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# **Kuwait preps as stormy weather threatens roads**

# DAYS OF THUNDER ... INTENSE RAIN AHEAD

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (Agencies): The acting Director of the Meteorological Department Dhirar Al-Ali predicted scattered rain in Kuwait on Monday and Tuesday, sometimes accompanied by thunder, ranging from light to moderate. Rain could be heavy in some areas from Wednesday evening to Thursday morning.

Al-Ali explained to KUNA that weather maps and numerical models indicate Kuwait will be affected by an advancing surface low-pressure system that is gradually deepening, coinciding with a low-pressure system in the upper atmosphere. The system is accompanied by a warm and humid air mass, which will increase low and midlevel clouds, including cumulonimbus clouds, leading to a higher chance of scattered rain, sometimes with thunder, of varying intensity.

The rain expected in Kuwait on Wednesday evening will reduce horizontal visibility during periods of precipitation and increase the chances of fog formation in some areas on Thursday evening and during early morning hours.

Winds will generally be southeasterly to variable in direction, light to moderate in speed, becoming active at times and causing dust storms. Rain is expected to continue intermittently until Saturday.

Al-Ali urged citizens and residents to follow the weather forecast through the department's official website, its app, and its social media accounts to stay updated on the latest weather develop-

Meanwhile, Al-Seyassah daily reported that the "Ghaith Task Force" recently held a coordination meeting, chaired by Assistant Force Commander Brigadier General Bader Abdullah Al-Shatti, to prepare for the upcoming rainy season.

The meeting, which was held at the 94th Mechanized Brigade Saleh Al-Mohammed, included officers from various army units.

The main objective behind the meeting was to unify efforts and enhance

the force's readiness for rapid response. Discussions were focused on reviewing the field operations plan, coordinating mechanisms among participating entities, and finalizing procedures for handling emergency reports.

The enhanced readiness aims to ensure effective support for state agencies



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Vibrant kites blaze across Kuwait Towers, defying a brooding and cloudy Monday sky.



### **Opinion**

### Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

# Government, do right by the borrowers!

THE persistent social crisis, now stretching over three decades, is complicated by individual biases that impede any meaningful

At its core, this crisis revolves around citizens who are struggling with loan obligations, many of whom are desperately seeking ways to avoid imprisonment, particularly in light of the renewed enforcement of arrest warrants.

Official statistics indicate that around 224,000 Kuwaiti citizens are currently burdened with outstanding loans

Immediate action is needed to address this longstanding issue. Most borrowers took loans to meet essential needs, such as funding their children's education, covering overseas medical treatment, building family homes, or taking care of other vital necessities

The resolution of this social crisis depends on the understanding that the government holds several viable solutions.

Potential measures include restructuring loans, establishing long-term installment plans spanning 20 to 30 years, and waiving compounded interest, which often causes debts to balloon far beyond the initial principal.

Solving this problem is straightforward, not miraculous. The Minister of Finance must first coordinate with banks to agree on a loan rescheduling plan and its time-

This proposal does not require the government to pay off the loans directly, but rather providing guarantees to secure

As previously noted, borrowers would repay only the principal over a 30-year period. For instance, a citizen with a KD 30,000 debt would have an annual payment of just KD 1,000, which is a simple and manageable arrangement.

If the government wishes to extend further support, it could cover the interest payments, as negotiated with the banks.

There are many straightforward solutions available to address personal debt and alleviate the burden on citizens without causing financial losses or resorting to extreme measures, such as issuing arrest warrants or imprisoning individuals for small debts, some of which do not exceed

It is important to emphasize that this focus on personal debt would not affect commercial loans granted to companies and institutions, which are usually secured by collateral often worth several times the loan amount.

Kuwait has various methods available to resolve this issue. For instance, it could adopt an approach similar to that used in 25 African and Arab countries facing financial difficulties, where repayment periods were extended from 18 to 30 years for total debts reaching USD 21 billion.

By comparison, the personal debt of Kuwaiti citizens (excluding housing loans) is far smaller, totaling approximately KD 1.7 billion.

Therefore, resolving the crisis requires treating citizens similarly to how people are treated in other countries.

### **Continued on Page 5**

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# 15 years jail, KD 20K fine for drug framing offenses

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Ministry of Interior is continuing its awareness campaign, "Safeguarding Our Homeland" to raise awareness about the new law on drugs and intoxicants, which will come into effect on December 15, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

**Continued on Page 5** 

# Mass custody order rocks Ya Hala case

15 men and women referred to jail

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Badr, issued arrest warrants for 15 defendants, both men and women, who are involved in the case known in

the media as the "Ya Hala Draws" case.

The court ordered all defendants to be referred to the Central Jail pending trial to complete the investigation and judicial procedures.

The Ya Hala draws file originated from reports submitted by security authorities regarding manipulation of commercial raffle draws organized under the Kuwait Shopping Festival "Ya Hala," supervised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

**Continued on Page 5** 



Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs delivers an opening speech at the Gulf Digital Construction Forum 2025.

### Kuwait leads Gulf digital construction revolution

**By Mohammed Al-Enezi** Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdul Latif Al-Mishari affirmed that digital transformation in the construction and management of cities and facilities has a direct impact on the quality of engineering work, the effectiveness of infrastructure, and the efficiency of government and private projects.

In his opening speech at the Gulf Digital Construction Forum 2025, organized by the Kuwait Union of Engineering Offices and Consulting Firms, Minister Al-Mishari explained that adopting modern digital technologies has become essential to keep pace with development needs and enhance performance in the design, implementation, management, and operation phases.

**Continued on Page 5** 

### Day by Day

"AL-MADHAN" jokingly refers to an extremely wealthy person. No matter how silly, it is somehow funny. Everyone who hears it

God has His secret ways of wisdom, which we may not always figure out. This world is full of good and bad.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

**Zahed Matar** 

### **Asian caught with** '7-kilo' drug haul

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MoI), represented by the Criminal Security Sector, announced Monday that an Asian national was arrested with a large quantity of narcotic drugs prepared for distribution inside the country.

The arrest followed confidential information that the suspect possessed drugs, MoI said in a statement.

After verifying the information and obtaining a legal warrant, security forces raided his residence and seized about seven kilograms of narcotics: five kilograms of heroin, two kilograms of methamphetamine, and two precision scales used for weighing drugs, MoI mentioned.

The suspect and the seized items were referred to the competent authorities for legal action, it pointed out.

The ministry confirmed that it will continue, without leniency, to track down anyone who threatens the security of society or tries to spread this dangerous

**Continued on Page 5** 

# KGOC plans major Khafji, Wafra production boost

### By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Following the appointment of Bader Al-Munaifi as

the new CEO of Kuwait Gulf Oil Com-

pany (KGOC) and an extensive meeting of the company's senior officials, the company is planning to increase production capacity at the joint Khafji oil field in cooperation with Saudi Arabian Oil Company Aramco. According to informed sources, the plan aims to raise production from 300,000 to 355,000 barrels per day by

**Continued on Page 5** 

### IOM lauds Kuwait's global relief efforts

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Chief of Mission in Kuwait Mazen AboulHosn said Monday that Kuwait plays a leading humanitarian role, becoming a global hub admired for its distinguished efforts assisting vulnerable communities across multiple crisisaffected regions.

He affirmed to KUNA, during his meeting with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Khaled Al-Mughames, that discussions reviewed ongoing IOM projects in several countries and explored

**Continued on Page 5** 

Avian flu ends

# **Kuwait resets** poultry trade

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Marwa Al-Jaidan has issued a series of administrative decisions, which include lifting the ban on importing all types of fresh, chilled, frozen and processed poultry meat, and all of its derivatives and products, in addition to table eggs from China, Turkiye, Portugal and Bangladesh, as the highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak has ended.

According to these decisions, it is now permitted to import food products derived from cattle covered by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal

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**Boursa Kuwait** concludes its 16th **Corporate Day in Dubai in collabora**tion with Jefferies **Financial Group** 



**Markaz highlights** key investment themes and opportunities at 'Markaz 2026 Outlook' seminar

IOM Chief of Mission in Kuwait with KRCS Chairman in a group photo.

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-45 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming at night.

By Night: Rather cold and cloudy

Weather

to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeast-erly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-42 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

**Station Max Exp Kuwait City** 

**Min Rec** 

Kuwait Airport Abdaly 29 21 29 18 14 19 17 22 16 16 Bubyan Jahra Failaka Island Salmiyah Ahmadi Wafra Salmy

# Cyber risks, AI threats top ICI-PAAC agenda

Kuwait backs constructive dialogue: Sheikh Al-Jarrah

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah affirmed Monday Kuwait's hosting of the seventh meeting of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Policy Advisory Group (ICI-PAAC) reflects firm commitment to backing constructive dialogue, promoting multilateral cooperation and maintaining regional security.

In the opening speech of the twoday meeting, attended by representatives from NATOs 32 Allies and partner countries from the Gulf, Sheikh Jarrah welcomed participants to Kuwait, expressing appreciation to all partner countries, experts, and delegations whose presence reflects a shared commitment to constructive dialogue, enhanced cooperation, and strengthened collective security.

He highlighted the significance of hosting the meeting at the NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait, the only NATO-affiliated facility of its kind outside NATO territory, describing it as a testament to the depth of Kuwait's partnership with NATO and to its pivotal role in promoting meaningful engagement between the Alliance and

Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah noted that Kuwait is honored to host the ICI meeting for the third time, reaffirming the countrys steadfast commitment to multilateral cooperation and regional security

#### **Importance**

This year's meeting, he added, carries additional importance as the first to be hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is a step that reflects Kuwait's dedication to strengthening diplomatic engagement, enhancing institutional coordination, and advancing shared strategic objectives with NATO and regional partners.

He emphasized that the theme of

الاجتماع السابع للمجموعة الاستشارية للسياسات لمساحرة اسطنسول للتعساول 7" ISTANBUL COOPERATION INITIATIVE POLICY ADVISORY GROUP " ICI - PAG "

KUNA photo

Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah amid participants of the conference.

this year's meeting, cybersecurity governance and the implications of artificial intelligence for regional and global stability, reflects pressing priorities that require comprehensive and forward-looking dialogue.

The discussions, he said, will cover a wide range of issues, including the evolution of ICI cooperation, political and security developments in the region, shared strategic priorities, cyber risks, emerging threats posed by AI, and cooperation in addressing transnational challenges.

Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah stressed that in an era of rapidly shifting geopolitical dynamics and increasingly complex security threats, the value of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative becomes even more apparent.

The platform, he noted, has served as an effective forum for strategic dialogue and practical collaboration in fields such as maritime security, counterterrorism, cyber resilience, and emerging technologies.

Speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood Javier Colomina affirmed that the seventh meeting of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Policy Advisory Group (ICI-PAAC), held in Kuwait, comes at a crucial moment for regional and international security.

Colomina said that the meeting, which brings together NATOs 32 Allies and partner countries from the Gulf, provides an important platform to review shared priorities, explore opportunities for cooperation, and address the growing range of challenges affecting both regions.

He described the current environment as "the most unstable security context in decades", citing persistent instability in the Middle East, and ongoing tensions in Lebanon, Syria, and

He welcomed the recent positive developments related to ceasefire efforts, made possible through the mediation of the United States, Turkiye, Qatar, Egypt, and Kuwait, but underscored that significant challenges remain.

"No nation or region can address these challenges alone," he said.

He stressed that the Gulf region has become more prominent than ever, noting its leadership in mediation, innovation, counterterrorism, maritime security, and in safeguarding food and energy security.

He also highlighted the strong economic and investment ties between the Gulf and Europe, describing the region as "a go-to partner whose role is essential in todays increasingly complex world."

Colomina underscored the deep interconnection between Euro-Atlantic and Gulf security, pointing to examples such as the use of Iranian-manufactured drones in Ukraine, the activities of competing strategic actors, and the global repercussions of the war on food and energy markets.

"These developments clearly demonstrate how closely intertwined our security environments have become,'

Speaking about the NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait, Colomina emphasized its strategic importance, noting that it is the only NATO training and education facility in the entire southern neighbourhood.

#### **Potential**

"This Centre has always been important, but it must become even more relevant," he said, explaining that although more than 35 activities were carried out last year, the Centre holds even greater potential to support cooperation in cybersecurity, maritime security, counterterrorism, innovation, and emerging technologies.

He added that the Centre is uniquely positioned to help elevate NATOs cooperation with the Gulf and wider region and could become a flagship institution for dialogue, capacitybuilding, and advanced defence coop-

Looking ahead to the outcomes of the meeting, Colomina said he is optimistic but stressed the need for concrete results.

"Dialogue is essential, but today we must be as practical and goaloriented as possible," he stated. "We need to translate these discussions into specific projects and a clear roadmap that strengthens cooperation across the priority areas our experts will address.

Colomina concluded by expressing appreciation to the State of Kuwait for hosting the meeting and for its longstanding support to ICI, affirming NATOs strong commitment to deepening cooperation with Gulf partners to enhance regional stability, promote dialogue, and reinforce

### **Crown Prince receives AUC Chief call**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Monday a call from Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) Mahmoud Ali Youssouf.

During the phone conversation, the AUC chief extended his greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, while commending Kuwait's key role in backing the commission to achieve stability and peace in the African con-

They also reviewed the latest developments in the African continent, in addition to ways of promoting bilateral cooperation.



KUNA photo

Kuwait's ambassador to Warsaw Saad Al-Mehaini, Polish guests at the Kuwaiti pa-

## Kuwait participates in Poland charity event to aid needy kids

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait Embassy in Poland on Sunday took part in an international charity bazaar sponsored by Polish First Lady Marta Nawrocka, an initiative the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission said was an effort to reinforce the principle of humanitarian work. The event encapsulates the virtues of volunteerism and "humanitarian giving," Kuwait's ambassador to Warsaw Saad

Al-Mehaini said in a statement, citing the embassy's participation as a testament to Kuwait's "prolific legacy" in the humanitarian arena, he added.

Kuwait's pavilion at the bazaar showcased a diverse range of homemade products, running the gamut from food and clothing to jewelry, in an event routinely organized to shore up aid for impoverished children around the globe.

# **Kuwait deports almost 37,000** expats in 'law-breaking' roles

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The number of expatriates deported for violating laws and regulations in Kuwait has reached approximately 36,610, representing various nationalities, as of the end of last week, reports Al-Anba daily.

This figure reflects the intensified security campaigns in all governorates aimed at apprehending violators and enhancing public safety.

According to a security source, the majority of those deported are of Asian nationalities, with most cases involving violations of residency and labor laws or participation in criminal activities.

The source affirmed that the Ministry of Interior often considers deportation a more appropriate measure than impris-

He explained that the increase is attributed to joint coordination among several sectors, including the General Traffic Department, Public Security, the Residency Affairs Investigation Department, and the Tripartite Committee. The deportation procedures are completed within a maximum of one month, as stipulated by law, while the actual deportation is implemented within just ten days.

Robbery bid fails: The Court of Appeals sentenced a retired officer of the Ministry of Interior to five-year imprisonment with hard labor for stealing a taxi, committing armed robbery, and attempting to rob a money exchange office in Fintas, reports Al-Rai daily.

The defendant was charged with stealing a taxi, breaking into a money exchange office in Fintas, and possessing and using a weapon against an employee. He was unable to go on with the robbery because the weapon malfunctioned, and he ended up fleeing the scene.

# GCC must further strengthen bonds with China: envoys

BEIJING, Dec 8, (KUNA): The ambassadors of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in China emphasized the importance of strengthening the existing strategic partnership with China across various political, economic, and cultural

This came during a meeting held at Kuwait's Embassy in Beijing, where the ambassadors handed over the chairmanship of the GCC group to the Bahraini ambassador, marking Bahrain's assumption of the presidency of the 46th session of the GCC Supreme Council, the Kuwaiti Embassy in China said in a statement

The ambassadors commended Kuwait's leadership of the previous session, which embodied the wise vision of its political leadership in enhancing the Council's presence on the regional and international stages as a pillar of security, stability, and

They also stressed the significance of the outcomes and decisions of the GCC-China Summit held in Riyadh in December 2022, an important event in the history of relations between the two sides, where Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the leaders of the GCC countries, marking the first summit between the



KUNA photo

Ambassadors of GCC countries meet in China.

Kuwait participates

### **Future of global media** tops **UAE** summit meet

ABU DHABI, Dec 8, (KUNA): The "Bridge 2025" Summit opened in Abu Dhabi on Monday with the participation of Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi to discuss the future of global media

The three-day event features seven tracks covering digital content, artificial intelligence, human-centered media, film production, the creative economy, journalism, and the influ-

Organized with global partners, the summit hosts more than 60,000 participants and 400 speakers, chaired by UAE National Media Office head Abdullah Al-Hamed to support innovation in content creation.

It forms a key initiative of the "Bridge Alliance," an independent global body aimed at advancing media, content, and entertainment sectors while strengthening their economic and social impact.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Mansouri of UAE University told KUNA the summit is a pivotal platform that enhances the UAE's role as a regional hub for media and creative industries amid rapid digital transformation.

He said the gathering unites experts and innovators to exchange knowledge, explore trends, and review technologies reshaping global media production and distri-

UAE Journalists Association Chairperson Fadila Al-Maeni told KUNA the summit supports Abu Dhabi's vision as a center for new ideas by linking institutions, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers in discussions on digital innovation and emerging technologies.



Kuwaiti Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi at the summit.

### **Other Voices**

## George and Amal... and the Brothers' draft constitution

### By Ahmad alsarraf

SINCE the 1940s, dozens of thinkers and writers have been affiliated with, ioined, or influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, including Egyptians,

Ku-Syrians. Iraqis, waitis, Jordanians, Tunisians, and others, among them Savvid Qutb. Muhammad Amara, Al-Attar, Al-Arian, and Said Hawwa.

Despite Muslim Brothergrowing strength, both nu-

merically and financially, and the expansion of its influence to Europe, the Americas, the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, and Asia, it has never revealed or declared its philosophy or the political system it would implement if it came to power, whether through violence or the ballot box.

Their approach has always been characterized by an inability to provide clear answers. The year they ruled Egypt proved the emptiness of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and their lack of a governing philosophy acceptable to both the Western world and the Egyptian people, which could have allowed them to maintain power indefinitely.

An interview previously conducted by American actress Drew Barrymore with actor George Clooney, which went largely unnoticed at the time, resurfaced

During the interview, Clooney revealed that the Muslim Brotherhood had enlisted the help of international human rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin, who later became his wife, to draft their constitution in London in early 2013.

Clooney likely meant that Amal assisted in drafting or formulating parts of the Egyptian Constitution created under Mohammad Morsi, which granted the Muslim Brotherhood extraordinary powers. This constitution faced wide-

spread rejection and sparked massive protests, ultimately leading to military intervention and the Brotherhood's removal from nower

There is no recognized legal or constitutional document known as the "Muslim Brotherhood Constitution." Therefore, Amal Clooney, the Leba-

nese-American Druze, did not contribute to drafting that constitution prior to becoming Mrs. Amal Clooney. However, the mere revelation of the Muslim Brotherhood's reliance on her highlights the organization's structural

weakness and the intellectual bankruptcy of its leadership, even nearly a century after its founding. The Muslim Brotherhood Group is primarily known for its slogan, "Islam is the solution." They have never clarified the meaning of the slogan, nor

specified which interpretation of Islam they follow or would implement. Throughout its history, the Muslim Brotherhood has accumulated tens of billions of dollars, particularly during

the petrodollar boom. However, since it was not licensed in any country to form a political party that could freely invest its funds, the Brotherhood was forced to appoint individuals from within its ranks to manage

these funds on behalf of the movement. This explains the absence of active non-Egyptian members within the Egyptian Brotherhood or on the board of the international Muslim Brotherhood organization, despite their significant polit-

ical, financial, and organizational roles. Most of those responsible for managing the Muslim Brotherhood's funds enjoyed a privileged lifestyle, particularly those living in Germany, such as Said Ramadan, the husband of the founder Hassan al-Banna's daughter, and Youssef Nada, who lived in Switzerland and served as the Brotherhood's Minister of Investment. Khairat al-Shater held the position of the Brotherhood's Minister of Trade.

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# diwaniya (۴) حيوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## It's just like yesterday ... pain of invasion lingers

"DESPITE the bitterness of suffering, the depth of pain, and the shock experienced during the Iraqi invasion, Dr. Sulaiman Al-Shatti skillfully presents a vivid account of his observations from that period in his recently published book, Diaries of the Weeks of the Invasion. His testimony, titled "My Son Is Not More Precious Than the Nation", is written with eloquent narration and precise expression, allowing the reader to witness a tapestry woven with social, political, and national scenes," columnist Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah wrote for

**Al-Seyassah** daily.
"A professor of Arabic language, Dr. Sulaiman Al-Shatti draws on his extensive literary and critical expertise to portray a series

of episodes from his diary during the Iraqi invasion. His testimony includes scenes rich in political, military, and human significance, reflecting the events and realities of those harrowing days in Kuwait's history.

"Many citizens experienced shock, disbelief, and denial on the dawn of August 2, 1990. How-



Khaled Al-Tarrah

ever, the attitude of Sulaiman Al-Shatti (Abu Ali) was different. He remained steadfast, resilient, and strong in the face of the invasion, and he recalled every detail meticulously. The book included scenes from the first day, showing citizens trying to confirm the invasion, observing the deployment of the Iraqi army in the streets of Kuwait, and taking financial precautions. The scene of the aggression included the Iraqi attack on Kuwait and a squadron of Iraqi helicopters flying low over the Sixth Ring Road, with the soldiers' features clearly visible. A general atmosphere of gloom prevailed from dawn until evening, with almost no food available.

"Al-Shatti wrote that he began checking on family members, including a brother in the military, another in radio security, and a third who worked at the Northern Fire Department and had disappeared. He noted a notice posted on the front of the cooperative society asking about a son who had not returned to his mother. The book also included scenes of citizens getting to know one another, especially in new residential areas like Mishref. It described a scene of neighbors gathering in a tent to exchange information and share the latest news.

"The book also highlighted the media, and the difference between the British BBC, which adhered to professionalism and objectivity, and Monte Carlo Radio, which took a political stance supporting Saddam Hussein. It recounts a personal tragedy, as the author's son was injured in a car accident. The injury was severe, described as "very serious," and he fell into a coma. Al-Shatti said he was advised to take his son and leave Kuwait, but he refused, stating, "My son is not more precious than Kuwait."

The book then presents poignant scenes of the beginning of the air and ground war, the

"great withdrawal," and the "roar of cars heading from south to north." The sight was unsettling as Kuwait was plunged into darkness by smoke from the burning oil wells and the destruction of power stations by the occupying forces. The eloquent way the author portrays the invasion made me wish the book would never end."

#### Also:

"In his book "The Arabs: A Japanese Perspective," the Japanese thinker Nobuaki Notohara recalls, "I witnessed Japan's defeat in World War II at the age of five, living with my family in a Tokyo that had been completely destroyed. Amid hunger and deprivation, I observed the reconstruction process and later witnessed the results of correcting past mistakes, enjoying the benefits of Japan's economic revival". Through this, Notohara summarized a historical human experience for his country, Japan," former Director General of the Arab Planning Institute Dr. Bader Othman Malallah wrote for Al-Seyassah daily

"An academic, historian, and linguist, Notohara lived through the devastation Japan suffered in World War II and the subsequent revival of the only country to have experienced atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He witnessed the reconstruction process that began after the war, a process driven by immense human potential, where the will to rebuild combined with a determination to innovate and create, supported by the unwavering resolve of the people.

"Japan's GDP is estimated at around four trillion dollars, with exports reaching approximately 700 billion dollars. The country boasts some of the highest education standards, and the Japanese yen is considered a safe-haven currency. Japan is a global leader in patents, research and development, and higher education. Japan holds 30 percent of the world's industrial robots, has one of the most advanced infrastructures globally, and enjoys financial and political stability. Its efficient institutions are supported by clean technology and renewable energy.

