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Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

O Kuwait, the world is facing the threat of a deadly trade war

IN the Global Risks report, experts painted a grim picture of the economic outlook for the next two years. More than 1,300 officials from governments, corporations, and major international institutions participated in the survey for this report, which was published by the World Economic Forum. So, what does this mean?

If experts labeled last year as the "year of the trade war", then this year is set to be one of multifaceted economic turmoil, fueled by escalating conflicts between major global powers.

What began as a limited dispute over trade tariffs has evolved into a fierce economic and financial war, along with the emergence of new major alliances that differ completely from those of the past.

With the European-American tensions over Greenland, the alliance between the two sides is now under threat, and the economic and financial repercussions are expected to be significant.

Furthermore, there are secondary trade and financial disputes between countries that are negatively affecting the global economy. These tensions increase the risks faced by Gulf sovereign wealth funds invested in the USA and its allies.

As a result, countries with large sovereign wealth funds have begun withdrawing investments from high-risk markets and redirecting them to safer regions.

Meanwhile, other nations, including several Gulf states with limited economic and financial infrastructure, are focusing on developing domestic productive projects and forging partnerships with neighboring countries. Their goal is to create an integrated market capable of withstanding major global shifts and avoiding significant

risks.

These countries have spent several years adjusting their strategies by diversifying their production sectors and reducing reliance on the centralized economies favored by the United States. This allows Washington to acquire more funds from various sectors to ease its debt burden, which has reached unprecedented levels of almost \$37 trillion.

The grim outlook highlighted by experts in the report underscores the need to change the methods by which sovereign wealth funds are invested, particularly in high-risk regions that are constantly vulnerable to setbacks. The 2008 global financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic serve as lessons of the financial and economic difficulties the world has faced, the effects of which continue to be felt today.

The discussion regarding the need to be cautious about expanding sovereign investments abroad and the importance of repatriating a significant portion of them, as well as building modern infrastructure and major refining projects, establishing diversified industries, and focusing on food security all point to the necessity of adopting a new, low-risk strategy that can be managed without losses.

The world today is facing a fierce trade and economic war that threatens major entities.

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Kuwait eyes 'polluter pays' waste management policy

Trash may soon carry a price tag

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Municipal Council member Alia Al-Farsi has proposed imposing fees on the private and commercial sectors for waste management services, including disposal, treatment, and destruction at designated sites.

The proposal also covers costs related to land reclamation and environmental remediation.

It calls for a technical and legal study to determine a per-ton fee, establish the implementation and monitoring mechanism, and integrate modern tracking systems for waste transportation vehicles.

It specifically targets commercial and private waste producers, explicitly excluding the residential sector.

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Day by Day

WHY don't we establish educational cities where private sector schools are connected by a metro network, if needed?

We should consider school cities where land is sold to those who wish to build a school or leased to investors in education. Even government schools could be rented, reducing costs for the state. This would create cleaner, more beautiful, and more educationally advanced schools.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



A craftsman's hands bring a tiny wooden dhow to life, carrying Kuwait's heritage across time at Bahrain's International Colors of the East Arts Exhibition. - See Page 12

New rules boost Kuwait fight against terror, WMD threats

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya issued Ministerial Resolution No. 176/2025 concerning the executive regulations of the committee tasked with implementing Security Council resolutions under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter related to combating terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The resolution consists of 53 articles, the most prominent of which are as follows:

Article 1: The Special Committee shall be chaired by the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Development and International Cooperation and include the following members:

1. The Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Development and International Cooperation, who shall serve as Vice-Chairman
2. A representative from the Ministry of Justice
3. A representative from the Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit

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Kuwait's Visionary Lighthouse wins BrandEx '26 silver award

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): Assistant Undersecretary for Support Services at the Ministry of Information Salem Al-Watyan said Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, titled "Visionary Lighthouse," winning the Silver Award at BrandEx 2026 for Architecture, Best Thematic Exhibition is a global achievement.

Continued on Page 4



Kuwait's pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, titled 'Visionary Lighthouse'. KUNA photo

Kuwait's health sector moves toward unified employee IDs

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi issued a ministerial decision to approve the requirements and regulations for standardizing official work identities, seals/stamps, official correspondence, and digital applications in both the public and private sectors.

The decision comes as part of the Ministry of Health's commitment to strengthening institutional governance, reinforcing official identity, and standard-

izing administrative and organizational practices in all healthcare facilities.

In a press statement issued on Monday, the ministry explained that the decision was issued in response to the healthcare system's need for a unified framework governing employee identification and its use. The framework aims to enhance institutional discipline, raise security and reliability standards, and prevent irregular practices that could undermine procedures or the credibility of official documents.

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Siren activation 'routine test'

Civil Defense urges calm, ignore rumors after sirens

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Colonel Turki Al-Hajri, Director of Operations at the General Directorate of Civil Defense, confirmed that the activation of sirens on Monday was part of a trial to ensure the readiness and safety of the early warning system, based on directives from the Minister of Interior and the ministry's Undersecretary.

Speaking on the "Good Morning Kuwait" program, Colonel Al-Hajri explained that the early warning system uses three main tones:

- a flashing tone signals an imminent threat
- a wavy tone indicates the threat has

occurred

■ a continuous tone shows the threat has passed

He emphasized that the activation was purely for testing purposes and should not have caused any alarm.

Colonel Al-Hajri urged the public to ignore rumors and rely only on information from official media sources.

He affirmed the siren system is regularly maintained and is distributed in all governorates of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Yaqoub Bahman, Head of the Awareness and Guidance Department at the General Directorate of Civil Defense, affirmed that the siren test will be conducted at 10:00 AM on the first day of each month, as directed by the senior leadership of the Ministry of Interior.

He revealed that the test may occur on a Friday or Saturday, and urged everyone to remain calm and follow the instructions and guidelines issued by Civil Defense and official authorities upon hearing the test sirens.



Colonel Al-Hajri

Frost warning issued

Kuwait nights bite as sub-zero chill looms

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): The acting Director of the Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, says weather maps and numerical models indicate the country will be affected by a high-pressure extension accompanied by a cold to very cold air mass.

Al-Ali explained in a special statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that on Tuesday, winds are expected to be northwesterly, light to moderate in speed, occasionally gusty, raising dust in open areas and causing high sea waves. Maximum temperatures will range between 20 and 22 degrees Celsius, while minimum temperatures will range between 7 and 10 degrees Celsius, with a chance of fog forming in some coastal areas at night.

From Wednesday to Friday morning, northwesterly winds will continue, intensifying the feeling of cold as temperatures drop noticeably. During this period, maximum temperatures will range between 14 and 16 degrees Celsius, and minimum temperatures between 2 and 5 degrees Celsius, falling below zero in inland areas, with a chance of frost in agricultural and desert regions.

He added that, in general, Tuesday's weather will be warm during the day and cold at night, while from Wednesday to Friday, it will be cold to cool during the day and cold to very cold at night.

Kuwait welcomes ceasefire in Syria, integration of SDF

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (Agencies): The State of Kuwait welcomed on Monday the agreement on a ceasefire and the full integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) into the administration of the Syrian state, said Kuwait's Foreign Ministry.

In a statement, the Ministry said that the step will enhance security and stability in the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic, commending the efforts made by the friendly United States to reach the agreement.

The Ministry also renewed Kuwait's firm position in support of Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity.

Continued on Page 4

8 Zain Kuwait reinforces 5G-Advanced roadmap with region's first ultra-high-capacity network milestone



8 KFH launches enhanced corporate e-banking platform

| Prayer Timings | | | |
|----------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Fajr | 05:20 | Asr | 14:55 |
| Sunrise .. | 06:43 | Maghrib .. | 17:15 |
| Zohr | 11:59 | Isha | 18:36 |

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather cold with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-42 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

By Night: Cold to very cold and

Weather

partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-42 km/h.

| Station | Max Exp | Min Rec |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Kuwait City | 20 | 12 |
| Kuwait Airport | 21 | 11 |

| | | |
|----------------|----|----|
| Abdaly | 22 | 07 |
| Bubyan | 16 | 10 |
| Jahra | 22 | 12 |
| Failaka Island | 18 | 12 |
| Salmiyah | 20 | 15 |
| Ahmadi | 22 | 10 |
| Jal Aliyah | 21 | 08 |
| Nuwaisib | 23 | 14 |



HH the Amir



HH the Crown Prince



HH the Prime Minister



First Deputy PM

Kuwait Amir and Crown Prince receptions

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

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

His Highness the Amir received First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad

Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Crown Prince

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

Arab experts panel meets in Cairo

Media regulation, development eyed

CAIRO, Jan 19, (KUNA): The 22nd session of the Arab Electronic Media Committee (AEMC) began on Sunday in Cairo with participation from Arab media authorities to discuss regulating and developing digital media and promoting safe, responsible use of electronic platforms. Director of the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Information Ministers Dr Haider Al-Jubouri said the meeting supports preparations for the 104th Arab Media Committee session and the 22nd Executive Bureau session in Kuwait.

Al-Jubouri noted that electronic media has become a leading influence on Arab public opinion due to rapid information dissemination and its capacity to enhance interaction, transparency, and broader community participation across digital environments regionally today. He stressed the importance of developing unified Arab regulatory frameworks that keep pace with rapid digital transformation in media governance and content production while encouraging innovation, accountability, and consistent professional standards across platforms regionally internationally.

He expressed hope that deliberations would yield practical recommendations advancing regulation and development of Arab digital media, praising the UAE for launching the committee's official website and supporting coordinated institutional cooperation efforts regionally.

The agenda includes cybersecurity recommendations to



KUNA photo

The Arab Electronic Media Committee during the meeting.

fortify Arab platforms against cyberattacks, review specialized committee membership, assess risks from violent or extremist electronic games, and examine a draft book on Arab electronic media and institutional utilization.

Discussions also cover a proposed Arab model law regulating digital media, review training to enrich the committee website with national content, and consider a UAE initiative hosting 2026 training on engineering in artificial intelligence era.

Kuwait sympathizes with Spain over train tragedy victims

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday voiced the country's sympathy and solidarity with the friendly Kingdom of Spain over the tragic

train accident in the country's southern part, which claimed multiple casualties.

In a press release, the ministry offered Kuwait's sincere condolence and

solace to the Kingdom of Spain and the victims' families, while wishing a swift recovery of the injured.

- See Also Page 6

Kuwait, Italy vow action to protect human rights

Women role stressed in peace building, war resolution

KUWAIT, Jan 19, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Sheikhha Ambassador Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah on Monday stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation between Kuwait and Italy in human rights fields.

She underscored the need to support international efforts aimed at empowering women and enhancing their meaningful participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes at regional and international levels.

In a statement to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah said her discussions with several Italian officials reflected the distinguished bilateral relations between Kuwait and Italy and their continued development across various areas.

She noted that the meetings were held in the presence of Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Nasser Al-Qahtani and featured ongoing



Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah

ing coordination and constructive dialogue between the two friendly countries.

She explained that the talks took place on the sidelines of her participation in the high-level dialogue on advancing peace, stability, security and the contribution of women mediators, negotiators and peacebuilders, held in Rome from January 20 to 21.

Sheikhha Jawaher said she met with Italy's Deputy Director-General for the United Nations, Human Rights and International Organizations Department, Alessandra Molina, and Coordinator for Women Peace and Security Luca Fratini.

She highlighted the vital role women play in sustaining peace and increasing its chances of success, noting that women are among the groups most affected by conflicts, necessitating their effective inclusion in decision-making processes.

She added that the meetings emphasized coordination between Kuwait and Italy through their membership in the UN Human Rights Council to support multilateral action and strengthen human rights protection.

Italian officials expressed appreciation for Kuwait's role in advancing human rights and women's empowerment, praising its contributions to the Women, Peace and Security agenda and affirming continued coordination in relevant international forums.

Sheikhha Jawaher said the discussions reflect Kuwait's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and promoting international cooperation to achieve security, stability and sustainable peace.



KUNA photo

Some of the photographers' works on display at the center.

Scientific Center hosts event

Forum supports handiwork of photographers, creators

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): The Scientific Center, one of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences' facilities, hosted recently DD photographers forum, in collaboration with Fashionet, as part of its continued support for innovation in Kuwait.

Speaking to KUNA, the center's deputy director general Mohammad Al-Sanousi said the forum seeks to provide an interactive platform to bring together professional and amateur photographers, and content creators through displaying an exhibition of the latest photography equipment and techniques, along with panel discussion and workshops.

The step came in line with the center's keenness on supporting innovative industries,

and enabling youth and content creators in Kuwait through creating interactive platforms bringing together knowledge, practical experience and direct contact with experts and modern techniques, he added.

This shows the center's vision on offering qualitative experiences for visitors to include photography fields, visual production as well as artificial intelligence in a manner that contributes to developing the skills of new generation and opening new horizons to talented people in innovative fields, he stated.

The forum includes panel discussions, specialized lectures on content creation and cinematic photography, digital adv, AI and more.

Other Voices

Hand over the fuel stations

By Ahmad alsarraf

Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) was established in 1960 to manage fuel stations, with its capital initially shared between the government and the private sector. A few years later, the government fully acquired the company and appointed the late Ahmed Al-Sayed Omar Assem as chairman. Assem led KNPC for 16 years, managing it with competence and integrity.

However, after his tenure, KNPC stagnated and remained largely unchanged for half a century, showing little development beyond what Assem had established.

The company's decline became evident when the government sold some of its stations to the private sector a few years ago. The clear difference in appearance and service, favoring the private stations, confirmed once again that the state is a failed businessman.

On another front, the Supreme Petroleum Council approved the restructuring of Q8, the company that owns thousands of fuel stations, particularly in European cities, turning it into a wholly owned subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). Q8 continues to operate its overseas stations while also operating within Kuwait. Its corporate structure and ownership are now more closely linked to Kuwait, aligning it more closely with national oil policy and placing it under greater oversight in operations, procurement, and distribution.

Furthermore, to streamline spending and reduce costs through asset

consolidation and management, Q8 has been entrusted with managing some or all local fuel stations, instead of sharing this responsibility with other entities.

KNPC hopes to benefit from Q8's expertise in managing advanced, low-emission, and extensive service stations abroad to develop and standardize its retail fuel operations in Kuwait.

Despite Q8's significant success in Europe, little is known about it domestically. I have never heard of, or read about, any Kuwaitis holding senior positions at Q8 or its high profitability, despite nearly 45 years of operation.

Personally, I am not comfortable with companies that are overly secretive about their activities. It is clear, however, that they have failed to develop local expertise capable of fully managing this sector professionally. As a result, they are unlikely to perform much better than KNPC's stations and will probably continue as weak competitors to privately owned fuel stations.

In this case, the relevant authorities in the country could request the Supreme Petroleum Council to study the idea of granting citizens the right to manage or lease some of the new fuel stations, particularly those located in residential areas. These stations could offer basic mechanical services under a system that allows citizens to operate them for specific periods while using the KNPC logo and fully complying with its standards and regulations.

This would help reduce unemployment among citizens interested in this sector, and provide opportunities within a business framework based on individual initiative rather than the management of large commercial enterprises.

□ □ □

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Bonus for 'Hafiz' subscribers soon

KOC fully settles KD 270 million MEWRE debt

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: In three consecutive installments, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) managed to fully clear its outstanding debt to the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEWRE), which had reached approximately KD 270 million.

According to informed sources from MEWRE, the payments were made according to a schedule agreed upon by both parties, as part of ongoing financial coordination between government entities.

The settlement enhances financial stability and ensures timely payment of outstanding dues owed to MEWRE.

KOC's full repayment affirms its commitment to fulfilling its obligations to government entities and supports MEWRE's efforts to enhance cash flow efficiency, particularly amid ongoing expansions in infrastructure and the energy sector.

The payment mechanism was established following a series of joint meetings aimed at regu-

lating financial dues between government entities and ensuring sustainable cash flows without accumulating debt, which is a policy consistently applied by MEWRE to all consumers.

This step is part of a wide government initiative to address mutual debts among agencies and institutions and to uphold the highest standards of financial discipline. It aims to optimize the use of public resources and prevent the buildup of outstanding debts in the future.

The ministry affirmed its commitment to continuously updating billing and collection systems for all consumers, including oil companies. It is upgrading its processes to keep pace with the latest technology, ensure timely payments, and prevent the emergence of new debts.

Meanwhile, the sources confirmed that the ministry is currently awaiting approval from the relevant authorities to deposit funds from the "Hafiz" program into the accounts of eligible subscribers. Deposits are expected to begin after the first week of February.

They revealed that 1,861 accounts will benefit from the electricity incentives, while 2,937 ac-

counts will receive water incentives.

The sources revealed that the total number of subscribers registered in the program from 2021 until January 11, 2026, reached 9,310, with 19.99 percent eligible for the electricity incentive and 31.55 percent eligible for the water incentive.

They confirmed that participation in the "Hafiz" program is low compared to the total number of customers, highlighting the program's importance in reducing energy consumption while helping customers save on their bills.

The sources highlighted that participants are also entitled to rewards calculated as a percentage of their savings, adding that these rewards can reach over 40 percent for electricity and 50 percent for water and are deposited directly into customers' accounts.

They urged customers to register for the program and encouraged wider participation, noting that the ministry is working to attract as many customers as possible to ensure that conservation becomes a common practice, bringing substantial benefits to all participants.

PACA to complete employee output evaluations by Feb 2

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) will finalize and approve employee performance evaluations by February 2, based on the decision issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) requiring all civil aviation sectors to implement the specified procedures.

According to Informed sources, the mechanism emphasizes evaluating employee performance through the CSC's integrated systems program, with evaluations conducted within a specific timeframe by the direct supervisor and subsequently ap-

proved by the next-in-line authority.

If a direct supervisor is unavailable, the next-in-line official will carry out the evaluation, recording the action under the "Personnel Affairs Committee" and submitting the completed form to the Administrative Affairs Department via an official letter.

If there is no next-in-line official, the direct supervisor will carry out the evaluation, again referencing the "Personnel Affairs Committee," and submit it to the Administrative Affairs Department using the same procedure. The responsibility for disclosing an employee's performance evaluation rests with the direct supervisor or an official of equivalent rank, and not with the Attendance Department.

Kuwait, Iraq hold talks on 'maritime borders'

BAGHDAD, Jan 19, (KUNA): The 13th meeting of the Kuwaiti-Iraqi Joint Technical and Legal Committee on the Demarcation of Maritime Borders beyond Marker 162 was held in Baghdad on Monday.

The Kuwaiti side was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, while the Iraqi side was headed by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Ziyad Al-Tamimi.

During the meeting, both sides restated their commitment to continuing the committee's periodic meetings with a view to finalizing the demarcation of maritime borders between the two countries beyond Marker No. 162, based on international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Instability rules the land of two rivers, palm trees

“ON February 8, 1963, the Baathists succeeded in overthrowing Abdul Karim Qasim, who was immediately assassinated on Baghdad Radio after a sham trial. The sole leader, as he was known, had been in power since July 14, 1958,” Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“Abdul Karim Qasim, along with a group of military officers, had carried out an inhumane massacre targeting the Hashemite royal family. It culminated in the killing of the young and ailing King Faisal II, who was preparing for his wedding, along with the regent, Prince Abdul-Ilah, and the rest of the Hashemite family, with the exception of an infant, Ali bin Prince Hussein Al-Hashemi, who was miraculously saved.”



Hassan Ali Karam

“The saying goes, ‘He who kills will be killed, even if it takes time.’ Qasim was no better than the Baathists who later seized power. The sole leader was executed, and since that dark day that engulfed Iraq, the situation in Mesopotamia, the land of the two rivers and a million palm trees, has remained unstable.”

“It will not stabilize as long as the intentions of those in khaki uniforms and those in black suits persist, along with the struggle for the top position, the central bank, and smuggled oil shipments.”

“After the tragic and oppressive rule of Saddam, from which the Americans liberated them, Iraqis could have expressed gratitude and found stability. They could have thanked God Al-mighty, who delivered them from a tyrannical dictator and restored their human, religious, and secular freedoms.”

“The Americans not only liberated Iraqis from a tyrannical regime, but may also have liberated the world from a despotic dictator at a time when dictatorships and one-man rule were collapsing.”

“Iraqis should have been able to focus on rebuilding their nation and catching up with the developed world. Iraqis are no less capable than other peoples and nations of the developed world, especially when we recall Iraq’s rich history and the Iraqi scholars and intellectuals who emigrated, were displaced, or fled the inferno of Saddam’s oppressive and tyrannical rule, choosing exile over a homeland that had become alien to them.”

“According to what I have heard, a life-size statue of Abdul Karim Qasim was erected in one of Baghdad’s public parks. The statue was the work of a sculptor affiliated with the remnants of the Communist Party, whose activities were banned under Saddam’s regime.”

“The return of leftist and liberal parties in Iraq, such as the Democratic Party of Kamil al-Jaderji and others, remains a possibility. If these parties regain their former strength and establish a firm foothold, we may see a different Iraq, one free from corruption, thieves, and the dominance of the lira, fils, toman, dinar, and dollar.”

“Rehabilitating Abdul Karim Qasim’s image does not mean that Iraqis lived in luxury during his rule. The military is the military. What did Arab countries ruled by the military, from Egypt and Syria to Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, gain other than prisons, ignorant and despotic dictatorships, poverty, and a coterie of corrupt military figures and their cronies?”

“Even worse, coups beget coups, and oppressed peoples ruled by the military continue to suffer injustice and languish in dark prisons.”

“Some people, groups claiming to be nationalists, political Islamists, or Baathists, criticize Western intervention as a supposed rescue of oppressed peoples. They argue that today’s world is no longer governed by military regimes or autocratic one-man rule. We must recognize that World War II marked the beginning of a new world order, particularly with the advent of scientific progress and modern technology. The world is changing, and people must adapt to this change. There is no other solution.”

“Here in Kuwait, we had no disagreements with Abdul Karim Qasim’s rule. I recall that the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, visited Baghdad with a delegation of Kuwaiti officials, and there were no publicly declared disputes between the two neighboring countries.”

“When Kuwait gained independence from the United Kingdom and the protection treaty was abolished, it should have been sufficient for Kuwait to enjoy its freedom as an independent state. However, the sole leader insisted on spoiling the Kuwaitis’ joy at their country’s independence. One week after the protection agreement was abolished, Abdul Karim Qasim issued a statement at midnight declaring his non-recognition of Kuwait’s independence and asserting that it was a province of Iraq.”

“Political science professor Abdullah Al-Nafisi notes that the British ambassador to Baghdad, who had a personal relationship with Abdul Karim Qasim, incited him to lay claim to Kuwait.”

“However, Britain acted swiftly. Immediately after Iraq’s claims were announced, British forces were moved from Cyprus to Kuwait to preempt any Iraqi aggression. Throughout their history, Iraqis were rarely ruled by an Iraqi leader. Abdul Karim Qasim was the first Iraqi ruler, and he was later assassinated by the Baathists.”

“A review of Iraq’s history shows that it was often a transit route for dif-

ferent peoples. In any case, Kuwait will remain a neighbor with shared borders and other ties that bind the two countries.”

“Abdul Karim Qasim is gone, and there is no hope of his return. Saddam Hussein is gone, and there is no hope for the new Baathists who seized control of the 2025–2026 parliament to revive his tyranny and autocratic rule. The world is evolving, and history will not be reversed. This is something the people of the region must understand.”

Also:

“There are several observations regarding the government’s performance in local affairs that are of interest to a wide segment of the population. These are primarily organizational issues that could be resolved through immediate decisions, preventing losses for individuals without causing any harm to the state,” columnist **Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“For example, the Ministry of Social Affairs issued a decision regarding the reorganization of wedding halls, which has created considerable difficulties.”

“For instance, a citizen living near the capital or the First Ring Road who tries to reserve a hall may be surprised to find that the available options are in distant areas such as Saad Al-Abdullah suburb, Jahra, or Fintas. This often discourages guests from attending and imposes significant costs on the hosts.”

“While this decision is part of the organizational process, it is essential to consider the address on the applicant’s civil ID card. There are many conveniences for residents, but there are also several challenges for citizens, including this issue that troubles many Kuwaitis. What should be a joyful occasion sometimes turns into disappointment because many guests are unable to attend the wedding.”

“The second observation occurred during a visit to a neighboring country. At the airport, I noticed an African woman in her forties standing to the side and crying. I asked a police officer if I could help her. The officer explained that she was waiting for her sponsor to provide an exit permit, as residents are not allowed to leave without it. The woman kept calling her sponsor, but he did not answer, and she ultimately missed her flight.”

“This procedure is important because it ensures the safety of everyone involved. In Kuwait, when a domestic worker’s passport is stamped at the airport before departure, a message is sent to the sponsor notifying them that the worker has left. But what if the worker has committed a violation or a crime? What value does that message have in such cases?”

“We appreciate the Ministry of Interior and the Public Authority for Manpower for issuing the decision on an exit permit for residents. However, the decision unfortunately does not include domestic workers, who can leave Kuwait without permission even after committing a crime. I hope that the exit permit requirement will be extended to include domestic workers.”

□ □ □

“In Arabic language, the term ‘retirement’ may be derived from the word ‘qa’ada,’ meaning ‘to sit down.’ A person retires when they lose interest in something or step away from it,” columnist **Dr. Khaled Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

“A retiree is someone who has stopped working, either because they have reached the legal retirement age or by choice, in order to dedicate themselves to other aspects of life.”

