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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Bahraini Minister of Interior Lt. Gen. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa.

## Amir, Crown Prince receive Bahrain Minister of Interior

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and Bahraini Minister of Interior Lt. Gen. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa, on his visit to Kuwait.

During the meeting, the Bahraini Minister conveyed to His Highness the greetings of King Hamad bin Isa of Bahrain, as well as his wishes for His Highness's continued good health and well-being, and for the people of Kuwait further progress and prosperity.

In turn, His Highness the Amir entrusted the Bahraini Minister with his greetings to King Hamad, along with his best wishes for lasting health and wellness.

His Highness the Amir prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow further development and prosperity upon the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people under the wise leadership of His Majesty the King.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Director of His Highness the Amir's Office, Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jamal Mohammad Al-Thiyab, Undersecretary of the Amiri Diwan, Sheikh Abdulaziz Meshal Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Issa Al-Issa, and Director General of the Coast Guard Major General (Naval) Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef Al-Sabah.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and Bahraini Minister of Interior Lt. Gen. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Khalifa, on his visit to Kuwait.

During the meeting, the Bahraini Minister conveyed to His Highness the greetings and appreciation of King Hamad bin Isa of Bahrain, as well as his wishes for His Highness's continued good health and well-being, and for the people of Kuwait further progress and prosperity.

Continued on Page 5



### Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## First Deputy PM taking action on the ground is commendable

WHEN high-ranking officials personally conduct field inspections, their actions become visible to the public, enabling them to directly assess the situation on the ground and implement necessary corrections.

This hands-on approach was largely absent from the state apparatus over the past four or five decades. That period was marked by ongoing conflict and infighting between the National Assembly and successive governments.

The result was ministerial instability, with officials often acting passively, leaving critical issues to chance and focusing primarily on avoiding political confrontation.

We have repeatedly highlighted this problem, as the state majority of Kuwaitis have called for stability in the executive branch so the government can commit to and implement its program, a demand that long went unmet.

However, the current government's move towards active, on-the-ground engagement has revealed the deep-rooted shortcomings inherited from the previous era.

This activity has exposed the extent of the decline within the ministries, largely driven by the pervasive influence of powerful vested interests. These interests actively obstructed any project that did not serve their agendas and, through their influence over members of parliament, interfered in nearly every aspect of governance.

Today, as we see the First Deputy Prime Minister conducting field visits to various facilities and directing the agencies under his supervision, we truly feel things are starting to move in the right direction.

Just days ago, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef toured several farms and witnessed firsthand the difficulties faced by their owners in relation to food security. This is due to the control exercised by certain traders and cartels over vegetables, meat, and other commodities, as they are unwilling to relinquish the substantial profits generated from imports.

However, following the decisions and directives issued by the second-highest-ranking official in the Cabinet, there is now a real opportunity to revive this vital strategic sector and reduce the heavy food import bill.

Furthermore, we have been witnessing similar field visits by ministers for several months now, and their results are gradually becoming evident.

This approach was clearly absent in the past. In many cases, the ministerial chair encouraged complacency, with officials content to limit their roles to signing internal correspondence.

As a result, Kuwait lost major projects, including the Dow Chemical Company project, the Northern Economic Zone, and Silk City.

It would also have lost Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port had the new administration not taken steps to advance it.

His Highness the Prime Minister is closely monitoring the project through field visits and weekly meetings with the committee responsible for finalizing arrangements with the companies implementing the port and other related projects.

For the past 50 years, the idea of dedicated workers' cities has been discussed without tangible progress. Commendably, the First Deputy Prime Minister recently declared this a top government priority, signaling that companies will soon begin implementation.

However, this is just the beginning, not the completion. Achieving Kuwait's development goals will require many additional steps.

A critical next phase involves significantly opening the country to both investors and visitors, along with a major overhaul of infrastructure.

This development must cover the metro, railway, roads, electricity, and essential services, as well as the creation of entertainment and amenities needed to attract citizens, residents, and investors to the country. These proposals have been repeatedly highlighted in the media, yet they were long met with ministerial indifference and inaction.

These ideas could serve as the foundation for a comprehensive national development plan.

Continued on Page 5

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## PAM, Interior team up on labor reforms

Kuwait e-services simplify employee transfers

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), chaired by Director General Engineer Rabab Al-Osaimi, held a coordination meeting with senior officials from the Ministry of Interior as part of ongoing efforts to modernize legislation on the labor market, enhance human resource efficiency, improve the business environment, and develop work systems under the new residency law, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Discussions during the meeting focused on implementing the new law on foreign residents and developing work systems and procedures to ensure institutional integration and meet the requirements of the next phase, in line with Amiri Decree No. 114/2024 concerning the Law on the Residence of Foreigners and its executive regulations.

Eng. Al-Osaimi emphasized that this coordination with the Ministry of Interior reflects the political leadership's vision for Kuwait's future, aiming to establish an organized and flexible labor market closely linked to modern residency legislation, integrating economic, regulatory, and security aspects to serve the public interest and support sustainable development.

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Mohammad Morsi

Photo during the 'Chemically Synthetic Drugs: The Hidden Enemy in Societies' symposium organized by the Kuwait Chemical Society.

### DCGD reports major success under new law

## Kuwait anti-drug raids snare thousands

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Director General of the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) Brigadier General Mohammed Qabazard affirmed that the new drug law has been effective in deterring drug dealers and traffickers.

He noted a rise in complaints related to addiction treatment since the implementation of the new law.

mentation of the new law.

Brigadier General Qabazard revealed that the department received 150 reports, stressing that all cases were handled with full confidentiality, and those affected were admitted to an addiction treatment hospital.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the "Chemically Synthetic Drugs: The Hidden Enemy in Societies" symposium organized by the

Kuwait Chemical Society, Brigadier General Qabazard stated that DCGD teams are available around the clock and will take firm action against all drug dealers and traffickers, regardless of their methods of promotion or smuggling, to ensure the protection of society and maintain its security and safety.

Continued on Page 5

4°C chill Wednesday onward

## Brace for rain, frost this week

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department has forecast that the country will witness scattered rain showers and dust-raising winds on Tuesday, with the possibility of frost forming in agricultural and desert areas from Wednesday to Friday.

The acting Director of the department Dhirar Al-Ali told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Monday that weather maps and numerical models indicate the country will be affected from Tuesday dawn by an extended low-pressure system, accompanied by a relatively warm and humid air mass, with chances of scattered rain and ac-

tive southeast winds that may occasionally raise dust.

He explained that temperatures are expected to rise slightly until Tuesday evening, and then a high-pressure system will advance on Tuesday night, bringing a cold and dry air mass and light to moderate northwesterly winds, occasionally gusting between 15 and 50 km/h, causing dust and raising sea waves to over six feet.

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, temperatures will drop noticeably, with a chance of frost forming in agricultural and desert areas.

Continued on Page 5

### Newswatch

Fuel oil deals hit \$12 mln

## KPC expands global marketing reach

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has developed a strategy to enhance the efficiency of its global marketing sector and expand into new markets.

According to informed sources, KPC has granted this sector the authority to finalize both long-term and short-term

agreements and contracts with major international oil companies. The marketing sector possesses strong sales capabilities and the expertise to identify new markets, particularly as KPC's subsidiaries produce high-quality crude oil and petroleum derivatives that meet international standards, including diesel, naphtha, jet fuel, and other products.

Continued on Page 5

## 24-carat gold now KD 44.52

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12, (KUNA): Gold prices stayed strong in the Kuwaiti market last week, reflecting the metal's global safe-haven status.

According to a report issued by Dar Al-Sabaek Kuwait, the price of 24-carat gold reached around KD 44.520 per gram, while 22-carat gold traded near

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait strengthens clinical governance

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi issued a ministerial decree on Sunday concerning the appointment of the heads and rapporteurs of the technical department councils in healthcare facilities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained on its X account that the decision aims to enhance integration, unify clinical policies, and improve the quality of healthcare provided to citizens in line

Continued on Page 5



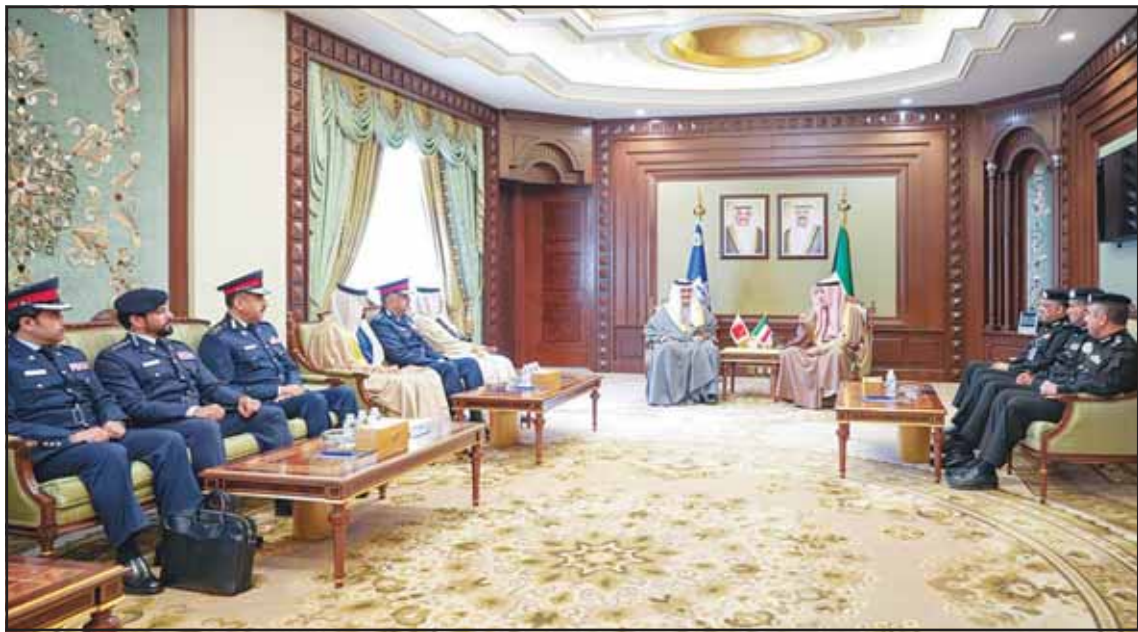
8 Zain Kuwait wins Best PR Team award in Private Sector

9 NBK maintained its massive efforts to enhance financial literacy in Kuwait throughout 2025



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	05:20	Asr .....	14:50
Sunrise ..	06:44	Maghrib ..	17:09
Zohr .....	11:56	Isha .....	18:30

# Local



KUNA photo  
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah receives the Bahraini Interior Minister and the accompanying delegation.

## Kuwait, Bahrain discuss security issues

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12, (KUNA): Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusef Saud Al-Sabah discussed Monday with Bahraini Minister of Interior Lieutenant General Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, security issues of mutual interest and ways to enhance cooperation.

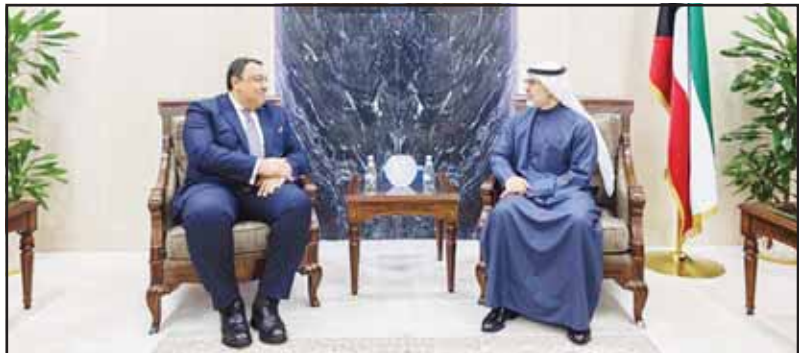
The Ministry of Interior stated in a press release that this took place during Sheikh Fahad Al-Sabah's meeting with the Bahraini Minister of Interior as part of his official visit to the country.

The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior expressed his welcome to the Bahraini Minister of Interior and the accompanying delegation, affirming that this brotherly visit contributes to strengthening security cooperation and coordination. He pointed to the deep fraternal and historical relations that unite Kuwait and Bahrain, and to the continuous development witnessed in various fields, particularly in security aspects.

For his part, the Bahraini Minister expressed his pride in the level of security cooperation and coordination between the two brotherly countries, stressing the importance of continuing joint work and the exchange of security expertise and experiences in a manner that supports and develops the security capabilities of both sides.

The statement added that a number of joint issues were discussed, in addition to reviewing the Bahraini experience in the field of alternative penalties and open prisons, and the positive results achieved within the framework of developing the criminal justice system and enhancing concepts of reform and rehabilitation, thereby contributing to the support of community security and stability.

The meeting was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wahaib, the Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Public Security Affairs, Major General Hamed Al-Dawas, along with a number of security leaders.



KUNA photo  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in talks with the visiting Egyptian Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates, Ambassador Ihab Fahmy.

## Deputy FM receives Egypt Assistant FM

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12, (KUNA): Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday, Egyptian Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates, Ambassador Ihab Fahmy, on the occasion

of his visit to the country.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries across various fields, in addition to reviewing the latest regional and international developments.

## Road repairs scheduled till Jan 15

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Ministry of Public Works announced the implementation of major maintenance work on several highways and internal roads under new contracts, from January 10-15, as part of the ministry's ongoing plan to improve road network efficiency and enhance traffic safety, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry explained that the maintenance covers eight main highways and expressways in vital locations throughout the country, including Abdali Road, Subiya Road, the intersection of the Fourth Ring Road with Maghreb Road and its extension to Damascus Street intersection, Fahaheel Road opposite Mishref and Salwa, Salmi Road towards Kuwait City,

the overpass at the Fourth Ring Road intersection towards Salmiya, and the Seventh Ring Road from Kilo 24 mark to Kilo 27 mark in both directions.

The maintenance work extends beyond highways to include 36 residential areas in various governorates. The work involves repairing multiple sections within these areas, with priority given to projects focused on rehabilitation of streets and improvement of pavement layers.

This is part of a comprehensive, long-term maintenance program under the new contracts, which uses an improved asphalt mix and modern technical standards to ensure road durability and reduce the need for frequent repairs.

## KPTC signs major deal for supply of modern buses

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Kuwait Public Transport Company (KPTC) signed a new agreement with Al-Qurain Automotive Trading Company for the supply of a large number of modern King Long buses for public transport services, based on the company's plans to develop and strengthen its operational fleet, reports Al-Anba daily.

The contract is expected to support the existing large fleet of King Long buses, enhance service efficiency and reinforce KPTC's position as a leading public transport provider in Kuwait.

The agreement was signed on December 17, 2025 by CEO of KPTC Mansour Al-Saad, and Chairman and CEO of Al-Qurain Automotive Trading Company Ahmad Al-Mutawa.

Al-Mutawa expressed his gratitude to KPTC for its continued confidence in Al Qurain Company's products and services, noting that this strategic partnership, spanning nearly four decades, reflects the depth of cooperation and shared success between the two parties.

Also, Al-Saad praised the high level of support and collaboration between the companies, and expressed hope that the partnership will continue to serve both parties' aspirations and contribute to the development of Kuwait's public transport system.

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Warm and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind later on, with speeds of 15-50 km/h causing rising dust over open areas with a chance for scattered light rain.

Weather			
<b>By Night:</b>	Rather cold and cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind changing to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h causing rising dust over open areas with a chance for scattered light rain.		
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	

Kuwait City	20	08
Kuwait Airport	20	04
Abdaly	21	02
Bubyan	19	02
Jahra	21	07
Failaka Island	19	07
Salmiyah	19	13
Ahmadi	20	06
Jal Aliyah	19	06
Nuwaisib	20	07

## Other Voices

# A changing global landscape

By Nasser Al-Hajeri

Recent developments across different regions suggest that global affairs are entering a period of heightened complexity. Issues that once appeared local or regional are increasingly drawing international attention, reflecting how interconnected today's political, economic, and security environments have become.

In Latin America, Venezuela continues to face ongoing political and economic challenges.

Prolonged instability has affected governance, public services, and regional relations, leading external actors to take a closer interest in developments there. As a result, the situation has expanded beyond domestic concerns and is now viewed within a broader international context.

In Europe, discussions surrounding Greenland and its strategic importance have brought renewed focus to the Arctic region. Changes in climate, accessibility, and global trade routes have increased interest in Arctic territories. This has led to diplomatic engagement



Al-Hajeri

and policy debates involving Denmark and other international partners, highlighting how emerging regions are gaining relevance in global planning and security considerations.

In Iran, protests have taken place in several cities amid difficult economic conditions, including concerns about rising prices, currency depreciation, and access to basic goods.

These demonstrations have reflected public concerns over the economic situation and have continued for periods of time in different parts of the country.

Taken together, these situations illustrate a broader pattern in which global affairs are shaped by overlapping political, economic, and strategic factors. Developments in one country or region increasingly influence discussions and decision making elsewhere. This interconnectedness places greater emphasis on diplomacy, communication, and coordination among states.

As the international environment evolves, maintaining dialogue and cooperation remains essential. Managing differences through established diplomatic channels helps reduce uncertainty and supports stability. While challenges persist across regions, continued engagement and respect for international norms remain central to addressing shared concerns in a changing global landscape.

# Fund diversifies SMEs, entrepreneurs support

## 'Mubader Plus' program launched

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development announced the launch of the second edition of the "Mubader Plus" (Initiative Plus) program, highlighting its continued support and empowerment of entrepreneurs and SME owners in Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The acting Director General of SME Development Basma Al-Jassem stated that the launch of the second season of "Mubader Plus" is in line with the fund's strategy to provide high-quality, non-financial services to entrepreneurs and clients, raise the standards of SME owners, and build on the successful outcomes of the first season.

She explained that the fund is committed to designing programs that address the real needs of businesses, offering practical solutions to the operational, financial, and organizational challenges faced by entrepreneurs in various sectors.

The second edition of "Mubader Plus" represents an advanced model of integrated support, combining specialized training, mentoring sessions, and practical application of

theoretical knowledge.

The fund views empowering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as extending beyond financing to include capacity building, skills development, and fostering a culture of innovation. This approach positively impacts the national economy and contributes to diversifying income sources, in line with state directives and New Kuwait 2035 vision.

The launch of the second season of "Mubader Plus" reflects the fund's commitment to enhancing the capabilities of entrepreneurs and providing high-quality, non-financial services.

The program includes 12 specialized training workshops, each lasting three days, covering strategic areas such as planning and growth, artificial intelligence, government tenders and practices, digital marketing, financial management, and governance and legal compliance. It also offers 12 tracks of specialized mentoring and guidance sessions tailored to participants' needs.

"Mubader Plus" targets entrepreneurs and SME owners funded by the fund, and registered in the National Registry, as well as existing business owners.

Registration will be open through dedicated online links for each training workshop and mentoring session, as part of a media campaign for promoting the program, its features, and expected outcomes.

## Applicants not more than 28 years

# KPC opens jobs for fresh law graduates

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries announced job opportunities for fresh Kuwaiti graduates holding a Bachelor of Laws degree in the English legal system.

KPC explained that the application period will be from January 12 to January 26, 2026. Eligibility requirements include being a Kuwaiti citizen, holding a Bachelor of Laws degree (or equivalent) in the English legal system,

and achieving a minimum overall grade point average of 3 out of 4 (or 85 percent), 2.1 Upper Second (UK system), or Second Class Honors (Grade 1) (Irish system).

Applicants must have graduated within the past five years and be no older than 28 years as of January 12, 2026, including fractional years.

They must not be registered as employers with the Public Institution for Social Security, and must not currently be employed by KPC or any of its subsidiaries.

All required documents must be attached with the application, including

a copy of the civil ID, a copy of the nationality certificate via the Sahel app, a personal photograph, and an equivalency certificate from the Ministry of Higher Education.

Applicants must also attach their university certificate and an official transcript from the Cultural Office. Graduates of non-accredited systems (those not using the four-point or percentage-based system) must submit an official certificate indicating their equivalent grade point average, except for graduates of the British and Irish systems.

## Other Voices

# McCarthyism and the repercussions of fear

By Ahmad alsarraf

Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy is best known for leading an aggressive campaign against communism during his tenure in Congress from 1947 to 1957.

He gained notoriety for his blacklist, which included the names of American citizens accused of being communists or having communist sympathies. He claimed that communists had successfully infiltrated various sensitive and influential institutions in the United States, particularly in the media, culture, and arts.

McCarthy's allegations sparked widespread panic, as fear quickly spread, especially after a congressional subcommittee was formed to investigate those named on his lists.

The hearings received extensive media coverage, and a large number of civilian and military officials, artists, and intellectuals were summoned, as they were accused of treason, and were either imprisoned or dismissed from their positions.

Many of these accusations were baseless, and the hearings often resembled a spectacle, marked by uproar and drama, particularly when Senator McCarthy aired personal grievances against the accused in an effort to permanently silence them. As a result, many innocent people suffered the consequences of his actions.

The consequences of McCarthyism were devastating, as many individuals lost their jobs, were blacklisted, and had their reputations irreparably damaged.

Hollywood, the literary and cultural industries, and the press were particularly affected. Over 300 actors, writers, directors, and others suspected of communist ties were denied employment. Notable examples include the "Hollywood Ten," who were imprisoned for refusing to testify, as well as international figures such as Charlie Chaplin, who was forced into exile, Dalton Trumbo, Orson Welles, Lena Horne, and Dorothy Parker.

Hundreds of schoolteachers and university professors also lost their positions for refusing to cooperate with the investigations or due to alleged communist sympathies. The blacklists extended to labor leaders and prominent scientists, including J. Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the Manhattan Project that developed the first atomic bomb.

It was a harsh period that left deep scars on America, but it also served as a critical cautionary tale about the limits of political



alsarraf

power and the dangers of ideological hysteria. A climate of suspicion and accusation prevailed, weakening democratic debate and partially paralyzing cultural life. What lessons did America take from this experience?

The episode proved that constitutional freedoms can be quickly eroded under the pressure of fear. The mere existence of a constitution is not enough without a political culture committed to protecting it.

It underscored the importance of distinguishing real security concerns from their exploitation in politics, showing how national security issues can be manipulated for populist or personal gain. Ultimately, McCarthyism became a lasting warning against the misuse of state power to target political opponents.

Over time, the term "McCarthyism" came to signify politically motivated accusations made without evidence.

The period fostered a greater awareness of the value of dissent. The debates that followed, in universities, courts, and the media, strengthened the defense of freedom of thought and established McCarthyism as a "dark chapter" in history that should not be repeated. This helped shape a rights-based culture more attuned to the dangers of political censorship.

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Farwaniya Governorate photo  
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser receives Dr. Sami bin Mohammad Al-Suqair, a member of the Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia.

# Kuwait, Saudi Arabia ties strong and deep-rooted

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser received Dr. Sami bin Mohammed Al-Suqair, a member of the Council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia, faculty member at the College of Sharia at Qassim University, member of the Islamic Jurisprudence Academy, and Imam and Khateeb of Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen Mosque.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Dr. Al-Suqair was accompanied by Director of the Department of Senior Scholars' Affairs Bader bin Saleh Al-Atram, Sharia researcher at the Council of Senior Scholars Ahmad bin Matar Al-Otaibi, and Director of the Center for Promoting Moderation at the Ministry of

Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in Kuwait Dr. Abdullah Mutair Al-Shuraika.

The discussions during the meeting focused on various issues of mutual interest, reflecting the strong and long standing relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser expressed his appreciation for the visit, and wished Dr. Al-Suqair continued success in his scholarly and da'wah efforts, and continued progress, prosperity, and stability for Saudi Arabia. Dr. Al-Suqair thanked the governor for the warm welcome and generous hospitality, and commended his support for community initiatives. He also wished Kuwait continued development and prosperity under its wise political leadership.



# Is it time to protect kids from cultural invasion?

“PROTECTING future generations from cultural invasion is essential. Isn’t it time to confront the technological, intellectual, and cultural invasion targeting our children and youth?” Kuwaiti writer **Ghanima Habib** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“I chose to raise this question at the beginning of this article because of its importance, particularly since our generations have, for many years, been exposed to foreign cultures that erode values and encroach upon our authentic Arab societies.



Ghanima Habib

“With the rapid spread of modern technology, social media has become a powerful tool for influencing youth and children in the world, particularly our children.

“I am not advocating against the use of technology or benefiting from it. However, by my cautious and prudent nature, I believe that every tool has both positive and negative aspects. It is no secret that modern technological development holds the potential for both progress and destruction.

“Here, I recall a statement I once heard from the late Minister of Education Dr. Ahmad Al-Rubaie, who said that a knife is useful for cutting apples, yet at the same time it can become a weapon that takes lives.

“Given that the threat of technological infiltration has eroded our values, customs, and noble traditions, this is an appeal to researchers, educators, and specialists to identify the best and most engaging ways to reach youth and children. This can be achieved by highlighting the contributions of scholars from Islamic civilization and Western scientists, and by promoting positive role models who have benefited humanity in various fields in the modern era, so they may serve as examples to follow.

