



Amir congratulates Sultan of Oman on 'versary of assuming throne' Page 2

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Amir receives Crown Prince, PM, KNG Chief, 1st Deputy PM

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Moshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

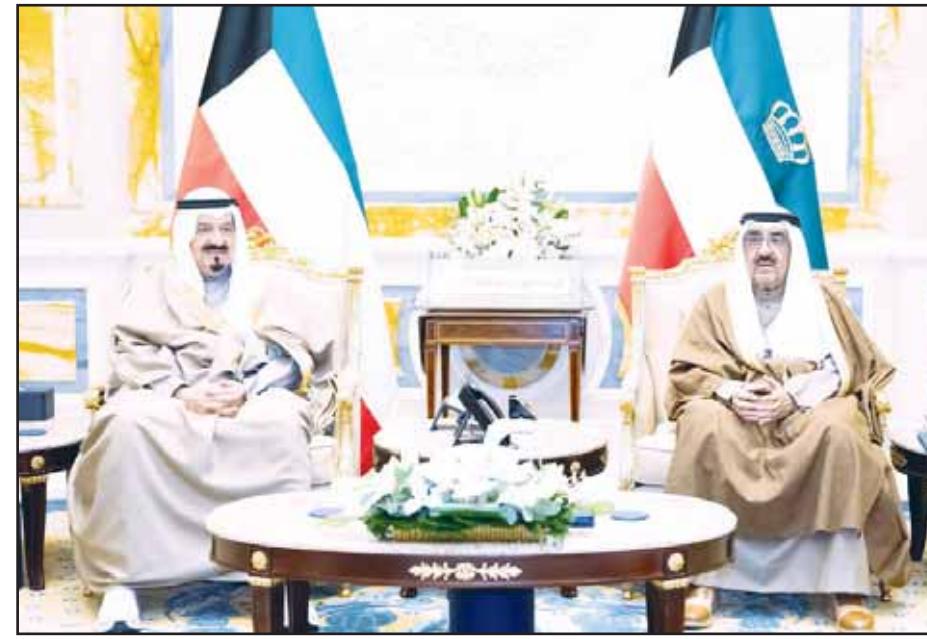
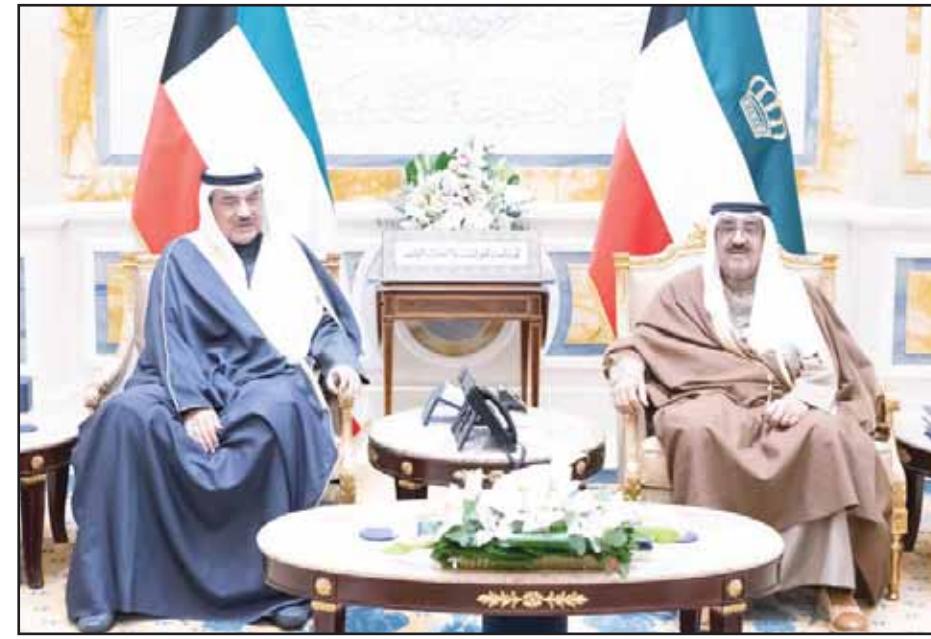
Further, His Highness the Amir received the Head of Kuwait's National Guard, Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir received First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Also on Sunday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received the Head of Kuwait's National Guard, Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince received First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.



Amiri Diwan photos

Left to right: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Moshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Workers cities replace Jleeb, Khaitan



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

The GCC is a dream for its citizens

THE Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative was initially met with pessimism in most of the Arab world and the Middle East, since many considered it a divisive move that would separate its members from the Arab League.

The conception of this initiative is a vivid memory, spearheaded by HH the late Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad and King Fahad bin Abdulaziz (may Allah have mercy on them), and later receiving the blessing of HH the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan. This foundational support fueled the enthusiasm of the founding fathers of the Council.

This period was marked by extremely sensitive international and regional circumstances. The fate of many Arab nations was under threat due to the Iran-Iraq War and the new Iranian regime's doctrine of "exporting the revolution," which was widely interpreted as intent to alter the cultural identity of neighboring countries. In this challenging environment, the Gulf states recognized the crucial need to consolidate their power in order to safeguard their existence and national security.

Consequently, the GCC was established with the support of its populace. It immediately set out

to solidify its presence through a series of agreements, all aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of union, as outlined in its charter: "To attain coordination, integration and interdependence among member states in all fields", ultimately leading to their unity.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has faced numerous critical challenges throughout its 45-year history. One of the major challenges occurred nine years after its founding -- the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein. The successful liberation of Kuwait was a direct result of the member states' unified and unwavering opposition to the occupation.

More recently, the region dealt with the instability caused by the 'Arab Spring', which created vulnerabilities in some member nations and allowed

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Relocation gets green light

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah affirmed that the government, headed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Moshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, is keen on implementing comprehensive organizational and developmental solutions in line with the move of the political leadership to focus on addressing the workers housing issue and supporting vital sectors.

These solutions include establishing new residential cities for workers, addressing shortcomings in the

agricultural sector, and activating the role of Kuwaiti Farmers Union in supporting local production.

During his recent visit to the farms in Wafra, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef revealed that one of the priorities of the government is the establishment of integrated residential cities for workers.

He said this will lead to the relocation of workers from the existing cities to new, dedicated cities, especially given the large number of workers residing in residential areas. He pointed out that the political leadership is closely following up this issue.

He added the existing workers' cities have reached their full capacity, indicating that specialized companies will soon start implementing new workers' city projects to replace the current housing for workers in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Khaitan.

Continued on Page 5

First Deputy PM visits fire injured

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, in the presence of Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, visited those injured in the General Department of Correctional Institutions (GDCI) building fire, who are receiving the necessary medical care.

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First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, in the presence of Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, checks on those injured in the General Department of Correctional Institutions (GDCI) building fire.

Justice Minister oversees exams for Junior Legal Researcher candidates



Minister of Justice, Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait, addresses the media during an inspection tour of Kuwait University in Shadadiya.

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Minister of Justice, Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait, conducted an inspection tour of Kuwait University in Shadadiya, during which he observed the written examinations for the position of Junior Legal Researcher, a qualification for the role of Public Prosecutor (Class C).

The minister and senior ministry officials were received by Dr. Dina Musaed Al-Mailem, President of Kuwait University, along with several university staff. He oversaw the examination process, accompanied by the Chairman and members of the Admissions Committee - Counselor Bader Al-Musaed, Counselor Talal Al-Matar, Counselor Najib Al-Majed, Counselor Abdullah Al-Qasimi, and Counselor Fahd Al-Atteeqi.

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Kuwait beefs up infection control

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi emphasized that investing in infection prevention and control programs is the most prudent and impactful investment, as it is the first line of defense in reducing healthcare-associated infection rates, improving clinical outcomes, easing economic burdens and enhancing public trust in healthcare institutions.

In his opening address at the Second International Conference on Infection Prevention and Control, jointly organized by the new Al-Mowsat Hospital and Kuwait Center for Disease Prevention and Control, Al-Awadhi explained that the conference is not just a continuation of scientific progress, as it also reflects a firm belief that infection control issues have transcended the technical realm to become a fundamental pillar of healthcare quality, the main guarantee of patient safety.

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Kuwait banks closed Jan 18

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): The Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) announced on Sunday, that local banks will be closed on Sunday, January 18, in observance of Isra and Miraj.

KBA Deputy Secretary General Shaikha Al-Éssä said in a press statement that banks will resume work on Monday, the 19th of Jan, in accordance with the circular issued by the The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK).

Kuwait opposes Israel's Somaliland recognition

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Ali Abdulla Al-Yahya reaffirmed his country's firm opposition to "the infamous declaration" of the Israeli occupation authorities on recognition of the so-called Somaliland as an independent state.

The State of Kuwait fully supports the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Somaliland over all its territories and strongly condemns any measures that might transgress Somaliland's security and national unity, he said in a speech to the 22nd extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the

Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Saturday.

Al-Yahya thanked sisterly Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Turkey for calling the OIC extraordinary ministerial meeting, and the OIC Secretary-General Hussein Ibrahim Taha for setting the stage for it.

"The Israeli occupation authorities' infamous declaration, dated December 26, 2025, on recognition of the so-called Somaliland constitutes a flagrant violation of Somaliland's sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, and a

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait extends birth registration deadline

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, as well as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, issued a ministerial decree amending Resolution No. 2/89 on the registration deadlines for newborns in the Civil Information System, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decree, which was published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Yoom" on Sunday, amends clause b of Article 2 to read, "One hundred and twenty days from the date of birth for those born within Kuwait."

Article a of the same decree previously set registration deadlines based on individuals' circumstances as follows: 30 days from the date of return to Kuwait for Kuwaiti citizens, 30 days from the date of arrival in Kuwait for GCC citizens, and 30 days from the date of obtaining residency for non-Kuwaitis.

Newswatch

DUBAI: Iran's parliament speaker warned Sunday that the U.S. military and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if the U.S. strikes the Islamic Republic over the ongoing protests roiling the country, as threatened by President Donald Trump.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf made the threat after nationwide protests challenging Iran's theocracy saw protesters flood the streets in the country's capital and its second-largest city into Sunday morning, crossing the two-week mark. At least 203 people have died in violence surrounding the demonstrations, activists said, with fears the death toll is far higher.

With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult. (AP)

GAZA: Some 21 displaced Gazans, including children, have died as an intense cold wave grips swathes of the Palestinian enclave, local media reported on Sunday.

The fatalities come at a time of "catastrophic" humanitarian conditions across the Gaza Strip, where the "mass genocide" perpetrated by Israeli Occupation forces has left more than a million Palestinians forcibly displaced, it said. (KUNA)

KFH leads digital transformation & banking innovation

Page 9



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on Government

and Private Projects, Specializing

in Cables Marketing

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Prayer Timings

Fajr 05:20 Asr 14:49
 Sunrise .. 06:44 Maghrib .. 17:08
 Zohr 11:56 Isha 18:30

Local

Amir congratulates Sultan of Oman on 'versary of assuming throne



Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad



Sheikh Sabah Khaled



Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah



Haitham Bin Tareq Al-Saeed

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Mild and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 06-32 km/h.

By Night: Rather cold and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain later on.

Weather

ate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain later on.

Station Max Exp Min Rec

Kuwait City 20 11

Kuwait Airport 19 08

Abdaly	19	07
Bubyan	18	05
Jahra	19	10
Failaka Island	18	08
Salmiyah	19	13
Ahmadi	20	07
Jal Aliyah	19	07

Kuwaiti, expats win reprieve in fire case

Jail, fine suspended in manslaughter charges

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The Court of Cassation ordered the suspension of the prison sentence issued against a citizen and a number of expatriates in the Manqaf fire case, on manslaughter and other charges, pending consideration of the appeals against the ruling.

The court also ruled to stay the custodial sentence and replace it with a fine of KD5,000.

In addition, it annulled the decision of the Appeals Court that sentenced businessman Mohammad Nasser Al-

Badah, Director of Al-Badah Company, to one year imprisonment with hard labor, while examining the appeal filed by his lawyer, Attorney Sultan Hamad Al-Ajmi.

Previously, the Appeals Court revised several of the rulings, reducing the sentence of a number of defendants to one year of imprisonment with hard labor, instead of three years. It also imposed three-year prison sentence with hard labor on three defendants for manslaughter, sentenced two others to one year of imprisonment with hard labor for perjury, and sentenced four defendants to one year of imprisonment with hard labor for harboring a fugitive.

Al-Ajmi submitted an appeal to the Court of Cassation based on multiple legal grounds, such as misapplication of the law, errors in attribution, and shortcomings and flaws in the reasoning underlying the judgment. He stressed that the constituent elements

of the crime were not present in his client's case and that the conviction is based on the Appeals Court was invalid.

Earlier, the Public Prosecution referred the case file to the General Department of Investigations at the Ministry of Interior, categorizing the incident as a misdemeanor rather than a felony. This classification was based on technical reports, which concluded the fire was accidental and did not result from an intentional act.

The case dates back to June of last year, when a major fire erupted in a building used to house workers in Manqaf. The blaze led to the death of 49 workers and injured a comparable number -- mostly Indian nationals. The incident was among the most serious the country experienced in recent years. The defendants faced charges including manslaughter, perjury, negligence, facilitating the escape of fugitives, and causing injury through negligence.



Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets his Somali counterpart Abdisalam Abdi Ali.



Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr. Varsen Shahin.



Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya meets his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdulaaty.

'Somaliland' breach of sovereignty

FM meets Somalia, Egypt, Palestine, envoys

JEDDAH, Jan 11: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Ali Abdullah Al-Yahya met with his Somaliland counterpart Abdisalam Abdi Ali on the fringes of the 22nd extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Saturday.

Both ministers discussed the bilateral relations and cooperation between their two sisterly countries in various fields, as well as the situation in Somalia in the aftermath of the Israeli occupation authorities' recognition of the so-called Somaliland as an independent state.

They share the view that the infamous declaration represented a blatant breach of Somaliland's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a violation of the international law and the UN Charter.

The two ministers agreed to continue coordination and consultation in the framework of the OIC and other international forums with a view to contributing to regional security and stability.

Palestine

Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya met with Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr. Varsen Shahin and discussed bilateral relations between the two states.

The two senior diplomats, meeting on sidelines of an extraordinary of Foreign Ministers' meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, on Somaliland last night, also discussed means of boosting bilateral strategic cooperation in many vital fields.

They also discussed a number of issues of mutual interest.

Kuwait, Egyptian FMs discuss bilateral strategic cooperation

Egypt

Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya has met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdulaaty and discussed ways of cementing relations between the two countries.

Al-Yahya and Abdulaaty also discussed strengthening strategic cooperation in different areas, as well as issues of mutual interest.

The top diplomats met on fringes of the an extraordinary meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, on Somaliland last night.

Info minister updates TV and radio advertising regulations

Licenses of 516 firms cancelled

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajil issued Ministerial Decision No. 196/2025 for canceling the commercial licenses of 516 companies that failed to submit their financial statements for three consecutive years, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to Article 1 of the decision, the cancellation of licenses is in accordance with Paragraph 7 of Article 266 of the Companies Law, which requires companies to maintain up-to-date financial records.

The second session discussed public relations strategies and media crisis management. Dr. Mohammad Al-Shammari from Saad Al-Abdullah Academy for Security Sciences stated that artificial intelligence has become the main driver in developing public relations and customer service activities in modern institutions. He confirmed that it has contributed to the qualitative leap, improved the quality of services, and enabled rapid and effective response to beneficiaries' needs.

Dr. Mutlaq Al-Omairi, also from the academy, talked about the importance of developing public opinion measurement tools using artificial intelligence. He added that previous methods relied on traditional surveys, which are no longer effective. He then stressed that artificial intelligence remains a machine, which requires human intellect.

AI exploiters fabricating news, spreading rumors to face law

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations and Customer Service, with the theme, "Innovation... Communication... Future," kicked off Sunday.

Organized by the Public Relations Association, the conference is held under the patronage of Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

The conference, held at the National Library, was attended by a group of experts, academics, and specialists in the fields of public relations and customer service.

Speakers emphasized that Kuwait made significant strides in digitization and digital transformation. While some highlighted the potential dangers of artificial intelligence and its impact on jobs, others suggested that some professions will disappear, while others will be created by artificial intelligence.

The first session tackled the digital transformation in public relations and media. Director of the Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior Othman Al-Gharib stated that the Ministry of Interior adopted digital transformation. He said more than 55 of the services that the ministry offers are available on the Sahel platform, which greatly facilitated service delivery.

He warned about the danger posed by some individuals exploiting technology to fabricate videos and spread false information and rumors, asserting that the ministry deals firmly with those who spread rumors.

He pointed out that artificial intelligence has

many advantages, including saving time and effort, and emphasized that the ministry continues to develop and utilize artificial intelligence. He added that paper transactions are on their way to disappearing in light of the digital transformation.

Meanwhile, Colonel Ali Al-Rashid, representing Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), said the new applications facilitated many things, especially in terms of dealing with rumors and exaggeration, because they give quick access to information. He affirmed that the electronic transformation simplified matters and that the prevention sector has been fully digitized.

He cited the use of artificial intelligence in awareness campaigns to provide real-time translation of awareness messages into multiple languages, stressing that rumors are being monitored and teams are working round the clock to reveal the truth.

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undertake the following:

- Marketing advertising space across programs and organizing price offers and diverse advertising packages

- Proposing price lists and advertising methods for special programs and occasions, including Ramadan, holidays, national celebrations, special program cycles, or specific events related to the nature and timing of television programs, series, or sports tournaments.

- Reviewing and monitoring advertisements to ensure they meet technical and content



Al-Mutairi

standards, as well as any conditions specific to the advertising material.

- Coordinating with the relevant unit in the ministry's Financial Affairs Department to manage advertising contracts, collect fees, and oversee the broadcast of advertisements as stipulated in the contracts.

The two decrees added a new clause to the tables in Appendix 2 of Ministerial Decree No. 992/2022, specifying a 25 percent increase in advertising rates for advertisements during live broadcast on Kuwait Television channels via the digital platform 51.

In Article 3, the decrees stipulate that the Head of the Support Services Sector at the ministry, or their designee, shall sign advertising contracts arranged by the relevant unit in the Financial Affairs Department.

Licenses of mobile vendors revoked

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi/Jaber Al-Hamoud

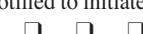
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajel issued a ministerial decree revoking several mobile vendor licenses.

The decree, published in the official gazette, Kuwait Al-Youn, on Sunday stipulates in its first article the cancellation of the commercial licenses of 516 companies listed in the appendix to the decree, due to their failure to submit financial statements for three consecutive years, in accordance with Paragraph Seven, Article 266 of Companies Law No. 1/2016.

The second article stipulates that procedures for dissolving

the companies mentioned in the first article shall commence, pursuant to Article 266 of the Companies Law, and that the companies shall be notified to initiate liquidation procedures.



Verdict delayed: The Criminal Court on Sunday decided to postpone until Feb 1 the issuance of its verdict in the case of the murder of a maid in Sabah Al-Nasser.

Last week, the court reopened the proceedings in the 'Sabah Al-Nasser crime', in which a Gulf national is accused of beating her maid to death with a stick. Sunday's session was scheduled to hear the closing arguments of the defense team.

LOCAL

diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Reputations at risk in malicious complaints

"RECENTLY there has been a troubling rise in malicious complaints filed by some divorced mothers, particularly those with custody, against their children's fathers in the context of family disputes, often related to the enforcement of visitation rights," columnist Bassam Fahad Thunayyan Al-Ghanim wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The most serious of these complaints are accusations of fathers sexually harassing their children, due to their severe psychological and social consequences that affect not only the father but also the child, the family, and society at large. The danger of such accusations lies not only in the damage they inflict on the father's reputation and his social or professional standing but also in the profound harm inflicted on the child."



Bassam Al-Ghanim

"Even if the complaint is dismissed or the father is acquitted, the child may continue to bear a psychological and social stigma for many years, undermining self-confidence, emotional development, and future relationships. The child becomes an involuntary victim of a complex situation over which he or she has no control and bears no fault. Practical experience shows that a huge percentage of these reports are not filed to protect the child, but rather for personal or vindictive reasons, or as a means to pressure the father, deprive him of his legal right to see his children, or tarnish his reputation and damage his social and professional life."

"The misuse of laws designed to protect against domestic violence and to safeguard children represents a serious deviation from their intended purpose. This highlights the urgent need for decisive legal and legislative measures, including the imposition of deterrent penalties on anyone found to have filed a malicious complaint, while simultaneously ensuring that every report is subject to a thorough and balanced investigation. Such measures are essential to distinguish genuine complaints aimed at protecting the child from those used as tools of malice or revenge. A final judicial ruling of conviction, not merely the filing of a report or the opening of an investigation, is the true measure for establishing cases of domestic violence."

"Furthermore, the relevant authorities, primarily the Public Prosecution and the judiciary, must handle these cases with great caution, taking into account their motives and family context. Children must never be used as tools of pressure or bargaining chips in adult disputes. The primary objective should always be the psychological and social protection of the child, ensuring their right to a balanced and healthy relationship with both parents."

"It is particularly concerning to observe the role of some law firms that exploit the absence of explicit penalties for malicious reporting, encouraging the filing of complaints under the pretense of protecting the child, while their true aim is to prolong the dispute and secure financial gain, without regard for the serious psychological harm inflicted on the child or the accused parent."

"Therefore, it is essential to enact clear legal provisions that impose penalties on the complainant if an investigation concludes with the dismissal of the complaint or establishes its lack of merit, without prejudice to the accused parent's right to seek compensation for the material and moral damages suffered. The presence of a deterrent penalty would curb the hasty filing of false reports and help protect the family unit from legal manipulation."