“Retirement should not mean a complete halt in pursuing personal priorities and goals. However, some people treat retirement as a metaphorical psychological and spiritual death, or a total abandonment of any beneficial physical, intellectual, or psychological activity.”

“I will highlight some reasons why individuals perceive retirement as akin to death and also suggest ways to approach this golden stage of life positively.”

“One reason is the lack of preparation for life after retirement. Some individuals neglect, or perhaps are simply too complacent, to adequately plan for the post-retirement phase. They may assume that their sole purpose after retirement is physical and mental rest, overlooking the fact that retiring from a job does not mean retiring from life’s journey entirely.”

“A wise person prepares to live in a way that makes retirement a meaningful new chapter.”

“Sometimes, people become so absorbed in their professional duties that they neglect their families, children, or grandchildren. As a result, some retirees may feel that their children or grandchildren no longer need them after years of absence or neglect.”

“Retirees should focus on reconnecting with their children or grandchildren by actively engaging with them, building closer relationships, and sharing common interests. They can share their life experiences and listen attentively in return.”

“Retirees can also dedicate time to fulfilling long-postponed personal aspirations. Retirement provides an opportunity to pursue personal goals and ambitions that were delayed due to career commitments.”

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Kuwait hosts the GCC meeting on cybersecurity.

KUNA photo

Call to boost Gulf cybersecurity cooperation

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): The Cybersecurity Working Team of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries held its 21st meeting on Monday, hosted by the State of Kuwait and chaired by Director of Cyber Operations Brigadier General Qutaiba Al-Madhan.

The General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army said in a press statement that the meeting discussed a number of topics related to enhancing joint Gulf cooperation in the field of cybersecurity, as well as exchanging expertise and practical applications in a way that contributes to raising efficiency levels and protecting digital in-

frastructure from cyber threats.

It added that the meeting comes within the framework of the GCC countries’ commitment to unifying efforts and developing cyber capabilities in support of the security and stability of the GCC states, while keeping pace with rapid developments in the cybersecurity field.

Kuwaiti escapes noose in murder

Syrian family holds fake nationality

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19 : The Court of Appeals sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen to life imprisonment after convicting him of murdering a driver employed by his family in Saad Al-Abdullah and hiding the body by burying it in the Amghara scrapyard.

The Public Prosecution had charged the defendant with premeditated murder, stating that he killed the victim following a dispute and then transported the body to the Amghara scrapyard to conceal the crime. Investigations, technical evidence, and forensic reports confirmed the defendant’s involvement in the incident.

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Citizenship forgery: A comprehensive review by the Citizenship Investigations Department has uncovered a complex case of citizenship forgery dating back to 1985, involving a Syrian man born in 1950. The case ultimately led to the revocation of citizenship of approximately 42 individuals, including children and grandchildren, reports **Al-Rai** daily.

According to informed sources, the case began in Beirut when a Syrian woman claimed to be the daughter of a deceased Kuwaiti citizen. In 2019, the Nationality Investigation Department received official correspondence from the Kuwaiti Embassy in Lebanon regarding a 21-year-old Syrian woman seeking to prove her lineage to a deceased Kuwaiti father.

At the time, specialized committees from Kuwait were conducting overseas investigations into similar claims. These committees collected DNA samples from the woman, along with all official documents proving her identity, including Syrian civil records of both her and her mother.

Confirmed

DNA analysis confirmed that the deceased Kuwaiti citizen was the woman’s biological father, after her sample matched those of children registered in his official file. However, missing documents and incomplete procedures prevented her from being officially added to her father’s citizenship file, leaving the case pending. During a later comprehensive review of all files containing observations, complaints, or suspicions, authorities reopened the deceased citizen’s file. Investigators noted that the man was born in 1950 but had only obtained Kuwaiti citizenship in 1985, raising serious concerns.

Further examination revealed that the deceased had three wives, all of Syrian nationality. Two resided in Kuwait, while the woman’s mother lived in Syria. This discovery prompted investigators to deepen their inquiry. The uncles listed on the same citizenship file were summoned and, when questioned, admitted that the deceased man was not their brother. They stated that their late father had included an unrelated individual as one of his sons on the citizenship file without their knowledge. They confirmed they had never met him and that he had not attended their father’s funeral.

PAAAFR disconnects power to many plots

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) announced on Sunday that electricity had been cut off from several plots and holdings in Wafra Agricultural area that were recently reclaimed due to violations of their allocation terms and conditions, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

In a press statement, PAAAFR explained that the Director General of PAAAFR, Eng. Salem Al-Hai, conducted an inspection tour of Al-Wafra to ensure that plot and holding owners were complying with the designated usage conditions. The tour, carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, resulted in electricity being disconnected from a number of non-compliant plots that had recently been reclaimed.

PAAAFR affirmed the need for owners to adhere to allocation requirements to avoid legal and administrative measures stipulated by applicable regulations.

GCC must boost security cooperation, says Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib recently chaired a meeting with the heads of sectors participating in the “Arabian Gulf Security 4” tactical exercise, currently taking place in Qatar, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

He highlighted that Kuwait’s involvement in the exercise reflects its commitment to strengthening joint security cooperation among Gulf states. Major General Al-Wuhaib affirmed the importance of improving the readiness and field efficiency of Ministry of Interior’s personnel to effectively handle various crises and emergencies, indicating that this dedication is essential for supporting the security and safety framework and reinforcing the principle of teamwork.

He also called for the highest levels of discipline and professionalism from all participants, urging them to represent the State of Kuwait in a manner that reflects its stature and the competence of its security forces. He concluded by commending the preparedness and active efforts of all participating sectors.

Major General Al-Wuhaib issued a press statement from the Ministry of Interior, conveying the directives of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef. These directives highlighted the exercise’s vital role in strengthening joint Gulf security cooperation and improving coordination and practical integration among security agencies across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states.

The discussions during the meeting focused on readiness and participation strategies for the exercise.

Brigadier Abdullah Al-Ateeqi, Head of the Traffic and Operations Sector, and Brigadier Dakheel Al-Dakheel, Head of the Special Security and Correctional Institutions Sector, were present during the meeting.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Eng. Adel Al-Wasees, a senior electronics specialist and first-place winner of the Best Innovative Technology Award in water desalination.

Governor wins praise for supporting Kuwait talent

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Eng. Adel Al-Wasees, a senior electronics specialist and first-place winner of the Best Innovative Technology Award in water desalination.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser expressed pride in this scientific achievement, highlighting that it reflects the high level of national expertise and its potential to develop technological solutions that support national water security and sustainability, in line with the state’s development strategy. Al-Wasees thanked the governor for the warm reception, praised his support for national talent, and affirmed his commitment to continuing his research to serve the nation’s interests.

PAI shuts 4 industrial plots, fines 33 others

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: A total of 37 decisions issued by the Director General of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) was published in the official gazette “Kuwait Alyoum” on Sunday, reports **Al-Jarida** daily.

These decisions were related to the closure of four industrial plots and the imposition of administrative penalties on 33 other plots for various violations, including constructing buildings without permits and encroaching beyond plot boundaries.

The decisions highlighted the need to rectify the violations within one month, warning that harsher penalties would be imposed if the issues are not addressed.

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Expansion projects with UAE and Oman to strengthen regional energy grid

GCC power network yields KD3.995 bln in savings: GCCIA

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The latest annual report issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) confirmed the achievement of savings estimated at KD3.995 billion since the network was established in 2009 until the year 2024, exceeding the construction cost estimated at KD2.094 billion.

Projects included in the plan of GCCIA are the expansion of the electrical interconnection network with the United

Arab Emirates (UAE) and connection with the Sultanate of Oman.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report, stating that the expansion of the network with UAE was designed to strengthen the Gulf electrical interconnection network and enhance the capacity of electrical energy transmission, increasing it from 2,400 megawatts to 3,500 megawatts, based on the results of comprehensive technical and economic feasibility studies that proved the project is in line with the plan of GCCIA to ensure the provision of a flexible and effective electrical network and long-term benefits for the energy in-

frastructure in the region.

According to the report, the project includes the construction of a 400-kV overhead transmission line extending 96 kilometers from Salwa Station to Al-Silaa Station, as well as the expansion of 400-kV conversion equipment with electrical breakers, electrical reactors and protection and control systems to enhance the stability and efficiency of the system, with a total estimated cost of \$205.5 million, and is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2027.

The report stated that the connection with Oman has a voltage of 220 kilovolts and a capacity of 400 megawatts,

pointing out that the decision was taken based on the results of comprehensive technical and economic feasibility studies, and with the aim of enhancing the technical and economic benefits of the Sultanate and the Gulf network.

The project includes the construction of two 400 kilovolt power transmission stations – ‘Ibri’ in Oman and ‘Baynounah’ in UAE, in addition to the expansion of the current commodities station. This connection will be supported by dual overhead electricity lines operating at a voltage of 400 kilovolts, with a total length of about 530 kilometers.

Kuwait and Bahrain explore ways to strengthen health cooperation

Officials discuss integrating medical services



Chairman of Bahrain's Supreme Council of Health (SCH) with Kuwaiti delegation. Minister of Health photo

MANAMA, Jan 19, (KUNA): Chairman of Bahrain's Supreme Council of Health (SCH) Dr. Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Khalifa received a Kuwaiti delegation, led by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutariri, in Manama on Sunday.

The meeting, which gathered Bahraini Minister of Health Dr. Jaleela bint Sayed Jawad Hassan, explored ways for promoting cooperation in the areas of healthcare.

Both sides exchanged views on their respective successes in medical and healthcare services with a view to achieving integration among the institutions of the sisterly countries.

During his visit, Dr. Al-Mutariri, accompanied by Undersecretary of the Bahraini Ministry of Health Dr. Lu'lua Shuwaiter, visited the National Bank of Bahrain's Multiple Sclerosis Center where he was briefed on the quality of medical and rehabilitating services being provided to patients.

Strengthening bilateral ties

Kuwait's FM holds talks with Arab counterparts

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya discussed, in a phone call on Sunday, with his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty the efforts exerted to upgrade bilateral relations in a variety of domains.

They also reviewed the latest regional and international developments of mutual interest.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya discussed, in a phone call on Sunday, with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan strengthening bilateral relations in various fields.

They also reviewed the latest regional and international developments of mutual interest.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Sunday made a phone call with his Qatari counterpart Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, discussing close relations



Al-Yahya

between both sisterly countries.

During the phone conversation, they also addressed the latest regional and international developments.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Sunday made a phone call with his Bahraini counterpart Abdullatif Al-Zayani, discussing close relations between both sisterly countries.

They also addressed, during the phone conversation, the latest regional and international developments. Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya on Sunday made a phone call with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan.

During the phone conversation, they discussed close relations between both sisterly countries, and ways and means to further promote and develop them in various fields, along with the latest regional and international developments.

Kuwait Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya and Jordan Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Aymen Al-Safadi, discussed over a phone call the bilateral ties between the two countries.

The two sides also touched on the latest regional and international developments.

Elections set for March 29

KJA opens 2026-'28 board nominations

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) has announced the opening of nominations for membership on the Board for the 2026-2028 term. Nominations will begin on January 26 and continue until the end of the workday on Thursday, March 12, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In an official statement, the board invited KJA members wishing to run for board membership to visit KJA's secretariat to complete the nomination form and submit a copy of their civil ID, a copy of their 2026 membership card, and an updated copy of their "Kuwait Mobile ID" or "Sahel" applications.

According to Article 29 of KJA's by-laws, the ordinary general assembly meeting, scheduled for 3:00 pm on Sunday, March 29, at KJA's headquarters, will be valid if more than half of eligible members are present. If a quorum is not met, the meeting will be postponed for 30 minutes and will then proceed regardless

of the number of members present.

Elections for the Board of Directors will take place from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm on the same day at KJA's temporary headquarters in Shuwaikh Industrial, Press Street, Al-Balagh Printing Building, second floor. Members are required to present their updated Civil ID through the "Kuwait Mobile ID" or "Sahel" applications to vote.

The general assembly agenda will begin with the approval of the Board of Directors' administrative report for January 1 to December 31, 2025, followed by the approval of the balance sheet and the income and expenditure statement for the same period. Members will also review and approve the estimated budget for the fiscal year 2026 and appoint the auditing firm for 2026.

The meeting will also include discussion of any proposals submitted by KJA members, consideration of new matters, and the election of the Board of Directors for 2026-2028.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait welcomes

The Syrian government Sunday announced a ceasefire with the Syrian Democratic Forces, taking almost full control of the country and dismantling the Kurdish-led forces that controlled the northeast for over a decade.

The announcement comes as tensions between government forces and the SDF boiled over earlier this month, eventually resulting in a major push by government forces toward the east. The SDF appeared to have largely retreated after initial clashes on a tense front line area in eastern Aleppo province.

Hours after the government announced the deal, SDF leader Mazloum Abdi confirmed it in a video statement, saying the group had accepted the agreement, which stipulates their withdrawal from Raqqa and Deir el-Zour provinces "to stop the bloodshed."

"We will explain the terms of the agreement to our people in the coming days," he said.

Syria's Defense Ministry said it ordered the fighting to halt on the front lines after the agreement was announced.

Syria's new leaders, since toppling Bashar Assad in December 2024, have struggled to assert their full authority over the war-torn country. An agreement was reached in March that would merge the SDF with Damascus, but it didn't gain traction as both sides accused each other of violating the deal.

Since the push, the government has largely asserted control of the Deir el-Zour and Raqqa provinces, critical areas under the SDF that include oil and gas fields, river dams along the Euphrates, and border crossings.

Syria's state-run news agency SANA showed President Ahmad al-Sharaa signing and holding the agreement. Abdi, who was scheduled to meet with the president in Damascus was not seen, though his signature appeared on the document. Al-Sharaa told journalists that Abdi could not travel due to bad weather and will visit Damascus on Monday.

"It's a victory for all Syrians of all backgrounds," al-Sharaa told journalists in Damascus after signing the agreement. "Hope-

fully Syria will end its state of division and move to a state of unity and progress."

The two warring sides are key allies of Washington. U.S. Envoy Tom Barrack met with al-Sharaa earlier Sunday as government forces were sweeping into the city of Raqqa and across Deir el-Zour province. Abdi reportedly joined the meeting over the phone.

Barrack praised the agreement, saying it will lead to "renewed dialogue and cooperation toward a unified Syria," ahead of working on the details of implementing the integration.

"This agreement and ceasefire represent a pivotal inflection point, where former adversaries embrace partnership over division," said Barrack in a post on X.

Kuwait's Visionary

Speaking to KUNA on Monday, Al-Watyan said the award reflects continued support from the political leadership and aligns with the ministry's strategy to strengthen high-quality international participation and deepen Kuwait's cultural and media presence at major global events.

This helps build a positive image of the country and activates soft power as a key tool of cultural and media diplomacy through creative, modern and interactive experiences that highlight national identity, he explained.

The achievement reflects the support of Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, who stresses that international participation should be strategic platforms illustrating Kuwait's humanitarian values and deep-rooted heritage through modern, people-centered communication, he added.

The ministry aimed to make Kuwait's Expo 2025 pavilion a leading model for using culture and media to support national goals, strengthen international partnerships, and spotlight Kuwait's future vision in culture, education and sustainability, Al-Watyan mentioned.

He reiterated the ministry will continue supporting well-planned and impactful international participation that supports its strategy and strengthens Kuwait's position on the global cultural and media map.



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KUNA photo
Falconers participating in the 11th edition of the Nasser bin Hamad Falconry and Hunting Season.

Kuwaiti falconers shine in Bahrain

MANAMA, Jan 19, (KUNA): Ahmad Youssuf and Ahmad Abal-Qolub, of Kuwait, made outstanding achievements in the international races of the 11th Nasser bin Hamad Season for Falcons and Hunting competition.

Al-Youssuf led the Gyr Shaheen Qarnas race while Abal-Qolub won the Harrar Farrokh race, surpassing Saudi and Qatari competitors.

The competition, featuring nearly 250 birds and falconers from across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

member countries, was held at the Falcon Grounds, to the south of Bahrain International Endurance Village.

Mohammad Al-Marri, the chief organizer of the competition, commended, in press remarks following the event, the outstanding technical performance of participants.

He attributed the impressive presence of participants from across the Gulf region and beyond to the growing popularity of the traditional sport and heritage of the region.

Real estate transactions surge by 87% in 1 week

Industrial boom fuels sharp rise

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The local real estate market witnessed remarkable growth in weekly transactions, recording an 87.3 percent increase in the number of transactions and an 8.2 percent rise in transaction value.

This surge was driven by strong activity in industrial, residential, and investment properties, which offset a notable decline in commercial property deals.

According to data from the weekly report issued by the Real Estate Registration and Documentation

Departments at the Ministry of Justice, the local real estate market witnessed significant activity during the period from January 11 to 15. The total number of transactions reached 148 deals valued at KD 66.1 million, compared to 79 deals worth KD 61.1 million in the previous week.

The residential real estate sector showed strong performance during the week, with transaction values rising from KD 19.6 million to KD 35.2 million, marking a significant qualitative growth of 79.6 percent. The number of transactions also increased from 56 to 98, a 75 percent rise, indicating continued demand in this sector.

The investment real estate sector saw a notable surge in the number of transactions from 18 to 39, which is an increase of 116.7 percent. However, the total transaction value experienced a slight decline of 4 percent, reaching KD 19 million compared to KD

19.8 million in the previous week, reflecting greater activity in smaller-scale transactions.

Meanwhile, the commercial real estate sector experienced a sharp decline, with transaction values falling from KD 20.9 million to KD 3.4 million, a drop of 83.7 percent.

The number of transactions also decreased by 50 percent, from four to just two, reflecting the absence of the “large” deals that had driven commercial real estate activity the previous week.

In contrast, the industrial real estate sector recorded exceptional growth, with qualitative weekly transaction increases exceeding 962 percent and a quantitative rise of 800 percent.

Transaction values in this sector reached nine deals worth KD 8.5 million, compared to a single deal worth KD 800,000 in the first week of January, highlighting remarkable activity in industrial real estate.

Continued from Page 1

O Kuwait,

Therefore, Kuwait needs several industrial, service, agricultural, and other projects to help minimize risks and stimulate domestic consumer spending in order to ensure greater social stability. Such a strategy would position the country as a regional economic force, benefiting from the industrial diversification of neighboring states and achieving long-awaited integration.

Today, the Middle East is on the brink of a radical change. While the region remains volatile, it is also a central hub in the global economy. With its strategic location, unique cultural and social characteristics, and vast wealth, Kuwait is capable of playing a significant role both locally and regionally.

That is why we said yesterday, and reiterate today, that investing sovereign wealth funds domestically and forming partnerships with culturally and socially homogeneous nations has become a necessity for all countries that have long invested abroad. These countries have suffered greatly from this policy and are now seeking new, safer avenues.

Stop focusing on imposing fees and raising fuel prices, and instead, turn your attention to the bigger issues. Support the people so they can, in turn, support you.

Kuwait eyes

Al-Farsi based her plan on the Kuwait Municipality Law and the Municipal Waste Management Regulations. The main objective is to apply the “polluter pays” principle for holding waste generators accountable for part of the management costs. This aims to encourage waste sorting, promote recycling, and enhance environmental sustainability. Revenues generated will be used to improve the waste management system, rehabilitate land, and support the local recycling industry.

Al-Farsi emphasized the necessity of this measure in light of Kuwait’s growing environmental challenges, rapid urban development, and ongoing progress.

She highlighted that implementing policies to hold waste producers accountable for preventive and corrective measures is essential, in line with the Municipal Waste Management and Public Hygiene Regulations.

Kuwait’s health

It standardizes official work ID cards for employees in healthcare facilities in medical, paramedical, pharmaceutical, and administrative roles by adopting a standardized design that includes approved basic data, precise specifications for personal photographs and fonts, and links to electronic access systems and sensitive areas within healthcare facilities. It also regulates official paper and electronic correspondence and standardizes the official logo in all communications and digital applications

In addition, the decision assigns clear responsibilities to administrative leaders and healthcare facility managers to monitor implementation and submit immediate reports upon detecting any violations. A six-month transitional period is granted from the date of publication in the official

gazette, extendable by up to ten months, to ensure gradual and orderly implementation of the approved requirements.

New rules

4. A representative from the Central Bank of Kuwait
 5. A representative from the Ministry of Interior
 6. A representative from the Ministry of Defense
 7. A representative from the Public Prosecution
 8. A representative from the Ministry of Social Affairs
 9. A representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
 10. A representative from the General Administration of Customs
 11. A representative from the Capital Markets Authority
 12. A representative from the Public Authority for Civil Aviation
 13. A representative from the Insurance Regulatory Unit
- Article 2: The Chairman of the Special Committee shall nominate the Committee’s Rapporteur and Secretariat. The Chairman may invite any Kuwaiti entity that is not part of the Special Committee, as well as any qualified expert, to attend meetings when deemed appropriate.
- Each member of the Special Committee may submit proposals in this regard.
- Article 3: The Rapporteur and Secretariat of the Special Committee shall undertake the following duties:
1. Issue invitations to Special Committee meetings.
 2. Record the minutes of meetings and maintain all records, decisions, and other matters related to the Committee’s work.
 3. Notify the Chair and members of the meeting date at least ten (10) working days in advance, which may be shortened in cases of extreme necessity at the Chair’s request and according to the timeframe specified.
 4. Provide all members of the Special Committee with the agenda, items, and topics to be discussed, along with the necessary documents and information.
 5. Provide the Chair and members with a draft of the meeting minutes within five working days for review and feedback before adoption at the next meeting.
 6. Provide members with a copy of all Committee decisions.
- Article 4: The Chair of the Special Committee may request assistance from any person deemed appropriate to support the Committee’s work.
- Article 5: The Special Committee shall serve as the liaison between the Government of the State of Kuwait and the relevant foreign authorities.
- Article 6: A member of the Special Committee must meet the following conditions:
1. Be a Kuwaiti citizen.
 2. Be nominated by the entity they represent. A member may only decline membership through an official letter from the nominating entity. If a member is unable to attend more than three consecutive meetings without an acceptable excuse, the Chair shall request the nominating entity to nominate a replacement who meets the membership requirements.
 3. Be fully aware of relevant international resolutions, national legislation, and instructions issued by the State of

- Kuwait in the fields of combating terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
4. Hold a supervisory position of at least department director level, with a thorough understanding of the powers of the entity they represent, particularly regarding combating terrorism and the financing of weapons of mass destruction.
 5. Be authorized by their entity to make appropriate decisions related to combating terrorism and the financing of weapons of mass destruction.
 6. Have full proficiency in English, given the Special Committee’s tasks and necessary communication with external parties or during meetings.
 7. Commit to submitting semi-annual reports to the Committee on actions taken by their organization regarding Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. These reports will be discussed during the Committee’s sessions.
- Article 7: Members of the Special Committee must do the following:
1. Refrain from disclosing information and data available to them by virtue of their Committee membership, except as permitted by relevant laws, regulations, or matters related to their work.
 2. Refrain from sharing information and data with media outlets or on social media without the Committee Chair’s permission.
 3. Attend all Special Committee meetings at the scheduled times.
 4. Complete all assigned tasks and provide all required data and information.
 5. Maintain continuous adherence to all regulations stipulated in this resolution.
 6. Serve as the primary point of contact between the Special Committee and their employing entity, and be addressed directly on all matters related to the Committee’s work.
- Article 8: The Special Committee shall hold its meetings according to the following mechanisms:
1. A meeting may be convened at the request of the Committee Chair, the Vice-Chair, or at the request of at least half of the Committee members.
 2. The Committee Chair shall preside over meetings. In their absence, the Vice-Chair shall preside.
 3. The Special Committee may invite any person it deems appropriate for consultation or to provide their opinion on a specific matter, without granting them voting rights, provided they are Kuwaiti citizens.
 4. Members must attend Committee meetings in person.
 5. The Committee shall meet every three months or as necessary.
 6. Meetings shall be held at the time and place determined by the Committee Chair. If all agenda items are not completed, a supplementary meeting shall be scheduled within a period determined by the Chair to address the remaining items.
- Article 9: The quorum for the Special Committee shall be as follows:
1. A quorum for Special Committee meetings shall consist of half the members plus one, including the Chair or, in the Chair’s absence, the Vice-Chair.
 2. If a quorum is not reached at the start of the meeting, the meeting shall be postponed for half an hour to allow members to attend. If a quorum is still not achieved, the Special Committee Rapporteur shall send a letter to all members stating that

- the meeting has been canceled due to lack of quorum. The meeting will then be rescheduled for a later date.
- Article 10: The voting mechanism in the Special Committee shall be as follows:
1. The Special Committee shall make decisions by a majority vote of the members present. In the event of a tie, the side supported by the Chair shall prevail.
 2. A member who is absent has no right to object to decisions adopted during the meeting held in their absence.
 3. The Committee may issue some decisions by circulation based on the following criteria:
 - a. The matter’s necessity warrants a decision by circulation, as determined by the Chair.
 - b. Decisions issued by circulation must be presented at the next meeting and recorded in the minutes.
 - Article 11: In addition to the responsibilities outlined in other chapters of this Ministerial Decree, the Special Committee shall undertake the following tasks:
 1. Coordinate efforts among the relevant authorities in the State of Kuwait.
 2. Participate in relevant conferences and committees.
 3. Request documents or data from the relevant authorities as necessary to perform its duties.
 4. Issue instructions and directives to relevant authorities or the private sector for implementing listing decisions.
 5. Regularly monitor the database established by the Special Committee to track its work.
 6. Submit periodic reports to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on its activities, and provide recommendations every six months or upon request.
 7. Establish any working groups deemed necessary to perform its functions efficiently.
 - Chapter Three: Listing on the National List by the Special Committee pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1373
 - Article 12: The Committee, either on its own initiative or upon request from a competent foreign or local authority, shall list any person reasonably suspected of:
 - a) Committing, attempting to commit, participating in, or facilitating a terrorist act.
 - b) Acting directly or indirectly, or being under the control of a person described in paragraph a.
 - c) Acting on behalf of, or under the direction of, a person described in paragraph a.
 - Article 13: The Committee has the authority to collect and request any information from any public authority, person, or entity in the State of Kuwait to determine whether a person meets the criteria for listing under Article 12.
 - The Special Committee and its members may not notify the person concerned that their inclusion on the list is under consideration.
 - Article 14: When the State of Kuwait receives a request from a foreign or local authority to list a person, the Committee shall consider the request immediately and make a decision. The Committee must work on obtaining from the requesting entity as much identifying and supporting information as possible, including the proposed name, sufficient details for accurate identification, and specific information supporting whether the person meets the criteria in Article 12, in accordance with the Committee’s internal

- procedures.
- The Special Committee issues a decision and notifies the foreign or local entity in writing.
- Article 15: Listing under Article 12 does not depend on the existence of any criminal proceedings against the person, such as investigation or prosecution. The Special Committee immediately notifies financial institutions, designated non-financial companies and professions, regulatory authorities, and other competent entities of any listing decision and provides all available identifying information through the automated email alert system. The Committee then publishes the listing decision in the official gazette “Kuwait Alyoum” and makes the information available on its website.
- Article 16: The Committee may request any foreign entity to implement a listing decision made under Article 12.
- When making such a request, the Committee shall provide as much identifying and supporting information as possible, including the proposed person’s name and any details necessary for accurate identification and to support the determination that the person meets the criteria in Article 12.
- Article 17: The Committee shall review each listing decision under Article 12 at least every two years to ensure that reasonable grounds for maintaining the decision still exist.
- The annex to the decision on listing criteria includes the following:
1. Listing criteria pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 1267/1999, 1989/2011), and subsequent related resolutions:
 - Any person or entity involved in the financing, planning, facilitation, preparation, or execution of acts or activities by, in cooperation with, under the name of, on behalf of, or in support of the supply, sale, or transfer of arms and related material, recruitment for, or support of, acts or activities related to al-Qaeda, or any cell, splinter group, or derivative thereof.
 - Any enterprise owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by any person or entity listed in the preceding paragraph, or by those acting on their behalf or under their direction.
 2. Listing Criteria pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 1267/1999, 1988/2011), and subsequent resolutions concerning the Taliban:
 - Any person or entity involved in financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or committing acts or activities carried out by, in conjunction with, on behalf of, in support of, or in connection with the Taliban, supplying, selling, or transferring arms and related material to, or in support of, designated persons and other individuals, groups, undertakings, or entities associated with the Taliban in a manner that undermines peace, stability, and security in Afghanistan.
 - Any facility owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by any person or entity designated under the preceding paragraph, or by persons acting on their behalf or under their direction.
 3. Listing Criteria under Security Council Resolutions 1718/2006, 2087/2013, 2094/2013, 2270/2016, and subsequent resolutions concerning the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea:
 - Any person or entity involved in the DPRK’s nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction programs or ballistic missile programs.

