. The truth, however, is that homes in these areas can be advantageous, provided that advanced infrastructure and comfortable services are available, perhaps even more so than living in more crowded and less desirable locations. At the same time, citizens may be justified in their complaints about the slow pace of infrastructure development in these areas.

“In the UAE, this may not be the case, as the country’s large size requires people to live near their workplaces, and infrastructure projects are completed quickly. Today, we have an educated and informed generation with a realistic vision that aligns with the demands of modern life. Young people are willing to live in a 250-square-meter house, even in areas far from the capital. The key is the speed of infrastructure development and the provision of services suitable for this type of housing, including adequate parking. These advantages are currently lacking.

“In a previous article, I discussed the lack of parking at Amiri Hospital. If the government does not have a plan to address this issue, how can it hope to solve the housing crisis?”

Also:

“Germans, Russians, and others do not converse in English with one another, even if some of them know it. This is not out of national pride, as is often suggested, but because language is the essential link between generations. It is a vessel that preserves the cultural heritage and civilization of a people,” Kuwaiti writer Zaid Al-Jalawi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

“We must ensure that the Arab East does not suffer the same fate as the West, where conversations are reduced to “Peace be upon you” and “Praise be to God,” with the rest of the discourse lost. Laws should be enacted to protect the connection between our future and our past, and to hold accountable any Arab individual, whether in government institutions or commercial enterprises, who prioritizes English over the higher interests of society.

“We can no longer understand what some government employees and company workers are saying. In the past, conversations consisted of simple “yes” or “no” responses, perhaps with a phrase or two in a foreign language. Today, we are often forced to listen to entire paragraphs, and many feel embarrassed to ask those who are exploiting their positions to clarify or repeat themselves so we can understand. These employees, whether in the public or private sector, or even outside of work, may act in good faith, but their habits risk creating a generation that does not understand basic Arabic terms. For instance, a child may ask the meaning of “security officer,” and we are compelled to explain that it means “police.” The natural order has been reversed, and returning to the previous balance will not be easy.

“There must also be a public stance,

supported by active associations dedicated to protecting the Arabic language. These associations should engage with government officials and company boards to raise awareness of the dangers posed by overusing English and other foreign languages among Arabic-speaking communities.”



“The United States is witnessing a broad debate about the meaning of poverty and the boundaries of the middle class in the modern era, following a rise in the cost of living that outpaces real income growth,” investment advisor Alaa Mohammad Al-Behbehani wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

“Although traditional economic indicators, such as unemployment, inflation rates, and GDP, suggest relative stability, the daily reality for American families reveals a deep crisis that goes beyond official figures. In a recent article, American economist Bill Bonner provided a critical assessment of the American family’s situation, drawing on the analysis of researcher Michael Green, who argues that the true poverty line today should exceed approximately \$130,000 annually (41,000 Kuwaiti dinars) if calculated using the same methodology applied in the 1960s.

“The article highlights a radical shift in the cost of living, but many of its assumptions deserve careful re-examination. Its central idea focuses on a new form of poverty, where families outwardly appear to be middle class with a house, a car, constant connectivity, and stable employment, but are weighed down by financial obligations that prevent them from saving or achieving long-term stability. Expenses such as housing, university fees, healthcare, childcare, and communication services now make up the largest portion of family budgets, while spending on food and traditional necessities has declined. Debt has become an increasingly significant tool for covering these costs. As a result, families are perpetually tied to banks and credit institutions, creating a situation akin to modern financial slavery.

“The article assumes that all aspects of modern life are essential, though some reflect lifestyle choices rather than absolute economic necessities. Without comparisons to European or Canadian countries, the analysis remains incomplete. The United States, unlike most advanced economies, has the most expensive healthcare system, the heaviest student debt burden, and the least government support for young families, which intensifies pressure on the middle class. Nevertheless, the article’s main argument is that the cost of “normal living” is rising faster than people can afford, leading to long-term depletion, a lack of savings, and limited ability to own property.

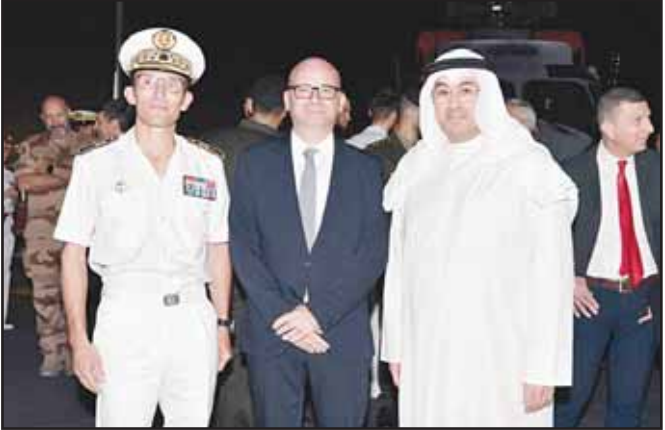
“Despite the differences between Kuwait’s economic and social systems and those of the United States, there are notable similarities, such as the high cost of housing. Property prices in Kuwait are among the highest in the Gulf region relative to average income. Young people struggle to find suitable housing before obtaining a loan, waiting periods are long, and rents have increased at a pace disproportionate to private sector salaries.

“Most families rely on private schools due to the low quality of public education, placing a significant strain on household budgets. Kindergartens and nurseries are also relatively expensive for the middle class. Kuwait has one of the highest personal loan-to-income ratios in the world, and credit card-driven consumption has become common. Many employees spend years repaying debt, limiting their ability to save. Private sector salaries do not always keep pace with the actual cost of living, and government salary increases lag behind the rising costs of housing, education, and goods.

“In the United States, some expenses have become social necessities rather than basic needs. Frequent travel, the latest gadgets, a consumerist lifestyle, and reliance on domestic help have all contributed to a higher cost of living, whether for essential or discretionary purposes. Is Kuwait heading toward a “burdened middle class” model? The answer is neither a simple yes nor a simple no. However, there are indicators that deserve attention, including rising real estate prices, a widening gap between income and the cost of education and services, a consumer culture reliant on loans, a lack of long-term savings, and the slow pace of economic reforms. If these trends continue, we may witness a pattern similar to what is happening in the United States, though shaped by local characteristics.

“The impact of economic crises and inflation on the middle class is not unique to America; it represents an emerging global model. In some societies, residents appear outwardly well-off, yet beneath the surface, they face constant financial pressures that prevent stability or savings, effectively trapping them in “debt bondage.” In Kuwait, similar challenges are emerging, particularly in housing, education, and consumption. Clear policies are needed to balance income with the cost of living, ensuring that financial strain does not escalate into a deeper social crisis.”

— Compiled by Simi K.Kutty



KUNA photos

Top and above: GCC navies’ top officials with Kuwaiti dignitaries meet at a reception held at the naval base.

GCC navies join Kuwait in drill set for Dec 15

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Mohammad Al-Ahmad Kuwait Naval Base has hosted ships and boats of GCC states’ navies in preparation for the drill, “Ittehad 2025,” due on December 15.

The Kuwait Army Chief of Staff said in a statement that the planned exercise would be held in line with the joint military action among the GCC states and the strategy to defend their territorial sea waters.

It quoted Commander of the Kuwait Naval Force Rear Admiral Saif Al-Hamlan as welcoming the participating GCC forces, noting that the drill was designed to uplift the common efficiency in a ‘realistic training

environment.’

Rear Admiral Al-Hamlan has added that participation of the GCC countries’ naval forces in this drill reflects the GCC states’ joint objectives and destiny, brings into the limelight the high professionalism of the naval forces and ability of joint action for bolstering security and stability of the Arabian Gulf.

The mock combat will feature employment of rocket launchers, artillery batteries, joint operations and associated athletic activities.

Duo jailed in ‘influencer’ harassment

Victim acquitted of abuse, phone misuse

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Misdemeanor Court acquitted a social media influencer of charges of verbal abuse and misuse of a smartphone for filming a dispute and exchange of accusations on a public road, after her lawyer, Inam Haidar, proved the lack of evidence and absence of any technical or verbal proof against her.

Instead, the court convicted two young men,

sentencing them to two weeks’ imprisonment, for damaging the influencer’s vehicle, committing an indecent act in public, and directing insulting language at her. However, The court suspended their sentences for three years, on the condition that they provide a KD 300 bail bond and pledge to maintain good conduct and refrain from repeating the offense.

According to the case details, the influencer’s vehicle was deliberately rammed by the two men after she swerved into their path. They verbally abused her, made obscene gestures, and one of them intentionally rammed her car, causing damage estimated at approximately KD 500.

The Public Prosecution had charged the third defendant (the social media influencer) with

misusing a smartphone by filming the first defendant without his consent, and insulting the first and second defendants, based on a complaint filed by both parties.

Lawyer Inam Haidar, representing her client in court, argued that the charges were unsubstantiated and lacked any technical or factual evidence to support the claims of filming or the alleged insults.

She emphasized that the case file contained no evidence implicating her client, while the charges against the two young men were supported by evidence and circumstantial proof.

After reviewing the case and hearing arguments, the court acquitted the third defendant of all charges.

Woman hurt in mishap

African expat in ICU after hit-and-run car accident

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: An African expatriate was struck by a vehicle in Saad Al-Abdullah, with the driver fleeing the scene, reports Al-Anba daily. According to a security source, the victim sustained serious life-threatening injuries and was transferred to the intensive care unit in critical condition. Authorities are carrying out their investigation to locate the driver and refer him to the Public Prosecution.



Woman injured: A collision occurred in Khaldiya between a delivery vehicle and a car driven by an expatriate woman, resulting in the latter sustaining multiple fractures, reports Al-Anba daily.

The woman was immediately taken to Al-Amiri Hospital for treatment, and the driver responsible for the accident was taken to Khaldiya Police Station for legal action.



‘Stay away from drugs’: The Ministry of Interior released videos featuring several women who experienced drug addiction and were rescued from this dark path, reports Al-Anba daily. In these videos, they emphasized that their greatest mistake was simply trying drugs, thus sending a clear message to never experiment with them.

The women also praised the role of the addiction treatment center in saving their lives.

They expressed their gratitude to First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef for his support of efforts to combat and treat drug addiction.

‘Verify buyer’s identity before selling e-cards’

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has instructed companies and institutions that operate websites and applications selling electronic cards and top-ups to verify buyers’ identities before completing any sale, in accordance with the Ministerial Decision No. 243/2024, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to informed sources, the measure aims to enhance oversight of these platforms and prevent potential manipulation by sellers.

The decision regulates the sale of electronic products in Kuwait, requiring companies and institutions with such websites to implement specific controls and standards for online transactions involving items such as iTunes cards, mobile phone credit, and other top-up products.

Violators of the decision are subject to penalties stipulated in Decree Law No. 10/1979 on supervision of trade in goods and services, as well as the laws governing commercial licenses and companies.

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New GPA rules set for overseas scholarships

Higher Education outlines mechanism

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Ministry of Higher Education outlined the mechanism for calculating the equivalent GPA for students applying to the overseas scholarship program, as part of its efforts to streamline procedures for high school graduates seeking scholarships for the 2026/2027 academic year, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that the equivalent GPA is calculated based on three main components - the percentage of the high school diploma exam score, the percentage of the national exam scores, and the weight of each component according to the chosen field of study.

It highlighted that admission to the scholarship program is competitive, taking into account the equivalent GPA and the number of available places in each specialization.

The ministry clarified that this mechanism aims to ensure the selection of the most qualified students for specializations that require scientific and linguistic skills suited to the

nature of study at accredited international universities.

It emphasized the importance of carefully reviewing these regulations before submitting applications to ensure the selection of the appropriate specialization and to maximize the benefits of the scholarship opportunities. Comprehensive guidance is available through the ministry's website and official platforms.

The equivalent GPA for admission to programs in human medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine is calculated as follows:

- 90 percent weight for the high school diploma
- 5 percent weight for the English language test
- 5 percent weight for the mathematics test

For pharmacy programs, the ministry clarified that the high school diploma accounts for 70 percent, while the national exam accounts for 30 percent, distributed as follows:

- 15 percent English language
- 15 percent mathematics

For students applying to engineering programs, the equivalent GPA is calculated based on:

- 65 percent weight for the high school diploma
- 35 percent weight for the national exams, split as 15 percent English language and 20 percent mathematics



Top and above: Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attends the Ahmadi Exhibition for Supporting Small Businesses 2025.

Governor praises KOC's support

Ahmadi backs youth-led business

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah highlighted the vital role of small businesses in supporting the national economy.

Speaking at the opening of the second edition of the Ahmadi Exhibition for Supporting Small Businesses 2025, held in the Ahmadi tent at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), the governor noted that the event is in line with the governorate's focus on empowering talented Kuwaiti youth.

Sheikh Hamoud praised all participants and KOC for hosting the exhibition, and invited citizens to visit the exhibition and explore the promising projects, innovations, and aspirations of young entrepreneurs and national talent.

He stressed that the Ahmadi Governorate, in partnership with KOC, is committed to supporting initiatives and events that deliver social and environmental benefits.

Governor Sheikh Hamoud wished the exhibition success in its second edition.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Al-Basri, Director of Public Relations and Media at KOC, stated that the opening of the exhibition, under the patronage of the Ahmadi Governor, reflects KOC's commitment to supporting entrepreneurs in the small business sector.

He emphasized that KOC assists small projects in line with its strategy and that of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, particularly in areas of social responsibility and youth empowerment.

Al-Basri indicated that several young men and women from various regions participated in the exhibition to showcase outstanding projects that benefit the community.

He revealed that KOC will launch Al-Ahmadi Sports Day, the largest sports and entertainment event, in February 2026, culminating in a grand festival for all Kuwaiti citizens.

PAM opens spring '26 registration for student internship

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has announced the registration process for its student training program in private sector companies for the spring semester of 2026, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAM explained that the training period will be held from January 4 to 29, 2026, and is aimed at providing students with practical experience in private sector companies and enhancing their professional skills.

Registration for the program began on November 16 and will continue until December 18.

Students can register electronically by scanning the QR code available on the authority's website at <https://www.manpower.gov.kw/SummerTrainingProject>.

Artist Al-Fahad stable after severe infection

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Kuwait Union for Artistic and Theatrical Production and Entertainment Industry issued a press statement regarding the health condition of artist Hayat Al-Fahad in London, following reports on some websites and media platforms claiming her condition had deteriorated, reports Al-Jarida daily.

President of the union Khaled Al-Rashed stated, "We would like to inform the public that the esteemed artist Hayat Al-Fahad, Vice President of the union, experienced another severe health crisis on December 1, which required her admission to the Intensive Care Unit for the second time since she traveled to London approximately four months ago.

She has been undergoing thorough examinations and continuous treatment since suffering a stroke at the end of July.



Al-Fahad

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Official advocates smart mobility

Kuwait's Al-Faresi joins Global Future Roads Forum in Riyadh

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Member of the Municipal Council, Eng. Aliya Al-Faresi, represented the State of Kuwait at the Global Future Roads Forum, held as part of the Saudi Multimodal Mobility Exhibition in Riyadh.

Al-Faresi presented a paper during a panel discussion titled "Cooperative Frameworks for Seamless Integration and Action Plan for Mobility Transformation in the GCC Countries."

The panel brought together leading regional experts to explore the most effective strategies GCC cities should adopt over the next three to five years to reduce congestion, improve road safety, and support rapid urban growth through sustainable, future-ready mobility solutions.

The panel discussion brought together a select group of regional leaders to identify the most effective measures GCC cities should adopt over the next three to five years to reduce congestion, improve road safety, and support rapid urban growth through sustainable, future-ready mobility solutions.

Al-Faresi highlighted the growing importance of micro-mobility, including scooters, bicycles, and e-bikes, as a major component



Municipal Council member, Eng. Aliya Al-Faresi, representing the State of Kuwait at the Global Future Roads Forum.

of urban transport.

She stressed that with proper regulations, safety standards, and integration with public transport networks, micro-mobility can significantly reduce congestion and enhance connectivity between destinations.

KU hosts 'Make a Move' health and sports event

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait University's Security and Safety Department, in collaboration with the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) and the Public Authority for Youth (PAY), organized a health and sports event titled "Make a Move" on Wednesday, December 3, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Sabah Al-Salem University City campus.



Students and staff embrace wellness at KU's 'Make a Move' sports event.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the event was attended by the Security and Safety Department Director Yousef Yaqoub Al-Khamis.

Aimed at raising awareness about the importance of physical activity and its role in improving public health, the event encouraged university members to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle.

Participants enjoyed a variety of sports and awareness activities that combined fun and educational value, under the supervision of

specialists in fitness and public health, and with the participation of several organizations and institutions.

Al-Khamis explained that the "Make a Move" event was organized to promote physical activity among young people, combat obesity and inactivity, and encourage a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

The event included fun activities, sports challenges, and various competitions, creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm and positive interaction among the university members and

providing a break from their daily study and work routines.

The event was held in the corridor between the College of Business Administration and the College of Life Sciences, from 9:00am to 5:00pm, with a large turnout and enthusiastic participation.

Al-Khamis encouraged all Kuwait University members to take part in similar activities in the future, emphasizing their importance in promoting public health and building a vibrant, collaborative university community.



Ministry of Information photos
Kuwait Information Minister, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi visits Kuwaiti pavilions displaying in Qatar.

Minister Al-Mutairi visits Kuwaiti pavilions in Qatar

Kuwait's Minister of Information, Culture, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi on Saturday visited Kuwaiti pavilions and exhibitions showcasing at Qatar's tourist and entertainment destinations

The minister toured the tourist destinations, Darb Lusail and Katara Cultural Village. He proceeded to the sites after attending the Kuwait-Jordan football match held as part of the 2025 Fifa Qatar Arab Cup tournament.

Al-Mutairi in remarks during the visits expressed satisfaction at the eye-catching Kuwaiti participation with diverse

handicrafts and artistic works depicting the national identity. He lauded the Kuwaiti artists, handicrafters and the institutions for displaying cultural content that promotes Kuwait's history.

These efforts are being extorted as a result of the political leadership's support for culture and arts, "a segment of Kuwait's soft power and its civic message," he said.

He was accompanied by the acting charge d'affaires at the State of Kuwait Embassy in the State of Qatar, Mohammad Al-Zu'bi. (KUNA)

Kuwait mourns loss of veteran diplomat Abdulrazzaq Al-Kandari

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait and its diplomatic community mourned the loss of Ambassador Abdulrazzaq Abdulqader Al-Kandari, a distinguished figure in Kuwaiti diplomacy, who passed away after decades of dedicated service, reports Al-Rai daily.

