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Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Sovereign wealth funds require caution

THE United States of America is contemplating a legislative change that will subject non-US sovereign wealth funds to domestic business taxation by amending Section 892 of the Tax Code. This section currently exempts foreign governments and their related entities, including sovereign wealth funds and certain pension funds, from taxes on investment activities.

The potential measure will remarkably reduce the returns and profitability of such investments, negatively impacting sovereign wealth funds globally, particularly those from Gulf states, which hold substantial assets in the American stock market, real estate and other sectors.

In case the US Congress approves this amendment, the restriction on investment is expected to trigger capital flight, leading to enormous losses for Gulf sovereign wealth funds, including Kuwaiti funds.

Since a large proportion of these funds is invested in the American market—the largest economy in the world, it is imperative to address the negative impact and mitigate losses arising from the proposed tax change.

Furthermore, Washington's imposition of increased tariffs compounds the losses by restricting global trade and investment.

Capital seeks safe havens. Is there a safe haven for any country other than investing its sovereign wealth funds domestically?

Before examining the negative consequences of the anticipated American decision, it is crucial to consider another angle – the Kuwaiti economy's heavy reliance on oil, which accounts for 90 percent of its revenues.

If oil prices drop due to certain factors like the end of the Ukrainian-Russian war, the resumption of Venezuelan oil production or other swift global shifts, a huge financial deficit is unavoidable.

The best strategy is for countries, particularly Kuwait, to invest their sovereign wealth funds domestically. Kuwait has a pressing need for diversification in various sectors like manufacturing, food production, technology, digital services and entertainment.

The internal investment is vital, considering the long-standing international trend of acquiring natural and rare resources to offset the persistent financial deficits in most European, North American and South American nations.

While the infrastructure development in the Gulf region is showing significant progress, it is unfortunate that Kuwait lags behind, remaining stagnant in its own development efforts.

Consequently, by allocating a substantial portion of its sovereign wealth funds to establish factories for self-sufficiency—following the example of other nations—and simultaneously developing modern digital services, promoting agriculture and strengthening food security, Kuwait will have greater economic and social stability. This enhanced stability will, in turn, ensure political stability.

A major dairy and cheese company in one of the Gulf states secured its animal feed supply by acquiring large farms in Argentina.

Continued on Page 5

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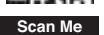
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Marriage every 34 minutes, divorce every 75 in Kuwait

Farwaniya courts top notarization activity

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Statistics and Research Department at the Ministry of Justice released the statistical report on the achievements of the Sharia Notarization Department in November 2025.

The report indicated high demand for Sharia notarization services, recording tens of thousands of transactions related to marriage, authentication, divorce, reconciliation, official notification and conversion to Islam.

Statistics showed that 1,252 marriage and reconciliation transactions were registered within the abovementioned month, averaging 42 transactions per day or one marriage or reconciliation every 34 minutes.

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Mol staff, public turn up in mass number to mourn death of Colonel Al-Khamsan

— Details Page 2 —



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

From books to bots: Kuwait libraries set for AI upgrade

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The current annual development plan report revealed a new project to transform public libraries into smart, model libraries, with funding through the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL).

The report explained that a budget of KD 300,000 has been allocated to the project, which is scheduled for completion by the end of March 2028. The project aims to develop libraries, utilize them effectively in the knowledge economy, and support creative and cultural industries.

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Sha'ban begins January 20

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Al-Ojairi Scientific Center announced that the crescent moon of Sha'ban will not be visible on Sunday, January 18, corresponding to the 29th of Rajab 1447 AH, in several countries of the Islamic world, as the moon will set before the sun. This means that the month of Rajab will be completed as a 30-day month, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, Al-Ojairi Scientific Center explained that Tuesday, January 20, will mark the first day of

Sha'ban 1447 AH. The astronomical conjunction of the sun and moon (new moon) will occur on Sunday evening at 7:51 pm GMT, after sunset in Kuwait.

Precise astronomical calculations, based on a map showing the moon's phases across the globe, indicate that the moon will set on Monday, January 19, approximately 35 minutes after sunset in Kuwait. At that time, the moon will be over 18 hours old.

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Water, diesel shortages threaten Kuwait agricultural productivity

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Farmer Nasser Saad Al-Jarri (Abu Bader) is recognized as one of the pioneering farmers in the Al-Wafra agricultural area. His late father, Saad Mubarak Al-Jarri, was among the first farmers in the coastal village of Abu Halifa in the 1950s, before the discovery of oil transformed the area into the modern city of Abu Halifa, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

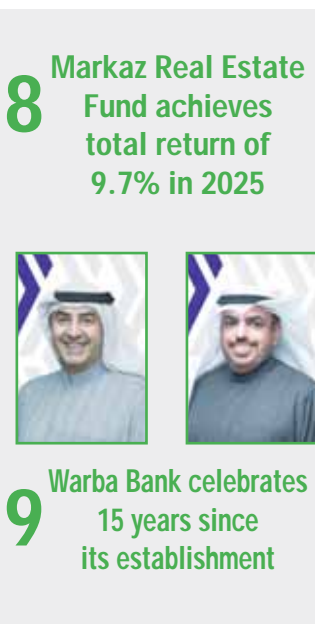
In those early days, farmers from Abu Halifa transported their diverse agricultural produce to Safat (now Darwazat Al-Abdul Razzaq) every morning on camels. It used to be a long and arduous journey that took about ten hours. They would rest briefly at what is now Souk Al-Manakh before beginning

the return trip to the coastal farms of Abu Halifa.

For Nasser Saad Al-Jarri, as for many members of the Al-Jarri family, farming is an integral part of life.

Bader Saad Al-Jarri (Abu Jassim) served as Vice President of the Kuwait Farmers Union. Saad Al-Jarri was a prominent farmer in Abu Halifa in the 1950s, supplying daily produce to Kuwait City. Following in his father's footsteps, Nasser has become a leading farmer, producing thousands of tons of agricultural products daily from his extensive farm overlooking Street 500 in Block 6 of the Al-Wafra agricultural area in south of Kuwait.

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Gold stabilizes near KD 45 amid global trends

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA): Precious metal prices in the Kuwaiti market reflected global trends, with 24-carat gold reaching around KD 45.420 per gram (approximately 150 dollars), and 22-carat gold about KD 41.630 per gram (around 137.3 dollars). Silver stabilized at about KD 965 per kilogram (roughly 3,100 dollars), supported by ongoing momentum in global metals markets.

Globally, gold prices stabilized at

the end of last week's trading after a noticeable decline due to profit-taking and a relative easing of geopolitical tensions, closing at 4,595 US dollars per ounce, amid expectations that restrictive monetary policy in the United States will continue for a longer period.

A report by Kuwait Gold Bullion Company issued on Sunday explained that despite the daily decline, gold ended the week with clear gains, supported by strong rises in the first half of the week after reaching record levels.

February gold futures fell 0.61 percent, while weekly gains were about 2.4 percent. The performance followed a rally that pushed prices to historic highs, encouraging investors to secure profits as geopolitical concerns, which had previously supported demand, eased.

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Ambassador Rasheed praises Kuwait's culture, Vision 2035

UK ambassador highlights strong ties and future collaboration with Kuwait

By John C. Fernandes
Online Media Manager

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The British Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Qudsi Rasheed opened his first official press interaction by thanking members of the media, noting that he had already met many journalists, editors-in-chief, and legal representatives since assuming his post.

He explained that although he had wished to meet the press immediately after presenting his credentials on December 16, scheduling pressures meant the meeting was delayed. "In my mind, this remains my first official opportunity to speak to the press," he said, adding that while he had attended several public events, this marked his first formal media engagement.

The ambassador also referred to a New Year message he had sent earlier to editors, expressing appreciation for the warm reception he had received since arriving in Kuwait. He extended his gratitude not only to the media, but to Kuwait as a whole.

Describing his welcome, the ambassador said it had been exceptionally warm at all levels, from His Highness the Amir and the government to the wider public. He added that both he and his family feel settled and at home in Kuwait.

Since his arrival, the ambassador said he has had the opportunity to engage closely with Kuwaiti society, traveling across the country, visiting farms in Wafra, spending time in the desert in Jahra, and attending diwanias. These experiences, he noted, provided valuable insight into Kuwait's culture, values, history, and heritage.

Reflecting on his early impressions, the ambassador highlighted three themes that have stood out. The first, he said, is



H.E. Qudsi Rasheed, British Ambassador to Kuwait

the depth and closeness of the relationship between Britain and Kuwait. "You feel it everywhere," he remarked, noting that British influence is evident in everyday life, from sports and culture to the strong personal connections many Kuwaitis have with the UK.

The second striking feature, he said, is the energy of the Kuwaiti people. He praised their dynamism, creativity, and strong work ethic, describing a society full of ideas and ambition, reflected also in national development plans such as Kuwait Vision 2035.

The third characteristic he highlighted was the openness of Kuwaiti society. He pointed to the active media landscape and the willingness of people to openly discuss politics, economics, sports, and social issues.

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Prayer Timings			
Fajr	05:20	Asr	14:54
Sunrise ..	06:43	Maghrib ..	17:14
Zohr	11:58	Isha	18:35

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather cold and partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain and a chance for fog forming at night.

By Night: Cold with light to

Weather

moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-32 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	17	08

Kuwait Airport	18	05
Abdaly	19	03
Bubyan	16	02
Jahra	17	04
Failaka Island	16	04
Salmiyah	16	11
Ahmadi	17	05
Jal Aliyah	17	05
Nuwaisib	16	05

Mol staff, public turn up in mass number to mourn death of Colonel Al-Khamsan



The body of Colonel Saud Nassar Al-Khamsan is carried to the grave after the funeral.



Relatives of the late Colonel Saud Nassar Al-Khamsan receive condolences from the public.

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Colonel Saud Nassar Al-Khamsan, an officer at the General Administration of Correctional Institutions, was laid to rest at Sulaibikhat Cemetery on Sunday.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef led the funeral procession, along with Undersecretary of the Interior Ministry Major General Abdul Wahab Al-Wahaib, in addition to a number of high-ranking security and military officials, as well as a large number of citizens, relatives and friends of the deceased.

In a press statement issued Sunday evening, the ministry announced the death of Al-Khamsan. It said “with hearts believing in the will and decree of Allah, the Ministry of Interior -- represented by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, Undersecretary of the ministry Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wahib, officers, non-commissioned officers, personnel, professionals and civilians -- mourns the passing of the late Colonel Saud Nassar Al-Khamsan, may Allah have mercy on him. We implore Allah Almighty to bestow on him His vast mercy, accept him to His spacious Paradise, and grant his family and loved ones patience and solace.”

Al-Khamsan died from injuries sustained in the recent fire at the General Directorate of Correctional Institutions building. The tragic fire incident occurred due to an electrical short circuit during maintenance works -- carpeting of a corridor and replacement of furniture in the administration building, which caused injuries to an officer, several soldiers and workers.

Deeply saddened by the incident, the newspaper extends its sincere condolences to the Ministry of Interior and the family of the deceased, may Allah Almighty have mercy on him and grant him paradise.

Status strengthened: Father Haifawi

History created in Cardinal Parolin's official Kuwait trip

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Father Suleiman Haifawi, the official spokesperson for the Catholic Church in Kuwait, stated that Kuwait is witnessing a historic and exceptional moment with the arrival of His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, who is in Kuwait on an official and pastoral visit, reflecting the depth of the distinguished relations between Kuwait and the Holy See, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

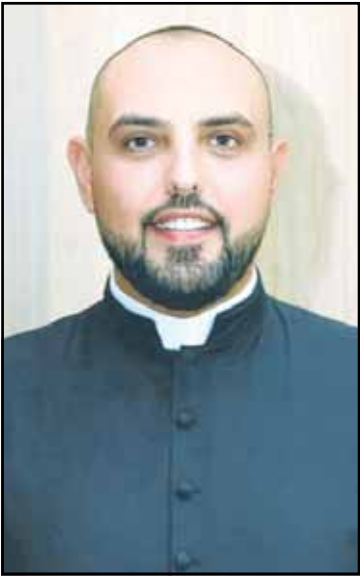
He explained that the historical ties between Kuwait and the Holy See date back to 1965, when Kuwait became the first Gulf state to establish formal diplomatic relations with the Vatican. This was a pioneering step that reflected its early openness and its vision based on dialogue, respect for others, and the promotion of peace and coexistence. These relations have witnessed continuous development and constructive cooperation over the decades, culminating in reciprocal official visits, ongoing messages of appreciation, and shared humanitarian initiatives, all of which affirm the special place Kuwait holds in the eyes of the Holy See.

Father Haifawi went on to explain that the visit of the Secretary of State of the Holy See and the official representative of His Holiness the Pope, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, coincided with a highly significant historical event, which is the elevation of Our Lady of Arabia Parish in Ahmadi to the rank and dignity of a “Minor Basilica” on Friday, January 16. This unprecedented official and spiritual celebration strengthens the position of the Catholic Church in Kuwait.

The Mass was attended by priests, monks, nuns, and clergy from various faiths and denominations, as well as official representatives from the State of Kuwait, diplomats, and distinguished guests from Kuwait and abroad.

Our Lady of Arabia Church, which is located within the compound of the Kuwait Oil Company in Ahmadi, is a historic church built in 1955. Since its establishment, the church has served as a prominent spiritual and humanitarian landmark, a gathering place for Christian believers - both Kuwaiti citizens and residents of various nationalities - and a center for Christian witness based on service, commitment, and coexistence within Kuwaiti society.

Father Haifawi revealed that granting the church the title of “Minor Basilica” is a high ecclesiastical honor awarded globally to churches distinguished by their spiritual, historical, and liturgical significance, reflecting their direct connection to the Holy See.



Father Suleiman Haifawi

He indicated that this allows the church to use certain papal symbols and celebrate special liturgical occasions, serving as a living sign of communion with the Pope within the universal Church.

Father Haifawi emphasized that the elevation of Our Lady of Arabia Parish to Minor Basilica is a historic, cultural, and humanitarian milestone, highlighting Kuwait's image as a land of dialogue, tolerance, respect for freedom of worship, and embrace of religious and cultural diversity, guided by wise leadership and a humanitarian vision.

On this occasion, he said, “We extend our deepest respect and appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, and to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince (May God protect them both), as well as to the State of Kuwait, its leadership, government, and people, for their support, care, openness, and mutual respect. We pray that Kuwait remains an oasis of peace and security, a source of goodness, and a bridge of convergence between peoples and cultures.

The visit of the official representative of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, carries a special apostolic greeting to the State of Kuwait and its leadership.

The Holy See highly values the humanitarian and cultural role of the State of Kuwait in preserving the honorable history between the Gulf States and the Church.”

PADA resumes distribution of devices for handicapped

Number of beneficiaries on rise: Dr Al-Hilal

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Dr. Khalifa Al-Hilal, the acting Deputy Director of the Medical, Psychological, and Social Services Sector at the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA), revealed that PADA recently resumed the distribution of assistive devices, including wheelchairs and hearing aids, and continues to do so daily without interruption, based on deliveries from the contracted companies.



Dr. Al-Hilal

In a press statement, he explained that the distributed wheelchairs are specially designed for specific cases. Each case undergoes a thorough evaluation by a specialized committee, which takes the necessary measurements. Contracts are then signed with companies to supply and deliver the devices to eligible recipients within specified timeframes.

The number of beneficiaries is steadily increasing. More than 60 wheelchairs were delivered last week, along with hearing aids. Coordination with the companies is ongoing to ensure a smooth supply and delivery process.

Regarding the challenges, Dr. Al-Hilal affirmed that there have been no significant obstacles in the supply process.

He expressed his appreciation for the support of the Ministry of Finance and relevant authorities in facilitating procedures and obtaining the necessary approvals, emphasizing that everyone is working as a unified team to resolve any issues.

Dr. Al-Hilal highlighted that PADA is opti-

mistic about finding lasting solutions to all outstanding cases, stressing that teams are working tirelessly from morning until the end of the workday to expedite distribution and finalize backlogged applications.

Concerning those caring for a disabled person who have not yet updated their information after receiving the text message, Dr. Al-Hilal urged them to comply within the specified one-month timeframe from the date of the message to avoid any potential legal action.

He revealed that the number of individuals who have not updated their information will be determined after the 30-day period.

Regarding committee appointments, Dr. Al-Hilal confirmed that the maximum waiting period is now no more than two to three weeks, and in some cases, appointments can be scheduled as early as the next day.

He indicated that the long waiting periods, which previously extended up to six months, have been completely eliminated for over a year.

Project to cost over KD16 million

MEWRE gets SAB nod for fiber optic installation project

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEWRE) has received conditional approval from the State Audit Bureau for a contract worth KD 16,433 million to install fiber optic cables at main substations.

This confirms an article published

by the daily in December 2025, which cited a figure of KD 16.7 million for the project.

The final approval followed the bureau's review, resulting in a saving of KD 298,577 through amendments to price schedules and the removal of certain items.

The MEWRE had originally submitted the tender to the State Audit Bureau on December 7 for auditing. The project supports the minis-

try's strategic objective of modernizing infrastructure and advancing digital transformation.

The new fiber optic network is expected to enhance the communications system supporting MEWRE's operational systems and enable remote management of the electrical grid, improving overall efficiency.

In a separate announcement, MEWRE stated that some services

on its website and the '152-MEW' application would be temporarily suspended on Sunday morning for six hours.

The suspension is required to carry out scheduled upgrades to the Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

The ministry expressed its appreciation to customers for their understanding and cooperation during the maintenance period.

Drug law awareness in senior schools planned

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Awareness materials on the new anti drug law will be introduced in the curriculum of intermediate schools from next academic year, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to educational sources, the move is aimed at enhancing student awareness of the dangers of drug use and its legal consequences, as well as to strengthen preventive efforts against the phenomenon.

The contents of the new drug law will be taught in an age-appropriate educational format, focusing on the penalties for drug use, possession, and trafficking.

The materials will also highlight the health, psychological, and social effects of drug abuse, and this will help students develop early legal awareness and make informed choices that protect them from delinquency or exploitation.

The sources indicated that the initiative underscores the role of schools in protecting students from the increasing exposure to drug dealers, particularly as social and technological changes have expanded the ways drugs are promoted and marketed to younger age groups.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) will organize workshops on assessing and managing corruption risks from January 19 to 22 in order to raise awareness of risk management mechanisms, and will include participation from various entities, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Nazaha explained that adopting preventive measures is one of the most effective ways to protect institutions from corruption risks and enhance their integrity. This involves implementing procedures that limit opportunities for corruption and reduce its impact.

As part of this effort, Nazaha has prepared a “Guide to Assessing and Managing Corruption Risks,” designed to help government entities understand, assess, and manage the corruption risks they face by providing clear guidelines and essential procedures.

The workshops aim to enhance the capabilities of entities and institutions by training specialized staff on applying the guide according to best practices. The goal is to create an institutional environment capable of identifying and addressing corruption risks early, taking preventive measures to avoid cases of corruption rather than responding only after they occur.

EPA detects 7 violations in Wafra and Arifjan deserts

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18 : The Environment Public Authority (EPA), in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and Kuwait Municipality, detected seven environmental violations in Wafra and Arifjan deserts in south of Kuwait during an inspection campaign of campsites at these locations, reports Al-Anba daily.

Sheikha Al-Ibrahim, Director of Public Relations and Media at EPA, explained that the campaign was a joint effort to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and adherence to the Environmental Law.

Camps found violating the law were issued fines and removed. Violations of Articles 33, 40, and 41 of the Environmental Protection Law were recorded at 11 campsites, which are related to waste disposal, the use of construction materials harmful to the desert environment, and general non-compliance with environmental regulations.

Article 33 prohibits dumping garbage or waste of any kind outside designated containers, with penalties ranging from a minimum fine of KD 50 to a maximum of KD 500.

Article 40 of the law prohibits anyone visiting desert areas, whether to set up camps or for other purposes, from engaging in activities that could damage the soil, alter its natural properties, or pollute it in a way that affects its productivity. The executive regulations of the law specify the standards and requirements that must be followed.

Violating Article 40 carries a fine

ranging from KD 250 to KD 5,000, and the violator is required to remove the effects of the violation within the timeframe set by EPA. If the violator fails to do so, EPA will restore the area at the violator's expense.

Article 41 prohibits grazing, irrigated agriculture, or any activity that could harm the quantity or quality of vegetation cover in the area, and lead to desertification or degradation of the terrestrial environment.

Prohibits

Article 41 also prohibits the destruction of crops, plants, and trees, the picking of flowers in public squares, streets, and facilities, and the uprooting of trees and wild plants on public lands. Exceptions are allowed, as outlined in the executive regulations of the law, for development purposes, and compensation must be provided for any uprooted green spaces or trees. The penalty for violating Article 41 ranges from KD 250 to KD 5,000.

Al-Ibrahim affirmed the importance of adhering to the Environmental Protection Law and its executive regulations to preserve the environment, ensure its sustainability, and prevent violations.

She urged citizens and residents to avoid camping in undesignated areas, obtain the necessary permits, and protect the desert environment in accordance with the Environmental Protection Law and its implementing regulations.

Illegal expat held for stealing costly construction material

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Criminal Security Sector's Hawally Investigations Department closed a case involving the theft of construction equipment valued at KD 2,300 after arresting the suspect, who had been in violation of residency laws for more than a year, reports Al-Anba daily.

In detail, a citizen reported the theft of construction equipment belonging to him, including iron, electrical wires, and a generator, with a total value of KD 2,300. He said the theft occurred on December 24, 2025 on Al-Mahdi Street in Hawally, and did not initially accuse any specific person.

According to security sources, authorities immediately launched an investigation, collecting evidence and reviewing surveillance camera footage near the crime scene, which helped identify the suspect.

When questioned, the accused claimed that another individual had committed the theft, indicating that the person came forward voluntarily and confessed in detail, citing prior financial disputes with the complainant. When confronted with this claim, the complainant acknowledged that financial disputes existed between them but maintained his accusation that the accused

was responsible for the theft.

Further investigation, including an analysis of CCTV footage, confirmed that the individual identified as A.S.M. was the perpetrator. Authorities also confirmed the existence of previous financial disputes between the two parties. A check through the Ministry of Interior's automated system revealed that the accused had been in violation of residency laws since August 23, 2024. Legal procedures are being taken against him, and he will be referred to the competent authorities.

□ □ □

Two expats caught drunk: Two expatriates were arrested separately on Kabad Road and in Mangaf for consumption and possession of liquor, and for an absconding case respectively, reports Al-Anba daily.

In the first case, Jahra patrol officers apprehended an expatriate in his forties on Kabad Road after finding him intoxicated and in possession of a bottle of imported liquor.

According to security sources, officers became suspicious of a parked car and, upon approaching it, discovered the man inside.

LOCAL

diwaniya



A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Might is right ... world order disturbed, at major threat!