"Given the seriousness of this phenomenon, it is imperative to amend both the Protection from Domestic Violence Law No. 16/2020 and the Child Rights Law No. 21/2015 by including explicit provisions that address malicious reporting. The absence of specific penalties in the current laws has created opportunities for misuse, inadvertently turning them into tools that can harm both parents and children."

"In conclusion, addressing this issue requires the coordinated efforts of legislators, the judiciary, and executive authorities to ensure that child and family protection laws serve as instruments of justice and care, rather than tools for malice or personal vendettas. Such measures are essential to preserve family stability, protect children's psychological well-being, and secure their social future."

Also:

"Since the implementation of Law No. 126/2023 on Combating the Monopoly of Vacant Land, some have attempted to circumvent it by transferring ownership of undeveloped land to relatives or their companies through gifts or sales, hoping to avoid the increasing annual fees. However, the law explicitly closes this loophole," legal real estate advisor Eman Al-Hashash wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

the fee period continues uninterrupted. Similarly, converting a property into a waqf (endowment) and then revoking it does not nullify the state's right to calculate the fees. Moreover, even before this law was issued, the Ministry of Finance had sent official letters to the Ministry of Justice instructing them to halt any transfer of ownership of vacant land exceeding the fee exemption threshold unless the outstanding fees are paid.

"This has already been applied to some individuals, with notices placed in the real estate registration system prohibiting any transactions on their properties. They are not allowed to transfer or register any property until the fees are fully settled. According to the Fatwa and Legislation Department, the absence of implementing regulations does not prevent the collection of fees, as regulations serve only to organize procedures and do not suspend the application of the law."

"In conclusion, whether through a gift, endowment, or any other transaction, attempts to circumvent the law will not exempt anyone from paying the prescribed fees. The state is now committed to enforcing these charges and ensuring real estate justice. Everyone must adjust to this new reality."

□ □ □

"The current events in Iran undoubtedly require close monitoring and careful scrutiny, given our proximity to that neighboring country," columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Unfortunately, our geographic reality has placed us near Iran, and as a result, we have consistently felt the repercussions of developments there."

"During the Iran-Iraq War, we were greatly affected, and following the fall of the former Iraqi regime, the impact on Kuwait was again significant. This confirms that events in the region inevitably affect us in one way or another."

"The ongoing unrest in Iran has a major impact on the entire region and may carry negative consequences. At the same time, there could be positive outcomes in the long run, though this is not the focus of this discussion. Rather, the aim here is to analyze the realities that have led to these events and the violence that continues to unfold on a daily basis."

"I believe that today's developments are not comparable to what occurred in the past. Circumstances have changed, and we are aware of the influence of the Iranian bazaar, as well as the role of students, who were the most active force during the unrest under the Shah's rule and contributed to his downfall."

"Any popular uprising of this nature cannot be easily suppressed. Increased repression will only lead to wider violence. Temporary measures, therefore, cannot resolve the situation; a radical solution is required, one that places the interests of the people above those of the regime."

"While external factors may play a role, they are not the primary cause. The main responsibility lies in the very nature of the regime itself. The lack of true internal reform has allowed events to escalate to this dangerous point."

"International influences, ongoing changes, and the reshaping of the global map of power carry significant repercussions. The aftermath of the recent war involving Iran, Israel, and the United States has affected the economic situation, which continues to suffer from structural distortions that cannot be corrected as long as internal factions refuse to relinquish their gains, even if a hundred uprisings were to occur."

"Iran's substantial support for regional militias, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iraqi groups, and the Houthis in Yemen, while its own people suffer from widespread poverty, has further exacerbated the situation."

"All of this has made Iran highly vulnerable to major unrest, potentially threatening the cohesion of its institutions, especially as these events continue to spread across every city and region."

"It appears that the Iranian government lacks the capacity to manage the unrest in a way that could mitigate the crisis."

"In this discussion, I address the Iranian regime, or more precisely, the influential forces within it. What can you do with a population suffering from hunger and a stagnant economy? No matter how powerful the regime may be, the state will struggle to control the situation. With even a semblance of good governance and a consistent effort to resolve the people's problems, citizens would rally against the government."

"For example, during the invasion of Kuwait, the occupiers found not a single Kuwaiti willing to support them or abandon the defense of legitimacy."

"During that period, national unity was displayed in its clearest form. Will the same occur in Iranian society, which is composed of numerous minorities, marginalized regions, and a small elite that monopolizes the nation's wealth?"

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

KFF tackles fire in Ahmadi garages, storage tanks



Left: KFF Chief Major General Talal Al-Roumi talking to firemen at the site. Right: Fire-fighters battling the flames.



By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Fire engulfed a number of garages and highly flammable material storage tanks located within an industrial plot in the Ahmadi Industrial Area on Saturday afternoon. No casualties were reported.

According to sources from Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Ahmadi, Fahheel, Mina Abdullah, Hazardous Materials, and

Support Fire Stations, along with Kuwait Oil Company firefighters, rushed to the location after receiving information about the fire incident, and they extinguished the fire before it spread further to nearby businesses.

The operation was carried out under the direct supervision of Chief of KFF, Major General Talal Al-Roumi.

The Ministry of Interior provided crucial support by securing the site and managing traffic in the surrounding area during the incident.



Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah

Defense Minister & team go to Italy on official trip

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): The Minister of Defence, Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdulla Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and his accompanying delegation departed for Italy on an official visit, said Defence Ministry press statement.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Assistant Undersecretary for Cooperative Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Dr. Sayed Issa Bu Ammar.

Co-ops must up quality of services given – Gov.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Assistant Undersecretary for Cooperative Affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Dr. Sayed Issa Bu Ammar, to discuss enhancing cooperation and joint coordination.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, they discussed several issues related to supporting cooperative work and improving coordination with cooperative societies to raise the quality of services provided.

The governor highlighted the Ministry of Social Affairs' important role in supporting the cooperative system, and praised efforts to develop institutional work and strengthen integration among government entities.

Dr. Bu Ammar expressed his gratitude to the Farwaniya Governor for the warm reception, reaffirming the ministry's commitment to ongoing cooperation and coordination with the governorate to serve the public interest and meet residents' needs.

Culprit on wanted list

Kuwaiti man fails to pay KD970 pending car rent

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: A lawyer representing a car rental company filed a report at Taima police station, stating that a citizen breached trust by failing to settle the balance on a rented luxury 2020 Range Rover, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to the report, the accused rented the vehicle on October 12, 2025, and paid rental fees up to November 25, 2025, before turning off his phone and cutting off communication with the company. He later returned the vehicle on December 2, 2025, after contacting the company from a different number, but failed to pay the accumulated amount despite repeated promises.

The outstanding balance owed to the company had reached KD 970 by the time the report was filed.

As a result, the case was referred to the Criminal Security Sector.

Investigations, including a check of the Ministry of Interior's database, revealed that the accused was wanted under an arrest warrant issued by the General Directorate of Investigations in a separate fraud case and was at large. He was added to the wanted list, and the necessary legal procedures were initiated against him.

'Pool efforts to cut smuggling'

Border security vital: Al-Omar

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Deputy Director General for Ports, Search, and Customs Investigation at the General Administration of Customs (GAC), Saleh Al-Omar, emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination among security agencies in protecting borders and combating smuggling in all its forms, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a press statement issued by GAC on Saturday, Al-Omar said this during an inspection tour of the Nuwaiseeb and Umm Al-Maradim border crossings, conducted in cooperation with the General Department of Coast Guard, under the directives of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, and at the invitation of Coast Guard Director General Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef. The tour aimed to review operational mechanisms at the border crossings, monitor customs and security procedures, and assess readiness.

Brigadier General Salem Al-Shehab, Director General of the Police Air Wing, also attended the tour as part of efforts to reinforce security coordination and integration among agencies responsible for protecting Kuwait's land and sea borders.

Al-Omar highlighted the importance of continuing field visits, closely monitoring operations, gathering observations and suggestions from staff, and addressing obstacles to enhance efficiency and readiness.

He also praised the vital role of the Coast Guard and the Police Air Wing in supporting the security system and safeguarding Kuwait's borders.

15-yrs jail, deportation for Al-Khaldi

By Jaber Al-Humoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Abdulwahab Al-Muaili, on Sunday sentenced Salman Al-Khaldi to 15 years in prison with hard labor, followed by deportation, in a State security case.

Special Buffet

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Mughal Mahal SINCE 1988

LOCAL

MoSA expands nat'l Family Council's role

Minister reviews dev't plans

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthal Al-Huwayla, affirmed on Sunday that the Ministry is proceeding according to a well-established institutional approach aimed at strengthening the integration of national roles and ensuring that the Supreme Council for Family Affairs fulfills its vital responsibilities in protecting Kuwaiti families, supporting women's and children's issues, and consolidating social stability. This aligns with the directives of the state and the vision of its wise leadership in building a cohesive and sustainable society.

This statement was issued by Al-Huwayla following her meeting with the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, in the presence of the Council's Secretary-General, Mona Al-Mutairi. The meeting was part of a periodic follow-up on work progress, reviewing performance mechanisms, and ensuring the consistency of institutional efforts in implementing the Council's national responsibilities.

Al-Huwayla stressed that the Ministry provides full and direct support to enable the Council to perform its duties optimally. She



Minister of Social Affairs photo
Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwayla during her meeting with employees of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs

affirmed that the Ministry closely monitors all executive procedures and addresses any organizational observations within the approved legal and administrative frameworks, ensuring the highest levels of quality and efficiency in performance and the optimal utilization of available resources.

She explained that the meeting reviewed the Council's future vision and development plans, and discussed key achievements in family protection, women's empowerment, and child welfare, reflecting the state's firm commitment to strengthening family cohesion and achieving sustainable social development.

She affirmed that the next phase will witness increased coordination and integration between the Ministry and the Council, along with the development of institutional work mechanisms.

MEW launches 2 fiber optic upgrade projects

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The official spokesperson of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Fatima Hayat, announced that, as part of the ministry's strategic plans, work has begun on two contracts to supply and extend fiber optic cables between main substations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, she explained that the project aims to enhance the efficiency of the communications system supporting the ministry's operational networks. The work includes excavation and installation of underground fiber optic cables to connect main substations and power stations to monitoring and control centers via dedicated underground routes. It also involves replacing existing overhead lines with underground fiber optic cables for improving op-

erational efficiency, system control, and remote management of the electrical network.

Hayat indicated that a weekly schedule outlining the project locations will be published, allowing for advance review of the work plan and necessary coordination.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy expressed its sincere gratitude to citizens, residents, and relevant authorities for their cooperation and understanding during the implementation period.

It affirmed its commitment to preserving the infrastructure at the work sites and restoring it to its normal condition upon completion of the projects.



JANUARY



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One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast

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Terms & conditions apply

Over 70 teams compete in VEX and drone challenges

TSCK hosts robotics training competitions

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The Scientific Center of Kuwait (TSCK) hosted training competitions for teams participating in the Kuwait National Robotics Championship, jointly organized by Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Youth.

According to a press release issued by TSCK, the event witnessed the participation of more than 70 teams of various age groups. The training competitions aimed to prepare participants for the championship, giving them the opportunity to test their technical skills and gain practical experience ahead of the official contests.

The competitions included the VEX Robotics Competition and drone challenges, allowing participants to enhance their skills in programming, engineering design, teamwork, and problem-solving, while boosting their readiness for upcoming national competitions.

Mohammed Al-Sanousi, Deputy Director General for Visitor Experience at the Scientific Center of Kuwait, affirmed that hosting the training competitions reflects the center's role in supporting interactive and applied education, and enhancing students' and youth's skills in science, technology, and innovation.

He explained that TSCK will continue supporting such initiatives that promote scientific and technological culture and empower students, in line with national development goals and the vision of a knowledge-based, innovative-driven economy.

These competitions are part of agreements and memoranda of understanding between TSCK, Kuwait University, and the Public Authority for Youth, aimed at unifying efforts to support students and youth and strengthen institutional partnerships in achieving national development objectives.

Meanwhile, the acting Dean of the College of Science at Kuwait University, Professor Dr. Haider Sayed Jawad Behbehani, said the quali-



TSCK photo
Participants and organizers pose for a group photo during the robotics training competitions hosted by The Scientific Center of Kuwait, ahead of the Kuwait National Robotics Championship.

fying rounds for the Kuwait National VEX Robotics Competition and the Aerial Drones Competition highlighted students' outstanding capabilities and talents in the fields of robotics, engineering, and programming, and reflected the advanced level of the participants.

Dr. Behbehani explained that the qualifying rounds determine which student teams will advance to the final stage of the championship, scheduled to be held in February 2026.

Hosting the final qualifying rounds was made possible through collaboration with TSCK and the Public Authority for Youth, with the support of strategic private-sector partners including Zain Kuwait and Al-Sayer Group, and with sponsorship from Warba Bank, and educational partners Kuwait Technical College and the College of Science and Technology.

Dr. Behbehani emphasized that the Kuwait National Robotics Championship is a leading educational initiative that prepares a generation capable of keeping pace with global technological advancements, while enhancing students' problem-solving and critical thinking skills in line with the state's focus on investing in human capital.

In addition, Ghazi Al-Jalawi, Assistant Undersecretary for Youth Activities at the Public Authority for Youth, affirmed that supporting scientific and technological initiatives for youth is a core priority for the authority. He stressed that this commitment stems from the belief in the importance of empowering young national talents and cultivating a generation capable of innovation and competition in modern fields of science and technology.

Islamic Affairs directs mosques staff to submit leave in advance

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The Mosques Sector Department at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has requested that all religious personnel, including imams, preachers, and muezzins, suspend their leave during the holy month of Ramadan and adjust their schedules accordingly to ensure smooth and efficient operations, reports Al-Anba daily.

A circular was issued to all religious staff, emphasizing that any leave or

absence requests must be signed only by the substitute employee, and no one may sign on behalf of another. Also, leave requests must be formally submitted to the department at least one week in advance. Leave extensions are allowed only in emergency situations and require a written request submitted to the department director, their representative, or the head of the relevant section.

CAPT opens power network bids

MEW refers KD 18.4 million grid upgrade tender to Audit Bureau

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy referred the tender for upgrading data collection and analysis equipment at power generation and water desalination plants, as well as main substations, to the State Audit Bureau on Thursday.

This step reflects the ministry's commitment to applying the bureau's pre-audit procedures to all tenders and ensuring approval is granted only after thorough audit and review, with the aim of upholding the integrity of all processes.

The ministry had recently received approval from the Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to award five components of the tender for upgrading data collection and analysis equipment at power generation plants

and main substations, at a total cost of KD 18,436 million.

The tender aims to upgrade the equipment used for data collection at production and transmission stations, ensuring full readiness and optimal efficiency in their assigned tasks. This initiative is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to modernize and enhance the electricity grid and its components, including production and transmission stations, which are critical to the overall network.

Meanwhile, CAPT opened bids for the operation and maintenance of the electrical distribution network.

Eight valid bids competed, which will now be reviewed by the ministry to prepare a technical recommendation. The results will then be submitted back to CAPT to award the contract to the bidders that meet the technical requirements, within 30 days of referral.

Drive targets plastic waste, ghost nets

Kuwait Dive Team launches major cleanup campaign in Kuwait Bay

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): The Kuwait Dive Team, affiliated with the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, has launched a large-scale environmental campaign to clean and rehabilitate Kuwait Bay, aiming to remove plastic waste, abandoned fishing nets, wooden debris and sunken vessels, with the participation of government entities and a group of volunteers.

In remarks to KUNA, Head of the team Waleed Al-Fadhl said that the initiative comes as an urgent response to the growing quantities of waste carried into the bay through rainwater drains, in addition to repeated encroachments on the coastal environment.

Al-Fadhl noted these pollutants pose a direct threat to the bay's unique marine ecosystem, adding that the team has prepared four boats, transport vehicles and bulldozers to remove the waste, in addition to diving equipment, marine navigation devices and cleaning tools.

He affirmed that the campaign gains added importance as it coincides with the approach of spring, stressing that Kuwait Bay is a strategic global stopover for thousands of migratory birds and a vital natural nursery for fish and shrimp spawning, making its protection essential for food security and environmental balance.

Al-Fadhl noted that the team, in cooperation with Jahra Natural Reserve Management at the Environment Public Authority, removed large quantities of abandoned fishing nets and plastic waste from the reserve's coastline, in addition to clearing tons of debris from the shores of Ashairij and Doha.

He announced that the next phase of the plan will include intensive cleanup operations at Umm Al-Nammal Island, Al-Subiya area, the Free Zone coastline and the hospital district, calling on citi-



Kuwait Diving Team photo
The Kuwaiti diving team launches a major campaign to clean Kuwait Bay and protect it from pollutants.

zens and residents to play an oversight role and report any observed environmental violations.

Al-Fadhl also urged sea-goers and nature enthusiasts to protect wildlife and refrain from disturbing migratory birds at their resting sites, stressing the need to comply with fishing bans inside the bay.

He warned against the use of prohibited fishing nets that turn into so-called "ghost nets," which devastate fish stocks and damage the seabed for years, calling for urgent action to remove abandoned and anchored vessels in the Ashairij area due to their negative impact on the landscape, navigation safety, coastal soil and pollution levels.

Al-Fadhl thanked the supporting government entities, emphasizing that coordinated institutional and community efforts are the only way to preserve Kuwait Bay as a national environmental heritage for future generations.

Ministry takes over assets

MoSA moves to dissolve 7 NGOs over legal violations

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The Ministry of Social Affairs is in the final stages of completing legal procedures to issue ministerial decrees to dissolve and liquidate the assets of seven non-governmental and charitable organizations, reports Al-Jaridah daily.

According to informed sources from the ministry, these organizations, which include professional, cultural, and social entities, are being targeted due to either a lack of commitment to their activities or violations of the law.

Three of the organizations (two non-governmental and one charitable) are being dissolved at the request of their founders, while the remaining four will be dissolved due to their limited community impact and failure to achieve their stated objectives.

The assets of the dissolved organizations will be transferred to the ministry pending the identification of an appropriate recipient.

As part of its ongoing review of all registered non-governmental and charitable organizations, the ministry aims to identify those that are inactive or non-compliant with regulations, controls, and legal requirements.

Second and third warnings will be issued to organizations found in violation, urging them to rectify their issues promptly. Failure to comply will result in their formal dissolution and liquidation.

Four consecutive warnings have already been issued. The ministry is sending these warnings to the boards of directors of the violating organizations at weekly intervals. If the warnings are ignored or the violations are not corrected promptly, the ministry will proceed with the prescribed legal

measures of dissolution and liquidation.

These associations have nearly exhausted all warnings without taking any serious corrective action, prompting the ministry to move forward with dissolution after presenting the cases to the Committee for the Registration, Evaluation, and Dissolution of Public Benefit Associations and Charities, reviewing their bylaws, and approving the dissolution.

A memorandum listing the names of the associations is being submitted to the minister for further legal action.

These associations violated Article 27 of Law No. 24/1962, which governs clubs and public benefit associations. They have not conducted any on-the-ground activities or provided meaningful services to the community for several years. Moreover, they have failed to submit their annual budgets or financial reports to the ministry, and their bank accounts have been inactive for an extended period. Some associations have not even used their designated automated messaging usernames to access the ministry-linked system since their establishment, underscoring their ineffectiveness and lack of seriousness.

Regarding the funds in these associations' accounts, the sources indicated that following liquidation, the money will revert to the ministry, which will determine the appropriate recipient in accordance with Article 25 of the model bylaws.

They emphasized the ministry's commitment to enforcing the law against associations that fail to serve the community and provide tangible benefits to citizens.

Four major power projects to bolster Kuwait's national grid

Citizens to hold 50% stake in massive ventures

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The development plan report highlighted four electricity generation projects involving the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP). They are:

■ the Zour North Power Plant (phases 2 and 3)

■ the Dibdiba Power Plant

■ the Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex (phase 3)

■ the Khairan Power Plant (phase 1).

These projects are expected to generate 6,500 megawatts, including 2,000 megawatts from renewable sources, and produce 153 million imperial gallons of water per day.

The energy projects aim to stimulate a dynamic private sector, a central element of the plan to transform the country into an attractive investment hub led by private enterprise. This transformation will be supported through a business-friendly environment, fair competition, and streamlined government procedures, all within a framework focused on innovation and advanced technology in multiple sectors.

According to the report, eight policies have been identified to implement the program, five of which are already

underway. The policies include expanding public-private partnerships through privatization strategies, developing large-scale, highly efficient economies of scale by prioritizing economic sectors, providing inclusive opportunities for all by enhancing competitiveness, supporting and promoting direct investment by easing access to the national economy, and developing innovative products and services through an integrated technology, innovation, and knowledge ecosystem.

The report highlighted three projects, including the Zour North Power Plant (phases 2 and 3). These are located in the western part of the Zour North Power Plant Phase One site and the northern part of the existing Zour South Power Plant site, approximately 100 km south of Kuwait City on the Arabian Gulf coast.

The project will be implemented under the design, finance, build, operate, and transfer (BOT) model with a 2,700 MW combined-cycle power plant designed for Kuwait's weather conditions, along with a desalination plant producing 120 million imperial gallons of water per day.

The second project, the Dibdiba Power Plant, and the Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex (phase 3) are integrated electricity generation projects, utilizing photovoltaic (PV), concentrated solar power (CSP), and wind energy technologies. The total installed capacity of the projects in this phase is

expected to reach at least 2,000 MW using these technologies.

The third project is the Khairan 1 Power Plant, located in Khairan adjacent to the southern border of the existing Zour South Power Plant, approximately 100 km south of Kuwait City.

The project will be implemented under a design, finance, build, operate, and transfer (BOT) model with a power generation capacity of 1,800 MW designed for Kuwait's weather conditions. It will use combined-cycle technology and include a desalination plant with a production capacity of 33 million imperial gallons per day.

Last August, KAPP announced the signing of a commitment document for the implementation of the second and third phases of the Zour North Power Plant project with a consortium including ACWA Power and Gulf Investment Corporation.