"In the 1980s, economists dubbed Japan an "economic miracle." Its renaissance began not just from scratch, but from below zero, with no resources other than its people, their determination, sound planning, effective management, and a commitment to quality in work and production. Politicians, planners, and managers prioritized quality in every aspect. Japan sent its students to Europe and the United States to study quality systems in various sectors, which later bore fruit in industry, technology, and management. Japan's education system is considered one of the most efficient and advanced in the world. It focuses on social values and behavior as much as academic achievement and teamwork, without neglecting individual excellence.

"Respect and order are instilled from childhood. Students participate in cleaning their schools daily, fostering a sense of responsibility and belonging. Education is not based on rote learning but on a system in which the student plays the leading role, while the teacher serves

as a guide. Teachers enjoy a prestigious social status and are regarded as both social and educational role models. Japan has also expanded digital education and the use of artificial intelligence from the primary level onward.

"Japan adopted the best aspects of every successful experience. This does not mean the country is without challenges. One of its most difficult challenges is its debt, estimated at around 250 percent of GDP. However, Japan deals with this issue through prudent monetary policies, efficient public debt management, a balanced and fair tax system, and a capable and effective banking system. Within this framework, and drawing on his extensive knowledge of the Arab region, Notohara examined Arab development, dissecting its conditions, analyzing its trajectories, and evaluating its outcomes. His Japanese critical approach was clear, direct, and respectful. He raised important questions, which we may agree or disagree with, but that are nonetheless worthy of consideration.



Dr. Bader Malallah

"Notohara asked why Arabs do not learn from their own experiences and why they have been unable to catch up with the Japanese. These questions were not intended to belittle Arabs, among whom he had lived for 40 years, but rather stemmed from his empathy for them in the face of difficult developmental circumstances

and an even more challenging future. However, Notohara fell into the trap of generalization when he spoke at length about all Arabs, even though his observations and conclusions were based on a small number of Arab countries.

"The state of Arab development and its indicators appeared close to Notohara's vision. The total Arab GDP (for all Arab countries combined) in 2024 was estimated at approximately \$3.6 trillion, compared with Japan's GDP of around \$4 trillion, Germany's \$4.7 trillion, and the UK's \$3.7 trillion. While the population of the Arab region is around 480 million, the combined population of those countries was about 274 million. Collectively, Arab countries contribute roughly five percent of global GDP, whereas the European Union contributes 15 percent, three times as much.

"Arab countries vary considerably in their development paths. Overall indicators show an illiteracy rate of around 25 percent among males and 46 percent among females. The average unemployment rate is 12 percent, rising to 28 percent among youth. These rates are high compared to global averages, compounded by structural imbalances and debt, budget deficits, a lack of diversification in income sources, limited funding, and inadequate infrastructure. All of these factors underscore the urgent need for reform in Arab development. Was Notohara biased against Arabs, or was he sympathetic to

— Compiled by Simi K.Kutty

Lt. General Al-Barjas inspects training courses at Al-Sumoud Camp.

### 'Nation first'... Barjas meets trainees

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Undersecretary of the National Guard, Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas, accompanied by senior National Guard commanders, conducted an inspection tour of several training courses at Al-Sumoud Camp on Sunday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Lieutenant General Al-Barjas conveyed the greetings of the National Guard leadership, represented by the Chief of the National Guard, Sheikh Mubarak Hamoud Al-Sabah, and the Deputy Chief, Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf, to the participants.

He urged the participants to benefit from the courses and their theoretical and practical content, which are designed to qualify them through comprehensive training curricula in line with the National Guard's 2030 Strategic Plan, "Protecting the Nation."



Lawyers commended the efforts of the Higher Committee of the National Conference.

Confab seeks to strengthen Kuwait social fabric & unity

**By Jaber Al-Hamoud** 

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Higher Committee of the National Conference "From Kuwait We Begin... To Kuwait We Return' held a press conference at the Kuwait Law Society in Bneid Al-Gar, under the patronage of Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber, for officially launching the media campaign for the 25th edition of the conference.

The conference draws inspiration from the words of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who affirmed that, "National unity is a shield protecting Kuwait and Kuwaitis and a fortress against adversity and challenges.'

The committee adopted this directive as the guiding principle and central message of the conference, with the aim of strengthening national cohesion and reinforcing values of belonging and loyalty.

The committee highlighted that the conference, originally a voluntary, communitydriven initiative, seeks to strengthen the social fabric of Kuwait and strengthen national unity through a series of events celebrating Kuwaiti values and heritage.

It noted that the previous 24 editions honored 269 national figures who have made significant contributions to Kuwait's his-

The conference attracted wide participation from media representatives, public figures, and national affairs enthusiasts, all of whom expressed support for the media campaign leading up to the 25th edition, further amplifying the conference's message and

Meanwhile, the Chair of the Higher Supervisory Committee, Lawyer Yousef Al-Yassin, opened his speech by officially announcing the launch of the new edition.

During the conference, he announced that a group of deceased Kuwaitis who made distinguished contributions to national and humanitarian causes would be honored.

# 'Accept employee resignation'

Rights cannot be overlooked: lawyer

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Court** of First Instance obligated the Ministry of Health to accept the resignation of an employee and overturned its decision to refrain from processing the resignation.

This ruling is based on the arguments presented by Attorney Dr. Fadhil Al-Basman, lawyer for the employee. He proved that the administrative body exceeded the legal deadline and violated the regulations, thereby, infringing upon the employee's legal status and deprived him of his financial rights.

According to the case file, the employee, who has been working at the ministry since 2010, submitted his resignation on Feb 2, 2025.

Article 74 of the Civil Service Law states that failure to process the resignation within 30 days means it is automatically accepted.

Despite the deadline having passed on March 2, 2025, the entity refrained from making a decision. Instead, it issued a decision on May 26, 2025

to suspend the salary of the employee, citing the existence of an investigation committee formed on May 19, 2024 to oversee job performance evaluations for 2023.

The court clarified in its ruling that the administrative body's failure to make a decision—which it was legally obligated to make—is considered a negative decision contrary to the law, as long as the entity does not provide a valid reason for the suspension of the resignation acceptance, such as the existence of a disciplinary investigation or ongoing legal proceedings.

The court emphasized in its reasoning that the administration did not provide any documentation proving the existence of a legal impediment preventing the acceptance of the resignation, considering that the silence regarding making a decision within the specified period is an implicit acceptance, as specified by the civil service regulations.

Accordingly, the court nullified all negative decisions, especially the suspension of salary payment, and ordered the administrative body to pay the expenses and attorney's fees.

Al-Basman argued that his client acquired a firm legal position by virtue of the court's acceptance of his resignation, and that administrative abuse in obstructing an employee's rights can neither be overlooked nor tolerated.

This principle was upheld by the court in its ruling, which legal sources described as a significant step in strengthening judicial oversight of negative administrative decisions.

Al-Basman asserted that this ruling reaffirms the Kuwaiti judiciary's commitment to protect public employees from any administrative abuse or transgression, and it establishes the principle of implicit acceptance of resignation when an administrative body fails to exercise its powers within the legally prescribed time-frame.

Judgment delayed: The Court of Appeals on Sunday decided to postpone the issuance of its judgment in the case of former MP Muhannad Al-Sayer until the session scheduled for Dec 28, following the Public Prosecution's appeal against the verdict issued by the Criminal Court.

The Criminal Court acquitted Al-Sayer of the charges against him in a State security case, which included challenging the authority of His Highness the Amir, disseminating false news and misusing the mobile phone.

The prosecution appealed the acquittal, requesting a review of the charges against Al-Sayer. It previously released Al-Sayer on bail of KD 1,000 pending the hearing of the case.



The Omani delegation during their visit to the Anti-Corruption Authority.

# **Oman team in Kuwait to up** views on anti-graft strategy

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) on Sunday received a delegation of Oman's State Financial and Administrative Audit Authority, currently on a visit to the country to examine Kuwait's strategy to enhance integrity and combat corruption.

Nazaha said in a statement that the visit

aims to benefit from the State of Kuwait's experience in fighting corruption through studying the laws and regulations of the authority. The delegation was briefed about Naz-

aha's tasks with the competent authorities in the realm of combating corruption and mechanisms of financial revelations.

# Court restores custody of 3 daughters to mom

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Family Court of Appeals overturned a lower court ruling that had stripped a woman of custody of her three daughters, and instead declared the case inadmissible and granted custody back to her.

The lower court had awarded custody to the father, citing prosecution reports indicating the girls' preference to live with him, along with a flash drive containing conversations and messages between the mother and "strangers."

The mother's legal counsel Lawyer Mohammad Ahmad Al-Rifai argued that the case should be dismissed since the court had previously affirmed the mother's right to custody. He stressed that the new documents submitted by the father

did not provide conclusive evidence of the mother's unsuitability for custody. The court rejected the mother's claim that she had married

only be verified with a notarized marriage contract. It also found the witnesses' testimonies unconvincing, as they lacked supporting evidence and could not confirm they had seen the mother in person.

someone unrelated to the girls, noting that such a claim could

The court ruled that the audio recordings on the flash drive could not be definitively attributed to the mother, rendering them inadmissible as evidence. In addition, the court emphasized that the daughters' pref-

erence to live with their father did not override the mother's custody rights, given their young age and the principle that the child's best interests are the primary consideration.



# **Kuwait partakes in Jeddah** water sustainability forum blood donation drive at The Avenues

Delegation explores global solutions

JEDDAH, Dec 8, (KUNA): The fourth edition of the Innovation Conference on Water Sustainability 2025 kick-started in the Saudi city of Jeddah on Monday, with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Electricity, Water and **Renewable Energy participating.** 

Addressing the event, Chairman of the Saudi Water Authority (SWA) Abdullah Al-Abdulkarim underlined the necessity of cooperation and supporting innovation in developing models of work, finance and policies to strengthen water usage.

He added that the conference, which highlights the means to achieve water sustainability in the world, draws the participation of educational institutions, scholars, technology firms, research and innovation centers, decision-makers and stakeholders, to find water sustainability solutions in the 21st

He cited key challenges as a quarter of world population's lack of access to safe water sources and potential displacement of around 700 million people due to water scarcity.

The Saudi official added that water contributes to promoting world economies, given that around 60 percent of world production includes water-based industries and activities. Acting Assistant Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Water, Electricity and Renewable Energy's Sector of Wa-



A delegation from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy participating in the conference.

ter Operation and Maintenance Fahad Al-Thufairi is leading the Kuwaiti delegation partaking in the conference.

Key topics will include utility regulation, future water solutions, financing sustainability, the circular economy, public-private partnerships, management efficiency, digitalization, and the water-energy nexus. The event will feature various activities to connect global innovators.

### Ahmadi Governor hosts Moroccan envoy



Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah with Ambassador of Morocco to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Monday received at his office the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Kuwait, Ali Ben Issa, who was accompanied by Deputy Ambassador Khaled Al-Khanshouf.

According to a press release issued by Ahmadi Governorate, the governor welcomed Ambassador Ben Issa, wished him success in his duties and expressed hope for further strengthening and deepening bilateral relations.

The meeting included discussions on the friendly ties between the two sisterly countries and ways to enhance cooperation in various fields.

Ambassador Ben Issa expressed his pleasure and gratitude for the warm reception, and praised the care and attention given to the Moroccan diplomatic mission and Moroccan residents in Kuwait at both official and popular levels.

### **Sheikh Athbi praises volunteers**

# Farwaniya Governor hosts life-saving

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Under the patronage of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, the "A Drop of Your Blood Can Save a Life" initiative was held on Sunday morning at The Avenues Mall.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the event was organized in cooperation with the Kuwait Blood Bank and in the presence of Director of Farwaniya Security Command Brigadier General Mohammed Eid Al-Ghasab, Assistant Director Brigadier General Yahya Dashti, Andalous Security Commander Colonel Abdullah Saeed Al-Ajmi, and several senior security officers.

The initiative reflects Farwaniya Governorate's commitment to supporting health and humanitarian efforts promoting a culture of blood donation in the community. It witnessed a large turnout of citizens and residents who donated blood.

The governor emphasized the humanitarian importance of blood donation and its role in saving lives. He praised the efforts of medical staff, volunteers, and the public for their active participation.

Sheikh Athbi expressed gratitude to the Kuwait Blood Bank, The Avenues Mall management, and all involved medical staff and volunteers. He affirmed the governorate's continued support for all initiatives that enhance community health and strengthen values of giving and solidarity.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah with medical staff and volunteers at the blood donation initiative held at The Avenues



Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah and security officials interact with a blood donor during the Farwaniya blood donation drive at The Avenues Mall.

Students granted two full appointments

# **PAAET** early registration kicks off

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Deanship of Admissions and Registration at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced the start of early registration for students for the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, beginning December 9. Each student will have two full registration appointments during this period, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Deanship explained that early registration is part of

PAAET's commitment to organizing the academic process and facilitating course enrollment, providing students with ample time to select suitable courses and adjust their schedules over a six-day period.

The scheduled appointment system allows each student two registration dates to finalize their course schedules or make any necessary adjustments before the registration pe-









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Engineer Abeer Al-Awadhi, Head of the National Cybersecurity Center, honoring the second-place winner in the professional category.

### Kuwait Hackathon 2025 wraps up

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): The third edition of Kuwait Hackathon 2025, organized by CODED Academy and the National Cybersecurity Center, concluded on Saturday under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

The event aimed at supporting youth initiatives in cybersecurity and software tech-In her closing remarks, Engineer Abeer

Al-Awadhi emphasized that sponsoring the Hackathon is a commitment to empowering youth in addressing digital challenges. She praised the talent showcased at the

event and stressed digital security is now a national necessity.

Al-Awadhi also highlighted the importance of training young talent to protect Kuwait's digital infrastructure and thanked Sheikh Fahad, along with partners, judges, mentors, and trainers, for their support.

Ahmad Maarefi, CEO of CODED Academy, reaffirmed the academy's dedication to cultivating cybersecurity professionals and enhancing Kuwait's digital transformation through skill development.

He noted that collaboration between the government and the private sector is key to building a robust digital environment. During the ceremony, winners of the

competition were announced, as follows: In the professional category, Ret2zero secured first place, followed by P4YL04D.

exe and A5. In the high school and university category, Blue Wave took first, followed by RootX and PowerxSec.

### **News in Brief**

Al-Mutlaa Water Plant under SAB review: In confirmation of the report titled "Al-Mutlaa Water Treatment Plant awarded for KD 29.9 Million" published by the daily on Nov 25, the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy has referred the tender for the construction, completion, and maintenance of the power plant and its associated facilities at Site No. 1 in Al-Mutlaa Residential City to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review and auditing of the tender procedures and to provide its opinion on contract approval, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The tender is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to complete infrastructure and facilities in new residential cities, including Al-Mutlaa, which are essential for providing suitable housing for citizens.



CSC picks 461 for education jobs: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) announced the nomination of 461 citizens registered in the central employment system, who hold educational specializations and graduated from Kuwait University or the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, to work at the Ministry of Education, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



His Highness the Amir Al-Jaber



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah



His Highness Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Crown Prince, PM extend greetings

## **Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Syrian Pres on Liberation Day**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of congratulations to Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa on the liberation day.

His Highness the Amir praised the solid brotherly relations between the two peoples, affirming the aspiration to cement these ties further in various spheres.

He also wished the Syrian president good health, progress and prosperity for the Syrian people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on Monday sent a cable of congratulations to Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa on the liberation day.

He wished the Syrian president good health, more progress and prosperity for the Syrian people.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Monday sent a cable of congratulations to the Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa on the liberation day of Syria.

### Partnership strengthens across trade, food and innovation

# Kuwait, Mongolia mark 50 years of strong ties

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, Ambassador Samih Hayat, affirmed that the 50-year relationship between Kuwait and Mongolia is "longstanding and historical" and has continuously developed in various

During a reception organized by the Mongolian Embassy to celebrate Mongolia's National Day and the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Mongolia, Ambassador Hayat said Kuwait plans to begin importing live cattle from Mongolia "at the start of next year," as part of expanding cooperation in food security.

He explained that the two countries are preparing to hold their fourth round of political consultations between their foreign ministries during the first quarter of next year. The next phase will witness enhanced transportation and trade exchanges, starting with direct air routes and followed by maritime routes, citing successful experiences with local and international airlines, the arrangements for which are currently being finalized.

Regarding the Mongolian Ambassador's statement about making Kuwait a hub for exporting Mongolian products to the Gulf countries, Ambassador Havat explained that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries follow unified standards. This means that products entering Kuwait can be directly exported to the rest of the Gulf states, particularly the Arabian Gulf, making Kuwait as a hub for the transit and distribution of Mongolian goods. The strong relations between the two countries, which span more than five decades, motivate them to build upon and expand this cooperation into wider areas, not only in food security, but also in cybersecurity and other promising fields.

Meanwhile, the Mongolian Ambassador to Kuwait, Sergelen Purey, affirmed that the celebration



Photo by Samer Shaqir Ambassador of the Republic of Mongolia to Kuwait, Sergelen Purev Shaday, and Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, Ambassador Johar Hayat, during the cutting of the celebration cake.

of Mongolia's National Day and the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries marks a significant milestone in their journey of friendship and partnership.

He noted that five decades of cooperation have built a solid relationship based on mutual respect and mutual aspirations.

The ambassador stated that his priority since assuming his post in Kuwait has been to strengthen the partnership through practical initiatives and tangible results that benefit both countries, noting that Mongolia is now well-positioned to support Kuwait's food security.

He revealed that the first shipment of Mongolian lamb has already arrived in the Kuwaiti market, and efforts are underway to begin exporting beef and live cattle next month.

The ambassador indicated that the embassy is also exploring the possibility of exporting Mongo-

lian meat to Qatar and Bahrain via Kuwait, which would enhance regional connectivity.

He expressed his gratitude to the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) for its support in obtaining accreditation from the Gulf Accreditation Center for Halal Certificates.

Ambassador Purev also expressed Mongolia's deep appreciation for the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), and praised its role in financing road, health, energy, and service infrastructure projects that have had a direct and lasting impact on citizens' lives.

He pointed out that cooperation with KFAED currently includes a vital road project linking the new capital with the historic Karakoram. He expressed his hope for the success of this important

The ambassador explained that in recent years, extensive cultural and tourism activities have allowed Mongolia to showcase its rich heritage to the Kuwaiti public. The values of generosity, hospitality, and sincerity have united the two peoples for half a century.

The two countries finalized an air transport services agreement earlier this year. Mongolian Airlines (MIAT) and Kuwait Airways are currently working to finalize a separate agreement that will pave the way for the future launch of direct flights between the two countries.

The ambassador expressed Mongolia's eagerness to cooperate with Kuwait in the fields of digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and smart governance, emphasizing that these technologies can bring a significant leap forward in public administration, education, healthcare, and labor market planning.

He also highlighted Mongolia's readiness to expand collaboration in medical training, hospitals, telemedicine, and health innovation, while providing expertise in the health, engineering, digital technology, and modern agriculture sectors.

### **Continued from Page 1**

### Government,

This approach would stimulate consumer spending and help alleviate many of the social problems currently affecting numerous Kuwaiti families.

Irrelevant arguments about why people borrowed, appeals to social justice, or concerns for those who did not borrow should be dismissed.

Those who chose not to borrow simply had no need to do so, making such objections largely irrelevant.

### Mass custody

Investigations revealed suspected tampering with the results of numerous draws through forgery, bribery, and exploitation of official positions to unlawfully direct prizes to specific beneficiaries in exchange for financial

Earlier this year, criminal investigation teams in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce uncovered a network allegedly involved in rigging festival draws, identifying a senior official in the raffle department and several collaborators. Among those linked to the scheme was an expat woman who allegedly benefited from multiple vehicle prizes and was arrested at Kuwait International Airport as she at-

Due to the sensitivity of the case and its impact on public confidence in commercial promotions, the Public Prosecution previously ordered that investigations into the Ya Hala Shopping Festival draws be conducted confidentially and prohibited publication of details until the conclusion of inquiries. The broader file on draw manipulation in Kuwait covers dozens of commercial draws, significant prize values, and a large number of defendants referred to the Criminal Court on charges that include bribery, forgery, money laundering, and embezzlement of public funds.

### **Kuwait resets**

Code on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) from countries subject to the import ban related to the disease.

On the other hand, Al-Jaidan prohibited the import of the aforementioned products from the United States of America and Santarem in Portugal, except those heat-treated sufficiently to eliminate the virus that causes the highly pathogenic avian influenza.

### **KGOC** plans

2028, as well as target further expansion of gas processing facilities in the Neutral Zone.

KGOC and Chevron Saudi Arabia are planning to increase production capacity at the Wafra oil field from 170,000 to approximately 200,000 barrels per day between 2026 and 2027.

According to an official document, Khafji Joint Operations achieved tremendous successes last year, with average daily production of exportable gas reaching 14.64 million cubic feet, and exportable natural gas liquids reaching approximately 4,190 barrels per day. Wafra Joint Operations shipped about 22 million standard cubic feet of associated gas to Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

The sources affirmed that despite the extension of KOC CEO Ahmad Al-Eidan's term until July 2027, and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) board's approval of Bader Al-Munaifi as CEO of KGOC, the steps and procedures for merging KGOC under the KOC umbrella are accelerating.

Indicating that the asset transfer process is currently in its final stages, the sources clarified that the initial stages of the merger between the two companies will begin after the conclusion of the 2025/2026 fiscal year on March 31, 2026.

They confirmed that the Al-Durra gas field project is progressing well following the completion of engineering works, especially after KPC

secured government approval for its implementation, with strong support from the Kuwaiti government.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) announced the postponement of KOC's tender deadline for the construction of three new 132 kV power stations in the Al-Maqwa C and Burgan H fields, along with their associated 132 kV overhead lines in southern and eastern Kuwait. The new deadline is December 23, 2025, instead of December 9, 2025.

CAPT also announced via "Kuwait al-Youm" the postponement of the deadline for submitting bids for a KOC tender to establish three new 132 kV electrical stations in Ahmadi F, Burgan F, and Burgan G, along with their 132 kV overhead feeders in southern and eastern Kuwait.

### **IOM** lauds

enhanced cooperation in humanitarian assistance, health, and education to ensure broader and more effective

He noted that Kuwait is among IOM's principal supporters, explaining that several cooperation agreements were signed recently and that coordination is ongoing to establish new partnerships in Syria, Yemen, and Sudan to strengthen joint humanitarian

For his part, Al-Mughames said in a similar statement that KRCS continues reinforcing its regional and international humanitarian role by supporting vulnerable groups and building strong partnerships with global organizations to ensure sustainable humanitarian outcomes.

Al-Mughames added that the Society prioritizes expanding cooperation with UN agencies and specialized organizations to enhance the quality of relief, health, and development programs and further consolidate Kuwait's deeply rooted humanitarian presence across all major fields of global humanitarian action.

The meeting was held at KRCS headquarters in the presence of the Organization's senior officials.

### **Asian caught**

menace, underscoring that the law will catch up with criminals wherever they are and that monitoring and follow-up efforts are ongoing around the clock.

### 15 years

The ministry explained that the new law imposes a prison sentence of up to 15 years and a fine of KD 10,000 to 20,000 on anyone who plants drugs or intoxicants in an innocent person's possession, falsely accuses them of possession, or conceals such substances in their possession without their knowledge, if it results in any of the following:

- The victim's arrest ■ The discovery of these substances in
- the victim's possession ■ The victim's pretrial detention
- The victim being formally charged
- by the competent investigative author-

### **Kuwait leads**

This ensures the achievement of the state's objectives in developing the housing sector and modernizing the municipal work system.

At Kuwait Municipality and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, digital methodologies are being used to improve the quality of plans, accelerate project completion, and enhance the efficiency of facility and property management in new cities and residential areas, in line with the state's vision for a more efficient and sustainable urban

environment. Recent years have seen major advancements in Building Information Modeling (BIM) and its role in improving project management, reducing waste, and enhancing the quality of outcomes. This is coupled with the rapid expansion of smart city and facilities management applications, which have become an essential part of the urban development system.

Al-Mishari commended the efforts of the Kuwait Union of Engineering Offices and Consulting Firms and its commitment to empowering the local engineering sector to adopt digital methodologies in line with the highest international standards.

