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ZERO TOLERANCE AS HISTORIC CRACKDOWN TARGETS NARCOTICS NETWORKS

Kuwait's new drug law now active

Customs reinforces its role as first line of defense against drug smuggling

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Decree-Law No. 159/2025 on combating narcotic and psychotropic substances, which comes into effect on Monday, December 15, marks a major turning point in national legislation and reinforces the state's comprehensive war against drug traffickers and its efforts to save victims.

The new law, comprising 84 articles, reflects the state's balanced approach, combining strict deterrence of

criminal networks and the elimination of their funding sources through maximum penalties. It also emphasizes the humanitarian aspect by providing confidential and safe treatment for victims of addiction.

The law consolidates previous legislation on narcotics and psychotropic substances, unifying concepts, terminology, and legal provisions related to crimes, penalties, and procedures, thereby facilitating implementation and enhancing effectiveness.

It imposes harsher penalties for crimes involving the importation, smuggling, manufacturing, and cultivation of drugs, including the death penalty or life imprisonment in the most serious cases, along with substantial fines, while providing special protection for vulnerable groups.

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Openness is good, but it needs a welcoming smile at the border

COMMUNISM was prohibited in many Arab countries, and anyone adopting this ideology was often accused or scrutinized. Communist books were also banned.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, some countries amended their laws, while others continued to ban books on Marxist ideology, even though many proponents have abandoned the theory.

I mention this to draw a comparison with the current situation in our country regarding openness and some of its associated drawbacks.

Today in Kuwait, based on my own information, around 100,000 people are subject to security restrictions, most of which were imposed before the Iraqi invasion.

It is true that some of these security restrictions were imposed for legitimate reasons related to national security, while many others were issued during times of chaos, widespread favoritism, or personal disputes.

At that time, it was possible to deport someone for minor reasons or register a security restriction against them for issues as trivial as a traffic violation, which would not normally justify deportation. These cases were not criminal matters but minor violations.

Therefore, with the state's push for openness, the promotion of tourism, and the strategy announced by the Minister of Information and Culture, it is important to reconsider these security restrictions. Many affected individuals hold important profes-

sional positions, and some have investments and wish to return to Kuwait to participate in projects that contribute to the local economy.

The efforts of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef are widely commended for his sincere commitment to opening Kuwait to all. This aligns with the directives of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who always emphasizes the need to restore Kuwait's leading role. Achieving this objective requires addressing several issues, including these longstanding security restrictions.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet recently discussed the 11-kilometer "Cultural Trail" project, which aims to provide a cultural and tourist experience that reflects Kuwait's identity. The success of such a large-scale project depends on a thriving tourism sector.

No visitors will come to Kuwait if they face inappropriate treatment at the airport or other entry points. Staff at these locations represent the face of the country and its first impression. Therefore, it is important to ensure all visitors are welcomed

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Photo by Samer Shiger

Kuwait City skyline and streets engulfed in dense fog Sunday, shrouding the capital in an eerie, misty veil.

Downpours threaten southern Kuwait

Persistent rainfall expected through Friday

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): The acting Director of the Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, says Kuwait experienced light, scattered rains in some areas early Sunday morning, with varying intensity rainfall which is expected to continue until the early hours of Friday.

Al-Ali explained to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that weather maps, pressure distributions, and numerical models indicate the country will be influenced by a high-pressure system which will gradually recede from Monday. This will allow a surface low-pressure system from the southwest to advance gradually, coinciding with

another upper-atmosphere low-pressure system, accompanied by a relatively cold and humid air mass. The is expected to generate low and medium clouds, with some cumulonimbus clouds forming.

Scattered rains, sometimes accompanied by thunderstorms and ranging from light to moderate intensity, is expected on Monday and Tuesday. From Wednesday evening to Thursday, rainfall may be heavy at times, particularly in southern and coastal areas.

The rainy conditions are expected to continue until the early hours of Friday, with horizontal visibility likely to decrease during rainfall periods

and fog forming in some areas during the evening and early morning hours.

Winds will be southeast to variable, light to moderate in speed, occasionally intensifying. Maximum temperatures during this period are expected to range between 17 and 20 degrees Celsius, while minimum temperatures are forecasted between 12 and 15 degrees Celsius. Gradual improvement in weather conditions will begin on Friday morning.

In conclusion, Al-Ali urged the public to follow the weather bulletin via the Meteorological Department's official website, app, and social media platforms to stay updated on the latest weather developments.

Prosecution posts 88.8% completion

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: A statistical report issued by the Statistics and Research Department at the Ministry of Justice revealed that the Public Prosecution achieved high completion rates in October 2025, reflecting effective performance in handling incoming and pending cases, with an overall completion rate of 88.8 percent.

The report stated that the total number of cases received during the month reached 4,755, with commercial misdemeanor cases topping the list at 34.8 percent of the total, while drug addiction cases were at the bottom at 1.5 percent.

The number of cases processed reached 2,557, with commercial misdemeanors also accounting for the largest share at 38.6 percent, compared to 1.6 percent for drug addiction cases.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: An Amiri decree on Sunday appointed **Dr. Faisal Al-Adwani** and **Saadoun Bouarkhi** as assistant undersecretaries at the Ministry of Higher Education.

A separate decree named **Rabab Al-Ossaimi** as General Director of the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) with the rank of undersecretary.

Another one appointed Manal Al-Asfour as General Director of the Kuwait Municipality with the rank of undersecretary.

Moreover, a decree promoted Brigadier **Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib** to the rank of Major General, appointing him as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday expressed the State of Kuwait's condemnation of the terrorist attack against a joint Syrian-American security patrol near the Syrian town of **Tadmor (Palmyra)** on Saturday.

Several people were killed and wounded in the assault.

The Kuwaiti ministry affirmed in a statement that this criminal act constituted flagrant breach of the international law, threat to regional security and peace, renewing the robust rejection of violence, terrorism and criminal acts regardless of the motives and causes. (KUNA)



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Ambassador Tara Scheurwater speaks at the reception organized by the Embassy of Canada.

Canada's historic support recalled

Embassy of Canada hosts 60th anniversary of ties with Kuwait

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Assistant Foreign Minister for the Americas Nawaf Al-Ahmad affirmed that the celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Canada is a milestone, allowing a thorough review of the long history of friendship and cooperation, and an opportunity to open new horizons for partnership in various fields.

In his speech at the reception organized by the Embassy of Canada on the occasion, Al-Ahmad expressed Kuwait's deep appreciation for former Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Aliya Mawani for her tremendous efforts in strengthening bilateral relations, as well as incumbent Ambassador Tara Scheurwater for her dedication and contribution to the success of the anniversary events.

He also commended the Canadian Embassy team for organizing a series of events that reflected the strength of the ties between the two countries.

He revealed that the cultural and diplomatic initiatives witnessed last year, particularly the publication of the book, "Take Your Seat", through the collaboration of the Canadian

Embassy and the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embodied the spirit of mutual friendship and deep understanding between the two peoples.

He emphasized that Kuwait will never forget Canada's historic stance during the Iraqi invasion in 1990 and its vital role in the international coalition to liberate Kuwait, affirming that this support will remain etched in the national memory and will be appreciated forever.

He explained that Kuwaiti-Canadian relations are based on a shared vision of diplomacy, peaceful conflict resolution support for multilateral action, and fruitful cooperation, encompassing political and defense dialogue, academic exchange and economic partnerships.

He affirmed that Kuwait looks forward to a new phase of cooperation with Canada, stating that the 60th anniversary is not the end of an era, as it is rather a promising beginning for greater rapprochement and coordination in the coming years.

He hopes that the friendship between the two countries will continue to grow in a way that serves the interests of both nations.

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Kuwait civil aviation enforces leave freeze

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) issued an administrative directive to stop the approval of all types of leave requests in the integrated system of the Civil Service Commission (CSC), effective Monday.

Sources from the PACA told the newspaper that the Administrative and Financial Affairs Sector informed the departments at Kuwait International Airport that this step is part of preparations for the annual employee evaluation process as the current calendar year draws to a close. They explained that this measure is a follow up to the circular issued by the sector on Nov 10, about the monitoring of employee attendance.

Sources also clarified that the directive does not cover the leave requests for December, which will be approved until Jan 5, 2026, stressing no such requests will be accepted after this date.

Sources added that the circular emphasized the necessity of distributing it to all employees and adhering to its contents to ensure the smooth flow of work and the accuracy of the annual evaluation procedures. They said comments or inquiries should be made through official correspondence.

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Avian flu and BSE spark fresh import restrictions

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) has recommended imposing a ban on the import of all types of fresh, chilled, frozen, and processed poultry meat, its derivatives, products, and table eggs from the Portuguese province of Santarém, except for those sufficiently heat-treated to eliminate the virus, due to an outbreak of highly pathogenic Influenza A Virus (IAV), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, PAFN stated that It has also recommended a ban on the import of all types of fresh, chilled, frozen, and processed poultry meat, its derivatives, products, and table eggs from Mexico, except for those sufficiently heat-treated, due to an IAV outbreak.

Meanwhile, it has recommended lifting the ban on imports of all types of fresh, chilled, frozen, and processed poultry meat, its derivatives, products, and table eggs from the Portuguese region of Vendas Novas, following the end of the highly pathogenic IAV outbreak.

It also recommended lifting the ban on imports of all types of fresh, chilled, frozen, and processed poultry meat, along with poultry derivatives, products, and table eggs from China, Turkey, and Bangladesh, following the end of the highly pathogenic IAV outbreak. PAFN indicated that it has decided to allow the import of beef from countries previously subject to bans related to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), in accordance with the World Organisation for Animal Health's Terrestrial Animal Health Code, specifically Article 11.4.2 of Chapter 11.4.

8 Gulf Bank honors its outstanding employees in 2025



9 ABK launches new brand identity 'ABK Wealth Management,' unifying investment and private banking services

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:09	Asr	14:33
Sunrise ..	06:34	Maghrib ..	16:51
Zohr	11:43	Isha	18:13

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather cold and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times easterly wind, with speeds of 06-40 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 to cold and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Weather

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	20	15
Kuwait Airport	21	12
Abdaly	20	13
Bubyan	18	10
Jahra	22	14
Failaka Island	19	12
Salmiyah	22	17
Ahmadi	24	11
Nuwaisib	23	13

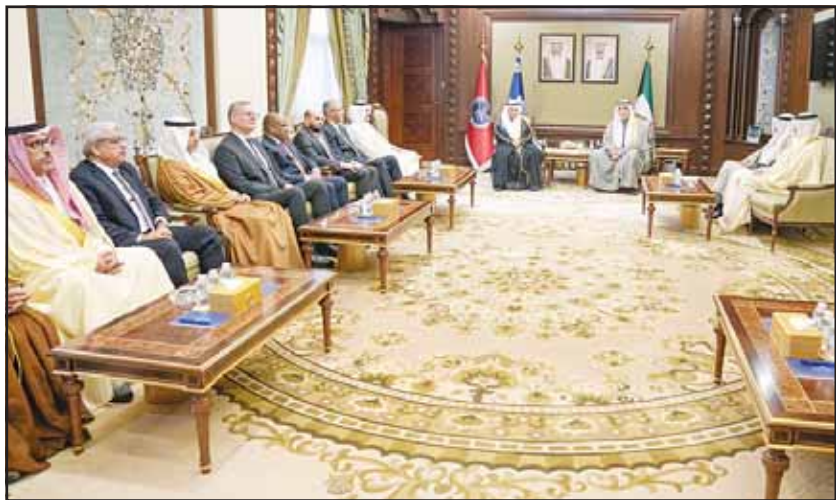
Amir meets Crown Prince, Acting PM

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received

Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Sunday Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.



PM Diwan photo
The Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah receives AEO member states officials.

Acting PM receives AEO member states officials

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): The Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, received on Sunday at Bayan Palace ministers and representatives of the oil and energy departments at the member states of the Arab Energy Organization (AEO).

Among his guests was the AEO Secretary General Jamal Al-Loughani.

The reception was held on the occasion of the currently held 115th session of the or-

ganization, attended by the State of Kuwait Oil Minister Tareq Al-Roumi.

Talks during the meeting dealt with the distinguished ties between the State of Kuwait and sisterly states with AEO membership, and means of boosting pan-Arab energy cooperation.

The session was attended by President of the Prime Minister's Diwan, Abdulaziz Al-Dakheel, and the Oil Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Nimr Fahad Al-Malek Al-Sabah.

Al-Zour water station back in operation after minor hitch

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The North Zour Company resumed operation of all water production units at Zour plant after repairing the malfunction that caused its shutdown last Wednesday, say sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

Sources explained that restarting the water production units at the plant, which produces 107 million gallons daily, will maintain a balance between water production and consumption rates, especially since several water production units at various ministry stations are still undergoing maintenance.

On the other hand, Undersecretary of the ministry Dr. Adel Al-Zamil inspected several ministry sites on Saturday to review the progress of work and assess their operational readiness.

During his visit to Al-Salam Emergency Center, Distribution Networks Sector Training Center, and the ministry's workshops

in Subhan, Al-Zamil underscored the importance of these facilities in providing services to citizens and employees, while stressing the need to adhere to the highest standards of quality and efficiency in carrying out tasks.

He praised the efforts of Kuwaitis working in different sectors of the ministry, urging them to continue working as a team to achieve the desired goals.

Meanwhile, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) extended the deadline for the submission of bids for the supply and installation of three main substations for the cloud data center project in different locations, along with their feeders and accessories, until Jan 6, 2026.

It is worth noting that once the bids are opened and the ministry obtains approval from the Board of Directors of CAPT to award the contract to the winning bidder, the ministry will refer the tender to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review, audit and approval prior to the implementation of the project.

Other Voices

The temporary triple farewell and Ali Lotfy

By Ahmad alsarraf

I have lived with them, through them, and for them for nearly eighty years. They have accompanied me throughout my life, rarely leaving my side in the thirty thousand days and nights that have passed in my life.

These three were often my solace, whether at home or traveling. They are the first things I think of, after hunger, after returning from a trip or a spa, after recovering from an illness, or immediately after finishing a diet, or in moments of joy or sorrow.

I have lived with sweets, bread, and rice all my life. Whenever I approach a buffet table, irrespective of whether I am hungry or full, my eyes are drawn inexorably to plates of rice in all its varieties, and to bread in its many forms.

I notice nothing else but containers of sweets and the incredible artistry of their preparation. They look so tempting that if I were to see them before a hot meal of rice or bread, I would be compelled to start with them as soon as I finish my main course.

A few days ago, I bid a farewell to this cherished trio of rice, bread, and sweets.

It is said that Ali Lotfy Mahmoud, better known as Ali Lotfy (1935-2018),



alsarraf

who served as Egypt's Prime Minister from September 1985 to November 1986, suddenly decided to impose a significant price increase on nuts, particularly those used in preparing the traditional Ramadan dish known as Yameesh, which is considered essential for the Ramadan fast.

In Egyptian dialect, Yameesh refers to a mix of dried fruits and nuts commonly served during Ramadan, such as dates, dried apricots, raisins, copra, and apricot paste (Qamar al-Din), along with hazelnuts, pistachios, almonds, and walnuts, which are also used in preparing various Ramadan drinks that are an essential part of Egyptian Ramadan tables.

Ali Lotfy's decision came at the worst possible moment, just as confectioners were preparing to import nuts. Merchants faced inevitable losses. How could Ramadan in Egypt be complete without sweets that rely on nuts?

Confectioners and nut suppliers were left with no choice but to accept the hefty price increase on imported ingredients. Some decided to respond to the Prime Minister in their own way.

They agreed to offer two large dishes of the popular dessert "Umm Ali" on their menus. The first dish, as usual, contained nuts and was priced at 100 Egyptian pounds. The second, much cheaper dish, included only bread, milk, and butter, without any nuts, flavorings, or other additions, and was humorously named "Umm Ali... Lotfy".

□ □ □

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'Border patrols role vital to protect homeland'

Minister briefed on new border security setup

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef conducted an inspection tour of the General Directorate of Land Border Security on Saturday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He was welcomed by the Head of the Border Security Affairs and Coast Guard, Major General Mujbel bin Shawq, along with several other senior security officials.

In an official state-



Sheikh Fahad

ment, the Ministry of Interior explained that during the tour, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef reviewed the workflow and security measures in place to protect and secure the land borders.

Sheikh Fahad was given a presentation on the development of the new border monitoring and protection system. He also received a detailed briefing on its operational mechanisms and the advanced technologies it employs. These systems enhance security preparedness, improve early detection capabilities, and ensure rapid response, thereby strengthening control across all border sectors and helping prevent infiltration, smuggling, and other

threats to Kuwait.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef also visited the Bahith border post, where he reviewed its readiness and security procedures. He was briefed on field operations and the post's role in strengthening border security, coordination, and response efficiency.

He praised the performance and efforts of the border security personnel, and their vital role in protecting the homeland and maintaining its security.

Sheikh Fahad affirmed the importance of continuously developing security systems, enhancing human resource efficiency, and utilizing modern technologies.

Historic 'Geopark' has big potential to spike tourism

Project site thousands of years old: KOC official

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said the land of Kuwait Geopark project was distinctive and the focus would be placed on how to turn it into a tourist attraction.

"Through this project we will turn challenges into opportunities for all stakeholders who will share success," Al-Mutairi, also Minister of State for Youth Affairs, said during an inspection tour of the site on Saturday.

The Ministry of Information supervises the project which is being implemented by Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) in collaboration with Touristic Enterprises Company and Kuwait Geosciences Society as well as other state bodies.

The minister said his meeting today with representatives of the government bodies and the private sector aimed to ensure integrated implementation of this very important initiative.

"The project, which reflects the distinctive geological, climatic and environmental characteristics of Kuwait and the Gulf states in general, envisages launching a variety



KUNA photo
Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi visits the site with KOC personnel.

of tourist-attractive activities," Al-Mutairi went on.

Kuwait Geopark is an ambitious initiative through which the Ministry of Information seeks to expand partnerships with government and non-government actors and open new horizons for the touristic system of the country, the minister added.

Meanwhile, KOC's Deputy CEO for Planning and Innova-

tion Mohammad Khalifa Al-AbdulJaleel said the site of Kuwait Geopark had exceptional historical and archaeological significance.

"It dates back to the Ubaid period (c. 5500-4900 BC) which is a prehistoric period featuring the rise of civilization and early human settlement in the West Asia and the Gulf region," Al-AbdulJaleel pointed out.

He added that KOC took charge

of the construction and development of the Geopark project thanks to its long technical experience and national role in backing the cultural and environmental projects.

Located to the north of Kuwait Joon (bay), the site includes striking landscapes from the Martian-like outcrops in Subiya desert to escarpments in Jal Az-Zor, which provides ground for listing it on UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Sackings probable

Need job in gov't sector, get tested for drugs use

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: From December 15, government entities may require applicants for public sector jobs to undergo testing for the use of narcotic and psychotropic substances without a prescription as part of the mandatory medical examinations, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to informed sources, this measure is in line with Article 66 of Decree-Law No. 159/2025 on combating narcotics and psychotropic substances and regulating their use and trade, which comes into effect on December 15.

The new law allows the competent appointing authority in each government entity to decide whether to include the drug test in appointment procedures for central government employment.

The requirement of physical fitness for public sector employment is outlined in Article 1 of the Civil Service Law.

Meanwhile, termination of service for employees deemed medically unfit is stipulated in Article 32 of Law No. 15/1979 concerning the civil service. Similar provisions exist for security forces, including Articles 31 and 96 of Law No. 23/1968 on the Police Force System and Articles 32 and 99 of Law No. 32/1967 on the Kuwait Army.

Meeting the health fitness requirement for civil and military public service positions, which mandates that employees' bodies be free of narcotic or psychotropic substances, is a condition for both initial appointment and continued employment. If an employee no longer meets this condition during service, the requirement is considered waived.

The law further stipulates that the competent authority, or its authorized representative, in coordination with the ministry, may conduct periodic or random drug tests on employees during official working hours to detect the use of any narcotic substances or preparations without a prescription.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah distributing winter garments to sanitation workers.

Governor distributes winter clothes to cleaning workers

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Under the patronage of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, a campaign was launched to distribute winter clothing to sanitation workers in the Farwaniya Governorate.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the initiative was carried out with the cooperation of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, which is supporting the campaign's goal of promoting social responsibility and assisting workers.

The ceremony was attended by representatives from the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, including Public Relations Supervisor Othman Al-Shuraiba, Social Media Manager Talal Al-Yousef, and members of the bank's volunteer team Sheikh Jarrah Al-Sabah, Maryam Mohammed, and Nourhan Al-Bahrani.

Governor Sheikh Athbi highlighted the Farwaniya Governorate's commitment to providing a safe and humane work environment for sanitation workers, particularly during the cold winter months, while also emphasizing the importance of strengthening partnerships with the private sector in community service.

Meanwhile, representatives from the Commercial Bank of Kuwait expressed pride in their participation in this humanitarian effort, noting that it highlights the value of solidarity and collaboration among all parties.

The campaign is part of a series of community activities by the Farwaniya Governorate, carried out in partnership with private sector institutions, aimed at promoting community partnership and serving the public good.

Man found hanging by rope; foul play suspected

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: A citizen, in his 20s, died when a vehicle and a motorcycle collided in Raqqa.

A security source told the newspaper that the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received information about the tragic accident that occurred near a traffic light in Raqqa. Security and medical emergency personnel rushed to the accident site.

The source added that upon arrival, the rescuers found that the citizen already succumbed to his injuries.

The citizen's body was transferred to the Forensic Medicine Department and a case was registered. Security authorities launched an investigation to determine the circumstances leading to the accident.

Meanwhile, security authorities are investigating a suspected foul play case following the death of a citizen in Hawally Governorate, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to a security source, the victim's family found him hanging by his neck from the ceiling of his room. Security personnel and forensic investigators promptly responded to the scene after receiving the report.

A case of suspected foul play has been officially registered, and the public prosecutor ordered the body to be removed after an initial examination and transferred to the forensic department for further investigation.

Reminiscing bygone era ... globe goes bonkers

“THERE is a real danger in the use of the so-called Artificial Intelligence in the workplace. Many employees and workers may be replaced by machines, leading to increased unemployment and human suffering,” columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The danger of this technology becomes apparent when public figures, both global and ordinary, appear in a false light on social media. A head of state might appear to threaten another country with war, prompting the latter to arm itself and perhaps even leading to war. Or someone might post a fake video of a husband talking about his family, causing discord within the family. There is also the electric car. Everyone may have cheered and celebrated its production, but many of them suddenly caught fire, causing the car to burn and the owner to lose the money spent on it.