“Protecting children and youth from the dangers of technological, intellectual, and cultural invasion requires activating the role of schools by revitalizing libraries and providing books that present biographies of inventors and distinguished scientists from Islamic civilization and other civilizations. It also requires highlighting positive role models among contemporary scientists, with particular focus on young Arabs who have excelled in various fields. Furthermore, a daily reading hour should be designated as a mandatory class period.

“In this context, universities in the Arab world must train and educate their students in enlightened thinking that promotes freedom of opinion and respect for differing viewpoints. I recall how Al-Shuwaikh Secondary School in the 1960s and 1970s was a beacon of cultural and political awareness and progress, instilling in its students a strong sense of Arab identity. How much we need this role today.

“The role of the family is no less important. Activating the role of parents in this technological age has become essential for raising children with noble values. It is crucial to focus on supervising children at home, observing any changes in their behavior, and using technology to interact and play with them while, as much as possible, ensuring that the websites they visit are appropriate.

“Furthermore, religious discourse must be activated and developed, and places of worship should be revitalized to promote moderate thought that highlights the tolerant aspects of Islam, so that children grow up with sound religious beliefs, free from violence and extremism.

“We must also recognize the role of civil society organizations concerned with culture in using advanced technology in all its forms to spread societal awareness and protect children and youth from falling prey to destructive cultural and intellectual invasion.”

Also:

“Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has left her mark on a number of development projects in recent years, working to organize and oversee several of them through hands-on efforts,” columnist **Sheikh Eng. Fahad Dawoud Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Kuwait needs this type of proactive leadership, as the country currently requires substantial work and achievement. The construction sector demands significant effort, and complacency has no place in any field.

“Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan is frequently seen supervising project implementation on the ground and has proven herself capable of managing large-scale and complex projects.

“This highlights an important point - it establishes a solid foundation for relying on Kuwaiti women, who have proved a strong presence in all fields.

“Minister Al-Mashaan undertook a task that many considered challenging - implementing the principles and foundations of good governance to ensure the integrity and sustainability of administrative and technical work within the ministry.

“Undoubtedly, there was some chaos, but Al-Mashaan, with her strategic vision, managed to overcome obstacles and organize work in various areas.

“Among the completed projects were those of small and medium-sized enterprises, which play a vital role in the economy.

“In the past, many small business owners faced obstacles and found no support. Therefore, organizing small businesses and allocating spaces for their owners is seen as a major step forward in revitalizing these sectors. Today, several of these sectors can be utilized, even if their contribution to GDP is modest.

“Meanwhile, a bright moment witnessed in Kuwait last week confirms our potential to establish a strong sports movement.

“Kuwait’s hosting of the French Super Cup played a major role in reviving sports tourism and showcasing the country as a global destination capable of hosting major events. The attendance of approximately 52,000 fans, both local and international, affirms our ability to transform this popular event into a major tourist attraction.”

□ □ □

“The nature of life dictates that every journey has a beginning and an end. It starts with a first step, which is the foundation, the first building block for continuity and achievement,” Kuwaiti writer **Sagr Muhammad Al-Mujaim** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Any deviation from the path can prevent us from reaching the destination for which the journey was undertaken. If the journey began with a specific goal and was driven by ambition, even a slight shift can turn it into something entirely different like greed. The difference between ambition and greed is significant. Deviating from the goal negatively impacts not only the individual but also those around them.

“The distinction between ambition and greed lies in preserving the message, which must remain clear throughout the stages of progress and achievement.

“Most importantly, it involves insisting on adding a personal touch, which is the essence of the message.

“Greed is entirely different. It lacks vision and innovation, focusing solely on achieving illusory gains without contributing solutions, approaches, or creative ideas.

“One must first believe in the message and begin by applying it and adhering to its principles. If successful, they can then inspire others to pursue the same goal. As mentioned earlier, greed harms the greedy person first and foremost.



Sagr Al-Mujaim

“Ambition, on the other hand, cultivates a positive attitude toward others, strengthening the path to achieving one’s objectives.

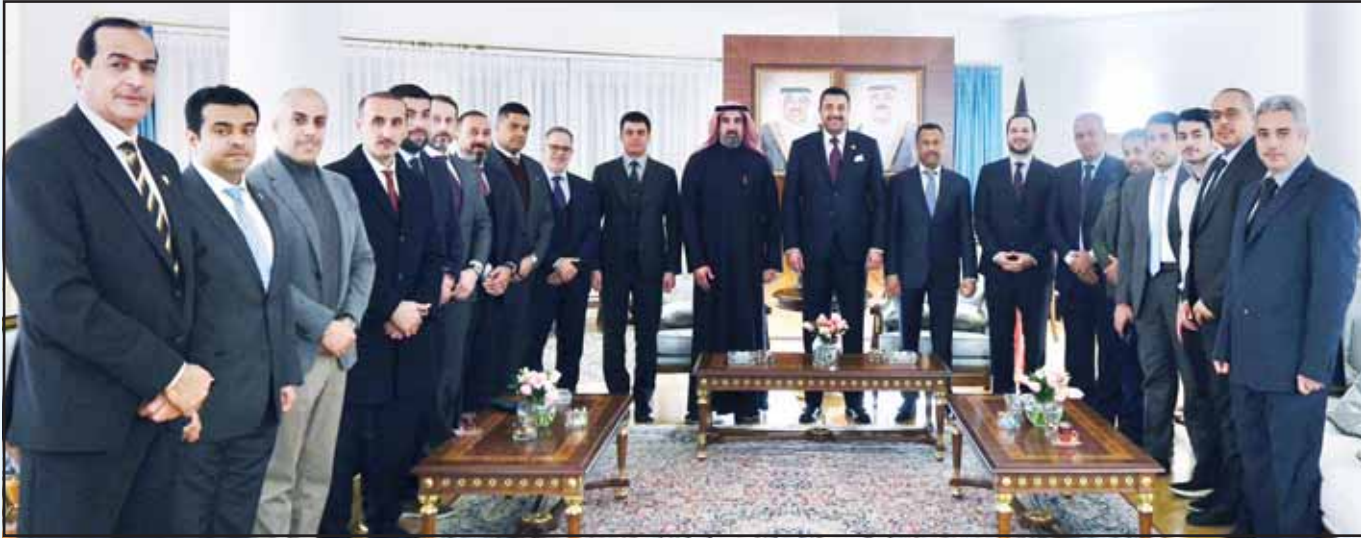
“An ambitious person must possess several qualities, including presence, independent decision-making, the ability to listen to different perspectives, and the willingness to apologize for mistakes, as no one is infallible. An ambitious person should be proactive and engaged whenever necessary. The more initiative one takes, the more achievable the goals become. An ambitious person must carefully define these qualities while always maintaining respect for others. When respect is lost, everything falls apart.

“It is often said to someone who transgresses against others, “Respect yourself.”

“This phrase carries great significance, because once a person abandons respect for others, they give them the green light not to respect them.

“Many ambitious people deliberately highlight the flaws of those who disagree with them, using them as justification for disrespect. Some go even further, criticizing others without offering advice or reflecting on their own shortcomings. These individuals have no clear purpose and contribute nothing to the advancement of their fields. They simply seek to take someone else’s position by undermining them.”

— Compiled by Simi K.Kutty



KUNA photo  
Kuwait’s Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah meets members of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Italy during his official visit.

## ‘Continue work to strengthen Kuwait, Italy bonds’

ROME, Jan 12, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah met with members of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Italy during his official visit.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Ministry of Defense said the minister commended the embassy’s efforts in representing Kuwait and strengthening cooperation with Italy, underscoring the importance of continued diplomatic work to serve shared interests and support bilateral ties.

At the end of the visit, Kuwait’s Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani hosted an official dinner in honor of the minister and his accompanying delegation, the statement added.

# Woman granted supervisor post

Top MEW officials penalized

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12 : The Administrative Court ruled in favor of a client represented by Lawyer Mohammad Al-Ansari, granting her the right to be seconded to the position of Supervisor in the Revenue and Collection Department in the Financial Affairs Administration’s Support Services Sector.**

The court found that the previous administrative decision violated both legal provisions and the established job selection criteria. The ruling annulled a decision issued on October 30, 2024, which seconded another employee to the supervisory position for one year, despite the established seniority of Lawyer Al-Ansari’s client in her current financial grade.

Under Article 4 of Civil Service Council Resolution No. 18/2011, her seniority qualified her for the secondment.

The court highlighted in its reasoning that the administrative body did not dispute the plaintiff’s fulfillment of the legal requirements for the supervisory position.

Also, the department failed to provide a comparative statement of her employment and financial status relative to the individual who was granted the secondment, despite a prior court order to do so. The court viewed this omission as supporting evidence for the plaintiff’s claim.

The ruling emphasized that the contested decision violated the proper legal provisions, requiring its annulment to the extent that it bypassed Lawyer Al-Ansari’s client.

Consequently, the court affirmed her right to be seconded to the position retroactively from the date the original decision was issued.

□ □ □

**Top officials fined:** The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Dr. Adel Al-Zamel, issued two decisions imposing penalties, including salary deductions, on employees holding Head of Department and Senior Engineer positions, reports Al-Anba daily.

The penalties are based on the final report of the investigation committee formed under Ministerial Resolution No. 142/2024, which studied the technical aspects of the implementation, completion, and maintenance of the Central Prison infrastructure and its expansion site.

Dr. Al-Zamel’s decisions explained that the employees were found to have committed violations outlined in the committee’s report. These included accepting the project without verifying its technical readiness, failing to identify deficiencies and issues, neglecting to accurately document the project’s status, and demonstrating insufficient technical expertise.

## KPA eyes plan to upgrade Doha’s Port; tender soon

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) is preparing to issue a tender for a feasibility study on the Doha Port development project. During its meeting on Wednesday, KPA requested that the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) reconsider issuing a tender for the study.

In response, CAPT’s Board of Directors decided to expedite KPA’s compliance with Resolution No. 35, issued at its November 26 meeting, which included several approved amendments.

The feasibility study is part of seven strategic development projects assigned to KPA under its development plan, including three projects for the development of Doha, Shuwaikh, and Shuaiba ports.

The Doha Port development project involves rehabilitating the port’s infrastructure through comprehensive design work to upgrade all facilities, renovating existing buildings, and constructing new service buildings within the port. The project also includes designing a landfill area located south of the port, which will include commercial and tourist facilities such as berths, hotels, restaurants, and green spaces.

Development

Meanwhile, the Shuwaikh Port development project focuses on deepening the waterway leading to the port, constructing a new semi-automated container terminal, and rehabilitating and deepening berths 1 through 7 to accommodate deep-draft vessels and expand the port’s capacity.

The project also includes redistributing activities and internal spaces within Shuwaikh Port, constructing administrative buildings for all relevant entities required at the port, and establishing a comprehensive customs inspection area to enhance operational efficiency. A passenger terminal will also be built to accommodate cruise ships.

As for the Shuaiba Port Development and Expansion Project, it involves constructing new berths in line with the latest international design and environmental standards to meet modern operational needs and enhance port efficiency.

The project also includes upgrading and rehabilitating infrastructure by enhancing service networks and constructing a power station to improve the efficiency of port services.

### Awareness bid

## KFF wins Best Public Relations Dept Prize

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) received the Best Public Relations Department Award in the government sector at the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations, organized by the Kuwait Public Relations Association under the patronage of the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Baddah Al-Mutairi, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The award was presented by the minister’s representative, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Engineer Nasser Al-Muhaisin, to Brigadier General Mohammad Ibrahim, Director of Public Relations and Media at KFF, in recognition of KFF’s outstanding efforts.

Brigadier General Mohammad Ibrahim expressed his happiness and pride in receiving the honor, highlighting that the award reflects the trust of the judging panel and serves as motivation to continue improving media and communication performance.

He praised the success of the competition and its role in encouraging both public and private sector entities to contribute and innovate in service of the nation.

Kuwait Fire Force earned the award for its excellence in conducting awareness campaigns aimed to enhance community knowledge, promote a culture of prevention and safety, protect lives and property, and instill the principles of fire safety and prevention within society.

## ‘Imams’ contracts renewed

By Mohammad Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has approved the renewal of contracts for 1,409 part-time Kuwaiti individuals currently serving in religious roles as mu-ezzins, imams, and imam-preachers. According to informed sources, CSC has notified the Ministry of Islamic Affairs of its approval to renew the contracts for all listed personnel.



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KFAED photo  
Officials of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development pose for a group photo with members of the Algerian diplomatic delegation during their visit to the Fund's headquarters.

## KFAED hosts diplomatic delegation from Algeria

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: As part of ongoing cooperation between local institutions and entities, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) hosted a diplomatic delegation from the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria at its headquarters. The visit was organized under the annual Diplomatic Hospitality Program by the Saud N. Al-Sabah Kuwait Diplomatic Institute.

The purpose of the visit was to introduce the visiting delegation to the nature of the Fund's work and its role in development. During the visit, a presentation was delivered to the delegation about the activities of the Kuwait Fund.

The presentation, given by Mr. Fawaz Al-Adsani, Superintendent of the Operations Department for Arab Countries, highlighted the Fund's achievements since its establishment, its operational framework, and its activities that reflect Kuwait's foreign policy based on developmental and humanitarian assistance at both regional and global levels.

Additionally, Dr. Nasser Al-Rifai,

Engineering Advisor at the Kuwait Fund for Development, provided a detailed explanation of the Fund's operations, including the sectors and regions where the Fund finances projects, with particular emphasis on its activities in Algeria.

For his part, Mr. Mohammed Reda Khoujah, head of the Algerian diplomatic delegation, expressed his gratitude for the valuable presentation offered by the Fund's officials, hoping it would benefit the Algerian diplomats in the delegation. Khoujah also thanked the Fund for its warm welcome and generous hospitality.

It is worth noting that the Kuwait Fund for Development was the first institution in the Middle East to play an active role in international development efforts by financing development projects in developing countries and contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Today, the Fund serves as a solid bridge of friendship and solidarity between the State of Kuwait and its sisterly and friendly nations.

# MoCI plans to unify car rental contracts in landmark reform

Proposals aim to curb disputes and unfair fees

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is studying a proposal to amend the car rental document to regulate the vehicle market -- an unprecedented move aimed to unify practices and regulate the contractual relationship between rental offices and customers.**

This is part of a government initiative to modernize the regulatory frameworks for the car rental market and ensure a balance between consumer rights and the interests of rental companies in order to reduce legal disputes and boost confidence in this vital service sector.

Reliable sources informed the newspaper that a tripartite meeting will be held Monday, with representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Experts Department at the Ministry of Justice, and Insurance Unit in attendance. They will discuss amending the car rental document and

review a set of regulatory proposals aimed at controlling the vehicle rental market and strengthening consumer protection.

Sources said the meeting is part of a comprehensive review of current rental documents and contracts, in light of frequent consumer complaints.

Sources revealed the proposals on the meeting agenda include regulating the operations of car rental offices according to seven main axes as follows:

- Define car categories and rental prices through clear and approved classifications (Economy, Mid-range and Luxury), thus, ensuring clarity of category and rental price for the consumer and limiting manipulation or misrepresentation in vehicle classifications.
- Standardize the terms of rental contracts in all rental offices and companies, ensuring clear, specific, and binding wording for both parties, to be officially approved by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to guarantee fairness and transparency in contracts.
- Abolish the standardized value for additional kilometers in rental contracts and replace it with a calculation that corresponds to the car's value, category and prevailing market price, with exceptions for special vehicle categories – if any – whose nature of use requires different arrange-

ments.

- Obligate rental offices and companies to notify the renter within a fixed period before the lease expires, either by telephone or text message, to alert them on the approaching lease end date. In the event of the renter's late payment, failure to return the vehicle or loss of communication, legal action will be taken immediately, preventing the accumulation of unpaid rent without the consumer's knowledge.
- Prevent consumers from being obligated to pay unjustified fees, such as file opening fees, accident charges, depreciation percentages in case of total loss, or being required to have the vehicle repaired at the dealership, unless these clauses are clearly stipulated in the contract and approved by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Require rental offices to maintain a comprehensive record containing the accident history of rental vehicles, repair invoices, and copies of lease agreements. This will enhance transparency and guarantee consumer rights during contracting or dispute resolution.
- Provide a replacement vehicle for the consumer in case the rented car breaks down due to a technical malfunction during the rental period, at no additional cost. The consumer will not be charged for towing fees in such cases.

### Ministry unveils sale via sealed bids, opening Jan 21

## MoF to auction unused gadgets at Nat'l Assembly

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Ministry of Finance announced the auction of several unused iPhones, iPads, and routers at the National Assembly Secretariat, to be conducted through sealed bids, reports Al-Anba daily.

Auction announcement No. 2524, published in the official gazette "Kuwait Alyoum", states that the inspection period will last four working days, from January 11 to January 14. This period is also designated for obtaining the terms and conditions booklet and submitting participation applications. Applications can be submitted through the Tenders, Procurement, and Warehouses Department's Tenders Section, located in the National Assembly building on Arabian Gulf Street, Gate No. 4.

The announcement explained that tender documents can be obtained for a non-refundable fee of KD 30, payable in cash or via KNET at the National Assembly's General Secretariat. Upon receipt, bidders must sign a declara-

tion and undertaking to adhere to the specified deadline for submitting their bids to the Central Sales Committee at the Ministry of Finance.

The ministry has set Wednesday, January 21 for opening the envelopes and holding the auction session. The session will take place at the Ministries Complex Block 12, Third Floor at the General Storage Affairs Department.

The ministry explained that bidders must be Kuwaiti institutions or companies registered in the Commercial Register and with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Foreign bidders are eligible if they have a Kuwaiti partner or agent with a notarized contract. Required documents include a copy of the certificate of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), a copy of the company license, and a letter of authorization approved by KCCI. All documents must be valid. Kuwaiti individuals are also permitted to participate in the auction.



## JANUARY



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KUNA photos  
Undersecretary of Islamic Affairs at the opening of the 'My Craft...By My Hands 5' exhibition.

## 'My Craft...By My Hands 5' expo highlights inmate rehabilitation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12, (KUNA): Undersecretary of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dr. Eng. Suleiman Al-Suwailem, affirmed the ministry's commitment, in cooperation and partnership with the Ministry of Interior, to caring for inmates of correctional and rehabilitation centers and contributing to their reintegration into society.

This came in a press statement by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs on Monday following the inauguration of the "My Craft...By My Hands (5)" exhibition at the Capital Mall Complex.

Al-Suwailem added that the exhibition highlights the ministry's experience in rehabilitating inmates through its vocational training programs and rehabilitation activities, according to an approved plan designed to achieve the objectives for which these programs were established.

He noted that engaging inmates in producing handicrafts and artisanal products is an innovative idea to utilize their energy and creativity in productive ways, enhancing their skills and capabilities.

The success of this approach is reflected in the fact that the exhibition has reached its fifth edition this year.

Al-Suwailem expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Directorate of Correctional Institutions, for its significant efforts and prominent role in serving the inmates in cooperation with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs over the past years.

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### News in Brief

**MoCI launches contact update service:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched a new service via the Sahel Business application that enables business owners to register and update the mobile phone number and email address linked to their commercial license, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry affirmed that this service will ensure business owners receive notifications directly and efficiently.

**Power outage hits Salmiya:** The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy reported that the Salmiya (BX) main power transformer plant went out of service, causing power outages in some areas of Salmiya, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry confirmed that emergency teams are on site, working to restore electricity as quickly as possible.

It affirmed that it is closely monitoring the situation to ensure a safe and complete restoration of service.





KFAED representatives at the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations and Customer Service.



KFAED photos  
Officials and attendees stand during the opening session of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations and Customer Service.

Enhancing service quality through smart tech

KFAED joins in Int’l Conference on AI

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) participated in the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations and Customer Service, organized by the Kuwait Public Relations Association and held at the Kuwait National Library.

The Fund’s participation reflects its commitment to keeping pace with rapid technological developments, and supporting national initiatives aimed at promoting digital transformation and institutional innovation, as well as sharing expertise on the latest applications of artificial intelligence in public relations and customer service.

Kuwait Fund took part in the third session, titled “Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Public Relations and Customer Service,” where the discussion highlighted the role of smart technologies in developing institutional workflows and enhancing service quality.

In this context, The Fund empha-

sized, during the session, that the future of public relations depends on balancing smart technologies with the human touch, recognizing the importance of direct communication and effectively representing the institution to its audience.

It also pointed out that the sector is expected to undergo transformations in job roles, with new positions requiring advanced digital skills, alongside the importance of investing in staff training and improving communication mechanisms to ensure a unified institutional message.

The Fund also noted that using pre-designed visual layouts in event planning helped improve preparedness, reduce errors, and achieve higher efficiency in terms of time and cost.

The conference served as a specialized platform that brought together a distinguished group of leaders, experts, and specialists to discuss the latest trends in public relations, media, and artificial intelligence, and to review successful experiences in leveraging smart technologies for the benefit of institutions and society.

Information ministry embraces AI to elevate communication and service

Digital shift shapes Kuwait's PR landscape

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Dr. Nasser Al-Muhaisen, affirmed that digital transformation has become a major pillar for enhancing administrative work, particularly in public relations departments in governmental and private institutions.**

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations and Customer Service, where he represented the event’s patron, Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Dr. Al-Muhaisen de-



Public Relations Consultant and Member of the Advisory Committee for the Kuwait Public Relations and Customer Service Award, Khaled Al-Khalifi, delivers a speech.

scribed the conference as a significant event based on the principle of institutional partnership, which the ministry actively promotes as part of its strategy.

He highlighted the Ministry of Information’s support for events that

contribute to the development of civil society organizations and the private sector.

Al-Muhaisen indicated that the conference tackled a number of important topics, including the impact of artificial intelligence on decision-making, corporate communication, and the evolution of public relations, while also emphasizing the need to keep pace with rapid technological developments.

For his part, Jamal Al-Nasrallah, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Relations Association, highlighted that artificial intelligence has become a vital factor in the success of public relations and customer service departments.

He noted that the conference provided an important platform for exchanging expertise, showcasing successful experiences, and enhancing the skills of professionals in these fields.

Al-Nasrallah congratulated

the winners of the Kuwait Public Relations and Customer Service Award, describing it as a stimulus for creativity, excellence, and innovation.

He also extended his congratulations to the association’s founding board, its members, and all public relations professionals on the occasion of the association’s 20th anniversary, commending the efforts of successive boards in advancing the profession.

In addition, Khaled Al-Khalifi, public relations and customer service consultant and member of the award’s judging advisory committee, noted that this year’s award saw strong competition among public and private sector institutions, as well as among individual participants.

At the conclusion of the conference, several organizations and individuals were honored in recognition of their outstanding contributions.

Following are the winners of the Kuwait Public Relations and Customer Service Award:

- Best Influential Figure in Community Awareness - Dr. Ibrahim Al-Rashdan, Consultant Cardiologist and Interventional Cardiologist
- Best Influential Company in Community Awareness - Talabat Kuwait
- Best Service Application - The unified government application for electronic services “Sahel”
- Best Public Relations Campaign - Central Bank of Kuwait’s Let’s Be Aware” Banking Awareness Campaign
- Best Public Relations Department in the Government Sector - Kuwait Fire Force
- Best Customer Service Department in the Government Sector - Public Authority for Housing Welfare
- Best Public Relations Department in the Private Sector - Zain Kuwait
- Best Customer Service Department in the Private Sector - Boubyan Bank
- Best Personality in Media and Public Relations - Brigadier General Nasser Abu Salib, Ministry of Interior Spokesperson



KUNA photos  
Organizations and companies that have won the Kuwait Public Relations and Customer Service Award.

PAM, Interior

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has launched a new package of online services through its As’hal portal in order to save companies time and effort by eliminating the need to visit the relevant departments, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The new services include:

- Issuing a work permit (transfer from the same sponsor - Article 24)
- Renewing a partner’s work permit
- Issuing a work permit (status amendment)
- Transferring from employee to partner
- Transferring from partner to employee
- Issuing a work permit (transfer from an entry visa)

PAM explained that these e-services can be easily accessed through the following steps:

1. Access the As’hal portal for company services
2. Select the desired service and fill in the required information
3. Attach the necessary documents and complete the application

Kuwait strengthens

with the best international medical standards.

This move comes within the framework of unifying technical references and treatment protocols, strengthening governance and coordination among health-care facilities in various specialties, raising the quality of health services through standardized procedures, and supporting institutional technical decision-making.