Throughout his career, Ambassador Al-Kandari witnessed pivotal events in Algeria, Lebanon, and Iran. Despite the challenges



Veteran Kuwaiti diplomat Abdulrazzaq Al-Kandari, affectionately known as Abu Tariq, whose decades-long career strengthened Kuwait's diplomatic ties across the Arab world and beyond.

of such postings, he consistently represented Kuwait with a trusted, balanced, and unifying voice, earning respect for his ability to build bridges and promote cooperation.

Renowned for his exceptional political and diplomatic skills, he cultivated an extensive network of relationships, always prioritizing the interests of Kuwait and the Arab world, whose unity and progress he deeply valued.

Continued from Page 1

Anti-Monopoly

This measure is vital, because the proportion of young people needing housing assistance is consistently rising.

By curbing land prices and significantly reducing the waiting period for housing aid, this legislation provides a scientific, legal and financial solution.

It guarantees that young families can secure housing units or apartments at affordable rental rates, ultimately offering them substantial relief while preventing housing deprivation.

Furthermore, the proposed law aligns with Gulf legislative trends. In some countries in the region, increased fees on vacant land successfully curbed monopolies.

Meanwhile, other nations stimulated the economic cycle by easing property ownership for non-citizens and simultaneously advancing housing projects for citizens.

Overall, this law is a positive step, supporting the strategic goal of the State to guarantee the citizens' welfare.

21 Kuwait

The report emphasized the importance of investing surpluses generated from privatization and distributing a portion of the returns to citizens.

It identified the program's main challenges as the low participation of citizens and the private sector in public asset ownership, the public sector's dominance in operational sectors, and imbalances in public finances.

The report stated that the program's objectives include increasing citizen participation in privatized assets, gradually privatizing operational sectors, and restructuring public finances.

It noted that the program includes the privatization of the Shuaiba North Power Plant, which is being implemented through the technical unit of the privatization program with non-governmental financing.

The General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development affirmed the need for developing radical solutions to handle the challenges facing projects included in the plan.

It highlighted that some projects are experiencing huge delays despite the relevant authorities not reporting any obstacles to their progress.

Association of

The association's members include female ambassadors, wives of ambassadors and heads of missions, female diplomats working in embassies and international organizations, as well as wives of members of African missions.

Ambassador Thoms called for the activation of the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, describing it as "a historic victory for African women and their most important tool in confronting all forms of discrimination."

She then introduced the members of the association's founding executive committee and the organizing committee for the celebration, praising their dedication to the success of this significant event.

In closing, Ambassador Thoms congratulated all members of the association on the launch of this new chapter of collaborative work, stating that the initiative "will be a true platform for strengthening African-Kuwaiti relations and the beginning of a long path of fruitful cooperation". She also emphasized the commitment to further enhancing the partnership with Kuwait.

In addition, Assistant Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs Tahani Al-Nasser expressed her sincere gratitude for the invitation to represent Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and deliver a speech at the official launch of the African Women Diplomats' Dinner, which marked the establishment of the African Women Diplomats Association in Kuwait.

She said the association is a positive step toward strengthening diplomatic efforts, and it represents one of many avenues that contribute to promoting peace and cooperation between countries.

Al-Nasser affirmed that the historical relations between Kuwait and African countries are deeply rooted, spanning more than sixty years.

She stressed that Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognizes this important association as part of African diplomatic activity, which holds a significant and prominent presence both in Kuwait and globally.

Al-Nasser highlighted that African female diplomats play a key role with full commitment to African identity while celebrating the continent's rich political, economic, and cultural heritage, particularly during the annual Africa Day on May 25.

Kuwait nabs

341 grams of methamphetamine (shabu), around 9,000 Lyrica pills, and nearly 3,000 Captagon tablets.

The ministry added that authorities also confiscated roughly 6 kilograms of chemical drugs, about 3.25 kilograms of marijuana, around 20 grams of heroin, 75 grams of hashish, a rolled cigarette, five bottles of hashish oil used for electronic cigarettes, and three precision scales used for weighing narcotics. Around 400 Kuwaiti dinars-suspected proceeds from drug trafficking-were recovered.

All suspects and seized items were referred to the competent authorities to take the necessary legal action. The ministry reaffirmed its continued efforts to pursue drug traffickers and distributors through ongoing security campaigns.

Q8 becomes

The appointed members are Shukri Abdulaziz Al-Mahrous, Areej Yousef Al-Bahr, Shafi Taleb Al-Ajmi, Fahad Saad Al-Mutairi, Dhari Hamed Al-

Gharaballi, Ali Mohammed Al-Ajmi, and Hamad Rashid Al-Zuwair.

The board also approved the appointment of Shukri Abdulaziz Al-Mahrous as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Q8 International and Areej Yousef Al-Bahr as Vice Chairman.

The membership term will officially begin once the company's founding assembly approves the appointments of the chairman and board members for a three-year term.

The KPC Board also decided to appoint Shafi Taleb Al-Ajmi as CEO of Q8 International for a three-year term, effective from the date the founding assembly approves the appointments of the chairman and board members.

Bullish sentiment

China will release inflation and production data for November, and the UK, Germany, and Italy have a busy week of economic reports covering growth, trade, and industrial production.

These developments collectively support a bullish outlook for gold prices, particularly amid slowing inflation and weakening US labor market indicators.

Gold futures for February delivery closed the week at \$4,243 per ounce, while the dollar index remained steady at 98.9 points. The yield on 10-year Treasury bonds rose to 4.14 percent, limiting gold's gains but not preventing it from staying above \$4,190 per ounce.

Analysts are divided between neutral and optimistic, though major market investors lean toward a bullish scenario.

Observers believe that surpassing the \$4,265 per ounce level could trigger a retest of the all-time high near \$4,380 per ounce. Some forecasts even suggest that gold could reach \$5,000 per ounce by 2026, fueled by ongoing central bank purchases and declining global interest rates.

Philippine officials

Secretary Cacdac toured the care and rehabilitation programs available.

He praised the center's efforts to enhance social protection and protect workers' rights, and highlighted the importance of continued cooperation between Kuwait and the Philippines in supporting the welfare of migrant workers.

The delegation also conducted a thorough tour of the center's facilities, noting its role as a leading model in the GCC and the wider region in terms of capacity and the quality of humanitarian services provided.

At the end of the visit, Secretary Cacdac thanked the leadership and staff of PAM, commending their ongoing efforts to enhance services and affirming that Kuwait's initiatives reflect a strong commitment to protecting workers' rights and maintaining a safe, humane working environment.

Kuwait affirms Arab charter commitment

982 laws reviewed for human rights

CAIRO, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait has reiterated its commitment to offering periodical reports on applying the principles of Arab charter to the Arab Charter on Human Rights Committee as planned, out of its eagerness to boost and protect human rights in the country.

This came in a joint news conference between Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights Affairs Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, who chairs Kuwait's delegation participating in discussing Kuwait's second periodical report before the committee, and the head of the committee Mohammad Al-Shehhi during the 28th session.

Sheikha Jawaher referred that the committee visited Kuwait ahead of the discussion to get informed about efforts exerted by the concerned bodies related to the application of the charter's provisions and articles.

Kuwait is witnessing a tangible and noticeable progress in human rights, she said, noting that about 982 laws and articles have been reviewed in Kuwait to boost the measures of maintaining human rights.

The recent reviewed laws were the anti-drug law to protect society and individuals from this dangerous scourge and the cancellation of Article 153 of the penal code, she stated. The Arab region is characterized by some special values and traditions that are consistent with Islamic sharia, Sheikha Jawaher pointed out.

She stressed Kuwait's belief in the Arab League's mechanisms, mainly the ones related to human rights.



KUNA photo
Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights, Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, delivers her speech.

Sheikha Jawaher pointed to the amendment of the law, which raises the minimum marriage age to 18 for both males and females.

Meanwhile, Al-Shehhi affirmed Kuwait's eagerness to abide by presenting its second periodical report on applying the Arab charter on human rights.

He referred that the discussions included constructive and interactive dialogue between the committee's members and Kuwait's high-level delegation.

Offering Kuwait's report as planned shows the country's real political will to abide by Arab mechanisms concerned with human rights, he pointed out.

The committee followed, with great concern, human rights developments made by Kuwait over the past years, he stated.

Sheikha Jawaher led Kuwait's delegation containing some government bodies during the 28th session at the Arab League's H.Q to discuss the second Kuwaiti periodical report.



Photos during Dalal Al Mulla Legal Group launching of its 'Musaed' Smart Platform at NEXUS Exhibition.

Dalal Al Mulla Legal Group unveils 'Musaed' smart platform at NEXUS

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Dalal Al Mulla Legal Group inaugurated its pavilion yesterday at the NEXUS Exhibition, welcoming visitors as part of its participation aimed at showcasing the latest advancements in its legal services. The pavilion witnessed significant interest from legal professionals and technology sector specialists.

The Group's Founder and CEO, Dalal Al Mulla, announced the launch of the digital platform "Musaed," the first smart legal platform of its kind in Kuwait—an initiative that has been described as a major milestone in the digital transformation of legal services in the country.

Al Mulla stated that the platform is designed to provide innovative legal services and consultations powered by artificial intelligence, enhancing efficiency and enabling faster access to accurate and reliable legal information.

She emphasized that the launch of "Musaed" comes as part of the Group's strategy to develop its digital infrastructure, improve user experience, and keep pace with

modern trends in offering more comprehensive and accessible legal services.

Al Mulla noted that the NEXUS Exhibition is one of the leading technology events that brings together specialized companies in technological solutions and digital transformation. This year, the exhibition focused on showcasing the latest innovations in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced systems, and smart services, making it a key platform for communication between industry leaders, innovators, and future-oriented projects that support the vision for digital transformation in Kuwait and the region.

She also expressed her appreciation for the attendees who joined the event, affirming that public support strengthens the Group's efforts to continue developing innovative legal solutions that serve the business sector and the community, while supporting the national direction towards digital transformation.

Laws and services ensure children's safety

Kuwait affirms 'strong and integrated' child-protection system at Arab forum

CAIRO, Dec 7, (KUNA): A Kuwaiti official has affirmed that Kuwait has a strong and integrated child-protection system based on specialized institutions and fair legislation that ensures a safe environment guaranteeing children's stability and their physical and psychological well-being.

This came in a worksheet presented by Dr. Maha Al-Jarallah, psychological consultant at the Supreme Council for the Family, during the closing session of the High-Level Arab Conference on Child Labour and Social Protection Policies in Arab States, held under the umbrella of the Arab League.

Al-Jarallah outlined for the conference the historical development of social protection in Kuwait, as well as the legal framework and the main actors in the child-protection system.



KUNA photo
Dr. Maha Al-Jarallah, Psychological Consultant at the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, affiliated with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Social Affairs.

‘Roberts may be wrong about history underpinning unitary executive’

Supreme Court weighs another step in favor of broad presidential power sought by Trump

WASHINGTON, Dec 7, (AP): US Chief Justice John Roberts has led the Supreme Court’s conservative majority on a steady march of increasing the power of the presidency, starting well before Donald Trump’s time in the White House.

The justices could take the next step in a case being argued Monday that calls for a unanimous 90-year-old decision limiting executive authority to be overturned.

The court’s conservatives, liberal Justice Elena Kagan noted in September, seem to be “raring to take that action.”

They already have allowed Trump, in the opening months of the Republican’s second term, to fire almost everyone he has wanted, despite the court’s 1935 decision in Humphrey’s Executor that prohibits the president from removing the heads of independent agencies without cause.

The officials include Rebecca Slaughter, whose firing from the Federal Trade Commission is at issue in the current case, as well as officials from the National Labor Relations Board, the Merit Systems Protection Board and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The only officials who have so far survived efforts to remove them are Lisa Cook, a Federal Reserve governor, and Shira Perlmutter, a copyright official with the Library of Congress. The court already has suggested that it will view the Fed differently from other independent agencies, and Trump has said he wants her out because of allegations of mortgage fraud. Cook says she did nothing wrong.

Humphrey’s Executor has long been a target of the conservative legal movement that has embraced an expansive view of presidential power known as the unitary executive.

The case before the high court involves the same agency, the FTC, that was at issue in 1935. The justices established that presidents - Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time - could not fire the appointed leaders of the alphabet soup of federal agencies without cause.

The decision ushered in an era of powerful independent federal agencies charged with regulating labor relations, employment discrimination, the air waves and much else. Proponents of the unitary executive theory have said the modern administrative state gets the Constitution all wrong: Federal agencies that are part



US President Donald Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting at the White House on Dec 2 in Washington. (AP)

of the executive branch answer to the president, and that includes the ability to fire their leaders at will. As Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in a 1988 dissent that has taken on mythical status among conservatives, “this does not mean some of the executive power, but all of the executive power.” Since 2010 and under Roberts’ leadership, the Supreme Court has steadily whittled away at laws restricting the president’s ability to fire people.

In 2020, Roberts wrote for the court that “the President’s removal power is the

rule, not the exception” in a decision upholding Trump’s firing of the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau despite job protections similar to those upheld in Humphrey’s case.

In the 2024 immunity decision that spared Trump from being prosecuted for his efforts to overturn the 2020 election results, Roberts included the power to fire among the president’s “conclusive and preclusive” powers that Congress lacks the authority to restrict.

But according to legal historians and even a prominent proponent of the originalism approach to interpreting the Constitution that is favored by conservatives, Roberts may be wrong about the history underpinning the unitary executive.

“Both the text and the history of Article II are far more equivocal than the current Court has been suggesting,” wrote Caleb Nelson, a University of Virginia law professor who once served as a law clerk to Justice Clarence Thomas.

Jane Manners, a Fordham University law professor, said she and other historians filed briefs with the court to provide history and context about the removal power in the country’s early years that also could lead the court to revise its views. “I’m not holding my breath,” she said.

Slaughter’s lawyers embrace the historians’ arguments, telling the court that limits on Trump’s power are consistent with the Constitution and U.S. history.

The Justice Department argues Trump can fire board members for any reason as he works to carry out his agenda and that the precedent should be tossed aside. “Humphrey’s Executor was always egregiously wrong,” Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote. A second question in the case could affect Cook, the Fed governor. Even if a firing turns out to be illegal, the court wants to decide whether judges have the power to reinstate someone.

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote earlier this year that fired employees who win in court can likely get back pay, but not reinstatement.

That might affect Cook’s ability to remain in her job. The justices have seemed wary about the economic uncertainty that might result if Trump can fire the leaders of the central bank. The court will hear separate arguments in January about whether Cook can remain in her job as her court case challenging her firing proceeds.

America

7.0 magnitude quake hits Alaska: A powerful, magnitude-7.0 earthquake struck in a remote area near the border between Alaska and the Canadian territory of Yukon on Saturday. There was no tsunami warning, and officials said there were no immediate reports of damage or injury.

The US. Geological Survey said it struck about 230 miles (370 kilometers) northwest of Juneau, Alaska, and 155 miles (250 kilometers) west of Whitehorse, Yukon.

In Whitehorse, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Sgt. Calista MacLeod said the detachment received two 911 calls about the earthquake.

“It definitely was felt,” MacLeod said. “There are a lot of people on social media, people felt it.”

Alison Bird, a seismologist with Natural Resources Canada, said the part of Yukon most affected by the tremor is mountainous and has few people.

“Mostly people have reported things falling off shelves and walls,” Bird said. “It doesn’t seem like we’ve seen anything in terms of structural damage.”

The Canadian community nearest to the epicenter is Haines Junction, Bird said, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) away. The Yukon Bureau of Statistics lists its population count for 2022 as 1,018. (AP)



Hubbard Glacier, located near Yakutat, Alaska, is seen on Aug 1, 2024. (AP)

in the U.S. illegally and had previously been deported. He faced a hearing Monday morning in Mecklenburg County District Court.

An arrest warrant filed in a North Carolina court says Solarzano appeared to be intoxicated and was slurring his words when he challenged the victim to a fight.

Online court and jail records did not list an attorney for Solarzano. (AP)

N.Carolina stabbing attack injures 1: Police in North Carolina have charged a 33-year-old man with critically injuring another person in a stabbing on a Charlotte commuter train, just a few months after a Ukrainian refugee riding one of the city’s trains was killed in an unrelated knife attack.

Oscar Solarzano, 33, was charged with attempted first-degree murder, assault with a deadly weapon and other crimes stemming from the Friday afternoon attack in which he wielded a large knife, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police said in a news release.

Police said the victim suffered a stab wound and was hospitalized in critical but stable condition.

Solarzano was being held in jail Saturday without bond. A magistrate judge said in a court filing that the suspect was

Louisiana inmates on the run: Two inmates accused of violent crimes, including second-degree attempted murder, are on the run after escaping from a southwestern Louisiana jail Wednesday by removing pieces of a degrading wall and using sheets to scale a wall, officials said. A third inmate who joined in the breakout killed himself after he was tracked down.

It was the latest bold jail escape in Louisiana. Earlier this year 10 inmates broke out of a New Orleans jail after crawling through a hole behind a toilet. It wasn’t until five months later - following the discovery of the escape crime scene with a message that read “To Easy LoL,” finger-pointing by officials as to who was to blame for the audacious escape and a search that spanned multiple states - that all 10 inmates were recaptured. (AP)

‘Trump can order use of force as he sees fit’

Hegseth defends strikes on cartel boats

WASHINGTON, Dec 7, (AP): US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth defended strikes on alleged drug cartel boats during remarks Saturday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, saying President Donald Trump has the power to take military action “as he sees fit” to defend the nation.

Hegseth dismissed criticism of the strikes, which have killed more than 80 people and now face intense scrutiny over concerns that they violated international law. Saying the strikes are justified to protect Americans, Hegseth likened the fight to the war on terror following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

“If you’re working for a designated terrorist organization and you bring drugs to this country in a boat, we will find you and we will sink you. Let there be no doubt about it,” Hegseth said during his keynote address at the Reagan National Defense Forum. “President Trump can and will take decisive military action as he sees fit to defend our nation’s interests. Let no country on earth doubt that for a moment.”

The most recent strike brings the death toll of the campaign to at least 87 people. Lawmakers have sought more answers about the attacks and their legal justification, and whether U.S. forces were ordered to launch a follow-up strike following a September attack even after the Pentagon knew of survivors.

