



Amir, Crown Prince receive KDIPA's 10th annual report

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), KDIPA Deputy Chairman Wafa Ahmed Al-Qatami and KDIPA board members, who presented the authority's 10th annual report for 2024-2025 to His Highness the Amir.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), KDIPA Deputy Chairman Wafa Ahmed Al-Qatami and KDIPA board members.

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HH the Amir receives KDIPA Director General, KDIPA Deputy Chairman and KDIPA board members.



HH the Crown Prince receives KDIPA Director General, KDIPA Deputy Chairman and KDIPA board members.



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

A smart state invests in its nation

THE persistent need to boost GDP and diversify income sources is a pressing concern.

In tackling this, the government should not hesitate to learn from other nations, especially those with similar economic, cultural, and social characteristics to Kuwait.

Valuable lessons can also be drawn from countries that, despite starting with comparable economies in the past, managed to surpass even strong long-established economic powers. It was a success achieved through deliberate strategy rather than a miracle.

Therefore, acknowledging the many ways to increase national output is far from revolutionary. What is crucial is that decision-makers understand that relying on short-term, improvised solutions will inevitably produce long-term negative consequences, affecting both the country and future generations.

Any immediate benefits from such measures are merely temporary palliatives for a chronic, underlying illness.

In times of crisis, countries have responded in different ways. Some manage to transform challenges into opportunities for growth, while others cling to conventional approaches that often lead to significant deficits.

A successful approach avoids unnecessarily restricting citizens' lives or imposing excessive burdens on businesses such as factories, farms, restaurants, and entertainment venues, unlike what is commonly seen today.

Instead, it implemented smart incentive-driven regulations that attract investment and stimulate activity in a variety of sectors.

Kuwait, in particular, possesses vast untapped resources and numerous underutilized opportunities.

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ENTRY, VISIT VISA FEES NOW KD 10 MONTHLY

Kuwait activates new residency regulations

Domestic workers age limit 21-60; investors get 15 years



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

— See Page 5

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Ministerial Decision No. 2249/2025, regarding the executive regulations of the Decree-Law on the Residence of Foreigners, came into effect on Tuesday, December 23, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a post on its X account, the Ministry of Interior clarified that entry and residence visas for foreign investors subject to Law No. 116/2013 are issued upon request from the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA).

Ordinary residency permits may be granted to foreign investors for a period not exceeding 15 years, in line with regulations set by the Council of Ministers.

Such permits may be issued to foreign investors who meet the requirements, based on an official letter from KDIPA.

The executive regulations of the law specify a four-month grace period for registering the births of foreign nationals.

After this period, fines will apply, starting at KD 2 per day for the first month and KD 4 per day thereafter.

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Arrest warrants surge for debt defaulters in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: There was a noticeable rise in legal measures taken against individuals who defaulted on their debts in the months of August, September, and October 2025, as per recent statistics issued by the Ministry of Justice's General Department for Sentences Enforcement.

While these figures reflect a stricter approach toward enforcing judicial rulings, they have also sparked an important legal debate regarding the rights of insolvent debtors and the safeguards provided under Kuwaiti law for those who can genuinely prove their inability to meet financial obligations.

The statistics showed that a total of 5,669 requests for arrest warrants were registered during August, September, and October of this year.

It also revealed that 2,780 arrest warrants were issued during the same period, along with 55 warrants that were renewed, reflecting the continued pursuit of individuals who fail to comply with court rulings.

With regard to travel restrictions, the statistics indicated that several deterrent measures were implemented.

During this period, 12 individuals

were arrested and 88 debtors were placed in detention by the competent authorities. Meanwhile, arrest warrants against 200 debtors were lifted after they settled their financial obligations or reached payment agreements.



Al-Rifai



Al-Haddad

rest or detention orders before the Appeals Chamber of the Court of First Instance.

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Kuwait issues sweeping medical regulations

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has introduced a comprehensive regulatory framework for imported medical products, human medicines, and cosmetics through four important ministerial decisions.

This framework aims to enhance safety and quality standards

in the healthcare market, in line with international best practices.

The four important ministerial decisions are:
- Regulation of Imported Controlled Products - Grants the Drug and Medical Products Registration and Control Department exclusive authority over the release and circulation of controlled medical products.

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'Kuwaiti-British ties strong' Ambassador Rasheed describes Kuwait posting as close to heart

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kuwait, Qudsi Rasheed, has described his posting in Kuwait as more than just a diplomatic assignment, calling it a place close to his heart. From his first days in the country, he experienced a warm welcome and genuine human connection, making his transition smoother and faster than in any other nation where he has previously served.

Speaking in a television interview on the "Good Morning Kuwait" program on Channel 2, the ambassador shared his personal experiences while also emphasizing the long-standing historical ties between Kuwait and the United Kingdom.

He noted that 2024 has been designated the Year of Kuwaiti-British Partnership, a celebration of over a century of cooperation in political, economic,

defense, cultural, and educational fields. Ambassador Rasheed also highlighted significant Kuwaiti investments in Britain and the presence of thousands of Kuwaiti students pursuing higher education in British universities.



Rasheed

Meshal Al-Ahmad, describing it as a significant milestone both personally and professionally, especially as it coincided with the second anniversary of His Highness's accession to power.

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Sharp decline in reckless driving

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The recent widespread rainfall across the country has coincided with a noticeable decline in reckless driving, particularly the loud and dangerous "drifting" and stunts that citizens and residents were previously accustomed to hearing, especially at night and during rainy weather.

This positive shift, marked by the disappearance of illegal vehicle stunts, reckless driving, and related gatherings, is directly attributed to the new traffic law that came into effect in April.

The law has significantly improved driver compliance, contributing to a calmer and more disciplined traffic environment, especially during wet conditions.

Official statistics from the General Traffic Department confirm the effectiveness of the law.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a coordination meeting Tuesday, in preparation for the 12th session of the Kuwaiti-Bahraini Joint Higher Committee, chaired by Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Najib Al-Bader.

Al-Bader told KUNA the meeting reflects Kuwait's integrated institutional approach to advance preparatory coordination for joint committees, ensuring alignment among relevant authorities and achieving outcomes that embody the depth and distinction of bilateral relations with Bahrain and advancing frameworks of bilateral cooperation and partnership across political, economic, investment, cultural fields, serving shared interests and benefiting both peoples directly. (KUNA)



'Incredible India' campaign launched 12 to mark first anniversary of India-Kuwait strategic partnership

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:14	Asr	14:37
Sunrise ..	06:39	Maghrib ..	16:55
Zohr	11:47	Isha	18:17

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Mild and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-30 km/h with a chance for fog forming at night.

Weather
By Night: Cold with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 06-30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for fog forming over northern areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	17	12
Kuwait Airport	21	10
Abdaly	20	08
Bubyan	20	14
Jahra	21	14
Failaka Island	17	13

Debate erupts over ‘personal law’ shift

Forum focuses on rights of family members

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Center at Kuwait University, in collaboration with the Women’s Institute for Development and Peace, organized a dialogue forum titled “Social Peace and Family Stability: The Draft Personal Status Law,” reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The forum focused on the draft Personal Status Law and its implications for the family unit, including the rights of family members, the best interests of the child, and the impact of these factors on social peace.

Head of the Women’s Institute for Development and Peace Kawthar Al-Jouaan explained that the Personal Status Law has long been a topic of debate. The current discussion is taking place within a national framework aimed at strengthening the role of the family while achieving a balance between the law and reality.

In this regard, Professor of Public Law at Kuwait University’s Faculty of Law Dr. Mohammad Al-Faili, emphasized that the document circulating regarding amendments to the Personal Status Law is explicitly described as a “draft law,” reflecting the careful approach of its drafters before it becomes fully ratified.

He noted that this cautious approach is positive, as it allows for broad public discussion prior to enactment.

Dr. Al-Faili explained that the topic naturally invites debate due to its direct connection to family life and the associated social and legal implications. Discussions on such matters are expected to have multiple perspectives, grounded in the objective sources of the law.

He asked whether the issue at hand concerns human behavior that requires legal regulation or a jurisprudential interpretation that is being considered for adoption or rejection.



Kawthar Al-Jouaan



Mohammad Al-Faili



Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharaika

Dr. Al-Faili said the issue extends to the foundations upon which the jurisprudential interpretations is based.

He questioned whether decisions should be guided by what is more or less preferable in jurisprudence or by the criterion of social interest, particularly since the matter involves a binding law rather than a mere jurisprudential opinion.

Dr. Al-Faili stressed the importance of broadening the discussion beyond the jurisprudential dimension to include the social dimension, especially regarding the most significant articles of the draft. He said the debate should start from clear considerations of public interest to address a fundamental question - Why does the existing law need to be amended?

Dr. Al-Faili stated that this question requires deeper research by the drafters of the bill.

He explained that an initial reading of the texts reveals a tension between two perspectives. The first views marriage primarily as a legitimate relationship between a man and a woman, thus reinforcing the individuality of the spouses. The second perspective frames marriage within a social context, which can sometimes disadvantage one party, through concepts such as the husband’s guardianship and spousal compatibility. This discrepancy calls for an objective discussion on whether the conditions of women in contemporary Kuwaiti society align with those underlying previous legal rules and interpretations, or whether social changes necessitate a re-evaluation.

Dr. Al-Faili addressed the issue of inheritance, noting it as one of the most significant points of contention in the draft.

He highlighted that the drafter has diverged from a principle and interpretation that has been established since 1971 and incorporated into the Personal Status Law, and he questioned the rationale behind this change.

Dr. Al-Faili stressed that claiming to oppose these trends to determine the “most correct” legal opinion is uncertain, given the diversity of legal opinions and differences among schools of thought. This, he said, calls for a thorough scholarly discussion before finalizing the legislative position.

Meanwhile, Director of the Center for Promoting Moderation Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharaika noted that, to date, he is unaware of the names of the committee members responsible for drafting the amendments.

He indicated that no one involved has appeared in the media to explain the details of the draft or clarify its philosophy and objectives to the public.

Dr. Al-Shuraika emphasized his strong support for the proposed amendments to the Personal Status Law, noting that the law’s core structure remains intact and has not undergone radical changes.

He highlighted that approving online marriage contracts is among the amendments he has long advocated for, stating that this change could have a significant positive impact on reducing divorce issues and potentially decrease approximately 90 percent of divorce cases.

70,000 apply in mad rush for health insurance

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Health Insurance Department received around 70,000 applications in the last two days, as expatriates rushed to complete transactions before the scheduled fee increase, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the Ministry of Interior raised the renewal fee from KD 10 to KD 20, effective Tuesday, in line with the new law.

The Residency Affairs Departments in all six governorates experienced heavy overcrowding, particularly for in-person services such as residency renewals, family reunification applications, and submission of “non-marriage certificates.” Priority was given to cases nearing expiration and to applicants who had previously submitted electronic applications but were required to finalize procedures in person.

Kuwaiti farmers successful in growing fruit variety under controlled environs

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: “Nearly every farm in Al-Wafra and Al-Abdali, particularly in recent years, has climate-controlled fruit greenhouses that helps in producing a wide variety of fruits, including citrus, figs, grapes, guavas, pomegranates, bananas, mangoes, peaches, and apples”, reports Al-Seyassah daily quoting farmer Faleh Al-Shehri as saying.

He revealed that many Kuwaiti

farmers have successfully produced commercial quantities of fruit for sale in the local fruit and vegetable markets over the past few seasons.

Al-Shehri affirmed the need to encourage farmers to expand the cultivation of citrus, figs, papayas, and bananas to ensure sufficient commercial supply for local markets, suggesting that electricity and fresh water be of-

fered at nominal prices to owners of greenhouses and climate-controlled agricultural complexes.

He indicated that generous government support for greenhouse and agricultural complex owners would allow them to achieve agricultural success, as has been the case with strawberry cultivation in many farms in northern and southern Kuwait.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah visits local produce festival.

Festival aims to support Kuwaiti farmers, promote local produce

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Under the patronage and in the presence of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, the fourth Kuwait Farmers Festival was held, organized by the Ishbiliya Cooperative Society.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the festival took place in the central market parking lot and was aimed to support Kuwaiti farmers and promote local produce.

Governor Sheikh Athbi was welcomed by Chairman of the Ishbiliya Cooperative Society Dr. Awjan Al-Arada, Vice Chairman Yousef Al-Shalhi, several board members,

as well as Chairman of the Kuwait Farmers Union Ahmed Al-Adwani, and the union’s Secretary Ahmed Al-Shabak.

During his tour of the festival, the governor viewed the national agricultural products on display, and praised the organizers for their efforts in supporting farmers and boosting local production.

He emphasized the importance of continuing such events, which contribute to empowering Kuwaiti farmers and strengthening community partnerships.

Al-Arada and Al-Adwani expressed their gratitude to the governor for his patronage, support, and attendance.



PM Diwan photo
His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Sabah receives KDIPA's 10th annual report for 2024-2025.

PM receives KDIPA's annual report for '24-'25

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Tuesday Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority

(KDIPA), KDIPA Deputy Chairman Wafa Ahmad Al-Qatami and KDIPA board members, who presented the authority’s 10th annual report for 2024-2025 to His Highness the Prime Minister.

Food, health supplies priority: Al-Nouri

Kuwait charity, UNICEF deal to support kids

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society signed on Monday a co-operation deal with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to support children in the Gaza Strip, with a contribution of USD 1 million, amid worsening humanitarian conditions.

Chairman of the Society’s Board of Directors Jamal Al-Nouri told KUNA that the deal comes in light of the sharp deterioration of living conditions in Gaza, particularly for children who face severe shortages of food and medicine, in addition to growing health challenges.

He noted that children with disabilities are among the most affected, making urgent humanitarian intervention essential.

Al-Nouri said the Society is keen to implement its programs in co-

operation with UN organizations as strategic partners capable of delivering assistance inside Gaza efficiently, despite significant access restrictions.

He explained that cooperation with UNICEF helps ensure that food and health supplies reach the most vulnerable groups.

Under the agreement, specialized

food assistance will be provided to about 25,000 children, while health and medical services will support nearly 200,000 children through primary healthcare centers, contributing to strengthening the capacity

of the health sector under current conditions.

He affirmed the Society’s readiness to cooperate with all entities able to deliver aid to those affected in Gaza, within joint frameworks regulated by Kuwait’s Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Al-Nouri highlighted the Society’s ongoing food, health and relief programs in Gaza since the start of the crisis, praising the role of donors in Kuwait in sustaining these humanitarian efforts.

He commended the support extended by the Ministries of Social Affairs and Foreign Affairs to charitable societies, describing it as a key pillar in enhancing Kuwait’s humanitarian role and reflecting the country’s leading position in relief and charitable work.



Al-Nouri

‘Public interest will be looked after’

SAB reviews 24 airport projects worth KD 8m

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: State Audit Bureau is currently reviewing 24 tenders and projects planned for Kuwait International Airport, with a total estimated value of approximately KD 8 million.

According to informed sources, the review is part of the approved oversight procedures before the projects receive final approval for implementation.

The bureau is still in the review phase, following submissions from the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA). It is examining both the financial and technical aspects of the tenders and projects before issuing its

final opinion in line with applicable laws and regulations.

The tenders under review include providing baggage handling services at Kuwait International Airport Terminal 1 (T1) and operating restaurants and commercial spaces within the airport.

In addition, there is a tender for the design, manufacture, supply, installation, and operation of specialized technological systems, including an integrated ground-based sensor station, an overhead airborne system, and a hydrogen generator system.

These are part of efforts to introduce modern and advanced technologies into airport operations.

The list of tenders also includes a

number of commercial and service activities in T1 terminal, including travel agencies, telecommunications services, cafes, optical stores, clothing, and electronics, car rentals, pastry shops, and other services aimed at enhancing the experience for travelers and airport users.

The sources confirmed that the State Audit Bureau reviews all tenders and projects according to approved oversight frameworks, focusing on compliance with applicable laws and their impact on the development of Kuwait International Airport’s facilities and the improvement of service quality. Any observations will follow established procedures to ensure proper implementation and the fulfillment of the public interest.

Other Voices

A tribute and a meeting with Ricardo in Cairo

By Ahmad alsarraf

I HAVE written twice before about the Lebanese media figure Ricardo Karam. The last time was about his meeting with a Lebanese woman who lost her husband and two sons, while she and her daughter were seriously injured during the Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon.

The meeting took place at her request, and Ricardo shared a post on his X account about his moving encounter with her, which inspired me to make a donation to her, a donation that was also contributed by some kind readers.

I later met Ricardo in Beirut over dinner, and he invited me to attend the annual “Takreem” ceremony, which is being held this year in Cairo. It was the first time I had heard about the organization, although its organizers had previously held their last annual event in Kuwait.

Ricardo Karam is a prominent Lebanese media figure, producer, and writer, known for his talk shows featuring interviews with international personalities.

Fifteen years ago, he founded the “Takreem” organization, or endowment, which has become one of his most significant achievements, aiming to celebrate and highlight Arab excellence.

He invited a group of distinguished men and women from various fields including art, social work, culture, and finance, to collaborate with

him in establishing and supporting Takreem. The organization presents a series of prestigious awards to outstanding individuals in areas such as leadership, education, business, humanitarian work, and cultural and scientific innovation. The awards aim to empower youth and women through a ceremony that matches the grandeur, prestige, and rigorous standards of international award events like the Palme d’Or, the Emmys, and the Oscars.

Takreem is the centerpiece of a larger and highly successful project. Ricardo’s ambitions are both high and legitimate, and the team supporting him, from the Board of Directors to the Board of Trustees, brings significant expertise and capability.

Takreem aims to showcase pioneers and innovators, presenting them as inspiring role models, far removed from the negative stereotypes often associated with the region in global media.

At the recent awards ceremony held at the historic Abdeen Palace, I witnessed remarkable examples of these individuals, whom we should all take pride in. Their selection was no easy task, and there is no doubt that the Board of Trustees conducted a rigorous process to shortlist the deserving recipients of the prestigious Takreem Endowment Award.

The awards have previously been held in various capitals and cities, including Beirut, Doha, Manama, Cairo, Paris, Marrakech, Dubai, and Kuwait City, with subsequent editions attended by a distinguished group of figures.

Some may be tempted to compare the Takreem Awards to the Nobel Prizes or the King Faisal Foundation Prizes. While there

are differences in scale, funding, and selection mechanisms, the Takreem Endowment will continue to gain prominence and media exposure over time. What is truly needed is a permanent platform to celebrate Arab achievement, even if it follows a different model from other international awards.

The success of Takreem Middle East inspired Ricardo to establish complementary initiatives, such as Takreem America, aimed at connecting Arab Americans with their roots.

As a non-profit organization, Takreem rejects mediocrity and strives for the highest level of professionalism. It emphasizes giving its awards significant moral and media weight, far beyond the financial incentives offered by other entities.

Its most recent ceremony in Egypt was truly magnificent and meticulously organized.

The organizers succeeded in creating an event attended by hundreds from around the world, a remarkable achievement in a city like Cairo, where everyone left with only positive experiences.

Choosing Cairo and its venues for Takreem’s events proved to be an excellent decision. Everything ran more smoothly than I had anticipated. My wife and I spent a wonderful few days there, filled with cultural discussions and the formation of new friendships. It was a clear message of what can be achieved when intentions are sincere. There are many figures with strong will and sincere hearts capable of building a better future.

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Bold decision can only end ‘housing problem’

“THE suffocating crisis Kuwait is experiencing currently over expatriate workers’ housing is neither sudden nor accidental but it stems from years of hesitation, indecision, and the postponement of necessary solutions,” columnist **Bassam Fahad Thunayan Al-Ghanim** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The demolition of old housing areas, particularly in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, without providing planned alternatives, has turned a chronic problem into a full-blown crisis, creating traffic congestion, infrastructure strain, unhealthy overcrowding, and social tension.

“The solution is well-known and has been proposed for over 15 years, but it has not been implemented.

“More than 15 years ago, I proposed a comprehensive plan to build 20 mixed-use residential and commercial complexes for workers, distributed fairly across Kuwait’s six governorates. Each complex would be located near work sites, easing pressure on roads and reducing long daily commutes for thousands of workers.

“The concept is simple yet impactful. Each complex, built on an area of 50,000 square meters, would include one or two underground levels for parking, with organized entrances and exits for minibuses and buses to ensure safe and orderly movement and prevent traffic congestion. Above ground, the ground floor and mezzanine would house hundreds of shops, services, and entertainment facilities, including showrooms, grocery stores, cafes, restaurants, health clubs, and other essential services.

“These complexes offer a major advantage by creating employment opportunities for more than 5,000 citizens who own small and medium-sized enterprises, eliminating the need to search for distant or costly locations.

“At the heart of each complex is a residential zone comprising eight buildings, each 25 stories high and covering an area of 2,500 square meters.

“Each building would be equipped with eight elevators, with every floor containing 50 furnished hotel-style apartments, each measuring 50 square meters. The units would include a bedroom, a small living area, a kitchen, and a bathroom, and would be designed to accommodate only one or two occupants, preserving human dignity and preventing overcrowding.

“Each building would contain 1,250 apartments, offered at a nominal rent not exceeding KD 100 per month.

“Monthly income from each building would reach 125,000 dinars, amounting to one million dinars per month for the eight buildings, in addition to revenues from commercial outlets, which could exceed one million dinars per month.

“The security dimension of this proposal is equally important. These complexes are not merely workers’ housing, but fully integrated and secure communities with designated, regulated points of entry and exit.

“Such a model would enable security agencies to effectively monitor movement, control access, reduce disorder and unregulated gatherings, and limit potential security and social risks.

“Transitioning from random, unregulated housing to organized and monitored residential complexes represents a qualitative shift toward enhancing community security, protecting residents, and achieving stability, while preserving human dignity and safeguarding rights.

“What is needed today is a courageous decision, one that embraces integrated solutions, long-term planning, and the resolution of crises rather than simply relocating them.

“Your Highness the Prime Minister, Kuwait lacks neither resources nor ideas. What it needs is decisive leadership, which, by God’s grace, is now available.”



Al-Ghanim

own.

“Does the Muslim Brotherhood believe that the people of Kuwait will remain silent in the face of their pressure or manipulation, or that patriotic Kuwaitis will hesitate for a moment to defend their country? That is impossible.

“The people of Kuwait are greater than their agendas and more discerning than their campaigns. They will not allow any party to compromise the nation’s sovereignty or threaten its security and stability.

“In Kuwait, citizenship of thousands of individuals has been revoked for reasons deemed appropriate by the state, and at no point did we witness fierce campaigns or uproar from any group, tribe, or movement. So why is the Muslim Brotherhood so outraged now?