The project's cost is estimated at over one billion Kuwaiti dinars, according to KAPP. It stated that the project is supported by financing from a group of local and international banks, which reflects strong confidence in Kuwait's investment environment.

The project will be implemented under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, with 40 percent allocated to the foreign investor, 50 percent to Kuwaiti citizens, and 10 percent to public entities eligible to invest in such projects.

A public shareholding company

will be established and partnership contracts signed to begin the design, construction, and operation phases. The company is expected to be listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange once commercial operations start, which is expected in mid-2028.

In March 2025, the Chinese and Kuwaiti sides signed a framework agreement for the third and fourth phases of the Shagaya Renewable Energy Project, with a total production capacity of 3,200 megawatts. The project is scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2026, with electricity production expected to begin in 2028.

The Chinese side has commenced technical studies in coordination with the Kuwait Investment Authority over a six-month period, after which the studies will be submitted for approval by Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy before implementation begins.

The partnership model is based on establishing public shareholding companies to implement projects, while the Kuwaiti government oversees project management.

A strategic partner is responsible for providing the goods and services produced to the state. Under the law, 50 percent of the shares of these companies are allocated to Kuwaiti citizens, and 26 to 44 percent to a strategic investor, who may be Kuwaiti, foreign, or a consortium of investors, while the government retains the remaining share.

Continued from Page 1

The GCC

groups loyal to external powers, including Iran, to infiltrate and pose a threat.

The GCC proved its capacity for self-reliance and resilience during this period, particularly through the decisive action taken in Bahrain to counter the Iranian expansion. This 'painful surgical operation' showcased the Council's ability to protect the member states against internal threats linked to external powers and foreign interference.

The unified strength of the Council was also evident in 2015, when the GCC formulated a united front on regional events in Iraq and neighboring countries, and when it made the decision to confront the Houthi group following their attempted attack on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These instances underscored the power derived from the unified force of the GCC.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) demonstrates enormous strength and resilience, proving its capacity to overcome challenges and emerge stronger. Any disagreement among member states can be resolved.

At the GCC summit opening amid regional instability in 2011, the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz advocated for invoking the first article of the Charter to declare a union. This was viewed as the necessary response to potential threats.

Such a union is very important. For instance, a unified Gulf currency, especially when combined with diversified industrial bases tailored to each country's capacity, will elevate the status of the GCC as a global financial powerhouse.

Furthermore, integration aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in various sectors, from food to arms manufacturing, will pave the way for establishing a single central bank.

Given the evolving international dynamics, the Gulf union is now considered imperative. While some may perceive the region as vulnerable, the reality is that the GCC nations possess considerable inherent strengths. This union is the hope of the people in the region and it will ensure that the GCC will become a major force in the future.

Justice Minister

It is worth stressing that the first exams for applicants to the Public Prosecution position was held at Kuwait University under a new system that relies entirely on electronic testing.

Following the tour of the exams, which was held at the College of Science, Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait stated that 1,295 Kuwaitis applied for this important judicial position, which is considered one of the key pillars of the justice system.

He explained that the new system represents a preliminary step toward a systematic and organized process for future cohorts of Public Prosecutors. The exams are conducted entirely electronically, with no human intervention in grading. The results will be available immediately, allowing applicants to see their scores upon completing the exam and whether they have qualified for the personal interview stage.

The Minister of Justice praised the cooperation with Kuwait University, commending the high level of professionalism in organizing the exams.

Minister Al-Sumait expressed his gratitude to the Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, President of Kuwait University Prof. Dina Al-Mailem, and Deputy Director of the university Dr. Suleiman Al-Rifai for the huge efforts of their respective teams.

He highlighted the transparency and integrity of the examination process, conducted without human intervention.

Minister Al-Sumait explained that the number of candidates who passed the written exam and qualified for the personal interviews conducted by the Judicial Committee will be determined following the announcement of the results. The names of those who pass the personal interviews will then be submitted to the Judicial Council and subsequently approved by the Ministry of Justice.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS

Re: Bankruptcy of Debtor / Khalid Jaafar

Qasim Mohammed Ali & Others

Pursuant to the decision of the Honorable Bankruptcy Judge regarding the Bankruptcy Trustee, Certified Public Accountant / Nasser Al-Enezi, to convene the creditors regarding the bankruptcy estate of the Debtor:

Mr. Khalid Jaafar Qasim Mohammed Ali

(Kuwaiti National – Civil ID No. 259112300633)

Acting in his personal capacity and in his capacity as the owner of:

1. Advanced Projects Establishment for General Trading and Contracting

2. Advanced Projects Center for General Building Contracting

AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH the provisions of the Bankruptcy Law, we hereby invite all creditors to submit their claims and supporting documents within a period not exceeding twenty (20) working days from the date of this notice.

Therefore, all creditors and debtors are requested to review the Bankruptcy Trustee during the specified period at the following address:

Trustee's Address:

Kuwait – Bneid Al-Gar – Block (1) – Mohammed Marafi Street

Building (28) – 4th Floor – Office No. (10)

Contact Numbers: 51530012 / 99081109

Certified Public Accountant / Nasser Al-Enezi

Email: mgc_consulting@yahoo.com

The current applicants represent two graduating classes from two years ago. Once this cohort is accepted, the application process will reopen for two additional positions using the same procedures and mechanisms.

Applications to the Public Prosecution will be accepted annually. This measure is part of the plan to nationalize judicial positions, in anticipation of the expected departure of a number of foreign judges in the coming years.

In response to a question about errors that affected previous recruitment processes, Minister Al-Sumait emphasized that the ministry will not tolerate a recurrence of such mistakes, as they undermine the fairness of the selection process.

He noted that the revised examination system has addressed these issues through a full transition to electronic testing.

Minister Al-Sumait affirmed that the current examinations adhere to the highest standards of governance, highlighting that the majority of state institutions have adopted this type of electronic testing.

He pointed out that the plan to Kuwaitize the judiciary extends until 2030, noting that the percentage of foreign personnel in this sector decreased from 20 percent to 17 percent as of October 1.

He indicated that this reduction will continue gradually as annual cohorts of judges and prosecutors from Egypt leave after completing their service, adding, "We highly appreciate them, for they are the ones who taught us in this sector."

Minister Al-Sumait stated, "The time has come for Kuwaitis to assume full control of this vital judicial system, and they are fully capable of managing it with competence and merit."

In response to a question about the Public Prosecution's recruitment process for the coming years, the Minister of Justice explained that the recently adopted decisions establish a fairer and more transparent system for employment.

The recruitment of public prosecutors has become a collaborative process, no longer the sole responsibility of any single entity. It now involves the Ministry of Justice, the Judicial Admissions Committee at Kuwait University, and the Kuwait Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies, all under full judicial and administrative oversight from the relevant authorities.

The appointees will initially begin their work as legal researchers in the Ministry of Justice until they complete the training course that qualifies them for the position of Public Prosecutor. This mechanism will serve as the foundation for the ministry's ongoing recruitment process.

He went on to explain that the National Plan for Modernizing the Legislative System aims to review approximately 25 percent of the existing laws. Kuwait currently has 983 laws, and the target is to review 250 of them by December 2026. The review of 201 laws has already been completed at a rapid pace. The work has been divided into several tracks, including the Technical Office of the Minister of Justice, which comprises advisors from the courts as well as heads and members of the Public Prosecution, in addition to eight joint special committees made up of representatives from the judiciary, government, and public benefit associations. Each committee is responsible for amending a key law.

One of these committees has completed drafting a new law for economic courts, which is one of the most important laws. A major criticism leveled against the State of Kuwait has been the lengthy adjudication times in courts handling commercial disputes and cases involving foreign investors, due to the absence of specialized courts.

Other committees are working on updating the Penal Code, which has not undergone a comprehensive amendment since 1970, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, issued in the 1960s, as well as the insurance system covering car accidents, buildings, and projects. The aim is to establish a fast and efficient system that reduces litigation time from years to just weeks or a few months.

Minister Al-Sumait also highlighted a comprehensive review of the Civil Service Law, also known as the Labor Law, noting that the current provisions do not allow employers or employees to fully secure their rights.

He revealed that academic and legal experts, including Dr. Anwar Al-Fuzai, Professor of Law at Kuwait University and former expert at the International Labour Organization, were consulted to develop a sound draft addressing the existing concerns in the law.

Counselor Al-Sumait clarified that passing the written exam is only half the battle, noting that applicants will now receive their results immediately instead of waiting weeks as before.

He indicated that obtaining 25 out of 40 points is the minimum requirement to advance to personal interviews before the judicial committee, known for its integrity and experience, which selects the most qualified candidates for this public service position.

The minister also addressed support staff positions in the courts, announcing the start of Kuwaitization for the "Court Clerk" position, which has traditionally been held by non-Kuwaitis, revealing that the title has been changed to "Court Session Coordinator" in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

He stressed that a significant number of citizens had applied for the position and are currently undergoing screening, testing, and personal interviews.

The minister announced that the position of "Court Session Secretary" has been open to women for the first time,

highlighting that Kuwaiti women now hold several roles within the judicial system, including judge, public prosecutor, and deputy public prosecutor.

He noted that Awatif Sand had been appointed as Under-secretary of the Ministry of Justice and became a member of the Supreme Judicial Council, a first in Kuwait's history.

Minister Al-Sumait expressed confidence in women's ability to perform this delicate role, which requires a high level of organization and efficiency, and affirmed that their presence would significantly enhance the courts' effectiveness.

The minister confirmed that the plan to modernize the legislative system is progressing faster than scheduled, with the primary goal of facilitating citizens' lives and expediting access to their rights.

He highlighted that delayed justice is a form of injustice, and it is unacceptable for litigants to wait years to obtain their rights, citing examples such as flight delays and lost luggage.

Minister Al-Sumait noted that current procedures impose a burden on affected individuals, discouraging them from seeking legal recourse.

Workers cities

He reiterated the commitment of the government to combat all forms of corruption, confirming that work is underway in various sectors, including agriculture and issues affecting the lives of Kuwaiti citizens and the expatriates. He emphasized that the implementation of desired reforms will take time, adding that His Highness the Amir remains committed to the protection of the interests of citizens and to continue the fight against corruption.

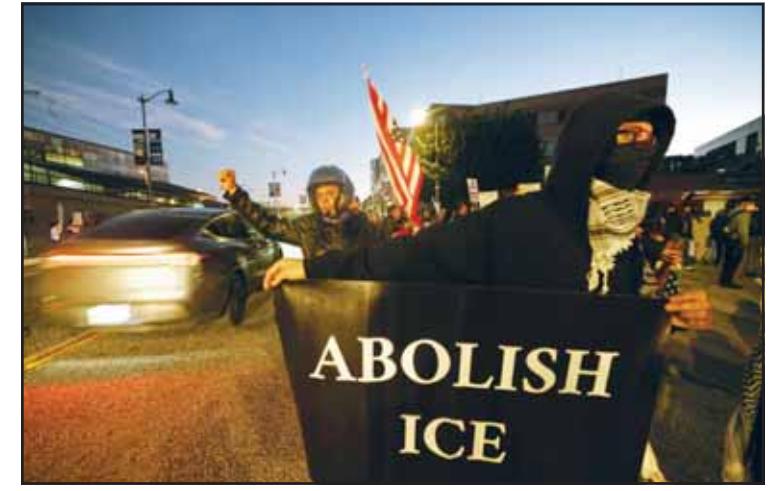
Regarding agriculture, he affirmed the withdrawal of several farms in Jahra and Fahd Al-Ahmad, as only one party benefited from this initiative, while the citizens suffered. He stressed that the Kuwaiti Farmers Union was not established to generate profits, but rather to serve as an organizational umbrella for Kuwaiti farmers and support local production. He underscored the importance of supporting national products and promoting reliance on local production, citing the aviation sector as an example. He questioned the rationale behind importing when direct purchases from Kuwaiti farms are possible, stating that several ideas and initiatives are being developed and further organization is needed to implement this approach.

He then called for regular monthly meetings among farmers to agree on a clear operational mechanism, coordinate efforts, and address shared challenges, thereby, contributing to increased agricultural production and achieving sustainability in this vital sector.

INTERNATIONAL



Left: Demonstrators march outside the White House in Washington, Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent who fatally shot Renee Nicole Good in Minneapolis. Center: Protesters walk through a shopping center after attending a demonstration for Renee Good, who was fatally shot by an ICE officer earlier in the week, Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, in Kansas City, Mo. Right: Protesters gather during a demonstration in front of the Metropolitan Detention Center calling for an end to federal immigration enforcement operations, Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP)



Minnesota leaders urge calm as anger boils

Protesters assemble across US after ICE-linked shootings

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan 11, (AP): Thousands of people marched in Minneapolis on Saturday to protest the fatal shooting of a woman by a federal immigration officer there and the shooting of two people in Portland, Oregon. Minnesota leaders urged demonstrators to remain peaceful.

The protest was one of hundreds planned for towns and cities across the country over the weekend. It came in a city on edge since the killing of Renee Good on Wednesday by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

"We're all living in fear right now," said Meghan Moore, a mother of two from Minneapolis who joined the protest. "ICE is creating an environment where nobody feels safe and that's unacceptable."

On Friday night, a protest outside a Minneapolis hotel that attracted about 1,000 people turned violent as demonstrators threw ice, snow and rocks at officers, Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara said. One officer suffered minor

injuries after being struck with a piece of ice, O'Hara said. Twenty-nine people were cited and released, he said.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey stressed that while most protests have been peaceful, those who cause damage to property or put others in danger will be arrested. He faulted "agitators" that are trying to rile up large crowds."

"This is what Donald Trump wants," Frey said of the president who has demanded massive immigration enforcement efforts in several U.S. cities. "He wants us to take the bait."

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz echoed the call for peace.

"Trump sent thousands of armed federal officers into our state, and it took just one day for them to kill someone," Walz said on social media. "Now he wants nothing more than to see chaos distract from that horrific action. Don't give him what he wants."

"We will fight with peaceful expression, in court, through public debate, and at the ballot box. Keep the peace.

And keep the faith," Walz said later in another post.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security says its deployment of immigration officers in the Twin Cities is its biggest ever immigration enforcement operation. Trump's administration has said both shootings were acts of self-defense against drivers who "weaponized" their vehicles to attack officers. Connor Maloney said he was attending the Minneapolis protest to support his community and because he's frustrated with the immigration crackdown.

"Almost daily I see them harassing people," he said. "It's just sickening that it's happening in our community around us."

He and other protesters, including children, braved subfreezing temperatures and a light dusting of snow, carrying handmade signs saying declaring, "De-ICE Minnesota!" and "ICE melts in Minnesota."

They marched down a street that is

home to restaurants and stores where various nationalities and cultures are celebrated in colorful murals.

Steven Eubanks, 51, said he felt compelled to attend a protest in Durham, North Carolina, because of the "horrifying" killing in Minneapolis.

"We can't allow it," Eubanks said.

"We have to stand up."

Indivisible, a social movement organization that formed to resist the Trump administration, said hundreds of protests were scheduled in Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, Ohio, Florida and other states.

In Minneapolis, a coalition of migrant rights groups organized the demonstration that began in a park about half a mile from the residential neighborhood where the 37-year-old Good was shot on Wednesday.

But the large protest apparently did not deter federal officers from operating in the city.

A couple of miles away, just as the demonstration began, an Associated

Press photographer witnessed heavily armed officers - at least one in Border Patrol uniform - approach a person who had been following them. Two of the agents had long guns out when they ordered the person to stop following them, telling him it was his "first and final warning."

The agents eventually drove onto the interstate without detaining the driver.

In Richfield, a suburb of Minneapolis, federal agents with their faces covered pointed their fingers at journalists and warned them to stay away as they detained a man outside a home improvement store.

Protests held in the neighborhood have been largely peaceful, and in general there has been minimal law enforcement presence, in contrast to the violence that hit Minneapolis in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd in 2020. Near the airport, some confrontations erupted on Thursday and Friday between smaller groups

of protesters and officers guarding the federal building used as a base for the Twin Cities crackdown.

O'Hara said city police officers have responded to calls about cars abandoned because their drivers have been apprehended by immigration enforcement. In one case, a car was left in park and a dog was left inside another.

He said immigration enforcement activities are happening "all over the city" and that 911 callers have been alerting authorities to ICE activity, arrests and abandoned vehicles.

The Trump administration has deployed thousands of federal officers to Minnesota under a sweeping new crackdown tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents. More than 2,000 officers were taking part.

Three congresswomen from Minnesota attempted to tour the ICE facility in the Minneapolis federal building on in the morning and were initially allowed to enter but then told they had to leave about 10 minutes later.



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban speaks at the Fidesz party's 31st congress in Budapest, Hungary, Jan. 10, 2026. Orban said on Saturday that he is ready to lead the ruling party alliance in the upcoming parliamentary election. (Xinhua)

Orban says ready to lead Fidesz in upcoming election

BUDAPEST, Jan 11, (Xinhua): Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Saturday that he is ready to lead the ruling party alliance in the upcoming parliamentary election.

wage growth and family support policies, and said the government aims to further raise wages in the next term.

Orban urged candidates to engage with voters and address key issues, including the conflict in Ukraine, migration and social policy. He reiterated his opposition to migration and said Hungary would continue to resist pressure related to the European Union's migration pact.

Also:

BUDAPEST: Hungary will continue to pursue the "Hungarian path" in both domestic and foreign policies amid profound changes in the global political landscape, Hungarian Prime Minister **Viktor Orban** said last week.

Speaking at his annual international press conference in Budapest, Orban said Hungary has been following the "Hungarian path" since 2010 and will continue to do so in the years ahead, particularly in addressing challenges related to energy and migration.

Analysts question Trump's controversial plan

What US control of Greenland would mean

WASHINGTON, Jan 11, (AP): U.S. President Donald Trump wants to own Greenland. He has repeatedly said the United States must take control of the strategically located and mineral-rich island, which is a semi-autonomous region that's part of NATO ally Denmark.

Officials from Denmark, Greenland and the United States met Thursday in Washington and will meet again next week to discuss a renewed push by the White House, which is considering a range of options, including using military force, to acquire the island.

Trump said Friday he is going to do "something on Greenland, whether they like it or not."

If it's not done "the easy way, we're going to do it the hard way," he said without elaborating what that could entail. In an interview Thursday, he told The New York Times that he wants to own Greenland because "ownership gives you things and elements that you can't get from just signing a document."

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that an American takeover of Greenland would mark the end of NATO, and Greenlanders say they don't want to become part of the U.S.

This is a look at some of the ways the U.S. could take control of Greenland and the potential challenges.

Trump and his officials have indicated they want to control Greenland to enhance American security and explore business and mining deals. But Imran Bayoumi, an associate director at the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, said the sudden focus on Greenland is also the result of decades of neglect by several U.S. presidents towards Washington's position in the Arctic.

The current fixation is partly down to "the realization we need to increase



The northern lights appear over homes in Nuuk, Greenland, on Feb. 17, 2025. (AP)

our presence in the Arctic, and we don't yet have the right strategy or vision to do so," he said.

If the U.S. took control of Greenland by force, it would plunge NATO into a crisis, possibly an existential one.

While Greenland is the largest island in the world, it has a population of around 57,000 and doesn't have its own military. Defense is provided by Denmark, whose military is dwarfed by that of the U.S.

It's unclear how the remaining members of NATO would respond if the U.S. decided to forcibly take control of the island or if they would come to Denmark's aid.

"If the United States chooses to attack another NATO country militarily, then everything stops," Frederiksen said.

Trump said he needs control of the island to guarantee American security, citing the threat from Russian and Chinese ships in the region, but "it's not

true" said Lin Mortensgaard, an expert on the international politics of the Arctic at the Danish Institute for International Studies, or DIIS.

While there are probably Russian submarines - as there are across the Arctic region - there are no surface vessels, Mortensgaard said. China has research vessels in the Central Arctic Ocean, and while the Chinese and Russian militaries have done joint military exercises in the Arctic, they have taken place closer to Alaska, she said.

Bayoumi, of the Atlantic Council, said he doubted Trump would take control of Greenland by force because it's unpopular with both Democratic and Republican lawmakers, and would likely "fundamentally alter" U.S. relationships with allies worldwide.

The U.S. already has access to Greenland under a 1951 defense agreement, and Denmark and Greenland would be "quite happy" to accommodate a beefed up American military

presence, Mortensgaard said. For that reason, "blowing up the NATO alliance" for something Trump has already, doesn't make sense, said Ulrik Pram Gad, an expert on Greenland at DIIS.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told a select group of U.S. lawmakers this week that it was the Republican administration's intention to eventually purchase Greenland, as opposed to using military force. Danish and Greenlandic officials have previously said the island isn't for sale.

It's not clear how much buying the island could cost, or if the U.S. would be buying it from Denmark or Greenland.

Washington also could boost its military presence in Greenland "through cooperation and diplomacy," without taking it over, Bayoumi said.

One option could be for the U.S. to get a veto over security decisions made by the Greenlandic government, as it has in islands in the Pacific Ocean, Gad said.

Palau, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands have a Compact of Free Association, or COFA, with the U.S.

That would give Washington the right to operate military bases and make decisions about the islands' security in exchange for U.S. security guarantees and around \$7 billion of yearly economic assistance, according to the Congressional Research Service.

It's not clear how much that would improve upon Washington's current security strategy. The U.S. already operates the remote Pitmeik Space Base in northwestern Greenland, and can bring as many troops as it wants under existing agreements.

Greenlandic politician Aaja Chemnitz told The Associated Press that Greenlanders want more rights, including independence, but don't want to become part of the U.S.

Washington, Oregon win

Federal court protects mail-in ballots

SEATTLE, Jan 11, (AP): A federal judge on Friday blocked President Donald Trump's administration from enforcing most of his executive order on elections against the vote-by-mail states Washington and Oregon, in the latest blow to Trump's efforts to require documentary proof of citizenship to vote and to require that all ballots be received by Election Day.

