



Amir receives credentials of five new Ambassadors

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received during a ceremony at Bayan Palace on Tuesday, the credentials of Wierish Ramscoek as Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mohammad Jaber Abu Al-Wafa as Ambassador of Egypt, Ghadi Al-Khoury as Ambassador of Lebanon, Qudsi Rasheed as Ambassador of the United Kingdom, and Maksym Subkh as Ambassador of Ukraine, accrediting them as ambassadors of their respective countries to Kuwait.

The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Director of the Office of His Highness the Amir, Lieutenant General Retired Jamal Al-Theyab, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan, Sheikh Abdulaziz Mishal Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary for External Affairs at the Amiri Diwan, Mazen Al-Issa, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs, Minister Plenipotentiary Abdulmohsen Al-Zaid, and the Commander of the Amiri Guard, Major General Staff, Bader Al-Sahloul.



Ambassador of Egypt



Ambassador of Lebanon



Ambassador of the United Kingdom



Ambassador of the Netherlands



Ambassador of Ukraine

Amiri Diwan photos



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Do pension funds need better management?

PENSION funds around the world vary widely in how they are managed and how their assets are handled. While some funds are efficiently run and prudently managed, delivering strong annual returns, many others suffer from persistent deficits caused by inefficiency, poor management, or corruption.

However, adopting strategies from others is a sign of strength rather than weakness. Sound management practices, including those related to pension funds, have been successfully shared and implemented in many countries.

In countries such as the Netherlands, Japan, and Switzerland, pension funds have become major contributors to national economic output. Their success lies in diversifying investments rather

than relying on a single model, enabling them to generate substantial annual returns despite a growing number of retirees.

A vision for comprehensive development is needed to eliminate the persistent actuarial deficit in social security systems, a problem for which no lasting solution has yet been found. These structural problems are not unique to any one country.

With assets exceeding KD 45

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'Strict yet humanitarian'

Legal experts hail Kuwait's landmark drug legislation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Decree-Law No. 159/2025 on combating narcotic and psychotropic substances came into effect on Monday, December 15, marking what has been described as the most serious and decisive step in the state's efforts to fight drugs and eliminate their sources, reports Al-Seyassah daily.



Al-Qattan

The new law replaces previous legislation and is based on a dual approach that combines strict deterrence against criminal networks with humanitarian care for victims of addiction.



Al-Wawan

Consisting of 84 articles, the decree establishes a comprehensive legal framework to tighten control over the drug trade.



Haidar

It authorizes the death penalty or life imprisonment for anyone involved in importing, smuggling, producing, or cultivating narcotic substances with the intent to traffic them, along with fines that may reach KD two million.

The law also imposes the death penalty if the perpetrator exploits a minor in committing trafficking or promotion offenses.

It closes legislative loopholes previously exploited in drug cases by including newly introduced and dangerous psychotropic substances, such as methamphetamine and Lyrica, in the official schedules.

It stipulates that anyone found in a location designated for drug use, who knows its purpose and is able to leave but fails to do so, may face up to three years in prison, with spouses, children, and parents exempt from this penalty.

In this regard, Lawyer Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan stated that the decree represents a qualitative shift in criminal policy, as it combines strict enforcement with a humanitarian approach.

He emphasized that the state has sent a clear and decisive message while simultaneously providing a path to recovery for addiction victims.

Al-Qattan stressed that one of the most significant new aspects of the law is the increased penalties for using smart applications or electronic payment methods in drug sales and promotion, thereby enhancing the value of digital evidence as independent, admissible proof of the crime.

He also highlighted provisions protecting whistleblowers and ensuring the confidentiality and security of their information.

Meanwhile, Lawyer Jarrah Mubarak Al-Wawan noted that the decree maintains its humanitarian focus, granting addicts immunity from

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Thunderstorm fury set to slam Kuwait

Strong winds, rain to peak Thursday

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16, (KUNA): Kuwait is set to be affected by unstable weather starting Wednesday evening, with scattered thunderstorms of varying intensity, expected to peak early Thursday and turn heavy in some areas, the Meteorology Department said Tuesday.

Acting Director of the Meteorology Department Dhirar Al-Ali said weather charts indicate mild weather and partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered rain and a chance for fog forming on Wednesday

evening.

He also said weather instability will continue on Thursday night, cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms that might be heavy at times and a chance of fog forming.

Al-Ali added that northeasterly to northwesterly winds will become active, exceeding 60 kilometers per hour, leading to rough seas with waves rising above seven feet.

He noted that the rainy conditions are expected to continue from Wednesday night until Friday noon, with a chance of fog in some areas, while cloud cover and rainfall are forecast to gradually decrease from Friday afternoon.



Group photo during the Moroccan-Kuwaiti Economic Forum.

Forum boosts cooperation

Moroccan exports to Kuwait rise 7.1%

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



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Kuwait, Ali Ibin Issa, speaks at the Moroccan-Kuwaiti Economic Forum.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Kuwait, Ali Ibin Issa, reported that Moroccan exports to Kuwait increased by approximately 7.1 percent during the first half of 2025.

Speaking at the Moroccan-Kuwaiti Economic Forum, the ambassador highlighted the strong trade activity between the two countries in 2023 and 2024, as well as the economic importance of their bilateral relations.

Ambassador Ibin Issa explained that Kuwaiti-funded projects in Morocco cover multiple sectors, including automotive, aerospace, renewable energy, and tourism.

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Scene triggers safety concerns

Tree-top car TV drama stunt

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Motorists on the Sixth Ring Road, opposite Sulaibiya farms, were surprised on Monday by the sight of a vehicle perched high in a tree along the roadside, prompting widespread confu-

sion and concern among passersby. The scene drew comparisons to the famous Egyptian film "My Father Is Up a Tree" from the late 1960s, starring the late Abdul-Halim Hafidh and a host of other stars of the golden age of Egyptian cinema.

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Day by Day

IF a wise person makes a mistake, he apologizes, while a fool resorts to sophistry. It is best not to engage with a fool in order to avoid anxiety and maintain your peace of mind.

A fool's actions reveal him. No special skill or patience is needed to recognize it. You should determine your stance toward a fool early on.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



12 Crown Prince attends 'Between Two Masterpieces' exhibition



10 KfH solidifies social responsibility leadership in 2025 with innovative initiatives and strategic partnerships



8 Borsa Kuwait lists Action Energy in 'Premier' Market

News watch

KUWAIT CITY: The Amiri Diwan on Tuesday mourned the demise of Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah at the age of 67.

The funeral service is to take place at 2:36 p.m. local time Wednesday. (KUNA)

KUWAIT CITY: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Subaih Abdulaziz Al-Mukhaizee discussed with head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission in Kuwait Francisco Parodi the aspects of cooperation in the field of financial reforms. (KUNA)

GAZA: The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said on Tuesday that its crews treated five members of a family, a father, mother, and three daughters, due to an attack by colonists after midnight last night in Al-Auja area near Jericho.

According to the Palestinian News Agency (Wafa), Israeli forces raided Amman Street in the city center at dawn. (KUNA)

Online rulings now available

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The Ministry of Justice has launched an online service that allows users to access the full text of court rulings directly through the Sahef application, available for government agencies and other concerned parties, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry stated that this step is part of its efforts to enhance digital services, streamline procedures for litigants, and save time and effort by eliminating the need to visit its offices.

Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:10 Asr 14:33
Sunrise .. 06:35 Maghrib .. 16:52
Zohr 11:43 Isha 18:14

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate northeasterly wind changing to southwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-30 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

By Night: Rather cold to cold

Weather

and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southerly wind to southwesterly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h with a chance for thunder rain that might be heavy over southern areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	18	12

Kuwait Airport	19	12
Abdaly	19	08
Bubyan	14	08
Jahra	19	11
Failaka Island	15	10
Salmiyah	17	14
Ahmadi	14	09
Wafra	18	12
Sally	16	07

Amir, Crown Prince, Premier congratulate Bahrain

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa on his country's 54th National Day and the 26th anniversary of his accession to power.

In his cable, His Highness the Amir lauded the significant achievements and development during the era of King Hamad and commended the strong ties linking the State of Kuwait with the Kingdom of Bahrain.

He affirmed both countries' commitment to bolster relations and cooperation in various sectors, and expressed good wishes to King Hamad as well as to his country so it may witness further progress and development under the monarch's wise leadership.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa on his country's 54th national day and the 26th anniversary of his

accession to power.

His Highness the Crown Prince wished the Bahraini monarch good health and his country most progress and prosperity under his sagacious leadership.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah then sent a cable of congratulations to the King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa on his country's 54th National Day and the 26th anniversary of his accession to power.



Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya and the Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki during the cake-cutting ceremony.



Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers Sulaiman Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah (right), Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki at the ceremony.



Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki receives well-wishers at the ceremony.



Photos by Samer Shaqar
Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki with diplomats and guests.

Kuwait, Bahrain united in historic ties, destiny

'Royal vision laid foundation of modern state'

MANAMA, Dec 16, (KUNA): Bahrain's national celebrations, on December 16, stand as a testament to an extended journey of construction and achievement led by a royal vision that laid the foundations of a modern state, consolidated pillars of progress and stability, and placed people at the heart and ultimate goal of development.

The Kingdom is living the atmosphere of National Day and the anniversary of the accession of the Bahraini monarch, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, significant occasions not confined to the conscience of Bahrainis alone but the Gulf states and their peoples, foremost the State of Kuwait.

Kuwait Charge d'Affaires to Bahrain Yusef Al-Banwan said deeply-rooted relations binding the two brotherly countries constitute a distinctive model of integration and reflect unity of destiny and close historical ties between their leaderships and peoples.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Banwan said cherished national occasions of the Kingdom of Bahrain represent a bright milestone in its developmental journey and reflect the achievements and comprehensive renaissance realized under its wise leadership and government, as well as the security, stability and progress it enjoys across various fields.

He affirmed the State of Kuwait viewed Bahrain's national celebrations as dear occasions to the hearts of all Kuwaitis, given the strong bonds and firm ties of religion, blood, history, language, kinship and shared destiny that unite the two brotherly countries.

He noted the continuous development witnessed in Kuwaiti-Bahraini relations across various fields, thanks to the instructions of the leadership of both countries, and their mutual keenness to strengthen bilateral cooperation and elevate it in a manner that serves interests of the two peoples and enhances the framework of joint Gulf action.

Al-Banwan wished Bahrain further progress and prosperity, and for its people continued security and stability.

On this occasion, Bahrain is witnessing feelings of pride in qualitative achievements realized across various fields, and in the firm national will that unites its people behind a leadership that works tirelessly for a more prosperous and stable future. This reflects a shared vision for building a modern state based on justice, equality and the rule of law, moving steadily toward the future.

These celebrations coincide with a year that witnessed notable development momentum at various levels, as Bahrain continued its path of

'We're confident in Bahrain effective leadership of pan-Arab organization'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya stated Monday that the Kingdom of Bahrain's presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council comes at a "delicate time" that requires "great efforts."

He expressed his confidence in Manama's ability to effectively lead the pan-Gulf organization at this important stage.

Minister Al-Yahya said this during a celebration held Monday at the Bahraini Embassy in Kuwait to mark the National Day and 26th anniversary of the Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa's accession to the throne.

The Kuwaiti top diplomat expressed his sincere congratulations to the Bahraini leadership and people on this national occasion, wishing them continued progress and prosperity.

The Bahrain embassy's ceremony was also at-

institutional reform, strengthened principles of transparency and accountability, and developed the way the government functions in ways that enhance performance efficiency and keep pace with the aspirations of the current stage.

On the economic front, the Kingdom achieved remarkable progress thanks to flexible policies based on innovation and diversification, and support for promising sectors such as financial technology, industry, logistics services and telecommunications. This enhanced Bahrain's ability to attract investment and consolidated a stable economic environment capable of achieving sustainable growth.

Foundation

Bahrain has also placed increasing emphasis on citizens as the foundation and driver of development, through the implementation of programs to empower national competencies, provide job opportunities, and support training and professional development, thereby enhancing the readiness of human resources and contributing to the support of the national economy.

On the social front, the Kingdom continued to strengthen the social protection system, expand the scope of services provided to citizens, and support most needy groups, reflecting a comprehensive vision aimed at improving quality of life.

During 2025, Bahrain witnessed notable cultural and tourism momentum through hosting diverse international and regional events that contributed to consolidating its position as a center for culture, arts, and the conferences and events industry, and attracting visitors from around the world.

tended by Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Fahad Yusef Saud Al-Sabah, a number of foreign ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions in Kuwait.

For his part, Bahrain's Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki commended the strong relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait.

Al-Maliki pointed out that the Bahrain's foreign policy is based on moderation and constructive cooperation and aims to promote the values of dialogue, coexistence, peace, and sustainable development.

Ambassador Al-Maliki renewed Bahrain's commitment to spare no effort during its presidency of the GCC to strengthen the Arabian Gulf cohesion and advancing joint GCC action to meet people aspirations.

In the sports field, achievements continued at both local and international levels, reflecting attention to developing sports infrastructure and enhancing Bahrain's presence on the global stage.

In a prominent Gulf milestone, Bahrain consolidated its leading position in joint Gulf action by hosting the 46th Gulf Summit on December 3. During the summit, the Kingdom emphasized the importance of strengthening integration among GCC states and unifying efforts across political, economic and security fields, based on a vision founded on shared destiny and mutual interests.

Hosting the summit came as confirmation of the active role played by Bahrain in supporting the framework of joint Gulf action, strengthening cooperation among the six GCC states, and continuing the journey of shared development that has united the peoples of the region for decades.

Within the framework of the firm relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait, the past year witnessed further deepening of cooperation at various levels, as the leadership of both countries continued to support the partnership path through the Joint Supreme Committee and to enhance initiatives that serve Gulf interests, consolidate unity of ranks, and reinforce the depth of historical ties between the two brotherly peoples.

Bahraini-Kuwaiti relations constitute an advanced model of strong relations based on mutual respect and unity of shared destiny, as both countries are keen to expand cooperation in all fields in a manner that reflects the strength of the partnership and a unified vision toward the future of the region.

KUWAIT RECALLS WISE LEADERSHIP

2nd year of late Amir Sheikh Nawaf passing away marked

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16, (KUNA): On the second anniversary of the passing of the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which falls on December 16, Kuwait recalls his wise leadership, which lasted nearly three years.

During his rule, he was keen to promote development, stability, and elevate Kuwait's status regionally and globally, and while December 16th, 2023 marked his loss, his legacy and accomplishments will be remembered in Kuwait's history.

Over nearly six decades, the late Amir made a lasting impact on the institutions he led, focusing on their growth, workforce development, and the enhancement of their roles in strengthening Kuwait's presence at the regional and global levels.

He assumed leadership on September 29, 2020, succeeding his brother, the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, becoming Kuwait's 16th ruler in accordance with the Constitution.

Born on June 25, 1937, he was the sixth son of the late Amir Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait's 10th ruler.

Sheikh Nawaf pursued his education at various schools in Kuwait, including Sharq and Al-Mubarakiya, and was well-known for his respect for his teachers and mentors.

Following Kuwait's independence, the late Amir began his political journey in 1962, when the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah appointed him as Governor of Hawalli.

On March 19, 1978, Sheikh Nawaf was named Minister of Interior, where his primary focus was maintaining national security and stability.

Sheikh Nawaf took the role of Minister of Defense in January 1988. During this time, he worked to modernize the military, equip the Kuwaiti Army with the



Late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad

latest technology from various countries, and strengthen its combat capabilities.

When Kuwait came under the Iraqi invasion and occupation in 1990-91, he played a critical role in leading the resistance and ensuring the safe relocation of Kuwait's Amir to Saudi Arabia while also commanding the army.

After Kuwait's liberation in 1991, Sheikh Nawaf was appointed Minister of Social Affairs, and on October 17, 1992, he became Deputy Chief of the National Guard.

Nearly nine years later, on July 13, 2003, Sheikh Nawaf returned as Minister of Interior, and later on October 16, an Amiri decree named him First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior.

Before becoming the Amir of Kuwait in 2020, Sheikh Nawaf served as Crown Prince following an Amiri decree issued by the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on February 7, 2006.

For 14 years, he contributed to the country's development and stability through key decisions and policies.

'Safeguarding Our Homeland' achieves widespread success

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The national awareness campaign "Safeguarding Our Homeland" launched by the Ministry of Interior to coincide with the implementation of the new drugs law - Decree No. 159/2025 - has achieved widespread success in reaching various segments of society.

This success builds on the positive outcomes of the traffic law awareness campaign, launched by the ministry following the law's enactment in April, which helped strengthen traffic compliance and raise community awareness.

The Ministry of Interior is committed to

combining proactive awareness campaigns with the strict enforcement of new legislation.

The "Safeguarding Our Homeland" campaign is the culmination of intensive and coordinated efforts led by the Public Relations and Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior, under the direct guidance of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef who emphasized the importance of preventive and awareness-raising initiatives alongside law enforcement.

The campaign was implemented under the leadership of the Director General of the General Department of Security Relations and Media Brigadier General Nasser Abu Salib, with the support of his assistant, Colonel Youssef Anbar, Director of the Security Media Department Colonel Othman Al-Gharib, and Director of the Public Relations Department Colonel Faisal Sand Al-Daihani.



Sheikh Fahad

Other Voices

Theory of Dunning-Kruger

By Ahmad alsarraf

In the 1900s, psychologists Dunning and Kruger developed a theory bearing their names, which proved that behavioral or cognitive bias occurs when an individual overestimates their skills or knowledge compared to others.

This bias arises when a person exaggerates their abilities while failing to recognize and address their weaknesses. For example, someone might believe they are fit to star in a romantic film, but the film producers do not see them as suitable.

Another example is a student who does not study diligently and receives low grades. Before the exam, they may have been confident that they understood everything and expected a high score. When they fail, they are shocked and may justify it by claiming the questions were unfair or that the teacher dislikes them, rather than acknowledging that their poor performance was the real reason.

In the Dunning-Kruger experiment, some participants scored low on tests of logic, grammar, and sense of humor. Yet, they rated themselves as above average.

Another example is a low-performing employee who constantly volunteers for tasks beyond their abilities. They insist their approach is the best and resist any criticism or additional training, convinced they understand the work better than their colleagues, despite their poor performance.

Similarly, a manager with limited experience may refuse to consult specialists or experts, making major decisions with excessive confidence. This often leads to serious mistakes for the organization, which they then justify by blaming external fac-

tors rather than acknowledging their own inability to assess themselves accurately.

We also see individuals who have read only a few social media posts on complex topics such as vaccines or economics, yet speak with great confidence as if they were experts, even though they lack a fundamental understanding of the scientific method in these fields.

We often encounter people who offer definitive opinions on the constitution, electoral systems, or economic policies, yet when asked about the simplest details, they cannot provide an answer. Despite this, they remain convinced that their position is correct and that everyone else is ignorant. Some people consider themselves excellent drivers, so they speed, use their phones while driving, and break traffic laws, believing they can control the car without recognizing the real risks involved.

Conversely, some individuals tend to underestimate themselves, even when they are experts. For example, a highly skilled researcher might find a subject "simple" because it comes easily to them and then assume it is equally easy for everyone else. In doing so, they undervalue their own expertise and overestimate others' knowledge, diminishing their own achievements.

These examples illustrate the essence of the Dunning-Kruger effect.

An ignorant person is unaware of their own ignorance because the skills required to understand a subject are the same skills needed to recognize their lack of knowledge.

Interestingly, the Dunning-Kruger theory was awarded the "Nobel Prize for Ironic Stupidity," also known as the "Darwin Prizes," an unofficial award organized by the humorous journal "Annals of Improbable Research". The award aims to highlight studies that are bizarre, trivial, or counterintuitive.



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diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Some love their nation ... while others sell out

"IN 1898, German Emperor Wilhelm II visited Damascus, and the entire city turned out to give him a grand welcome," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"During the reception at the entrance to the Citadel, the Empress, Wilhelm's wife, noticed a beautiful white donkey. She asked the then-governor of Damascus, Mustafa Asim Pasha, to bring it to her so she could take it back to Berlin as a souvenir.

"The governor went to find the donkey's owner, a man named Abu al-Khair Tallou, and requested that he give the donkey to the Empress. Abu al-Khair refused. The governor, angered, offered to buy the donkey, but Abu al-Khair remained steadfast, saying, "Your Excellency, I have six fine horses. If you wish, I will give them all to the Empress as a gift, free of charge. But not the donkey."

"The governor was surprised by this response and asked why. Tallou smiled and replied, "Sir, if they take the donkey to your country, the world's newspapers will write about it. People will ask, 'Where is this donkey from?' and the answer will be, 'From Damascus.' The 'Damascus donkey' will become the talk of the town, perhaps even a subject of ridicule. People will say, 'Is it possible that the Empress of Germany found nothing in Damascus to admire except donkeys?' Therefore, I will neither give it to her nor sell it."

"The governor conveyed Tallou's answer to the Emperor and Empress, who laughed heartily and were impressed by his response. The Emperor then ordered that Tallou be awarded a symbolic medal.

"The moral of this story is - Some people protect their country's reputation, refusing to let it be tarnished by gossip, while others, like donkeys, would sell their country and everything in it. When it comes to patriotism, some nations fall apart due to the erosion of national unity, leading to their collapse, while others have had rulers compelled to use force to preserve their nation.

"I was working at the Kuwaiti embassy in Belgrade in the early 1980s, and I predicted that Yugoslavia would eventually break apart. When I shared this observation with my fellow diplomats in 1985, they ridiculed my opinion.

"Indeed, Yugoslavia disintegrated in the early 1990s into several independent republics. My prediction was based on observing that President Josip Tito had successfully unified the diverse regions of Yugoslavia into a single state, but after his death in May 1980, ethnic tensions and animosities resurfaced among the Yugoslavs.

"Some countries enforce the rule of law through the use of military force to maintain national unity. Sri Lanka, for example, delivered a decisive blow to the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which had plunged the country into civil war in 1983. The government crushed the rebellion in 2008,

ending the civil war and restoring stability and security to the nation."

Also:

"Public employment grants an individual a legal status derived from the legal personality of the government entity to which they belong. Anyone who seeks and accepts a public position becomes essentially an employee number, effectively suspending their personal identity during the performance of their official duties," Kuwaiti writer **Zaid Al-Jalawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Being exposed to any assault or attack, whether within the entity where they work or outside while performing their duties, does not entitle the employee to file a complaint directly. Instead, the employee must request their employer to initiate a criminal or civil lawsuit. This is in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 485/2008, which requires every government entity to file a criminal lawsuit against anyone who verbally insults, gestures offensively toward, or assaults its employees while they are performing their duties.