"THE current US President Donald Trump's father used to send him to collect rent from the buildings he owned in New York. One day, Donald asked his father, 'Dad, why do I always stand on the right or left side of the door after ringing the bell?' His father replied, 'Because they fire their weapons at the door'. In this way, his father taught him to be tough, instilling the idea that life is a 'battle,' with winners and losers, and that failure brings shame and disgrace," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Donald's upbringing continued under strict discipline at military school, which he entered at the age of thirteen, where he learned that to appear powerful, he had to instill fear in others and command obedience. 'After assuming the presidency in November 2024, Trump began provoking some countries, taking unusual or surprising positions, and intervening in the affairs of other nations, with some of his actions affecting domestic stability. He also faced two assassination attempts.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

"He faced criticism from fellow citizens, his administration, the State Department, and American and international media alike. Some notable examples include the following:

- "Americans are calling for Trump's impeachment" by Tom O'Connor in Newsweek
- The front-page ad on the Washington Post offering \$10 million for information that could incriminate Donald Trump and remove him from office
- "Trump is the biggest threat to international security" by Kim Sengupta in The Independent (UK)
- "Trump has wreaked havoc on American society in his first year" by Max Boot in Foreign Policy
- "Three-quarters of Americans believe Trump is leading them to war" by Andrew Buncombe in The Independent.
- "Trump's policies will leave the world in chaos" by Richard Gowan in International Policy Report
- "The worst year of US foreign policy under Trump" by Foreign Policy
- "Trump and his administration have shattered the State Department" by Robbie Grimmer, Dan De Luce, and Colum Lynch in Foreign Policy.
- "President Trump is threatening the international order in a frightening and highly dangerous manner. He has suggested that Canada join the United States as the 51st state, sought to acquire Greenland from Denmark by force or diplomacy, and expressed intentions to occupy the Panama Canal. Day after day, he issues unpredictable and sometimes aggressive decisions that risk destabilizing the international order.

- "American journalist Ethan Levins said, 'Now China can arrest the Japanese or Vietnamese prime minister, Russia can arrest the Estonian prime minister, and India can arrest the Bangladeshi prime minister. Everyone can act as they please, and America can't intervene because the United Nations no longer functions effectively.'
- "William Galston wrote in The Wall Street Journal, 'Trump believes that whoever has the power is right when dealing with others, and if you have influence, use it to the fullest extent'.

The British newspaper Al-Sabea wrote that Trump "constantly appears angry, says whatever comes to mind, and respects only power and money."

"Recently, Trump told The New York Times, 'My personal morality is the only international law. I don't need international law.'

"Trump arrested the president of Venezuela, as we have written about, and is currently threatening Iran if its government continues to suppress and oppress the people in the ongoing Iranian protests.

"We have repeatedly told the Iranian government to open a new chapter with the Arab world and the West to reform the internal situation so that Iran can develop and progress, instead of suppressing the people. This could lead to a coup and then a civil war, causing its regions to demand secession."

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"Trump arrested the president of Venezuela, as we have written about, and is currently threatening Iran if its government continues to suppress and oppress the people in the ongoing Iranian protests.

"We have repeatedly told the Iranian government to open a new chapter with the Arab world and the West to reform the internal situation so that Iran can develop and progress, instead of suppressing the people. This could lead to a coup and then a civil war, causing its regions to demand secession."

"American journalist Ethan Levins said, 'Now China can arrest the Japanese or Vietnamese prime minister, Russia can arrest the Estonian prime minister, and India can arrest the Bangladeshi prime minister. Everyone can act as they please, and America can't intervene because the United Nations no longer functions effectively.'

"William Galston wrote in The Wall Street Journal, 'Trump believes that whoever has the power is right when dealing with others, and if you have influence, use it to the fullest extent'.

The British newspaper Al-Sabea wrote that Trump "constantly appears angry, says whatever comes to mind, and respects only power and money."

GCC as well as Jordanians.

"The owner is available around the clock and stays in constant contact with everyone. Even in his absence, the diwaniya transforms into a heritage space filled with artifacts and paintings reflecting Kuwaiti culture. It has also become a place to honor outstanding students and graduates each year.

"Al-Jarallah's diwaniya has grown into a gathering place for Kuwaitis, GCC citizens, and Arabs alike. It stands as a Kuwaiti landmark in Jordan, reflecting the values and morals of the Kuwaiti people. As a result, the owner has become an ambassador, admirably representing his country. Is it not fitting, then, to call the diwaniya owner a citizen-ambassador?"

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"The article titled 'Channel sovereign wealth domestically' by Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Editor-in-Chief of Arab Times and Al-Seyassah newspapers, published on Wednesday, January 14, highlights a truth that is known to every citizen and reopens a file that has been postponed for many years," columnist **Bassam Fahad Thunayan Al-Ghanim** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Kuwait lacks neither wealth, a strategic geographic location, nor resources, yet it has paid the price for isolation and missed opportunities.

"It was therefore natural for the public to welcome the openness announced by the Ministry of Interior with relief, as an economy, like a body, cannot thrive when constrained by restrictions. However, openness alone is not enough, but it must be translated into projects, economic activity, a thriving market, and a state capable of competing once again to reclaim what it has lost.

"True courage lies not in repeating calls for development, but in creating the mechanisms for it, and turning financial abundance into tangible economic impact in Kuwait.

"This is the foundation of the idea I am proposing - the establishment of a 'Domestic Investment Authority' as a regulated economic and investment entity. Its primary goal would be to stimulate the local market, support national projects, and enhance the efficiency of domestic investment, without undermining or conflicting with foreign investments.

"The proposed Domestic Investment Authority is based on several important principles such as economic stability cannot be left to chance; market stimulation cannot be achieved through mere statements, and job creation cannot be realized through wishful thinking.

"In recent years, Kuwait's economy has paid a double price. First, the loss of investment and development opportunities that could have transformed the country, and second, leaving the market vulnerable to fluctuations without adequate tools to absorb shocks and quickly restore balance.

"While markets are naturally exposed to volatility, countries differ in their ability to respond. Some possess intelligent intervention mechanisms to navigate crises, while others allow the market to face challenges alone, only to be caught off guard by losses.

"The establishment of a Domestic Investment Authority indicates to investors and citizens that the state is present, has a plan, and possesses the capacity to uphold stability.

"Equally important is the focus on local projects. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in particular, are more than just commercial ventures, but they form the backbone of the real economy. They generate jobs, cultivate a productive workforce, drive supply and service chains, and help ease the government's responsibility to provide employment for Kuwaiti citizens.

"When these enterprises struggle, employees, families, merchants, and suppliers all feel the impact, and a silent recession begins, the effects of which often last for years.

"Supporting local businesses is not merely about assisting entrepreneurs, but it is essential for safeguarding social and economic stability.

"Kuwait possesses substantial financial surpluses, yet a significant portion are not utilized domestically, as many investments are directed abroad, exposing the country to high risks or lower-than-expected returns.

"The local economy requires infrastructure development, an enhanced visitor and tourist experience, and the launch of service, industrial, agricultural, and technological projects that will place Kuwait at the center of regional competition.

"Al-Jarallah captured this reality succinctly in his article when he stressed that the country's infrastructure requires a 'major leap forward' along with more flexible laws that facilitate investment and open doors rather than create obstacles.

"However, even the most brilliant idea can become problematic without proper governance. Therefore, the Domestic Investment Authority must be founded on a clear principle - no support without standards, no investment without transparency, no government intervention in the market without established regulations, and no partnerships without legal and accounting oversight.

"With strong governance, the Domestic Investment Authority can evolve into a respected national institution that builds confidence, aligns priorities, and equips the economy with a tool for stability and a driver of growth.

"The important message today is that Kuwait does not need more wishes. It needs decisive action that turns openness into growth, capital into projects, and opportunities into jobs."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Kuwaiti, Saudi naval forces to conduct joint drill



Kuwaiti Naval Force has departed for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to participate in the joint bilateral naval exercise 'Gulf Peace 1' with the Royal Saudi Navy's Eastern Fleet.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA): A detachment of the Kuwaiti Naval Force has departed for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to participate in the joint bilateral naval exercise "Gulf Peace 1" with the Royal Saudi Navy's Eastern Fleet.

The Kuwaiti Navy vessel Failaka, the landing ship Al-Safar, along with special naval units, set sail as part of Kuwait's contribution to the

exercise, which is scheduled to take place from January 16 to 25.

In a press statement issued on Sunday, the Kuwaiti Army said the participation reflects the ongoing efforts to strengthen military cooperation between the two brotherly nations. The exercise also aims to enhance naval capabilities, exchange maritime expertise, and improve the operational readiness and efficiency of participating personnel.

Kuwaiti held for stealing expat's vehicle and cash

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: An Asian expatriate's annual leave took an unfortunate turn after a series of incidents that began with the theft of his vehicle and cash and ended with a traffic violation, ultimately leading to the arrest of the culprit, who turned out to be a Kuwaiti employee of a government agency, reports Al-Anba daily.

In detail, the expatriate reported to the Salmiya police station that his white 2014 Japanese sedan had been stolen.

He explained that after leaving a bank where he had cashed his annual leave check worth KD 640, his vehicle suffered a flat tire. He went to a tire repair shop and, while he was busy paying, an unknown person took advantage of the car being left running, entered the vehicle, and fled with the cash.

According to security sources, the case was referred to the Criminal Security Sector, where authorities launched an investigation. Through surveillance footage from the repair shop and biometric fingerprint analysis, investigators identified the suspect as a Kuwaiti citizen employed in the government sector.

After obtaining a warrant from the Public Prosecution, the suspect was arrested and taken to the Salmiya police station. During questioning, he confessed fully and in detail to the charges against him.

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Driving under DUI: A young man in his twenties was referred to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) after being arrested in the Jahra area while under the influence of drugs and in possession of a bag containing a suspected narcotic substance, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, patrol officers in the Jahra area noticed a vehicle being driven recklessly, which raised their suspicion. After pursuing the car and forcing it to stop, officers identified the driver as a Kuwaiti citizen in his twenties who appeared to be under the influence of drugs.

A search of his person uncovered a small bag containing a substance believed to be narcotics. He was arrested and referred with the seized items to DCGD for further action.



Al-Seyassah photo
Fire destroys the room in the apartment.

One hurt as fire breaks out in Qairawan house

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Fire broke out in a house in Qairawan on Saturday, resulting in injuries and burns to an individual, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Firefighters from Qairawan and Sulaibikhat fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire, after which the site was handed over to the relevant authorities for investigations into the cause of the fire.

Holding converted into eatery seized: PAAAFR

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) announced that the Animal Production Department, specifically the Livestock Pens Monitoring Section, discovered an illegal holding/acquisition during one of its inspection tours, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAAAFR explained that the seized holding had been converted into a restaurant, which is a clear violation of the plot allocation terms. It is taking the necessary legal measures in this regard.

It emphasized the importance of full compliance with allocation terms, warning that any violation could result in legal action, including the possible confiscation of the holding.

Case resolution rate sees jump

45% suits tackled in Nov '25

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: As part of its efforts to expedite litigation and enhance judicial performance, statistics issued by the Statistics and Research Department of the Ministry of Justice concerning the work of the Court of First Instance in November showed an increase in the case resolution rate for both criminal and non-criminal cases to approximately 45 percent, along with significant progress in completing electronic notifications.

According to the statistics, the number of incoming non-criminal cases reached 11,800, with partial commercial civil cases accounting for 27.8 percent of the total, while bankruptcy cases recorded the lowest share at just 0.01 percent.

Pending cases numbered 51,164, with partial commercial civil cases representing the largest portion at 25.9 percent, and bankruptcy cases again at the lowest percentage.

Resolved cases totaled 20,528, with partial commercial civil cases comprising 26.8 percent, while bankruptcy cases remained at

0.01 percent.

The overall completion rate for non-criminal cases reached approximately 40.1 percent, with fee exemption cases achieving the highest rate at 99.5 percent, compared to the lowest completion rate of 26.4 percent for sales cases.

In the distribution of non-criminal cases by court, the Capital Court received the largest share of incoming cases at 58.2 percent, followed by Ahmadi at 42.2 percent, Farwaniya at 39.9 percent, Jahra at 39.7 percent, the Capital Court at 39.5 percent, and the Financial Markets Court at 31.7 percent.

The Capital Court also led in both pending cases with 64.7 percent and adjudicated cases with 63.6 percent.

Regarding completion rates, Hawally Court ranked first at 42.6 percent, followed by Ahmadi at 42.2 percent, Farwaniya at 39.9 percent, Jahra at 39.7 percent, the Capital Court at 39.5 percent, and the Financial Markets Court at 31.7 percent.

Regarding criminal cases, the number of incoming cases reached 17,754. Misdemeanors accounted for the largest share at 70.1 percent, followed by appealed misdemeanors at 27 percent, and felonies at 2.9 percent.

Pending criminal cases totaled 50,889, with misdemeanors representing 82.2 percent, appealed misdemeanors 15 percent, and felonies 2.8 percent.

Adjudicated cases numbered 25,623, comprising 76.9 percent misdemeanors, 20.7 percent appealed misdemeanors, and 2.4 percent felonies.

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Scientific research to shape ecological park in Jaber Al-Ahmad

KISR partners with J2 to link science and urban sustainability



Group photo during the signing of the agreement.

KISR photo

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) signed a memorandum of understanding and a contract recently with J2 General Contracting Company, which is a joint venture between Al-Argan International Real Estate and Al-Musharaka International Real Estate, to develop an integrated ecological park within the Jaber Mall project in Jaber Al-Ahmad, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, KISR explained that the project aims to promote environmental sustainability and link scientific research with urban development. It will also involve implementing an applied research project to design and construct the ecological park based on the principles of sustainable natural landscaping.

The project will focus on using drought-resistant native plants and

integrating educational and awareness programs to create a healthy green environment around Jaber Mall.

Under the contract, KISR will provide scientific recommendations for selecting plants suited to the Kuwaiti environment, as well as technical guidance for designing pathways, water features, and environmental shading solutions.

KISR will conduct specialized scientific studies to ensure the park's sustainability and growth, making it a model for future urban projects. The institute will also collaborate on organizing lectures and awareness activities focused on the environment, sustainability, and the importance of native plants.

The Director General of KISR, Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan, affirmed that the project reflects KISR's vision of strengthening the role of scientific

research in promoting community development.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Argan International Real Estate Company, Eng. Khaled Al-Mashaan, emphasized the company's commitment to adopting sustainable solutions based on scientific principles and integrating scientific research into urban planning.

He highlighted that the park will include an educational pavilion focused on environmental awareness and energy conservation, contributing to raising environmental consciousness within the community.

The CEO of J2 Company, Ali Khaja, stated that the collaboration with KISR represents a vital pillar of the project's strategic and environmental vision and provides a solid scientific foundation for informed decision-making.

KAPP refers tender for fixed-line telecom project to Audit Bureau

10 Gbps fiber network to reach 90% by 2028

By Mohammed Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) referred the tender for the fixed-line telecommunications network development project to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) on Wednesday for the latter to carry out pre-audit pro-

cedures, including study, audit, review, and approval of the contract.

The project is part of KAPP's ongoing efforts to propose and implement strategic development projects aimed at accelerating growth by enhancing the role of the private sector in executing projects vital to the national economy. It is expected to develop public facilities, boost GDP, diversify income sources, and increase national revenue, in addition to supporting hu-

man development and creating job opportunities for local talent.

It is worth noting that KAPP has set clear objectives for the project in terms of speed, aiming to provide a network with standard speeds of 10 gigabits per second initially.

In terms of coverage, the project will ensure that the fiber optic network reaches at least 90 percent of homes in Kuwait by 2028. It will also offer a range of services, including commercial and enhanced services for subscribers, while creating employment and training opportuni-

ties for Kuwaiti citizens in the ICT sector.

In addition, it is expected to improve cost efficiency by reducing the operational expenses currently borne by the Ministry of Communications.

The project includes the design, financing, construction, operation, maintenance, and transformation of the Ministry of Communications' networks, covering active infrastructure, passive infrastructure, and the copper network (fixed-line telephone lines).

MoJ offers 52 e-solutions

Justice Ministry leads Sahel gov't digital services in 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Ministry of Justice announced on Friday that it has secured a leading position among government institutions in the number of digital services offered through the unified government application, Sahel, for 2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It affirmed that the achievement reflects the ministry's commitment to supporting digital transformation and facilitating litigation procedures and judicial services.

Statistics from the Sahel app show that the ministry tops the list of government

entities in terms of the number of digital services by offering 52 online services out of the 42 participating government institutions.

In an official statement, the ministry highlighted its dedication to expanding digital services to enhance user experience and expedite transactions, in line with Kuwait's digital government initiatives.

The Sahel application serves as the unified national platform for e-government services, allowing citizens and residents to securely and easily complete government transactions through digital channels.



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KFAED photos

High school students participating in the 15th edition of the 'Be Among the Outstanding' program.

Delegations under flagship program

KFAED organizes international trips for outstanding students

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA): The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) announced the departure of two delegations of male and female high school students taking part in the 15th edition of the "Be Among the Outstanding" program.

Organized annually in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the program features different destinations each year, with this year's trips headed to the Republic of Indonesia for female students and the Republic of Uzbekistan for male students, running until 24 January.

In this regard, Mona Al-Ayaf, Director of the Media Department at the Kuwait Fund, emphasized that the two trips aim to motivate students to continue striving for excellence and academic achievement.

She noted that the "Be Among the Outstanding" initiative brings together academic motivation, development awareness, and cultural exchange, while helping familiarize younger generations with the humanitarian role played by the State of Kuwait at both regional and international levels.

For her part, Fatima Al-Turkait, Supervisor of the female students' trip to the Republic of Indonesia,

clarified that the program includes visits to development projects financed by the Kuwait Fund, in addition to tours of tourist sites and historical and cultural landmarks across Indonesia.

She noted that the delegation is accompanied by supervisors from the Ministry of Education to ensure continuous oversight of the students throughout the trip.

Meanwhile, Saleh Al-Taqui, Supervisor of the male students' trip to Uzbekistan, stated that the students will visit several vital projects financed and established with the support of the Kuwait Fund.

The visits will also highlight the positive impact of these projects on the Uzbek people and economy, in addition to tours of the country's most prominent historical, cultural, and tourist attractions.

Launched in 2010, the "Be Among the Outstanding" program is an initiative of the Kuwait Fund implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Education.

The program organizes two annual one-week trips for outstanding male and female students to partner countries where the Fund operates, offering participants firsthand exposure to key development projects supported by the Fund.

LOCAL

Kuwait experts eye Venezuela's investment potential

Oil, gold and agriculture seen as key opportunities after political change

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Days after the removal of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, information, economics, gold and finance experts in Kuwait shared their views on the investment opportunities in Venezuela and how the public and private sectors in Kuwait could take advantage of Venezuela's economic capabilities.

These experts agreed on the need for Kuwait to capitalize on the unfolding developments in Venezuela, particularly since many major and emerging countries are expected to move quickly to exploit the attractive investment prospects there.

Venezuela holds the largest oil reserves in the world, estimated at 303 billion barrels, along with gold reserves estimated at 8,000 tons. Its extensive agricultural plots make it suitable for livestock investment, alongside natural resources that are likely to stimulate global economic interest, especially in

the mining sector.

Director General of the Gulf Center for Information and Documentation Dr. Ibrahim Al-Shukri pointed out that if new investment opportunities emerge in various Venezuelan economic sectors, there will be no objection to pursuing them provided feasibility studies are conducted.

He explained that Venezuela's investment environment was previously unattractive to foreign investors, which contributed to the economic downturn in multiple sectors in the country. He thinks this deterioration negatively affected the living standards of the Venezuelan population.

Al-Shukri supports the idea of investing in Venezuela's oil and refining industries, given its confirmed oil reserves exceeding 303 billion barrels. He suggested that Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) could establish an oil refinery in Venezuela, similar to its refineries in Vietnam, Italy and Oman.

Meanwhile, economist Qais Al-Ghanim emphasized that any Kuwaiti investment abroad must satisfy several requirements like security stability and the adoption of government policies that encourage investment without complications or excessive bureaucracy. He warned against directing Kuwaiti in-

vestments to Venezuela, unless the situation there becomes clearer and more stable. He recalled that when Cuba opened its economy and some Kuwaitis sought to invest there, they were advised to wait until conditions stabilized.

Al-Ghanim explained that Venezuela's economic direction – whether positive or negative – typically becomes evident after a year and a half to two years. He said if the Venezuelan government becomes more dynamic and implements policies that attract foreign capital, then Kuwaiti investment in the oil and mining sectors will be acceptable, particularly in light of the country's natural wealth.

Gold expert Bader Al-Arbash believes that the most promising investment opportunity after the stabilization of conditions in Venezuela lies in gold, taking into consideration the substantial gold reserves of the country -- estimated at 8,000 tons. He indicated that the most viable investment prospect in Venezuela is closely tied to gold, especially since prices have risen in recent months.

He expressed opposition to any Kuwaiti investment in oil exploration in Venezuela, citing the extremely difficult infrastructure involved in oil extraction and the high cost of producing a single barrel from its res-

ervoirs. He argued that prioritizing the development and expansion of oil extraction within Kuwait itself is far more advantageous than investing in Venezuela.

Financial and economic expert Khaled Mohamed underscored the importance of Kuwait benefiting from Venezuela's economic potential, taking into consideration that major global powers will be competing for it. He said the Kuwaiti private companies can take advantage of numerous investment opportunities in Venezuela within a wide range of fields, including contracting, real estate, tourism, mining and other promising sectors.

He also stressed the value of investing in livestock and cattle farming in Venezuela, which has vast fertile land suitable for agriculture and animal husbandry, along with its abundant water resources.

He added that Venezuela's natural wealth will draw international economic attention, especially in the mining sector, which includes iron, aluminum, coltan (used in electronics manufacturing), phosphate and nickel.

He concluded that all forthcoming projects in Venezuela are expected to succeed due to its proximity to the American market and its strong economic relationship with China.

Continued from Page 1

Sovereign wealth

This strategy mirrors a broader global trend of offshore production to cut costs and raise supply chain efficiency. Other countries are focusing on food security in Africa, investing in domestic food processing plants and establishing joint ventures with parent companies.

It is important that these foreign investments come with sturdy domestic infrastructure, including modern transportation networks, metro and railway systems, advanced ports, educational cities and recreational facilities.

This progress mitigates the risks associated with foreign investments. Otherwise, such investments are vulnerable to negative global and local developments.

Marriage every

Meanwhile, 595 divorces were documented, averaging 20 divorces per day or one divorce every one hour and 15 minutes.

Data revealed that the number of marriage contracts reached 1,143, averaging 38 contracts per day. Marriage between Kuwaitis accounted for the largest percentage at 73.3 percent, followed by marriage between non-Kuwaitis at 16.2 percent, then marriage between Kuwaiti men and non-Kuwaitis at 8.2 percent, while marriage between non-Kuwaitis and Kuwaiti women reached 2.3 percent.

Moreover, 109 marriage authentication contracts were registered, averaging 3.6 contracts per day. Contracts between Kuwaiti husbands and non-Kuwaiti wives accounted for 54.1 percent, while no authentication contracts were registered among Kuwaiti couples. The statistics also showed that 74.3 percent of the authentication transactions were conducted based on court rulings.

The statistics revealed that 81.5 percent of marriage contracts were documented by foreign marriage officiants, compared to 18.5 percent at the Sharia Documentation Department. This is a manifestation of the reliance of clients on authorized officiants outside the department.

On the other hand, 595 divorce cases were documented in November last year. Divorce among Kuwaiti couples reached 58.7 percent, while 92 cases of marital reconciliation were recorded, averaging three cases per day. Majority (85.9 percent) of these cases were documented through certificates of reconciliation.

Regarding official media and declarations of Islam, 52,359 transactions were completed, averaging 1,745 transactions per day. Official media accounted for 99.9 percent of these transactions and only 58 cases of conversion to Islam were processed online. The Farwaniya Main Courts Complex recorded the highest number of such transactions.

Furthermore, the total number of transactions for stateless residents reached 1,115, with an average of 37 transactions per day. These transactions are distributed as follows: 85.7 percent official notifications, 9.5 percent marriage and attestations, 4.3 percent for divorce and 0.5 percent for review. The Jahra Center recorded the highest percentage of these transactions.

UK ambassador

Despite having been in Kuwait for only three months, he said he had already met thousands of people, describing the pace of engagement as remarkable.