“Is it because the decision targeted one of their prominent figures, who never hid his support for, or theorizing about, the revolutions that devastated Arab countries and plunged them into chaos? This same individual actively promoted their destructive political ideology wherever he could and repeatedly attacked Saudi Arabia and the UAE without hesitation.

“This is in addition to the doctrinal deviations he presented in his lectures, seminars, and programs, errors that religious scholars have refuted, exposing their falsehood and misguidance.

“The anger of the “bankrupt Muslim Brotherhood” today is not about defending a principle, but about defending a symbol they rely on, whose discourse and ideas underpin their agenda.

“We ask God to protect our Amir and Crown Prince, guide them to what is best for Kuwait and its people, and grant our nation continued security, stability, and prosperity.”

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“The second anniversary of the accession of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (May God protect him) coincides with the fifth anniversary of the passing of former Minister of Defense His Highness Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (May God have mercy on him). Together, these two occasions recall a deeply significant chapter in Kuwait’s modern history,” Kuwaiti writer **Sheikha Hessa Al-Hamoud Al-Salem Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“The convergence of these anniversaries highlights a chapter in Kuwait’s history when firm political will was aligned with a bold reformist vision, and leadership was based on a deep sense of patriotism under the banner of “The state first and the rule of law above all.”

“From the very first moment of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah’s reign, the path was clear and unequivocal - governance guided by the wisdom of the state rather than the logic of favoritism, and reform based on the Constitution and the rule of law, not in slogans.

“His Highness the Amir presented a model that was calm in appearance yet firm in substance, focusing on restoring the prestige of institutions, strengthening trust between the state and society, and eliminating the sources of corruption that had burdened the country and its people.

“At the core of this approach was the fight against corruption, regarded as a national imperative that could not be delayed.



Sheikha Hessa

Ministry of Interior under the leadership of His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, the mandate to act firmly to cleanse the country of corrupt elements and confront networks manipulating the law, particularly in cases of citizenship forgery, which constituted a direct assault on national identity and social justice.

“At this time, we remember the late His Highness Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (May God have mercy on him) as one of the most prominent figures who broke the silence and dared to confront corruption at a time when addressing the issue was fraught with risk.

“Sheikh Nasser (May God have mercy on him) was not one to offer empty slogans; he was a man of principle. He summed up his reformist philosophy in his timeless statement, “There can be no development or justice in a state as long as corrupt individuals remain within its institutions. And what we see of achievements falls short of our aspirations.”

“These words cemented in the public mind the truth that genuine development rests on integrity, and that justice cannot coexist with corruption.

“A clear commitment to the interests of Kuwait is the common thread that unites His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (May God protect him) and the late Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, despite their different roles and the eras in which they served.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Embezzlers get court ‘reprieve’

Blogger jail bound in libel suit

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Court of Cassation upheld the Court of Appeals’ ruling to refrain from sentencing 20 employees of Jahra Hospital who were convicted of embezzling salaries by falsifying attendance records.

The ruling follows the full repayment of the misappropriated funds by the employees.

According to the case file, the defendants conspired with several security guards to clock in on their behalf in exchange for money, using silicone fingerprint scanners to record false attendance and departure times. This allowed them to receive salaries and allowances they were not entitled to.

Both the lower and appeals courts had convicted the employees but refrained from issuing sentences, taking into account the repayment of the embezzled amounts. The Court of Cassation upheld this ruling.

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Blogger jailed 3 years: The Court of Cassation sentenced an X account user to three-year imprisonment with hard labor in a State Security case filed against him over multiple offenses committed via social media. The charges included insulting His Highness the Amir, the Emirate institution, members of the judiciary, and the national flag, as well as misusing smartphones.

The court acquitted him of insulting the United Arab Emirates.

The offenses occurred between October 30, 2023 and December 17, 2023, within the jurisdiction of the State Security apparatus.

Investigations revealed that the defendant, without government authorization, committed a hostile act against a foreign state, the United Arab Emirates, by posting a message on his X account that was deemed offensive to His Highness the Amir and potentially harmful to Kuwait’s political relations.

The defendant was also found guilty of publicly insulting His Highness the Amir through words and writings, posting messages and videos on his X and Snapchat

accounts accessible to the public. He was convicted of publicly attacking the Emirate institution and insulting the national flag by sharing its image accompanied by hateful and contemptuous remarks.

The conviction also included personally criticizing the Amir via Snapchat, insulting members of the judiciary through offensive posts on X, and intentionally misusing a smartphone to commit the crimes attributed to him.

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Abuse of authority: The Misdemeanor Court acquitted a security officer from the Ministry of Interior’s Enforcement Investigations Department of charges of using excessive force against the mother of two men wanted for the execution of a court order.

The incident took place during a raid of their home in Jahra Governorate.

The prosecution had accused the officer of abusing his authority as a police officer by assaulting the woman and using excessive force, which caused injuries that were confirmed in a medical report.

According to the case file, while a team of police personnel from the Enforcement Investigations Department was heading to the residence of the two men to execute an outstanding arrest warrant, their father objected to the presence of the officers.

He began shouting and verbally abusing one of the officers in front of the accompanying force. The situation escalated, and he assaulted the officer, resulting in injuries. He was subsequently subdued and taken to the police station. Meanwhile, the mother of the two men reported being assaulted by the officer while he was performing his duties.

During the trial, Lawyer Mohammad Al-Sayegh, representing the security officer, asserted his client’s denial of the charges.

He explained that the officer had identified himself to the victim as a security officer from the Criminal Investigation Department, and that he was there to execute a court order. She had allowed the officers into the house to arrest the wanted individuals.

Lawyer Al-Sayegh argued that the victim’s statements were unsubstantiated and lacked conclusive evidence to prove the assault, and he requested his client’s acquittal.

The court accepted the request and acquitted the security officer of all charges.



KUNA photo

Seagulls frolicking on the rocks in hunt for prey.

Fines from KD 500-5,000

EPA scrambles to rescue seagulls from poachers

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): Personnel of the Environmental Public Authority (EPA), in collaboration with the Environmental Police, has tackled 17 cases of hunting and seizing seagulls, EPA said on Monday.

Sheikha Al-Ibrahim, EPA’s public relations and information director, said in a statement to KUNA that upon a notification from the Public Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries, the EPA and police teams headed to the suspicious place, detained the offenders and took other necessary measures. The caged birds were released and re-settled in their natural habitats.

EPA noted that Law 100 prohibits hunting, killing, catching, harming, caging any of the wildlife creatures. Poachers are punished with maximum one year behind iron bars, fine ranging between KD 500 and KD 5,000, or with one of these two penalties.

‘Rights, dignity vital’

Rehabilitation core of jail reforms, says Mol

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Acting Director General of the General Directorate of Correctional Institutions at the Ministry of Interior Brigadier General Osama Al-Majed disclosed that the vision of the ministry is founded on its firm belief that correctional institutions are not just places of punishment, but rather spaces for reform, development and rehabilitation.

Speaking at the opening of the Unified Gulf Week for Inmates, Al-Majed stressed that caring for and rehabilitating inmates are considered national and moral responsibilities that play a crucial role in maintaining security and social stability.

He confirmed that the State of Kuwait adopted a well-established humanitarian approach to safeguard human dignity and ensure the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law. He pointed out that this approach is evident in the comprehensive development of the correctional system, infrastructure, programs and human capital.

He added the ministry is keen on upgrading correctional facilities, improving staff efficiency, and activating psychological, social, educational and vocational rehabilitation programs, based on the conviction that justice is fully realized only when individuals are rehabilitated and enabled to reenter society as constructive members.

He revealed that the General Directorate of Correctional Institutions introduced an integrated package of educational initiatives, including literacy programs, formal schooling, distance university education, as well as vocational and technical training.

Three promoted to brigadier rank

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah promoted three police officers from the rank of “Colonel” to “Brigadier”, in accordance with Amiri Decree No. 235/2025 issued on December 14, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that the ceremony was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib and a number of senior security officers.

The officers who have been promoted are Brigadier Abdulaziz Al-Omairi, Brigadier Abdulrahman Al-Othman, and Brigadier Mohammed Al-Mazeed.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef affirmed that these promotions are in recognition of the officers’ sincere efforts throughout their careers, as well as their dedication and professional discipline, which have contributed to supporting security and stability.

He highlighted that promotion is a national duty and responsibility that requires continued hard work with utmost sincerity and dedication.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef urged security leaders to perform their duties with a spirit of teamwork, adherence to the law, and a focus on improving performance, in line with the directives of the political leadership, while enhancing public confidence in the security services.



Brig. Gen. Omar Al-Sirri

GTD gets Brig Gen Al-Sirri as new department head

By Munif Nayef
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23 : The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, has issued a decree appointing Brigadier General Omar Al-Sirri as Director General of the General Traffic Department.

According to a security source, Brig. Gen. Al-Sirri’s appointment follows the retirement of Brigadier General Saad Al-Qatwan, the former Director General of the General Traffic Department.

Brig. Gen. Al-Sirri previously served as Assistant Director General for Engineering and Research.

E-registration open for 2nd go at army service

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Administration and Human Resources Directorate of the General Staff of Kuwait Army announced the opening of registration for reinstatement to military service for Kuwaiti Army personnel only, effective December 22, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

Registration will be conducted electronically via the Ministry of Defense website, under the “Rejoin Service and Insurance” section.

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Al-Mutairi oversees Grand Media Award preparations

Minister affirms strong Bahrain relations

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi was briefed on the latest developments in the work of the Supreme Committee for the Kuwait Grand Media Award (Shiraa), reviewing the committee’s operational mechanisms and the latest updates related to the award.

The Ministry of Information said in a press statement on Monday that this came during a meeting between Minister Al-Mutairi and the chairman and members of the committee, reflecting the commitment to enhancing the quality of media work and establishing standards of excellence and professionalism.

The ministry stated that the meeting discussed preparations for announcing the award winners at the beginning of February, in addition to reviewing the evaluation and judging stages and the adopted criteria to ensure transparency and fairness, reflecting the prestigious status of the award as one of the leading initiatives supporting Kuwaiti media creativity.

The statement conveyed Minister Al-Mutairi’s praise for the efforts ex-



Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and Chairman of the Supreme Committee for the Kuwait Media Award (Shiraa) Saad Al-Ali during the meeting.

erted by the chairman and members of the Supreme Committee and the working teams, commending the professional role played by the members of the judging panels. He emphasized the importance of continuing to work as a unified team to achieve the award’s objectives and solidify its role in motivating media talent and strengthening the national media message.

Minister Al-Mutairi on Monday affirmed significance of reciprocal visits by officials of Bahrain and Kuwait for boosting media cooperation and partnerships in various spheres.

Minister Al-Mutairi was speaking to KUNA at end of his official three-day visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain in response to an invitation by the Bahraini Information Minister Dr. Ramzan Al-Noaimi. He lauded the expanded mutual

cooperation in all sectors, re-affirming that the Kuwaiti-Bahraini relations are exemplary, and thanked the leadership, government and people for the warm hospitality.

The Kuwaiti Information Minister confirmed that he had met during the visit with King Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalia, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman Al-Khalifa, adding that there was affirmation during the meetings of solidity of the bilateral relations and mutual keenness on boosting these ties at diverse levels.

He added that his talks with the Bahraini information minister dealt with means of consolidating joint action in the media spheres and developing programs. Moreover, he indicated that he had visited the country’s landmarks, lauding its cultural richness.

Record prizes await participants

CMA bolsters awareness drive for fourth Gulf Smart Investor Award

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) is continuing its extensive awareness campaign to promote the fourth edition of the Gulf Smart Investor Award. Launched in early November, the campaign will run until the end of February 2026, coinciding with the end of the competition’s participation period.

According to a press release issued by CMA, the campaign includes a variety of activities and events, including press releases, interviews, radio and television awareness messages, and posts on the CMA’s social media accounts.

In addition, university and educational workshops are being held to introduce the competition, which is open to citizens and residents of Kuwait as well as other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. These workshops were launched in early September 2025 and will continue until the end of February 2026.

Through the campaign, CMA aims to encourage greater participation from Kuwaiti citizens and residents in this year’s competition compared to the previous three editions.

As part of its ongoing campaign, CMA conducted nine awareness workshops at various educational institutions:

- One workshop at Maria Al-Qibtiya High School
- Two workshops at the Australian University
- One workshop at the American International University (AIU)
- One workshop at the American University in Kuwait (AUK)
- One workshop at the College of Technology and Aviation,
- One workshop at the College of Administrative Sciences at Kuwait University,



CMA photo
Participants attend an awareness workshop organized by the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) as part of the Gulf Smart Investor Award campaign.

- One workshop at the Gulf University for Science and Technology

- One workshop at the Abdullah Al-Salem University.

In addition, the CMA participated in the “Accounting Week” events at AUK, setting up an information booth at the exhibition to introduce visitors to CMA and the joint Gulf awareness program. The focus was on the fourth edition of the Gulf Smart Investor Competition, including its terms, participation mechanisms, and prizes, which exceed 1.5 million Saudi Riyals.

CMA also dedicated a section of its online awareness magazine to provide detailed information about the competition.

The awareness campaign coincides with a similar promotional effort launched by the member states of the joint Gulf investment awareness program, which will continue until the end of February 2026.

Participants in the competition are divided into three categories: individu-

als, universities, and schools. They are tasked with producing educational materials that promote financial literacy and enhance investment awareness.

This year marks the fourth edition of the Gulf Smart Investor Competition, which was first launched in 2022.

The competition has seen both qualitative and quantitative developments, including the introduction of a new “writing” category alongside existing tracks in video, photography, and drawing. The number and value of prizes have also increased significantly, rising from 9 prizes worth v300,000 Saudi Riyals in the first edition to 44 prizes totaling over 1.5 million Saudi Riyals in the current edition.

CMA encourages citizens and residents to participate for a chance to win one of these valuable prizes.

Details on the competition and participation can be found on the dedicated page of the Mulim program website at <https://mulimgcc.org> or via the QR code provided.

Teachers Society lauds new job description cards

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Kuwait Teachers Society praised Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei’s Decision No. 265/2025, which adopts detailed job description cards as part of the Ministry of Education’s new organizational structure, reports Al-Seyassah daily. President of Kuwait Teachers Society Hamad Al-Houli described the decision as a significant achievement and a response to the society’s long-standing demands.

He explained that it will allow teachers to focus on their core duties without the burden of excessive administrative tasks. The decision preserves teachers’ acquired rights, strengthens governance, and enhances performance efficiency within the ministry. It promotes institutional efficiency, elevates the educational system, clearly defines responsibilities for each employee, and minimizes overlap and duplication of duties.

13 suburban centers tender underway

New consultancy deal advances South Saad Al-Abdullah project

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

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: In a move reflecting the accelerated progress of one of the largest housing projects currently underway, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has awarded a consultancy contract for detailed planning and design, as well as the preparation of tender documents, for the construction, completion, and maintenance of public buildings at 13 suburb centers within the South Saad Al-Abdullah Residential City project.

According to official data, several consultancy firms submitted bids, with five companies successfully passing the technical evaluation after achieving the required success rate of 70 percent or higher, in line with the technical standards approved by the relevant authorities.

One of the qualified companies was selected to carry out the detailed planning and design for the centers, paving the way for the next stages involving the preparation of tender documents for contractors.

In this context, informed sources explained that completion rates in the South

Saad Al-Abdullah Residential City project are showing significant progress compared to the approved schedule. Work is proceeding according to established plans and in line with PAHW’s objectives for completing housing projects allocated to citizens. Specialized supervisory teams are continuously monitoring progress through regularly submitted reports to address any technical or implementation issues promptly, ensuring adherence to technical specifications and approved timelines. The 13 planned suburban centers represent a fundamental component of the city’s infrastructure, as they will house public facilities and integrated services that contribute to a comprehensive residential environment for residents and meet their daily needs.

The sources affirmed PAHW’s commitment to implementing these facilities according to the highest planning and engineering standards, stressing that PAHW is moving forward with the completion of all project phases, in parallel with the implementation of infrastructure works, which will ensure the city is ready for occupancy within the specified timeframe.



KUNA photo
The Director General of KUNA, Mohamed Al-Mannaei, receives the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Red Crescent Society, Khiled Al-Maqamis, in the presence of the Editor-in-Chief, Mohamed Al-Bahar, and the Director of the Office of the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Lamia Al-Farsi.

KUNA and KRCS strengthen media cooperation on humanitarian effort

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): Acting Director General of KUNA Mohammad Al-Mannaei met on Monday with Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Khalid Al-Maqamis to discuss ways to enhance joint cooperation, particularly in highlighting Kuwait’s humanitarian efforts.

During the meeting, Al-Mannaei stressed KUNA’s commitment to supporting humanitarian and charitable initiatives, especially the work of the KRCS, through responsible and comprehensive

media coverage, praising the society’s leading role at both regional and international levels.

For his part, Al-Maqamis underscored the vital role of media as a key partner in showcasing relief efforts, noting the importance of developing media cooperation mechanisms to serve shared humanitarian goals.

The meeting was attended by Acting Editor-in-Chief Mohammad Al-Bahar and Director of the Director-General’s Office Lamia Al-Farsi.

PADA adds 5 new services to Sahel




By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) announced the addition of five new services to the Sahel application. These services include applying for a traffic license plate, printing disability and caregiver certificates, and submitting requests for reduced working hours for people with disabilities and their caregivers.

Applications will be sent directly to employers via the government messaging system, with a copy available for printing.

PADA stated that the initiative is based on the directives of Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, as part of ongoing efforts to streamline procedures and enhance digital transformation.

It emphasized that the move reflects its commitment to improving services for people with disabilities and their caregivers, facilitating transactions for saving time and effort, and supporting the state’s push for expanded digital government services.



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First row, from right: Britain’s Kate, Princess of Wales, Prince Louis, Prince George, and Britain’s Prince William watch the Platinum Performing Arts dancers during the Together At Christmas carol service at Westminster Abbey in London, Friday Dec. 5, 2025. (AP)



Left: Britain’s Prince William and Prince George attend the Together At Christmas carol service at Westminster Abbey in London, Friday , Dec 5, 2025. Right: Britain’s Kate, Princess of Wales, Prince Louis and Princess Charlotte attend the Together At Christmas carol service at Westminster Abbey in London, Friday, Dec. 5, 2025. (AP)



Trump announces plans for new Navy ‘battleship’ as part of a ‘Golden Fleet’

WASHINGTON, Dec 23, (AP): US President Donald Trump has announced a bold plan for the Navy to build a new, large warship that he is calling a “battleship” as part of a larger vision to create a “Golden Fleet.”

“They’ll be the fastest, the biggest, and by far 100 times more powerful than any battleship ever built,” Trump claimed during the announcement at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

According to Trump, the ship, the first of which will be named the USS Defiant, will be longer and larger than the World War II-era Iowa-class battleships and will be armed with hypersonic missiles, nuclear cruise missiles, rail guns, and high-powered lasers - all technologies that are in various stages of development by the Navy.

The announcement comes just a month after the Navy scrapped its plans to build a new, small warship, citing growing delays and cost overruns, deciding instead to go with a modified version of a Coast Guard cutter that was being produced until recently. The sea service has also failed to build its other newly designed ships, like the new Ford-class aircraft carrier and Columbia-class submarines, on time and on budget.

Meanwhile, the Navy has struggled to field some of the technologies Trump says will be aboard the new ship.

The Navy spent hundreds of millions of dollars and more than 15 years trying to field a railgun aboard a ship before finally abandoning the effort in 2021.

Laser technology has seen more success in making its way onto Navy ships in recent years, but its employment is still limited. One system that is designed to blind or disable drone sensors is now aboard eight destroyers



US President Donald Trump speaks at his Mar-a-Lago club, Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, in Palm Beach, Fla. (AP)

after spending eight years in development.

Developing nuclear cruise missile capabilities or deploying them on ships may also violate non-proliferation treaties that the U.S. has signed with Russia.

A U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing plans, told The Associated Press that design efforts are now underway for the new ship and construction is planned to begin in the early 2030s.

Both Trump and Navy Secretary John Phelan spoke about the new Trump-class warship as a spiritual successor to the battleships of the 20th century, but historically that term has referred to a very specific type of ship - a large, heavily armored vessel armed with massive guns designed to bombard other ships or targets ashore.

This type of ship was at the height of prominence during World War II, and the largest of the U.S. battleships, the Iowa-class, were roughly 60,000 tons. But after World War II, the battleship’s role in modern fleets diminished rapidly in favor of aircraft carriers and long-range missiles. The U.S. Navy did modernize four Iowa-class battleships in the 1980s by adding cruise missiles and anti-ship missiles, along with modern radars, but by the 1990s all four were decommissioned.

According to a newly created website for the “Golden Fleet,” this new “guided missile battleship” is set to be roughly the same size as Iowa-class battleships but only weigh about half as much, around 35,000 tons, and have far smaller crews - between 650 and 850 sailors.

Its primary weapons will also be missiles, not large naval guns.

Cyberattack disrupts France’s postal and banking services days before Christmas

PARIS, Dec 23, (AP): With just three days to go before Christmas, a cyberattack knocked France’s national postal service offline Monday, blocking and delaying package deliveries and online payments.

The timing was miserable for millions of people at the height of the Christmas season, as frazzled postal workers fended off frustrated customers.

No one immediately claimed responsibility, but suspicions abounded.

At a post office in southern Paris, usually bustling this time of year, workers questioned whether the attack could be linked to Russia. Or a disgruntled customer, or colleague.

Officials didn’t comment on the culprit. Paris prosecutors were examining the case.

What the postal service La Poste called a “major network incident” remained unresolved by Monday evening, more than eight hours after it was first reported. For a company that delivered 2.6 billion packages last year and employs more than 200,000 people, that’s a big hit.

La Poste said in a statement that a distributed denial of service incident, or DDoS, “rendered its online services inaccessible.” It said the incident had no impact on customer data, but disrupted package delivery.

Letters, including holiday greeting cards, could still be mailed and delivered. But transactions requiring tracking or access to the postal service internal computer systems were impossible.

The cyberattack also hurt online banking. Customers of the company’s banking arm, La Banque Postale, were blocked from using the application to approve payments or conduct other banking services. The bank redirected approvals to text messages instead.

“Our teams are mobilized to resolve the situation quickly,” the bank said in messages posted on social networks.

The disruption came a week after France’s government was targeted by a cyberattack that targeted the Interior Ministry, in charge of national security.