U.S. District Judge John H. Chun in Seattle found that those requirements exceeded the president's authority, following similar rulings in a Massachusetts case brought by 19 states and in a Washington, D.C., case by Democratic and civil rights groups.

"Today's ruling is a huge victory for voters in Washington and Oregon, and for the rule of law," Washington Attorney General Nick Brown said. "The court enforced the long-standing constitutional rule that only States and Congress can regulate elections, not the Election Denier-in-Chief."

The executive order, issued in March, included new requirements that people provide documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote and a demand that all mail ballots be received by Election Day. It also put states' federal funding at risk if election officials didn't comply.

Officials in Oregon and Washington,



Olive, 4, deposits an election ballot into a drop box in Seattle, Wash., under the supervision of her mother, on Nov. 4, 2025. (AP)

which accept ballots as long as they are postmarked by Election Day, said that could disenfranchise thousands of voters.

During the 2024 general election, officials in Washington counted nearly 120,000 ballots that were received after election day but postmarked by it. Oregon officials received nearly 14,000 such ballots.

The judge found that Trump's efforts violated the separation of powers. The Constitution grants Congress and the states the authority to regulate federal elections, he noted.

Oregon and Washington said they sued separately from other states because, as exclusively vote-by-mail states, they faced particular harms from the executive order.

Trump and other Republicans have promoted the idea that large numbers of people who were not U.S. citizens might be voting. However, voting by noncitizens is rare and, when they are caught, they can face felony charges and deportation.

America

Mississippi rampage kills 6: A 24-year-old Mississippi man killed six people - his father, brother, uncle, 7-year-old cousin, a church pastor and the pastor's brother - at three locations during a Friday night rampage in a rural area, authorities said.

Daricka M. Moore was arrested at a police roadblock in Cedarbluff just before midnight after dozens of local, state and federal officers flooded the northeast Mississippi area.

Moore was being held without bail Saturday at the Clay County jail in West Point on murder charges and ahead of an expected initial appearance Monday before a judge.

Clay County District Attorney Scott Colom, who said he expects to pursue the death penalty, told The Associated Press that Moore would likely be appointed a public defender at that time.

If charges are upgraded to capital murder before then, Moore will be ineligible for bail under state law.

Clay County Sheriff Eddie Scott said at a Saturday news conference that evidence and witnesses indicate that Moore was the only shooter and no other injuries have been reported. (AP)

□ □ □

Ex-husband charged in murders: The ex-husband of an Ohio woman was charged with the murders of her and her husband, according to court and county records.

Michael McKee, 39, was booked Saturday and is currently being held in Illinois, according to the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office. He is alleged to have shot and killed the couple, Dr. Spencer Tepe, a 37-year-old dentist, and Monique Tepe, 39, in their Columbus home. There were no county court records in Ohio reflecting whether McKee has an attorney yet.

Dispatcher first received calls of concern, including from Tepe's boss, when he didn't show up for work, which the boss said was "out of character." Columbus police discovered the Tepes on the second floor of their home on Dec. 30 with gunshot wounds when officers conducted a wellness check. Their two young children were in the home and unharmed, police said.

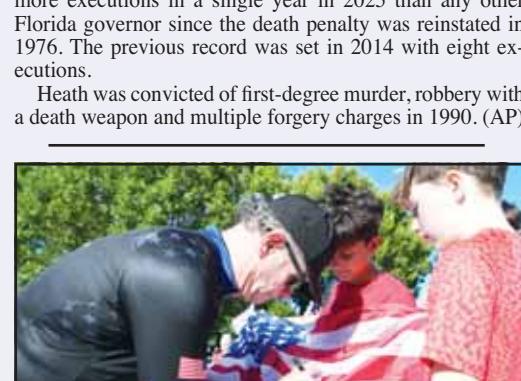
Police had released security footage earlier this week of a person of interest in a dark hoodie and light colored pants who was walking in an alley near the couple's home between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. - the window of time in which investigators believed they were attacked. (AP)

□ □ □

Florida sets execution date: A man convicted of killing a traveling salesman during a robbery is set to become Florida's first execution of 2026 under a death warrant signed Friday by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, who signed off on a record 19 executions last year.

Ronald Palmer Heath, 64, is scheduled to die by lethal injection Feb. 10 at Florida State Prison. DeSantis oversaw more executions in a single year in 2025 than any other Florida governor since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976. The previous record was set in 2014 with eight executions.

Heath was convicted of first-degree murder, robbery with a death weapon and multiple forgery charges in 1990. (AP)



Wounded Warriors Project CEO Walt Piatt, left, signs an American flag for students outside of the Coral Shores High School as wounded veterans ride in the annual Florida Keys Soldier Ride organized



Tourists take photos of the iconic giant snowman at the Qunli music park in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, Jan. 10, 2026. Standing 19 meters tall, measuring 14 meters in length and 11 meters in width, the snowman was dug and carved out of over 3,500 cubic meters of snow, with tourists swarming to take pictures of its classic red scarf and round face. (Xinhua)

5 killed in truck-car collision

Newlyweds among 8 dead in Pakistan fatal gas blast

ISLAMABAD, Jan 11, (Agencies): A gas cylinder explosion early Sunday after a wedding reception at a home in Pakistan's capital killed at least eight people, including the bride and groom, police and officials said.

The blast occurred as guests who had gathered to celebrate the couple were sleeping at the house, causing part of the house to collapse, according to the Islamabad police. Seven people were injured.

In a statement, police said the explosion occurred in a residential area in the heart of the city. A government administrator, Sahibzada Yousa, said authorities were alerted about the blast early Sunday and officers are still investigating. He said some nearby homes were also damaged. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed grief over the loss of lives and offered condolences to the victims' families, according to a statement from his office.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: At least five people



Government officials survey the damage of a home caused by a gas cylinder explosion hours after a wedding reception, in Islamabad, Pakistan, Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026. (AP)

Asia

Thailand imposes curfew after attacks: An immediate curfew has been imposed in Thailand's southern province of Narathiwat in response to a spate of violent incidents, including multiple explosions, the country's military announced on Sunday.

In an official statement released on the Narathiwat Task Force's social media account, the Thai military said it would roll out a series of measures to safeguard public order and security, including tightening controls at border checkpoints between Thailand and Malaysia and enforcing the curfew in Narathiwat that bans residents from leaving their homes between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Earlier on Sunday, the military confirmed that multiple petrol stations in Thailand's southern border provinces were hit by arson attacks and explosions late Saturday night, leaving one police officer injured, with five petrol stations in Narathiwat among the targeted sites.

According to Thai media reports, the assailants set fire to convenience stores at the petrol stations and detonated homemade bombs at fuel pumps, which triggered large fires on the premises. (Xinhua)

Speedboat crash leaves multiple injured: A speedboat carrying 55 people collided with a fishing boat near the popular Phi Phi Islands in Thailand's Krabi province on Sunday morning, leaving several passengers injured and in need of medical attention, the Krabi Provincial Public Relations Office announced via social media.

According to the announcement, Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center received official notification of the collision at 9:10 a.m. local time. Preliminary investigations confirmed the speedboat was occupied by 50 tourists, one Thai guide, one foreign guide, and three crew members. All individuals involved in the accident have since been safely rescued and transferred to the shores of Phi Phi Islands.

(Xinhua)

Australia extends emergency funding: Over 300 structures have been destroyed in the ongoing bushfire crisis in the southeast Australian state of Victoria, authorities said on Sunday as they announced support for affected communities.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the Premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan, on



Thailand's Prime Minister and leader of Bhumjaithai Party Anutin Charnvirakul, front left, takes a selfie with a supporter during an election campaign in Bangkok, Thailand, Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026. (AP)

We are well ... I'm a fighter, Maduro tells son

US issues Level 4 travel warning for Venezuela amid militia roadblocks

WASHINGTON, Jan 11, (Agencies): The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs on Saturday warned that as international flights have resumed, U.S. citizens in Venezuela "should leave the country immediately."

The bureau said in a post on X that the security situation in Venezuela "remains fluid" and there are "reports of groups of armed militias, known as colectivos, setting up roadblocks and searching vehicles for evidence of U.S. citizenship or support for the United States." U.S. citizens are advised to "remain vigilant and exercise caution" when traveling by road and to monitor airlines' communications and websites for updated information.

"Venezuela has the highest Travel Advisory level -- Level 4: Do Not Travel -- due to severe risks to Americans, including wrongful detention, torture in detention, terrorism, kidnapping, arbitrary enforcement of local laws, crime, civil unrest, and poor health infrastructure," the bureau said.

The United States launched a large-scale military operation against Venezuela in the early hours of Jan. 3, taking by force Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife. The strikes have drawn worldwide condemnation and concern.

Meanwhile, Venezuelan lawmaker Nicolas Maduro Guerra said on Saturday that his father, President Nicolas Maduro, sent a message through his lawyers saying he is in good condition and remains resolute while being held in the United States. "The lawyers told us they are strong and that we should not be sad," Guerra said while addressing leaders of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela.

He quoted his father as saying: "We are well. I am a fighter."

President Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, are currently held in the United States after U.S. forces carried out military strikes in Caracas and three other Venezuelan cities on Jan. 3, an operation that resulted in their capture. The strikes have drawn worldwide condemnation and concern. Maduro Guerra said his father remains unbroken, adding that the government and its supporters "are united and standing firm."

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Kuwait Bourse closes lower on Sunday

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): The Boursa Kuwait ended Sunday's trading session on a negative note, as the general market index declined by 47.06 points, or 0.53 percent, settling at 8,791.02 points.

Trading volume reached 287.7 million shares across 17,471 cash transactions, with a

total value of KD 69.5 million (approximately USD 212 million).

The main market index lost 27.85 points, or 0.34 percent, closing at 8,129.48 points. A total of 126.5 million shares changed hands through 9,404 transactions, generating KD 17.5 million (about USD 53.3 million) in value.

Business

Organized in collaboration with KPMG Kuwait and the CFA Society

Boursa Kuwait concludes awareness sessions on 'IFRS Update & New DMTT Law for Multinational Enterprises'

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Boursa Kuwait successfully concluded interactive awareness sessions entitled "IFRS Update and the New DMTT Law for Multinational Enterprises," held at the Khaled AlKharafi Auditorium at the Boursa Kuwait building.

Organized in collaboration with CFA Society and KPMG Kuwait, the sessions brought together finance professionals, listed companies, and representatives from financial institutions to discuss recent regulatory developments impacting financial reporting and tax compliance in the Kuwaiti market.

The sessions were presented by senior executives from the Tax and Corporate Services Sector at KPMG Kuwait, who offered participants practical insights into navigating the evolving regulatory landscape and its impact on financial reporting and taxation.

The first session focused on key updates within the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) framework, notably the upcoming implementation of IFRS 18, which will come into effect on January 1, 2027, and will replace IAS1.

The standard introduces a fundamentally revised structure for the presentation and disclosure of financial statements, including new defined subtotals in the statement of profit or loss, enhanced requirements for transparency in management-defined performance measures, and more consistent classification of income and expenses.

Speakers highlighted that the changes aim to improve comparability, clarity and the quality of financial reporting for users of financial statements, while requiring companies to reassess their reporting systems, internal controls, and communication with investors ahead of the transition.

Participants also received an overview of IFRS 1 and IFRS 2, which outline requirements related to sustainability and climate-related disclosures, supporting greater alignment with global ESG reporting practices.

The second session focused on the recently introduced Domestic Minimum Top-up Tax (DMTT) Law for multinational enterprises, which came into effect on January 1, 2025, together with its Executive Bylaws, and establishes a comprehensive framework for implementing DMTT regulations and applying global minimum tax provisions in Kuwait.

During the session, experts underscored the law's requirement that large multinational enterprises (MNEs) with consolidated global revenues of at least €750 million in two of the previous four years pay a minimum effective tax rate of 15% on their Kuwait-sourced prof-



Boursa Kuwait, CFA Society, and KPMG Kuwait highlight key IFRS and tax developments impacting listed companies.

its.

Under the new rules, companies that fall within scope will transition from Kuwait's previous tax obligations, such as corporate income tax, zakat, National Labor Support Tax (NLST) and other legacy tax regimes to a modernized framework aligned with international standards. This shift aims to simplify compliance, ensure consistency and support Kuwait's integration with global tax practices. The new framework also reflects alignment with global standards under the OECD/G20's "Pillar Two" initiative aimed at preventing profit shifting and ensuring fair taxation.

These awareness sessions reflect Boursa Kuwait's ongoing commitment to keeping market participants fully informed of key regulatory and reporting developments that directly impact financial transparency and tax compliance.

The company aims to provide practical guidance that

supports listed companies and financial institutions in strengthening their reporting frameworks, enhancing governance practices and aligning with international standards in a manner that supports market stability, investor confidence and enhances the long-term sustainable growth of the Kuwaiti capital market and its participants.

Boursa Kuwait recently amended its Rulebook in line with the Capital Markets Authority's Circular No. 4 of 2025, which requires companies listed on the "Premier" Market to disclose their 2025 sustainability reports and publish them on the bourse's website no later than the end of the second quarter of the financial year (end of June 2026), taking into account differences in companies' financial periods.

Organizing enlightening workshops and other educational initiatives form an integral part of Boursa Kuwait's strategy for corporate social responsibility

(CSR), which aims to create a lasting and meaningful impact on the communities where it operates. It also underscores Boursa Kuwait's role as a catalyst for market development and reflects its dedication to building a resilient ecosystem aligned with international best practices and the objectives of New Kuwait Vision 2035. It also aligns with Goal 4 - Quality Education - and Goal 17 - Partnership for the Goals - of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Brief Overview of Boursa Kuwait:

The establishment of Boursa Kuwait in 2014 marked the first step in the privatization project of the Kuwait Stock Exchange, which was founded in 1977 as the first exchange in the Gulf Cooperation Council region and was reorganized in 1983 as an independent financial institution. The transitional phase began in 2016, with Boursa Kuwait officially assuming the responsibilities and operations of the Kuwait Stock Exchange, replacing it with an official license in the same year after the successful completion of the transitional phase. This ensured that Boursa Kuwait developed the infrastructure and operated according to best practices and international standards. It commenced the creation of an advanced, reliable trading platform built on efficiency, credibility, and transparency to serve all asset classes with a focus on the interests of traders and the national economy.

Boursa Kuwait has undertaken various market reforms as part of its comprehensive plans to enhance it in several stages. It succeeded in introducing innovative investment tools, enhancing transparency, and restructuring the market to increase its liquidity and competitiveness, based on its mission-focused strategy, which emphasizes developing the market to meet international standards. The company's developmental and improvement efforts have also contributed to the reclassification of the Kuwait market as an "emerging market" among key global index providers, enhancing Kuwait's position as a leading regional financial center.

In a pioneering step in Kuwait's privatization field, the privatization of Boursa Kuwait was successful, conducted in two stages. The first stage was in February 2019 when a consortium of Kuwaiti investment companies and a global exchange operator won the privatization bid, acquiring a 44% stake in the company.

In December 2019, the privatization process was completed through the public offering of a 50% stake owned by the Capital Markets Authority to Kuwaiti citizens, with the offering oversubscribed by more than 850%. Boursa Kuwait is listed on the "Premier Market" under the name "Boursa".

AI and automation drive KOC's operational efficiency

KOC drills 1,337 oil wells in 3 years

By Najeen Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) drilling and exploration teams have drilled 1,337 oil wells in the last three years.

According to informed sources, this figure excludes non-associated gas wells.

KOC repaired 5,783 oil production wells between 2023 and 2025. The percentage of shut-in wells undergoing repair is less than four percent. Restoring shut-in or low-producing wells is expected to yield more than 10,000 barrels of oil per day in 2025, in line with KOC and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) strategy to reach four million barrels per day by 2035 and sustain that level until 2040.

Its exploration teams have saved millions of dinars by increasing the depth of some existing wells under development.

KOC is actively pursuing its strategy to boost efficiency while reducing operating costs, having restructured its IT infrastructure with the creation of an Innovation and Digital Transformation Team. It is working on implementing digital solutions, particularly artificial intelligence applications for big data analytics. The team is also responsible for coordinating the execution of KPC's

SoftPOS boosts Burgan Bank's merchant solutions

Burgan Bank expands SoftPOS to support credit card payments

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Burgan Bank announced the expansion of its innovative SoftPOS solution powered by K-NET, now enabling merchants to accept credit card payments directly through their smartphones. The service upgrade marks a major milestone in the Bank's digital payments strategy, positioning Burgan Bank among the first in Kuwait to offer a holistic SoftPOS solution that supports debit card, credit card, and prepaid card payments, replacing traditional POS devices.

SoftPOS transforms any compatible smartphone into a secure, fully functional payment terminal, giving merchants, SMEs, startups, and home-based businesses a simple and cost-effective way to accept contactless payments anytime and anywhere. The enhanced SoftPOS service aligns with Burgan Bank's robust digital transformation strategy and active contribution to achieving the Vision 2035 goal to transform Kuwait into a cashless, digital-first economy, empowering businesses to modernize their payment methods and operate with greater flexibility and mobility.

Commenting on the software's latest update, Mr. Abdullah Husain Al-Maqseed, Executive Manager - Merchant Acquiring at Burgan Bank, said: "In line with our committed contribution to achieving Kuwait Vision 2035 goals and supporting our local economy's transition to a digital one, as well as our momentous digital transformation journey, we continue to deploy the latest financial technologies available to add ease, convenience, and security to our customers' day-to-day business operations.



Al-Maqseed



Adopting SoftPOS powered by K-NET marks a milestone in our offerings for merchants, especially those whose businesses are naturally portable and on-the-go, empowering them to accept payments seamlessly wherever and whenever."

In addition, SoftPOS is governed by advanced data and cyber security features, in adherence to the cyber security framework set forth by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Burgan Bank's stringent risk management strategy. The encrypted transactions guarantee the highest degree of safety for all client data and transaction information, guarding them against theft.

For merchants interested in elevating their everyday transactions and offering their customers a seamless checkout experience, more information about SoftPOS can be found on Burgan Bank's website (www.Burgan.com). For more inquiries, call customer support at 1804080.

Targeting private real estate credit opportunities

Kamco Invest, Santander form €300 mln sharia-compliant private credit alliance

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Kamco Invest and Santander Alternative Investments jointly announced the EUR300m partnership to offer sharia-compliant, income-generating investment opportunities in the European real estate private credit space to the investment community in the Arabian Gulf region.

The partnership will leverage the sourcing, underwriting and execution capabilities of Santander's local, experienced real estate credit teams to co-invest in select real estate credit opportunities across Western Europe. The strategy focuses on senior-secured and mezzanine financing, targeting enhanced, risk-adjusted returns while maintaining disciplined capital preservation, supported by rigorous due diligence, transparent governance, and institutional-grade execution.

Santander Alternative Investments serves as the specialized alternative asset management arm of Santander Asset Management, with a core focus on private credit, real estate, and other alternative investment strategies. Santander Asset Management is the global asset management arm of Banco Santander, headquartered in Spain with presence across ten countries in Europe and Latin America and total assets under management exceeding Euro 255 billion. It combines European market insight with global investment expertise, maintaining a strong track record in alternative credit strategies supported by disciplined underwriting, sustainability integration, and a focus on long-term value creation.

As global credit markets continue to evolve, private credit has emerged as a structurally supported asset class driven by elevated interest rate environment, tighter lending conditions by commercial banks, and a growing need for financing alternatives outside traditional banking channels. These dynamics have reinforced the role of private lenders, particularly in markets characterized by heightened refinancing requirements and sectors underserved by conventional lending sources.

Asset-backed financing has gained significant prominence due to its resilience, disciplined structure, and alignment with both borrower needs and investor objectives. Unlike unsecured lending, asset-backed financing anchors repayment to underlying collateral, offering stronger cash flow visibility, conservative loan-to-value discipline, and enhanced downside protection through comprehensive covenant frameworks. This approach has proven especially relevant across sectors benefiting from long-term demand drivers such as residential assets, logistics, hospitality, and select



Mohammed Al Othman



Carlos Manzano

KAMCO INVEST

Santander
Alternative Investments

alternative real estate segments.

Commenting on the partnership, **Mohammed Al Othman**, Managing Director of Alternative Investments at Kamco Invest, said, "Private credit has become an increasingly important component of institutional portfolios globally, supported by structural shifts in lending markets and the growing appeal of income-oriented, asset-backed strategies. We are excited to partner with Santander Alternative Investments, reflecting our commitment to expanding our alternatives platform through collaborations that bring global expertise and disciplined investment practices to our clients in Kuwait and the wider GCC."

Carlos Manzano, Chief Executive Officer of Santander Alternative Investments, said, "Partnering with Kamco Invest, a respected regional institution with a strong market presence, enables us to bring our origination network, credit discipline, and the expertise of our European real estate investment team to a new set of investors seeking resilient, risk-adjusted income. We see a compelling window for private real estate credit in today's market environment and look forward to building a long-term alternatives platform that can scale with market demand."

Al-Othman concluded, "This strategic step enhances our ability to provide access to high-quality opportunities that are aligned with the evolving needs of sophisticated investors seeking stability, diversification and long-term value."

The partnership reflects Kamco Invest's long-term strategy to expand its offering in the alternatives space

and strengthen its relationships with leading international investment managers. By deepening its capabilities in private credit and secured lending solutions, Kamco Invest aims to reinforce its position as a regional leader in delivering diversified, resilient, and institutionally structured investment opportunities to its clients.

It is worth noting that Kamco Invest was recently named Kuwait's Best for Alternative Investments in 2025 by Euromoney, recognizing the company's strong performance and diverse solutions in the alternative investment space which covers private equity, real estate and structured products.