Concluding his introductory remarks, the ambassador said he looked forward to engaging further with the media and answering questions on his experience, priorities, and the future of UK-Kuwait relations.

Question: What message did His Highness convey to you when you presented your credentials, and what advice did he offer?

Answer: His Highness was extremely warm and welcoming. He emphasized the importance of the longstanding relationship between the United Kingdom and Kuwait, and the distinct roles both countries have played in each other's histories. He spoke of Kuwait's importance to the UK and conveyed that Kuwait should feel like a second home to me—just as the UK has long been a second home for many Kuwaitis. He highlighted this mutual sense of belonging between our peoples. His advice to me was to focus on truly understanding Kuwait—its culture, its people, and its values—and to make that understanding central to my work.

Q: Your Excellency, among the many issues on your agenda, which priority areas do you intend to focus on and develop?

A: As a diplomat, it is difficult to identify a single priority, because there are several areas that matter deeply. At the heart of my work is maintaining, deepening, and strengthening the bilateral relationship between the United Kingdom and Kuwait. That relationship spans foreign policy, the close ties between the ruling family here and the Royal Family in the UK, as well as people-to-people connections, culture, and many other areas of cooperation.

Importantly, I believe the UK-Kuwait relationship should not be defined solely by the past, but also by the present and the future. All three are essential. Our shared history must be preserved, and we must remember those who came before us. I am reminded of that every day by the historical gifts and symbols that surround me, reflecting the long-standing friendship between our two countries and the contributions made on both sides.

At the same time, the present matters greatly. There is a great deal happening today in business, education, healthcare, politics, and regional foreign policy, and these areas require continuous engagement and cooperation. Looking ahead, the future is equally critical. Young people—both in Kuwait and in the UK—will shape the next chapter of our partnership. As we mark 35 years since the liberation of Kuwait, the question is how we work together as partners for the next 35 years and beyond.

Trade is another key priority. For me, the trading relationship extends well beyond commerce and business-to-business ties. It includes cooperation in healthcare, education, defense, technology, and other strategic sectors. This is particularly important as both countries undergo significant transformation. Kuwait is advancing its Vision 2035, while the UK is implementing its industrial strategy, focused on the industries that will drive future growth.

The challenge—and the opportunity—is to align these two visions. Areas such as artificial intelligence, data centers, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing are likely to be central to our cooperation in the years ahead.

Q: Given the ambitious scope of Vision 2035, how do you perceive its prospects? To what extent is the British government engaged, and what role do you play in encouraging their active involvement?

A: Vision 2035 is a good and necessary vision. It covers the entire country, and it's something the UK fully supports. We're now less than ten years away from 2035, but I think the phase we're in now is really the implementation phase. People, whether in Kuwait or outside, now understand what's needed—especially in terms of transforming the economy, developing infrastructure, and attracting foreign investment.

British companies are very positive about the opportunities here. Everyone knows Kuwait's poten-

tial—from its population to its resources. The big question now, especially for UK companies, is how best to enter the market. In some areas, like oil and gas, where British companies have long-standing relationships, it's easier. In other areas, there may be more challenges.

Our role as the government isn't to tell companies what to do, they make their own independent decisions. What we do is help them understand the opportunities, connect them with the right relationships in Kuwait, and communicate back to the Kuwaiti government the challenges companies face. Ultimately, companies will come if the opportunities are here—they want to succeed and do well. Our job is to support them and ensure their concerns are heard.

Q: On the defense front, are there any agreements planned or joint training exercises in the works, particularly given the current regional tensions?

A: I wouldn't necessarily link our defense activities to tensions in the region. We have several ongoing training programs with Kuwait on the defense side. Just this month and next, we're running a major exercise between our two armies called Exercise Desert Warrior. Several British soldiers arrived in Kuwait a few days ago and are currently training alongside the Kuwaiti Armed Forces. I'm scheduled to attend the final closing session, which will take place the week before Ramadan.

This kind of training happens continuously. Many Kuwaiti military personnel also go to the UK for programs at our training facilities. Sandhurst is the most well-known, but we also have Dartmouth for the Navy and other programs. Just last week, I met cadets who completed two years at Sandhurst—they're now returning to Kuwait to serve not only in the army but also in other areas, including the Ministry of Interior and the Coast Guard. We've even had the first female Coast Guard cadets go to the UK for training.

So, these programs are permanent and ongoing. There is a longstanding British commitment to Kuwait's security, which dates back over 120 years and was particularly clear during the 1990 invasion. While the region may not yet be fully stabilized, our collaboration and support for Kuwait's armed forces remain continuous and strong.

Q: The UK has a long-standing commitment to Kuwait's security, dating back over 120 years, as was evident during the 1990 invasion. Today, the region remains unstable, with ongoing tensions and military actions involving multiple players, including the United States and allies such as Greenland. In this context, how would the UK respond if a significant security incident were to occur in the region? And is your commitment to Kuwait and the wider GCC still firm, even if other players in the region are allied with different sides?

A: There's a lot to unpack in your question. I would start by saying that Kuwait, like the rest of the region and the United States, is an ally of the UK, and we share deep interests across economic, political, and military fields. These ties are longstanding and strong, both historically and today.

On the ground, we have over 20 British military officials permanently stationed here, integrated into the Kuwaiti Armed Forces. There is also extensive military cooperation, as I mentioned earlier, not just in Kuwait but across the region, including Qatar and Bahrain. That demonstrates the visible and ongoing commitment of the UK.

Of course, it's difficult to speculate about the future. You mentioned Greenland, the United States, and the wider region. The world is uncertain, and none of us can predict everything that will happen. Regarding Greenland, the UK has been clear that we stand

with Denmark, as Greenland is a Danish territory. NATO obligations are clear under Article 5, and the future of Greenland is ultimately a matter for Denmark and the people of Greenland.

At the same time, it's not unusual for allies to have differing views on certain issues. Disagreements exist, but the strength of our friendships, alliances, and partnerships ensures there is always a channel for discussion.

As for Kuwait's foreign policy, that is for Kuwait to define. What is clear is that Kuwait has consistently played a positive and stabilizing role in the region, helping to maintain peace and stability in many historical situations. We respect their approach and continue to work closely with them.

Q: UK recently announced the opening of a Palestinian embassy, following your recognition of Palestine four months ago. How do you assess this step, and what kind of support can the UK provide—particularly in coordination with Kuwait—toward the reconstruction of Palestine?

A: Britain has a historic and moral responsibility when it comes to Palestine. That responsibility is clear, and it guides our commitment to ensuring justice for the Palestinian people, including the stability and security of a Palestinian state.

The recent recognition of Palestine and the opening of the embassy is one step on that journey. It's not the final step—there is still much to be done to help Palestine achieve the stability and security it needs as a state, and we stand ready to support that.

In Gaza, this includes putting pressure on Israel to allow the Palestinian people a life of dignity. Aid must flow freely, borders must be opened, and NGOs and the UN need to operate without restrictions to support the people on the ground. We continue to engage with Israel to explain why this is not only a matter of justice for Palestinians but also in Israel's interest.

In terms of direct support, the UK has provided over £100 million in aid to Gaza this year, and around £250 million over the last two years. This includes food, medical care, shelter, and now reconstruction efforts. We have also contributed £4 million for mine clearance to address unexploded ordnances.

Recognition and the embassy are important visible steps, but there is still much work ahead. We remain committed to doing what we can—both by engaging diplomatically and providing tangible support on the ground.

Q: Earlier, there were reports suggesting that Iran might target American bases in the region. If such an attack were to occur, how would the UK, as an ally of the GCC countries, respond? What is your reaction to these threats?

A: It's very difficult to speculate on specific scenarios. There are so many possibilities, and it's not something that I—or even my ministers or government—can predict with certainty.

What I can say is that we have been very clear with the Iranian government that their current actions against peaceful protesters are unacceptable. That message has been communicated directly. At the same time, diplomacy and working toward negotiated solutions remain our top priority to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Our alliances in this region are strong and well-integrated—politically, economically, and militarily—but it's simply impossible to predict exactly how events might unfold.

Q: What steps is the UK taking to address and reduce the trade deficit with Kuwait?

A: I wouldn't say that reducing the trade gap is a specific objective. Different countries trade in different ways, with different imports and exports. Our focus is on increasing UK exports to Kuwait be-

cause there are clear opportunities and mutual benefits in doing so—not simply to close the trade gap.

Where Kuwait can export, it does so, and where Britain can export, we aim to expand our trade relations. There are many areas where we see potential for growth, including healthcare, education, defense, and technology. These are sectors where we are actively working to increase UK exports to Kuwait.

Water, diesel

On Nasser Al-Jarri's farm, there are large enclosures for raising sheep and poultry, with a particular focus on pigeons.

Farmer Al-Jarri hopes that competition in the auction will start based on the cost of each agricultural product, a method he says ensures a fair profit for producers after covering their expenses.

He called for giving priority to local produce in Al-Wafra and Sulabiya markets, and praised some cooperative societies for allocating space to display locally grown products.

He also requested that the price gap between local and imported agricultural goods not be too large.

Al-Jarri highlighted the issue of subsidized diesel, commending the Kuwait Farmers Union for its efforts to reinstate subsidized diesel for farmers in Al-Wafra and Al-Abdali.

He revealed that he currently spends around KD 1,000 per month on diesel, but the cost would drop to no more than KD 500 if subsidized diesel were available.

Meanwhile, farmer Mansour Sayer Al-Shammari has proposed a series of measures to tackle the chronic problems that farmers in the Al-Abdali agricultural area in north of Kuwait face, particularly the shortage of treated irrigation water, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Shammari suggested allocating two days each week for delivering treated water to every plot of land in the region. He also called for the quick reinstatement of subsidized diesel for agricultural producers and urged authorities to resolve the frequent and sudden power outages that disrupt farming operations. In addition, he expressed hope that the recently introduced high fees for bringing in agricultural workers would be canceled.

Highlighting the competitiveness of local produce, Al-Shammari stressed that he is not concerned about imported products, provided that the guiding principle remains "Quality in production and integrity in marketing."

He stressed that locally grown produce reaches consumers fresh, healthy, and safe, giving it a clear advantage in the market.

Al-Shammari explained that his farm produces a wide variety of crops throughout the year, with planting cycles scheduled in close succession. The farm's total agricultural area is estimated at around 200,000 square meters, all covered by modern, cooled greenhouses established in partnership with the agricultural financing portfolio he manages on behalf of the Ministry of Finance and the Industrial Bank of Kuwait.

His farm production includes cabbage, eggplant, potatoes, onions, corn, squash, beans, peas, sunflowers, broad beans, cauliflower, carrots, zucchini, and various leafy greens.

Al-Shammari emphasized that the farm could cultivate even more varieties if it had reliable access to treated water, subsidized diesel, electricity, and trained agricultural labor at reasonable wages.

He explained that the farm currently requires about 20 water tankers daily to transport fresh water from its main stations at high costs. The price of a 300,000-gallon water coupon has risen from KD 51 to KD 151, making it prohibitively expensive.

Al-Shammari also questioned why the use of desalination plants on farms is prohibited, particularly given the ongoing treated water shortage in Al-Abdali.

From books

The project aligns with NCCAL's strategic plan and the "New Kuwait 2035" vision, aiming to transform libraries into smart, model facilities in line with international standards and offering innovative interactive services using artificial intelligence technology.

Gold stabilizes

Gold received strong support earlier in the week due to increased geopolitical risks and US statements hinting at potential military action against Iran. Later, these concerns subsided as signals from the US administration suggested a possible delay in any military move, thus reducing the risk premium and demand for safe-haven assets in recent sessions.

Strong US economic data also put pressure on gold prices. Industrial production grew more than expected, and the US labor market showed resilience with declining unemployment claims and stable unemployment rates below Federal Reserve estimates. This strengthened the US dollar and increased Treasury yields, reducing gold's appeal as a non-yielding asset.

These developments reinforced market expectations that the Federal Reserve is unlikely to cut interest rates in the near term, with stabilization expected at the next meeting and broad monetary easing likely postponed until mid-2026. This reduced investor bets on a continued short-term upward momentum for gold.

From a technical perspective, gold stabilized below 4,600 dollars per ounce after hitting a low of 4,537 dollars on Friday, before rebounding above the 4,550-dollar support level.

Indicators suggest a shift from bullish to neutral momentum, with high potential for continued wide-range fluctuations in response to sudden political or economic developments. The 4,550-dollar level currently represents major support, while 4,600–4,640 dollar level forms major resistance.

Last week, gold prices experienced sharp volatility, moving within a range of between 4,536 and 4,640 dollars per ounce, driven by news on US monetary policy and geopolitical developments. Despite recent declines, prices remain near historical highs, reflecting continued structural support.

Analysts are divided on short-term prospects, with supporting factors and risks in balance. Some foresee a temporary correction driven by profit-taking and rising yields, while the overall trend remains underpinned by long-term fundamentals, including increasing global debt levels and ongoing political uncertainty.

Markets are awaiting the upcoming release of important US economic data, including Federal Reserve-preferred inflation indicators, personal income and spending, GDP readings, purchasing managers' indices, and consumer confidence, which will play a decisive role in shaping monetary policy expectations and determining gold's next path.

Gold is currently trading in an environment of high volatility and uncertainty, with investors closely monitoring potential changes in US monetary policy or renewed geopolitical escalation, factors that could quickly restore upward momentum in prices.

Sha'ban begins

Al-Ojairi Scientific Center affirmed that these astronomical indicators are considered reliable criteria for determining the beginning of the Islamic month.

Thousands march in Greenland to support Arctic island in face of Trump's takeover threats

Europeans reeling as Trump imposes tariffs over Greenland dispute

BERLIN, Jan 18, (AP): Europeans were reeling Sunday from U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that eight countries will face 10% tariff for opposing American control of Greenland.

The responses to Trump's decision on Saturday ranged from saying it risked "a dangerous downward spiral" to predicting that "China and Russia must be having a field day."

Trump's threat sets up a potentially dangerous test of U.S. partnerships in Europe. Several European countries have sent troops to Greenland in recent days, saying they are there for Arctic security training. Trump's announcement came Saturday as thousands of Greenlanders were wrapping up a protest outside the U.S. Consulate in the capital, Nuuk.

The Republican president appeared to indicate that he was using the tariffs as leverage to force talks with Denmark and other European countries over the status of Greenland, a semiautonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark that he regards as critical to U.S. national security. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland would face the tariff.

There are immediate questions about how the White House could try to implement the tariffs because the EU is a single economic zone in terms of trading, according to a European diplomat who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. It was unclear, too, how Trump could act under U.S. law, though he could cite emergency economic powers that are currently subject to a U.S. Supreme Court challenge.

European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said China and Russia will benefit from the divisions between the U.S. and the Europe. She added in a post on social media: "If Greenland's security is at risk, we can address this inside NATO. Tariffs risk making Europe and the



People protest against Trump's policy towards Greenland in front of the US consulate in Nuuk, Greenland, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026. (AP)

United States poorer and undermine our shared prosperity."

Trump's move also was panned domestically.

U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, a former U.S. Navy pilot and Democrat who represents Arizona, posted that Trump's threatened tariffs on U.S. allies would make Americans "pay more to try to get territory we don't need."

"Troops from European countries are arriving in Greenland to defend the territory from us. Let that sink in," he wrote on social media. "The damage this President is doing to our reputation and our relationships is growing, making us less safe. If something doesn't change we will be on our own with adversaries and enemies in every direction."

Norway and the U.K. are not part

of the 27-member EU, which operates as a single economic zone in terms of trading. It was not immediately clear if Trump's tariffs would impact the entire bloc. EU envoys scheduled emergency talks for Sunday evening to determine a potential response.

António Costa, president of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European

Commission, pledged to continue their full solidarity with Denmark and Greenland.

"Tariffs would undermine transatlantic relations and risk a dangerous downward spiral. Europe will remain united, coordinated, and committed to upholding its sovereignty," they wrote in a joint statement late Saturday.

The tariff announcement even

drew blowback from Trump's populist allies in Europe.

Jordan Bardella, president of Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party in France and also a European Parliament lawmaker, posted that the EU should suspend last year's tariff deal with the U.S., describing Trump's threats as "commercial blackmail."

Trump also achieved the rare feat of uniting Britain's main political parties - including the hard-right Reform UK party - all of whom criticized the tariff threat.

"We don't always agree with the U.S. government and in this case we certainly don't. These tariffs will hurt us," Reform UK leader Nigel Farage, a longtime champion and ally of Trump, wrote on social media. He stopped short of criticizing Trump's designs on Greenland.

Meanwhile, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who leads the center-left Labour Party, said the tariffs announcement was "completely wrong" and his government would "be pursuing this directly with the U.S. administration."

The foreign ministers of Denmark and Norway are also expected to address the crisis Sunday in Oslo during a news conference.

Thousands of Greenlanders carefully marched across snow and ice to take a stand against U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday. They held signs of protest, waved their national flag and chanted "Greenland is not for sale" in support of their own self-governance in the face of increasing threats of an American takeover.

Just as they finished their trek from the small downtown of Greenland's capital city Nuuk to the U.S. Consulate, the news broke: Trump, from his home in Florida, announced he will charge a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from eight European countries over their opposition to U.S. control of Greenland.



A visitor to Lake Eola Park in downtown Orlando, Fla., walks past the flock-of-seagulls 'Take Flight' sculpture on a chilly morning, Friday, Jan. 16, 2026. (AP)

Florida faces rare winter snow event

Snow, subzero wind chills sweep US

HOUSTON, Jan 18, (AP): A blast of winter weather brought snowfall and subfreezing wind chills across the Midwest and East Coast on Saturday as well as near-freezing temperatures in parts of the South, including normally balmy Florida.

In northeastern Ohio, sudden bursts of heavy snow and gusty winds created whiteout conditions, according to the National weather Service. Snow squall conditions moved into the Cleveland metro area and were expected to continue east into Pennsylvania and parts of eastern New York.

"Expect visibilities of less than a quarter of a mile and rapid snow accumulation on roadways. Travel will be difficult and possibly dangerous in the heavy snow," the National weather Service warned.

Below-average temperatures in the Central and Eastern U.S. were predicted for the weekend and into early next week.

"The next few nights are forecast to be very cold for much of the Central

and Eastern United States," the weather Prediction Center, part of the National weather Service, said. "Sub-zero wind chills are forecast from the Plains to the Midwest and Northeast, with the coldest wind chills expected in the Upper Midwest on Sunday night."

"Impactful snowfall" was forecast to begin late Saturday up and down the East Coast, from the western Florida Panhandle to Maine, according to the prediction center. Snow was expected to blanket Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island by Sunday night, with some areas getting up to 4 inches (10 centimeters) of snow.

Meanwhile Oklahoma, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida were expected to have near-freezing temperatures at least through the weekend.

In Tallahassee, Florida, there could be some snowfall Sunday morning, according to the National weather Service. But it should not last long.

"So here in Tallahassee, the likelihood of any snow accumulation is not zero, but it's very low. I mean the

ground will be just too warm for anything to stick and accumulate," said Kristian Oliver, a meteorologist with the National weather Service's office in Tallahassee.

It would be the second time in as many years that the state has seen snow: In January 2025 up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) fell in parts of the Panhandle, part of a record-breaking snowstorm that impacted the Deep South including other normally snow-free places like Houston and New Orleans.

"On average we have an event like this maybe every few years. But having two back to back I'd say is pretty anomalous for the area," Oliver said.

Up to 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) was forecast for central Georgia south of Atlanta, with the heaviest snowfall expected between 6 a.m. and 11 a.m.

"Plan on slippery roads during the snow, as well as on Sunday night into Monday morning as remaining water/snow refreezes," the National weather Service's Atlanta office said.

Federal judge halts arrests of protesters

ICE crackdown sparks Minneapolis clashes

MINNEAPOLIS, Jan 18, (AP): Protesters for and against the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown clashed in Minneapolis on Saturday as the governor's office announced that National Guard troops had been mobilized and stood ready to assist state law enforcement, though they were not yet deployed to city streets.

There have been protests every day since the Department of Homeland Security ramped up immigration enforcement in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul by bringing in more than 2,000 federal officers.

A large group of protesters turned out in downtown Minneapolis and confronted a much smaller group of people attending an anti-Somali and pro-Immigration and Customs Enforcement rally. They chased the pro-ICE group away and forced at least one member to take off a shirt they deemed objectionable.



Law enforcement detain a man outside the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building during a protest on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, in Minneapolis. (AP)

Jake Lang, who organized the anti-Islam and pro-ICE demonstration, appeared to be injured as he left the scene, with bruises and scrapes on his head. He said via social media beforehand that he intended to "burn a Quran" on the steps of City Hall, but it was not clear if he carried out that plan.

Lang was previously charged with assaulting an officer with a baseball bat, civil disorder and other crimes before receiving clemency as part of President Donald Trump's sweeping act of clemency for Jan. 6 defendants last year. Lang recently announced that he is running for U.S. Senate in Florida.

In Minneapolis, snowballs and water balloons were also thrown before an armored police van and heavily equipped city police arrived.

"We're out here to show Nazis and ICE and DHS and MAGA you are not welcome in Minneapolis," protester Luke Rimmington said. "Stay out of our city, stay out of our state. Go home."

The state guard said in a statement that it had been "mobilized" by Democratic Gov. Tim Walz to support the Minnesota State Patrol "to assist in providing traffic support to protect life, preserve property, and support the rights of all Minnesotans to assemble peacefully."

Maj. Andrea Tsuchiya, a spokesperson for the guard, said it was "staged and ready" but yet to be deployed.

The announcement came more than a week after Walz, a frequent critic and target of Trump, told the guard to be ready to support law enforcement in the state.

During the daily protests, demonstrators have raided against masked immigration officers pulling people from homes and cars and other aggressive tactics. The operation in the deeply liberal Twin Cities has claimed at least one life: Renee Good, a U.S. citizen and mother of three, was shot by an ICE officer during a Jan. 7 confrontation.

On Friday a federal judge ruled that immigration officers cannot detain or tear gas peaceful protesters who are not obstructing authorities, including while observing officers during the Minnesota crackdown.

During a news conference Saturday, a man who fled civil war in Liberia as a child said he has been afraid to leave his Minneapolis home since being released from an immigration detention center following his arrest last weekend.

Video of federal officers breaking down Garrison Gibson's front door with a battering ram Jan. 11 become another rallying point for protesters

who oppose the crackdown.

Gibson, 38, was ordered to be deported, apparently because of a 2008 drug conviction that was later dismissed. He has remained in the country legally under what's known as an order of supervision. After his recent arrest, a judge ruled that federal officials did not give him enough notice that his supervision status had been revoked.

Then Gibson was taken back into custody for several hours Friday when he made a routine check-in with immigration officials. Gibson's cousin Abena Abraham said Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials told her White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller ordered the second arrest.

The White House denied the account of the re-arrest and that Miller had anything to do with it.

Gibson was flown to a Texas immigration detention facility but returned home following the judge's ruling. His family used a dumbbell to keep their damaged front door closed amid sub-freezing temperatures before spending \$700 to fix it.

"I don't leave the house," Gibson said at a news conference.

DHS said an "activist judge" was again trying to stop the deportation of "criminal illegal aliens."

Europe

Portugal votes amid crowded field: A record 11 candidates are standing in Portugal's presidential election Sunday, with a populist party leader poised to possibly bring another political breakthrough for Europe's growing far-right parties.

The large field makes it unlikely that any candidate will capture more than 50% of the vote for a first-round win. That would leave the two top candidates to compete in a runoff ballot next month.

Almost 11 million people are eligible to vote in the election, with most results expected late in the day. The winner will replace Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, who has served the limit of two five-year terms.