In that incident, a suspected hacker extracted a few dozen sensitive files and obtained access to data relating to police records and wanted persons, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said on broadcaster France-Info. He blamed “imprudence” at the ministry for the incident. French media reported that a 22-year-old was detained.

Also last week, prosecutors said that France’s counterespionage agency is investigating a suspected cyberattack plot involving software that would have allowed remote users to control computer systems of an international passenger ferry. A Latvian crew member is in custody facing charges of having acted for an unidentified foreign power, officials said.

France and other European allies of Ukraine allege that Russia is waging “hybrid warfare” against them, using sabotage, assassinations, cyberattacks, disinformation and other hostile acts that are often hard to quickly trace back to Moscow.



A postal delivery man leaves a post office, Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025 in Paris. (AP)

North America

Canada PM taps new US envoy: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced on Monday that financier **Mark Wiseman** will serve as the country’s next ambassador to the United States, an appointment that comes at a critical time in relations between the two major trading partners.



Wiseman

Wiseman will assume the role on Feb. 15 and will be involved in negotiations with the U.S. regarding the review of their free trade agreement.

“Mark Wiseman brings immense experience, contacts, and deep commitment at this crucial time of transformation of our relationship with the United States,” Carney said in a statement. “As a core member of our negotiating team, he will help advance the interests of Canadian workers, businesses, and institutions.”

Wiseman replaces Kirsten Hillman, who announced her resignation earlier this month. (AP)

Oldest National Park Service ranger dies: Betty Reid Soskin, who rose to national fame as the oldest National Park Service ranger and used the spotlight to talk about the African American experience during World War II, has died. She was 104.

Her family and the park service announced her death through social media, saying she was surrounded by loved ones at her home in California when she died Sunday. They did not release a cause of death.

“She was a powerful voice for sharing her personal experiences, highlighting untold stories, and honoring the contributions of women from diverse backgrounds who worked on the World War II Home Front. Thank you for your service, Ranger Betty,” the park service said in a statement. (AP)

Mistrial in corruption case: A judge declared a mistrial Monday in the corruption case of a former aide to New York governors after jurors said they were hopelessly deadlocked and couldn’t reach a verdict on charges she sold her influence to China and profited from a medical equipment scheme during the pandemic.

The federal jury in Brooklyn was unable to reach a unanimous verdict in the case against Linda Sun and her husband, Chris Hu. The foreperson said the panel was deadlocked on all 19 counts.

“Your honor, after extensive deliberations and re-deliberations the jury remains unable to reach a unanimous verdict. The jurors positions are firmly held,” the jury said in a note to U.S. District Judge Brian Cogan shortly after resuming deliberations Monday with an alternate juror taking the place of a juror who had to leave because of prior travel commitments.

Prosecutor Alexander Solomon told the judge that the government wants to retry the case “as soon as possible.” (AP)

Zelenskyy decries pre-Christmas assault as peace talks continue

Russian attack on Ukraine kills 3, cuts power

KYIV, Dec 23, (AP): Russia fired more than 650 drones and three dozen missiles at Ukraine in a large-scale attack that began during the night and stretched into daylight hours Tuesday, officials said. At least three people were killed, including a 4-year-old child, two days before Christmas.

The barrage struck homes and the power grid in 13 regions of Ukraine, causing widespread outages in bitter temperatures, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, a day after he described recent progress on finding a peace deal as “quite solid.”

The bombardment demonstrated Russian President Vladimir Putin’s intention of pursuing the invasion of Ukraine, Zelenskyy said in a post on the Telegram messaging app. Ukrainian and European officials have complained that Putin is not sincerely engaging with U.S.-led peace efforts.

The attack “is an extremely clear signal of Russian priorities,” Zelenskyy said. “A strike before Christmas, when people want to be with their families, at home, in safety. A strike, in fact, in the midst of negotiations that are being conducted to end this war. Putin cannot accept the fact that we must stop killing.”

U.S. President Donald Trump has for months been pressing for a peace agreement, but the negotiations have become entangled in the very different demands from Moscow and Kyiv.

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said Sunday he held “productive and constructive” talks in Florida with Ukrainian and European representatives. Trump was less effusive Monday, saying, “The talks are going along.”

Initial reports from Ukrainian emergency services said the child died in Ukraine’s northwestern Zhytomyr region, while a drone killed a woman in the Kyiv region, and another civilian death was recorded in the western Khmelnytskyi region, according to Zelenskyy.

Russia launched 635 drones of various types and 38 missiles, Ukraine’s air force said. Air defenses stopped 587 drones and 34 missiles, it said.

It was the ninth large-scale Russian attack on Ukraine’s energy system this year and left multiple regions in the west without power, while emergency power outages were in place across the country, acting Energy Minister Artem Nekraso said. Work to restore power would begin as soon as the security situation permitted, he said.

Ukraine’s largest private energy supplier, DTEK, said the attack targeted thermal power stations in what it said was the seventh major strike on the company’s facilities since October.

DTEK’s thermal power plants have been hit more than 220 times since Russia’s full-scale invasion began in February 2022. Those attacks have killed four workers and

wounded 59.

Authorities in the western regions of Rivne, Ternopil and Lviv, as well as the northern Sumy region, reported damage to energy infrastructure or power outages after the attack.

In the southern Odesa region, Russia struck energy, port, transport, industrial and residential infrastructure, according to regional head Oleh Kiper.

Initial drafts of U.S. proposals for a peace deal between Ukraine and Russia meet many of Kyiv’s demands, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday, although he suggested that neither side in the almost four-year war is likely to get everything it wants in talks on reaching a settlement.

“Overall, it looks quite solid at this stage,” the Ukrainian leader said of recent talks with U.S. officials who are trying to steer the neighboring countries toward compromises.

“There are some things we are probably not ready for, and I’m sure there are things the Russians are not ready for either,” Zelenskyy told reporters in Kyiv.

U.S. President Donald Trump has for months been pushing for a peace agreement, but the negotiations have run into sharply conflicting demands from Moscow and Kyiv.

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said Sunday he held “productive and constructive” talks in

Florida with Ukrainian and European representatives, though Trump was less effusive the following day, saying, “The talks are going along.”

“We are talking. It’s going OK,” Trump said Monday while on vacation at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. Asked if he planned to speak to Zelenskyy or Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump didn’t say, offering only of the fighting, “I’d like to see it stopped.”

Zelenskyy, meanwhile, said “nearly 90%” of Ukraine’s demands have been incorporated into the draft agreements.

The backbone of the proposed deal is a 20-point plan, he said. There is also a framework document on security guarantees between Ukraine, European countries, and the United States, as well as a separate document on bilateral security guarantees granted to Ukraine by the U.S.

Zelenskyy mentioned several key points, such as the Ukrainian army remaining at a peacetime level of 800,000; membership in the European Union; and European forces, under the leadership of France and the U.K. and with a “backstop” from Washington, ensuring “Ukraine’s security in the air, on land, and at sea.”

“Some key countries will provide presence in these domains; others will contribute to energy security, finance, bomb shelters, and so on,” the Ukrainian president said.



Left: In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service on Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025, a rescue worker puts out a fire of a residential house destroyed by a Russian strike in Kyiv region, Ukraine. Right: A residential house is seen damaged after a Russian strike in Zhytomyr region, Ukraine. (AP)



Asia

Japan’s former emperor turns 92: Japan’s beloved former Emperor Akihito marked his 92nd birthday Tuesday as his heart condition stabilized, palace officials said, following health concerns earlier this year.



Akihito, the father of Emperor Naruhito, was diagnosed in May with insufficient blood flow to the heart muscles but has been in stable condition since he started a new medication in July, the Imperial Household Agency said in a statement.

He still enjoys scientific research into goby fish, career work in which he found 10 new species, and he visits a biology lab on the palace compound twice a week, the agency said.

Akihito, who has held the title of emperor emeritus since his abdication in 2019, was to celebrate his birthday with his family and receive guests, including Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

Known for his efforts to make amends for Japan’s war-time past, Akihito repeatedly prayed this year for its victims and the survivors who faced hardships as he marked the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. (AP)

Thailand hails China mediation: Thai Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nikorndej Balankura stated on Tuesday that Thailand appreciates China’s role in facilitating the de-escalation of tensions along the Thailand-Cambodia border.

Addressing a press briefing on the Thailand-Cambodia border situation the same day, Nikorndej said Thailand appreciated China’s engagement and its role in de-escalating the confrontation between Thailand and Cambodia, and commended China for upholding an objective and impartial position. A meeting of the General Border Committee is scheduled on Wednesday in Thailand, where military representatives from both countries will conduct consultations on ceasefire arrangements. (Xinhua)

Singapore police to tighten security: Singapore police said they expect large crowds along Orchard Road, the city-state’s main shopping district, on Christmas Eve and will tighten security measures, including deploying additional officers, conducting security checks and closing some metro entrances and roads.

Police officers, auxiliary police officers and security officers will be deployed from Wednesday evening to manage crowds in the area, with barricades and directional signage put in place, the Singapore Police Force said in a Facebook post on Monday. (Xinhua)



Volunteers clad in Santa Claus costumes throw their hats in the air for a photo during a Christmas charity event before they deliver gifts for the underprivileged in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025. (AP)

Protest erupts in New Delhi over lynching of Hindu man

Bangladesh suspends visa services for Indians

NEW DELHI, Dec 23, (Agencies): The Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi on Monday announced the temporary suspension of consular and visa services.

The move comes days after India temporarily shut its visa application center in Chittagong, Bangladesh, following a demonstration outside the Assistant High Commission of India in the port city.

Meanwhile, a protest erupted in India’s capital Tuesday in response to the death of a Hindu man who was lynched and burned by an angry mob in neighboring Bangladesh, a new sign of strain in relations between the neighboring countries.

The protest in New Delhi, mainly led by Hindu nationalist organization Vishva Hindu Parishad, highlights the fragility in the relationship between India and Bangladesh, which often is held up as a rare example of stability in South Asia.

Bangladeshi student leader Sharif Osman Hadi died in a hospital in Singapore on Thursday after being shot on Dec. 12 in Dhaka. Police in Bangladesh said they identified suspects and the shooter likely had fled to India.

Hadi’s death triggered widespread violence in Dhaka. The offices of two national daily newspapers were torched and Indian diplomatic missions were targeted. A Hindu man also was burned alive, which sparked the protest Tuesday in India.

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered Tuesday near the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, shouting slogans and accusing Bangladeshi groups of wrongly targeting minorities. They carried placards and banners with slogans including “India will not tolerate torture of Hindus in Bangladesh” and “Our silence should not be mistaken as weakness, we are lions.”

Authorities erected barricades and imposed tight security around the diplomatic enclave that included police and armored vehicles. Security personnel used batons to hold back some protesters who broke through

barricades in an apparent attempt to enter the embassy.

One of the Indian protestors, Rajkumar Jindal, threatened “dire consequences” if authorities in Bangladesh failed to stop violence against Hindus.

“People who are committing atrocities should stop doing that. We are here to awaken the people who are asleep,” Jindal said.

Hadi took part in a 2024 political uprising that ended the 15-year rule of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has been in exile since fleeing Bangladesh on Aug. 5, 2024. He was a fierce critic of India and Hasina and planned to run as an independent candidate in a major constituency in Dhaka in the next national elections in February.

Hadi’s death sparked a new diplomatic squabble with India and prompted New Delhi this week to summon Bangladesh’s envoy.

Bangladesh’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs also summoned Pranay Verma, the Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, to apprise him of the security situation at Bangladesh missions in New Delhi and state capitals Kolkata and Agartala, a leading Bengali-language newspaper reported Tuesday.

Tensions between India and Bangladesh increased again with the death on Thursday of Dipu Chandra Das, a 25-year-old Hindu man who was lynched and burned publicly following allegations of blasphemy in Myemensingh district’s Bhaluka subdistrict.

Das’s killing contributed to a pattern of fear among the Hindu community in Bangladesh following the ouster of Hasina.

Religious minority groups including Hindus and Christians have accused Bangladesh’s interim government headed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus of failing to protect the safety of Hindus and others. The Yunus administration has rejected the allegations.



Police officers try to stop activists of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a prominent right-wing Hindu nationalist organization, crossing over barricades during a protest near Bangladesh High Commission accusing Bangladeshi groups of wrongly targeting Indians, in New Delhi, India, Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2025. (AP)

Regional cooperation key to lasting Asia-Pacific security

HONG KONG, Dec 23, (Xinhua): In 2025, the Asia-Pacific region faced a series of security challenges, ranging from recurring border conflicts, aggressive political rhetoric to domestic unrest in several countries.

Despite these challenges, regional countries continue to express a shared commitment to peace and development, highlighting that dialogue and cooperation remain the path to lasting stability in the Asia-Pacific.

PERSISTENT BORDER TENSIONS

Throughout the year, border conflicts involving Thailand and Cambodia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and India and Pakistan have remained among the most prominent security flashpoints in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Thailand-Cambodia border clashes, rooted in long-standing territorial disputes dating back to the colonial era, flared up again after military confrontations in border areas that began in late May. On Oct. 26, during the ASEAN summit held in Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia signed a joint peace declaration. However, less than two months later, violent border clashes broke out again in December.

According to data released by both sides, two rounds of clashes so far have left dozens of people dead, with over 700,000 people evacuated to safety.

“The immediate priority is to halt the fighting, safeguard civilians and return to a diplomatic path supported by international law and the neighborly spirit on which ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) depends,” said Anwar Ibrahim, prime minister of Malaysia, the 2025 ASEAN chair, following the renewed conflict.

It is hoped that ASEAN, in coordination with China as a key dialogue partner, can facilitate a mutually acceptable peace proposal that contributes to the early resolution of the dispute, said Humprey Arnaldo Russel, head of the ASEAN-China Research Center of the University of Indonesia.

In South Asia, tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been high since October, when deadly border clashes killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and suspected militants, and wounded hundreds on both sides.

The October clashes ended with a ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Türkiye. But several subsequent rounds of talks in the Middle East have failed to produce a lasting deal.

Despite periodic escalations, both countries demonstrate an awareness that prolonged instability undermines domestic security and regional economic integration, highlighting the necessity of sustained diplomatic engagement, remarked Shair Ahmad Hashmat, an Afghan scholar.



In this photo released by Agence Kampuchea Press (AKP), a destroyed building is seen after a Thai bombing in Poipet town, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025. (AP)

After the implementation of the Trump administration’s new social media vetting norms ensuring “U.S. national security or public safety.”

“The Department of State conducts thorough vetting of all visa applicants, including an online presence review of all student and exchange visitor applicants in the F, M and J non-immigrant classifications. Beginning December 15, we are expanding the online presence review to all specialty occupation temporary worker (H-1B) visa applicants and their dependents in the H-4 visa classification,” the spokesman said.

“In every visa case, we will take the time necessary to ensure an applicant does not pose a risk to the safety and security of the United States, and that he or she has credibly established his or her eligibility for the visa sought, including that the applicant intends to engage in activities consistent with the terms of admission,” the spokesman added.

AGGRESSIVE POLITICAL REMARKS SPARK SECURITY CONCERNS

In East Asia, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi’s erroneous remarks on China’s Taiwan drew worldwide criticism for reviving militarism and threatening regional stability.

At a Diet (Japanese parliament) meeting on Nov. 7, Takaichi cited the so-called “survival-threatening situation” -- a trigger designed by the controversial 2015 law -- and linked it to the Taiwan question, suggesting Tokyo might treat the Taiwan question as grounds for military involvement un-

der the legislation.

Despite repeated representations from China, Takaichi has refused to repent for her blatant and provocative rhetoric.

Takaichi’s remarks revealed a worrying tendency of militarism in Japan and were extremely dangerous, which were unacceptable and should be withdrawn, warned Keio University Professor Emeritus Hiroshi Onishi.

In recent years, Japan has reshaped its security policy, boosting defense spending, easing arms-export restrictions, pursuing offensive weapons development, and moving further down a troubling path of military expansion.

Valery Kistanov, a Japan expert at the Russian Academy of Science, warned Takaichi’s remarks on Taiwan could heighten regional tensions and risk triggering conflict.

Takaichi’s erroneous remarks are very destabilizing and undermine the security of the entire region, Australian Citizens Party’s National Chairman Robert Barwick said. Julia Roknifard, a senior lecturer at Taylor’s University in Malaysia, urged Japan to focus on its domestic socio-economic challenges rather than becoming a source of instability in East Asia.

US urges humanitarian truce now

Sudan PM takes peace plan to UN

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 23, (AP): Sudan’s prime minister has proposed a wide-ranging peace initiative to end a nearly 1,000-day war with a rival paramilitary force, but the United States urged both sides to accept the Trump administration’s call for an immediate humanitarian truce.

Kamil Idris, who heads Sudan’s transitional civilian government, told the Security Council his plan calls for a ceasefire monitored by the United Nations, African Union and Arab League, and the withdrawal of paramilitary forces from all areas they occupy, their placement in supervised camps and their disarmament.

Sudan plunged into chaos in April 2023 when a power struggle between

the military and the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded into open fighting, with widespread mass killings and rapes, and ethnically motivated violence.

This has amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity, according to the U.N. and international rights groups.

It seemed highly unlikely the RSF would support the prime minister’s proposal, which would essentially give government forces a victory and take away their military power.

In an indirect reference to the truce supported by the U.S. and key mediators Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, known as the Quad, Idris stressed to the U.N. Security Council that the government’s proposal is “homemade -- not imposed on us.”

In early November, the Rapid Support Forces agreed to a humanitarian truce. At that time, a Sudanese military official told The Associated Press the army welcomed the Quad’s proposal but would only agree to a truce when the RSF completely withdraws from civilian areas and gives up their weapons - key provisions in the plan Idris put forward on Monday.

Idris said unless the paramilitary forces were confined to camps, a truce had “no chance for success.”

He challenged the 15 members of the Security Council to back his proposal.

Indian professionals stranded back home as US visa renewals face inordinate delay

NEW DELHI, Dec 23, (Xinhua): Thousands of Indian professionals holding H-1B visas and had returned home during the ongoing festival season in India remained stranded as their interviews for renewal of work permits had been postponed by the U.S. embassy or consulates by as long as over 12 months, or even more.

According to media reports, such interviews were “abruptly rescheduled” by the U.S. embassy in New Delhi and consulates in several cities, particularly Chennai and Hyderabad.

“The Department of State regularly shifts appointments as needed to match resource availability. We will communicate any changes directly to affected visa applicants,” said a spokesman of the U.S. embassy in New Delhi.

Most of such interviews fell between Dec. 15 and 26, with the U.S. State Department telling the high-skilled Indian professionals that their interviews were delayed

after the implementation of the Trump administration’s new social media vetting norms ensuring “U.S. national security or public safety.”

“The Department of State conducts thorough vetting of all visa applicants, including an online presence review of all student and exchange visitor applicants in the F, M and J non-immigrant classifications. Beginning December 15, we are expanding the online presence review to all specialty occupation temporary worker (H-1B) visa applicants and their dependents in the H-4 visa classification,” the spokesman said.

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Kuwait oil price surges to \$60.49 pb

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by USD 1.25 to USD 60.49 per barrel (pb) on Monday, compared to USD 59.24 pb the previous day, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday. In global markets, Brent Crude rose by USD 1.60 to USD 62.07 pb and West Texas Intermediate also went up by USD 1.49 to USD 58.01 pb.

Business

Boursa concludes its gold sponsorship and hosting of LOYAC's Kontinue Program, ushering in a new cohort of entrepreneurs

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Boursa Kuwait concluded its gold sponsorship and hosting of the Kontinue Social Entrepreneurship Program, one of LOYAC's flagship initiatives dedicated to developing the entrepreneurial skills of aspiring business leaders and startup founders between the ages of 20 and 35.

The fourth edition of the program, which spanned six weeks from November 2 to December 10, delivered a total of 94 training hours and culminated in a graduation ceremony for its participants at the Boursa Kuwait premises on Wednesday, December 10, 2025.

"Boursa Kuwait's sponsorship and hosting of the fourth edition of the Kontinue Entrepreneurship Program reflects our firm commitment to supporting Kuwait's entrepreneurial ecosystem and empowering youth to transform their innovative ideas into viable, scalable ventures," said Boursa Kuwait's Senior Director of Marketing and Corporate Communications, Mr. Naser Meshari Al-Sanousi. "The program embodies our belief in the importance of investing in human capital and equipping aspiring entrepreneurs with practical knowledge and applied skills to navigate market challenges and build sustainable businesses."

Sessions took place in the inspiring setting of Boursa Kuwait's state-of-the-art training halls, which served as a dynamic learning environment for participants. Equipped with advanced facilities, the space enabled a wide range of integrated training activities, demonstrating Boursa Kuwait's commitment to fostering creativity, encouraging interactive learning and empowering participants to maximize the benefits of the program.

"Boursa Kuwait was keen to provide a fully equipped training environment within its premises, supported by the latest technologies and comprehensive technical and logistical support to ensure participants gained the maximum benefit from the program's content," Al-Sanousi added. As part of the program, 24 local entrepreneurs were selected to serve as mentors for each business idea, bringing diverse expertise across key fields such as technology and digital transformation, business strategy and growth, corporate finance and investment, food and beverage branding, healthcare and community empowerment, risk management and startups, youth development and education, operations and procurement, governance standards and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, as well as retail, e-commerce, marketing, and artificial intelligence.

These critical areas of expertise provided participants with the support needed to develop scalable and sustainable business ventures, with mentors offering hands-on guidance and personalized follow-up throughout the various stages of building their projects, in turn helping participants better understand challenges, capitalize on development opportunities and improve the overall quality of their final outputs.

Additionally, the program's content was developed in collaboration with Babson College, a U.S. academic institution specializing in entrepreneurship and leadership education, to equip participants with the essential



Naser Al-Sanousi



Graduation photo

- A strategic initiative in partnership with LOYAC to foster entrepreneurial skills and empower youth to build sustainable ventures
- The program featured 94 hours of intensive training and personalized mentorship from 24 entrepreneurs to transform innovative ideas into scalable ventures

knowledge and tools for entrepreneurial success, with a strong focus on developing leadership skills and understanding both the theoretical and practical foundations of launching and managing startups.

The Kontinue Social Entrepreneurship Program focused on enhancing participants' abilities to identify user needs and build ventures based on effective and sustainable foundations, while gaining a solid understanding of success metrics and business continuity. Featuring interactive workshops led by entrepreneurship experts, the program covered key areas such as idea development, financial planning, team building and strategies for sustainable growth.

"Supporting such impactful initiatives aligns with Boursa Kuwait's strategy for corporate social responsibility, which places youth empowerment and education at the core of its priorities," said Al-Sanousi.