- Any person or entity providing support to the DPRK’s nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction programs or ballistic missile programs, including through illicit means.
- Any person or entity acting on behalf of, or under the direction of, any person or entity designated under paragraph 1 or 2.
- Any legal person or entity owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by a person or entity designated under paragraph 1 or 2.
- Any person or entity that has assisted in evading sanctions or violating the provisions of resolutions 1718/2006 or 1874/2009.
- Any person or entity that has contributed to the DPRK’s prohibited programs or activities, or to evading related resolutions, including any entity affiliated with the DPRK government, the Workers’ Party of Korea, or any person or entity acting on their behalf or under their direction, or any entity owned or controlled by them, or any person or entity identified by member states as associated with the DPRK’s nuclear or ballistic missile programs or other prohibited activities under resolution 1718 (2006) and subsequent resolutions.
4. Listing Criteria under Security Council Resolutions and Subsequent Resolutions Concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran:
 - Any person or entity that has participated in, been directly or indirectly associated with, or provided support for sensitive activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran related to nuclear proliferation in a manner inconsistent with Iran’s commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or in the development of nuclear weapons delivery systems, including participation in the procurement of prohibited materials, goods, equipment, or technologies as defined in Annex B to Resolution 2231 (2015).
 - Any person or entity that assists listed persons or entities in evading sanctions.
 - Any entity owned or controlled by persons or entities affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and listed pursuant to Resolution 1929/2010, including through illicit means.
 - Any person or entity acting on behalf of, or at the direction of, entities affiliated with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and the cargo division of Iran Air (IRISL), listed pursuant to Resolution 1929/2010, or entities owned or controlled by IRISL, including through illicit means, or any person or entity determined by the United Nations Security Council or the relevant committee to have assisted listed persons or entities, whether in evading sanctions or violating the provisions of resolutions 1737/2006, 1747/2007, 1803/2007, or 1929/2008.
- Article 51: Ministerial Resolution No. 8/2025, issued on March 16, 2025, concerning the implementing regulations of the Special Committee for the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions issued under Chapter VII of the Charter, is hereby repealed.
- Article 52: Each responsible official shall implement this resolution, act accordingly, and communicate it to all concerned parties.
- Article 53: This resolution shall enter into force on the date of its issuance and shall be published in the official gazette “Kuwait Alyoum”.

The Embassy of the United States of America

Will Hold A Public Auction

The auction will be held on Saturday, January 24, 2026, in the parking lot outside the front gate of the U.S. Embassy in Bayan, Al-Masjed Al-Aqsa Street. Auction items will be available for public viewing starting at 8:00 a.m., with the auction officially commencing at 9:00 a.m. Auction items will include used vehicles, a forklift, concrete tiles, a shipping container, household and office furniture, office equipment, appliances, drapes, carpets, computers, printers, and various electrical and repair supplies that have reached the end of their useful life or are no longer needed by the U.S. Embassy. All items will be sold “as is” to the highest bidder. Payment must be made in KWD in cash or via K-NET only. Credit cards will not be accepted.

The following used vehicles and forklift will be among the items included in the auction:

1. Chevrolet, Suburban 2017

2. Ford, F-150, 2014

3. Ford, Explorer, 2015

4. Chevrolet, Suburban, 2015

5. GMC, Yukon, 2011

6. Forklift, 3 Ton Diesel, TCM FD30T3Z

For more information please call :

22591263 - 22591115

22591094 - 22591267

CAPT to review KD1bn North Kabad wastewater plant deal

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) is planning to discuss the direct contract for the North Kabad wastewater treatment plant project, valued at more than one billion dinars, in its upcoming meeting after reviewing the full details submitted by the Ministry of Public Works, reports Al-Rai daily.

According to informed sources, the decision to discuss the contract was made following an announcement by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, while chairing the 43rd meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of Major Development Projects on Thursday, that the technical studies for the North Kabad wastewater treatment plant are nearing completion.

CAPT had postponed its decision on the North Kabad wastewater treatment plant project last week to allow for a more thorough review of its various components by representatives from the Ministry of Public Works. The project includes the construction of the wastewater treatment facility, connecting pipelines to existing plants, and other related works.

The sources explained that this project is among several major projects currently underway in Kuwait with the support of the Chinese government.

PAAET to fill faculty posts

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced that applications for faculty positions in various scientific disciplines will open soon, based on PAAET’s keenness to attract distinguished academic talent and supporting scientific research, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It affirmed that details on the required specializations, conditions, criteria, and application procedures and deadlines will be announced soon on its official website.

In this regard, Director General of PAAET, Prof. Hassan Al-Fajjam, highlighted that the move aims to strengthen PAAET’s academic journey by fostering a stimulating educational and research environment and attracting experts with notable scientific achievements.

Urgent Needed

| | |
|--|---------|
| 40 Technical Support -Field Engineers | |
| Experienced in managing large-scale IT projects across various platforms and operating systems, with expertise in security and support. Skilled in troubleshooting and providing support for desktops, printers, networks, and applications to meet the needs of IT and hospital staff, Berfer European and American citizenship | 3 years |
| Experience associated with large-scale projects in the government sector, Berfer European and American citizenship | 3 years |
| 4 Lead Managers | 7 years |
| Manage operations , ensuring SLA compliance, system performance, and seamless coordination with other teams and third parties | |
| 15 nurses | 3 years |
| with 3 years experience and certificates | |
| 5 pharmacies | 1 year |
| 5 Pharmacies 1 year experience | |

Hr_hiring@ebeshara.com



An immigration supporter raises his fist during a protest on Jan 17, 2026, in Minneapolis. (AP)

Army puts 1,500 soldiers on standby for possible Minnesota deployment

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): The Pentagon has ordered about 1,500 active duty soldiers to be ready in case of a possible deployment to Minnesota, where federal authorities have been conducting a massive immigration enforcement operation, two defense officials said Sunday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military plans, said two infantry battalions of the Army's 11th Airborne Division have been given prepare-to-deploy orders. The unit is based in Alaska and specializes in operating in arctic conditions.

One defense official said the troops are standing by to deploy to Minnesota should President Donald Trump invoke the Insurrection Act, a rarely used 19th century law that would allow him to employ active duty troops as law enforcement.

The move comes just days after

Trump threatened to do just that to quell protests against his administration's immigration crackdown.

In an emailed statement, Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell did not deny the orders were issued and said the military "is always prepared to execute the orders of the Commander-in-Chief if called upon."

ABC News was the first to report the deployment.

On Thursday, Trump said in a social media post that he would invoke the 1807 law "if the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don't obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job."

He appeared to walk back the threat a day later, telling reporters at the White House that there wasn't a reason to use it "right now."

"If I needed it, I'd use it," Trump

said. "It's very powerful."

Trump has repeatedly threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act throughout both of his terms. In 2020 he threatened to use it to quell protests after George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police, and in recent months he threatened to use it for immigration protests.

The law was most recently invoked by President George H.W. Bush in 1992 to end unrest in Los Angeles after the acquittal of four white police officers in the beating of Rodney King.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a Democrat and frequent target of Trump, has urged the president to refrain from sending in more troops.

Meanwhile, the US Department of Justice said Sunday it is investigating a group of protesters in Minnesota who disrupted services at a church where a local official with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement apparently serves as a pastor.

Will it be enough?

Republicans, Democrats trying to contain US President Trump's Greenland aggression

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): Republican lawmakers are scrambling to contain President Donald Trump's threats of taking possession of Greenland, with some showing the most strident opposition to almost anything the Trump administration has done since taking office.

They gave floor speeches on the importance of NATO last week. They introduced bills meant to prevent the US from attacking Denmark. And several traveled to Copenhagen to meet with Danish counterparts.

But it's not clear that will be enough, as the president continues to insist that he will take control of the Arctic island. It's raised fears of an end to NATO - a decades-old alliance that has been a pillar of American strength in Europe and around the globe - and raised questions on Capitol Hill and around the world about what Trump's aggressive, go-it-alone foreign policy will mean for world order.

"When the most powerful military nation on earth threatens your territory through its president over and over and over again, you start to take it seriously," Sen Chris Coons told The Associated Press.

The Delaware Democrat organized the bipartisan trip to Denmark to "bring the temperature down a bit," he said, as well as further talks about mutual military agreements in the Arctic.

Republican Sens. Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska accompanied a handful of Democrats on the trip. Also, Republican lawmakers joined in meetings in Washington last week with the Danish foreign minister and his Greenlandic counterpart where they discussed security agreements.

Yet it's clear Trump has other ideas. He said Saturday he will charge a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from eight European nations because of their opposition to his Greenland plans.

Trump said on social media that because of modern weapons systems "the need to ACQUIRE is especially important."

Key Republicans have made clear they think that forcefully taking Greenland is out of the question. But so far, they've avoided directly rebuking Trump for his talk of possessing the island.

Tillis on social media called Trumps tariff plans "bad for America, bad for American businesses, and bad for



US President Donald Trump points after arriving at Palm Beach International Airport on Air Force One on Jan 16, 2026, in West Palm Beach, Florida. (AP)

America's allies."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., told reporters Thursday that "there's certainly not an appetite here for some of the options that have been talked about or considered."

In a floor speech, Thune's predecessor as Republican leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell, warned that an attempt to seize Greenland would "shatter the trust of allies" and tarnish Trump's legacy with a disastrous foreign policy decision.

Republican and Democratic law-

makers alike see an obvious path to bolstering American interests in Greenland while keeping the relationship with NATO-ally Denmark intact.

In a meeting with lawmakers Thursday, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt discussed how the countries could work together to develop critical mineral industries and military cooperation, Coons said. The diplomats also told the senators there is no evidence of Chinese or Russian activity in Greenland.

Trump has made the argument that the U.S. should take Greenland before China or Russia do, prompting worry across Europe. Troops from several nations have been sent to Greenland in support of Denmark.

Murkowski said on social media that "our NATO allies are being forced to divert attention and resources to Greenland, a dynamic that plays directly into Putin's hands by threatening the stability of the strongest coalition of democracies the world has ever seen."

Lawmakers are looking at a few options for taking a military attack on Greenland off the table. Still, the

Trump administration has shown little if any willingness to get congressional approval before taking military action.

Lawmakers, including Republicans like Murkowski, are pushing legislation that would prohibit Department of Defense funds from being used to attack or occupy territory that belongs to other NATO members without their consent.

The Alaska senator also suggested Congress could act to nullify Trump's tariffs. Murkowski and several other Republicans have already helped pass resolutions last year meant to undo tariffs around the globe, but those pieces of legislation did not gain traction in the House. They would have also required Trump's signature or support from two-thirds of both chambers to override his veto.

Democrats have also found some traction with war powers resolutions meant to force the president to get congressional approval before engaging in hostilities. Republicans last week narrowly defeated one such resolution that would prohibit Trump from attacking Venezuela again, and Democrats think there could potentially be more Republicans who would support one applying to Greenland.

Trump's tariff threat 'completely wrong' and trade war in no one's interest, says Starmer

LONDON, Jan 19, (AP): British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday that US President Donald Trump's threat of tariffs against allies over Greenland is "completely wrong" and a trade war is in no one's interest.

Trump said Saturday that he would charge a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from eight European nations, including the UK, because of their opposition to American control of Greenland, setting up a potentially dangerous test of US partnerships in Europe. Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory of NATO ally Denmark.

The president indicated the tariffs were retaliation for last week's deployment of symbolic numbers of troops from the European countries to Greenland, which he has said was essential for the "Golden Dome" missile defense system for the US. He also has argued that Russia and China might try to take over the island.

Starmer said Britain supports the "fundamental right" of Greenland and Denmark to decide the future of the Arctic island.

Starmer, who has worked to forge a strong relationship with Trump, said the U.K.-U.S. relationship was vital and "we are determined to keep that



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer delivers a statement in the media briefing room of 9 Downing Street in central London on Jan 19. (AP)

relationship strong, constructive and focused on results." But he said that doesn't mean pretending differences don't exist.

He said at a news conference in London that "being pragmatic does not mean being passive and partnership

does not mean abandoning principles." But seeking to calm the turmoil, Starmer said Britain will work with allies in Europe, NATO and the United States and "keep dialogue open."

He indicated that Britain is not planning to consider retaliatory tariffs. "We have not got to that stage. My focus is on making sure we don't get to that stage," he said.

Six of the eight countries targeted are part of the 27-member European Union, which operates as a single economic zone in terms of trade.

European Council President Antonio Costa said Sunday that the bloc's leaders expressed "readiness to defend ourselves against any form of coercion." He is expected to convene a summit of the bloc's leaders later this week.

Denmark's defense minister and Greenland's foreign minister are expected Monday to meet NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte in Brussels, a meeting that was planned before the latest escalation.

In a statement beforehand, Danish Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen said Denmark and Greenland were "meeting broad support for NATO to do more in the Arctic" and would discuss that with Rutte.



In this aerial view grab taken from video provided by Guardia Civil, a view of the Iryo train with rescue workers at the scene after a high-speed train collision, near Adamuz, Spain on Jan 16. (AP)

Authorities fear more bodies could be found

Spain train collision kills at least 39

ADAMUZ, Spain, Jan 19, (AP): Spanish police said Monday that at least 39 people are confirmed dead in a high-speed rail collision the previous night in the south of the country when the tail end of a train jumped the track, causing another train speeding past in the opposite direction to derail.

The impact tossed the second train's lead carriages off the track, sending them plummeting down a 4-meter (13-foot) slope. Some bodies were found hundreds of meters (feet) from the crash site, Andalusia regional president Juanma Moreno said, describing the wreckage a "mass of twisted metal" with bodies likely still to be found inside.

Efforts to recover the bodies continued Monday, and the death toll is likely to rise. Authorities are also focusing on attending hundreds of distraught family members and have asked for them to provide DNA samples to help in the identification of the victims.

The crash occurred Sunday at 7:45 p.m. when the tail end of a train carrying 289 passengers on the route from Malaga to the capital, Madrid, went off the rails at 7:45 p.m. It slammed into an incoming train traveling from Madrid to Huelva, another southern Spanish city, according to rail operator Adif.

The head of the second train, which was carrying nearly 200 passengers, took the brunt of the impact, Spanish Transport Minister Oscar Puente said. That collision knocked its first two carriages off the track. Puente said that it appeared the largest number of the deaths occurred in those carriages.

Authorities said all the survivors had been rescued in the early morning.

Moreno said Monday morning that emergency services were still searching for bodies.

"It is likely (that there will be more dead people found) when you look at the mass of metal that is there. The firefighters have done a great job, but unfortunately when they get the heavy machinery to lift the carriages it is

"The carriages were twisted. We had to work slowly, cutting through the wreckage," Francisco Carmona, firefighter chief of Cordoba, told Onda Cero radio. "There were moments when we had to remove the dead to get to the living."

Passengers reported climbing out of smashed windows, with some using emergency hammers to break the glass, according to Salvador Jiménez, a journalist for Spanish broadcaster RTVE, who was on board one of the derailed trains.

Jiménez did not suffer serious injuries, but saw bodies being pulled out of train cars, calling the image "harrowing."

"A train can derail or have an accident," Jiménez told the network by phone Monday, "but this magnitude of tragedy was unthinkable."

Authorities said 159 people were injured. As of Monday, that included 11 adults and one child in critical condition.

The collision took place near Adamuz, a town in the province of Cordoba, about 370 kilometers (about 230 miles) south of Madrid.

A sports center in Adamuz was turned into a makeshift hospital, and the Spanish Red Cross set up a help center offering assistance to emergency services and people seeking information. Members of the Civil Guard and civil defense worked on site throughout the night.

"The scene was horrific. It was terrible," Adamuz mayor Rafael Moreno told The Associated Press and other reporters. "People asking and begging for help. Those leaving the wreckage. Images that will always stay in my mind."

Spanish King Felipe VI expressed his condolences Monday, adding that the royal house was looking into a visit to Adamuz in the coming days.

"I understand the desperation of the families and the number of injured people who have suffered this accident, and we are all really worried," he said, speaking from Athens.



An injured person is transported by ambulance in Adamuz, near Córdoba, southern Spain on Jan 19, after a high-speed train derailed and collided with another train. (AP)

probable we will find more victims."

"Here at ground zero, when you look at this mass of twisted iron, you see the violence of the impact," Moreno said.

Moreno said that authorities are also searching the area near the accident for possible bodies.

"The impact was so incredibly violent that we have found bodies hundreds of meters away," Moreno said.

Various Spaniards who had loved ones traveling on the trains posted messages on social media saying they were unaccounted for and pleading for any information.

Spain's Civil Guard opened an office in Cordoba, the nearest city to the crash, as well as Madrid, Malaga, Huelva and Seville for family members of the missing to seek help and leave DNA samples.

"Some of the dead are not easily identifiable and will need a DNA test," Moreno said.

Video and photos showed twisted train cars lying on their sides under floodlights late on Sunday.

Europe

Czech Republic town hall shooting kills 1: A shooting at a town hall in northern Czech Republic on Monday left one dead and six others wounded, including a police officer, police said.

Police said the suspect was fatally shot and there was no further danger.

The shooting took place at the Chřibská town hall, police said.

A motive for the shooting wasn't immediately clear.

Prime Minister Andrej Babiš offered condolences to the victims' relatives.

Chřibská is located near the German border and has the population of some 1,300. (AP)

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Drone strikes cut power in southern Ukraine: Ukrainian drone strikes damaged energy networks in Russia-occupied parts of southern Ukraine, leaving hundreds of thousands of people without power on Sunday, according to Kremlin-installed authorities there.

Meanwhile, Moscow has kept up its hammering of Ukraine's energy grid in overnight attacks that killed at least two people, according to Ukrainian officials.

More than 200,000 households in the Russia-held part of Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region had no electricity on Sunday, according to the Kremlin-installed local governor.

In a Telegram post, Yevgeny Balitsky said that nearly 400 settlements have had their supply cut, because of damage to power networks from Ukrainian drone strikes.

Russia has hammered Ukraine's power grid, especially in winter, throughout the nearly four-year war. The strikes aim to weaken Ukrainians' will to resist in a strategy that Kyiv officials call "weaponizing winter."

Russia targeted energy infrastructure in Odesa region overnight on Sunday, according to Ukraine's Emergency Service. A fire broke out and was promptly extinguished. (AP)

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Ventura wins place in Portugal runoff: The leader of a hard-right populist party placed second in Portugal's presidential election Sunday in a stunning outcome and will face a center-left opponent in a runoff vote next month that

Emergency tents are set up in a residential neighborhood where people can warm up following Russia's regular air attacks against the country's energy objects that leave residents without power, water and heating in the dead of winter, in Kyiv, Ukraine on Jan 15. (AP)

Congress boosts army modernization budget

Philippine President Marcos announces new natural gas discovery off Palawan coast

MANILA, Philippines, Jan 19, (Agencies): Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr announced the discovery of a new natural gas deposit near an existing gas field in waters facing the disputed South China Sea, which could shield his country from a potential power crisis.

The discovery of the gas reservoir northwest off Palawan province was “significant” and could eventually supply power to more than 5.7 million households annually, Marcos said Monday.

The undersea reservoir is estimated to contain about 98 billion cubic feet (2.7 billion cubic meters) of gas. Initial tests showed 60 million cubic feet (1.6 million cubic meters) of gas could be extracted each day from the well, Marcos said without providing other details including when commercial production could start.

“This helps Malampaya’s contribution and strengthens our domestic gas supply for many years to come,” Marcos said. “Aside from the natural gas,

the discovery also includes condensate, which is a high-value liquid fuel.”

The new gas deposit, called Malampaya East 1, was discovered by a Philippine consortium about 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) east of the main Malampaya gas field, where commercial gas production started more than two decades ago and was projected to considerably decline in a few years.

The Malampaya gas to power facility has generated more than 20% of the electricity to Luzon, the most populous northern Philippine island region. In 2023, Marcos extended an exploration contract in Malampaya by 15 years.

Experts have predicted Malampaya could run out of gas in a few years, which has sparked fears of a potential power crisis in Luzon, where the bustling capital and main financial and business district is located.

The offshore gas field lies within the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone of the Philippines, a 200-nautical-mile (370-kilometer) stretch of water from a country’s coastline where it has exclu-



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr waves during his keynote speech at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO summit in Gyeongju, South Korea, on Oct 31, 2025. (AP)

sive rights to explore and harness resources under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Philippine efforts to explore for oil and gas in another offshore region, the Reed Bank, has been stalled for years

because of opposition from Beijing, which claims sovereignty over the area along with most of the South China Sea. The Reed Bank also lies in the fringes of the South China Sea west of the Philippine island province of Palawan.

Vietnam’s oil and gas exploration in the disputed region also has been opposed by China. Beijing claims virtually the entire South China Sea and has reinforced its presence including coast guard and naval patrols in the disputed waterway in recent years.

Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have been involved in the region’s long-simmering territorial standoffs.

Also:

MANILA: The Philippine Congress has allocated 40 billion pesos (about 673 million US dollars) in capital outlays for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) modernization program under the 2026 national budget, a senior lawmaker said Sunday.

House of Representatives Minority

Leader **Marcelino Libanan** said lawmakers also authorized an additional 50 billion pesos (approximately 842 million dollars) under unprogrammed appropriations to further support the military’s modernization projects.

Libanan said that the release of funds from unprogrammed appropriations would depend on the availability of excess or new government revenues or on the approval of loans for foreign-assisted projects.

He said Congress introduced a new special provision in the 2026 General Appropriations Act, granting the Secretary of Finance authority to enter into loan contracts and other financing arrangements to help fund AFP modernization initiatives.

Under the provision, Libanan said, the finance secretary may arrange additional funding, including grants and loans, if necessary, in consultation with the Department of National Defense and subject to presidential approval and prior concurrence of the Monetary Board.