Polls opened at 8 a.m. on a mostly sunny day across the country and were due to close 12 hours later.

Among the front-runners, according to recent opinion polls, are André Ventura, the leader of the populist Chega (Enough) party. Chega's surge in public support made it the second-largest party in Portugal's parliament last year, just six years after it was founded. (AP)

Austria avalanches kill 5 skiers: Five skiers have been killed in a pair of avalanches in the Salzburg Pongau region of western Austria on Saturday, authorities said.

Four skiers were killed by a snow slide in the Gastein Valley, south of the city of Salzburg, that swept away seven

people. Two were injured - one seriously - and a third escaped unharmed, the APA news agency reported.

"This tragedy painfully demonstrates how serious the current avalanche situation is," said Gerhard Kremser, district head of the Pongau mountain rescue service, noting the "clear and repeated warnings" about the avalanche risk.

Four rescue helicopters, mountain rescue and Red Cross dog teams, and a crisis intervention team were rushed to the scene. (AP)

Thousands of people rally in Serbia: Thousands of people rallied Saturday in Serbia as university students announced a new stage in their struggle against President Aleksandar Vucic's tenure. They have led more than a year of mass demonstrations that shook his autocratic government in the Balkan country.

Protesters in Novi Sad, chanting "thieves," accused the government of rampant corruption that they believe also led to a November 2024 train station disaster in the northern city that killed 16 people and triggered the nationwide movement for change.

Vucic has refused to schedule an immediate early election that students have demanded. Hundreds of people have been detained, or reported losing their jobs or facing pressure for opposing the government.

University students told the crowd in Novi Sad on Saturday that after last year's protests, they will now offer a plan on how to rid Serbia of corruption and restore the rule of law. They proposed banning corrupt officials from politics and in-

vestigating their wealth as first steps for the post-Vucic government. (AP)

16 detained in Georgia over violence: Georgian law enforcement authorities have detained 16 members of a radical neo-Nazi group on charges of organized violence, robbery, and the torture of a minor, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia announced Saturday.

The suspects, reportedly including 10 minors and two girls,

are accused of operating an organized criminal cell adhering to fascist ideology.

According to investigators, the group systematically targeted people selected in advance, attacking individuals who differed in their views, sexual orientation or identity.

The prosecution stated that the members subjected their victims to physical and psychological abuse, often filming the torture to distribute the footage across social media and encrypted private channels. (Xinhua)



Britain's opposition leader Kemi Badenoch speaks during a protest against the proposed Chinese embassy, in London, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026. (AP)



Far-right candidate Sarah Knafo shakes hands with people in a market as she campaigns for Paris mayoral election, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL



Uganda's incumbent President Yoweri Museveni speaks to the press after voting at a polling station in Kiruhura district, Uganda, on Jan. 15, 2026. (Xinhua)

Challenger rejects 'fake' results

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni secures 7th term

KAMPALA, Jan 18, (AP): Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni won his seventh term with 71.65% of the vote, according to official results Saturday, in an election marred by a days-long internet shutdown and rigging claims by his youthful challenger, who rejected the outcome and called for peaceful protests.

The musician-turned-politician best known as Bobi Wine took 24.72% of the vote, the final results showed.

Wine, whose real name is Kyagulyanyi Ssentamu, has condemned what he described as an unfair electoral process and alleged abductions of his polling agents before voting had even started in parts of the East African country. He said he rejected the "fake" results and urged Ugandans to peacefully protest until the "rightful results are announced."

Wine said he had to escape to avoid arrest by security forces who stormed his house Friday night. Police spokesperson Kituuma Rusoke said Wine was "not under arrest" and was free to leave his house, but there was "controlled access" for others trying to go into the property to prevent people from using the premises to incite violence.

Electoral officials face questions about the failure of biometric voter identification machines on Thursday that caused delays in the start of voting in

urban areas - including the capital, Kampala - that are opposition strongholds.

After the machines failed, in a blow to pro-democracy activists who have long demanded their use to curb rigging, polling officials used hard-copy registers of voters.

The failure of the machines is likely to be the basis for any legal challenges to the official result.

Wine has not said whether he would launch a legal challenge with the courts, which previously have refused opposition efforts to nullify Museveni's victories while recommending electoral reforms.

Museveni said he agreed with the electoral commission's plan to revert to paper records of voters after the biometric machines failed, but Wine alleged fraud, claiming that there was "massive ballot stuffing" and that his party's polling agents were abducted to give an unfair advantage to the ruling party.

The head of the observer mission for the African Union, former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, told journalists Saturday that the mission did not find "any evidence of ballot stuffing" in the polling stations the team observed. He urged electoral authorities to test biometric machines in advance to prevent the failures and delays witnessed on election day.

Pakistan forces repel bank, police station attacks

Karachi mall fire kills 6, injures over 20

ISLAMABAD, Jan 18, (Agencies): At least six people were killed and over 20 others injured after a fire broke out at a shopping mall in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi late Saturday night, officials said on Sunday.

Spokesperson of the southern Sindh province, Sadia Javed, told Xinhua that the blaze erupted at Gul Plaza, a multi-storey shopping mall located on the MA Jinnah Road, which houses over 1,200 shops.

The spokesperson added that the firefighting teams have been working consistently to control the 3rd-degree fire, which spread to several floors of the plaza.

An official from Rescue 1122, Hassanul Haseeb Khan, said that firefighting efforts had managed to control about 40 percent of the blaze by early Sunday morning.

"The majority of the shops contain goods such as crockery, clothing, electrical appliances, cosmetics and perfumes, which intensified the fire," said the rescue official, adding that a section of the plaza collapsed and a rescue worker was buried under it.

The rescue official said that several people are still trapped in the building and efforts are being made to rescue them.

Police officials said the fire initially broke out in shops on the ground floor of the building and appeared to have been caused by a short circuit before spreading to other parts of the mall.

Also: ISLAMABAD: A truck plunged into a canal and a passenger bus overturned, in separate road crashes hours apart in Pakistan on Saturday, killing at least 24 people and injuring 45 others, officials said.

The first crash happened in Sargodha, a city in the eastern Punjab province, where a truck carrying pas-



People gather as firefighters try to control a massive fire that broke out in a multi-story shopping mall, in Karachi, Pakistan, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026. (AP)

sengers and cargo skidded off the road and fell into a canal amid heavy fog. Fourteen people were killed and nine others were injured, according to police and rescue officials.

In a separate crash, at least 10 people were killed and 36 others were injured when a speeding passenger bus overturned on the Makran coastal highway in the southwestern Balochistan province, senior police official Aslam Bangulzai said. The bus was

traveling from the southern city of Karachi to Jiwani, a town in Balochistan, he said.

Traffic crashes are common in Pakistan and are often blamed on reckless driving, poor road conditions and weak enforcement of traffic laws.

□ □ □

ISLAMABAD: At least 12 "terrorists" were killed in clashes with the security forces in three different areas in

Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province on Friday.

According to Pakistan military's media wing Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), approximately 15 to 20 terrorists carried out multiple terrorist activities in Kharan City of Balochistan.

"Wherein, terrorists attacked City Police Station, National Bank of Pakistan and Habib Bank Limited," said ISPR.

Files link Venezuela's acting leader to alleged drug, money networks

Rodríguez flagged in multiple DEA probes, records show

WASHINGTON, Jan 18, (AP): When US President Donald Trump announced the audacious capture of Nicolás Maduro to face drug trafficking charges in the U.S., he portrayed the strongman's vice president and longtime aide as America's preferred partner to stabilize Venezuela amid a scourge of drugs, corruption and economic mayhem.

Left unspoken was the cloud of suspicion that long surrounded Delcy Rodríguez before she became acting president of the beleaguered nation earlier this month.

In fact, Rodríguez has been on the radar of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration for years and in 2022 was even labeled a "priority target," a designation DEA reserves for suspects believed to have a "significant impact" on the drug trade, according to records obtained by The Associated Press and more than a half dozen current and former U.S. law enforcement officials.

The DEA has amassed a detailed intelligence file on Rodríguez dating to at least 2018, the records show, cataloging her known associates

and allegations ranging from drug trafficking to gold smuggling. One confidential informant told the DEA in early 2021 that Rodríguez was using hotels in the Caribbean resort of Isla Margarita "as a front to launder money," the records show. As recently as last year she was linked to Maduro's alleged bag man, Alex Saab, whom U.S. authorities arrested in 2020 on money laundering charges.

The U.S. government has never publicly accused Rodríguez of any criminal wrongdoing. Notably for Maduro's inner circle, she's not among the more than a dozen current Venezuelan officials charged with drug trafficking alongside the ousted president.

Rodríguez's name has surfaced in nearly a dozen DEA investigations, several of which remain ongoing, involving agents in field offices from Paraguay and Ecuador to Phoenix and New York, the AP learned. The AP could not determine the specific focus of each investigation.

Three current and former DEA agents who re-

viewed the records at the request of AP said they indicate an intense interest in Rodríguez throughout much of her tenure as vice president, which began in 2018. They were not authorized to discuss DEA investigations and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The records reviewed by AP do not make clear why Rodríguez was elevated to a "priority target," a designation that requires extensive documentation to justify additional investigative resources. The agency has hundreds of priority targets at any given moment, and having the label does not necessarily lead to being charged criminally.

"She was on the rise, so it's not surprising that she might become a high-priority target with her role," said Kurt Lunkenheimer, a former federal prosecutor in Miami who has handled multiple cases related to Venezuela. "The issue is when people talk about you and you become a high-priority target, there's a difference between that and evidence supporting an indictment."

Critics decry inauguration as 'power grab'

Guinea junta leader sworn in as president

CONAKRY, Jan 18, (AP): Junta leader Gen. Mamadi Doumbouya was sworn in Saturday as president of Guinea after he overwhelmingly won last year's presidential election despite an earlier promise not to present himself as a candidate.

Doumbouya took power in a 2021 military coup and has run the country with an iron fist. In December, he won the presidential election, which was held under a new constitution that revoked a ban on military leaders running for office and extended the presidential mandate from five years to seven years. Doumbouya was accused by critics of clamping down on opposition and dissent.

On Saturday, Doumbouya took the oath of office in a brand-new 55,000-seat stadium located in the suburbs of Conakry, the capital, before an audience of African leaders and representatives of the African Union Commission and the ECOWAS Commission.

"I fully appreciate the immense responsibility that the people of Guinea have entrusted to me following the presidential election," he said. "This mandate that has just been given to me is not a personal honor; it is a commitment to the Guinean people. A commitment to address the various governance challenges facing our country."

Although rich in mineral resources, half of Guinea's 15 million population is mired in poverty and experiences record levels of food insecurity, according to the World Food Program.



Guinea's president-elect Mamadi Doumbouya salutes the military at the inauguration ceremony in Conakry, Guinea, Jan. 17, 2026. (Xinhua)

The Simandou iron ore project, a 75% Chinese-owned mega mining project at the world's largest iron deposit, has been the focal point of infrastructural and economic revitalization for the junta. Production at the site began late last year after decades of delay. The authorities are banking on the project to create thousands of jobs and open investments in other sectors, including education and health.

Many supporters of the president-elect attended the ceremony. Swept up in the lively atmosphere, 28-year-old law student Rokiatou Kaba, from the Kankan Prefecture -Doumbouya's

hometown - was overjoyed.

"Guinea is fully back on the international stage. Economic takeoff is imminent, prosperity is guaranteed," he told The Associated Press.

But not everyone was convinced. In the corner of the stadium, Hassmiou Baldé, a 26-year-old economics student, seemed lost in thought, oblivious to the atmosphere around him.

"This is all just theater," he said. "After driving out all the real opposition, he surrounded himself with minor, unknown rivals."

He added: "It's a charade. A power grab."



In this photo provided by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS), members of its rescue team conduct a searching operation around Mount Bulusaraung, South Sulawesi province, Indonesia, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026. Inset: This photo provided by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS) shows debris of an ATR 42-500 turboprop airplane at Mount Bulusaraung in South Sulawesi province, Indonesia, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026, after the aircraft lost contact Saturday. (AP)

Indonesian plane wreckage found

Indonesian rescuers on Sunday recovered wreckage from a missing plane that is believed to have crashed the previous day with 11 people on board while approaching a mountainous region on Sulawesi island during cloudy weather.

The turboprop ATR 42-500 was on its way from Yogyakarta on

Indonesia's main island of Java to Makassar, the capital city of South Sulawesi province, when it vanished from radar on Saturday shortly after being instructed by air traffic control to correct its approach alignment.

The plane, operated by Indonesia Air Transport, was last tracked

at 01:17 p.m. in the Leang-Leang area of Maros, a mountainous district of South Sulawesi province. It was carrying eight crew members and three passengers from the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry who were aboard as part of an airborne maritime surveillance mission. (AP)

from the incident, all of whom sustained injuries. Of those injured, 14 have since been discharged from hospitals.

Authorities said they will continue to monitor the site while assessing safety conditions and reviewing protocols following the deadly collapse. (Xinhua)

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Cambodia nets 75 online scam suspects: Cambodia has arrested a total of 75 online scam suspects in the latest crackdown on the cyber scams, said a press release from the Ad-Hoc Committee to Combat Online Scams on Saturday.

They were apprehended on Friday during raids on a hotel and a guesthouse in the capital Phnom Penh for allegedly conducting online scams and staying in the kingdom illegally, it said.

Cambodian authorities will take the strictest legal action against all the masterminds involved in the cyber scams, without any exception, the press release said.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said in a special message on Tuesday that the fight against cyber scams is one of the government's key tasks at present to ensure the peaceful living of the people.

He added that, given the danger to society posed by cybercrime, the government has taken a number of measures against this crime and achieved many positive results.

Hun Manet called on authorities at all levels and people from all walks of life to join together to eradicate online scams in order to restore Cambodia's image on the international stage. (Xinhua)

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5 missing after China factory blast: Preliminary checks indicated that five people remain unaccounted for, with no fatalities reported so far, after an explosion at a factory in western Baotou City, north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, according to local authorities.

The explosion occurred at a plate plant of Baogang United Steel at around 3 p.m. on Sunday, said the city's emergency management bureau. The blast caused noticeable tremors in its surrounding areas.

The number of injured is still being determined. Multiple injured people have been rescued earlier, as rescue forces from the autonomous region and the city have arrived at the scene. (Xinhua)

Asia

Cebu landfill tragedy toll hits 36: The body of the last remaining missing person in the Jan. 8 landfill landslide in the central Philippine city of Cebu was retrieved early Sunday, bringing the total number of victims who perished in the tragedy to 36, the country's Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) said.

In a social media post, the BFP said all reported missing individuals had been accounted for as of 5:41 a.m. local time on Sunday, marking the completion of search, rescue, and retrieval operations nearly two weeks after the incident.

"Responding teams have completed systematic search, rescue, and retrieval operations, ensuring that no further missing persons remain," the bureau said, adding that coordination among ground units and partner agencies remains in effect as post-operation assessments and site monitoring continue.

The victims were among workers trapped inside a facility when a portion of a dumpsite collapsed on Jan. 8, sweeping the structure in its path.

Cebu City officials said 18 people were rescued



Visitors take pictures of a snow-covered Forbidden City, in Beijing, China, Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026. (AP)

Agreement aims to build digital knowledge economy

Zain Kuwait, BHCK sign MoU to empower youth and foster innovation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Zain Kuwait and Box Hill College Kuwait (BHCK) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a general framework for a strategic partnership across youth empowerment, education, innovation, social responsibility, and employment, supporting the development of national youth talent and reinforcing education's role in building a digital knowledge economy.

The agreement was signed at the Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) at the company's Shuwaikh HQ, joined by Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti and Box Hill College Kuwait President Dr. Ali Arifa, alongside officials from both sides.

This step reflects the two parties' direction toward strengthening cooperation between the private sector and academic institutions and aligning educational outcomes with market needs, particularly in technology and innovation, contributing to empowering the next generation of leaders and decision-makers for the digital future.

Commenting on the occasion, Waleed Al-Khashti said: "At Zain, we believe that investing in innovation is not a one-time initiative, but a long-term commitment that begins with education and ends with real career and market opportunities."

This cooperation represents a practical step to connect knowledge with application and equip students with the digital and professional skills that Kuwait's economy needs today, through training programs, real-world experiences, and partnerships that deliver impactful results."

He added: "We believe investing in people is the foundation for shaping a more prosperous future. The integration of roles between the private sector and academic institutions is a pivotal pillar for building a digital knowledge economy. That is why we continue expanding pathways that empower youth, strengthen their acquisition of in-demand market skills, and develop joint initiatives that reflect our approach to achieving purpose-driven progress through education, innovation, and sustainable



Waleed Al-Khashti and Dr. Ali Arifa sign the MoU.



Al-Khashti and Arifa with Zain and Box Hill College teams.

Waleed Al-Khashti:

■ "Investing in innovation is not a one-time initiative, but a long-term commitment that begins with education and ends with real career and market opportunities"

Dr. Ali Arifa:

■ "Our partnership with Zain opens broad horizons for our students and researchers to benefit from advanced practical expertise"

partnership."

Dr. Ali Arifa expressed his pleasure at signing the MoU, stating: "This cooperation with Zain represents a pivotal milestone in the College's journey to broaden opportunities that connect higher education outputs with the practical needs of the market in Kuwait."

He continued: "Partnering with one of the leading national telecom

and technology companies opens broad horizons for our students and researchers to benefit from advanced practical expertise, high-quality training programs, and joint initiatives that contribute to strengthening the College's role in serving the community," adding that the agreement offers multiple areas of cooperation, including participation in joint events, conferences, and workshops hosted by either institution.

This collaboration also comes as part of Zain's approach to deepening its partnerships with academic institutions, driven by its belief that building a thriving digital economy requires an integrated ecosystem that connects the private sector with educational institutions.

This, in turn, creates practical pathways for students and graduates through training, joint projects, and national talent attraction programs, aligning with the company's sustainability strategy and aspirations to support Kuwait's vision for a diversified economy based on knowledge and innovation.

Box Hill College Kuwait continues to develop its academic and practical outputs through MoUs and strategic partnerships with public and private sector entities, contributing to the preparation of qualified graduates who can compete effectively in the market.

Kuwait Fund signs KD 8 mln loan deal

KFAED extends new loan to enhance GCC power interconnection with Iraq

RIYADH, Jan 18, (KUNA): Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a third additional loan agreement worth KD 8 million with the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) to finance the project to enhance the GCC power grid interconnection and link it with the southern power network of the Republic of Iraq.

The agreement comes as part of the Fund's ongoing efforts to support regional projects with a direct impact on Kuwait.

Acting Director General of the Kuwait Fund, Waleed Al-Bahar, said in a statement to KUNA following the signing that the project is among Kuwait's key strategic initiatives, noting that the additional loan reflects the Fund's commitment to supporting electricity security and sustainability.

He added that the Fund's contribution aligns with its keenness to support projects that deliver direct returns to Kuwait, foremost among them strengthening electricity security and enhancing the efficiency and reliability of the national power grid.

Al-Bahar noted that the GCC power interconnection project helps increase the capacity of Kuwait's electricity network to meet growing demand, particularly during peak consumption periods, while also reinforcing power integration among countries in the region.

The project to enhance the GCC power interconnection system is considered one of the most important regional infrastructure projects in the energy sector.

It includes the construction of a new interconnection station (Al-Wafra Station), which has entered actual operation within the GCC grid system in the Al-Wafra area of Kuwait, covering an area of around 62,000 square meters.

The project also involves extending 400-kilovolt double-circuit overhead transmission lines over a distance of approximately 255 kilometers to connect the new station with the Al-Fadhili substation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The project is expected to generate significant technical and economic benefits for Kuwait, as it will increase the supportive capacity of the national electricity grid by about 3,000 megawatts, enhancing the reliability of power supplies, improving operational efficiency, and supporting the country's economic and social development.

Regionally, the project will also deliver important benefits by supporting the electricity grid in southern Iraq through the provision of stable power supply of no less than 500 megawatts, contributing to improved performance and stability of the network there.

In addition, the project contributes to achieving several UN Sustainable Development Goals, including good health and well-being (Goal 3), quality education (Goal 4), affordable and clean energy (Goal 7), decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9), sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11), and partnerships for the goals (Goal 17).

This additional loan marks the third financing extended by the Kuwait Fund to the project, bringing the total value of its loans to KD 78 million, representing around 29 percent of the project's cost.

The Government of Kuwait is also contributing approximately KD 37.5 million, underscoring the Fund's pivotal role in supporting regional infrastructure projects, enhancing energy security, serving Kuwait's strategic interests, and strengthening joint GCC cooperation.

Exclusive auto deals at Kuwait International Fairgrounds

Gulf Bank joins Auto World Exhibition 2026

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: As part of its commitment to staying connected with its customers, Gulf Bank announced its participation in the Auto World Exhibition, held at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds over six days from January 19 to 24, with the participation of a large number of car dealerships, companies, and banks.

As always, Gulf Bank is keen to provide premium banking services and financing solutions to its customers across various sectors, foremost among them the automotive sector. The bank offers convenient financing solutions that benefit all customers—both citizens and residents—through all car dealerships in Kuwait.

In cooperation with 11 of the largest car dealerships in Kuwait, Gulf Bank customers can enjoy zero-interest (0%) car purchase facilities for amounts of up to KWD 25,000, with flexible repayment periods of up to five years. Customers can also benefit from discounts of up to KWD 500 at several other dealerships, in addition to special discounts available throughout the exhibition period.

Gulf Bank is always committed to providing distinguished services to all customers and helping them choose the most suitable dealership to purchase a car under easy credit terms. The bank's permanent offices at these exhibitions also ensure customer privacy and fast transaction processing, reflecting its desire to enhance the customer experience in line with the highest banking quality standards.

The bank places great importance on customer satisfaction and looks forward to serving their needs and comfort through the presence of its employees at car dealerships geographically spread across various areas of Kuwait (Al-Rai, Shuwaikh, Ahmadi, Fahaheel, Qurain Markets, and Jahra), during both morning and evening hours. Customers are welcomed by a select and dedicated team of Gulf Bank employees ready to serve them, meet their requirements, and answer their inquiries through the Gulf Bank website and mobile application, as well as at any of the bank's branches across Kuwait.



- Zero-interest offers in cooperation with 11 major dealerships, and discounts of up to KWD 500 at others
- Car financing of up to KWD 25,000 with repayment periods of up to 5 years

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading bank in Kuwait by engaging its employees in an inclusive and diverse work environment to deliver exceptional customer service, while remaining committed to serving the community in a sustainable manner. Thanks to its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the bank gives customers the freedom to choose how and where to complete their banking transactions, while ensuring a smooth and fast banking experience.

As part of its support for Kuwait Vision 2035, "New Kuwait," and its commitment to collaborating with various stakeholders to achieve this vision, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving strong developments in sustainability across environmental, social, and governance levels through a range of strategically selected sustainability initiatives, both within and outside the bank.

Based on a sustained performance over more than 24 years within a Sharia-compliant investment framework

Markaz Real Estate Fund achieves total return of 9.7% in 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" closed 2025 with positive performance for the Markaz Real Estate Fund, delivering a total return of 9.7%, comprised of 4.7% from cash distributions and 5.0% from growth in the capital value of its assets.

During 2025, the Fund recorded net profits of KWD 7.2 million, equivalent to 132.4 fils per unit, supported by active fund management, strong operating performance across its real estate portfolio, stable rental income, and the realization of capital gains from the revaluation and sale of certain assets.

By the end of 2025, assets under management for the Markaz Real Estate Fund reached approximately KWD 81.1 million. The Fund also continued to maintain stable occupancy rates and high-quality rental cash flows, which was reflected positively in the returns achieved.