About Kamco Invest
Kamco Investment Company K.S.C (Public) "Kamco Invest" is a regional non-banking financial powerhouse headquartered in Kuwait with offices in key regional financial markets, established in 1998 and listed on Boursa Kuwait in 2003. It is an independently managed subsidiary of Burgan Bank, a member of KIPCO Group, adopting highest standards of corporate governance and regulated by the Capital Markets Authority and Central Bank of Kuwait. The Company offers a comprehensive range of investment solutions covering asset management, investment banking and brokerage.

Kamco Invest has AUM of over USD16.4bn as of 30 September 2025 allocated to various asset classes and jurisdictions, making it one of the largest asset managers in the MENA region. It has acted as investment banker to deals exceeding USD45.3bn from its inception to 30 September 2025 in equity capital markets, debt capital markets and mergers & acquisitions.

Over 600 million digital banking transactions in 2025

KFH leads digital transformation & banking innovation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues to spearhead digital transformation within the banking sector, leveraging its robust infrastructure and innovative digital services to deliver a secure, seamless, and sophisticated banking experience available 24/7.

Through platforms such as KFHOnline, smart branches (KFH Go), ATMs, and phone service, banking transactions have become more seamless than ever. Customers performed more than 600 million e-transactions during 2025, reflecting their deep confidence in the bank and reinforcing KFH's leadership in providing future-proof banking solutions.

Customer transactions covered a wide range of services, including instant issuance of virtual cards, opening additional accounts without visiting the branch, activating and suspending cards, creating deposits, adding beneficiaries, balance inquiry and transaction statements, requesting cheque books, buying and selling gold, applying for financing, managing children's accounts, using WAMD instant payment service, and sending and requesting funds via KFH Pay, among many other advanced digital services. Moreover, self-service transactions recorded 5.5 million calls, and the contact center handled 2.6 million calls.

Deputy Group CEO Transformation, Technology and Operations, Haytham Altermait said that KFH continues its leadership in delivering innovative digital solutions that enable customers to complete their banking transactions anytime and from anywhere, while ensuring the highest standards of security and reliability. This approach is part of the Bank's strategy to promote digital transformation and deliver an integrated banking experience that keeps pace with global developments in the financial sector.

KFHOnline update

Altermait added: "As part of its commitment to providing the best banking experiences, KFH implemented a comprehensive upgrade to KFHOnline app. The update introduced a redesigned home page that offers a smoother, more interactive user experience, making it easier for customers to access banking services and view the latest products and services tailored to app users. The update also enhanced the customer profile page, enabling users to view details of their banking tiers and enjoy exclusive benefits tailored to each program. New services were also added, including the new instant issuance of the digital card and managing the ATM card usage limits."

200 Digital services

Altermait explained that KFHOnline app offers more than 200 digital banking services, including WAMD, online account opening, gold trading, e-payment and settlement solutions, and other essential services that support customers' daily banking needs.

KFH GO

Altermait emphasized KFH's commitment to expanding its KFH Go network of smart branches, which currently consists of 11 locations: The Avenues, Ishbiliyah, Jabiya, Mangaf, Sabah Al-Ahmad, Al-Salam, and Abu Fatira cooperatives, as well as Shuwaikh KFH Auto Showroom, and Al-Khiran, Abdullah Al-Salem, and Airport branches. He added that KFH seeks to increase the number of these smart branches to meet the needs of customers in most areas of Kuwait because of their continu-



Haytham Altermait

Altermait:

■ KFHOnline app offers more than 200 digital banking services

ous success and ease of use for the various KFH services.

WAMD and Western Union

As part of its leadership in offering advanced digital banking solutions for customers, including local and international money transfer through KFHOnline, KFH introduced the WAMD money transfer service and co-branded international money transfer services in cooperation with Western Union. This service enables customers to conduct fast and secure transfers, whether in cash, directly to bank accounts, or to digital wallets worldwide, with access to Western Union's extensive global network.

Money request

This service allows customers to request money from individuals or groups by sharing a payment link quickly and easily, entering the recipients'

phone numbers, or creating a group for collective payment requests. Customers can also track payment status for each recipient through the previous transactions section for KFH Pay.

Easier financing

Applying for a financing online through KFHOnline app has become more convenient. Customers can submit their financing request through the Finance Services menu in the app and select Finance Request option.

Cards services

KFH successfully launched a pioneering service that enables new customers to open accounts via digital sales devices, becoming the first in the market to operate the mobile D-POS (Digital Point of Sale). This solution allows for instant account opening on KFH systems.



Smart branches

KFH also introduced the automated credit card printing for the first time in Kuwait, enabling customers to instantly print credit and prepaid cards in their new, distinctive design. This complemented the Bank's ability to instantly issue all types of cards via self-service devices, reaffirming its leadership in enhancing customer experience. Credit and prepaid cards can now be replaced instantly via self-service printing using a Civil ID or QR code.

Additionally, KFH customers are able to temporarily suspend and reactivate their cards, view KFH Rewards points, and access full card details through the KFHOnline application.

The Bank has also made progress in updating customer's Civil ID and authentication without the use of a physical card. Customers can transfer their funds from their prepaid card to their personal bank account. In addition, KFH cus-

tomers who have an additional family card can now control the additional card's limits.

Zaheb Platform

The launch of Zaheb, a digital payment platform for businesses, allowed corporate customers to easily pay by generating payment links and QR codes, eliminating the need for POS devices.

KFH introduced its first corporate mobile banking app (eCorp) featuring five core business services, and integrated biometric facial recognition technology to enhance security.

The eCorp app has been updated to include major new features, such as payroll transfer capabilities and cheque book requests for initiators.

KFH also introduced three new debit card products with various features specifically designed for corporate custom-



Gold Account



Mobile app



WAMD service



AFAQ service

ers for government use. One of these cards is issued with limited acceptance only on government KNET POS/PG terminals. This card has received positive feedback from users.

Payment services

KFH introduced a new payment solution for business owners and companies, switching their smartphones into secure and user-friendly POS terminals for debit cards and digital wallets. The service offers the highest security standards, with a maximum transaction limit of KD 250 per transaction.

AFAQ service was also launched, providing enhanced transparency and traceability for financial transactions and transfers across the GCC.

Cybersecurity

New infrastructure and security upgrades have strengthened group-wide transactions and laid a solid groundwork for cybersecurity. Key initiatives include building a robust infrastructure, unifying operations, and implementing proactive risk management.

Accelerating Digital Transformation

KFH continues to accelerate its digital transformation with a focus on responsibility and security, integrating artificial intelligence and automation while bolstering cybersecurity. The bank has successfully adopted cutting-edge technologies that have reduced costs, increased reliability, and accelerated performance. These advancements have significantly improved operational efficiency and transformed customer experience.

LGS

KFH achieved a milestone by becoming the first bank in Kuwait to integrate QR codes into Letters of Guarantee. This feature extends to all issued documentation and transactions, enhancing security and streamlining the verification process.

Contact Services

In 2025, KFH expanded its service capabilities by integrating its international branches into the IVR system, allowing for seamless, toll-free transfers to Egypt, the UK, and Bahrain. Additionally, the bank introduced a dedicated IVR interface for individuals with intellectual disabilities to ensure inclusive access to its services.

KFH Offers

Through KFH Offers section, integrated into KFHOnline app, customers can explore a diverse array of exclusive benefits. These features underscore KFH's dedication to providing a technology- and innovation-led banking experience. By proactively adapting to industry trends, the bank continues to solidify the sustainability of excellence.

Innovation and Creativity

KFH continues to foster a culture of creativity and innovation through its annual Group-wide (Innovation Challenge). This initiative leverages employee-driven ideas to create value-added financial services and high-quality solutions while streamlining workflows and modernizing systems. By refining procedures and optimizing the work environment, the competition aims to enhance customer experience, rationalize expenses, and drive growth through increased efficiency, a broader customer base, and greater flexibility.

Supporting tech innovation and secure digital transformation under Kuwait Vision 2035

talabat sponsors the KPRA's International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations & Customer Service

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: In line with its dedicated corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy and commitment to sharing its digital expertise with Kuwait's private and public sector partners, talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, concluded its strategic sponsorship of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Public Relations and Customer Service, organized by Kuwait Public Relations Association (KPRA) under the theme "Innovation... Communication... Future".

The conference, held under the patronage of His Excellency Abdulrahman Badah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, brought together national and international experts in the fields of PR, corporate communications, customer service, and digital services, who shared valuable market insights on leading the local market's digitally driven future in line with Kuwait Vision 2035 goals.

In recognition of its impactful support, talabat was honored for its strategic sponsorship of the conference. The company also received the "Best Influential Company in Community Awareness" award, accepted by Abdullah Al-Mansour, Director of Communications, Public Affairs, and Corporate Responsibility at talabat



talabat - KPRA Conference

Kuwait.

As part of the company's sponsorship, Al-Mansour took part in the main panel discussion on "Digital Transformation in Public Relations and Media" alongside subject matter experts from private and public sectors.

In light of his participation, Al-

Mansour emphasized the pivotal role of innovation in talabat's strategy, affirming: "At talabat, we adopt a dual approach to investment. As we develop advanced smart tools to enhance operational efficiency, we prioritize investing in our human capital to ensure they possess the necessary skills

to operate these tools. Integrating AI is not an end in itself, but rather a means to support informed and sustainable decision-making."

Speaking about competitive advantage, Al-Mansour pointed out that talabat, as a company born and bred in Kuwait, has a unique advantage in

adopting modern technologies. He added, "Our accumulated knowledge of the Kuwaiti market over more than 22 years enables us to utilize AI more effectively, especially in content creation and audience engagement. We rely on AI as a proactive risk management tool through real-time monitor-

ing of media and social media platforms, which enhances our ability to respond flexibly and responsibly."

The conference agenda covered several vital topics around leading the future of digitally enhanced PR and customer service in Kuwait, including digital PR strategies, innovation and entrepreneurship in PR and customer service, cybersecurity, professional ethics and data privacy, AI and service excellence, as well as Vision 2035 for PR and customer service. Besides the panel discussions, the conference also hosted a number of engaging workshops that enabled participants to discuss and apply different central notions on AI in the industry. The workshops tackled topics such as AI and decision making, cybersecurity and managing digital PR crises, digital transformation and innovation in customer service, data analysis and strategy building, as well as digital leadership and managing PR teams in the age of AI.

The sponsorship of the KPRA conference is among talabat's numerous efforts planned throughout the year to uphold its commitment to spreading knowledge and awareness among industry professionals, partners and the wider community on the innovative use of technology to address real-world challenges, through active participation and thought leadership.

Advancing net zero commitment

Zain Group earns 'A' rating in CDP Climate Change '25

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has achieved the top 'A' score in the recently published CDP Climate Change 2025 disclosure cycle, marking a significant milestone in the Group's climate action journey.

CDP is a global non-profit platform that enables organizations to measure, manage, and disclose environmental-related data, with scoring designed to recognize robust transparency and credible action toward climate goals.

This 'A' leadership-level score reflects Zain's strengthened commitment to environmental accountability and climate action, supported by comprehensive governance structures, enhanced risk management, and clearly defined decarbonization initiatives aligned with global standards. The recognition underscores the Group's progress in embedding climate considerations into strategic planning, operational resilience, and long-term value creation across its footprint.

Zain's climate change leadership is further underscored by CDP benchmarks showing average scores of 'B' for Telecom and Data Centers, and 'C' for the global average, with Zain being the only company based in Kuwait to achieve an 'A' leadership level score. Out of 21 disclosures and out of 252 globally disclosing telecommunications services companies, only 30 received an 'A' score, placing Zain in the top 12% of the industry.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, commented: "Addressing climate change should be a key priority for every organization and everyone living on this planet. Zain's acts with the belief that sustainable growth and climate leadership must go hand in hand."

He added, "As we continue to scale our digital infrastructure across the region in driving meaningful connectivity, we are equally committed to accelerate our transition and reduce emissions throughout our operations to achieve Net Zero by 2050. We firmly believe this commitment will create value to all our stakeholders."

Jennifer Suleiman, Chief Sustainability Officer & Mohammed AlMursi, Chief Technology Officer at Zain Group, jointly added: "Achieving an 'A' score from CDP is a testament to the rigor, transparency, and action embedded in our climate governance and operational execution. This recognition reinforces our commitment to SBTi-aligned targets, renewable energy expansion, and comprehensive climate-risk management across our value chain. We remain focused on pursuing transformational digital innovations and delivering measurable emissions reductions while strengthening resilience and long-term value creation across all our markets."

Operating across diverse markets increasingly exposed to rising temperatures, prolonged heatwaves, water scarcity, flooding, and energy infrastructure volatility, Zain Group has prioritized climate resilience and decarbonization to safeguard network performance and business continuity and proactively address its environ-

mental impacts.

Additionally, the rapid growth of data usage, network expansion, and rollout of energy-intensive technologies such as 5G and data centers further amplify the company's environmental impact. Managing these challenges requires balancing connectivity growth with decarbonization, addressing both physical and transition risks, and ensuring that climate considerations are embedded into business strategy and processes, governance, and risk management processes.

Zain's latest CDP recognition further validates the Group's contribution to building a more resilient future, highlighting Zain's role in encouraging wider corporate climate action across the region by demonstrating how ambition can be translated into accountable, data-driven progress.

Over the past five years, Zain has advanced a structured, measurable climate agenda:

■ 2020: Improved network efficiency by reducing CO₂ emissions by 10% per terabyte of data traffic, deployed 1,000+ solar-powered base stations in Jordan, Sudan, and South Sudan, and achieved 14% energy savings across data centers and network sites.

■ 2021: Upgraded to an A- CDP Climate Change rating, positioning Zain as the highest-ranked telecom operator in MENA at the time, and set a near-term target to reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 42% between 2020 and 2030, aligned with SBTi pathways.

■ 2022: Launched a Group-wide Climate Change Compliance Framework endorsed by the Board, installed solar hybrid systems across 400+ network sites in Jordan, Sudan, and Iraq, and implemented 57 energy-efficiency initiatives to reduce fuel consumption and emissions.

■ 2023: Deployed 338 hybrid energy solutions across network sites, migrated 55 sites in South Sudan to solar-powered systems, and strengthened alignment with SBTi, advancing Zain's Net Zero 2050 roadmap and emissions reduction ambition by 2030.

■ 2024: Deployed 242 solar solutions and 96 hybrid battery systems, connected 123 sites to the grid, and invested USD 4+ million in these initiatives. Zain also reduced diesel fuel consumption by approximately 7.5% YoY and delivered around USD 11.4 million in operating expenditure savings through energy-efficient and low-emission solutions.

■ 2025: Sustained progress toward its verified SBTi-approved net-zero goals by expanding renewable energy solutions, enhancing energy efficiency across facilities, deepening water-risk assessments, and strengthening waste and water management. A key milestone was launching Zain's Climate Transition Plan, outlining a practical and phased roadmap toward Net Zero. In Kuwait, Zain joined the Kuwait Green Building Council (KGBC), reinforcing its commitment to accelerating emissions reduction and improved energy efficiency, supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Trump proposes 10% cap on credit card interest

NEW YORK, Jan 11, (AP): Reviving a campaign pledge, President Donald Trump wants a one-year, 10% cap on credit card interest rates, a move that could save Americans tens of billions of dollars but drew immediate opposition from an industry that has been in his corner.

Trump was not clear in his social media post Friday night whether a cap might take effect through executive action or legislation, though one Republican senator said he had spoken with the president and would work on a bill with his "full support." Trump said he hoped it would be in place Jan. 20, one year after he took office.

Strong opposition is certain from Wall Street in addition to the credit card companies, which donated heavily to his 2014 campaign and have supported Trump's second-term agenda. Banks are making the argument that such a plan would most hurt poor people, at a time of economic concern, by curtailing or eliminating credit lines, driving them to high-cost alternatives like payday loans or pawnshops.

"We will no longer let the American Public be ripped off by Credit Card Companies that are charging Interest Rates of 20 to 30%," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Researchers who studied Trump's campaign pledge after it was first announced found that Americans would save roughly \$100 billion in interest a year if credit card rates were capped at 10%. The same researchers found that while the credit card industry would take a major hit, it would still be profitable, although credit card rewards and other perks might be scaled back.

About 195 million people in the United States had credit cards in 2014 and were assessed \$160 billion in interest charges, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau says. Americans are now carrying more credit card debt than ever, to the tune of about \$1.23 trillion, according to figures from the New York Federal Reserve for the third quarter last year.

Further, Americans are paying, on average, between 19.65% and 21.5% in interest on credit cards according to the Federal Reserve and other industry tracking sources. That has come down in the past year as the central bank lowered benchmark rates.

Credit card companies earn three streams of revenue from their products: fees charged to merchants, fees charged to customers and the interest charged on balances. The argument from some researchers and left-leaning policymakers is that the banks earn enough revenue from merchants to keep them profitable if interest rates were capped.

mark rates, but is near the highs since federal regulators started tracking credit card rates in the mid-1990s. That's significantly higher than a decade ago, when the average credit card interest rate was roughly 12%.

The Republican administration has proved particularly friendly until now to the credit card industry.

Capital One got little resistance from the White House when it finalized its purchase and merger with Discover Financial in early 2015, a deal that created the nation's largest credit card company. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which is largely tasked with going after credit card companies for alleged wrongdoing, has been largely nonfunctional since Trump took office.

In a joint statement, the banking industry was opposed to Trump's proposal.

"If enacted, this cap would only drive consumers toward less regulated, more costly alternatives," the American Bankers Association and allied groups said.

Bank lobbyists have long argued that lowering interest rates on their credit card products would require the banks to lend less to high-risk borrowers. When Congress enacted a cap on the fee that stores pay large banks when customers use a debit card, banks responded by removing all rewards and perks from those cards. Debit card rewards only recently have trickled back into consumers' hands. For example, United Airlines now has a debit card that gives miles with purchases.

The U.S. already places interest rate caps on some financial products and for some demographics. The Military Lending Act makes it illegal to charge active-duty service members more than 36% for any financial product. The national regulator for credit unions has capped interest rates on credit union credit cards at 18%.

Credit card companies earn three streams of revenue from their products: fees charged to merchants, fees charged to customers and the interest charged on balances. The argument from some researchers and left-leaning policymakers is that the banks earn enough revenue from merchants to keep them profitable if interest rates were capped.

Greenland at center of Trump's critical minerals push

WASHINGTON, Jan 11, (AP): Greenland's harsh environment, lack of key infrastructure and difficult geology have so far prevented anyone from building a mine to extract the sought-after rare earth elements that many high-tech products require. Even if President Donald Trump prevails in his effort to take control of the Arctic island, those challenges won't go away.

Trump has prioritized breaking China's stranglehold on the global supply of rare earths ever since the world's number two economy sharply restricted who could buy them after the United States imposed widespread tariffs last spring. The Trump administration has invested hundreds of millions of dollars and even taken stakes in several companies. Now the president is again pitching the idea that wresting control of Greenland away from Denmark could solve the problem.

"We are going to do something on Greenland whether they like it or not," Trump said Friday.

But Greenland may not be able to produce rare earths for years - if ever. Some companies are trying anyway, but their efforts to unearth some of the 1.5 million tons of rare earths encased in rock in Greenland generally haven't advanced beyond the exploratory stage. Trump's fascination with the island nation may be more about countering Russian and Chinese influence in the Arctic than securing any of the hard-to-pronounce elements like neodymium and terbium that are used to produce the high-powered magnets needed in electric vehicles, wind turbines, robots and fighter jets among other products.

"The fixation on Greenland has always been more about geopolitical posturing - a military-strategic interest and stock-promotion narrative - than a realistic supply solution for the tech sector," said Tracy Hughes, founder and executive director of the Critical Minerals Institute. "The hype far outstrips the hard science and economics behind these critical minerals."

Trump confirmed those geopolitical concerns at the White House Friday.

"We don't want Russia or China going to Greenland, which, if we don't take Greenland,

you can have Russia or China as your next door neighbor. That's not going to happen," Trump said.

The main challenge to mine in Greenland is, "of course, the remoteness. Even in the south where it's populated, there are few roads and no railways, so any mining venture would have to create these accessibilities," said Diogo Rosa, an economic geology researcher at the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland. Power would also have to be generated locally, and expert manpower would have to be brought in.

Another concern is the prospect of mining rare earths in the fragile Arctic environment just as Greenland tries to build a thriving tourism industry, said Patrick Schröder, a senior fellow in the Environment and Society program at the Chatham House think-tank in London.

"Toxic chemicals needed to separate the minerals out from the rock, so that can be highly polluting and further downstream as well, the processing," Schröder said. Plus, rare earths are often found alongside radioactive uranium.

Besides the unforgiving climate that encases much of Greenland under layers of ice and freezes the northern fjords for much of the year, the rare earths found there tend to be encased in a complex type of rock called eudialyte, and no one has ever developed a profitable process to extract rare earths from that type of rock. Elsewhere, these elements are normally found in different rock formation called carbonatites, and there are proven methods to work with that.

"If we're in a race for resources - for critical minerals - then we should be focusing on the resources that are most easily able to get to market," said David Abraham, a rare earths expert who has followed the industry for decades and wrote the book "The Elements of Power."

This week, Critical Metals' stock price more than doubled after it said it plans to build a pilot plant in Greenland this year. But that company and more than a dozen others exploring deposits on the island remain far away from actually building a mine and would still need to raise at least hundreds of millions of dollars.

Even the most promising projects can struggle to turn a profit, particularly when China resorts to dumping extra materials onto the market to depress prices and drive competitors out of business as it has done many times in the past. And currently most critical minerals have to be processed in China.

The U.S. is scrambling to expand the supply of rare earths outside of China during the one-year reprieve from even tougher restrictions that Trump said Xi Jinping agreed to in October. A number of companies around the world are already producing rare earths or magnets and can deliver more quickly than anything in Greenland, which Trump has threatened to seize with military power if Denmark doesn't agree to sell it.