Though Hegseth compared the alleged drug smugglers to Al-Qaida terrorists, experts have noted significant differences between the two foes and the efforts to combat them.

Hegseth’s remarks came after the Trump administration released its new national security strategy, one that paints European allies as weak and aims to reassert America’s dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

During the speech, Hegseth also discussed the need to check China’s rise through strength instead of conflict. He repeated Trump’s vow to resume nuclear testing on an equal



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth arrives before the lighting of the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse on Dec 4, near the White House in Washington. (AP)

basis as China and Russia - a goal that has alarmed many nuclear arms experts. China and Russia haven’t conducted explosive tests in decades, though the Kremlin said it would follow the U.S. if Trump restarted tests.

The speech was delivered at the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute in California, an event which brings together top national security experts from around the country. Hegseth used the visit to argue that Trump is Reagan’s “true and rightful heir” when it comes to muscular foreign policy.

By contrast, Hegseth criticized Republican leaders in the years since Reagan for supporting wars in the Middle East and democracy-building efforts that didn’t work. He also blasted those who have argued that climate change poses serious challenges to military readiness.

Europe

Georgia denies using camite on protesters: Georgia’s State Security Service on Saturday refuted allegations that police used a World War I-era chemical agent, known as “camite,” on protesters in 2024, saying that laboratory tests detected only standard, legally permitted crowd-control substances, Interpressnews reported.

First Deputy Head of the State Security Service **Lasha Maghradze** said that an extensive investigation, which included more than 160 procedural actions, 93 witness interviews and chemical testing of seized samples, showed that officers used chlorobenzylidene malononitrile to disperse crowds on the night of Dec. 4-5, 2024.

The substance was mixed with propylene glycol, he said, adding that neither of the substances is prohibited under Georgian or international law. (Xinhua)



Maghradze

Heathrow Airport incident causes disruptions: Multiple people were reported to be assaulted at a multi-storey car park at Terminal 3 of London’s Heathrow Airport on Sunday morning, said the Metropolitan Police.

The police arrested one man after several people were sprayed with what is believed to be “a type of pepper spray” at Heathrow Airport by a group of men before they fled the scene. The disruption reportedly caused the airport traffic to be blocked and trains to be suspended, and the airport has advised its customers to “allow extra time when travelling to the airport and to check with their airline for any queries” on its website.

Armed officers were called to the scene and arrested one

man on suspicion of assault. He remains in custody as detectives work to identify and locate additional suspects, said the police. (Xinhua)

UK sanctions GRU: UK imposed sanctions on Russia’s entire military intelligence agency (GRU) and summoned Moscow’s Ambassador after an inquiry accused President Vladimir Putin of ordering the 2018 Skripal Novichok poisoning. UK Foreign Secretary said, in a statement, that the Russian Ambassador was summoned over the inquiry’s findings, which “confirm Russia’s use of a military-grade nerve agent that killed a British citizen, Dawn Sturgess.”

The report finds “the GRU, with Putin’s authorization, used Novichok, which was illegally developed and retained by Russia in breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention.”

The latest sanctions target eight GRU cyber officers involved in operations against Yulia Skripal.

UK further demanded an end to Russia’s ongoing campaign of hostile activity against the UK and NATO.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned Russia’s “reckless aggression” over the Salisbury poisonings, calling Dawn Sturgess’s death a tragic reminder of the Kremlin’s disregard for human life. (KUNA)

Shooting in N.Croatia leaves 1 dead: A shooting in the Medjimurje County in northern Croatia has left one woman dead and another fighting for life in the hospital, the county police said in a statement on Friday.

The police received an emergency call at 20:53 (19:53 GMT). Upon arrival at the scene, they found that at a home on the Sitnice Street, a 40-year-old man shot a 28-year-old and a 29-year-old woman before running away, said the statement, cited by the Croatian Radiotelevision.

The two were rushed to the Cakovec Hospital nearby. After attempted resuscitation, the 28-year-old woman died, while the 29-year-old remained in a critical condition, it said. (Xinhua)



The oil tanker Kairos stranded off near the Black Sea port of Ahtopol, Bulgaria on Dec 6, after an alleged Ukrainian drone attack. (AP)

Sanctioned oil tanker stranded off Bulgaria’s Black Sea coast

Bulgarian maritime authorities on Saturday launched efforts to evacuate the crew of the oil tanker Kairos stranded off the Black Sea port of Ahtopol and believed to be part of the “shadow fleet” used by Russia to evade international sanctions linked to its war in Ukraine.

Last week, the Gambian-flagged 274-meter Kairos caught fire after an alleged attack with Ukrainian naval drones in the Black Sea near the Turkish coast. It was sailing empty from Egypt toward the Russian port of

Novorossiysk.

The 149,000-ton Kairos, formerly flagged as Panamanian, Greek and Liberian, was built in 2002. It was sanctioned by the EU in July this year, followed by the U.K. and Switzerland.

The ship entered Bulgaria’s territorial waters on Friday under tow by a Turkish vessel, but the mission was abruptly abandoned, leaving the tanker to drift across the sea without power like a ghost ship before stranding less than a nautical mile off the shore. (AP)

18 migrants die as inflatable boat sinks south of Greek island of Crete

ATHENS, Greece, Dec 7, (Agencies): At least 18 migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea in an inflatable boat died when it capsized south of the island of Crete, Greek authorities said Saturday.

The half-sunken boat was located Saturday by a passing Turkish merchant vessel, authorities said. Two survivors were rescued and a rescue operation to find more was ongoing.

Greece is a major entry point into the European Union for people fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia and fatal accidents are a common occurrence. The short but perilous journey from Turkey’s coast to nearby Greek islands in inflatable dinghies or small boats, often in poor conditions, used to be the major route until increased patrols and alleged pushbacks reduced crossing attempts. In recent months, arrivals from Libya to Crete have surged.

Authorities have not yet determined where the boat came from.

A ship and a plane from European border agency Frontex, a Greek Coast Guard helicopter and three merchant



Migrants rescued south of Crete walk after their arrival at the the port of Lavrio, Greece, on July 10. (AP)

vessels are taking part in the search operation.

Also:

BEIJING: An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.0 jolted **Greece** at 2048

GMT on Saturday, the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences said. The epicenter, with a depth of 10 km, was initially determined to be at 38.01 degrees north latitude and 22.00 degrees east longitude.

Russian strikes kill one as US, Ukraine officials wrap up third day of talks

KYIV, Ukraine, Dec 7, (AP): Russian missile and drone attacks overnight into Sunday killed at least one person in Ukraine, after U.S. and Ukrainian officials wrapped up a third day of talks aimed at ending the war.

A man was killed in a drone attack on Ukraine’s northern Chernihiv region Saturday night, local officials said, while a combined missile and drone attack on infrastructure in the central city of Kremenchuk caused power and water outages. Kremenchuk is home to one of Ukraine’s biggest oil refineries and is an industrial hub.

Kyiv and its Western allies say Russia is trying to cripple the Ukrainian power grid and deny civilians access to heat, light and running water for a fourth consecutive winter, in what Ukrainian officials call “weaponizing” the cold.

The latest round of attacks came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday evening he had a “substantive phone call” with American officials engaged in talks with a Ukrainian delegation in Florida. He said he had been given an update over the phone by US and Ukrainian officials at the talks.

“Ukraine is determined to keep



US special envoy Steve Witkoff, (right), Russian presidential foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov, (left), Russian Direct Investment Fund CEO Kirill Dmitriev, (second right), and Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump’s son-in-law, arrive for meetings in Moscow, on Dec 2. (AP)

working in good faith with the American side to genuinely achieve peace,” Zelenskyy wrote on social media.

Speaking Saturday at the Reagan National Defense Forum, US President Donald Trump’s outgoing Ukraine en-

voy, Keith Kellogg, said efforts to end the war were in “the last 10 meters.”

He said a deal depended on the two outstanding issues of “terrain, primarily the Donbas,” and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

‘Report truthfully on HK matters’

Hong Kong holds 8th-term LegCo election

HONG KONG, Dec 7, (Xinhua): Voting for the election of the eighth-term Legislative Council (LegCo) of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) kicked off Sunday morning.

Long queues had already formed outside multiple polling stations across Hong Kong before the polls opened at 7:30 am local time. At polling station entrances, staff and volunteers attentively assisted voters with the procedures.

HKSAR Chief Executive John Lee cast his ballot around 8:30 a.m. at Raimondi College on Robinson Road. Speaking to the media, Lee hoped that all voters would come out to vote, noting that each ballot represents a push for reform and a collective effort to move forward together.

The new term of LegCo will be composed of 90 members, including 40 elected by the Election Committee, 30 elected by functional constituencies, and 20 elected by geographical constituencies through direct elections. A total of 161 candidates are contesting the election, with competition for every seat.

Also:
HONG KONG: The Office for Safe-



Citizens arrive at a polling station in Tai Po of Hong Kong, south China on Dec 7. (Xinhua)

guarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) on Saturday urged foreign media outlets to refrain from concocting or spreading false information in their reporting of Hong Kong matters.

Certain foreign media outlets have made slanderous remarks against the

HKSAR's disaster-relief efforts in the deadly fire in the residential complex Wang Fuk Court, and attacked and interfered with the Legislative Council General Election, said the office in a statement about its talks with directors and journalists of some foreign media outlets operating in Hong Kong on Saturday.



Ships sail on the Yangtze River near the Xiling Gorge in Zigui County, central China's Hubei Province on Dec 6. (Xinhua)

M23 rebels advance in eastern DR Congo despite newly signed deal

GOMA, DR Congo, Dec 7, (Xinhua): The March 23 Movement (M23) rebels have expanded their operations across several areas of South Kivu Province in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) over the past days, even as the DRC and Rwanda signed in Washington a peace deal hailed as a major step toward de-escalation in the region.

Clashes escalated from Tuesday to Friday around Kaziba, Lubarika, Rurambo, Luvungi, and the heights of Mount Munanira in South Kivu. In the area, Burundian forces and several local armed groups have been operating alongside the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC).

"The rebels launched several attacks on our positions and attempted to bypass our defensive arrangements along the Kaziba-Luvungi axis, but the army continues to repel these attempts. Fighting is still ongoing," FARDC spokesperson in South Kivu Reagen Mbuyi said Thursday.

Local sources on Friday confirmed the rebels' advance toward the Ruzizi Plain and the corridor leading to Uvira from Luvungi -- a shift that



M23 rebels escort government soldiers and police who surrendered to an undisclosed location in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo on Jan 30. (AP)

several analysts describe as "a major evolution of the front toward Uvira", the temporary administrative capital of South Kivu, after the provincial capital, Bukavu, fell to the rebels in

February.

Residents in the affected areas reported a FARDC pullback and the displacement of civilians fleeing the new combat zones. Hundreds of families have arrived in Uvira, while others from Kamanyola, a strategic crossroad in the province, crossed into Rwanda to escape shellfire.

Uvira sits on a critical road linking Bukavu with Burundi and Tanzania and serves as a logistical base for FARDC in the Ruzizi Plain, an area hosting multiple local and foreign armed groups. A possible M23 advance toward Uvira has become a growing concern for Congolese authorities and regional actors.

The latest rebel advance persisted into early Saturday despite the signing of a U.S.-mediated peace deal between the DRC and Rwanda in Washington on Thursday, which, according to DRC presidential spokesperson Tina Salama, 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.

5 dead in car-truck collision

At least 25 killed in India's Goa club fire

NEW DELHI, Dec 7, (Agencies): A fire ripped through a popular club in India's Goa state, killing 25 people, including tourists, the state's chief minister said Sunday.

The blaze occurred just past midnight in Arpora village in North Goa, a party hub, some 25 kilometers (15-miles) from the state capital, Panaji.

Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said most of the dead were the club's kitchen workers, as well as three to four tourists. Six people were injured and are in stable condition, he said. All the bodies have been recovered.

The fire was caused by a gas cylinder blast and has been extinguished, the Press Trust of India news agency reported, quoting local police. However, witnesses told the agency that the fire began on the club's first floor, where nearly 100 tourists were on the dance floor. Several rushed to the kitchen below in the chaos and got trapped along with staff, it said.

Fatima Shaikh said the commotion began as flames erupted, according to



The charred interiors of a club, which caught fire early Sunday, are seen in Arpora, Goa, India on Dec 7. (AP)

the news agency. "We rushed out of the club only to see that the entire structure was up in flames," she said.

Also:
NEW DELHI: At least five people were killed early Sunday when their car collided head-on with a truck in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh, local police confirmed by phone.

The accident occurred in the state's Jashpur district, and the impact was so violent that the car was completely crushed, killing all occupants instantly. Local residents alerted the police, who took the deceased to a local hospital. The identities of the deceased have not yet been established, and an investigation is underway to determine the cause of the crash.

Asia

2 bodies recovered after Malaysia floods: The bodies of two siblings who had been swept away during floods in Malaysia's Selangor state have been recovered following a two-day search, authorities said late on Saturday.

Kajang police chief **Naazron Abdul Yusof** said the 14-year-old's body was found trapped in a retention pond at 8:35 p.m. local time on Saturday. The body of the 12-year-old sibling had previously been recovered on Thursday.

The brothers were trying to retrieve a ball from a storm drain on Thursday when they were swept away.

The recent floods in Malaysia have resulted in elevated water levels in the country, with tens of thousands being displaced. Two other deaths had previously been attributed to floods. (Xinhua)



Yusof

Vietnam floods kill 2: Vietnam announced Friday that at least two people have died after heavy rains triggered floods in several parts of the country, causing dozens of landslides, major infrastructure damage, and the evacuation of residents from their homes.

Radio Voice of Vietnam quoted authorities in Lam Dong province as saying the rains flooded thousands of homes and caused at least two deaths.

The province recorded around 16 landslides that damaged roads and bridges and forced hundreds of houses to be evacuated, it added.

Meanwhile, Deputy Director General of the Vietnam

French president thanks China for warm welcome during state visit

BEIJING, Dec 7, (Xinhua): French President Emmanuel Macron expressed gratitude for the hospitality he received during his three-day state visit to China, writing "Thank you China for your warm welcome!" in both Chinese and English on his social media accounts on Saturday.

In his post, the French president shared a video highlighting moments from the trip, ranging from the welcome ceremony and official meetings to interactions with students and local residents, as well as a ping-pong match he played with French and Chinese athletes.

In another X post published on Friday, he thanked China for this "inspiring visit and this warm, friendly welcome," highlighting the "powerful moment" spent in southwest China's Sichuan Province.

Macron praised Duijiangyan in Sichuan's capital city Chengdu as a "two-thousand-year-old marvel that tames water and irrigates Sichuan." He said the ancient irrigation project embodies the same "harmony between human ingenuity and nature" and the "care for the mountains and water that bring life" as found in southwestern France's Hautes-Pyrenees Department.

Macron concluded his fourth state visit to China on Friday, after stops in



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan, together with French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron, take seats at Huaigu Pavilion, where they enjoy tea by the waterside and hold wide-ranging discussions on global affairs, in Duijiangyan of Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province on Dec 5. (Xinhua)

both Beijing and Chengdu.

Macron has stressed the importance of cooperation and mutual understanding in tackling contemporary challenges during a speech he delivered at a university in Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province.

Macron has wrapped up his three-day state visit to China, during which he delivered a speech at the Chengdu-

based Sichuan University on Friday.

Macron noted that humanity is experiencing a profound transition in habits, lifestyles, and landscapes. He emphasized the necessity of not only cooperating but also fostering mutual understanding, getting to know one another, and engaging in collective reflection to develop practical solutions for pressing issues like the climate crisis.



Venezuelan opposition supporters demonstrate ahead of the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony where Venezuelan Maria Corina Machado is among this year's laureates, in Lima, Peru on Dec 6. (AP)

Supporters of Venezuelan opp'n leader march in cities worldwide

Supporters of Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado demonstrated Saturday in several cities worldwide to commemorate her Nobel Peace Prize win ahead of the prestigious award ceremony next week.

Thousands of people marched through Madrid, Utrecht, Buenos Aires, Lima and other cities in support of Machado, whose organization wants to use the attention gained by the award to highlight Venezuela

's democratic aspirations. The organization expected demonstrations in more than 80 cities around the world on Saturday.

The crowd in Lima carried portraits of Machado and demanded a "Free Venezuela." With the country's yellow, blue and red flag draped over their backs or emblazoned on their caps, demonstrators clutched posters that read, "The Nobel Prize is from Venezuela." (AP)

Benin armed forces foil attempted mutiny – Interior Minister Seidou

COTONOU, Dec 7, (Xinhua): Benin's armed forces have foiled an attempted mutiny aimed at destabilizing the state and its institutions, Minister of Interior and Public Security Alassane Seidou said in a statement on Sunday.

Seidou made the remarks after a group of soldiers announced earlier in the day on state broadcaster Benin TV that President Patrice Talon had been "removed from office."

According to the minister, the armed forces and their command, "faithful to their oath," responded in a republican manner and were able to keep the situation under control, thwarting the attempt. The government called on the public to continue their activities as normal. Speaking separately to the French weekly magazine Jeune Afrique on Sunday morning, Romuald Wadagni, minister of state in charge of economy and finance, said the situation was "under control."

"The mutineers are trapped. We are clearing the area, but it is not over yet. We are safe," He said, adding that helicopters were patrolling the city and that the central Cotonou was heavily secured by the armed forces.

Local residents told Xinhua by phone that in Cotonou, the country's economic capital and largest city, and its surrounding areas, armed soldiers were mainly deployed at key intersections, while residents continued their daily activities



Soldiers ride in a military vehicle along a street amid an attempted coup in Cotonou, Benin on Dec 6. (AP)

and major markets remained open.

Earlier Sunday, the group of soldiers, identifying themselves as the "Military Committee for the Refoundation (CMR)," convened and decided that "Mr. Patrice Talon is dismissed from his functions as president of the republic."

Gunshots were reported at Camp Guezo, near the president's residence in Cotonou, and local media said the soldiers had taken control of the state broadcaster.

Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Sunday’s trading session on a positive note, with its general index advancing by 30.83 points, or 0.35 percent, to close at 8,888 points.

Trading activity saw around 346.6 million shares change hands through 21,545 cash transactions, with a total market value reaching KD 81.9 million (approximately USD 249.7 million).