As part of its commitment to sustainability and the application of best environmental practices, the Fund announced that Al Nada Residential Tower has officially received LEED Gold certification, in recognition of the building's efficiency in energy and water consumption, indoor environmental quality, and adherence to sustainable construction standards. This contributes to lowering operating costs, enhancing the long-term value of the asset, and aligning with local and global responsible investment trends.

As one of the early real estate funds in the State of Kuwait, the Markaz Real Estate Fund benefits from a long performance record exceeding 24 years, with an annual internal rate of return of 7.7% since inception, alongside regular monthly cash distributions. This reflects the strength of its business model and its ability to generate stable returns across different economic cycles. The Fund is managed in accordance with Sharia principles and is available for investment to all residents in the State of Kuwait of all nationalities,



Abdulrahman Al Sanad

under a comprehensive regulatory framework with high standards of governance and transparency.

Stable returns and a forward-looking outlook

On this occasion, Abdulrahman Sulaiman Al Sanad, MREF Executive Committee Member, stated: "The 2025 results reflect the effectiveness of the Fund's strategy in achieving a strong balance between regular cash distributions and growth in the capital value of assets, through professional management of a diversified real estate portfolio within the Kuwaiti market. This performance demonstrates the Fund's

ability to meet the expectations of investors seeking stable periodic income and balanced growth, particularly amid market volatility."

Al Sanad added: "We continue to focus on improving operational performance and enhancing asset efficiency to deliver sustainable long-term value for our investors, within a Sharia-compliant investment framework and a disciplined investment approach centered on maximizing value from existing assets and leveraging selective opportunities that enhance portfolio quality and long-term returns. The Fund also intends to continue improving asset efficiency and managing capital with flexibility, supporting the sustainability of cash distributions and keeping pace with developments in the local real estate sector."

In his assessment of the real estate sector, Al Sanad noted that the sector is witnessing promising opportunities in housing and in the investment segment in the State of Kuwait, driven by growing infrastructure investments and structural developments that are reshaping these segments. He added that the next phase will feature a key focus among institutional investors and family businesses with large real estate portfolios on restructuring their portfolios to be more future-ready, and on unlocking value through reorganization, including separating the role of the investor from the role of the asset manager, which



enhances operational efficiency and improves the quality of long-term returns.

Investment opportunities and professional management

Through its real estate fund, Markaz continues to offer income-generating real estate investment opportunities, supported by monthly cash distributions and a flexible, liquid investment structure that enables investors to build their positions gradually without the operational challenges associated with direct property ownership. The Markaz Real Estate Fund is overseen by an integrated governance ecosystem that includes independent auditors, a custodian, an investment controller, and a registrar, reducing operational risks and strengthening investor confidence.

Markaz reaffirms its commitment to continuing the development of its real estate products and strengthening the position of the Markaz Real Estate Fund as one of the leading income-generating real estate funds in the State of Kuwait. Investors may subscribe to the Fund through Markaz, or through Gulf Bank in its capacity as the Fund's distributor, providing easier accessibility and aligning with the needs of investors seeking flexible investment solutions.

Key performance indicators of the Markaz Real Estate Fund for 2025

- Total return: 9.7%

- Cash distributions: 4.7%
- Growth in capital value: 5.0%
- Net profits: KWD 7.2 million
- Unit earnings: 132.4 fils
- Assets under management: KWD 81.1 million
- Track record exceeding 24years

Important information (QR Code Ad to MREF Website page)

■ Fund Manager: Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C. "Markaz", Kuwait City, Mirqab, Al Sour Street, Al Shaya Tower, Floor 8, Tel: +965 2224 8000, P.O. Box 23444, Safat 13095, State of Kuwait

■ Fund Administrative Board Members: Ghazi Al-Osaimi, Milad Elia, Khaled Al-Mubarak, Abdulrahman Sulaiman Al Sanad

■ To obtain a copy of the Articles of Association, Prospectus, and the Fund's financial reports, please visit: www.markaz.com

Disclaimer

This announcement has been prepared for promotional purposes and has been approved by Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz". No material information relating to the investment referred to herein has been omitted. Investments in the Fund may be exposed to risks arising from changes in market conditions. There is no guarantee or assurance that the investment will generate any returns.

Accordingly, potential investors should conduct their own analysis and research, and consult their financial, legal, tax, audit and other professional advisers when making investment decisions or considering any strategy discussed in this content. Investors should also understand that such an investment carries a high degree of risk, including the risk of losing the principal invested, and that distribution levels cannot be predicted or guaranteed.

Past performance is not necessarily indicative of, and does not necessarily predict, future performance. The Fund's net asset value is variable and may decrease or increase. Please review the subscription prospectus and all Fund documents to understand the risk factors associated with this investment, as well as the investment methodology and operations, before investing in the Fund.

Reaffirming its commitment to sustainable growth and banking innovation

Warba Bank celebrates 15 years since its establishment

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Warba Bank celebrates its fifteenth anniversary since its establishment by an Amiri Decree in 2010 as an Islamic financial institution contributing to the national economy and providing Sharia-compliant banking solutions. With a capital of KD 100 million and 76% of the Bank's share allocated to Kuwaiti citizens as the State covered subscription costs on their behalf, the establishment of Warba Bank made it the first bank to include all of Kuwait's citizens without exception as shareholders, making it the only establishment of its kind worldwide in which the people represented 100% of the shareholders at inception in a decision by the Kuwaiti government to allocate the majority of the shares to its citizens as a form of long-term investment and a means of ensuring stability for future generations.

And since its establishment, Warba Bank has embarked on a journey guided by a clear vision focused on building a modern Islamic banking model that balances authenticity with innovation and keeps pace with the rapid changes in the financial sector. At the heart of its strategy has been serving the Kuwaiti community, supporting economic development, enhancing financial inclusion and reinforcing the values of governance, transparency and sustainability. This vision has been reflected in a strategy that balances digital transformation, sound governance and the development of banking products and services, while elevating customer experience and building long-term relationships founded on trust and credibility.

A Journey Rooted in a Clear Vision and Ambition

From its early years, Warba Bank adopted a balanced strategy focused on gradual growth and the development of banking products and services aligned with market needs, alongside strict adherence to Sharia principles and the application of the highest standards of governance and risk management to ensure financial stability and long-term sustainability.

Commenting on this milestone, **Mr. Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer**, Chairman of Warba Bank, stated: "We are proud to be a Kuwaiti bank deeply rooted in this cherished homeland and closely connected to its people, working hand in hand to build a brighter future for Kuwait. Since its establishment, Warba Bank has been committed to supporting our country's development vision, driven by our firm belief in the pivotal role the banking sector plays in realizing Kuwait's ambition to become a regional and global financial and commercial hub. We have translated this commitment into tangible investments and initiatives by supporting major development projects and empowering small and medium-sized enterprises as a cornerstone of economic growth, income diversification and the creation of quality job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth. All of this is supported by a strong track record of achievements and a clear strategic vision that reaffirms our commitment to remain a bank of the people, from the people and for the people, embodied in our slogan, 'Let's Own Tomorrow.'"

Warba Bank's journey has not merely been a story of innovation and customer service, but also one of financial and operational success supported by figures and indicators reflecting accelerated growth and growing market confidence. Since its launch with modest capital, the Bank has achieved steady growth in assets, customer deposits and financing volumes, affirming the effectiveness of its strategy and its ability to deliver sustainable returns to shareholders. The Bank's assets grew significantly, driven by the expansion of its Sharia-compliant financing portfolio and the widening of its retail and corporate customer base. This growth was not merely quantitative, but also reflected the quality of assets and the strength of the Bank's financial position, positioning Warba Bank among the most stable and profitable Islamic banks in the region.

Warba Bank pursued a carefully considered approach to strengthening its capital base as a core pillar of growth and sustainability, implementing several capital increases at pivotal stages of its development to support business expansion, enhance financial solvency and enable investments in operational infrastructure, digital transformation and Sharia-compliant product development. Notable capital increases took place in 2018, followed by another in 2021, culminating in the largest subscription in the history of the local economy in 2025, valued at approximately KD 1.9 billion. This capital increase supported a strategic move to acquire a significant stake in Gulf Bank, marking one of the most prominent investment transactions in the history of the local banking sector. This increase reflected shareholder confidence in Warba Bank's long-term vision and signaled its transition into a new growth phase driven by strategic partnerships and high-impact investments, further strengthening its position as a leading Islamic financial institution and expanding its influence within the banking ecosystem and the national economy.

Over its fifteen-year journey, Warba Bank has received numerous local, regional and international awards and recognitions in appreciation of its excellence in digital innovation, adherence to Sharia principles and sound governance, active role in social responsibility and strong financial performance and sustainable growth. These accolades stand as a testament to the strength of its strategy, the dedication of its workforce and its ongoing commitment to excellence and the advancement of Islamic banking.



Hamad Al-Sayer



Shaheen Al-Ghanem

Expanding Products and Services to Meet Evolving Market Needs

Commenting on the Bank's operational expansion, **Mr. Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem**, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, stated: "At Warba Bank, we have never limited ourselves to offering a narrow range of products. Since our establishment, we have been committed to the continuous expansion of our banking portfolio to include innovative and diversified solutions that address the evolving needs of both individuals and businesses. Over the years, we have recorded notable growth in operational volumes, accompanied by a steady expansion of our customer base and increased diversification of banking services and products across the retail, corporate and investment sectors. This progress has strengthened our position as a comprehensive Islamic bank capable of serving the requirements of diverse customer segments."

Al-Ghanem highlighted that Warba Bank has continued to expand its branch network across Kuwait, while ensuring an integrated banking experience that combines a strong physical presence with advanced digital channels. This approach facilitates easier access to banking services and enhances the overall quality of service delivered to customers.

He noted that despite the Bank's relative youth compared to other institutions in the market, Warba Bank has successfully introduced advanced, high-quality solutions. These include flexible Sharia-compliant residential mortgage financing, vehicle financing solutions, Islamic credit cards offering exclusive benefits, as well as savings and investment accounts that enable customers to grow their funds in secure and profitable ways. In addition, the Bank has developed specialized accounts designed to meet the needs of youth and low-income segments.

Focusing on the corporate sector, Al-Ghanem emphasized that Warba Bank has emerged as a strategic partner for a wide range of small, medium, and large enterprises. The Bank offers innovative Sharia-compliant financing solutions that support business growth and expansion, underpinned by a deep understanding of market needs and a strong ability to innovate and deliver flexible, effective financial solutions. This has positioned Warba Bank as the preferred banking partner for clients across various economic sectors.

Digital Transformation: A Cornerstone of Development

Al-Ghanem stated: "Digital transformation has been one of the fundamental pillars of Warba Bank's strategy since the early stages of its journey, driven by our early recognition that the future of banking depends on technology, innovation and the ability to deliver secure and flexible digital solutions that meet customer expectations in a rapidly evolving environment. Accordingly, the Bank adopted a proactive approach to the development of its digital services, placing digital transformation at the core of its operational growth and overall banking experience."

Over the years, Warba Bank has continued to invest in upgrading its technological infrastructure, launching advanced digital platforms and enhancing its banking application to become a primary channel that enables customers to manage their financial affairs securely and conveniently, anytime and anywhere. This approach has also included investing in building the digital capabilities of the Bank's workforce, ensuring readiness to keep pace with technological advancements and achieve high levels of operational efficiency.

Digital transformation at Warba Bank has extended beyond the provision of electronic channels to encompass the reengineering of internal processes, accelerating procedures, improving service quality and enhancing overall operational efficiency. Today, customers are able to conduct most of their banking transactions through smart applications or digital platforms, from opening accounts and managing cards to executing local and international transfers with ease, speed and the highest security standards.

This transformation has directly enhanced customer experience by reducing waiting times and delivering a more seamless and flexible banking journey aligned

with evolving lifestyles. It has reinforced customer satisfaction and cemented Warba Bank's position as a leader in Islamic digital banking. This trajectory confirms the Bank's unwavering commitment to placing the customer at the heart of its digital strategy and to continuous innovation as a key driver of long-term, sustainable value.

Sharia Compliance and Sound Governance: Pillars to Sustainable Growth

Al-Ghanem emphasized Warba Bank's commitment to applying the highest standards of corporate governance and risk management to safeguard its operations, protect the rights of depositors and shareholders, and strengthen the confidence of regulatory authorities as well as local and international institutions. He noted that the Bank fully complies with regulations issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait and adopts global best practices in compliance, anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism financing, and operational and credit risk management, thereby supporting the stability and resilience of its operating environment.

He further affirmed that adhering to the 4 Sharia principles and sound governance constitutes the cornerstone of Warba Bank's business model. The Bank adopts the highest standards of transparency and integrity across all its operations and products under the supervision of an independent Sharia Supervisory Board. This approach has consistently reinforced customer trust, strengthened the Bank's financial resilience, and supported balanced and sustainable growth that delivers tangible value to both the economy and society.

Investing in Human Capital

Al-Ghanem highlighted Warba Bank's investment in competitive national talent, driven by the belief that human capital lies at the heart of sustainable growth. Empowering employees and enhancing productivity are central to the Bank's strategy, recognizing employees as the Bank's true ambassadors and driving force behind superior performance. Over the years, the Bank has launched a range of distinguished initiatives and programs aimed at achieving these objectives, including training programs across various fields – most notably innovation and technological advancement – as well as volunteer and internal initiatives that reinforce a performance-driven, innovative and collaborative corporate culture.

He explained that Warba Bank views itself not merely as a financial institution, but as a national partner in the development journey, working alongside the public and private sectors to achieve ambitious national goals for a prosperous and sustainable future. The Bank has achieved a Kuwaitization rate exceeding 82%, contributing to the development of a new generation of Kuwaiti banking leaders capable of steering the financial sector forward.

Social Responsibility: Investing in Future Generations

Al-Ghanem highlighted Warba Bank's continued investment in competitive national talent as part of the Bank's firm belief that human capital is the cornerstone of sustainable growth. Empowering employees and enhancing productivity remain central to Warba Bank's strategy, with its people recognized as the Bank's true ambassadors and the driving force behind its strong performance. Over the years, the Bank has launched a range of distinguished initiatives and development programs designed to achieve these objectives, including comprehensive training across various disciplines, most notably in innovation and technological advancement, as well as volunteer and internal initiatives that foster a performance-driven, innovative, and collaborative corporate culture.

He further explained that Warba Bank views itself not merely as a financial institution, but as a national partner in Kuwait's development journey, working alongside both the public and private sectors to support ambitious national objectives and contribute to a prosperous and sustainable future. In this context, the Bank has achieved a Kuwaitization rate exceeding 82%, helping to cultivate a new generation of Kuwaiti banking leaders equipped to drive the financial sector forward.

Future Outlook: Toward Broader Horizons of Excellence

Commenting on the Bank's next phase, Al-Ghanem stated: "From an operational perspective, the Bank is focused on enhancing the digital customer experience and developing banking products and services that embody sustainability and social responsibility, in line with the expectations of future generations. We also continue to play a vital role in supporting the national economy and advancing sustainable development goals through innovative financing solutions, prudent investments, income diversification and strengthening economic resilience to address future challenges."

He added that 2026 will mark a year of new and pivotal milestones, building on the progress achieved in the previous year, noting: "We are continuing to lay strong foundations and renew our commitment as an active Islamic financial institution that contributes to financial stability, supports economic development and keeps pace with global transformations in the banking sector." Al-Ghanem concluded by emphasizing that the next phase will focus on accelerating digital transformation, expanding strategic partnerships and delivering smarter banking solutions that generate sustainable value for customers and society alike.

Other Voices

De facto management of a company: Where does legal responsibility lie?

By Attorney Shaikha al Julaibi

In the past few years there have been many instances where organizations which are supposedly managed by a set of individuals according to the books, but in reality, this is not the case at all. In most companies, there are partners who have been given financial and management powers at their own discretion with or without agreement made in the articles of organization. This soft law creates a stark legal example where a person who practically manages the company might have to share the burden of responsibility even not being the title holder.

Sound of De Facto Managing

De facto management comes into play where one individual or partner has been making decisions on a continuous basis, binds the party with some commitments and acts as the primary contact point for daily operations but has not been formally recognized for that role. Some of the signs are:

- Authority: One person holds complete authority on crucial financial and operational activities.
- Decision Making: Other managers are kept out of the loop from important decisions.
- Rights: The person in charge conserves all rights towards bank, agreements and external representation.

Right Mantras of Law in Kuwait

Kuwait Companies Law lays a lot of emphasis on what something is as opposed to how it was portrayed. The accountability is on the person really running the show instead of the one who has been given some glamorous title. Legal history and jurisprudence tells us:

- Unilateral Power Flow: Breach of corporate responsibility.
- De Facto Management Partner's Liability: Faces legal issues if things go wrong or laws are broken.
- Manager's Responsibility: Can be held responsible for oversight, but the primary responsible party is the one acting without proper authorization.

Coexistence of De facto and De jure

Where articles say there would be multi management or anything to be done by collective decision, then a single person executing those powers all by himself/herself are almost like peeing in open in the porcelain toilets. This behavior cannot be justified by saying it's an emergency or need. These kinds of situation where the bosses on multiple sides are taking the decisions and vice versa is not at all good for the company, it's hoard-



Shaikha al Julaibi

ers of the shares and for the business system at all. They say judges can intervene and cancel the orders made by the one boss without taking the team along.

Conserving the Minority Interest in the Company

Being in some group makes you entitled for some rights in that company, specifically when there's strong proof that something is being done against you. Courts can make order conceding the balance and obliging de facto manager towards liquidating what he has devoured or invested by chance. Even the transitions, records, secrecy agreements, prepared documents could be your.

Tips for the Start-up Owners and Powerless Partners

Under commercial bedrock, you better follow the following things:

- Supplement the articles of organization with a contractual agreement that outlines internal roles and accountability.
- Tie power with liability, as open hand-holding always results in someone having their hand cut off.
- Save all details of discussions, legally approved documents, and communicates for future use as solid proof.
- Authenticate your stake by exercising your given right as a boss, or else be prepared to take things as they come.
- Never give in to any control that may be selective and unethical.

In Summation

De Facto management is a consequential happening, where Kuwait law places believer on real management and not the glorious title. Real companies are formed under legal balance of rights & duties. An early well-formed governance, full occasional closing by the eye-power and tackling of illegal unilateral act is the key fallout of a well sustained business administration routine.

Bank Account Hacking: Defining the bank's responsibilities & the customer's obligations

By Lawyer Abdulrahman Al-Houti

Amid the growing number of complaints related to electronic fraud and its various forms, it has become important and necessary to understand the legal procedures that must be followed when a bank account is hacked as a result of fraud or deception.

At the outset, it is essential to highlight a critically important point: under Kuwaiti law, a bank's liability does not automatically cease merely because a customer has fallen victim to fraud. Rather, the bank remains bound by specific legal obligations, and any failure to fulfill these obligations may render the bank fully or partially liable for the financial loss suffered by the customer, even if the customer disclosed his banking details as a result of deception.

Within the framework of cybersecurity requirements, banks are obligated to provide effective protection systems for the banking services offered through electronic platforms and mobile applications. In this regard, banks must prevent unauthorized access, detect suspicious transfers, and protect customers' confidential data to prevent fraud, hacking, or theft of funds.

Accordingly, banks are required to monitor transactions that deviate from a customer's usual transaction behavior, and they bear the responsibility of preventing suspicious transfers until proper verification is conducted. If a bank executes an abnormal withdrawal or transfer from a customer's account without adequate verification, this may constitute evidence of negligence on the part of the bank.

For example, if a customer has a history of regular withdrawals and transfers, and a sudden large withdrawal or transfer to an unknown account occurs, this should trigger an internal alert within the bank. In such cases, the bank's failure to act on this warning constitutes supervisory negligence. The bank may also be held liable if it delays responding to the customer's report or fails to take immediate action upon receiving such a report.

If it is established that the fraud occurred due to weak verification mechanisms, deficiencies in the bank's electronic security system, or technical faults in the bank's mobile application or website, the bank shall bear full liability, as such matters fall within the scope of its obligations to secure customer accounts.



Abdulrahman Al-Houti

Among the bank's obligations in this context is the implementation of clear awareness campaigns against fraud, aimed at educating customers and warning them about fraudulent calls and fake links, as well as continuously reminding them not to disclose confidential banking information. If a bank neglects its awareness responsibilities, such neglect constitutes professional misconduct and may partially attribute liability to the bank for the fraudulent incident.

As for the legal procedures required of a person who has been subjected to banking fraud, the first step is to immediately notify the bank by contacting customer service or visiting the nearest branch. Legally, the customer has the right to request the temporary freezing of his account, suspension of external transfers, or deactivation of the card or electronic service that was compromised.

To preserve his legal rights, the customer must submit an official complaint to the Cybercrime Department at the Ministry of Interior, either in person or through the Ministry of Interior's electronic platform. The customer should provide fraudulent messages, links, visual or audio recordings received from the fraudsters as supporting evidence.

In addition to the above, it is advisable for the fraud victim to file a complaint with the Public Prosecution to formally establish the occurrence of the fraud, particularly in cases where the perpetrator is apprehended.

In conclusion, even if a customer disclosed his banking information as a result of fraud, this does not absolve the bank of its professional and supervisory responsibilities, nor does it negate the customer's right to compensation if it is proven that the bank could have prevented the transaction, detected it, or mitigated its effects. In all cases, bank account holders are advised to exercise extreme caution when conducting any banking transactions and to strictly adhere to bank instructions regarding the protection of their financial data.

As part of its ongoing commitment to providing innovative banking products

KIB launches Visa Corporate Prepaid Card, enhancing flexible business payments

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Kuwait International Bank (KIB), in partnership with Visa, announced the launch of its new Visa Corporate Prepaid Card, making it the first bank in Kuwait to offer this service. The card is designed to be a smart and secure solution for managing company expenses through virtual cards and digital platforms.

Leveraging the capabilities of the Visa Commercial Pay (VCP) platform, the card combines secure virtual payment technology with centralized expense management, giving businesses a powerful tool to control spending, improve efficiency, and streamline financial operations. The new card provides companies the flexibility to issue unlimited virtual cards for employees under the company's name, all funded through a single primary Prepaid Card.

The new Visa Corporate Prepaid Card offers a comprehensive range of benefits, including compatibility with digital wallets such as Apple Pay, global acceptance, enhanced spending control, and detailed transaction visibility. These features provide companies with the ability to monitor, manage, and authorize corporate expenses securely and in real time, reducing administrative workload and improving cash flow management.

Commenting on the product launch, Hesham Al Mubarak, General Manager of the Wholesale Banking Department at KIB, stated: "We are pleased to launch the new Visa Corporate Prepaid Card, which embodies our commitment to providing our clients with unique digital banking solutions." He added: "Our partnership with Visa reaffirms our commitment to innovation and to delivering banking solutions that place the customer at the heart of our priorities. This card provides companies with unprecedented levels of expense control and enhances the efficiency of their financial operations, while also of-



KIB and Visa introduce smart corporate expense solution.

fering greater flexibility in today's business environment. It delivers essential services and benefits for companies seeking to enhance their financial management and achieve the highest levels of transparency and efficiency."

From his side, Mohamed El-Shareef, General Manager of the Digital Innovation and Data Intelligence Department at KIB, said: "The launch of this card aligns with the Bank's strategic direction to empower companies to adopt smarter digital operating models built on data and effective financial governance. Integration with the Visa Commercial Pay platform enables companies to gain real time visibility and more accurate insights into their spending, supporting better decision making while enhancing compliance and transparency. At KIB, we believe that true innovation goes beyond providing advanced payment tools; it lies in building an integrated digital ecosystem that enhances operational efficiency and supports business growth in a rapidly evolving digital landscape."