"This ministerial resolution highlights the true nature of the law, indicating that a public employee, even if subjected to abuse at their workplace by a superior or colleague, cannot claim a personal attack on their dignity. This is because there is no legal basis for such a claim, as all public employees provide a national service in exchange for a salary.

"A public employee may submit a complaint to their department, requesting an investigation into the incident. The department will evaluate the seriousness of the complaint. If the relevant department considers the complaint serious, it will initiate an investigation. If the investigating body suspects that a public law offense may have occurred, it will suspend the investigation and refer the matter to the under-secretary of the ministry for consultation with the minister. The minister will then decide, in accordance with Article 59 of the Civil Service Law, either to file a complaint with the Public Prosecution or to instruct the investigating body to proceed with disciplinary action.

"An example of this is the attacks suffered by members of the Special Forces at the hands of protesters, which resulted in serious injuries. It has not been reported that any of these personnel claimed that their dignity had been violated. The principles of public service do not permit sectarianism, tribalism, or any other form of bias within its system.

"Supporting groups or teams based on personal friendships is not allowed, as it constitutes a violation of the public service code of conduct. Every employee, upon joining the workforce, is expected to undergo training that emphasizes that their role is essentially that of a job number and that their loyalty must be to the institution they serve, not to any other entity. Therefore, employees are required to return their work ID cards upon the termination of their employment."

"We cannot deny the positive role social media plays in our lives today, but we also can-

not ignore its negative effects on people of all ages," Syrian writer **Dr. Adnan Mahrez** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"As a result, many government agencies, particularly educational and training institutions in developed countries, have begun to recognize the risks associated with these platforms. They have taken steps to introduce legislation and regulations to address this issue and reduce its harmful impact.

"The Australian government has been a pioneer in this regard, announcing new legislation aimed at preventing children under the age of 16 from accessing social media. This measure seeks to protect the younger generation and safeguard children's overall well-being from the growing negative effects of constant digital exposure on their mental and physical health.

"Indeed, Australia began implementing the law on Wednesday, December 10, as part of a set of measures described globally as pioneering, aimed at protecting children's physical and mental health from excessive social media use.

"Meanwhile, relevant authorities in several countries have developed awareness and educational programs to warn against this phenomenon. Some have even started introducing supplementary programs and curricula in nurseries, kindergartens, and schools targeting children aged 4 to 12. These aim to provide guidance and raise awareness about the dangers of social media use and its social and psychological effects on children, including increased isolation and a reduced ability to speak and communicate naturally with others.

"These programs, which can be considered supplementary enrichment initiatives alongside the core curriculum, aim to develop children's social skills, support their psychological well-being, strengthen their character, and enhance their overall health.

"In addition to offering advice and guidance to parents and guardians on how to interact with their children and encouraging them to limit social media use, the organizations behind these programs ensured the involvement of specialists, educational and guidance institutions, as well as medical and psychological professionals. The programs also provide parents with information and training on how to use the curricula effectively and equip them with best practices for engaging with their children and addressing their health, psychological, social, and physical challenges.

"While some social media platforms and service providers have criticized the decision and defended their role in offering these services, the Australian government has warned that such companies must assume their responsibilities and will be required to comply with the decision or face substantial fines.

— Compiled by **Simi K. Kuttu**



Ahmad Al-Dawas



KUNA photo
Delegation from Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College (MAJCS) visits Oman's Academy for Strategic and Defense Studies.

Kuwait, Oman armed forces to up ties, share knowhow

MUSCAT, Oman, Dec 16, (KUNA): A delegation from Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College (MAJCS) visited Oman on Tuesday as part of efforts to bolster military and academic cooperation as well as exchange expertise between the two countries.

A statement by the General Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces said that the delegation was headed by Air Vice Marshal Fahad Al-Khurainj, noting the visit is part of the international visits program aimed at broadening cooperation, sharing

academic experience and reinforcing ties between the armed forces of Kuwait and Oman.

During the visit, Air Vice Marshal Fahad met with Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defense Studies Major General Hamad bin Ahmad, where both sides exchanged talks and discussed several issues of mutual interest, particularly in academic fields.

The delegation was briefed on the academy's missions and its role in preparing strategic and defense studies and research, as well as its key activities and programs.

No injuries in tent fire

KFF personnel hone their skills in training at Qatar

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Non-commissioned officers from Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) participated in a specialized external training course on industrial firefighting at the Ras Laffan Emergency and Safety College in Qatar from December 7 to 11, reports Al-Anba daily.

The training was attended by Director of the Human Resources Development Department Brigadier Abdullah Sultan Al-Ansari, as well as Brigadier Mohammad Ahan Al-Ahan, the College Director.

The course was aimed to develop technical and practical skills and enhance the level of field readiness, which reflects KFF's commitment to advancing external training programs and expanding regional and international cooperation.

This strengthens personnel efficiency and keeps pace with global best practices in firefighting.

Fire erupts in tent: Fire broke out in a camp in Al-Khuwaisat desert. No injuries were reported, and damage was limited to material losses, reports Al-Anba daily.

The rapid response of the specialized teams helped prevent the fire from spreading to nearby camps.

An investigation has been launched to determine the cause.

Visitors to desert areas are urged to follow safety procedures, avoid leaving fire sources unattended, and comply with instructions from the competent authorities to protect lives and property.

Kuwait vows 'overhaul' of anti-corruption laws

DOHA, Dec 16, (KUNA): Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Chairman Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim affirmed on Monday the State of Kuwait's endeavors to overhaul its legislations, measures and policies for abiding by the UN conventions against corruption.

Speaking at the 11th session of the Conference of the States Parties (COSP11) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Al-Ibrahim affirmed that Kuwait has enacted new legislations to attain absolute implementation of the UN convention against corruption, namely Law 69/2025 stipulating greater jurisdictions and independence for the authority.

Moreover, Law 79/2025 had been issued regarding international judicial cooperation on criminal cases, he added, revealing that work was underway to map out the second phase of the national strategy to boost integrity and combat corruption according to criteria and recommendations of FATF, the Financial Action Task Force.

Hunt for contractor in cash misappropriation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The Hawally Criminal Investigation Department's Hawally and Shaab Office has placed an Egyptian contractor on its arrest list following a report from a contracting company that it had fallen victim to embezzlement of subsidized building materials valued at approximately KD 21,000, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the accused was employed as a subcontractor under a contract to manage and execute a construction project for a plot owner in Shaab, Block 3. His responsibilities included supplying the subsidized materials and delivering the project turnkey.

A dispute arose between the company and the contractor, leading to the termination of their working relationship. The company later discovered that the contractor had supplied the materials to the plot owner, who then embezzled some and sold them without the company's knowledge. The embezzled materials are estimated at KD 21,000, and the plot owner has requested the company to resupply them.

The company is committed to taking all necessary measures to apprehend the accused and inventory the materials involved, in order for the investigations to be completed and the case to be referred to the concerned authorities for legal action.

Co-ops statistics: Latest statistics issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs revealed that there are 528,103 shareholders in 74 cooperative societies and 274 public benefit associations, including both civil and charitable organizations, reports Al-Anba daily.

More than 36,000 files benefit from social assistance programs, and approximately 55,000 individuals receive services intended for the elderly. The number of social assistance beneficiaries reached 36,268, and the number of priority card holders totaled 36,712.

A total of 54,652 individuals benefit from services provided to the elderly, which reflects the ministry's ongoing efforts to support this segment of society. There are a total of 74 cooperative societies in the country, with a total of 528,103 shareholders. The number of public benefit associations, both civil and charitable, stands at 274.

Wedding halls under scrutiny

'No profiteering from subletting'

By **Fares Ghaleb** and **Inaas Awadh**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: To ensure fairness and prevent manipulation, the Ministry of Social Affairs has issued a circular regulating wedding hall reservations.

According to the circular, wedding hall reservations may not be transferred to another person under any circumstances. If a reservation holder wishes to cancel, the booking will be officially voided and the paid amount refunded in accordance with the ministry's approved procedures and regulations. This is aimed to streamline operations and prevent exploitation of the reservation system.

Field inspection teams, comprising both male and female personnel, will be formed to verify that the individual who made the reservation is the same person hosting the event and to ensure full compliance with all regulations and instructions.

The ministry emphasized in the circular the absolute prohibition of requesting or collecting any money in exchange for transferring a reservation or facilitating the use of the halls, considering this a serious violation.

It stated that strict legal measures will be taken, without leniency, against anyone found to be involved in manipulation or the unlawful collection of funds, in accordance

with applicable laws and regulations.

In the event of any reports, individuals are requested to contact the designated number via WhatsApp at 22484531, with full confidentiality guaranteed for all informers.

Waste removal

Municipal Council member Waleed Al-Dagher submitted a question to Kuwait Municipality's executive body regarding the level of cleanliness and waste removal in livestock pens, farms, and stables.

He highlighted increasing complaints from citizens and property owners in Kabd, Al-Hajin, and Wafra livestock pens, as well as horse and camel stables in Jahra, Abdali, and Wafra farms, and the Sulabiya agricultural holdings, concerning poor cleanliness level, waste accumulation, and the spread of odors and insects. These issues reflect shortcomings in the oversight of cleaning companies, weak monitoring, or insufficient resources allocated to these sites.

Al-Dagher requested clarification on Kuwait Municipality's commitment to cleaning services in these areas, including whether fees are collected for these services, their legal basis, and the revenue generated.

He also sought information on the number and scope of cleaning contracts, the obligations of contracting companies, and whether departments or units are responsible for monitoring cleaning operations in these locations.

Furthermore, Al-Dagher called for an explanation of the reasons behind the poor cleanliness and the measures the municipality is taking to improve environmental conditions and service quality.

589 food trucks lose their license

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has revoked the licenses of 589 mobile food trucks after confirming that they had expired over a year ago and were not renewed, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the license revocations are in line with Ministerial Resolution No. 190/2025, which calls for a comprehensive review of all mobile food truck licenses as part of efforts to regulate the business environment and promote equal opportunities.

This measure aims to remove inactive licenses from the market and ensure that op-

portunities and support are directed to committed entrepreneurs, thus contributing to a fairer and more competitive environment and improving the quality of services provided to the community.

The ministry affirmed that regulating the mobile food truck sector also involves developing monitoring tools and implementing digital transformation.

It urged license holders to obtain the "Smart License" through the ministry's website via the "Commercial Registry Portal", and display the license prominently on the vehicle.



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Officials and business leaders attend talks at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry during the visit of the Uzbek trade delegation, focusing on expanding bilateral economic cooperation.



Kuwait, Uzbekistan eye deeper business links

KCCI hosts high-level Uzbek trade delegation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) received a trade delegation from the Republic of Uzbekistan on Sunday, December 14.

According to a press release issued by KCCI, the delegation was led by the Minister of Investment, Industry, and Trade, Laziz Kudratov, and included the Uzbek Ambassador to Kuwait, Ayubkhan Yunusov, a number of business leaders, local company officials, and members of the press.

KCCI lauded the steady growth of economic relations between Kuwait and Uzbekistan over the past decade, noting that bilateral trade has gradually expanded, which reflects strong potential for further trade cooperation between the two friendly nations.

The delegation included representatives of leading Uzbek companies operating in sectors such as agriculture and food processing, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, textiles and apparel, building materials, and furniture.

KCCI highlighted that these sectors offer promising opportunities for partnerships with Kuwaiti companies in the areas of trade, food and consumer goods, healthcare, construction, logistics, and investment services, thus creating complementary strengths and potential joint ventures.

It reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening economic cooperation



Members of the Uzbek delegation tour an exhibition of Uzbek food and consumer products on the sidelines of their meeting with KCCI, highlighting opportunities in food security and trade.

tion between Kuwait and Uzbekistan, expressing confidence that the discussions would open the door to new opportunities and lasting partnerships benefiting both countries.

Meanwhile, Minister Laziz Kudratov thanked KCCI for the warm welcome and excellent organization, noting that the Uzbek delegation's visit to Kuwait follows the official visit of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev earlier this year, which resulted in agreements

and memoranda of understanding at the highest leadership levels between the two nations.

Kudratov highlighted the tangible progress in bilateral cooperation, pointing out that the number of direct flights between Kuwait and Uzbekistan has increased to four per week, which has contributed to increased travel, trade, and tourism between the two countries.

He said new logistics corridors have been established to facilitate

the flow of goods and merchandise between Kuwait and Uzbekistan, thus positively contributing to the growth of trade volume.

Kudratov emphasized Uzbekistan's interest in attracting Kuwaiti technology, expertise, and capital to support development plans in several vital sectors, including oil and gas, chemical industries, construction, real estate development, and banking.

He highlighted Kuwait's pivotal role in the region, noting that the Kuwaiti market serves as a natural and strategic gateway for Uzbek products due to its geographic proximity as the closest Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country to Uzbekistan, which enhances trade and transportation opportunities.

Kudratov pointed to general legal reforms in Uzbekistan where taxes are among the lowest compared to other countries, adding that direct investment flows reached \$42 billion by 2025.

He identified mining, energy, petrochemicals, and information technology as among the most promising sectors in Uzbekistan, and revealed a major project to expand the current capital city with comprehensive services.

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Amiri decrees reset senior gov't officials

Cabinet OK's top-level appointments

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: A series of Amiri decrees were issued announcing important appointments and promotions in several ministries and government authorities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The appointments include senior positions in the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Higher Education, Kuwait Municipality, and the Public Authority for Manpower, with officials promoted or appointed to ranks ranging from Assistant Undersecretary to Major General.

These decrees were issued in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations, based on ministerial recommendations, and with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

Amiri Decree No. 231/2025 was issued to promote Brigadier Abdulwahab Al-Wahib of the Police Force to the rank of Major General and appoint him as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior.

The decree was issued in accordance with Law No. 23/1968 on the Police Force System and its amendments, Law No. 15/1979 on the Civil Service and its amendments, the April 4, 1979 decree on the Civil Service System and its amendments, and Decree No. 84/2024 on ministerial delegations and appointments and its amendments, based on the recommendation of the acting Minister of Interior and with the approval of the Cabinet.

Article 1 - Brigadier Abdulwahab Ahmed Abdulwahab Al-Wahib is promoted to the rank of Major General in the Police Force and appointed Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior.

Article 2 - The Minister of Interior shall implement this decree, which takes effect from the date of its issuance and shall be published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm".

Meanwhile, Amiri Decree No. 234/2025 was issued to appoint Dr. Faisal Al-Adwani and Saadoun Buarki as Assistant Undersecretaries in the Ministry of Higher Education.

The decree was issued after reviewing the Constitution, Amiri Order No. 15/1979 concerning the Civil Service Commission and its amendments, Decree No. 15/1979 on the Civil Service System and its amendments, and Decree No. 84/2024 on Ministerial Appointments and Delegations and its amendments.

The appointments were made upon the recommendation of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

Article 1 - Dr. Faisal Abdullah Mohammed Al-Adwani and Saadoun Mohammed Khalifa Buarki are appointed as assistant undersecretaries in the Ministry of Higher Education.

Article 2 - The Minister of Higher

Education and Scientific Research shall implement this decree, which takes effect from the date of its issuance and shall be published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm".

Furthermore, Amiri Decree No. 232/2025 was issued for appointing Manal Al-Asfour as Director General of Kuwait Municipality with the rank of Undersecretary.

The decree was issued after reviewing the Constitution, Amiri Order No. 10/2024, Law No. 33/2016 concerning Kuwait Municipality as amended by Law No. 1/2018, Decree-Law No. 15/1979 on the Civil Service and its amendments, Decree No. 161/2023 on appointment of a Deputy Director General of Kuwait Municipality, and Decree No. 84/2024 on ministerial delegations and appointments and its amendments.

The appointment was made upon the recommendation of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

Article 1 - Manal Mohammed Al-Asfour is appointed as Director General of Kuwait Municipality with the rank of Undersecretary.

Article 2 - The Minister of State for Municipal Affairs shall implement this decree, which takes effect from the date of its issuance and shall be published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm".

In addition, Amiri Decree No. 233/2025 was issued for appointing Rabab Al-Osaimi as Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) with the rank of Undersecretary, as well as Abdul Latif Al-Fawzan and Nasser Al-Mutairi as Deputy Directors with the rank of Assistant Undersecretary.

The decree was issued after reviewing the Constitution, the Amiri Order of May 10, 2024, Law No. 15/1979 on the Civil Service and its amendments, Law No. 109/2013 concerning PAM, the April 4, 1979 decree on the Civil Service System and its amendments, Decree No. 153/2022 transferring supervision of PAM, and Decree No. 84/2024 on ministerial delegations and assignments and its amendments.

The appointments were made based on the recommendation of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

Article One - Rabab Abdullah Mazid Al-Osaimi is appointed as Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower with the rank of Undersecretary.

Article Two - Abdul Latif Faisal Al-Fawzan and Nasser Al-Humaidi Al-Mutairi are appointed as Deputy Directors of Public Authority for Manpower with the rank of Assistant Undersecretary.

Article Three - The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior shall implement this decree, which takes effect from the date of its issuance and shall be published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Youm".

English proficiency streamlined

MoHE maps GAT scores to IELTS

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The Ministry of Higher Education has introduced an equivalence between IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores and English proficiency test scores with the aim of standardizing language proficiency assessment criteria and facilitating admission and scholarship procedures, thereby providing greater clarity for students and academic institutions both inside and outside Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the new equivalence enables students to determine the corresponding IELTS scores on standardized English proficiency tests, thereby expediting the academic admission process, especially for those applying to higher education programs and scholarships abroad.

The score equivalency is as follows:

- 66 on the General Aptitude Test (GAT) corresponds to 5.5 on IELTS
- 73 on the GAT corresponds to 6 on IELTS
- 81 on the GAT corresponds to 6.5 on IELTS
- 89 on the GAT corresponds to 7 on IELTS
- 96 on the GAT corresponds to 7.5 on IELTS
- 100 on the GAT corresponds to 8 - 9 on IELTS

The ministry affirmed that adopting this equivalency is part of its ongoing efforts to develop the admissions and scholarship system and align English language requirements with internationally recognized standards.

This decision provides students with greater flexibility in choosing tests to prove their English language proficiency and helps reduce discrepancies in language assessments across different institutions.

26 US academic programs gain Kuwait accreditation approval

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The acting Director General of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance, Dr. Jassem Al-Ali, approved the addition of 26 academic degrees and study programs to the list of recommended higher education institutions in the USA, after they met Kuwait's academic accreditation standards, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The newly added programs include bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at several prestigious American universities, including Virginia Commonwealth University, Rowan University, Brown University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Drexel University, Rutgers University, City University of New York, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Maryland-College Park, Colorado State University-Fort Collins, and others.

The approved programs cover a wide

range of fields, including arts, business administration, supply chain and logistics, public health, epidemiology, clinical epidemiology, industrial health, public health sciences, occupational therapy, and master's program in business administration.

The decision emphasized the importance of students maintaining regular attendance throughout the academic week. It required that the program follow the traditional education system.

It also stipulated that at least one cohort must have graduated from the program before accreditation to ensure academic stability and the quality of its graduates.

The decision highlighted the need to comply with all regulations governing study at higher education institutions outside the State of Kuwait, while reaffirming the requirement for accreditation of academic degrees.



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Experts call for legal reforms and psychological awareness

Kuwait WCSS hosts symposium on protecting women from violence



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Panelists discuss strategies to protect women and women with disabilities from violence during a symposium organized by the Women's Cultural and Social Society in Kuwait.

By Inaas Awad
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: As part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, the Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS) organized a symposium titled "An Integrated System for Protecting Women and Women with Disabilities from Violence: A Legal, Social, and Psychological Perspective" at its headquarters in Khaldiya on Tuesday.

Professor of Psychology at Kuwait University Dr. Fatima Ayad highlighted the importance of understanding the extent and types of violence faced by women with disabilities, noting that it is often

more severe and diverse than the violence experienced by able-bodied women.

She called for addressing negative societal attitudes, particularly exploitation and sexual assault.

In this regard, Director General of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA), Dr. Dalal Al Othman, stated that a team called "Friends of the Disabled" is responsible for monitoring and documenting all violations faced by persons with disabilities, as well as ensuring follow-up, supervision, and oversight to guarantee their rights and protection from harm or violations of their dignity.

Meanwhile, Lawyer Houra Al-

Habib, Head of the Child Center at the Kuwaiti Lawyers Society, affirmed that Kuwait's legislative system includes laws that protect women, such as the Penal Code and the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, there are legislative gaps that still need to be addressed.

In addition, consultant psychiatrist Dr. Mariam Al-Awadhi emphasized that violence extends beyond physical and sexual harm to include psychological, emotional, and verbal abuse, as well as institutional violence tied to laws and societal systems.

She stressed that raising psychological awareness should be a top priority.

Caravan parking reform proposed

By Inaas Awad
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Municipal Council member Dr. Hassan Kamal has proposed the creation of designated, fully equipped public parking areas specifically for caravans, in order to tackle the problem of random and unregulated parking of caravans outside the official camping season.

Dr. Kamal explained that caravan owners often struggle to find legal, year-round parking, which frequently leads to haphazard parking in coastal or desert areas,

causing environmental damage, regulatory conflicts, and traffic issues. The proposed establishment of prepared sites with basic services is seen as a crucial step. It would support recreational activities, reduce the negative impacts of unauthorized parking, enhance public safety, regulate land use, and contribute significantly to environmental preservation.

In conclusion, Dr. Kamal insisted that this measure is a security, environmental, and regulatory necessity that will improve the country's urban and environmental scene.

MoE launches secure system for 2025/'26 semester exams

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: The Ministry of Education announced on Sunday that it has completed preparations for the start of the first semester exams for the 2025/2026 academic year, which are scheduled to begin on Wednesday for intermediate school students and tenth-grade and eleventh-grade students, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the ministry affirmed its commitment to providing all necessary resources to ensure a secure and fair testing environment that guarantees equal opportunities for all students.



Al-Tabtabaei

The ministry explained that Minister Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei is dedicated to building a comprehensive system that safeguards the integrity of the educational process for all students.

Providing this secure testing environment is part of a framework that combines strict adherence to relevant ministerial regulations and decisions with special attention to the psychological and educational needs of students.