Business

Empowering over 800 students with financial and entrepreneurial skills through four programs in 2026

Boursa Kuwait enters a strategic partnership with INJAZ to empower Kuwaiti youth and promote financial literacy

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: In line with its commitment to social responsibility and human capital development, Boursa Kuwait has signed a strategic partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, a non-profit organization that prepares Kuwaiti youth for success in the global economy. The collaboration supports Boursa Kuwait’s ongoing efforts to promote financial literacy and youth empowerment.

Through this partnership, Boursa Kuwait will back a range of INJAZ Kuwait’s specialized educational programs during the first half of 2026, targeting students across various educational levels. Among the key initiatives is the “My Money, My Future” program, designed to introduce middle school students to core financial concepts such as saving, investing, and responsible spending. The bourse will also support the “I’m an Entrepreneur” program, which nurtures creative thinking, entrepreneurial skills, and positive life habits among the youth.

Additionally, Boursa Kuwait will sponsor the “Personal Finance” program, which offers high school and university students a hands-on experience in financial decision-making and career planning. The bourse will also support the “My Company” program, which enables students to establish and manage virtual companies under the guidance of private sector mentors.

More than 800 students are expected to benefit from these programs, which aim to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to thrive in the modern economy.

Commenting on the agreement, Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications at Boursa Kuwait, Mr. Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi, stated, “Boursa Kuwait firmly believes that investing in youth is an investment in the future of Kuwait. Empowering young people is a key step in preparing a well-informed and capable generation ready to lead the country’s economic transformation, in line with the national vision of positioning Kuwait as a leading regional financial and investment hub.”

“Our collaboration with INJAZ Kuwait reflects our commitment to promoting financial literacy and supporting educational programs that enhance individuals’ ability to make informed financial decisions,” he added.

Financial literacy is one of the strategic pillars of Boursa Kuwait’s corpo-



Boursa Kuwait teams up with INJAZ Kuwait to boost youth financial literacy.

rate social responsibility programs, as the company believes that promoting financial awareness across all segments of society contributes to building a more inclusive, transparent, and stable investment environment in the long term.

In line with this belief, Boursa Kuwait is committed to supporting educational initiatives that enhance individuals’ understanding of saving, financial planning and responsible investing. These efforts aim to keep pace with market developments and empower the next generation to make informed financial decisions that support sustainable economic growth.

Al-Sanousi added that Boursa Kuwait’s support of these specialized programs reflects its unwavering commitment to advancing financial knowledge and empowering ambitious youth in the fields of entrepreneurship and innova-

tion, which contributes to creating sustainable social impact that strengthens the ability of future generations to actively contribute to the country’s economic development.

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our partners at INJAZ Kuwait for their efforts in nurturing young talent and look forward to continuing this fruitful collaboration to achieve tangible outcomes that support the future of our nation,” he said.

The partnership with INJAZ is part of Boursa Kuwait’s broader efforts to create meaningful impact within the communities it serves, as part of its corporate sustainability strategy and its commitment to implementing initiatives that elevate knowledge, enhance expertise and nurture the skills of all market participants. It also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 4 – Quality Education, and Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

CEO of INJAZ Kuwait Ms. Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi also emphasized the importance of the partnership, stating, “INJAZ Kuwait is proud to collaborate with Boursa Kuwait, a partnership that reflects our shared belief in the importance of youth empowerment and enhancing their capabilities to actively contribute to the national economy. The private sector’s continued support and trust in the educational and developmental role of INJAZ gives us the ability to expand the reach of our programs and impact a larger number of students across various educational levels.”

“Boursa Kuwait’s investment in INJAZ programs is a direct contribution to building a conscious and ambitious generation equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to lead the future. In closing, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Boursa Kuwait for its support and confidence in our mission, and I look forward to achieving even greater milestones together,” she added.

INJAZ Kuwait is a non-profit organization and a member of the global Junior Achievement network, supported by the Kuwaiti private sector. Through strategic partnerships with the business and education sectors in Kuwait and the help of qualified volunteers, INJAZ offers bilingual educational programs in Arabic and English focused on entrepreneurship, leadership, and career readiness that aim to build successful professional pathways for the youth in Kuwait.

Highlighting financing initiatives

KFH to feature in Gulf Digital Building Forum

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is participating in the Gulf Digital Building Forum 2025, organized by the Kuwaiti Federation of Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses. The event is held under the patronage of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Eng. Abdullatif Hamed Al-Mishari.

Running from 8 to 11 December, the forum is amassing a wide participation from governmental institutions, engineering offices, specialized companies, universities and research bodies. It aims to shed light on the significance of advanced digital applications in enhancing the building and construction sector, while also highlighting the global developments in the field.

During the forum, KFH highlights its efforts in driving digital advancement and its strategy to continuously develop its business, products and services. KFH showcases its significant achievements in establishing a modern technological infrastructure, as well as building an integrated ecosystem of services and products.

These accomplishments also include strengthening security, enhancing development policies and extending relationships with retail and corporate banking customers by meeting their needs through structured and tailored services. These services are characterized by their quality, accuracy, security, and are available 24/7.

During one of the panel discussions, KFH presents its digital financing initiatives and products designed to facilitate processes for customers, keeps pace with technological developments, and supports emerging trends in construction and building projects. These efforts reflect the Bank’s recognition of the significance of this sector and its impact on the national economy and

trade initiatives in the Kuwaiti market.

KFH’s financing solutions enjoy strong customer demand and competitive advantages, driving the Bank to continuously enhance existing offerings and introduce new products and services that meet the growing investment needs in construction, building, and real estate development for both individuals and major companies.

It is worth noting that the Gulf Digital Building Forum 2025 aims to promote the widespread adoption of Building Information Modeling (BIM) in public and private sectors projects, enhance smart city applications and facilities and asset management in infrastructure and major developments, as well as analyze regional digital transformation case studies and their application within the Kuwaiti environment. The Forum also focuses on expanding the national dialogue on digital transformation and empowering students and young professionals to pursue careers in digital construction and future technologies.

The event is expected to witness broad participation from government entities, engineering institutions, real estate developers, universities, and researchers, reinforcing its position as a leading platform in the GCC region shaping the future of digital construction and smart cities in the region.

Additionally, the forum serves as a key step for exchanging regional and international expertise and translating knowledge into practical applications that support the future of the construction sector in GCC countries. It also represents as a national and regional platform to enhance the efficiency of the construction sector in Kuwait through digital transformation, smart city applications, facilities management, and higher standards of quality and sustainability.



Hammoud and Al-Khuzam with Zain and Boubyan Takaful executives.

Vision 2035 alignment: Digital transformation and financial inclusion

Zain launches its fully Digital Motor Insurance App in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced the milestone launch of Zain Insure, Kuwait’s first fully start-to-end digital motor insurance application. The announcement was made at NEXUS 2025, Kuwait’s premier technology and innovation event.

Developed in partnership with Boubyan Takaful Insurance company, part of the Boubyan Group of companies, specifically for the Kuwait market, the innovative motor insurance offering provides customers with an end-to-end digital experience from a quote to policy purchase, and to claims through one seamless app.

Customers can receive an instant quote and purchase motor insurance online; manage and renew their policy anytime, anywhere; file and track claims digitally; and access all their insurance documents securely via the Zain Insure app.

The launch of Zain Insure reflects Zain’s ongoing transformation into becoming a TechCo as it expands its focus and base of activities beyond telecom services to delivering customer-first digital solutions that simplify everyday experiences.

The initiative also marks one of the first digital insurance partnerships of this nature in Kuwait formed between the country’s biggest telecom player, and one of the most innovative financial services groups. Zain insure digital services will gradually extend to Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, and KSA, offering motor, device and other insurance services depending on local market conditions.

Malek Hammoud, Zain Group’s Chief Digital Investment Officer said, “The financial services industry remains a core area of development and investment at Zain, and the launch of Zain Insure underpins our competencies in technology innovation, customer centricity, and convenient delivery of financial services. Zain Insure is a clear reflection of our ‘4WARD-Progress with Purpose’ corporate strategy and we believe this



Malek Hammoud and Ebrahim Al-Khuzam announce the launch of Zain Insure.

- A simple, and digital way to get motor insurance, from quote to claim, all through one app
- Service launched in partnership with Boubyan Takaful Insurance
- Zain Insure services gradually being rolled out across other markets



it from a product that is purchased into a service that is experienced. Our strategic partnership with Zain embodies this vision, marking a new era for the Kuwaiti insurance market.”

The introduction of Zain Insure in Kuwait aligns with Vision 2035 by driving digital transformation and customer-first innovation, and it reinforces Zain’s role as a company that places customers first and delivers the most convenient and seamless digital experiences across different service areas.

Historically, Zain has powered the reinvention of the world of mobile financial services across various markets, with the aim to expand financial inclusion and technology innovation in Kuwait and beyond.

During NEXUS, Malek Hammoud and Ebrahim Al-Khuzam took part in a panel discussion on the evolving landscape of the insurance industry, where they explored why Zain is entering the insurance space, the vision behind Zain Insure as a fully digital platform, the evolution of the insurance sector, and how technology, regulation, and customer expectations are reshaping it.

They also addressed trust and compliance in digital onboarding, shared their ambitions to expand digital insurance offerings across new markets, and outlined how Zain Insure supports Kuwait Vision 2035 by advancing financial inclusion and making insurance more inclusive, accessible, and technology driven.

The Zain Insure app can be downloaded from the Apple AppStore and Google Play Store.



KFH head office

launch in Kuwait is just the beginning for this highly in-demand and fast-growing area of activity.”

Ebrahim Al-Khuzam, CEO of Boubyan Takaful, commented: “We are proud to partner with Zain on the launch of Kuwait’s first fully digital motor insurance platform — a milestone that reinforces Boubyan Takaful’s position as a market leader in digital insurance solutions. This strategic partnership reflects our shared commitment to introduce state or art

technology-driven experiences that simplifies and enhance access to insurance services.”

He added: “At Boubyan Takaful, we are moving beyond traditional models and pioneering the next wave of digital innovation through embedded insurance, where protection becomes an invisible yet essential part of the customer experience. Our vision is to make insurance effortless and naturally integrated into everyday life — transforming

Hackathon trains 620 participants

Makhazen honored for advancing cyber talent

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Makhazen (the new name for Agility Public Warehousing Company KSCP), a Kuwait-based infrastructure, logistics, and industrial services company, announced that it was recognized for its dedication to nurturing homegrown cybersecurity talent and developing local capabilities to tackle the critical digital challenges of the future, at the 2025 Kuwait Hackathon, held under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Fahad Youssef Al-Sabah, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Interior, and organized by the National Cybersecurity Center (NCSC) and CODED Academy.

Faisal Jamil Sultan, Chairman of Makhazen, said: "As a long-standing strategic partner of Coded Academy, Makhazen has supported the digital upskilling of more than 6,900 students since 2022. Today, we are pleased to renew our sponsorship of the Kuwait Cybersecurity Hackathon, which reflects our ongoing commitment to empowering young talent and equipping them with the practical capabilities needed to navigate future digital challenges. This initiative also aligns with Kuwait's vision of fostering a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy and preparing its youth for the demands of digital transformation."

This marks the second consecutive year that Makhazen has served as a strategic partner for the Kuwait Hackathon. During the 2024 edition, 1,474 participants had the opportunity to test and expand their cybersecurity skills, while promoting cybersecurity as both a career and a national priority. Building on this success, the 2025 edition offered a wide range of workshops designed to broaden participants' cybersecurity knowledge across multiple domains, accessible to both competition entrants and the general public. The program equipped more than 620 participants



Agility receives recognition from CODED CEO Ahmad Marafi in appreciation of its strategic partnership.

Other Voices

Netflix bid for Warner Bros. shakes industry

By Hassan F. Beidas

The entertainment industry was shaken last Friday after Netflix announced it would acquire Warner Bros. in a landmark cash-and-stock agreement valued at \$83 billion. After the announcement the Warner Bros share rose 3.2% to \$25.33 while Netflix share fell 0.2%. If approved, the transaction would rank among the largest industry mergers of the decade, fundamentally reshaping the global streaming landscape.

The companies describe the proposed merger as a strategic combination emphasizing strength, choice, and enhanced value for consumers. Proponents of the deal also highlight long-term opportunities for shareholders and a stronger position for the U.S. entertainment sector. Netflix provided statistics that reflect its powerful market presence, it currently estimates 69 million paying subscribers in the United States and claims 46% of monthly active users in global streaming applications according to market intelligence firms.

A consolidated Netflix-Warner Bros. entity would instantly form a media giant controlling nearly half of the streaming market. While such mergers often



Hassan F. Beidas

promise increased innovation and efficiency, critics note a pattern of reduced competition, job cuts, and stagnant industry wages following consolidation.

Regulators, particularly in the United States and Europe, are expected to scrutinize the proposal closely. The merger would boost Netflix's global base to more than 130 million subscribers, raising concerns about subscription price hikes and shrinking content choices for consumers. The U.S. Department of Justice has already confirmed that the deal will undergo review—a process that could extend for up to a year. While, Netflix anticipates it will take 12 to 18 months to fully complete the merger deal.

Financial terms of the agreement allocate each Warner Bros. Discovery shareholder \$23.25 in cash and approximately \$4.50 in Netflix stock per share, valuing the company at \$27.75 per share—an equity valuation of roughly \$72 billion and \$82.7 billion when debt is included. The deal also features substantial breakup fees: Netflix has agreed to pay \$5.6 billion if the acquisition falls through, while Warner Bros. would owe \$2.8 billion should it withdraw.

As the deal moves into regulatory evaluation, stakeholders across the entertainment industry—and millions of subscribers—wait to see whether this blockbuster merger will reshape streaming for the better or concentrate power in ways that reshape entertainment access for years to come.



General Directorate of Civil Aviation



Jazeera Executive Management



Jazeera Team Members

Airbus partnership highlighted as key to two-decade expansion

Jazeera Airways marks 20 years of growth & partnerships

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, celebrated its 20th anniversary with an exclusive partner recognition event that brought together stakeholders from across the airline's local and global ecosystem. The event honored key government entities including the Kuwait Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Customs, and the Public Authority for Manpower, as well as general sales agents (GSAs), travel agencies, service providers, international airport partners, and major global suppliers—most notably Airbus and CFM the airline's long-standing aircraft and engine manufacturers.

Gathered under one roof were business leaders, dignitaries, and industry partners who reflected on Jazeera's journey and reaffirmed a shared commitment to shaping the next era of growth for Kuwait's aviation and tourism sectors.

Established following an Amiri Decree enabling the formation of privately owned airlines in Kuwait, Jazeera Airways was founded with a vision to advance the country's aviation industry and expand its international reach. That vision has guided the airline through two decades of consistent and sustainable growth.

Speaking at the event, Marwan Boodai, Chairman of Jazeera Airways, said: "The success of Jazeera Airways over the past 20 years has been shaped by strong partnerships, the dedication of our people, and the trust of our customers. Together, these pillars



Marwan Boodai - Jazeera Airways Chairman

have built a resilient airline that strengthens Kuwait's global connectivity, contributes to its economy, and continues to grow with purpose. As we celebrate this milestone, we pay tribute to all our partners and reaffirm our commitment to the next 20 years of progress and expansion."

Over the past two decades, Jazeera Airways has grown its network, expanded operational capabilities, forged key global partnerships—including its strategic aircraft partnership with Airbus—and invested significantly in enhancing passenger experience. The airline remains aligned with Kuwait's broader ambitions to develop its tourism offering and build a modern aviation ecosystem that can support future demand.

Today, Jazeera operates a fleet of 23 Airbus aircraft and serves more than 70 destinations across the Middle East, Central and South Asia, Europe, and

Africa, carrying over 5 million passengers annually. As Kuwait progresses toward its national vision for tourism and economic diversification, demand for airport infrastructure is expected to rise significantly—requiring terminal capacity of 50 million passengers or more in the years ahead.

Reflecting on the milestone, Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said: "Jazeera Airways proudly marks twenty years of partnership and belief — belief in Kuwait, in opportunity, and in the power of aviation to connect people and drive growth. Our journey has been built on shared ambition, the dedication of our partners, and the tireless efforts of the Jazeera team — the heart of this airline. Looking ahead, Kuwait is ready, Jazeera is ready, and together we will unlock the next phase of growth."

As we expand our fleet to 50 aircraft, serve up to 10 million passengers annually, and grow across strategic markets, we will lead through innovation, digital transformation, and sustainability, while staying unwavering in our commitment to safety and customer experience."

As Jazeera Airways enters its next chapter, it remains committed to deepening partnerships, building new bridges, and creating shared value across its network in Kuwait and beyond. The next 20 years promise to be a transformative period—for the airline, for its partners, and for the future of aviation in Kuwait.

Diverging economic indicators point to likely Fed rate cut

By National Bank of Kuwait

Market activity this week was dominated by conflicting U.S. economic signals and the firming anticipation of a near term Federal Reserve policy pivot, driving significant currency moves and asset repricing. The narrative centred on a "K-shaped" divergence within the economy, where sectoral and income level fractures are becoming more pronounced. The manufacturing sector deepened its contraction, with the ISM Manufacturing PMI falling to a four month low of 48.2, marking nine straight months of decline as new orders weakened and firms broadly managed headcounts. In opposition, the vast services sector demonstrated resilience, as the ISM Services PMI held steady at 52.6, supported by higher income households even as lower income groups felt the pinch of rising prices. This opposition extended to the labor market, where a surprise drop of 32,000 in ADP private payrolls, the largest decline in over two years, contrasted sharply with a plunge in weekly jobless claims to a more than three year low, creating uncertainty about the jobs landscape ahead of the delayed official November report. These crosscurrents solidified market expectations for a Fed rate cut next week, with an approximately 87% probability priced in, pulling the U.S. dollar index below 99 for its second consecutive weekly loss. Major currencies capitalized on this dollar weakness and diverging central bank outlooks. The euro climbed above \$1.165, buoyed by upgraded Eurozone PMI data and a stance that allows the European Central Bank to remain on hold while the Fed eases. The British pound advanced beyond \$1.335 amid domestic budget optimism and its own central bank's looming policy decision. The Japanese yen strengthened past 155 per dollar on growing speculation that the Bank of Japan is preparing to raise interest rates later this month, a shift endorsed by recent government and central bank commentary. In commodities, gold rose to around \$4,220 per ounce, drawing support from the soft labor data and the compelling Fed narrative, while Brent crude oil futures held near \$63.3 per barrel at a two-week high, supported by geopolitical tensions and the prospect of stimulus from U.S. rate cuts. Equities edged higher in a tentative wait and see mode. Globally, Australia's economic growth slowed more than expected in the third quarter as consumers pulled back, while China's services sector expansion softened to a five month low with a worrying dip in business confidence. Overall, markets are reconciling a patchwork of data that reveals underlying economic fragility beneath pockets of strength, a combination that is compelling a decisive shift in U.S. monetary policy and realigning global capital flows accordingly.