He stressed that the forum serves as a strategic communication channel between governmental and legislative bodies and engineering offices to develop national policies and standards and to support the adoption of modern technologies in major projects. Al-Mishari affirmed that the Ministry

of State for Municipal Affairs and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) believe in the importance of this partnership and are working to support it to achieve the goals of sustainable development and New Kuwait 2035 vi-

He concluded by wishing the forum success in achieving its objectives and producing practical recommendations that contribute to building an advanced digital engineering system and strengthening the Gulf countries' position as a leading platform in digital construction and smart city development. Meanwhile, the Chairman of the

Kuwait Union of Engineering Offices and Consulting Firms and Head of the Forum, Eng. Bader Al-Salman, said the forum's sponsorship and the Housing Minister's attendance reflect clear governmental support for Building Information Modeling (BIM) and its application in both the public and private construction sectors.

He said, "We hope these efforts will lead to the governance and modeling of all government programs and projects and their full integration into engineering licensing platforms to expedite completion and reduce negative human intervention.

Eng. Al-Salman stressed that the forum initiative reflects the commitment of engineering offices and consulting firms in Kuwait to developing their services according to international standards and strengthening their role in BIM related to planning, construction, and building.

He explained that the forum serves as a direct communication channel and a cornerstone of a collaborative strategy between engineering offices and governmental and legislative bodies to develop national policies and standards, adopt modern building technologies for smart cities, and improve the management of facilities and major projects. Dozens of engineering offices and consulting firms possess regional and international expertise and work using electronic technologies and 3D modeling in accordance with BIM requirements.

Eng. Al-Salman emphasized the need to upgrade the electronic infrastructure for engineering licenses to allow licenses to be obtained directly without human intervention, in line with the requirements of the relevant authorities. He concluded that the forum rep-

resents a voluntary contribution from engineering offices to highlight advancements in information modeling, expedite project completion, reduce paperwork, enhance Kuwait's position on the global investment map, and achieve prosperity for citizens under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Director General for Planning and Design at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), Nasser Khuraibet, affirmed PAHW's commitment to advancing expansion plans for building new cities and implementing comprehensive digital transformation to meet the growing demand for housing units and improve quality of life in Kuwait.

In his speech at the Gulf Digital Construction Forum 2025, Khuraibet explained that the government, through its various ministries and agencies, has worked since the 1950s to provide housing for citizens, as Kuwaiti families are entitled to apply for a housing unit upon

# **Council sets deadline for** private school relocation



Photo by Rezk Tawfig

Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Muhairi, holds its 11th regular session of the fourth term.

### Multiple sites, expansions move forward

**By Inaas Awadh** 

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8:** The Municipal Council held its eleventh regular session of the fourth term, chaired by Abdullah Al-Muhairi, on Monday.

During the session, the Council discussed several agenda items, most notably the reasons behind the Kuwait Municipality's delay in handing over the alternative sites allocated for relocating private schools from residential areas.

After discussions lasting about one hour, the Council concluded by recommending the addition of a clause to its previous resolution regarding the relocation of private schools from residential areas.

The clause stipulates the cancellation of all approvals and licenses issued by the municipality to private schools in residential areas by the end of the 2027/2028 academic year and requires the Ministry of Education to

The Council approved several important site allocations and project expansions, including: ■ The Ministry of Interior's request

to expand the radar network site in Al-Khairan, originally allocated by a previous Municipal Council resolution.

■ The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy's request to allocate an absorption pit in Abu Kharjin and Al-Sabahiya, adjacent to the Al-Zour water distribution complex

■ The Public Authority for Civil

Aviation's request to allocate a site for a wind slashing station (RS36) in the central region.

■ The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's request to allocate a site for the Al-Durra field project in Al-Zour. ■ The Ministry of Finance's request to add a fourth floor to residential

buildings in the workers' housing complex project in Subhan, Block 11. ■ Approval of a real estate company's request to subdivide property Ño. in Salmiya, Block 2.

■ Approval of the proposal by Vice Chairman Khalid Al-Mutairi to add car washing and detailing to permitted activities in Abu Futaira (Al-Qurain Markets) and Ardiya Industrial areas.

■ Approval of the United Refreshments Company's request to utilize sidewalk space for placing refreshment and water coolers for grocery store, food outlet, or supermarket operations.

■ Three requests from the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy:

1. Allocation of a site for a secondary transformer station in Salwa, Block 6 (Station No. 2)

2. Allocation of a site for a secondary transformer station in Salwa, Block 11 3. Relocation of two secondary transformer stations within the Ardiya

Industrial, Block 4 ■ The Ministry of Public Works' request to allocate a temporary treatment line connecting the mobile wastewater treatment plant in West Abdullah Al-Mubarak to an existing treatment line on Highway 6.

■ A proposal submitted by Council member Munira Al-Amir to adopt and activate an electronic review system for engineering plans within Kuwait Municipality.

■ A proposal submitted by Council

member Nasser Al-Jadaan to create a secondary entrance opposite Rumaithiya, with authorization granted to the Ministry of Public Works to prepare the final design and determine the entrance width in accordance with regulations of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART).

■ The Ministry of Health's request to change the designated use of the insect control center in Jahra, Block 90, into a dialysis center, including adjustments to the site's boundaries and the addition of space.

In addition, the Municipal Council recommended preserving the letter from the Insurance Regulation Unit concerning the localization of all insurance activities in industrial areas, in accordance with Law No. 125/2019 and its executive regulations.

The Council also recommended retaining the proposal submitted by Deputy Chairman Khalid Al-Mutairi to create a U-turn exit on Road 108, opposite the Farwaniya Dental Hospital in Sabah Al-Nasser.

It recommended preserving the proposal submitted by member Abdullah Al-Enezi to establish a pedestrian walkway, a bicycle path, and designated areas for children's play and sports equipment in Saad Al-Abdullah Residential City, opposite Blocks 9 and 11. Under the "Other Business" agenda

item, several council members requested a discussion on establishing a mechanism to facilitate and expedite the issuance of building description certificates by the municipality.

After deliberation, the Council through its Vice Chairman Khalid Al-Mutairi (one of the proposers), recommended referring the matter to the Reform and Development Committee for further study.

# Kuwait's charity opens new clinic in Darfur



Part of the work of the third field clinic for displaced Sudanese in the Tawila area of North Darfur State.

KHARTOUM, Dec 8, (KUNA): The Kuwait-based Patients Helping Fund Society announced on Sunday opening a new field clinic in the Tawila area of North Darfur State to offer healthcare services to displaced people there. In statements to KUNA, the Fund's field office coordinator

in Tawila, Mohammad Ahmad said that the clinic's opening is part of a two-month emergency plan aimed at addressing healthcare gaps in the displace people camps and alleviating pressure on local health facilities. For his part, the Fund's North Darfur office director Dafal-

lah Al-Fatih said that the new clinic, the third of kind by the society in North Darfur, was opened in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). He noted that the Kuwaiti Fund would continue collaboration

with humanitarian partners to address the urgent health needs of displaced people in displacement camps in North Darfur. He added that the clinic serves hundreds of families who have recently arrived in the area after fleeing from the city



Protesters participate in an anti-ICE demonstration during a meeting at the City Hall in New Orleans on Dec 4. (AP)

# Mamdani tells immigrant NYers about right not to comply with ICE

NEW YORK, Dec 8, (AP): New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani posted a video to social media on Sunday explaining immigrants' right to refuse to speak to or comply with agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, days after federal agents carried out a raid in Manhattan.

In the video, Mamdani vowed to protect the city's 3 million immigrants, saying, "We can all stand up to ICE if you know your rights."

He explained that people in the US can choose not to speak to federal immigration agents, film them without interfering and refuse their requests to enter private spaces. ICE agents cannot enter spaces like a home, school or private area of a workplace without a judicial warrant signed by a judge, Mamdani said

"ICE is legally allowed to lie to you, but you have the right to remain silent. If you're being detained, you may always ask, 'Am I free to go?' repeatedly until they answer you," said Mamdani, who will be sworn in as mayor on Jan 1.

His comments came a week after demonstrators gathered as ICE attempted to detain people on Canal Street near New York's Chinatown. A similar immigration sweep in the same neighborhood last October was also met with protests.

"New York will always welcome immigrants, and I will fight each and every day to protect, support, and celebrate our immigrant brothers and sisters," Mam-

dani said in Sunday's video.

Weeks earlier, Mamdani had a surprisingly cordial Oval Office meeting with President Donald Trump, whose administration is carrying out federal immigration enforcement operations in several U.S. cities, most recently in New Orleans.

New Orleans' mayor-elect said Friday that a federal immigration crackdown launched this week is already causing harm as encounters between masked agents and residents, including some caught on video, has prompted public backlash in the blue city.

Frustrated city officials pointed to the case of Jacelynn Guzman, a 23-year-old U.S. citizen who was walking back to her Louisiana home from a trip to the grocery store on Wednesday when a truck pulled up beside her and two masked federal agents approached her, according to security footage obtained by The Associ-

Guzman began running away as a second vehicle arrived and the agents pursued her down the sidewalk until she reached her family's home in Marrero, a neighborhood across the Mississippi River from downtown New Orleans. Guzman's mother has lived there her entire life.

"We're legal, we are from here, born and raised," Guzman shouted back at

the agents. "Don't chase me, that is disgusting. Guzman, who has no criminal record, told the AP that she panicked

when agents approached. "That was my only thought that they were going to take me and I wasn't going to get to have a say in that decision," Guzman said. "Because most likely they didn't care that I was saying I was a U.S. citizen. So why would they care what else I had to say?"

Several hundred agents under Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino have converged on Southeast Louisiana this week as part of an immigration enforcement operation seeking to arrest 5,000 people. The Department of Homeland Security has touted dozens of arrests with only limited details released. Many Hispanic residents have said they feel their community is at risk of being abused or detained by agents regardless of their legal status.

Blue states under fire from Trump administration

# Party's midterm strategy must focus on voters' pocketbook concerns: Democratic govs

PHOENIX, Dec 8, (AP): Democratic governors met this weekend in Arizona, looking to parlay last month's big victories for the party in New Jersey and Virginia into campaigns for next year's midterms, when a majority of governor's seats will be up for elec-Those elections helped Democrats

zero in on what they see as a strategy to help grow their ranks in office and recover from big losses in 2024, when voters put Donald Trump back in the White House and gave Republicans majorities in both houses of Congress.

The plan is to focus intently on making life more affordable, a message they hope will work even in some conservative-leaning states.

"We have to be laser focused on

people's everyday concerns and how hard life is right now for the American people," said Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, the new chairman of the Democratic Governors Association and a possible candidate for president in 2028. "Everybody wants the economy of tomorrow, but paying the bills today is absolutely critical.

He and other governors said Democrats can use the affordability message as a cudgel against Trump without making him the central focus of their campaigns. "Yes, we can judge a president, and we should judge this president," Beshear said. "But we never judge those voters.'

The meeting of Democratic governors comes as blue states have been under fire from the Trump administration, which is exercising power in novel ways against the president's per-

Trump has deployed the National Guard in California, Oregon and Illinois over the objections of their Democratic governors. His administration has demanded detailed voter data and threatened to cut off food assistance for states that don't provide information to support his immigration crack-

Heading into a primary season in which factions will battle over the future of the party, Democratic governors largely sang from the same sheet over the weekend. A dozen candidates and sitting governors all said they plan to talk extensively about the costs of housing, child care, utilities and groceries during Trump's second term.

But the unified focus on affordability papers over real divisions in the party's ranks over how aggressively to confront Trump, who won all of the presidential battleground states last year, and how to deal with the rising costs that are squeezing Americans.

On the same day Democratic mod-



Kentucky Gov Andy Beshear waves to a cheering crowd after his speech during the Ben Nelson Gala on Nov 7, in Omaha, Neb. (AP)

erates with national security credentials, Mikie Sherrill in New Jersey and Abigail Spanberger in Virginia, won their governor's races, Democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani won election as New York mayor. All ran on promises to tackle affordability, but they offered very different visions for how to deliver.

The affordability strategy isn't without risk. Economic conditions could change, making concerns about prices less salient or urgent.

And Democrats could be setting themselves up for disappointment down the road if they win in 2026 but are unable to bring down costs to voters' satisfaction, allowing Republicans to capitalize on the same buyer's remorse Democrats are now seeking to

For Democratic incumbents seeking

reelection, they can't rest on fighting the Trump administration, said twoterm Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico. They need to show results.

"Deliver for me. But don't forget to fight this," said Lujan Grisham, who is barred by term limits from seeking reelection. "They do want both, and finding ways to cross-cut those and marry that I think is going to be a winning set of messages.

After the New Jersey and Virginia elections last month, the White House began shifting its message to focus more on affordability. Trump, who has not done much domestic travel during his second term, is scheduled to visit Pennsylvania on Tuesday to highlight his efforts to reduce inflation.

The president has talked more about affordability recently, and he reduced tariffs on beef and other commodities that consumers say cost too much. But Trump also has said the economy is better and consumer prices lower than reported by the media.

"The word affordability is a Democrat scam," he said during a Cabinet meeting last week.

He continues to blame his Democratic predecessor, former President Joe Biden, for the increase nationwide in inflation rates that occurred this year after his return to the White House.

Overall, inflation is tracking at 3% annually, up from 2.3% in April when Trump rolled out a sweeping set of import taxes.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Sunday said the administration will be intent on reducing inflation, after tackling immigration and pushing to have interest rates cut.

"I expect inflation to roll down strongly next year," he said on CBS's 'Face the Nation.' Democratic governors and candi-

dates were largely aligned in the conclusion that many voters in 2024 didn't feel as if their party was focused on their concerns or shared their anger at a system they believe is failing average Americans.

"I think if there was any failure in the presidential election, it's we forgot what real people care about," said Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek, who is expected to seek a second term next year. "We've got to listen to people," said

Keisha Lance Bottoms, the former mayor of Atlanta who is running for Georgia governor.

Once Spanberger takes office in January, Democrats will control 24 governor's offices, a significant improvement from the low point of just 16 following the 2016 election but still slightly behind the Republicans' 26

Ukraine prez holds talks in London with European allies

# Zelenskyy 'hasn't read' US-authored proposal to end war: Trump

LONDON, Dec 8, (AP): Ukranian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met French, German and British leaders in London on Monday amid what Kyiv's European allies described as a "decisive time" in the U.S.-led effort to end Russia's war in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer held talks with Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz at the British leader's 10 Downing St. residence to try to strengthen Ukraine's hand.

In an exchange with reporters on Sunday night, US President Donald Trump appeared frustrated with Zelenskyy, claiming the Ukrainian leader "hasn't yet read the proposal."

"Russia is, I believe, fine with it, but I'm not sure that Zelenskyy's fine with it," Trump said in Washington. "His people love it, but he hasn't read it."

It's not clear why Trump thought Zelenskyy hadn't read the plan or who he was saying loved it. Ukrainian officials have made sparing comments about it and few details of the negotiations have been made public.

"I'm a little bit disappointed that President Zelenskyy hasn't yet read the proposal, that was as of a few hours ago. His people love it. But he hasn't - Russia's fine with it," Trump told reporters on the red carpet at the Kennedy Center Honors. "Russia is, I believe, fine with it, but I'm not sure that Zelenskyy's fine with it. His people love it, but he hasn't read it."

Russian President Vladimir Putin also hasn't publicly expressed approval for the White House plan. In fact, Putin last week had said that aspects of Trump's proposal were unworkable, even though the original draft heavily favored Moscow.

Trump has had a hot-and-cold relationship with Zelenskyy since rid-ing into a second White House term insisting that the war was a waste of US taxpayer money. Trump has also repeatedly urged the Ukrainians to cede land to Russia to bring an end to a now nearly four-year conflict he says has cost far too many lives.

Starmer, Macron and Merz took a more supportive stance toward Kviv in comments before their Monday meeting. The UK leader said the push for peace was at a "critical stage," and stressed the need for "a just and lasting ceasefire.'

Merz, meanwhile, said he was "skeptical" about some details in documents released by the US. "We have to talk about it. That's why we are here," he said. "The coming days ... could be a decisive time for all of us.'

Zelenskyy said late Sunday that his talks with European leaders this week in London and Brussels will focus on security, air defense and long-term funding for Ukraine's war effort. The leaders are working to ensure that any ceasefire is backed by solid security

guarantees both from Europe and the US to deter Russia from attacking

US and Ukrainian negotiators completed three days of talks on Saturday aimed at trying to narrow differences on the U.S. administration's peace proposal.

Zelenskyy said in a post on Telegram that talks had been "substantive" and that National Security and Defense Council Secretary Rustem Umerov and Chief of the General Staff Andrii Hnatov were traveling back to Europe to brief him.

A major sticking point in the plan is the suggestion that Kyiv must cede control of the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine to Russia, which illegally occupies most but not all of the territory. Ukraine and its European allies have balked at the idea of handing over land.

Starmer said he "won't be putting pressure" on Zelenskyy to accept a peace settlement.

"The most important thing is to ensure that if there is a cessation of hostilities, and I hope there is, it has to be just and it has to be lasting, which is what we will be focused on this after-

noon," he told broadcaster ITV. Trump has had a hot-and-cold relationship with Zelenskyy since winning a second term, insisting the war was a waste of US taxpayers' money. Trump has also repeatedly urged the Ukrainians to cede land to Russia to end the nearly four-year conflict.

The European talks follow the publication of a new US national security strategy that alarmed European leaders and was welcomed by Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the document, which spells out the administration's core foreign policy interests, was largely in line with Moscow's vision.

"The nuances that we see in the new concept certainly look appealing to us," he said Monday. "It mentions the need for dialogue and building constructive, friendly relations. This cannot but appeal to us, and it absolutely corresponds to our vision. We understand that by eliminating the irritants that currently exist in bilateral relations, a prospect may open for us to truly restore our relations and bring them out of the rather deep crisis."

The document released Friday by the White House said the US wants to improve its relationship with Russia after years of Moscow being treated as a global pariah and that ending the war is a core U.S. interest to "reestablish strategic stability with Russia."

The document also says NATO must not be "a perpetually expanding alliance," echoing another complaint by Russia. It was scathing about the migration and free speech policies of longstanding U.S. allies in Europe, suggesting they face the "prospect of civilizational erasure" due to



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and French President Emmanuel Macron, talk on the doorsteps of 10 Downing Street, London on Dec 8, following a meeting of the leaders inside. (AP)



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Services on Dec 8, a rescue worker puts out a fire of a car in front of a residential building damaged by a Russian strike in Sumy region, Ukraine. (AP)

# Greenland hosts annual talks with US

NUUK, Greenland, Dec 8, (AP): Greenland is hosting annual meetings with US officials to discuss bilateral ties at the end of a year in which U.S. President Donald Trump ramped up talk of a U.S. takeover of the mineralrich island that is a semiautonomous territory of Denmark.

The meeetings starting Monday will include a bilateral "joint committee' meeting between Greenland and U.S. officials that will discuss cooperation "in a number of important areas," according to a statement from Greenland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Science.

A separate "permanent committee" meeting will involve the Danish government. Similar meetings were held last year in the United States.

Vivian Motzfeldt, who heads the ministry, said Greenland was "pleased"

to host the two days of meetings. "Through these successful meetings, we ensure that the interests of the Greenlanders and the Americans are respected for the benefit of all parties, she said, adding the aim was to "develop cooperation in areas of common



A plane carrying Donald Trump Jr lands in Nuuk, Greenland on Jan 7. (AP)

Trump stirred concerns earlier this year in Greenland, Denmark and the European Union, which counts Denmark among its 27 member countries, by reviving talk of a US takeover of Greenland after returning to office for his second term.

The issue had drifted off headlines but then Danish officials summoned the US ambassador in Copenhagen in August following a report that at least three people with connections to Trump carried out covert influence operations in Greenland.

Earlier this year, US Vice President JD Vance visited a remote US military base on the island and accused Denmark of underinvesting

### **Europe**

Suspect detained in Norway shooting: Police said they have taken into custody a suspected shooter after reports that shots were fired inside a shopping center in central Oslo on Monday morning.

Police told media that they are still searching for any injured individuals and for others who may have been in-

They also urged the public to stay away from the area until the situation is normalized. (Xinhua)

2 survivors found after boat sinks: Two men found alive among 17 dead bodies in a partially sunken migrant boat south of the island of Crete over the weekend told Greek authorities the vessel had been carrying a total of 34

Greece's coast guard said Monday. A search and rescue operation was underway, the coast guard says, but strong winds and rough seas have been hampering efforts. The survivors' revelation could mean

people, and that 15 had fallen overboard and were missing,

the death toll might increase to 32. On Saturday, the coast guard said a passing Turkish merchant vessel had come across the half-sunken migrant boat 36 nautical miles (41 miles, 66 kilometers) southwest of the town of Ierapetra in southern Crete. Seventeen of the passengers on board, all men, were already dead, and there were only two survivors, the coast guard said, revising its initial count of 18 bodies.

The survivors were transported to a hospital in Crete, and the bodies were taken to a morgue on the island for autopsies, the coast guard said.

The survivors later told authorities there had been a total of 34 people on board the vessel, which had set sail from Tobruk in Libya on the night of Dec. 1. The boat suffered engine failure the following day and began to drift, while 15 of those on board fell into the water and went missing, authorities said. (AP)

Germany's BSW adopts new name: Germany's new left-wing political force, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW), adopted a new name and elected a new dual leadership during its federal party congress held in Magdeburg on Saturday and Sunday.

Delegates voted to rename the party "Alliance for Social Justice and Economic Reason" while keeping the abbreviation "BSW." The name change will officially take effect on Oct. 1, 2026, according to a statement from the party's In addition to the re-branding, the congress elected a

in her office as co-chair and member of the European Parliament Fabio De Masi was elected as the new co-The party was founded in early 2024 after some political figures including Sahra Wagenknecht broke away from the

new executive duo. Amira Mohamed Ali was confirmed

Left party (Die Linke). As announced last month, party founder Sahra Wagenknecht will step down as leader of the political party that

### Malaysia PM calls for calm over renewed clash

## Thailand launches airstrikes along border with Cambodia as tensions reignite

BANGKOK, Dec 8, (Agencies): Thailand launched airstrikes along the disputed border with Cambodia on Monday as both sides accused the other of breaking a

ceasefire that halted fighting earlier this year. Longstanding border disputes erupted into five days of combat in July that killed dozens of soldiers and civilians. US President Donald Trump pushed the Southeast Asian neighbors to sign a truce agreement in October, but tensions have

continued to simmer. The Thai army said that more than 50,000 people have left areas near the border for shelters, while Cambodia's Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said that tens of thousands of residents had been displaced from several villages near the border. The latest round of clashes has killed at least one Thai soldier and four Cambo-

dian civilians, officials said. Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said in a televised speech that military operations would be carried out as necessary to defend the country and protect

"Thailand has never wished for violence. I'd like to reiterate that Thailand has never initiated a fight or an invasion, but will never tolerate a violation of its sov-

ereignty," he said. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet wrote on Facebook that his government's immediate tasks were to protect the people and the country's sovereignty. "I ask all ministries, institutions, authorities at all levels, all types of armed

forces and all Cambodian citizens to unite for the cause of the nation and the

homeland during this difficult period," he wrote. The ceasefire was strained in early November after Thai troops were injured by land mines, leading Thailand to announce that it would indefinitely suspend implementation of the agreement. Both sides continue to trade accusations over responsibility, even as they are supposed to be cooperating in getting rid of the mines.

tensions simmered between the two countries. But another brief episode of fighting took place along the border Sunday, after which both sides said the other fired first. The Thai army said Cambodian fire in-

Trump said in mid-November that he'd intervened to preserve the ceasefire as

Cambodian civilians flee their homes near border with Thailand in Preah Vihear province, Cambodia on Dec 8. (Xinhua)

jured two Thai soldiers and Thai troops retaliated, resulting in an exchange of fire that lasted around 20 minutes. Cambodia said that the Thai side fired first and that its own troops did not retaliate.

On Monday, Thai army spokesperson Maj. Gen. Winthai Suvaree said the Cambodian troops fired first into Thai territory in multiple areas. He said at least one Thai soldier was killed and about eight other soldiers were wounded. Thailand then used aircraft "to strike military targets in several areas to suppress Cambodian supporting fire attacks," he said.