Vietnam party meeting opens with leadership, economic growth on the line

HANOI, Vietnam, Jan 19, (AP): Vietnam’s most important political conclave began Monday, as the ruling Communist Party convened to decide the country’s leadership and broad policy course for the next five years.

A total of 1,586 delegates from across Vietnam gathered in the capital, Hanoi, for the National Congress, the party’s highest decision-making body, which meets every five years to elect its top leadership and set priorities shaping the country’s political and economic direction.

Delegates will elect about 200 members to the party’s Central Committee, which in turn appoints 17 to 19 members to the powerful Politburo in a tightly choreographed process.

Beyond settling the question of who will lead Vietnam through 2031, the Congress will also determine how the country’s single-party system responds to far more turbulent world, as the Southeast Asian export apowerhouse pursues its ambitious goal of becoming a high-income economy by 2045 amid intensifying U.S.-China rivalry and a splintering global economy.

Here is what to expect.

Communist Party General Secretary To Lam is expected to be confirmed to a full five-year term.

A crucial question is whether he will also move to combine the roles of party chief and state president, as many diplomats and analysts expect. This will concentrate power in an echo of the political model of China under Xi Jinping



Delegates hold up Communist Party member cards as a vote during a meeting in preparation for the opening of the National Congress in Hanoi, Vietnam on Jan 19. (AP)

and neighboring Laos.

Vietnam has traditionally been governed through a “four pillars” system, in which the party chief, president, prime minister and National Assembly chair balance one another. Collapsing those roles would weaken that arrangement and make To Lam the most powerful leader in Vietnam in decades.

He has overseen the most ambitious round of bureaucratic and economic reforms since the late 1980s, when Vietnam liberalized its economy, including cutting tens of thousands of public-

sector jobs, redrawing administrative boundaries to speed decision-making, and initiating dozens of major infrastructure projects.

Lam spent decades in the Ministry of Public Security before becoming its minister in 2016. He led the anti-corruption campaign championed by his predecessor, Nguyen Phu Trong. His rise took place while Vietnam’s Politburo lost of six of its 18 members during an anti-corruption campaign, including two former presidents and Vietnam’s parliamentary head.



Firefighters battle a blaze at a house as wildfires burn in Lirquen, Chile on Jan 18. (AP)

Wildfires race across Chile, leaving 18 people dead

Wildfires raging across central and southern Chile on Sunday left at least 18 people dead, scorched thousands of acres of forest and destroyed hundreds of homes, authorities said, as the South American country swelters under a heat wave.

Chilean President Gabriel Boric declared a state of catastrophe in

the country’s central Biobio region and the neighboring Nuble region, around 500 kilometers (300 miles) south of Santiago, the capital.

The emergency designation allows greater coordination with the military to rein in over two dozen active wildfires that have so far blazed through 8,500 hectares (21,000 acres), according to the

national forestry agency.

In a press conference from the hard-hit city of Concepción in the Biobio region, Boric expressed his support and condolences to the victims and warned that the government’s initial reports of 18 people killed and 300 houses destroyed were expected to rise as the extent of the losses came into focus. (AP)

garments and plastic goods, said Dr Abid Jalal Sheikh, Karachi’s chief rescue officer.

Some of the relatives of the missing waited outside the burned-out plaza Monday, hoping for news. (AP)

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IED blast kills man in India: A 20-year-old man was killed when a pressure Improvised Explosive Device (IED), believed to be planted by Naxals, went off in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh, police said Monday.

The explosion took place on Sunday in the forest area of Kasturipad village of Bijapur district, about 495 km south of Raipur, the capital city of Chhattisgarh.

Following the incident, government forces launched a search in the area to check for more IEDs. (Xinhua)

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Explosion in downtown Kabul kills 7: An explosion in downtown Kabul on Monday killed at least seven people and wounded about a dozen more, according to an Italian medical charity running a surgical care facility in the city. The reasons for the blast were not immediately clear.

The explosion appeared to have hit a restaurant in the Shahr-e-Naw district of the Afghan capital. In the first few minutes after the blast, a police spokesman, Khalid Zadrán, had identified the facility affected as a hotel.

The Italian NGO, EMERGENCY, said its surgical center in Kabul had received 20 people from the blast, including seven who were already dead when they arrived. (AP)

Asia

Japan PM to dissolve lower house on Jan 23: Japanese Prime Minister **Sanae Takaichi** on Monday announced her plan to dissolve the House of Representatives on Jan 23 for a snap general election set for Feb 8.

At a press conference, Takaichi said she will dissolve the 465-member lower house on Friday, the opening day of this year’s ordinary parliamentary session.

Voting will take place on Feb 8, with official campaigning starting from Jan 27, she added.

The election, the first since Takaichi took office on Oct 21, is set to come with more than two years left in the current lower house term. (Xinhua)

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Yoon’s legal team files appeal: South Korea’s former president Yoon Suk-yeol’s legal team filed an appeal Monday against the first-instance verdict on his obstruction of arrest charges, YTN reported.

Yoon was sentenced to five years in prison on his arrest obstruction charges stemming from a martial law attempt, live footage showed last Friday. Under South

Korean law, the deadline to file an appeal is one week, meaning the appeal had to be submitted by Jan 23.

After several of their key arguments were rejected in the ruling, Yoon’s side held a press conference earlier on Monday, announcing that an appeal was formally filed with the Seoul Central District Court at 4 p.m.

Meanwhile, the special prosecutor, who has yet to receive the full written verdict, said he plans to review the ruling and decide whether to file an appeal. The team of Cho Eun-suk, an independent counsel who led investigations into Yoon’s insurrection and other charges, demanded a 10-year prison term for Yoon. However, as the prosecution previously expressed regret that the sentence was only half of what was sought, observers widely expect an appeal to be filed. (Xinhua)

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Factory blast in China’s Inner Mongolia kills 2: An explosion at a factory in north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region has killed two people, left eight missing and injured 84, local authorities said Monday.

The explosion occurred at 3:03 pm on Sunday at a plate plant of Baogang United Steel in western Baotou City. It was caused by the blast of a 650-cubic-meter saturated water and steam spherical tank, Lin Li, executive vice mayor of Baotou, told a press briefing on Monday.

A total of 84 injured people are being treated in hospitals, with five in serious condition and the remaining 79 sustaining minor injuries, such as facial wounds and soft tissue contusions, according to Lin. (Xinhua)

Govt declares nat’l disaster over flooding

School bus crash in S.Africa kills 13

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 19, (AP): A truck collided with a school minibus in South Africa’s Gauteng province, killing at least 13 children, authorities said Monday.

Preliminary reports indicated at least 11 schoolchildren died at the scene, with two others succumbing to their injuries in the hospital.

The private vehicle was transporting students to various primary schools and high schools in the southwest of Johannesburg on Monday when the incident occurred around 7 a.m., according to authorities

Witnesses said the minibus carrying the children was overtaking other stationary vehicles when it hit the truck in a head-on collision. Police said the incident is being investigated and the truck driver will be questioned.

Gauteng Emergency Services transported five patients to the Sebokeng Hospital, while two others were taken to Kopanong Hospital for further medical care. The bus driver also suffered injuries and was among those taken to hospital.

Parents were seen weeping uncontrollably at the scene of the accident, while emergency services were picking up books and stationery.

President Cyril Ramaphosa expressed his sadness at the loss of life, saying national and provincial authorities would provide families and schools with the necessary psychosocial support.



People walk through floodwaters in Nkomazi, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa, on Jan 16. (AP)

port.

“Our children are the nation’s most precious assets and we must do all we can - from observing the rules of the road to the quality of service providers appointed to transport scholars - to protect learners,” said Ramaphosa.

The country’s minister of basic education, Siviwe Gwarube, said many of the accidents involving school transport were caused by driver error. She called on the Department of Transport

to make sure that vehicles entrusted with transporting schoolchildren are roadworthy.

Also:

CAPE TOWN, South Africa: South Africa declared a national disaster Sunday over torrential rains and floods that have killed at least 30 people in the country’s north, damaged thousands of homes and washed away roads and bridges.

The declaration was made by the head of the National Disaster Management Center and announced by the government. It allows the national government to coordinate the response to the disaster.

The worst impact is in the northern provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, where the fatalities occurred. But the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs said at least three other provinces had also been affected by the severe weather.

Parts of South Africa and neighboring **Mozambique** and **Zimbabwe** have experienced heavy rains for weeks. That resulted in severe flooding in central and southern Mozambique and northern South Africa. More than 100 people have died in the three countries since the rains began late last year.

The floods in northern South Africa caused the closure of the Kruger National Park and the evacuation of hundreds of tourists and staff members from flooded camps to other parts of the park.

Guatemala president declares state of siege after gang violence kills seven police officers

GUATEMALA CITY, Jan 19, (AP): Guatemala President Bernardo Arévalo declared a 30-day state of siege Sunday after suspected gang members in Guatemala’s capital killed seven police officers in apparent retaliation for authorities in the country’s southwest retaking control of one of three maximum security prisons where inmates had rioted and taken hostages the day before.

The attacks on police in and around Guatemala City came after hundreds of anti-riot police stormed Renovación prison in Escuintla, about 47 miles (76 kilometers) southwest of the capital, to free nine guards who had been taken hostage there. Jailed gang leaders often order members outside the prison walls to carry out retaliatory attacks.

“They rioted in the prisons and took hostages with the intention of making the state accept their demands, which for decades were granted,” Arévalo said on national television Sunday. The attacks that followed the retaking of those prisons Sunday, were “an attempt to terrorize security forces and the population so that the government relents in its head-on fight against the gangs.”

The president said all of the hostage guards were freed Sunday. The gangs’ audacious attempt to challenge authorities was a sign that his administration’s security efforts were working, Arévalo said.

Arévalo’s state of siege still re-



Security forces enter the Preventivo Zona 18 prison to free guards taken hostage and retake control of the facility in Guatemala City on Jan 18. (AP)

quires congressional approval, but can take effect before that vote occurs. The constitution allows such a declaration in cases of serious violence, insurrection or action by organized crime groups that exceeds the ability of civilian authorities to respond.

The declaration can limit some constitutional rights like the freedoms of movement, gathering and protest. The president said it was necessary to ensure the safety of Guatemalans and allow the government to use all its resources to combat the gangs.

Shots rang out as riot squads swept into the facility that houses gang lead-

ers. About 15 minutes later, an Associated Press journalist saw the freed guards being escorted from the prison. They appeared to be unharmed. No injuries or deaths were immediately reported.

Later on Sunday, authorities retook control of the other two prisons in the capital, freeing six guards at one and 28 at the other, according to National Civil Police.

On Saturday, the Interior Ministry had said 46 guards were being held hostage. It was not immediately clear what explained the discrepancy with the 43 freed on Sunday.

Subcontinent

Karachi mall fire death toll rises to 23: The death toll from a massive fire at a shopping plaza in Karachi rose to 23 on Monday as rescuers recovered more bodies from the badly damaged building, police said. Dozens remain missing.

Firefighters extinguished the blaze at the multistory plaza late Sunday, nearly 24 hours after it erupted, allowing rescue teams to enter the building. Authorities fear the death toll will rise as they look for 46 more people, according to city police chief Asad Raza.

Raza told The Associated Press on Monday that only six bodies have been identified so far. The rest will need DNA testing as the “bodies were beyond recognition,” police surgeon, Dr. Summaiya Sye, said.

Earlier, Sindh provincial Chief Minister **Murad Ali Shah** told a news conference in Karachi that rescue teams were searching for survivors and the dead. He said those killed in the fire included a firefighter and that the government would provide 10 million rupees (\$36,000) in compensation to the family of each person killed.

The fire spread quickly through shops storing cosmetics,



Shah

Boursa ends session on a positive note

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed trading on Monday with strong gains across all indices. The general market index advanced 73.09 points, or 0.84 percent, to settle at 8,822.03 points. Trading activity totaled 250.6 million shares executed through 18,021 transactions, with a total value of KD 70.5 million (about

USD 215 million). The Main Market Index recorded the highest percentage increase, adding 92.50 points or 1.15 percent to reach 8,152.68 points. This segment saw 132.1 million shares traded through 9,240 transactions, worth KD 19.6 million (approximately USD 59.7 million).

Business

KFH launches enhanced corporate e-banking platform

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Group Chief Corporate Banking Officer, Yousef Almutawa, announced the launch of an enhanced version of KFH’s corporate e-banking services. This milestone accelerates KFH’s digital transformation and reaffirms its leadership in providing integrated solutions that help corporates manage their operations with greater efficiency.

Almutawa said that the new version reshapes the banking experience for corporate customers, making it smarter, faster, and more secure. By leveraging a deep understanding of customer needs, the updated platform delivers a comprehensive digital experience that supports business growth and highlights trust.

He noted that the new version plays a pivotal role in elevating how corporate customers interact with KFH. It introduces unprecedented enhancements that leverage digitalization and modern technology across all corporate activities and market relationships in Kuwait.



Yousef Almutawa



Mohamed Shouman

- Almutawa:**
- Reshaping customer banking experience
- Shouman:**
- Digital platform offers new features and services

Almutawa added: “This reflects the scale of KFH’s initiatives and contributions to elevate the overall business

environment and strengthen collaborations with partners to introduce modern services that aligns with the latest global

systems.”

Group General Manager Corporate Control and Transformation at KFH, Mohamed Shouman, said that the launch of the enhanced version of the corporate online banking services and the smart mobile application represents an exceptional banking experience offered to KFH corporate customers. He noted that this achievement was made by integrating the latest technologies according to the highest security standards to manage financial operations in a modern manner and by using tools that promote sustainability.

The new update minimizes paper-based transactions by enabling online request submissions, thereby supporting sustainability objectives and environmental preservation. It also delivers improved administrative and operational performance, along with faster turnaround times through a modern digital interface.

He added that the new version and ap-

plication provide corporates with a wide range of new features and services, including a modern and user-friendly interface with easy navigation, a single user with full authorities to facilitate account management, Zahab payment service, supplier services, the issuance of IBAN certificates with QR code, enhanced One-Time Password (OTP) authentication, access to detailed information on credit limits and deals, the ability to request credit limits and deals, online updating of data, as well as smarter and more interactive notifications and alerts.

Shouman further noted that KFH corporate customers are now able to access the new version through the Bank’s official website, or by downloading the KFH Corporate application through Apple App Store and Google Play Store. “This major development is part of a solid and long-standing partnership between KFH and its corporate partners,” remarked Shouman.

First in the region to achieve 31 Gbps using multi-band aggregation

Zain Kuwait reinforces 5G-Advanced roadmap with region’s first ultra-high-capacity network milestone

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: In a regional first, Zain Kuwait announced the successful completion of an ultra-high throughput test reaching 31 Gbps using advanced multi-carrier spectrum aggregation across sub-6 GHz (using n77, n78, n41 bands) and mmWave. The milestone reflects Zain’s continued investment in building future-ready infrastructure and its ongoing focus on evolving network capabilities to meet rising demand and enable the next wave of digital services.

By combining large bandwidth resources with 5G-Advanced (5G-A) capabilities, the test achieved stable ultra-high data rates, demonstrating Zain’s readiness to deliver extreme capacity, low latency, and next-generation network performance.

In addition to validating technical feasibility, the trial explored the technical potential of the N77 and mmWave bands, which are globally recognized as key evolution paths for high-capacity 5G-A development. This forward-looking verification strengthens Zain’s commercial 5G-A deployment and enhances its ability to support high-density services, applications, and future network requirements.

Building on the principles of intelligent capacity management, the milestone aligns with the broader evolution of 5G-Advanced, including advanced carrier aggregation approaches that help networks handle heavy usage more efficiently while



Daaij Al-Oud

- Daaij Al-Oud:**
- “We’re building an infrastructure that powers Kuwait’s digital ambitions”

maintaining consistent performance.

Commenting on the milestone, Chief Technology Officer Daaij Al-Oud said: “Reaching 31 Gbps in a real-world verification is a strong signal of how far network capabilities can evolve when we combine advanced spectrum assets with 5G-Advanced features. This regional first reflects our commitment to building a future-proof network that keeps Kuwait at the forefront of next-generation connectivity.”

He added: “This kind of capacity and performance readiness supports



Zain Headquarters

what comes next, from demanding high-density environments and enterprise-grade connectivity to new experiences that rely on ultra-low latency and massive bandwidth. Our goal is to ensure the network remains ready not only for today’s digital lifestyles, but also for the platforms, applications, and innovations that will shape the next phase of the digital economy in Kuwait and across the region.”

The achievement strengthens Zain’s ability to support a wide range of high-demand scenarios and next-generation applications, including performance-intensive use cases in high-density venues, advanced fixed

wireless and enterprise connectivity, immersive digital experiences, smart city services, and large-scale IoT deployments, alongside emerging cloud and AI-driven services that require consistently high throughput and responsiveness.

This milestone also reflects Zain’s broader direction under its 4WARD strategy - Progress with Purpose, through which the company aims to maximize its potential as a customer-centric, future-proof, and impactful leading TechCo, while continuing to meet growing data demands, explore new digital business models, and evolve into a more integrated technology company.

Real estate yields average 7.4% in Q4

Industrial properties lead with 8.86% returns in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The 2025 fourth quarter report issued by ‘Al-Hisbah’ real estate platform revealed that the average quarterly real estate return in the local market reached 7.4 percent, supported by improvement in returns from investment, commercial and industrial/craft properties.

The report stated that average real estate investment returns reached 6.3 percent, while commercial properties achieved average return of 7.1 percent. Industrial and craft real estate recorded the highest performance, with an average return of 8.86 percent.

The report clarified that the announced return rates neither reflect concession transactions carried out prior to the decision to suspend concessions, nor do they include concessions granted in exceptional cases. It explained that the calculated average returns for usufruct properties are based solely on actual transactions completed during the period under review, and therefore cannot be considered a fixed annual indicator for 2025, generalized across the year, or taken as evidence of market stability during the fourth quarter.

It also indicated that these returns exclude properties that violate the building regulations issued by Kuwait Municipality. It added that the data and estimated values for investment properties were calculated on the assumption that basements are not rented and do not generate income, in line with current municipal regulations, which prohibit their use

for commercial or storage purposes.

The report showed that investment returns in the six governorates ranged between 6.2 percent and 6.6 percent. Ahmadi and Jahra governorates recorded the highest average investment return at 6.6 percent, followed by Farwaniyah Governorate at 6.4 percent, then Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate at 6.3 percent, while Hawally and the Capital governorates ranked last, with an average return of 6.2 percent.

It clarified that the rate of return on real estate investment is a financial indicator used to measure investment efficiency by comparing the income generated from a property to its market value. This represents the total return relative to the total invested amount and is expressed as a percentage.

It added that common practice in the local market relies on calculating total expected annual income without deducting expenses or accounting for occupancy rates.

It also stated that the announced return rates represent average returns for newly constructed, fully occupied properties, consisting of spaces and units that are in highest demand in the market and rented at fair market values.

With regard to commercial real estate, the report revealed that Ahmadi Governorate recorded the highest commercial return at 7.5 percent, Hawally and Farwaniyah governorates followed with 7.3 percent, then Jahra Governorate at seven percent, while the Capital Governorate is last with an average commercial return of 6.7 percent.

As for industrial and craft properties, average returns reached 8.86 percent. The Capital and Ahmadi governorates achieved the highest returns at 10 percent, followed by Farwaniyah Governorate at 8.3 percent, and then Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate at 7.1 percent.

The average market rental value for investment

apartments, measuring 60 to 65 square meters amounted to KD291 per month. Rental averages varied between KD253 and KD315 per month depending on the governorate. The Capital Governorate ranked first with the highest average rental value at KD315, followed by Hawally Governorate at KD308, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate at KD300, Farwaniyah and Jahra governorates at KD285, and Ahmadi Governorate at KD253.

It explained that these estimates were based on the assumption that properties are newly built and free from any advantages, disadvantages or additional services. It emphasized that rental values are influenced by several factors like location, accessibility, proximity to services, orientation of the building façade, availability of parking, security services and quality of construction.

The residential units cited in the report are hypothetical and may not actually be available in the market with identical specifications, while the listed offer prices do not necessarily reflect actual rental values.

Average occupancy rate of residential units in investment housing:

- Farwaniyah Governorate: 93 percent
- Hawally Governorate: 92 percent
- Jahra Governorate: 91 percent
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate: 90 percent
- Capital Governorate: 86 percent
- Ahmadi Governorate: 85 percent

Estimated average market rental value for investment apartments (60-65 square meters):

- Capital Governorate: KD315
- Hawally Governorate: KD308
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate: KD300
- Farwaniyah Governorate: KD285
- Jahra Governorate: KD285
- Ahmadi Governorate: KD253

Al-Menawr underlined the keenness of PAI on backing Kuwait’s industries and enabling factories to boost their competitiveness regionally, in a manner that contributes to proceeding with economic and industrial development in Kuwait.

The event is hosting more than 1,100 companies of 50 countries displaying 20,000 products and solutions in the areas of internal equipment and finishes.

industries and open new horizons to factories to expand in external markets.

The exhibition, to continue until January 21, is one of the largest specialized events in construction field held in Saudi Arabia, he told KUNA in a statement.

As part of the ‘Big 5’ chains, the expo is held annually in some countries, and it creates proper opportunities to exhibitors to help them promote their products and explore new markets, he noted.

Markets subdued as mixed inflation data, politics weigh

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global markets traded with a cautious yet constructive tone over the week, as U.S. data showed mixed progress on inflation alongside continued economic resilience and rising political uncertainty. Headline and core CPI held at 2.7% y/y, while producer prices rose 0.2% m/m, lifting annual PPI to 3.0% and highlighting persistent upstream price pressures, particularly from energy. Consumer demand remained firm, with retail sales exceeding expectations, and jobless claims declined, reinforcing the “low hire, low fire” labor market narrative. Meanwhile, renewed concerns over Federal Reserve independence following political pressure on Chair Jerome Powell added to policy uncertainty. Amid these developments, the dollar index edged higher, U.S. equities finished mixed on the week, and commodities outperformed, with gold and silver surging to record highs as investors sought safe-haven exposure amid elevated geopolitical and economic risks.

United States

Fed Chair Jerome Powell Threatened with Criminal Investigation

Federal prosecutors have launched a criminal investigation into Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell over the \$2.5 billion renovation of the Fed’s Washington headquarters and his related testimony to Congress, which Powell said reflects President Donald Trump’s long-standing frustration with the central bank’s reluctance to cut interest rates as aggressively as demanded. Observers warn the probe could undermine the Fed’s independence, weaken confidence in the U.S. economy, and increase risks of higher inflation, pressure on the dollar’s reserve-currency status, and higher government borrowing costs, concerns echoed by some Republicans, including Senator Thom Tillis, who vowed to oppose future Fed nominees, and Senator Lisa Murkowski, who called for a Justice Department investigation. Despite these risks, financial markets remain largely calm, with U.S. equities recovering from early losses to close higher, suggesting investors are not yet pricing in a serious threat to Fed independence.

CPI Numbers Broadly In Line with Expectations

U.S. consumer prices rose 2.7% y/y in December, capping a year of modest inflation progress but ongoing cost-of-living pressures. Headline inflation was unchanged from November, while monthly CPI accelerated to 0.3%, driven by persistent housing costs alongside higher food prices (+0.7% m/m) and energy prices (+0.3%). Core inflation rose 0.2% on the month, bringing the annual core rate to 2.7%, broadly in line with expectations. While inflation remained above pre-pandemic norms at year-end, both headline and core measures eased from earlier in the year, marking an improvement from January’s higher inflation readings.

PPI Accelerates in November

U.S. producer prices rose 0.2% m/m in November 2025, accelerating from October’s 0.1% increase and in line with expectations. The gain was driven by a 0.9% rise in goods prices, the strongest increase since February 2024, largely reflecting a 4.6% surge in energy costs. Food prices were unchanged, while services prices

were flat after rising 0.3% in October. Core PPI was unchanged on the month, undershooting forecasts. On a year-over-year basis, both headline and core producer inflation increased to 3.0%, exceeding market expectations.

Retail Sales Print Shows Consumer Resilience

U.S. retail sales increased at a robust pace in November, highlighting continued consumer resilience despite economic uncertainty and a cooling labor market. Headline sales rose 0.6% m/m, rebounding from a downwardly revised 0.1% decline in October and exceeding market expectations of a 0.4% increase. Gains were broad-based at the start of the holiday season, led by specialty retailers, gas stations, and home improvement stores, while the control group measure rose a strong 0.4%, well above forecasts. Only furniture and department stores posted declines, underscoring the overall strength of consumer spending and the U.S. economy through 2025 despite policy uncertainty and disruptions such as the government shutdown.

Unemployment Claims Falls Amid “Low Hire, Low Fire” Economy

U.S. initial jobless claims fell last week, signaling that layoffs remain subdued despite concerns about a softening labor market. New filings declined by 9,000 to 198,000 in the week ending January 10, well below expectations and the prior week’s level. The data reinforce the picture of a “low hire, low fire” economy, where hiring remains sluggish, but layoffs and unemployment continue to stay low. Markets continue to price in two rate cuts by year-end.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 99.39.

United Kingdom

GDP Print Comes in Better than Anticipated

The pound weakened against major peers despite stronger-than-expected UK GDP data for November, as market focus shifted to expectations that the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates unchanged at its upcoming meeting. UK GDP expanded by 0.3% m/m, well above forecasts of 0.1%, marking a clear rebound after contractions in September and October following a flat August. In response to the upbeat growth data, markets are only pricing in 45 bps worth of easing by year-end.