Mohammed Reyad, Visa's Country Manager for Kuwait, said: "We are delighted to introduce Visa Corporate Prepaid Card program with KIB, offering local businesses and corporates a more efficient and secure way to manage their payments and expenses. By leveraging Visa Commercial Pay, we are delivering advanced virtual payment technology and expense management tools that help companies streamline operations. This launch also reflects Visa's ongoing commitment to supporting Kuwait's vision for a thriving digital economy and ensuring that the benefits of digital payments reach businesses of all sizes across the country. As we move forward, Visa remains dedicated to working closely with our partners like KIB to further drive payments innovation in the business sector and support Kuwait's efforts in growing the country's digital economy."

The new Corporate Prepaid Card is now available for eligible corporate clients. To apply, clients can visit a KIB Corporate Branch and request the card.



Raed Maree and Sager AlSharhan in a group photo with the officials responsible for implementing the agreement.

As part of its strategy to strengthen leadership

stc & Australian University ink TNA agreement to empower employees

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the signing of a three-year Training Needs Analysis (TNA) agreement (TNA) with the Australian University (AU) in Kuwait. The collaboration will focus on providing access to internationally recognized training programs, as well as customized learning solutions to enhance employee engagement and career progression. The initiative aligns with stc ongoing commitment to support and empower its workforce, while encouraging them to progress in their careers by gaining practical and hands-on knowledge and experiences.

The TNA agreement was officially signed during a ceremony attended by senior executives from both parties, including Raed Maree, Chief Human Resources Officer at stc, as well as Sager AlSharhan, Assistant to the President for Support Services at AU. The newly formed partnership between the two parties marks the beginning of a strategic collaboration focused on learning, leadership development and workforce capability building. Through the partnership, stc aims to deliver structured and customized training programs to its employees that align with its business priorities and operations.

The three-year TNA comes as part of stc internal strategy to strengthen its leadership, managerial and professional capabilities across the organization. The collaboration with AU will provide stc's workforce with access to internationally recognized development programs as part of the Company's long-term approach to sustainable talent development. Having been awarded the employer of choice title, stchas incorporated employee development as a core pillar in its strategy and culture.

Commenting on the agreement on behalf of stc, Maree said, "As stc continues its transformation journey, investing in our people remains a strategic priority. This agreement reflects our belief that future-ready organizations are built through continuous learning, leadership development, and strong academic partnerships. That is why we believe in the importance of empowering our employees and providing them with the most suitable tools and experiences to assist them in excelling in their careers and achieving higher milestones."

stc's collaboration with AU supports its ongoing effort to deliver tailored learning solutions that address the needs of employees across various functions and business areas. The partnership focuses on role-aligned train-



Raed Maree and Sager AlSharhan during the signing of the agreement.

■ **Maree:** As stc continues its transformation journey, investing in our people remains a strategic priority.

■ **AlSharhan:** We aim to help stc invest in its people, strengthen leadership at every level, and build the skills essential for the future

ing programs designed to enhance professional capabilities and strengthen overall workforce effectiveness. This agreement is considered one of several initiatives that the Company has launched to support the needs of its workforce.

AlSharhan said, "The signing of the TNA agreement reflects a shared commitment to building capability in a structured and practical way — aligning training with stc's business priorities and supporting a high-performing workforce. At the Australian University, this is more than just an agreement — it's the beginning of a partnership built on trust and genuine value. Together, we aim to help stc invest in its people, strengthen leadership at every level, and build the skills essential for the future. We are proud to stand beside stc on this journey — supporting learning that delivers visible impact in daily performance and lasting growth."

Three substations to supply electricity to Google Cloud

CAPT to close KD 22 mln tender for Google Cloud power stations

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) will close the tender for the construction of three main substations to supply electricity to three Google Cloud data centers on Feb 10 at an estimated cost of KD22 million.

Reliable sources stated that the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is keen on overcoming obstacles to the construction of these substations to ensure they will be ready to supply electricity to the three Google Cloud centers.

Sources confirmed that Kuwait entered major partnerships to develop a national cloud infrastructure in cooperation with Google Cloud and Microsoft, following the example of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Bahrain, which have successfully attracted cloud regions.

Sources pointed out that establishing cloud data centers necessitates reliable electricity supply to

power the facilities. They said Kuwait is committed to the implementation of new power projects to meet its electricity needs, including that of the cloud data centers.

They added that the establishment of large cloud data centers in Kuwait — similar to the projects being implemented in Saudi Arabia and the UAE — entails the development of necessary infrastructure, particularly power generation plants.

Sources affirmed that Kuwait is working hard to secure its electricity needs for the cloud centers through the implementation of various projects like North Zour and Khairan power plants, fourth phase of the Subiya power plant, and various phases of the Shagaya renewable energy project.

It is worth mentioning that the ministry will construct three main substations in Sulaibiya, North Saad Al-Abdullah City and Mutlaa, in accordance with the agreement signed between the Kuwaiti government and Google.

Offering a comprehensive banking experience

KFH expands integrated services for Turkey and Egypt customers

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Following the success of the Group Service Center at Mishref branch, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced adding services of KFH- Egypt in the Group Service Center at Khaldiya branch. The Bank is also planning to open new centers in light of the remarkable demand from customers to benefit from the wide range of services offered to both existing and prospective customers of KFH -Turkey and KFH -Egypt. The two centers serve as an integrated gateway for the Group's services.

In pursuit of comprehensive performance, KFH launched the Group Service Center at Khaldiya branch in 2023, and Mishref branch last year, catering to customers of KFH-Turkey and KFH-Egypt. The centers provide a number of services tailored to customers through an integrated banking experience, with plans to eventually cover the remaining Group subsidiaries' markets.

Today, both centers offer a variety of services catering to customers' needs. These include hassle-free new account opening, straightforward updates to personal and banking information for continuous service and dedicated technical support for activating and using the mobile banking apps of KFH-Turkey and KFH-Egypt. Additionally, the centers facilitate secure transaction management and the request and delivery of ATM cards for KFH-Egypt account holders, enabling customers to access their accounts and conduct their transactions easily and securely. The objective of KFH Group Service Center is to serve customers in a convenient, comprehensive, fast, and flexible manner inside Kuwait.

The centers cater specifically to customers in the personal banking tier and above, underscoring KFH's continuous effort to provide excellent services, that meet customer expectations, enhance their banking experience



KFH's Khaldiya branch

and keep up with current banking products and services. Ultimately, this will bring the Bank closer to its customers, enabling it to offer direct support and immediate responses with top-quality banking services.

Highlighting UK-Kuwait trade ties with dairy promotion

Lulu launches British Dairy Promotion

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait is inviting shoppers to discover the taste of Britain with a special British Dairy Promotion, launched in collaboration with the UK's Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT).

The promotion officially kicked off on 14 January at Lulu Hypermarket Qurain, where the launch was inaugurated by Mr Stuart Summers, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy Kuwait, alongside representatives from the British Embassy, Lulu Kuwait management, and AHDB Middle East. The event marked the start of a week-long celebration of premium British dairy products.

Speaking during his visit, Mr. Stuart Summers, Deputy Head of Mission, said:

"It was a pleasure to join Lulu Hypermarket, AHDB and the Department for Business and Trade to launch this British Dairy Promotion in Kuwait. British dairy is renowned for its exceptional quality, great taste and high standards of animal welfare — values that consumers here in Kuwait really appreciate. This promotion is a great example of the strong and growing UK-Kuwait trade partnership, and I encourage shoppers to visit and discover the best of British dairy for themselves."

The promotion is running from 14 to 20 January, is available across several Lulu hypermarket locations in Kuwait, including Qurain, Egaila, Sabahiya, Salmiya, and Al Rai, making it easy for customers to enjoy a wide variety of high-quality British dairy.

Shoppers can explore products from 13 well-known British dairy brands, offering a delicious range of cheeses, yoghurts, and other dairy favorites. Made using time-honored traditions, high animal welfare standards, and quality ingredients, British dairy is loved around the world for its great taste and consistent quality.

Customers attending the launch event were also treated to product tastings, giving them the chance to sample the rich flavors and experience the quality of British dairy firsthand. Whether you're a cheese lover, a health-focused shopper, or simply looking to try something new, the promotion offers something for everyone.

This British Dairy Promotion reflects Lulu Hypermarket's commitment to bringing the best international products to its customers and enhancing the shopping experience with exciting global flavors. By working with trusted international partners, Lulu continues to offer quality, choice, and value to shoppers across Kuwait.



Photos during the campaign.



HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad, his sons Sheikh Mohammad Nasser and Abdullah, and Sheikh Malik Jaber Al-Malik



HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad offering congratulations.



HH Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah, Bahraini Interior Minister Rashid Al-Khalifa, Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al-Zayyani, and Sheikh Mubarak Salim Al-Ali



HH Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid, and Sheikh Rashid Al-Khalifa



Sheikh Dr. Du'aj Al-Khalifa and Sheikh Faisal Al-Khalifa Al-Malik



The groom Othman Abdullah Al-Yahya



Omani Interior Minister Hamoud Al-Boursaeedi, Omani Foreign Minister Bader Al-Boursaeedi and Abdul Aziz Al-Dekhail



Yousef Al-Sumail and Minister of Justice Nasser Yousef Al-Sumait

Foreign Minister Al-Yahya hosts wedding reception for son Othman

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya hosted a reception at the St. Regis Hotel to celebrate the wedding of his son, Othman, to the daughter of Mubarak Abdullah Al-Banwan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The reception was attended by His Highness the Prime Minister, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, along with a number of ruling family members, senior officials, ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, and family and friends, who offered their congratulations and best wishes to the couple for a happy life together.



Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim Al-Du'aaj



Saudi Ambassador Prince Sultan bin Saad



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah



Marzouq Al-Ghanim offering congratulations.



Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber and his son Sheikh Jaber



Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad



Sheikh Mubarak Al-Du'aaj



Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah and his son Sheikh Abdullah



Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Saleh Al-Malki



Egyptian Ambassador Mohamed Abu Al-Wafa and Lebanese Ambassador Ghady El Khoury



John Mayer plays Ripple during a public memorial for Grateful Dead guitarist Bob Weir on Saturday, Jan. 17, in San Francisco. (AP)



Musicians Joan Baez and Mickey Hart embrace during a memorial for Grateful Dead guitarist Bob Weir. (AP)



Fans gather at a public memorial for Grateful Dead guitarist Bob Weir on Saturday, Jan. 17, in San Francisco. (AP)

Fans and musicians pay tribute to Grateful Dead icon

Thousands celebrate legendary musician Bob Weir in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan 18, (AP): Thousands of people gathered Saturday at San Francisco's Civic Center to celebrate the life of Bob Weir, the legendary guitarist and founding member of the Grateful Dead who died last week at age 78.

Musicians Joan Baez and John Mayer spoke on a makeshift stage in front of the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium after four Buddhist monks opened the event with a prayer in Tibetan. Fans carried long-stemmed red roses, placing some at an altar filled with photos and candles. They wrote notes on colored paper, professing their love and thanking him for the journey.

Several asked him to say hello to fellow singer and guitarist Jerry Garcia and bass guitarist Phil Lesh, also founding members who preceded him in death. Garcia died in 1995; Lesh died in 2024.

"I'm here to celebrate Bob Weir," said Ruthie Garcia, who is no relation to Jerry, a fan since 1989. "Celebrating him and helping him go home."

Saturday's celebration brought plenty of fans with long dreadlocks and wearing

tie-dye clothing, some using walkers. But there were also young couples, men in their 20s and a father who brought his 6-year-old son in order to pass on to the next generation a love of live music and the tight-knit Deadhead community.

The Bay Area native joined the Grateful Dead - originally the Warlocks - in 1965 in San Francisco at just 17 years old. He wrote or co-wrote and sang lead vocals on Dead classics including "Sugar Magnolia," "One More Saturday Night" and "Mexicali Blues." He was generally considered less shaggy looking than the other band members, although he adopted a long beard like Garcia's later in life.

The Dead played music that pulled in blues, jazz, country, folk and psychedelia in long improvisational jams. Their concerts attracted avid Deadheads who followed them on tours. The band played on decades after Garcia's death, morphing into Dead & Company with John Mayer.

Darla Sagos, who caught an early flight out of Seattle Saturday morning to make the public mourning, said she suspected something was up when there were

no new gigs announced after Dead & Company played three nights in San Francisco last summer. It was unusual, as his calendar often showed where he would be playing next.

"We were hoping that everything was OK and that we were going to get more music from him," she said. "But we will continue the music, with all of us and everyone that's going to be playing it." Sagos and her husband, Adam Sagos, have a one-year-old grandson who will grow up knowing the music.

A statement on Weir's Instagram account announced his passing Jan. 10. It said he beat cancer, but he succumbed to underlying lung issues. He is survived by his wife and two daughters, who were at Saturday's event.

His death was sudden and unexpected, said daughter Monet Weir, but he had always wished for the music and the legacy of the Dead to outlast him.

American music, he believed, could unite, she said.

"The show must go on," Monet Weir said.

Variety

CAIRO: Egypt seized 526 ancient Pharaonic artifacts from an individual in Minya Province, south of Cairo, in an illegal trafficking bust, the Interior Ministry announced on Saturday.

Following a coordinated investigation with the Minya security directorate by tourism and antiquities police, the suspect was targeted and arrested, the ministry said in a statement.

During questioning, the suspect confessed that the items were obtained through illegal excavation in a mountainous area and intended for trafficking, the statement added.

Antiquities inspectors confirmed that all seized items were authentic and dated back to ancient Pharaonic eras.

Under Egyptian law, anyone convicted of illicit excavation, concealment, or smuggling of antiquities faces aggravated imprisonment, possible fines, and confiscation of both the artifacts and all the equipment, tools, and vehicles used in the illegal activities. (Xinhua)

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BUDAPEST: Chinese linguist and literary translator Guo Xiaojing was awarded the "Knight of Universal Culture" title here on Saturday for her outstanding contributions to cultural exchange and mutual understanding between China and Hungary.

The award was presented during a gala marking the Day of the Hungarian Culture at the Stefania Palace Cultural Center.

Guo, director of the Hungarian Research Center at Beijing Foreign Studies University, was recognized for her efforts in advancing Hungarian studies in China and strengthening academic cooperation. According to the award citation, her work has laid a solid foundation for bilateral cooperation in education, research, and cultural dialogue.

As the first Chinese director of the Confucius Institute at Eotvos Lorand University (ELTE), Guo played a pivotal role in expanding Chinese language education in Hungary. Her career also spans major lexicographical and scholarly projects, including significant dictionary and translation initiatives.

The citation highlighted Guo's commitment to the idea that the power of culture lies in "understanding and resonance." By presenting Chinese stories in Hungarian and interpreting Hungarian traditions through the lens of Chinese philosophy, she has contributed significantly to deeper people-to-people connections.

The gala, now in its 30th anniversary, brought together representatives from cultural institutions, civil organizations, and the arts to celebrate cultural heritage and international cooperation. (Xinhua)

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LONDON: Artes Mundi, the UK's leading biennial exhibition and international contemporary art prize, has named Peruvian artist Antonio Paucar as the winner of Artes Mundi 11 (AM11), organizers said. Paucar was awarded 40,000 pounds (about 53,500 U.S. dollars) on Thursday, with organizers citing his creation of "a unique artistic language through performances, sculpture and related video."

For the exhibitions, Paucar presented large-scale hand-woven alpaca-wool sculptures and performance documentation. The jury praised his practice for its long-term engagement with local environments and communities.

"Drawing on his origins and the material culture of his indigenous Andean background, his practice poetically tackles contemporary conflicts faced by indigenous peoples and the ensuing environmental threats to place and home," the citation read. (Xinhua)

Awards



Joachim Trier is honored in the best director category at the European Film Awards in Berlin. (AP)



Liv Ullmann, actress and filmmaker, is honored in the 'Lifetime Achievement' in Berlin. (AP)



Actress Greta Scarano is honored in the category 'European Young Audience.' (AP)



Renate Reinsve, who won Best European Actress for Sentimental Value, stands on stage at the 38th European Film Awards in Berlin, Saturday, Jan. 17. (AP)



Stellan Skarsgård accepts Best European Actor award for 'Sentimental Value'. (AP)



Sabrina Krämer is honored in the 'European Costume Design.' (AP)



Ugo Bienvenu is honored in the category 'Animated Feature Film.' (AP)



Sara Rajael is honored in the category 'Shortfilm-Prix Vimeo.' (AP)

New films, albums bring big names to streaming this week

Johnson and Springsteen take center stage online

NEW YORK, Jan 18, (AP): Dwayne Johnson transforming into MMA pioneer Mark Kerr for "The Smashing Machine" and Louis Tomlinson releasing his third solo album are some of the new television, films, music and games headed to a device near you.

Also among the streaming offerings worth your time this week, as selected by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists: Ryan Murphy's new series "The Beauty" tackles beauty standards with some horror mixed in, Jeremy Allen White plays The Boss in "Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere" and Megadeth going out with a bang with their final, self-titled album.

■ Dwayne Johnson transformed into MMA pioneer Mark Kerr for "The Smashing Machine," a surprisingly gentle drama about winning, addiction and self-worth, which is set to debut on HBO Max on Friday, Jan. 23. In his review, Associated Press Film Writer Jake Coyle wrote that the potency of Johnson's performance is "let down by a movie that fails to really grapple with the violent world around Mark, resorting instead for a blander appreciation of these MMA combatants. What does resonate, though, is the portrait of a human colossus who learns to accept defeat." Filmmaker Benny Safdie won a directing prize for his efforts at the Venice Film Festival, though the awards season spotlight has shifted to his brother, Josh, who made "Marty Supreme."

■ HBO Max also has Judd Apatow's "Mel Brooks: The 99-Year-Old Man!" arriving on Thursday. The two-part documentary includes interviews with Brooks himself as well as the likes of Ben Stiller, Jerry Seinfeld, Adam Sandler and Conan O'Brien.

■ The Bruce Springsteen biopic "Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere" is also making its streaming debut on Hulu and Disney+ on Friday, Jan. 23. Written and directed by Scott Cooper, the film stars Jeremy Allen White as The Boss during the making of the soulful "Nebraska" album. In his review for the AP, Mark Kennedy called it "an endearing, humbling portrait of an icon," adding that it is almost a mirror of the album itself, "unexpected, complicated and very American gothic."

■ A few other film festival gems are coming to more niche streamers too. The documentary "Mr. Nobody Against Putin," a 2025 Sundance selection about a Russian teacher who secretly documents his classroom's transformation into a military recruitment center during the invasion of Ukraine, is streaming on KINO Film on Thursday. And Mubi has Paolo Sorrentino's "La Grazia" starting on Friday, Jan. 23. Star Toni Servillo won the best actor prize at Venice for his turn as a fictional Italian president.

■ You'd be right to call it a symphony for dissolution. Last summer, American thrash metal giants Megadeth announced they were going out with a bang. They'll soon embark on a farewell tour, but before that, they will release their final album, the self-titled "Megadeth." Pressure's on, and they're answering the call with their characteristically complex guitar work.

■ Perhaps best known as a candid and cool force in the gargantuan boy band One Direction, the Englishman Louis Tomlinson will release his third solo album on Friday, the existential "How Did I Get Here?" His work usually pulls from his most direct influences, Britpop chiefly among them on 2020's "Walls" and 2022's "Faith in the Future." The "How Did I Get Here?" singles "Lemonade" and "Palaces" seem to suggest those influences are still present, but subtle now in favor of sunny, pop-rock choruses.

■ The great Lucinda Williams has returned with a new one titled "World's Gone Wrong." It is, of course, uniquely Williams - at the intersection of rock, Americana, country and folk - and stacked with inspirational collaborations from Norah Jones, Brittney Spencer and more. Those, partnered with a powerful rendition of Bob Marley's "So Much Trouble In The World" with Mavis Staples, makes for a must-listen.

■ FX's new series cocreated by Ryan Murphy tackles beauty standards with some horror mixed in. "The Beauty" features an all-star cast including Evan Peters, Ashton Kutcher, Rebecca Hall, Jeremy Pope, Anthony Ramos and Isabella Rossellini. Bella Hadid also guest stars. Kutcher plays a tech billionaire who has created a

drug that can lead to so-called physical perfection but not without dangerous consequences. "The Beauty" is based on a comic book of the same name and premieres Wednesday on Hulu and Disney+ internationally.

■ On the heels of the "Heated Rivalry" phenomenon, Netflix has its own love story to heat up the ice that premieres on Thursday. Where "Heated Rivalry" is based on a steamy romance book series, "Finding Her Edge" is adapted from a YA novel. It's about a figure skater training for the world championships, who finds herself in a love triangle with her current and former skating partners.

■ Scott Foley and Erinn Hayes star in a new faith-based family drama called "It's Not Like That," coming to Prime Video on Sunday, January 25. Foley plays Malcolm, a pastor and father of three whose wife recently died and Hayes is Lori, a divorced mother of teenagers. Their families were always close but Malcolm and Lori find themselves relying on each other more and more as they navigate being single parents.

■ Flynt Buckler, the hero of Escape from Ever After, lives in a storybook world. But that fantasy goes sour when a greedy corporation invades those books, turning them into cyberpunk dystopias and Lovecraftian nightmares. Can Flynt swashbuckle his way to the top, or will he settle for a crummy office cubicle? Developer Sleepy Castle Studio says it was inspired by Nintendo's classic Paper Mario games, and the cartoonish 2D settings show off that influence. Turn the page Friday, Jan. 23, on Switch, Xbox X/S, PlayStation 5 or PC.

■ MIO: Memories in Orbit is another 2D adventure rooted in a Nintendo classic - in this case, Metroid, the mother of an entire subgenre. You are a small robot in an enormous starship called the Vessel, but your AI bosses have stopped working. It's up to you to figure out what went wrong while fighting off rogue machines, and the more you explore, the more skills you gain. The ship's sprawling innards have a hand-drawn, pastel look that you might not expect in a sci-fi game. Blast off Tuesday on Switch, Xbox X/S, PlayStation 5 or PC.

New study examines climate interventions’ risks

Climate engineering would alter oceans, reshaping marine life

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

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By Kelsey Roberts, Cornell University; UMass Dartmouth; Daniele Visioni, Cornell University; Morgan Raven, University of California, Santa Barbara, and Tyler Rohr, University of Tasmania

Climate change is already fueling dangerous heat waves, raising sea levels and transforming the oceans. Even if countries meet their pledges to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that are driving climate change, global warming will exceed what many ecosystems can safely handle.

That reality has motivated scientists, governments and a growing number of startups to explore ways to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere or at least temporarily counter its effects.

But these climate interventions come with risks - especially for the ocean, the world’s largest carbon sink, where carbon is absorbed and stored, and the foundation of global food security.

Our team of researchers has spent decades studying the oceans and climate. In a new study, we analyzed how different types of climate interventions could affect marine ecosystems, for good or bad, and where more research is needed to understand the risks before anyone tries them on a large scale. We found that some strategies carry fewer risks than others, though none is free of consequences.

Climate interventions fall into two broad categories that work very differently.

One is carbon dioxide removal, or CDR. It tackles the root cause of climate change by taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

The ocean already absorbs nearly one-third of human-caused carbon emissions annually and has an enormous capacity to hold more carbon. Marine carbon dioxide removal techniques aim to increase that natural uptake by altering the ocean’s biology or chemistry.

Biological carbon removal methods capture carbon through photosynthesis in plants or algae. Some methods, such as iron fertilization and seaweed cultivation, boost the growth of marine algae by giving them more nutrients. A fraction of the carbon they capture during growth can be stored in the ocean for hundreds of years, but much of it leaks back to the atmosphere once biomass decomposes.