The Thai army said artillery rounds landed near residential areas on the Thai side, but reported no civilian casualties so far.

Cambodian Defense Ministry spokesperson Maly Socheata said the Thai military attacked the Cambodian troops first on Monday, and that Cambodia did not retaliate during the initial attacks.

"Cambodia urges that Thailand immediately stop all hostile activities that threaten peace and stability in the region," she said.

Neth Pheaktra, the Cambodian Minister of Information, said fire from Thai forces killed four Cambodian civilians and injured about nine others.

The prime minister of regional neighbor Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, called for restraint in a statement posted to social media and said that his country is ready to support efforts to avert further fighting.

'Our region cannot afford to see long-standing disputes slip into cycles of confrontation," he wrote. Thailand and Cambodia have a history of enmity going back centuries, when they were warring empires.

Their modern territorial claims stem largely from a 1907 map drawn when Cam-

bodia was under French colonial rule, which Thailand has argued is inaccurate. The International Court of Justice in 1962 awarded sovereignty to Cambodia over an area that included the 1,000-year-old Preah Vihear temple, which still rankles many Thais.

The ceasefire does not spell out a path to resolve the underlying basis of the

dispute, the longstanding differences over where the border should run. Meanwhile, Malaysia has expressed deep concern over reported armed clashes between Cambodian and Thai forces along their border, conveying condolences to

the families of those killed or injured on Monday. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on social media that the renewed fighting risks unravelling the careful work that has gone into stabilizing relations between the two neighbors. He said that as close partners of Malaysia and key members of ASEAN, Thailand and Cambodia were urged to exercise maximum restraint, maintain open channels of communication and make full use of existing mechanisms to ease tensions.

### **Asia**

S.Korea prez approval rating falls to 69.4 pct: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung's approval rating fell 1.7 percentage points from a week earlier to 69.4 percent last week, a weekly poll showed Monday.

The negative assessment on Lee's conduct of state affairs gained 1.0 percentage points to 28.9 percent, according to computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) by local pollster Flower Research.

The ruling liberal Democratic Party's support increased 1.5 percentage points to 57.7 percent, while the conservative opposition People Power Party's approval score added 1.0 percentage points to 25.6 percent.

Support rate for the minor leftleaning Rebuilding Korea Party and the minor rightist New Reform Party logged 2.6 percent and

2.0 percent each last week. The pollster's separate survey of automated response

system (ARS) showed that Lee's approval rating inched down 0.4 percentage points to 61.5 percent last week compared to the previous week. (Xinhua)

Quake strikes off Japan's northern coast: A powerful earthquake struck off the coast of northern Japan on Monday, triggering a tsunami alert, the Japanese Meteorological Agency said.

The agency said the magnitude 7.2 quake struck off the

coast of Hokkaido, near the coastal city of Aomori with an epicenter about 50 kilometers (about 30 miles) below the sea surface. It issued an alert in the region for a tsunami of up to 3

meters (up to 10 feet). Nuclear power plants in the region were conducting safe-

ty checks, public broadcaster NHK reported. (AP) 



Indonesia repatriates 2 drug traffickers: Indonesian officials said on Monday that two Dutch nationals imprisoned in Indonesia on drug trafficking convictions will be repatriated to the Netherlands later in the day following the agreement between the two countries.

The two prisoners, including one who had been sentenced to death, were handed over by the Indonesian authorities to Dutch authorities at a prison in Jakarta, ahead

The men wore baseball caps and bright green T-shirts at the handover. They were being treated for health problems, and the Netherlands had requested their repatriation on humanitarian grounds. Indonesia's deputy minister for immigration and correctional coordination, I Nyoman Gede Surya Mataram, said at a news conference in Jakarta that the two men would continue to serve their prison sentences in the Netherlands. (AP)

Vietnam expressway collision kills 2: Two people were killed and three others injured in a traffic accident on the North-South Expressway in Vietnam's central province of Quang Tri on Monday morning, Vietnam News Agency

The collision occurred at around 5:30 a.m. between a tractor-trailer and a truck traveling in the same direction. The truck sustained heavy front-end damage.

The accident caused traffic congestion for several kilometers along the expressway. (Xinhua) 

Firefighter killed in Australian bushfires: A firefighter has died after being crushed by a tree while fighting a bushfire in the eastern Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) on Sunday night.

Authorities said on Monday that emergency services were called to reports that a man had been struck by a tree on a property near the town of Bulahdelah, 190 km northeast of Sydney, around 10:45 p.m. on Sunday

He was treated by ambulance paramedics, but died at the scene. Chris Minns, the premier of NSW, confirmed that the man was a firefighter from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). (Xinhua)



Chinese Vice President Han Zheng meets with visiting German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul in Beijing, China on Dec 8. (Xinhua)

### Chinese vice president meets German FM

Chinese Vice President Han Zheng met with visiting German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul in Beijing on Monday. Noting that China and Germany are important economic and trading partners which can achieve win-win results through mutually beneficial cooperation, Han said China is willing to work with Germany to deliver on the important common understandings between the leaders of the two countries, enhance communication and dialogue, and work to bring the China-Germany all-round strategic partnership to a new level.

Han said the Taiwan question is at the center of China's core interests, and China hopes that the German side will abide by the one-China principle. China also expects Germany, as a core major country in the European Union, to play an active role in promoting the healthy development of China-EU relations. (Xinhua)



Demonstrators take part in a march against violence following a series of high-profile cases in the country, in Sao Paulo on Dec 7. (AP)

Explosion outside police station

in Mexico's Michoacán state kills 5

### **Women protest violence across Brazil**

Tens of thousands of women in cities across Brazil rallied against violence Sunday as a record number of female victims and a series of recent high-profile cases

have shocked the country.

Women of all ages and some men took to the streets in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and other cities, calling for an end to violence and misogyny and for men to join them in their struggle. Alline de Souza Pedrotti's sister, who was an administrative worker in a school in Rio

de Janeiro, was killed on Nov. 28 by a male colleague along with another employee.

Pedrotti, who was at the demonstration on the boardwalk in Copacabana, said the person who killed her sister didn't accept having female bosses.

"I'm devastated," she told The Associated Press. "But I'm fighting through the pain and I won't stop. I want changes in the legislation and new protocols to prevent this kind of crime from happening again." (AP)

### Benin coup leader's location and fate of hostages unknown after failed takeover LAGOS, Nigeria, Dec 8, (AP): The ap-

parent leader of a failed coup in Benin was on the run and the fate of hostages remained unclear a day after a group of soldiers attempted to overthrow the government of the West African na-

The soldiers calling themselves the Committee for Refoundation stormed the national television station early Sunday morning. Led by Benin army officer Lt. Col. Pascal Tigri, eight soldiers appeared in a broadcast announcing the removal of President Patrice Talon, dissolution of the government and suspension of all state institutions.

By Sunday afternoon, the coup was foiled by Benin's military, supported by Nigerian air and ground forces, which launched a series of attacks against fleeing mutineers. At least a dozen soldiers were arrested while others remained at large Monday. Tigri's whereabouts were not

Talon described the coup late Sunday as a "senseless adventure" and said the situation was under control. He vowed to punish mutineers and ensure the safety of hostages, including some believed to be senior military officers. He did not disclose their identities or the number of casualties and hostages.

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres on Sunday condemned the attempted coup, saying it would "further threaten the stability of

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu



This photo taken on Dec 7, 2025 shows a street view of Cotonou, Benin. 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. (Xinhua)

praised Nigeria's armed forces for standing "as a defender and protector of constitutional order in the Republic of Benin on the invitation of the gov-

The Economic Community of West African States, the organization representing the regional bloc of nations, said Sunday it had deployed a standby force to Benin to help preserve democracy. The troops included personnel from Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone. The size of the force remains unclear.

Calm returned Monday to Cotonou, Benin's administrative center, after sporadic gunshots were heard across the city throughout Sunday, but there a heavy presence of soldiers remained

Despite a history of coups following its independence from France in 1960, the tiny country has enjoyed uninterrupted democratic rule in the past two decades.

The attempted coup is the latest in a spate of coups that have rocked West Africa since 2020. Soldiers seized power last month in Guinea-Bissau after disputed election results, following Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Guinea and Gabon among the countries that have experienced similar takeovers in the past five years.

Sri Lanka parliament passes '26 budget: Sri Lan-



budget was conducted from Nov 15 to Dec 5. In the final voting, 158 lawmakers voted in favor, while only one MP opposed it and two abstained. Sri Lankan President Anura

The third reading of the national

Kumara Dissanayake presented the 2026 national budget to the Parliament on Nov. 7, with the sec-

ond reading of the budget taking place from Nov. 8 to 14.

The deadly accident took place due to reckless driving,

Bomb blast kills over 30 in Congo: A bomb explosion killed more than 30 people and wounded 20 others in eastern Congo following a dispute between the Congolese army and a pro-government militia, despite a deal signed in Washington and touted as a major step toward peace

**Africa** 

Residents and civil society leaders told The Associated Press that the FARDC, the Congolese army's acronym, and Wazalendo, which has been helping the army combat the insurgents, clashed before they felt the blast in the town of Sange in South Kivu Sunday evening. (AP)

**100 kids abducted in Nigeria freed:** A total of 100 of the schoolchildren abducted from a Nigerian school last month have been released, the Christian Association of Nigeria said Monday, adding that more than 100 students remain in captivity. At least 303 schoolchildren were seized at the Niger state school together with 12 of their teachers when gunmen attacked the St. Mary's Catholic School in Papiri community on Nov 21. (AP)

**'114 dead in Sudan drone strikes':** The head of the World Health Organization said Monday that the death toll from drone strikes on a kindergarten and other sites in Sudan's Kordofan state last week is now at 114 people killed, including 63 children. (AP)

### **Subcontinent**

ka's Parliament on Friday passed the third reading of the



Road accident kills 3 in Afghanistan: Three commuters, all students, were killed and three others injured due to a road accident in the northern Afghanistan Faryab province on Monday, said Mawlawi Shamsudin Mohammadi, provincial director of the information and culture

the official said without providing more details.. (Xinhua)

One of the people who died at the scene was the driver of the truck that exploded, officials have said. The use of explosives - dropped from drones, buried like mines or

MEXICO CITY, Dec 8, (AP): The number of victims killed in an explo-

sion outside a police station in the

western Mexican state of Michoacán

over the weekend has risen to five, the

Attorney General's Office said Sunday.

ing Saturday's explosion, according to

center of the town of Coahuayana, on

the coast of Michoacán, a state where

numerous criminal groups operate,

including the powerful Jalisco New

Generation Cartel. It's also where the

government recently launched a major

security operation given the ongoing

the vehicle that exploded was a pickup

truck and that the remains of two peo-

ple were found at the scene. Authori-

ties said three of those killed and five

of those injured were members of a

community police force.

The state prosecutor's office said

the office.

Twelve others were injured follow-

The blast happened at midday in the

Michoacán State Governor Alfredo Ramirez Bedolla, (left), and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum attend a presentation of the new security strategy against violence for the state of Michoacan, at the National Palace in Mexico City on Nov 9. (AP) hidden along roads - has been an increasingly common technique used by criminal groups in the region, although it is not typical for them to be placed

According to Héctor Zepeda, commander of the community police, the explosion was so powerful that human remains were scattered throughout the

# Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's trading session on a positive note, with the general index advancing by 69.80 points, or 0.79 percent, to close at 8,957.80 points.

Trading activity was robust, as 494.18 million shares changed hands through 27,938 cash transactions, generating a total value of KD 126.14 million (approximately USD 384.7 million).

# Business

More than 100 meetings held between nine listed Kuwaiti companies and leading global institutions

# **Boursa Kuwait concludes its 16th Corporate Day in Dubai in collaboration with Jefferies Financial Group**

DUBAI, Dec 8: Boursa Kuwait concluded its 16th Corporate Day on December 8, held in collaboration with Jefferies Financial Group, one of the world's leading financial and investment institutions, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Bringing together representatives from nine listed companies on the Kuwaiti market with a distinguished group of global firms and institutions, the event featured over 100 meetings with more than 35 potential investors, including representatives from investment banks, asset management companies, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds and other major financial and investment entities.

Participants included Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait Finance House, National Bank of Kuwait, Mobile Telecommunications Company "Zain Group", Mabanee Company, Gulf Bank, Burgan Bank, Kuwait Real Estate Company and National Investments Company, representing approximately KD 31billion of the KD 52.30 billion total market capitalization of the Kuwaiti capital market.

The event provided international investors with an opportunity to gain insights into the latest financial and strategic developments of these companies, monitor their financial performance, explore their business strategies and learn more about their environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices.

"Boursa Kuwait continues its efforts to enhance the international presence of the Kuwaiti capital market by highlighting promising its investment opportunities and organizing Corporate Days and roadshows in collaboration with some of the world's leading financial institutions.

The exchange remains committed to fostering an efficient and transparent investment environment that meets the expectations of local and international investors, while supporting the sustainable growth of the national economy," said Boursa Kuwait's Head of Markets Sector Noura Al-Abdulkareem.

She added that this Corporate Day forms a part of Boursa Kuwait's ongoing efforts to strengthen engagement between Kuwaiti capital market issuers and international investors, reflecting the company's commitment to developing a stable, sustainable, and highly liquid market with a strong emphasis on transparency.

"These efforts align with the goals of the "New Kuwait" Vision and the national development plan, which aims to position Kuwait as a leading regional financial and investment hub," she stated.

During its meetings with prospective investors, Boursa Kuwait highlighted its key



Boursa Kuwait hosts 16th Corporate Day in Dubai with Jefferies.

develop the Kuwaiti capital market, which included the launch of the second part of the third phase of the Market Development Program (MD 3.2), which featured the implementation of the Central Counterparty (CCP) system, completion of cash settlement through settlement banks and the Central Bank of Kuwait's "KASSIP" system, and the upgrade of brokerage firms' operating model to that of a 'Qualified Broker.'

In addition, the technical environment and IT infrastructure have been prepared to support the future listing and trading of Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs) and fixed-income instruments such as sukuk and bonds.

The company also presented its latest operational enhancements, including the extension of continuous trading hours until 1:00 PM, improvements to the closing auction mechanism to allow for order modifications throughout the auction period and a reduction in the random closing interval from the final two minutes to the last 30 seconds of the trading session.

In addition, the exchange revised listing requirements for the "Main Market," lowering the by the controlling shareholder group from KD 15 achievements and ongoing plans to further million to KD 5 million, while maintaining the

requirement that free float shares represent no less than 20% of the company's capital.

"Boursa Kuwait continued to implement its market development plans in collaboration with its partners in the capital market apparatus, making significant progress in 2025 with the launch of the second part of the third phase of the Market Development Program, the extension of trading hours, enhancements to the closing auction mechanism and the easing of listing requirements for the "Main" Market.

These initiatives have strengthened market efficiency, reinforced its appeal and enhanced its international competitiveness,"added Al-Abdulkareem.

Boursa Kuwait also highlighted its recent financial performance, reporting a net profit of KD 23.05 million for the first nine months of the year, a significant increase of 59.81%.

The company's operating revenue reached KD 37.06 million, reflecting a 41.45% rise, while operating profit grew by 58.16% to KD 28.36 million during the same period in 2025.

In addition, the Kuwaiti capital market outperformed its GCC counterparts in terms of trading velocity (turnover ratio), exceeding 45% and continuingits upward trajectory.

Commenting on Boursa Kuwait's partici-

pation in the Corporate Day, Chief Financial Officer Mr. Naim Azaddinstated, "Corporate Days serve as an important platform to showcase our key achievements to the international investment community and update potential investors on Boursa Kuwait's financial and operational performance.

The company continued to deliver outstanding results during the first nine months of 2025, seeing an increase in its net profit, operating profit and operating revenues.

These figures reflect the strength of our performance and the efficiency of our financial and operational management, reaffirming the success of Boursa Kuwait's privatization journey and cementing its position as one of the region's standout financial success stories."

The participation of listed companies in Corporate Day events underscores their commitment to best practices in investor relations, enhancing transparency and affirming the strategic importance of investor engagement in driving growth and long-term sustainability.

These events offer an interactive platform where investors gain direct access to detailed financial and non-financial information.

Through in-depth discussions, participants develop a clearer understanding of company performance, future growth drivers, and strategic direction, supporting more informed, high-quality investment decisions.

Since its establishment, Boursa Kuwait has strived to build a reliable, transparent exchange, creating a dynamic and liquid capital market supported by an advanced trading platform.

The company has implemented a wide range of reforms and enhancements that have elevated its status to one of the region's leading exchanges. It has also played a central role in developing the Kuwaiti capital market to attract local and international investors through a diverse set of new products, services and infrastructure, as well as market reform initiatives as part of a phased development strategy.

Following its successful privatization in 2019 and self-listing in 2020, Boursa Kuwait has further strengthened its role as a leading regulatory and operational entity, standing out as one of the region's most notable institutional transformation success stories.

The company has also intensified efforts to promote the Kuwaiti capital market across major global financial hubs through its series of international roadshows and Corporate Days, which highlight the strength and outlook of Kuwaiti listed companies and facilitate their access to institutional investors around the

By International Business Magazine

# **Gulf Bank wins 'Most Innovative Online Banking Services Kuwait'**

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Gulf Bank has been awarded the "Most Innovative Online Banking Services Kuwait 2025" by International Business Magazine, marking a distinguished milestone in the Bank's ongoing journey to redefine digital banking standards in Kuwait. This recognition reflects Gulf Bank's continuous commitment to deploying advanced technologies, elevating customer interaction touchpoints, and enhancing its digital ecosystem to meet the evolving needs of customers in a fast changing financial landscape.

The award was presented during the International Business Magazine Awards 2025 ceremony in Dubai, an influential global platform that celebrates institutions demonstrating exceptional achievements in technology, strategy, and operational excellence. The ceremony honors organizations that are not only adapting to industry shifts, but also shaping the future of their sectors through bold innovation and strategic investment. Gulf Bank's presence among these global leaders reaffirms its distinguished role as a driver of transformative change within the regional financial services mar-

In line with its digital transformation objectives, Gulf Bank has maintained a clear focus on expanding its digital capabilities and enhancing the customer journey across every channel. A key element of this progress is the comprehensive upgrade of the Gulf Bank App, which has become one of the most trusted and widely used financial applications in Kuwait. The enhanced feature set, strengthened security architecture, and optimized per-



formance framework reflect Gulf Bank's commitment to delivering a frictionless, intelligent, and intuitive digital experience. These improvements have resulted in greater user engagement, faster service delivery, and more personalized interactions that empower customers to manage their finances with confidence and convenience.

Complementing its digital upgrades, Gulf Bank also reimagined customer rewards through the enhanced Gulf Points program, now recognized as the most rewarding loyalty program in Kuwait. The improved structure provides customers with a wide range of redemption options, including cashback, point gifting, and access to the sector's first digital eStore. This innovative platform enables customers to exchange Gulf Points for an extensive selection of products and services, illustrating the Bank's commitment to integrating lifestyle driven value into its digital offerings. By merging convenience, choice, and advanced technology, Gulf Bank continues to elevate the customer experience beyond the traditional boundaries of banking.

This latest award joins a growing list of regional and international recognitions received by Gulf Bank this year in areas including digital innovation, wealth management excellence, youth empowerment, and corporate social responsibility. Together, these achievements reinforce the Bank's reputation as one of the region's most forward thinking financial institutions, committed to delivering meaningful value through technology driven solutions and impactful community initiatives.

As Gulf Bank continues its innovation journey, it remains focused on designing financial solutions that are resilient, agile, and ready to meet the demands of the future. This recognition not only celebrates the Bank's digital advancement to date, but also serves as a catalyst for continued investment in breakthrough technologies that will shape the next era of banking in Kuwait and beyond.

### **Supporting over 13,000 projects**

### Kuwait pushes sustainable development through IsDB & Arab Coordination Group

JEDDAH, Dec 8, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has always committed itself to finding and offering concerted solutions to throw much weight behind the economies and societies of Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) member states for a better development future.

By so doing, Kuwait only seeks to play a responsible role to contribute effectively to pushing forward comprehensive human development and to aiding in safeguarding human dignity across the Muslim world.

Kuwait, which is one of the IsDB's cofounders and main supporters, joined the pan-Muslim bank in 1974 and has ever since contributed roughly USD 3.5 billion to its capital in a bid to promote its role in the member states' economic and social development.

It has funded 63 developmental projects covering various vital sectors at a total value of around USD 981 million, just as posted on the bank's website.

According to Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), Kuwait has contributed to numerous development projects in member states as part of the Arab Coordination Group by means of extending syndicated financing loans or grants to member states.

Cooperative projects cover new roads to ensure a smooth traffic movement, power plants in developing countries, dams, sewage water treatment, infrastructure and seaports, primarily aiming at boosting trade exchange among member states.

Based on the KFAED's report, between 2012 and 2021, the State of Kuwait bankrolled joint development projects in the context of the IsDB's Arab Coordination Group, including the first, third and fourth stages of the Arab Development Portal and contribution to the taskforce of the water and sanitation sector of the group's institutions as well as the development aid committee.

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), which is one of the most significant multilateral financial institutions, emerges as an effective partner of supporting the Muslim world's comprehensive human development and empowering its communities to meet future

The strategy of the Jeddah-based bank, which started operation in 1975, is based on promoting innovation, energy, transport, digital infrastructure, education, agriculture, food security, health, and environmental care, alleviating poverty and backing technology and artificial intelligence. The bank comprises 67 member states of the Orga-

members states' peoples and non-member states' Muslim communities in line with Islamic Sharia principles. The bank's cumulative net approvals since it was es-

nization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), helping them in achieving economic development, social progress of

tablished hit roughly USD 206.56 billion. The IsDB Group is chaired by Dr. Mohmmad Al-

Jasser who was elected by the bank's Board of Governors in July 2021. On the bank's role in supporting member states,

Al-Jasser underlined the bank's ironclad commitment

to bolstering their resilience amid difficulties and crises, and backing their long-term sustainable economic growth, thus positively affecting people's lives. He added that the bank's mission is to push forward comprehensive human development, focusing on pri-

ority sectors for alleviating poverty, improving health services and educational quality, promoting good governance and achieving public welfare. The member state's continued confidence in the bank

has enabled it to maintain its excellent credit rating (AAA) from major world credit rating agencies throughout years, showing its firm financial strength, global and Islamic status and developmental leadership.
Since its inception, the bank has undergone numerous

evolutions, having transformed from a single entity to a group that comprises several institutions, including the Islamic Development Bank Institute, Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC), International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation and the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development.

The group seeks to meet member states' priorities and gives top priority in its new strategic framework for the 2026-2035 to promoting trade, investment and integration through investment in cross-border infrastructure, digital trade facilitation and educational

Furthermore, the bank is working with key partners, particularly Arab Coordination Group, which marked in Washington in October, its golden jubilee of influential contributions to supporting sustainable development efforts worldwide.

The Arab Coordination Group is a strategic alliance that aims at finding and offering compatible and effective solutions for development financing by means of supporting economies and communities for a better future; having financed more than 13,000 development projects in over 160 countries.

The group comprises 10 institutions in the form of national funds, multilateral Arab regional and international institutions, notably Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Arab Gulf Program for Development, Arab Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, OPEC Fund for International Development, Qatar Fund for Development and Saudi Development Fund.

With the participation of leading financial sector experts from the US, Europe, and Kuwait

# Markaz highlights key investment themes and opportunities at 'Markaz 2026 Outlook' seminar



Ali H. Khalil, CEO of Markaz



Noor Al-Jeraisy, Wealth Management & Business Development, Markaz



Fay Al-Bader, Manager, Advisory & M&A, Investment Banking, Markaz



aAhmed Al-Falah, Managing Director, Investment



Abdulaziz Alhajeri, Senior Analyst, International Real



Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director, Wealth Man-



Giovanni Leonardo, CFA, Head of Investment Manage-



Panelists participating in the discussion.



KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Reaffirming its leadership in asset management and investment banking in the region, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" held its annual seminar titled "Markaz 2026 Outlook: Navigating Trends and Investment Opportunities." The event took place on December 8, at the St. Regis Hotel Kuwait, bringing together Markaz experts alongside distinguished international speakers from the financial sector to examine global and regional market developments and the forces shaping investment opportunities in the

The seminar featured in-depth discussions covering global macro trends, GCC market dynamics, real estate cycles, fixed income, private markets, private credit, and investment-banking insights. Attendees also gained perspectives on how technology, policy shifts, and demographic trends are influencing capital flows and sector performance across the region. The event underscored Markaz's ongoing commitment to supporting investors with timely insights, disciplined research, and access to diversified opportunities.

During his opening keynote, Ali H. Khalil, CEO of Markaz, stated: "As we look toward 2026, the global economic environment is undergoing steady and meaningful change. Technological shifts, policy movements, and geopolitical dynamics are shaping investment behavior, and economies that adapt will be best positioned to navigate this transition. Across the region, and particularly in Kuwait, we see reform momentum gaining clarity, with governance improving and investment priorities becoming more focused. These developments support a more stable and resilient economic outlook. This confidence is also reflected in market performance, with Kuwait's local index rising over 25% this year, signalling strong investor belief in the reform path.'

He added: "Our markets remain cyclical, and opportunities often arise during periods of volatility, which is why disciplined liquidity and risk management are essential. Regionally, we are confident in the prospects of the Saudi market as we expand our presence there, and we remain optimistic about Kuwait's outlook. The country benefits from real opportunities and a strong capital market, supported by viable projects, low public debt, and high lending capacity in the banking sector. Looking ahead, Kuwait is set to deploy nearly KD 40 billion in housing, logistics, energy, and oil and gas over the next 5 to 10 years. Investment that carries a meaningful multiplier effect across the broader economy. Combined with ongoing governance, regulatory, and fiscal reforms, and investments in housing, logistics, infrastructure, oil, and technology, Kuwait is laying the groundwork for sustainable returns and the development of new sectors and businesses. With our diversified capabilities, deep expertise, and trusted investment platform, Markaz is well positioned to help clients navigate change with confidence and seize opportunities across Kuwait, the region, and global markets.'

Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director of Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, added: "At Markaz, we believe that informed decision-making begins with clarity. Clarity in understanding market shifts, opportunities, and risks. As a wealth partner, our role is to translate these insights into solutions that support individuals, families, and long-term wealth plans. The discussions today reinforce the importance of solid strategies and a forward-looking approach, and we remain committed to empowering our clients with the perspective and tools needed to navigate the years ahead."

### **Global Market Overview**

The seminar opened with a presentation by Giovanni Leonardo, CFA, Head of Investment Management and Executive Board Member at Schroders, who shared an outlook on global economic trends for 2026. His session addressed interest-rate expectations, global growth, inflation rates, shifting capital flows, and the accelerating influence of technology and AI across markets.

Leonardo stated: "As 2026 approaches, on the broader economic trends, we stay constructive on equities, supported by rising real wages, resilient earnings, and cooling—if still imperfect—inflation. In a world of steady growth and markets that have already priced in much of the optimism, we remain neutral on fixed income, favouring shorter maturities and leaning toward government bonds as tight corporate spreads leave little margin for error. After taking profits on gold, we're underweight alternatives for now, though gold remains an important hedge in portfolios, and we continue to see long-term value in private markets and real estate as we look for the right moment to rebuild broader alternatives exposure."

**GCC & Kuwait Market Perspectives** Moderated by Deena Refai, Executive Vice President, Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, a panel discussion titled "Opportunities in Equities, Real Estate, and Fixed Income" featured a panel of senior Markaz specialists who examined key themes across regional equities, real estate, and fixed income. Markaz experts provided an in-depth overview of the economic landscape across the GCC, noting the continued impact of reforms, fiscal stability, and long-term development programs on investment activity. Discussions highlighted how government-led diversification efforts, particularly in housing, logistics, industrial capacity, and technology infrastructure, continue to support sectors' resilience and attract both regional and international capi-

Rasha Othman, Executive Vice President, Investment Banking (Capital Markets & Fixed Income) at Markaz, said: "Fixed-income markets delivered positive performance in 2025, supported by interest rate cuts and a broad rally in bond prices. The GCC fixed-income index has returned approximately 9% year-to-date. GCC governments, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman, continue to deepen their debt capital markets as part of broader financing diversification efforts, with ongoing sovereign issuances contributing to a more mature and well-defined yield curve. Looking ahead to 2026, we expect further cuts in interest rates. GCC bonds remain highly attractive, offering yields above those available in U.S. and European markets, alongside growing regional momentum in green bonds, which is drawing increased foreign investor interest. We believe that market volatility will also present meaningful investment opportunities. Despite the challenges, Markaz remains committed to identifying resilient opportunities through effective asset allocation and selecting low-risk sectors capable of performing across market cycles.'

Milad Elia, Executive Vice President of MENA Real Estate, at Markaz said: "Real estate opportunities are emerging in Kuwait housing sector as well as in warehousing in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, driven by infrastructure investments and structural changes. Another theme for the coming few years, for institutional investors and family offices with large real estate portfolios, is to structure these portfolios to future proof them and unlock value through restructuring and separating the role of investor from Asset Management. Noting that asset managers create value by selecting high-quality assets, enhancing leasing and collection performance, and managing operations efficiently through on the ground knowledge and the use of modern technologies; all of which represent key strengths of Markaz.

Lisa Âmin, Head of European Real Estate - Business Developmentat Markaz said: "Global real estate is entering a more selective phase of the cycle, where rigorous underwriting and strong operating partners are essential. In the US, and across key European markets, long-term demand in logistics, housing, and specialized assets remains supported by structural trends and constrained supply. As markets recalibrate, we see targeted opportunities in resilient assets that can deliver stable, cycle-aware performance

Mohammed Al-Abdulkader, Senior Vice President of MENA Equities at Markazsaid: "GCC equity markets continue to benefit from structural growth drivers supported by demographic demand, regulatory reforms, stable liquidity levels, large-scale development projects, and housing and logistics activity. These factors provide greater visibility across several sectors, most notably finance, construction, industrials, real estate, and logistics. They are also expected to strengthen partnerships and alliances with regional and international companies involved in delivering the country's major projects. With fundamentals improving, we see promising selective opportunities for long-term investors within these sectors.

Abdulaziz Alhajeri, Senior Analyst in International Real Estate at Markaz, delivered a focused overview of the global real estate cycle, highlighting where major markets stand today and how that positioning influences returns, risk, and allocation decisions. His presentation emphasized the importance of understanding where we are in the cycle and identifying opportunities that emerge as markets adjust, particularly in segments supported by structural demand and long-term fundamentals

Kashish Tandon, CFA, Executive Vice President, Investment Advisory,

at Markaz, moderated a panel titled "Private Markets — The New Frontier for Growth", which featured experts from Blackstone, BlackRock, Goldman Sachs, and Macquarie. The panelists discussed growth opportunities in private markets and private credit, noting the asset class's expanding role in diversi-

Andrew Park, Managing Director, Blackstone Credit and Insurance (BXCI), New York said: "Allocating to private markets is now becoming a core portfolio decision for private wealth clients, as broader access and a greater opportunity set across asset classes (such as private credit, equity, infrastructure, and real estate) are driving adoption for eligible investors. At Blackstone, we are seeing this momentum globally – including in the Middle East, where access is expanding and client appetite is rising, reinforcing the case for integrating private markets.'

Hannah Wallis, Head of Multi-Alternatives Strategy, EMEA, BlackRock said: "We are entering a new era in which alternatives are no longer optional for clients, with the sector on track to exceed \$32T in AUM by the end of the decade. As we continue transforming access to institutional-quality private markets investments through new evergreen and semi-liquid solutions, we see future portfolios for wealth clients shifting beyond the traditional 60/40 to include up to 20% in private assets."

Victoria Baker-Duly, Managing Director, Private Equity Capital Raising EMEA, Goldman Sachs said:

"As deal activity rises in private markets, it will provide Limited Partners (LPs) with new data to evaluate manager track records as they allocate new capital to existing and potential new relationships. General Partners (GPs) will need to strategically identify growth areas that exceed overall economic growth, potentially shifting in geographic focus. The pursuit of higher-growth sectors is expected to continue. As data science, AI, and automation continue to mature and accelerate, there is greater potential for driving revenue growth and enhancing efficiency. Dealmaking activity is accelerating, with strong capital markets and lower financing costs as tailwinds. With valuations still high, the importance of value creation and operational resilience is paramount, with the strongest companies now able to attract interest from strategic buyers and public market investors.

İlias Benjelloun, Portfolio Strategy, Macquarie Infrastructure Fund, said: "Once previously reserved for institutional investors, the private market opportunity is increasingly becoming a necessity for sophisticated investors as they look to move away from the traditional stock and bond portfolio and towards genuine diversification and resilient returns. The future of portfolio construction lies in taking a diversified approach and harnessing the power of private markets. This is especially true for private infrastructure, which offers tangible downside protection, stable income, and direct exposure to the real economy - providing investors with exposure to physical assets and long-term contracts that can weather macroeconomic volatility, hedge against inflation, and deliver sustainable value over the long term."

From the investment-banking perspective, Ahmed Al-Falah, Managing Director, and Fay Al-Bader, Manager Advisory & M&A, presented key trends shaping corporate strategy in the region. Their session highlighted the rise in IPO activity, cross-border expansion, and the impact of technology, particularly AI, on business models, capital raising, and competitive positioning. They noted that the current transformations are creating significant opportunities for companies to develop more flexible and adaptive strategies, enhancing growth prospects and contributing to the creation of sustainable value in an environment that is evolving at an accelerated pace.

The seminar also featured a short video outlining Markaz's digital-transformation initiatives, including advancements in data infrastructure, AI-enabled insights, upgraded client-service platforms, CRM modernization, and enhanced internal systems, all part of a long-term roadmap to strengthen transparency, efficiency, and digital client experience.

Expertise and Legacy

Anchored in over 50 years of trust and financial leadership, the "Markaz Outlook 2026" seminar once again served as a key platform for knowledge exchange and forward-looking insights, underscoring Markaz's role as a trusted partner in wealth creation.

### In line with the Bank's comprehensive social responsibility and sustainability strategies

### Burgan Bank concludes a month-long series of initiatives & awareness activities throughout Nov

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Building on its role as a proactive corporate citizen and advocate for health and wellness, Burgan Bank has concluded its month-long Movember men's health awareness campaign. The Bank's engagement in the annual global Movember movement reflects its broader social responsibility agenda and its continued dedication to promoting healthy lifestyles across Kuwait, supporting the nation's development priorities under Kuwait Vision 2035.

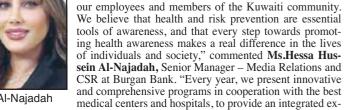
under Kuwait Vision 2035.

The initiative, which covered key topics including general men's health, diabetes, and prostate cancer, was designed to benefit multiple segments of society, starting with the Bank's employees and their families and extending to the wider community.

"In line with Burgan Bank's philosophy, 'Driven by You',our November activities reaffirm our

commitment

to the health of



perience of education, prevention, and early detection. We are proud of our role as a responsible institution that translates its values into tangible initiatives that positively impact the lives of community members and place public health among its top priorities."

At the turn of the month, Burgan Bank lit its headquarters in blue to signify its active participation in the global men's health awareness initiative "Movember", which included a series of social media educational videos, prepared in cooperation with doctors at Kuwait Hospital, about diabetes and the importance of adopting a healthy and balanced diet for children, employees, and members of society.

The awareness video series also highlighted vital information about prostate



A glimpse of the 'Driven by You' campaign.

cancerearly detection and prevention.In addition,a dedicated awareness videowas also published, highlighting the story of a child who began experiencing early symptoms of diabetes, the content showcases his daily journey to inspire other children and to reinforce the importance of the family's commitments to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

On World Diabetes Day, Burgan Bank organized a one-day on-ground diabetes awareness activation at Souq Al-Mubarakiyah – one of Kuwait's most prominent heritage landmarks – in cooperation with Kuwait Hospital, under the slogan "Your Health Matters". The event included free medical and nutritional checkups and consultations for visitors, provided by the hospital's medical staff, to encourage community members to adopt a healthy and balanced lifestyle. During the event Burgan Bank representatives were keen to spread awareness among the community members about "Let's be Aware" campaign so they can be conscious about their banking rights and responsibilities and to avoid any fraud attempts.

In addition, Burgan Bank organized a special event for its employees focused on men's health at its headquarters, "Burgan Men's Open Day", which aimed to promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage employees to maintain a balance between their work and personal lives. The awareness event included general medical consultations and awareness sessions, with a particular emphasis on prostate cancer, under the slogan "Driven by You". The event was held in col-



Burgan Bank headquarters lit up in blue in support of the 'Movember' campaign.

laboration with a medical team from Amiri Hospital, one of Kuwait's leading hospitals, with which Burgan Bank is proud to partner on such initiatives. Moreover, the Bank hosted a fully equipped mobile clinic to encourage its employees to undergo free screenings in cooperation with IMAGS.

The Men's Open Day saw the participation of Kuwaiti small and mediumsized enterprises (SMEs) involved in various aspects of men's health and wellbeing, such as agriculture and landscaping, healthy nutrition, specialized medical centers, and medical clinics.

The initiatives spanning the month of November are part of Burgan Bank's ongoing commitment to supporting its employees' and the community's health and well-being, in addition to its year-round health initiatives. These effortsreaffirm the Bank's dedicated efforts to foster a healthy and balanced work environment and uphold its responsibility as a certified Great Place to Work®. It further cements the Bank's commitment to fulfilling its mission of being an employer of choice and an active contributor to community's comprehensive sustainable development.

# ABK organizes an exclusive gathering for female clients

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: As part of its ongoing commitment to engaging with its female clients year-round and organizing exclusive events tailored to them, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) hosted a series of special gatherings for its female clients at

the Boucheron jew-

elry boutique. The

events offered at-

tendees a unique

opportunity to ex-

plore the brand's

tions while benefit-

ing from exclusive

purchase discounts,

reflecting the Bank's

distinctive

collec-



Johair Marafi ing their needs to the highest standards in line with its customer-centric banking vision.

The events were attended by **Johair Marafi**, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, alongside a number of female ABK staff members who provided attendees with an overview of the Bank's diverse products, solutions, and lifestyle-focused offers designed to meet the evolving expectations of clients in the local market.

Commenting on the occasion Marafi said, "We were keen to ensure that this event delivered an exceptional experience that celebrates women's taste, while reiterating that our objective goes beyond providing banking services alone. We strive to create exclusive platforms that offer our clients opportunities for connection and inspiration. This event once again reaffirms

our commitment to delivering personalized care and attention to every client, and to positioning the Bank not merely as a financial institution, but as a true partner in every aspect of excellence our clients aspire to."

Marafi further noted that the event underscored ABK's focus on ensuring the highest levels of comfort for its female clients, enabling each attendee to enjoy a personalized and distinctive experience. She highlighted that the occasion served as a celebration of their unique personalities and refined tastes, bringing together the luxury of fine jewelry with the quality of ABK's banking services. She added, "We recognize the strong in-

she added, we recognize the strong interest in fashion and luxury jewelry within the Kuwaiti market. Accordingly, our collaboration aimed to offer our clients insight into the brand's rich heritage as one of the world's leading jewelry houses, in addition to showcasing its latest designs available in Kuwait. The partnership also enabled clients to benefit from exclusive discounts and offers when completing purchases using our cards and tailored banking solutions."

Marafi concluded by affirming that such events represent an important step toward further strengthening relationships with ABK's female clients and expressing appreciation for their continued trust and loyalty. She added that hosting these events supports the Bank's efforts to better understand client needs, introduce suitable offers, and forge additional partnerships within the local market. She also indicated that the coming period will witness more exclusive events and distinctive offers aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction and attracting new clients to the Bank's continuously growing family.



Group photo

### **Committed to providing a seamless customer experience**

# NBK launches new updates on the Mobile Banking App

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: As part of its commitment to placing customers at the heart of its operations, National Bank of Kuwait launched new updates and enhancements on the NBK Mobile Banking App that aim to facilitate customer experience, provide better control, and ensure flexibility and convenience as they manage their finances digitally.

The latest NBK Mobile Banking App updates offer customers major benefits that allow them to navigate and manage their finances anywhere and at any time, including:

### Start your investment journey

Watani Investment Company (NBK Invest), the investment arm of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) Group, announced the launch of enhanced digital investment features within the NBK Mobile Banking App, offering clients a seamless and integrated investment experience. The new update introduces a dedicated investment dashboard that enables users to easily view available investment products, subscribe to funds, and monitor their portfolio directly through the app.

This enhancement makes the process of opening accounts for NBK Invest's comprehensive range of investment solutions clear and convenient, allowing access to a range of investment solutions, including Money Market Funds, Brokerage Services, Guided Investments, and Equity and Bond Funds. The initiative reflects NBK Group's ongoing commitment to delivering innovative digital solutions that enhance accessibility, convenience, and engagement, empowering clients to manage their wealth securely through the NBK Mobile App.

### **Apply for International Mortgages**

NBK now offers customers the convenience of applying for international mortgages through the Mobile Banking App.

This service allows eligible customers to register their interest to buy property outside Kuwait in locations such as the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Germany, Portugal and UAE by submitting their request through the App

To do so, eligible customers can apply in a matter of minutes, providing our valued clients with a quick and slick digital service to



Mr. Mohammad Al-Dakhil

Al-Dakhil

■ NBK is keen on demonstrating its digital excellence and enriching its customers' banking experience with innovative products and services.

fulfil their international property ambitions.

#### Topping up Prepaid Cards easily Using K-net

Another great feature the new updates include is loading up Prepaid Cards using K-net payment gateway, and it can be done very easily, whether through the NBK Mobile Banking App dashboard or card details screen.

To do so, customers should simply tap on the quick action button under the card titled: "Load", which will take them to the "Loading Options" screen to choose which method of loading they desire.

Another channel customers can load their prepaid cards with is K-net, by inputting the desired amount for loading the card, after which the K-Net portal will open to add the debit card details. Once complete, a "success" screen will display on the NBK Mobile Banking App.

### NBK Mobile Transfers

This service allows NBK Mobile Banking App users to send or receive money instantly to other NBK customers by making their mobile number visible on the app and making the transaction without the need to provide their NBK account number. By having this option, customers can enjoy processing their transfer transactions in seconds.

This service will also allow customers to pay their friends back for lunch or dinner, for instance, or even collect money from a group of friends and family for a gift on social and personal occasions.

Commenting on these updates and enhance-

ments, Mr. Mohammad Al-Dakhil, AVP – Head of Digital Banking Channels at NBK, said: "We are continuously upgrading the NBK Mobile Banking App experience by introducing new features that reflect our commitment to delivering smart, convenient, and fast digital banking experience. With these ongoing enhancements, we aim to enable our customers to manage their finances and transactions with great ease and flexibility".

Additionally, Al-Dakhil emphasized that the increasing customer interest in using the NBK Mobile Banking App has contributed to increased penetration and customer engagement with its services, which enhanced its position as the go-to solution for daily banking services.

Finally, Al-Dakhil highlighted that NBK is keen on demonstrating its digital excellence and enriching its customers' banking experience with innovative products and services.

With its Mobile Banking App, NBK aims to provide customers with a secure opportunity to manage their money easily and at any time. NBK Mobile Banking App allows customers to perform various banking transactions such as opening new accounts, viewing account transactions and credit cards, viewing the total NBK Miles Points and NBK Rewards Points, making Credit Card and digital bill payments, in addition to locating NBK branches, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), and Cash Deposit Machines in Kuwait, and updating personal information, among various other services.

The NBK Mobile Banking App is available for download on the App Store, Google Play Store, as well as Huawei App gallery.

In line with its dynamic CSR strategy and its proactive role in advancing the F&B industry in Kuwait

### talabat partners with KGCA to support the sustainable growth of Kuwait's culinary ecosystem

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Building on its active contribution to the sustainable growth of Kuwait's food and beverage (F&B) industry and its commitment to supporting national talents, talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, announced its strategic partnership with the non-profit company Kuwait Gastronomy and Culinary Arts (KGCA). This partnership aligns with talabat's strategic CSR program, which focuses on supporting local talents as well as home-grown businesses, especially within the fields of technology and culinary arts. It also contributes to achieving Kuwait Vision 2035 goal for sustainably diversifying the local economy.

"We are delighted to be part of a strategic partnership with the non-profit KGCA, through which we can expand our contribution to advancing Kuwait's F&B sector and preserving its distinct cuisine," said Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Communications, Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility at talabat Kuwait. "As active contributors to the sustainable development of the local food industry, in line with our CSR strategy, we remain committed to supporting all initiatives that aim to invest in Kuwait's national talents and qualifying them to lead the F&B and hospitality sectors."

He added: "Our partnership with KGCA means combining talabat's robust digital infrastructure and far-reaching network with the country's top chefs' comprehensive knowledge and expertise to develop the F&B sector – a melting pot which we're sure will have a prominent impact on raising the overall standards of culinary excellence in Kuwait." On his part, Chef Faisal Al Nashmi, President of KGCA, said: "It is a proud moment for all of us at KGCA to have the backing of influential industry leaders such as talabat, who share our vision for maturing and reinforcing Kuwait's culinary art sector. The indus-



Abdullah Al-Mansour with the KGCA board members.

try has been growing and evolving for many years, with more food festivals and concept restaurants popping up across the country, which sets the scene for a more focused effort to bring leading and aspiring culinary talents together in one place to learn from one another and preserve Kuwaiti cuisine through creativity and innovation."

Budding from Kuwait's evolving culinary art scene and growing F&B industry, KGCA, a non-profit culinary organization, was established by a group of the country's finest chefs – led by Chef Faisal Al-Nashmi alongside Chef Khaled Al-Baker, Jassem Al-Abouh, Chef Sadiqa Ismael, Chef Hanouf Al Balhan, Chef Ziad Al Obaid and Chef Alyazi Al Awadh. The organization, with the support of strategic partners including talabat, aims to foster a dynamic, innovative, and sustainable ecosystem for culinary artists as well as F&B businesses to preserve Kuwait's unique food heritage while adapting it to the modern food culture and popular taste.

At the core of KGCA's mission is advanced gastronomy education, including regular workshops that address the many facets of culinary arts and the F&B business. These workshops, in addition to yearlong initiatives and events, are designed to guarantee the sector's continuous growth in par with the highest industry standards, positioning Kuwait as a travel destination and investment hub for all food enthusiasts and prominent professionals.

In line with the strategic partnership, talabat is set to play a central role in shedding light on local talent, chefs, restaurants, and success stories in Kuwait, in addition to supporting KGCA in organizing community events and culinary activities that engage the public and industry.

It serves to note that talabat's efforts in developing Kuwait's F&B sector continues to cover more fronts, beginning with leveraging the most advanced technologies to offer customers and stakeholders a rewarding experience to guaranteeing that employees, partners, and relevant stakeholders thrive in an inclusive and fair work environment that rewards dedication and innovation. The company also upholds its commitment to supporting homegrown businesses and talents – an extension for its ongoing endorsement of Kuwait Vision 2035.

# Features



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025** 

### 'Zootopia 2' holds strong in second

# 'Five Nights at Freddy's 2' surges to No. 1 with massive \$63m debut

NEW YORK, Dec 8, (AP): "Five Nights at Freddy's" has powered up the box office once again. The sequel opened in 3,412 theaters in the U.S. and Canada this weekend and far surpassed expectations with \$63 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Seemingly immune to widely negative reviews, "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" notched the biggest opening ever for the weekend after Thanksgiving, which usually is a more muted buffet of leftovers. It's also the biggest opening of the year for a PG-13 rated movie and the second biggest horror opening, behind "The Conjuring: Last Rites." The movies and the game are about a family restaurant, Freddy Fazbear's Pizza, whose anthropomorphic robots turn murderous at night.

"There's been a lot of doom and gloom about the industry overall, but this movie helped drive the industry to the biggest first weekend post-Thanksgiving ever," said Jim Orr, who heads domestic distribution for Universal.