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3381.

Commodities

Gold, and Silver surge to Record Highs

Gold rallied to a fresh record over the week, topping out at \$4,642.72, with silver surging alongside it as heightened geopolitical and economic uncertainty boosted demand for safe-haven assets. Investor caution was reinforced by renewed concerns over Federal Reserve independence, after global central bank leaders publicly backed Fed Chair Jerome Powell following threats of a criminal indictment by the Trump administration. Spot silver also climbed to record levels, peaking at \$93.57 during the week.

The XAU/USD pair was last seen trading at 4,594.94, while the XAG/USD pair was last seen trading at 89.90.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30580.

| Previous Week Levels | | | | | This Week’s Expected Range | | 3-Month Forecast |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Currencies | Open | Low | High | Close | Minimum | Maximum | Forward |
| EUR | 1.1629 | 1.1583 | 1.1698 | 1.1597 | 1.1555 | 1.1700 | 1.1646 |
| GBP | 1.3394 | 1.3359 | 1.3494 | 1.3381 | 1.3340 | 1.3500 | 1.3379 |
| JPY | 158.00 | 157.52 | 159.45 | 158.09 | 157.50 | 160.00 | 156.88 |
| CHF | 0.8006 | 0.7953 | 0.8040 | 0.8029 | 0.7900 | 0.8125 | 0.7952 |

PAI leads Kuwaiti pavilion at Riyadh construction expo

RIYADH, Jan 19, (KUNA): The ‘Big 5 Construct Saudi’ exhibition kick-started on Sunday in Riyadh, with a Kuwaiti specialized pavilion containing some national construction factories as part of backing national industries.

Director General of the Public Authority of Industry (PAI) supervising the pavilion Mashari Menawer said Kuwait’s partaking seeks to highlight the quality and diversification of the country’s

AI, inequality, and global trust take center stage at Davos

Davos 2026 opens amid inequality and geopolitical shifts

DAVOS, Jan 19, (AP): Corporate chiefs and government leaders including U.S. President Donald Trump swarm into Davos, Switzerland, this week, joining an elite annual meeting that promotes dialogue and economic progress - even as a domineering tone from Washington has upended the global order and billionaires have reaped trillions in new wealth as the poor lag behind.

The World Economic Forum, the think tank whose four-day annual meeting opens Tuesday, has a stated motto of “improving the state of the world,” and this year’s theme is “A spirit of dialogue.” One question is whether Trump will speak with attendees - or at them.

Nearly 3,000 attendees from the interlinked worlds of business, advocacy and policy will tackle issues including the growing gap between rich and poor; AI’s impact on jobs; concerns about geo-economic conflict; tariffs that have rocked longstanding trade relationships; and an erosion of trust between communities and countries.

“It’s really going to be a discussion at a very important moment ... geopolitics is changing,” said Mirek Dušek, a forum managing director in charge of programming. “Some people think we’re in a transition. Some people think we’ve already entered a new era. But I think it’s undeniable that you are seeing a more competitive, more contested landscape.”

Trump’s third visit to Davos as president comes as U.S. allies worry about his ambition to take over Greenland, Latin America is grappling with his efforts to reap Venezuela’s oil, and his hardball tactics toward Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell have stirred concern among business leaders and lawmakers alike.

Trump’s peace-making credentials also will be on the table: An announcement looms about his “Board of Peace” for Gaza, and he and his administration are expected to have bilateral meetings in the warren of side rooms at the Congress Center.

The U.S. leader seems to revel in strolling through the Davos Congress Center and among executives who back his business-minded, money-making approach to politics. Critics will also be nearby: He’s blown hot and cold recently with Colombian President Gustavo Petro, an invitee; Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi of Iran, whose leaders face U.S. sanctions over their handling of recent protests, will be on hand.

The two likeliest counterweights to Trump’s administration on the international scene - China and the European Union - get top billing on the first day of the event: EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will speak Tuesday morning, right before Vice Premier He Lifeng, China’s “economic czar” - as Dušek put it.

The forum will be without its founder, Klaus Schwab, who hosted the first event in Davos 55 years ago focusing on business, only to see it since balloon into a catchall extravaganza. He stepped down in April. New co-chairs Larry Fink, the head of investment firm BlackRock, and Andre Hoffman, vice chair of pharmaceuticals firm Roche, are in charge.



Flags decorate the Congress Center where the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum takes place in Davos, Switzerland, Monday, Jan. 19, 2026. (AP)

This year will also mark the debut appearance of Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, arguably the world’s most important tech leader today, among some 850 CEOs and chairs of global companies - along with some celebrities like Hollywood actor and safe-water advocate Matt Damon.

The future of AI, its impact on business and work, and the prospects for artificial general intelligence will be key themes.

The presidents of Argentina, France, Indonesia, Syria and Ukraine will be among the dozens of national leaders on hand.

Leading public-relations firm Edelman reports in its annual trust barometer - launched a quarter-century ago and this year surveying nearly 34,000 people in 28 countries - that trade and recession fears have climbed to an all-time high, optimism is falling especially in developed countries, and “grievance” last year has morphed into broader “insularity.”

“People are retreating from dialogue and compromise, choosing the safety of the familiar over the perceived risk of change,” said CEO Richard Edelman. “We favor nationalism over global connection and individual gain over joint progress. Our mentality has shifted from ‘we’ to ‘me’.”

The survey found that about two-thirds of respondents said their trust was concentrated toward CEOs of the companies that they work for, fellow citizens or neighbors, while nearly 70% believed institutional leaders - such as from business or government - deliberately mislead the public.

Oxfam, the world-renowned advocacy group, issued a report ahead of the Davos event which showed that billionaire wealth rose by more than 16% last year, three times faster than the past five-year average, to more than \$18 trillion. It drew on Forbes magazine data on the world’s richest people.

Oxfam said the \$2.5 trillion rise in the wealth of billionaires last year would be enough to eradicate extreme poverty 26 times over. Their wealth has risen by more than four-fifths since 2020, while nearly half the world’s population lives in poverty, the group said.

The Trump administration has led a “pro-billionaire agenda,” the group said, through actions such as slashing taxes for the wealthiest, fostering the growth of AI-related stocks that help rich investors get richer, and thwarting efforts to tax giant companies.

The advocacy group wants more national efforts to reduce inequality, higher taxes on the ultra-rich to reduce their power, and greater limits on their ability to shape policy through lobbying.

With such concerns filtering through to policymakers, Trump, who is leading the biggest-ever U.S. delegation and will have about a half-dozen Cabinet secretaries in tow, is expected to discuss housing and affordability in his Davos speech on Wednesday.

As usual, protesters rallied over the weekend in and near Davos ahead of the event. Hundreds of marchers scaled an Alpine road up to the town on Saturday behind a banner in German that read “No Profit from War” and alongside a truck that bore a sign: World Economic Failure.

Companies like Microsoft, India’s Tata Consultancy, social media titan TikTok and cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike have joined governments from countries like Nigeria, Qatar, Ukraine and the United States - a USA House is making a debut this year - to set up shop on the Davos Promenade to promote their services, products and national economies.

Davos storekeepers rent out their premises so that forum participants can have the prime real estate for the week.

Critics have long accused the annual meeting in Davos of generating more rhetoric than results, and they see Trump’s return as sign of the disconnect between haves and have-nots. Some say Swiss leaders who support the event and flock to Davos too are adding to the problem.

“It is worrying how Swiss politicians are courting warmongers and their profiteers in Davos,” said Mirjam Hostettmann, president of Switzerland’s Young Socialists, who have led protests against the event. “The WEF will never bring peace, but will only fuel escalation.”

Key facts about the World Economic Forum in Davos



Attendees listen to a virtual speech delivered by U.S. president Donald Trump, at the Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025. (AP)

DAVOS, Jan 19, (AP): Nearly 3,000 high-level participants from business, government and beyond plus untold numbers of activists, journalists and outside observers are converging in the Swiss town of Davos for the World Economic Forum’s annual meeting.

Here’s a look at the latest edition of the elite affair in the Alpine snows: The forum is a think tank and event organizer based in Geneva whose main event - the annual meeting - debuted in 1971 in Davos, a ski-resort town of about 10,000 people at a height of about 1,500 meters (nearly 5,000 feet) in the Alps of eastern Switzerland.

The first edition, hosted by forum founder Klaus Schwab, featured a gathering of business executives.

Since then, the meeting has swelled into a catch-all conference on issues as diverse as economic disparity, climate change, technology, and global cooperation - as well as competition and conflict.

More than 200 sessions will tackle a wide array of issues.

Organizers says a record of nearly 400 top political leaders, including more than 60 heads of state and government, and nearly 850 chairs and chief executives of many of the world’s leading companies.

Headlining the lineup is U.S. President Donald Trump, who’s set to deliver a speech on Wednesday, and several Cabinet ministers and top advisers including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and special envoy Steve Witkoff.

President Emmanuel Macron of France, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, President Ahmad al-Sharaa of Syria, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, President Felix Tshisekedi of Congo, Vice Premier He Lifeng of China, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine are among the who’s-who of top attendees.

Organizers say 55 ministers for economy and finance, 33 ministers for foreign affairs, 34 ministers for trade, commerce and industry, and 11 central bank governors are also expected.

Tech titans scheduled to be on hand include Jensen Huang of Nvidia. Microsoft’s Satya Nadella, Demis Hassabis of Google DeepMind, and Arthur Mensch of France’s Mistral AI.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte and World Trade Organization Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala are among scores of top officials from international institutions.

The geopolitical context has become incredibly complex this year: Trump’s pronouncements and policies on subjects as diverse as Venezuela, Greenland and Iran - not to mention his aggressive tariff policies - have upended the world order and raised questions about America’s role in the world.

The advent of AI - its promise and perils - has also become a hot topic. Business executives will examine how to apply it to boost efficiency and profits; labor leaders and advocacy groups will warn of its threat to jobs and livelihoods, and policymakers will look to navigate the best way forward between regulation and right to innovate.

Davos conference organizers always trot out buzzwords for the meeting, and this year’s is “A Spirit of Dialogue” - around five themes of cooperation, growth, investment in people, innovation and building prosperity.

Critics say Davos is too much talk and not enough action to rectify gaping inequality in the world and address troubles like climate change.

IMF: Global economy to grow 3.3% in 2026 despite US trade tensions

India to lead major economies with 6.4% growth

WASHINGTON, Jan 19, (AP): An unexpectedly sturdy world economy is likely to shrug off President Donald Trump’s protectionist trade policies this year, thanks partly to a surge of investment in artificial intelligence in North America and Asia, the International Monetary Fund said in a report out Monday.

The 191-nation lending organization expects that global growth will come in at 3.3% this year, same as in 2025 but up from from the 3.1% it had forecast for 2026 back in October.

The world economy “continues to show notable resilience despite significant US-led trade disruptions and heightened uncertainty,” IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas and his colleague Tobias Adrian wrote in a

blog post accompanying the latest update to the fund’s World Economic Outlook.

The U.S. economy, benefiting from the strongest pace of technology investment since 2001, is forecast to expand 2.4% this year, an upgrade on the fund’s October forecast and on expected 2025 growth - both 2.1%.

China - the world’s second-largest economy - is forecast to see 4.5% growth, an improvement on the 4.2% the IMF had predicted October, partly because a trade truce with the United States has reduced American tariffs on Chinese exports.

India, which as supplanted China as the world’s fastest-growing major economy, is expected to see growth decelerate from 7.3% last year (when it was juiced by an unexpectedly strong second half) to a still-healthy 6.4% in 2026.

Tariffs and tepid demand challenge economic stability

China’s economy grew 5% in 2025, slows in Q4

HONG KONG, Jan 19, (AP): China’s economy expanded at a 5% annual pace in 2025, buoyed by strong exports despite U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariffs.

However, growth slowed to a 4.5% rate in the last quarter of the year, the government said Monday. That was the slowest quarterly growth since late 2022, when China was beginning to loosen stringent COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The economy, the world’s second largest, grew at a 4.8% annual pace in the previous quarter.

China’s leaders have been trying to spur faster growth after a slump in the property market and disruptions from the pandemic rippled through the economy.

As expected, annual growth last year was in line with the government’s official target for an expansion of “around 5%.”

In quarterly terms, the economy grew 1.2% in October to December.

Strong exports helped to compensate for weak consumer spending and business investment, contributing to a record trade surplus of \$1.2 trillion.

Chinese exports to the U.S. suffered after President Donald Trump returned to office early last year and began raising tariffs. But that decline was offset by shipments to the rest of the world. Soaring imports of Chinese goods are leading some other governments to take action to protect local industries, in some cases raising import duties.

Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed to extend a truce in their bruising tariffs war, also helping to alleviate pressure on China’s exports. But China’s exports to the U.S. still fell 20% last year.

“The key question is how long this engine of growth can remain the primary driver,” Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at Dutch bank



Construction workers buy their lunch meals near the office buildings at the central business district during lunch break hour in Beijing, Monday, Jan. 19, 2026. (AP)

ING wrote in a recent note. “Should more economies also start ramping up tariffs on China, as Mexico has done and the E.U. has threatened to do, eventually, a tighter squeeze will be seen.”

China’s leaders have repeatedly highlighted boosting domestic demand as a policy focus, but their effects have so far been limited. A trade-in program for drivers to replace older cars with more energy-efficient models, for example, has been losing steam in recent months.

“Stabilization, not necessarily recovery, of the domestic property market is key to revive public confidence and, hence household consumption and private investment growth,” said Chi Lo, senior market strategist for Asia Pacific at BNP Paribas Asset Management.

China has also provided trade-in

subsidies for home appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines and TVs. While major consumer stimulus policies in 2025 -- including such subsidies -- are set to continue in 2026, they may be scaled back, Weiheng Chen, global investment strategist at J.P. Morgan Private Bank, said in a recent note.

Investments in artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies remain a key priority for China’s ruling Communist Party as it moves to boost self-reliance and rival the U.S. Meanwhile, many ordinary Chinese and small businesses are struggling with tough times and troubling uncertainty over jobs and incomes.

Liu Fengyun, a 53-year-old noodle restaurant owner in a small county in southwestern China’s Guizhou province, said business has become very

difficult these days. Some of her customers told her that “money is hard to earn now” and “making breakfast at home is cheaper.”

“People all say, ‘The overall environment is not good right now - what more can you expect? People don’t have money anymore. Nothing is easy to do now,’” Liu said.

Kang Yi, head of China’s National Bureau of Statistics, on Monday told reporters that China’s economy had sustained “steady progress in 2025 despite multiple pressures” and has “solid foundations” in countering risks.

Some economists and analysts believe China’s actual economic growth in 2025 was slower than official data suggest. The Rhodium Group, a think tank, said last month it expected China’s economy to grow only by 2.5% to 3% last year.

The Chinese economy expanded at a 5% annual rate in 2024, and 5.2% in 2023, according to government data. Ambitious official growth targets have also trended down over the past few years, from 6% to 6.5% in 2019 to “around 5%” in 2025.

A slower annual expansion is expected for 2026. Deutsche Bank forecasts that China’s economy will grow about 4.5% in 2026.

A strong and stable economy is considered crucial for social stability, a primary priority for China’s leaders. While China could probably maintain social stability even at lower economic growth rates, Beijing “wants the economy to keep growing”, said Neil Thomas, a fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute’s Center for China Analysis.

China likely needs to sustain a roughly 4%-5% annual expansion in order to reach its soft target by 2035 of \$20,000 gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, he said.

Chinese AI chip firms shine as US export curbs spur self-reliance

BEIJING, Jan 19, (Xinhua): A report ranking the top 50 Chinese AI companies has shown that enterprises specializing in AI chips emerged as the most notable performers in 2025, taking seven of the top ten spots.

All three companies at the top of the list -- Cambrian, Moore Threads and MetaX -- are AI chip-related firms, while among the 18 newly ranked ones, 10 are engaged in AI chip businesses, according to the Hurun China AI Top 50 released on Monday.

Rupert Hoogewerf, chairman and chief researcher of the Hurun Report, attributed this corporate prominence partly to the tightening of U.S. export restrictions on high-end AI chips, which has in turn accel-

erated China’s push for self-reliance in computing power.

China’s position in AI has strengthened significantly in 2025, according to the report. Citing usage data of 100 trillion tokens from a third-party platform, it reveals that the market share of Chinese open-source models, which stood at just 1.2 percent by the end of 2024, has since grown significantly, at times approaching 30 percent.

AI companies on the list are remarkably young, having been founded an average of 12 years ago. The youngest ranked enterprises -- Moonshot AI, Baichuan AI and StepFun -- were established in 2023, and are all

focused on AIGC large models.

The list also includes companies specializing in emerging AI application areas -- such as AI-driven drug discovery, autonomous driving technology and enterprise decision-making -- highlighting the rapid real-world adoption of AI technologies in China.

The report indicates that the listed AI companies are increasingly serving as “enablers” to empower Chinese sectors like consumer electronics and new energy vehicles to compete globally.

Beijing leads the list as the home to 19 ranked companies, followed by Shanghai with 14 and Shenzhen with 6, according to the report. Collectively, China’s

first-tier cities account for more than 80 percent of the enterprises on the ranking, underscoring a clustering effect in the country’s AI sector.

The list ranks companies based on corporate value. For listed companies, market capitalization is calculated based on closing stock prices as of Jan. 9. Valuations for unlisted companies are determined with reference to comparable listed firms in the same sector or their latest financing rounds.

Notably, robotics firms like UBTECH, companies whose core business is not primarily AI, including ByteDance and DeepSeek, which focuses on fundamental AI research, were not included in the ranking.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



Got a birthday or event?
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AI dialogue showcases India's leadership in digital innovation

Embassy of India hosts AI dialogue ahead of India AI Summit 2026



Photos during the event.

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The Embassy of India in Kuwait, in collaboration with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) – Kuwait Chapter, organized the “India–Kuwait AI Impact Dialogue 2026” on 19 January 2026 at the Salwa Sabah Conference Center, Kuwait. The Dialogue was convened as a precursor to the prestigious “India AI Impact Summit 2026” scheduled to be held in New Delhi from 16–20 February 2026. The event brought together leading professionals and experts from Kuwait’s Information Technology ecosystem, creating a dynamic platform for exchange of ideas and insights. Discussions centered on key themes including AI-driven innovation, ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence, capacity building, and potential India–Kuwait collaboration in emerging digital technologies.

In her remarks, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, H.E. Mrs. Paramita Tripathi emphasized India’s commitment to leveraging AI for inclusive development and strengthening partnerships with friendly countries such as Kuwait, in the fields of research, technology, education, health, energy and innovation, and highlighted India’s advancements in AI and digital technologies. She stated that India has rapidly positioned itself as a leading global hub for artificial intelligence, supported by a robust talent base of over five million tech-professionals. Communities. She further noted that India ranks among the top countries worldwide in both AI

skill penetration and AI being integrated into critical sectors including healthcare, agriculture, finance, education, and governance, driving higher productivity, accelerating innovation, and promoting inclusive growth. A key catalyst for this progress is India’s strong digital public infrastructure.

The Ambassador also pointed that India’s startup ecosystem is one of the largest and fastest-growing in the world, with over 1,00,000 startups, including more than 100 unicorns. A growing share of these startups are AI-led, developing solutions in fintech, health tech, climate technology, logistics, smart cities, and enterprise automation. With continued focus on talent development, ethical AI, and international collaboration, India is strengthening its role as a leading contributor to the global digital and innovation economy.

The gathering was also addressed by Mr. Rohit Agarwal, Chairperson of the (ICAI) – Kuwait Chapter, who welcomed this initiative and spoke on the importance of collaboration between the technical sectors of India and Kuwait. The Keynote speaker from India was Ms. Nithya Subramanian, Senior Director Data and AI Code - Best Buy, who addressed the session on “Building an AI-Ready Organization: Data Culture, Digital Literacy & Leadership”. Mr. Jamal Al-Humoud, Founder and CEO of Journey Consulting, Kuwait led the discussion on “Building Trustworthy AI: Safety, Security & Governance in the Age of Generative AI”. An

engaging interactive Q & A session was also held for the attendees.

The ‘India-Kuwait AI Impact Dialogue 2026’ forms an integral part of the Embassy’s ongoing efforts to showcase India’s growing technological prowess, particularly in the field of Artificial Intelligence and emerging digital technologies. The initiative highlights India’s capabilities in innovation, digital public infrastructure, and responsible AI, while providing a platform for meaningful exchange of ideas, expertise, and best practices.

The ‘India AI Impact Summit 2026’ was announced by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, at the France AI Action Summit in February 2025. A premier global platform, the summit will bring together world leaders, policymakers, industry pioneers, researchers, and innovators to shape the future of Artificial Intelligence through dialogue, collaboration, and policy exchange. Scheduled to take place in New Delhi on 16 to 20 February 2026, the India AI Impact Summit will mark a historic milestone as the first-ever global AI summit to be hosted in the Global South. The event underscores India’s growing leadership in the global AI ecosystem and its commitment to promoting inclusive, responsible, and human-centric AI for global good.

More Details on the India AI Impact Summit 2026 are available on the event website: <https://impact.indiaai.gov.in/>



Warbow Wolverines – winners



TCC organizing team

Warbow Wolverines clinch KEF TEC Challengers Cup 2026 title

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Warbow Wolverines emerged as champions, while Kerala Tuskers finished as first runners-up and God’s Own XI secured the second runners-up position, in the 3rd edition of the TEC Challengers Cup 2026 – organized by the Thrissur Engineers College Alumni Association under the banner of the Kuwait Engineers Forum (KEF) – concluded successfully on January 16, 2026, at the Salmiya Boulevard Cricket Stadium.

The two-day cricket tournament, held on January 9 and 16, witnessed enthusiastic participation and strong spectator support, further establishing its status as a prominent platform for cricket in Kuwait. Played in the fast-paced T10 format, the event delivered thrilling matches marked by rapid gameplay, competitive intensity, and exemplary sportsmanship.

Eight teams – Black Panthers, Kerala Tuskers, Venad Warriors, White Elephants, High Range Blasters, God’s Own XI, Thiruvalla Warriors, and Warbow Wolverines – competed for the coveted title through league and knockout stages, culminating in an exciting final.

The opening day featured early-morning matches and a colorful opening ceremony, creating a festive atmosphere at the venue. The concluding day witnessed high-intensity knockout matches, bringing the tournament to a memorable close.

The trophies were presented by KEF GC, Ex-GC, and GCD. Print and digital versions of tournament souvenir were officially released by KEF GC Mr. Ganga Prasad and ex-GC Mrs. Hanan Shaan and is now available online at www.tecchallengerscup.com/ magazine.

Individual excellence was also recognized during the awards ceremony. Rahul Menon of Warbow Wolverines was adjudged the Best Batsman, Mohammed Shajeer of Kerala Tuskers received the Best Bowler award, and the Most Valuable Player award was presented to Anfar Kasi of Warbow Wolverines. Man of the match awards, were presented by Presidents and Chairpersons of KEF constituent Alumni.

Speaking after the event, Clifton, Chairman of the Thrissur Engineers College Alumni Association and Event Convenor, stated that the TEC Challengers Cup continues to serve as an important platform for promoting cricket while fostering unity and camaraderie within the engineering community.

TEF Kuwait emphasizes safety, modernization, and knowledge sharing

Tamil Nadu Engineers Forum hosts 2026 Technical Inauguration Event in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: The Tamil Nadu Engineers Forum (TEF) Kuwait – 2026 organized its Technical Inaugural Event on 14 January 2026 at Park Inn by Radisson, Mahboula, Kuwait, bringing together engineers, industry experts, and professionals for technical knowledge sharing and innovation.

The event was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Mr. Dhari Al-Ajmi, a renowned Cybersecurity Specialist and entrepreneur, who delivered an insightful Keynote Address on “Future Trends in Operational Technology (OT) – Cybersecurity.” His perspectives on managing cyber risks and strengthening digital resilience added significant value to the program.

The program commenced with a Welcome Address by Mr. Stanley, General Secretary – TEF Kuwait, who warmly greeted the gathering and highlighted TEF’s commitment to professional excellence, knowledge sharing, and community engagement.

During the event, Mr. Rajendra Kannan, President – TEF Kuwait, delivered the Presidential Address, formally marking the commencement of TEF’s technical activities for the year. In his address, he reflected on TEF’s journey since its inception in 1999 and its sustained focus on technical advancement.

The President outlined TEF 2026’s technical vision, emphasizing continuous learning, modernization, safety, and best practices. He also announced the flagship Technological Innovations Conference & Exposition (TICE), scheduled for 1 October 2026, which is expected to host over 600 delegates from the Oil, Petrochemical, Power, and Water sectors.

The Inaugural Event featured two technical sessions:

- “From Legacy to Reliable: Enhancing Safety of Old MV Switchgear as per Latest IEC Norms” by Mr. Avanish Srivastava, Specialist – R&D (MV Switchgear), Eaton Power Distribution Services.
- “Auditing and Assessment of Infrastructure and Building Utilities” by Mr. R. Kalaimony, Amith Civil & Allied Engineering Services Pvt. Ltd.

The event was sponsored by Golden Palm Petroleum Services. The Managing Director, Mr. Sabah Al



Photos during the event.

Shammi, Operations Managers Mr. Krishna Kumar and Mr. P. P. Muthu, and Mr. Maher Salameh, Country Manager – Eaton Power Distribution Services, graced the occasion with their presence.