It will strictly enforce all laws and regulations governing examinations, particularly those related to exam violations, and implement the provisions of the Penal Code following recent amendments that added two new articles criminalizing cheating and exam leaks. The recent Penal Code amendments impose penalties on anyone who participates in, incites, mediates, or benefits from cheating in examina-

tions. These legal amendments aim to protect educational fairness, safeguard the credibility of academic certificates, and deter anyone attempting to compromise educational outcomes or undermine public trust in the education system.

Implementing the law is essential for protecting the rights of honest students and ensuring equal opportunities for all. It will strictly enforce the updated Penal Code by referring any examination staff member or individual involved in any capacity to the competent authorities if found participating in actions that compromise exam integrity, disrupt their conduct, facilitate cheating, or manipulate results. It will not hesitate to take the necessary legal measures against anyone involved in practices that undermine the integrity or order of examinations, whether they are inside or outside the education system.

The recent amendments to the Penal Code impose penalties on anyone who participates in, incites, mediates, or benefits from cheating in examinations. It will implement the National Observer System by appointing 215 carefully selected national observers based on established and published criteria. These observers will begin their duties with the start of the intermediate-level and tenth-grade and eleventh-grade exams.

The selection of these observers was based on an evaluation of personal interview results, choosing those with the highest scores to ensure their competence and readiness to carry out their assigned supervisory tasks.

They completed a specialized training program covering their duties, the operational procedures within examination committees, and the automated system used for submitting daily reports and documenting field visits.

AI crucial factor in building smart water systems: KISR

GCC workshop highlights data-driven strategies

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16, (KUNA): Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Director General Dr. Faisal Al-Hamidani on Tuesday said artificial intelligence (AI) has become a pivotal tool capable of transforming water challenges into promising opportunities and turning data into accurate decisions that support resource sustainability.

Al-Hamidani made the remarks in a speech delivered on behalf of the patron, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Chairman of KISR's Board of Trustees Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, at the opening of a two-day regional workshop titled "Artificial Intelligence for the Sustainable Management of Water Resources in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries," organized by KISR.

Science and innovation are the gateway to the future, he said, noting AI has become among the key tools in water resource management due to its exceptional ability to collect and analyze data and accurately predict future changes.

Al-Hamidani pointed to challenges facing the region, including scarce natural water resources, fluctuating rainfall and growing demand driven by population growth and expanding development activities, stressing that deploying modern technologies opens new horizons for innovative solutions that improve operational efficiency and advance planning mechanisms to bolster water security.

The workshop reflects KISR's commitment to adopting cutting-edge global technologies and enhancing national capabilities, he added, emphasizing that AI is no longer merely a technical option, but a key factor in building smart water systems able to adapt to climatic and environmental shifts.

Al-Hamidani voiced confidence that the sessions will address key issues, including national AI readiness, digital sovereignty, data security and smart modeling, leading to sustainable applications and community awareness, contributing to innovative ideas and practi-



Dr. Faisal Al-Hamidani, Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research



Engineer Hamad Al-Hatmi, Gulf Water Science and Technology Association Chairman



Dr. Mohammad Al-Rashed, representative of the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States

KUNA photos
Dr. Abdulmajid Bin Amara, Secretary General of the Federation of Arab Scientific Research

cal strategies. In similar remarks, GCC General Secretariat Representative Dr. Mohammad Al-Rashidi said water is among the most strategic priority files for GCC states, given its direct link to water and food security and the requirements of sustainable development.

GCC states have set a clear roadmap to strengthen joint action, culminating in the Gulf Water Strategy prepared in 2016 and updated this year to reflect regional and international developments, he said.

Al-Rashidi noted the General Secretariat's interest in leveraging modern technologies, foremost AI applications, as tools to raise efficiency of water resource management, improve strategic planning, support decision-making, enhance predictive capabilities and manage risks.

AI is among the most important enablers capable of driving a qualitative shift in the water sector by improving operational efficiency, reducing losses and enhancing network management in

line with sustainable development goals, particularly Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation, he mentioned.

Meanwhile, Gulf Water Science and Technology Association Chairman Engineer Hamad Al-Hatmi said the workshop builds on the outcomes of the 15th Gulf Water Conference held in Doha in April 2024, and that its outputs will serve as input for the 16th Gulf Water Conference scheduled to be held in the Sultanate of Oman in 2026. GCC countries face growing challenges in agriculture and urban growth due to increased demand for limited renewable freshwater, Al-Hatmi pointed out, noting these challenges are pushing toward a new approach based on digital transformation.

He reviewed key AI applications for the future of the water sector, including predictive analytics for early leak detection, improving desalination and distribution efficiency, demand management, reducing losses and supporting strategies

to protect water quality.

The workshop will focus on vital themes such as the water sector's readiness for AI, its applications across municipal and agricultural water supply chains, desalination and wastewater treatment, as well as modern smart-city practices and forecasting droughts and floods through early warning systems, Al-Hatmi explained.

In his remarks, Secretary General of the Arab Union of Scientific Research Councils Professor Dr. Abdulmajid Bin Amara said the meeting brings together leading scientists to explore how AI can improve water management through big data analysis and precise forecasting.

The Union places strong emphasis on water and AI within the Arab Alliances for Scientific Research and Innovation initiative, he said, describing it as the first joint cooperation initiative among researchers in Arab countries.

Bin Amara called on research institutions and researchers to submit their projects for the initiative's second edition, launched in mid-last month, praising Kuwait's role through KISR in supporting the Union's programs and initiatives serving Arab development goals.

Meanwhile, Head of the Workshop's Organizing Committee Dr. Mohammad Al-Rashed said in a press statement the workshop aims to introduce relevant entities to practical AI tools for water management and showcase successful models of AI applications in the water sector.

The workshop seeks to enhance cooperation among policymakers, researchers and industry leaders and develop practical strategies to integrate AI into water-management systems in GCC countries, Al-Rashed said. He expressed thanks and appreciation to participating entities and speakers, commending the research and ideas presented, and underlining that AI is a strategic tool essential to ensuring sustainable water resources and strengthening water security in GCC countries.

The workshop, organized by KISR in cooperation with the GCC General Secretariat, the Gulf Water Science and Technology Association and the Arab Union of Scientific Research Councils, aims to exchange knowledge, formulate actionable strategies and enhance partnerships between researchers and decision-makers to ensure a safe and sustainable water future in the region.

Continued from Page 1

Do pension

billion, the Public Institution for Social Security has substantial capacity to invest locally. Such domestic ventures generally carry lower risk than foreign investments, some of which have resulted in huge losses, including the refusal of banks in Lebanon to return two deposits totaling USD 347 million.

By focusing on local investments and benefiting from strong leadership and expertise comparable to those managing successful pension funds worldwide, the institution can strengthen the national economy through a range of strategic projects. These include housing projects such as building complexes suitable for small families, as well as infrastructure projects along highways that could generate toll revenue.

It can also invest in state-granted land allocated to address the actuarial deficit, which is yet to see any development. Furthermore, constructing warehouses and rental shops could stimulate commercial activity and benefit the national economy. Kuwait faces a growing challenge as the number of retirees, currently estimated at around 200,000, continues to rise. This necessitates a clear and proactive investment plan, including seeking international expertise, if necessary, to avoid a future deficit caused by weak financial management.

The institution's performance in past decades has been severely undermined by deep-rooted problems. These harmful practices include outright embezzlement, which became one of the major scandals of the 20th century, as well as nepotism in appointments based on favoritism, persistent interference from influential figures and members of parliament, and the notion that public employment is an entitlement rather than a responsibility.

This notion, often described as the citizen's "share of national wealth," represents a particularly harmful form of corruption that has affected not only the Public Institution for Social Security but state institutions as a whole.

As a result, the fund has been rendered largely ineffective, despite the urgent need for it to function as a strong economic engine. In contrast, other countries have strengthened similar funds, realizing that their financial stability depends on diversifying income sources rather than relying on the sale of a single commodity such as oil.

Unfortunately, Kuwait continues to issue statements without translating them into tangible outcomes.

Tree-top

However, in this case, the television production went a step further by placing not the father but a vehicle high in a tree.

Within minutes, multiple reports flooded the Control Room of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), amid fears that the vehicle could fall due to unstable weather conditions, posing a danger to road users. Firefighting teams and security personnel were immediately dispatched to the scene to assess and handle the situation.

According to a source from KFF, inspection of the site revealed that the vehicle's position was not the result of a traffic accident. Instead, it had been placed in the tree as part of the filming of a television series, without prior coordination or notification to KFF or other relevant authorities.

The unexpected scene led firefighters to immediately remove the vehicle from the tree and secure the area to ensure public safety and prevent any

potential hazards or traffic disruption.

The source stressed the importance of prior coordination with the concerned authorities when filming or staging unusual scenes in public areas, in order to ensure public safety, avoid unnecessary panic, and prevent interference with traffic flow.

Legal experts

punishment if they voluntarily surrender themselves, or through a guardian, to the competent authorities for treatment, provided they fully comply with the prescribed rehabilitation program.

He confirmed that the law increases the penalty for drug use to up to ten years imprisonment if the offense occurs within prisons, police stations, addiction treatment centers, or educational institutions.

In addition, Lawyer Inaam Haidar stated that the implementation of the new drug law marks a pivotal moment in Kuwait's fight against crime, reflecting a strong legislative will to protect youth and enhance community security.

She affirmed that the law's effectiveness depends on strict enforcement, rapid judicial adjudication of cases, and intensified public awareness campaigns highlighting the severe penalties and available treatment options.

Moroccan exports

Moroccan exports to Kuwait rose from 97 million dirhams in 2022 to between 179 million and 217 million dirhams over the past two years, reflecting growing Kuwaiti interest, particularly in agricultural products

such as red fruits, which accounted for 29 million dirhams in 2023 and 20 million dirhams in 2024.

Ambassador Ibin Issa predicted a rise in Moroccan exports to Kuwait, particularly in agricultural products such as fruits and vegetables, as per the expertise of local companies and the government's "Green Generation 2030" strategy.

Launched by King Mohammed VI in February 2020, the strategy builds on the successes of the "Green Morocco Plan" and focuses on human capital development, modernization, sustainability, and competitiveness through innovation, digitalization, and the enhancement of agricultural value chains.

These efforts are part of wide nationwide reforms, including major improvements to roads, railways, airports, and ports, as well as the introduction of a high-speed rail line.

Ambassador Ibin Issa also highlighted Morocco's position as a globally recognized industrial and logistical hub in strategic sectors such as automotive, aerospace, and food industries.

He emphasized that Morocco continuously enhances its business environment through the implementation of the new Investment Charter, streamlining procedures, and offering financial and tax incentives, thereby boosting competitiveness and attracting investors.

The forum, the second of 2025, highlighted the deep historical ties between Morocco and Kuwait and reflects both countries' commitment to strengthening bilateral economic cooperation for mutual benefit, in line with the aspirations of King Mohammed VI and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah.

Ambassador Ibin Issa concluded by expressing his pleasure at the participation of businessmen and officials from leading Moroccan food companies alongside their Kuwaiti counterparts.

He also extended his gratitude to Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) for their support of the joint economic event.

Meanwhile, Emad Abdullah Al-Zaid, Assistant Director General of KCCI, emphasized that diverse exports and strong productive expertise reflect economic transformation and progress.

He cited Morocco as a success story, noting its shift from dependence on ready-made garments to becoming a leader in automotive and advanced industries within just two decades.

Supporting this transformation with data, Al-Zaid explained that Morocco's global agricultural food exports more than doubled between 2015 and 2023, reaching USD 8.8 billion. However, 73 percent of these exports are concentrated in European markets, while Morocco's agricultural exports to GCC are expected to remain under USD 0.1 billion in 2024, despite the GCC importing over USD 74 billion of such products.

For example, Morocco accounts for less than 0.1 percent of Kuwait's annual USD 6.7 billion agricultural imports, totaling only USD 7.2 million.

Also, KCCI expressed hope that the meeting will produce a strong, diversified, and sustainable export relationship, rather than focusing solely on immediate deals.

They urged Moroccan companies to develop a GCC-wide export marketing strategy to enhance the com-

petitiveness of their products.

Furthermore, the meeting also aimed to allow Moroccan companies to present investment opportunities to their Kuwaiti partners, further strengthening bilateral trade relations.

In addition, Dr. Salah Al-Othman of Al-Shall Group highlighted Kuwait's expanding service economy, which offers financial and consulting services that connect investors, traders, and consumers.

He affirmed the market's strong purchasing power, noting Kuwait's population of nearly 5 million (with one-third citizens), a per capita GDP of approximately USD 2.5 million, and average annual household spending of around USD 60,000.

The food and restaurant sector alone is valued at USD 3.5 billion. Consumer strength is further reflected in the roughly USD 16 billion Kuwaitis spend on tourism abroad, with Morocco emerging as a preferred destination for both tourism and investment.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Ibin Issa explained that Morocco's economic transformation has strengthened its position as a preferred destination for foreign investment and a reliable trading partner. International reports consistently rank Morocco among the top African countries for business and as a favored tourist destination. In 2025, Morocco set a tourism record, welcoming approximately 18 million visitors by late November, including 31,000 from Kuwait.

He attributed this success to the Kingdom's stable political climate, which attracts secure investments, as well as its strategic location connecting Africa, Europe, and the Atlantic, providing a significant advantage in accessing regional markets.

Challenges loom

California map fight puts House at stake

LOS ANGELES, Dec 16, (AP) — The fight over California's new congressional map designed to help Democrats flip a string of U.S. House seats kicked off in court Monday, where a panel of federal judges is considering whether the rejiggered districts approved by voters last month can be used in elections.

The hearing in Los Angeles sets the stage for a high-stakes legal and political fight between the Trump administration and Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, who's been eyeing a 2028 presidential run. The lawsuit asks a three-judge panel to grant a temporary restraining order blocking the new map by Dec. 19 — the date candidates can take the first official steps to run in the 2026 elections when GOP control of the House will be in play.



Newsom

Voters approved California's new House map in November in so-called Proposition 50. It's designed to help Democrats flip as many as five seats in the midterm elections. It was Newsom's response to a Republican-led effort in Texas backed by President Donald Trump.

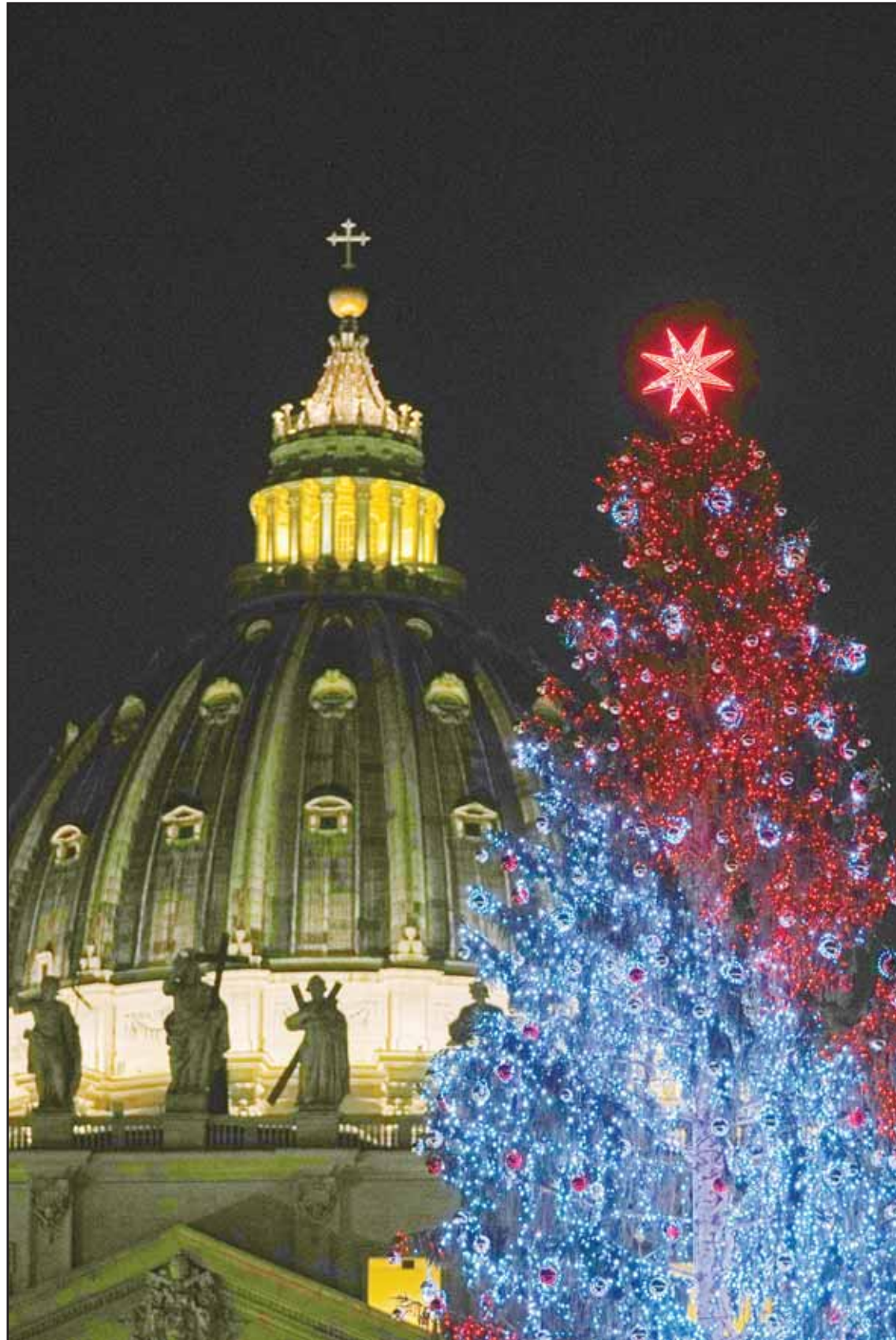
The showdown between the nation's two most populous states has spread nationally, with efforts aiming to determine which party controls Congress for the second half of Trump's term. Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio have adopted new district lines that could provide a partisan advantage.

Some plans are facing legal challenges, but the Supreme Court ruled earlier this month to allow Texas to use its new map for the 2026 election. The Justice Department has only sued California.

The Justice Department, joining a case brought by the California Republican Party, has accused California of gerrymandering its map in violation of the Constitution by using race as a factor to favor Hispanic voters. Republicans want the court to prohibit California from using the new map. Voters approved the map for the 2026, 2028 and 2030 elections. State Democrats said they're confident the lawsuit will fail.

"In letting Texas use its gerrymandered maps, the Supreme Court noted that California's maps, like Texas', were drawn for lawful reasons," Newsom's spokesperson Brandon Richards said in a statement. "That should be the beginning and the end of this Republican effort to silence the voters of California."

The lawsuit cites a news release from state Democrats that says the new map "retains and expands Voting Rights Act districts that empower Latino voters" while making no changes to Black majority districts in the Oakland and Los Angeles areas. The federal Voting Rights Act, passed in the 1960s, sets rules for drawing districts to ensure minority groups have adequate political power. The lawsuit also cites a Cal Poly Pomona and Caltech study that concludes the new map would increase Latino voting power.



A 27-meter fir tree from the Ultimo valley in South Tyrol, Italy, is lit up as Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Monday, Dec. 15, 2025. (AP)

Europe

France building blast kills 2: An explosion occurred on Monday in a residential building in the Ain department in eastern France, resulting in at least six casualties, including two children who were killed, local authorities said.

The blast occurred at around 5:30 p.m. local time (1630 GMT) on the ground floor of a four-story building in Trevoux, according to a statement from the prefect of Ain.

Two nearby schools suffered material damage, including shattered windows, but no injuries have been reported, the statement said.

It added that rescue operations remain ongoing, urging the public to stay away from the area.

"I offer my sincere condolences to the families of the young victims. My thoughts are also with the injured," French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said on social media platform X. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

France, Cyprus sign agreement: France and Cyprus signed a strategic partnership agreement here on Monday during Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides' visit to France.

French President Emmanuel Macron met with Christodoulides.

"They signed a strategic partnership agreement aimed at strengthening and structuring bilateral relations, particularly in the areas of defense, economy, cultural cooperation, innovation, and education, as well as reinforcing coordination on European and international matters," the Elysee Palace said in a statement.

The two leaders also discussed the priorities of Cyprus's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2026 and major international issues, it added. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

1 dead in Moscow stabbing: A student was fatally stabbed by a minor, who also wounded a security guard, at an educational institution in the Moscow region early Tuesday, the Russian Investigative Committee said.

The incident occurred at the Gorki-2 settlement in the western district of Odintsovsky, the committee said, adding that a criminal case has been initiated.

The victim was a fourth-grade student, said Ksenia Mishonova, children's rights ombudswoman of the Moscow region.

The attacker has been detained and is being transported to investigative authorities, the Ministry of Internal Affairs said. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Hungary sets up AI Council: Hungary has established the National Artificial Intelligence Council, a new advisory body tasked with monitoring technological developments and regulatory practices related to artificial intelligence (AI), and formulating recommendations and policy proposals, government officials said on Monday.

Speaking at a press briefing following the council's inaugural meeting in Budapest, Government Commissioner for AI Laszlo Palkovics, who also chairs the body, said the council was created in line with European Union legislation regulating AI governance at the member state level.

Palkovics said Hungary had taken an early and proactive approach, stressing that AI was "too important to be represented only by authorities." As a result, the council brings together representatives from academia, universities, market supervision and other authorities, as well as economic organizations. (Xinhua)



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, right, attends a parliament session in The Hague, Netherlands, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025. (AP)

US envoys to pitch plan to Kremlin

Ukraine peace deal could be days away

KYIV, Dec 16, (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says proposals being negotiated with U.S. officials for a peace deal to end his country's nearly four-year war with Russia could be finalized within days, after which American envoys will present them to the Kremlin before further possible meetings in the United States next weekend.

Zelenskyy told reporters late Monday that a draft peace plan discussed with the U.S. during talks in Berlin earlier in the day is "very workable." He cautioned, however, that some key issues — notably what happens to Ukrainian territory occupied by invading Russian forces — remain unresolved.

U.S.-led peace efforts appear to be picking up momentum. But Russian President Vladimir Putin may balk at some of the proposals thrashed out by officials from Washington, Kyiv and Western Europe, including postwar security guarantees for Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov repeated Tuesday that Russia wants a comprehensive peace deal, not a temporary truce.

If Ukraine seeks "momentary, unsustainable solutions, we are unlikely to be ready to participate," Peskov said.

"We want peace — we don't want a truce that would give Ukraine a respite and prepare for the continuation of the war," he told reporters. "We want to stop this war, achieve our goals, secure our interests, and guarantee peace in Europe for the future."