The appointed heads and rapporteurs of the technical councils in various specialties are as follows:

1. Internal Medicine and Psychiatry Departments and their branches
  - Dr. Turki Muaid Faraj Al-Otaibi as Head
  - Dr. Aziz Rakhees Sayer Al-Dhafeeri as Rapporteur
2. Obstetrics and Gynecology Departments
  - Dr. Amal Khader Abdullah Ayed as Head
  - Dr. Nada Ibrahim Makki Ibrahim as Rapporteur
3. Pediatrics and Neonatology Departments
  - Dr. Wafaa Abdul Mohsen Hamad Al-Atceqi as Head
  - Dr. Salman Nayef Al-Tawala as Rapporteur
4. Orthopedic Surgery Departments
  - Dr. Mubarak Amer Ghanem Al-Omairi as Head
  - Dr. Ahmed Lafi Dahilan Al-Harbi as Rapporteur
5. Otolaryngology Departments Council
  - Dr. Hussein Jasser Khalaf Al-Shammari as Head
  - Dr. Mutlaq Khalid Ali Al-Sayhan as Rapporteur
6. Ophthalmology Departments Council

- Dr. Ahmed Fahd Abdul Aziz Al-Foudari as Head
  - Dr. Hanan Ibrahim Abdul Malik Al-Saleh as Rapporteur
7. General Surgery and Specialized Surgery Departments Council
    - Dr. Suleiman Mousa Mansour Al-Muzaidi as Head
    - Dr. Mohammed Ali Mohammed Al-Jasmi as Rapporteur
  8. Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Departments Council
    - Dr. Abdul Rahman Taleb Sayed Abdul Rahman Al-Rifai as Head
    - Dr. Huda Abdul Razzaq Al-Foudari as Rapporteur
  9. Dermatology and Venereology Departments Council
    - Dr. Atfal Khalid Saad Al-Lafi as Head
    - Dr. Mohammed Faihan Al-Otaibi as Rapporteur
  10. Radiology Departments Council
    - Dr. Buthaina Mohammed Ahmed Al-Kandari as Head
    - Dr. Maryam Ghloum Mohammed Ali Rais as Rapporteur
  11. Nuclear Medicine Departments Council
    - Dr. Abdul Redha Abbas Ismail as Head
    - Dr. Iman Shaker Nasrallah Al-Awadi as Rapporteur
  12. Laboratory Departments Council
    - Dr. Ibtisam Sadiq Khalaf Ahmed Al-Juma as Head
    - Dr. Fajer Khalid Al-Assaf as Rapporteur
  13. Emergency Departments Council
    - Dr. Fatima Mohammed Abdulrahman Al-Kandari as Head
    - Dr. Nawaf Fahad Sultan Dahab as Rapporteur
  14. Physical Medicine Departments Council
    - Dr. Jamal Mohammed Hassan Jamal as Head
    - Dr. Ayoub Baqer Ali Abbas Baqer as Rapporteur
  15. Specialized Dental Council:
    - Dr. Amer Zaal Saleh Hamid as Head
    - Dr. Fatima Noman Al-Rais as Rapporteur.

Kuwait anti-drug

He urged families to monitor their children and report any suspicious behavior related to drug use by calling the Hotline No. 1884141, emphasizing that DCGD is ready to respond to reports 24/7.

Brigadier General Qabazard stated during the symposium that the State of Kuwait has taken a significant legislative step by implementing the new law to combat drugs and psychotropic substances, which has had a clear and tangible impact on strengthening deterrence and reducing the spread of drugs, especially chemically manufactured ones.

He stressed that the law has also supported security efforts and provided the relevant authorities with

more effective legal tools to deal with these crimes.

Brigadier General Qabazard said, “Chemically manufactured drugs are among the most dangerous types due to their rapid spread, the ability to alter their composition and names, and their direct targeting of young people.”

He revealed that the department’s efforts in 2025 led to the seizure of 3,039 cases and the arrest of 3,871 suspects, in addition to confiscating approximately three tons of various narcotics and 10 million psychotropic pills, and deporting 1,197 individuals from the country.

Brigadier General Qabazard said, “Today, we are facing organized criminal networks that use modern and sophisticated methods in manufacturing, smuggling, and distribution, taking advantage of advanced technologies and communication channels.”

He emphasized that DCGD maintains a constant state of maximum readiness, achieved by enhancing the capabilities of security personnel, improving awareness and training levels, and decisively uncovering and confronting these criminal activities.

Meanwhile, the President of the Kuwait Chemical Society Haif Al-Hajraf said, “Modern toxins are no less dangerous than traditional drugs. In fact, they often surpass them in their impact and destructiveness on the individual, the family, and society.”

He explained that the danger of manufactured drugs lies not only in their health, psychological, and social effects but also in the ease with which they can be produced, distributed, and circulated among young people.

Furthermore, Dr. Ali Khurabet, General Manager of Eco Environmental Consulting Company, stressed that the company’s sponsorship of such seminars reflects both its consulting role and its commitment to social responsibility.

He highlighted that the company is dedicated to allocating a portion of its profits to support conferences and programs that benefit the community.

In addition, Major Abdulaziz Al-Lanqawi discussed the role of DCGD in combating this scourge, as well as the ongoing awareness campaigns conducted by the Ministry of Interior on the dangers of drugs to society.

He emphasized the importance of reporting drug users and assured that all reports are handled with complete confidentiality until the individuals recover and reintegrate into society.

Brace for

The maximum temperatures during this period will range between 17 and 20 degrees Celsius, and the minimum temperatures will range between 4 and 11 degrees Celsius, making the weather generally mild to cool during the day and cold to very cold at night.

24-carat

KD 40.810 per gram.

Silver stabilized at approximately KD 873 per kilogram.

Globally, gold closed last week at \$4,510 per ounce, posting weekly gains of over four percent, marking one of its strongest weeks since the start of the year.

The rise was driven by weak U.S. economic data and escalating geopolitical risks, which redirected investors toward safe-haven assets, with gold at the forefront.

February gold futures rose about 0.9 percent on Friday, equivalent to more than \$40, closing near \$4,515 per ounce. Prices touched \$4,517 during trading, approaching the all-time high of \$4,549, signaling strong investment demand despite the U.S. dollar remaining relatively strong.

The increase followed the release of the U.S. December jobs report, which showed only about 50,000 new positions added, far below expectations and below the revised previous month’s figures. The unemployment rate fell to 4.2 percent, but concerns about slowing employment growth fueled speculation that the Federal Reserve may cut interest rates in 2026 to support economic growth.

Market expectations currently reflect a potential interest rate reduction of 50 to 56 basis points this year, providing strong support for gold as a non-yielding asset.

Meanwhile, housing indicators also showed continued slowdown, with building permits and housing starts declining compared with previous months, reflecting pressure on the real estate sector tied to interest rates.

Furthermore, the preliminary University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index came in better than expected, though rising medium-term inflation expectations limited the positive impact and maintained concerns over U.S. household purchasing power.

In bond markets, U.S. 10-year Treasury yields remained near four percent, yet strong gold buying persisted amid safe-haven demand.

Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, Venezuela, and Eastern Europe, along with renewed U.S. measures against Iran and Venezuela, further supported precious metal prices.

Government demand also played a major role. The Chinese Central Bank continued its gold-buying program for the 14th consecutive month, reducing global supply and strengthening the upward price trend.

Technically, gold remains in a bullish trend as long as prices stay above \$4,500 per ounce, with momentum indicators nearing new highs, opening the way to test the all-time high of \$4,549 in the coming period.

In addition, silver’s performance was more volatile but stronger in percentage terms, narrowing the gap with gold and signaling growing in-

vestor interest in the metal relative to gold.

Markets are now focusing on upcoming U.S. economic data, including the Consumer Price Index, Producer Price Index, and retail sales, which will shed light on inflation trends and consumer spending. Investors are also watching weekly jobless claims, regional manufacturing indicators, and Federal Reserve officials’ speeches for signals on the timing and scale of interest rate cuts.

Economic data from Europe, China, and Japan, including industrial production, GDP, and trade balances, are also expected to influence global risk appetite and the direction of gold in the near term.

The report concluded that gold’s strong performance at the start of 2026 reinforces its role as the most important hedging tool amid economic volatility and rising geopolitical uncertainty, cementing its importance in investors’ and institutions’ portfolios worldwide.

KPC expands

The global marketing sector has faced numerous challenges due to a competitive international environment and the growing supply of petroleum derivatives. However, thanks to the sector’s flexibility, KPC has successfully confronted global competition with a sophisticated and advanced approach that aligns with its strategic ambitions.

Meanwhile, an official document revealed that KPC’s global marketing sector achieved remarkable growth last year, particularly following the commissioning of the Clean Fuels Project and the Al-Zour Refinery, which facilitated the signing of new contracts and strengthened the corporation’s market position.

Regarding fuel oil, KPC signed two contracts with Qatar Energy UK Ltd to supply approximately 2.7 million metric tons, generating revenues exceeding \$12 million.

A short-term contract was also signed with Glencore Energy UK Ltd at a price above the market average. Also, a contract was signed with OQ Trading to supply products to the Duqm Refinery, enhancing value addition by refining crude oil into higher-value products.

According to the document, Kuwaiti crude oil represented the largest share of KPC’s exports in the first quarter of last year, accounting for 86.70 percent.

Exports of Khafji crude, which is a heavy crude oil extracted from the Khafji offshore field in the neutral zone shared by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, accounted for 9.10 percent.

The Kuwaiti light crude represented 2.80 percent of total exports. Kuwaiti heavy crude accounted for 1.10 percent. Also, Eocene crude represented 0.30 percent of exports.

Among petroleum products, gas oil ranked first at 27 percent, followed by kerosene at 22.80 percent, and naphtha at 16.50 percent. Fuel oil came fourth at 16.60 percent, propane fifth at 6.20 percent, butane seventh at 4.90 percent, sulfur eighth at 3.80 percent, and petroleum coke ranked last.

The Higher Purchasing Committee for KPC and its subsidiaries announced, through the official gazette, the awarding of a comprehensive contract for the dry-docking and maintenance of six tankers, requested by the Kuwait Oil Tanker Company. The contract was valued at US\$13,547,765, equivalent to KWD 4.134 million.

First Deputy

The government therefore has a responsibility to actively review and take into consideration all public commentary to fully understand the situation and the demands of its citizens.

A real commitment to advancing Kuwait, which is a nation that has lagged behind due to years of stagnation, will ensure that these efforts finally produce the desired results.

Amir, Crown

In turn, His Highness the Crown Prince entrusted the Bahraini Minister with his greetings to King Hamad, along with his best wishes for lasting health and wellness.

The meeting was attended by Head of His Highness the Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Director General of the Coast Guard Major General (Naval) Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef Al-Sabah and other officials.

Earlier, Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah received Sunday Bahraini Minister of Interior Lieut. Gen. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, upon his arrival at Kuwait International Airport on an official visit reflecting the depth of the fraternal relations between the two brotherly countries.

The Ministry of Interior said in a press statement that Sheikh Fahad Al-Sabah expressed his welcome to the Bahraini Minister of Interior in his second country, Kuwait, wishing him a pleasant stay.

The statement noted that the visit comes within the framework of strengthening ties of joint cooperation and security coordination between Kuwait and Bahrain, reaffirming the strength of bilateral relations in various fields.

Several security leaders were present to receive the Bahraini Minister of Interior upon his arrival in the country.



# Lawsuits by Trump allies could shape how the 2030 census is done and who will be counted

ORLANDO, Fla., Jan 12, (AP): The next U.S. census is four years away, but two lawsuits playing out this year could affect how it will be done and who will be counted.

Allies of President Donald Trump are behind the federal lawsuits challenging various aspects of the once-a-decade count by the U.S. Census Bureau, which is used to determine congressional representation and how much federal aid flows to the states.

The challenges align with parts of Trump’s agenda even as the Republican administration must defend the agency in court.

A Democratic law firm is representing efforts to intervene in both cases because of concerns over whether the U.S. Justice Department will defend the bureau vigorously. There have been no indications so far that government attorneys are doing otherwise, and department lawyers have asked that one of the cases be dismissed.

As the challenges work their way through the courts, the Census Bureau is pushing ahead with its planning for the 2030 count and intends to conduct practice runs in six locations this year.

America First Legal, co-founded by Stephen Miller, Trump’s deputy chief of staff, is leading one of the lawsuits, filed in Florida. It contests methods the bureau has used to protect participants’ privacy and to ensure that people in group-living facilities such as dorms and nursing homes will be counted.

The lawsuit’s intent is to prevent those methods from being used in the 2030 census and to have 2020 figures revised.

“This case is about stopping illegal methods that undermine equal representation and ensuring the next census complies with the Constitution,” Gene Hamilton, president of America First Legal, said in a statement.

The other lawsuit was filed in federal court in Louisiana by four Republican state attorneys general and the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which opposes illegal immigration and supports reduced legal immigration. The lawsuit seeks to exclude people who are in the United States illegally from being counted in the numbers for redrawing congressional districts.

In both cases, outside groups represented by the Democratic-aligned Elias Law Group have sought to intervene over concerns that the Justice Department



People walk past posters encouraging participation in the 2020 Census in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, April 1, 2020. (AP)

would reach friendly settlements with the challengers.

In the Florida case, a judge allowed a retirees’ association and two university students to join the defense as intervenors. Justice Department lawyers have asked that the case be dismissed.

In the Louisiana lawsuit, government lawyers said three League of Women Voters chapters and Santa Clara County in California had not shown any proof that department attorneys would do anything other than robustly defend the Census Bureau. A judge has yet to rule on their request to join the case.

A spokesman for the Elias Law Group, Blake McCarren, referred in an email to its motion to dismiss the Florida case, warning of “a needlessly chaotic and disruptive effect upon the electoral process” if the con-

servative legal group were to prevail and all 50 states had to redraw their political districts.

The goals of the lawsuits, particularly the Louisiana case, align with core parts of Trump’s agenda, although the 2030 census will be conducted under a different president because his second term will end in January 2029.

During his first term, for the 2020 census, Trump tried to prevent those who are in the U.S. illegally from being used in the apportionment numbers, which determine how many congressional representatives and Electoral College votes each state receives. He also sought to have citizenship data collected through administrative records.

A Republican redistricting expert had written that us-

ing only the citizen voting-age population, rather than the total population, for the purpose of redrawing congressional and state legislative districts could be advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.

Both Trump orders were rescinded when Democratic President Joe Biden arrived at the White House in January 2021, before the 2020 census figures were released by the Census Bureau. The first Trump administration also attempted to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census questionnaire, a move that was blocked by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In August, Trump instructed the U.S. Commerce Department to change the way the Census Bureau collects data, seeking to exclude immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally. Neither officials at the White House nor the Commerce Department, which oversees the Census Bureau, explained what actions were being taken in response to the president’s social media post.

Congressional Republicans have introduced legislation to exclude noncitizens from the apportionment process. That could shrink the head count in both red and blue states because the states with the most people in the U.S. illegally include California, Texas, Florida and New York, according to the Pew Research Center.

The Constitution’s 14th Amendment says “the whole number of persons in each state” should be counted for the numbers used for apportionment. The numbers also guide the distribution of \$2.8 trillion in federal dollars to the states for roads, health care and other programs.

The Louisiana lawsuit was filed at the end of the Biden administration and put on hold in March at the request of the Commerce Department. Justice Department lawyers representing the Cabinet agency said they needed time to consider the position of the new leadership in the second Trump administration. The state attorneys general in December asked for that hold to be lifted.

So far, in the court record, there is nothing to suggest that those government attorneys have done anything to undermine the Census Bureau’s defense in both cases, despite the intervenors’ concerns.

In the Louisiana case, Justice Department lawyers argued against lifting the hold, saying the Census Bureau was in the middle of planning for the 2030 census: “At this stage of such preparations, lifting the stay is not appropriate.”



Danish military forces participate in an exercise with hundreds of troops from several European NATO members in the Arctic Ocean in Nuuk, Greenland, Sept. 15, 2025. (AP)

## Greenland tensions spark talks

## Britain discusses Arctic security with NATO

LONDON, Jan 12, (AP): Britain is discussing with NATO allies how it can help beef up security in the Arctic to counter threats from Russia and China, a government minister said Sunday.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said the talks are “business as usual” rather than a response to recent threats by U.S. President Donald Trump to take over Greenland.

Trump has said that he would like to make a deal to acquire Greenland, a semi-autonomous region of NATO ally Denmark, to prevent Russia or China from taking it over. He said Sunday night that making a deal for Greenland would be “easier” and insisted the U.S. needed to acquire it. “One way or the other, we’re going to have Greenland,” he told reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew back to Washington.

Greenland, with a population of around 57,000, is defended by Denmark, whose military is dwarfed by that of the U.S., which has a military base on the island. Denmark’s prime

minister has warned that a takeover would threaten NATO.

Trump dismissed that idea on Sunday, proclaiming himself the savior of NATO for encouraging member countries to boost their defense spending.

“I like NATO,” he said.

He then questioned “whether or not, if we needed NATO, would they be there for us? I’m not sure they would.”

In fact, NATO’s Article 5 common defense guarantee, which treats an attack on one member as an attack on them all, has only been invoked once, in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States, leading to NATO’s operation in Afghanistan.

Tensions have grown between the U.S. and Denmark since the Trump administration renewed its warnings against Greenland. Jesper Møller Sørensen, Denmark’s ambassador to the U.S., fired back at newly tapped U.S. Greenland envoy Jeff Landry, who said in a social media post that

the “U.S. defended Greenland’s sovereignty during (World War II) when Denmark couldn’t.”

Sørensen responded that Denmark has always stood alongside the U.S., particularly after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, and that only Greenlanders should decide their future.

“Let’s continue to address security challenges in the Arctic as partners & allies,” Sørensen wrote. Danish officials are meeting with Secretary of State Marco Rubio this week.

The U.K. agrees with Trump that Russia and China are increasingly becoming more competitive in the Arctic Circle, Alexander said.

“Whilst we haven’t seen the appalling consequences in that part of the world that we’ve seen in Ukraine, it is really important that we do everything that we can with all of our NATO allies to ensure that we have an effective deterrent in that part of the globe against (Russian President Vladimir) Putin,” Alexander told the BBC.

## Minneapolis on edge as agents swarm streets

## ICE raids shake Minnesota’s Twin Cities

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan 12, (AP): Federal agents carrying out immigration arrests in Minnesota’s Twin Cities region already shaken by the fatal shooting of a woman rammed the door of one home Sunday and pushed their way inside, part of what the Department of Homeland Security has called its largest enforcement operation ever.

In a dramatic scene similar to those playing out across Minneapolis, agents captured a man in the home just minutes after pepper spraying protesters outside who had confronted the heavily armed federal agents. Along the residential street, protesters honked car horns, banged on drums and blew whistles in attempts to disrupt the operation.

Video of the clash taken by The Associated Press showed some agents pushing back protesters while a distraught woman later emerged from the house with a document that federal agents presented to arrest the man. Signed by an immigration officer, the document - unlike a warrant signed by a judge - does not authorize forced entry into a private residence. A warrant authorized by an immigration officer only authorizes arrest in a public area.

Immigrant advocacy groups have conducted extensive “know-your-rights” campaigns urging people not to open their doors unless agents have a court order signed by a judge.

But within minutes of ramming the door in a neighborhood filled with single-family homes, the handcuffed man was led away.

More than 2,000 immigration arrests have been made in Minnesota since the enforcement operation began at the beginning of December, said Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem told Fox News on Sunday that the administration would send additional federal agents to Minnesota to protect immigration officers and continue enforcement.

The Twin Cities - the latest target in President Donald Trump’s immigration enforcement campaign - is bracing for what is next after 37-year-old Renee Good was shot and killed by an immigration officer on Wednesday.

“We’re seeing a lot of immigration



A man is arrested by federal immigration officers Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, in Minneapolis. (AP)



Border Patrol agents arrest an activist, Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, in St. Paul, Minn. (AP)

enforcement across Minneapolis and across the state, federal agents just swarming around our neighborhoods,” said Jason Chavez, a Minneapolis city councilmember. “They’ve definitely been out here.”

Chavez, the son of Mexican immigrants who represents an area with a growing immigrant population, said he is closely monitoring information from chat groups about where residents are seeing agents operating.

People holding whistles positioned themselves in freezing temperatures on street corners Sunday in the neighborhood where Good was killed, watching for any signs of federal agents.

More than 20,000 people have taken part in a variety of trainings to become “observers” of enforcement activities in Minnesota since the 2024 election, said Luis Argueta, a spokesperson for Unidos MN, a local human rights organization.

## Europe

**Ziobro granted asylum:** A former Polish justice minister who faces prosecution in his homeland over alleged abuse of power said Monday that he has been granted asylum in Hungary.

Zbigniew Ziobro was a key figure in the government led by the nationalist conservative Law and Justice party which ran Poland between 2015 and 2023. That administration established political control over key judicial institutions by stacking higher courts with friendly judges, and punishing its critics with disciplinary action or assignments to far-away locations.

Current Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s government came to power more than two years ago with ambitions to roll back the changes, but efforts to undo them have been blocked by two successive presidents aligned with the national right.

In October, prosecutors requested the lifting of Ziobro’s parliamentary immunity to press charges against him. They allege among other things that Ziobro misused a fund for victims of violence, including for the purchase of Israeli Pegasus surveillance software. (AP)

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**Freeze strands tourists:** Thousands of tourists were stranded in northern Finland on Sunday after flights at Kittilä airport were canceled due to severe cold.

The temperature at the airport dropped to minus 37 degrees Celsius (minus 34.6 degrees Fahrenheit) on Sunday morning, after several days of similar frigid weather, making de-icing of aircraft and other operations difficult, Finland’s national public broadcaster Yle reported.

The deep freeze is expected to continue in Kittilä, which is located in Finnish Lapland in the sparsely populated north, on Monday, when the Finnish Meteorological Institute predicts temperatures of almost minus 40 C (minus 40 F).

Finnish are generally used to frosty winter temperatures but this year’s cold, which has affected wide regions of northern, central and eastern Europe, is more severe than in other years. (AP)

## Thousands of nurses strike in New York

NEW YORK, Jan 12, (AP): Thousands of nurses in three hospital systems in New York City went on strike Monday after negotiations through the weekend failed to yield breakthroughs in their contract disputes.

The strike was taking place at The Mount Sinai Hospital and two of its satellite campuses, with picket lines forming. The other affected hospitals are New York-Presbyterian and Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx.

About 15,000 nurses are involved in the strike, according to New York State Nurses Association.

The strike, which comes during a severe flu season, could potentially force the hospitals to transfer patients, cancel procedures or divert ambulances. It could also put a strain on city hospitals not involved in the contract dispute, as patients avoid the medical centers hit by the strike.

The hospitals involved have been hiring temporary nurses to try and fill the labor gap during the walkout, and said in a statement during negotiations that they would “do whatever is nec-

essary to minimize disruptions.” Montefiore posted a message assuring patients that appointments would be kept.

The work stoppage is occurring at multiple hospitals simultaneously, but

each medical center is negotiating with the union independently. Several other hospitals across the city and in its suburbs reached deals in recent days to avert a possible strike.



Nurses strike outside Mount Sinai West Hospital, Monday, Jan. 12, 2026, in New York. (AP)

The nurses’ demands vary by hospital, but the major issues include staffing levels and workplace safety. The union says hospitals have given nurses unmanageable workloads.

Nurses also want better security measures in the workplace, citing incidents like an incident last week, when a man with a sharp object barricaded himself in a Brooklyn hospital room and was then killed by police.

The union also wants limitations on hospitals’ use of artificial intelligence.

The nonprofit hospitals involved in the negotiations say they’ve been working to improve staffing levels, but say the union’s demands overall are too costly.

Nurses voted to authorize the strike last month.

Both New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and Mayor Zohran Mamdani had expressed concern about the possibility of the strike. As the strike deadline neared, Mamdani urged both sides to keep negotiating and reach a deal that “both honors our nurses and keeps our hospitals open.”





U.S. Ambassador-designate to India Sergio Gor speaks to embassy officials and media upon his arrival at the embassy in New Delhi, India, Monday, Jan. 12, 2026. (AP)

Gor addresses tensions

## New US ambassador seeks India ties reset

NEW DELHI, Jan 12, (AP): The U.S. and India are actively engaged on a bilateral trade agreement to deepen economic and strategic partnership, the U.S. ambassador-designate to New Delhi said Monday.

Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, India has emerged as the second biggest buyer of Russian crude after China, upsetting the Trump administration, which criticized the purchases as helping fuel Moscow’s war machine.

In August, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to place an additional 25% tariff on India for its purchases of Russian oil, bringing the combined tariffs imposed by the United States to a steep 50%.

A close aide of Trump, the new ambassador-designate, Sergio Gor, said the next call between the two sides on trade-related matters was scheduled Tuesday.

“Real friends can disagree, but always resolve their differences in the end,” Gor said in an address on his first day in office at the U.S. Embassy. “Remember India is the world’s largest nation so it’s not an easy task to get this across the finish line, but we are determined to get there.”

Gor, who is also the U.S. special envoy to South and Central Asia, announced that India will be formally invited next month to join a U.S.-led strategic initiative called Pax Silica as

part of a broader partnership.

The initiative aims to build a secure silicon supply chain, from critical minerals and energy inputs to advanced manufacturing, semiconductors and artificial intelligence. Nations that joined it last month include Japan, South Korea, U.K. and Israel.

Gor’s comments on bolstering trade and economic ties with India highlights a renewed push to anchor the partnership at a time the relationship has strained following Washington’s mounting pressure on New Delhi to stop buying discounted Russian crude oil.

India and the U.S. have been negotiating a bilateral trade agreement since early last year. They hoped to conclude the first tranche by the fall of 2025, but it hasn’t come through mainly due to differences over sourcing of Russian oil, and Indian negotiators facing pressure to protect small farmers and domestic industries.