The inaugural technical event marked the beginning of TEF’s 27th year, setting a strong benchmark

for the technical programs planned for 2026. TEF expressed its sincere appreciation to its speakers, sponsors, partners, and members for their continued support.

The event concluded with networking and professional interaction among the participants.

ONCP continues annual social service at Wafra Farm

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: ONCP Kuwait Committee distributed kits, including New year gift and food to expatriate workers from India and Bangladesh at Wafra farm as a part of the association’s yearly social service activities to the needy people. NCP Overseas Cell National Convener and Norka (Govt. of Kerala) Loka Kerala Sabha Representative Babu Francis Olakkankil inaugurated the event.

The event was presided over by ONCP Kuwait Vice President Prince Kollappillil. Joint Secretary Ashokan Thiruvananthapuram delivered the welcome address. Executive members Sunny K. Allese, Pradeep, Jinu Vakathanam, and Mrs Sivi Pradeep led the programs. Abdul Aziz Kozhikode delivered a vote of thanks to participants.



Photo during the event.

Millions at stake in privacy case involving high-profile plaintiffs

Prince Harry's legal battle with UK tabloids enters final phase

LONDON, Jan 19, (AP): Prince Harry has arrived in a London court for the third and final chapter in his legal quest to tame the British tabloids.

Harry, also known as the Duke of Sussex, is the lead litigant in a case full of high-profile plaintiffs who accuse the publisher of the Daily Mail of invading their privacy by using unlawful information-gathering tactics to snoop on them for sensational headlines.

The seven plaintiffs, including Elton John and actors Elizabeth Hurley and Sadie Frost, allege that Associated Newspapers Ltd. hired private investigators to bug their cars, gain access to their private records and eavesdrop on phone calls.

Millions of dollars are on the line as Prince Harry returns to court this week for the third and final chapter that starts Monday in his legal quest to tame the British tabloids.

The Duke of Sussex is the lead litigant in a case full of high-profile plaintiffs who accuse the publisher of the Daily Mail of invading their privacy by using unlawful information-gathering tactics to snoop on them for sensational headlines.

Harry, Elton John and actors Elizabeth Hurley and Sadie Frost are among a group of seven who allege that Associated Newspapers Ltd. hired private investigators to bug their cars, view their private records and eavesdrop on phone calls.

The publisher has denied the allegations and called them preposterous.

The trial in London's High Court is expected to last nine weeks and will see the return of Harry to the witness box for the second time since he made history in 2023 by

becoming the first senior member of the royal family to testify in more than a century.

The case was one of many that has emerged from the widespread phone hacking scandal in which some journalists began intercepting voicemail messages around the turn of this century and continued for more than a decade.

Harry won a court judgment in 2023 that condemned the publishers of the Daily Mirror for "widespread and habitual" phone hacking. Last year, Rupert Murdoch's flagship U.K. tabloid made an unprecedented apology for intruding on his life for years, and agreed to pay substantial damages to settle his privacy invasion lawsuit.

Harry's self-proclaimed mission to reform the media is more personal and goes far beyond headlines that attempted to document his party boy youth and romance ups and downs.

He holds the press responsible for the death of his mother, Princess Diana, who was killed in a car crash in 1997 while being pursued by paparazzi in Paris. He also blames them for persistent attacks on his wife, Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, that led them to leave royal life and move to the United States in 2020.

The trial comes as Harry tries to repair a damaged relationship with his family since he moved to America and burned the bridge behind him by penning a scorching 2023 memoir, "Spare," and airing other family grievances in a Netflix series.

Frosty relations with his father, King Charles III, appear to be thawing a bit after the two met for tea last fall when Harry was last in town.

But a reunion this time looks unlikely.

The start of the trial coincides with Charles' trip to



Britain's Prince Harry arrives at London's High Court to lead a group, including Elton John and Elizabeth Hurley, accusing the Daily Mail's publisher of privacy invasion through unlawful tactics in a trial that is part of a wider phone hacking scandal in London, Monday, Jan. 19. (AP)

Scotland and Harry's visit is expected to be limited to the opening of the trial and his early testimony.

The case against the Mail was filed in 2022 and has been the subject of several contentious hearings that have led to rulings that each side has claimed as victories.

Lawyers for Associated Newspapers had argued that the case should be thrown out because claims dating as

far back as 1993 were brought too late. But in a ruling saying the cases have a "real prospect of succeeding," Judge Matthew Nicklin said the papers had "not been able to deliver a 'knockout blow'" to the claims.

In the same ruling, Nicklin handed a win to the Mail in saying Harry and the others could not use records that allegedly showed payments by the Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday to private investigators because they had been disclosed in confidence to a government inquiry into phone hacking.

But Harry's lawyers later got permission from U.K. government officials to use the documents.

A private investigator whose name is on a sworn statement supporting the claims of Harry and the celebrities has filed another statement denying he ever snooped on them.

During an early hearing in the case, attorney David Sherborne said his clients were not aware they were phone hacking victims until Gavin Burrows and other investigators came forward in 2021 to "do the right thing" and help those he targeted. Burrows said he "must have done hundreds of jobs" for the Mail between 2000 and 2005, and that Harry, John and his husband, David Furnish, and Hurley and Frost were "just a small handful of my targets."

But he has since signed another statement saying he had not been hired by Associated Newspapers to do any unlawful work.

It's unclear what impact his conflicting statements will have on the case.

The other claimants are anti-racism activist Doreen Lawrence and former politician Simon Hughes.

CBS stands firm

'60 Minutes' airs 'pulled' Trump deportation story

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (AP): "60 Minutes" on Sunday aired its story about Trump administration deportations that was abruptly pulled from the news-magazine's lineup a month ago, a move that had triggered an internal battle about political pressure that spilled out into the open.

Correspondent Sharyn Alfonsi made no reference to her dispute with CBS News editor-in-chief Bari Weiss in the story about deportees who had been sent to El Salvador's notoriously harsh CECOT prison. When the segment was struck from the Dec. 21 episode on Weiss' orders, Alfonsi told her "60 Minutes" colleagues that it "was not an editorial decision, it was a political one."

Weiss had argued that the story did not sufficiently reflect the administration's viewpoint or advance reporting that had been done by other news organizations earlier.

The story shown Sunday included no on-camera interviews with Trump administration officials. But it did include statements from the White House and Department of Homeland Security that were not part of what Alfonsi had used before her story was pulled. Some of statements, which were carried in full on the "60 Minutes" website, were dated prior to Dec. 21. "Since November, '60 Minutes' has made several attempts to interview key Trump administration officials on camera about our story," Alfonsi said. "They declined our requests."

Alfonsi did not immediately return a message from The Associated Press on Sunday. She said in her email that the administration's refusal to consent to on-camera interviews was a tactical maneuver designed to kill the story.

Statement

CBS News, in a statement said, that its "leadership has always been committed to airing the '60 Minutes' CECOT piece as soon as it was ready. Tonight, viewers get to see it, along with other important stories, all of which speak to CBS News' independence and the power of our storytelling."

Alfonsi's report was the second of three on Sunday's show, with the lead story being Cecilia Vega's report from Minneapolis about ICE enforcement efforts and the protests to its tactics.

The initial decision to sideline Alfonsi's CECOT story became a flashpoint for critics who said the appointment of Weiss, founder of the Free Press website who had no previous experience in television news, represented an attempt by the network's new corporate leadership to curry favor with Trump.

While pulled from the broadcast in December, Alfonsi's original story mistakenly became available online. CBS News had fed a version of the news-magazine to Global Television, a network that airs "60 Minutes" in Canada, which posted it on its website before the last-minute switch removing the piece. That enabled sharp-eyed viewers to see what Weiss had rejected, offering the opportunity to compare it to what "60 Minutes" eventually put on the air.

The body of the story was unchanged. It included a brief clip of President Donald Trump saying the prison operators "don't play games," and one from White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt saying that "heinous monsters, rapists, murderers, sexual assaulters, predators who have no right to be in this country" were sent there.

Alfonsi's introduction was updated to lead with the Jan. 3 U.S. raid that led to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, currently held in U.S. custody. She changed the end of the story to include the administration comment, including its explanation for not providing detailed records on the migrants sent to El Salvador.

Film



This image released by Disney shows Neytiri, performed by Zoe Saldana, in a scene from 'Avatar: Fire and Ash.' (AP)

'Zootopia 2' becomes highest-grossing animated release

'Avatar' tops box office as 'Bone Temple' opens strong

LOS ANGELES, Jan 19, (AP): "28 Years Later: The Bone Temple" may have scored well with critics, but slightly more moviegoing audiences chose to spend the holiday weekend catching up with "Avatar: Fire and Ash." James Cameron's epic topped the North American box office charts for the fifth straight weekend with \$13.3 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. The Walt Disney Co. also celebrated another win as their Thanksgiving release "Zootopia 2" became the highest grossing animated Motion Picture Association release of all time.

Meanwhile "The Bone Temple," directed by Nia Da-Costa, landed in second place with \$13 million through Sunday. By the end of Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday, it's expected to be at \$15 million, still trailing "Avatar's" projected \$17.2 million. The film, released by Sony Pictures and starring Ralph Fiennes and Jack O'Connell, opened wide this weekend in 3,506 theaters on a wave of hype and strong reviews. It currently has a 93% on Rotten Tomatoes, and 72% of audiences said in a PostTrak poll that they would "definitely recommend" the movie. Considering it's also solidly in the horror genre and arriving in January, often a dumping ground for lesser movies, "The Bone Temple" should have done better. Internationally, it made \$16.2 million from 61 markets.

But perhaps in a case of too much too soon, the sequel also comes less than a year after the previous installment, "28 Years Later," which opened to \$30

million in June. Going into the weekend, "The Bone Temple" was expected to make at least \$20 million through Monday. With a reported \$63 million production budget, not including marketing and promotion, it also has a long journey to break even.

"It's one of those head-scratchers," said Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Comscore. "There may be a little bit of confusion from audiences. But word-of-mouth might sustain it in this marketplace, like we saw with 'The Housemaid' and 'Zootopia 2.'"

Danny Boyle and Alex Garland, the team who started it all with "28 Days Later," which came out in 2002, are also working on a third installment.

Global

Third place went to "Zootopia 2," with \$8.8 million in its eighth weekend. With global grosses currently at \$1.7 billion, it surpassed "Inside Out 2" as the highest grossing MPA animated release of all time. The MPA distinction means that the Chinese blockbuster "Ne Zha 2," which has made over \$2.2 billion, is not included in the rankings. "Zootopia 2" is also now the ninth biggest global release of all time.

"The Housemaid," one of the other major blockbusters of late, landed in fourth place with \$8.5 million. Made for only \$35 million, the Lionsgate release has grossed nearly \$250 million worldwide.

Rounding out the top five was "Marty Supreme," which became A24's highest grossing North Ameri-

can release with a running gross of \$79.7 million, unseating "Everything Everywhere All at Once." Josh Safdie's mid-century adrenaline rush may get another boost after Oscar nominations are announced Thursday.

"Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" and "The Two Towers" were also back in theaters this weekend and both in the top 10, grossing \$3.6 million and \$2.4 million respectively.

Outside of the top 10, Focus Features' "Hamnet," which won best drama and best female actor for Jessie Buckley at the Golden Globes last weekend and is considered another top Oscar contender, expanded to 718 locations this weekend where it made \$1.3 million through Sunday.

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

1. "Avatar: Fire and Ash," \$13.3 million;
2. "28 Years Later: The Bone Temple," \$13 million;
3. "Zootopia 2," \$8.8 million;
4. "The Housemaid," \$8.5 million;
5. "Marty Supreme," \$5.5 million;
6. "Primate," \$5 million;
7. "Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring," \$3.6 million;
8. "Greenland 2: Migration," \$3.4 million;
9. "Anaconda," \$3.2 million;
10. "Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers," \$2.4 million.

NFL to celebrate generations of MVPs

Green Day to open 60th Bowl with anniversary ceremony

LOS ANGELES, Jan 19, (AP): The NFL is marking the 60th anniversary of the Super Bowl with a hometown opening act.

Green Day will kick off the big game with an opening ceremony Feb. 8 at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, the league announced Sunday.

The performance will celebrate six decades of the championship's history, with the band helping usher generations of Super Bowl MVPs onto the field.

The trio, who formed in the East Bay sub-region of the San Francisco Bay Area and are made up of Billie Joe Armstrong, Mike Dirnt

and Tré Cool, are expected to perform a selection of their best-known anthems as part of the tribute.

"We are super hyped to open Super Bowl 60 right in our backyard!" lead singer Armstrong said. "We are honored to welcome the MVPs who've shaped the game and open the night for fans all over the world. Let's have fun! Let's get loud!"

The ceremony airs live at 3 p.m. Pacific on NBC, Telemundo, Peacock and Universo.

"Celebrating 60 years of Super Bowl history with Green Day as a hometown band, while honoring the NFL legends who've helped de-

fine this sport, is an incredibly powerful way to kick off Super Bowl LX," said Tim Tubito, the league's senior director of event and game presentation.

"As we work alongside NBC Sports for this opening ceremony, we look forward to creating a collective celebration for fans in the stadium and around the world."

The opening ceremony will take place ahead of the pregame entertainment, in which Charlie Puth is to perform the national anthem, Brandi Carlile will sing "America the Beautiful" and Coco Jones will deliver "Lift Every Voice and Sing."



Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day performs during the first weekend of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Club on Saturday, April 12, 2025, in Indio, Calif. (AP)



A glimpse of the Kuwait Handicrafts Association's participation in the International Colors of the East Art Exhibition in Manama.

Kuwait Handicrafts Association showcases national heritage at the International Colors of the East Arts Exhibition in Manama, Bahrain.

KUNA photos

Kuwait Handicrafts Association showcases national heritage at Bahrain arts exhibition

In an atmosphere rich with authenticity and heritage, the Kuwait Handicrafts Association participated in the International Colors of the East Arts Exhibition in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The exhibition showcased a curated selection of Kuwaiti crafts that reflect the country's cultural identity and popular traditions, offering a vibrant glimpse into the skills and artistry preserved through generations.

Exhibits included maritime and desert crafts as well as traditional works inspired by Kuwait's social history. Using natural materials and authentic handicraft techniques, the display conveyed the spirit of the place and its people.

The participation highlighted the Association's efforts to safeguard the nation's artisanal heritage while promoting its cultural and economic significance, reinforcing a sense of belonging and national identity among visitors. (KUNA)

Birds



Head of the Bird Monitoring and Protection Team at the Society, Mohammad Shah.



KEPS records a large and diverse number of birds.



A bird is flying over the water.



KEPS hosts Winter Bird Count and tracks rare species at Sulaibikhat Beach.



A flock of flamingos flies over Sulaibikhat Beach during the Winter Bird Count event.



Kuwait's marine environment serves as a key stopover for migratory and resident birds in winter.



Seagulls and wading birds fill the islands of Sulaibikhat Beach.

KUNA photos

KEPS hosts Winter Bird Count event

Kuwait tracks diverse bird species in annual count

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): The Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) organized on Saturday the “World Winter Bird Count Day” event at Sulaibikhat beach.

The event was held under the patronage of Social Affairs and Family and Childhood Affairs Minister Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah and with broad participation from government and community bodies, volunteer teams and members of the diplomatic corps, the KEPS said in a press release.

Field monitoring and documentation by the specialized team recorded large and diverse numbers of birds, topped by Dunlin (500), Black-headed Gull (300), Greater Flamingo (200), Common Redshank (200), Kentish Plover (50) and Mallard (30).

The list also included Grey Heron (20), Grey Plover (20), Laughing Dove (20), Common Shelduck (12), Slender-billed Gull (10), Common Ringed Plover (10), as well as varying numbers of other species.

KEPS Chair Dr. Wijdan Al-Oqab said on the sidelines of the event that the activity is part of the Society's contribution to international environmental initiatives, aimed at reinforcing environmental awareness and highlighting the importance of preserving Kuwait's migratory and resident birdlife.

She added that a key objective is to underline the need to protect and clean beaches and reduce all kinds of waste, especially plastics, to safeguard biodiversity in the area.

Al-Oqab praised the patronage of Minister Al-Huwailah, and commended the participation of the Ministry of Interior, including the environmental police's awareness role, as well as the presence of emergency medical services as a precaution.

She noted the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and BirdLife International are strategic international partners for the activity.

She said the diversity of participants - including government entities, civil society organizations, volunteer groups, large numbers of youth and families, and several Arab and foreign ambassadors - reflects growing environmental interest in Kuwait.

She added the event ran from noon to 4 p.m.,

with birdwatchers, environmental experts, photography enthusiasts and student groups taking part, alongside fixed viewing platforms, binoculars, a photo exhibition and a beach clean-up campaign.

Head of KEPS' Bird Monitoring and Protection Team Mohammad Shah said the best time for counting in Kuwait is during December and January, when migration movements decline, allowing more accurate monitoring of wintering species.

He said KEPS has organized the activity since 2012 and, after initially holding it for one day, expanded this year's count to cover January 1-17, across Kuwait, with systematic monitoring at different times and locations to be included in the Society's annual 2026 monitoring report.

Shah said KEPS schedules the event on the third Saturday of January due to high tide conditions, which bring wading and seabirds closer to shore, facilitating accurate counting from fixed observation points.

Technology

Anti-doomscrolling videos

Influencers challenging social media addiction

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (AP): It's simple to accidentally become entranced by an endless loop of videos on Instagram or TikTok. But sometimes, that mindless scroll is interrupted by a reminder that what you thought was a 10-minute break spent on your phone was closer to 30 minutes.

Olivia Yokubonis, armed with a kind voice and scientific research, often pops up in feeds on social platforms, gently reminding viewers that they might not remember the video they saw two videos before she appeared on the screen.

Yokubonis is a content creator who goes by the name Olivia Unplugged online, making videos to combat overuse or mindless use of social media. For the most part, people who view her videos welcome the disruption from the endless loop of content, treating it as a wake-up call to get off their phones. Other times, they are snarky.

“People will comment and they'll be like, 'Oh, (it's) ironic that you're posting. And I'm like, 'Where else am I supposed to find you, Kyle? Outside? You're not outside. You are here, sitting here,'” she said. “For us to actually be seen, we have to be where people are.”

Yokubonis' content responds to the feeling many people have, that they spend too much time on social media or apps.

Overuse

“Most people have no clue how much time they spend on social media,” said Ofir Turel, a professor of information systems management at the University of Melbourne who has been studying social media use for years. Through his research, Turel found that when he presented people with their screen time information, they were practically “in a state of shock” and many people voluntarily reduced their usage afterwards.

Yokubonis is part of a growing group of content creators who make videos encouraging viewers to close out the app they're on. Some are aggressive in their approach, some more tame; some only occasionally post about social media overuse, and some, like Yokubonis, devote their accounts to it.

She works for Opal, a screen time app designed to help users “reclaim their focus,” she said, but those who engage with her content might not have any idea she is working for the company. Brand logos, constant plugs to download the app and other signs of branding are almost entirely absent from her page. “People love hearing from people,” she said. Millions of views on her videos point to that being true.

“It's a fine line and a balance of finding a way to be able to cut through that noise but also not adding to the noise,” she added.

Ian A. Anderson, a postdoctoral scholar at California Institute of Technology, said he finds this kind of content interesting, but is curious whether it's disruptive enough to prompt action. He also said he wonders whether those with the strongest scrolling habits are “thoughtless about the way (they're) intaking information.”

“If they're paying full attention, I feel like it could be an effective disruption, but I also think there is a degree to which, if you are really a habitual scroller, maybe you aren't fully engaging with it,” he said. “I can think of all sorts of different variables that could change the effectiveness, but it does sound like an interesting way to intervene from the inside.”

With billions of active users across TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and other social media platforms, talk of cutting down on screen time is perennial, as is the idea of addiction to social platforms. But there's tremendous disagreement over whether social media addiction actually exists.

Researchers, psychologists and other experts agree some people spend too much time on social media, but the agreement tends to stop there. Some researchers question whether addiction is the appropriate term to describe heavy use of social media, arguing that a person must be experiencing identifiable symptoms, like strong, sometimes uncontrollable urges and withdrawal, to qualify as addiction. Others, like Turel, acknowledge the term seems to resonate with more people and is often used colloquially.

Anderson said he recognized the prevalence of casual mentions of being addicted to phones and was curious to see if that talk was “benign.”

A recent study of his suggests the debate extends further than academic discourse. In a representative sample of active Instagram users, Anderson found that people often overestimate whether they are “addicted” to the app.

On a self-report scale, 18% of participants agreed that they were at least somewhat addicted to Instagram and 5% indicated substantial agreement, but only 2% of participants were deemed at risk of addiction based on their symptoms. Believing you are addicted also impacts how you address that issue, Anderson said.

“If you perceive yourself as more addicted, it actually hurts your ability to control your use or your perception of that ability and makes you kind of blame yourself more for overuse,” Anderson said. “There are these

Sri Lanka unveils the world's biggest purple star sapphire

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Jan 19, (AP): A Purple Star Sapphire weighing 3,563 carats which is claimed to be the world's biggest of its kind was unveiled on Saturday in the Sri Lankan capital by the owners, who are ready to sell the precious stone which is estimated to be worth at least \$300 million.

The round shaped gem named “Star of Pure Land” is the world's largest documented natural purple star sapphire, said Ashan Amarasinghe, a consultant gemologist.

“This is the largest purple star sapphire of its kind,” he told the media, adding that the gem “shows a well-defined asterism. It has six rays asterism. That's something special out of all the other stones.”

The gem, which has been polished, is owned by the Star of Pure Land Team, who want to remain anonymous for security reasons.

One of the owners said the gem was found in a gem pit near the remote Sri Lankan town of Rathnapura, known as the “city of gems,” in 2023.



The world's largest purple star sapphire, claimed to be the largest of its kind, is placed on display at a ceremony in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Saturday, Jan. 17. (AP)

It was purchased together with other gems in 2023 and about two years later, the owners found that it was a special stone. They then got it certified by two laboratories.

Amarasinghe said the value of the stone has been estimated at \$300 million to \$400 million by international valuers. Sri Lankan sapphires are renowned for their unique color, clarity and shimmer.

Kuwait achieves over 97 successful pediatric stem cell transplants

Kuwait hosts conference on pediatric stem cell therapy

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): The Health Ministry inaugurated on Monday the Fifth Conference on Stem Cell Transplantation and Gene Therapy for Children, a two-day event held under the patronage of Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi and attended by leading international and regional experts.

Assistant Undersecretary for Medical Support Services, Dr. Abdullah Al-Fares, speaking on behalf of the conference patron, said the event reflects Kuwait's steadfast commitment to advancing its healthcare system and placing children's welfare at the forefront of national priorities.

He noted that the field of cellular and gene therapies is witnessing rapid global scientific progress and has become a cornerstone of modern medicine, particularly in treating hereditary blood disorders, immunodeficiency diseases, and refractory cancers in children.

Dr. Al-Fares highlighted Kuwait's achievements in pediatric stem cell transplantation, reporting nearly 97 successful cases carried out with national expertise and international standards, reflecting the competence of medical, nursing, and technical staff alongside the Ministry's continuous institutional support.

He emphasized that gene therapy is a strategic priority, with intensive efforts underway to make it available in Kuwait, applying scientific and regulatory standards to ensure the highest safety and quality levels for pediatric patients.

The conference chair and head of the Pediatric Hematology, Oncology, and Stem Cell Transplantation Department, Dr. Sundus Al-Shareeda, described the conference as a leading regional scientific platform, bringing together top experts to exchange the latest research in stem cell transplantation.

The scientific program features more than 40 specialized lectures over two days, delivered by over 35 international and regional speakers from leading reference hospitals and centers in Europe, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

The conference also includes specialized practical workshops aimed at developing hands-on skills, transferring expertise, and enhancing rapid diagnostics and pediatric medical simulations.

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Ministry of Health officials inaugurate the Fifth Conference on Stem Cell Transplantation and Gene Therapy for Children.



The Minister of Health inaugurates a new wing at Amiri Hospital.

KUNA photo

New ward features 10 specialized rooms

Amiri Hospital opens new surgical ward

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

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi has inaugurated a new surgical ward at Amiri Hospital, with the aim of increasing bed capacity and providing a comprehensive treatment environment in line with modern healthcare standards.

Dr. Al-Awadhi highlighted that the new ward enhances the quality of the services provided, patient safety, and the efficiency of medical and nursing staff, while reducing

pressure on existing wards and improving the hospital's capacity to handle surgical cases of varying complexity.

In this regard, Assistant Undersecretary for Engineering Affairs and Projects at the Ministry of Health, Ibrahim Al-Naham, said the ward includes ten specialized rooms, five general rooms with a total of twenty beds, a service room, four doctors' offices with private bathrooms, a meeting room, six public restrooms, a staff room, a meal preparation kitchen, a nurses' break room with two bathrooms and lockers, a pharmacy and two storage rooms.

Population falls

China birth rate hits record low

BANGKOK, Jan 19, (AP): How do you persuade a population to have more babies after generations of limiting families to just one?

A decade after ending China's longtime one-child policy, the country's authorities are pushing a range of ideas and policies to try to encourage more births - tactics that range from cash subsidies to taxing condoms to eliminating a tax on matchmakers and day care centers.