American officials on Monday said that there's consensus from Ukraine and Europe on about 90% of the U.S.-authored peace plan. U.S. President Donald Trump said: "I think we're closer now than we have been, ever" to a peace settlement.

Plenty of potential pitfalls remain, however.

Zelenskyy reiterated that Kyiv rules out recognizing Moscow's control over any part of the Donbas, an economically important region in eastern Ukraine made up of Luhansk and Donetsk. Russia's army doesn't fully control either.

"The Americans are trying to find a compromise," Zelenskyy said, before visiting the Netherlands on Tuesday. "They are proposing a 'free economic zone' (in the Donbas). And I want to stress once again: a 'free economic zone' does not mean under the control of the Russian Federation."

The land issue remains one of the most difficult obstacles to a comprehensive agreement.

Putin wants all the areas in four key regions that his forces have seized, as well as the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow illegally annexed in 2014, to be recognized as Russian territory.

Diplomatic

Zelenskyy warned that if Putin rejects diplomatic efforts, Ukraine expects increased Western pressure on Moscow, including tougher sanctions and additional military support for defense. Kyiv would seek enhanced air defense systems and long-range weapons if diplomacy collapses, he said.

Ukraine and the U.S. are preparing up to five documents related to the peace framework, several of them focused on security, Zelenskyy said.

He was upbeat about the progress in the Berlin talks.

"Overall, there was a demonstration of unity," Zelenskyy said. "It was truly positive in the sense that it reflected the unity of the U.S., Europe, and Ukraine."

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and some 30 other countries are expected to formally approve plans Tuesday to create a com-

pensation body to pay for damages to Ukraine caused by the Russian invasion, but questions remain about where the money will come from.

The expected approval at a ceremony in the Dutch city of The Hague follows peace talks in Berlin with U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. Zelenskyy voiced readiness to drop his country's bid to join NATO in exchange for Western security guarantees, but rejected the U.S. push for ceding territory to Russia.

"These security guarantees are an opportunity to prevent another wave of Russian aggression," he said, in response to journalists' questions "And this is already a compromise on our part."

The Council of Europe, the continent's preeminent human rights organization, has facilitated the International Claims Commission which will allow Ukrainians to seek compensation for "damage, loss or injury" caused by the Russian Federation since the full-scale invasion began in February 2022.

The commission will assess claims made to the already up-and-running register of damages, which was launched during a Council of Europe summit in Iceland in 2023. "There will be no reliable peace without justice," Zelenskyy told leaders at the summit by video address from Kyiv.

Some 80,000 claims have already been filed with the register, which is based in The Hague.

Questions remain about where the claims commission will get its funding. The Council of Europe is adamant that Russia must foot the bill but there is no clear pathway for forcing Moscow to pay up. One proposal is to use some of the tens of billions of dollars in frozen Russian assets held in Europe.

Britain's MI6 spy chief says Putin is dragging out peace talks, wants to subjugate Ukraine

LONDON, Dec 16, (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin is stalling efforts to end Russia's war on Ukraine, and is testing the West with tactics that fall "just below the threshold of war," the head of Britain's MI6 spy agency said Monday.

Blaise Metreweli, the intelligence agency's new boss, said Putin is "dragging out negotiations" on stopping the conflict, and remains determined to "subjugate Ukraine and harass NATO members."

"We are now operating in a space between peace and war," Metreweli said of the wider global threat landscape in her first public speech since becoming chief of Britain's foreign intelligence agency two months ago.

Metreweli accused Moscow of sponsoring cyberattacks on other countries' critical infrastructure, drone incursions around European airports, campaigns of arson, sabotage and disinformation, and "aggressive activities in our seas, above and below the waves."

"The export of chaos is a feature, not a bug, in this Russian approach to international engagement, and we should be ready for this to continue until Putin is forced to change his calculus," she said.

Metreweli, 48, is the first woman to head the U.K.'s 116-year-old foreign intelligence service. She gave reporters a rare glimpse inside MI6 headquarters in London, which she noted was "familiar to movie fans everywhere" from the James Bond spy thrillers.

Speaking inside the spy chief's wood-paneled dining room overlooking the River Thames, she said rapidly evolving technology is rewriting the rules of conflict, while hybrid threats from states and extremist groups mean "the front line is everywhere."

The speech made a brief reference to China's "implications for national security," but Metreweli focused on the threat from an "aggressive, expansionist and revisionist Russia."

"Russia is testing us in the gray zone with tactics that are just below the threshold of war," she said.

The warning came amid a flurry of



The new head of Britain's MI6 Blaise Metreweli makes her first public speech in London, Monday, Dec. 15, 2025. (AP)

diplomatic meetings aimed at ending the almost four-year war sparked by Russia's invasion of its neighbor.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was in Berlin Monday to meet U.S. envoys, and will meet later with the leaders of Germany, France and Britain. Kyiv's allies are trying to bolster support for Ukraine amid Washington's pressure to swiftly accept a U.S.-brokered peace deal.

The MI6 chief, known as C, is the only employee of the secretive agency whose name is made public. In a speech that, unusually, touched on her personal backstory, Metreweli said that coming "from a family shaped by devastating conflict, I grew up with a deep sense of gratitude for the U.K.'s precious democracy and freedom."

After Metreweli's appointment was announced in June, media reported that her grandfather, Constantine Dobrowolski, had been a Nazi spy in Ukraine during World War II.

MI6 said Metreweli never met her grandfather.

Metreweli, who has almost three decades of clandestine service and a background in anthropology, psychology and AI, was previously the MI6 director of technology and innovation — the real-world equivalent of the fic-

tional Bond gadget-master Q.

She said technological savvy and human intelligence are both key to combating "an interlocking web" of security threats, and MI6 officers "must be as comfortable with lines of code as we are with human sources, as fluent in Python as we are in multiple languages."

"Our world is more dangerous and contested now than it has been for decades," she said, adding that "we are being contested from sea to space, from the battlefield to the boardroom — and even our brains, as disinformation manipulates our understanding of each other and ourselves."

"The foundations of trust in our societies are eroding. Information, once a unifying force, is increasingly weaponized," she added.

In a warning to Britain's adversaries, she said MI6 will "sharpen our edge" and "take calculated risks." She said the agency should tap into "our historical, SOE instincts," referring to the clandestine Special Operations Executive that sent agents on daring sabotage missions in Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II.

"We will never stoop to the tactics of our opponents. But we must seek to outplay them," she said.



A cable car sits on California Street as SFMTA members work alongside at the scene where multiple people were injured after a cable car suddenly came to a stop on Monday, December 15, 2025, in San Francisco. (AP)

San Francisco cable car mishap hurts 15

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec 16, (AP) — More than a dozen people were hurt when a San Francisco cable car abruptly stopped Monday afternoon.

Fifteen people had injuries ranging from minor to moderate, the San Francisco Fire Department posted on social media. Two of them were immediately taken to hospitals and 11 others were treated for what the department described as "minor aches and pains."

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, which runs the cable cars, said it was actively investigating the incident and gave no reason for the stop.

INTERNATIONAL

Japan lifts megaquake advisory, urges caution

TOKYO, Dec 16, (AP): Japan lifted a megaquake advisory for the country's northeastern coast Tuesday, one week after a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck off northern Japan that officials said had caused an increased risk of a subsequent major quake.

The lifting means residents in the designated area under the advisory are no longer asked to sleep in their day clothes, with helmets, shoes and grab bags at their bedside in case a magnitude 8 or larger quake hits the area.

At a joint news conference, officials at the Japan Meteorological Agency and Cabinet Office said the probability of a megaquake has somewhat decreased, but the lifting doesn't mean the risk has disappeared, urging residents to maintain adequate levels of vigilance and preparedness.

The agency issued the so-called megaquake advisory last Monday after the magnitude 7.5 quake struck off the eastern coast of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan's main island of Honshu, and just south of the northern island of Hokkaido, leading to mild damage in the region.

The earthquake caused more than 40 mostly mild injuries and damaged dozens of homes, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. Tsunami alerts and advisories were issued and waves of up to 70 centimeters (27 inches) were recorded in parts of the region, but no tsunami damage was reported. Officials said municipalities and residents reacted calmly to the advisory and there was no panicking.

In the summer of 2024, when Japan issued a first-ever "Nankai Trough" megaquake advisory for the southern half of the country's Pacific coastline, the ambiguity of that warning led to panic buying of emergency food, event cancellations and business closures. The mechanism for issuing advisories for the Hokkaido-Sanriku area was introduced in 2022 as a lesson from the 2011 disaster, when a magnitude 9.0 quake and subsequent tsunami devastated Japan's northeastern coast.



This aerial drone photo taken on Dec. 15, 2025 shows the winter scenery of a wetland park in Xinghua, east China's Jiangsu Province. (Xinhua)

Bullet holes, damaged vehicles highlight how recent violence shattered daily life

DR Congo's Uvira reopens tentatively following days of heavy clashes

UVIRA, DR Congo, Dec 16, (Xinhua): In Uvira, a strategic city in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), streets are being swept, shops are cautiously reopening, and residents are stepping back into public spaces as daily life begins to move again.

After days of intense fighting, the once temporary administrative center of South Kivu has begun a fragile recovery, with uncertainty over whether calm will last.

Early Saturday morning, three days after the March 23 Movement (M23) claimed to have seized the city, residents in several neighborhoods emerged to clean main roads, sweep streets, and clear debris left by recent clashes.

"This is the first time we've come out since the fighting," said Ndugu Bahambwe, a local of Kalundu neighborhood, holding a broom. "We were afraid, but we also want to show that life has to continue."

Bahambwe said the citywide cleanup was meant to prepare for a possible reopening of economic activities as early as next week, "if the situation remains calm."

While the atmosphere felt quieter than before, caution governed daily routines, especially after dark. Many shops shut their doors, public transport operated at reduced capacity, and most residents only went out for necessities.



Left: Vendors sell goods in Uvira, a city in South Kivu Province in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on Dec. 15, 2025. Right: An abandoned vehicle is pictured near Uvira, a city in South Kivu Province in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on Dec. 14, 2025. (Xinhua)

From daytime till after dark, this tentative return unfolded under a heavy military presence, with M23 fighters deployed around key sites and stationed at major intersections across the city.

Uvira is functioning again, residents told Xinhua, but under close watch. Those bullet holes and damaged vehicles still stayed, highlighting how the recent violence shattered daily life.

In recent weeks, fighting between the Congolese military and the M23

has spread across several territories in South Kivu, displacing over 500,000 civilians, including over 100,000 children, and disrupting economic activity, according to the United Nations Children's Fund.

Uvira's strategic location off the shores of Lake Tanganyika and on the border with Burundi, with an active crossing point, makes its stability particularly sensitive.

As a commercial crossroads in South Kivu, Uvira plays a crucial role



in cross-border trade with Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, particularly in food, fuel, and mineral supplies.

The uncertainty surrounding the next phase of the conflict continues to shape civilian behavior more than any official declaration of calm.

Aganze Aristote, who fled Uvira during the fighting, said his family lost most of their belongings while escaping gunfire. "We abandoned many things while running," he said.

After hearing that the area had been secured, he decided to return. "Life became very difficult when we fled. We didn't know where to go," he said. "I came back and reopened so that the children would not die of hunger."

Munyasoile Yve made a similar decision after fleeing. "Where we went, we realized we risked dying of hunger," he said. "The money ran out, and the local authorities couldn't support everyone. We had no choice but to return."

The instability has also affected for-

eign workers.

As M23 forces entered Uvira, Burundian authorities closed the border with the DRC, citing security concerns.

On Sunday, a one-day, limited passage was granted to allow hundreds of Burundian nationals stranded in South Kivu to go back home, following consultations between the M23 and Burundian authorities.

At the border, a long queue of visibly anxious people formed under the sun. Many carried all they had left — bundles wrapped in cloth and balanced on their heads, sweat running down their faces as they stood in line waiting for their turn.

Among them was Fulgence Ndaizehe. "We were working in Uvira," he said. "But given the situation, we decided to go back to Burundi."

As residents cautiously tried a return to daily routines, M23 spokesperson Lawrence Kanyuka on Saturday urged youth to avoid violence, looting, and retaliation, noting residents themselves, particularly young people, as a key force in stabilizing the city.

Briefing the United Nations Security Council on Friday, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN under-secretary-general for peace operations, warned that the DRC continued to face a deep security and humanitarian crisis, with civilians bearing the brunt of the violence.

Kast victory signals regional right swing

SANTIAGO, Dec 16, (AP): Chile has become the latest country in Latin America to veer toward the right, electing a deeply conservative veteran politician who has long attracted comparisons to Donald Trump.

The president-elect, José Antonio Kast, has expressed nostalgia for the 17-year military dictatorship of the late Gen. Augusto Pinochet, opposed the legalization of same-sex marriage and advocated in recent years for a constitutional ban on abortion.

Those stances, which some say sabotaged Kast's previous presidential bids in the increasingly liberal country, didn't seem to matter in Sunday's election.

Instead, Kast, 59, won a landslide victory by tapping into a deep well of resentment at the status quo in a country whiplashed by an unprecedented rise in organized crime and disappointed by the great expectations that President Gabriel Boric raised but will leave unfulfilled.

Experts say this reflects the pervasive anti-incumbent mood that has gripped South America and, significantly, boosted the radical right at a time when Trump is seeking to influence the region's political future.

It's a dramatic turn from only two decades ago, when the commodities boom brought to power the so-called "pink tide" of left-wing leaders, like the late socialist icon Hugo Chávez, who whipped up voters by railing against U.S. imperialism and vowing to redistribute their nations' wealth.

"The last decade, it's been rough," said Steven Levitsky, a Harvard political scientist. "And the people who get blamed for stagnant economies, rising crime — or, at least, rising perceptions of crime — and not insignificant corruption are those who've been in power, and that's the left."

Across South America this year alone, voters strengthened the mandates given to anarcho-capitalist President Javier Milei in Argentina and iron-fisted President Daniel Noboa in Ecuador, rather than return their countries to the left-wing traditions that held sway previously.

In Bolivia, voters outraged over corruption and economic crisis elected right-wing President Rodrigo Paz in October and ended nearly two decades of socialist rule.

In Peru, demands for a ruthless approach to organized crime have caused political chaos and empowered the country's right-wing politicians ahead of a presidential election next year.

Last week, partial results in Honduras' paralyzed presidential vote showed a conservative former mayor endorsed by Trump and his right-wing sportscaster rival deadlocked in a stunning rebuke of the incumbent left-wing government.

Then, on Sunday, voters traumatized by insecurity, angry about uncontrolled migration and frustrated with a dispiriting economy chose Kast over Jeannette Jara, his communist rival from the center-left governing coalition who failed to persuade them that she was something other than the continuity candidate. Experts say the new Latin American hard right underscores Trump's influence.



Kast

Subcontinent

India road accident claims 15: The death toll from Tuesday's multi-vehicle collision has risen to 15, with around 48 people injured, local police confirmed by phone.

Up to seven buses and three cars were involved in the pileup amid heavy fog. The collision immediately caused the vehicles to catch fire, resulting in numerous casualties.

Only three of the bodies have been identified so far, although efforts were underway to contact the families of all the deceased and injured. "The dead bodies are burnt beyond recognition," a local cop told Xinhua over the phone, adding that all the bodies had been shifted to a mortuary and a few of the injured were in critical condition. (Xinhua)

Pakistan sentences cleric: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court sentenced a senior leader of a banned Islamist party to 35 years in prison for inciting violence, more than a year after the cleric publicly called for the killing of the country's then-chief justice, court officials and a defense lawyer said Tuesday.

Zaheerul Hassan Shah, a leader of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, was arrested last year after a video circulated on social media showing him offering 10 million rupees (\$36,000) to anyone who beheaded then-Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

Isa had faced criticism from hardline religious groups last year after he granted bail to a man from the minority Ahmadi community in a blasphemy case. (AP)

Sri Lanka reopens most schools: Sri Lanka on Tuesday reopened most government and government-approved private schools following school closures due to Cyclone Ditwah, a senior official said.

According to Nalaka Kaluwewa, secretary to the Ministry of Education, 9,929 of the country's 10,076 schools reopened, while 147 schools in three provinces remain closed due to ongoing emergency conditions. These schools are in the Uva, Central, and North Western provinces, which were most affected by Cyclone Ditwah, he said. (Xinhua)



Kashmiri workers use age-old hand dyeing techniques to transform raw wool into colorful yarns for making carpets and shawls inside a workshop in the old part of Kashmir, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025. (AP)

Philippines confirms suspects' visit before attack

ISIS influence cited in Bondi shooting

MELBOURNE, Dec 16, (AP): A mass shooting in which 15 people were killed during a Hanukkah celebration at Sydney's Bondi Beach was "a terrorist attack inspired by Islamic State," Australia's federal police commissioner Krissy Barrett said Tuesday.

The suspects were a father and son, aged 50 and 24, authorities have said. The older man, whose state officials named as Sajid Akram, was shot dead. His son was being treated at a hospital.

A news conference by political and law enforcement leaders on Tuesday was the first time officials confirmed their beliefs about the suspects' ideologies. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the remarks were based on evidence obtained, including "the presence of Islamic State flags in the vehicle that has been seized."

There are 25 people still being treated in hospitals after Sunday's massacre, 10 of them in critical condition. Three of them are patients in a children's hospital.

Also among them is Ahmed al Ahmed, who was captured on video tackling and disarming one assailant, before pointing the man's weapon at him and then setting it on the ground.

Those killed ranged in age from 10 to 87 years old. They were attending a Hanukkah event at Australia's most famous beach Sunday when the gunshots rang out.

The suspects traveled to the Philippines last month, said Mal Lanyon, the Police Commissioner for New South Wales state. Their reasons for the trip and where in the Philippines they went would be probed by investigators, Lanyon said.

He also confirmed that a vehicle removed from the scene, registered to the younger suspect, contained improvised explosive devices.

"I also confirm that it contained two homemade ISIS flags," Lanyon said.

The Philippines Bureau of Immigration confirmed Tuesday that Sajid Akram traveled to the country from Nov. 1 to Nov. 28 along with Naveed



In this photo released by the Prime Minister office, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese meets Ahmed al Ahmed at St George Hospital in Sydney, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025. (AP)

Akram, 24, giving the city of Davao as their final destination. Australian authorities have not named the younger suspect.

Groups of Muslim separatist militants, including Abu Sayyaf in the southern Philippines, once expressed support for the Islamic State group and have hosted small numbers of foreign militant combatants from Asia, the Middle East and Europe in the past.

Decades of military offensives, however, have considerably weakened Abu Sayyaf and other such armed groups, and Philippine military and police officials say there has been no recent indication of any foreign militants in the country's south.

Earlier, Albanese visited al Ahmed in hospital. Albanese said the 42-year-old Syrian-born fruit shop owner had further surgery scheduled on Wednesday for shotgun wounds to his left shoulder and upper body. "It was a great honor to meet Ahmed al Ahmed. He is a true Australian hero," Albanese told reporters after a 30-minute meeting with him and his parents.

"We are a brave country. Ahmed al Ahmed represents the best of our

country. We will not allow this country to be divided. That is what the terrorists seek. We will unite. We will embrace each other, and we'll get through this," Albanese added.

The famous blue-shirted lifeguards of Bondi Beach attracted praise as more stories of their actions during the shooting emerged.

One duty lifeguard, identified by the organization's Instagram account as Rory Davey, performed an ocean rescue during the shooting after people fled, fully clothed, into the sea.

Another lifeguard, Jackson Doolan, posted to his social media a photo taken as he sprinted, barefoot and clutching a first aid kit, from Tamarama beach a mile away towards Bondi as the massacre continued.

"These guys are community members and it's not about the surf," Anthony Caroll, one of the stars of a popular reality television show called "Bondi Rescue," told Sky News on Tuesday. "They heard the gunshots and they left the beach and came right up the back here into the scene of the crime, into harm's way while those bullets were being shot."

Action Energy IPO oversubscribed more than five times

Boursa Kuwait lists Action Energy in 'Premier' Market

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Boursa Kuwait announced the listing of Action Energy Company (AEC) in its "Premier" Market, with trading in the company's stocks set to commence at the opening trade session on December 17, 2025, under the ticker symbol ALF TAQA. The company will be included under the Energy sector, bringing the total count of companies listed on the exchange to 140, with 34 in the "Premier" Market alone.

Action Energy Company offered 45.9% of its shares to diversify its shareholder base, strengthen governance practices and expand its visibility among investors, contributing to the development of the Kuwaiti capital market by broadening the universe of listed companies and increasing available investment opportunities. AEC's listing also encourages other companies to consider listing, which supports market growth and reinforces the long-term interests of investors.

"We are pleased to welcome Action Energy Company to the "Premier" Market, a listing that reflects Boursa Kuwait's continued commitment to deepen the market and enhance sectoral diversity. The company's admission supports our efforts to broaden investment opportunities and attract issuers that demonstrate the strength and dynamism of the Kuwaiti economy," said Boursa Kuwait CEO Mr. Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi.

Al-Osaimi also highlighted the exchange's role in supporting and empowering listed companies, stating, "Boursa Kuwait continues to play a strategic role by working closely with listed companies to support their adherence to regulatory standards, reinforce sound governance and transparency, and enable them to pursue their growth objectives within an efficient and trustworthy market environment."

"I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Capital Markets Authority for its ongoing support of the capital market apparatus and commend the collective efforts of Action Energy and the National Investments Company, which contributed to the success of this listing," he added.

As part of its initiatives to enhance awareness and understanding of regulatory re-



Mohammad Al-Osaimi



Eng. Rawaf Bourisli



Fahad Al-Mukhaizim

quirements among companies preparing to list, Boursa Kuwait organized an awareness program for Action Energy executives focused on post-listing ongoing obligations in the "Premier" Market.

The session was delivered by specialized members of the executive management responsible for regulatory compliance and corporate governance, issuer and disclosure services, trading operations and corporate communications.

During the session, participants gained insights into their responsibilities following listing, encompassing both the Capital Markets Authority's executive regulations and the ongoing obligations dictated by the exchange's rules. The session also provided a practical demonstration of the automated disclosure system used by listed companies, along with a discussion on the schedule of stock entitlements and requisite corporate actions.

Established in 2015, Action Energy is a Kuwaiti company operating in the oilfield services sector. It provides a wide range of exploration and production services, including oil well drilling, oil and natural gas ex-

traction services and the maintenance of oil facilities, wells, refineries, and petrochemical plants. Its operations also include natural gas well drilling and gas injection services in oilfields.