"Everybody's just been running to get to this endpoint. And if you go to Greenland, it's like you're going back to the beginning," said Ian Lange, an economics professor who focuses on rare earths at the Colorado School of Mines.

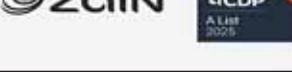
Many in the industry, too, think America should focus on helping proven companies instead of trying to build new rare earth mines in Greenland, Ukraine, Africa or elsewhere. A number of other mining projects in the U.S. and friendly nations like Australia are farther along and in much more accessible locations.

The U.S. government has invested directly in the company that runs the only rare earths mine in the U.S., MP Materials, and a lithium miner and a company that recycles batteries and other products with rare earths.

Scott Dunn, CEO of Noveon Magnetics, said those investments should do more to reduce China's leverage, but it's hard to change the math quickly when more than 90% of the world's rare earths come from China.

"There are very few folks that can rely on a track record for delivering anything in each of these instances, and that obviously should be where we start, and especially in my view if you're the U.S. government," said Dunn, whose company is already producing more than 2,000 metric tons of magnets each year at a plant in Texas from elements it gets outside of China.

We're a Climate A List organization, recognized as a leader in corporate transparency and action on climate change.

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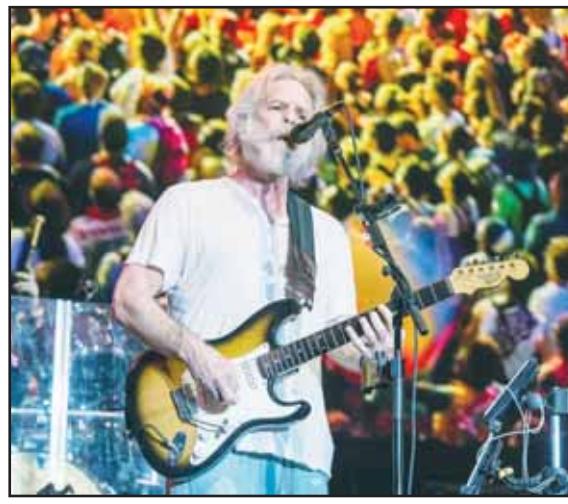


Features

ARAB TIMES

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026

Obituaries



Bob Weir of Dead & Company performs at Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival on Sunday, June 12, 2016, in Manchester, Tenn. (AP)

Actor T.K. Carter dies at 69

Bob Weir, co-founder of Grateful Dead, dies at 78

LOS ANGELES, Jan 11, (AP): **Bob Weir**, the guitarist and singer who was an essential member of the Grateful Dead helped found the sound of the San Francisco counterculture of the 1960s and kept it alive through decades of endless tours and marathon jams, has died. He was 78.

Weir's death was announced Saturday in a statement on his Instagram page.

"It is with profound sadness that we share the passing of Bobby Weir," a statement on his Instagram posted Saturday said. "He transitioned peacefully, surrounded by loved ones, after courageously beating cancer as only Bobby could. Unfortunately, he succumbed to underlying lung issues."

The statement did not say where or when Weir died, but he lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for most of his life.

Weir joined the Grateful Dead - originally the Warlocks - in 1965 in San Francisco at just 17 years old. He would spend the next 30 years playing on endless tours with the Grateful Dead alongside fellow singer and guitarist Jerry Garcia, who died in 1995.

Weir wrote or co-wrote and sang lead vocals on Dead classics including "Sugar Magnolia," "One More Saturday Night" and "Mexicali Blues."

After Garcia's death, he would be the Dead's most recognizable face. In the decades since, he kept playing with other projects that kept alive the band's music and legendary fan base, including Dead & Company.

Artistry

"For over sixty years, Bobby took to the road," the Instagram statement said. "A guitarist, vocalist, storyteller, and founding member of the Grateful Dead. Bobby will forever be a guiding force whose unique artistry reshaped American music."

Weir's death leaves drummer Bill Kreutzmann as the only surviving original member. Founding bassist Phil Lesh died in 2024. The band's other drummer, Mickey Hart, practically an original member since joining in 1967, is also alive at 82. The fifth founding member, Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, died in 1973.

Dead and Company played a series of concerts for the Grateful Dead's 60th anniversary in July at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, drawing some 60,000 fans a day for three days.

Born in San Francisco and raised in nearby Atherton, Weir was the Dead's youngest member and looked like a fresh-faced high-schooler in its early years. He was generally less shaggy than the rest of the band, but he had a long beard like Garcia's in later years.

The band would survive long past the hippie moment of its birth, with its ultra-devoted fans known as Deadheads often following them on the road in a virtually non-stop tour that persisted despite decades of music and culture shifting around them.

"Longevity was never a major concern of ours," Weir said when the Dead got the Grammys' MusiCares Person of the Year honor last year. "Spreading joy through the music was all we ever really had in mind, and we got plenty of that done."

Ubiquitous bumper stickers and T-shirts showed the band's skull logo, the dancing, colored bears that served as their other symbol, and signature phrases like "ain't no time to hate" and "not all who wander are lost."

The Dead won few actual Grammys during their career - they were always a little too esoteric - getting only a lifetime achievement award in 2007 and the best music film award in 2018.

Just as rare were hit pop singles. "Touch of Grey," the 1987 song that brought a big surge in the aging band's popularity, was their only Billboard Top 10 hit.

But in 2024, they set a record for all artists with their 59th album in Billboard's Top 40. Forty-one of those came since 2012, thanks to the popularity of the series of archival albums compiled by David Lemeieux.

Their music - called acid rock at its inception - would pull in blues, jazz, country, folk and psychedelia in long improvisational jams at their concerts.

"I venture to say they are the great American band," TV personality and devoted Deadhead Andy Cohen said as host of the MusiCares event. "What a wonder they are."

□ □ □

Veteran actor **T.K. Carter**, who appeared in the horror film "The Thing" and "Punky Brewster" on television, has died at the age of 69.

Carter was declared dead Friday evening after deputies responded to a call regarding an unresponsive male in Duarate, California, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Police did not disclose a cause of death or other details, but said no foul play was suspected.

Thomas Kent "T.K." Carter was born Dec. 18, 1956, in New York City and was raised in Southern California.

He began his career in stand-up comedy and with acting roles. Carter had been acting for years before a breakthrough role as Nauls the cook in John Carpenter's 1982 horror classic, "The Thing." He also had a recurring role in the 1980s sitcom "Punky Brewster."

Other big-screen roles include "Runaway Train" in 1985, "Ski Patrol" in 1990 and "Space Jam" in 1996.

"T.K. Carter was a consummate professional and a genuine soul whose talent transcended genres," his publicist, Tony Freeman, said in a statement. "He brought laughter, truth, and humanity to every role he touched. His legacy will continue to inspire generations of artists and fans alike."



Left: Dr. Al-Jassar during the opening of the forum. Right: A selection of artworks from the forum.



KUNA photos

23 Kuwaiti artists display 51 paintings and artworks

Al-Salhiya Fine Arts Forum kicks off, highlighting local talent

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11, (KUNA): The "Al-Salhiya Fine Arts Forum" kicked off Sunday in Kuwait, organized in cooperation between the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, the Arab Media Forum, and the Al-Salhiya Complex. The event features 23 Kuwaiti artists displaying 51 paintings and artworks and will continue until January 17.

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, said that the forum aims to support the Kuwaiti visual arts movement and provide local artists with an opportunity to showcase their works in public spaces accessible to a wider audience.

Al-Jassar noted that the exhibition includes more than 50 paintings and ceramic

pieces representing diverse artistic schools and styles. He said the level of participating works reflects the global presence of Kuwaiti fine arts while highlighting the evolution and variety of its creative expressions.

He added that holding art exhibitions in commercial complexes helps connect Kuwaiti artists with the public, especially those without direct access to the arts. Al-Jassar emphasized that such cultural initiatives can open new horizons for audiences to engage with fine arts, a goal that encourages the council to continue supporting public art events.

The forum is part of a broader effort to promote cultural participation and strengthen the visibility of Kuwait's artistic talent both locally and internationally.

Film



This image released by Lionsgate shows Gerard Butler, from left, Morena Baccarin, and Roman Griffin Davis in a scene from 'Greenland 2: Migration.' (AP)

Butler delivers sturdy performance in 'Migration'

'Greenland 2' is an unmemorable sequel

LOS ANGELES, Jan 11, (AP): Let's get the obvious thing out of the way first, shall we? There may never have been a better week in the history of the modern world - or at least recent cinema - to release a movie with "Greenland" in the title.

Just in case you're reading this from another era or galaxy, you'll see what we mean if you Google "United States" and "Greenland." Otherwise, not much more needs to be said.

Except that "Greenland 2: Migration," a serviceable but rather low-key, even grim affair starring a sturdy, understandably melancholy Gerard Butler, would make anyone want to get the heck out of Greenland - not find a way to own it. That's because the movie, Ric Roman Waugh's sequel to his comet-disaster film of 2020, presents a Greenland that, like most of the world, has been reduced to an unlivable mess of radioactive ash, with life only possible in a dank underground bunker.

And that's before things get even worse, forcing everyone to flee before a tidal wave flattens them. Hence the truly important word in the title: "Migration."

Butler returns as John Garrity, and Morena Baccarin as his wife, Allison. At the screening I saw, Butler popped on-screen beforehand to welcome viewers and tell them the sequel is "just as intense, but with more emotion." That seems to be the goal, and Baccarin's main job: her Allison is the vehicle for fear, anxiety and sadness, while John is mostly the strong silent type, though with an affinity for poetry. A new addition is Roman Griffin Davis as their 15-year-old son Nathan, who's growing up in less than ideal circumstances.

It's been five years since the Clarke meteor struck Earth and destroyed two-thirds of it. Images from the first film return as a reminder - the Eiffel Tower clipped in half and bent like a mangled metal toy, the Sydney Opera House just recognizable amid the ash.

When we left the Garritys, they were among the planet's lucky survivors, having made it to the Greenland bunker. Now, nobody feels too lucky, though there's an effort to recapture some rhythms of normal life: school, evening socials with dancing, exercise class. The outside remains off limits to most. John, a surface scavenger, takes dangerous trips up in a gas mask. It's a bleak existence, especially for a teenager like Nathan, who's taken to briefly sneaking out.

A meeting of the bunker's governing committee, on which Allison sits, shows how precarious things are getting. "We're basically running on fumes," someone says. Besides the toxic radiation, the comet is still sending forth destructive fragments. Can we go to Iceland, they wonder? No, that's gone. Same with Canada. And most of Europe.

Except, maybe, southern France. One expert posits that the impact left a crater there, a safe zone with clean air where human life can not only survive, but thrive. And where the grass is, quite literally, greener.

Meanwhile, a bit of social conflict comes into play when one member suggests that a group of migrants seeking shelter be denied entry. Allison argues to save them, and wins.

It all becomes moot when a brutal earthquake destroys the bunker itself. The family races to the shore and manages to reach a small rescue craft with a few others before a tsunami hits.

Marvel dropped him from future projects, and "Magazine Dreams," a film once tipped to bring him an Oscar nomination, went on ice until last year.

Good, an actor herself, began dating Majors in 2023, and was a constant presence at his trial in New York. They were engaged in 2024, and wed last year in a small, impromptu ceremony as he promoted "Magazine Dreams."

Guinea is not the first country to award citizenship to descendants of enslaved people. Last year, US singer Ciara became one of the first public figures to become a citizen of Benin.

Ghana last year naturalized 524 African Americans, after President Nana Akufo-Addo invited them to "come home" in 2019, as part of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in North America in 1619.

Guinea has been ruled by junta leader Gen. Mamadi

The craft runs out of gas, but manages to land ... in Liverpool, a partly submerged metropolis which resembles, say, Venice after a volcanic eruption. (These intermittent scenes of postapocalyptic cities and barren landscapes are what Waugh does best.)

There's not exactly a warm welcome. But the family manages to find a car and pay its driver to take them toward London, where Allison has a dear friend. "The world is a dangerous place now," the man says, unnecessarily.

Obviously, more harrowing journeys ensue. One will involve a death-defying trip across the English Channel - or what remains of it - some of it on bridges seemingly made of only rope.

The family meets various people along the way, none particularly memorable. This sequel may be focused more on emotion and character - since the whole comet thing happened long ago - but the problem is, none of this is compellingly rendered, and is forgotten when convenient. A relationship between young Nathan and a sweet girl he meets, for example, is basically dropped.

Will the family make it to France, and does the beautiful crater exist? That's the part we can't tell you. As for the "Greenland" of it all - well, Greenland is forgotten early, and even when we were there, it was nothing to write home about. But hey - it makes for a pretty fortunate title.

"Greenland 2: Migration," a Lionsgate release, has been rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association "for some strong violence, bloody images, and action." Running time: 98 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Variety

CONAKRY, Guinea: Hollywood couple Meagan Good and Jonathan Majors received Guinean citizenship after tracing their ancestry to the West African country through DNA testing.

The couple was awarded citizenship in a private ceremony in the capital of Conakry on Friday. They are scheduled to tour the country's tourist sites on Sunday.

"We think that you are among the worthy sons and daughters of this Guinea. You represent our country, the red-yellow-green flag all over the world," said Djiba Diakité, head of the president's cabinet.

Majors seemed destined for the ranks of Hollywood's A-list before he was arrested following a 2023 altercation with his then-girlfriend. He had won critical accolades for his work in "Da 5 Bloods" and "Lovecraft Country" and secured years of future Marvel stardom with his role as Kang the Conqueror. However, after his conviction on assault and harassment charges,

Doumbouya since a 2021 coup. Last month, he was declared the winner of the presidential election after clamping down on opposition and dissents, leaving him with no major opponents. (AP)

KABUL: An Afghan hand-woven carpet produced by a local company has secured first place among submissions from 19 countries at the Domotex International Exhibition in Istanbul, Türkiye, local media outlet TOLnews reported on Saturday.

Citing the Union of Afghan Carpet Producers and Exporters, the report described the achievement as a significant milestone, one that is expected to boost the international reputation and market value of Afghan carpets.

This marks the second time for Afghan carpet producers and exporters to participate in the Domotex event, which ran from Jan. 8 for two days.

Artisans and industry leaders regard this victory as a crucial step toward global recognition for Afghanistan's esteemed handmade carpet industry. (Xinhua)

Guinea has been ruled by junta leader Gen. Mamadi

Virtual reality offers escape and practical experience to inmates

VR headsets become 'hope machines' for prisoners in California

CHOWCHILLA, Calif., Jan 11, (AP): Jacob Smith has been in prison for two decades, but he and other inmates are still taking regular trips to far-flung, exotic locales. No passport required, just a virtual reality headset.

"I went to Thailand, man!" Smith recalled with a grin, describing the first time he strapped on a VR device and was transported to the lush landscapes and bustling markets of Southeast Asia.

A Los Angeles-based nonprofit is bringing the technology to California prisons with the goal of providing inmates a brief escape and, more importantly, exposure to real-world scenarios that will prepare them to reenter society.

During a weeklong program last month, incarcerated men at Valley State Prison near Fresno sat on metal folding chairs in a common area. They shuffled in their seats as they were outfitted with the headsets that resemble opaque goggles. Their necks contorted slightly and smiles spread across their faces as the high-definition videos started and their journeys commenced.

Some saw the sights on the other side of the globe, including Bangkok, while others experienced more practical scenes, such as job interviews. The men sit across virtual desks from virtual interviewers who are both easygoing and hard-nosed to give them the tools for finding employment once they are released.

"For a lot of us, the workforce has changed and things are different with the application process," said Smith, who is eligible for parole in 2031 and now volunteers helping his fellow inmates navigate the VR experience. "It's a nerve-wracking experience going to sit in front of somebody and telling them why I'm good for the job."

Afterward, volunteers help the inmates process the emotions or traumas that bubbled up during their experiences. Sabra Williams, founder of the nonprofit Creative Acts, calls the VR devices a "hope machine."

The program stems from a prison arts project that Williams ran that incorporated theater, music, poetry, dance and painting. Watching incarcerated people become engaged in artistic pursuits made her wonder about other ways to "bring the outside world inside."

She heard from people who had left prison lamenting that technology had



Incarcerated men use virtual reality headsets inside Valley State Prison in Chowchilla, Calif., Dec. 11, 2025. (AP)

passed them by. They felt confounded by simple things like pumping gas, checking out at a supermarket, or going to the ATM.

"And what I hear from them is that it made them feel like they didn't belong, and that they only belong in prison," she said.

First Williams' group dug for footage on YouTube to recreate everyday activities. Soon they were creating their own videos focusing on travel, constructive scenarios, civic engagement, conflict resolution, art, and even meditation "to blow

their minds and also educate their minds."

Such technology could have an important role to play in rehabilitation and, especially, reintegration into society, said Nancy La Vigne, the dean of Rutgers-Newark School of Criminal Justice in New Jersey. She envisions people who haven't been in the real world for a long time using VR to act out navigating the DMV or figuring out how to take a city bus.

Another benefit could be a calming effect on stressed-out inmates. La Vigne points to research published by the American Psychological Association that found that incarcerated people who viewed short nature videos showed reduced levels of aggression and were subject to fewer discipline reports.

But with a hefty price tag and limited access, La Vigne worries about the "practical realities," such as unintended consequences that stem from those who might be left out of the VR experience.

"You can't just hand them out or sell them at commissary," La Vigne said.

A former inmate, Richard Richard, first used a VR headset about six years ago when the program was launched and since his release has become a volunteer for Creative Acts. He said he is impressed by how far the technology has advanced. He loves watching his fellow inmates use the devices for the first time and then progress as they deal with trauma and emotional issues.

"You may physically be here, but mentally, spiritually you can actually transcend this environment," he said.

The group conducts the program, using 100 Oculus headsets donated by Meta, both in the general population and in solitary confinement. Youth offenders are also eligible. It currently runs three times a year at four California prisons, and Williams hopes to expand it throughout the state and across the country.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said in a statement Friday that it "welcomes innovative approaches that help keep our communities safe."

In announcing the introduction of VR at the California Men's Colony prison in San Luis Obispo County last August, the department said the usage has the potential "to heal trauma, regulate emotional response, and prepare for a safe, successful reentry into society."

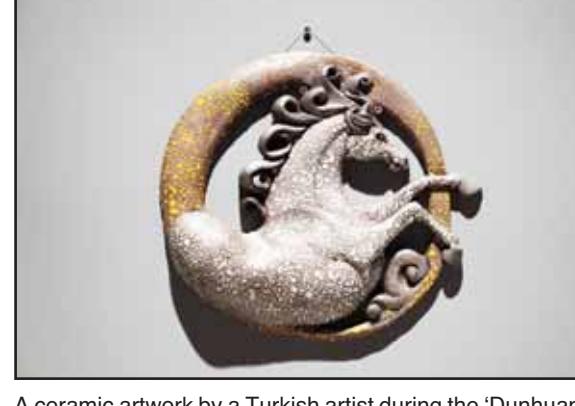
Art



A person visits the 'Dunhuang in Glazes' exhibition at the Jiangxi provincial art museum in Nanchang, east China's Jiangxi Province, Dec. 19, 2025. (Xinhua)



This photo taken on Dec. 19, 2025 shows a ceramic artwork related to Dunhuang murals during the 'Dunhuang in Glazes' exhibition. (Xinhua)



A ceramic artwork by a Turkish artist during the 'Dunhuang in Glazes' exhibition. (Xinhua)

'It feels like a dialogue across time and space'

Turkish artist paints new Silk Road stories

NANCHANG, Jan 11, (Xinhua): In a quiet studio in Jingdezhen, a Chinese city famous for its ancient porcelain heritage, Turkish artist Dilan Atasayar guided a brush dipped in cobalt blue across the curve of a white clay body.

Under her steady hand, two ancient civilizations seemed to meet, as intricate vine motifs from traditional Turkish art intertwined with the flowing ribbons of the "Flying Apsaras," the celestial beings depicted in China's ancient Dunhuang murals.

"It feels like a dialogue across time and space," she said.

For Atasayar, a PhD student at Jingdezhen Ceramic University, this city in east China's Jiangxi Province has become a "second hometown." Her artistic journey, however, began thousands of miles away in Iznik, a Turkish city renowned for its historic ceramic production.

Centuries ago, Jingdezhen exported its ceramics, including the exquisite blue-and-white porcelain, to Central Asia, West Asia, Europe and Africa via the ancient Silk Road, profoundly influencing the development of porcelain making in places like Iznik.

Growing up in Iznik, Atasayar spent her childhood gazing at these Eastern ceramic treasures in local museums, fascinated by the blue motifs that seemed both foreign and familiarly connected

to her own culture.

After spending eight years studying traditional ceramic arts in Türkiye, Atasayar decided to trace the roots of that inspiration. In 2023, she enrolled in a doctoral program at Jingdezhen Ceramic University, and has been studying to master Chinese ceramic techniques such as blue-and-white shading and underglaze painting.

But her exploration has gone beyond traditional ceramics. After settling in Jingdezhen, Atasayar became fascinated by a flourishing artistic trend: the creative fusion linking Jingdezhen's porcelain with the aesthetics of Dunhuang, a historic hub along the ancient Silk Road in northwest China.

"The fluid lines and rich storytelling of the Dunhuang murals share an intrinsic resonance with Turkish traditional decorative arts," Atasayar explained. "And Jingdezhen's porcelain and blue-and-white techniques provide the perfect medium to express this connection."

In her works, cultural boundaries often blur as she weaves together motifs from both traditions. For instance, a Flying Apsara might be depicted holding an instrument reminiscent of Turkish classical design.

This fusion goes beyond simple collage. Atasayar delves deep

into the history, philosophy and aesthetics of the Dunhuang art, all the while refining her mastery of ceramic techniques.

"Every time I open the kiln, it's like unwrapping a gift from history. The result is unpredictable, but full of surprises," she said.