The first film, also a Blumhouse production, was a surprise hit two years ago. It opened to \$80 million in October 2023, despite also being available to stream on Peacock. Universal decided to open the sequel exclusively

in theaters. With a reported production price tag of only \$36 million, "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" is on its way to being another smash. It's another reminder of the potential massive upside of theatrical releases as many in the industry and out wonder what Netflix's acquisition of Warner Bros. will mean

for moviegoing.

The sequel, written by the game's creator Scott Cawthon, saw the return of cast members like Josh Hutcherson, Matthew Lillard and Elizabeth Lail as well as director Emma Tammi. Reviews were dismal, even worse than the first. Mark Kennedy, in his zero star review for The Associated Press, called it an "incoherent mess." But horror fans have been known to turn out for opening weekends regardless of reviews. This audience had a decidedly more positive take. According to PostTrak polling data, 70% of ticket buyers said they would "definitely" recommend "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" to their friends.

Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Comscore, said that the teen video gamer audience is sometimes underestimated and this weekend proves once again that given the right film, will come out to the movie theater for that communal expe-



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Toy Freddy, voiced by Kellen Goff, in a scene from 'Five Nights at Freddy's 2.' (AP)

rience with fellow fans.

It was also enough to push the more family-friendly "Zootopia 2" into second place in its second weekend in theaters, where it added \$43 million in North America. But the Disney film isn't hurting after its record Thanksgiving opening. With \$219 million from 52 territories internationally, including China, the running global total is an eye-popping \$915.8 million. It's officially pushed Walt Disney Studio releases over the \$5 billion mark globally - the only studio to do so this year.

"Wicked: For Good," also a Universal release, landed in third place in its third weekend with \$16.8 million from 3,985 theaters, brining its domestic total just shy of \$297 million.

Fourth place went to Gkids' anime "Jujutsu Kaisen: Execution" which opened to an estimated \$10.2 million, while Lionsgate's "Now You See Me: Now You Don't" rounded out the top five with \$3.5 million, pushing its running global total to \$210 million.

"Kill Bill: The Whole Bloody Af-

fair" was close behind with \$3.3 million from 1,198 theaters. Quentin Tarantino combined "Kill Bill: Vol. 1" and "Vol. 2" into a four hour and 35-minute epic (including a 15 minute intermission). The Lionsgate release got a rare A+ CinemaScore from an audience that was 72% male. According to the studio, most of the 70mm and 35mm showings were sold out. Due to the demand for the film prints, the studio is exploring an extended run. "Kill Bill" star Lucy Liu had a big weekend at New York's AMC Lincoln Square where the independent drama "Rosemead" made \$50,243 from one

A filmed version of the Tonywinning revival of "Merrily We Roll Along," starring Jonathan Groff, Daniel Radcliffe and Lindsay Mendez and released by Sony Pictures Classics, opened just outside of the top 10 with \$1.2 million from 1,084 screens.

The running annual domestic box office just this weekend surpassed \$8 billion. Since the pandemic, it's only surpassed \$9 billion once, in 2023, when "Barbie" topped the year. Prior to 2020, it would regularly hit \$11 bil-

"It's not impossible, but every movie is going to have to overperform in some way if we're going to get to the \$9 billion threshold," Dergarabedian said.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian

theaters, according to Comscore:
1. "Five Nights at Freddy's 2," \$63 million.

2. "Zootopia 2," \$43 million.

3. "Wicked: For Good," \$16.7 mil-

4. "Jujutsu Kasen: Execution," \$10.2 million.

5. "Now You See Me: Now You Don't," \$3.5 million.
6. "Kill Bill: The Whole Bloody Af-

fair," \$3.3 million.

7. "Eternity," \$2.7 million, 8. "Hamnet," \$2.3 million.

9. "Dhurandhar," \$1.9 million.

10. "Predator: Badlands," \$1.9 mil-

'A great epic writer'

### Krasznahorkai delivers a rare lecture in Stockholm

STOCKHOLM, Dec 8, (AP): Hungarian László Krasznahorkai, who won the Nobel Prize in literature for his surreal and anarchic novels that combine a bleak world view with mordant humor, gave a lecture in Stockholm in one of his rare public appearances.

The lecture was part of the Nobel week that is underway in Stockholm and Oslo with laureates holding news conferences and giving speeches before they are awarded the prestigious prizes.

Krasznahorkai's lecture, which he gave in Hungarian, ranged across topics such as old and new angels, human dignity, hope or the lack thereof, rebellion and his observations of a clochard - or tramp - on the Berlin subway.

He introduced his lecture, according to the English translation, by saying that "on receiving the 2025 Nobel Prize in Literature, I originally wished to share my thought with you on the subject of hope, but as my stores of hope have definitely come to an end, I will now speak about angels." As opposed to "the angels of old," the new an-

gels, Krasznahorkai said, "have no wings, but they

also have no message, none whatsoever. They are merely here among us in their simple street clothes, unrecognizable if they so wish. "They just stand there and look at us, they are searching for our gaze, and in this search there is a plea for us, to look into their eyes, so that we our-

selves can transmit a message to them, only that unfortunately, we have no message to give," the author writes in sad, yet poetic prose.

### **Sacrifices**

Expressing himself in his long, winding trademark sentences full of apocalypse but without full stops, he says it comes as a shock when he "detects the horrific story of these new angels that stand before me, the story that they are sacrifices, sacrifices: and not for us, but because of us, for every single one of us, because of every single one of us, angels without wings and angels without a message, and all the while knowing that there is war, war and only war, war in nature, war in society, and this war is being waged not only with weapons, not only with torture, not only with destruction: of course, this is one end of the scale, but this war proceeds at the opposite of the scale as well, because one single bad word is enough.'

When the Nobel judges announced the award for Krasznahorkai in October, they described the 71-year-old as "a great epic writer" whose work "is characterized by absurdism and grotesque ex-

"Krasznahorkai's work can be seen as part of a Central European tradition," the Nobel Prize organization said. "Important features are pessimism and apocalypse, but also humor and unpredictability.

His novels include "Satantango," "The Melancholy of Resistance," "War and War," "Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming" and "Herscht

Last year's winner was South Korean author Han Kang. The 2023 winner was Norwegian writer Jon Fosse, whose work includes a seven-book epic made up of a single sentence. Meanwhile, the director of the Norwegian No-

bel Institute, Kristian Harpviken, said Saturday that Venezuelan Peace Prize laureate and opposition leader María Corina Machado will come to Oslo this week to receive her award in person.

The 58-year-old, who won for her struggle to achieve a democratic transition in the South American nation, has been in hiding and has not been seen in public since January. Harpviken told Norwegian public broadcaster

NRK that Machado was expected to personally pick up the prize on Wednesday.

"I spoke with the Peace Prize winner last night, and she will come to Oslo," Harpviken said, according to NRK.

The Nobel Prize award ceremonies will be held Wednesday on the Dec. 10 anniversary of founder Alfred Nobel's death in 1896. The award ceremony for peace is in Oslo and the other ceremonies are in Stockholm.



Laszlo Krasznahorkai, Nobel Prize laureate in Literature, delivers his Nobel Prize lecture in Stockholm, Sweden. (AP)

### **Golden Globes Awards**

Globes are giving a best podcast trophy for the first time

### 'One Battle After Another' leads nominations



Golden Globes president Helen Hoenhe speaks during the nominations announcement for the 83rd Golden Globes at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

NEW YORK, Dec 8, (AP): Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another" scored a leading nine nominations to the 83rd Golden Globe Awards on Monday, adding to the Oscar favorite's momentum and handing Warner Bros. a victory amid Netflix's acquisition deal.

In nominations announced Monday from Beverly Hills, California, "One Battle After Another" landed nominations for its cast - Leonardo Di-Caprio, Teyana Taylor, Sean Penn and Chase Infiniti - along with nods for Anderson's screenplay and direction. It's competing in the Globes' category for comedy and musicals.

Close on its heels was Joachim Trier's "Sentimental Value," a Norwegian family drama about a filmmaking family. The Neon release's eight nominations included nods for four of its actors: Stellan Skarsgård, Renate Reinsve, Elle Fanning and Inga Ibsdotter Lilleaas.

The Globe nominations, a tattered but persistent rite in Hollywood, are coming on the heels of the a potentially seismic shift in entertainment. On Friday, Netflix struck a deal to buy Warner Bros. Discovery for \$72 billion. If approved, the deal would reshape Hollywood and put one of its most storied movie studios in the hands of the streaming giant.

Both companies are prominent in this year's awards season. Along with "One Battle After Another," Warner Bros. has "Sinners," Ryan Coogler's acclaimed vampire hit. It was nominated for seven awards by the Globes, including box office achievement, best actor for Michael B. Jordan and Coogler for best director.

Netflix's contenders include Noah Baumbach's "Jay Kelly" (which landed nods for George Clooney and Adam Sandler), Guillermo del Toro's "Frankenstein" (five nominations) and the streaming smash hit, "KPop Demon Hunters." Arguably the most-watched movie of the year, the three

nominations for "KPop Demon Hunters" included one for cinematic and box office achievement - an oddity for Netflix, which typically gives its films only small, limited theatrical runs but found a No. 1 box office weekend in singalong screenings for the animated film.

The two studios led all others in nominations across film and television on Monday. Netflix landed 35 nominations, boosted by its expansive film slate and television nominees like the British limited series "Adolescence" (five nominations). Warner Bros. had 31 nominations, including 15 from HBO Max for series such as "The White Lotus," the lead TV nominee with

The proposed deal for Warner Bros. has stoked concern throughout the industry that Netflix might devote one of the most theatricalfocused studios to streaming. The leading trade group for exhibitors has called the deal "an unprecedented threat." On Sunday, President Donald Trump said the market share created by the merger "could be a problem," and Paramount said Monday it was mounting a hostile bid for Warner Bros.

Yet the studio that triumphed on the movie side of the Globe nominations was Neon. The indie specialty film company has emerged as a dominant force in international releases, winning a string of Palme d'Or awards at the Cannes Film Festival. It earned 21 nominations Monday, including five of the six international film nominees.

That included four nominations for Jafar Panahi's "It Was Just an Accident," the acclaimed Iranian revenge drama. Panahi has often been imprisoned, put under house arrest or prohibited from leaving Iran by the Islamic Republic regime. Earlier this month, while traveling outside of Iran with the film, he was sentenced to a year in prison and a new two-year travel ban.

### Partial list of 2026 Golden Globe nominees

Nominees for the 2026 Golden Globe Awards have been announced. Here's a partial list of who's nominated for this year's awards, which will be held Jan. 11 at the Beverly Hilton. Nikki Glaser will host the ceremony.

"Frankenstein"; "Hamnet"; "It Was Just An Accident"; "The Secret Agent"; "Sentimental Value"; "Sinners."

"Blue Moon"; "Bugonia"; "Marty Supreme"; "No Other Choice";

"Nouvelle Vague"; "One Battle After Another."

"Avatar: Fire and Ash"; "F1"; "KPop Demon Hunters"; "Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning"; "Sinners"; "Weapons"; "Wicked: For Good"; "Zootopia 2." "It Was Just an Accident," France; "No Other Choice," South Ko-

rea; "The Secret Agent," Brazil; "Sentimental Value," Norway; "Sirât," Spain; "The Voice of Hind Rajab," Tunisia. "Arco"; "Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba Infinity Castle"; "Elio";

"KPop Demon Hunters"; Little Amélie or the Character of Rain"; "Zootopia 2." Paul Thomas Anderson, "One Battle After Another"; Ryan Coogler,

"Sinners"; Guillermo del Toro, "Frankenstein"; Jafar Panahi, "It Was Just an Accident"; Joachim Trier, "Sentimental Value"; Chloé Zhao, "Frankenstein"; "Sinners"; "One Battle After Another"; "Sirât";

"Hamnet"; "F1."

"The Diplomat"; "The Pitt"; "Pluribus"; "Severance"; "Slow Horses"; "The White Lotus." "Abbott Elementary"; "The Bear"; "Hacks"; "Nobody Wants This";

"Abbott Elementary; The Bear; "Hacks; "Nobody Wants This; "Only Murders in the Building"; "The Studio."
"Adolescence"; "All Her Fault"; "The Beast in Me"; "Black Mirror"; "The Girlfriend"; "Dying for Sex."
Bill Maher, "Is Anyone Else Seeing This? "; Brett Goldstein, "The Second Best Night of Your Life"; Kevin Hart, "Acting My Age"; Kumail Nanjiani, "Night Thoughts"; Ricky Gervais, "Mortality"; Sarah Silvermen "Pact Mortality"; Sarah Silvermen "Pact Mortality";

man, "PostMortem." "Armchair Expert with Dax Shepard"; "Call Her Daddy"; "Good Hang with Amy Poehler"; "The Mel Robbins Podcast"; "SmartLess ; "Up First from NPR."

### **Variety**

PARIS: Workers at the Louvre Museum voted Monday for strikes to protest their work conditions, a ticket-price hike for non-European visitors and security weaknesses that a brazen daylight theft of France's Crown Jewels highlighted in October.

In a letter announcing the strike action starting next Monday, which was addressed to France's culture minister and seen by The Associated Press, the CGT, CFDT and Sud unions asserted that "visiting the Louvre has become a real obstacle course" for the millions of people who come to admire its huge collections of art and artifacts.

The museum is in "crisis," with insufficient resources and "increasingly deteriorated working conditions," said

the unions' strike notice to Culture Minister Rachida Dati. "The theft of 19 October 2025 highlighted shortcomings in priorities that had long been reported," the unions

alleged. (AP) 

**LHASA:** A film depicting the developmental journey of Tsonyi, China's highest-altitude county in Xizang Autonomous Region, is scheduled for nationwide release on

Produced to mark the 60th founding anniversary of the autonomous region this year, the film named "Puruo Gangri" is jointly presented by the publicity departments of Xizang, Zhejiang Province and Nagqu City, of which Tsonyi County is under the jurisdiction.

The title refers to the Purog Kangri Glacier in the county, the thickest glacier on the Qinghai-Tibet Pla-

With an average altitude surpassing 5,000 meters, Tsonyi County covers nearly 120,000 square km within the Changtang National Nature Reserve. The area has only about 40 percent of the oxygen found at sea level. Winters can last up to 10 months, with temperatures plunging as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius. (Xinhua)

### **Heritage**

### Kuwaiti Sadu arts highlight shared cultural ties with Bahrain

# Kuwaiti heritage, Sadu weaving shine during Muharraq Nights event

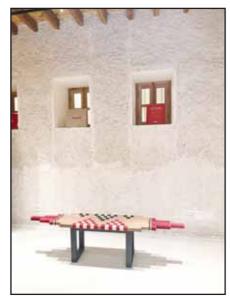


Muharraq Nights come alive with Kuwaiti Sadu weavings.

MANAMA, Dec 8, (KUNA): Kuwaiti heritage took center stage during the Muharraq Nights event, with the works of Kuwait's Al-Sadu Society prominently on display.

The society's contemporary interpretations of the traditional craft highlight the shared cultural heritage between Kuwait and Bah-

Running until December 30, the Muharraq Nights event offers visitors a rich showcase of



A dynamic piece that re-imagines traditional Sadu symbols in a contemporary style.

cultural experiences and artworks from various participants.

Sheikha Bibi Duaij Al-Sabah, Chairperson of the Kuwaiti Sadu Society, told KUNA that the association is committed to showcasing Kuwaiti works abroad, expressing pride that Kuwait is the first country to participate in Muharraq Nights, reflecting the strong cultural ties between Bahrain and Kuwait.

She praised the festival for celebrating Bah-



A special section showcasing the Kuwaiti Sadu Handicraft Society to visitors.

rain's rich heritage and its efforts to preserve cultural traditions for future generations, extending gratitude to the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities for its invitation and

Sheikha Bibi Al-Sabah highlighted that the exhibition features artistic and craft pieces inspired by traditional Sadu weaving patterns, presented in contemporary forms that blend innovation with authenticity.



The beauty of Kuwaiti heritage shines during the Muharraq Nights event.

The showcase also includes collaborative works by Kuwaiti and Bahraini designers, emphasizing the shared artistic vision and deep cultural history between the two na-

The opening was attended by several dignitaries, including Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities; Sheikha Altaf Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Honorary President of Sadu



Traditional craft is showcased during the event.

House; Chairperson Sheikha Bibi Duaij Al-Sabah; Counselor Yousef Al-Banwan, Charge d'Affaires at the Embassy of Kuwait in Manama; Salah Al-Malki, Bahrain's Ambassador to Kuwait; and other notable guests.

The exhibition, which opened Saturday evening, will continue until 30 December 2025, offering visitors a cultural experience that presents Sadu arts in a renewed, contemporary

### Exhibition highlights inclusion and talent participants

### **ASCC** hosts 'Me and the Sea' exhibition for people with special needs



Rawan Al-Qahtani, Educational Administration Officer at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center.

A wave of happiness and enthusiastic participation filled the exhibition's young attendees.



A selection of the artworks featured in the ex-

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8, (KUNA): The Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre (ASCC), in collaboration with the Kuwait Center for Autism, inaugurated the art exhibition "Me and the Sea" on Monday, featuring contributions from several centers supporting individuals with special needs.

Rawa Al-Qahtani, head of the Centre's educational administration, told KUNA that the partnership aligns with Kuwait Vision 2035, which emphasizes strengthening cultural identity, empowering cultural institutions, and promoting community-focused inclusion initiatives through interactive platforms that provide equal opportunities for all.



A glimpse of the artworks participating in the ex-

Running until December 13, the exhibition showcases 67 artworks created by various centers serving people with special needs. The collection includes paintings, drawings in diverse styles and colors, models, and handicrafts-all reflecting the participants' unique vision of the sea.

Al-Qahtani highlighted that the exhibition celebrates the creativity of children and youth, showcasing their artistic talents and abilities. She explained that the initiative aims to foster the inclusion of children and youth with special needs in cultural and artistic activities, offering them a platform to express their skills and share their achievements with the



A look at the pieces showcased in the exhibition.

The exhibition also supports Kuwait's broader efforts toward building an inclusive society, promoting participation, embracing diversity, and reinforcing the role of cultural institutions in nurturing creativity.

Additionally, Al-Qahtani noted that the event contributes to several Sustainable Development Goals. including inclusive and equitable quality education, reducing inequalities, and creating sustainable cultural and educational spaces. She emphasized that museums and cultural centers serve as informal learning platforms that help cultivate a more aware, accepting, and inclusive society.



KUNA photos Some of the artworks on display.

### **Event strengthens Kuwait-UAE cultural ties**

### **Emirates Falcons International** Cup concludes in Kuwait

KUWAIT, Dec 8, (KUNA): The first Emirates Falcons International Cup concluded on Sunday in Kuwait, crowning the tournament winners after a competition held from December 4. The event featured 200 falconers and 270 falcons, under the supervision of the UAE and International Falconry Federations.

The winners were honored by Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, UAE Minister of Sports and Vice President of the UAE National Olympic Committee Dr. Ahmed Al-Falasi, and Secretary-General of the UAE and International Federations for Falconry Rashed bin Markhan.

In his speech at the closing ceremony at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center, Minister Al-Mutairi emphasized that Kuwait hosting the inaugural championship reflects the deep-rooted and historic ties between Kuwait and the UAE, which continue to strengthen under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed.

He highlighted that the event demonstrates the closeness and cooperation between the two nations, seen in the organization, participation, and strong public attendance. Al-Mutairi also congratulated the winners across all categories and praised their outstanding performances, while expressing gratitude to Secretary-General Rashed bin Markhan, members of both federations, the UAE Ambassador to Kuwait and embassy staff, participants, and all teams and institutions involved.

Minister Al-Falasi echoed these remarks, noting that events like the championship strengthen Gulf brotherhood and cooperation. He also expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait for supporting sports initiatives, particularly heritage sports that highlight Gulf history and identity.

The championship winners were as follows: Overall Championship: 1st – Ahmed Abdullah, 2nd – Abdulaziz Al-

3rd - Abdulrahr ıan Al-Ajmi Pure Gyr Category: Abdulrahman Al-Ajmi – 1st place

Qarmousha Category: Anas Allam – 1st place

Gyr-Taba'a Category: Mohammad Falah – 1st place Farm-Bred Peregrine "Hurr" Category: Abdulrahman Al-Ajmi - 1st

Farm-Bred "Shaheen" Category: Abdulaziz Al-Shehab - 1st and 2nd

The Emirates Falcons International Cup marks a significant UAE initiative, promoting heritage sports and conveying messages of brotherhood, loyalty, and the enduring ties between Kuwait and the UAE.



Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi

### **Ukrainians protest against highlighting Russian culture**

# 'Lady Macbeth' draws roaring applause at La Scala

MILAN, Dec 8, (AP): The gala crowd at Milan's Teatro alla Scala cheered the season premiere of Dmitry Shostakovich's "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk" with a 12-minute standing ovation Sunday, as the storied theater synonymous with the Italian repertoire opened with a Russian melodrama for the second time since Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The crowd of luminaries fully embraced stage director Vasily Barkhatov's bold telling of merchant wife Katerina Izmajilova's fall into a murderous love triangle against the backdrop of Stalin's Soviet Union, right up to the jarring final scene with a Soviet truck barreling into a wedding party, and two characters perishing in burst of flames

U.S. soprano Sara Jakubiak was showered with carnations and cheers for her tireless portrayal of Katarina, the title character, over the 2 hour and 40 minute opera, and the audience cheered its appreciation for conductor Riccardo Chailly, making his last Dec. 7 gala premiere appearance as music director.

"No one ever expects this," Jakubiak said backstage of the enthusiastic reception. "I am just so happy."

While the 2022 gala season premier of "Boris Godunov" drew protests from the Ukraininan community for highlighting Russian culture in the wake of the invasion, the premiere of "Lady Macbeth"



People watch Dmitri Shostakovich's Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District on a giant screen inside Milan's Galleria arcade during the opening of La Scala Opera House's 2025-26 season in Milan, northern Italy. (AP)

inspired a flash mob demonstrating for peace.

Shostakovich's 1934 opera highlights the condition of women in Stalin's Soviet Union, and was blacklisted just days after the communist leader saw a performance in 1936, the threshold year of his campaign of political repression known as the Great Purge.

A dozen activists from a liberal Italian party held up Ukrainian and European flags in a quiet demonstration removed from the La Scala hubub that aimed "to draw attention to the defense of liberty and European democracy, threatened today by (President Vladimir) Putin's Russia, and to

support the Ukrainian people."

Another, larger, demonstration of several dozen people in front of city hall called for freedom for the Palestinians and an end to colonialism, but was kept far from arriving dignitaries by a police cordon. Demonstrations against war and other forms of inequality have long countered the glitz of the gala season premiere that draws leading figures from culture, business and politics dressed in their finest frocks.

Culture Minister Alessandro Giuli was joined by the senator for life Liliana Segre, a Holocaust survivor, and Milan Mayor Giuseppe Sala in the royal box. Italian pop stars Mahmoud and Achille Lauro were also among those in atten-

Chailly began working with Barkhatov on the title about two years ago, following the success "Boris Godunov," which was attended by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, both of whom separated Russia's politicians from its culture.

But outside the Godunov premiere, Ukrainians protested against highlighting Russian culture during a war rooted in the denial of a unique Ukrainian culture.

Chailly called the staging of Shostakovich's "Lady Macbeth" at La Scala for just the fourth time "a must."



Winners of the first Emirates Falcons International Cup.



Officials stand up for the Kuwaiti national anthem.

### To advance health innovation and support diabetes research

# Dasman Diabetes Institute and Zain Kuwait sign MoU

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Dasman Diabetes Institute, a center of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Zain Kuwait to enhance cooperation in innovation, science, and technology related to diabetes. This comes as part of supporting national efforts aimed at improving quality of life and reducing health risks through advanced digital solutions.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Faisal Hamed Al-Refaei, Acting Director General of Dasman Diabetes Institute, and Nawaf Al-Gharabally, CEO of Zain Kuwait. Both parties emphasized that this partnership aims to support innovation in healthcare through launching research and technology initiatives based on data and scientific analytics, in collaboration with global partners such as Huawei and Harvard University.