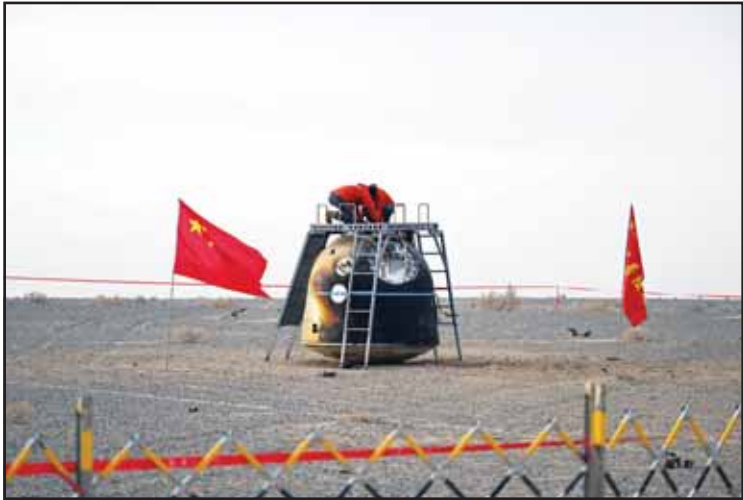
The efforts haven't paid off yet. At least, that's what population figures released Monday show for what is now the world's second-most populous nation. China's population of 1.4 billion continued to shrink, marking the fourth straight year of decrease, new government statistics show. The total population in 2025 stood at 1.404 billion, which was 3 million less than the previous year.

Measured another way, the birth rate in 2025 - 5.63 per 1,000 people - is the lowest on record since 1949, the year that Mao Zedong's Communists overthrew the Nationalists and began running China. Figures before that, under the previous Nationalist government, were not available.

China was long the world's most populous nation until 2023, when it was surpassed by regional neighbor and sometime rival India. Monday's statistics illustrate the stark demographic pressures faced by the country as it tries to pivot from a problem it is working hard to overcome: status as a nation with a growing but transitional economy that, as is often said, is "getting old before it gets rich."

The number of new babies born was just 7.92 million in 2025, a decline of 1.62 million, or 17%, from the previous year. The latest birth numbers show that the slight tick upward in 2024 was not a lasting trend. Births declined for seven years in a row through 2023.

Most families cite the costs and pressure of raising a child in a highly competitive society as significant hurdles that now loom larger in the face of an economic downturn that has impacted households struggling to meet their living costs.



The return capsule of the Shenzhou-20 spaceship is pictured at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on Jan. 19. (Xinhua)

All experiments verified

China's Shenzhou-20 return capsule lands safely on Earth

JIUQUAN, Jan 19, (Xinhua): The return capsule of the Shenzhou-20 spaceship, carrying no astronauts, touched down at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at 9:34 a.m. (Beijing Time) on Monday, according to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

On-site inspections confirmed that the return capsule's overall appearance was normal and that items inside were in good condition. The Shenzhou-20 spaceship return mission was a complete success, the CMSA said.

"With the return of the Shenzhou-20 spaceship, all main tasks of the space emergency response for China's space station have been successfully completed," it announced.

The Shenzhou-20 crewed spacecraft was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China on April 24, 2025, and it later successfully docked with the space station. Its return was postponed in early November due to a suspected space debris impact incident, and it remained in orbit to conduct related experiments.

At 12:23 a.m. (Beijing Time) on Monday, the spacecraft undocked from the space station combination and began its unmanned return journey. With a total orbital duration of 270 days, the mission verified the spacecraft's capability to remain docked in orbit for nine months, the CMSA noted.

China on Oct. 31, 2025, launched the Shenzhou-21 crewed spaceship, sending three astronauts to its orbiting space station on a six-month mission.

To mitigate risks during the return of the Shenzhou-20 spacecraft, the Shenzhou-21 astronaut crew took the opportunity of extravehicular activities on Dec. 9, 2025, to capture close-up images of the return capsule's window using a high-definition camera, further

investigating the condition of window cracks stemming from a suspected collision with space debris.

Notably, in preparation for the emergency launch of the Shenzhou-22 spacecraft, a window crack treatment device was urgently developed and sent to the space station. The astronauts installed the device inside the Shenzhou-20 return capsule, effectively enhancing the capsule's thermal protection and sealing capabilities for the return journey.

The CMSA recalled that after the suspected impact damage was detected on the Shenzhou-20 spacecraft's window, the mission command promptly organized simulation analysis and experimental verification, adjusting the mission plan and activating emergency procedures.

Meanwhile, the Shenzhou-23 spacecraft, which will be used for the rolling backup mission, has arrived at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center, while a Long March-2F Y23 carrier rocket is about to be shipped to the launch site, the CMSA revealed.

The Shenzhou-20 astronauts, namely Chen Dong, Chen Zhongrui and Wang Jie, are all in good health. They met the press in Beijing on Jan. 16, which was their first public appearance since returning to Earth.

The trio spent 204 days in orbit, setting a new record for the longest in-orbit stay among Chinese astronaut crews, the CMSA said.

China's commercial crewed spacecraft test capsule completes land-buffering verification

In a separate news, the test module of a Chinese commercial crewed spacecraft CYZ1 successfully completed the integrated verification trial of its landing-buffering system, the spacecraft developer InterstellOr said on Sunday.

Sewage surveillance uncovers outbreaks

CDC studies highlight wastewater testing as powerful disease tracker

NEW YORK, Jan 19, (AP): Wastewater testing can alert public health officials to measles infections days to months before cases are confirmed by doctors, researchers said in two studies published recently by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Colorado health officials were able to get ahead of the highly contagious virus by tracking its presence in sewer systems, researchers wrote. And Oregon researchers found wastewater could have warned them of an outbreak more than two months before the first person tested positive.

The findings add to evidence that wastewater testing is a valuable weapon in tracking disease, including COVID-19, polio, mpox and bird flu.

But the national wastewater surveillance system, run by CDC since 2020, is newly at risk, under a Trump administration budget plan would slash its funding from about \$125 million a year to about \$25 million.

Peggy Honein, director of the CDC's division of infectious disease readiness and innovation, said the proposed funding level would "sustain some of the most critical activities" but "it would likely require some prioritization."

The national system covers more than 1,300 wastewater treatment sites serving 147 million people. It includes six "centers for excellence" - Colorado among them - that innovate and support other states in expanding their testing.

The funding cut is still a proposal, and Congress has started pushing back against cuts to health care in general.

But state health departments say they are preparing for a potential loss of federal support regardless. Most state programs are entirely federally funded, Honein said.

Colorado started its wastewater surveillance program in 2020 with 68 utilities participating voluntarily. The program has since narrowed in its focus even as it grew to include more diseases, because it is 100% federally funded, said Allison Wheeler, manager of the Colorado's wastewater surveillance unit.

The work is funded through 2029,



A sign is seen outside a clinic with the South Plains Public Health District, Feb 23, 2025, in Brownfield, Texas. (AP)

Wheeler said, and the department is talking to state leaders about what to do after that.

"I know that there are other states that haven't been as fortunate as us," Wheeler said. "They need this funding in order to sustain their program for the next year."

In the Colorado study, which Wheeler co-authored, officials started testing wastewater for measles in May, as outbreaks in Texas, New Mexico and Utah were growing and five cases had been confirmed in Colorado.

In August, wastewater in Mesa County tested positive about a week before two measles cases were confirmed by a doctor. Neither patient knew that they had been exposed to measles. As they traced 225 households and health care contacts of the first two patients, health officials found five more cases.

In Oregon, researchers used preserved sewage samples from late 2024 to determine if sewage testing could have discovered a burgeoning outbreak.

The 30-case outbreak spanned two counties and hit a close-knit community that does not readily seek health care, the study's authors wrote. The first case was confirmed on July 11 and

it ultimately took health officials 15 weeks to stop the outbreak.

The researchers found that wastewater samples from the area were positive for measles about 10 weeks before the first cases were reported. The virus concentration in the wastewater over the weeks also matched the known peak of the outbreak.

"We knew that we were missing cases, and I think that's always the case in measles outbreaks," said Dr. Melissa Sutton, of the Oregon Health Authority. "But this gave us an insight into how much silent transmission was occurring without us knowing about it and without our health care system knowing about it."

Other states, such as Utah, have integrated wastewater data into their public-facing measles dashboards, allowing anyone to track outbreaks in real time.

And in New Mexico, where 100 people got measles last year and one died, the testing helped state health officials shrink a vast rural expanse. The state's system flagged cases in northwestern Sandoval County while officials were focused on a massive outbreak 300 miles (483 kilometers) away in the southeast, said Kelley Plymesser, of the state health department.

Immune cells detect molecules in new way

Study shows why antidepressants fail for some

SYDNEY, Jan 19, (Xinhua): An Australian study has identified a clinically distinct subtype of depression that may explain why standard antidepressants often fail, paving the way for more personalized treatments.

Researchers from the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Center analyzed data from nearly 15,000 Australians with depression and identified a clinically distinct "atypical depression" subtype that is strongly linked to other mental and physical illnesses like diabetes, said a statement from the center on Friday.

Published in Biological Psychiatry, the study found that this atypical depression group, about 21 percent of the sample, did not respond well to common antidepressants such as SSRIs and SNRIs.

These common drugs target brain chemistry, but the study's findings suggest other biological processes, such as a dysregulated body clock, might be behind this type of depression, suggesting a need for alternative treatment strategies, the statement said.

The study also found that the group with atypical depression was more prone to side effects from common antidepressants, such as weight gain, it said.

Researchers linked this subtype to higher genetic risks for metabolic, immune, inflammatory and circadian

(body clock) markers, underscoring the need for more tailored treatments based on an individual's biology.

"This personalized approach would ensure people get help sooner and avoid ineffective and prolonged medication trials that may cause side effects that can be distressing," said study lead author Mirim Shin, research fellow at the Brain and Mind Center.

Center Co-Director, Professor Ian Hickie said the research highlights that many people, particularly women, still do not receive effective treatment the first time they seek help.

"This research makes a strong case for more precise treatment for individuals based on their biology as a vital tool in tackling increasing rates of depression," Hickie said.

Meanwhile, an international team of scientists has discovered a new way immune cells recognize molecules in the body, challenging a long-standing view of how the immune system works.

The study, published in Nature Communications, found that a key molecule called CD1c can show lipid antigens to T cells in a sideways position instead of the upright arrangement scientists believed to be standard for more than 30 years, said a statement from Australia's Monash University on Friday.

Researchers from Monash Univer-

sity's Biomedicine Discovery Institute (BDI) and the Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital in the United States used advanced imaging, including data from the Australian Synchrotron, to reveal that CD1c can hold and display multiple lipid molecules at the same time.

The finding shows that immune recognition is more flexible than previously thought, helping explain how the body's defense system detects a wide variety of lipid molecules found in human tissues.

"There are additional ways immune cells can 'see' what's around them," said Adam Shahine, a National Health and Medical Research Council research fellow at Monash BDI.

However, "much of immunology has been built around the idea that immune recognition follows one fixed arrangement," Shahine said.

Lipids are abundant throughout the body and play important roles in normal physiology and disease, the statement said, adding that understanding how the immune system recognizes these molecules is essential for building a more complete picture of immune function.

Scientists said this new understanding could support research into diseases where lipids play a role, leading to new strategies for diagnostics and targeted therapies.

Blink-powered eye tracker aids paralyzed patients

JINAN, Jan 19, (Xinhua): Researchers in China have developed a self-powered eye-tracking system that harnesses energy from blinking to help paralyzed individuals control devices like wheelchairs, offering a potential breakthrough for assistive technology.

Self-powered human-computer interaction systems are attracting significant attention for their sustainable, sensitive and stable performance, driven by the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence.

The system, as reported in the journal Cell Reports Physical Science this month, uses a nanogenerator called TENG to capture the minute friction generated between the eyelid

and the eyeball during a blink. This harvested energy powers the sensor, eliminating the need for an external battery.

Dubbed ET-TENG, the device has been created by teams from Qingdao University and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and it can detect subtle eye movements with high precision. It was shown to identify a minimum eyeball deflection angle of 2 degrees with 99 percent accuracy. The gadget also functions in total darkness, overcoming a limitation of traditional camera-based eye trackers that rely on external light sources.

The technology could allow individuals with conditions like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), who retain eye movement, to operate computers or wheelchairs, according to the study.

Beyond medical assistance, the team suggested that the system could have applications in space exploration for hands-free control panels, in smart vehicles for driver fatigue monitoring, and in making virtual reality headsets more lightweight and energy-efficient.

Its high sensitivity, simple structure and strong anti-interference capability provide technical support for promoting applications in the field of human-computer interactions, according to the researchers.

SPORTS

Olympic champ is ‘all in’ for Milan

Zoi Sadowski-Synnott targets back-to-back slopestyle titles

BARCELONA, Spain, Jan 19, (AP): New Zealand snowboarder Zoi Sadowski-Synnott won gold and silver medals at the 2022 Winter Games, riding a fighting spirit based on being an underdog from Down Under.

Now the three-time Olympic medalist is a favorite to defend her women’s slopestyle title next month at the Milan Cortina Games.

Sure, hailing from New Zealand meant day-long transoceanic flights to get to major competitions on the other side of the globe and extremely long stints away from home. It also made the 24-year-old relish the role of outsider.

“We come from a small country. It is not as wealthy as say the United States, and if you have a dream, you have to work hard for it. I think that’s kind of kind of in our blood,” Sadowski-Synnott told The Associated Press from her home on the South Island.

The softspoken rider put New Zealand on the map in a winter sport that was traditionally dominated by Northern Hemisphere powers like the U.S. and European countries. New Zealand and Japan have helped widen the snowboarding elite to include the Asian Rim. She has joined the list of famous New Zealand athletes like Scott Dixon, Lydia Ko and the many rugby stars for the All Blacks, though that list is nearly bereft of winter sports.

Sadowski-Synnott became the first New Zealander to win a gold at the Winter Games in 2022 when she triumphed in women’s slopestyle, where snowboarders demonstrate their skills on a course with obstacles and jumps. She followed with a silver in big air. She also won bronze in big air at the 2018 Games when she was 16.

Sadowski-Synnott is peaking ahead of the 2026 Games. She won her third world championship in slopestyle in 2025, when she also became the first Kiwi woman to win a Crystal Globe for slopestyle.

She won’t be alone. New Zealand’s government has increased financial support for winter sports during this Olympic cycle. Freestyle skier Nico Porteous, who won a gold of his own in Beijing, has retired. But freestyle skier Luca Harrington and Alpine skier Alice Robinson are also medal hopefuls.

“We don’t have the numbers that, say, America or European countries have but you can really feel how special it is when we do get that support because we’re like the underdogs,” she said. “When I’m overseas competing I do feel so much support from New Zealand and definitely it is ramping up to these Olympics.”

New Zealand’s winter athletes rarely feel the warmth of summer.

Sadowski-Synnott said she leaves home in October for competitions in the Northern Hemisphere and won’t return until May or early June, just when winter is arriving in New Zealand. The only exception are the two weeks at home for Christmas, which is midsummer in New Zealand.

“It is funny talking to some of my competitors and friends on tour. They’ll talk about not having been home for four weeks and we’ve already been living out of a suitcase for three months,” she said. “It is hard coming from New Zealand in that sense. But I’ve been doing it for a really long time, so I’m used to it and, yeah, I love it.”

Born in Australia to an American mother and a Kiwi father, Sadowski-Synnott moved to New Zealand at age 6 and grew up in Wanaka next to a ski resort where foreign athletes come to train when it is summer in the northern half of the globe.

She has the advantage of “being able to sleep in my own bed and be around friends and family while also training for such a long period of time where there’s no disruptions or competitions.” She also benefits from the tight community that is New Zealand, especially inside its snowboarding crew.

Sadowski-Synnott recalled her eureka moment when at age 12 she saw New Zealand women competing in the first slopestyle event at the 2014 Olympics. About that time she began riding with the country’s best at her local snowboard park.

“When I started really competing and my career started taking off, there were people that came before me that that kind of had paved that way, which was really special and really made it all possible,” she said.


Sadowski-Synnott became the first woman to land back-to-back double corks in competitive slopestyle before the Beijing Olympics. After missing the entire 2023-2024 season with an ankle injury, she became the first woman to pull off a triple cork in slopestyle (think of corks as off-axis spinning jumps, providing a corkscrewing effect).

Bone bruising in her knee ruled Sadowski-Synnott out of two World Cup events in December but she said she is not worried about being fit before she heads to Italy. And she’s not sweating the challenges.

“There’s definitely a point in this season where those tricks that you were scared of three months ago, they now feel like nothing. It’s like automatic muscle memory,” she said. “Those risks in your mind have just completely gone, and all there is is confidence.”

In snowboarding, she said, you must push away concerns that you could pick up a bad injury while spinning through the air, even with the Olympics right around the corner.

“There is that aspect of, ‘Oh, should I wait to do this trick that is too risky because it might put me out for the next comp?’ But I think in snowboarding you can’t have that mindset,” she said. “You gotta do the tricks when you can and just be all in.”



Silver medalist Zoi Sadowski Synnott of New Zealand celebrates during a medal ceremony for the women’s snowboard big air at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. (AP)

Durant passes Nowitzki for 6th place on career scoring list as Rockets top Pelicans



Houston Rockets forward Kevin Durant (7) dunks during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the New Orleans Pelicans in Houston. (AP)

Luka, LeBron get Lakers back into form

HOUSTON, Jan 19, (AP): Kevin Durant had 18 points and moved into sixth place on the NBA’s career points list, and Jabari Smith Jr. scored a season-high 32 points as the Houston Rockets beat the New Orleans Pelicans 119-110.

Alperen Sengun had 21 points and eight rebounds and Amen Thompson finished with 20 points as Houston won for the third time in four games.

Trey Murphy III scored 21 points on 7-for-15 shooting and Zion Williamson had 20 points and six rebounds. Derik Queen finished with 15 points for the Pelicans, who lost for the fourth time in five games and 13th time in 15 games.

With 15.2 seconds left in the game, Durant stepped to the free throw line needing one point to pass Hall of Famer Dirk Nowitzki (31,560 points) on the NBA’s scoring list. The 15-time All-Star made two free throws and received a standing ovation from the home crowd. Durant now has 31,562 career points. Michael Jordan is fifth on the list at 32,292.

When the game was over, a special video message was played on the jumbotron with Dirk Nowitzki congratulating Durant.

Smith, who had 22 points in the first half, bounced back from a 3-for-12 shooting performance in a win over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Friday. Against the Pelicans, he shot 11 for 21 and had a career-high seven 3-pointers.

Lakers 110, Raptors 93

In Los Angeles, Luka Doncic had 25 points and seven assists, LeBron James added 24 points and seven assists, and the Los Angeles Lakers returned to form with victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Deandre Ayton had 25 points and 13 rebounds in his impressive return from a knee injury for the Lakers, who won for just the second time in seven games while playing their final home game before an eight-game, 15-day road trip.

Ayton had his highest-scoring performance since Nov. 3 while making all 10 of his shots.

Doncic also returned with a strong performance after missing Saturday’s loss at Portland to rest his nagging injuries, hitting five 3-pointers.

James played in back-to-back games for the sec-



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) goes up for a basket during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Toronto Raptors in Los Angeles. (AP)

ond time this season - and the second time this week, capably completing a set of five games in seven days for the 41-year-old superstar who had previously been resting for one game in back-to-back sets.

Trail Blazers 117, Kings 110

In Sacramento, Deni Avdija had 26 points, eight assists and eight rebounds in his return from a back injury to help the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Sacramento Kings.

Avdija missed three games after straining his lower back late in a game against New York last Sunday. He looked fine while helping Portland to its ninth victory in 12 games, going 10 of 18 from the floor in 31 minutes.

Shaeden Sharpe also had 26 points, and Donovan Clingan added 21 points and 17 rebounds. Toumani Camara had 17 points as the Trail Blazers won their third consecutive game against the Kings this season.

The Trail Blazers have won 12 of 15 games to get back to .500 at 22-22 for the first time since they were 6-6 on Nov. 11.

Hornets 110, Nuggets 87

In Denver, Brandon Miller scored 23 points, Tjdjane Salaun came off the bench for 13 points and 11 rebounds, and the Charlotte Hornets blew past the injury-depleted Denver Nuggets.

Rookie big man Ryan Kalkbrenner had 17 points and six rebounds, Collin Sexton had 14 points and five assists, and LaMelo Ball had 10 points, six assists and three steals for Charlotte.

Over the past three games, Miller has averaged 25.7 points per game.

The Hornets had lost four of their previous six games and entered the night 1-9 in its past 10 matchups against Denver, which suffered its second-most lopsided loss of the season.

The Nuggets were without five of their top eight scorers - center Nikola Jokic (bone bruise in left knee), forward Aaron Gordon (right hamstring strain), forward Cameron Johnson (bone bruise in right knee), guard Christian Braun (left ankle sprain) and center Jonas Valanciunas (right calf strain). The five players combine to average 77.3 points per game.

Bulls 124, Nets 102

In Chicago, Coby White scored 24 points, Ayo Dosunmu had 19 and the Chicago Bulls beat the Brooklyn Nets to split a home-and-home set.

The Nets won the opener 112-109 on Friday night in Brooklyn.

Nikola Vucevic added 17 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for Chicago. Matas Buzelis also scored 17 points.

Nolan Traore scored 16 points for Brooklyn. Danny Wolf and Jalen Wilson each had 14. The Nets have lost nine of 11.

Dosunmu had 3-pointers at the beginning and end of a 10-0 run late in the first quarter to help the Bulls take a 39-22 lead into the second. Chicago led 70-51 at the half and the advantage stayed above 20 points for most of the second half.

The Bulls average more than 20,000 fans at the United Center, but there were plenty of empty seats at tip-off, which came 30 minutes after the Los Angeles Rams and Bears kicked off their NFC division round game a few miles away at Soldier Field.

Grizzlies 126, Magic 109 in London

In London, Ja Morant had 24 points and 13 assists in his return to the lineup to lead the Memphis Grizzlies to victory over the Orlando Magic in the first NBA regular-season game in London since 2019.

Jock Landale added 21 points and 8 rebounds and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 17 points as Memphis avenged its 118-111 loss to Orlando in Berlin on Thursday in the first of their European doubleheader.

Orlando trailed by 33 points in the first half before reducing the deficit to 17 on Paolo Banchero’s 3-pointer to make it 108-91 with 8:15 left in the fourth quarter. The Grizzlies closed it out from there.

Gerard birdies last two holes for 65 to finish alone in second

Gotterup opens PGA Tour season with Sony Open title for third straight year

HONOLULU, Jan 19, (AP): Chris Gotterup had leis draped around his neck and the gold Sony Open trophy in the other for the traditional toast from the Waialae members Sunday evening. He’s loved coming to Hawaii, even if the occasion was never worth celebrating.

He was part of the rookie class that came to Honolulu in 2024 for orientation, only to be told there was no room for them in the field. He missed the cut a year ago, falling to No. 195 in the world.

On Sunday, he pulled away with a combination of power and putting for a 6-under 64 to win the Sony Open by two shots, giving him three victories in three years on the PGA Tour and moving him closer to golf’s A-list.

“I just felt like this week I was in a good frame of mind, just happy to be here,” Gotterup said. “I felt like I was in control of my brain, which is the most important thing. I drove it great and made some putts when it mattered.”

He finished at 16-under 264 and moved to No. 17 in the world.

Ryan Gerard birdied his last two holes for a 65 to finish alone in second. He flew to Mauritius at the end of last year and was runner-up to move into the top 50 and secure a spot in his first Masters. Now he’s just outside the top 30.

Patrick Rodgers had another chance at his first PGA Tour victory, but he went without a birdie on the back nine until the final hole. He closed with a 65 to finish third.

“Unfortunately, didn’t have a hot putter today,” said Rodgers, who now has nine top 3s since 2015.



Chris Gotterup holds his trophy after winning the Sony Open golf event at the Waialae Country Club in Honolulu. (AP)

Gotterup had a dream week, in control of his game at Waialae, cruising the streets of Waikiki at night to get away from golf. On Sunday, he got a little help from 54-hole leader Davis Riley, who had a pair of birdies through five holes before his bid ended in a span of four holes.

He had consecutive three-putt bogeys from long range, and then followed with a wild drive into the trees left of the eighth fairway that led to double bogey. He went from a two-shot lead to three shots behind and never caught up, closing with a 71 to tie for sixth.

But then, Gotterup didn’t give anyone much of a chance.

“It was anyone’s tournament,” Gotterup said. “Then I made a couple nice putts and I saw a couple people drop back. I know Ryan played a great tournament and he tried to make a run at the end. Couple other guys played great and I just held them off.”

Even on an old-school Waialae course with doglegs framed by royal palms, he pounded away with tee shots of 330-plus yards early on the back nine. But it was his putter that ultimately made a difference.

Gotterup holed a 20-footer on No. 12, and then poured in a 25-foot putt on the 13th, the toughest hole on the course. He all but clinched it with a tee shot that landed perfectly between the pin and the bunker on the par-3 17th for a final birdie.

He said the course reminded him of a home, and Gotterup has a lot of those lately - raised in New Jersey and three years at Rutgers, a senior season at Oklahoma where he stayed until recently moving to Florida.