He emphasized that the exchange aims to contribute to building a more diverse and sustainable national economy by promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and affirmed that Boursa Kuwait takes pride in sponsoring and hosting this program, recognizing its role in enhancing the quality of training and connecting participants with global best practices in entrepreneurship.

Boursa Kuwait's sponsorship of the Kontinue Social Entrepreneurship Program marks its second collaboration with LOYAC this year, having sponsored Eco-Quest earlier this year. One of Kuwait's largest interactive environmental initiatives, the competition aims to instill values of sustainability and foster environmental awareness in school students through hands-on, experiential learning activities that strengthen their connection

to the environment.

Boursa Kuwait and LOYAC have a strategic partnership focused on empowering youth and supporting their ambitions in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship, which underscores both parties' commitment to developing young talent and enhancing their practical and professional skills through impactful initiatives that embody the values of social responsibility and promote long-term positive change in society.

The partnership forms part of Boursa Kuwait's broader efforts to create meaningful impact within the communities it serves, in line with its corporate sustainability strategy. Aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 4: Quality Education, and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals, it reflects the company's ongoing commitment to implementing initiatives that elevate knowledge, skills and expertise across all segments of society, including market participants and aspiring entrepreneurs.

LOYAC Board Member Mrs. Fareeha Al-Saqaf stated that the Kontinue program reflects the organization's commitment to supporting purpose-driven entrepreneurship among youth, noting that the program has helped transform innovative ideas into projects with sustainable economic and social impact throughout its tenure.

"LOYAC is dedicated to investing in the potential of youth and empowering them to contribute to community development. The Kontinue Program serves as an integrated platform for skill-building and fostering socially driven entrepreneurial thinking that responds to community needs and supports future development," she added.

General index rises 18 points

Boursa Kuwait closes positive on Tuesday

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Tuesday's session in positive territory, with the general index gaining 18.02 points, or 0.20 percent, to close at 8,980.33 points.

Trading activity remained robust, as 202.2 million shares changed hands through 16,690 transactions, with a total value of KD 64.2 million (approximately USD 195.8 million).

The Premier Market Index advanced 34.66 points, or 0.36 percent, to settle at 9,602.63 points. It recorded 96.3 million shares traded across 8,109

transactions, amounting to KD 43.3 million (around USD 132 million).

In contrast, the Main Market Index slipped 46.61 points, or 0.56 percent, to close at 8,260.28 points, with 105.8 million shares traded through 8,581 transactions valued at KD 20.8 million (approximately USD 63.4 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index edged up 2.37 points—a 0.03 percent increase—to settle at 8,683.79 points, with 57.06 million shares traded in 3,855 transactions worth KD 11.7 million (around USD 40.9 million).

a hedge during uncertainty, while a weaker US dollar boosts demand by making bullion cheaper internationally for investors.

Al-Rezaian noted that ongoing geopolitical tensions and rising political and economic risks pushed investors toward safe assets, particularly gold, as markets await key US growth and inflation data guiding policy expectations during the coming months.

He added that silver prices also rose sharply, jumping over three percent to trade near USD 69 per ounce, marking record levels amid stronger investor appetite for precious metals this year across global commodity markets.

Weak dollar lifts gold & silver

Gold increases to record \$4,415 amid rate cut bets

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): Head of Planning and Follow-up at Dar Al-Sabaek Company Bader Al-Rezaian said gold prices surged in trading to record levels, surpassing USD 4,415 per ounce, driven by safe-haven demand and US interest rate cuts expectations.

He told KUNA on Monday that rising signs of easing US inflation and softer labor data strengthened investor bets that the Federal Reserve will shift toward monetary easing during the coming period in global markets.

He explained that lower interest rates reduce the opportunity cost of holding gold, increasing its appeal as

Al-Budaiwi praises BADEA's role

GCC & BADEA officials discuss ways to strengthen cooperation

RIYADH, Dec 23, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi discussed on Tuesday with President of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) Abdullah Al-Musaybeh ways to enhance joint cooperation.

The GCC General Secretariat stated that this took place during Al-Budaiwi's reception of Al-Musaybeh at the

General Secretariat's headquarters in Riyadh.

The statement explained that areas of work of mutual interest between the GCC and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa were reviewed.

Al-Budaiwi praised the initiatives and development projects undertaken by the bank to support development on the African continent.

ENBAT program equips youth with job market skills

KIPCO celebrates 3rd cohort of ENBAT graduates

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: KIPCO – Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) – held a graduation ceremony for the third cohort of its ENBAT work readiness program. The program, which ran for nine weeks from October to December, provided recent college graduates with a safe learning environment to develop the core competencies and skills that employers consider essential for new hires.

The event celebrated the success of the ENBAT graduates and their trainers and recognized the efforts of KIPCO's partners: en.v for designing the program curriculum; the American University of Kuwait (AUK) and the American United School (AUS) for hosting the training sessions, and Marina FM who were the program's media partner.

This edition of the program featured two news sessions: 'CV Writing' presented by United Real Estate (URC), and 'Navigating Job Interviews' presented by Burgan Bank.

Speaking at the event, Ms Eman Al Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Senior Vice President – Corporate Communications and Investor Relations, said:

"ENBAT was created with a clear and very practical purpose: to equip young talents with the skills, tools and confidence they need to enter today's job market and thrive in it. Looking at you today, we see that purpose fulfilled. As you step into the job market, remember that learning does not stop here. Stay curious, stay persistent, and do not be afraid to aim high. The road may not always be easy, but you have already shown that you have the discipline and the determination to succeed."

The MC of the ceremony was ENBAT graduate, Yousef Al Raqum, who said of his experience:

"As peers, we showed commitment, curiosity, teamwork and a willingness to step outside of our comfort zones. Tonight is a celebration of growth, learning, connection and the incredible journey that we all took over the past nine weeks."

In a speech on behalf of the graduates, Joud Al Rukaibi reflected on her experiences during the program and said:

"ENBAT is to prompt something to grow, to sprout, to spring it into development. Over the past nine weeks, that is exactly what we experienced. We arrived with different backgrounds and experiences, but with one shared intention: to refine our abilities, strengthen our potential, and step into our futures with more clarity and confidence. We began as strangers,



Ms Eman Al Awadhi speaking on behalf of KIPCO.



Yousef Al Raqum acting as MC.



Joud Al Rukaibi representing the graduates.



ENBAT's third cohort.

and by week 9 we were a small community. We supported one another, challenged one another, shared ideas, shared confusion, and definitely shared a lot of laughter. I truly believe that this program has planted something meaningful in each of us that will continue to grow. Whether it's confidence, clarity, resilience or simply a new way of seeing the world, we are walking away different from how

we started."

The program was designed in collaboration with en.v which has worked on a number of successful programs, all of which focus on bringing together people representing different parts of the community and facilitate the process of building bridges, collaboration and connections.

Of the 200 applicants to the program, 30 were selected to take part.

The six facilitators of the program all have private sector experience and have been trained by en.v to help the participants build the core skills needed to become effective leaders and collaborators. The program includes four modules: Self, Systems, and Critical Thinking; Cross Cultural Communication; Design Thinking; and Work Culture & Applying Skills.

In partnership with Euromoney Learning

Gulf Bank launches ‘Beyond AJYAL’ program to develop mid-level Kuwaiti leaders

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: As part of its commitment to developing national talent and strengthening institutional excellence, Gulf Bank has launched the “Beyond AJYAL” program in collaboration with Euromoney Learning, one of the world’s leading institutions in banking, financial, and leadership training.

“Beyond AJYAL” is an advanced program specifically designed to develop mid-level Kuwaiti leaders holding managerial positions, preparing them to lead the future in line with the directions and pillars of Kuwait Vision, particularly the creative human capital pillar.

The program aims to enhance advanced leadership skills, empower national talent to assume future leadership roles, and strengthen their ability to adapt to the demands of a rapidly evolving economic environment. It also plays a key role in supporting Kuwaitization plans and the Bank’s sustainable growth strategy.

On this occasion, Mr. Hamed Al-Tamimi, Acting General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, stated:“The launch of the Beyond AJYAL program



Group photo during the training program.

■ Hamed Al-Tamimi: A strategic step to enhance the capabilities of Kuwaiti human capital and prepare them for leadership roles

represents a strategic step toward strengthening the capabilities of Kuwaiti human capital and preparing them for leadership positions, ensuring the Bank’s continued success and excellence.”

He added:“We are confident that this program will be a valuable addition to Gulf Bank’s leadership development journey and will empower our employees to lead future transformations and achieve our institutional objectives in line with the Bank’s five-year strategy.”

The program features a comprehensive training framework that combines global best practices with experiential learning approaches, delivered through a strategic partnership with a leading international institution, contributing to the preparation of young leaders for senior management positions within the Bank.

How experts are racing to decode Trump’s tariff rules

NEW YORK, Dec 23, (AP): After a half-century immersed in the world of trade, customs broker Amy Magnus thought she’d seen it all, navigating mountains of regulations and all sorts of logistical hurdles to import everything from lumber and bananas to circus animals and Egyptian mummies.

Then came 2025.

Tariffs were imposed in ways she’d never seen. New rules left her wondering what they really meant. Federal workers, always a reliable backstop, grew more elusive.

“2025 has changed the trade system,” says Magnus. “It wasn’t perfect before, but it was a functioning system. Now, it is a lot more chaotic and troubling.”

Once hidden cogs in the international trade machine, customs brokers are getting a rare spotlight as President Donald Trump reinvents America’s commercial ties with the world. If this breathless year of tariffs amounts to a trade war, customs brokers are its front lines.

Few Americans have been exposed as exhaustively to every fluctuation of trade policy as the customs broker. They were there in the opening days of Trump’s second term, when tariffs were announced on Canada and Mexico, and two days later, when those same levies were paused. They were there through every rule on imports of steel and seafood, on cars and copper, on polysilicon and pharmaceuticals, and on and on. For every tariff, for every carve-out, for every order, brokers have been left to translate policy into reality, line by line and code by code, in a year when it seemed every passing week brought change.

“We were used to decades of a certain way of processing, and from January to now, that universe has been turned kind of upside-down on us,” says Al Raffa, a customs broker in Elizabeth, New Jersey, who helps shepherd containerloads of cargo into the U.S. packed to the brim with everything from rounds of brie to boxes of chocolate.

Each arrival of products imported to the country requires filings with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and often, other agencies. Importers often turn to brokers to handle the regulatory legwork and, with a spate of new trade rules unleashed by the Trump administration, they’ve seen their demand grow alongside their workloads.

Many shipments that entered duty free now are tariffed. Other imports that had minimal levies that might cost a company a few hundred dollars have had their bills balloon to thousands. For Raffa and his crew, the ever-expanding list of tariffs means a given product could be subjected to taxes under multiple separate tariff lines.

“That one line item of cheese that previously was just one tariff, now it could be two, three, in some cases five tariff numbers,” says 53-year-old Raffa, who has had jobs in trade since he was a teenager and who has a button emblazoned with “Make Trade Boring Again.”

Government regulations have always been a reality for brokers, and the very reason for their existence. When thick tomes of trade rules changed in the past, though, they typically were issued long ahead of their effective dates, with periods for comment and review, each word of policy crafted in an attempt to project clarity and definition.

With Trump, word of a major change in trade rules might come in a Truth Social post or an oversized chart clutched by the president in a Rose Garden appearance.

“You’d be remiss not to be looking at the White House website on a daily basis, multiple times a day, just to see what executive order is going to be announced,” Raffa says.

Each announcement sends brokerage firms into a scramble to attempt to dissect the rules, update their systems to reflect them and alert their customers who may have shipments en route and for whom any shift in tariffs could mean a major hit to their bottom line.

JD Gonzalez, a third-generation customs broker in Laredo, Texas, and president of the National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America, says the volume and speed of changes have been challenging enough. But the wording of White House orders has often left more unanswered questions than brokers are accustomed to.

“The order is kind of vague sometimes, the guidance that’s being provided is sometimes murky, and we’re trying to make the determination,” 62-year-old Gonzalez says.

Gonzalez rattles off 10-digit tariff codes for alcohol and doors and recites the complicated web of rules that determine the duties on a chair with a frame made of steel produced in the U.S. but processed in Mexico. As brokers’ work has grown tougher, he says some of their firms have begun charging customers more for their services because each item they’re responsible for tracking on a bill of lading takes longer.

“You double the time,” he says. Brokers can’t help but see the imprints of their work everywhere they go. Gonzalez looks at a T-shirt tag and thinks of what a broker did to get it into the country. Magnus sees Belgian chocolate or Chinese silk and is awed, despite all the things that could have kept something from landing on a store shelf, that it still arrived. Raffa walks through the supermarket, picks up a can of artichoke hearts, and considers every possible regulation that might apply to secure its import into the country.

It has been heartening for brokers, who existed in the gray arcanas of hidden bureaucracy unseen by most Americans, to now earn a bit more recognition.

“It was maybe taken for granted how that wonderful piece of gourmet cheese got on the shelf, or that Gucci bag,” says Raffa. “Up until this year, people were clueless what I did.”

Magnus, who is in her 70s and based on Marco Island, Florida, spent 18 years at U.S. Customs before starting at a brokerage in 1992. She came to find comfort in the precision of rules governing every import she cleared the way for, from crude oil to diamonds.

“We don’t like to have any doubt, we don’t like to leave anything up to interpretation,” she says. “When we ourselves are struggling, trying to interpret and understand the meaning of some of these things, it is a very unsettling place to be.”

It’s not just the White House orders that have complicated her work. The Department of Government Efficiency cost-cutting blitz under billionaire Elon Musk led to layoffs and retirements of trusted government workers that brokers turn to for guidance. A shutdown slowed operations at ports. And fear of being out of step with the administration has some federal employees cautious about decoding trade orders, making answers on interpretation of tariff rules sometimes tough to come by.

Magnus was befuddled by moves that seemed at odds with everything she knew of trade policy. Canada as adversary? Switzerland subjected to 39% tariffs? It defied how she had come to see the choreography of cargo and what it says about the world.

“It’s like an incredible ballet to be able to trade with all these countries all over the world,” she says. “In my own mind, I always felt that as long as we were trading and we were friendly with each other, we were reducing the chance of war and killing each other.”

Work has been so hectic this year that Magnus hasn’t managed to take a vacation. Weekends have so frequently been upended by Friday afternoon edicts announcing a tariff is going into effect or being taken away that it has become an inside joke with colleagues.

“It’s Friday afternoon,” she says. “Is everybody watching?”

A couple hours after Magnus repeats this, the next White House order is posted, undoing a slew of tariffs on agricultural products and sending brokers into another scurry.

WASHINGTON, Dec 23, (AP): The U.S. economy grew at a surprisingly strong 4.3% annual rate in the third quarter, the most rapid expansion in two years, as government and consumer spending, as well as exports, all increased.

U.S. gross domestic product from July through September - the economy’s total output of goods and services - rose from its 3.8% growth rate in the April-June quarter, the Commerce Department said Tuesday in a report delayed by the government shutdown. Analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet forecast growth of 3% in the period.

However, inflation remains higher than the Federal Reserve would like. The Fed’s favored inflation gauge - called the personal consumption expenditures index, or PCE - climbed to a 2.8% annual pace last quarter, up from 2.1% in the second quarter.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, so-called core PCE inflation was 2.9%, up from 2.6% in the April-June quarter.

Economists say that persistent and potentially worsening inflation could make a January interest rate cut from the Fed less likely, even as central bank officials remain concerned about a slowing labor market.

“If the economy keeps producing at this level, then there isn’t as much need to worry about a slowing economy,” said Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer for Northlight Asset Management, adding that inflation could return as the greatest concern about the economy.



Roofers work atop a house in Anna, Texas, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025. (AP)

In a slow holiday trading week, U.S. markets on Wall Street turned lower following the GDP report, likely due to growing doubts that another Fed rate cut is coming next month.

Consumer spending, which accounts for about 70% of U.S. economic activity, rose to a 3.5% annual pace last quarter, up from 2.5% in the April-June period.

Consumption and investment by the government grew by 2.2% in the quarter after contracting 0.1% in the second quarter. The third quarter figure was boosted by increased expenditures at the state and local levels and federal government defense spending.

Private business investment fell 0.3%, led by declines in investment in housing and in nonresidential buildings such as offices and warehouses. However, that decline was much less than the 13.8% slide in the second quarter.

Within the GDP data, a category that measures the economy’s un-

derlying strength grew at a 3% annual rate from July through September, up slightly from 2.9% in the second quarter. This category includes consumer spending and private investment, but excludes volatile items like exports, inventories and government spending.

Exports grew at an 8.8% rate, while imports, which subtract from GDP, fell another 4.7%.

Tuesday’s report is the first of three estimates the government will make of GDP growth for the third quarter of the year.

Outside of the first quarter, when the economy shrank for the first time in three years as companies rushed to import goods ahead of President Donald Trump’s tariff rollout, the U.S. economy has continued to expand at a healthy rate. That’s despite much higher borrowing rates the Fed imposed in 2022 and 2023 in its drive to curb the inflation that surged as the United States bounced back with unexpected strength from the brief

but devastating COVID-19 recession of 2020.

Though inflation remains above the Fed’s 2% target, the central bank cut its benchmark lending rate three times in a row to close out 2025, mostly out of concern for a job market that has steadily lost momentum since spring.

Last week, the government reported that the U.S. economy gained a healthy 64,000 jobs in November but lost 105,000 in October. Notably, the unemployment rate rose to 4.6% last month, the highest since 2021.

The country’s labor market has been stuck in a “low hire, low fire” state, economists say, as businesses stand pat due to uncertainty over Trump’s tariffs and the lingering effects of elevated interest rates. Since March, job creation has fallen to an average 35,000 a month, compared to 71,000 in the year ended in March. Fed Chair Jerome Powell has said that he suspects those numbers will be revised even lower.

E-commerce outpaces store sales this season

Holiday spending rises, but shoppers stay cautious

NEW YORK, Dec 23, (AP): Consumers stepped up gift giving during the first seven weeks of the holiday shopping season, according to new data released Tuesday. But uncertainty about the economy is making shoppers more targeted in their buying.

From Nov. 1 through Sunday, cash and credit card sales rose 4.2%, which is less than the 4.8% increase during the same period a year ago, according to Visa’s Consulting & Analytics division.

The data, which exclude sales from auto dealerships, gas stations, and restaurants, are not adjusted for inflation or the impact from President Donald Trump’s tariffs.

When adjusted for inflation, retail sales rose a more modest 2.2% for the first seven weeks of the holiday period, according to Visa’s U.S. principal economist Michael Brown. That compares with the inflation adjusted 3% in the same year-ago timeframe.

“It’s certainly not a spectacular season,” Brown told The Associated Press. “It’s sort of an average holiday season given concerns about macro economic growth, inflation. There’s still a lot of uncertainty among the consumer population.”

Mastercard SpendingPulse, which also tracks cash and credit card spending, said that sales rose 3.9% from Nov. 1 through Sunday. That’s above its 3.6% forecast for the overall season, but also lower than last year’s 4.1% increase during the same period.

Shoppers “blended online and in-store shopping to find the best deals and maximize convenience,” said Michelle Meyer, chief economist at Mastercard Economics Institute.

The figure, not adjusted for inflation, excludes sales from automotive dealerships and gas stations, but includes business from restaurants. Mastercard SpendingPulse didn’t have an inflation-adjusted figure available.

Retailers say customers are being selective, focused this year on gifts while holding off on the usual holiday decor spending. Many households are struggling with higher prices for groceries, rent and imported goods hit by tariffs. The latest job report, released by the Labor Department last week, also shows a souring employment picture.

As a result, consumers have been more gloomy, though that seemed to improve last month as worries about inflation eased a bit, according to the University of Michigan.

When all the numbers are in, Visa expects holiday sales data will be more or less in line with its prediction of a 4.6% sales increase between November and December.

Several of the holiday season’s busiest shopping days are still ahead, including the day after Christmas and first Saturday after the holiday, according to Sensormatic, which tracks retail foot traffic.

But shoppers remain cautious days before Christmas.

RetailNext, which measures real-time foot traffic in physical stores,

noted there was a 5.4% decline in customer traffic on Saturday compared with last year. So-called “Super Saturday” typically competes with Black Friday as the busiest shopping day of the season. The drop suggests that Americans are spreading their trips across the final weeks before Christmas and are sticking to shopping lists, according to Joe Shasteen, global manager, advanced analytics at RetailNext.

Still, the overall data from Visa and Mastercard are in line with the forecast from the National Retail Federation, the nation’s largest retail industry trade group. It expects sales over November and December of between \$1.01 trillion and \$1.02 trillion. That would be up 3.7% to 4.2% over last year.

Figuring out consumer behavior this season has been challenging after a 43-day federal government shutdown interrupted the publication of U.S. economic data, including retail sales.

The Commerce Department reported last week that sales at U.S. retailers and restaurants were unchanged in October from September, dragged down by electric car sales after the Trump administration allowed government subsidies for those vehicles to expire.

According to Visa, e-commerce sales rose 7.8% for the first seven weeks of the period, fueled by promotions that started early in the season.

Shopping in stores is still dominant, with 73% of holiday payment volume being driven by in-store sales, and 27% taking place online, Visa said.

Still, online sales surged 7.4%, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse, compared with a 2.9% increase in stores.

General merchandise stores, defined by big discounters like Target and Walmart that sell all types of merchandise, rose 3.7%, Visa said. Electronics emerged as the hottest category, with sales rising 5.8% during this timeframe, fueled in part by devices powered by artificial intelligence, Visa said.

Tariffs played a key role in how shoppers behaved, Brown said.

Clothing and accessories sales accelerated at a 5.3% pace from Nov. 1 through Dec. 21 from a 4.1% increase last year as the category wasn’t as affected by tariffs as other areas like holiday home decor, predominantly made in China, Brown said. That category saw a slim 0.8% sales gain.

And a still weak housing market hurt sales of home improvement items like building materials and garden accessories, which recorded a 1% sales increase, Visa said.

Mastercard SpendingPulse also reported that spending on clothing was strong - up 7.8% for the first seven weeks of the season compared with a year ago, helped by chilly temperatures and seasonal deals.

Restaurant spending increased 5.2% from Nov. 1 through Dec. 21, suggesting that Americans are spending on experiences like a night out, Mastercard SpendingPulse said.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT

Got a birthday or event?