United States

ISM Manufacturing PMI

The U.S. ISM Manufacturing PMI slipped to 48.2 in November, marking a ninth straight month of contraction and the weakest print in four months, undershooting expectations. The downturn deepened across key components, with supplier deliveries, new orders, and employment all falling further, while 67% of firms continued to

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1595	1.1588	1.1681	1.1642	1.1600	1.1730	1.1697
GBP	1.3225	1.3176	1.3385	1.3329	1.3240	1.3400	1.3330
JPY	156.10	154.32	156.20	155.34	154.00	156.75	154.06
CHF	0.8031	0.7990	0.8054	0.8044	0.8000	0.8150	0.7968

manage headcount rather than hire. Price pressures picked up again, backlogs shrank further, and inventories declined at a slower pace. There were a few bright spots, including a rebound in production. ISM Chair Susan Spence noted that 58% of manufacturing GDP remained in contraction, unchanged from October.

ISM Services PMI

According to a survey released on Wednesday, activity in the U.S. services sector which constitutes over two-thirds of the country's economic output remained stable in November. Evidenced by the Institute for Supply Management's (ISM) nonmanufacturing purchasing managers index (PMI) holding nearly steady at 52.6, surpassing the 52.1 forecast. Despite lingering subdued employment levels and elevated input prices, a scenario that suggests the economy was on firmer ground midway through the fourth quarter, driven by higher-income households. However, might be shortened by recent stock market volatility, contrasting with lower-income households disproportionately impacted by rising import tariff driven prices, an observation confirming the "K-shaped economy" seen in consumer sentiment surveys, and occurring ahead of the government's delayed publication of the initial third-quarter gross domestic product (GDP) estimate.

ADP Non-Farm Employment Change

US private-sector payrolls fell by 32K in November 2025, a sharp reversal from an upwardly revised 47K gain in October and well below forecasts for a 10K increase. It was the largest decline since March 2023, driven by a steep 120K drop in employment at small establishments, even as medium firms added 51K and large companies added 39K. Sector details showed job losses in manufacturing (-18K), professional/business services (-26K), information (-20K), construction (-9K) and financial activities (-9K). Offsetting gains came from education/health services (+33K), leisure/hospitality (+13K), natural resources/mining (+8K) and trade/transport/utilities (+1K). Wage growth also cooled slightly, with pay for job stayers rising 4.4% y/y (vs 4.5%) and job-changers up 6.3% (vs 6.7%), reinforcing the picture of easing labor momentum.

Unemployment Claims

the number of Americans filing new applications for state unemployment benefits dropped to 191,000 in the week ending November 29. A decrease of 27,000 that marks the lowest level since September 2022 and significantly undershot the 220,000 claims forecast by economists polled by Reuters, a historically low figure. Even considering volatility around last Thursday's Thanksgiving

holiday included in the data which could ease concerns about a sharp labor market weakening following the private payrolls decline shown in Wednesday's ADP employment report, and precedes the delayed release of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' closely watched November employment report, which, due to a 43-day government shutdown, will now be published on December 16 instead of this Friday.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 98.992

Asia-Pacific

Australia's Economy

Australia's economy grew 0.4% q/q in Q3 2025, slowing from an upwardly revised Q2 result and falling short of the 0.7% forecast, though still marking the 16th straight quarter of expansion. Growth was weighed down by a sharp cooling in household consumption (0.5% vs 0.9% in Q2) as discretionary spending normalized after a strong Easter boost. Government spending held steady (0.8%). Net trade dragged on growth, with exports rising less than imports, while inventories subtracted 0.5ppts. In contrast, private investment surged 2.9%, its fastest pace since early 2021, driven by strong machinery and equipment spending, contributing 0.5ppts to growth. Public investment rebounded 3.0%, supported by renewable energy, water, telecoms, and rail projects. The household savings rate increased to 6.4%. On an annual basis, GDP rose 2.1%, just below expectations.

The AUD/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 0.6637

China RatingDog Manufacturing PMI

China's RatingDog General Services PMI eased to 52.1 in November from 52.6 in October, marking the softest expansion since June but still slightly above expectations. Growth slowed as new business weakened, though new export orders returned to expansion amid improving US-China trade sentiment. Employment continued to decline due to non-replacement of staff and cost-driven redundancies, resulting in rising backlogs. Input costs remained elevated, driven by raw materials, office supplies, and fuel, though the pace of inflation moderated slightly, prompting firms to raise selling prices only marginally. Looking ahead, business sentiment weakened sharply, falling to one of its lowest readings on record

The USD/CNY currency pair was last seen trading at 7.0696

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30565.



Isam Al-Sager and Shaikha Al-Bahar



Salah Al-Fulaij and Sulaiman Al-Marzouq



Mohammed Al-Othman



Isam Al-Sager, Shaikha Al-Bahar, Salah Al-Fulaij, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Mohammed Al-Othman, Mohammad Al-Kharafi, and representatives of Al Manzel Program.

Tailored benefits to help customers build, renovate, and own their dream homes

National Bank of Kuwait launches financing solutions for building, renovating, and refurbishing homes

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: In line with its dedication to providing banking services that meet the changing needs and aspirations of its customers in different stages of their life, National Bank of Kuwait announced launching NBK Al Manzel Program, the largest specialized home improvement program, that includes financing solutions for residential developments.

This initiative comes as part of the bank’s commitment to supporting its customers in their home renovations and constructions by offering them flexible and comprehensive financing solutions.

Through this program, NBK aims to confirm its position as the financing partner of choice in the local market, by providing an integrated experience that starts from planning to execution, and includes financing options specifically designed to suit the individual needs of customers, whether they are seeking to renovate, furnish, restore, or even start building their homes from scratch.

- Personal loans up to KD 95,000 designed to meet the client’s construction and furnishing needs.
- Flexible repayment terms tailored to the client’s income and financial circumstances.

Al-Othman: NBK Al Manzel Program confirms NBK’s leadership in prioritizing its customers’ needs.

We provide our customers with an integrated system of services that make their journey towards owning their dream house more seamless and convenient.

- A grace period of up to 12 months.
 - Fast processing and application procedures.
- Commenting on this initiative, Mr. Mohammed Al-Othman, Chief Executive Officer, Consumer and Digital Banking at NBK Group, said: “At NBK, we believe that owning a dream home is not merely a financial goal but a milestone in everyone’s life that reflects their aspirations and lifestyle. With this in mind, we designed NBK Al Manzel Program to be a comprehensive experience that starts from the idea to the realization of the dream, supported by flexible financing solu-

tions and strategic partnerships with leading local brands”.

Al-Othman also emphasized that NBK is keen to be part of its customers’ journey towards achieving their housing dreams, whether through housing loans or NBK Al Manzel Program, further noting the bank’s firm commitment to innovating and providing the best for its customers.

Moreover, Al-Othman added: “We don’t simply provide financing, but we provide our customers with an integrated system of services to make their journey towards owning their dream house more seamless and convenient. This reflects our deep commitment to enhancing the quality of life of our customers and confirms our leadership in providing innovative banking solutions based on partnership, trust and added value”.

NBK Al Manzel Program stems from NBK’s strategy to strengthen its position as a leading financial institution that prioritizes the needs of its customers and constantly seeks to provide innovative solutions that enhance their banking experience and keep pace with their aspirations for a more stable and prosperous life.

NBK continues to invest in developing its personal and digital banking services to meet the needs of its customers and enhance their banking experience.



Part of the honoring ceremony for Al Manzel Program partners.

Stallone, Kiss and Gloria Gaynor honored

Trump hosts Kennedy Center Honors for first time

WASHINGTON, Dec 7, (AP): Sylvester Stallone, Kiss and Gloria Gaynor are among the luminaries being celebrated Sunday at the annual Kennedy Center Honors, with Donald Trump hosting the show, the first time a president will command the stage instead of sitting in an Opera House box.

Since returning to office in January, Trump has made the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, which is named after a Democratic predecessor, a touchstone in a broader attack against what he has lambasted as “woke” anti-American culture.

Trump said in August that he had agreed to host the show. The Republican president said Saturday at a State Department dinner for the honorees that he was doing so “at the request of a certain television network.” He predicted that the broadcast, scheduled to air Dec. 23 on CBS and Paramount+, would have its best ratings ever.

“It’s going to be something that I believe, and I’m going to make a prediction: This will be the highest-rated show that they’ve ever done and they’ve gotten some pretty good ratings, but there’s nothing like what’s going to happen” on Sunday night,

Trump said.

Trump is assuming a role that has been held in the past by journalist Walter Cronkite and comedian and Trump nemesis Stephen Colbert, among others. Before Trump, presidents watched the show alongside the honorees. Trump skipped the honors altogether during his first term.

Since 1978, the honors have recognized stars for their influence on American culture and the arts. Members of this year’s class are pop-culture standouts, including Stallone for his “Rocky” and “Rambo” movies, Gaynor for her feminist anthem “I Will Survive” and Kiss for its flashy, cartoonish makeup and onstage displays of smoke and fire. Country music superstar George Strait and Tony Award-winning actor Michael Crawford are also being honored.

The ceremony is expected to be emotional for the members of Kiss. The band’s original lead guitarist, Ace Frehley, died in October after he was injured during a fall.

Previous honorees have come from a broad range of art forms, whether dance (Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham), theater (Stephen Sondheim,



Secretary of State Marco Rubio, left, and President of the Kennedy Center Board of Trustees Richard Grenell, right, join the 2025 Kennedy Center Honorees, front row from left, Sylvester Stallone, George Strait, Gloria Gaynor and Michael Crawford, members of the rock band KISS, Paul Stanley, center right, Gene Simmons and Peter Criss, center left, for a group photo at the 48th Kennedy Center Honors Medallion Reception, hosted at the U.S. Department of State in Washington. (AP)

Andrew Lloyd Webber), movies (Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks) or music (Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell).

Trump upended decades of biparti-

san support for the center by ousting its leadership and stacking the board of trustees with Republican supporters, who then elected him chair. He

has criticized the center’s programming and the building’s appearance - and has said, perhaps jokingly, that he would rename it as the “Trump Kennedy Center.” He secured more than \$250 million from Congress for renovations of the building.

Presidents of each political party have at times found themselves face to face with artists of opposing political views. Republican Ronald Reagan was there for honoree Arthur Miller, a playwright who championed liberal causes. Democrat Bill Clinton, who had signed an assault weapons ban into law, marked the honors for Charlton Heston, an actor and gun rights advocate.

During Trump’s first term, multiple honorees were openly critical of the president. In 2017, Trump’s first year in office, honors recipient and film producer Norman Lear threatened to boycott his own ceremony if Trump attended. Trump stayed away during that entire term.

Trump has said he was deeply involved in choosing the 2025 honorees and turned down some recommendations because they were “too woke.” While Stallone is one of Trump’s Hollywood “special ambassadors” and has

likened Trump to George Washington, the political views of Sunday’s other guests are less clear.

Strait and Gaynor have said little about their politics, although Federal Election Commission records show that Gaynor has given money to Republican organizations in recent years.

Kiss co-founder Gene Simmons spoke favorably of Trump when Trump ran for president in 2016. But in 2022, Simmons told Spin magazine that Trump was “out for himself” and criticized Trump for encouraging conspiracy theories and public expressions of racism.

Fellow Kiss member Paul Stanley denounced Trump’s effort to overturn his 2020 election defeat to Democrat Joe Biden, and said Trump supporters who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, were “terrorists.” But after Trump won in 2024, Stanley urged unity.

“If your candidate lost, it’s time to learn from it, accept it and try to understand why,” Stanley wrote on X. “If your candidate won, it’s time to understand that those who don’t share your views also believe they are right and love this country as much as you do.”

Atashin on a farewell tour

Googoosh recalls family, exile & life in the spotlight

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, Dec 7, (AP): For Googoosh, Iran’s most-famous singer, life always has been balancing act of one kind or another.

It began as a child, performing with her acrobat father who balanced her on a chair atop another chair resting only on his chin. Then later, as an icon of stage and screen during the last years of the shah, her looks and hairstyles were copied by Iranian women who wanted to look more “Googooshi,” a Farsi adjective all her own.

Then came the decades of silence after Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution, barred from performing, only to return to the stage abroad in 2000. And now, embarking on a farewell tour, she’s adding author as her latest reinvention as her homeland undergoes a societal change yet again.

“I did not realize that all these challenges and struggles were considered a balancing act,” the 75-year-old singer told The Associated Press. “If that is what it means, then yes, I have spent my entire life trying to create and maintain a balance between my personal life and my artistic life.”

The new book by the singer, born Faegheh Atashin, is called “Googoosh: A Sinful Voice.” In it, Googoosh with the help of co-author Tara Dehlavi recounts a life shaped by both the political forces that have changed Iran in the modern era and her tumultuous personal life.

But it all began with performing at an early age with her father, Saber Atashin, to whom the book is dedicated along with the people of Iran. Googoosh recounts falling only once in the shows, her father catching her. But from the first performance atop the chair, Googoosh appeared bound for the spotlight.

“They held their breath and waited in complete silence,” she recounted. “Every muscle in my body tensed. Seconds felt like an eternity. Finally, Papa slowly began to lower me gently toward the ground. When my feet touched the floor, the audience sighed in relief before they erupted into roaring applause. I had survived. And we were a hit!”

Googoosh began singing and performing in films at a young age. That included before the royal court of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who later became mortally ill and fled Iran just before the 1979 revolution.

Fascination

Googoosh had been tabloid fodder in Iran before the revolution. Married four times in her life, her personal life long had been a fascination. And within her book, she recounts undergoing abortions and battling with substance abuse around and after the revolution, including freebasing cocaine and smoking opium. She considers suicide at one point in New York City before deciding to go back to Iran under its newly formed theocracy.

“There were times where I would ask this question to you and say, ‘Are you sure you want to share this?’” Dehlavi, her co-author said. “And you always said that, ‘I’m either I’m telling my story or I’m not. I have to I have to tell it all.’”

Returning to Iran, Googoosh found herself harassed by his newly empowered theocracy, which put a lien on her home and blocked her ability to be issued a passport. Authorities banned her from performing or singing, she recounted, and at one point imprisoned her.

But she describes while trying to hide her identity in public or in private, people always pushed her to sing again, to find her voice despite the restrictions and threats.

“After the revolution, the pressure on me grew,” Googoosh said. “Since Farsi is my mother tongue and I grew up in Iran, I could not adjust to living outside my country. I did not want that life. I hoped I could somehow continue performing for my own people, inside my own country.”

Ultimately though, in 2000 under the government of reformist President Mohammad Khatami, Googoosh was able to get a contract to perform abroad, pull the money together to pay off her liens, obtain a passport and leave Iran. She never returned, but has performed abroad for the last 25 years for Iranians who similarly are homesick for their country.

Islamic hard-liners within Iran still denounce her, particularly after 2014 music video, punishable by death in the country.

Googoosh’s new book and her farewell tour come at a time of change in Iran. More and more, Iranian women choose to forgo the country’s mandatory headscarf, or hijab. The 2022 death of Mahsa Amini and the nationwide protests that followed enraged women of all ages and views in a way few other issues have since the revolution.

But meanwhile, Iran’s economy continues to strain under international sanctions over its nuclear program. Its theocracy continues to execute people in the wake of the



In this file photo, Iranian pop star Googoosh performs during a concert at the Dubai Expo 2020, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

Film



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Elizabeth Lail, from left, Piper Rubio, and Josh Hutcherson in a scene from ‘Five Nights at Freddy’s 2.’ (AP)

No real horror and no real awareness

‘Five Nights 2’ fails to deliver the frights

NEW YORK, Dec 7, (AP): How do you top “Five Nights at Freddy’s,” the video game movie adaptation about murderous anthropomorphic robots? If it’s a battle for insipid nonsense, the answer is blindingly clear: “Five Nights at Freddy’s 2.”

The sequel builds on the un-scary, un-funny bones of the 2023 original by expanding the Freddy’s Cinematic Universe with an even more head-scratching outing. “I don’t know what happened. I feel sick,” says one poor actor. We feel you, sister.

“Five Nights at Freddy’s 2” assumes you’ve watched the first so sit through that dreck before attempting to digest the latest, which hysterically keeps unpacking game lore all the way through, even during the closing credits. It even arrogantly sets the table for “Five Nights at Freddy’s 3” without earning the second.

Back is returning director Emma Tammi - this time using a script from the game’s developer, Scott Cawthon - and the cast from the first: Former security guard Mike (Josh Hutcherson, emoting poorly), police officer Vanessa (Elizabeth Lail, uncertain what movie is being made) and Mike’s 11-year-old sister, Abby (Piper Rubio, always game).

Abby wants nothing better than to reunite with her

Chuck E. Cheese-like animatronic pals - Freddy Fazbear, Bonnie, Chica and Foxy. Her nasty science teacher (Wayne Knight, not going to have a good movie) hates her and she’s weird, mostly because she pines for the companionship of four possessed robots. Therapy for everyone!

The sequel does get kudos for introducing a truly scary creature amid the decidedly nonfrightening, bow-tie wearing, big-eyed animatronics - The Marionette, a truly unsettling (slightly Jigsaw-like) dude with a mask that has rosy red cheeks and a body with elongated arms. But the filmmakers fumble by losing him in the machinery. It’s not even clear by the end who is bad and who is good. (Well, it’s clear the movie isn’t good.)

Trauma runs through “Five Nights at Freddy’s 2” and it’s mainly the repercussions from the first movie. Vanessa hasn’t properly dealt with the fact that her father set this whole murderous situation going, Mike is trying to move past the horror of having seen people murdered by pizza parlor entertainment figures and Abby is a mess, leaving a note for her brother that reads: “Gone to fix my friends.” (Why not “Gone to fix this movie”?)