Dr. Faisal Al-Refaei stated that this MoU includes implementing a pilot project to develop digital solutions for people with diabetes by providing smart devices from Huawei to measure vital indicators, support preventive care, and develop a secure digital health platform to manage and analyze data under the full supervision of Dasman Diabetes Institute and in accordance with the



Dr. Faisal Al-Refaei and Nawaf Al-Gharabally after signing the MoU.

#### Dr. Faisal Al-Refaei:

- Developing a secure digital health platform to manage and analyze data under Dasman's supervision, supported by Zain's technology
- Nawaf Al-Gharabally: We seek to embed healthier lifestyles and enable smarter, connected health experiences through digital innovation

highest privacy standards. The partnership also aims to strengthen joint scientific research between Dasman Diabetes Institute, Kuwait University, and one of Harvard University's laboratories, with technology sup-

port from Zain.

Nawaf Al-Gharabally said: "Our partnership with Dasman reflects our belief that purposeful collaboration can transform technology into tangible impact in people's



lives. By combining Zain's digital capabilities with Dasman's leading expertise in healthcare excellence, we aim to promote healthier lifestyles, strengthen preventive awareness, and help enable smarter, more connected health experiences in our community. This initiative is an extension of our purpose to build 'Lasting Connections, Better Lives,' and a translation of our commitment to supporting Kuwait's national development priorities through leveraging technological innovation."

This partnership further reinforces Dasman Diabetes Institute's leading efforts to support innovation and technology in ways that serve the community and enhance quality of life in the State of Kuwait.

This initiative also aligns with Zain's broader efforts to accelerate purpose-driven digital transformation across vital sectors, particularly healthcare and community wellbeing. Through advanced connectivity solutions, secure digital platforms, and scalable services, Zain is working to enable smarter service models, enhance public awareness, and support institutions and individuals with digital tools that help promote healthier, more informed lifestyles.

Zain continues to expand its ecosystem of strategic partnerships with leading national entities to deliver innovations that respond to diverse community needs. By leveraging next-generation network capabilities, data-driven solutions, and its growing portfolio of digital and enterprise services, Zain reaffirms its commitment to supporting the digital transformation journey and strengthening its role as a trusted partner for sustainable, high-impact initiatives that benefit individuals, society, and the economy alike.

### **Opening paths for new treatments**

### Scientists identify key cause of vascular cognitive impairment

MANHASSET, N.Y., Dec 8, (BUSINESS WIRE): Scientists at Northwell Health's Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research have uncovered a critical mechanism driving vascular cognitive impairment (VCI), the world's second most common form of dementia after Alzheimer's disease. Their findings pinpoint the dysregulation of vasoactive neuropeptides, or key regulators of blood-vessel tone, as the root cause of microvascular dysfunction in VCI. This discovery opens an entirely new frontier for developing both pharmacological and non-pharmacological thera-

Led by Chunyan Li, PhD, associate professor in the Institute of Bioelectronic Medicine at the Feinstein Institutes, and PhD student Willians Tambo of the Elmezzi Graduate School of Molecular Medicine, the research team employed extensive molecular profiling and behavioral testing in an animal model of chronic cerebral hypoperfusion (CCH), which mirrors the sustained reductions in brain blood flow seen in VCI patients. The team then evaluated two complementary interventions: administration of calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP), a powerful vasodilator, and activation of the natural diving reflex (or oxygen□conserving reflex). Both approaches successfully restored balanced neuropeptide signaling, prevented persistent narrowing of cerebral micro vessels and significantly improved memory and learning in their preclinical model.

"Vascular cognitive impairment is a widespread, devastating condition for which no effective treatments currently exist," said Dr. Li, the study's lead investigator. "By uncovering neuropeptide imbalance as the primary driver of microvascular damage, we've not only revealed VCI's underlying cause but also demonstrated two clear paths toward reversing it."

These findings recast long-held assumptions that oxidative stress and inflammation are the initial sparks of VCI. Instead, the research shows that impaired neuropeptide control and vessel constriction arise first, setting the stage for downstream amyloid deposition and tissue injury. This work repositions oxidative stress and inflammation as consequences, rather than catalysts, of impaired cerebral blood

Building on these insights, Dr. Li's team is now developing a novel bioelectronic therapy: noninvasive trigeminal nerve stimulation to elicit the diving reflex. Supported by the U.S. Department of Defense and prize funding from the 2023 Northwell Health Innovation Challenge, this approach is being tested in models of traumatic brain injury and ischemic stroke, two conditions that significantly increase the risk of

"There is an urgent need for deeper understanding and better treatment options for VCI and related neurological disorders," said Kevin J. Tracey, MD, president and CEO of the Feinstein Institutes and Karches Family Distinguished Chair in Medical Research. "Dr. Li and her colleagues have taken the crucial first step by showing how VCI begins, laying the groundwork for the next generation of targeted

therapies.' These results not only challenge prevailing theories about the origins of vascular dementia but also chart a clear course toward the first interventions designed to directly alter disease trajectory by restoring microvascular function and preserving cognitive integrity.

# **US** vaccine advisory committee recommends delaying hepatitis B shot for most newborns NEW YORK, Dec 8, (AP): A federal also noted there's no good evidence ing things up.'

Decision now up to parents and doctors

vaccine advisory committee voted on Friday to end the longstanding recommendation that all U.S. babies get the hepatitis B vaccine on the day they're born.

À loud chorus of medical and public health leaders decried the actions of the panel, whose current members were all appointed by U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. - a leading anti-vaccine activist before this year becoming the nation's top health official.

"This is the group that can't shoot straight," said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University vaccine expert who for decades has been involved with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and its workgroups.

Several medical societies and state health departments said they would continue to recommend them. While cies, the trade group AHIP, formerly people may have to check their poliknown as America's Health Insurance Plans, said its members still will cover the birth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine.

For decades, the government has advised that all babies be vaccinated against the liver infection right after birth. The shots are widely considered to be a public health success for preventing thousands of illnesses.

But Kennedy's advisory committee decided to recommend the birth dose only for babies whose mothers test positive, and in cases where the mom wasn't tested.

For other babies, it will be up to the parents and their doctors to decide if a birth dose is appropriate. The committee voted 8-3 to suggest that when a family elects to wait, then the vaccination series should begin when the child is 2 months old.

President Donald Trump posted a message late Friday calling the vote a very good decision.

The acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Jim O'Neill, is expected to decide later whether to accept the committee's recommendation.

Asked why the newly-appointed committee moved quickly to reexamine the recommendation, committee member Vicky Pebsworth on Thursday cited "pressure from stakeholder groups," without naming them.

Committee members said the risk of infection for most babies is very low and that earlier research that found the shots were safe for infants



The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices meets in Atlanta on Dec. 5, 2025 to consider changes in hepatitis B vaccine recommenda-

They also worried that in many cases, doctors and nurses don't have full conversations with parents about the pros and cons of the birth-dose vaccination.

The committee members voiced interest in hearing the input from public health and medical professionals, but chose to ignore the experts' repeated pleas to leave the recommendations

The committee gives advice to the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on how approved vaccines should be used. CDC directors almost always adopted the committee's recommendations, which were widely heeded by doctors and guide vaccination programs. But the agency currently has no director, leaving acting director O'Neill to de-

In June, Kennedy fired the entire 17-member panel earlier this year and replaced it with a group that includes several anti-vaccine voices.

Hepatitis B is a serious liver infection that, for most people, lasts less than six months. But for some, especially infants and children, it can become a long-lasting problem that can lead to liver failure, liver cancer and scarring called cirrhosis.

In adults, the virus is spread through sex or through sharing needles during injection drug use. But it can also be passed from an infected mother to a baby.

In 1991, the committee recommended an initial dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth. Experts say quick immunization is crucial to prevent infection from taking root. And, indeed, cases in children have plummeted.

Still, several members of Kennedy's committee voiced discomfort with vaccinating all newborns. They argued that past safety studies of the vaccine in newborns were limited and it's possible that larger, long-term studies could uncover a problem with the birth dose.

But two members said they saw no documented evidence of harm from the birth doses and suggested concern was based on speculation.

Three panel members asked about the scientific basis for saying that the first dose could be delayed for two months for many babies.

"This is unconscionable," said committee member Dr. Joseph Hibbeln, who repeatedly voiced opposition to the proposal during the sometimes-heated two-day meeting.

The committee's chair, Dr. Kirk Milhoan, said two months was chosen as a point where infants had matured beyond the neonatal stage. Hibbeln countered that there was no data presented that two months is an appropriate cut-off.

Dr. Cody Meissner also questioned a second proposal - which passed 6-4 - that said parents consider talking to pediatricians about blood tests meant to measure whether hep B shots have created protective antibodies.

Such testing is not standard pediatric practice after vaccination. Proponents said it could be a new way to see if fewer shots are adequate.

A CDC hepatitis expert, Adam Langer, said results could vary from child to child and would be an erratic way to assess if fewer doses work. He that three shots pose harm to kids. Meissner attacked the proposal,

saying the language "is kind of mak-

Health experts have noted Kennedy's hand-picked committee is focused on the pros and cons of shots for the individual getting vaccinated, and has turned away from seeing vaccinations as a way to stop the spread of preventable diseases among the

The second proposal "is right at the center of this paradox," said committee member Dr. Robert Malone.

Some observers criticized the meeting, noting recent changes in how they are conducted. CDC scientists no longer present vaccine safety and effectiveness data to the committee. Instead, people who have been prominent voices in anti-vaccine circles were given those slots.

The committee "is no longer a legitimate scientific body," said Elizabeth Jacobs, a member of Defend Public Health, an advocacy group or researchers and others that has opposed Trump administration health policies. She described the meeting this week as "an epidemiological crime scene."

Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy, a liver doctor who chairs the Senate health committee, called the committee's vote on the hepatitis B vaccine "a mistake."

"This makes America sicker," he said, in a post on social media.

The committee heard a 90-minute presentation from Aaron Siri, a lawyer who has worked with Kennedy on vaccine litigation. He ended by saying that he believes there should no ACIP vaccine recommendations at all.

In a lengthy response, Meissner said, "What you have said is a terrible, terrible distortion of all the facts." He ended by saying Siri should not have been invited.

The meeting's organizers said they invited Siri as well as a few vaccine researchers - who have been vocal defenders of immunizations - to discuss the vaccine schedule. They named two: Dr. Peter Hotez, who said he declined, and Dr. Paul Offit, who said he didn't remember being asked but would have declined anyway.

Hotez, of the Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, declined to present before the group "because ACIP appears to have shifted its mission away from science and evidencebased medicine," he said in an email to The Associated Press.

Feinstein Institutes photo Drs. Chunyan Li and Willians Tambo led the study

# New 'diphtheria outbreak' kills 50 children in Somalia

MOGADISHU, Dec 8, (Xinhua): Somalia's Ministry of Health and Human Services on Sunday confirmed that a new diphtheria outbreak has killed 50 children and infected about 1,000 others nationwide.

In a statement, the ministry said children aged 5 to 15 have been the most affected.

Responding to this "dangerous situation," the ministry has launched vaccine campaigns to control the disease, it said, adding that vaccination will begin on Dec. 15 and run for five days.

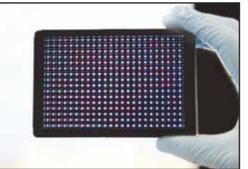
"All children, wherever they are, in villages, health facilities, and schools will be vaccinated", the ministry said, urging parents to bring their children to the designated sites to help contain what it described as a "killer disease." The warning comes amid a deteriorating humanitarian situation in Somalia, compounded by persistent conflict and climate shocks, including floods and droughts.

MELBOURNE, Dec. 8, (Xinhua): Scientists in Australia have produced a first-of-its-kind catalog of pediatric cancers, offering fresh clues for developing targeted immunotherapies for young patients.

The Children's Cancer Model Atlas (CCMA), based at the Hudson Institute of Medical Research in Australia, contains the world's largest collection of more than 400 high-risk pediatric cancer cell lines for AI-driven treatment testing and analysis, a media release of the Hudson Institute said

The CCMA is creating the pediatric cancer catalog, representing a detailed resource of high-potential immune targets in childhood cancers, to accelerate the discovery of new therapies and biomarkers for childhood cancers, the release said.

Childhood cancers lead to disease-related deaths and respond poorly to adult-style immunotherapies, and current therapies can affect children's



Scientists in Australia create childhood cancer

catalog to advance pediatric immunotherapy

Image of how well different drugs work to combat cancer cells.

growing bodies and have lasting side effects, it

Researchers analyzed over 200 high-risk pediatric cancer cell lines in the CCMA's collection to identify a crucial characteristic of each one,

known as the HLA (human leukocyte antigens) type and potential neoantigens it presents to the immune system, it added.

The HLA are proteins on the surface of cells that the immune system uses to distinguish between 'self' and 'non-self.' Using this information, we predicted which neoantigens each cancer model might produce and present," said the study's senior author Claire Xin Sun from the Hudson Institute and Australia's Monash University.

"Neoantigens are small, abnormal protein pieces formed when cancer cells mutate, and different HLA types can present different neoantigens to the immune system," Sun said, adding that knowing the HLA type helps to determine which neoantigens can actually be recognized.

Published in iScience, the study helps researchers identify which tumors have actionable antigens, which make them good candidates for immunotherapy to guide safer, more effective immunotherapies, the researchers said.

# OKC overpowers Jazz to extend remarkable start

Lakers edge 76ers behind LeBron's late heroics and Doncic's 31-point triple-double

SALT LAKE CITY, Dec 8, (AP): Chet Holmgren and Jalen Williams each scored 25 points and the defending champion Oklahoma City Thunder improved to 23-1 with their 15th straight victory, routing the Utah Jazz 131-101.

Holmgren added nine rebounds, and Williams had eight assists. Aaron Wiggins scored 19 points, while Branden Carlson had a season-high 13 points.

Oklahoma City shot 58% from the field and made 21 3-pointers. The Thunder scored 27 points off 17

Kyle Filipkowski led the Jazz with 21 points and 10 rebounds. Walter Clayton Jr. and Taylor Hendricks added 20 points apiece. Clayton had nine assists.

Both teams played without their leading scorers. Thunder star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was sidelined because of left elbow bursitis. Utah's Lauri Markkanen sat out with an undisclosed illness.

Oklahoma City raced out to a 13-1 lead before the Jazz scored their first basket 3 1/2 minutes in. Utah made it 18-9 on a layup from Keyonte George and then got buried under an avalanche of baskets from Carlson.

The second-year center dunked the ball and made three 3-pointers over five possessions to ignite a 25-7 run that made it 43-16 going into the



Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James. center, goes up to shoot as Philadel-phia 76ers' Jabari Walker, left, and Quentin Grimes, right, look on during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Philadelphia. (AP)

final minute of the first quarter. The Thunder ended up scoring 45 firstquarter points.

#### Lakers 112, 76ers 108

In Philadelphia, LeBron James hit a late go-ahead 3-pointer and scored 29 points, Luka Doncic had a tripledouble and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Philadelphia 76ers.

Joel Embiid, who otherwise had an awful shooting night for the 76ers, made an 18-footer that tied it at 105. James came right back down and hit a 3 with 1:12 left for the lead and added a 20-footer on the next possession to make it 110-105.

Doncic finished with 31 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists.

Tyrese Maxey led Philadelphia with 28 points. Embiid missed 17 of 21 shots and scored 16 points.

Doncic, the NBA scoring leader, missed the last two games as he traveled to Slovenia where his fiancee gave birth to their daughter. James sat out Friday night against Boston with sciatica, which kept him sidelined for the first 14 games this season, and left foot joint arthritis.

James reached 10 points in the

second quarter in his first game since the end of his streak of 1,297 double-digit scoring games when the NBA's career points leader finished with only eight Thursday night at

#### Warriors 123, Bulls 91

In Chicago, Brandin Podziemski scored 21 points off the bench, Jimmy Butler added 19 in his return to the lineup and the injury-depleted Golden State Warriors beat the Chicago Bulls to extend the longest active losing streak in the NBA.

The Bulls have lost seven in a row, their most since an eight-game skid in the 2019-20 season.

Quinten Post also scored 19 points

Golden State shot 22 of 47 from beyond the arc with seven players connecting from long range. Post and Podziemski each hit five 3s.

Josh Giddey scored 18 points and Matas Buzelis added 16 for the Bulls, who shot 36% from the field and were out-rebounded 51-38.

The Warriors held an opponent to under 100 points for a third straight game and limited Chicago to its fewest points in a game this season.

Butler started after missing two games (left knee), but Golden State remained without Stephen Curry, Draymond Green and Al Horford.



Memphis Grizzlies forward Cedric Coward (23) handles the ball against Portland Trail Blazers forward Deni Avdija, left, in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Memphis, Tenn. (AP)

Coach Steve Kerr said trio might return Friday against Minnesota.

### Nuggets 115, Hornets 106

In Charlotte, Jamal Murray scored 34 points, Nikola Jokic finished with 28 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds and the Denver Nuggets held on to defeat the Charlotte Hornets to extend their franchise record to road winning streak to 10 games.

Tim Hardaway Jr. had 14 points off the bench for the Nuggets (17-6), who are off to their best start in franchise history.

Miles Bridges finished with 24 points while Brandon Miller added 16 for the Hornets, who played without six players due to injuries including their top two point guards, La-Melo Ball and Collin Sexton. Rookie Liam McNeeley added a boost off the bench with a career-high 13 points for the Hornets, making 4 of 5 shots from 3-point range.

Murray, who had 52 points on 10 3-pointers last week's 135-120 win over Indiana, erupted for 23 points in the first quarter Sunday but the Nuggets still trailed 58-57 at halftime.

#### Celtics 121, Raptors 113

In Toronto, Jaylen Brown scored 30 points, Derrick White scored 14 of his 27 in the first quarter and the Boston Celtics beat Toronto, holding on late after blowing a 23-point lead in the second half.

Payton Pritchard scored 15 points and Anfernee Simons had 12 as the Celtics won their fifth straight and seventh of eight. Neemias Queta added 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Brandon Ingram scored 30 points and Scottie Barnes had 18 points and 11 rebounds but Toronto lost its third straight, all at home. The Raptors hadn't lost back-to-back home games this season before Friday's loss to Charlotte.

Boston led 87-64 after Pritchard's 3-pointer about 3 1/2 minutes into the third quarter. Toronto answered by outscoring the Celtics 34-10 over the next 10 minutes,

### Knicks 106, Magic 100

In New York, Jalen Brunson had 30 points and nine assists, Josh Hart added 17 points and 12 rebounds, and the New York Knicks beat the Orlando Magic.

OG Anunoby had 21 points and seven rebounds, and Mikal Bridges finished with 12 points, seven rebounds and six assists. The Knicks (16-7) improved to 13-1 at home, and defeated the Magic for the first time in three meetings, despite playing without center Karl-Anthony Towns (left calf tightness).

Desmond Bane had 16 points and six rebounds, and Anthony Black had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Magic (14-10), who lost star forward Franz Wagner in the first quarter due to a lower left leg injury.

Wagner, who leads Orlando with 23.4 points per game, had seven points in seven minutes but landed awkwardly after going up for a dunk after being fouled by Knicks center Ariel Hukporti.

#### **Grizzlies 119, Trail Blazers 96**

In Memphis, Santi Aldama scored 22 points, Jaylen Wells and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 17 each and the Memphis Grizzlies built a big first-half lead in a victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Jock Landale finished with 15 points to help Memphis win for the seventh time in nine games.

Jerami Grant led Portland with 21 points. Deni Avdija and Shaedon Sharpe had 17 points each. Avdija added seven rebounds and seven assists, but his streak of at least 25 points, five rebounds and five assists ended at five games.

Portland was without either of its top two centers. Donovan Clingan missed his second consecutive game with a left lower calf contusion, while Robert Williams III was a late scratch with an illness. That left 7-foot-2 rookie Yang Hansen, the 16th overall pick last summer, to start his first game of the season. The Chinese player had four points and five rebounds.

### **Reitan earns Masters spot**

# Matsuyama rallies to win Hero World Challenge for 2nd time Odermatt completes

NASSAU, Bahamas, Dec 8, (AP): Hideki Matsuyama holed out from the 10th fairway for eagle on his way to an 8-under 64 and stuffed his 9-iron to 2 feet on the 18th hole in a playoff to defeat Alex Noren and win the Hero World Challenge for the second time.

Noren also shot a 64, making an 18-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole in regulation to force a playoff. His 20-foot birdie putt on the first extra hole missed to the left.

Scottie Scheffler, going for a third straight title at Albany Golf Club, fell back on the par-5 11th when he hit driver off the fairway with a speck of mud on his golf ball. It led to a bogey and he never caught up. Scheffler shot 68 and tied for fourth. Sepp Straka also made bogey on the 11th to fall out of the lead. He also shot 68 to finish third.

Matsuyama won the first tournament of the year in Hawaii and the final tournament of his season in the Bahamas

Kristoffer Reitan of Norway held on over the back nine and closed with an even-par 72 to complete a wire-to-wire victory in the Nedbank Golf Challenge, his second European tour title of the year that will send

BRISBANE, Australia, Dec 8, (AP):

Brendon McCullum figured out Eng-

land's main problem after back-to-

back eight-wicket losses to Australia

in the Ashes: Overdoing it in training.

tests of the series to reclaim the old urn

- the symbol of the intense rivalry be-

tween England and its former colony

- the England coach wants his squad

to recharge and recover at one of Aus-

British broadcasters, McCullum spoke

about the hostile conditions Down Un-

der and said the biggest problem after

the heavy series-opening loss in Perth

was too much practice before the day-

like we overprepared, to be honest,"

he told Australia's 7 network Sun-

day night after the eight-wicket loss

at the Gabba. "We had five intense

training days and I think sometimes

when you're in the heat of the battle,

sometimes the most important thing

is to feel a little bit fresh and make

sure your (headspace) is completely

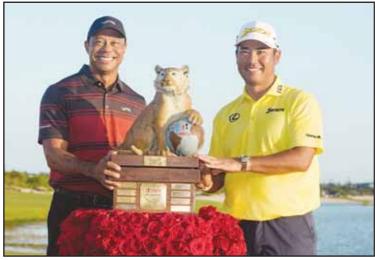
"Leading into this test match I felt

In interviews with Australian and

tralia's premier beach resorts.

night test in Brisbane.

So, needing to win the last three



Hideki Matsuyama, of Japan, right, poses for a photo with golf legend Tiger Woods after winning the Hero World Challenge PGA Tour at the Albany Golf Club, in New Providence, Bahamas. (AP)

McCullum demands mental reset after setbacks

England's Ashes struggles due to overtraining

him to the Masters for the first time. Reitan began the final round with

a five-shot lead, but he saw the lead shrink to a single stroke when he played the back nine without a birdie. He held his nerve against Jayden Schaper of South Africa (68) and Dan Bradbury of England (66) for a one-shot victory.

"I think the boys just need a few

days off. Need to change up the train-

ing methods a little bit. We'll let the

dust settle on what has been a pretty

Reitan, who earned a PGA Tour card for 2026 by finishing eighth in the Race to Dubai, also won the Soudal Open. His second victory moves him just outside the top 30 in the world ranking, assuring he will finish in the top 50 with one tournament left this year.

Colin Montgomerie set the tone

intense last couple of weeks and start

to plot and plan our way back into the

elaide, where Australia needs only a

The third test starts Dec. 17 in Ad-

in the leadoff singles matches and Bernhard Langer and Soren Kjeld-sen finished off a European tour victory in the Skechers World Champions Cup over the American and International teams.

Europe finished with 230 points over three days of nine-hole matches. The International team had 213.5 points, while the Americans managed 204.5 points as the defending champions.

Montgomerie, who never lost a singles match in his Ryder Cup career, earned 10.5 points in the opening match that allowed Europe to expand the lead it build after two days of nine-hole matches in modified alternate shot and better ball at Feather Sound.

Kjeldsen and Langer each won 12 points out of a possible 18 points in the last two singles matches.