“As the number of factories in the world increased, air pollution also increased. Airplanes contributed to this, as their engines emit smoke. On the ground, cars added to emissions, leading to rising global temperatures. This, in turn, caused ice in the Arctic and Antarctic to melt, resulting in rising sea levels. It was previously stated that rising sea levels would inundate the lands of some countries and cities, such as Alexandria, the Maldives, and Bangladesh. Recently, heavy rains in Asia uprooted trees, caused landslides, and triggered floods that destroyed homes and left people homeless.

“What we have mentioned highlights the danger of technology and climate pollution to humanity. What has also politically strained relations between countries, in addition to the events in Gaza, are the actions of Russian President Putin, who launched an unjust war against Ukraine in 2022 that continues to this day. He occupied some of its eastern territories and is currently demanding that these lands be annexed by Russia. We have previously mentioned the reason for the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. It is Putin’s belief that NATO is expanding through the increase in its members and that its borders are moving closer to Russian territory. He sought to occupy Ukraine to make it a buffer state between Russia and Western Europe.

“Regarding European affairs, Europe welcomed Syrian refugees in 2015, but other migrants also arrived along with them, including Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, Africans, and others. What happened next was surprising - their arrival coincided with extremist attacks on European society, such as bombings and attacks on groups of people in public spaces. We have written in the past about this. This situation led



Ahmad Al-Dawas

Europe to adopt a more cautious stance toward migrants, and Europeans increasingly supported far-right political parties in elections. In America, President Trump threatened to overthrow the Venezuelan president, accusing him of being lenient with Venezuelan drug cartels that smuggle drugs into the United States by sea and of threatening China with the occupation of Taiwan. In West Africa, extremist Islamic groups occupied part of Mali after 2011, and their influence then spread throughout the region. Somalia split into three areas, including a pirate-infested southern Somalia.

“Yemen is rich in resources, but its situation is unstable. During the so-called “Arab Spring” in 2011, the Houthis, a group in northern Yemen, revolted against the government, claiming it neglected their needs. They took up arms and overthrew the legitimate government in Sana’a, which then relocated to Aden. They also threatened shipping in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, forcing vessels to avoid the Suez Canal and sail around the Cape of Good Hope, causing Egypt to lose approximately \$800 million per month. Life was much more beautiful 40 or 50 years ago, in its artistic, social, and moral aspects.”

Also:

“In a previous article, I mentioned that Kuwaiti citizens would not accept a 250-square-meter house. A news agency took this out of context and used it as a headline. First, I would like to thank the news agency for its attention to this statement. I received many responses because the phrase was taken from a longer text. In that article, I was highlighting a reality that still exists in some areas of Kuwait, particularly along the First Ring Road, such as Shamiya,” columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“When the government replanned these areas, the decision was made to set the plot size at 250 square meters, without providing adequate services and infrastructure to support the growing population. If a family at that time consisted of a father, mother, and two sons, it has since grown, and the children have grown as well. Consequently, the need for expansion has increased. For example, that family now owns four cars, one for each member. Because the planning did not take this into account, a parking crisis ensued.

“While some citizens objected and the plot size remained at 500 square meters, other plots were reduced to 300 square meters, and some even had narrow strips of 12 or 10 meters, meaning they were not fully finished. The area became very congested due to the numerous obstacles that arose later. Therefore, when I say that citizens in other countries can live in a 250-square-meter house, it is because the infrastructure there supports it.

“In Kuwait, when the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) requires new families to live in a 250-square-meter house without adequate in-

frastructure, and without considering the expected increase in family size or urban development, it is natural that citizens would be reluctant to live in such a small space, especially in the new, remote areas of Wafra, Al-Mutlaa, and others. To this day, most of these new areas lack comprehensive infrastructure, including cooperative societies, schools, clinics, and even police stations. For these reasons, citizens are unwilling to live in such small houses.

“However, if services and modern infrastructure were available to accommodate the anticipated population growth and urban development, citizens with small families today, and potentially larger families in the future, would undoubtedly accept such housing. Many newlywed couples would accept housing if these services were provided. They want a home that meets the needs of their families. This is what I meant in the paragraph of the article “Citizen Well-being... Between the UAE and Kuwait,” published on this page last week.”

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“With the issuance of Decree Law No. 159/2025 on combating drugs and intoxicants, the Ministry of Interior has taken a pioneering step that affirms its commitment to protecting society. This law is more than a legislative text; it represents a comprehensive national vision that integrates legal enforcement, medical care, and social rehabilitation, positioning Kuwait among the leading countries addressing the issue of drugs through a clear, scientific methodology and strategy,” Saudi writer **Hajar Al-Saleem** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“An important feature of this law is the establishment of the Supreme Council for Combating Drugs and Intoxicants, which serves as the cornerstone of this national strategy.

“The Council’s role is not limited to oversight but it also formulates policies, develops awareness and prevention programs, and monitors the implementation of plans in all ministries and agencies.

“This integrated approach reflects the state’s understanding that combating drugs is a shared national responsibility requiring cooperation among all sectors.

“The law marks a significant leap in the humanitarian aspect through the establishment of specialized rehabilitation and treatment centers that are equipped to the highest medical and security standards.

“These centers focus not only on medical treatment but also on family and social reintegration programs, which help drug users and addicts recover and return to society with sound mental and social health.

— **Compiled by Simi K. Kutty**



Hajar Al-Saleem



KUNA photo
The Kuwaiti Navy patrol boat Garoh and the Indian Navy ship Sarthak carried out a joint exercise to boost naval security.

‘Garoh’, ‘Sarthak’ in joint drill

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Navy patrol boat Garoh and the Indian Navy ship Sarthak carried out a joint sea maneuver for combating fires and securing logistics in the waters.

The Kuwaiti military said on Saturday

that the drill was part of activities to bolster naval security, elevate the level of operating readiness and back up cooperation among international coalitions for the protection of sea navigation and attaining stability in the marine environment.

Duo in ‘boxing’ bout acquitted

‘Business partner’ compensated

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The Criminal Court acquitted a Kuwaiti man and woman, members of the Kuwaiti national boxing team, of committing acts of violence on board a Kuwait Airways flight.

The airport investigation officer testified that a verbal altercation between the two defendants led to an exchange of insults. The woman then slapped the man, who responded by kicking and punching her, causing injuries documented in the initial medical report. The investigation also confirmed that there were no physical damages to the aircraft or any indication of threat to its safety and that of the passengers.

Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan, lawyer for one of the defendants, argued that the elements of the crime of committing acts

of violence on board an aircraft, as defined in Article 32 of Law No. 6/1994 on crimes related to aircraft safety and air navigation, were absent. He also emphasized the lack of actual danger to the aircraft.

Al-Qattan pointed out that the actions attributed to the defendant—even assuming their veracity—fall under the category of self-defense. He pointed out the lack of conclusive evidence in the case file to establish a conviction, and that the incident was nothing more than a personal altercation, which did not affect the flight or its safety.

□ □ □

‘Partner’ compensated: The Court of Appeals (Commercial Circuit) issued a final ruling, obligating the brother of a former member of the National Assembly to pay KD300,000 to a businessman.

Attorney Mohammad Ahmad Al-Rifai, lawyer for the plaintiff, filed a lawsuit to demand the return of funds received by the defendant under an investment contract that was terminated.

The dispute arose when the businessman gave the defendant KD150,000 for investment, as stipulated in a contract between them.

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Kuwaiti Embassy in Indonesia photo
Kuwait's Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Al-Yasin with Indonesian Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin.

Kuwait and Indonesia eye closer health cooperation

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 14, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Indonesia Khaled Al-Yasin has discussed with Indonesian Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin means of boosting bilateral collaboration in the health field.

The talks covered sharing information and expertise, and alluring Indonesian qualified technical and health cadres in a manner that contributes to improving healthcare level in Kuwait, Kuwait Embassy in Jakarta said in a statement on Saturday.

The Kuwait-Indonesia relations have established in 1968 and witnessed a growing level to cover developing human potential, professional training and healthcare sector.

Cooperation between the two countries is paramount, as Jakarta has, since 1970s, been sending highly skilled nurses and technical staff to GCC member states. As a result, Indonesian health professionals have been present in numerous hospitals across the region for many years.

Kuwait affirms commitment to partake in joint Arab initiatives

Ambassador Al-Mutairi stresses media, regional collaboration

CAIRO, Dec 14, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait has affirmed its keenness on partaking in activities that support joint Arab action in various spheres.

This approach is the basis for pan-Arab co-operation, exchanging experience and boosting Arab presence at regional and international quarters, said Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi, the State of Kuwait Permanent Delegate at the Arab League in a statement to KUNA.

Ambassador Al-Mutairi was speaking during participation in activities held in Libya under umbrella of "Tripoli Media Days," forum, namely the 2025 Arb-International Media Dialogue Forum that began on Thursday and inauguration of the National Libyan Museum.

He indicated that debates during the forum focused on topics such as the Arab identity, making of media content, media personnel training, developing digital content and employing artificial intelligence in the media.

The Kuwaiti delegate indicated that the forum followed up on executive plan of the Arab media strategy, adopted by the ministerial Arab media council, focusing on support for the Palestinian cause, combating extremism and terrorism as well as promoting the Arab identity.

He lauded the inauguration of the face-lifted Libyan museum incubating priceless items that symbolize the national cultural-archeological heritage after the authorities managed to retrieve unique and historic relics from abroad.



KUNA photo
Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States

Activities held on the forum sidelines were attended by Prime Minister of the Libyan National Unity Government Abdul Hamid Al-Dbeibeh, Libyan Minister of State for Communication and Political Affairs Walid Al-Lafi, Arab League Assistant Secretary-General for Media and Communication Ahmed Rashid Khattabi, Arab information ministers, representatives of ministers, ambassadors of Arab League

member states, media figures, experts, influencers and bloggers. The participants included various government and diplomatic representatives, heads of labor unions and organizations with an observer's status at the Arab media council, including the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) AND the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport.

Over 6,000 students tested across seven colleges

Sabah Al-Salem University holds 3rd aptitude test

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: A total of 6,380 students sat for the third round of academic aptitude tests at Sabah Al-Salem University colleges, covering Arabic, English, and Mathematics, administered in both paper and electronic formats, on Saturday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The first testing session took place at seven locations, including the College of Engineering and Petroleum, College of Science, Faculty of Life Sciences, College of Business Administration, College of Education, Faculty of

Arts, and the University Administration Building.

Arabic and Mathematics tests were administered in paper format along with electronic tests. The second session included English and Mathematics tests, also conducted electronically.

In addition, English and Mathematics tests were held in paper format at the College of Education and the Faculty of Life Sciences, in line with the set procedures.

Leaders call for expansion

Kuwait Farmers Union features fresh produce at Ardiya Market

By Adnan Makkawi Jarada
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Visitors eager to see the achievements of Kuwaiti farmers can head to the market of the Kuwait Farmers Union in Ardiya, which is open daily to the public.

Despite covering only 2,000 square meters, the market is filled with fresh, ripe Kuwaiti vegetables and fruits, all available for public auction. Each item is sold by four marketers accredited by the relevant agricultural authorities, under the supervision of representatives from the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) for ensuring fairness in the auction process and accuracy in weighing the produce.

The daily recently visited the market with the union's President Ahmed Musallat Al-Adwani, Secretary Ahmed Nasser Al-Shabak, and Secretary Amin Obaid Nasser Al-Nafishan.

The President of the Kuwaiti Farmers Union, Ahmed Musallat Al-Adwani, expressed his pride in the availability of Kuwaiti produce, and congratulated farmers on the reopening of the market in its new form.

He promised farmers further achievements under the slogan "Working from Good to Better", emphasizing that the Kuwait Farmers Union is fully aware of its responsibility and vital role in developing and improving plant resources.

Al-Adwani expressed gratitude to the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, who is responsible for agricultural affairs in the Cabinet, for visiting the Ardiya Farmers Market, supporting Kuwaiti producers, and championing farmers' causes.

He also thanked the Chairman of the Board of Directors of PAAAFR, Dr. Mohammed Dawood Al-Ahmad, and the Director General, Engineer Salem Al-Hai, for their continued support of farmers in cultivation and marketing.

Meanwhile, the Secretary of the Kuwait Farmers Union and Head of the Markets Committee, Ahmed Nasser Al-Shabak, stated that the volume of produce from the Abdali and Wafra farms reflects the strong interest of the relevant authorities in agriculture and Kuwaiti farmers.

He noted that the union has requested either an expansion of the Al-Ardiya market or allocation of sufficient land to accommodate its operations.

Al-Shabak assured that the Kuwait Farmers Union is ready to begin construction and establish the necessary refrigerated storage facilities as soon as the land is provided.

He highlighted the union's extensive experience in wholesale agricultural marketing through public auctions since the early 1980s and confirmed that it has the financial and human resources to manage a larger market.

Al-Shabak explained that the current Ardiya Farmers Market is not large enough to display all the farmers' produce, and the market has been leased from PAAAFR. As a result, farmers are sometimes forced to display their produce at the Wafer market in Sulaibiya.

He went on to explain that the peak season for national fruit and vegetable production begins in early March and continues until the end of June.

Dozens of Kuwaiti farmers are currently offering around 120,000 boxes of fruit, covering approximately 17 varieties. The quantity rises to between 200,000 and 250,000 boxes of varying sizes and weights at the peak of the season.

Al-Shabak reiterated the union's request for the allocation of land to establish a dedicated fruit and vegetable market, complete with facilities to protect produce from weather conditions, rain, and extreme heat, through the construction of refrigerated warehouses that would enable a longer sales season throughout the year.

In addition, Secretary of the Kuwait Farmers Union, Obaid Nasser Al-Nafishan, stated that the union is working to expand the market or acquire a large plot of land to construct a facility that reflects the status and reputation of Kuwaiti farmers.

He expressed his gratitude to farmers for their efforts in achieving this commendable national production, which has helped control local prices.

Al-Nafishan said, "Were it not for domestic production of vegetables and fruits, their prices would be double in our local markets. Kuwaiti farmers play a vital role in ensuring food security and driving the national economy, despite the many challenges they face. These challenges include increased fees, insufficient supply of treated water, and frequent power outages."

Al-Nafishan called for an increase in the agricultural subsidy budget and the timely disbursement of full cash support to eligible recipients without delay.

He praised the abundant production, particularly of early-ripening potatoes.

Revealing that around 120 farmers prefer to sell their produce at the Al-Ittihad market in Ardiya due to their trust in its management, Al-Nafishan urged representatives of consumer cooperative societies to prioritize the Ardiya Farmers Market when purchasing vegetables and fruits from all residential areas of Kuwait.

KUNA develops multimedia skills with 'Mobile Journalism' program

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): The KUNA Center for Development of Media launched its training program "Mobile Journalism" on Sunday, running until December 18, with the participation of KUNA and Qatar News Agency (QNA) staff members.

The program covers the fundamentals of smartphone journalism, a range of tools and their uses, an introduction to photography for interviews and various shots, audio recording, and how to record clear, natural sounds.

It also aims to refine the trainees' practical skills and develop their abilities in photography, video production, and editing using smartphone applications and smart devices, as well as addressing the importance of mobile journalism, multimedia story production, and planning skills for creating a visual story with a clear chronological sequence.

The program equips participants with the necessary skills to plan, produce, and publish their materials and visual stories using only their smartphones, and covers photojournalism, audio recording and narration skills, and professional video production



KUNA photo
Part of the training program 'Mobile Journalism.'

editing on mobile devices.

Established in December 1995, the KUNA Center for Development of Media, is regarded as one of the most important media training centers that has provided hundreds of training programs in various media fields, it aims to develop personal media capabilities and potential and to advance professional media work.



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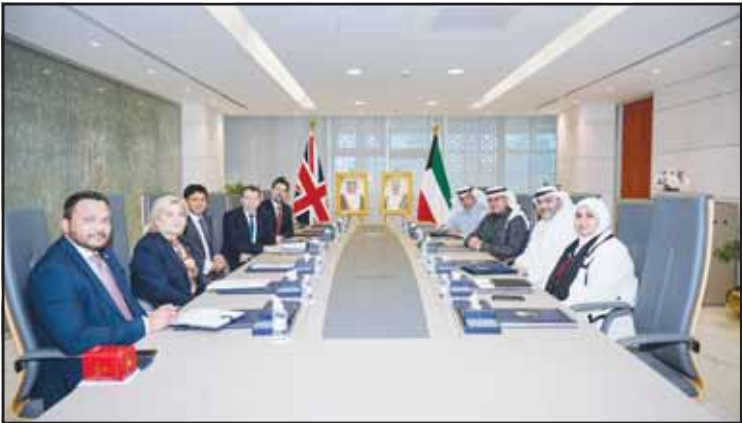
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KUNA photo
The Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, the Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, with the UK Trade Commissioner to the State of Kuwait.

Al-Mukhaizeem meets UK Trade Commissioner for strategic talks

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Acting Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem on Sunday held talks with the United Kingdom’s Trade Commissioner to Kuwait.

The minister’s discussions with Lord Iain McNicol dealt with ways to enhance bilateral relations within the framework of the historic and strategic partnership that unites the two countries.

In a press statement issued on Sunday, the Ministry of Finance said the meeting included an exchange of views on a number of economic and investment issues of mutual interest and ways to develop them during the coming phase.

The ministry added that the discussions also reviewed strategic and devel-

opment efforts and plans in both countries, as well as the potential contribution of each side to supporting and implementing these plans in line with available capabilities, in a manner that serves the mutual interests of both parties.

The statement noted that views were also exchanged on opportunities for cooperation in several vital sectors, including investment, sustainable energy, information technology, and the transport sector. The meeting further addressed current priorities and projects, along with prospects for future cooperation in these areas.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of the UK and Northern Ireland to Kuwait, Qudsi Rasheed and a number of officials from the Ministry of Finance and the British Embassy in Kuwait.

Over KD 1.25mn funds shifted

Decree-Law 161/2025 amends KISR’s spending for 2025/2026

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Decree-Law No. 161/2025, related to transfers between chapters in the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research’s (KISR) budget for the fiscal year 2025/2026, has been issued, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The decree stipulates that expenditures for Chapter Two be increased from KD 8,077,500 to KD 9,102,475 through two transfers totaling KD 1,024,975. The first transfer amounted to KD 825,294 from Chapter

One appropriations, raising the total allocation for Chapter One to KD 33,487,206. The second transfer involved KD 199,681 from Chapter Four appropriations.

Expenditures under Chapter Three were also amended, rising from KD 699,000 to KD 929,319 through a transfer of KD 230,319 from Chapter Four, which now has a total appropriation of KD 2,630,000, as detailed in the table attached to the decree-law.

Kuwait, Bahrain expand human rights cooperation

JEDDAH, Dec 14, (KUNA): Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, the Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights, held talks on Sunday with the Director of the Bahraini Foreign Ministry’s Human Rights Department, Ambassador Dr. Arwa Al-Sayed, on boosting cooperation in the human rights realm.

The talks between Sheikhha Jawaher and Al-Sayed, also a member of the independent permanent Human Rights committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, were held on sidelines of the commission’s 26th regular session that began at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah earlier today.

The two sides agreed on pursuing and boosting

cooperation at the bilateral and international levels.

Dr. Al-Sayed lauded the State of Kuwait’s efforts at the humanitarian levels.

Meanwhile, Sheikhha Jawaher held talks with the general director for women and human rights affairs at the Iranian foreign minister, on cooperation in the sector.

Gulf educational forum seeks sustainable research solutions

Minister Al-Tabtabaie urges evidence-based policies

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaie affirmed that “educational research is fundamental to the development of education and shaping its future.”

In his opening remarks at the two-day Gulf Forum for Educational Researchers, organized by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, Al-Tabtabaie stated that education is an integrated system for building human potential, developing skills, and enhancing critical thinking and innovation. He pointed out “this enables our children to adapt to the demands of the current era and compete effectively in the knowledge economy.” He underscored the importance of the forum, which focuses on the priorities of Gulf educational research, use of modern technologies and artificial intelligence in research, and strengthening educational policies grounded in applied research.

He hopes the forum will yield scientific recommendations and research insights to support decision-makers, improve the quality of educational policies, and contribute to a more efficient and sustainable educational future for children in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Present at the opening ceremony for the forum were Director General of the Bureau Dr. Mohammad Al-Muqbil, Director of the Bureau Dr. Mohammad Al-Shuraika, several undersecretaries of education ministries in the Gulf countries, directors of international organizations, ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions, researchers, educational specialists and international experts.

Al-Tabtabaie added “the forum comes at a time our educational systems are undergoing rapid transformations and facing increasing challenges that require the development of our research tools and the strengthening of integra-



Photo by Mohammad Morsi
Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaie poses for a group photo at the opening of the Gulf Forum for Educational Researchers.

tion in visions and experiences, in order to keep pace with the demands of the times.” He emphasized the central role of educational research as a key pillar in formulating sound educational policies and in making decisions based on knowledge and solid scientific evidence.

He explained that hosting this forum reflects the consistent Kuwaiti approach rooted in a firm belief in the importance of joint Gulf cooperation to build an integrated research system based on the exchange of expertise and the unification of efforts. He said such cooperation develops the collective ability to overcome shared educational challenges and transform them into opportunities for sustainable development.

He stressed that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education is proud of the support it receives from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. He said such support is a manifestation of the political leadership’s conviction that

education is the cornerstone of building advanced societies and the main driver of sustainable development.

Meanwhile, Al-Muqbil highlighted the challenges that educational researchers in the Gulf countries are facing like limited data availability, insufficient funding, and weak connection between research outcomes and the needs of decision-makers. He also emphasized the necessity of creating stimulating research environments in schools and universities.

He asserted that overcoming these challenges is both essential and achievable through the establishment of shared Gulf data platforms, expansion of support and funding programs, activation of international research partnerships, adoption of modern research methodologies, and development of researchers’ capacities to meet contemporary requirements.

He explained that the future of education in the Gulf depends on transforming educational research from a seasonal or occasional activity into a sustainable system that generates knowledge and translates it into practi-

cal plans and programs. He added that the Bureau recognized the importance of this field at an early stage by establishing a specialized center for educational research in 1977 through the generous patronage of the leaders of the member states.