Gor said trade was an important aspect of the relationship, but the countries will also continue to work closely in areas such as security, counter terrorism, energy, technology, education and health.

In the face of steep U.S. tariffs, India has in recent months accelerated a push to finalize several free trade agreements. It signed one with Oman last month and concluded talks with New Zealand.



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, left, looks on as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi flies a kite during the inauguration of International Kite Festival in Ahmedabad, India, Monday, Jan. 12, 2026. (AP)

## India, Germany finalize defense and trade pacts

NEW DELHI, Jan 12, (AP): Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz met on Monday in western Gujarat state to push for deeper economic and security ties between the South Asian nation and Europe’s largest economy.

Modi and Merz held talks in the city of Gandhinagar, where the two countries signed various agreements to enhance cooperation in the defense sector, skill development, health and education, as both nations seek to reduce dependence on China and bolster economic ties.

After the bilateral talks, Modi noted that Germany is India’s most important trading partner in the European Union and said both leaders were seeking to expand those ties.

He said the two countries are pursuing new projects in areas such as climate action, energy and mining of rare earth elements, and have also agreed on a road map to boost cooperation between their defense

industries for joint development and production.

“We want to elevate the relations between India and Germany to an even higher level,” Modi said.

Germany has not traditionally had close defense ties with India, but the two sides have been trying to boost cooperation in the sector. Germany’s Thysenkrupp is expected to partner with Indian firms to build six advanced conventional submarines in India, part of New Delhi’s ongoing efforts to modernize its naval capabilities.

Merz said India and Germany share “tremendous economic potential,” and the two countries are working together to strengthen ties in the field of security policy and defense cooperation.

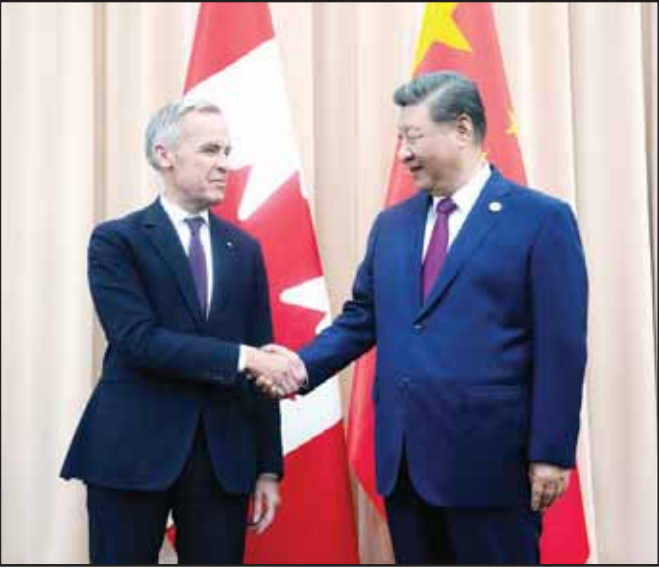
“India is a desired partner, a partner of choice for Germany,” Merz said, according to a live official translation. He added that negotiations on a free trade agreement between India and the EU need to be concluded to fully realize the potential of economic ties

between the two countries.

The two sides also signed an agreement that makes it easier for Indians to work in Germany’s health care sector.

Merz’s visit to India - also his first to an Asian country since he took office last year - comes ahead of a planned India-EU summit later this month, where leaders hope to make progress on a long-pending free trade agreement. India hopes to deepen economic engagement with Europe in the face of U.S. tariff rates of 50%.

During his visit, Merz toured the Sabarmati Ashram, once home to independence leader Mahatma Gandhi, and attended the International Kite Festival at the Sabarmati riverfront. Modi and Merz flew kites during the event. Merz, who is accompanied by a large business delegation, is later scheduled to travel to southern Bengaluru city to meet Indian and German business and technology leaders.



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the start of a meeting in Gyeongju, South Korea, Oct. 31, 2025. (AP)

### Canadian PM to visit China

BEIJING, Jan 12, (Xinhua): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will pay an official visit to China from Jan. 14 to 17 at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Qiang, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson announced on Monday.

At a regular news briefing, Spokesperson Mao Ning said that this visit marks the first trip to China by a Canadian Prime Minister in eight years, and the Chinese side places great emphasis on it.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet with the Canadian prime minister to provide new strategic guidance for further improving and developing China-Canada relations, said Mao.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang and Chairman of China’s National People’s Congress Standing Committee Zhao Leji will hold separate talks



Legislator Nicolas Maduro Guerra, the son of deposed President Nicolas Maduro, is greeted as he arrives at a government-organized evangelical gathering calling for his father’s release after U.S. forces captured him, in Caracas, Venezuela, Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026. (AP)

Rodriguez calls for trust in political leadership

## Venezuela reaffirms fraternal ties with Cuba

CARACAS, Jan 12, (Xinhua): Venezuela on Sunday reiterated its “historic stance” toward Cuba, reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the principles of “fraternity, solidarity, cooperation and complementarity,” despite mounting pressure from Washington for Caracas to isolate the Caribbean nation.

The Venezuelan government released a statement underscoring its support for the free exercise of self-determination and sovereignty of peoples, which it considers fundamental pillars of international relations.

It emphasized its adherence to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and international law, highlighting the longstanding and evolving ties between Venezuela and Cuba.

The Venezuelan government stressed that relations between states should be governed by the principles of non-intervention, sovereign equality

and self-determination and that “political and diplomatic dialogue” is the only viable path to “peacefully resolve disputes of any kind.”

This statement comes amidst heightened pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump, who has urged Venezuela to isolate Cuba by cutting off the flow of fuel and money from the South American country to the island nation.

Elsewhere, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel on Sunday said Cuba is a free, independent and sovereign nation, rejecting U.S. President Donald Trump’s accusations that the island country provided “security services” to Venezuela in exchange for oil.

Diaz-Canel said on X that the United States has “no moral authority to point the finger at Cuba in anything,” adding that the U.S. side turns everything, even human lives, into a business.

The president said that the United States is “hysterical” against the Caribbean nation because of the sovereign

decision of the Cuban people to choose their political model.

“Those who blame the Revolution for the severe economic hardships we suffer should be ashamed and keep quiet,” he said. “Because they know and recognize that they are the result of the draconian measures of extreme asphyxiation that the United States has imposed on us for six decades.”

Cuba does not attack or threaten other countries, said Diaz-Canel, adding that the country is ready to defend itself “to the last drop of blood.”

Meanwhile, the Venezuelan people must trust their political leadership in the face of actions that may seem “hard to understand,” given the current complexity of the Venezuelan political environment, Venezuela’s acting president Delcy Rodriguez said on Sunday.

In a televised address, she also called for national unity, which includes all political and social sectors.

Meeting seeks to stabilize relations

## Japan to host summit with South Korea

TOKYO, Jan 12, (AP): Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi will host South Korean President Lee Jae Myung in her hometown on Tuesday, in a summit meant to stabilize ties between the two sometime-rivals as Japan’s worries about Chinese power in Asia grows.

The meeting is part of a swirl of diplomatic activity in a region with growing tensions. A week ago Lee visited China, where leader Xi Jinping sought to cozy up to Seoul amid tensions between Japan and China after Takaichi said in November that potential Chinese military action against Taiwan, the island democracy Beijing claims as its own, could justify Japanese intervention. Lee’s visit also follows the

capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro by the United States, a mutual ally of Japan and South Korea.

Takaichi and Lee will meet in her hometown of Nara, Japan’s scenic ancient capital.

The talks will be their first full summit and third meeting in less than three months since Takaichi took office, Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said.

At their talks on the sidelines of the APEC summit in Gyeongju, South Korea, in October, Lee reportedly asked Takaichi to meet in Nara. Their meeting will focus on trade and the challenges of China and North Korea.

Japan and South Korea must also figure out how to deal with Trump’s unpredictable diplomacy, and both

countries are under U.S. pressure to increase their defense spending.

During Lee’s meetings in China, Xi called on the two countries to join hands, noting their historical rivalry against Japan in World War II. Lee is expected to maintain a neutral position between Japan and China.

“Given the current strategic environment, strengthening Japan-South Korea relations and reinforcing the Japan-U.S.-South Korea cooperation is more important than ever,” Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told reporters on Friday. “The Japanese and South Korean governments are on the same page about closely communicating to develop our relations stably and in a forward-looking manner.”

Africa

**Sudan gov’t returns to Khartoum:** Sudanese Prime Minister Kamil Idris announced on Sunday the return of his government to the capital Khartoum.

“Today, we return, and the Government of Hope returns to the national capital,” Idris told a gathering in Khartoum after nearly three years of operating from its wartime capital of Port Sudan. He underlined that his government would attach more attention to the improvement of living conditions in the country, mainly healthcare, reconstruction of hospitals and development of educational services. The Sudanese prime minister regarded the move as a “message of reassurance to citizens and a sign of government commitment to working from the heart of the capital”. (KUNA)

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**China vows support to Somalia unity:** Chinese Foreign Minister Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated Sunday that China would consistently support Somalia in safeguarding its national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, also expressed opposition to any attempts by “Somaliland” region to colude with Taiwan authorities to seek independence, the official news agency (Xinhua) reported. (KUNA)

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**Vote counting begins in Benin:** Vote counting began across Benin on Sunday after polling stations closed in the country’s combined legislative and municipal elections.

Polling stations opened nationwide at around 7:00 a.m.

local time (0600 GMT). In line with Benin’s newly enacted Electoral Code, voting lasted 10 hours from the opening of each polling station. In several districts of Cotonou, the economic capital of Benin, and other parts of the country, Xinhua reporters observed that polling staff started counting ballots immediately after voting ended at around 5:00 p.m. local time, before transmitting provisional results to the Independent National Electoral Commission. (Xinhua)



Sudanese Prime Minister Kamil Idris is pictured during a press conference at the Khartoum State Government headquarters, in Khartoum, Sudan, on Jan. 11, 2026. Idris on Sunday announced the return of the government to the capital, Khartoum, for the first time since the outbreak of war on April 15, 2023, after nearly three years of running state affairs from the eastern city of Port Sudan. (Xinhua)



## Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's trading session on a weaker note, with its general index falling 43.36 points, or 0.49 percent, to settle at 8,747.66 points.

Market activity saw the exchange record a total trading volume of 301.5 million shares across 18,465 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 82.6 million (approximately USD 253 million).

# Business

Through its 2025 Sustainability Competition

## KFH steps into a sustainable future by empowering employee innovation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: In line with its commitment to integrating sustainable development goals as a key pillar into its operations, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the launch of the Sustainability Competition 2025 for its employees. The initiative aims to motivate creativity and adopt innovative and applicable ideas that enhance the Bank's performance across economic, environmental, social and governance aspects of sustainability (EESG).

The competition is designed to promote sustainability as a comprehensive institutional approach by actively engaging employees in developing innovative and dynamic solutions that contribute to improving operational efficiency, reducing operating costs, and creating added value for KFH. It also offers participants the opportunity to win a cash prize of up to \$15,000 for the best implementable idea.

The competition is an extension of a series of sustainability-focused programs adopted by KFH. The competition is open to all em-

ployees to submit innovative ideas that include the following:

- Initiatives that enhance the well-being of employees and promote their engagement in the workplace.

- Community initiatives with a tangible and sustainable impact.

- Initiatives to reduce carbon emissions in KFH buildings and improve climate risk management.

Executive Manager Governance and Sustainability at KFH, Mohammad Alarbeed, stated that the competition underscores the Bank's commitment to fostering innovation and creativity among its employees in sustainability. It also reflects KFH's belief that human capital is the primary driver of development and the cornerstone for building an innovative and sustainable work environment.

He added: "In 2025, KFH achieved notable success in reinforcing its leadership in sustainability through the integration of sustainability elements into the Group's strategy



Mohammad Alarbeed

and the adoption of ESG principles in alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These efforts align with the Bank's standing

as the largest bank in Kuwait by market cap, and the world's second-largest Islamic bank. They also reflect KFH's well-established expertise in Islamic finance."

### Advanced rankings

Alarbeed further said: "In recognition of its successful sustainability efforts, KFH achieved MSCI ESG "A" Rating. KFH was included in the included in the FTSE4Good Index for its outstanding performance in ESG practices. The Bank also became the first bank in Kuwait to receive the GSAS Gold Level Sustainability Assessment System Certificate for its Auto Showroom building.

### Prestigious sustainability awards

Further affirming its achievements in sustainability, KFH Group Chief Executive Officer, Khaled Yousef AlShamlan, has been recognized on Forbes Middle East magazine's "The Middle East's Sustainability Leaders 2025" list AlShamlan was ranked as the top CEO in Kuwait and the fifth in the Middle East's banking sector. Addi-

tionally, KFH won the Most Sustainable Projects award for 2025 from Forbes Middle East magazine. KFH also bagged the Sustainability Award – Middle East Level from EMEA Finance. KFH also received the Banking Excellence Award as part of its participation in the Kuwait Builders Summit 2025 (KBS). The award was based on specific criteria including quality, financial solvency, innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility.

### Sustainability report

During 2025, KFH issued its fifth annual Sustainability Report, highlighting the Bank's proactive initiatives in sustainability and social responsibility.

### Carbon footprint report

KFH also released its third Carbon Footprint Report, providing a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impact of its operations. The report supports the Bank's ongoing efforts to monitor and track carbon emissions and further enhance environmental performance.

### Reflecting a holistic comms approach that blends community impact, credibility, & digital agility

## Zain Kuwait wins Best PR Team award in Private Sector

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Zain Kuwait's Corporate Affairs and Relations team has won the award for Best PR Team in the Private Sector at the Kuwait PR and Customer Service Awards, organized by the Kuwait Public Relations Association to honor organizations that have demonstrated outstanding performance in advancing PR and customer service practices and elevating corporate communications standards in line with clear professional foundations.

The honoring took place at a ceremony held at the Kuwait National Library, under the patronage of H.E. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and attended by Dr. Nasser Muhaisen, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Jamal Al-Nasrallah, Chairman of the Kuwait Public Relations Association, alongside a group of PR and media executives and professionals from both the public and private sectors.

This recognition reflects the approach of Zain Kuwait's Corporate Affairs and Relations team, which goes beyond managing communications to leading the brand narrative and translating Zain's strategy into impactful stories and messages that build trust, reinforce Zain's presence as a national brand driving innovation, and create tangible impact in people's lives.

The award recognized the team's excellence in managing a large and diverse portfolio of high-impact initiatives that advance Zain's strategic objectives, from strengthening community partnerships and empowering youth, to accelerating innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems, and expanding media relations and effective internal communications. Across every stream of work, the team consistently delivers high-quality, brand-aligned outputs.

In 2025, the company achieved a series of standout milestones on its journey toward technology leadership and deeper community engagement, through a wide range of initiatives and projects supported by fully integrated media and advertising campaigns.

These included the launch of 5G-Advanced technology, winning 5 global Ookla Speed test awards, and introducing MAX entertainment plans, alongside major community initiatives such as Khaleeji Zain 26, Dawri Zain, the Zain Alshuhoor Ramadan campaign, and the regional Zain Great Idea program for accelerating tech startups, among others.

As part of its commitment to developing the sector and fostering knowledge exchange, Zain also participated as the strategic partner of the Interna-



Dr. Nasser Muhaisen and Jamal Al-Nasrallah present the award to Waleed Al-Khashti and the Zain Corporate Affairs and Relations team.



Al-Khashti during the panel discussion.



Al-Khashti delivers Zain's address during the closing ceremony.

tional AI in PR and Customer Service Conference, which featured a rich program of specialized panel discussions.

During the conference, Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait, took part in a panel titled Digital Transformation in PR and Media, where he highlighted the importance of digital transformation as a decisive factor in strengthening institutional credibility, as well as the need for speed, message consistency, and transparency.

He also discussed the shift from simply "publishing news" to "shaping a narrative" across every touchpoint, from digital platforms to on-ground

experiences and community events, supported by data and monitoring to better understand audience interests and turn insights into smarter communications decisions. In addition, he addressed how AI tools can enhance the readiness of PR and customer service teams in crisis management.

Zain affirmed that this recognition embodies its ongoing commitment to advancing the PR and customer service profession in Kuwait, supporting responsible digital transformation, and reinforcing more professional and transparent communication practices that keep pace with market expectations and the evolving media and technology landscape.

### Reinforces social commitment with new CSR partnership

## Warba Bank signs partnership with KASCO for Ramadan Iftar meals initiative

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Warba Bank today announced it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kuwait Aviation Services Company (KASCO) to supply Iftar meals as part of the Bank's annual Ramadan initiative in which meals are distributed to fasting individuals across various areas in Kuwait.

Attending the signing on behalf of Warba Bank were Director of Public Relations and Corporate Communications, Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi, Executive Director of the Sharia Management, Abdullah Abdul Rahim Fakhro, and Director of Marketing, Saeed Tareq Esbaitah, and on behalf of KASCO Bader Albader and Abdullah Ahmed AlQallaf.

Speaking of the partnership, Abdullah Abdul Rahim Fakhro, Executive Director of the Sharia Management at Warba Bank, said that Warba Bank's annual Iftar initiative reinforces the values of social solidarity as instructed by the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, while also embodying our Bank's mission to promote community sustainability in line with our Islamic identity. Fakhro highlighted that the Bank's leadership and team of volunteering employees will be distributing the Iftar meals, reflecting the Bank's strong social work culture where everyone unites to serve a humane mission, and uphold the values of compassion, cooperation and giving that form an integral part of Warba Bank's identity.

Fakhro added that Warba Bank takes great pride in its Iftar initiative, as it aligns with the values and spirit of the holy month of Ramadan, which calls for compassion, harmony and peace. He cited the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Whoever provides food for a fasting person to break his fast will receive a reward equal to that of the fasting person, without diminishing the fasting person's reward in any way." He affirmed that, since its establishment, Warba Bank has remained committed to engaging with all segments of society through its corporate social responsibility programs.

Mr. Fakhro further emphasized that Warba Bank's leadership extends beyond Islamic banking and financial services to include community service as an integral part of the Bank's mission and identity.

He explained that Warba Bank's volunteer team is unique by the diversity



KASCO x Warba partnership.

of its members, comprising Bank employees, customers as well as members of the executive management and leadership team, all of whom want to actively participate in this charitable initiative. This collective effort reflects Warba's culture of fostering teamwork and unity within the workplace, while also creating a positive environment that strengthens social cohesion and a shared sense of responsibility.

Concluding his remarks, Fakhro stated: "Warba Bank remains committed

to continuously growing its Ramadan social programs year after year, ensuring the delivery of initiatives that align with the spirit and values of the holy month and deepen the Bank's connection with the community. Throughout Ramadan, Warba Bank will continue to offer a range of meaningful social contributions by expanding its humanitarian and social initiatives, reinforcing the values of solidarity and compassion inspired by the principles of Islamic Sharia."

Kuwait Aviation Services Company (KASCO) launched this strategic partnership with Warba Bank as part of its corporate social responsibility commitment, reflecting the Board of Directors' and executive management's dedication to supporting charitable and volunteer initiatives that promote cooperation and social solidarity, and contribute to sustainable development. KASCO is a leading provider of catering and food preparation services, in addition to its core operations in aviation services and aircraft catering as a subsidiary of Kuwait Airways. The company also delivers catering, banquets, event services and meal solutions to a wide range of government entities, as well as public and private sector organizations. KASCO holds several internationally recognized quality and safety certifications, including ISO 17025, ISO 22000, Halal Certification and HACCP for food safety, underscoring its commitment to the highest standards of quality, safety and operational excellence.

Warba Bank is among the banks that have achieved remarkable success in a short period, securing a leading position in Islamic digital banking services. It is also among the local banks with the largest number of shareholders, bringing it closer to all segments of society. This achievement further reinforces the Bank's standing as a trusted financial partner that combines innovation with social responsibility in delivering best-in-class financial products and services.



Implementing a chain of innovative initiatives, lectures, and workshops for all society segments

## NBK maintained its massive efforts to enhance financial literacy in Kuwait throughout 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: In line with its deep commitment to spreading financial literacy and raising awareness in society, National Bank of Kuwait maintained launching a chain of innovative initiatives and awareness campaigns throughout 2025, aiming to instill concepts of digital and financial security, prevent fraud, and improve people’s banking knowledge across different society segments.

**Workshops in Collaboration with “Lee Wa Lakom” Initiative**  
As part of the “Let’s Be Aware” campaign, NBK launched a series of educational workshops in collaboration with the “Lee Wa Lakom” initiative, which addressed the basics of financial literacy, personal budget management, and the importance of dealing with official channels to avoid fraud. These workshops saw remarkable interaction from the participants and contributed to raising their level of financial awareness.

**Awareness Sessions for Government Companies and Entities**  
In 2025, NBK organized awareness sessions for employees of major companies, particularly in the oil sector such as KNPC and KIPIC, in addition to a specialized course for Ministry of Interior employees, focusing on cybersecurity, digital forensics, and methods of combating money laundering and terrorist financing using modern technologies. These initiatives have strengthened the collaborative work between the banking sector and government entities, which aim to protect the Kuwaiti economy.

In line with its keenness to strengthen collaborations with the oil sector institutions and work hand in hand to combat electronic fraud and scams, NBK also organized an awareness lecture on the “Let’s Be Aware” campaign at the headquarters of the Petrochemical Industries Company, to spread banking culture and enhance financial awareness among the company’s employees.

These activities reflect NBK’s continued commitment to spreading financial knowledge and culture among society members, for not only does the “Let’s Be Aware” campaign aim to raise awareness about fraud risks, but also brings attention to highly important topics, including the best ways to benefit from banking services and products, promoting a culture of saving and investment, and other related topics.

**An Innovative Digital Campaign**  
Among NBK’s awareness efforts in 2025 was launching a series of short educational videos across its digital platforms, covering topics such as password strength, two-factor authentication, and the importance of verifying links before entering data. This campaign specifically targeted young people and contributed to raising awareness on methods of protection against electronic fraud, achieving high viewership and interaction rates.

**Financial Literacy in Schools for the Youth**  
Aiming to further promote building a financially and technologically aware generation, NBK’s efforts extended to include school students by organizing workshops in several private and public schools to introduce students to the basics of digital security and the importance of managing money at a young age.  
These workshops saw remarkable interaction through real case studies presented by NBK’s team, who also posed questions to the



NBK Headquarters

- NBK believes that awareness is the first line of defense against fraud.
- The bank is utilizing its digital capabilities to enhance clients’ trust and protect their personal information.
- The commitment of NBK toward building financial literacy is part of its social responsibility.

students to test their understanding. This is because this session aimed to go beyond raising awareness and enable students to be vigilant and proactive in protecting their personal data when using social media sites.

**Awareness is the First Line of Defense**  
NBK believes that awareness is the first line of defense against fraud, so the bank is constantly publishing relevant content through its social media platforms, to protect the interests of customers, enhance their trust, and build a secure banking environment in the backdrop of accelerating developments in technology and AI that brought forth new and more complex fraud techniques.  
The bank is constantly making the utmost efforts to communicate with customers through its digital channels and platforms, which have the largest following among Kuwaiti banks, to raise financial awareness in society and support the efforts of CBK in protecting customers and the economy. NBK also always strives to come up

with new methods to educate the public on how to protect their data and bank accounts.

**Preemptive Digital Fraud Cautioning**  
NBK warned customers against falling victim to suspicious advertisements that use the logos of famous banks and companies to lure victims with advanced and diverse fraudulent methods and steal their money, such as deceiving them with investment opportunities in fake or worthless stocks, or through unlicensed financial investment activities, such as trading in “Forex”, as well as investment opportunities that promise exaggeratedly attractive profits.

Moreover, the bank advised customers to take heed when selecting investments, by giving serious consideration to all details such as the people they invest with, and consulting a neutral party, such as brokers or financial advisors licensed by the investment authority, to ensure they do not fall victim to fraud.

More on being preemptively prepared, NBK also advised customers to follow the instructions and guidelines of banks and CBK bulletins on how to avoid fraudulent messages and hacking banking applications attempts, in addition to paying attention to suspicious transactions, as well as following the principles of online security, not sharing banking data with anyone, and taking all other precautions that would protect the confidentiality of passwords.

NBK also advised using only trusted applications when logging into online banking services and stressed the importance of using official websites and applications when paying bills, such as accessing official service pages through the government’s “Sahl” application and avoiding the use of the Google search engine as it will display many pages similar to government websites. This exposes users to fraud, scams, and theft of their bank accounts simply by clicking on payment links.

The bank also stressed the need for caution and vigilance when making any bill payments to any service provider, emphasizing the importance of verifying that the website used is the official one, and the same applies to online shopping. The security and reliability of the websites of the stores logged into must be checked, making sure that they are protected, encrypted and use the secure https protocol.

Finally, NBK stressed the importance of regularly reviewing bank account activity to identify any unauthorized or suspicious transactions, as unauthorized payments often occur after credit cards, banking or personal information are stolen, or smartphones are hacked through fake applications, also emphasizing the need to change passwords regularly and not using the same passwords for multiple accounts.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key promoter and participant in all CBK’s campaigns and initiatives to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. As one of the leading financial institutions in Kuwait, the bank frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as a wide range of training courses for its employees to enhance their knowledge and expertise in the areas of combating fraud and financial crime, in addition to its presence on all its social media platforms.