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China claims men’s and women’s doubles titles
NEW DELHI, Jan 19, (Xinhua): China bagged the men’s and women’s doubles gold medals at badminton’s India Open.
Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang took the men’s doubles title, rallying to beat Japan’s Hiroki Midorikawa and Kyohei Yamashita 17-21, 25-23, 21-16. It was their second India Open championship, having previously won in 2023.
The women’s doubles title went to China’s Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning, who defeated Japan’s Yuki Fukushima and Mayu Matsumoto 21-11, 21-18 for their second title of the season.
South Korea’s world No. 1 An Se-young defeated China’s Wang Zhiyi 21-13, 21-11 in 43 minutes to win the women’s singles title in their 10th straight final meeting between the top two-ranked players, with An extending her perfect record in those matches to 10-0.
The victory is An’s 36th career BWF World Tour women’s singles title. She has now won 30 consecutive international matches since October 2025, solidifying her hold on the top ranking.

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SPORTS

Event raises awareness across all of society

Kuwait Sports Day reflects national vision for health, says Abdullah

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19: Bashar Abdullah Al-Salem, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, emphasized that Kuwait Sports Day, scheduled for February 7, embodies the state's vision of making sports an integral part of daily life. He noted that the event reflects the leadership's commitment to supporting community sports, promoting public health, and enhancing quality of life, underscoring the belief that sports are essential for building strong individuals and a thriving society.

Abdullah highlighted that the state, through its various governmental institutions, prioritizes sports for all as a key tool for health prevention, social cohesion, and discovering young talent. He confirmed that the Public Authority for Sports is working closely with the Kuwait Sports for All Federation, government entities, civil organizations, and the private sector to ensure the success of this national initiative.

He added that Kuwait Sports Day goes beyond physical activities. The event delivers a comprehensive awareness message, targeting all segments of society—from children and youth to the elderly and people with disabilities—promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities, and



Bashar Abdullah Al-Salem, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports

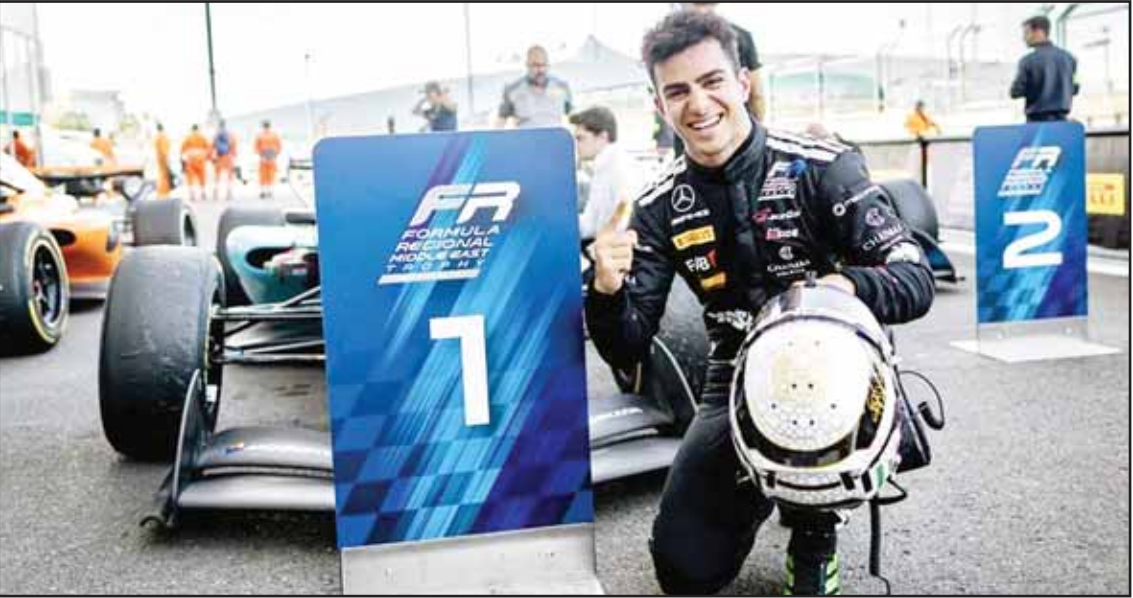
reinforcing the principle that sports are a right for everyone.

Abdullah also explained that the programs and activities accompanying the day have been carefully designed to suit all ages and abilities. The initiative aims to foster a culture

of physical activity and motivate individuals to adopt healthy, sustainable lifestyles, in line with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the Public Authority for Sports' 2022–2028 strategy to develop sports and build a healthy, productive society.

First MENA driver to win Formula

Rashed makes history with Yas Marina win



Rashed Al Dhaheeri, Emirati driver, celebrates atop the podium.

DUBAI, Jan 19: Emirati driver Rashed Al Dhaheeri made history by winning the opening round of the Formula Regional Middle East Championship at Yas Marina Circuit from January 16–18, becoming the first driver from the Middle East and North Africa to claim victory in the series.

The opening round, sanctioned by the FIA, featured 32 drivers from 11 teams and marked the competitive debut of the new Tatuus T-326 car, equipped with a 1.6-liter Toyota

engine, Pirelli tires, an updated chassis, advanced aerodynamics, and enhanced handling.

Al Dhaheeri adapted quickly to the new car during free practice, recording the second-fastest time in Friday evening sessions.

He narrowly missed first place in the initial qualifying session by just 0.001 seconds, before securing his first pole position of the 2026 season in the second qualifying session.

Speaking after the race, Al Dhaheeri said that winning at Yas Ma-

rina, where his racing career began, and in front of his fans and family, was a dream comes true.

He credited the victory to hard work and preparation over the winter break.

The championship continues at Yas Marina Circuit for its second round from January 23–25, 2026, before moving to the Dubai Autodrome from January 30 to February 1, and concluding the season at Losail International Circuit in Qatar from February 11–13, 2026.

Barcelona winning streak ends with loss at Sociedad

Atletico downs Alaves

MADRID, Jan 19, (AP): Disallowed goals, hitting the woodwork five times, and great saves.

It was just too much for Barcelona to overcome on Sunday as it lost 2-1 to Real Sociedad in the Spanish league to see its 11-game winning streak come to an end.

Barcelona had three goals disallowed - as well as a penalty-kick call reversed by video review - in the first half alone. It had five attempts hit the woodwork, including an 84th-minute header by Jules Koundé from close range, and Sociedad goalkeeper Alex Remiro made a series of impressive saves.

The loss left the Catalan club one point ahead of second-place Real Madrid, which beat Levante 2-0 at home on Saturday. It was the second consecutive win for Sociedad, which moved to eighth place.

Mikel Oyarzabal put the hosts ahead with a volley by the far post in the 32nd minute. Barcelona equalized with a header from Marcus Rashford in the 70th but a minute later Gonçalo Guedes put Sociedad ahead again with a shot from inside the area.

Barcelona had plenty of chances throughout the match. It thought it had taken the lead a few minutes into the game when Fermín López scored with a low shot from outside the area, but the goal was disallowed by video review for a foul by Dani Olmo on Sociedad's Takefusa Kubo in the buildup.

Barcelona also had a goal by Frenkie de Jong called back for offside in the 21st and another by Lamine Yamal in the 27th.



Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, left, challenges for the ball with Real Sociedad's Sergio Gomez during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Sociedad and Barcelona in San Sebastian, Spain. (AP)

Yamal was awarded a penalty in first-half stoppage time but the call was reversed because he was offside.

Sociedad's Carlos Soler was sent off in the 88th for a hard foul.

Barcelona had won 11 in a row across all competitions in a streak that included a 2-1 victory over Real Madrid in the final of the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia last weekend. It hadn't lost since a 3-0 road defeat against Chelsea in the league phase of the Champions League.

Its last Spanish league loss had been a 2-1 defeat against Real Madrid in the first clásico of the season at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in October.

Barcelona forward Raphinha was not included in the squad for Sunday's match. João Cancelo made his debut off the bench in the second half after recently signing with the Catalan club. Kubo had to be taken off the field on a stretcher in the second half because of an injury.

Alexander Sorloth scored early in the second half to give Atletico Madrid a 1-0 home win over relegation-threatened Alaves.

Sorloth struck in the 48th minute with a firm header from near the penalty spot after Pablo Barrios crossed from the right flank. The ball hit the post at the far corner before going in.

It was the 10th start in 19 league games for Sorloth this season. The Norway forward has six goals, three with headers.

Doghaim elected ASBU Chairman

TUNIS, Jan 19, (KUNA): The Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) announced Monday the election of Mohammad Doghaim, as Chairman of the union's Standing Sports Committee and Ahmad Manadi as First Vice Chairman of the Committee, during the committee's 27th meeting in Tunis.

In a statement, the Union said that during the meeting the committee reviewed the outcomes of sports exchanges over the past year. In this context, the General Administration undertook to provide television coverage for a range of sporting events at both Arab and international levels, made available by member organizations.

These events covered a wide spectrum of team and individual sports, as well as official and friendly matches and tournaments, in addition to various competitive and exhibition activities.

The statement explained that the level of exchanges was marked by the frequency and diversity of activities offered for exchange. In addition to official competitions, these included some recreational sports

such as marine and beach activities, including swimming, diving, beach volleyball, and beach soccer.

The committee also reviewed developments related to the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) offer concerning television broadcast rights for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Milan and the 2028 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles. The IOC affirmed its strong desire to resume cooperation with the Arab States Broadcasting Union, which has been a historic partner for more than four decades.

The committee further reviewed the Union's participation, through its Sports Office, in the Monaco Meetings Exhibition in France, which it has regularly attended for many years. This participation made it possible to keep abreast of the latest developments in the global sports rights market, as well as to diversify experiences and seek alternative markets beyond football and well-known traditional sports, in light of the intense and unequal competition with private and monopolistic companies in the Arab world.

Füllkrug ends goal drought in Milan victory

Dream debut for Malen with Roma

MILAN, Jan 19, (AP): Donyell Malen needed 26 minutes to mark his arrival at Roma with a goal.

Malen scored the opening goal in Roma's 2-0 win at Torino that saw the capital side cement fourth place in Serie A on Sunday.

It was also a great way for Malen to celebrate his 27th birthday on Monday.

Malen joined Roma on loan from Aston Villa on Friday, with the option to make the deal permanent at the end of the season.

The Netherlands forward was thrown straight into the starting lineup and thought he had scored in the 23rd minute but it was ruled out as he had been offside when he ran onto Paulo Dybala's pass.

The two combined again three minutes later with Malen controlling Dybala's slide-rule pass before slotting past Torino goalkeeper Alberto Paluari.

Dybala got onto the scoresheet himself in the 72nd minute. His effort from the edge of the area was parried by Paluari but came back to Dybala, who volleyed into the roof of the net.

The result also avenged Roma's mid-week defeat at Torino in the Italian Cup.

New AC Milan signing Niclas Füllkrug scored his first goal in nearly a year to give his team what could prove to be a crucial 1-0 win over relegation-threatened Lecce.

Milan cut the gap to Serie A leader Inter Milan back to three points. Inter, which had also struggled against Lecce midweek, won 1-0 at Udinese on Saturday.

Füllkrug joined Milan on loan from West Ham on the opening day of the winter transfer window in Italy.

The 32-year-old Germany forward hadn't scored since April 5, against Bournemouth in the Premier League.

He ended that drought in the 76th minute, less than three minutes after being substituted on for Christian Pulisic. Alexis Saelemaekers ran onto a long pass from Matteo Gabbia down the right and then put in a cross for Füllkrug to head into the bottom far corner. Pulisic had had two of Milan's best chances before coming off but the United States international was denied by two great saves from Lecce goalkeeper Wladimiro Falcone, who also pulled off a number of other fine stops.

Infantino criticizes 'unacceptable' Senegal conduct

Chaos of AFCON final reflects badly on Morocco prospects as 2030 WC co-host

RABAT, Morocco, Jan 19, (AP): Morocco's dry run as a 2030 World Cup co-host could hardly have gone worse with the chaotic end to the Africa Cup of Nations. The final was marred Sunday by fighting between fans and stewards on the field and a walk-off from the Senegal team which felt a grave injustice had been done after having a potential trophy-winning goal ruled out in stoppage time before host Morocco was awarded a penalty.

Outraged Senegalese supporters jumped over barricades and landed in photographers' positions behind one of the goals, where they threw chairs onto the field and battled with stewards before police arrived to try and restore order.

Meanwhile, rival players clashed on the sideline, with Morocco coach Walid Regragui involved in the melee, possibly to calm tensions. Tempers also flared in the press box.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino condemned the "unacceptable scenes" and slammed the Senegalese players for leaving the field after Congolese referee Jean-Jacques Ndala awarded Morocco the penalty.

"The ugly scenes witnessed (Sunday) must be condemned and never repeated," the FIFA leader posted on his Instagram account after attending the game in Rabat.

"I expect that the relevant disciplinary bodies at CAF (the Confederation of African Football) will take the appropriate measures," Infantino wrote.

CAF also described the incidents as unacceptable in a later statement, and said it is "reviewing all footage and will refer the matter to competent bodies for appropriate action to be taken against those found guilty."

Senegal coach Pape Thiaw faces severe sanctions for his part leading this players back to the locker



Morocco's Braham Abdelkader Diaz, left, is embraced by FIFA President Gianni Infantino after receiving the golden boot after the Africa Cup of Nations final soccer match between Senegal and Morocco in Rabat, Morocco. (AP)

room when Morocco was awarded a stoppage-time penalty, forcing the game to stop for almost 15 minutes. It is unclear if any ban imposed on Thiaw would apply just in future African competitions or at FIFA's World Cup in North America. Senegal starts its World Cup playing France on June 16 at MetLife Stadium near New York, where it also plays Norway six days later.

The fighting continued even while play resumed for Morocco star Braham Diaz to take one of the worst penalties in soccer history. Pape Gueye then scored in extra time for Senegal to win the final 1-0.

Senegal coach Pape Thiaw's postgame conference was called off after he arrived smiling for journalists' questions when he was booed - presumably by Moroccan journalists - and arguments broke out between accredited media.

Apart from the failures in security that allowed fans reach the field of play during the final, there were other incidents that reflected badly on Morocco as host, including the ongoing battle that Senegal's reserve goalkeeper Yéhvann Diouf had trying to stop Moroccan ball boys from stealing starting keeper Édouard Mendy's towels during the match. Nigeria goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali also had his towel taken before the penalty shootout against Morocco in the semifinal.

Morocco also seemed to benefit from favorable refereeing throughout the tournament, while its image as a good host was somewhat marred by the deafening whistles opposing teams faced from the Moroccan fans in the 69,500-capacity Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium, where the home side played all its games.

Before the final, the Senegalese Football Federation strongly condemned local authorities for how its team had been treated upon its arrival in Rabat for the match.

Morocco is a main co-host for the 2030 World Cup with Spain and Portugal. It still harbors hopes of hosting the final in the under-construction Hassan II Stadium, set to be the largest soccer arena in the world with a capacity of 115,000 after its planned completion in 2028.

Rail links taking supporters from Rabat to stadium venues in Tangier, Marrakech, Casablanca, Agadir and Fez are excellent, while the ticket app from national railway ONCF is available in English, French or Arabic and straightforward for foreign fans to use.

The motorways between the main cities are also excellent and were praised by journalists arriving from other African countries.

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NEWS



New Zealand's players pose with the trophy after winning the One Day International cricket series against India in Indore, India. (AP)

Sports

AMIR CONGRATULATES MOROCCO ON SUCCESSFUL HOSTING OF AFCON

Senegal roars to AFCON glory amid chaos



His Majesty King Mohammed VI



Morocco's Brahim Abdelkader Díaz, left, and Senegal's El Hadji Malick Diouf battle for the ball during the Africa Cup of Nations final soccer match between Senegal and Morocco in Rabat, Morocco. (AP)



Senegal's Sadio Mane holds the trophy aloft as he celebrates with teammates after winning the Africa Cup of Nations final soccer match between Senegal and Morocco in Rabat, Morocco. (AP)

King Mohammed VI congratulates team on reaching final

RABAT, Morocco, Jan 19, (Agencies): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah each sent cables to King Mohammed VI of Morocco, congratulating him on the successful organization of the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

The Kuwaiti leaders praised Morocco for its excellent preparations for participating teams, as well as the high-standard stadiums and facilities, noting that they reflected the country's bright and civilized image. His Highness the Amir additionally congratulated Morocco on its national team's second-place finish, commending the team's performance and the high level of sportsmanship demonstrated throughout the tournament.

In their messages, the Amir, Crown Prince, and Prime Minister wished King Mohammed VI continued good health and well-being, and expressed hopes for further progress and prosperity for the Kingdom of Morocco and its people under His Majesty's wise leadership.

Senegal won the Africa Cup of Nations dramatically.

Pape Gueye scored in extra time for the Teranga Lions to beat host Morocco 1-0 in a chaotic final, which at one point saw fans trying to storm the field and Senegal's players walking off the pitch to protest a penalty decision deep into second-half stoppage time.

It appeared unclear if the game could continue as fans battled with stewards. "We all saw what happened at the end of the match, but we took the decision to come back onto the pitch and give everything," Gueye said.

Play resumed after a stoppage of 14 minutes, only for Senegal's Édouard Mendy to easily save Brahim Díaz's attempt at a Panenka penalty when he lobbed the ball straight into the goalkeeper's arms with the last kick of normal time.

Gueye then scored the winning goal in the fourth minute of extra time when he swept the ball into the top right corner with his left boot.

The 69,500-capacity Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium emptied quickly after the final whistle. Few were left to see the Senegalese players lift the trophy.

It's Senegal's second Africa Cup win. The Teranga Lions won the 2021 edition

after a penalty shootout against Egypt.

There was chaos before extra time after Morocco was awarded a controversial stoppage-time penalty just after Senegal had what seemed a good goal ruled out at the other end.

Senegal's goal in the second minute of stoppage time was ruled out for a foul by Abdoulaye Seck, but TV replays showed little contact on Morocco defender Achraf Hakimi, who fell before Seck headed the ball off the post. Moussa Niakhaté headed in the rebound.

Then Morocco claimed a penalty for a pull by El Hadji Malick Diouf on Brahim, and it was awarded after Congolese referee Jean-Jacques Ndala checked replays.

The decision led to fights between some of the Moroccan substitutes and their opposing players with Morocco coach Walid Regragui also involved, possibly in a bid to calm the situation.

Anger spilled over among the organized group of Senegalese fans, with many jumping down among the photographers and trying to storm the field from behind one of the goals. At least one threw a chair onto the field. They were mostly held back by a long line of police.

There were also fights in the press box - possibly involving Moroccan and Senegalese fans masquerading as journalists to get accreditation - while tempers flared.

"The image we gave of African football was rather shameful," Regragui said. Senegal coach Pape Thiaw led his team off the field while Moroccan fans celebrated the penalty decision and whistled the ongoing fighting on the field.

The players returned some 14 minutes later, and Brahim - Morocco's star and the tournament's top scorer with five goals - missed the chance to end Morocco's 50-year wait for the trophy.

"Football sometimes is cruel, and today we lost," Regragui said. "We know in a final, you need to take the few chances that come your way. That penalty in the last seconds could have won us the title."

Brahim was whistled by the remaining Morocco fans when he went to collect his runners-up medal.

Instead, Gueye scored Senegal's first goal from open play - rather than from penalties - in a final. This was Senegal's fourth appearance in an Africa Cup final.

"Sadio (Mané) told us to come back on and we re-mobilized," Gueye said. "Édouard then made the save, we stayed focused, got the goal, and won the game."

Before the game, the Senegalese Football Federation decried a lack of "fair play" from the Moroccan hosts before the final, citing an alleged lack of security,

problems with the team hotel, training facilities and ability to get tickets for its supporters.

Senegal was without suspended captain Kalidou Koulibaly and midfielder Habib Diarra, and dealt a further blow before kickoff when Krépin Diatta and Ousseynou Niang both got injured in the warmup. Diatta was due to start at right back.

Senegalese anger at the penalty decision came after Morocco also seemed to benefit from favorable refereeing calls in previous games. Regragui angrily rejected suggestions that the home team was being favored.

Thiaw's post-game press conference was called off because of journalists shouting and arguing when he emerged for their questions. Their arguments continued after Thiaw left the podium.

For Morocco, a 2030 World Cup co-host, defeat is a demoralizing blow. The kingdom has invested heavily in soccer facilities and infrastructure. One of the most aggressive infrastructure buildouts in African sporting history fueled protests in October from mostly young Moroccans who feel other areas are being neglected.

Meanwhile, His Majesty King Mohammed VI sent a congratulatory message to the Moroccan national football team for reaching the final of the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON 2025) hosted in Morocco.

In his message, the King praised the players, coaches, technical and medical staff, administrative officials, and the Royal Moroccan Football Federation, calling the achievement a "honorable continental success."

"Through this outstanding journey, you have shown that perseverance, dedication, and team spirit are essential for success. You have presented a model for Moroccan and African youth, proving what can be achieved with confidence in one's talents and abilities," the King said.

He also highlighted the team's performance as evidence of the importance of investing in human resources and modernizing Morocco's sports infrastructure, which has demonstrated its strength and readiness to host future global events, including the 2030 FIFA World Cup.

The King emphasized that hosting the tournament was not only a major sporting achievement but also a message of hope and pride from Morocco to the continent, showing that African talent can excel and innovate on the global stage.

Finally, King Mohammed VI expressed appreciation for the passionate Moroccan fans who supported the team throughout the tournament and encouraged the players to continue their efforts to achieve even greater successes and honor Moroccan football internationally.

Hong Kong holds off India

Saudi Arabia cruises past Aussies at Asian Handball Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Jan 19, (KUNA): Saudi Arabia's national handball team recorded a convincing 42-24 victory over Australia on Monday in a Group D match of the 22nd Asian Men's Handball Championship, currently being held in Kuwait.

The tournament, which serves as a qualifier for the 2027 IHF World Men's Handball Championship in Germany, runs until January 29.

Playing at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Hall, the Green Falcons de-

livered another dominant performance, controlling the match from start to finish and outclassing their Australian opponents in both halves.

The win marked Saudi Arabia's third consecutive victory in the competition, underlining its strong form in the group stage. Hussein Fariq was named Man of the Match for his standout display.

In another Group D encounter on Monday, Hong Kong secured their first win of the tournament, edging India 36-30 after suffering two consecutive defeats.



KUNA photo
Saudi player is tackled as he goes for a goal during the Asian Handball Championship in Kuwait.

Gauff advances despite serving struggles

Djokovic racks up more records, Swiatek overcomes rust to advance in Melbourne

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan 19, (AP): Iga Swiatek knows she has plenty to work on in her bid for a first Australian Open title and a career Grand Slam.

The No. 2-ranked Swiatek never got comfortable in a 7-6 (5), 6-3 win over No. 130-ranked Chinese qualifier Yuan Yue in the first-round on Monday night.

Novak Djokovic already has a record 10 titles in Australia among his 24 major championships, and just keeps racking up the records.

He equaled two all-time tennis marks by starting his 21st Australian Open and his 81st Grand Slam tournament, and he added another milestone in the last night match Monday with his 100th win at Melbourne Park.

The 38-year-old Djokovic had a 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 first-round win over Pedro Martinez to become the first man to win 100 or more matches at three Grand Slam tournaments.

"I like the sound of it," he said. "Centurion is pretty nice."

Swiatek won Wimbledon last year to go with her four French Open titles and her victory at the 2022 U.S. Open, leaving the Australian Open as the only major missing from her collection. She has twice reached the semifinals.

Yuan was swinging freely and rifling winners as she took a 5-3 lead, and Swiatek had to switch things up.

"I was a bit rusty at the beginning," she said. "Many ups and downs, but overall I have some stuff to work on. I'll just focus on that."



Novak Djokovic of Serbia plays a forehand return to Pedro Martinez of Spain during their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

From 5-3 down in the first, she held a service game at love to force Yuan to serve for the set. Swiatek broke back to level and then, in the tiebreaker, she remained composed and converted on her second set point.

"I started a bit tight. I needed to get my legs moving. Go after my shots. Be brave with the decisions," she said of the change up. "It's not hard to win matches when everything is going well. Today it wasn't, but I was able to win."

Swiatek had a disrupted preparation for the year's first major, losing two singles matches at the United

Cup but helping Poland win the title for the first time.

One of those losses was to No. 3 Coco Gauff, who also had some struggles before beating Kamilla Rakhimova 6-2, 6-3 in the opening match on Rod Laver Arena on Day 2.

Gauff has won two Grand Slam titles but, like Swiatek, has never gone past the semifinals at Melbourne Park.

She had six double-faults in the first set against Rakhimova, but found her range in the second. It's not a new issue - she had a four-high 431 double-faults last year - but is something Gauff is working on.

"I mean, it was just the first set," Gauff said. "I had like three doubles in the first game, and once I got through that game, I mean, it was pretty much smooth sailing."

No. 4 Amanda Anisimova, runner-up at the last two majors, and No. 6 Jessica Pegula won in straight sets, advancing along with No. 8 Mirra Andreeva, No. 17 Victoria Mboko and No. 25 Paula Badosa.

Sofia Kenin, the 2020 champion, had her fifth consecutive first-round exit at Melbourne Park following a 6-3, 6-2 loss to fellow-American Peyton Stearns, and No. 15 Emma Navarro lost in three sets to Magda Linette.

Priscilla Hon secured her first trip to the second round of her home major in six years and also helped her opponent Marina Stakusic leave the court in a wheelchair after the Canadian qualifier collapsed with severe leg cramps.