Moreover, Al-Shuraika confirmed that the Bureau receives support from the political leadership and the wise Kuwaiti government, which activated its role in serving Gulf education systems and supporting educational decision-makers throughout the region.

Al-Shuraika stated that the forum is organized at a crucial moment, as educational systems in the Gulf states face rapidly evolving challenges, which necessitate rigorous research and innovative solutions. He revealed the Bureau is keen on ensuring that the forum serves as an effective scientific platform for strengthening research collaboration, exchanging professional expertise, and exploring the latest global methodologies in educational research, thereby, supporting decision-makers in developing evidence-based educational policies.

Mol holds an exhibition on new ‘anti-drugs law’

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The Ministry of Interior, represented by the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media, the Drug Control General Department, the General Administration of Customs, and the Kuwait Lawyers Society, held an exhibition on the new anti-drugs law from Thursday, December 11 to Saturday, December 13 at Khairan Mall, as part of its “Safeguarding Our Homeland”

national campaign, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the exhibition was aimed at familiarizing the public with the important provisions of the new law, and explaining the penalties related to drug use, promotion, and trafficking, as part of a comprehensive security and legal effort to combat the scourge of drugs.

Continued from Page 1

Openness is

respectfully, regardless of nationality. After all, these visitors contribute to the national economy in one way or another.

Times have changed compared to decades ago, and the approach to issuing security restrictions must change accordingly.

For instance, if two residents have a disagreement, both may be deported and subjected to security restrictions. The fair approach should hold only the wrongdoer accountable, while the other party should not face penalties. If the dispute is purely personal or trivial, why impose restrictions on both individuals?

Many practices, rooted in past experiences, were generally flawed and often served the interests of certain individuals and influential figures, even when considered minor by some. These seemingly small issues can have a major negative impact on tourism, where good publicity is the most important incentive.

It is important that the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, who is known for his bold decisions, instructs the relevant authorities to remove these security restrictions and ensure a warm reception for arrivals at border crossings.

Attention to small details has a positive ripple effect on society. Likewise, neglecting them can become a heavy burden, and drain energy and resources.

Kuwait’s new

It balances humanitarian and legal considerations, stipulating that no criminal charges will be brought against addicts who voluntarily seek treatment, while ensuring the confidentiality of their information and protecting informants and those undergoing treatment.

Article 3 of the decree law establishes two distinct treatment structures - rehabilitation centers and addiction treatment centers.

Article 4 authorizes the Ministry of Interior to establish correctional and rehabilitation centers for individuals serving prison sentences for possession of drugs for personal use. In these facilities, convicts are required to undergo medical treatment, rehabilitation, training, and family or social reintegration programs.

It also sets strict conditions for prescribing and dispensing narcotic substances, as detailed in Articles 20, 22,

and 24. This reflects legislative rigor in regulating medical and professional practices, preventing the leakage or misuse of these substances, and curbing the exploitation of prescriptions.

Article 44 classifies the use of a minor, a mentally ill person, or someone under a perpetrator’s care or supervision in committing a crime as an aggravating circumstance, warranting the death penalty in trafficking and distribution cases.

The humanitarian and rights-based aspects of the law are reflected in Article 61, which stipulates that no criminal case shall be filed against an addict who voluntarily surrenders to an addiction center for treatment and rehabilitation, provided this occurs before any complaint or request for prosecution is made.

The law places paramount importance on protecting the confidentiality and personal safety of all individuals involved, whether whistleblowers or patients, boosting trust and encouraging people to seek help without fear of stigma or exposure.

Article 56 stipulates that anyone who unlawfully discloses information related to reports and treatment of addicts, details of individuals admitted to rehabilitation or addiction treatment centers, or test results specified in Article 66, shall face imprisonment of up to two years, a fine of up to KD 10,000, or one of the prescribed penalties.

The law also encourages reporting for treatment purposes. Article 62 allows a spouse or a relative up to the third degree to report an addict for treatment, while ensuring full confidentiality for the reporter. The reported individual will be admitted to a rehabilitation center for a specified period and may be released early upon recovery.

Articles 63 and 64 balance punitive deterrence with rehabilitative treatment by granting the Public Prosecution and the courts the authority to order admission into a rehabilitation center instead of filing criminal charges or imposing a sentence on individuals who commit offenses related to the consumption, possession, import, smuggling, purchase, production, or manufacturing of narcotics for personal use.

The law provides for the establishment of the Supreme Council for Combating Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances. It is responsible for developing a comprehensive national strategy, planning awareness, prevention, and treatment plans, and aligning national efforts with relevant international treaties, ensuring effective and integrated implementation.

Following the issuance of Decree-Law No. 159/2025, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior,

Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, affirmed that recent years have seen the seizure of large quantities of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the prevention of many smuggling attempts.

He affirmed that the law marks a new phase of legislative rigor in Kuwait, and enhances the security apparatus’s ability to enforce deterrence and tighten the noose on criminal networks under the strongest punitive framework the country has seen.

In this regard, the National Human Rights Bureau described the law as a qualitative legislative milestone that strengthens societal protection, safeguards fundamental rights, and responds effectively to relevant international requirements.

In preparation for the law’s implementation, the Ministry of Interior launched an awareness campaign titled “Safeguarding Our Homeland” to familiarize the public with its provisions. The campaign was complemented by intensive media and awareness efforts from various relevant entities.

The ministry inaugurated the first field exhibition under the campaign at The Avenues Mall, in collaboration with the Kuwait Lawyers Society and the Ministry of Health, to raise awareness about the law. The exhibition included informational and interactive displays highlighting significant updates to the law and its deterrent penalties, along with educational videos and brochures.

Earlier in December, the Public Prosecution launched a proactive media awareness campaign across its official platforms, emphasizing that the next phase will involve decisive and precise enforcement of the law’s provisions from the moment it takes effect.

It is worth highlighting that the Cabinet approved the draft decree-law on combating narcotics and psychotropic substances and regulating their use and trade during its meeting on October 28, which reflected its firm commitment to protecting society and individuals and ensuring Kuwait’s stance in line with international best practices in combatting drugs.

As part of ongoing national efforts to protect society from drugs, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) reaffirmed its commitment to its pivotal role as the first line of defense for the nation through strict monitoring of all land, sea, and air entry points, and efforts to intercept attempts to smuggle narcotics and psychotropic substances into the country, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, GAC explained that these efforts are carried out under the direct support and guidance of the

acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, who prioritizes combating drugs as a top security objective.

GAC personnel operate within an integrated system that combines risk-based targeting, thorough inspections, and the latest technological tools, while maintaining continuous coordination with relevant security agencies to prevent smuggling before narcotics reach Kuwait.

The Public Relations Department of GAC participated in the “Safeguarding Our Homeland” awareness exhibition, which was held under the patronage of Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, with the involvement of customs inspectors and the presence of Saleh Al-Omar, Deputy Director General for Ports, Search, and Customs Investigation Affairs.

This participation was in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, the Kuwaiti Lawyers Society, and other entities, reflecting a collective effort to raise public awareness about the dangers of drugs and all kinds of contraband.

GAC affirmed that recent successes in seizing narcotics reflect the vigilance of its personnel and the effectiveness of the procedures in place, as well as underscore the magnitude of the national responsibility entrusted to them in protecting society.

In conclusion, it affirmed its ongoing commitment to fulfilling its national duty with full dedication, in close coordination with state institutions, and with the continued support of the security leadership.

Prosecution

The report recorded the highest completion rates in check-related misdemeanor cases and drug addiction cases, at 100 percent each, reflecting the speed with which these types of cases are resolved.

Information technology cases had the lowest completion rate among all types of cases, at 78 percent.

Regarding felony cases, the report indicated that a total of 1,157 cases were received, with banking crimes accounting for 38.6 percent, while kidnapping, arrest and detention cases are the lowest at 1.7 percent.

The number of resolved cases reached 876, with an overall resolution rate of 79.9 percent.

Property theft cases recorded the highest resolution rate among felonies at 87.6 percent, while murder and assault cases recorded the lowest resolution rate at 61.5 percent.

The report attributed this to the complexity of such cases and the need for

more time for investigation.

As for the performance of the Public Prosecution offices, the Commercial Affairs Prosecution Office received the highest number of cases -- 19.4 percent of the total. It also accounted for the largest share of cases reviewed and resolved, at 30 percent and 31.9 percent respectively.

On the other hand, the Capital Markets Prosecution Office recorded the lowest number of incoming cases at 0.1 percent, with no cases disposed during the month. Similarly, the General Prosecution Office did not record any incoming, pending or disposed cases.

The Public Funds and Anti-Money Laundering Prosecution Office recorded the highest completion rate at 95.5 percent, while the Capital Governorate Prosecution Office had the lowest completion rate at 70.3 percent.

The report explained that no completion rate was calculated for the Capital Markets Prosecution Office due to the absence of disposed cases during the reporting period.

24K gold

US Labor Department data showed initial unemployment claims rose to 236,000 for the week ending December 6, the highest level in over two months, reflecting a gradual slowdown in the labor market.

The overall picture suggests a loss of momentum previously enjoyed by the US economy, which strengthens demand for hedging assets, with gold at the forefront. Geopolitical tensions continue to support gold prices, as stalled peace talks between Russia and Ukraine and escalating political rhetoric keep global market anxiety high, sustaining investor interest in gold as a hedge against political and economic risks.

US Treasury yields saw modest increases, with the 10-year yield around 4.19 percent, while real yields fell to approximately 1.78 percent, providing additional support for gold prices due to their inverse relationship.

From a technical perspective, the trend for gold remains upward, with prices trading above \$4,300 amid strong buyer dominance. Momentum indicators, including the Relative Strength Index, are near overbought levels, reflecting robust demand despite the possibility of short-term corrections.

If gold breaks the \$4,353 per ounce level, it could test the historical high of \$4,381, followed by \$4,400, \$4,450, and \$4,500 in the medium term. Conversely, a decline below \$4,285 could push prices down to \$4,250 and then \$4,200 as key support levels in the com-

ing period.

This week, markets are expected to release significant economic data, including delayed US labor reports, inflation figures, retail sales, interest rate decisions, and speeches by major central bank officials.

Dar Al-Sabaek Company expects these developments to play a pivotal role in determining gold’s direction in the coming period, with the yellow metal remaining supported “as long as monetary uncertainty and geopolitical risks persist in the global economy.”

Kuwait civil

Sources stated that setting clear deadlines for approving leave requests helps avoid discrepancies or issues in preparing employee evaluation reports and instills work discipline during the transition period between 2025 and 2026.

Sources affirmed that adhering to the specified deadlines for approving requests is essential for ensuring the smooth flow of work, particularly in operational and administrative sectors, stressing the need for all employees to comply with the circular.

Embassy of

Meanwhile, Scheurwater said “the celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Kuwait is a historic milestone embodying the strength of the ties between the two countries that spanned six decades.”

She added that 2025 is an exceptional year for the Canadian Embassy in Kuwait, during which it worked for 11 months to highlight the history of cooperation and the diverse areas of partnership between the two countries with the theme “Cooperation and Communication.”

She stated that the logo and visual identity for the celebration were inspired by the traditional Kuwaiti art of Sadu weaving, reflecting the fusion of Canadian and Kuwaiti cultures. She pointed out that the logo’s design incorporated symbols from both heritages, such as the Canadian maple leaf, the Kuwaiti flag, the organ, and the ‘inukshuk’, a symbol of nature and culture in northern Canada.

She expressed her deep appreciation for the Canadian community in Kuwait, and for Canadian community networks, such as the Canadian Women’s Network and the Energy Sector Professionals Group, for their continuous support, along with Lumiere, the events partner throughout the year.

Thousands evacuate

Floods ... arctic cold ravage northern US

MONROE, Wash., Dec 14, (AP): A blast of arctic air swept south from Canada and spread into parts of the northern U.S. on Saturday, while residents of the Pacific Northwest braced for possible mudslides and levee failures from floodwaters that are expected to be slow to recede.

The catastrophic flooding forced thousands of people to evacuate, including Eddie Wicks and his wife, who live amid sunflowers and Christmas trees on a Washington state farm next to the Snoqualmie River. As they moved their two donkeys to higher ground and their eight goats to their outdoor kitchen, the water began to rise much quicker than anything they had experienced before.

As the water engulfed their home Thursday afternoon, deputies from the King County Sheriff's Office marine rescue dive unit were able to rescue them and their dog, taking them on a boat the half-mile (800 meters) across their field, which had been transformed into a lake. The rescue was captured on video.

Another round of rain and wind is in store for the region as early as late Sunday, forecasters said.

"Bottom line at this point in time is we're not done despite the sunny conditions that we have across western Washington at this point," said **Reid Wolcott**, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle.

"There is yet more still to come in terms of in terms of wind, in terms of rain, in terms of flooding," he said. "And Washingtonians need to be prepared for additional impacts, additional flooding, tree damage, power outages, etc."

High winds expected at the end of the weekend and into the first part of week are a concern because the ground is extremely saturated, putting trees at risk of toppling, he said.

In Burlington, a farming community

about an hour north of Seattle, the receding floodwaters allowed residents to assess damage and clean up their homes.

Friends and relatives helped empty Argentina Dominguez's home, filling trailers with soaked furniture, ripping carpet and mopping muddy floors.

"I know it's materialistic stuff, but they were our stuff. It's really hard. But we're gonna try our best to like get through it all," Dominguez said. "We're just trying to get everything off the floor so we can start over."

In Snohomish County, Washington, north of Seattle, emergency officials on Saturday led federal, state and local officials on a tour of the devastation.

"It's obvious that thousands and thousands of Washingtonians and communities all across our state are in the process of digging out, and that's going to be a challenging process," Gov. Bob Ferguson said.

"It's going to be expensive," he said. "It's going to be time consuming, and it's going to be potentially dangerous at times. So I think we're seeing here in Monroe is what we're going to be seeing all across the state, and that's what's got our focus right now."

As the Pacific Northwest begins to recover from the deluge, a separate weather system already brought dangerous wind-chill values - the combination of cold air temperatures and wind - to parts of the Upper Midwest.

Shortly before noon Saturday, it was minus 12 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 24 degrees Celsius) in Grand Forks, North Dakota, where the wind-chill value meant that it felt like minus 33 F (minus 36 C), the National Weather Service said.

For big cities like Minneapolis and Chicago, the coldest temperatures were expected late Saturday night into Sunday morning. In the Minneapolis area, low temperatures were expected to drop to around minus 15 F (minus 26 C), by early Sunday morning. Lows in the Chicago area are projected to be around 1 F (minus 17 C) by early Sunday, the weather service said.

The Arctic air mass was expected to continue pushing south and east over the weekend, expanding into Southern states by Sunday.



Wolcott



A boy plays with bubbles in front of a Christmas tree at Piazza del Popolo in Rome, Italy, Dec. 13, 2025. (Xinhua)

5 suspects arrested for allegedly plotting attack on Christmas market in Germany

BERLIN, Dec 14, (Xinhua): Five suspects have been arrested on suspicion of plotting an attack on a Christmas market in southern Germany, local police and authorities said on Saturday.

The suspects include one Egyptian, one Syrian and three Moroccans, according to a joint statement released by the local police, the Munich Public Prosecutor General's Office and the Bavarian Central Office for Combating Extremism and Terrorism.

Formal arrest warrants were issued for four of the men, while the fifth has been placed in preventive custody, said the statement.

Prosecutors currently suspect an Islamist motive behind the planned attack, which was allegedly to be carried out using a vehicle.

The Egyptian suspect had allegedly called for an attack at a mosque in the southern state of Bavaria during the 2025 Christmas season, urging the use of a vehicle to ram a Christmas market in order to "kill or injure as many people as possible." Further details remain undisclosed due to ongoing investigations, added the statement.

Far-right surge fuels immigration backlash

Rising anti-immigrant rhetoric rocks Europe

LONDON, Dec 14, (AP): In the past year, tens of thousands hostile to immigrants marched through London, chanting "send them home!" A British lawmaker complained of seeing too many non-white faces on TV. And senior politicians advocated the deportation of longtime U.K. residents born abroad.

The overt demonization of immigrants and those with immigrant roots is intensifying in the U.K. - and across Europe - as migration shoots up the political agenda and right-wing parties gain popularity.

In several European countries, political parties that favor mass deportations and depict immigration as a threat to national identity come at or near the top of opinion polls: Reform U.K., the AfD, or Alternative for Germany and France's National Rally.

President Donald Trump, who recently called Somali immigrants in the U.S. "garbage" and whose national security strategy depicts European countries as threatened by immigration, appears to be endorsing and emboldening Europe's coarse, anti-immigrant sentiments.

Amid the rising tensions, Europe's mainstream parties are taking a harder line on migration and at times using divisive language about race.

"What were once dismissed as being at the far extreme end of far-right politics has now become a central part of the political debate," said Kieran Connell, a lecturer in British history at Queen's University Belfast.

Immigration has risen dramatically over the past decade in some European countries, driven in part by millions of asylum-seekers who have come to Europe fleeing conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and Ukraine.

Asylum-seekers account for a small percentage of total immigration, however, and experts say antipathy toward diversity and migration stems from a mix of factors. Economic stagnation in the years since the 2008 global financial crisis, the rise of charismatic nationalist politicians and the polarizing influence of social media all play a role, experts say.

In Britain, there is "a frightening increase in the sense of national division and decline" and that tends to push people toward political extremes, said Bobby Duffy, director of the Policy Unit at King's College London. It took root after the financial crisis, was reinforced by Britain's debate about Brexit and deepened during the COVID-19 pandemic, Duffy said.

Social media has exacerbated the mood, notably on X, whose algorithm promotes divisive content and whose owner, Elon Musk, approvingly retweets far-right posts.

Across Europe, ethnonationalism

has been promoted by right-wing parties such as Germany's AfD, France's National Rally and the Fidesz party of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Now it appears to have the stamp of approval from the Trump administration, whose new national security strategy depicts Europe as a collection of countries facing "economic decline" and "civilizational erasure" because of immigration and loss of national identities.

The hostile language alarmed many European politicians, but also echoed what they hear from their countries' far-right parties.

National Rally leader Jordan Bardella told the BBC he largely agreed with the Trump administration's concern that mass immigration was "shaking the balance of European countries."

Policies once considered extreme are now firmly on the political agenda. Reform UK, the hard-right party that consistently leads opinion polls, says if it wins power it will strip immigrants of permanent-resident status even if they have lived in the U.K. for decades. The center-right opposition Conservatives say they will deport British citizens with dual nationality who commit crimes.

A Reform UK lawmaker complained in October that advertisements were "full of Black people, full of Asian people." Conservative justice spokesman Robert Jenrick remarked with concern that he "didn't see another white face" in an area of Birmingham, Britain's second-largest city. Neither politician had to resign.

Many proponents of reduced immigration say they are concerned about integration and community cohesion, not race. But that's not how it feels to those on the receiving end of racial abuse.

"There is no doubt it has worsened," said Dawn Butler, a Black British lawmaker who says the vitriol she receives on social media "is increasing drastically, and has escalated into death threats."

U.K. government statistics show police in England and Wales recorded more than 115,000 hate crimes in the year to March 2025, a 2% increase over the previous 12 months.

In July 2024, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim violence erupted on Britain's streets after three girls were stabbed to death at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class. Authorities said online misinformation wrongly identifying the U.K.-born teenage attacker as a Muslim migrant played a part.

In Ireland and in the Netherlands, protesters often demonstrate outside municipal meetings in communities where a new asylum center is proposed. Some protests have turned vio-

lent, with opponents of asylum-seekers throwing fireworks at riot police.

Across Europe, the main focus of protests has been hotels and other housing for asylum-seekers, which some say become magnets for crime and bad behavior. But the agenda of protest organizers is often much wider.

In September, more than 100,000 people chanting "We want our country back" marched through London in a protest organized by a far-right activist and convicted fraudster Tommy Robinson. Among the speakers was French far-right politician Eric Zemmour, who told the crowd that France and the U.K. both faced "the great replacement of our European people by peoples coming from the south and of Muslim culture."

Mainstream European politicians condemn the "great replacement" conspiracy theory. Britain's center-left Labour Party government has denounced racism and says migration is an important part of Britain's national story.

At the same time, it is taking a tougher line on immigration, announcing policies to make it harder for migrants to settle permanently. The government says it is inspired by Denmark, which has seen asylum applications plummet since it started giving refugees only short-term residence.



Protesters wave a Union Flag during a demonstration in Orpington near London, Friday, Aug. 22, 2025 as the dilemma of how to house asylum-seekers in Britain got more challenging for the government after a landmark court ruling this week motivated opponents to fight hotels used as accommodation. (AP)

America

Shooting kills 2: At least two people were killed and nine others wounded Saturday afternoon at Brown University in Providence, the U.S. state of Rhode Island, campus officials said.

The two fatal victims and eight of the injured were students at Brown University, President Christina Paxson told a news conference on Saturday evening.

Six of the injured are in critical but stable condition, one is in critical condition, and another is stable, local media reported, citing the hospital. (Xinhua)

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Flight safely returns: A United Airlines flight experienced an engine failure during takeoff from Dulles International Airport on Saturday before safely returning to the airport, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The FAA said United flight 803 was traveling to Tokyo when the engine failed Saturday afternoon. The plane, a Boeing 777-200, safely returned to airport around 1:20 p.m. The FAA will investigate.

The plane returned to the airport after losing power in one engine, according to the airline. There were no reported injuries among the 275 passengers and 15 crew members, and a different aircraft was scheduled to continue the flight later Saturday. (AP)

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Jones enters race: Former U.S. Sen. Doug Jones, the last Democrat to hold statewide office in Alabama, kicked off his campaign for governor Friday, saying voters deserve a choice and a leader who will put aside divisions to address the state's pressing needs.

"With your help we can finish what we began. We can build the Alabama we've always deserved," Jones told a packed crowd at a Birmingham campaign rally featuring musician Jason Isbell.

He said the state has urgent economic, health care and educational issues that are not being addressed by those in public office. (AP)



A woman suffering from an illness, right, is massaged by her daughter, left, as they take refuge in Wat Prasat Srahkandal, Banteay Menchey province, Cambodia Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025. (AP)



Cambodian evacuees queue to register for relief items at a safe zone in Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia on Dec. 12, 2025. (Xinhua)



Thai rescue team members move a body into a vehicle after a Cambodian artillery strike in Sisaket province, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025. (AP)

Flights between Phnom Penh, Bangkok remain normal despite ongoing clashes

Thailand reports first civilian death as border war intensifies

KANTHARALAK, Thailand, Dec 14, (Agencies): Thailand’s government said a rocket attack from Cambodia on Sunday killed a 63-year-old villager, its first civilian death reported as a direct result of combat over the past week along the border of the two Southeast Asian nations.