## First trading week of 2026: Divergent momentum, data, policy, and geopolitics shape markets

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global markets this week were influenced by a combination of mixed economic data, US policy signals, and ongoing geopolitical developments. In the United States, labour market indicators softened into year-end, as November job openings fell to 7.15 million, the lowest level in over a year, the vacancies-to-unemployed ratio eased to 0.9, and hiring slowed to its weakest pace since mid-2024; manufacturing activity remained in contraction, with the ISM index declining further to 47.9, while services activity strengthened to 54.4, highlighting continuing sectoral divergence. December non-farm payrolls rose by 50K, below expectations, while the unemployment rate edged down to 4.4%; preliminary University of Michigan consumer sentiment and inflation expectations came in at 54.0 and 4.2% respectively. US Treasury yields flattened over the week, with the 2s10s and 5s30s curves compressing by 8.4 bps and 6.6 bps respectively, while the DXY closed at 99.133 [+0.72%]. In Canada, labour market data showed a fourth consecutive month of modest job gains, while the unemployment rate rose to 6.8%, driven by a sharp expansion in labour supply, with USD/CAD last trading at 1.3913. Across Europe, euro-area headline inflation eased to 2.0%, with core inflation at 2.3%, and softer services prices reinforcing expectations for a continued ECB policy pause; the HCOB composite PMI moderated to 51.5, and EUR/USD closed the week at 1.1636 [-0.70%]. Swiss inflation edged up to 0.1% YoY, consistent with a neutral SNB stance, with USD/CHF last printing at 0.8012, while in the UK, services PMI edged up to 51.4 and the composite PMI held at 51.4 despite rising input cost pressures, with GBP/USD closing the week at 1.3403 [-0.39%]. In the Asia-Pacific region, China’s CPI rose to 0.8% YoY, while producer prices contracted by 1.9% YoY, underscoring persistent deflationary pressures, with USD/CNY at 6.9783; in Australia, core inflation eased to 3.2% YoY and headline CPI to 3.4%, reinforcing the RBA’s hold bias, with AUD/USD closing the week at 0.6687 [-0.09%]. Globally, equity markets delivered mixed performances, sovereign yield curves saw modest repricing, and oil prices advanced - with Brent up 4.26% on the week - amid supply concerns and geopolitical developments in the Middle East, Russia/Ukraine, and Venezuela, alongside heightened strategic attention on Greenland; spot gold and silver also rose over the week to reach 4509.50 and 79.86 respectively.

### United States and Canada

**US Policy: Housing, Consumer Credit and Assertive Foreign Stance Dominate Early 2026 Agenda**

The Trump administration has advanced a forceful domestic and foreign policy agenda, with near-term market implications. On housing, the President pledged to ban large institutional investors from purchasing single-family homes and directed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to buy \$200B of agency mortgage bonds, equivalent to just over 2% of the \$9T outstanding market. Mortgage-backed securities tightened, with the 30-year fixed mortgage rate averaging 6.16% in the week ending January 8. Separately, Trump called for a one-year cap on credit-card interest rates at 10%, versus an average rate near 21%, targeting a core profit centre for US banks and raising risks to credit availability. On foreign policy, the US ordered withdrawals from 31 UN

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1719	1.1618	1.1743	1.1636	1.1555	1.1700	1.1687
GBP	1.3456	1.3393	1.3568	1.3403	1.3290	1.3500	1.3400
JPY	156.84	156.12	158.18	157.90	156.10	159.50	156.67
CHF	0.7924	0.7906	0.8018	0.8012	0.7900	0.8125	0.7936

bodies and signalled a more unilateral posture, while actions in Venezuela and renewed rhetoric on Greenland unsettled allies, notably Canada, reinforcing geopolitical risk premia across markets. DXY last printed at 99.133.

**US Labour Market Moderates: Payrolls +50K vs +70K Expected, Unemployment 4.4%, Jobless Claims at 208K**

US labour market indicators softened into year-end, reinforcing signs of cooling demand for labour. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 50K in December, below the 70K median forecast, following downward revisions to the prior two months, while the unemployment rate edged down to 4.4%. Average hourly earnings rose 0.3% MoM, in line with expectations, indicating easing but stable wage momentum. Private payroll growth slowed to 37K, with job gains concentrated in leisure and hospitality and health care, offset by declines in retail trade, construction and manufacturing. Complementary data showed job openings falling to 7.15M in November, the lowest level in over a year, with the vacancies-to-unemployed ratio declining to 0.9. Together, the data underscore a gradual normalisation in labour market conditions amid a cautious Federal Reserve policy stance. Swap markets are currently pricing two Fed rate cuts in 2026. Separately, University of Michigan consumer sentiment and inflation expectations printed at 54.0 and 4.2% respectively.

**US Activity Diverges as Manufacturing PMI Falls to 47.9 While Services PMI Rises to 54.4 in December**

US economic activity showed a marked sectoral divergence in December. Manufacturing conditions deteriorated further, with the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) manufacturing index easing to 47.9 from 48.2, marking the tenth consecutive month in contraction and the weakest reading in over a year. The downturn was driven by inventory drawdowns at the fastest pace since October 2024, alongside sustained cost pressures, with the prices-paid index holding at 58.5, around six points above end-2024 levels. New orders, exports, and employment all remained in contraction. In contrast, services activity strengthened materially, with the ISM services index rising 1.8 points to 54.4, the highest since October 2024. New orders, business activity, exports, and employment all accelerated, underscoring continued resilience in the services-led expansion despite persistent manufacturing weakness.

**Canada Employment Up 8.2K in December as Unemployment Rises to 6.8% on Labour Force Surge**

Canada’s labour market recorded a fourth consecutive month of job growth in December, with employment increasing by 8.2K, defying expectations for a 2.5K decline, while the unemploy-

ment rate rose 0.3 percentage points to 6.8% as labour supply expanded sharply. Statistics Canada reported that the labour force grew by 81K, the largest increase in over a year, lifting the participation rate to 65.4%, led by gains in Ontario and Quebec. Employment gains were driven by 50.2K full-time positions and higher self-employment, with notable strength in health care and social assistance (+20.8K) and construction (+11.2K), partly offset by a 42K decline in part-time roles. Annual employment growth slowed to 1.1%, the weakest since 2016 excluding the pandemic, while wage growth for permanent employees eased to 3.7%, indicating moderating labour market momentum amid rising slack. USD/CAD last printed at 1.3913.

### Europe and the United Kingdom

**Euro-Area Inflation at 2.0% Target and Composite PMI at 51.5 Reinforce ECB Rate-Hold Outlook**

Euro-area inflation eased to the European Central Bank’s 2.0% target in December, down from 2.1%, with core inflation slowing to 2.3% and services inflation moderating, supporting a continued policy pause. Inflation dynamics remain uneven across major economies, with Germany at 2.0%, France at 0.7%, and Spain at 3.0%. Growth indicators softened modestly, with the HCOB composite Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) easing to 51.5 from 52.8, while the fourth-quarter average of 52.3 marked the strongest reading since the second quarter of 2023. Services activity continued to offset manufacturing contraction, sustaining expansion across the bloc. National PMI trends showed Spain outperforming, Germany moderating, and France stagnating. Swap markets price approximately five basis points of ECB easing by September, implying a 20% probability of a 25bp cut, broadly consistent with a prolonged rate-hold baseline amid contained inflation pressures. EUR/USD last printed at 1.1636.

**Swiss Inflation Rises to 0.1% YoY in December, Reinforcing SNB Hold as Policy Bias Turns Neutral**

Swiss inflation increased to 0.1% YoY in December, up from 0.0% in November, marking the first acceleration since July and aligning with market expectations. The outcome leaves fourth-quarter inflation in line with the Swiss National Bank’s (SNB) 0.1% forecast and reduces immediate pressure to reintroduce negative interest rates. Underlying inflation firmed to 0.5%, driven primarily by higher costs for rent, education, and tobacco. FY 2025 inflation averaged 0.2%, the weakest since the first year of the Covid pandemic, underscoring persistently subdued price dynamics. The SNB’s December policy deliberations reflected a neutral bias, judging neither easing nor tightening appropriate, while maintaining a high threshold for sub-zero rates. Forward guid-

ance remains cautious, with inflation projected at 0.3% for the year amid soft growth and a still-strong franc. USD/CHF last printed at 0.8012.

**UK Services Activity Edges Up to 51.4 in December Amid Rising Input Costs**

The S&P Global UK Services Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) rose modestly to 51.4 in December from 51.3 in November, below the provisional estimate of 52.1, signalling lacklustre business activity growth at the end of 2025. Input costs accelerated to the fastest pace since May, driven by higher staff expenses and rising raw material and fuel costs, while output prices increased at their quickest rate since August. Hiring declined for the fifteenth consecutive month, though the pace of contraction eased slightly. New orders improved after four months of decline, and exports rose for the first time since August. Composite PMI, incorporating manufacturing, increased to 51.4 from 51.2. Persistent services price pressures may constrain the Bank of England’s policy easing, despite last month’s bank rate cut to 3.75%. Swap markets are pricing in one or two quarter-point cuts in 2026. GBP/USD last printed at 1.3403.

### Asia-Pacific

**China CPI Rises to 3-Year High of 0.8% YoY in December, While Producer Prices Extend 39-Month Deflation**

China’s consumer inflation rose to 0.8% YoY in December, the fastest pace since February 2023, driven largely by higher food prices and seasonal consumption. For FY 2025, headline inflation averaged 0.0%, the weakest outcome since 2009, underscoring persistent deflationary pressure. Food prices increased 1.1% YoY, while vegetable prices surged over 18% amid weather disruptions. Core CPI remained stable at 1.2% for a third consecutive month, and non-food inflation held at 0.8%. Producer prices fell 1.9% YoY, marking a 39th consecutive monthly decline but the narrowest contraction in over a year. Services inflation softened further, and housing-related prices turned negative, highlighting continued demand fragility. The data point to ongoing deflation risks despite temporary cost-driven price support. USD/CNY last printed at 6.9783.

**Australia Core Inflation Eases to 3.2% YoY in November as Headline CPI Undershoots at 3.4%, Supports RBA Hold Bias**

Australia’s inflation momentum softened in November, reinforcing the Reserve Bank of Australia’s near-term case to maintain policy settings. The trimmed mean measure rose 3.2% YoY, easing from 3.3% and in line with consensus, while headline CPI increased 3.4%, below the 3.6% forecast. Disinflation was broad-based, with annual goods inflation slowing to 3.3% from 3.8% and services inflation easing to 3.6% from 3.9%. Housing remained the largest contributor to inflation at 5.2%, followed by food and non-alcoholic beverages at 3.3% and transport at 2.7%. Market pricing for near-term tightening moderated marginally following the release. Swap markets are currently pricing an 80% chance of a rate hike by May 2026. The RBA is expected to await the quarterly inflation report on January 28 before reassessing policy, with future decisions remaining data dependent. AUD/USD last printed at 0.6687.

### Kuwait

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30560.



Executive order protects Venezuelan oil revenue amid investment push

## Trump signals ExxonMobil may be barred from Venezuela projects

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE, Jan 12, (AP): President Donald Trump said Sunday that he is “inclined” to keep ExxonMobil out of Venezuela after its top executive was skeptical about oil investment efforts in the country after the toppling of former President Nicolás Maduro. “I didn’t like Exxon’s response,” Trump said to reporters on Air Force One as he departed West Palm Beach, Florida. “They’re playing too cute.” During a meeting Friday with oil executives, Trump tried to assuage the concerns of the companies and said they would be dealing directly with the U.S., rather than the Venezuelan government. Some, however, weren’t convinced. “If we look at the commercial constructs and frameworks in place today in Venezuela, today it’s uninvestable,” said Darren Woods, CEO of ExxonMobil, the largest U.S. oil company. Also on Friday, Trump signed an executive order that seeks to en-

sure that Venezuelan oil revenue remains protected from being used in judicial proceedings. The executive order, made public on Saturday, says that if the funds were to be seized for such use, it could “undermine critical U.S. efforts to ensure economic and political stability in Venezuela.” Venezuela has a history of state asset seizures, ongoing U.S. sanctions and decades of political uncertainty. Getting U.S. oil companies to invest in Venezuela and help rebuild the country’s infrastructure is a top priority of the Trump administration after Maduro’s capture. The White House is framing the effort to “run” Venezuela in economic terms, and Trump has seized tankers carrying Venezuelan oil, has said the U.S. is taking over the sales of 30 million to 50 million barrels of previously sanctioned Venezuelan crude, and plans to control sales worldwide indefinitely.



Darren Woods, CEO of ExxonMobil, takes notes before President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with oil executives in the East Room of the White House, Friday, Jan. 9, 2026, in Washington. (AP)

# Justice Department subpoenas Fed’s Powell amid Trump clash

Senators warn Fed independence at risk after DOJ move

WASHINGTON, Jan 12, (AP): Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said Sunday the Department of Justice has served the central bank with subpoenas and threatened it with a criminal indictment over his testimony this summer about the Fed’s building renovations. The move represents an unprecedented escalation in President Donald Trump’s battle with the Fed, an independent agency he has repeatedly attacked for not cutting its key interest rate as sharply as he prefers. The renewed fight will likely rattle financial markets Monday and could over time escalate borrowing costs for mortgages and other loans. The subpoenas relate to Powell’s testimony before the Senate Banking Committee in June, the Fed chair said, regarding the Fed’s \$2.5 billion renovation of two office buildings, a project that Trump has criticized as excessive. Powell on Sunday cast off what has up to this point been a restrained approach to Trump’s criticisms and personal insults, which he has mostly ignored. Instead, Powell issued a video statement in which he bluntly characterized the threat of criminal charges as simple “pretexts” to undermine the Fed’s independence when it comes to setting interest rates. “The threat of criminal charges is a consequence of the Federal Reserve setting interest rates based on our best assessment of what will serve the public, rather than following the preferences of the President,” Powell said. “This is about whether the Fed will be able to continue to set interest rates based on evidence and economic conditions - or whether instead monetary policy will be directed by political pressure or intimidation.” It’s a sharp departure from the Fed’s understated response to Trump this year. The central bank has attempted to placate the administration by dialing back some policies, such as efforts to consider the

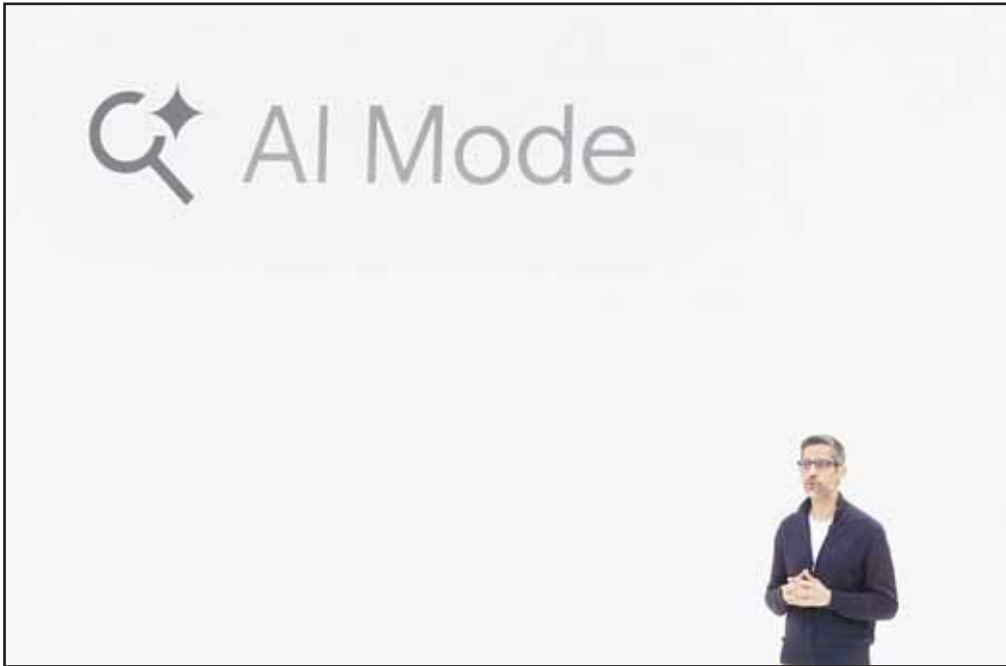
impact of climate change on the banking system, that the administration clearly opposed. The renewed attacks on the Fed’s independence, and Powell’s full-throated defense, reignite what had appeared to be a dormant battle between Trump and the chair he appointed in 2017. The subpoenas will renew fears that the Fed’s independence from day-to-day politics will be compromised, which could undermine global investors’ confidence in U.S. Treasury securities. “We expect the dollar, bonds and stocks to all fall in Monday trading in a sell-America trade similar to that in April last year at the peak of the tariff shock and earlier threat to Powell’s position as Fed chair,” Krishna Guha, an analyst at Evercore ISI, an investment bank, wrote in a note to clients. “We are stunned by this deeply disturbing development which came out of the blue after a period in which tensions between Trump and the Fed seemed to be contained,” Guha added. In a brief interview with NBC News Sunday, Trump insisted he didn’t know about the investigation into Powell. When asked if the investigation is intended to pressure Powell on rates, Trump said, “No. I wouldn’t even think of doing it that way.” Powell’s term as chair ends in May, and Trump administration officials have signaled that he could name a potential replacement this month. Trump has also sought to fire Fed governor Lisa Cook, an unprecedented step, though she has sued to keep her job and courts have ruled she can remain in her seat while the case plays out. The Supreme Court will hear arguments in that case Jan. 21. At the Senate Banking Committee hearing in June, Chairman Tim Scott, a Republican from South Carolina, said the Fed’s building renovation included “rooftop terraces, custom elevators that open into VIP dining rooms, white marble finishes, and even a private art collection.” Powell disputed those details in his testimony, saying “there’s no new marble. ... there are no special elevators” and added that some of the controversial items are “not in the current plan.” In July, Russell Vought, director of the Office of Manage-

ment and Budget, said in a letter to Powell that his testimony about changes to the building plans “raises serious questions about the project’s compliance” with previous plans approved by a planning commission. Still, later that month, Trump visited the building site and, while standing next to Powell, overstated the cost of the renovation. Later that day, Trump, speaking to reporters, downplayed any concerns with the renovation. He said, “they have to get it done” and added, “Look, there’s always Monday morning quarterbacks. I don’t want to be that. I want to help them get it finished.” When asked if it was a firing offense, Trump said, “I don’t want to put that in this category.” The Justice Department in a statement Sunday said it can’t comment on any particular case, but added that Attorney General Pam Bondi “has instructed her US Attorneys to prioritize investigating any abuse of tax payer dollars.” Timothy Lauer, a spokesperson for U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro’s office, said they don’t comment on ongoing investigations. With the subpoenas, Powell becomes the latest perceived adversary of the president to face a criminal investigation by the Trump administration’s Justice Department. Trump himself has urged prosecutions of his political opponents, obliterating institutional guardrails for a Justice Department that for generations has taken care to make investigative and prosecutorial decisions independent of the White House. The potential indictment has already drawn concern from one Republican senator, who said he’ll oppose any future nominee to the central bank, including any replacement for Powell, until “this legal matter is fully resolved.” “If there were any remaining doubt whether advisers within the Trump Administration are actively pushing to end the independence of the Federal Reserve, there should now be none,” said North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis, who sits on the Banking Committee, which oversees Fed nominations. “It is now the independence and credibility of the Department of Justice that are in question.”

## Gemini chatbot to enable in-app purchases through major retailers

# Google turns Gemini chatbot into virtual retail assistant

NEW YORK, Jan 12, (AP): Google said Sunday that it is expanding the shopping features in its AI chatbot by teaming up with Walmart, Shopify, Wayfair and other big retailers to turn the Gemini app into a virtual merchant as well as an assistant. An instant checkout function will allow customers to make purchases from some businesses and through a range of payment providers without leaving the Gemini chat they used to find products, according to Walmart and Google. The news was announced on the first day of the National Retail Federation’s annual convention in New York, which is expected to draw 40,000 attendees from retail and technology companies this week. The role of artificial intelligence in e-commerce and its impact on consumer behavior are expected to dominate the three-day event. “The transition from traditional web or app search to agent-led commerce represents the next great evolution in retail,” John Furner, Walmart’s incoming president and CEO, said in a joint statement with Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai. Google’s new AI shopping feature works this way: if a customer asks what gear to get for a winter ski trip, for example, Gemini will return items from a participating retailers’ inventory. In the case of Walmart, customers who link their Walmart and Google accounts will receive recommendations based on their past purchases, and any products they decide to buy via the chatbot could get combined with their existing Walmart or Sam’s Club online shopping carts, according to the statement. OpenAI and Walmart announced a similar deal in October, saying the partnership would allow ChatGPT members to use an instant checkout feature to shop for nearly everything available on Walmart’s website except for fresh food. Google, OpenAI and Amazon all are racing to create tools that would allow for seamless AI-powered shopping by taking chatbot users from browsing to buying within the same program instead of having to go to a retailer’s website to complete a purchase. The race between OpenAI and Google has heated up in recent months. Before the recent holiday shopping season, OpenAI launched an instant checkout feature within ChatGPT that allows users to buy prod-



Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai speaks at a Google I/O event in Mountain View, Calif., Tuesday, May 20, 2025. (AP)

ucts from select retailers and Etsy sellers without leaving the app. San Francisco software company Salesforce estimated that AI influenced \$272 billion, or 20%, of all global retail sales, in one way or another during the holiday shopping season. Google said the AI-assisted shopping features in Gemini only would be available to U.S. users initially but that it planned to expand internationally in the coming months. Shoppers initially only can make payments through the cards linked to their Google accounts but soon will be able to make purchases using PayPal, the company said. The aim of deploying chatbots in e-commerce is to make it easier for people to find what they’re looking for. Instead of entering search terms and keywords, they can type or use voice dictation, and refine their searches through a conversational back-and-forth. Tech companies also are rolling out “AI agents” that are a step beyond today’s generative AI chatbots, though their ability to buy products on behalf of consumers is still limited. “I’m under no false belief that there’s going to be a snap of the finger and then all of a sudden, agentic commerce is going to get everywhere,”

Mike Edmonds, PayPal’s vice president of agentic commerce and commercial growth, said at Sunday’s convention. But he cautioned retailers against taking a wait-and-see approach. Shopify founder and CEO Tobin Lutke told a small group of reporters on Thursday that many people like the experience of “having a personal shopper who really gets them, understands them and can fit something in your budget,” but Shopify also wants to make it doesn’t “over automate.” “The person, the shopper, is in charge, and they can make the final call, but also we make it so that people find the perfect product for themselves,” he added. Walmart’s Furner said Sunday that the largest employer and retailer in the U.S. is trying to “close the gap between I want it and I have it” with the help of AI. He and Pichai announced from a stage at the National Retail Federation conference that Walmart plans to expand drone delivery service to 150 more stores in partnership with Wing, a division of Alphabet. The addition will bring Walmart’s drone delivery locations with Wing to 270 by 2027, stretching from Los Angeles to Miami, the companies said.

# AI reshapes China’s workforce, creating new job opportunities

BEIJING, Jan 12, (Xinhua): From chatbots to autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping how work gets done in China, boosting efficiency while redrawing industrial boundaries. However, the shift has heightened concerns about job displacement, with workers ranging from assembly-line operators to designers and translators already feeling the pressure. Acknowledging short-term disruption, economists believe AI is less the end of jobs than a transformative force that, much like earlier waves of technological revolutions, will restructure the labor market by giving rise to new professions and work models. China’s policymakers, for their part, are acting to guide AI’s development in an effort to cushion its impact on employment, while also stepping up investment in human capital, aiming to build a workforce better equipped for rapid technological changes and support an economy in transition. No job killer Analysts said concerns about technology displacing workers are hardly new. Every major technological leap, from the steam engine to mechanization, has triggered similar fears. “Even as some traditional roles are gradually fading, AI raises productivity and opens space for new industries, creating new opportunities and redefining employment in the future,” said Wu Jie, an analyst of think tank DRCnet. In August 2025, the State Council rolled out guidelines for the “AI Plus” initiative, calling for broader use of AI to create new jobs and upgrade existing ones, while steering innovation resources toward sectors with strong employment potential. The World Economic Forum has projected in a report that by 2030, AI and data processing technologies would have created about 11 million jobs worldwide, more than offsetting the roughly 9 million jobs they are expected to displace. Notably, this dynamic is already visible in China. China’s AI core industry is approaching a scale of 600 billion yuan (around 85.58 billion U.S. dollars), according to Ding Zhuang, a research fellow at Chongqing Institute for Financial Studies at the Renmin University of China. “From breakthroughs in large language models and algorithms to the deep integration of AI with manufac-

turing, services and biotech, demand for talent is surging,” he said. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security has identified 72 new occupations over the past five years, with more than 20 tied directly to AI. Each new occupation is expected to generate jobs for 300,000 to 500,000 people in its early stages. Autonomous driving offers a telling case study. Rather than simply replacing drivers, companies are creating roles that combine operational experience with digital skills. Firms behind robotaxi services are hiring ground-safety supervisors, vehicle testers and dispatch algorithm engineers. Many openings give priority to former taxi, bus or ride-hailing drivers, reflecting a push to retrain rather than discard traditional workers. One such transition is Zhang Chao, a former car leasing manager who is now a remote safety operator for robotaxis in Beijing. He monitors autonomous vehicles in real time and intervenes when necessary, such as rerouting cars in response to road closures. The role requires a solid understanding of vehicle systems and software, as well as concentration and patience, Zhang said. “The factory floor used to be about assembling, welding and repairing. Now workers are shifting from holding wrenches to managing systems, becoming testers and operators for intelligent connected vehicles,” said Wang Hao, a researcher at the China Center for Information Industry Development. Investing in people With AI representing a deep restructuring of skills, divisions of labor and job forms, the government has accelerated adaptation through retraining, upgraded education and investment in human capital. A nationwide skills-upgrading campaign through 2027 is providing subsidized training for more than 30 million people. Schools have been ordered to strengthen AI education, starting at the primary level, to help students understand how technology interacts with society. More recently, a new phrase has emerged in official documents: “Investing in human capital.” It has appeared repeatedly in the 2025 government work report, long-term development planning papers, and a high-level economic meeting last month that set priorities for 2026.