The filmmakers really haven’t decided for a second time whether Freddy, Bonnie, Chica and Foxy are deeply evil

or actually friendly, which leads to existential confusion. They layer on movie cliches like thick pepperoni slices: old-fashioned delicate music boxes, flickering flashlights, eyeglasses cracked and refrigerator door closing jumpscares. At one point, Megan Fox provides the voice for Chica. Will you notice? Of course not.

As sequels must do these days, we’ve got an extra portion of these nasty Care Bears - they come in waves - and there’s a weird moment when Vanessa travels back in time to the mind palace of her evil father, which just seems like an excuse to rehire Matthew Lillard. The animatronics this time both lumber like creaky dinosaurs but also unbelievably pounce unseen like leopards and apparently can outrun a midsize sedan.

It’s an incoherent mess, something that, back in the day, would be straight to DVD. “Five Nights at Freddy’s 2” has an after-school special vibe with no real horror and no real awareness that it should. “What kind of kid would want to come here?” asks Mike. Indeed.

“Five Nights at Freddy’s 2,” a Universal Pictures release that hit theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for violent content, terror and some language. Running time: 104 minutes. Zero stars out of four.

‘You can’t be an actor and not fail’

Clooney reflects on fame, failure and a life in movies with ‘Jay Kelly’

NEW YORK, Dec 7, (AP): George Clooney is not Jay Kelly. That much he is sure of.

But when a famous movie star of a certain age decides to take on a role as a famous movie star of a certain age, full of regrets and realizing that he’s missed out on so much of his own life in pursuit of greatness and fame, it does invite some questions.

Clooney, 64, wasn’t thinking about all that when Noah Baumbach called him about the part. He was just thinking about how hard it is to get good roles the older he gets.

“I was predisposed to want to do it before I even read it,” Clooney told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

He wasn’t the only one. Adam Sandler, Laura Dern and Billy Crudup were just a few of the many stars of “Jay Kelly,” streaming on Netflix on Friday, who pretty much signed on script unread. Baumbach’s name, as the writer-director behind “Marriage Story” and “The Squid and the Whale,” has that kind of effect on actors, from those he’s worked with before, to those who’ve just admired him from afar.

“Jay Kelly,” which Baumbach wrote with Emily Mortimer, wasn’t just a clever character study but a lovingly clear-eyed portrait of the strange business of Hollywood moviemaking



Cast member Adam Sandler, from left, co-writer Emily Mortimer, cast member George Clooney, director/co-writer Noah Baumbach and cast member Laura Dern pose for a portrait to promote the film ‘Jay Kelly’ in Los Angeles. (AP)

and the personalities involved - the managers (Sandler), the publicists (Dern), the makeup artists (Mortimer), the best actor from acting class who didn’t make it (Crudup), and, of course, the one who did (Clooney).

“It’s so lush in its appreciation for the sort of carnival life of actors and the proximity to some kind of gilded, glorious life that’s always tantalizingly close,” Crudup said. “We use movie stars as some kind of analogy about what it means to be successful and have a happy life, when in fact, that’s smoke and mirrors. And if you’re too busy looking out for that, you’re gonna miss the life that you have.”

Clooney saw the trappings of fame, especially when achieved too young, through the lens of his very famous aunt Rosemary Clooney, at a safe distance from his home in Kentucky.

“She got her fame at 16, and it was big. She was on a cover of Time magazine,” he said. “And she believed all the stuff when they tell you how great you are ... Then the business changed and she wasn’t prepared for that. If you believe the first part, you gotta believe the second part.”

Failure, which he came to appreciate through many, many rejections, was an important part of the game. Clooney was in his 30s when he launched into the stratosphere with “ER.”

“You can’t be an actor and not fail,” he said. “And that’s the risk, right? That’s why when it’s successful it pays off. It’s because you’re willing to risk humiliation.”

‘Vibrant cultural heart of the comprehensive tourism strategy’

Whispers of history, glimmers of art: The magic of Al Ain

By Susan Nasser
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The transition from Abu Dhabi Airport marked more than just a city-to-city motion, it is the initial entry into a world of serenity and marvel.

The drive to Al Ain unfolded across the expansive desert, and the destination seemed to approach at a deliberately gradual pace with each passing kilometer.

The narrative begins in the tranquil Al Ain Oasis. Here, the only sound is the gentle flow of the ‘falaj’ (irrigation channel), while the deep shade of the palm trees is a constant, unmoving presence.

The place is a microcosm of history and culture — the park, museum, Sheikh Zayed Palace, central square, ‘souk’ (market) and environmental center are clustered.

They form a cohesive narrative, much like pages in an open book, illustrating the long history of how people in this region mastered the art of coexisting with water, sun and time.

The visit to Al Ain Museum marked a change in pace. With more than 200 archaeological sites, the ground beneath us seemed to whisper the story of time.

Inside the halls, different eras were revealed seamlessly. From the historic fort to the ancient artifacts housed within, a picture of a city emerged, not instantly created, but built and shaped over time, layer by layer and story by compelling story.

The experience shifted dramatically upon reaching Al Qattara, a station where light itself seemed to be transformed.

The initial setting pays homage to nature with native Emirati plants. Following this natural introduction, the area is dedicated to art through the ‘Manar Abu Dhabi’ initiative, debuting in Al Ain.

Thus, the oases of Al Jimi and Al Qattara are converted into a vast, open-air night gallery. Six distinct light installations are placed among the palm trees, interacting with the water and subtly redefining the scenery while preserving its essential character.

During the opening holiday — coinciding with the Traditional Crafts Festival, the oases teemed with visitors, and the paths transformed into trails of light, sound and wonder: artists, people, children, cameras and shadows—all of them are part of a single scene, as if the city stepped outside its ordinary routine to celebrate itself.

The journey in Al Ain concluded, but it kept on resonating. This is a city adept at preserving its heritage—not as a cage, but as an open book—and embracing contemporary art while remaining true to its distinct character.

It captivates not with clamor, but with a profound sense of peace, etching itself into your memory like the shimmering reflection of light on water.

Sadu Illuminates the Night at Al Qattara

At Al Qattara Oasis, Emirati artist and designer Khalid Al Shafar weaves his tapestry of light with his work, “The Red Sadu Carpet,” as part of the ‘Manar Abu



Al Ain Museum (Inset) Al Ain Oasis



Abdullah Yousef Mohammad

Dhabi’ events.

Ancient patterns are reborn in a contemporary language, stretching between brick and light, giving memory a tangible form that the visitor walks with step by step, where Sadu transforms from a craft into a luminous story in the eye.

When a Tree Breathes Light

At the Al Jimi Oasis trail, Emirati artist Maitha Hamdan weaved an intimate connection between humanity and nature through her work, “Breath of Place/Same Place,” also part of the ‘Manar Abu Dhabi’ events.

At the heart of the scene stands a cypress tree with its expansive shade, with strands of light on its branches, moving as visitors pass by, the glow shifting as if the tree breathes with the footsteps of

those who walk by.

Between light, air and branches, boundaries dissolve and the strands sway with the evening breeze, creating a soft whisper that accompanies the experience.

Here, the visitor is not merely an observer, but part of the rhythm, walking slowly within a space that invites him to listen to the place and contemplate a rare moment where the body becomes one with light and nature.

Did you listen to what the flower is saying?

Audiovisual artist Christian Brinkmann presented his interactive work, “In the Breath of Flowers”, in which a plant transforms from a silent object into a living partner in the artistic experience.

A real plant equipped with sensors that respond to touch and react to proximity translates every signal into light, sound and image in real time, as if nature is engaging in a dialogue with the visitor.

The leaves seem to breathe, the lighting shifts with each approach, and visual elements emerge from a 3D scan that preserves the plant’s finest details. Here, the interaction is not merely observation, but a subtle sensory participation that invites gentle closeness and listening to what the flower is saying as it speaks the language of light and sound.

Abu Dhabi Strengthens its Tourism Position... and Al Ain is the Heart of the Cultural Scene

Abdullah Yousef Mohammad, Director of International Operations at the De-

partment of Culture and Tourism in Abu Dhabi, affirmed that the emirate “continues to solidify its position as a comprehensive global tourism destination, combining authentic Arabian hospitality with sophisticated experience.”

He pointed out that “Al Ain is the vibrant cultural heart of the comprehensive tourism strategy, encompassing UNESCO World Heritage sites, natural oases and unique human experiences.”

He explained that “tourism growth plans are based on diversifying experiences, expanding regional and international partnerships, and enhancing accessibility to the emirate.”

He said “Gulf markets, particularly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, continue to register strong growth, driven by the rise in family travel and short breaks.”

He revealed that “Abu Dhabi welcomed more than 9.4 million hotel guests by October 2025, an eight percent increase in the number of international visitors and a significant rise in visitor spending,” emphasizing that “repeat visitors from the Gulf countries constitute a key pillar of the tourism growth strategy.”

He added that “Saadiyat Cultural District is greatly contributing to the consolidation of Abu Dhabi’s position as a global cultural capital through its iconic landmarks, most notably the Louvre Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum and Natural History Museum, as well as the remarkable expansion in the luxury hospitality sector and new tourism projects within the Abu Dhabi Tourism Strategy 2030.”



Left to Right photos from the Museum.

UAE, Int’l Falconry Chief commend Kuwait for organizing World Falcon Cup



Seif Al-Shalahi, member of the organizing committee, Chairman of the Kuwait Falconers' Association, and member of the IFF.



Participants pose for a group photo.



KUNA photos
Highlights from the final day of the UAE World Falcon Racing Cup.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): The United Arab Emirates and Secretary General of the International Federation for Falconry Sports and Racing Rashed bin Markhan commended Kuwait’s outstanding organization of the first UAE World Falcon Racing Cup, saying the high professionalism shown made this heritage sporting event comparable to major international championships.

In a press statement Sunday, Markhan thanked Kuwait’s Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman

Al-Mutairi for his strong support and close follow-up, which ensured the tournament was delivered at a high level.

He also commended the efforts of the organizing committees from Kuwait and from the UAE and International Falconry Federations (IFF), noting the impressive performance of Kuwaiti falconers, whose long tradition in the sport and strong bird lineages contributed to intense competition across all races.

Meanwhile, Seif Al-Shalahi, member of the or-

ganizing committee, Chairman of the Kuwait Falconers’ Association, and member of the IFF told KUNA that participants delivered remarkable performances that impressed all attendees, proving their ability to compete internationally.

With the support of Al-Mutairi, Kuwait will take part in the third International Federation for Falconry Sports and Racing (IFFSR) Cup in Dubai next February, represented by winners of the main rounds of the current Cup in the Pure Gyr, Gyr Shaheen, Garmousha, and Gyr Tabaa

categories, he added.

Al-Shalahi thanked the UAE and IFF for choosing Kuwait to host the first edition, reflecting the deep friendly ties between the two countries, and said the close cooperation between the Kuwaiti organizing committee and Emirati and international teams was key to this success.

The winners will be honored at a closing ceremony this evening at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, held under the sponsorship of Al-Mutairi.

New agreements expand research, reconstructive surgery and AI-assisted patient consultations

Al-Babtain Center signs deals with Korean medical institutions

By Bassam Al-Qassas
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Head of the Al-Babtain Center for Burns and Plastic Surgery, Dr. Muhammad Khalaf, announced the signing of a series of new cooperation agreements with medical institutions in South Korea.

The agreements cover medical research, reconstructive surgery, medical training, the exchange of expertise, and online patient consultations using artificial intelligence technologies in both Kuwait and Korea, as well as the performance of several specialized procedures.

Dr. Khalaf highlighted that the agreements provide for quarterly workshops featuring leading Korean doctors, who will deliver weekly lectures and participate in surgeries at the center.

He noted that cooperation with the Korean side had existed intermittently for 15 years but has now become regular and structured following the signing of the new agreements.

Dr. Khalaf revealed that visiting experts include Professor Ji-P Hong, a lymphedema specialist, Professor Qaisun, a reconstructive and cosmetic surgery specialist, and Professor

Mustafa Hamdi from Belgium, a consultant in reconstructive and cosmetic surgery, who will visit Kuwait on January 20-24, 2026.

He stressed that during the Kuwait Conference in Seoul, four medical research papers were presented on lymphedema, microsurgery, reconstructive surgery in Kuwait, and complications of cosmetic procedures. A memorandum of understanding was also signed with the Korean Association of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons during the conference.

Dr. Khalaf explained that the center treats burn complications that restrict movement in the hands, feet, eyes, or mouth using skin and muscle replacements, stem cell techniques, lasers, and skin grafts with artificial skin made from human cells.

The center performs five to six surgeries daily and has ten intensive care beds. Burn cases involving more than 20 percent of the body surface area are referred to the center due to the need for intensive care by a specialized medical team, including anesthesiologists, intensive care physicians, burn specialists, plastic surgeons, and a specialized nursing team.

The center has a hyperbaric oxygen therapy room with

six seats, used to treat diabetic foot, chronic wounds, burns, hearing loss, and post-reconstructive surgery.

The center also receives some cases referred from the ENT and pediatric surgery departments at Ibn Sina Hospital. Plans are underway to establish a specialized center for the nervous system and neurosurgery in the future.

The center offers advanced laser devices for treating congenital vascular malformations (hemangiomas) and performs delicate surgeries such as repairing and separating fused fingers, functional procedures to improve limb movement, reattaching fingers severed in accidents, and transferring nerves, tendons, and muscles. Some procedures take more than 24 hours, requiring highly skilled, patient, and calm plastic surgeons.

The center also treats surgical complications from chest or abdominal surgeries and provides advanced services in breast cancer treatment using the latest microsurgical devices and natural tissue reconstruction techniques, including Galaflex.

Dr. Khalaf mentioned a visit from Professor Bernisio Cleese, a consultant in maxillofacial surgery and congenital malformations, who performs surgeries on children with

cleft lip, craniosynostosis, and other congenital facial deformities.

He indicated that surgeries are typically performed six months after birth, except in rare cases requiring immediate intervention within the first few hours of life, such as a skull defect or brain tissue protruding outside the head.

Dr. Khalaf stressed that the center is also working to strengthen its international collaborations with several global medical and academic institutions through agreements and joint programs with Harvard University, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and Boston University.

He affirmed that these agreements cover advanced medical research, the exchange of expertise, remote case consultations via Zoom, the use of specialized software for burn treatment, physician exchanges, and performing microsurgical procedures with medical teams from Mexico and Turkey.

Dr. Khalaf said the Ministry of Health encourages the center to expand its use of modern technologies, revealing that robotic surgeries will soon be conducted at the Al-Babtain Center once the new system becomes fully operational.

MoH advances patient care

Kuwait among leading states to adopt robotic endocrine surgery

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwait has been among the leading counties that implemented robotic surgery techniques to be part of the state's medical system.

This was announced in a speech delivered by Ministry of Health's Undersecretary Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi while opening Kuwait's first endocrine surgery forum.

Representing the sponsor of the forum Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Al-Mutairi said the step is part of the ministry's plan aiming to invest in advanced techniques to raise the quality of services and boost diagnosis accuracy.

Addressing the forum featuring some distinguished surgeons and specialists from inside and beyond Kuwait, Al-Mutairi added endocrine surgery today stands at the forefront of advanced medical subspecialties that combines

high surgical skill with a profound sense of human responsibility.

He pointed out that every surgery performed in this field represents a pivotal moment in the life of a patient who regains health and balance.

The Ministry of Health has established specialized endocrine surgery units at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital and Al-Amiri Hospital, he stated, noting that implementing such units is being completed in the remaining general hospitals.

Meanwhile, the conference chair Dr. Ali Al-Sayed said that the forum is the first of its kind, as it is entirely dedicated to endocrine surgery and supports specialties in Kuwait.

Holding this forum does not merely represent a scientific event, but is a true reflection of our commitment to "our medical and humanitarian mission," he added.



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, delivers his speech during the opening of the first Kuwaiti Forum for Endocrine Surgery.



Part of the audience.

KUNA photos

Health Ministry unveils new treatment guidelines

Kuwait inaugurates 1st oncology conference to boost cancer care

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: The Kuwait Oncology Association hosted the inaugural "Kuwait Oncology Conference", which was inaugurated on Saturday by the Ministry of Health.

Assistant Undersecretary for Primary Healthcare Dr. Nadia Jumaa delivered a speech on behalf of the Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, in which she stressed that the conference is a significant scientific event that brings together distinguished healthcare professionals, experts, and international participants.



Healthcare leaders and oncology experts gather at the inaugural Kuwait Oncology Conference, marking a new chapter in advanced cancer care and patient-centered treatment.

She explained that the main objectives of the conference are to promote the exchange of expertise and strengthen global medical cooperation.

The adoption of the latest diagnostic and treatment techniques has led to a huge improvement in healthcare outcomes in recent years, ensuring that every patient receives comprehensive, carefully tailored care that preserves privacy and enhances the chances of successful treatment.

The Ministry of Health continues to carry out its developmental vision through internationally approved medical protocols with the aim to improve the healthcare system and translate this vision into practice.

Among these efforts is the transformation of the Kuwait Cancer Control Center into an integrated medical environment offering advanced diagnostic and treatment services, psychological and social support, specialized staff training, and enhanced public awareness about the importance of early detection.

The ministry announced the upcoming opening of a new cancer center, a comprehensive medical facility equipped with advanced systems, technologies, and medical equipment that meet the highest international quality standards.

The center is expected to ensure accurate diagnosis and timely treatment while keeping pace with patient needs and future healthcare challenges.

During the conference, the ministry also announced the launch of the book

"Recommendations and Guidelines for Radiotherapy and Oncology 2025," which was developed over recent years to serve as a scientific and professional reference based on the most up-to-date international protocols.

It affirmed that the book has been approved by the Radiology and Radiotherapy Departments Council as well as the Ministry of Health, marking an achievement that the healthcare system takes pride in.

The ministry expressed hope that the conference would advance the field of oncology in Kuwait, help develop national strategies for cancer patient care, and contribute to enhancing the quality of medical services, aiming to make Kuwait a regional model that meets the highest scientific and medical standards.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Kuwait Oncology Conference Dr. Sadiq Abu Zallouf highlighted data from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which is part of the World Health Organization, predicting approximately 30 million new cancer cases globally by 2050, up from 20 million in 2022.

At the conference opening, he revealed that more than 18 million deaths are expected this year, compared to 9 million in the previous year.

Dr. Abu Zallouf emphasized that these

figures reflect the increasing global burden of cancer and underscore the urgent need for enhanced prevention and response strategies.

He noted that delayed diagnosis remains one of the major obstacles to effective cancer treatment.