Both countries confirmed that large-scale fighting, which was set off by a skirmish on Dec. 7 that wounded two Thai soldiers, continued Sunday. The two sides are battling over longstanding competing claims to patches of frontier land, some of which contain centuries-old temple ruins.

More than two dozen people on both sides of the border have officially been reported killed in the past week’s fighting, while more than half a million have been displaced.

Reporters from The Associated Press arrived at the scene of Sunday’s rocket impact in Sisaket province’s Kantharalak District about 10 minutes after it hit. They witnessed the body of a man totally wrapped in bandages being put on a stretcher that was taken to an ambulance.

A house a couple of hundred meters (yards) away was in flames, with village volunteers attempting to put out the fire with buckets of water. A piece of shrapnel believed to be from the same rocket was embedded nearby in the road.

The victim, identified as Don Patchapan, was killed in the heart of a residential area near a school, according to a Thai Army statement. Thai Government spokesperson Siripong Angkasakulkiat condemned Cambodia for deliberately firing into civilian areas, saying that such an action was “cruel and inhumane.”

Cambodia has deployed truck-mounted BM-21 rocket launchers with a range of 30-40 kilometers (19-25 miles).

Each can fire up to 40 rockets at a time but cannot be precisely targeted. They have landed largely in areas from where most people have already been evacuated.

Thai authorities say Cambodia has launched thousands of the rockets on virtually a daily basis. Thailand, meanwhile, has been carrying out airstrikes with its fighter planes, with Cambodia saying the bombing continued on Sunday. Both sides have employed drones for surveillance and delivering bombs.

The Thai military has acknowledged 15 of its troops have died during the fighting, and estimated Sunday that there have been at least 221 fatalities among Cambodian soldiers. Cambodia denounced the Thai count of its dead as disinformation but has not yet acknowledged any military casualties. It has said at least 11 civilians have been killed and more than six dozen wounded.

Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Manet delivered a morale-boosting message to his countrymen on Sunday, writing on social media that he is proud to see this nation’s strength “in this situation where our country is facing difficulties due to aggression from neighboring countries.”

The new fighting derailed a ceasefire promoted by U.S. President Donald Trump that ended five days of earlier combat in July. It had been brokered by Malaysia and pushed through by pressure from Trump, who threatened to withhold trade privileges unless Thailand and Cambodia agreed. It was formalized in more detail in October at a regional meeting in Malaysia that Trump attended.

Trump announced this past Friday that the two countries had agreed at his urging to renew the ceasefire, but Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul denied making any commitment and Cambodia announced it was continuing

to fight in what it said is self-defense.

A Thai Navy warship in the Gulf of Thailand joined the fighting on Saturday morning, trading fire with guns based in Cambodia’s southwestern province of Koh Kong. Each side blamed the other for initiating the exchange on a new front.

Meanwhile, flights between Phnom Penh and Bangkok as well as those between Siem Reap and Thailand are operating as normal although the Cambodia-Thailand border fighting is still going on, a Cambodian civil aviation spokesperson said on Saturday.

“So far, Cambodia’s two international airports -- the Siem Reap Angkor International Airport and the Techo International Airport, which serves the capital city of Phnom Penh -- have still accommodated flights from Thailand as usual. There is no change,” Sinn Chanserey Vutha, secretary of state and spokesperson of Cambodia’s State Secretariat of Civil Aviation (SSCA), told Xinhua on Saturday evening.

“Flights are still operating as usual, as the SSCA is monitoring the situation closely daily,” he added.

Vutha said there are 77 flights between Phnom Penh and Bangkok per week, with 53 flights operated by five Thai airlines and 24 flights operated by two Cambodian airlines.

He added that there are 63 flights between Siem Reap and Thailand per week, including 35 flights from Siem Reap to Suvarnabhumi airport, 21 flights to Don Mueang airport, and seven flights to Phuket airport.

According to the spokesperson, airspace over fighting zones, which was closed during the previous clashes in July, remains closed until further notice.

The Cambodia-Thailand border conflict has reignited since Dec. 7, and the fighting is still going on as of Saturday afternoon, the Cambodian defense ministry said in a press release.

In related news, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Saturday that he has held separate telephone conversations with Thailand’s caretaker Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, calling on both sides to implement a ceasefire starting from 22:00 (1500 GMT) Saturday.

Via social media, Anwar stated that he conveyed Malaysia’s deep concern over the current situation during the calls and urged both parties to immediately cease all forms of hostilities and refrain from any further military actions, including the use of force or the forward movement of armed units.

To de-escalate tensions and enhance transparency, Malaysia has requested the deployment of an ASEAN Observer Team, led by the Malaysian Chief of Defense Forces, to monitor the on-site situation. Findings from the monitoring will be submitted to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting scheduled for Dec. 16.

Hun Manet said on his official social media account on the same day that Cambodia welcomes and supports the ceasefire initiative proposed by Anwar.

However, Anutin confirmed in a media interview on Saturday afternoon that there would be no ceasefire on Saturday night. He emphasized that Thailand must fully defend its national sovereignty and the safety of its people at present and does not need to follow orders from anyone.

The Cambodia-Thailand border conflict has reignited since Dec. 7, causing casualties to both sides.

Right-wing wave lifts Kast in Chile election

SANTIAGO, Chile, Dec 14, (AP): As Chileans head to vote on Sunday, even detractors of ultra-conservative former lawmaker **José Antonio Kast** say the candidate whose radical ideas lost him the past two elections is now almost certain to become Chile’s next leader.

Kast’s meaningful lead in the polls over his rival in the presidential runoff, communist Jeannette Jara, shows how the hard-liner agitating for mass deportations of immigrants has seized the mantle of the traditional right in a country that once defined its post-dictatorship democratic revival with a vow to contain such political forces.

But much is also up for grabs about Chile’s political direction. Kast’s claim to a popular mandate depends on his margin of victory on Sunday over Jara, the center-left governing party candidate who narrowly beat him in the first round of elections last month.

Although various right-wing parties won around 70% of the vote in that election, substantial support for a populist center-right candidate who described himself as an alternative to Kast’s “fascism” revealed that, between the contrasting ideologies of the front-runners, sit hundreds of thousands of centrist voters with no real representation.

“Both are too extreme for me,” said Juan Carlos Pileo, 44, who plans to cast a blank ballot Sunday, as voting

is now mandatory in Chile’s elections. “I can’t trust someone who says she’s a communist to be moderate. And I can’t trust someone who exaggerates the amount of crime we have in this country and blames immigrants to be fair and respectful.”

It remains a question whether Kast, an admirer of U.S. President Donald Trump, can implement his more grandiose promises.

They include slashing \$6 billion in public spending over just 18 months without eliminating social benefits, deporting over 300,000 immigrants in Chile with no legal status and expanding the powers of the army to fight organized crime in a country still haunted by Gen. Augusto Pinochet’s bloody military dictatorship from 1973 to 1990.

For one, Kast’s far-right Republican Party lacks a majority in Congress, meaning that he’ll need to negotiate with moderate right-wing forces that could bristle at those proposals, significantly shaping policy and his own legacy.

Political compromises could temper Kast’s radicalism, but also jeopardize his position with voters who expect him to deliver quickly on his law-and-order campaign promises.

At each campaign event, Kast has taken to ticking off the number of days remaining until Chile’s March 11 presidential inauguration, warning they should get out before they’ll “have to leave with just the clothes on their backs.”

Jorge Rubio, 63, a Chilean banker in downtown Santiago, the capital, said he’s “also counting down the days.”



Kast



Police cordon off an area at Bondi Beach after a reported shooting in Sydney, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025. (AP)

29 people confirmed wounded

Gun rampage at Bondi Beach kills 11, one shooter fatally neutralized

SYDNEY, Dec 14, (AP): Two gunmen shot dead eleven people on Sunday at Sydney’s Bondi Beach, police said. One gunman was fatally shot by police and the second arrested.

The suspect was in critical condition, authorities said. A massive emergency response was underway, with injured people loaded into ambulances.

At least 29 people were confirmed wounded, according to a statement by police in New South Wales state, where Sydney is located. Two of those hurt were police officers.

Australian authorities haven’t confirmed what the target of the mass shooting was. Hundreds had gathered for an event at Bondi Beach called Chanukah by the Sea, which was celebrating the start of the Hanukkah Jewish festival.

Dramatic footage apparently filmed by a member of the public and broadcast on Australian television channels showed someone appearing to tackle and disarm one of the gunmen, before pointing the man’s weapon at him.

Lachlan Moran, 32, from Melbourne, was waiting for his family nearby when he heard shots, he told The Associated Press. He dropped the beer he was carrying for his brother and ran.

“You heard a few pops, and I freaked out and ran away. ... I started sprinting. I just had that intuition. I sprinted as quickly as I could,” Moran said. He said he heard shooting off and on for about five minutes.

“Everyone just dropped all their possessions and everything and were running and people were crying and it was just horrible,” Moran said.

Police said their operation was “ongoing” and that a “number of suspicious items located in the vicinity” were being examined by specialist officers. Emergency services were called to Campbell Parade about 6.45 p.m. responding to reports of shots being fired.

Local news outlets spoke to distressed and bloody bystanders who witnessed the horror. New South Wales Premier Chris Minns described the reports and images coming from the scene as “deeply distressing.”

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement that his thoughts were with all those affected.

“The scenes in Bondi are shocking and distressing,” he said. “Police and emergency responders are on the ground working to save lives.”

Mass shooting deaths in Australia are extremely rare. A 1996 massacre in the Tasmanian town of Port Arthur, where a lone gunman killed 35 people, prompted the government to drastically tighten gun laws and made it much more difficult for Australians to acquire firearms.

Significant mass shootings this century included two murder-suicides with death tolls of five people in 2014, and seven in 2018, in which gunmen killed their own families and themselves.

In 2022, two police officers were shot and killed by Christian extremists at a rural property in Queensland state. The three shooters in that incident, conspiracy theorists who hated the police, were also shot and killed by officers after a six-hour siege in the region of Wiambilla, along with one of their neighbors.



Left: Emergency workers transport a person on a stretcher after a reported shooting at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025. Right: Police set up as they investigate at Bondi Beach after a reported shooting in Sydney on Sunday. (AP)

Subcontinent

India, Georgia tackle cooperation: India and Georgia on Saturday discussed all gamut of the bilateral relationship and current regional and global developments.

A statement from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said that as part of the 8th India-Georgia Foreign Office Consultations held in Tbilisi both the sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations including political engagement, trade and economic cooperation, cultural exchanges and people-to-people ties.

They also held deliberations on ways to further expanding cooperation in new areas as they exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

The Indian delegation was led by Secretary (West) at the Ministry of External Affairs Sibi George while Deputy Foreign Minister of the Georgia Alexander Khvitiashvili led Georgian delegation during the talks. (AP)

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Chinese delegation visits Sri Lanka: A delegation led by Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), concluded a three-day visit to Sri Lanka on Saturday at the invitation of the Sri Lankan side.

During the visit, Yang met respectively with Bimal Rathnayake, member of the Politburo of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), chair of the Sri Lanka-China Parliamentary Friendship Association, and minister of transport, highways and urban development, and Vijitha Herath, minister of foreign affairs, foreign employment and tourism. He also met with Sunil Kumara Gamage, minister of youth affairs and sports, and Vraie Cally Balthazaar, mayor of Colombo.

Yang held a group discussion with Indrananda Abeysekera, president of the Association for Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation, and heads of other Sri Lankan organizations committed to friendship with China, on deepening people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. (Xinhua)

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6 Bangladeshi peacekeepers killed: Six peacekeepers from the Bangladesh Army were killed and eight others were injured after attackers targeted a United Nations base in Abyei, Sudan, the Inter Service Public Relations of the Bangladesh Army said in a statement Saturday night.

“War is ongoing,” added the statement. No further details were immediately available.

Bangladesh interim government’s Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has expressed deep shock over the incident. (Xinhua)

In recognition of its employees' efforts & as part of its commitment to promoting a culture of outstanding performance

Gulf Bank honors its outstanding employees in 2025



Corporate management with Faisal Al-Gharaballi, General Manager of International Banking Services.



Marketing and Corporate Communications team, with Chief Marketing Officer Najla Al-Essa in the center.



Consumer Banking team with General Manager Bader Al-Ali in the center.



Corporate Affairs team, with General Manager Dari Al-Bader in the center.



Group photo of risk management team.



The Human Resources Department, with Assistant General Manager Hamed Al-Tamimi in the center.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: As part of its ongoing commitment to recognizing employee efforts and fostering a culture of outstanding performance, Gulf Bank organized its annual recognition ceremony for outstanding employees in 2025. This first-of-its-kind event celebrates employees from 15 different departments, selected based on their commitment to and application of the Bank's core values: ambition, people, accountability, and simplicity.

The event reflects Gulf Bank's vision of establishing a work culture founded on motivation, excellence, and creativity. The Bank continues to develop a supportive work environment that encourages professional growth, initiative, and innovation, positively impacting the quality of services provided to customers and the achievement of the Bank's strategic objectives.

During the ceremony, the Bank honored a select group of employees who embodied its corporate values in their daily performance – whether through initiatives they introduced, their positive impact on their teams, or their commitment to enhancing the customer experience and raising service standards. Award recipients were selected through a rigorous evaluation process in collaboration with the

- Strengthening and embedding a work culture based on motivation, excellence, and creativity, positively reflected in the banking services provided to customers
- Placing investment in employees at the top of its priorities, as they are the driving force behind continued progress and the achievement of sustainable excellence

relevant departments to ensure recognition of individuals who made a tangible and effective contribution throughout the year.

This recognition represents a new step within a series of strategic initiatives adopted by Gulf Bank to build a positive and integrated work environment, strengthen employee loyalty, and acknowledge their efforts through formal and effective platforms. It also highlights Gulf Bank's vision of embedding a work

culture based on motivation, excellence, and creativity.

Gulf Bank continues to strengthen its position as one of the leading banking institutions that values human capital as a key pillar of success, placing investment in employees at the forefront of its priorities, as they are the driving force behind continued progress and the achievement of sustainable excellence.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading bank in Kuwait by engaging its employees in a comprehensive and diverse work environment to deliver exceptional customer service, while remaining committed to serving the community sustainably. Through its wide network of branches and innovative digital services, the Bank empowers its customers to choose how and where they conduct their banking transactions, while ensuring a smooth and fast banking experience.

In support of Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and in line with its commitment to collaborate with various stakeholders to achieve this vision, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving strong advancements in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance dimensions through diverse, strategically selected initiatives both within and beyond the Bank.

National Holidays TVC captures hearts with patriotic message

Zain wins 4 Kuwait Creativity Awards for campaigns that blended purpose, craft, and community impact



Dr. Nasser Muhaisen and Madhi Al-Khamees honor Zain.



Al-Khamees with the Zain team during the ceremony.



Waleed Al-Khashti receives the award for Best Personality in Public Relations.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Zain Kuwait added four awards to its creative track record for its 2025 TVCs and media productions, which combined purpose, excellence in execution, and meaningful community impact. This achievement came on the sidelines of the 13th edition of the Kuwait Creativity Award ceremony.

Zain was honored during the ceremony organized by the Arab Media Forum, held under the patronage of H.E. the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, with the attendance of the Ministry of Information Undersecretary Dr. Nasser Muhaisen, Arab Media Forum Secretary General Madhi Al-Khamees, alongside media professionals, artists, content creators, and influencers.

Zain won awards for its 2025 National Holidays TVC, the mini-documentary A Wonderful World Beyond Borders, the Khaleeji Zain 26 TVC, in addition to the award for Best Personality in Public Relations that recognized Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti.

The National Holidays TVC received wide public attention and engagement. Produced by Joy, its lyrics captured emotions of patriotism and pride, starring Kuwait and Gulf music icon Abdullah Al-Ruwaished, alongside

renowned artists Mustafa Ahmed and Ibrahim Dashti. The lyrics were written by poet Salem Sayyar Al-Enzi and composed by Sulaiman Ghannam Al-Daikan.

Zain's mini-documentary film, A Wonderful World Beyond Borders, highlighted the success story behind a historic achievement recorded by Kuwait in Guinness World Records, following an intercontinental robotic tele-surgery that surpassed 12,000 kilometers, linking Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital in Kuwait with Cruz Vermelha Hospital in Brazil. The accomplishment was the result of close collaboration between the Ministry of Health, Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, Zain, and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

In celebration of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup (Khaleeji Zain 26) and to welcome Kuwait's guests, Zain launched a TV commercial starring outstanding local talents Humoud Al-Khudhur, Khaled Al-Mudhaffar, and Lulwah Al-Mulla. The TVC was vibrant with life, color, and emotion, reflecting deep excitement and great pride in this tournament that holds a special place in the hearts of the Gulf's people.

The TVC opened in a lively village that embodied the spirit of Gulf communities, and concluded at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, which hosted the

tournament's matches and stood as a symbol of solidarity and unity through shared passion. It was not merely an advertising campaign, but a celebration of the Gulf spirit, its traditions, and the unity that brings its peoples together.

Zain is keen for the creative character of its campaigns and artistic productions to remain a natural extension of its brand identity and values. They go beyond visual appeal to reflect the pulse of society and keep pace with its interests. From this perspective, Zain's vision extends beyond providing digital services, toward building a presence that touches the details of everyday life and shares in people's occasions, milestones, and impactful causes.

This recognition reflects the level of excellence Zain continues to establish across its marketing and advertising journey year after year, reaffirming its commitment to continuously developing this pillar as Kuwait's leading national operator. Zain is driven by a firm belief that media, across both traditional and digital platforms, has a tangible influence in shaping awareness and behavior, and that effective advertising remains among the most important channels for communicating with the community.

The Kuwait Creativity Award aims to spotlight the ad-



The recognition reflects Zain's creativity, identity, and values.

vertising sector locally and across the Arab region by encouraging positive competition and showcasing creative talent, contributing to the development of professionals' capabilities and strengthening their artistic skills. The awards also focus on supporting messages that carry constructive themes and positive ideas within advertising content.

A new milestone in ABK’s long-term strategic vision

ABK launches new brand identity ‘ABK Wealth Management,’ unifying investment and private banking services

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has announced the launch of its new brand identity ‘ABK Wealth Management,’ which brings together the identities of ABK Capital and ABK’s Private Banking division. This move represents a significant milestone in the Bank’s long-term strategy to strengthen its wealth management services and offer integrated solutions focused on serving clients across the region and beyond.

Commenting on this occasion, Sherif ElRafie, CEO of ABK Capital, stated, “The launch of ABK Wealth Management reflects our deep commitment to the people we serve. It stems from truly listening to our clients, understanding their goals, challenges, and aspirations in a rapidly evolving financial environment. This new identity strengthens our promise to deliver clarity, trust, and tailored solutions through a platform built around their needs. As their world changes, so do we, with a singular focus of helping our clients thrive.”

Empowering Clients

ABK Wealth Management offers a unified, world-class platform that brings together diverse investment opportunities, all managed through the guidance of a trusted relationship advisor. Designed in response to our clients’ evolving needs, this integrated offering redefines simplicity and personalization, combining ABK’s investment expertise with a seamless and personalized experience that empowers clients to manage their wealth with confidence.

ElRafie, said, “Our continued investment in the development of ABK Capital is reflected in the launch of ABK Wealth Management. This unified brand simplifies access to our tailored offerings and empowers clients to reach a wider range of solutions designed specifically for them.”

Strategic Growth

ElRafie added that ABK Wealth Management is central to ABK’s strategy to deepen relationships with a discerning client base seeking sophisticated financial solutions. The new brand identity brings together advanced portfolio management, global investment strategies, comprehensive risk advisory, and financial planning capabilities delivered through a seamless high-performance platform designed to meet the needs of today’s most ambitious clients.

“This milestone reflects our deep commitment to innovation and excellence,” ElRafie said. “By merging the identities of ABK Capital and ABK’s Private Banking division under ABK Wealth Management, we aim to deliver greater value, higher efficiency, and access to the world’s leading investment opportunities through our innovative tools and financial solutions.”

Client-Centric Design

The new identity offers a comprehensive wealth management experience for clients seeking reliable advice and tailored strategies. It draws on the expertise of ABK Capital and ABK’s Private Banking professionals and is supported by strong partnerships with top-tier global asset managers.

Mohammad AlQattan, Chief Consumer Officer at ABK, commented, “Our clients want clarity, simplicity, and a team that



Sherif ElRafie, CEO of ABK Capital



Mohammad AlQattan, Chief Consumer Officer at ABK

sees the bigger picture. Whether it’s a multi-generational wealth plan or a high-value investment, ABK Wealth Management is equipped to deliver the ideal outcome.”

He added, “The new brand identity combines traditional service excellence with digital innovation, fostering closer client relationships through technology that enhances ease, transparency, and personalization.”

He revealed that the Bank is focused on meeting the aspirations of Private Banking clients and keeping pace with their lifestyle by launching exclusive offers tailored to them, leveraging the expertise of major institutional partners to help them grow and preserve their wealth, and providing advisory services that reinforce their satisfaction and confidence in the Bank’s capabilities as their ideal banking partner throughout their financial and investment journey.

He added that with the official launch of the new ABK Wealth Management identity, the coming period will witness several key steps that will enhance and expand the solutions offered to clients in the Kuwaiti market, as well as across regional and global markets. He noted that the team is



fully prepared to provide the necessary advisory support that elevates the financial and banking experience

of high-net-worth clients, while strengthening the Bank’s competitive position locally, regionally, and internationally.

He further noted that ABK Wealth Management will adopt a client-centric approach focused on developing customized solutions that align with the individual needs of high-net-worth clients, understanding each client’s unique financial objectives, and designing tailored strategies to effectively manage risk. This ensures that the Bank remains the first and most trusted choice in wealth management, committed to helping clients build a lasting legacy for generations to come.

He stated that the core focus of the new identity will be to empower clients to understand the markets and lead the future with unwavering confidence, adopting a perspective that goes beyond the traditional concept of wealth. It will also deepen their understanding of how to identify the right timing to make informed financial and investment decisions that best serve their interests.

He concluded, “Clients will now enjoy an expanded array of benefits, including

access to global investment opportunities, portfolio strategies, dedicated wealth advisors, real-time portfolio management tools, and comprehensive financial planning. These services are enhanced by partnerships with global institutions offering exclusive market insights.”