**'Primate' leads new releases with \$11 million debut****'Avatar: Fire and Ash' tops box office for fourth straight week**

LOS ANGELES, Jan 12, (AP): "Avatar: Fire and Ash" kept on smoldering at the box office, taking the top spot for a fourth straight week on a relatively quiet weekend as the January doldrums began setting in for the industry.

The third chapter in James Cameron's Pandora epic brought in \$21.3 million in North American theaters for The Walt Disney Co., according to studio estimates Sunday.

In total after four weeks, "Fire and Ash" has grossed \$342.6 million in North America and \$888 million in the rest of the world. Last week it joined its two predecessors as a billion-dollar earner.

The week's top-grossing new release was Paramount Pictures rampaging-chimp horror film "Primate," which earned \$11.3 million domestically and \$13.4 worldwide.

Disney's "Zootopia 2" has shown remarkable staying power since its November release. It continues to be a global juggernaut and a sensation in China. Globally, the animated sequel has piled up \$1.65 billion. That put it just on the edge of becoming Disney's highest grossing animated movie ever, trailing only the \$1.66 billion brought in by 2019's

photorealistic "The Lion King."

In its seventh week, it was fourth at the North American box office with \$10.1 million for a domestic total of \$378.8 million.

The Sydney Sweeney-driven thriller "The Housemaid" continues to be a good earner for Lionsgate, which earlier this week greenlit a sequel. It collected \$11.2 million in North America in its fourth weekend for a total of \$94.15 million and has brought in \$192.5 million worldwide after costing just \$35 million to make.

The figures came on a Sunday when much of Hollywood's attention is on the Golden Globe Awards. "Avatar: Fire and Ash" and "Zootopia 2" are nominated for two awards apiece.

But among contenders in top categories at the Globes, only A24's "Marty Supreme" is in this weekend's box office top 10, finishing sixth with a \$7.6 million take and a \$70.1 million four-week total in North America.

It's nominated for best picture musical or comedy, with star Timothée Chalamet nominated for best actor in a comedy and cowriter and director Josh Safdie nominated for best



This image released by 20th Century Studios shows Neytiri, performed by Zoe Saldana, (left), and Jake Sully, performed by Sam Worthington, in a scene from 'Avatar: Fire and Ash.' (AP)

screenplay.

On the whole, Hollywood started 2026 strongly. Rev-

enues this weekend were up 23% from the same weekend in 2025, according to data firm Comscore. And the 2026 total so far is also up 23% from last year.

The movie industry is coming off a poor 2025, where domestic moviegoing continued to slide. But studios are hoping 2026 could be the best box-office year of the decade as they await the releases of new "Avengers," "Spider-Man," "Toy Story," "Super Mario Bros" and "Dune" movies.

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

1. "Avatar: Fire and Ash," \$21.3 million; 2. "Primate," \$ 11.3 million; 3. "The Housemaid," \$11.2 million; 4. "Zootopia 2," \$10.1 million; 5. "Greenland 2: Migration," \$8.5 million; 6. "Marty Supreme," \$7.6 million; 7. "Anaconda," \$5.1 million; 8. "The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants," \$3.8 million; 9. "David," \$3.1 million and 10. "Song Sung Blue," \$3 million.

**Awards****Chalamet wins his first Golden Globe****'Hamnet' and 'One Battle After Another' top Globes**

Jessie Buckley poses the award for best performance by a female actor in a motion picture, drama for 'Hamnet.' (AP)



Wagner Moura with the award for best performance by a male actor in a motion picture, drama for 'The Secret Agent.' (AP)



Rose Byrne with the award for best female actor in a motion picture - musical or comedy for 'If I Had Legs I'd Kick You.' (AP)



Timothée Chalamet poses with the award for best performance male actor in a motion picture - musical or comedy for 'Marty Supreme.' (AP)



John Wells, (from left), R. Scott Gemmill, and Noah Wyle with the award for best television series - drama for 'The Pitt.' (AP)

LOS ANGELES, Jan 12, (AP): Paul Thomas Anderson's ragtag revolutionary saga "One Battle After Another" took top honors at Sunday's 83rd Golden Globes in the comedy category, while Chloé Zhao's Shakespeare drama "Hamnet" pulled off an upset over "Sinners" to win best film, drama.

"One Battle After Another" won best film, comedy, supporting female actor for Teyana Taylor and best director and best screenplay for Anderson. He became just the second filmmaker to sweep director, screenplay and film, as a producer, at the Globes. Only Oliver Stone, for "Born on the Fourth of July," managed the same feat.

In an awards ceremony that went almost entirely as expected, the night's final award was the most surprising. While "One Battle After Another" has been the clear front-runner this awards season, most have pegged Ryan Coogler's Jim Crow-era vampire thriller as its closest competition.

But "Hamnet," a speculative drama about William and Agnes Shakespeare based on Maggie O'Farrell's best-seller, won in the dramatic category shortly after its star, Jessie Buckley, won best female actor in a drama.

It was a banner night for Warner Bros., the studio behind "One Battle After Another" and "Sinners." Warner Bros. Discovery has agreed to be sold to Netflix in an \$83 billion deal. Paramount Skydance has appealed to shareholders with its own rival offer.

In his speech after winning best director, Anderson praised Warner co-chief Michael DeLuca. "He said he wanted to run a studio one day and let filmmakers make whatever they want," said Anderson. "That's how you get 'Sinners.' That's how you get a 'Weapons.' That's how you get 'One Battle After Another.'"

**Moment**

The final awards brought to, or near, the stage a handful of the most talented filmmakers together in Anderson, Zhao and Coogler - plus Steven Spielberg, a producer of "Hamnet." Regardless of who won what, it was a heartening moment of solidarity between them, with a shared sense of purpose. Zhao fondly recalled being at Sundance Labs with Coogler when they were each starting out.

"As students, let's keep our hearts open and let's keep seeing each other and allowing each other to be seen," said Zhao, while Coogler smiled from the front row.

"Sinners" won for best score and cinematic and box-office achievement. The win for box office and cinematic achievement, over franchise films like "Avatar: Fire and Ash," was notable for Coogler's film, a movie that some reports labeled a qualified success on its release.

Yet "Sinners" ultimately grossed \$278 million domestically and \$368 million worldwide, making it highest grossing original film in 15 years.

"I just want to thank the audience for showing up," said Coogler. "It's means the world."

Coming off years of scandal and subsequent rehabilitation, the Globes and host Nikki Glaser put on a star-studded ceremony that saw wins for the streaming sensation "KPop Demon Hunters" (best animated film, song), a meta triumph for Seth Rogen's "The Studio" and an inaugural award for podcasting that went to Amy Poehler's "Good Hang."

Many of the Oscar favorites won. Timothee Chalamet won his first



'Hamnet' team poses in the press room with the award for best motion picture - drama during the 83rd Golden Globes on Sunday, Jan. 11, at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)



Rhea Seehorn poses with the award for best female actor in a television series - drama for 'Pluribus.' (AP)



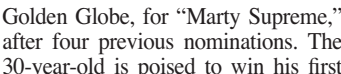
Amy Poehler poses with the award for best podcast for 'Good Hang with Amy Poehler.' (AP)



Ludwig Göransson poses with the award for best original score - motion picture for 'Sinners.' (AP)



Jean Smart poses with the award for best female actor in a television series - musical or comedy for 'Hacks.' (AP)



Golden Globe, for "Marty Supreme," after four previous nominations. The 30-year-old is poised to win his first



Sara Murphy, (from left), Teyana Taylor, Paul Thomas Anderson, and Chase Infiniti pose with the award for best motion picture - musical or comedy for 'One Battle After Another.' (AP)



Owen Cooper, (from left), Erin Doherty, Hannah Walters, Stephen Graham, and Ashley Walters pose with the award for best television limited series, anthology series or motion picture made for television for 'Adolescence.' (AP)



Audrey Nuna, (from left), Mark Sonnenblick, EJAE, Rei Ami, Yuhun IDO, Jeong Hun-seol pose with the award for best original song - motion picture for 'Golden' from 'Kpop Demon Hunters.' (AP)

Oscar. Fellow nominees like Leonardo DiCaprio and George Clooney stood to applaud his win.

"My dad instilled in me a spirit of gratitude growing up: Always be grateful for what you have," said Chalamet. "It's allowed me to leave this ceremony in the past empty handed, my head held high, grateful just to be here. I'd be lying if I didn't say those moments didn't make this moment that much sweeter."

The Globes, held at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, got underway with a pointedly political

opening from host Nikki Glaser and an early award for the night's favorite, "One Battle After Another." Emceeding the show for the second straight year, Glaser kicked off the show with self-aware satire.

"Yes, the Golden Globes, without a doubt the most important thing happening in the world right now," she said.

In a winning, rapid-fire opening monologue that landed some punch lines on the usual subjects - the age of Leonardo DiCaprio's dates, Kevin Hart's height - Glaser also dove right

into some of her most topical material.

For the on-the-block Warner Bros., Glaser started the bidding at \$5. Referencing the Epstein files, she suggested best editing should go to the Justice Dept. The "most editing," however, she suggested deserved to go to Bari Weiss' new CBS News - a dig at the Paramount Skydance-owned network airing the Globes.

Political tension and industrywide uncertainty were the prevailing moods heading into Sunday's awards. Hollywood is coming off a disappointing box-office year and now anxiously awaits the fate of one of its most storied studios, Warner Bros. Following the fatal shooting of Renee Good in Minneapolis by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer, several attendees wore pins reading "Be Good."

The Globes, formerly presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, have no overlap or direct correlation with the Academy Awards. After being sold in 2023 to Todd Boehly's Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions, a part of Penske Media, the Globes are voted on by around 400 people. The Oscars are voted on by more than 10,500 professionals.

But in the fluctuating undulations of awards season, a good speech at the Globes can boost an Oscar campaign. Winners Sunday included Rose Byrne ("If I Had Legs I'd Kick You") for best female actor in a comedy or musical, and Wagner Moura, the Brazilian star of "The Secret Agent," for best male actor in a drama. Kleber Mendonça Filho's period political thriller also won best international film.

**Generations**

"I think if trauma can be passed along generations, values can do," Moura said. "So this to the ones who are sticking with their values in difficult moments."

Other winners Sunday included the supporting actor front-runner, Stellan Skarsgård who won for the Norwegian family drama "Sentimental Value." It was the first major Hollywood movie award for the 74-year-old, a respected veteran actor who drew a standing ovation.

"I was not prepared for this because I, of course, thought I was too old," said Skarsgård.

In the television awards, "The Pitt" took best drama series, while Noah Wyle won, too, brushing past his former "ER" star Clooney on the way to the stage. Netflix's "Adolescence" won four awards: best limited series, and acting awards for Erin Doherty, Stephen Graham and 16-year-old Owen Cooper.

Other winners included Rhea Seehorn for "Pluribus" and Jean Smart for "Hacks."

But the most comically poignant award of the night went to "The Studio," the best comedy series winner. Seth Rogen's Hollywood satire memorably included an episode devoted to drama around a night at the Globes. (Sample line: "I remember when the red carpet of the Golden Globes actually stood for something.") Rogen also won best male actor in a comedy.





George Clooney, (left), and Amal Clooney arrive at the 83rd Golden Globes. (AP)



Priyanka Chopra-Jonas arrives at the 83rd Golden Globes on Sunday, Jan. 11. (AP)



Left: Leonardo DiCaprio at the 83rd Golden Globes. Right: Kleber Mendonça Filho, (left), and Emilie Lesclaux pose with the award for best motion picture - non-english language for 'The Secret Agent' (AP)



Complete list of 2026 Golden Globe Award winners

LOS ANGELES, Jan 12, (AP): The revolutionary saga “One Battle After Another” won best picture, musical or comedy at the 83rd Golden Globe Awards.

“Hamnet” won best picture, drama at the ceremony Sunday night.

Entering the night, “One Battle After Another” topped the list of nominations with nine, followed by “Sentimental Value” with eight.

Comedian Nikki Glaser hosted the ceremony from the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills. The night marked Glaser’s second consecutive year as host.

Here’s a list of winners at Sunday’s Golden Globes:

- Motion picture, drama: “Hamnet”
- Motion picture, musical or comedy: “One Battle After Another”
- Male actor, motion picture, drama: Wagner Moura, “The Secret Agent”
- Female actor, motion picture, drama: Jessie Buckley, “Hamnet”
- Female actor, motion picture, musical or comedy: Rose Byrne, “If I Had Legs, I’d Kick You”

- Male actor, motion picture, musical or comedy: Timothée Chalamet, “Marty Supreme”
- Female supporting actor, motion picture: Teyana Taylor, “One Battle After Another”
- Male supporting actor, motion picture: Stellan Skarsgard, “Sentimental Value”
- Motion picture, non-English language: “The Secret Agent,” Brazil
- Motion picture, animated: “KPop Demon Hunters”
- Director, motion picture: Paul Thomas Anderson, “One Battle After Another”
- Screenplay, motion picture: Paul Thomas Anderson, “One Battle After Another”
- Cinematic and box office achievement: “Sinners”
- TV series, drama: “The Pitt”
- TV series, musical or comedy: “The Studio”

- Male actor, TV series, drama: Noah Wyle, “The Pitt”
- Female actor, TV series, drama: Rhea Seehorn, “Pluribus”
- Female actor, TV series, musical or comedy: Jean Smart, “Hacks”
- Male actor, TV series, musical or comedy: Seth Rogen, “The Studio”
- Limited series, anthology series or made for TV movie: “Adolescence”
- Male actor, limited series, anthology series or made for TV movie: Stephen Graham, n “Adolescence”
- Female actor, limited series, anthology series or made for TV movie: Michelle Williams, “Dying for Sex”
- Male supporting actor, television: Owen Cooper, “Adolescence”
- Female supporting actor, television: Erin Doherty, “Adolescence”
- Original song, motion picture: “Golden” from “Kpop Demon Hunters”
- Original score, motion picture: Ludwig Göransson, “Sinners”
- Stand-up comedy performance: Ricky Gervais, “Mortality”
- Podcast: “Good Hang With Amy Poehler”

Fashion

Fashion takes center stage at Golden Globes red carpet

Celebrities embrace black and old Hollywood glamour

LOS ANGELES, Jan 12, (AP): Ariana Grande, Teyana Taylor, Timothée Chalamet and a sea of other stars said goodbye to color at this year’s Golden Globes, opting instead for black. And many in the crowd stuck with tried and true old Hollywood glamour Sunday.

But even in basic black, the red carpet had plenty of personal flourishes and playful embellishments.

Risk-takers Taylor, a winner for “One Battle After Another,” and Jenna Ortega went with “whale tails,” aka the tops of thongs, peeking out the backs of their black gowns. Taylor did it with her custom slinky Schiaparelli gown that showed off a deep low-cut back with a glittery low-hanging bow thong. Ortega, keeping it goth, wore a Dilara Findikoglu gown with black shoulder tassels and a black thong.

“I thought that was such a cheeky call-back to Y2K fashion,” InStyle Fashion Director Kevin Huynh said. “I was just like, wow, you wouldn’t expect that on a red carpet.”

Grande left behind her “Wicked” character’s signature pink color for a black Vivienne Westwood couture dress but brought back her ponytail. Other notable celebrities in black included Ayo Edebiri, Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus and Mia Goth.

Jewels

Edebiri chose a black off-the-shoulder Chanel dress embellished with jewels on the shoulders from Matthieu Blazy’s Métiers d’Art 2026 show.

Celebrities held onto their gowns and watched their steps as they posed for photos on high stairs that served as the red carpet.



Amanda Seyfried



Elle Fanning



Stacy Martin



Selena Gomez arrives at the 83rd Golden Globes on Sunday, Jan. 11, at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

Like the Met Gala, they lined up at the bottom and had to perilously climb their way up.

The 83rd Golden Globes gives a glimpse into how celebrities will showcase their original take on fashion as the awards season progresses. Since 1944, the show has honored the best in film and television.

The carpet, at The Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, is a chance for nominees to make a statement, though some are beholden to fashion houses who pay them as ambassadors.

Several, including George Clooney, wore Giorgio Armani. The fashion world lost Armani in September, but his eponymous brand lives on.

“It was nice to see so many attendees, including Julia Roberts and Kate Hudson, wearing the brand and pay tribute,” said Véronique Hyland, fashion features director for Elle.

Not all celebrities followed the black dress trend.

Host Nikki Glaser, who held hosting duty for the second time, wore a strapless satin blush-pink corseted satin gown with a full skirt by Zuhair Murad. Emma Stone stunned in a butter yellow Louis Vuitton skirt set.

orous floral silk stole.

**Imagination**

“Just to go out in a naked dress that leaves very little to the imagination is one thing but what Jennifer Lawrence did was such a romantic approach to it,” Huynh said. “I think that really says a lot to Sarah Burton, the designer of Givenchy. She is a woman designing for women.”

The male nominees didn’t stray too far from traditional looks. Colman Domingo pared down his typical colorful suits for a black suit by Valentino adorned with silver leaf brooches down his lapel. Timothée Chalamet, a winner for “Marty Supreme,” has become one to watch for his fashion choices. Departing from his past colorful looks, Chalamet wore a black velvet vest and jacket from Chrome Hearts with black Timberland boots. Chalamet’s partner of three years, Kylie Jenner, did not walk the carpet with the actor, but viewers captured her in a custom silver column look by Ashi Studio. It was hand-embroidered with a fan-shaped crystal bead neckline.



Britt Lower



Jennifer Lopez



Lisa arrives at the 83rd Golden Globes on Sunday, Jan. 11, at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

“Sinners” star Wunmi Mosaku stunned in a flowy yellow Matthew Reisman gown. The mother-to-be revealed her baby bump on the carpet. Mosaku’s co-star Hailee Steinfeld showed off her pregnant figure on the carpet in a peach colored gown.

Stars shone in metallics. “Sentimental Value” actor Renate Reinsve twirled on the carpet in a shimmery silver tasseled dress by Nicolas Ghesquiere for Louis Vuitton. Her co-star Elle Fanning’s Gucci dress was embroidered with Norwegian flowers in honor of their Norwegian drama film.

Rising star Chase Infiniti reflected back the carpet and all its stars in her mirrored corseted gown by Nicolas Ghesquiere for Louis Vuitton.

“She’s now Louis Vuitton ambassador, which I think kind of shows her potential as a star,” Vanity Fair style writer José Criales-Unzueta said. “So much of what happens behind the scenes helps define what we’re looking at, whether it’s a deal, whether it sponsorship, whether it is brand ambassadorship.”

Claire Danes eschewed the academic, laid-back tailored looks of her “Beast in Me” character for an effortlessly elegant, couture gown designed by her close friend Zac Posen for GapStudio. Posen and Danes’ friendship and creative collaboration began in high school.

Posen began working on Danes’ Golden Globe gown in November. As both creative director for Gap and GapStudio designer, Posen told The Associated Press that elevating the American essential into evening-gear is part of his creative process for the brand.

For Danes’ look, Posen transformed the concept of the classic Gap pocket T-shirt into an off-white silk jersey couture gown with subtle bugle beaded detailing and embroidery. The shimmering dress featured a low scoop back and front pocket detail.

“Claire has a great elegance to her and is deeply inherently sophisticated, but yet cool,” Posen said. “Those elements fit perfectly with one of our icons that has built and defined our brands, the pocket tee.

Celebrities are keeping the sheer dressing trend alive with no signs of it slowing down. Lisa of Blackpink wore a black sheer Jacquemus dress, and Jennifer Lopez posed in a see-through dress by Jean-Louis Scherrer.

Jennifer Lawrence walked the carpet in a floral sheer dress by Sarah Burton at Givenchy and accessorized her look with a glam-

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## HEALTH/SCIENCE

### CAN begins week-long thyroid cancer awareness campaign in Kuwait

# Thyroid cancer survival rate reaches 99.5 pct with early detection

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: The Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) launched its annual thyroid cancer awareness campaign on Sunday under the slogan, "Be Aware and Care".

The campaign will continue for a period of one week, with the aim of raising public awareness and increasing recovery rates from thyroid cancer, which ranks third among the most common cancers in the country.

In his speech during the opening ceremony,

Chairman of the Board of Directors of CAN Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh disclosed that the rate of recovery from thyroid cancer remarkably increases with early detection, -- about 90 percent, while the survival rate is 99.5 percent. He said the disease affects women two to three times more than men.

He explained that the thyroid gland is one of the essential glands in the endocrine system. He stated that the difficulty in assessing its importance lies in the fact that the hormones it secretes are involved in all metabolic processes, making awareness of its functions a necessity

throughout the year, not just in a specific month.

He pointed out that diagnosing thyroid dysfunction is done through blood tests to measure the level of thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), in addition to ultrasound examinations. "Following these tests, a specialist determines the appropriate treatment plan if any abnormality is detected," he added.

He revealed the Kuwait Cancer Registry's 2021 annual report showed that thyroid cancer is one of the most common cancers among women in Kuwait, with 114 cases, ranking second, after breast cancer. He said an additional

98 cases were recorded among non-Kuwaiti women, and it was less common among men, with 38 cases recorded among non-Kuwaiti males.

On the other hand, Campaign Coordinator Dr. Eman Al-Shammari told the newspaper that thyroid cancer ranks third among the most common cancers in Kuwait, second among cancers affecting women, after breast cancer, and it accounts for approximately 90 percent of head and neck cancers.

She revealed that this year, the campaign is organizing activities in public hospitals and the

Kuwait Cancer Center. "These activities include awareness lectures, medical exhibitions, and the distribution of educational materials and gifts to patients and their companions, to provide simplified medical information," she elaborated.

She emphasized that the campaign focuses on promoting a healthy lifestyle and discouraging smoking, while affirming the launching of 'Makin' Club, which includes women who recovered from cancer, as well as the commencement of psychological training and rehabilitation programs.

### Study finds CRPS–migraine link

## Targeted 'therapy' offers hope for rare blood cancer

CANBERRA, Jan 12, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia have developed a new targeted therapeutic approach that could improve treatment for myelofibrosis, a rare and serious form of blood cancer.

Published in the journal Blood, the research focuses on finding smarter ways to treat myelofibrosis by targeting the abnormal blood cells that drive the disease using immunotherapy, rather than just managing symptoms, said a news release from the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute on Monday.

Myelofibrosis disrupts the production of healthy blood cells, causing fatigue, pain and an enlarged spleen, reducing quality of life, the release said, adding that current treatments ease symptoms but cannot eliminate the disease.

The research represents an important step towards more precise, disease-focused treatments and is a world-first showing Type 1 calreticulin mutations differ from Type 2 mutations in terms of treatment, according to Daniel Thomas, director of SAHMRI's Blood Cancer program, who co-led the study with Angel Lopez, head of Human Immunology at SA Pathology.

The team found not just one, but two different targets that optimally remove the culprit cells.

"People with myelofibrosis are often treated with therapies that help control symptoms, but they don't selectively target the abnormal cells driving the disease," said Thomas, adding that the research showed that by focusing on what makes these cells different, it might be possible to develop treatments that are both more effective and more targeted.

He noted the research is part of a major paradigm shift in the treatment of myelofibrosis and related diseases.

Using patient-donated cells, the research highlights the potential of precision immunology, which harnesses the immune system to recognize and act on disease-causing cells with extraordinary specificity while sparing healthy tissue, Lopez said.

"The future of cancer treatment lies in understanding disease at a molecular and immune level and then translating that knowledge into therapies that are potent, long-lasting and precise," said Lopez.

Further research and clinical development are needed before the therapy advances to human trials, potentially

paving the way for safer, more effective treatments for myelofibrosis, according to the release.

Two-thirds of complex regional pain syndrome patients face new or worsening migraines: study

□ □ □

**Migraines:** Researchers in Australia have identified a direct connection between Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) and headaches, finding that two out of three adults with CRPS experience new or worsening migraines.