Dr. Abu Zallouf stressed the importance of raising public awareness about cancer symptoms, encouraging prompt medical consultation for any concerning signs, and continuously investing in early detection services, modern equipment, resources, and the training and development of healthcare professionals.

In addition, Dr. Mariam Al-Otaibi, Head of the Kuwait Cancer Society, emphasized that fighting cancer is a team effort that combines clinical expertise and scientific research to support patients in every aspect of their care, ultimately guiding them toward a safe and healthy life.

She highlighted that caring for cancer patients requires not only advanced medical treatment but also a deep understanding of their needs, compassionate care that preserves their dignity, and reassurance throughout the treatment journey.

Dr. Al-Otaibi stressed the importance of raising awareness and breaking down fear barriers to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The Conversation

Vaccine committee votes to scrap universal hepatitis B shots for newborns despite outcry from children's health experts

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

□ □ □

By David Higgins
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

The committee advising the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on vaccine policy voted on Dec. 5, 2025, to stop recommending that all newborns be routinely vaccinated against the hepatitis B virus - undoing a 34-year prevention strategy that has nearly eliminated early childhood hepatitis B infections in the United States.

Before the U.S. began vaccinating all infants at birth with the hepatitis B vaccine in 1991, around 18,000 children every year contracted the virus before their 10th birthday - about half of them at birth. About 90% of that subset developed a chronic infection.

In the U.S., 1 in 4 children chronically infected with hepatitis B will die prematurely from cirrhosis or liver cancer.

Today, fewer than 1,000 American children or adolescents contract the virus every year - a 95% drop. Fewer than 20 babies each year are reported infected at birth.

I am a pediatrician and preventive

medicine specialist who studies vaccine delivery and policy. Vaccinating babies for hepatitis B at birth remains one of the clearest, most evidence-based ways to keep American children free of this lifelong, deadly infection.

In September 2025, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, or ACIP, an independent panel of experts that advises the CDC, debated changing the recommendation for a dose of the hepatitis B vaccine at birth, but ultimately delayed the vote.

This committee regularly reviews vaccine guidance. However, since Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. disbanded the entire committee and handpicked new members, its activity has drastically departed from business as usual. The committee has long-standing procedures for evaluating evidence on the risks and benefits of vaccines, but these procedures were not followed in the September meeting and were not followed for this most recent decision.

The committee's new recommendation keeps the hepatitis B vaccine at birth for infants whose mothers test positive for the virus. But the committee now advises that infants whose mothers test negative should consult with their health care provider. Parents and health care providers are instructed to weigh vaccine benefits, vaccine risks and infection risks using



Children are most likely to get infected by hepatitis B at birth, when contact with their mother's blood can transmit the virus. (AP)

"individual-based decision-making" or "shared clinical decision-making."

On the surface, this sounds reasonable. But while parents have always been free to discuss benefits and risks with their health care providers to make a decision on what's best for their child, this change is not based on any new evidence, and it introduces uncertainty into a recommendation that has long been clear.

As a doctor, I am already seeing this uncertainty play out in the clinic.

I recently had new parents ask to postpone the hepatitis B vaccine until adolescence because they believed federal health leaders had evidence that people only become infected through sexual activity or contaminated needle use.

After a brief conversation, they came to understand that this was inaccurate - children can be infected not only at birth but also through routine household or child care exposures, including shared toothbrushes or even

a bite that breaks the skin. In the end, they chose to vaccinate, but this experience highlights how easily well-intentioned parents can be misled when guidance is not clear and consistent.

Hepatitis B is a virus that infects liver cells, causing inflammation and damage. It is spread through blood and bodily fluids and is easily transmitted from mother to baby during delivery.

The hepatitis B vaccine has been available since the early 1980s. Before 1991, public health guidance recommended giving newborns the hepatitis B vaccine only if they were at high risk of being infected - for example, if they were born to a mother infected with hepatitis B.

That targeted plan failed. Tens of thousands of infants were still infected each year.

Some newborns were exposed when their mothers weren't screened; others were exposed after their mothers were infected late in pregnancy, after their initial screening. And like any lab test, the screening can have false negative results, be misinterpreted or not be communicated properly to the baby's care team.

Recognizing these gaps, in 1991 the CDC recommended hepatitis B vaccination for every child starting at birth, regardless of maternal risk.

The U.S. adopted a policy of vaccinating all babies from birth because

the number of people with hepatitis B infections was, and remains, relatively high, and because many mothers do not receive prenatal care, so their infections go undetected.

Meanwhile, in some European countries, like Denmark, only babies with certain risk factors receive the vaccine at birth. That's because in those countries, hepatitis B infections are much less prevalent and pregnant mothers are more widely tested due to universal health care. Due to these differences, that approach is not effective in the United States. In fact, most World Health Organization member countries do recommend a universal birth dose.

The greatest danger for infants contracting hepatitis B is at birth, when contact with a mother's blood can transmit the virus. Without preventive treatment or vaccination, 70% to 90% of infants born to infected mothers will become infected themselves, and 90% of those infections will become chronic. The infection in these children silently damages their liver, potentially leading to liver cancer and death.

About 80% of parents choose to vaccinate their babies at birth. If parents choose to delay vaccination due to this new recommendation, it will leave babies unprotected during this most vulnerable window, when infection is most likely to lead to chronic infection and silently damage the liver. (AP)

Taira earns the biggest victory of his career

Yan dominates Dvalishvili to capture bantamweight championship at UFC 323

LAS VEGAS, Dec 7, (AP): Petr Yan stunned Merab Dvalishvili with a dominating effort to capture the bantamweight championship by unanimous decision at UFC 323.

With punishing strikes and several crushing kicks to the rib cage, Yan (20-5) ended Dvalishvili's 14-match winning streak.

"I'm very happy to stand here with the championship belt, thank you to all the fans," Yan said, through an interpreter. "I worked so hard, I prepared so hard for this moment."

Dvalishvili (21-5) hadn't lost since April 21, 2018, when Ricky Simon won by submission. It was his fourth title match of 2025.

Yan exacted revenge for his last loss when Dvalishvili defeated the 32-year-old by unanimous decision on a UFC Fight Night card on March 11, 2023.

Dvalishvili, 34, closed a -425 favorite, which meant a better laid \$425 to \$100 at BetMGM. Anyone wagering \$100 on Yan would have won \$320.

"I lost today," Dvalishvili said. "Congratulations to him."

In the co-main event, challenger Joshua Van won the flyweight belt from former champion Alexandre Pantoja with a TKO just 26 seconds into the first round after a quirky finish.

In what appeared to be a freak accident, Pantoja (30-6) injured his left shoulder just after throwing a right roundkick to Van's head. But as Van (16-2) blocked the kick, Pantoja used his left arm to brace his fall, but his arm buckled, and he



Petr Yan celebrates with a member of his team after defeating UFC bantamweight champion Merab Dvalishvili during UFC in Las Vegas. (AP)

immediately grabbed it and waved to referee Herb Dean to stop the bout at 26 seconds.

In a display of sportsmanship, Van immediately joined Pantoja on the canvas to check on him once the bout was called.

Also from the main card:

In what was a scheduled three-round flyweight bout, No. 5 Tatsuro Taira (18-1-0) earned the biggest victory of his career, a first-round stoppage over No. 2 Brandon Moreno (23-9-2) at the 2:24 mark of the second round after capitalizing on a rear-mount ground-and-pound.

In a three-round bantamweight match, unranked rising star Payton Talbott (11-1-0) dominated 10th-ranked Henry Cejudo (16-6-0) to earn a 30-27 unanimous decision over the former two-division champion. Cejudo, who fought for the last time, was honored with a tribute video after the bout.

In a three-round light heavyweight bout, fifth-ranked Jan Blachowicz (29-11-2) and 11th-ranked Bogdan Guskov (18-3-1) fought to a majority draw. Blachowicz was given the 29-28 edge by one judge, while two others had it 28-28.

It marked the last UFC pay-per-view fight after the organization agreed to a seven-year contract with Paramount Plus under which future bouts will be on the streaming service. The partnership, which includes the two popular series Dana White's Contender Series and The Ultimate Fighter, begins Jan. 24 with UFC 324 in Las Vegas.

Shiffrin finishes 6th

Robinson races to second straight World Cup GS win

MONT-TREMBLANT, Quebec, Dec 7, (AP): Alice Robinson of New Zealand raced to her second straight women's World Cup giant slalom victory at Mont-Tremblant, while American star Mikaela Shiffrin finished sixth.

Robinson led after the first run and had a combined time of 2 minutes, 16.18 seconds in the first of two races at the resort northwest of Montreal.

"I was a bit nervous this morning because the conditions here were so different compared to last weekend, so I wasn't sure the good skiing from last weekend necessarily meant it was going to be good this weekend," Robinson said. "I'm really happy to roll it through in these conditions which were really tough today."

She has six career World Cup victories, also winning a week ago at Copper Mountain in Colorado. That victory made her the women's World Cup victory leader among skiers from a non-European or North American nation.

Zrinka Ljutic of Croatia was second, 0.94 seconds back. Valerie Grenier of Canada was third, a second behind on her home course.

"It was a big reaction, big tears in my eyes," Grenier said. "I still can't believe it happened. With my teammates jumping into my arms, it made me cry a lot."

Switzerland's Camille Rast (2:17.39) and France's Clara Dizez (2:17.69) rounded out the top five. Shiffrin (2:17.83), who was third after the opening run, posted only the 20th-fastest second run.

The course and the steady snowfall through the entire first run appeared to cause trouble for several skiers, including some of the favorites.

Austria's Julia Scheib, who won the first giant slalom of the season and led standings entering the day, failed to complete her opening run, as did Sweden's Sara Hector, fifth in the standings and the first out of the gate Saturday.



Alice Robinson of New Zealand speeds down the course as she races in the women's World Cup giant slalom in Mont Tremblant, Que. (AP)

Teams making weather a key consideration

Indoor stadiums to limit heat impact at the next World Cup

WASHINGTON, Dec 7, (AP): For teams coming to next year's World Cup, Friday was about learning options.

Saturday was for finding out other logistics - the sites and times of games.

The entire schedule for the 2026 tournament in Canada, Mexico and the United States was revealed Saturday, a day after the draw divided the 48-team field into a dozen groups of four for the preliminary round. Now every team knows how much travel it will face while playing its first - and possibly only - three games. They can also estimate how much the heat will be a factor.

Even Canada coach Jesse Marsch - whose team will stay north of the border in Toronto and Vancouver while playing in Group B - is taking the weather into account. Canada opens in Toronto against the winner of a European play-off, and that game is at 3 p.m. so it could conceivably be pretty warm.

"We're going to make sure our guys are fit," Marsch said. "We're going to make sure that they acclimatize to what the weather could be."

Heat has long been an issue at World Cups. The Qatar tournament in 2022 was played later in the year because of it. The last time the U.S. hosted a World Cup in 1994, games were mostly during the day. That was convenient for television viewers in Europe, but it made for some sweltering conditions in places like the Cotton Bowl in Dallas.

Over three decades later, that venue isn't being used at the 2026 World Cup. Instead, games in the Dallas area will be played in Arlington, Texas, at AT&T Stadium - and the home of the NFL's Cowboys has a retractable roof. So do the stadiums in Houston and Atlanta that are being used.

SoFi Stadium - the Los Angeles Rams' home in Inglewood, California - has a roof, but air from the outside can flow in. With five afternoon games on the schedule, SoFi is a spot where temperatures could soar.

The Mexican sites - Estadio Azteca in Mexico City, Estadio Akron in Guadalajara and Estadio BBVA in Monterrey - could become heat concerns as well. American soccer fans are well aware of how oppressive conditions



FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks during the match schedule reveal for the 2026 soccer World Cup in Washington, Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025. (AP)

at Azteca can be, in terms of both the temperature and the altitude, for visiting teams. But in this tournament, almost all the games at the three Mexican venues are at night.

Here are the group stage games where heat is most likely to be an issue at kickoff. This is based on 30-year averages of Accuweather's "RealFeel" temperature. Because of their roofs, Arlington, Houston and Atlanta are not included. All times local:

88 degrees - Switzerland vs. Winner of European Playoff A (June 18 at 12 p.m. in Inglewood)

87 degrees - Belgium vs. Iran (June 21 at 12 p.m. in Inglewood)

87 degrees - Curaçao vs. Ivory Coast (June 25 at 4 p.m. in Philadelphia)

86 degrees - Tunisia vs. Netherlands (June 25 at 6 p.m. in Kansas City, Missouri)

85 degrees - Scotland vs. Brazil (June 24 at 6 p.m. in Miami Gardens, Florida)

85 degrees - Ecuador vs. Germany (June 25 at 4 p.m. in East Rutherford, New Jersey)

85 degrees - Norway vs. France (June 26 at 3 p.m. in Foxborough, Massachusetts)

84 degrees - Qatar vs. Switzerland (June 13 at 12 p.m. in Santa Clara, California)

84 degrees - Uruguay vs. Cape Verde (June 21 at 6 p.m. in Miami Gardens)

84 degrees - South Africa vs. South Korea (June 24 at 7 p.m. in Monterrey)

84 degrees - Saudi Arabia vs. Uruguay (June 15 at 6 p.m. in Miami Gardens)

Porter and Claxton shine as Nets outclass Pelicans



Atlanta Hawks guard Nickeil Alexander-Walker (7) goes to the basket past Washington Wizards guard Bub Carrington, left, during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Washington. (AP)

Timberwolves edges Clippers

NEW YORK, Dec 7, (AP): Michael Porter Jr. tied his season high with 35 points, Nic Claxton had his second triple-double and the Brooklyn Nets beat the New Orleans Pelicans 119-101 on Saturday.

Porter matched his career best by reaching 30 for a third straight game, having also done it last Feb. 3-6 during his final season with Denver. He made five 3-pointers and had nine rebounds after sitting out Thursday to rest his back in the second night of a back-to-back.

Claxton finished with 14 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists. He's the first Nets player with multiple triple-doubles in a season since James Harden (nine) and Kevin Durant (four) in 2021-22, and the second Nets center with multiple career triple-doubles. Shawn Bradley had five from 1995-97.

Day'Ron Sharpe added 16 points on 7-for-8 shooting as Brooklyn won for the third time in four games to improve to 6-17.

Trey Murphy III scored 23 points for the Pelicans, who lost their sixth straight game and fell to 3-21. Sad-

diq Bey added 18 points and Bryce McGowens had 16.

Hawks 131, Wizards 116

In Washington, Jalen Johnson had his second straight triple-double and fourth of the season, finishing with 30 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists in Atlanta's victory over Washington.

Onyeka Okongwu added 21 points for the Hawks. They snapped a three-game losing streak and avenged a 132-113 loss in Washington on Nov. 25.

Vit Krejci scored 14 points and made three of his four 3-pointers in the fourth quarter to help Atlanta pull away after giving back a lead that had been 20 in the second quarter and 18 in the third.

CJ McCollum scored 28 points for last-place Washington, which lost its third in a row and second straight at home following two consecutive home wins. He hit seven 3s as the Wizards stayed in the game on 17-of-28 shooting beyond the arc.

Warriors 99, Cavaliers 94

In Cleveland, Pat Spencer scored a career-high 19 points in his first NBA start and Golden State shook off an awful-shooting first quarter to defeat Cleveland.

It was the third consecutive game the third-year guard has scored at least 15. His three 3-pointers were a career high.

Gui Santos added 14 points, Buddy Hield scored 13 in his first start of the season and Quinton Post had 12. The short-handed Warriors have won three of four, despite missing Stephen Curry, Draymond Green, Jimmy Butler and Al Horford.

Donovan Mitchell led Cleveland with 29 points,

including 16 in the fourth quarter. Evan Mobley scored 18 and Darius Garland 17. The Cavaliers, who were missing Jarrett Allen and Lonzo Ball, have dropped five of seven.

Pistons 124, Bucks 112

In Detroit, Cade Cunningham had 23 points and 12 assists and Detroit beat Milwaukee 124-112 to end the Bucks' 15-game winning streak in Detroit.

Milwaukee came into the season with a 13-game winning streak against the Pistons, but Detroit has won two of three this season.

Jalen Duren had 16 points and 16 rebounds for Detroit, which has won four of five to improve to 19-5, with the only loss coming on Wednesday night in Milwaukee. Isaiah Stewart added 19 points.

Kevin Porter Jr. had a season-high 32 points for the Bucks, who have lost 10 of 12. Kyle Kuzma added 15 points.

Kings 127, Heat 111

In Miami, Zach LaVine had season highs of eight 3-pointers and 42 points, and Sacramento got their first double-digit win of the season by topping Miami.

Keegan Murray scored

16, Nique Clifford had 15 and DeMar DeRozan finished with 13 for the Kings, who came into the game having lost four straight and 12 of their last 14. Sacramento's five wins entering the night were by a combined 18 points, none of them by more than a five-point margin.

LaVine's previous bests this season were six 3s and 34 points. Sacramento led by as many as 28 - another season-best - and got its biggest win ever in Miami. The Kings were 6-31 all-time in Miami, never winning by more than 15 points.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 27 for the Heat, who have dropped three straight for the first time this season. Simone Fontecchio scored 20 for the Heat, who got 18 from Norman Powell and 13 from Andrew Wiggins.

Timberwolves 109, Clippers 106

In Minneapolis, Naz Reid made a go-ahead 3-pointer with 13 seconds remaining. Jaden McDaniels scored 27 points and Minnesota beat Los Angeles.

Julius Randle added 24 points for Minnesota. Reid's big shot capped a 19-point night off the bench, including 5 of 8 from deep. Mc-

Daniels then made two free throws with 4.8 seconds left and the Timberwolves held on.

Minnesota won its season-high fifth straight game. The Clippers have lost seven of eight.

James Harden led the Clippers with 34 points and moved into 10th on the NBA's career scoring list. He surpassed Carmelo Anthony (28,289 points) with a pair of free throws in the third quarter.

Kawhi Leonard added 20 points while Ivica Zubac had 15 points and 13 rebounds for the Clippers. Harden missed a potential tying 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Mavericks 122, Rockets 109

In Dallas, Anthony Davis scored 29 points and Dallas beat Houston to finish a back-to-back coming off a blowout loss at defending champion Oklahoma City.

Davis went 14 of 19 from the field a night after making just one of nine shots and scoring two points in 24 minutes in a 132-111 loss to the Thunder. It was fewest points of the 10-time All-Star's career when playing at least 20 minutes.