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Ambassador of India graces FAIPS Annual Day celebration

FAIPS celebrates Annual Day 2025 with 'Masquerade' theme

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The Annual Day Celebration of FAIPS was held with great enthusiasm on Tuesday, 16th December 2025, with the captivating theme 'Masquerade.' The event was graced by the esteemed presence of the adding

great honour to the occasion.

The program commenced with the salutation to the Kuwait National Flag followed by the Kuwait National Anthem and the ceremonial Lighting of the Lamp. The Principal, Mr. Ravi

Ayanoli, welcomed the honourable Chief Guest, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, Ms. Paramita Tripathi, the Guests of Honour, Ms. Lana Othman Al Ayyar, Chairperson and CEO of Al Rayan Holding Company, Mr. Arun Choudhary, CFO, United Education Company along with Ms. Mona Al Ajmi, Social & Psychological Supervisor for foreign schools in MoE.

The chief guest lauded the institution as one of the best schools, appreciating the confidence of the students, the vibrant costumes and the well-coordinated presentation showcased during the program reflecting the school's commitment to excellence, creativity and strong value.

The morning festivities commenced with a melodious English song motivating to discover who we truly are followed by a Hindi song rendering that love, and friendship can always be renewed. What followed next was the Principal's address emphasizing the

pivotal role of teachers as the third parents in a child's life. He highlighted the importance of nurturing without bias and allowing every child to grow in their unique way acknowledging that teachers instead of compelling, motivate and inspire children to explore and develop their talents, fostering their holistic growth – academically, emotionally, and socially. He stressed that respecting and trusting teachers encourages children to do the same, building a supportive and nurturing learning environment.

Vibrant, choreographed performances mesmerized the audience, starting with a Kathak-Western fusion. "The Hidden Bloom" used a farmer's life to illustrate nurturing a child's potential through patience, while "Shadows to Shine" promoted happiness and work-life balance. "The Radiant Reveal" celebrated a child's journey to self-confidence, followed by "The Masked Awakening," which focused on emotional well-being. The energy peaked with "Fusion Dynamics" and an Egyptian cultural dance, "Mysteries of the Nile." The event concluded with "Veils of Trust," a grand finale depicting a historical figure's triumph of truth over betrayal. The auditorium echoed with the thunderous applause of the audience who witnessed a colourful and spectacular program leaving them in a trance.

This was followed by the Vote of Thanks by the Primary School Headmistress, Ms. Seema Bhatnagar thanking all teaching and non-teaching staff for their untiring efforts to make the program a grand success and the parents for their support and cooperation.



Photos during the event.

Rajendra Kannan elected President of TEF Kuwait

TEF Kuwait announces new executive committee for 2026

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Tamilnadu Engineers Forum (TEF), Kuwait, a prestigious nonprofit professional association and one of the most active Indian Engineering bodies in the Country, continues its remarkable journey of excellence, innovation, and community service. Certified under ISO 9001:2015 standards, TEF has consistently upheld the highest benchmarks in engineering knowledge-sharing and organizational governance.

Established by accomplished engineers from Tamil Nadu, India, TEF today stands as a vibrant and influential professional forum, proudly representing more than 550 engineers and registered

with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait. The forum is widely recognized for fostering technical growth, leadership development, and cultural integration within the engineering fraternity.

TEF's flagship technical events—including the Technological Innovations Conference & Exposition (TICE) and various symposiums, workshops, and expert lectures—have earned widespread appreciation for enriching Kuwait's engineering community. With equal emphasis on social engagement, the forum hosts sports events, Cultural events for Family members, wellness initiatives, and Children focused programs, making TEF a dynamic, holistic, and community-driven organization.

The new committee was elected unopposed under the meticulous supervision of election officers Mr. Ramaraj and Mr. Bala Elamaram, whose transparent and well-coordinated election process received high appreciation from the members. The Election officer Mr. Ramaraj has formally announced the TEF Executive committee for the year 2026 during the TEF 2025 Valedictory Ceremony held at Delhi Public School (DPS) on December 12th, 2025.

TEF Kuwait Organizing committee for the year 2026

President: Mr. Rajendra Kannan
General Secretary: Mr. Agnel Stanley Charles

Treasurer: Mr. Logachandran Jayachandran

Vice President: Mr. Raghuraman R
Joint Secretary (General): Mr. Periyaswamy Chellaiah

Joint Treasurer: Mr. Reckston PJ
Joint Secretary (IT): Mr. Muthukumar.K

Committee Members

Mr. Amarash Murali, Mr. Ananthraj, Mr. Ashok Venkanna, Mr. Bharath Samvel, Mr. Elanchelvam Nallathambi, Mr. Elavarasan Karthikeyan, Mr. Jaganath Konda Ramalingam, Mr. Krishna Nivas, Mrs. Lavanya Raju, Mr. Mohanraj P, Mr. Muthulingam S, Mrs. Mythili Rajamannar, Mr. Nagarajan Sevugaperumal, Mrs. Nithya, Mr. Pradeepkumar Raju, Mr. Praveen, Mr. Sathishkumar Jeyachandran, Mr. Suresh Anand, Mr. Suresh R.

Leadership Vision for 2026
Mr. Rajendra Kannan, President of TEF 2026, emphasized the organization's commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and professional excellence.

He highlighted TEF's focus on empowering engineers through modern learning platforms, industry collaborations, and community-driven initiatives.

Mr. Agnel Stanley Charles, General Secretary, introduced the new team and outlined the strategic roadmap for 2026, aligned with TEF's mission of advancing engineering knowledge while nurturing cultural unity and social well-being.

Key Events Planned for 2026

Inaugural Event & Technical Symposiums with Cultural Show (NEN-JUKKULE 2026)

Winter Sheen – A Celebration of Women

Kodai Vizha

InnoEx (Season-4)– Inter-School Science Competition

Annual Sports Events

TEF Walking Challenge

17th Technological Innovations Conference & Exposition (TICE) and 10th Engineering Excellence Awards (EEA)

TEF Picnic

Valedictory (NEE KAVITHAIGAL 2026)

A Promising Year Ahead

New Team for TEF Kuwait will officially begin its activities from 1st Jan 2026, marking the start of another inspiring year dedicated to engineering advancement and community enrichment. The forum extended heartfelt appreciation to all Indian associations, Sponsors, partner organizations, volunteers, and well-wishers for their constant encouragement and support.

With revitalized energy and a committed leadership team, TEF Kuwait continues to strengthen the spirit of professionalism, unity, and innovation across Kuwait's Indian community.



Photo during the event.

Asim Mahfuz Kidwai elected President of AMUOBA-Kuwait

AMU alumni in Kuwait elect new executive council

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: AMU alumni in Kuwait successfully conducted elections to constitute the new Executive Council of AMUOBA-Kuwait for the term 2026–2027. The elections generated great enthusiasm among alumni, reflecting the strong bonding and democratic spirit of the AMU fraternity in Kuwait.

AMUOBA has continued its tradition of biennial elections. This election marked the formation of new team of AMUOBA-6. While most Executive Council members were elected unopposed, elections were held for the key positions of President and Vice President.

The polling was held at Rajdhani Palace, Khaitan, on 19th Dec. 2025 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Despite

traffic and parking challenges, alumni from across Kuwait turned up in large numbers to exercise their right to vote, ranging from young professionals to senior members who have long guided the association.

The outgoing team AMUOBA, under the leadership of President Mr. Aslam Parvez, along with Vice President Mr. Tariq Waseem, OSD Mr. Yusuf Abdullah, DOSD Ms. Talat Fatma with other EC members Mr. Adil Sareer, Mr. Masood Alam, Mr. Maqsood Habib, Mr. Shah Nawaz Siddiqui, Mr. Mohammad Shahid Ali, and Mr. Tauqir Alam-organized the elections efficiently, paying close attention to even the minutest details. Dinner and refreshments were arranged.

After the conclusion of voting and counting, the results were declared at 10:30 pm on 19th Dec. 2025. Mr. Asim Mahfuz Kidwai was elected President and Ms. Shazia Mansoor Vice President. The following office bearers were elected unopposed: General Secretary Mr. Mohammad Khurshid Anwar; Joint Secretary Mr. Syed Obaid Ahmed; OSD Mr. Syed Naved Asghar; Dy OSD Mr. Aaley Ali, and EC members Mr. Amaan Ahmad, Mr. Tanveer Ahmed, Mr. Abdul Rahman, Mr. Shadan Ahmad Khan, Mr. Hasan Kamal, Mr. Rizwan Ahmed Khan, Mr. Quaiser Danish and Mr. Shababat Ali Khan.

The election process was carried out with remarkable efficiency, transparency, and precision, thanks to the diligent supervision of Election Commissioner Mr. Jamil Akhtar and the unwavering support of his dedicated team members, Mr. Shueb, Mr. Javed, and Mr. Arsalan. Their hard work and commitment ensured a flawless and seamless election.

The election process—from initial site visits and logistical arrangements to the final departure of the guests was diligently managed by the President Mr. Aslam Parvez & Vice President Mr. Tariq Waseem.

President Mr. Aslam Parvez in his concluding speech, extended heartfelt thanks to the Election Commission team, voters verification team, the outgoing office bearers, the Advisory Committee members, Seniors and the entire Alig fraternity in Kuwait. He praised their strong belief in the democratic process and their overwhelming presence, which contributed to the success of the election. The President also expressed gratitude to the newly elected team, looking forward to professionalism, dedication, and a commitment to fostering dynamic teamwork during the association's tenure for the year 2026 & 2027.



Photo during the event.

Toastmasters Club organizes a friendly badminton tournament

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Desert Pioneers and Dreamweavers Toastmasters Club organised an outdoor friendly badminton tournament on Friday, the 19th of December 2025 at ICSK Junior School, Salmiya. The event brought together members, their friends and families, for a day filled with laughter, camaraderie and spirited matches. The event not only showcased our love for sports but also reinforced the strong bonds that make our Toastmasters family unique.

It was certainly an unforgettable day, especially as the weather seemed to have a mind of its own. There was continuous rainfall on the evening of December 18th, making the use of the open-air badminton court particularly challenging under these conditions. The rainfall persisted throughout the night, prompting me to wake twice to ascertain whether it had ceased. Fortunately, the rain let up early on the morning of the 19th, so we were able to proceed with the friendly badminton tournament as scheduled.

We all became lively and energetic. The court was filled with excitement and enthusiasts. Participants ranging from first-time players, including children, to seasoned badminton players took to the court with zeal displaying not just their athletic skills but also their sportsmanship and team spirit. Whether on the court or cheering from the sidelines, everyone contributed to an atmosphere of encouragement and positivity.

This event would not have been possible without the presence of a wonderful personality who was our umpire for the matches. Right from the onset, he ensured in managing, making calls, keeping score, and controlling the court. His dedication and professionalism as an umpire have been exemplary. If it weren't for him, players would have had never ending friendly arguments over the scores. I take this opportunity to formally acknowledge and express gratitude to our most patient and amazing umpire, Nabeel Fiyas who has now become a good friend to us all.

The participation of every player contributed to the success of this event. Each match was played with passion, and the friendly rivalries only added to the joy of the occasion. Grateful to all the players who brought their best game and made the tournament truly memorable. Thank you to every player for your competitive spirit during the game, which helped the tournament run smoothly

and brought great energy to the event. Special mention must be made to the children who put forth their utmost effort, with some, even outperforming their parents. Your presence and support created a warm and welcoming environment, ensuring everyone had a great time. However, there was one person Wafiq Anwar, who was the star of the day, he not only gave his best performance but introduced 2 remarkable players Shahul Hameed and Naina Mohamed who helped shift the momentum of the tournament entirely. The sportsmanship shown is highly commendable.

The friendly badminton tournament started with eight doubles teams competing, progressing through the quarterfinals and semifinals before concluding with a final match that determined the top three positions. Both teams competing in the final match demonstrated exceptional effort and competitiveness as they strived to secure first place.

Behind every successful event stands a group of dedicated supporters. I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mohamed Shiraz who helped with planning, setup, and arranging the court as well as to Nasruddin Parkar for bringing homemade hot ginger tea that gave us all the required energy we needed and kept us warm during the chilly early morning. His thoughtfulness is humbly appreciated. Last but not the least to all those who brought snacks and kept us fed during the tournament. The event culminated with everyone of us having a hearty breakfast at Nilavara restaurant.

More than just a sporting event, our badminton day was a celebration of togetherness and the spirit of Toastmasters. It was wonderful to see new friendships forming, laughter echoing across the courts, and everyone coming together to share memorable moments. Events like these remind us of the importance of community and the joy of connecting beyond our usual meetings.

We look forward to many more such gatherings in the future, where we can continue to build friendships, support one another, and of course, have fun! Thank you once again to everyone who participated and contributed to making this event a success. Let's carry this energy and enthusiasm into all our upcoming activities! Until next time, keep smiling, stay active, and cherish the memories we have created together.



Photos during the tournament.

From Broadway understudy to star

Skelley's magical journey with Harry Potter comes full circle

NEW YORK, Dec 23, (AP): John Skelley can't escape the pull of Harry Potter. It's as if something magical keeps them together.

The stage actor was first hired to be an understudy of the grown-up wizard in Broadway's "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child." Then he led the cast in San Francisco before the pandemic hit. He returned to Potter on a yearlong national tour and now finds himself back on Broadway, with the role officially his.

"It's like something that just kind of keeps coming back into my life," says Skelley. "There have been multiple times where I thought, 'Well, that might be the last time I do it.' And then the opportunity kind of keeps coming back."

All this from a guy who wasn't initially a huge fan of Potter and the gang from Hogwarts. He hadn't read the books before he auditioned, nor seen the stage show, although he had seen the movies when visiting his now-wife in grad school while she was at class.

Once he landed the gig, Skelley inhaled the "Harry Potter" books - one a week for seven weeks - and has listened to two different audiobooks. Harry Potter is now front and center.

"It's definitely become a huge part of my professional and personal life," he says. "I mean, the amount of Harry Potter memorabilia sitting in front of me right now is crazy."

The Minneapolis-born Skelley has been acting since age 8 when he starred in "It's a Jungle Out There," his second grade class musical. He graduated from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater BFA Actor Training Program and has been a professional actor since 2007.

He and his wife, the actor Maren Searle, moved to New York in 2014 and for four years landed commercial voice work, off-Broadway gigs and narrated audiobooks.

He earned a New York actor's rite of passage when he was cast in an episode of "Law & Order: SVU," playing a Legal Aid lawyer. "I had like two lines, but I felt like I'd made it: 'I'm a New York actor now. 'Law & Order,' baby!"

Then he got a call from his agent asking if he was willing to audition as an un-



This photo provided by Matthew Murphy shows from left, John Skelley as Harry Potter and Tom Felton as Draco Malfoy in 'Harry Potter and The Cursed Child'. (AP)

derstudy for Potter, going on if the main actor was ill or unavailable. He naturally said yes.

The play picks up 19 years after the end of the final novel, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows." An adult Potter is married to Ginny Weasley, sister of his best friend, Ron, who married brainy Hermione. Both couples have children and

all are in danger again.

Skelley attended an hourlong movement call - at one point dancing with a wand - and then was asked to perform two scenes from the play. He tried to keep smiling.

"When I was a kid, I was trying out for the freshman football team, and I was not the greatest athlete by far. But my philosophy was like, 'Run to the end of the drill, run to the end of the line, make sure you're the kid who doesn't give up early.' And that won me my spot on the football team. So, I tried to have that same attitude."

He got a call-back two days later for another movement call. He left thinking it hadn't gone well and he'd lost the chance. The next day his agent called with a question: "Do you want to go to Hogwarts?"

"My wife and I are both actors, and we had been in New York for about four years and struggling and trying to just make ends meet," he says. "And then, all of a sudden, this job came up, and it just felt like such a like a lifesaver."

The day after he made his Broadway debut as Potter, he went to a call-back and got the same role for the upcoming San Francisco production, which opened in December 2019. It closed in March 2020 as the pandemic gripped the nation.

The San Francisco show reopened in December 2021 and closed the following September. Skelley and his wife moved back to New York and within weeks got an offer to take "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" on tour - Chicago for six months, Los Angeles for four and Washington, D.C., for two. Searle got a job in the ensemble, so they toured together. Then the call came for him to make the Potter role his own this winter on Broadway.

One of Skelley's fans is John Tiffany, who directs "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" and calls the actor a vital member of the show's extended family.

"He brings so much truth and vulnerability to the role of Harry. It's been a joy to watch his performance deepen over the last seven years as he's explored this iconic character," Tiffany says. "A consummate professional and company leader, we're beyond thrilled to have John back on Broadway for this full-circle moment."

'It is a political decision'

'60 Minutes' pulls segment critical of deportation policy

NEW YORK, Dec 23, (AP): An internal CBS News battle over a "60 Minutes" story critical of the Trump administration has exploded publicly, with a correspondent charging it was kept off the air for political reasons and news chief Bari Weiss saying the story did not "advance the ball."

Two hours before airtime Sunday, CBS announced that the story where correspondent Sharyn Alfonsi spoke to deportees who had been sent to El Salvador's notorious CECOT prison, would not be a part of the show. Weiss, the Free Press founder named CBS News editor-in-chief in October, said it was her decision.

The dispute puts one of journalism's most respected brands - and a frequent target of President Donald Trump - back in the spotlight and amplifies questions about whether Weiss' appointment was a signal that CBS News was headed in a more Trump-friendly direction.

Alfonsi, in an email sent to fellow "60 Minutes" correspondents said the story was factually correct and had been cleared by CBS lawyers and its standards division. But the Trump administration had refused to comment for the story, and Weiss wanted a greater effort made to get their point of view.

"In my view, pulling it now after every rigorous internal check has been met is not an editorial decision, it is a political one," Alfonsi wrote in the email. She did not immediately respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Alfonsi said in the email that interviews were sought with or questions directed to - sometimes both - the White House, State Department and Department of Homeland Security.

"Government silence is a statement, not a VETO," Alfonsi wrote. "Their refusal to be interviewed is a tactical maneuver designed to kill the story. If the administration's refusal to participate becomes a valid reason to spike a story, we have effectively handed them a 'kill switch' for any reporting they find inconvenient."

"Spike" is a journalist's term for killing a story. But Weiss, in a statement, said that she looked forward to airing Alfonsi's piece "when it's ready."

Speaking Monday at the daily CBS News internal editorial call, Weiss was clearly angered by Alfonsi's memo. A transcript of Weiss' message was provided by CBS News.

Contentious

"The only newsroom I'm interested in running is one in which we are able to have contentious disagreements about the thorniest editorial matters with respect and, crucially, where we assume the best intent of our colleagues," Weiss said. "Anything else is completely unacceptable."

She said that while Alfonsi's story presented powerful testimony about torture at the CECOT prison, The New York Times and other outlets had already done similar work. "To run a story on this subject two months later, we need to do more," she said. "And this is '60 Minutes.' We need to be able to get the principals on the record and on camera."

It wasn't clear whether Weiss' involvement in seeking administration comment was sought. She reportedly helped the newscast arrange interviews with Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff this past fall to discuss Trump's Middle East peace efforts. Trump himself was interviewed by Norah O'Donnell on a "60 Minutes" telecast that aired on Nov. 2.

Trump has been sharply critical of "60 Minutes." He refused to grant the show an interview prior to last fall's election, then sued the network over how it handled an interview with election opponent Kamala Harris. CBS' parent Paramount Global agreed to settle the lawsuit by paying Trump \$16 million this past summer. More recently, Trump angrily reacted to correspondent Lesley Stahl's interview with Trump former ally turned critic Marjorie Taylor Greene.

"60 Minutes" was notably tough on Trump during the first months of his second term, particularly in stories done by correspondent Scott Pelley. In accepting an award from USC Annenberg earlier this month for his journalism, Pelley noted that the stories were aired last spring "with an absolute minimum of interference."

Pelley said that people at "60 Minutes" were concerned about what new ownership installed at Paramount this summer would mean for the broadcast.



The CBS logo at the entrance to its headquarters, in New York. (AP)

Film



This photo provided by Sony Pictures Classics shows Ralph Fienne as Dr. Henry Guthrie in Sony Pictures Classics 'The Choral,' (AP)

Heartfelt WWI drama about power of music

Fiennes strikes right note in 'The Choral'

NEW YORK, Dec 23, (AP): The best parts of the "Ocean's Eleven" movies aren't the big heists. They're when the crew, that motley assortment of raw talent, is being put together. And that's perhaps the best bit in "The Choral," if you substitute George Clooney with Ralph Fiennes and Las Vegas with northern England. And the ultimate goal is music, instead of oodles of cash. Stay with us here.

"The Choral" is a very gentle, very British movie about the importance of art, set against World War I, that's powerful in a decidedly non-flashy way. It's so genteel that when one young patron of the town's very nice sex worker is done with his business, they shake hands.

"The Choral" marks the fourth fruitful collaboration between director Nicholas Hytner and writer Alan Bennett, who previously combined for "The Madness of King George," "The History Boys" and "The Lady in the Van." This time, they return to Yorkshire.

With Britain in its second year of horrific, grinding warfare on the continent, the trains in the mill town of Ramsden leave with soldiers who volunteer to fight and return with casualties, men missing eyes, legs and arms.

When the town's Choral Society choirmaster signs up to battle the Germans, he's replaced by Fiennes' Dr. Henry Guthrie, who is brilliant but a dangerous choice. He spent

years in Germany, for a start, enthralled by its love of the arts, plus he's an atheist and is gay. "Let's just say I'd prefer a family man," grouses one local. Just being Catholic is suspicious around here.

The choral performance that had been chosen - Johann Sebastian Bach's "The St. Matthew Passion" - is soon axed because Bach is German. Same with Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Handel. Fiennes' Guthrie suggests Edward Elgar's "The Dream of Gerontius." At least he's British.

That's when you get the "Ocean's Eleven"-style getting-the-gang-together montage. Guthrie needs a huge choir and, with so many candidates off fighting, he's got to look in unlikely places. We see him go to pubs and hospitals and bakeries, looking for anyone who can sing. Won't that allow the riff-raff in? "Do you want a choir or do you want a Sunday School?" he replies. Fiennes is wonderful here, demanding of his amateur choir levels of excellence that's astronomical for a northern mill town. He's devoted to music but also to a German love partner in danger. Fiennes conveys that all in a glance or a sharp word, one of the most economical actors working.

The film opens its aperture to the young people in the choir - with standout performances by Jacob Dudman, Amara Okereke and a fun cameo by Simon Russell Beale - and Bennett's ability to be both sacred and profane shine.

A national draft is coming and the 18-year-old would-be soldiers feel like their futures are being taken away. They want to drink Champagne, ride in motorcars and see the sea before they die. "I want to live," says one.