The launch of ABK Wealth Management will not result in any legal changes to the services provided by ABK, which remain fully approved by the Central Bank of Kuwait, or ABK Capital, which is regulated by the Capital Markets Authority.

The introduction of ABK Wealth Management underlines ABK’s ongoing focus on delivering long-term value to clients, shareholders, and the broader community. As financial markets evolve, ABK continues to position itself as a trusted partner offering stability, opportunity, and insight across every economic cycle.

Seamless Experience

ABK Wealth Management brings together the investment capabilities of Ahli Capital Investment (ABK Capital), the bank’s owned investment arm and the Private Banking expertise at ABK).

This integrated approach combines ABK’s legacy of personalized relationship banking with Ahli Capital’s deep market insight and portfolio management expertise—offering our high-net-worth clients a seamless and comprehensive wealth management experience.

From bespoke banking solutions and exclusive credit facilities to strategic investment advisory and asset management, ABK Wealth Management is designed to preserve, grow, and protect your wealth across generations.

By aligning private banking and investment under one umbrella, we deliver a unified service built on trust, discretion, and excellence—helping you navigate opportunities with confidence and clarity.

To be the trusted wealth management partner of choice offering expert guidance, tailored strategies, and enduring value for every generation.

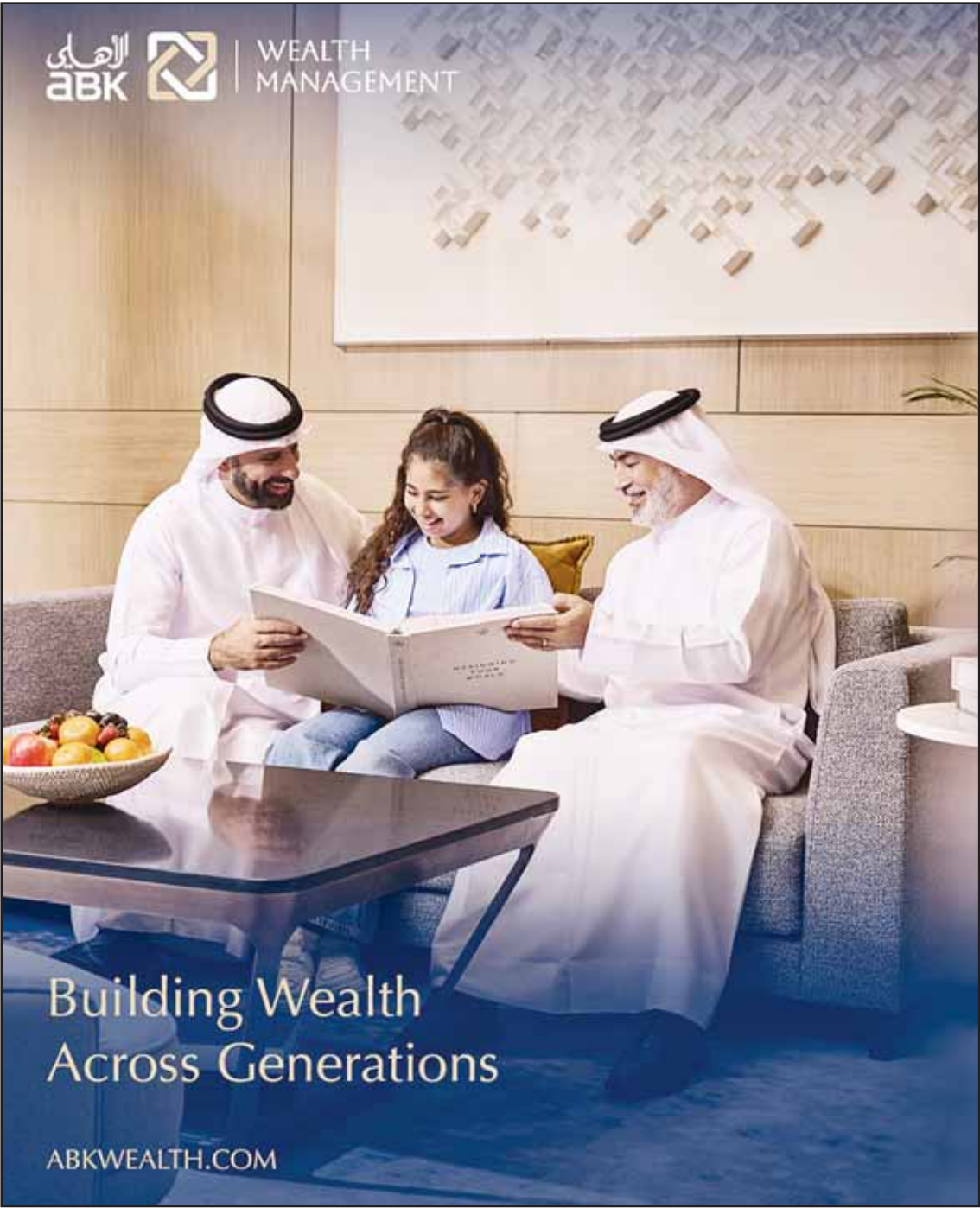
To meet our clients wealth management needs through our a fully integrated, forward-looking bespoke solutions that make a meaningful impact today and for generations to come.

We build long-term relationships on a foundation of trust, integrity, and commitment. We strive to be a dependable partner, offering guidance and clarity at every step of your financial journey.

Our team goes beyond the traditional by offering a strategic partnership built on understanding, discretion, and alignment. We work alongside you to navigate wealth preservation, growth, and succession with confidence.

Through a blend of advisory expertise, personalized service, and access to global opportunities, we empower informed decisions, seize market potential, and achieve long-term success.

Leveraging ABK group’s robust regional presence and international partnerships, we offer clients access to a world of investment opportunities with the insight and care of a trusted local advisor.



As part of its strategic partnership for Kuwait Hackathon

KFH reinforces national cybersecurity & empowers a digitally skilled generation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the third edition of Kuwait Hackathon, organized by CODED Academy in cooperation with the National Cyber Security Center (NCSC).

The participation aligns with KFH's social responsibility and its leading role in empowering youth, promoting innovation, and encouraging national talents specializing in modern digital technologies and individuals interested in software and cybersecurity.

Head of Public Relations and Media at KFH Group, Yousef Al-Ruwaieh affirmed the Bank's commitment to supporting this initiative, the largest national cybersecurity event in Kuwait, with the participation of over 300 Kuwaiti youth. The competition was launched on the sidelines of the NEXUS exhibition under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

While receiving an honor on behalf of KFH, Al-Ruwaieh stated in a press release that fostering innovation and creativity among Kuwaiti youth is one of the key pillars of the Bank's social responsibility and sustainability strategy.

He explained that such initiatives help strengthen national cybersecurity and contribute to building a digitally qualified generation capable of tackling future challenges.

"Digital literacy has become a necessity rather than a choice, which calls for investing in the community and youth and equipping them with the skills required in cybersecurity and advanced technology," He noted. "Kuwait Hackathon and other digital initiatives are an important step towards preparing a generation of national talents capable of protecting the country's digital infrastructure and qualified to lead technological transformation and support the digital economy in Kuwait."

Al-Ruwaieh expressed KFH's pride in its long-standing strategic partnership with CODED Academy, since 2018 which has resulted in the



Al-Ruwaieh:

- KFH the first entity to collaborate with CODED, taking pride in the fruitful partnerships that add value to the community

Marafi:

- The partnership with has strengthened the Academy's activities and increased the number of coding professionals

launch of many distinctive programs and initiatives that cover all age groups starting from children's programs up to initiatives involving university students and graduates such as Kuwait Codes, Kuwait Hackathon and CODED Juniors. These initiatives have contributed to qualifying youth, supporting start-ups, and developing entrepreneurship and advanced technical skills in the community.

He further noted that KFH was the first entity to collaborate with CODED, highlighting the Bank's strong track record of fruitful partnerships and initiatives that add value to society and reinforce KFH's leading position as a role model in the private sector.

CODED Academy CEO - Ahmad Marafi

In his statement, CODED Academy CEO, Ahmad Marafi, commended the strategic partnership with KFH which led to strengthening the Academy's capabilities and expanding its activities and scope of services to include a larger segment of Kuwaiti youth. He added that the partnership with KFH has contributed to increasing the number of qualified coding professionals, reflecting the Bank's pioneering role in promoting innovation and empowering youth in technology fields as part of its social responsibility.

Marafi pointed out that Kuwait Hackathon is the largest national initiative in cybersecurity, organized to global standards, and represents a turning point in equipping a competitive digital generation in line with Kuwait's vision for digital leadership.

Competition results

The competition witnessed strong participation in two categories: Professionals, and High School and University students. In the Professionals track, team (zero2RET) secured first place, followed by (P4YL04D.exe) in second and (5A) in third. Meanwhile, in the other category, team (Wave Blue) came first, (RootX) second, and (PowerxSec) third.

Boursa Kuwait ends Sunday in the green

General index rises 25 points

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Sunday's session on a positive note, as the general index rose by 25.26 points, or 0.28%, to close at 9,083.47 points.

Trading activity saw 313.2 million shares exchanged across 19,964 transactions, totaling a value of KD 82.15 million (approximately USD 250.5 million).

The Main Market Index recorded a strong performance, gaining 77.73 points (or 0.94%) to settle at 8,346.31

points. This came on the back of 162.2 million shares traded through 11,993 transactions, worth KD 30.2 million (around USD 92.1 million).

The Premier Market Index also advanced, adding 13.71 points (or 0.14%) to close at 9,715.05 points, with 151 million shares traded through 7,971 transactions, valued at KD 51.8 million (approximately USD 157.9 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index climbed 34.55 points, or 0.40%, to reach 8,647.09 points, with 80.3 million shares changing hands in 5,174 transactions worth KD 15.2 million (about USD 46.3 million).

Ardian eyes Kuwait for regional expansion hub

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The French investment firm "Ardian" is planning to open an office in Kuwait to capitalize on growing opportunities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Bloomberg expects the branch to open next year, noting that it will serve as a gateway for Kuwaiti investors to Europe.

Bloomberg also reported that Wa-

fra, owned by the Public Institution for Social Security, acquired a minority stake in the French company last month. Ardian manages assets worth approximately \$196 billion and would be the first major European private equity firm to establish a presence in Kuwait.

The company has nearly 20 offices worldwide, including one in Abu Dhabi.

Arab energy cooperation key to market stability

AEO holds 115th ministerial meeting in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14, (KUNA): The 115th ministerial meeting of the Arab Energy Organization (AEO) kicked off on Sunday, chaired by Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi.

The AEO member states convened the meeting to address organizational priorities and coordination amid rapid global energy developments.

In his opening remarks, Al-Roumi said the meeting comes at a critical stage for the organization given rapid transformations in the global energy sector that require closer coordination, unified visions and sustained cooperation among member states to support market stability and bolster the organization's regional and international standing.

He said the agenda covers a range of core organizational issues, including discussion of the proposed 2026 estimated budget, a review of the latest developments related to the study on advancing the organization's work, and updates on the project to modernize internal regulations and bylaws.

Al-Roumi also stated that ministers will also examine progress and initiatives, in addition to developments in the oil and energy sectors and the shared responsibilities these changes place on member states.

Al-Roumi reaffirmed Kuwait's full support for all initiatives and steps undertaken by the AEO to develop its work, keep pace with global energy transformations and deepen integration among member states, in line with the directives of the country's political leadership and Kuwait's active role in supporting Arab energy cooperation and advancing coordination across the



Kuwait chairs 115th Arab Energy Organization ministerial session.

sector.

He also commended the General Secretariat for its efforts in preparing and organizing the meeting, expressing hope that the outcomes would further strengthen joint Arab action and contribute to a more stable and sustainable future for the energy sector.

For his part, AEO's Chief Jamal Al-Loughani thanked the Kuwaiti government for hosting the meetings and for its continued support of the organization's activities, praising Al-Roumi's efforts in facilitating the convening of the ministerial session.

Al-Loughani said the General Secretariat has been implementing a development project since the issuance of a ministerial council decision, in coordination with a specialized committee and under the supervision of the Executive Bureau.

He added that the progress achieved places a greater responsibility on the Secretariat to continue its work and intensify efforts to enhance the organization's performance, pointing out that the AEO is entering a new historical phase marked by aspirations, opportunities and challenges that require collective action.

He underscored the ministerial council's central role as the cornerstone for coordinating policies and efforts aimed at building a supportive framework for the organization's future, expressing appreciation for the council's continued guidance and support.

Fed cuts rates for the third time, while other central banks pause

By National Bank of Kuwait

This week's market narrative was dominated by a dovish-but-divided Fed and a chorus of largely steady central banks, set against patchy growth data. The Fed cut the funds rate again to 3.50–3.75%, its third 25 bp move this year, signaled that further hikes are off the table and announced USD 40bn of T-bill purchases, even as its projections still show only one cut penciled in for 2026, leaving markets happy to price in more easing, push the dollar index back toward the high-98s and drive gold above USD 4,300 as yields drifted lower. Elsewhere, the SNB kept its key rate at 0% and reiterated its reluctance to return to negative territory, while the Bank of Canada held at 2.25% amid decent growth and inflation near target, and Australia's RBA remains on hold with a softening labor market lurking beneath a stable 4.3% jobless rate. On the data front, UK GDP contracted again in October, extending a run of zero growth, whereas China's inflation ticked higher from very low levels, hinting at only a gentle improvement in demand. Equities took the policy mix as broadly supportive: The Dow notched fresh record highs and the S&P 500 extended gains. On the FX front, major currencies traded higher supported by a weaker U.S. dollar.

North America

Fed Delivers Third Straight Cut, Signals Slower Pace in 2026

The Federal Reserve lowered the federal funds target range by another 25 bps to 3.50%–3.75% in December 2025, marking a third straight cut and the lowest level since 2022. The decision was unusually divided, with three dissenting members: Stephen Miran pushed for a larger 50 bp move, while Austan Goolsbee and Jeffrey Schmid preferred to leave rates unchanged. The updated projections still point to just one additional 25 bp cut in 2026, even as the Fed upgraded its GDP growth forecasts for 2025–26 and trimmed its PCE inflation estimates only slightly, leaving unemployment forecasts at 4.5% for 2025 and 4.4% for 2026. The U.S. dollar weakened after the announcement, slipping to a seven-week low around 98.5 on the index.

U.S. Job Openings Stays High as Cooling Remains Gradual

Latest JOLTS data showed U.S. job openings edging up by 12,000 to 7.67 million in October 2025, from 7.66 million in September, underscoring that labor demand remains resilient despite softer momentum elsewhere in the economy.

The earlier September print was revised to show a hefty 431,000 jump from August's 7.23 million, with both months comfortably above the 7.2 million consensuses. Sector details were mixed: openings climbed sharply in trade, transportation and utilities (+239k) and in health care and social assistance (+49k) but fell in professional

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1640	1.1614	1.1762	1.1740	1.1675	1.1820	1.1792
GBP	1.3320	1.3284	1.3438	1.3368	1.3285	1.3470	1.3369
JPY	155.16	154.88	156.95	155.81	154.80	157.00	154.54
CHF	0.8036	0.7922	0.8085	0.7959	0.7875	0.8000	0.7882

and business services (-114k), the federal government (-25k), and leisure and hospitality (-22k). Regionally, gains in the South (+77k) and West (+12k) were partly offset by declines in the Midwest (-42k) and Northeast (-35k). The September and October figures were released together after a 43-day government shutdown delayed data collection, but the overall picture still points to a labor market that is cooling only gradually rather than cracking.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 98.399.

BoC Holds Rates Steady, with Growth and Inflation Near Target

The Bank of Canada left its target overnight rate unchanged at 2.25% in December 2025, maintaining the Bank Rate at 2.50% and the deposit rate at 2.20% after signaling in October that policy settings were "about right." Recent data have broadly supported that stance: GDP surprised to the upside with 2.6% annualized growth in the third quarter, while the unemployment rate dropped to 6.5% in November, pointing to a firmer labor market.

At the same time, inflation has eased, with headline CPI slowing to 2.2% in October and core measures holding in a 2.5–3% range, consistent with underlying inflation around 2.5%. Policymakers flagged ongoing global uncertainty, tariff-related pressures and volatile trade flows as key risks that could still generate sizeable quarter-to-quarter swings in activity. For now, the Governing Council judges that the current policy rate is appropriate to keep inflation near the 2% target while helping the economy navigate structural adjustment, but it reiterated its readiness to act if the outlook deteriorates.

The USD/CAD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3769

Europe

SNB Keeps Rates at 0.0%, Amid Very Low Inflation

The Swiss National Bank left its key policy rate

unchanged at 0%, as expected, against a backdrop of flat inflation in November – exactly at the lower end of its 0–2% target band. Headline price pressures remain subdued, with falling prices for imported goods, helped by a strong Swiss franc, offsetting only modest gains in domestic goods and services, which rose by about 0.4% y/y.

Despite this soft backdrop, policymakers reiterated that they are keen to avoid a return to negative interest rates, citing the "undesirable effects" such a move would bring. Updated projections still show inflation remaining within the price-stability range over the entire forecast horizon, with averages of roughly 0.2% in 2025 and gradually rising toward 0.8% by late 2028. That profile allows the SNB to justify keeping rates at 0% for many months, even as it acknowledges the risk that inflation could briefly slip below zero again if imported disinflation persists.

The USD/CHF currency pair was last seen trading at 0.7959

United Kingdom

UK Growth Stalls Again as Services and Construction Weaken

UK's recent economy growth data were weak, with the economy shrinking 0.1% m/m in October 2025, the same fall as in September and worse than the small rise markets had expected. This is now the fourth month in a row without growth, showing how fragile activity has become. The services sector was the main drag, down 0.3%, hit by lower activity in shops, car repairs, and IT and consulting services. Construction also fell 0.6%, mainly because of a drop in new private housing projects. The only real positive came from industry, where output rose 1.1% after a sharp fall the month before, helped by stronger car production, mining and utilities.

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3368

Asia-Pacific

RBA on Hold as Inflation Risks Edge Higher

The Reserve Bank of Australia left its cash rate unchanged at 3.6% for a third consecutive meeting, maintaining a data-driven stance as signs emerge that inflation risks are tilting higher. The decision was unanimous, with the Board stressing that recent indicators still point to sticky price pressures and a labor market that remains tight. Capacity utilization has climbed to 83.6%, an 18-month high, reinforcing the risk of renewed inflation if growth re-accelerates. The Australian dollar and three-year government bond yields both moved higher as swap markets priced in roughly a one-in-three chance of a hike at February's meeting. The planned removal of government power-bill rebates is expected to lift headline CPI, but the RBA has already factored this into its projections, supporting a "wait-and-see" posture into early 2026.

Aussie Jobless Rate Steady but Labor Market Softens

Australia's unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.3% in November 2025, coming in a touch better than expected as the number of unemployed fell to a three-month low. Beneath the surface, however, conditions softened: total employment dropped by about 21,300, reflecting a sharp fall in full-time positions that more than offset gains in part-time work. The participation rate eased to an eight-month low of 66.7%, underemployment climbed to 6.2%, and total hours worked declined by 1 million, all pointing to a cooling labor market despite the stable headline jobless rate.

The AUD/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 0.6652

China Inflation Higher, Up from a Low Base Previously

In China, headline CPI quickened to 0.7% y/y in November 2025 from 0.2% previously, in line with expectations and the strongest pace since early 2024. The main shift came from food prices, which turned positive (+0.2% y/y) for the first time in about ten months thanks to a rebound in fresh-produce costs. Consumer trade-in schemes continued to support demand, helping to firm prices in categories like clothing and healthcare, while education inflation eased slightly. Housing costs were broadly unchanged, and transport prices fell more sharply, leaving the overall inflation picture uneven. By contrast, core CPI held at 1.2% y/y, its highest level in roughly 20 months, hinting at a gradual strengthening in underlying price pressures.

The USD/CNY currency pair was last seen trading at 7.0548

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30560.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



Got a birthday or event?
Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!
Email your write-up and photos to
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We'll feature it on our What's On page!

Spirit of the season and coming New Year celebrated

IWG Kuwait hosts annual Seasonal Dinner at Crowne Plaza Hotel



Cutting of the ceremonial cake.



Participants pose for the camera.



Participants pose for a group photo after the closing ceremony.

Photos by Samer Shaqir

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: To celebrate the spirit of the season and the coming New Year, the International Women's Group-Kuwait (IWG) held its annual Seasonal Dinner for members and honored guests, including women ambassadors accredited to the State of Kuwait, on Wednesday, 10 December 2025, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The evening opened with welcoming remarks from the master of ceremonies, Mrs. Layla Boulos.

IWG President Mrs. Marika Kochlamazashvili, spouse of the Ambassador of Georgia, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the IWG Executive Board since September and conveyed her appreciation to the Honorary President, H.E. Sheikha Hanouf Bader Al Mohammed Al Sabah, as well as to the Executive Board for their support. She highlighted the group's vibrant program of cultural and community activities throughout the year

and noted the Executive Board's hard work and unwavering commitment, which continue to strengthen the IWG and elevate its mission. She wished members an evening filled with warmth, inspiration, and anticipation for a prosperous year ahead.

Bringing the spirit of harmony and celebration, the program began with a musical performance by the St. John the Baptist Scout Band from the Orthodox Church.



Beautiful voices and harmonies of the Savior Choir from the Catholic Church.

The evening continued with a heartfelt address by Mrs. Rima Khalidi, wife of the Palestinian ambassador and Vice President of the IWG. She spoke about the significance of the Palestinian city of Bethlehem during this season, a time

when it captures the world's attention and brings together Palestinian Christians and Muslims in shared festivities, parades, and public celebrations. Guests then enjoyed a short video offering a glimpse into Bethlehem's seasonal tra-

ditions, followed by a musical performance by renowned Palestinian singer Yacoub Shaheen.

The festive atmosphere was further elevated by the beautiful voices and harmonies of the Savior Choir from the Catholic Church, adding to the evening's spirit of unity and joy.

For the final segment of the program, attendees participated in karaoke led by Mrs. Baigalmaa Bayantsagaan, spouse of the Mongolian ambassador, creating a lively and cheerful close to the night's activities.

Guests spent the rest of the evening enjoying raffles and an exquisite dinner prepared by the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The Seasonal Dinner concluded with warm wishes for the coming year and gratitude to all IWG members and partners for their continued support of the organization's mission to foster cultural understanding, international friendship, and the empowerment of women in Kuwait.