Takashi Ogiso closed with a 5-under 65 to win the season-ending Golf Nippon Series JT Cup on the Japan Golf Tour. Kota Kaneko tied for sev-

enth to claim the tour's money title. Greg Owen lost a five-shot lead on the back and then birdied the 18th hole for a 7-under 65 and a one-shot victory in the MCB Mauritius Legends for his first European Legends Tour title.

draw to retain the Ashes.

too many catches.

or match situations.

looking forward.

Across the first two tests, England

has forfeited strong positions with in-

disciplined bowling or poor shot selec-

tion from batters attempting to score

needlessly quickly, and also dropped

The coaching staff has been criti-

cized for only organizing one tour

game in Australia to warm up ahead

of the series. Coaches and players have

been criticized by an increasing num-

ber of ex-international players for pur-

suing the attack-at-all-costs mentality

rather than adapting to the conditions

"The message from the captain, the message from myself: You can't

come to this country and start sulk-

ing and feeling sorry for yourself if

things haven't worked out," McCul-

lum said. "You can't have a glass

jaw when you tour Australia. You've

got to stand up and you've got to go

again. You've got to wear a few on

McCullum's method is to keep

Scheib wins GS, Shiffrin ties for 4th

# **Beaver Creek double**



Italy's Alex Vinatzer, left, Switzerland's Marco Odermatt, center, and Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen celebrate on the podium after a World Cup men's giant slalom skiing race in Beaver Creek, Colo. (AP)

BEAVER CREEK, Colo., Dec 8, (AP): Marco Odermatt of Switzerland cruised to a World Cup giant slalom win Sunday for his second victory on the Birds of Prey course in a four-day

After winning Thursday's down-hill, Odermatt found more speed through the tricky GS setup and finished in a combined time of 2 minutes, 20.59 seconds. He held off Alex Vinatzer of Italy by 0.23 seconds. Norwegian skier Henrik Kristoffersen finished third.

Odermatt got back on track in the GS after falling in the first run at Copper Mountain, Colorado, on Nov. 28. It ended a streak of eight straight World Cup podium finishes in the GS.

The snow at Beaver Creek always seems to bring out the best in Odermatt. He's finished in the top three on nine occasions, including five wins, at this hill. His first World Cup victory was in a super-G at Beaver Creek on Dec. 6, 2019.

For all the success he's had at the venue, though, Odermatt has struggled in the giant slalom at Birds of Prey. His best finish was 27th in the discipline at Beaver Creek - until Sunday

That may be why he let out a scream after he saw his winning time.

"It's very special," said Odermatt, who now has 28 World Cup wins in GS. "The giant slalom today was somehow missing on my portfolio. Yeah, I'm super happy.'

So, which win means more this weekend - the downhill or the GS?

"Those are always tough questions," Odermatt said. "I think I still have to go with the downhill because downhill is just something different.'

It was Vinatzer's fourth career World Cup podium and first in the GS. American racer River Radamus was 18th after the first run but moved up to sixth place with a strong final performance. His teammates, Ryder Sarchett (25th) and George Steffey (27th), also finished in the top 30.

The men's circuit moves to Val d'Isere, France, next weekend for a giant slalom and slalom.

Meanwhile, Julia Scheib of Austria used a strong final run to win a World Cup giant slalom Sunday, with American standout Mikaela Shiffrin finishing in a tie for fourth place.

Scheib, who was in second place after the opening run, made up ground in a hurry to finish with a combined time of 2 minutes, 13 seconds. She edged Sara Hector of Sweden by 0.57 seconds. First-run leader Alice Robinson of New Zealand had a miscue in her run and slipped to third place.

Shiffrin narrowly missed being on the podium as she wound up in a tie with Swiss racer Camille Rast. Both were 1.17 seconds behind Scheib.

The 30-year-old Shiffrin hasn't been on the giant slalom podium since suffering her scary crash in the discipline in November 2024 at Killington, Vermont. She sustained a puncture wound and severe damage to her oblique muscles. She also has been dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder in the

GS because of the crash. Shiffrin finished sixth in the event

the way in and you've got to head totest match between Australia and England in Brisbane. (AP)

England's captain Ben Stokes plays a shot during the second Ashes cricket

### Officials hail top-level play

# Inaugural West Asia Women's Volleyball reaches quarterfinals

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The quarterfinal lineup for the first-ever West Asia Women's Volleyball Clubs Championship, organized by Salwa Al-Sabah Club and running until December 13, has been finalized.

11:00 a.m.: Al-Fatah vs. Al-Qalamoun (Lebanon)

1:00 p.m.: Sharjah (UAE) vs. Al-Fayhaa (Saudi Arabia) 3:00 p.m.: Sanharib (Iraq) vs.

Al-Ula (Saudi Arabia) 5:00 p.m.: Salwa Al-Sabah Club vs. Al-Nasr (Jordan)

Khaled Al-Kaabi, Vice President of Qatar Club and head of the Qatari delegation, praised the high level of play from West Asian teams throughout the tournament, noting the strong competition from the preliminary round to the present stage. He also commended the outstanding organization and efforts of Club Chairperson Sheikha Naeema Al-Ahmad in ensuring the event's success.

Emirati commentator Jaafar Al-Fardan highlighted the steady progress of the women's teams and praised the work of the club's chairperson and organizing committees.

He noted that the championship's organization, from venue readiness to logistics, has impressed all attendees and reinforced Kuwait and Salwa Al-Sabah Club's reputation for hosting top-tier tournaments.

Al-Fardan expressed hope that the club will host continental-level tournaments in the future, following the success of this West Asia Championship.



Khaled Al-Kaabi, Vice President of Qatar Club.

Sheikh Sabah lauds Kuwait's dressage event

### **Kuwait successfully hosts FEI Dressage World Challenge**



Winners and officials share a joyous moment on the podium.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: The Dressage World Challenge, organized under the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI), concluded successfully at the Police Equestrian Club track in Subhan, showcasing high-level equestrian talent.

The judging panel was led by Irina McEnamy, a 5-star FEI-accredited international judge with extensive dressage experience, alongside Alison Abrahams and Beverly MacIvoy.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Mubarak, head of the Dressage Committee at the Kuwait

Equestrian Federation, praised the event, emphasizing Kuwait's success in hosting a prestigious international competition. He noted that such tournaments play a crucial role in developing dressage, a foundational discipline of equestrian sports.

Sheikh Sabah added that the FEI Dressage World Challenge series provides athletes the chance to compete internationally without leaving their home countries, while also supporting national federations in advancing various equestrian disciplines.

# Palestine and Syria overcome hurdles to reach quarterfinals



Historic moment captured: Palestine and Syria celebrate Arab Cup quarterfinal success together, sharing triumph after hardship.

### From suffering to joy

### By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Dec 8: The qualification of Palestine and Syria to the quarterfinals of the Arab Cup has brought a moment of shared joy not only to the players and fans of these teams but to all football enthusiasts.

Both nations have faced tremendous challenges in recent years. Beyond the hardships endured by Palestinians for over 75 years under Israeli occupation, the people of Gaza—

and Palestinians at large—have suffered immensely over the past two years. Similarly, Syrians have endured the consequences of a prolonged war for more than 13 years.

The teams' achievements are therefore wellearned, and the heartfelt congratulations exchanged after the matches reflect the players' shared sense of struggle and resilience. Although Qatar and Tunisia, strong favorites in

the group, were eliminated, the host nation's fans warmly applauded Palestine and Syria, celebrating the joy that comes to two nations after long years of hardship.

Commentator Mohammed Al-Otaibi remarked,

"These expressions of happiness send a message to anyone who sought to divide them. These are

peoples who have experienced the same suffering and tragedy." Syrian coach José Lana said, "We have proven our responsibility, and everyone feels pride and honor."

Syrian player Mohammed Al-Salakhdi added, "Representing Syria is a true honor. I am proud to be here, and my goal is to bring joy to our fans."

Palestinian coach Ihab Abu Jazar described his team's qualification as "historic and a major achievement, bringing happiness to Palestinian fans across the country and abroad."

He continued, "Given the challenges in Palestine, every competition is an important opportunity for the national team to maintain its presence. Our ambitions are high, and we are focused on the next match."

### **Troubled Liverpool goes to Inter**

# Real Madrid meets City in striker showdown

GENEVA, Dec 8, (AP): A Champions League clash between Kylian Mbappé and Erling Haaland will surely happen in the final one day.

On Wednesday, it is a routine league-phase game when Real Madrid hosts Manchester City and the most feared forwards in soccer cross paths for the third time in the competition since Haaland debuted in 2019.

Also this week, Liverpool brings its season of turmoil to San Siro against Inter Milan on Tuesday, when Bayern Munich hosts Sporting Lisbon. Paris Saint-Germain is at Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday.

In the sixth of the eight rounds, league-leading Arsenal can become the first team to reach the 16-point total that last season ensured advancing direct to the round of 16.

Arsenal is the only team with five straight wins on 15 points and needs to avoid defeat Tuesday at Club Brugge to reach the potential cutoff between eighth and ninth place in January.

Tuesday at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium likely won't be the last time they meet this season.

France will play Norway on June 26 at the New England Patriots' stadium in Foxborough, Mass., in one of the most anticipated games from the World Cup draw made Friday.



Bayern's Konrad Laimer, front left, talks to team mate Serge Gnabry, right, during a training session in Munich, Germany, ahead of the Champions League opening phase soccer match between FC Bayern and Sporting Lisbon. (AP)

There might also be more in the Champions League given that Real Madrid and Manchester City met in the knockout rounds in each of the past four seasons. They combined to win three titles in that time though Mbappé still seeks his first.

Mbappé vs. Haaland first happened in the round of 16 in February 2020. Newly arrived at Borussia Dortmund, Haaland scored two in the first leg against Paris Saint-Germain and revealed his "Zen" goal celebration, sitting down cross-legged as if meditating. Mbappé and PSG won in Paris to advance 3-2 on aggregate score.

Last season, in the knockout playoffs in February, Mbappé scored four times including a hat trick in the second leg as Madrid beat Man City in both games, despite Haaland's two goals in the first leg.

Mbappé's four goals at Olympiakos last month lifted him to be top scorer in the Champions League this season. He needs one more to reach 10 in a Champions League season for the first time during his decade in the competition.

Haaland has five so far, and already got into double figures in three Champions League campaigns. Madrid starts the week in fifth place

on 12 points, two ahead of City in ninth in the 36-team standings.

Harry Kane is just as prolific

Harry Kane is just as prolific for Bayern Munich this season. He has scored 28 in just 22 games for Bayern plus five in five World Cup qualifiers for England.

Kane has kept pace with Haaland's goal-a-game ratio in the Champions League and kept Bayern third in the standings, despite losing at Arsenal two weeks ago.

Ahead of Kane and Haaland is six-

Ahead of Kane and Haaland is sixgoal Victor Osimhen, who is fit to return with Galatasaray at Monaco on Tuesday. Both teams are in contention for a top-24 finish and places in the knockout stage starting in February.

Barcelona hosting Eintracht Frankfurt is a repeat of a remarkable show of force by visiting fans four seasons ago - and one the Spanish club has now worked to avoid.

### **Kok claims seventh 500m victory**

# Stolz wins 3 titles as Speed Skating World Cup wraps up in Heerenveen

HEERENVEEN, Netherlands, Dec. 8, (Xinhua): American speed skater Jordan Stolz dominated the ISU Speed Skating World Cup in Heerenveen with three gold medals and three track records.

Stolz, 21, stormed to victory in the men's

Stolz, 21, stormed to victory in the men's 500m in 33.90 seconds on Sunday, adding to the 1,000m and 1,500m golds he had already collected.

Taking three golds in three days, the American star felt his 500m race on the final day was not as strong as his 1,000m performance on Saturday.

mance on Saturday.

"I was a little bit tired," he said after the 500m competition. "It can be a little bit faster. On the other hand, I think this is my fastest time at sea level, so I'm happy about it."

Jenning de Boo of the Netherlands fin-

ished 0.20 seconds behind Stolz in the men's 500m but held off Japan's Wataru Morishige by the same margin to secure silver. Reigning Olympic champion Gao Tingyu placed 13th in 34.71, and his teammates Xue Zhiwen and Lian Ziwen were 12th and 15th

In the men's 1,500m, Stolz set a track record of 1:42.55. Dutch skater Kjeld Nuis

charged in the final laps to take silver in 1:43.31, overtaking China's Ning Zhongyan, who earned bronze in 1:43.87.

Ning's 1,500m bronze was his second podium of the season after taking silver in Salt Lake City last month. He placed sixth in the men's 1,500m in Calgary and now ranks fourth overall in the season's 1,500m standings. Ning also finished fifth in the 1,000m on Saturday in 1:07.70.

On the women's side, Dutch skater Femke Kok thrilled the home crowd with a 37.00-second win in the 500m, her seventh straight World Cup victory in the event. Her teammates Jutta Leerdam and Marrit Fledderus completed a Dutch sweep, while China's Tian Ruining finished 13th.

In the women's mass start, the Netherlands' Marijke Groenewoud claimed gold in 8:07.66, with China's Hou Jundan placing fifth in 8:08.68.

The Heerenveen meet was the third of five World Cup stops this season. The first four legs serve as qualifiers for the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, with the circuit continuing from Dec. 12 to 14 in Hamar, Norway.

### **Best of the Rest**

**Kuwait falls to Saudi Arabia:** Kuwait fell 1-0 to Saudi Arabia on Monday in their second match of the U-23 Gulf Cup football tournament. After a goalless first half, Abdullah Rdaif netted the winner for Saudi Arabia in the 61st minute, securing all three points. In the other Group A match, Qatar defeated Bahrain 1-0. The results pushed both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to six points each. (KUNA)

**Selby fends off Trump fightback:** Mark Selby resisted a determined comeback from Judd Trump to seal a 10-8 victory and secure his third UK Championship title on Sunday. Selby laid the foundations for his first Triple Crown title since 2021 and the 10th of his career with an impressive afternoon session.

He produced near-flawless snooker to race into a 5-0 lead, before defending champion Trump reduced the deficit to 6-2 by the end of the first session. When play resumed in the evening, Trump intensified the pressure, taking three of the next four frames, but Selby held on. A composed break of 91 moved him 8-5 in front, but several missed pots allowed world number one Trump to close to 8-7 with runs of 125 and 55. (Xinhua)

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**Ramos confirms Monterrey exit:** Veteran Spanish defender Sergio Ramos has parted ways with Monterrey after the club's defeat to Toluca in the semifinals of the Liga MX Apertura tournament.

The 2010 World Cup winner said he had decided not to seek an extension to the season-long deal he signed last February.

"Yes, it is my last match," the 39-year-old said after Monterrey and Toluca drew 3-3

"Yes, it is my last match," the 39-year-old said after Monterrey and Toluca drew 3-3 on aggregate, a result that saw the latter progress due to a superior regular-season record.





Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, centre left, speaks with teammate Dominik Szoboszlai as they take part in a training session in Liverpool, England. (AP)

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# DOMES

# **Kuwait takes on UAE as Arab Cup** quarterfinal spot hangs in balance

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, Dec 8: Kuwait goes into today's crucial Arab Cup Group C match against the UAE at 5:30 p.m. at Stadium 974 aiming for victory. At the same time, Egypt will face Jordan at Lusail Stadium in a game that could determine which teams advance to the quarterfinals.

Jordan has already secured its place in the next round, topping the group with 6 points, while Egypt sits second with 2 points. The UAE has 1 point, with Kuwait just behind on goal difference. The battle for the second qualifying spot is wide open, with Egypt needing a win regardless of the Kuwait-UAE result, while Kuwait and the UAE must rely on Egypt drawing or los-



Kuwait head coach Hélio Sousa

ing to Jordan to have a chance at progression.

Kuwait started the tournament with a 1-1 draw against Egypt, despite dominating the match, before falling 1-3 to Jordan last Saturday. The defeat sparked criticism of Portuguese coach Hélio Sousa, who had replaced all 11 starters from the Egypt match.

In preparation for today's game, the technical staff focused on correcting errors that led to the three goals against Jordan, improving team organization and positioning, particularly in the first half where the opposition controlled much of the play.

Sousa acknowledges that a win alone may not guarantee advancement but wants to showcase the progress the team has made under his leadership since September, as players gain confidence and display stronger performances.

Meanwhile, the UAE team shares the same objective. Coach Cosmin views today's match as an opportunity to deliver a strong performance, secure quarterfinal qualification, and avenge their 2-1 defeat to Kuwait in the last Gulf Cup 20 hosted in Kuwait in

### Kuwait's Winter Sports Club praises Al-Mutairi for sponsoring Level 4 Ice Hockey World Cup



Minister Al-Mutairi receives the Winter Games Club delegation.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 8: Fahid Al-Ajmi, Chairman of the Kuwaiti Winter Sports Club, expressed his gratitude to Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi for sponsoring the Level 4 Ice Hockey World Cup, which Kuwait will host next April under the supervision of the International Ice Hockey Fed-

Al-Ajmi told KUNA that the sponsorship provides significant support for the club and motivates its administrative and technical teams in their preparations for the tournament, which will feature national teams from Singapore, Armenia, Iran, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

He described the tournament as a major event offering

Kuwaiti youth a unique opportunity to compete with their peers from five countries in a sport that ranks as the third most popular worldwide.

Al-Ajmi noted that the club has already begun organizing the event, holding meetings with the IIHF and organizing committees to meet all technical and operational requirements and ensure the championship is delivered at the high-

He also extended thanks to the Public Authority for Sports for its continuous support and to all state entities that contributed to the tournament's success, emphasizing the club's commitment to showcasing Kuwait's excellence and organizational capabilities through a distinguished sporting event.

# Celta stuns Madrid at Bernabeu



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe controls the ball as Celta's Javi Rodriguez closes in during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Celta Vigo in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

### Barcelona extends league lead to 4

MADRID, Dec 8, (AP): Real Madrid had two players sent off in its 2-0 home defeat to Celta Vigo on Sunday and lost more ground to Spanish league leader Barcelona. Madrid conceded early in the second half and then saw red cards for Fran García and Álvaro Carreras in its first defeat of the season at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in all competitions. Unused Madrid substitute Endrick was also shown a red card for complaining. Williot Swedberg scored for the visitors with a nice flick from near the penalty spot in the 54th. Madrid lost García with a second yellow card in the 64th and Carreras in stoppage time.

Swedberg sealed Celta's victory in a breakaway shortly after Madrid was reduced to nine players. "We are all upset. It wasn't the game or the result that we wanted," Madrid coach Xabi Alonso said. "The referee's decisions threw us off balance. I didn't like the refereeing."

Madrid has won only two of its last seven matches across all tournaments. It next hosts Manchester City in the Champions League on Wednesday. Madrid's only other league loss this season was a heavy defeat at Atletico Madrid in September. It also lost at Liverpool in the league phase of the Champions League in November. Sunday's setback left Alonso's team four points behind Barcelona.

The Catalan club won 5-3 at Real Betis on Saturday. Madrid is only one point ahead of third-placed Villarreal, which has a game in hand. Vinícius Júnior and Kylian Mbappé both had good chances to equalize for Madrid but couldn't capitalize on their opportunities.

Madrid defender Éder Militão had to leave the game in the first half because of an injury. Celta moved to 10th place with its second win in three league games. Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga had an afternoon to forget in Girona's 3-0 loss to Elche at home.

The Argentine goalkeeper's mistakes led to two Elche goals, including one after he

passed the ball straight to an opponent inside the area while trying to send it to a defender. Earlier, he had failed to make a routine save on an angled shot by the near post. Gazzaniga also had a nightmare game in Girona's opening league match, when his blunders led to a goal and a penalty, resulting in his ejection, and a 3-1 loss to Rayo Vallecano. Girona, sitting inside the relegation zone in 18th place, has only one win in its last six games in all competitions. Elche, which hadn't won in seven consecutive league games, moved to

Roberto Fernández converted a first-half penalty kick as fifth-placed Espanyol beat Rayo Vallecano 1-0 for its third straight league win. Rayo, which was playing 12th, had to play with 10 men from the 64th minute due to a red card for Unai López. Espanyol's Tyrhys Dolan was sent off in the 87th. Rayo hasn't won in five consecutive league games. Hugo Duro scored three minutes into stoppage time as 15th-placed Valencia drew with 13th-placed Sevilla 1-1 at home. Sevilla, winless in three straight league games, went ahead with an own-goal by César Tárrega in

### Fluminense seals Libertadores berth

### Neymar faces knee surgery

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec 8, (Xinhua): Neymar said Sunday he will undergo surgery after helping Santos avoid relegation from Brazil's Serie A.

The 33-year-old revealed he had played the latter part of the season carrying an injury to his left knee, without providing details.

"I came for this, to try to help the best way I can," the former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain forward said after Santos' 3-0 home win over Cruzeiro, a result that left the club 12th in the standings, four points clear of the relegation zone.

These have been tough weeks for me. I thank those who were with me to lift me up. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have played these matches because of these injuries, this knee problem. I need to rest and then we will have this knee surgery.'

Neymar made just 19 of a possible 38 appearances for Santos this year and scored eight goals, having rejoined his boyhood club from Al Hilal in January.

His injury-riddled campaign followed more than a year out with a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament suffered in October 2023.

Brazil's all-time leading scorer is in a race against time to be ready for next year's FIFA World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

He has not represented his country for more than two years and Brazil manager Carlo Ancelotti has said he will only consider players who are fully fit and playing well for their clubs. 

Paulo Henrique Ganso and Thiago



In this file photo, Brazilian soccer player Neymar gives a news conference in Santos, Brazil. (AP)

Silva scored second-half goals as Fluminense secured a direct berth in next year's Copa Libertadores with a 2-0 home win over Bahia in Brazil's Serie.

Ganso put the hosts ahead on the final day of the season by intercepting an errant back-pass and chipping a shot over goalkeeper Ronaldo Strada. Silva doubled the lead eight min-

cross with a thumping close-range header. The result at the Maracana Stadium means Fluminense finished the season in fifth place with 64 points, four ahead

utes later, meeting Yeferson Soteldo's

of seventh-placed Bahia. Elsewhere, a Thaciano brace helped relegation-threatened Santos cruise to a 3-0 home win over Cruzeiro.

Thaciano struck twice in three firsthalf minutes before Joao Schmidt added a third goal on the hour as Santos rose to 12th in the 20-team standings, four points clear of the relegation zone. Cruzeiro remained third, despite securing only one victory from its last five

### **Best of the Rest**

Povet steps down as Jeonbuk coach: Gus Poyet stepped down as coach of Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors on Monday after leading the South Korean club to a league and cup double in his only season.

Jeonbuk said in a statement that the 58-year-old Poyet was unhappy about the November suspension and subsequent resignation of his assistant, Mauricio Taricco, for an alleged racist gesture during a K League

game.
"Coach Poyet felt dispirited and burdened by Taricco's resignation," the club statement said. "We tried to share our vision for the new season and vowed to help restore coach Taricco's dignity. In the end, we decided to respect coach Poyet's decision.

Taricco denies any racist intent. Poyet's resignation comes two days after Jeonbuk defeated Gwangju 2-1 after extra time in the Korean FA Cup final. The club previously secured its record 10th K League title with five games to spare

"I leave the team with regret," Poyet, who had one year left on his contract, said. "I am really grateful to the fans, and I'm sorry and saddened that I couldn't properly say goodbye." (AP)

Barton given a suspended sentence: Former Premier League soccer player Joey Barton has been given a suspended jail sentence after he was convicted of sending grossly offensive social media posts about two female pundits and a broadcaster who works on British television.

A jury at Liverpool Crown Court found last month that the 43-year-old Barton "crossed the line between free speech and a crime" in six posts he made on X about Lucy Ward and Eni Aluko, who are both former players, and TV presenter Jeremy Vine.

Barton was cleared of six other counts that he sent a grossly offensive electronic communication with intent to cause distress or anxiety from January to March 2024.

On Monday, Judge Andrew Menary KC sentenced Barton to six months in custody, suspended for 18 months.

Barton must also complete 200 hours of unpaid work in the community

and pay prosecution costs of £23,419 (\$31,206).

Two-year restraining orders were also issued against each of his victims which includes publishing any reference to them on any social media platform or broadcast medium. (AP)

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