They're also very horny and want to lose their virginities before they go to the front. Romantic rivalries flourish, but, again, this is very British. "Cheerio, then," says one heartbroken choir member who has returned from war maimed and is now being dumped by his longtime love.

The performance is put in jeopardy by the composer of "The Dream of Gerontius" when he stops by to find out what this choral society is doing to his work, which is extensive. It's being completely reimagined. "Art comes out of art," he is told. Will he be persuaded?

Small-town Britain has been the setting of several music-filled, let's-put-on-a-show movies - like "Brassed Off" and "The Full Monty" - and "The Choral" belongs in that good company, although it will leave a slightly sad note as the trains by the end are going to France with some fine singing soldiers aboard. Many will not return.

"The Choral," a Sony Pictures Classics release that is in theaters Christmas Day, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for some language and sexual content. Running time: 108 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Chalamet electrifies as a driven striver in 'Marty Supreme'

LOS ANGELES, Dec 23, (AP): "Everybody wants to rule the world," goes the Tears for Fears song we hear at a key point in "Marty Supreme," Josh Safdie's nerve-busting adrenaline jolt of a movie starring a never-better Timothee Chalamet.

But here's the thing: everybody may want to rule the world, but not everybody truly believes they CAN. This, one could argue, is what separates the true strivers from the rest of us.

And Marty - played by Chalamet in a delicious synergy of actor, role and whatever fairy dust makes a performance feel both preordained and magically fresh - is a striver. With every fiber of his restless, wiry body. They should add him to the dictionary definition.

Needless to say, Marty is a New Yorker. And needless to say, Chalamet is a New Yorker.

And so is Safdie, a writer-director Chalamet has called "the street poet of New York." So, where else could this story be set?

It's 1952, on Manhattan's Lower East

Side. Marty Mauser is a salesman in his uncle's shoe store, escaping to the storeroom for a hot tryst with his (married) girlfriend.

This witty opening sequence won't be the only thing recalling "Uncut Gems," co-directed by Safdie with his brother Benny before the two split for solo projects. That film, which feels much like the precursor to "Marty Supreme," began as a trip through the shiny innards of a rare opal, only to wind up inside Adam Sandler's colon, mid-colonoscopy.

Sandler's Howard Ratner was a New York striver, too, but sadder, and more troubled. Marty is young, determined, brash - with an eye always to the future. He's a great salesman: "I could sell shoes to an amputee," he boasts, crassly. But what he's plotting to unveil to the world has nothing to do with shoes. It's about table tennis.

How likely is it that this Jewish kid from the Lower East Side can become the very face of a sport in America, soon to be "starving at you from the cover of a Wheaties box?"

To Marty, perfectly likely. Still, he

knows nobody in the U.S. cares about table tennis. He's so determined to prove everyone wrong, starting at the British Open in London, that when there's a snag obtaining cash for his trip, he brandishes a gun at a colleague to get it.

Shaking off that sorta-armed robbery thing, Marty arrives in London, where he fast-talks his way into a suite at the Ritz. Here, he spies fellow guest Kay Stone (Gwyneth Paltrow, in a wise, stylish return to the screen), a former movie star married to an insufferable tycoon ("Shark Tank" personality Kevin O'Leary, one of many nonactors here.)

Kay's skeptical, but Marty finds a way to woo her. Really, all he has to say is: "Come watch me." Once she sees him play, she's sneaking into his room in a lace corselet.

This would be a good time to stop and consider Chalamet's subtly transformed appearance. He is stick-thin - duh, he never stops moving. His mustache is skimpy. His skin is acne-scarred - just enough to erase any movie-star sheen. Most strikingly, his

eyes, behind the round spectacles, are beady - and smaller. Definitely not those movie-star eyes.

But then, nearly all the faces in "Marty Supreme" are extraordinary. In a movie with more than 100 characters, we have known actors (Fran Drescher, Abel Ferrara); nonacting personalities (O'Leary, and an excellent Tyler Okonma (Tyler, The Creator) as Marty's friend Wally); and exciting newcomers like Odessa A'Zion as Marty's feisty girlfriend Rachel.

There are also a slew of nonactors in small parts, plus cameos from the likes of David Mamet and even high wire artist Philippe Petit. The dizzying array makes one curious how it all came together - casting director Jennifer Venditti taking interns? Production notes tell us that for one hustling scene at a bowling alley, young men were recruited from a sports trading-card convention.

Elsewhere on the creative team, composer Daniel Lopatin succeeds in channeling both Marty's beating heart and the ricochet of pingpong balls in his propulsive score.

Ambassador of India to Kuwait Tripathi inaugurates the event

‘Incredible India’ campaign launched to mark first anniversary of India-Kuwait strategic partnership



By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Arab Times/Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: To mark the first anniversary of the India-Kuwait Strategic Partnership, which was established during the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December 2024, the Indian Embassy in Kuwait launched an “Incredible India” tourism promotion campaign on Monday, December 22 at the iconic Kuwait Towers.

The event was inaugurated by the Ambassador of India to Kuwait, Paramita Tripathi, and CEO of Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) in Kuwait Anwar Abdullah Al-Hulaila.

The event was attended by members of the Kuwaiti and Indian media, travel agencies, tour operators, and prominent figures from the Indian community.

As part of the launch, Ambassador Tripathi and CEO Al-Hulaila flagged off 20 buses to launch the month-long tourism campaign for promoting India’s diverse tourism offerings. The buses showcase iconic destinations such as adventure tourism in Rishikesh (white water rafting), wildlife experiences at Gir Forest National Park, the serene backwaters of Kerala, and luxury travel on the Maharajas’ Express. Scenic and heritage sites including the tea estates of Munnar, Nubra Valley in Ladakh, Gulmarg in Kashmir, Charminar, Hawa Mahal, and Jal Mahal are also showcased as part of the month-long campaign, which aims to spread the message of “Incredible India” throughout Kuwait.

On the occasion, Ambassador Tripathi planted a Neem (Azadirachta indica) tree sapling at



the Kuwait Towers grounds in celebration of the India-Kuwait Strategic Partnership. The act was part of the ‘Plant for Mother (Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam)’ initiative launched by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on World Envi-



Top and above: Photos from the event



ronment Day in 2024, which encourages planting trees in honor of mothers. The initiative has already seen over 1.4 billion saplings planted worldwide till date.

India’s tourism sector continues to attract

millions of visitors each year, with 20.94 million foreign tourists recorded in 2024, alongside nearly 3 billion domestic tourist trips.

The country offers a rich and varied landscape, including the great Himalayas, cold



mountains of Ladakh, hot deserts of Rajasthan, pristine islands of the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep, wildlife safaris of lions, tigers, elephants and one-horned rhinos, river islands, beaches, lakes, and waterfalls.

There are 44 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and 96 Ramsar sites in India. Tourism contributes around 5.2 percent of India’s GDP and supports millions of jobs while generating substantial foreign exchange earnings.

Over the past decade, India has invested roughly USD 1 billion in tourism infrastructure, enhancing visitor experiences through development of tourism destinations, circuits, major projects, and rural tourism initiatives. Programs like the “Incredible India” campaign, the establishment of national and state tourism boards, and the recent introduction of e-visa facilities for Kuwaiti citizens aim to facilitate travel and further strengthen India’s tourism sector.

The “Incredible India” bus campaign is part of the Indian Embassy’s strategy to position India as a preferred destination for Kuwaiti tourists during the upcoming travel season.

The campaign is set to run for one month, bringing a visual celebration of India’s tourism to the streets of Kuwait while encouraging stronger cultural and tourism ties between the two nations. The embassy has been actively organizing a range of tourism promotion activities for this purpose.

Meanwhile, a lucky draw will be held for participants who post photographs of the Incredible India buses on social media platforms, including Facebook, X, and Instagram. They must use the hashtag “#IncredibleIndia” and tag the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

Ellison guarantees \$40.4 billion in Paramount’s hostile bid for Warner

NEW YORK, Dec 23, (AP): Paramount is sweetening its hostile takeover bid for Warner Bros. Discovery with an “irrevocable personal guarantee” from Larry Ellison, who is putting up billions of dollars to back the deal for his son’s company.

On Monday, Skydance-owned Paramount announced that Larry Ellison - the founder of Oracle and father of Paramount CEO David Ellison - had personally agreed to be responsible for \$40.4 billion of equity financing for the company’s offer, as well as any damage claims.

Paramount had previously said that the

Ellison family trust would be backing more than \$40 billion of its bid for Warner. But Warner’s board was critical of that decision last week, arguing that Paramount had “consistently misled” shareholders about the Ellison family’s backing because a “revocable trust is no replacement for a secured commitment.”

Paramount took a swipe at that assertion on Monday - maintaining that Larry Ellison holds the majority of the trust’s assets and that Warner had not previously asked for a personal guarantee. But nevertheless, the company said, it “elected to address WBD’s current stated concerns.”

Tourism

‘Truly impressive’

Ethnic New Year celebrations in China draw global visitors

GUIYANG, Dec 23, (Xinhua): To the rhythm of lusheng woodwind pipes and the scent of sticky rice cakes, a village in southwest China’s Guizhou Province celebrated its annual Dong New Year festival over the weekend -- an event that has become a gateway for global visitors.

Known as one of the major Dong villages in China, Zhaoxing Dong Village of Liping County holds unique folk cultural events each year, including frying Dong-style pastries, singing the grand song of the Dong ethnic group, hosting grand ethnic parades, lusheng musical competitions, and bonfire parties.

The vibrant festival attracted tourists from all over the world, creating a joyful festive atmosphere.

Konstantin Pokazachenko, a tourist from Moscow, Russia, arrived by high-speed train from Guilin, a renowned tourist destination in the neighboring Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. He and his friends have stayed in the village for two days. During this time, they visited many ancient buildings, experienced a grand parade and participated in the ritual activities.

“I have seen Chinese ethnic song and dance performances before, but this Dong New Year event featured more participants and a wide variety of performances. Experiencing it in person was truly impressive,” he said.

According to China’s National Immigration Administration (NIA), tourists from 76 countries now enjoy unilateral or mutual visa-free entry, with transit exemptions expanded to 55 countries.

Visa-free

Data from the NIA showed that visa-free entries accounted for over 7 million foreign arrivals in the third quarter of this year, representing 72.2 percent of all foreign entries and marking a 48.3 percent year-on-year increase.

Thanks to the visa-free policy, more and more international visitors choose China’s remote southwestern mountainous areas as their travel destination, adding more global vibe to the region.

Chloe Bertrand, who works in Guangdong Province, visited the village for the first time with her parents and sister, who had flown to China for the Christmas holiday.

“We chose Guizhou’s rural areas as the final stop of our China trip to experience local ethnic traditions,” she said, adding that the mountainous Guizhou is also ideal for hiking.

Sarwar Jahan, a vlogger from Bangladesh who has over 400,000 followers online, captured beautiful and exciting moments of the Dong New Year with his camera.

“Today’s grand parade was amazing. Local people truly love and take pride in their ethnic culture,” Jahan said. “The scenery, culture, and the smiles of the people deeply fascinated me.” Jahan plans to share his short videos on Facebook and YouTube to showcase the beauty of Guizhou to global audiences. “Now, cooperation between Bangladesh and China is deepening. Many Bangladeshis watch Chinese videos and are very interested in Chinese culture.” To date, nearly 10,000 inbound visitors have traveled to the village, figures show.

By organizing events such as the Dong New Year celebrations and village-level chorus



This photo shows a long-table banquet joined by tourists and locals in Zhaoxing Dong village of Liping County, southwest China’s Guizhou Province. (Xinhua)



Locals present belts with floral designs to tourists in Zhaoxing Dong village of Liping County, southwest China’s Guizhou Province. (Xinhua)

competitions, local authorities have developed distinctive ethnic cultural tourism projects that enrich rural tourism with a variety of cultural experiences, said Lu Weimin, Party chief of the village.

The village has now developed over 400 hotels, guesthouses and restaurants, creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for more than 2,000 villagers, Lu added.

The local initiative aligns with China’s broader national strategy. As noted in a recommendations document for the formulation of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), China will spur deeper integration of culture and tourism through the vigorous development of cultural

tourism and use culture to empower economic and social development.

The document also emphasized the need to offer more convenient and foreigner-friendly services for inbound tourists.

Liang Jianfeng, from Foshan City of Guangdong Province, known for its traditional lion dance, led a youth lion dance team to perform in the Dong Village.

“The annual Dong New Year celebration not only deepens ethnic cultural exchanges between Guizhou and Guangdong, but also lays a solid foundation for enhanced future cooperation in culture and tourism between the two regions,” Liang said.

	Ministry of Justice Part 1 Bankruptcy Management First Instance Court Hawalli Courts Complex	
In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful In the name of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Bankruptcy Management On Thursday, December 18, 2025, at the Bankruptcy Management Department With the membership of Mr. Ali Hassan Shams Al-Din (Bankruptcy Judge) And in the presence of Mr. Othman Adel Al-Safadi (Secretary) The following decision was issued In application No. 32024, Preventive Settlement Registered under automated number: 2444194230 - Submitted by: Banta Furniture and Furnishings Co. LLC Against:		
1- Kuwait Finance House 2- Anil United Bank – now Kuwait Finance House 3- Warba Bank 4- Al Mulla International Finance Company 5- Kuwait Industrial Bank 6- And others.		
Having reviewed the documents and papers: Whereas the facts of the application were previously detailed in the decision published in the official Gazette (Kuwait al-Yaum), Issue No. 1744, on June 22, 2025, regarding the commencement of preventive settlement proceedings concerning the submitted application, and the decision published in Kuwait al-Yaum, Issue No. 1749, on July 27, 2025, appointing Ms. Rabia Saad Al-Muhanna as “Supervisor” to follow up the application for preventive settlement proceedings and to oversee the company’s financial affairs, we summarize them as follows: The applicant, in her capacity as the debtor, submitted a request to commence preventive settlement proceedings against the respondents, stating that she is capable of continuing her business operations and that she has a clear operational plan and future cash flows that will enable her to overcome her financial difficulties and restore balance to her position. Following the issuance of the aforementioned decisions, a meeting was held between the applicant and the creditors on 2025/12/ to vote on the plan. The applicant company submitted to the Bankruptcy Department the minutes of the creditors’ meeting to vote on the proposed preventive settlement, which is the subject of the current application, along with six files containing the notices sent to attend the meeting, the attendance record, and the voting record. The meeting concluded with the approval of the proposed preventive settlement. The auditor attached an explanatory memorandum regarding the meeting, indicating that the preventive settlement plan had obtained the required majority. Legal Basis: Article 1 of the Bankruptcy Law, Law No. 7/1/2020, stipulates that: “For the purposes of this Law, the following terms and phrases shall have the meanings assigned to them below: ... Preventive Settlement: Procedures aimed at reaching an agreement between the debtor and their creditors on a proposed preventive settlement in accordance with the provisions of this Law. ... Required Majority: The majority required to consider a matter presented to the creditors’ meeting as having been approved, which is achieved if the following conditions are met: 1- The affected creditor or creditors holding at least more than half of the affected debts are present at the meeting where the vote will take place. 2- Approval by the creditor or creditors holding two-thirds of the debts represented at the meeting. 3- Approval by a numerical majority of the affected creditors after excluding the relevant parties from voting at the meeting. Affected creditor: Any creditor whose rights are impacted by the outcome of the vote on the matter under discussion and voting at the creditors’ meeting, where the result of the vote will prevent them from obtaining their rights as agreed upon with the debtor. Article 81, paragraph 1, of the same law stipulates that: “Within 10 days of the date of approval or rejection of the preventive settlement proposal, the debtor shall notify the Bankruptcy Department, the Supervisor, the Bankruptcy Committee, and the designated supervisory authority, as applicable, of this notification and attach the approved or rejected plan, the minutes of the meetings in which the vote took place, documents proving the notices sent to attend the meetings, proof of attendance, and proof of voting. If the plan is approved, the notification shall request ratification of the plan.” Article 82 of the same law stipulates that: “Within 10 days of the Bankruptcy Department receiving the notification of the creditors’ approval of the preventive settlement proposal and its attachments, the bankruptcy judge shall ratify the proposal after verifying the fulfillment of the following two conditions: 1- That the proposal has obtained the required majority approval.” Article 83 of the Bankruptcy Law states that a preventive settlement proposal must meet the criteria of fairness if it fulfills the following conditions: 1- Creditors receive sufficient information and adequate time for review and voting on the preventive settlement proposal submitted to the Bankruptcy Department before the commencement of preventive settlement proceedings. 2- The procedures for the creditors’ meeting and voting, as outlined in the preventive settlement proposal submitted to the Bankruptcy Department before the commencement of preventive settlement proceedings, are not violated. 3- The existing rights of creditors are respected – particularly the rights of creditors with liens and privileges – and equality is ensured among creditors with equal standing, especially regarding the sharing of losses and the distribution of new rights. Article 85 of the same law also permits any affected creditor who did not vote in favor of the preventive settlement proposal to appeal the creditors’ decision to approve the proposal to the Bankruptcy Department within 10 days of the date of the creditors’ meeting at which approval was decided. Article 86 of the Bankruptcy Law stipulates: “Bankruptcy proceedings stipulate that a preventive settlement proposal approved by the bankruptcy judge shall be binding on all creditors who rejected the proposal. The Bankruptcy Department shall announce, publish, notify, disclose, and register, in accordance with Article (83) of this Law, every decision issued approving a preventive settlement proposal, rejecting the proposal, suspending approval, terminating proceedings, initiating restructuring proceedings, or declaring bankruptcy, within 10 days of the decision’s issuance. The bankruptcy judge may, however, limit the registration of the decision to the bankruptcy register and the commercial register. Therefore, and given that the documents establish that the applicant company invited the affected creditors to attend a meeting to vote on the preventive settlement proposal, by means of notices that included the meeting’s date and location, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the preventive settlement proposal, the meeting was held on December 2, 2025, to vote on the proposal. The meeting resulted in the creditors’ approval of the preventive settlement proposal by the legally required majority. Minutes of the meeting were drawn up and signed by the debtor (the applicant company), the attending creditors with voting rights, and the representative of the creditors’ committee. The applicant company also complied with the legal requirement to notify the Bankruptcy Department of the creditors’ approval within the legally prescribed period. The notification included the approved plan, the minutes of the voting meeting, supporting documents, proof of attendance, and proof of voting. The notification also requested ratification of the preventive settlement proposal. Since none of the affected creditors filed an appeal with the Bankruptcy Department against the approval decision within the legally prescribed period, and given that the proposal obtained the required majority approval, fulfilling all three conditions, and met the standards of fairness stipulated in Article 83 of the Bankruptcy Law, the two conditions stipulated in Article 82 of the same law have also been met. Therefore, the Bankruptcy Judge decided:		
1- Approval of the proposed preventive settlement. 2- The Bankruptcy Department is tasked with publishing this decision in the Official Gazette (Kuwait al-Yaum), registering it, and notifying the applicant company, the creditors’ committee, the bankruptcy committee, and the General Directorate of Execution within 10 days of its issuance. 3- The applicant company is tasked with disclosing the decision on its website and publishing it in two local daily newspapers, one of which must be in English, and notifying all creditors, while depositing proof of implementation with the Bankruptcy Department.		
Judge Ali Hassan Shams El-Din	Secretary, Bankruptcy Othman Adel Al-Safadi	

Advanced gene-editing technology enables high-yield, disease-resistant crops

Chinese scientists develop ‘precision-designed’ seeds to boost food security

BEIJING, Dec. 23, (Xinhua): Chinese scientists have announced a series of major breakthroughs in developing “precision-designed” seeds that can increase crop yields while reducing fertilizer use and enhancing disease resistance, marking a significant advance for food security and sustainable agriculture.

At a press conference held on Monday, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) unveiled the scientific achievements of its strategic priority research program, “Precision Seed Design and Breeding.” Launched in November 2019, this flagship initiative has brought together experts from over 30 institutions to address pressing challenges in agriculture, including excessive fertilizer use, frequent crop diseases, and limited arable land.

“Over the past six years, the program has created 37 pilot crop and livestock varieties, enhancing their superior traits. These varieties have been cultivated across nearly 14.48 million mu (about 965,000 hectares), delivering substantial social and economic benefits,” said Li Jiayang, CAS academican and chief scientist of the program.

Researchers have identified key genes that govern valuable crop traits such as higher yield, improved nutrient use efficiency, and enhanced resistance to pests, drought and diseases. By leveraging advanced technologies like genome editing, they have developed



A rapidly domesticated wild rice species (left), and a corn species (right), is pictured at a press conference of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in Beijing, capital of China, Dec. 22, 2025. (Xinhua)



new crop varieties that achieve both high performance and environmental sustainability.

A standout achievement is the discovery of the OsTCP19 gene, which enables rice to maintain stable yields even when nitrogen fertilizer application is reduced by 20 to 30 percent. “This could help resolve the long-standing issue of excessive fertilizer use in Chinese agriculture,” said Chong Kang, CAS academican and researcher at the Institute of Botany under CAS.

In wheat research, scientists have identified genes providing broad-spectrum resistance to powdery mildew. They also developed a new variety named “Zhongke 166,” which exhibits strong resistance to Fusarium head blight, a destructive disease. “This variety has already been planted across nearly 1.5 million mu (about 100,000 hectares) and helps reduce pesticide usage,” Chong added. Chinese researchers have also made remarkable progress in breeding technology. Using a homegrown genome-editing tool,

they have created new wheat lines that are both high-yielding and disease-resistant, a combination previously difficult to achieve through conventional breeding. In 2024, this work earned China’s first biosafety certificate for a gene-edited staple crop, a major milestone in agricultural regulation.

Another pioneering effort involves the rapid domestication of a wild rice species. By “reprogramming” this wild plant, scientists developed a new rice type in a significantly shorter timeframe than traditional breeding

methods allow. “This achievement has gained international recognition as a breakthrough that could open new avenues for global food security,” Li said.

The program has also yielded results in other crops and in aquaculture. For example, scientists have developed 10 new soybean varieties with higher yield and improved nutritional value, addressing China’s heavy dependence on soybean imports. In fish breeding, researchers created a new crucian carp variety, “Zhongke 6,” which grows 25 percent faster, has high survival rates, and im-

proves feed use efficiency by 20.1 percent compared to existing breeds. They have also successfully bred a boneless strain suitable for farming.