Other methods involve growing plants on land and sinking them in deep, low-oxygen waters where decomposition is slower, delaying the release of the carbon they contain. This is known as anoxic storage of terrestrial biomass.

Another type of carbon dioxide removal doesn’t need biology to capture car-

bon. Ocean alkalinity enhancement chemically converts carbon dioxide in seawater into other forms of carbon, allowing the ocean to absorb more from the atmosphere. This works by adding large amounts of alkaline material, such as pulverized carbonate or silicate rocks like limestone or basalt, or electrochemically manufactured compounds like sodium hydroxide.

Solar radiation modification is another category entirely. It works like a sunshade - it doesn’t remove carbon dioxide, but it can reduce dangerous effects such as heat waves and coral bleaching by injecting tiny particles into the atmosphere that brighten clouds or directly reflect sunlight back to space, replicating the cooling seen after major volcanic eruptions. The appeal of solar radiation modification is speed: It could cool the planet within years, but it would only temporarily mask the effects of still-rising carbon dioxide concentrations.

We reviewed eight intervention types and assessed how each could affect marine ecosystems. We found that all of them had distinct potential benefits and risks.

One risk of pulling more carbon dioxide into the ocean is ocean acidification. When carbon dioxide dissolves in seawater, it forms acid. This process is already weakening the shells of oysters and harming corals and plankton that are crucial to the ocean food chain.

Adding alkaline materials, such as pulverized carbonate or silicate rocks, could counteract the acidity of the additional carbon dioxide by converting it into less harmful forms of carbon.

Biological methods, by contrast, capture carbon in living biomass, such as plants and algae, but release it again as carbon dioxide when the biomass breaks down - meaning their effect on acidification depends on where the biomass grows and where it later decomposes.

Another concern with biological methods involves nutrients. All plants and algae need nutrients to grow, but the ocean is highly interconnected. Fertilizing the surface in one area may boost plant and algae productivity, but at the same time suffocate the waters beneath it or disrupt fisheries thousands of miles away by depleting nutrients that ocean currents would otherwise transport to productive fishing areas.

Ocean alkalinity enhancement doesn’t require adding nutrients, but some mineral forms of alkalinity, like basalts, introduce nutrients such as iron and silicate that can impact growth.

Solar radiation modification adds no nutrients but could shift circulation patterns that move nutrients around.

Shifts in acidification and nutrients will benefit some phytoplankton and disadvantage others. The resulting changes in the mix of phytoplankton matter: If different predators prefer different phytoplankton, the follow-on effects could travel

all the way up the food chain, eventually impacting the fisheries millions of people rely on.

Of all the methods we reviewed, we found that electrochemical ocean alkalinity enhancement had the lowest direct risk to the ocean, but it isn’t risk-free. Electrochemical methods use an electric current to separate salt water into an alkaline stream and an acidic stream. This generates a chemically simple form of alkalinity with limited effects on biology, but it also requires neutralizing or disposing of the acid safely.

Other relatively low-risk options include adding carbonate minerals to seawater, which would increase alkalinity with relatively few contaminants, and sinking land plants in deep, low-oxygen environments for long-term carbon storage.

Still, these approaches carry uncertainties and need further study.

Scientists typically use computer models to explore methods like these before testing them on a wide scale in the ocean, but the models are only as reliable as the data that grounds them. And many biological processes are still not well enough understood to be included in models.

For example, models don’t capture the effects of some trace metal contaminants in certain alkaline materials or how ecosystems may reorganize around new seaweed farm habitats. To accurately include effects like these in models, scientists first must study them in laboratories and sometimes small-scale field experiments.

Some scientists have argued that the risks of climate intervention are too great to even consider and all related research should stop because it is a dangerous distraction from the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We disagree.

Commercialization is already underway. Marine carbon dioxide removal startups backed by investors are already selling carbon credits to companies such as Stripe and British Airways. Meanwhile, global emissions continue to rise, and many countries, including the U.S., are backing away from their emissions reduction pledges.

As the harms caused by climate change worsen, pressure may build for governments to deploy climate interventions quickly and without a clear understanding of risks. Scientists have an opportunity to study these ideas carefully now, before the planet reaches climate instabilities that could push society to embrace untested interventions. That window won’t stay open forever.

Given the stakes, we believe the world needs transparent research that can rule out harmful options, verify promising ones and stop if the impacts prove unacceptable. It is possible that no climate intervention will ever be safe enough to implement on a large scale. But we believe that decision should be guided by evidence - not market pressure, fear or ideology. (AP)

China blends tradition and technology to globalize TCM

Traditional Chinese medicine winning global hearts

BEIJING, Jan 18, (Xinhua): In the heart of Germany, a traditional Chinese herbal product has secured a lasting place on the shelves of the renowned Bahnhof-Apotheke pharmacy chain for over six years, with nearly 200,000 bottles of Shufeng Jiedu granules sold to date.

Priced at 39.9 euros per bottle, this respiratory relief formula is among more than a dozen products from Anhui Jiren Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. in eastern China, exemplifying the global journey of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

This journey is no longer limited to classic remedies stored behind pharmacy counters. Since last year, a “Four Seasons Tea” based on TCM principles has been offered not only in German pharmacies but also on the menu of a tea house in Hamburg, serving as a daily wellness supplement.

“From treatment to wellness, we seek to integrate TCM’s health-preserving culture into the daily lives of Europeans,” said Zhu Qiang, deputy general manager of Anhui Jiren Pharmaceutical.

Once regarded as an exotic alternative, TCM is now expanding its global presence and joining the worldwide conversation on health and lifestyle.

To progress from cultural curiosity to global acceptance, TCM first had to tackle a fundamental challenge: making the “inexplicable” explicable.

The empirical nature of TCM, coupled with the complexity of herbal formulas, has long puzzled international regulators and scientists. For instance, the same herb may either promote or stanch blood flow, depending on its combination with other ingredients.

The response has been a systematic drive toward standardization. China has facilitated the establishment of a technical committee under the International Organization for Standardization, which has so far issued over 100



A staff member works at a workshop of the Tianjin Pharmaceutical Da Ren Tang Group Co., Ltd. in Tianjin, north China, Dec. 25, 2025. (Xinhua)

international standards for TCM.

Pioneering institutions have also played a key role. For example, Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine has led the creation of the world’s first international educational standard for TCM undergraduate programs.

On the corporate front, major Chinese pharmaceutical companies have diligently pursued international certifications. Tianjin Pharmaceutical Da Ren Tang Group Co., Ltd. has obtained certifications recognized in Australia and Japan. As early as 1997, its product Suxiao Jiuxin Pills, a compound emergency medicine for heart attacks, was successfully registered as a prescription drug in Russia.

Anhui Jiren Pharmaceutical entered the European market in 2018, and 193 of its TCM granule varieties have passed official German quality inspections and are available in the EU market. “We are exploring new ap-

proaches to bring more products to the global market, including strengthening ties with overseas research institutions to prove TCM’s efficacy with scientific evidence,” Zhu Qiang said.

Data from China’s National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine showed that TCM is now practiced in 196 countries and regions. China has also signed TCM cooperation agreements with over 40 foreign governments and international organizations.

Beyond documentation, transformation is underway on factory floors and in research labs, where intelligent technology is decoding herbal wisdom and demonstrating its mechanisms through data.

At the digitalized workshop in a Tianjin Pharmaceutical Da Ren Tang plant, Suxiao Jiuxin Pills roll off automated production lines. Each bottle carries a QR code that allows consumers to trace the medicine’s journey

-- from the specific herb plantation to every step of processing, storage and quality control.

“We use digital control to tackle the pain point of batch-to-batch variation in herbal products, ensuring both efficacy and stability,” explained Li Hongjiang, the plant’s production deputy general manager.

The upcoming new generation intelligent workshop, with an investment exceeding 300 million yuan (about 43 million U.S. dollars), will use near-infrared spectroscopy and visual inspection systems to further enhance precision, Li added.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is also scaling up TCM production. In 2024, Tianjin-headquartered Tasly Pharma, in collaboration with Huawei Cloud, launched a TCM large language model. Trained on a massive corpus of classical texts and clinical data, it assists in formula optimization, mechanism explanation and the discovery of new clinical applications.

Similarly, a large model was jointly developed last year by organizations including the National SuperComputer Center in Tianjin and Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, encompassing knowledge from over 20 TCM clinical disciplines.

“AI can synthesize the vast empirical knowledge recorded in ancient TCM texts, thereby supporting the standardization of TCM practice,” said Guo Yi, vice president of Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

The ultimate test of TCM’s global integration lies not only in clinics but also in its seamless adoption into daily life. This is evident in the growing trend among young Chinese who are embracing TCM-inspired beverages, foods and physical exercises. Meanwhile, Chinese companies are also actively introducing TCM as a modern lifestyle choice worldwide.



NASA’s new moon rocket, Artemis II, slowly makes its way to pad 39B at the Kennedy Space Center, Saturday, Jan. 17, in Cape Canaveral, Fla. (AP)



The crew of the new NASA moon rocket, Artemis II, take part in a news conference, from left, NASA Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen, mission specialist, Christina Koch, pilot Victor Glover and commander Reid Wiseman at the Kennedy Space Center, Saturday, Jan. 17, in Cape Canaveral, Fla. (AP)

First lunar mission

NASA's moon rocket rolls out for February launch

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Jan 18, (AP): NASA’s giant new moon rocket moved to the launch pad Saturday in preparation for astronauts’ first lunar fly-around in more than half a century.

The out-and-back trip could blast off as early as February.

The 322-foot (98-meter) rocket began its 1-mph (1.6-kph) creep from Kennedy Space Center’s Vehicle Assembly Building at daybreak. The 4-mile (6-kilometer) trek took until nightfall.

Thousands of space center workers and their families gathered in the predawn chill to witness the long-awaited event, delayed for years. They huddled together ahead of the Space Launch System rocket’s exit from the building, built in the 1960s to accommodate the Saturn V rockets that sent 24 astronauts to the moon during the Apollo program. The cheering crowd was led by NASA’s new administrator Jared Isaacman and all four astronauts assigned to the mission.

“What a great day to be here,” said

Reid Wiseman, the crew commander. “It is awe-inspiring.”

Weighing in at 11 million pounds (5 million kilograms), the Space Launch System rocket and Orion crew capsule on top made the move aboard a massive transporter that was used during the Apollo and shuttle eras. It was upgraded for the SLS rocket’s extra heft.

The first and only other SLS launch - which sent an empty Orion capsule into orbit around the moon - took place back in November 2022.

“This one feels a lot different, putting crew on the rocket and taking the crew around the moon,” NASA’s John Honeycutt said on the eve of the rocket’s rollout.

Heat shield damage and other capsule problems during the initial test flight required extensive analyses and tests, pushing back this first crew moonshot until now. The astronauts won’t orbit the moon or even land on it. That giant leap will take come on the third flight in the Artemis lineup a few years from now.

Researchers unlock sepsis treatment secret in new trial

SYDNEY, Jan, 18, (Xinhua): Researchers in Australia hailed positive Phase II trial results for a sepsis drug candidate, targeting one of the leading causes of death.

The sepsis drug candidate was a carbohydrate-based drug called STC3141, said a statement of Australia’s Griffith University on Thursday.

“The trial met the key endpoints to indicate the drug candidate was successful in reducing sepsis in humans,” said Distinguished Professor Mark von Itzstein at Griffith’s Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics.

Administered via infusion, the

small-molecule experimental drug counteracts harmful biological molecule release during sepsis and could treat the disease by reversing organ damage, the statement said.

Von Itzstein co-developed the drug candidate with Professor Christopher Parish’s team at the Australian National University.

Sepsis affects millions of hospitalized patients each year when the immune response to infection attacks the body’s own tissues and organs, potentially leading to septic shock, multiple organ failure and death, the researchers said.



This undated image provided by Communications Earth and Environment shows the mummified remains of a cheetah. (AP)

Rare discovery

Mummified cheetahs in Saudi caves reveal lost populations

NEW YORK, Jan 18, (AP): Scientists have uncovered the mummified remains of cheetahs from caves in northern Saudi Arabia.

The remains range from 130 years old to over 1,800 years old. Researchers excavated seven mummies along with the bones of 54 other cheetahs from a site near the city of Arar.

Mummification prevents decay by preserving dead bodies. Egypt’s mummies are the most well-known, but the process can also happen naturally in places like glacier ice, desert sands and bog sludge.

The new large cat mummies have cloudy eyes and shriveled limbs, resembling dried-out husks.

“It’s something that I’ve never seen before,” said Joan Madurell-Malapeira with the University of Florence in Italy, who was not involved with the

discovery.

Researchers aren’t sure how exactly these new cats got mummified, but the caves’ dry conditions and stable temperature could have played a role, according to the new study published Thursday in the journal Communications Earth and Environment.

They also don’t know why so many cheetahs were in the caves. It could have been a denning site where mothers birthed and raised their young.

Scientists have uncovered the rare mummified remains of other felines, including a saber-toothed cat cub in Russia.

It’s uncommon for large mammals to be preserved to this degree. Besides being in the right environment, the carcasses also have to avoid becoming a snack for hungry scavengers like birds and hyenas.

Norovirus sickens students

Poliovirus detected in sewage across 40 Pakistani districts

ISLAMABAD, Jan 18, (Xinhua): Poliovirus has been detected in sewage samples from 40 districts across Pakistan, according to test results from the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health.

In a statement issued this week, the Pakistan Polio Eradication Program said environmental samples were collected in December 2025 from multiple locations nationwide, confirming the presence of poliovirus in several areas.

“A total of 127 environmental samples were collected from 87 districts during this period. Of these, 40 samples tested positive for poliovirus, while 87 were declared negative,” the statement said.

The statement noted that while the continued detection of poliovirus in sewage remains a concern, overall trends show a decline in virus circulation compared to previous years, reflecting the impact of sustained vaccination and surveillance efforts.

According to the program, Pakistan reported 31 poliovirus cases in 2025, a significant drop from 74 cases recorded in 2024.

The next nationwide anti-polio vaccination campaign is scheduled to be held from Feb. 2 to 8, 2026, aiming to vaccinate more than 45 million children under the age of five across the country.

□ □ □

Swine fever: An outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) has been confirmed at a pig farm in Gangneung, a city in South Korea’s Gangwon province, Yonhap News Agency reported Saturday.

Local authorities said Saturday that about 20,000 pigs raised at the farm will be culled in accordance with quarantine regulations.

The report said local animal health authorities began testing after the farm owner reported pig deaths on Friday. The results, confirmed at around 1 a.m. local time Saturday, showed the pigs had tested positive for ASF. This marks the first ASF case reported in Gangwon province in about 14 months, following the previous outbreak detected in November 2024.

To prevent the spread of the disease, quarantine authorities have dispatched an initial response team and an epidemiological investigation team to the farm. Access to the premises has been restricted, while disinfection and epidemiological investigations are underway.

□ □ □

Norovirus infections: A total of 103 students at a senior high school in Foshan, south China’s Guangdong Province, have been infected with norovirus, local health authorities said Saturday, noting that no critical or fatal cases were reported.

Norovirus, a common pathogen leading to acute gastroenteritis, typically causes symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea. The students from Xinghui Middle School recently fell ill with symptoms preliminarily confirmed as caused by norovirus infections.

All 103 students are in stable conditions. The school campus has been disinfected, and students are subject to health monitoring and attendance checks. An epidemiological survey is also underway.

Adebayo drops 30 as Miami holds off Thunder

Spurs avoid season sweep vs Wolves

MIAMI, Jan 18, (AP): Andrew Wiggins’ 3-pointer with 31 seconds left put Miami up for good, Bam Adebayo scored 30 points with a career-best six 3s and the Heat defeated the NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder 122-120.

Norman Powell scored 19 for Miami, while Pelle Larsson finished with 16. Simone Fontecchio and Myron Gardner combined for 24 points off the Miami bench.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 39 for Oklahoma City, which fell to 35-8 on the season. Aaron Wiggins scored 18 for the Thunder, which got 15 from Ajay Mitchell and 14 from Chet Holmgren.

The Thunder lost Jalen Williams midway through the second quarter with what the team said was right thigh soreness, even though the starting guard was grabbing at his right hamstring as he limped off the floor. He will be evaluated Sunday, Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said.

Oklahoma City had a chance to tie on the possession following Andrew Wiggins’ go-ahead 3, but Holmgren missed off a lobbed inbounds pass from Alex Caruso and Miami controlled the rebound. The Thunder got a stop on the ensuing Heat possession, calling time with 3.0 seconds remaining.

Caruso inbounded to Gilgeous-Alexander, who quickly sent the ball back to Caruso - whose 3-point try bounced off the backboard and rim as time expired. It was Oklahoma City’s first loss this season when scoring at least 120 points; they were 24-0 in such games entering Saturday.

Spurs 126, Timberwolves 123

In San Antonio, Victor Wembanyama had 39 points and nine rebounds, corralling a critical offensive rebound in the final seconds, enabling the San Antonio Spurs to fend off Anthony Edwards’ season-high 55 points and beat the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Donte DiVincenzo’s 24-foot, 3-pointer put the Timberwolves up 119-118 with 1:03 remaining. Wembanyama responded with a 20-footer and then blocked Joan Beringer’s reverse layup 13 seconds later to preserve the one-point lead.

De’Aaron Fox added 25 points and 12 assists as San Antonio avoided a season sweep of its three-game set against Minnesota. Keldon Johnson added 20 points for the Spurs.

Edwards had 26 points in the fourth quarter, going 5 for 7 on 3-pointers and nearly completed a repeat of Minnesota’s last game against San Antonio.

Edwards drained a 3-pointer in the final seconds on Jan. 11 as San Antonio blew a 19-point lead in the fourth quarter in losing 104-103 at Minnesota.

Edwards’ late barrage was needed after the Spurs set a season-high in the first half.

The Spurs shot 57% from the field in outscoring the Wolves 48-22 in the second quarter. It was San Antonio’s highest scoring quarter since 1987 and fourth most in franchise history for any quarter.

Wembanyama was 3 for 5 on 3-pointers in scoring 23 points in the first half, matching his season high for points in any half.

Trail Blazers 132, Lakers 116

In Portland, Shaedon Sharpe had 25 points to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to victory over the Los Angeles Lakers, who were playing without top scorer Luka Doncic.

Jerami Grant and Caleb Love each added 22 points for the Blazers, who have won seven of their last nine games.

Marcus Smart had 25 points for the Lakers but he limped off the court midway through the fourth quarter and did not return. The extent of his injury was not known.

LeBron James added 20 points, nine rebounds and eight assists. Drew Timme finished with 21 points off the bench.

Nuggets 121, Wizards 115

In Denver, Jamal Murray scored 42 points on 15-for-24 shooting and the Denver Nuggets pulled away in the final minutes for a win over the Washington Wizards.

With the game tied at 110, Murray hit a 3-pointer with 2:12 to play to put the Nuggets ahead to stay. He then added another jumper and a pair of free throws to extend the lead to 117-110.

Tim Hardaway Jr. had a season-high 30 points and Peyton Watson scored 21 as Denver, still playing without the injured Nikola Jokic (left knee bone bruise), won its fourth in a row and for the sixth time in its last seven games.

Kyshawn George had 29 points to lead the Wizards, who lost their sixth in a row including all four on this road trip. Khris Middleton and Alex Sarr scored 16 each.



Miami Heat guard Kasparas Jakucionis (25) comes under pressure from Oklahoma City Thunder guard Aaron Wiggins (21) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Miami. (AP)

Suns 106, Knicks 99

In New York, Devin Booker scored 27 points after missing a game with a sprained left ankle, and the Phoenix Suns beat the slumping New York Knicks.

Grayson Allen added 16 points and Mark Williams had 14 for the Suns, who had dropped the first two games on their six-game Eastern Conference road trip, including Thursday in Detroit when they played without Booker. He shot only 7 for 18 from the field, but was 12 for 14 on free throws.

Karl-Anthony Towns and Deuce McBride each scored 23 points for the Knicks, who were playing without starters Jalen Brunson and Josh Hart because of ankle injuries. They have lost three straight and eight of their last 10 games.

Mavericks 138, Jazz 120

In Dallas, Klay Thompson scored all 23 of his points in the first half, including the 17,000th of his career, and six Mavericks scored in double figures in a 138-120 win over Utah on Saturday night as Dallas completed a two-game sweep of the Jazz.

Dallas and Utah have played three times in 10 days. Utah won at home on January 8, 114-112. Dallas won 144-122 on Thursday.

The Mavericks were without Cooper Flagg (left ankle sprain) for a second straight game and the first injury absences of his rookie season. Dallas was also missing Anthony Davis (finger) and Kyrie Irving (knee) and forward P.J. Washington for personal reasons.

Pistons 121, Pacers 78

In Detroit, Duncan Robinson and Cade Cunningham each scored 16 points in limited minutes as the Detroit Pistons routed the shorthanded Indiana Pacers at Little Caesars Arena.

The 43-point margin matched the ninth-biggest win in Pistons franchise history.

The Pacers played without their four leading scorers, with Pascal Siakam resting and Benedict Mathurin (thumb), Andrew Nembhard (back) and Obi Toppin (foot) dealing with injuries. T.J. McConnell, who is sixth on the team in scoring and second in assists, also sat out with a knee problem.

Jalen Duren had 15 points and eight rebounds for Detroit, which got points from 13 players, as the Pistons won for the fifth time in six games.

Jarace Walker led Indiana with 13 points and Tony Bradley added 12. The Pacers had won four of five.

Celtics 132, Hawks 106

In Atlanta, Jaylen Brown scored 41 points, Sam Hauser led a 3-point barrage in the second quarter and the Boston Celtics blew away the Atlanta Hawks .

The Celtics put this one away with a 52-point outburst in the second quarter, stretching what had been a fairly competitive opening period to an 82-51 laughter at halftime.

Boston barely missed at all in the second, knocking down 19 of 25 shots - including 11 of 15 beyond the 3-point arc. Hauser was perfect on his six attempts from long range in the period, and Brown dazzled inside and out. On a strong drive to the hoop in the final seconds of the half, he flexed his muscles for the State Farm Arena crowd, as if to say the Hawks had no chance of stopping him.

Brown had 29 points by halftime, combining with Hauser (21 points) to nearly outscore the entire Hawks team. The Celtics reached triple figures well before the midway point of the third period and stretched their lead to 43 points before both teams cleared their benches.

Australia and France complete the podium

Britain claims season-opening SailGP victory



Emirates Great Britain SailGP Team celebrates on the podium after winning the opening race in Perth, Australia. (AP)

PERTH, Australia, Jan 18, (AP): Defending champion Great Britain won the first event of the sixth season of Sail GP Sunday, beating home favorite Australia and France in a three-boat final.

Britain hit the start line fastest in the final, edging France while Australia incurred a boundary line penalty in the start box and had to start behind its two rivals.

The British team then sailed a flawless race to hold the lead throughout while Australia crossed the finish line just ahead of France.

“It’s an incredible start to the 2026 season,” British driver Dylan Fletcher said. “We had a few problems yesterday but I’m really proud of the way the team came together today and it’s great to get the win.

“There’s plenty to work on but we’ll keep chipping away all season.

Racing took place at the mouth of the Swan River near Fremantle, a coastal town near Perth in Western Australia.

The famous Fremantle Doctor, a strong south-westerly sea breeze, came in just in time for racing each day, gusting around 35kmh and creating choppy conditions which were among the most extreme many crews have experienced.