Ghana Embassy in Kuwait holds diaspora engagement forum



Embassy officials led by Mr. Mohamed Habib Idris stand for the Kuwait anthem.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: The Embassy of Ghana in Kuwait held a significant diaspora engagement session on December 5, 2025, bringing together members of the Ghanaian community at the Embassy premises. The event focused on labour-related issues and provided a platform for Ghanaians in Kuwait to voice their concerns. The program began at 4 p.m. with an opening Islamic prayer.

Present at the gathering were officers of the Ghana Embassy, including His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Habib Idris, Ambassador of Ghana to the State of Kuwait; Mrs. Nimatu Ziblim Adam, Head of Chancery; Mr. Majeed Alhasan, Counsellor for Political and Diaspora Affairs; Mr. Husin-Mubarak Andani, Consular; and other officials of the mission.

Also in attendance were Dr. Gillani Shah, Senior Attorney at the Legal Center Law Firm in Kuwait; Madam Gertrude Essah Acholatshe, Vice President of the Ghanaian Union in Kuwait (GUK); and Mr. Kwame Amponsah, Vice President of GUK.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador

Mohamed Habib Idris urged Ghanaians in Kuwait to familiarize themselves with and respect the laws of the State of Kuwait. He emphasized that every Ghanaian represents the image of Ghana and therefore must safeguard the country's reputation through responsible conduct.

Addressing contractual challenges faced by some Ghanaians, he advised community members to carefully read all contract terms before signing and to always keep a copy for reference, especially in cases of dispute. He concluded by stressing the importance of unity and encouraging all Ghanaians to join the Ghanaian Union in Kuwait (GUK).

Madam Gertrude Acholache, President of GUK, encouraged attendees to uphold decency in their conduct and appearance. She also urged Ghanaians to refrain from any form of drug abuse, noting that Kuwait enforces strict laws in this regard. She ended her address by inviting Ghanaians to register with GUK, emphasizing the strength that comes from unity. Dr. Gillani Shah, Senior Attorney at the Legal Center, delivered an informative session on legal matters affecting expatriates.

Kala(Art) announces winners of Children's Day painting competition

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Kala(Art) Kuwait has announced the winners of "NIRAM 2025" Children's Day painting competition at Indian Community School, Khaitan, in association with American Tourister. The prize distribution ceremony will take place at Indian Community School, Khaitan on Friday, 30th January 2026 at 2:00 PM onward.

Kala(Art) Kuwait announced that this is the 21st consecutive year NIRAM has been conducted on the occasion of Children's Day, the birth day of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India. It is worthwhile to note that students of different nationalities from all 28 Indian Schools in Kuwait with the active participation of more than 2600 children in the competition. The School Management, as well as the Indian Community, including business establishments as sponsors, have also voluntarily extended their entire support to this wonderful event.

Winners of the Painting Competition titled "NIRAM2025" have been adjudged by the well-known Artists Mr Sasi Krishnan, Mr Sunil Kulnada, Mr Hari Chengannur and Mr Vishnu Jayakrishnan, appointed by the Executive Committee of "Kala(Art) Kuwait" and accordingly the Lists of Winners are being released by the organisers as follows:

Overall Championship 1st Position-IES Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya, 2nd Position - Indian Community School, Salmiya, 3rd Position-Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian private School, Ahmadi.

C. Bhaskaran Memorial Trophy as a tribute to the Late. Mr C Bhaskaran, one of the founders and advisory board member of Kala(Art) Kuwait, won by the Indian Community School, Khai-



A combo photo of Niram-2025 winners.

tan, the school from which the maximum number of students participated in this event.

Group-A: 1st Prize-Advika Ajishmohan, UKG, United International Indian School (UIIS-New), IInd Prize-Kaelyn Elizabeth Abhilash, 1stStd., IES-BharatiyaVidhyaBhavan, Abbasiya, and Evava Brijith Santhosh, 1stStd, Indian Community School, Amman, IIInd Prize-Mishika Joshi, 1st Std, IES-Bharatiya VidhyaBhavan, Abbasiya and Anaira Parash Thesia, 1st Std, Indian School of Excellence.

Group-B: 1st Prize-Esa Elsa Santhosh, 2nd Std., United International Indian School (UIIS-New), IInd Prize-Adria Sara Philip, 4th Std., Indian School of Excellence and Abiel Boby Mathew, 3rd Std., United International Indian School (UIIS-New), IIInd Prize-NiharikaPradesh Menon, 3rd Std., Indian Community School, Junior Branch, Salmiya and Anika Ajish, 3rd Std., United International Indian School (UIIS-New).

Group-C: 1st Prize-Erin Eliza Joseph, 6th Std., Indian English Academy (Donbosco), Salmiya, IInd Prize-Rianna Valushka Pinto, 6th Std., IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya, IIInd Prize-DakshitaSifin, 7th Std., Gulf Indian School, Fahaheel and Nayana Mariam Jiji, 7th Std., United International Indian School (UIIS-New).

Group-D: 1st Prize-Sachin Kolanachi, 8th Std., Indian Community School, Sr. Salmiya, IInd Prize-SuhanaJagta, 12th Std., IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya and Daniel Sanju Paul, 8th Std., Indian Community School, Sr. Salmiya, IIInd Prize-Delna Theresa, 9th Std., Indian Central School, Abbasiya and GauriLaiju, 9th Std. Indian Community School, Sr. Salmiya and Diya Austin 8th Std. Indian Community School, Sr. Salmiya.

Clay Sculpture: 1st Prize-Jalaludeen Akbar, 11th Std., IES-Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, Abbasiya, IInd Prize-Afia Shaikh, 10th Std., Indian

Community School, Sr. Salmiya and Naisa Mariam Jacob, 12th Std. Indian Community School, Sr. Salmiya, IIInd Prize-Ziva Mamnoon, 7th Std., Indian Community School, Khaitan and Joana Elizabeth Tity, 10th Std., Learners Own Academy, Abbasiya.

Open Canvas (for Parents & Guests): 1st Prize-Mr Mriganga Das, IInd Prize-Mrs. Priyanka Kunwar and Mrs Divya, IIInd Prize- Mrs Priya Ajish, Mr Sujay Pusadkar, and K. Surya Priya.

The organisers announced that the entire winners, consisting of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 59Merit Prizes as well as 171 Consolation Prizes (Total 261 Prizes) have already been forwarded to all participating Schools. The List may also be available at our website www.kalakuwait.net.

Kala(Art) Kuwait, highlights the exclusive prizes for the winners as first place with a Gold Coin & gold medal, second place with a silver medal and third place with a bronze medal, along with a memento & certificate. Merit and Consolation prize winners also will have a trophy & certificate.

Kala(Art) Kuwait has congratulated all the Winners and also thanked all the participants and the School Managements, Sponsors, and all Indian Associations for their wholehearted support to make the event a great success and well supported by Kuwait's English & Malayalam visual and print media and Web Portals. The organisers also convey their heartfelt thanks to the Parents and Art Teachers, according to 'Kala(Art) Kuwait' President, Siva Kumar, General Secretary, Aneesh Varghese, Treasurer, Ajith Kumar, General Convener Jiyash Abdul Kareem and Public Relations Convener, Mukesh V. P.

Blood donation camp held by MACO Kuwait and BDK

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: A blood donation camp jointly organized by Malayalees Association and Cultural Organization (MACO) Kuwait, and the

BDK Kuwait Chapter was held at the Al-Adan Blood Transfusion Center. The camp was inaugurated by eminent social worker Manoj Mavelikkara.



A photo from the event.

The inaugural function was presided over by Association President Biju Bhavans, with Regi Kumar (Secretary) delivering the welcome address. John Mathru (Chairman), Uthaman (Vice President), Sajini (Cultural Secretary), Thulasi Rani (Joint Secretary), Vasanthakumari (PRO), along with Haneefa, Shaji, Rajan, Praveen, Vinod, and Murali from the BIDKE Kuwait Chapter, extended their felicitations and addressed the gathering. Certificates were distributed to participating members in recognition of their contribution.

Susan Jose (Treasurer) delivered the vote of thanks, marking the event's conclusion. The organizers expressed gratitude to all volunteers and donors for making the blood donation camp a meaningful success.

GKPA team distributes winter clothes to Kabd workers

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: As part of its annual social service initiatives, the Kuwait Chapter of GKPA (Global Kerala Pravasi Association) distributed winter clothes to workers in the Kabd farm area. The programme was organised with the objective of providing relief and warmth to labourers facing harsh winter conditions.

The volunteer team was led by GKPA Global Chairman Mubarak Kambrath. The programme was attended by Justin P. Jose, (President of GKPA Kuwait Chapter) ; Binu Yohannan, (Secretary), Ambili Narayanan, (Women's Wing Chairperson), and Rasiyath Beevi (Women's Wing Secretary)

Representing the Central Committee and area teams, Ashraf Choorot, Jaleel Kottayam, Girija Omanakuttan, Bindhu Hawally, Menish Vas, Faisal Kambrath, Mujeeb K.T., Assainar, Ullas Udayab-

hanu, Mathew V. John, Sajena Kollam, Arshitha Lalitha Kozhikode, Mini Abbasiya, Naseer Kochi, Mayyeri Aboobacker, Jiby Abbasiya, Sajini Baiju Kaihan, along with other volunteers, were present. The support extended by Faisal Kabd at the distribution location was

especially noteworthy. Gafoor, Vanaja Rajan and Preethi Thiruvananthapuram coordinated the programme remotely.

Organisers reaffirmed their commitment to continue such meaningful humanitarian initiatives in the future, reaching out to the needy in Kuwait as well as in Kerala.



Global Kerala Pravasi Association officials pose for a family photo.

A symbolic milestone

China's 2025 box office tops 50 bln yuan as animation enjoys banner year

BEIJING, Dec 14, (Xinhua): China's 2025 cinema box office surpassed 50 billion yuan (more than 7 billion U.S. dollars)-- a symbolic milestone that analysts say underscores a banner year for animation, which now accounts for nearly half of the market's revenue.

According to data from the China Film Administration, box office receipts totaled 50 billion yuan as of 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 13, with over 1.19 billion admissions recorded nationwide this year. Domestic films contributed 40.95 billion yuan of that total, or 81.9 percent, reflecting the continued dominance of locally produced titles.

Movie data platforms Maoyan and Beacon have said this is the fifth time China's annual box office has crossed the 50-billion-yuan threshold, following 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2023.

Of the 50 films that have grossed more than 100 million yuan this year, 33 were domestic productions and 17 were foreign titles.

Animation has emerged as the year's defining force. Beacon analyst Chen Jin noted in a statement to Xinhua that animated films generated more than 24.5 billion yuan in ticket sales in 2025 -- close to half of the annual total. Analysts have widely described this as both a "harvest year" and a "breakout year" for the genre.

Four animated titles rank among the year's top-10 films: "Ne Zha 2," "Zootopia 2," "Nobody" and "Boonie Bears: Future Reborn," which respectively place first, third, sixth and ninth.

The year began with a box office phenomenon when "Ne Zha 2" grossed 15.4 billion yuan, accounting for more than 30 percent of the



A woman walks past movie posters at a movie theater in Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu Province. (Xinhua)

entire annual box office to date and raising the revenue ceiling significantly for both individual titles and

the animated film category. At the other end of the calendar, "Zootopia 2" has sparked a surge in year-end at-

tendance, setting records for the single-day box office performance of a foreign film and for total earnings by an imported animated title in China, with cumulative receipts coming in at 3.4 billion yuan as of Saturday.

Summer release "Nobody" earned 1.7 billion yuan, becoming the highest-grossing two-dimensional animated film in China's box office history.

Maoyan analyst Lai Li has said the impact of animated hits extends well beyond ticket sales. As highly expandable forms of intellectual property, he noted, they are driving rapid growth in merchandise and licensing while demonstrating long-term franchise value.

Speaking recently about the performance of "Zootopia 2," Yin Hong, vice chairman of the China Film Association and a professor at Tsinghua

University, said that imaginative, high-quality animation is a clear favorite among young people, whose social media dominance means that winning their demographic wins the market.

Beyond animation, 2025 has also seen notable breakthrough hits in the war film genre. Titles such as "Dead to Rights," "Evil Unbound," "Gezhi Town" and "Dongji Rescue" moved away from grand, sweeping narratives in favor of stories told through the perspectives of ordinary individuals.

"The shift brought a sense of freshness and earned strong word-of-mouth popularity," Lai said.

"Dead to Rights," which focuses on the 1937 Nanjing Massacre by Japanese aggressors, grossed more than 3 billion yuan, emerging as one of the year's breakout hits.

Film



People walk by the Silas W Robbins B & B in Wethersfield, Conn., Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, where parts of the Hallmark film 'Christmas on Honeysuckle Lane' were filmed. (AP)

Fans love these sweet yet predictable holiday movies

Holiday movie magic awaits on Connecticut tours

WETHERSFIELD, Conn., Dec 14, (AP): "Christmas at Pemberly Manor" and "Romance at Reindeer Lodge" may never make it to Oscar night, but legions of fans still love these sweet yet predictable holiday movies - and this season, many are making pilgrimages to where their favorite scenes were filmed.

That's because Connecticut - the location for at least 22 holiday films by Hallmark, Lifetime, and others - is promoting tours of the quaint Christmas-card cities and towns featured in this booming movie market; places where a busy corporate lawyer can return home for the holidays and cross paths with a plaid shirt-clad former high school flame who now runs a Christmas tree farm. (Spoiler alert: they live happily ever after.)

"It's exciting - just to know that something was in a movie and we actually get to see it visually," said Abby Rumpfelt of Morganton, North Carolina, after stepping off a coach bus in Wethersfield, Connecticut, at one of the stops on the holiday movie tour.

Rumpfelt was among 53 people, mostly women, on a recent weeklong "Hallmark Movie Christmas Tour," organized by Mayfield Tours from Spartanburg, South Carolina. On the bus, fans watched the matching movies as they rode from stop to stop.

To plan the tour, co-owner Debbie Mayfield used the "Connecticut Christmas Movie Trail" map, which was launched by the wintry New England state last year to cash in on the growing Christmas-movie craze.

Mayfield, who co-owns the company with her husband, Ken, said this was their first Christmas tour to holiday movie locations in Connecticut and other Northeastern states. It included hotel accommodations, some meals, tickets, and even a stop to see the Rockettes in New York City. It sold out in two weeks.

With snow flurries in the air and Christmas songs piped from a speaker, the group stopped for lunch at Heirloom Market at Comstock Ferre, where parts of the Hallmark

films "Christmas on Honeysuckle Lane" and "Rediscovering Christmas" were filmed.

Once home to America's oldest seed company, the store is located in a historic district known for its stately 1700s and 1800s buildings. It's an ideal setting for a holiday movie. Even the local country store has sold T-shirts featuring Hallmark's crown logo and the phrase "I Live in a Christmas Movie. Wethersfield, CT 06109."

"People just know about us now," said Julia Koulouris, who co-owns the market with her husband, Spiros, crediting the movie trailer in part. "And you see these things on Instagram and stuff where people are tagging it and posting it."

The concept of holiday movies dates back to the 1940s, when Hollywood produced classics like "It's A Wonderful Life," "Miracle on 34th Street," and "Christmas in Connecticut," which was actually shot at Warner Bros. studios in Burbank, California.

In 2006, five years after the launch of the Hallmark Channel on TV, Hallmark "struck gold" with the romance movie "The Christmas card," said Joanna Wilson, author of the book "Tis the Season TV: The Encyclopedia of Christmas-Themed Episodes, Specials and Made-for-TV Movies."

"Hallmark saw those high ratings and then started creating that format and that formula with the tropes, and it has now become the dominant formula that they create for their Christmas TV romances," she said.

The holiday movie industry, estimated to generate hundreds of millions of dollars a year, has expanded beyond Hallmark and Lifetime. Today, a mix of cable and broadcast networks, streaming platforms, and direct-to-video producers release roughly 100 new films annually, Wilson said. The genre has also diversified, with characters from a wider range of racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as LGBTQ+ storylines.

The formula, however, remains the same. And fans still have an appetite for a G-rated love story.

Music

Sheeran scene illuminating

Swift opens up about Eras Tour in docuseries

NEW YORK, Dec 14, (AP): "The Eras Tour was a lifetime within my life," Taylor Swift told the room at a screening of the first two episodes of her new Disney+ docuseries, "The End of an Era." "It feels insane."

Swift spoke to the small New York crowd on Tuesday - a year and one day since she concluded the history-making Eras Tour. In the room were her parents Scott and Andrea Swift and brother Austin, a select few members of the press (including Hoda Kotb, Willie Geist and Gayle King), as well as her tour dancers, the choreographer Mandy Moore, docuseries directors Don Argott and Sheena M. Joyce and a few others. The showing was briefly interrupted by security alarms as a small fire was extinguished elsewhere in the building.

"The directors expanded upon the stories of not just me, but everyone who was part of this," Swift said, before taking her seat in the crowd.

Here are key takeaways from the first two episodes of the six-episode docuseries, which launches Friday on Disney+. Two episodes will drop weekly, through Dec. 26.

The premiere episode opens in Vancouver, Canada, 15 minutes before the tour's final date. Swift, standing in a circle with her dancers, delivers an impassioned speech, reminding them the Eras Tour wasn't about pieces simply falling into place. "You put the pieces where they are," she tells them. It sets the tone for what follows: "The End of an Era" is the only behind-the-scenes look at her tour and what drove it.

Early on, Swift states that there were two distinct catalysts for the Eras Tour. One was having her back catalog sold out from underneath her, inspiring the rerecording project that showed her the value of "celebrating your past." The other was the pandemic, which heightened the desire for a return to live events.

The first episode also celebrates the incredible demand the tour created - mentioning Ticketmaster but not delving into the frustration it caused. The ticket seller sparked outrage in November 2022 when its site crashed during a presale event. The company said the site was overwhelmed by both fans and attacks from bots posing as consumers to scoop up tickets and sell them on secondary sites. The debacle prompted congressional hearings and bills in state legislatures aimed at better protecting consumers.

In August 2024, three dates were canceled in Vienna over an apparent plot to launch an attack on the concerts.

"It's like a force to be reckoned with in global culture," Swift says of the tour in the first episode. "So never did



Taylor Swift performs at Wembley Stadium as part of her Eras Tour in London. (AP)

I think we'd have a terrorist plot."

The episode continues with Swift in London, preparing to perform for the first time since the cancellations - less than week later. "We dodged a massacre situation," she says.

"Being afraid something is going to happen" to her audience, she says, "this is a new challenge."

About a week before the Vienna cancellations, a teenager killed three girls and wounded 10 people in a knife attack at a Swift-themed dance and yoga class in the English seaside town of Southport. Swift at the time said she was "completely in shock" over the violence.

As Swift contends with preparing herself for her first shows since Austria, she mentions the Southport attack and starts to cry when describing the "little kids" attacked.

"I'm going to meet some of the families tonight," she says, getting emotional before reminding herself to "lock it off," and get into pop performer mode. She compares it to being a pilot needing to adopt a "calm, cool, collected" demeanor. Later, it is revealed that Swift privately met with families of the Southport victims. That is not on camera, but the aftermath is: Swift in tears, realizing the show must go on.

Swift's fiancée, the Super Bowl champion Travis Kelce, first appears as a soothing voice on the phone, as Swift expresses her anxieties over the London shows and nailing a surprise performance with Ed Sheeran. His telepresence immediately elevates her mood.

"Thanks for making my day bet-

ter," he tells her. "Some people get a vitamin drip," she responds. "I get this conversation."

Sheeran and Swift hang backstage and work out their set in London. Florence Welch is featured in the series, too. "The persona is huge, but the person is soft," Welch says of her similarities to Swift. Later, she describes being swept up in the magic of the Eras Tour. Swift is her friend, but when she joined the pop phenomenon on stage, she couldn't help but think: "Oh my god, it's (expletive) Taylor Swift."

The Sheeran scene is particularly illuminating. She tells him she's off for two months following the London run, and she's planning on using that time to go somewhere no one can find her.

"I don't want to be tracked like an animal," she tells him, admitting to feeling "hunted" lately.

Those in and around Swift's orbit tell their stories throughout the first two episodes. Fans will meet Amos Heller, her bassist since 2007. They will learn that Mandy Moore, the famous Hollywood choreographer, joined Swift's tour after Emma Stone suggested Swift work with her. You'll see another choreographer/former dancer Amanda Balen rejoin the stage. "I don't want dancers that blend in," Swift says of her crew.

Fans will get more of Kameron Saunders, the beloved dancer, and his story - of being belittled in his field for his size, of his mother's endless support and how his brother, the professional football player Khalel Saunders, paid for his flight to audition for the tour.

Egypt reveals restored colossal statues of pharaoh in Luxor

LUXOR, Egypt, Dec 14, (AP): Egypt on Sunday revealed the revamp of two colossal statues of a prominent pharaoh in the southern city of Luxor, the latest in the government's archaeological events that aim at drawing more tourists to the country.

The giant alabaster statues, known as the Colossi of Memnon, were reassembled in a renovation project that lasted about two decades. They represent Amenhotep III, who ruled ancient Egypt about 3,400 years ago.

"Today we are celebrating, actually, the finishing and the erecting of these two colossal statues," Mohamed Ismail, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, told The Associated Press ahead of the ceremony.

Ismail said the colossi are of great significance to Luxor, a city known for its ancient temples and other antiquities. They're also an attempt to "revive how this funerary temple of king Amenhotep III looked like a long time ago," Ismail said.

Amenhotep III, one of the most prominent pharaohs, ruled during the 500 years of the New Kingdom, which was the most prosperous time for ancient Egypt. The pharaoh, whose mummy is showcased at a Cairo museum, ruled between 1390-1353 BC, a peaceful period known for its prosperity and great construction, including his mortuary temple, where the Colossi of Memnon are located, and another temple, Soleb, in Nubia.

The colossi were toppled by a strong earthquake in about 1200 BC that also destroyed Amenhotep III's funerary temple, said Mohamed Ismail, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

They were fragmented and partly quarried away, with their pedestals dispersed. Some of their blocks were reused in the Karnak temple, but archaeologists brought them back to rebuild the colossi, according to the Antiquities Ministry.