The company appointed the National Investments Company (NIC) as Exclusive Listing Advisor and Subscription Agent, and as Joint Global Coordinator alongside EFG Hermes UAE Limited. In addition, NIC, EFG Hermes UAE Limited, and Arqaam Capital Limited were appointed as Joint Bookrunners.

Commenting on Action Energy Company's listing, Vice Chairman Eng. Rawaf Ibrahim Bourisli said, "Today marks a transformative milestone as Action Energy Company joins Boursa Kuwait as a publicly listed company. Since 2015, we have built a reputation as Kuwait's leading onshore drilling and oilfield services provider, with a contract backlog of approximately KD 324 million as of June 2025."

"The listing broadens our shareholder base and provides financial flexibility to pursue our local and regional growth strategy, including expanding into adjacent oilfield ser-

vices, while maintaining our focus on supporting Kuwait's oil production targets and energy security objectives," he added.

The private subscription for Action Energy was done through NIC's official website during the period from 23 November to 7 December 2025. The offering included a primary issuance of new shares representing up to 16.68% of the company's capital, in addition to a secondary offering of existing ordinary shares representing up to 29.21% of the capital, which were sold by existing shareholders to new potential investors.

Together, the primary and secondary offerings comprised 260 million shares, representing 45.9% of the company's issued capital, priced at 212 fils per share. Subscription demand exceeded the offered value by over five times, with initial coverage reaching KD 276 million.

NIC Board Member and Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Fahad Abdulrahman Al-Mukhaizim, commented on the listing, saying, "National Investments Company reaffirmed its commitment by successfully leading the private placement of Action Energy Company and managing all regulatory

and technical aspects necessary for its listing on the "Premier" Market. Acting as listing advisor, sole subscription agent, lead coordinator, and joint bookrunner, the company delivered the project on schedule, upholding the highest standards of governance and transparency throughout the process."

"The successful listing of Action Energy Company highlights National Investments Company's ability to manage complex offering and listing processes with professionalism and efficiency, reinforcing the company's standing as a leading investment institution at both the local and regional levels. This achievement builds on a strong track record and the deep expertise of a team committed to the highest standards of excellence," he added.

Boursa Kuwait collaborates closely with the Kuwaiti capital market apparatus and all market participants to develop the market, enhance its alignment with leading international standards, and adopt global best practices. These efforts help create an attractive environment for high-quality listings across a wide range of sectors.

The exchange operates under a multi-phase market development strategy aimed at building a trading environment defined by efficiency, transparency, and fairness. This is achieved through deepening the market expanding its base of issuers and investors, and increasing liquidity levels, thereby supporting Kuwait's national economic growth.

Boursa Kuwait continues to implement a series of comprehensive structural and operational reforms, upgrading its infrastructure, trading platforms and the services provided to listed companies and investors. These initiatives strengthen the market's readiness to adapt to future developments and evolving requirements.

Through the organization of roadshows and corporate days that enhance engagement with regional and global investors, Boursa Kuwait plays a pivotal role in promoting the Kuwaiti capital market and reinforcing Kuwait's position as an attractive financial hub in the region.

Renewing 6 ISO certifications

Zain maintains best-in-class governance and compliance



KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Zain Kuwait has successfully renewed management systems across six international standards set by ISO, further reinforcing its commitment to operational governance, compliance, and the highest levels of quality across all departments. This achievement follows a comprehensive external audit conducted by an accredited, independent body which verified that Zain's systems and operational infrastructure conform to global benchmarks.

This year, Zain maintained its certifications for Quality Management (ISO 9001), Environmental Management (ISO 14001), Occupational Health and Safety Management (ISO 45001), Information Security Management (ISO/IEC 27001), IT Service Management (ISO/IEC 20000-1), and Business Continuity Management (ISO 22301).

For the second consecutive year, Zain achieved full compliance across all requirements with zero nonconformities. The company also highlighted ISO 37301:2021 as its seventh certification, assessed this audit period and recognized for significant continual improvement in its Compliance Management System. Its renewal audit is set for February 2026.

These results affirm Zain's commitment to delivering services and products that meet customers' expectations and ambitions, align with international regulatory frameworks, enhance environmental protection, strengthen information security, and support business continuity, all of which elevate the overall customer experience.

Zain takes pride in being among the first private-sector institutions in Kuwait to prioritize quality management and operational excellence, including being recognized with ISO certifications over the past three decades to ensure ongoing alignment with international standards.

From the outset of its journey, Zain obtained its first ISO in Quality Management Systems, laying the foundation for adopting best practices and global standards in the ICT sector. As its operations and services expanded, the company earned additional ISO certifications across key domains such as information

security, business continuity, and environmental management.

ISO 9001 Quality Management
Commitment to a holistic system that assures service quality by controlling processes, measuring performance, and addressing root causes of issues. The result is higher customer satisfaction, reduced waste, faster response, and better experiences at every touchpoint.

ISO 14001 Environmental Management

Commitment to managing the environmental impact of corporate activities through compliance with regulations, efficient use of resources, and reduction of emissions and waste. The result is more efficient, sustainable operations that protect the environment and improve the carbon footprint.

ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety

A systematic framework to identify and reduce workplace risks, prevent incidents and injuries, and foster a prevention-first culture. The result is a safer work environment, greater employee well-being, and fewer unplanned stoppages.

ISO/IEC 27001 Information Security Management

Ensures confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information by assessing risks and applying clear security controls. The direct outcome is fewer breaches and leaks and stronger trust in the protection of customer and partner data.

ISO/IEC 20000-1 IT Service Management

Adoption of best practices in service management such as incident, change, and service-level management. This improves system reliability and stability, leading to more consistent digital services, shorter downtime, and a better technology experience for users.

ISO 22301 Business Continuity Management

Readiness for emergencies and the restoration of critical activities within defined time objectives. The result is higher operational resilience and the ability to respond to unexpected events without affecting customers or business operations.



Zain headquarters

In collaboration with Gulf University for Science & Technology

Gulf Bank celebrates graduation of first cohort of its Risk Management Academy

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Gulf Bank announced the graduation of the first cohort of its Risk Management Academy, launched in collaboration with Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), marking a step that reflects the Bank's firm commitment to developing national talent and enhancing professional capabilities in line with the rapid changes in the banking sector.

This initiative comes as part of Gulf Bank's strategy to invest in human capital as the cornerstone of achieving sustainable growth and fostering innovation in financial services. The Academy serves as a specialized educational platform aimed at preparing a new generation of experts in risk management—one of the most vital fields in the banking industry due to its pivotal role in safeguarding financial institutions and ensuring their stability.

On this occasion, Mr. Hamed Al-Tamimi, Acting General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, stated: "We are proud today to graduate the first cohort of the Risk Management Academy, which embodies our ongoing commitment to investing in Kuwaiti talent and building a strong base of human capital capable of contributing to the development of the future of the banking sector. This initiative is not merely a training program; it is a strategic step toward building qualified banking leaders who can confront global challenges in risk management."



Hamed Al-Tamimi

"Our collaboration with Gulf University for Science and Technology has enabled us to deliver specialized, high-quality training that empowers Kuwaiti youth to play a pivotal role in strengthening the financial sector and supporting national economic growth. This stems from our firm commitment to implementing Gulf Bank's Vision 2030, which aims to empower national talent, foster innovation, and deliver sustainable value to custom-



A group photo of the first graduating class, with Hamed Al-Tamimi in the center.

ers, employees, and the community."

The program spans two weeks and combines academic learning with practical application through educational modules specially designed in collaboration with GUST. It includes interactive sessions and workshops led by a select group of risk management experts, covering various aspects of credit risk management, in addition to hands-on training and applied case studies.

Prior to the technical training, participants undergo a series of professional development workshops delivered by Gulf Bank trainers in the areas of communication, teamwork, and leadership

skills, ensuring their preparation as well-rounded professionals capable of keeping pace with a modern, technology-driven work environment.

The launch of the Risk Management Academy is part of a broader set of initiatives adopted by Gulf Bank to enhance human development, in line with national development goals and Kuwait Vision 2035. The program also contributes to building a generation of banking leaders capable of addressing global economic challenges and applying best practices in risk management, thereby ensuring the sustainability of Kuwait's financial sector and strengthening its regional and global competitiveness.

Strengthening Latin American footprint

Menzies Aviation secures first-ever ground handling operator certificate in Argentina

LONDON, Dec 16: Menzies Aviation, the leading service partner to the world's airports and airlines, is the first international company to be granted a ground handling operator certificate by Argentina's National Civil Aviation Administration (ANAC). This marks an important first step toward entering a large and dynamic market where many of Menzies' airline partners operate.

The ANAC certification confirms that Menzies has met all regulatory and technical requirements to operate under Argentine aviation law. It authorises the company to deliver ground handling services at both Ezeiza International Airport (EZE) and Aeroparque Jorge Newbery (AEP) in Buenos Aires. EZE is the largest international airport in Argentina, while AEP serves as the country's busiest domestic hub – together forming the heart of Argentina's aviation network.

Menzies' ambition for Argentina is to operate where demand, airline presence and infrastructure call for a strong international operator. Menzies has a proven track record in entering new



Menzies Aviation Ground Handling.

markets as long-term investors in Latin America and Argentina represents the natural next step.

The Government of Argentina's decision in 2024 to deregulate ground handling services forms part of a broader plan to modernise and open the country's aviation sector. As the market transitions to international competition, Menzies

Aviation is poised to bring global standards, new investment, and strong operational expertise to support the development of aviation services and the sector more broadly.

As it prepares for market entry, Menzies is developing plans to build a substantial and highly trained local workforce, supported by modern equipment

and guided by global best practices to deliver safe, efficient and high-quality services across Argentina's key airports.

The certification reinforces Menzies' increased presence across Latin America, where the company now operates in 9 countries, supports 61 airports and employs more than 10,000 people across the region.

Tomeu Mas, Senior Vice President Latin America, Menzies Aviation, said: "We are extremely proud to have secured ANAC certification in Argentina. This milestone sets a strong foundation for our future growth in a market that has significant potential. We are now focused on taking the next step towards entering Argentina and working with the aviation community to deliver safe, secure and high-quality ground handling services to airlines."

This certification completes the final regulatory requirement ahead of operational launch and strengthens Menzies' eligibility for upcoming airport tenders as Argentina opens its ground handling market to international companies.

BUSINESS



Offering real-time financial updates

Borgan Bank launches Investor Relations app

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: As part of its ongoing focus on digital innovation across its operations, Borgan Bank launched its new mobile Investor Relations (IR) application, now accessible on both iOS and Android devices. This next-generation platform is designed to strengthen the Bank's engagement with investors and stakeholders, while ensuring full compliance with regulatory requirements and aligning with global best practices in corporate disclosure. This digital milestone highlights Borgan Bank's unwavering commitment to transparency and proactive investor communication.

The Borgan Bank IR app transforms access to the Bank's financial and corporate information, offering seamless, real-time updates through an interactive, user-friendly mobile platform. It allows investors to gain instant access to the latest disclosures, financial reports, investor presentations, and corporate events, ensuring they remain up to date with the Bank's publicly available information. It also allows them to view key financial metrics, performance indicators, and dividend history at a glance, offering a clear understanding of the Bank's financial standing.

With the app, investors can also receive smart push notifications for new disclosures, reports, and upcoming events, with the convenience of adding them directly to their device calendar. Additionally, they can monitor share price movements through interactive charts and analyze stock performance over multiple periods.

These features ensure investors and stakeholders can engage with Borgan Bank's financial information conveniently, efficiently, and securely - anytime, anywhere. The app offers a personalized user experience, allowing investors to build and manage customized watchlists synced across devices, and tailor their experience by selecting preferred language, currency, and notification settings.

"The Launch of Borgan Bank's IR Mobile App marks a key milestone in our digital transformation journey and reinforces our commitment to investor engagement," said Mr. Khalid Al-Zouman, Group Chief Financial Officer, Borgan Bank. "The app provides stakeholders with real-time, transparent, and interactive access to the Bank's key financial information and corporate disclosures, making it easier than ever to stay informed," he added.

In line with the Bank's rigorous data protection, cloud governance, and risk management strategies, the IR app operates as a standalone, cloud-based platform, fully independent from Borgan Bank's internal systems. It does not process financial transactions or store sensitive client information, ensuring the highest levels of security and operational integrity.

Borgan Bank's investors and stakeholders can now download

the IR mobile app by visiting the Apple Store or Google Play.

About Borgan Bank
Established in 1977, Borgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Borgan Bank has majority-owned subsidiaries, collectively known as the "Borgan Bank Group", in the MENA region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria - AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank - TIB (Tunisia), Borgan Bank Turkey (Turkey) and United Gulf Bank (Bahrain). Furthermore, Borgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Borgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Borgan Bank's brand has been built on a foundation of real values - trust, commitment, excellence, and progression - which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank's core philosophy of 'Driven by You' is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed.

Borgan Bank has achieved the LEED v4.1 O+M: EB Gold Certification for its Head Office in Kuwait City. The Bank has also obtained the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO/IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management Systems (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five consecutive times. At the same time, the Bank has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years.

Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Borgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Borgan Bank is a majority-owned subsidiary of KIPCO (Kuwait Projects Company), one of the largest holding companies in the MENA region.

Delegation tours Kuwait Airways facilities

Kuwait Airways, UK trade envoy discuss aviation cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: During an official visit to Kuwait Airways, the Chairman, Captain Abdulmohsen Al-Fagaan, met with United Kingdom's Trade Envoy to Kuwait, Lord Iain McNicol, who was accompanied by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait, HE Qudsi Rasheed, and their delegation. During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to strengthen and further develop relations between Kuwait Airways and various British companies in the commercial air transport sector, fostering cooperation that benefits both parties.

During the visit, discussions also focused on developing cooperation in operational systems, reflecting joint efforts to strengthen collaboration at all levels for mutual growth and progress. They also discussed future opportunities to support Kuwait Airways' development and modernization plans in various areas, including strategies to further improve them.

Kuwait Airways is keen to benefit from advanced British expertise in the aviation industry, which contributes to enhancing the quality of services provided to passengers and supports the national carrier's goals of expansion, keeping pace with the highest global standards in the aviation sector.

The visit concluded with a tour of Kuwait Airways' exhibition gallery, where the British delegation explored the history of the national carrier and its achievements over the years.



Al-Fagaan, Lord McNicol, Ambassador Rasheed, and their accompanying delegation.



Al-Fagaan presents Lord McNicol with a commemorative shield.



Al-Fagaan presenting a commemorative shield to Ambassador Rasheed.

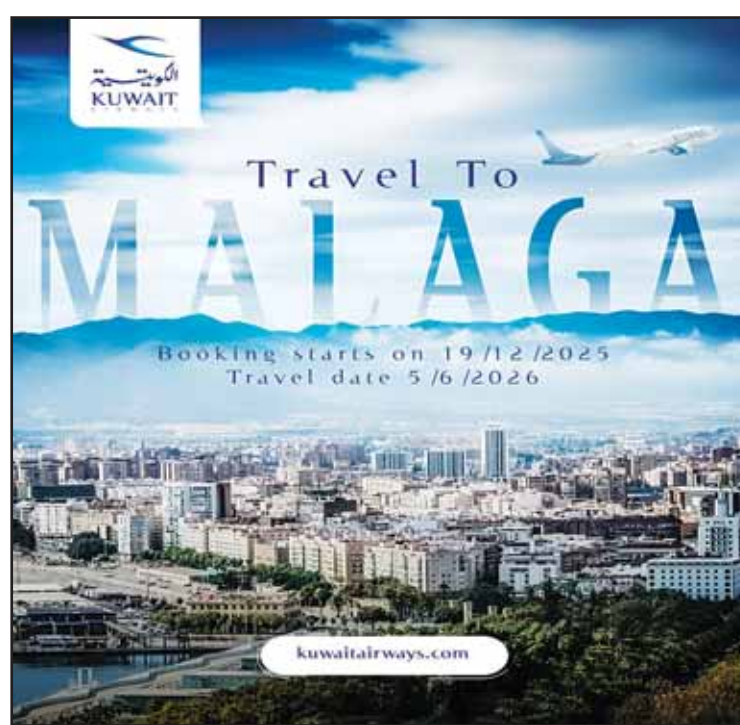
Booking commences from 19 December 2025

Kuwait Airways launches direct flights to Malaga

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: As part of Kuwait Airways' plans to provide diverse travel options for its valued passengers during the 2026 summer season, the company has announced the launch of its scheduled direct flights to the Spanish city of Malaga, commencing from 5 June 2026. The service will operate three flights a week on Fridays, Sundays, and Tuesdays.

Kuwait Airways stated that passengers can start booking from 19 December 2025, through the company's website, mobile application, and all sales offices. The company also emphasized that it would operate its wide-body Boeing 777-300 aircraft on the Malaga route, enabling its valued customers to enjoy the Royal and Business Class seating with the latest amenities, while also providing increased seat capacity to those travelling on this route.

Kuwait Airways stated that this initiative is within the framework of its ongoing efforts to offer pas-



sengers a wider range of travel options, meet their diverse needs, and enhance service quality through the launch of new and varied destinations. The company emphasized its continued commitment to serving its valued customers and providing the highest levels of comfort during their travel onboard Kuwait Airways.

Kuwait Airways concluded by reaffirming its commitment to providing comprehensive services to its valued passengers and removing all obstacles throughout their travel journey, starting from booking tickets, entering Terminal 4, to completing travel procedures and boarding the aircraft for a comfortable and safe journey. Kuwait Airways also offers a distinguished onboard experience, featuring a wide selection of entertainment programs available on the screens, as well as diverse menus designed to suit different tastes and preferences.

Higher prices, tariffs weigh on US consumer demand

Retail spending stalls amid price pressures

NEW YORK, Dec 16, (AP) - Sales at U.S. retailers and restaurants were unchanged in October from September as consumers moderated their spending amid worries about higher prices and other economic uncertainties after splurging over the summer.

But a big factor dragging down the figure was a 1.6% drop in sales at motor vehicles and auto parts dealerships, hurt by the expiration of federal government subsidies that sliced demand for battery-powered electric cars. Excluding that category, retail sales rose 0.4%, the Commerce Department said Tuesday in a report delayed more than a month because of the 43-day government shutdown.

The overall flat spending in October was less than economists expected and followed a revised 0.1% increase in September, the agency said. Retail sales jumped 0.6% in July and August and 1% in June.

The federal government is gradually catching up on economic reports that

were postponed by the shutdown.

"The retail sales report for October was a dud, but the underlying details offer more encouraging signals for (fourth quarter) consumer spending and an elevated starting point for the critical two-month stretch for holiday sales," Tim Quinlan, an economist at Wells Fargo, wrote Tuesday.

Still, Quinlan said other data suggest some slowdown through mid-December and leave the firm cautious on how the consumer crosses the finish line.

The government retail sales figures, which aren't adjusted for inflation, show that Americans remained selective in October as many households struggled with high prices for groceries, rent, and many imported goods hit by tariffs.

The latest job report, released by the Labor Department Tuesday, also shows a souring employment picture.

The retail sales report covers about one-third of consumer spending, with the rest going to services such as trav-

el, haircuts, and entertainment.

Sales at clothing and accessories stores rose 0.9%, while business at furniture and home furnishing stores increased 2.3%, likely due to rising prices because of tariff costs. Most furniture is made in China.

Online retailers posted a 1.8% sales increase, while department stores saw business rise 4.9%.

But business at restaurants, the lone services component within the Census Bureau report and a barometer of discretionary spending, posted a 0.4% sales dip. The report comes as retailers are preparing for the crowds of last-minute shoppers with expanded hours and stepped up deals for the last stretch of holiday shopping before Dec. 25.

Hiring has generally been weak, while the unemployment rate has ticked higher, which could hurt consumer spending and the broader economy. The latest job report showed that the U.S. gained a decent 64,000 jobs in November but lost 105,000 in Oc-

tober as federal workers departed after cutbacks by the Trump administration. The unemployment rate rose to 4.6%, the highest since 2021.

Despite lots of uncertainty, holiday shopping season had a solid start, with shoppers focusing on deals, according to data over the Black Friday weekend. But spending hasn't been even across the board.

Third-quarter results from retailers released last month have been mixed. Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, posted strong sales as it pulls shoppers across a wide spectrum of incomes who are drawn to its low prices. TJX Cos., which operates stores under such names as T.J. Maxx and Marshalls, has seen an influx of shoppers looking for a treasure hunt experience.

But Home Depot has seen slower spending as shoppers focus on small home projects, while Target, grappling with weak sales, is trying to revive its reputation as a place for affordable but stylish fashion and home goods.

Government layoffs offset private hiring gains

US adds 64,000 jobs in November as unemployment rises to 4.6%

WASHINGTON, Dec 16, (AP) - The United States gained a decent 64,000 jobs in November but lost 105,000 in October as federal workers departed after cutbacks by the Trump administration, the government said in delayed reports.

The unemployment rate rose to 4.6% last month, highest since 2021. The November job gains were higher than the 40,000 economists had forecast. The October job losses were caused by a 162,000 drop in federal workers, many of whom resigned at the end of fiscal year 2025 on Sept. 30 under pressure from billionaire Elon Musk's purge of U.S. government payrolls.

Labor Department revisions also knocked 33,000 jobs off August and September payrolls.

Hiring has clearly lost momentum, hobbled by uncertainty over President Donald Trump's tariffs and the lingering effects of the high interest rates the Fed engineered in 2022 and 2023 to rein in an outburst of inflation. Since March, job creation has fallen to an average 35,000 a month, compared to 71,000 in the year ended in March.

Both the October and November job creation numbers, released Tuesday by the Labor Department, came in late because of the 43-day federal government shutdown. Those delays have made deliberations more difficult at the Federal Reserve, where policymakers are divided over whether the labor market needs more help from lower interest rates.

Worries about the job market were enough to nudge the Fed into cutting its benchmark interest rate by a quarter of a percentage point last week for the third time this year. But three Fed officials refused to go along with the move, the most dissents in six years. Two voted to keep the rate unchanged while inflation remains above the central bank's 2% target. Stephen Miran, appointed by Trump to the Fed's governing board in September, voted for a bigger cut - in line with what the president demands.

Tuesday's report shows that "the labor market remains weak, but the pace of deterioration probably is too slow to spur the (Fed) to ease again in January," Samuel Tombs, chief U.S. economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, wrote in a commentary. The Fed holds its next policy meeting Jan. 27-28.