The new study from Australia's Murdoch University found the debilitating conditions often occur on the same side of the body with overlapping symptoms, a news release from the university said Monday.

CRPS and migraine symptoms like limb pain, sensitivity to light and touch, and forehead tenderness often appear on the same side, it said, adding that CRPS is a rare, serious condition occasionally triggered by limb injuries such as fractures or sprains, with persistent pain that may last for months or years and can spread beyond the site of injury.

The study, published in the journal Cephalalgia, surveyed 88 adult CRPS patients and found that 66 percent reported migraines that had started or gotten worse after the onset of CRPS, with 22 percent suffering near-daily headaches.

The research was an important step towards more effective treatment of these debilitating conditions, said Professor Peter Drummond from Murdoch University's School of Psychology.

"We found that migraine headaches often began or got worse after the injury that triggered CRPS. There seemed to be a direct connection between the limb injury and the headaches as they were often on the same side of the body and symptoms overlapped. That is, one condition may feed the other," he said.

The findings back the theory that the injury that sparks CRPS may increase sensitivity to pain long-term, which then fuels both migraine and CRPS symptoms. Over time, the two conditions may worsen each other.

The study recommends screening for migraine in CRPS clinics and screening for CRPS signs in headache clinics as practical considerations for clinicians, advocating integrated pain management approaches.

### Outdoor time helps office workers beat stress

## A taste of nature can provide calm and balance during the workday

NEW YORK, Jan 12, (AP): The crisp crinkle of fallen leaves beneath your feet. The swish and trickle of water moving through a stream. A breath of crisp, fresh air.

Spending time in nature can be invigorating or produce feelings of peace and calm. But many professions allow little time or access to the outdoors during the workday.

After a youth spent climbing trees and playing soccer, Anna Rose Smith found it difficult when her first job as a psychotherapist in Utah required working in a windowless office.

So she spent her lunch breaks outside, walking to nearby fountains or gardens. She picked up flower petals or leaves from the ground and brought them back to her desk, where she would listen to recorded bird songs, sometimes incorporating the soothing chirps into sessions with clients.

"It helps to just have that reminder that these things are going on outside," Smith said. "I can remember, no matter what happens in this room or with my job today, there's still going to be birds singing."

Getting to trees or shorelines can be challenging during work hours, especially in cold weather and urban environments. But there are ways to enjoy the outdoors and to bring the natural world into your place of work, even if it's a windowless cubicle.

Scheduled meetings don't have to take place indoors. An in-person appointment can happen on a park bench. Smith sometimes suggests a "walk and talk" meeting at a nearby greenway.

Mobile devices mean virtual get-togethers also aren't limited to conventional work spaces. You can also attend Zoom meetings while walking a woody path.

Smith will ask if she can participate in an online meeting with her smartphone and headphones, allowing her to "still be able to get sunlight on my face or see water and plants and birds," she said.

"I do definitely feel more calm," Smith, who grew up in South Dakota but now lives in a more moderate climate in North Carolina, said. "I think it helps with focus as well. I'm just feeling more peaceful and optimistic."

Atlantic Packaging, a sustainable packaging manufacturer headquartered in Wilmington, North Carolina, encourages employees to hold meetings in the courtyards of its facilities or while taking a walk, said Becca Schusler, the company's wellness director.

The company added fig trees and native plants to its Charlotte location. It



Hikers move amongst the fall foliage at Ricketts Glen State Park in Benton, Pa. Oct 14, 2025. (AP)

launched a nature challenge in 2024 in which employees tracked the time they spent outdoors while dog walking, eating meals, attending meetings or watching a sunset. Participants uploaded photos into a group chat from their workstations around the US.

"It was just so wonderful because we got sunrises in the mornings, sunsets at night from all different areas, from the beach to the mountains in Nevada," Schusler said.

Some employees reported they felt like they handled stress better as a result of spending more time outside, she said.

Separate from meetings, a group of Atlantic Packaging employees get together for "Walk it out Wednesdays," a weekly time to take strolls together. "It helps provide a quick break in the day where they can reset and refocus," Schusler said.

The Ford Motor Company also has encouraged employees to move outdoors. When it redesigned its Dearborn, Michigan, headquarters in 2025, the automaker included native plants, walking paths and outdoor pavilions, and suggested people use the grounds for meetings. The parking lot was put further away from the main building by design so people would walk for a few minutes by tall grasses, rocky outcroppings, bridges and flowers.

"We are very careful about how we are engineering space so that our brains and our bodies react positively," said Jennifer Kolstad, Ford's global and brand design director. "Designing for human health is our priority, our responsibility."

When temperatures dip and more time is spent indoors, windows can provide a connection with nature.

The designers who laid out Ford's new headquarters placed offices in the center of floors so exterior walls with tall

windows could be enjoyed by everyone in collaborative spaces, Kolstad said.

During Smith's windowless office days, she kept a pothos plant in the room. The greenery didn't need much light and survived with the dose it got when Smith moved it to spend weekends in a colleague's office that had a window.

"If it's really ugly weather, extreme, then I think that's where windows are truly a godsend," she said.

To catch some sunshine and feel the wind on your face during a commute, consider biking all or part of the way. Many cities and towns have bicycle sharing programs. A warm coat and mittens can keep you from getting too cold while pedaling. Layer up with a neck gaiter, balaclava or hat under your helmet.

Erin Mantz, who works in Washington, D.C., as vice president of marketing for public relations firm Zeno Group, walks to a Pilates class before work four times a week, often before the sun rises. On the days she works from home, she takes breaks to walk her dog on the meandering paths in her neighborhood.

Mantz said that as a child living in Chicago, she often played at the park with neighborhood friends while bundled up in winter gear. She found it difficult to maintain her connection with nature when she had prior jobs that called for working in an office full-time.

"Growing up Gen X, we were always running around outside, and you have that great feeling of freedom and fresh air," she said.

Now that she has a hybrid work schedule, she's realized that spending time outdoors helps her feel relaxed and destressed.

"It's so good for me," Mantz said. "The fresh air reminds me of that youthfulness of being outside, and I think it's physical and mental, honestly. I feel reinvigorated."

### NASA launches exoplanet-observing mission

## Chinese astronauts conduct key experiments on space station

BEIJING, Jan 12, (Xinhua): The Shenzhou-21 crew aboard China's Tiangong space station have recently successfully completed a series of crucial in-orbit training exercises and advanced scientific experiments, laying solid groundwork for future missions and scientific discovery.

A video report by China Media Group on Sunday night showed the astronauts engaged in comprehensive drills, including teleoperated rendezvous and docking, medical rescue procedures and emergency evacuation training last week.

These activities are designed to enhance the crew's operational proficiency and emergency response capabilities during their long-term stay in orbit, it said.

According to the report, for the teleoperated docking training, astronauts practiced using manual control devices to simulate the delicate process of guiding

spacecraft. The medical drill focused on familiarizing the crew with the location and operation of medical equipment, reviewing protocols to ensure preparedness for potential health incidents.

Notably, the team conducted an emergency evacuation drill, simulating a fire scenario requiring a swift exit from the station module.

Beyond training, the crew made significant progress in several scientific research projects. In the field of space medicine, astronauts utilized VR headsets and electroencephalogram (EEG) equipment to conduct studies on eye-brain coordination.

This research aims to analyze the patterns and changes in astronauts' brain control signals under weightless conditions, potentially contributing to future brain-computer interaction technologies.

Simultaneously, the in-situ optical study of lithium-

ion battery electrochemistry progressed smoothly. The findings are expected to provide vital theoretical support for developing more reliable and efficient lithium-ion batteries for future space exploration endeavors.

The Shenzhou-21 manned spacecraft was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Oct. 31, 2025. Following the launch, the Shenzhou-21 and Shenzhou-20 crews carried out China's seventh in-orbit handover. On Dec. 9, the Shenzhou-21 crew completed their mission's first series of extravehicular activities.

Meanwhile, NASA launched a new satellite mission into low Earth orbit on Sunday to study the atmospheres of exoplanets and their host stars.

The mission, codenamed Pandora, lifted off aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket at 5:44 a.m. Pacific Time from Vandenberg Space Force Base in the U.S. state of California on Sunday.

### What science says about using weighted vests

## Weighted vest helps with fitness, but it's not a cure-all: experts

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

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**By Kristen Marie Beavers**  
Wake Forest University

Health and fitness trends come and go, and many fads don't deliver on their promises - remember vibrating belts or sauna suits? Today, weighted vests, made from sturdy fabrics like nylon and filled with iron sand or small weights, are gaining widespread use. Here's what to know about them:

Weighted vests have been around for centuries, but they have recently surged in popularity in response to a broader shift in thinking about exercise. No longer confined to the gym, physical activity is increasingly about maximizing health benefits of the movements people already do - things like walking, climbing stairs or cleaning their homes.

Weighted vests fit squarely into this philosophy. They offer a simple, manageable way to add resistance to everyday activities. And they don't require additional time, complex equipment or major changes to established routines.

I study health and exercise science and have analyzed the effects of exercising with weighted vests. In my view, they represent a low-tech, high-impact opportunity to sneak resistance training into everyday activities. Research has shown that adding weight can help with building muscle

and bone, as well as losing weight and keeping it off.

As with any tool, however, the results depends on how you use it.

The human body has great capacity to adapt to environmental stress. Weighted vests add mechanical stress, or load, to the body, requiring muscles and bones to withstand more force than usual.

Many parts of the body respond to this challenge. The brain learns to "recruit," or activate, muscle fibers more effectively. This can help prevent injury and increase strength and performance.

Reacting to greater stress can improve muscle power and agility, which are vital for preventing injuries. Carrying a heavier load also makes your heart work harder, which improves cardiac health.

Finally, people need strong balance and proprioception, or body awareness, to protect joints and avoid falls and fractures, especially as they age. Evidence suggests that weighted vests can improve these capabilities.

Several lines of research - especially in aging, obesity and mobility science - have found that weighted vests provide meaningful benefits. They include:

■ Improved muscle function: In one study from 2002, older people who wore a vest during a 12-week stair-climbing exercise program showed greater muscle power and performance in their legs.

■ Potential for bone health benefits: A 1993 study showed that bone density modestly increased in older women wearing a weighted vest during a weekly low-level exercise class. A 2003 study in which subjects wore weighted vests during 32 weeks of walking and strength training found significant improvement in hip bone density.

■ Metabolic improvements: In a 2025 study, my research group found that older adults who wore weighted vests for 10 hours per day while dieting ended up regaining less weight in the following year than older adults who dieted without wearing a weighted vest. These findings seem to be driven by metabolic improvements associated with weighted vest use.

Weighted vests are not a panacea, and there are limits to what wearing one can accomplish. My research, including a recently completed randomized clinical trial called INVEST in Bone Health, has sought to answer whether weighted vests can protect bone health during weight loss in older adults.

As we lose weight, we also tend to lose bone - a particular concern for older adults

whose bones are already more fragile. Bone loss can increase the risk of fractures, threatening independence, mobility and overall quality of life.

In the INVEST in Bone Health study, we enrolled 150 older adults with obesity whose average age was 66. Of the group, 75% were women. We assigned them to three groups for a 12-month weight loss program that included meal replacement products and behavioral counseling.

The first group focused on weight loss alone. The second group engaged in the same weight loss program and also wore adjustable weighted vests for eight hours a day, with weight added to match the weight they lost, so that their bodies carried a constant load. The third group took part in weight loss activities and in supervised exercise using weight training machines.

After 12 months, we found that all participants had lost about 10% of their body weight, which was a positive outcome. However, they also had experienced significant declines in hip bone density, ranging between 1.2% and 1.9%. Wearing a weighted vest did not prevent bone loss at the hip compared with weight loss alone. Neither did resistance training.

Both the weighted-vest and resistance-training groups did show increased markers of bone formation compared with weight loss alone. In other words, weighted vest use and resistance exercise showed some evidence of bone growth, which may translate into skeletal benefits over time.

In addition, we recently presented findings at a national aging conference suggesting that weighted vests are more likely to benefit bone health in women than in men, which may be due to sex differences in bone sensitivity. We also found evidence that standing more while wearing the vests positively influences bone health. These findings reflect a growing understanding that weighted vests work more effectively in some people and situations than others. In adopting any new weight-bearing activity, it's important to "start low and go slow" to avoid injury. Consult with your doctor, especially if you are new to exercise. (AP)

### Dengue cases

## Polio drive to reach 45m kids

ISLAMABAD, Jan 12, (Xinhua): Pakistan will vaccinate more than 45 million children during its first nationwide polio eradication campaign of 2026, scheduled to run from Feb. 2 to Feb. 8, health authorities said on Saturday.

The country's emergency operations center said the week-long campaign will be conducted across the country, with vaccination teams administering oral polio vaccine to children under the age of five.

The campaign will be held simultaneously in Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan as part of coordinated cross-border efforts to interrupt poliovirus transmission, the center added.

More than 400,000 workers will take part in the drive, carrying out door-to-door vaccination and related activities nationwide.

The authorities urged parents to cooperate with vaccination teams to protect their children from lifelong disability caused by poliovirus, and emphasized the importance of completing routine childhood immunization alongside polio vaccination. □ □ □

**Dengue:** Sri Lanka has recorded 2,170 dengue cases during the first nine days of 2026, health officials said on Saturday.

Prashila Samaraweera, community medical specialist of the National Dengue Control Unit, told journalists that a "high-risk dengue situation" has been identified across 41 Medical Officer of Health (MOH) divisions. She said health teams have intensified surveillance and mosquito-control operations in these areas.

Samaraweera added that school principals and local health authorities have been instructed to carry out dengue-control programs ahead of this year's Advanced Level examinations and before schools reopen.



IOC gives thumbs-up

Milan-Cortina hockey arena set for NHL stars

MILAN, Jan 12, (AP): The International Olympic Committee says it's impressed with the new hockey arena for the Milan Cortina Games, even if parts of it still look like a building site.

The Santiagiulia Ice Hockey Arena will be one of the focal points of the games next month with NHL players returning to the Olympics for the first time in more than a decade.

However, the venue has also been the focal point of the buildup with construction delays and other matters causing concern.

It is finally ready - or at least almost.

The ice rink is in place and most of the seating, but there is still an abundance of plastic sheeting, while some areas such as the locker rooms are far from finished.

"What I see personally is an extraordinary seating bowl and this venue ... looks fantastic," IOC Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi said Sunday. "The last time I came was before Christmas, and this is radically different. So, so much progress. Anyone involved here, hat off.

"There's only one way to go, and that is the view of the experts ... and what they tell us, first class."

The NHL has previously expressed concern about ice quality due to construction delays with deputy commissioner Bill Daly saying the league would not send its players if there were any safety concerns.

The IOC shared some of those worries.

"Although we were facing a lot of difficulties, we always had a very strong plan," Dubi said. "Now having a plan does not mean that you're going to get there, but there was so much oversight and so much expertise thrown at this venue with probably the best engineers, the best Ice Meister, everything that could be thrown at that venue was thrown.

"So, did I ever have doubts? No. Was I concerned? Certainly. Because if you were here six months ago it didn't look this way I can tell you. It's incredible what they've

done, really incredible."

Dubi was speaking on the final day of a long-awaited, three-day test event at the arena.

The original test event scheduled in December didn't happen because of the construction delays. The one scheduled this weekend - the final league and cup games of the domestic season - is less than a month out from the women's competition.

The NHL is expected to release a statement at the end of its visit to the new arena, with a delegation having spent time here over the past three days.

The International Ice Hockey Federation can see no barrier to the NHL returning to the Olympics for the first time since 2014, especially after having simulated Olympic conditions at the test event with three matches a day on Saturday and Sunday.

"We know how it's difficult to have a high level of quality of ice for the third game of the third period. Yesterday that was a good test because that was fantastic, the puck was sliding, it was not bumping," IIHF President Luc Tardif said. "So we'll go back in Zurich happy and confident.

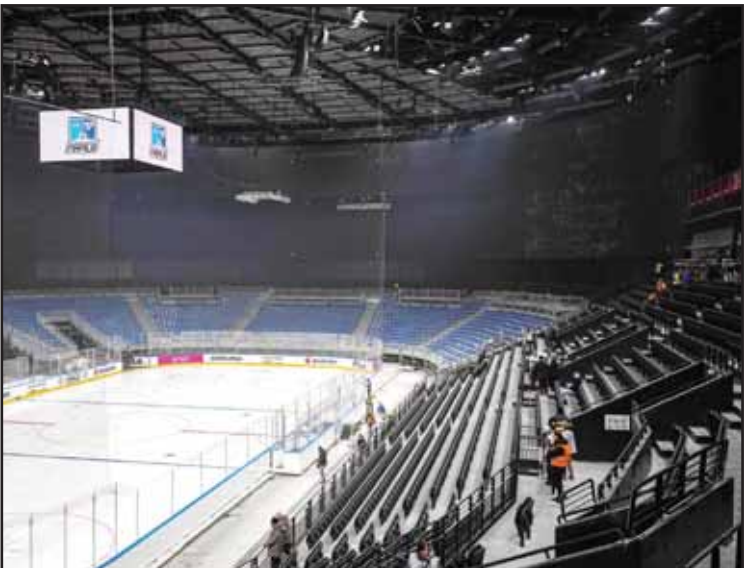
"We're going to make a report, but yesterday that was a test, so there is no reason that NHL will not come ... We want to make sure about the quality of ice, the security for the players, doesn't matter where they come from. So now I can say we're ready for the competition."

The players themselves said they were happy with the quality of the ice.

Canadian James Livingston, who plays for the Wipptal Broncos, said he was sure his compatriots in the NHL would be fine.

"I mean we all grew up playing on ponds back in Canada, so I'm sure that whatever gets thrown at them, they're gonna adapt and they're gonna enjoy it," he told The Associated Press. "And they are playing for their country. So, I think it will be a great competition."

The men's Olympic hockey tournament is scheduled from Feb. 11-22, the women's from Feb. 5-19.



The Milano Santiagiulia Ice Hockey Arena for the Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics. (AP)

Beijing sinks to losses as Shanghai storms to nine-game winning streak

BEIJING, Jan 12, (Xinhua): The Beijing Ducks fell 118-100 to the Shenzhen Aviators for their second loss of the week, while the Shanghai Sharks beat the Shanxi Loongs 96-81 for a ninth straight win as the 13th round of the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) season ended.

Beijing dropped to fifth in the standings after the loss. Returning forward Zeng Fanbo and newly signed Victor Bailey Jr. have yet to develop clear chemistry with the team. Although Beijing's leading scorer Eugene German scored 34 points, the Ducks committed 16 turnovers, repeatedly fueling Shenzhen's fast breaks.

For Shenzhen, Terquavion Smith shot 16 of 25 from the field for 45 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, while Wang Haran made five three-pointers on his way to 25 points.

In another marquee matchup of the round, Kenneth Lofton Jr. had 29 points and 15 rebounds to lead Shanghai past Shanxi. The win extended Shanghai's streak

to nine games and lifted the Sharks to the top of the standings.

Shanxi stayed within striking distance through the first three quarters but went cold in the final 10 minutes, scoring eight points in the fourth. Hamidou Diallo scored 22 points in the loss.

In other 13th-round games, defending champion Zhejiang Lions beat the Ningbo Rockets 84-78, the Shandong Heroes extended its winning streak to six games after beating the Ningjing Monkey Kings 89-76, the Guangdong Southern Tigers defeated the Liaoning Flying Leopards 108-78, the Qingdao Eagles edged the Jilin Northeast Tigers 82-74, the Xinjiang Flying Tigers beat the Jiangsu Dragons 99-60, the Fujian Sturgeons defeated the Tianjin Pioneers 115-94, the Guangzhou Loong Lions beat the winless Sichuan Blue Whales 106-76, and the Zhejiang Golden Bulls beat the Beijing Royal Fighters 89-69.

DeRozan reaches 26,000 career points in Kings win over Rockets



Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, front, pursues a loose ball with Denver Nuggets forward Spencer Jones in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

Suns breeze past Wizards

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Jan 12, (AP): DeMar DeRozan had 22 points and became the 23rd player in NBA history to reach 26,000 points, helping the Sacramento Kings beat the Houston Rockets 111-98.

DeRozan reached the milestone in the second quarter.

Zach LaVine added 18 points, Russell Westbrook had 15 points, 10 assists and six rebounds, and Malik Monk also scored 15 points in the Kings' first victory of the year. They are 9-30.

Kings guard Dennis Schroder served the first game of a three-game suspension for a confrontation with Lakers star Luka Doncic after a game in Los Angeles on Dec. 28.

Amen Thompson had 31 points and 13 rebounds for Houston. Kevin Durant added 23 points, and Alperen Sengun had 19 points and nine rebounds. The Rockets have lost four of five to fall to 22-14.

**Suns 112, Wizards 93**

In Phoenix, Royce O'Neale scored 19 points, Devin Booker added 17 and the Phoenix Suns breezed to a 112-93 victory over the Washington Wizards.

Phoenix has won 10 of its last 13 games.

The Suns led 96-65 going into the fourth quarter after Dillon Brooks scored 11 points in the third, hitting three 3-pointers. The sloppy Wizards shot just 6 of 21 (28.6%) in the third and had seven turnovers.

The Suns improved to 14-5 at home and were able to sit their starters for the entire fourth quarter. O'Neale made 5 of 9 shots from 3-point range while Brooks finished with 16 points and made four threes. Booker added eight assists.

The Phoenix backups were productive - Grayson Allen had 12 points, Oso Ighodaro added 10 and Ryan Dunn had nine.

Washington's Alex Sarr finished with 19 points and 15 rebounds, while rookie Tre Johnson also had 19 points. The Wizards - who had 23 turnovers - have lost three straight after their best stretch of the season, winning five of seven.

**Timberwolves 104, Spurs 103**

In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards banked in a go-ahead, 3-foot runner with 16.8 seconds and the Minnesota Timberwolves overcame a 19-point deficit to beat the San Antonio Spurs.

Edwards scored 23 points. Julius Randle had 15 points, eight rebounds and the winning defensive possession against Victor Wembanyama, who had 29 points in 27 minutes in his return to San Antonio's starting lineup. The 7-foot-4 Frenchman had trouble shedding Randle and his upper-body strength, clanking a 16-foot jumper with 6.6



Sacramento Kings guard DeMar DeRozan (10) drives to the basket with Houston Rockets guard Josh Okogie, right, defending during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Sacramento, Calif. (AP)

seconds to go.

De'Aaron Fox's 3-point heave near the buzzer missed, too, sending the Minnesota crowd into a frenzy after the back-and-forth finish between two of the top teams in the Western Conference.

Donte DiVincenzo scored 19 points with a major spark for the comeback from the 19-point deficit early in the third quarter for the Timberwolves (26-14), who are 16-6 since Thanksgiving Day.

**Thunder 124, Heat 112**

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 29 points after a slow start and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Miami Heat.

Jalen Williams had 19 points for Oklahoma City, and Chet Holmgren and Ajay Mitchell each added 16. The Thunder have won three straight.

Andrew Wiggins scored 23 points - including seven 3-pointers - to lead Miami, which has lost three straight. Tyler Herro had 19 points and Pelle Larsson added 16.

Gilgeous-Alexander missed his first five shots of the game, but then went 10 for 14 from the field the rest of the way to top the 20-point mark for the 110th consecutive game.

With about four minutes remaining in the third, Gilgeous-Alexander - who had 16 points in the quarter - made a 3-pointer and pumped his fist while he walked back toward the other end as Miami called a timeout. It was part of a 15-0 run that gave the Thunder a 13-point lead.

Both teams came in among the top four in the NBA in defensive rating, and while Oklahoma City and Miami both shot better than 50%, the defenses left their mark.

**Hawks 124, Warriors 111**

In San Francisco, Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 24 points, Jalen Johnson contributed 23 points, 11 rebounds and six assists and the Atlanta Hawks beat the Golden State Warriors.

Luke Kennard had a season-best 22 points and six 3-pointers off the bench in the Hawks' third straight win.

Stephen Curry scored 31 for his 13th 30-point performance of the season and Jimmy Butler had 30 points, seven rebounds and six assists in his fourth 30-point outing as the Warriors had a three-game home winning streak snapped. They had one other game both scoring 30 or more points and the Warriors also lost that one at Orlando on Nov. 18.

**Nuggets 108, Bucks 104**

In Denver, Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 25 points, Aaron Gordon had 23 and the injury-ravaged Denver Nuggets beat the Milwaukee Bucks.

Peyton Watson had 19 points, eight rebounds and six assists for the Nuggets. Over his team's past seven games, the fourth-year guard has been averaging 23.7 points and 6.9 rebounds per game. Zeke Nnaji added 14 points and 11 rebounds for his first double-double of the season.

Denver was without five of its top eight scorers, including Nikola Jokic (bone bruise in left knee) and Jamal Murray (sprained left ankle). The five sidelined players are averaging a combined 84.6 points per game this season.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 31 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds for the Bucks. Myles Turner scored 16 points while Bobby Portis and AJ Green added 14 apiece, Ryan Rollins was held to two points, snapping a career-best streak of 37 consecutive games with at least 10 points.