Kevin Durant scored 20 of his 27 points in the first half but ended up not playing in the fourth quarter after the Mavericks outscored Houston 37-20 in the third and took a 21-point lead early in the fourth. The game was tied at halftime.

Cooper Flagg had 19 points, and one of his three assists came on a nifty transition bounce pass to Ryan Nembhard for a 98-77 lead. Brandon Williams scored 20 points as the backup point guard to Nembhard, the rookie who had 11 points and seven assists in his sixth consecutive start, the first of his career.



Miami Heat forward Nikola Jović (5) dribbles ahead of Sacramento Kings guard Keon Ellis (23) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Miami. (AP)

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Success reflects the high standards of equestrian sport in Kuwait

Al-Khorafi wins silver at FEI Asian Equestrian Championships



Ali Al-Khorafi's medal-winning moment at Asian Equestrian Championship.

PATTAYA, Thailand, Dec 7, (KUNA): Kuwaiti jockey Ali Al-Khorafi claimed the silver medal in the individual show jumping competition at the FEI Asian Championships, held in Pattaya, Thailand. The event, which began on December 3, concluded on Sunday. Speaking to KUNA, Secretary General of the Kuwait Equestrian Federa-

tion (KEF), Ghazi Al-Jeraiwi, praised Al-Khorafi's achievement, noting that it adds to the silver medal the Kuwaiti team secured in the team competition. He said the success reflects the high standards of equestrian sport in Kuwait. Al-Jeraiwi commended the entire Kuwaiti squad for their outstanding

performance and expressed gratitude to everyone who contributed to the team's victories at the Asian tournament. Kuwaiti riders had previously won silver in the team competition on Friday. The team included Yara Al-Hunaidi on Valmira, Annaz Al-Annaz on Carlsson 69, Fawaz Rashed on Gaia des Forets, and Ali Al-Khorafi on I.

Handball (D) course begins in Kuwait

Kuwait departs for Cairo ahead of Asian Handball Championship

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait's national men's handball team is set to leave for Cairo this evening for an overseas training camp in preparation for the Asian Championship, which Kuwait will host in mid-January as part of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. The delegation is led by Handball Federation Treasurer Khalid Taleb and includes team manager Abdulaziz Al-Zaabi, head coach Aron Kristansson from Iceland, assistant coach Heini from Serbia, goalkeeper coach Marwan Maqayez, coach Ayman Al-Sheikh, and the medical team led by physiotherapist Mahdi Al-Bakoush. Meanwhile, the (D) Coaching License Course kicked off yesterday, organized by the Kuwait Handball Federation in cooperation with the International and Asian Handball Federations at the Abdullah Al-Salem Leadership Training Center in Khaldiya.

On the opening day, Asian Handball Federation President Bader Al-Diyab was honored. He commended the Kuwait Handball Federation for its efforts in hosting training programs and wished all participants success. Al-Diyab highlighted that the in-



Bader Al-Diyab, President of the Asian Handball Federation, receives recognition from the International Handball Federation at a Kuwait training program.

volvement of Kuwaiti coaches and staff in such programs demonstrates the country's commitment to developing technical expertise and raising the standard of handball at the international level.

Norris clinches historic title at Abu Dhabi GPrix

Verstappen wins the season-ending race

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates, Dec 7, (AP): McLaren driver Lando Norris held his nerve but could not hold back the tears after clinching his first Formula 1 title at the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Sunday.

Red Bull driver and defending champion Max Verstappen won the race with Norris placing third behind his McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri in second, which allowed Norris to finish two points ahead of Verstappen in the season-long standings.

Piastri was also in contention for his first F1 title and finished third in the standings, 13 points behind Norris, who ended the season with seven wins and 423 points.

The 26-year-old Norris became the first British champion since Lewis Hamilton in 2020, and also denied Verstappen a fifth straight title.

"Oh God. I've not cried in a while. It's a long journey. First of all, I want to say a big thanks to my guys, my parents," Norris said a few minutes after the race. "I now know what Max feels like a little bit. I want to congratulate him and Oscar, too. It's been a long year but we did it."

Norris entered the three-way battle 12 points ahead of Verstappen and 16 ahead of Piastri, who also won seven races but none since the Dutch GP on Aug. 31.

Verstappen started from pole position for Red Bull with Norris on the front row beside him and Piastri third on the grid. Verstappen needed Norris to be fourth or lower and Norris had to finish outside the top five if Piastri won.

Verstappen's astounding late-season charge came close to unseating both McLaren drivers after they had shared the lead throughout the season and then were undone by driver



McLaren driver Lando Norris of Britain burns tires after becoming a world champion after the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Inset: Norris celebrates after becoming a world champion. (AP)

and team-strategy errors.

But even Verstappen's season-leading eighth win and 71st of his career could not stop Norris, who kept his composure on Sunday, having been under severe pressure in recent weeks.

The McLaren motorhome erupted with joy and CEO Zak Brown congratulated Norris on the team radio in his usual jovial manner.

"Lando, this is Zak from McLaren. Is this the world champion hotline? You did it! You did it! Awesome," Brown said.

Norris didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He did both.

"Oh my God, thanks so much. I love you guys. Thanks for every-

thing," Norris said and then broke down in tears.

After crossing the line, Norris stayed in his car for a few moments, visibly emotional. His parents were on the side of the track and he went over to hug them before celebrating with his McLaren engineers and mechanics.

Mercedes driver George Russell came over to hug Norris. Others sympathized with Piastri, who was looking to become the first Australian champion since Alan Jones in 1980.

Pole position was crucial on the 58-lap circuit in Abu Dhabi, where overtaking is hard, and so it proved again as Verstappen joined the long list of

race winners from pole since 2015.

Charles Leclerc finished fourth for Ferrari ahead of Russell and with Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso sixth.

Verstappen made a clean start with Piastri overtaking Norris at the end of Lap 1, while slick Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc was soon behind Norris.

Norris was the first of the contenders to change tires when he came in on Lap 17 to switch from medium to the more durable hard tires.

But Norris was caught behind some traffic and had Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Yuki Tsunoda ahead of him in third spot, which in turn allowed Leclerc to gain some ground on Norris.

Kazma face third-placed Khairin

Qadsia looks to upset Kuwait Club

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait Club is set for a key clash in the sixth round of the basketball league when it faces Qadsia at 7:30 p.m. today. Earlier in the day, Kazma will take on Khairin at 5:00 p.m. Both games will be held at the Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Sports Complex.

The league features a three-division format, with the top four teams advancing to the semifinals. The playoffs follow a best-of-three system, where the first-place team faces the fourth, and the second faces the third, with the first team to win two games moving on to the final.

Kuwait Club leads the standings with 10 points from five victories, remaining unbeaten. Qadsia sits in sixth place with seven points from four matches. Their previous match against Al-Sulaibikhat was postponed due to Al-Sulaibikhat's Iranian professional player, Solar Monji, joining his national team for the Asian qualifiers.

Despite Kuwait Club's dominance over Qadsia in recent seasons, Qadsia remains one of the few teams capable of challenging the White team and securing an upset.



Kuwaiti player drives in for the score.

Turkish coach Andiyak Baisir relies on key players Abdulaziz Al-Humaidi, Abdulmohsen Al-Mousawi, and Abdullah Tawfiq, alongside American professionals Brandon Garrett and DeQuan Jones.

In the earlier matchup, second-placed Kazma, with nine points from five games, will battle third-placed Khairin, who have eight points from five matches.

Best of the Rest

Chinese veteran Xu claims Ruka aericals gold: China's veteran freestyle skier Xu Mengtao made a strong start to what could be her fifth Olympic campaign, clinching the women's aericals title at the FIS Freestyle World Cup in Ruka, Finland on Saturday evening.

Beijing 2022 Olympic champion Xu, 35, reaffirmed her status as a dominant force in women's aericals in the opening World Cup event of the Milan-Cortina 2026 season. She performed the most difficult jump of the night - a back full-full - and secured victory with 89.29 points.

Canada's Marion Thenault finished second with 82.48 points, while another Chinese skier Chen Meiting placed third on 75.31. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Ex-Liverpool owner Hicks dies: Tom Hicks, the Texas businessman and philanthropist who owned two Dallas-area professional sports franchises and an English Premier League soccer team, died Saturday. He was 79.

Spokesperson Lisa LeMaster said in statement that Hicks died peacefully in Dallas surrounded by family.

Hicks owned the NHL's Dallas Stars from 1995-2011, winning the Stanley Cup in 1999. He also owned baseball's Texas Rangers from 1998-2010, leading them to three American West Division titles and a World Series appearance. In 2007, he acquired a 50% stake in Liverpool. (AP)

Very disappointing: Stokes

Smith's brilliance propels Australia to victory in 2nd test and a 2-0 Ashes lead

BRISBANE, Australia, Dec 7, (AP): Steve Smith took a brilliant reflex catch to swing momentum, got into a heated exchange with Jofra Archer and then slogged the winning runs Sunday as Australia beat England again to take a 2-0 Ashes lead.

Set a target of 65 for victory in the second test after dismissing England for 241 in the second innings, Australia raced to an eight-wicket win late on Day 4 as storms brewed in and around the stadium.

Archer was bowling around 150 kph (93 mph) under the lights and it only fired up Smith.

There were some theatrics involving the Australia captain and England's strike pace bowler, with Smith ducking under a short ball and then critiquing Archer for bowling "fast when there's nothing going on, champion." He then hit a four and a six to bring up 1,000 test runs at the Gabba.

With Australia at 63-2 and needing just two runs to win the day-nighter, Smith hit a six to seal it and finished unbeaten on 23 from nine deliveries.



Australia's Travis Head bowled out by England's Gus Atkinson during the second Ashes cricket test match between Australia and England in Brisbane. (AP)

Day 4 was a tale of two captains.

England skipper Stokes curbed his attacking instincts, dispensing with Bazball and pragmatically setting about reviving England's Ashes

prospects.

England had resumed Sunday at 134-6, and took an hour and 36 minutes - 18.2 overs - to erase the first-innings deficit.

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NEWS



Bremen's Jens Stage, left and Hamburg's Albert Lokonga, right, challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Hamburger SV and SV Werder Bremen in Hamburg, Germany. (AP)

Sports

Souza shakes up Kuwait squad ahead of crucial Arab Cup clash against UAE

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Dec 7: Kuwait returned to training as it prepares for its decisive Group C match against the United Arab Emirates tomorrow in the Arab Cup. The Blues fell 1-3 to Jordan in their previous match, while the UAE drew 1-1 with Egypt, securing Jordan's place in the quarterfinals. The second qualifying spot remains open, contested between Egypt (two points), Kuwait, and the UAE (one point each).

To advance, Kuwait must defeat the UAE and hope for a draw or loss by Egypt against Jordan. Meanwhile, Egypt only needs a victory to guarantee qualification, regardless of the Kuwait-UAE result.

Portuguese coach H lio Souza faced criticism after the Jordan defeat, following a sweeping squad overhaul in which he replaced all 11 starters from the Egypt match.

Speaking after the game, Souza admitted his disappointment: "We didn't

start the match as we should have, and Jordan quickly gained control. We needed a fast reaction."

He added, "In the second half, the team performed much better. We dominated possession, created more chances, and managed to narrow the gap. We were close to equalizing before conceding the third goal."

Souza stressed that the team must give their all in the final group match to keep qualification hopes alive. Several players also underwent medical sessions to recover from bruises and minor strains sustained against Jordan.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Football Association has opened registration for fans wishing to support the team in the decisive UAE match, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense and Kuwait Airways. Buses will transport fans directly from the airport to the stadium and return them afterward.

Since the playoff victory over Mauritania on November 25, which secured Kuwait's spot in the group stage, the Football Association has provided civilian and military flights to facilitate fan attendance, ensuring strong support for the team throughout the tournament.



Players hold training ahead of the key clash against UAE.

Messi and Inter Miami win MLS Cup, complete historic journey

'A spectacular day'

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Dec 7, (AP): Lionel Messi's legacy was long secured when he came to Inter Miami and joined Major League Soccer. He'd won a World Cup, won dozens of trophies, was generally considered the greatest player in the sport's history.

He didn't need an MLS Cup. But he wanted one - and got it.

Messi and Inter Miami have completed their ascent, beating the Vancouver Whitecaps 3-1 on Saturday in the MLS Cup final for the franchise's first championship. It came 2 1/2 years after the legend arrived in South Florida, a move that stunned plenty of on-lookers at the time.

He led the team to a Leagues Cup trophy in 2023, the MLS Supporters' Shield last year before a first-round playoff loss - and now, they grabbed MLS' biggest prize.

"Last year we went out early in the league and were eliminated in the first round," Messi said in Spanish afterward. "This year, winning MLS was one of our main objectives. The team made a huge effort - it was a very long year, with many matches - and we were up to the task all season."

Messi set up the title-clinching goal with a 72nd-minute assist to Rodrigo De Paul, a play where Messi stole the ball and threaded a pass through a tiny gap in a wall of Vancouver defenders. De Paul got it in stride, pushed it into the far corner of the net - and Messi



Inter Miami's Lionel Messi hoists the trophy alongside teammates after defeating the Vancouver Whitecaps in the MLS Cup final soccer match, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. (AP)

went airborne to hop into his arms a few seconds later, all smiles.

And as the final minutes ticked away, Inter Miami's pink-clad fans - most wearing Messi's No. 10 on their backs - stood and stomped and cheered. South Florida has seen NFL and NBA and Major League Baseball and NHL titles in the past.

It's a soccer town now, too. Messi made that happen. Tadeo Allende

scored in the sixth minute of stoppage time - off another Messi assist, of course - to make it 3-1. And when Messi lifted the trophy surrounded by his teammates, confetti rained down and fireworks boomed.

"This was the dream," Inter Miami managing owner Jorge Mas said. "A spectacular day."

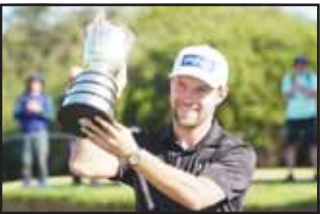
Inter Miami became the 16th franchise in the league's 30-year history to

win an MLS title. And this extends a run of parity for MLS, which has seen five different franchises win championships in the last five years and eight franchises claim a title in the last nine seasons - only Columbus has won twice in that span.

It has, and the moment is also the culmination of a 12-year odyssey for David Beckham, part of Inter Miami's ownership group.

Neergaard-Petersen claims first major title at Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia, Dec 7, (AP): Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen won the Australian Open for his first major professional title Sunday when his scrambled par on the final hole crushed the hopes of hometown favorite Cam Smith who was chasing his first win in more than two years.



Denmark's Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen holds the Stonehaven Cup after winning the Australian Open golf tournament in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Smith and Neergaard-Petersen came to the 72nd hole tied at 15-under after a thrilling contest over the last nine holes. Neergaard Petersen shanked his drive into difficult rough on the right with a bunker between his ball and the green.

Smith found the green with his second but with a long, sloping putt to the hole. Matter of fact as he has been throughout the week, Neergaard got up and down for par while Smith missed his difficult putt for birdie, then a 1.5 meter return putt to force a playoff.

The 26-year-old Danish player won by a single shot at 15-under 269 after rounds of 67, 66, 66 and 70. Smith started the last round two shots behind the leader, drew level by the turn and led outright after sinking a three meter putt for birdie on the 10th hole.

After a birdie at the 11th, Smith bogeyed the 12th and was level with Neergaard-Petersen at 13 under. The pair stayed locked together until the final hole when Smith's missed par putt handled his opponent a career-changing victory.

"It's hard. I'm really at a loss for words. It's been a battle all day," Neergaard said. "Even from the outside, you can look calm but it was a storm inside (for me) all day.

"But I managed to keep battling and to get it up and down to make that putt on the last. I don't know what to say, to be honest."

Smith, the 2022 British Open champion who ended his streak of missing seven consecutive cuts this year on Friday, shot 66 Saturday and was tied for second, two strokes off the lead.

After all his missed cuts, Smith, said that it was "nice being in contention" entering the final round.

"It's been a while since I've had this feeling to be honest," he said. "I love that it's the Australian Open. I couldn't think of a better place to get back into form. It would shut a few people up."

Smith has won the Australian PGA twice but has yet to win the Stonehaven Cup as the champion of his national open.

His last tournament victory came at the LIV tournament in Bedminster, England in August 2022 and his previous top-10 finish was in July.

Rory McIlroy's 11 bogeys over four days, including an unfortunate encounter with a banana peel on Saturday, kept him out of contention. On Sunday, the Northern Irishman had a final round 69, with five birdies and three bogeys, to finish in a tie for 10th.

McIlroy, the Race to Dubai winner and who completed his career Grand Slam when he won the Masters this year, was making his first appearance at the Australian Open since 2015. He won it in 2013.

Speaking after his final round Sunday, the world No. 2 called for a more favorable schedule to attract more of the game's top players. While he thought the sandbelt courses held massive appeal, the scheduling didn't help the tournament attract the top overseas players.

Kuwait volleyball team returns home with Arab Challenge Cup bronze

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 7: Kuwait's national volleyball team arrived back in Kuwait after securing the bronze medal in the inaugural Arab Challenge Cup held in Amman, Jordan.

Tunisia claimed the championship title, with Egypt finishing as runners-up. Host nation Jordan placed fourth, followed by Bahrain in fifth and Palestine in sixth.

The team received a warm welcome from Kuwait Volleyball Association President Dr. Jaber Al-Marri, Assistant Secretary-General Nayef Al-Rashidi, Competitions Committee Chairman Aref Al-Subaihi, Training Committee Chairman Dr. Jaber Al-Sharif, his deputy Talal Jassem, as well as fans and families of the players.

Dr. Al-Marri congratulated the Kuwaiti volleyball community on the achievement, expressing hope that the bronze medal will pave the way for more future successes.

He praised the team for delivering strong performances despite notable absences, adding that the federation's development plans are progressing well toward building a competitive national team capable of excelling in the coming years.

Al-Marri also extended his congratulations to the players and the technical and administrative staff, led by Argentine coach Juli n  lvarez, assistant coach Zaid Al-Kazemi, and team manager Mohammed Al-Balushi. He urged them to maintain their momentum and prepare thoroughly for the next phase to continue raising the standard of Kuwaiti volleyball.



The players honored upon their return.