In late 1990s, an Egyptian German mission, chaired by German Egyptologist Hourig Sourouzian, began working in the temple area, including the assembly and renovation of the co-



A hot air balloon flies over the assembly of two giant alabaster statues for Pharaoh Amenhotep III, before the official opening, in the southern city of Luxor, Egypt. (AP)

lossi.

"This project has in mind ... to save the last remains of a once-prestigious temple," she said.

The statues show Amenhotep III seated with hands resting on his thighs, with their faces looking eastward toward the Nile and the rising sun. They wear the nemes headdress surmounted by the double crowns and the pleated royal kilt, which symbolizes the pharaoh's divine rule.

Two other small statues on the pharaoh's feet depict his wife, Tiye.

The colossi - 14.5 meters (48 feet) and 13.6 meters (45 feet) respectively - preside over the entrance of the king's temple on the western bank of the Nile. The 35-hectare (86-acre) complex is believed to be the largest and richest temple in Egypt and is



One of the two giant alabaster statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, is photographed during the official opening, in the southern city of Luxor, Egypt. (AP)

usually compared to the temple of Karnak, also in Luxor.

The colossi were hewn in Egyptian alabaster from the quarries of Hatnub, in Middle Egypt. They were fixed on large pedestals with inscriptions showing the name of the temple, as well as the quarry.

Unlike other monumental sculptures of ancient Egypt, the colossi were partly compiled with pieces sculpted separately, which were fixed into each statue's main monolithic alabaster core, the ministry said.

Sunday's unveiling in Luxor came just six weeks after the inauguration of the long-delayed Grand Egyptian Museum, the centerpiece of the government's bid to boost the country's tourism industry and bring cash into the troubled economy. The mega project is located near the famed Giza Pyramids and



Visitors take photos with the two giant reassembled alabaster statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, in the southern city of Luxor, Egypt. (AP)

the Sphinx.

The tourism sector, which depends heavily on Egypt's rich pharaonic artifacts, has suffered during years of political turmoil and violence following the 2011 uprising. In recent years, the sector has started to recover after the coronavirus pandemic and amid Russia's war on Ukraine - both countries are major sources of tourists visiting Egypt.

"This site is going to be a point of interest for years to come," said Tourism and Antiquities Minister Sherif Fathy, who attended the unveiling ceremony. "There are always new things happening in Luxor."

A record number of about 15.7 million tourists visited Egypt in 2024, contributing about 8% of the country's GDP, according to official figures.

AI, IoT and smart devices creating accessible, safe competition

China empowers people with disabilities using new technology

SHENZHEN, Dec 14, (Xinhua): Technology has become an invaluable partner for athletes and individuals with disabilities at China's 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games, currently underway across Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

A total of 7,824 athletes from 34 delegations have registered for the Games. The main competition began Tuesday, marking the first time the two events have been jointly hosted by the three regions of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The most significant highlight of the Games, according to the organizing committee, is the major role technology plays in assisting athletes. Across the venues, a range of cutting-edge technologies has been implemented, including the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, big data and digital twins, to create an accessible and supportive environment.

Gong Wei, a Beijing-based volunteer who has been providing remote sign language translation for more than a year, said the number of requests has increased since the Games began. Through a program on WeChat, users can connect with volunteers for video calls within seconds.

"This service not only breaks down geographic distance but also bridges the psychological gap for people with hearing impairments, offering them certainty and confidence," Gong said.

The program was developed by Shi Chengchuan, a hearing-impaired person, whose team has also created sign language translation software and devices used in public services and institutions such as government offices, hospitals and schools.

Zheng Qihao, a Games official from Guangzhou, said smart, barrier-free modules were installed across various venues. These include emergency help buttons, accessible query platforms,



The advanced all-terrain wheelchair used in China's 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games. (Handout via Xinhua)

smart service pillars and online sign language translation machines, all connected to the venue's central control system.

A technology exhibition at the main media center showcased products such as AI-powered accessibility systems, guide dog robots and advanced all-terrain wheelchairs, all of which generated significant interest from visitors.

"These products are equipped with advanced balance control algorithms and reliable mechanical structures, ensuring stability and user safety on various terrains," said Liu Yi'an, an employee from a smart wheelchair manufacturer.

He added that Guangdong has long been a leader in assistive technology production, and now, with the integration of AI, new materials and other cutting-edge technologies, mobility for people with disabilities has become safer and more convenient.

The integration of smart systems can also be seen in the newly introduced electronic dartboards, which adjust in height to accommodate wheelchair users.

"The dartboard's automatic height adjustment has made it much safer and more reliable than traditional models," said Luo Baogang, coach of Shaanxi Province's disability darts team.

"Athletes are much more comfortable with the new electronic dartboards, as they're designed with their needs in mind."

Beyond the competition floor, technologies such as guide dog robots are assisting blind athletes, and digital twin technology is enabling real-time monitoring of venue operations. A range of advanced products have been put into use during competition, helping move technologies from laboratories into real-world testing and market application.

Chen Xuejun, deputy secretary-general of the organizing committee, said the Games provide an opportunity to



A boy with hearing impairment is using remote sign language translation. (Handout via Xinhua)



The electronic dartboards used in China's 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 9th National Special Olympic Games. (Xinhua/Zheng Xin)

better integrate disability services into broader social development. "We aim for higher-quality and

more sustainable progress, so that people with disabilities can look forward to a brighter future," Chen said.



KUNA photo WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus during the press conference.

WHO: No link between vaccines and autism spectrum disorders

GENEVA, Dec 14, (KUNA): Director-General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus parts of the WHO confirm unequivocally that there is no causal link between vaccines and autism spectrum disorders.

Speaking at a press conference held in Geneva on Thursday, Ghebreyesus said that the Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety had reviewed 31 studies conducted over 15 years in several countries all confirming WHO's previous conclusions that childhood vaccines and vaccines administered during pregnancy including those containing aluminum or thimerosal do not cause autism.

Stressing the importance of vaccines, he said that over the past 25 years under-five mortality has dropped by more than half from 11 million

deaths a year to 4.8 million and vaccines are the major reason for that.

He reaffirmed that vaccines remain essential especially for people at high risk of influenza complications and COVID-19 that continues to spread causing severe disease and death in high-risk groups and long COVID.

He said that last week WHO designated a new variant under monitoring (BA.3.2) and published a new risk evaluation and published also a new strategic plan for coronavirus disease threats including COVID-19, MERS and potential new coronavirus diseases.

He stressed that this is the first unified plan for coronavirus disease threats marking a turning point in the transition from the COVID-19 emergency response to sustained long-term and integrated management.



A newborn baby, whose Chinese zodiac sign is dragon, is seen with the mother at a hospital in Shijiazhuang, North China's Hebei province, Feb 10, 2024. (Xinhua)

China eyes nationwide free childbirth coverage by 2026

BEIJING, Dec 14, (Xinhua): China has announced an ambitious plan to make childbirth essentially free for parents under national insurance guidelines by 2026.

The move, revealed at a national healthcare security conference on Saturday, is part of a broader strategy to address the country's declining birth rate by reducing the financial burden of having children.

Authorities said they will enhance medical expense coverage for prenatal

checkups based on the affordability of the national medical insurance fund.

The goal for next year is to ensure the basic costs of childbirth are fully covered by insurance programs nationwide, with individuals paying nothing out-of-pocket for standard delivery services within policy limits.

Seven provincial-level regions, including Jilin, Jiangsu and Shandong, already provide full coverage for in-hospital childbirth medical expenses within the policy scopes.

The Conversation

AI's errors may be impossible to eliminate – what that means for its use in health care

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



By Carlos Gershenson Binghamton University, State University of New York

In the past decade, AI's success has led to uncurbed enthusiasm and bold claims - even though users frequently experience errors that AI makes. An AI-powered digital assistant can misunderstand someone's speech in embarrassing ways, a chatbot could hallucinate facts, or, as I experienced, an AI-based navigation tool might even guide drivers through a corn field - all without registering the errors.

People tolerate these mistakes because the technology makes certain tasks more efficient. Increasingly, however, proponents are advocating the use of AI - sometimes with limited human supervision - in fields where mistakes have high cost, such as health care. For example, a bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in early 2025 would allow AI systems to prescribe medications autonomously. Health researchers as well as lawmakers since then have debated whether such prescribing would be feasible or advisable.

How exactly such prescribing would work if this or similar legislation passes remains to be seen. But it raises the stakes for how many errors AI developers can allow their tools to make and what the consequences would be if those tools led to negative outcomes - even patient deaths.

As a researcher studying complex systems, I investigate how different components of a system interact to produce unpredictable outcomes. Part of my work focuses on exploring the limits of science - and, more specifically, of AI.

Over the past 25 years I have worked on projects including traffic light coordination, improving bureaucracies and tax evasion detection. Even when these systems can be highly effective, they are never perfect.

For AI in particular, errors might be an inescapable consequence of how the systems work. My lab's research suggests that particular properties of the data used to train AI models play a role. This is unlikely



The Da Vinci medical robot is used for bariatric surgery.

to change, regardless of how much time, effort and funding researchers direct at improving AI models.

As Alan Turing, considered the father of computer science, once said: "If a machine is expected to be infallible, it cannot also be intelligent." This is because learning is an essential part of intelligence, and people usually learn from mistakes. I see this tug-of-war between intelligence and infallibility at play in my research.

In a study published in July 2025, my colleagues and I showed that perfectly organizing certain datasets into clear categories may be impossible. In other words, there may be a minimum amount of errors that a given dataset produces, simply because of the fact that elements of many categories overlap. For some datasets - the core underpinning of many AI systems - AI will not perform better than chance.

For example, a model trained on a dataset of millions of dogs that logs only their age, weight and height will probably distinguish Chihuahuas from Great Danes with perfect accuracy. But it may make mistakes in telling apart an Alaskan malamute and a Doberman pinscher, since different individuals of different species might fall within the same age, weight and height ranges.

This categorizing is called classification, and my students and I started studying it in 2021. Using data from more than half a million students who attended the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México between 2008 and 2020, we wanted to solve a seemingly simple problem. Could we use

an AI algorithm to predict which students would finish their university degrees on time - that is, within three, four or five years of starting their studies, depending on the major?

We tested several popular algorithms that are used for classification in AI and also developed our own. No algorithm was perfect; the best ones - even one we developed specifically for this task - achieved an accuracy rate of about 80%, meaning that at least 1 in 5 students were misclassified. We realized that many students were identical in terms of grades, age, gender, socioeconomic status and other features - yet some would finish on time, and some would not. Under these circumstances, no algorithm would be able to make perfect predictions.

You might think that more data would improve predictability, but this usually comes with diminishing returns. This means that, for example, for each increase in accuracy of 1%, you might need 100 times the data. Thus, we would never have enough students to significantly improve our model's performance.

Additionally, many unpredictable turns in lives of students and their families - unemployment, death, pregnancy - might occur after their first year at university, likely affecting whether they finish on time. So even with an infinite number of students, our predictions would still give errors.

To put it more generally, what limits prediction is complexity. The word complexity comes from the Latin plexus, which means inter-

twined. The components that make up a complex system are intertwined, and it's the interactions between them that determine what happens to them and how they behave.

Thus, studying elements of the system in isolation would probably yield misleading insights about them - as well as about the system as a whole.

Take, for example, a car traveling in a city. Knowing the speed at which it drives, it's theoretically possible to predict where it will end up at a particular time. But in real traffic, its speed will depend on interactions with other vehicles on the road. Since the details of these interactions emerge in the moment and cannot be known in advance, precisely predicting what happens to the car is possible only a few minutes into the future.

These same principles apply to prescribing medications. Different conditions and diseases can have the same symptoms, and people with the same condition or disease may exhibit different symptoms. For example, fever can be caused by a respiratory illness or a digestive one. And a cold might cause cough, but not always.

This means that health care datasets have significant overlaps that would prevent AI from being error-free.

Certainly, humans also make errors. But when AI misdiagnoses a patient, as it surely will, the situation falls into a legal limbo. It's not clear who or what would be responsible if a patient were hurt. Pharmaceutical companies? Software developers? Insurance agencies? Pharmacies?

In many contexts, neither humans nor machines are the best option for a given task. "Centaur," or "hybrid intelligence" - that is, a combination of humans and machines - tend to be better than each on their own. A doctor could certainly use AI to decide potential drugs to use for different patients, depending on their medical history, physiological details and genetic makeup. Researchers are already exploring this approach in precision medicine.

But common sense and the precautionary principle suggest that it is too early for AI to prescribe drugs without human oversight. And the fact that mistakes may be baked into the technology could mean that where human health is at stake, human supervision will always be necessary. (AP)

Influenza A dominates global flu season: WHO

GENEVA, Dec. 14, (Xinhua): Influenza activity has risen globally since October this year, with influenza A viruses dominating circulation, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a report released late Wednesday.

The latest "Seasonal influenza - Global situation" update noted that the increase coincides with the onset of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and a seasonal uptick in acute respiratory infections caused by influenza and other respiratory viruses.

Although global influenza levels remain within expected seasonal ranges, early increases and more intense activity than usual have been observed in some regions, particularly involving influenza A (H3N2) viruses.

In many Northern Hemisphere countries, acute respiratory infection rates have increased, driven by seasonal epidemics of respiratory pathogens such as influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and other common respiratory viruses, WHO said.

The timing of onset, duration, magnitude, and severity of each seasonal wave remain difficult to predict, as they depend on the type of circulating viruses, popu-

lation immunity, and environmental conditions.

Some Northern Hemisphere countries have reported early starts to the flu season, though activity has not yet reached the epidemic threshold. Meanwhile, parts of the Southern Hemisphere have recorded above-average virus activity in recent months.

Across temperate, sub-tropical, and tropical regions, detections of H3N2 viruses have increased, making this virus predominant since late September.

The report noted that seasonal influenza viruses continue to evolve. Since August 2025, based on available genetic sequence data, there has been a rise in the detection of H3N2 J.2.4.1 (alias K subclade) viruses from several countries.

These subclade K viruses showed several genetic changes from related H3N2 viruses, though current epidemiological data do not indicate an increase in disease severity.

WHO stated that vaccines remain essential, especially for people at high risk of influenza complications and their caregivers. Even when circulating strains differ from those included in vaccines, seasonal influenza vaccines can still provide protection.

Zeefa named player of the match

Kuwait women open Gulf T20I campaign with emphatic win



Left to right: Photos from the event.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Kuwait Women began their Gulf Cricket Women's T20I Championship 2025-26 campaign with a commanding 68-run victory over Qatar Women in the tournament opener at the Al-Amerat Cricket Ground in Oman. Electing to bat first, Kuwait posted an imposing 160 for 5 in their 20 overs, setting the tone for a dominant performance.

The star of the match was Zeefa Jilani, who marked her debut in spectacular fashion. Jilani anchored the in-

nings with a brilliant 71 off 54 balls, smashing five fours and three sixes at a strike rate of 131.48.

Her confident stroke play gave Kuwait momentum through the middle overs, and crucial partnerships ensured the side maintained a strong scoring tempo. Supporting contributions came from Priyada Murali (21) and Sabreen Zaki (34), but it was Jilani's innings that stood out as the backbone of Kuwait's total. The hosts were able to repeatedly rebuild after minor set-

backs, ultimately posting a challenging target for Qatar.

In reply, Qatar struggled to find form against disciplined Kuwait bowling.

The visitors were dismissed for 92 in 16.2 overs, never able to build substantial partnerships. Jilani continued her fine all-round performance by claiming 2 for 8 in her bowling spell, applying pressure at key moments and stemming Qatar's chase.

Kuwait's bowlers complemented their batters with tight lines and consistent pressure, restricting Qatar's batting depth and forcing regular dismissals. The early dismissals in the powerplay proved costly for the chase, leaving Qatar always playing catch-up. For her outstanding all-round display with both bat and ball, Zeefa Jilani was deservedly named Player of the Match, spearheading Kuwait's dominant start to the championship.

Leverkusen edges Cologne with Terrier back-heel magic

Frankfurt ends four-game winless run

BERLIN, Dec 14, (AP): Martin Terrier scored a contender for goal of the season as Bayer Leverkusen defeated local rival Cologne 2-0 in their 73rd Bundesliga derby.

Arthur's cross from the right was behind Terrier, but the French forward dropped down and looped the ball in over Cologne goalkeeper Marvin Schwäbe with the back of his heel to break the deadlock in the 66th minute.

Robert Andrich headed in from Alex Garcia's corner six minutes later to seal the win.

Leverkusen was without key players Patrik Schick and Alex Grimaldo but still boasted enough talent to create the greater chances against the visitors, who had injury-enforced absences of their own.

The win kept Leverkusen in fourth place, the last for Champions League qualification.

Many fans missed the derby because of protests against police security measures that they felt went too far.

Much of the visitors' block was empty for the game because around 500-600 Cologne fans decided to leave the stadium before kickoff. Supporter group Fanhilfe Köln alleged that police had conducted strip searches on traveling supporters.

Despite the rivalry between the clubs, Leverkusen ultras also left the stadium in solidarity with the Cologne fans.

Ritsu Doan scored for Eintracht Frankfurt to end its four-game winless run across all competitions with a 1-0 win over Augsburg.

The Japan forward took the ball past two Augsburg defenders and unleashed his shot before he was closed



Augsburg's Anton Kade, left, and Frankfurt's Nnamdi Collins, right, challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Eintracht Frankfurt and FC Augsburg in Frankfurt, Germany. (AP)

down by two more. The deflection from a retreating defender took the ball beyond Finn Dahmen in the Augsburg goal in the 68th minute, setting off relief-tinged celebrations around the stadium.

Noahkai Banks briefly spoiled the mood when he equalized late, but the goal was ruled out for offside after a VAR check. It was the second goal that was ruled out for offside for the visitors in the game.

Frankfurt lost narrowly at Barcelona in the Champions League on Tuesday, after it was routed 6-0 at home by Leipzig in its previous game.

"The lads tried with all they had left in the tank," Frankfurt coach Dino Toppmöller said of his team's busy schedule. "They were lacking that bit of freshness. It's been a grueling six months."

St. Pauli overcame a harsh sending off to end its 10-game winless run with a 2-1 victory over relegation rival Heidenheim.

Pauli had Eric Smith sent off before the break when referee Sören Storks penalized him for a foul on Marvin Pieringer as the last defender, though TV replays showed the Heidenheim forward made the most of light contact and threw himself to

the ground. There was no VAR intervention.

Martijn Kaars had already put Pauli ahead, and he stunned the visitors by scoring the second against the run of play early the second half.

Pieringer pulled one back later, but Pauli held on for its third league win of the season.

Wolfsburg's revival under interim coach Daniel Bauer continued with a 3-1 win at Borussia Mönchengladbach. It stretched the team's unbeaten run to three games.

Hoffenheim defeated promoted Hamburger SV 4-1 for its fourth straight home win.

Lim and Shin claim WTT finals mixed doubles title

HONG KONG, Dec 14, (Xinhua): South Korea's Lim Jong-hoon and Shin Yu-bin cruised past China's Olympic champions Wang Chuqin and Sung Yingsha in straight games in the mixed doubles final at the World Table Tennis (WTT) Finals.

With SUN having suffered an injury in the women's singles competition, the reigning mixed doubles world champions found it difficult to keep up with their opponents' pace.

After an 11-9 loss in the opening game, Wang and Sun took four consecutive points to pull back to 9-8 in the second, but the South Korean duo regrouped to win 11-8.

The second seeds continued their good form, prevailing 11-6 in the third game to secure their title.

Earlier in the day, an ankle injury had forced Sun to pull out of her women's singles semifinal against compatriot Kuai Man.

Kuai clinched a 12-10 victory in the third game for a 2-1 lead, before Sun called a medical timeout to deal with her ankle pain. After returning to action, the world No. 1 leveled the score with an 11-7 win in the fourth game.

However, Sun's ankle continued to hamper her. After losing the fifth game 11-3, she withdrew from the contest, sending Kuai into the title showdown.

"After going through many matches, I had already felt the lack of supporting strength on my feet in the first game, and the pain increased in the third," Sun explained.

"I hoped to deal with it well and

continue to play. Despite winning the fourth game, I found it hard to move in the fifth, especially on the forehand.

"I wanted to compete in the mixed doubles final. Though the result was not satisfactory, we did go all out," she added.

In another all-Chinese affair in the women's singles, second seed Wang Manyu sailed past Chen Yi 11-9, 11-3, 12-10, 11-8.

"As we are quite familiar with each other, this match was more about adjustments on the court," Wang said after her win. "I was patient in the match. Whether leading or trailing, I could deal with it and tried to make adjustments to score points." Recovering from his mixed doubles semifinal defeat along with Kuai, Lin Shidong triumphed 4-0 in an all-Chinese men's singles quarterfinal against Xiang Peng. Second-seeded Lin set up a semifinal clash with Japan's Tomokazu Harimoto, who escaped with a win over France's Felix Lebrun in a seven-game thriller.

"I played Harimoto not long ago. Looking at our head-to-head record, I'm not the favorite," Lin noted. "I hope to go into the next match with humility and show everything I'm capable of. I'll give my best to see how I can learn from him." The other men's semifinal pits Wang Chuqin against Sweden's Truls Moregard.

As the season-ending tournament, the WTT Finals will conclude on Sunday, with the men's and women's singles titles up for grabs.



Lim Jonghoon (2nd right)/Shin Yubin (1st right) of South Korea and Wang Chuqin/Sun Yingsha (2nd left) of China pose at the awarding ceremony after the mixed doubles final match between Wang Chuqin/Sun Yingsha of China and Lim Jonghoon/Shin Yubin of South Korea at the WTT Finals Hong Kong 2025 in Hong Kong, south China. (Xinhua)

Ribeiro extends Bahia contract

Estudiantes beats Racing on penalties to clinch title

BUENOS AIRES, Dec 14, (Xinhua): Estudiantes secured its first Argentine Primera Division title in 15 years with a 5-4 penalty shootout victory over Racing.

After a four struggle for most of the final, Adrian Martinez appeared to set Racing on course for victory when he broke the deadlock in the 81st minute at Unico Stadium in Santiago del Estero.

The 33-year-old forward capitalized on chaotic defending to chip the ball into an empty net after Uruguayan goalkeeper Fernando Muslera had rushed off his line.

But Estudiantes pressed for an equalizer and Guido Carrillo put his side on level terms with a bullet header after Jose Sosa's delivery from a set piece.

Thirty minutes of extra time failed to end the stalemate as the match went to a shootout. Colombian winger Edwain Cetre missed with his side's second attempt when his tame effort was kept out by Facundo Cambeses.