Her dedication and effort have borne fruit. Her artwork "The Friendship Vase" is currently on display at the Jiangxi provincial art museum as part of the "Dunhuang in Glazes" exhibition, drawing visitors from home and abroad.

On the vase, Chinese auspicious clouds dance with Turkish scroll patterns, while the sacred lotus of the East resonates with graceful Ottoman tulip motifs.

Atasayar is not alone in her creative pursuit. She is part of a growing community of foreign artists in Jingdezhen, who have been drawn by the city's porcelain-making heritage and open atmosphere. Today, the ancient porcelain capital hosts thousands of international artists who, like Atasayar, find new inspiration in old traditions.

"Historically, blue-and-white porcelain traveled from China to Türkiye and shaped our art. Today, we bring our own cultural background back here to engage in dialogue with Chinese tradition and create something new," Atasayar said.

Obituary

Pulitzer winner
US historian Howe dead

NEW YORK, Jan 11, (AP): Daniel Walker Howe, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian whose "What Hath..." became a widely acclaimed chronicle of the vast technological and social changes in the US in the first half of the 19th century, has died at age 88.

Walker died on Dec. 25, according to a spokesman for the University of California, Los Angeles, where he was a professor emeritus. Additional details were not immediately available.

Awarded the Pulitzer in 2008, "What Hath..." was part of the Oxford University Press' ambitious and decades-long series on American history, with other works including such Pulitzer winners as David M. Kennedy's book on the Great Depression and World War II, "Freedom from Fear," and James M. McPherson's Civil War epic "The Battle Cry of Freedom."

Howe's 900-page book covered 1815-1848, from the end of the War of 1812 to the dawn of organized feminism in the US - the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. Howe traced the steady expansion west of a young country abiding by the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny." He documented the rise of Andrew Jackson and modern political parties, the overturning of the elite order that had controlled the presidency since George Washington, and the ongoing debate over slavery that would lead to armed conflict.

The country was facing changes familiar to 21st century Americans. In the years leading up to the Civil War, the US became more industrialized, more entwined and more divided. Information was traveling faster; the title "What Hath..." was taken from the biblical phrase used for the first telegraph message, sent in 1844. Newspapers and books were proliferating thanks to cheaper printing and to more efficient mail service, and the infrastructure was being modernized through roads, bridges, canals and other public works projects.

At the same time, the more technology advanced, the more resistance arose in the South, where leading politicians, opposed the new projects - "internal improvements" - for fear they would undermine slavery.

"Internal improvements could be opposed for reasons that had nothing to do with their economic effects. There were those who felt their stake in the status quo threatened by any innovation, especially intervention sponsored by the federal government," Howe wrote.

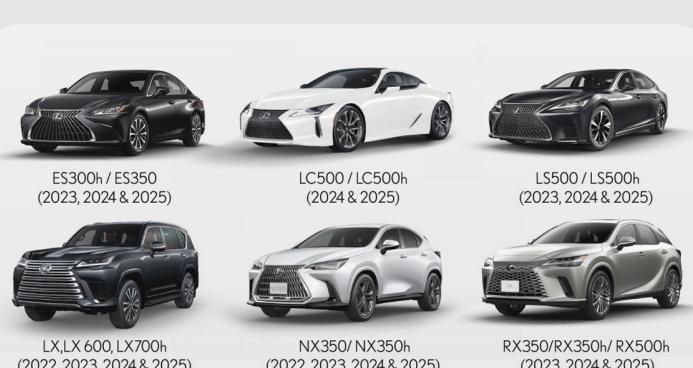
Reviewing the book for The New Yorker in 2007, historian Jill Lepore praised it as "a heroic attempt at synthesizing a century and a half of historical writing." She also noted that "What Hath..." was not the first choice for Oxford editor C. Vann Woodward, the prize-winning Southern historian.

"What Hath..." was, in part, a response to another acclaimed work: Charles Sellers' landmark "The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846." Woodward had asked Sellers to contribute to the Oxford series but turned down "The Market Revolution" because he found it too negative.

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Obituary

Alien theories

Swiss writer Erich von Däniken dies

BERLIN, Jan 11, (AP): Erich von Däniken, the Swiss author whose bestselling books about the extraterrestrial origins of ancient civilizations brought him fame among paranormal enthusiasts and scorn from the scientific community, has died. He was 90.

Von Däniken's representatives announced on his website on Sunday that he had died the previous day in a hospital in central Switzerland. His daughter Cornelia confirmed the information to Swiss news agency SDA.

Von Däniken rose to prominence in 1968 with the publication of his first book "Chariots of the ...," in which he claimed that the Mayans and ancient Egyptians were visited by alien astronauts and instructed in advanced technology that allowed them to build giant pyramids.

The book fueled a growing interest in unexplained phenomena at a time when thanks to conventional science man was about to take its first steps on the Moon.

"Chariots of the ..." was followed by more than two dozen similar books that sold 60 million copies in 32 languages, spawning a literary niche in which fact and fantasy were mixed together against all historical and scientific evidence.

While von Däniken managed to shrug off his many critics, the former hotel waiter had a troubled relationship with money throughout his life and frequently came close to financial ruin.

Born in 1935, the son of a clothing manufacturer in the northern Swiss town of Schaffhausen, von Däniken is said to have rebelled against his father's strict Catholicism and the priests who instructed him at boarding school by developing his own alternatives to the biblical account of the origins of life.

After leaving school in 1954, von Däniken worked as a waiter and barkeeper for several years, during which he was repeatedly accused of fraud and served a couple of short stints in prison.

In 1964, he was appointed manager of a hotel in the exclusive resort town of Davos and began writing his first book. Its publication and rapid commercial success were quickly followed by accusations of tax dodging and financial impropriety, for which he again spent time behind bars.



von Däniken

By the time he left prison, "Chariots of the ..." was earning von Däniken a fortune and a second book "... from Outer Space" was ready for publication, allowing him to commit himself to his paranormal passion and travel the world in search of new mysteries to uncover.

Throughout the 1970s von Däniken undertook countless field trips to Egypt, India, and above all Latin America, whose ancient cultures held a particular fascination for the amateur archaeologist.

He lectured widely and set up societies devoted to promoting his theories, later pioneering the use of video and multimedia to reach out to ever-larger audiences hungry for a different account of history.

No amount of criticism dissuaded him and his fans from believing that Earth has been visited repeatedly by beings from Outer Space, and will be again in the future.

In 1991 von Däniken gained the damning accolade of being the first recipient of the "Ig Nobel" prize for literature - for raising the public awareness of science through questionable experiments or claims.

Even when confronted with fabricated evidence in a British television documentary - supposedly ancient pots were shown to be almost new - von Däniken insisted that, minor discrepancies aside, his theories were essentially sound.

In 1985 von Däniken wrote "Neue Erinnerungen an die Zukunft" - "New Memories of the Future" - ostensibly to address his many critics: "I have admitted (my mistakes), but not one of the foundations of my theories has yet been brought down."

Although his popularity was waning in the English-speaking world by the 1980s, von Däniken's books and films influenced a wave of semi-serious archaeological documentaries and numerous popular television shows, including "The X-Files," which featured two FBI agents tasked with solving paranormal mysteries.

His last major venture, a theme park based on his books, failed after just a few years due to lack of interest. The "Mystery Park" still stands, its man-made pyramids and otherworldly domes rotting as tourists prefer to explore the charms of the nearby town of Interlaken and the imposing Swiss Alps that surround it.

Erich von Däniken is survived by his wife of 65 years, Elisabeth Skaja, Cornelia and two grandchildren.

Center boasts state-of-the-art medical technology

Health minister inaugurates specialized center for pediatric dentistry

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi on Sunday inaugurated the Nasser Abdulmohsen Al-Saeed Specialized Center for Pediatric Dentistry in Abdullah Al-Salem suburb, in the presence of Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, Undersecretary of the Health Ministry Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, and a number of health and executive officials.

Al-Awadhi said the center is a qualitative addition to the system of pediatric dental services, as it was designed and equipped according to the latest international systems and standards, thereby, providing a safe and child-friendly treatment environment that considers psychological and behavioral aspects, in addition to treatment.

He disclosed that the ministry continues to expand specialized services and raise the efficiency and quality of health facilities to achieve the best health outcomes for the community. He stated that the center consists of 49 specialized clinics, such as pediatric dentistry, school health, special needs, sensory disorders, and pediatric root canal clinics equipped with the latest microscopes. He added the center has nine radiology rooms with state-of-the-art equipment



Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi inaugurates Nasser Abdulmohsen Al-Saeed Specialized Center for Pediatric Dentistry in Abdullah Al-Salem suburb.

like CT scanners, craniofacial and jaw measurement devices, intraoral X-ray machines and panoramic X-rays.

He asserted that the project embodies a commendable model of community partnership, expressing his appreciation for the generous donation from the estate of Nasser Abdulmohsen Al-Saeed and their pioneering humanitarian role in supporting the health sector. He also praised the contributions of the family of the deceased, which enabled the establishment of a specialized center serving children and ensuring the sustainability of healthcare services.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs and Projects Ibrahim Al-Nahham revealed that the center was built on a plot measuring 6,760 square meters, with a total building area of 6,939 square meters. It consists of a ground floor, a first floor and a rooftop, built according to the highest engineering standards adopted for healthcare facilities.

Assistant Undersecretary for Dental Affairs Dr. Ahmed Asad said the center provides services to the age group from birth up to 16 years old, and includes advanced facilities and equipment, which keep pace with the latest scientific advancements in the field of pediatric dentistry.



Kuwait hosts the third edition of the Cardiac Shock Conference.

Over 300 cardiogenic shock cases in Kuwait in 2025

Kuwait's conference highlights high mortality risk of cardiogenic shock

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Dr. Mohammed Zubaid, President of the Gulf Heart Association and Vice President of the Kuwait Heart Association, affirmed that cardiogenic shock is one of the most dangerous complications of acute heart attacks.

He said this in his speech at the opening of the Third Cardiac Shock Conference, which was organized by the Kuwait and Gulf Heart Associations in cooperation with the American Society for Cardiac Catheterization and Interventions. A select group of international and regional experts in cardiology and advanced cardiac interventions participated in the conference.

Dr. Zubaid revealed that global statistics indicate that 3 to 10 percent of heart attack patients experience this critical condition, with mortality rates ranging from 40 percent to 50 percent, despite significant advancements in diagnosis and treatment.

He stressed that cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death worldwide, with tens of thousands of cases of cardiogenic shock reported each year.

Policy shift fuels immunization hesitancy

New US vaccine guidance confusing parents, could harm kids: doctors



Vaccines are prepared for students during a pop-up immunization clinic at a school in Louisville, Ky., on Thursday, Aug. 8, 2024. (AP)

the changes that they better align the U.S. with peer nations "while strengthening transparency and informed consent."

But doctors say they are sowing doubt - the vaccines have been extensively studied and proven to be safe and effective at shielding kids from nasty diseases - at a time when childhood vaccination rates are already falling and some of those infectious diseases are spreading.

On Friday, the American Academy of Pediatrics and more than 200 medical, public health and patient advocacy groups sent a letter to Congress about the new childhood immunization schedule.

"We urge you to investigate why the schedule was changed, why credible scientific evidence was ignored, and why the committee charged with advising the HHS Secretary on immunizations did not discuss the schedule changes as a part of their public meeting process," they wrote.

O'Shea said she and other pediatricians discuss vaccines with parents at every visit where they are given. But that's not necessarily "shared clinical decision-making," which has a particular definition.

On its website, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices says: "Unlike routine, catch-up, and risk-based recommendations, shared clinical decision-making vaccinations are not recommended for everyone in a particular age group or everyone in an identifiable risk group. Rather, shared clinical decision-making recommendations are individually based and informed by a decision process between the health care provider and the patient or parent/guardian."

In this context, health care providers include primary care physicians, specialists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and pharmacists.

A pair of surveys conducted last year by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania suggested that many people don't fully understand the concept, which came up last year when the federal government changed recommendations around COVID-19 vaccinations.

Only about 2 in 10 US adults knew that one meaning behind shared decision-making is that "taking the vaccine may not be a good idea for everyone but would benefit some." And only about one-third realized pharmacists count as health care providers to talk with during the process, even though they frequently administer vaccines.

Tips to make the most of your workouts

Strength training crucial for women in midlife to keep bones, muscles healthy

NEW YORK, Jan 11, (AP): When Sarah Baldassaro turned 50, she took stock of her health and began working with a fitness coach on strength training, a type of exercise that's crucial for women in midlife.

"Now I would say I'm stronger overall than I ever have been at any age," said Baldassaro, 52, of Alexandria, Virginia. "My fitness level is much more like when I was in my early 30s."

Medical experts say strength training keeps bones and muscles healthy after menopause when estrogen loss speeds up a reduction in bone density and contributes to the gradual loss of muscle mass. This type of exercise - which involves working against resistance - also helps women maintain a healthy weight and stay on track with New Year's resolutions about fitness.

"People underestimate how powerful it is," said Dr. Christina DeAngelis, an OB-GYN at Penn State Health.

But what should your workout look like and how do you get started?

Physical therapist Hilary Granat said bone and muscle health are intertwined: When muscle pulls on bone during resistance training, it stimulates bone-building cells.

Resistances can come from dumbbells, free weights or machines such as rowers. One example of a strength training exercise is the chest press, which involves lying back on a bench or the ground, pressing weights up from chest level and then lowering them.

It's important to work "close to muscle failure," said Granat, who owns Core Total Wellness in Washington, D.C. "You really have to push yourself."

That means lifting weights that are heavy enough to be challenging and doing somewhere between six and 30 repetitions.

You'll know you're working hard enough if you start slowing down in tempo or speed or can't do another repetition in good form, she said. A good

Extreme weather

Oceans set new heat record in '25

BEIJING, Jan 11, (Xinhua): A new international study reveals that the world's oceans absorbed more heat in 2025 than in any other year since modern record-keeping began.

Published Friday in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*, the analysis shows that the ocean's heat increase last year amounted to a staggering 23 Zetta Joules of energy -- equivalent to 37 years of global energy consumption at the 2023 level.

The findings stem from a major collaboration involving over 50 scientists from 31 research institutions worldwide. By integrating data from leading international centers and independent research groups across Asia, Europe and the Americas, the scientists concluded that the heat content in the upper 2,000 meters of the ocean reached its highest recorded level in 2025, underscoring a clear and sustained upward trend.

The study highlights that ocean warming is not uniform. In 2025, about 16 percent of the world's ocean area saw record-high heat, while an additional 33 percent ranked among the top three warmest years in their historical records. The fastest warming occurred in regions including the tropical and South Atlantic, the North Pacific, and the Southern Ocean.

While heat stored in the deep ocean set a new record, surface temperatures exhibited a slightly different pattern. The global average sea-surface temperature in 2025 was the third warmest on record, remaining about 0.5 degrees Celsius above the recent baseline and slightly below the peaks observed in 2023 and 2024.



Sarah Baldassaro, (left), demonstrates a strength-training regimen with her trainer, Hilary Granat, at the Center for Orthopedic Rehab and Exercise on Thursday, Jan. 8, in Washington. (AP)

rule of thumb for an exercise like a bicep curl is to lift weights somewhere between 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms) and 20 pounds (9.1 kilograms), with novices starting at the lower end.

Baldassaro has worked her way up to 20 pounds (9.1 kilograms) for some exercises, incorporating techniques she learned from Granat.

She said the health coach has helped her expand her workouts beyond mostly cardio.

While she still does aerobic exercises, "the strength training has really been the difference maker for me," she said.

Building up bones and muscles doesn't necessarily require equipment. You can also do pushups, squats, lunges, situps, crunches or planks. Another good exercise is squatting down with your back against a wall.

Even the simple act of getting into and out of a chair can be helpful, DeAngelis said.

"You have to engage your core going from sitting to standing," she said.

Cell biology mystery

Scientists find why women suffer more severe gut pain

CANBERRA, Jan 11, (Xinhua): Scientists have identified the cellular mechanism behind why women experience more severe chronic gut pain than men, linking the sex differences to estrogen.

Researchers in Australia and the United States reported in the journal *Science* that estrogen is the main culprit, a statement of the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) said Friday.

"We found that estrogen directly amplifies communication between two specialized gut cell types, triggering heightened sensitivity to pain signals in females," said SAHMRI Professor Stuart Brierley, conducting the study in collaboration with scientists from the University of California, San Francisco.

Estrogen activates a colon pathway that boosts release of the gut hormone PYY, which in turn stimulates serotonin output and sensitizes pain-trans-

mitting nerves, said Brierley, also from Australia's University of Adelaide.

"If we can interrupt this pathway at the right point, we may be able to reduce chronic gut pain without affecting the normal digestive functions of these hormones," he said.

The discovery is a major step toward developing more personalized treatments for chronic gut pain conditions like irritable bowel syndrome and other debilitating visceral pain disorders, such as endometriosis, the statement said.

□ □ □

Cell growth: Researchers in Australia have solved a long-standing mystery in cell biology, revealing how cells decide when to grow and when to stop.

This marks a breakthrough that could open new paths in treating cancers, epilepsy and other growth-related diseases, a statement from Australia's Monash University said Friday.

Kenya greenlights rollout of injectable HIV prevention drug

NAIROBI, Jan 11, (Xinhua): Kenya's Ministry of Health said on Saturday that it has approved the rollout of lenacapavir, a twice-yearly HIV prevention drug, for use in the East African country.

The ministry said the recommendation follows a comprehensive scientific assessment of the quality, safety, and efficacy of lenacapavir, conducted in line with Kenyan law and applicable international regulatory standards.

"Its long-acting formulation allows it to be administered only twice a year,

offering an important alternative to daily oral HIV prevention medicines. This is particularly beneficial for individuals who face challenges with taking pills every day," Aden Duale, cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Health, said in a statement issued in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

Kenya is among the first African countries to recommend lenacapavir for registration, a decision that aligns with recent global public health guidance, including recommendations by the World Health Organization, Duale said.

Chock and Bates win record-setting seventh title

Malinin makes it four straight at US Figure Skating Championships

ST. LOUIS, Jan 11, (AP): Ilya Malinin won his fourth consecutive U.S. Figure Skating title on Saturday night, capping the last national championships before the Milan Cortina Olympics with his usual unparalleled flair but a dialed-back version of the world champion's high-flying jumps.

Malinin scaled back a free skate that could include as many as seven quads, going for just three - still more than anyone else in the competition. He finished with 324.88 points, extending an unbeaten streak that stretches back more than two years.

"I decided not to go for any risks. I wanted to play it safe, because hopefully in a few weeks I have to go again," Malinin said.

Alexander Torgashev finished second with a season-best free skate that produced a total of 267.62 points, while Maxim Naumov earned the bronze medal with 249.16 points, and may have fulfilled the wishes of his late parents by making the Olympic team.

They were among those killed when a plane collided with a military helicopter over the Potomac River in January 2025.

U.S. Figure Skating will announce the team headed to Italy on Sunday.

"I gritted my teeth on everything. I fought on everything. If I had to crawl, I would crawl to the end," Naumov said, "but I made it."

Earlier in the night, Madison Chock and Evan Bates won a record-setting seventh U.S. title with a flamenco-style free dance set to a version of the Rolling Stones hit "Paint It Black" from the dystopian sci-fi Western show "Westworld."

Chock and Bates, the three-time reigning world champions, wound up with 228.87 points. Emilia Zingas and Vadym Kolesnik were second with 213.65 and Christina Carreira and Anthony Ponomarenko were third with 206.95.

"The feeling that we got from the audience today was unlike anything I've



From left to right, silver medalist Andrew Torgashev, gold medalist Ilya Malinin, bronze medalist Maxim Naumov and fourth place finisher Jacob Sanchez pose after the men's free skate competition at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in St. Louis. (AP)

ever felt before," said Chock, who along with Bates helped the Americans win team gold at the Beijing Olympics four years ago, but finished a disappointing

fourth in the ice dance.

They'll be the heavy favorites to win gold next month in Italy.

The 21-year-old from Fairfax, Virginia, was somewhat controversially skipped over for the American team four years ago, when the officials making the call decided he was too young and inexperienced. But rather than sulk about it, Malinin turned the time since into an unstoppable march through just about every competition he has entered.

Along with winning everything the last two years, he has one second-place finish in the last three. That includes victories this season in the Grand Prix de France, Skate America and the Grand Prix Final, the most prestigious event outside the Olympics and worlds.

Skating to a musical medley featuring his own voice-over, Malinin opened with a quad flip, then landed a triple Axel, before hitting a triple lutz rather than a quad lutz. Malinin added a quad lutz and a quad salchow-triple Axel combination later in the program, earning him yet another standing ovation - and another gold medal in a closet already full of them.

The real question remains who will join Malinin on the Olympic team. The U.S. also has qualified the maximum of three men's spots for the upcoming Winter Games, and Torgashev and Naumov staked their claim on Saturday night.

Skating to "In This Shirt" by The Irrepressibles, Naumov landed an opening quad salchow but tripled his other planned quad. He was otherwise solid on his jumps, other than spinning out on his last combination jump, and earned his own standing ovation.

It was an emotional week for Naumov, who brought to the kiss-and-cry area an old photo of him with his parents, Vadim Naumov and Evgenia Shishkova. One of the last conversations he had with them was about what it would take to make the Olympic team.

Meizhen achieves personal best

Ethiopia's Wolde, Aga defend titles at '26 Xiamen Marathon

XIAMEN, Jan 11, (Xinhua): Ethiopia's Dawit Wolde and Ruti Aga secured back-to-back victories at the 2026 Xiamen Marathon, the year's first World Athletics Platinum Label road race.

Wolde, the men's defending champion, crossed the finishing line first in 2:09:18, narrowly edging compatriots Hailemariam Kiro (2:09:20) and Adisius Gobena (2:09:22).