**Raptors 116, 76ers 115 OT**

In Toronto, Scottie Barnes hit a tiebreaking free throw with 0.8 seconds remaining in overtime and the Toronto Raptors beat the Philadelphia 76ers in the first of back-to-back meetings between short-hand-

ed teams.

Barnes made the first of two from the line and intentionally missed the second as Toronto won its third straight home meeting with the 76ers. He finished 10 for 12 at the line.

Barnes scored 31 points, Jamal Sheard added a career-high 22 and Immanuel Quickley had 20 as Toronto won its third straight at home. Collin Murray-Boyles had 17 points and matched his career-high with 15 rebounds.

Tyrese Maxey scored 38 points for the 76ers and VJ Edgecombe had 17. Kelly Oubre Jr., Domnick Barlow and Quentin Grimes each scored 13 points but Philadelphia lost for the second time in seven games.

**Magic 128, Pelicans 118**

In Orlando, Paulo Banchemo had 23 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, Desmond Bane added 27 points and Orlando beat the New Orleans Pelicans in Magic center Moritz Wagner's return from a serious knee injury.

Wagner missed more than a year after tearing his left ACL, last playing Dec. 21, 2024. He had eight points and two rebounds in 10 minutes Sunday in the Magic's last game before their two-game series against Memphis in Berlin and London.

Zion Williamson led New Orleans with 22 points, and Trey Murphy III and Jordan Poole added 21 each. The Pelicans have lost 10 of 11.

**Grizzlies 103, Nets 98**

In Memphis, Cedric Coward hit two late 3-pointers and scored 21 points to help the Memphis Grizzlies hold off the Brooklyn Nets.

Jock Landale added 16 points and nine rebounds, and Santi Aldama had 15 points and eight rebounds. Cam Spencer had 12 points and 12 assists in the Grizzlies' last game before their two-game series against Orlando in Berlin and London.

Noah Clowney and Tyrese Martin led the Nets with 17 points each, and Danny Wolf and Jalen Wilson scored 11 points each. Wolf also had 10 rebounds. Martin was 6 of 8, going 5 of 7 from 3-point range.

Brooklyn led 98-90 after Clowney split a pair of free throws with three minutes Memphis scored the final 13 points, with Coward's second late 3 giving the Grizzlies a 101-98 lead with just less than a minute left.

Memphis, which squandered a 21-point second-half lead Friday night in a loss to Oklahoma City, watched the Nets opened the second half with a 17-6 rally to pull even at 67.

Michael Porter Jr., who had 18 points and six assists in Friday's 121-105 loss to the Clippers, sat for the game due to rest.

Team USA Figure Skating brims with confidence

ST. LOUIS, Jan 12, (AP): World champions Ilia Malinin and the ice dance duo of Madison Chock and Evan Bates will anchor one of the strongest U.S. Figure Skating teams in history when they head to Italy for the Milan Cortina Olympics in less than a month.

Malinin, fresh off his fourth straight national title, will be the prohibitive favorite to follow in the footsteps of Nathan Chen by delivering another men's gold medal for the American squad when he steps on the ice at the Milano Ice Skating Arena.

Chock and Bates, who won their record-setting seventh U.S. title Saturday night, also will be among the Olympic favorites, as will world champion Alysa Liu and women's teammate Amber Glenn, fresh off her third consecutive national title.

U.S. Figure Skating announced its full squad of 16 athletes for the Winter Games during a made-for-TV celebration Sunday.

Malinin will be joined on the men's side by Andrew Torgashev, the all-or-nothing 24-year-old from Coral Springs, Florida, and Maxim Naumov,

the 24-year-old from Simsbury, Connecticut, who fulfilled the hopes of his late parents by making the Olympic team.

Vadim Naumov and Evgenia Shishkova were returning from a talent camp in Kansas when their American Airlines flight collided with a military helicopter and crashed into the icy Potomac River in January 2025. One of the last conversations they had with their son was about what it would take for him to follow in their footsteps by becoming an Olympian.

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Hasaranga and Shanaka star

# Sri Lanka stuns Pakistan to square Twenty20 series

DAMBULLA, Sri Lanka, Jan 12, (AP): Sri Lanka ended a 14-year drought by beating Pakistan in a Twenty20 game at home to draw their three-match series 1-1.

The hosts won the third T20 by 14 runs .

In a rain-reduced match, Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka smashed five sixes in 34 runs off nine balls that propelled Sri Lanka to a strong 160-6 in its allotted 12 overs after Pakistan won the toss and chose to bowl.

Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha matched his counterpart with a blistering 45 off just 12 balls before Sri Lanka fast bowlers Matheesha Pathirana (2-34) and Eshan Malinga (1-27) bowled two tidy overs at the end and restricted the visitors to 146-8.

Pakistan won the first T20 by six wickets before the second game was washed out without a ball being bowled in Dambulla.

The series was part of both teams' preparations for next month's T20 World Cup to be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka. Pakistan is due to play all its World Cup games in Sri Lanka.

Agha had slashed the target to 101 inside the first four overs of Pakistan's lively chase



Hasaranga



Shanaka

when he smacked three sixes and five fours. But Pathirana provided a crucial breakthrough when Agha holed out to short fine leg while attempting a ramp shot against the pacer.

Key wrist-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (4-35) then picked up two wickets in his first five deliveries - Saim Ayub and Usman Khan were caught in the outfield as Pakistan slipped to 67-4.

Mohammad Nawaz (28) and debutant

wicketkeeper-batter Khawaja Nafay (26) revived the chase with a breezy 49-run stand before Hasaranga grabbed two more wickets in his final over.

With 30 needed off the final two overs, Pathirana clean bowled Nawaz with a slower delivery in the penultimate over which went for 10 runs. Malinga's final over conceded just five runs, including four wides.

It was Sri Lanka's first T20 win against Pakistan at home since 2012.

Sri Lanka's top-order batters earlier kept scoring at a rapid pace in challenging conditions for the bowlers, who had to bowl with the wet ball due to soggy outfield.

Opener Kamil Mishara scored 20 off 8 balls;

Kusal Mendis capitalized on a dropped catch with a knock of 30 off 16; and former white-ball captain Charith Asalanka scored 21 off 13.

Shanaka and Janith Liyanage (22 not out off 8 balls) provided the late flurry as Sri Lanka scored 58 runs in the final three overs - 19 runs in the 10th over, 15 in the 11th and 24 in the 12th.

Shanaka stayed deep in his crease and smacked Wasim for three successive sixes in the last over.

Pakistan will play a three-match T20 series against Australia at home before the T20 World Cup begins Feb. 7 while Sri Lanka hosts England in a white-ball series later this month.

# Man United out of FA Cup, faces trophy-less season



Brighton's Pascal Gross- left, and Manchester United's Kobbie Mainoo run for the ball during the FA Cup third round soccer match between Manchester United and Brighton in Manchester, England. (AP)

‘20-time English champion not in a good moment’

**MANCHESTER, England, Jan 12, (AP): Managerless Manchester United crashed out of the FA Cup with a 2-1 defeat to Brighton.**

At the end of a week that saw the storied Premier League team and 13-time FA Cup winner fire head coach Ruben Amorim, the loss at Old Trafford has likely consigned United to another trophyless season and was greeted with loud jeers from the home crowd.

Interim coach Darren Fletcher admitted the 20-time English champion was “not in a good moment,” but said it was too soon to write the season off with Champions League qualification still achievable.

“It’s probably not what fans want to hear about Manchester United because they’ve been winning cups and challenging for the Premier League,” he said. “Don’t waste the season. That would be the challenge that I would set. That’s the challenge that probably the players feel like they need to achieve this year.”

Former United striker Danny Welbeck scored what proved to be the decisive goal in the 64th minute, and Benjamin Sesko’s late header was only a consolation for the hosts in the third-round match.

United has exited both domestic knockout competitions at the earliest possible stage this season, following the humbling loss to fourth-tier Grimsby in the English League Cup. The latest defeat means United will play the bare minimum of 40 competitive games for a top division team this season.

Its only chance of silverware this term is the Premier League, which would require a remarkable turnaround with United currently seventh in the standings and 17 points behind leader Arsenal with 17 games left.

A trophyless campaign would be back-to-back seasons in which United has ended up empty-handed.

The club’s hierarchy hope an interim coach will

be able to salvage the season by securing Champions League qualification. United has spoken to former players Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Michael Carrick about taking on the role until the summer.

Fletcher, who has taken charge of the two games since Amorim’s departure, is also a contender, as well as former United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy.

The loss to Brighton underlined the challenge facing the interim coach.

“Any time you come in at Manchester United, it’s a massive job,” Fletcher said. “It’s not about a manager, it’s not about directors. It’s about everyone and the players have to group together, take responsibility, find a way of improving quickly and taking on the challenge for the rest of the season.”

Brajan Gruda fired Brighton ahead in the 12th, with Welbeck doubling the advantage after the break. Sesko scored his third goal in two games in the 85th, but substitute Shea Lacey was sent off four minutes later and United could not force an equalizer to take the game to extra time.

“I gave it my best and ultimately I’m disappointed to not be able to win a game or to get a result today,” said Fletcher, who drew his other game in charge 2-2 with relegation-fighting Burnley.

Arsenal advanced earlier Sunday with Gabriel Martinelli scoring a hat trick in a 4-1 win at Portsmouth.

Martinelli’s treble helped the Premier League leader come 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 after Andre Dozzell scored an own-goal.

Martinelli put the visitors ahead with a flicked header in the 25th. He slid in for his second six minutes after the break and headed in his hat-trick goal in the 72nd. It was the first time the Brazilian had scored a hat trick for Arsenal.

Victory could have been even more emphatic if Noni Madueke had converted from the penalty spot in the first half.

“It’s always tough to go into these places, es-

pecially in the manner that we started the game, conceding the early goal, but we managed to turn things around so I’m very happy,” said manager Mikel Arteta.

Record 14-time FA Cup winner Arsenal last lifted the trophy in Arteta’s first season in charge in 2020. It was the last major honor the London club won, but victory against Portsmouth maintains its four-pronged trophy pursuit along with the Premier League title, the Champions League and the English League Cup.

“I think we are very privileged to be where we are, and the games that we have to play, which means that we are in every competition,” Arteta said.

Top-flight Leeds was also behind to Championship opposition, but recovered from 1-0 down to beat Derby 3-1 at Pride Park.

Third-tier Mansfield pulled off an upset to beat Championship side Sheffield United 4-3 and Norwich routed Walsall 5-1, with Jovon Makama scoring a hat trick. Norwich head coach Philippe Clement later said that U.S. international Josh Sargent refused to play in the game.

Relegation-fighting West Ham needed extra time to beat QPR 2-1. Valentin ‘Taty’ Castellanos’ goal saw Nuno Espirito Santo’s team end a 10-match winless run.

West Bromwich Albion beat Swansea 6-5 on penalties following a 2-2 draw after extra time. Hull won 4-3 against Blackburn on penalties after a 0-0 draw.

Norwich said a home fan died at the conclusion of its win over Walsall at Carrow Road. A medical emergency occurred after the game and the Championship club announced the death of the fan later in the day.

“The club would like to sincerely thank medical staff, stewards and nearby supporters for their efforts to assist during the emergency and will ensure those involved receive the appropriate care,” a Norwich statement read.

“Everyone at Norwich City would like to send their heartfelt condolences to the supporter’s family and friends.”

# Bayern routs Wolfsburg to move 11 clear

BERLIN, Jan 12, (AP): Michael Olise scored twice as Bayern Munich started the new year by routing Wolfsburg 8-1 with six second-half goals to move 11 points clear at the top of the Bundesliga.

Olise, Harry Kane and Luis Díaz picked apart the Wolfsburg defense on Sunday in a display of dominance which leaves Bayern firmly on course to defend the title in only the 16th game of the 34-game season.

Bayern coach Vincent Kompany was pleased his players didn’t let up.

“It’s these moments where it’s five, six, 7-1, and they keep running, they keep pressing and keep trying to score goals,” he told broadcaster DAZN. “I have to say, I like that.”

In freezing temperatures for Bayern’s first game since the winter break, Olise got a brace and Kane and Díaz one apiece, along with goals for substitutes Raphael Guerreiro and Leon Goretzka, and two Wolfsburg own-goals.

Bayern only had two nervous moments all game. The first was Dzenan Pejcinovic’s goal for Wolfsburg in the 13th, which leveled the score at



Wolfsburg's Saël Kumbédi and Munich's Luis Díaz, right, in action during the Bundesliga soccer match between Bayern Munich and VfL Wolfsburg in Munich, Germany. (AP)

1-1 after right back Konrad Laimer missed an interception.

The other was a brief injury scare for Kane, who needed treatment after being caught on the ankle by defender Moritz Jenz midway through the first half but was soon back in action.

It was Bayern’s biggest margin of victory in a Bundesliga game since Kompany took over ahead of the 2024-25 season. His team has scored a remarkable 63 goals in 16 league games this season, nearly four per game, and conceded only 12.

Bayern hasn’t lost a Bundesliga game since March and remains the only unbeaten team in any of Europe’s five biggest leagues. Wolfsburg is 14th, three points above the relegation zone, as a troubled season hits a new low.

Bayern’s closest rivals all had difficulties this weekend as second-place Borussia Dortmund drew 3-3 with Eintracht Frankfurt, Bayer Leverkusen lost 4-1 to Stuttgart and Leipzig’s game was postponed due to snow.

Wolfsburg’s American midfielder Kevin Paredes entered in the 77th minute, his first match this season after recovering from foot surgery in August.

Also Sunday, United States full back Joe Scally scored his first goal since 2023 as Borussia Mönchengladbach beat Augsburg 4-0. Gladbach moved up two places to 10th after winning at home for only the second time this season.

Effort fuels dream

## Kuwait’s EQUICIETY Dressage Champ’ship draws record riders

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Sheikha Fajr Badr Al-Sabah has announced the completion of all preparations for the upcoming “EQUICIETY” Horse Dressage Championship, set to take place next Friday and Saturday at the Police Sports Club racetrack in Subhan. The event will feature a record number of riders, including both male and female participants.

Sheikha Fajr highlighted the growing popularity of horse dressage, calling it the foundation of equestrian sports. She noted that the 2025-2026 season has already seen a wide range of events and activities promoting dressage, all of which are supported by the Kuwait Equestrian Federation and coordinated with international dressage authorities. Several

championships and training camps were held throughout the season to develop the sport in Kuwait further.

She added, “We began promoting horse dressage several years ago and have had the honor of organizing numerous championships across various clubs with the support of Sheikh Sabah Mubarak Al-Sabah. This effort has helped our dream come true and contributed to the growth of dressage in Kuwait. EQUICIETY is committed to hosting an annual, high-level dressage championship, supported by the Kuwait Equestrian Federation and the Police Sports Club. The Kuwait Equestrian Federation officially recognizes the event and will be overseen by international judges.”



Sheikha Fajr Badr Al-Sabah.

### Best of the Rest

**Wang Xindi wins men’s Aerials World Cup:** China’s Wang Xindi claimed the men’s title, while Australia’s Danielle Scott won the women’s event at the FIS Freestyle Skiing Aerials World Cup stop in Lake Placid on Sunday.

Wang scored 103.50 points in the men’s final with a jump featuring a difficulty degree of 5.000. Ukraine’s Yan Havriuk finished second on 94.12 points. China’s Qi Guangpu also scored 94.12 points but placed third as the Ukrainian was superior in form.

“I’m so happy and very excited. Today, the weather was not good, and a lot of us chose safety today. Thanks to my team and wife for helping me get here,” Wang said.

In the women’s competition held on the same day, Scott took gold with 95.88 points. Wang’s wife Xu Mengtao finished second on 94.01 points, while Kaila Kuhn of the United States claimed bronze with a score of 92.29. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**Ugandans cheer Kiplimo’s third world cross-country gold:** Ugandans have showered praise on long-distance runner Jacob Kiplimo after he clinched a historic third consecutive gold medal at the World Athletics Cross Country Championships in Tallahassee, Florida, on Saturday.

Kiplimo won the senior men’s 10km title in 28:18, finishing ahead of Ethiopia’s Berihu Aregawi, who clocked 28:45.

“Kiplimo defending his 10km senior men’s title to complete a historic back-to-back treble is a very big achievement and we thank him for doing Uganda proud,” Dominic Otuchet, president of Uganda Athletics, told Xinhua on Sunday.

Fans also lauded Kiplimo for his consistency and continued success on the global stage. Sarah Mpalanyi praised the athlete for “always carrying the Ugandan flag high.” (Xinhua)

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NEWS





Daniil Medvedev of Russia holds the winner's trophy after he won the men's final match against Brandon Nakashima of the United States 6-2, 7-6, at the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

# Sports

KD 500 bonus for Al-Arabi players

## Al-Qadsia exits Crown Prince Cup; Club faces overhaul

By Hassan Mosa  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 12: Al-Arabi continued its dominance over Al-Qadsia, as coach Nasser Al-Shatti guided “the Green” to a 2-0 victory over their traditional rival in the Crown Prince Cup quarterfinals at Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium.

This marks Al-Arabi’s sixth win over Al-Qadsia in recent seasons, with the Yellow team claiming only one victory – in last season’s Super Cup semifinal – highlighting Al-Shatti’s growing edge in derby encounters.

With this win, Al-Arabi advances to the

semifinals, maintaining its recent habit of reaching finals, though the club has struggled to secure trophies in recent years.

Club president Abdulaziz Ashour praised the players and staff for their efforts and awarded each player 500 Kuwaiti Dinars for their performance, expressing hopes for continued success en route to the title.

Bahraini player Kamil Al-Aswad returned to action with Al-Arabi, while Nabil Marmouq is expected to leave due to injury.

Meanwhile, Al-Qadsia’s struggles continued. The team is now out of the Crown Prince Cup and has little chance of catching up in the Zain Premier League, sitting fifth with 15 points – 11 behind leader Kuwait Club – and

slim hopes of qualifying for the Gulf Champions League.

Al-Qadsia’s performances this season have been underwhelming, with foreign players failing to make a significant impact.

Many believe the club needs a complete overhaul, including changes to management, technical staff, and player lineup, to restore its former glory.

According to statistics, Al-Qadsia has played 16 matches this season across all competitions, winning 6, losing 6, and drawing 4. In their last 13 matches, the team scored 12 goals and conceded 12, highlighting the need for urgent improvements.



Bahraini player Kamil Al-Aswad waves to fans.

# Kuwait and Qatar in the running to host next Spanish Super Cup as Barcelona retains title

Raphinha double breaks Real heart

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 12, (AP): Raphinha scored twice as Barcelona beat Real Madrid 3-2 in the final of the Spanish Super Cup played in Saudi Arabia.

Raphinha’s 73rd-minute winner came in a fortuitous manner after he slipped while shooting and the shot deflected off Madrid defender Raúl Asencio to fool goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois. The president of the Spanish soccer federation, Rafael Louzán, said Sunday that the final of next year’s edition will be played either in Qatar or Kuwait because Saudi Arabia will be hosting the Asian Cup.

The final will return to Saudi Arabia in 2028 and will be played there until at least through 2030.

The clasico final featured a hectic end to the first half when three stoppage-time goals were scored before the break, two by Real Madrid and one by Barcelona. Barcelona beat Madrid 5-2 in last year’s final, when Raphinha also scored twice.

“We gave all we had,” Raphinha said. “I was emotional at the end of the match, we needed a win like this.”

It was the 16th Super Cup title for Barcelona, more than any other club. Madrid is second with 13 titles.

Kylian Mbappé, who had missed the semifinals of the mini-Super Cup tournament because of a knee issue, entered the match in the 76th but couldn’t do enough to help Madrid equalize. The France forward missed Madrid’s win over Atletico Madrid in the semifinals on Thursday but then traveled from Spain to Saudi Arabia to be available for the final of the mini-tournament.

Robert Lewandowski also scored for Barcelona. Madrid’s goals were scored by Vinicius Júnior and Gonzalo Garcia.

The trophy was lifted by Barcelona defender Ronald Araujo, who had been out since November because of private reasons. Spanish media reports said he was on a mental health break.

The Catalan club opened the scoring in Jeddah on Sunday with Raphinha in a breakaway in the 36th. Madrid equalized with a superb goal from Vinicius two minutes into first-half added time, with the Brazil forward capping a nice



Barcelona players celebrate after winning the Spanish Super Cup final soccer match against Real Madrid at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

run by splitting a couple of defenders before scoring from inside the area.

Vinicius hadn’t scored in 16 matches with Madrid, since October.

Lewandowski put Barcelona back ahead two minutes after Vinicius’ goal, and Garcia evened the game again three minutes later at the end of the

first half.

Madrid had two golden chances to equalize again in added time but couldn’t capitalize on them.

“We have to turn the page as soon as possible,” Madrid coach Xabi Alonso said. “It’s just one game, one competition, and it’s the least important one

we have. We have to look ahead, try to get everyone back together, recover our morale, and move on.”

Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong was sent off in second-half stoppage time.

Barcelona reached the Super Cup final by routing Athletic Bilbao 5-0,

while Madrid defeated Atletico Madrid 2-1.

Barcelona is the first league champion in eight seasons to win the Super Cup, and the first team to retain the trophy since Pep Guardiola’s team won three in a row in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The teams not involved in the Span-

ish Super Cup played a regular round of La Liga matches as the domestic competition reached its midway point.

Fifth-place Espanyol drew 1-1 at second-to-last Levante, while midtable Rayo Vallecano defeated Mallorca 2-1 at home. Barcelona leads the league, sitting four points ahead of Madrid after 19 rounds.

## Variawa’s incredible comeback snatches stage

WADI AD-DAWASIR, Saudi Arabia, Jan 12, (AP): Saood Variawa snatched stage eight from South African compatriot Henk Lategan by three seconds after an impressive comeback drive in the Dakar Rally.

Variawa, only 20 and driving in his third Dakar, started 26th and was in sixth place with 100 kilometers to go in the 483-kilometer loop outside Wadi ad-Dawasir. Then he was third after 414 and second after 448.

For the second straight day Lategan had a stage win ripped from his grasp. On Sunday his Toyota’s rear damper broke 30 kilometers from the finish.

Meanwhile, Luciano Benavides became the overall motorbike leader for the first time in his ninth Dakar after winning a second straight stage and gobbling up all 7 1/2 minutes in bonus time for faultlessly opening the way.

Benavides won the stage by 4:50 over KTM teammate and defending champion Daniel Sanders and replaced Sanders atop the overall by 10 seconds

going into the two-day marathon stage.

Monday’s stage, the longest of the race, had a cocktail of dunes, valleys

and rocks but navigation was easier than expected and it turned into a fast, wind-whipped special.



Driver Saood Variawa and co-driver Francois Cazalet compete during the eighth stage of the Dakar Rally with a start and finish at Wadi Ad Dawasir, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

The top five cars - featuring main title contenders Lategan, Nasser Al-Attiah and Mattias Ekström - were less than a minute apart for the first 400 kilometers until Al-Attiah’s navigation error suddenly dropped him two minutes behind.

Thanks to starting nearly an hour after the opener, Ekström, Variawa sneaked through for his second career stage win. The first last year at 19 made him the youngest stage winner in Dakar history.

Variawa, following his father Shamer as a Dakar racer, suffered tire, navigation and mechanical problems on Sunday but got his Toyota back up to 13th overall with the aim of a maiden top-10 finish.

Al-Attiah’s Dacia got about 45 seconds back in the closing section to finish fifth and limit his time losses to remain the overall leader by four minutes over Ekström, whose Ford was third on the stage, and six minutes over Lategan.

## Rule change makes Semeno available for City in Cup semis

NEWCASTLE, England, Jan 12, (AP): New signing Antoine Semenyo is available to play for Manchester City in the English League Cup semifinals because of a recent rule change - and that hasn’t gone down well at Newcastle.

Semenyo has already played for Bournemouth in the League Cup, having come on as a substitute in its 2-0 loss to Brentford in August.

However, the Ghana international, who joined City in a \$87 million deal last week, can play against Newcastle in the last four rule because of a rule introduced for this season which allows a player to represent up to two clubs in the competition in a single campaign.

The first leg is on Tuesday.

Asked what he thought of the change, Newcastle manager Howe smiled and said ruefully: “Yeah, it was nice to find out that rule had changed after finding out they’d signed him! I have to say that’s one rule change I probably wouldn’t be supportive of at this current moment.”

Semenyo made his debut for City on Saturday and was one of nine scorers in a 10-1 thrashing of third-tier Exeter in the FA Cup.

“Antoine’s had an incredible season,” Howe said of a player who has scored 10 Premier League goals already. “I’m a big admirer of his and he scored on his debut, so fair play to him. I think Man City have signed a very, very good player.”

With Jeremy Doku potentially returning to the starting lineup against Newcastle, City manager Pep Guardiola might choose to switch Semenyo to the right wing at St. James’ Park with Oscar Bobb and Savinho currently out injured.

“In a few actions (against Exeter) he showed what he showed at Bournemouth,” Guardiola said, “and hopefully he can continue to do that here.”