The unemployment rate, though still modest by historical standards, has risen since bottoming out at a 54-year low of 3.4% in April 2023. It rose from 4.4% in September, and the number of people in the labor force - those working or looking for work - increased 323,000 from September. A rate for October was not avail-



Hiring sign is displayed at a grocery store, in Glenview, Ill., Monday, Dec. 15, 2025. (AP)

able because of the shutdown.

Kevin Hassett, director of the White House National Economic Council, said that those pickups likely reflect former federal workers searching for new jobs. "Probably what's going on is the 250,000 federal government workers who took the buyout are staying in the labor force and looking for work" and are therefore counted as unemployed until they find new jobs, Hassett told reporters.

The latest jobs figures could decline in the coming months. Last week, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said that the central bank thinks that hiring has been overcounted by about 60,000 jobs a month since spring. "You can say that the labor

market has continued to cool gradually, maybe just a touch more gradually than we thought," Powell said at a news conference.

Workers' average hourly earnings rose just 0.1% from October, the smallest gain since August 2023. Compared to a year earlier, pay was up 3.5%, the lowest since May 2021.

Health care employers added more than 46,000 jobs in November, accounting for more than two-thirds of the 69,000 private sector jobs created last month. Construction companies added 28,000 jobs. Manufacturing shed jobs for the seventh straight month, losing 5,000 jobs in November.

"The takeaway is that the labor market remains on a relatively soft footing, with employers showing little appetite to hire, but are also reluctant to fire," Thomas Feltema, senior economist at TD Economics, wrote in a commentary. "That said, labor demand has cooled more than supply in recent months, which is what's behind the steady upward drift in the unemployment rate."

Adding to the uncertainty is the growing use of artificial intelligence and other technologies that can reduce demand for workers.

"We're in Lehigh Valley, which is a big transportation hub in eastern Pennsylvania," said Matt Hobbie, vice president of the staffing firm HealthSkill in Allentown. "We've seen some cooling in the logistics and transportation markets, specifically because we've seen automation in those sectors, robotics."

Because of the government shutdown, many agencies are playing catch-up with economic data.

The Labor Department finally put out the September jobs report on Nov. 20, seven weeks late. It published some of the October data - including a count of the jobs created that month by businesses, nonprofits and government agencies - along with the November report Tuesday.

American companies are mostly holding onto the employees they have. But they're reluctant to hire new ones as they struggle to assess how to use artificial intelligence and how to adjust to Trump's unpredictable policies, especially his double-digit taxes on imports from around the world.

The uncertainty leaves jobseekers struggling to find work.

In May, Amy Beckrich, 54, of Farmington, Minnesota, lost her human relations job at a consulting firm. She's since applied for more than 100 positions. Even landing interviews is difficult. She finally got one, waited 20 minutes - and the recruiter never showed up.

2025 programs set the standard for sustainable CSR

KFH solidifies social responsibility leadership in 2025 with innovative initiatives and strategic partnerships

Al-Ruwaieh: KFH primary strategic partner for social development and sustainability



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh



The KFH Voluntary Team poses in front of a 'Beyond Horizons' billboard, representing the bank's structured and sustainable approach to corporate social responsibility.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Throughout 2025, Kuwait Finance House maintained its leadership in social responsibility by delivering distinguished and strategic initiatives spanning multiple sectors and reaching all segments of society. These efforts included empowering more than 1,200 students, supporting 300 young people in cybersecurity, distributing 30,000 Iftar meals, opening of the 10th ward of the Addiction Treatment Center, launching the first of its kind Digital Sustainability award, and continuing the KFH Academy program designed to develop Kuwaiti youth.

Thousands of community members also participated in the Bank's competitions and events, covering public health, student and education support, youth empowerment and the sponsorship of sports talents. These achievements were complemented by KFH's support for innovation and digital transformation programs, initiatives for people with special needs, environment protection, and the implementation of voluntary and awareness campaigns. These initiatives reaffirmed that KFH is not merely a Bank, but a leading strategic partner for community development and sustainability.

Head of Public Relations and Media at KFH, **Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh** emphasized the Bank's commitment to maintaining its pioneering social role and strengthening its position as a strategic partner and role model for corporate social responsibility across the private sector.

He noted that KFH's 2025 initiatives were aligned with the community's priorities and addressed the needs of diverse groups through a sustainable and structured approach.

"Social responsibility is not simply a set of initiatives. It is a strategic pillar within KFH's business model. In 2025, our efforts gained unprecedented momentum, with a focus on reinforcing the concepts of sustainability, innovation and youth empowerment," added Al-Ruwaieh.

He further noted: "In the year ahead, we look forward to further strengthening these efforts, ensuring a broader positive impact and contributing to achieving sustainable development goals, while reinforcing our position as a leading financial institution that combines economic growth with sustainable social impact."

Empowering students and youth

Al-Ruwaieh explained that education and the empowerment of students and youth remain a top priority within KFH's social responsibility strategy. Throughout 2025, KFH continued to support specialized educational programs and initiatives that focused on developing students' skills and honing their talents. These included sponsoring school and university activities, delivering awareness workshops in financial literacy and entrepreneurship, as well as supporting training programs for students and fresh graduates to prepare them for the labor market and enhance their capacity for innovation and productivity.

Strategic partner for Ma'a Attalaba program

Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH's strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information for the "Ma'a Attalaba" program underscores its commitment to supporting students, youth and educational initiatives. Ma'a Attalaba is considered a long-running national platform, a viewing staple for over 50 years, aimed at showcasing the talents and capabilities of school students and enhancing their knowledge. Through its diverse content broadcast on Kuwait TV and the 51 platform, the program witnessed the participation of more than 1,200 students representing 24 schools.

The largest honoring ceremony for high school top achievers

He noted that KFH, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, organized the largest ceremony honoring 150 high school top achievers for the 2024/2025 academic year in literature, science, and religious disciplines. The ceremony also recognized students from private schools and those with international recognition.

KFH Academy

Al-Ruwaieh added that KFH continues to support the students and graduates through a wide range of training and educational workshops, delivered as part of the KFH Academy program. "The program is designed to empower Kuwaiti youth with a practical training within a professional banking environment, combining theoretical content with practical training across diverse areas such as public relations (PR) and media, digital transformation and innovation, as well as engineering projects.

Collaborating with universities

He highlighted the Bank's ongoing efforts to supporting education and innovative student initiatives by strengthening cooperation with Kuwait University, Abdullah Al Salem University (AASU), Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), College of Engineering and Petroleum, and various universities and colleges across both the public and private sectors. This also includes supporting students clubs, contributing to developing initiatives that serve students and youth.



KFH participates in the largest honoring ceremony for high school top achievers of the 2024/2025 academic year, recognizing 150 outstanding students in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

The largest and main sponsor of the Engineering Design Exhibition

Al-Ruwaieh pointed out that KFH is the primary and largest supporter of Kuwait University's College of Engineering and Petroleum students. "The Bank continued its strategic partnership for the 47th Engineering Design Exhibition, providing support over the years for students and outstanding engineering projects. He noted that KFH supports over 300 participating students, reflecting the Bank's purposeful vision to empower national youth and foster innovation.

Kuwait Hackathon initiative

As part of KFH's pioneering role in social development, youth empowerment and innovation, Al-Ruwaieh highlighted the Bank's significant success in supporting Kuwait Hackathon, the country's largest cybersecurity competition, for the third consecutive year. The initiative witnessed the participation of over 300 Kuwaiti talents and aimed to empower them and enhance their digital skills.

NEXUS Exhibition

Reflecting the Bank's keenness and recognition of initiatives and events that support technological advancement and innovation, KFH continued its participation in the 2025 NEXUS Technology Exhibition, one of Kuwait's leading platforms for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

Kuwait Codes and a long-standing partnership with CODED

Al-Ruwaieh added that KFH participated in a ceremony honoring a group of graduates of the Kuwait Codes initiative, as part of its strategic partnership with CODED Academy which started in 2018. This participation reaffirms KFH's leadership in fostering innovation and supporting youth empowerment in technology.

Digital Sustainability Award

Affirming the significance of sustainability within its strategy and digitization, KFH dedicated the Digital Sustainability Award. The award encourages Kuwait Codes participants to acquire practical skills that help them create eco-friendly applications aligning with global sustainability standards.

Environment and sustainability

Al-Ruwaieh mentioned that KFH places strong emphasis on environmental protection and sustainability through targeted initiatives that promote awareness of natural resource conservation and support a wide range of environmental campaigns. These efforts are delivered as part of its Keep it Green initiative, which serves as an umbrella for implementing various environmental programs, projects, and activities.

International Conference on Sustainable Development

KFH participated in the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST)'s International Conference on Sustainable Development, Social Responsibility, and Business Ethics. Al-Ruwaieh noted that during the event, the bank showcased its pioneering initiatives, including the Keep it Green environmental campaign, the issuance of green Sukuk, and the launch of bank cards made from recycled materials, along with other programs.

Teaching agriculture to children

He added that KFH participated in the 4th Kuwait Sustainability Event, which was held under the slogan "Do Your Part to Sustainability." At the event, the bank hosted an agricultural workshop for children aged 5 to 10 to instill a culture of environmental conservation and encourage farming.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh (left) signs a cooperation agreement with Kuwait University, strengthening KFH's commitment to supporting academic excellence, student clubs, and innovative engineering projects.

KFH's dedication to developing a sustainability-aware generation was clearly reflected in the high enthusiasm of the participants.

"This is Your Role"

Al-Ruwaieh explained that KFH participated in the national campaign, "This is Your Role", the largest of its kind in Kuwait. Conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and other governmental and private entities, the campaign involved 70 public schools and approximately 500 students across all of Kuwait's governorates. Activities included beach clean-ups, area rehabilitation, greening efforts, and tree planting projects.

Development Initiative of Al Wataniya Area

KFH has provided support for The Development Initiative of Al Wataniya Area, the space separating Baitak Tower and Souq Al Wataniya in Kuwait City. This initiative is a joint effort between KFH, Kuwait Municipality, and the College of Architecture at Kuwait University. The winning design projects from this collaboration will be developed and implemented in accordance with stringent environmental and sustainability standards.

Addiction Treatment Center

Al-Ruwaieh noted that KFH participated in the opening of the Addiction Treatment Center's tenth wing, a step that continues the bank's original 2005 initiative to establish the center. This confirms KFH's ongoing leadership in supporting health initiatives.

Promoting Financial Literacy and Banking Awareness

Al-Ruwaieh highlighted that KFH intensified its financial literacy efforts in 2025 to safeguard customers against financial risks and digital fraud. To enhance banking awareness, KFH launched targeted campaigns featuring awareness messages across various digital platforms and media outlets. These campaigns detailed common fraud methods and protection techniques, emphasizing the critical importance of never sharing confidential information and always activating bank apps security features. These actions significantly contributed to raising customer and community awareness.

Collaboration with the Ministry of Interior

Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH continued its strong community engagement by collaborating with the Ministry of Interior on various security campaigns. Key efforts included a strategic partnership with the 38th Unified GCC Traffic Week ("Driving Without a Phone"), Back-to-School Security Awareness Campaign, and the Seafarers Security Awareness Campaign (which involved distributing safety kits for maritime safety). Additionally, KFH and the Ministry of Interior organized school visits across Kuwait to welcome students and parents, promoting traffic safety awareness and providing gifts.

Sadu House

KFH renewed its strategic partnership with Sadu House. Al-Ruwaieh noted that the collaboration includes organizing joint programs and workshops aimed at preserving Kuwaiti heritage and culture, developing creativity among children and youth, and promoting sustainability through activities focused on recycling and enhancing the value of heritage.

Continued on Page 11



Students participate in a financial literacy workshop organized by KFH to instill the value of saving and financial responsibility as part of the 'Let's Be Aware' (Diraya) national campaign.



Fostering literacy and culture: Children gather for a workshop organized in collaboration with Hzaya Bookstore, part of KFH's initiative to encourage reading and enrich young minds with meaningful concepts.



Celebrating Kuwaiti heritage: Children participate in KFH's vibrant Gergaan activities at The Avenues Mall during the 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan' campaign.



KFH representatives and officials gather at the bank's booth during a major innovation exhibition, highlighting KFH's role as a primary strategic partner for national engineering and design projects.



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh, Head of Public Relations and Media at KFH (second from left), participates in a press conference announcing the renewal of the strategic partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company for the fourth season of Winter Wonderland Kuwait.



Kuwait Finance House (KFH) representatives receive a commemorative gift from the Ministry of Health, marking the opening of the 10th ward at the Addiction Treatment Center, a continuation of KFH's long-standing support for national health initiatives.



Winners of the 'Kuwait Hackathon' receive a KD 5,000 prize, marking KFH's third consecutive year supporting the country's largest cybersecurity competition for young Kuwaiti talents.



KFH staff distribute safety kits and gifts as part of their ongoing community engagement and collaboration with national authorities.



A young contestant participates in the 12th annual KFH Quran Recitation Competition, an event that saw over 500 participants across various age groups.

Continued from Page 10

Hzaya and Sama

He added that KFH continued its initiative to promote the Arabic language among children through programs and activities in cooperation with Sama Academy. The bank also collaborated with Hzaya bookstore, a specialist in children's and youth literature, to encourage reading and enrich young minds with meaningful concepts.

Season four of Winter Wonderland

Al-Ruwaieh pointed out that KFH renewed its strategic partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company to sponsor Winter Wonderland for the fourth consecutive season. The partnership included the organization of a wide range of events and competitions, as well as the distribution of gifts and prizes to visitors throughout the season.

Supporting SMEs

He pointed out that part of the Bank's social responsibility is represented in supporting SMEs and entrepreneurs, while contributing to specialized events and exhibitions aimed at empowering this segment and strengthening their presence in the local market. These efforts included supporting Kuwaiti businesses participating in Winter Wonderland, Your Coffee is on Us initiative held every Sunday, as well as participating in various activities and events throughout the year to support entrepreneurship such as the Capital of Opportunities national initiative, the NEXUS exhibition, and KFH's strategic partnership with the Kafo platform, which aims to promote community innovation and transform young people's ideas into practical solutions that support sustainable development efforts.

KFH Strategic Partners

Al-Ruwaieh emphasized KFH's continuous efforts to sponsor outstanding and creative Kuwaiti youth, support their capabilities, and support their participation in major international competitions and championships across various youth activities, including sports, cultural, and social arenas.

This is carried out under the KFH Strategic Partners program, which aims to foster creativity and competitiveness. He highlighted the Bank's partnerships with a distinguished group of champions and high achievers who have won international competitions and are recognized as global leaders in their respective

fields.

Employee wellness initiatives

He noted that KFH organized numerous sports and health initiatives for employees, including the Padel competition held as part of the Movember campaign, with the participation of 32 players. The Bank also organized a PlayStation tournament and a bowling tournament, both of which saw strong participation and a high level of competition among employees.

Health awareness campaign

Al-Ruwaieh said: "In continuation of its role in health awareness, KFH successfully launched its breast cancer awareness campaign, and Movember campaign under the slogan You Are Stronger, in addition to its diabetes awareness initiative, encouraging the adoption of preventive measures." He added that these efforts also included various health initiatives and activities in cooperation with Al Salam Hospital and the Dasman Diabetes Institute, in addition to organizing a series of first aid courses, blood donation events, and sponsoring numerous awareness seminars and campaigns for the prevention of various diseases. The Bank also organized sports events throughout the year to encourage different segments of society to adopt an active lifestyle and maintain good health.

Social Media Channels

He added that KFH leverages its social media channels to serve customers and the public by publishing awareness campaigns and educational content, while responding to all customer inquiries within record time.

Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan

Al-Ruwaieh further mentioned that KFH's Ramadan campaign, Increase Good Deed in Ramadan, saw remarkable success with its numerous community and volunteer initiatives. This included distributing approximately 30,000 Iftar meals, Ramadan Majla, and Eid clothes in collaboration with Kuwait Red Crescent Society, hospitality services for worshippers at mosques, and organizing the largest walking challenge, in collaboration with KFH strategic partner, V-Thru. Throughout the month of Ramadan, KFH also shared a series of awareness videos in collaboration with medical doctors and nutrition specialists as well as traffic awareness messages in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, promoting safe driving practices and accident prevention, along with

initiatives to share Iftar meals with on-duty workers during iftar timing, Gergean celebration activities, and cooking courses and many other activities.

Over 500 participants in KFH's Quran Recitation Competition

Al-Ruwaieh added that KFH organized the 12th annual Quran Recitation competition, which the Bank launched and organized for the first time in Kuwait. The competition witnessed the participation of over 500 contestants from all segments of the society, and 60 winners were honored across different categories.

KFH Holy Quran Application

He indicated that KFH offers the Holy Quran mobile application, available on iOS and Android. The app has achieved record numbers in users and downloads across various app stores, thanks to its unique user-friendly features.

Sustainability report

Additionally, KFH issued its fifth annual Sustainability Report, highlighting its proactive initiatives in sustainability and social responsibility.

Carbon footprint report

KFH also released its second Carbon Footprint Report, presenting a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impact of its operations, products, and services, in line with the Bank's efforts to develop financial products that support environmental initiatives.

Global awards and recognitions

KFH received a number of prestigious awards, including the Most Sustainable Projects in the Middle East award for 2025 from Forbes Middle East magazine. The Bank also won the Sustainability Award – Middle East Level and the Corporate Social Responsibility Award from EMEA Finance in addition to maintaining its inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index, and a rating of "A" by MSCI ESG index.

Investing in the community

Al-Ruwaieh emphasized that social responsibility is an integrated strategic approach reflecting KFH's institutional values in serving society. He noted that KFH will continue to invest in the community and launch initiatives that support and advance the goals and pillars of sustainable development across various social levels.



The KFH booth at the 2025 NEXUS Technology Exhibition, showcasing the bank's latest digital banking services and commitment to technological innovation.



KFH officials honor the winning students of the 'Ma'a Attalaba' program, a long-standing strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education to showcase student excellence.



As part of the 'You Are Stronger' health awareness campaign, KFH organized specialized seminars and discussions to promote breast cancer awareness and preventive health measures for the community.



Volunteers participate in a beach clean-up under the 'Keep it Green' umbrella, part of KFH's extensive environmental protection and sustainability efforts.



A group photo showing the winners of a KFH-sponsored design competition, where students were awarded grants (KD 800) to foster innovation and national talent.



Graduates of the 'Coded Juniors' program celebrate their success; KFH's long-standing partnership with CODED Academy aims to empower the next generation of Kuwaiti youth with essential digital and programming skills.

Event organized by Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah

Crown Prince attends 'Between Two Masterpieces' exhibition



Crown Prince Diwan photos

Under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince, the exhibition 'Between Two Masterpieces: The Emergence of Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah' was officially opened.



His Highness the Crown Prince received upon his arrival.



His Highness the Crown Prince welcomed.



An official delivers a speech.



His Highness the Crown Prince touring the exhibition.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16, (KUNA): Under the auspices and attendance of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah, Bain Tuhfatain (Between Two Masterpieces), exhibition took place, which was organized by Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah (House of Islamic Antiquities), DAI, at the American Center in Jlelah, Kuwait City.

Upon arrival, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah was received by Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information, Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Badah Al-Mutairi, and the Director General of DAI Sheikha Hessa Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

The event was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Musherji, the Director of His Highness Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Nader Abdullah Al-Jalal, Minister of Education Sayid Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, along with senior state officials.

The ceremony began with the national anthem, followed by a documentary showcasing the history of the Al-Sabah Archaeological Collection and the establishment of DAI.

Afterwards, a speech was delivered by Bader Ahmad Al-



His Highness the Crown Prince touring the exhibition.



Buajian, the Chairman of the Founding Committee of the Friends of DAI.

In his speech, Al-Buajian said that this exhibition, "Between Two Masterpieces," the birth of DAI, is the fruit of a voluntary effort in which the friends of the DAI participated with love and dedication.

Al-Buajian added, DAI allowed us to be part of its cultural work, making us partners in its mission, and opened its doors to us to serve our country through volunteering.

This exhibition is one of the fruits of this collaboration, Al-Buajian added, thanking all the supporters.

Later, the Director General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature (NCCAL), Dr Mohammad Al-Jassar, delivered a similar speech on the occasion.

Another speech was also delivered by Minister of Information, Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Badah Al-Mutairi, in which he highlighted this exhibition, which documents a cultural journey spanning nearly five decades, and was built on a shared effort and an integrated vision, coming from the late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Finally, His Highness the Crown Prince toured the exhibition and was briefed on the various aspects of arts and antiquities that are owned by DAI and the founder of Al-Sabah Archaeological Collection.

Kuwait Embassy in Brussels hosts 'Kuwaiti Cultural Day' promoting heritage



BRUSSELS, Dec 16, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait Embassy in the Belgian capital has organized "Kuwaiti Cultural Day", celebrating the national culture and heritage and promoting the genuine Kuwaiti cuisine.

It was held as part of the monthly meeting by the "Women's League of Asia and the Pacific," attended by spouses of diplomats serving in Belgium.

Participants interacted and enjoyed a glimpse of the Kuwaiti culture and the Gulf country's heritage, in addition to relishing the Kuwaiti food.



Top and above: photos from the Kuwaiti Cultural Day.

KUNA photos

Balkan nations move closer to compliance with the Minamata Convention

Albania, Montenegro complete national mercury device inventories: WHO

OSLO, Dec. 16, (Xinhua): The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe announced on Tuesday that Albania and Montenegro have finalized national inventories of mercury-containing medical devices, marking a significant step toward phasing out their use in the health-care sector.

According to the WHO, the inventories cover devices such as thermometers and sphygmomanometers used to measure blood pressure, including those currently in use, in storage, or already decommissioned.

The progress is part of a five-year Global Environment Facility (GEF) project implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

and executed by the WHO. The initiative supports the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, a global treaty aimed at protecting human health and the environment from the harmful effects of mercury.

While harmless when intact, these devices can release mercury if broken, posing risks to health-care workers and patients, as well as broader health threats through environmental pollution, the WHO said. It noted that inhaled mercury can affect the nervous system, kidneys, and respiratory system.

In Albania, the project has enabled a targeted survey of about 7,000 health-care professionals to identify knowledge gaps and training needs. Pilot health-

care facilities have also been selected to demonstrate the replacement of mercury-containing devices with safer alternatives.

Meanwhile, Montenegro has focused on capacity building, with representatives from pilot health centers taking part in training sessions on the safe handling, storage, and disposal of mercury equipment. Consultations have also begun with the municipality of Bar on temporary waste storage solutions.

Both Balkan countries, along with around 60 percent of nations in the WHO European Region, have ratified the Minamata Convention, committing to halting the import, export, and production of mercury-containing medical devices.