In the women's race, Aga retained her crown with a time of 2:22:45, finishing ahead of fellow Ethiopians Meseret Abebayehu (2:25:15) and Fikrete Wereta (2:25:31).

Wolde, who shattered the course record last year, revealed his primary objective this time was solely to win, not to break his own mark.

"What I wanted to do this year is just to keep my title, not to break my course record," Wolde said in the post-race interview, "so I had no reason to push it early." The 34-year-old also noted an improvement in this year's adjusted course, specifically the removal of a U-turn near the 41km mark. "I was happy that I didn't see that U-turn this year," he said.

"This year when I came as the defending champion, I put a lot of pressure on me. I did it, so I'm happy," he added.

In the women's competition, Aga also emphasized a shift in strategy from her record-breaking run in 2025.

BYU edges rival Utah

Pope, Swain and Mark come up big as Texas stuns No. 13 Alabama



BYU guard Richie Saunders, right, goes to the hoop as Utah forward Kendyl Sanders (13) defends during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in Salt Lake City. (AP)

Christian Anderson added 15 points for the Red Raiders, making their first to Boulder in nearly 16 years. Atwell went 5 of 12 from 3-point distance as Texas Tech (12-4, 2-1 Big 12 Conference) won a true road game for the first time this season.

Isaiah Johnson scored all 21 of his points in the second half for Colorado (12-4, 2-1), which trailed by 24 before rallying. The Buffaloes had a chance to win at the end but Barrington Hargrave missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Auburn 95, Arkansas 73

In Auburn, Keyshawn Hall scored 30 points and Auburn shot 57% from the field in routing No. 15 Arkansas.

KeShawn Murphy added 16 points and 10 rebounds for the Tigers (10-6, 1-2 Southeastern Conference), and Elijah Freeman scored 13 off the bench.

Terence Brown scored 25 points for Utah but turned the ball over in the corner with 8.9 seconds left when his team had a chance to tie. Saunders was fouled and clinched the game with two free throws.

Don McHenry had 21 points for the Utes (8-8, 0-3), who have lost three in a row but never let BYU relax in this rivalry game.

Texas Tech 73, Colorado 71

In Boulder, Donovan Atwell scored 17 points, JT Toppin had 16 points and 13 rebounds, and No. 14 Texas Tech held off a furious second-half rally by Colorado in a 73-71 victory.

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Villarreal beats Alaves to strengthen hold on third

BARCELONA, Spain, Jan 11, (AP): Alberto Moleiro delivered a goal and an assist to help Villarreal beat Alaves 3-1 and stay in touch with the La Liga front-runner. Giovani Lo Celso headed in a cross by Antony in the 83rd to salvage sixth-placed Real Betis a 1-1 draw at bottom side Real Oviedo.

Valencia remained in the relegation zone after drawing at home with Elche 1-1.

Moleiro is one of the sensations of La Liga with his creativity and scoring abil-

ity. He is a major reason why Villarreal is in third place at the season's midway mark even after winger Jeremy Pino left last summer for Crystal Palace.

The 22-year-old from the Canary Islands tallied his eighth goal of the season to open the scoring just after halftime. Moleiro curled a shot from outside the area in off the far post.

Veteran striker Gerard Moreno volleyed in a loose ball to double the hosts' advantage in the 55th.

Moleiro cued a third goal by Georges Mikaadze when he slipped a pass between two defenders into a sliver of space where the Georgia striker chipped it over goalkeeper Antonio Sivera.

Alaves striker Toni Martinez softened the blow for the visitors by pulling one back in the 85th.

Villarreal was eight points adrift of leader Barcelona and four behind second-placed Real Madrid. It was three points clear of

fourth-placed Atletico Madrid. Garcia Toral's side also has one more game in hand than the three rivals. Girona edged Osasuna 1-0 after Vladislav Yanat used the heel of his left boot to turn home a pass just before halftime.

The game was marred by a scuffle between the teams in injury time after Girona player Lass Kourouma was shown a direct red card for using his knee in a tangle with Osasuna's Aimar Oroz. Osasuna players rushed onto the field during the incident.

Cementing its status as the most titled team in the tournament's history

Gulf Bank team crowned champion of 'Banks' Football League for tenth time in its history

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: The Gulf Bank team was crowned champion of the Kuwait Banks Club Football League, securing the title for the tenth time in its history after a well-deserved victory in the final match against Boubyan Bank with a score of (3-2). The match was held at Abdullah Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah Stadium at Al-Yarmouk Sports Club.

This triumph came after an outstanding campaign in which the Gulf Bank team delivered strong performances that reflected its experience and superiority in the tournament. Following an impressive display throughout the competition from the very beginning, the team succeeded in imposing its style of play and achieving positive results that qualified it to reach the top of the podium, reaffirming its position as one of the most decorated teams in the history of the tournament.

The tournament witnessed intense competition among the participating bank teams; however, the Gulf Bank team clinched the title thanks to its technical discipline, strong team spirit, and the outstanding performances of its players.

This achievement represents a new addition to Gulf Bank's record of sporting accomplishments and

confirms its continued strong presence in football tournaments dedicated to the banking sector.

Gulf Bank places great importance on supporting sports and promoting a culture of physical activity, driven by its belief in the role of sports in improving quality of life and fostering a healthy lifestyle within the community. The bank is keen to encourage its employees and members of the community to engage in sports by supporting various tournaments and sporting events.

In this context, Gulf Bank organizes the Gulf Bank Marathon annually, one of the most prominent community sporting events in the State of Kuwait. The marathon attracts thousands of participants from different age groups and aims to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and making it a daily lifestyle choice. This initiative aligns with the bank's strategy to reinforce social sustainability standards, focusing on supporting health and sports initiatives and enhancing positive engagement with the community.

The Gulf Bank football team presents a distinguished model of teamwork and cooperation among employees, comprising a group of



The Gulf Bank team posed for a group photo after securing the Kuwait Banks Club Football League title.

young talents who combine professional commitment with athletic excellence.

The team is keen to participate

actively each year in the Banking Union Championship, delivering notable technical performances that reflect a spirit of competition and

discipline. The team also contributes to strengthening relationships among employees and reinforcing values of teamwork and belonging, in line

with Gulf Bank's vision of supporting sports activities and building a healthy and motivating work environment.

Nasser tipped for Kazma move

Kazma misses key foreign stars ahead of Al-Tadamon test

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Kazma are grappling with the absence of several of its foreign professionals and will be without them when it takes on Al-Tadamon next Friday in the 11th round of the Zain Premier League.

Jordanian midfielder Anas Al-Awadat is currently in Amman on special leave after travelling last December due to his father's health condition. The club has agreed with the player – whose contract runs until June 2027 – to return to the squad in the coming days. Should he need more time with his family, Kazma is open to loaning him to a Jordanian club until the end of the season.

Kazma is also missing fellow Jordanian Ali Azzayezh, who is representing his country in the AFC U-23 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia. He is expected to rejoin the team immediately after completing his duties with Jordan's Olympic side.



Benin international and Kazma SC forward Samson Akinyoolla in action.

Azzayezh recently impressed at international level, scoring two goals in Jordan's 3-2 win over Saudi Arabia.

Another blow came with the injury to Benin striker Samson Akinyoolla, who suffered a fractured leg in last week's match against Al-

Kazma exited the Crown Prince Cup at the preliminary stage and currently sits fourth in the Zain Premier League with 15 points, one point behind Al-Fahaheel in third, five adrift of Al-Arabi in second, and eight points behind leaders Kuwait Club.

Kuwait Club eyes Al-Nasr victory

Kazma seek revenge against Al-Qadsia

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Kazma will be out to settle the score when they face Al-Qadsia this evening at 7:30 pm at the Basketball Federation Hall in Round 10 of the league. The round tips off with Kuwait Club vs Al-Nasr at 5:00 pm at the same venue.

Kuwait Club currently leads the standings with 18 points from nine straight wins, remaining the only unbeaten side in the competition. Al-Qadsia, Kazma and Al-Qurain follow on 16 points each, while Al-Sulaibikh is fifth with 15 points. Al-Nasr sits sixth on 12 points, ahead of Al-Sahel (11), with Al-Arabi bottom on 10 points.

The league is played over three phases, with the top four teams advancing to the Final Four, which will be decided through a best-of-three playoff format.

Al-Qadsia edged Kazma 101-97 in the first phase and will be aiming to repeat that result to strengthen its push for second place behind leader Kuwait Club. Al-Qadsia has shown clear improvement in recent weeks under Turkish coach Anday Paiser, who is keen to confirm his team's ability to compete seriously for the title.

Al-Qadsia boasts a strong lineup featuring Abdulaziz Al-Humaidi, Abdulmohsen Al-Mousawi and Abdullah Tawfiq, alongside a group of young players and American imports Jomaro Brown and Brandon Garrett.



Al-Qadsia fires at hoop in last clash with Kazma.

Kazma, meanwhile, is enduring a tough period due to injuries to three key players – Abdulrahman Al-Sahoo, Abdulaziz Raihan and American guard Jaguan Jones.

In the day's other match, Kuwait Club will look to put its recent setback behind it after suffering 88-85 loss to Saudi side Al-Ula in the West Asia League last Tuesday, as it aims to return to winning ways against Al-Nasr.

Best of the Rest

Arsenal routs Portsmouth 4-1: Gabriel Martinelli scored a hat trick as Arsenal advanced to the fourth round of the FA Cup with a 4-1 win at Portsmouth on Sunday. The Premier League leader came back from going a goal down to the second tier Championship team inside three minutes.

Colby Bishop stunned Arsenal with the opening goal at Fratton Park, but the lead only lasted five minutes when Andre Dozzell scored an own goal. Martinelli put the visitors ahead in the 25th and struck twice in the second half.

Leeds was also behind to Championship opposition, but recovered from 1-0 down to beat Derby 3-1 at Pride Park. (AP)

Pepi was surprisingly left off the U.S. squad for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. (AP)

Poland clinches United Cup in decisive mixed doubles

Sabalenka retains Brisbane crown



Team members from Poland celebrate with their trophy after defeating Switzerland in the final at the United Cup tennis tournament in Sydney. (AP)

It looked as if that trend was going to continue as Swiatek started strongly and claimed the opening set 6-3 at Ken Rosewall Arena.

But the No.11-ranked Bencic shifted the momentum by winning nine consecutive points to open the second, evening the match in a swift 33-minute set.

The decisive third set hinged on a crucial break at 2-1, where Bencic capitalized on a powerful forehand to seize control. While Swiatek fought to save two match points with consecutive aces, her effort was hampered by an uncharacteristic 36 unforced errors, compared to just 10 from Bencic.

Bencic sealed the win with a sublime backhand winner into the open court on her third match point.

"To be honest, I felt I was in the match from the very first point," Bencic said. "I thought I was going great and I was 0-3 down. I was 'OK, what do I have to do.' I think I just

tried to keep the level and just wait for some chances."

Meanwhile, Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka captured her second consecutive Brisbane International title and 22nd career singles crown after a straight-sets victory over Marta Kostyuk on Sunday.

Sabalenka appeared in her third straight Brisbane final and the Belarusian looked in comfortable surroundings as she won 6-4, 6-3 in Pat Rafter Arena.

The Brisbane International is a tuneup for the Australian Open which begins next Sunday.

Kostyuk went hard early by attacking Sabalenka's second serve, clawing back an early break with sublime drop shots that briefly rattled the world No. 1.

However, Sabalenka's relentless intensity and match smarts proved decisive as she exploited the oppressive Brisbane humidity with punishing baseline rallies to clinch the

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A supporter cheers before the Africa Cup of Nations quarterfinal soccer match between Egypt and Ivory Coast in Agadir, Morocco. (AP)

Sports

Salah stars as Egypt ends Ivory Coast reign

Nigeria books spot in AFCON semis

RABAT, Morocco, Jan 11, (AP): Mohamed Salah scored and Egypt eliminated defending champion Ivory Coast to move into the Africa Cup of Nations semifinals after a 3-2 victory.

Salah nabbed his fourth goal of the tournament - Egypt's third of the game - in the 52nd minute and the Pharaohs needed it as Ivory Coast threatened to come back twice from two goals down.

But Egypt held on in Agadir despite relentless Ivorian pressure and booked a semifinal date with 2021 champion Senegal in Tangier on Wednesday.

"We just fight for our country and hopefully we go through the next game as well," Salah said. "It's (a)



Nigeria's Ademola Lookman, top, and Algeria's Hicham Boudaoui challenge for the ball during the Africa Cup of Nations quarterfinal soccer match between Nigeria and Algeria, in Marrakech, Morocco. (AP)

tough opponent, of course, and we give our best."

Ivory Coast had a woeful start as Franck Kessie lost the ball in midfield after a poor touch and Odilon Kossouou fell over instead of cutting out Emam Ashour's ball for Omar Marmoush, who scored in the fourth minute.

Ramy Rabia produced a brilliant block to preserve the lead then scored himself with a header from a corner in the 32nd.

Ivory Coast finally pulled one back in the 40th when Egypt defender Ahmed Fotouh bundled in a dangerous Yan Diomande free kick that Kossouou headed on.

Salah restored Egypt's two-goal cushion early in the second half when Rabia caught the Ivorian defense out with a long ball for Ashour, who set up Salah with the outside of his boot.

Guéla Doué pulled one back again with his heel in a goalmouth scramble after goalkeeper Mohamed El-Shenawy clawed the ball away in the 73rd, but the Elephants' equalizer never came.

Egypt is bidding for a record-extending eighth title.

Victor Osimhen scored one goal and set up another for Nigeria to down Algeria 2-0 for its place in the semifinals.

"We shouldn't focus on my personal performance. We should focus on the team effort," Osimhen said after a week in which he dominated headlines for his on-field argument with teammate Ademola Lookman in their previous game.

The Super Eagles, who had a far from ideal preparation with reports of bonuses not being paid, will face host Morocco in the second semifinal in Rabat on Wednesday.

They needed patience in Marrakech against the team with the best defense in the tournament after



Egypt's Mohamed Salah, right, scores his side's third goal during the Africa Cup of Nations quarterfinal soccer match between Egypt and Ivory Coast, in Agadir, Morocco. (AP)

failing to take their chances in the first half - Akor Adams fired over when he had only Luca Zidane in the Algeria goal to beat, and Calvin Bassey had another effort cleared off the line.

Osimhen finally scored after the break when he headed the ball back across Zidane's direction of movement from Bruno Onyemaechi's cross.

It was the first goal at the tourna-

ment conceded by Zidane, whose parents were in the stands again.

But it was quickly followed by the second.

Patient buildup play preceded Alex Iwobi's pass to Osimhen, who unselfishly played across for Adams, who eluded the out-rushing Zidane and poked the ball into the empty net in the 57th.

Algeria coach Vladimir Petković reacted with three changes including

the withdrawals of captain Riyad Mahrez and star forward Ibrahim Maza but there was nothing the Fennec Foxes could do to get back in the game against the confident and assured Nigerians, who remained in control throughout.

Scuffles broke out after the game involving players and team officials, while referee Issa Sy was shielded from irate Algeria staff and escorted off the field.

Three-time champion Nigeria, which lost the final to Ivory Coast in the last edition, is bidding to win the title for the first time since 2013. It would help make up for the disappointment of failing to qualify for the World Cup - in contrast to Algeria.

Morocco and Senegal booked their semifinal places on Friday with wins over Cameroon and Mali, respectively.

Al-Sharbatty clinches 'Atyab Al-Marshoud' Show Jumping title

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 11: Saudi Olympic rider Abdullah Al-Sharbatty delivered a commanding performance to capture the title of the 12th "Atyab Al-Marshoud" International Show Jumping Championship, a World Cup-qualifying event held at the Kuwait Equestrian Center with participation from riders representing Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Britain, Hungary and Italy.

Al-Sharbatty topped the Grand Prix class over 150cm, clocking 35.66 seconds without penalties to secure first place and a \$15,000 prize following the jump-off. He was followed by Hussain Al-Kharafi, Anaz Al-Anaz, Yara Al-Hunaidi, Ali Al-Kharafi and Abdulrahman Al-Mudhahka. The winners were crowned by Waleed Sulaiman Al-Marshoud, Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee, in the presence of representatives of the sponsoring companies.

The Saudi rider dedicated the achievement to the Saudi leadership and people, as well as equestrian fans, praising the continued support provided by Waleed Al-Marshoud for the sport at both local and international levels.

Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Awadhi



Grand Prix winners on the podium.

claimed the Medium Tour title over 135cm, ahead of Mohammed Al-Marshoud and Layan bin Issa, while Fawaz Rashid won the Small Tour over 125cm.

Meanwhile, national team rider Anaz Al-Anaz, representing Sahara

Resort, claimed the Grand Prix titles over 140cm and 145cm on the opening two days of the championship.

Event patron Waleed Sulaiman Al-Marshoud expressed his delight at the tournament's success, highlighting the

steady improvement in riders' technical standards from season to season. He also congratulated Abdullah Al-Sharbatty on winning the prestigious title and welcomed him to Kuwait among his fellow riders.

Mattias clips Al-Attiyah's lead to 4:47

Lategan's late trouble gifts Dakar Rally stage seven to Ekström

WADI AD-DAWASIR, Saudi Arabia, Jan 11, (AP): Henk Lategan was cruising to the stage win and overall lead in the Dakar Rally on Sunday until he hit trouble in the last section.

Lategan led the final checkpoint 40 kilometers from the end of the 459-kilometer special between Riyadh south to Wadi ad-Dawasir by nearly two minutes and had the provisional lead in the general rankings by more than two minutes.

But 10 kilometers later he was at a standstill for 10 minutes for an undisclosed reason.

Stage seven was gifted to Ford driver Mattias Ekström, the first repeat car winner, and Lategan's Toyota tumbled to 13th place, 8 1/2 minutes back.

After nearly four hours of racing, Ekström beat Toyota's João Ferreira home by 4 1/2 minutes, followed by Ford teammate Mitch Guthrie. Less than two minutes covered second place to 10th after the fast, flat sandy track.

Lategan demolished Nasser Al-Attiyah's provisional six-minute overall lead after about 350 kilometers but ultimately Al-Attiyah's Dacia stayed in front, Ekström replaced Lategan in second and clipped Al-Attiyah's lead to 4:47.

Nani Roma's Ford was elevated to third, 7:15 behind and six seconds ahead of Lategan, after Roma's 1:10 speeding penalty on stage five was scrubbed by FIA stewards late Saturday during the rest day. It gave Roma his 14th car stage victory, one more than he achieved on a motorbike.

Lategan slipped to fourth, down by seven min-



Driver Mattias Ekström and co-driver Emil Bergkvist compete during the seventh stage of the Dakar Rally between Riyadh and Wadi Ad Dawasir, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

utes, and four-time champion Carlos Sainz rounded out the top five.

Luciano Benavides blazed the motorbike track,

leading at every checkpoint for his second stage win in this Dakar. Edgar Canet overcame an early navigation error to rally from 46th place to second and give KTM an unexpected 1-2 finish. Canet was nearly five minutes behind Benavides and Adrien van Beveren was third.

Defending champion Daniel Sanders' KTM was fourth on the stage but he padded his overall lead over two-time champion Ricky Brabec from 45 seconds - the smallest halfway lead in 10 years - to 4:25. Benavides in third improved to only 4:40 behind while Toshia Schareina fell further back to 15 minutes. Nobody else was within a half-hour of Sanders.

As the Hondas of Brabec and Schareina swept the track, Sanders closed in on them. He finally caught the leaders with about 150 kilometers to go. Schareina said he and Brabec made a mistake. Sanders said they waited for him. In any case, Sanders pulled away so he would take the time bonuses and deny the Hondas.

"We lose a little bit today," Brabec said, "but I think for tomorrow we're in a lot better position than them (KTM) because (the stage) it's a little bit more difficult."

Stage eight will be the longest of the race at 481 kilometers, a loop outside Wadi ad-Dawasir with plateaus and canyons.

Sanders wasn't fazed: "If they want to slow down in the race for tomorrow because it's a bigger day then that's their strategy. (I'm) just getting warmed up. I feel good."

China defeats Australia in U23 Asian Cup

RIYADH, Jan 11, (Xinhua): China beat Australia 1-0 on Sunday in its second Group D match at the 2026 AFC U23 Asian Cup in Riyadh.

China held on to seal the win.

Speaking at the post-match press conference, Peng said his goal was the result of teamwork.

"It was a very tough match. Our team fought like warriors on the pitch, and this goal is the result of everyone's collective efforts. The goal belongs to the whole team, not to me alone," China head coach Antonio Puche Vicente praised the team's performance.

"This is unbelievable. It is historic for China's football. They played fantastically," he said.

China, which drew 0-0 with Iraq in its opener, will face Thailand in its final group match on Wednesday.

Al-Nassr looks to close gap on unbeaten Al-Hilal

RIYADH, Jan 11: All attention turns to Kingdom Arena in Riyadh today as Al-Hilal and Al-Nassr clash in the 15th round of the Saudi Roshn League. The two sides have met on a Monday three times since the start of the season, splitting two wins and sharing one draw.

Al-Hilal leads the table with 35 points, winning 11 matches and drawing two, while Al-Nassr sit second with 31 points after winning their first ten games before a draw and two successive losses.

The unbeaten Al-Hilal will aim to maintain its perfect record and widen the gap over its closest rival.

Al-Nassr, who lost the top spot following defeats to Al-Ahli and Al-Qadisiya, is eager to return to winning ways and reduce the gap to just one point. A loss could push it further from the title race and risk dropping to third.

Both teams will miss key players due to international duty: Al-Hilal are without Moroccan goalkeeper Yassine Bououn and Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly, while Al-Nassr will be without Senegalese forward Sadio Mané, all participating in the Africa Cup of Nations.



In this file photo, Cristiano Ronaldo (right) vies for the ball not pictured with Al-Hilal player.