But Muslera then saved Gaston Martirena's spot kick before Franco Pardo hit the post, sparking raucous celebrations among Estudiantes players and fans.

The victory marked Estudiantes' seventh top flight title and first since it won the 2010 Apertura tournament.

The result hands Estudiantes a direct berth in the group stage of next year's Copa Libertadores, South America's equivalent of the UEFA Champions League.

Meanwhile, Bahia has extended the contract of former Brazil international midfielder Everton Ribeiro, the Brazilian Serie A side said.

The 36-year-old, whose previous deal had been due to expire on December 31, will now be tied to the club until December 2026. "Our captain and symbol of a new era has renewed his contract," Bahia said in a social media post.

Ribeiro has played 121 matches across all competitions for Bahia since joining the club in January last year, scoring nine goals and providing 17 assists.

'Nothing beats sharing the podium with a teammate' Summer

Britcher claims Gold as USA Luge reaches 50 World Cup wins

PARK CITY, Utah, Dec 14, (AP): Summer Britcher got a gold medal and gave USA Luge a historic moment.

Britcher delivered the 50th World Cup win in USA Luge's history, winning a women's singles race on the 2002 Olympic track on Saturday night.

It was Britcher's sixth World Cup victory, extending her singles record for U.S. athletes. She's now fourth U.S. slider to win six golds on the circuit; doubles sliders Mark Grimmerette and Brian Martin won 11, and 2014 Olympic bronze medalist Erin Hamlin won six as well - four in singles, two in relays.

"I feel so good," Britcher said. "It's been quite a while since I stood on top of the podium. I can't even describe."

Her first win was at Park City, 10 years and two days ago. She won three times in that 2015-16 season and twice more in 2017-18 - and not since, until Saturday.

Britcher - who finished two runs in 1 minute, 26.961 seconds - had the overnight lead after Friday's start in the unique two-day, two-run format; typically, World Cup singles races are two runs in one day. That meant she was the last to slide on Saturday night, and she delivered. She crossed the finish line, skidded to a stop and hopped off her sled in celebration. Italy's Verena Hofer was second, 0.105 seconds back, and Park City native Ashley Farquharson rallied from 10th at the midway point to third, 0.109 seconds back of Britcher.

"The only thing better than getting a podium is sharing the podium with a team-



In this file photo, Summer Britcher of the United States waves after the women's sprint race at the Luge World Cup in Igls near Innsbruck, Austria. (AP)

mate," Britcher said.

In the men's singles race - also the two-run, two-day format in a break from the norm - Austria's Jonas Mueller held onto his overnight lead by posting the fastest run once again and easing to a win over Germany's Max Langenhan.

Italy took third and fourth, with Leon Felderer grabbing bronze and Dominik Fischnaller finding speed at the end of his

run to edge Jonny Gustafson of the U.S. out of the fourth-place spot.

Italy won the team relay, with Austria second and the U.S. - with Britcher getting her second medal of the night - placing third.

Johannes Lochner keeps finding ways to beat Francesco Friedrich.

The German stars were first and second again in a World Cup bobsled race on Sat-

urday, with Lochner driving to the win in a four-man event at Lillehammer, Norway, and Friedrich losing some time in the second and final run to settle for the silver.

It was the ninth consecutive World Cup race, going back to last season and including two-man events, in which Lochner and Friedrich finished first and second in some order.

Lochner now has beaten Friedrich - generally considered the best driver ever, someone who swept the two- and four-man golds at each of the last two Olympics, as well as each of the last two world championships - in four of five World Cup races this season and seven out of the last eight going back to last season.

Adam Ammour drove to third in the four-man race, giving Germany a sweep of the medals in that event. Kris Horn drove to 15th place for the top American finish.

In the women's monobob race earlier Saturday, Bree Walker of Australia got her fourth career World Cup win - and her third in Lillehammer. She had the best time in both heats to hold off Katrin Beierl of Austria, who finished second for her first World Cup monobob medal, and Laura Nolte of Germany was third.

Kaillie Humphries Armbruster had the top U.S. finish, placing seventh.

Bobsled: World Cup weekend in Lillehammer continues Sunday.

Skeleton: World Cup sliding continues Dec. 19 in Sigulda, Latvia.

Luge: World Cup sliding continues Dec. 19 in Lake Placid, New York.

Al Sahel & Yarmouk seek win

Kazma aims to bounce back as volleyball league continues



Kazma player launches a spike as Kuwait Club players dive to defend.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Kazma is looking to recover from their opening-round defeat to Kuwait Club when it faces Burgan at 7:30 pm in the second round of the Volleyball League, while Al Sahel takes on Yarmouk at 5:30 pm. Both matches will be held at the Kuwait Volleyball Federation Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports

Complex.

In the first round, Qadsia, Al Arabi, Al-Salibikhat, and Kuwait Club earned their first three points, while Kazma, Al Nasr, Burgan, and Al Shabab are still searching for their opening victory. Yarmouk and Al Sahel begin their league campaigns today.

The league format features a single preliminary group round, with the top six teams advancing to the Premier Division to compete in three sections, and the team with the most wins

crowned champion. The preliminary round winner gains an advantage going into the next stage. Teams placed seventh to tenth, along with the Youth National Team, compete in the First Division across three sections.

Kazma aims to claim its first victory and full points, taking on a Burgan side that suffered a 3-0 defeat to Al Arabi in the opening round.

Meanwhile, Al Sahel and Yarmouk are seeking a strong start with a win in their matchup today.

Channing tops Medium GP

Al-Rashid clinches top honors at Sahari International Show Jumping



Podium glory for Sahari Show Jumping winners.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Rider Fawaz Al-Rashid captured the title of the Sahari International Show Jumping Championship, held at the Sahari Equestrian Resort, with strong participation from riders representing Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, India, Hungary, and Britain.

Al-Rashid claimed victory in the 145cm Grand Prix, ahead of Dalia Al-Zahim, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Anaz Al-Anaz, Ali Al-Kharafi, Nick Channing, Abdulrahman Al-Fazaie, Antonio Morozzo, Khaled Al-Khabizi, Fawaz Al-Subaie, and

Abdulrahman Al-Madhahka. The winners were crowned by Sheikh Sabah Badr Al-Sabah, Acting Governor of Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Hawalli, alongside Shaqer Al-Kazemi, Vice President of the Equestrian Federation, and Sheikh Sabah Ali Al-Sabah.

In other results, Nick Channing topped the Medium Grand Prix, Abdullah Al-Gharbally won the Small Grand Prix, and Misk Al-Marshoud claimed first place in the 110cm class.

The opening day also saw Anaz

Al-Anaz take the Grand Prix, Aws Al-Tannak win the 130cm Medium Grand Prix, and Dalal Safar secure victory in the Small Grand Prix.

The championship was overseen by Waleed Al-Jassim and Sheikh Sabah Ali Al-Sabah, with Mohammed Al-Behbehani managing the stables. International judge Lama Abdel Aal provided expert commentary, while the judging panel was chaired by Nidar Al-Mustafa, with Raghad Al-Dabbous, Ibtisam Al-Arouri, and Ines Beigel as members.

Barcelona rolls past Osasuna

Atletico beats Valencia

BARCELONA, Spain, Dec 14, (AP): Raphinha scored a brace as Barcelona beat Osasuna 2-0.

The Brazil forward broke the deadlock with a shot from the top of the area in the 70th minute at Camp Nou. He then put the result beyond doubt by scoring from close range with six minutes remaining.

Raphinha, however, stayed focused on his team.

“We need to focus on ourselves and if we do our job then we won’t have to worry about anyone else,” Raphinha said. “We are playing better than before and the more points, the better.”

Raphinha was key to Barcelona winning La Liga and Copa del Rey last season, when Hansi Flick’s side also reached the Champions League semifinals.

Barcelona struggled to replace his speed and incisiveness when Raphinha was sidelined with a leg injury for six weeks earlier this campaign. But he has returned as strong as ever. He also assisted in a 3-1 victory over Alaves in late November and scored in a 3-1 win over Atletico Madrid earlier this month. Sixteenth-placed Osasuna generated little in attack but its defense and goalkeeper Sergio Herrera frustrated Barcelona until Raphinha struck. Herrera saved a shot by Lamine Yamal while Marcus Rashford’s goal-bound effort was blocked by a defender.

Raphinha’s first goal came after Barcelona recovered the ball and Pedri González led a counterattack before laying off for him to score from distance. His second was easier: a tap-in af-



Barcelona’s Lamine Yamal passes the ball during a La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Osasuna in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

ter Osasuna defender Alejandro Catena redirected a cross from Jules Koundé to the far post where Raphinha was unmarked.

Antoine Griezmann scored the winner after coming off the bench to help fourth-placed Atletico beat Valencia 2-1 and stay nine points behind Barcelona.

Griezmann replaced Julián Álvarez with half an hour to go with Atletico leading after Koke Resurrección scored from a rebound in the 17th.

Lucas Beltrán pulled the visitors level in the 63rd with a shot from outside the area as the Argentine striker skirted past a defender and lashed a long strike just inside the post.

Griezmann restored the lead

in the 74th at the Metropolitan Stadium when he used an exquisite control, hooking down a long ball with the tip of his boot, before he fired in the winner.

The 34-year-old Griezmann has taken a more limited role with Atletico this season, but he is still proving to be decisive. The former France star scored two goals as a substitute in a 3-1 win over Levante last month and also netted after coming on in the second half against Sevilla and Real Madrid.

His winner against Valencia increased his record haul for Atletico to 204 career goals.

The loss for Valencia will increase the pressure on coach Carlos Corberán with the team

in 17th place just on the edge of the relegation zone.

Leandro Cabrera’s header helped Espanyol beat Getafe 1-0 on the road and secure a fourth consecutive league win.

Espanyol is the surprise of the season approaching the winter break. The Barcelona-based team is in fifth place after 16 rounds, having barely avoided relegation on the final day of last season.

Also, Mallorca beat Elche 3-1. The game was tied 1-1 until Elche keeper Iñaki Peña gifted the ball to Mallorca’s Omar Mascarell, who lobbed the ball over Peña’s head from near midfield for the go-ahead goal in the 82nd.

Kuwait Club eyes win over Al Arabi to boost Super League

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Kuwait Club aims to top Group Two of the West Asia Super League (Gulf Zone) when it visits Qatar’s Al Arabi tonight at 7:00 pm in the Al Gharafa Club Hall, as part of the fourth round of the tournament.

The “Whites” currently sit third with five points, having won two games and lost one, while Al Arabi is fourth with four points from one victory and two defeats. Saudi side Al Ula leads the group with six points, just ahead of Sharjah of the UAE on point difference.

Kuwait Club hopes to secure an away win, which would boost its chances of topping the group and qualifying directly for the second round. According to the tournament format, group winners ad-

vance straight to the semi-finals, while the second- and third-placed teams face off in a playoff to decide the other semi-final spot.

The finalists then join teams from Central Asia for the final stages.

Kuwait Club in excellent form, leading the domestic league unbeaten, and Serbian coach Dusan Stokovic expects his team to maintain that momentum against a determined Al Arabi side.

Stokovic will rely on players Hamad, Mohammed Adnan, Alexander Al-Ghais, Turki Hamoud, and Imran Johar, alongside imports Charlie Moore, Jamal Jones, and Frenchman Geoffrey Lauvergne.

Al Arabi, meanwhile, will look to Bosnian Almedin Kikanovic, American Ismail Diallo, and Bahraini Mustafa Rashid (“Mosti”) to guide it to victory.



Kuwait Club player trying to control possession during a game.

Vonn finishes 4th

NZ Robinson wins World Cup super-G

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland, Dec 14, (AP): New Zealand’s Alice Robinson was already leading the Olympic season’s giant slalom standings. Now she’s a threat in super-G, too.

Robinson won a World Cup super-G on Sunday for her first career victory in the discipline - which also made her the first Kiwi to claim a win in the speed event.

Robinson finished 0.08 seconds ahead of Romane Miradoli of France and 0.19 ahead of Sofia Goggia of Italy.

“Crazy. I was not expecting this today,” Robinson said. “I always felt like I was holding back in super-G a bit but not a part of me was scared today. I just wanted to go for it.”

The 41-year-old American stand-out Lindsey Vonn finished fourth, 0.27 behind. In a downhill on Friday, Vonn became the oldest winner in the circuit’s history. Vonn then finished second in another downhill on Saturday.



New Zealand’s Alice Robinson, centre, winner of an alpine ski, women’s World Cup super-G event, poses on the podium with second placed France’s Romane Miradoli, left, and third placed Italy’s Sofia Goggia in St. Moritz, Switzerland. (AP)

“I’m a little bit disappointed in myself that I didn’t push hard enough,” Vonn said. “I was too conservative in some sections.”

Mikaela Shiffrin, the holder of

a record 104 World Cup victories, missed the final gate but did not fall.

Shiffrin hadn’t entered a speed race since crashing in a downhill in Cortina d’Ampezzo, Italy, nearly

two years ago. She’s also still recovering her form after another crash in a giant slalom in Killington, Vermont, last season left her with a deep puncture wound on the right side of her abdomen.

Emma Aicher, the German skier who won Saturday’s downhill, lost control coming over a jump early in her run and fell. But she got right back up and appeared uninjured.

U.S. Ski Team coach Alex Hoedlmoser set a tricky course that caught out several other racers, too - despite clear and sunny skies providing perfect conditions.

Robinson has won two of the four giant slaloms this season but had never finished better than fourth in a super-G.

Now she’s a two-discipline threat for the Milan Cortina Olympics. Women’s Alpine skiing at the Feb. 6-22 Winter Games will be held in Cortina.

All six of Robinson’s previous World Cup victories came in giant slalom.

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NEWS



Norway's Timon Haugan celebrates winning an alpine ski, men's World Cup slalom event, in Val d'Isere, France. (AP)
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Sports

Sharjah wins inaugural West Asia Women's Volleyball Championship



A Commemorative Shield presented to Sheikha Naima.



Sharjah celebrates on the podium.

Sheikha Naima: Tournament success inspires continental sports ambitions

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Sharjah of the UAE emerged victorious at the first West Asia Women's Volleyball Championship, which concluded at the Salwa Al-Sabah Hall under the patronage of Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

Sharjah secured the title with a 3-0 win over Al-Fatat in the final, while Al Ula of Saudi Arabia claimed third place by defeating Al-Nasr of Jordan in the third-place match.

The closing ceremony was attended by Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad, Chairperson of Salwa Al-Sabah Club; Ali Al-Kuwari, President of the West Asia Volleyball Federation; Mohammed Al-Kuwari, Secretary-General; Dr. Jaber Al-Mari, President of the Kuwait Volleyball Federation; Naif Al-Khumaili, Assistant Secretary; and heads of delegations from the participating teams.

Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad emphasized that the success of the first edition of the tournament was achieved through the collaborative efforts and participation of all involved. She said:

"The championship was a success both technically and organizationally, as confirmed by all 12 participating clubs. This was possible thanks to the combined efforts and commitment of everyone to showcase the tournament at its best."

She added that this success motivates the organization of future continental-level events, expressing plans to host an Asian Women's Championship in the near future.

Ali Al-Kuwari highlighted the tournament's success on both technical and organizational fronts, noting that the competition reflects the rapid development of women's volleyball in West Asia. He added that the championship served as an important platform for talent discovery and enhancing competitive experience among players, stressing the need to continue supporting women's tournaments and expanding participation to raise the level of competition regionally and continentally.

Ali-Kuwari also praised Salwa Al-Sabah Club for its role in hosting the event,

commending the organization, logistics, and technical management—from preparing courts and scheduling matches to providing optimal conditions for participating teams. He said the club's efforts set a model standard for hosting regional sports events.

Dr. Jaber Al-Mari lauded the organizational and technical success of the championship and praised Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad for her key role in delivering a successful event that highlighted Kuwaiti volleyball. He affirmed that the federation supports all tournaments held in Kuwait.

Fatima Al-Alili, Head of Team Sports at Sharjah Club, congratulated the club management, coaching staff, and players for earning the inaugural title through deserved victories against strong competition from West Asian clubs.

Ahmed Al-Anizan, Secretary of the International Volleyball Federation Referees Committee, praised the high standard of refereeing throughout the tournament, noting their crucial role in ensuring smooth matches. He added:

"We aim to prepare top referees for any championship in Kuwait and showcase their true abilities, which have been recognized by all participants."

Man City and Aston Villa win to stay in touch with Arsenal

MANCHESTER, England, Dec 14, (AP): Manchester City and Aston Villa kept the pressure on Premier League leader Arsenal with wins.

Nottingham Forest pulled further away from the relegation zone with a 3-0 against Tottenham and Sunderland beat Newcastle 1-0 in the Tyne-Wear derby after an own goal from Nick Woltemade.

Arsenal had extended its lead at the top of the standings to five points with a 2-1 win against Wolves on Saturday. But a day later its closest rivals both responded with victories - second-place City winning 3-0 at Crystal Palace and Villa, in third, twice coming back to beat West Ham 3-2 at the London Stadium.

City is two points behind Arsenal and Villa is a point further back.

Beaten by Palace in the FA Cup final last season, City exacted some revenge to take all three points at Selhurst Park.

Erling Haaland scored his 101st Premier League goal to put City in front late in the first half and he got his second of the match with an 89th-minute penalty. The Norwegian has 36 goals in 27 appearances for club and country in another remarkable scoring season. He is the league's leading scorer with 17 goals.

Phil Foden got City's other goal in between Haaland's double.

Morgan Rogers scored twice in the second half to extend Aston Villa's winning run to nine-straight games and keep Unai Emery's team on the heels of Arsenal and City.

Villa has lost just one of its last 13 games in the league and won 10 of its last 11, but twice had to come from behind at relegation fighting West Ham.

Mateus Fernandes scored the fastest goal in England's top flight this season when putting the home team 1-0 up after just 29 seconds. But Konstantinos Mavropanos' own goal leveled the game eight minutes later.

Jarrod Bowen then gave West Ham the lead at halftime with his second goal in as many games in the 24th.

Rogers leveled the game again five minutes after the break and struck the winner in the 79th.

The first stage of Mohamed Salah's



Manchester City's Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Crystal Palace and Manchester City in London. (AP)

rehabilitation at Liverpool is complete after the Egypt forward returned to the team for its 2-0 win over Brighton.

The question now as Salah heads off to the Africa Cup of Nations: Is there a future for him at Anfield when he comes back?

Salah, who let rip last weekend about his current frustrations at Liverpool, entered as a 26th-minute substitute to a big ovation and set up the second of Hugo Ekitike's goals as the defending champions jumped to sixth place and extended their unbeaten run to five games in all competitions.

"For me, there is no issue to resolve," Liverpool manager Arne Slot said of his star player's current situation at the club.

Arsenal beat last-placed Wolverhampton 2-1 - but only thanks to two own-goals, the second of which came in stoppage time.

On a run of just one win in their previous three games, the leaders looked like dropping more points when Tolu Arokodare equalized for Wolves in the 90th minute, canceling out an own-goal by goalkeeper Sam Johnstone in the 70th.

Then Yerson Mosquera headed into his own net from Bukayo Saka's cross to gift Arsenal the win.

Chelsea beat Everton 2-0 and was set on its way to victory by Cole Palmer's first goal in three months.

Brunson explodes for 40 as Knicks oust Orlando

Thunder derailed as Spurs seal NBA Cup final spot

LAS VEGAS, Dec 14, (AP): Victor Wembanyama returned from a 12-game absence with 22 points and nine rebounds, giving San Antonio a surge and the Oklahoma City Thunder just its second loss with the 111-109 victory, putting the Spurs in the NBA Cup final.

The Spurs play the New York Knicks in Tuesday night's final.

Oklahoma's last defeat was Nov. 5 at Portland, and the Thunder carried a 16-game winning streak into this game. They are now 24-2, the second-best start behind only the 25-1 record by Golden State in 2015-16.

This is the Thunder's second loss in a row in Las Vegas. They also lost last year's final to Milwaukee, 97-81.

Wembanyama, who received "M-V-P" chants from the pro-Spurs crowd, had a plus-21 rating in 21 minutes. Team-mate Devin Vassell scored 23 points, and De'Aaron Fox and Stephon Castle each scored 22.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 29 points, and Chet Holmgren and Jalen Williams each totalled 17.

Wembanyama had been out because of a strained left calf, though the Spurs went 9-3 in his absence. He was placed on a minutes restriction against the Thunder, but that didn't limit his impact.

Wembanyama, who entered the game averaging 26.2 points and 12.9 rebounds, gave the Spurs an immediate boost and sent a surge into the crowd. Fans began to roar when he removed his sweatpants before the second quarter, and Wembanyama had a plus-20 rating in just seven minutes, even with his team trailing by three points at halftime.

But San Antonio ended the first half with a 13-point run to make it a contest. The Spurs used a 10-point run in the third quarter to go up 62-56 and set the stage for a tense fourth period.

Jalen Brunson scored at least 30 points for the fourth consecutive game, his season-high 40 leading the Knicks past the Orlando Magic 132-120.

The Knicks, who have won five in a row and nine of 10, will play San Antonio on Tuesday night for the championship.

Brunson also had eight assists and made 16 of 27 shots, including a 3-pointer in the third quarter after Orlando's Anthony Black fell backwards onto



San Antonio Spurs guard Dylan Harper (2) lays up the ball near Oklahoma City Thunder guard Aaron Wiggins (21) and forward Jaylin Williams (6) during the second half of an NBA Cup semifinals basketball game in Las Vegas. (AP)

the floor. Karl-Anthony Towns had 29 points, and OG Anunoby scored 24 for the Knicks.

Jalen Suggs scored 25 of his 26 points in the first half for the Magic before leaving in the fourth quarter because of a sore left hip. Paolo Banchero added 25 points, and Desmond Bane scored 18.

This game had a playoff feel with

both teams playing physically and taking seemingly every opportunity to push the pace. The Knicks shot 60.7% and outscored the Magic 70-62 in the lane.

The game was back and forth with 11 lead changes and 10 ties before the Knicks went on a 10-point run late in the third quarter to take a 102-92 lead.

It appeared a little NBA history could be made when, at halftime, Brunson and

Suggs each scored 25 points. No regular-season game has produced a 50-point scorer from each team since 2000.

But Suggs scored just a point in the second half, and he clearly was hobbled. He went to the locker room early in the fourth quarter. The Magic played without Franz Wagner, who is out several weeks with a high ankle sprain.