Racing takes place between identical 50 foot catamarans which rise out of the water on foils, allowing boats to “fly.” On Sunday boats reached speeds of more than 90 kph (56 mph). In the windy conditions, boats were using an 18 meter wing sail.

Only 11 of the 13 boats in this season’s Sail GP series lined up in the first

of Sunday’s three fleet races. Spain missed the entire event after suffering a training mishap while New Zealand was ruled out of the event after a collision with Switzerland only minutes into the opening race of the season.

Switzerland was on starboard jibe approaching the end of the second left on Saturday’s first race and had the right of way, while New Zealand, on port, tried to cross ahead of the Swiss boat. New Zealand seemed likely to just scrape past but the Swiss boat collided with the stern of New Zealand’s boat.

New Zealand was later penalized by umpires for its part in the incident.

The New Zealand boat suffered extensive damage but is expected to be able to race in its home event in Auckland, New Zealand from Feb. 14.

Gu warms up for Olympics by retaining Laax ski slopestyle title

LAAX, Switzerland, Jan 18, (AP): Two-time Olympic champion Eileen Gu shook off a crash and celebrated her second straight slopestyle title at the Laax Open.

Gu had already locked up victory before she set out on her second run. She tried a double cork 1080 - that’s two head-over-heels flips - but fell hard on her right side with one ski and her poles flying off after coming up short on a rotation.

After gathering herself on the slope,

she skied gently down to the finish and appeared not to be seriously hurt. She smiled and waved to the camera when she stood by second-placed Marin Hamill of the U.S. and third-placed Lara Wolf of Austria.

“I’m OK,” Gu said. “I don’t really like taking a victory lap, so I wanted to just do something to keep pushing and show my best out here. But that’s the sport, sometimes you fall, so it’s OK.”

Slopestyle is the only event where Gu fell short of gold at the Beijing Games

four years ago and will enter the Milan Cortina Winter Games next month as the favorite to add it to her Olympic medals collection. She claimed gold in halfpipe and big air - in addition to her silver in slopestyle - in 2022.

The American-born star who competes for China went last in the lineup thanks to her leading qualifying score. She didn’t need to land the second run after nobody surpassed the 85.13 she earned over her flawless opening trip through the course’s rails and jumps.

Beaudry & Cizeron win European ice dance title ahead of Olympics

SHEFFIELD, England, Jan 18, (AP): France’s Laurence Fournier Beaudry and Guillaume Cizeron won the ice dance at the European figure skating championships after the buildup was overshadowed by a dispute between Cizeron and his former dance partner.

Fournier Beaudry and Cizeron scored 135.50 points for their free skate to music from the movie “The Whale” for a total 222.43.

That’s the highest total score in ice dance by anyone this season and underlined their status as challengers to American pair Madison Chock and Evan Bates for the gold medal at next month’s Winter Olympics.

“It was a really important step for us, the first European championships for us,” said Cizeron, who was in his first season with Fournier Beaudry. “It’s setting a really important base for us to keep getting better.”

Cizeron won the Olympic gold medal in 2022 with Gabriella Papadakis, who has published a book describing him as controlling and their partnership as unequal.

Cizeron has contested her claims and called the comments part of a “smear campaign.” Papadakis said on Friday she lost a commentary role with NBC for the Winter Olympics.

The experienced Italian pair of Charlene Guignard and Marco Fabbri, 14 years on from their European championship debut in Sheffield, took silver with 210.34. The Italians overtook home favorites Lilah Fear and Lewis Gibson of Britain, who were second after the rhythm dance but finished third overall on 209.51.

Nika Egadze of Georgia will head to the Olympics as the European men’s champion after a dominant win by nearly 17 points.

Skating last after rivals made mistakes, Egadze needed only to avoid glaring errors to secure gold but delivered a personal-best free skate, landing four high-scoring quadruple jumps and scoring 181.72 points for a total of 273.

Egadze dived onto the ice and slid on his chest to cheers from the crowd as he left after the skate.

“When I came to the ice it was a little bit shaky,” Egadze said. “I just remembered the words of my coaches, I just need to enjoy the moment.”

It was the second gold medal of the championships for Georgia after Egadze’s friends Anastasiia Metelkina and Luka Berulava won the pairs on Thursday.



France Laurence Fournier Beaudry and Guillaume Cizeron celebrate with their gold medals after competing in the Ice Dance Free Dance, during day four of the ISU European Figure Skating Championships. (AP)

Matteo Rizzo took the silver for Italy on 256.37, his fourth career medal at the European championships.

Georgii Reshtenko of the Czech Republic had never placed higher than ninth at a major championships but smashed his personal best with 238.27 for a surprise bronze, beating defending champion Lukas Britschgi of Switzerland into fourth.

Estonian brothers Aleksandr and Mihhail Selevko were second and third behind Egadze following Thursday’s short program but both fell in the free skate and dropped to fifth and sixth overall as they failed to match fellow Estonian Niina Petrokina’s win in the women’s competition.

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Event draws record turnout

EQUICIETY Dressage Champ'ship ends in style



Sheikh Sabah Al-Mubarak and Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef Al-Sabah honor the champions.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: The EQUICIETY Dressage Championship wrapped up successfully following two days of high-level competition held on Friday and Saturday at the Police Sports Federation arena in Subhan, drawing a record turnout of riders and strong participation from both men and women.

The championship featured impressive performances by Reem Al-Sultan, Fajr Al-Sabah, Areej Al-Meyaan, Salahuddin Belaroui, Abdullah Al-Gharbally, and Abdullah Al-Hoqal, highlighting the growing standard of dressage competition in Kuwait.

Winners were crowned by Sheikh

Sabah Al-Mubarak and Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef, who also honored the youngest participant in the tournament, rider Haider Baqer.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Sabah Al-Mubarak emphasized the importance of dressage as the foundation of equestrian sport, noting that the 2025-2026 season has witnessed a surge in dressage-related events and activities. He credited the Kuwait Equestrian Federation for its continued support, as well as coordination with international governing bodies, which has led to the organization of champi-

onships and training camps aimed at developing equestrian sport.

Meanwhile, President of the Police Sports Federation, Brigadier General (Naval) Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, highlighted the federation's active sporting calendar, revealing that the Subhan arena has hosted numerous events in recent weeks. He added that several equestrian championships are scheduled during the current period, including weekly local competitions on Fridays, an international championship later this month, and the hosting of the Equestrian League final in cooperation with the Kuwait Equestrian Federation.

Hillier finishes second

Elvira wins Dubai Invitational after McIlroy and Lowry falter

DUBAI, Jan 18, (AP): Nacho Elvira benefitted from dramatic final-hole mishaps by Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry to win the Dubai Invitational by one shot on Sunday, securing his third title on the European tour.

The 190th-ranked Elvira did what the two Ryder Cup stars couldn't and kept out of the trouble down No. 18, making a stress-free par and shooting 69 to finish on 10 under in the first tournament of 2026.

A few minutes earlier, Lowry had been on that number heading down the last but found the greenside bunker from the middle of the fairway, then water from the sand. He made a double-bogey 6 for a round of 69 and wound up two strokes back.

Before that, McIlroy arrived at the 18th tee a shot behind Lowry but pushed his drive way right into the rough, sent his approach into the bunker, and couldn't get up and down. McIlroy and Lowry were tied for third place.

Daniel Hillier of New Zealand shot 65 and was alone in second place on 9 under.

"It means the world," said Elvira, whose wife and children ran onto the green to celebrate with the Spaniard. "You tell me on Tuesday I would be winning this, I'd never believe you."

"Anything that happens after this, nothing can compare."

Lowry was seeking a first European tour title since September 2022 and a first win anywhere since capturing a team victory with close friend McIlroy at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans in April 2024.

Elvira started the final round in the lead and held a three-shot advantage on 11 under after making birdie at No. 7. Then came back-to-back bogeys from No. 8 before he saved par at the par-5 No. 10 after hitting into water off his second shot, keeping him in touch with Lowry, McIlroy and a crowd of challengers.

Around an hour before the finish, five players - Hillier, McIlroy, Lowry, Marcus Armitage and Elvira - shared the lead on 9 under before Lowry rolled in a



Nacho Elvira of Spain hits off the first tee during the final round of Dubai Invitational golf tournament in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday. (AP)

30-footer for birdie at No. 15 to take the solo lead. He couldn't hang on.

Vonn keeps streak alive



Germany's Emma Aicher celebrates at the finish area of an alpine ski, women's World Cup Super G, in Tarvisio, Italy. (AP)

Aicher claims Tarvisio title

TARVISIO, Italy, Jan 18, (AP): At age 41, Lindsey Vonn's ability to consistently finish on the World Cup speed circuit's podium is unparalleled.

Vonn finished second in a super-G on Sunday that was held amid difficult visibility to claim her seventh podium result in eight races this season.

No other skier has more than three podiums in the speed events - and Vonn's "worst" result this season is fourth. Even Mikaela Shiffrin - who has seven podiums in 14 technical races - hasn't been as consistent across all of her events.

The results make Vonn a clear medal favorite in both downhill and super-G for the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics, which open in less than three weeks.

Vonn was beaten only by Germany's Emma Aicher, who is 19 years younger.

Aicher finished 0.27 seconds ahead of Vonn for her second victory this season, with former Olympic champion Ester Ledecka third, 0.94 behind.

"It was tough conditions with the visibility but I'm really happy to be on the podium again," Vonn said. "Of course, I'm close to another win, but it is what it is. I think I'll save the hundredths for Cortina."

Alice Robinson, the New Zealand skier who won two giant slaloms and a super-G this season, crashed into the final gate and hit the snow hard. She got right back up and appeared to avoid serious injury but seemed shaken.

Fog on the upper section made it difficult for skiers to navigate the Prampero course.

Vonn led Aicher at every checkpoint but lost time on the final gates.

It was Aicher's fourth career victory after two downhill and a super-G. She's one of the few skiers on the circuit who competes in all four disciplines.

Aicher was born in Sweden to a Swedish mother and a German father.

Ledecka, the Czech racer who claimed Olympic golds in both snowboarding and skiing at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games, won her first podium of the season.

Romane Miradoli of France finished fourth and Keely Cashman of the United States was fifth for the best result of her career.

The women's circuit remains in Italy for the Kronplatz giant slalom on Tuesday.

There is only one more set of speed races before the Olympics, in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, Jan. 30-31.

Also Sunday, the Italian team announced that defending overall World Cup champion Federica Brignone is returning to the squad for the Kronplatz race - which would mark her first time competing since breaking multiple bones in her left leg in April.

The Italian team said Brignone would make a final decision after testing the course on Monday.

Marseille dominates Angers

Lens holds lead with 10th straight win

LENS, France, Jan 18, (AP): Winger Wesley Saïd scored a brilliant goal to secure Lens' 10th consecutive win across all competitions and place atop the Ligue 1 standings.

Lens defeated Auxerre 1-0 after Saïd controlled with his chest Malang Sarr's cross into the box and finished with a left-footed volley from the bounce. The 65th-minute goal was his eighth this season.

Lens, which claimed its only French title in 1998, stayed one point ahead of defending champion Paris Saint-Germain, which beat Lille.

Next-to-last in the standings, Auxerre was not intimidated by the buoyant crowd and posed a strong challenge to the host with intense pressing.

After a first half of few clear chances, Lens showed more intent and Matthieu Udol, set up by Adrien Thomasson, came close to breaking

the deadlock. The ball fell back to Udol who struck again only for defender Fredrik Oppegård to block.

Udol then delivered a low cross toward the near post for Thomasson, whose effort went just wide. Lens kept pushing and was finally rewarded when Saïd slotted home.

Third-place Marseille put on a display of collective force and won at mid-table Angers 5-2 ahead of a Champions League showdown with Liverpool next week.

Angers' defense imploded quickly and Marseille led 4-0 after 40 minutes before Amine Sbai pulled one back for the host just before the interval.

Amine Gouri put Marseille in the lead followed by goals from Mason Greenwood and Hamed Traore. Winger Timothy Weah added

a header to cap a slick collective move. Igor Paixao made it 5-1 in the 88th and Jim Allevinah reduced the gap after a breakout.

Santiago Hidalgo started in place of the suspended Emersonn and scored twice as Toulouse thrashed Nice 5-1. It was Toulouse's third win in four Ligue 1 matches.

New signing Elye Wahi was on the scoresheet for Nice.

Toulouse has 29 goals, its best total after 18 rounds since 1998. The team was seventh in the standings, 17 points behind Lens.

PSG warmed up for next week's Champions League match at Sporting with a convincing 3-0 win over Lille on Friday. Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembélé scored a brace. Monaco fell to its seventh defeat in eight games, at home to Lorient 3-1.

Dortmund overcomes St. Pauli scare

Bayern roars back to smash Leipzig

BERLIN, Jan 18, (AP): Just when it seemed Leipzig might be the team to inflict Bayern Munich's first Bundesliga loss this season, Bayern found an extra gear.

Bayern scored five goals in 38 second-half minutes to rout Leipzig 5-1 after going into halftime behind for the first time in the league this season.

Harry Kane scored his 21st Bundesliga goal of what could yet be a record-breaking season, but it was a team effort with five different scorers. Goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, too, stepped up with crucial saves as speculation ramps up over whether Bayern will extend the 39-year-old's contract.

Jürgen Klopp, watching on in his capacity as Red Bull's head of global soccer, was pleased when Romulo turned in David Raum's cross to take the lead in a dominant though wasteful first half performance.

Leipzig blunders got Bayern back into the game. In the 50th minute, Dayot Upamecano caught Leipzig's Christoph Baumgartner

in possession and played in Serge Gnabry to score, and in the 67th Ridle Baku slipped as he went to intercept a cross leaving Kane with an easy finish.

After that it was one-way traffic as Jonathan Tah, Aleksandar Pavlovic and Michael Olise scored in the 83rd, 85th and 88th minutes to complete Bayern's victory.

To cap it off, attacking midfielder Jamal Musiala came off the bench late on for his first game since July when he broke his left leg at the Club World Cup, and celebrated with the Bayern fans after the final whistle.

The win restored Bayern's 11-point advantage over Borussia Dortmund, which scraped past St. Pauli 3-2 after letting a two-goal lead slip earlier.

The Dortmund crowd cheered the referee's announcement that video review showed St. Pauli's Ricky-Jade Jones had indeed fouled Maximilian Beier inside the penalty area, and was jubilant when Emre Can converted the spot kick.



Leipzig's Yan Diomande and Bayern's Harry Kane challenge for the ball during the Bundesliga soccer match between RB Leipzig and FC Bayern Munich in Leipzig, Germany. (AP)

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NEWS



Ida Marie Hagen of Norway, center, winner, second placed Minja Korhonen from Finland and third placed Nathalie Armbruster pose after a nordic combined, women's World Cup 5km individual normal hill, in Oberhof, Germany. (AP)

Sports

UAE Ambassador praises organization

Gulf derby night as Kuwait meets UAE at Asian Handball Championship

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18: Kuwait will conclude its Group C campaign at 6:00 pm today, taking on the UAE in the final round of the main stage of the Asian Handball Championship, currently underway at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

Three additional matches are scheduled for today. Saudi Arabia face Australia at 2:00 pm (Group D), followed by India against Hong Kong at 4:00 pm, while Iran meet Japan at 8:00 pm in another Group Four encounter.

Results from the third round of the preliminary stage, played last Saturday, saw Kuwait defeat Hong Kong 39-25, the UAE overpower India 43-21, Iran cruise past Australia 39-13, and Saudi Arabia edge Japan 27-24.

These results allowed Kuwait to maintain top spot in Group C on goal difference ahead of the UAE, with both teams collecting four points and securing qualification to the main round. Hong Kong and India finished the group without points.

Saudi Arabia leads Group D with four points from two wins, sealing qualification to the next round. The second qualification berth remains up for grabs between Iran and Japan, both on two points and separated only by goal difference, while Australia exited the race after finishing bottom without a point.

The Blues are keen to preserve their Group C lead and claim an important morale-boosting victory over the UAE, who is also targeting first place after already booking its place in the next round.

The other Group C match between India and Hong Kong is largely academic, with both sides already eliminated and playing only for final positioning.

In Group D, competition is expected to intensify between Iran and Japan as both teams chase victory and the second qualifying ticket behind Saudi Arabia, who wrapped up top spot with consecutive wins in the previous rounds.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, will aim for a third straight victory when it faces winless Australia, hoping to advance convincingly and strengthen its push for qualification to the 2027 Handball World Cup in Germany.

Dr. Saleh Al-Majroub, Secretary-General of the Kuwait Football Association, expressed pride in the Kuwaiti Handball Federation for hosting one of Asia's premier sporting events, the Asian Championship, which serves as a qualifier for the 2027 World Cup.

"Handball ranks second only to soccer in popularity and enjoys a strong fan base," Al-Majroub said. "My presence at the championship reflects our full support for the Handball Federation, especially as the tournament is being staged in Kuwait, a land of friendship and peace, under national leadership that deserves everyone's backing."



Kuwaiti players celebrate their victory over Hong Kong.

He wished the national team success and voiced hope that Kuwait would reach the podium and secure qualification for the upcoming World Cup in Germany.

UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Matar Hamed Al-Neyadi praised Kuwait's hosting of the championship, highlighting the country's exceptional ability to organize major sporting events to the highest standards.

He noted that the organizing committee had provided all necessary facilities to ensure the comfort of participating delegations, adding that such professionalism is characteristic of Kuwait's commitment to delivering successful tournaments.

Al-Neyadi concluded by wishing the Gulf teams competing in the championship continued success and progression to the later stages.

Sabalenka, Alcaraz set early pace in Melbourne as Venus makes history



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain plays a forehand return to Adam Walton of Australia during their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Two of the women's seeds go out

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 18, (AP): Aryna Sabalenka and Carlos Alcaraz fulfilled expectations on opening night of the Australian Open, the No. 1 seeds advancing in straight sets in a Sunday session that started with tennis royalty Rod Laver and Roger Federer in the crowd.

Rod Laver Arena was heaving for their first-round matches, capping a day when a record total of 100,763 fans packed into Melbourne Park.

The 45-year-old Venus Williams set a record, too, becoming the oldest player ever in the women's singles draw at the Australian Open.

Out on John Cain Arena, the so-called People's Court because it's open to fans with ground passes, Williams was up two service breaks at 4-0 in the third set before Olga Danilovic rallied to win six straight games in a 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-4 victory.

The seven-time major winner, play-

ing on a wild-card entry in the singles in just her second major since returning to the tour last year, plans to continue in doubles.

"I'm really proud of my effort today because I'm playing better with each match, getting to the places that I want to get to," she said. "Right now I'm just going to have to keep going forward and working on myself."

Sabalenka fended off left-handed wild-card entry Tiantsoa Rakotomanga Rajaonah, 6-4, 6-1 after dropping the opening service game.

"I didn't start my best. She showed up. Fired on. She was playing great," said Sabalenka, who won the Australian title in 2023 and '24 and was runner-up last year. "It was a tricky start."

Sabalenka prepared for the first major of the season with a title in Brisbane but was a little more nervous than usual because Laver, the Australian great, and 20-time major winner Federer were watching.

"I'm a huge fan. I wanted to show great tennis so you guys enjoyed watching me play," she said. "There was definitely a lot of pressure. I was walking, thinking 'don't look there, don't look there!'"

Her next round is against Chinese qualifier Bai Zhuoxuan, who outlasted

2021 French Open runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (10) in a 2-hour, 43-minute match. No. 28 Emma Raducanu, who could potentially meet Sabalenka in the third round, beat Mananchaya Sawangkaew 6-4, 6-1.

Day 1 of a scheduled 15 closed with Alcaraz winning 6-3, 7-6 (2), 6-2 over Adam Walton, beginning his bid to set a record for being the youngest player to complete a career Grand Slam.

Alexander Zverev, runner-up here last year to Jannik Sinner, shrugged off a sluggish start to beat Gabriel Diallo 6-7 (7), 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 to reach the second round at Melbourne Park for the 10th straight year.

"Definitely, when I saw the draw, wasn't too happy to be honest," Zverev said of the tricky challenge presented by No. 41-ranked Diallo. "He's very young, very talented. Unbelievably aggressive."

No. 10 Alexander Bublik advanced over Jenson Brooksby 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, No. 29 Frances Tiafoe overpowered Jason Kubler 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-2 and Michael Zheng fended off Sebastian Korda 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 6-7 (0), 6-3 in an all-American first-round.

Zheng, a college star at Columbia who advanced through qualifying to

make his tour-level debut, will next face No. 32 Corentin Moutet, who was booed after his underarm serve on match point in a 6-4, 7-6 (1), 6-3 win over Tristan Schoolkate.

Two of the women's seeds went out in the opening afternoon, with Elsa Jacquemot ousting No. 20 Marta Kostyuk 6-7 (4), 7-6 (4), 7-6 (7) and Turkish qualifier Zeynep Sonmez upsetting No. 11 Ekaterina Alexandrova 7-5, 4-6, 6-4. Sonmez halted her match briefly in the second set to help a ballkid who appeared to be struggling in the heat before the tournament medical team took over.

Seventh-seeded Jasmine Paolini, No. 12 Elina Svitolina and Maria Sak-kari all advanced in straight sets.

Former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova withdrew because of a shoulder injury before her scheduled first-round match, giving a place in the main draw to Taylor Townsend, the lucky loser from qualifying, to take on Hailey Baptiste.

In a 2 1/2-hour all-American contest on Court 13, Baptiste prevailed 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-3.

Coco Gauff will open play Monday on Rod Laver Arena against Kamilla Rakhimova. Iga Swiatek and Novak Djokovic have night matches.

Nwabali denies Salah

Nigeria beats Egypt for 3rd place at Africa Cup

CASABLANCA, Morocco, Jan 18 (AP): Goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali saved two penalties including the first from Mohamed Salah for Nigeria to beat Egypt 4-2 in a penalty shootout for third place at the Africa Cup Nations.

Ademola Lookman scored the winning penalty.

Salah and Omar Marmoush had their penalty kicks saved by Nwabali at the start of the shootout after the teams drew 0-0 in normal time. No extra time was played for the consolation of a bronze medal.

It was the Super Eagles' second consecutive penalty shootout following a scoreless draw after losing the semifinal to Morocco on penalties on

Wednesday.

Nwabali produced a strong hand to stop a well-taken penalty from Salah, then thwarted Marmoush's effort straight down the middle with his foot.

Salah had been kept quiet by Nigeria's defenders and was unable to add to his 11 Africa Cup goals altogether.

Victor Osimhen remained on Nigeria's substitutes' bench, suggesting he was carrying an injury from the semi-final defeat to Morocco. Osimhen was taken off in extra time of that game just before the penalty shootout.

The Super Eagles ended the Africa Cup on a positive note in contrast to the last edition, where they lost in the final to host Ivory Coast.



Egypt's Omar Marmoush, left, challenges Nigeria's Igoh Ogbu during the Africa Cup of Nations third place game between Egypt and Nigeria in Casablanca, Morocco. (AP)

South Korea edges Oman in thriller

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 18, (KUNA): South Korea edged past Oman 29-24 in a closely contested Asian Handball Championship match on Sunday, with talisman Kim Taekwan delivering a stand-out performance to guide his side to victory.

Oman fought hard to overturn the deficit, but South Korea's experience proved decisive as Kim Taekwan, who was named man of the match, led his team to a hard-

earned win.

Earlier in the day, Iraq defeated Jordan 26-21 in Championship, currently being hosted by Kuwait and running until January 29.

The Group B encounter, which opened the fourth day of competition, was played at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. Iraq secured their second consecutive victory after taking a 14-11 lead into halftime and maintaining control in the second half.



KUNA photo

Korean and Omani battle for the ball during the Asian Handball Championship.