The Conversation

Researchers aim to improve forecasts for water management and flood control

What is an atmospheric river? A hydrologist explains the good and bad of these storms and how they're changing

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

By Qian Cao,

University of California, San Diego

Along the U.S. West Coast, atmospheric rivers are dreaded for the damage they can cause, but they are also essential to the region's snowpack and water supply, as Qian Cao, a hydrologist at the University of California, San Diego, explains.

An atmospheric river is a narrow corridor or filament of concentrated water vapor transported in the atmosphere. It's like a river in the sky that can be 1,000 miles long. On average, atmospheric rivers have about twice the regular flow of the Amazon River.

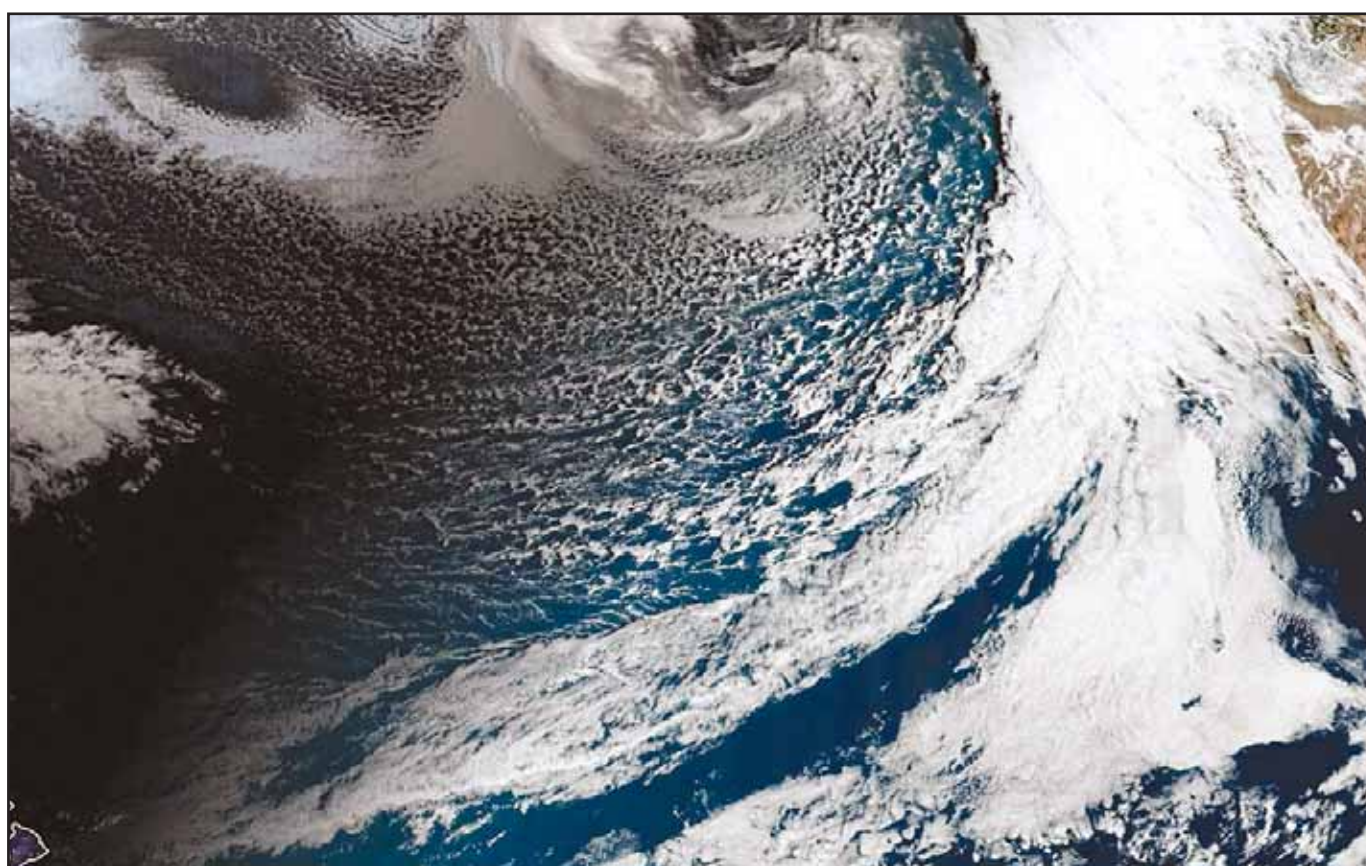
When atmospheric rivers run up against mountains or run into local atmospheric dynamics and are forced to ascend, the moisture they carry cools and condenses, so they can produce intense rainfall or snowfall.

Atmospheric rivers occur all over the world, most commonly in the mid-latitudes. They form when large-scale weather patterns align to create narrow channels, or filaments, of intense moisture transport. These start over warm water, typically tropical oceans, and are guided toward the coast by low-level jet streams ahead of cold fronts of extratropical cyclones.

Along the U.S. West Coast, the Pacific Ocean serves as the reservoir of moisture for the storm, and the mountain ranges act as barriers, which is why the western sides of the coastal ranges and Sierra Nevada see so much rain and snow.

Consecutive atmospheric rivers, known as AR families, can cause significant flooding.

The first heavy downpours saturate the ground. As consecutive storms arrive, their precipitation falls on soil that can't absorb more water. That contributes to more runoff. Rivers and streams fill up. In the meantime, there may be snowmelt due to warm tempera-



A satellite image shows a powerful atmospheric river hitting the U.S. West Coast on Jan. 31, 2024. (AP)

tures, further adding to the runoff and flood risk.

California experienced a historic run of nine consecutive atmospheric rivers in the span of three weeks in December 2022 and January 2023. The storms helped bring most reservoirs back to historical averages in 2023 after several drought years, but they also produced damaging floods and debris flows.

The cause of AR families is an active area of research. Compared with single atmos-

pheric river events, AR families tend to be associated with lower atmospheric pressure heights across the North Pacific, higher pressure heights over the subtropics, a stronger and more zonally elongated jet stream and warmer tropical air temperatures.

Large-scale weather patterns and climate phenomena such as the Madden-Julian Oscillation, or MJO, also play an important role in the generation of AR families. An active MJO shift occurred during the early 2023

events, tilting the odds toward increased atmospheric river activity over California.

A recent study by scientists at Stanford and the University of Florida found that storms within AR families cause three to four times more economic damage when the storms arrive back to back than they would have caused by themselves.

I'm a research hydrologist, so I focus on hydrological impacts of atmospheric rivers. Although they can lead to flood hazards,

atmospheric rivers are also essential to the Western water supply. Atmospheric rivers have been responsible for ending more than a third of the region's major droughts, including the severe California drought of 2012-16.

Atmospheric rivers provide an average of 30% to 50% of the West Coast's annual precipitation.

They also contribute to the snowpack, which provides a significant portion of California's year-round water supply.

In an average year, one to two extreme atmospheric rivers with snow will be the dominant contributors to the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada. Together, atmospheric rivers will contribute about 30% to 40% of an average season's total snow accumulation there.

That's why my colleagues at the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, part of the University of California, San Diego, work on improving atmospheric river forecasts and predictions. Water managers need to be able to regulate reservoirs and figure out how much water they can save for the dry season while still leaving room in the reservoirs to manage flood risk from future storms.

Warmer air can hold more moisture. As global temperatures rise in the future, we can expect more intense atmospheric rivers, leading to an increase in heavy and extreme precipitation events.

My research also shows that more atmospheric rivers are likely to occur concurrently during already wet conditions. So, the chance of extreme flooding also increases. Another study, by scientists from the University of Washington, suggests that there will be a seasonal shift to more atmospheric rivers earlier in the rainy season.

There will likely also be more year-to-year variability in the total annual precipitation, particularly in California, as a study by my colleagues at the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes projects. (AP)

China's largest freshwater lake shrinks by 90 percent

NANCHANG, Dec. 16, (Xinhua): China's largest freshwater lake, Poyang Lake, has shrunk by 90 percent from its high-water season level and entered an extremely low-water level, local authorities said Sunday.

At the landmark Xingzi hydrological station in east China's Jiangxi Province, the water level fell below the extremely low-water mark on Sunday morning, with the gauge reading only 8 meters.

This year, Poyang Lake's water level first dipped below the 12-meter drought warning line on Aug. 8, 87 days earlier than the average time of previous years. To date, the lake has been 217 days below the drought warning line, meaning nearly two-thirds of the year in low-water conditions.

To address the situation, a nearby water supply company in Duchang County has mobilized 10 pumps operating at full capacity to draw water from the outer lake to the plant's intake, said Wang Chunhua, head of the company's production and operations department.

The company also stepped up inspections of drinking water sources and increased the frequency of water quality testing to ensure the safety of drinking water for 160,000 urban and rural residents nearby.

The lake has repeatedly set new low-water records in recent years, with a growing trend of dry seasons starting earlier, lasting longer, and reaching lower water levels.

In 2022, its water level dropped to a record low of 4.6 meters. The following year, the lake entered its



Poyang Lake, China's largest freshwater lake, has shrunk by 90% from its peak levels and entered an extremely low-water level, with the water gauge showing an eight-meter reading. (Xinhua)

dry season on July 20, the earliest date on record.

Experts warn that the prolonged low water levels will affect the wintering of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds, including Siberian cranes, oriental storks and white-naped cranes, as well as the reproduction of aquatic species such as the finless porpoise.

Local governments around the lake are closely monitoring the situation, implementing precise water management measures and carrying out emergency responses, such as dredging channels and supplementing ecological water, to minimize the impact.

With its well-preserved ecosystem, Poyang Lake is a key wintering site for waterfowl in Asia. The peak migration period for birds heading to the lake typically runs from mid-December through early January.

NASA's Maven orbiter goes dark, Mars mission probes underway

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida, Dec. 16, (AP): NASA has lost contact with a spacecraft that has orbited Mars for more than a decade.

Maven abruptly stopped communicating to ground stations over the weekend. NASA said this week that it was working fine before it went behind the red planet. When it reappeared, there was only silence.

Launched in 2013, Maven began studying the upper Martian atmosphere and its interaction with the solar wind once reaching the red planet the following year. Scientists ended up blaming the sun for Mars losing most of its atmosphere to space over the eons, turning it from wet and warm to the dry and cold world it is today.

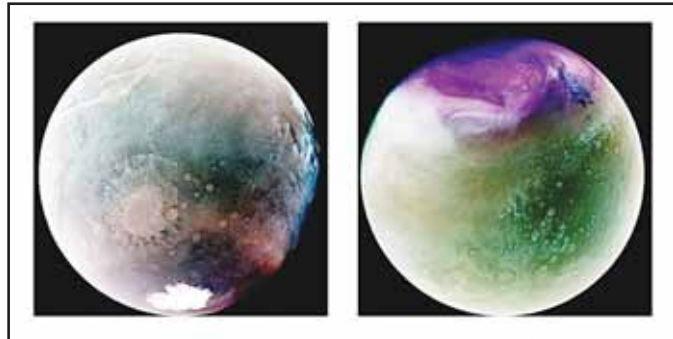
Maven also has served as a communication relay for NASA's two Mars rovers, Curiosity and Perseverance.

Engineering investigations are underway, according to NASA.

NASA has two other spacecraft around Mars that are still active: Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, launched in 2005, and Mars Odyssey, launched in 2001.



This illustration provided by NASA depicts the MAVEN spacecraft orbiting the planet Mars. (AP)



This combination of ultraviolet spectrum images provided by NASA shows atmospheric features of the planet Mars in July 2022, left, during the southern hemisphere's summer season, and the planet's northern hemisphere in January 2023 after Mars had passed the farthest point in its orbit from the Sun, captured by the MAVEN spacecraft. (AP)

Infant botulism cases rise in US

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 16, (Xinhua): A total of 51 infant botulism cases have been reported across 19 U.S. states as of Wednesday amid a nationwide recall of potentially contaminated infant formula, according to an update from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Epidemiologic and laboratory evidence indicated that ByHeart Whole Nutrition infant formula may be contaminated with Clostridium botulinum, which is causing infant illness in multiple regions of the country, the FDA said.

Investigations by both ByHeart and the FDA into the root cause of the contamination are ongoing. At this stage, the FDA said it cannot rule out the possibility that all ByHeart infant formula products may have been affected.

In response, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) broadened its case definition to include any infant with botulism who was exposed to ByHeart formula at any time since the product's launch in March 2022.

Previously, case counts only included illnesses beginning on or after Aug. 1, 2025. With the expanded definition, the CDC and state health partners identified 10 additional cases that occurred between December 2023 and July 2025.

Illness onset dates range from Dec. 24, 2023 to Dec. 1, 2025. All 51 affected infants were hospitalized, but no deaths have been reported to date. The infants range in age from 16 days to 264 days, and 43 percent are female, according to the FDA.

State and local public health officials are interviewing caregivers about foods the infants consumed in the month prior to becoming sick. All 51 infants had been fed ByHeart Whole Nutrition powdered formula before falling ill.

Additional testing by ByHeart, the FDA, the CDC, and state partners is underway, with results expected in the coming weeks.

Afghanistan advances nationwide vaccination campaign against polio

KABUL, Dec. 16, (Xinhua): Afghanistan is committed to eradicating polio, a health official said Monday at the launch of a nationwide vaccination campaign, local media Tolonews reported.

Sharafat Zaman Omarkhil, spokesman for the Ministry of Public Health, made the remarks as the latest immunization drive in the current year began.

This is the final anti-polio campaign of 2025. Over four days, about 7.2 mil-

lion children under five will receive oral polio vaccine drops in 16 of the country's 34 provinces, including the capital, Kabul.

Zaman urged families to cooperate in the fight against the crippling disease and to assist health workers until the country is free of the wild poliovirus.

According to the report, nine polio cases have been registered in Afghanistan so far in 2025.

SYDNEY, Dec. 16, (Xinhua): Scientists in Australia have uncovered a mechanism that may explain why glioblastoma, one of the deadliest brain cancers, returns after treatment, offering new clues for safer, more effective therapies, a media release of the University of Sydney said Tuesday.

The study, published in Nature Communications, shows that a small population of drug-tolerant cells known as "persister cells" rewires its metabolism to survive chemotherapy, using an unexpected ally as an invisibility cloak: a fertility gene called PRDM9.

The researchers found that while the body un-

dergoes chemotherapy stress, glioblastoma cells are able to hijack PRDM9 to churn out cholesterol, helping persister cells withstand damage and eventually allowing the tumor to return, it said.

"Chemotherapy kills most cancer cells, but in glioblastoma, a few survive and are able to regrow the tumor. We think we've found their survival trick and potential ways to block it," said lead author Professor Lenka Munoz from the University of Sydney.

By blocking PRDM9 or cutting off the cells' cholesterol supply, researchers were able to wipe out persister cells in lab and animal models. When combined with chemotherapy, their ap-

proach dramatically improved survival in mice, the release said.

The team developed a brain-penetrant chemotherapy drug WJA88, paired with a tested cholesterol-lowering agent. The combination shrank tumors and extended survival in preclinical models with minimal side effects, it said, adding the same mechanism may exist in other hard-to-treat cancers, with plans to test the approach on ovarian cancer next.

Accounting for about half of all brain tumors, glioblastoma claims the lives of up to 200,000 people globally each year, with a median survival rate of just 15 months.

New hope against deadly brain cancer

Scientists uncover glioblastoma's chemo-resistance

Elevating regional motorsports with Qatar showdown

Toyota GR Yaris Cup Kuwait roars back for Season 3



KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. is thrilled to announce the official launch of the Toyota GR Yaris Cup Kuwait Season 3. The highly anticipated one-make racing championship will ignite the tarmac at Kuwait Motor Town with a series of thrilling race rounds running from December 2025 through March 2026.

The opening ceremony was attended by Faisal Bader Al-Sayer Chairman, Bengt Schultz COO, Martin Aherne Senior Business Director Toyota Group Sales, Bader Faisal Al Sayer Senior Manager Toyota Marketing, Theo Kruger General Manager of Toyota retail sales, Hamad Al Fouzan Deputy General Manager product planning and sales administration, Group Business Heads and Senior Managers, representatives from the sponsoring brands in the presence of members of the press and media.

Building on the success of its first two seasons, Season 3 promises to deliver intensified competition, showcasing the pure performance of the rally-bred Toyota GR Yaris and solidifying Kuwait's position as a regional motorsport hub.

"The GR Yaris Cup is more than a race; it's a platform to nurture and showcase regional racing talent. We anticipate an exciting season filled with outstanding competition and continued commitment to the highest standards of sportsmanship and safety" commented Martin Aherne. "We are immensely proud to bring back the cup for a third season. This series is a true testament to the dedication of our entire collaborative team."

The Toyota GR Yaris was designed for high performance, and this cup is the ultimate test of the attributes and skills of both the vehicle and driver. Together, they represent the harmony of precision, performance, and partnership that characterizes the Toyota GR philosophy. The success of the championship is a direct result of the seamless collaboration between several key partners including Group Sales and Marketing, the highly skilled technicians from Ahmadi Performance who meticulously race-prepared the GR Yaris fleet, Mr. Essa Hamzah Alfailakawi, President and Mr. Fuad Abu Arja Director of International Relations and Motorsports from Kuwait International Automobile Club, the team of experts at Suffix Sports Management, and the vital partnership with Kuwait Motor Town.

Bader Faisal Al-Sayer said "The third season of this championship represents our biggest platform yet, especially with the Toyota GR Yaris Regional Cup at the world-class Lusail International Circuit. Marketing-wise, we will continue to produce outstanding performance-based digital content that will generate tremendous engagement across the region".

ALSAYER's Ahmadi Performance Team – The Technical Experts

GR Yaris is true sports car developed by experts at the Toyota Gazoo Racing

World Rally Team and the 12 units which are part of the GR Yaris Cup Season 3 are being race-prepared under FIA regulations, in-house with skill and precision by service technicians at Al Sayer Ahmadi Performance. Carefully selected race specific components are added to the impressive standard specification to create a car at home circuit in the cutthroat environment of a one-make competition.

Each championship-eligible car is outfitted with a standardized suite of professional-grade racing components, including adjustable race shocks, a race-specific exhaust system, and high-performance race brake pads paired with braided lines. The cars will run on 18-inch alloy wheels fitted exclusively with Yokohama A050 tires.

Inside the cockpit, driver development is prioritized with a sophisticated race logger to capture and analyze performance data, enabling drivers to identify and execute precise areas for improvement. Crucially, the driver environment meets the highest safety standards, featuring a Recaro Pole Position race seat, a six-point safety harness, a fire suppression system, and a race steering wheel, all integrated within an FIA-certified six-point roll cage.

Fans and motorsport enthusiasts are invited to follow the journey of Season 3 as the calendar of race dates is finalized and released. Get ready for an action-packed season of high-speed thrills and competitive driving!

This year, the event features a larger group of distinguished sponsors who share our vision and passion for achieving success in addition to a wider range of tal-

ented drivers who will play a crucial role. The sponsors and drivers are not just part of the event; they are key partners in the success of Season 3.

Kuwait and Qatar Unite for Regional Racing Excellence

A major highlight of the upcoming season will be the continuation of the GR Yaris Regional Cup to be held on 17th and 18th of April 2026 in cooperation with Abdulghani Motors, where the Kuwaiti champions will face off against their regional rivals at the prestigious Lusail International Circuit in Qatar. This regional collaboration underscores ALSAYER's commitment to fostering a pan-GCC racing culture and providing local talent with international-level competition.

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) certified one-make race event initiated by an automotive distributor in the region will feature 15 racing drivers backed by a strong track record of achievements in the field of motorsports.

GR Yaris Cup Season, List of Drivers & Sponsors are as follows:

Mohammed Al Adasani – Mai – IconWerk
Abdulaziz Al Majed – Yokohama
Ahmed Al Kandri – Ninja
Ahmed Al Mudhaf – Caribou Coffee
Hisham Al Jeri – Gulf Bank
Ziyad Al Shaya – Al Rai Newspaper
Fahad Ben Salamah – Alanbaa Newspaper
Abdulaziz Al Saeed – TGMO
Nawaf Al Marzouq / Jassem Al Marzouq – Kuwait Insurance Co.
Hamad Al Ibrahim / Dhari Al Mousherji – AlRajhi Bank
Ahmed Al Ghanim/ Zaid Ashkanani – Cofran Lubricants
Faisal Al Hajeri – Warba Bank

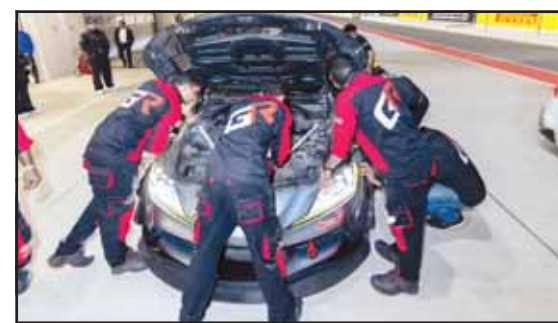
Engine	Engine	In-Line 3-Cylinder Intercooler
Type	G16E-GTS (10.5:1 compression ratio) Turbo boost is set between 1.4 and 1.81 bar	
Displacement		1,618cc
Maximum Output (KW/PS)	220 [272]	
Maximum Torque (KW/PS)	370(37.7) /3,000-4,600	
Transmission	Transmission	6-Speed manual transmission (MT)
Drive system		Four-Wheel drive

The inaugural event of the GR Yaris Cup was successfully held on **December 11th and 12th, 2025, at Kuwait Motor Town (KMT)**. Providing attendees with a memorable experience, the high-caliber racing demonstrated the potential of the regional motorsport scene and established a strong foundation for the future of the series.

A key highlight of the opening weekend at Kuwait Motor Town was an exclusive VIP preview of the high-performance GR Yaris was also held, giving the guests an up-close look at the rally-bred machine prior to the official Cup launch.

The remaining four rounds are scheduled as below:

- Second Round – 8th, 9th and 10th of January 2026
- Third Round – 12th and 13th of February
- Fourth Round – 5th and 6th of March 2026
- Fifth Round – 26th and 27th of March 2026



Top and above: Photos from the event.

Rayo shares points with Betis

Roma beats Como to stay close to Inter

ROME, Dec 16, (AP): Brazilian full back Wesley França got the only goal as Roma beat Como 1-0 and moved within three points of Serie A leader Inter Milan.

A summer signing from Flamengo, França gave Roma the breakthrough it deserved on the hour mark by taking Matías Soulé's pass and firing a low shot in off the far post.