Among the most acclaimed outcomes is the “Zhongkefa” rice series. One variety, “Zhongkefa 5,” delivers yields more than 20 percent higher than popular local varieties in northeast China, performs well in saline-alkaline soils, and ranks among the top five most widely cultivated conventional rice varieties in the country. Another variety, “ZKFZG1,” is China’s first early-season japonica rice for double-cropping systems, allowing new-season rice to reach markets two to three months earlier than usual.

“These advances represent a fundamental shift in China’s crop breeding paradigm, moving from traditional, experience-based methods to precise, predictable and efficient ‘molecular design,’” Li explained. “This approach not only shortens breeding cycles but also enables the development of crops tailored to specific needs, such as enhanced nutrition, stress tolerance, or resource use efficiency.”

The success of the seed program demonstrates China’s growing strength in agricultural science and technology. These innovations are poised to reinforce China’s food security, facilitate the shift toward greener farming practices, and provide new solutions to global agricultural challenges, he added.

SIRT6 vital for healthy neurons

Study uncovers key enzyme protecting brain from aging

JERUSALEM, Dec 23, (Xinhua): A team of researchers from Israel, Russia, the Czech Republic and Belgium has discovered how an enzyme protein called SIRT6 protects the brain from damage that occurs with aging, Israel’s Ben-Gurion University of the Negev said in a statement on Sunday.

The study, published in Nature Communications, showed that SIRT6 controls the way the brain uses tryptophan, an important substance that helps produce energy and key chemicals like serotonin and melatonin.

Tryptophan is often called a “sleep molecule,” but it also plays a role in mood, learning, and brain health. In aging and certain brain diseases, the balance of tryptophan use is disrupted. This can reduce the production of serotonin and melatonin while increasing harmful byproducts that are toxic to nerve cells.

The researchers used models in human cells, mice, and fruit flies to study this process. When SIRT6 levels drop, tryptophan is used more for energy production, creating toxic compounds and leaving the brain without enough protective neurotransmitters.

The study also found a way to reverse this damage. In fruit flies lacking SIRT6, blocking another enzyme called TDO2 reduced the harmful byproducts, protected brain tissue, and improved movement.

These findings suggest new possibilities for treating age-related brain disorders, sleep problems, and mood changes, the researchers said.

Targeting SIRT6 or TDO2 may help protect the brain, restore healthy chemical balance, and improve quality of life as people get older, they said.



This photo taken on Feb. 18, 2025 shows a view of Taiyuan City, north China’s Shanxi Province. (Xinhua)

EPICC improves simulations

Chinese researchers develop advanced air quality model

BEIJING, Dec. 23, (Xinhua): Chinese researchers have developed a new air quality model that enables more accurate simulation of two major pollutants: fine particulate matter and ground-level ozone.

Named the Emission and Atmospheric Processes Integrated and Coupled Community Model (EPICC), it provides a refined tool for understanding and managing complex air pollution challenges, especially in fast-developing regions.

Unlike earlier air quality models, which were typically developed by individual researchers or small teams -- an approach that often constrained overall progress -- this initiative adopted a collaborative framework. Scientists formed the “EPICC Model Working Group,” comprising 59 researchers from 13 institutions, including the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Tsinghua University, and Peking University.

Air quality models play a critical role in studying the formation, transport, and transformation of pollutants in the lower atmosphere, supporting the design of effective pollution control strategies. While leading models have historically originated in the United States, the researchers noted that such mod-

els are not always well-suited to China’s unique pollution profile, which includes coal smoke, photochemical smog, and severe haze.

The EPICC model integrates the latest scientific insights into key atmospheric processes. Designed with a modular structure, it allows components to be easily updated or interchanged. The model incorporates advanced chemical representations, such as manganese-catalyzed sulfate formation and aerosol-sunlight interactions.

According to the working group, performance tests demonstrate that EPICC version 1.0 significantly improves the simulation accuracy of particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less (PM2.5) and ozone. It addresses common shortcomings of earlier models, which tended to underestimate sulfate pollution and overestimate summer ozone concentrations.

“This model can serve as a more effective decision-support tool not only for China but also for other rapidly developing countries grappling with similarly complex air pollution issues,” the working group added.

The study detailing the new model has been published in the journal Advances in Atmospheric Sciences.

The Conversation

How corpse plant produces its terrible smell and why female flowers do most of the work

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

By Delphine Farmer, Colorado State University; Mj Riches, Colorado State University, and Rose Russell, Colorado State University

Sometimes, doing research stinks. Quite literally.

Corpse plants are rare, and seeing one bloom is even rarer. They open once every seven to 10 years, and the blooms last just two nights. But those blooms - red, gorgeous and massive at over 10 feet (3 meters) tall - stink. Think rotting flesh or decaying fish.

Corpse plants definitely earn their nickname. Their pungent odors attract not only the carrion insects - beetles and flies normally drawn to decomposing meat - that pollinate the plants, but also crowds of onlookers curious about the rare, elaborate display and that putrid scent.

Plant biologists have studied corpse flowers for years, but as atmospheric chemists we were curious about something specific: the mixes of chemicals that create that smell and how they change during the flower’s short bloom.

While previous studies had identified dozens of volatile organic and sulfur compounds that contribute to corpse flower scents, no one had yet quantified those emission rates or looked at how the rates changed throughout a single evening. We recently got that opportunity. What we found opened a new window into the complexity and strategic behavior of a very unusual flower.

Corpse plants are native to the Indonesian island of Sumatra but are considered endangered, even there. Several years ago, Colorado State University was given a corpse plant, or Titan arum (Amorphophallus titanum), to study. Its name is Cosmo - Titan arums are rare enough that they get names.

Cosmo sat dormant in the CSU plant growth facility for several years before showing signs that it was about to flower in spring 2024. When news came that Cosmo was going to bloom, we jumped at the opportunity to bring our atmospheric chemistry expertise into the greenhouse.

We deployed a series of devices for collecting air samples before, during and after the bloom. Then we measured chemicals in the air samples using a gas chromatography mass spectrometer, an instrument that is mentioned frequently on crime TV shows. Colleagues also brought a time-of-flight mass spectrometer that we placed downwind of Cosmo to measure volatile organic compounds every second.

To make each rare bloom count, corpse plants put vast amounts of energy into the show, producing large flowers that can weigh more than 100 pounds.

The plants heat themselves up using a biochemical process known as thermogenesis that enhances emissions of organic compounds that attract insects.



During Cosmo’s bloom, Colorado State University Plant Growth Facilities Manager Tammy Brenner points toward the inside of the spathe, the large outer sheath that opens. Just below her hand is the floral chamber, where rows of tiny female and male flowers were blooming. They aren’t easy to see from outside, but the smell is impossible to miss. (CSU photo)



Each corpse plant has both male (yellow) and female (red) flowers. The female flowers bloom first to attract pollinators coming from other corpse flowers. The next day, the male flowers bloom, providing pollen for flies and beetles to carry away to the next plant. The thin, yellow strands are pollen. (CSU photo)

Corpse plant emissions are notorious. While some local communities revered the plants, others would try to destroy them. In the 19th century, European explorers actively collected Titan arum plants and distributed them throughout botanical gardens and conservatories around the world.

Corpse plants are dichogamous: Each has both male and female flowers. Inside the giant petal-like leaf called a spathe, each plant has a central spike called a spadix that is ringed with many rows of tiny female and male flowers near its base. These female and male flowers bloom at separate times to avoid self-pollination, and they are the source of the smell.

On the first night of a corpse plant bloom, the female flowers bloom to attract pollinators that, if they’re lucky, are carrying pollen from another corpse plant. Then, on the second night, the male flowers bloom, allowing pollinating insects to carry pollen off to another corpse plant.

The rare blooms and avoidance of self-pollination highlight not only why these plants are listed as endangered but also their need for efficient pollination strategies - exactly the chemistry we wanted to investigate.

We found that the female flowers do most of the work attracting pol-

linators, as previous studies noted. They emit vast amounts of organic sulfur, plus some other compounds that mimic rotting smells to attract beetles and flies that normally feed on animal carcasses.

It’s this organic sulfur that really stinks from the female bloom: Methanethiol, a molecule in the same chemical family of compounds as the odors emitted by skunks, was the single most-emitted compound during Cosmo’s bloom.

We also measured many other organic sulfur compounds, including dimethyl disulfide, which has a garlic smell; dimethyl sulfide, known for an unpleasant scent; and dimethyl trisulfide, which smells like rotting cabbage or onions. We also measured dozens of other compounds: sweet-smelling benzyl alcohol, asphalt-scented phenol and fragrant benzaldehyde.

While previous studies found some of the same compounds with different instruments, we were able to measure the methanethiol and quantify the concentrations quickly enough to track the progress of the bloom overnight.

As Cosmo bloomed, we combined our instrument data with measurements of the air change rate in the greenhouse - meaning how fast it takes for air to move through the space - and were able to calculate the emission rates.

The volatile emissions added up to about 0.4% of the plant’s average biomass, meaning the plant, which we estimated to weigh about 100 pounds, lost a measurable amount of weight while producing those chemicals. That’s a lot of stench.

The female flowers bloomed all night, but early the next morning the emissions rapidly stopped. We wondered whether this cutoff point just might be evidence of floral trapping: a pollination strategy employed by other members of Titan arum’s family.

During floral trapping, the floral chamber can physically close through movement of hairs or expansion of parts of the plant, such as the surrounding spathe. A physical closure of the floral chamber would not be easily visible to bystanders, but it could rapidly cut off the emissions the way we observed.

An Australian arum lily that smells like dung uses this technique. The carrion insects that come for the female flowers are forced to stay for the male flowers that bloom the next night, so they can carry off that pollen to find another female corpse bloom. Our evidence suggests that the corpse flower probably does too.

The second night, the emissions started back up - at much lower levels. The male flowers emit a sweeter set of aromatic compounds and far less sulfur than the females.

We hypothesize that the male flowers don’t need to work as hard to smell pungent in order to attract as many insects because insects are already there due to floral trapping. A 2023 study found that thermogenesis was also weaker during the male bloom: the spadix reached 96.8 degrees Fahrenheit (36 C) during the female bloom, but only 92 F (33.2 C) during the male bloom.

We found that the corpse plant’s powerful emission rates can be an order of magnitude stronger than landfills - albeit only for two nights. These strong emissions are well designed to move far through the Sumatran jungle to attract carrion flies. (AP)

Singapore raises age limit for 1st-time blood donors

SINGAPORE, Dec. 23, (Xinhua): Singapore will raise the upper age limit for first-time blood donors to 65 from 60, effective Jan. 2 next year, the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) said.

Under the new rules, first-time do-

nors will be allowed to give blood up to one day before their 66th birthday, while repeat donors may continue donating until age 75, the HSA said in a statement on Monday.

“With our aging population, it is crucial that we tap into every safe op-

portunity to expand our donor pool while maintaining the highest safety standards for both donors and recipients,” HSA Chief Executive Officer Raymond Chua said.

Data from HSA based on donors up to the current age limit of 60 show that

adverse reactions decline with age, a trend consistent with findings from international studies, the authority said.

Singapore needs to maintain a minimum blood stockpile of nine days to ensure emergency preparedness, the HSA noted.

Fans celebrate Afghanistan’s heritage

Thousands turn out to cheer on buzkashi equestrian games

KABUL, Afghanistan, Dec 23, (AP): Through the dust kicked up by the pounding hooves of a scrum of horses and riders, a winner emerges. The victorious team gallops around the playing field, holding a flag aloft. The final of Afghanistan’s hugely popular annual tournament of buzkashi, a traditional equestrian sport with few formal rules that is known for its often violent scrums, was played Monday. Traditionally, riders from two opposing teams would compete to score goals using a goat carcass as a ball. A fake carcass is now used, made of leather and rope and stuffed with straw and weights to simulate the size and weight of a dead animal. The players - 12 riders on each team - hang out of the saddle at impossible angles, swooping down to grab the fake carcass and gallop ahead of the rest of the riders toward the goal. The game was banned during the Taliban’s first rule of Afghanistan in



Left-right: Riders from the Sar-e-Pul and Badakhshan compete in the final of Afghanistan’s annual buzkashi tournament, a traditional equestrian sport in which riders score points using a fake goat carcass, on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan. (AP)

the late 1990s but reemerged after their ouster, and they have allowed it to continue since seizing power

again in 2021, with government officials attending the matches. Monday’s final, in which the



northern province of Sar-e-Pul crushed the northeastern province of Badakhshan 7-0, was the 11th day of

the national league tournament. The province of Baghlan came third and Kunduz fourth out of the 11 teams

that participated. Eight foreign players from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan also joined the teams, said Atal Mashwani, the spokesman of Afghanistan’s General Directorate of Physical Education and Sports. A corporate sponsor - a gasoline company - ensures funding for the tournament, and there is a prize of a car for each of the first four teams, as well as cups, medals and certificates. The tournament is wildly popular, with thousands of men and boys packing the spectator stands in the playing field in central Kabul. Some scrambled up trees or electricity pylons for a better view. Restrictions placed on women and girls in Afghanistan mean they are not allowed to attend as spectators - although in the country’s conservative society, women attending such matches was frowned upon even when there were no formal restrictions on their movements.

Club has done a solid job

Kane hails team spirit behind record season

BERLIN, Dec 23, (AP): Even by Bayern Munich standards, it’s been an unusually dominant year in Germany. A 4-0 win at Heidenheim on Sunday meant Vincent Kompany’s team ends 2025 nine points clear in the Bundesliga, well on the way to retaining the title it won back in May after Bayer Leverkusen’s one-season reign. A first domestic double since 2020 is possible, too. “It was an amazing year. To be able to win the league with this team was really special for me,” Bayern striker Harry Kane said Sunday. “I felt like from that moment, even in the Club World Cup (in June), we started to build a spirit and a team energy that’s hard to break.” Just once in 2025 has Bayern lost to German opposition, 3-2 against humble Bochum in March. The team’s goal difference 15 games into this Bundesliga season is a barely believable +44, far more than any other team in Europe’s “big five” leagues. Kane has scored 30 goals for Bayern in all competitions this season, while Luis Díaz has shone since arriving from Liverpool for a reported 75 million euros (\$87 million) and 17-year-old Lennart Karl has been a revelation. Even long-term injuries to Jamal Musiala, Alphonso Davies and Dayot Upamecano couldn’t slow Bayern down as the team started 2025-26 on a 16-game winning run. So what comes next? Winning the Bundesliga is the minimum for any Bayern coach. The club has done a solid job in replicating that German consistency in Europe this season, but the real tests are yet to come. A quarterfinal exit to Inter Milan in the 2024-25 Champions League was a tough blow, while losing to Paris Saint-Germain at the same stage of the Club World Cup was more understandable, especially since that game



Munich’s Harry Kane celebrates during the German Bundesliga soccer match between VfB Stuttgart and FC Bayern Munich in Stuttgart, Germany. (AP)

saw a grisly injury to Musiala. Bayern is now second in the Champions League table and won plaudits for its grit in beating PSG with 10 men, though a meek 3-1 loss to Arsenal was a warning there’s still work left to do. There’s also the German Cup. Since Bayern’s last win in 2020, it hasn’t been past the quarterfinals. Coach Kompany has a decision to make when Musiala finally returns from the leg fracture that’s kept him out since July. Does he change a winning team to incorporate a player who was crucial to Bayern last season but is yet to play with Díaz? Bayern’s consistency is mirrored by the instability of its main German rivals. Second-place Borussia Dortmund ends the year with unrest in the squad after defender Nico Schlotterbeck criticized his teammates’ work rate and forward Karim Adeyemi protested against a decision to substitute him. Leverkusen started the year in chaos with coach Erik ten Hag dismissed after three games, though Kasper Hjulmand has steadied the ship and even stunned Manchester City.

BYU dominates Eastern Washington

Arizona stays perfect

TUCSON, Ariz., Dec 23, (AP): Brayden Burries scored 20 points, Ivan Kharchenko added 14 and top-ranked Arizona overcame a sluggish start to rout Bethune-Cookman 107-71 on Monday night. The Wildcats (12-0) remained No. 1 in this week’s AP Top 25 after shutting down San Diego State on Saturday, but labored early on offense in the final game before their holiday break. Careless at times with the ball, Arizona allowed Bethune-Cookman (3-9) to hang around until ratcheting up its defensive pressure midway through the first half. Arizona used a big run to build a 14-point halftime lead and shot 57% from the floor to match its best start since opening 12-0 in 2014-15. The Wildcats scored 50 points in the paint, grabbed 20 more rebounds and converted 36 points off Bethune-Cookman’s 22 turnovers. Arizona point guard Jaden Bradley had 11 points, five rebounds, five assists and four steals. Arizona is one of six remaining undefeated teams in Division I and has seven straight wins by at least 20 points, its longest streak since eight straight 20-point wins in 1929, according to Sportradar. **BYU 109, Eastern Washington 83** In Provo., AJ Dybantsa had 33 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists to lead No. 10 BYU to a victory over Eastern Washington. Dybantsa became the first player with a triple-double for the Cougars since Kyle Collinsworth against UAB on March 16, 2016. Richie Saunders had 22 points to help BYU (12-1) go unbeaten through a four-game homestand. Kennard Davis Jr. and Robert Wright III added 17 points apiece. Wright also dished out seven assists. The Cougars shot 61% from the field in the second half and made 16 3-pointers. Davis led the way with a career-high five. Kiree Huie led Eastern Washington with 17 points. Jojo Anderson and Al-

ton Hamilton IV added 13 apiece for the Eagles (2-11), who lost to a Big 12 opponent for the third time this season. **Illinois 91, Missouri 48** In St. Louis, Freshman guard Keaton Wagner made a career-best five 3-pointers and scored 22 points to lead No. 20 Illinois to a 91-48 rout of Missouri. Andrej Stojakovic returned from a first-half injury to score 16 points, and Tomislav Ivisic added 14 points as the Fighting Illini (9-3) rolled to the most lopsided victory in the history of the Braggins’ Rights rivalry. Sebastian Mack had 17 points off the bench to lead Missouri (10-3) as coach Dennis Gates left his reserves in for much of the second half with the game out of hand. After building a 16-point lead at halftime, the Illini poured it on with two 3-pointers from Ivisic in the opening minutes of the second half and finally pulled their starters with 2 1/2 minutes left. North Carolina 99, East Carolina 51 In Chapel Hill, Caleb Wilson had 21 points and 12 rebounds, and No. 12 North Carolina had its highest-point total of the season in a 99-51 victory over East Carolina. Wilson also had four blocks and three steals, while Henri Veesaar finished with 16 points and 10 rebounds. Luka Bogavac added 15 points. Seth Trimble scored 12 for the Tar Heels (12-1), who hit 12 3-pointers and shot 54% from the field. Gio Emejuru finished with 21 points and 14 rebounds for ECU (5-8). Jordan Riley, who came in averaging a team-high 21.7 points, scored a season-low 11 on 4-of-24 shooting. **Kansas 90, Davidson 61** In Lawrence, Tre White and Flory Bidunga each had 18 points and eight rebounds as No. 17 Kansas used balanced scoring to beat Davidson. Six players finished in double figures for the Jayhawks (10-3), including all five starters. Bryson Tiller added 11 points and Jamari McDowell scored 10. Melvin Council Jr. had 10 points, nine assists and seven rebounds.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Dec 23, (AP): Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points, and the Oklahoma City Thunder bounced back after two losses in three games to beat the Memphis Grizzlies 119-103 on Monday night in a matchup of teams missing several key contributors.

Gilgeous-Alexander made 11 of 20 shots and had eight assists and four steals. It was his 100th consecutive game with at least 20 points, adding to the second-longest streak in NBA history. Jalen Williams scored 24 points and Ajay Mitchell added 16 off the bench before leaving midway through the fourth quarter for Oklahoma City (26-3), which played without starters Chet Holmgren (illness) and Isaiah Hartenstein (calf soreness). Cedric Coward and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope each scored 15 points for Memphis (13-16), which played without injured starters Ja Morant (ankle) and Zach Edey (ankle). The Grizzlies committed 23 turnovers, leading to 31 Oklahoma City points. The teams combined to shoot 80 3-pointers. The Grizzlies were 18 for 41 (44%), while the Thunder made 15 of 39 (38%). Oklahoma City led 67-54 at halftime. The Thunder turned a 57-47 lead into a 17-point advantage on a dunk by Williams, a deep 3-point basket by Lu Dort and a layup by Gilgeous-Alexander. Three turnovers by Caldwell-Pope fueled the blitz. **Nuggets 135, Jazz 112** In Denver, Jamal Murray and the Denver Nuggets raced out to a 19-0 lead in the opening four minutes and tied a franchise record for 3-pointers with 24, cruising to a victory over the Utah Jazz. It was the second time in 17 days that Utah got down big before hitting a shot or a free throw. The New York Knicks led the Jazz 23-0 on their way to a 146-112 win on Dec. 5. The biggest run to open an NBA game was 29-0 by the Los Angeles Lakers against Sacramento on Feb. 4, 1987. Denver shot 68.2% in the first quarter and made 15 of 28 from 3-point range in the first half, five by Murray. He scored 27 points and Cameron Johnson went 6 of 6 from deep to finish with 20. Nikola Jokic had 14 points, 13 rebounds and 13 assists, and Peyton Watson scored 20 after missing two games. Jokic got his 14th triple-double of the season and 178th of his career when he fed Watson for a layup with 7:10 left in



Orlando Magic guard Jase Richardson (11) land on top of Golden State Warriors guard Brandin Podziemski (2) while going for a loose ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

the third quarter. Lauri Markkanen had 27 points and Keyonte George scored 20 for Utah, which has dropped three straight. **Warriors 120, Magic 97** In San Francisco, Stephen Curry roared back from a rough first half to score 18 of his 26 points after intermission, Jimmy Butler had 21 points and the Golden State Warriors ran away from the Orlando Magic in the second half for the win. Curry played on a tender left ankle and missed his initial six 3-point tries - beginning 3 for 13 from the floor - before finally connecting from deep with 8:20 left in the third quarter to pull the Warriors within 71-69. That was all it took to get Golden State rolling on a 14-4 run. The two-time MVP shot 10 for 23 overall, making 4 of 13 3s. He had six assists and two of his team’s eight steals. Paolo Banchero had 21 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists, and Desmond Bane scored 20 points for Orlando in the first night of a road back-to-back. **Pelicans 113, Mavericks 113** In New Orleans, Zion Williamson scored 24 points, including 10 straight in a decisive two-minute span of the fourth quarter, to power the New Orleans Pelicans to a 119-113 victory over the Dallas Mavericks, extending the Pelicans’ season-long winning streak to five games. The Pelicans, who started the season 3-22, have posted their longest winning

streak since 2022. New Orleans erased an 87-79 deficit after three quarters with a 38-19 run in the first 10:24 of the final quarter. With New Orleans leading 105-103, Williamson scored on five of the Pelican’s next six possessions, four of them on strong drives to the basket from the right side, to put the Pelicans up 117-106 with 1:37 left. The Mavericks were led by Anthony Davis’ season-high 35 points. They scored seven straight points to cut the New Orleans lead to 117-113 with 18.1 seconds left, but Trey Murphy III iced the game for the Pelicans with two free throws with 10.4 seconds remaining. Derik Queen had 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Pelicans, and Saddiq Bey added 19 points and seven rebounds. **Cavaliers 139, Hornets 132** In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points and De’Andre Hunter had 15 of his 27 in the second half, powering the Cleveland Cavaliers to victory over the Charlotte Hornets. Darius Garland added 27 points and 10 assists for Cleveland, which pulled away in the second half to snap a three-game losing streak. The Cavaliers also had lost three straight at home and are 2-5 at Rocket Arena since Nov. 30. LaMelo Ball led Charlotte with 23 points and nine assists, making six 3-pointers. Rookie Kon Knueppel and Brandon Miller each had 20 points, while Moussa Diabate grabbed a season-high 14 rebounds.