Until then it had been an unremarkable match at the Stadio Olimpico.

Defenses were on top during an even first half with Como's Jean Butez the only goalkeeper making a save.

The second half was slightly more exciting

and Bryan Cristante had a goal disallowed for the home side.

But there were few chances and no more goals, which will not bother Roma, which snapped a recent poor run and moved into fourth place.

Como remained seventh, six points behind. It was the second defeat in a row for Cesc Fàbregas' side although both losses have come to teams above it in the table.

Meanwhile, Rayo Vallecano drew at home with Real Betis 0-0 and extended its winless streak to six games in La Liga.

The home side had scored only once in its

last five league games but was unlucky not to end that poor run in a first half notable for the performance of Betis goalkeeper Álvaro Valles.

The withdrawal of top goal-scorer Jorge de Frutos after 18 minutes did not help Rayo's cause and neither did the woodwork, with Isi Palazón striking the post in the second half.

Betis was also more positive in the second period but neither side could find a way to break the deadlock. The result left Betis in sixth place and Rayo in 13th just three points above the relegation zone.



Como's Nico Paz and Roma's Lorenzo Pellegrini charge the ball during the Serie A soccer match between AS Roma and Como 1907 at Rome's Olympic stadium, Italy. (AP)

Change Name

I, Mohammad (current name in passport) holder of Indian Passport No. S4697865 having permanent Address- House Number 113 Hamaal Mohalla, Sheopor, PIN 476337 Madhya Pradesh India. Residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth in future my name will be read as under: Given name: Mohammad Surname Husain

Chelsea, Juventus aim for Women's Champions League quarters

LONDON, Dec 16, (AP): Four quarterfinal spots on offer and no shortage of teams vying to take them.

The Women's Champions League heads into a hectic final round of games on Wednesday with Chelsea, Juventus, Real Madrid and Bayern Munich all strong contenders for direct entry into the quarterfinals behind leaders Barcelona and OL Lyonnes.

The nine games all kick off at the same time on a night which could see fortunes shift as fans and coaches keep an eye on scores from across Europe.

The first season with an 18-team league phase

instead of the old group system hasn't produced much jeopardy over the 12 teams who qualify for the knockout stages. Only a shock win for Norway's Valerenga at Bayern could change the composition of the top 12.

What matters is the top four, who go directly to the quarterfinals, while places five through 12 must survive an extra playoff round.

With 13 points from five games, Barcelona and OL Lyonnes haven't quite secured a quarterfinal spot mathematically, but will go to the final eight

barring losses to Paris FC and Atletico Madrid, respectively, and at least three other results going against them.

That leaves two more quarterfinal spots open. Third-place Chelsea is in the best position to nab one on 11 points but has a tricky game against two-time Champions League winner Wolfsburg.

Juventus, Madrid and Bayern all follow on 10 points, with three more teams on nine including Manchester United, which visits Juventus in one of the most evenly matched of Wednesday's games.

Arsenal is the defending Champions League winner but hasn't always looked like it. Currently in eighth, Renée Slegers' team is heading for the playoff round, barring a miracle.

Arsenal will be a heavy favorite at OH Leuven but unless rivals slip up, the reward for beating the Belgian team is likely to be only a more favorable seeding for the playoff round.

One potential outcome would be facing Leuven again in the round of 16 rather than tougher potential opponents like United or Paris FC.

Mudar wins Al-Jazeera Cup

'Kahail Al-Ghanayem' claims Al-Adiyat Stud Cup

Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser and Al-Roumi present the trophy to Al-Ghanayem Stable.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Kahail Al-Ghanayem, representing Al-Ghanayem Stable and guided by trainer Omar Al-Nusfi with jockey Ali Al-Farmawi, captured the Al-Adiyat Stud Cup for Egyptian Arabian horses (Mixed C4) over 1,200 meters.

Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser, President of the Higher Authority for Horse Racing, along with Alaa Al-Roumi, owner of Al-Raya Stud, presented the trophy to Al-Ghanayem Stable, in addition to a commemorative

shield for Al-Adiyat Stud.

In the sixth race, Mudar of Al-Akshan, trained by Mohammed Al-Athab and ridden by Tawfiq, won the Al-Jazeera Real Estate Development Company Cup (Mixed C4) over 1,000 meters. The seventh race saw Mujeeb of Al-Khaled, trained by Hamad Al-Ajmi and ridden by Raimondo, secure the same cup in the Handicap (0-55, C4) category over 2,000 meters.

Fahad Al-Ajmi, President of the Higher Authority for Horse Racing,

Secretary General of the Hunting and Equestrian Club, and advisor to the Chairman of Al-Jazeera Real Estate Development Company, presented the trophies for the sixth and seventh races. Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser also awarded a commemorative shield to Al-Jazeera Real Estate Development Company.

The Hunting Club Trophy in the first four races was claimed by Shaqran, Ghasab, Kabeer Al-Haqawi, and Takbeer.

Adnan scores 11 points

Kuwait Club routs Al-Arabi to reclaim top spot

Kuwait Club player shows skill and control as the team maintains dominance.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Kuwait Club reclaimed the top spot in Group B of the West Asian Basketball League (Gulf Super League) after a commanding 93-58 victory over Qatar's Al-Arabi at Lusail Hall, during the fourth round of group matches.

With the win, Kuwait Club's points total rose to 7, while Al-Arabi sits fourth and last with 5 points.

Kuwait Club dominated from the opening tip to the final buzzer. Mohamed Adnan scored 11 points, including three three-pointers in the first quarter. American player Jamal Jones (2.03 m) effectively neutralized Al-Arabi's Bahraini star Mustafa Rashid "Mosty" (1.77 m), preventing him from taking his trademark three-point shots and forcing him out of rhythm—he left scoreless after scoring 29 points in the previous encounter in Kuwait. Adnan and Jones were not the only

standout performers. Alexander Al-Ghais added 11 points, while Imran Johar, Charlie Moore, and Geoffrey Laverge also delivered impressive performances throughout all four quarters. Al-Arabi's coach, Tunisian Hatem Mamlouk, struggled to find solutions in the absence of key center Almedin Kikanovic, who remained on the bench due to injury.

The score by quarters reflected Kuwait Club's dominance: 24-11, 18-11, 22-15, and 29-21.

Jokic leads Nuggets to OT win over Rockets



Los Angeles Clippers guard Kobe Sanders (4) drives the ball against Memphis Grizzlies guard Cam Spencer (24) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Monday in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

DENVER, Dec 16, (AP): Nikola Jokic had 39 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists for his NBA-leading 12th triple-double of the season as the Denver Nuggets outlasted the Houston Rockets 128-125 in overtime on Monday night in a matchup of two of the top three teams in the Western Conference standings.

Jamal Murray added 35 points for Denver, including six of his team's 11 points in overtime. Murray made 14 of his 15 free-throw attempts.

The win was the Nuggets' fifth in a row and was their first home victory since Nov. 8.

The final 1:40 of regulation had four ties and four lead changes, a stretch capped off by a free throw by Murray that tied the game with 2.3 seconds remaining after an away-from-play foul on Houston's Amen Thompson. Denver retained possession after the free throw, but a 3-point attempt by Jokic from the top of the key was long.

The Nuggets took a 124-117 lead after a Spencer Jones 3 with 2:59 remaining in overtime, but the Rockets clawed back, getting within three with the ball and 13 seconds remaining. Alperen Sengun missed a contested 24-foot 3 with 4.9 seconds remaining, allowing Denver to hold on for the victory.

Sengun paced the Rockets with 33 points, 10 assists and 10 rebounds for his first triple-double of the season. Kevin Durant added 25 points, seven



Toronto Raptors forward Sandro Mamukelashvili (54) goes to the basket as Miami Heat guard Dru Smith, left, and center Kel'el Ware (7) defend during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Monday in Miami. (AP)

assists, five rebounds and five blocks for Houston, which lost its third consecutive road game.

A Nuggets team that was already down two starters in Aaron Gordon (hamstring) and Christian Braun (ankle) played much of the game without starting guard Peyton Watson, who left six minutes into the first quarter after suffering a right trunk contusion.

Jazz 140, Mavericks 133 OT

In Salt Lake city Keyonte George scored 37 points and Lauri Markkanen added 33 to lift the Utah Jazz to a 140-133 overtime win against the Dallas Mavericks, despite a career-

high 42 points from Cooper Flagg.

George, who had 39 points on Friday in Memphis, scored the first five points of overtime. Kyle Filipowski scored 16 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter and overtime as the Jazz won consecutive games for just the second time this season.

Flagg has been playing his best basketball the past few weeks as the No. 1 overall draft pick has averaged 25.7 points in the last seven games and became the first 18-year-old in league history to score 40 points. Flagg also tied Mark Aguirre for the most points by a rookie in Mavs history.

P.J. Washington scored 25 and Najj Marshall had 15 for the Mavericks, who had won five of six games.

The Mavericks led 124-116 before the Jazz reeled off 11 straight points, capped by Isaiah Collier's driving basket with 53.6 seconds remaining.

Flagg scored and was fouled on the next possession but missed the free throw that could have tied it.

Grizzlies 121, Clippers 103

In Inglewood, Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 21 of his 31 points in the first half and Cam Spencer added a career-high 27 points as the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Los Angeles Clippers.

Jaylen Wells scored 16 points and rookie Cedric Coward had 12 as the Grizzlies earned a victory over the Clippers for the third time in less than three weeks. Ja Morant also scored 12 points for Memphis in his second game since returning from a calf injury.

While Morant has returned, Grizzlies center Zach Edey missed his second game of an extended absence

because of a left ankle injury. Santi Aldama started at center for the second consecutive game and was held to just three points with two rebounds.

Kawhi Leonard scored 21 points and Kris Dunn added 17 for the Clippers, who have lost 12 of their last 14 games.

James Harden was held to 13 points, while John Collins and Jordan Miller each had 10 for Los Angeles in its eighth straight home loss. The Clippers last won in their own building on Oct. 31.

The Clippers led 64-63 on Leonard's 3-pointer just before the midpoint of the third quarter. The Grizzlies took charge from there, going on a 9-0 run for a 72-64 lead, while taking a 90-76 advantage into the fourth quarter. Wells had four points in the run.

Pistons 112, Celtics 105

In Boston, Cade Cunningham had 32 points and 10 rebounds to help the Detroit Pistons beat the Boston Celtics.

Caris LeVert and Tobias Harris each added 13 points for the Eastern Conference-leading Pistons, who won their fourth straight. Detroit also got even for a frustrating loss in Boston late last month.

Jaylen Brown had 34 points, eight rebounds and seven assists to lead the Celtics. Derrick White scored 31 points as Boston lost its second straight after a five-game winning streak.

When the teams met three weeks ago, Boston ended Detroit's franchise record-tying 13-game winning streak despite 42 points from Cunningham, who missed a tying free throw in the closing seconds.

Scottie matches Woods' streak

Scheffler wins PGA Tour player of the year for 4th straight year

WASHINGTON, Dec 16, (AP): Scottie Scheffler earned another comparison with Tiger Woods on Monday, joining him as the only players to win PGA Tour player of the year at least four times in a row.

Scheffler made an easy case to pick up another Jack Nicklaus Award. His tour-leading six victories were twice as many as anyone else and included two majors, the PGA Championship and the British Open, to leave him on the cusp of a career Grand Slam.

He became the first player since Woods in 2000 to lead the PGA Tour with the lowest scoring average in each of the four rounds and had 15 consecutive tournaments in the top 10 to end his remarkable season.

"I think overall the thing that I'm most proud of when I look at the last couple years is just consistency," Scheffler said on a conference call. "It's not very easy to just show up and finish in the top 10 each week. I think that's something that's very difficult to do and something I'm very proud of, bringing the intensity that I need to in these tournaments and being prepared as I need to in order to perform well week in and week out."

Scheffler was on the ballot with Rory McIlroy, Tommy Fleetwood and Ben Griffin. The award is a vote of the players, though the PGA Tour did not release what percentage of the votes Scheffler received or how many players voted.

Woods is an 11-time winner of the award and won five straight times from 1999 through 2003.

McIlroy had a big year in his own right, nothing grander than his playoff victory in the Masters for the final leg of the career Grand Slam and a green jacket he had been pursuing for 15 years. He also added titles at Pebble Beach and The Players Championship.

Scheffler, however, has been putting on a master class of consistency since breaking through with his first PGA Tour title in 2022. Along with 19 victories in his last 80 events on the PGA Tour - that doesn't include his Olympic gold medal last year



Scottie Scheffler, of the United States, reacts to making a birdie on the fourth hole during the third round of the Hero World Challenge PGA Tour at the Albany Golf Club, in New Providence, Bahamas, Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025. (AP)

in Paris - Scheffler has finished among the top three in just over 46% of his PGA Tour starts.

This season alone, Scheffler led the PGA Tour in 17 statistical categories, ranging from his accuracy from tee-to-green, how often he followed a bogey with a birdie or better (36%) and official earnings, which this year topped \$27 million.

And he effectively gave McIlroy and everyone else a head start. Scheffler sliced his right hand during Christmas last year while using a wine glass to cut ravioli. He missed nearly two months and didn't really find his groove until a week before the Masters when he was runner-up in Houston.

That began an astonishing stretch in which Scheffler didn't finish worse than a tie for eighth the rest of the year. He played his final six PGA Tour events without a round over par, and he had a stretch of 21 consecutive rounds in the 60s.

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Dallas Mavericks forward Cooper Flagg (32) drives to the basket guarded by Utah Jazz forward Kyle Anderson (2) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Salt Lake City. Jazz won 140-133 in overtime. (AP) — See Page 15

Sports

Kuwait to bid for 2035 Asian Cup: Sheikh Al-Yousuf

'Re-election depends on key factors'

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 16: Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousuf Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwait Football Association, announced that Kuwait plans to apply to host the 2035 Asian Cup.

In a press statement, Al-Yousuf clarified that Board member Osama Hussein has not resigned. He explained that "Osama faced pressure from his club to step down following the transfer of an Al-Arabi player to another team. Although he initially intended to resign, he later withdrew his decision."

Sheikh Al-Yousuf emphasized that "the sports system is not suited for emotional decisions" and highlighted that the federation treats all clubs equally, adding that it "will not favor any club over the others."

He noted that anyone leading the federation under current circumstances "cannot achieve results unless the rules are reformed."

Regarding his own future, Sheikh Al-Yousuf said, "My candidacy for a new term depends on several factors. If these are not met, I will not run."

He also addressed challenges faced by national team players, saying, "Players in other countries are professionals, unlike our team. Our players face multiple difficulties due to their commitments to the national team during camps and tournaments."

Sheikh Al-Yousuf detailed some specific issues: one player had his home repossessed, three others were dismissed from their jobs at the Ministry of Education, and two had their salaries suspended and were considered absent from work.

He suggested that a report could be submitted to the government outlining the challenges in Kuwaiti sports and stressed the need to implement profes-

sional standards if development is desired. He added that the state should seek guidance from experts with experience in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Sheikh Al-Yousuf praised the national team's fans for their loyalty during the Arab Cup preparations, noting that their frustration after Kuwait's early exit reflected their emotional nature. He compared this to Bahrain and Qatar, who exited their tournaments early without facing heavy criticism from fans.

He confirmed that Portuguese coach Helio Sousa will remain in charge, citing fan support and the federation's satisfaction with his performance.

Reflecting on Kuwait's Arab Cup performance, Sheikh Al-Yousuf said, "I told the coach that changing the squad, the team would likely lose to Jordan by three or four goals." He added that Sousa apologized after the match, saying, "The The players let me down."



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef, President of the Kuwait Football Association

Jordan and Morocco to battle for Arab Cup glory



Jordan players celebrate after victory over Saudi Arabia.

DOHA, Dec 16: Jordan secured a spot in the Arab Cup 2025 final after a 1-0 semifinal victory over Saudi Arabia. Nizar Al-Rashdan scored the decisive goal in the 66th minute, brilliantly heading a cross past Saudi goalkeeper Nawaf Al-Aqidi. The final between Jordan and Morocco will take place tomorrow at Lusail Stadium, while Saudi Arabia will face the UAE in the third-place match.

Morocco reached the Arab Cup final for the first time after defeating the UAE 3-0 in the other semifinal at Doha's Khalifa International Stadium. Karim El Berkaoui opened the scoring in the 28th minute with a precise header, substitute Achraf El Mahdioui doubled the lead in the 83rd minute, and Abderrazak Hamdallah sealed the 3-0 win with a goal in stoppage time.

Rodgers takes charge of Saudi team Al-Qadsiah after departure from Celtic

KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia, Dec 16, (AP): Brendan Rodgers has returned to soccer as the coach of Saudi Arabian club Al-Qadsiah, six weeks after resigning from Scottish champion Celtic.

Al-Qadsiah, whose squad includes Italian striker Mateo Retegui and former Real Madrid defender Fernandez Nacho, is in fifth place in the Saudi Pro League in its first season after promotion.

Rodgers departed Celtic on Oct. 27 under a cloud, his second spell in charge damaged by scathing criticism from major shareholder Dermot Desmond that Rodgers' conduct had been "divisive, misleading, and self-serving" and that he "contributed to a toxic atmosphere around the club."

He has opted to continue his managerial career outside Britain for the first time, having previously coached Liverpool, Leicester and Swansea.

In its statement announcing the hiring of Rodgers on Tuesday, Al-Qadsiah described him as a "world-renowned coach" and said his arrival "reflects the club's ambitious vision and its rapidly growing sporting project."

Aramco, the state-owned Saudi oil giant, bought Al-Qadsiah in 2023 in a move that has helped to transform the



In this file photo, then-Celtic head coach Brendan Rodgers greets supporters after a Europa League soccer match between Red Star and Celtic at Rajko Mitic Stadium in Belgrade, Serbia. (AP)

club's status.

"This is a landmark moment for the club," Al-Qadsiah chief executive James Bisgrove said. "The caliber of his experience and track record of winning reflects our ambition and long-term vision to establish Al-Qadsiah as one of Asia's leading clubs."

Rodgers is coming off winning back-to-back Scottish league titles with Celtic, where he won 11 major trophies across his two spells. He also won the FA Cup with Leicester.

Al-Qadsiah's last two coaches were former Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler and former Spain midfielder Michel.

Thiago Silva set to leave Fluminense

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec. 16, (Xinhua): Former Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain defender Thiago Silva is set to leave Fluminense as he seeks to continue his career in Europe, according to Brazilian media reports.

The 41-year-old former Brazil captain is contracted to Fluminense until June 2026 but has told the Rio de Janeiro club he plans to return to London to be close to his family, newspaper O Globo reported.

It said that Fluminense had attempted to change the center-back's mind but added the decision was "irreversible".

Silva returned to his boyhood club in July last year after ending his four-year spell with Chelsea. He made 46 appearances across all competitions for Fluminense in 2025 and helped it reach the semifinals of the expanded FIFA Club World Cup.

Ramsey leaves Pumas: Welsh midfielder Aaron Ramsey has parted ways with Pumas after an injury-riddled spell with the Mexican club.

The 34-year-old played six matches and scored one goal after joining the Mexico City side on a free transfer in July.

"I would like to thank the Mexican people for their kindness and generosity, for making me and my family feel so welcome in Mexico City," the former Arsenal and Juventus player said on social media.

"I also want to give a huge thank you to the coach, the coaching staff and, especially, the medical staff for helping me through a difficult period with injuries." In addition to physical problems, Ramsey's time in Mexico was marked by the disappearance of his dog in October, which he said had "haunted" his family.

Reguilon joins Inter Miami: Inter Miami has signed former Real Madrid defender Sergio Reguilon on a free transfer, the MLS club said on Monday.

Reguilon, who turns 29 on Tuesday, agreed to a two-year deal with the option of a 12-month extension.

The Spain international left-back had been without a club since parting ways with Tottenham Hotspur in June. He made 73 appearances across all competitions for the London club, scoring two goals.

A fun game for everyone: Amorim

Man United held in goal-fest against resilient Bournemouth

MANCHESTER, England, Dec 16, (AP): Manchester United drew with Bournemouth 4-4 in one of the best games in the Premier League.

United coach Ruben Amorim said before the match that "playing against Bournemouth is never fun" and they were prophetic words on a night his side had most of the opportunities but still came away with only a point.

The Cherries had beaten United 3-0 in their last two visits to Old Trafford, but there seemed little chance of that happening again as the home side took control from the off and was a goal up after 13 minutes.

Diogo Dalot's lofted cross fell to Amad Diallo to nod in almost on the goal line.

United dominated a pulsating first half, but Antoine Semenyo brought Bournemouth level after 40 minutes. Poor defending saw United lose the ball on the left flank, and Semenyo strode forward and sent an angled shot under Senne Lammens.

Casemiro restored United's lead on the stroke of halftime when he headed home from a Bruno Fernandes corner. Bournemouth goalkeeper Djordje Petrovic flapped at the Brazilian's effort.

"It was a fun game for everyone at home," Amorim said. "If you look at the game, you can think we lost the two points in the second half. I think we lost the two points in the first half. I think we should have more goals; we should have a different result at halftime."

"It was then similar to Nottingham (Forest, 2-2 in November), where we suffered two goals really fast, but we managed to get back to take the advantage, and then we needed to close the game out."

After the break, the visitors scored twice in six minutes to take the lead for the first time.

Evanilson finished superbly after only 37 seconds thanks to a great through ball from Marcus Tavernier, and six minutes later, Tavernier curled a left-foot shot around the United wall to put Bournemouth 3-2 ahead and silence the home crowd.

United rallied, and a superb free kick from Fernandes, so often a saviour, sailed into the top corner with 13 minutes left and two minutes later Matheus Cunha got the break of the



Bournemouth's Justin Kluivert, left, and Manchester United's Luke Shaw fight for the ball during a Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Bournemouth in Manchester, England. (AP)

ball inside the box and finished clinically to put the home side back in front at 4-3.

And yet Bournemouth had its own reserves of resilience to come back a third time in the match.

With six minutes remaining, Eli Junior Kroupi finished brilliantly with one-touch control and a curling side-footer past Lammens.

"It is one the fans will definitely enjoy," Tavernier said, "but for us on the

pitch it was a bit frustrating. We started the first half slowly, but stayed in the game. In the second half, we came out and did what we had to do.

"The start of the second half was amazing for us on the pitch. We put

ourselves in an amazing position in the game. Unfortunately, we conceded such sloppy goals." The result lifted Manchester United into sixth place. Bournemouth, winless in its last seven league games, was in 13th place.