Hunter gave the Cavaliers a big boost early in the third quarter, remaining on the court after being bloodied by a flagrant foul to his face by Diabate. He made both free throws, then a 3-pointer on the subsequent possession to push their lead to 98-85. Dean Wade chipped in 14 points and seven rebounds for Cleveland, which took its largest advantage at 131-112. Lonzo Ball had six points and seven assists in the middle contest of a three-game homestand that precedes the Cavaliers’ Christmas Day game at New York. Mitchell ended the first half by banking in a 28-footer at the horn, giving him 18 points and the Cavaliers a 70-63 advantage. Garland scored 17 points, while Knueppel and Ball each had 15 for Charlotte. **Pistons 110, Trail Blazers 102** In Portland, Jalen Duren had 26 points and 10 rebounds as the Detroit Pistons held off the Portland Trail Blazers 110-102 on Monday night after blowing a 21-point lead. Ausar Thompson added 18 points and 12 rebounds for the Eastern Conference-leading Pistons (23-6). Duncan Robinson scored 15 and Cade Cunningham had 14 before fouling out early in the fourth quarter. Shaedon Sharpe led the Trail Blazers (12-17) with 25 points on 11-of-21 shooting but also committed eight turnovers. Deni Avdija added 18 points, nine assists and eight rebounds.

Australia rings the changes for 4th test

MELBOURNE, Australia, Dec 23, (AP): Todd Murphy will replace the injured Nathan Lyon as Australia’s spin bowler and captain Pat Cummins as expected will be rested for the fourth Ashes test against England beginning Friday at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Murphy is set to play his first test in Australia in the Boxing Day match, edging out Matt Kuhnemann and Corey Rochiccioli for a spot in the 15-man squad named Tuesday. With the Ashes retained following Australia’s third straight win in the series at Adelaide, Cummins will sit out the match following a serious back injury in June. He said after Australia’s 82-run win over England in Adelaide that he would be unlikely to play at the MCG. Steve Smith is expected to be fit after a vertigo episode forced him to miss the third test and he would again captain Australia in Cummins’ absence. Fast bowler Jhye Richardson is in contention to play his first test in more than four years after being recalled to the squad following a series of injuries. Lyon tweaked his hamstring while diving to save a boundary on the final day of the third test.

The 38-year-old Lyon has enjoyed an injury-free run through most of his test career, with the other setback being a torn calf in the 2023 Ashes. Murphy played two tests during that 2023 Ashes series after Lyon was injured, taking six wickets in Australia’s loss at The Oval

in south London. Australia coach Andrew McDonald said Tuesday that Lyon underwent surgery on his torn hamstring and could be out of action for many months. “He’s pretty shattered,” McDonald said of Lyon. “He’s a huge part of what



Australian players celebrate the dismissal of England’s Jamie Smith during play on the final day of the third Ashes cricket test between England and Australia in Adelaide, Australia. (AP)

we do. He’s facing a long recovery time frame, so I’ll leave that up to the medical team, but all I know is it’ll be pretty long-ish (recovery).” McDonald also said Cummings was no certainty for Australia’s T20 World Cup campaign. Australia’s first match is on Feb. 11 against Ireland at Colombo, Sri Lanka. Although Cummins captains the test and ODI teams, allrounder Mitch Marsh leads Australia in the shortest format. “I’m assuming, he’ll (Cummins) have a check-in scan at some point and gather more information around where his back is at,” McDonald said. “Looking forward to the World Cup, whether he will be there or not, I can’t really say. It’s quite gray at the moment. We’re hopeful.” The fifth and final Ashes test is scheduled to begin Jan. 3 at the Sydney Cricket Ground. **Australia squad:** Steve Smith (captain), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Brendan Doggett, Cameron Green, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Todd Murphy, Michael Neser, Jhye Richardson, Mitchell Starc, Jake Weatherald, Beau Webster.

Kuwait Club aims to reclaim league lead against Burgan

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The fourth round of the Volleyball League continues today at the Union Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, featuring two exciting matchups. At 5:30 PM, Al-Qadsia will take on Al-Sahel, followed by Kuwait Club facing Burgan at 7:30 PM.

Al-Sulaibikhat leads the standings with 8 points, edging out Kuwait, also with 8 points, on points difference. Al-Arabi and Al-Qadsia are third and fourth with 7 points each, followed by Al-Shabab in fifth with 6 points, Kazma sixth with 5 points, Al-Yarmouk seventh with 3 points, and Burgan eighth with 1 point. Al-Nasr and Al-Sahel remain at the bottom without any points.



Kuwait Club's playerst rushed to defend as the opponent spiked the ball.

Despite having only one point, Burgan could still challenge Kuwait Club, which is aiming for a win and full points to reclaim the top spot. Under Brazilian coach Eduardo, Kuwait Club boasts a strong lineup capable of delivering top performances. Burgan hopes to rise to the occasion and secure a positive result.

Meanwhile, Al-Qadsia is expected to have a comparatively easier match against Al-Sahel, given the clear technical advantage of the team.

Shaaf dominates the mixed C4 2,200m showdown

'Bakhita Al-Ghanayem' claims the 'Ajmal' Cup at Kuwait Hunting & Equestrian Club

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: The mare Bakhita Al-Ghanayem, owned and trained by Yousef Al-Khalifi and ridden by Salem Al-Ajmi, captured the "Ajmal" Cup, owned by Mohammed Jasim Al-Marzouq, in the Egyptian C4 mares' race over 1,400 meters with a time of 1:49.31. The victory came in the sixth race of the eighth meeting at the Kuwait Hunting and Equestrian Club.

Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser, Secretary General of the Club and Chairman of the Supreme Horse Racing Authority, along with Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi, owner of "Al-Raya Stable," presented the trophy to the winning team.

In the seventh race (Mixed - C4) over 2,200 meters, Shaaf from Al-Hamoud Stables, trained by Naif Hameed and ridden by Alberto, took home the Kuwait Shooting and Equestrian Club Cup with a time of 2:28.29.

The fifth race saw Dhakir, owned by Al-Damak, trained by Sultan Al-Damak, and ridden by Saud Al-Dosari, finish first in the



Salem Al-Ajmi and Bakhita Al-Ghanayem celebrate their triumph.

Handicap 0-45 C4 race for trained riders over 1,400 meters, clocking 1:30.47.

Earlier races saw victories for Dora Benny, Kayan, Batal, and Optic, each earning trophies from

the Kuwait Shooting and Equestrian Club in the first through fourth races.

Neres shines as Napoli wins Italian Super Cup



Napoli's players celebrate with the trophy at the end of the Italian Super Cup final soccer match between Napoli and Bologna in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Reigning Serie A champion beats Bologna

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Dec 23, (AP): David Neres scored in each half for Napoli as the reigning Serie A champion won the Italian Super Cup for a third time on Monday, beating Bologna 2-0 in Saudi Arabia.

The teams met in Riyadh to decide a tournament played between the winners and

runners-up of last season's league and cup competitions.

Neres' 39th-minute opener was a worthy cup winner, his superb left foot shot from 25 meters out curling into the far corner and giving an outstretched Federico Ravaglia no chance in the Bologna goal.

His second showed a different side to his attacking talents, as, with nearly an hour gone, he took advantage of a slack pass from Ravaglia and dispossessed John Lucumi before dinking the ball

over the prostrate keeper.

It was the second time the former Ajax and Sao Paulo winger has bagged a brace for Napoli since joining the club from Benfica in August 2024.

The win marked Napoli's third triumph in the competition, following wins in 1990 and 2014. Antonio Conte's side has won seven of its last nine competitive games.

It sits in third place in Serie A, one point behind AC Milan and two points behind leader Inter Milan.

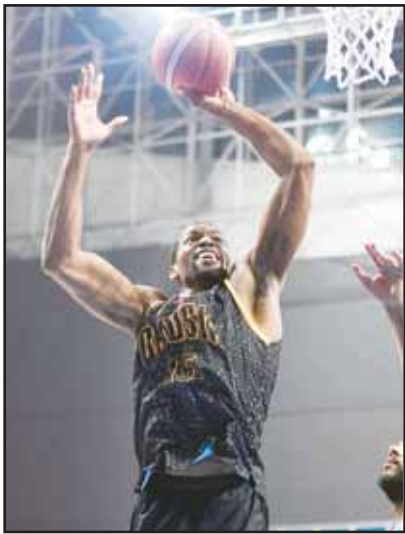
Al-Sulaibikhat, Al-Qurain face off in crucial battle

By Khaled Al-Enezi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23: Today's eighth-round matches in the Second Division basketball league will see Al-Qadsia face Al-Nasr at 5:30 PM at the Union Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, followed by Al-Sulaibikhat vs Al-Qurain at 7:30 PM in the same venue.

Kuwait Club tops the standings with 14 points from 7 wins and no losses, followed closely by Kazma and Al-Qadsia each with 12 points from 5 wins and 2 losses. Al-Qurain and Al-Sulaibikhat are tied at 11 points, Al-Nasr has 9 points, Al-Sahel 8 points, and Al-Arabi remains at the bottom with 7 losses. The league features a three-division system, with the top four teams advancing to the Golden Square playoffs, played in a best-of-three format.

The Al-Sulaibikhat vs Al-Qurain game is crucial, likely deciding the fourth playoff spot alongside the top three—Kuwait Club, Kazma, and Al-Qadsia—who are expected to secure their places. In the first division, Al-Sulaibikhat edged Qurain 89-86, but Qurain quickly rebounded with a win over Al-Qadsia in the second round,



Qadsia player slams home a powerful dunk.

making it strong contender. Under national coach Yahya Kleib, Qurain seeks revenge and a higher ranking, while Al-Sulaibikhat, led by Coach Fahad Barjas, aims to secure the win and move closer to a top-four finish.

Meanwhile, Al-Qadsia is heavily favored against Al-Nasr, given the clear difference in team strength.

Liverpool star Isak out for two months after injury

LONDON, Dec 23, (AP): Liverpool striker Alexander Isak will be laid up for two months with a broken ankle and fibula from a tackle that coach Arne Slot described as reckless on Tuesday.

Isak had surgery on Monday, two days after he was injured in the act of scoring the opening goal of a 2-1 win over Tottenham in the Premier League.

"It's going to be a long injury, for a couple of months," Slot said. "It's a big disappointment for him and, as a result, for us."

"This was, for me, a reckless challenge. I've said a lot about the tackle of Xavi Si-

mons (who was sent off for dragging his studs down the calf of Virgil van Dijk in the same game) which for me was completely unintentional.

"I don't think you will ever get an injury out of a tackle like that. But the tackle of (Micky) van de Ven (on Isak), if you make a tackle like that 10 times, 10 times there is a serious chance the player gets a serious injury."

Van de Ven slid into Isak and trapped his shooting foot just after he'd shot.

TV analyst and Liverpool great Jamie Carragher defended Van de Ven.

Kuwait curling team chases glory in Doha



Supervisor Ali Al-Buhairi with players Saud Al-Kanderi and Fatima Abdullatif before departing to participate in the Doha Championship.

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 23, (KUNA): The Kuwait Winter Games Club announced on Tuesday that the national curling team will participate in the Qatar International Open, which begins on Wednesday in Doha.

The club president, Fehaid Al-Ajmi, stated that the national team will be represented by Saud Al-Kanderi and Fatima Abdullatif.

Al-Ajmi highlighted that the team's participation in this three-day international event is part of preparations for upcoming competitions, noting that curling is one of the most important Winter Olympic sports, and expressing hope that the team will achieve strong results in the tournament.

He also emphasized the club's commitment to developing its five sports, which include curling, speed skating, ice hockey, figure skating, and skating, all recognized Olympic disciplines.

The national team will compete alongside teams from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, India, and Belgium.

Fulham edges Nottingham Forest

LONDON, Dec 23, (AP): A record-equaling first half penalty from Raul Jimenez gave Fulham a 1-0 win over lowly Nottingham Forest in the Premier League on Monday.

The London side sought to avoid losing three consecutive home league games for only the second time since being promoted in 2022 and Jimenez's precise strike from 12 meters ensured it avoided that fate in an uninspiring encounter.

An uneventful first half came to life seconds before halftime when Fulham

was awarded a spot kick following a foul by Douglas Luiz on his fellow Brazilian Kevin.

Mexican striker Jimenez scored for the 11th time in 11 attempts to preserve his 100% conversion record in the league. Only one other player, Yaya Toure, has scored 11 out of 11 penalties in the competition.

"I like to have the pressure of the penalties," Jimenez said. "I have never missed. I am really happy about that and I want to continue like that. If there are more penalties

to come then I will be there."

Forest came more into the game at the start of the second half but Fulham had the best chances to score with Jimenez and Kevin both surning good opportunities.

The result in the Premier League's last match before Christmas lifted the Cottagers two places into 13th, equal on points with the teams above it, Brentford and Newcastle.

Forest remained in 17th, five points clear of the bottom three.

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NEWS



Senegal fans cheer during the Africa Cup of Nations Group D soccer match between Senegal and Botswana in Tangier, Morocco. (AP)

Sports

Egypt off to flying start in Africa Cup of Nations

Salah scores winner

RABAT, Morocco, Dec 23, (AP): Mohamed Salah got Egypt off to a winning start in the Africa Cup of Nations by scoring late for 2-1 against Zimbabwe.

Salah captained the team in his first start for nearly a month and fired inside the bottom corner in stoppage time to spare Egypt embarrassment against a team ranked 129th in the world.

Egypt, the record seven-time champion, was thwarted for long periods in the coastal city of Agadir by Zimbabwe's stubborn defending and an outstanding performance from goalkeeper Washington Arubi.

"We wasted several scoring chances and we didn't have luck on our side," Egypt coach Hossam Hassan said. "That's football. We were the better team throughout the match. Opening games are always difficult."

Prince Dube stunned the favorites in the 20th minute when he took Emmanuel Jalai's cross with his first touch and spun around a defender to flick it past Egypt 'keeper Mohamed El-Shenawy with his next.

Salah tried riling his teammates. They kept missing chances. Hassan hooked Emam Ashour in the 33rd, leaving the midfielder in tears on the bench.

Arubi tipped over a fierce strike from Marmoush. Trézéguet dived in an attempt to win a penalty and was booked, then Salah, Marmoush, and Mostafa Mohamed - who had gone on for the ineffective Ashour - all had efforts blocked before the break.

The game resumed in the same manner after until Marmoush finally found a way to score from a difficult angle in the 64th.

Salah's winner gave the Pharaohs three points in Group B. The Liverpool star has never won Africa's premier competition. This is his fifth edition.

Lyle Foster earned South Africa a hard-fought 2-1 over Angola in the other group game.

The Bafana Bafana ended a six-game winless streak against Angola, which had won three and drawn three of their meetings since a World Cup qualifier in November 2015.

South Africa's Oswin Appollis opened the scoring in Marrakech with a low strike inside the left post in the 21st minute, but midfielder



Zimbabwe's Teenage Hadebe tackles Egypt's Mohamed Salah during the Africa Cup of Nations Group B soccer match between Egypt and Zimbabwe in Agadir, Morocco. (AP)

Show equalized some minutes later when he deflected Fredy's free kick from the wing inside the near post.

Tempers frayed after a foul by South Africa's Aubrey Modiba before the break.

Tshepang Moremi thought he scored a brilliant goal after it. The goal was ruled out for offside after a VAR review, and Mbekezeli

Mbokazi struck the crossbar with a fierce strike as South Africa kept pushing.

Angola coach Patrice Beaumelle refreshed his attacking lineup by sending on Mabululu and Milson in the 76th but it was Foster who scored at the other end when he curled the ball beyond Hugo Marques' outstretched arm in the 79th.

Patson Daka scored in stoppage time for 2012 champion Zambia to grab a 1-1 draw against Mali in the early game in Casablanca.

Mali dominated and missed a penalty before the break when Willard Mwanza saved El Bilal Touré's effort - the second saved penalty in as many games at the tournament.

Lassine Sinayoko finally broke the deadlock around the hour mark, but Daka had the final say with a header to earn Zambia a point in Group A.

Host nation Morocco leads the group with three after opening with a 2-0 win over Comoros on Sunday.

Kuwait weightlifting team clinches 9 bronze medals

DOHA, Dec 23, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti weightlifting team claimed nine bronze medals at the West Asia Weightlifting Championship for youth, juniors and seniors, in addition to three matching trophies at the Arab Youth Championship, both hosted in Doha.

Mohammad Karam stood out with three bronze medals in the 71kg category at the West Asia Championship, while Issa Al-Shaher matched the feat by winning three bronze medals at the Arab Youth Championship and adding three more bronzes in the West Asia competition.

The Qatari capital on Saturday marked the start of three major weightlifting events: the 10th Qatar International Weightlifting Cup 2025, the Arab Weightlifting Championship for youth, juniors and seniors, and the West Asia Weightlifting Championship across the same age groups.



Issa Al-Shaher after being honored with the bronze medals.



Mohammad Karam celebrating his medals with the coaches.

City most encouraged by the standings

Topping EPL at Christmas is no guarantee of the title

MANCHESTER, England, Dec 23, (AP): Arsenal is top of the Premier League at Christmas, but the Champagne can stay on ice for now.

Mikel Arteta knows from painful experience that festive standings guarantee nothing when it comes to eventually lifting the title.

Arsenal led the way at this point in 2022 and 2023, only to be twice beaten to the crown by Manchester City.

Topping the table at Christmas has traditionally been a bad omen for the North London club, even before Arteta's time as manager. On four previous occasions in the Premier League era it has held the Yuletide No.1 and never gone on to be crowned champion.

Pep Guardiola and his City side may be most encouraged by the standings, having gone on to win the title on four occasions when not leading at this stage.

Arteta, however, is not dwelling on past failures. "What gives me belief and confidence is the level of performance and the consistency of that," he said after Saturday's narrow win at Everton ensured top spot. "That's very, very difficult to do in this league and that means the team is constantly there."

"Enjoy the process of winning and you're going to have to go to difficult places, you're going to have difficult moments. We have dealt with a lot of things already and we are there."

In all 33 seasons of the Premier, the top team at Christmas has been crowned



Fulham's Kevin and Nottingham Forest's Nicolo Savona, right, battle for the ball during the Premier League match between Nottingham Forest and Fulham, in London. (AP)

champion on 17 occasions, just over 51% of the time.

Arsenal had looked like racing away at the top, taking advantage as Liverpool's title defense unraveled while City also slipped up early.

But the lead is now two points over second-place City after a recent run of two points from a possible nine away from home. City briefly moved to the top on Saturday before Viktor Gyokeres' penalty sealed the 1-0 victory at Everton and broke Arsenal's winless run on the road.

Which team went on to win the title:

2002-03 - Manchester United
2007-08 - Manchester United
2022-23 - Manchester City
2023-24 - Manchester City
United and Chelsea have won the title on five occasions after leading at Christmas. United has held first place at Christmas seven times in the Premier League era.

Chelsea has a 100% conversion rate when leading at Christmas. Likewise City, which has won on the

three occasions it led. Liverpool has won on two of the seven times it was first.

The sight of City in the rear-view mirror will be a familiar one to Arteta and Arsenal. And while this is far from a vintage Guardiola team, its charge has an ominous feel. A 3-0 win against West Ham on Saturday was a seventh straight victory in all competitions for City and a fifth in a row in the league.

Guardiola's side may lack some of the fluidity and guile of the teams that dominated English soccer until being dethroned by Liverpool last season but, with Erling Haaland up front, it has the most lethal striker in the country.

Haaland's double against West Ham took his season's total to 38 goals in 28 games for City and Norway. He is far and away the leading scorer in the league with 19 goals, his closest rival is Brentford's Igor Thiago on 11.

If Arsenal hoped the signing of Gyokeres would provide it with a similarly lethal forward, it hasn't worked out like that yet. The Sweden international has just seven goals in 24 games for club and country. His penalty against Everton was only his fifth league goal of the season and his first in six games in all.

Aston Villa is the form team in the top flight, with 10 straight wins in all competitions, and is just three points back from Arsenal in third place.

Victory against United on Sunday made it 11 wins from 12 games in the league. Unai Emery's team is unbeaten in 19 games in all, with 16 wins during that run.

Kuwait bags two more medals at Arab Shooting Championship



A group photo of the Kuwait team.

KUNA photos



Kuwaiti shooters on the podium.

MUSCAT, Dec 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's national shooting team added two more medals to its tally at the Arab Pistol and Rifle Shooting Championship, winning two bronze medals in the 50m Three Positions event for men and women.

This brought Kuwait's total haul to three medals—one silver and two bronze.

Head of the Kuwaiti delegation and Secretary General of the Kuwaiti and Arab Shooting Federations, Obaid Al-Osaimi, said that Turki Al-Shemmari, Ali Al-Mutairi and Khaled Al-Majed finished third in the men's competition with a score of 58.1704 points. Oman claimed the gold medal, while Bahrain secured silver.

In the women's event, Maryam Arzouqi, Ritaaj Al-Ziyadi and Fajr Al-Dhbaib also placed third, recording 41.1659 points. Bahrain topped the standings, with Oman finishing second.

The Kuwaiti team had earlier delivered a strong performance on Sunday by finishing second overall after intense competition with other Arab teams. Kuwait's women's trio had already claimed silver in the 10m Air Rifle event.